

AFTER SHOPPING. Seoul Express Bus Terminal



Barbara Kruger, 1987

BIG QUESTIONS: If the cultural politics of consumption is shifting. Also shifting is the space of consumption. Also shifting is the representation of that space vis-a-vis social media. Layers of understanding are being added and subtracted. How does one transition from space to place.

BIG SITE: The site of the Express Bus Terminal is the largest open site remaining in Seoul. It is more than half the size of Central Park. It is also central, with the intersection of three major subway lines (3, 7, 9); with the nexus for nation travel by bus, connecting to 60 cities in S. Korea. In total, the bus terminal station handles 300 thousand persons per day, inclusive of busses and metro.

BIG INFRASTRUCTURE: Infrastructure is a generator of many things and NOT just traffic. In this case, the density of people has many spin-offs and has spawned differing kinds of infrastructure and measures of use. For example, the underground market alone houses over 1,000 stores. And as early as 2010, bus terminal metro station was the country's most popular wifi hotspot. The site also links with with a regional green infrastructure pathway that reaches multiple millions.

SMALL TESTBED: A new amalgam of production and consumption and cultural knowledge, applied to the semi-abandoned bus terminal as guerilla operation. A floor plate will be occupied. It will evolve to something never before experienced. It will be like the existing flower market, but for the 21st century.

GETTING STARTED: We leave for Seoul with analysis of a theoretical text; a New York City case-study; and a "jump-start" design scenario for an empty floor of the bus terminal; and a relevant textual analysis, all for discussion on site.

COLLABORATORS: We will dovetail directly with an architecture studio at Korea University and the Korea University Urban Lab. Principal stakeholder is the Shinsegae Group (SSG) that is partial owner of the site and engaged with revolutionizing the Korean retail industry. We will directly address their concerns, within the context of revitalization of major urban infrastructure.

ADDITIONAL DESIGN CONCERNS.

This largest regeneration parcel in the center of Seoul has recently changed hands to majority ownership of Shinsegae, that is also heavily invested in shopping culture on the site through both its flagship department store and the myriad small outlets integrated within the Bus Terminal building. It is a given that the logistical area will remain, but to be platformed over and with some reconfiguration. Also remaining will be the Marriott Hotel, already upgraded. The Bus Terminal building, dating from 1975 and considered by some as an important landmark for modern architecture, will also remain and its abandoned floor plates repurposed as demonstration projects. The extraordinary diversity of the site will be heightened, combining new and uncanny programmatic overlaps coming from new cultural politics, at least in part related to next generation "shopping."

A fundamental question is how to kick-start new concepts of public space at the micro-scale (Bus Terminal floor plate), and at the macro-scale (the entire park platform)). What evolves will be a kind of "park," but not exclusively in the 19th century sense. If there is green vegetation, it may well be such hybrids as the large wholesale flower market presently in the terminal building; or the existing urban greenway which is presently blocked by the site. The pressing overall conceptual question will be how is the "park" going to engage new concepts for urban public space in the 21st century? And how can new mechanisms for social interaction be incorporated (i.e. social media). Finally, what will be the nature of the cultural engagement that combines all aspects?

Field Study in Seoul will be as follows: Arrival on **Friday, October 4** and departure **Thursday, October 11**. Semester schedule is below:

Week 1-2 Topical research, case-studies, and first sketch designs

Week 3 Pin-up and Preparation of Seoul Presentations

Oct 4-11 SITE VISIT

Week 4-6

Week 7

Oct 24 MIDTERM REVIEW

Week 8-9

Week 10-13

Nov 6 pre-FINAL REVIEW

Week 14:

December 9 FINAL REVIEW