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The Olympic Games' cultural programme and its role in fostering local creativity: report to the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

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THE OLYMPIC GAMES' CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND ITS ROLE IN FOSTERING LOCAL CREATIVITY

Report to the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

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Executive Summary

In recent years, the advantages of having a strong creative economy and the benefits of creative industries' agglomeration for cities and regions have been widely explored, but the role of large cultural and sports events in developing local creative economies seems to be still under-researched. This project looks precisely at the role of the Olympic cultural programme in fostering local creativity in the host region. The study focuses in particular on the development of local talent and entrepreneurship, on the emergence of local networks of creative enterprises, and on the enhancement of local creativity as a result of the Cultural Olympiad programme. In order to investigate these themes, a case study approach, based on two case studies - Turin 2006 and London 2012 - was chosen. Face-to-face interviews (with 12 creative entrepreneurs and two Cultural Olympiad organisers), in addition to a qualitative e-mail survey, were selected as the most appropriate methods for this research.

Although higher visibility and publicity emerged as the main perceived tangible positive outcomes of participation in the cultural programme, our findings revealed that advantages go beyond these tangible outcomes. Interviewees described cultural events as outlets for creativity, new experiences which allow the development of fresh ideas. Events allow participating creative firms to showcase their products and to advertise the city's or area's creativity, whereas normally creative activities often happen 'behind closed doors'. In London, as well as in Turin, creative professionals regarded networking as a very important activity for their work. However, while in Turin networking and improved connectivity was not seen as a consequence of participation in the Cultural Olympiad, in London participants revealed to have created new contacts and collaborations thanks to the cultural programme, or expressed their hopes to achieve this through future participation. Overall, in East London as well as in Turin participants revealed a great emotional attachment to their area (in the case of London) or city (in the case of Turin). Creative professionals of both places see enhanced local pride and increased visitation as very important outcomes of the Olympic Games, regardless of their personal return as businesses.

Nonetheless, the aspect which in Turin was perceived as most important when discussing the effects of the Cultural Olympiad on creativity is the atmosphere during the Games. The atmosphere during the Games, variously described by participants as wonderful, fun, sunny, amazing, creative and marvellous, seems to be linked to a number of factors, including the fact that everyone was happy and excited, and strangers smiled at each other in the streets. An interviewee in particular explicitly linked creative inspiration with happiness and working in a cheerful environment.

However, not all the research participants had positive feelings towards the Cultural Olympiad, with some of the London respondents being particularly critical. The three main concerns were the lack of funding available to develop creative projects for the festival, the lack of information about it, and the quality/authenticity of the cultural programme. In London, in particular, several participants expressed fears that most of the funding available will be directed to other regions of the UK or to large, less independent organisations. In contrast with these views, the Turin Cultural Olympiad had, for example, the advantage of involving many local small creative businesses, but according to its curator this led to a loss of visibility for the actors involved. Generally, the subordinate role of the Cultural Programme in comparison with sport events (and thus its under-funding) is perceived as an overarching problem. At the end of this report these criticisms are discussed and some recommendations for organisers provided.

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The Olympic Games' Cultural Programme and its Role in Fostering Local Creativity

1. Introduction: Aims and Objectives

At the 2002 International Symposium on Legacy (IOC, 2002), culture was identified 'as one of the fundamental aspects of Olympic legacy, that could be considered as the basis for its existence and continuity. Indeed, culture was identified as not just one aspect of Olympic legacy, but as the ultimate source of all others' (IOC, 2002: 2). In this context the creative industries emerge as particularly important players, since by definition their nature embraces both the cultural and economic dimensions. In fact, as recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 'creative industries are becoming increasingly important components of modern post-industrial knowledge-based economies. Not only are they thought to account for higher than average growth and job creation[1], they are also vehicles of cultural identity that play an important role in fostering cultural diversity' (UNESCO, 2006: 3; footnote added by the author).

In recent years, the advantages of having a strong creative economy and the benefits of creative industries' agglomeration for cities and regions have been widely explored (see, for instance, Landry, 2000, UN, 2008, DCMS, 2009). However, the role of large cultural and sports events in developing local creative economies seems to be still under-researched. This project looks precisely at the role of the Olympic cultural programme in fostering local creativity in the host region. Evidence from a number of academic studies (e.g. Paiola, 2008; Smith, 2008), including the researcher's PhD based in East London, showed that cultural events can play an important role in fostering local creativity, knowledge sharing and networking between small creative enterprises. The study focuses in particular on the development of local talent and entrepreneurship, on the emergence of local networks of creative enterprises, and on the enhancement of local creativity as a

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[1] For instance, in the UK, between 1997 and 2006 the creative industries grew by 4% of Gross Value Added (GVA) and 2% of employment per annum, compared to a 3% and 2% respectively of the whole economy (DCMS, 2009). According to UN (2008), the world trade in creative goods and services 'increased at an unprecedented average annual rate of 8.7 percent' between 2000 and 2005, and 'this positive trend occurred in all regions and groups of countries and is expected to continue into the next decade' (p. IV).

result of the Cultural Olympiad programme[2]. The city regions of Turin and London were chosen as case studies.

Often the attraction of external firms and capital is one of the objectives of large cultural and sports events (Sacco and Tevano Blessi, 2007). However, here the focus will be on local small and micro firms[3], which are often the greatest contributors to creative innovation and cultural diversity (Jacobs, 1970). In particular, two aspects will be explored:

1. The role of Olympic Cultural Programmes in developing local talent and local entrepreneurship.
2. The role of Olympic Cultural Programmes in fostering connectivity, collaboration and networking between creative firms.

In order to investigate these themes, a case study approach, based on two case studies (Turin 2006 and London 2012), was chosen. Face-to-face interviews with creative entrepreneurs, in addition to an exploratory e-mail survey, were selected as the most appropriate methods for this research.

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[2] Creative enterprises (which include cultural firms) are defined as 'those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 2001: 5). Creative clusters will be defined as 'geographic concentrations of interconnected creative companies and institutions' (adapted from Porter, 1998).

[3] Micro enterprises are here defined as employing 10 or fewer people and having an annual turnover of €2 or less. Small enterprises employ 50 or fewer people and have an annual turnover of Ä10M or less (European Commission, 2005).

2. **Literature review**

a. **Events and Regeneration**

Over the past three decades culture has increasingly represented an integral aspect of cities' development policies, and the organisation of events has often played a key role in local and regional regeneration strategies. Events such as the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, 1990 Glasgow European Capital of Culture and 2000 Sydney Olympic Games are often-cited examples of how a well-planned event can contribute to a wider urban development strategy (for instance, García, 2004a; Smith, 2009). Not only can events attract additional government funding and support, provide a reason to make interventions, and a deadline for their achievement (Smith, 2009), but they are also believed to have a number of physical, social and economic positive effects on cities. Such effects often include the use of dilapidated or brown-field sites to stage the event and the construction of new venues and other facilities. Events also provide local authorities with a reason to invest in physical regeneration, transport, and heritage restoration. They are believed to have potential to contribute to the creation of a positive city image and thus attract tourism and investment; to foster local pride and social cohesion (e.g. Rohe, 2002); and to promote participation in cultural and sport activities. They can trigger the creation of employment through local business development, attraction of new businesses and private investment. Large scale events can also provide opportunities for local people (including socially excluded groups) to volunteer and participate in other forms of training (Misener and Mason, 2006). More broadly, a vibrant cultural environment will contribute to the quality of life and thus to the attraction (and retention) of people to live, work, study and play.

However, research on the use of events as catalysts for regeneration[4] has pointed out a number of risks and disadvantages of relying on events to achieve regeneration objectives. The effects of such policies can in fact be short-lived, if long-term objectives are not identified in advance and integrated in wider development strategies (Smith, 2009). For

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[4] There exist a vast body of research on this topic. See for instance: Smith, 2009a and 2009b; Stevenson, 2009; Balsas, 2004; García, 2007; Gold and Gold, 2005; Richards and Palmer, 2010.

example, the post-event use of newly built sports facilities can create problems if their future function is not identified prior to their construction. Critics have also pointed out the increasing costs of hosting events and the danger of neglecting local communities in the attempt to attract tourists (e.g. Eisinger, 2000). Similarly, other risks can be the possible displacement of local residents and small businesses, loss of affordable housing and gentrification. Event-led regeneration policies have been described by some as 'cosmetic exercises' (García, 2004a) or 'carnival masks' (Harvey, 1989) utilised by policy makers to divert attention and resources from social problems. Negative environmental consequences, overcrowding and disruption to everyday life for residents are also noted disadvantages of staging events.

b. The creative industry sector

The first studies on the creative and cultural industries and their role in economic development (such as Mulgan and Worpole, 1985) were undertaken in the UK in the early 1980s (Montgomery, 2007). However, the *creative industries* sector was officially recognised for the first time only in 1998, when the British Department of Culture, Media and Sport defined as '…those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 2001: 5). Namely, creative industries include: advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio.

The creative sector is characterized by a tendency to attract younger and highly skilled people (Meethan and Beer, 2005), by an organizational mode made of micro to medium enterprises (Cunningham, 2002) and by a strong dependence on innovation, mobility and flexibility (Meethan and Beer, 2005). Purvis (1996) described the 'collaborative, non-adversarial relationships between small 'popular fashion' firms in Manchester' (p. 138) and noted that being small and flexible was a conscious choice which allowed them to adapt quickly to the changes in fashion for their niche markets.

Creative industries account for higher than average growth and job creation (LDA, 2008) and are also vehicles of cultural identity, playing an important role in promoting cultural

diversity (UNESCO, 2006). Since their outputs are identifiable for being essentially cultural or symbolic in nature (Scott, 2000), a critical mass of creative firms is often seen as a means for the attraction of tourism, skilled human capital and investment to places. Because of their tendency to locate in ex industrial infrastructures (e.g. Hutton, 2005), the contribution of these industries to the physical regeneration of post-fordist, derelict areas has been recognized. For these reasons, the creative industries have been increasingly regarded as valuable tools for the economic and social development of cities, and their geographical clustering has been encouraged by city planners, capitalizing on their workers' particular need for face-to-face contact and networking (Rutten, 2006). Many cities have therefore tried to utilise the creative industries as sources of new employment and tools to project a positive image, especially for places that were seen as outdated and declining (Landry, 2006).

As Sacco and Tevano Blessi (2007) pointed out, cultural and creative firms thus become crucial players of the development process, since innovative organisational practices and creative ideas largely originate from them, becoming an 'essential part of the organizational life of *any* firm' (p. 113). In this contex, the idea of assessing the role of a series of coordinated cultural events (such as the Olympic cultural programme) in the development of innovative practices and cultural production within the creative sector seems especially interesting. Most notably, local entrepreneurs represent important agents in the governance of cultural events (Paiola, 2008: 23) and act as community entrepreneurs (Cromie *et al.*, 1993), or as social entrepreneurs (Bellini, 2000). Being tightly linked to each other thanks to extensive networks, they behave as bridges between organizations, playing the role of knowledge couriers (Paiola, 2008).

c. Creative Clusters

According to the agglomeration theory, the geographical clustering of similar industries, namely business clusters, can be beneficial on several levels to businesses and customers alike (for instance, Porter, 1998, Omerod et al., 2006). As noted by Hutton (2009: 988) creative industries in particular 'operate not as autonomous entities within the urban economy but, rather, function as production ensembles intimately linked with (and complemented by) local consumption sectors and industries'. Neff (2005), in her study on

the location of social networks in the digital media industry in New York, concluded that place has become more, not less, important to cultural production over time, and that networking activities are concentrated in specific areas of the city. Furthermore, according to several commentators (for example, Porter 1998, Hitters and Richards 2002) creative and cultural industries are especially apt on clustering, for the need of both creative exchange and economies of scope due to the difficulty of substituting capital to labour in these sectors. More specifically, often creative firms derive a competitive advantage from clustering in post-industrial inner city areas, where they can access concentrations of skilled labour, benefit from the distinctive post-industrial built form, and from the proximity of key institutions and amenities (Hutton, 2009). Such clusters allow them to access the 'dense social milieu of the metropolitan core which strongly favours knowledge-intensive activity' (Hutton, 2009: 988).

Schoales (2006) argues that culture, fashion, and financial investment clusters could be seen as 'alpha clusters' as they present some of the most-pronounced cluster-specific traits. Kong (2005) shows the importance of social networks and capital derived from interpersonal relationships in the Hong Kong film-making industry. According to this author, cultural workers place great importance to interpersonal ties and trust, which are built in different stages of the production process through events and episodes (Kong, 2005). In particular, Kong (2005) illustrates the concept of 'embeddedness' in relation to the cultural industries. Cultural and creative industries are strongly rooted in a community of workers, and - because their production is culturally based - they are embedded in a particular place. They form networks of 'socially constructed and culturally defined' institutions and are therefore influenced by mutuality, trust and co-operation (Coe, 2000: 394), which discourages malfeasance (Granovetter, 1985). According to Kong (2005), in order to assess the social bases of the cultural industries it is necessary to understand the nature of networks. Cultural communities clustered in a same place benefit from coordination, knowledge sharing and collective learning (Kong, 2005). As Scott (2000: 9) noted, the creative sector 'refers not only to agglomerations of technologically dynamic firms, but also to places where qualities such as cultural insight, imagination, and originality are actively generated from within the local system of production'.

d. 'Buzz', coolness and the development of a creative field

Existing networks of creative and cultural industries located in a specific place represent repositories of cultural capital (Scott, 1999), and thus attract similar individuals in search for an appropriate 'industrial atmosphere' (Scott, 1999), resulting in a virtuous circle of atmosphere production – creative inspiration – attraction of talent. The 'industrial atmosphere' includes place attributes, strong presence of creative firms as well as specialised schools and organisations (Scott, 1999), which all contribute to the reinforcement of a cultural framework. Research previously conducted by the author of this report (Pappalepore et al, 2011) found that creative workers are attracted to areas where creative industries aggregate thanks to their 'cool' atmosphere and the opportunities for creative inspiration they provide. Such spaces represent concentrations of 'complex prompts, ideas, trends and fashions' (Drake, 2003: 515), which together provide what Drake (2003) refers to as a 'creative buzz'. The concepts of creative buzz, cool atmosphere and inspirational environment are especially important in the context of this study. One of the key ideas this research is aiming to interrogate is in fact whether a programme of cultural events such as the Cultural Olympiad can contribute to create and reinforce such a conducing environment. Previously, other studies have concentrated on other factors, such as the physical morphology of places (Drake, 2003), and their role in creative production. According to Drake's qualitative study, for instance, whereas for some artists locality is perceived as having little or no impact on individual creativity, for many the physical environment represents an important source of inspiration.

Further research has highlighted the role of face-to-face contacts between creative entrepreneurs in the production of a particular scene (Silver et al., 2006) or a 'communication ecology' (Bathelt and Graf, 2008: 1947) mainly consisting of information, new knowledge and updates, as well as gossip and 'trade folklore' (Bathelt and Graf, 2008: 1947). Consumption venues such as cafes, nightclubs and galleries are seen as important in the creation of this atmosphere (Neff, 2005) as well as the presence of retail outlets which create 'street level activity and animation' (Brown et al., 2000: 444). In this respect, the concept of 'creative field' - developed by Scott (e. g. 2006) elaborating on Bourdieu's idea of social field (Bourdieu, 1983) - seems particularly relevant. Scott describes the creative field as 'a set of interrelationships that stimulate and channel individual expressions of

creativity (Scott, 2006: 8). These interrelationships are constituted by the networks of firms and workers, infrastructural facilities (research establishments, design centres, etc.) as well as local cultures, conventions and institutions (Scott, 2006). Nachum and Keeble (1999), in their study of media industries in Soho, London, pointed at mutual learning processes as a critical advantage of being located in a cluster. Media industries in Soho appeared to be involved in 'processes of localised collective learning', achieved through social interaction in informal meeting places such as coffee bars, restaurants and pubs, which were 'instrumental in creating a sense of community, in fostering the mechanisms that turn this collection of firms into a single whole, and generating positive externalities for the benefit of the firms involved' (Nachum and Keeble, 1999: 31). One of the questions that occupies the present research is whether a series of coordinated cultural events, such as the ones provided by the Cultural Olympiad programme, may have a role in stimulating mutual learning processes and the development of a creative field, with consequent positive impacts on the development of local creativity and creative networks.

e.   Cultural events: an opportunity for creative businesses?

Quality of knowledge production, development of local entrepreneurship, development of local talent and internal and external networking are key factors of successful development strategies based on culture and events (Sacco et al., 2006). However, perhaps surprisingly, there seems to be a lack of literature around the role of events in the development of local creativity. Available research is limited and generally only relates to the economic effects of events on local cultural organizations; with benefits normally measured in terms of larger audiences for cultural activities, higher levels of funding, increased production of cultural products, and higher collaboration between cultural organizations (Richards and Palmer, 2010). In the case of the European Capital of Culture event, for instance, data show that in most cases events had significantly boosted cultural audiences (Richards and Palmer, 2010).

Cultural events often involve the direct procurement of artworks or performances provided by local cultural organisations. Artists and creative firms are central to the event product and they represent an important stakeholder group: for instance, the Edinburgh Festival involves each year over 20,000 performers (Richards and Palmer, 2010). A type of event

which directly involves the participation of artists is, for instance, the commission of artworks for public display, which becomes an event in itself (Richards and Palmer, 2010). Such commissions can range from art installations, through film to performing arts and music. Examples of this kind of events are Barnaby Evans' fire sculpture installations and Christo and Jeanne-Claude's environmental art (Richards and Palmer, 2010). In 2005, The Gates, a two week art installation by Christo and Jean-Claude in Central Park, New York, stimulated not only a fivefold increased visitation of the park, but also a surge in cultural activities' attendance around the city, especially near the event location (Richards and Palmer, 2010).

Unfortunately, event organising bodies rarely keep a record of the involvement of local creative businesses in the organisation and delivery of the event. The evaluation of the Culture10 event programme in the North East of England (SWQ, 2006a and 2006b), for instance, found that only few events were aware of the proportion of their expenditure with businesses in the region, although estimates would suggest that around 60% - 75% of expenditure was made within the area (SQW, 2006a).

Increasingly, however, large-scale cultural events tend to involve internationally recognised artists rather than local ones, in order to extend the scope of the event, attract international visitors and enhance media attention. García (2004) illustrates how in the much celebrated cases of Glasgow European Capital of Culture 1990 and Sydney Cultural Olympiads 2000 the most emphasised aspects of their arts programmes had been the spectacular and international ones, rather than the most innovative or representative of the local cultures. For instance in the case of Glasgow, out of a total of £26.87 million dedicated to programming, only £8.74 million was spent on community events, social work and education, while £18 million was allocated to funding international or large national arts companies (García, 2004a). According to García (2004a) the ambition of attracting external visitors and corporate investors rather than enhancing the visibility of the community regional programme may explain the limited recognition of the event's legacy. In the case of Sydney 2000, the Arts Festivals' aim to facilitate Aboriginal reconciliation was criticised for presenting Aboriginal work 'within a white sense of aesthetics' (García, 2004a: 110), suggesting that 'the Olympic Arts Festivals were not able to provide authentic cultural experiences, but rather exotic commodities for the enjoyment

of visitors and – white – locals' (García, 2004a: 110). In contrast with this approach, the French city region of Lille Metropole, when the European Capital of Culture event in 2004 took place, had amongst its major objectives to keep a balance between international blockbusters and local events. The latter were staged by local creative firms and were embedded in the local culture. This approach facilitated a greater participation of local residents, the promotion of cultural innovation and support for local creative talent (Sacco and Tevano Blessi, 2007).

Another way in which creative industries may benefit from events is tourism development in the destination, which may generate future demand for creative outputs such as cultural products, as well as provide enhanced access to a pool of consumers. Increased visitation can also contribute to the 'buzz' or leisurely atmosphere, and provide opportunities for creative professionals to acquire and share outside knowledge. However, not all creative businesses see tourism development in a positive light. For instance, Molotch and Treskon (2009) in their study of the art scenes in New York's SoHo and Chelsea, described the negative attitudes of SoHo's art galleries towards the development of tourism: 'besides not buying, the tourists go into the galleries (and) laugh at the art (…) having the right kind of people around builds artists' and galleries' reputations. If the crowds are scene-unsuitable, they are a pollutant; this appears to be more generally applicable to spaces of the creative economy' (Molotch and Treskon, p. 518). In addition, to many small and micro creative businesses, tourism development may also signify gentrification and increased property prices, and thus represent a threat to the affordability of their working space.

However, direct commission of cultural products and tourism development are not the only ways in which cultural and, more generally, creative businesses can benefit from cultural events. The evaluation of the Culture10 event programme in the North East of England (SWQ, 2006a and 2006b) found that cultural events can positively impact on the creative sector on two levels, directly and indirectly. Directly, this happens through the event's direct engagement with local creative businesses and the attraction of investment and resources such as tourism. Indirectly, by providing opportunities for learning, networking and participation in activities which can generate ideas and new skills (SQW, 2006b). Such opportunities can happen 'formally through mentoring arrangements or informally simply through meeting some of the leading figures in their fields. The experience can generate

new ideas, opportunities, contacts and confidence. It can include creative businesses as well as performers, for example working with experienced staging crew, lighting engineers, media experts. In short, events can be a vehicle for the region's cultural businesses to interact with national and international artists, performers and businesses' (SQW, 2006b, p. 21).

Finally, as noted by Smith (2008), creativity needs multiplicity, a flux of unexpected events (Scott, 2000) and spontaneity (Richards and Wilson, 2007). Cultural events could therefore play a key role in the production of such a creative environment. As seen earlier, vibrant, creative places that offer a stimulating cultural environment are regarded as attractors of talent and skills (Zukin, 1995, Florida, 2002) and precisely for this reason many cities have seen the development of a rich calendar of cultural events as an integral part of their development strategy.

f. The Cultural Olympiads

The father of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, originally recommended to the nascent IOC in a letter dated 2 April 1906, that it is important for the Olympic Movement to understand "to what extent and in what form the arts and literature can participate in the celebration of the modern Olympiads" (quoted in Grant, 2003: 21). Rather than a sport competition, de Coubertin and his collaborators saw the Olympic Games as a *panegyris*, a 'festive assembly in which the entire people come together to participate in religious rites, sporting competitionsand artistic performance' (Gold and Reville, 2007: 59). In order to fulfill his ambition, in 1906 Coubertin organized an Advisory Conference on the 'Incorporation of the Fine Arts in the Olympic Games and Everyday Life', where the IOC agreed to include arts competitions in the Games and to encourage artistic performance at sporting events more generally (Gold and Reville, 2007). A first limited version of the Olympic Art Competitions were held during the 1908 London Games, while Stockholm was the first city to develop a substantial cultural programme in 1912 (Gold and Reville, 2007). After the 1948 London Olympic Games, the IOC decided to end the Art Competitions and recommended that exhibitions showcasing the country's art (without any formal awarding of medals) would be organised instead (Masterson, 1986; Gold and Reville, 2007).

Since 1952, cultural programmes have been included in the Olympic Games. However, contrary to the 1954 amendment to the Olympic Charter, their content has not always been derived from the host culture (García, 2002), and often host cities have failed to merge the cultural offer with the sport aspects of the Games (García, 2003, 2004a). Ever since the arts programme lost its competitive aspect, its relevance and awareness have decreased (García, 2008). After the 1956 Melbourne Games successive cities have had very different approaches to the Olympic Games cultural programme in terms of length, organisation and themes (García, 2008). Only since 1992 the cultural side of the Olympic Games has been formalized in the Cultural Olympiad (Kennell and MacLeod, 2009).

More recently host cities have become more ambitious in organising the arts festivals, which have included an aspiration to address 'audience development, access and inclusion' (García, 2008: 370). The 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games represented a turning point in the history of the Olympics Cultural Programmes. In 1988 the Barcelona organising committee announced a four year-long cultural programme culminating in an Arts Festival to coincide with the Games (Gold and Reville, 2007; García and Miah, 2005). The four year format has since then been adopted by all subsequent summer Olympic host cities. In comparison with the summer Olympic Games, winter Games have generally been relatively smaller, with no expectations around art festivals or a cultural programme. Cortina d'Ampezzo was the first winter host city, in 1956, to offer cultural activities in addition to the sport competitions (Gold and Reville, 2007). However it was only with Turin 2006 that the concept of the Cultural Olympiad was fully embraced by a winter host city.

Today, the International Olympic Committee Charter states that 'the host city shall organize a programme of cultural events' (IOC, 2007a: 80). However, the Cultural Olympiad is still considered a minor part of the sports programme (Shipway and Brown, 2007). According to Shipway and Brown (2007) the increasing costs of the Games to the host cities, and the fact that the cultural programme rarely appears on the media, represent the main reasons why the Cultural Programme is often under-funded. Whereas the sport events are broadcasted around the globe, 'the Cultural Olympiad is much less familiar and well-understood not only by the general public but also by those organizations that may

find themselves involved' (Kennell and MacLeod, 2009: 84). García (2004a) adds that their marginal role seems to be linked to the opinion that cultural festivals are less likely to attract private funding, a problem which is 'underpinned by the subordinate position of art in relation to sport within the sphere of leisure and culture' (Stevenson, 1998: 131). Furthermore, strict regulations where only one product per category can be associated to the Olympic Games (eg. McDonalds for food) make the attraction of cultural sponsors even more difficult García and Miah, 2007).

Evidence from the Sydney Olympic Games (Cashman, 2006), however, shows that a legacy of the Cultural Programme has been longer term benefits for local artists and art companies, especially in terms of commissioning of new work (Shipway and Brown, 2007). In addition, García (2004a) argues that the art programme can represent a key advantage during the bidding stage, both by increasing the potential appeal of the proposal and by gaining the support of the local community. Stevenson (2009) identified three types of cultural legacy that can be achieved on a local level through the Cultural Olympiads programme. Firstly, the improvement in partnership working (e.g. between local authorities, public bodies and the private sector) and the creation of networks to deliver regeneration; secondly, the creation of community capacity and leadership; and, finally, the cultural support of the existing creative industries through regeneration.

3. **The Turin 2006 Cultural Olympiad**

Turin, an Italian city that was severely affected by de-industrialization, hosted the Winter Olympic Games in 2006. One of the main aims of Turin's strategic plan is to promote Turin as a city of culture, tourism and commerce (Torino Internazionale, 2000, 2005), and, in this context, the Olympic Games were seen as a key tool 'to accelerate the city's transition from the post-industrial era to a service economy' (IOC, 2007: 36). The city hoped – and succeeded – to rejuvenate the tourism industry (mostly based on winter sports) and to change its image from one of industrial, gritty town, to one of creativity, youth and development. As the IOC in its final report recognised, the aim of improving the city's image was achieved, not only for external markets but primarily for its inhabitants (IOC, 2007).

Turin was the first Winter Olympic City to organise an extensive Cultural Programme parallel to the sport programme. The Cultural Olympiad – ItalyArt – was provided by the Ministry of Culture, the Region, the City, the Province and public agencies and institutions. It included 54 projects in the five categories of visual arts, 'theatre and dance', music, cinema and 'literature, history and society', with about 200 events in total. Aim of the Cultural Olympiad was to represent the local cultural landscape, presenting the cultural identity and history of Turin and its mountain region to the world through the global dimension of the Olympic Games (TOROC, 2006a). Some events started three months before the actual Games, although the greatest part of the cultural events took place during the sports programme. Only three annual events were organised during the three years prior to the Olympic Games. They were called *Meno 3*, *Meno 2* and *Meno1* (as in a countdown: - 3, - 2, - 1) and aimed to promote and create consensus amongst the local community towards the Olympics and their cultural programme (Comune di Torino, 2007). Two types of event which characterised the Turin's Cultural Oympiad are the 'urban decoration programme' and the 'Olympic nights'. The former included the decoration of the city by light installations created by artists and other visual works aimed to promote Turin city region's qualities in terms of history, art, architecture, science and gastronomy (García, and Miah, 2007). The 'Olympic Nights', on the other hand, consisted of two all-night long street parties with live music, cultural events, and galleries, museums, restaurants and bars open all night. According to the Turin 2006 organising body, TOROC, more than one million visitors attended the Cultural Olympiad events and for all paying

events tickets were sold out (TOROC, 2006b). The final IOC report (IOC, 2007) criticized the fact that 'whilst the number of initiatives cannot be criticised, the integration of each one into a coherent programme was certainly lacking. It was hard for visitors to work out what exactly was going on and how each activity was linked to the Olympic Games'.

Vanolo (2007) looks at the construction of Turin's image, and in particular at the city's attempt to develop an image of 'creativity' as a legacy of the Olympic Games. The author analyzed a number of marketing messages, images and events, aiming to assess the role of creativity in the creation of Turin's image following the Olympics. Most importantly for the present research, the study assessed the construction of specific references to creativity and culture through the events of the Cultural Programme. According to his research, the events of the cultural programme, 'which were quite disconnected from the sports events, strongly nurtured the cultural dimension of the city in its traditional meaning' (p. 380). However, certain events which were more commercial in nature (such as the Chocolate fair) 'mainly support local manufacturing by commoditizing culture, i.e., transforming and packaging culture into easy-to-consume products (...), with the promotion of the city occurring as a side effect' (p. 380). Rather than through the Cultural Olympiads, according to Vanolo (2007) the Turin Olympic Games contributed to portray an image of dynamicity and 'buzz' through the media representation of two landmark Turin areas: the night-life zone on the Po river waterfront (Murazzi area) and the Quadrilatero, an area recently gentrified by artists and young creative professionals.

4. The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad

London, with the London Organising Committee (LOCOG) aiming to create the largest Cultural Olympiad in the history of the Games (Lander and Crowe, 2010), seems to have taken the Cultural Programme particularly at heart. Like the previous five summer Games (ever since Barcelona 1992), the London Cultural Olympiad programme started already in September 2008, meaning that cultural events are planned to develop for 4 years leading to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games cultural festival. In accordance with Coubertin's objectives of integrating sport and the arts, the LOCOG intends to incorporate culture in every aspect of the Games, in addition to providing a dense cultural programme. For instance, culture is embedded in London's plans for its Olympic Park, which includes the *ArcelorMittal Orbit*, a viewing tower designed by artist Anish Kapoor and structural engineer Cecil Balmond (Lander and Crowe, 2010). For the first time in the history of the Games, in the case of London the Cultural Programme will take place on a national rather than local level. The Cultural Olympiad will therefore play a key role in the achievement of one of the main objectives of the Games, which is to disperse the benefits of London 2012 to the whole of the UK.

The three key values articulated by the London Organising Committee are 'to celebrate London and the whole of the UK welcoming the world – the unique internationalism, cultural diversity, sharing and understanding; inspire and involve young people; [and] generate a positive legacy' (LOCOG, 2007:3). As outlined by Kennell and MacLeod (2009:84), these values inspire the goals of the Cultural Olympiad, which are to:

- Inspire and involve the widest range of London and UK-wide communities;
- Generate sustainable long-term benefits and legacy effects to the cultural life;
- Create outstanding moments of creative excellence across the full range of performing arts and creative industries;
- Connect future generations with the UK's artistic communities and with their peers around the world;
- Promote contemporary London as a major world cultural capital;
- Drive tourism and inward investment and use the creative industries to boost economic regeneration; and

- Embrace the Olympic movement values of "excellence, respect and friendship" and the Paralympic movement vision to "empower, achieve, inspire". (LOCOG, 2007: 4).

London's Cultural Olympiad comprises 10 major projects which aim to encourage the widest range of people across the UK to take part:

- *Artists taking the Lead,* 12 artists' commissions over the UK and Northern Ireland;
- *Music,* the multicultural music programme;
- *Discovering Places*, a series of events aimed to promote hidden places in the UK;
- *Somewheret,* aimed at providing young people with spaces for sports or cultural activities;
- *Stories of the World*, exhibitions all over the UK "curated" by people from diverse backgrounds;
- *Film Nation,* which gives young people aged 14-25 the opportunity to make films led by major filmmakers;
- *Unlimited*, a celebration of disabled arts, culture and sports;
- *World Shakespeare Festival*, a 3 month Shakespeare festival; and
- *Outdoor Arts,* a series of large-scale outdoor arts project.

In practical terms, the main Cultural Olympiad programme is being delivered by national cultural agencies, supported by central funding from the LOCOG and the Legacy Trust, in collaboration with existing UK cultural funding bodies, plus funding from the commercial partners of London 2012. According to LOCOG (2008), in 2008 already between £60 and £70 million were earmarked for Cultural Olympiad projects by different actors such as the Legacy Trust, Youth Music, Arts Council England, MLA, BBC, as well as local authorities and art bodies. In addition to the main programme outlined above, there will be a number of smaller projects which will enable national sponsors to benefit from the association with the Olympic rings and the creation of the 'Inspire Mark', a new brand to promote local and regional projects, which adopts the London 2012 logo but without the Olympic rings (Lander and Crowe, 2010). However, there is no new funding attached to the non-core Cultural Olympiad and this, according to Kennell and MacLeod (2009: 87) 'leaves those outside of the national cultural agencies, and those local authorities outside of East London, with no alternative than to badge their own plans with the policy rhetoric of local

government' (Kennell and MacLeod, 2009: 87). The Greater London Authority, in a report on 'The Cultural Olympiad and the Security of the Olympic and Paralympic Games' (GLA, 2008), noted that there are concerns as to how small-scale projects that want to participate in the Cultural Programme will be supported, as well as whether the Cultural Olympiads will succeed to engage all of London's diverse communities. In this regard the Culture, Media and Sport Committee of the House of Commons (2007:46) advised that 'the Government should do more to publicise and coordinate [the Cultural Olympiad], drawing together ideas, sharing good practice, and increasing awareness of some of the more practical and imaginative suggestions which are being made'.

The topic of local involvement with the Cultural Olympiads, and - most importantly for the present study - of the involvement of local creative businesses, seems to be especially significant considering that the area where the Olympic Park will be located is home to a large number of independent artists and art organisations. According to the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers (NFASP, 2009), more than a 25% of [London's] studio buildings are located in the five host Olympic London boroughs (Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest) where 35 groups and organisations provide around 940 affordable studio spaces. In Hackney Wick and Fish Island alone (where the core of the Olympic Park will be based) some 620 artists studios are located (NFASP, 2009). The London borough of Hackney Council's cultural strategy, *Creative Hackney 2006*, has among its objectives 'To promote Hackney's reputation as a centre of arts, culture and entertainment, to encourage people to live, visit and do business here. To provide support to artistic and cultural activities in the borough and build local pride' (LBH, 2006, p.1 cited in Stevenson, 2009: 15). While the development of the Olympic Park seems to contribute towards such objectives, critics have argued that the local artistic community will be negatively affected by the Games due to gentrification and to the loss of character brought about by the regeneration process (e.g. NFASP, 2009; Stevenson, 2009). As NFASP (2009) noted, 'the irony is that, while London's vibrant, diverse and influential culture has been promoted as a significant aspect of London 2012, the very studio complexes that have contributed to that vitality, along with other supporting businesses such as materials suppliers are under threat and some have disappeared altogether' (*online*).

Hackney Wick, in particular, is an area characterised by social deprivation and low rents on commercial premises; the development of a Media Centre and new transport connections are therefore seen by many as a threat to the local artistic community (Stevenson, 2009). Interviews with local artists conducted by Stevenson (2009) show that local artists are concerned about increasing rents and the closure of galleries and studios. However, although the Cultural Olympiad 'has created momentum and raised the profile of art and event production in Hackney Wick (...) they [local artists] note that the momentum of the process might lead to the programme and its legacy becoming quite focussed on delivering benefits to those parts of the creative industry which are larger, more successful and can articulate their aspirations' (Stevenson, 2009: 36).

5. Research Method

As outlined above, the aim of the research is to assess the impact of the Cultural Olympiad on creative industries in the two case studies' host region (Turin 2006 and London 2012). More precisely, the goal of the study is to analyse:

1. The role of Olympic Cultural Programmes in developing local talent and local entrepreneurship.
2. The role of Olympic Cultural Programmes in fostering connectivity, collaboration and networking between creative firms.

Although the development of local entrepreneurship and local talent are considered as some of the most important outcomes of organizing large scale events, only rarely host cities keep a track record of the results obtained in this sense. Such data, when collected, is generally only quantitative, comprising measurements of increased audiences, funding and production, occasionally including evidence on collaborations between cultural organizations. As noted by Richards and Palmer (2010: 361) 'such measures do not take into account factors such as the impact on the audiences of the work that is seen, the positive influence of the event itself on the creative sector (such as generating new ideas or developing contacts and new collaborations), nor how such events stimulate the imagination of young people, which may have an effect on city creativity for many years'. The evaluation of the Culture10 event programme in the North East of England (SWQ, 2006a and 2006b) is one of the rare examples of an event impacts evaluation where intangible aspects such as creative inspiration derived from the event and improved networks among creative professionals were studied. The present research intends to focus specifically on these 'softer' impacts, such as improved contacts, effects on creative inspiration and informal learning. More precisely, this study explores local creative industry professionals' perceptions and feelings towards the Olympic Games cultural programmes aiming to provide recommendations to future organisers on how to improve local creative industries' involvement and the positive impacts on local creativity. As recognised by SWQ (2006b: 21), 'these benefits are difficult to capture and could only, realistically, be reported by those working in the sector'. For this reason, people working within creative organizations (from here on referred to as 'creative professionals') represented the main subjects for this research.

Only micro and small creative firms - thus employing 50 people or fewer and with a turnover of €10 million or less (European Commission, 2005) – were included. The reason for this selection is that micro and small creative firms are considered by the author as those most in need for support, as well as the greatest contributors to creative innovation and cultural diversity (Jacobs, 1970). As the aim of this research mainly involves the study of perceptions, feelings and other intangible factors such as creative inspiration and atmosphere, a qualitative, in-depth approach based on case studies was adopted for data collection. For each case study the evidence collection was conducted in two phases: a first exploratory email survey, and a second stage of face to face in-depth interviews.

Choice of case studies

The choice of the two case studies, London and Turin, was based on a number of factors:

1. Familiarity of the author with the two cases (including the two languages): I had in fact the opportunity to personally attend the Turin's Cultural Olympiads while working for the Italian State Television (RAI) in Turin in February 2006. As for London, it is the city where I live and work and the East London area where the Olympic Park will be located was the object of previous research (e.g. Pappalepore et al., 2010).

2. Both in the case of London and of Turin the Olympic Parks are located in depressed ex industrial areas with the objective of triggering regeneration;

3. Both London 2012 and Turin 2006 placed strong emphasis on their cultural programmes and on the inclusion of local communities (e. g. London Councils, 2007; London2012, 2009);

4. In the case of Turin, the 4 year timeframe between the Games and the evidence collection seems an appropriate time to evaluate its legacy, since the assessment of the Games' legacy should not be measured just immediately after them (IOC, 2002). In the case of London, the Cultural Olympiad programme started in 2008 thus allowing research while the pre-Olympic programme is happening.

Sampling techniques

After identifying the population – micro and small creative industries in East London and Turin – a list of contacts was created through an Internet-based research. A total of 460 creative industries in East London and 250 in Turin were identified and asked to fill in an e-mail survey. After a first contact and a reminder one month later, 64 responses from London and 58 from Turin were collected. This result represents a response rate of 13,9% and 23,2% respectively, which is fairly satisfactory considering that no reward or prize draw was offered in return for their collaboration. The email questionnaire comprised of open and close-end questions (refer to Appendix I and II), including three questions aimed to verify whether the respondent actually met the requirement of working with a small or micro creative industry in the selected areas. Three respondents had to be excluded from the analysis on these grounds.

For the face to face interviews a purposive sampling technique was used. Based on a first qualitative analysis of the questionnaires received, 20 respondents per case study were contacted again and asked to take part in a qualitative interview. The people contacted during this second stage were those who were (or had been) directly involved with the Cultural Olympiad or those who gave particularly articulated answers to the open questions, thus showing willingness to express their views on the topic. Finally, a total of four face to face in-depth interviews were conducted with creative professionals in Turin and seven (with 8 creative professionals) in East London. In addition to this, an interview was made with the artistic director of the Turin Cultural Olympiad and one with a curator of the London Cultural Olympiad.

First stage: qualitative email questionnaire

The email questionnaire had several objectives. Firstly, it aimed to capture the level of awareness and participation of the surveyed local creative firms to the planning, creation and delivery of the Olympic Cultural programme. Secondly, it explored the effects of the Cultural Olympiad on their creativity, production and innovation. Moreover, new liaisons developed, networks created and collaborative projects implemented by creative firms were investigated. Finally, the survey helped to assess the potential of the Olympic Cultural Programme in aiding knowledge sharing, creative exchange and collaboration and thereby its contribution to the possible development of creative clusters. The questionnaire

also included more general questions on the experience of living the Olympic Games (for Turin only), on cultural events and on the role of atmosphere. The questionnaire contained open questions where the participants were free to express their thoughts without restrictions, as well as close-end questions based on a 5-point Likert scale. The research did not aim to obtain statistically valid quantitative data or to make generalisations from the results. Rather, it sought to provide an exploratory base for future research and some initial recommendations based on rich, in-depth data. However, the close-end (Likert scale) questions allowed the researcher to cover a greater range of topics in the limited time available and had also the advantage of allowing direct comparison between questionnaires. The questionnaires were utilised as an exploratory tool and as a basis for the development of the interview topic guides. The answers to the questionnaire's open-ended questions were analysed using a qualitative (coding) technique and formed part of the final qualitative analysis. For certain questions, such as those concerning the effects of participation in the Cultural Olympiad, only answers given by creative firms who did participate (or are currently participating) in the cultural programme could be used, thus reducing the number of responses analysed.

Second Stage: in-depth interviews

Face to face interviews were chosen as the leading method to collect rich, in-depth data concerning the participants' feelings, opinions and experiences. A semi-structured interviewing technique based on a flexible but pre-determined topic guide was adopted, thus allowing comparability yet a certain degree of openness towards emerging topics and unexpected themes. The topic guides used can be found in the appendices (Appendix III-V). All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The small sample used for face-to-face interviews (refer to table below for a list of interviewees) is probably the main limitation of this research. This is due to the limited timeframe of the study, and to the fact that a reward was not offered to interview participants. This topic of research is very new therefore the present study represents an exploratory investigation of a subject that calls for further research. It is therefore recommended to extend the research and plan a reward (such as gift voucher) for all interview participants, as well as a prize draw for questionnaire respondents.

Interviewees (face to face)		Is (or was) involved in the Cultural Olympiad?
Turin	Communication officer, public library	Yes
Turin	Communication Officer, art gallery	Yes
Turin	Designer	Yes
Turin	Artist	Yes
Turin	Cultural Olympiad Artistic Director	Yes
East London	Ceramic Artist	No
East London	Photographer	No
East London	Designer	No
East London	Director, arts organisation	No
East London	Director, cultural / arts organisation	No
East London	Co-director of an gallery space and arts organisation	No
East London	Curator, Public art gallery	No
East London	Executive Director, Theatre	Yes
East London	Cultural Olympiad Curator	Yes

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data collected through the questionnaire and face to face interviews was analysed using a technique adapted from Yin (2009), previously used by the researcher. A-priori themes were identified through the literature review and analysis of the research questions (refer to Appendix VII for the list of themes identified). Such themes were used to code the text obtained from interview transcripts and questionnaires, which allowed for new themes to emerge from this first round of analysis. Both a-priori and emerged themes were then reorganized in a more manageable number of macro-themes and used to identify links between narrative variables and develop initial propositions (Yin, 2009). The coding process was repeated several times until a sufficient depth of analysis was achieved.

6. Results

a. Turin

Effects of participation

The e-mail survey revealed a high awareness of the Cultural Olympiad in Turin: the majority of our respondents (45 out of 57) were aware that the Cultural Olympiad took place in parallel to the Olympic Games. However, only 11 respondents had actually been involved with the Cultural Olympiad. From the questionnaires it emerged that those creative firms who were directly involved with the cultural programme saw increased production as a positive effect of participation, and for some of them (5 out of 11) participating also stimulated the development of new ideas. On the other hand, according to this exploratory questionnaire the participation in the programme did not impact significantly on the degree of innovation. Fewer respondents declared to have developed new projects (four respondents) or new products (five respondents).

According to the creative professionals who were interviewed, who had all been involved with the cultural programme in 2006, the opportunity to develop new products and to achieve greater visibility through participation were some of the most important advantages of participation. The Cultural Olympiad artistic director, interviewed in the context of this research, noted that 'visibility' is the most important benefit the Olympic Games cultural programme can offer to participants, since there is no additional funding linked to it. For instance, a designer who participated in an exhibition that was part of the programme, said:

> '*the return is only in theory, in terms of new customers I did not have any advantage (…) however, in terms of image, yes, I will always be able to say, I took part in that exhibition*'.

Other interviewees, on the other hand, also noted some more tangible advantages, such as the opportunity to attract more customers or to organise some special events. For instance, a communication officer of a public library described how participating in the events allowed them to put together an exhibition inside the library that, otherwise, would have never been organised. This exhibition, according to the interviewee, attracted a high

number of visitors who had consequently a chance to see the library and, as a result, may have become future library users. The higher number of visitors was partly linked to the exhibition, but also to the mere fact that during the Olympic Games there were many more tourists in Turin. When asked whether the Cultural Olympiads are a useful tool to promote local creativity she said:

'*very, very much. Because we saw a much stronger flow of visitors than usual (...) because in Turin there were more people than usual, many tourists from all over the world who also came to this library, but also many people from Turin. Some people live just around the corner and they had never been to this library, but in the context of this Cultural Olympiad project they came (...) we attracted more people and that has been a great opportunity for us because since then we have more international people who visit our library*'

The same interviewee also noted the role of such events in stimulating creativity within the organisation, because:

'*in terms of our internal creativity, of course it did* [stimulate it] *because [events] represent new experiences and they allow us to get fresh ideas; not so much from a communication point of view, but from an exhibition point of view fresh ideas can come up*'

One of the aim of the present study is also to explore the role of cultural events in developing new contacts and create networks. Networking was certainly seen as important by most interviewees, as a designer from Turin well described:

'*It is always important to exchange ideas. To exchange opinions, to see what others are doing and perhaps collaborate. I do not believe in individual work, I rather believe in group work. And if group work involves different firms, it is certainly a positive thing because many heads can see many things, and many thoughts on one product can provide more possibilities*'

According to the interviews and email questionnaire, however, increased collaboration was not felt as a strong effect of the Cultural Olympiad (six participating companies out of eleven claimed to have made new contacts by being part of the programme, and only four out of eleven declared that participation in the programme increased collaborations for

them). The questionnaire also aimed to verify whether the firm's location played a role in this process (i.e. whether being based near the Olympic site would make a difference), however, the firm's location seems to be irrelevant in terms of benefits related to the Cultural Olympiad perceived by our respondents. What instead seems to be regarded as a key positive effect of the event (from both, face-to-face interviews and questionnaires, including people not directly involved with the cultural programme) is the festive atmosphere and the buzz linked to the Olympic Games. This is therefore not exclusively related to the cultural events, but to a number of factors including the sport events, the high number of visitors in the city and the general excitement linked to the Games.

The atmosphere during the Olympic Games was described by all the interviewees with great enthusiasm. For instance, in an architect's words (from the questionnaire):

'*the positive aspect is the wonderful, fun, sunny and even creative atmosphere of that time. Turin changed day by day and I had the impression I was looking at it with different glasses, 3D glasses. Everything was valorised and enhanced: monuments, buildings, venues, squares... the whole city and especially the people. I'd say it has definitely been a very positive event*'

Or, again, an artist in a face-to-face interview:

'*Amazing, amazing. Extraordinary. The excitement got everyone. Everyone participated, and you must take into account that Turin is a difficult city from an 'involvement' point of view, or at least it seemed to be. Because people from Turin are quite closed, quite wary. Instead, day after day, this thing involved everyone, in a very unique manner*'

Very similarly, a designer, asked about the atmosphere, commented:

'*Marvellous, marvellous. Wonderful. Really, people from Turin had never seen such a beautiful moment. Because everyone you met on the street smiled at you. It really created a festive atmosphere. It was really great.*'

A video producer, disappointedly noted that atmosphere and enthusiasm were the only legacy left after the games: '*wonderful atmosphere, engaging enthusiasm, but that's all what is left now*'.

Atmosphere, creative environment, and the artistic inspiration process

This research intends to shed lights on whether and how such a great atmosphere can contribute to individual creativity and, more specifically, what makes an atmosphere, or an environment, creative or conducive for creativity. The architect quoted above described the atmosphere during the Games as '*wonderful, fun, sunny and even creative*'. Similarly, one of the answers given by our interviewees seems to suggest that the playful, happy atmosphere linked to an event is what makes it 'inspiring'. This interviewee, a designer, described a creative environment as:

'*an environment that should mainly be cheerful, which may seem banal but in my opinion is not. Because working in serenity, in harmony, in happiness, allows you to have a free mind, free to do things that are maybe very strange and that later have to be translated into real, feasible products. The ideal environment is definitely very cheerful*'

The idea that a cheerful environment is conducive for creativity seems consistent with recent economics studies which found a positive correlation between happiness and work productivity (Oswald et al, 2009), although certainly some would argue that, in history, often the greatest works of art have come from the minds of very melancholic artists.

Towards the end of the interview, the creative professionals who were interviewed were asked whether – and how – cultural events can help stimulate individual creativity. One of them explained:

'*[cultural events are] very important because knowing new things keeps your mind on the move. Perhaps I go and see an exhibition which has nothing to do with my work, but this makes me think. It makes me see other things, it makes me want to do things. I believe in movement, in progress. Thus, all creative events even a dance or a garden can be inspirational. [interviewer: so what characteristics should an event have to inspire creativity?] it sould not be banal (...) it should include many things, not be confined to one single topic*'

Turin interviewees regarded their city as very stimulating, a 'laboratory', particularly conducive for creative work. From the interviews conducted, they all appeared to be particularly attached to their city. Perhaps for this reason, the Cultural Olympiad and, more

generally, the 2006 Winter Games, are seen as important for the city, rather than for them as businesses or individuals. For example an interviewee, the communication officer of a public library, commented:

'the locals are still benefiting from it. Even just the opportunity to enhance the image of Turin and also to refurbish many buildings, to clean. On a broader level for sure, and then I think that trickles down, like, in a chain effect'.

Increased city pride was seen as a key aspect of this process by many. An artist said:

'2006 was a great opportunity and Turin played their hand well. (…) the city supported the events and the initiatives, and this had a huge return, a big win, in which residents found their self-motivation. The gratification of seeing their city being able to do what it did, and doing it well. However, it left a big bill to pay, which is what is now causing massive problems. The Olympic debt. The city of Turin has an Olympic debt of more than €300 million, of which we can only pay the passive interests'

Negative aspects

The economic cost of the Games and the use of infrastructures after the Games were seen by many as the downsides of all the cheerfulness and excitement. For example, an artist commented:

'[events are] a double edged sward, in the sense that on the one hand they bring big benefits, like for instance the national and international promotion of the city. There are great benefits but also big disadvantages, which is what follows the event when there is the implosion. Then you have to pay the debts. Or the other problem is the huge infrastructures that were built and for which the city spent lots of money'

An artist who worked on the city's artistic illumination during the Games as part of the Olympic cultural programme, for example, noted how the lights created for this event now lack maintenaince. In his words:

'everything perishes, decays, there is decay. I see it in the illumination of the city, they spent a lot of money, they did a huge job, but there is no maintenance now. The light

bulbs go out and are not replaced. This is very bad. It's a bit like throwing a party spending everything you have. A wedding that is too big, too expensive'

Another recurrent criticism to the Olympic Games made by our interviewees is the minor role played by the cultural events compared to the sport programme. The artistic director of the Cultural Olympiad, interviewed within the present study, stressed the fact that great efforts were made to give importance to the cultural programme, although '*during the Games all the attention is focused on the medals, the sport event, the champions'*. However, the artist who worked on the illumination of the city during the Games referred to the Cultural Olympiad as 'a series of secondary events'. According to him, the Cultural Olympiads '*were pretty average because they represented a tool, an excuse, to give something to everyone, to allow everyone to work. So small, local businesses - which are very important because they are there throughout the year, for all the events, every year - had something to do. As a consequence there was a parcelling, sharing of the work (...) but I haven't seen anything significant'*

The 'parcelling' of events belonging to the cultural programme was noted also by the artistic director of the Cultural Olympiad who, thinking back, commented that the events were too many:

'*there were too many micro-events that we organised to please everyone, to keep political balance. Perhaps a reduced offer would have been better. I also think that the cultural aspect of the Games should have contaminated the sport aspect more. A stronger link'*

The theme of the link between sport and cultural events was not touched upon by the creative professionals interviewed in Turin, but it represented a more prominent theme of the London interviews. In the next section these are reviewed, and then discussed in the final chapter.

b. London

Effects of participation

In London, the cultural programme was launched two years ago (2008) and the major cultural festival, which will take place at the same time as the sport Games, has not yet happened. Nonetheless it was interesting to explore local creative professionals' perceptions of the effects the Cultural Olympiad could have on their work. The email survey showed that – although awareness is generally high – some creative businesses are still unaware of the existence of this programme: 39 respondents indicated they know about a programme of cultural events linked to the 2012 Games, whereas 23 respondents were not aware. Of the 62 respondents, only 11 are actually directly involved with the Cultural Olympiad, a very similar result as in the case of Turin. Many of the respondents who are not yet involved, however, explained to have attended informational meetings and expressed a wish to participate in the future. Those who are involved, are partecipating to different Cultural Olympiad projects, such as *Unlimited*, the *Open Weekends*, the *Create Festival*, and *Artists Taking the Lead*. Others contributed with projects to the launch of the Cultural Olympiad in 2008 and ran school workshops, while others are preparing projects to submit in the hope of participating in the Olympic festival taking place in the summer of 2012.

Although in the email survey only a small minority indicated increased production as a positive effect of the Cultural Olympiad, being able to develop new projects was perceived by some of the interviewees as one of the benefits of the cultural programme. For instance, in the questionnaire an art gallery stated:

'*We are taking part in the Open Weekend event (…) it encouraged us to think creatively and come up with an idea that would involve lots of people, give them a positive creative experience and increase visitor numbers to our galleries'*

In contrast to such views, however, some respondents see the Games as an event that has no interest at all for local creative businesses, and one interviewee (the director of a theatre) even stated that '*during the Olympics itself, many of the cultural institutions [in East London], the buildings, might not even open (…). They might actually just close down.*

None of them are programming at the moment. So they might just shut down and sell it to the highest bidder for 5 or 6 weeks of the Olympics'

A questionnaire respondent, a film producer, noted that although his company is not officially involved with the Cultural Olympiad, they have been part of some projects and benefited from the various initiatives that have already sprung from the Olympic Park area. He wrote in the questionnaire:

'*We have ongoing unofficial involvement which is increasing - producing various cultural projects around the fringes of the Olympic site (…) We have been part of projects that have the 'inspired by' mark and initiatives such as open weekend but primarily our creative output and increased projects, ideas and networks have been self initiated outside of the cultural olympiads (…) we have been inspired by the olympics, increased collaborations etc but are not directly supported by the cultural olympiad*'

This was however an isolated case of someone feeling they have benefited from being close to the Olympic Park, as a great majority of respondents did not seem to perceive their location as an important advantage. Seven of the eleven questionnaire respondents who are involved in the Cultural Olympiad, however, felt that participation encouraged them to start new projects, while 5 (out of 11) thought that participation stimulated the development of new ideas. In a face-to-face interview, one of the Cultural Olympiad participants, the director of a theatre, noted that the advantages derived from participating in the cultural programme are debatable because '*if you look at the Create programme at the moment, there is a lot in it, so there is nothing unique in being part of Create because a lot of things are part of Create at the moment'* . However, in his opinion, what is really important for his theatre is to create '*the access for our [theatre] participants to play in something directly relating to culture in the Olympics'* .

Similarly to the case of Turin, creative firms seem to consider 'networking' as a very important aspect of their business and personal development. Unlike Turin, however, in the case of London the Cultural Olympiad seems to have played a role in the development of new contacts and creation of networks, or – if not – often questionnaire respondents and interviewees expressed the hope that it will in the future. For example, a designer wrote in the questionnaire:

'*If we were involved in the cultural Olympiad we would increase our networking, sharing of knowledge and creative exchange. We have started talking with independent designers about collaborations*'

In an interview, the co-director of a gallery space and arts organisation, described how the Cultural Olympiad led to collaborations that are not usual in the art gallery world: '*I haven't yet met a gallery that can collaborate well with another gallery, unless it's something like the Cultural Olympiad, where there is the Create Festival going on where all those galleries take part in an event*'

For some creative firms the main benefit of hosting the Olympic Games is not related specifically to the cultural programme, but rather to the attraction to London of such a large number of visitors. For example a ceramic artist interviewed in the context of this research, when asked whether creative industries will benefit from London 2012 answered '*Hopefully yes. I mean not just from funding that the Olympics are putting forward, but from the influx of people and stuff like that*'. Similarly, the manager of a cultural organisation stated '*Meeting new people, it's more activity for us*'. Others, linked the influx of people with the enhancement of local pride:

'*With all the different people that are going to come to London and the fact that Londoners are going to feel extra proud that they live here, I think it's a really unique opportunity to widen the access to the arts that isn't there necessarily today*' (Co-director of an gallery space and arts organisation, London)

Interestingly, one interviewee noted that events are important because they stimulate local people to be proud not just of their city, but more precisely of what it has to offer from a cultural point of view:

'[interviewer: and do you think that cultural events are important to foster local creativity?] *Yes, absolutely. I think they create a local pride in what's created in the arts and the design field, across textiles, ceramics, jewellery, furniture. That is really important*' (designer, London)

Creative environments

As expected, the risk of gentrification in the area around the Olympic Park was seen as a possible threat by some and discussed in the interviews. However, the interviewees perhaps surprisingly seemed to hold the view that the risk of gentrification is not a sufficient reason to stop the area's improvement. Several interviewees spoke about East London as an ideal place to work as a creative professional. Interviewees often described the place where they worked and the benefits derived from working in a creative cluster. A photographer from Hackney Wick (an area adjacent to the Olympic Park) described it as

'a very friendly area. I've lived here for 2 years and I know hundreds of people in this area. (...) And then in meeting all these people you talk about your work and you blast ideas off of each other. It's a wonderfully creative space to be in. And I'm part of a Hackney Wick photography group and we've basically got all of the photographers together and we have little evenings or drinks and talk about photography. So in that respect it's very creative'

A ceramic artist, from the same area, noted however how everything in Hackney Wick happens 'behind closed doors', so that the creative atmosphere or the 'buzz' are not visible to an outsider, but perceived very strongly by the creative professionals involved:

'I mean you've seen the outside of this place, it looks shambolic, but it's got all of this kind of creative stuff going on inside. And that's what Hackney Wick is. Everything is going on indoors and it's all behind closed doors. And the weekend you wouldn't know about from reading anything, "Time Out" or whatever, but it's party central as well. You can guarantee that you'll have something to do on the weekend'

Another interviewee, the co-director of a gallery space and arts organisation, spoke about East London as an ideal environment for the development of creative ideas, which can be recognised even by the way people are dressed:

'And I think if you can make it in London and you can make it in this area you can probably do it anywhere. Because there is a lot of competition but if you look for the right opportunities they are there. Definitely you couldn't say this wasn't a creative environment. First Thursdays says it all, you should come and see how everyone is

dressed. They may be not an artist after all and not even own a piece of artwork but everyone looks like they are a piece of artwork.'

Although the importance of working in a creative environment and the role of networking in the development of new ideas are recognised, several interviewees did not see cultural events as particularly important players in this process. One of the interviewed artists described cultural events as a 'platform', an 'outlet for creativity' and a 'deadline for motivation'. Similarly, when asked what characteristics a cultural event should possess in order to provide inspiration, a designer responded '*perhaps just by providing outlets for them*'. An interviewee, the director of a theatre, explained in more details what role cultural events can play in fostering creativity: they function, in his opinion, as platforms to be seen and attract support, as well as opportunities for publicity on the media, and occasions where the local community can get involved with cultural organisations:

'*It can focus activity (…) so for us the usefulness of big events is twofold: one is to get our professional work seen and hopefully attract more future potential support and so on, so being in magazines and on people's websites and links and all the rest of it. But the other thing is also to match with the needs of our participant groups, sort of amateur performers if you like, the people that come to our classes and workshops and things. And there is an opportunity for presenting something of their work as well, so there is a little slice of it that is looking at the community*'

Criticism

With specific regard to the Cultural Olympiad, however, London interviewees and questionnaire respondents appeared to be much more critical than in the case of Turin. Much of this criticism relates to the lack of funding, opportunities and information. Some participants, for example, think that there are no opportunities for small firms or individual artists:

- '*I don't know enough about it to know whether it would be appropriate for me as a sole craftsperson/trader*' (ceramics artist, questionnaire).

- *'I would like to. however I am a sole trader and have to be realistic about the size of my company and its lack of profile. The bar to get into the CO process is too high'* (designer, questionnaire).

- *'We would very much like to participate but remain unsure of how. It also seems that the funding for this will be allocated to large and long-established organisations, at the exclusion of smaller, innovative companies'* (museum, questionnaire).

- 'I was not aware that small galleries such as this could participate' (art gallery, questionnaire)

Others, feel that most opportunities are for creative and cultural organisations based out of London: in the rest of the UK or even internationally. Generally the 'lack of funding' appeared to be a prominent theme in most interviews and questionnaires. In this sense, some saw the Olympic Games as an opportunity, others as a threat. *'There has been lot written in the press'*, one commented, *'about how Arts Council funding in the past has been cut so that money can go to the Olympics. I would have hoped that it would have been a great benefit to an organisation like us but now I'm not sure. I will be able to answer that question in a couple of years'*

The commercialisation or loss of authenticity of art is another worry that seems to affect several creative professionals in relation to the Cultural Olympiad or, more generally, the Olympic Games:

'It seems that the Olympics actually threatened the fine art integrity of this project as so many people desperate to turn it into the legacy of the Olympics meant non-artists latched on with promises of funding from large supporters such as banks and so forth... however, this did not happen and frustrated the founding artists to the point of disassociating themselves from the project all together' (art gallery, questionnaire)

Or, again:

'As an artist-run, not-for-profit space we are entirely against the so-called cultural olympiad. We believe that it is a means of neutering the production of genuine art by financing (and thus sanctioning) only a very narrow part of the art spectrum and none of it

likely to challenge the presumed status quo or actually have any lasting cultural value whatsoever. It cannot 'inspire new ideas' because it will only recognise ideas that it wants to see generated' (art gallery, questionnaire).

A very different point of view was instead held by the curator of a public art gallery, who seemed to suggest that mainstream exhibitions would be more appropriate for this type of event. The reason for this is that, in his opinion, Olympic Games visitors are probably not interested in art:

'*Well, I think that the sort of thing that would go well would be to do very popular exhibitions, not sort of subtle, clever, interesting exhibitions, but really famous names. That's what I would recommend (...)when we have heard that the Olympics are going to be held here we thought about doing exhibitions about sporting arts, but actually we suddenly thought that most people who want to come to the Olympics are actually not that interested in art (...) They are not the sort of people that would have come to England just to see art galleries. So I suspect that they won't be as enthusiastic as they should be, really' (Public art gallery curator, London)'*.

Overall, the respondents had a great deal of criticism on the organisation of the Cultural Olympiad, but also excitement about London 2012 and all the related events. The main criticism revolved around an 'inaccessible' process in order to participate, lack of funding, but above all, lack of information. A ceramic artist, when asked whether she had any recommendations for the organisers, said: '*if they could just come into the area a little bit and speak to us. You know a bit of a meet and greet or if they just came around and spoke to people at the Hackney Wicked Festival that would be great as well (...) considering I'm looking at arts jobs and all that kind of arts listings on a regular basis I have not really seen much about what is available for artists and creative people to do with the Olympics. But we still have got a couple of years to go'*.

As well represented by the final quote, feelings about the Cultural Olympiads are at the moment mixed, often between excitement, disappointment (for the missed opportunities) and hope (for future opportunities):

'*it's been an interesting time watching it all come out of the ground and I'm not quite sure yet whether to rent my house out to some media boss or to stay, I'm not quite sure yet. But I'm definitely on the list to try and get tickets and I'm looking for the excitement of it*' (designer, London)

7. Conclusions

This research explored the perceptions and feelings of local artists and other creative professionals in East London and Turin towards the Cultural Olympiads and their effects on their work and creativity. The two case studies were very different in many ways, allowing the study to explore this phenomenon from different perspectives. Whereas in Turin the Cultural Olympiad happened during the Winter Games in 2006, in London it is happening at the moment, but the main cultural festival will take place during the Summer Games in 2012. People in Turin can talk of their experiences during and after the Olympic Games, while Londoners can only discuss their current involvement and their projects for the future.

This exploratory study allowed the researcher to discuss the research topic with a wide range of actors: professionals who have not been involved with the cultural programme, professionals who have been, others who want to get involved or are working on projects to submit, as well as two Cultural Olympiad curators. The research did not have any ambition to collect quantitative data or provide any statistical evidence. However, similar results emerged in Turin and East London in terms of participation, with 11 of 57 questionnaire respondents being involved in the Cultural Olympiad in Turin, and 11 of 62 in London. In both cities, those who are participating or had participated in the cultural programme saw the main advantages of participation in the opportunity to develop new products and to achieve greater visibility. Visibility in particular can, according to our research participants, be achieved in several ways: thanks to the publicity obtained on the Olympic Games website and other official promotional material, thanks to the opportunity of associating one's name with the Olympic Games (also after the Games have finished, as described by an interviewee in Turin) and thanks to increased tourist visitation throughout the duration of the Games. As the Turin's Cultural Olympiad artistic director noted, visibility and association with the Olympic brand were the main benefits the Turin cultural

programme could have offered to participants, as there was no additional funding attached to it.

However, the findings of this exploratory research revealed that the advantages of cultural events perceived by creative professionals go beyond the tangible outcomes measured in terms of increased production and publicity. Prior to this study, an events' evaluative research conducted in the North East of England (SWQ, 2006a and 2006b) found that cultural events can impact on the creative sector indirectly by providing opportunities for learning, networking and participation in activities which can generate ideas, new skills, contacts and confidence (SQW, 2006b). The qualitative evidence collected within this research confirms some of these findings. For instance, an artist interviewed for the present study in London described cultural events as outlets for creativity, adding that they provide a 'deadline for motivation', while in Turin a participant noted that events 'represent experiences and they allow us to get fresh ideas'. Several interviewees described how, in Turin, the three Olympic weeks were packed with a 'mushrooming of cultural events' (even too many, according to two interviewees). As confirmed by our respondents, this contributed to portray an image of cultural buzz, especially among its residents (IOC, 2007).

Interestingly, a designer from East London pointed out how cultural events '*create a local pride in what's created in the arts and the design field*'. Two key positive aspects of the Cultural Olympiad, and of cultural events more in general, seem then to be their role as platforms (or ways to increase visibility) and their potential to raise awareness of what is created in the arts field. This seems especially interesting in relation to what an artist noted about Hackney Wick, a deprived area adjacent to the Olympic Park in East London: '*I mean you've seen the outside of this place, it looks shambolic, but it's got all of this kind of creative stuff going on inside. And that's what Hackney Wick is. Everything is going on indoors and it's all behind closed doors*'. Research previously conducted by the author of this report (Pappalepore, 2010) similarly found that often creative clusters fail to succeed as cultural quarters precisely because they lack platforms to showcase the area's creative production and its artistic buzz. The findings of the present study, suggest that the cultural events linked to the Olympic Games (whether included in the official Cultural Olympiad or not) could serve as a platform to promote the cultural activities happening in East London 'behind closed doors', and possibly contribute to its promotion as a cultural quarter.

In London, as well as in Turin, creative professionals regarded networking as a very important activity for their work. However, while in Turin networking and improved connectivity was not seen as a consequence of participation in the Cultural Olympiad, in London participants revealed to have created new contacts and collaborations thanks to the cultural programme, or expressed their hopes to achieve this through future participation. In London, being based near the Olympic Park is seen by some as an advantage in terms of opportunities, and in particular one participant described how this proximity allowed the development of new projects despite not being officially involved with the Cultural Olympiad. In contrast with this view, in Turin the firm's location is not perceived at all as a factor affecting the benefits derived from the Games and related events. In Turin, the present research shows no evidence of the development of new creative clusters as a consequence of the Cultural Olympiad or the Olympic Games (in London this aspect cannot yet be explored). Nonetheless, it is in this context interesting to point out that Vanolo (2007) noted how in Turin, during the Games, two creative areas of Turin (Murazzi and Quadrilatero) especially attracted the interest of the media, thus contributing to portray an image of dynamicity and buzz for the whole city of Turin.

 While creative professionals in London seem to associate themselves with the area where they live (e.g. Hackney Wick), in Turin they perceive the city as a whole – probably a consequence of the much larger size of London and of its polycentric character. All of them – Turin residents and East Londoners – describe the place where they live as a very creative environment, conducive of artistic inspiration. Overall, in East London as well as in Turin participants revealed a great emotional attachment to their area (in the case of London) or city (in the case of Turin). Both East London and Turin are former industrial centres which have heavily suffered following the decline of manufacturing, and which were – until very recently – seen as unappealing places from a touristic point of view. As a consequence, creative professionals of both places see enhanced local pride and increased visitation as very important outcomes of the Olympic Games, regardless of their personal return as businesses. This aspect was felt very strongly in both places, but particularly in Turin where an interviewee even stated that residents found their 'self-motivation' thanks to the Games.

Nonetheless, the aspect which in Turin was perceived as most important when discussing the effects of the Cultural Olympiad on creativity is the atmosphere during the Games.

This is especially interesting in the context of this research, since one of the objectives which emerged following the literature review is to explore whether a series of coordinated cultural events may have a role in the development of a creative field (Scott, 1999) with consequent positive impacts on the development of local creativity. The atmosphere during the Games, variously described by participants as wonderful, fun, sunny, amazing, creative and marvellous, seems to be linked to a number of factors, including the fact that everyone was happy and excited, and strangers smiled at each other in the streets. An interviewee in particular explicitly linked creative inspiration with happiness and working in a cheerful environment. In this sense, the development of such an inspiring atmosphere was probably facilitated by the cultural programme, which included many open air events (such as concerts and performances on stage), an urban decoration programme and two sleepless nights (Notti Bianche) of street and indoor events.

As Smith (2008) suggests, creativity needs multiplicity, a flux of unexpected events (Scott, 2000) and spontaneity (Richards and Wilson, 2007). Evidence from this research shows that the festive atmosphere during the Games is seen by Turin participants as the most positive outcome of the Olympics, and a long lasting one too ('all what is left', according to an interviewee). In London clearly this aspect could not be explored, but this finding provides a key recommendation for organisers of future Games and related cultural programme, including the London ones: try to facilitate a festive and sharable cheerful atmosphere through the organisation of open air, visible and free events. Such events can contribute to stimulate the development of a creative field (made of various elements, including atmosphere but also cultural institutions, networks of creative professionals and others) and thus have a lasting positive effect.

It must be noted, however, that not all the research participants had positive feelings towards the Cultural Olympiad, with some of the London respondents being particularly critical. The three main concerns are the lack of funding available to develop creative projects for the festival, the lack of information about it, and the quality of the cultural programme. In London, in particular, several participants expressed fears that most of the funding available will be directed to other regions of the UK or to large organisations. The latter fear should probably be linked to the Mayor's objective to spread the benefits of the Olympic Games to all UK regions, which means that the Cultural Olympiad events can take place anywhere in the UK. This national reach ambition may seem a sensible idea for

a country where the capital already features 40% of the national arts infrastructure, despite hosting only 12% of its population (Landry, 2005). However, by organising the Cultural Olympiad on a national scale, London will incur the risk of diluting resources and benefits, producing a fragmented image for the event, and creating confusion on what Cultural Olympiad really means.

When asked what she would suggest to future cultural programme organisers, the artistic director of the Turin Cultural Olympiad suggested the organisation of a programme made of fewer coordinated events. The Turin Cultural Olympiad had the advantage of involving many local small creative businesses, but according to its curator this led to a loss of visibility for the actors involved. In contrast with this view, London interviewees precisely fear that funding will only go to large cultural organisations. The 'small vs. large' issue is partly linked to the strict regulations that rule the use of the Olympic symbols and brand, which limit the number of projects that can be included under the Cultural Olympiad umbrella. In London, organisers have tried to overcome this problem through the creation of an on-line 'Cultural Diary', where organisations can register any event they are organising for 2012 (from January throughout the year), whether it is part of the official Cultural Olympiad or not. By registering their events, organisations have the potential to be included in marketing campaigns that will be led by the Greater London Authority and Visit London in 2012. In addition, the 'Inspire Mark' brand was created, adopting the London 2012 logo but without the Olympic rings, to allow the promotion of smaller projects (Lander and Crowe, 2010). After 2012, research will be needed in order to assess the effectiveness of these schemes; however, this research has shown very low awareness of London 2012-related initiatives addressed at creative and cultural firms at present. Lack of information and the need to feel more involved are in fact the most common complaints flagged by London respondents in relation to the Cultural Olympiad.

The lack of sufficient funding for Cultural Olympiad projects is a problem recognised also by the Greater London Authority, which noted that there are concerns as to how small-scale projects that want to participate in the Cultural Programme will be supported (GLA, 2008). Similarly, some Olympic Games researchers point out the under-funding of cultural programmes, which are often treated as secondary events in comparison with the main sport programme. Shipway and Brown (2007), for instance, link this lack of funding to two main factors: the increasing costs of the Games to the host cities and the fact that the

cultural programme rarely appears on the media. A recommendation could therefore be made to forthcoming Olympic Cities, which is to encourage media coverage of the cultural programme – at least at a local and national level – with the aim of slowly increasing awareness for the benefit of future Cultural Olympiad editions in terms of funding and creative organisation' participation and satisfaction.

García (2004a) contributes to this debate and adds that the cultural programmes' marginal role is ultimately related to the subordinate position occupied by the arts in relation to sport within the sphere of leisure (Stevenson, 1998). This theme was discussed also by some of our interviewees, including the artistic director of the Turin Cultural Olympiad, who mentioned that '*during the Games all the attention is focused on the medals, the sport event, the champions'*. The curator of a public art gallery, interviewed in London in the context of the present study, expressed doubts with regards to the effects of the Olympic Games on cultural venues visitation. According to him, visitors attracted by such a large sport event are not the ideal audience for cultural venues because 'they *are not the sort of people that would have come to England just to see art galleries (...) they won't be as enthusiastic as they should be'*. This approach, which reveals the mistrust some creative professionals feel towards the public attracted by sport events, echoes the attitude of gallery owners described by Molotch and Treskon (2009: 518) in their study of SoHo, New York, where (according to an interviewee) 'the tourists go into the galleries (and) laugh at the art'. Thus, while sport event organisers seem to be sceptical of the potential contribution of cultural events - for instance, in terms of media attention and sponsorship development - some creative industries are doubtful of sport events' ability to contribute to their business. Probably a greater involvement of the creative sector prior to the event, more information on the potential benefits, and training on how to take advantage of such opportunities, could encourage artists and other creative professionals to have a more open and positive attitude towards such events. In London, this was attempted through a programme of seminars organised by public bodies and individual local authorities to disseminate information on opportunities. However, this research revealed a very high level of disinformation and disappointment mainly due to lack of information. Again, in this context the media could play an important role in spreading information and in increasing participation of smaller businesses.

Finally, a major preoccupation for some creative professionals concerns the authenticity of the events included in the programme. While one London interviewee advocated the staging of blockbuster events, the majority see this possibility as a threat to the overall quality of the Cultural Olympiad. Although most London interviewees see tourism development and the regeneration of the Olympic Park area as opportunities, they also fear that the emphasis on image could negatively impact the selection of Cultural Olympiad projects. This would involve giving priority to large established cultural institutions and more commercial forms of culture, at the expense of smaller, independent and more innovative creative productions. In Turin, for instance, certain Cultural Olympiad events were 'easy to consume' cultural products aimed to promote local industries and traditions (e.g. chocolate making) rather than to provide a real cultural experience (Vanolo, 2007). On the other hand, other projects were more innovative and sophisticated, so that the programme could cater for a wide range of audiences and contribute to the promotion of local creative talent on different levels. As two London interviewees noted, in fact, the role of such large cultural programmes should not be limited to the development of elite forms of art; they should aim to promote local skills and make them accessible to a wider public, as well as give residents and visitors a chance to take part and be involved in cultural activities.

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