

being assembled by the City of New York's Department of Cultural Affairs.

It is sort of a strange analysis but for me these mixed developments remind me of how the ski industry was saved in the 80s by being reinvented as a real estate play. The problem is that the shaky business model that we work with makes us very fragile partners for developers who generally do not give a damn as long as the inclusion of a cultural component gets them their condominium tower. There is something else that bothers me about this – the idea of artists and their shiny new homes looking like tropical fish in an aquarium – something is lost!

Finally we have the creative cities construction which was initiated at least in part by the spell cast by Richard Florida¹ who has turned a very simple idea into an empire of self-promotion. The simple idea is that people, particularly people with interesting jobs and skills, like to live and work in creative places and that cities ought to promote cultural and creativity as a means to recruit these people and thus drive economic development.

In December 2005 the Center for an Urban Future published *Creative New York*, a survey of New York's creative core that led to a series of specific recommendations on how to advance economic development by attracting and supporting creative people in New York City. Mayor Bloomberg has now announced the city will create a new office to aggressively pitch New York around the world as the nation's arts and cultural capital and to help non-profit organisations, particularly those in the arts, cope with the high costs that threaten their survival. The new office, which will include at least two employees, and which is within the Economic Development Corporation, recognises that sky-rocketing rents have made it much harder for smaller arts groups to flourish. This office will help such groups navigate the real estate market, obtain technical advice and attract financing. The new office will be similar to those that already exist in other industries such as financial, media, real estate, biotech and retail. It will also try and help non-profit groups secure low interest and tax exempt loans through the industrial development

¹ Richard Florida is best known for his work in developing his concept of the creative class, and its ramifications in urban regeneration. This research was expressed in Florida's best-selling books 'The Rise of the Creative Class', 'Cities and the Creative Class', and 'The Flight of the Creative Class'

agency. The city is also putting together a US\$100m (£53m €78m) fund to help artists buy homes. In fact, all of this is closely modelled on the London Development Agency's *Creative London* initiative which began in 2003 and has developed into a series of programmes and financing investment, talent development, real estate and promotion.

The challenge is helping artists in ways that do not stifle creativity, and then surrounding that creative core with a concentration of more commercially orientated industries like advertising, design and fashion that benefit from and feed off that creativity. I think it is a great idea but clearly one that is going to need government supervision; not so much to convince people that it is a good idea but to create the incentives that concentrate that cultural activity.

Arts and culture have played a huge role in the regeneration of North American cities. For me, though, there are still three problems. First of all there remain a number of these regenerated cities that are not particularly creative. I would contend that 42nd Street in New York City is an area of entertainment and commerce, not an area of arts and culture. Non-profit groups can rarely afford to be in these kinds of districts and buildings, most notably the organisations like Jazz at Lincoln Center.

The second, and closest, problem is that while we can legislate subsidies to keep artists in cities that have developed and become really want to stay there



The cities of New York and London are following similar paths in terms of cultural development

Here arts management consultant Duncan Webb sets out the situation in the US; he is followed by theatre consultant David Staples giving examples from both the US and UK, while theatre consultant Anne Minors focuses on regeneration using the younger generation.



Gains and losses through generation: 42nd Street in New York before and after 'regeneration'

