Edited by Gillian Rose

Seeing the City Digitally

Processing Urban Space and Time

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Seeing the City Digitally

Cities and Cultures

Cities and Cultures is an interdisciplinary book series addressing the interrelations between cities and the cultures they produce. The series takes a special interest in the impact of globalization on urban space and cultural production, but remains concerned with all forms of cultural expression and transformation associated with modern and contemporary cities.

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Monica Degen and Isobel Ward

Abstract

This chapter examines the temporal politics of urban redevelopment by analysing how multiple future urban imaginaries are mediated through a range of digital visualizations and across urban spaces. Focusing on the planned move of the Museum of London into West Smithfield Market in 2024 as part of the Culture Mile redevelopment project, we analyse how a variety of stakeholders mobilize different images across three kinds of spaces – urban space, strategic planning space, and social media space – and how each is underpinned by various and multiple temporalities. We show how digital visual technologies have become central to preparing the ground for urban redevelopment schemes and placemaking strategies, by appealing to our sensory and experiential sensibilities.

Keywords: urban imaginaries, placemaking, futures, Culture Mile

Introduction

Since the 1990s, culture-led regeneration has been at the forefront of many cities' post-industrial revitalization strategies (Cronin and Hetherington 2008; Della Lucia and Trunfio 2018; Miles and Miles 2004; Rius Ulldemolins 2014). Central to this process has been the physical redesign of neighbourhoods linked to a conscious reimagining of the future "look and feel of place" promoted visually through various traditional media outlets such as billboards, magazines and newspapers. Due to changes in media use and advances in technologies during the last two decades, the use of digital visualizations such as computer-generated images (CGI) or sharing digital images on social media has become more prevalent in the promotion of

such urban developments. CGIs are used by architects both to design new areas, sell new developments to prospective clients and used on hoardings to promote them (Degen et al. 2017; Rose et al. 2016). Images and films on social media platforms such as Instagram further brand, frame and disseminate the perception and use of these redesigned places (Braun Erik et al. 2013). Greenberg refers to such processes as the production of an "urban imaginary", in other words, the ways in which "the space of the city is produced not only materially and geographically but also in the social imagination and through changing modes of representation" (2000: 228).

This chapter will analyse how shaping and manufacturing this urban imaginary, increasingly based on digital technologies, has become a crucial feature of urban redevelopment schemes and placemaking strategies. In particular, we analyse the ways in which digital visual technologies frame the future senses of place. We show how placemaking is a complex temporal achievement organized and materialized by the interactions between multiple and diverse temporalities framed by urban decision makers, the built environment and its users. We do so by focusing on an area currently undergoing redevelopment: the Smithfield Market area in London. In 2017, the Smithfield Market area was designated part of the Culture Mile[1], London's largest cultural regeneration project for the next decade comprizing fifteen per cent of the total area of the Square Mile, "the citadel of money making" where "creativity is fast becoming the most valuable currency" (Pickford 2017). As part of this project the Museum of London (MoL) is planning to move in 2024 to West Smithfield Market which currently contains derelict Victorian buildings and adjoins the oldest operational wholesale meat market in the UK. Included in the wider redevelopment, is the opening of Farringdon East Crossrail Station in 2021 to improve access to what has been described as London's new cultural destination.

This chapter analyses the relationship between the relocation of the MoL to Smithfield Market and the planning and imagining of the area's future as part of the Culture Mile. The chapter will start by discussing the relationship between placemaking, urban imaginaries and time. We then provide an overview of the Culture Mile and its main aims and objectives and examine how the urban regeneration of the Smithfield Market area and the redesign of the MoL draw on a range of distinct, yet interlocked temporalities. By doing this we want to think through the ways in which the future relocation of the MoL is perceived, imagined and constructed across

1   A partnership endorsed by the Corporation of London including the Barbican, the London Symphony Orchestra, The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Museum of London

three distinct spatialities. The spatialities are: a) urban space, b) strategic planning space and c) social media space.

Placemaking, future urban imaginaries and the digital

Since the 1980s, changes in global political and economic processes have promoted a move in urban policy from concerns for welfare issues and social politics to more entrepreneurial strategies where cities are eager to compete for investment and visitors on a global scale. The outcome has been the emergence of a new spatial logic reflected in major urban restructuring, as modernist industrialism has been replaced by post-industrial flexible accumulation (Harvey 1989; Hubbard and Hall 1998; Zukin 1991). These changes are mirrored in the radical redesign of urban landscapes across the globe from Sao Paolo to Manchester which has led "cities across the world to take on a new character and a new dynamic that has forced issues of culture and consumption more predominantly to the fore" (Cronin and Hetherington 2008, 1).

We can understand the increased pressure on cities to brand themselves and promote their unique place-differentiating qualities as part and parcel of this global entrepreneurial arena of urban competition which has encouraged a conscious construction of coherent place identities that will appeal to certain social groups, similar to a commercial product, so called "brandscapes" (Klingmann 2007). Much of this urban branding is now undertaken by formalized public-private coalitions which bring together the competing interests from local government, businesses, real estate and local not-for-profit organizations. Indeed, there has been a clear co-evolution of urban redevelopment and branding, where increasingly the two processes work hand in hand and are part of urban policy "emerging as a hybrid materialization representing the process of creating new spatial settings" (Lucarelli 2018, 12).

This amalgamation of spatial restructuring linked to branding processes is particularly typical for the restructuring of neighbourhoods, rather than a whole city where a symbolic layer is often just added to an existing place, illustrated by slogans such as "Barcelona more than ever" or "I Amsterdam". Instead, neighbourhood regeneration tends to encompass the combination of a redesign of the physical landscape linked to a broader array of urban policies (e.g. event management, retail and leisure infrastructure, zoning policies, and so on) and branding processes which re-signify and aim to choreograph the sensory-emotional experiences or, to put it simply, the "feel

of place" (Degen 2008, 2010, 2014). The aim is to inscribe particular places within the city with a specific set of meanings and "ways of being, feeling and acting with the brand" that lead to the creation of particular urban lifestyles (Masuda and Bookman 2016, 171). In recent years this combination of urban redesign, social planning and branding has been defined in urban policy under the umbrella term of "placemaking".

Placemaking was a fundamental idea in the work of Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte in the 1960s and 1970s to create more human-centred cities and as an oppositional stance to modernist urbanism's perceived placelessness, and has since underpinned the aims of urban design (Aravot 2002). Since the late 2000s the concept of placemaking has witnessed a resurgence and is regarded as a key ingredient, or even formula (see https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking), for successful urban regeneration to enhance a city's attractiveness to the creative classes (Lew 2017), particularly following the influential and highly contested work of Richard Florida (2005; for a critique see Peck 2005; Wilson and Keil 2008; Mould 2015 amongst many others). Thus, placemaking is far from a neutral concept but regarded critically as a key element of gentrification processes (see for example Wilson and Keil 2008; Montgomery 2016) as it tends to involve a physical re-design of places and a deliberate engineering of the social life of the neighbourhood. Placemaking has become an economic development tool: "[a] process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, shop, learn, and visit" (Wyckoff et al. 2015: vi quoted in Lew 2017, 453) where design professionals and governments follow a series steps and tools to promote infrastructure growth (Lew 2017).

During this process, the image of a neighbourhood is an important element to be managed and shaped as it informs perceptions and expectations of a place. As Zukin (1991) explains, since the 1960s with the development of new media technologies, the intensification of advertizing and the expansion of urban elites has led to an extensive critical infrastructure of media outlets from guidebooks to newspaper reviews, and now websites, bloggers, or Instagram posts amongst many other digital outputs that mediate ever more complex urban consumer spaces. These images and associated discourses about particular neighbourhoods are central in shaping the perceptions of those living or visiting a place and strongly shape the cultural recoding of places (Miles and Miles 2004) to create a "new urban imaginary":

> [A] coherent, historically based ensemble of representations drawn
> from the architecture and street plans of the city, the art produced by
> its residents, and the images and discourse on the city as seen, heard or

read in movies, on television, in magazines or other forms of [digital]
mass media (Greenberg 2000, 228).

As Greenberg further explains, a number of urban imaginaries coexist
and compete with each other in any locality. Moreover, as she expands by
analysing the development of urban lifestyle magazines, the power and
form of the precise mediation of urban imaginaries goes hand in hand with
the development of the latest media technologies. If we consider the digital
to be the most transformative and wide-reaching technological develop-
ment since the start of the twenty-first century the question that arises is:
how are digital technologies reconfiguring the planning and branding of
neighbourhoods such as the Smithfield Market area? And, what kind of
spatio-temporal relations do they convey?

Let us start by examining the planning aspects. As we have argued
elsewhere (Degen 2018) planning in itself is a deeply temporal activity: "[A]
continuous process [...] of choosing strategically through time" (Friend and
Hickling 1997, 1; see also Abram and Weszkalnys 2011; Myers and Kitsuse
2000). And, one could argue, always future oriented. First, planning provides
a tool and practice to manage the present, "of governing and organizing the
relationship between the state, citizens, and other organizations whether
private, commercial, or public" but, also it is "the transition over time from
current states to desired ones" (Abram and Weszkalnys 2011, 3–4). Hence,
much planning practice consists of preparing for future activities by trying
to organize, predict and manage the spatial outcomes of future times. This
is because urban space is highly unpredictable and "messy" and strategies,
plans or future projections aid to "tame urban complexity" (Hoch 2009).
Second, this future planning is informed by the past history of a place and
present technologies, values and planning trends. Thirdly, as the future
is the "not yet" (Adam 2006), it needs to be built as a performative trope
into urban change. This is done through two main features: first, forecasts
and projections of future economic growth, environmental sustainability,
demographic change, estimated future visitor numbers; and second, through
the construction of scenarios, visioning, and backcasting which aim to
provide assurances to investors and engage the general public on an affective
level with what the future will feel and look like. Thus, for future landscapes
to be communicated effectively they need to be *visualized* convincingly. It is
in this process where future urban imaginaries, branding and placemaking
strategies start to merge.

Advances in digital technologies since the 1970s mean that computer
generated images (CGIs) have become the common means for architects and

developers to plan, visualize and market future urban developments. Digital visualizations created through the use of visualizing software applications such as Sketch Up, Rhino and Studio Max make it possible to compose carefully crafted images of buildings set within a future and imagined urban context as part of the design and planning process. Indeed, CGIs have now become the most common type of image media used to visualize and market future urban redevelopments and their envisaged social uses (Rose et al. 2016). They have become such a ubiquitous part of producing and marketing contemporary urban landscapes that we could claim that they are one way in which cities "are beckoned into existence by code" (Thrift and French 2002, 311).

The rapid and intense development of social media in the last decade has added another layer to how cities are experienced, mediated and imagined through digital technologies. For the purpose of this chapter we focus in particular on Youtube and Instagram. A range of scholars (Boy and Uitermark 2017; Rose 2016a, 2016b) have drawn attention to how social media and digital photography is changing our relationship with technology and space. It is important to highlight that one needs to differentiate between different uses of social media. Thus, organizations such as the Culture Mile or the Museum of London use social media as part of their communication strategy to promote events, activities and their brand. However, the ability by the general public to also be involved and take professional quality photographs, especially through the filters and editing facilities of Instagram, "challenge the distinction between professional and amateur and strategic and non-strategic" (Thelander and Cassinger 2017, 7). It is thus important to start examining what kind of power relations are being forged between these various urban digital imaginings, branding and spatial developments.

In the rest of the chapter we bring together these related areas of scholarship to outline a theoretical and empirical application that places the various temporalities of urban placemaking and digital visual imaginings in relation to what Sharma has described as the power-chronography which "provides a politicization of time that dispels individualistic accounts of time and allows the social and relational contours of power in its temporal forms to emerge" (Sharma 2014, 14). We look at the intersections between future placemaking and digital imaginings to understand who has the power to shape the urban imaginary, who is addressed by it and who is left out because "there is a politics and ethics of and to temporality and the future where futurity is actively involved in the making and remaking of difference and inequality" (Coleman and Tutton 2017, 444). Let us now turn to an overview of the development of the Culture Mile in relation to the relocation of the MoL.

The Culture Mile and the relocation of the Museum of London

The beginning of the Culture Mile (CM) in the City of London can be traced back to 2010 when the development of its first Cultural Strategy was approved. The Corporation of London, the City's municipal governing body, established "The Cultural Hub Working Party" which stated that its "vision for 2017 is to see the City's identity as a cultural hub strengthened in its own right, alongside its status as a financial centre" (Cultural Hub Working Party Report to Policy and Resources Committee 2013). It is important to highlight that the Corporation is the fourth largest cultural funder in the UK due to hosting in its borough many cultural institutions, yet is rarely acknowledged as such, and "[t]he hub would be both a *visual area* that invites people in *to experience its cultural offering* and a *collaborative hub* between renowned institutions […] to draw in more visitors to this area and increase the exposure of, and enhance the quality of provision by, these renowned cultural institutions" (Cultural Hub Working Party Report to Policy and Resources Committee 2013, emphasis by authors). Publica, a private urban design practice, was commissioned by the City of London to develop a strategy for this cultural hub, as part of the Barbican and Golden Lane Area Enhancement Strategy, with the aim "to deliver a comprehensive identity for the area which will resonate and attract audiences from around London, the UK and the World" (Publica 2015). What stands out in this document is how Publica discusses the changing trends in culture within cities, suggesting that culture is increasingly provided in public space rather than merely within buildings and therefore there should be more collaboration between cultural institutions to create shared programmes of public realm events.

In 2016 the working group requested £100,000 from the City of London funds to employ marketing and communication experts to come up with a more distinctive brand for this cultural area. They employed Jane Wentworth Associates and Pentagram to complete a brand strategy which set out four clear values for the area: joined-up, generous, agile, experimental. They developed the name "Culture Mile" and an associated suite of imagery – logo, website, promo videos – and Culture Mile was officially launched in July 2017. It encompasses the mile from Farringdon to Moorgate and is a public-private partnership umbrella organization endorsed by the Corporation of London which includes the Barbican, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Museum of London. The City of London's 2018-2022 Cultural Strategy highlights the links between the urban redesign of the area and culture by stating that its first objective is to "[t]ransform the City's public realm and physical infrastructure, making it a more open, distinct, welcoming and
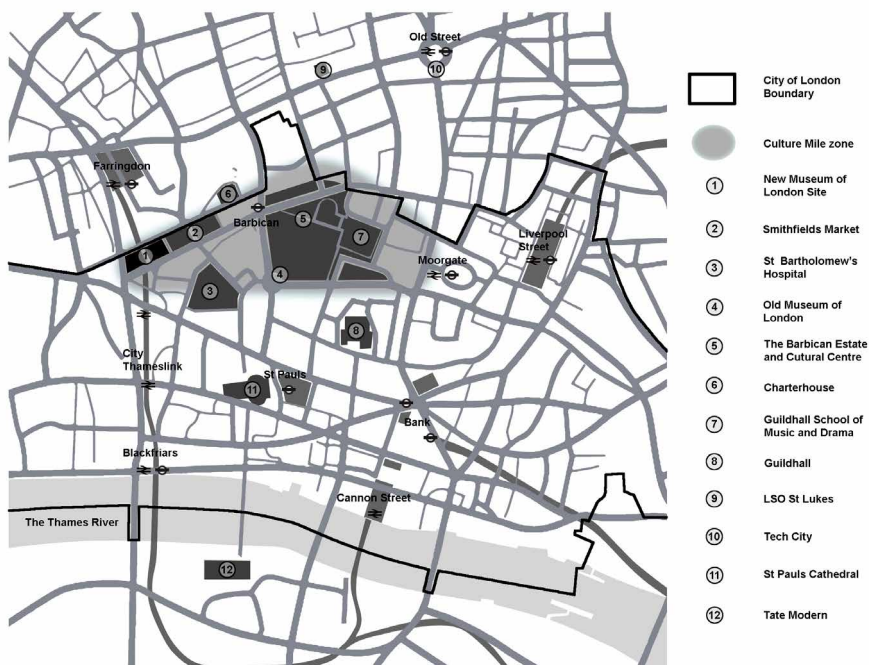
Figure 5.1. Map of area and Culture Mile. Courtesy of Isobel Ward.

culturally vibrant destination" (City of London 2018). This is implemented by the Corporation of London's planning department through their Look and Feel programme which is applying the recommendations made by Publica for their public realm enhancement programme. The second objective is to "[d]evelop Culture Mile in the north west of the City which will become an exciting destination for London and act as a catalyst for change across the rest of the Square Mile" (City of London 2018). Culture is clearly regarded here as a changemaker and there are clear links noted in the strategy between culture and commerce, suggesting that culture will become a new revenue for the City of London.

We can see here that the CM regeneration project allows an enactment of a particular "active" version of the future to contrast it with a "passive" present. Since the CM's launch, discourses in the media hint to "the potential", "genuine regeneration" (Pickford 2017) and "major destination" of the CM – that will "deliver new experiences for everyone" (Kenyon 2018). The MoL's relocation is being described as a landmark project that "will establish it with an international public" (Kenyon 2018) as cultural institutions are presented as an explicit part of the city's economic revitalization programme. Implicit in this future scenario building are the promises for a "better" material and

temporal order, implying that the already present needs improvement: "Plans can be constructed to avoid undesirable futures, to make desired forecasts come true, or to create new, more desirable futures" (Myers and Kitsuse 2000, 223).

Turning now to the MoL specifically: the MoL has the largest urban history collection of the world (Kennedy 2016). It is a charitable institution funded by the City of London Corporation, the GLA and a range of benefactors. For its move to its new site in West Smithfield Market, by 2017 it had raised £110 million from the City of London Corporation, £70 million from the Greater London Authority and City Hall – their largest investment in a cultural initiative – and it needed to raise another £70 million from the private sector, individuals and charitable foundations (BBC 2017). Planning permission has been submitted in December 2020 with plans to start construction soon after.

In interviews with museum curators and managers, they explain that the need to move has been longstanding, due to the geographical location of the museum, housed above a busy roundabout near the Barbican, not easily accessible and discouraging to visitors: one needs to follow an array of escalators, steps and narrow corridors to be able to find it. Curators especially point to a desperate need for more space for its 7 million objects which are mainly kept in enormous warehouses in the East End. Thus, in their view the new venue in West Smithfield provides the museum an opportunity to reinvent itself and transform its relationship with the city and its publics. Hence, the MoL is particularly eager to develop a porous relationship between the Smithfield neighbourhood and its surrounding locality. As the Lead Curator of the New Museum states: "The vision for the new museum is that its whole look and feel will embody London. It will capture the essence and personality of the restless and creative city, including its past and present sensory experience" (Werner in Degen et al 2017).

The Museum of London's multiple imaginaries

Let us start analysing how the New Museum of London is visualizing itself in the future through the umbrella organization of the Culture Mile and through three kinds of spaces, each with different temporalities: a) urban space, b) strategic planning space, c) social media space. The data for this discussion was gathered from a six month pilot study collaboration with the MoL in 2017 which set out to examine the changing sensory identity of the Smithfield area from past, present and future. The multimethod study included ethnographic

research, historical and contemporary planning research, interviews with key stakeholders, a vox pox survey with 110 members of the public as well as a sensory and temporal mapping of the area. The aim of the study was to gain insights into how the character of the area has evolved over the centuries, Smithfield's current identity and perceptions amongst the general public, and what the expectations of Smithfield's diverse publics were for the move of the New Museum of London (see www.sensorysmithfield.com). During this pilot research, we noticed an increased use of digital visualizations to promote the area and envisage its future and have since then been conducting further interviews, ongoing online research of social media and regular ethnographic observations of the area.

a) Urban space

To understand the placemaking at stake in this case study and how digital technologies are involved in this process, we start with situating the current senses of place as perceived by those using the Smithfield area. The concept of placemaking can be traced back to phenomenological cultural geography traditions aiming to understand how individuals or communities develop a sense of place over time and through their personal experiences and corporeal engagements with place (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977). This sense of place can be deeply personal or relate to more communal structures of feeling that have developed over generations to shape the attachments of particular groups to place (Pred 1986). As Lew further explains, "[t]hese are mostly organic, bottom up processes, whereby places are claimed and shaped through everyday, and often mundane social practices" (Lew 2017, 449). However, as he explains, increasingly this organic evolving of a sense of place is replaced through "placemaking" which refers to the strategic and planned work done by place branding organizations and the conscious positioning of particular media narratives, orchestration of events and stylization of the urban environment to construct specific place identities and meanings of place. Everyday engagements with places whether as a local or visitor are complex performances in which the combination of imagination, embodied experience and materiality of place create diverse forms of place consumption and engagement (Edensor 2001). When people engage with places, they draw on representations of place such as those in social media for example, to plan and inform their engagements, highlighting how the three spatialities we analyse are interconnected.

The main characteristic of the physical space which our respondents remarked upon was the juxtaposition of diverse sensory and temporal

Figure 5.2. A juxtaposition of architectural styles. Courtesy of Camilla Lewis.

experiences which creates a unique place identity in the Smithfield area. This stems from a temporal juxtaposition in the built environment which features buildings from a diversity of historical periods: the grand Victorian market building, surrounded by street layouts that have remained unaltered since 1870 and follow mainly a Medieval pattern. Next to it buildings date from various periods including Medieval monasteries, Victorian housing, the Barbican housing estate which was built in the 1960s to the east, and to the west a glittering façade of high glass buildings constructed in the 2000s.

The temporal juxtaposition within the built environment is intensified by a diversity of lived temporalities by various social groups whose distinct uses of the neighbourhood generate particular daily and weekly rhythms and overlapping, clashing sensescapes in the public spaces of Smithfield. The use of public space varies greatly across the times of the day as different demands shape and conflict in space: from the arrival of meat lorries that loudly take over roads from 11pm creating traffic jams; market workers in their white robes shouting orders and young clubbers jostling and sharing pavements between 11pm and 7am; a diverse fleet of market customers from exclusive restaurants to halal butchers arriving at the market between 2am and 6am; and a mixture of city and creative workers from 8am to 6pm mingling on streets with builders, hospital staff, couriers, tourists,
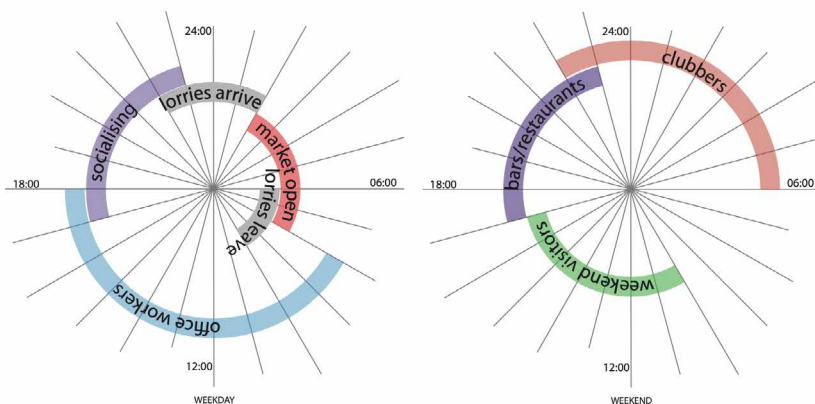
Figure 5.3. Temporal rhythms of Smithfield market area. Courtesy of Isobel Ward.

and restaurant visitors at nights and weekends. One of our interviewees described the idiosyncratic feel of the area as follows:

> It's got a bit of bite to it [...] it's a bit grit, a bit of edge, a bit trendy here and there [...] This place is alive at 3am in the morning [...] You've got weird little cocktail bars around the corner underground. There's the market just around the corner. It's all this mash of [...] it just feels it's got that little edge to it, which is interesting (vox pop June 2017).

All of our vox pop survey respondents commented on how it is precisely the variety of social uses that give the area a particular vibrant character. One local resident we interviewed described Smithfield as "buzzy" and commented on how unexpected encounters were commonplace, as different groups found themselves "cheek by jowl" in this area of the city.

   These results show that it is precisely the entanglements of past and present buildings and traditions in the landscape and uses of place that give the Smithfield area its unique sense of place. In addition, the temporalities of the past are woven through this environment not just with the continuity of spatial patterns of the built environment or the concentration of historical sites, but also through an imagined narrative of a place which has contested wider processes of change. This is an argument that has been taken up by conservationists and in the media, and is continuously presented through the visual imagery displayed by hotels, pubs and heritage information boards on the market in the area. For example, one of the hotels has a series of historical images and Dickensian quotes displayed on its windows to

highlight the historical linkages and continuity in the look and feel of the area, highlighting that the Great Fire was extinguished just before it reached the Smithfield site, and bomb damage to the buildings during the Second World War was not extensive. Fundamental changes which have taken place in its social, spatial and sensory history are not mentioned in these narratives such as for example spatial restructuring by the Corporation of London that can be dated back to the twelfth century, Victorian attempts at urban sanitation, changes in the social fabric of the neighbourhood or changes and developments in transportation facilities such as the building of the rail and underground routes that cut through the area, to mention a few. A strong theme that emerged in our interviews is that Smithfield is generally described as having managed to "buck the trend" of the high speed capitalist city and is therefore perceived as an area stagnant in time.

This perceived narrative of continuity has been mobilized in studies intended to imagine or plan future regeneration projects. While there have been several endeavours since the 1970s to regenerate this area, future developments have always been halted. Two attempts to demolish West Smithfield were stopped after public inquiries in 2005 and 2014 prompted by local heritage campaigners who argued that the market buildings made "a significant contribution" to the character and appearance of the area. And, a report prepared for English Heritage, argued "the fragile identity – defined by its architectural character, streets, places and activity patterns" should be "respected and reinforced rather than ignored" (Farrell 2007, 3). Hence, when initial planning strategy meetings took place to discuss the current plans for redevelopment, the heritage status of the site and market traders' concerns had to be taken on board. Local authority planners are aware of this and there is a constant tension between maintaining historic sites and redeveloping for a changing city – thus the MoL's plan to move in has been regarded by many market traders and the general public as positive, able to negotiate these concerns and be an enabler for the current regeneration of the market.

These concerns have strongly influenced the creation of the branding campaigns by the New Museum of London of its new location which is advertised as the "Museum of Londoners" on huge billboards around Smithfield's current spaces which visually frames portraits of individuals engaged in their particular working practices within the wider history of the area. The aim was to create: "[A] campaign that is the museum of the people who live and work here. It's the Museum of Londoners. So, we focus around the people who are working in this area now, either in the markets or in the cafés or in the hairdresser training place [...] so, we're very kind of

Figure 5.4. Museum of Londoners and Crossrail advertising. Courtesy of Monica Degen.

consciously, deliberately wanting to affect the neighbourhood" (Director of Transformation MoL). The images include a market butcher, Crossrail engineer, trainee hairdresser and local café owner amongst others. The portraits stand out for their crisp colours, boldness and intimate feel and reflect London's cultural and ethnic diversity. The hoardings cover the buildings to be developed and provide a visual reference point and landmark as they melt with the surrounding urban landscape, providing a scene that individuals then capture on their mobile phones. They were taken by 20 year old local photographer Vicky Grout who has developed her career by documenting the lifestyle and development of London's grime scene by first posting her pictures on Instagram. These billboards are physically dominating the built environment earmarked for transformation, and physically announce an impending sense of change, yet are clearly based on local links.

They stand in contrast with a second type of image that are advertising the forthcoming urban change on hoardings: namely Crossrail CGI images and those by developers advertising new residential spaces. These billboards project very "run of the mill" CGIs: featuring soft colours, a corporate, cleansed, and smooth vision of the future – erasing any link to the existing physical location and alluding to the creation of an imaginary local community of future commuters, residents and visitors – and very much ignored by passers by.

b) Strategic planning space

The second spatial dimension we would like to analyse is the strategic planning of the New Museum of London within the Culture Mile which explicitly draws on digital visualizations to present a vision of the future and prepare the public for the imminent spatial changes. A series of exhibitions to inform and consult the general public took place in 2019 at the West Smithfield site and within the MoL heavily featured CGIs designed by Stanton Williams and Asif Khan, with conservation architect Julian Harrap. The CGIs feature heavily on the current MoL website (https://museum. london/). It is important to note that planning permission still needs to be approved at the writing of this chapter and that the architects and museum curators are in the first stage of the development, i.e. producing a brief for the planning application.

A vital issue for the New Museum is enhancing its visibility and permeability – referring to the Museum's links with its surroundings spatially,

Figure 5.5. (a) Proposed Campus. Source: Stanton Williams and Asif Khan, © Secchi Smith. (b) Proposed West Smithfield at Night. Source: Stanton Williams and Asif Khan, © MIR.

culturally and socially. The move to West Smithfield is expected to increase visitors from 750,000 to two million a year. According to the Director of Transformation, the problem with the MoL's current location is that it was based on "a concept of a cloistered, quiet space in the heart of the City. Very inward-looking, which doesn't chime with twenty-first century agendas for public museums". Hence, not surprisingly the CGIs of the future development depict activity: moving people, and those that stand still are clearly taking pictures or actively observing the new environment. The CGIs' lighting also enhances feelings of openness and permeability of the buildings as sun rays shine through and images are taken from a pedestrian's point of view, clearly highlighting entry points and featuring people moving across different spaces. As one of the architects involved in the redesign of the building explains, the new Museum of London will integrate spatially and conceptually with the city:

> The city will be drawn into the Museum and will have many different partners working inside who they will engage with. It's like the idea of the public house. We are reinventing the public realm. [...] The entrance to the market is vital. We want there to be lots of entrances, maybe about seven. This is going to be a democratic realm where people can pass through, meet up or have a coffee.

While many of the curators we spoke to were concerned about the curatorial content and narratives of the New Museum, the management were concerned about how to create a landmark venue which attracts both local and global audiences.

Let us analyse this in more detail. The market building is part of a heritage site which allows the new museum to enter into a temporal dialogue with its surroundings while simultaneously providing its differential quality, its landmark value effect. The historical market is crucial to the New Museum's conception, however the existing old, abandoned and weathered buildings are reinterpreted in the CGIs, lifted into the future, and appear cleansed, light and mixing elegantly with contemporary design features. The CGIs are central in conveying this experiential aspect of the planned museum. While drawings of planned buildings always attempt to make them attractive, CGIs can produce particularly atmospheric and photo-realistic views of buildings, often glowing at dusk and thus tapping into the affectual and kinaesthetic tactility of the city, thus taking the viewer into the future feel of place (Degen et al. 2017).

While it is acknowledged that a redesign of the existing buildings is part of the broader rebranding of the area, there is also an attempt "to hold

onto the character of the area" (architect) and to "reflect the melting pot character of the area" (architect). Yet, an inherent tension for the design and planning of the building is between what is "for the best interest of the museum for the next generation" and "the [existing market] building telling us things. So, the building will say, 'I'm not supposed to do this', or 'I'll let you do this' to me" (Director of Transformation MoL). Thus, the existing market building might not allow some of the contemporary design features suggested which leads architects and planners to find compromises. However, this is not explicitly acknowledged in the CGIs which not only present a "finished design" but invoke clearly the future uses and publics that will access these buildings. This illustrates how "[t]he future is not a disconnected end-state that exists only in the future; instead the future should be viewed as a continuous unfolding of time that is rooted in past and present" (Myers and Kitsuse 2000, 225). The present and future uses are incorporated in this envisaged building through the CGI: "[T]he move is a way of changing the museum, doing something different and reinventing it for a twenty-first century audience" (Director of Transformation). This change, in his view, will be driven by the architectural experience that the New Museum provides: "It's going be the sort of uniqueness of the buildings and kind of experience of being in the buildings that is going drive people [to visit]." Hence, the brief for the architectural competition emphasized strongly the provision of different uses of the buildings:

> The ambition that the museum is sort of integrated into the public realm [and] that it becomes something that is a bit more like Southbank Centre, in that people feel comfortable using these buildings for their own purposes at different times of the day or night. And it's not necessarily the fact that people are going to be driven by a kind of cultural imperative that they're coming to see something about history, or coming to see something about a particular London narrative or an object. But [rather], that the building has a greater sense of ownership by Londoners. [...] that translates into, for example: how could Londoners be part of, and leave a part of them in, the museum? (Director of Transformation)

So, who are these Londoners? The analysed CGIs suggest The New Museum of London is planned to be a twenty-four hour museum, reflecting the current twenty-four hour character of the neighbourhood; but appealing to different publics than those currently creating these twenty-four hour rhythms. So, a move away from the current clashing melange of meat market workers, clubbers, hospital workers and city workers to a new consuming public

consisting of families, tourists and a diversity of young people. As mentioned above, the New Museum's ambition is to attract visitors and it promises novel experiences including a twenty-four hour bar area, boutique retailers, and an array of events such as the London Fashion show to entertain new publics. One could argue that these competing discourses and imageries reflect the various and sometimes competing roles that contemporary museums have in contemporary society from curators of knowledge to entertainment venues.

We have shown in this section how the strategic planning imaginaries draw upon overarching spatio-temporal characteristics currently present in Smithfield such as the re-use of historical buildings or the twenty-four hour uses of place. Yet, while these spatio-temporal characteristics of the built environment's current uses have emerged over time from organic processes and are produced by a variety of social groups, we can see that the combination of planning strategies and digital visualizations aim to produce a smooth new choreography of uses to attract specific publics. The digital visualizations portray a spatial re-organization of place, new activities taking place in the public spaces and a clear transformation of the current sense of place.

c) Social media space

In this last section we want to reflect on the role that social media space plays in the placemaking of the MoL's imminent move. Social media branding has become part of communication strategies of organizations, and neighbourhood redesign schemes are no exception. Society's move to the digital presents a challenge for cultural institutions, as a quotation by the Chief Digital Officer of the New York Met used at a presentation explaining the concept behind the Culture Mile illustrates: "People ask me: is your biggest competition the MoMa? No, our competition is Netflix. Candy Crush. It's life in 2016" (Wentworth 2018).

Social media activity in regards to the new MoL has taken place via a number of channels. The MoL's own digital communication about their new location has been gradually building up since 2016 as discussions with different stakeholders involved or affected by the move have evolved. Hence, the MoL has been digitally branding its move with a series of YouTube videos which started in 2016 and more recently via its designated website (https://museum.london). It has branded itself to a much lesser extent via Instagram, mainly drawing attention to its YouTube videos. The MoL's initial promotion of its new location via the YouTube videos celebrates

and presents the current feel of the Smithfield Market area, presenting its history through the built environment, its diverse social uses, temporal rhythms and sensescapes which characterize the identity of the area, using mostly filmed footage and photographs. The videos do not show any of the CGIs of the new location. Smithfield's current physical and social uses are clearly presented here as a backdrop for the New Museum as stated on their website:

> We believe London is the world's greatest city and we are uniquely placed to tell its story, but only if we have a showcase worthy enough. So, our ambition is to do this at the heart of a new cultural hub in the City of London with outstanding links to the rest of London and the world, and in doing so we will become one of London's top five most visited museums. (MoL website)

From a branding point of view one could argue that the contribution that the current market and its everyday practices provide to the temporal and sensory set up of the area are kept as an important feature of these films and provide the area's unique selling point.

A much more intensive and public-facing branding campaign for the cultural regeneration of the area has been the setting up of the Culture Mile since late 2017 which allowed the Corporation of London to bring together four of its key cultural institutions, including the Museum of London. Because of the lack of a masterplan for the entire Smithfield area due to complex boundary issues with different councils, the network provides a cohesive identity and performs a united vision. The loose network, whose staff are dispersed across the various cultural institutions involved and the planning department of the Corporation, helps to imagine a coherent whole and supports powerful actors to perform and own a particular vision of the future of this area, the Culture Mile, in order to:

> [T]ransform the area, improving their offer to audiences with imaginative collaborations, outdoor programming and events seven days a week. Links between venues will be improved and major enhancements to the streets and wider public realm will enliven the area which, as Culture Mile expands and flourishes, will be regenerated (see Corporation of London website).

A crucial focus for the Culture Mile has been the "activation" and animation of public life in streets in the neighbourhood, as the area is planned to

become more residential and shift its reputation of a "dead" city centre adding to the creation of a new place imaginary. The public envisaged to be attracted to its streets includes "city businesses, office workers, residents, schools, cultural and commercial occupiers, creative industries partners and potential investors and funders" (www.culturemile.london). Alongside traditional media such as posters in London Underground stations and Time Out London, social media, especially Instagram, has been one of the main media through which the Culture Mile events have been marketed and branded with the view to bring particular publics to the area. From November 2017 to May 2020 Culture Mile Instagram features 125 posts and has 2305 followers. Thus for example the "Culture Mile Nights" event was explicitly branded to under forty-year olds:

> Our Instagram like tessellation of images, by curating that and making it look really appealing for a certain audience, was really key for marketing Culture Mile Nights [...] That was like a really kind of a pivotal moment in terms of how we use that particular channel. Because we knew that Instagram [is] attracting an audience of between eighteen and thirty-five, late thirties, for this particular event they were like the key audience for it. (Marketing Manager CM)

Indeed, when programming events the creation of experiences, or "memorable moments" (Pine and Gilmore 1999), captured and shared via social media, especially Instagram, are an important feature to be taken into account. The capturing of experiences and their distribution via social media influence the placemaking strategies of the Culture Mile showing how the planning of activities is linked to a conscious awareness of how they will be distributed and shared:

> If you think about what people use to curate their own experience of an area, that's one of the key things [we consider]. Not just in terms of like constructing outwardly that experience. But for themselves. It's not just about showing to other people that you've been to a place. It's also, for you, like how do you remember the place? What were the things that you were really excited by? So, [social media] has absolutely changed placemaking. [...] It certainly is something that we consider when we're looking at public programming: how is this going to be remembered? How is this going to be like distributed or shared? It's not the number one guiding principle, but it's absolutely something that's in the back of my mind. (Marketing Manager CM)

This supports Tiidenberg's suggestion that three key features of the social media visuality are "(1) networked visuality which centralizes sharing, (2) emplaced visuality which centralizes movement and location; and (3) conversational visuality which centralizes personal interactions via visuals" (Tiidenberg 2018, 14). Similarly, these three aspects are central in the way the redevelopment and transformation of the Smithfield area is mediated and branded via Culture Mile posts: images are shared across different publics; particular views, places and moments are emplaced visually and temporally; and the personal experience of a sense of place is further communicated through remarks, hashtags, likes and reposts. We can understand posting of place tags as conscious markers of a curated place identity by organizations or users and as a symbolic claim to place (Budge 2020) which are shared with others.

While the focus of this chapter is on how social media is used by organizations in placemaking strategies, some of the insights in studies on amateur use of Instagram are relevant for this analysis. For example, the work of Boy and Uitermark (2017) on how individuals portray different neighbourhoods on Instagram, shows how both the production and the content of social media can reiterate very particular understandings of places and people as only specific places or scenes are depicted and shown in particular ways. Precisely because screens, including phone screens, are part of the everyday staging of urban life, their contents appear and intervene in the experiencing of cities. In their study of how different neighbourhoods in Amsterdam appear on Instagram, Boy and Uitermark remark that:

> Instagram users selectively and creatively reassemble the city as they mobilize specific places in the city as stages or props in their posts. Instagram images, in turn, become operative in changing the city [...] users view the posts of others. (2017, 613)

This picturing and its circulation serves to amplify, in their case study, the gentrification of those neighbourhoods. Similarly, one could argue that the postings by the Culture Mile serve to guide people to explore particular places and events in the Smithfield area but not others, presenting a curated and partial account of the neighbourhood. These social media posts strongly influence the visual imagining of how place is perceived, experienced and understood. In the case of the Culture Mile, its posts relate to their organized events, public art projects and the cultural events promoted by the cultural institutions that are part of it. No images appear of the working market or other current everyday uses of the neighbourhood.

In another digital campaign in 2018 the Culture Mile sponsored a series of films by poets called "Between the Storeys" which were distributed via YouTube and other social media. Over 6 months three poets and a filmmaker engaged with the neighbourhood and its inhabitants and workers producing specially commissioned poems "to animate the stories, histories and experiences of different communities living within the Smithfield area" (https://www.culturemile.london/betweenthestoreys/betweenthestoreys). These poems and films evoke and reflect the past and present culture in the Smithfield area, both in terms of its rich and varied built environment and mixed social uses. And, as the market area has not been regenerated yet, the poems reflect the life and the sensations that can be encountered in the present moment. All three poems combine particularly sensory evocations of past, present and future, paying particular attention to the clashes of social groups and sensations: "A Community of Souls" reflects on community and regeneration, young and old, new buildings and historic buildings; "Underlines/Overheard" evokes the current and past railways and uses; and "Began in Fabric" draws out the similarities between the comings and goings of the night club Fabric and the meat market.

These urban imaginaries overlap in many ways with the perceptions of the urban landscape by people living, visiting or working in the area; the history ingrained in the built environment, the activities in and around the meat market and the idiosyncratic feel of place captures these artists' imaginations and artistic outputs. The future strategic planning space is not mentioned or, if mentioned, evoked as a threat to the delicate "street ballet" (Jacobs 1961) that characterizes this area. These online videos largely simultaneously represent the area based on the present sensations, everyday rhythms and communities one can encounter but that will gradually be stripped away in the future through the cultural regeneration and inevitable gentrification of the area. As the videos are commissioned and featured by the Culture Mile we can argue that they brand the "present feel of place" by drawing on the existing urban space, current lifestyles, atmospheres and senses of place as a unique selling point even though the forthcoming cultural regeneration will inevitably change this.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the cultural regeneration of the Smithfield Market area by analysing how future urban imaginaries are mediated and visualized through a range of digital technologies and across a range

of spatialities to advance urban development. This is used as a tool by planning and building professionals to create support for the planning application, sell the development to future investors and to prepare the public for the new look and feel of a neighbourhood. Urban design, branding and placemaking activities clearly merge in contemporary regeneration processes. Indeed, this case study has shown how digital technologies such as the production of CGIs and social media branding can be viewed as digital foundations to prepare the ground, showcasing and promoting future urban imaginaries *before* a redevelopment takes place: visibility is key in order to compete on the global catwalk (Degen 2008). The digital visualizations make the future a perceptible, present vision, yet only represent selective narratives and characteristics – in this case a future imagined in line with the agenda of creating a cultural quarter to attract new audiences to the Smithfield area.

We have shown how a diversity of future urban imaginaries are convened across different spatial representations in the development of the Culture Mile and the re-location of the MoL. We started by examining the perception of the urban space of the Smithfield area by current users and argued that the MoL's Museum of Londoners hoarding campaign presented a future embedded physically within the urban textures and within the present daily life of the neighbourhood, showcasing existing practices of the neighbourhood and addressing local people. We then analysed the strategic planning space where the MoL presents a future aimed at a new global public through the use of CGIs which represent the future experiential aspects of the new development, providing suggestive and photo realistic imaginaries of the future uses. Lastly, we examined the branding of the transformation of the area and the new MoL location through social media campaigns via the Culture Mile. Here the area and its future are very much located in a current sense of place, drawing on particular aspects of its history, and embedded in the current urban fabric and everyday practices. Yet, in our view, branding the area selectively through art and culture also creates a particular visual aesthetic framing of Smithfield and its surrounding area as a consumable product – part of an urban lifestyle one can partake in when visiting the area. The branding uses social media to target simultaneously a global and niche public, interested in the area and specific historical and cultural events. We have highlighted how these urban imaginaries at times overlap, at other times differ from or, indeed, might change the current socio-spatial set up of Smithfield by drawing on the physical aspects of Smithfield Market, yet with a tendency to reframe and recode the social uses and cultural meanings of the area.

The power chronography, or politics of time, in the city come to the fore when we analyse who has the power to shape these urban imaginaries. Most people living, visiting and working in Smithfield say the meat market and its practices and cultures are part and parcel of what produces its unique sense of place, and want to protect and retain it. Those involved in planning and branding the future Culture Mile believe that the public desires different types of spaces and experiences. Yet, the exact demographics of these publics are not clearly defined for cultural organizations such as MoL as there is a tension between its commercial aims to become a "destination" and compete with other museums within London and globally, and its role as a civic, cultural and knowledge institution. The distinctive urban imaginaries visualized for these differing aims have one thing in common: they conjure the future by appealing to our sensory, affectual and experiential sensibilities. This is done through various means such as identifying with people's everyday practices in the present urban space; suggesting future uses and lifestyles through glamorous CGIs; via Instagram posts which disseminate selected intensified moments that showcase cultural events promoted through the Culture Mile; or showcasing evocative poetic films based on the current senses of place. The research has shown that the future relocation of the MoL within the Culture Mile is perceived, imagined and constructed through many forms and imaginaries illustrating that the future is far from being one dimensional but envisaged as multiple possibilities.

While the temporal logic of the capitalist city is linked to financial capital and movement, it is clear from this case study that the stagnation of urban redevelopment over years has allowed for different temporalities to emerge in the Smithfield Market area. This unique identity is cherished by the current publics working, visiting or living in the area who have adamantly expressed that they would not like the area to become another sanitized retail and service environment such as Spitalfields or Covent Garden. As Lew (2017, 462) highlights, approaching place making as both organic and planned "informs us of what we cannot control, and what needs to be given freedom to evolve in its own way and its own time". This is a challenging task and points to the paradox inherent in this project: the move of the Museum of London to Smithfield Market will irrevocably transform the area. While the museum is eager to land softly and become part of an existing neighbourhood, its own development and success will threaten and transform the uses and senses of place of this diverse area. Yet, its move also opens up an opportunity for the New Museum of London to re-evaluate, explore and re-imagine, maybe radically, what being a city museum consists of, its role in its locality and wider urban space.

Postscript: The planning permission for the New Museum of London was accepted on the June 23 2020 (https://museum.london). At the time of the writing of this article it is difficult to predict how the global Covid-19 pandemic will affect this project's future.

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