CONFUSED SPACES
*THEATRICALITY AS A DEVICE FOR
DEFINING DIFFERENT TYPES
OF PUBLIC SPACE*

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by
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ABSTRACT

Confused Spaces:

Theatricality as a device for

defining different types

of public space

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Confused Spaces has come to the conclusion that theatricality can be a device for defining different types of public space. This book aims to define theatricality in architectural terms by taking principles from the disciplines of theater and urban design. It limits the scope of the definition to a specific set of elements of theatricality that include spectacle, transition, flexibility, and compactability. After attempting to define why these elements of theatricality are valid architectural concepts, the text then pushes to understand the experience that these elements can create. Through the use of historical and contemporary references, an argument for theatricality can already be found to exist but simply has not been clearly defined.

The best methods of studying the design concepts are initially discussed. It is believed that in addition to a thorough case study of an existing structure which practices theatricality, the best way to explain the concepts of the idea as well as analyze them would be through several design attempts. Architectural competitions become the venue for experimentation. Three competition entries are submitted that attempt to implement theatricality. One more competition is created and results in an exhibition of the entries as well as an installation which can be studied and analyzed in a physical space.

By using principles distilled from all the preceding research and design analysis, a theoretical large-scale design is explored. The design combines significant site data with all the design principles defended in the text up to this point. The design becomes the most complete visual representation of the core concept for theatricality. In conclusion, it is determined that the principles of theatricality clearly have a significant impact on the public and the pedestrian experience. It is encouraged for the concept to be used as a design device for creating pedestrian-friendly spaces in the future.

Keywords: Theatricality, Transition, Spectacle, Flexible, Compactible, Threshold, Urban Design, Architecture, Theater

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I. INTRODUCTION

Thesis Statement

Despite decades of research on Urban Design, many American cities still lack a pedestrian focus that is tangible, flexible, and playful (Gehl, 2010a). Some urban developers and designers have learned that strategies such as wider sidewalks or suspension as you move through space are valuable and as such they have employed some clever design tactics. However public space planning is often still confused and overwrought with cliché elements. Those elements are typically trying to represent some foreign, typically European, downtown despite completely different context, history, and culture. The designs are also frequently subdued by the stranglehold of an obsessive committee with misunderstood historical context as their driving force. To add to the confusion, many malls and private establishments misrepresent their properties as being part of the public domain and generally speaking, the public is none-the-wiser.

What are the designs doing and why?

These buildings and establishments in urban centers are essentially being theatrical. They are building a set with a stage and doing it as cheaply as possible while still capturing an audience with simply those elements.

Why does that matter?

Recently an interesting trend has arisen on the internet. The amount of websites where the user can rate their experience or a product has grown dramatically. When looking at the multitude of reviews for movies, books, music, cities, restaurants, etc, it

may become apparent that the users are not typically critiquing things by appearance alone. For most, the area of greatest concern is the story and the experience of the thing being reviewed. In this case we can apply this trend to public urban spaces. People do not necessarily care about the built design on a surface level. Even when you include some people in design professions, seldom do friends gather and tell stories about the shapes of buildings or the design of space. They relate to each other through the experience they had in the space.

This is again very theatrical. People like telling, hearing, and seeing stories unfold. The set can keep attention for a moment, but the story is the interesting aspect of theater that so many designers are forgetting when it comes to architecture. The design is not just about slapping facades on a box and putting a lot of 'public' space in front of it. It cannot be that simple. Yes, many people fall for this, perhaps out of a lack of choices or understanding. Examples include Disneyland, just about any 'Towne Centre' in America, and many of the places in the research of Brian Lonsway and his contemporaries (Lonsway, 2009). People prefer theatricality to some extent. If they did not, architecture would not be a profession.

Clearly there is a relationship between architecture and theater, intentional or not. My contention is that if we look to theater and observe which other theatrical elements are missing in our public spaces, perhaps could we could devise a way to infuse them back into the design of the space.

When it comes to theatricality as applied to architecture, there is a long list of elements that could fall under the banner of 'what is missing,' but this research shall only focus on the areas that are most important and most oft forgotten. At its core, theater is about which elements?

Theater is about being 'live.' Perhaps its most defining characteristic and the primary thing that sets it apart from film is that theater is in the moment and could change at any time. Yes, theater is often scripted, but almost every show strays from the script in a different way. At each level, when a script is going to be performed it suddenly gets a reinterpretation by a slew of people from the producer to the director to the set designer to the actors. Improvisation is more than just a back up when the script fails but a continually strategy for approaching performance (Campbell, 1984).

Theater is also about transitions. It is about transitioning the audience into a different world. Those transitions come in at every level of procession from the viewpoint of the audience. On the stage the performers transition between scenes, roles, locations, times, states of existence, etc. The words procession and proscenium are inherently theatrical terms. The proscenium in particular is a strange transitory zone between the set and the audience that can be inhabited by the performers when necessary. And the idea of procession is to transition in a ceremonious way that typical includes some level of performance or theatrics, such as a parade or a wedding ceremony.

On a similar token to the last two points, most theater is infinitely flexible. It often sets out to represent a variety of things with the same pieces. The back of one set is the front of another. One costume could get used by another. One extra or even main character plays another character. Many theatrical pieces are not just multi-purpose but actually transformable. The terms multi-purpose and transformable are not the same and should be distinguished from one another. For example, a field of grass could be multipurpose, as it is a blank slate on which many things can happen. However, that field is not transformable in itself because it only has one state. But a fold-out couch is something that has more than one purpose (bed/couch) as it has two separate states as well.

Finally, the goal toward singularity is very common in the field of technology and often in the design of more compact spaces like planes, RVs, boats, and spaceships. The goal of all these products is to simplify and compress objects in space to make them foldable, changeable, and highly flexible. For example, on an airplane, the seat back becomes a tray table for eating, and it also contains pockets galore and sometimes an embedded screen. The seat cushion is also a floatation device because without that there would be a slue of life vests simply taking up space somewhere else in the plane. When space is limited, much like on a theater stage, people tend to get more creative about how they use that space in the most efficient way possible. In the United States, particularly in the western US, where space has not been much of a factor for city planning, this need for versatility and flexibility in design has seemed unimportant. However, as our cities have grown larger and larger, we are hit with the realization that just expanding outward is not the answer. This argument as it applies to cities can be translated to almost any scale.

How can design of public space tie together compactness, transition, flexibility, and the momentary nature of theater? What are the hurdles and the benefits of such an experiment? That is precisely what this research is setting out to do.

Designers already understand how to design the sets, but typically without an understanding of how to add the theatrical portions. It is crucial to the future of design that we understand the non-static aspects of design. In his film, *The Social Life of Small Public Spaces*, William Whyte (1988) made a comment in reference to the Seagram Building Plaza in New York City that can be applied to this situation:

As we move from the rear, we see another aspect of the place that's quite fascinating: the movement of people across it. Choreography is wonderful and choreography really is the right word; the way people move, circle, stop, speed

up, the colors they wear. There's a beauty that they most often sense themselves. You see none of this in architectural photographs, usually quite empty of people, but visually this movement is the ultimate test of a design.

How curious that Whyte (1988) used a theatrical term to describe an architectural experience. Architects have a tendency to design static things while the audience and the space is not being used in a static way. Imagine a building where you can literally pull off a piece of the façade and use it as a bench or a table or play some sort of game with it. And other people are using it for other purposes at the same time. Imagine layers upon layers of transitional spaces that fold in and out of one another to create ever-changing experiences.

By blending standard definitions of space and using theatricality as an instrument for design, urban spaces can ultimately become truly pedestrian friendly and as dynamic as the people that use them.

II. THEATER

Relationship to Thesis

Theater relates to architecture on a variety of levels that go well beyond the breadth of this research. In the simplest form the elements of Spectacle, Transition, Flexibility, and Compactability are the theatrical properties that will be explored and applied to an architectural context.

In a generic sense, theater's relationship to architecture is very tangible and is long-standing. However, many understand that relationship only in the obvious ways. Forced perspective in the design of many theaters compresses space in a literal way but this concept, along with countless others, falls on the side of the fence that this research does not wish to support.

There are two sides of the fence. One is the side of the more popular theatrical tropes. Empty facades are placed over simple boxes to create excitement where there is none. They are devoid of any relationship that makes a building into architecture. The very 1-dimensional relationship of a stage to audience is another flat connection. These all fall on the 'fake' side of the fence and for the purposes of this research, they are all pretending to be something. These elements are exactly why terms like theatrical and dramatic have come to mean overdone or over-the-top or completely fake.

The other side of the fence is the 'real' side. It is on this side that the most positive and most functional qualities of theater exist. This is where flexibility, transition, compactability, and spectacle lay.

Spectacle

Spectacles and performance and other theatrical elements can be used to create dynamic and inviting spaces. Design is all about creating spontaneous moments called spectacles, events or performances (Rockwell, 2007b; Tschumi, 1997). The understanding of transition and suspense can be used to create the most dynamic spaces (Gideon, 1971; Tschumi, 1994, 1997). An argument could be made for sequence, suspense, and transition playing a part in the creation of spectacles (Tschumi, 1997). Spectacles can occur in both public and private spaces. Oftentimes, it can be difficult to differentiate between these two types of spaces.

Spectacle is a valuable and necessary part of theater that ties in with the 'live' aspect of it (Rockwell, 2007a). It is the event. It is the show that people are going to see. It is what they want. However, as architects, we are not in the business of designing an event. No matter how well designed our space is, we cannot expect that just because we build it, it will be used for glorious and ambitious spectacles. With design competitions or projects, architects often idealize the expected level of pedestrian use, going well above a realistic goal. We would be doing a disservice to the space and to the people using it to assume that far more people would use a space than is realistic.

This is not to say that spaces should not be designed with ambitions for greater foot traffic than is existing. What urban design often involves is a careful consideration of scale. Considering which spectacles and live events can happen and at which scale they should occur in a given space is very important. Layering possibilities for multiple spectacles at multiple scales would lend itself to creating the best results.

The moral of this entire aforementioned section is simple. Do not plan on any spectacles happening as the architects will not design the events themselves. Rather one should design a space that allows for spectacles and for flexibility at the appropriate density and scale given the context.

Is spectacle a reinterpretation of art, space, place, etc? Perhaps it is. Perhaps it is not. Either way, allowing a structure with design for the possibility that spectacles could redefine the space for their own agenda is a positive way to go.

Transition

Theatrical transitions occur with space, place, time, and people. Many contemporary theaters in the United States compel the audience members to go from a public, 'real' world into a private, 'fake' world with an abrupt transition between those two realms. However, venues such as Garnier's famed opera house or the National Grand Theater of China by Paul Andreu (2007) allow the audience a greater chance to connect with the performance they are attending through the extension of the heightened experience. Therefore, for the most dynamic audience experience in and around performance spaces, the transition thresholds can be extended through an exploration of procession and transition.

The audience should be able to transition into a theater space through a lively and dramatic urban and cultural context (Rowe, 1997). Transition is a distinct discourse in itself, but it must be explored as a theatrical element to better understand how to extend thresholds in and around a public urban space.

Figure 1: "National Grand Theater of China"

The National Grand Theatre of China by Paul Andreu (2007) is theatrical in its idea of procession that allows the audience time and space to prepare for the show. However, one could imagine that the threshold could also be used as a gallery which would have elements from the corresponding performance in the space, allowing the audience to become even more connected to the show. Teatro Olimpico by Andrea Palladio, with the set by Vincenzo Scamozzi, takes the real world and places it in a forced perspective on stage. The stage mimics the life outside the theater, but I propose that the life outside the theater should actually begin to engage the theater and its performance.

The Set essentially brings the vibrance of reality to a performance space to be viewed. The stage interacts with the life outside the theater in a reflective way. Also, Renzo Piano's Niccolo Paganni Auditorium in Parma, Italy essentially forces the set to fit in the building, but I argue that the set should inform the building much more. It should not be simply 'fit in.' There should be a clear relationship between the stage and the set, the theater, the theater lobby and entry space, and the exterior of the theater, which is the urban context. The more opportunities of both physical and phenomenological transitions to occur, the more fluid the space will be and the more heightened the theatrical experience.

Figure 2: "Teatro Olimpico"

Figure 3: "Niccolo Paganini Auditorium"

Flexibility

Flexibility of space, objects, and people is very important in the design of a public space. Typically, flexibility is misunderstood or misconstrued as a version of something that is multipurpose. Recall that multipurpose is not transformable. Transformable is the kind of flexibility that is necessary to encourage pedestrians to use their surroundings in new and interesting ways. A great example of a multipurpose space is a large tent or an empty field. While a lot can certainly happen in a field or under a large tent, design solely with the purpose of unlimited uses in this sense is not ideal.

People like options but not completely blank slates. By designing publicly accessible pieces of a building that are capable of changing in a way that has a relationship to the design of the buildings and public spaces, as well as the surrounding context, the greatest number of truly dynamic results are possible. Studies have shown people like less options when it comes to retail and food selections. It has also been proven they use their time more wisely when it is limited in some way or has a set of rules attached to it.

People embrace and enjoy the ability to work within a certain set of boundaries. Let us go back to the theater relationship again. In theater, most shows work with a certain framework and get creative in how they relate to the audience in that scenario. Shows will be staged differently in a black box than an amphitheater or a 360 degree circular stage with seating. The goal of theatricality in architecture is to provide the framework while still allowing change (Davis, 2003). The best examples of this take design beyond the blank slate and they allow themselves to adapt to the rule of the site while still allowing for continual change.

Compactability

Architects have talked about the industrialization and compression of architecture in the past, but in a way that is self-contained, like mass produced homes or housing units or cookie cutter houses. That is not what I am arguing for. Many architects who advocate for the use of digital fabrication discuss compactness in a slightly more compelling way. Zaha Hadid (Richards, 2011) experimented with the design of a room in a house that is to appear as one single form conceptually. While this is compelling, the compactness still tends to be self-contained and not necessarily contextual.

Compactness can be used to actually create great feelings of openness and expansiveness. When a compacted piece unfolds, it begins to imply greater things. Why can architecture not do this as well as a seat-back tray table in an airplane?

Theater is inherently compact as well because it needs to be but public space is often the opposite. Particularly in the Western United States public and urban space has had a near-endless territory in which to expand so it has never truly needed to be compact. This sprawl is one of the greatest faults and it is a necessity that compactness becomes an important quality soon (Cullen, 1971)

III. THE REAL FAKE

Experience vs. Evidence

Of all the design problems that may arise within urban spaces, perhaps the most confusing are those that many deem 'fake.' What is fake? Fake is a term for a space which ignores all contextual references, be they historical, cultural, etc. Places like Disneyland have become tourist attractions (Whyte, 1988) and a Mecca for those who praise the 'fake.' Other examples include the World Shopping Center in Rio de Janeiro and Stan Gale's plans to build a Utopian city 35 miles south of Seoul, South Korea modeled on Boston, Paris, Venice, and Manhattan. Those are 'fake' spaces modeled on 'real' spaces. (Lonsway, 2007) They give people less reason to travel to new places and more reason to travel to only the same five places in different settings around the world. Sounds like a theme park, does it not?

These fake spaces make people crave pictures as evidence of travel instead of experiences for the purpose of simply experiencing something genuine. Contemporary design is one entire design area that has been shutdown in many cities for the sake of the fake. People in downtown committees all over the United States often fight new designs in favor of designs that mimic the history or flavor of their local area. That is basically pushing historical and cultural context too far. Those types of designs are no longer contextual, but merely duplicates of what is already there. To many, this is where theatricality fits in with regards to design.

Admittedly, theater has many façade-like and fake elements in more recent history and because of that it has been twisted to represent that which is 'fake' or buildings that are lying. However, historically theater was originally about connecting to the 'real' as a

story-telling method. The earliest theaters had no false backdrop, but rather actual cities and surrounding landscapes acted as the backdrop. Much later, façades, backdrops, and sets were developed to create a space that was ultimately locked-in and not open to the possibilities of reality. What I wish to result from this research is a design that balances on a line between fake and real. Perhaps ironically, I contend that the elements of theatricality could actually be used to create higher quality genuine public spaces and more genuine experiences. What do Americans really want, the 'real fake?' As William Whyte (1988) has said, they would rather pay to go to Disneyland to experience space instead of contributing to the betterment of public spaces that are in their hometown.

Public space in urban cores is a large issue to tackle. Many areas of design could be addressed. Perhaps the private frontage along public space is where this design should focus. Privately owned public space is where the most change can happen. But is that overly optimistic? If commercial enterprises could realize the benefits of creating higher quality public space from a financial and traffic flow perspective, would they be more interested in quality design and the experience of their users? Disneyland was an early endeavor to include environmental psychology as a tool for mapping the master plan (Dunlop, 2011). It is with environmental psychology that we can begin to map the circulation of visitors and how that affects the design.

So it seems that fakeness gives people comfort and they do not want reality. How could design either show them what is real or encourage them to choose the real over the fake? Is our imagination the aspect that interests us most and if so, how can design compete with imagination?

Relationship to Thesis

The question of real versus fake as they relate to perception returns when theming and theatricality are brought back into the conversation. Many urban spaces are debatably genuine public or private spaces. My search is no longer just about clarifying what type of space it is. It is more about those spaces being real or at least allowing for real experiences. This is a crucial distinction. Caricatures can be real without being boring and contextually monotonous. Historical context and site context are always design considerations, but experiential context gets muddled through designs.

Ultimately the public must exist with the private, and theatricality is a way to blend the two areas. Theatricality could highlight the important features of a space and engage the public. Typical private spaces often have incentive to win us over. They could benefit financially from people being interested in their space, and when it will increase the developer's bottom line, they will typically invest in design that will draw in more people. But the public does not always feel the need to create the same kinds of engaging spaces. It acts like it has nothing to gain from being better, so it is not often dealt with (Casey, 1997).

So where does this debate about space lead? How to people perceive space? It is this perception that makes it feel more or less 'real.' (Krier, 1979) Do people genuinely prefer a canned experience where everything is chosen or the open-ended one? Do they prefer the symbolic context or the context of immediacy?

It is with immediacy that I imagine the local public space would actually have leverage. An immediate reward is something people crave in many scenarios. Theater offers immediacy as a solution. It is something that can really only be experienced in the moment and could not be a memory-based space. It offers unpredictability to a certain degree. This is the strongest connector between theatricality and urban design. This is one of the elements of live performance that cannot be recreated. In a day where everything is recorded and uploaded and instantly frozen in time, you don't need to be there. Flash mobs have been rising in popularity because their unpredictable nature makes them appealing.

How does this unpredictability influence design? The impromptu is arguably what makes many spaces into places. Predictability could be what brings most people to a space but the unpredictable is what allows the place to grow and develop and it gives people a reason to stay. It creates an image of the place that people desire.

So perhaps the idea is to give parameters to a space and let private enterprises modify their own smaller individual spaces. Is this all that needs to be done by the designer? If a private retail developer buys up a huge lot, they typically create storefronts and fake public spaces between private ones. Could this developer sell the private spaces or change the terms of the rental to allow for changes and customization? This change could happen more rapidly than the stagnant pace of typical large developments or government-owned public spaces. Ultimately space is simply a physical term, but place is experiential. I am interested in creating places and developing a system that will allow people to continue to create more places in the future. This research should result in the ability to create an experiential place in any location.

Dérive Now

Situationists theater as it relates to architecture is all about the relationship to the temporal, so instead of just experiencing space in an evolving and changing way, why not allow the spaces to transform as well. Getting lost was a big part of the Dérive manifesto. Guy Debord of the Situationists was about spectacle and places only being relevant because of the events that happened in them. Getting lost today is becoming less and less relevant. It is difficult to get lost. It is difficult to genuinely discover new things in physical space.

In the age of the internet, place is not even necessary to many people. So how do we create designs that engage people in a way that they want a place and that they want a specific space? Urban design theories regarding spectacle are severely diluted and over time have become less relevant and out of date. Perhaps the core concepts are still relevant but they are lacking a draw to the younger generation. This is a generation that does not find out about a restaurant by going downtown and exploring as previous generations may have done. Instead, they look it up on Yelp or UrbanSpoon and locate it through their GPS.

Figure 4: Situationist App

How can we mediate this? Can we provide people with the Situationist experience in this new context? In the age of information how do you keep people uninformed for the betterment of their experiences and to provide the suspense that comes with theater and performance in public space? This is a new Situationist endeavor. How can we keep people interested in a physical place in a digital world? The provided experience must be unique, so unique that pictures, videos, and maps cannot capture it. How can it be unique: through theatrical concepts, like unpredictability, spectacle, and what else?

We cannot expect a space to have a new crazy activity everyday. And the design has trouble actually affecting spectacles on a regular basis anyway that could primarily be influenced by the community. So the bigger question then becomes how do you get the larger community involved in this attraction of the space? Is there anything that cannot be photographed but merely experienced? People like to show the photographs of their craziest and most unique experiences. They often need to get the photograph more than they want to get the actual experience. If that is the biggest draw to a space, once again, I ask: How can design be a solution?

Perhaps this truly could be a 'New Situationist/Dérive' movement where the forces being rebelled against are similar but more difficult to deal with. There are several enemies of the Dérive that go beyond photographs and maps. Today, constant connections to the internet and GPS systems impede true spontaneity; at least the spontaneity that used to occur in real space. It prevents seemingly random stumbling and discovery. To that end, StumbleUpon rose to prominence as a brilliant computer program because it allowed people to experience the internet in a wildly different way than they had in the past. How can the results of this research create a randomized, more spontaneous and place-based way for people to experience a specific location?

IV. URBAN DESIGN

Pedestrian Friendly

Pedestrian friendly urban planning is good for people as well as for the development of cities. Pedestrian focused cities are arguably better than automobile focused cities. (Gehl 1987, 2004, 2010b, 2011). In many American cities, pedestrian centric planning, particularly public space planning, is confused (Crow 1990). Thorough investigation and experimentation of public spaces being re-centered around the pedestrian has shown a statistical increase in the number of people enjoying the space (Gehl 1987, 2010a, 2011; Millard, 2011; Richards, 2011). Consistently, the argument shows that when space relates to the human scale and human needs there is greater success with the designed environment (Gehl 1987, 2010, 2011, 2004; Mehta, 2007).

While the research on better public space planning and designing for the pedestrian in urban spaces is not a new avenue of thought or discussion, it is only recently making a substantial impact (Richards, 2011). As such, I believe it is imperative to focus our efforts in the architectural community on creating higher quality urban spaces, specifically focusing in on public space and the spectacles that can occur there. In much of his research, Gehl begins to touch on events and spectacles in urban contexts and their relevance but I believe that is a larger area of research that needs to be further explored.

Gehl's (1987) research focused on how pedestrians increased the social quality of the public and urban space. He did not touch as much on how confused the general population is about what is public or private space. The public and private domains are often pretending to be something they are not. Pedestrian friendly urban planning is good for people as well as for the long-term development of cities. How could procession

in theater overlap with circulation of those same people through a city and/or public spaces? This is a leading question pushing the research in the direction of theater as a transitional device to guide people from different space types with ease (Crow 1990).

Copenhagen, Denmark is a city that had an increasing amount of automobile traffic in the 1970s when architect and urbanist Jan Gehl (1987) began pushing the city into a pedestrian centered direction. Now the city boasts 37% of people commuting to work via bicycle and a huge shift toward walking to work as well. Is Copenhagen the base model to go by? Are more bike paths and an increase in foot traffic the best indicators of a successful pedestrian centric city? Gehl (2012) once said, "Do not look at how many people are walking in the city, but look at how many have stopped walking to stay and enjoy what is there." A well developed city is not just about getting from point A to point B but rather about having a social experience.

William Whyte gained a great deal of insight from his research on the Social Life of Small Urban Spaces. Whyte, much like Gehl, methodically observed people to determine their behaviors in public urban spaces. He supported Image and Identity, Attractions and Destinations, and Flexible Design among other things (Whyte 1980). He once touted that "it is difficult to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished. (Whyte 1988)"

As was explored in earlier research, the study of people and their experiences is a valuable tool for understanding the uses of different spaces. In *Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch (1960) claims that successful urban spaces have at least one of the five dynamics that create a memorable place: Landmarks, Nodes, Districts, Paths, and Edges. The principles of Lynch (1960) and the rigorous analysis by Jan Gehl (1987, 2004, 2010a, 2011, 2012) and William Whyte (1980, 1988) have laid the groundwork for much of my research.

One aspect of urban design often discussed by Gehl (2004) and Whyte (1980) is the activity of spaces and their value to the overall feeling of the space. However, when it comes to the details or the types of activity, the details are vague. This is one avenue in which theater and urban design intertwine. Most successful urban installations involve transient elements, and particularly focus on the nature of flexibility in the space as a key element cited by Gehl (1987, 2004, 2011), Whyte (1988), and Lynch (1960).

Each individual wishes to make a space their own and as such, they enjoy altering it, even if subconsciously. People like adaptable spaces and they like to personalize it from the start, whether by moving a seat slightly or by adjusting their surroundings. I still intend that these aspects of urban design be considered, but something is missing. It is here that this research can find a home. By focusing on the need for adaptable, ever-changing, varied, and predictably unpredictable space, design solutions may arise. When it comes to activity, unpredictability should be the primary predictable aspect of urban spaces.

Spectacles and performance and other theatrical elements can also be used to create dynamic and inviting spaces. Design is all about creating spontaneous moments called spectacles, events or performances (Rockwell, 2007b; Tschumi, 1997). The understanding of transition and suspense can be used to create the most dynamic spaces (Gideon, 1971; Tschumi, 1994, 1997). An argument could be made for sequence, suspense, and transition playing a part in the creation of spectacles (Tschumi, 1997). Spectacles occur primarily in public spaces, but are they enough to activate those spaces? And how can design affect this change?

V. PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

Battling Spatial Stereotypes

Space types are currently too broadly defined as simply private or public. The public and private domains are often attempting to be something else (Lonsway, 2007, 2009). Other types of space remain to be defined and explored in depth.

The broadest currently defined types of space are simple and well-known in both the architectural community and well beyond: public and private. Many people conceptually understand the two and could explain them if asked on the street. However when it comes to the complexities of architecture and local legislation regarding those spaces, they become less and less clear (Lonsway, 2009).

When space types become blurred we need to reconsider what they are. Brian Lonsway (2007) has given us many examples demonstrating the confusion, but let us focus on just one for a moment. Disney portrays the small town America vibe so well that many visitors consider it public. They even label the entrance to the Magic Kingdom as 'Main Street.' On Main Street in Philadelphia, workers, activists, etc. could protest and picket all they want. But on Main Street in Disneyland, the minute you start picketing you can guarantee that Disney security would come out of the woodwork to remove you from the site.

Architecturally, the two spaces I just mentioned are not too different and people in the moment have a tendency to view them that way. But legally, they are extremely different. What can be done to clarify these types of spaces and lessen the confusion?

Actuality of Space

As defined in this research, there are four types of space that are at odds with each other: Public, Private, Pseudo-Public, and Pseudo-Private. Public and private are already largely known and understood and as such shall not be further explored in this research (Newman, 1996). Pseudo-public is a private entity portrayed as public and pseudo-private is the opposite, public portrayed as private.

Public

*of, pertaining to, or affecting a population or a community as a whole;
open and accepting space with an inherent sense of freedom*

Private

belonging to, pertaining to or affecting a particular person or a small group of persons; a space with a sense of confinement and expected privacy

Pseudo-Public

a seemingly open and accepting space with an apparent sense of freedom but in actuality belonging to a private entity, person, or small group

Pseudo-Private

a space with a sense of confinement and expected privacy that is actually public and open to a population or a community

Theater is already present primarily in pseudo-public space. It has inherent 'pseudo' and façade-like elements that relate it to this type of space (Lonsway, 2007, 2009). But does theatricality only belong in pseudo-public space? Could theater be used with the other types of space, particularly pseudo-private space?

This research is about the reconsideration/redesign of public spaces, inside/outside, public/private, real/fake. I argue that by using theatricality as a design device, one could better synchronize public and private spaces. Specifically, I intend to focus on exploring existing public spaces and how those spaces could become pseudo-private using theatrical elements. Furthermore, I endeavor to explore how theater could define the transitions between pseudo-private space, public space, and private space. This design strategy could promote more theatrical planning and ultimately allow for more pedestrian-focused cities.

Additionally, a design strategy for these undefined spaces has yet to be completely determined. Theming is a type of theatricality that is added to space to increase its appeal. (Lonsway, 2007, 2009). Some have argued theming could be accepted if designed with the primary human user in mind. This could allow for the everyday person, not someone with vast architectural knowledge, to experience and enjoy a building or space even if it is pretending to be something it is not (Lonsway, 2009; Venturi, 1977). Theming and theatricality could be a solution for undefined spaces.

Figure 5: The Four Types of Space

PUBLIC <i>Open to all</i>	PSEUDO-PRIVATE <i>A public space perceived as being private</i>	PSEUDO-PUBLIC <i>A privately-owned space perceived as being public</i>	PRIVATE <i>Belonging to particular person(s)</i>
Parks	Government Offices Park Offices	Shopping Malls Train Cars	Homes Commercial Offices
Transit Centers			

VI. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Overall, the approach I think will work best with this project is a qualitative one. There is the possibility of multiple end results constructed by different people and my research should be exploratory and interpretive. In terms of focusing my direction, I see three methods being most useful to my particular research effort.

Precedent Method

In general, I believe that architectural projects gain a significant amount of knowledge from direct study of similar projects with elements of what is trying to be described. This research is not necessarily aiming to create a definite solution to a problem, but rather trying to highlight the qualities that exist already in a select number of built projects and trying to focus those qualities in future works. Built projects have end-user experience information that would be difficult to forge and is particularly useful in this study.

Grounded Theory Studies

Jan Gehl (1987) gathered a significant amount of information using this exact method. As such, it is a valid way in which my research information can be gathered. I need to see how the built environments effect the actions and interactions of humans. My research shall attempt to collect data in this manner.

Content Analysis

Similar to the case study, my research aims to gather and identify specific characteristics of a body of material. To me, my case study research will involve in-depth study of only a few built projects. However, through content analysis I can also include a wider array of projects, built and unbuilt, that may be relevant but do not need in-depth investigation given the short timeline of this research effort.

Precedent & Competitions

In order to understand how spectacle, flexibility, and unpredictability could influence design, I decided to engage in several relevant design competitions. Competitions are a particularly good resource for information and design in a relatively short amount of time. They also offer to supplement standard relevant text as a resource. In the short time span of four months, I engaged in three separate competitions and found value in each of them in different manners. The condensed time frame forced me to develop solutions and I believe the lessons learned from them can guide this research toward an ultimate design.

The Highline

A precedent study exploring the theatrical implications of an abandoned train line.

Movement on Main

A competition that attempts to create social change through highlighting street life.

ULI/Hines

A competition that challenges the teams to develop a real, large-scale site.

Ragdale Ring

A competition begging to recreate an historic ring theater space at artist community.

Competition Host

A competition wherein entrants use theatricality to resolve master planning issues.

VII. PRECEDENT -

THE HIGHLINE

The Highline History

The Highline, was designed in collaboration with James Corner Field Operations and Piet Oudolf. It is a 1.5 mile long public park built on an abandoned elevated railroad stretching from the Meatpacking District to the Hudson Rail Yards in Manhattan. According to Diller Scofidio + Renfro (2012) the Highline was its own inspiration. That is to say, upon exploring the abandoned beauty of the existing area, the architects and activists were inspired by the pensieve, unruly beauty of this post-industrial ruin (Greenhood, 2012).

Nature had reclaimed what was formerly a crucial part of the urban infrastructure. It is in this way that the idea behind the park was to interpret its inheritance. Diller Scofidio + Renfro simply wanted to refocus what already existed. They used the park to translate the biodiversity that had made the rails its home after they fell into ruin into something new. The areas of plantlife became a string of site-specific urban microclimates along the stretch of railway including sunny, shady, wet, dry, windy, and sheltered spaces (Greenhood, 2012).

The collaborators on this project called their process 'agritecture' which is part agriculture, part architecture. By utilizing this design method, the Highline surface is digitized into discrete units of paving and planting which are assembled along this particular stretch of railway into a variety of gradients from 100% paving to 100% soft, richly vegetated biotopes (Greenhood, 2012).

The paving system consists of individual pre-cast concrete planks with open joints to encourage emergent growth like wild grass through cracks in the sidewalk. The long paving units have tapered ends that comb into planting beds creating a textured, “pathless” landscape where the public can meander in unscripted ways. The park accommodates the wild, the cultivated, the intimate, and the social. Access points are durational experiences designed to prolong the transition from the frenetic pace of city streets to the slow and seemingly otherworldly landscapes above (Sternbergh, 2007).

The Highline has cultural attractions as well as its integrated architecture and plant life. As part of a long-term plan for the park to host temporary installations and performances of various kinds, Creative Time, Friends of the Highline, and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation commissioned *The River That Flows Both Ways* by Spencer Finch as the inaugural art installation. The work is integrated into the window bays of the former Nabisco Factory loading dock as a series of 700 purple and grey colored glass panes (Moss, 2012; Greenhood, 2012).

Figure 6: The Highline Theater

Each color is exactly calibrated to match the center pixel of 700 digital pictures, one taken every minute, of the Hudson River, therefore presenting an extended portrait of the river that gives the work its name. Creative Time worked with the artist to realize the site-specific concept, which emerged when he saw the rusted, disused mullions of the old factory, which metal and glass specialists Jaroff Design helped to prepare and reinstall. The summer of 2010 featured a sound installation by Stephen Vitiello, composed from bells heard throughout New York. Lauren Ross, formerly director of the alternative art space White Columns, is serving as the first curator for the Highline. (Greenhood, 2012)

Figure 7: The Highline Transformability

Analysis of Highline

The upcycling of the railway into a city park has increased real-estate development in the neighborhoods that are along the line. Mayor Bloomberg cited the High Line for being the initiator of a small renaissance in the neighborhood. By 2009 more than 32 new projects were under construction or planned nearby. On the other end of the spectrum, the real estate boom has taken its toll on many well-established businesses in West Chelsea which have closed due to loss of neighborhood customer base or rent increases. (Amateau, 2008)

The Highline's success in New York City has encouraged the leaders of other cities, such as Mayor Rahm Emanuel of Chicago, who see it as "a symbol and catalyst" for gentrifying neighborhoods (Amateau, 2008). Several cities also have plans to renovate some railroad infrastructure into park land, including Philadelphia, St. Louis and Chicago, where the Bloomingdale Trail, a 2.7 mile-long park on former railroad infrastructure, will run through several neighborhoods. It costs substantially less to redevelop an abandoned rail line into a park than to demolish it. James Corner, one of its designers, said, "The High Line is not easily replicable in other cities," observing that building a "cool park" requires a "framework" of neighborhoods nearby in order to succeed (Chan, 2008).

Much of the highline research brought me to question why something like this can only seem to exist in a situation in which the design is retrofitting something existing. The typology of an elevated park was not truly created until the opportunity for such a thing was discovered in the beauty of an abandoned rail line (Sternbergh, 2007). Why can design not start with a new typology, instead of always building on existing typologies?

Impact on Thesis

The Highline had a dramatic impact on the early stages of the investigation into theatricality. In essence, it contained in some way all four primary elements of theatricality. From studying the highline through text, images, and in person, I was able to distill the theatrical principles from the project.

There is the obvious and dominant element of spectacle. First, the Highline is raised above the street level, which declares dominance over the street level. The users are both able to view the vibrance of the city surrounding them and they are simultaneously being observed as the object of spectacle from all those traveling at street level or staying the neighboring buildings. There is also the much less subtle viewing area of the theater which has the street and city as its backdrop. Flexibility is also clearly alive in the Highline. The best example of this is the use of the existing tracks to house sliding benches. The benches have a relationship to the past but also provide a new purpose. They are flexible in that you can adjust their location and you can move them. You can also push some together or move them far apart.

Transition is the primary purpose of this project. It was originally a rail line, so it was about travel and transportation to begin with. In the adaptation to a new park, this theme remained strong. The park weaves through buildings, around them, between them, and all the while you are moving across town. To bring it back to spectacle aspect, there is the transition from the ground to the platform as a distinct experience. There are countless literal transitions and proscenias. Space is clearly limited, at least in the width of this park, so inventive solutions exist when a change in the scenery is required.

VIII. COMPETITION 1 -

DASH

Design Brief

The challenge for this competition was to create a design that links public spaces, parks, and streetscapes with health and the environment in Syracuse, NY. From this project I discovered that people seem most interested in spectacle and in the fragmentary aspect of theater as a tool for design. I worked on this design with a small group of collaborators and it was from them that many of the viewpoints were tested. Spectacle is a valid area of exploration, but I realized that fragmentation, though an accurate term, does not necessarily work in architectural context without continuity as well. In this way, the fragmentation occasionally feels fake and slightly forced.

In spite of this, fragmentation can be applied in a proper way when given consideration and careful thought. In fact, individuals experience situations in context. For example, they perceive of something as an organized whole when it is actually the sum of parts (Madanipour, 2003). This is very much how fragmentation with continuity works when applied to design.

Design Approach

The SALT District of Syracuse is a neighborhood that has been remarkably successful at turning its problems into opportunities. The Ground Up, WCNY, The Redhouse, The Delavan Arts Center, and the SU Warehouse have all helped to turn an under-served area into one of the most exciting in the region. However, the area remains relatively low-density for an inner-city neighborhood.

The area lacks the sheer density to make everyday street life as robust and vibrant as some would like to imagine. This is not a bad thing, far from it. But it means that plans for intervention must take these realities into consideration and not waste resources on expensive infrastructure that goes unused and neglected. We therefore propose a strategy of spectacle. When the life of the street cannot be spatially compressed, it must be chronologically compressed into events.

We envision the quarter mile of Wyoming Street from Marcellus to Fabius as a race track for any manner of 'Wyoming Street Dashes,' from traditional sprints and boxcar derbies to more 'out there' events like dogsled drag racing, competitive ziplining, and solar remote control car races. These urban spectacles would attract participants and visitors from all over the city, and in some cases the region. The increased activity would contribute to supporting a more robust commercial presence along the eastern edge of Wyoming Street, and the competitive nature of the events could foster a healthy rivalry and awareness between different neighborhoods of Syracuse.

To support these 'Dashes', a permanent infrastructure is needed that enables the logistics of the races as well as serving everyday civic functions and marking the Wyoming Street corridor as important. This infrastructure would need to provide distance-marking, lighting, and vendor utility hookups. We propose a continuous overhead track over the sidewalk on the west side of the street. This track would be structured to support all manner of add-ons, such as benches, lights, information panels, swings, playground ziplines, as well as a permanent run of 'monkey bars' for the fun and exercise of the local residents. The tubes of the 'monkey bars' could have power and data lines inside that could replace the overhead wires existing currently, as well as periodic outlets to allow vendors and passersby to plug into the grid.

In addition to the linear 'monkey-bar' track, the separate parts of the site would be integrated into this infrastructure. The large Marcellus corner lot would be the 'mainstage' for the events, providing a focal point for following the races and socializing. The mid-block lot south of Otisco would be a 'digital garden' for interactive sculpture installations produced by the neighborhood artists. The small Tully corner lot would be the 'backstage' for Dash participants to prepare for races. In an age where the latest in multi-million-dollar entertainment is instantly available to all on their computers and phones, we insist that these organized, participatory, social spectacles are the best strategy for fostering an active, outdoor civic life.

Design Submission

Figure 8: Dash Competition Submission Materials

Winter Day

It's a blizzard as usual in Syracuse and the children are using the opportunity to make giant snowballs and casually toboggan down the empty street. Meanwhile, a local artist takes shelter under the awning while waiting for a ride.

Panorama B - West Side

Winter Spectacle

It's the annual Dogsled Drag-race and the competition is fierce! Meanwhile, a high school class is learning about interactive technology in the sculpture garden.

Panorama B - East Side

Impact on Thesis

The primary goals of this project were to reinforce some of the principles of theatricality but at the time of this particular investigation, those principles were still being partially formed. To compare, there was an opportunity to show the big annual type of spectacle with the everyday spectacle. This concept remained. While this was conceptually compelling, the execution was not yet there. The spectacles did not relate to the transitional infrastructure.

While the infrastructure was flexible and partially transformable it was severely disconnected from the overall scheme and idea. An earlier theatrical idea of fragmentation was attempted here but it got so muddled and lost that the element ended up being removed from the list of core elements of theatricality. It was realized that fragmentation is more related to compactability and that both still need continuity and cohesion at the largest scale in order to work.

IX. COMPETITION 2 -

EASTSIDE FALLS

Design Brief

The proposal for this competition was to act as a large-scale urban design and development challenge for a multidisciplinary group. This project is about collaboration dominantly, but as it relates to my research, it was very much about spectacle. The goal of the design was to create a series of spectacles related to water that engaged the public and acted as attractors for specific areas of the expansive site. Theater played a large conceptual role in the design phase as well, where the concept of procession and thresholds dominated a lot of the conversation.

To a degree, the result of this project more closely resembled the Serial Vision work of Gordon Cullen (1971). This interpretation was much more filmic than theatrical. To avoid this in the future, the key to the design must be something experiential. It was with this project that I began thinking about the experience of the project as being a key factor to the design of urban public space. Tschumi, Rockwell, and Rossi have only scratched the surface on the experience. Now, we must explore this more in depth.

Design Approach

The Eastside Falls project offers a re-development strategy for Minneapolis East which embraces the rich history of downtown Minneapolis. It also redesigns an under-utilized urban area, disconnected by a patchwork of surface parking lots, into a vibrant, attractive, and welcoming live, work, shop, and play place for people. The project reconnects this historic heart of Minneapolis to other storied districts such as the Mill District, Downtown West, and Elliott Park.

This comprehensive project is developed in four distinct phases over ten years. When completed, the neighborhood will have a powerful visual connection to St. Anthony's Falls and contain many design references to the city's lifeblood. The proposed building heights compliment the city skyline and the massing cascades towards the Viking's Stadium, dramatically mirroring the falls only a few blocks away. The project contains 1618 mixed-income units and will be fully integrated with existing public infrastructure thus offering residents a number of transportation choices. These include the transit center for the Hiawatha light rail, HourCar care share, and Nice-Ride bike share program. The project will include 1,919,142 square feet of new commercial space and 783,421 square feet of new retail space. Additional amenities include a 290 room hotel connected to 75,000 square feet of gymnasium/athletic facility.

People living and working in Eastside Falls will be within walking distance to a range of recreational and entertainment opportunities including the historical Armory building that has been creatively renovated into an all-weather marketplace, brewery and concert hall. The Armory provides an exciting connection point between the well-

established downtown entertainment, business, shopping, and nightlife districts to the Vikings' Stadium and the University of Minnesota. The design of Eastside Falls develops a stronger human-scale connection with the dynamic downtown and encourages ground-level activity by connecting the Minneapolis skyway system to the street level. This ground level pedestrian network responds to Minnesota's challenging climate with spaces that change with the seasons such as the vibrant park featuring a waterfall in summer and an ice skating rink in winter and an internal corridor weaving through two mixed-use blocks to create a naturally lit indoor galleria. The galleria displays a unique water feature that captures the buildings heat and re-uses snow-melt and rainwater for a living artwork. By incorporating an integrated system to reclaim and reuse water, this development firmly commits to sustainability strategies and meets the LEED criteria for Neighborhood Development standards to become a certified gold plan.

Celebrating the history of Minneapolis and embracing future goals for sustainability, connectivity, and an the future, Eastside Falls inspires people to explore and enjoy downtown life year-round by offering a compelling, countless opportunities and adventurous experiences. Integrated mixed use communities, mixed income housing, a broad range of entertainment, and transportation opportunities offers a sustainable, vibrant, and attractive neighborhood for the city's diverse population.

Design Submission

Figure 9: Eastside Falls Competition Submission Materials

Impact on Thesis

At this point in the research, the principles were more defined, but the scale of this project and the complexity of the design brief made it more difficult to resolve everything in a short amount of time. When it comes to spectacle, the grand lake, Armory interior renovation, and the elevated grass rampway all address the concern. But the scale of these design moves seems to be off when it comes to the everyday spectacle. They can manage the grandiose but not the typical arrangement.

Transitions are also important here as the pathways linking parks to the major venues and spectacle areas are well-defined. This appears to work as well, particularly with the Water "Y" feature, an indoor shopping area with a waterfall rainwater recycling feature in the center. But this site lacks on actual flexibility. It ended up being much more multi-purpose than transformable. The compactability aspect was one that, if added, could have perhaps created more unity amongst the other three elements and thus created a continuous and connected master plan.

X. COMPETITION 3 -

UMBRELLA

Design Brief

The challenge for this competition was to create a temporary, outdoor performance venue that creates a semi-public space and uses sustainable materials as best as possible. The proposal exposed two new theatrical concepts that connected very strongly with the research while reinforcing another theatrical element already being investigated. The first new concept was that this project required most of the materials be used or recycled objects. They also were encouraged to be completely recycled at the end of the project as well for a full circle material use.

The second aspect I found interesting was that the theater was a temporary installation. It had to have a temporary, flexible, and if possible, ever-changing aspect to it that allowed for the space to be customized beyond the parameters of the design. Additionally, this project was essentially treated as a public space while actually being a private space.

Design Approach

Imagine the approach: emerging through trees around the side of the historic house, the long view of an idyllic prairie beckons you to move forward. As you do, a curious wooden structure peeks out from behind a prominent tree. As you draw nearer, this structure's intention becomes apparent: it is a portal, calling you to pass underneath its span. You pass through the gateway and you have entered a space that is a world unto itself. A larger wooden structure draws your eye. Two high walls open to you, welcoming you to an inner sanctum housing a simple stage and made whimsical by an undulating, scaly canopy. The scales cast textured shadows on the grass beneath and the backdrop to the stage is a verdantly planted vertical wall. The walls of the structure have apertures, and hung in the openings are wooden lanterns that glow in the spaces like fireflies in jars on a summer night.

A moment's reflection, and you realize this entire world is constructed of only three components: pallets, crates, and umbrellas. You've seen them all before, but never in a collective language. You take your seat under the umbrellas, and after a brief final gaze through the wall opening into the setting sun, the house lights have gone down and the performers come on-stage. It is four musicians, some kind of string ensemble. The two violinists assume their perch on the wall openings, and the other two set up in the front. When they begin, the acoustics of the wooden space reverberate warmly, as the engrossing sound of the contrapuntal violins transport you into another world entirely, one of pure music.

This is one of many experiences made possible by Umbrella. Poetry is made intimate by the enclosure. Plays are made vivid by the greenery. The lighting lends everything an over-arching sense of theatricality and wonderment. The space is both adaptable and substantial; the audience never feels like they are merely in a field watching a show, but enveloped in an artistic experience.

Not only does Umbrella provide a dynamic and flexible space to showcase and experience live art, but its component construction allows for its constituent elements to be eventually separated and re-used. All of the crates, pallets, and umbrellas will be left intact, able to be given away, sold, or otherwise re-cycled to their original purpose. The planted pallets will be reinstalled as permanent vertical gardens, or sold as small-scale greenery, allowing individuals to take home a living piece of the Summer 2013 Ragdale experience.

The linear patterns created by the slats will be natural light filters and shelves on which to hang any adornments the artists might see fit. Art will be displayed in crates embedded in pallets. The lighting of the project will be accomplished by battery-operated fixtures integrated into the crates and umbrella canopy, evoking the Japanese lanterns of the first performance in the original Ragdale Ring. Umbrella is easily construct-able, dismantlable, and reuse-able.

Design Submission

Figure 10: Umbrella Competition Submission Materials

Impact on Thesis

In this final competition design attempt, most of the theatrical elements have successfully been implemented. With layered umbrellas providing a canopy over the stage and much of the audience, there is an immediate understanding of the spectacle about to occur. But what is equally thrilling are all the mini-spectacle possibilities abound. There are small areas backstage and around the audience where the many artistic residents of the Ragdale Foundation can perform in their off hours. Light becomes another driving force for the spectacles. Light shining out of crates and from behind pallets and umbrellas has a spectacular quality about it that draws you in.

As you walk across the site, transition is of the utmost importance and the view around every new bend and corner has been considered until eventually the main stage is revealed. Flexibility and compactability work in tangent with this concept at its core. The entire design is made from primarily three source materials: wooden pallets, wooden crates, and umbrellas. Beyond the added hardware and lights, these materials dominate the scene and it is clear that the various arrangements of them are nearly endless. Latterns are crafted from umbrella handles and crates with a cordless light.

This simple but clearly defined project begins to truly explore the core elements and how they could be assembled. It is this combination that one hopes could be implemented in the design of an entire building or urban center.

XI. COMPETITION HOST - *STAGES OF TRANSITION*

Introduction

In addition to the exploration I did as a competitor in the first three competitions, I initiated a new competition at Cal Poly. This competition also focused on the following four points:

- 1: Suggest the possibilities of resolving some of the Master Plan issues that the campus at Cal Poly lacks.
2. Infuse elements of theatricality to create a space that engages people in an experiential way they could not have expected.
3. Do all design and construction without spending a dime by using 100% of the recycled resources available at Cal Poly.
4. Contribute to further research. This competition was established as a research tool.

From my own recent experience in competitions, I have discovered how much information can be produced in a relatively short period of time. By creating a competition and opening it up to designers and planners across the United States a great deal of information was gained. The project resulted in a completed installation, which was personally installed and which was used to gather data about the benefits of that installation and how it has altered the space, positively or negatively. The fact that it was actually installed acted as incentive for designers during the competition and it still contributed to further research.

In addition to the winning entry that was constructed, a tremendous amount of information about how people interpret theatricality and how it applies to public space can be drawn from the entries that did not necessarily win. They might not have been appropriate for this site or not be the best executed project, but the core ideas will still typically be visible in most submissions. This core idea can be picked over and when compared with potentially hundreds of other design, similarities and discrepancies may begin to arise. Much of this information has significantly influenced the final design and research portions of this exploration.

Expectations

By holding a competition, the hope was that the results would expose both the most and least common understandings of theatricality as they apply to urban space. The benefit of building one of the designs was that the actual success or failure of the experiment could be measured in some way. This could be done by comparing early analysis with later analysis. All of this increased understanding will ideally influence both the research and the design process.

The prediction I made for this competition was that prior to the installation, engagement in the space would be lower and the amount of people to stop and enjoy the space would be lower. Following the installation the engagement would be greater and more people would interact with the space.

Initial Analysis

Site analysis had been completed on the 8 possible sites initially. Measurements of each site were taken and multiple recordings were taken of the movement of people across the site. These recordings were noted at both high traffic times in between classes as well as low traffic times during classes. These readings are the norms from which the later recordings on the chosen site or sites will be compared. Primarily, this data shows the obvious difference in traffic times, gender related choices, as well as common paths.

Figure 11: Stages of Transition Initial Site Analysis

Designs

The installation and exhibition winner was "Dramatic Threshold." This Installation design clearly combined the elements of suspense, proscenium, and performance pure and simple. The project was clear, elegant, and the details were well thought out. The drawing style stood out and the idea most accurately addressed the competition prompt.

The runner-up was "Visual Scavenger Hunt." This concept was extremely polished and addressed many of issues of the prompt quite well. This idea would do well at the scale of the courtyard as well as the campus. The only fault of this design was the lack of transformability. The positions of the viewing boxes were fixed and not intended to change. This is something that was lacking in the design that should be implemented in future design concepts.

Another finalist worth mentioned was "Striking Movements." This piece was quite polished and emphasize a unique sculptural playfulness unlike any other. However its best attribute was also its greatest fault as it was simple a sculpture and not truly interactive.

Figure 12: "Dramatic Threshold"

Figure 13: "Visual Scavenger Hunt"

Figure 14: "Striking Movements"

Installation

The winning entry was installed from October 24th to October 31st in the Architecture Courtyard at Cal Poly. By testing the Dramatic Threshold on site, principles of theatricality were once again able to be tested, but this time the test was able to be done in a physical way. This test, though at a far smaller scale, was appropriate in terms of the content of the winning entry. The finalists were chosen by myself in addition to a committee of Jury members with whom I discussed the results.

In addition to the installation, the results were also exhibited at Cal Poly. The test result and quotations following were all recorded in person. The location of the project was changed due to the campus facilities department's requirements for temporary installations. If implemented in the appropriate area; the results may have varied greatly, but the test was not solely based on the physical location of the installation piece and as such the results are still included.

Figure 15: Installation 1

Figure 16: Installation 2

Supplemental Analysis

The analysis of this site compared to the original data is astounding. At First, it seemed that very little had changed. Very few people engaged with the installation at all while I sat off to the side, discretely observing the site. The first day of observations was also a gloomy day, the first rainy day in San Luis Obispo in weeks. I left the site having not witnessed a single person pass through the box. Then I returned the next morning and I was happy to find footprints inside the box. A few people, perhaps inebriated, mischeivous, or simply curious, but nonetheless a few people walked through the threshold.

There is something about the object/box that intrigued people enough the draw them in. After conducting more thorough observations and even adding signage to the box, more intriguing results were recorded. By comparing behavior maps movement of people through the space can clearly be seen as different. There are a higher number of interactions and the number of people who used the box is also higher. Additionally, the number of students who reacted positively to the box with a smile, etc. was even higher as many who didn't walk through still smiled.

Figure 17: Stages of Transition Behavior Mapping

Impact on Thesis

Ultimately, most of the research has shown that while people like to engage in activities like this one, they are more hesitant when uninvited. The drastic increase in users once signage was added is so significant that it means this box did not succeed enough on its own to force use. If however, the box was installed in the location that its creator originally suggested, it is believed that it would have forced users to respond differently.

While use was limited without signage the other hope is that during a retail or more adventurous experience as in De La Guerra Plaza in Santa Barbara, more people will interact with buildings or objects. If everything is clearly interactive or the interactivity is highlighted in some way, that would aid in the encouragement of people to use the prop, whichever one it may be. Another revelation was noticing that stairs have a clear directional quality and can manage to call users in a specific direction without the need of added signage. This went on to influence the final design experiment in Santa Barbara.

XII. TESTING WITH DESIGN

Choosing a Site

The site chosen was De La Guerra Plaza in Santa Barbara. This was selected to its proximity to State Street yet significant lack of use excluding occasional events in the space. The proximity to historic El Paseo, the Casa De La Guerra and the Paseo Nuevo, made this site capable of becoming extremely dynamic.

Figure 18: Choosing a Site

Site History & Context

De La Guerra Plaza is a small park type area in downtown Santa Barbara, California located right next to the Santa Barbara News Press. It is best known for the activities that take place there during Santa Barbara's huge annual Fiesta, early every August. There are booths, musical performances, and lots of festivities for the downtown area in De La Guerra Plaza. In the 1950s, there was always a glass blowing booth where children could buy and take home glass ornaments as souvenirs. De la Guerra Plaza was a public gathering place and festival area as far back as Santa Barbara's Mexican Alta California era. The plaza is located in front of Casa De la Guerra Adobe and the Paseo De La Guerra (Days, 1977).

The city of Santa Barbara has gone from Chumash Indian to Spanish to Mexican to American. This varied history plays a significant role in the evolution of the space. Santa Barbara was actually the center of the silent film industry in the early 1900s. At the time, Flying A Studios was located downtown and was the largest film studio in the world. In the early 1800s there was a significant earthquake followed in 1925 by the worst earthquake in the area in recorded history (Days, 1977).

Spanish colonial style was actually promoted in the early 1900s to do away with more Eastern styles that came over during the gold rush. Lobero Theatre is an example of this. By the mid-1970s, forces opposing uncontrolled growth had become stronger than those favoring development. On April 8, 1975, the City Council passed a resolution to limit the city's population to 85,000 through zoning (Days, 1977).

Site Analysis

Analysis of the site includes a composite behavior map showing how people travel through the park and the neighboring downtown. This map overlays and averages data collected from over 50 ten-minute viewing periods over the course of 20 separate days. Based on this information the most dominant parts of the site could be determined as well as the most common gathering spaces for individuals. The final design utilized this information to make the final design decisions.

Figure 19: Santa Barbara Site Analysis

Design Process

The design began as a simple experiential collage focusing on the experience of difference aspects of the site. Initial designs emphasized transformability more than the other elements and there lacked a program. Much of the initial concepts were targeted at creating a public experience and designing a public space as well as a vendor area to link the distant and barren parking lot side with the far more interesting State Street side.

The next level of exploration investigated the program and attempted to place it in the existing context. It was found that the best experiential program to align with principles of design was the addition of a 'Please-Touch' museum. While these museums are typically geared toward children, this one would be geared more toward the age group that most commonly uses the space: 18-28 year olds. This new program was developed into the finalized design.

Resultant Design

This finalized design at 728 State Street places an emphasis back on the transformability of all spaces while still declaring spectacle, compactability, and transition as supremely important. The massive adjustable platforms used to create any theater or gallery space and facing any direction are simple at first but inherently more complex upon exploration and extended use. Beneath the platforms lies a vendor village where a series of tracks slide vendor carts around the site. The façade of the building matches with the historical nature of the side while on the inside and in the theater portion, angles are skewed to align with dominant views and paths on the site. The arched nature of the vendor tracks is in line with the existing arched driveway which will mostly disappear when paved in. The tracks also have a relationship with the existing Chumash Native American symbols painted on nearby caves and rocks.

The ground and roof garden both start to tilt, tile, and slope to show more relationships with the dominant paths and views on the site. Further flexibility occurs within the massive wall with furniture and wall features that fold and adjust.

All the design views resolve themselves at the main vendor market. A covered area neighbors the vendor truck parking, which has a strong connection to the existing colonnade with rotating columns with expanding fins. These can be used to highlight the vendor aspect of the space and the ultimate in flexibility and compactability. The vendor space manages to link the colonnade to the main path from State Street with the parking lot. It also mediates the large differences in section from the tower it neighbors to the low level shrubs on its other side.

A dominant goal of this design is to pull the culture of Santa Barbara, not necessarily the historical context or architecture, into the space. This design should bring back a richer culture that has been subdued by the standardized historic architecture. To make this space function, people are needed. People activate the space. Jan Gehl (2010) has written time and time again about how people are the most important activator for a site, so why not highlight that relationship?

When it comes to the theatrical nature of this design a question that arises is, what is the story unfolding on the site? With this design there is the possibility of several stories happening. The obvious and already mentioned changing of the platforms can create several stories and several different theater experiences simple by itself. But beyond that, each floor has a different story and a different theatrical experience. The ground floor is both more intimate and traditional and opening to performance from street artists, the vendors, or even children skateboarding around. The museum has its own draw as a space and has the most standard theater experience despite the variety of its configuration. And then finally, the roof has the draw of the city as an experience as well as the filmic experience of the outdoor movie viewing experience.

Figure 20: 728 State Street Final Design Plans 1

Site Plan

Ground Floor

Figure 21: 728 State Street Final Design Plans 2

Second Floor

Roof

Figure 22: 728 State Street Final Design Elevations and Details

Figure 23: 728 State Street Final Design Renderings

XIII. THE FUTURE

What the Research Tells Us

All the research points to one thing: believe it or not, there is clarity and vision in a project that adheres to these principles of designing with the four elements of theatricality as your guide. This is a design strategy perhaps best suited for public projects, hence the pedestrian friendly urban spaces disclaimer in the thesis statement from the beginning of the book. Theatricality can mean much more than simply an application of some fake slapped on afterthought or of an overdone or over the top flashy bit of attention grabbing silliness.

The research does not aim to be a definitive way to design public spaces. It is the framework and a set of guidelines that can better a space in the long run and push architectural designs to do things they have previously ignored. People and space are already theatrical by nature, so why fight against that nature. Use the actors and focus on the story, not merely the set.

Ultimately, the conclusion that has been made is that there is something more powerful than just the framework I have mentioned. Theatricality in the form of transition, spectacle, compactability, and flexibility is certainly important as a framework, but the most important part of the design is the story and the characters. In all other artistic mediums such as film, television, music, and painting, the best work tends to come from great stories with great characters. Architecture can and should be designed with the stories and characters in mind as well.

What the Design Tells Us

Based on the reception of the reviewers of this research, the design tells us several stories. There is the story of the vendor who can move throughout the site whenever she wants. In the morning, she joins other vendors at the vendor village for an event and a large crowd of people shopping. Throughout the day she makes her way across the site. Midday she ends up being part of the set in a small skit. In the evening she ends up under the platforms as light rain draws customers from outside.

There is a child who skateboards all over the site, an older gentlemen who enters the museum to see exhibits and a related live performance and there is a couple who only goes to the museum to see the rooftop midnight showing of their favorite romantic comedy. The stories are endless as is the design of the spaces. The flexibility is great yet still in a strong enough framework that an architectural concept can be understood. While it is virtually impossible to definitively determine whether an architectural design would be successful or not without building it, it is possible for all readers to be the judges. And more importantly, do not take this design as the only design. Take the core principles of the research as your tools for designing a better space and perhaps eventually urban spaces can ultimately become truly pedestrian friendly and as dynamic as the people that use them.

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APPENDICES

A: Glossary of Terms

Theatricality (n):

1. Suggestive of theater or of acting, artificiality, or spectacle.
2. Marked by exaggerated self-display and unnatural behavior.
3. Spatially denoted by high levels of ornamentation which are often exaggerated and extremely detailed material use which often coincides with a performance; Also typically has a condensed spatial sequence and/or a highly developed procession into a theater

Dramatic (adj):

1. Characteristic of live performance, esp. involving conflict or contrast; vivid; moving.
2. Highly effective; striking, shocking, exaggerated.

Threshold (n):

1. A piece of wood or stone placed beneath a door; a doorsill.
2. An entrance or a doorway.
3. The point that must be exceeded to begin producing a given effect or result or to elicit a response: a low threshold of pain.
4. Any place or point of entering or beginning: the threshold of a new career.
5. Most importantly the point at which a stimulus is of sufficient intensity to begin to produce an effect: the threshold of consciousness; a low threshold of pain, etc.

Transition (n):

1. Movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another; change.
2. A passage from one scene to another by sound effects, music, etc., as in a television program, theatrical production, or the like.

Mise en scène (n):

1. The process of setting a stage, with regard to placement of actors, scenery, properties, etc.
2. The stage setting or scenery of a play.
3. Surroundings; environment.

Performer (n):

1. One who carries out; executes; does.
2. One who goes through or executes in the proper, customary, or established manner.
3. One who acts (a play, part, etc.), as on the stage, in movies, or on television.
4. One who renders life to a inanimate object or space.
5. One who accomplishes any action involving skill or ability before an audience.

Procession (n):

1. The act of moving along or proceeding in orderly succession or in a formal and ceremonious manner, as a line of people, animals, vehicles, etc.
2. The line or body of persons or things moving along in such a manner.
3. The act of coming forth from a source.

Proscenium (n):

1. The area of a modern theater that is located between the curtain and the orchestra.
2. The stage of an ancient theater, located between the background and the orchestra.

Interactivity (n):

1. The extent to which something is interactive.

Interactive (adj):

1. Connecting with a human user, often in a conversational way, to obtain data or commands and to give immediate results or updated information.
2. An object or a party that allows 2 groups to relate.

Interact (v):

1. To act one upon another through a means that is additional to the participating parties:
E.g. Two families interact using video-messaging via the internet.

Spectacle (n):

1. An event, moment, or space of enormous cultural significance which is not observed on a regular basis.

B: Information Collection

Figure 24: Where the Research Belongs

Table 1: Matrix of Source Relevance

Element of Theatricality:	Precedent 1:	Precedent 2:	Precedent 3:
Ornament - any element added to an otherwise merely structural form, usually for purposes of decoration or embellishment.	Tom Wiscombe, "Extreme Integration"	Blaine Brownell, Transmaterial Blaine Brownell, Transmaterial 2 Blaine Brownell, Transmaterial 3	
Spectacle - Anything presented to the sight or view that is striking of impressive. A public show or display, particularly on a large scale.	David Rockwell, Spectacle	Bernard Tschumi, Architecture In/Of Motion	<i>Movement of Main Submission</i>
Procession - the act of moving along or proceeding in orderly succession or in a formal and ceremonious manner, as a line of people, animals, vehicles, etc.	Bernard Tschumi, Architecture In/Of Motion	Sigfried Gideon, Architecture & Phenomena of Transition	
Forced Perspective - the use of objects or images that are larger or smaller than they should be, to suggest that they are nearer or further away than they really are.	Paul Newell Campbell, Form & Art of Theater	Brian Lonsway	
Suspense - 1. the condition of being insecure or uncertain. 2. excitement felt at the approach of the climax.	David Rockwell, Spectacle	Curt Fentress, Designing Public Space	
Compress and Release - The acting of first pressing something together or forcing something into less space followed by the feeling of being freed from confinement or obligation. Note: Generally, the feeling of freedom upon release is greater if preceded by compression.	Jan Gehl, Urbanized Jan Gehl, Life Between Buildings Rowe, Civic Realism	Davis, Tracy, ed. and Thomas Postlewait, ed. Kristen Richards, "Hither, Thither, and Jan"	<i>Movement of Main Submission</i>
Proscenium - The arch that separates a stage from the auditorium. In less literal terms, a device that separates the audience from the performers.	Bernard Tschumi, Event Cities	<i>Movement of Main Submission</i>	
Layered Obscurity - Some device of varying thickness laid on or spread over a surface or one another. The increase in the layers increases the obscurity, or how much is not clear but rather vague or uncertain.	Tadao Ando, "Kara-za"	Venturi, Scott-Brown, Learning from Las Vegas	Deck of 'Invisible' Cards
Perceived Transparency - Visibility through multiple layers is understood and identified by means of the senses, regardless of whether or not the visibility is actually present.	Popular Science Image of 1950 in 1925	TransBay Terminal	
Fragmentary - incompleteness, not finished, lacking some part, partial or broken in smaller pieces.	Highline Park	<i>Movement of Main Submission</i>	
Performance - 1. Some form of entertainment presented before an audience. 2. The manner or quality of functioning.	Henry Sayre, The Object of Performance	Hammond, Performing Architecture	Karsten Harris, "Theatricality and Re-presentation"