

International Symposium 2008

Creative Construct: Building for Culture and Creativity

April 28 - May 1, 2008

Fairmont Château Laurier, Ottawa, Canada

www.symposium2008.ca

Any city is a scribbled etch-a-sketch of old and new, pathways and monuments, etc, all the various elements that go into a cityscape.

Every city is a collage

Urban theory: collage – architectural discourse -- architectures in relation to each other...

That framework has guided urban design and planning ever since...every creative practice is in relation to all the others that came before and that surround it. Context is very important. Everything adds to the collage

An explanation and exploration of various theories of urban space –urban geography

Relationship between urban geography and the creation of theatre and film

Bringing together interest in urban geography and in representational space....

To consciously engage people in their sense of place and sense of community –and collective memory—

Imagination is key to enriching the symbolic quality of our cities

It is important to understand the links between representation, perception, and experience

André Lefebvre urban theorist—the construction of space

Ways of seeing influence ways of knowing and therefore ways of being

Our experience of space in the past is tied to how we see those spaces in the present

There is interplay of symbolic and physical dimensions

Over the past century there's been a trajectory of influence due to the numbers of people studying space and context in cities

Walter Benjamin – German writer and theorist – early 1900s –even walking became a methodology for investigating the city

– influence – a way of understanding subtlety and its importance in how we experience city

“Profane illumination” – walking as a mean to create that collage - -intent to bring working class to realization of their condition through the collisions of introducing and experiencing new elements

1950s-ideas of collage and spatial experience - -the situationist—spirit of anarchy to modern media culture.

Psycho-geography – people drifting through city – looking at the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment

Sought to understand when people gain insight

Urbanism – offer a living critique

Chuck Palahniuk (writer)– “The only frontier you have left is the world of intangibles”.

Methodologies also deal with how we represent the intangible. It is important to study what they mean for the relationship between representation and space

Victor Bergen—

Unique role of representation in architecture.....it's about an idea, about architecture as a field of research and as a practice

Art and architecture are blurred...critical architecture—not meant to be built but critical in its intentions

New Babylon

Cedric Price – fun spaces...living critique

Every design re-imagines a city...

the spark of imagination and potential

Peter Lunefield – hardscape and imagescape

Our work is in essence interdisciplinary –

Allison Orlean - -Strange and strong yet crude and precarious - -wharf structures

“festivalisation and spectacularisation of landscape”

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Andy Jones –
Michael Crummey—

All about a historical installation

Graeme Patterson
Sara Graham

The idea of artwork being site-specific is important - -every work is site-specific and relational

Architectures for Creativity is a course at which students examine this relationship—given the task of using theory as practice - -design for a specific space...balance the elements of the landscape with the architectural elements - -both are landscapes...

Part 2: Irwin

More focus on practice

Overview of work on DT lower east side in Vancouver—a look at how we are using those spaces as cultural workers

I have been an artist and cultural worker for twenty years...

Looking at spaces, creating some of the first youth art centres in Canada; also festivals in public spaces

—community arts movement in Vancouver, Vancouver arts council – Roundhouse – communications and program assistance

Exec director of mental health arts centre....community and cultural planning; developing spaces that support artists

Intervention: New Genre in Public Art - -

—imaging interventions with artists in public spaces.

—homeless – national public health crisis –

—housing activists –village of 18,000 people, second poorest in Canada (besides north Winnipeg - -huge aboriginal segment)

—housing activists built a makeshift billboard (wood and home depot stuff)

—“Homes Not Games”

—challenged city to work with the homeless – negotiating conventions of gallery, street art, etc

—street artists - -challenged how to work within conventions of artistic institutions - -no access to cultural spaces, first time they come in and learn the conventions of system and space..

The artists that weren't homeless established artists were also very excited about the project...

54 homeless deaths, 135% increase in homelessness...UN complaint by housing activists in neighbourhood - -all while millions spent on Olympics...Neighbourhoods being artificially repressed, or bulldozed...a few business people own most of land, forced gentrification

“Out of the Rain” at the Roundhouse - -exhibit to raise money - -conference with politicians...

now target that program more to homeless artists in neighbourhood

now supporting homeless artists with studio space and materials, and exhibition

Outreach to leverage what we can through our cultural practices to bring about change...

also Gallery has partnered with other organizations - -

Much - -food and art

identify key issues, e.g. zoning, planning, etc, to discuss and identify themes

1—regulatory framework –

how to promote infrastructure that doesn't fit into the existing framework – Vancouver has a history of shutting down alternative spaces that don't comply, don't fit regulations, etc

what if they hadn't been shut down?

what is the role of city cultural planners to enable these spaces to occupy sites that perhaps don't have proper zoning or the correct fire escapes, haven't been designed for public assembly uses?

—double whammy - -regulations and the scarcity of funding for culture –

These spaces are necessary fluid streams so artists can experiment, can find new forms

Proposal with the city for street level art centre in an empty retail space on LES

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–try to get city to acknowledge the homeless artists - -crack addicts who sell art for a fix or a hotel room or food - -40 to 60 of these - -master carvers....

–some who have produced 30,000 drawings –their work is collected in suburban homes all over the mainland - -now hearing –reports of work being picked up for 20 dollars, being sold to thousands...

–interesting ethical issues need to confront in our work as a cultural organization

–space at 44 Cordova – gone nowhere after three years, the city unable to break the silo between social planning, real estate, etc...

–artists are often the grease for regentrification – money to clean up DLES—beautification of

–of the 10\$million allotted to clean up LES for Olympics, probably 9 million will be spent on beautification, and the other on people

How to protect the artists?

City is required to intervene to look after H&S, etc...

Trying to impress on city that we can do it differently

Cluster model – gallery is a collective – of people who are sex abuse survivors, trauma survivors, mental health issues - - unique model in terms of mental health and cultural services - -not rehabilitation or therapy - -people look after each other and support - -successfully model of collectivity and mutual interest

Community art centre – also a cluster model – people form clusters and we support them – joint applications for admin and management also a voice to neighbourhood - -

LES is a dumping ground because of policies – in mental health and in housing – resulted in an artificially created ghetto responded by creating our own community infrastructure – affects artists

demonstrates how artists who are visionaries can be effective without working in the boundaries of social policy

Cross-silo –

-have attracted a lot of interest from business, etc..

-mobile media, ICT cluster - -local technologists –

- handing out cameras for people to document –

-arts marketing portal

-building new arts centre called W2 - -Woodward Centre

W2 Community Media Arts Centre

innovative - -looking at how this gentrified neighbourhood will look; what assets we want to save, design

clustered together groups – literary – gallery Gache—pointing centre—TV lab—two community radio stations – cross media centre - -multiplatform environment rather than silos of arts disciplines –

so that people can use whatever they're comfortable with the share their cultural environments - -multi discipline –

centre has social housing, art school, etc

Goal: how can homeless people feel comfortable in this newly gentrified city? Architect interested in challenges of deigning this future community – negotiating with city of Vancouver..

as we lose the neighbourhood we'll still have some key spaces that are accessible to working class people, and will enable them to still have a voice

3. Notable examples and links to websites

Practical example:

Intangible Evidence - -an exhibition and research process at The Rooms in St John's

collective memory and cultural identity – interest in –

worked with visual artists, a writer, and performance artist...they all could take whatever they wanted from the archives collection and create work in response

Practical examples:

Homes Not Games – a project on Vancouver's lower east side

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W2Centre

cellspace.org

fearlesscity.ca

4. Interesting questions and/or comments from the audience

Discussion:

How provincial planning acts do not consider these views – do not consider creativity - -the standards do not consider creativity at all –e.g. zoning, standards, etc

Question - -Charles Butowski—polite applause—the hoofs of the horses from hell pounding the ceiling

the audience just gets it - -the artist will wake them up - -audiences could not agree –would want to be more than passive viewer --

Note taker: Lisa Zanyk