

Richard Sommer: *dossier*

_2-4

Personal Statement

_5-6

cover feature: **Turning Full Circle: One Spadina Crescent, University of Toronto**
Ken Greenberg, *Canadian Architect*, October 2017

public programming

_7

Daniels Faculty, New Identity and Lecture Poster Series

collaboration:

Bruce Mau Design (identity) Catalogtree (poster designs)

Symposia and Conferences Organized

1995 – 2018

_8-11

representative writing

_12-14

“Highway Beautiful: The 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March”

Critical Productive, No. 1 2011

_15-16

“Time Incorporated: The Romantic Life of the Modern Monument”

Harvard Design Magazine, Number 9, 1999

representative design and exhibition projects 1990 – 2010

_17

The Democratic Monument In America, 1900-2000

traveling exhibition

_18

Olympic Games Cleft Auto Park: Georgia Dome

(premiated competition entry) Atlanta, Georgia

_19

Neopolitan Plan For Hell’s Kitchen

(commissioned study/ Storefront for Art and Architecture exhibition) Manhattan/ West Side, New York

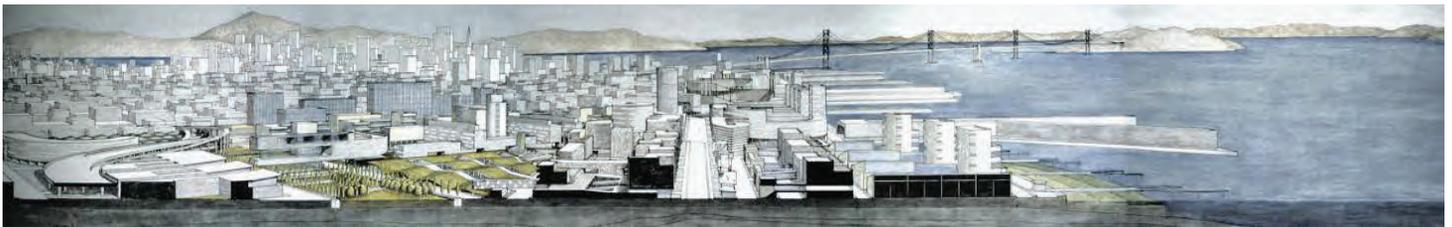
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Plan For Mission Bay

(commissioned study and exhibition) San Francisco, California

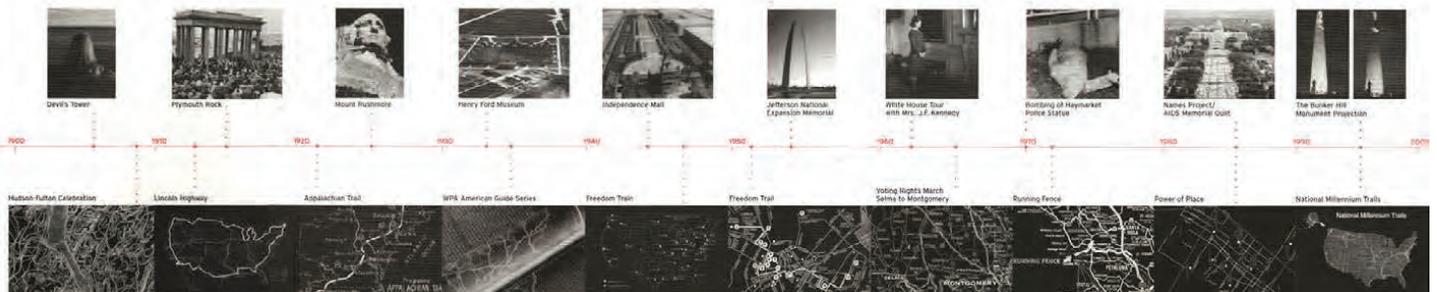
Personal Statement

The CV that accompanies this dossier provides an account of the different places, roles, and activities that led to my current role as Professor, and Dean of the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto. What my CV perhaps does not reveal is the diverse path I have taken in my development as a teacher, scholar, and designer. After completing my studies at the Rhode Island School of Design and Harvard GSD, my first ten years out of school were itinerant, moving between practice and teaching. When I started, I was trying to emulate the teacher-practitioners that had been my models and mentors, pursuing a practice with small projects, writing, competitions, and organizing symposia and exhibitions. During this time, I was focused on teaching as a means to develop ideas, and cultivate a community of students and peers. When I took my first teaching post at Iowa State, I had little or no knowledge of tenure, or understanding of the hierarchies and politics of colleges and universities. The roles I had at Iowa State, Columbia, Washington University, the California College of the Arts (as a scholar-in-residence) and the travelling I did under the Wheelwright Fellowship were critical to my development as a teacher, and to the formation of the program of research I have pursued as a scholar and designer. After my initial, itinerant years, the eleven years that followed at Harvard GSD were a period of focus and maturation. While at Harvard GSD, I also served as the O'Hare Chair in Design and Development and Visiting American Scholar at the University of Ulster (2005-10), where I worked with government agencies, academics, and other groups to develop proposals for the design of Northern Ireland's cities and towns as they were emerging from "The Troubles." It was during this period that I reconciled myself to the reality that not only by circumstance, but by choice, I had become more of a professor than a practitioner.



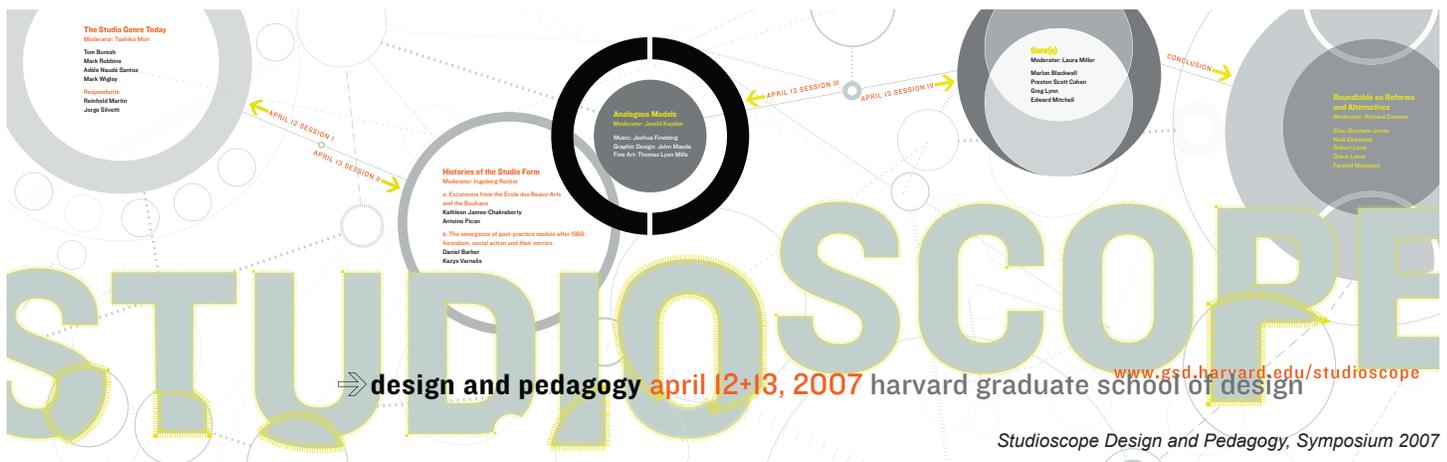
25-foot-long panorama: project and exhibition for Mission Bay, San Francisco, 1996-97

My teaching, research, writing, and creative work take the complex physical geography, culture, technology, politics, and historiography of the contemporary city as a starting point for pursuing a more synthetic, cosmopolitan architecture and urbanism. This work has evolved along two related lines, both concerned with the intersections between architecture, cities, and the politics of democracy. The first line, more applied and professionally oriented, reconceives urban design by strengthening the architect's role in city-building in light of contradictory forces – on the one hand, increasing requirements for democratic representation and community participation in planning processes, and on the other, the retreat of public sector actors that has come with the growing dominance of private real-estate markets in the construction of the city. Much of my teaching and curricular reform at Harvard GSD, the applied research I conducted in Northern Ireland, and my current leadership of the multi-disciplinary urban "SuperStudio" at UFT (a collaborative core studio in which all of our Architecture, Landscape and Urban Design Students share the same brief) revolves around the theme of developing design methods to better manage the competing constituencies at play in almost any significant urban project. The second line of my work is a long term, historically-oriented, multi-faceted research project – pursued at times with collaborator Glenn Forley – examining the transformation of monument-making in societies aspiring towards democracy, with a particular focus on the American experience.



timeline: Democratic Monument in America, 1900-2000, exhibition, 2000-02

I have had research, teaching and administrative experiences at a small private art college, a land grant university, and leading research universities in the U.S., Europe, and Canada, both public and private. These academic contexts have given me a wide perspective to draw on. From the beginning of my career, I have tackled the most essential tasks associated with operating a successful school of architecture: studio teacher and curriculum coordinator; lecturer and seminar leader, mentor to students, and advisor to student organizations. As I continued to teach, I also led



curriculum reforms, development, and delivery; organized accreditation reports and visits (this past year I managed my 7th APR/ site visit); organized many symposia and exhibitions, coordinated admissions, led school publications and public programming, and participated in ACSA conferences as a presenter, paper referee, panel moderator and conference host.

As Dean of the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design for the past decade, I have brought my experience to bear on all the above-mentioned fronts. Yet, to lead a needed transformation of the Daniels Faculty I had to grow and stretch my capacities much farther than I ever imagined. In the decade before my arrival, the Daniels Faculty had begun to take important steps to rebuild itself, after nearly being closed in the late-nineteen-eighties. Yet, as a school almost exclusively dedicated to professional design education, the Faculty was still considered an outlier in UofT's science and humanities dominated culture. UofT is a large, public Research University with enrollments above 90K, and the Daniels Faculty was considered too small to survive under the revenue-centered budget model UofT began implementing almost 15 years ago. Against this background, almost immediately after arriving, I initiated major reforms. To survive and prosper at UofT, I saw that our school needed to expand beyond its mandate in professional architectural education and engage the larger structures of UofT by becoming a full-fledged University Division. While these reforms were partially motivated by concerns about the school's size and financial resources, and the changing realities of public education in Canada (as everywhere), I never argued for the changes as a purely pragmatic matter, but rather, as an opportunity for our school to play a broader and more important role at UofT and in society at large. My proposal was that we



Left: Smart Geometry Conference, Daniels Faculty 2018

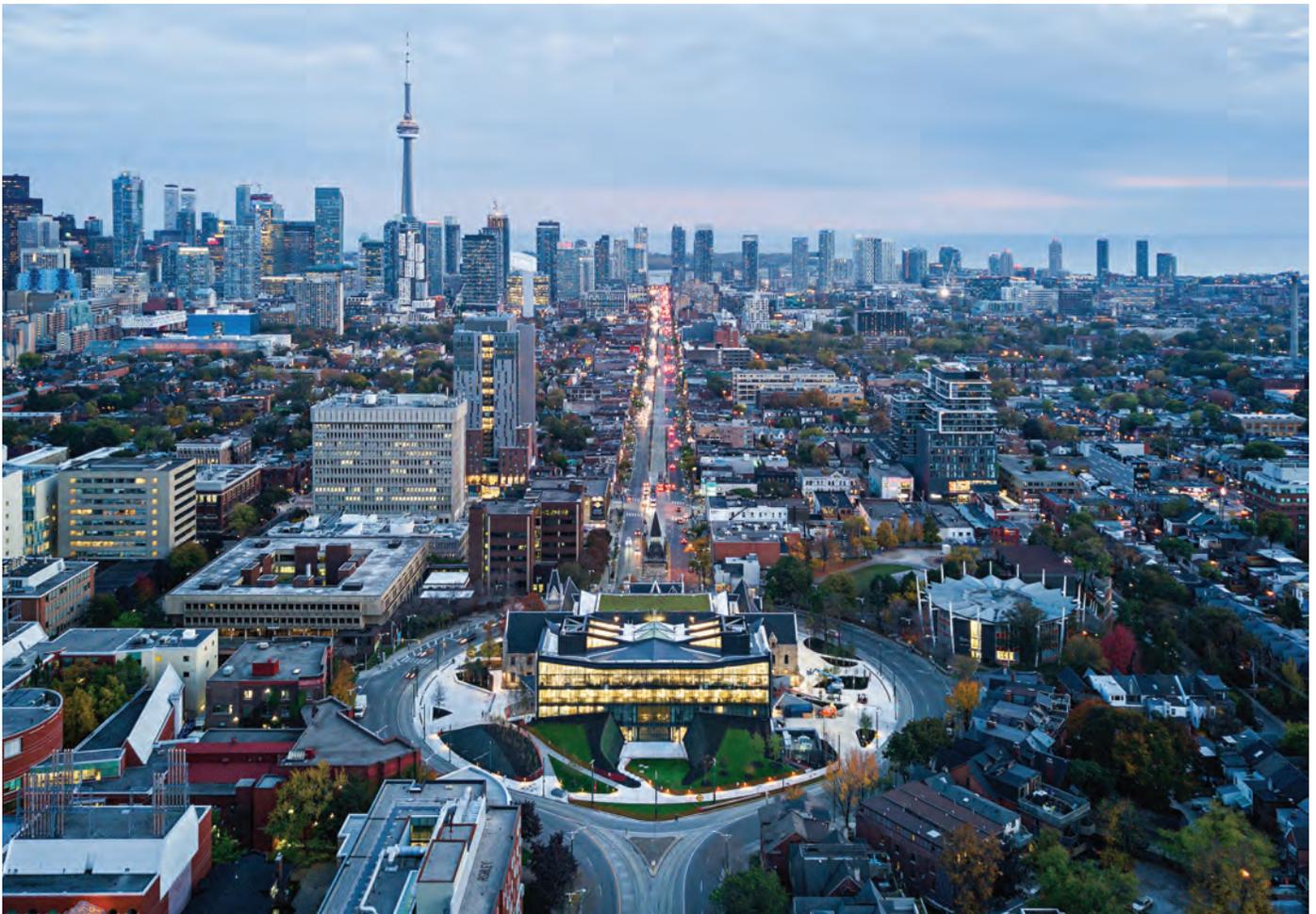


Right: Richard Sommer addressing the Graduate "SuperStudio," 2018

should lead in making creative inquiry, design-thinking and visual literacy a new hallmark at the University of Toronto. Mobilizing talented colleagues, I built an inventive new undergraduate foundation in architectural and art/visual studies, renewed the school's three graduate professional programs, created a unique, publicly-funded Ph.D. in Architecture, Landscape, and Design, and helped found various research initiatives, including the Global Cities Institute and the Green Roof Testing Laboratory. Adding art, curatorial work, environmental stewardship, and wood-based material science foci to our primary strengths in architecture, landscape and urbanism has broadened our disciplinary capacities and better connected us to both our Canadian context and issues of indigeneity. The Daniels Faculty's rising reputation has rapidly increased student enrollment and more than doubled our faculty numbers, along the way increasing the number of women and other underrepresented groups among our faculty ranks at a higher rate than any other division at UofT. When I started, we had a graduate-only student population of 375. By adding other allied disciplines, and large, broad-based undergraduate programs with more than 1000 students, we are now among the largest schools in North America with architecture at their core. As part of this growth, we have expanded the Faculty's public programming, drawing diverse constituencies into vital, interdisciplinary discussions about architecture, art, landscapes, and cities.

Perhaps my boldest achievement at UofT was imagining a site and building platform to serve the school's expanded mission. Opened in 2017, the Daniels Building at One Spadina Crescent reinvigorated one of Toronto's great civic landmarks, and is now catalyzing renewal at the western edge of the University's main downtown campus. The building features Fabrication Facilities, Exhibition Galleries, a spectacular polychrome Main Hall, and light-filled Design Studios unique in North America today. Celebrated as "one of the best buildings in Canada of the past decade" by the Canada's paper-of-record, the Globe and Mail, the Daniels Building at One Spadina has been widely published and received seventeen national and international design awards to-date. I count as one of my most important achievements as Dean that I was able to convince the University's leadership and others in the city and surrounding communities that we had the vision and could garner the financial support to undertake this large and complex 95M dollar project. Working closely with a multi-disciplinary team led by Nader Tehrani and Katie Faulkner of NADAAA, I have fought harder to realize this project than perhaps anything else in my professional life. I have literally put my job and reputation at stake to make sure critical aspects of this project's architecture and landscape would be achieved in way that would properly represent the school's newfound prominence and expanded prospects for the future. The design and configuration of the Faculty's new home embodies many of aspirations I have for the role that schools of architecture can play in the life of students, universities, cities, and the communities in which they sit. The Faculty just began its third year at One Spadina, and the building is helping to both transform the culture of the faculty, and the city that surrounds it.

As I prepare to complete my second term as a dean next year, and plan a return to my life as a professor, I have begun to reflect on the six schools where I have served, the diverse opportunities and circumstances they have presented, and my role within them. In each of these schools, I have sought to foster the kinds of creative environments and learning opportunities that would best serve students, my colleagues, and the broader communities at play. Becoming a dean has helped me to better realize, and develop, the skills and perspectives to orchestrate and promote the work of others. Along the way I have engaged thousands of students, and been a mentor to many individuals who have gone onto have prominent careers in academia, practice, and industry, some now with tenure, leading their own schools. As I have taken on increasing administrative and leadership roles over the course of my career, I have stayed engaged as a designer and scholar, and have never lost sight of the entrepreneurship and tenaciousness required to teach and undertake research in architecture and its allied disciplines. I understand the necessarily fragile nature of architecture within an institutional culture dedicated to research and creative inquiry through the making of things, and am deeply committed to it.





above The grid-like spaces on the ground floor generate a dynamic spatial fabric on an otherwise cylindrical form. **arrow above** The main floor features an expansive view into the sky and outdoor areas.



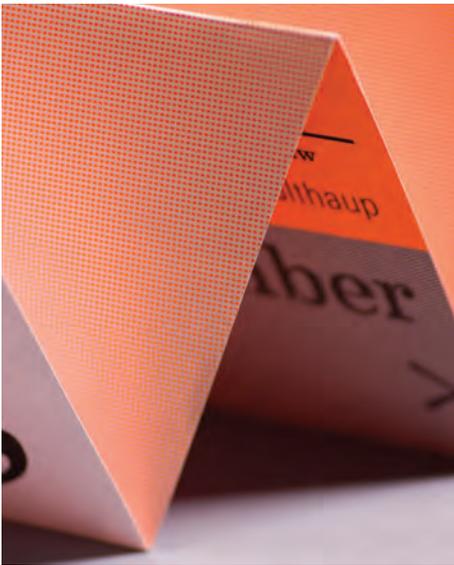
New Identity
& Posters

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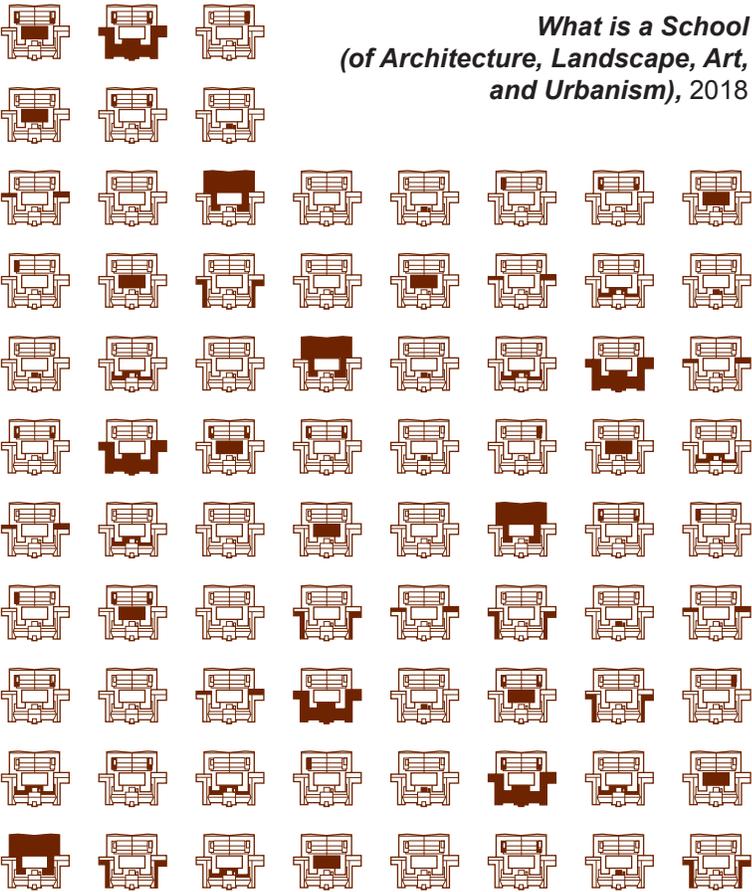


folded & wearable public programming materials: w/ Catalogtree, Arnhem / Berlin
new Daniels identity, logo and website, w/ Bruce Mau Design, Toronto
www.daniels.utoronto.ca





*What is a School
(of Architecture, Landscape, Art,
and Urbanism), 2018*



Feb 27-28, 2015
230 College Street, Toronto
Student Presentations on
Sunday March 1

afterempiricalurbanism.com

After Empirical Urbanism

Friday February 27, 2:00pm
Carto Graphics
Jill Desimini
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Jesse LeCavaller
MIT Media Lab
Sarah Williams
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Mason White, moderator
University of Toronto

Friday February 27, 4:00pm
The Bias of Data
Mona El Khaffi
University of Toronto
Dietmar Offenhuber
Northwestern University
Mark Shepard
University of Toronto
Uttan Byrne, moderator
University of Toronto

Saturday February 28, 10:30am
Leveraging the Marketplace
Robert Bruegmann
University of Illinois at Chicago
McLain Clutter
University of Michigan
Tim Love
Northwestern University
Roger Sherman
University of California, Los Angeles
Robert Levit, moderator
University of Toronto

Saturday February 28, 1:30pm
Fictions of the Ordinary
Tobias Amorbst
Wesley College
Marshall Brown
MIT Media Lab
Alex Lehnerer
Eberhard-Karls-Universität
Michael Piper, moderator
University of Toronto

Saturday February 28, 3:30pm
Use and Misuse of History
George Baird
University of Toronto
Eve Blau
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Margaret Crawford
University of California, Berkeley
Kazys Varnelis
Columbia University
Richard Sommer, moderator
University of Toronto

Sunday March 1, 10:00 am
Sunday Session
Kipoko Spaulding
Alexander Eisenschmidt
University of Illinois at Chicago
Graeme Stewart
ERA Architects, Toronto
And Student presentations

A new empirical urbanism has emerged over the past two generations, drawing habits of mind and methods of observation from the natural and social sciences, and making use of emerging forms of statistical and visual analysis. Such practices take observation, systematic documentation, and artful analysis of the city, as given, as a precondition to any designed intervention. For our purposes Empirical Urbanism is a framework for revealing the sometimes hidden philosophical assumptions, and design allis among a diverse group of urban theories and practices that, while often thought to represent opposing ideologies, share an empirical approach.

This symposium will interrogate this trend, asking how urbanism as an art and a set of practices may gain from more explicitly deciphering the relationship between the ways we characterize the past and present city, and how we go about projecting alternate futures for it. Our title notwithstanding, we do not imagine an end to empirical urban research. Rather, the discussion and debates we hope to sponsor have the aim of repositioning observation-based practice, and airing new approaches to seeing and designing the city.

Daniels



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
JOHN H. DANIELS FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, AND DESIGN

After Empirical Urbanism, 2015



Huburbs: Metrolinx Mobility Hub
Book & Symposium, 2011

HUBURBS:
Metrolinx Mobility Hub Symposium
Friday, April 15, 2011, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Innis Town Hall, University of Toronto, 2 Sussex Avenue

Presented by:
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
JOHN H. DANIELS FACULTY OF
ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, AND DESIGN

Generously supported by:
METROLINX
An agency of the Government of Ontario

STUDIOSCOPE

design and pedagogy april 12+13 2007

Beyond The Model: New Modes Of Project And Teaching

Studio-based forms of design instruction first emerged at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts more than a century ago. Since then, the built environment has come under the influence of ever-expanding professional, administrative, and market-based regimes. How has the studio system evolved to address these changes? Does studio teaching reflect, interpret, or challenge modes of practice? Do we conceive of the design studio as a venue in which critical aspects of architectural, landscape, planning, and urban design practices are transmitted, or rather as the site where design is constructively distinguished from a larger array of technical or even scholarly knowledge?

In many schools, studio teaching still largely reflects the sites and scenarios that are the focus of contemporary practice. Adherence to established project genres is not just a matter of transmitting professional values but is characteristic of studio pedagogy itself, where models may be drawn from the history of architecture, the broader built environment, or other disciplines. Nevertheless, a shift has recently occurred in how studios embody research and design speculation. The very terms through which established parameters of design are typically rehearsed in the studio—site, social program, building function, and scale of intervention—have been placed into critical relief. There are, for example, studios today that focus primarily on fabrication techniques made possible by digital technologies, and studios that assume the hybridization of architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and engineering now virtually required for large-scale urban projects. Phenomena usually taken as a background against which to design now become the subject of design itself.

Morphological analysis, programmatic speculation, and ecology are becoming increasingly important to design practice, and there is a concomitant focus on these issues in studio teaching. Yet, behind the seeming pluralism that characterizes contemporary studio teaching lingers a debate dating back to the unsetting of functionalist approaches more than a generation ago. Revisiting a Beaux-Arts approach, the previous generation of design pedagogues substituted the more flexible legal term "precedent" for "model." Their aim in positioning architecture, landscape architecture, and urbanism as a complex genealogy of precedents was to undermine the rhetoric of functionalism and modernism's blind embrace of the new, and instead to pursue design as a consciously figurative, or traditional, social art. Still in play in the passage from part to bubble diagram (and back again through the "precedent," the "conceptual" model, and the generative map) is the degree to which technical, social, economic, and political phenomena of an extra-architectural nature may establish the parameters of an architectural, urban, or landscape design.

These are among the issues that will be addressed by the symposium Studioscope. This symposium and subsequent publication will bring together preeminent design educators and scholars to examine the historical emergence, contemporary complexion, and future prospects of the design studio. Focusing on those technical, representational, and procedural aspects of the design studio that make it a distinct pedagogical model, the symposium will illuminate and critically rehearse the most fundamental approaches and "schools." Both the center and borders of the studio genre will be explored, including the structure and content of "core" studios and innovative models of studio instruction from analogous fields.

The ultimate goal of Studioscope is to create a platform for examining the status of the studio within schools of architecture and related design fields as a means to open and illuminate channels of innovation within the genre.

GSD Studioscope Planning Committee

Richard Sommer, Symposium Chair
Director, Master of Architecture in Urban Design Programs
Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design

Jorge Silveiti
Nelson Robinson Jr. Professor of Architecture

Ingeborg Røcker
Assistant Professor of Architecture

Jerold S. Kayden
Co-Chair and Director of Planning Program, Department of Urban Planning and Design
Frank Backus Williams Professor of Urban Planning and Design

Preston Scott Cohen
Director, Master of Architecture Programs
Gerald M. McCue Professor in Architecture

Location

Harvard University Graduate School of Design
Gund Hall, Piper Auditorium
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
617 495 2621

www.gsd.harvard.edu/studioscope

April 12, afternoon

Welcome and Symposium Introduction 1:30 PM

Alan Aitchner, Dean, Harvard Graduate School of Design
Ruth and Frank Stanton Professor in Urban Policy and Planning, HGSD
Richard Sommer, Symposium Chair

Session I: The Studio Genre Today 2:00-6:00 PM

Moderator: Toshiko Mori, Chair, Department of Architecture
Robert P. Hubbard Professor in the Practice of Architecture, HGSD
Principal, Toshiko Mori Architect

Tom Baresch, Chair and Professor of Architecture
A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning,
University of Michigan
Principal, Guthrie + Buresh Architects

Mark Robbins, Dean and Professor of Architecture
Syracuse University School of Architecture

Adèle Navas Santos, Dean and Professor of Architecture and Planning
School of Architecture + Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Santos Prescott and Associates

Mark Wigley, Dean and Professor of Architecture
Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
respondents:

Reinhold Martin, Director, Ph.D. Program in Architecture
and Master of Science Program in Advanced Architectural Design,
Associate Professor of Architecture
Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

Jorge Silveiti, Nelson Robinson Jr. Professor of Architecture, HGSD
Principal, Machado and Silveiti Associates

April 13, morning

Session II: Histories of the Studio Form 9:00-10:00 AM

Moderator: Ingeborg Røcker, Assistant Professor of Architecture, HGSD

a. Excursions from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Bauhaus

Antoine Picon, Director of Doctoral Programs
Professor of the History of Architecture and Technology, HGSD
Kathleen James-Chakraborty, Head of the School of Art History and Cultural Policy,
University of York, University College, Dublin

b. The Emergence of Post-Practice Models after 1968:

Formalism, Social Action, and their Mirrors

Daniel Barber, Lecturer, Yale University School of Architecture
Founder, A+P+P

Karys Varnelis, Director of the Network Architecture Lab
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Architecture
Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

Session III: Analogous Models

4:30-10:00 PM

Moderator: Jerold S. Kayden, Co-Chair and Director of Planning Program,
Department of Urban Planning and Design,
Frank Backus Williams Professor of Urban Planning and Design, HGSD

Music: Joshua Fineberg, John L. Loeb Professor of the Humanities
Department of Music, Harvard University

Graphic Designer: John Maeda, E. Ridge and Nancy Allen Professor of
Media Arts and Sciences, Associate Professor of Design and Computation,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Co-Director, SMP/CITY

Fine Art: Thomas Lynn Mills, Professor of Foundation Studies
Rhode Island School of Design

April 13, afternoon

Session IV: Core(s)

2:00-4:00 PM

Moderator: Laura Miller, Associate Professor of Architecture, HGSD
Principal, borfax/B.L.U.

Marion Blackwell, Associate Professor of Architecture
University of Arkansas School of Architecture
Principal, Marion Blackwell Architect

Preston Scott Cohen, Director, Master of Architecture Programs
Gerald M. McCue Professor in Architecture, HGSD
Principal, Preston Scott Cohen, Inc.

Greg Lynn, Studio Professor, University of California at Los Angeles,
School of the Arts and Architecture

Edward Mitchell, Adjunct Assistant Professor,
Yale University School of Architecture
Principal, EMA Architects

Session V: Conclusion

Roundtable on Reforms and Alternatives

4:45-6:00 PM

Moderator: Richard Sommer, Director of Master in Architecture and
Urban Design Programs, Associate Professor of Architecture, HGSD
Principal, borfax/B.L.U.

Ellen Dunham-Jones, Director, Architecture Program
Associate Professor of Architecture
Georgia Institute of Technology College of Architecture

Niall Kirkwood, Chair and Program Director,
Department of Landscape Architecture and Technology, HGSD
Professor of Landscape Architecture and Technology, HGSD

Diane Lewis, Professor of Architecture
Iwan S. Chanin School of Architecture, Cooper Union
Principal, Diane Lewis Architect

Robert Levit, Director, Master of Urban Design Program
Associate Professor of Architecture
University of Toronto Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design
Principal, Robert Levit Studio

Farshid Moussavi, Professor in Practice of Architecture, HGSD
Principal, Foreign Office Architects

www.gsd.harvard.edu/studioscope

Studioscope: design and pedagogy 2007

1

Panel 1
Mapping the New Spaces of the City
Nancy Spector
Model of analysis and mapping
the genes and patterns of organization
Moderator
Roger Sherman
SIAA/ADU/CUA
Richard Sommer
Associate Professor
Urban Design and Planning
Harvard University
Chris Reed
27015 Landscape Urbanism
Boston, MA

Participants:
Ronald Greenstein
Urban Land Institute
Harriet Tregoning
Secretary of State
State of Maryland
Alex Krueger I.A.A.
Chair
Department of Urban Design
and Planning
Harvard University
Moderator
Andrea Kahn
Associate Professor
Landscape Architecture
Cornell University

Urban Design emerged in the middle of the twentieth century as a practice that primarily posited its vision of a renewed, humanist city as the essential, shared element of managing political and economic authority. The challenge for Urban Design today is to develop a model of analysis and design that can effectively translate in a new historical-cultural language—i.e., in the computing and often contentious relationships that exist between land speculation and the individual citizen and groups that have increasing political rights to participation in the making of the built environment. With this larger challenge in mind, these conferences will explore connections between the complex, hybrid geographies that may be revealed and negotiated through Urban Design and the kinds of controversies and disagreements inherent that ultimately free ourselves from these new geographies. Of particular interest will be those defined spaces and sites that have typically been resistant to analysis and design due to both their form and quality: how do they act against the model of analysis and design?

Thursday February 13, 2003
2:00-2:30pm
Registration
2:30-3:00 pm
Introduction
George Theak, AIA, Chair
Department of Architecture
Northwestern University
Alex Krueger, I.A.A., Chair
Department of Urban Planning & Design
Harvard University
3:00-4:00 pm
Panel 1
"Mapping the New Spaces of the City"
4:30 pm
Keynote Address
William Mitchell
Eusebio S. Gussak Professor
of Architecture
University of Virginia

Friday February 14, 2003
9:30-10:00 am
Registration
10:00-10:30 am
Panel 2
"New Engines of Development"
11:00-12:00 pm
Panel 3
"The New Agency: Democratic Representation in the Processes and Outcomes of Urban Design and Development"
1:00-2:00 pm
Panel 4
Concluding Comments and Proposed Agenda for Next Meeting

Northeastern University and Harvard University
A two-part conference comprised as a continuation of the investigations begun at the Columbia/Harvard/Van Alen Urban Pedagogies conference held in April 2002.
Northwestern University
Ralph W. Engstrom
Boston, MA 02115
Panel 1
February 13 & 14
2003
Northwestern University
"Mapping the City: New Boundaries, Engines and Consequences"
Panel 2
October
2003
Northwestern University
"New Programs, Projects and Modes of Agency for Urban Design"

Information and registration:
architecture
113 Ryder Hall
Northwestern University
Boston, MA 02115
617 373 4637
www.architecturalnew.eds.edu
architect@new.eds.edu

Panel 2
New Engines of Development
Topic: Economic
New Institutions, Private and Public
Structures (beginning for economic)
Joining, reorganizing and managing sites
which present complex and varied
opportunities, and making an emerging
agenda and multiple activities
The Reorganization of Private Money and
Public Interest/Emerging Programs and
Planned Space within City
Willy Scharif
IAP
Chairman, Strategic Development
Jerold Kayden
Harvard University
Robert L. Oliver
VP for Finance & Administration
WSP International
Moderator
Roger Sherman
SIAA/ADU/CUA
William Mitchell
University of Virginia
Moderator
Ten Lovvorn
Northwestern University

Participants:
John DeWitt
Brownfield Recovery Inc.
Strategic Perspective
Ann Beha
Architect
Preservation and Historical Heritage
Perspective
Harriet Tregoning
Secretary of State
Governmental/PA&A Sector Association
Anthony Flint
Boston
The Boston Office
Community Association
Chris Gordon
Houston
Regional Reconstruction Perspective
William Mitchell
University of Virginia
Design Perspective
Richard Sommer
Design Perspective

New Agency, Democratic Representation in the Processes and Outcomes of Urban Design and Development
Roundtable
The goal of both parts of the conference is to explore how new methods for analysis, mapping and designing the urban geographies in question can be coordinated with, and ultimately influence, the political engagement and behavior of urban design.
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Friday February 14, 2003
9:30-10:00 am
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1:00-2:00 pm
Panel 4
Concluding Comments and Proposed Agenda for Next Meeting

Information and registration:
architecture
113 Ryder Hall
Northwestern University
Boston, MA 02115
617 373 4637
www.architecturalnew.eds.edu
architect@new.eds.edu

2

3

The New Geography of Urban Design, 2003

essay (representative of ongoing research): Highway Beautiful: The 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March, 2011

DOSS

Highway Beautiful: The 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March

RICHARD M. SOMMER
GLENN FORLEY

The time will come when we will not confine our marching to Washington. We will march through the South, through the heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We shall pursue our own "scorched earth" policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground—nonviolently. We shall fragment the South into a thousand pieces and put them back together in the image of democracy. We will make the action of the past few months look petty. And I say to you, WAKE UP AMERICA!
—John L. Lewis, deleted portion of his speech at the March on Washington, D.C. (1963)

Beauty belongs to all the people.
—President Lyndon Johnson at the signing of the Highway Beautification Act (1965)

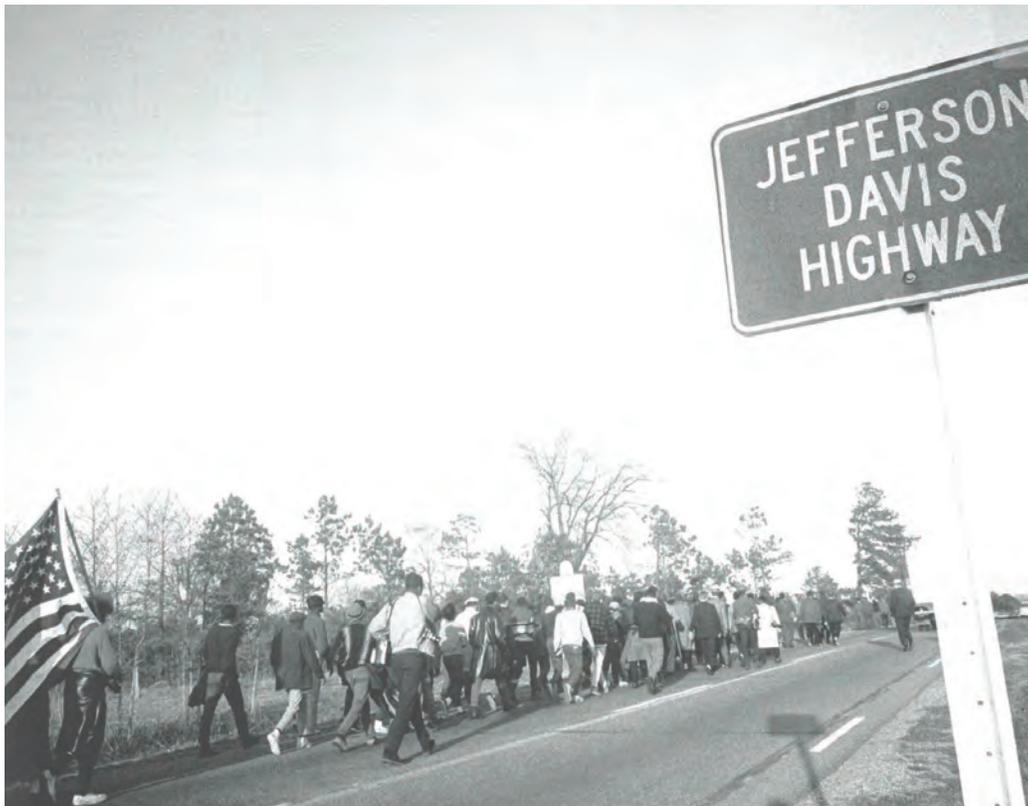
The 1965 Selma to Montgomery, Alabama voting rights march along highway U.S. 80 represents a critical moment in the history of American democracy, where the tension between maintaining civic order in the country's most public of spaces, and exercising a basic act of citizenship fell into crisis. Despite all that has been said and written about the march from Selma to Montgomery, important aspects of the built infrastructure central to this historic event have not been well understood. Our purpose here will be to emphasize the local, and moreover, spatial politics at work in the intersection between the personal act of walking, its more conscious performance in the collective protest march, and the American highway. The collective walk along U.S. 80, as a democratic activity, highlights contradictions between the practices of the 1960s civil rights and highway beautification movements, and opens questions about the relationship between the aesthetic and political ambitions of this period. That is, if the federal solution to the commercial "blight" of the 1960s infrastructural landscape lay in applying aesthetic blandishments of nature to the country's largest network of public space (the interstate highways), was there an analogous change in aesthetic to the spaces in which the ugliness of racial segregation and the suppression of constitutional rights took place?

The protest walk along a highway is a particular kind of civil as well as civic disobedience in which peaceful protest intervenes in what is commonly held as uncontested space. In an urban context, civil disobedience is inherent in the common spaces of the city. The tacit understanding of the street is that it harbors the potential for collective protest.¹ Alternatively, the highway becomes a staging ground for

protest only by imposition. Given the social compact of a highway—the acceptance of a minimum of limits (i.e., speed, alcohol consumption) in return for maximum efficiency—the collective protest walk is a civic intrusion into a mono-functional space that intensifies the more familiar and historically sanctioned act of civil disobedience.² And yet, in the context of the Jim Crow South, an additional layer of limits consisting of implied social practices and unstated cultural codes existed for its African-American population that operated on a state and, moreover, a local level, effectively compromising the American myth of the highway as an unfettered space. The collective transgression of the highway by southern blacks, in other words, implicated an entire spatial, and in turn, social structure.

There is a history of long-distance protest walks in the United States, some of which precede the dominance of the automobile. Among them were the 1864 march for jobs from Massillon, Ohio to Washington, D.C. by "Coxey's Army" and the 1913 march for women's suffrage from New York City to Washington, D.C. by the "suffrage pilgrims."³ In 1963, well into the automobile age, there was an attempt at a "Freedom Walk" from Chattanooga, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi by members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to protest racial segregation.⁴ Yet, the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery initiated by James Bevel of SNCC and advanced by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was distinct for receiving widespread public support, the protection of the federal government, and extensive national media coverage in the effort to advance the civil rights of African Americans.⁵ However,

048 CRITICAL PRODUCTIVE 1.1



Highway Beautiful: The 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March, 2011

black men beyond the nationalization of Jim Crow statutes to effectively wage what Bruce Catton called a "cold Civil War." Alabama state troopers, for example, displayed the Confederate flag on their uniforms as well as their patrol cars. Alabama state trooper headquarters, under the benign title of the Department of Public Safety, begged the question of who was included in the public and whose safety was being secured.¹¹

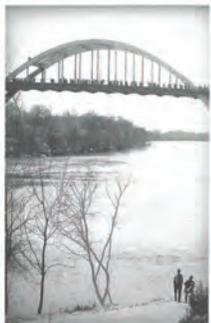
The Alabama state troopers' violent suppression of the first attempt to march from Selma to Montgomery on Sunday, March 7, is an indication of the soft-soled Civil War that existed between southern states and their black citizenry. After one session of a two-session hearing on the march, go Alabama state troopers who had assembled on the far side of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the city limit of Selma and the divide between Dallas and Lowndes counties, charged into the group of voter bloc members led by Hosea Williams of SCLC and John Lewis, head of the SNCC. Using clubs, whips, electric cattle prods, horses, and C-4 tear gas to induce nausea, state troopers beat the marchers back into Selma and to the sanctuary of Brown Chapel Methodist Church, the organizing site of the voting rights campaign. The violent actions of the state troopers resulted in injuries to over 50 of the marchers. Those treated were sent to a black-only hospital outside of Selma.¹²

The USC received highlighted televised broadcasts of the attack by interrupting Judgment of Nuremberg to show footage of the march. The juxtaposition of mass murder and Alabama state troopers committing mass violence did not go unnoticed. In the days after the attack that came to be known as "Bloody

Sunday," protests demanding federal intervention in Selma spread across the country including a sit-in at the White House during a regularly scheduled tour, and an extended sit-in organized by SNCC and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) at the Library Bill, at the time located in the entryway of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. New York Times columnist James Reston noted, "It is the almost instantaneous television reporting of the struggle in the streets of Selma, Ala., that has transformed what would have been mainly a local event a generation ago into a national issue overnight. Even the segregationists who have been attacking the photographers and spraying black paint on their TV lenses understood the point: 'Public outrage and congressional pressure for a response to 'Bloody Sunday' accelerated the additional voting rights legislation that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been seeking and that the Johnson administration had been preparing since November 1964."¹³

On March 7, President Johnson gave a televised address outlining his legislation for what was to become the Voting Rights Act in a joint session of Congress that was watched by over 90 million viewers. The new legislation addressed many of the reactions expressed by voters that continued to distrust black blocs and proposed the intervention of federal registrars in states slow to register black voters. The primary demand for federal intervention in this discriminatory manner, voting procedures had been met.¹⁴

One week earlier, the day after the televised broadcast of the events of "Bloody Sunday," the President also gave a speech on the administration's plan to introduce legislation



View of Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, Alabama, looking north.

on highway beautification as a means to protect the surrounding landscape along interstate highways from the spread of billboards and junkyards, and "to make our roads more to recreation and pleasure."¹⁵ Over the course of the following weeks, the effort to complete the march from Selma to Montgomery and the passage of highway beautification legislation, part of the Johnson administration's vision for a "Great Society," unfolded at parallel moments that evoked the racial and class fissures of the interstate highway as a cultural rather than a technological construct.

Following the outcome of a court hearing reviewing the permit for another attempt to complete the march to Montgomery, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. staged a second controversial march of some 500 people, approximately age of whom were elderly, who had traveled to Selma from around the country in expression of solidarity following the violence of "Bloody Sunday." The second march, held on March 9 and known as "Turnaround Tuesday," repeated the standard with the Alabama state troopers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, but in what was later acknowledged as a prearranged agreement, no arrests were made. King and his supporters knelt down, prayed, then turned around and walked back into Selma. Journalist Andrew Kopplev noted, with skepticism, the effectiveness of the performance:

If you have never heard a man Negro and white sing "We Shall Overcome," bands joined and swayed in eight solemn rows on U.S. 90 just west of the Alabama River, there is little that can be said to cover the experience. Civil rights demonstrators are never so bold but this hardly seemed an actual participating [with the essential drama]. But for about 10 minutes, the



Oppose Selma, Sunday hearing.

incredibly complex, overlapped, interwoven, and certainly unscripted Selma voting rights campaign was involved with a kind of profound passion that the world of pseudo-events rarely sees. Then it was over. Like characters in a play, King and Clark spoke their lines and went through their motions. If it was not rehearsal, it could have been.

That evening three men looking to punish white supporters of the Black civil rights activists attacked a group of voting rights, resulting in the death of Rev. James Ray of Boston two days later.¹⁶

On March 15, two days after the president's voting rights speech, Judge Frank Johnson of the Federal District

Court ruled in favor of allowing the march from Selma to Montgomery to proceed and issued an injunction preventing the state authorities from interfering with the march—despite testimony from state troopers that marchers along a highway posed a traffic hazard. Judge Johnson's ruling was based, in part, on the appropriateness of the highway as a site of protest. He weighed the public's right to have unrestricted access to the highways against the state of justice that was being protested. Johnson wrote that, "It seems basic to our constitutional principle that the extent of the right to assemble, demonstrate and march peacefully along the highways and streets in an ordered manner should be commensurate with the minority of the wrongs that are being protested and petitioned against. It,



The arrival of Montgomery, 1965.

this case, the wrongs are enormous. The extent of the right to demonstrate against these wrongs should be determined accordingly." The stated purpose of the march was to present Governor Wallace with a petition outlining the grievances of black residents of Alabama, in particular the issue of voting rights.¹⁷

The potential for violence that surrounded the march was measured by the amount of security the federal government provided. Following Governor Wallace's refusal to mobilize the Alabama National Guard, President Johnson federalized 1,000 of them. In addition, Johnson authorized 100 FBI agents and 100 U.S. marshals along the route, stationed over 100 military police near Selma and another 200 military police near Montgomery, and placed 1,000 regular infantry troops on alert at Fort Benning, GA.

Act II: Walking the Line
After Act I "Bloody Sunday," and Act II "Turnaround Tuesday," the march finally commenced on Sunday March 23. Thirty-two thousand people left Selma, comprised of 10,000 rights leaders and rabbin, premy cooks and boarders, representatives of the student left, movie stars and infants in strollers. There were two blind people and a man with one leg. He carried a crutch. The marchers who believe they have been denied the vote long. The first night, in accordance with the federal court order, most marchers returned to Selma by bus, car, and a special train in order to reduce the number of marchers to the 500 who would continue into Lowndes County where U.S. 90 narrows from a four-lane to a two-lane highway for just under 1 mile. The goal chosen to continue the march were primarily those who were beaten or arrested during the Selma voting rights

campaign. Surrounded by Army troops as well as Alabama National Guard troops with the Confederate flag on military trucks, the marchers were met with additional guarding, intersections and searching for explosives around bridges and wooded areas, the 300 marchers passed through a landscape of mirages, small swamps, and trees draped with Spanish moss. As the New York Times observed, "Lowndes is a limestone country, and the marchers, not afraid, are at least a little nervous."¹⁸

Bracketing the walk through Lowndes County was a more poignant-like parade of thousands that left Selma and entered Montgomery, consisting of local residents, out-of-town supporters, clergy, civil rights representatives, labor leaders, academics, politicians, and entertainers.¹⁹ At the end of the week, some 25,000 people assembled in front of the Montgomery Capitol, site of the 1865 inauguration of Jefferson Davis as president of the Confederacy. Following speeches that included one by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., an aide to Governor Wallace refused an attempt by a group of marchers to exhibit a petition of grievances. At the end of the Montgomery rally and the withdrawal of the security forces, organizers warned marchers to leave the city quickly. Organizers of the march had arranged for drivers to take participants back to Selma. One of those volunteer drivers, Viola Liuzzo, a nurse from Detroit, was shot and killed by three members of the KKK while driving with Larry Moton, a SNCC volunteer, along U.S. 90. Re/Jefferies. Davis Highway just outside of Lowndes on a return trip to Montgomery.²⁰

Media reporting on the march ranged from proclaiming the historical significance of the event to criticizing the motivation for the march. One argument was that



State Troopers, Selma, Alabama, Lowndes County, March 24, 1965.



David Davidson, shot on highway in the 1960s.



View from Selma, Alabama, U.S. 90.



Carl M. Highways, White House, 1965.

once the Johnson administration announced new voting rights legislation, the Selma voting rights campaign lost its primary grievance. Moreover, the goal of attracting national media attention had succeeded as a result of the accumulating arrests and the violent spectacle of "Bloody Sunday." As one journalist later noted, "First and foremost, [violence] is a powerful catalyst to arouse public opinion. If the poor Negroes who were tear gassed and beaten in Selma had walked all the way to Montgomery without a violent incident, we would still be awaiting a voting bill. It is in Selma an isolated case." The while the potential for further violence may have induced national media attention (SNCC never provided live coverage of the entry into Montgomery), the completion of the march was an unmissable victory in the waging of a "cold Civil War" consisting of nonviolent struggle over a common space with different identities. Thus between a civil rights claim to U.S. 90 and a state's rights claim to the Jefferson Davis Highway.²¹

While conceived separately in 1956, the Voting Rights Act and the Highway Beautification Act both evolved the federal government in creating laws to impose national standards in state and local conditions. In the case laws concerning civil rights and the beautification of public space, respectively. Emerging that history's marginalized African-American citizens asserted their rights to political representation and "improving" the appearance of highway would seem incongruous—and unusual—goals. Yet, these projects and the movements they grew out of exemplify the two aims, competing strains of American democracy as they were manifested during this period: the guarantee of voting rights stems from the collective desire to participate in the formation of a more perfect union and the more individualistic desire for physical safety and social access via interstate highways. About the clear connection between rights and access, many Americans, especially in recent history, would be hard pressed to

choose which of their freedoms most allows them to improve their status in life—their right to vote or their capacity to change where they live or work and thereby reinvent themselves. The U.S. interstate highway system has profoundly influenced the configuration and fortunes of every American city and town in the last half of the 20th century, and thereby the lives and opportunities available to their inhabitants.

Taking on the highway in 1956, at perhaps the most active moment of highway construction and related works of urban renewal, President Lyndon Johnson wanted that while the United States may be a society too large and diverse to share a national definition of beauty, it could probably agree on what is "ugly." Johnson added straight-ahead, that outside of cultural questions of beauty, Americans can agree that "nature" (Selma is a purely scenic area) is always beautiful. Its within a long history of associating the beauty of the nation with its natural inheritance rather than its built or recorded history. During the signing ceremony for the Highway Beautification Act, Johnson recalled his trip back to the White House along the (officially planned) George Washington Memorial Parkway the day before, after recovering from surgery and a hospital stay: "I saw Nature in its parent. The landscape had turned red. The maple leaves were scarlet and gold... And not one foot of it was marred by a single thoughtless man-made obstruction—no advertising signs, no junkyards. Well, doctors could prescribe no better medicine for me." In 1965, perhaps Americans could agree that the commercialization of the landscape that could be seen as plainly through the windshield on any highway was ugly and that more nature and less culture was the cure. Was

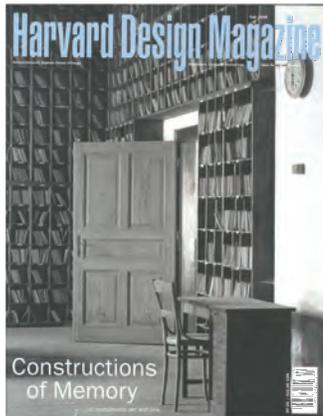
there a similar level of agreement that the actions of the southern states against their African-American citizens were an ugly sight on American soil?

How did the march from Selma to Montgomery, and the events that precipitated it, come to be represented within the landscapes in which they occurred? Thirty years after the voting rights march, U.S. 90 between Selma and Montgomery retained successive designations as an Alabama State Scenic Highway (August 1995), a National Scenic Byway (December 1995), an All-American Road (January 1996), and finally, a National Historic Trail (December 1996). These designations demonstrate that the voting rights and highway beautification acts ultimately became conflated in the slow transformation of the Jefferson Davis Highway from an interstate highway to a National Historic Trail. The highway's successive designations and the public programming that has accompanied these changes have transformed what was a roadside experience of walking for five days through a despoiling landscape into a one-hour tourist drive (not including stops corresponding to the voting rights march along the route) along a road passing through "the great rolling hills of Lowndes County."²² By 1996, the two-lane highway of U.S. 90 passing through Lowndes County had been widened to a four-lane four-lane highway. Among the features along the new four-lane stretch of U.S. 90 in Lowndes County is a small market, sponsored by a group of SCLC women, commemorating the site where Viola Liuzzo was murdered. A wrought-iron fence surrounds the memorial to protect it from vandals.²³

Notes

1. Michael Sauter, "The 'Cold Civil War' of the 1960s: The Struggle for the Right to Vote in the South," *Journal of American Studies*, 40 (2006): 1-24.
2. Bruce M. Wilson, *The Road to Nowhere: The Story of the Interstate Highway System* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).
3. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
4. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
5. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
6. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
7. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
8. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
9. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
10. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
11. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
12. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
13. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
14. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
15. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
16. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
17. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
18. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
19. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
20. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
21. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
22. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).
23. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Highway Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004).

essay (first writing on the subject): Time Incorporated: The Romantic Life of the Modern Monument, 1999



Time Incorporated

The Romantic Life of the Modern Monument, by **Richard M. Sommer**

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES monument-making offer for recasting the commemorative spaces of the contemporary landscape? Can monuments engender democratic spaces in a society whose building practices seem to reflect, on the one hand, the desire to express the free flow of matter and information, and, on the other, the overweening influence of the “value engineer”? I would like to respond to these questions by exploring, through a consideration of projects both built and unbuilt, new modes of monument making and reception—modes that are nomadic, temporary, and landscape-like. I will also explore how new forms of monument are struggling to embody critical and democratic values, often using ironic and allegorical tactics rejected by mainstream Modernism. But first I will examine how the Classical desire for permanence and the Romantic search for prescient forms of artistic expression persist in modern attempts at monumentality.

ALLEGORICAL AND IRONIC MONUMENTS

At the start of 20th century, just before the Futurists’ rejection of the monument, Adolf Loos dissected the nature of the modern monument. In “Architecture,” Loos described architecture’s function as the ability to “arouse sentiments,” and argued that only certain kinds of architecture—the tomb and the monument—possessed the transcendent potential of “art”; all else was utilitarian “building.”¹ In making this distinction, Loos seemed to be rearticulating a Classical schema in which architecture, with the monument as exemplar, is understood to be a symbol of humankind’s ability to overcome the aleatory, destructive forces of nature. Yet Loos’s association of the monument with Classicism was ambiguous. In the same essay, he does more than equate the monumental function of architecture with art; he also claims that “the work of art is revolutionary: the house is conservative”—that is, art can be challenging and forward-looking, but architecture must fulfill the more everyday need for comfort.

Following Loos’s desire to elucidate the differences between things, one might distinguish between his categories *tomb* and *monument*. Like the religious reliquary, the tomb possesses a special aura because we understand that it contains a real body or artifact; it

thus effaces the “distance” of representation. This is what Loos was referring to in this seminal passage from “Architecture”: “. . . if in a wood, we come across a tumulus, six feet long and three feet wide, shaped by the spade into a pyramid, we become serious and something in us says: here someone is buried. This is Architecture.”² Because it does *not* contain the person or thing commemorated, the commemorative monument differs in essential ways from the tomb. Its power depends not upon the presence of the real body or artifact but instead upon the rhetorical force of a representational strategy—where no body exists, one must be metaphorically summoned.

Loos is at his discriminating best when he explores the relationships and differences between material facts and conjured auras, between everyday practices and transcendent values. Despite the effort Loos made to identify culture as a dividing line between “art” and “life”—part of his insistence, in the words of the Viennese writer Karl Kraus, that we not mistake the “urn” for the “chamber pot”—the greatest monument he designed was not a tomb or commemorative site but rather a skyscraper: his famous entry in the 1922 competition for a new headquarters for the *Chicago Tribune*, a high-rise in the form of a giant column.

Reviewing the text that accompanied Loos’s design, Manfredo Tafuri, who had once described the project as “ironic” and indeed prophetic of Pop Art,³ revised his assessment and wrote, dismissively:

A single column extracted from the context of its order is not, strictly speaking, an allegory; rather, it is a phantasm. As the paradoxical specter of an order outside time, Loos’s column is gigantically enlarged in a final effort to communicate an appeal to the perennial endurance of values. Like the Giants of Kandinsky’s *Der gelbe Klang*, however, Loos’s giant phantasm succeeds in signifying nothing more than its pathetic will to exist—pathetic, because it is declared in the face of the metropolis, in the face of the universe of change where values are eclipsed, the “aura” falls away, and the column and the desire to communicate absolutes become tragically outdated and unreal.⁴

Yet only an interpretation this narrow would fail to understand Loos’s column as allegorical and ironic. The literary critic Paul de Man de-

scribed, in his writing on Romanticism, how allegorical and ironic modes of expression create works that embody the modern subject’s sense of alienation and difficulty in using language transparently.⁵ In this view, the allegorical work, by deploying historical forms within a new context, challenges—or, in de Man’s terms, “evacuates” and “refigures”—longstanding traditions and received histories—in the case of the Loos’s Tribune Column, the tradition and history of Greco-Roman architecture.

Allegory is allusive, pointing to (rather than embodying) its content. Irony either dissimulates—pretends to be what it is not—or playfully multiplies the author’s voice, depending for its effect upon the difference between what an author says and what an audience understands the author to mean. Articulating the unparalleled ability of irony to engage modern audiences, de Man writes that “it seems to be only in describing a mode of language which does not mean what it says that can one actually say what one means.”⁶ Whatever Loos’s intentions (he was, after all, a darling of the Dadaists), the radical shift in scale and function of what he called “The Big Greek Column” was taken by many as an ironic gesture, one that allegorized Sullivan’s tripartite high-rise and playfully implied a link between the newspaper column and the Doric column.

A more recent work of monumental art picks up where Loos left off: Claes Oldenburg’s 1968 *Proposal for a Skyscraper for Michigan Avenue, Chicago, in the Form of Laredo Taft’s Sculpture “Death.”*⁷ Conceived after the artist had toured Europe’s “great monuments,” Oldenburg’s project uses the idea of the monument to suggest a radical redefinition of an urban site. Referring to a tour of the recently completed John Hancock Building with its architect, Bruce Graham of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Oldenburg found something lacking in Graham’s claim that the Hancock’s tapering form was derived purely from the imperatives of structure and program.

Oldenburg, who had spent many of his early years in Chicago, was ambivalent about the Hancock. He liked the building but resented its scale and how it “followed him around,” obliterating what he had come to view as the Chicago skyscraper: the Palmolive, later the Playboy, Tower.⁸ Then, during a visit to the



THE DEMOCRATIC MONUMENT IN AMERICA 1900-2000

Traveling Exhibition
2000-02
Curator And Designer:
Richard Sommer w/
Fizer/Forley design

The Democratic Monument Exhibition explores the proposition that there is a new category of architectural objects that can be construed by situating concepts associated with the modern monument within the evolving political aspirations and practices of democracy in the United States. The exhibit is structured around a chronological survey of ten juxtaposed pairs of monuments representing each decade of the 20th century. Ostensibly dedicated to the themes of liberty, freedom, and equal representation—as opposed to the commemoration of war—each of the examples chosen has played a significant role in challenging the traditional conception of the monument through its symbolism, method of production, or means of reception. The exhibit's timeline, which contains approximately three hundred annotated images, maps and diagrams, locates the selected monuments in relation to political, artistic, and technological events of the past century. Two kinds of monuments have been chosen to represent each decade: Objects, often vertical in orientation and made of single or highly aggregated parts and Trails, horizontal in orientation and capable of rendering large swaths of the landscape with a singular theme or purpose.



Parsons School of Design Exhibitions
The Arnold & Sheila Aronson Galleries
66 Fifth Avenue

Aronson Gallery Installation, Fall 2001

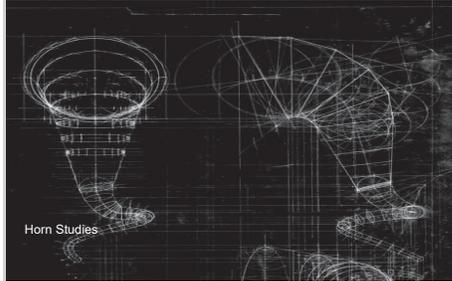


Georgia Dome

THE CLEFT AUTO PARK

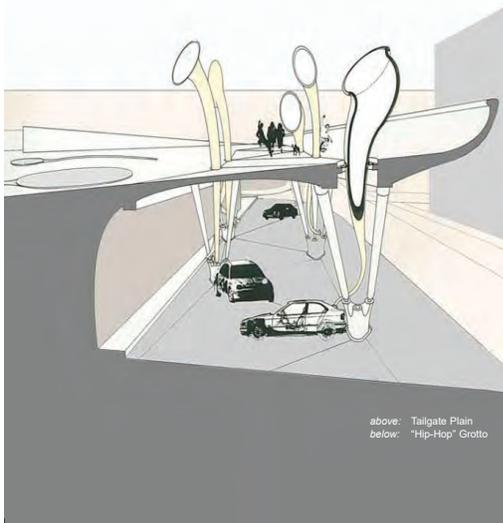
Georgia Dome Olympic Site, Atlanta, GA, 1996
w/ John Bass, borfax/B.L.U.

This project situates a tail-gating parking lot (above), and hip-hop grotto (below), where music from the cars pumped up to sound-horns. A play on the myths surrounding the original Olympics, the project transformed an old rail yard next to the Georgia Dome, one of the sites of the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. The text developed for the competition, included the following:



Horn Studies

"The Sacred character of ancient Olympia, site of the first Olympics, arose from its location in a geographical cleft. Over time, a continuous series of individual cults were superimposed on the site, one upon the other, and the actual location of the cleft was lost. This loss of origin coincided with Zeus' assertion of absolute mastery over the sanctuary at Olympia. Zeus became master by eliminating his male rivals, all of whom were representations of earlier cultures at Olympia. What had originally been footrace-fertility games – marriages of God and Earth, symbolizing the dominance of earth gods and their representation of agriculture – were gradually transformed into games representing the militant and immortal Zeus. Thus, the introduction of "Heavy" athletic events such as boxing and wrestling combined with pushing, strangling, and twisting, all of which were derived from earlier rituals involving blood sacrifice. Interestingly, artistic activities, especially music, dance and theater, preceded the 'combat' of naked bodies at other competition sites, but not at Olympia."



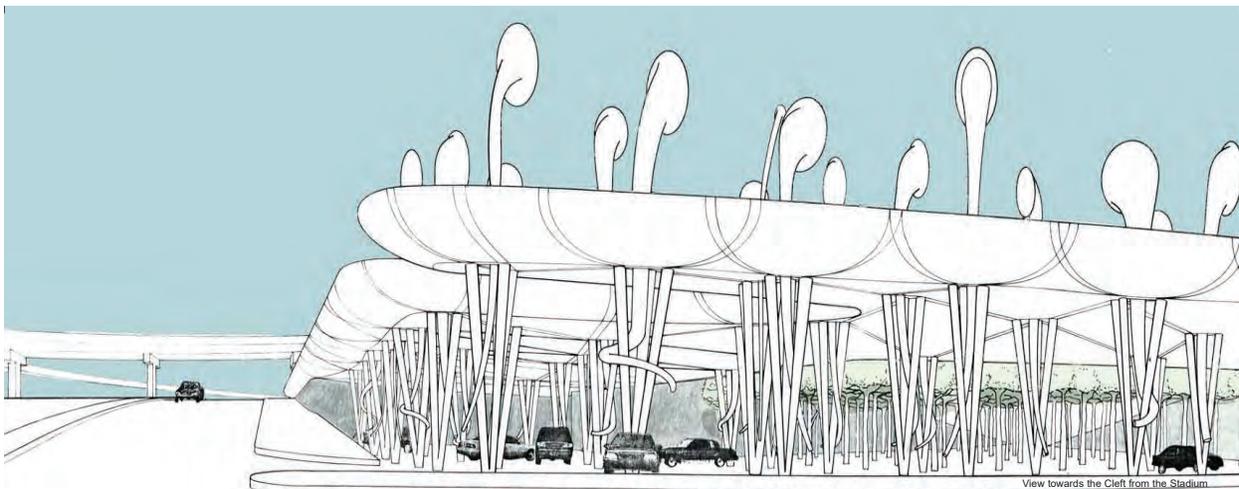
above: Tailgate Plain
below: "Hip-Hop" Grotto



View towards Downtown Atlanta



Axonometric of Tailgate Plain with the Georgia Dome at right

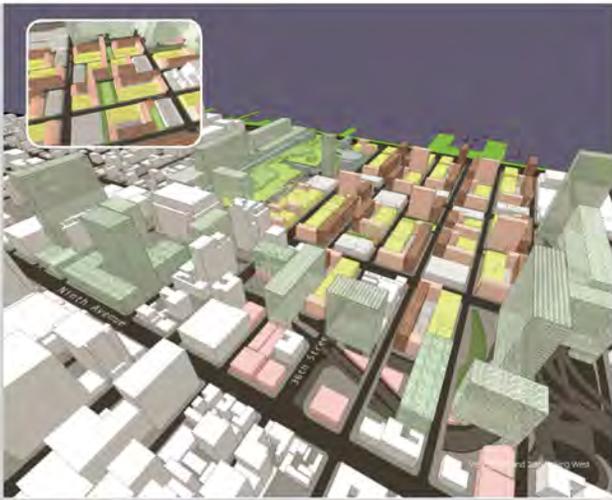


View towards the Cleft from the Stadium

3000 years later at another Olympic site:

As with the lost cleft of ancient Olympia, our cities are characterized by activities which leave marks and then fade from view. Such is the nature of this site in Atlanta, Georgia: parked cars occupying a geographic scar left by a railroad yard.

With this background in mind we conceived of a car park to accommodate a series of modern rituals that supplement spectator sports. These rituals are redolent of themes transfigured from ancient reveries associated with Olympia and the Olympics, here embedded in the cult of automobiles and tailgating. Thus the project synthesizes two aspects of the tailgating tradition, jazzmen playing horns out the back of a car, here replaced by a "grotto" of electronic mix-masters piping sound up from below, and above, the imbibing of distilled spirits, the grilling of meats and hero worship, i.e. Beer, Hot Dogs and fanatic behavior.

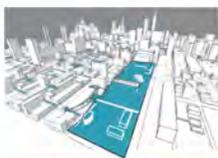


NEOPOLITAN PLAN FOR HELL'S KITCHEN

commissioned study, exhibition and publication, 1999-01
 Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, NY
 w/ Laura Miller, borfax/ B.L.U.

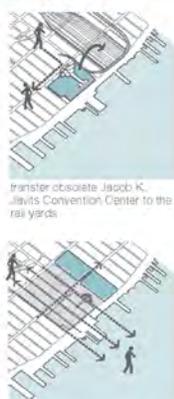


"Underdeveloped" according to powerful real-estate interests, Hell's Kitchen (the extended area of what is now called "Hudson Yards") should logically accommodate the expansion of Midtown Manhattan's density. Yet bridges, ramps, and major access points associated with the Lincoln Tunnel, as well as the Port Authority Bus Station, the Jacob Javits Convention Center, and rail yards form a barricade of "obnoxious" infrastructure, making the site resistant to laissez-faire development. Commissioned by The Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association, the NeoPolitan Plan projected an admixture of use, height and bulk zoning, quite literally figuring the overlapping political and socioeconomic interests vying for Hell's Kitchen, one of the most contested urban sites in a major American metropolis in recent history. Going beyond project-based scenarios that respond primarily to one – or appease all – interests, agencies and constituencies, we invented design procedures to leverage one party's interests against the holdings or interests of others. The former Javits mega-site is re-parceled – forming a new NeoPolitan neighborhood, where housing, commercial uses, community programs, and open spaces hopscotch across the site strategically, serving the interests of local constituencies. Ultimately, the NeoPolitan Plan for Hell's Kitchen is less a "plan" than a design-based vehicle for private interest to become the subject of public debate and negotiation.

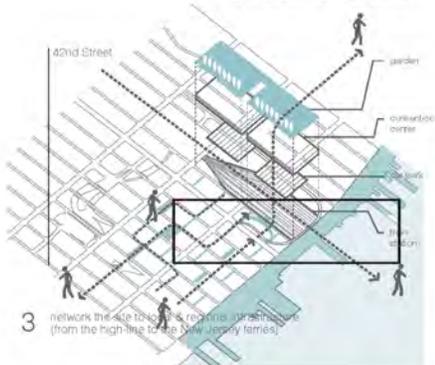


Regional Flows
 Existing Major Infrastructure
 Proposed Major Infrastructure

STACKING THE YARDS



1 transfer obsolete Jacob K. Javits Convention Center to the rail yards
 2 liberate five jumbo blocks for a new west side neighborhood



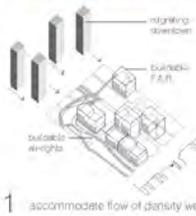
3 network the site to the city & regions (from the high line to the New Jersey ferries)



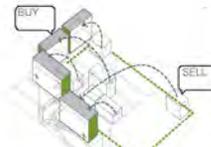
Commercial Flows
 Existing Midtown Business District
 Proposed "Midtown West" District



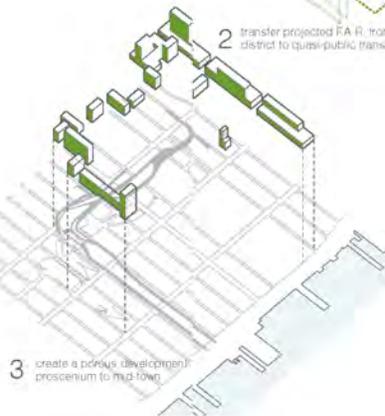
MIGRATING MIDTOWN



1 accommodate flow of density west



2 transfer projected F.A.R. from surrounding district to quasi-public transit air rights



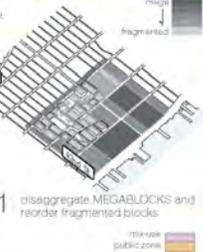
3 create a precinct development proscenium to mid-town



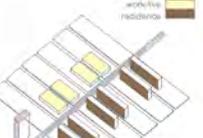
Housing Flows
 Existing Residential Development
 Proposed Residential Development



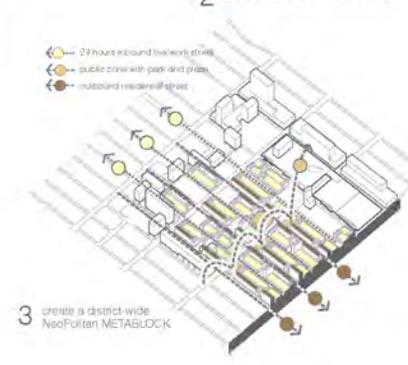
PLAYING HOPSCOTCH



1 disaggregate MEGABLOCKS and reorder fragmented blocks



2 sample manhattan's mix in the MIX

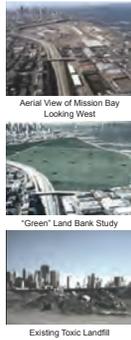


3 create a district-wide NeoPolitan METABLOCK

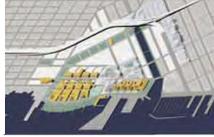
PLAN FOR MISSION BAY

*funded study and exhibitions
San Francisco, CA 1997
w/ John Bass, borfax/ B.L.U.*

The project's overarching aim was to show how the various forms of commercial growth that have been considered for this site could be accommodated in a way that allows public interests to be better served by private development. This was achieved in two ways; one having to do with the form of the project, the other with its representation. The project situates proposed forms of Development, including a mixed-use research campus, housing & commercial development in such a way as to link profit with both a functioning and symbolic remediation of a large swath of the site's toxic ground (see the "Garden Girdle"). The project also proposes a much broader range of building and landscape conditions than were typically considered in San Francisco at the time—each linked to the highly differentiated programmatic needs and physical characteristics found at the center, edges and infrastructural extensions of the site. For example, the plan accommodates a range of densities, so that the pastoral predilections of the urban dweller (influenced by the spirit of American suburbia) and the need for some ecological restitution are addressed by building both a "Times Square" and a space for "Fresh Air".



Phase I: Satellite City & Air-Right Proscenium



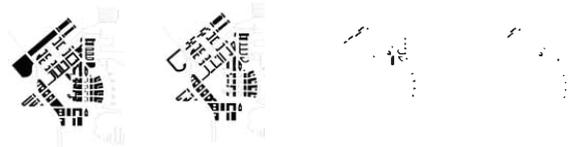
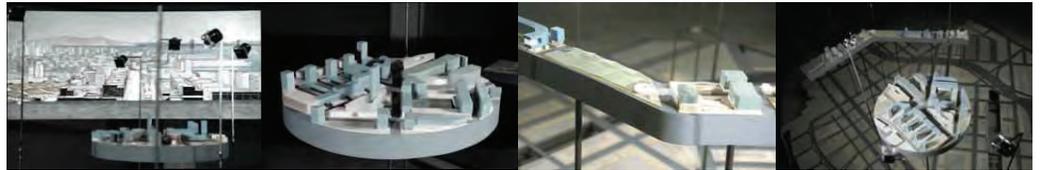
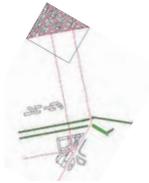
Phase II: Third Street Super Strip



Phase III: Highway and Canal Wrap



Phase IV: Transfer of Remediated Land



Plans cut from 0 to 100+ ft.