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Contested Urbanscapes

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Introduction: *Contested Urbanscapes*

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Contesting the Urban

Hannah Arendt defined the urban milieu as the par-excellence public, common, and non-homogenizing realm. The city, in and because of its diversity, has rarely, if ever, existed or functioned as an uncontested space. The urban is always there in order to be claimed by diverse groups, as Henri Lefebvre would argue. Urban hi/stories can be narrated as periods of contestations of a certain form succeeded by periods of contestations of a different form. The urban, perhaps unlike the suburban or the rural, is contestation itself.

This volume of the *Montreal Architectural Review* explores the theme of urban contestation via a collection of interdisciplinary contributions that engage and interpret urban landscapes of conflict. Definitions and elaborations of urban contestation range widely in the contributions, proposing a diversity of possibilities that draws from the diversity of the urban itself. Ioannidis and Petridou, combining urban geography and public policy, study urban contestation through a data-driven reading of graffiti and street art on buildings and surfaces in a real-time unfolding of crisis in the streets of Beirut. Sun, from an architectural theory perspective, offers a hermeneutic reading of New York's High Line as an urban design

that can only exist in continuous and often painful conflict between reality and imagination. Glumčević and Odobašić Novo, in an urban studies analysis review, highlight breaks and changes in architectural and urban culture via a descriptive, almost journalistic retelling of open warfare through the wounded fabric of Sarajevo. Lowery, via a fine arts hybrid of photography, painted banners and installations, visually documents and interprets contestation as a series of lines, of "boundaries, blocks, and borders," that violently divide urban fabrics in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Agency in the Contested City

Margaret Crawford interpreted spatial contestations of the public realm as definitions of the city. Considered in the expanded field of twenty-first century's globalized narrative of mobility, these definitions acquire renewed meaning. Underprivileged populations become authors of novel everyday urbanisms, collocating and claiming their own formulations of the city, often in conflict with the established order. David Harvey would pose that the urban experience can transfigure from alienating to humanizing only by undergoing crisis and contestation.

As the contributions in this volume evidence, it is often in the space, the place, and the time of contestation that the urban acquires new and heightened meaning, providing the possibility for spatial-cultural shifts, and becoming itself a physical manifestation of agency by which those shifts can occur. The city is claimed and changed repeatedly in action - whether by spraying calls to revolution on its walls, by walking through imagined superimposed landscapes on its fabric, by refashioning its war-torn streets and apartment buildings into protective shelters, or by capturing, painting, and reproposing the mnemonic of urban conditions of divisions. Calame's book review of *Urban Heritage in Divided Cities* in this volume wisely suggests that while specific episodes and imaginings of urban contestation can often be highlighted as notable moments of spatial-cultural shifts, the intrinsic nature and chronic behaviors of the politics and culture of urban partition and injustice are not studied as more persistent patterns in a way that can lead to their overcoming. At the same time, the immediacy of action at the local scale and context, while of presumably less importance to regional or global networks of power, can eventually lead to changes in those more persistent patterns of injustice. The transfiguration from an alienating to a humanizing urban experience can occur instantaneously, repeatedly, or persistently, through a multiplicity of actions and agents of contestation. Though engagement with these actions and agents may indeed be but a fragment of a wider process, it is at the least a significant and necessary fragment.

The Desire for Urban Belonging

Jeff Ferrell proposed that, perhaps today more than ever before, groups questioning and contesting the contemporary urban structure become inventors of alternative systems of aesthetics, representation, identity and meaning, and that their actions build collective memory, shudder social order, and expose new possibilities in spaces of socio-political conflict. Is there hope, then, as Myrto Tsilimpounidi would imagine, that urban contestation can eventually lead to new forms of urban belonging?

The question can perhaps begin to be partially answered by immersing in this volume's contributions with an understanding that transcends architectural and urban aesthetics, representation, identity, and meaning as manifestations of purely formal, functional, or social perspectives. The studies herein can instead, or additionally, be approached from within our humanity, from within our subjectivities. As humans, our actions and our creations, including those of and within urban contestations, are driven primarily by a desire to belong. We long to belong. We long to be part of one another. We desire to belong to and with our surroundings, to and with our buildings, to and with our cities. That desire drives our actions, our creations, our questionings, our revolutions. Alberto Pérez-Gómez poses that architecture engages the inhabitant as an active participant and not as a disengaged spectator precisely because it derives from this desire, because it is 'built upon love.' Similarly, should we understand the city as a construction of desires and of belonging, the contested urban landscapes engaged in the volume become episodes toward a belonging that is already being shaped by the actions of contestations themselves. Urban belonging is not a destination or an end. It is a contested and a continuous journey.

About the Author

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Montreal Architectural Review

Street Art and the 'Right to the City' in a Fragmented Metropolis: The Case of Beirut[1]

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Mid Sweden University

Abstract:

In this paper, we examine how the demand of the citizens of Beirut for their 'right to their city' played out during the major popular uprising, which began on the 17th of October 2019. We focus on various forms of street art that had already been in place before the uprising as well as several pieces that emerged during the days following the beginning of the demonstrations. Our intent was to flesh out how drawing on the walls of the Lebanese capital manifested itself as a key activity through which people, regardless of sect and socioeconomic status, fought to improve their city and transform it into a space where leaders are corrupt-free, people's living standards are improved, the environment is cleaner and human rights are respected. We conducted a group interview of Lebanese (street) artists to contextualize the city's street art scene. The core materials for our study consist of 147 photographs of street art, taken during a week's stay in Beirut in October 2019. We performed thematic narrative analysis on the material, revealing five distinct themes. All themes reflect demands for a 'right to the city' in nuanced ways. We fleshed them out with the use of at least one illustration per theme. While some images projected overt political slogans and art others transmitted their message in a subtler manner. We conclude that graffiti and other forms

of street art are powerful means through which groups and individuals project their messages in order to assert their self-preservation and, ultimately, their 'right to the city' in contested urban spaces, where power differentials play out on political, social, and spatial levels.

Introduction

On arriving at Beirut airport in the evening of the 18th of October 2019, little did we and our traveling companions know that the entire city and, indeed, the whole country had been gripped in the midst of a major political crisis.[2] Since the preceding day, the Lebanese people had taken to the streets en masse, expressing major displeasure against the manner in which the government had been handling a chronic economic crisis and mounting economic debt. The crowd's main demand was for the prime minister and the entire government to step down. A series of measures, including deep slashes in public funding and the imposition of heavy taxes relating to goods and services had enraged the population whose quality of life has been declining for decades due to rising unemployment and extremely low wages. The final spark that ignited this uprising was the imposition of a hefty monthly tax on WhatsApp calls as well as the embarrassing position the Government found itself in when forced to request aid from neighboring countries since it lacked the resources to fight a series of forest fires.[3]

Beirut is no stranger to sociopolitical turmoil. Over almost half a century the Lebanese capital has witnessed a 15-year civil war, invasions and occupations by foreign armies and upheavals ranging from localized sectarian conflicts between the city's numerous ethnic groups, assassinations of political figures, and bombings of public buildings including embassies. Notable events include major demonstrations, especially following the 2005 murder of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, which led to the withdrawal of the Syrian army that had been in the country for almost three decades. A few years later, the country's inability to deal with the growing environmental disaster associated with large accumulations of garbage led to fresh uprisings.[4] Further dissatisfaction has often been expressed due to the post-war downtown redevelopment process led by the private corporation Solidere, which in the spirit of neoliberalism, has transformed the area into a zone of wealth that is out of reach to most of Beirut's citizens.[5] [6] [7]

The aforementioned events reflect the growing despair of most of Beirut's citizens concerning the way things have unfolded in their city and Lebanon as a whole. Forces ranging from widespread inefficiency and outright corruption on the part of politicians which, in turn, have led to widespread social problems

(e.g., high unemployment, rising living costs and suppressed wages) but also weak urban planning legislation and a disastrous track record with regards to the natural environment have caused major problems such as the elimination of public transportation, drastic loss of public open space, chronic accumulations of trash and oppressive air pollution. In turn, these events triggered a growing desire on the part of numerous people regardless of their sect or socioeconomic status to demand their collective right to their city. In other words, these citizens wish to have a say in determining their future as opposed to experiencing the consequences of the decisions of increasingly unpopular governments.[8] [9] [10] [11]

Here, we refer to the events that began on the 17th of October 2019 as our point of departure. For approximately one week we witnessed first-hand a series of practices, mirroring the citizens' efforts to stake a claim in managing their city's future. In turn, these include: (a) the take-over of public spaces, including squares and roads; (b) temporary occupation of properties that had been sealed off by the authorities for decades, and; (c) the "appropriation" of walls by street artists and others who sought to lay their claim to their city through various expressions of street art. While we briefly describe a and b, we focus mostly on the third practice. We note that despite considerable debate surrounding the meaning of street art, we have adopted the description of Taş and Taş of "'street art' as an umbrella term, encompassing any type of art (graffiti, spray paintings, installations, ready-mades and performances) whose use of the street contributes essentially to its meaning." [12] For our purposes, we focus almost exclusively on graffiti, which Hanauer defines as "a pictorial and written inscription on a publicly accessible surface." [13] [14]

While Hanauer argued that graffiti is "a specific communicative act used by a variety of subcultures to provide personal voice in a public domain" [15], in the Lebanese case, we contend that 'doing graffiti' or, indeed, any type of street art, is not confined to subcultures. Rather, these practices have become a cultural conduit for a broader sociopolitical response to the persistent 'non-governability' of the Lebanese state. Non-governability concerns the inability "to make consistent and stable public policy" [16] stemming, *inter alia,* from ignoring public input in decision-making processes. The attempt to make (un)stable public policy preceding the unrest in October 2019 was yet another manifestation of non-governmentality, public sector dysfunction and paralysis, extreme clientelism, corruption, and impingement on citizens' rights. The act of doing graffiti, simultaneously subversive and artistic, reflected an attempt to reclaim public space as much as the message of the graffiti was geared towards the same goal.[17] Thus, our purpose is to analyze the street art in Beirut as a means toward claiming the right of citizens to their city; a spatial act with political objectives. The study fills a lacuna since it constitutes a rare investigation drawing from primary research of street art pieces rather than an analysis of secondary data.

Searching for the 'Right to the City'

In *Rebel Cities*, David Harvey reminds us that our times are dominated by a neoliberal market logic "where the rights of private property and profit trump all other notions of rights one can think of". [18] For decades, we have witnessed in numerous cities worldwide the actions of policymakers, planners, architects, and builders, which have transformed downtowns, waterfronts and abandoned manufacturing or warehouse districts into standardized spaces, which are subjected to a high degree of regulation.[19] [20] [21] These areas regularly lend themselves to the development of luxury-oriented housing, hotels and entertainment facilities while also commonly staging spectacle-oriented events. They are spaces where security guards and surveillance equipment ensure that those who do not belong – the poor, the homeless, certain ethnic groups - are unwelcome. [22] [23]

The commodification of these urban spaces and their transformation into exclusive zones catering to a minority of a city's population lead one to ask to whom the city really belongs. As Pugalis and Giddings state "this in turn raises crucial questions about the 'right to the city', when particular users, uses and activities are privileged over others." [24] This 'right to the city' is not only a right of access to what the city has to offer in a physical sense. As Harvey argues, it is more about citizens collectively having the freedom and opportunity to transform their living environment according to their wishes.[25] Harvey states that, occasionally, various groups (e.g., those demanding the rights of women, gays, minorities, workers, and those campaigning for the environment) demonstrate, and these uprisings can have implications with a global reach. The 'Arab Spring', when people in various North African and Middle Eastern countries rose in protest constitutes a good example of such movements.[26] [27] [28] The recent 'Black Lives Matter' campaign reflects collective action, which has rapidly spread to numerous cities throughout the United States and further afield.[29]

Questions that commonly arise when talking about the 'right to the city' are, according to Marcuse, "whose right, what right and to what city?"[30] Responding to the first question, he argues that it is those who feel marginalized or excluded. These are groups that are often economically oppressed and/or persons who believe they have little or no say in decisions that directly affect their quality of life. In terms of the "what right", Marcuse contends that we are not talking about a single legal right like the right to use a particular public space or a right to receive certain services but rather a "collectivity of rights", which the community demands not only from a legal but also a moral standpoint.[31] Finally, in response to "what city", Marcuse refers to Lefebvre who was not so much talking about the city in its present form but more so about a future state in which the "right to urban life" emerges as the key objective.[32]

During the peak of the global economic crisis, Brenner et al. argued that cities, especially during the throes of widespread economic restructuring, are far more than growth engines leading to profit for a minority of individuals and businesses. Instead, they should be treated as places that address their citizens' rights to have a greater say over the social and environmental conditions they experience in everyday life. In other words, these cities should be primarily "for people, not for profit".[33]

Meanwhile, Mitchell argues that one way to address the 'right to the city' is by gaining right of access and appropriating public space in a physical sense. Drawing from Lefebvre, he conceptualizes urban public space in two different ways. On the one hand, spaces that have been configured to be used for a particular purpose can be seen as *representations of space*.[34] Fitting this category are the aforementioned highly-regulated spaces that materialize in the form of well-lit and policed public plazas, pedestrian shopping streets and festival marketplaces.[35] On the other hand, the public spaces that have been overran by one or more groups such as political organizations or the homeless can be seen as *spaces of representation*. Mitchell then states that "public space is a place within which a political movement can stake out the space that *allows it to be seen* [emphasis added]. In public space, political organizations can represent themselves to a larger population. By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public".[36]

The uprisings in several places worldwide in recent times, including the anti-globalization rallies in Seattle and Genoa, the angry marches in Athens concerning the state of the Greek economy, the Occupy Wall Street movement, as well as the revolutionary movements throughout the Near and Middle East represent the struggles of large groups of people to embrace their 'right to the city'.[37] This claim commonly reflected through the physical occupation of public spaces such as streets, squares and parks. Within these spaces, demonstrators engage in various practices (e.g., chanting, singing, setting up tents). This urban resistance is often also mirrored through various forms of street art, including graffiti. Taş and Taş describe these actions "as a participatory political practice", suggesting that the street artists "transform urban public space, as a means of both challenging established power relations and transforming prevailing notions of politics, art, and publicness".[38]

Previously, various urbanists discussed graffiti's role in neighborhood transformation. For instance, Zukin and Braslow argue that the art produced on walls allows certain communities (e.g., immigrants from a particular country) to assert their presence as creative in-migrants (in a global city like New York).[39] Nevertheless, despite these studies, research that specifically examines the role of graffiti in the context of the 'right to the city' is uncommon. Other than the case of Istanbul by Taş and Taş, few others have examined the role of street art as an expression of claims on public space.[40] [41] [42] [43]

Zieleniec interprets graffiti's role in the context of the 'right to the city', arguing that drawing on walls leads to "reclaiming and remaking the city as a more humane and just, social space". He believes that despite the increasing popularity of street art in localities worldwide, we lack understanding of how creating this art relates to producing urban space. To conceptualize this interplay, Zieleniec contends that Lefebvre's outlook on the 'right to the city' is the ideal lens through which to "see and read graffiti as an active and creative engagement in and with urban space that emphasizes the possibility of refashioning, reclaiming the city and the urban for people and not just for profit."[44] [45] Thus, street art becomes a means through which those who feel marginalized in contemporary urban spaces assert their own individual identity by creatively transforming the walls into art. "Graffiti provides alternative ways to seeing the city,

not just for those who write or paint the walls but also those who read and see it. Graffiti is a means to communicate a range of ideas, perspectives and opinions and to ensure a more egalitarian use of the city and its streets . . . Graffiti then, is an embodied creative colonization of public space."[46]

While certain scholars highlight the 'resistance' element in street art, such approaches often underplay the messages of other artistic expressions within the same urban context.[47] Sprengel questions the "fetishization of 'resistance' in English language scholarship" relating to street art.[48] Although she focuses on performative street art (music and plays in public spaces) in Cairo and Alexandria following the 'Arab Spring' of 2011, her premise is that not all artists perceive their work as explicitly 'political'. Rather, Sprengel believes that certain artists convey their messages in a "quiet" way. "Instead of endeavoring to transform the state, these artists worked in the gaps of state power to repair the social cleavages that state power exacerbates".[49]

We now proceed to investigate how Beirut's citizens have been expressing their demand for their right to determine the future of their city, especially through practices of street art. While we focus mostly on the events surrounding the uprising of October 2019, we recognize that these demands for the 'right to the city' have existed for several years.

Method, Data and Framework for Analysis

Our study was part of a larger interdisciplinary project relating to street art. Our 4-person research group represented different academic disciplines: fine arts, architecture, human geography, and political science. Over six days in October 2019 we took 1,092 pictures of graffiti around Beirut. After sorting out duplicates, illegible or unclear images and those unrelated to the narrative under investigation, we settled on 147.[50] This dataset includes images created during the riots, but also those created before the unrest. We conducted thematic visual narrative analysis on graffiti images, the message of which was immediately obvious.[51] Consequently, interpretation was an integral part of the analysis, enriched by the interdisciplinarity of the researchers. We worked on the interface of the visual and the textual since the text-based street art itself concomitantly constituted written word and an image, while the image-based street art told a story. In other words, we told "a story *about* images that themselves told a story".[52]

Thematic narrative analysis focuses on what is told, the content of speech, rather than the telling, or the speaker.[53] Thematic visual narrative analysis draws on the same principles though when it comes to "sites of inquiry"[54], the researchers may interrogate the production of the image that is, who produced it, where and when and with what medium. Alternatively, the researchers may examine the image itself—the content—or concern themselves with audiencing. This entails focusing on possible readings and the dialectic relationship of the onlooker. In this project, we pay attention to each image's content. In contrast to other

studies, we pay less attention to the stories and identities of the people who produced the images, though we leaned on a group interview with Lebanese artists in order to situate the analysis of the images. This was a group interview of five people (men and women) involved in street art (as well as other kinds of artistic expression), ranging in age and religious affiliation. Our discussions lasted a period of approximately four hours. One of us documented what was discussed by taking extensive notes. For ethical purposes, we preserved our respondents' anonymity. The group interview was unstructured; after briefing the artists on the aim and objectives of our research project, they told us their stories and the story of their art.

The focus of our analysis is the cultural responses to the non-governability of the Lebanese state by citizens asserting their 'right to the city'. We worked inductively with the material, aiming to uncover how the main themes expressed in the images relate to these demands. Thus, we avoided *a priori* decisions about what kind of graffiti to include in our data collection, nor did we impose our judgements about the quality of the art or the message at the time of data collection. We had various discussions regarding the material, during collection and afterwards, resulting in the development of the narrative. These conversations included an expression of our feelings and relationship to research in general, in addition to the material in particular.[55] Iterative communication not only brought our disciplinary specificities to the surface, but also made the negotiated coding process transparent and the analysis more creative.[56] The collaborative process enriched the analysis through the dialectic process of the inductive analysis.[57] We must note that none of us speaks Arabic. An Arab-speaker with knowledge of the Lebanese context translated the material during a three-hour recorded session. Finally, we used the software Atlas.ti to organize and systematically analyze the images.[58] This enabled us to identify key emerging themes, which we elaborate upon in the following section. We do so, through a detailed analysis of one or more representative images per theme.

Beirut and the 'Right to the City'

Before embarking on our analysis, we briefly explain the background leading up to the events we witnessed in October 2019. To begin with, the protests were very much fueled by the non-governability of the Lebanese state, the seeds to which were sown in the aftermath of the 15-year long civil war that ended in 1990 and which followed the Taif agreement of 1989. While it is extremely simplistic to blame the sectarian structure of Lebanon's society for the war,[59] an unanticipated outcome of the agreement was that it intensified society's 'sectarianization'. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Taif agreement, the non-governable nature of the country, resulted in sectarian warlords taking over the provision of services. This intensely clientelist system led to a political economy that during times of crisis destabilized the political system in a manner which favored the elites and exacerbated intra-sectarian competition.[60]

The widespread demonstrations that began on 17th October 2019 in Beirut saw citizens regardless of sect (e.g., Sunni or Shia Muslims, the Druze, Armenians, Greek Orthodox and Maronites) or of socio-economic status spill out into the streets with one prevailing common cause in mind: to bring down the government they regarded as extremely corrupt and ineffective. The crowd's specific aim in the midst of the turmoil was to abolish the sectarian system of governance. This is what we experienced first-hand during out visit to the city. Although, initially, our purpose for being in the Lebanese capital was to examine how street art plays out in contested urban spaces, the events that unfolded in front of us were vital in shaping the nature of our study.

We quickly realized that we were witnessing a widespread, and for the most part peaceful, movement whereby people of varying ages and backgrounds were making a case for their 'right to *their* city'. To paraphrase Robert Park,[61] people were expressing en masse their demand to live in a transformed world, reflecting their desire for, among others, the elimination of corruption, the right to a living wage and affordable housing, and also the ability to breathe clean air in an environment where green spaces have been vanishing[62]. As mentioned in the introduction, three predominant actions reflect how Beirut's citizens put forth their demands: the takeover of public open spaces, the temporary occupation of buildings that had been boarded up for years, and through street art.

Taking over public open space

The most visible citywide expression of a 'revolution' in October 2019 was people taking to the streets where they marched or rode in convoys of vehicles. Occasionally, especially during the first two days, they barricaded some of the city's main arteries, including the one leading to the international airport. A common theme in all these instances was the flying of the Lebanese flag, in an expression that this uprising was one where every citizen was rallying behind the flag and not along sectarian affiliations. Importantly, the epicenter of the demonstrations was Martyrs' Square and several blocks surrounding this. This area is close to the rejuvenated downtown and many government offices. In Martyrs' Square itself, demonstrators set up tents as well as food and drink stations and held speeches, rallies and concerts. The takeover of the square was well organized, even to the point where a recycling station had been set up.

Temporary occupation of 'boarded-up' buildings

Another illustrative expression of people's 'right to the city' was reflected through the occupation of two landmark buildings, both of which had been shut off to the public for decades. In turn, these were the Grand Theatre and a building that, because of its unique shape, has been dubbed The Egg (an unfinished cinema from the 1960s). The theater was a major landmark in Beirut, was built in the late 1920s and was the focus of Beirut's cultural scene until the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. Since the 1990s, it has been fenced off on the premise that it was not structurally sound due to damage it had received during the hostilities. During the 2019 uprising demonstrators managed to break through the barricades and, for a few days, they and other curious individuals invaded the space. Young persons had never been inside this building while older individuals spoke of their fond memories of a different (peaceful) time before the outbreak of the civil war. "You could buy refreshments here before" an older man told us, unprompted, while we were in the theater documenting the writing on the walls. He said he used to go there with his friends when they were young and had not been in the building in decades. He came out that day to claim the space in his memory and the recollection of an earlier time, when the theater was a space of entertainment rather than a contested space of failed revitalization efforts and repeated governmental failures. Within this space the temporary occupiers painted the walls, and from the higher floors they could look down on the crowds in the streets[63]. Meanwhile, the occupation of the Egg led to this building being used as a space for lectures as well as many street art activities. The Egg was also transformed into a 'safe space' where women as well as the LGBTQ community were able to participate in various discussions.

Street art

The act of using public space and specifically walls to generate a statement and convey a narrative is, in itself, a way to claim the 'right to the city'. During our time in Beirut, it was obvious that there was a flurry of revolutionary graffiti being created, especially within the main area where the demonstrations were unfolding. These pieces were the latest iteration of a street art corpus that has come to dominate large swathes of the Lebanese capital in recent years and, as we have mentioned, many of these – despite not being as clearly anti-government as the ones produced during the uprisings – were also included in our analysis, since they also convey messages, ones which assert a 'right to the city'. Our thematic visual narrative analysis revealed several threads emerging in the street art. As one of our respondents noted. "Fiction is a form of a resistance and a luxury in Lebanon" (R2), and so are the stories that the walls say to the passers-by.

Coexistence: Feel-good beautification

Large, mural-like pieces on the side of buildings require, if not explicit permission by the authorities, consultation with the local community (R4). Therefore, it is hardly surprising that they tend to not be overtly subversive or offensive and, often, they are painted by known artists. Permission notwithstanding, the act of drawing the mural remains a means for citizens to assert their 'right to their city'. Several large murals in multi-story buildings convey a message of coexistence through feel-good beautification. An example of these is "The Rhino and the Oxpecker" by Miami-based artist Ernesto Maranje in collaboration with local children, [64] depicted in Figure 1.

This piece is colorful, in stark contrast to the all-too quotidian, for Beirut, dirty mustard-beige of the apartment building. It depicts a large rhinoceros and, sitting upon this big animal, a small bird, an oxpecker. The art speaks for the possibilities of symbiosis in the midst of blue, pink, orange and yellow flowers. The bird grooms the rhinoceros, the rhinoceros provides nourishment to the bird: a positive educational tale of coexistence. A closer look at the image may convey that this symbiosis is 'other-wordly', a concept not indigenous to Lebanon. After all, neither the rhinoceros nor the oxpecker is indigenous to Lebanon. What is more, the horn of the rhinoceros is quite pronounced and the most colorful part of the mural. The colors, blue, red, orange, yellow, white, and black are stark, constituting a colorful constellation, a feel-good rhinoceros' horn. However, the polychromatic focus on the horn transforms the entire animal into a hybrid overweight unicorn, a creature that is mythical. Therefore, coexistence does not exist.

Finding Common Ground: The Use of Cultural Icons

Conversely, Ashekhman[65] often weave cultural icons in their art. In the piece depicted in Figure 2, Kermit is in the middle of two sentence fragments. The Arabic reads: "to be free or not to be", meaning that if one cannot have freedom, one might as well be dead. It does not specifically mention what it is that one wishes to be free of, although one could infer that the artists are alluding to the dysfunctional government system. (Figure 2)

The light-heartedness of the smiling Kermit from the Muppet show belies the seriousness of the message, which alludes to the famous opening phrase of Hamlet, who is contemplating suicide. In doing so, Hamlet also recognizes that there are no good alternatives to life, problematic though it may be. The writing also alludes to "give me freedom or give me death" by Patrick Henry, ushering the American revolution. The laughing, innocent-looking Kermit, bright and green, a famous Muppet, is also, of course, a puppet, controlled, manipulated by the hand of a man in a suit. Only the man's arm is visible. The mural is fraught with tensions along binaries: Arabic writing/western cultural symbols and allusions; bright colors/

dark message; Muppet/puppet, and laughter/manipulation. The wall on which it was painted becomes the public space that Tsavdaroglou who builds on Lefebvre sees as, "the constant field of conflicting social relationships, desire [for something other than the status quo] and revolutions".[66]

Advocacy: Fragmented Mobilities Interrupted

The chronic retreat of the state has resulted in a practically non-existent public transportation system, oppressive pollution, and an insufficient waste management system. (Figures 3a and 3b)

For several years, environmental groups in the Lebanese capital have demanded, among others, the need to expand green space, improve waste-management systems, and to clean the air.[67] Further, they have claimed their right to urban space in ways that would sustainably enhance mobility. After all, this large metropolitan region has no public transit system to speak of, and infrastructure catering to cyclists and pedestrians is seriously lacking. This has led to efforts such as the one initiated by a collective of artist-cyclists known as the 'Chain Effect' who engage in a series of street art projects throughout the city that promote cycling.[68] [69] In their case, the art is simple. Their image of the bike in Figure 3b is stenciled, minimal, designed to deliver the message, nothing more, nothing less. The multiplicity of the bikes speaks to the critical mass needed to make a difference— one is not enough. An additional statement, which claims the right to public space is seen in Figure 4, amid a constellation of anti-American and anti-Western slogans.

Rather than being an art piece of mere text, this stencil is used as a communication tool, pointing the reader to the social media pages of the environmental group responsible for its creation. It also makes a statement, which advocates maintaining public accessibility to the area immediately above the Raouche seaside rocks, which has been fenced off. Advocacy is the common thread in these three aforementioned images, whereby the respective environmental groups are active, through their street art, in claiming their right to urban mobility and for accessibility to open (nature-based) spaces. (Figure 5)

Further evidence of people's demand to access public spaces was expressed during the riots. Specifically, the Grand Theater became a flash point of the indignation of the public against the misappropriation of public space. In the image depicted in Figure 5, the call for the recovery of public space is explicit as seen in the banner at the top of the building: "calls for the recovery of public property". Notably, the color scheme on the banner is that of the Lebanese flag, alluding to the entire country's desire to move beyond sectarian power differentials and the corruption associated with that system. It is also worth mentioning that street artists have drawn white cutouts clinging on the outside walls of the theater. These shapes resemble white doves, the symbol of peace. A closer look reveals that the stenciled cutouts are human, harlequin-like figures with no visible hands in a free-fall—individually and in clusters. The figures are both whimsical and ominous, perhaps conveying the idea of Lebanon in free-fall.

Inclusion: A Lebanon for All

The Egg, another Beirut landmark that has not been accessible to the public for decades, also became the site of a distinctly inclusive narrative during the riots. Specifically, the building's interior was covered with various messages.

The writing in black in Figure 6a, located towards the top of the wall, was the slogan written (and stenciled) in numerous walls: "revolution". The first word was commonly rendered with an upward arrow, implying the need to rise up for a revolution. In the rendition in Figure 6a, a stick figure atop the text is doing just that. While feminist slogans and calls for the inclusion of LGTBQ populations in claiming their right to their city are uncommon in Lebanon, within the Egg but also along a barricade outside the Grand Theater, we observed several such messages. The image in Figure 6b includes slogans such as "women for revolution", and "Leila project for the homeland" alluding to Mashrou' Leila, an indie music group considered controversial partly due to its openly gay lead.[70] Slogans in both images convey how jaded people have become with their government: "the blind leading the blind" and "damn the sectarian system" (in Arabic, image to the right in Figure 6b). In addition to the rainbow flag, the images display slogans (in English) "queers are here" and "poor, black, gay trans", "Lebanon for women and gays", "the woman voice revolution", "female revolution" and "women for revolution". The narrative of the last group of writings is one of staking a claim rather than a call for action. There are no verbs in these slogans, even in the imperative (such as fight, or rise up, for example). This renders them static. These are messages conveying the idea that these groups are here too. They are claiming their right to their city; they are claiming their right to be seen, to be heard and, in a nutshell, to exist.

Finally, the narrative of anger was palpable. Several street art pieces produced at the time of the riots was raw and angry, calling for dissolving the governmental structures and devising an alternative to sectarianism—a revolution. In contrast to the previous theme, which was inclusive in the sense that it privileged the unseen 'other' in the demanded new order, the image depicted in Figure 7 suggests a violent disruption of the status quo. The piece is large, itself painted on the shattered glass of an expensive commercial space, colorful and playful. It strikes a similar tone (though not as cerebral) as Figure 2, although the playfulness of the image belies its seriousness. Furthermore, it depicts a bottle of Almaza beer turned into a Molotov bomb. Although Lebanon is not known for its production of beer, Almaza is a traditional lager that has been produced for decades. The established and the traditional become the vessel for the fuel that is about to ignite. Here, the aim of the artist(s) is to transmit the wish that, in case of an emergency, the status quo must shatter. In this instance, the emergency had arrived.

Concluding Remarks

Beirut's walls where street art flourished, especially during the 2019 unrest, were transformed into 'spaces of representation'[71], the vehicle through which individuals and groups asserted their imperative to be seen and heard. Both the act of 'doing' the street art and the various messages it conveyed related to the public's pronounced discontent with the chronic non-governmentality of the Lebanese state. The analysis of 147 images, revealed five distinct themes. These were, in turn: co-existence through feel-good beautification; the use of icons from pop-culture to reflect the identification of common ground demands; the advocacy for enhanced access to better and more sustainable mobility, cleaner air and access to open space; slogans and images referring to the inclusion and rights of often marginalized groups in Lebanese society including women and the LGBTQ population; and finally, outright revolutionary calls to overthrow the government and replace it with a non-corrupt political system that reflects the wishes of the population.

The assertion of the right of the citizens to their city, expressed along these themes, was both overt — 'loud'— as seen in the slogans produced during the unrest and more subtle — 'quiet'— ambiguous and conflicting[72] as expressed in various art pieces, including the large-scale murals, which preceded the uprising. Essentially, however, as articulated by one of our respondents (R4), painting the walls, regardless of what the intended message is meant to be, constitutes an act of defiance. The artists and slogan writers engage in a very public way and, by doing so, they assert their right to exist in a city governed by politicians who for years have failed to represent them. "The whole place is ours" our respondent went on to say. Referring to some of his own past graffiti pieces, he asserted that writing his opinion on the wall was an act of self-preservation, the manifestation of a conscious choice to not be the victim of a power-sharing political system that strips the powers from its citizens. Within a contested urban space such as Beirut, the act of 'taking over' the walls of the city, even temporarily, served as a powerful reminder that the street artists regard the city as belonging to everyone regardless of religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic standing, or political leanings. Citizens contested established pathologies, structures that were aimed at perpetuating inequality and exclusion, and projected a diverse array of identities in the public gaze. In conclusion, the street art in this city but also in many other localities worldwide, provides the agency through which those whose voices have long been ignored can assert their right to the urban mosaic within which they live.

Images

Figure 1. The Rhino and the Oxpecker. Source of photograph: the authors.

Figure 2. Kermit. Source of photograph: the authors

Figure 3a. Bikes. Source of photograph: the authors

Figure 3b. Bikes. Source of photograph: the authors

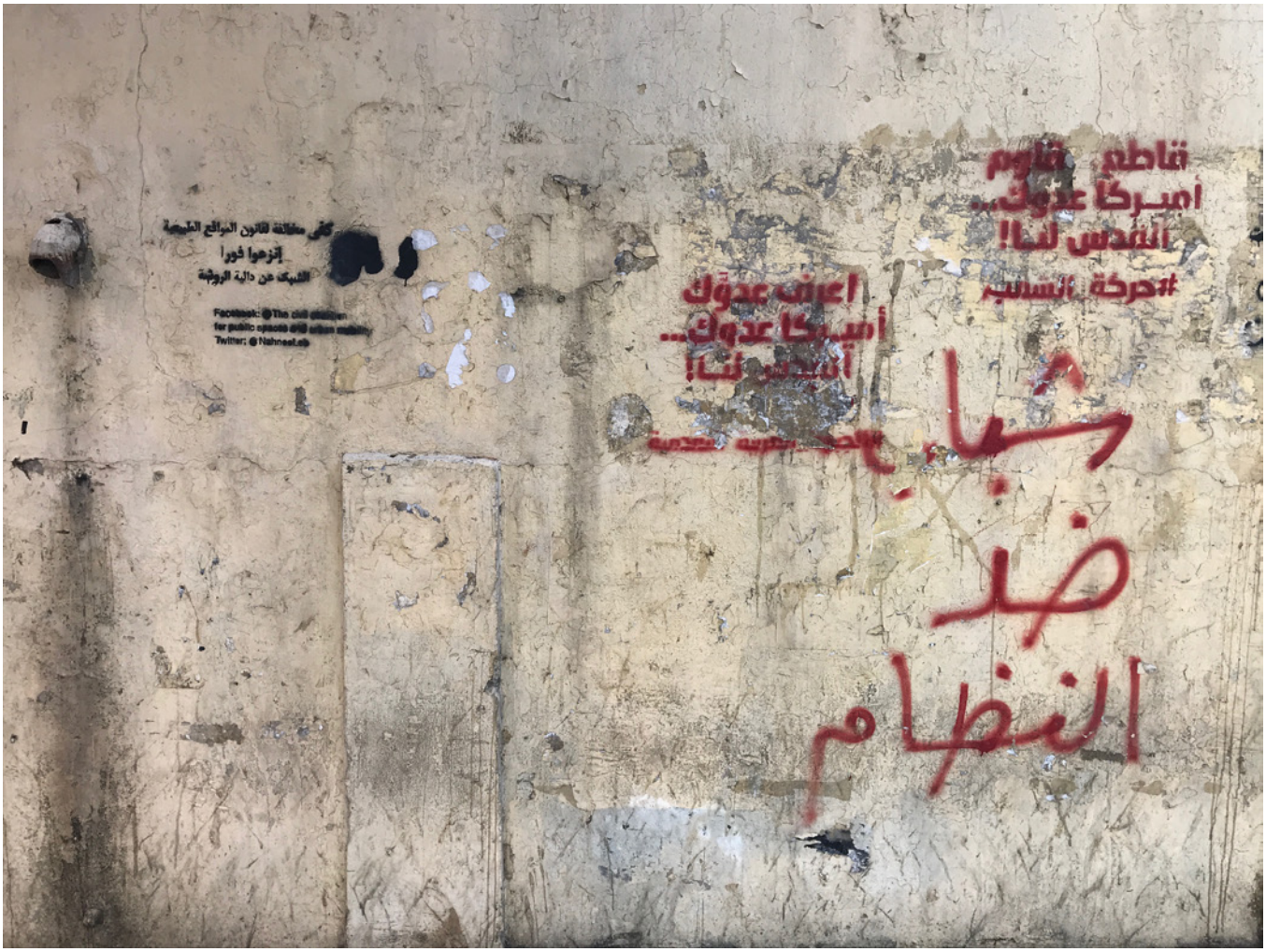

Figure 4. Stencil and slogans. Source of photograph: the authors

Figure 5. Grand Theater. Source of photograph: the authors

Figure 6a. The Egg. Source of photograph: the authors

Figure 6b. The Egg. Source of photograph: the authors

Figure 7. In case of revolution, break glass. Source of photograph: the authors

Notes

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Montreal
Architectural
Review

Between Built and Dreamt: The Contested Urbanscapes of New York City through Walking on the High Line

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Abstract

This research investigates the urban sphere beyond its physical condition and studies it as a transcendent phenomenological field that engages memory, imagination, and dream. By using the perception of Benjaminian *flâneur* as a phenomenological method to investigate the subconscious layers of New York City's urbanscapes, this research argues that the embodied experience of the *flâneur* transcends the physical urban space into a surrealist dream world. This contestation between built and dreamt asks us to rethink urban space as a sphere of precarious emergence where experiences reform from memory, poetically perceived images surface from imagination, and embodied consciousness attuned to public spheres arises from dream. The research conducts its theoretical inquiry of urban contestations through a surrealist framework that assesses the perception of the *flâneur* from a phenomenological perspective and focuses on the relationship between the High Line and New York City to investigate a particular urbanscape of contestations that challenges the boundaries between real and surreal, dream and un-dream, past and present, emergence and nostalgia. It further argues that the phenomenological experience of the *flâneur* evokes memory, imagination, and dream to transform the physicality of urban space into an atmospheric

domain of subjective consciousness. In the case of High Line, this domain finds its home in the latent surrealist world that contests the reality of the built world by instilling subjective architectural uncanniness. For the *flâneur*, the High Line becomes a place of departure that traces past experiences back to memory, a site of voyeurism that channels imagination, and a threshold between dream and reality.

Prologue: Contested Urbanscapes

The so-called "objective" studies of urban space and urbanism often fixate on the programmatic datum and physicality of inhabited cities, invariably foregoing the horizons of the ephemerality and multiplicity of the contestations among experienced and perceived urbanscapes. But built urban space is not just a permanent homogenous domain in accordance with the Cartesian understanding of spatial quality. It is a sphere of precarious emergence where experiences reform from memory, poetically perceived images surface from imagination, and embodied consciousness attuned to public spheres arises from dream. One experiences the urban space as both the spectator and the participant who is enthralled with an "enigmatic depth" through embodied consciousness. Differing from the three-dimensional Cartesian space, the "enigmatic depth" is the depth of poetic experience attuned to the built environment that induces the spatio-temporal dimension of the urban space.[1] Henri Lefebvre argues that the Cartesian concept of space is "the result neither of intellectual construction nor of sensory elaboration but which is, rather, given *en bloc* as suprasensory purity, as infinitude."[2] This research investigates the urban sphere beyond its physical condition and studies it as a transcendent phenomenological field that engages memory, imagination, and dream. It offers a humanistic approach to urbanism to reveal the latent layers of consciousnesses in the contested urban fields that are the union of body, mind, and soul.

To contextualize the contestation of multidimensional urbanscapes, the research investigates the urban sphere of New York City in general and the repurposed post-industrial ruin of the High Line Park in particular, in order to understand the depth of urban experience and the oscillating of urbanscapes between the built and the dreamt. In a collective volume *New York, New York!: Urban Spaces, Dreamscapes, Contested Territories* Sabine Sielke contends that New York City is a perpetual "divisive terrain… projected in the American cultural imaginary as Promised Land and 'city upon a hill' and as Sodom and Gomorrah,…[with] urban spaces [that] have always kept shape-shifting, creating novel dreamscapes and newly contested territories to be explored."[3] The subjective experience of New York City transforms urban

space into an amorphous domain comprised of moods, sensations, images, nostalgia, and emergence. This differing perception of urbanscapes challenges the stagnancy and permanency of the physically built world by evoking embodied consciousness.

The subjective layer of perceived urban space calls into question the reality of the built environment. This revelation of conflict and disparity between the two urbanscapes is prevalent in surrealist investigations of urban fabrics, of which Paris has been a primary case-study. Susan Buck-Morss argues that the surrealists experience Paris both "as something objective and as something dreamt," and their "fascination with urban phenomena" produces the "Surrealist" face of Paris that embodies poetic images which had "the psychic force of memory traces in the unconscious."[4] The agent that operates such transfiguration and mediates between the dichotomous urban fields is the urban *flâneur*. The peripatetic *flâneur*, historically the nineteenth-century urban stroller in Paris, leisurely traverses the city and perceives the urban sphere through embodied movement and spontaneous visual ecstasy charged with imagination.

The *flâneur*'s investigation of the city opens up the latent dream world of the urban fabric. In the essay "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century (1939)," Walter Benjamin writes that "The *flâneur* seeks refuge in the crowd. The crowd is the veil through which the familiar city is transformed for the *flâneur* into phantasmagorias."[5] Eli Friedlander describes the *flâneur*'s experiences of the arcades as a "dream configuration" that manifests a field of meaning emerging from the collective memory of the past.[6] The phantasmagorias perceived by the traditional *flâneurs* resonate with Paris's dreamscape later experienced by the surrealists who had ventured into the subconscious layer of the urban space. Using the perception of the *flâneur* as a phenomenological method to investigate the myriad conditions of urbanscapes, this research argues that the bodily experience of the *flâneur* transcends the physical urban space and enters into a surrealist dream world. The research conducts its theoretical inquiry of urban contestations through a surrealist framework that assesses the perception of the *flâneur* from a phenomenological perspective.

To further define the phenomenological aspect of a *flâneur*'s perception, this research situates the *flâneur*'s bodily experience in its occupied conscious domain, defined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty as the phenomenal field. For Merleau-Ponty, "this field is at the disposal of consciousness and one…surrounds and envelops its perceptions," which forms "an atmosphere, a horizon…with a temporal situation" that places "the emotional and practical attitudes of the living subject (the body of the experiencer) in relation to the world in an incorporated psycho-physiological mechanism."[7] The relationship and interplay between body and mind create this atmospheric domain of perception. Monika Langer contends that Merleau-Ponty "designates perception as a phenomenal field to indicate that it is not a spectacle spread out before a disembodied mind, but rather an 'ambiguous domain' in which perspectival, incarnate subjects are situated" and where "perceptual experience can be rediscovered."[8] The phenomenal field situates the experiencer and the perceptual world in a sphere of mental consciousness in which one comprehends the urban space

through a threefold phenomenological understanding—memory, imagination, and dream. As a result, the perception of the *flâneur* transfigures the urban space into contested urbanscapes where reality and dream collide, publicness and privateness become interchangeable, and a transitory atmosphere between homely and unhomely occurs. Consequently, the surrealist perception of urban space transforms the built realm into a dream world where the urban sphere becomes contested fields of experiences that challenge the boundaries between real and surreal, dream and un-dream, past and present, emergence and nostalgia.

This research focuses on the High Line in New York City to investigate the particular contested urbanscapes between the city's built reality and its latent dream world. It argues that the phenomenological experience of the *flâneur* evokes memory, imagination, and dream to transform the physical urban space into an atmospheric domain of subjective consciousness. In the case of High Line, this domain finds its home in the latent surrealist world that contests the reality of the built world by instilling subjective architectural uncanniness. Urban and cultural theorist Christoph Lindner in his essay "Retro-Walking New York" expounds this 'uncanniness' as "an aesthetics and spatiality of defamiliarization."[9] Steven Holl's hypothetical Manhattan proposal "Bridge of Houses" (1979-1982) has imagined the High Line as a site of elevated urban villas that invites walking as a method to observe the cityscape according to a variety of scales and perspectives. Almost mythical and estranged from the urban fabric, the High Line nonetheless perpetuates its integration with the urbanscape through walking. This research accentuates this consciousness of High Line and elevates it to the theory of *flâneur* to further understand the relationship between the High Line and the city.

For the *flâneur*, the High Line becomes a place of departure that traces past experiences back to memory, a site of voyeurism that channels imagination, and a threshold between dream and reality. The mind of the *flâneur* departs from reality and seeks disparate experiences from memory (a reminiscence of another place or personal encounters) to fill the void of the present (new "memory" and perception), thus concocting a horizon of memory that shelters new reality and transcends the urban space into subjective plots and narratives. The built urbanscape unfolds into panoramas through the eyes and minds of the *flâneur*. These urban images craft a mythical urbanscape in the mental and imagined world which contests and challenges the physicality of the urban field and the reality of the built world. Imagination constructs fictious urban myths and collages the city through a new form of meaning. Friedlander investigates the conception of "dream configuration" from the perception of Benjamin's *flâneur* and argues that "the manifestation of the incorporation of an environment in consciousness" produces "dream images" that "gather the amorphous surroundings" of the environment.[10] The *flâneur* operates as an embodied dreamer who traverses the contested fields between dreaming and awakening through a transcendent ambulatory body.

Dream and Flâneur

For the nineteenth-century *flâneur*, Paris manifests itself as a surrealist dream world of "phantasmagorias." Benjamin writes that "it is not the foreigners but … the Parisians, who have made Paris the holy city of the *flâneur*, the landscape built of sheer life."[11] Through urban walking, the urban ensemble of Paris is fragmented into "dream images," and Benjamin contends that "the arcades and interiors, the exhibition halls and panoramas are residues of a dream world."[12] Continuing Benjamin's observations, Buck-Morss argues that urban objects, as "relics of the last century" are like "dream images," because they function as "hieroglyphic clues to a forgotten past."[13] As the experiencers of the city, the *flâneurs* recount past and present built realities from a historical and subjective horizon that traces their perceptions with "dream images." This recounting is imbued with individual and collective memory of the past, imagination of the present, and dream between the thresholds.

Dream images of the city divulge the transformation from the physical to the metaphorical world. Lefebvre explicates 'abstract space' as a domain that "contains much, but at the same time it masks (or denies) what it contains rather than indicating it." He contends that abstract space "contains specific imaginary elements: fantasy images, symbols which appear to arise from something else."[14] One can argue that the dream world of the urban sphere evoked through *flânerie* resonates with the notion of Lefebvre's abstract space in which images are crafted through the combination of present imaginings and past recollections. The dream world comprises fantasy images through reminiscences and imagination that transcend the Cartesian definition of space and its objective reality.

In the essay "Surrealism and the Latent Reality of Dreams," Dalibor Veselý defines dream as "a testimony of the nature of the latent world that we are capable of recalling consciously that represents a continuity between what is revealed and what is hidden, between light and shadow."[15] Dreaming is a process of making, a process of recalling, and a process of unveiling what is hidden. For the Parisian *flâneur*, the urban space harbors daydreaming, contests perceptions, and presents the physical built world as enigmatic and fragmented dream images.

This latent dream world is innately surrealistic. According to Veselý, surrealism manifests in the continuation between dream and consciousness. He cites André Breton's remarks on the relationship between dream and surrealism: "surrealism acts as a conduction wire between the far too distant worlds of waking and sleep,"[16] to argue that the dream world is where the surrealists situate themselves. Breton further explains the production and experience of surrealism in *Manifestoes of Surrealism* and states that the "simultaneous products of the activity" (*les produits simultanés de l'activité*) that spark "luminous phenomenon" (*le phénomène lumineux*) are what induce the mood of surrealism.[17] Benjamin attributes such "luminous phenomenon" to a non-religious "profane illumination."[18] The urban images generated

by the mind of the peripatetic *flâneur* through mundane yet spontaneous walks embody such "profane illumination." For the *flâneur*, the "surrealist images" sparked from the embodied experience of the built urban sphere are essentially "dream images."

This relationship between dream and *flâneur* provides a lens through which we can read urban space as domains of transformation, atmospheres of conflict, and fields of contestation. To comprehend the dreamt perception of the *flâneur*, we need to investigate the field in which the perception forms. For architect Juhani Pallasmaa, perception, memory, and imagination are in constant interaction. He asserts that "the domain of presence fuses into images of memory and fantasy," and the urban spectator perpetually "constructs an immense city of evocation and remembrance, and all the cities they have visited are precincts in this metropolis of the mind."[19] The fusion of memory and imagination creates a phenomenal field where the experiencer, as *flâneur*, crafts a dream world that contests the objective perceptual reality.

Memory, imagination, and dream operate in the phenomenal field. Merleau-Ponty states that the "phenomenal field" is not an "inner world," and the "phenomenon" is not a "state of consciousness" or a "psychic fact."[20] Philosopher Taylor Carman furthers that the phenomenal field was "already carved out and made available and familiar to us by our involuntary bodily perceptual capabilities and unthinking behaviors."[21] He believes that the phenomenal field presents perceived things to us as "infused" with an immanent meaning. The *flâneur*'s urban perception forms "dreamt urbanscape" from embodied experiences that engage the subconscious mind infused with memory, imagination, and dream. Carman defines Merleau-Ponty's phenomenal field as "the sensory 'background' underlying our perception of isolated qualities and our formulation of explicit judgments."[22] Carman continues by arguing that "the sensory experience always has the form of a field, rather than a mere sum or accumulation of data, the perception is always essentially perspectival" and "the field is irreducibly a kind of space or place where objects and their qualities appear to us, relative to us." He notes that for Merleau-Ponty, "the phenomenal field is a transcendental condition of the possibility of our 'being' perceptually open to the world."[23] Between dream and reality, the phenomenal field acts as a mechanism that connects the ambulatory and sensory body of the *flâneur* to the perceptual built world.

To conclude, the surrealist theoretical framework of *flâneur* and dream reveals the contestations of urbanscapes between imagination and reality. The phenomenological inquiry of the relationship between memory, imagination, and dream studies the *flâneur*'s urban perception methodically. Memory, imagination, and dream emerge, exchange, and ultimately elicit the past to the present in the phenomenal field, manifesting the urban fields of conflict.

The High Line as Flânerie

Landscape historian John Stilgoe notes that American naturalist Henry David Thoreau "discovered and descried while walking—and while standing still—along the railway tracks."[24] For Stilgoe, walking along the tracks of the High Line "provides an opportunity for discovery,"[25] which resonates with the experience of incessant urban walker *flâneur*. Lindner attributes the conception of the High Line to the Promenade Plantée in Paris and describes the latter as "… 'a linear pathway for seeing and being seen' in the classic mode of the Benjaminian *flâneur*."[26] One can argue that the High Line is innately a site that harbors the *flâneur* and provides the *flâneur* with an urban sphere both physical and imaginary to observe, sense, and occupy. This research further deploys the *flâneur* as a phenomenological urban walker who connects urban fragments, dream images, and amorphous fields of consciousness through walking as method.

The High Line (2009) is an elevated linear urban park (one-and-a-half-mile-long) designed through a collaboration between landscape architect James Corner, architecture studio Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf. It rests on an abandoned freight railway in the West Side of Manhattan that connects the Whitney Museum of American Art in the south to the Hudson Yards in the north. For the urban *flâneurs* who traverse the city, it provides them with elevated pauses and parades, a voyeuristic excursion that interrupts the walks, and a panoramic experience of the urbanscape that promotes daydreaming. Walking on the High Line, the visual-sensory channels the latent world of imagination to build an alternative narrative of the architectural assemblage one would encounter along the curated, elevated urban pathway. The High Line is an urban site that carries unexpected moods through its intentional as well as unintentional urban architectural ensemble: Renzo Piano's Whitney Museum of American Art, the "Little Island" designed by Thomas Heatherwick, Zaha Hadid Architects' 520 West 28th Chelsea Condos, the IAC Building by Frank Gehry, the apartment block at 100 Eleventh Avenue by French architect Jean Nouvel, the Shed by the Diller Scofidio + Renfro and the Vessel by Thomas Heatherwick. The city is reshaped into a dream world through this collection of unexpected structures that elicits moods, provokes imagination, and evokes nostalgia. The existing ones are transformed into *flânerie* for nostalgia and memory and the intentionally designed ones act as the dream agency for the High Line to awaken the latent world, especially the one by Zaha Hadid with its interlocking chevrons of steel façade alluding to the High Ling's linearity. During the walk, the *flâneur* becomes an urban collector and, more specifically, an image collector whose mind transcends the physical built world through imagination. The High Line thus becomes a dream-walking corridor that floats above the streets of reality.

The architecture along the High Line creates a panoramic urbanscape of New York City. Heinz Ickstadt argues in his essay "Envisioning Metropolis: New York as Seen, Imaged, and Imagined," that walking provides a mode of ecstatic experience that reveals the "urban sublime" in New York City. Ickstadt uses John Marin's painting *Lower Manhattan* as an example and writes that "the ecstasy of walking over the [Brooklyn Bridge] is projected onto the bridge itself which appears to be exuberantly dancing in a burst

of urban energy."[27] The High Line is an urban site that yields similar sublimity through its panoramic experience. It is both an integrated fabric and a juxtaposition to the built urbanscape. The elevated walkway provides modes of jubilant voyeurism that produce accrued urban energy to the spectators of the city. In his essay "Hunt's Haunts: History, Reception, and Criticism on the Design of the High Line," Corner notes that the High Line intentionally slows down the experience of strolling in contrast to the "bustling context of Manhattan," and its meandering paths "create an experience that cannot really be properly captured in a photograph, or even video, ...the place must be walked, with senses unfolding in sequence and in juxtaposition."[28] The panoramic walking experience brings poetically and evocatively charged tension between the voyeur and the urban space. The relationship between the voyeur and the perceptual built world embodies a transitory urban space where dream and reality contest.

The research is intrinsically an investigation into the mind, the perception, the surreal perspective of our relationship with the urban realm in which we dwell. The transfiguration of urban space from Cartesian reality to the surrealist dream world asks us to rethink the physicality of the city we inhabit, to question the permanency of built reality, to challenge the homogeneity of urban layers. The notion of contested urbanscapes slices the urban sphere into disparate, myriad, and interconnected atmospheric experiences. These contested fields manifest multidimensional urbanscapes congruently and coexist in time, space and mind. The contested urbanscapes narrate an innately complex urban fabric comprised of the conception of *poiesis* that alludes to a city incessantly in the making.

New York City as Memory of Place

The High Line is an urban project that transforms a post-industrial ruin into an elevated urban garden that invites walking as a form of reading the city. Elizabeth Diller, one of the lead designers for the High Line, remarks that "we hope the design would foster a sense of magical disorientation and freedom from the city. ...we wanted to encourage walking."[29] Walking on the High Line, one encounters the mythical residues of post-industrial ruin, which Corner describes as "discarded, silent, and obsolete."[30] The subconscious memory of the past lingers presently in the experience of the city. For Anthony Vidler, the city transforms into an oneiric domain through the "realm of memory." He writes that "No longer are things either the result of thoughts or their simple signifiers; rather they are constituted in that ambiguous realm of memory that is at once experience and recollection of experience in such a way as to remain inseparable."[31] Memory becomes infused with imagination, induces metaphorical hermeneutic interpretations, and stresses a horizon that reintroduces the city as a temporary reading. The Friends of the High Line, a nonprofit organization that led the campaign to build the project, commissioned photographer Joel Sternfeld to document the

abandoned railway site through photographs. The preservation of the memory of the site/ruin through photographs amplifies the memory as "residual dreams" of the past. The essay "Residues of a Dream World: The High Line, 2011" argues that Sternfeld's photographs of the High Line, along with other displays of the structure in its ruin state "form a supplement to the High Line's development, evoking its precarious past to regulate its future."[32] I argue that the High Line is an urban site that begins with the memory of the past and ends with the memory of the present. It transforms the urban sphere into a contested realm of reality, imagining, and dreaming.

Sternfeld acts as a *flâneur*, strolling on the High Line site while documenting the existing condition of the future High Line and the built sphere in which it resides. Sternfeld's perception of the place finds recollections from the collective memory of the poignant and deserted post-industrial ruin, elevating it to an almost mythical rumination. Memory is not a static state, it is a phenomenological mood, a state of being, and a process that understands the relationship between the body and the environment in which the body situates, it channels the latent dream world of consciousness and transcends the body and place into a place of imagination. Adam Gopnik describes Sternfeld's "transporting experience" while walking on the High Line as "an experience of a pilgrimage more than a promenade."[33]

The memory of the place is emphasized through the experience of walking the High Line. There are five major special access locations along the High Line that provide vertical circulation and access to the elevated pathway via slow stairs and elevators. These points of entry to the elevated garden are also points of departure and exit from the urban street, providing the urban *flâneur* with unexpected perspectives of the city. From Gansevoort Street to West 30th Street, these special access locations are mapped out to integrate Manhattan historical places such as Gansevoort Market Historic District, Fulton Houses, Chelsea Piers, Chelsea Historic District, and London Terrace, to enhance the emergence of memory in the urban experience. They are conceived as "durational experiences" that take the urban strollers "to the surreal urban meadow" from the "frenetic pace of the city street."[34]

Memory can be understood as intrinsically phenomenological. Philosopher Dylan Trigg uses Edmund Husserl's division between "the noesis of memory (the act) and the noema of memory (the what)" to explain that the memory of a place is concerned with the past and present simultaneously. He writes that "for Husserl, the 'act' and the 'what' constitutes the structure of intentionality, making in each case an inseparable union."[35] Walking the High Line, the perception of the *flâneur* processes the twofold phenomenological memory: the act of remembering and the noema of memory. I argue that the 'act' of the *flâneur*'s recollection seeks memory-images from the nostalgia of the site and the past personal experience from another time and place and imposes them upon the current situation through imagination that ultimately fills the voids of (present) absence. Concurrently, the noema processes present "memory" of the perceived built sphere of the High Line—the linear vegetated path and the panoramically wrapped urbanscapes. The 'act' and the 'what' amalgamate memory and reality to illustrate a mentally constructed urbanscape that

contrasts with the homogenous and senseless reality of the urban sphere. Memory activates "the sensible and mental reality" of the nostalgic urban field and reveals the contestation of urban conditions. Diller explains that the design language of the High Line aims to consolidate the connection between "the site's found state of dereliction" (memory of the ruin) and "the metaphor of the ruin and its association with nostalgia and dystopia."[36]

Corner further explains the relationship between perception and memory of the walk on the High Line: "Hunt develops the concept of the *longue durée*, the long duration, the slow accrual of experience and meaning over time. …Landscapes can never be properly captured in a single moment; they are always in a process of becoming, as in a temporal quarry of accrual and memory—collecting experiences, representations, uses, the effects of weather, changes in management, cultivation, and care, and other traces of layered presence."[37] Memory acts as a spatiotemporal mechanism that creates a corporeal dimension in which the perception of the urban *flâneur* who experiences the city by walking on the High Line form a phenomenal field that encompasses the sensory, body, and subconsciousness. The memory of place is a distinct spatiotemporal event, in which the "world" or field of "place memory" offsets the peripheral environment, establishing a context singular to the remembering subject.[38] The memory of a place demarcates what Trigg calls a "corporeal dimension."[39] Walking on the High line, "a revitalized lost ritual,"[40] recreates the memory through the phenomenal field in which body, perception, and city construct a spatiotemporal event that mediates between imagination, memory, and dream.

New York City as Imagination

Alberto Pérez-Gómez argues that among the "prosaic and relatively inhuman spaces of our cities," there are sites that "have a great potential to escape the hegemony of panoptic domination and technological control."[41] These sites invite imagination, cultivate atmospheric moods, and ask for surrealist interventions. They construct moments of poetics in the city that confront the datum and rationale of the built urban space, provoke new interpretations of the urban milieu, and instill imagination in the plots of the urbanscape. The High Line is unequivocally a site that embodies these potentials. Diller notes that the design of the High Line "was not driven by programming" but "evolved from a close reading of site attributes and atmosphere."[42] She attributes the programming for the Chelsea Market tunnel, part of the High Line between West 15th Street to West 16th Street as a place for congregation and social events, to the Venturi Effect, the sound, the shade, and the light conditions of the site.[43] The transfiguration of this post-industrial ruin into both a climatical atmospheric site of sound, smell, and shade, and a sensible atmosphere of moods, memory, and emotion ultimately concocts a contested field of various agents, conflicts, and experiences. Lindner notes that the High Line has "a strange of doubleness" as both "an aging ruin and

an object of newness" and "simultaneously abandoned and occupied."[44] This remark also valorizes the High Line as a field of contestations itself. The conflicts of the site provide potentials for poetic readings, mythical interpretations, and unexpected discoveries that stimulate imagination.

For Pérez-Gómez, such sites reveal "particular chasms and wounds" that would only expose their "vectors of desire" that can be appreciated by surrealists through flânerie.[45] In the case of High Line, the surrealist imagination of the city is instigated through the walks, stops, and spectating. The unique perspective of the High Line frames the city as horizontal and fragmented panoramic paintings. Gopnik writes that "the High Line does not offer a God's-eye view of the city, exactly, but something rarer, the view of a lesser angel: of a cupid in a Renaissance painting, of the putti looking down of the Nativity manger."[46] This perspective gives the sequential 'architectural ensemble' along the walks a picturesque rhythm and a garden backdrop. Each frame of the city is a still painting of both the past and the present. The architecture is the personified hero in the experienced urban plot, the signifier in the perceived urbanscape, and the monument in a particular moment of pause. The ensemble of the architectures (Whitney Museum of American Art, the "Little Island," Zaha Hadid's 520 West 28th Chelsea Condos, IAC Building, apartment block 100 Eleventh Avenue, the Shed, and the Vessel) induce poetic analogical readings of the city and disclose contentious conflicts of the urban fabric to form a *theatrum mundi* in which the experiencer, as the *flâneur*, and the urban architecture exchange roles between actors and spectators. Pérez-Gómez's word offers a portrayal of the interchangeable rapport between the High Line and the consciousness of imagined urbanscapes: it is a site that creates a "new mythology" that opens "our world to mystery," and it is a place that demands to be articulated as "the coincidence of life and death in a moment of poetic incandescence."[47]

Imagination activates memory and functions as a tool for understanding latent meanings of perception. Trigg writes that "the dynamic interplay between memory and imagination is realized in that place becomes a passive container of memory, whereas the imagination is raised to the role of active retriever."[48] He further explains Gaston Bachelard's position on dreams and claims that "through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days, and the daydreaming allows the past to come forth."[49] One can argue that dream is both a condition and an action. It is the result of the phenomenological reading of memory and imagination of a place, and it is an action that connects memory to imagination. In Trigg's words, "the contextualization of memory means that daydreaming becomes nothing less than a halfway house between memory and imagination."[50] Ricardo Scofidio, another lead designer for the High Line, defines the High Line as a "space for daydreaming," and he writes that "sitting in the Sunken Overlook (a moment of pause during the walking journey on the High Line) looking at the traffic requires little attention. You can just stare endlessly at the stream of traffic. Your brain is free to wander elsewhere."[51]

Corner cites landscape historian John Dixon Hunt's essays and notes that "places that gifted him the feeling of a 'great perfection' are 'haunted by undeniable spirits, wherein the environment can become landscape." He then defines that the spirits are not some mystical essences but rather human mind, imagi-

nation, fictions, and designs which make "a place of lasting presence that inevitably haunts precisely because of effects that tend to linger and escape any form of easy definition."[52] For Corner, the High Line is a place haunted by the spirits of human imagination. The urban site incorporates the city into a "haunted place" itself, and Corner describes that "the design of the site, the choreography of movement, the meandering of paths, the siting of overlooks and vistas, and the coordination of seating and social spaces are intended to reinterpret, amplify, dramatize, and concentrate these readings of the site."[53] For the incessantly wandering *flâneur*, these interventions reinvigorate the place with hauntings and imagination. The High Line connects the *flâneur*'s individual experience to the locality of the spirits.

Trigg argues that "our bodies carry the remains and reminders of a lived past, fulfilling the original meaning of the sense that we carry places with us."[54] He explains that the sense of haunted feeling for a place derives from the separation of bodily 'I,' in which the place we carry is distorted. He writes that "ordinarily, the places we carry with us sediment themselves in our bodies innocuously, establishing a fluid 'intentional arc' that reinforces the singularity of the self's being-in-the-world. Yet, as we have seen, when the "I" is confronted with what Merleau-Ponty terms 'mutilation and disablement,' a certain mode of being is forged, which thematizes a prepersonal longing for unity."[55] The "certain mode of being" is the *flâneur*'s ambulatory body that is haunted by the spirit of the place fueled with an "uncanny mood." Just as Corner claims, traversing through the High Line, the disorienting "I" is stimulated and haunted by the imagination of the uncanny atmosphere. The site harbors an "uncanny atmosphere" for the flâneur through moments of unexpected ruminations at the Sunken Overlook, the West 22nd Street Seating Steps and Lawn, and the Woodland Flyover, and through stimulations at the West 30th Street Hudson Yards' architectural fantasy, the unexpected overlook of the floating "Little Island" near the Little West 12th Street, and the other ecstatic architectural encounters along the walk. (Figure 1) The urban space "haunts" the *flâneur*'s perception.

New York City as a Dream World

The Promenade Plantée that runs from the Bastille out to the Bois de Vincennes in Paris is an antecedent to the High Line of New York. However, Gopnik argues that "the difference, evident to anyone who has walked both, is that the Promenade Plantée is a piece of Paris that happens to be about Paris—an elegant, flowered walkway looking down on elegant, flowered streets—while the High Line is a place where the discordant encounters of its city are briefly resolved, …an easement in the air."[56] As correctly implied in this comparison, Paris provides the historical and theoretical context needed to understand the dream world of New York City. In the case of the Promenade Plantée and the High Line, both elevated gardens demarcate secluded urban territories that recall the paradise of Eden (a dream world of itself) from which the reality

of the world (the built urban environment) is perceived as a panoramic landscape narrated through time, place, and emotions. The city unveils its surrealist realm through a dreamt panoramic urbanscape that speaks to us with ephemeral moving frames.

The perception of the nineteenth-century Parisian *flâneur* is panoramic experience through a dialectical spatial reading between the architectural and urban space. Louis Daguerre's Diorama in the Passage de Panoramas reduces the city into an interior phantasm that translates the panoramic experience into an "atmospheric wonder"[57] in the realm of dream and reveals the pathos of the exterior urban realm. The architecture acts as a collector of the city similar to the *flâneur*'s being an urban collector who collages urban images to construct an urbanscape through the subconscious state of dreaming.

Benjamin argues that "in panoramas, the city opens out to landscape—as it will do later, in a subtler fashion, for the *flâneur*."[58] He positions urban consciousness in the realm of dream: "our waking existence likewise is a land which, at certain hidden points, leads down into the underworld—a land full of inconspicuous places from which dreams arise."[59] Art historian Tatiana Senkevitch comments on Benjamin's writing and elaborates that "the proximity of visual experiences afforded by viewing painted panoramas of cities or navigating through real shopping arcades became essential for distilling and comprehending images in motion."[60] The city as landscape leads the *flâneur* into moments of pauses, perilous unknowns, and mythical recollections, creating an inner dream realm where the *flâneur* falls into a transcendent reverie.

For the flâneur, the High Line is an open arcade that cuts through the urban fabric of Manhattan, a dream house that opens up New York City as a panoramic landscape, and an enclosed urban interior that hides its poetic atmosphere in the verticality of New York City's architectural manifestation. Corner describes the panoramic urbanscape perceived through the flâneur as the perpetual "pervasive background."[61] The experience of the "background" for the urban walker is a state between dreaming and wakening as he writes: "What I enjoy most about walking on the High Line is that I am usually on it in a distracted state, and yet it awakens me with a palpable sense of place and eventfulness."[62]

Having scrutinized nineteenth-century American literature, Dana Brand expounds on the historical connections between Parisian *flâneurs* and American *flâneurs*, and their panoramic urban narratives of American cities, specifically that of New York City. Brand describes nineteenth-century New York literary journalists as *flâneurs* and their sketches of the city as panoramic urban experiences. Brand writes that after 1835, most of the *flâneur* sketches in the literary journal *Knickerbocker* are set in New York, which had been unequivocally set in Paris and London hitherto and that "it is possible to trace the developing self-consciousness of New York as a setting suitable for the *flâneur*."[63] He argues that New York in the view of influential *flâneurs*—American journalists like Willis and Foster, becomes the new Paris.[64] He then states that "the New York *flâneurs* were always comparing their productions (narratives of perceived urban space) to panoramas, dioramas, and daguerreotypes."[65]

The experience of the *flâneur* and the images of panoramas are intertwined urban consciousnesses that craft a dreamt and transcendental reality of the urbanscape. One can understand this reality as the dream realm of the *flâneur* in which the city transfigures its architectural and urban spheres into fragmented panoramic images. Brand argues that panorama and *flâneur* "have claimed an analogous authority deriving from their respective claims to be relatively unmediated images of reality."[66]

Walking on the High Line, the tension between the architecture ensemble along the linear pathway and the moment of pause creates an interactive panoramic experience of the city's urbanscape. The "Little Island" anchors the part of the walk from Little West 12th Street to West 15th Street by provoking the *flâneur* with an unexpected visual encounter of a mythical garden from afar. The 10th Avenue Square and Sunken Overlook instills a moment of stagnancy and functions as do the pavilions in Chinese gardens that elicit rumination and daydreaming for the stroller. Traversing through the narrow Wildflower Straightaway, enveloped by the façades of skyscrapers, to West 30th Street, the Shed and the Vessel abruptly bring an unforeseen climax to the experience of the walk. (Figure 2) Walking becomes a celebrated ritual that deprives the *flâneur* of the preconceived judgment of the city and forms ecstatic yet temporal moods of sublimity in a panoramic dream world. This panoramic dream world depicts the city as so many choreographed yet capricious collages of surrealist moments. It recreates the city through moods, atmospheres, and plots that contest the reality of the city and its mundane and often hegemonic and overemphasized programmatic condition.

Conclusion

This research has argued that mentally constructed urbanscapes are ephemeral domains that engage moods, evoke poetics, and embody imagination. This transient urbanscape differs from the built reality and forms a surrealist dream world. The High Line functions as the threshold between the two contested urbanscapes for the urban *flâneur*. The surrealist body of the *flâneur* mediates between perception and the built world, between present experience and past memory, and between rationality and imagination.

From a phenomenological understanding of memory, imagination, and dream, we can begin to look beyond the built reality of urban space to discover latent urban layers of a surrealist world where dream resides. Contested and contesting urbanscapes of dream and reality manifest through these subconscious layers of urban space. The phenomenological reading of memory, imagination, and dream resuscitates the nineteenth-century *flâneur* and brings the perception of the *flâneur* to contemporary urbanism. The contestation reveals that the urban realm is not a permanent domain that only requires statistical mapping and technological intervention. It is instead a field of conflicts, contentious agents, and poetic moments.

These contested urbanscapes ask us to redefine the city as a palimpsest that embodies multiple horizons of interpretations. Lindner argues that "the extreme iconicity of the New York skyline and the opportunity provided by the park to encounter that skyline—even inhabit it—in a defamiliarized, intimate, and decelerated way is the core High Line experience."[67] The interplay between urban space and the participatory spectator—*flâneur* constructs meanings through surrealist encounters, slices of latent layers, and precarious transformations between disparate urban conditions. These contestations highlight the role of the human body and its embodied perception. It further reclaims the divinity and poetics of the place we inhabit. The phenomenological human experience is the essential measure of the potency and benefits of urbanization. The rediscovered dream world of New York City through walking the High Line is not an isolated case, for it earnestly requires us to shift our attention to the cosmically connected human bodies that occupy the built world and answer the fundamental question of the reason to build.

The body that occupies the city functions as an agent that navigates between reality and dream. The contesting urbanscapes are temporary urban spheres where the body and mind travel "to and from" through perception. The phenomenological corporeal relationship between us and our cities gives meaning to the urbanscape where we reside and where we retrace and recollect our experiences. Delightfully incessant, the dream world harbors the longing for the world between the built and the imagined, one that we cautiously comprehend and construct.

Images

Figure 1. View of the “Little Island” from the High Line © Ke Sun, 2021

Figure 2. View of the Shed from the High Line © Ke Sun, 2021

Notes

1 See essays "Phenomenological Depth and the Work of Jean-Jacques Lequeu" and "John Hejduk's Critical and Poetic Architecture" in Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Timely Meditations, Selected Essays on Architecture, Vol.1: Architectural Theories and Practices* (Montreal: Right Angel International, 2016). Pérez-Gómez makes an analogy between Merleau-Ponty's understanding of "depth" as the spatio-temporal dimension and Plato's *chora*.

2 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992), 293.

3 Björn Bosserhoff and Sabine Sielke, eds., *New York, New York!: Urban Spaces, Dreamscapes, Contested Territories* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2015), 9-15.

4 Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 33.

5 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 21.

6 Eli Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 92.

7 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 22-25.

8 Monika M. Langer, "The Phenomenal Field," in *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary*, ed. Monika M. Langer (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 15-20.1989

9 Christoph Lindner, "Retro-Walking New York," in *Deconstructing the High Line: Postindustrial Urbanism and the Rise of the Elevated Park*, ed. Christoph Lindner and Brian Rosa (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 94. Lindner cites Amita Sinha's comments on the High Line that defines the structure as "the idea of beauty in terms of the strangely familiar" and argues that it evokes the realm of what Anthony Vidler terms the "architectural uncanny."

10 Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait,* 101-2.

11 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* 880.

12 Ibid., 13.

13 Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 39.

14 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 311.

15 Dalibor Veselý, "Surrealism and the Latent Reality of Dreams," trans. Peter Stephens, *Umeni / Art* 56, no. 4 (August 2008), 325-32.

16 Ibid.

17 André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 37.

18 Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 209.

19 Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 67-68.

20 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 57.

21 Taylor Carman, *Merleau-Ponty* (London: Routledge, 2019), 64.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 65.

24 John R Stilgoe, "Steganography Photographed," in *Walking the High Line*, ed. Joel Sternfeld (New York: Steidl Pace McGill Gallery, 2001), 31-45.

25 Ibid., 42.

26 Lindner, "Retro-Walking New York," 95.

27 Bosserhoff and Sielke, *New York, New York!,* 24.

28 James Corner, *The Landscape Imagination: Collected Essays of James Corner 1990-2010*, ed. Alison Bick Hirsch (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2014), 345.

29 James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *The High Line: Foreseen and Unforeseen* (New York and London: Phaidon Press, 2020), 13.

30 Ibid.

31 Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 203.

32 Michael Cataldi et al., "Residues of a Dream World: The High Line, 2011," *Theory, Culture & Society* 28, no. 7–8 (December 1, 2011): 358–89, https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276411425834.

33 Adam Gopnik, "A Walk on the High Line: The Allure of a Derelict Railroad Track in Spring," in *Walking the High Line*, ed. Joel Sternfeld (New York: Steidl Pace McGill Gallery, 2001), 49.

34 James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *The High Line: Foreseen and Unforeseen*, 160.

35 Dylan Trigg, *The Memory of Place: A Phenomenology of the Uncanny* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 48.

36 James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *The High Line: Foreseen and Unforeseen*, 172.

37 Corner, *The Landscape Imagination*. 345.

38 Trigg, *The Memory of Place*, 57.

39 Ibid., 55.

40 James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *The High Line: Foreseen and Unforeseen*, 174.

41 Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Timely Meditations, Selected Essays on Architecture, Vol.2: Architectural Philosophy and Hermeneutics* (Montreal: Right Angel International, 2016), 121.

42 James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *The High Line: Foreseen and Unforeseen*, 176.

43 Ibid.

44 Lindner, "Retro-Walking New York," 100.

45 Pérez-Gómez, *Timely Meditations, Vol.2,* 121.

46 Gopnik, "A Walk on the High Line: The Allure of a Derelict Railroad Track in Spring," 49.

47 Pérez-Gómez, *Timely Meditations, Vol.2*, 121.

48 Trigg, *The Memory of Place,* 66.

49 Ibid., 65.

50 Ibid., 66.

51 James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *The High Line: Foreseen and Unforeseen*, 175.

52 Corner, *The Landscape Imagination*, 341.

53 Ibid., 304.

54 Trigg, *The Memory of Place*, 302.

55 Ibid.

56 Gopnik, "A Walk on the High Line: The Allure of a Derelict Railroad Track in Spring," 52.

57 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* 533.

58 Ibid., 5-6.

59 Ibid., 875.

60 Richard Wrigley, ed., *The Flâneur Abroad: Historical and International Perspectives* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 172.

61 James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *The High Line: Foreseen and Unforeseen*, 175.

62 Ibid.

63 Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 71. During 1853, New York City hosted an international exhibition called the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations in which it featured a glass and iron building—the New York Crystal Palace—to compete with the similar one built in London's 1851 Great Exhibition.

64 Ibid., 77.

65 Ibid., 74.

66 Ibid., 54.

67 Lindner, "Retro-Walking New York," 101.

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Ke Sun is a Ph.D. candidate in Architectural History and Theory. He has taught Architectural Theory courses at the University of Florida School of Architecture. Sun's doctoral research deploys a phenomenological investigation of contemporary cities through the theoretical framework of surrealist flânerie. It theorizes the flâneur from nineteenth-century Paris, conceives of the flâneur as a spatial figure so as to understand humanistic urbanism, and argues that the phenomenological perception of the flâneur harbors a dream world in the built environment that contests the reality of the built urbanscape.

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Shifting Morphology: Sarajevo Under Siege

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Abstract

When violence and destruction occur in an urban setting, as was the case in the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo, the city takes on a new morphology as the citizens adapt their living habits. In the process they also adapt both urban and architectural spaces to the new-found circumstances as a form of survival strategy. Aside from mere survival, the notion of civic resistance also becomes crucial in such instances, and in the case of Sarajevo, we argue in this paper, that it unfolded in the form of cultural production and 'consumption'. The culture-related practices were in particular those that allowed for the creation of an alternate reality and in that way became a means of fighting against aggression, thus turning places of oppression into spaces of liberation. Utilizing the example of the siege of Sarajevo, this paper examines modes of urban destruction, the adaptability of the city's tissue, and the formation of spaces that occur spontaneously through the acts of survival tactics and civic resistance of its citizens.

Introduction

Building upon Lefebvre's idea of the right to the city, David Harvey argues that the transformation of the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power of the citizens to reshape the processes of urbanization, where the right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a "right to change ourselves by changing the city".[1] During times of conflict, where violence and destruction occur directly in an urban setting, changes of the urban fabric become a part of warfare tactics but also – at the same time – a part of survival strategy. During times of destruction the citizens often find alternative modes of operation within the newly established social order. In such instances the citizens are able to reshape the morphology of a city by changing their patterns of movement, repurposing existing buildings for new functions, reconfiguring interior space usage, etc. Thus they adapt to the new set of urban rules which are driven by the patterns of military destruction.

Once urban survival mechanisms are set in place, the next step of survival tactics lies in the ability to endure the newly established social and urban (dis)order. This civic resilience may take many forms, from a simple act of going to school or work despite the risk of getting wounded or killed in the process, to that of taking up arms. However, perhaps the most defiant civic act of resilience or resistance comes in the form of engaging in cultural activities in the midst of a conflict. This reflects Lefebvre's demand for "art, conceived as a capacity to transform reality, to appropriate at the highest level the facts of the 'lived,' of time, space, the body, and desire".[2]

Through the prisms of the siege of Sarajevo (1992-1995), this paper focuses first on understanding the role and the means of urban destruction during a conflict; secondly it attempts to explore the adaptive strategies that citizens apply to urban and architectural spaces in order to survive the destruction. Finally, it looks at urban resilience through cultural production as a means of creating an alternative space from which to escape the conflict, if only temporarily.

Destruction of Urban Order

During the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo, the city and its architecture became direct targets of war, thus shifting the discourse of urban destruction during a conflict from that of collateral damage to that of purposeful and calculated annihilation. It was during this time that the term 'urbicide' came into the forefront within the context of urban conflict.[3] Although this term was first coined in the 1960's by Michael Moorcock and was built upon by Marshall Berman and Martin Coward, during the war in Bosnia in the early 1990's it came to the forefront through the writings of Bogdan Bogdanović and a group of Bosnian architects from

Mostar. The term 'urbicide' is described as the killing of cities through targeting diversity imprinted in architecture and urban space.[4; 5] Also defined as "war against common urban life", urbicide is a concept commonly mentioned when addressing the topic of wartime destruction.[6; 7]

Along with the notion of urbicide, another important term coined in relation to the Bosnian conflict is 'memoricide', interpreted by Robert Bevan as 'killing of memory'. This term addresses the obliteration of material evidence and anchors of a society (such as historic open spaces, urban quarters and religious or cultural buildings - mosques, churches and synagogues; libraries, museums and archives) that had inhabited the area.[8] Andrew Herscher also argues that a building's identity can not remain stable after it has been attacked and destroyed.[9] All of these terms provide meaningful tools for understanding the phenomenon of spatial violence and terror by building upon the notion that these violent changes of the urban tissue can be understood as collateral damage, destruction of cultural heritage, or metaphors for certain concepts or values.[10]

In Bosnia, and in Sarajevo in particular, the rich and layered multicultural past and a long tradition of coexistence between different ethnic groups was also reflected in the city's layered urban fabric. For the ethno-nationalists' agenda, the city was a physical testament to the multiculturalism that needed to be erased.[11] Thus along with genocide came urbicide and memoricide, with the mutual goal of erasing diversity from Bosnian identity. Robert Hayden contends:

> Heterogeneity was concentrated in the central part of the territory of Yugoslavia [in particular] the republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina [and those areas bordering it]...In these parts of Yugoslavia, the idea that the Yugoslav peoples could not live peacefully together was empirical nonsense. It was perhaps because these regions constituted living disproof of [ethno]nationalist ideologies that [they] have been the major theatres of...war.[12]

Systemic Destruction of Cultural Heritage

In the urban form of Sarajevo, buildings from different historical periods are legible and form a chronological narrative along the river. It starts with the old Ottoman city core of Baščaršija at the eastern end, progresses to the Austro-Hungarian part of formal administrative buildings and finally expands to the west and is followed by Socialist architecture consisting of block residential buildings. Aside from having had this physical testament of coexistence, Sarajevo was also the most multi-ethinic city in the former Yugoslavia according to the census of 1991.[13] The destruction of this multiethnic and multicultural story and the attack on the physical environment was an attempt at establishing a new story. Such destruction aims to erase remnants of the common past of different ethnic groups, where aggressors seek "clean" and uniform self-governing spaces and territories. As stated by Midhat Aganović:

> [...] the Town has never before experienced such intensity of parallel killing of its citizens and destruction of its physical structures. The whole town complexes, monuments, residential areas, buildings and apartments, facilities of public services and housing, economic potentials, business and religious objects, infrastructural facilities, lines of communications, public units, etc. have been exposed to the most brutal demolishing and destruction for months.[14]

During the siege of Sarajevo, the military targets included cultural buildings, places with a certain meaning that testify to the past of communities and their own present and future. In this circumstance, they ceased to be collateral damage and instead became targeted, methodologically destroyed objects in an attempt to erase the history and identity they represented. Whereas Sarajevo's essence is coexistence and a common past that manifests itself in public space and cultural institutions, the puritan idea of separation and uniformity and the denial of togetherness and diversity is the foundation of the dynamics of its ethnic cleansing. Abolishing cultural infrastructure that bears witness to Sarajevo's identity and shared past is the ultimate act of violence and annihilation of the aggressor's nationalist agenda.[15]

Since the aggressors were in possession of the exact coordinates of over 1500 cultural and other targets, they were able to target even the hidden buildings, and not just those exposed to the siege line.[16] Upon further inspection of the city map (Figure 1), it becomes clear that the violence was most commonly inflicted upon buildings of high symbolic and functional merit. The main public areas were violently eradicated, especially the ones with shared collective identity, such as libraries, museums and religious buildings, reconstituting a 'landscape of fear'— a network of dangerous and forbidden zones in which any daily activity became potentially lethal.

Based on the data on public buildings destruction in the Warchitecture[17] catalogue, 75% of targeted buildings were secular institutions, and 25% were related to particular ethnicities.[18] The manner and frequency of shooting and shelling changed according to the daily practices of the citizens: during peak hours of the day, holidays, and weekends it increased, and during the nights the visibility decreased, as did the destruction.[19] The destruction was at first just a strategy for gaining military dominance and frightening the citizens in an attempt to force the government into accepting the occupiers' terms. C. J. M. Drake mentions different types of terrorists' targets, some of them being the functional ones, such as gas, water and electricity, medical complexes, industrial headquarters, humanitarian aid depots and media centers, with the most attacked being the building of the newspaper Oslobođenje, which in Bosnian stands for 'liberation'.[20]

The systematic destruction of wartime violence often targets a city, its heritage, and architecture. This kind of destruction is often directed towards buildings of 'heightened collective significance,' [9] those which are of symbolic value for the targeted group, ones that trigger communal emotions and affect the victims' resistance and morale. The attack on cultural heritage strikes one's values, tradition and identity.[21] As early as 1992, two main targets of the systematic destruction of Sarajevo could be defined: the multicultural civil population and the urban fabric. The constant intentional bombing of cultural icons dispelled

any doubt that the goal of war was the obliteration of cultural heritage.[22] This included historic buildings, buildings housing cultural heritage (museums, libraries and archives), heritage places of value for national collective memory, as well as buildings related to the XIV Winter Olympics. The besiegers targeted other numerous sites of cultural significance, including Gazi Husrev-beg's Mosque, Sacred Heart Cathedral and the Jewish cemetery, while the former City Hall turned into the Bosnian National Library was completely destroyed along with most of its rich collection. Thus the besiegers intentionally completely demolished the Bosnian National Library and University Library, the main archives of Bosnian written culture, and a major cultural center of the entire region of the former Yugoslavia.[23]

This act of destroying the architectural corpus affects both its physical presence and symbolic role. However, although the physical form undergoes destruction, its symbolism and value are not erased in the collective memory, but rather are oftentimes emphasized and reconfirmed. Destruction instead suddenly sets into motion other forces that then tend to shape a new environment.[24] Thus the meaning of material or physical space gets re-established through action and narration. From the perspective of the ethnography of violence, it has been suggested that the meaning of space is socially formed through brutality, which guides the way people adapt and structure their activities. Space is but a 'practiced place', meaning it is a geographic area until it gets its function through social action.[25]

Adaptive Architecture and Survival Strategies

Adaptive architecture refers to spaces designed to adapt to their environments, users or objects. The expression is an umbrella term for what is implied when discussing and dealing with flexible, interactive architecture.[26; 27; 28] Adaptive architecture brings together several disciplines such as architecture, art and engineering, designing spaces as mediums for a wide range of uses and functions.[29] Regardless of whether spaces were initially envisioned as flexible, interactive or dynamic, the field embraces the concept of all architecture being adaptive rather than static, whether with or without human invention and intervention. Spatial features such as orientation, form, thresholds between inside and out, as well as internal partitioning are all features that can be manipulated under changing circumstances. Fluidity and adaptability of space allows its survival in times of architectural disaster. This implies operating within the given conditions, and what characterizes it are not forms it generates, but rather the interventions that form it.[30] In the case of Sarajevo, according to Mirjana Ristić, "o*rdinary people mobilized new forms of spatial thinking to produce creative responses through which the city was transformed from an urbicidal space into a resilient civic place."*[10] In terms of patterns of urban dynamics under extreme circumstances, spatial configuration takes on new meanings.[31] Cities in wartime become urban laboratories. Not only does a war-inflicted urban trauma suggest broken spatial and social networks, it also removes memory from space, putting both the

city´s history and future in jeopardy. It is widely argued that "trauma defines the moment in which the urban system needs to reinvent itself in order not to disappear".[32] The example of Sarajevo under siege addresses an urban occurrence that often arises in urban conflicts: self-(re)organization.

Armina Pilav introduced the term 'un-war space', both a literary and spatial concept wherein the prefix 'un' stands for redefining, reimagining and reconstructing, whereas war means "to address conflict via military violence."[32] Those war and un-war spaces resulted in transitional spaces of different scales and materials. Sarajevo was caught in a cycle of destruction and reconstruction, turning both the public and private spaces into self-programmed ones. Subject to constant destruction, the city was physically transformed at all scales: landscapes, streets, living spaces, and building exteriors, but also practices of everyday life. Repurposing building ruins became a daily practice, thus establishing transitory wartime interventions, where living meant adjusting to the new spatial reconfiguration of the war. People's movements were limited to underground and above-ground urban spaces, while most of the everyday life remained under the ground and turned into a total emergency. The above-ground city was used solely for obtaining food and other essential supplies.[33] Many shops, schools, hospitals, and apartment and office buildings were uninhabitable, with walls penetrated by shells, windows shattered by blasts, and rooms gutted and burned. Bricks from destroyed buildings were used to fill holes in walls.[34] Many damaged buildings, once repaired, were habitable again, but some rooms were more dangerous than others, with walls and openings exposed to snipers and shrapnel, making them completely unoccupiable.[35] The urban spaces were transformed into an enclosed 'urban interior' in which residents regained their right to move and access places of social encounter. Historical and inactive cemeteries, city parks as well as green areas and stadiums were repurposed as war cemeteries. The city's 40,000 trees were cut for cooking and heating. Public transport was non-existent, and people moved by foot or bicycles, while heavy supplies were conveyed in baby carriages, wheelbarrows and winter sleds.[36]

Because of its specific geography and urban morphology, as well as the position of the siege line, Sarajevo was extremely exposed to military attacks, enabling a direct and precise aim at many buildings and public spaces.

Due to the morphology of the Socialist part of the town, entire buildings were exposed to the attack and it was more difficult to seek shelter because of the large open and exposed areas between free-standing residential buildings. In need of shelter from snipers, new spatial strategies were employed. A temporary pattern of urban resilience and the main element of contemporary fortifications was an urban wall. This temporary installation was mobile, free standing or fixed onto the walls of opposite buildings, thus closing the space between them (Figure 2).

The 'hard barriers' were improvised from garbage and shipping containers, destroyed cars, tramcars, piled buses, cement blocks or sandbags (Figures 3 and 4), that did not allow for the snipers' shots to pierce through. The only safe route across these areas would be behind the UN armored vehicles. In the Grbavica neighbourhood, there was a strip made of containers known as the 'Road of Salvation', that offered shelter

when crossing the most dangerous part of the town. The buildings of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman parts, except for those along the riverbank, were somewhat sheltered by the surrounding buildings whose roofs and front facades were fully exposed to the attacks from the siege line.

The denser morphology of this part of town was easier to shelter by hanging and stretching large pieces of fabric from building to building. Made from big linens, curtains and canvases, general dimensions of these 'soft barriers' (Figure 5) would depend on the accessibility of the said materials, as well as the level of protection needed. These canvases would sometimes fall down due to weather, and suddenly reveal the street. They could hide passers-by from snipers' gazes but not bullets, as they could still puncture through and harm someone behind it.

All of these barriers also served as canvases for graffiti through which residents channeled their judgement, messages and self-deprecating humor (Figures 6). Some of the writings also said "Tito come back", "I am not crazy" and "Everyone is crazy here". Thus this temporary architectural response to violence also takes on a communicative function through graffiti messages.[37]

Metamorphosis of Living Spaces

Through the siege, not only were the public spaces affected, but also the daily rhythm of residential life of the half-million citizens of Sarajevo was transfixed and overturned. Out of the 71,000 homes in Sarajevo, 24,000 were completely demolished, 35,000 heavily damaged, while only 12,000 were somewhat spared. Adapting and redesigning homes to protect themselves, repairing damage, and maximizing the usability and livability of spaces, citizens were suddenly forced to be architects of improvisation.[38]

Severely affected by constant destruction, citizens were forced to improvise, adapt and overcome through innovative spatial reproductions. These momentary war-time constructions of the city also formed new images of the future of Sarajevo. Zoran Doršner's wartime studies contained texts, articles and overlapping sketches of the war changes and adaptations that occurred within residential units (Figures 7 and 8). There he pointed out that a prewar Sarajevo apartment had distinctive functional zones: the living area, kitchen, dining room and a balcony linked to the sleeping rooms and the bathroom by a corridor. The wartime-adapted plan showed the living area's function was now to storage bicycles, trolleys, water and firewood, while actual daily activities were all condensed into a pulled-back corner of the apartment.

During winter, balconies served as refrigerators. Since the food supplies ran out soon after the war started, many persons exchanged valuable personal belongings for it. People made gardens in their homes - flower pots on balconies - and exchanged produce for something else they needed. Balconies were also used as escape routes when there were fires caused by shelling. Sheets would be tied to the rail and one would climb down to balconies of the unaffected apartments. Citizens would often joke that "urban

rock-climbing had inevitably become an athletic discipline in the besieged Sarajevo."[10] Destroyed flats and the underground shelters people were forced to live in often had glued and hammered UNHCR1 plastic foil covering their glassless windows, along with stacks of books, sandbags, mattresses and cupboards. Homes lacked electricity, water and food, and were often shared with neighbors of the same buildings. Heating was also fueled by books, clothes, and furniture, and chimneys had to be made in each household, to let the smoke out. Craftsmen came up with designs of simple but efficient metal furnaces that could be fueled by gas (when there was any), coal, wood and other available flammable materials. These were often used to make coffee, which was a luxury Sarajevans gave up with great difficulty. Because of their central position, staircases of residential buildings became places of everyday social interaction; it was where tenants met, talked, hung out, played cards or chess, and exchanged supplies. Besides assuring safety and communal interaction, they were routes for emergency evacuations towards basements and shelters. The apartment buildings' basements were where the people most often socialized and entertained themselves through board games, comics, cards, etc.

Culture as a Means of Civil Resistance

> Some essential realities are being masked by what has been referred to as the 'self-satisfaction' of mass culture. This culture is maintained at the expense of creativity that can emerge only from an imagination stirred by confrontation with every kind of experience and actuality. [35]

More than the military conflict, the siege of Sarajevo represented a struggle for the survival of human will and dignity. For those citizens who stayed in the city during the four-year siege, life was very uncertain. They were constantly exposed to death, danger and poverty. However, with the hope and will for survival, determination to preserve the elements of normal urban life, and the expectation of soon seeing the end of the war, the notion of resistance became crucial. In wartime Sarajevo, everyday life became a resistance of its own. Sarajevans survived the siege by sticking to their normal routines as much as possible, and that meant showing basic humanity and resistance to the cult of violence that physically surrounded them and kept them hostage. A bravery that bordered on madness was noticeable in every aspect of life. This initiative belongs to an important segment of what we define today as cultural resistance to aggression.[39]

The cultural life of the besieged city gave rise to perhaps the most avant-garde scene in the former Yugoslavia. Under the extreme violence that Sarajevo endured, its citizens tried to preserve its identity through cultural production and thereby defended the city from the warped ideals that drove the brutal aggression.[40] Accordingly, artists' work reflected or criticized and even made fun of the siege. Everyone was motivated to perform and exhibit and contribute in any way possible to the resilience through the

arts. Many artists, when asked about their cultural and spiritual resistance, shared the opinion that their engagement in wartime cannot be described that way. They considered the term to be inadequate and that what they did was a form of spite; it was not an organized resistance, but rather a spontaneous act out of a need to reaffirm creative expression despite the horror and destruction.[41]

During the siege, hundreds of art related events were held; forty-eight concerts by the Sarajevo Philharmonic played, 263 books published, 177 art exhibitions put up, 156 documentary films shot, and 182 plays premiered (Figure 9). This number does not include various prayers for peace, countless artistic improvisations throughout the city and reading books to children in the passages of buildings and basements. All this was done, as people say, with sticks and ropes, usually with candles and charity packages with food as artists' fee.[42]

Spiting the oppressor and in spite of danger, citizens attended as many cultural events as possible. They were making a statement that their spirits and morale could not be destroyed while trying to make sense of what was happening and to retrieve a sense of normality. The normal life everyone was nostalgically speaking of was the life they had had before war started, before they were violently stripped of all social norms. Although life under siege was known to be everything but normal, it eventually became strangely so. Surrounded by destruction and death, citizens and artists were coping with their horrendous reality through any form of creative expression, thus working themselves into a conscious forgetting and imitating of life as they went.[43] As Megan Kossiakoff points out, "One lived with death as much as one lived with arts. No cultural activities stopped, but neither did the dying."[44] The artistic life of the city flourished during the siege, driven by both the determination to resist reality and the impulse to forget it. Sarajevo's wartime art grew to become one of its most recognizable brands, but also an object of the kind of nostalgia that serves as a reminder of the worst and the best of times.

Cultural resistance came out of the need to preserve the humanity and spirit of Sarajevo life. It was the city's own way of boosting morale and strengthening its own resilience, and doing so while sending a message to the enemy. Art was one of the only healing refuges left in which people could constructively occupy themselves and unleash their creative energies. It is difficult to plan an entire system of resilience, and much of it appeared spontaneously from within the Sarajevo population. Physical survival was no longer the only existential problem, and that is where art acted as an innovative way of survival. That mindset was put into action while creating and consuming art. Both public and residential buildings' interiors were soon adapted into spaces for socializing through cultural events – such as exhibitions, theatre, movies, concerts, etc. The events were organized under impossible conditions, in destroyed buildings and shelters, basement stages, devastated galleries, repaired open spaces and people's homes. A large number of programs were even done on the front lines, i.e., in Dobrinja neighborhood and surrounding schools. A major segment of theatrical activities from that period always tended to perform part of their activities with an alternative approach, primarily to get closer to the audience, because the audience at that time had a problem getting to the theater. The children from the Mjedenica home were visited by "Flowers of

Love", and some other organizations did dance, music and drama programs. Artists would go performing all over the city, and the idea was that—due to the inability of people to move around—cultural programs would come to the people.

As everything was reduced to such spaces, all of them were free to use at any time, particularly in an attempt to ascribe some function to them, for they gave some sense of security (Figure 10). Spaces with a higher degree of security were recognized as spaces in which work could be done.

Reinventing and appropriating public buildings for culture and performances was a way of revolting against spiritual annihilation. People were no longer moving targets, but bearers of civilization and its positive values. If one were to categorize the alternative spaces used for cultural events, one would be on the front lines where musicians put up events, performing in the barracks, trying to motivate the soldiers. Dobrinja neighbourhood was especially important; it functioned as a state of its own and as one of the best examples of good organization in the city. These people and organizations perfectly covered the needs of the population, including cultural programs, all because they had a community who helped make it all happen. The second category of alternative spaces were healthcare and administrative buildings. People in hospitals could not attend the programs in the city, so the programs went to the hospitals. In the ruins of the post office building and of City Hall, artists put up exhibitions and musical performances. The third category were shelters, located in basements of residential buildings, children's homes, galleries, schools and many other such places. The basement of the Youth Theatre was a shelter to a few of the local actors, a place where they founded the Sarajevo War Theatre and performed all of their plays. The shelters were used more during 1992 and 1993 than in later years.

Conclusion

This paper argues that when the basic survival mechanisms are set in place, the civic resilience becomes the next very important aspect of enduring the anew founded social and urban (dis)order in the time of conflict. It goes on to outline that the civic resilience may take many forms, however, perhaps the most defiant civic act of resilience or resistance comes in the form of engaging in cultural activities. By taking the example of the siege of Sarajevo (1992-1995), the paper focuses first on understanding the role and the means of urban destruction during the siege, secondly it attempts to explore the adaptive strategies that citizens apply to urban and architectural spaces in order to survive the destruction encountered and, finally, it examines urban resilience through cultural production as a means of creating an alternative space from which to escape the conflict, thus also providing a means of civic resistance to the violence.

By examining the patterns of destruction during the siege of Sarajevo, the military targets became everything that had to do with daily life and routine including (and especially) the cultural buildings, places that testified to a common past and a multicultural city. As such during the war, they ceased to be collateral damage and instead became targeted and methodologically destroyed in an attempt to erase the history and multicultural ideas that they represented. Whereas Sarajevo's essence is a coexistence that manifests itself in public space and cultural institutions, the puritan idea of separation and uniformity and the denial of multiculturalism and diversity is the foundation of the dynamics of its ethnic cleansing. Thus, abolishing cultural infrastructure that bears witness to Sarajevo's identity and shared past is the ultimate act of violence and annihilation of the aggressor's nationalist agenda.

Subject to constant destruction, the city was physically transformed at all scales: landscapes, streets, living spaces, and building exteriors, but also practices of everyday life. In order to protect themselves from the ever-present violence and danger, the citizens created transitional spaces of different scales and materials. The paper has outlined how buildings were repurposed and how everyday life remained underground and turned into a total emergency. The above-ground city was used solely for obtaining food and other essential supplies. Furthermore, not only were the public spaces affected, but also it became important to adapt and redesign homes for protection and in order to maximize the usability and livability of spaces. As such, the citizens were suddenly placed in the role of architects.

Aside from physical survival, the survival of the spirit became a question of crucial importance. During the siege of Sarajevo, as this paper has mapped out, hundreds of art-related events were held. This number does not include countless artistic improvisations throughout the city and at informal events. Under the extreme violence and destruction that Sarajevo endured, we've argued, its citizens tried to preserve both the city's identity (and their own) through cultural production, and in doing so, were defending the city from the wrongful ideals that drove the brutal aggression. The cultural life of the besieged city gave rise to perhaps the most avant-garde scene in the former Yugoslavia. Oftentimes, the work reflected or criticized and even made fun of the siege itself. Everyone was motivated to perform and exhibit and contribute in any way possible to the Resistance via the arts.

When violence and destruction occur in an urban setting, as was the case in the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo, a city takes on a new morphology as the citizens adapt their living habits. In the process and as a form of survival strategy, they also adapt both urban and architectural spaces to the new found circumstances. Aside from mere survival, we argue that the notion of civic resistance also becomes crucial and that it unfolded in the form of cultural production and 'consumption'. The culture-related practices were in particular those that allowed for the creation of an alternate reality and in that way became a means of fighting against aggression, thus turning places of oppression into spaces of liberation.

Images

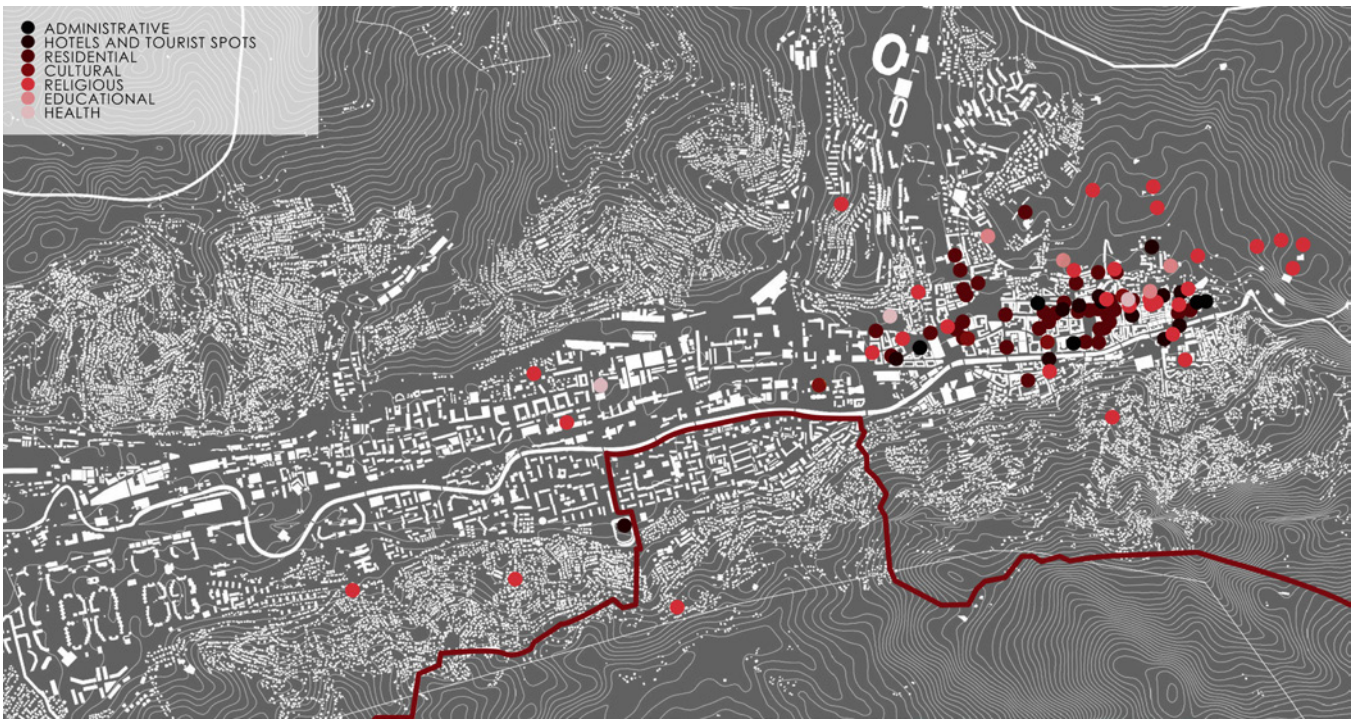

Figure 1. Destroyed buildings across Sarajevo as recorded in Warchitecture: Urbicide catalogue; Map: Author.

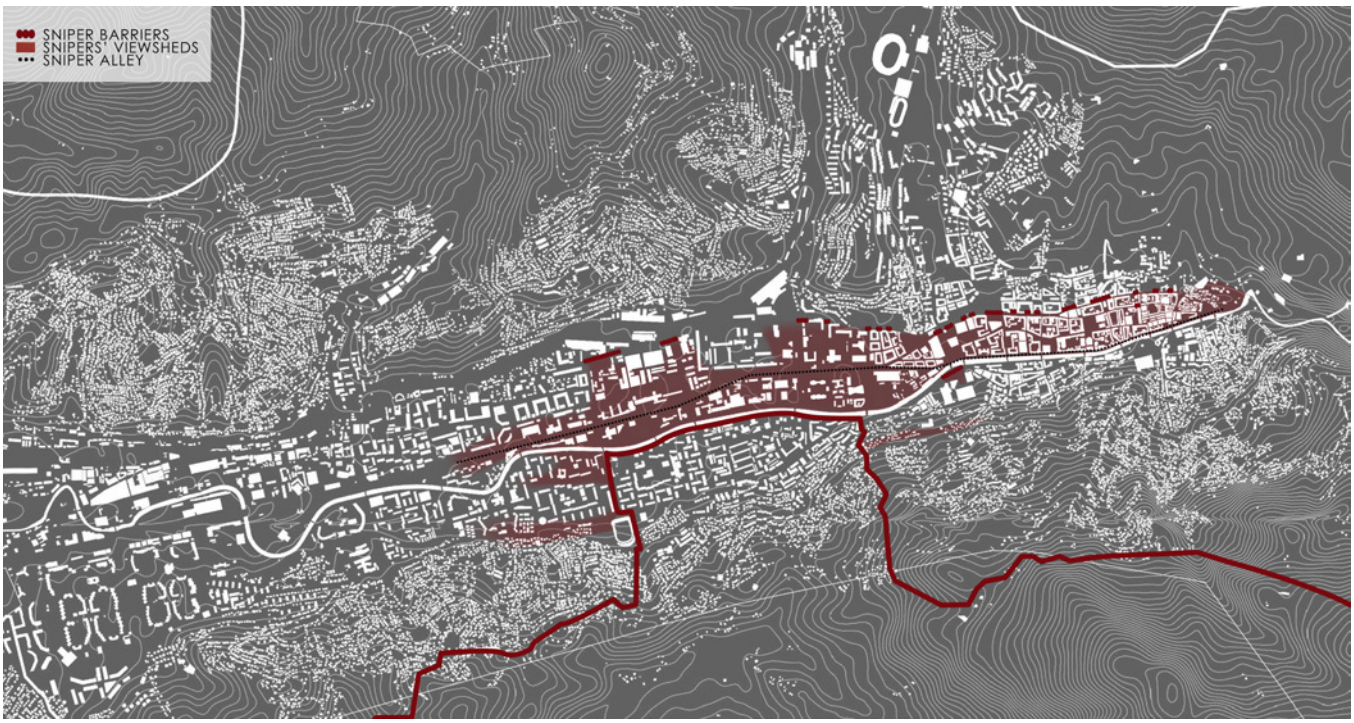

Figure 2. Sniper's viewsheds, sniper barriers and "sniper alley"; Map: Author.

Figure 3. Hard sniper-protection barriers; ©Milomir Kovačević Strašni.

Figure 4. Sandbag barricades; ©Kemal Hadžić.

Figure 5. Soft sniper-protection barriers; ©Milomir Kovačević Strašni.

Figure 6. Hard sniper-protection barriers covered in graffiti; ©Milomir Kovačević Strašni.

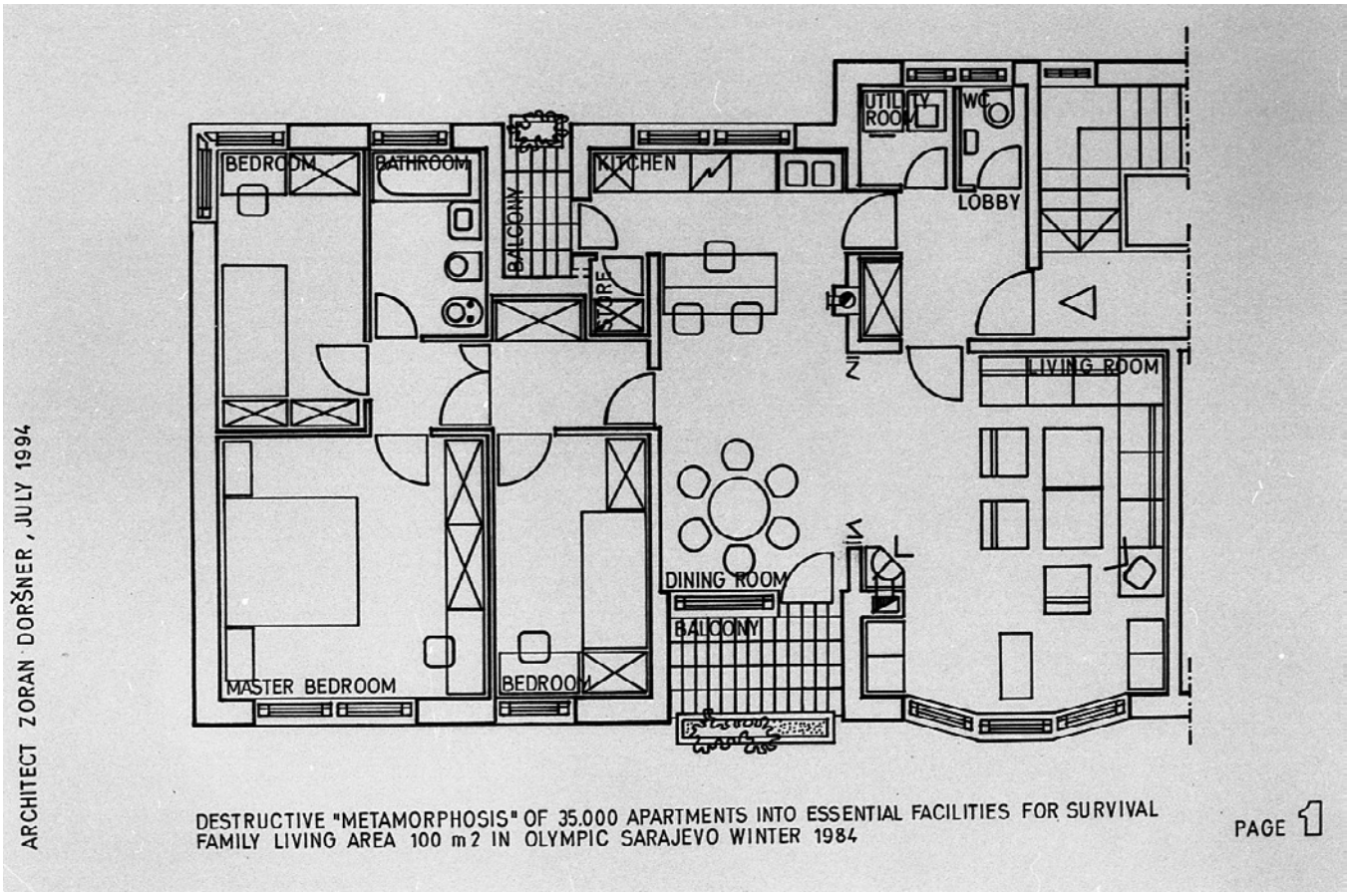

Figure 7. A typical Sarajevan pre-war apartment floorplan; Drawing: Zoran Doršner.

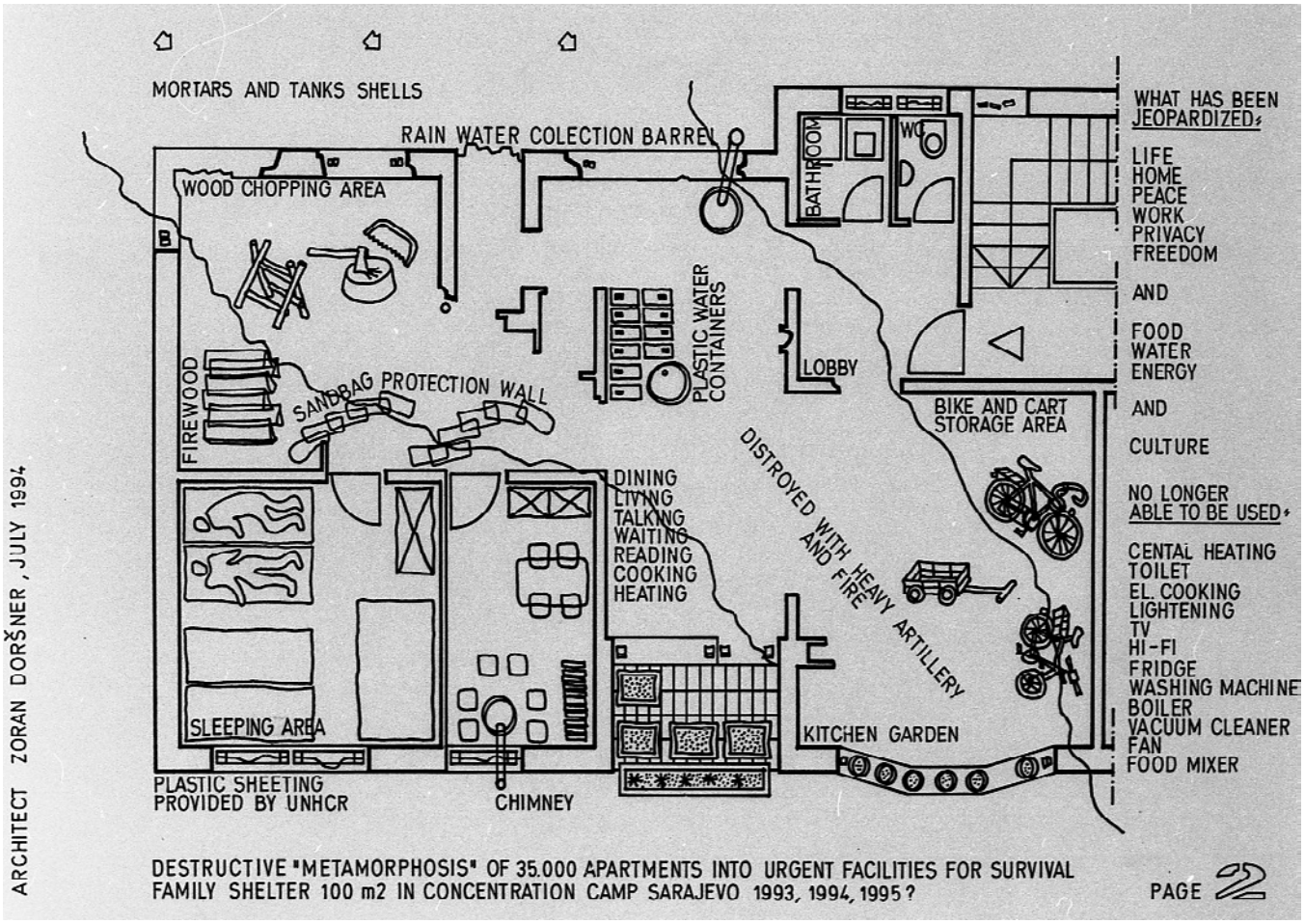

Figure 8. A typical Sarajevan apartment floorplan wartime transformation; Drawing: Zoran Doršner.

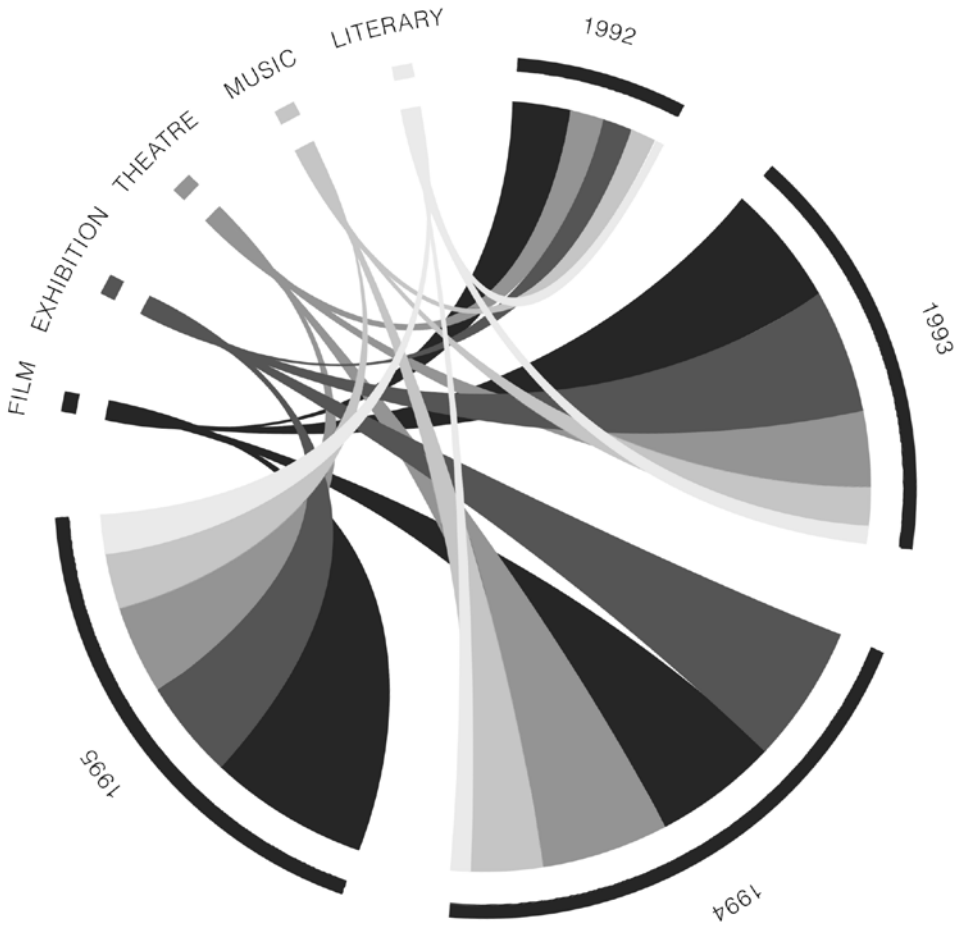

Figure 9. Cultural events through siege years; Diagram: Author.

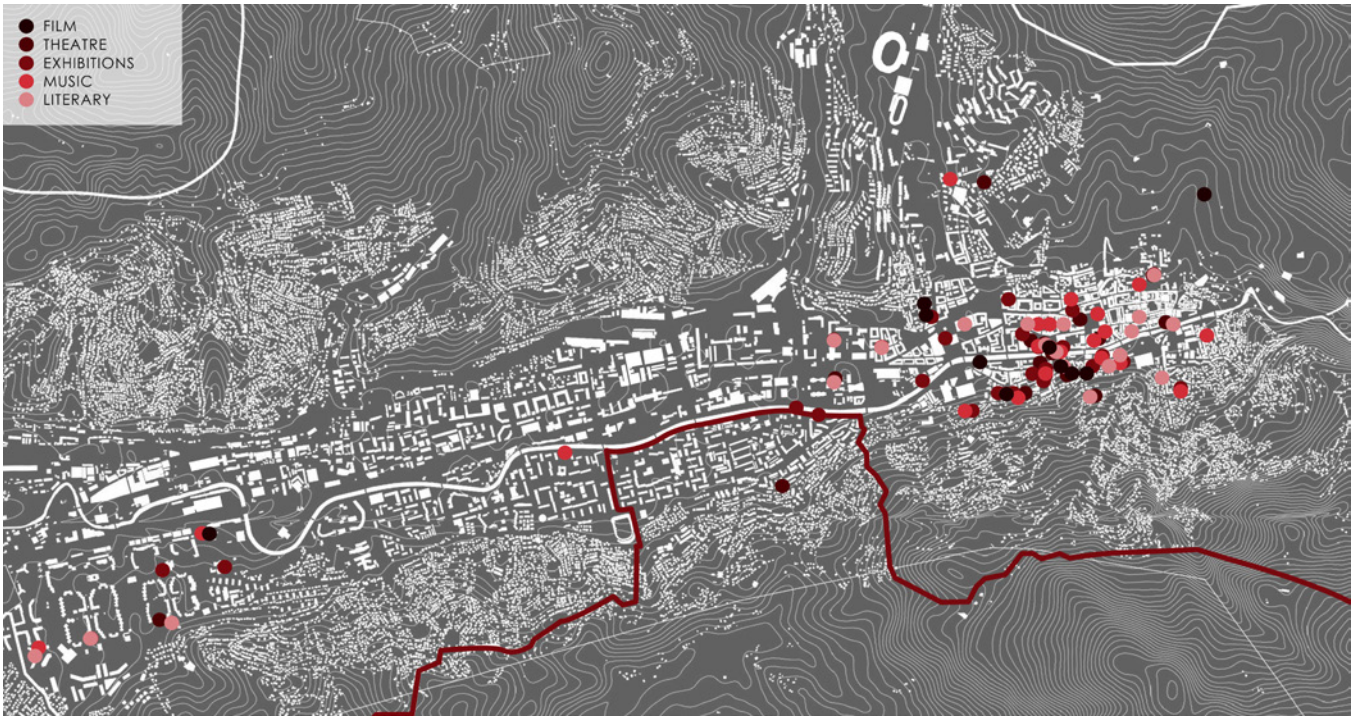

Figure 10. Locations of cultural events held during siege; Map: Author.

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Montreal Architectural Review

Visual Discourse: *Boundaries | Blocks | Borders: Lines of Beirut, Jerusalem, and Nicosia*

Todd Lowery
Drury University

Barricades that repel and obstruct.
Walls that surround and exclude.
Cartographies that contain and divide.
Graffiti that communicate and express.

This contribution presents a series of photographs and an installation that interpret fragments of, and moments in, three eastern Mediterranean cities. The works engage relationships between barriers, boundaries, lines, and visual expressions. They are based on observations and experiences of spatial-cultural and socio-urban dynamics in the fabrics of Beirut, Jerusalem, and Nicosia.

While these cities are often referred to, or imagined, as places that in earlier iterations existed as complete or unified socio-urban structures, their (hi)stories betray pasts and presents of frequent and persistent division and fragmentation. Movement, flow, and communication, or lack thereof, of people,

ideas, and goods are constantly defined and redefined by numerous layers of visible and invisible barriers. The works interpret these layers comprised of natural and human-made structures and attempt to connect and recreate experiential findings from fieldwork in the three cities.

> Cities can be divided in many ways. Some have been shattered by a wax pencil in the space of an hour, remaining split for decades by a "chinagraph frontier," as in Nicosia. Others are restless battlegrounds scored by informal boundaries of varying degrees of permanence. Some cities develop sealed, semipermeable boundaries in response to particular episodes, seasons, or political events.
>
> (Calame et al., 2012, 8)

Fieldwork included sketchbook drawing, journaling, and photography. The culmination of the study is the creation of a multi-panel, acrylic and spray-paint installation piece. The installation is comprised of six three-meter-tall banner-type paintings suspended from the ceiling and reaching the floor. One continues across the floor for another three meters and ends by draping across a structure that echoes a barricade element. Each of the three cities is addressed through two banners that recall a sense of place via color and structure that quotes and paraphrases graffiti and street art in customary materials and techniques.

The street art that informs the banners of each location represents a motif of recurring imagery. The most salient image and form elements from Beirut include the Lebanese Flag, clenched fist, circular-shaped stencils, cedar trees, and concrete or steel barriers. The Jerusalem banners feature tall limestone walls of uniform materials and relentless construction, religious symbols, and thickly brushed white or gray paint used to buff/cover/negate graffiti. The dominant motifs of Nicosia incorporate imagery of the walled city, barrels and barricades, concertina wire, and flags. Ambient elements for each city emerged from the experiences of urban fabric and events and were translated as analogous visuals.

The banners are in dialogue with each other through the painted imagery, and also function together in their materiality and objectness. They divide space, restrict circulation, obscure views, and limit access. In placement, the banners physically impose divisions and diversions within the exhibition space redolent of those found in the three cities.

The photographic works not only connect to the installation as research documents and interpretive conduits, but concurrently speak as individual compositions that evoke and evince the structural dynamics of place through composition, form, and subject.

Lines that are drawn on maps, lines that are drawn in our minds, and lines that are drawn on the ground. Lines that delineate, that differentiate, that exclude. Lines that form space and lines that form meaning. Lines that divide, segment, and contain, but also lines that can facilitate, communicate, and unite.

Images

Near the Ledra Street Border Crossing, Nicosia - 35.1742 N, 33.3619 E

Ledra Palace Checkpoint, Markou Drakou Avenue, Nicosia – 35.1775 N, 33.3553 E

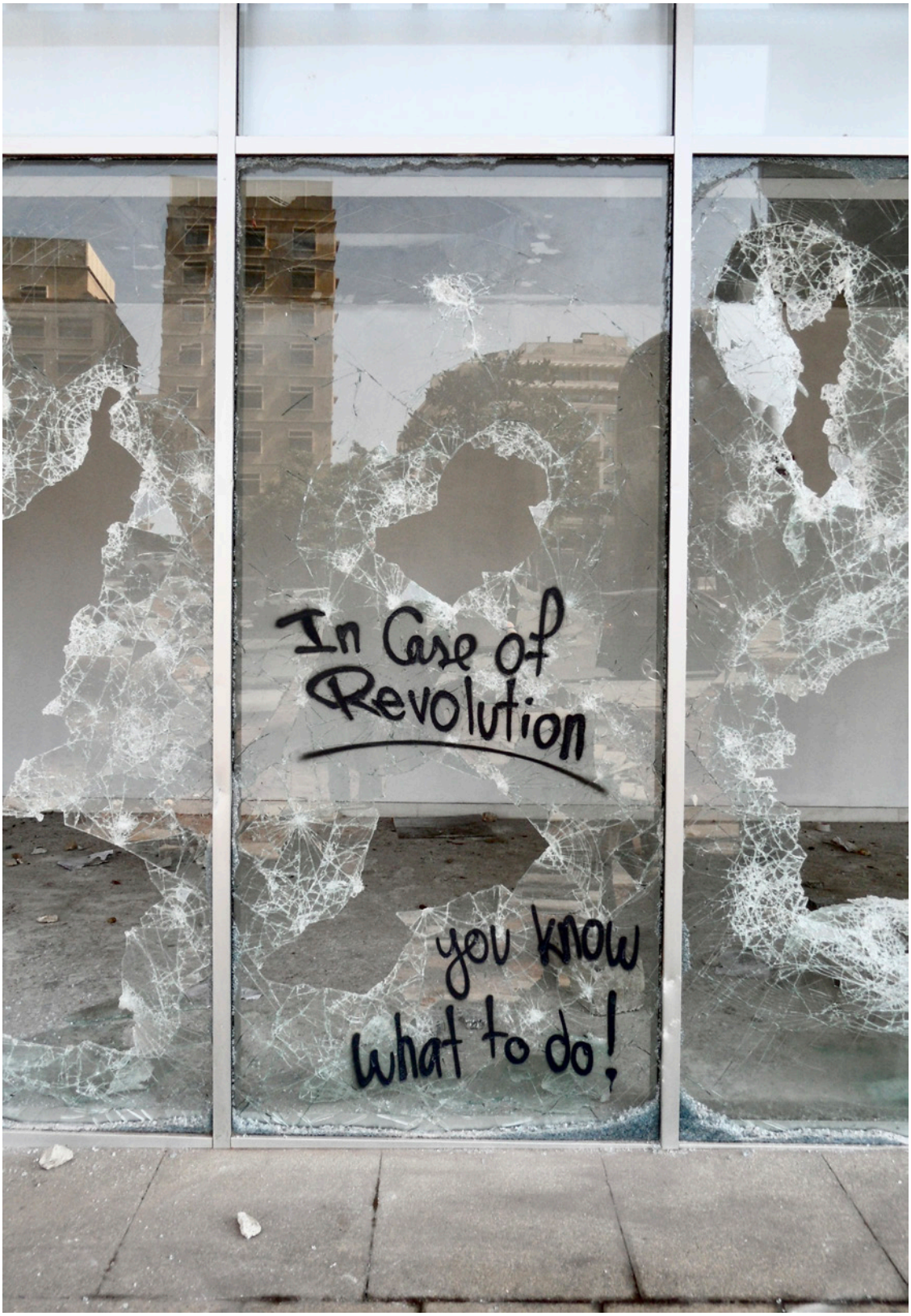
Lidinis and Eptanissou, Nicosia - 35.1746 N, 33.3656 E

Artemidos and Vasileiou Voulgaroktonou, Nicosia - 35.1742 N, 33.3602 E

Alkiviadi and Lidinis, Nicosia - 35.1745 N, 33.3647 E

Nicosia banners

Rome Avenue, Beirut - 33.8965 N, 35.4884 E



Bechara El Khoury, Beirut - 33.8937 N, 35.5064 E

Emir Béchir, Beirut - 33.8949 N, 35.5044 E

Basra Street, Beirut - 33.8968 N, 35.4809 E

Emir Béchir, Beirut - 33.8948 N, 35.5052 E

Beirut banners

Church of the Holy Spulchre, Jerusalem - 31.7787 N, 35.2302 E

Shoshen Street, Jerusalem - 31.7792 N, 35.2238 E

Khavakuk Street and Mea Shearim Street, Jerusalem - 31.7882 N, 35.2206 E

Ibn Batuta and Ibn Khaldun Street, Jerusalem - 31.7874 N, 35.2319 E

Near Sha'ar Habarzel Street, Jerusalem - 31.7787 N, 35.2301 E

Jerusalem banners

Boundaries | Blocks | Borders Installation

Notes:

Calame, J., Charlesworth, E., & Woods, L. (2012). *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia (The City in the Twenty-First Century)*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

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Todd Lowery is an American visual artist. He holds a Master of Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York City and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Missouri State University. He is a Professor of Fine Arts at Drury University and has served as Chair of Drury's Department of Art and Art History. Since 2015, solo exhibitions of Todd's work have been held in Canada, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Sweden, and the US. He maintains studios in Athens and Springfield and divides his time between the US, Italy, Cyprus, and Greece.

Montreal Architectural Review

Book Review: Ristic M & Frank S (eds). *Urban Heritage in Divided Cities: Contested Pasts* Routledge, 2020

Jon Calame
Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity

As terrible events continue to unfold in the West Bank and Israel, filling headlines with disturbing scenes of misery and destruction from Jerusalem and Gaza, good scholarship on the questions of the divided city has never been of greater potential relevance and practical value. The issues surrounding ethnic partition of cities – its origins, its proponents, its sequences and its aftermaths – are complicated, and it remains likely that scholars and practitioners will never understand them sufficiently. The scholarship is young; we have only begun to recognize reliable cause-and-effect relations which result in violent and sometimes permanent harm to the civilians who reside in and around these places.

One of the newest contributions to this body of work is "*Urban Heritage in Divided Cities: Contested Pasts*" edited by Mariana Ristic and Sybille Frank, published by Routledge in 2020. This volume is a compilation of papers contributed by authors from around the world, building from and expanding upon material presented at a 2016 Montreal conference panel called "Contested Pasts", likewise curated by Ristic and Frank. The volume focuses on the importance of historic cities in the broader dialogue about urban partition, and it argues that well-conceived responses to partition on the part of designers and

planners can influence the speed and quality of post-partition recovery and reconciliation. It allows the reader to examine more than thirteen different sites where formal or informal partition has taken place, with emphasis on the role of historical narratives, both real and invented.

The core premise, or promise, of this book is to demonstrate how manipulations of the built environment in divided cities may assist with "mediating, subverting, or overcoming" sociopolitical conflict and traumas associated with partition. Elsewhere Ristic has asserted that "design can act as a trigger for a positive sociopolitical change" and that "insights into how the urban form, network, spatial practices, meanings and senses of place were destroyed…can open a window into the features of cities that should be transformed with the view to reinforcing coexistence." (Ristic, *Architecture, Urban Space and War: The Destruction and Reconstruction of Sarajevo*, 2018). Upon the possibility of such therapeutic triggering, much of the potential value of this volume rests.

It is revealing to note that Ristic believes a carefully chosen site-specific transformation (regarding bricks and mortar urban "features") may generate non-formal, non-site-specific benefits, such as social healing, conflict reduction and mutual understanding. Her suggestion is certainly a seductive one. If it could be positively shown that the harms resulting from partition could be reduced or eliminated through carefully designed alterations to select historic buildings and public places, we would have the template for a new and hybridized branch of the architectural profession.

Before we return to this exciting prospect, it may be useful to examine how little we know at the present moment in relation to these complicated problems. For example, we have yet to systematize a diagnostic approach to divided cities with respect to their original wounds and pathologies. We have neither a shared terminology nor standard analytical methods which would allow us to systematically examine and compare the dynamics of partition across two or more cities. We continue to apply, for the most part, a purely anecdotal approach to the topic. We speak of particular cities, and particular antagonistic groups, and particular objects in the urban landscape with special symbolic value, but not yet of types, taxonomies or stages of urban partition.

For example, if we understood more thoroughly the forces and politics behind the emergence of the Green Line in Jerusalem – manifesting in 1948, dissolving in 1967, and scarring life in that city ever since – we would have many more insights about what is happening now. If in possession of such insights, diplomats and scholars could be making more useful and substantive contributions to the prospects for negotiated settlement and more equitable allocation of urban resources. Linking this example to the book under consideration, we might wonder what the chapter concerning Hebron and its "heritage necropolitics" might have to say about the current violence in Jerusalem, East and West. While this outstanding exploration by Feras Hammami is one of the most detailed and rigorous in the volume compiled by Ristic and Frank, it does not offer the reader a rubric or language with which to unpack other cases. We are left with a clear sense of the injustices and injuries inflicted upon Palestinians in Hebron, but we are not left with the tools we need to understand an emerging case study or even the one a few dozen miles away.

Absent these insights, researchers and practitioners are compelled to recite the same old stories with fresh names and dates, never quite penetrating the outer skin of the conflict, relying on journalists and others to make superficial, hasty and poorly-corroborated observations on our behalf. These kinds of recitation are a weakness of Ristic and Frank's book; it leaves a reader awash in details, metaphors, emblems, and episodes of injustice, but cross-cutting insights about the nature of partition are regrettably scarce.

This anecdotal approach may lead readers to accept the conventional notion that deep, inscrutable hatreds exist between ethnic groups in divided cities, such that no rational person could understand them and no logical policy could contribute to their dissolution. This set of assumptions typically produces equally superficial and irrational revitalization projects from outside parties, few of which have ever shown much lasting effectiveness on the ground. Heaven help the residents of any divided city who encounter one of these benevolent actors accompanied by a lot of money -- the results are prone to be both dramatic and counterproductive, as evidenced by the odd regression of Mostar since Prince Charles came calling. These well-intentioned interventions rested on a faulty diagnosis of that city's partition, and accordingly delivered the wrong medicine for its residents -- on a silver platter.

It is incumbent upon those of us who are involved in the field of built heritage and urban development to be more candid about what we know, and we do not know about historic cities affected by urban partition:

We know quite a lot about how partition happens and how it intersects with the historic built environment. We know many of the stages and sequences that urban partition exhibits, from the earliest signs of political maneuvering and social unrest to the purposeful construction of permanent physical barricades. We know extensively the particular social and political narratives that accompany this evolution, mainly because we have been able to observe more examples of this phenomenon than any of us would have wished for or anticipated.

We know much less about why certain cities succumb to these forces of partition, while many others with identical underlying conditions and tensions do not. We know little or nothing about how much social unrest is manipulated by political actors in order to justify draconian urban planning schemes involving physical segregation of ethnically distinct enclaves. In addition, though several historically divided cities have been repaired in relation to buildings and free circulation, with Mostar and Beirut as prominent examples, we have yet to see a clear case of a divided city recovering socially and economically as a result of the repairs made to torn and shattered physical fabric. (This point is well articulated by Scott Bollens' essay on Solider in this volume.) More importantly, as a field we know very little about how physical alterations to the urban environment feedback upon social relations and systems in general. Which is to say, we do not know much about the degree to which physical repairs can heal the social wounds which inevitably result from a partitioning process, even when these repairs are thoughtfully made, collaboratively executed and generously funded.

This last observation brings us back to a problem with premises in the book under consideration, as framed by Ristic and Frank. It has already been noted that the editors lean heavily on the idea that heritage "has the agency to transform socio-spatial relations for better or for worse" (p. 2), arguing repeatedly that the historic physical environment "shapes" identities, places, and relations between contesting groups. From a purely practical perspective, a reader is compelled to wonder how this kind of transformation through shaping is measured; what metric is proposed by Ristic and Frank with which to recognize "better" or "worse" socio-spatial relations? Better for whom? The editors do not offer an answer to such questions.

More fundamentally, Ristic and Frank fail to adequately define the terms and assumptions upon which their overarching analysis rests. Looking only at the phrasing cited above, the editors are obliged to explain how the notion of "heritage" is bounded and construed in this context, and why they chose to distinguish historic from non-historic urban fabric for the purposes of their analysis. The reader is also compelled to wonder what exactly would constitute a durable and substantial transformation, and how that change could be measured with consistency across disparate case studies. How should the reader understand the notion of "agency" as it may be exercised by an abstract entity such as heritage, and what precisely is meant by the shaping of identity?

Aside from broad-stroke terminology, this volumed is embedded with problematic assumptions regarding failed group relations, identity-based conflict, the superiority of stability over conflict, and the individual's relationship with the built environment. Each of these is debatable in the broader context of divided city politics, but they are implicated by Ristic and Frank as non-debatable and understood. Central among these is a supposition, adopted without comment or examination by the editors, that partition is a uniformly heinous injury inflicted upon cities, one to be healed through reconciliation between historically antagonistic social groups. It is worth remembering that reconciliation may not be what is most needed by the groups in question, while partition may be part of a larger process of urban evolution, one complex enough to defy positivistic notions of fairness and social harmony.

This book contains many rigorous and informative contributions from highly informed scholars, demonstrating a consistent concern for the well-being of communities affected by urban partition. Anyone who has spent time with the topic of divided cities shares an interest in the possibility of recovery on the social level, and many of the contributors to this book have put their interest into practice with insightful examinations of traumatized communities they know well. Despite all this, the editors have failed to synthesize these findings into a form that could improve the efficiency and relevance of future research. They have instead produced a volume marred by fuzzy logic and reductive phrasing, imposing a therapeutic frame on an urgent problem which deserves straightforward treatment.

Ristic and Frank observe rightly that social conflicts can modify historic places, and then they proceed to assume that modifying historic places can reduce social conflict. The symmetry of this logic is tempting but unstable. It becomes irresponsible when it leads researchers to seek physical interventions they hope will bring about symbolic social change. This approach attacks symptoms of partition without sufficient

exploration of its root causes. Ristic and Frank have given us an optimistic projection of how they hope urban professionals might influence the consequences of partition, propped up with non-corroborating, non-parallel anecdotes. Though useful patterns surely exist, under Ristic and Frank's stewardship, these anecdotes coalesce into neither a proof nor a method. Their book provides more reasons for professional concern, but does not offer the tools and yardsticks built environment practitioners need to confront the problem -- one still unfolding, still evolving, and still eluding most scholars of urban development -- in its fullest complexity.

About the Author

Mr. Calame is an independent American scholar whose training is in architectural history and urban development. He currently serves as a Research Scholar at the Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity. Between 2001-2013, Jon was a partner with Minerva Partners, a non-profit consulting group working internationally to support cultural heritage. He examined collaborative urban planning in Nicosia, Cyprus as a senior Fulbright Scholar and studied Italy's Roma camps as a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome in 2010. He is the co-author of a 2009 book entitled *Divided Cities: Beirut, Belfast, Jerusalem, Mostar and Nicosia*.