

Venice beach

1a) We started on the sea front looking at the stalls along the beach. We noticed the tourist tat reflected the sun sea and sand life style of living by the beach, but this area would only appeal to tourists. It had a very surfy vintage feel and was attempting to be very alternative. We thought it succeeded in created this image. The buildings were covered in graffiti and street art like in east LA, but unlike East LA the buildings were very well kept and the arty style was relevant and deliberately creating a hipster and on trend aesthetic. The low rise and beach hut inspired architecture gave it a very laid back vibe which reflected the lifestyle there. Inside a stereotypically Venice surf shop we



asked if they had any local publications and were pointed to free high end liberal fashion and surf magazines. This is a representation of Venice because it shows the target market the place appeals to.

We ventured in land to Abbott Kenny where we found lots of bohemian shops which catered to an environmentally conscious ethos, for example even a plush environmentally mattress shop!

Whilst the street was intending to be cool and on trend it was very upmarket so only catered to a particular income level. For example, we saw numerous signs claiming to welcome all races, religions and genders etc, however the prices will alienate much of the population. Venice is presented as a hippy haven connected to the earth through its shops and services, however this ideal has been so commercialised it subverts those values.

1b) It is evident that Venice is struggling for independence from the rest of the city. Venice has a very unique culture which it seems it is trying desperately to hang on to. Venice merged with Los Angeles in 1926 but it has always retained its self-reliant economy and culture which suggests it is independent from LA. We noticed that a lot of the buildings were high rise and newly constructed, which is different from surrounding areas were more residential in nature. There was a Mediterranean look to the as well as many different varieties of artwork. The restoration of buildings we came across was very minimal but what we noticed was that it seemed to be a lot of shops that



have been quickly constructed with materials such as corrugated metal. This suggested that the area is more reliant on the local economy which indicates an independence from the rest of the city. We came across a few demonstrations from local people with one sign (as pictured) saying 'Venice is a community not a corporate campus', which demonstrates the struggle of independence once again, it suggests that big companies/businesses may be trying to invest in to what is a small community of independent shops.

2 b) Venice Beach appears to look environmentally friendly because the street on the sea front is pedestrianised with frequently used cycle lanes; and there are lots of bins compared to Santa Monica and other areas of LA. However, there is little evidence of efforts to reduce rubbish or recycle waste, and the bicycle hire seemed to be more of a tourist attraction than an effort to be more environmentally friendly. There are also huge carparks, and the majority visitors will have arrived by car.



Tourists were the only people renting bikes



Pedestrian area adjacent to a massive carpark

Venice's 1960s New Age began when spiritual, crystal healing, bohemians moved to live by the sea. This lifestyle can still be found in Venice today however this movement has evolved from a focus on spirituality to fitness and sport leisure (surfing, skateboarding, tennis, and body building). However there is still evidence of the 1960s New Age in the lifestyle. There is an atmosphere of freedom, individuality and a rejection of the mainstream. Weed shops and tarot readings can be found on the sea front, as well as a book shop which only sold politically liberal books.



Brighton is also a 'Place on the Margin' like Venice, in its individuality, its independent shops and its orientation on the arts (including graffiti). There is also a similar culture of spirituality, weed smoking, recreation and liberal attitudes. They are both coastal areas which attract creative minds to the physical margin of the city.