The Collective Object: Realizing Collective Space in an Era of Bigness

Laura M. Sherman
Kennesaw State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/barch_etd
Part of the Architecture Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/barch_etd/12

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Architecture at DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Architecture Theses - 5th Year by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.
THE COLLECTIVE OBJECT:
REALIZING COLLECTIVE SPACE IN AN ERA OF BIGNESS

This Thesis is Presented to the
Faculty of the Department of Architecture
College of Architecture and Construction Management
by
Laura Melissa Sherman
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Architecture
Kennesaw State University
Marietta, Georgia
Spring 2017
Kennesaw State University
Department of Architecture
Laura Melissa Sherman
The Collective Object:
Realizing Collective Space in an Era of Bigness

Architecture reacted to the Technological Revolution of the late 19th century with inspired proposals of optimistic expectation for the new era. The advancements of elevators, escalators and air conditioning meant a new era for the scale and scope of the built environment. However, society quickly realized the advantageous reality of this technology: their buildings no longer needed the cities which surrounded them. Endless interiors and "cities-within-cities" meant the choice to never again interact with the undesirables of the true city. A trend of self-interested architectures affected urban societies with a cultural shift towards the exclusion that their cities embodied. This thesis proposes to revitalize the gathering potentials of the city through the design of a collective object in an era of architectural "bigness".
This thesis would not be possible without the counsel and support of my thesis advisors.

Professor Ed Akins
for your encouragement and insightful counsel throughout this thesis and my architectural education. Thank you for the commitment and enthusiasm that you have shared with me.

Professor Tim Frank
for your thoughtful critiques and dialogues from the beginning of this thesis process.

This education would not be possible without the guidance of the faculty at Kennesaw State University (formerly Southern Polytechnic State University), especially those listed, and the support of my scholarship donors.

Professor Joseph Choma
for your tremendous influence on my architectural education and for your early advice in the thesis process.

Professor Ann Parker
for your encouragement and guidance when I first entered this university. It has truly made all the difference.

Professor Neeraj Bhatia
for being an external aid to this thesis and for sharing your own work with me. It has been highly impactful to my research along with your thoughtful correspondences.

Paul T. Martin
for your scholarship, which has supported this education throughout.

Goldgeier Family
for your scholarship, and even greater, the extension of your family’s camaraderie. I am grateful for your involvement in my academic and personal growth.

Linscott Family, Smith Family, James Fausett, Beck Family, and AIA Georgia
for your scholarships, each of which has enabled me the ability to pursue this degree without hindrance.

This thesis would not be possible without the counsel and support of my thesis advisors.

Professor Ed Akins
for your encouragement and insightful counsel throughout this thesis and my architectural education. Thank you for the commitment and enthusiasm that you have shared with me.

Professor Tim Frank
for your thoughtful critiques and dialogues from the beginning of this thesis process.

This education would not be possible without the guidance of the faculty at Kennesaw State University (formerly Southern Polytechnic State University), especially those listed, and the support of my scholarship donors.

Professor Joseph Choma
for your tremendous influence on my architectural education and for your early advice in the thesis process.

Professor Ann Parker
for your encouragement and guidance when I first entered this university. It has truly made all the difference.

Professor Neeraj Bhatia
for being an external aid to this thesis and for sharing your own work with me. It has been highly impactful to my research along with your thoughtful correspondences.

Paul T. Martin
for your scholarship, which has supported this education throughout.

Goldgeier Family
for your scholarship, and even greater, the extension of your family’s camaraderie. I am grateful for your involvement in my academic and personal growth.

Linscott Family, Smith Family, James Fausett, Beck Family, and AIA Georgia
for your scholarships, each of which has enabled me the ability to pursue this degree without hindrance.

Gratures from the Author

This thesis is dedicated to:

Ben Pinckney
for your endless love and support,

Halima Mendoza,
for your unconditional friendship,

& to my family: John, Esther, RJ, and Patricia Sherman
for your encouragement and light.

"How did the rose ever open its heart and give to this world all its beauty? It felt the encouragement of light against its being, otherwise we all remain frightened."

-Hafiz

Gratures from the Author
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents Section I: Theorem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 01</strong> DESIGN THEORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 02</strong> RESEARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Biggest Problem of the Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Before Bigness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Timeline to Post-urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Evolution and Devolution of the Collective Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Losing the Center: Optimistic Bigness of the Post Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Contending with the Scale of the City: The De-Stanford Case Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 The Commercial Object: Emergence of Exclusive Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Exclusive Architecture Generates Exclusive Society: Philosophers of the 20th Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 03</strong> DESIGN PROCESS: REGENERATING THE COLLECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Inclusive Architecture Generates Inclusive Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Literary Synthesis Matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Site: Revisiting the Problem of Koolhaas's &quot;Vitruvian&quot; Essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents Section II: Practicum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 04</strong> DESIGN SYNTHESIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 Preliminary Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 Final Documentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **CHAPTER 05** CRITICAL RESPONSE TO DESIGN THEOREM |
| 51 Reflection |
| 52 Conclusions |

| APPENDIX |
| A Final Thesis Presentation Boards |
| B Bibliography |
| C Image Index |

Note: View in a two-page spread layout to view full images.
Architecture reacted to the Technological Revolution of the late 19th century with inspired proposals of optimistic expectation for the new era. The advancements of elevators, escalators and air conditioning meant almost limitless potential for the scale and scope of the built environment. However, society quickly realized the advantageous reality of this technology: their buildings no longer needed the cities which surrounded them.

Endless interiors and “cities-within-cities” meant the possibility of a lifestyle where people could choose to never again interact with the undesirables of the true city.

The built environment actively resisted the collective. A trend of self-interested architectures affected urban societies, with a cultural shift towards the exclusion that these spaces enabled. The phenomenon, termed “Bigness”, by Rem Koolhaas, is also linked to his essay, “Atlanta”, where he critiqued John Portman’s network of sky bridges for producing this supremacism phenomenon and suggested Atlanta as “the real city at the end of the 20th century.”

By studying the evolution and devolution of the collective objects which once gathered the masses of society, this research explores the links to shifts in cultural values throughout history. This leads to an awareness of how “Bigness” affects a disposition of exclusion in contemporary culture. This thesis proposes to revitalize the gathering potentials of the city to create a culture of inclusion through the design of a new collective object in an era of architectural “Bigness.”
The Collective Object

Sculpture Illustrating Thesis Concept

In this sculpture, concrete represents the resilience of the existing urban fabric as a framework. Wooden dowels read and pull out of the concrete voids and inform an entirely new object. The collective forms the part. The sculpture translates out of the previously shown flow chart diagram. In a post-urban landscape, this is to be interpreted as the city forming its own center by generating its own collective object at points of urban discontinuity. The object is a ‘part’ operating and gathering the ‘whole’ of the city.
The contemporary metropolis is in a state of inversion. Its collective spaces have diminished due to the increasing privatization of urban life. Buildings independent of the surrounding city have demonstrated a trend of architecture acting as a tool for exclusion. Problematized by the theoretical projects of Rem Koolhaas and other 20th century architects, the condition exists as a reality today. This thesis intends to form a collective object in Atlanta by structuring a dialogue where the collective object is informed by its site context.

This research will first examine the current state of collective space and develop the case for its reestablishment. The contemporary American metropolis lacks significant space for civic life. The collective object was once the very nucleus of the ancient city. The potential Together was the driving force of humanity’s urbanization. The city has since lost this primordial sign indicated by ancient Greek and Roman city planning. Derived from the Greek agora, the nucleus of the Roman city was the forum: a collective object which was integral to the formation and functioning of ancient cities. This foundation for societal exchange was typically the first urban element designated in the founding of new cities. However, the demise of the collective object has since diminished. Cities are now characterized by isolation within urban fabrics of growing density and diversity. Our populace has lost the object of its urbanization. The vital role of civic buildings during antiquity can be understood through the maps of Giambattista Nolli. In the 18th century, he captured the urban dialogue of Rome by mapping the dynamic relationship between civic buildings and the city. His contribution demonstrated the significance of the collective object as Rome deemed its public institutions no less infrastructural than streets.

Over time, the changing common values of western society diminished such public institutions. The power of buildings to act as collectives shifted to other typologies, like markets and churches. These new collective objects were far less democratic. The final truly democratic space of the public library would also contend to survive in a changing world. The disintegration of the public sphere in the city was a theme for many 20th century philosophers and architects. Kenneth Frampton’s “The Status of Man and the Status of His Objects” revealed concern that the loss of society’s values attributed to “the effect of atomizing the public building.” Rem Koolhaas’s essay on “Bigness” discussed the opportunity to revert to an architectural condition where the exterior of the city is no longer a collective theater – there’s no collective “it” left.

In Atlanta, a trend of pseudo-public mall interiors and skybridges demonstrated that architecture could be used as a tool for exclusion. My research seeks to advocate for architecture’s potential as collective objects. Returning collective space to the urban context will ultimately restore the object of our urbanization and renew the city as a collective right.
This essay outlines five theorems which consider that beyond a certain scale, architecture acquires the properties of bigness. The distance between the core and envelope is ever increasing with the establishment of the elevator and other technological advancements. Through these advancements, scale, architectural composition, tradition, transparency and ethics break. The most radical break is that bigness is no longer part of any tissue. “It exists; at most, it coexists.” (Koolhaas, 1995)

Listing the property of “Bigness” as a sort of building species, Koolhaas states that beyond a certain scale, architecture embodies an ideological problem. This new species of architecture is a result of technologies which resulted in the elevator, electricity and air-conditioning. It has a potential to reorganize the social world.

‘Bigness’ supports the inquiry of this thesis on the contemporary state of the interiorized city which inverts the condition presented by Giambattista Nolli on ancient Rome.

“One hundred years ago, a generation of conceptual breakthroughs and supporting technologies unleashed an architectural BIG BANG.

By randomizing circulation, short circuiting distance, artificializing interiors, reducing mass, stretching dimensions, and accelerating construction, the elevator, electricity, air-conditioning, steel, and finally, the new infrastructures formed a cluster of mutations that induced another species of architecture.

The combined effects of these inventions were structures taller and deeper-BIGGER-than ever before conceived, with a parallel potential for the reorganization of the social world - a vastly richer programmation.”

“Bigness no longer needs the city; it competes with the city; it preempts the city; or better still, it is the city.”

“This is no longer a collective theater where ‘it’ happens: there’s no collective ‘it’ left. The street has become residue...”
The Collective Object

Greek Agora
Classical Era

The Greek agora was centrally located in ancient Greek city-states. The meaning of 'agora' is "gathering place". It served a twin function of being a political and commercial space and later functioned as the city marketplace. The agora was significant to Athens. It is where philosophers like Socrates and Plato created their philosophical dialogues on life. Its importance has echoed through time. It was a topic for Raymond Unwin’s "Town Planning in Practice" where he stated: ‘The Greek city is marked alike by the unpretentious character of its private dwelling-houses and the splendour of its public building and meeting-places. The great central feature of the town was the agora. (Mark, 2009)

"They seem to have been two kinds of agorae: 1) a great meeting place where the people assembled for public functions, and 2) other meeting places, usually smaller, where they met for traffic and trade. These two open spaces were surrounded with peristyles or colonnades, often of two storeys in height, forming shady walks and meeting places." (Unwin, 1909)

The proximal nucleus of the city has been phased out by a society which values consumption over community. The agora, which served as a collector to gather the masses and the forum as a platform for common discourse, was rendered obsolete. A societal fixation on commerce left little territory for places on which the city was founded. Places for community and democracy were conscripted for a handful of building types, fragmented from the original foundation of urban core.

Athenian Agora

The following research serves as supporting evidence on the loss of a collective object through a brief historical analysis supporting a critical need for the reintroduction of a new urban center today.

To open the discussion on why the theorem of this thesis will mainly center about ancient Rome, Richard Sennett, a 20th century sociologist wrote, “Modern times are often compared to the years the Roman Empire went into decline: Just as moral rottenness is supposed to have sapped Rome's power to rule the West, it is said to have sapped the modern West's power to rule the globe. For all the ill-sense of this notion, it contains an element of truth. There is a rough parallel between the crisis of Roman society after the death of Augustus and a present-day city. It contains the baldness of public and private life.” (Sennett, 1996)

Using Sennett’s ‘The Fall of Public Space’ as an insertion point, the section of the text titled ‘Dead Public Space’ begins to recognize ‘large-scale, high-density buildings’ as a reason for the proliferation of dead and meaningless public space. In a critique of Gordon Bunshaft’s Lever House, Sennett states: ‘No diversity of activity takes place on the ground floor: it is only a means of passage to the interior. The facade of the building on the street is a large, smooth surface which reflects neither a function nor the purpose of the building. The form of this International-type skyscraper is at odds with its function, for a miniature public square revivified is declared in form, but the function destroys the nature of a public square, which is to intermix persons and diverse activities.’ (Sennett, 1996)

The primordial nucleus of the city has been phased out by a society which values consumption over community. The agora, which served as a collector to gather the masses and the forum as a platform for common discourse, was rendered obsolete. A societal fixation on commerce left little territory for places on which the city was founded. Places for community and democracy were conscripted for a handful of building types, fragmented from the original foundation of urban core.

“We need to emphasize some parts and subordinate others, and the best way to do this in town design is to have definite centres. The effect of our public buildings is lost if they are scattered indiscriminately about in the town.”

No diversity of activity takes place on the ground floor: it is only a means of passage to the interior. The facade of the building on the street is a large, smooth surface which reflects neither a function nor the purpose of the building...
The Roman Forum ca 500 B.C.

The Roman forum followed the agora. It served the same functions as the Greeks. The forum’s plan to public events was planned into the Roman city. The Roman forum’s structure was planned with two principal streets (the Cardo and Decumanus) and the forum squares were positioned at the intersection of these axes of movement. Public buildings were made adjacent to the forum such as the basilica and other temples (Trachtenberg, Hyman, 2003).

Pope Sixtus V brought about the Baroque order in Rome by reacting to the urban need for unity under the Church. At the time, the church was the collective object of a primarily Christian society. His plan for Rome used the Egyptian obelisks found in Rome and placed them at points in the city. This master plan generated an urban design which asserted the power of a point in space as a design force.

In Design of Cities, Edmund Bacon (fig 2.2.2) argued that this schema of spatial articulation was due to the discovery of perspective in the 15th century. He said it was “not manipulation of mass but articulation of experience along an axis of movement through space.”

Pope Sixtus V Plan for Rome 16th century
The Collective Object

Map of Rome

Giambattista Nolli

1748

The 18th century map of Rome (fig 2.2.4) created by Giambattista Nolli was the first map of its kind to make distinctions beyond traditional figure-ground representation. The indoor versus outdoor spatial variation is not the primary concern of Nolli’s mapping strategy. The solid and private space frames and defines the void and public spaces. The map reveals an urban culture where streets and public institutions are of equal infrastructural importance. James Tice states that, “The context conditions the building and the building in turn exerts an outward pressure on the city fabric. The dialectical relationship between buildings and their context—a two way street—suggests a dynamic interplay between solid and void, figure and ground and the new and the old. The evolution of the city and its formal and spatial structure, therefore, is seen, not as a static proposition, but rather as a dynamic, highly charged and even volatile discourse of competing pressures, issues, needs, and desires—both in urban and human terms.”

“It is not easy for us today to realise the great part which the centre played in the life of an ancient town. So much more of that life was carried on in the open air, so much more of the intercourse and exchange of ideas was effected by speech in the market place, in the days when printing and the newspaper were unknown.”

Laura Sherma

The Architecture of the Classical Interior

S. Semes

2004

The axis of vista and movement is explored and cataloged by Semes who states, “classical design is a continuum operating at different scales. What is whole at one scale is a part at a larger scale. The room, the building and the city are distinguished only by their different scales and the particular tools that are proper to each.” Semes, 2004

Semes elaborates on the enfilade, where the axis of vista is always in line with the axis of movement, “so that the whole becomes an axis through the rooms along this line, even of other routes are available to us. To Rome, this composition was typical only replacing for topography and context.”

His work needs a time in history where the role of architecture moved beyond a single object. Its influence pushed outward blending into its context and in turn being generated and informed by it.

“An ensemble of rooms: a selection of plan types.

B. Radial axes: Hadrian’s Villa, Tivoli, second century.
C. Enfilade: Champs, by Bullet de Chamblain, 1701-07.

“What is whole at one scale is part at a larger scale.”

(Semes, 2004)
2.3 TIMELINE TO POST-URBAN
The Emergent Non-Relationship of Architecture and Site

EVENTS

800 BC - 600 AD
The Greek Agora, a "gathering place", it is considered one of the most important cultural centers for the contemporary civilizations.

800 B.C. - 500 B.C.
Middle Ages 1100 to 1600

1600 - 1700
Renaissance 1300 – 1600

1800 - 1850
Romanticism 1800 – 1850

1920s -

1972

2007

2015

Heat waves, or the voluntary prisoners of medium blur
Le Corbusier

Urban master plan aligned with the environmental impact of jungles which were aimed at establishing a balance between the environment and the surrounding urban areas, Le Corbusier explored the city layout in the city of Le Corbusier to avoid congestion. The city is designed with a grid-like pattern, and each building is aligned along a central axis. The proportion of buildings is carefully calculated to ensure visual harmony.

Arendt to argue that the built environment is a typology which addresses how the relationships of pivotal buildings to the city interior which has become the preeminent concern in postmodernism.

Rem Koolhaas

Urbanism

Victor Gruen

Mr. and Mrs. of the Big City

With the property of bigness. The distance and ethics break. The most radical composition, tradition, transparency and ethics break. The most radical composition, tradition, transparency and ethics break.

Mark Pimlott

The Infrastructural Space of American Large Metropolises

The Infrastructural Space of American Large Metropolises

North American built environment is the greater this type of space is.

Without and Within: Essays on Architecture

Heatherwick wins commission to design "The Hive", a "chamber of events", a place of culture that has no ecology. This work recognizes that buildings are not isolated from the environment but are embedded in it. The concept of the "chamber of events" emphasizes the relationship between architecture and the environment.

Contrasto compelling to design "the Hive", it's present without events, in any culture. He works recognizes that buildings are not isolated from the environment but are embedded in it. The concept of the "chamber of events" emphasizes the relationship between architecture and the environment.


draws for the creation of the domestic shopping mall from the author of this book essentially defined to the bee control. The "House Effect"

The text outlines a theoretical sketch of the modernist ideals of progress and plans embracing futuristic visions for the contemporary era.

"Building" Spaces: One dimension applying that beyond the weight of space, the materiality of space, the peripheries of space, the dimension of space becomes a "space". The relationship between the "space" in a city and the architecture is not only structural but also experiential. The built environment is not just a physical entity but also an extension of the human experience.

The Infrastructural Space of American Large Metropolises

Without and Within: Essays on Architecture
1. If public institutions like the library and communication at large are now becoming infrastructural light, what programs will they become? (Or will they eventually phase out?)

2. Is a dialogue between architecture and its site context especially important to the success of public architecture?

3. In what ways are infrastructures (public transit, highways) making cities better or worse?

4. Do we still need places like the ancient agora/forum to gather?

5. How do we make use of the ancient agora/forum in today’s cities to make them more democratic and more inclusive?

Q. Laura Sherman

A. Neeraj Bhatia

1. I am not concerned about the shift in the mediated forms — I think the library is a cultural and political institution more than anything else. It acts as a space to bring people together and reaffirm democracy — whether it is holding book clubs, art lectures, political town halls — that are always there. I do see it evolving, but it is more important to reaffirm values of open access.

2. Yes of course. It is really important — particularly with civic buildings. But context isn’t simply to replicate existing (museums, etc) of surrounding. I would advocate for a deeper understanding of context through understanding the socio-political and cultural context of the site and the people who use the building.

3. I think certain infrastructures are “more democratic,” — i.e. a sidewalk anyone can use, a bike lane requires a modest investment, more transits as well. Highways require a car and several people can afford them. We need more infrastructures that touch more people.

4. I really think we do in some sense. It is much more powerful and real to see people together than through mediated technologies.

5. It depends if these bridges are open to everyone or just people in the offices. If they are really exclusive then they disconnect itself. If they are publicly open and any action is allowed in them as you would find in the street then it may not be a big problem.
2.5 LOSING THE CENTER: OPTIMISTIC BIGNESS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

After the Technological Revolution (or Second Industrial Revolution) of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the built environment embodied a scale of unfamiliar proportion. The uncharted territory presented itself to the architectural community and was met with great enthusiasm. Several projects surfaced showcasing theories on how the new era could save the inventions of the past century.

The atmosphere of the subsequent ventures were boldly idealistic: Such ideas centered around literally rebuilding and reordering the cities of the world for maximizing density, short-circuiting travel, and harnessing the apparent boundlessness of industrialized standardization.

Other, more utopian projects disregarded any true spatial center. The historical analysis revealed the importance of a true critical center for the masses to gather. This thesis proposes that the architectural proportions of urban “bigness” contributed to society’s disassociation with any centers of antiquity.

This section explores and analyzes these projects for their individual manifestos. Extracting their innovations and criticisms will funnel into a solution for the urban issues of the 21st century.

“[Architecture] has become dispersed, diffused, distributed across many sites, and finally, virtually present across all sites, until it has achieved complete command, complete interiority, and with it, the fantasised condition of the natural.

This condition is not natural, of course, but acutely artificial: a projection, whose determinations and representations are workings of ideology. This projection does not meet the unknown, the other or the world, but supersedes them, replacing them with its conditions and workings, with its illusions of transparency, naturalness and freedom.”

(Pimlott, 2007)
**The Collective Object**

**Continuous Monument: An Architectural Model for Total Urbanization**

Superstudio

Superstudio’s Life Without Objects and use negative utopia with critical intent. The group intended to illustrate a conviction that a single architectural move across the world could “put cosmic order on earth.” This was imagined as a near-future prediction.

Its pure form is reasoned to abandon all chaos of design and appear the only alternative to nature. Its purity is a byproduct of a “world rendered uniform by technology, culture, and all the other forms of imperialism.” (Lang, 2003)

“The grid is fundamentally a symbol of fabrication – an artificial structure that holds its own determinacy and potentiality.” (Lang, 2003)

**Innovations**
- Embraces progress of modern industry
- Standardization and repetition allows for high accessibility
- Designed for equality and access to light and green space

**Criticisms**
- Urban center is left undefined
- Tabula rasa - built on the ground of demolished cities
- Design drags city into segregated districts

**Ville Radiouse**

Le Corbusier

1924

Ville Radiouse is an urban master plan proposed for a tabula rasa site in one of the European cities. This radical proposal was aligned with the modernist ideals of progress which encouraged annihilation of tradition. (Merin, 2013)

The plan emerged from originating nothing and introduced a utopian concept of zoning, Le Corbusier explained: “The city of today is a dying thing because its planning is not in the proportion of geometrical one fourth. The result of a non-geometrical but in repetition. The result of repetition is standard.”

**Innovations**
- Embraces progress of modern industry
- Standardization and repetition allows for high accessibility

**Criticisms**
- Urban center is left undefined
- Tabula rasa - built on the ground of demolished cities
- Design drags city into segregated districts

**fig 2.5.1**

**fig 2.5.2**

**fig 2.5.3**

**fig 2.5.4**

**fig 2.5.5**
**The Collective Object**

**Competition for the New Administrative Center, Perugia**

**Mario Botta, Luigi Snozzi**

1971

This project proposes a megaform for an administrative center in Italy as documented by Kenneth Frampton in “Megaform as Urban Landscape” (1999). He describes Botta and Snozzi as Ticinese Neo-Rationalists.

A project for the Zurich terminus, the form retraces the line of the Sihl River. The project carries a parking garage which hovers above a rail line. The architecture is unique for a megaform, due to its high sensitivity and performativity to an existing site. By linking the rail and road infrastructure and acting as a palimpsest of a previously-existing topography, this project acts as its own manifesto for the potential of megaform buildings. (Frampton, 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovations</th>
<th>Criticisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embraces progress of modern industry</td>
<td>Lacks a defined spatial center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraces sensibility of urban alienation</td>
<td>Architecture doubles as infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses grid as ordering system for adaptations to site</td>
<td>Repetition lacks intelligibility, urban center is left undefined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No-stop City**

**Archizoom**

1969

No-stop City is an unbuilt project of an infinitely extending interior grid. The interior is envisaged as a liberator to society trapped in alienation. The City flows out with its blankness, its featurelessness allowing us to be anyone anywhere. This was a method of progress defined by the very power which Archizoom critiqued.

The drawings show a continuous grid with short walls, interrupted only by natural features such as trees and mountains. The photographs illustrate the endless and featureless space in which humans live as campers in an artificial world decorated by bits of nature. (Artemel, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovations</th>
<th>Criticisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embraces progress of modern industry</td>
<td>Artificiality is part of design intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraces sensibility of urban alienation</td>
<td>Lack of spatial hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses grid as ordering system for adaptations to site</td>
<td>Repetition lacks intelligibility, urban center is left undefined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Competition for the New Administrative Center, Perugia**

**Merno Botto, Luigi Snozzi**

1971

This project proposes a megaform for an administrative center in Italy, as documented by Kenneth Frampton in ‘Megaform as Urban Landscape’ (1999). He describes Botta and Snozzi as Ticinese Neo-Rationalists.

A project for the Zurich terminus, the form retraces the line of the Sihl River. The project carries a parking garage which hovers above a rail line. The architecture is unique for a megaform, due to its high sensitivity and performativity to an existing site. By linking the rail and road infrastructure and acting as a palimpsest of a previously-existing topography, this project acts as its own manifesto for the potential of megaform buildings. (Frampton, 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovations</th>
<th>Criticisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embraces progress of modern industry</td>
<td>Lacks a defined spatial center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraces sensibility of urban alienation</td>
<td>Architecture doubles as infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses grid as ordering system for adaptations to site</td>
<td>Repetition lacks defined entry point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraces sensibility of urban alienation</td>
<td>Urban scale sensitivity is lacking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No-stop City**

**Archizoom**

1969

No-stop City is an unbuilt project of an infinitely extending interior grid. The interior is envisaged as a liberator to society trapped in alienation. The City flows out with its blankness, its featurelessness allowing us to be anyone anywhere. This was a method of progress defined by the very power which Archizoom critiqued.

The drawings show a continuous grid with short walls, interrupted only by natural features such as trees and mountains. The photographs illustrate the endless and featureless space in which humans live as campers in an artificial world decorated by bits of nature. (Artemel, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovations</th>
<th>Criticisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embraces progress of modern industry</td>
<td>Artificiality is part of design intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraces sensibility of urban alienation</td>
<td>Lack of spatial hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses grid as ordering system for adaptations to site</td>
<td>Repetition lacks intelligibility, urban center is left undefined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Collective Object

In Grid We Trust

The Open Workshop 2011

This proposal is for Manhattan’s future where its characteristic street grid produces an “infrastructure of collective connection while subdividing (and connecting) a plurality of individual identities embodied within architecture and neighborhood districts.”

The grid becomes a “unified collective structure” which connects New York’s urban islands of the future. The grid became a frame for urban rooms and acted as a conduit for moving people and resources. (Bhatia, 2011)

Factory 798
Bernard Tschumi
2004

Factory 798 is an architectural intervention which operates at an urban scale. The site of this project was occupied by an old manufacturing plant from the 1950s. The project contains the underpinnings of Tschumi’s stance on urban transgression. For him, the intervention onto a site with existing systems is one of preservation through transformation. Tschumi advocates for preserving the existing as a layer of participation.

The building is diagrammatically representative of a layer of progress floating above a layer of development. This is to create a dialogue between contrasting conditions. Tschumi creates an architectural infrastructure which operates separately from the land below it. (Tschumi, 2004)

Innovations
- Preserves existing context
- Preserves development with existing construction
- Adaptive reuse of obsolete historic program

Criticisms
- Loss of relationship with ground
- Spatial order is not apparent
- Urban center is left undefined

Factory 798

In-Grid We Trust

The Open Workshop 2011

This proposal is for Manhattan’s future where its characteristic street grid produces an “infrastructure of collective connection while subdividing (and connecting) a plurality of individual identities embodied within architecture and neighborhood districts.”

The grid becomes a “unified collective structure” which connects New York’s urban islands of the future. The grid became a frame for urban rooms and acted as a conduit for moving people and resources. (Bhatia, 2011)

Innovations
- Meets progress of modern industry
- Transcends urban dimensions
- Uses grid as ordering system

Criticisms
- Form is not affected by site context
- Lack of spatial hierarchy
- Urban center is left undefined
- Repetition lacks intelligibility

Innovations
- Preserves existing context
- Preserves development with existing construction
- Adaptive reuse of obsolete historic program

Criticisms
- Loss of relationship with ground
- Spatial order is not apparent
- Urban center is left undefined

In-Grid We Trust

The Open Workshop 2011

This proposal is for Manhattan’s future where its characteristic street grid produces an “infrastructure of collective connection while subdividing (and connecting) a plurality of individual identities embodied within architecture and neighborhood districts.”

The grid becomes a “unified collective structure” which connects New York’s urban islands of the future. The grid became a frame for urban rooms and acted as a conduit for moving people and resources. (Bhatia, 2011)

Innovations
- Meets progress of modern industry
- Transcends urban dimensions
- Uses grid as ordering system

Criticisms
- Form is not affected by site context
- Lack of spatial hierarchy
- Urban center is left undefined
- Repetition lacks intelligibility

Innovations
- Preserves existing context
- Preserves development with existing construction
- Adaptive reuse of obsolete historic program

Criticisms
- Loss of relationship with ground
- Spatial order is not apparent
- Urban center is left undefined

In-Grid We Trust

The Open Workshop 2011

This proposal is for Manhattan’s future where its characteristic street grid produces an “infrastructure of collective connection while subdividing (and connecting) a plurality of individual identities embodied within architecture and neighborhood districts.”

The grid becomes a “unified collective structure” which connects New York’s urban islands of the future. The grid became a frame for urban rooms and acted as a conduit for moving people and resources. (Bhatia, 2011)

Innovations
- Meets progress of modern industry
- Transcends urban dimensions
- Uses grid as ordering system

Criticisms
- Form is not affected by site context
- Lack of spatial hierarchy
- Urban center is left undefined
- Repetition lacks intelligibility

Innovations
- Preserves existing context
- Preserves development with existing construction
- Adaptive reuse of obsolete historic program

Criticisms
- Loss of relationship with ground
- Spatial order is not apparent
- Urban center is left undefined

In-Grid We Trust

The Open Workshop 2011

This proposal is for Manhattan’s future where its characteristic street grid produces an “infrastructure of collective connection while subdividing (and connecting) a plurality of individual identities embodied within architecture and neighborhood districts.”

The grid becomes a “unified collective structure” which connects New York’s urban islands of the future. The grid became a frame for urban rooms and acted as a conduit for moving people and resources. (Bhatia, 2011)

Innovations
- Meets progress of modern industry
- Transcends urban dimensions
- Uses grid as ordering system

Criticisms
- Form is not affected by site context
- Lack of spatial hierarchy
- Urban center is left undefined
- Repetition lacks intelligibility

Innovations
- Preserves existing context
- Preserves development with existing construction
- Adaptive reuse of obsolete historic program

Criticisms
- Loss of relationship with ground
- Spatial order is not apparent
- Urban center is left undefined
Parc de la Villette was an international competition, 1982-83, to redesign an undeveloped plot of land from the national wholesale meat market in Paris, France. The site was a 125-acre expanse of massive proportion amidst a dense urban fabric. It presented the unique opportunity to design one of the last remaining blank slates in Paris.

The competition attracted several noteworthy architects among over 470 submissions. The entries illustrated their individual positions on architecture’s role on the scale of the city.

Among them was the winner, Bernard Tschumi, and Rem Koolhaas. The logic of the two proposals were totally contrasting and exposed their differences in design reason and urban theory.

These case studies provide insight on how two of the 20th century’s most influential architects contended with the programming and design of urban surfaces rather than the enclosed objects of previous era. In this way, the Parc de la Villette competition signaled a radical shift in architecture’s scope of influence.
The Collective Object

 bernard tschumi uses his theory on architecture and event to conceptualize his design entry for parc de la villette. bernard tschumi conceptualized that each individual would experience the park in a unique way. the intent of the design is to induce movement and exploration throughout the park. a layered architectural language of points, lines and surfaces. 35 points, which are defined as architectural 'follies' serve as an organizing element to the field. the individual body is to perceive these in relationship to one another in order to retain a sense of place. (tschumi, 1983)

tschumi's approach is summed up on his website, "la villette could be conceived of as one of the largest buildings ever constructed — a discontinuous building but a single structure nevertheless, overlapping the site's existing features and articulating new activities. it opposes the landscape notion of olmstead, widespread during the 19th century, that 'in the park, the city is not supposed to exist.' the radical idea of designing a social and cultural park contrasts the concept of the other submissions of using the idea of a traditional park at all, including oma's. tschumi's stance that architecture has the capacity to be a cultural/social generator is established especially through his "follies" which exist as empty objects accepting of any program.

the interrupting and intersecting bodies of the three architectural languages illustrate the thesis of tschumi's manhattan transcripts and architecture and disjunction.

the design of the park as a social condenser leaves a design problem in itself. the strips are meant to be a strategy to create maximum permeability between each programmatic band. (omah, 1983)
The Collective Object: EMERGENCE OF EXCLUSIVE ARCHITECTURE

The previous unbuilt projects are insights to the utopian visions brought by the possibilities offered by the Technological Revolution. However, there was an unexpected consequence of the Technological Revolution’s collection with architecture: its built reality embodied a character which defied its intentions.

Society came to realize that these buildings no longer depended on the social classes surrounding them. Endless interiors and “cities-within-cities” meant the possibility of a lifestyle where people could choose to never again interact with the undesirable of the real city.

Victor Gruen’s text, From Centers for the Urban Environment: Survival of the Cities spearheaded this movement. He proposed and eventually built the first American shopping mall. Its intention of creating a place outside of the office and home to escape and gather, were more innocent than its volatile results.

Society came to realize that their buildings no longer depended on the cities which surround them. Endless interiors and “cities-within-cities” meant the possibility of a lifestyle where people could choose to never again interact with the undesirable of the real city.

Victor Gruen’s text, From Centers for the Urban Environment: Survival of the Cities spearheaded this movement. He proposed and eventually built the first American shopping mall. Its intention of creating a place outside of the office and home to escape and gather, were more innocent than its volatile results.

His vision for an architecture conceived primarily with the interior provided a place for the subdivision populous to park, go inside, and dwell in utopian, gay-friendly shopping hub. The exterior would be rendered bland, used only as a shell for the delights of the interior and a backdrop for a sea of parked cars.

Southdale Mall was then built out of this concept in 1952. Windowless, its exterior was no longer the point. However, it proved his concept to be true. The masses of society flocked to these malls and commissions came from all over. Society then pronounced the endless interior as its new collective object.

However, the commercial collective object was unique. It would not gather the masses. One part of society would morph it into a mall: a singular object, into a series of objects, action: a city of objects, networked and tunneled together using the real city as a calming block.

“I am often called the father of the shopping mall. I would like to take this opportunity to disclaim paternity once and for all. I refuse to pay alimony to those bastard developments. They destroyed our cities.”

“Once, a city was divided in two parts. One part became the Good Half, the other part the Bad Half.”

“As so often before in this history of mankind, architecture was the guilty instrument of despair. It is possible to imagine a mirror image of this terrifying architecture, a force as intense and devastating but used instead in the service of positive intentions.

Division, isolation, inequality, aggression, destruction... could be the ingredients of a new phenomenon: architectural warfare against undesirable conditions..."
The Collective Object

A trend of self-interested and disparate architectures affected urban societies with a cultural shift. Where the potential to gather was once the driving force behind humanity’s urbanization, new societal values began to take the opposite effect.

The urban public sphere saw severe disintegration. The real public was displaced. House only by the shady integrity of human infrastructure landscapes of sites and shopping plazas within urban endless interiors held bastardized imitations of what once belonged to the real public sphere. Beyond the conventional boundaries of the city the voids often misleadingly called parks and plazas were fenced in, policed, and locked. They became paper stand-ins for the space required of a real democracy.

Several philosophers and architects of the 20th century reacted to this cultural shift with concern. Chief among them was Kenneth Frampton who wrote on “The Public Realm and the Human Artifice” which stated that “the public space of appearance could still serve not only to house the public realm, but also to represent its reality.”

Frampton quotes the philosophical work of Hannah Arendt who writes, “Power preserves the public realm and the space of appearance, and as such it is also the lifeblood of the human artifice, which, unless it is the scene of action and speech, if the web of human affairs and relationships and the stories engendered by them lacks its ultimate raison d’etre.”
Additionally, Arendt writes that power emerges from "Only where men live so close together that the potentialities for action are always present..." Frampton correlates this observation by stating Robert Venturi's assertion in Complexity and Contradiction is that "the Americans don't need piazzas, since they should be at home watching television." Frampton concludes that these absurd observations emphasize "an urbanized populace who have paradoxically lost the object of their urbanization." The city which once depended on gathering as their source of power has discarded it as mere scaffolding to a new order characteristic of isolation. Frampton quotes Arendt in stating, "Without being talked about by men and without housing them, the world would not be a human artifice but a heap of unrelated things to which each isolated individual was freely to add or subtract objects. The world would be as floating, as futile and vain as the wandering of nomadic tribes." (Frampton, 1982)
The Collective Object

Tschumi’s diagrams serve as an architectural interpretation of Manhattan’s reality. It is an attempt to visualize the relationship between the city and its people. The elements of The Park, The Street, The Tower, and The Block are hosts to a series of dramatic events which unfold as a narrative of intense and unlikely events. (Tschumi, 1994)

Photographs act as witnesses to urban events (or programs) and they are transcribed into diagrams which suggest the choreography of actors on a stage set. Tschumi asserts that events, intensified in the transcripts, are the origin of architecture.

The diagrams are an attempt to illustrate the relationship between objects and events. The theme surrounds a disjunction between use, form and social values.

In his later publication, “Architecture and Disjunction”, Tschumi states, “the disjunction between space and event ... was characteristic of our contemporary condition.” Architecture, then, “could also export its findings into the production of culture.” (Tschumi, 1998)

Tschumi’s assertion is that the event precedes the architecture. It is the assertion of this thesis that architecture is a production of culture, as Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts illustrate, as well as a producer of culture, as Koolhaas’s “Exodus” asserts.

“Exodus” in S. M. L. XL
Rem Koolhaas
1972

The satire of Exodus is a tool to illustrate the inescapable effects of the architecture which defines our cities. The built environment is of greater importance to societal development than what is presented on the surface. The friction of architecture against the city fabric is damaging, transformative and problematic.

In a similar investigative representation to Tschumi, Koolhaas uses collage to create rolls of film – factual and fictional – to develop a narrative of a city’s specific history. Photographs act as witnesses to urban events (or programs) and they are transcribed into diagrams which suggest the choreography of actors on a stage set. Tschumi asserts that events, intensified in the transcripts, are the origin of architecture.

The diagrams are an attempt to illustrate the relationship between objects and events. The theme surrounds a disjunction between use, form and social values.

In his later publication, “Architecture and Disjunction”, Tschumi states, “the disjunction between space and event ... was characteristic of our contemporary condition.” Architecture, then, “could also export its findings into the production of culture.” (Tschumi, 1998)

Tschumi’s assertion is that the event precedes the architecture. It is the assertion of this thesis that architecture is a production of culture, as Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts illustrate, as well as a producer of culture, as Koolhaas’s “Exodus” asserts.

There is no architecture without action, no architecture without event, no architecture without program.

“Exodus” in S. M. L. XL
Rem Koolhaas
1972

The satire of Exodus is a tool to illustrate the inescapable effects of the architecture which defines our cities. The built environment is of greater importance to societal development than what is presented on the surface. The friction of architecture against the city fabric is damaging, transformative and problematic.

In a similar investigative representation to Tschumi, Koolhaas uses collage to create rolls of film – factual and fictional – to develop a narrative of a city’s specific history. Photographs act as witnesses to urban events (or programs) and they are transcribed into diagrams which suggest the choreography of actors on a stage set. Tschumi asserts that events, intensified in the transcripts, are the origin of architecture.

The diagrams are an attempt to illustrate the relationship between objects and events. The theme surrounds a disjunction between use, form and social values.

In his later publication, “Architecture and Disjunction”, Tschumi states, “the disjunction between space and event ... was characteristic of our contemporary condition.” Architecture, then, “could also export its findings into the production of culture.” (Tschumi, 1998)

Tschumi’s assertion is that the event precedes the architecture. It is the assertion of this thesis that architecture is a production of culture, as Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts illustrate, as well as a producer of culture, as Koolhaas’s “Exodus” asserts.

There is no architecture without action, no architecture without event, no architecture without program.

“Exodus” in S. M. L. XL
Rem Koolhaas
1972

The satire of Exodus is a tool to illustrate the inescapable effects of the architecture which defines our cities. The built environment is of greater importance to societal development than what is presented on the surface. The friction of architecture against the city fabric is damaging, transformative and problematic.

In a similar investigative representation to Tschumi, Koolhaas uses collage to create rolls of film – factual and fictional – to develop a narrative of a city’s specific history. Photographs act as witnesses to urban events (or programs) and they are transcribed into diagrams which suggest the choreography of actors on a stage set. Tschumi asserts that events, intensified in the transcripts, are the origin of architecture.

The diagrams are an attempt to illustrate the relationship between objects and events. The theme surrounds a disjunction between use, form and social values.

In his later publication, “Architecture and Disjunction”, Tschumi states, “the disjunction between space and event ... was characteristic of our contemporary condition.” Architecture, then, “could also export its findings into the production of culture.” (Tschumi, 1998)

Tschumi’s assertion is that the event precedes the architecture. It is the assertion of this thesis that architecture is a production of culture, as Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts illustrate, as well as a producer of culture, as Koolhaas’s “Exodus” asserts.

There is no architecture without action, no architecture without event, no architecture without program.

“Exodus” in S. M. L. XL
Rem Koolhaas
1972

The satire of Exodus is a tool to illustrate the inescapable effects of the architecture which defines our cities. The built environment is of greater importance to societal development than what is presented on the surface. The friction of architecture against the city fabric is damaging, transformative and problematic.

In a similar investigative representation to Tschumi, Koolhaas uses collage to create rolls of film – factual and fictional – to develop a narrative of a city’s specific history. Photographs act as witnesses to urban events (or programs) and they are transcribed into diagrams which suggest the choreography of actors on a stage set. Tschumi asserts that events, intensified in the transcripts, are the origin of architecture.

The diagrams are an attempt to illustrate the relationship between objects and events. The theme surrounds a disjunction between use, form and social values.

In his later publication, “Architecture and Disjunction”, Tschumi states, “the disjunction between space and event ... was characteristic of our contemporary condition.” Architecture, then, “could also export its findings into the production of culture.” (Tschumi, 1998)

Tschumi’s assertion is that the event precedes the architecture. It is the assertion of this thesis that architecture is a production of culture, as Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts illustrate, as well as a producer of culture, as Koolhaas’s “Exodus” asserts.

There is no architecture without action, no architecture without event, no architecture without program.

“Exodus” in S. M. L. XL
Rem Koolhaas
1972

The satire of Exodus is a tool to illustrate the inescapable effects of the architecture which defines our cities. The built environment is of greater importance to societal development than what is presented on the surface. The friction of architecture against the city fabric is damaging, transformative and problematic.

In a similar investigative representation to Tschumi, Koolhaas uses collage to create rolls of film – factual and fictional – to develop a narrative of a city’s specific history. Photographs act as witnesses to urban events (or programs) and they are transcribed into diagrams which suggest the choreography of actors on a stage set. Tschumi asserts that events, intensified in the transcripts, are the origin of architecture.

The diagrams are an attempt to illustrate the relationship between objects and events. The theme surrounds a disjunction between use, form and social values.

In his later publication, “Architecture and Disjunction”, Tschumi states, “the disjunction between space and event ... was characteristic of our contemporary condition.” Architecture, then, “could also export its findings into the production of culture.” (Tschumi, 1998)

Tschumi’s assertion is that the event precedes the architecture. It is the assertion of this thesis that architecture is a production of culture, as Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts illustrate, as well as a producer of culture, as Koolhaas’s “Exodus” asserts.

There is no architecture without action, no architecture without event, no architecture without program.
In order to revitalize the gathering potential of the city, this thesis proposes the design of a new collective object. As Koolhaas and Tschumi establish a precedent for the built environment’s negative effects on cultural production, there is substantial evidence that the reverse could also be true.

With the intention of providing a reality and permanence to the power of the masses amidst a city of privatization and separation, the design of a collective object draws on the historic power of urban centers, fueled by the new critical relevance of the current century.
The new institutions of the city will perhaps occur at moments of intensity, linked to the wider network of the urban field, and marked not by demarcating lines but by thickened surfaces.

The points addressed within Allen’s book often overlap with Frampton’s thinking on the city. However, Stan Allen attempts to offer solutions to the issues put forth. Allen asserts that architecture has an infrastructural dimension which it has the responsibility to take full advantage of.

“As Robert Morris has put it, ‘European art since Cubism has been a history of permuting relationships around the general premise that relationships should remain critical.’ Perhaps a more radical shift is required. This is all the more urgent given that, under the pressure of technological or societal shifts, institutions are changing from within. As the social, political, and technical roles of those institutions are called into question, the corresponding typologies that have informed the past are shifting. What once was a place of certainty has been eroded by the onrush of media, consumer culture, and telecommunications. Architecture’s capacity to represent and shelter that collective memory has in turn withered. To design a library or a museum today is to contend with an entirely new set of expectations.”

By forming the institution within a directed field condition connected to the city or landscape, a space is left for the tactical improvisations a future users. A loose fit is proposed between activity and enclosing envelope. More than a family configuration, the field condition allows an architecture that admit change, accident, and improvisation. It is an architecture not invested in durability, stability, and certainty, but an architecture that leaves space for the uncertainty of the real.
The role of architecture in modern society is to act as the mediator of exchange between men and their city. “...the space of public appearance could still serve not only to house the public realm, but also to represent its reality.” (Frampton, The Status of Man and the Status of His Objects, 1982)

“Fueled initially by the thoughtless energy of the purely quantitative, Bigness has been, for nearly a century, a condition almost without thinkers... The impossibility (of Bigness) triggers the autonomy of its parts, which is different from fragmentation: the parts remain committed to the whole.” (Koolhaas, Bigness 1993)

The city is becoming more diverse and this demands design accepting of this plurality. The inability of modern societies to find “common ground” indicated a new form of pluralism but deteriorated “concern for the collective public realm.” (Bhatia, The Infrastructural Space of Appearance, 2005)

“Without a common realm, we are without both certainty and the quality of sameness that bonds us to enable action to transpire. This signals the breakdown of the public sphere.” (Bhatia, The Infrastructural Space of Appearance, 2005)

“Form is an instigator of performances and responses, a frame that suggests rather than fixes, that maps or diagrams possibilities that will be realized only partially one at a time.” (Allen, Points and Lines, 1999)

“Because of the rise of ‘Bigness’ there is no collective left on the exterior of the city. The street becomes residue. ‘Bigness no longer needs the city: it competes with the city; it preempts the city; or better still, it is the city.” (Koolhaas, Bigness 1993)

Because of the rise of “Bigness” there is no collective left on the exterior of the city. The street becomes residue. “Bigness no longer needs the city: it competes with the city; it preempts the city; or better still, it is the city.” (Koolhaas, Bigness 1993)

The city forms underlie the meaning and characteristics of human life. (Rossi, Architecture of the City, 1984)

“The disintegration between space and event was characteristic of our contemporary condition. Architecture then, ‘could also react to its findings into the production of culture.’” (Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, 1994)

“Rowe proposes the concept of ‘resilience’ and contextivism as a compromising theory. Urban context softens the ideal form. Rather than ‘hoping and waiting for the weather away of the object’ it might be judicious, in most cases, to allow and encourage the object to become digested in a prevalent texture or matrix.” (Rowe and Koetter, Collage City, 1978)

Rowe proposes the concept of “resilience” and contextivism as a compromising theory. Urban context softens the ideal form. Rather than “hoping and waiting for the weather away of the object,” it might be judicious, in most cases, to allow and encourage the object to become digested in a prevalent texture or matrix.” (Rowe and Koetter, Collage City, 1978)

“Toward initially by the thoughtless energy of the purely quantitative, Bigness has been, for nearly a century, a condition almost without thinkers... The impossibility (of Bigness) triggers the autonomy of its parts, which is different from fragmentation: the parts remain committed to the whole.” (Koolhaas, Bigness 1993)

“Because of the rise of ‘Bigness’ there is no collective left on the exterior of the city. The street becomes residue. ‘Bigness no longer needs the city: it competes with the city; it preempts the city; or better still, it is the city.” (Koolhaas, Bigness 1993)

“The disintegration between space and event was characteristic of our contemporary condition. Architecture then, ‘could also react to its findings into the production of culture.’” (Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, 1994)

“Form is an instigator of performances and responses, a frame that suggests rather than fixes, that maps or diagrams possibilities that will be realized only partially one at a time.” (Allen, Points and Lines, 1999)

The city forms underlie the meaning and characteristics of human life. (Rossi, Architecture of the City, 1984)

“The urban artifact has a formal structure that confirms the presence of the city. The form of urban artifacts ‘is available to understand the city in its totality.” (Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, 1994)

“Regenerating the collective sphere requires a negotiation between the ideal form and urban context.” (Rossi, Architecture of the City, 1984)
Atlanta has what Rem Koolhaas describes as “intensity without physical density” (1994). It embodies a certain formlessness and holds its foci on its periphery— if it is determined to have any foci at all—is a problem of the postmodern city.

Koolhaas states that Atlanta was the exception during an era when urban downtown cores were in crisis (1994). He calls Atlanta’s recovery an “American Renaissance” where John Portman plays developer. The uninhibited architect-developer subsequently interiorized the urban core of Atlanta through a string of sky bridge connections between his own buildings. The interiorized city propagated globally with the invention of the atrium, an outside condition turned hermetically-perfect interior. This predominant architectural condition divorces its urban fabric.

A web of competing autonomous architectures define the new urban condition. The new urban condition is devoid of any relationship with its context. The societal conditions that grizzly morphed in Atlanta grudgingly paved the way for a city that could go anywhere. The rise of post-modern and braced spread interiorized its own dimensions as potential.

There were no need for the urban core: Its people could go anywhere. “Downtown has become anywhere” (Koolhaas, 1994).

The United Nations published that by 2050, 66 percent of the world’s population will live in cities. Their projections reveal that urbanization combined with the overall growth of the world’s population could add another 2.5 billion people to urban populations by 2050. Atlanta is one of the fastest growing cities in the nation.

According to the Urban Institute, by 2030, it will see one of the highest population growths of 10 percent and 10 percent population growth. This report from the University of Nevada said the U.S. essentially health; learn how to build cities a second time. (Urban Institute, 2014)
This diagram is deceitful in that it does not regard how public these spaces truly are. With the rise of "privately-owned public space," what may be deemed as open space is often fenced-in and privately controlled.

Each dot represents a building with public and democratic programs. The majority of these points are libraries, as the last remaining vestiges of truly public architecture.

Atlanta Central Library as an example of a "collector object" to gather the masses and unify the city.

Privately-owned public spaces are not truly public. Access can be denied, which thereby denies people the right to public appearance.
This analysis reveals a programmatic deficiency for civic space in Atlanta. A closer look also shows that the civic spaces of the city exist within one region in the downtown core. This is where the capital, government offices, and political spaces are found.

The highways displayed as arterial behave in the opposite manner. Although providing distant connections across the periphery of Atlanta, these macro arteries are analyzed as critical 'fault lines' between fragmented pieces of the city. Highways which act as physical dividers also hold the potential to unify. Infrastructure acting as public right of way has the capability to become right of way for people, not only automobiles.
“To secure that they (centres) shall be genuine centres where people will be likely to congregate, they must either be themselves the focal points of the main traffic lines...”
The site for implementation is ideally set within the urban core. The characteristics of the urban core hold the issues this thesis aims to address. This includes transit as a primary method of inclusive placement and diversity of populace and population growth when paired with urban isolation. The site may also be adjacent to an existing community infrastructure as a method of reinforcement or addition.

A site potential best aligns the conditions present within Atlanta. It is an exemplary testing ground as a means of repopulation of the urban core, of diversity, and an example of urban centers which do not presently encourage interaction.
The selection of the Georgia Capitol site at the “point of convergence”, referenced in the last section, alludes to Raymond Unwin’s text stating that town centers should occur at the focal points of main traffic lines. This thesis also stands as a critique of modern traffic lines, where the context is a stark contrast to the urban fabric of Unwin’s 1909 text. The contemporary traffic line acts as an edge rather than a focal point. Its utility has become its only function.

The placement of a node over the highway returns validity to Unwin’s decades-old concept of town centers. In terms of land use and zoning, the contemporary highway still stands as a public shared space and right of way. However, its design allows no access for congregation. This project reclaims the air rights as a public right of way, designed for public accessibility.
The Collective Objective

PARKS + PLAZAS

- Hurt Park
- Georgia Plaza Park
- Park
- Liberty Plaza
- Future Greenway (proposed via LCI)

AMENITIES

- Government
- Business
- Retail
- Religious
- Education
- Hospital

Site Photographs
Adjacent context and infrastructure

1. Site Plan (Future LCI + Phase)
2. 52,800 SF / 446 units / 265 ksf / 4.1 acres
3. Mixed-Use / 52,000 SQF Commercial
4. 32,000 SF Parking + 420 Spaces
5. Phase 1 / Phase 2

Site Analysis
Local Information

Laura Sherma

Hurt Park
Georgia Plaza Park
Park
Liberty Plaza
Future Greenway (proposed via LCI)

Government
Business
Retail
Religious
Education
Hospital

6. Site Plan (Future LCI + Phase)
7. 52,800 SF / 446 units / 265 ksf / 4.1 acres
8. Mixed-Use / 52,000 SQF Commercial
9. 32,000 SF Parking + 420 Spaces
10. Phase 1 / Phase 2
Strategic Intensification of Collective Design moves generated by site

The network of sky bridges which frame the site lead to a network of multi-level parking decks. The odd array of tubes stem out from the Twin Towers State Building which houses a MARTA transit station.

SPILL and remove sky bridges as tools for exclusion. Allow city life to intermingle.

Elevated walkways (sky bridges)

OPEN dialogue with government centers through contextual relationships.

CONNECT disjointed urban islands by constructing activated spatial continuity.

The network of sky bridges which frame the site lead to a network of multi-level parking decks. The odd array of tubes stem out from the Twin Towers State Building which houses a MARTA transit station.

The collective object

Strategic Intensification of Collective Design moves generated by site

The network of sky bridges which frame the site lead to a network of multi-level parking decks. The odd array of tubes stem out from the Twin Towers State Building which houses a MARTA transit station.

SPILL and remove sky bridges as tools for exclusion. Allow city life to intermingle.

Elevated walkways (sky bridges)

OPEN dialogue with government centers through contextual relationships.

CONNECT disjointed urban islands by constructing activated spatial continuity.
Early Design Process

Forms generated as a site response

PART DEVELOPMENT

Initial response forms axis from capital and creates node at point of shifting axis.

MLK Jr. Drive is considered as an extension of ground.

Axis is reconsidered to have greater hierarchy to proposed greenway versus the capital.

Final design incorporates both axes. The major axis as the greenway and minor axis as the capital are hybridized.

Initial response forms axis from capital and creates node at point of shifting axis.

MLK Jr. Drive is considered as an extension of ground.

Axis is reconsidered to have greater hierarchy to proposed greenway versus the capital.

Final design incorporates both axes. The major axis as the greenway and minor axis as the capital are hybridized.

Initial response forms axis from capital and creates node at point of shifting axis.

MLK Jr. Drive is considered as an extension of ground.

Axis is reconsidered to have greater hierarchy to proposed greenway versus the capital.

Final design incorporates both axes. The major axis as the greenway and minor axis as the capital are hybridized.

Initial response forms axis from capital and creates node at point of shifting axis.

MLK Jr. Drive is considered as an extension of ground.

Axis is reconsidered to have greater hierarchy to proposed greenway versus the capital.

Final design incorporates both axes. The major axis as the greenway and minor axis as the capital are hybridized.
Valued programs centering around collective activity will be used to enforce the concepts presented by this thesis. A new quality of space can be derived from precedents of public institutions. Understanding that the activation of the collective object is an "in-between" condition, the precedent of the plaza becomes paramount where the collision and interaction of secondary programs are critical to the success of the proposed internalized plaza. 

Programming
Translating Societal Values Into Space
The challenges of the design process grappled with incorporating various formations of public space. The design iterations intended to find where these spatial arrangements were most appropriate to form environments of collectivism. Where architecture as landmark and space-definer characterized collective objects throughout history, they must now find some updated relationship to an urban contemporary context where architecture as landscape, object, and city hold the most prominent forms.

The Collective Object

Laura Sherman

Form-Finding Process

External Building Core: Structure, Mechanical, Egress

Street Activity

Programs for MLK Jr. Drive

Projection screen for civic interaction

Internal Plaza

Deployable Civic Infrastructure

Energy storage for deployable units (Water, Solar, Waste)

Research Genealogy / Incorporation

Feeding Research Into Final Design

Architecture as landmark

Architecture as space-definer

Architecture as landscape

Architecture as object

Architecture as city

Early Design Ideas

Feeding Process
The Collective Object

Program

01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10

SHELTER PARKING
ACCESS TO BUILDING SYSTEMS
ENERGY STORAGE
DATA SERVERS
CIRCULATION/CORE
VERTICAL INNER PLAZA
INTERNALIZED STREET
CAFES
RETAIL
CLASSROOMS
SMALL MUSEUM DISPLAYS
RESOURCE LIBRARIES
NORTH/SOUTH TOWER LOBBIES
MIXED-INCOME/HOMELESS HOUSING
COMMUNAL KITCHEN
FOOD BANK
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
COMMUNITY MEETING ROOMS
WORKSHOP LABS
MAKER SPACES
OFFICES
AUDITORIUM
DEPLOYABLE ACTIVATORS
STUDIOS
NEWS AND RADIO
VERTICAL PARK

The lowest level of the building functions as a "battery" to store energy, water and parking within the space of public refuge. Parking Garage and building storage use the darkest area of the site. Wasted space between columns is used for automobiles.
The Collective Object

1. Exterior Walkway
2. Men’s Restroom
3. Women’s Restroom
4. Double Egress
5. Classrooms
6. Elevators

Floor Plans
5th Floor Plan

5th Floor Plan Core Detail
The Collective Object

01 Plaza
02 Walkways
03 Auditorium D
04 Auditorium E
05 Elevator Core
06 Proposed Ext. axis unobstructed street through building
07 Retail, Business
08 Cafe, Lounge
09 Escalators to North and South
10 Street
11 Greenvay
Spatial Tensions of Elevator – Auditorium and Deployable Activators
Object’s Spatial Dialogues are Transformed via Kinetic Elements

Deployable Activator Functions
“Follies” redefined as tools for collective expression

Greenway: Object as receiver
Internal: Object as activator
Between: Object as exchanger
Deployed: Object borrowed by city
Auditorium in up position: Protection of demonstrators
Auditorium in down position: Public Access

Deployable Activator as podium
Deployable Activator as screen projection during event
Deployable Activator as blockade during protest

Laura Sherma
The building’s functionality takes from its ability to protect and provide a platform for the people of the city. Its adjacency to the capital and significance being the terminus of the proposed greenway gives ample voice and appearance when collective opposition is required.

“The role of architecture in modern society is to act as the mediator of exchange between men and their city... the space of public appearance could still serve not only to house the public realm, but also to represent its reality.” (Frampton, 1982)
“What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, or at least not primarily, but the fact that the world between has lost its power to gather them together…”

(Frampton, 1982)
This section depicts an art expo as an example of day-to-day life unfolding. Having a continuous program to activate the collective object outside of the life of an urban event further protects its permanence and urban use.

This is collective space in an era of “Bigness”. Its implementation should not deny the urban spatial reality and technology from which the issues of bigness stemmed. As bigness is able to hold larger capacities of people, the collective object becomes more critical as a truly public node amidst the masses. **It stands as a permanent frame of action, discourse and event.** The collective object is an opportunity to revitalize the gathering potentials of the city. Within a rapidly-growing urban fabric of exclusion, **we must work towards a culture of inclusion.**
South Section AA
Section Cut Through “Thin” North Tower Revealing Spatial Hierarchy
The Collective Objective

Diagonal West Section BB
Section Cut Through Capitol - Oriented Axis as Significant Adjacency
West Elevation
View of Hollow Collective Platform as Terminus of Greenway

East Elevation
Drawing of Dynamic Mid-Level Ramped Surfaces
Urban Axonometric
Macro Diagram of Urban Scope and Influence
"As our cities become increasingly fragmented and pluralistic, the complete separation of society is a fundamental threat to our public realm and the reality and certainty that it provides."
Architecture as frame of collective space

Thin Bar (one-sided urban edge)
Thick Bar (two-sided urban edge)

Proposed access pathways to mend disconnection

Views frame capitol and greenway as major axes

Cuts through volume provide access, views and interaction

Ground Access with urban edges

Disconnections in the urban field

Diagramming Gestural Design Moves

Design Diagrams
“Without a common realm, we are without both certainty and the quality of sameness that bonds us to enable action to transpire. This signals the breakdown of the public sphere.”

(Bhatia, 2007)
CRITICAL RESPONSE TO DESIGN THEOREM
The Collective Object

At some point, society must come to the realization that the very origin of humanity’s urbanization began with one purpose: to gather. Today’s built environment has honed and conditioned itself into competing entities which actively invest in their own separation. Autonomy has become the prevailing urban typology. This is as unsustainable as it is troublesome. With the world’s population growing exponentially, our buildings are bigger, denser and invest to compete for the affections of those who can afford them.

The issue ultimately lies where although our cities are more capable of holding our individual quantities, they are less capable of hosting our collective society. Without a collective object, civilization has lost its physical reality. There is no real community. There is no mediator between man and society.

This project presents an opportunity to realize collective space in an era of “Bigness”. It is first defined by the city and then defines the city. Instead of reformatting the urban design structure to solve an urban problem, I analyzed the formations of the cities from which ours were derived. There was a gap found in the approaches taken by many architects of this century. This thesis proposes a return to the collective object that once drove humanity’s urbanization collaged with the urban condition of “Bigness” which defines the contemporary city. The intention is that this solution will restore the collective object to the masses.

Conclusions

5.2

Laura Sherma

The solution of this thesis is presented in the form of an architectural proposal. In the process of coming to a design project as the best means of proposing a solution, there was a back-and-forth debate between an urban design proposal and a building proposal. The end result seems to straddle somewhere in-between.

Reflecting on the Parc de la Villette case studies, architects of the last century appears to have a growing claim on the territory of urban design. Perhaps we were entirely too slow coming into this realm and perhaps too much of architectural practice has not arrived at that conclusion yet.

When a building is placed among others, it is immediately dependent on context for success. It is determined by its paranoiac, symbiotic, or otherwise entirely coded into its design. Its ability to be thoughtful of these qualities is the responsibility the profession of architecture.

Upon presentation of this thesis to a panel of jurors, I was asked if the collective object had already been determined by society, if our high demand and use of commercial spaces meant that our gathering object could be the commercial spaces I meant to critique.

However, I concluded, with the aid of Neeraj Bhatia’s writings, that the places owned and operated by commercial interest cannot be truly collective because they are not truly public. The cities of today are simultaneously places of public and private. Diverse, privatized spaces are at constant odds with the masses. This is why at least some portion of our built environment must provide the public realm. If the city is increasingly interiorized and the interior is increasingly privatized, at what point does the public realm become residue?
The Collective Object

*Awarded 1st Place in Kennesaw State University Thesis Competition 2017*

A FINAL THESIS PRESENTATION BOARDS
BIBLIOGRAPHY


BiblioTHEQUE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Company.


villette


Figure 2.5.15 Ibid

Figure 2.5.14 In Grid We Trust | The Open Workshop. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.ingridwetrust.org/in-grid-we-trust/

Figure 2.5.13 Ibid

Figure 2.5.12 Factory 798 Rendering. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.tschumi.com/media/files/01635.jpg

Figure 2.5.11 Ibid

Figure 2.5.10 Tschumi, B. (1994). The Manhattan Transcripts (2 edition). Sasso Marconi (BO) Italy: Wiley.


Figure 2.5.8 Ibid


Figure 2.5.6 Retrospective: Archizoom And No-Stop City - Architizer. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.architizer.com/blog/archizoom-retrospective/.

Figure 2.5.5 Ibid

Figure 2.5.4 Ibid


Figure 2.5.2 Ibid

Figure 2.5.1 AD Classics: Ville Radieuse / Le Corbusier. (2013, August 10). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.archdaily.com/411878/


Figure 2.4.8 Tschumi, B. (n.d.). Factory 798. Retrieved May 01, 2017, from http://www.tschumi.com/projects/20/


Figure 2.4.5 Tschumi, B. (1994). The Manhattan transcripts: theoretical projects. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

Figure 2.4.4 Giambattista Nolli’s Map of Rome. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/maps/nolli_06.jpg

Figure 2.4.3 Existing Slaughterhouse before Parc de la Villette. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://thetouristinparis.com/paris/

Figure 2.4.2 Accueil. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.villette.com/

Figure 2.4.1 Tschumi’s site plan of Parc de la Villette. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.tschumi.com/media/files/01635.jpg

Figure 2.3.7 Pimlott, M. (2007). Without And Within. Rotterdam: Episode Publishers.

Figure 2.3.6 Bhatia, N. (2005). THE INFRASTRUCTURAL SPACE OF APPEARANCE: New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Figure 2.3.5 Allen, S. (1999). Points and Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City (1 edition). New York: Pearson.


Figure 2.3.3 Gruen, V . (1973). Centres for Urban Environment. Van Nost. Reinhold.


Figure 2.3.1 AD Classics: Ville Radieuse / Le Corbusier. (2013, August 10). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.archdaily.com/411878/

Figure 2.2.4 Giambattista Nolli’s Map of Rome. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/maps/nolli_06.jpg

Figure 2.2.3 Existing Slaughterhouse before Parc de la Villette. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://thetouristinparis.com/paris/

Figure 2.2.2 Bacon, E. N. (1978). Design of Cities (New Ed edition). London: Thames & Hudson.


Figure 2.1.9 Frampton, K. (1982). Modern architecture and the critical present. NY: Architectural Design.


Figure 2.1.6 Tschumi, B. (1994). The Manhattan transcripts: theoretical projects. New York: St. Martin’s Press.


Figure 2.1.4 Tschumi, B. (1994). The Manhattan transcripts: theoretical projects. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

Figure 2.1.3 Existing Slaughterhouse before Parc de la Villette. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://thetouristinparis.com/paris/

Figure 2.1.2 Arbor: Agora. Retrieved May 02, 2017, from http://www.ancient.eu/Agora

Figure 2.1.1 AD Classics: Ville Radieuse / Le Corbusier. (2013, August 10). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from http://www.archdaily.com/411878/