

Course Syllabus

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Architecture Research Seminar

Art as Social Infrastructure

Spring 2017

Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation

Columbia University

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Art and Social Infrastructure

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Premise:

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This seminar seeks to investigate the interrelationship between design, art, community and economic development. We propose to evaluate the models, strategies, and tools used to deploy art in service of community and economic prosperity. Drawing from an array of contemporary and historical examples, the research will examine the efforts and successes of private cultural institutions, as well as governments operating at city, regional, and national scales.

We propose to investigate precedents where a significant art institution or events act as urban catalyst, and assess the impact of its transformation over time. Our premise is that as cities around the world seek to nurture twenty-first century industries, lively urban centers, and harmonious communities—while simultaneously adapting to a whirlwind of social, technological, and environmental changes, all under severe budgetary constraints—it is imperative to better understand the ways in which a city can express its values, enhance its identity, and quantify its growth.

How can design and art be used as drivers of lasting community development and economic growth?

Method:

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Our research will analyze precedents at different scales in preparation for an interdisciplinary conference to be held at GSAPP in the Spring 2018. (A selection of the Seminar research will be eligible to be presented by its participants at the conference) The seminar will examine how investment in art and culture affects the growth and development of cities. We will look at the role design, art, and cultural institutions play in the built environment, across urban and socio-economical scales.

We will explore the conditions, coincidences and contradictions of art and culture, education and development, community, citizenry, capital, gentrification, valuation and devaluation, at the small, mid-sized, and global city scale. Through an exploration of existing and potential art-based community development strategies, this seminar seeks to re-orient the conversation on city-building around arts and culture as drivers and community developers.

Examples include: the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Art Basel in Miami and Hong Kong, Documenta in Kassel, the neighborhood of Williamsburg in New York, the Cannes Film Festival, and Dia:Beacon in New York State's Hudson Valley. These examples demonstrate how cultural and art organizations, at different levels of investment and scales, have influenced the growth, vibrancy, and economic sustainability of cities.

Since the 1980s, artists and arts organizations have become the de facto 'pioneers' of the urban development process, serving as unintentional 'foot soldiers' of real estate development, as they 'rediscover' and 'open up' previously marginalized and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

In seeking out new creative spaces and communities, establishing new venues and urban frontiers, artists generate public interest and investment, and are subsequently 'priced' out (and pushed out) of the places they laboriously and communally created, along with the long-time residents of these communities who have called these 'new' neighborhoods 'home' for generations.

Among citizens—particularly those in economically disadvantaged communities 'development' is sought after, but 'gentrification' is feared. As artists and long-time community members feel increasing pressure from the rising cost of housing and services, urgent questions arise about what drives development and how the city can achieve an optimal balance between 'development' and

'preservation' in urban place-making, and between revitalization and respect for their longstanding communities and rich, if often devalued, histories.

The seminar will explore the idea of the *colony*, as it pertains to the gathering of like-minded people such as artists and collectors in cooperative art colonies, or communes with shared interest, but also as it relates to the emergence of a colonial tendency to occupy, subjugate and control the sites where the art venues are established.

Questions

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- Do Arts and Culture create better conditions for urban economic growth and community development or are they simply a Trojan horse for developers to make a land grab?
- How are communities and citizens affected by the development and success of art events and districts, and art attractors such as Museums, art fairs, and global art festivals?
- What types of art practices and models can be more responsive to the needs and values of communities and citizens that form them?
- How can art be used as driver of lasting community development and economic growth?
- What is the global phenomena behind the steady influx of capital into the Art World, why does money go to Art more now than ever before?
- What do cities like Bilbao, Miami, London, New York gain from Art centric development?
- How can the location of a prestigious Art Venue affect a local, underserved neighborhood?
- Dollar for dollar, how does the Return on Investment (ROI) in Arts and Culture compare to the Return on Investments in urban infrastructure, e.g. transportation and affordable housing?

Case Studies

Through the following precedents, the seminar will review existing evidence and compile a list of cause and effect factors from a 'place making' perspective.

- Documenta, (Various Architects) Germany *and Post World War II*: Documenta is a recurring art show in Kassel, Germany curated every four years. The event was established in war-devastated Kassel as a means to present a new, progressive, art-centric image of post-war Germany.
- Guggenheim Museum, (Gehry) Bilbao, Spain, *From the Franco era to Bilbao and Today*: Spain developed a multi-focal network of world-renown regional museums to affirm its democratization in post-Franco era Spain, generating what is now widely known as the "Bilbao effect" and other remarkable regional and global cultural sites and events.

- Serpentine, Art Pavilions, (Multiple Architects), London, England, *The Serpentine Pavilions and Globalization*: England transformed its colonial legacy into a well-endowed network of art fairs, international museum shows and an annual staging of pavilions that attract global attention and centers cultural discourse as well as a fierce commercialization of art as commodity.
- Art Basel Miami Beach, (Arquitectonica), Art Fair in Miami, US. This case study examines how the Art Basel Miami Beach Art Fair has totally transformed a neglected area of Deco Miami into a exploding art district that peaks for 4 days a year
- Dia:Beacon, (OpenOffice/Solomonoff/Irwin), Beacon, New York, This case study examines how after experiencing post-industrial urban devastation, the city re-urbanized around the Museum, with the benefit of the Metro-North Train connection and the Hudson Waterfront.
- Prada Foundation, (OMA/Koolhaas), Milano, Italy. This case study examines how fashion and art patronage merge to create lasting changes in a post industrial zone of the Italian north.
- *Art Detroit and its post-Fordian re-urbanization*: Post-industrial American cities are anchoring new urban development strategies through the agency of cultural institutions.
- *Botin Center, Santander, Spain: Creating Social Capital and Urban Innovation*. This case study examines the efforts and motivations of a philanthropic foundation and a city's government to build a new arts-education center, designed by Renzo Piano, on a water-front site at the heart of Santander, a port-city on the Atlantic coast in northern Spain. Eighteen years after the opening of the Guggenheim Bilbao, our case study will compare and contrast the regional transformation of these two cities, track the results of these different approaches, document the successes and any difficulties and speculate on its future potentialities.

The seminar output would include research, cost/benefit analysis, planning data, maps and visualizations. The seminar output will be collected in a book and use for the preparation of a GSAPP conference on the same subject to take place in the Spring of 2018.

Schedule

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The Spring Semester has 12 scheduled seminar meetings.

It meets Thursday from January 18 to April 28, 2017 from 11 am to 1 pm.

There will be no seminar during Kinne Trip week, March 9th, 2017

Spring Break is March 13 to 20th, 2017

Final Research is due on April 27th at 1.30 PM

Bibliography

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Forthcoming