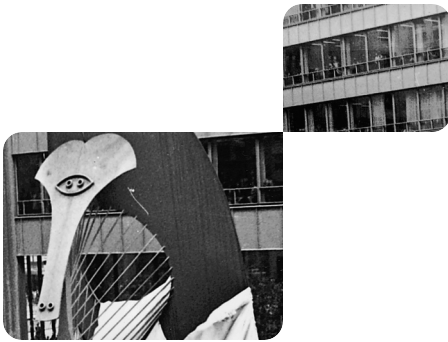




*Introduction: **The City as Site***

I have a very clear memory of a warm night late in the summer of 1985. Having come to “Art on the Beach,” an outdoor venue on a landfill in Lower Manhattan, I sat with a couple of hundred other people on the sand listening to Sun Ra and his Solar Arkestra. The concert was set before an architectural environment called *Delta Spirit House* created by David Hammons, Jerry Barr, and Angela Valerio. The backdrop was perfect for Sun Ra: a beautifully designed shack painstakingly constructed with materials scavenged from the streets of New York. And the audience was the sort of mixture one hopes for in New York—people from the downtown art world, friends of Hammons, Barr, and Valerio from the Lower East Side, Brooklyn, and Harlem, and jazz enthusiasts from all over the city. The racial and economic mix was significant, but everyone was casual and relaxed. As the sun set, Sun Ra revealed to us that he was from the moon, chanting, “Space is the place.” We were transported, but content in the very immediate surroundings of the Hudson River, the traffic on the West Side, the grandiose scale of the Lower Manhattan business district, and the intense artistic and musical invention before us. But this was one of the last moments of “Art on the Beach,” and the place where we sat listening that evening is now a part of Battery Park City, a luxury neighborhood synonymous with the 1980s’ version of urban development and public art in the United States. In a review in *Artforum*, critic Patricia Phillips lamented the end of “Art on the Beach” and the encroachment of the developers’ bulldozers:

In the final installation of Creative Time’s “Art on the Beach,” there was a significant sense of timely conclusion; the situation was not unlike that of a professional athlete or musician who, in deciding when to retire, must balance personal goals—perhaps unfulfilled—with the desire to go out on top, with dignity. . . . The condition of the landfill site was the most poignant indication of the finale. Bulldozers had shaped a large plateau in the center of the site, leaving a depressed corridor around the edge where most of the installations were built. A cyclone fence had been erected along the southern and western edges, obstructing access to the Hudson River. The encroachment of Battery Park City Authority development was imminent.¹

At the time, the transformations that were about to take place on the site still seemed unreal to me. After all, Creative Time² had been presenting “Art on the Beach” for exactly the six years I had been in New York, and it was an art world institution. The World Financial Center had just opened, and its polished brass and granite seemed



Left: Sun Ra concert in front of *Delta Spirit House* by David Hammons, Jerry Barr, and Angela Valerio, 1985, Creative Time's "Art on the Beach," New York, New York. Photograph: Lawrence I. Lesman, courtesy of Creative Time.

Right: Battery Park City (on right), New York, New York, as seen from the World Trade Center in 1998.

like a vision of everything the 1980s stood for, but it was not until "they" closed down "Art on the Beach" that I began to think more seriously about the relationship of art to the city, and who "they" were. When I had built an installation on the landfill in the summer of 1985, I was, perhaps, in a partnership with the developers who were in a holding pattern as they got their money together to build on the site. As an artist, I had helped keep the site active, helped attract people to the landfill. When the Authority was ready to build, out went "Art on the Beach" and its temporary experimental feel, and in came a set of luxurious apartments and suitably high-priced permanent art installations spread throughout the development. I began to consider the role that art was asked to play in the development of the city. When I walk through Battery Park City today, I still think of the evening when I heard Sun Ra. I think of the modesty and originality of the architecture of *Delta Spirit House*, as well as the social and racial diversity of the crowd who had come to the concert. And I wish that the Battery Park City Authority could have seen the potential in that moment. In fact, as Rosalyn Deutsche has pointed out, they did everything they could to ensure a lack of economic diversity among the residents of their development. On the insistence of the Authority (with the acceptance of the state), *all* of the subsidized housing units were eliminated from the site. In 1999, Battery Park City's Web site proudly proclaims this victory with the following timeline entry, "1986: New York Legislature passed, and Governor signed, legislation which allowed Battery Park City's excess rev-

enue to be used for low- and moderate-income housing in the Bronx and Harlem."³ After "Art on the Beach" ended, Sun Ra's audience was not invited to live together on the site. This course of events places Battery Park City squarely within the mainstream postwar urban development in the United States.

The history of public art is most often told with an emphasis on the word "art," and very little consideration of the public context. Writers discuss the sequence of artistic development, usually paying no more than lip service to the development of the twentieth-century city, or modern art's relationship with those developments. To contextualize the projects discussed in this book, it is necessary to look back to the transformations in the American city after World War II. This essay is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of postwar urbanism. Rather, I want to set up a very basic dialectic between top-down, "pro-growth" development initiated by or for business elites, and grassroots, "community-oriented" development initiated by or for people outside the traditional mainstream of power in the United States. In one way or another, the art projects discussed in the interviews (with the possible exception of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*) relate more closely to the second sort of urban development—toward sharing power rather than imposing solutions, toward healing wounds inflicted by the fragmentation and social segregation of contemporary public space.

When World War II ended, veterans returned to a new American Dream. The good life required owning a car and a home of one's own. "Moving up" meant moving out of the city. Expressways were built at a feverish rate as population in the suburbs increased by 45 percent in the 1950s.⁴ Between 1945 and 1965, the registration of automobiles nearly tripled.⁵ Highways became a new focus for Americans. Where mass transit had accounted for more than one-third of passenger miles in 1945, its share had dwindled to 5 percent by 1965. The white middle class got off the subway, into their cars, and out of the cities.⁶ The space people sought in postwar America was increasingly private, from their homes to their mode of transport. In abandoning the street for the highway, the subway for the car, and the city for the suburbs, Americans lost everyday sites for social interaction. Where a street is a confusing melange of activities—a social scene, a place for commerce, a site for transit—the highway has a single use, the transportation of people from one place to another. The individual driver in a private car, on the way to a private home, is independent and isolated.

And highways are not only lines of transit; they can also create lines of division. It is well documented how highways tore the heart out of neighborhoods dur-

ing this period of reckless construction. In his book *The Power Broker*, Robert Caro relates how Robert Moses brazenly plowed highways through neighborhoods. One of the most egregious examples was the Cross Bronx Expressway that was constructed without the least concern for the lives of the thousands of people it would displace. At one famous juncture, a well-organized community group suggested a slight alteration of the route of the highway that would have saved 1,530 apartments from demolition, tearing down 6 instead of 159 buildings over the stretch of a mile. Starting when they received eviction notices in 1952, a neighborhood group led by a housewife named Lillian Edelstein fought the demolition of their homes along this stretch. After a fierce battle, Moses prevailed and the highway went through as originally planned. Many people trace the downward spiral of the Tremont section of the Bronx to the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway.⁷ The “success” of this highway was repeated in cities across the United States, displacing millions of low-income tenants with little thought of where they might move. The narrative of urban renewal often seems to have pitted women like Edelstein against male master planners like Moses.

The goal of highways like the Cross Bronx Expressway may have been to make the city more efficient, but the result was a quicker exit; the cities’ loss was the suburbs’ gain. Of course, highways did not completely empty the cities. They simply created an escape route for those who were allowed to use it. Systematically excluded from many suburbs, African Americans found themselves in cities of diminishing resources.

Among the most famous developers during the postwar period were the Levitt brothers, who built “Levittowns” on Long Island and outside of Philadelphia. Rows of nearly identical homes on identical lots were differentiated only by variations in exterior trim. As fast as these houses were built, they were inhabited, largely by veterans and their families. While Jews, Irish people, and Italians were welcome in these instant suburbs, African Americans were not. In fact, the contract signed by each new homeowner in Long Island’s Levittown included a clause that read: “No dwelling shall be used or occupied by members of other than the Caucasian race.”⁸ This was not exceptional. In his classic study of the suburbanization of the United States, Kenneth Jackson traces the roots of suburban segregation, and argues that the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) played a significant role. Not simply turning a blind eye to racial prejudice, this New Deal agency actually initiated the practice of “red lining” certain areas that would not qualify for federal loan guarantees, and racial division was an essential criterion in this practice.⁹ The FHA, which was aug-

mented by the Veterans Administration after the war, was a major contributor to the suburbanization of the United States. Jackson says:

FHA helped to turn the building industry against the minority and inner city housing market, and its policies supported the income and racial segregation of suburbia. For perhaps the first time, the federal government embraced discriminatory attitudes of the marketplace. Previously, prejudices were personalized and individualized; FHA exhorted segregation and enshrined it as public policy. Whole areas of cities were declared ineligible for loan guarantees.¹⁰

Developers, banks, real estate agents, the federal government, and community groups made sure that the suburbs remained white. And, as feminist critics have pointed out, the social and physical architecture of the suburbs created a prescribed role for women. Where the war effort had expanded the options of women in the workforce in the 1940s, the suburbs rigidified their domestic roles in the 1950s. No longer “Rosie the Riveter,” the new American woman was a housewife in the ‘burbs. As Dolores Hayden has argued, the national priority of employing veterans after the war meant removing women from the workforce.¹¹ There were several types of segregation in the suburbanization of the United States: The segregation of the increasingly black cities from the white suburbs, the segregation, for men, of the business day in the city and the domestic evening at home in suburbia, and the gender segregation of the breadwinning husband and the stay-at-home wife.

The banality of these suburbs was attacked vehemently by architects at the time. Of course, architects were effectively shut out of the design of these homes, and



Public Housing in lower Manhattan, New York, 1998.

their attacks were generally more aesthetic than social. After the war, architecture was dominated by High Modernist thought, particularly the design and theories of Le Corbusier, the Swiss-born Parisian. An essential force in the creation of Modernist architecture (a.k.a. the International Style), his radical vision had become commonplace by the 1950s. Since the 1930s, architecture and planning schools in the United States had been dominated by his followers. As Lewis Mumford said, the appeal of Le Corbusier was that he

*... brought together the two architectural conceptions that separately dominated the modern movement: machine-made environment, standardized, bureaucratized, "processed," technically perfected to the last degree; and to offset this the natural environment, treated as so much visual open space, providing sunlight, pure air, green foliage, and views.*¹²

The result of this synthesis was the vertical garden city—monolithic high-rise buildings with green areas between. Le Corbusier's notion was to bulldoze the old city in favor of a clean, logical, well-engineered vision of the future. Following Le Corbusier's exhortation, "WE MUST BUILD IN THE OPEN,"¹³ architects sought to create open space around their buildings, be they high-rise office towers on plazas, or high-rise housing built off the street, surrounded by green space.

Le Corbusier's imagination was not limited to the drawing board, or even the design of specific buildings, but bore fruit in a new conception of urban life. His proposal for a city of 3 million people (1922) was the High Modernist utopia, and one outstanding aspect was a clear separation of elements—separation of buildings from one another, separation of housing and manufacturing, separation of pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic, and so on. For example, Le Corbusier argued that, in his ideal design, "The river flows far away from the city. The river is a kind of liquid railway, a goods station and sorting house. In a decent house the servants' stairs do not go through the drawing room—even if the maid is charming (or if the little boats delight the loiterer leaning on a bridge)."¹⁴ Advocating the separation of the city from its traditional life blood, the river, Le Corbusier's condescending reference to the "little boats" reveals a tremendous arrogance, but he had no place for sentimentality. And, in an odd metaphor for a socialist, Le Corbusier points to the advantages of the separation of the classes, "even if the maid is charming."

In 1958, one of the most significant modernist buildings in America was completed. The Seagram Building, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson, created a sensation in New York City. Stark and elegant, it was set back from the street on Park Avenue, providing a rare public plaza. From newspaper reports at the time, this space was well used by the office workers in the area. One reporter wrote:

*A half-acre plaza in front of the new thirty-eight story Seagram Building on Park Avenue has become an oasis for office workers and passers-by. The plaza is 100 feet deep and a full blockfront wide, between Fifty-second and Fifty-third Streets. It was designed by Mies Van Der Rohe, principal architect of the bronze skyscraper, to provide a spacious setting for the building and give a little breathing space to pedestrians. He feels they are too often hemmed in by towering buildings.*¹⁵

It is important to remember how unusual this plaza was at the time. If one walks up Park Avenue from Fiftieth to Sixtieth Street today, it is still possible to see how this modest plaza came as a relief, and in looking at photographs from the late 1950s, you can understand how exciting and modern the design must have felt. But from a con-



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson, Seagram Building, 1956–1958, New York, New York. Photograph: Ezra Stoller, © ESTO, courtesy of Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc.

temporary perspective, it seems that the commentators in 1958 were suffering from urban claustrophobia. They consistently repeated terms of derision for the city like “hemmed in,” “airless,” and “dark”—hardly phrases that come to mind today in describing Park Avenue. Whatever one feels about the Seagram Building, its popular success led to the so-called Plaza Law of 1961, New York City’s first incentive zoning device. The device was simple: Developers could build larger structures with a higher “floor area ratio” if they provided a plaza or arcade—to produce public spaces like those at the Seagram Building or Lever House across the street.¹⁶ The 1961 changes in the zoning laws of New York City encouraged developers to construct high-rise buildings on small footprints, creating a series of open plazas. When it was passed, the *New York Times* called the plaza law a “tremendous victory in the cause of building a better city of the future.”¹⁷ It is interesting to note the terms in which the debate over the law took place. A *New York Times* article in 1959 hailing the proposed zoning law began thus:

*There is an old New York story of an Irishman who returned to his former neighborhood and found no one he knew. “Where are the Irish?” he asked a Jewish man. The answer was another question, “Where are all the Indians?” The zoning resolution made public today won’t bring back the Indians—not at today’s prices. In time, though, it might open the way for a return to New York City of some of the nomads from the suburbs.*¹⁸

This period piece (set at the time when Jews were replacing Irish people in New York neighborhoods) expresses a clear motivation of the zoning law: creating a city that is appealing to those who had left for the suburbs. The thirst for open space, away from crowding was a sign of the times, just as the move to the suburbs had been.

As crime grew in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the public spaces created by the Plaza Law became increasingly regulated—including the construction of illegal fences and spikes expressly intended to prevent sleeping or sitting.¹⁹ By the 1980s, the value of these zoning laws was in question; the incentive was reduced in many areas and eliminated in others.²⁰ Laws of this nature have proven to be particularly problematic in historic districts where they are seen as precluding contextual design.²¹

By the early 1960s, modern architecture’s hold on public design was such that there was little regard for historically significant buildings. An egregious example was the demolition of McKim, Mead, and White’s Pennsylvania Station in New York in 1964, making way for a modern structure that is now universally despised. While

the old Penn Station boasted a grand waiting room 800 feet long, with Corinthian columns and a 150-foot-high vaulted ceiling, the new version fit the term “men’s room modern.” The demolition of Penn Station led directly to the establishment of the Landmarks Preservation Commission in New York City, but the immediate result was an interest in saving the city’s great landmarks, not the fabric of the city.²² In fact, even in Le Corbusier’s most extreme plans, he sought to preserve the gems of the past, while bulldozing the city as a whole. In a postmodern irony, thirty years after its demolition, the architecture of the old Penn Station has reappeared on the site in a permanent public artwork called *Ghost* (1993–1994) by Andrew Leicester. Now, as you walk to the Long Island Railroad trains, you pass by low-relief recreations of fallen columns from the grand classical building that once stood on the site. Plans are now under way to move Penn Station to the vast Post Office building across the street, to recapture the grandeur that was lost in the creation of the efficient Modernist building.

Though African Americans were excluded from many suburbs during the postwar period, they too were in transit. Millions of African Americans moved from the South to the North during the 1940s and 1950s. Escaping Jim Crow, they sought better-paying factory jobs in the northern industrial cities. For example, while the white population of Chicago declined 13 percent from 1950 to 1960, the black population increased by 65 percent. There were nine race riots in Chicago during this period—nervous whites reacting violently to the threat of black encroachment.²³

In the 1950s, profound contradictions characterized urban policy in the United States. On the one hand, federal government-supported initiatives like massive highway projects contributed to the suburbanization of the United States, draining resources from the cities. On the other hand, “urban blight,” and the abandonment of the city became a national concern. Planners and bureaucrats across the country embarked on vast “urban renewal” projects, which meant bulldozing the old city in favor of a cleaner replacement, with an emphasis on bulldozing. Between 1949 and 1968, 300,000 more units of low-income housing (mostly in minority communities) were demolished for redevelopment than were built.²⁴ It is hard to say whether it would have been better or worse if more units had been replaced. The low-income units constructed under urban renewal programs were generally gigantic high-rise projects designed in the stripped-down Modernist style of the day. These were what Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter call the cut-price, bureaucratic rendition of Le Corbusier’s vision.²⁵

The archetypal housing project, the urban mirror of suburban Levittown, was Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis. When it was designed in the early 1950s, Pruitt-Igoe was meant to “save not only people but money.”²⁶ In reality, it wasted both. At the time of its construction, *Architectural Forum* hailed it as a project that would “cut two big sections out of the collar of slums which is threatening to strangle the downtown business section.”²⁷ One money-saving innovation was elevators that only stopped on every third floor. At each elevator lobby was a “gallery” where children could play while their mothers did the laundry. The notion was to create vertical “neighborhoods,” because the tenants were coming from (razed) communities that were 90 percent single houses.²⁸ But these galleries were barren abstractions of the communities that were destroyed. People were transported from “blight” of the street into the geometry of the International Style. Because of the height of the buildings and the space-saving innovations at Pruitt-Igoe, there was a “river” of open space that made its way through the project, just the sort of green relief that Le Corbusier and his followers advocated.

In 1965, little more than a decade after the completion of Pruitt-Igoe, another article appeared in *Architectural Forum* under the headline, “The Case History of Failure.”²⁹ The occasion of the new article was the renovation of the housing project. Even at a time in which St. Louis was suffering from a shortage of low-cost housing, people were avoiding Pruitt-Igoe; it was one-third empty.³⁰ By all accounts it was an unsafe and unpleasant place to live. The “galleries” were a convenient site for crime, referred to as “gauntlets” by the tenants. Children did play there, but their games were too loud and rough for the scale of the galleries—outdoor play in an indoor setting. Three children had fallen from the galleries. The open space, such a high priority in the project’s early conception, that river of green, was strewn with broken glass and trash.³¹ In the 1965 *Architectural Forum* article, there was some hand-wringing by the original architect from Hellmuth, Yamasaki, and Leinweber, but the Housing Authority had hired the same firm to oversee the project’s renovation. It is interesting to note that when the project was being designed, the architects and critics had no reservations with the notion of “architectural determinism”—the idea that the physical space would create a social environment and “save lives” of slum dwellers. When the project failed, a whole spectrum of social problems, along with the architecture, was blamed.

But Pruitt-Igoe was no longer only a housing complex; it was a symbol. When a crime was committed in the part of St. Louis near the project, it was referred to by

the newspapers as a “Pruitt-Igoe crime,” which meant that the perpetrator was African American.³² The projects, designed to clean up the city, were now a racist symbol of urban chaos. As early as 1957, Catherine Bauer, a great advocate of public housing for decades, argued that the monotonous standardization of the projects made them look harshly institutional, and demeaned the tenants with the stigma of charity.³³

As Kenneth Jackson points out, the concentration of public housing in the inner city was not typical of the European or British postwar reconstruction. There, government housing projects were built where land was least expensive, often in the suburbs rather than in the city. This rarely happened in the United States for two reasons. First, to qualify for federal housing funds, a local municipality had to set up its own housing agencies—a step suburban communities invariably failed to take. Second, there was a requirement that one slum unit be eliminated for every unit of public housing that was built. Therefore, only areas that had slums were eligible for federal funding.³⁴ Jackson says:

*However confused the situation appears, however much government officials argue that Washington programs have been consistently motivated by the desire to produce social benefit for all income groups, the basic direction of federal policies toward housing has been the concentration of the poor in the central city and the dispersal of the affluent to the suburbs. American housing policy was not only devoid of social objectives, but instead helped establish the basis for social inequities. Uncle Sam was not impartial, but instead contributed to the general disbenefit of the cities and to the general prosperity of the suburbs.*³⁵

As Pruitt-Igoe was built, abstract expressionism was becoming a high-end commodity item in the world of painting. Individually designed Modernist homes were also stylish, but in the world of real estate, Modernist *standardization* was strictly low-end. By 1968, The National Commission on Urban Problems concluded that housing projects of this sort were “antcommunity,” and blamed the architects who advocated high-rise housing. Other late 1960s reports came to the same conclusion and advocated scattering small-scale contextual projects through the cities.³⁶ Pruitt-Igoe, born of the rubble of bulldozed neighborhoods, was imploded in 1972. I remember watching it on television. A great nightmare of bureaucratic Modernism was reduced to dust, and, as Kate Nesbitt has written, “The dramatic, intentional

bombing of this work of modern architecture (which had been widely celebrated at its opening) was a clear wake-up call to the profession."³⁷

And where were the artists while all of this was happening in the city? Just as High Modernism held sway in the architectural and planning community, it was dominant in the artistic community. And High Modernism segregated art to an "autonomous" aesthetic realm. In his famous essay, "Towards a Newer Laocoön" (1940), Clement Greenberg articulated his vision of Modernist art, arguing that painting, first and foremost, addresses issues that are inherent in painting. Greenberg's position has had tremendous influence either overtly or covertly on how most of us think about aesthetics. Greenberg wrote:

*. . . the avant-garde arts have in the last fifty years achieved a purity and radical delimitation of their fields of activity for which there is no previous example in the history of culture. The arts lie safe now, each within its "legitimate" boundaries, and free trade has been replaced by autarchy [self-rule]. Purity in art consists in the acceptance, willing acceptance, of the limitations of the medium of the specific art . . . The arts, then have been hunted back to their mediums, and they have been isolated, concentrated, and defined. It is by virtue of its medium that each art is unique and strictly itself.*³⁸

As Thomas Crow points out, this early formulation of Greenberg's critical position sounds reluctant if not regretful³⁹—it is only out of necessity that the arts have been "hunted back to their mediums." While conservative critics like Hilton Kramer are the most ardent protectors of this position today, it seems relevant to note that Greenberg was coming from a leftist, if not Marxist perspective,⁴⁰ and that the project of Modernism has generally been considered progressive; Le Corbusier was a socialist as well. But what is important is how these two influential men embraced the notion of purity and division.⁴¹

As time progressed, Greenberg became a champion of aesthetic purity, and his articulation has been tremendously influential. As a lecturer on public art, I have found that people are often exasperated with any discussion of art that is not "pure." How often have I heard some version of the complaint, "Why can't we just concentrate on the *art* of these projects instead of worrying about politics or history?" "Art" in this context means aesthetics divorced from social context. Of course, there are many "Modernisms," including a strain that has sought to "integrate art and life"—from Courbet, to Duchamp, to Pop art. Perhaps this strain could be called "low Mod-

ernism.” In this essay, I am referring to the High Modernism of Clement Greenberg’s later writings, Le Corbusier’s urban planning, etc.

Whatever critical dialogue may have emerged, it seems clear that an institution has developed to protect the “purity” of the art object from those external forces that might pollute its autonomy: the modern art museum. In the long view, the history of art is the history of public art. Although the pyramids and cathedrals may seem like museums today, this was not the case at the time of their creation. There were no museums in the middle ages. What would have been in them? Art had a specific site and use. To remove the art from its site would have been a sacrilege—literally. The development of the museum is a symptom of the same sort of ideology that Greenberg articulated. In the last 100 years for the first time, artists have been making art for museums, places where art can be “strictly itself.” In his essay, “Healing in Time,” Michael Brenson argues that Modernist artists have consistently set out to heal the divisions of the modern world. He would certainly take issue with the notion that Greenbergian isolation has been the dominant concern of Modernist artists. However, Brenson concludes that despite their intention to address and counteract the traumas of the modern world, the fate of these artists’ creations has been compromised by context:

*The healing power of images now seems limited. Most of the responses of modernist painting and sculpture to dislocation, displacement, and injustice—and to the denial and defensiveness of institutional thinking—found their homes in living rooms, galleries, and museums. The museums with which modernist painting is identified are now establishment institutions whose curatorial decisions inevitably defend the social and economic interests of their well-heeled and mostly white corporate boards of trustees. The increasing isolation of modernist painting and sculpture from the texture of the world in which they were created has reinforced the view that Modernism is now itself both a symptom and a victim of the fragmentation and divisiveness many modernist artists tried, in their own way to heal.*⁴²

But High Modernism has also had potent critics even as it held sway as the dominant ideology. In 1961, Clement Greenberg confidently wrote “Modernist Painting,” a concise reiteration of the ideas he had formed two decades earlier, now stated in terms of the triumph of Modernism. By this time his power in the art world was immense. That same year, however, an ambitious attack on Modernist urbanism was

mounted by Jane Jacobs in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs championed the interactions that take place on the traditional urban street. She wrote:

*Le Corbusier was planning not only a physical environment. He was planning for a social Utopia too. Le Corbusier's Utopia was a condition of what he called maximum individual liberty, by which he seems to have meant not liberty to do anything much, but liberty from ordinary responsibility. In his Radiant City nobody, presumably, was going to have to be his brother's keeper any more. Nobody was going to have to struggle with plans of his own. Nobody was going to be tied down.*⁴³

Jacobs sees Le Corbusier's utopia as a hell of division and isolation; the freedom of Le Corbusier's Modernism is freedom *from* others. Jacobs contrasts this with the "freedom of the city" that she sees in more traditional urban spaces, a complex order of intricate interplay. It is an order composed of "movement and change"—what she calls the "art of the city." Outside the rigid geometric order of the Modernist city, individuals take part in an "urban ballet," in which each understands his or her part but is able to improvise in relation to the others.⁴⁴

Jacobs also had some angry words to describe the sort of open space that Le Corbusier's followers championed, from Seagram's plaza to the river of green at Pruitt-Igoe:

In New York's East Harlem there is a housing project with a conspicuous rectangular lawn which became an object of hatred to the project tenants. A social worker frequently at the project was astonished by how often the subject of the lawn came up, usually gratuitously as far as she could see, and how much the tenants despised it and urged that it be done away with. When she asked why, the usual answer was, "What good is it?" Or "Who wants it?" Finally one day a tenant more articulate than the others made this pronouncement: "Nobody cared what we wanted when they built this place. They threw our houses down and pushed our friends somewhere else. We don't have a place around here to get a cup of coffee or a newspaper even, or borrow fifty cents. Nobody cared what we need. But the big men come and look at the grass and say, 'Isn't it wonderful! Now the poor have everything!'"

This tenant was saying what moralists have said for thousands of years: Handsome is as handsome does. All that glitters is not gold.

*She was saying more: There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and be served.*⁴⁵

Jacobs attacked Modernist urbanism's oppressive order. Pitting the traditional street, as exemplified by her own Greenwich Village neighborhood, against the clean designs of the city-planning establishment, she extolled the value of the interconnection that develops through repeated casual interaction. She argued against the value of the precious green space and light-at-any-expense sought by Modernist designers, and this was profoundly anti-institutional at the time. Remember that *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was written the same year that the Plaza Law was enacted in New York. Of course, Jacobs agreed with the tenant who said that the space could have better been used as a newsstand or a coffee shop. But this open space was worse than useless. It created a buffer zone, a disconnection that tended to pull people apart. Instead of low-rise, high-density streets like Greenwich Village, these projects were built tall and separate. Considering the fact that she started out as a community activist rather than an urban theoretician, it is not surprising that Jacobs called for a more democratic design process that included the voice of the user.



Jane Jacobs's Hudson Street, 1999.

Even though Jacobs seems to feel that every street should be like her own in Greenwich Village, her observations are astute and relevant almost forty years later, and her efforts helped save Greenwich Village from the sort of destructive “revitalization” it did not need.

Critics like Jane Jacobs had been sounding the alarm since the early 1960s, but it took disasters like Pruitt-Igoe to change the tide in the bureaucratic and aesthetic establishment. Architects played a significant role in the transformation of the city, but it would be absurd to blame them altogether. Blaming Le Corbusier for Pruitt-Igoe is like blaming Marx for the design of the Soviet State—not irrelevant, but reductivist and incomplete. The “blighted” areas that were bulldozed did, by and large, have significant social problems, which were transported to the projects, and amplified. And it was not architects who created the desire to abandon the city and seek suburbia. Rather, the architects and the people moving to Levittown were subject to the same historical sensibility, which included a distaste for the “disorder” of the city. It is a symptom of the simplemindedness of public discourse that the National Commission on Urban Problems blamed architects for the failed housing projects, overlooking, for example, the influence of agencies like the FHA. However muddy the thinking was, a series of mid-1960s laws, under President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society program, radically changed the focus of federal urban development policy. As John Mollenkopf writes:

Before 1966, urban renewal projects had demolished more than a quarter of a million low-rent central-city units, displacing almost a million people. Only 114,829 new units had been built in cleared areas, and only 45,861 of these were subsidized. After the passage of the 1965 and 1968 Acts, the rate of urban renewal demolition and displacement declined, the emphasis shifted to housing rehabilitation rather than clearance, and the number of subsidized units constructed in renewal areas between 1966 and 1972 tripled.⁴⁶

The new approach to urban renewal involved the participation of people from the affected communities, a radical and controversial departure from the top-down development practices. But when the Office of Economic Opportunity’s Community Action Program sought to “assist the poor in developing autonomous and self-managed organizations which are competent to exert political influence,”⁴⁷ local politicians cried foul. They saw this empowerment of community-based groups as

usurping their own control. But it was not until the Nixon administration that these programs were essentially dismantled.

In the mid-1960s, High Modernism had another potent critic within the architecture and design community in the United States. In 1966, Robert Venturi published *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, an unapologetic and influential attack on Modernism's purity:

Architects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture. I like elements that are hybrid rather than "pure," compromising rather than "clean," distorted rather than "straightforward," ambiguous rather than "articulated," perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as "interesting," conventional rather than "designed," accommodating rather than excluding, redundant rather than simple, vestigial as well as innovating, inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. I am for a messy vitality over obvious unity.⁴⁸

This message had tremendous influence. The language, easily contrasted to that of Greenberg, is filled with phrases of inclusion and addition—words like hybrid, compromising, and the consistent use of "as well as." *Complexity and Contradiction* is generally hailed as the starting point for Postmodernism (a term Venturi dislikes) in architecture, and it was written in response to sterile and bureaucratized Modernism. The early formulation of Postmodernism called for the return to decoration, symbolism, and a humanized urban vision. When Venturi asked the question, ". . . is not Main Street almost all right?"⁴⁹ it was an intentional blasphemy against the modernist dogma of order and efficiency. Venturi saw aesthetic and social value in the vitality of the seemingly chaotic street that Le Corbusier's followers detested and Jacobs loved.

By the mid-1960s the cities of the United States were in crisis. Riots were a frequent occurrence. In 1966 alone, there were twenty-one major riots. In 1967, there were eighty-three. By this time, inner cities were largely African American, but the police forces remained mainly white, and almost every riot was sparked by police incidents; Rodney King had plenty of predecessors. Twenty-three died in Newark, thirty-four in Watts, forty-three in Detroit.⁵⁰ After 1968, the riots ceased, but the crime rate continued to rise. Corporate offices and factories were moving from downtown to the suburbs.⁵¹ To this grim picture, add the chaos of the public sector: subway

strikes, urban mismanagement, the threat of municipal bankruptcy, and the expenditure of much-needed public resources on the Vietnam War. Here is what the *New York Times* sounded like in the summer of 1967:

*TROOPS BATTLE DETROIT SNIPERS,
FIRING MACHINE GUNS FROM TANKS.
DETROIT TOLL IS 31*

Rioters Rout Police;

Guardsmen Released to Aid Other Cities

Detroit, Wednesday, July 26—National Guard tank crews blasted away at entrenched snipers with .50 caliber machine guns early today after sniper fire routed policemen from a square mile area of the city. "If we see anyone move, we shoot and ask questions later," a guardsman said.⁵²

By this time, the failures of the planning establishment had become crystal clear. Architecture and planning schools broadened their focus to become more interdisciplinary and responsive to "community needs." Starting in the 1960s, people including Paul Davidoff, Chester Hartman, and Herbert Gans pioneered "advocacy planning*" to aid populations who they say were left out of the standard planning practices that stressed growth and favored the middle and upper classes.⁵³ The advocacy planners were followed by a second generation, known as "equity planners" in the 1970s, a group that shared an interest in creating planning schemes for the disadvantaged, and gained a foothold in some city governments. A tremendous amount of thought began to center on the reconstruction of communities and saving cities from the excesses of the last generation's renewal projects. It was at this time that artists were called into the fray.

From a bureaucratic perspective, the reintroduction of art into the city coincided with the Percent for Art movement. The first "Percent for Art" law in the United States passed Philadelphia's City Council in 1959 and was called, "Aesthetic Ornamentation of City Structures."⁵⁴ Percent for Art laws provide a simple mechanism for commissioning art; around 1 percent of the construction costs of public buildings is set aside in a separate budget line called an "art allocation." There had been provisions for the expenditure of construction dollars for art in public buildings at least since the 1930s, but these provisions were never mandatory, and were often over-

looked by Modernist architects and planners for whom “aesthetic ornamentation of city structures” was anathema. There were several motivations for the Philadelphia law. Michael von Maschzisker, a sponsor of the bill, said: “Spread the message that fine arts must be returned to American architecture; that sterility and her hand-maiden, monotony, must be banished from our avenues.”⁵⁵ Clearly this was an attitude hostile to the sort of stripped-down Modernist design that had taken over public building. As Penny Bach says in her history of Philadelphia’s program, “It was thought that public art on a more human scale might be able to salvage an increasingly bleak urban environment.”⁵⁶

Just as architects were demonized as the destroyers of the city, artists were unrealistically asked to salvage it. At some basic level, there was a hope that art could revive an old idea of the city. It is not so much that people wanted art on their buildings. Rather, they wanted to return to the sort of urban environment that they imagined was present at the time artists were regularly included in architecture. The initial impetus was conservative—a nostalgia for the premodern rather than any sense of the Postmodern. The laws were spawned in an effort to attract people back to the downtown areas that they were abandoning. And, in fact, urban redevelopment is still a primary motivation in many public art programs.

While several laws were in place earlier, the national move toward public art came in the 1970s, just after the nadir of urban despair. In the early days of the public art movement, the work that was placed in the “increasingly bleak urban environment,” was by the icons of Modernism; Pablo Picasso, Alexander Calder, and Henry Moore were called upon to create symbols of a new urban identity. The autonomous object moved outside of the protective walls into the city as museum. And where were these works placed? In the banal public spaces that had been created by the International Style’s retreat from the street—the post-public space of the corporate or governmental plaza. Probably the most highly publicized monument installed in an American city during this period was the “Chicago Picasso.” In the summer of 1967, as Detroit burned, the *Chicago Tribune* declared a new era for the windy city:

*READY OR NOT, CHICAGO ENTERS ITS PICASSO ERA IN CIVIC CENTER
50-FOOT SCULPTURE UNVEILED BY MAYOR*

From this day forward, for better or for worse, Chicago and Picasso are joined together as one. . . as the Eiffel Tower and Paris, the Little Mermaid and Copenhagen, as the Vatican

and Rome, the Empire State Building and New York, the Boardwalk and Atlantic City, Red Square and Moscow.

It could be worse, Chicago.

*It has been worse.*⁵⁷

While people on the streets in Chicago had their reservations about the Picasso, the rhetoric from public officials was optimistic, and it was very nice to be optimistic about *something* in the summer of 1967. This sculpture was to be a new image for the city, Chicago's Eiffel Tower.

On the day of the dedication of the Chicago Picasso in 1969, Charles Cunningham, the director of the Art Institute, sounded a chord that would be heard over and over again, as modern art reentered public space, "Those who haven't experienced this type of art may not like it," he said, "but that's alright. Not too many years from now, it will be accepted by the man on the street, as Van Gogh and the others are today."⁵⁸ This theme has become a mantra for the defense of public art—you *will* like this in the future.⁵⁹ It is strange to think of Picasso, so avant-garde in Paris just after the turn of the century, still shocking people on the streets of Chicago sixty years later. To the art world, Picasso's avant-garde had become routine and passé by that time.

Meanwhile, in Washington, also in 1967, the National Endowment for the Arts created its Art in Public Places Program to "give the public access to the best art of our time outside of museum walls."⁶⁰ The NEA's first commission was Alexander Calder's *La Grande Vitesse*, installed at the civic center of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1969. Like the Chicago Picasso, the Calder had its share of detractors in the city. However, as it has been reported often, the sculpture soon became popular, even gracing the municipal garbage trucks as a logo for civic pride. Once again, the story goes, people's initial reaction was wrong, but they came around. The image of the Calder sculpture on the garbage trucks proved the worth of the public art project, and defined its goal: civic pride. Miwon Kwon has said in reference to *La Grande Vitesse*:

It is important to note that Calder never saw, nor did he feel it necessary to visit, the plaza before the sculpture's installation. Like a good modernist, he operated under the assumptions of an artwork's autonomy. The site, in the case of this project, then, was conceived as a kind of abstract blankness awaiting some marker (i.e., art, sculpture) to give it what



Left: Pablo Picasso, *Untitled (the Chicago Picasso)*, 1967, Chicago Civic Center, Chicago, Illinois. Photograph courtesy of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill L.L.P.



Right: Alexander Calder, *La Grande Vitesse*, 1969, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Commissioned by the city of Grand Rapids and the National Endowment for the Arts, Art in Public Places Program.

could be claimed an authentic identity, even if that identity was created through the logic of a logo.⁶¹

And, in 1997, this sculpture-as-logo was still popular in Grand Rapids. When Angela Murphy, my research assistant, called the municipal offices there seeking photographs of *La Grande Vitesse*, a city official gladly ran out and took pictures of both the sculpture and a garbage truck, which bears a now somewhat abstracted image of the work. Kwon's analysis, which is just as valid for the Chicago Picasso and many other large-scale works of the period, points to the overriding strength of High Modernism in the early days of the public art movement. Public art simply meant placing large-scale work in open plazas, marking them as "unique," even as the strategy became generic.

If Jane Jacobs and Robert Venturi represent a counterpoint to the rigidity of Le Corbusier's Modernism, it is easy to point to contemporary alternatives to Calder and Picasso's public art in the late 1960s. Two artists who created radically different public art in the late 1960s (their work is discussed in interviews later in this book) were Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Vito Acconci. Though Ukeles was educated in the

Modernist academy of the time, she was confronted with a profound disjunction in her life and art when she had her first child. The essential elements of this transformation were clearly stated in Ukeles's "Manifesto! Maintenance Art" of 1969, in which she declared that her domestic work and her art were one:

I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately) I "do Art."

*Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them as Art.*⁶²

Ukeles's artistic project since that time has been consistent with the philosophy stated in the manifesto. For the most part using a collective, participatory approach, she has created a series of maintenance-based installations, public art projects, and performances. An important transformation in her work came about as a result of a project called "I Make Maintenance Art 1 Hour Every Day," (1976), which was presented at the Whitney Museum Downtown. Reviewing her Whitney project in the *Village Voice*, David Bourdon wrote humorously that Ukeles's performance might hold the key to additional funding for the financially strapped Department of Sanitation. If they could simply call the collection of garbage, performance art, perhaps they could seek funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.⁶³ Ukeles liked the idea, contacted the Department of Sanitation, and began their long-standing collaboration. While Ukeles's more recent work has been less obviously feminist, its roots were certainly in "women's work." (The genesis of Ukeles's work is discussed in an interview in Part III.⁶⁴) She ventured out into the city, not to save it from its filth but to understand it, to bridge the gap between artists and public-sector workers, between domestic and public work, between people and the waste they create.

Another artist who quite literally walked out of the gallery into the city in 1969 was Vito Acconci. In *Following Piece* (1969), he followed a different person through the streets until they entered private space each day for one month. He then sent a record of his activities to a member of the art world,⁶⁵ a kind of urban report back to the ivory tower. While *Following Piece* was in the mode of the mail art and systems art of the time, it was a precursor to Acconci's more obviously public art of the 1980s and 1990s. While Picasso, Calder, and the countless other creators of sculptural objects for plazas in the 1970s and 1980s worked within the Modernist spaces



Left: Grand Rapids, Michigan, garbage truck with logo including an image of La Grande Vitesse, 1997.



Right: Vito Acconci, *Following Piece, Street Works IV*, 1969, streets of New York, New York. Photograph courtesy of Acconci Studio.

they were assigned, Ukeles and Acconci challenged traditional notions of sites for art. They imagined fluid intersections with the city, creating public space for their art in a way that had tremendous influence.

While there were suggestions of a new direction in the work of Acconci, Ukeles, Alan Kaprow, and many others, the official monument-oriented public art movement continued unabated in the 1970s, as Percent for Art requirements were passed in Seattle, Miami, Chicago, Cambridge, Portland (Oregon), and as the federal government made its formerly voluntary art allocation mandatory. But the ideology behind these programs was still very conservative. In general, the programs that were created as public art ordinances spread across the United States in the 1970s, following in the footsteps of the well-publicized successes of the late 1960s, such as the Chicago Picasso. The Northwest, particularly Seattle, was a hotbed for public art in the 1970s. Jerry Allen is a longtime public art official and former director of King County's Percent for Art Program. In an interview, Allen described how the percent programs became law in Seattle in 1973. Allied Arts, an arts advocacy group, prevailed on Mayor Wes Uhlman to consider Percent for Art:

[Uhlman] was a strong downtown development advocate. Along with some other "civic boosters," Uhlman decided to embark on a number of issues to turn things around. The county made the commitment to build a sports stadium (eventually resulting in the Kingdome). The city and the county passed a \$100 million bond issue to begin building Free-

way Park and to refurbish county parks. Remember, that was a pretty good size bond issue back then, particularly for municipalities that were in financial trouble. The mayor and the county executive got interested in Percent for Art, as a way of creating opportunities for artists, and creating a more attractive downtown. The ideas associated with public art at that time were pretty rudimentary. People were thinking about “placing” works of art, based on that notion that the city could become an outdoor museum. But the idea that was driving it initially was economic. It was part of a larger package of initiatives that the city and the county were undertaking to fix their image and fix their economy.⁶⁶

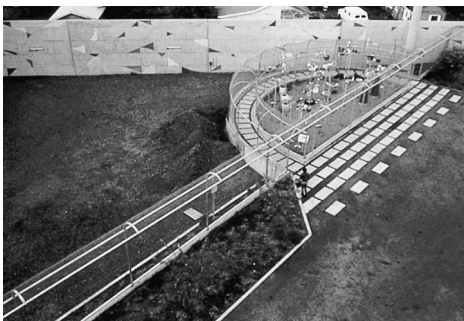
Seattle’s Percent for Art became a national leader. By all accounts, there was an ambitious push toward commissioning art as soon as the law passed. While most Percent for Art laws have provisions limiting what sorts of sites will be considered for commissioning art, exempting infrastructure work, for example, almost every public construction project qualified for funding in Seattle. Richard Andrews, who ran Seattle’s program, told me, “We were everywhere.”⁶⁷ One unusual site that qualified for Percent for Art funding in 1976 was an electrical substation called Viewland/Hoffman, and it is worth considering because of its disproportionate influence. Viewland/Hoffman was the sort of site seldom considered for public art in other cities, and as an electrical substation, there simply was no opportunity to work in the traditional manner. There was no plaza on which to place an artwork, no building to adorn with architectural detail. According to Richard Andrews, the architects at Hobbs/Fukui were instrumental in bringing artists onto the project at an early stage, although the sponsor agency, Seattle City Light, was dubious. With the artists and architects working together from the very beginning, Viewland/Hoffman is generally considered the first “Design Team” project. One motivation for the inclusion of artists was the unpopularity of the project in the surrounding neighborhood. So, as often happens, the artists were brought in to help make the project more palatable. As subsequent generations of design teams will attest, it was not easy going. Richard Andrews wrote:

The first months of the design team’s efforts confirmed City Light’s concerns, as the participation of artists Andrew Keating, Sherry Markovitz and Lewis “Buster” Simpson seemed to throw the entire design process into chaos. In fact, the architects, who were initially supportive, found themselves in the seemingly endless debate with the artists on how to proceed with the design process and how the artists might be involved. It was immediately clear (and this has proven true in subsequent design team projects) that although the

*artists and the designers spoke a common language of form and material, they were far apart in their understanding of how the individual creative process of art and design worked, let alone how they might be integrated into a real project.*⁶⁸

An example of the difference in approach might have been Simpson, Keating, and Markovitz's insistence on beginning the project by canvassing the neighborhood. The artists wanted to ask residents about their misgivings toward having a substation near their homes, thus opening the process to "lengthy deliberations."⁶⁹ The artists were not used to the process of public design. How could they be? This was the first design team, and some architects of subsequent generations have cursed the day that architects from Hobbs/Fukui opened the door for this sort of collaboration.

After intense effort, Viewland/Hoffman substation was completed. The result was a whimsical mixture of electrical equipment whirligigs by Emile and Veva Gehrke (invited to participate in the project by Keating, Markovitz, and Simpson), as well as sculpture and seating designed by the artist/architect team. The project was a success in terms of public reaction, and in the now mythic status that it has taken on in the public art community.⁷⁰ Word spread that artists had been allowed into the process early, and had made a significant difference. An electrical substation, an infrastructure facility that was the center of citizen resentment, had been transformed into a focus of local community life. If this sort of team could be created, public art administrators reasoned, artists would be able to be more than merely decorators of a site. They could become "placemakers." Public art administrators are constantly fighting for more power for artists. This is based both on a belief in the creative strength of artists and a desire for more power for administrators. After all, if the



Andrew Keating, Sherry Markovitz, Lewis Simpson, artists, Hobbs/Fukui, architects, Viewland/Hoffman Substation, 1979, Seattle, Washington. Commissioned by the Seattle Arts Commission and Seattle City Light.

artist is only an afterthought, a decorator of a leftover part of the site, then the administrator does not have a very interesting or significant job.

In the mid-1970s, it seemed that some of the cities' efforts to right themselves were working. Neighborhood associations across the country began to oppose highway construction. At the same time, the gas crisis of 1973–1974 made driving considerably more expensive, and mass transit became the new building agenda of municipal governments. Getting to and from suburban bedroom communities became a bit more problematic, as workers had to endure the indignities of long waits at the gas station and even car-pooling. Small-scale projects gained in popularity. "Urban Renewal" gave way to "Community Redevelopment," at least in the names of the governmental agencies.⁷¹ By the late 1970s, optimistic rhetoric became the norm—downtown had been "reborn." Many cities were climbing out of debt,⁷² while office construction was revving up for the 1980s boom. Planners and citizen groups tended to favor the redevelopment of existing architecture in their modest ventures. But the recovery in the 1970s was not evenly felt across the country. While prospects did not seem as grim as a decade earlier, Northern industrial cities continued to lose population while cities across the Southwest surged. John Mollenkopf attributes this to conservative urban development policies on the federal level. Conservatives in and out of government were sick of the disorder of the older (minority-dominated, Democratic-voting) cities, and put their support elsewhere:

*These newer cities, typified by those in the Southwest, are strong service centers, have little traditional industry but branch plants instead in the new industries, and little or no conflict or even political debate over growth issues. They have benefited most from the private sector reaction against the political climate of the older cities and its search for conservative alternatives. In contrast to the Northeast, Southwestern cities have had weaker public sectors, fewer calls for political accountability, little or no protest, and a far stronger military influence.*⁷³

The 1970s, then, saw a continued downward trend for the large industrial cities, and the problems that President Johnson had tried to address were effectively neglected under President Nixon.

Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, among others, created a framework for Postmodernism in architecture, but when it became a fad in the high stakes world of corporate image-making in the late 1970s, Postmodernism was literally superficial.



Carlos Ortiz, *Untitled (Scene from the South Bronx)*, ca. 1975.

It became little more than an *aesthetic* style, absorbing many of the urbanistic habits of High Modernism. Now the geometric high-rise buildings had a bit of trim. The Postmodern architecture of the office boom of the 1980s had no new urban agenda. Architect James Wines has argued that the Postmodern style was reduced in the most part to adding detail to buildings—columns, pediments, cornices, entablatures. Ultimately, he says, “the Postmodernist dialogue has been an exclusive interprofessional forum, and the movement’s representative built structures have continued to be dominated by Modernist/abstractionist principles.”⁷⁴ The sort of radical Postmodernism that Venturi and Scott Brown envisioned was, for the most part, ignored or superficially absorbed into business as usual. As Robert Venturi has said, “Simpleton Postmodernism promoted seductive prettiness and nostalgic appeal as a vulgarization of our architecture—which is ugly and ordinary or gauche and tense—and which we refuse to give a name.”⁷⁵

If any building signaled the triumph of Postmodernism in architecture it was the Portland Building (1980) by Michael Graves. This monumental governmental office building featured wildly exuberant decoration. The oversized decorative motifs seem intentionally humorous—Postmodern irony. There was an artist, Raymond Kaskey, involved in the project, but he had nothing to do with this decoration. Rather, Kaskey created a huge allegorical figure of Portland set at the base of the building. Taken together, the art and architecture seem to represent the conservative strain of Postmodernism. The building is grandiose, an overblown if gently ironic image of civic pride, while the artwork, an over-scale allegorical figure, lacks the architecture’s Postmodern irony.



Raymond Kaskey, Portlandia, 1995, in front of the Portland Building (Michael Graves, Architect). Photograph: Randy Rasmussen, the Oregonian.

Around the same time, a new sort of Postmodern urban renewal was becoming popular: the “festival marketplace.” Throughout the country, upscale development projects were cropping up in urban centers: Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston, Harborplace in Baltimore, the Gallery at Market East in Philadelphia, the South Street Seaport in New York City, Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco. These developments, mostly owned and operated by the Rouse Corporation, attempted to resurrect the old city by creating historically “themed” shopping malls. For example, the press package from Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston is filled with the history of the site. It even begins with a quotation from General Lafayette from 1825: “The City of Boston, the Cradle of Liberty, may Faneuil Hall ever stand a monument to teach the world that resistance to oppression is a duty, and will, under true republican institutions become a blessing.”⁷⁶ Imagine General Lafayette’s surprise if he were to learn that a century and a half later his fiery words were being used to help attract customers for Victoria’s Secret and the Warner Brothers store. While there were no neighborhoods bulldozed for these schemes, they did have one thing in common with the development practices of the fifties and sixties: they were built for the well-off. In fact, the manipulative nostalgia of these sites could drive one back to agreement with Le Corbusier’s hard-nosed attack on sentimentality.

In her book *The City of Collective Memory* Christine Boyer argues that the festival marketplace and related development projects signaled the move from the Modernist city to the “City of Spectacle”:

For this is the reaction against order: to break apart the dominating unity that prevailed for so many years in the City of Panorama. The utopic disruptions of rational town planning, the boredom of their pure crystalline forms, produced in their wake the City of Spectacle, a city in which appropriations of historical styles and restaged scenographic allusions now become bounded nodes within an urban composition criss-crossed by highways and invisible electronic circuitry.⁷⁷

I live adjacent to one of these “restaged” sites in New York City, the South Street Seaport. While the Seaport has brought “street life” back to the neighborhood, it is a sea of strangers, tourists absorbing a renovated slice of old New York. This tourist-oriented street life is fundamentally different from the urban ballet advocated by Jane Jacobs, where the essence of the experience was the creation of a neighborhood of long-term residents. And, as Boyer points out, the life of the Seaport is clearly “bounded.” Aside from a short strip of stores on the path leading from the subway, local businesses have seen virtually no benefits from the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit the South Street Seaport. Rather, the “old New York” feel that people come to admire is a place unto itself. While there was urban optimism in some quarters in the 1980s, there was also continued development in the outlying districts—massive office and shopping centers at highway interchanges throughout the country. Perhaps the paradigmatic example of this sort of development (at least in



*The South Street Seaport, New York, New York, 1999.
Developer: Rouse Corporation.*

name) was Perimeter Center outside Atlanta, which included more office space than downtown Atlanta in 1988.⁷⁸ Urban centers seemed to be recovering, but their suburban rivals were growing even faster.

The 1980s were a tremendously active time for public art. Building on the trend of the 1970s, cities across the country passed Percent for Art ordinances, including New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Phoenix. But the most influential success of the decade was not commissioned through any of these programs, but through private donations. Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1981) gained widespread acclaim after a controversy threatened to prevent it from opening (see interview in Part I). Lin's interactive, embracing space showed how a nonobjective work could communicate to the elite and the "common" observer alike. While using the aesthetic vocabulary of abstraction, it soon became one of Washington's top tourist attractions, and was hailed in the art and popular press alike. In the summer of 1997, as I was buying some groceries at the Shop 'n Save in Skowhegan, Maine, I noticed a carousel of children's books, and stopped to buy one for my son. I was surprised to see among them *A Wall of Names: The Story of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*.⁷⁹ It was a "Step 4" reading book in a Random House series that also features *True-Life Treasure Hunts* and *To the Top! Climbing the World's Highest Mountains*. I bought the book and in reading it I realized once again how profoundly important the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* has been in the recent history of public art. The book gave a very good introduction to the war and the memorial, but what was most outstanding was that I had purchased the book at Shop 'n Save. The supermarket, as public a site as you could find in Skowhegan these days, had no other books on art of any sort.

It is emblematic that Lin, who was trained as an architect, created the decade's best known public art work. There was a growing move among artists and public art programs toward "useful" art: plaza designs, walkways, artist-designed seating. Artists like Alice Aycock, Andrea Blum, Mary Miss, Scott Burton, Elyn Zimmerman, and Siah Armajani created benches, bridges, fountains, and plazas that were hard for some to identify as art. This functional art came to dominate public art in the 1980s, becoming somewhat formulaic. Artists had fought for the right to participate on "design teams" on more equal terms with the architects. However, some artists began to feel that their vision was simply absorbed into the setting, bureaucratized beyond recognition in the name of interprofessional cooperation. In fact, Siah Armajani, a leading practitioner of architectural sculpture, and a successful participant in several design teams in 1990, said:



Siah Armajani, in collaboration with Scott Burton and Caesar Pelli, the marina at the World Financial Center, New York, New York. Photograph: Timothy Hursley, courtesy of Max Protech Gallery.

Public art was a promise that became a nightmare. Our revolution has been stolen back from us and now it is our job to get it back. In the first place, the idea of a design team just doesn't work . . . the kind of design team that just gets together around a table is like a situation comedy. It is cynical and unproductive. Genuine debate can't take place around a table in that way. You get what the real-estate developer and the arts administrator want because they control the money. The whole emphasis in most of these projects is on who can get along best with the others involved—at the expense of vision and fresh thinking. It is like that story about the two thieves who hole up in an abandoned restaurant to plan their next job. While they are plotting in the basement kitchen, the dumbwaiter comes down and there is an order for fried chicken, Southern style. "What shall we do" asks one. "Quick, fill the order," says the other, "or they'll come and find us." So they send up some fried chicken Southern style. But then another order comes down, and another, and they keep filling them and sending them up. This is what has happened to our revolution.⁸⁰

The design team had changed considerably in the sixteen years that separated Viewland/Hoffman and Armajani's lament. What had been radical, including the artists' desire to canvass the neighborhood before proceeding with the project, had become routine. Can you imagine the developers of Battery Park City acquiescing to artists' demands to canvass the neighborhood before proceeding with their

construction? While the artists had brought new ideas to the table in Seattle, their ideas were absorbed in the bureaucracy of collaboration by 1990.

It is now rather fashionable to attack work done in this mode because it seems to fit so comfortably into its settings, to blend seamlessly into the context of architecture and urban development. However, there are many examples of this sort of work that created a meaningful hybrid of art and architecture. Elyn Zimmerman's *Sanctuary* (1990) at the University of South Florida is a good example. The work is sited next to the Lee Moffitt Cancer Center, and it creates a peaceful place for people to sit and talk. I was told on a tour of the campus that it is often used by patients to meet with their families. This was easy to imagine. When I sat within the work, I felt embraced by the space Zimmerman had created; the sound of water gently falling through limestone boulders was soothing. In its attention to surface, texture, and small detail, it seemed like the sort of space that a sculptor rather than an architect would design. In its contours, construction, and scale, it seemed architectural. Its use was defined by its physical and social site—a place to speak quietly, to confront and escape the depressing realities of the cancer center. This mode of art is still widely popular in public art, and functional/architectural projects by Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi, Michael Singer and Linnea Glatt, and Vito Acconci are discussed in Part II.

But the 1980s are also remembered as the decade in which *Tilted Arc* was removed. Ronald Reagan had been elected in 1980, and his newly appointed bureaucrats were intent on undoing much of what they saw as the misguided liberal legacy of the Carter administration. William Diamond, newly appointed regional administrator of the General Services Administration led the successful battle to have *Tilted Arc* removed, a traumatic ordeal for many of Serra's supporters, one that was watched with some trepidation by public art administrators across the country. Serra was not a participant in the move toward architectural sculpture. In fact, he was frank in his distaste for the new style.

I am interested in work where the artist is a maker of "anti-environment" which takes its own place and makes its own situation, or divides or declares its own area. There seems to be in this country right now, especially in sculpture, a tendency which makes work which attends to architecture. I am not interested in work which is structurally ambiguous or in sculpture that satisfies urban design principles. I have always found that to be not only an aspect of mannerism but a need to reinforce a status quo of existing aesthetics. Most of



Elyn Zimmerman, Sanctuary, 1990, Lee Moffitt Cancer Research Center, University of Southern Florida, Tampa, Florida. Photograph courtesy of Gagosian Gallery, New York, New York.

the architecture that has been built is horrendous. I am interested in sculpture that is non-utilitarian, non-functional . . . any use is a misuse. I am not interested in sculpture that conventionalizes metaphors of content or assimilates architectonic spiritual structures, for there is no socially shared metaphysic.⁸¹

Given Serra's goal of creating a work that "makes its own situation," some art world critics felt that a problem with *Tilted Arc* was that it seemed to fit a bit too comfortably into the plaza. While Serra routinely built sculptures that overwhelmed the viewer, truly dislocating a 2000-square-foot gallery, an 84-foot-long piece of steel next to a 50-story building was a bit dwarfed. Many, including myself, would have preferred something more astonishing, something that dislocated the plaza more entirely. But there was tremendous support for Serra, and losing the battle over *Tilted Arc* was a terrible blow to many of us.

Urban optimism was tempered in the late 1980s with the stock market crash of 1987. Old problems seemed to be reappearing—fiscal difficulties for the cities, real estate problems in downtown areas. Although there were four race riots following police incidents in Miami during the 1980s, they were generally overlooked as aberrations from the norm. In 1992, the urban optimism of the 1980s officially came to an end with the uprising in Los Angeles: fifty dead, \$1,000,000,000 in damages. As urban

historian Jon Teaford points out, the optimism of the 1980s had been an illusion. During that period, manufacturers and corporations continued to leave cities, as office space in the suburbs continued to grow. These thriving suburbs are still overwhelmingly white; Levittown in Long Island, famous for its exclusion of African Americans after the war, now has 31 black residents out of a total of 53,286.⁸² Teaford says, "Americans preferred the autonomy of the social fragment to some unifying ideal preached by starry-eyed reformers. Thus, Americans opted for dissolution of the city and, with the aid of the automobile, created the dispersed and fragmented metropolitan world of the late twentieth century."⁸³ And, in truth, great time and energy have been expended in the twentieth century in creating the technical tools of privacy and separation: indoor plumbing replaces the public fountain; the wristwatch replaces the public clock on the tower; records and CDs replace live music; movies replace live drama, and TV replaces movies. All of these could be seen in terms of separation—pulling away from public, toward individual experiences. In fact, privacy has become something of an obsession in recent decades. Jonathan Franzen argues that what he calls our "privacy panic" is based on a false belief that there is less privacy now than in the past because computerized records are kept by our credit card providers, telephone companies, video rental stores, and so on. Franzen counters with a different vision of the past:

In 1890, an American typically lived in a small town under conditions of near-panoptical surveillance. Not only did his every purchase "register" but it registered in the eyes and in the memory of shopkeepers who knew him, his parents, his wife, and his children. He couldn't so much as walk to the post office without having his movements tracked and analyzed by his neighbors. Probably he grew up sleeping in a bed with siblings and possibly his parents, too. . . . In the suburbs and exurbs where the typical American lives today, tiny nuclear families inhabit enormous houses, in which each person has his or her own bedroom, and, sometimes, bathroom. Compared even with the suburbs in the sixties and seventies, when I was growing up, the contemporary condominium development or gated community offers a striking degree of anonymity. It's no longer even the rule that you know your neighbors.⁸⁴

This is life in the fragmented world that Teaford sees as the typical American experience, and our nearly inevitable future.

And what of the interconnection of technology? Certainly we have all heard of how the telephone, television, and the computer can contribute to the creation of a new “virtual agora.” Doesn’t the proliferation of the Internet speak of the desire for interconnection? The Internet is a huge, untested mechanism for interaction, though it is certainly debatable how attractive a public space can be that eliminates the body.⁸⁵ Preliminary data suggest that the virtual contact of the chat rooms may not lead to a feeling of connectedness. An article in the *New York Times* headlined “Sad, Lonely World Discovered in Cyberspace” announced the findings of a study of Internet users in August 1998.⁸⁶ To the great surprise of the social scientists who conducted the survey, and especially to the technology companies that funded it (including Intel, AT&T, and Apple Computer), the conclusion of the two-year study was that Internet users experience greater loneliness and depression than those who do not go online. Moreover, it was not the case that depressed and lonely people were drawn to the Web for solace. The Internet users in the study were originally as happy as the less technology-inclined control group; Internet use *caused* the decline in their psychological well-being.⁸⁷ Answering your e-mail simply is not the same as talking to someone on the telephone, and talking on the telephone is not the same as speaking to someone in person. In addition, the Internet can decrease the perceived need to live in an urban center. If you can make all the contact you need online, why not live in a peaceful and quiet environment away from the crowds?

Television is also hailed by some as creating the “new public space” because it is one of the few activities that practically every American engages in— that is, we do have collective experience in the fragmented Postmodern world because we are all watching the same television shows. In a research study called “Time for Life,” Geoffrey Godby and others concluded that technological advances have increased free time for people in developed countries. And what have people been doing with this free time? They have been watching more television, “even though they rate it among their least favorite forms of leisure.” Americans average more than sixteen hours of television per week, up four hours since 1965.⁸⁸ John Tierney said, “The increase in tube-watching seems especially perverse considering that it coincides with a decline of two hours a week in the amount of time people spend socializing, an activity they consider much more enjoyable than television. A society of solitary people sitting at home enviously watching the camaraderie on ‘Friends’ does not seem like a triumph of the communications revolution.”⁸⁹

One might despair as Americans fade off into suburbanized isolation, a populace of glazed-eyed Web-surfers glued endlessly to the screen or tube. But there certainly are signs in the late 1990s that the sprawl of suburbia has many people nervous. The 1998 elections saw a widespread reaction against the effects of unfettered suburban development. By passing ordinances across the country to buy open space and confine development, Americans in effect opted for denser suburban neighborhoods. The move has been couched in environmental and social terms. Larry Bohlen, cochairman of the Sierra Club's national campaign to fight sprawl said, "We're not trying to subvert the American dream—we're trying to get back to it. It's that 'Leave it to Beaver' town where all the kids walk to school."⁹⁰ It is emblematic of the politics of the 1990s that any initiative needs to be couched in the most conservative possible rhetoric.

Despite Teaford's pessimistic assessment (written in 1993) that the suburbanization of the United States will continue apace, the 1990s have been another period of urban optimism, and using the arts for urban development has become increasingly popular for municipal governments across the country. In 1993, for example, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, with Alliance for the Arts and other groups, published a report entitled, "The Arts as an Industry: Their Importance to the New York-New Jersey Metropolitan Region."⁹¹ Among the report's most significant findings was that the total economic impact of the arts in 1992 for the New York City area was \$9.2 billion.⁹² The frank mission of the report was to change the way people think about the arts. While the spiritual value of art is well known, the report argued, there is another side to art that is quantifiable—economic impact. This report was immediately seized upon by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) as a way of justifying expenditures of public money for the arts. After all, people come to New York for culture, spend a lot of money, create thousands of jobs, and support the tax base. All of this was convincing to public officials, and the DCA continued to hammer away at the arts as an economic engine. This campaign was so successful that when Rudolph Giuliani took office in 1992, he placed DCA under the supervision of his Deputy Mayor for Economic Development. But DCA was in for a bit of a surprise. The Deputy Mayor took the economic arguments so seriously that he proposed deep cuts in the support that the city had been providing to the smaller community-based organizations, in order to increase support for the larger institutions. After all, these were the largest tourist draws and the biggest employers. If art is about economic development, why not pour more money into the Metropolitan



Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 62nd to 66th Street, New York, New York. Center: Wallace K. Harrison, Metropolitan Opera House, 1966. Left: Philip Johnson, New York State Theater, 1964. Right: Max Abramovitz, Avery Fisher Hall, 1962. Photograph: Erin Riley.

Museum of Art, which draws 3 million people a year, and pull the plug on the small groups in the outer boroughs? This became an annual battle, but not one that DCA should have been surprised about. Urban economic development once again was structured to benefit the well-to-do.

All over the country, in the new regime, cities are using concert halls and museums to draw the middle and upper middle classes back to downtown. There has been a tremendous growth of what Sharon Zukin calls the symbolic economy—"the intertwining of cultural symbols and entrepreneurial capital."⁹³ A front page story in the *New York Times* in November 1997 carried the headline, "Cities Are Fostering the Arts as a Way to Save Downtown"⁹⁴ The article chronicled the efforts to "build on the arts" through consciously utilizing culture as an urban development tool. According to the article, the model for all of these centers is Lincoln Center, built on the site of eighteen blocks razed by Robert Moses, as the beachhead for the gentrification of the Upper West Side of Manhattan. These new projects ranged from Philadelphia's \$330 million Avenue of the Arts to a jazz museum in Kansas City, to the New Jersey Center for the Performing Arts in Newark. One expert was quoted as estimating that there were between \$4 and \$5 billion spent on capital projects for the arts in the decade 1986–1996, and much of that total was justified in terms of urban development. But these megaprojects are only a part of the picture:

Beyond the big-ticket building projects are myriad other efforts in which cities have imposed designated taxes on hotel rooms and amusements, offered incentives to developers and aggressively leveraged property taxes to raise money. They have created arts districts, financed arts festivals and promoted regularly scheduled cultural events. Often they have invested large amounts of public money in museums, concert halls and theaters to create tourist destinations, burnish regional reputations and stimulate blighted neighborhoods.⁹⁵

In fact, “Urban Development and the Visual Arts” is now required in New York University’s Arts Administration Program. Public art projects are only a modest part of this emerging field. However, the rhetoric and goals of the new Arts-as-Urban-Development movement are similar to those of the early efforts in Percent for Art. Mayors and city council members are still looking for ways to bring people back to the cities, to make urban life attractive to the middle and upper classes.

Not everyone is on the bandwagon. A project that has been criticized as an example of the 1990s version of Arts for Urban Development was “Places with a Past,” which took place at Charleston, South Carolina’s Spoleto Festival. The citywide event was a series of site-specific projects organized by Mary Jane Jacob in 1991. In this project, artists were sent out into the city to uncover its historical and contemporary qualities. The book jacket of the publication that accompanied “Places with a Past” says:

For one year, the selected artists visited the town of Charleston and became engaged with the extraordinary resources—historical and cultural subjects of past and present—that make the city an exceptional environment in which to stage such an exhibition. The 18th-19th- and 20th-century sites became an active part of each artist’s concept; the city a canvas upon which the artist could exercise his or her imagination. The artists’ installations, in turn, provided a new and fresh look at this beautiful city of the American South.⁹⁶

More or less assigned to address the past in Charleston, an internationally acclaimed group of artists responded in very different ways, but an overriding theme was race relations from the times of slavery to the present. To many of the artists it was an opportunity to examine memory, the notion that for many in the south “ol’ times dere am not forgotten.” But even as these installations were clearly critical of cultural amnesia, their role in the context of urban development is ambiguous. When an urban

project uses history to expose the uniqueness of the place, how far is it from tourism promotion? Miwon Kwon says:

... the ambitions of programs like "Places with a Past" ... ultimately do not seem to veer very far from those of the city officials and cultural leaders of Grand Rapids, Michigan, [sponsors of Calder's La Grande Vitesse] thirty years ago. For despite the tremendous difference in the art of choice ... their investment in generating a sense of uniqueness and authenticity for their respective places of presentation remains quite consistent. As such endeavors to engage art in the nurturing of specificities of locational difference gather momentum, there is a greater and greater urgency in distinguishing between the cultivation of art and places, and their appropriation for the promotion of cities as cultural commodities.⁹⁷

Kwon is arguing that the temporary and more politically pointed public art of "Places with a Past" can be used for the same sort of urban development goals that we saw in Battery Park City. As the above quotation from the "Places with a Past" book jacket makes clear, one of the goals of the project was to uncover the uniqueness of the city, and provide "a fresh look at this beautiful city of the American South." Kwon points out how similar this is to the goals of the original Percent for Art laws: to attract people to the city, to infuse a site with the sense of uniqueness that any proper "destination" needs.

But the differences between *La Grande Vitesse* and the works in Charleston are profound. Consider David Hammons's contribution to "Places with a Past." For the project, Hammons chose to work in the African American community, selecting as his site, two empty lots within a poor residential section. As Hammons began to work on the site, he was approached by a local contractor named Albert Alston. After some discussion, Hammons enlisted Alston as his collaborator on a project that they called *House of the Future*. The house was a very narrow, two-story structure, with a variety of elements typical of the architecture of Charleston, from the type of roofing materials to the shingles and doors. Everything was carefully marked, and Hammons describes the house as a learning center for kids in the neighborhood. Hammons also invited a young artist from the neighborhood, Larry Jackson, to create a gallery for himself in the lower section of the house. In Hammons's mind, it was important to hand over control of the project to the local community. As an outsider, he was hesi-



David Hammons, House of the Future, 1991, Spoleto Festival, Charleston, South Carolina. Photograph courtesy of Jack Tilton Gallery.

tant to make the site his statement alone, although he is also frank in admitting that the overall direction was his. In the second lot, Hammons created *America Street* (named after the street that ran between the two lots). Here he created a billboard image of African American kids, situated to look up at a flag pole, upon which Hammons flew an American flag created in red, black, and green (the colors of the Black Nationalist flag).

The installations included elements of participatory, community-based art, local pride, racial identity politics, *arte povera*, and architectural sculpture. But it was equally important to Hammons to find a place for the project that would stretch the social limits of the visitors to the Spoleto Festival. He chose a site that made some art lovers so uncomfortable that they would not get out of their cars. But those who did were invited to interact with people in a community far from scenic Charleston. The urban development agenda of the official sponsors is only part of the picture. There are too many directions from which to criticize public art; the same arguments are rarely used to critique art in museums. Is it necessary, for example, for every review of an exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum to refer to the origins of the Guggenheim family's wealth in the abuse of the landscape around Leadville, Colorado? When an artwork reorients memory in a site, it begins to change the psychological environment. Perhaps this is only a partial step, but it should not be ignored. The *Vietnam*

Veterans Memorial is one of the top tourist attractions in Washington, D.C., and Washington is a city that markets its memorials more aggressively than most, while remaining a city intensely divided by race and class. But to reduce Lin's memorial to its tourism function disregards what happens at the site.

By the late 1980s the sort of community orientation Hammons employed in Charleston was becoming increasingly popular among artists and administrators alike. As Suzanne Lacy points out in her book *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, a good way to understand the changing attitudes toward public art in commissioning agencies is to look at the National Endowment for the Arts's guidelines for its Art in Public Places category. As mentioned earlier, the initial goal of the Art in Public Places Program was "to give the public access to the best art of our time outside museum walls." This statement makes two assumptions that would come into question: that the "quality" of an artwork is something that people will agree upon, and that what succeeds in a museum will succeed on a city street. By 1974, Lacy notes, the NEA guidelines said that the commissioned artwork should be "appropriate to the immediate site," and by 1978, that the commissioning agency should "approach creatively the wide range of possibilities for art in public situations." In 1979, the NEA asked for "methods to insure an informed community response to the project." In 1983, grant recipients were required to submit "plans for community involvement, preparation, and dialogue," which were expanded by the early 1990s to include "educational activities which invite community involvement."⁹⁸ This transition from a pursuit of the "best" art to community involvement is not complete by any means. Art world representatives on panels convened to select artists for public commissions still often pit "quality art" against accommodation to "community issues." However, interest in local participation has opened the door for artists like Mierle Ukeles to create art within the context of Percent for Art programs. Her artistic practice, along with that of Vito Acconci, so far from the official public artists in 1969, has entered the mainstream.

In January 1999, the city of Portland, Maine, unveiled its community cultural plan.⁹⁹ Portland's comprehensive downtown plan, adopted in the early 1990s, reflected the sort of Art as Urban Development that has been discussed above; in fact, Portland's primary goal in declaring an arts district is the economic revitalization of downtown.¹⁰⁰ But the community plan, at least in the idealistic state of its first inception, is inclusive, participatory, and open. The plan was developed through a "communitywide process" that included personal interviews with scores of ethnic,

religious, cultural, political, and neighborhood leaders, as well as open public forums. The results reflect this process. As opposed to the top-down approach of the early public art efforts that sought to expose the people to the “best art of our time,” the Portland plan assumes that the arts are in the communities, and will flourish with the support of a concerted public effort. “Far from any notion of elite culture,” the report says, “our aim has been to thoroughly democratize our cultural perspective and to empower communities that have previously been absent from public cultural discourse. At its core, this planning process has been an attempt to take a measure of our entire community and its constituent cultures, and to devise a set of mechanisms through which our representative civic government might address their needs and aspirations.”¹⁰¹ The recommendations of the report are not gleaming concert halls or museums, but more modest proposals like a community cultural center that would be accessible to a wide range of groups. Throughout the report, there is an effort to find ways to create interconnections among the people of Portland, while celebrating cultural diversity. Within an array of possible initiatives is the suggestion that public art can play a role in the city. The report was refreshing to read. It did not oversell the value of art as an economic engine. Rather, it argued for the value that art can have in the recreation of community.

In his book *Art, Space, and the City*, Malcolm Miles takes a similar tack to that of Rosalyn Deutsche, Miwon Kwon, and Sharon Zukin in his analysis of art and urban development—arguing that it reinforces the dominance of the cultural elites in the city. However, he sees more hope in alternative practices, in the spirit of the plan developed in Portland, Maine:

*. . . the methodology of planning privileges the representations of space (in [Henri] Lefebvre's terms) of the expert, just as the law, according to [Ivan] Illich, privileges the dominant interests in society; yet if a doctor describes his patients as “experts on their own health,” perhaps dwellers are also experts on their city, and if so, their expertise begins in their awareness of the spaces around their bodies and the lattices of memory and appropriation they assemble as a personal reading of the city. From this it follows that the role of the planner becomes that of enabler, assisting members of communities in acquiring the vocabulary of information added to the empowerment of community identity, to affect planning outcomes. There is a parallel between planning which involves community participation and art which engages with defined publics in participatory work.*¹⁰²

Certainly the framers of Portland's new cultural plan see the citizens of the city as experts on their own space, and rely upon their judgment. This is the philosophy behind many contemporary public artists, certainly not limited to the artists in this book, but including Suzanne Lacy, Daniel Martinez, Tricia Ward, Tim Rollins, and many more.

Again, I think back to the moment when we were sitting on the sand at "Art on the Beach," listening to Sun Ra. It would be easy to say that our pleasure that night was only a prelude to the "uneven development" of the site (to use Rosalyn Deutsche's phrase). But the moment also held out the potential of art in a public context. It is a potential for coexistence and dialogue that is at the center of the art discussed in this book. This essay has attempted to set up a rather simple series of dialectics: Jane Jacobs's and Robert Venturi's celebration of the street versus Le Corbusier's clearance of the old city; the Great Society's community participation model obliterated by Nixon, Calder and Picasso's installations in High Modernist space versus Ukeles's and Acconci's navigation through the city; the early formulation of the design team versus the bureaucratized version lamented by Siah Armajani; our moment at Art on the Beach versus the experience of Battery Park City.

Each of the artists interviewed in this book is deeply involved in creating space or time for interconnection and dialogue, in the rather optimistic attempt to reorient the city of fragmentation and separation. The public spaces created by Lin, Venturi and Scott Brown, Glatt and Singer, and Acconci are sites for democratic interaction. Avalos, Hock and Sisco, Ahearn, Ukeles, Jones and Ginzler, and Wodiczko create ongoing opportunities for dialogue, often in collaboration with their audiences. Chin and Moore make the most literal attempt at curative art. Paulo Freire's writings on the theory and practice of dialogue (discussed in Part III) have helped me understand the potential in sharing power in an educational context. In Freire's model, true dialogue, the mutual pursuit of critical understanding among equals, will lead to critical consciousness for all involved. Just so, many of the art projects in this book allow for an open exchange among equals, far from the elitist notion that public art is a gift of the "best" to the people of the city.

Notes

1. Patricia Phillips, "Art on the Beach," *Artforum*, November 1985, p. 106.
2. Creative Time is a nonprofit arts organization that presents public art, performance, and other projects in "unexpected places" in New York City.
3. For a lengthy and intelligent analysis, see Rosalyn Deutsche, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," October 47 (Winter 1988), pp. 3–53. The elimination of middle-income housing is mentioned in the "Time Line" section of Battery Park City's Web site: "<http://batteryparkcity.org/time line>," November 1998.
4. Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth Century American City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p.98.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
7. Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), pp. 863–879.
8. Teaford, *American City*, p. 103.
9. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 203–212.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
11. Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1984), p. 41.
12. Lewis Mumford, *Architecture as a Home for Man* (New York: Architectural Records Books, 1975), p. 117.
13. Le Corbusier, "The City of To-Morrow and Its Planning" (1929), reprinted in *The City Reader* (London: Routledge, 1996), edited by Richard LeGates and Frederic Stout, p. 373.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 370.
15. "Footsore Here Find Oasis at Seagram Building Plaza," *New York Times*, July 26, 1958, p. 12.
16. Norman Marcus, "Notes on New York City Zoning—1961–1991: Turning Back the Clock—But with an Up-to-the-Minute Social Agenda," *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, Vol. 19, Spring 1992, p. 715
17. Editorial, *New York Times*, December 16, 1960, p. 32.

18. Joseph Herzberg, "Zoning for Living Long Range Plan Could End Flight Of City Residents and Aid Industry," *New York Times*, February 16, 1959, p. 23.

19. Marcus, "Notes on New York City Zoning," p. 716.

20. Ibid., p. 719.

21. *Zoning and Historic Districts*, prepared for Municipal Art Society's Planning Center. (New York: Abeles Phillips Press and Shapiro, Inc., 1990), p. 38. The document presents a series of problems and recommendations. For example:

Problem #4: Much of the city's zoning encourages development that departs radically from the surrounding area's existing built form. This occurs even where the zoning limits new development to the pre-existing bulk and density because the zoning regulations ensure that the maximum floor area can be achieved only through out-of-context design. Within historic districts themselves, this encourages (and often necessitates) the submission of inappropriate designs . . .

Recommendation #4: Undertake more extensive contextual district rezoning, particularly within and around designated historic districts. Contextual zoning now safeguards the built environment within several historic districts in Manhattan's Upper East Side and West Sides, as well as the larger neighborhoods extending beyond the designated districts; but 1961 height factor zoning, hostile to the traditional cityscape, governs development within and around most historic districts.

22. Marcus, "Notes on New York City Zoning," p. 709.

23. Teaford, *American City*, p. 115.

24. Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream, a Social History of Housing in America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. 234.

25. Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, "Collage City," *The Architectural Review*, Vol. CLVIII, No. 942, August 1975, p. 72.

26. "Slum Surgery in St. Louis," *Architectural Forum*, Vol. 94, April 1951, p. 129. The comparison of this article and the later reassessment of Pruitt-Igoe is suggested by Jon Teaford.

27. Ibid., p. 129.

28. Ibid., pp. 129–131.

29. James Bailey, "The Case History of a Failure," *Architectural Forum*, Vol. 123, December 1965, pp. 22–26. It should be noted that the author of the 1965 article made full mention of the praise for the project in *Architectural Record's* 1951 article.

30. Bailey, "Case History of a Failure," p. 22.

31. Ibid., p. 23.

32. Ibid., p. 24.
33. Catherine Bauer, "The Dreary Deadlock of Public Housing," *Architectural Forum*, Vol. 106, No. 5, May 1957, pp. 141–142.
34. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 227.
35. Ibid., p. 230.
36. Wright, *Building the Dream*, p. 237.
37. Kate Nesbitt, ed., *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), p. 22.
38. Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays of Clement Greenberg* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 32.
39. Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 9.
40. For a discussion of Greenberg's Marxism, see T. J. Clark's essay, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art" in *Postmodern Perspectives*, edited by Howard Risatti (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), pp. 20–38.
41. Consider the historical moment as well. After World War II, especially in Europe, many artists turned to abstraction in revulsion against the ways repressive regimes had employed realism. The purity of abstraction was seen in sharp relief against the horrors of propagandistic representation, so Greenberg's reluctant retreat is understandable.
42. Michael Brenson, "Healing in Time," *Culture in Action* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), p. 28. *Culture in Action* accompanied a citywide public art project of the same name sponsored by Sculpture Chicago and organized by Mary Jane Jacob.
43. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 22. As of 1997, Jane Jacobs is still active in urban politics. Now 81 years old, she is living in Toronto, where she is seen as a kind of municipal "guardian angel" according to the *New York Times* ("Toronto, a City That Works, Offers Varied Places to Play," October 17, 1997, p. 1, Weekend Section). She has continued her work since the 1960s, fighting freeways and promoting urban diversity.
44. Ibid., p. 50.
45. Ibid., p. 15.
46. John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 90.
47. Ibid., p. 91.

48. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966), p. 22.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
50. Teaford, *American City*, pp. 129–130.
51. Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940–1985* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 210.
52. *New York Times*, Vol. CXVI, July 26, 1967, p. 1.
53. Norman Krumholtz and Pierre Clavel, *Reinventing Cities: Equity Planners Tell Their Stories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p. 14.
54. Penny Balkin Bach, *Public Art in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), p. 130.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Sheila Wolfe, *Chicago Tribune*, No. 227, August 15, 1967, p. 1.
58. *Time*, Vol. 90, August 25, 1967, p. 54.
59. See my introduction to Douglas Crimp's interview on *Tilted Arc*, pp. 61–66.
60. Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain, New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), p. 22.
61. Miwon Kwon in *Kunst auf Schritt und Tritt* (Hamburg: Kellner, 1997), p. 101.
62. Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "Manifesto! Maintenance Art," *The Act*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1990, pp. 84–85.
63. David Bourdon, "Art," *Village Voice*, October 4, 1976, p. 105.
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65. Kate Linker, *Vito Acconci* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), p. 20.
66. From an interview I conducted by telephone with Jerry Allen in March 1996. At the time, he was manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs in San Jose, California.
67. From a phone interview with Richard Andrews, July 1996.

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69. Ibid., p.14.
70. Ibid., p. 67. This is Richard Andrews's assessment of the project fifteen years after its completion.
71. Teaford, *Rough Road*, p. 232.
72. Teaford, *American City*, p. 156.
73. John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 217.
74. James Wines, *De-Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1987), p. 117.
75. Robert Venturi, *Iconography and Electronics upon a Generic Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p. 319.
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78. Teaford, *American City*, p. 165.
79. Judy Donnelly, *A Wall of Names* (New York: Random House, 1991).
80. Calvin Tomkins, "Open, Available, Useful," *The New Yorker*, March 19, 1990, p. 71.
81. Richard Serra, *Richard Serra: Interviews, Etc. 1970–1980* (Yonkers: The Hudson River Museum, 1980), p. 128.
82. Bruce Lambert, "At 50, Levittown Contends with Legacy of Racial Bias," *New York Times*, December 28, 1997, New York Report, pp. 23–24.
83. Teaford, *American City*, p. 169.
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91. "The Arts as an Industry: Their Importance to the New York-New Jersey Metropolitan Region." Published by The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Alliance for the Arts, New York City Partnership, and Partnership for New Jersey. October 1993.
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94. Bruce Weber, "Cities Are Fostering the Arts as a Way to Save Downtown," *New York Times*, November 18, 1997, pp.1; A24.
95. Ibid., p. A24.
96. Mary Jane Jacob, et al., *Places with a Past* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991).
97. Miwon Kwon, "For Hamburg: Public Art and Urban Identities," in *Christian Phillip Muller, Kunst auf Schritt und Tritt, Public Art is Everywhere* (Hamburg: Kellner, 1997), p. 107.
98. All quotations from NEA guidelines are from Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*, pp. 22–24.
99. *Celebrating Community: A Cultural Plan for Portland, Maine*. Prepared by the Celebrating Community Steering Committee (Portland: Portland Arts and Culture Alliance, 1999). On October 5, 1998, the Portland City Council adopted the plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Portland, Maine.
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