

Phoebe Patey-Ferguson

LIFT and the London 2012 Olympics: Spectacular Experiences

In 2012, London staged the Olympic Games and the associated Cultural Olympiad, which produced the 'London 2012' Festival, funding a wide series of events including many productions by the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT). A decade on, this article considers the impact of these overlapping events during a period of unprecedented austerity in the United Kingdom, and how arts events might be considered as having colluded with the government's own agenda. The connection between neoliberal governance, with its programme of increased privatization, rapid gentrification, and the opportunistic marketing of diversity is examined with reference to increasing nationalism through Olympiad displays, together with the increasing influence of the 'experience economy' as defined by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore. Phoebe Patey-Ferguson is a Lecturer in Theatre and Social Change at Rose Bruford College. This article, derived from their PhD on LIFT in its social, cultural, and political context, follows 'LIFT and the GLC versus Thatcher: London's Cultural Battleground in 1981' (NTQ 141) and, in the same issue, Patey-Ferguson's interview with LIFT's founding Artistic Directors, Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal.

Key terms: festivals, Cultural Olympiad, spectacle, experience economy, multiculturalism, sociology of theatre.

'LIFT 2012' was one of the largest, most ambitious, and most expensive Festival editions in the history of the London International Festival of Theatre.¹ It embraced the nationalist spirit of the London 2012 Olympics that created a bonanza across the capital to draw attention to Britain on the international stage as a country that was wealthy, contemporary, and rich in multicultural diversity. This carnivalesque period served as a temporary interruption of the prevailing values that the traditionalist policies of Prime Minister David Cameron's austerity government had been enacting – and would return to, after the event was over. Despite the significant public investment in the arts, which led to a huge financial return, as well as exceeding expectations in terms of domestic and international engagement with the arts, the government continued to reduce public subsidy to the sector following the summer of events.²

In 2012, London experienced an overwhelming amount of nationalistic festivals, shows, and pageants, all distributed through media to an international audience in an attempt to demonstrate its global power in a

post-imperial era. The popular Royal Wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton, Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, and the Olympic Games all contributed to a 'feel good' factor for a nation reeling from the ongoing effects of the global recession and the recent massive cuts in public expenditure. Those agents most dominant in the political and economic fields had pursued and encouraged these spectacles for financial profit and to conserve the established order which significantly contributed to the direction the nation took in the following years. As journalist Dan Hancox wrote after the UK's 2016 referendum decision to leave the European Union, 'the flags went up in 2012 and never really came down'.³

Festivals play a major role in constructing, (re)producing, and reinforcing uchronic narratives and images, which communicate shared meanings, understandings, and values that include national identity. According to Émile Durkheim's theory of 'collective effervescence', through social gatherings 'individuals imagine the society of which they are members and the obscure and yet intimate

relations they have with it'.⁴ In his authoritative study of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, John Hargreaves built on Durkheim's assertions to create an assessment of the powerful impact that symbols (which accrue meaning through ritual) can have on emotions related to national or global cultures involved in the Olympic Games and Cultural Olympiad.⁵ The symbols, which decorated London and were transmitted across the globe through media coverage, overtly conveyed British nationalism. The flag of the British Union appeared ubiquitous throughout the Games: flying from official buildings, draped over athletes, waved at the Olympic torch relay, projected across buildings, and repeated thousands of times on bunting. Paul Gilroy wrote that these British celebrations were always 'dream worlds revisited compulsively': 'They saturate the cultural landscape of contemporary Britain. The distinctive mix of revisionist history and moral superiority offers pleasures and distractions that defer a reckoning with contemporary multiculturalism and postpone the inevitable issue of imperial reparation.'⁶ Gilroy revealed the extent to which 'postcolonial melancholia' permeated all areas of British life – an inability of the nation to process its loss of empire and position in the global standing it endowed. Thus, these 'nation-making' events did not seek to address systematic imbalances in power inside the national field or in relation to global fields of power. Nor do they construct more convivial futures or ease multicultural tensions. Instead, their repetitions conceal these inequalities in order to conserve existing power structures.

From the outset, London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games had aimed to strengthen British national identity, making it an odd bedfellow for LIFT, which had a profound history of fighting parochial and imperialist thinking.⁷ Although individual international companies who were presented in the Festival had still remained mostly independent from (or resistant to) state control and participated with a cosmopolitan spirit, as they had done for over three decades, LIFT had strongly aligned itself with a furtively jingoistic Olympic project. Although this collusion between the state and economic fields led this revived

nationalism, in order to be successful it had to be enacted through the agents in the field of cultural production, as national identity is a product of narratives constructed and disseminated through culture.⁸ As Britain saw a revival of the parochial attitudes (the flags going up) to which LIFT had for so long stood in opposition, it had almost entirely become co-opted by those fields external to the cultural field, losing its autonomy and therefore ability to critically engage with the fields of power through high-quality artistic events.

Arts Council England Funding Cuts and Private Investments

Fiscal austerity cast a shadow across all aspects of social, political, and cultural life during the first years of the Cameron government, but the 2012 London Olympic Games provided a temporary economic and cultural boost. London not only hosted the Games but the Cultural Olympiad, a series of events, festivals, and performances designed to 'highlight diversity', 'raise cultural aspirations', and 'reinforce the UK's reputation as a world leader'.⁹

The sociopolitical climate from 2010 onwards bore stark similarities to the landscape in which LIFT had been created thirty years previously.¹⁰ Under a new Conservative prime minister, unemployment figures were high and rising, with 2.57 million unemployed people and youth unemployment at over 21 per cent, the highest rates since 1988.¹¹ In 2011, there were riots in cities across England sparked by racial injustices perpetrated by the police force and exacerbated by widening disparities in wealth, whilst the welfare system was further dismantled and public services rapidly privatized. Far from being coincidental, these similarities were a deliberate radical resurrection of the Thatcherite agenda as austerity was designed to advance a larger programme of shifting the political economy of Britain towards a more radical, competitive, and individualistic neoliberal society. The Conservative government led an attack on what it considered to be the negative impact of the public sphere on the quality of all areas of British life, including the field of cultural

production. This marked a trend that continued through the six years of Cameron's leadership.

On the 18 June 2010, Arts Council England (ACE) announced it would be required to make £19 million of cuts to expenditure which amounted to a 0.5 per cent cut to all 880 RFOs (Regularly Funded Organizations) such as LIFT.¹² In October, Chancellor George Osborne released his Comprehensive Spending Review, which would cut the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport's (DCMS) budget by 24 per cent, leading to a further 30 per cent reduction in the budget for ACE. This meant a 15 per cent cut to RFOs, which led to over one hundred arts organizations losing their funding. A further blow would be struck by Osborne in the Autumn Statement released in December 2010, which removed another £11.6 million from ACE.

The arts sector had already received a significant blow before these rounds of cuts. Under the previous government, led by Labour prime minister Gordon Brown, ACE had seen a reduction in its budget as since 2006 up to £2.2 billion of arts funding had been diverted from ACE and National Lottery funding towards the Olympics and Cultural Olympiad.¹³ Among many others, this saw LIFT lose 50 per cent of its funding in 2008, the closure of arts organizations and companies, and ACE's project grant budget reduced by a third. Arts organizations were then required to apply to the specific Olympic fund in order to support projects that would happen during 2012. However, in order to qualify, these projects would be required to correspond to the state-run festivals such as London 2012 and match the vision of the Olympiad.¹⁴ LIFT successfully gained funding for ten shows, half of its programme, enabling it to stage ambitious works and place the organization in a global spotlight as the June Festival overlapped with the Games held in the East End of London.

LIFT's national and international profile as an influential arts organization had fallen since Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal's departure in 2004. Mark Ball, appointed as Artistic Director by the LIFT board in 2009, returned the Festival to a delineated, one-month event that

occurred biannually, thus ending the experimentation with the festival frame that had characterized The LIFT Enquiry period from 2001 to 2009. Ball perceived, when he arrived, that LIFT was at 'a point of crisis' and, under his direction, it became a financially resilient organization, in spite of the strained economic circumstances.¹⁵ He achieved this by appealing to the popular market through fully assimilating the organization into the neoliberal capitalist 'experience economy'.¹⁶ His pragmatic, business-minded approach to the Festival involved dynamism and inventiveness that ensured LIFT's survival through a period in which international theatre became incredibly difficult to fund and produce in Britain and London-based festivals with an international remit. BITE (Barbican International Theatre Events), for instance, ceased to exist. However, the methods that were used forced a compromise of LIFT's founding principles, including artistic quality and cultural democracy, as well as its autonomy in the field.

This predominantly resulted from the ways in which the economic value of the arts was asserted as the only frame that mattered. Maria Miller, Secretary of State for Media, Culture, and Sport from 2012 to 2014, demanded that the whole arts sector 'help . . . reframe the argument [for public funding]: to hammer home the value of culture to our economy'.¹⁷ Miller justified this on the grounds that, 'in an age of austerity, when times are tough and money is tight, our focus must be on culture's economic impact'.¹⁸ Every organization, artist, and company in the sector was expected to fervently justify economic impact to government as a defensive strategy in rationalizing arts funding as a principle. Arts organizations such as LIFT, which were attempting to continue as large organizations with a high-profile or international remit, were left with no other option but to embrace this precedence of economic impact, attempting to fit artistic programmes around fiscal gain and relying on commercial tactics such as high-profile marketing strategies and high ticket prices.

LIFT was shaped by these financial conditions. Its efficient adaptation saw it grow in

size and wealth despite the reduction in arts funding by adapting effectively to these new financial conditions, although this naturalized the logic of neoliberal principles of the organization. Funding from private enterprise, individual donors, and charitable trusts had first been encouraged as a replacement for public funding by Thatcher's government. However, following the Coalition Government's spending cuts in 2010, it was made obligatory for organizations in England to pursue such funding in order to receive ACE subsidy. LIFT's report to its board for 2011 stated:

The current executive is focused on realistic budget preparation, better financial expertise and management, and increased capacity in fundraising. It has revised its business model going forward with a more diverse funding base, greater financial partnerships with other organizations, reducing its core reliance on Arts Council England, and significantly increasing earned income.¹⁹

A key element of LIFT's success during this period of austerity was due to its ability to attract alternate income streams. For the 2010 Festival, LIFT received a total of £23,487 from donations, sponsorship, trusts, and foundations. In 2012, this rose to £113,320, and for the 2014 Festival it had increased again to £259,136.

The Coalition announced in 2011 that, as part of its plan for the Big Society, they would 'renew Britain's culture of philanthropy' in the *Giving White Paper*.²⁰ 'Philanthropy' is a misleading term as it implies disinterested giving, whereas what is being encouraged is sponsorship, a strategic business partnership where both donor and recipient benefit from the relationship.²¹ It was claimed that the arts could receive the funding they needed, without state interference through a regime of targets, while large corporations could enhance the legitimacy of the firm among its stakeholders and customers, and develop positive socially responsible images through increased 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) payments.²² In a speech in 2014, the Chair of ACE, Sir Peter Bazalgette, enthused about the recent 'opportunities' business had to 'invest' in the arts: 'Arts organizations are responding vigorously to reduced public

funding by growing commercial revenues, providing business opportunities.'²³

However, funding from the private sector inevitably compromised the field of cultural production and exacerbated structural inequality as it benefited larger, more established, organizations that were based in large cities and produced more conventional work that did not directly oppose or impede the private sector's interests.²⁴ Furthermore, it compounded a system of unaccountability where corporations and other financial elites determined what could be created, when, where, and by whom.²⁵

The Cultural Olympiad

The 2012 Olympics and the Cultural Olympiad were exemplary events for the convergence of two colluding fields of power: the economic and the state. In London, local authorities enabled private companies to enact rapid 'regeneration' projects in East London during the lead-up to the Olympics. They demolished social housing and erected 'luxury' apartments, transformed and gentrified local communal spaces, and decimated long-standing communities. This process, promoted as 'urban renewal' and decried as 'social cleansing', was done to generate enormous private profit, whilst government bodies not only gave permission but also contributed public funds towards it.²⁶

Arts organizations were embedded in this process, receiving significant amounts of funding in order to create work that would help to obscure the damaging impacts of gentrification, predominantly in working-class and immigrant areas.²⁷ For example, the largest grants LIFT received from 2009 to 2011 were from the Thames Gateway development scheme, which transformed forty miles of land in anticipation for the Olympic year. This money enabled LIFT to produce many of its socially engaged projects based in East London, while new housing was built in the area that was unaffordable to residents, and community infrastructure replaced with 'a few retail parks' and 'very poor collective facilities'.²⁸ The field of cultural production was coerced into serving both state and

economic agendas since it was a resource dependent on state and corporate money. In this process of gentrification, state power was deployed to increase economic power, which then sought to reinforce its position by increasing state power, thereby creating a closed loop where homologous dominant forces constantly conserved and perpetuated the established order. The Cultural Olympiad is a key event which reveals the ways major arts organizations are put into the service of the austerity-driven neoliberal capitalist agenda of government.

The Cultural Olympiad was designed to increase the power of the state. Since its creation by Pierre de Coubertin in the 1890s, the modern Olympic Games had become a powerful international stage where the sovereignty of the nation could be exhibited through sport, culture, and economic displays. De Coubertin had conceived of the Games as a resurrection of what he had interpreted as the spirit of the Ancient Greek 'festive assembly in which the entire people came together to participate in religious rites, sporting competitions, and artistic performance'.²⁹ In its first three decades, the modern Games included arts competitions alongside the sporting ones. However, deciding the winners of these became increasingly difficult as what was considered the 'best' art was highly contested.³⁰ Following Raymond Williams's definitions, David Inglis has argued that a 'more companionable partnership was possible between "sports" and "culture", where the latter was taken to mean the 'whole way of life' of a given nation, rather than the "high arts" alone'.³¹

This approach was first epitomized by the 1936 Berlin Olympics, created by the Nazi Party, which used the event as an international platform to demonstrate the power of the German state. In the first Cultural Olympiad of its kind, it included populist displays of nationalist propaganda, mass participation, spectacle, and state elite manipulation.³² Even though the explicitly fascist content of this event was decried after 1945, the cultural aspect of the Games would be used henceforth to demonstrate the aims and ambitions of the host nation through

participation and spectacle.³³ For the London Games in 2012, the world witnessed an opening ceremony directed by Danny Boyle, who staged a huge spectacle that told a version of British history that accentuated the perceived superiority of Britain in industry, healthcare, entertainment, gay rights, and so on, and included mass participation from non-actors such as healthcare workers.³⁴

Spectaculars

LIFT 2012's most expensive production was *Surprises: STREB – One Extraordinary Day*, a spectacle that aimed to rival the opening ceremony in its scale, ambition, and popular appeal.³⁵ It was funded with over £1.3 million from the London Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOGOC), and presented part of both LIFT and the Cultural Olympiad's 'London 2012' programme. Working with over thirty dancers in the Streb Extreme Action Company, American choreographer Elizabeth Streb designed seven daredevil displays on iconic landmarks along the South Bank and in the centre of the city. They included the London Eye (*Human Eye*), the Millennium Bridge (*Waterfall*), City Hall (*Skywalk*), outside the National Theatre (*Speed Angels*), in Paternoster Square (*Turn*), and Trafalgar Square (*Ascension and Human Fountain*).³⁶ In each of these locations, a group of the dancers would appear without prior warning to perform daredevil stunts displaying their athletic skills.

STREB was produced by LIFT to be in London's 'Look and Feel' programmes, supported by the Greater London Authority and LOCOG in order to make the 'Games experience an unforgettable memory' for all visitors to London.³⁷ As a 'Spectaculars' project, it was supported as one of the 'wow moments' which were to be 'visual postcards that will be forever burned into people's memory as one of their key London 2012 Games experiences' and draw attention to London's tourist attractions.³⁸ Prior to the event, Jeremy Hunt, the Conservative Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media, and Sport, said:

'STREB . . . will promote London's iconic landmarks to the world by showing them off in a completely new light.'³⁹

The event was successful. LIFT estimated that 18,000 people had watched these events throughout Sunday 15 July in person, with many thousands more seeing online and national media coverage.⁴⁰ Many of the audience responses, taken as surveys by volunteers immediately after each performance, commented that the shows were 'inspiring', 'breathtaking', 'shocking'. However, others recorded that they had hoped there would be 'more artistic events and not just spectacle'. These comments were echoed in a review written by Jonathan Jones in the *Guardian*. It called the day 'all show and no brains', and accused LIFT of confusing 'art with hype and show', and the whole Cultural Olympiad of having 'no cultural depth at all'.⁴¹

The other large-scale LIFT 2012 production partly funded through the Cultural Olympiad was a different kind of spectacle. *Gatz*, by the New York-based company Elevator Repair Service, was an eight-hour performance of the full text of *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, which ran for six weeks at the Noël Coward Theatre in London's West End theatre district. Set in a dilapidated office, a worker at his desk, played by Wooster Group actor Scott Shepherd, picked up a copy of the book and began to read out loud, becoming Nick, the narrator of the story. As he then made his way through the text, co-workers became characters in the book, using their banal surroundings to conjure the extravagant world of excessive wealth depicted in the text. Mark Ball felt it was compelling to present an adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*, set just before the financial crash of 1925, following the crash of 2008:

Here was a guy . . . writing about power without responsibility, people living this privileged life with a sense that everything's about to fall off the precipice, and it just seemed so timely. As a piece for our times, with all that narrative about the responsibility that should come with wealth and the recklessness of the world of bankers and high finance, for me it was a very powerful, political piece.⁴²

Theatre critic Dominic Cavendish called the production a 'landmark theatrical event' and agreed with Ball that:

As the credit crunch rumbles on, and the gap between boom-year fantasies and harsh economic realities becomes ever plainer for millions, it wouldn't be surprising if [director John] Collins's interpretation, digging to the heart of Fitzgerald's ambiguous attitudes to the super-rich, strikes a chord.⁴³

The eight hours of the production itself reflected the typical length of a working day, and its relationship to the aspirational notions of wealth gain in capitalist societies was summarized by critic Matt Trueman, who wrote: 'The American Dream has brought the American Drudge.'⁴⁴

However, the production itself had another relationship to the creation and loss of capital. This was the first ever production by LIFT presented in this commercial theatre context. Although funded by the Cultural Olympiad, it also made significant profit through selling tickets throughout its run, the majority of which went to the private company of commercial theatre producer Cameron Mackintosh. Ball explained why this production was a political act for LIFT:

It disrupted the established way in which the mainstream thought theatre could be made and appreciated. What seemed to be an impossible project to deliver – a durational performance by a company no one's ever heard of . . . and to make that effectively a commercial success in a Cameron Mackintosh theatre, has caused a level of disruption in the West End that has allowed projects that wouldn't have happened to happen . . . it's challenging the status quo.⁴⁵

Effectively, the production primarily benefited the commercial theatre sector. First, it created personal economic profit for Mackintosh, made possible through the investment of public subsidy but without return for the public sphere. Second, the risk managed by LIFT in staging *Gatz* proved to commercial theatre producers that they could financially profit from more experimental theatre forms, thereby benefiting the field of economic power but decreasing the autonomy of the

field of cultural production by co-opting avant-garde artistic practices and thus reducing their agency and effectiveness in opposing systems of domination.

100% London: Celebrating the Cosmopolitan City

Selling the city to a global audience and propagandizing for the British state were also embedded into the Cultural Olympiad's key aim of celebrating 'cultural diversity'. In the programme for *100% London* by Rimini Protokoll, Ball wrote how the performance matched this aim by promising to fulfil a fascination with 'the communities and cultures nestled alongside each other' – a saccharine description of the complexities of the multicultural city.⁴⁶ Aiming to celebrate the diversity of cities, Protokoll's work was overdetermined by being presented as part of the Cultural Olympiad as a cosmopolitan celebration with an uncritical attachment to the government's strategic frameworks of participation promoted throughout 2012. Named *100% City* by the company, the production used a structure that the company reproduced across the globe with minimal adjustments for different cities such as *100% Cork*, *100% Melbourne*, *100% Lisbon*, *100% Montréal*, *100% Penang*, and so on. In each version Rimini Protokoll recruited one hundred participant performers based on the specific categories of 'age, gender, ethnic background, household status, and region'.⁴⁷ The main purpose of the production is to 'humanize statistics' by showing how these 'real people' of any city are 'not just numbers' but 'people with power to make [their] own decisions'.⁴⁸

The winning bid for the London 2012 Olympics had been sold on London's ethnic and cultural diversity, a self-congratulatory evasion of the state-perpetuated tensions of multicultural Britain that continued to elude or suppress acknowledgement of institutional racism and colonial legacies. The opening claim made in the bid submitted to the IOC claimed that 'London's diversity and creativity would contribute to the Games . . . guaranteeing a warm welcome for all'.⁴⁹ Mayor of London Ken Livingstone claimed that 'if one

city encapsulates the human race it is London. Every athlete . . . would find a community from their home country to welcome them, receive them, and cheer them on.'⁵⁰ At the time, critics saw this as blatant opportunism as it negated any critical engagement with, or taking action towards eliminating, the systematic and structural issues of racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia that still proliferated in the capital.⁵¹

The deliberate refusal to engage with these systematic and structural issues had been underscored following the 7 July 2005 attacks, which had occurred less than twenty-four hours after the success of the Olympic bid was announced. Trevor Phillips, then head of the Commission for Racial Equality, made a high-profile speech titled 'Sleepwalking to Segregation', which reinforced the idea that multiculturalism had failed in Britain. Phillips claimed that 'crime, no-go areas, and chronic cultural conflict' were outcomes of 'marooned communities', and that we had 'allowed tolerance of diversity to harden into the effective isolation of communities'.⁵² He claimed this had led to a 'fragmentation of society' that endangered 'key British values' such as 'respect for individuality, free speech, equality, democracy, and freedom'.⁵³

In an editorial for the *News of the World*, Lord Stevens, the former head of London's Metropolitan Police force, and advisor to the Prime Minister, demanded that 'the Muslim community in this country accept an absolute and undeniable, total truth: that Islamic terrorism is their problem'.⁵⁴ This notion that certain communities were responsible for their own marginalization and isolation had become pervasive due to its perpetuation by the media and successive governments, in spite of continued institutionalized racism in all areas of public life and ongoing violence committed against these communities. Studies showed that up to 60 per cent of all mosques and Islamic centres and their staff and worshippers had suffered at least one attack between 2001 and 2011, including petrol bombs and serious physical assaults.⁵⁵

100% London's diverse city chorus fuelled London's perception of itself as a cosmopolitan city, while exoticizing difference and

creating a strict theatrical frame which limited and made uniform the behaviour and expression of participants. For example, Marissia Fragkou and Philip Hager note how some performers in the show were 'asked to dance briefly to a piece of music that represented their culture as a way of illustrating the range of ethnic backgrounds in London'.⁵⁶ This performance of 'the ethnic' rehearsed what Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo have referred to as a 'thin cosmopolitanism', which 'lacks due to consideration of either the hierarchies of power subtending cross-cultural engagement or the economic and material conditions that enable it'.⁵⁷

Similarly, in the Olympic bid, Black-British and Asian-British athletes such as Denise Lewis, Kelly Holmes, Amir Khan, and Ade Adepitan were featured prominently throughout in an attempt to assert 'multiculturalist nationalism' in which figures like them are integral to the self-image of the nation as 'tolerant'.⁵⁸ Critically, their role remained contingent on their presentation as 'appropriate' national subjects by conforming to corporate, nationalist, conservative, and gendered expectations.⁵⁹ As Jen Harvie has written, while cultural differences are purportedly protected, the state has, in fact, 'assimilated them to serve its own imperial purposes, such as the cultivation of a self-promoting and self-interested narrative of the metropolis as benignly tolerant of difference'.⁶⁰

A large section of *100% London* involved a question being asked, and all participants moving to the left or right side of the green circle labelled 'me' and 'not me'. These questions ranged from enquiries about personal experience ('Have you survived cancer?' and 'Have you ever contemplated suicide?') to political positions such as 'Do you want to ban the burqa in public space?' and 'Do you think gay marriage should be allowed?' Although these questions highlighted a diversity of opinions on contentious subjects, these were restricted to 'yes' or 'no' with no discussion. There was no critical analysis of how or why these questions were phrased or answered in the way they were; and the structure of the show ensured that no tensions

arising from disagreements could be played out on the stage.

This negotiation of diversity painted an ideal, positivistic image of London's ethnic, socio-economic and cultural composition, reinforcing official national Olympic narratives about a harmonious co-existence of different people with various opinions and political positions – obfuscating any prejudice or harm that informed and shaped those opinions, or how they were perpetuated by the people who hold them. *100% London* rendered invisible the ethnic fissures of the city's demographics, thus filling the state's aspirations for managing diversity and difference. The way in which Rimini Protokoll's show had already demonstrated it was able to achieve this management in previous *100% City* manifestations was a key reason it was funded to be part of LIFT's Olympiad offerings.

One further example of this fissure was evidenced in pre-production, as each of the one hundred participant-performers were required to nominate the next, in the hope of creating a continuous chain. However, often the participants chosen would not know anyone outside of their age or ethnic group to nominate. When there were thirty-seven recruits, there was nobody of Pakistani heritage, which is a significant ethnic group in the capital. Furthermore, none of the thirty-seven individuals knew anybody to ask who was Pakistani. The LIFT team was required to recruit through newspaper advertisements and personal enquiries, demonstrating potentially how minimally intercultural or multi-cultural interaction occurred between the city's highly diverse populations. However, the show still claimed that there had been an unbroken chain, and it was presented as 'documentary theatre', which obscured the more fractured reality and the complexity of reasons behind such a reality.

More successfully, *Unfinished Dream*, created by the Iranian director Hamid Pourazari, was also funded as part of the Olympiad to create community spirit in Croydon. Pourazari collaborated closely with Perpanata, a local theatre project already embedded in the area, to bring fifty residents and refugees together to create a devised show based on

images in their dreams. The work aimed imaginatively to reverse the negative stereotypes consistently reproduced in the British media about refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers, unemployed people, and those on benefits levelled across every racial, ethnic, and national group in the country.⁶¹

The initial phase of cuts to public spending from 2010 onwards saw funding to local authority and local government severely reduced. It saw the withdrawal of government subsidy for university fees, sweeping cuts to welfare and disability benefits, and a significant reduction in the Arts Council budget, among many other reductions. These policies caused increased social problems, including higher levels of unemployment, escalating violent crime, homelessness, and social disorder.⁶² In order to attempt to create popular consensus around these policies, it was necessary to demonize those who relied on various forms of welfare; for example, Cameron's division of the population into the soundbite slogan 'workers or shirkers'. This consistency of negative representations in the media enabled people on benefits, unemployed people, migrants, and asylum-seekers to function as 'national objects' – stigmatized figures that served as 'ideological conductors mobilized to do the dirty work of neoliberal governmentality'.⁶³

Despite its importance, *Unfinished Dream* was one of the lowest-attended shows of LIFT 2012, and it was the only show that had not attracted any reviews at all in national or international publications. However, the performance proved exemplary as a participatory community-based project for those who took part in the three-month process, and it produced greater multicultural understanding in the social fabric of the area through working with the pre-established connections of the theatre company. One participant explained the impact of the show on their life:

Not only has [*Unfinished Dream*] changed people's lives but it has helped people to change their mindset about certain things, that you can do all things, regardless, whether it's hard or not hard, so that's

the way I see it. Because I didn't, I could act and now I know I can act.⁶⁴

As with *100% London*, whose participants said they had found the show important since they were able to make friends with 'different' people, the biggest impact for those who participated in *Unfinished Dream* was in their own personal development. Although work was funded according to the government's programme of 'improving' the Croydon area in order to attract property developers and investors to this part of London, the work generated positive change for the targeted groups of people involved. *Unfinished Dream* demonstrated how important it is that festivals, as time-limited intermittent events, collaborate with arts organizations already deeply rooted in the community they serve – something that is not possible when the aim is to create 'spectaculars'.

Four Shakespeare Plays in Four Festivals

The remaining eight works in LIFT 2012 of the Cultural Olympiad were more conventional theatre productions. There were two new commissions from British companies Forced Entertainment and Gob Squad, both returning to LIFT with *The Coming Storm* and *Before Your Very Eyes*, respectively. There were also four LIFT 2012 productions of plays by William Shakespeare, which were part of the 'World Shakespeare Festival 2012' (WSF), another festival funded and presented as part of London 2012. These shows were therefore part of four overlapping festivals: LIFT, WSF, London 2012, and the Cultural Olympiad. Within the WSF, there was yet another 'festival' called Globe to Globe, held at the Globe Theatre, where all thirty-seven of Shakespeare's plays and Shakespeare's narrative poem *Venus and Adonis* were performed by a theatre company from a different country: Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, China, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Kenya, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Macedonia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, South Sudan, Spain, Turkey, the

United States of America, Zimbabwe, as well as one production in British Sign Language and, as well, a British production by the Globe Theatre. The enterprise risked being compromised by the agendas of these different organizations, making it difficult to determine whether any of these festive frames could allow for a meaningful reception of these theatre works, or whether they would be revealed as nothing more than a marketing ploy.

The WSF was organized by the Royal Shakespeare Company, which facilitated over sixty theatre companies from Britain and the world at large to perform Shakespeare's plays, including responses and adaptations. Two of these productions were supported by LIFT and came from the Middle East: *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad* by the Iraqi Theatre Company, and *Macbeth: Leila and Ben* by the returning Tunisian company Artistes Producteurs Associés, both presented at Riverside Studios. Potentially, *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad* was the first production by Iraq's National Theatre since the official end of combat in the country since the American-led and British-supported invasion in 2003. The political importance and symbolic vitality of this landmark production were nearly impenetrable for an audience to access through the bumph of multiple festival materials; and the show's strong message against British neo-colonialist interventionism was neutralized through the powerful nationalistic imagery that proliferated in the capital during its run.

Other Shakespeare productions were commissioned as part of a temporary 'Cool Britannia' revival intended to demonstrate the innovative and forward-thinking nature of British theatre to an international audience and global marketplace. Adding a further festival into the mix, *The Rest is Silence* by dreamthinkspeak was co-commissioned by WSF, LIFT, and the Brighton Festival. The company 'reworked and remixed' *Hamlet* in order to surround an audience with the action at Riverside Studios; actors were behind windows that doubled as video screens and mirrors on all four sides. *The Dark Side of Love* was directed by Brazilian Renato Rocha with a company of British teenagers in the tunnels

under the Roundhouse. An immersive physical production, the teenage performers created sequences based around young lovers in Shakespeare's plays. Critics deemed both shows to be 'impressive', 'atmospheric', and 'memorable'. However, all reviews (positive and negative) of each of these shows commented on their lack of artistic quality or substantive content. One typical example was a three-star review of *The Dark Side of Love* by Lyn Gardner in the *Guardian*: 'But, for all its strengths and visual swagger, this frustratingly disjointed piece never quite delivers.'⁶⁵

LIFT and the Experience Economy

The influence of the experience economy model on the cultural field intensified sharply in Britain in 2012, and this approach strongly shaped the LIFT programme, as well as the other associated Festivals. The experience economy is a system that creates and markets cultural experiences catering to individual consumers in order to generate economic gain. It was brought to popular attention in 1999 when Joseph Pine and James Gilmore published *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business is a Stage*.⁶⁶ This work outlined a socio-economic system where aesthetic experiences, rather than goods or services, forms the basis for the field of economic production. Pine and Gilmore put forward the theory that the commodification of an experience, defined as the 'feeling' that is created when experiencing a staged memorable event, was the next evolution of the service economy that had dominated the previous decades, flourishing after the decline of industrial economy.⁶⁷

According to Pine and Gilmore, the beginning of the 'experience expansion' began with the 'thrilling ride' of Walt Disney's theme parks and resorts, starting with Disneyland in California, which opened in 1955. In these parks, which have continued to be built and developed worldwide, the Disney brand is 'spatialized' into an immersive environment that people are willing to pay significant amounts of money to enter in order to have memorable experiences.⁶⁸ Experience products are considered luxury items that are

consumed for a 'thrilling' or 'pleasurable' purpose.⁶⁹ The festival as an experience product is counter to the conception of it being a place for the enactment of autonomous cultural democracy, social engagement, or political activism, which had driven the creation of LIFT. Many of these festivals in the UK in 2012 were particularly instrumentalized as a marketing tool in order to increase tourism and international trade in the Olympic year.

Founders of LIFT, Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal, had defined LIFT during their leadership by a focus on what role theatre played in the artistic, social, cultural, and political landscape. From 2010, when it was first absorbed into the experience economy, the discourse shifted to the individual as cultural consumer and to her expectations and involvement with theatre as an experience product. This is evident not only in the types of theatre performances that were presented in LIFT – predominantly immersive, gaming, or participatory theatre – but also in the way the Festival communicated with audiences. As Ball states in the introduction to the LIFT 2012 programme, 'At the heart of the festival is a commitment to participation and involvement, creating new theatrical experiences that place you . . . at the centre of things. . . . LIFT 2012 will be a thrilling theatrical ride.' The Festival sought to attract the individual consumer by creating an effective experience product that promised a good 'feeling' in return for parting with their money.⁷⁰ Pine and Gilmore state that this is essential to generating profit through experiences, which must be managed to ensure the satisfaction and entertainment of each customer. Such an appeal to the individual directly counters, of course, the conception of a festival as a place of egalitarian social engagement that might create *communitas*, and therefore this approach nullifies the Festival's promise of the possibility of emancipatory transformation or subversion.

The remaining ten productions in the Festival that were not directly funded by London 2012 could all be characterized primarily as 'experiences'. This is, partly, because they were under more pressure to be economically viable, although they still indirectly benefited from the money invested in the arts in London

during the Olympic year. There were several more immersive and site-specific productions: British companies Coney and Magic Me gave audiences *An Adventure Map* and *Where the Heart Is*, both guided tours that took individuals on journeys around the city; Look Left Look Right staged *You Once Said Yes*, a one-to-one show that took individual audience members on a series of guided encounters around Camden; Lebanese director Lucien Bourjeily presented *66 Minutes in Damascus*, in which audiences were bundled into the back of a van and then held in faux-imprisonment in an attempt to convey the horrors of the Syrian civil war which had begun the year before; *Motor Show* by Requardt and Rosenberg was a much-acclaimed site-specific production on a stretch of wasteland by Greenwich; and a 'Rio Artists Occupation' was staged at Battersea Arts Centre to look towards the subsequent Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Participation is often an illusion of action that obfuscates the structural inequality and social hierarchies present within both the artistic and political fields, and therefore cannot directly change the position of those who dominate the field. While Ball was inviting the audience to participate and get involved, Cameron had used the identical tactic in the general election in 2010. The dark blue Conservative manifesto booklet was gilded with *Invitation to Join the Government of Britain* on the cover. Inside, Cameron wrote in his introduction:

Some politicians say: 'Give us your vote and we will sort out all your problems.' We say: real change comes not from the government alone. Real change comes when the people are inspired and mobilized, when millions of us are fired up to play a part in the nation's future.⁷¹

Both these 'invitations' to participate in the theatre and in the government are based on the neoliberal subject's perceived need for a direct and individualized engagement within an eternal and unchangeable structure of power, in contrast to recognizing society as co-dependent groupings of individuals who are educated and trained in order to fulfil different roles on behalf of society within a system of power that is constantly shifting.

The range of companies and methods of working demonstrates that not all the shows can be reduced to an 'experience' for a paying audience on an individual basis. However, it is clear that, as a festival, LIFT is positioned to appeal to the experience economy. Socially engaged practices of theatre-making become further complicated when held in a festival frame that is absorbed into the experience economy. The position-taking of performances that emerged from dedicated processes with marginalized communities therefore had their positions altered in the field by the movement of LIFT, limiting their ability to transform power relations and affect social change. As the Festival was absorbed into the language, framing, and techniques of the experience economy, it lost its own avant-garde artistic and antagonistic position in the field. But, on the other hand, Ball's playing of the game increased LIFT's economic capital and ensured its financial security as it grew in revenue from his first Festival in 2010 until his final edition in 2016, despite continued austerity measures. This economic success came at the expense of the organization's integrity, capitalizing on creativity rather than the Festival being an exercise in solidarity and liberation.

Conclusion

In the decade following the 2012 London Olympics, there has been overwhelming evidence that the flags 'never really came down'. Six months after the Games and its supposed celebration of international cooperation had ended, Cameron pledged that he would hold a referendum if the Conservative Party was elected in 2015. He stated:

It is time for the British people to have their say. It is time to settle this European question in British politics. I say to the British people: this will be your decision. And when that choice comes, you will have an important choice to make about our country's destiny.⁷²

The invitation from Cameron for the British public to 'get involved' is repeated here. It is no longer the expectation that elected members of parliament, with specialist knowledge,

make informed decisions on behalf of their constituents, but that everyone is expected to directly participate in international decision making, regardless of their ability to do so. After Cameron's election with a Conservative majority in 2015, he was required to maintain this promise, and announced a referendum on Britain's EU membership to be held on 23 June 2016. A political landscape of rising xenophobic nationalism and right-wing populism that emerged since Cameron's pledge, with the increased power of UKIP, led to greater scepticism about international movement and cooperation.

In the short term, the so-called 'Brexit' vote was not an abstracted poll on international bureaucratic organizations, but became a poll on cultural values and domestic realities in Britain. Following the referendum, there was a sudden upsurge in racist and xenophobic hate crimes across the country, with one Polish man beaten to death in Harlow by a gang of teenagers in the immediate wake of the result.⁷³ These events called into question Britain's claim to be a liberal and inclusive multicultural society, exposing tensions and divisions that many had sought to ignore or had obscured over the preceding decades. The neoliberalization of Britain had found itself articulated on the terrain of a 'national question', a deeply unsettled political and cultural domain where what Antonio Gramsci had called the 'national-popular' was contested.⁷⁴ The 'Leave' campaigns had articulated a profound vision of 'the people', one that a diffusion of vision in the cultural field had not been able to address while it was distracted by meeting targets and competing for funding.

Ball had ensured the survival of LIFT as an organization, while sacrificing many of its artistic and political principles which had become incompatible with the funding that was available under an austerity-driven Conservative government. This is a position all society is placed in under neoliberal market economics, as Bourdieu observed: '[Neoliberal policies aim to] *call into question any and all collective structures* that could serve as an obstacle to the logic of the pure market.'⁷⁵ Since Festivals – and, of course, theatre itself – are a fundamentally collective structure, a

space to come together, create, change history, and generate communities, the question remains whether they can retain this social value under the regime of an individualistic neoliberal ideology that prioritizes vacuous 'experiences' over enlightenment or empowerment. As soon as this economic system, which so firmly shapes every aspect of life, is absorbed into the way artistic practice and production are carried out, it begins methodically to destroy the ability of those involved in functioning as a collective, which in turn destroys any possibility of collective action, such as protest or high-quality theatre experiences.⁷⁶

In 2022, the government tried to reassert the success of London 2012 in 'raising the national spirit' with a 'year of festivals' which included: the 'Festival of Brexit' (renamed 'Unboxed'); the Commonwealth Games and Arts Festival; another Jubilee (Platinum) for Queen Elizabeth II; and small-scale Olympic Games legacy events, predominantly held on and around the Olympic site in Stratford. LIFT 2022, the first festival held by Artistic Director Kris Nelson following the cancellation of the 2020 Festival during the Covid-19 pandemic, was not associated with any of these state-run events. In 2012, LIFT had been so co-opted by the dominant political and economic spheres that it did not have the autonomy to resist them. However, as Britain continued in its new era of isolationist politics, while navigating an ongoing pandemic, a recession, and a new cost of living crisis caused by rampant inflation and callous profiteering enabled by the current Conservative government, it remains to be seen whether festivals can be recovered from the market as a collective social, political, and artistic endeavour.

Notes and References

1. This article, and the thesis from which it has been developed, would not have been possible without the ongoing support of my supervisor Professor Maria Shevtsova, and I extend special thanks for her constant guidance. Thanks also to the staff at LIFT for their support and access to materials, in particular Kate Ward and Mark Ball, who were the General Manager and Artistic Director, respectively, during my research period.

2. Beatriz Garcia, *Final Report: London 2012 Cultural Olympiad Evaluation* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool and Institute of Cultural Capital 2013), <[\[iccliverpool.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/London_2012_Cultural_Olympiad_Evaluation_ICC.pdf\]\(http://iccliverpool.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/London_2012_Cultural_Olympiad_Evaluation_ICC.pdf\)>.](http://</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

3. Dan Hancox, 'A Tale of Two Nations: From the London 2012 Olympics to Brexit', *The National: Arts and Culture*, 10 August 2016, <<http://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/a-tale-of-two-nations-from-the-london-2012-olympics-to-brexit-1.145350>>.

4. Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [1912], trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), p. 227.

5. John Hargreaves, *Freedom for Catalonia: Catalan Nationalism, Spanish Identity, and the Barcelona Olympic Games* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 15, 56.

6. Paul Gilroy, 'Why Harry's Disoriented About Empire', *Guardian*, 18 January 2005.

7. Tessa Jowell, 'From Consultation to Conversation: The Challenge of Better Places to Live', in *Capturing the Public Value of Heritage*, ed. Kate Clark (Swindon: English Heritage, 2006), p. 7–13.

8. Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Narrating the Nation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 1–7; Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs "Identity"?', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), p. 1–17.

9. Arts Council England, *2012 Games – Our Vision* (London: Arts Council England, 2008), p. 3, <<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160204122523/http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/2012-games-our-vision>>.

10. See Phoebe Patey-Ferguson, 'LIFT and the GLC versus Thatcher: London's Cultural Battleground in 1981', *New Theatre Quarterly*, XXXVI, No. 1 [NTQ 141] (February 2020), p. 4–15.

11. Office for National Statistics, *Labour Market Statistics, October 2011* (London: Office for National Statistics, 2011).

12. Adrian Harvey, *Funding Arts and Culture in a Time of Austerity* (London: Arts Council England, NLGN, 2016).

13. Arts Council England, *2012 Games – Our Vision* (London: Arts Council England, 2008), p. 3; <<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160204122523/http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/2012-games-our-vision>>, p. 2.

14. John Hughson, 'Sport and Cultural Policy in the Re-Imaged City', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, XIV, No. 4 (2008), p. 355–60.

15. Rose Fenton and Lucy Neal, interview with author, London, 15 February 2018.

16. See B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre and Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

17. Maria Miller, 'Testing Times: Fighting Culture's Corner in an Age of Austerity', keynote speech, 24 April 2013, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/testing-times-fighting-cultures-corner-in-an-age-of-austerity>>.

18. *Ibid.*

19. LIFT 2012 Financial Report (London, 2012).

20. Francis Maude, *Giving: White Paper* (London: Cabinet Office, 2011).

21. Even individuals giving through donations or crowd funders are offered 'rewards'. For sponsorships or large donations, trusts, foundations, and businesses expect to receive branding, naming rights, or social media

exposure from the arts organization. See Bernadette McNicholas, 'Arts, Culture and Business: A Relationship Transformation, a Nascent Field', *International Journal of Arts Management*, VII, No. 1 (Fall 2004), p. 57–69 (p. 59).

22. See Jay M. Handelman and Stephen J. Arnold, 'The Role of Marketing Actions with a Social Dimension: Appeals to the Institutional Environment', *Journal of Marketing*, LXIII, No. 3 (July 1999), p. 33–48; Sankar Sen and C. B. Bhattacharya, 'Does Doing Good Always Lead to Doing Better? Consumer Reactions to Corporate Social Responsibility', *Journal of Marketing Research*, XXXVIII, No. 2 (May 2001), p. 225–43; and Jonathan Jones, 'Tate is Right to Take BP's Money', *Guardian*, 29 June 2010.

23. Peter Balzagette, 'Three Compelling Reasons Why Businesses Should Get Behind British Arts and Culture', *City A.M.*, 16 September 2014.

24. Jen Harvie, 'Funding, Philanthropy, Structural Inequality, and Decline in England's Theatre Ecology', *Cultural Trends*, XXIV, No. 1 (2015), p. 56–61 (p. 56).

25. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

26. See *The London Olympics and Urban Development: The Mega-Event City*, ed. Gavin Poynter, Valerie Viehoff, and Yang Li (London: Routledge, 2015); Loretta Lees, 'Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance?', *Urban Studies*, XLV, No. 12 (November 2008), p. 2249–70; Paul Watt, 'Housing Stock Transfers, Regeneration, and State-Led Gentrification in London', *Urban Policy and Research*, XXVII, No. 3 (September 2009), p. 229–42; Paul Watt, "'It's Not For Us": Regeneration, the 2012 Olympics, and the Gentrification of East London', *City*, XVII, No. 1 (February 2013), p. 99–118; Paul Watt and Anna Minton, 'London's Housing Crisis and its Activisms', *City*, XX, No. 2 (March 2016), p. 204–21; Pete Fussey, Jon Coaffee, Gary Armstrong, and Dick Hobbs, 'The Regeneration Games: Purity and Security in the Olympic City', *British Journal of Sociology*, LXIII, No. 2 (June 2012), p. 260–84; and Michael J. Rustin, *London's Turning: The Making of the Thames Gateway* (London: Routledge, 2016).

27. Martha Rosler, 'The Artistic Mode of Revolution: From Gentrification to Occupation', *E-flux Journal*, Issue 33 (March 2012), p. 177–98; Daniel Makagon, 'Bring on the Shock Troops: Artists and Gentrification in the Popular Press', *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, VII, No. 1 (March 2010), p. 26–52.

28. Edward Platt, 'The Cockney Siberia', *New Statesman*, 5 March 2010, <<https://www.newstatesman.com/environment/2010/03/thames-gateway-london-area>>.

29. Margaret M. Gold and George Reville, 'The Cultural Olympiads: Reviving the Panegyris', in *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896 to 2012*, ed. John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 59–83 (p. 59).

30. The competition model was dropped after 1948 due to a series of complex antagonisms between sport and arts such as the developing avant-garde which rejected the 'bourgeois' standards of the event's judging criteria, as well as the changing values attached to arts and sports in relation to amateurism and professionalism. See David Inglis, 'Culture Agonistes: Social Differentiation, Cultural Policy, and Cultural Olympiads', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, XIV, No. 4 (November 2008), p. 463–77.

31. Inglis, 'Culture Agonistes', p. 467, drawing on Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* [1977] (London: Fontana, 1981).

32. *Ibid.*, p. 467–8.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 467. The tensions of the Cold War were explicit in the 1980 Games in Moscow and in Los Angeles in 1984. See Abigail Gilmore, 'Counting Eyeballs, Soundbites, and 'Plings': Arts Participation, Strategic Instrumentalism, and the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, XVIII, No. 2 (March 2012), p. 151–67 (p. 154).

34. In addition to the opening ceremony, campaigns for nationalist support of 'GREAT' Britain from the global public was rolled out across the world in order to boost tourism and investment. In the lead-up to the Olympics, Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport, led a global campaign titled 'GREAT', which promoted Britain across the globe. Neo-colonialist interventions included: draping New Delhi taxis in British flags; stopping traffic in Tokyo with a 'GREAT' branded double-decker bus; lighting up Shanghai with 'GREAT' projections on buildings; and sending David Beckham and Prince Harry to Sugarloaf Mountain in Rio, requesting that thousands of journalists cover the event. See Jeremy Hunt, '2012 – Our Best Ever Tourism Year', speech at Tate Modern, 14 August 2012, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/2012-our-best-ever-tourism-year>>.

35. This was from a budget of £32 million funded from a rate precept on London residential council-taxpayers as part of the Olympic public sector funding package. See Ozlem Edizel, Graeme Evans, and Hua Dong, 'Dressing up London', in *The Handbook of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Volume Two: Celebrating the Games*, ed. Vassil Girginov (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 19–35 (p. 19).

36. The performances were done suspended from the London Eye and Millennium Bridge, and abseiling from City Hall. There were special gantries erected outside the National Theatre and in Trafalgar Square, whilst a large aluminium wheel was installed in Paternoster Square.

37. Kika Dabbs, Amanda Kiely, and Giles Stanford, *Learning Legacy: Lessons Learned from Planning and Staging the London 2012 Games* (London: LOCOG, 2012).

38. Greater London Authority, *LOOK & FEEL Budget* [Request for Mayoral Decision No. MD696] (London: Greater London Authority, 2012).

39. Greater London Authority, 'Surprises: Streb – One Extraordinary Day of Unforgettable Action', Mayor of London/London Assembly, 5 July 2012, <<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases-4738>>.

40. LIFT, 'Surprises: Streb – One Extraordinary Day', report (London, n.d.).

41. Jonathan Jones, 'The Cultural Olympiad: where's the culture?', *Guardian*, 18 July 2012.

42. Mark Ball, 'A Powerful Political Piece', in LIFT, *Gatz theatre programme* (London, 2012).

43. Dominic Cavendish, 'Show of Strength', in *ibid.*

44. Matt Trueman, 'Review: Gatz, Public Theatre, New York', 23 June 2012, <<http://mattrueman.co.uk/2010/11/review-2gatz-public-theatre-new-york.html>>.

45. Mark Ball, interview with author, 11 August 2017.

46. Mark Ball, 'Welcome to 100% London, a unique production that puts faces to the stories and statistics of our city', in Rimini Protokoll, *100% London* theatre programme (London, 2012), p. 7.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

48. Rimini Protokoll, *100% London*, performance at Hackney Empire, June 2012.

49. London 2012, Candidate File, London, 2004, <<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/200801072>

10715/<http://www.london2012.com/news/publications/candidate-file.php>>, p. 1.

50. London 2012, media release, 'Business Leaders Urged to Back the Bid', 6 October 2004.

51. See Daniel Burdsey, 'The Technicolour Olympics? Race, Representation, and the 2012 London Games', in *Watching the Olympics: Politics, Power, and Representation*, ed. John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 69–81 (p. 70).

52. Trevor Phillips, 'After 7/7: Sleepwalking to Segregation', speech at the Manchester Council of Community Relations, 22 September 2005.

53. *Ibid.*

54. John Stevens, 'If you're a Muslim – It's Your Problem', *News of the World*, 12 August 2006.

55. Robert Lambert and Jonathan Githens-Mazer, *Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: UK Case Studies 2010* (Exeter: University of Exeter, European Muslim Research Centre, 2010), p. 106.

56. Marissia Fragkou and Philip Hager, 'Staging London: Participation and Citizenship on the Way to the 2012 Olympic Games', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, XXIII, No. 4 (2013), p. 532–41 (p. 535).

57. Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo, *Performance and Cosmopolitanism: Cross-Cultural Transactions in Australasia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), p. 9.

58. Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Pride Politics and Multiculturalist Citizenship', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, XXVIII, No. 3 (2005), p. 559–78 (p. 560).

59. To understand how Black Britons have been 'allowed' to signify the dominant white, conservative sporting national culture and the limitations placed on them, and, furthermore, how this point is underscored by the absence in the Olympic bid of high-profile Black Britons who had criticized the white dominance of sport such as Ian Wright and Chris Eubank, see Ben Carrington's 'Postmodern Blackness and the Celebrity Sports Star: Ian Wright, "Race", and English Identity', in *Sports Stars: The Cultural Politics of Sporting Celebrity*, ed. David L. Andrews and Steven J. Jackson (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 102–23; and his 'Fear of a Black Athlete: Masculinity, Politics, and the Body', *New Formations*, XLV (2002), p. 91–110. Amir Khan in particular was mobilized in media discourses after the 7 July 2005 attacks as the archetypal 'good' British-Asian. See Daniel Burdsey, 'Role with the Punches: The Construction and Representation of Amir Khan as a Role Model for Multiethnic Britain', *The Sociological Review*, LV, No. 3 (August 2007), p. 611–31.

60. Jen Harvie, *Staging the UK* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 193.

61. See, for example, Kim Allen, Imogen Tyler, and Sara De Benedictis, 'Thinking with "White Dee": The Gender Politics of "Austerity Porn"', *Sociological Research Online*, XIX, No. 3 (August 2014), p. 1–7 (p. 2); Deborah Andrews, 'I'm Claiming £50,000 of Benefits I Don't Need': Shameless Mother of Ten Admits to Fiddling the System – but Says She Will NEVER Stop while the Government Make it this Easy', *MailOnline*, 29 May 2012, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2151202/Im-claiming-50kbenefits-I-dont-need-Shameless-mother-admits-fiddling-says-NEVER-stop>>; Stephen Brien, 'Make Work Pay – For All', *Spectator*, 11 March 2010, <<http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/5834183/make-work-pay-for-all>>; James Chapman, 'A Life Without Work: 1.5 million Britons Have Never Worked a Day

in their Lives', *MailOnline*, 14 September 2010, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1311789/1-5m-Britons-havent-job-left-school.html>>; Matt Chorley, 'Revealed: How 10 Families on Benefits Were Paid More on Average Each Week than Someone with a Salary of £85,000', *MailOnline*, 13 May 2014, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2627028/Revealed-How-10-families-benefits>>; and David Cameron, 'PM's speech on Welfare Reform Bill', 17 February 2011, <<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcript/s/2011/02/pms-speech-on-welfare-reform-bill-60717>>.

62. Peter Taylor-Gooby and Gerry Stoker, 'The Coalition Programme: A New Vision for Britain or Politics as Usual?', *The Political Quarterly*, LXXXII, No. 1 (January–March 2011), p. 4–15.

63. Imogen Tyler, *Revolted Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain* (London: Zed Books, 2013), p. 9.

64. LIFT, 'Unfinished Dream Participant Feedback', Festival Participant Questionnaires (LIFT, 2012).

65. Lyn Gardner, 'The Dark Side of Love – Review', *Guardian*, 2 July 2012.

66. See note 16 above.

67. Michael Hardt, 'Affective Labour', *Boundary 2*, XXVI, No. 2 (Summer 1999), p. 89–100 (p. 90–1); Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture: Volume 1 [Information Age Series]* (London: Blackwell, 1996), p. 220.

68. Pine and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy*, p. 2–3.

69. Anne Lorentzen and Carsten Jahn Hansen, 'The Role and Transformation of the City in the Experience Economy: Identifying and Exploring Research Challenges', *European Planning Studies*, XVII, No. 6 (2009), p. 817–27 (p. 820). For the experience economy and place promotion, see Deborah Hayes and Nicola MacLeod, 'Packaging Places: Designing Heritage Trails Using an Experience Economy Perspective to Maximize Visitor Engagement', *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, XIII, No. 1 (January 2007), p. 45–58. For the experience economy and visitor experience, see Haemoo Oh, Anne Marie Fiore, and Miyoung Jeoung, 'Measuring Experience Economy Concepts: Tourism Applications', *Journal of Travel Research*, XLVI, No. 2 (November 2007), p. 119–132. For the experience economy and marketing destination strategies, see Michael Morgan, Jörgen Elbe, and Javier de Esteban Curiel, 'Has the Experience Economy Arrived Yet? The Views of Destination Managers in Three Visitor-Dependent Areas', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, XI, No. 2 (March/April 2009), p. 201–16. See also Marjana Johansson and Jerzy Kociatkiewicz, 'City Festivals: Creativity and Control in Staged Urban Experiences', *European Urban and Regional Studies*, XVIII, No. 4 (2011), p. 392–405; Shane Pegg and Ian Patterson, 'Rethinking Music Festivals a Staged Event: Gaining Insights from Understanding Visitor Motivations and the Experiences They Seek', *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism*, XI, No. 2 (2010), p. 85–99; Steve Oakes and Gary Warnaby, 'Conceptualizing the Management and Consumption of Live Music in Urban Space', *Marketing Theory*, XI, No. 4 (2011), p. 405–18; Aikaterini Manthiou, Seonjeong Lee, Liang (Rebecca) Tang, and Lanlung Chiang, 'The Experience Economy Approach to Festival Marketing: Vivid Memory and Attendee Loyalty', *Journal of Services Marketing*, XXVIII, No. 1 (2014), p. 22–35; *Cultural Economy: Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life*, ed. Paul du Gay and Michael

Pryke (London: Sage, 2002); and *Cultural Tourism: Global and Local Perspectives*, ed. Greg Richards (London: Routledge, 2011).

70. Pine and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy*, p. 11–14.

71. The Conservative Party, *Invitation to Join the Government of Britain* (London: The Conservative Party, 2010), p. iii.

72. David Cameron, 'EU speech at Bloomberg,' 23 January 2013, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg>>.

73. Daniel Devine, 'Hate Crime Did Spike after the Referendum Even Allowing for Other Factors', London School of Economics, Brexit Blog, 19 March 2018.

74. *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916–1935*, ed. David Forgacs (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p. 363–70.

75. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Essence of Neoliberalism,' *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 8 December 1998, <<https://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu>> (original emphasis).

76. Ibid.