

portfolio

TKNK

2



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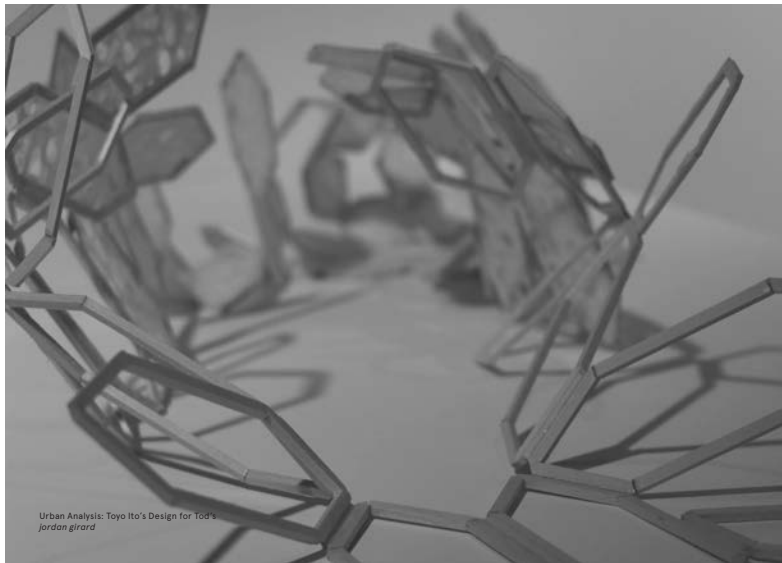
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Forward, <i>Tenlie Mourning</i>	6
Notes from the Editors in Chief, <i>Jordan Girard and Tiffany Kim</i>	7
Magnetoreception: A Sixth Sense Revisited, <i>Isabel Narea</i>	9
Artwork, <i>Kaela Chambers</i>	13
Proprioception, <i>Julie Hoffmann</i>	17
Sensory Practices, <i>Konstantina Sarris</i>	19
Cargo Pattern, <i>Sophie Kovel</i>	21
Network Fever Library, <i>Caroline Chen</i>	23
Landscape Optimization, <i>Jordan Girard</i>	36
School I: Figure-Ground Perception, <i>Randy Armas</i>	30
Edible Schoolyard: Trellis Complex, <i>Elliot Kwon</i>	33
Injecting Suburbia, <i>Tiffany Kim</i>	38
Inhabiting Connections, <i>Benjamin Gaber, Lauren Espeseth, Sara Shalam, and Rhea Schmid</i>	43
Excerpts from: The Meatpacking District: Would You Like It Rare or Well Done?, <i>Rochelle Haiff</i>	46

FORWARD
tenlie mourning

Before beginning one's work, an architect must first have an understanding of the weight of their responsibility; to develop a concrete solution to a current problem—whatever it may be. Thus, the beauty of architecture is exposed in its ability to apply a rational solution to the seemingly irrational, the emotional, and the fleeting.

*Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness.¹ It is the attempt to reconcile space, time, and movement, but the operative word here is yearn. To be timeless means to transcend the impossible. Therefore, an architect must understand the true, insurmountable nature of this greater assignment before taking it on. It is beyond the means of any mortal to develop a solution to stand the test of time; one that remains efficient, workable, and contemporarily exquisite. Thus the adage: *art is never finished.**

Still, this is not to say that one does not feel compelled to try. Driven by the necessity of completing a work to solve the issue at hand, an architect simultaneously strives towards the practical and the impossible, providing a temporary solution while yearning for timelessness. And with that attempt, his work is finished. Here, we aim to present these projects in their most final and permanent possible form: the portfolio.

¹ Frank Gehry

TKTNK stands for Tectonic.

It is a student-run journal published once a year by the Barnard and Columbia Architecture Society (B+C I A).

TKTNK is about sharing, knowledge and thoughtfulness.

SHARING

Our goal is to make public what often stays within the walls of design studios. This year the theme for TKTNK is Portfolio, exposing the private works of students in order to bring them to the public realm. The journal is a portfolio of Columbia and Barnard undergraduate architecture department's projects, allowing the reader to become the judge.

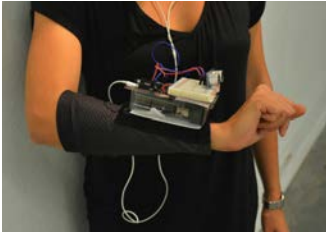
KNOWLEDGE

TKTNK curates architecture projects designed in studios of all four years. The publication strives to emphasize the ingenious, analytical, and technical design skills developed by students. It shows various representational techniques students learn during the course of their education and emphasizes students' take on how to improve elements of the urban fabric based on their experience and vision.

THOUGHTFULNESS

Students strive to produce creative, thoughtful, and critical design solutions to answer urban and social problems of their time. Topics such as social inequalities, distribution networks, and transportation are central to this publication. Because students know that architecture should have a role in improving such conflicts, the projects presented incorporate proposed solutions to these problems.

Editors in Chief Jordan Girard, Tiffany Kim



MAGNETORECEPTION: A SIXTH SENSE REVISITED

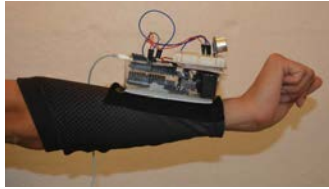
Isabel narea

In my Perceptions of Architecture studio course, a series of architectural proposals were assigned following the design of a device meant to alter sensory perception. I chose to research magnetoreception, the sixth sense that allows an organism to perceive direction, altitude or location based on objects around it and the earth's magnetic field. This sense has been proposed to explain animal navigation and the development of regional maps.

Human magnetoreception, however, is controversial in that our smart phones have replaced it altogether. Data driven applications have mastered the logic of travel. As a result, human navigational impulse has become an eccentricity and we are increasingly reliant on technology to navigate around the city. Through a series of drawings and models, I explored an alternative to this phenomenon.

My original device serves as an analogue for the sense of magnetoreception as it gives directional voice commands to the user based on the distances of objects around them. The user is instructed to "turn right", "turn left", or "cross the street" based on three different distances of objects.

After testing my device within Central Park, I chose to map my experience through the symbolic notation of a maze, a mechanism that exists to challenge navigational skills. The data collected at the site included which voice commands were triggered and speed. The resulting drawing notates the changes in direction and speed through the symbols and complexity of the



sensory altering device

mazes. The more complex mazes would take longer to solve and represent a slower pace. The simpler mazes represent a faster pace. The varying lengths in construction lines represent changes in directionality, as those are the distances that triggered different commands. The data also accounts for the effect of walking against pedestrian traffic, as this path resulted in more confusion and a slower pace.

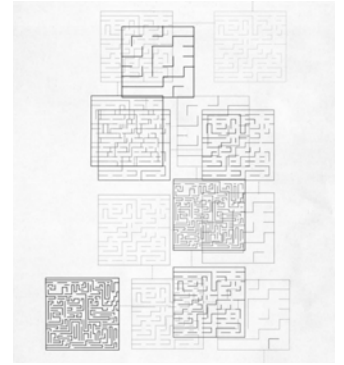
The site map can be seen as an instruction set for constructing the site-specific model. In decoding the symbols and folding the modules according to the turns taken, the correct arrangement of the modules arises. The areas that have the most overlapping of models coincides with areas with the most traffic within the drawing.

My final model proposes a testing ground meant to maximize the efficiency of my device and enhance the perception of magnetoreception. Mazes are traditionally a two dimensional experience, so I implemented varying floor levels, wall heights and visibility through windows in exploring the third-dimension. The distances between the passages are designed to trigger specific voice commands of the device. Furthermore, the heights of the walls are meant to create a variety of speeds as it affects whether or not the user can see beyond the walls.

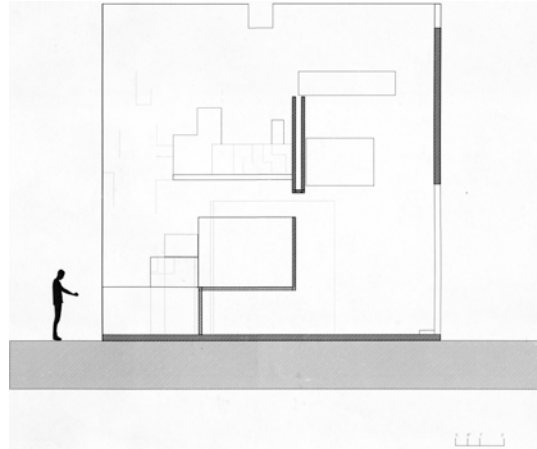
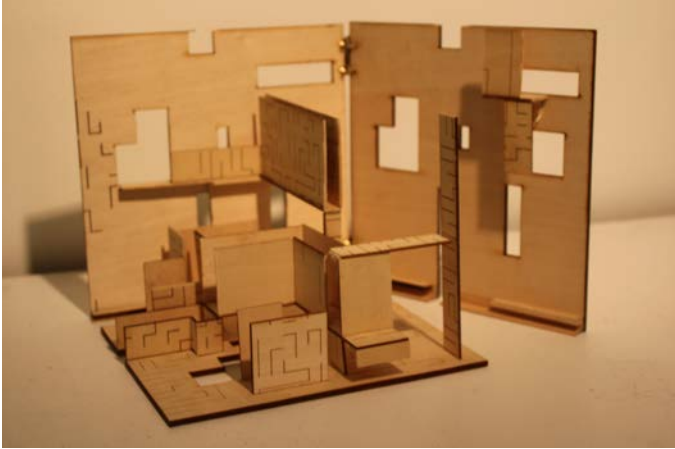
Finally, the ability to memorize the maze and thus prevent the effectiveness of the testing ground is surpassed by the movable hinges of the testing ground. The hinges can be opened, and the floor plane can be removed from its slits and rearranged in different ways, so that each arrangement would result in a different navigational experience through the maze.

By using my device within this testing ground, one

result of the device's auditory manifestation of navigational impulse. Through the changes in wall height and visibility, the user becomes aware of changes in altitude, direction and speed, and in turn interacts more closely with the surrounding environment.



site mapping drawing



left page testing ground model
right page section of testing ground model

TKINK

13



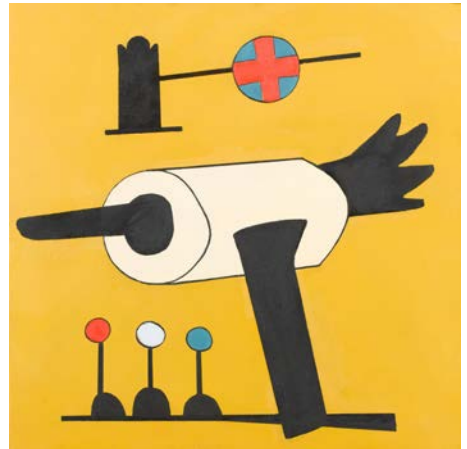
14



portfolio

TRIPTYCH
kaela chambers
Tempera and ink on paper, 2012.

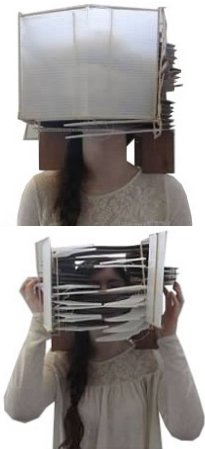
HUMAN



EXPLORER

kaela chambers

Oil paint on canvas, 2011.



PROPRIOCEPTION

Julie Hoffmann

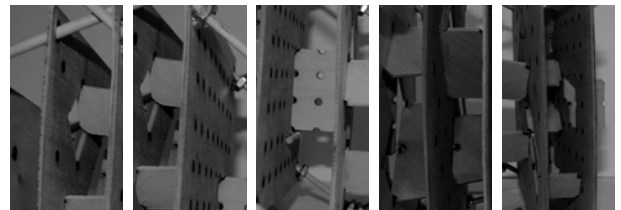
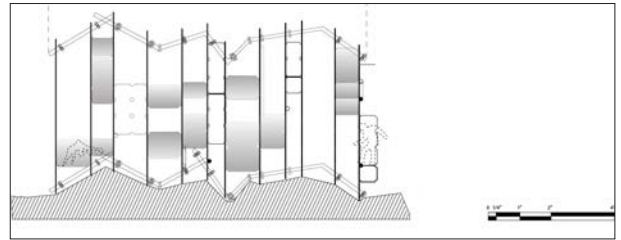
How much do we really notice our hands? Do we pay attention to the integral role they play in our everyday lives, or do we simply see the result of their work?

This project demonstrates the phenomenon of human perception and overlooking the hand. The box-like structure conceals the face, allowing the focus to be on the hands as they pull on two side pieces that in turn cause the box to open and unmask the face. Visibility of the subject both internally and externally relies on the hands, yet the subject itself remains unaware of this. The hands are highlighted in this model as the sole reason the box can open, but once it is open, they fade into the background again. Though important in everyday tasks, the hands are often overlooked and their movements and tasks are done without awareness or care; only the result is noticed.

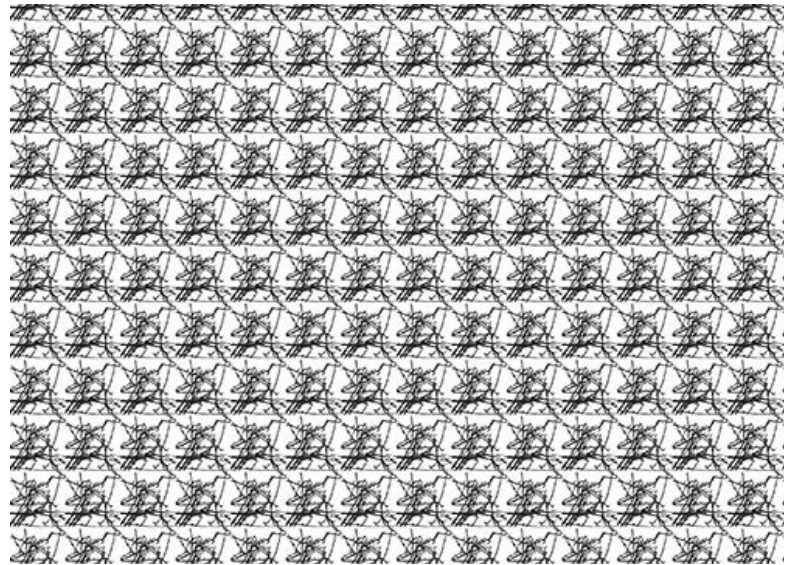
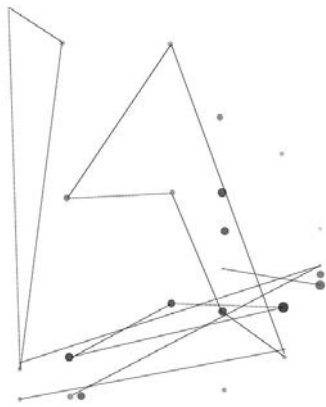


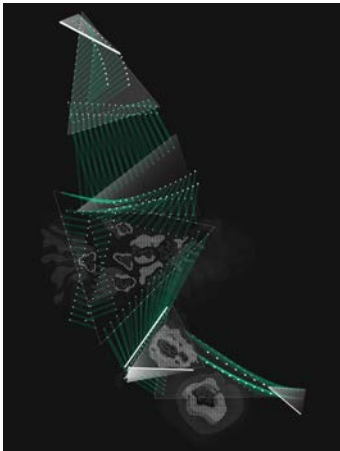
SENSORY PRACTICES
konstantina sarris

In this project, I examine the role of our senses in mediating our understanding of the built environment. This project is about the relationship between 'sight' and 'site', and the sensory engagement by investigating and transforming the urban space. I researched about equilibrioception, which is the sense of balance, particularly in animals, and the projection of it to my hand. The movements of the dowels give me a topographical sense by the shape that they form altogether.



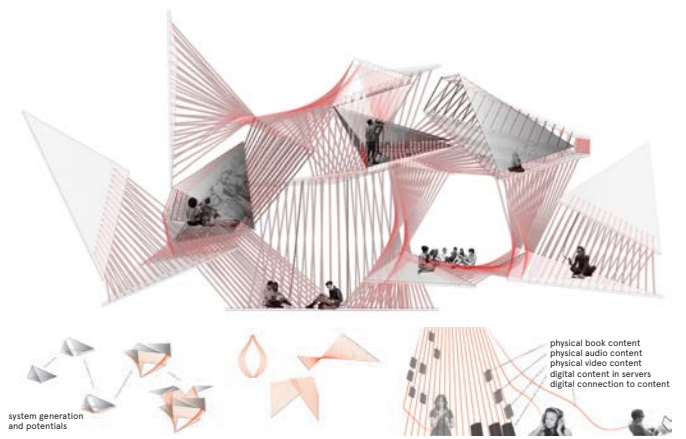
CARGO PATTERN
sophie kovel





NETWORK FEVER LIBRARY
caroline chen

As an early conceptual model, the project investigates the development of a library as a physically networked and open system using a construction methodology of tilted and skewed planes and strings. Considering the library as a space for cultural production and consumption of many media other than physical books, this concept for a library uses the strings as a new storage system for a diverse array of physical and digital medium. The concept also puts a greater emphasis on audio versus physical material, allowing for the filtration of sound throughout the space in order to create a fluidly connected system of sounds.



BUILDING

system generation and potentials

physical book content
 physical audio content
 physical video content
 digital content in servers
 digital connection to content



Social Issue: Communication
Joud al shalifat

LANDSCAPE OPTIMIZATION

Jordan girard

This project is the proposition of a city garden attached to PS 101 in Harlem between 111th and 112th Street on Park Avenue. This project adds new programs to the site as well as integrates the existing programs of the school. It is a space for learning and a space for food production, preparation, and distribution.

The core of the project is to design a garden where the production would be consumed by the school. Given the limited amount of space on the site and the height of the buildings around it, tilting the ground up facing south was the optimum way of getting more sun light.

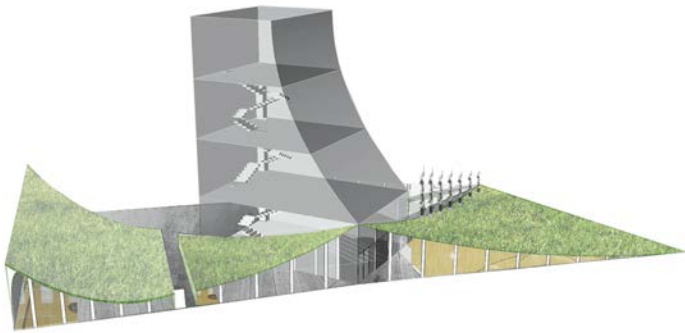
The title "landscape optimization" comes from the desire to manipulate the topography of the terrain in order to get longer hours of sun exposure and subsequently to get a bigger volume of production. The tower made of glass and steel has itself been designed so that the shape captures as much natural light as possible while providing users with fifteen foot ceilings. The program required the construction of a basketball court, which due to space restriction, has been placed underground.

TKIN

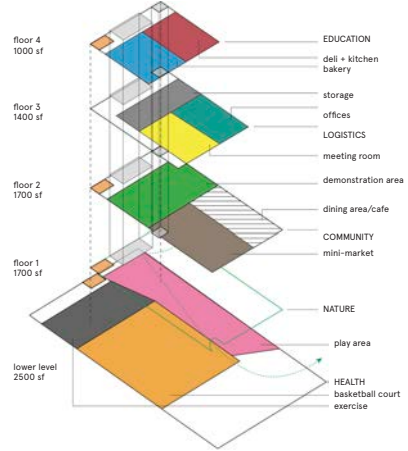
27



PS 101
school site



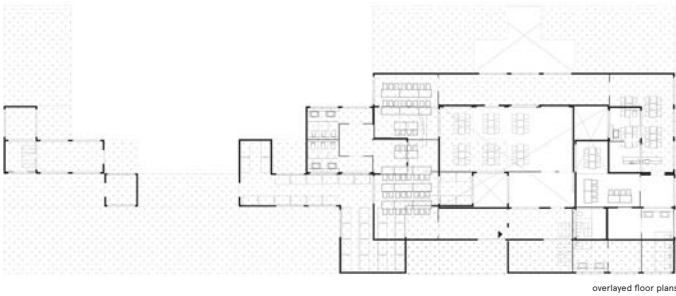
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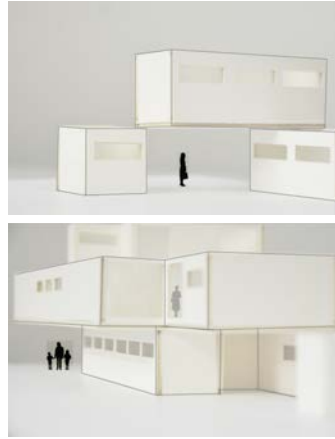
portfolio



BUILDING



overlaid floor plans



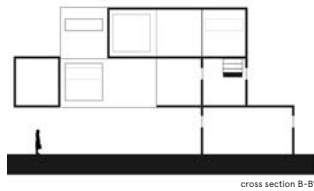
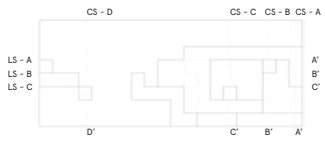
rendered perspectives

SCHOOL 1: FIGURE-GROUND PERCEPTION
randy armas

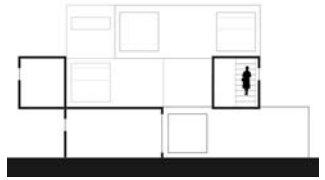
The design process of the school started with an interest in pursuing the perceptual differences between figures and ground, built and unbuilt. I was interested in exploring the gradient that lies between the extremes of a built and enclosed space surrounded by unenclosed spaces and the opposite - i.e. enclosed built spaces surrounding open areas or ground. The program of the school was organized following these spatial relationships. The gradient can be read in the plans starting from left to right and the result of this design strategy is the addition of a certain sculptural quality to both extremes. When applying the same rationale to the design of the sectional dimension, the school also acquires a monumental character, which while mighty does not fall to invite the public as to foster social relationships through the different open areas.

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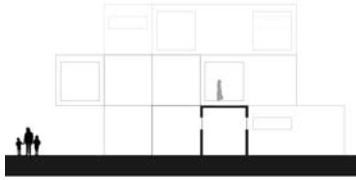
31



cross section B-B'



cross section C-C'

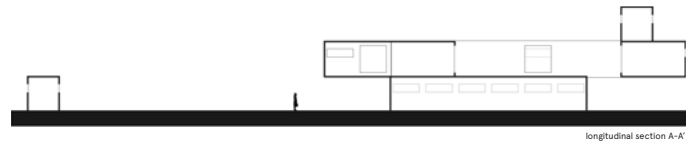


cross section D-D'

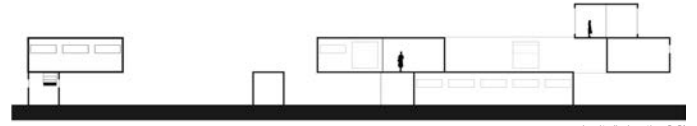
(left page) cross sections (right page) longitudinal sections

32

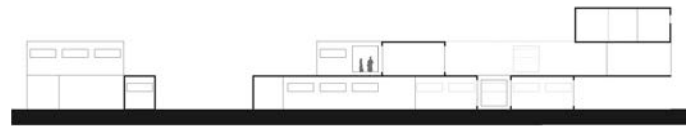
portfolio



longitudinal section A-A'



longitudinal section B-B'

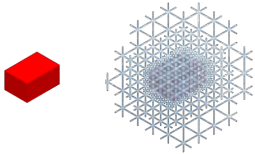


longitudinal section C-C'

BUILDING

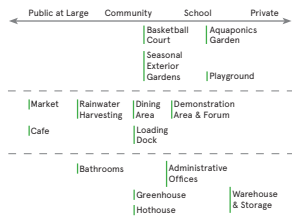
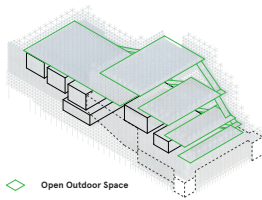
TKIN

EDIBLE SCHOOLYARD: TRELLIS COMPLEX
elliot kwon



33

Response to Program
Trellis Density varies
depending on type of
Program



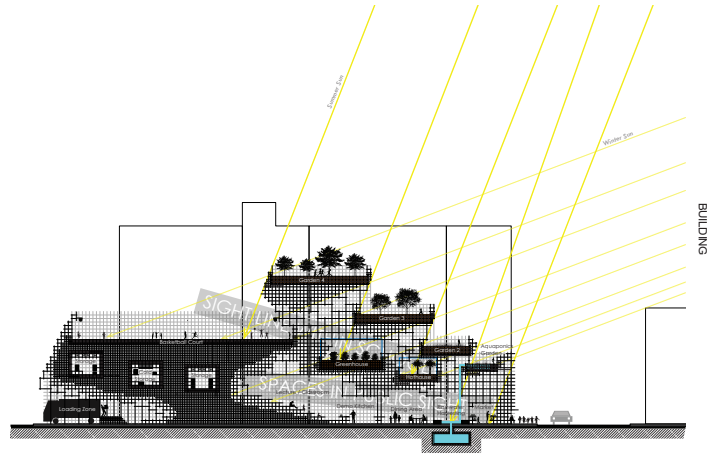
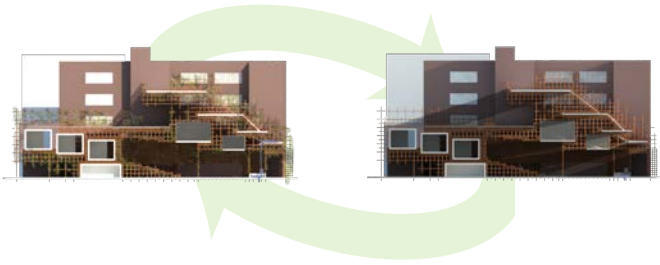
◇ Open Outdoor Space

⊗ Protected / Covered Outdoor Space

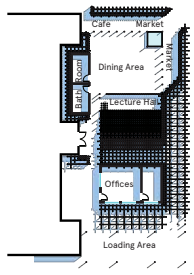
⊠ Indoor Space



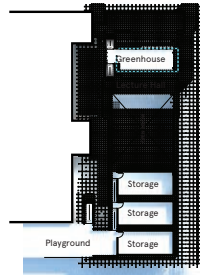
Response to Light
Trellis Density accommodates sun angles in summer and winter



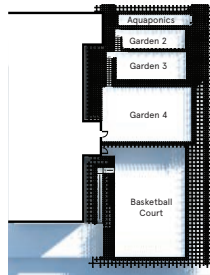
Plan | + 5 ft



Plan | + 30 ft

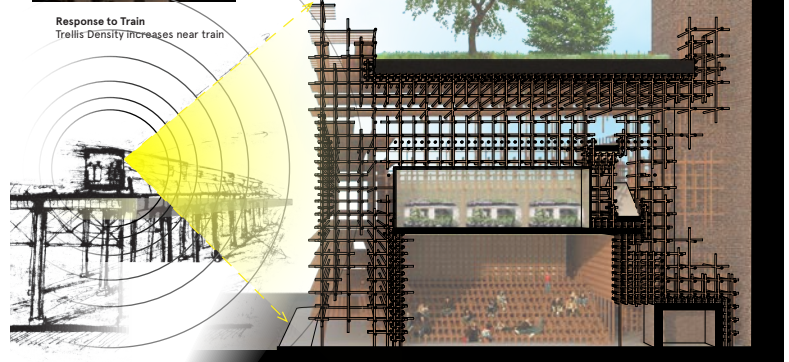


Plan | + 50 ft



We must fight against the eyes from the train, the eyes of the rich suburbanites as they commute to and from Midtown. We must protect the children of P.S. 101 from these intruding voyeurs.

Response to Train
Trellis Density increases near train



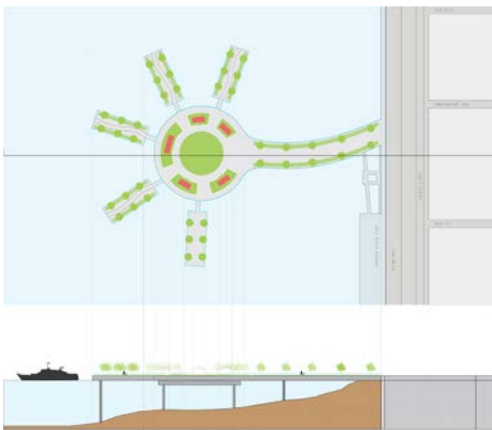


INJECTING SUBURBIA

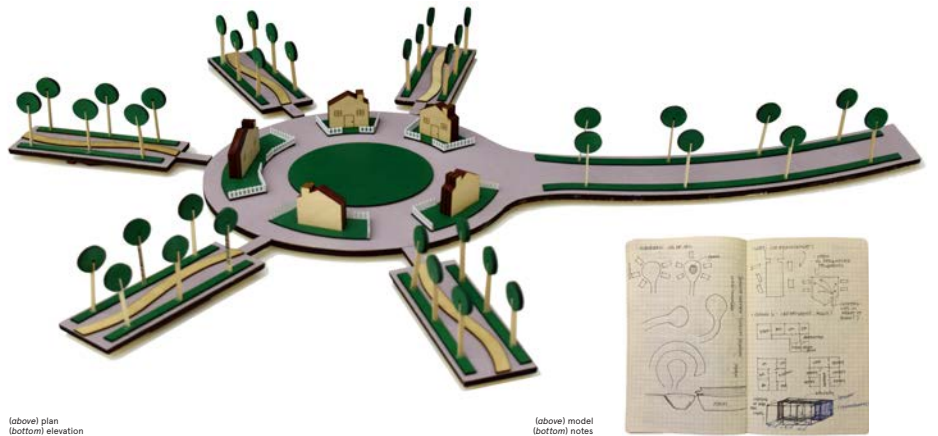
tiffany kim

This project (to re-think the ferry terminal typology) stems from the intentions of the architects of Wall Street Pier 11 located in Manhattan. The architects, Judith Heintz Landscape Architects and Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects, wanted their design to blend in with its surroundings. They wanted the design to be in line with "New York Authenticity." In doing so, they designed a pier described as an "outdoor, urban loft" that did not force visitors to use the pier in predetermined ways.

My project is a critique on the architects' use of a residential typology, in this case, a loft, for a public space. What if a different residential typology were to have been used instead, such as suburbia? This typology, unlike the loft, has pre-determined functions and an associated look. This new design would encompass certain icons of suburbanization such as a cul-de-sac as the main shape, white picket fences, houses, which would serve programmatic functions, etc. The experience of a visitor would be completely different.



(above) plan
(bottom) elevation



(above) model
(bottom) notes

INHABITING CONNECTIONS

benjamin gaber, lauren espeseth, sara shalam, rhea schmid

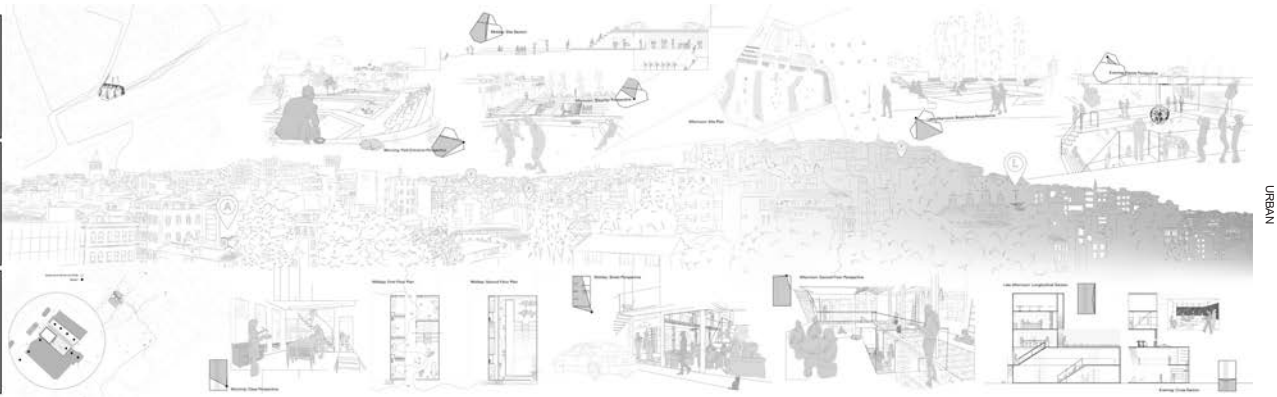
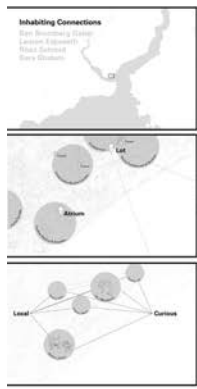
Our preliminary research looked at two resources, Transit and Morphology. We began to understand how Istanbul is developing and how people move through it. Our first design intervention attempted to create a mobile and adaptable pavilion that connects people literally across busy streets and socially by expanding the programs of neighboring buildings onto the street.

After visiting Istanbul, our group chose to focus specifically on a character we call the "curious."

A population of people with a unique role in the city, that we define as having a temporary (or seemingly temporary) stay in the city – a student, researcher or intern (whether local or international) and even a visiting architecture class like ourselves. These people have a desire and curiosity, beyond that of the typical tourist, to explore the city's fabric and various neighborhoods. They are in a place long enough to really explore it and

brief enough to feel pressured to squeeze everything in. Our goal is to connect this population with the local communities of Istanbul, allowing them to begin to understand the contemporary nature of Istanbul. More importantly, we want to inspire or provoke further curiosity; drive them to discover more of this city (more hidden spaces like these).

We imagine this as a network of interventions throughout Istanbul: here, we designed two specific sites – the Lot and the Atrium. In order to overcome the intimidating language and cultural barriers that exist between the "curious" and the local, we decided to design spaces with programs that are inherently universal – sport, dance, food (cooking), film, music, and art. We split these up onto different sites as appropriate and created spaces where the two groups can connect via shared activity.



excerpts from
**THE MEATPACKING DISTRICT: WOULD
 YOU LIKE IT RARE OR WELL DONE?**
 rochelle hafif

"If you live in New York it is because you like change, and you had better embrace it or get out," said Florent Morellet in 2001, a leading Meatpacking District activist and the owner of the restaurant that would spark the district's path towards commercial gentrification.¹ Yet interestingly enough, about exactly seven years later Florent's historic restaurant would be forced to close, due to the skyrocketing of a rent once \$1,350 a month to what his landlord would now demand, \$30,000 a month.² Florent stands as just one of the many actors that played and still play a role in the use and overall change of the neighborhood. And from whatever angle you choose to look at it, the complete transformation of the district is absolutely astonishing. What was once home to bloodstained streets, meatpacking trucks, prostitutes and unsupervised clubs became covered in high-end fashion, upscale restaurants, and beautified public space. Significantly, the district's transitional past allows us to comprehend its present. While Neil Smith theorizes about gentrification as a residential phenomenon, he overlooks the importance of commercial gentrification in areas such as the Meatpacking District, where residential change has been resisted through the use of public-private partnerships; in this case study, community actors are essentially private actors and therefore diversity, a core element in the vision of Jane Jacobs, is largely dependent upon their interests.

1. The Meatpacking District's History: Stages of Transition
 The Meatpacking District is about a 20-square-block

neighborhood, on the west side of Manhattan, surrounded by Chelsea to the north and ending at Horatio Street to the south. The Meatpacking District is said to have gone through four major phases of development throughout its history, shifting from residential, industrial, to what we know of today as an overall commercial area. Its transitional past explains its most recent redevelopment as it ultimately shaped its unique character. Before the 1860s the district was mainly residential, and its unique Belgian-blocked streets formed open intersections and junctures. After the Civil War, New York City established itself as the financial center of the country and with this stamina the district would start its succession towards industrialism. The Meatpacking District, or Gansevoort Market District's, first phase of development was from the 1880s to the late 1920s. During this time period, the area would slowly begin to flourish as a residential space, and even more so, an industrial space with the foundation of the Gansevoort Meat Market in 1883. According to the District's Designation Report, "Historian Elizabeth Blackmar has noted that... in the second quarter of the 19th century, spatially-segregated elite residential neighborhoods began to develop," and therefore the mixed-use ideal of residences and industry that withstood change within the Meatpacking District was extremely unique. In the 1880s development was spurred by two main factors: the creation of two municipal markets and the 1878 partition of real estate owned by the Astor family.

The decision to create a market space in the district was largely spurred by political actors, as politicians such as the

Commissioner of Public Works claimed that the city had a right to "clear the streets" of the vendors that were located downtown near Fulton St. in the 1870s. The former site of the Hudson freight yard would house the new Washington and Gansevoort markets. Thereafter, in 1883, the New York Times called the Gansevoort Market, "the most unique of the marts the City possesses." These markets thus sparked development as street improvements were made in response to traffic, wholesale produce and meat dominated business, and monumental low-rise purpose-built buildings, such as warehouses, arose to serve the industry. Furthermore, in 1897 the Manhattan Refrigerating Company was established in the district to service the meatpacking industry. This helped increase property values according to the president of the company, Thomas Albeus Adams, who fought with the city in order to extend his business. In addition to the MRC, the City chose to construct the Chelsea Piers with the rise of steamship commerce. The second actors in the first phase of development were private actors, the Astor family. At this time, ownership of land in the area was clearly desirable, and the family developed one third of its buildings. In the early 19th century, John Jacob Astor I was the wealthiest man in America, and paid George Clinton, governor of NY and soon to be Vice President, for the property. In 1878, the property in the district was partitioned and improvements were made by hiring high quality architects to maximize the value of their real estate.

By the 1930s, the completion of transportation and development projects made by New York would spark the next major

phase of development, where the meatpacking industry would come to consolidate as the dominant industry in the district, and the shift from a residential to industrial area would become complete. This phase was from about the 1930s up until the 1960s. The N.Y.C. Grade Crossing Elimination Act of 1928 had called for "West Side Improvement," creating new transportation innovations such as the Elevated Miller Highway in 1931 and the direct access of Seventh Ave South to the Market. Perhaps most significantly, the Elevated Freight Railway or the High Line was done in 1934. During the 1930s, the area was officially industrialized, and flourished economically, rather than shall we say, aesthetically.

Once maritime commerce along the Hudson River declined, due to the rise in containerized shipping elsewhere and airline travel, the meatpacking industry began to weaken. Additionally, with the explosion of the suburbs, the supermarket system and home appliances, there was less need for these plants. The next phase, roughly the 1960s to the 1980s can be deemed as a phase of decline. In 1974, the Miller elevated highway is closed, as well as the elevated freight line. And in 1979, the Manhattan Refrigeration Co. closes as well. Even in 1981, there existed discourse about the changing character of the district, as the New York Times wrote, "One indication of the changing nature of the neighborhood...the former Manhattan Refrigeration Company building...is being transformed into a luxury apartment building."³

In addition to the meatpackers still present in the

neighborhood, came a vibrant gay nightlife that had emerged in the 1970s, with the opening of clubs such as the Zoo and Mineshaft. Also, during this time organized crime and dishonest police officers provided little to no restrictions in the district. In 1985, an investigation led to the indictments of police officers that had taken money from after-hour clubs. The same year, the Department of Health closed the sex club, Mineshaft with the "AIDS era" on the rise.⁴ In 1995, the New York Times wrote, "the meatpackers have long coexisted with people attracted by the area's relative remoteness, narrow streets and gritty atmosphere. Partly because there were few legal residences in the district, a raucous night life began flourishing in the 1970s, catering at first to gay men, then expanding its audience."

Coming into the 1990s, the Meatpacking District would begin to see change like never before, as it entered the phase of complete redevelopment, renewal and reuse, shaping it to become the place it is today. Florent Restaurant, the first new and commercial business of the area opened in 1985. From there, the district would begin to spiral into a wave of commercialism, as new customers stepped onto the slippery streets. The district had thus transitioned from residential, to industrial to commercial.⁵ Starting in the 1990s, several actors would begin play a large role in the change.

II. The Actors Behind the Curtain of Redevelopment.

A. *Commercial Gentrification as a Movement of Capital*
The Meatpacking District's history of gradual change

provided the following by the 1990s: a completely "run-down" neighborhood, consisting of slippery, disoriented streets and illegal, uncensored nightlife. Sounds appealing, doesn't it? Well, according to Neil Smith it is exactly this type of environment that attracts not only, private, but public actors to ultimately take charge. It is within Smith's work, "Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People," that the economic factors hidden beneath the district's outer image become clear:

Although the very apparent social characteristics of deteriorated neighborhoods would discourage redevelopment, the hidden economic characteristics may well be favorable. Whether gentrification is a fundamental restructuring of urban space depends not on where new inhabitants come from but on how much productive capital returns to the area [from the suburbs].¹ Neil Smith

This outlook on gentrification as a monetary theory applies to the change that took place in the Meatpacking District, as it was financial investment that sparked its redevelopment. While the social characteristics of the area, such as risqué nightlife, would clearly seem unappealing to developers, low rents become magnetic. The "restructuring of urban space" that took place in the district was a direct result of new capital flow rather than incoming upper-class residents. The problem with Neil Smith's argument is its view of gentrification as purely a residential phenomenon. I will now show, using the Meatpacking District as an example, that his theoretical observations can be applied to gentrification in areas of commercial change as well.

Gentrification, if a movement of capital, still poses a threat to areas that have resisted residential change.

Notably, Smith clearly states that gentrification cannot be explained in terms of the gentrifier alone, but rather that there are other actors involved in this process- developers, real estate firms, government agencies etc. The one consumer preference that stands out in the process of redevelopment is "the preference for profit or a sound financial investment." Therefore, the Meatpacking District, of low rent and waterfront property, would most certainly come to produce a profit. These conditions entice landlords and developers to invest in the built environment of the neighborhood. As Smith theorizes, "In a capitalist economy, land and the improvements built into it become commodities." One must also recognize that the inner city was once neglected aside from the central financial district, and "historical mechanisms of capital depreciation in the inner city" led to eventual reinvestment. Therefore, Smith then goes on to attribute gentrification to the rent gap, or the gap between actual ground rent and the potential it holds. By the 1990s, landlords and investors took hold of the gap in the Meatpacking District and envisioned the rise of property value in the area. Accordingly, the appeal of the district was a matter of capital, of depreciated ground rent with enormous potential.

Smith also attributes cultural and economic causes to the process of gentrification. Culturally, the city becomes a place of the young, whose dreams are no longer suburban. Even more so, "the values of consumption rather than production guide central

city land use decisions"; if values of consumption in the city are of high stature, the production side will produce to fulfill those desires. The Meatpacking District became a cultural hub for the young, and economically the area sought to produce for the wealthy consumer. He also states that, "consumer preference and demand are of primary importance in determining the final form and character of revitalized areas—the difference between Society Hill, say, and New York's SoHo." In order to meet certain demands the Meatpacking District was specifically formulated. So we must then question, the demands of whom?

I will now identify three types of actors that contributed and still contribute to the redevelopment of the area in making decisions on urban land use: private actors, such as real estate companies, public actors, such as the NYC Planning Association, and community actors, such as the Meatpacking District Improvement Association. Often times, there is a blurred line between private and community actors, but for now we can examine them separately. Generally the power to control shifts between these three agents, depending on their demands, eventually to try and find some kind of balance.

B. Private Actors

First, let's start with the private actors, as they frequently provide the capital flow of which Neil Smith attributes to the cause of gentrification. Up until the decline in the 1960s and 70s, the Astor family ownership was the prominent private actor in the district, taking control over most improvements in the area.

While Gottlieb, and other big property owners, bought property in the district during the 1980s, there were other "meat" families who picked up properties before that. The Meilman family, who worked in the meatpacking industry, bought most of the property along W 14th and some of 13th street in the district between 1956 and 1964.⁹ The family is shown in a short film done on the district by the Meatpacking District Improvement Association. In the film, Myron "Mike" Meilman, the Co-founder of Meilman Family Real Estate, stated that his father had migrated to America in 1928, and that the family remained in the Meatpacking District ever since. "From where it was to where it is now is just absolutely amazing," said Mike. His two sons, Cliff and Rich, are also shown in the video and described the meatpacking scene that took place when they were children. Rich Meilman, the principal of the company, talked about the transition of the neighborhood in the 1990s. "I put an add in the Village Voice," he stated, "I had fifteen calls the first day, and I said I think we've got something. Basically in 1990 is when we started converting our buildings here to office lofts." Many real estate companies would begin to do the same, slowly marking up rents for their new tenants.

But what spurred property owners to up their rents in the first place? Where did the demand for such "run-down" property even come from? Surely they didn't wake up one morning and assume that if they increased the value of their rent high fashion would simply walk along and grab it! In order to answer this question, I met with Tom Jarrold, founder of the marketing agency Jet MMS, who took space owned by the Meilmans in an

old stable in the Meatpacking District on West 14th. Tom has lived in the Meatpacking since the 90s and does marketing for brands such as Armani Exchange. I asked Tom what sparked the high-end fashion industry to move to the neighborhood. He explained that originally, due to the low-rent and the type of space offices that were once warehouses provided, designers and artists decided to move into the district. "Fashion always wants to be on the cutting-edge, and the Meatpacking District was considered unchartered waters," said Tom. Wherever designers and artists plant their studios, retail boutiques follow. And when the first upscale clothing store, Jeffrey, moved to the district in 1999 it became a catalyst for all the others. Additionally, restaurants Florent and Pastis, Milk Studios and the unique built environment sparked this new interest. Hotel Gansevoort and the Standard would follow later on.

C. Public Actors

While the transformation of the district was primarily financed through private investment, the importance of political support must be stressed. This moves us to the second set of actors, the public actors. Private actors in the real estate realm hold power in terms investment decisions, but without public policy and support redevelopment cannot be successfully achieved. The most important government actor in New York City in recent years is the mayor, and specifically in relation to redevelopment, The Mayor's Office for Economic Development and Rebuilding. When the Gansevoort Market District was designated

as a historic district on September 9, 2003 Mayor Bloomberg released the following statement:

We are very excited by the critical role that the Gansevoort Market Historic District, with its unique sense of place and historic importance, will play in the development of the Far West Side. This is just the first of several key projects, including the restoration of the High Line, the construction of Hudson River Park, and the development of the Hudson Yards, that form the core of the Administration's plans for the Far West Side. When completed, these projects will revitalize the West Side of Manhattan, forming a necklace of dynamic waterfront communities, each with their own unique assets." Mayor Bloomberg

Issues of historic designation, rezoning and overall economic development often fall under the control of the Mayoral Office, as they are critical to the administrative efforts to redevelop the city. The office has overall control of other government agencies, and therefore played a huge role in the transformation of the Meatpacking District. Other public agencies that contributed to the development of the neighborhood include, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, the NYC Department of City Planning (DCP), and the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT). In an NYC DCP press release on November 6, 2003, DCP Director Amanda Burden stated the following:

Another of our ambitious efforts is our rezoning master plan proposal for West Chelsea, a critical link between the newly landmarked Gansevoort Meat Market District and Hudson Yards. Here we are using traditional zoning tools in a totally innovative manner, whereby we will promote new housing

*in character with the existing building form, preserve and enhance the city's premier art gallery district, and most importantly, facilitate the transformation of the High Line into an elevated public open space.*²⁷ Amanda Burden

After the historic designation of the district, the DCP prevented residential development within the area through the use of commercial zoning. Later on, DOT partnered with the Meatpacking District Initiative in 2007 to redesign the district and control traffic flow in order to create public plazas, and to transform the streets into vibrant, social urban spaces. These are some of the plans they requested in their presentation:

- Create a public space in Gansevoort Plaza, attached to northern curbs
- Use industrial-styled elements to define new public spaces
- Create pedestrian priority zone reducing speed limit to 15mph on Gansevoort, LittleW, 12th and 13th Sts. and on 9th and 10th Aves. and Washington St.
- Install all-way stop signs on Washington St. at 13th and Little West 12th Sts.²⁸

V. The Friends of The High Line: Creative Reuse and the Paradox of Diversity

Perhaps the potential for diversity hangs above the streets themselves. Aside from the commercially gentrified, exclusivity that rests on the streets of the district, the High Line seems to foster a much more diversified, welcoming environment. After 1980, trains ceased to run on the once bustling infrastructure and soon after a group of property owners of land beneath the High Line lobbied for its demolition. In 1999, Joshua David and Robert

Hammond, residents of the neighborhood, advocated to preserve the High Line and to reuse it as a public park with their non-profit, Friends of the High Line. In 2002 it became city policy to preserve the High Line, and in 2003 they created an open competition in which 720 teams from 36 different countries designed proposals for its reuse. CSX Transportation Inc donated the structure to NYC in 2005. The portion that rests in the Meatpacking District was opened to the public first, in 2009.

The High Line connects the Meatpacking District to West Chelsea, Clinton and the West Side Rail Yards. This provides the potential for diversity that exists outside of the district to feed into the commercially gentrified area. It is a tremendous example of creative reuse of public space. The various public events, such as the High Line Food Program, offered on the High Line foster the sense of community in an area that lacks residential space. The High Line even offers the Schools Program where schools can bring their classes to the High Line to learn about nature and design. The Friends of the High Line provides over 90% of the High Line's operating budget in lieu of a license agreement with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation. "What is Friends of the High Line? Through stewardship, innovative design and programming, and excellence in operations, we cultivate a vibrant community around the High Line," says the organization.²⁹

When looking at the future of the Meatpacking District, the High Line becomes essential. As the 2011 New York Times article "Record \$20 Million Gift to Help Finish the High Line Park" writes, "The High Line is an unusual public-private

partnership." The City paid most of the cost for the first two sections, while Friends of the High Line agreed to fundraise for expenses in annual maintenance. For example, the Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation agreed to donate \$20 million for its completion (DVF owns a store in the district).³⁰ This is an example of private actors, whose interests meet those of the public. The public-private partnership in this case becomes a useful tool.

Here's the paradox: On the one hand the High Line serves as a great example of reuse and public space. It promotes diversity and community on the High Line itself, and has the potential to feed on to the streets of the Meatpacking District changing the dynamics of its commercial gentrification. As more tourists flock the pathway of the High Line, the stores below begin to change. Rents go down, and the cycle of capital begins again. High-end retailers are currently in the midst of moving out to SoHo and Madison Ave, and more mass-market retailers are moving in. With the coming of the Whitney Museum in the district, it will become even more of a tourist and public destination.³¹ The Meatpacking District, still commercially zoned, has the potential to fulfill the vision of Jacobs as simply those who walk its streets and use its plazas can diversify it. It can embody a core value of New York City as welcoming and inviting to all. Commercially, we are in good shape. Public spaces gradually become true public spaces.

On the other hand, commercial diversity does not entail residential diversity. According to residential real estate own-

ers the real estate values of property amongst the High Line, those that allow for residential high-rises, are increasing due to the High-Line. "For those who thought that area was a flash in the pan, something that already happened, they're going to be pleasantly surprised with the next dimensions of the change in that neighborhood," said Joseph Sitt, the chief executive of Thor Equities, who owns 446 West 14th Street (connects directly to the High Line). The new development projects being built along the structure will not be affordable housing. L&M, a firm that typically develops low and moderately priced housing said they couldn't buy enough development rights from landowners immediately beneath the High Line to make moderate-priced units feasible.³²

VII. The Cycle of the City: The Future of the District

In conclusion, here is the direction I see the Meatpacking District going in. I believe that despite the private actors' interests in the commercial gentrification of the area, the movement towards mass-market retailers is inevitable. This will then create a diversified public that will occupy the streets as it now occupies the park above it. Commercial gentrification in the area will begin to fade. At the same time, this does not entail residential diversity. The High Line, being an aesthetically pleasing waterfront structure, will undoubtedly raise the value of land for which many residential high-rises outside of the commercially zoned area will soon house high-income residents. They may take shopping trips to SoHo or Madison Ave, or even stay on the

streets of the Meatpacking District, but the stores will nonetheless transition to mass retail. The Meatpacking District once again serves as an unusual space. It raises several compelling questions: Is commercial gentrification beneficial in the sense that with it can come public space? If public space gradually becomes diversified, does it matter that the residences around it are not? If diversity is a core value of the City, how do we achieve it with private actors in mind?

From racks of meat to racks of clothing, the specific transformation that occurred in the Meatpacking District is rare. Commercial gentrification as a movement of capital, the public-private partnership as a community-based partnership, public space and its paradoxes, and the tactics used to accomplish these things are astounding. I explored the Meatpacking District on a Friday afternoon, and I felt the sense of constant action. The restaurants were busy with customers, high-end boutiques spiked out of metal canopies and old warehouses, and MPIA lamppost signs read "LIVE/WORK, WALK/RIDE, EAT/DINE, SHOP/BUY, CREATE/ART. Experience the Meatpacking District." Aside from the walking, I don't know if I could have fully "experienced" the district according to their slogan. Even so, I think there is something positive to be said about the renewal of the Meatpacking District: the creativity that went into the High Line, altered traffic patterns to form plazas, and preservation of the distinct architectural character is most certainly a symbol of New York City's ability to make a statement in an ever-changing world. As I walked down the High Line, many people were tourists, amazed by the High Line's innovation. This type of appeal is what contributes to a global city. Yet we must question commercial gentrification, despite Smith's overlooking. We must examine the public-private partnership and perhaps creatively use it as a tool for the public, rather than view it as an inevitable enemy like Squires does. And finally, we must look at the City according to the vision of Jane Jacobs. So Florent, do we live in NYC because we like change? Or maybe because we like diversi-

ty? The city will remain ever changing, but we can only hope that its diversity remains as well.

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