

James Boyle  
Chair  
Culture Commission  
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7 October 2004

Dear James,

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to the consultation process of the Culture Commission.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the meeting at The Lighthouse on 20th September (Creative Industries Group) or to reply by the suggested date of 27th September. However, I hope that my comments are received in time to be considered for this first phase of consultation.

As an independent research consultancy specializing in commercializing creativity, Farm7 values the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process. For your information, further company details can be found as an appendix to this reply.

I hope that this response is of use to the Culture Commission and I look forward to participating in future consultation events.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Docherty  
Director.

# **FARM7**

## **Response to Culture Commission Phase 1 of the Consultation Process**

Prepared for  
James Boyle, Chair

October 2004

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## Response to Culture Commission

This response to the proposal for 'cultural rights for the Scottish citizen, and those of its creative community' has been structured according to the 5 core activities impacting on the remit of the Commission as outlined in your invitation letter. I have provided two responses to each section: one relates to cultural activities broadly, the second to design as a key contributor to the creative industries, one of the main areas of activity for Farm7. Design has been highlighted specifically as a particularly significant sector both culturally and economically, representing 25% of the creative industries – second only to software and computer services<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, Glasgow has been recognised as a centre of design excellence<sup>2</sup>

### Education

Cultural Industries: education is a critical element in informing, engaging and growing audiences. Whilst it is recognised that the education of younger people (e.g. school children) is critical for a deep and long-term impact, this should not be to the exclusion of educational activities for other audiences ranging from young adults through to older and mature generations.

Informing audiences of the impact and contribution of new as well as established cultural activities would be welcomed. This might include introducing older generations to contemporary approaches to expressing culture such as digital art or graffiti art; educating young adults through computer gaming or immersive learning approaches; whilst increasing access to information on cultural activities through the web, and encouraging the young as well as 'silver surfers'<sup>3</sup> to use alternative means of accessing information.

Design: There is a common misconception that design relates purely to aesthetics – that it is superficial, about styling or making products look a particular way. There is further confusion where design is misinterpreted as relating specifically to fashion. An educational focus is necessary to ensure a broad and comprehensive understanding of design as a means of realising a defined problem whilst embodying sensory and experiential cultural references. Design is a broad term relating to architecture, signage, products, graphics and processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Creative Industries Economic Estimates Statistical Bulletin, DCMS, August 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Creative Industries Mapping Document, DCMS, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> A **silver surfer** is a senior citizen who uses ("surfs") the World Wide Web, <http://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/Silver+Surfer>

A focus on design and, by default, the proliferation of a design-literate society, is necessary for continued national economic sustainability. A broader understanding of the cultural and economic contribution of design as a creative force is necessary. Although the work of design legends such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh is widely known, mapping of the design heritage of Scotland would be a valuable exercise with a broad educational value. For example, it is not widely known that Glasgow hosts the world's first dedicated school of design – Glasgow School of Art. This was founded 15 years before the Royal Academy in London. A comprehensive review of the cultural contribution of Scottish design would be of great value.

To ensure that the cultural contribution of design is properly recognised, can be appraised and valued, exemplar design projects need to be identified and promoted to industry, as well as to society generally. The educational focus may range from highlighting various design courses and job opportunities to school pupils and graduates, to highlighting the economic contribution that design can make to business and industry with a focus on different skills and activities available or that can be learned.

A broad educational programme to inform business and industry of the quantitative as well as the qualitative contribution of design would be welcomed. It is widely recognized that significant skills gaps exist within the design industry and that there is a lack of educational content to bridge this divide<sup>4</sup>. The development of appropriate continuous professional development activities is critical to ensuring adequate skills for the development of this important industry sector.

### **The Institutional Infrastructure**

Cultural Industries: to complement established cultural events, a more creative approach may be required to attract new audiences from a wide socio-economic demographic. This might include taking a proactive approach by bringing art and culture to the people. A good example of how this has been done successfully is Block 37 in Chicago. This is a vacant space near the heart of the city that is open to the public for events, festivals and myriad cultural activities. Many events that previously took place within city neighbourhoods are now located downtown in a highly visible location that is easy to access. Events are free of charge.

It is useful to note that the 'cultural ephemera' or short-term events that occupy Block 37 throughout the year are always devised for the people of the city and not to generate tourism.

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<sup>4</sup> Scottish Creative Industries Skills 2, Scottish Enterprise, 2002

New ways of engaging audiences are necessary. Established methods such as activities in schools, school trips, voucher schemes can help change the perception of many arts and cultural events and activities by widening access. In particular, it is necessary to connect with audiences who consider these activities 'not for us'. A good example of this approach is illustrated in Glasgow's Tron Theatre advertising to help dispel the myth of theatre for 'luvvies'<sup>5</sup>.

Design: since the disbanding of Scottish Design in 2000, there has been no strategic approach to embedding design in industry or supporting the growth and development of the design industry in Scotland. Without an adequately researched way forward and committed resources, design initiatives will remain piecemeal and at the discretion of funding bodies. A coherent approach is required to determine the way forward for investment in and support for design as a significant contributor to Scotland's culture and economy. A design commission, similar to the Culture Commission might be a way forward.

### **The Delivery of Services and Access to Them**

Cultural Industries: Undoubtedly a variety of approaches to delivering services and ensuring adequate access are required to engage a broad and varied audience including various socio-economic groups and ethnicities. Research on preferred approaches for specific target groups may be required to determine the best way of ensuring adequate access and service delivery.

Non-traditional venues or locations, such as Block 37, and other 'gathering places' could help increase access to activities.

Ease of access will be affected by transport infrastructure and availability. Visibility is also important to ensure general awareness. These have been long-standing issues for venues such as the Tramway in Glasgow.

Design: comprehensive research is required to determine what services are required for specific audiences whether they be design consultancies, design professionals or industry and business users and consumers of design services, products or processes. Based on these findings, the best mode/s of delivery and ensuring access can be determined.

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<sup>5</sup> This recent advertising campaign was prominent on the Glasgow Underground.

## **Marketing and Promotion**

Cultural Industries: a multi-pronged approach to marketing and promotion is necessary. This might increasingly include the use of email and mobile communications to notify individuals of opportunities for early bookings and of last minute availability of tickets (not unlike 5pm.com).

Promotion of activities through publicly visible events, in the way that Mischief Las Bas provide street entertainment in Glasgow's main thoroughfares including Buchanan Street.

Design: promoting the cultural contribution of design via events, exhibitions and activities to celebrate and communicate past, current achievements and future and trends. Research is necessary to determine the content and approach of specific initiatives that will increase support and help develop design awareness in Scotland prior to advising on how this should be achieved.

## **Encouraging Creativity**

Education, access and opportunity.

Creativity must be officially recognised as having a powerful economic values, in addition to its cultural value. This requires that all sectors of the Scottish community recognise and apply their creative potential in education, business and life.

Design: it is necessary to engage the design community, business and industry and the various support agencies such as Scottish Enterprise to build on and further develop the rich design cultural heritage and fully exploit future talent in Scotland.

## Appendix

### **Farm7**

At Farm7 we create and apply knowledge on design and creativity to improve the performance and competitiveness of organisations. We do this in many ways including through research and consultancy. We work in collaboration and develop project partnerships with public and private organisations, where appropriate.

Key areas of activity for Farm7 include:

**Design Policy:** creating new knowledge, developing national, regional and sectoral policy

**Sustainability:** creating new knowledge, resources and CPD

**Health:** understanding the environmental impact on wellbeing and services, creating new knowledge assets, resources, services, products and policy

**Workplace:** creating new knowledge, assets, resources, services and products

**Creative Industries:** creating new knowledge, improving reach; increasing growth, developing CPD and business skills

Some of the projects that are underway at the moment include:

**Social Care Services:** developing a design framework for social care services that will enhance the experience of the service users and improve the effective delivery of care services by staff. This is in collaboration with a local university.

**Creative Industries:** facilitating the development of a creative industries strategy for a local authority region.

**Workplace:** devising strategic design approaches for the design of work spaces.

**Consultancy:** providing consultancy to Scottish Executive-funded sustainability project, Sust., to initiate and drive forward Phase II of the programme.