**Introduction**



Figure 1: 72 Urban Action, Bat-Yam, Israel (Source: http://blog.nh-hotels.com/competitions/urban-action/, accessed 20th February, 2014)

In September 2010, in Bat Yam, a small city just to the south of Tel Aviv, ten groups of people were hurriedly building temporary architectural interventions around the city (illustrated in Figure 1). They were taking part in a competition called ’72 Hour Urban Action’ (which was part of a wider Bat-Yam Biennale of Landscape Urbanism) in which the teams planned, mapped and built a public, community project, all within 72 hours. Examples included a children’s play area in the communal spaces of a residential tower block, a reflective garden and a ‘pop-up’ market stall. They were given a meagre budget, access to construction tools and striking orange overalls. The winners of the competition were award a cash prize and perhaps more interestingly, “the chance for its creation to remain in Bat Yam for good” (Grant, 2010: n.p). The instigators of the project hoped to encourage others to engage with such ‘urban action’, challenging the notion that instigating change in public space can be a long and drawn out and overtly bureaucratic process. It allowed people to intervene in the urban arena without going through the traditional channels of planning procedure, and as such, shifted the power balance of the urbanization process, if even for a brief impermanent, temporary moment. This project also exemplifies what has come to be called Tactical Urbanism (hereafter, TU).

The TU movement is attributed to urbanist and planner, Mike Lydon, who heads up an institution called the Streets Plan Collective, an urban planning-cum-activism group based in New York City. The growing popularity of TU, as promoted by Lydon and a growing cohort of devotees, has fuelled an interest in small-scale activities undertaken by local citizens that redesign their urban area to be more ‘liveable’ (Lydon et al, 2011). This movement has garnered impressively widespread interest in a relatively short space of time. However, despite its origins in community-led, activist, unsanctioned and even subversive activities, TU is becoming (if it is not already so) co-opted by prevailing ‘neoliberal development agendas’ (Peck, 2005). A buzz-phrase that engenders a sense of ‘cool’ and a creative aesthetic, TU is already being utilised by mayors and urban policy institutions within the framework of ‘urban redevelopment’ in a post-2008 recession era. This paper argues that because of this, TU is being divorced from its citizenry and activist ethos, and fast becoming the latest iteration of ‘cool’, creative urban policy language.

TU can hence be critiqued as becoming the latest political vernacular akin to, and embroiled within, the Creative City discourse, as initiated by Landry and Bianchini (1995) and then later popularised by Florida (Florida, 2002a, 2002b, 2012). This creativity thesis (that has become central to mobile urban policy) has been critiqued as vacuous, and merely a justification for existing public-private urban redevelopment strategies; strategies that have deleterious effects on the social fabric of urban life via gentrifying processes (e.g. see O’Callaghan, 2010 for a comprehensive review of these critiques). The Creative City paradigm (and the incumbent ideologies of the ‘creative class’ and the ‘creative economy’) is seen as representing the most recent interpretation of neoliberal urban growth and the associated social, cultural and economic inequalities that it engenders (see Peck, 2005; Christopher, 2008; Ponzini and Rossi, 2010; Leslie and Catungal, 2012; Vivant, 2013). This paper will therefore argue that TU is in danger of suffering a similar fate; it is becoming/has become the ‘quick-fix’ that contemporary urban policy so craves (Peck, 2005).

To argue this point and situate it in the wider context of urban theory, the paper will first outline the history of the TU concept, and how it is portrayed in contemporary debates. The very name itself though, *Tactical Urbanism,* has broader etymological connotations with key concepts in urban theory, namely ‘tactics’ (related the work of De Certeau (1984)) and ‘urbanism’ (related to the work of Lefebvre (1970)). Moreover, when TU is viewed through the lens of their work, the activist, community-orientated, and subversive claims of TU can begin to be questioned. The following section therefore focuses on the first part of the term – *tactical*. It will argue that TU is becoming less about how individuals and communities are bettering their local environment through direct urban interventions. The latter section will then focus on the second part of the term – *urbanism*, and argue that TU is being drawn into a wider rhetoric of the Creative City[[1]](#footnote-1).

***Tactic*al Urbanism**

There is a growing body of work that articulates and analyses the increasing interest in small-scale, unsanctioned, community-led urban interventionist activities (Edensor et al., 2010; Hou, 2010). Douglas (2013: 2) has noted the rise of ‘Do-it-Yourself’ (DIY) urbanism, which he describes as;

“Civic-minded and intended toward the functional improvement of lived urban spaces through skilful, playful, and localized actions, these increasingly visible yet often unattributed practices complicate common assumptions and have received little attention from social scientists or urban policy and planning professionals”.

Qualitatively different from subversive or reactionary interventions (such as graffiti or political demonstrations), Douglas argues that DIY urbanism has its history in the 1960s and 1970s, in the dawn of the “neoliberal era” (*ibid.*). The terminology of DIY urbanism here then seems to be commensurable with the interventionist and community-orientated themes that TU is championing (detailed subsequently), but there are a plethora of other phrases that have been used to denote similar kinds of ideals. Indeed, Iveson (2013: 941) has grappled recently with the variance in lexicon and argues that;

“We are not sure how to describe what is happening. Those seeking to come to grips with practices have begun to group them together for consideration under banners such as ‘insurgent’, ‘do-it-yourself’ (DIY), ‘guerrilla’, ‘everyday’, ‘participatory’ and/or ‘grassroots’ urbanism”.

Others however seem less concerned with the nuanced specificities of the lexicon and have brushed aside such uncertainty and utilized the catchall phrase ‘Tactical Urbanism’. Specifically, the prevailing contemporary usage that dominates online parlance of TU can be attributed to Mike Lydon, who is part of the Streets Plan Collaborative based in New York City; an institution that seeks to “create high-quality public spaces, believing that the key to reversing the harmful effects of suburban sprawl is to promote compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods [sic]” (Streets Plan Collaborative, n.d.). They created an online publication called “Tactical Urbanism: Short Term Action, Long Term Change” in 2011 (with a second volume in 2012). The document is accessible, readable and aimed at citizens and policy makers alike. It’s ‘bite-size’, pithy and in some senses polemic narrative renders TU as an identifiable phenomena and active tool that can be undertaken to better urban environments. It proclaims;

“Improving the liveability of our towns and cities commonly starts at the street, block or building scale. While larger scale efforts do have their place, incremental, small-scale improvements are increasingly seen as a way to stage more substantial investments…. Sometimes sanctioned, sometimes not, these actions are commonly referred to as “guerrilla urbanism”, “pop-up urbanism”, “city repair” or “DIY urbanism”. For the moment, we like “Tactical Urbanism””.

(Lyndon et al., 2012: 1)

So already we are seeing the unproblematic collectivisation of rather disparate activities, which Iveson (2013) notes are subtly different politically and aesthetically, under an umbrella term that belies such nuances. The publication then goes onto describe how to perform TU, and what the potential obstacles can be from governmental institutions and frameworks. Examples they offer include turning parking spots for automobiles into temporary parks by placing potted plants, deck chairs, tables and even laying down turf (called ‘parklets’). Other initiatives include painting playground style lines directly onto the pavement so that children can play hopscotch, basketball or any other playground activity. There is a real sense then that TU is inculcating an agenda from a variety of ‘everyday’ interventionist (or to use their language, ‘unsanctioned’) activities into a corollary of promotable activities.

The second volume insists that TU is not new, citing *Les Bouquinistes* in Paris in the 1500s as the first informal ‘pop-up’ shops, and therefore the world’s first example of TU. However, market stalls and mobile street vendors have been common throughout antiquity, so why the booksellers of The Seine are accredited as being the first Tactical Urbanists is not elucidated further. What is clearer though is that they attribute the recent trend of TU down to three current trends; the great recession, shifting demographics and the rise of the Internet as a tool for a civic society (pages 2 and 3). They indicate that it is the “young and well educated”, who are moving into “once forlorn walkable neighbourhoods” (2012b: 3) as the main instigators of TU initiatives. Already here we see the gentrifying undertones of TU, as undertaken by ‘young and well educated’ people (perhaps this could read ‘the creative class’?) into once ‘forlorn’ (a subjective, emotive and loaded term no doubt) neighbourhoods. The movement of a young professional elite into inner-city areas connects more broadly with the gentrification debate (Zukin, 1987; Ley, 2003; McLean, 2010), too broad a topic to be tackled in this paper. Suffice to say that the TU promotional material aligns with, and therefore fuels the valorisation of, characteristics of the gentrification process.

Because of this, the phrase TU has gained popularity in urban policy as a political mobile ideology that adheres to the agile, precarious and ‘creative’ characteristics of contemporary neoliberal urban development. Yet, TU champions interventionist and subversive activities that can be viewed as a direct reaction to this prevailing development discourse. The ‘unsanctioned’ nature of TU is often eulogised as being an important part of its *rasion d’etre* (Carver, 2012) and the term is used as part of the typology of TU itself (see Lydon et al., 2012: 7). Also, throughout the TU literature (see Courage, 2013) it is clear that many of the activities that have been brought under the umbrella term of TU were once (and in some case, still are) considered subversive and sometimes illegal, such as yarn-bombing (which is detailed later in this paper), ‘ad-busting’ (Bearder, 2012) and guerrilla gardening (Adams and Hardman, 2013). More broadly though, many of the activities that TU exemplifies online and in the ‘how-to’ guides are predicated upon urbanites effectively taking matters into their own hands, and reconfiguring their local environment without any official ‘go ahead’. However, through political co-option and the desire for a creative or ‘cool’ urban aesthetic (Frank, 1998), these activities are being ‘conquered’ or subsumed into the wider process of urban capitalism (despite being predicated upon a reaction against it). Indeed, as Boltanski and Chiapello (2005: 425) have articulated, “capitalism ‘recuperates’ the autonomy it extends, by implementing new modes of control”; and as such TU can be viewed as a new mode of urban ‘capitalistic’ control.

But it is not just ‘unsanctioned’ activities that TU engenders; it positions them at the other end of a spectrum opposite sanctioned activities (such as pop-up cafés and ‘Open Streets Initiatives’ (Lydon et al., 2012)). Moreover, the TU publication posits these against a range of actors that can instigate them. As such, it offers a list of ‘leaders’ who could initiate the projects (from artists, local restaurants to municipalities and politicians) and the ‘scale’ on which they could operate. For example the ‘Pavements to Plaza’ intervention is (perhaps rather paradoxically given the philosophical basis of TU) “tactical urbanism as led by a municipality” (2012: 7) on the multiple city block level, whereby guerrilla gardening could be undertaken by “Neighborhood [sic] Advocates” (2012: 11) at the street level. In effect then, this TU guide has collectivized a suite of rather disparate and in some cases, ideologically opposed practices that are seen to improve the ‘liveability’ (however ill-defined) of the city and offers step-by-step advice on how these can be carried out.

TU then, in popular (and mostly online) rhetoric refers to activities that encompass elements of DIY urbanism (as described by Douglas (2013) and Iveson (2013)), and indeed some other activities that others have labelled as ‘vernacular creativities’ (Edensor et al., 2010) or ‘insurgent’ (Hou, 2010). The packaging of a variety of activities (from guerrilla gardening to pop-up retail outlets to yarn-bombing) into a narrative that is pushed forward into urban policy is in effect, creating a logic that politically neutralises the interventionist and subversive characteristics of said activities (those in the ‘unsanctioned’ category at any rate); and by offering a ‘how-to’ guides renders TU replicable across cities with ease. What TU has negated with its ever-increasing virtual and physical circulation, is the reactionary and *tactical* nature of urban creative acts and urban subversions (Daskalaki and Mould, 2013). Given the extraordinary political mobility of the phrase and its incorporation into mainstream urban policy, TU has lost any ideological relation to reactionary, subversive and anti-hegemonic moments that are rife within the daily urban quotidian, and catalysed many of the more mundane (and commercially exploitable) examples of TU that we see in circulation today. The divorcing of rhetoric and practice is all the more perplexing (and in many ways, frustrating) given the presence of the very word ‘Tactical’. The word itself inculcates a transgression, a ‘soft’ subversion that the mainstream usage has ideologically admonished in favour of a more palpable and accessible (and hence, easier to capitalise upon) form of urban interventionism. De Certeau (1984) in *The Practice of Everyday Life* articulates how ‘tactics’ within the everyday have an innate power to react, to resist and to reclaim. Hedraws a distinction between what he calls ‘strategies’ and ‘tactics’. Strategies contain, compartmentalize and capture; they “assume a place that can be circumscribed” (1984: xix), or a “place that can be delimited as its own” (1984: 36). He offers some examples of such strategies, including a business, an army, a scientific institution, and crucially here, a city. In contrast to strategies, he argues that tactics are those instances of incursion;

“The place of the tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has as its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances… Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into “opportunities””.

(De Certeau, 1984: xix)

So, like a computer virus slowly infecting a hard-drive, or a tumbu fly larvae burrowing into its human host, a tactic infiltrates the totality, subversing it from within, while never claiming a functional or identifiable space. It can utilize the existing infrastructures on offer (from the strategy), but never claim a space or a territory of its own, as this would be to engage with the system on its own terms. The aspatiality of the tactic renders it elusive to appropriation by strategic control, as strategies occur through the claiming of space. Therefore,

“This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that accepts the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse”.

(De Certeau, 1984: 37)

The language here of De Certeau foreshadows the practices that are classified under the TU spectrum of activities, but they have been transmogrified via a politically neutral and capitalism-friendly narrative, which has rendered these *tactics* part of an urban *strategy*. These activities can *take place* in that they reappropriate, reconfigure and enliven a particular place temporarily, but as soon as these practices take the *space* of the city through engaging with the inherent strategies (neoliberal urban development for instance), then they cease to be *tactic*al, and become part of the city’s strategy. By infiltrating or intervening in the city in a tactical way, by taking place momentarily but never claiming space, these moments of urban subversion are perpetually in motion, which engenders a purer politics of transgression (Cresswell, 1996), rather than complicating the contextualization with an binary inflection of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. In other words, a tactic is the moment of release from the urban strategy, the initial spark of creativity. Once these activities accumulate, once they form a broader politics (of resistance to, or amalgamation into the Creative City), they cease to be tactics and become something else. As De Certeau (1984: xix) so succinctly put it (and therefore worth repeating), “whatever it wins, it does not keep”.

**Tactical *Urbanism?***

There are, of course, two words here. *Tactical*, and *Urbanism*. TU as a concept (perpetuated by Mike Lydon and the myriad of institutions, think tanks and online urbanist media) has denounced the first of these to become more of the second. In other words, the *tactic*al idiosyncrasies of these activities, through a linguistic collectivising framework forwarded by TU and its protagonists, have become part of the neoliberal urban development discourse. Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) defined urbanism as an ideology that subdued urban citizenry in favour of the mass-production of an urbanity of consumerist capitalism. Critiquing the urban condition (and the utopian discourse that urban governments work towards) as creating the ‘industrial city’, he instead argues for an urban society that is constantly challenging the status quo, and pushing for a more socially just city. This could therefore be seen to encapsulate the ideologies of TU activities, however, Lefebvre’s argument is that the urban idea itself (urbanism) has subsumed all, even the everyday. Therefore, the term urbanism denotes rigidity, structures and as Lefebvre (2003: 162) argues, “a common political economy”. It is “an impediment because of its models” (*ibid*.), an accusation that, as we have seen above, can be readily levelled at TU. The constant replication of urban landscapes and city policies that TU engenders speaks just as much to the desires of the ‘industrial city’ (in Lefebvrian language) as it does to the ease of policy mobility within neoliberal capitalism (Peck, 2005; Peck et al., 2013).



Figure 2: A 'Parklet' in San Francisco (Photo by Steve Rhodes, Used under Creative Commons, 2006)

Therefore, TU is losing its *Tactical*-ness and becoming more part of an urban strategy – conforming to the Lefebvrian description of *urbanism*. To illustrate this, there are examples in the United States of TU activities as specific mayoral policies. A form of guerrilla planning and a staple part of the TU agenda, ‘parklets’ originated in San Francisco in 2005 (see Figure 2), when a group of artists and activists called Rebar paid for a parking spot in the downtown area and proceeded to lay turf, plants and benches for people to sit on. After the allotted time was up, the park was taken away (Merker, 2010). Since then, there are now ‘Park(ing) Days’ in the US and other selected cities were institutions are encouraged to conduct similar activities in their own cities. Since 2005 they have become increasingly popular, and mayors of cities are beginning to incorporate them as ‘permanent’ features. Philadelphia’s Office for Transportation and Utilities has a ‘parklet program’ where a ‘how-to’ guide is offered for people wanting to set up a parklet (MOTU, 2013); the City of Boston in 2012 made a request for proposals for teams to design parklets throughout the city (Boston Complete Streets, 2012); San Diego began pilot projects in September 2013 (North Park, 2013). While small scale and restricted to handful of US cities, it points to the fact that TU activities (of which ‘parklets’ represent the least subversive given it can be conducted within the legal framework of parking regulations) are being co-opted by urban governments in order to exude an urban ‘brand’ that aligns with a cool and creative, even edgy, PR-riddled narrative, while maintaining an essence of control over such interventionist urban activities.

Other interventions include the creation of ‘urban swings’ in Hamburg (urbanshit.de, 2013), pothole gardening in Bogata (The Pothole Gardener, 2013) and ‘plug-and-play’ initiatives in the economically stagnating area of Ørestad, Copenhagen (Mould, 2013). Yarn-bombing (shown in Figure 3) is yet another example of an activity that has a creative interventionist and subversive quality, whereby people cover often mundane urban artefacts (such as trees, phone boxes, lampposts and so on) in colourful knitted paraphernalia.



Figure 3: A yarn-bombed bicycle park (Photo by ShapeThings, used under Creative Commons)

Sometimes labelled as ‘craftivism’, it is an activity that can operate in and over the boundaries of what is considered illegal or not (the practice has a very contested legality). But it is done with the purpose of illuminating the urban via textual and material means, over the imposed banality and enforced drudgery of political economic, and consumerist consumption activity in city;

“The stealth movement of craftivists taking to the streets and bringing craftwork into public space by tagging the urban landscape or engaging in collectivist knitting as political activism serves to contrast the standardized order of the city and movement through it”.

(Wallace, 2013: n.p)

In essence then, yarn-bombing is an activity that is attempting to awaken people to the city around them. This is of course a generalization, and the ‘activity’ of yarn-bombing is itself multiplicitous and defies such a simple and sweeping categorization (see Butcher, 2012; Price, forthcoming). But it resonates with many other urban creative subcultures such as parkour, skateboarding and urban exploration (Daskalaki and Mould, 2013), in that there are instances of yarn-bombing or craftivism that are inherently subversive and “express their art and politics… as a response to the dehumanizing qualities of the urban environment; as opposition to war, globalization, and consumerism” (Wallace, 2013: n.p). However, within the framework and narrative of TU, the resistive and oppositional nature of yarn-bombing, and indeed other more subversive (or ‘unsanctioned’, to use TU language) activities is absent. It is the more artistic, creative and ‘place-making’ aspects that are celebrated and highlighted within a TU framework. Lydon himself articulates this in an interview with the journalistic online webzine, Atlantic Cities;

“Most of the things that we include in the guide generally are aiming at doing something larger. They’re not just for the sake of doing it. And of course in a lot of ways, to make that work, you need to have whatever you’re doing to *become sanctioned or supported*, either with funding or with *being allowed by the municipality*”.

(Lydon, as quoted in Berg, 2012: n.p, my emphasis)

Therefore it is clear that the aim of TU is to bring these “cool and interesting” (*ibid.*) activities into the realm of ‘sanctioned’ urbanity; to resist their subversive characteristics (hence my emphasis).

Such a desire for community-led practices to become ‘something larger’ is admirable, but to couch this in the theory of De Certeau (1984) and Lefebvre (1970), it is reducing these tactics to conforming to the ideals of the industrial city; to *urbanism*. Such a desire undoubtedly stems from the post-2008 recessionary environment and related austerity measures which has increased the desire for temporary, cost-effective means of urban development and the rejuvenation of the accumulation of urban capital (Pratt and Hutton, 2013). Deslandes (2013) argues that DIY urbanism (which as we have already seen is rallied into the TU ‘brand’) is anything but empowering to the individuals carrying out these activities. She argues;

“DIY urbanists experience the ‘poverty’ of low financial capital and are obliged to justify their projects, at least, in part, on the promise of returning capital to abjected urban space”.

(Deslandes, 2013: 223)

The ‘amateurish’ nature of DIY urbanism (and indeed other commensurable activities that fall under the umbrella of TU) is inculcated as an important, indeed, necessary part of post-recessionary, austerity-governed urban development. Therefore, TU can be seen as a direct response to such economic pressures. It symbolises (and plays to) the popularity within mainstream urban political discourse of economic restructuring that is inherently agile, temporary, amateur, precarious, creative and crucially, inexpensive, something Kinsley (2014: np) notes as risking a “post-austerity commercial revanchism”. TU (particularly through the inclusion of ‘pop-up urbanism’ (Rosenberg, 2011)) has been used to advertise and champion temporariness, and glorify the economic precarious and peripatetic nature of this style of urban commercial and retail activity (Hancox, 2014).

TU clearly generates a more community-orientated and ‘usable’ city (albeit for some and not for others – particularly those who occupied the ‘forlorn’ neighbourhoods that are being gentrified). Parklets, plug-and-play initiatives, pop-up cafés, yarn-bombed lampposts – they all espouse a city that is more inviting, and encourage us to engage with the urban topography – to be active citizens. Their urban utility cannot be under-estimated, and their community-engaging, ‘softer’ politics is to be underscored. They “reinvent the ties that bind” (Amin, 2008: 16) and this is to be celebrated. However, the desire of TU advocates to become “something larger”, to be “allowed by the municipality” (Lydon in Berg, 2012: n.p), to move toward a political narrative that is readily co-opted by neoliberal urban development renders such qualities less distinct. Moreover, their collectivization into a ‘movement’ has created a policy mobility that has been branded, marketed and promoted as being an alternative to the mainstream urban development paradigm, but at the same time, containing the creativity ideology that is still so critical to urban governance structures that have employed the Creative City mantra. As such, cities are able to capitalize upon the TU idea, using it to wrap up existing commercial ‘development’ strategies, and further defenestrate their subversive and/or emancipatory qualities. They are eradicating the tactical, in favour of the urbanism.

**~~Tactical~~ Urbanism?**

What this paper has argued (and given incidental vignettes of) is that the urban neoliberal development discourse co-opts the reactionary and tactical (in the De Certeauian sense) moments of creativity, creating a Lefebvrian urbanism that can be replicated across space. What must be stressed at this point though, is that due to its relative novelty, TU as ‘urbanism’ is still in a process of *becoming* urbanism. Such language alludes to the politics of Deleuze and Guattari (2003 [1987]), who theorise these tactical moments as *lines of flight* from the *apparatus of capture* (i.e. the Creative City, or the De Certeauian strategy). But rather than going on to claim a ‘new land’ of rhizomatic existence, they are being recaptured by the city, and moulded back into the system of the urban neoliberal development (in the guise of TU). Deleuze and Guattari describe the role of the State (to which, for the purposes of clarity in this paper, we can take to mean the urban creativity agenda) as that which reconfigures tactical events by subsuming them into their own agenda;

“deterritorialization is a result of the territory itself being taken as an object, as a material to stratify, to make resonate. Thus the central power of the State is hierarchical… because the only way to recombine what it isolates is through subordination”.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 2003 [1987]: 433)

In other words, the linguistic prevalence of TU in contemporary creativity-inspired urban policy discourse represents the *subordination* of tactical events into neoliberal urban development structures (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005); the Creative City (with a capital C). As such, the city re-establishes economic and political hegemony through the power of political language. TU therefore is *becoming* a vernacular empty of tactics, that is being used more as a political tool to engender neoliberal urban development than a means of empowering the socially, politically and economically excluded.

TU is a growing phenomenon in urban politics and can interject with many current debates within urban studies (Edensor et al., 2010; Hou, 2010). It certainly has connotations around urban informality, suggesting that the activities that TU purports to encompass are already rife in the urban areas of the Global South (Simone, 2004; 2010), making all the more stark its alignment with a Westernized (or US-centric) style of neoliberal urbanism. What this paper has articulated though is that TU is an apparatus that has captured urban interventionist moments, and subsumed and subordinatedthem into the Creative City mantra and the urban neoliberal development system more broadly. It represents the latest cycle of the urban ‘strategy’ to co-opt moments of creativity and alternative urban practices to the urban hegemony – it is the new Creative City.

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1. Given the relative novelty of TU, and its proliferation in the virtual realm, much of the literature surrounding it is online (blogs, webzines, open-access papers and so on). Therefore this paper will regularly refer to online articles. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)