

Foglio

March 2006

Newsletter for the School of Architecture Syracuse University in Florence

Carmen Andriani

Julia Czerniak

Tony Fretton

Juan Herreros

Mark Linder

Adolfo Natalini

Mark Robbins

Seung H-Sang

Peter Wilson

Bruce M. Coleman

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Alick M. McLean

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Foglio

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Syracuse University in Florence

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Welcome to the Syracuse University School of Architecture symposium “Transnational Dialogues on Urbanism.” For many years, the city of Florence has provided us an essential setting for the study of the historic city and its architecture. With this symposium, the Florence Center now opens a portal to Italy and Europe for the study of contemporary design practice and its multiple discourses in technology, architecture and urbanism. It also provides us a forum beyond our home base in Syracuse, New York, to reflect upon current urban practices in the other post-industrial cities in Europe and the United States, other cities like ours that have experienced rapid social and economic change. It is a chance to revisit questions regarding our relation to history and culture as designers and planners.

The symposium and this publication are the result of the concerted efforts by the School of Architecture in Florence, its faculty and staff. I would like to thank Francisco Sanin, the new coordinator of the program for conceiving and organizing the event, as well as faculty members Bruce Coleman, James Cooper, Maya Krause, and Nieves Mestre, and the staff, Jennifer Haag and Suzanne Moore. Special thanks are due to Brenda Cooke for her contribution to the design of this publication and to Susan Henderson for her dedicated and clarifying editing. Thanks also to Barbara Deimling, Director of the SUF program, who has lent her considerable support to this enterprise through the Division of International Programs Abroad. Finally, thanks to Chancellor Nancy Cantor, whose concept of “scholarship in action”—with the intellectual engagement and empathy that it inspires—animates our work at home and abroad.

Mark Robbins
Dean, School of Architecture
Syracuse University
New York

Following the tradition of the grand tour, many American universities established Italian-based study abroad programs. The nineteenth century grand tour was intended to reconnect the adventurous traveller with the beauty and pleasures of classical antiquity and the Mediterranean culture more generally. From Goethe to Stendhal, from Piranesi to John Soane, many great minds engaged in these travels. We at Syracuse see the richness of Italian history and culture as a laboratory in which to study the evolution and transformation of architecture and its relation to the city. At the same time, we realize that this is a time of enormous change. Florence exemplifies the conditions of an increasingly globalized society. Invaded, almost consumed, by the global tourism industry, it also remains stubbornly local in its customs, history and culture.

In keeping with our intention to construct an open and dynamic relationship with contemporary ideas in Europe and abroad, we have organized an event that

brings together a select group of architects, urbanists and theorists. They represent not only a variety of countries and continents but also a wide range of attitudes towards the urban condition, from large-scale urban plans to intimate spaces that critically engage the city, to theoretical work that reflects on the way global economic structures are redefining traditional notions of space, territory, city and periphery—work that engages with site-specific conditions.

This newsletter presents a collection of short essays contributed by the participants/guest speakers, respondents, and faculty. It anticipates forthcoming issues of a new *Foglio* journal that will serve as our print vehicle of the Florence Center, a vehicle for intellectual debate and the exploration of contemporary ideas and practices in architecture and urbanism in Europe and internationally.

Our thanks to all the speakers and contributors for making the symposium and the *Foglio* newsletter possible. We in the Florence Center would particularly like to thank Mark Robbins, Dean of the School of Architecture and Barbara Deimling, Director of the SUF Center, for their encouragement and support. Special thanks to our staff, Brenda Cooke, Jennifer Haag, and Suzanne Moore, without whom this event and this publication would not have been possible.

Francisco Sanin
Coordinator, School of Architecture
Syracuse University in Florence

Central Territoriality in Romanina

Carmen Andriani



*(International invited competition,
Area: Romanina (suburb of
Rome), central territoriality, 2005,
winning project ex aequo
of the first phase)*

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and tenured professor with the
Faculty of Architecture in Pescara.
Her work focuses on the transfor-
mations of coastal landscapes and
the design of abandoned areas. She
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Engineering Architecture), of
which she is also a member. She
has been Visiting Professor at
several universities in Europe and
in the United States.*

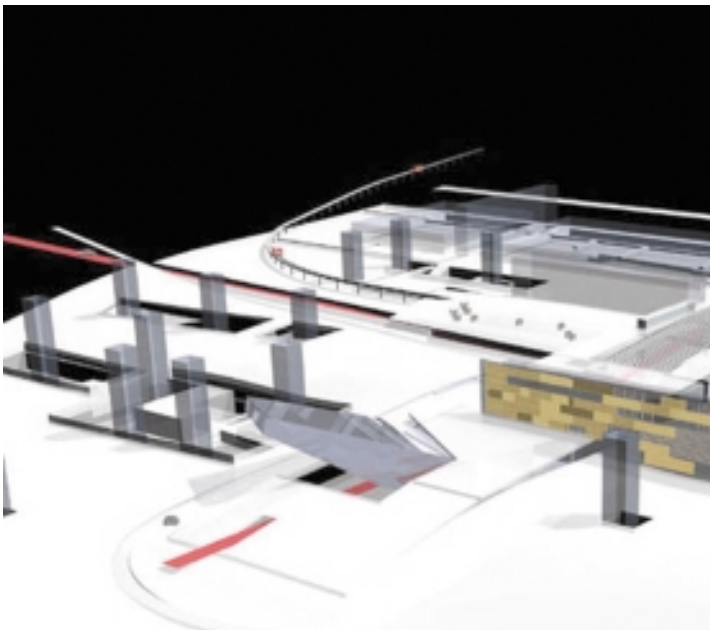
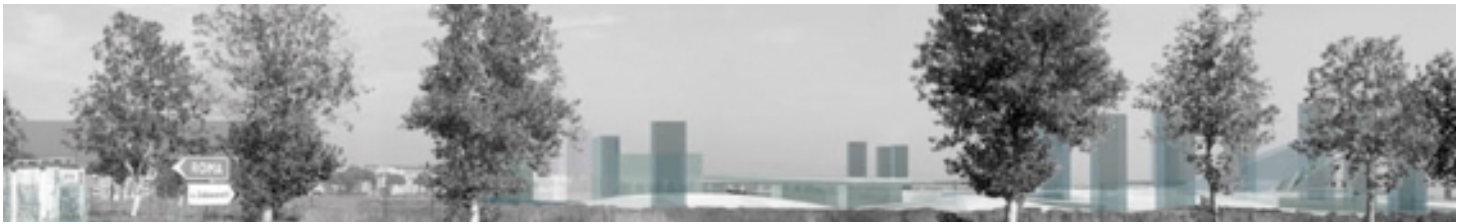
We conceived the project in terms of a central territory that is neither introverted nor self-referential. Rather it sets up the potential for dynamic interference from both formal and functional points of view. The intention is not simply to “add” new activities and new forms. We want to channel existing processes of transformation, processes that can convey the energy of this part of the city, including individual, collective, and institutional action. The idea is to give the inhabitants the idea of a territory in flux.

It is vital to the strategy that a network comprised of infrastructure enhances the configuration of the emerging urban landscape. The network itself has determined some of our structural choices for the project. For example, there is the ‘transept’, a transverse system that supports vital functions in the area, its technology and media facilities as well as its collective centers, the entertainment and hotel district and the public spaces. The park system incorporates residential, archaeological

sites and sports facilities. A punctuating system of towers provides minimalized infrastructural units disposed in successive increments. The towers can be altered or increased in number over time. The system of housing is conceived as a system that can also expand over time and is flexible in not defining its form in terms of fixed rooms. In the articulation of the open spaces, our infrastructural model is artificial and stratified on one hand, natural and shaped on the other. By maintaining open perspectival views, we aim to maintain the rurality inherent to these dispersed Roman territories. Our superimposition of functions creates a mixture of functions, a mixture required to guarantee the kind of full-time vitality associated with consolidated cities.

In this project we wanted to bring together opposite systems of value (local versus territorial functions, fast and slow movements, proximity versus contiguity) to predispose interference with the hierarchy of the large urban functions. In this way it will recognize and emphasize the connective character of the open spaces.

The project has been shaped by the complexities of what we consider the “centrality of Romanina,” and by the very high density of its specific conditions. This appraisal has also necessitated the coordinated integration of many disciplines—urbanism, architecture and archaeology, to name a few.



“CLear: Glass City”

Julia Czerniak and
Mark Linder

CLear is a transdisciplinary collaborative led by Julia Czerniak and Mark Linder, two architects with divergent backgrounds and interests.

CLear is a loosely configured and variable array of affiliations between its two principals and collaborators in multiple disciplines.

CLear aims, literally and specifically, to come to terms with the discipline of architecture and simultaneously attenuate the limits of architectural practice.

CLear's transdisciplinary approach works against the grain of two tendencies in contemporary architectural theory and practice. On the one hand, many architects today are calling for a recuperation of disciplinary identity. At a time when design is a global growth industry and architecture seems close to reclaiming its status at the top of the heap of the arts, these architects no longer look to other disciplines to justify or motivate their work. On the other hand, there is the all-too-pervasive appeal for interdisciplinarity. No doubt in reaction to the

seemingly conservative, even repressive implications of discipline, the advocates of interdisciplinarity tend to believe that, by nature, a discipline isolates itself and produces disciples.

We offer transdisciplinarity as a less sanguine and more overtly theoretical approach. Unlike an interdisciplinarity that presumes various disciplines can establish shared methods or concepts, transdisciplinarity insists on the necessary value of distinct disciplinary identities. Unlike the call for a return to discipline, transdisciplinarity is in no way a retrenchment. Rather, as Homi Bhabha suggests, transdisciplinary work “happens at the edge or limit” of one's own discipline “where some of the fundamental ideas of our discipline are being profoundly shaken.” It is on those borders where we become aware, in need of, and able to revise the tools and technologies of our discipline. Transdisciplinarity involves “the formulation of knowledges that require our disciplinary scholarship and technique but demand that we abandon disciplinary mastery and surveillance.”

The object of transdisciplinary work is to demonstrate the flexibility of disciplinary identities and to produce reconfigured modes of practice that will both intensify and expand the discipline. Architecture, like all disciplines, is a malleable institution: its work and knowledge appear through and are produced by its discourses, yet none of those discourses is entirely contained within the discipline itself. Transdisciplinary work navigates that contested field of discourses, a field that is constantly reconfigured as discourses are shared by or shift between disciplines. In this scenario, exchanges between disciplines produce particular “subjects” in the collective and individual sense. Thus transdisciplinarity scrutinizes architecture's appearance and seeks its significance in the forms of other disciplines, or in the spaces between disciplines, without abandoning the specific modes of architectural discipline.

GLASS CITY, CLear's winning entry for a competition in Toledo, Ohio, exemplifies our work as a transdisciplinary collaborative. While the project team included architects, landscape architects, ecologists, and artists,

Julia Czerniak teaches architecture and seminars on landscape theory and criticism at Syracuse University. Educated as an architect at Princeton University and the Mackintosh School as well as a landscape architect at Penn State, both her research and speculative practice, CLear, focus on the intersection of these disciplines.

Mark Linder teaches theory and design at Syracuse. He received degrees in architecture from the University of Virginia (B.S.), Yale (M. Arch., M.E.D.) and Princeton (Ph. D). He recently published the book Nothing Less than Literal.

three architects, Julia Czerniak, Linda Pollak, and Sandro Marpillero, are the primary designers and strategists of the project. The project is emphatically an architectural enterprise. The analytical and visualization techniques, the use of form and materials, and the scale of intervention are within the protocols of the architect, even as they challenge professional norms.

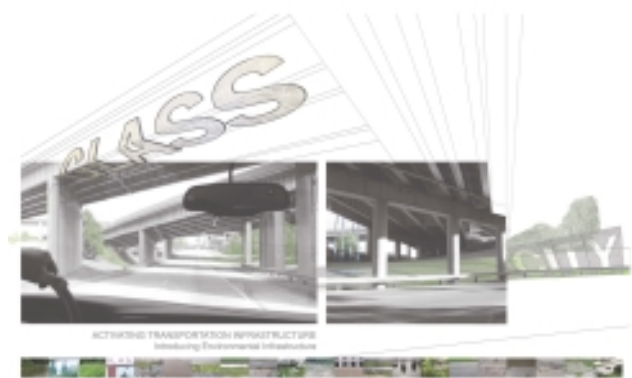
GLASS CITY was motivated by our desire to expand the field of the architectural discipline by applying its knowledge and techniques to problems and projects outside of, or marginal to, the proper domain of practice. In this way, we were able to address concerns that are not traditionally understood as the responsibility of the architect: landscape, urban design, development, branding, and civil engineering.

GLASS CITY reinvents the public right-of-way—the 'leftover' spaces resulting from the imposition of the Anthony Wayne Trail (AWT) highway—to construct a legible urban threshold. Post-industrial Toledo is an assemblage of forces and flows that continue to form the site. The project engages these forces and flows in a layering of existing and new infrastructures, activated at different times of day, season, and weather, which acquaint Toledo with, and reactivate, the remains its own history. The project suggests three strategic shifts:

From Object to Field: Two strategies reveal the site as a continuum of spatial and temporal scales: 1) the activation of the 19th and 20th century transportation infrastructures of canal, railroad, highway, and city grid in support of a legible urban identity; and 2) the introduction of 21st century environmental infrastructures for storm water management and public service.

From Gateway to Threshold: The proposal converts unused areas of the highway right-of-way into a series of six vehicular threshold events. Distinct systems—porous surfaces, filter drums, structural mesh, and a solar field—engage the changing speed and vantage points of drivers to activate elements of Toledo's past, present, and future as fleeting images.

From District to Corridor: The terminus of the threshold event sequence, a warehouse district, shares edges with a historic railroad, a highway, a north-south urban grid, a river and a creek. It has been modified, erased or deformed by each of their needs. Our project activates the latent potential in the AWT's intersection and connection with each of these urban boundaries.



Buildings and their Territories

Tony Fretton



The Lisson Gallery, London

(excerpts from “Bauten und ihre Territorien”, by Tony Fretton, Werk Bauen + Wohnen, December 2005.)

Tony Fretton is founder of Tony Fretton Architects Ltd. He taught at the Architectural Association London and has been visiting professor at Lausanne, Switzerland and at Harvard University. He has lectured worldwide. He currently teaches at Delft University.

Façades in our buildings come about through our interest in what those buildings can say or do in relation to the world around them. My physicalised and experiential approach to architecture leads me to notice how buildings, and for that matter building materials, embody social ideas and values, rituals of use and other cultural information directly in their fabric. From this I can see how to make architecture in which there is a productive tension between its roles as art and as a basic human communication.

Lisson Gallery London (1992)
Construction itself was the prime agent in this design. Steel frame construction allowed the building to be very open to and present in the surrounding city, exposing the constructional concrete with the finish of the floors underlining its physicality.

Spanning across the open structure are very large windows, which receive north light across the street from the open schoolyard opposite, and slide to allow the installation of artworks. The primary purpose of the glazing is to make the building a public place for the eye.

In essence the façades are made up of the activity in the interior and reflections of the surrounding trees, buildings and sky. Onto this scene the sliding windows and entrance doors are sketched very minimally in an arrangement that mimics the shop in the adjoining 18th century building. Gallery floors align with those of its neighbour and a shift of axis in the first floor façade makes the two buildings seem similar in size.

Faith House, Holton Lee Dorset (2002)

Faith House is located in an extensive rural territory of heath land, copses, meadows and agricultural fields that leads eventually to the sea at Poole Harbour in Dorset.

In a number of buildings across the site, including Faith House, a charitable foundation works in Holton Lee with disabled people using personal growth, the arts, spirituality and exposure to the natural environment as therapy.

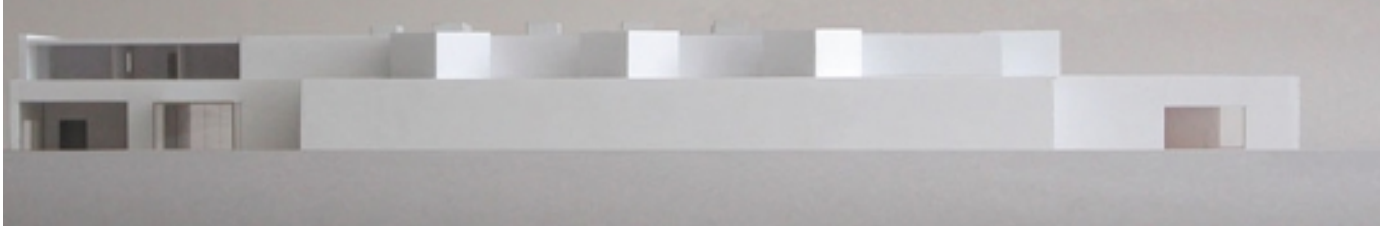
Our design for Faith House was an essay in how location and the techniques of low cost, sustainable construction can be used symbolically. Significance is given to the building by placing it at the end of the long straight road that leads in through the estate and placing it on a slight rise in the garden of the existing farm house from which it looks out to the fields.

As it is approached the sky and land can be seen through and around the building, symbolically locating it and the occupants in the natural world.

The main façade is intentionally ambiguous, offering images of a modest rural temple, an agricultural building or a sculpture.

A porch on the left provides an open air shelter from the rain, with a discrete door leading to a room for quiet contemplation, painted silver and containing a circle of cut trees.

Symbolism here is careful, neither ironic nor emotional, and people



The Regional Art Museum at Fuglsang Southern Denmark, model

have said that it allows the building to become their own imaginative property.

Regional Art Museum at Fuglsang Southern Denmark (2006-7)

The project is located within the buildings of a former farm on a site of exceptional beauty. Here the land extends completely level through sparsely delineated trees and fields to salt marshes at the edge of the sea that are a reserve for wild birds.

The scheme is planned so that the landscape will be the first thing that visitors see as they drive into the site and then walk to the building, which is placed discretely to the side.

Since the building will be first seen obliquely, the main façade is given a string profile and massing by three tall diagonal roof lights grouped above a sheer and windowless enclosing wall.

This configuration is also composed with the primary forms of two

neighbouring very old and high roofed barns and the façade of the Manor House that has three tall gables.

All the farm buildings are brick, and one barn is painted white, the other red. Brick will be used in the new building and finished with a white translucent glaze to make the Museum seem both deeply situated in its location and unearthly.

At the entrance there will be a lateral view through the whole depth of the building, taking in the lobby and the art room and ending in the fruit orchard behind.

Leading from the lobby, the galleries are a succession of top-lit internalised spaces in which to be lost and absorbed in thought, culminating in a room that looks like a gallery but which houses no art, only views of the Fuglsang estate, some of which are depicted in the paintings that are part of the museum collection.



The Faith House, Dorset

Infrastructural Geography: Project, Technique and Fun

Juan Herreros



If we accept the definition of GEOGRAPHY as the science that deals with the DESCRIPTION of the earth and if we understand INFRASTRUCTURE as that which makes it possible for something to FUNCTION, we could then invent a new discipline that combines these two names: INFRASTRUCTURAL GEOGRAPHY. This discipline would deal with the description of the functioning of the earth. The concept that the earth “functions” implies the existence of a wide range of laws, processes and techniques that are part of the way people inhabit it as well as the way they manipulate and change the earth in the very process of inhabitation. It also implies that these processes can be coherently explained at any scale that one chooses to read them.

We are talking about another kind of nature, different from the view of nature that has been sublimated by ecologist's bad consciousness or by the nostalgia of paradise—a view of nature that is highly artificial. If we superimpose this notion of ARTIFICIAL NATURE to the traditional view of nature—natural—we could conclude that EVERYTHING IS NATURE. A conclusion

that is far more demanding than the one formulated a few years ago, namely that ALL IS CITY. Accepting this concept that all is nature means to confront oneself with the idea of complementary movements between city and nature and vice-versa. TO MAKE NATURE ARTIFICIAL (nature as object of a project) and TO NATURALIZE THE CITY (not to be confused with making it “green”) these two concepts should be seen as symmetrical poles in a great contemporary project whose objective should be the dissolution of the boundaries between them, the construction of a new ecology that will operate in the blurred boundaries between the two.

This will be a geography without the traditional oppositions between the positive aspects (nature, plants, and animals) and negative aspects (cities, cars, and people). It is not enough to give things a name; we need to identify some RAW MATERIALS and new TECHNIQUES that should be understood as being themselves part of this new nature.

The first of these materials is CHANGE, in particular the kind of change that would occur in any event: one could ask how can we participate and appropriate the violent processes of change taking place in a structural way today. For example tourism, or the destruction of the earth resources by infrastructures, energy policies, the architecture associated with mobility and migration, overwhelming levels of poverty and marginalization. What does architecture do when confronted with the concerns and compromises imbedded in the present?

The second is ENERGY, understood in all the senses of the word—production, accumulation, transport, consumption and recycling waste—these processes and concepts constitute a common denominator of an architectural debate, in terms of the production of ideas or in the development of the projects as well as their materialization and future life. One should even consider the project necessary obsolescence and return to the vital cycle of things; in the end is this not the meaning of recycling?

A third is INFORMATION. We could apply similar concepts and processes to it, as we did to energy as a material of the project. But we should be aware

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have worked together since 1984.*

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Project Design at the Madrid
College of Architecture. Their work
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the world over, and been in exhi-
bitions such as MoMa's "Light
Construction", NY, and "New
Trends in Architecture 2002",
Tokyo. He is currently visiting pro-
fessor at Princeton University
School of Architecture.*

that information as a material of the project is the most complex and demanding as it has been saturated with literal interpretations. We are talking about architecture—and landscape—as a synthesis, codification, generation and transmission of information. An information that is heterogeneous and enormously efficient in cultural terms. Information is a material that has an enormous capacity to develop the project.

When we talk of TECHNIQUES (“a group of processes and resources that serve a science or an art”), we sometimes forget that the subject of “design” in our schools aims to teach people how to “make projects”. To accept this definition implies recognizing that executing a project requires routines, methods and decision-making systems that can be understood as protocols, like those that exist in medicine or experimental investigation. Showing concern for the processes before the results—THINKING TECHNIQUE, and in this case THINKING DESIGN—is a way of being, a way of being an architect that is directly linked to a PRAGMATIC ATTITUDE. This pragmatic attitude responds to the demands of contemporary practice to combine on one hand the necessary large quantities of data, knowledge, lexicons and expertise necessary in the project with the necessary uncertainty, imagination and surprise on the other. It is in our own interest to ask ourselves what would be the DESIGN TECHNIQUES associated with this discipline that we have called INFRASTRUCTURAL GEOGRAPHY. We would follow up by saying that the most specific action for a pragmatic architect would be the establishment and selection of protocols in the form of sets of rules or equation systems for each situation, protocols used to identify the potential opportunities behind each case.

It is interesting to notice that so much is said about the need to review our procedures but little is said about what they are. So it is not strange to see today the presence of anachronistic concepts of institutional ideas about design that are based on concepts of typological structures referred to a time where all design was done under the same methods. It would not be hard to imagine today a teaching program that would train students in different and diverse design techniques—METHODOLOGIES—explaining their origins, alliances and failures. In each case we would find evidence that each point of

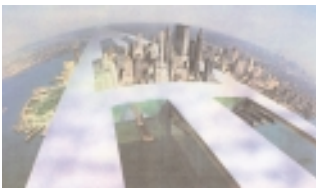
departure establishes a system of reference from where to build the project. These systems not only refer to a set of specific ideas of geometry, building resources, and an external theoretical support but more they also weave complex relations with the revolutions and questions that permeate our culture and our architectural practice. By this line of questioning we pretend to identify what is there in the geography of the present that is of interest to architecture. A present that is full of upheavals and contradictions. We also pretend to identify what elements exist in this geography of the present that although overwhelmingly present have not yet been fully codified for our discipline and therefore can be recovered and used in a positive manner.

We are allowing ourselves to take on the commitment of drawing up a list of possible places of departure and the corresponding (failed) version derived from its most dogmatic or literal practice: Material Culture (against minimalism); New Geometries (against unsustainable freedom); Ecological Sensitivity (against bad conscience); Scientific Revolution (against a fascination with complexity) and Solidarity Policies (against dignity of the minimum).

This list remains open to adding or to losing elements depending on whether a particular vein of exploration runs out. The operative interest of each one of these protocols will depend on their capacity to present themselves as openly as possible; uncertainty forces us into it. THE FUTURE, the unknown, is an essential part of our work, and it is a mistake to assume that such unpredictability opens the doors to the celebration of chaos. As a conclusion we must insist that only if we consider the project as an INVESTIGATION can we take advantage of the possibilities open through the new dimensions of the world and its associated technologies. The metric system is no longer the same, the unit of measure in our contemporary world is no longer the square metre and to understand we only need to cast a superficial glance at the *Vital Signs* directory. *Vital Signs directory: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future* is now published by the Worldwatch Institute and gathers a collection of statistics that deal with analysing the state of the planet and its evolution in all possible dimensions: economic, social, productive, ecological, etc.

Avant Garde and Resistance

Adolfo Natalini



From *Istogrammi*, *Manhattan Continuous Monument*



Superstudio picnic table in Bellosguardo, 1971. Photo: C. Toraldo di Francia

*(excerpted from: 'Superstudio—
The Middelburg Lectures')
Translation by Frances Brunton*

Born in Pistoia, Italy, Adolfo Natalini was the founding member of Superstudio. He has built extensively in Holland, Germany and Italy. His work has been published and exhibited internationally. He founded Natalini Architetti in Florence, Italy.

On November 4, 1966, the Arno river invaded Florence. It was the worst flood of the century with the water reaching a depth of nearly six metres in the Santa Croce area. Superstudio was born on the same day. The first to notice this coincidence was Arata Isozaki in his essay "Superstudio and the traces of the flood." Unaware of the water encroaching on the city streets, I spent nearly all day drawing up the first Superstudio poster-manifesto. At five o'clock the water reached my studio.

Superstudio was a situationist movement that used the traditional tools of architecture in the form of drawings and projects to critique not only architecture but society. Our rhetorical devices were metaphor and allegory, and the instruments of irony and imagination. We moved in the no-man's-land between art and architecture, making forays into the fields of politics, sociology and philosophy.

It was a truly avant garde effort, using the term in its military sense of vanguard, i.e., a troop that goes before the main force,

destroying the first defences of the enemy, and sacrificing themselves in order to open the way for the rest of the army. Our aim was to destroy the current system and prepare a new one free from divisiveness, from cultural colonization, from violence and consumerism. We were pursuing a utopia: a world and lives freed from work, a "life without objects." Our 'Continuous Monument' and 'Twelve Ideal Cities' were anti-utopian, others such as the 'Histograms' pointed a way towards rationalism and minimalism, and others, such as 'The Fundamental Acts' constituted a form of existential meditation.

In 1973, we considered our duty as a vanguard over. We had won a few battles, but not the war. Still, we thought it was time to end the destructive phase, and embark on a reconstructive one. Together with friends and the students at the university here, we tried for a rebirth for architecture, investigating the simple tools of everyday life and extra-urban material culture. We searched for the roots of creativity and necessity. We looked at elementary need, desires and dreams.

Then, in 1979, I thought that the time for my apprenticeship, research and studies was over (I was 38), and I decided to become an ordinary architect.

It is difficult to answer the question asked by some young people: how did Natalini go from Superstudio to what he is doing today, his anti-modernism? My work still largely stems from this early work, although it is hard to discover its traces...It is still anti-utopian, if we mean that the only utopia left to us is globalization.

Today architecture has been homogenized by a cynical and useless experimentalism: the only possible reaction is a return to order, or rather to tradition. So, we want to oppose the utopia of globalization with the harshness of small local worlds and a great longing for beauty.

Superstudio's work was necessary for the sixties: my work in the nineties was necessary for that time and the beginning of the new century. Once

we needed a revolution, a way of breaking away from the established culture of the time; today, all ideologies having departed, we need to work against ultra-liberalism and consumerism, against the transitory pace of fashion and empty aesthetics void of content, against the cult of personality and pointless experimentation. The buildings I have designed in the last ten years are based on the idea of resistance against all this.

After our avant garde years, I had been sufficiently vaccinated against the disease of modernity to remain untouched by the eclecticism of the post-modern movement, subsequently by the technological baroque of high tech, then by the constructivist post-expressionism. Now, I watch as minimalist chic and functionalism pass by.

Ulysses had himself bound to the mast of his ship so that he could not follow the sirens' calls. I have not, nor have I stopped my ears with wax like his sailors. Every day I hear the beguiling voices of magazines and the enthusiasm and passion of my students and co-workers. I well know that my renunciation of contemporary experimentation automatically excludes me from the race for success.

Since 1979, I have been working on historical European cities. I have encountered different histories and contemporary situations. Books and journals show me a world in which architecture is capable only of producing novelty and difference, with no attention paid to sites or people, not really necessary, architecture created only through a need for self-affirmation, using the methods of a "marvel" created through being "different" and ugly. So, the only avant garde position today is to re-affirm the uniqueness of every single place, and the needs, hopes and memories of those who went before us, not to search for useless originality, but for a necessary return to our origins.

My work now aspires to a timeless normality. I would like to vanish into my buildings, and for them to vanish into their urban context, and for the city to become a landscape in which we could live without stress.



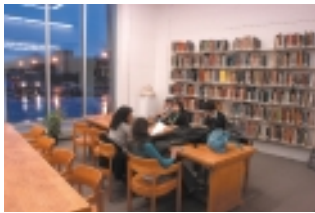
From *Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death, Life—Supersurface—Spring cleaning*, 1971, lithograph SUPERSTUDIO



Groningen, The Netherlands 1991 - 1996, Natalini Architetti with Cor Kalfsbeek

Really Blue Skies

Mark Robbins



"The Warehouse" in downtown Syracuse, New York

Mark Robbins is the dean of the Syracuse University School of Architecture. His work bridges the art and architecture fields, exploring the social and political forces that contribute to the built environment.

In the airport on my way to Florence, (though it could have been Duluth or New York), standing in long lines to go through the now familiar ritual of disrobing in public—jacket, belt, shoes, then emptying pockets, and unpacking my computer—I could hear a soothing, recorded voice informing me that this personal inspection would keep me and my country safe, a part of Homeland Security. I wondered, however, whom this Homeland included—moms and dads with rosy-cheeked children in modest white Cape Cods and green lawns? Is it the Honduran, Salvadoran, and Haitian sailors plying the Miami River, invisible to the tourist trade, or couples like Giuseppe and Jonathan in a high rise on 11th Avenue on the island of Manhattan?

Back at home and my place of embarkation, the city of Syracuse, which in the course of securing its future, is preoccupied with a vast development project which promises to revitalize its economy and that of the region. Called Destiny USA—formerly DestiNY—the project is a mall complex of Brobdingnagian

scale, comprising a research park, hotels, and acres of enclosed shopping villages. A series of commercials in a massive recent television campaign offered its hopeful vision for the region, which is reinforced in print. "[D]iscover and experience life as it should be," their website heralds. "[D]estiny has been designed specifically for everyone. It will attract more people, more often and more profitably than anything ever built. Uniquely configured to be inclusive, Destiny USA will deliver fascination and discovery for everyone with a distinctive blend of experience and experiment..." Beyond the hyperbole (they project sixty million visitors to central New York, one in four U.S. citizens annually) and the dubious urbanism (Destiny's site is a mile from a ghostly downtown commercial core), the project raises serious questions about who is served by this type of urban development. Whose long-term responsibility is it to plan the form of cities and counties? The power of market-driven projects like Destiny is that they can muster forces to convincingly promote a vision of a city, albeit a reproduction under glass, with the wherewithal generally lacking in American civic discourse. In a political culture that everywhere reinforces insouciant market and media views, questions about who we are as a nation and the ways in which we provide for civic life become more significant.

Where then do we fit in, (and by "we" I mean students, faculty, and the academy), those who may operate more critically within the marketplace? How do we address the boundaries between the realm of ideas and brute three-dimensional reality, between thinking and doing, drawing and making? Given the current state of political and sectarian rhetoric, and the dramatic limitations on public funding for cultural organizations, academic institutions are vital in fostering new ideas and innovative work. Our educational endeavor seeks to develop curious and critical practitioners, with the broadest view of their field and its role in contemporary culture. Enhancing their effectiveness in the world depends on both technical skill and intellectual agility and an engagement that they see modeled in their university, its staff, and faculty.

In support of this aim and in concert with Syracuse University Chancellor Nancy Cantor's principles of "scholarship in action," the School of Architecture brings the urban situation and its issues directly to the classroom. Our students witness the faculty and administration involved with the life of the city in concrete ways, from consulting with municipal leaders to the design of projects such as the Community Folk Art Gallery and the Paul Robeson Center. Design studios analyze and map the city to reveal the complex layering of social and physical dynamics. The founding of UPSTATE: a Center for Design, Research, and Real Estate underscores the School's commitment to the city and region. Under its aegis, our Community Design Center and our studios have tackled real issues: proposals for the Syracuse Housing Authority, new housing types for the city's south side, and the removal of the barriers posed by intrusive interstate highways.

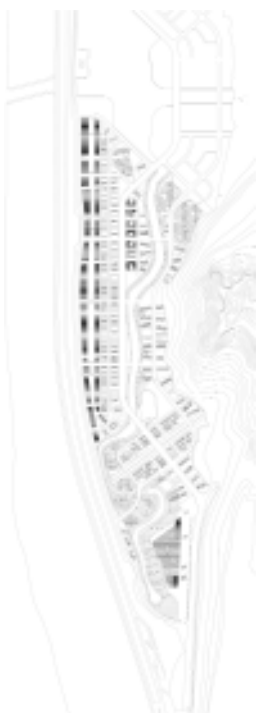
At the larger scale the University has undertaken a number of projects both on campus and off "the Hill." And while other cities may have as close a relationship with a university in their midst, the intention here is to make this a reciprocal relationship, which recognizes the benefits to all. The first of these projects to be completed is the Warehouse, which serves as the new temporary home of the School of Architecture, as well as programs in the School of Visual and Performing Arts. It also houses a community gallery space and arts education facilities. After a renovation by noted architect Richard Gluckman, the windowless concrete frame building, with its powerful interior bell columns, is now a beacon of academic and cultural activity just on the edge of Armory Square, the city's primary pedestrian area downtown.

Even during its brief ten-month construction period, the University and School used the Warehouse to celebrate the city and its cultural life. It has been the site of exhibitions and tours and at the beginning of the academic year, 1200 freshman students flooded downtown for the lighting of artwork on the building's façade commissioned for the occasion. The Warehouse is an active, vibrant facility, symbolic of the potential for city-university affiliations and has already begun to have a catalytic

impact on the downtown economy. In addition to introducing a new community of some 700 people into the daily life of the city, it has made the area more attractive for other projects. Two adjacent parcels of land have been optioned for potential mixed-use residential and commercial blocks. The University and the city will shortly announce a request for proposals from landscape architects, architects, and planners for a vision of what the Chancellor has termed a "connective corridor." The design competition will result in dramatic ideas for a planted, lighted path, which parallels the new shuttle route between town and campus. Through all these efforts, we hope to inspire our students to employ their disciplinary expertise to make cities that are worth the effort. As an institution, we are modeling this endeavor. Our students aren't daunted by the prospect.

Proposing a 'City of Wisdom'

Seung H-Sang



*(excerpted from the author's paper
"Culturescape-Paju Book City")*

Seung H-Sang has been the principle of IROJE Architects of Seoul since 1989; he is also a founder of the Seoul School of Architecture. His work has been exhibited in Asia, Europe and America.

A glimpse at those old maps of Seoul, worked by our ancestors in a delicate manner and meticulous detail, tells us just how interesting a city it was to live in. Its unique setting—sunned terrain surrounded by graceful mountains with crystal-clear water cascading down between them—is a landscape painting in itself. With boundaries blurred between the artificial and the natural, and urban settings opened to one another in a contiguous sequence with nature, the old maps of Seoul reflect the palimpsest of urban narratives.

On the other hand, look at the maps generated by contemporary cartographers. First, they demarcate the districts of commercial, industrial and residential use as functioning zones. Then, a hierarchy of road networks connects each of them according to its profitability. It seems as if these maps manifest an unspoken condition of place that deny or permit access according to whether we are rich or poor. For despite the enormous amount of information and statistical data that these maps contain, they remain products in pursuit of capitalistic prof-

it. The life portrayed in them lacks authenticity. They tell only of the troubling nature of today's city.

I would like to propose the 'City of Wisdom.' What kind of place is it? It is a place that enables people to reside and enjoy, rather than to possess. It is a place where people share their ideals and convictions rather than being compelled to a single desire or goal. It emphasizes the pre-eminent value of human life, and the ideal of harmony and sharing rather than acquiring.

The architecture of this place is always open. The city enters architecture, and architecture enters the city. Passage is neither obstructed nor blocked. Buildings are linked together in horizontal and vertical continuity.

This place also bears the traces of our memories of the past: the buildings of the old days are never wiped out, but are altered and updated. It is therefore a city full of an architecture that conveys our wisdom and extends our memories into the future.



The City of Wisdom is not functional. 'Function' is too simple a concept to encompass the complexities of our lives. Efficiency and convenience, keywords of contemporary architectural practice, have trained us to live by orders and precedents in order to facilitate ever faster and more complex agendas. But there is no specific purpose in the spaces of the City of Wisdom, for the space assigned a function disappears as soon as the goal is reached. This is a city of solids and voids, or rather, a city filled up after its voids are established for their positive contribution, and it will thus be a city to enjoy a long life and prosperity. Traditional Korean houses were built around just such voids, the *madang* or courtyards. The *madang* allowed for celebrations, rituals, production, labor and receptions. Most of all, the *madang* was a place to ponder and recharge the spirit. The void is the common ground of being and furthers our common purpose; together, voids coalesce the life of the city.

In the City of Wisdom architecture struggles to stay small, to treat its neighbors neither with arrogance nor condescension. It is honest and restrained. It supports the notion that the lives lived in buildings count more than the buildings themselves; architecture is only life's platform, a place to demonstrate life's value. Such logic applies not only to life, but to the way architecture allows us to inhabit according to our beliefs and to make sense of the world in built form—white walls tracing the journey of the sun, translating acoustics and sounds of the rain, blowing the wind beneath, and opening up to see the passing clouds above. The city shaped by the mediation of knowledge—this is the City of Wisdom.



Urbanity

Peter Wilson



The Falkenried Quartier, Hamburg

Founding member and partner of Bolles+Wilson, Peter Wilson has lectured world-wide; his work has been internationally exhibited and published. He taught at Barlage Academy, Amsterdam, as well as Barcelona, Venice, NAI Rotterdam, "External Diploma Examiner" at the Architectural Association London and the University of Cambridge and Syracuse Florence.

"The public space of the medieval city was the physical counterform of the private realm."

This quote from Ken Frampton's 1979 essay "Hannah Arendt and the recovery of the Public Realm," posits the exterior perimeter of the private realm as effectively shaping the space of the city. It is a paradigm that has repeatedly if nostalgically informed official planning and architectural thinking over the last twenty-five years. Bolles and Wilson's two blocks in Magdeburg co-opted this authority of the private realm in their reconstitution of the historic space of the Cathedral Square in that city, as they did in their masterplan and subsequent project for the Falkenried Quartier in Hamburg. In the Hamburg project they permeated an existing block (block = 19th century institutionalization in Arendt's dialectic) with a network of routes and spaces that were framed by the private zones of residential and office fabric, and the grey zones of commerce.

Today, the political ambition for a public space of representation (B+W Masterplan Amersfoort,

NL) must be seen as compensatory within the overall context of dispersion and mobility. Meanwhile, the private has undergone radical transformations, invading the social, abandoning the reflective (Arendt) and now indelibly permeated by global media.

For more than ten years, Bolles and Wilson have been researching the contemporary dissolution of the city as coherent form, everyday fields, the networked landscape of mobility, under the rubric of "Eurolandschaft" ["Euro-landscape"]. This has as much to do with identifying appropriate modes of perception (Gurskey scans, Strutt stop-pages, Gaussian strolls) as with actual strategies of intervention. Architecture in such contexts is not a particularly frequent event. In built and projected works this ambiguous island status has been answered by iconic anchoring (Minden-K, Kaldewei Kompetenz Center) or a radical re-mix of everyday codes of use (RS + Yellow Store – Münster).

The ambition for "urbanity" must today be measured against a multiplicity of contexts and operative modes. From cities whose exponential growth can only be scanned under the "informal" rubric (B+W Masterplan for Tirana) to the post-digital re-formulation of traditional urban institutions (B+W BEIC Library Milan).



The BEIC Library, Milan



“Euro-landscape”



Cathedral Square, Magdeburg

The Spatial City – Reconsidered

Bruce M. Coleman

There are two long standing yet opposing traditions: on the one hand, the garden as the locus of all that is good and, on the other, the city as the seat of all that civilization has to offer.

The former may be represented by the famous fresco of *The Expulsion*, Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden by Massacio in the Brancacci Chapel in Florence, where Eden, paradise on earth, is represented as a garden. It may well be that the pervasive notion of the garden, as a place to be desired, a place of tranquility, a place that nurtures life, is in some way an attempt to recreate Eden, paradise on earth. The latter is the fresco *The Agony in the Garden* from the *Camera degli Sposi* in Mantua by Mantegna. In it Jerusalem is represented as a walled city in the background. There are seemingly hundreds of such paintings, all of which represent the city as an idealized place, often on a hill.

One of the most fundamental definitions of civilization is the coming together of people to do together things which are best done communally rather than individually. The vast majority of

the institutions produce buildings—which are in turn found in the city. Thus the city can readily be understood as the seat of civilization. Put another way: civilizations build cities.

If the garden can be said to have a basis in ancient texts, religion and mythology, so too the city. Speaking to the future settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Winthrop quotes from the Sermon on the Mount, “We shall be as a city on a hill.” It is not “shining” or “on the hill” that are relevant here. It is “City” where the hope, the future, the very basis of all that is good is represented. Seen in this context, the very concept of city, or urbanity, takes on enormous importance.

But what form should the City take? Again, two opposing views: In *Collage City*, by Colin Rowe and Alfred Koetter, the cover image is a figure ground plan of Wiesbaden, Germany. On the left: the city of mass, volume, space; the city for the public good, the traditional city. On the right: the city of objects, without space, the garden city, the city of the individual, the modern city. Or, in Rowe’s view: The anti-city.



The Expulsion, Massacio, Brancacci Chapel, ca 1425

The Agony in the Garden, Camera degli Sposi, Mantegna, 1465-74

Bruce Coleman is Professor of architecture at Syracuse University. A graduate of Cornell University, he practiced for ten years in the office of Werner Seligmann & Associates and is an architect in private practice.



Le Corbusier, *The Ville Radieuse*, 1933
Leon Krier proposal for European Parliament in Luxemburg

Both the traditional city and the modern city may be represented by Rome. The traditional city as drawn by Nolli and a decidedly more “modern” representation of Rome is by Bacon in which all semblance of the urban fabric, the urban spatial connective tissue, has vanished leaving only the monuments.

Recent theorists continue to represent these opposing views. The proposal by Leon Krier shows buildings as edge buildings, spatial liners. Space dominates. The *Ville Radieuse*, by Le Corbusier, shows the dominance of the street grid and the apportioning of the city by function. Objects dominate.

Two signature applications in urban design may serve to represent these distinctly opposing approaches, ones which most modern urban designers know well and may thus be understood as reference points: The entry to the Roma Interrotta exhibition of 1979 by Colin Rowe with Judy DiMaio and others. Rowe was unhappy when he was asked to contribute to the exhibition since “We assume that, on the whole, modern architecture was a major catastrophe except as a terrible lesson best to be forgotten.” The scheme loads even more objects, and more to the point, much more fabric, into the city. It revels in the formal wizardry of urban space making. The constituent element, the block, particularly a highly malleable one, is necessary to permit the endless variations on street and piazza.

Corbusier’s application is perhaps clearest in the *Ville Radieuse*, the radiant city. Elegant but repetitious buildings are distributed in the elegant garden. The city is zoned into commercial, office, residential and industrial areas, all interconnected not by space but by a highway system and the garden. Light, air, and the individual dominate. The garden displays a romantic vision which is based on the individual. Civic activities, the rituals of civilization, have no place. The *Res Publica* ceases to exist in any meaningful way.

Is there a resolution?

While an assertion of the landscape as the new plane of constitution may work in the exurban condition, where the density of building is low, it hardly seems a workable proposition for the urban realm. Modern concerns for energy and the economics of sustainability alone would seem to doom the proposition yet it remains very compelling.

Some form of defining space, or at least implying it, needs to be maintained. Without it, public and private dissolve into one, revelation and surprise are abandoned and the notion of sequence, the means of accommodating the rituals of life, are removed.

Traditional construction relies heavily on the wall. The implied structure is an appliqué which provides order, rhythm, proportion. Modern construction inverts the scheme, beginning with the skeletal frame and applying enclosure as a light skin. Joseph Paxton described modern cast iron and glass construction 20 years before the Crystal Palace of 1851 as “the table and the table cloth,” the separation of structure and enclosure. From this moment on, the notion of external wrapper may be understood as independent of structure and enclosure. As typically deployed, the skin is stretched rather tightly over the bones. It may, however, also provide a strategy that mediates, if only it can be understood as a separate entity, one with a more complex role. Perhaps this is best seen in the Cartier Foundation in Paris by Jean Nouvel, where the extension of the façade beyond the traditional role of enclosure reasserts its role as the definer of the street edge.

The separation of the façade from the building yields the detached façade. Once detached from the traditional role of enclosure, it can begin to take on another role, one that has to do with the relationship to the city, with the making of urban space.

The Urban and Architectural Development of Vienna: Three Walls, Three Rings, and Three Classes

James Cooper

The map of Vienna reflects, perhaps more clearly than any other European capital, the major historical movements in architecture and urbanism from the baroque into the early twentieth century. In that time, Vienna experienced three major phases of development. Each phase was initiated by the construction or demolition of a set of defensive walls and each was associated with the rise of a social class: the aristocracy; the bourgeoisie; and proletariat, in turn. Ironically, the urban preconditions necessitating each phase were largely the result of each previous generation's reluctance to allow the city to modernize. While each phase produced some of Europe's most innovative and progressive architecture and urbanism, the city has maintained a unified character.

(a summary of the author's pre-symposium lecture)

Assistant Professor James Cooper, M.Arch., M.Ar.H., Ph.D., is on the architecture faculty at Syracuse University in Florence. His expertise includes the architecture of Mies van der Rohe and Michelangelo.

The siege of Vienna by the Turks in 1529 proved its medieval walls obsolete. The construction of new walls surrounded by a wide glacis of open space coincided with the city's enhanced status as the official residence of the Holy Roman Emperor. In 1683, the Turks attacked again. The new walls protected the inner city, but the

suburbs were destroyed. This prompted the construction of a second defensive ring, the so-called Linienwall. Then, in an atmosphere of renewed prosperity and security, the city witnessed the reconstruction of the suburbs and the construction of a ring of some of Europe's grandest Baroque aristocratic palaces, which included the Belvedere, Schwarzenberg, Liechtenstein and Trautson Palaces, and just beyond the Linienwall, the Imperial Palace of Schönbrunn. Like a string of pearls, these palaces and their gardens confronted the old city center from across the glacis. Meanwhile, the reforming emperor developed middle class housing blocks for the new suburbs. Like the Baroque palaces, these humbler projects assumed the courtyard typology found in the old city center, in buildings like the Hofburg, the monasteries, the old university, and even generic medieval house blocks.

In 1857, after the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and a liberal government, the emperor ordered the destruction of the Renaissance walls, which had become an impediment to modernization. They were replaced with the famous "Ringstrasse." Its associated monumental buildings and lush parks were built on the open land of the glacis. Some of these monuments housed cultural institutions previously the domain of the aristocracy—the museums, theater, the opera house, and concert hall. Around this monumental Ringstrasse emerged a dense fabric of grand bourgeoisie apartment blocks, whose architects included Otto Wagner. These 'Rent Palaces' mimicked the forms and courtyard typology of the nearby Baroque palaces so closely that they are often difficult to distinguish from their forebears.

A major task of the Ringstrasse was to accommodate the movement of troops and public transportation. This, combined with the irregular octagon of the avenue, produced a street and an axis that dominated the individual buildings and their associated public spaces. Still, many carefully controlled 'baroque' urban spaces exist within the project, some with axes that penetrate deep into the old city. As a result, the Ring represents alternative conditions, where some buildings help clarify urban spatial compositions, and others stand as discrete object buildings in a spatial field.

Late in the century, further need for modernization led to the demolition of the Lineanwall, and its replacement with the so-called 'gurtel,' a utilitarian ring road that encompassed Otto Wagner's metro system and its elegant stations. The area between these two ring roads also became home to important Wagnerschule and Jugendstil projects and technologically-advanced housing blocks and institutional buildings. These works introduced proto-modernist development while maintaining basic classical design principles and the courtyard typology that had existed in Vienna for centuries.

After World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, financial crises and the migration of displaced citizens led to a severe housing crisis in Vienna. It was the primary concern of the new Socialist municipal government to build housing projects, and it produced hundreds during the 1920s. Some of the housing blocks were designed by former Wagnerschule students. These 'People's Dwelling Palaces' were enormous, even approaching the scale and monumentality of Schönbrunn. Many were located on the Gurtel, subsequently known as the 'Ringstrasse of the Proletariat.' Some displayed the streamlined monumentality of the Wagnerschule, and, following tradition, featured multiple public courtyards linked to adjacent streets. Typically, the apartment blocks followed the existing street grid and maintained the street walls of the Baroque suburbs, and in some large projects, such as Karl Marx-Hof and Reumannhof, the projects extended across several city blocks. Their relative proximity with the Baroque, the Ringstrasse and the fin-de-siècle monuments resulted in an interesting dialogue between new and old.

With the fall of the iron curtain and a subsequent increase in the population of the city, an annual average of 10,000 units housing per year set in large-scale social housing projects have been built each year. Following tradition, most design commissions are awarded through competitions, and many of these, by such progressive firms as Hencke Schreieck, Delugan-Meissl, Zaha Hadid, and MDRDV, respect the traditional courtyard typology and urban form of the city. Once again, Vienna



Vienna in 1850

is demonstrating that, given the persistence of certain architectural traditions and building typologies, progressive architecture of the highest quality can contribute in meaningful ways to the existing urban fabric of a contemporary city.

A Modernist's Gaze and Its "Other"

Susan R. Henderson

Frankfurt am Main, 1927

The new settlement of Bruchfeldstrasse became known to the public principally through its nickname, the "Zickzackhausen" [zig-zag houses]. Coming from the main street of the village, the jagged line of strange, new buildings made an immediate impression. In a neighborhood otherwise populated by brick, pitched-roof rental barracks, the bane of the working class, Bruchfeld-strasse rose novel and strange, its flat roofs and brilliant colors, an outlandish intrusion on the grim and compact enclave of Nied, an abrupt shift, from the world of nineteenth century speculation to the promise of the welfare state; from the old liberal order of reform to an ideal of apolitical modernity. Bruchfeldstrasse also launched the 'New Frankfurt' housing initiative. The first settlement by architect and city planner Ernst May was not a satellite born on open land, but an invasion of the industrial warrens south of the River Main. It was a strategic and symbolic move challenging the inevitability of two truisms of early Weimar: working class poverty and partisan chaos.

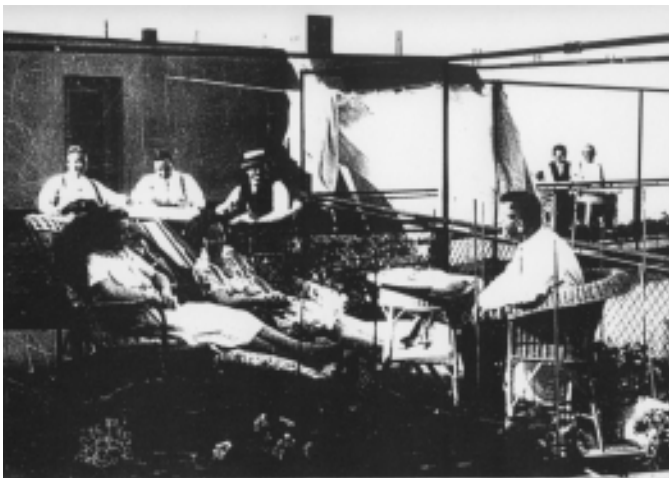
(excerpt from her pre-symposium lecture, "The New Frankfurt and Issues of Interpretation in Early Modernism")

Susan R. Henderson is a member of the faculty of the Syracuse School of Architecture. Her research focuses on European architecture from 1890 through 1930.



One of most publicized images produced by the "New Frankfurt" portrays a husband and wife as they relax on the roof terrace of their Bruchfeldstrasse apartment. Young and childless, they while away their leisure time, a freedom achieved with the establishment of the eight-hour day, only eight years before the picture was taken. One imagines that it is a Sunday that finds them not at church, but reading the papers in luxurious privacy and the open air. They are clearly city people, apparently white-collar workers, with no children, elderly parents or boarders to encumber them. She exhibits the style of the New Woman, with her bobbed hair, loosely fitted clothing and short skirt, he that of an office worker, in crisp white shirt and tie. Though there was little land near of the Hoechst paint factories for the construction of a garden suburb, the terrace of their new apartment is awash in sparkling sunlight and clean air, those ubiquitous life-giving elements that inhabit the poetic of so many landmarks of modern architecture. It is an essential portrait of the "New Frankfurt" initiative, and the idealization of a reformed modern life its makers dubbed the "New Life."

A second, and unpublished, partner photograph, one taken at the same sitting, pans the view to the left. Here, the previously contemplative couple laugh with their neighbors who sit only a few feet away, on the other

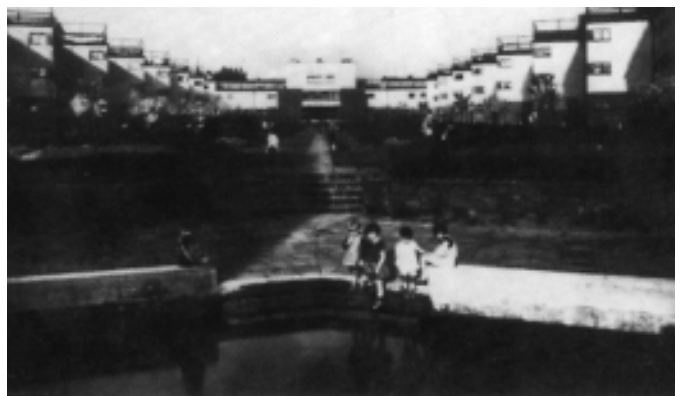


side of a meager, roll bar barrier. The impression of luxurious privacy portrayed in the published photograph is a pose after all. Like working class environments everywhere, the rooftop terraces were characterized by an inescapable intimacy among neighbors. And, instead of modern attire, one finds ordinary dress; instead of a quiet and private leisure, lively banter

and a proximity discomfiting to middle class viewers; instead of modern furniture, an assortment of this and that.

Architects disdained many aspects of working class culture and attempted to quash and censor them with housing regulations meant to safeguard the pristine serenity of their vision. The rejected publicity photos have none of the cool distance beloved by designers. In one such view of children at play in the new wading pool, we can hear the noise and raucous excitement as they tumble about in a motley array of bathing dress and a virtual delirium of joy. The published view presents, meanwhile, a formal and serene perspective of public space with children demure and aloof from the water.

These juxtapositions remind us that once the modern settlements were handed over to their constituents, the valuing of quiet privacy and reserve, of the invisibility of household labor, inevitably gave way to the more fundamental realities of working class life, to density and the limitations of rationalized space. A portrait of the private family life of the middle class became a public family reality in working class hands, one in which the tenants of Bruchfeldstrasse would forge their own version of Frankfurt's "New Life."



Eurosprawl

Richard Ingersoll

During the last 50 years, the edges of most European cities have expanded to include new urban areas within a 20 to 40 kilometer radius. The agglomeration is often 10 to 20 times greater in area than the original urban nucleus. An average of 80% of Europeans live in cities, and of these, the majority works, lives, and shops in this new urban condition outside of the compact fabric of the historic center—areas that can be called Eurosprawl.

The urban form—which is dominated by highways, shopping centers, enclaves for business, and housing settlements—is disconnected, open, flexible, and full of jumps of scale. The infrastructural works for elevated interchanges have a sublime beauty waiting to be discovered, veritable cathedrals of mobility. There is a curious uniformity in the architecture produced on the edges of cities—the gas stations, warehouses, discount stores, housing bars, and sports centers—that makes a highway strip in Spain look almost the same as one in Germany. This new expanded city of sprawl could

Richard Ingersoll's recent publications include Sprawltown, Cercando la città in periferia (2004). He currently teaches at Syracuse University in Florence.

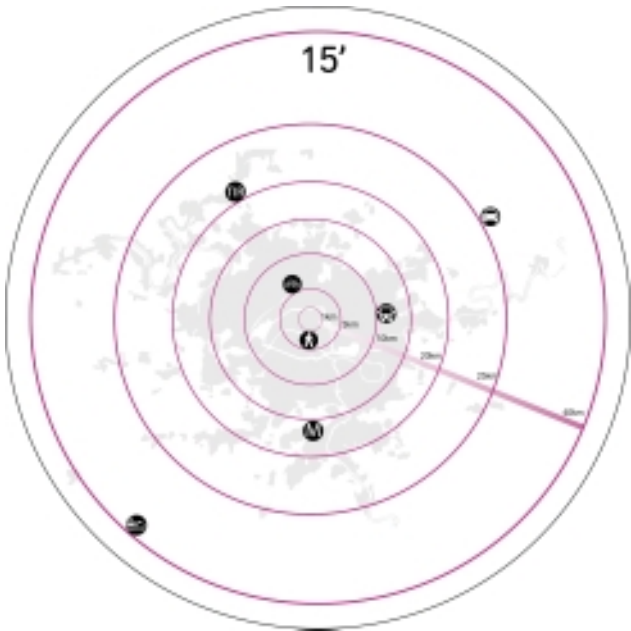


never have occurred without the high-speed transportation of the private automobile—there is currently one auto per every two persons in most European countries. While the automobile gives a sense of freedom of movement it has contributed to numerous environmental flaws, such as air and noise pollution, traffic jams, and traffic accidents.

All advanced social interactions—work, commerce, culture, health, education, crime, pleasure—are increasingly mediated by electronics into a sort of teletopia. Automated tellers, bar-codes, cell-phones, and internet have become a normal part of daily life and reduce one's dependence on space. Advanced consumerism offers the possibility of doing almost anything almost anywhere. While the edges of cities have grown, and some cities have experienced fusion, the centers of cities have been emptied both of economic functions and population. In some cases the void has been filled by new immigrant groups, in others, by the tourist industry. Tourism has become the leading industry world-wide, and has given a new purpose to the centers of cities, as well as a new attitude in creating housing settlements and shopping centers. The residents of European cities are quickly being converted into citizen-tourists.



The perception of sprawl is fragmented by the speed of automobiles. Often seen through rear-view mirrors, the city seems like a sequence of cinematic jump cuts. The common experience of sprawl is disorientation and uprootedness. One cannot imagine how to arrive on foot in these new urbanizations. For some people sprawl is a place of freedom where they can start over, free of the restrictions of the established city; for others it is a place that leads to alienation and a loss of identity. Eurosprawl is thus an unconscious expression of European unity. Multinational production of goods and services has given unexpected similarity to places that have different languages and cultural habits. The speed of transport and the convenience of telematics have made different cities seem like subway stops in a vast metro system serving the entire continent.



Berlin Topography: The Shaping of a History

Maya Krause

While most historic cities have been concerned with maintaining and rebuilding their traditional centers, Berlin has more often served as a testing ground for new architectural and urban design ideas. Heavily damaged in WW II and then again through post-war urban planning, the subsequent physical, psychological and economic condition of the city set the stage for radical change, acting as a catalyst for the redefinition of its institutions and history. Planners in the post-war period envisioned a city in which almost nothing that recalled the traumatic memories of the past would remain. The ruins of the 'hated stone city' with its dark alleys and poor neighborhoods would be destroyed and replaced by a new and better city. According to the *Kollektivplan* of 1946 by Hans Scharoun, the idea was not only to create a new city, but also a new society with hope for a better future.

This plan with its dream of social equality in a unified Berlin evaporated with its division in 1948. The Berlin Wall constructed in 1961 dissected the city and severed its many networks

overnight: the bonds between friends and families, its streets and squares were split in two. East and West were each forced to redefine itself as an autonomous city. Subsequently, the 'democratic city' of the West and the 'socialist city' of the East produced very different visions for the reconstructed city. In 1951 in the East, the *Stalinallee*, now called Karl-Marx-Allee, became 'Germany's first socialist street' lined with modern apartment blocks dubbed 'palaces of the people.' In the West, the *Hansaviertel*, an area heavily destroyed after WWII, was rebuilt according to modernist ideas of the open city. The IBA inner city housing developments in its turn rejected the modernism of both East and West, and reinvented the urban block under the influence of Aldo Rossi and his appeal for 'permanence' and 'urban texture' within the city's ground plan.

In Berlin today history surfaces to varying degrees and in diverse ways and is intrinsically linked to its topography—as an underground bunker, a memorial, a building—streets or entire districts emerge as manifestations of the history of the city, partly celebrated, partly denied. Equally striking as these substantive moments are the voids of the city. In their silence and emptiness they remind us of the past, a story inscribed into the layers of the ground. A vibrant urban center in the 1920s, *Potsdamer Platz* became one of these post-war voids, a 'no man's-land' occupying the eastern edge of West-Berlin after the construction of the wall. Its reconstruction after unification has transformed it into a new center on a global scale. With little consideration of its past or the existing site conditions, the development has been criticized for its 'overly capitalistic and corporate dimension', offering 'the amnesia of consumerism,' as phrased by Bonnie Marranca. It has become a place where new activities not only overwhelm memories of the past, but allow for an escape, an opportunity to move the city 'out of the shadows of its past'.

An opposite approach was taken at the recently excavated site of the Gestapo's former headquarters, a long-neglected site, considered 'politically contaminated.' Within the framework of the competition

*(a summary of the author's
pre-symposium lecture)*

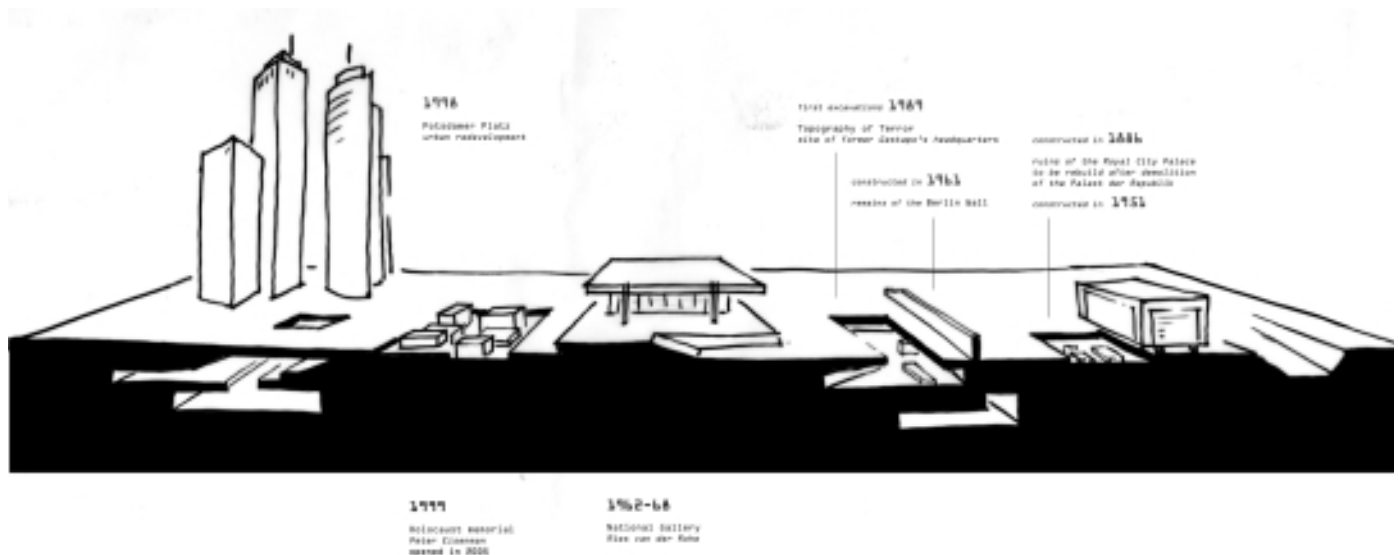
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ing urban space.*

Topography of Terror, the main concern was to expose rather than override the historical significance of the site as an undeniable part of the city's past. Thus in a continuous cycle of reinvention, Berlin erased its own history in order to shape new identities.

With the unification of East and West Germany in 1990 and Berlin's new role as the capital, the city has to once again redefine itself. Along with ambitious redevelopment plans directed towards the future, the city stands for a new consciousness towards the past. Each major new project, and the ensuing debate, has formed and changed the identity, life and character of the city. As such, history has become a continuous act rather than a closed chapter in the formation of the city. One of the most

heated recent debates surrounds the demolition of the *Palast der Republik* and the rebuilding of the former Hohenzollern Royal Palace. Built in 1886, the Royal Palace was damaged in WW II, but could have easily been reconstructed. Instead, it was demolished in 1950 as a symbol of 'Prussian militarism' and replaced by the *Palast der Republik*, a new socialist building constructed by the communists. While the Royal Palace will reestablish its important role in the surrounding historic fabric of the inner city, the erasure of the *Palast der Republik*, and the reassertion of an historical emblem of an aristocratic Germany is a powerful demonstration that building as an active reconstruction of history remains a primary strategy in Berlin today.



The City and Desire

Alick M. McLean

With its defined form and intimate social landscape, the historical city has stood not only as a place for desire, but as an object of desire itself. As uncontrolled growth, pollution and overcrowding ravaged the nineteenth century city, reformers and socialists such as Proudhon, Morris and Howard helped to spawn a new form of settlement in the suburb. Early planned communities near to but isolated from industrial cities provided a nostalgic vision of the historical city as village and offered improved living conditions and collective or individual home-ownership.

Some questioned these approaches to settlement. Friedrich Engels, in *The Housing Question* (1887) remarked that home-ownership made the worker less mobile and even more susceptible to wage exploitation; that the apparent self-determination offered by village life was a deception. The sociologist Georg Simmel, in "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), critiqued the nostalgia for village forms of social intercourse. He accepted the "blasé" attitude towards others in the industrial city as a pro-

tection from an overload of sensory or emotional impressions. Rather than the affection for, or trust in others that characterized earlier settlements, punctuality, precision and the unemotional engagement in work provided the means to unleash the extraordinary scales of efficiency, production and profit in the modern metropolis.

For all their political and social insights, both Engels and Simmel overestimated the capacity of urban dwellers to resist the lures of nostalgic urbanism, and underestimated the capacity of capitalist production to exploit such nostalgia. More recent critics, such as Theodor Adorno or Manfredo Tafuri, have spoken of nostalgia as endemic to the bourgeois condition, accepting its force though missing the fact that it is class-blind. Workers and industrialists are equally lured by the nostalgia for illusions of urban form and belonging, whether traditionally or modernistically clad. Tafuri admitted as much in the checkmate he described in the architecture profession, and by questioning the possibility of a politically-engaged architecture that does not in the end become co-opted by capitalist production.

Nostalgic environments pervade our post-modern world, from its shopping malls to its Disneyland, from the movies and television shows to advertisements. Even if the historical city is 'history,' it remains very much present in the popular imagination. The continued fascination of destinations like Florence demonstrates the present power of nostalgia, but also its universal—class and culturally independent—power. On the streets of Florence, busloads of American, Chinese, Japanese Northern and Eastern European workers and petty bourgeois tourists bump shoulders with the rich and famous in front of works produced by architects and artists dead 500 years or more. Little differentiates these nostalgists but their pace in moving from painting to painting or the amount of money they disburse on the way. Like so many medieval pilgrims grasping for contact with relics, they gather mementos—a fine meal, an Armani suit, an apron with David's genitals, a coffee table volume on Brunelleschi, a postcard. Cities such as Florence, Venice and Siena are overwhelmed by the logistics of these invasions, and Italians

*(excerpt from the author's paper
"The City and Desire")*

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have debated whether to charge entry into the cities themselves. That such proposals inevitably fail is due to the enigma of urban identity. Would anyone want to belong to a city that charges admission? Could one escape being either an employee or an actor, like the characters of Colonial Williamsburg? The question for Florence is moot: few Florentines remain and those that commute to jobs in the center leave as quickly as they can, alienated by the very nostalgia that draws the rest of the world.

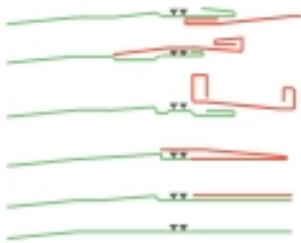
Today, urban nostalgia ranks as a prominent world enterprise. It may be time to rethink our assessment of it. Engels and Simmel embraced the industrial city as the inevitable present, but sought means for empowering its workers and residents. Similarly, I propose that we put aside ideology and accept the inevitable, and that we replace the term 'nostalgia,' for 'desire.' The culture industry, which subsumes the industries of shopping malls, theme parks or tourism as lifestyles, could be argued to include as well poetry, music, and any other artistic genre. The will to form and the desire to enjoy and share it may be as natural a human instinct as any other. Rather than vilify the industries catering to desire, might not we be better to engage the culture industry politically? As in any other form of industrial production, this would involve a direct engagement of cultural laborers—from builders to theme park retailers to ticket gatherers at museums to architects and artists—in the decision-making regarding financing, production, design, execution and marketing. What is at stake is cultural self-determination—that the desirous environment and polity might correspond to what we may actually want, need, and be capable of sustaining.



Anita Ekberg in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960)

Toposcape

Nieves Mestre



The presence of train tracks and the lack of significant landscape elements encouraged us to generate an artificial landscape and improve the existing one as a way to connect the city and the sea. Our new landscape creates a system of open, covered and closed spaces that produce urban and architectural opportunities. It is both an architectural topography and an urban landscape that we call 'Urbantecture,' and 'Toposcape.' Dressed as 'urbantects', with the tools of the 'toposcapers,' we are freed from the formulas of urbanism and the prejudices of architecture.

1. PROGRAMME and ACCESS

The toposcape is a system of public spaces where different urban trajectories meet to form bands of infrastructure. It adapts to and negotiates the limits of the project, point by point, expanding, contracting or folding when necessary. The new topography displays, even involves the railroad infrastructure along with the other public spaces. The whole becomes an urban landscape where the existing and the artificial dissolve.

As toposcapers we proceed by plotting traces, a novel, mixed technique that requires us to move from abstract analyses to the concreteness of the built. The distance between the rail lanes defined the initial modulation path, which in turn allowed for permeability that enabled pedestrian movement and a diminished use of the car. Building over the top of the rail lanes further employed its role as a locus of programmatic and dynamic intensity. Environmental parameters also shape the design, considerations like natural ventilation, solar efficiency, and water management.

To find the best sites for new urban facilities we, the urbantects, studied the hypothetical displacements produced by existing and new centers. Mapping these overlapping displacements generated high, medium, and low density areas. The areas free from this density are suitable for intensive grove extensions.

2. LANDSCAPE SIMULATION

The artificial topography we created works with the dichotomy between the natural and the artificial. On top of our folded structure we established a series of parallel strips of infrastructure and landscape that we characterized as 'texture.' The strips give unity to the topography of the landscape, and produce a fabric of public spaces from the scale and the location of the interventions.

To assign the different landscapes we created an open system where observing and choosing was more important than inventing. The resulting strips juxtapose different textures of a Mediterranean urban and natural landscape. Without preconception, we used a variety of textures, from city paving to fields of grain, imagining that from them we could see the sea, smell the aromatic plants, or lie in the sun listening to the birds drawn to this simulation of wild Mediterranean nature.

Contemporary techniques allow us to fold this surface and use some of its textures indifferently—for a floor, the wall of one building, or the roof of another. Green walls and roofs, water reservoirs on roofs, all are on

(With their entry 'Toposcape,' team members Manuel Leira, Ignacio Gonzalez Galan, and Nieves Mestre won the EUROPAN 8 competition for the region of Calabria, Italy in the "Urbanizing with Infrastructure" section.)

Nieves Mestre is an architect and teacher from Madrid. She is currently a faculty member at Syracuse University in Florence.

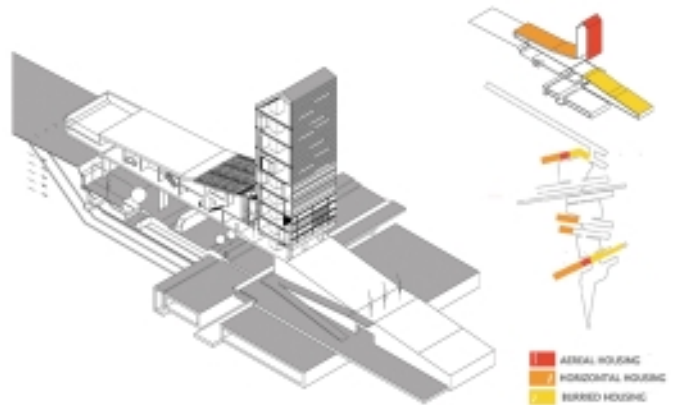
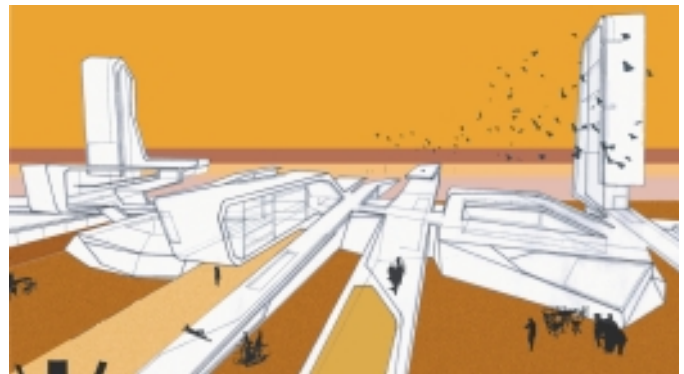
the agenda of contemporary architecture, and allow a sustainable approach in which their advantages coexist with an exhibition of, contact with, and knowledge of nature.

3. HOUSING PRINCIPLES

Density. Since the required housing area is small in proportion to the total area, we concentrated it in two nodes in order to generate a condition of urban density.

Hybrid typologies. Out of an interest in sustainability and in versatility, we combined two different housing typologies in a symbiotic relationship. The main issues defining our sustainable design approach were drainage systems, wind power, solar heating and natural cooling.

Privacy. The form and containment of the house reflects our idea of the dwelling as a continuum that contains a dynamic path of its own, a battery of facilities arrayed along its trajectory. We defined boundary of the individual unit by the footprint of sequences of inhabiting, the spatial links in the act of dwelling. This method generated a general type of structure that can apply to private housing, a hostel, and rental apartments.



The City of the Bang

Francisco Sanin



Above, and top two images next page:
Views from the Venice Biennale,
Korean Pavilion 2004

The unprecedented growth of cities in Asia has become in recent times a necessary point of reference and interest for many urbanists and theorists across the world.

According to recent statistics Seoul is within the political boundaries of the city the densest city in Asia, as well as one of the youngest. In fact, most buildings in Seoul are younger than the people that inhabit them—entire infrastructural systems become obsolete in short periods of time and entire regions are colonized on an almost daily basis to construct new towns and housing developments. These large complexes of housing are creating an emergent landscape of unprecedented repetition and anonymity that threatens to neutralize the richness and dynamic character of the city. The scale and nature of such developments have all but homogenized the urban landscape, not only of Seoul, but of the entire South Korean peninsula. From Seoul to Pusan, thousands upon thousands of apartment complexes built with exactly the same construction tech-

niques, color schemes, and graphics now constitute the primary visual identity of entire cities and regions.

One interesting new phenomenon, as a result of these new developments, is that the space of the house, the room or traditional *bang*, has moved from the private realm into the public space of the city. Not only the location and form of the bang are changed, but, more importantly, the way they are used, i.e., their associated social practices. The bang represents a new condition of heterogeneity, a network of spaces that are based on the juxtapositions of time and space. The *PC bang* (or computer room), the *jim jil bang* (sauna room), *norae bang* (singing room), etc.—places that are navigated according to a completely new forms of occupation—create, as Lefebvre would say, not a new urban text but a new urban texture; an emerging form of occupation and practice in the social space of the city. Here the virtual and the physical co-exist.

This fascinating phenomenon has created new forms of spatial occupation. Until a few years ago it was common place to talk of virtual space as a new space that would render physical space obsolete; the city of the bang is populated by a network of the virtual and the physical working in synergy; they reinforce each other. Internet, SMS and mobile phones now double as navigational devices in this bang network with which we traverse the endless territory of the city. The result is an intensified use of public space, no longer based on principles of 'center' and 'hierarchy,' but on a completely new way of understanding and using public space. The virtual becomes a code, a form of bringing together (if not communities, at least groups or tribes which may otherwise remain unknown to each other).

The superimposition of radically different scales and modes of occupation of the urban fabric creates in-between spaces, gaps that are left available for appropriation and transformation where a new and dynamic urban culture is emerging. One can only hope that the current trend of creating close-knit housing developments will not infringe

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upon what is an incredibly rich and powerful urban culture, a recent urban culture based upon simple but powerful and efficient principles of continuity and the superimposition of different but complementary urban systems.

In 2004 I participated as an advisor on the design of the Korean Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. The theme of the pavilion was the City of the Bang. The exhibition system I proposed reflected on the nature of this complex landscape of the bang both in its form and in its emerging practice. A network of glass panels displayed the work; framed within them were the results of extensive research done by the participants on the nature of the bang. Digital information penetrated the layers of transparent and translucent glass. The idea was to create a dynamic space enveloped by reflections and superimpositions composed of both physical and virtual space. The effect is to engage the viewer to reflect upon the potential of this emerging form of urbanity.



Housing in Seoul

Fear, Security, and the City

Debora Spini

In the Western imagination, the city has always served as a metaphor for politics. On the other hand, political transformations have never failed to impact the city's shape and face. In recent decades, many interpreters have highlighted how the decline of public space is vividly embodied in the transformation of the city's spaces and functions. The withering of urbanism as a life style whose primary referent is to be found in a dimension of public space is reflected in two opposite processes of self-isolation on the one hand and segregation on the other.

"Meeting people" was a typical feature of urban life. On the street, one could encounter all kinds of people, and it was almost impossible to avoid experiencing difference. Any town dweller knew that other kinds of people existed, however outlandish and unpleasant they may be. In contrast, contemporary urban life seems to focus on separating and avoiding, and space is allocated to make encounters virtually impossible. With its walls, physical or metaphorical, a segregated city makes it possible to avoid any

persona non grata. Who determines this allocation of space, and the relationship with space marks the difference between the elite and the un-privileged, as it primarily concerns the possibility of choosing, and consequently, the possibility to avoid unpleasant encounters. The elite may choose their place of living, may choose whom to share it with. They build walls around their neighborhoods, place fences and cameras before their doors to shut out the external world. Self-segregation becomes a lifestyle. For the underprivileged it is not possible to choose their position within the urban landscape. They must traverse the city to reach their workplaces and back again to their residences. The odyssey of three such youths in a ghostly nighttime Paris in the prophetic movie *La Haine* is the best representation of this feeling of estrangement.

In other times, the city was perceived as providing security to those who lived within its walls; today the city is perceived as a dangerous ground. Walls and gates no longer define its space as an "inside" opposed to a hostile "outside," but are now situated within the city itself and separate suburbia from ghettos. Such so-called gated communities answer a profound desire for security. A gated community is both secluded and de-territorialized; it does not belong to the city as such, but only to its dweller-owners. A related phenomenon are the so-called "Nimby groups" (Not-in-My-Backyard) that aim to preserve the identity of a given area against intruders.

Both *Gated communities* and the *Nimby* syndrome originated in a broad context of fear, security and obedience that represented the basic paradigm of Western political modernity as articulated in Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Nation states are no longer capable of ensuring this security and so the nature of fear has altered, assuming a strong, reflexive character. As Ulrich Beck has shown, contemporary fear in this time of 'Second Modernity' is an anxiety that derives from the impossibility of assessing and foreseeing the consequences of our actions. Traditional security-providing agencies, such as the nation state, are no longer perceived as able to meet the challenges of the "Society of Risk." Therefore, fear and the thirst for security become increasingly privatized and privatizing.

Ph.D., University of Pisa; Degree, University of Florence. Publications include Diritti di Dio, Diritti dei popoli: Pierre Jurieu e il problema della sovranità 1681-1691; as well as various essays in English and Italian on globalization and transformations of modernity. She coordinates the SUF Academic Internship Program and teaches courses in political thought and women's studies.

Politics no longer represents the scope of human agency dealing with fear, rather, security is sought and strived for privately. The walls of the gated communities in global cities from Sao Paulo to Los Angeles reflect this crisis of political agency in the time of globalization, when cameras and barbed wire assume the place of public decision.



Detail, the Angel of Death in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's 'Good and Bad Government' (1338)

