

A CULTURE OF LATES



...going out of his
...hasn't he?

Executive Summary

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**A report into the historic,
current and potential role of UK
museum Lates within the context
of the night-time economy**

Read The Reports

A Culture of Lates – full UK report

An International Culture of Lates

Late Like A Local

All available from www.WeAreCulture24.org.uk and
www.MuseumsatNight.org.uk

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Definitions

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Lates are events which start after 5pm that take place in Museums, Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Heritage Sites and Sacred Sites and Historic Houses. For the purposes of brevity the word museums is used as shorthand in this report to refer to venues of all types where applicable.

This report makes no distinction between the terms 'Lates' and 'after-hours' as related to events. We are aware that some venues and venue programmers regard Lates as a term only used by large venues, or only used to describe charged-for income-generating events (or in some cases used to describe only free events). As no agreement exists which defines or limits the term Lates to meaning one type of after-hours event, we have used it to indicate any type.

The term 'extended hours' is used in this report to mean an extension of the museum's normal opening hours, whether accompanied with extra programming or not.

'The Night-Time Economy (NTE) refers to all economic activity taking place between the hours of 6pm and 6am.'⁰¹

Placemaking refers to 'a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value'.⁰²

01. Mayor of London's New London Plan, November 2017, Chapter 7, 7.6.1 <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan/draft-new-london-plan/>

02. Project for Public Places, 'What is Placemaking?', https://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/ [31st December 2009]

Executive Summary



A Culture of Lates is a commitment by policymakers and museum programmers to invest in Lates as the industry's contribution to the UK's night-time economy. It is a mentality which once adopted would make Lates and extended openings essential components of a location's diverse night-time cultural offer and help keep museums at the heart of their communities.



Evening and night-time events in museums and galleries (Lates) have been a feature of UK nightlife since 2001 when the Victoria and Albert Museum started a regular night ("Friday Lates", now in their fifth year at South Kensington," V&A Annual Report and Accounts 2004-2005). The UK Lates scene is one of the most mature offers in the world, with museums and galleries all over the country intermittently or regularly opening up late for events.

However, no mapping exercise has ever been conducted to quantify the volume, assess the quality, evaluate the role and forecast the opportunities that Lates represent for the museum sector, the public and the UK's night-time economy.

This report represents a first attempt at lifting the lid on this strand of museum public programming to give us an insight into the contribution Lates make to the NTE, the issues they raise and the value they have in the context of reduced public funding but increasing public demand for more choice in after-work leisure activities.

This research's evidence and findings point to healthy prospects for the growth of Lates in the UK and can be seen as a roadmap for future development. It is important that we create a **Culture of Lates** in the UK to develop coherence and a joined-up approach to capacity building from venues and policymakers.

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Key Findings

The research findings can be grouped into eight key points:

1. Lates thrive when they are well supported and **integrated into a venue's core offer**
2. Lates make an increasingly **significant contribution to a diverse night-time economy**
3. Lates are a source of **income generation** and a proven route to **new audiences**
4. Creating a **social space** is the key to successful Lates events
5. Innovative programming raises **quality and increases income**
6. **Regular and festival Lates** event programmes combined build capacity and sales
7. **Evaluation** focused research leads to high quality programming and better policy decisions
8. Museum professionals want opportunities to **share Lates programming knowledge**, experiences and good practice

Recommendations

Based on the findings, we recommend to all stakeholders that:

1. Regular extended opening and/or after-hours events are integrated into **venues' core provision**
2. Lates must be **part of an area's night-time economy strategy** and supported with effective marketing
3. Lates should become **an established part of museum strategy**, valued and nurtured by leadership
4. **Museums should be community hubs**, perceived as social spaces that are open when most people can use them
5. Museums adopt the 'ladder route' to developing both **regular and festival** Lates event programmes
6. **Structures and platforms** are created that help museums get their product more effectively to market and enable customers to access information and tickets more easily
7. Lates event data is used by museum directors to **engage with national and local night-time economy policymakers**
8. Regular opportunities are created for **programmers to meet and share knowledge**

