7. Branded Places

Read chapter 7 of *The Culture of Design* **'Branded Places'**

Much of this chapter is devoted to challenging the idea that places become branded merely by running marketing campaigns or putting up so-called 'iconic buildings'. Instead, it looks to the intersection of a range of design. This can include logos or buildings, but also extends to things like street furniture and signage, but also to the activities of the creative industries and other professions or trades as well. Where there is an orchestrated, dominant fit of these things I have called this a 'designscape'. Of course, we needn't see place branding as, necessarily, a good thing. There may be tensions between the orthodoxies that are created through place branding and the diversity or experience of places in their everyday lives, for instance.

These exercises are devised to get you to think creatively about design and strategies for towns and cities. You are encouraged to be imaginative, risky, witty and radical, but also precise and reasoned. You might find it helpful to actually focus on a city that you know as a case study example rather than a hypothetical context where you then have to go the trouble of then inventing the scenario first. Present your ideas as a poster.

1. Create a strategy for to develop an **urban designscape** in which the hegemony of a modern **cultural elite** is actually maintained.

2. You are the Creative Director of a medium-size, regional city (population 500,000). Develop a brand and strategy that positions that city as such. This means that it doesn't have false aspirations to being a major, international design city, but may, rather, celebrated for its more **local qualities**.

3. You are head of an urban regeneration team. You are given the job of regenerating a neighbourhood that is suffering multiple deprivation. It has a transient population. It is home to a recent influx of immigrants from various countries. There is **very little budget** to provide cultural infrastructure such as community centres or to undertake large public works. Develop a strategy that promotes a sense of **place and identity** for the neighbourhood, taking the above factors and contraints into consideration.

4. You are Creative Director of a **progressive city** where the anti-globalisation movement, transition towns movement, slow food, social enterprises etc. are very active. You have been asked to design a way of communicating that city's essence for an international audience. You know

that if you create a 'traditional' brand (logotype, slogan etc.) you will be heavily criticised by many influential people within that city who are **'anti-branding'**. How else are you going to do this? How will it be rolled out and managed?

5. It is 2020, and by now the strategies of 'cultural industries' and 'creative quarters' have been discredited. Neither have returned significant economic advantages and they have emphasised social divisions and the negative impacts of gentrification. And, in any case, it is now understood that *everyone* is creative in various ways and that these notions shouldn't be the reserve of a cultural elite. Devise a transitional plan that uses design to move a place from being 'creative city' to being a **'beautiful city'**. In this case, 'beauty' can be widely interpreted and may not be merely about aesthetic dimensions.