OBSOLESCENCE

URBAN

magazine

from the
EDITORS

In light of the rapid pace of change that technology has spurred, it is not unreasonable to wonder how much of what we do today, in the field of planning and beyond, will be rendered obsolete tomorrow. Climate change threatens our very ways of existing--and as a result-- sets the stage for the emergence of new paradigms, and new ways of being. While how we once lived, worked, and cohabited may no longer hold the same relevance today as they once did, we are forced to adapt to this new normal or be pressured into obsolescence.

Thus, we present our dichotomous themes for the magazine. Just as we view the falling red, orange and ochre leaves with a pang of nostalgia, we must learn to let go of old ways of being that no longer serve our best interests. Then in the Spring, our faith is rewarded with the fresh vitality of new blooms, and the emergence of new ways of being. And so, we present the themes for our 2019-2020 issues, "Obsolescence" for the Fall and "Emergence" for the Spring.

We the senior editors of Urban magazine would like to give a hearty thanks to the junior editors and all of the contributors to the magazine. The efforts of the entire team are what make this magazine truly special, and on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the magazine, it is truly worthwhile to acknowledge the efforts of all of the contributors to the magazine thus far. In addition to Urban Planning, this edition sees contributions from departments across GSAPP, reflecting the pedagogy of planning as deeply rooted in collaboration and in the democratic exchange of ideas.

We now invite you to engage in the final step in this process, by actively reading, interpreting, and discussing the content that fills the following pages. We hope that the themes will spark your curiosity, provoke thought, and perhaps even spur a willingness to act.

URBAN's Senior Editors,

Conor, Maya and Kirthana

Detroit
Source: Conor Allerton

from the
FIRST EDITOR

"Where will you be in the 21st Century?" In the inaugural edition of *URBAN* in March 1999, we had a lot of questions about the future of New York, such as: Would mundane interests or big vision determine the future of Governor's Island? How would redevelopment of the Brooklyn Navy Yard meet job creation goals while limiting the effects of gentrification? Could preservationists save the architecturally significant Coogan Building in Chelsea?

Twenty years later, in 2019, we have some answers to those questions; more precisely, GSAPP MSUP alumni have helped shape the results.

Governors Island is being transformed into extraordinary parks and public spaces by a Master Plan for 87 of its 172-acres. The President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island is now Clare Newman (MSUP 2007 and former *URBAN* editor).

The Brooklyn Navy Yard also has a Master Plan, envisioning 30,000 jobs in the Yard by 2030. Today, Abdo Allam (MSRED 2014) is VP of Development. Steiner Studios, founded in 2003, occupies the eastern portion of the Yard, bringing thousands of persons employed in the film and tv industry to Clinton Hill. Steiner's real estate development affiliate, helmed by Juliet Cullen Cheung (MSUP 2002), recently opened a shopping center on the other side of the Yard, with Wegmans as its anchor tenant. Wegmans hired nearly half of their employees locally and is the first major supermarket in the neighborhood which includes multiple NYCHA complexes.

The Coogan Building was ultimately torn down and replaced by a residential rental tower, the Capitol at Chelsea, in 2001. It was renovated in 2018 by S9 Architecture which employs no less than four architects who graduated from GSAPP according to LinkedIn. S9 also coincidentally designed the new 16-story Dock72 at the Navy Yard which is expected to bring 4,000 jobs to the Yard.

URBAN was initially created in 1999 as a student run and written newsletter to foster connections between Columbia planning students, alumni, faculty, other urban planners, and professionals in related fields. Over twenty years, *URBAN* has thrived and evolved in the hands of each new editorial staff and class of students.

To survey the past 20 years of issues is to witness a complex history. Each edition's theme is enveloped in its specific context, reflecting not only the student body but also the world.

In 2001, after the attack on the World Trade Center, the theme was globalization, touching on New York's recovery and reconstruction, its position as a global city, and providing a venue for collective mourning and contemplation.

The focus of the Spring 2006 issue was Megaprojects. At the time, several large-scale projects were under consideration or in development worldwide, including Palm Jumeirah in Dubai, post-Katrina reconstruction in Louisiana, and multiple New York projects including Atlantic Yards, the High Line, and the World Trade Center Transportation Hub.

More recent editions have covered themes from spatial justice to tourism. How will these issues be documented in *URBAN* over the next 20 years? What issues and strategies will be relevant or obsolete? How will GSAPP graduates participate in the process?

I am simultaneously proud and humbled to wish *URBAN* a happy birthday. Every group of writers, editors, advisors, and supporters who have fostered its growth through the past 20 years deserves kudos, with a special thank you to Elliott Sclar and the first *URBAN* staff and alumni who supported it during its formative years.

Happy 20th Birthday *URBAN MAGAZINE*! Keep up the amazing work!

Sincerely,

Fernando G. DeGuia, Jr. (AICP; MSUP 2002)
Founder
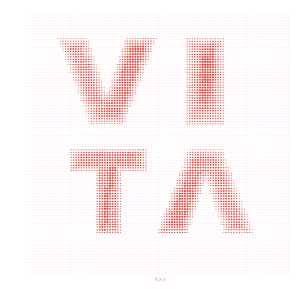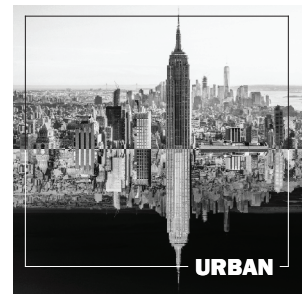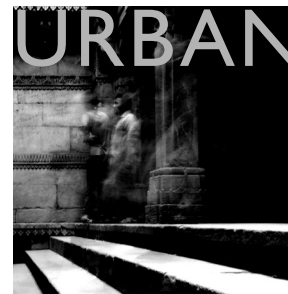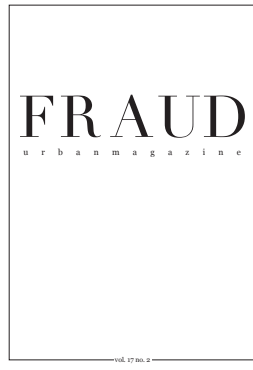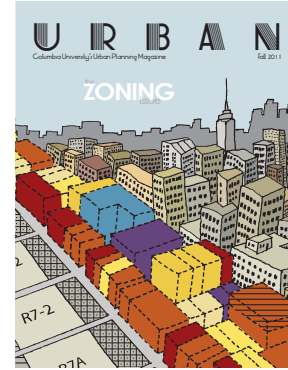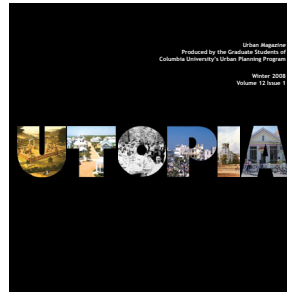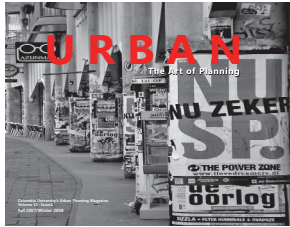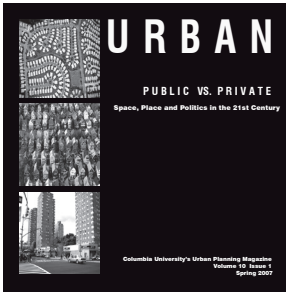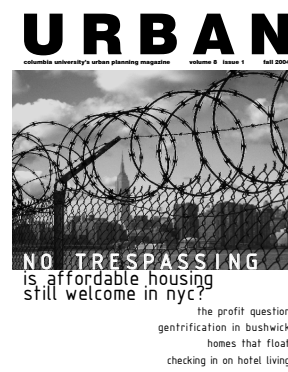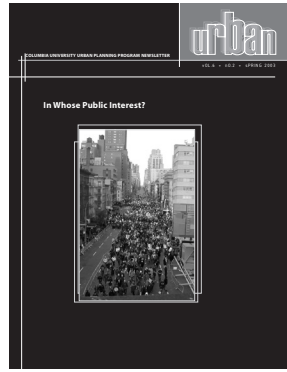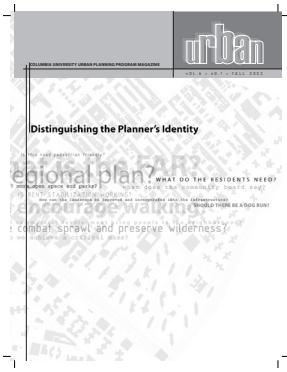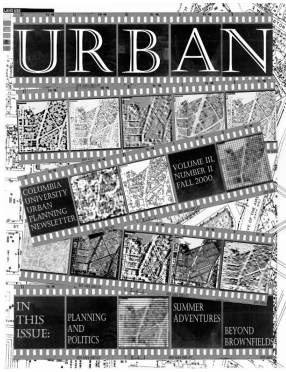
landscapes of
ANXIETY

Candelaria Mas Pohmajevic

ecology: from Greek oikos 'house' + -logy.

Ephemeral reality
of unstable ecology.
An atrocious anxiety emerged–
unconscious. Or is it conscious?

Humans burning fires
and extracting disproportionately.
Between the world and our bodies
exist snapshots of distortion.

This brutal banality
has weakened our emotions.
It has shaped our own fears,
our own ruthless tortures.

Impermanent beings
in the forest of storms
have vanished nature's variance,
and taken its toll.

The evergreen winters
the very dry soils
are so conspicuous, so dramatic.
There's no room for us all…

Hopeless spirit of my own.
Is it madness?
…
Shed some light into this hole,
fight them back,
the climate throes.

6 cm

Ibrahim Kombarji

Walking around the Beirut seashore is probably the ideal way of initiating an understanding of the city. Earlier this month, thousands of Lebanese formed a 'human chain' running from South to North, denoting the revival of a national unity. The 'Environment Law no. 444', issued in 2002, declares the 'right of every Lebanese citizen to free and open access to the seashore.' I started my walks with the help and constant encouragement of Professor Hiba Bou Akar, and this is when I better understood the impossibility of this law. Through simple calculation, each inhabitant has the right to 6 centimeters (6cm) of linear sea space in Lebanon. This essay reflects on our use of these 6cm.

four walks towards the sea
Source: Author

Some sites are rare by the qualities they offer. The contested maritime façade of Raouche exemplifies scarcity as a constraint. For more than five million Lebanese, 230 km of linear Mediterranean shoreline is quantitatively little. It allocates 6 cm to each inhabitant. A '*petit café*' sign, a chunk of the *Pigeon Rock*, a set of inaccessible staircases and a two-meter high concrete fence are four moments I face when attempting a walk from *Arslan* street towards the shore. Living two streets away from the immensity of the sea does not condition a fluid experience of Beirut's waterfront. I kept Plautus's maxim in mind: 'by following the river, we arrive at the sea'. In Beirut, these rivers are streets. I followed four of them towards the sea. These urban experiences reflect the neighborhood. *Raouche* is located in *Ras Beirut*, boarded by *Manara*, *Koraytem* and *Ain el Tineh* areas.

My first walk took me from *Chatila* street to the main *De Gaulle* seafront road. Two urban communities overlap in this 200-meter radius. *De Gaulle* is composed of networks of people circulating around the *Pigeon Rock* monument. It is shaped by a series of hotels and furnished apartments that face each other (Duroy Hotel, *Raouche Tower and Raouche Suites*). These hotels mostly serve Iraqi and Syrian tourists and refugees. On the first floors, a series of restaurants '*proudly*' advertise the catering of Arabic cuisine. They present their dishes on menus, banners and billboards as 'traditional Iraqi daily dish' or 'delicious Arabic cuisine'. On this same street, Iraqi, Syrian and Khaleeji dialects resound, creating a unique social collage. By experiencing these dialects, one experiences the neighborhood. They alter the urban fabric and social identity of the neighborhood, forming a network of identities. The Beiruti inhabitants and passer-by form a second network. The residential buildings furthest from the sea, are typically eight-floors or higher. Local services, such as hairdressers (e.g. Khamis Salon) occupy their ground floors. When approaching the seafront, the sea-facing high-rise towers become noticeable. Their ground floors showcase banks (e.g., *Blom Bank Raouche*), pharmacies (e.g., *Pharma+*) and food chains (e.g., *Starbucks-Hallab*) open to tourists and a particular Lebanese clientele. These networks operate within the same urban space, inevitably creating dichotomic *zones*. They produce clusters
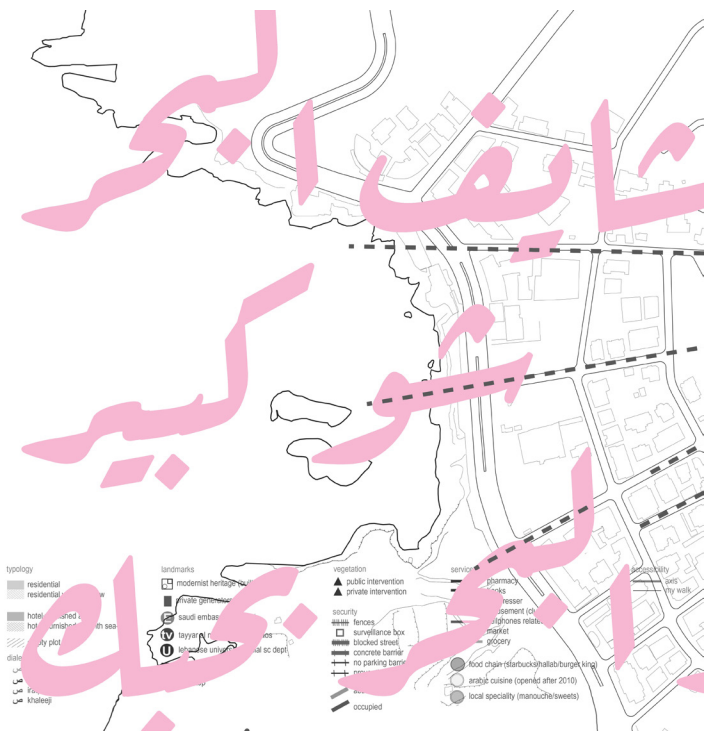
and social barriers revealing the contrasts between tourists and refugees on one hand and local or visiting Beiruti's, on the other. Each network conceives views about the other. Ali[1] explains how night-time clienteles -mostly 'couples on a romantic date' or 'groups of young people'- mask his 6 cm. People come to the *Pigeon Rock*, spending only a short time in front of the view. Since there is no real *space* to accommodate visitors, they tend to flock to surrounding cafés.
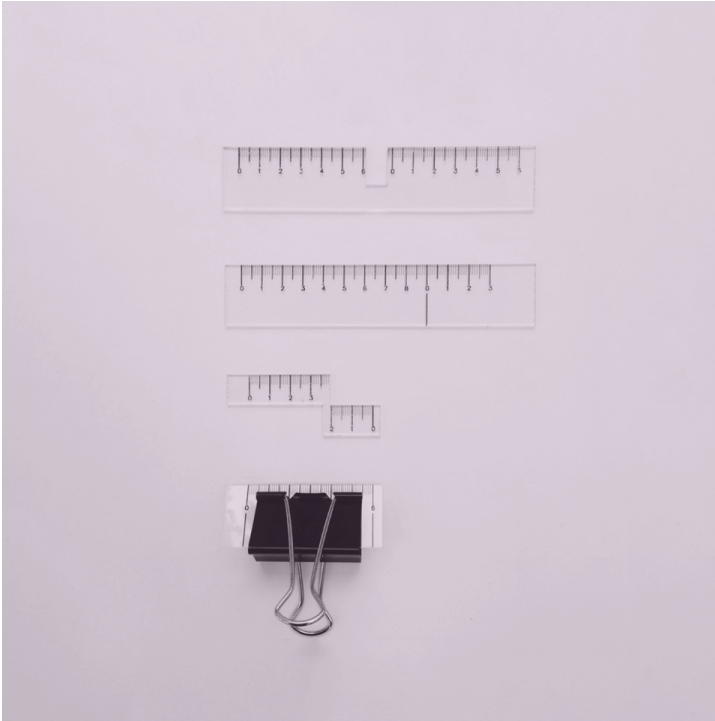
four embodied rivers
Source: Author

Moreover, the networks are physically divided, the highway's central infrastructure enacting both intersection and division. It is used by large buses carrying refugees directly from Syria to the hotels. Abu Khaled [2], a taxi driver, complains about them: 'these Syrian refugees are taking our space'. He is left without a 'single centimeter' of his linear measure per capita. Meanwhile, a Syrian tourist [3] denounces the insufficiency of these 6cm claiming there should be more. He came to the area because he never had a sea view in his hometown. Each network formulates an opinion about the other. At times, urban spatialities overlap. The *river* is segmented due to the coastline's presence, creating the distinction between the Beiruti neighborhood- offering a polished urban experience facing the sea- and prevalent leisure-oriented sector. This creates a sort of *segregation*, where venues produce subtle invisible *barriers*, restricting sea access for everyone.

My second walk took me from *Haykal* street to the main *De Gaulle* seafront road. The road is highly surveilled, due to its proximity to the previous Saudi embassy, the private home of a minister, the abandoned *Tayyar al Mustaqbal* TV studios, and the Hariri Palace. The *Tayyar al Mustaqbal* leaders control this portion of *Raouche*. Fences and checkpoints are deployed limiting people's mobility[4]. The '*petit café*', with its prime location overlooking the rare cliff-side lands facing the sea, does not escape this Hariri hegemony. It is symptomatic of an elite's supremacy over space. The café's operation within such systems is dictated by restricting both the 'type' of people that can use the space and the 'way' the place is utilized[5]. This appropriation 'constructs the image'[6] of our city. The *Tayyar al Mustaqbal* leaders build the discourse and rewrite our History through a 'constructed reality'[7]. Private actors -that also constitute the public *sector*- supervise and participate in the area's planning[8]. The informal privatization of the 'petit café', occurred after the civil war, reorganizing the production of the built environment surrounding the seashore. Today, it remains under the control of a political and financial elite, who take advantage of the 'unclear understanding' [9] of private/public ownership and subvert legal frameworks. The encroachment of this private exploitation of plots consequently leads to limiting public access to the sea. Property 'empowers and fosters' [10] these elites. What remains today of such actions and still governs the relationship of people to their seafront is the 'normalization' [11] of such practices. It is no longer seen as a problematic issue for a part of the population that supports these leaders. Also, even if such processes are deplored by many, none aspire to take actions. Abu Hassan [12], a man in his seventies who spends most of his day playing cards with friends on a bench facing the Pigeon Rock, states: 'I do not accept what Hariri is doing, these thieves are stealing our sea. I hate it…but what can I do? I have a friend who had to leave Dalieh because of this, because of what the Hariris did.' The owners of the petit café installed a series of posters congratulating the prime minister and a series of Lebanese flags. This clear political affiliation normalizes and reinforces the control of the *Tayyar al Mustaqbal* leaders on the area. Slogans and flattering images participate in legitimizing these leaders in the eyes of some.'

This clear political presence is also an indication of a prevailing Sunni community living in the area. The '*petit café*' is located in zone 10, segment III [13]. It is noteworthy to contextualize the café within the district laws. The informal encroachment of land occurred under a law seemingly tailored to satisfy those leaders. It permits rebuilding the previous existing café under the sole condition that the façade 'maintains the open natural landscape'. This segment of the law has been openly the café's owners. Today, the façade is composed of floor to ceiling glass and uses a series of vertical concrete elements to maintain 'the open natural landscape'. Technically, the law has been respected, but as Mohamad[14], a Beiruti living in the area, explains: 'this is ridiculous, these governments take what they want, and what works for them does not work for the people'. Jihad, a construction worker, quit his job not wanting to be part of such a project. He argues that these spaces should not be associated with a monetary value. This raises questions around the indexation of space to an 'exchange value' in the Marxist form and participates in framing our shore as a space where 'use value' should be considered instead. This *river* is shaped by an elite that encroaches onto public spaces.

Alia with her 6cm
Source: Author

My third walk attempted to lead me from *Azar* street to the main *De Gaulle* seafront road. There I discovered a staircase offering direct access to the sea, located between a modernist building, the *Shell Building*- built in 1959 by architects Makdissi, Adib and Schayer- and the Sea 2030 high-rise tower. These two adjacent buildings, constructed almost fifty years apart, embody the aspiration to modernity, with their seafront building typologies and the way the architects dealt with the interstice between highway and sea. The trio of architects represented one of the central firms in Beirut during the sixties. With their rich background in engineering, philosophy and construction, they adopted modernist ideals and grounded these principles in the Lebanese context. The Shell building is composed as a 'sculptural figure', while the street is a 'continuous void'[15]. A set of stairs, part of this 'void' could have been part of the building's design, reflects the modernist philosophy of integrating the building into the urban fabric. The stairs connect the main *De Gaulle* seafront highway - on the lower end- to the parallel Australia street. They allow free flow and 'an anonymous encounter of pedestrians' by all users. On these two-meter wide stairs, the architects defy hierarchies by producing a meeting place for the previously discussed networks. Different citizens have a place to interact, exchange. Modernist ideals also encouraged 'strolling and gazing'. At this époque, the seafront was an inviting space to all Beirutis- the stairs not only acting as a physical extension of the shoreline but also as an enjoyable path from the sea to the upper parts. Unfortunately, these stairs were blocked by a 90 cm high steel fence, altering the social history of this urban environment. *Why* were they blocked? Today, the lower part of the stair's landing is used as a sleeping area by refugees. These scenes of struggle are hidden. They contrast with the adjacent luxurious *entrée*. The recently built tower uses the 'modern instruments of design' without their intrinsic content. Modern ideals are emptied out, expressed in form. The building is neither placed far enough from the highway to offer a semi-public plaza nor close enough to consist of a typical entrée. A strip of artificial greenery 'decorates'[16] the tower's entire entrée- evoking a 'display' of individuality and wealth and a fabricated understanding of the modernist Garden City movement. This *river* is physically blocked by a fence. It deflects the movements of users. The sea becomes a commodity, its access privatized.
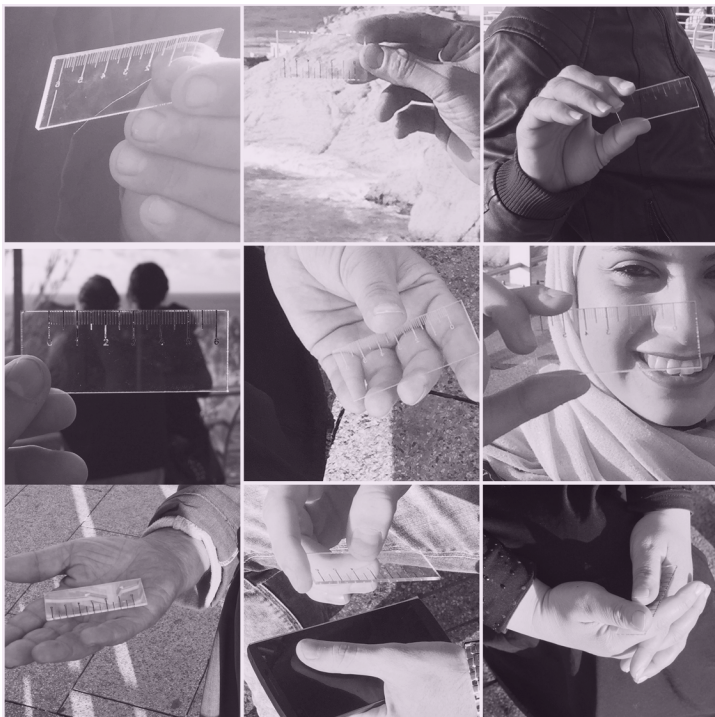
how do you use your 6 cms?
Source: Author

My fourth and last walk takes me along a different path from the same *Azar* street to the main *De Gaulle* seafront road. The street is composed of residential buildings with cell phone-related, pharmaceutical and market services on the ground floors. The streetscape is composed of several 'no parking signs', private interventions placing synthetic vegetation on sidewalks, and large generators extruding from the sides of buildings. These markers modify the urban experience. On this block, passerby can hear Lebanese talking and encounter families. A large two-meter concrete fence blocks the sea view. Amal[17], a resident of the area, explains how this portion of the street was *occupied* by the Lebanese army. They blocked the street and installed concrete and metallic fences, and surveillance boxes. These boundaries restrict access to the sea. These barriers, combined with the sense of surveillance, transform the space into an extension of Caldeira's 'city of walls'. Positioning the military *darak* on the sidewalk, instead of inside the building, is significant according to Caldeira. Karim, the *darak*, probes me as soon as he sees me looking around. His job is to observe, suspect and keep strangers away. The 'metaphorical'[18] cities that people construct in their daily practices of space are challenged by the fear

of these fences. As Amal walks the street, she makes 'fragmented trajectories' that 'elude legibility' [19]. Her fears form the 'trajectories' explained by De Certeau. This *river* is blocked, this abrupt visual and physical separation governs the urban experience.

These walks defined my experience of the seashore. The *rivers* are controlled, segregated, commodified, contested and blocked. Not only is the access to the sea influenced by the trajectory and the physical environment, but also by the directionality of our vision: from *where* do I look at the sea? Our use of space varies. Accessibility and mobility also produces our experience of space. These overlapping geographies allow an understanding of the central object that networks circulate around. The Pigeon Rock -a monument displayed in all guides, postcards and tours- is not well defined. Only by better understanding our *use* of the space around it- our *use* of our 6cm- can we understand these spaces produced.
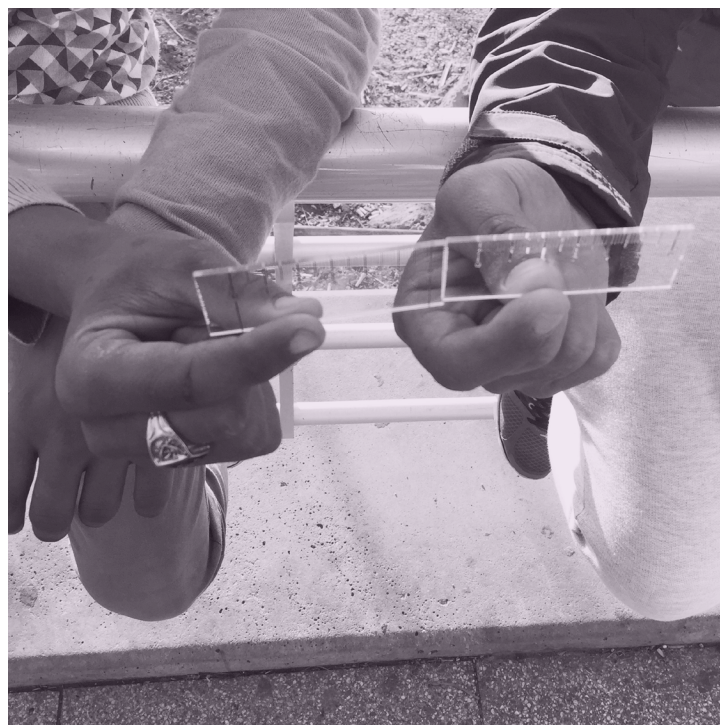
Omar and Tarek with their 6cms
Source: Author

Excerpted from a larger piece by Ibrahim Kombarji of the same title

PEDESTRIAN STREET SPACES
in central addis ababa

Seid Megersa Burka

Cities are places where people meet to exchange ideas, trade, or simply relax and enjoy themselves. A city's public domain includes streets, street spaces, squares, and parks which serve as both stage and catalyst for these activities. As such, they provide the structure that enables cities to come to life and to encourage and accommodate diverse activities, from the quiet and contemplative to the noisy and busy. A humane city with carefully designed urban street spaces creates pleasure for visitors and passers by as well as for those who live, work, and play there every day. Dwellers should have the right to easily access those spaces, just as they have the right to clear water. In this regard urban street space design and urban life have been studied thoroughly regarding the use of these spaces as a public domain and to offer the tools we need to not only improve the design of urban street spaces but to improve the quality of our lives in cities.

In Addis Ababa, one of Africa's fastest growing urban centers and the seat of the African Union, this has not necessarily been the case. For a long period of time, planning ideologies have favored accommodating car traffic, and in effect, has deprioritized urban space, pedestrianism and the role of city space as a fundamental resource and gathering space for urban dwellers.

For instance, Arada, or Piazza as its known locally, is the oldest settlement in Addis Ababa and is filled with rich urban street networks, quality pedestrian life, and iconic architectural buildings. It became the main marketplace in the city, originally opening as a trading place of the Oromo people--and has long been considered a meeting place for Addis' urbanites (Giorghis & Gérard, 2007). It was mainly an open-air market, divided into fifteen specialized sections called "tera" to distinguish different items. People travelled from the surrounding villages of Addis Ababa to sell their products and

Emperor Menelik riding the first car in street of Arada Market in 1907
Source: Giorghis & Gerard, 2007

Arada Market in 2000
Source: Giorghis & Gerard, 2007

buy imported items or other commodities. As there were no shops except those owned by foreigners around the area, this site was and remains to be important to Addis Ababa's history.
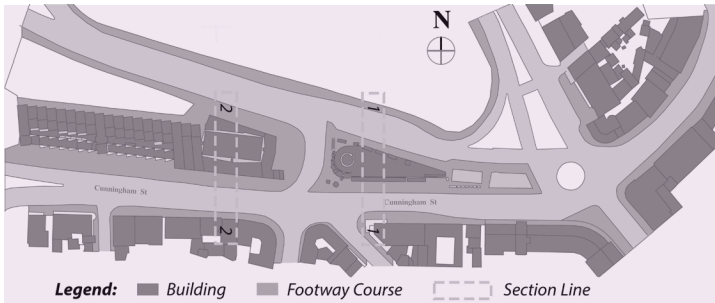
Map showing coverage of Footway Course in Cunningham Street
Source: Author
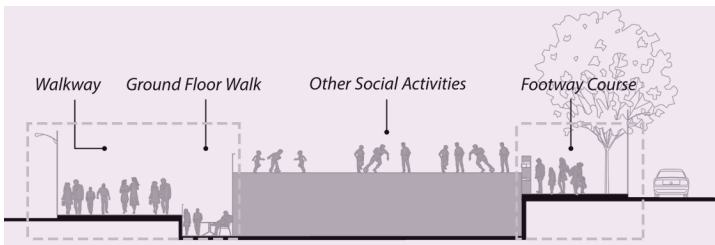
Detail Section 1-1 showing room for footway course in Cunningham Street
Source: Author
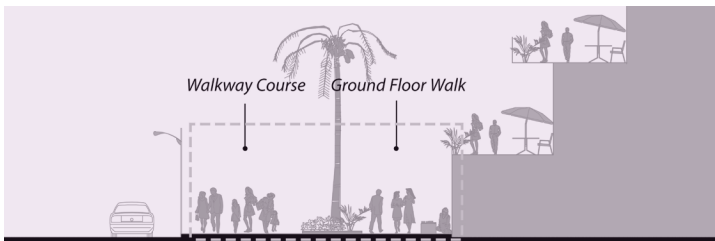
Detail Section 2-2 showing room for footway course in Cunningham Street
Source: Author

While the room for footway course in this area is not as wide as others, what does exist is a variety and volume of pedestrian activities and events, easy access to building entrances and adjacent public spaces, quality and richness of ground floors, and an overall liveliness of street. This is reflective of the carefully planned nature of the area, a legacy of the Italian occupation. Seating areas are supported by a variety of pedestrian activities and events, which are vital elements and contribute to pedestrians staying in the street space for longer periods of time. In Cunningham Street, located in Piazza, these seating areas are supported by the commercial corridor,

which offers a series of outdoor cafe seating, winessed mostly as the extension of ground floor businesses. These spaces offer people a glimpse into pedestrian activity in a hybrid space, where the edges of pedestrian footway overtake the building's leftover spaces.

Picture showing room for pedestrian footway on CS. Addis Ababa, 2013
Source: Author

Outdoor cafe seating's extension of exterior cafe on CS. Addis Ababa, 2014
Source: Author

In newly emerging central urban areas, like Cunningham Street in Addis Ababa, there is a great deal of pedestrian traffic being generated by necessity. As alluded to earlier, the number of pedestrians depends entirely on the extent to which people are invited to walk and stay--cementing the value of street space quality as important regardless of need.

Excerpted from Seid Burka's Master's thesis entitled
Reimagining Urban Street Spaces for a Better Urban Life in Central Addis Ababa

superheroes of
THE CITY

Ri Le

The midday university crowd encircles Captain Bayonne, backpacks slung over shoulders, squares of sentient glass in hand. The Captain is surrounded by the steps of Low Library and its stately and intimidating Greek columns. The enormous arenas of stone steps are meant to ascend the viewer to a place of higher learning and power, and the canopy of columns alludes to the thunderous gavel of the state. Directly across from Low is Butler Library, whose less-than-140-character frieze advertises its namesake's personal favorites with an almost obnoxiously Western bent: Homer, Herodotus, Sophocles, Plato… and so on. We are perhaps meant to be as afraid as we are inspired. But Captain Bayonne is a welcome foil—a trilogy of coughs reverberating against the melodramatic anxiety of a theater.

But against the loudness of the university's regal formality, the whimsical curiosity of Captain Bayonne's neon Mexican wrestler's mask, the fluorescent glow of his trainers, and the feline-themed spandex cycling uniform disarms the pretensions of Low Library. His sheer strangeness alone reminds us that Low is neither a courtroom or senate, nor even a library! So how much can we judge one's interior from their outward appearance, anyway?

For the minutes that he takes the brick-laid stage of Low Plaza, Captain Bayonne is the star of the show. Grasping a plastic Polar Spring water bottle, he marches to a nearby fountain and leans into the basin. Only a fool would drink the off-color water that expels from the plaza fountains, let alone sink their hands into it. Yet, the Captain does not care. He dunks the plastic bottle into the basin, preparing his projectile for the games. Having filled the thermoplastic vessel to a satisfactory weight of water, he walks ceremoniously to the center of the plaza. He kneels not for a king, an oracle, or a deity, but to place the bottle gingerly between the precise splines of his trainers. His arms fall perpendicular to the ground like battle standards on his sides. He is ready.

And so the Captain scans the horizon like the tiger graphic printed on his back, waiting for his audience to assemble. No matter that his full-body spandex suit absorbs the full radiation of the sun's unwavering heat. As if solar gain or the panoptic gaze of the audience wasn't overwhelming enough, he fearlessly dons a dark, one-piece cycling uniform; the kind of outfit that reveals too much without actually revealing anything at all. Fear, excitement, indifference—we can discern none of these with the mask occluding his countenance.

Suddenly, Captain Bayonne extends his arms back, as if to execute a violent backflip. Instead, his fibrous, muscular legs compress like bionic pistons, extending to release a swift maneuver that sends the bottle twisting into a parabolic arc into the air. It tumbles in slow motion, throwing glistening caustics onto the paving with the daylight of a rare moment of New York sunshine. And I— just another mere crowd gazer—admire the uncertain poetry of its untamed, continuous torque. Everyone can feel Earth's gravity pulling the bottle back to the ground as it spirals toward the iron petals of the plaza recycling bins. Will he score the winning goal?

Captain Bayonne is named after his hometown of Bayonne, New Jersey, located north of Staten Island and south of Jersey City. His Instagram posts are a cryptic, curious mosaic of absurdist images that echo the disturbing, memetic quality of early Aphex Twin promotional material, in which Richard D. James' grinning face is superimposed onto everyone from office workers, small children, to even a voluptuous swimsuit model. In one post, Captain Bayonne reports to Gettysburg in a regiments' portrait via Photoshop. In another, Captain Bayonne appears on a vintage Mets baseball card. In a humorously 'shopped Nike ad, Bayonne is dressed as Captain America, with a quote superimposed onto him: "Footthrow an abandoned water bottle into a public trash can. Even if you fail 98 of 100 attempts, you still cleaned up the streets."

But most numerous of all, Captain Bayonne is depicted on hats of presumably local fans, photoshopped running into/away from iconic images, and most importantly of all: running. The web publication Weird NJ described him as a "Fleet-footed Crusader for Fitness"

(Moran, 2015); Captain Bayonne is actually an avid runner. As depicted on his Instagram account, he is often spotted duelling automobiles on the streets of Bayonne; two legs of muscle versus eight cylinders of steel. Remarking on the virtues of running and fitness to a reporter from Weird NJ, Captain Bayonne describes running as a way to defuse violence, anger, and anxiety. "I tell people that all the time, that if you go out for a run, you won't have any of that. It will just dissipate"(Moran, 2015). Of course, there is a special quality that running in a bodysuit and mask imparts upon a runner…

These theatrics place Captain Bayonne amongst Morningside Heights' very own superheroes. Most who pass him by would never guess that he is a very involved community icon, as well as an employee of Columbia University. If anything, they are probably suspicious of his intentions. Upon moving to New York, I was often warned of the eccentrics, the freaks, the scammers: the type who are better off ignored… especially in Times Square. But Captain Bayonne is different from these false idols. Aside from his sartorial theatrics, the Captain is an anachronistic community figure; a unicorn amongst our current climate of inward privacy, public mistrust, fear, and paranoia. His gregariousness recalls the myth of a small-town America where neighbors know neighbors, where the deeds of nameless Good Samaritans ripple across town from the freshly-printed newsprint of the week's paper. Our current era of distant, anonymous discourse seems far removed from the nostalgic way that Bayonne residents celebrate and adore Captain Bayonne.

When asked about the meaning of his mask, Captain Bayonne claims that he began wearing a mask to increase his road visibility after being struck by an automobile during a run. It sounds fair enough—what could stand out more than a dayglo Lucha Libre mask and a peculiar patterned spandex bodysuit? However, his mask and suit allows him to become Captain Bayonne. Much like how the suit and the mask are the borders between Peter Parker and Spider-Man, Bruce Wayne and Batman, Bayonne's costume makes him anew. His costume is a Buddhist-like distillation of the wholeness of our universe and ourselves; it says everything we should know about him through the void of information it reveals about him. The most succinct description of Zen Buddhism is the enso, a circle-shaped marking whose simple, cyclical form expresses the concept of totality—a key Zen philosophical idea. Like the enso, Captain Bayonne's mask serves to meld multiple meanings and communicate a refined image. At its core, the mask allows Captain Bayonne to seamlessly embody an essence of health, vitality, and a bit of whimsy and audacity. His mask and his costume simultaneously communicate and facilitate these messages; we onlookers are both disarmed and inspired by both his comical form and the perpetual motion of his running figure.

It is urban studies cliché to speak of the city as being in constant flux, churning in a cyclical, ceaseless remaking and reordering. But if Marie Kondo had any say in the art of tidying up cities, I am confident that Kondo—best-selling organization guru, reality television star, the Japanese queen of tidying—would spare those like Captain Bayonne from a spring cleaning send-off: he sparks the simplest joy in the smallest public gestures. In an interview with a Columbia student documentarian published online, Captain Bayonne reflects a simple ethos our blasé outlook often occludes. He speaks like how a troubled Bodhisattva might ruminate, daring to conjure up the most fleeting happiness in others against a backdrop of ubiquitous suffering, "I'm not trying to hurt anyone or to make a political statement. It actually makes me happy when I see people with a smile on their face—it's more than anything that I want to do. There is so much hatred and misery in the world… if you could make somebody laugh or smile for a second, it's an amazing thing"(Goldstein, 2018).

As for the bottle soaring across Low Steps: the -9.8 meters per second squared brought the plastic bottle—and some of our hopes—sputtering onto a splashing mess onto the red brick. But like the enso and the mask, Captain Bayonne's bottle antics are an outward expression of his ethos. Captain Bayonne and his soaring water bottle is the je ne sais quoi of faith that we can always rely on our cities to deliver.

Tyson's Corner in 1972 and 1989
Source: tysonspartnership.org

‹ ‹ ‹ TYSON'S CORNER
edge city or center city?

Christine Ghossoub

"First there was downtown. Then there were suburbs. Then there were malls. Then Americans launched the most sweeping change in 100 years in how they live, work, and play. The Edge City."
(Garreau, 1992)

In his book "Edge City: Life on the New Frontier", Garreau described how Tysons Corner emerged from a rural farming community to a center for businesses in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Garreau, 1992). In that period of time, Tysons Corner was an "edge city", an urban area rising in office and commercial uses. The transformation followed major transportation developments. The introduction of four new stations as part of Metrorail's Silver Line expansion led to another transformation: Tysons turned from an edge city to a central urban hub of mixed-use activities. Planners have worked with local and neighboring communities as early as the late 1970s to create a vision for the sprawling urban center with goals of increasing accessibility, density, walkability, sustainability, and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, these ambitious plans did not lack adverse consequences on the local community.

How did the Board of Supervisors in Fairfax County use a pluralistic approach to establish the vision that transformed the 'edge city' of Tysons to a 'center city' starting in the early 1970s, and in what ways did the implementation of the vision negatively impact the communities locally and regionally in the past decade, in spite of the optimistic utopic goals set in the new vision?

Planners used an inclusive, pluralistic approach to build the vision for the new Tysons Corner Urban Center project

Paul Davidoff described pluralistic planning as an "intelligent choice" that can aid public policy "if different political, social, and economic interests produced city plans" (Davidoff, 1965). According to him, the public should be offered a plurality of plans shaped by different groups rather than a sole plan produced by a single entity. In September 1975, after Tysons had started growing as an active center for the largest businesses and retail centers since the late

'60s, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors commissioned a task force to conduct a study on the area that was reflected in the revised Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1978. Land use and zoning decisions were based on these collaborative recommendations through the early '90s. In 1990, the Board designated a Task Force that included local community members to amend the plan that equally "incorporated concerns of the community" (Davidoff, 1965). The Task Force engaged in extensive public outreach. As a result, the Comprehensive Plan was developed following a 'pluralistic' approach as opposed to an exclusionary top-down tactic.

Tysons Corner Urban Center: a utopic vision

"Under the bright light, I want a city all white, but the green cypresses must be there to punctuate it. All the blue of the sea shall reflect the blue of the sky" (Celik, 1992). Zeynep Celik included these words found in Le Corbusier's travel books in her article Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism. Celik described the architect's impressions of the city of Istanbul as utopic thoughts. In this case, utopia can be defined as a romantic and idealistic vision of the city (Celik, 1992). Similarly, the Board of planners established a utopic vision for Tysons Corner's new urban center. Their mission was to transform the edge city into a central hub of mixed-used activities using the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) model. Some of the positive goals that Tysons Corner's new vision included are:

New job opportunities and higher population density
A better quality of life through a work/life balance
A healthier environment
Increased proximity to public transportation
Increased accessibility and mobility
Diverse and affordable housing
(Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017)

Although comprehensive and idealistic, these goals are broad and do not consider effects on existing infrastructure and social patterns shaped by local residents.

Negative impacts on the local and regional community

Steve Offutt argues that, despite all the new transportation development, "Tysons will remain a spread-out, edge city with long distances between buildings, large parking lots and uncomfortable walking infrastructure" (Offutt, 2010). These problems can be related to LeCorbusier's unsuccessful strategies while planning for 'utopian' cities in the past. He incorporated concepts of order and idealism but failed to provide the most perfect living conditions for residents. Recent studies on road congestion and traffic movement today suggest that people have not stopped using their cars at Tysons, as opposed to the new vision's goals.

Moreover, a group of citizens called "DC Urban Moms and Dads". has started a forum for local residents to express their concerns on the new development:

> "I just don't see it as a desirable place to live so expect a lot of the residential part will be vacant. People will live in N Arlington and McLean and drive to work in Tysons".
>
> "It's like a gigantic office park with a mega mall attached. Navigating in and out is a huge pain in the neck. To call it a financial district is laughable". (DC Urban Mom & Dads, 2017)

Furthermore, "Between 2014 and 2015, the Tysons Urban Team recorded a 58 percent increase in felonies and a 34 percent increase in misdemeanors, and the trend is continuing in 2016", said Goldberg (Goldberg, 2016). This demonstrates another failure of the new plan.

Before the 1960s, Tysons was a rural area with little built-up lands and very affordable stores. "The store was the most memorable landmark in what was a very rural setting," said a local resident. Moreover, despite the simplicity of the land and the lack of development, locals seemed to have enjoyed the area before all the trees were cut and all the green lands were replaced with concrete. "I can remember riding my 100cc Yamaha trail bike up and down the hills there in 1967 with my friends shortly before the shopping center was built." (Kelly, 2014) This reflects Annaya Roy's concept of informality. It "connotes casual and spontaneous interactions and personal affective ties among participants." (Roy, 2009) The central grocery store used to be a destination for the majority, a social public space that burgeoned interactions between community members. However, the new plan for the city imposed a grid of organized roads and structured complexes, limiting the chances for informal interactions. New residents consider Tysons as a place for business rather than a home with longstanding memories.

Tyson's Corner Market
Source: Kelly, 2014

The addition of large office and mixed-use centers in Tysons led to the advent of new residents to the city. As a result, new apartments were priced commensurately with the new median income. Older apartments cost less than $200,000 while more expensive units can be priced between $400,000 to $900,000 and people are already getting priced out. Moreover, many local business owners are moving their offices from older and less desirable locations to higher-quality ones, leaving a large number of office spaces empty. This was described as the "flight to quality" movement. (Clabaugh, 2017)

Tysons Corner is a growing urban core within the larger Washington metropolitan area, attracting new people and businesses. The vision established by the Board of Commissioners for developing the city's urban center in Fairfax County's comprehensive plan seems to be failing. The role of Transit-Oriented Developments is to shorten the distances between both the people and the destinations. We are witnessing the opposite effect: the plan is bringing people further apart. Consequently, applying the concepts of pluralism and informality, as demonstrated by Davidoff and Roy, would allow for a more inclusive planning process and a more successful model for a city that responds better to the needs of local communities.

Abandoned Packard Plant, Detroit
Source: Conor Allerton

CHANGING PERIPHERIES
the obduracy of buildings
(and people who live in them)

Magda Maaoui

Translation of change in the urban landscape can be a complex mixture, an intertwining of shift and *stasis* that informs us on both the forces fostering change, and the people who perceive it.

When one thinks about the *banlieue* of Courbevoie, located north-west of Paris, the first snapshots that come to mind are the high-rise buildings of La Défense -the top CBD of continental Europe- and the Champs-Élysées -in direct continuity with the *avenue du Général-de-Gaulle* bordering the *banlieue*'s urban fabric to the south. Collective memory retains only snapshots of wealth and tertiary modernity for the Hauts-de-Seine department, the richest in France after Paris. Courbevoie is also well-known as the bastion of right politics. It is often nicknamed as the stronghold of "blue suburbs", in opposition to the north eastern "red suburbs" which have historically been leftist and working class.

And yet, once upon a time, Courbevoie was also red. It used to be one of the major industrial suburbs of Paris clustering automobile factories, electrical industries, foundries and copperworks. Since then, most industrial parcels have been redeveloped for commercial and residential use. This shift was strongly due to the development of the La Défense business district in the late 1950s, which would later be linked to Paris *intra muros* by the *métro* and the regional express railway.

This piece addresses the translation of change in Courbevoie, capturing the very moment the specialization of the municipality was deemed obsolete. Most importantly, it insists on what this restructuring imperative represented for local agents perceiving this change.

In fact, many local agents were not on board with this. The 1971 movie "Le Chat" (Figure 1), portrays Simone Signoret and Jean Gabin as a retired couple living in Courbevoie. Their *banlieue*, long subject to decline, fills with vacant lots, feral cats and urban renewal micro-projects.The last house standing is their own. Their house, street,

Figure 1: The 1971 movie "Le Chat", with legendary actors Simone Signoret and Jean Gabin, tells more than a love-hate story, and sets the stage for one house that resists the bulldozer-driven urban renewal operation that restructures Courbevoie. Source:

lives, are a statement against change. They symbolize the triumph of resistance - a most fabricated type of stability. They are not happy but will not leave. Hateful of each other, they are too rooted in the fixtures of their dilapidated house to abandon the ship. The couple probably hates the neighborhood as well, but it is the only battlefield that tolerates their constant bickering.

"Le Chat" embodies the not-so-classic tale of the people who opposed the changes - large-scale, bulldozer-driven, urban renewal operations - unfolding in several Parisian peripheries since the postwar era. The Signoret-Gabin love-hate story perfectly underlines the conflictual dimension and political nature of opposition to change. Their house and the familiar landmarks of rue Louis Blanc, place Victor-Hugo and impasse Dupuis represent the stage for the couple's resistance.

Even the cat has trouble finding its way in the changing neighborhood. She probably knows that neither her, nor her owners, can temper the pace of these urban renewal operations forever transforming the face of Courbevoie, and other neighboring *banlieues*. Indeed, the 55,000 longtime *courbevoisiens* residents quickly have to adapt to the evergrowing flows of employees commuting to the newly erected La Défense, whose first-generation office towers are for the most part built on the territory of Courbevoie (Figure 2).

Figure 3: "When History will judge La Défense" [Author's translation] - While elected officials and EPAD [Établissement Public pour l'Aménagement de la région de la Défense] agents in charge of acquiring and redeveloping land were chanting the promising business district, newspapers started voicing concerns about the long term impacts of this project on the local urban fabric. Source: Le Monde

Figure 2: The construction of the CNIT [Centre des Nouvelles Industries et Technologies], the first building to be erected in the La Défense business district, sets the tone for the spectacular break in the older urban fabric of Courbevoie. Source: grutiers.forumactif.com

The decline of the old neighborhoods undoubtedly intertwines with the glorious fate of a newly tertiarized portion of the city. This circumstance materializes through a planning operation set to modernize and build more housing, shops, cultural and sports amenities, and infrastructure, catering to the desires of this upsurge of office employees. Newspapers either chant or denounce the glory: the future is being paved for Courbevoie (Figure 3).

Figure 4: "Paris: a neighborhood that disturbs" [Author's translation] - Here, a Swiss newspaper echoes criticism by local Parisian media platforms and evokes controversies over the avant-garde architecture of the project, similar to contemporary projects such as the Beaubourg building and Montparnasse tower. Source: 24 heures

It appears in the horizon, the perfect new face of the changing periphery whose motto is, after all, *curva via, mens recta* (curved path, proper spirit). This motto is potentially one of the most accurate formalizations of change - and those who oppose it.

VISIBLE CITIES
paintings and poems

Claire Yang

San Francisco

Astray, the one with violet in her laps/
　　Wind is home but wings/
are breathed out/
　　　Broken into dim shape of blankets of homeless people/

Virgin sea longs for the naked bodies/
　　Reaching with rose arms/
Hanging off it are/
　　　wireless and the darkest of the dark fiber/

Heart grew cold and skin old/
　　Hades's hound remembers us/
From another time radiating through redwood leaves/
　　　　Another taste of post apocalyptic honey pain/

Double star Albireo forgets each others' name/
No, not forget/
　　Never knew/
Dissolves into two on Frida and Diego's marriage certificate
in the city hall/

Return the old tune of Robinson/
　　A chariot of antler, hobby horse, maid marion and fool/
Lambs back to the homeful dirt/
　　　Children splash on the golden breast

Philadelphia

I.
Half woman-half land/
The more lives within her the more land she became/
Land under jurisdictions/
  of particular ban/

The half woman picked up a piece of metal/
  with a hole as hollow as death's cradle/
Now the halves are even/
The death cancels out the life/

Men shooting west philly streets/
 need to be more land/
Lives shall bloom within them/
 So balance they will find

II.
A minute of infinite sighs/
  in a diary from a century ago/
High tide in lowlands launches/
    a florist to outer-space road/

  Finger-writing with streetlight shadow/
Tangled by the full moon riddle/
   Anthropocentric guilt-lapse model/
Breaks the incantation bowl/

 Urban Renewal, blight removal/
 a quartet of parking lots/
     Green statute, LOVE statue/
 a fugue of F.D.R.

The historic old headhouse at Harvard Station
Source: Author

OBSOLESCENCE AND THE MBTA
a love story

Michael A. N. Montilla

Obsolescence is a common feature of American transit systems. Nearly all rely on outdated vehicles, and either failing or inadequate infrastructure. A combination of apathetic transit policies, the often incremental nature of improvements, and induced demand ensure obsolescence's place in these transit networks, but not every system deals with this seemingly unavoidable obsolescence in the same way. Some transit authorities let obsolescence build upon itself creating an ever-worsening user experience signaling a system mortally wounded by decay. Yet others deftly work with obsolescence, incorporating it as part of the system's, and its city's histories. By doing so, these systems cultivate a robust, and favorable conceptualization amongst users and the politicians who influence their fate. While obsolescence is a problem for any transit system, repurposing and honoring obsolete transit infrastructures can contribute to a stronger transit systems overall.

Before I continue, I need to define exactly what I mean by a stronger transit system. In this phrase, stronger implies a system that is well supported by its users, operating authority, and government. A strong transit system is a transit system where most stakeholders agree that it is an absolute necessity, and it is a major focus of local and state political platforms. Like I said before, some systems allow obsolescence to go unchecked leading to overlooked and weaker systems. Conversely, other systems manipulate obsolescence by repurposing, preserving, or rejuvenating obsolete components. These systems turn their obsolescence into as much of an asset as possible, and strengthen their networks as a whole.

To explore this idea, I will discuss three rapid-transit stations in the MBTA Subway, the urban rail network of Boston, Massachusetts. The MBTA is an outstanding example to highlight my point. It features some of the oldest transit infrastructure in the country, and is frankly riddled with obsolescence. Despite its obsolete components, it is a very strong and well used system. My first example will be the bus tunnel at Harvard Station (Image 1) , and I will also talk about the obsolescence at Boylston and Government Center Stations. All three of these stations are over a century old, and all three show how obsolescence can be turned into an asset.

Image 1: A northbound bus operating in the Harvard Bus Tunnel
Source: Author

The history of the Harvard bus tunnel is an example of how repurposing obsolete infrastructure can improve transit efficiency. In 1912, the original Harvard Station opened as the northern terminus of what is now the Red Line of the subway. At the time, the station open with its heavy rail facilities, as well as a short trolley tunnel. The streetcars that served the area would use this tunnel to bypass Harvard Square above. Sadly, mid-century political forces were not kind to streetcars (or public transit in general), and the routes that ran through the tunnel were closed. Despite reaching obsolescence, the trolley tunnel was retained in its original location. Soon after

the closure of the trolley routes, both regular buses and electric buses powered by overhead power lines began to use the tunnel as an alternative to the congested roads above. By taking the buses off the street, and moving them into the old trolley tunnel, the MBTA curtailed the amount of vehicular traffic in the square while accelerating and safeguarding bus operations. In this case, the obsolete tunnel was repurposed into a beneficial piece of transit infrastructure. Opportunities to repurpose similar infrastructure exist within many transit systems, and operating authorities should consider reincorporating these components.

But not every form of obsolete infrastructure can be used in a contemporary transit system. Sometimes, obsolete infrastructure needs to be closed, or replaced, but its presence in the system can be celebrated nonetheless. At Boylston Station, one can see how obsolete infrastructures can be preserved and elevated to the status of monuments.

The preservation of heritage vehicles on the outer tracks at Boylston Station has turned the station into a functional museum. Boylston Station features two staggered island platforms with 4 tracks, but only the two inner tracks are in revenue service (Image 2). The outer tracks once led to a flying junction taking trolleys to a now-closed series of streetcar routes, but these tracks are now used as a gallery for transit history.

Walking into Boylston Station is a step through a time machine. If one could perceive obsolescence, it would feel like Boylston Station. There is a damp, metallic smell as one walks down the iron stairs onto the platform. It is dark station, but not hauntingly dark. It is the type of dark that can be comforting like a candle-lit chapel, or a calm night at sea. In this environment, trolleys that used to serve the station present themselves in repose. Their obsolescence transformed into a position of honor. They remind everyday users and visitors of the MBTA's history and place in the city, and make Boylston more than a station. It makes it a source of civic pride.

Such deference for the system's history can be seen in the rejuvenation of obsolete signage at Government Center Station as well. During a recent reconstruction of the station, workers uncovered tile signs referencing the station's old name, Scollay Square (Image 3). Instead of removing these signs, the MBTA rejuvenated them and placed them where they can be viewed on the platforms they were originally designed for. They are now seen by thousands of people a day, and remind transit users of the public square that once existed above the station. Scollay Square was a sordid, but lively square that the city leveled as part of urban renewal. With this history in mind, the rejuvenated signs effectively serve as both boastful beacons of the past, and warnings against the wholesale destruction of public space. Repairing, and retaining them near their original locations acknowledges the city's history, and bolsters the MBTA's identity.

Image 2: On the right, a Green Line light-rail train enters Boylston Station, while historic vehicles that formerly served the line rest on the outer track to the left. Source: Author

Image 3: A historic sign at Government Center showing the former name of the Blue Line platforms at the station. Source: Author

Yet obsolescence is still problematic, and it must be dealt with. Despite its charms, Boylston is one of the few stations in the MBTA that lacks ADA accessibility. Its headhouses and stairwells are outdated and effectively obsolete. Nevertheless, they are still in everyday use. In my opinion, one of the reasons the station lacks elevators and other accessibility infrastructure is politically-convenient deference to the age of the station. There is plenty of space to install such infrastructure at platform and street levels, but the station lacks these improvements in part because of the age, and the nostalgic feel of the station. Nostalgia can be useful when it comes to incorporating obsolescence, but it should not be used as an excuse to rely on obsolete components. In situations like Boylston Station, its historic qualities should be preserved, but essential improvements must also be integrated.

Image 4: The historic old headhouse at Harvard Station showing the Out of Town News' dwindling stock of magazines in its last month of operation (October, 2019). Source: Author

Before I close, I would like to talk about one final piece of obsolete infrastructure, the old headhouse at Harvard Station (Image 4). The headhouse was in use from the 1920's until the station was reconstructed with a new headhouse in the 1980's. Now obsolete, a nearby newsagent, the Out Of Town News, took up residence within its walls. The MBTA removed the stairs down to the platform level, and the newsagent replaced them with magazine racks, and displays. Today, the headhouse is nothing short of iconic. However, it is now obsolete as a newsstand, and there are serious questions about its future. In October 2019, the Out Of Town News moved out. For the next couple of months, the headhouse will be used as a temporary community center, and will close next year so that the city of Cambridge can renovate it. But there are no formalized plans for the headhouse post-renovation. What will become of this beloved structure? Nobody is sure, but I hope that it remains were it has always been so that it can continue welcoming folks to the square as it has done for over ninety years.

Obsolescence has been, and will be a fact of life in most transit networks, but by repurposing, preserving, and rejuvenating obsolete infrastructures, these components can be transformed into assets that strengthen their transit systems. Every city, and every transit system has an identity, a conceptualization that prevails in the minds of stakeholders. By building these identities through the wise incorporation of unavoidable obsolescence, transit systems across the world can remind their stakeholders that they are worth using, funding, and celebrating - even with their imperfections.

THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

and the fallacy of innovation

Ife Vanable

Fire, Jump / Not New (Introduction)

Just after 8:00am on an overcast Sunday morning on March 22, 1987, an eleven-year-old girl, Dwana, and her two older brothers, Robin, 16, and Stanley Jr., 22, jumped to their deaths from their 33rd floor apartment window of the south tower of Schomburg Plaza apartments located at Fifth Avenue and Central Park North, on an edge separating Central from East Harlem [Images 01-04]. The three-bedroom apartment, shared with their parents was ablaze. Trapped inside, driven by smoke, acrid fumes, and physically consumed by flames, left with little choice, the siblings sought refuge in the air and space beyond the window. In a spectacular display of raw humanity and keen self-preservation, perhaps hoping to land on a downstairs neighbor's balcony, the children fell to their deaths amid screams from onlookers on the ground imploring them not to jump. Upon review of the Jenkins children's bodies, Fire Commissioner, Joseph E. Spinnato, observed, "The bodies were sufficiently burned to the point where it would cause people to opt to jump" (Verhovek, 1987). An investigative report into the cause of the fire by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA, Schaenman, 1987) asserted, "Almost one-quarter of the population of the United States lives in multi-family dwellings. Many of these are high-rises. There are thus tens of millions of people who may be exposed to similar problems if the lessons from such fires are not heeded."

By the late 1990s, ten years after the three siblings leapt from their engulfed 33rd-floor Schomburg Plaza apartment, the USFA found that an estimated 15,500 high-rise structure fires raged each year between 1996 and 1998, three-quarters of which occurred in residential structures (USFA, 2002). The "lessons" to be learned from such fires are many, but are fundamentally tied to entrenched and enduring legacies of urban planning processes that championed schemes for development touted as new, but were often (and have become) systematically customary. In the name of combating various forms of perceived urban crises, urban planning processes have been marked by affording outsize power to programs deemed innovative to ultimately skirt or wholly override established regulations and local ordinances and make critical decisions about land use without regard to traditional jurisdictional boundaries or recourse to the electorate for approval, all in the name of "public benefit" (Brilliant, 3).

No New Plans

Perpetually cloaked in seemingly new initiatives, programs, corporations, re-organizations, etc., public planning indelibly requires a delegation of authority to some small group of decision makers and the allocation of resources for agreed upon public purposes. Fundamentally, how decisions are made and who has been endowed with the authority to enact those decisions is critical in the planning process. As such, considering the structural framework of public planning as relatively fixed, the ways that major public planning resolutions—what may be referred to as policies—have been implemented has been indelible, merely shape-shifting and taking on new names. Schomburg Plaza, developed by the Urban Development Corporation, dedicated in 1974, exemplifies the methodological and theoretical endurance of social policy aims and planning schemes in the American context since the emergence of the field in the early twentieth century. Historically situated urban planning schemes have routinely staged scenes of subjection (Hartman 1997), that arguably operate as racial formations borrowing an analytical tool developed by sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), in which human bodies and social structures have been represented and organized (Omi and Howard Winant, 55-56). As such, these processes and their resultant material artefacts operate as aesthetic acts, as what Jacques Rancière (2014) describes as "configurations of experience that create new modes of sense perception and produce novel forms of political subjectivity" (p. 3). And while

potentially novel subjectivities may emerge, they are produced in the wake of enduring systems that simultaneously define patterns of supposed disorder and impose reform.

From its emergence in 1968 as a public benefit corporation focused on the development of multi-family housing in urban domains, particularly in New York City, to an emphasis on economic development, with its operations eventually subsumed into what would become the Empire State Development Corporation in 1995, the New York Urban Development Corporation may now be regarded as obsolete. Schomburg Plaza was one of roughly one hundred residential projects developed across New York City and State by the UDC between 1968 and 1975 when it was formally restructured. A look at Schomburg Plaza's development and ongoing transformations (financial, architectural, and policy driven) reveals how the ostensible fall of the UDC into obsolescence was baked into the scheme early on. Schomburg Plaza and other similarly developed responses to the "urban problem" is a bellwether. Although, rather than indicating change, the trajectory of its development announces the systemic endurance of the old masquerading as the new.

Participation / Override

Schomburg Plaza is a six hundred-unit apartment complex comprised of twin, offset, thirty-five story, 100 x 100 ft. octagonal residential towers facing Central Park and an eleven story, mixed-use rectilinear bar building on Madison Avenue designed by Gruzen and Partners along with Castro-Blanco, Piscioneri & Feder Architects. Situated on the northeast corner of Central Park at what was known as Frawley Circle at the time of its dedication, Schomburg Plaza occupies an entire city block, bound by 110th and 111th Streets and Fifth and Madison Avenues [Images 05 & 06]. The initial development scheme from which Schomburg Plaza was eventually developed was part of the Federal government urban renewal efforts born of President Johnson's 1966 Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act. The proposed program and appropriated funds (some $400 million a year for six years) sought to "arrest blight and decay in entire neighborhoods…and bring about a change in the total environment in the area affected" (Markowitz and Rosner, 219). In November 1966, then Mayor Lindsay announced that what had been designated the Frawley Circle-Milbank urban renewal area [Image 07], would be one of three "depressed areas in the city designated for immediate renewal under a new Federal model cities financial aid program" (Markowitz and Rosner, 220). The Schomburg Plaza site at Frawley Circle was known as "Site 23."

Community participation in urban renewal projects was mandated by the 1966 Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, which facilitated the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and promoted experiments in alternative forms of municipal government organization and operation. The UDC was one such experiment established two years after Demonstration Cities was enacted. Dr. Kenneth B. Clark sat on its Board. The UDC, in an effort to comply with the mandate to represent the interests of the community and ensure participation where residential projects were planned, formed nonprofit community organizations or coordinated with pre-existing groups in conjunction with development efforts. For the development of Site 23, Northside Center for Child Development led by Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark, joined with La Hermosa Christian Church, the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and the United Mission Christian Society to form the 110th Street Plaza Housing Development Corporation, a re-alignment that absorbed what had been the Committee for Central Park North since at least 1965 before a Model Cities program was established or the UDC was formed. With firm agreement from the UDC, the 110th Street Plaza Housing Development Corporation became the designated Community Advisory Committee, officially recognized as spokespersons on behalf of the community regarding the development project ("Meeting of U.D.C. and 110thStreet Plaza Housing Development Corporation," 1 December 1969, Northside Center for Child Development Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. MSS COL 2261. Also Markowitz and Rosner, 223-224) [Image 08].

The redevelopment scheme's aim was to render aesthetically pleasing, an "ugly, rundown, neglected and dilapidated area," (Central Park North Committee Meeting Minutes, 10 November 1965, Northside Center for Child Development Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, cited by Markowitz and Rosner, 219), facilitating, individual, private domesticity and sexuality, performed in the homes of an integrated cohort of "stable," clean, respectable nuclear families. "By September 1973, more than six thousand application forms for six hundred available apartments had been distributed." Early 1974, prior to Schomburg Plaza's official dedication in December, "four thousand applications had been received." A deliberate and extensive advertising campaign was launched to reach beyond the glut of applications received from blacks and Puerto Ricans. Management and the Corporation led by the Clarks insisted that, "integration is a must if the development and community are to be stabilized." (Meeting Minutes, 110th Street Plaza Housing Development Corp., 11 December 1973 and 24

President Corazon C. Aquino congratulates Alex Evangelista of Philippine Military Academy during graduation at Baguio. With them are Defense Minister Rafael M. Ileto and Gen. Fidel V. Ramos.

3 Jump to Death and 4 Others Die In Harlem Apartment Tower Blaze

By SAM HOWE VERHOVEK

Three young people, trapped by flames in their 33d-floor apartment, jumped to their deaths and four other people were killed yesterday morning when a smoky blaze — at first thought to be contained in the basement — raced up a garbage chute and raged through the floors of a building at the northeast edge of Central Park.

Fire officials said a small, smoldering fire turned into disaster after the sprinkler system in the chute failed to function, apparently because the water had been turned off. Firefighters were also hampered by a broken standpipe valve at the base of the building, which forced one firefighter to run several hundred feet of hose around to a corner to a working valve.

No Smoke Detectors

Firefighters first responded to a report of a basement fire at 7:56 A.M. at one of the 35-story twin towers at 1295 Fifth Avenue, near 110th Street, in Harlem. It was not until 20 minutes later that firefighters realized that the blaze had spread upward and was burning on at least three floors of the pink concrete tower, the city's Fire Commissioner, Joseph E. Spinnato, said.

The flames were confined to a few apartments, which Mr. Spinnato said did not have smoke detectors although he added that records showed they had been installed by the landlord. But an

Continued on Page D3, Column 1

11-year-old girl and her two older brothers were trapped inside a 33d floor apartment, where the fire damage was said to be the worst.

Then, as scores of people watched from the street in horror, they leaped from a window, in what some witnesses said was a desperate effort to jump along the side of the building to a neighbor's terrace, and fell to their deaths in an alley. Seconds later, an onlooker said, smoke and flames came pouring from the window.

'Didn't Have a Choice'

"Everybody was screaming, 'Don't jump!' but they didn't have a choice," said a woman who heard the crowd from her apartment two blocks away and ran to the scene. "The bodies were sufficiently burned to the point where it would cause people to opt to jump," Mr. Spinnato added.

The young victims were identified as Stanley Jenkins Jr., 22 years old; a nephew boy, Robbin, 10, and Dwana, who some residents said celebrated her 11th birthday last week. The body of their mother — Martha Jenkins, a 65-year-old night nurse at the Harlem Hospital Center — was found in the apartment.

Their father, Stanley Jenkins, who friends said was driving a gypsy taxicab when the fire struck, returned unknowing to the building and was told of the deaths.

"My family's gone," Mr. Jenkins said later as he was comforted by friends outside a restaurant on Fifth Avenue, across the street from the building. "I came back and my friend said to me, 'Your family's gone.'"

Upstairs from the Jenkins apartment, firefighters found three other

Continued on Page A15, Column 1

DRUNKEN DRIVING SHOWING DECLINE

New Laws and New Attitudes Are Making Roads Safer

By ANDREW H. MALCOLM
Special to The New York Times

CHICAGO, March 22 — Widening public and legislative support for ever-tougher laws against drunken driving and tighter enforcement of existing regulations appear to be noticeably deterring many from driving while intoxicated.

In interviews, officials of several states said that they had detected a silent shift in social attitudes against drunken driving, akin to the reduced acceptance of smoking in public. At the same time social drinkers have been shunning hard liquor in favor of lighter drinks, like wine coolers and light beer.

Some experts see the shifting as part of a broader social trend emphasizing personal health habits involving, for example, less smoking, more physical exercise and greater attention to nutrition.

'Phenomenal' Recent Progress

"Many people have changed their habits," said Jim Edgar, the Illinois Secretary of State, a longtime advocate of strict enforcement of drinking laws. "People's consciousness is generally higher. It doesn't mean we are done, by any means. But the United States has made phenomenal progress in the last 48 months."

Statistics indicate that a combination of factors, including Federal and state crackdowns and educational campaigns, are having beneficial effects,

ma Struggles in Isolation

In New York, 'Workfare' Gets

By ALAN FINDER

EAST HARLEM
Manhattan Community District 11

Legend

☐ Urban Renewal Area (URA)

▨ Harlem-East Harlem URA (Scattered Sites)

East Harlem Triangle URA

Upper Park Avenue URA

Milbank Frawley Circle-East URA

East River URA

Metro North URA

Randalls Island Park

Wards Island Park

Mount Morris Park

Jefferson Park

The Northsider

NORTHSIDE CENTER FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
31 CENTRAL PARK NORTH • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10026

NEWSLETTER   MAY 1972   VOLUME VII   NO. 1

Gateway to Harlem -- and new home for Northside

—Press Release

Over the past six months, Fifth Avenue, between 110th and 111th Streets, has been a hub of activity. Inhabitants in the immediate vicinity have been asking numerous questions and have been making inquiries about housing for themselves.

A good look at the activity that is taking place indicates that the old dilapidated buildings have been demolished and, from an imaginative thought, it seems that from the ruins there will emerge newer and, quite likely, a far more enhancing site than was there before.

As a means of baring the true facts, The Northsider approached the Chairman of the site (called Site 23) and was given the following information:

Two eight-sided towers of thirty-four stories each and an eleven story building, will provide 600 units of housing for low and moderate income families. The sponsors of the project (the 110th Street Plaza Housing Development Corporation) include the Northside Center for Child Development, La Hermosa Christian Church, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and United Christian Mis-

The builders, also selected jointly, are the Douglas Urban Corporation. Both firms are interracial. Agreements signed with the Douglas Urban Corporation ensure the hiring and training of (Continued on page 3)

Artist's impression of two eight-sided towers and eleven story building being erected at 110 Street and Fifth Avenue. Note landscaping in foreground—new gateway to Harlem.

Another Service For Harlem

After experimenting with a Walk-On In Service at 31 Central Park North, Northside Center at long last has set up another of its unique and imaginative services: Walk-On In and Call-On In Service, at 247 East 117th Street in East Harlem.

The service set up as an experiment to assist residents in the Harlem community has grown into mammoth size necessitating the addition of larger

Otro Servicio para Harlem

Después de un exitoso experimento con el servicio "Entrar" en Northside Center, situado en el 31 Oeste de la calle 110 entre Lenox y Quinta Avenidas; se ha extendido este, creativo y único servicio "Entrar" al 247 Este de la calle 117 casi esquina Segunda Avenida. Este servicio fue establecido como un experimento para asistir a los residentes de la comunidad de Harlem, la demanda ha sido en tal pro-

January 1974, cited by Markowitz and Rosner, 234-235).

In the face of competing interests of a range of stakeholders, including, black folks from Central Harlem, Puerto Ricans from East Harlem (especially fervent protests by the Young Lords), religious groups and others, Schomburg Plaza was ultimately developed at a total cost of 25.6 million (roughly over $133 million in 2019). UDC provided initial development funding and long-term capital financing to initiate the project. New York State provided loans under the auspices of the New York Mitchell-Lama funding scheme, which provided mortgage support for limited-profit, low-moderate income housing, incentivizing private participation in urban renewal projects (Brilliant, 33). During the Rockefeller administration, a series of legislative efforts were made to encourage the participation of business in urban development and housing and to by-pass the restrictions of the state constitution. Among these, the principal Acts were those constituting the 1955 New York State Private Housing Finance Law, of which the Limited-Profit Housing Companies law, known as Mitchell-Lama, was a part.

A private development corporation endowed with unbridled public authority, the UDC realized a spate of below-market high-rises for low-moderate income households, extending far above the high-rise heights of existing New York City Public Housing. Entering into a market pregnant with contention, Eleanor Brilliant asserts that the UDC was heralded as "a new structure designed to deal with persistent problems that previous urban programs and existing institutions had been unable to resolve" (p. 13). The UDC, as a state level authority, was seen as one of a series of devices for overcoming limitations in the State's ability to act, endowed by legal mandate with the authority to circumvent limitations that presumably prevented the executive branch from implementing its programs (Brilliant, 41).

Ed Logue, a staunch proponent of linking ambitious, large-scale improvements to the built environment with a broader social agenda, agreed to accept Governor Nelson Rockefeller's offer of the presidency of the UDC, after a failed attempt at running for Mayor of Boston, if he and the newly formed agency would be afforded significant authority to implement public policy (Bloom and Lasner, 224-26). In a November 1969 Architectural Forum article, "Bridging the Gap from Rhetoric to Reality: The New York State Urban Development Corporation," Ed Louge asserted, "Sure we can rebuild America. Just give us the right of eminent domain, the power to ignore local zoning and unlimited financing" (Kaplan, 70). The UDC was an exemplar of the public-private partnership for urban development, a "super-urban

renewal agency" (Reilly and Schulman, 199-215) of sorts, where the greatest degree of private sector participation was fully expected. New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller in a "Special Message to the Legislature, Accompanying the Bills for the Urban Development Corporation" (McKinney's Session Laws of New York, 1968, 2359) declared:

> "The need to transform our urban core areas into decent places to live and work in is the priority domestic challenge confronting this Nation. No longer can we tolerate the decay, degradation and despair that exists there; no longer can we ignore discontent that breeds there. Yet thus far, we have not fully applied to the leading domestic challenge, the single force most responsible for material well-being generally prevalent in the Nation—the private enterprise sector of the economy."

Presumed public interests of communities or "urban areas" consisting of impoverished black and brown bodies were privatized and packaged for quick and efficient implementation. Nonprofit enterprises were to be involved, interlocutors who participated, but were not endowed with significant authority, as evidence of equitable practice in the use of federal funding. In addition to its capacity to issue its own bonds without recourse to public approval; initiate developments so that planning and development were defined as inseparable in the hands of one action-oriented agency; define public interest in urban areas at the State level and urban development in terms of the linkage of jobs and housing; use private profit in the pursuit of public purpose and develop an administrative organization combining autonomy, executive accountability-responsibility, and decentralization through local units, UDC's power to override local zoning and building codes was essential to the physical, material implementation of the high-rise tower for low-moderate income tenants (Brilliant, 14-15).

The UDC was in fact a shadow architect, predetermining the parameters for design, development and construction before any architect was commissioned, pushing buildings to new heights for a public purpose, in the name of public benefit; a moralizing mission to reform the behavior of black and brown bodies, in families and in the streets deemed pathological.

Participation / Override (Conclusion)

Deemed structurally new, UDC's formation was not without precedent. UDC bears an undeniable resemblance to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) that appeared in the 1930s in terms of its basic administrative philosophy, powers for areawide territorial development, complexity of economic and social goals, and ambiguous statutory authority for planning (Brilliant, 43). Both the UDC and TVA were afforded the capacity to plan for the realization of policies far beyond the statutory authority given them (Brilliant, 46). That is, each was fundamentally structured to deviate from the provision of one type of service or major function in order to fulfill more comprehensive aims by culling together a variety of participants. The broad scope of UDC's authority predetermined its eventual seeming obsolescence, discontinuing its work as a developer and turning towards economic development in 1975. By 1995 the "operational efforts" of the Department of Economic Development (DED) and the UDC were consolidated to do business as the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) in what was described as an effort "to reduce the size of government and improve efficiency" (History of Empire State Development, https://esd.ny.gov/about-us).

Eleanor Brilliant in her analysis of the Urban Development Corporation (1975) posits what she refers to as the "conversion hypothesis" to explain UDC's transformations in mission, approach, and execution during its short tenure. Brilliant explains that the UDC embodied a model that could be referred to as a "social enterprise model" (p. 6) at the state level. Such an organization is committed to performance and efficiency, has a business-like structure and seeks to develop partnerships with profit-making enterprises. Unlike most businesses, however, the UDC was a public purpose corporation. Therefore, while UDC sought to carry out rational social action in an efficient manner, it was subject to conflicting political demands. By its nature as a public organization, UDC was tied to the political system within which it operated and was measured by the standards of benefit defined by different publics (Brilliant, 6). Ultimately, for Brilliant, UDC's deep ties to financial institutions and the banking community account in large part for the "destiny of UDC" (p. 167). However, the often unarticulated aim of urban planning processes to determine, control and delimit the boundaries of bodies deemed problematic cannot go unrecognized.

In 2005, the Schomburg Plaza opted out of the Mitchell Lama low-moderate income housing program (a provision written into the law) and was exchanged among varying financial institutions (including Cammeby's International for just under $300 million, who later sold the property to Urban American Management for $918 million, including a $700 million mortgage originated by Deutsche Bank, as well as a large investment by the City Investment Fund). The development has since been renamed "The Heritage" and has recently undergone renovations to its exterior wall; experiencing the replacement of masonry wall units for glazing [Image 09]. Afforded a new face, Schomburg Plaza boasts a guise more aesthetically aligned with desirable multi-family apartment living while its underlying structure remains intact.

Abandoned house in Detroit
Source: Conor Allerton

EASTERN CRITIQUE ON URBANISM
transience and imperfection

Sherry Te

1 侘寂 **Wabi-sabi** (Japanese aesthetics, Buddhism) / acceptance of imperfection

2 無爲 **Wu-wei** (Chinese statesmanship, Confucianism) / inaction for free-flowing savoir-faire

3 物の哀れ **Mono-no-aware** (Japanese literature, Buddhism) / sensitivity towards transience, especially in seasons

IMPERFECTION + BEAUTY

As city-dwellers, why don't we revel with the fact that we have everything? We always want more, complain that other cities are better, that we have insufficient and inferior characteristics compared to those of other cities. New York, a classic example, is imperfect and has had a long history of pitfalls. Though, like an imperfectly shaped ceramic, its aesthetics lie not with perfect symmetry, but in its quirkiness (侘寂, wabi-sabi).[1]

We always complain about the dirtiness and scantiness of New York - but they give character to what New York is. Sure, there can be something learned or to be improved from the imperfection, but learning to appreciate gives people perspectives of hope, acceptance and contentment.

Often, planners praise the culture of externalizing solutions to the urban enhancement. However, there is merit in utilizing the inherent value of a city in 'beautifying' the city.

IMPERMANENCE + INEXERTION

Everything is fleeting. Like dirt in a toilet, change will always emerge. To people, change often equates to doom. Inexertion or inaction is a provided solution for impermanence. Embracing the ever-changing nature of an environment is a courageous act. In Eastern philosophy (無爲, wu-wei),[2] inexertion provides personal harmony by stimulating flow in one's state of being. It resonates a perfect knowledge of the reality that one experiences, navigating a situation with utmost efficaciousness. This allows transformation of energy to conform to its normative order.

What if in city planning, 'mindful planning' would be better? Addressing the needs of the current reality instead of conversing so much about the future?

It might be best to acknowledge the impermanence of things, and be more thoughtful of the present. Being more cognizant of our realities in cities could solve problems better by directing to system-failures current and real time. This is also a more sustainable way of planning, as resources are overseen better, and the 'present' can be utilized better.

NATURE + TRANSIENCE

Cities are not originally meant for relaxation and reflection. In one way or another, a sense of urgency will be stimulated by how cities greet you - by cars, subways, pedestrians, the culture of commerce, and busy schedules. Accomplishing as many tasks in the least possible time is a daily feat, to beat time. Time does not stop, and nature tells this. Even in built up, almost-artificial areas — cities — nature has a way to remind people of its passing. Nature is a time dial: seen through the sky, the trees.

The transience (物の哀れ, mono-no-aware)[3] of sunrises, sunsets, and lush green/yellow-tinted dry leaves posits the beginning and ends to different cycles in our lives. Nature is a good reminder for people to stay grounded — a tool for realigning ourselves. Freedom achieved from nature is a definitive indicator of its importance to be present in cities. By no means, the beauty that we can revel from nature should be scarce. The transience and ephemeralism that nature brings should be experienced omnipotently, especially in cities.

THE EVERYDAY CITY
the creation of ephemeral spaces

Jinish Gadhiya

Introduction

But we are unable to seize the human facts. We fail to see them where they are, namely in humble familiar objects. Our search for the human takes us too far, too deep. We seek it in the cloud or in mysteries, whereas it is waiting for us, besieging us on all sides.
— Henri Lefebvre, 'The Same and the Other'

'Everyday' relates to elements of ordinary human experience and itself conveys many complex meanings. The ordinary reveals the fabric of a space and time defined by a complex realm of social practices – an accident, habit, or desire. Everyday describes the living experience of urban residents, the banal and ordinary routines we know too well – commuting, working, relaxing, moving through city streets and sidewalks, shopping, eating food, running errands.

Even in its descriptive form, the everyday city has rarely been the focus of attention for designers, despite the fact that an amazing number of social, spatial and aesthetic meanings can be found in the repeated activities and conditions that constitute our daily, weekly, monthly, yearly routines. The city is a social entity that must be responsive to daily routines and neighbourhood concerns and should offer both an analysis of and a method for working within the social and political urban framework.

The belief that the everyday is important governs our life. Lefebvre was the first philosopher to insist that the apparently trivial everyday actually constitutes the basis of all social experiences within the city. Lefebvre describes daily life as the 'screen on which society projects its lights and its shadows, its hollows and its planes, its power and its weakness'. [1]

In spite of this significance, Lefebvre warns, that everyday is difficult to decode due to its fundamental ambiguity. As the first step in analysing this slippery concept, Lefebvre distinguished between two simultaneous realities that exist within everyday life: the *quotidian*, the timeless, humble, repetitive natural rhythms of life; and the modern, the always new and changing habits that are shaped by the sophisticated world of technology. [2]

The city is above all a social product, created out of the demands of everyday use and the social struggles of urban inhabitants. Design within the everyday space must start with an understanding and acceptance of the life that takes place there. [3]

The problem today – which has nothing philosophical about it – is that of the real life 'of' the city and 'in' the city. The true issue is not to make beautiful cities or well-managed cities; it is to make a work of life. The rest is a by-product.

The play of differences is the primary element in the 'real life' of the city. Lefebvre observed that abstract urban spaces, primarily designed to be reproduced, negated all differences: those that came from nature and history as well as those that came from the body, age, sex, and ethnicity'. [4]

Though these differences are progressively negated in the urban space, they nonetheless remain the most salient aspects of everyday life. The burdens and pleasures of life are distributed unevenly, according to class, age, race and gender. Lefebvre focused particular attention on the victims of everyday life, especially women sentenced to endless routines of housework and shopping. Lefebvre also identified immigrants, low-level employees, and teenagers as victims of everyday life, although 'never in the same way, never at the same time, and never all at once'. [5]

To locate these differences physically in everyday lives is to map the social geography of the city. The city for a bus driver or a pedestrian does not resemble that of an automobile owner. These differences separate the lives of the urban inhabitants from one another, while the overlap of their activities constitutes the primary form of social exchange in the city.

Dadar Station Market, Mumbai
Source: Author

The intersection between an individual or defined group and the rest of the city is everyday space: the site of multiple social and economic transactions, where multiple experiences accumulate in a single location. These spaces where the differences interact with each other for a small period of time are ephemeral. The space which is designed and created by everyday usage is the generator of activities constituting the 'Life of a Space'. The activation of such spaces at certain periods of time makes the environment transient. This imprints memories of the space used, which in turn, leads to a fission of other activities, generating a larger 'Ephemeral Space'.

The architecture of city design engages the daily without abandoning the structure, form, typology, light, material, and histories of art. These elements provide a vocabulary for public conversations about quality of life. The movement from macro to micro scales in city design entails a nuanced but critical shift in emphasis on the part of a designer. Critical to this evolution is the recognition of architecture's important role in establishing the human context of everyday life as well as a recommitment to the validity of city-making through specific acts of architecture. The accountability and quality of housing, open spaces, places of work, play and education are natural components of city design, not merely aesthetic fore- and after-thoughts of the planner designing a city. [6]

The architecture that accompanies the practice of city design must also communicate with the inhabitants of the place. To construct a communicating city implies proving spaces within buildings and landscapes, where both programmatic and symbolic points of difference and commonality are expressed. Since everyone is an expert in everyday life, it has never been an area of interest for the experts in design. Lefebvre pointed out that although experts and intellectuals are present in everyday life, they tend to think that they are outside and elsewhere. Convinced that everyday is trivial, they attempt to evade it. They use rhetoric and meta-language as 'permanent substitutes for experience, allowing them to ignore the mediocrity of their own condition'. [7]

Abstract culture places an almost opaque screen (if it were completely opaque the situation would be much simpler) between cultivated [people] and everyday life. Abstract culture not only supplies them with words and ideas but also with an attitude which forces them to seek the meaning of 'their' lives and consciousness outside of themselves and their real relations with the world'. [8]

Ephemeral Spaces: Experiences in a City

While the city can be studied, mapped, diagrammed, and probed from many professional perspectives, there is no substitute to the actual experience of a space. Whether encountered by foot, public transit, or car, while sitting on a bench, listening and observing, or through participation, the present city that surrounds us is taken for granted every day.

I see one such example daily during my commute to the railway station when I pass through a street with shops on either side of the road. There is an Auto Mechanic on the way. A chain link fence marks the lot's perimeter. During the day, the oil spotted pavement is filled with bikes awaiting repair. The space is filled with dirty oil stains and broken parts of bikes lying around. The name of the garage is written on a tin sheet with oil paint.

Every evening at about 6 o'clock while returning home, with the garage door closed after concluding the day's activity, and all the wrecks moved into the garage, street vendors start coming in and start putting up their stalls. Flex printed banners lit by bulbs charged by car batteries change the dynamics of the space altogether. The signage and the aroma of the food are enough to attract people to walk in and grab a bite. Despite this being a low profile food establishment, a surprising number of people somehow find this improvised drive in, and steer their cars into the busy narrow street to enjoy a snack or a meal.

The problem with the role of a designer is their reliance on design tools and actions that are never architecturally specific. The designer, rather than being a creator of micro and macro levels of experiences, becomes a diagrammer of plans, disconnected from the daily activities of the city. Physical architecture and dynamics of place making become less important than the social, environmental, transportation, economic, legislative actions that surround buildings in a city. We as designers fail to bring out the complex surprises that architecture can bring to the daily life of a city. Urban designers and architects generally tend to look for the extraordinary, the dramatic, whereas they tend to forget the usual and the everyday. These everyday activities have their own sense of drama, which is not given its due attention.

Flash mobs are one example of ephemeral spaces, where a site is taken and changed from its routine state creating a momentary space for a daily user. It not only adds an element of surprise but is also responsible for creating a curious desire in the inhabitants to be a part of the change taking place around them.

Similarly when we see the case of a vegetable market, on the pavements of a pedestrian street, it makes the commuter engage with the multiple activities happening on either side. The association of a commuter with respect to its surroundings makes him a part of the street scape which is an amalgamation of multi utility objects. It is not only helpful for the commuter to shop in these market streets,

but it also creates a sense of openness and gives them more options of the same utility with the movement in the space. Contrastingly, the new glass cladded malls and shopping complexes of the city offer a space for high human density interaction but lacks the freedom of movement because of its designed and controlled environment. The market would provide the commuter with a fluid space to travel through, without the sense of being in a closed environment. A mall cannot be used on the basis of a transition path, as private locked premises allow interaction only during fixed hours. A market, emerging in different pockets along transition paths, is a result of generations of human use, transforming a space throughout the day.

Manek Chowk, Ahmedabad is one of the most ephemeral spaces. It is highly dynamic in the nature of dense human activity, which takes place mostly because of the programmatic spaces designed around it. In the morning, the space has a religious quality to it where locals visit the temple, feeding the cow with fodder. In the afternoon, the space shifts usage and becomes a vegetable market catering to the pol houses in the vicinity. In the evenings, the space dynamically changes to become a khau galli, a local food street where hundreds of people are out on the roads having a variety of meals.

An office building designed and constructed by Serie Architects at Kurla looks at the transit movement of connecting the pedestrian to the main road by passing through the building. The office building not only generates a life in the open court but also makes it a commuter friendly zone where the interaction of the main road and the buildings adjacent to the other sides are connected. The open atrium created by the designer for public transition makes it filled with human life during the work hours. These spaces then not only are a part of the building design but belong to the everyday commuter as it becomes their space for every time they pass through it. This everyday space at a micro level resolves a big challenge of transition and social interaction which the downtown is lacking. Even at a macro level of designing we can observe that the building is not only responsible for inhabiting the office user but also a conjugator to the major road.

Through the designing process, we as designers will constantly feel flux in cities. Yet cities themselves have become resilient in adapting to these changes, the everyday slowly transforming to acclimate to constant change. The idea of the 'everyday' as a ritual and a practice must be documented and addressed in the process of designing, but I believe that new configurations of space will give rise to other forms of everyday, maneuvering around design, readapting itself and transforming into what we will then call the new 'everyday'.
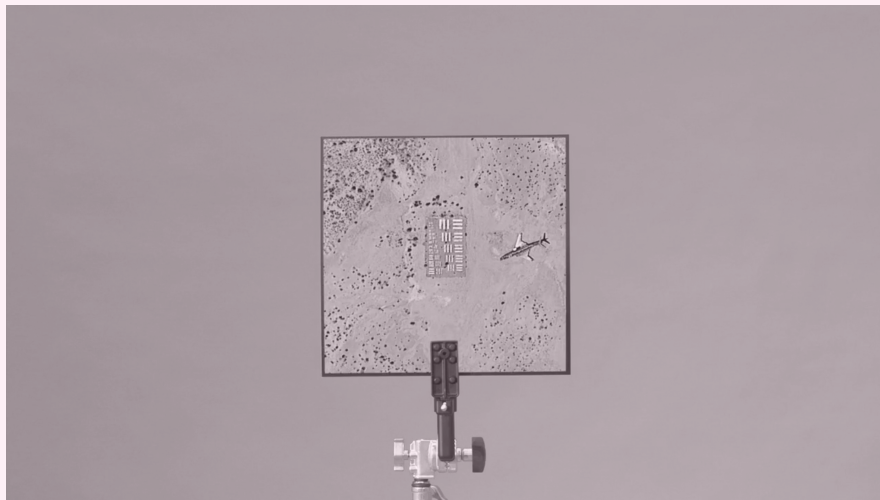
*Screenshots from the film
by Hito Steyerl*

HOW NOT TO BE SEEN
a fucking didactic educational .mov film

Yuning Feng

Hito Steyerl, a German filmmaker and visual artist, created *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV Film* (*How Not to Be Seen*). Steyerl's work is often in close communication with the current political issues, such as surveillance, militarization, and media. Her role as an artist is not limited to creating static art displayed or sold; she pushes the boundaries of both her artistic role and the definition of video art. Instead of a pure abstraction of an idea, her artworks derive from profound, scholarly research and interviews.

I am interested in the ambivalence of invisibility discussed in *How Not to Be Seen*. As stated in the title, this is an educational film. In it, Steyerl gives lessons on keeping individuals from being "visible" from the public, government, and even from image-capturing devices. She provides an opinion on the definition of "visibility," which, in a way, determines "how not to be seen." The visibility, in her lessons, is indicated as the object's size in comparison to a single pixel, his/her role in the community, his/her representation in politics, and the object him/herself. The titles of each lesson—how not to be seen by a camera, how to be invisible in plain sight, how to become a picture, how to disappear, and how to merge into the world that is made of images—provide a comprehensive and sophisticated discussion framework for this topic.

Apart from being a visual artist, Hito Steyerl is also an avid writer. Specifically, Steyerl states that being depicted in an image, a pixelation process, is not the equivalence of representation--"Participating in an image is not the same as being represented by it" (Steryerl, 2010). In one of her writings, she discusses the idea of active participation:

"If identification is to go anywhere, it has to be with this material aspect of the image, with the image as [a] thing, not as representation."

--A Thing Like You and Me, 2010

In order for an object to sustain its individuality, its identity, it requires autonomy within the object. A cup is a cup without the potter. An idea is an idea without people explain it. But a reflection of an object is not the object, because it does not have autonomy—it requires the object itself. Ignoring such dependence results in inaccurate representation. The evolution of technology is not equivalent to the improvement of "what we see".

As users and subjects of such a process, do we have the agency to make choices and deciding how and how much should we be represented? Do we have the ability to do so? Living in New York City, we are being videotaped 24/7 by LinkNYC cameras on the streets. Even though the company stated in their privacy policy that the footage will only be stored up to 7 days, who are the checks and balances in this process? Presidential candidate Andrew Yang's controversial proposal—the privatization of data produced by specific individuals; in this way, one can receive monetary benefit using their data.

The fear of being tracked and the fear of being eliminated as a subject—what are we afraid of?

The distrust of representation and the desire of being a thing—is it possible that such distrust and desire are just mirroring each other?

Two years ago, I watched this video in an art class feeling disturbed. Now I feel more than ever apprehensive and dismal when I watched it again.

*Screenshot from the film
by Hito Steyerl*

1. Camouflage

2. Conceal

3. Disguise

4. Mimic

5. Living in a gated community

6. Living in a military zone

7. Being at the airport, factory or museum

8. Own an invisible clock

9. Superhero

10. Female over 50

11. Surfing dark web

12. Being a dark pixel

13. Being a wifi signal moving through the human body

14. Being undocumented or poor

15. Being found court by filter

16. Being a disappeared person as an enemy of the state

17. Eliminated, liquidated, and then dissimulated

18. In the decades of the digital revolution, one hundred and seventy thousand people disappeared

19. Disappeared are not related, eliminated, eradicated, deleted, dispensed with, filtered, processed, selected, segregated, wiped out

20. Invisible people retreated to 3D animations, they hold the vectors of the mission to keep the picture together

21. They re-emerge into pixels

22. They emerge into the world made of all images

23. To hide

24. To remove

25. To get off the screen

26. To disappear

TOWARD A CLIMATE CURRICULUM
at GSAPP

Hayes Buchanan

In *The Just City*, author and former director of GSAPP's urban planning program Susan Fainstein, establishes diversity, democracy and equity as the most important criteria for the just city. In developing these criteria, Fainstein excludes a topic that "require[s] separate and fuller examination"-- that topic being the environment (Fainstein, 2010). In 2019, the necessity for this examination of the environment has deepened to a dramatic degree. In the Bay Area, Californians are experiencing planned power outages as the risk of wildfire grows (Worland, 2019). The government of Indonesia is abdicating its coastal capital city, Jakarta, for higher ground (Guest, 2019). In 2017, Hurricane Maria resulted in the death of almost 3,000 Puerto Ricans (Sanchez, 2018). The climate disaster demands the attention of our discipline. The time for a "separate and fuller examination" of resiliency planning is now, and Columbia GSAPP should lead the way.

The statistics are tired with repetition at this point. We have 12 years to limit warming to 1.5° Celsius—and we're already at 1.0° (currently the rate of warming is 0.2° per decade). If we fail to do so, the rate of warming will become significantly more unpredictable. This could result in a runaway warming scenario that no amount of intervention could reverse (IPCC, 2018). This is a strong case illustrating why humanity as a species must decarbonize rapidly if we are to spare the biosphere. We do not accomplish this without densifying. We do not accomplish this without public transit. We do not accomplish this without more stringent building codes. We do not accomplish this if our institutions are not equipping us to plan with climate emergency in mind.

GSAPP Urban Planning has taken an amicable but halfhearted stance towards resilient courses. Following the slate of Green New Deal classes offered this fall, it appears that 4-5 resiliency related electives will be offered on a temporary basis in the spring of 2020. Only one of these courses centers climate change specifically as its predominant focus. Is this piecemeal approach really enough?

Equipping the next generation of planners with the tools necessary to combat the climate crisis will require more than an inconsistent roster of resiliency related courses. Successful planning requires the ability to navigate a mosaic of competing interests, hierarchies, and power structures. In the current discourse of planning, many of those existing structures maintain value systems that ignore the health of the biosphere, complicating an already complex task. We need to be planners fluent in the science of climate crisis and adept at translating resiliency concerns into the language of every stakeholder. Planning as a profession is not alone in this necessity. Billy Fleming, director of the McHargue Center for Urbanism and Ecology, writes in his clarion call to the landscape architecture field; "The students… need coursework in public administration and finance, political theory, and community organizing" (Fleming, 2019).

Our task is not just to perform resiliency planning as professionals, but to create conditions where resiliency planning and processes are a fundamental part of every project. To teach planning without a thoughtful and coherent climate curriculum tempts history to label us obsolete.

The cachet of the climate crisis as a singularly significant issue has risen meteorically in the past two years. So far, however, few local governments have taken the problem seriously (to say nothing even of the Federal government). Even New York City's OneNYC 2050 plan fails to adequately address auto emissions, a fatal blind spot. The reasons for this are clear: many of the changes the climate crisis demands of us as a society are not politically popular enough to generate widespread support. One might think that this obstacle would render a resilient planning curriculum an exercise in futility. I would respond to that criticism with a quote from (noted villain) Milton Freidman:

"Only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change. When the crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable."

As resiliency planners it is our duty to generate these policies and to keep them in the discourse of our institutions because the day is coming when the tide will turn and we will spring into action—but only if we have been equipped to do so.

The mission of GreenSAPP is to promote a greater emphasis on and engagement with the topic of climate crisis in the curriculum and student life at GSAPP as we step into our roles as leaders in shaping the built environment.

GreenSAPP can be reached at columbia.greensapp@gmail.com

CITATIONS

Landscapes of Anxiety
Written by Candelaria Mas Pohmajevic (AUD '20)
Edited by Tihana Bulut

6 cm
Written by Ibrahim Kombarji (AAD '20)
Edited by Zeineb Sellami

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Written by Magda Maaoui (UP PhD)
Edited by Zeineb Sellami

Visible Cities: Paintings and Poems
Written and Painted by Claire Yang (UP '20)
Edited by Kirthana Sudhakar

Obsolescence and the MBTA: A Love Story
Written by Michael A. N. Montilla (UP '19)
Edited by Kirthana Sudhakar

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Written by Sherry Te (New York/Paris '20)
Edited by Geon Woo Lee

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Edited by Geon Woo Lee

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Written by Hayes Buchanan (UP '21)
Edited by Tihana Bulut

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