

THE RELEVANCE OF THE NORTH WEST TEXTILE LEGACY TO THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

Moira Stevenson – Deputy Director Manchester City Galleries.

Professor Maureen Wayman – Dean of Faculty of Art and Design and Pro-Vice –Chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University.

“amongst the most important means of stimulating industrial art education ... is the foundation of local museums of applied art of such character as is best adapted to advance the industries of the districts in which they are situated...the connection between these museums and the local schools of art should be of an intimate character.”

(The Royal Commission on Technical Instruction of 1881)

Abstract

The North West region of England, and in particular Manchester, is known worldwide as a textile centre. An unrivalled legacy of historic building, collections and expertise associated with the industry survives as testimony to the industry which not only dominated the region but was also responsible for generating its wealth.

The provision of textile design education in the region dates back to the 1830s and Manchester remains a major centre for education, research and development in the field of textiles. Many fashion/textile graduates from the Manchester Higher Education institutions have gone on to influence the industry regionally, nationally and internationally.

In terms of special collections a huge resource survives which requires new and imaginative approaches to identify and exploit how it might be used to stimulate creativity, inspire entrepreneurship and encourage economic growth. This presentation sets out to demonstrate how the textile legacy of the 19th and 20th centuries has the potential to support the development of the creative industries, thereby enabling them to contribute to future economic growth.

Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester City Galleries and the Creative Industries Development Service are currently collaborating on a project looking at how the City's fashion and textiles collections can be developed as a resource which will serve to attract and retain graduates in the field, encourage and foster creative enterprise and thereby stimulate the creative enterprise in the city. In addition to the collections resource engaged with teaching and research, the model will incorporate postgraduate programmes, incubator workshops and business support. The project is embedded in the City's Knowledge Capital initiative which aims to foster the knowledge based economy and stimulate enterprise and entrepreneurship.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE NORTH WEST TEXTILE LEGACY TO THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

Introduction

This paper has been prepared to have three parts. The first section provides an outline of Manchester's legacy of textile collections and their relationship to the development of art and design education within the City. The second gives an indication, albeit briefly, of some of the developments that have occurred to affect and change art and design education during the last fifty years. The section concludes with information about the most recent influences and interventions that are helping to affect and shape the thinking that will further develop the University's Faculty of Art and Design. The final section introduces a collaborative project (involving the Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester City Galleries and the Creative Industries Development Service) that utilises Manchester's special collections in teaching, research and the creative industries. It is intended that the project will ultimately provide students, researchers and all those involved in the creative industries with a world-class resource that has its origins in the 19th century but that has a relevance to the 21st century.

Manchester and the North West region of England are known worldwide for textile manufacture. While this reputation is founded largely on historical activity there is still much to link the region's identity internationally with textiles. The region has an unrivalled legacy of historic buildings, textile collections and a skilled workforce associated with the industry that once dominated the region. The industry was responsible for generating great wealth, continued to provide employment and its legacy could contribute to the region's future enterprise, redevelopment and economic growth.

The provision of design education in the region dates back to the 1830s. In 1835 a government Select Committee, was set up to look into the standard of design of British manufactured goods. At this time there was general concern about the standard of design and increased competition from Europe in the market for manufactured goods. The Committee recommended the establishment of a Government School of Design in London. Others were soon to follow.

A meeting to discuss the founding of the School of Design in Manchester was held in the Royal Manchester Institution on 10 February 1838. At the meeting it was stated that there had long been a wish that

“a school should be established in Manchester for the encouragement of the fine arts and those branches of mechanical science immediately connected with art”¹.

¹ Jeremiah, D., *A hundred years and more*, Manchester Polytechnic 1980

Reporting the event, the Manchester Guardian concluded that Manchester required a school of design to

“enhance the value of this district; to improve the taste of the rising generation; to infuse into the public mind a desire for symmetry of form and elegance of design; and to educate for public service a highly intelligent class of artists and civil engineers”².

The School of Design in Manchester opened in October 1838 in rent-free accommodation in the basement of the Royal Manchester Institution building on Mosley Street and soon attracted fifty students. Although the government initiative was expressly designed to influence the standards of design in the industries of the locality in which they were situated, it was acknowledged that the Manchester School of Design took the form of a high class drawing school or school of art, rather than a school of design. The policy of favouring a broader fine art curriculum brought it into conflict with the School of Design Council in London. However, the replacement in 1841 of the original headmaster with George Wallis brought it back in line with central policy. Wallis was responsible for the organisation of an exhibition of industrial art in 1845. This was a joint venture between the Royal Manchester Institution and the School of Design and included the work of students, designs from the local textile industry and, significantly, the proof of advancement in the application of machinery to art. This exhibition was staged six years prior to the Great Exhibition in 1851 and provided early evidence of the belief in the role of collections and exhibitions to influence both manufacturing and public taste.

The early years of the Manchester School of Design were fraught with financial difficulties, being dependent on free accommodation, student fees and charitable donations until 1843 when a small government grant provided additional support. This enabled the school to assert its independence from the Royal Manchester Institution building in Mosley Street and rent premises in Brown Street.

The debate that dominated the early years of the school was the opposing views in art education essentially those of vocational training against the broader, less utilitarian, form of art education. Wallis's emphasis on the drawing of ornament as being more relevant to the local textile industry brought him in conflict with C.H. Wilson, artist and head of the Central School of Design in London, who favoured figure drawing. Under James Hammersley, headmaster from 1848, the school broadened its syllabus and the art classes became less vocational taking it away from the school's original aims. By 1850 the register suggested that less than 20% of its students came from the textile industry and in 1853 it changed its name

² Jeremiah, D., *A hundred years and more*, Manchester Polytechnic 1980

to the Manchester School of Art³. In March of the following year, facing financial difficulties, the School of Art returned to the Mosley Street building and became a department of the Royal Manchester Institution, benefiting from membership privileges and subsidised accommodation. The Royal Manchester Institution had been established in 1820s for the promotion of “*Literature, Science and the Arts*”. It had staged annual art exhibitions and established collections. In addition to providing accommodation for a number of cultural societies, it housed laboratories and a museum. However, it was no more financially secure than the School of Art and was in such financial difficulty by the 1870s that in 1875 it asked the School of Art to vacate the rooms they occupied in the Mosley Street building. Spurred on by necessity, civic pride, the knowledge of continental educational practice and need to address the commercial competition from Europe and Japan, the decision was made to establish a purpose built school. With the campaigning, organisational and financial support of Frederick William Grafton, a calico printer and MP, funds were raised to purchase land in All Saints and commission a new building, which opened in April 1881, the year of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction to which F.W. Grafton gave evidence.

Early in the 1880s, the Royal Manchester Institution’s financial crisis led it to negotiate the transfer of its building and collections to Manchester Corporation and the building became the Manchester City Art Gallery. Evidence from second report of the Royal Commission on Technical Education, published in 1884 noted that

“a considerable sum was subscribed by private persons in Manchester and the Art Gallery has thus become possessed of a large and admirable collection of ancient textiles purchased from Dr. Franz Bock, from whom the ‘Bock’ collection of ancient textiles at South Kensington was obtained.....The ‘Bock’ collection is particularly rich in silk fabrics. It contains also a large number of ancient embroideries and laces together with an admirable, but unfortunately relatively small, collection of old linens and cotton prints. This branch of the collection will, no doubt, be developed as opportunity may offer; and in the meanwhile, by liberty of the authorities of the South Kensington Museum, a large and very rich loan collection of Indian fabrics has been placed in the hands of the Art Gallery Committee, and forms a valuable supplement to their permanent collections. The collection of textiles is intended to be especially of service to designers, who have already made some use of it. Arrangements are about to be made for their greater convenience in copying.”⁴

Throughout the 19th century museums were valued for the role they played in educating the public and designs for industry. The Royal Commission on Technical Instruction of 1881 stated in their report of 1884 that

³ Fowler, A. and Wyke, T., *Many Arts, Many Skills: The origins of the Manchester Metropolitan University*, Manchester Metropolitan University Press 1993

⁴ *Second Report of Royal Commissions on Technical Instruction*, London 1884

“amongst the most important means of stimulating industrial art education ... is the foundation of local museums of applied art of such character as is best adapted to advance the industries of the districts in which they are situated...” and advocated that *“...the connection between these museums and the local schools of art should be of an intimate character.”*

It was appropriate, therefore, as the centre of textile manufacture in the North West, that institutions in Manchester should acquire collections of textiles.

Sir Philip Cunliffe, Director of South Kensington and Bethnal Green Museums, giving evidence to the Commission, supported the close relationship between the museums and schools of art.

“It is in that close connection between the art schools and the museum that the superiority of the South Kensington Museum over other museums consists. I consider that a museum can have no life if it is not intimately connected with, and, if possible, under the same roof with the science and art schools.”

He also advocated the role of circulating collections from South Kensington Museum to support the regional collections and 50% grant funding to help finance the development of collections in regional museums. William Morris, giving evidence to the same commission, did not support the former on the grounds of the risks to objects in transit and that

“a museum, to be of any great use to those studying in it, as artists or designers, must be arranged in a permanent manner so that one can come day after day and see the same thing”⁵.

He went on to say that *“it is essential that a designer should learn the practical way of carrying out the work for which he designs; he ought to be able to weave himself”*. This thinking was to influence the move to the arts and crafts teaching methods within the schools of art.

Permanent collections of textiles were established in Manchester with the express purpose of inspiring the designers in the textile industry of the region. While there are references to the acquisition of collections in the annual reports of the School of Art in the 1870s this was done in a fairly ad hoc manner⁶.

⁵ *Second Report of the Royal Commissioners on Technical Instruction*, London 1884

⁶ Davies, J. and Shrigley, R, *Inspired by Design. The Arts & Crafts Collections of the Manchester Metropolitan University*, (catalogue) Manchester City Art Galleries 1994

It was only during the 1880s that a more systematic approach was taken. The adoption of arts and crafts principles in the teaching of the school led to a collection of arts and crafts material, including textiles, being established and in 1898 a decorative art museum was opened within the Municipal School or Art in Cavendish Street. In declaring it open the Lord Mayor described it as

“... the means of inspiring and educating a race of designers and craftsmen and craftsmen who by their skill and genius will do honour and promote the best interest of our City...”

In the Textile Court of the Museum, tapestries and other textiles designed by William Morris were exhibited⁷.

Parallel initiatives were going on elsewhere in the city. Among the original intentions of the governors of the Whitworth Art Gallery was the formation of a collection of textiles to act as a source of help and inspiration for the textile industry of the North. In 1888 they had acquired two tapestries *Flora* and *Pomona* designed by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. In 1891 they went on to purchase the great collection of early textiles and embroidery assembled by Sir Charles Robinson⁸. Manchester Museum also acquired fine collections of Coptic textiles.

Throughout the 20th century many personal collections have ultimately found their way into the museums of the regions and among the most significant is the collection of dress acquired by Dr C Willet-Cunnington which was purchased by the City in 1948 and forms the basis of the Gallery of Costume at Platt Hall⁹. The collection of embroidery and lace acquired by Rachel Kay Shuttleworth was bequeathed, together with Gawthorpe Hall the collector's family home, to the National Trust.

The study of textiles and costume in their own right has a long history but the systematic study and collection of material related to the technological, social and economic history of the textile industry is more recent. While it is true that machines reflecting significant advances in textile technology were preserved this was often done without their associated documentary and contextual information and in isolation from related processes. An example of this is the collections that were established in the History of Science and Technology

⁷ Davies, J. and Shrigley, R, *Inspired by Design. The Arts & Crafts Collections of the Manchester Metropolitan University*, (catalogue) Manchester City Art Galleries 1994

⁸ *The Whitworth Art Gallery, The First Hundred Years*, (catalogue), Whitworth Art Gallery 1988

⁹ *A Century of Collecting 1882-1982*, (catalogue), Manchester City Art Gallery, City of Manchester Cultural Services, 1983

Department at the University of Manchester Institute of Science & Technology (UMIST) and later transferred to the Museum of Science and Industry¹⁰.

It was not until the late 1960s and the growing interest in industrial archaeology that attention was given to the systematic collection of machinery and the preservation of entire processes in its original location. For example, the fulling stocks and spinning mules at Helmshore Textile Museums, Lancashire, and in the 1980s the hand jacquard looms at Paradise Mill, Macclesfield and the Lancashire looms at Queen Street Mill, Burnley with the associated steam engine preserved as part of the working operation¹¹.

It was this second great expansion of museums in Britain, from the late 1960s throughout the 1970s and 1980s, which redefined the relationships of museums with higher education and industry. In a climate of industrial decline and spurred on by government employment schemes and grant funded regeneration initiatives in the late 1970s and 1980s a new museum was established every two weeks. This phase of museum development did not focus on the acquisition of collections to inspire manufacturing industry but the transformation of manufacturing industries into the phenomena Hewitson termed the *Heritage Industry*¹². This museum movement was driven by a sense of loss and nostalgia for a lost glory and sense of pride in the skills and enterprise that had fuelled the local economy and sustained communities. Coalmines and factory sites were transformed into visitor attractions to provide employment and generate tourism in areas of industrial decline.

In the North West region textile mills and warehouses were converted to museums and visitor attractions and textile workers became tourist guides. These initiatives responded to the community's need to take comfort and security from nostalgia in a world of uncertainty and in the context of social, economic and technological change. Textiles were linked with the past and industrial decline and the idea that museums and collections had the potential to be relevant to a new and creative future was a concept whose time had not yet come. The creative industries were yet to be recognised and acknowledged as a force for economic growth and regeneration. The Creative Industries Development Services (CIDS) was not established in Manchester until 2000 and subsequently expanded to cover the Greater Manchester with the object of providing support for small and medium sized enterprises in the creative industries of the city region¹³.

¹⁰ McNeil, R. and Stevenson, M., *The Heritage Atlas 2: The Textile Legacy*, The Field Archaeology Centre, University of Manchester 1996

¹¹ McNeil, R. and Stevenson, M., *The Heritage Atlas 2: The Textile Legacy*, The Field Archaeology Centre, University of Manchester 1996

¹² Middleton, V.T.C., *New Visions for Independent Museums in the UK*, the UK Association of Independent Museums 1990

¹³ Interview with Lyn Barber, Director of Creative Industries Development Service, 2007

The Universities' interest in collections and collecting also focused on social and economic history and not creative enterprise. This was evidenced by the Manchester Studies Unit at Manchester Polytechnic (later Manchester Metropolitan University) and the development of the North West Film Archive, the Documentary Photographic Archive and oral history records deposited with the North West Sound Archive. Postgraduate courses in local history and Museum & Galleries Studies were established at the University of Manchester and Heritage Management at the University of Salford.

The recording and preservation of the social and economic history of the textile industry did not only result from research in departments of history within the established universities, but from a range of community and voluntary initiatives. 570 new museums were opened in England between 1970 and 1998¹⁴. This growth in the number of museums was largely in the independent sector frequently initiated by groups of enthusiasts or 'friends' organisations. Examples in the north west region include the Friends of Macclesfield Silk Heritage that led to the establishment of the Silk Museums in Macclesfield and organisations such as the Weavers Triangle association in Burnley that led to a variety of heritage related initiatives. Heritage as an intellectual, social and economic phenomenon engaged academics, commentators, entrepreneurs, communities and private individuals.

Other European countries did not experience the same growth in enthusiast-led, volunteer run museum. This could explain the different models of engagement of museums with industry in Britain when compared with other European countries. The museums that had been established in the 19th century to support the manufacturing industries in the regions of Europe continued to maintain strong links with the industries they had been established to serve.

The textile manufacturing regions of Europe continue to maintain significant museums of textiles which still enjoyed the support of contemporary local industry. One of the earliest textile archives was established in 1833 in Mulhouse, Alsace by the *Société Industrielle*, an association of printed textile manufacturers who collectively archived their own designs and added material from other periods and centres of manufacture. The collection grew in size and in 1880 a new museum was built to house it. In 1955 an independent association was established to run the museum, which is known as *Musée-Impression* and is regarded as the largest collection of printed textiles worldwide. Still with close links with the School of Design, the museum web site describes its position as existing "*somewhere between memory and creation*", thus clearly establishing its mission as a resource for creativity¹⁵.

¹⁴ Hewitson, R., *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline*, Methuen London 1987

¹⁵ *Musée-Impression*, website: www.musee-impression.com

Lyon, as the centre of the silk manufacturing industry in France, was to follow with the establishment of the Museum of Art & Industry in 1864, which developed extensive collections of textiles as examples of techniques of manufacture to support the silk industry in the city. Its successor, the *Musée des Tissus* was established in 1946. It is still owned and managed by the Chamber of Commerce and houses the internationally significant collection of ancient textiles and silks from the Renaissance to the present day, together with significant collections of French fashion and lace.¹⁶

Catalonia is a major region for textile manufacture in Spain so it is not surprising that textile collections were established in the region. The Municipality of Barcelona, following the particular example of Lyon, which acquired its first textile collection in 1883. They housed the textile holding in the Palace of Industry built for the universal exhibition in the city in 1888. This collection was merged with clothing and lace collections and now exists as *Museu Tèxtil i d'Indumentària*.¹⁷ Terrassa, adjacent to Barcelona, also has textile and fashion collections in the *Centre de Documentació i Museu Tèxtil*, which is owned and managed by the Chamber of Commerce. In addition to the museum displays and education activities they have a close relationship with designers and manufacturers through access to a web based archive of digitised images of over 20,000 textile samples from around the world and representing 2000 years of textile history.¹⁸

There are other examples of textile collections established in the 19th century to support textile industries elsewhere in Europe, for example Crefeld - a silk manufacturing city, but there are few recent new models that engage directly with contemporary design education.

Section Two: The Changing Face of Art and Design Education

During the early period of their existence the British Art Schools were largely industry funded with many students supported to attend courses by employers who needed a workforce that was trained and industry ready. The relationships between industry and the schools were therefore very close. In addition to this there were close connections between schools and museums. This meant that museum collections were integral to the curriculum and the curriculum was shaped and directed by industry. Schools at this time may best be described as centres for training, rather than centres for education.

The second half of the twentieth century saw British Art Schools providing students with largely unstructured, and some would say unmanaged learning environments¹⁹, especially if comparing them with the heavily regulated institutions of today. The teaching teams were

¹⁶ *Musée des Tissus*, website: www.lyon.fr/culture/musees/musee_tissus_arts_deco_1

¹⁷ *Museu Tèxtil i d'Indumentària*, website: www.museutextil.ben.es

¹⁸ *Centre de Documentació i Museu Tèxtil*, website: www.cdmt.es

¹⁹ Foreward to the forthcoming HEA-ADM publication concerned with Entrepreneurship

generally populated by artists and designers, often practitioners of repute who might, each week, enjoy a day or two of teaching. The tutor whose practice was confined only to weekend work was in the minority.

Changes in curriculum and teaching methods meant that many art school collections were not always appropriately cared for and protected resulting in damage, loss of artefacts, or in some cases the loss of whole collections. Fortunately this has not been the case at Manchester Metropolitan University where in 2002 the Manchester School of Art Collection was transferred from the Faculty into the Sir Kenneth Green Library, where accessibility for learning, teaching and research purposes has been greatly improved through conservation, cataloguing and various digitisation projects. The collection continues to grow and its content today reflects the needs of the disciplines covered in the greatly expanded portfolio of the Faculty of Art and Design's programmes.

Whilst not as strong in research or reference collections as some of the museums housed within the older universities, like for instance Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, established in the 17th century or the Pitt Rivers, established in the 19th century, there remain a number of highly prized art and design collections within the post 1992 universities and specialist schools of art. The Glasgow School of Art, best known for its Charles Rennie Macintosh architecture and collection also has a fine collection of 19th century plaster casts. Middlesex University has the Silver Studio Collection. Because in the 19th century the School promoted the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement the University's special collections contain some of the finest examples of the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain.²⁰ These collections are important in reflecting the history of art and design education in the UK²¹.

It is true to say that the British Arts Schools spent the first hundred years of their existence relatively undisturbed. The first real indication of intervention and change came in the form of the 1960s Coldstream Review. The outcome of this led to the introduction of the Diploma in Art and Design or Dip.AD., the subject's equivalent to the first degree. This was, however, a short lived qualification it being replaced by the BA (Hons) degree in 1972.

The independence and autonomy of the majority of the regional art schools concluded when in the early 1970s most were absorbed into the newly created, large, teaching institutions known as 'polytechnics'. These institutions scooped up the many and varied subject based colleges scattered across towns and cities. Many local education authorities were able to fund estates projects to accommodate these new centres of learning, some of which were

²⁰ Manchester Metropolitan University Special Collections/Foreward by Dame Sandra Burslem.
www.library.mmu.ac.uk/info/specialcoll

²¹ Interview with John Davies, Visual Resources Curator, Faculty of Art and Design, Manchester Metropolitan University.

built around and adjacent to the distinctive 19th century art school buildings. This major upheaval occurred when least interest was being shown in working from historic collections.

The 1980s saw the majority of these institutions introducing new academic structures to open up student choice and flexibility through often elaborate modular and unitised schemes. The agenda for change had been cast but art and design contained few agents for change.

“It is not so long ago that the word ‘modular’ would hardly pass the lips of an art and design lecturer except by way of a curse. Modularisation, though it is sweeping through the higher education sector, was ‘just not appropriate’ for art departments and schools.”²²

The British Government in the final decade of the last century published a paper containing their expansionist programme. This brought about the move from an elitist HE system to one that could cope with mass education. Despite remarkably few art and design educators having been trained to teach, the transition from the elitist to mass model was managed well by the subject specialists. The need to support greater student numbers with fewer resources was well met and art and design educators began to develop pedagogies that finally moved the delivery model away from the 19th century atelier system (or master sitting with the apprentice) to one with an emphasis on the process of learning.²³ Additionally, in response to demand new programmes were developed.

In 1992, twenty years after their inception, an Act of Parliament enabled polytechnics to gain university status. Interestingly, almost fifteen years on these institutions continue to be differentiated by the term – ‘new universities’. Another significant change of the 1990s was the inclusion of art and design in the Research Assessment Exercise. The subject’s success was overwhelming and much of the work submitted had been produced as a result of well established partnerships between the subject educators and their related industries.

The turbulence caused by the interventions of the last fifteen years has perhaps dislodged many traditions and made subject specialists responsive to change. The increased focus on research; the move to mass education and increased regulation have however all contributed to the weakening of the previously strong relationships that existed between the art and design schools and their related industries.

Industry too has been affected by the turbulence of late 20th century change, driven largely by the rapid advances in technology. It could be said that when the captains of industry were

²² Tysome, Tony, *Muds Win the Style War*, Times Higher Education Supplement, 19th March 1994.

²³ Knowles, M.S., Preface to Boud, D. (Eds) *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning*. London: Kogan Page.1981. Quoted in Entwistle, N. *The Impact on Learning Outcomes in Higher Education*. CVCP June 1992.

desperately competing in the 'cost wars' they should have been heeding the advice of the Design Council.

"There is a long history of British industry losing markets, profits, jobs and even complete companies as a direct result of its failure to invest in design."²⁴

The industries we are related to have often been, and continue to be, our fiercest critics, and two commissioned reports produced during the 1990s and the early part of the new century are testimony to this²⁵. The most common criticism levelled at the sector is 'too many similar courses producing too many similar graduates'. The sector has never really managed to remain entirely in step with the demands of industry and admitted this quite some time ago.

"The problem is that society continues to change rapidly and what industry wants now may not be the same thing that industry will want in the future. /by the time design schools implement changes to the curriculum to suit industry's expectations, graduate designers may have skills that are no longer a priority."²⁶

For educators and their industries to remain in step through this period of unprecedented change was not only undesirable for academic reasons but impossible. Art and design educators have managed, over time, to shift the emphasis away from that of a 19th century vocational training centre model towards that of learning centre, which is where we must remain. The restoration of the relationships with our industrial colleagues is however desirable and should not be difficult, as unlike some subject areas, art and design has never adopted an ivory tower approach to external collaboration.²⁷ They may, however, need some help in working with us to establish mutually beneficial and dynamic partnerships.

"Business will have to learn how to exploit the innovative ideas that are being developed in the university sector."²⁸

Prompted by a number of important reports such as Dearing²⁹, Leitch³⁰ and Lambert³¹ a growing interest in the creative industries has been emerging and for educators the desire

²⁴ *Design and the Economy*, Design Council Publication 1990

²⁵ *Design 2000 Report*, CapitB Trust 1990 and Newbury, M. *A Study of the UK Designer Fashion Sector*, DTI, 2003.

²⁶ Shaw, J. *Design Education's Paradox: is it to lead or to follow?* Curtin School of Design Journal 4, 1997. School of Design, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia

²⁷ *Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration*. December 2003

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ *The Dearing Report: Enquiry into Higher Education* 1997. The Committee was established 'to identify how Higher Education i.e. its purpose, shape, structure, size and funding should develop to meet the needs of the UK over the next 20 years'.

³⁰ *The Leitch Report. Skills in the UK: the long term challenge*. 2006. The Review, led by Lord Leitch, was commissioned by H.M. Government 'to consider what the UK's long term ambition should be for

and will to work in collaboration with those industries has been catalysed by a number of major projects.

The theme of the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design's (CHEAD) Annual Conference in 2004 was Knowledge Transfer³², timely for educators and other contributors addressing the implications of the Lambert Review. Speakers from the Design Council, the British Council's Creative Industries Unit, the Arts Council and members of Regional Development Agencies, to name but a few, concentrated on, and emphasised the importance of 'bridging design, education and business'. Attention was drawn to the need for 'creative education'. 'The centrality of the creative industries within the knowledge based economy' was also highlighted. A representative from HM Treasury and the Project Manager for the Lambert Review encouraged educators present to respond to the Government's 10 year Strategy for Science and Innovation and most importantly to take ownership of the term 'innovation'. The then Minister for the Arts –the Right Honourable Estelle Morris MP – confirmed the message that the creative industries were now an important Government agenda item and concluded her presentation with a simple, though powerful statement.

"Art and Design, your time has come!"

Although the Creative Industries Task Force had been in place since 1997 it was not until 2005 that a new ministerial post was created, and the Right Honourable James Purnell MP became the first person to hold the title of Minister for the Creative Industries. In a speech given in 2005³³ he spoke of the help provided by the creative industries in transforming cities like Manchester and others. Suddenly the scale of these industries was revealed, and their importance to the economy emphasised. Purnell went on to describe Britain as *'the world's most creative nation'* and art colleges as *'the incubators of Britain's creativity'*.

Criticisms made repeatedly by representatives of our industries in particular those directed towards artists and their 'inability to be business-like' were swept aside. Instead he focussed on the positive and in particular drew attention to the entrepreneurial qualities of successful designers singling out for applause a number of art and design education leaders who had *'pioneered the marrying of creativity with entrepreneurship'*. He did not see the art and design education sector as static but made reference to the development of *'innovative' programmes to train creative professionals'*.

developing skills in order to maximise economic prosperity and productivity and to improve social justice.'

³¹ Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration, December 2003

³² Summary Report: Knowledge Transfer. CHEAD Annual Conference, Bournemouth, 24-26 March, 2004.

³³ Purnell, J. Minister for the Creative Industries, *Making Britain the World's Creative Hub* keynote speech to IPPR event ,London.

The Creative Industries Division of the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Higher Education Academy for Art, Design and Media have both undertaken projects of a similar nature concerned with entrepreneurship, exploring how art and design educators can improve the way in which they better develop the creative entrepreneurs of the future. The DCMS report highlighted the need for innovative curriculum investment to increase opportunities for entrepreneurial learning and improve links with the Creative Industries, reiterating what had been said in the Dearing Report of 1997. The outcomes of both these reports stress the need for greater collaboration and partnerships with the design related industries.³⁴

It is important for educators and our partners in the workplace to think about relationships with industries in new and mutually beneficial ways. Providing creative graduates who are employable has always been our business but the role expected of educators has been extended in recent times to include educating the existing workforce through Continuing Professional Development.

“...and just providing more of what we have always done, won’t get us a thinking and educated workforce fit for the demands and complexity of the new, global economy... We do ask those institutions willing and equipped to take on the challenge of meeting the high-level education and skill needs of employers and their staff to do so now and do it with urgency.”³⁵

The Design Council with whom British art schools enjoy a positive working relationship established the Design Skills Advisory Panel to produce a Design Industry Skills Development Plan, the outcome of which will be influential in terms of education at all levels. The report, soon to be published, will undoubtedly stress the importance of collaboration and the need for the art schools to once again form closer partnerships with their industries. The mutuality of benefits can not be excluded from our debates about partnership.

So much has happened in recent years to affect the large institutions of which many art schools are part. All who are engaged in the HE sector have had to react and respond to the external drivers. It is, however, most important to now look at what is happening within the British art schools today and to reflect on the ideas being generated by the specialists. Many of these believe that this period in our long history has more than a degree of familiarity about it. We appear to be moving ever closer to the thinking of the 1830s, but within a 21st century context. Estelle Morris may have been absolutely right in terms of her 2004 message to conference –‘art and design your time has come’.

³⁴ *Developing Entrepreneurship for the Creative Industries: The Role of Higher and Further Education*. DCMS. May 2006. & *Creating Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship Education in Art , Design and Media – HEA-ADM*. Publication in process.

³⁵ Rammell. W. *Check Against Delivery*. The Guardian Higher Education Summit. February 2007

Following Knowledge Transfer in 2004 the 2006 CHEAD conference took as its theme Spaces for Art: Spaces for Art Education, at a time when evidence can be seen to exist to confirm that a change is occurring in terms of the architecture and space required to accommodate the modern academy. We have spoken earlier of the changes affecting the delivery of programmes, changes affecting our related industries, in particular the digital revolution. Change has also affected the learners who, of late, have developed many approaches to learning and varying patterns of attendance. Space costs for many art schools are an issue and utilisation surveys do little to justify the need for vast areas of studio that, in addition to workshop spaces, have to be paid for.

Just as in 1835 when the Government Select Committee visited mainland European centres in its search for design education models, so the CHEAD conference looked to mainland European partners to discuss how our curriculum and education through colleges and museums might be progressed³⁶. Those present reflected on the importance of space to the artist (and designer). Similar to the UK, the partners had been engaging in ambitious projects to build new structures like the underground college by the side of the Rhine, or to juxtapose new buildings alongside those of extraordinary historic significance such as the Gerrit Rietveld building. The partners when describing these new developments discussed the gallery and the museum as places of learning seeing them as '*spaces and places for dialogue and education and as centres for knowledge*' (Gys van Tuyl, Director of the Stedelijk Museum). Mels Crouwel, architect of the proposed Stedelijk extension and the Rietveld Academy building³⁷ made the point that the creation of an architectural masterpiece was not the primary concern. This was reiterated by another speaker, Declan McGonagle who also warned of '*making the vessel more important than the contents*'. Rather than focussing on buildings those present became absorbed in conversations about space and most importantly what that space was to be used for.

There are many reports and papers that have been directed at the HE sector, only a few of which have been mentioned in this paper. There are others concerned with our (art and design) role in supporting and developing the creative industries that can not be ignored. The UK is well-provided for, or some would say over- provided for, in terms of art and design education. The Art and Design Schools are competing for student numbers and all are seeking the characteristics and identities that will give them the competitive edge. Changes in space requirements and space provision will challenge providers in a way that will finally disturb and dislodge the 19th century model. The curriculum will have to accommodate and/or make more visible the skills, particularly those relating to employability. Taking ownership of the '*innovation*' referred to in the Government's ten year strategy for Science and Innovation

³⁶ Summary Report. *Spaces for Art: Spaces for Art Education*. CHEAD Conference. Amsterdam, 22nd-24th March 2006.

³⁷ CHEAD Conference Summary Report. *ibid*

is crucial if we are to provide 'creative education' that puts in place 'the bridges between design education and business', viewed as being as important now as in the 1830s.

Section Three: The Manchester Project

"Manchester was recently ranked the most creative city in the UK by Demos. The conurbation is a centre for knowledge-based activity, media production, sport and culture ... The power of the creative economy, which is supported by well-established agencies such as the 'Creative Industries Development Service', creates the potential for a unique growth profile in Greater Manchester and the opportunity to tap into and expand the wealth of talent across the conurbation, reinforcing the area's reputation as a centre of entrepreneurship and innovation."³⁸

Manchester is the regional capital and key economic driver for the North West, generating a quarter of the region's wealth and a tenth of its jobs. In the second half of the 20th century traditional industries have been overtaken by an economy based around knowledge, new ideas, enterprise and entrepreneurship. Manchester is the epitome of the post industrial city whose prosperity is dependent on the talent and ability of its population. The Deputy Prime Minister, in June 2003, in the Foreword to the Knowledge Capital Prospectus states "... a country like Britain today survives and prospers by the talent and ability of its people. Human capital is key ". Prime Minister, Tony Blair speaking at Tate Modern on 6 March 2007 states "the creative industries now account for more than 7% of the economy. They are growing at 5% per annum, faster than the economy as a whole. They employ almost 2 million people". He goes on to announce the production of a Green Paper in the summer of 2007 "... that will seek to increase the productivity of the sector further".

The creative industries are recognised as a key sector within Manchester, the sub-region and region as a whole. Manchester is the centre and driver for the sector in the region. Outside London, it has the highest level of growth, employment and GVA.

The Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS) was established in Manchester 2000 to deliver a series of pilot programmes in the City Pride Area with the support of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Constituted as a company limited by guarantee with a membership including Manchester, Salford and Tameside Councils, the Manchester Metropolitan University, Marketing Manchester and Manchester Enterprise.

CIDS has three primary roles in the support of small and medium sized enterprises in the creative industries:-

- i) Cluster development: through information services and development of support networks

³⁸ Greater Manchester Economic Development Plat 04/05, 06/07 p 8

- ii) Strategic and planning: representing the needs and interests of the creative industries to policy makers and funding bodies
- iii) Business support brokerage and sign posting: helping creative companies identify their needs and find appropriate, specialist support

CIDS is therefore the logical partner to work with Manchester Metropolitan University and the City Council in the development of a project which aims to develop a new model to re-engage collections with teaching and research in higher education and provide a source of inspiration for the creative industries. The Project is identified in the Knowledge Capital Prospectus as the International Centre of Excellence for Fashion and Textiles (ICEFT). The ultimate aim of the initiative is to attract students to study in Manchester on the undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by the universities, to enhance teaching and research in higher education and to retain graduates in the city to contribute to the knowledge economy. By providing enhanced access to the significant textile collections in the City the project aspires to provide a unique resource which will stimulate creative enterprise in the second largest cluster, after new media, of the creative industries in the city region.

Discussions are underway to establish the business case for the initiative, to develop the relationships and identify the facilities that need to be offered in order to deliver the desired outcomes. Models established in Europe and elsewhere will be examined to evaluate the respective benefits of the individual elements. A recent development in Europe that could offer evidence to support the case for investment is *Mode Museum (MoMu)* in Antwerp. Based at the Flanders Institute of Fashion, MOMU has provided a new model which re-engages textile/fashion collections with contemporary design education. Opened in September 2002³⁹ it has built on the image and profile of fashion in the city, established by the Antwerp Six. Graduates of the Institute, the Antwerp Six established an international reputation that has served to raise the profile of the City and the Institute in the fashion design world and the collections have further developed that image and profile through imaginative and ground breaking exhibitions of fashion and clothing.

Outside Europe, New York's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) offers another model, which houses a significant museum collection and stages a regular programme of exhibitions and events alongside the academic and teaching programme for the education and training of fashion and textile designers. FIT also has a membership scheme for textile designers. The scheme enables designers to borrow samples of textiles from an archive or library of designs to use as a source of inspiration for their own design work⁴⁰.

³⁹ *Mode Museum*, website: www.momu.be

⁴⁰ Interview with Lynn Felsher, Curator of FIT, 2007

Neither of these models combines all the elements envisaged for the Manchester project and they are each driven by the objectives of one institution and not a partnership of three organisations with different but complementary objectives.

There are 18 significant textile collections in museums in the northwest region with 8 located in the city and two with 'Designated' status identifying them as being of national/international significance. Little attention had been given to the use of these collections as a resource for the creative industries although staff and students at the University have used them to a greater or lesser extent for teaching and research. Interest in the region's collections to contribute to the education of designers and the creative industries was stimulated in the 1990s. A regional research project into the collections of pattern books, both of the cotton and silk industries established that a great body of material survived in a wide variety of institutions including record offices, company archives, technical colleges, universities and museums. This legacy of textile pattern books together with the collections in the museums of the region has enormous potential to benefit the education of designers in further and higher education and provide a stimulus for creative enterprise.

Fashion has been identified as the second largest cluster in the creative industries, after new media, in the Manchester sub-region, fashion designers, nationally and internationally, are constantly referencing previous decades as a source of inspiration. An example of this is evidenced by Vivienne Westwood's collections over many years. As a regular user of the collections at the V&A many of her designs can be cited as being inspired by historic dress.

Manchester has been, and continues to be, a major centre for education, research and development in the field of textiles. Students of Fashion & Textiles at the Metropolitan University have, since the 19th century, been trained and educated to enter the design related industries and many have gone on to influence the manufacturing industry regionally, nationally and internationally. The collections of dress at the Gallery of Costume and the wider collections in the region can only serve to enhance the potential of the University to educate future generations of fashion & textile designers who will go to work in the field.

The Faculty of Art and Design, as part of the University's modernisation agenda, is identifying ways in which it can develop a competitive edge and a clear brand identity that builds on the City's brand of 'original modern'. It is recognised that divisions leading to the compartmentalisation of education have occurred gradually over a period of time and they can not be permitted to continue. In creating an art school for the 21st century '*the contents of the vessel*' are of prime importance, and, while including some of the same there are additional, new and important elements.

The project under development is exploring how the University & CIDS can work with the collections of Manchester City Council's Gallery of Costume to develop it as a resource to enhance creative practice in the University and stimulate creative enterprise in the City. In addition to the collections resource, the model will incorporate postgraduate programmes, incubator workshops and business support. Current thinking suggests that the project should include:-

- A major new Textile, Embroidery and Fashion Gallery. Virtual and physical access to the City's Designated Costume Collections, MMU's textile collections and virtual access to the Embroiderers' Guild's international embroidery collection on another site in the City. Creation of a web based, digital image database, and state of the art collection storage linked to study facilities with on site curatorial expertise. *[This facility will serve the further and higher education research communities, the creative industries and special interest groups.]*
- A temporary Gallery for International Exhibitions. Innovative and changing displays of the permanent exhibition and major national and international temporary exhibitions of historic, contemporary and multicultural fashion and textile crafts. *[This facility would develop new audiences for the collection by celebrating the city's multicultural creative talent, strengthen the city's tourism offer and contribute to the positive image and profile of the city as a 21st century European multicultural capital.]*
- Exhibition space for contemporary designer/makers. Opportunities for contemporary designer/makers in the city and north west region to exhibit their designs and reach a wider public and potential buyers. *[This would aim to help SMEs and micro-enterprises to develop professional presentation techniques, reach new markets and help to develop business enterprise thus contributing to the creative economy of the city.]*
- Innovative Education Programmes, linked to the collections and exhibitions which would serve primary, secondary and adult education and deliver an outreach programme into the local multicultural community. *[This would aim to make a creative contribution to the delivery of the city's education attainment targets and provide bridging programmes between local community and higher education in the city.]*
- Cat walk facilities linking fashion and textile craft studies with high street retailers. Flexible cat walk facilities for student degree shows, new and established designers and the fashion retail sector in the city. *[A programme of fashion show events would aim to provide a focus for marketing and profile raising of the creative talent within the university and the creative industries of the city and to develop commercial and business networks for new and emerging talent.]*

These facilities should be high profile, reflect contemporary craft and design and be fully accessible. In addition a number of additional spin off creative enterprises could be linked, for example:-

- Virtual access to commercial and industrial resources including a database of resources and manufacturers and specialist business support services to assist design makers in realising production and marketing objectives
- A trade library and outlet for trade publications
- Incubator workshops with access to mentoring and business support advice

These ideas come together at an opportune moment for major collaboration between the universities and the City Council and offer a unique opportunity to consolidate internationally significant work within one centre of excellence. It will also open the door to wider national and international partnerships.

Manchester's is not the only project that has identified a need for a dialogue and collaboration between museums, HEIs and creative practitioners in the field of textiles. In July 2006 Manchester Art Gallery played host to the second in a series of seminars funded by the AHRC, entitled *Context and Collaboration* attended by an invited audience of forty academics/practitioners and curators. Co-ordinated and led by Lesley Millar⁴¹ the audience was asked to explore approaches to contemporary textiles through collaborative research between museums, HEIs and practitioners. Millar is keen to: develop a framework for identifying needs, and determining strategies that will enable collaboration across and between sectors.

The City and the University recognise the importance of the knowledge and creative economy in securing the future prosperity of the city. If the economic impact studies suggest positive outcomes from investment in the project, the partnership between the Manchester Metropolitan University, the City Council and the Creative Industries Development Service will receive the necessary financial support to realise the vision for the project, which will serve to foster creative education and enterprise in the city.

⁴¹ Lesley Millar is a Reader in Contemporary Practice at University College for the Creative Arts at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester. The Project *Context and Collaboration* included a series of seminars with invited audiences and a web forum and was funded by AHRC.