

Participatory Architecture in Montreal: Three Case Studies

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Participatory Architecture in Montreal: Three Case Studies**

Reid Walter Fredrick Cooper

Participatory architecture is a form of architectural process that integrates the actual users of buildings into their concept, design, building and maintenance. Participatory approaches first began to be explored during the 1950s, perhaps as a reaction to the overly deterministic modernist architecture advocated by the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*. Various participatory practices were explored in the 1960s and early 1970s, and while they may have captured the imagination of socially-inclined architects and some clients, the result of these experiments were not widely accepted or adopted. However, experiments did have the effect of consolidating a professional and lay understanding of architecture as socially responsible.

In this thesis, I argue that architecture, as a societal tool, continues to suffer from a crisis in its inability to address the needs of the users of architecture and not merely the clients who commission the construction of buildings. Several needs of the user include adequate affordable housing, buildings properly integrated into their surroundings, ecological buildings and cities, and buildings that have the ability to disclose historical continuity and life-enhancement. In three case studies undertaken in the Plateau Mont Royal borough of Montreal, I investigate instances of user participation in formal and informal architectural projects. These case studies show how user participation can help to guide architectural projects to socially and environmentally just solutions. In an

increasingly urbanized world where society is becoming progressively more polarized between the rich and the poor and where ecological devastation is becoming a reality in many cities, I argue that user participation in architectural projects is necessary if architecture is become a positive force for society.

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I would like to express my thanks and love to my wife Marlene who provides continual support, help and encouragement. She is an inspiration. Thanks also go to my parents Rod and Jean, sister Dana, and my beaux parents and sister, Gisele, Raouf, and Nathalie. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to city-dwellers who take an active role in making their city or community a better place for all to live.

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## **Introduction**

An urban nightmare in less than 50 years' time is certainly what will engulf us if current trends continue.

Walden Bello, Executive Director of the Bangkok-based research and policy institute Focus on the Global South and professor of sociology at the University of the Philippines.<sup>1</sup>

When investigating the problems associated with city centres, such as environmental degradation and social inequity, it is obvious to focus on the Global South. In many of these nations the population of cities are growing at twice the rate of national populations. People are forced out of the countryside by lack of agrarian reforms, the dumping of cheap subsidized agricultural products (facilitated by The World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture) and by longstanding city-biased, industry-first economic development that drive down the prices of grain and other farm products. Concurrently the capacity of industry and manufacturing to sustain these people is being eroded by reduced tariffs on imported products under economic programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the WTO, and the shift of foreign manufacturing capital to China to take advantage of low labour costs. This "migration-without-absorption" scenario results in vast shantytowns populated by what some have called a "subproletariat." The urban poor living in conditions of crime, squalor and insecurity now make up 30-40% of the population of cities such as Manila, Jakarta, Mexico City, and Lagos.<sup>2</sup> The urban environments in such cities are ecological disasters, affected by climate change, massive air pollution, and biologically dead rivers.

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<sup>1</sup> Walden Bello, "Viewpoints: The Urban World in 2050," ed. Kathryn Westcott (BBC News, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

In China and India, where much of the global manufacturing sector has relocated, the present conditions and prospects for the future are just as worrisome. A recent article in *The Guardian* newspaper points to the fact that whereas Britain has five cities with populations over 1 million people, China has ninety.<sup>3</sup> One of these cities, Chongqing, is currently the largest municipality in the world with 31 million inhabitants. On an average day in Chongqing 137,000 square metres of new floor space will be added for residential, business and recreational purposes. Every year 500,000 people move to the city. One of the results of this growth is that Chongqing produces 3,500 tonnes of waste a day – and there is no recycling. The growth of cities in China has necessitated an immense increase in the number of highways and a corollary increase in the number of cars on the road. China currently has 23,000 miles of highways, double that which existed in 2001, and second only to the United States. There are presently 20 million cars on the road; an increase of more than 300% from the year 2000. As one of the people interviewed for *The Guardian* story says: “driving is our right.”

With these figures in mind it is understandable that so much attention on the built environment is being directed to cities in developing nations. Yet in our globalized world an intimate relationship exists between developing and developed nations. The West’s appetite for cheap consumer goods creates much of the demand for commodities produced in China. Our insatiable appetite for energy shapes global events resulting in the protection of foreign oil assets. Urbanites worldwide are fed by petroleum-based agriculture and petroleum-based economies. As needs grow, more demands will be made on limited resources, which could result in further economic and social polarization with

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Watts, “Invisible City,” *Guardian*, March 15 2006.

those who can afford it withdrawing into protected enclaves while leaving the poor to exist in increased deprivation.

It is not only nation states that are becoming economically and socially polarized. Within states and cities, people are polarized into what Mike Davis calls “planets of slums” and “cities of gold.”<sup>4</sup> The city that these conditions create is what Michael Dear terms “post-modern urbanism,” and he believes this polarization is a trend that will continue to increase. Economically and socially polarized cities exist not only in Mexico and Indonesia, but also in Los Angeles and Montreal, for example. Rather than shantytowns, North American cities harbour inner-city ghettos where racial minorities and immigrants live in overcrowded social housing, unable to find jobs or accepting unskilled employment unwanted by the dominant actors in society.

Developed nations must address the problems in their own cities, and should help contribute to developing and effecting solutions for societies whose traditional ways of life have been derailed by global capital colonization. This thesis argues that user participation in the construction and maintenance of the built environment is an essential tactic for making architecture and urban planning more socially and ecologically responsible. Numerous studies have shown that cities and the attendant construction of buildings are among the highest contributors to global warming and pollution. A study by John Hopkins University found that 80% of carbon dioxide emissions, which are largely responsible for global warming, are produced by cities. Environmental sustainability, perhaps best understood as parallel care and respect for the ecosystem and its people,

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Dear, "Viewpoints: The Urban World in 2050," ed. Kathryn Westcott (BBC News, 2006).

must become a greater priority before the world becomes depleted of resources and too polluted to support human life. Further, social equity and justice have been shown to be declining in our cities as social classes become increasingly spatially segregated, and as fewer opportunities exist to accommodate diverse needs and practices. Social sustainability, defined as, “policies and institutions that have the overall effect of integrating diverse groups and cultural practices in a just and equitable fashion,”<sup>5</sup> must also become a priority for cities. These problems must be met head on by all levels of society; government, business and citizens.

Ecological and social sustainability in urban areas provides the overall framework for this paper. What follows is a study of space, but more particularly a study of what Henri Lefebvre has termed “the production of space;” or how space is understood and produced. I access the production of space through the vocabulary, grammar and history of architecture and urban planning. These two disciplines have their proper domain in space, and the human interaction and production of urban areas. Further, they greatly contribute to the production of space. However, there is a contemporary crisis in architecture and urban planning, which revolves around their being unresponsive to ecological and social concerns. This ongoing crisis has led the architect and theorist Giancarlo De Carlo to say that, “architecture has become too important to be left to the architects.”<sup>6</sup> Following De Carlo and other architectural theorists, I investigate this crisis throughout the paper. More specifically, I investigate the position of the user rather than the more traditional architectural personalities: namely, the architect and the client. In

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<sup>5</sup> Polèse & Stren, *The Social Sustainability of Cities* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Giancarlo De Carlo, “Architecture’s Public,” in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. Petruscu Jones, Till (New York: Spon Press, 2005). p. 13.

considering the “user” of architecture and city planning in the production of space I trace the history and contemporary practices of what I term, “participatory architecture.” This form of architecture considers the user as an active and creative participant rather than as a determined spectator. In particular, two English architectural scholars—Jeremy Till and Jonathan Hill—have made inroads into theorizing the position of the user in architecture. Yet, their architectural bias (they are both architects) has prevented them from fully considering the user. My investigation of participatory architecture thus technically and conceptually expands upon their ideas.

In this study, I further develop the notion of the user not only by writing about the user, but also through attempts to adopt the position of a user. The heart of this paper resides in three case studies focusing on interventions that occur in Montreal’s Plateau Mont Royal borough. Rather than strictly reporting on the studies, I take an active participatory role in the events documented. This position as not merely analytic observer, but embodied person engaging with the interventions at hand, lends itself to a fresh perspective on architecture, urban planning, and the consideration of the user.

The thesis begins with an introductory chapter, which presents a preliminary exploration of “participatory architecture,” defines my conceptual framework and performs a spatial analysis of the Plateau. The chapter considers the spatial, social, and historical context of this neighbourhood on the production and acceptance of the interventions described in the three case studies. The second chapter further explores the idea of architecture through an historical study of modernist city planning, which helped create the first participatory

architectural strategies and practices in the late 1950s and 1960s. A study of Montreal's transformation in the 1960s helps to situate ideas of modernist city planning, and provides a context for the investigation of the crisis of architecture. Thereafter, several key participatory strategies are highlighted to draw out concepts that inform an expanded conception of participatory architecture.

The final three chapters document the three case studies; a greenroof produced by the cooperative Centre d'Ecologie Urbaine, the street art of Roadsworth, and the nature of alleys on the Plateau. The three case studies cover dramatically different spaces; respectively, domestic space, public space, and public/private space. The studies are also different in that the first explores a group project, the second an individual endeavour, and the third an intervention carried out by an assemblage of people acting independently. The diverse nature of the case studies represents varying ways in which citizens as creative users can contribute to the conception, planning, construction and maintenance of the built environment. It is my belief that only through citizen participation can architecture and urban planning become more responsible and thoughtfully engage with the environmental and social challenges we face.

## Chapter 1 – Participatory Architecture

### 1.1 Basic Notions

Participatory architectural practices became a reality in post-war western societies. More commonly known as community planning, community consultation, citizen participation, and neighbourhood planning, participatory architecture is generally understood as an historical reaction against modernist architectural and urban planning strategies with their emphasis on functionality, user passivity and determinism, and hierarchical planning strategies. I have adopted the term “participatory architecture” to connote practices in which user participation results in changes in the use or meaning in the architecture of the city.

Architecture is traditionally defined as some combination of an artistic and technological program that results in an edifice or construct for human use.<sup>7</sup> However, this paper will take a broader definition of architecture, which includes the entire built environment. This is a political choice for which there are three reasons. First, as we explore more fully in chapters two and five, architecture is in a state of crisis. Amongst other things, this crisis is due to the fragmentation of architecture into various domains, such as urban planning, landscape architecture, interior design, and engineering. My study attempts to reinvigorate architecture by reclaiming and reintegrating urban design into the discipline. There are numerous historical precedents for this, as nearly all architects discussed in this thesis—from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier and de Carlo—have also acted as urban planners.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). p.109.

Second, expanding architecture to include urban planning means to acknowledge the social and environmental impact buildings have on the built environment. As Bruce Mau, one of the world's leading designers, and curator of the travelling *Massive Change* exhibition, suggested at a conference at McGill University on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006, architecture can not be understood simply as single buildings anymore.<sup>8</sup> Because urban buildings are created within an existing framework of other buildings and infrastructural networks like transportation, electricity and sewage, architecture must also consider the entire environment in which it is located. Considering a building in isolation as an aesthetic and technological achievement, as many architectural critiques do, blinds us to the fact that individual buildings are integral to the environment in which they are located. Both architectural practice and theory must consider the links and flows of people, goods and information to and from, and around the entire built environment. Although this is a contested understanding of architecture, it is important to know that many progressive architecture schools, such as Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Princeton's School of Architecture, The Bartlett in London, and RMIT in Melbourne, have programs which consider architecture and urban planning together.

Lastly, expanding the notion of architecture to include changes in use or meaning in the domain of the entire built environment deflates the traditional notion of architecture as pertaining only to grandiose projects. This is meant to valorize the actions of individuals and groups who intervene in the design, construction and maintenance of the built environment. It is necessary to understand that the built environment is not a static formal model but a dynamic process. Individuals, as well politicians, urban planners and

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<sup>8</sup> Bruce Mau, "Recording of Bruce Mau's Lecture at McGill," ed. Patrick Doan (2006).



architects, contribute to the changing environment, reordering space through usage. As John Kaliski says, “the person who chooses a different commuting route, posts a sign over an existing sign, sells from a corner cart, or volunteers to organize a community meeting is as much a city designer as the developer and architect who construct a skyscraper or the city official who suggests an ordinance.”<sup>9</sup> Acknowledging interventions in space as architecture valorizes the artistic merit and technical proficiency that accompanies certain practices. Indeed, it is the contention of this thesis that only through incorporating architecture accomplished by non-architects can the domain of architecture move on from its current crisis.

Participatory is an adjective that stems from the Latin *participator* and means, “to take or have a part or share of or in; to possess or enjoy in common *with* others; to share.”<sup>10</sup>

When participation is understood along with architecture, it usually denotes a practice with a specific goal, which is identified by an authority like the state, and direction, which is facilitated by an architect or urban planner. The people, or users, may participate in the design of the project, but on occasion will contribute to the conceptualization of the project or its construction and maintenance. In this way people ideally work together on the project for everyone’s mutual benefit. Participatory architecture places more emphasis on the process of creation and maintenance rather than the finished object.

In all participatory processes there are degrees of involvement, from token participation to full control of processes by citizens. Sherry Arnstein identifies this spectrum in

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<sup>9</sup> John Kaliski, “The Present City and the Practice of City Design,” in *Everyday Urbanism*, ed. Margaret Crawford, John Kaliski and John Chase (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1999). p. 105.

<sup>10</sup> OED, p. 2085.

conjunction with participatory city planning in her 'ladder of participation.'<sup>11</sup> In this hierarchical treatment of participation, 'citizen control' is placed at the top, while 'manipulation' sits at the bottom. As Jeremy Till notes, the fact that 'placation' - soothing or mollifying gestures on the part of the architect - sits just up from the halfway mark indicates that it is a professionally acceptable form of participation. In fact, the dominant form of participation in architecture or city planning is placation. Henry Sanoff, one of the main proponents of participation in architecture argues that, "participants have a sense of influencing the design process... it is not so much the degree to which individual needs have been met, but the feeling of having influenced decisions."<sup>12</sup> Participatory practices in architecture often act as soothing, placebo-like gestures, and can come in the form of barefaced manipulation. An example of the later is seen in the remarks of E.E. Lozano, a US community designer; "community designers should steer the decision making process towards desired goals... designers must function in communities both as interpreters and as agents of change who challenge anti-urban values."<sup>13</sup> While this is a blatant example of manipulation, often the discourse is more subtle, or hidden, framed in such desires for 'educating users.'<sup>14</sup> For an explanation of why this is so, we will turn to a classic theory of democratic participation.

In her book, Participation and Democratic Theory, Carole Pateman contrasts 'classical' democratic theory with what she terms contemporary theories of democracy. The former

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<sup>11</sup> Sherry Arnstein, "The Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the Institute of American Planners* 34, no. 4 (1969).

<sup>12</sup> H. Sanoff, "The Application of Participatory Methods in Design and Evaluation," *Design Studies* 6, no. 4 (1985).

<sup>13</sup> E.E. Lozano, *Community Design and Culture of Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> Watts & Hirst, "User Participation in the Early Stages of Building Design," *Design Studies* 3, no. 1 (1982). p. 17.

refers to democratic theories put forward by James Mill, Jeremy Bentham Jean Jacques Rousseau, J.S. Mill, and G.D.H. Cole. In these theories, and especially the latter three, the participation of the individual in political decision-making is of paramount importance. For these 'classical' theorists, participation has wide functions and is central to the establishment and maintenance of the democratic polity. Participation is seen as an educative process that has 'psychological' effects on the participants. Davis says that 'classical' theory can incorporate, "the education of an entire people to the point where their intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities have reached their full potential and they are joined, freely and actively in a genuine community."<sup>15</sup> Participation is part of an educative process where "the individual will eventually come to feel little or no conflict between the demands of the public and private spheres."<sup>16</sup> Importantly, participation "increases the feeling among individual citizens that they belong in their community."<sup>17</sup> As Jeremy Till notes, this form of participation is transformative in that its goal is to empower the citizen.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to 'classical' theories, Pateman examines several leading contemporaneous theories of democracy leading up to 1970 when the book was published. It is important to point out that Pateman perceives these theories to be a reaction to two developments, one intellectual, and one geo-historical. The size and complexity of industrialized societies with bureaucratic forms of organization cast serious doubts on the attainability of

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<sup>15</sup> L. Davis as quoted in C Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). p.21.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.25.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p.27.

<sup>18</sup> J. Till, "The Negotiation of Hope " in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. Peter Blundell-Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till (London: Spon Press, 2005).

democracy as it was commonly understood. The resulting development of political sociology in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century provoked appeals for broad amendments to 'classical' theory, or even its outright rejection. Democracy, as rule by the people by means of the maximum amount of participation, was understood as an unrealizable ideal. A choice became apparent between a 'classical' democracy or an organized society. This was a choice that seemed indispensable in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when understood against the background of rising totalitarian forms of government.

Distilling the works of Joseph Schumpeter, Bernard R Berelson, Robert A Dahl, Giovanni Sartori and Harry Eckstein, Pateman produces an empirical and descriptive contemporary theory of democracy.<sup>19</sup> The overriding concern of contemporary theories of democracy is to maintain stability of the state, for which a certain amount, but not too much, participation is necessary: "Thus we arrive at the argument that the amount of participation that actually obtains is just about the amount that is required for a stable system of democracy."<sup>20</sup> Specifically, participation should extend to the election of public officials and no more, for as Schumpeter states, "the electoral mass is incapable of action other than a stampede."<sup>21</sup> The reasoning behind this statement is that the perceived apathetic and politically uninvolved common citizen [sic], who stems from lower socio-economic situations, tends more towards non-democratic [read: communist] ideals. What are the causes of this apathy? Pateman points out that Sartori was one of the very few democratic theorists who actually posed this question. His answer serves to highlight to

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<sup>19</sup> These people are leading theorists representing an array of disciplinary approaches to democratic theory including the history of economic thought, behavioural science, political science, and social science.

<sup>20</sup> Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*. p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Schumpeter, as quoted in Ibid. p. 5.

whom they were responsible to, however, is disappointing; the apathy of the masses is “nobody’s fault in particular, and it is time we stopped seeking scapegoats.”<sup>22</sup> Limiting participation thus promotes the status quo. “In short, limited participation and apathy have a positive function for the whole system by cushioning the shock of disagreement, adjustment and change.”<sup>23</sup>

Participation, in politics as well as architecture, can and should be transformative. It can and should work towards producing community involvement and identity. It can and should stimulate intellectual, emotional, and moral values and attitudes towards issues of social and environmental sustainability. Despite Jeremy Tills’ assertion that, “full participation is an ideal, but an impossible one to achieve in architecture,”<sup>24</sup> I will show through the case studies that while full participation may be elusive, it is nonetheless being sought and sometimes achieved. Participatory architecture does not have to be a centrally organized activity facilitated by the state and an architect; it can consist of an individual or group of individuals who work for the benefit of themselves and others without being facilitated by an “expert.”

## **1.2 Intellectual Framework**

At the heart of this thesis are three case studies, which examine instances of participatory architecture on the Plateau Mont Royal. The studies intend to offer a description and in depth qualitative analysis of specific events or realities delineated both in time and space. The goal of these investigations is to understand how the interventions under

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<sup>22</sup> Sartori, quoted in Ibid. p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Till, “The Negotiation of Hope”. p. 27.

consideration came about in order to facilitate the creation of similar projects and to provide avenues for future research on similar urban interventions. The case studies are both illustrative and exploratory. They are illustrative in the sense that they describe the domain of participatory architecture by using three instances to analyze a theoretical paradigm. The studies are exploratory in that they raise new questions, probe new theoretical combinations, and test methods of gathering data, such as semi-structured interviews, that are not usually considered by architectural discourse.

The domain that the case studies describe is space, or more specifically, the contemporary urban space of the Plateau Mont Royal. In particular, I will be looking at the spatiality of human life - how human life interacts with space and vice versa. This includes the concepts of home, location, place, city, territory, environment, streets, gardens, etc. I will be considering social space; i.e. space not forged by nature, but produced by society. Borrowing from Henri Lefebvre, I am “concerned with logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias.”<sup>25</sup> Lefebvre’s ideas on space, capitalism, the everyday and alienation play a key role throughout this thesis.

Generally in the human sciences, space has been considered secondary, or an additive to historiographical and sociographical research. Philosophy and critical theory have tended to consider space as a frozen container, or as a background to events which are

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<sup>25</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991). p. 11-12.

dynamically constituted by an historically conscious construction and reproduction of social relations, and a socially conscious making of history.<sup>26</sup> This disinterest in space is due to what Henri Lefebvre calls the *realistic illusion* and the *illusion of transparency*.<sup>27</sup>

The realistic illusion stems from a shortsighted interpretation of spatiality that has its roots in the empiricist legacy stemming from Cartesian mind/body dualism, and which became entrenched in Enlightenment science and philosophy. Space is conceived of as an aggregate of physical objects. Space is conceptualized and theorized as objective appearance that can be empirically ordered and rationally understood. Abstract rationality naturalizes and universalizes the production of space such that the spatial organisation of society is understood as a natural, mechanical or organic process. Critical of this 'empiricist myopia,' Edward Soja says, "what they [positivist and empiricist theorizations of space] fail to see are the conflictual social origins of spatiality and its problematic production and reproduction."<sup>28</sup>

While this myopia precludes seeing past the opaqueness of objective appearances, the illusion of transparency sees through the concrete spatiality of social life. This view sees the production of space as a direct correlation to planned or mental space; space is understood as a production of idealist thought. "Spatiality, with occasional nods to its actual physical appearances and social origins, is considered primarily as a mental ordering of phenomena which is either intuitive and given or alternatively relativised into

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<sup>26</sup> Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996). p.44.

<sup>27</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. pp. 27-30.

<sup>28</sup> Edward W. Soja, "The Spatiality of Social Life: Towards a Transformative Retheorisation," in *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, ed. Urry Gregory, J (London: Macmillan, 1985). p. 101.

various and variable 'ways of thinking.'"<sup>29</sup> Kant, in his *Prolegomena* and his *Critique of Pure Reason* established an ideational understanding of space with his categorical imperatives, which has been proliferated through neo-Kantian interpretations of space. Instead of understanding the production and reproduction of space as problematic and politically motivated, the illusion of transparency suggests how space tends to be understood as a mental construct.

For Lefebvre, spatiality is of paramount importance. He writes,

The study of space offers an answer according to which the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing the space itself. Failing this, these relations would remain in the realm of 'pure' abstraction – that is to say, in the realm of representations and hence of ideology: the realm of verbalism, verbiage and empty words.<sup>30</sup>

That is to say that all social relations become real or concrete when they are inscribed in space through the social production of social space. There is no unspatialized social reality. As Edward Soja says on this issue, "even in the realm of pure abstraction, ideology and representation, there is a pervasive and pertinent, if often hidden, spatial dimension."<sup>31</sup> Social reality is presuppositionally and ontologically spatial. Spatiality is one part of an ontological trialectic which, along with historicity and sociality, provides the grounds of what the world must be like for us to have knowledge of it. Many critical philosophers, including Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Sartre and critical theorists including Kracauer, Simmel,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 102.

<sup>30</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. p.129.

<sup>31</sup> Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. p. 46.



Benjamin and Harvey have attempted to reactivate space. Yet, while contesting the historical tendency to ignore space, these efforts fall short of considering the full extent of space as a fully active element in ontological and epistemological suppositions. No one person has done more to re-introduce space into the ontological trialectic, and to assert the significance of space for social theory and philosophy than Henri Lefebvre.

Being-in-the-world, understood as Heidegger's *Dasein*, or Sartre's *être-là*, is ontologically historical, social and spatial. This ontological starting point has important consequences for individuals. As Soja says, "we are first and always historical-social-spatial beings, actively participating individually and collectively in the construction/production – the 'becoming' – of histories, geographies, societies."<sup>32</sup>

Another way of saying this is that social space, the urban space as we know it, is a social product. It is produced by society, and in a dialectical manner, produces society itself. A student of Lefebvre's, Manuel Castells, will go even further, saying that "space is not 'a reflection of society,' it *is* society."<sup>33</sup>

Lefebvre divides social space into three overlapping categories, the perceived, the conceived and the lived, which correlate to three "moments of social space"; respectively, spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation. Spatial practice essentially creates material space through everyday usage and is thus perceived space. It produces a spatiality that "embraces production and reproduction, and the particular

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1983). p. 4

locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation.”<sup>34</sup> “The spatial practice of a society secretes that society’s space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it.”<sup>35</sup> Spatial practice is thus both a medium and outcome of human activity. It is also the primary focus of attention for all the spatial disciplines.<sup>36</sup>

Representations of space “are tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations.”<sup>37</sup> This is the space of traditional architects and city planners who equate space with that which is conceived. Lefebvre was no major supporter of architects and planners. Adrian Forty, in his book *Words and Buildings*, summarizes Lefebvre’s complaints about these professions.<sup>38</sup> They do not create with pure freedom as they contend; that is their vision is constituted through the space in which they live. The space in which they work is not neutral, but is laden with historical and social value, which is often not recognized. Architectural drawing and rendering are tools for abstracting and homogenizing space for purposes of exchange and are thereby drained of life experience. Drawing privileges the eye and sustains the tendency for image and spectacle to take the place of reality. Finally, Lefebvre feels that architecture is responsible for making space appear homogenous by reducing the real to a plan that is not endowed with other qualities. Representations of space are also connected to the production of space - especially the order of space that is

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<sup>34</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. p. 33.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings : A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000).

imposed. "Such order is constituted via control over knowledge, signs, and codes: over the means of deciphering spatial practice and hence over the production of spatial knowledge."<sup>39</sup> For Lefebvre this is the dominant space of any society – "a storehouse of epistemological power."<sup>40</sup> This mental, or conceived space, is the representation of power, ideology, control and surveillance. It is also the space of utopian thought.

Spaces of representation, the third "moment of social space" is definitely the most difficult to understand, because by definition it is open and unable to pin down. It is both distinct from the other two spaces, but encompasses them at the same time. Spaces of representation embody "complex symbolisms, sometimes coded sometimes not."<sup>41</sup> They are linked to that part of sociality, which is "clandestine or underground." It is related to art, which Lefebvre feels may become understood less as a code of space, than as a code of spaces of representation. This is the space that is directly lived, "through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'."<sup>42</sup> This is also the dominated space, the one "which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate," overlaying physical space and "making symbolic use of its objects."<sup>43</sup> "Combining the real and the imagined, things and thought on equal terms, or at least not privileging one over the other a priori, these lived spaces of representation are thus the terrain for the generation of 'counterspaces'<sup>44</sup>, 'spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning.'<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. p. 67.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 67.

<sup>41</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. p. 33.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>44</sup> For more information on counterspaces, see M Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 1, no. 11 (1986).

<sup>45</sup> Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. p. 68.

Lefebvre's spaces of representation is the space which is of most interest for this thesis. It is the space in which I attempt to dwell in examining the three case studies – assuming the role simultaneously of perceptual being, analytic investigator and user/participant. In this space I use material analytic methods to come to an understanding of the socio/historical/spatial context in which the interventions outlined in the case studies come into existence, and continue to exist. My methodology here is to complete historical and sociological analyses of the Plateau Mont Royal in general, and the sites of the interventions in particular, to gain an understanding of the power mechanisms at work. Lefebvre's understanding of capitalist spatiality plays an especially important role for situating the practices under investigation. Further, various forms of spatial analysis are employed to investigate the nature of the spaces in which the interventions occur to better understand the implications they have on our sensual experience. Concurrently with material analysis, I use idealistic methods to come to an understanding of these sites as both perceptual bystander and active user/participant. In the first case study I refer to David Cooper's notion of virtues associated with garden practice. In the second case study Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and Heidegger's notion of *alethia* play a prominent role in theorizing the embodied being's interaction with an artwork. Finally, in the third case study, the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty plays a large role in re-conceptualizing architecture as a multi-sensorial engagement. Although the interweaving of these materialist and idealist ideologies inherent in these works in no way represents a hermetic conjunction between the two, it does represent an

attempt to disclose bridges between, and perhaps go beyond, these disparate schools of thought in the understanding of the user in participatory practices.

The choice to dwell in spaces of representation is primarily a political choice. Firstly, in engaging with the interventions not merely as an analytic observer, but as a perceptual and active participant, I follow a host of thinkers from Cicero to Lefebvre who believe that theory must be accompanied by practice. Understanding that society produces space as space produces society, I feel there is an incumbent responsibility on citizens to ameliorate their environments through ethical action. This is what Soja calls spatial praxis; “the active and informed attempt by spatially-conscious social actors to reconstitute the embracing spatiality of social life.”<sup>46</sup> The choice to engage in spatial production is also a selfish one. I believe, along with Lefebvre, that alienation can only be transcended through active engagement in physical space.

Secondly, my political project is to elevate the traditional understanding of the user/inhabitant as a passive placated spectator to a creative participant, and thus suggest the existence of opportunities for people to actively and consciously engage with their environments in an emancipatory spatial praxis. In the face of declining social and environmental habitats, which will be elaborated upon in Chapter 2, I do not place faith in technological solutions nor the leadership of business and state. Rather, I contend that only conscious and ethical social actors can lead our civilization from the brink of social and ecological devastation. The prevalence of market capitalism in contemporary society

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<sup>46</sup> Soja, " The Spatiality of Social Life: Towards a Transformative Retheorisation." p. 114.

has been theorized to undermine communal ideals,<sup>47</sup> homogenize individual consumers and suppress self-expression,<sup>48</sup> limit freedoms by enforcing particular views of reality and render everyday life less diverse and more passive.<sup>49</sup> Thus my work, by focusing on the active and creative aspects of users, intends to offer examples of how to renegotiate these worrying trends.

The user continues to be marginalized in architectural practice and discourse. The dominant way of looking at architecture from a practical and critical standpoint is through the architect/client model. The user is seldom included in the hierarchy. We see this in academic architectural discourse and in images of architecture, which are rarely sullied by the people actually using the building. Modernist architects, (as we will see in Chapter 2) in trying to build an ostensibly socially progressive architecture, do include an idea of the user in their plans, but this user is a passive universal character who is theorized to fit in very well with their determinist designs.

More recently, two British architectural historians, Jonathan Hill and Jeremy Till, have begun to examine the role of the user more closely in relation to participatory architecture. Till writes that, "participation presents a threat to many of the central tenets of architecture and the profession does what it can (either knowingly or by default) to resist that threat."<sup>50</sup> Till explains the threat by referring to the tension between the ideals

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<sup>47</sup> Robert V. Kozinets, "Can Consumers Escape the Market? Emancipatory Illuminations from Burning Man," *Journal of Consumer Research* 29, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>48</sup> Melanie Wallendorf and Eric Arnold, "We Gather Together: Consumption Rituals of Thanksgiving Day," *Journal of Consumer Research* 18 (1991).

<sup>49</sup> Douglas B. Holt, "Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption?," *Journal of Consumer Research* 25 (1998).

<sup>50</sup> Till, "The Negotiation of Hope ". p.29.

and reality of architectural practice. The ideals of architecture, as represented by the Vitruvian triad of commodity, firmness and delight are undermined by reality as represented by user demands, which are brought forward earlier along a time line with participatory architectural practices.<sup>51</sup> Commodity can be upset by the unpredictable and contingent uses and practices of the user. Also, the user generally does not place as high a value on aesthetic refinement and cutting-edge aesthetic considerations as the architect. While architects are likely more aware of contemporary trends in design, the user often attracted to more traditional aesthetic codes. Finally, the user may have other important issues which are not considered by the Vitruvian triad such as political and social issues. Thus including the user in the design process will often bring these disparate concerns together sooner and can spoil the architect's nicely laid plans.

Moreover, the inclusion of the user in participatory architecture can devalue the knowledge and power of the architect and the profession of architecture. Architecture, like all professional domains, relies on an exclusive access to a defined knowledge base. The more exclusive this knowledge base is, the better it is remunerated – such as the salary difference between a heart surgeon and a general practitioner. This knowledge base is protected by law, in that all architects are certified and receive a number registering them as part of the profession. Knowledge is protected as well in the form of drawn codes, the blueprints, technical elevations and such, which represent a communicative border between the architect and the user. “Participation thus constitutes

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<sup>51</sup> Commodity refers to solving a problem of function in as efficient manner as possible. Firmness refers to technical soundness - that a building will stand up to the elements, or ideally employing technology as a sign of progress. Delight refers to a polishing of forms in accordance with prevailing aesthetic sensibilities.

a double bind – the need to reassess what constitutes their [architect's] knowledge but also the worry that in so doing one may no longer be seen as an architect.”<sup>52</sup>

In 2003, Jonathan Hill undertook what I consider to be the most rigorous theorization of the user to date. In *Actions of Architecture: architects and creative users*, Hill identifies three types of users: the passive, reactive and creative. The hierarchy of architect and user continues to be evident today, and is maintained by what Hill terms the “denial of the user” – that a building need not be occupied to be called architecture – and “the control of the user,” which attributes behaviours to the user, based on notions of what the architect deems acceptable.<sup>53</sup> He identifies four models of the passive user; functionalist, relationship of director to actor, contemplation of art, and habit. The user in the functionalist scenario is akin to a technical operator learning to use a machine – the correct way. Architects working in this manner understand the user as obedient, predictable and determined. This is the most familiar means to define and diminish the user, and it is akin to the second category, the user as actor. This second category differs from the first in that it makes an emotive plea. “It is common for an architect to describe a building as a sequence of emotive spatial experience shared by all users.”<sup>54</sup> The architect directs the user through this emotional spatial sequence. The third category likens a building to a work of art where the user contemplates the building as they would an artwork in the gallery. These three categories all define the user as a passive abstraction and hold the architect up as the active creative party in the relationship. They

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<sup>52</sup> Till, “The Negotiation of Hope ”. p.32.

<sup>53</sup> Jonathan Hill, *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003). p. 10.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 18.



each also present a limited understanding of the experience of a building. The fourth category, habit, is applicable to users who use a building over and over. It undermines both user and architect for whereas the first three affirm the status of the architect, habit, “appears to be an unrewarding model of the user because there is no obvious and recognized expertise associated with it for them [architects] to claim.”<sup>55</sup>

The conception of the reactive user is understood by Hill to be an historical reaction against functionalist strategies. As we will see in Chapter 2, there was a plethora of post-war architectural strategies, which attempted to acknowledge the individuality of the user in specific contexts. These strategies theorized a reactive user who engaged in design and modified space as the situation required, but within a limited framework largely defined by the architect. Hill lists several post-war strategies engaged in theorizing the reactive user including flexibility, polyvalence, hedonistic modernism, narrative, form against function, and user collaboration.<sup>56</sup>

Finally we come to the creative user, whom Hill defines as either creating a new space or giving an existing one new meanings and uses.<sup>57</sup> In the chapter on creative users however, Hill disappoints. Like virtually all the architect-trained architectural historians I have encountered through my research, Hill shows the architect’s bias in disfavouring users. A graduate from the Architectural Association (AA), he fills this chapter with criticism of architects and planners put forward by the Situationist Internationale, and then proceeds to elaborate on the work of Bernard Tschumi, a former professor at the AA

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p. 27.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

in the early seventies, who creates places for the illusive creative user. The chapter, however, actually has very little to say about “creative users.” Nonetheless, there are three points Hill makes which will help us in understanding the creative user. The first is a point derived from Foucault’s *Space, Knowledge and Power* (1984), which states that the experience of a building depends not only on its design, but its management. This suggests that the creative user may intervene not only in the design and construction of the built environment, but in its maintenance as well. The second point is that in creative use, appropriation is a key element. He defers to Lefebvre who, “describes the user in two ways, as a negative abstraction [as we have seen], and as an appropriator attacking the functionalist domination and fragmentation of spatial practice.”<sup>58</sup> The third useful point that Hill makes derives from the work of Iain Borden where user creativity can be conceptual and constructional (these being closer to the conventional realm of architect), and mental, bodily, and physical (these being closer to the conventional realm of the user). Borden, in *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body* (2001), writes about the architecture of skateboarding where appropriation and creative use transpires through movement and projection of the body onto the physical environment.

The case studies will show that the space forged by creative users does indeed give new meaning and use to existing space. These spatial actors also appropriate the space, albeit sometimes temporarily. In my role, as non-architect, and as user/participant, I hope to avoid the typical bias of architect-academics and shed light from a different angle on the conceptualization of the so-called creative user. Concurrently, one of the goals of this thesis is to propose opportunities to realize participatory practices for creative users. This

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 65.

entails not only an examination of creative users, but also their context. As such, the geographical, social, historical and cultural context informing the case studies, taken as an aggregate, must be taken into account. In the next section I will suggest reasons why the Plateau Mont Royal, where all of the participatory practices outlined in the case studies take place, makes an excellent venue for the efforts of what Hill calls creative users.

### **1.3 Plateau Mont Royal**

The Plateau Mont Royal, or the Plateau for short, is one of nineteen boroughs of the City of Montreal. The Plateau is just over 7 km<sup>2</sup> in area and sits in close proximity to the northeast of downtown (figure 1). The Plateau is a natural plateau that sits to the north of the “Montreal Escarpment.” Sherbrooke Street forms the southern border with a steep hill below it. In the southwest, it is defined by McGill University and Mount Royal, which are highly visible borders. To the north and east, the Plateau is defined by a continuous train track. Parc Lafontaine, in the east accentuates the eastern border. These natural and built topological features contribute to the Plateau’s identity by giving it physical shape and presence.

The present population of the Plateau is not particularly diverse, and may in fact be becoming more homogenous. The escalation of housing prices on the Plateau in the past four years has probably contributed to this trend as more affluent residents push out lower income ones. This is reflected in the fact that working residents of the Plateau make up 73% of the population, more than 10% higher than the Montreal average, making the

Plateau the most important concentration of working residents in the city.<sup>59</sup> The average salary is \$27,464, about a thousand dollars less than the city's average with 32% of the residents existing on low-income revenues.<sup>60</sup> Based on statistics obtained by Census Canada in 2000, in terms of ethnic make-up, the population of the Plateau is overwhelmingly of Canadian-European origin with approximately 70% of the population coming from Canada or European countries. Visible minorities form only 12% of the population, with Chinese and Latin-American peoples comprising respectively 21% and 20% of the visible minority population.<sup>61</sup> The present ethnic homogeneity and relative affluence of the population has spared the Plateau from having to contend with any serious social conflicts.

The Plateau, like most of Montreal outside of the neighbourhood abutting the old port, was planned, albeit "lightly" planned. The grid pattern was not superimposed, but evolved from older farmer's fields in place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, developers acted without much state interference, and in their own financial interest. As a result, long narrow blocks are filled with long narrow lots, usually three stories high to maximize housing density and the developer's profit. Back alleys, of which there are many, were created to service the houses with coal, food and water from the rear, instead of making space along-side the houses which would have reduced the area of the flats for sale or rent.

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<sup>59</sup> *Profil Socio-Économique: Arrondissement Du Plateau-Mont-Royal* (Ville de Montreal, 2004 [cited August 17 2006]); available from <https://servicesenligne2.ville.montreal.qc.ca:443/sel/publications/PorteAccesTelechargement?lng=Fr&systemName=809445&client=Pla>.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

The Plateau has a long history that goes back to the establishment of noble fiefs on the island of Montreal in 1671 by the Gentlemen of Saint-Sulpice Seminary in Paris, who were granted the island as a seigneurie in 1663. Noble fiefs were set up all around the periphery of the island as self-sufficient fortified outposts whose owners had to live there, attract colonists, and provide a strategic location for defence of the island. From its earliest times, Boulevard St-Laurent, now known as “The Main” on the Plateau, connected the fortified town of Ville Marie to Sault-au-Récollet, on the banks of Rivière de Prairies, which was made a parish in 1736. St-Laurent, then, dates back to Montreal’s earliest history. This transportation corridor was used by immigrants to access the island because the boulevard’s southern origin is located in the old port. Eventually, as Montreal became a bilingual city with two main cultures, St-Laurent formed the border between the French in the east and the English in the west. It continues to be the east/west partition in the city and the physical manifestation of the divide between the “two solitudes” – English and French. Successive waves of immigrants such as Jews, Greeks, Vietnamese and Portuguese made their way up from the port. Various waves of immigrants left traces of their societies in the form of architectural decoration, restaurants, stores and bars. Thus the built environment of the Plateau is rich in diversity. From this multicultural hodgepodge many of Montreal’s most acclaimed artists emerged, such as Mordecai Richler, Leonard Cohen, Michel Tremblay and Yves Beauchemin. The artistic presence has grown over the years.

The Plateau continues to be home to many artists. According to a study conducted by Hill Strategies based on 2001 Canadian census data, Montreal is home to five of the ten most artistic<sup>62</sup> urban neighbourhoods (as defined by postal codes) in Canada – more than any other city.<sup>63</sup> Significantly, three of these communities are located on the Plateau (with the other two communities being adjacent to the Plateau), including the H2W neighbourhood which counts 8% of the population working in artistic capacities – more than any other neighbourhood in Canada, and ten times the national average.

The Plateau is a “creative community” as understood by Richard Florida, which is a community with a high proportion of artists who prefer neighbourhoods that permit or encourage individuality, self expression, openness to difference, and rich multidimensional experiences.<sup>64</sup> Florida goes on to assert that creative people like to live in communities “that enable us to reflect and reinforce our identities as creative people...”<sup>65</sup> Arguably, the Plateau is home to many creative people who may become creative users in the sense of Hill. Further, the interventions which are the subject of the case studies are more tolerated than in other areas of the city because they reinforce artistic identities and the identity of the Plateau as a creative community.

The Plateau has the densest population of the city at 13,096/km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>66</sup> It is also arguably home to the most progressive population in Montreal. This is evidenced in the last

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<sup>62</sup> Consisting of actors; artisans and craftspersons; conductors, composers and arrangers; dancers; musicians and singers; other performers (such as circus performers and puppeteers); painters, sculptors and other visual artists; producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations; and writers.

<sup>63</sup> Hill Strategies Research Inc., “Artists by Neighbourhood in Canada,” (2005).

<sup>64</sup> Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002). p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> Wikipedia, “List of Selected Cities by Population Density,” (2006).

municipal elections, as the Plateau elected the only member of *Projet Montreal* to council. *Projet Montreal* is by far the most progressive party in Montreal as evidenced by their policies, which encourage socially and environmentally responsible governance. Their platform promotes mass transportation, more room for cyclists and pedestrians, social housing, and increased green spaces.<sup>67</sup>

The Plateau is a distinctive neighbourhood in Montreal with its own identity as an artistic, progressive borough. There are several factors that contribute to this identity, including the area's topography, a progressive society, its cultural history, and its present-day artistic climate. This identity makes the Plateau an excellent place for creative users to experiment with different tactics for engaging with the built environment.

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<sup>67</sup> Projet Montreal, "Projet Montreal," (2006).

## **Chapter 2 - The decline of architecture and the rise of participation**

### **2.1 Modernist architecture and CIAM**

The term “participatory architecture” does not suggest a monolithic way of incorporating the user into architectural processes. There are various ways of integrating the user in multiple stages of the conceptual, design, construction, and maintenance processes. Participation in architecture became an increasingly visible strategy during the counter-cultural period of the 1960s with many practices desiring to be more socially responsible than had been demonstrated by modernist architectural practices until then. These practices form the major historical precedents for contemporary articulations of participatory architecture.

This chapter will briefly introduce the origins of modern architecture before providing an account of modernist architecture and town planning as exemplified by Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM). CIAM influenced a generation of modernist town planners, and negatively fed into the formation of participatory strategies after the organization was dissolved in 1956. The tangible results of their ideas and actions will be explored through an examination of Montreal's planning efforts in the 1960s. These efforts, together with the investigation into CIAM, is the basis on which I will elucidate the modern crisis in architectural credibility. Against this backdrop I mine the field of participatory architectural practices from the 1960's to delineate major themes that will help to approach and define participatory architecture.



The roots of what Habermas calls the ‘project of modernity’ started to come into focus in eighteenth century Europe as a reaction to the chaotic dissolution of normative social, political and economic order.<sup>68</sup> Enlightenment thinkers, motivated by notions of reform and challenges to traditional cultural authority, placed confidence in rational systems of thought and scientific investigation to improve the human condition. “The development of rational forms of social organization and rational modes of thought promised liberation from the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition, release from the arbitrary use of power as well as from the dark side of our own human natures.”<sup>69</sup>

Alberto Perez-Gomez recognizes Claude Perrault (1613-1688) as an incipient modernist architect with his eastern façade for the Louvre, built between 1665 and 1680. Perez-Gomez argues that this first instance of a paired-column colonnade adorning the eastern façade (figure 2) represents a break from historical and academic architecture.<sup>70</sup> Perez-Gomez demonstrates how Perrault sought to establish his own rules for his architectural creation, rather than relying on classical conceptions of established orders. Increasingly, architectural practice would move away from historical architecture towards more rational design as evidenced in the work of Claude Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806) (figure 3). Ledoux’s minimally ornamented work shows an increasingly rational approach to architecture where the function of the building plays a large role in its design.

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<sup>68</sup> Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity: An Incomplete Project," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983). p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990). p. 12.

<sup>70</sup> Perez-Gomez & Pelletier, *Architecture, Ethics and Technology* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994).

Modernist architecture, with emphasis on rationality and non-historical forms, became irrevocably intertwined with functionalism in the work of later “classically” modernist architects such as Le Corbusier (1887-1965), Sigfried Giedion (1883 – 1968) and Walter Gropius (1883-1969) among others. These architects, captivated with the new powerful machines of the 19<sup>th</sup> century set out to create architecture that would mimic the efficiency and sleekness of a machine. As Le Corbusier famously said, “the house is a machine to live in.”<sup>71</sup> Many of these architects, motivated by the swelling populations of cities resulting from the industrial revolution, began to concentrate their efforts on designing cities with the same characteristics as their buildings. This is important not only because it marks urbanism as a priority of architects, but also because it represents architecture’s overt effort to engage in social concerns. Much of the work done under the auspices of social reformation through architecture was proliferated through the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*.

Le Courbusier was a key organizer, along with Gabriel Guevrekian (1923-1987) and Sigfried Giedion, of the first CIAM meeting that took place at the Chateau La Sarraz, in Switzerland, June 1928. CIAM was a communications and theory-development organization that held ten large conferences over the span of 28 years. The significance of CIAM, as a mouthpiece for modern architecture, is that it exercised great influence over the built environment in many parts of the world. Eric Mumford, who recently wrote one of two<sup>72</sup> authoritative accounts of CIAM, entitled *The CIAM discourse on Urbanism, 1928 – 1960*, says, “CIAM... was a major force in creating a unified sense of what is

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<sup>71</sup> Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986).

<sup>72</sup> The other being Martin Steinmann’s *CIAM Dokumente 1928-1939* (not yet translated into English)

now usually known as the Modern Movement in architecture.”<sup>73</sup> This was accomplished by CIAM’s communicating to a specialized audience through print media and attendance at congresses, and to a mass audience through the built form and its images. The ideas generated or communicated by CIAM gained force through their dissemination by its many famous members such as the aforementioned Le Corbusier and Giedion as well as Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra (1892-1970), José Luis Sert (1902-1983), Mart Stam (1899-1987), Alison (1928-1993) and Peter Smithson (1923-2003), Aldo Van Eyck (1918-1999), Philip Johnson (1906-2005), Kenzo Tange (1913-2005), and Alfred Roth (1924-2002).

CIAM ostensibly set out to promote social justice and modern architecture. Because of its early social democratic ideals, it is tempting to say that CIAM was left leaning. However, besides many leftist or communist members there were also Fascist members, and members who willingly worked for Hitler’s Nationalist Socialist regime.<sup>74</sup> From primary and secondary sources, what comes through the historical record especially at the beginning and the very late years, is a desire to integrate architecture with socially democratic and humanist concerns. As an example, here is a segment from Gropius’ lecture at CIAM 2 Frankfurt supporting high-rise apartment buildings. The high-rise had,

the biologically important advantages of more sun and light, larger distances between neighbouring buildings, and the possibility of providing extensive, connected parks and play areas between the blocks. It thus appears necessary to develop the high-rise apartment building technically,

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<sup>73</sup> Eric Mumford, *The Ciam Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000). p.1.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p.5.

incorporating into its design the ideas of the centralized master household.<sup>75</sup>

“CIAM defined a new and perhaps overly ambitious socially transformative role for architects and architecture...”<sup>76</sup> The approach to the built environment espoused by the group was that physical design rather than political action could solve the despairingly poor living conditions in modern cities.<sup>77</sup> As Le Corbusier wrote, “Architecture or revolution. Revolution can be avoided.”<sup>78</sup> For Le Corbusier this betrayed a certain elitism which would infiltrate CIAM in the mid to late years. In their zeal to promote modern architecture they sought out powerful authorities, those that could overwhelm opposition, towards having their ideas realized. “By the mid-1930’s Le Corbusier and other CIAM members were making CIAM into a kind of syndicalist political party of architects, devoted to the goal of furthering modern architecture and oriented toward winning over any suitable modernizing “authority” to the cause, regardless of political orientation.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, although the political motivation of CIAM started out in the direction of social democracy, it evolved into an elitist organization interested in pursuing its own authoritative program.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that CIAM had a major influence on both practice and theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both Sert’s Urban Design program at Harvard (now recognized as the best in the world) and Team 10, a group of socially-conscious architects established in the 1950s, are immediate legacies of CIAM. Together with

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<sup>75</sup> Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture*, 1st ed. (New York,: Harper, 1955). p.116.

<sup>76</sup> Mumford, *The Ciam Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*. p.4.

<sup>77</sup> As is demonstrated in CIAM’s 1929 Frankfurt congress entitled, “The Minimum Subsistence Dwelling.”

<sup>78</sup> Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*. p. 269.

<sup>79</sup> Mumford, *The Ciam Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*. p.6.

journals, symposia and advocacy performed by former members, CIAM has continued to exercise an influence over contemporary architecture. As Mumford states, “much of the international network now in place involved with conceptualizing and re-conceptualizing the role of architects in the design of urban environments can be traced back to CIAM.”<sup>80</sup>

Probably the best known product of CIAM was The Athens Charter. It was drawn up as a result of the 4<sup>th</sup> CIAM congress, entitled The Functional City, which took place in 1933 on board a cruise ship in the Mediterranean, the SS Patris II, and was facilitated by the founder of the *Cahiers d'Art*, Christian Zervos. The Athens Charter, published in 1942 after heavy editing by Le Corbusier, proposed a 95-point program for planning and construction of rational cities, and addressed topics such as high-rise residential blocks, strict zoning, and the preservation of historic districts and buildings. The key concepts of the Charter were to divide the city into four independent functional zones; living, working, recreation and transportation. These concepts, together denoting “the functionalist city,” were distributed throughout the world by CIAM’s members and taken up by disparate governmental authorities. Examples include Mart Stam’s plans for post-war Dresden, Le Corbusier’s plans for Chandigarh, India, Lúcio Costa’s Brasilia, Brazil, and Montreal’s 1960s planning efforts. Many cities in North America like Boston, New York and Chicago, adopted mass housing plans that stemmed from CIAM initiatives.

Modernist urban planning, emphasizing rigid functionalism and determinism, has left a legacy that is often viewed as negative. The failure of CIAM and modernist city planning in general has been written about extensively by numerous prominent thinkers. A former

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 267.

member of Team 10, Giancarlo De Carlo, has written several scathing critiques of CIAM and modernist city planning. Jane Jacobs vehemently criticised mass housing and masterplanning initiatives in her classic work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Richard Sennett has practically made a profession of criticising modernist town planning.<sup>81</sup>

There are strong parallels between Montreal's post-war urban planning, and the discourse generated by the eighth CIAM conference entitled "CIAM 8: The Heart of the City," which took place near London, at Hoddesdon, UK in July, 1951. Both Montreal's planning bureau and the outcome of Hoddesdon advocated large interventions into the existing urban fabric to reinvigorate the centre. There were several crossovers between CIAM, Montreal and Canada which contributed to CIAM's influence over the Montreal plans. Peter Oberlander, who was put in charge of the Canadian CIAM team at Hoddesdon was living in Vancouver with his wife Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, and Jacqueline Tyrwhitt, the long time secretary of CIAM was teaching at the University of Toronto between 1952 and 1956. More locally, Sandy Van Ginkel, a member of CIAM and later Team 10 had moved to Montreal and married Blanche Lemco, both worked for the City Planning Department, and Van Ginkel contributed to the design of several projects including Place Victoria with Luigi Moretti. Further, Gilles Gagnon, a local architect, had attended CIAM 8, while the architect André Blouin was a strong and vocal supporter of Le Corbusier and modernist town planning.<sup>82</sup> To quote Michael Sorkin, a

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<sup>81</sup> Sennett's critiques of functional city planning can be read in many of his books including, *The Uses of Disorder: personal identity & city life* (1970) and *The Fall of Public Man* (1977).

<sup>82</sup> André Lortie, "Montreal 1960: The Singularities of a Metropolitan Archetype," in *The 60's Montreal Thinks Big*, ed. André Lortie (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004). p. 106.

New York based architect, speaking about Montreal in the 1960s, “the astonishing thing is that every single standard-issue piece of mid-century modernist strategizing happened here.”<sup>83</sup> Lastly, Pierre Lortie, the curator of the *Montreal Thinks Big* exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture from October 2004 to August 2005, makes mention of CIAM, calling one of the chapters in his essay, *Montreal 1960: The Singularities of a Metropolitan Archetype*, “CIAM’s Ultimate Dream.” Therein he draws specific parallels to Montreal’s “multilevel core” and discussions about similar subjects at Hoddesdon.<sup>84</sup>

For the delegates at Hoddesdon the rationale was to rehabilitate the city centre, which was envisioned as a heart pumping blood back into its arteries and giving new community life to post-war cities. For Montreal, the remarkable building that was done from roughly 1960 to the mid 1970s was largely the result of a economic, social and political factors. The post war economy was booming internationally as well as locally, as the manufacturing sector became reoriented from war-time efforts to civil concerns. Politically, Jean Lesage’s Liberal government introduced a vast amount of progressive legislative changes that was to have a dramatic effect on society during the period of the early 1960s known as the Quiet Revolution. Further, the vision and power of Montreal’s mayor Jean Drapeau, (in office for over thirty years) contributed to the rehabilitation of the centre, not least by ensuring that Expo 67 and the Olympics of 1976 would take place in Montreal. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, in 1960 demographers predicted that Montreal’s population (then at roughly 2.5 million inhabitants) would double to 5 million

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<sup>83</sup> Michael Sorkin, quoted in André Lortie, “Learning from Montreal,” in *The 60’s Montreal Thinks Big*, ed. André Lortie (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004). p. 149.

<sup>84</sup> André Lortie, *The 60’s Montreal Thinks Big* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004). p. 111.

by 1980, and stabilize at 7 million by the year 2000. Thus, Montreal planners embarked on a massive restructuring of their city to accommodate 7 million people. This was an unprecedented restructuring for Montreal, which in the course of the decade would see the construction of 12 skyscrapers, eleven bridges, nine highways, 26 kilometres of metro lines, and 2 islands to host Expo 67.

When the Montreal City Planning department was founded in 1941, it acted in reaction to private sector developments. For example it widened Boulevard René-Levesque (previously known as Dorchester Boulevard) in 1955 to allow for increased vehicular traffic. In 1960, however, facing a burgeoning population boom, the planning department moved from a reactive to a predictive force. In many ways the planners adopted strategies advocated and practiced by CIAM. The city was cut up into functional sections which would ground the development plans. Industrial zones were created along the Saint Lawrence Seaway representing the east-west axis, while housing was planned along the north-south axis up Highway 15 and down Highway 10. Commercial activity would take place in the heart of the city, downtown, and in suburban nodal points, which would all be connected by highways and bridges. These decisions contributed directly to a privileging of the car and the creation of single usage functional zones.

The regeneration of downtown Montreal's built environment was in effect an ideal moment to capitalize on property; a movement known as "urban renewal." So much of the rhetoric espoused by the CIAM Hoddesdon conference concerning locating administrative, commercial, leisure, and tertiary assets in the centre was vigorously



applied by Montreal's planners. Landowning corporations, most notably, the Canadian National Railroad (CNR), teamed up with corporate capital and state bureaucrats to develop the centre. The CNR converted their land holdings into riches by developing Place Ville Marie (I.M. Pei Association with local architects Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Michaud et Sise, 1962) and Place Bonaventure (Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Michaud et Sise, 1967). The CIBC developed a 45 story tower (Dickinson, Ross, Fish, Duschenes and Barrett, 1962) which was the tallest building in the Commonwealth of Nations upon its completion. Other large corporate developments included Place Victoria (Moretti, Nervi, Van Ginkel, 1966), the CIL building (Greenspoon, Freeland and Dunne, 1962), the Château Champlain hotel (Roger D'Astous et Jean-Paul Pothier, 1966), and Westmount Square (Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe, 1968). These projects developed not only the commercial sector but also the tertiary sector as most of the projects incorporated indoor shopping centres.

Governments on all levels also took the opportunity to consolidate their interests in downtown. Administrative offices were created for Hydro-Quebec (Gaston Gagnier, 1962) and Complex Desjardins (LaHaye et Ouellet, 1972), while the city of Montreal built a new courthouse (David and Boulva, 1971). Large cultural buildings were located in the centre such as Canada's Maison Radio Canada (Mathieu Godbout, 1972), Montreal's Place des Arts, and later the Olympic Village. There was even a plan to build a large university campus on the Plateau to be named Unest (Université de l'Est), and a massive sports and cultural complex called Place de la Confédération to the south of Place des Arts extending to what is now Complex Guy Favreau.

The concentration of the most important commercial, administrative, leisure and tertiary activities in the centre provided an irresistible opportunity for corporate and state interests to capitalize on their land holdings. Once land was freed from social uses through planners' abstracting mechanisms, and cleared of financially-disadvantaged people and their houses, corporate interests were free to exploit this valuable land in the centre. As Giancarlo De Carlo says of 'urban renewal' in general, "the architectural exercises of Hoddesdon thus once again<sup>85</sup> gave cultural justification to an operation of political and economic plunder."<sup>86</sup>

To clear the land of poor people's housing, the city appealed to hygienic reasons and undesirable economic activities that took place in some areas such as prostitution, gambling and alcoholism. In the end however, such rhetoric seems almost beside the point in what Micheal Sorkin refers to as Montreal's "by command urban development."<sup>87</sup> Several examples should help explain this statement. The Maison Radio Canada stands on ten hectares of land. When it was built between 1966 and 1972, 678 families and over 5000 people were evicted with only 225 families relocated by the city. 778 houses, fifty businesses and twenty factories were demolished for the project. This was a devastating social and economic intervention, which continues to affect the area today. The imposing 23 floor tower, complete with five hectares of parking lots, does not

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<sup>85</sup> De Carlo is referring to the 2nd CIAM conference at Frankfurt (1929) called "The Minimum Dwelling" which gave cultural justification for making housing units as small as possible.

<sup>86</sup> De Carlo, "Architecture's Public." p.10.

<sup>87</sup> Sorkin as quoted in Lortie, "Learning from Montreal." p. 150.

fit the scale of a neighbourhood composed of triplexes, and acts as a physical southern barrier.

Mayor Drapeau had hoped, but failed, to export most of these families to the north on land bordering the Metropolitan highway.<sup>88</sup> Certainly there were public protests contesting the demolition of housing and historic buildings, which gained greater momentum towards the end of the sixties. However, instances where protests realized any significant gains were few and far between. Protests had modified the Jeanne Mance housing projects (which were referred to as “The Radiant City” of Le Corbusier by the newspaper *La Patrie*<sup>89</sup>), built by the architectural firm of Greenspoon, Freedlander, Dunne and architect Jacques Morin in 1954. Protests had also forced changes to Cité Concordia, which was to be a massive project located to the east of McGill University and designed by the architectural firm of Mayerovitch and Bernstein (figure 4). Protests by citizens who would later organize themselves into the Milton-Parc Coop – the largest housing cooperative in Canada - altered the plans so as to reduce the impact on a beautiful neighbourhood composed of grey-stone buildings on the Plateau. The project that did go through was commenced in 1970 by architect Eva Vecsei who built three pyramidal structures of 30 floors each. The construction in any case necessitated the demolition of 255 houses and twenty businesses. As André Lortie says of this project, “The low-key [sic] renovations that ended the confrontations, halfway between the extensive demolition desired by developers and the preservation of the status quo

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<sup>88</sup> Lortie, p. 103.

<sup>89</sup> “La cite future: La cite radieuse au centre de Montreal,” *La Patrie*, 18 July, 1954.

demanding by local associations, demonstrated the limits of citizen action when faced with the power of free enterprise.”<sup>90</sup>

The dramatic changes in Montreal in the sixties and seventies were not due simply to the policies of CIAM or the Hoddesdon conference. The changes that Montreal, as well as many North American and European cities experienced at this time had been already underway under the auspices of “urban renewal,” where state bureaucracy and landowning capital had combined interests. What CIAM and Hoddesdon did do, as De Carlo says in his essay, “Architecture’s Public,” is provide cultural justification for this “renewal.” “The theories and proposals about the ‘heart of the city’ gave rise to all that was said and done in the following years to transform urban centres into management centres, commercial centres, recreational centres, or simply historic centres.”<sup>91</sup>

The immediate legacy of Montreal’s renewal in the years following was an exorbitant amount of forgotten, rubble-filled lots – leftovers from real estate speculation and demographic figures that did not pan out. Less evanescent are the class-based social segregation and pollution caused by favouring the automobile as the future of modern transportation. Along with developers and state officials, architects and planners are primary contributors to this ill-begotten legacy, which continues to inform a contemporary crisis in architecture. As De Carlo says,

The unconsciousness – or rather congenital irresponsibility – of architecture about motivations and consequences, had contributed

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<sup>90</sup> Lortie, p. 111.

<sup>91</sup> De Carlo, p. 10.

decisively to the expansion of social iniquity in its most ferocious and shameful aspect: the segregation of classes in physical space. The centre was reserved for the houses of the rich, for the most profitable economic activities, for bureaucracy and politics. Excluded to the edge in their minimum housing, the poor were cut off from the real life of the city.<sup>92</sup>

De Carlo's argument against architectural credibility in "Architecture's Public" is not simply based on modernist efforts and effects. The essay historically positions architects as subject to those in power – for those are the people and institutions from whom the architect (as bricklayer or high priest) earns his/her living. "In carrying out his [the architect's] duties he found both his dignity and his payment, as long as he did not worry about motivations or consequences: that is, as long as he did not refer his activity to a more general political condition."<sup>93</sup> Architecture continued along the same direction from medieval cathedral builders through bourgeois specialization and the industrial revolution. Despite the humanist rhetoric of modernist architecture as witnessed through its mouthpiece, CIAM, architecture has continued to favour the client over the user. "The point is that credibility disappeared when modern architecture chose the same public as academic or business architecture: that is, when it took an elite position on the side of the client rather than the side of the user."<sup>94</sup>

More recently in 1991, Margaret Crawford follows a similarly veined critique of the US architecture profession in an article entitled, "Can architects be socially responsible?" in which she answers simply, "no." Starting from a similar historical position as De Carlo, and tracing similar lines through the modernist movement, Crawford goes on to show that

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<sup>92</sup> De Carlo, "Architecture's Public." p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

architecture has neither the tools nor the ideological aspirations to address the social, economic and political concerns of contemporary times. Crawford asserts that the tools of architecture were eroded by other professions such as landscape architecture, urbanism, and engineering. This had the effect of forcing architecture to abandon the Vitruvian categories of firmness and commodity to stake the realm of delight, or aesthetics, as their own – which Crawford shows as having become increasingly elitist. “As a profession they [American architects] have steadily moved away from engagement from social issues, even those that fall within their realm of professional competence, such as homelessness, the growing crisis in affordable and appropriate housing, the loss of environmental quality, and the challenge posed by traffic-choked, increasingly unmanageable urban areas.”<sup>95</sup>

In a more idealistic vein, Alberto Perez-Gomez would agree with Crawford that formalistic strategies represent not only a watering-down of the architectural profession, but “may be dangerously irresponsible.”<sup>96</sup> For Perez-Gomez, the contemporary crisis in architecture dates back to the beginning of modern science and the instrumentality of architecture as exhibited by Claude Perrault, Claude Ledoux, Jacques-Nicolas-Louis Durand, and Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc among others. Perez-Gomez laments, in many of his writings, the modern architectural tendency to favour *techne* (technical prowess) over *poesis* (poetic meaning). Simply put, architecture has lost the ability to ground people’s experiences in a disclosure of the meaning or purposefulness of an

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<sup>95</sup> M. Crawford, “Can Architects Be Socially Responsible?,” in *Out of Site: A Social Criticism of Architecture*, ed. D.Y. Ghiardo (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1991). p. 27.

<sup>96</sup> Alberto & Pelletier Perez-Gomez, Louise, “Hermeneutics as Discourse in Design,” *Design Issues* 15, no. 2 (1999). p. 77.

individual's life. This is not merely a semiotic disjuncture. Traditionally, architecture represented or fostered a connection between people and cosmology – a locational and participatory relationship. This does not seem to be a concern for most contemporary architects – save perhaps Daniel Libeskind and a few others – who favour instrumentally technological or formalistic “solutions” to professionally identified “problems.”

## **2.2 The Rise of Participation**

The days of CIAM were clearly drawing to an end as the younger members, adopting leadership positions in the mid 1950's, became intensely dissatisfied with many of the organization's platforms. The end of CIAM occurred at the 10<sup>th</sup> congress, held in Otterlo the Netherlands in 1959 and came to indicate a renewed significance in social responsibility in architecture. CIAM, which was equated with deterministic, formalist, and above all functional architecture and city planning, came to be seen as a negative symbol against which many “alternative” or “radical” architectural practices developed.<sup>97</sup> The cultural and social ferment of the sixties only added to the experimental forms of architectural practice and production that characterized the decade. It is at this time that the first participatory architectural practices were developed.

Jonathan Hill and Simon Sadler have surveyed the alternative architectural approaches of the decade. Fixity, in terms of deterministic functionality, came to be seen as irrational while the notion of indeterminacy was considered more apropos of modern architectural

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<sup>97</sup> Mumford, *The Ciam Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*. p. 268.

problem solving.<sup>98</sup> More emphasis was placed on empowering the ordinary citizen while existence was conceptualized increasingly around aspects of sociality rather than economics. Further, an interest in vernacular architecture accompanied a general movement away from classical modernist formalism. A plethora of architectural practices popped up with these concepts as driving motivations. A sample of these practitioners includes: Team X, Archigram, Superstudio, Walter Segal, Lucien Kroll, Eilfried Huth, Peter Sulzer and Peter Hübner, Non-planners, Cedric Price, Ezra Ehrenkrantz, Nicholas Negroponte, Constant Nieuwenhuys, and Coop Himmelblau. From the above list of practitioners I will examine three to draw out the most important concepts that inform my idea of a contemporary participatory architecture going forward.

Team 10 was one of the first and probably the most influential of these alternative practices. The group derives its name from the fact that the core members were the ones who organized the tenth, and final, CIAM conference. In fact, they led the dissolution of CIAM. Most of the core members actually met for the first time at Hoddesdon, among whom are included Peter and Alison Smithson, Georges Candilis, Jacob Bakema, and Aldo Ernest van Eyck. Giancarlo De Carlo and Shadrach Woods, the other core members, joined Team 10 after the dissolution of CIAM. Other notable participants at Team X events include, Daniel van Ginkel and Blanche Lemco-van Ginkel, Charles Jencks, Joseph Rykwert, James Stirling, and Kenzo Tange.

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<sup>98</sup> Simon Sadler, "Open Ends: The Social Visions of 1960's Non-Planning," in *Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* ed. J & Sadler Hughes, S (Boston: Architectural Press, 2000). p. 141.



Team 10 functioned in an analogous manner as CIAM; as a forum where members would present current projects and open themselves to sometimes harsh critiques, while trying to improve architectural and planning approaches. The group came together over a shared feeling that the four functions of the city, as advocated by CIAM in the Charter of Athens, were no longer applicable to the times. Instead, Team 10 advocated a less abstracted, distanced and fixed approach to the city, which included taking into account a broader view of a community and its particular characteristics. Thus, instead of focusing on how a society should function, they first examined how a community did function. Their methodology put emphasis on the local, examining the fabric of a specific community rather than planning for a universal norm. In this examination, identifying ‘vital human associations’ were of paramount importance as well as understanding how they could facilitate the implementation of these associations.<sup>99</sup>

De Carlo was a vocal member of the group, and his feelings towards CIAM and the profession of architecture were shared by other members. They were also against pursuing technology for the sake of itself: “stop stumbling after progress,”<sup>100</sup> as Van Eyck wrote. They embraced the diversity of culture and the opinion of the individual. What they desperately wanted was to inject responsibility into architectural practice, and they advocated a “working-together-technique” between architects and users. Much like Lefebvre, they were interested in praxis, in building, not only in theorizing. In the words of Alison Smithson:

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<sup>99</sup> Risselada & van den Heuvel, *Team 10 1953-81: In Search of a Utopia of the Present* (Rotterdam: NAI, 2005).

<sup>100</sup> Van Eyck, “Team 10 Primer,” in *Team 10 Primer*, ed. Alison Smithson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968). p. 22.

For them [Team 10] 'to build' has a special meaning in that the architect's responsibility towards the individual or groups he builds for, and towards the cohesion and convenience of the collective structure to which they belong, is taken as being an absolute responsibility. No abstract Master Plan stands between him and what he has to do, only the 'human facts' and the logistics of the situation.<sup>101</sup>

A friend of De Carlo's, Lucien Kroll (b.1927) is relevant to this paper in several ways.

Kroll can be counted among those architects whose self-appointed role was that of facilitator in what is termed community planning. This is where the architect guides a group of people through the design stages of a project, and sometimes through the construction of the project. The architect, to varying degrees, subjects their knowledge to the needs and desires of the people. Community planning is closely related to the most prevalent participatory technique today - community consultation.

Kroll is a Belgian architect who made his name in the early 1970s by constructing the Maison Médicale (Mémé) with students at the University of Louvain on the outskirts of Brussels. The university had built a medical facility and were about to construct a hostel for medical students when the students rebelled. The students called in Kroll, who was known locally for his interest in participation, to create a counter-project. This was accepted by the intimidated university, which was looking for a peaceful end to the protests. For the project Kroll experimented with a self-generating architecture. Instead of imposing a top-down program, the design process was guided through an evolutionary maquette. He divided the large project among the staff in his office, who discussed all aspects of the project with the future users. Participants were allowed to contribute to the

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<sup>101</sup> Alison Smithson, "The Aim of Team 10," in *Team 10 Primer*, ed. Alison Smithson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968). p. 3.

maquette by adding to it – they were forbidden to remove previously-made additions.

“The design process became a voyage of discovery whose end remained unpredictable, and it produced a building whose anarchic and anti-hierarchical image flashed across the world” (figures 5 and 6).<sup>102</sup> Contrasting an image of the hospital with the hostel next door reveals a stark difference in regular monotony versus a creative diversity.

Theoretically, Kroll views the built environment as a landscape that is ever changing, accumulating diverse elements according to multiple interests. Monotonous regularity of the built environment is not capable of properly, or even humanely, accommodating people’s diverse needs and desires. The built environment is also inescapably political; every new construction is a reflection of social relations. The architect’s role, according to Kroll is to read the social and local context and to act as a facilitator, while allowing the process to express itself: “So our aim must be to define a place of freedom, to determine the circumstances for self-affirmation and low energy.”<sup>103</sup>

Walter Segal (1907-1985) was a Swiss born architect who came to Britain as a refugee from Fascism in the 1930’s. Segal is known for developing the self-build method in architecture, which started out as a temporary wood-framed house for his family in London. Built for £850, the design program was determined by the materials that were available. After facilitating several similar projects for private clients, the Borough of Lewisham adopted the self-build method for social housing. The city provided the site

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<sup>102</sup> Peter Blundell Jones, "Sixty-Eight and After," in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. Petrescu Jones, Till (New York: Spon Press, 2005). p. 135.

<sup>103</sup> Lucien Kroll, "Animal Town Planning and Homeopathic Architecture," in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. Petrescu Jones, Till (New York: Spon Press, 2005). p. 184.

and materials, and after an evening course with Segal, people built their own houses. Peter Blundell Jones reports that participation in the program produced a strong sense of community even before the houses were built.<sup>104</sup> “Against the top-down paternalist provision of housing under the modernist orthodoxy with everything predetermined, he [Segal] offered a bottom-up self-realizing pattern on its own scale and with its own logic, rediscovering a certain spontaneity.”<sup>105</sup> The self builders were free to choose their own appurtenances to the house, which sometimes did not follow the formal program. The aesthetic produced would have been akin to that of Kroll’s *Mémé* – an accumulative aesthetic that better represents the evolutionary diversity of interests in the city.

The practices of the sixties and seventies contribute to our conception of what participatory architecture is, or can be – even if contemporary articulations differ from those of the past. Participatory architecture is often something local, which will affect the micro-social fabric of urban areas. It does not necessarily follow a Master Plan, but can grow organically and spontaneously, ideally increasing a sense of community as it evolves. It involves people determining their own environment, and thus may be anti-authoritarian, but not necessarily. In this sense it is emancipatory and enabling. It is certainly political. It can take advantage of readily available assets like materials and locations, and thus the form it takes is less important as compared to the social uses it serves. Similarly the process is as important as the object produced. The aesthetic outcome of such projects are thus likely to embody diversity, difference and can be seen as being anarchic.

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<sup>104</sup> Jones, "Sixty-Eight and After." p. 131.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p. 131.

The radical architectural practices of the Sixties and early Seventies never became common currency although for a time they were celebrated in mainly one-off projects, and through images and theoretical treatises, which were disseminated through academic writing and the popular media. They demanded a profound change in the nature of the architectural profession. Architects often gave up power and control over the process and object, which can be seen as eroding the professional basis that they were trying to rehabilitate. The traditional relationship between architect and client was inverted to give the user a democratic say in the design process. Architectural norms were reevaluated with the result that social needs often became more important than formal programming. Architectural design was thus conceived, again, as part of a larger social project. However, these practices ran into trouble in the real world.

The architect's sacrificing of power did not lead to the empowerment of the masses as had been the aim. The participatory architect uses his or her knowledge instrumentally from the outside, not wanting to push solutions on the people. As Lars Lerup says, participation for the architect is largely a "managerial solution."<sup>106</sup> This limited role of the architect does not help very much in transforming the user's nascent desires into articulated form. Further, the architect's control is primarily ideological. Practically, the architect is most often at the disposition of the client, who in turn is driven to respect the needs of the market. Political and economic forces continue to control the production of the built environment. As Gillian Rose says of these practices, "the architect is demoted;

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<sup>106</sup> L Lerup, *Building the Unfinished: Architecture and Human Action* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977). p.136.

the people do not accede to power.”<sup>107</sup> The response from participatory architects to these emerging problems was to concentrate on opposing the dominant aesthetics of modernism. Margaret Crawford asserts, “this led them to identify the masses’ needs primarily in terms of ‘taste cultures,’ defending the user’s preference for colonial styles or bright patterns as meaningful social opposition.”<sup>108</sup> This was also a dead end because without the intervention of the state, low income users do not have the money or power to demand architectural styles. In terms of negotiating the so-called crisis in architecture, Crawford makes the important point that the radical practices of the sixties, while not effecting real change, paradoxically reinforced notions of architecture’s ethical disinterest and social concern.

Crawford goes on to say that these radical architects, hopes dashed, went to the universities, “where like love beads and student demonstrations, they served as reminders of the unfulfillable social hopes of the sixties.”<sup>109</sup> The fate of participatory architecture also seems to have diminished, being reduced mainly to community consultation or technology-based strategies, which carry on to this day. With few exceptions, the historical record of participatory architectural practices has remained slim until recent times.

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<sup>107</sup> Gillian Rose, "Athens and Jerusalem: A Tale of Two Cities," *Social and Legal Studies* 3 (1994). p.337.

<sup>108</sup> Crawford, "Can Architects Be Socially Responsible?." p. 39.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

### 2.3 True Participation

Currently, emphasis on participation in architecture in academic writing and practice is back on the agenda. It is acknowledged that participation is an integral part of developing citizen interest in their environment. UNESCO, in 2005, proposed five points to promote a city of solidarity and citizenship, one of which is participation. "To turn city-dwellers into citizens through education in citizenship: citizens must be given the means to express themselves in public and have an impact on their city. They must be placed at the centre of choices and decisions for the creation of a multifaceted city by measures to promote democratic discussion and participation."<sup>110</sup> Recently, the E.U., Canada and the US have all introduced legislation necessitating participation on certain types of architectural projects. Issues of social sustainability have worsened and are compounded by an impending environmental crisis. These issues are becoming more visible through increased media attention and the changing physical reality of our environment. Such large scale problems are resulting in increased awareness in users of the built environment, and have spurred people to action.

Social sustainability continues to be eroded in many contemporary cities. As Mario Polèse and Richard Stren write, "the degree of social inequality, cultural conflict, and political fragmentation experienced within urban boundaries has increased, even sharpened, over the last decade or more."<sup>111</sup> There are continuing problems with social housing as evidenced not only in developing nations such as the *favelas* in Rio, or the

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<sup>110</sup> Ali Kazancigil, "Forward," in *The Social Sustainability of Cities*, ed. Polèse & Stren (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>111</sup> Mario Polèse & Richard Stren. The Social Sustainability of Cities. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. p. 9.

make-shift shelters in many cities in Africa which house millions of people without basic infrastructure such as water, sewage, waste disposal and electricity. In the USA and Europe, ghettos continue to be centres of unemployment and social malaise. In many cities like Montreal that experienced urban renewal, economically disfavoured people and families are continuing to be pushed to the periphery, or are caught in disfavoured urban ghettos and are excluded from the cultural opportunities at the centre. Even such socially progressive projects as Habitation Jeanne-Mance, the only social housing project in downtown Montreal, are not safe from economic development.<sup>112</sup>

The privatization of public spaces continues to be a problem as public land is bought or given to private institutions for management like Melvin Charney's garden for the CCA. Space in these places is ostensibly public, but is carefully surveyed and policed to enforce privately-defined norms of conduct. For Marxist theorists like Fredric Jameson, Rosalyn Deutsche and David Harvey, public space has already been lost.<sup>113</sup> Finally, the erosion of important social institutions such as religion, family and stable employment has dovetailed with the rise of social atomization. These factors contribute to a social disconnection between citizen and state.

We see manifestations of these social problems on a daily basis. Globalization continues to re-order urban landscapes, often bringing immigrants and nationals into disaccord over scarce resources. For example, Europe and North America have seen an influx of immigrants in search of economic benefits. The social and economic divide between

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<sup>112</sup> André Beauvais, "Habitations Jeanne-Mance: Haro Sur Le Ghetto," in *Le Journal de Montréal* (2006).

<sup>113</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions : Art and Spatial Politics* (Chicago / Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).



these two groups of people, and their second-generation families, has led to increasing tensions as was witnessed in October and November 2005 in France. Second-generation immigrant youths living in 15 underprivileged urban areas burned thousands of vehicles and public buildings in protest against discrimination and integration problems. These people are not only socially but spatially marginalized, forced through economic means to live in poor communes far outside the centre of cities. In the US, ghettos continue to exist in urban centres. Government and mainstream architectural and urban planning practices continue to be unresponsive to these challenging problems.

As social sustainability issues become more apparent, so too does our awareness of an impending, if not present, ecological crisis. Daily there are reports of global warming, and devastating occurrences in the natural world. Global warming is a complex issue involving both natural and human influences, and determining scientifically what exactly is causing the rise in the earth's temperature is a continuing challenge. Nevertheless, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated in their most recent *Third Assessment Report* (2001), that "there is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities."<sup>114</sup> Further, pollution of our air, water and food supply is rife. In developed countries the situation is bad enough, with Canadians, for example, carrying a "body burden"<sup>115</sup> of toxic chemicals. When one considers the incredible ecological devastation being wrought on

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<sup>114</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Climate Change 2001: Synthesis Report " review of Reviewed Item, no. (2001), <http://www.ipcc.ch/pub/un/syren/spm.pdf>.

<sup>115</sup> Body burden refers to the amount of toxic chemicals regular people contain in their system. A study done by Environmental Defence, entitled "Toxic Nation," found that 60 of 88 chemicals tested for were detected, including 18 heavy metals, five PBDEs, 14 PCBs, one perfluorinated chemical, 10 organochlorine pesticides, five organophosphate insecticide metabolites, and seven VOCs. See <http://www.environmentaldefence.ca/>

the environment by developing countries such as China and India, one can only try to cling to hope. Canada is not helping things either with the newly elected Conservative government threatening to pull out of Kyoto. The Kyoto Protocol is an international and legally-binding agreement whose goal is to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases. Despite the widely-held notion that Kyoto does not go far enough in reducing emissions, it does symbolize for the nations that ratified it a willingness to work together to address climate change. Canada's possible withdrawal would not only be illegal, it would weaken the other member nations who are depending on Canada's participation. Further, it would signify Canada's disregard for climate change. Big business is not helping either. The Competitive Enterprise Institute is a non-profit public policy organization based in the USA dedicated to advancing the principles of free enterprise and limited government. It has recently been running ads in the US to purposefully confuse the public about global warming, taking on issues such as melting glaciers and increased carbon dioxide emissions. Their ads end with the tag line, "carbon dioxide: they call it pollution, we call it life."<sup>116</sup>

As social and ecological sustainability issues continue to dominate many newspaper headlines, people either cling to a technologically utopian solution - that technology will save us - or retreat into a form of supine fatalism. However, some people remain hopeful. With corporations and the state faltering in their leadership roles in creating socially and environmentally sustainable environments, it seems that increasingly, path bearing solutions are being blazed by progressive, community-based non-profit organizations or regular citizens, rather than members of the built environment hierarchy – state, business,

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<sup>116</sup> Competitive Enterprise Institute, "Competitive Enterprise Institute," (2006).

architects and planners. The interventions that are produced are rarely, if ever, overarching, large-scale solutions. Instead, they focus on smaller interventions aimed at creating opportunities for people to engage with local problems. These practices conceive the user as an active creative agent for change, and are the subject of the case studies.

The first case study follows the creation of a rooftop garden built by two community groups, the Centre d'Ecologie Urbaine and the Milton Park Coop in Montreal. This is a cooperative project involving community members who are involved in trying to ameliorate not only urban ecology, but individual lives as well. This type of practice is the most common of all the case studies. There are currently many cooperatives all over the world that are engaged in social and environmentally sustainable tactics and projects. For example, the Sustainable Everyday Project (SEP), developed by Ezio Manzini at the Polytechnic Milan University, is one of several existing web-based communication and organizational tools designed to proliferate participatory ideas and projects that can improve the social fabric of a community while reducing its ecological impact. They draw attention to projects that can be accomplished by anyone with a social and environmental conscience. Examples of projects on their site include; alternative transportation solutions like car sharing, ride sharing and bicycle sharing projects; and also include social facilitation projects such as communal living projects, volunteer projects and associations; and urban agricultural projects including roof-top gardening, food distribution projects and urban farms. The purpose of this case study is to show how community action can both materially ameliorate urban ecology and provide a place for individuals to transcend alienation.

The second case study examines the practice of Montreal street artist Roadsworth, who proliferates socially and environmentally conscious messages through playing with the city's infrastructure, such as its sewers, lampposts and traffic signs on streets. Street art is a global urban phenomenon that manifests in many forms including stickers, posters, stencils, signage and other media, including found material such as mattresses or refuse (figure 7). It is a strain of art that is gaining more and more attention with magazines and websites existing to facilitate global communication and proliferate images and ideas such as New York based The Wooster Collective<sup>117</sup> or the Montreal-based Nullwhore<sup>118</sup>.

The final case study attempts to synthesize many of the dualities inherent in the thesis such as architect and user, perceived and conceived, public and private and so on. My goal is to push the notion of "participatory architecture" even further than with the case of Roadsworth. I will examine the workings of several back alleys in the Plateau to materially and ideally identify how these places create a space that accomplishes what so many architects cannot; namely creating a place that has the capacity to disclose the meaning or purposefulness of an individual's life. This case study is unique because the character of alleys is not goal-directed; they come together as an assemblage of unstable and non-unified forces. The enabling factor in alleys seems to be the inattention they were given by urban planners, and this might provide a lesson to future planners.

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<sup>117</sup> *Wooster Collective* [webpage] (2006 [cited August 17 2006]); available from <http://woostercollective.com>.

<sup>118</sup> *Nullwhore* [Webpage] (2006 [cited August 17 2006]); available from <http://www.nullwhore.com>

### **Chapter 3 – Greenroofs**

**“Architecture makes visible the invisible.”**

**Richard Castor**

This chapter explores the material and intangible benefits of greenroofs both in general and more specifically as manifest in a greenroof project run by the Centre d'Ecologie Urbaine (CEU). For over a year, commencing in April 2005, I followed the ostensibly participatory practice which resulted in Montreal's first greenroof on an old triplex, a three floor residential dwelling, located on Ste-Famille Street, which is owned by La Petit Coop, a member of the Milton-Parc Housing Cooperative in the Plateau. The case study will focus on the architectural process and will consider different opportunities for participatory action at all stages of the project. Following this there will be a brief discussion of the benefits of rooftop gardening, on both a macro-level, affecting the city as a whole, and on the micro level, affecting individuals who engage in rooftop gardening practices.

Greenroofs can simply be considered as any roof that supports vegetation (figure 8). They have been in existence since antiquity, whether in the form of indigenous flora grown on roofs to provide a layer of protection from rain, or in the form of potted fruit or vegetable-bearing plants. Presently, rooftop gardens are enjoying a boom and are found in cities all over the world. Their recent popularity in urban centres can be understood by the financial, ecological and social benefits, which accrue to their owners and the greater society, as well as their desire for a “natural” space in the built environment. For example, Germany, which leads the way in greenroof implementation, has 15% of its

buildings incorporating rooftop gardens. For Montreal, where approximately 80% of the surface is either built or paved, greenroofs offer several benefits including increased roof life, extra space added to dwelling, cleaner, cooler air, more efficient water management and the emotional, aesthetic intangible benefits which result from the practice of gardening.

Many modern rooftop gardens were planned as such from the outset of the construction of their supporting buildings. The Vancouver Library (1995), designed by Moshe Safdie with rooftop design by Cornelia Han Oberlander (figure 9), is one such example.

Alternatively, rooftop gardens can be added to a building after its construction, which may require a structural intervention to accommodate increased weight loads. One of the things that make the Coop roof interesting for this thesis is that its rooftop, like the vast majority of rooftops on the Plateau, was a forgotten, under-designed space, a leftover of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century building methodologies in Montreal. This is relevant because it shows, among rooftop garden practitioners, a creative usage of space and a desire to rehabilitate underused spaces.

There are nominally three types of rooftop gardens; intensive, extensive, and suspended. Intensive greenroofs are normally found atop large, reinforced concrete buildings because they require a deep growing medium, irrigation, and maintenance. Examples in Montreal of such gardens include the garden at the Hilton Hotel at Place Bonaventure or the garden at the Sheraton Hotel. Extensive greenroofs require a thinner substrate, little or no irrigation, and a variable amount of maintenance depending on the plants used. The

greenroof of La Petite Coop is extensive. Extensive and intensive greenroofs often require structural interventions on older buildings because of their weight. The final category of suspended greenroofs is composed of large containers which sit atop existing roofs to grow plants. Usually not requiring structural ameliorations, this is the cheapest and easiest greenroof to set up – I have one of these greenroofs on my own house (figure 10).

The greenroof project at La Petite Coop presented many opportunities for participatory architectural practice, but seldom were these strategies employed in any type of meaningful way. This had its reasons and consequences, as will become clear throughout the description of the building process. I will now detail the four-fold architectural process of conception, planning, construction, and maintenance, which was introduced in the first chapter. The project was conceived by the CEU, and in particular by the architectural intern, Owen Rose, who is on its board of directors. The CEU is a non-profit think-tank and organization whose goal is to develop and ascertain the most viable approaches to sustainable development. Sustainable development is a process of developing (land, cities, business, communities, etc) that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" according to the *Brundtland Report*, a 1987 publication from the United Nations. One of the factors which sustainable development must overcome is environmental degradation, but it must do so while not forgoing the needs of economic development as well as social equity and justice. Several United Nations texts, most recently the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, refer to the "interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars" of

sustainable development as economic development, social development, and environmental protection.<sup>119</sup>

The goals of the greenroof project are both ecological and social. A high-density urban centre has many ecological advantages that spring from a common use of infrastructure, and enlarged populace with more diverse cultural attributes, increased labour and service specializations and efficient economization resulting from a geographically limited topography. However, with so many people living in the city's core, there are many environmental impacts such as air pollution and water pollution. There is also the urban heat-sink phenomenon resulting from the ground being covered with buildings and pavement and with little vegetation. Greenroofs can ameliorate these problems. In terms of air pollution, 1.5m<sup>2</sup> of grass produces, through photosynthesis, enough clean air for one human being.<sup>120</sup> Greenroofs reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels and produce oxygen. They also act like a filter by trapping fine air-borne particles in their foliage. For example, one square meter of grass will capture 0.2 kg of air-borne particles every day.<sup>121</sup>

Greenroofs can also reduce water pollution. They capture water and return it directly to the ecosystem through evaporation, rather than taxing the city's sewer system. In Montreal, roughly half of the aqueduct system, usually in new developments, benefits from separated rainwater and sewage systems. The other half of Montreal pays to gather, pump to the filtration plant and clean the rainwater before it is ejected into the St. Lawrence River. On an average day without precipitation Montreal's water filtration

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<sup>119</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "2005 World Summit Outcome," (2005). p. 12.

<sup>120</sup> Maude Landreville, *Toitures Vertes À La Montréalaise* (Montreal: SODECM, 2005). p. 25.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p. 25.



plant cleans 2,500,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water (enough to fill the Olympic Stadium), amounting to \$475,000 a day. When it rains, on average, these figures are tripled – that is \$1,425,000 a day. Further, every year, roughly twenty-five storms produce enough rain to overwhelm the system, causing the water to be ejected into the St. Lawrence River before it has had a chance to be filtered. The CEU estimates that if every house on the Plateau had a greenroof, the city's annual water filtration payment would be cut in half, and with adequate political interventions, Montreal could reduce the incidence of storms that overwhelm the system to three or four a year.<sup>122</sup> With global water filtration costs equalling \$0.19 a cubic metre, the savings that could be accrued with more responsible water management are impressive indeed.

The urban heat-sink phenomenon manifests itself in a five to ten degree Celsius increase in temperatures in the city, as compared to rural areas. This increase of heat is a result of the built environment being composed of heat-absorbing materials like concrete and asphalt roofs, energy usage, automobile traffic, and industrial emissions. The problem with the heat-sink effect is that it requires even more energy to reduce temperatures inside buildings, and it greatly contributes to the creation of smog, which, in a vicious circle, then contributes to increasing the heat-sink effect. Smog not only contributes to ozone depletion but also is a cause of respiratory problems. A study conducted by the Lawrence Berkeley Institute Laboratory using satellite images of large US cities found that if 15% of buildings were covered with greenroofs they would reduce the average temperature by 3.3 degrees Celsius, and reduce smog concentrations by 12%, which

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.p. 23.

would be the equivalent of pulling five million cars off the road.<sup>123</sup> A study conducted by Environment Canada<sup>124</sup> concludes that if 6% of Toronto's buildings had greenroofs the temperature in that city could drop by 1 to 2 degrees Celsius. The study also shows that a one degree Celsius change in temperature results in a 5% reduction in the amount of energy needed for climate control and refrigeration. This could result in over a million dollars saved in energy consumption per year and would result in reducing 2.18 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions (per 6.5km<sup>2</sup> of greenroofs) and eliminate 30 metric tons of pollution from the atmosphere. On a smaller scale a greenroof reduces noise pollution by acting as an acoustic insulator, reduces the need for air conditioning by acting as a thermal insulator in the summer, and increases biodiversity in the ecosystem.

The professed social goals of the CEU project are also wide-ranging. According to Rose the project is meant to valorize cooperative and social low-cost housing. By working with La Petite Coop, the project shows that low-cost housing can be socially responsible and "green," and thus is an additional tool to promote social housing.<sup>125</sup> The project also attempts to break social boundaries by integrating people from various professions relating to the construction of the project and the owners of the Coop. Finally, in contrast to the "empty words of politicians" the project is a "concrete example of what is possible" and thus empowers citizens to act in responsible ways.<sup>126</sup> Various reports generated from scientific measurement tools embedded in the roof, as well as

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<sup>123</sup> Louise-Gilles Francoeur, "Comme Rafrâchissement, Un Toit Réfléchissant?," *Le Devoir*, July 4 2003.

<sup>124</sup> Landreville, *Toitures Vertes À La Montréalaise*. p. 20.

<sup>125</sup> Reid Cooper, "Field Notes," (Concordia University, 2006). p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2,4.

publications, technical manuals and community meetings involving visits to the site, propagate knowledge of the project to citizens, architects, engineers and contractors.

Thus the objectives of the project in the conceptualization stage all reflected the goals of the CEU. Representing both client and architect, the CEU dominated the conceptualization of the project. La Petite Coop, ostensibly the users in this case study, only came on-board after the initial conceptualization had taken place. They needed a new roof, and approached the CEU upon hearing that another coop nearby decided not to allow the intervention on their roof. The Coop wanted to advance ecological goals and they put their trust in the CEU because, as Marise Guillemette, one of the Coop representatives states, “the ecological spirit of the project made us trust them.”<sup>127</sup>

Considering the CEU believes that “effective community organization, which also aims at urban reform, must have an approach which overcomes isolation or fragmentation,”<sup>128</sup> it is difficult to understand why the Coop was not integrated in a re-conceptualization of the project to properly ground the project in the local needs and desires of the users.

The planning stage involved assembling the revenue sources for the project, putting the planning team together and drawing up detailed plans for the project. Funding was cobbled together from various sources. Environment Canada, through their Eco Act Program, donated \$23,000 out of \$40,000 sought, for the integration of scientific equipment into the roof. Rose said the funding was important, but that a great share of it went towards documenting the process as was required by the granting agency. The

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<sup>127</sup> Reid Cooper, "Field Notes, June 1," (Concordia University, 2006b). p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> Centre Ecologie Urbaine, "Mission Statement," (2004).

Home Depot Foundation, based in Atlanta, GA, gave US\$25,000 – without strings attached. The City of Montreal gave \$10,000 towards the science end of the project, which required \$45,000. Rose says this allowed the city to market itself and that “they should have better merited the publicity by having given at least half the funds required.”<sup>129</sup> Finally, the Coop paid \$5000.

The planning process was dominated by the architect who the CEU defines in their second publication on the project, *Projet-pilot de Toit Vert*, as the “coordinator. It is the architect that ensures communication between the various people involved in the project, establishes the work schedule, procures the necessary permits from relevant authorities, conceives of the design and realizes architectural drawings necessary for workers to follow.”<sup>130</sup> It will be remembered that Lucien Kroll’s conception of the architect was quite dissimilar, with the users acting as designers, and an accessible maquette used to communicate design intentions. Rose, as the architect, instituted an ostensibly participatory framework for the planning stage called, “integrated design.” Integrated design is generally understood to accommodate participatory aspects by bringing together various professional and ownership elements of the project together for facilitated workshops in order to ensure everyone involved is informed and supportive of the plans. These workshops took place every two weeks from June 2004 to May 2005. They were open to the public, and I attended several meetings both as an interested observer and with the intention of actively contributing to the project. However, during the meetings it soon became clear to me that there was little place for my participation to occur. The

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<sup>129</sup> Cooper, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>130</sup> Jacob Nerenberg, *Projet-Pilot De Toit Vert: Démarche D’une Construction Écologique* (Montreal: SODECM, 2005).

workshops did not allow for much open discussion; rather they were meetings to disseminate the plans that had been formed by a core team of specialists. Members of the core work team numbered eight including the architect, engineer, contractor, roofer, an employee of Soprema (waterproof membrane producer), two horticulturalists and a landscape architect. There were twelve other member of the team who were less implicated, including a member of the Coop (see Annex A for full list of participants).

The planning stage is the traditional locus of participatory practice. It is the time users can voice their concerns about the projects, their needs and desires. Ostensibly, this project attempted to accommodate participation in the form of integrated design, but the realization fell short of the intent. Denis Bedard, one of the members of the Coop, says that its members were not encouraged to come to the meetings or participate in any way.<sup>131</sup> He says they were made to feel “unimportant, merely residents,” and felt that the Coop did not influence decisions. The “Coop was not heard.”<sup>132</sup> Rose says the project was a “professional architectural project,” and appealed to the technical nature of the discussion and drawings as a reason for the relatively small amount of participation by Coop members. This, it should be remembered is one of the architect’s traditional strategies for limiting the amount of participation of users. He also pointed to the fact that the Coop had only contributed \$5000 to the project and thus were basically getting a greenroof for free. This was meant to justify the limited role played by the Coop – again, a classic excuse for not including the users in the design process.

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<sup>131</sup> Cooper, Field Notes June 11, 2006a, p 2.

<sup>132</sup> Cooper, 2006a, p. 2.

In summary, although there was an ostensibly participatory structure in place, the role of the user was limited by appeals to their inability to demand responsiveness through monetary means, and through technical ignorance. The non-participation of the users, as we will see, ultimately led to user needs not being addressed by the plan. This in turn led to the Coop members feeling poorly towards the architect and CEU, to pay more than the budget had allowed for, and thus contributed to the continuing deficiencies of the project, which have still not been addressed over a year after the project was completed.

For technical reasons, the users were not permitted to engage in the construction of the greenroof as all people on a construction site are mandated by law to possess workplace safety cards. This legal formality mitigated against user participation in the construction, which, Bedard felt, was a non-issue, because by that point Coop members felt alienated from the project. There were some volunteers allowed on site to install the plants and scientific equipment, but the Coop members were not invited to volunteer. Guillemette says, “we were profoundly irritated by this point, so it is difficult to say if we would have liked to participate. If we had been better integrated into the project, more people would have been involved and would have wanted to be involved.”<sup>133</sup>

It was during the period of construction that the Coop started to assert itself, which had the effect of irritating the design team. Understandably, the Coop’s decision to build a rooftop garden became much more of a reality when the work started. The first day of construction, one of the members of the Coop noticed that the waterproof covering, intended to protect the roofless house against rain, was not installed after the workers had

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<sup>133</sup> Cooper, “Field Notes, June 1.”p. 2.

finished their day. This led the members for the first time to critically question the project and the major actors. They drew up a list of complaints including lack of safe access to the garden, no permanent water supply, safety and property consideration concerns, concerns with media and construction worker disrespect. Guillemette contends that in response, Rose and the core members of the project became, “more remote and unavailable.”<sup>134</sup> She alleges that they tried to play members of the Coop off of one another, refusing at times to speak to the official representative and demanding communication with the president and other members of the Coop. Guillemette says, “We felt we were bothering them. There was a lack of respect, an immense lack of respect.”<sup>135</sup> In speaking with Guillemette I concluded that an opportunity had been squandered by the CEU in not better integrating the future users of the greenroof, which could have led to increased support and labour, instead of an oppositional relationship.

The problems that had been brewing during the planning and construction stages came to a head once the project was handed over to the Coop for maintenance. The first problem was the access to the rooftop. The designers had purchased an aluminum ladder to go up through a trapdoor on the third floor balcony, but this was totally insufficient according to Bedard and Guillemette. The ladder could not be stored on the balcony for space and security reasons, so it had to be brought up two flights of stairs, which was an impossibility for some of the members of the Coop (figure 11). Further, the ladder was not fastened to the house in any way, so using it was precarious to say the least. Rose complained that they could not afford to put something in more permanent, but the ladder

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

solution was not working. Instead the two parties agreed to install a telescopic ladder that was attached at the top (figure 12). Not only is the ladder intrusive and aesthetically unappealing, but from having used it I can vouch that it does not feel safe. “The ladder is hell. I can’t even open the trap door myself, and it can’t stay open due to the rain.”<sup>136</sup> Instead, Guillemette, who is responsible for the maintenance of the garden, must hop over a third-floor balcony railing and jump onto an adjacent roof connected to the garden.

The water supply for the garden is also a problem. Most of the garden is serviced by an automated irrigation system, but during warm weather Coop members felt it necessary to do additional watering, especially for the non-irrigated section. Last year Guillemette says they watered twice a day on hot days. The problem is that at the present moment the only water available comes up through a hose which leaks all over and below the balconies. It was so bad that this year they have had no water supply, and are hoping the architect will install a permanent pipe as he is obliged to do under the terms of the contract.

Also, no terrace was installed on the roof, which would have made the garden, and activities associated with the garden far more appealing. “Without a terrace we really lose the utility of the garden. It is as if the architect did not want us to use the garden,” says Guillemette. Further, she alleges that the Coop is not permitted to plant vegetables in their garden; “it is too complicated to get up there anyway,” says Guillemette resignedly.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p. 3.



These three examples show how different the needs of the architect and the user can be. It shows a fundamental difference in conception of the greenroof. Whereas the members of the Coop conceived themselves interacting with the greenroof, the design team conceived the garden without any users. For them the primary purpose of the garden was to effect a positive ecological intervention and mobilize social support for greenroofs. As Guillemette says, “I feel the project was done with scientific objectives in mind.”<sup>138</sup> The fact that some very important factors that would facilitate utilization, such as safe access, water supply and a terrace, were not incorporated into the design betrays the long established, even if unconscious, desire of architects to distance their creations from users. “The error we made was not sitting down with the architect before starting and asking relevant questions for us: how will we access the garden? Can we have a terrace?”<sup>139</sup>

I do not wish to demonize either this greenroof project nor the architect involved. The project continues to positively contribute to the environment. It has generated much media attention for greenroofs, and through the CEU’s educational campaign, is a tool that is used to inform citizens of what they can do to better their environment. For his part, Owen Rose is a committed environmentalist and, as I gathered through our interview and various meetings, is concerned with social responsibility and justice. The way I have presented the project, however, shows that due to a lack of user participation serious oversights occurred. Based on my interviews I conclude that had there been more

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

meaningful participation of Coop members during the conceptualization and planning phases, both the client and the architect could have realized a project that better met both parties' needs.

Nonetheless, there are still two areas of participation I have not addressed, and which can be generalized both as the practice of gardening, and the practice of gardening on a rooftop. Despite the problems encountered, Guillemette admits, "I love being up here gardening (figure 13)."<sup>140</sup> She is responsible for the maintenance of the garden, and one of the few members of the Coop to use the space. When I pressed her to explain why she loved being there, she hesitated before talking about things like the beauty of the garden, the joy of creating something, and the delight of engaging with living things.<sup>141</sup> As a rooftop gardener myself I understand Guillemette's attraction to the garden. My garden offers me an oasis from the concrete city; one where I am, for the most part, in control of the environment. For the last four years in early spring I have taken my collection of seeds, some of which I harvested from last year's crop, and make them sprout.

Throughout the summer I gain satisfaction from working the soil with my hands, feeling its moisture and smelling its earthy odour. I prefer growing vegetables because there is immense fulfillment in growing my own food from seed and then eating and preserving the fruit of my labour for later consumption. The garden occupies me year around in researching and planning which vegetables I will grow and eating the preserves I make remembering and even tasting the previous summer. I love contributing as little as possible to the global food trade, which uses inordinate amounts of energy and labour to

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

fly or ship vegetables from halfway around the world. There is beauty and symmetry in nature, which I appreciate, and I know I am contributing, even in a very small way, to the amelioration of the environment. In fact there are many reasons why people enjoy gardening, and they are often very different from one person to the next. David Cooper has made a valiant effort to untangle the various attractions of gardens in his recent book *A Philosophy of Gardens*.

Cooper picks up on all of Guillemette's reasons for loving gardening. In essence, gardening incorporates such things as communing with nature, establishing a structured practice, and, despite the human effort involved in growing plants and vegetables, understanding that the products of the garden are "nevertheless 'given' – a gift of 'grace,' in effect, without which no amount of effort would be of use."<sup>142</sup> These garden practices and epiphanies have the capacity, and Cooper argues are ideally suited, to develop virtues on the way to establishing "the good life." Here he follows several antecedent philosophers including Pliny, who spent much of his life in gardens, and said that the garden provided "a good life and a genuine one."<sup>143</sup> The good life, in the sense implied by Pliny and Cooper, borrows from the Greek term, *eudaimonic*, meaning "human flourishing or well being"<sup>144</sup> and which describes a fulfilled, flourishing and consummate life. The virtues Cooper explores, are most notably a sense of caring, humility and hope, but also friendship and solidarity, respect, self mastery, and most importantly, truth. "Life in accordance with the virtues is 'in the truth', manifesting proper recognition, that is, of

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<sup>142</sup> David Cooper, *A Philosophy of Gardens* (Oxford: New York, 2006). p. 73.

<sup>143</sup> Pliny quoted in *Ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86.

the place of human existence in the scheme of things.”<sup>145</sup> John Cottingham says recognition, “is characteristically expressed through practices whose value and resonance cannot be exhausted by a cognitive analysis of [the] propositional contents’ of people’s explicit statements.”<sup>146</sup> Cooper quotes Maurice Merleau-Ponty who says of understanding or attunement to meaning, that it is, “in the hands” not “in the head.”<sup>147</sup> This understanding of gardening as theoretical and physical practice is very close to Lefebvre’s understanding of practice as a way of overcoming alienation towards living the “good life” or as he put it, lived practices.

Traditional philosophical practices generally privilege representation over action. However, as we have seen, Lefebvre’s formulation of socio-historico-spatial ontology reengages space, and action. To better understand Lefebvre’s interest in action, or what Marx termed praxis, we need to investigate his conception of alienation, which is at the heart of his emancipatory social praxis. Lefebvre distilled many of Marx’s expressions for estrangement [*Entfremdung* (foreignness or estrangement), *Verwirklichung* (to materialize or embody inauthenticity), *Verselbständigen* (giving independence), *Entäusserung* (renunciation or parting with an object), and *Vergänglichkeit* (transitoriness)] into the word “alienation.”<sup>148</sup> Robert Shields comments that Lefebvre would have understood alienation with its French roots of *ailleurs*, meaning elsewhere, bringing into play the ideas of identity and location. “This describes a geography of consciousness that accompanies the individual’s dialectic alternation between fully lived

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid. p. 98.

<sup>146</sup> John Cottingham as quoted Ibid. p. 134.

<sup>147</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty as quoted in Ibid. p. 134.

<sup>148</sup> John Moore, paraphrased in Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle : Spatial Dialectics*, *International Library of Sociology* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999). p. 40.

engagement and alienated withdrawal.”<sup>149</sup> Lefebvre defines alienation as the “single yet dual movement of objectification and externalization – or realization and de-realization.”<sup>150</sup> Objectification is the isolating of phenomena to render them apart, rather than integral to a larger situation. A stepping away from, or ‘cooling’ of, the world is enacted to understand and treat objects unemotionally, and objectively. In approaching objects, one takes an unreflective position, which reflects accepted social norms. Further, “the metaphorical qualities of objects are also ignored in a general reduction of the meaningfulness of the world to a set of predefined and commodified advertising images.”<sup>151</sup> At the same time, we objectify ourselves, externalizing our self into an object, which does away with alternative perceptions of self.

Marx had described alienation in terms of the workplace; people could be alienated from their work, from other people through competition, and from their own essence, or human-ness, which meant that people could misunderstand what it was that made them human. Lefebvre took from Marx’s idea of alienation in the workplace and applied it to everyday life. Lefebvre reorients Marxism from concerns with abstract macro-economics to the problems of human existence. Further, the body becomes the centre of his attempts to reground theory. “The body, at the very heart of space and of the discourse of power is irreducible and subversive. It is the body which is the point of no return.”<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid. p. 41.

<sup>150</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. p. 72.

<sup>151</sup> Shields, *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle : Spatial Dialectics*. p. 41.

<sup>152</sup> Lefebvre quoted in Ibid. p. 76.

Lefebvre later admitted that alienation was practically a natural state that set in after every un-alienated “moment.”<sup>153</sup> The sources of alienation, as it has been defined, occur throughout daily life. Objective calculation is necessary in making dispassionate calculations about the benefits of certain actions and possibilities for the future. It is an inherent element of self-consciousness. As Shields says, “alienation is always created anew, and living is the process of engagement with the conditions of engagement with the conditions of existence; *living is the practice of overcoming alienation* to reach a deeper level of understanding, of engagement and of reconciliation.”<sup>154</sup>

The lived practice of gardening can produce un-alienated moments through communing with nature, establishing a structured practice, and through linking our existence to a larger, perhaps mystical or magical world of grace. But Lefebvre’s construction of spaces of representation goes further than Cooper’s notion of the good life in its subversive nature. Remember Soja’s words, “these lived spaces of representation are thus the terrain for the generation of ‘counterspaces,’ spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning.”<sup>155</sup> Remember further that this gardening practice takes place on rooftops, by their very nature subordinate, peripheral and marginal. The greenroof and its maintenance are a practical, and practiced, theorization of the production of space that results in a “counterspace.” Although greenroofs are becoming more common, they continue to defy the common order of building methodologies by adopting a more ecologically conscious roofing alternative and practice. Participation in the maintenance of this particular type of space

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid. p. 73.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. p. 43.

<sup>155</sup> Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. p. 68.

is what qualifies it as a lived practice under the terms defined by Lefebvre. We have seen that the main motivation of the Coop and the CEU in having a greenroof was ecological, and Guillemette underlines this fact when she says of her rooftop garden practice, “I feel like I am participating in helping the environment.”<sup>156</sup>

With this case study I have tried to show how cooperative action can attempt to produce ecologically and socially responsible solutions to everyday problems in the city. The case study is also a concrete example of how, even with the best intentions and an ostensibly participatory framework in place, true participation can be elusive. The results of this non-participation were examined, and perhaps this project can be made as an example to support traditional participatory architecture, with emphasis on the conceptual and planning stages. But the case study goes further into a realm not usually considered by architectural discourse, that of the maintenance of the construction. The project is an excellent foil to explore this realm because the very nature of the garden demands constant maintenance, and one performed not by professionals but by the users of the rooftop. Despite the participatory deficiencies in the various stages of the project, participation in the maintenance was shown to be a meaningful practice for Guillemette and by extension for anyone choosing to engage in the garden’s maintenance. The importance of this practice in the scope of this thesis is that the meaning and benefits of participation extends beyond the domestic doorstep into the greater urban ecosystem and cultural sphere. It is architecture and participatory practice that makes what is invisible, visible.

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<sup>156</sup> Cooper, 2006b, p. 4.

## Chapter 4 – Roadsworth

*Au Dessou les paves, la plage*

Maxim of 1968 Paris revolts<sup>157</sup>

The ability to creatively participate architecturally, altering use and/or meaning of space, outside of the domestic sphere in a public urban setting does not immediately present many opportunities. Outside of the rapidly disappearing *terrain vague* on the Plateau there is simply not much space for creative interventions, as most everywhere has been planned and built upon. The only people who seem capable of communicating messages are those that own or rent commercial property: those who pay to have their advertisements seen – and of this there is seemingly no limit. Public space has been eroded by private capital which co-ops space for the benefit of private use. Further, what ostensibly public space that still exists is increasingly surveyed by a proliferation of security cameras, and policed by more and more security officers. Where then can one find opportunities to communicate meaningful messages in the contemporary capitalist grid of urban spatiality?

This case study demonstrates how the artistic interventions of a socially-minded citizen can contest capitalist space by “hijacking” the city’s infrastructure. The text reflects a dialogue between myself, the artworks, and the streets of Montreal. It draws from art historical exposition and critical urban discourse. My object is the politicization and demystification of a specific instance of the production of space: to show via an artistic

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<sup>157</sup> Ian Borden, "Another Pavement, Another Beach," in *The Unknown City*, ed. Rendell Kerr, Pivaro (London: MIT Press, 2001), p. 195.



project on the Plateau, that human geography is socially created, a source of political consciousness and site of social struggle. The artworks in question are part of a large project by the street artist Roadsworth who, between 2001 and 2004, created hundreds of individual images stencilled onto the streets and sidewalks and which operate in conjunction with and in contradiction to the city's infrastructure: sewers, crosswalks, passing lines. Following Hans Georg Gadamer, I adopt a hermeneutic approach towards the interventions that centres on the idea of play. Henri Lefebvre's theorization of capitalist spatiality informs this discussion which will also address ideas about human agency and institutional structures in this space. I will draw upon writings from the Situationist International to investigate parallels between their strategies and those employed by the artworks to forward social critique in a non-aggressive form of play. Finally, Edward Soja's conception of social praxis will be used to show how Roadsworth's art creates opportunities for human agency to affect the creation of space and society.

I first met Peter Gibson, aka Roadsworth, in December, 2004 several days after he was caught and arrested while making his art. Roadsworth, a resident of the Plateau, had started his practice three years earlier after 9/11. "I would paint the cyclist's symbol [on streets] and place it at different points in the city as a visual proposal for more bike paths." He continues, "we cover the city in 90% concrete to allow for cars, which produce traffic and congestion that continue unchecked, and relentlessly cause pollution. Cyclists and pedestrians are not given much of a share in the public space."<sup>158</sup> Roadsworth's arrest on November 29<sup>th</sup> led to 53 charges of public malfeasance amounting to a \$265,000 fine,

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<sup>158</sup> Reid Cooper, "When the Stencil Hits the Road," *The Globe and Mail*, January 6 2005.

and possible banishment from the city for three years. His story and its relationship to private and public space led me to write an article on his art in *The Globe and Mail* newspaper, which turned out to be a definitive moment in my career as an art historian. With the article I felt as though my research could make an impact on society by reaching a national audience. More poignantly, Roadsworth told me that after his mother read the article she finally respected his artistic practice. Roadsworth's art has had a large effect on me personally and my research. Although I did not participate in creating the images, I feel that my assessment and experience of them was more than that of a mere observer, as will become clear in the chapter. Further, my writing and research enabled me to participate in the events surrounding Roadsworth's art and subsequent arrest, and spurred me to respond to his utterances in kind.

Roadsworth's artworks are a montage of images, where a stencilled form is integrated into official pavement markings painted on the streets like passing lanes, crosswalks and carpark-marks. They are yellow or white, matching the colours of the official pavement markers and the end results are simple forms that, for the most part, are readily identifiable like vine leaves, a lasso or an owl. They are reminiscent of Andy Goldsworthy's art,<sup>159</sup> which orders natural elements like dandelions or feathers into pleasing and thought-provoking shapes. Roadsworth plays with official order to question and create a new order. His art is an urban phenomenon of benign images that invite viewers to look at them. They are not antagonistic towards the official markers, but perhaps agonistic. They exist in contrast to official pavement markings, but do not

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<sup>159</sup> Goldsworthy is a British artist and photographer living in Scotland. His sculpture and land art are site specific and take place in natural settings. He uses natural and found objects and arranges them in a naturalistic fashion that nonetheless stands out from the setting where in they take place.

aggress over them. They are perhaps a parody or mirror of the official markers that questions their existence.

The artwork intrudes into the space of official street-use and supplements official meanings with a second discourse. In their interaction with official signs as will be shown, they communicate an environmental and social consciousness. Walking, reliance on cars, and nature and the built environment are some of the themes he invokes. By intruding into planned urban space and altering it, the utterances have the capacity to defamiliarize the streets, thereby suggesting what they are and what they are not. In creating heterogeneous images in a street space that is characterized by homogeneity, an opportunity is created to contemplate the nature of the urban environment.

Roadsworth's images are street art. With its roots ostensibly in graffiti culture dating back to the 1960s in New York, much street art differentiates itself from graffiti in its writer's anonymity. Graffiti demonstrates a desire to mark territory, as opposed to exploring creativity or art in a traditional manner, with the writer's *tag* - a word or word symbol that marks the artist's passage through a particular locale - accompanying the work universally.<sup>160</sup> A tag sometimes accompanies street art, and indeed Roadsworth has one, a book with a stylized "RW" on its cover although this tag is rarely used, both in Roadsworth's work, and in street art in general. As Darius and Downey, New York Street artists, say of graffiti, "That tradition is all about the name, the signature. What we're

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<sup>160</sup> Nancy Macdonald, *The Graffiti Subculture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). p. xii.

doing has become something that still uses elements of graffiti, but isn't about a name anymore."<sup>161</sup>

While street art differs from graffiti in not being "about a name," it is still very much about territoriality, albeit not the personal, or group territoriality as advanced by practitioners of graffiti. Street art, because of its anonymity, appears to open up a space in the urban fabric for subjective territoriality as opposed to say, capitalist or state territoriality. This space is more about the viewer, and less about the various powers that put the message there. Much street art is overtly political, featuring anti-war slogans, or appropriating advertising space and messages. What these art works do is create an opportunity for the viewer to step out of regular urban consciousness into a subjective space of play or contemplation, and it is in this sense that the works create a territory for subjective experience. Mat Cook of design company Intro says, "The main aim is to break the monotony of looking at all these desperately vacuous images. It's a breathing space – make people laugh, or jar from the banal bus-journey existence you have. We're tired of being spoon-fed."<sup>162</sup>

Street art is unsanctioned, and for this reason it is ephemeral and not monumental. It is not supposed to be there and can be destroyed at any moment. Where traditional approaches to public art celebrate essentialist and timeless ideals, street art by its very nature exists at the moment of encounter, existing without a future. In this sense the work

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<sup>161</sup> "Street Artists," *Creative Review*, July, 2004 2004. p. 55.

<sup>162</sup> Francesca Gavin, "Superfly," *Blueprint* 2002. p. 67.

centres the viewer's perception of time to the present; one can take street art as impetus to (re)act now.

Such public art is opposed to art practices begun with public monuments in the 1960s celebrating established artists, and which has now evolved to incorporate notions of site-specificity and community involvement.<sup>163</sup> As Rosalyn Deutsche has shown in her article, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," public art increasingly operates in urban redevelopment, where the artist works with a team of developers, city planners and architects. Such art is put towards either ideals of utility, as with Scott Burton's various furniture pieces designed for public parks<sup>164</sup> or beautification, such as the recent installation of *La Joute* (1969), a sculpture-fountain by Jean-Paul Riopelle, near Victoria Square in Montreal. The case of *La Joute* is poignant here because it was moved in 2002 from its home in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, a spatially and economically peripheral area, to the centre of Montreal's international financial district. The residents fought hard to keep the sculpture-fountain, but ultimately capitalist forces had their way.<sup>165</sup> Developers employ public art to naturalize the conflicting forces upon which redevelopment and gentrification are built, by creating cohesion, order and rationality in space. Deutsche writes, "This is the real function of the new public art: to present as natural the conditions of the late-capitalist city into which it hopes to integrate us."<sup>166</sup> Unsanctioned public art, existing outside institutional frameworks, often invades public

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<sup>163</sup> Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995).

<sup>164</sup> Deutsche, *Evictions : Art and Spatial Politics*. p 65.

<sup>165</sup> Paule Des Rivieres, *La Joute De Riopelle* (2002 [cited August 17 2006]); available from [www.ledevoir.com/2002/05/31/2255.html](http://www.ledevoir.com/2002/05/31/2255.html).

<sup>166</sup> Deutsche, *Evictions : Art and Spatial Politics*. p 66.

space, politicizing the production of space and art. Where normative public art becomes suspect, unsanctioned public art gains credibility through its very illegitimacy.

Roadsworth's project is the totality of various, and oft-repeated image-utterances.

Utterances are malleable expressions. They are verbal acts that incorporate non-words like "shhh", or a tongue click. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, what generates meaning in an utterance is that it is bound in a communicative performance: the utterance responds to something, and is calculated to be responded to in turn. In this sense, Roadsworth's street utterances function in a dialogic manner, responding to the official pavement markers and engaging the person who happens to see them into a conversation of sorts. The utterances are identifiable in a visual lexicon of objects, but because there is no ostensible sense to the images, their meanings are dependant on the person who chooses to engage with them, bringing that person's contextual background into the conversation. One may react to the owl, for example, as a sign of wisdom (the owl being the sign of wisdom, or *sophia*) or as a sign of nature. Caught-up in this conversation, Roadsworth's images give rise to questioning the dialog that is taking place between the two image discourses; an interpretation that, again, calls upon the contextual background of the human interlocutor. The unofficial utterances could point to the arbitrary nature of the official markings, or perhaps they represent a threat to society, or perhaps they are nothing more than a playful attempt to make the streets more interesting. The point is that the person engaged with the images in dialog questions the images and makes sense of them through their own understanding, which might just be questioned in turn. This dialogic paradigm is given force by the sheer amount of utterances that are found on the streets.

Understanding the images as utterance is reinforced by the artist's ingenious use of official, that is, ordinary, pavement markings, which themselves constitute a more formal and familiar language. Roadsworth is not the first to paint unsanctioned symbols on the streets. In Montreal, our streets are littered with many images, coloured peonies, advertising for stores, lines indicating a walking path to follow. Globally, artists like Cismo in Sao Paulo (figure 14) or Zys in Tokyo (figure 15) have, respectively, appropriated sidewalks with painted curving lines and ornamented crosswalks with decorative patterns. Roadsworth is the only street artist I have come across, however, to systematically integrate his elaborations with official city infrastructures; street lines, lampposts and sewers.

Official street markings - sewers and lampposts notwithstanding - are a concrete language of utility the city employs for the ordered and controlled use of streets. In Québec we learn the meanings of these signs in school; there are textbooks devoted to interpreting the signs, and we are encouraged to obey the signs through the negative reinforcement of paying a fine if we disobey. Roadsworth's utterances intrude upon this utilitarian language, both interpreting it and supplementing it with a new language. This co-joining is made obvious by their artistic integration with the official signs and by using the same method of creation as the official markers – stencilling – and employing the same colour of paint – orange and white. People know the rules of the road; the markers that constitute the language of these rules are followed without hesitation. Roadsworth's art

inserts itself into the dialog of citizen and street, playfully altering it and showing the potential for creative and non-destructive dissent.

In this dialogue between three elements, official street signs, unsanctioned utterances and a human subject, there is a sense of play, a sense of going back and forth. As Tibor Van Roy, one of four Plateau residents I interviewed, says, "it is like someone is playing a game,"<sup>167</sup> and according to Hans-Georg Gadamer this is what a work of art should enable.<sup>168</sup> Play involves a movement that is not tied down to any goal, but oscillates between poles in dialogic communication. Gadamer understands one's *horizons*, one's knowledge and experience, as productive of understanding. Gadamer argues that the limits of a person's *horizon* can be elevated through play, exposure to dialogue and linguistically encoded cultural traditions because they place one's horizons in relief.<sup>169</sup>

An artwork exists to the extent that someone 'plays along' with it and engages actively with it; its identity is tied up with its recognition. Because the work arises out of its recognition and its understanding, its identity is bound up with variation and difference. It leaves the observer some leeway, a space to be filled up by him/her self. The reading of any work, "means above all performing a constant hermeneutic movement guided by the anticipation of the whole..."<sup>170</sup> Universally accepted conventions of representation have been overturned, replaced by forms of representation which demand the active

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<sup>167</sup> Cooper, "When the Stencil Hits the Road."

<sup>168</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer and Robert Bernasconi, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>169</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 1st paperback ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

<sup>170</sup> Gadamer and Bernasconi, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. p. 28.



involvement of the observer. The observer now must attempt to synthesize the work before him/her – for example in the appreciation of a cubist painting. The value of an artwork is found not in what it represents, but in what it does to us, or what it makes us do.

In this sense Roadsworth's utterances have the capacity to elevate one's horizons, to further one's understanding of what pavement markers and streets are. For the formulation of this realization I borrow the Greek term *alethia*, which received its most recent designation from Heidegger who uses it to refer to an essentialized truth.<sup>171</sup> Here, *alethia* is truth, not understood as an objective one-to-one correspondence, but as an understanding of one's existence in association to contextual information, historical agency, and in relation to other members of society, not as objects, but as subjects with the same capacity for *alethia*. *Alethia* means revealing, or un-concealing. It is an individually constructed truth that will vary from person to person. It must be emphasized that *alethia* is an idealized truth that does not transcend time. It is a truth bound in a moment that exists in a play of dialogic utterances between an embodied subject and an artwork together with contextual elements, all of which are ephemeral and subject to change.

In engaging with the street utterances in a dialogic act towards a momentary and ever changing sense of *aletheia*, I am led to consider what streets are. Not only does the play between sanctioned and unsanctioned street marks lead me to this conclusion, but many

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<sup>171</sup> See Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

of Roadsworth's utterances point towards an un-concealing of what lies beneath the streets. There are hatches, like a submarine hatch, which beg to be opened (figure 16). There are manhole covers with soda-pop can latches painted on them, waiting to be drunk. Zipper-heads appropriate passing lines, turning them into zippers that provocatively suggest an opening (figure 17). Some diagonal lines stencilled between passing lines (figure 18) create a cardiogram reading, suggesting one to ask where the heart is on the street, and what shape it is in?

In asking what a street is, one can consider its material existence, which is given in the dictionary: "a road in a town or village, usually hard surfaced and provided with drainage and artificial lighting and having buildings on one or both sides."<sup>172</sup> Also, one would consider its instrumental value: a strip of cleared land to enable the movement of vehicular traffic. People who use the road in the prescribed manner of utility understand these definitions. Roadsworth's utterances use the streets differently, not as a means to an end, but in a way that addresses immediate subjective existence. When Descartes, following Gallileo, introduced his conception of the mind/body duality and built his platform on the principle of *cogito ergo sum*, he set off a line of thinking that privileges *res cogito* over *res extensa*; subsequently enthroning reason and its corollaries of utility and technology. This is why one would be apt to apply to the notion of streets a definition that gives a rational or instrumental response to the question. Gadamer, on the other hand, seeks to re-centre embodied subjective experience. Here, truth is not a one-to-one

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<sup>172</sup> B. Cayne, ed., *The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary* (New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc., 1981). p 980.

correlation that can be proved scientifically over and over again. In this sense reason and notions of utility are chimeras that conceals *alethia*.

The question that I can answer then, is what is the street to me, and how does it affect my existence? I use the streets almost every day of my life, and in walking, cycling, or even driving, I have come to realize that the streets are not there for me, which is strange because as a citizen of Montreal I feel I have some claim on them. When walking or cycling, the speed at which cars and trucks fly by, even on the small streets, is not only de-humanizing but is frightening. Further, vehicular traffic is noisy and emits toxic fumes, which I can't help inhaling. If I drive, I am inevitably caught up in traffic that is omnipresent in every single North American city I have visited. These problems are a direct result of privileging cars in post-war North American urban planning. This policy is inevitably caught up in the economics and politics of auto manufacturing, which is predicated on a model of unlimited growth that is ultimately unsustainable. This is a dangerous principle to follow for anyone who values urban life as street culture.

Many of Roadsworth's utterances serve to undermine the primacy of the car and the privileging of the pedestrian or cyclist. His images often separate crosswalks and sidewalks, which are the space of pedestrians, from streets proper, which are the space of vehicles. A stencil of a barbed wire fence connected to two street lamps cordons-off the sidewalk from the street. Several crosswalks are protectively surrounded by barbed wire (figure 19). On one crosswalk, Roadsworth has extended the broken lines to produce a footprint. Moreover, the placing of lobby ropes with stanchions before crosswalks (figure

20) denotes either a welcoming space for pedestrians, or point to the fact that a pedestrian must wait to let traffic pass before they can use the crosswalk. Through these images, Roadsworth challenges the dominance of cars and presents an urban ecological consciousness by promoting pedestrian space.

It is beyond doubt that pedestrian traffic is far less ecologically damaging than vehicular traffic. Further, pedestrian traffic can be said to add to street life and culture whereas vehicular traffic, which flows through space quickly, acts to fragment urban space.

However, the sidewalk exists both in contrast to and parallel with the streets. Parallel, not only because of their material existence beside streets, but also because sidewalks are not generally considered a space of beauty and contemplation; they exist in a logic of utility. Like streets, they enable movement. Further, they allow for perception of, and facilitate consumption in, the spectacle of consumer culture. Gibson says, "I love the city, it is a great place of cultural exchange, but personally I feel there is not enough balance between cultural exchange and selling things. There is more to culture than consumer exchange and institutional messages."<sup>173</sup>

If streets are intended for specific uses, who do they serve? For Henri Lefebvre, the capitalist mode of production has an intense effect on the creation of space. Because production now takes place across geographically vast areas via technological networks, "the production of things in space" has become "the production of space."<sup>174</sup> The logic of the capitalist production of space is one of overriding utility for the accumulation of

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<sup>173</sup> Cooper, "When the Stencil Hits the Road."

<sup>174</sup> H Lefebvre, "Space: Social Product and Use Value," in *Critical Sociology: European Perspectives*, ed. J.W. Freiburg (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1979). p 285.

capital. Those who control capital exercise a hegemonic control over society as a whole including knowledge and culture. “The ruling class seeks to maintain its hegemony by all available means, and knowledge is one such means.”<sup>175</sup> Knowledge, issuing forth architecturally and from city planners as *conceived* space, dominates over *lived* space, the space of daily practice. “The speculative primacy of the conceived over the lived causes practice to disappear along with life, and so does very little justice to the ‘unconscious’ level of lived space *per se*.”<sup>176</sup>

Understanding this, streets are transportation corridors that allow the flow of commodities. Here, not only are goods and raw materials transported from all over the world to industrial complexes and consumer outlets, but people, as commodities, as tools of production, are transported to and from places of production and consumption. This is a paradigm in which conceived space, the state-planned space of roads, neighborhoods, infrastructure, takes precedence over *lived* space. Modernist city planning is partly responsible for the fragmented terrain over which people must travel to work, live and engage in leisure activities. Urbanists, architects and town planners engage in what Lefebvre calls ‘representations of space’ which “are tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations.”<sup>177</sup> Here, urbanists’ conceived space produces housing projects on the edge of town, characterized by homogenous, cookie-cutter residences, geographically distanced from retailers, and which funnel vehicular traffic to large big-box stores offering a selection of prescribed choices. Roadsworth’s utterances point to

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<sup>175</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.p 10.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. p 34.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. p 33.

this homogenization of space. Because of the homogenous character of roads, one could theoretically paint the same images on any carpark-mark and achieve the same results, not only in Montreal, but indeed, in most westernized cities around the world.

Capitalist space is, following Lefebvre, abstract space, where progress is measured not in human terms, but in terms of technological improvements such as increased speed of transportation, or better amenities.<sup>178</sup> Deutsche writes of city planners, “Theirs is a technocratic vision... it reacts by offering solutions that can only perpetuate alienation: the conviction that needs and pleasures can be gratified by expertly produced, professionally ‘humanized’ environments.”<sup>179</sup> She continues, “Space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also of means of control, and hence of domination, of power...”<sup>180</sup> The myth perpetuated by manufacturers and advertisers, that buying commodities will improve life, or that new products are essential, is a means to coerce consumers to buy more, ensuring a stable flow of money to entrenched capital. Indeed, without the constant flow of capital derived from new consumer products, our economy, as we know it, would crash. Our streets are inundated with advertisements that appear on signs, sidewalks, shops, cars and people. If the visual advertisements that pollute our streets were sound bytes, there would be a deafening cacophony of noise. Roadsworth’s invocation of loudspeakers perched on carpark-marks (figure 21) suggests to me these advertiser’s voices. And capital protects itself, not only through hegemonic control, but with the help of public security, and the

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid. p. 59.

<sup>179</sup> Deutsche, *Evictions : Art and Spatial Politics*.. 70

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.. 26.

increasingly omnipresent surveillance of security cameras. The specter of supervision is echoed in Roadsworth's surveillance cameras attached to parking places (figure 22).

Capitalist space as abstract space has three distinct qualities according to Lefebvre. It is homogenous so that it can be manipulated, used and exchanged. It is fragmented or divided into parts that can be bought and sold. It is hierarchically ordered, separated into centers and peripheries, high and low status spaces, spaces of the dominated and the dominant. It is subjected to an abstract measure to enable its manipulation by divorcing it from social subjects and specific and diverse uses. Many contradictions inhabit this space like the production of cores and peripheries on a local to an international scale. New luxury condo projects on the Plateau service the financially elite workforce of the downtown center that pushes current residents out of the center to the periphery. As capital moves to increase revenues and reduce expenses, commodity production and service migrates to different cities and nations to maximize profit. Increased and more robust global networks make it possible to dislocate traditional production jobs not only from the city centre to the periphery but from developed nations to developing nations like India and China where labour is cheaper. High-income business like finance, banking, corporate planning and management rely on large capital investment networks that pull similar businesses and services together, accumulating in global centres like New York, Tokyo and London.<sup>181</sup> Lefebvre writes, "The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and

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<sup>181</sup> Saskia Sassen, *The Global City : New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

resistance it encounters there.”<sup>182</sup> Moreover, as Deutsche writes, “Today, [capital] accumulation occurs not by absolute expansion, but through the internal differentiation of space. It is, then, a process of uneven development.”<sup>183</sup> Capital creates space, but must also destroy and recreate its own space for further accumulation of capital.

Roadsworth’s unsanctioned utterances reveal the contradictions inherent in capitalist space by defamiliarizing the streets. By suspending our traditional ideas of what streets are, and how they should be used, Roadsworth’s artworks can show how streets function normatively to provide tools for, and entrench, obedience. Specifically, his art suggests that streets, which are ostensibly public space, are in fact an articulation of privatized space facilitating the accumulation of capital. The art suggests that sidewalks aid our participation in producing capital, not only in helping us get to work, but in advertising products and facilitating in their consumption. In using streets we understand that we are tacitly engaging in the flow of goods and resources that come from some where and go to some place. These transportation systems are the products of state planners, whose goals are inexorably tied to the goals of capital accumulation, not the goals of living beings. The utterances thus point to the contradiction between the conceived versus the lived. They point to these various contradictions by their very being in places they are not allowed to be. In creating useless images on streets that exist in a logic of utility, unsanctioned utterances have the capacity to unveil the hidden order in which we all, unresistingly for the most part, are participants.

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<sup>182</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.49.

<sup>183</sup> Deutsche, *Evictions : Art and Spatial Politics*. p. 74.



Having thus revealed that people and public spaces have been manoeuvred by state and private planning into a place that serves the ends of capital accumulation, what can be done about it? Following the dialogic communication with Roadsworth's utterances, our focus is attentive to the element of play. While the utterances play, in a back and forth movement with an observer and with official street signs, they also invoke play, in the sense of fun and creativity. The utterances are not a violent manifestation, or a destructive action in any way. They reconfigure existing signs, but do not obliterate them. Many of the utterances are quite benign. Ice cream cones have been painted in various places on an intersection (figure 23). An owl, or a devilish-looking thinker (à la Rodin) sits atop various streets signs (figures 24 and 25). The cardiogram, zipper, and submarine hatch are all playful. In order to address the playful nature of these works, I will now turn to the writing of the Situationiste Internationale who sought to communicate socially disruptive messages through playful tactics.

The Situationist International (SI), an artistic and philosophical movement established in 1957 and disbanded in 1972, prefigures Roadsworth's unsanctioned utterances in their emphasis on play, and in the varying ways they critiqued modernist town planning and capitalist society. It would be misleading to express the ideas of the SI in any kind of holistic or uniform way for the various members expressed different and sometimes conflicting ideas. Here, their ideas, which coalesce with those suggested by the Roadsworth's unsanctioned utterances, have been unpacked to uncover additional elements of the utterances. Not only is the Situationist's tactic of *derive*, or urban wandering, reminiscent of the wandering nature of Roadsworth's utterances, but their

desire to create situations through play and their idea of artistic montage or *détournement*, finds strong links with Roadsworth's art.

The SI was critical of capitalist society for its exploitation of human beings and their capacity for work.<sup>184</sup> Work is essential for the existence of all living things, but capitalist society harnesses the work of the many for the benefit of the few. They felt that there was a dire paucity of the possibilities brought forth from capitalism and technology, and poverty in their actual use. As former SI member and founder, Guy Debord wrote, "The accumulation of production of ever-improving technological capabilities is proceeding faster than nineteenth-century communism predicted. But we have remained at the stage of a superequipped prehistory."<sup>185</sup>

As opposed to *homo fabre*, 'man the maker', the SI, through Constant Nieuwenhuys and his utopian project, New Babylon, put forward the idea of *homo ludens*, "Man the player."<sup>186</sup> While the ideal of play expressed in writings about New Babylon pointed to playing in the sense of having fun, a more serious side of play was implied in the manner of creating the new society Babylon represented. Members of the SI were hostile to the separation of art and poetry from everyday life, and this manifested itself in a desire to collapse the distance between the aesthetic and the quotidian. As they editors of *Situationiste Internationale* write,

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<sup>184</sup> Constant, *Exhibition Catalogue New Babylon*, Sourced From: [Http://Www.Notbored.Org/New-Babylon.Html](http://www.Notbored.Org/New-Babylon.Html) (The Hague: Haags Gemeetenmuseum, 1974).

<sup>185</sup> Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley, Calif.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981). p. 101.

<sup>186</sup> Constant, *Exhibition Catalogue New Babylon*.

So far philosophers and artists have only interpreted situations, the point now is to transform them. Since man is the product of the situations he goes through, it is essential to create human situations. Since the individual is defined by his situation, he wants the power to create situations worthy of his desires.<sup>187</sup>

The ability to change situations creates a stronger degree of immediacy, which counters feelings of alienation.

Traditional aesthetic theory finds the beautiful and the sublime in art and architecture in a frozen moment that captures or communicates some kind of essentialized ideal. In contrast, Guy Debord writes, “the Situationist goal is immediate participation in a passionate abundance of life, through the variation of fleeting moments resolutely arranged. The success of these moments can only be their passing effect.”<sup>188</sup> The emphasis here is on the provisional existence of the artwork, and this functions in obvious accord with Roadsworth’s utterances whose very nature, as unsanctioned and being physically outside, is ephemeral.

With his New Babylon, Nieuwenhuys modeled a whole city on the concept of ephemerality, variability and participation. This utopic city was one very large megastructure whose interior, including walls, lighting, heat, sound and other elements could be changed according to the whim of its inhabitants. There is a distinct anti-architectural basis to this project, which is communicated in Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle*: “The requirement of capitalism that is met by urbanism in the form of a freezing of life might be described in Hegelian terms, as an absolute predominance of

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<sup>187</sup> Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*. p.138.

<sup>188</sup> Guy Debord, “Theses on the Cultural Revolution (1958),” *October* Winter, no. 79 (1997). p. 90.

‘tranquil side-by-sidedness’ in space over ‘restless becoming in the progression of time.’”<sup>189</sup> This is very similar to the project of Roadsworth, which modifies the elements of Montreal’s transportation superstructure. The fear associated with both strategies, however, is the creation of an anarchic avalanche of personal choice and action that would impinge on the group so as to damage the functionality of the superstructure. Perhaps this fear is propagated as a mask for conservative forces to keep ‘radical’ elements in check. Debord was guided by the idea of “the principal of disorientation” which is a confusion of the hierarchy of spatial forms, creating spatial variability. Disorientation is akin to defamiliarizing the streets, to create variability and awareness, and to suggest similar variational strategies to observers of the utterances.

The method of aesthetic montage that Roadsworth employs, building from official structures, is also reminiscent of the Situationist idea of *détournement* that entails the “integration of present or past production of the arts into a superior construction of the surroundings.”<sup>190</sup> The idea was to create an architecturally based artistic form that would return fluidity to human society which spectacular culture had rendered static and reified. Roadsworth’s images as *détournement* are a second-order discourse which not only plays with the meaning of the primary discourse of official signs, but which leads observers to continue the play of changing meanings.

Thomas McDonough writes of *détournement*,

Significantly, this was no longer seen as a literal project of architectural flexibility, but as a political project of struggle over socially produced

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<sup>189</sup> Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Rev. ed. (Detroit: Black & Red, 1977). p. 121.

<sup>190</sup> Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*. p. 45.

meaning in the city. The urban fabric was to be neither embraced nor rejected, but would become the site of contestation; if the spectacle had destroyed the 'independence and quality of places,' détournement would occupy their ruins, first as a powerful propaganda tool, later as a melancholic contemplation of reification.<sup>191</sup>

As Edward Soja would argue, the realization that active participants can contest social space is a key step towards understanding that in fact conflicting social relations produce space. The creation of capitalist space is a continual process, not a *fait accompli*.

"Spatiality must be socially reproduced, and this reproduction process presents a continuing source of struggle, conflict and contradiction."<sup>192</sup> That human agency has a concrete role to play in the reproduction of spatiality has been overlooked by the majority of society for so long is a result of a double illusion, the opaque *realistic illusion* and the idealist *illusion of transparency*.

Roadsworth's unsanctioned utterances have the force to break these illusions. As personal and playful manifestations in the highly ordered, homogenous space of streets, they clearly exist in contrast to the value of utility in which streets exist. They show that urban space is not naturally formed, but make visible a contested struggle for the right to the streets. As agonistic to the official pavement markers, and by appearing suddenly, they show how space is not merely the manifestation of professional urban design. They show an impromptu creation of space that exists contrary to planned space. The streets are not just a-historical categorical imperatives of urban spatiality, but sites of contestation.

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<sup>191</sup> Thomas McDonough, "Fluid Space: Constant and the Situationist Critique of Architecture," in *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond*, ed. Zegher and Wogley (New York: MIT Press, 2001). p. 101.

<sup>192</sup> Soja, "The Spatiality of Social Life: Towards a Transformative Retheorisation." p. 97.

The capitalist structure of space might be difficult to see for some because of the dual illusions of opacity and transparency, because it influences both relations of production and the social relations of reproduction, and because it takes place in a complex matrix integrating local, national, and global spaces. Caught up in global matrices, and understood as 'natural,' spatial evolution is not only difficult to conceptualize and understand, it is seemingly impossible to stop; creating apathetic attitudes of inevitability and nihilism, or the embracing of some technological utopia. Contestation, asserts Lefebvre, Soja and many other scholars, must take place in the spatial realm, because spatiality is not only a product of society, but produces society, and assumes an authoritative and dominant role. As Soja writes, "Class struggle, as well as other social struggles are thus increasingly contained and defined in their spatiality and trapped in its 'grid.' Social struggle must then become consciously and politically spatial struggle to regain control over the social production of space."<sup>193</sup>

The world is in a state of crisis, and the issue of spatiality is paramount. Space, through economic and environmental crises, along with academic efforts, is becoming demystified and increasingly politicized. Environmental groups are fighting to reclaim geography plundered by capital, and advocate a radical change in consumption and behavioural patterns. Feminist movements challenge the structural components of society that perpetuates male hegemony. These efforts focus on spatiality as the centre of the production and reproduction of society. Space is understood neither as a mirror of society, nor as a passive container where society plays itself out, but as the locus of societal change, and thus where struggle and contestation must focus their attention.

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid. p. 110.

Space must be acted upon by ethically-minded individuals and organizations in a transformative action, which Soja, taking from Lefebvre, refers to as social praxis: “the active and informed attempt by spatially-conscious social actors to reconstitute the embracing spatiality of social life.”<sup>194</sup> This action, as historically contradictory practice, will take place on inherited spatial forms, as the co-joining of existing spatial paradigms with alternative “interests, projects, protests and dreams.”<sup>195</sup>

Unsanctioned utterances are just such an expression of social praxis. Roadsworth builds upon the inherited spatial ideology of utility represented by streets, and reconfigures elements of this logic to represent a new way of understanding. Handcuffs chained to parking meters (figure 26) demonstrate how we are slaves to their usage and not how they give us freedom as auto manufactures advertise. Light switches in the ‘on’ position (figure 27) remind us of how reliant we have become on consumption and technology. Bullets painted into crosswalks (figure 28) remind us of the human and environmental deaths that are incurred to maintain cheap sources of oil to run our vehicles and our lifestyles. These are spaces of difference which communicate diverse views that have few and obscure outlets for communication.

Certainly it can be argued that Roadsworth’s art can be construed as a public hazard. The city took such an approach in defending the arrest of the artist in 2004. Richard Coté, the political adviser to the Mayor of the Plateau Mont-Royal borough, says that as far as the

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid. p. 114.

<sup>195</sup> Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. p. 4.

city is concerned, "there is no question of artistic intention, it is about public security."<sup>196</sup>

To which Gibson replies, "I anticipated the safety concern. It almost seems ludicrous in the face of the existing safety concerns in the city with the sheer number of cars and the number of distractions in the form of advertisers' images."<sup>197</sup> Stephane Tischer, the director of the School of Landscape Architecture of The University of Montreal says, "maybe cars will go a little slower, (which is a good thing), but it is absolutely not something that is creating a danger."<sup>198</sup>

What if everyone started embellishing the streets with their own designs? Both the artist and the city agree that this would not be a desirable situation. Coté says, "If we don't put limits on things it will look like the subway in New York." But people do not want to limit artistic expression either; nor involve the justice system in a costly process. As a way for the city to react to street art, Chris Hand, director of Zeke's Gallery and art community activist, suggests there are "historical precedents for not prosecuting artists," pointing to the example of Maclean in Montreal in particular.<sup>199</sup> Maclean is best known for his 2001 Art Sign project where he converted "ARRET" signs into "A R T" signs with the use of red tape. Hand says, "He was not arrested. The police spoke with him and let him go on the condition that he would stop altering the signs."<sup>200</sup> Tischer agrees with this method: "Public space should be open for people to express different points of view. If someone does not like Roadsworth's works, there should be a dialog to bring different

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<sup>196</sup> Cooper, "When the Stencil Hits the Road."

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.



points of view together, and not simply call upon the police to make an arrest."<sup>201</sup> For me, Roadsworth's utterances are a call to step forward and assert the needs of embodied users in the streets. I symbolically achieved this through the creation of several masks made from Montreal city maps that I wore while walking around town (figure 29). Perhaps more concretely, this thesis attempts to open up and extend the discourse on everyday user participation in the built environment.

In altering our space, Roadsworth shows that human agency is possible even though we are confined in the capitalist grid of spatiality. He shows how, even in the overwhelmingly planned and conceived space of urban life, life's journey is one of an embodied subject that unfolds in space and time. Roadsworth is not the modernist *uber*-creator, but the communicator of a message: human agency has force. He shows us that opportunities exist to meaningfully participate even in this capitalist and technologically hegemonic world. We must believe that through imaginative human agency interacting with existing structures in social praxis will erode the grid of capitalist spatial hegemony.

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 5 – The Poesis of Alleys

More often than not, I would prefer to walk in the rear alley, precisely for all those little hints of life, activity, transition which the placid visual arts of suburbia did their best to politely disguise.

Lewis Mumford<sup>202</sup>

This chapter explores the environmental character and formation of the Plateau's back alleys as a paradigm for urban design. Increasingly, citizens have less direct impact on the city's construction, maintenance and administration as the vision of professional city planners continues to subject urban space to abstract configurations which facilitate efficiency, utility and ultimately capital accumulation. The alleys have benefited from institutional neglect by providing an opportunity to residents for participatory practice that takes many forms. Such practices contribute to the character of alleys, which fully engage the human sensorium and bring the participant or user into a greater historical movement of space and time. It is not the architect but regular citizens who write the latent poetic narratives communicated through alleys. The architectural contribution of non-systemic and non-instrumental interventions holds out promise to wrest the built environment from the hands of state authority who flatten social and cultural horizons. The formal and phenomenological qualities of such aggregates threaten to raze the foundations of the authoritative modernist city and produce a more humanely oriented environment.

The inspiration for this chapter stems from my long-time use of alleys. I use alleys as transportation corridors whether walking, bicycling, or cross-country skiing. The alley's

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<sup>202</sup> Lewis Mumford as quoted P. Reed, "Exploring Montreal's Alleys: A Discussion on Their History, Form, Sociology, Image and Interventions" (Thesis, McGill University, 2000). p. 37.

charm as an alternative to regular streets begs deeper study towards understanding the potential they have for the amelioration of the built environment. In this chapter I first investigate the origin of alleys in the industrial legacy of Montreal's history, and locate the present-day existence of alleys in Lefebvre's capitalistic city. The alley is understood to have benefited from institutional negligence and a discussion of its private/public character is followed by investigations into its ability to disclose historical continuity and life-enhancement through multi-sensorial engagement. Finally, the full *poesis* of alleys is articulated by their ability to engender urban participatory practice.

Montreal's block pattern, which gave birth and continues to give shape to alleys, was the result of piecemeal regulation, agricultural legacy and developers' profit motive.<sup>203</sup> The Plateau, which was still forested in 1760, took on the distinctive long and narrow block pattern by 1860 as agricultural tracts of land. Soon afterwards, developers bought the land and subdivided it between 1870 and 1879,<sup>204</sup> using the property boundaries as streets. Developers, keen on maximizing land usage, opted for long and narrow lots upon which they built duplexes and triplexes that soon became the norm to accommodate Montreal's swelling population. Nearly all the subdivisions incorporated alleys, which allowed rear access without compromising density. The form of the alley followed from its function by providing rear access for the delivery and storage of fuel, mainly wood

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>204</sup> A Knight and M.-J Vallee, *Figures De L'espace : Le Système D'architecture Urbaine À Montréal* (Université de Montréal 1988).

and coal, and permitted a place for horses to be stabled. Alleys were further used for communal wells, laundry facilities and washrooms.<sup>205</sup>

Historically, alleys have most often been the focus of disparagement by North American societies. Social reformers in Washington D.C. blamed alleys for the social ills the city was experiencing and advocated turning them into small streets. One of the posters of such reform movements reads: "The Blind Alley of Washington D.C. Seclusion breeding crime and disease: to kill the alley inmates and infect the street resident."<sup>206</sup> In Montreal, social reformer Herbert Ames (1863-1954) described the alleys of Montreal's St. Antoine and St. Anne Wards as "bad in themselves... being hidden, they are allowed to fall into a state of decay not fit for human habitation."<sup>207</sup> Geographer Paul-Yves Dennis believes that alleys are too narrow to be useful, "aesthetic considerations apart."<sup>208</sup>

Private interests and lackadaisical institutional policies brought Montreal's alleys into existence. However, through the city's unwillingness to take responsibility for them, alleys have subsequently been appropriated by citizens who elaborated on their everyday uses. In 1901, bylaw 207 ceded to the public any road, alley or public place that had functioned as public space for the previous ten years. Nonetheless, until 1960, when all alleys were declared public, the city had failed to acquire virtually any alleys.<sup>209</sup> Even

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<sup>205</sup> J-C Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution: Historical Analysis of the Development of Montreal's Architecture and Urban Environment* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981). p. 267.

<sup>206</sup> J Borchert, "Alley Landscapes of Washington," *Landscape* 23, no. 3 (1979). p. 3.

<sup>207</sup> L Roberts, *Montreal: From Mission Colony to World City* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969). p. 254.

<sup>208</sup> P-Y Dennis, "The Development of Various Districts," in *Montreal: Field Guide, 22nd International Geography Conference*, ed. Beauregard and Ludger (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1972). p. 84.

<sup>209</sup> Reed, "Exploring Montreal's Alleys: A Discussion on Their History, Form, Sociology, Image and Interventions". p. 67.

with the declaration of alleys as public in the 1960s, the city refused to assume control of alleys as suggested by the public trustee. The municipal government considered the transfer too costly in terms of time and money. More recently, with the adoption of charter 36, the city did gain ownership of many alleys with the intention of transferring ownership to private interests, which the city feels is the only way to maintain them.<sup>210</sup> In his Master's thesis entitled, *Exploring Montreal's Alleys*, Peter Reed asserts that "even recently and especially under the guise of urban renewal in the 1960's... alleys have been completely excluded from major redevelopment efforts."<sup>211</sup>

The fact that very few alleys are named further enforces the notion that alleys occupy a place on the fringe of institutional scrutiny. This was not always the case. In Montreal's expansion period c1860, the "Loi du cadastre" was adopted, which gave each alley a number corresponding to the particular subdivision where it was located.<sup>212</sup> Further, Reed reports that archival fire insurance maps indicate that many alleys were named. In time, however, they have for the most part become or remained nameless with a few exceptions like the Ruelles des Fortification, Duffalt, and Palace. In taking photographs for this case study I had to refer to alleys by the streets bordering them: for example, "the alley located between Ste. Dennis and Drolet, and Rachel and Mount Royal." The lack of attention given to alleys led Peter Donahue to remark that alleys suffer from "chronic

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid. p. 67.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>212</sup> L. Sirois-Charron, "Les Ruelles À Montréal, Une Resource À Gérer. Montréal: Rapport D'activités Présenté À L'enap, À L'inrs Et À Uqam" (Thesis, UQAM, 1991). p. 26.

*inbetween-ness* and chronic *behind-ness*. Being in an alley almost always means *not* being somewhere else.”<sup>213</sup>

Alleys have ironically benefited from a lack of institutional treatment or regulation by having been mostly left out of the capitalist production of space. Here a contrast between the street and the alley may be useful. Streets are generally regulated and well manicured spaces. Parking meters and car-park-marks stipulate where and for how long one may park their car, sidewalks indicate where it is appropriate to walk and crosswalks denote the proper place to cross, traffic lights and stop signs control traffic. Street lighting casts a homogenous glow across the landscape, and profanely manicured trees signal a small and highly regulated space for “nature.” The facades of buildings are in general well maintained for the public spectator. On high streets, only those who own or rent stores have a right to embellish the street and then in strictly defined terms. Streets are ostensibly public spaces where mainly private capital and the abstracted vision of city planners have the right to create.

In contrast, alleys represent a different type of formal treatment and private and public dynamic. I take an alley to signify not just the concrete path, but the many rear facades of buildings, fences and backyards that border it. Our experience of the alley being bordered by houses and streets, integrates these spaces laid out along a path into a whole. The somewhat private, hidden and earthen space of backyards spills out into the path; domestic exteriors are observable to vision through cracks and openings in fences and

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<sup>213</sup> P Donahue, "Alleys: Reading Urban Abjection and Anonymity," *The Midwest Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (1988). p. 77.

through the smell of vegetation and sound of wind rustling leaves. In contrast to rigid street facades and front yards open to public scrutiny, backyards exemplify personal and whimsical tastes and constructions. The participatory hand of human creation is exemplified in these private-public spaces, which are guided by fancy and facilitated by being hidden from public scrutiny. The alley is a mix of both private and public; it is the threshold of contact between internal and exterior worlds. Products of personal creation overflow quasi private space, over various personalized fences and into flower boxes and garden beds which grace public space made from private hands.

In contemporary urban centres the movement of history is stagnated by the overwhelming forces of capital (state and corporate control) that seek to prolong their power. Lefebvre makes it clear that historicity, as the product of a process of production, continues to be generated by knowledge and consciousness, and that it asserts its own self-sufficiency: “What disappears is history, which is transformed from action to memory, from production to contemplation. As for time, dominated by repetition and circularity, overwhelmed by the establishment of an immobile space which is the locus and environment of realized Reason, it loses all meaning.”<sup>214</sup> Similarly, Juhani Pallasmaa, writes that occularcentric design, producing an architecture of “image products that are detached from existential depth and sincerity”<sup>215</sup> mitigates against time, flattening history into a horizon that does not venture beyond the present. History and time, Pallasmaa argues, are essential in architectural landscapes whose task is to root humans in a

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid. p 21.

<sup>215</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin : Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Academy ; John Wiley & Sons, 2005).. p. 30.

continuity of time. As therapist Gotthard Booth says, “nothing gives man a fuller satisfaction than participation in processes that supersede the span of individual life.”<sup>216</sup>

Alleys constitute a time-based narrative due to their serendipitous overall negligence and thus afford a window back in time. Whereas fronts of houses, open to public scrutiny, are continually upgraded and kept in line through strict zoning laws, mitigating against a vernacular history, the backs of houses often communicate history in their decrepitude and age of materials, and through older forms. Because of their interstitial nature, the city, developers or residential communities seldom initiate the refurbishing of alleys, leaving their brute concrete skin to crack and become despoiled with refuse and errant construction materials like tar and excess cement. One sees silver tin-clad facades and fences arranged in diamond formations, which are reminiscent of Montreal’s 19<sup>th</sup> century tin roofs. Double-loaded lots, sheds and *hangars* (storage rooms located at the back end of the house) used to store food-stuffs, still occupy alley-scapes, harkening back several hundred years to when these elements had practical application in tethering horses, storing coal and lumber and keeping food stuffs. The many and varied doors that back onto alleys could constitute a case study in themselves. Older garage door panels are oriented vertically instead of the pervasive horizontal panels found on contemporary garages (figure 30) and their frame and panel construction is more elaborately articulated than the “clean” design of modern doors (figure 31). Very thin doors pop up here and there providing contrast to pervasive contemporary 34-inch doors (figure 32). These doors are often found with their enamel paint veneers cracking and protruding revealing layers of history – different from the chalky latex paint that cover well appointed doors in

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<sup>216</sup> Gotthard Booth as quoted in *Ibid.* p. 32.



the front of contemporary houses. Alleys teem with indigenous vegetation and with gardens and fruit trees. I have witnessed apple trees, cherry trees, fig trees, pear trees and plum trees, and the various coloured fruit these trees produce symbolize to me cycles of life and death. In these ways and more, alleys emancipate individuals from the dim horizon of the present and allow us to experience history, taking part in a succession of time that surpasses individual life.

Alleys are, to use Goethe's idea for a work of art, "life enhancing"<sup>217</sup> by engaging all our senses beyond occularcentric architectural products and by blending our sense of self with our experience of the world. Here, the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty take on critical importance in the creation of architectural landscapes. Merleau-Ponty theorized the "body-subject" as an alternative to the Cartesian "cogito" and "its privileging of an ahistorical, disinterested, disembodied subject entirely outside of the world."<sup>218</sup> The world, consciousness and the human body as a perceiving thing are intricately intertwined and mutually engaged in an osmotic-like relationship. The phenomenal thing is interrelated to our sensual perception and is not the unchanging object of the natural sciences. In this way, sensual perception has an active and constitutive dimension, and Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the mutual interaction of all the senses in this dynamic. He writes, "My perception is [therefore] not a sum of visual, tactile and audible givens; I

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<sup>217</sup> Goethe as quoted in Ibid. p. 44.

<sup>218</sup> Hubert L Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus, "Translators' Introduction," in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy* [Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

perceive in a total way with my whole being: I grasp a unique structure of the thing, a unique way of being, which speaks to all my senses at once.”<sup>219</sup>

Architecture is not a series of photographic images to be understood merely with vision and the mind’s eye, but by being palpable in its physicality, addresses all the senses.

Architecture that fully engages our various senses has the capacity to facilitate participation in the larger world and strengthen our sense of reality and sense of self.

Alleys have the capacity to bring forth our embodied selves through their emphasis on peripheral and unfocused vision, scale, distance from noisy streets, integration with nature, and their variance in colour and texture.

As opposed to the dominance of focused vision, conscious intentionality and perspectival representation in architectural practice today, which has the capacity to divorce the subject from their environment by reducing the subject to a mere spectator, Pallasmaa theorizes that unfocused and peripheral vision have the capacity to “enfold the subject in space,”<sup>220</sup> thus producing an emotional engagement. Alleys, which generally do not contain a dominant physical centrepiece, leave room for the roving eye. The many and varied setbacks produced by individual buildings and outcroppings of vegetation create places of light and dark, and hidden and open places that engage the imagination in their diversity and mysteriousness. Reed writes of alleys that, “there is a definite sense of curiosity that pulls the pedestrian around corners, with new sightlines and vistas

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<sup>219</sup> Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin : Architecture and the Senses*. p. 21.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

emerging with each turn.”<sup>221</sup> Alleys are rich in indigenous and heterogeneous plant life and thus are more akin to natural ecosystems like forests than the homogenous and artificial usage of “nature” in streets and urban parks. Pallasmaa writes, “a forest context, and richly moulded architectural space, provide ample stimuli for peripheral vision, and these centre us in the very space.”<sup>222</sup> Reed says that “from a purely physical perspective, the alley provides a setting that is extremely well-scaled,”<sup>223</sup> and makes his argument by pointing to their narrowness and their being bordered generally by fences and after that, houses. Further, trees, various climbing vegetation, electric wires and clotheslines often provide a canopy to alleys, which contribute to enclosure and comfortable human scale. “Understanding architectural scale implies the unconscious measuring of the object of the building [or landscape] with one’s body, and of projecting one’s body scheme into the space in question. We feel pleasure and protection when the body discovers its resonance in space.”<sup>224</sup>

Alleys exhibit a disordered and boisterous use of colour and texture. Because the backs of houses are less formal, people feel freer to experiment with colour. The fact that there is a high population density, with many people having different opinions of colour preference, contributes to colour diversity. Also, the many different components of the environment such as staircases, fences, facades, hangars, sheds, vegetation and so on, contribute to variances in colour. This same argument applies to texture. Surfaces of

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<sup>221</sup> Reed, "Exploring Montreal's Alleys: A Discussion on Their History, Form, Sociology, Image and Interventions". p. 42.

<sup>222</sup> Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin : Architecture and the Senses*. p. 13.

<sup>223</sup> Reed, "Exploring Montreal's Alleys: A Discussion on Their History, Form, Sociology, Image and Interventions". p. 39.

<sup>224</sup> Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin : Architecture and the Senses*. p. 67.

brick, wood, metal, tin, asphalt, vegetation and so on add to a sensually pluralistic environmental character. A fence made of raw wooden planks is arboreal-like (figure 33), while the top of a fence covered in glass shards (figure 34) is reminiscent of the roof of Antoni Gaudi's Casa Mila. The many complexities of colour and texture contribute to bodily engagement. So does the relative quietness of the alley. Because only local cars are legally allowed access to alleys, and mainly because one must drive more slowly, there is a rare paucity of automobiles in alleys. They are places of refuge from combustion engines whose pervasiveness flattens alternative sounds in the city. In the alley one can hear the sound of children playing, adults conversing and birds chirping. Similarly the lack of automobiles, which reduces city smells to petrol exhaust, allows one to smell the sweet scent of fruit and vegetation or, alternatively in a commercial alley, the fetid smell of putrefying garbage and human waste.

The sensual complexity of alleys engage the self's perceptions like few other places in the contemporary city. This complexity brings our embodied nature forward and centres existential reality in the self's engagement with the world. This realization has the capacity to raise our horizons beyond the flattened world of homogenous city planning. The alley acts as Hermes Trismegistus' "voice of the light."<sup>225</sup> Paraphrasing Alberto Perez-Gomez, alleys, "seem to awaken powers dormant in ordinary perception, demanding a different relationship with things."<sup>226</sup> The confluence of sensual profusion, the invocation of history, and the integration of self with cycles of life and death have the capacity to invoke a meaningful experience of the beautiful and integrate us into the

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<sup>225</sup> Quoted in A Perez-Gomez, *Chora: The Space of Architectural Representation* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994). p. 28.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

“whole (and holy) order of things”<sup>227</sup>. Yet the truly poetic nature of alleys can only be understood by taking into account their non-instrumental participatory character.

There are two modes of participation I wish to elaborate upon: participatory making and participatory observation. The division is quite simple, with the former taking into account social actors who create elements of the built environments often found in alleys, and the latter referring to users who participate in the social and communal character of alleys. Much contemporary urban social critique centres on a distance separating citizens and the built environment. Jones, Petruscu and Till write in their introduction to *Participation and Architecture* that, “modernism has meant the removal of people from decisions, as layers of bureaucracy and specialist procedures compel experts to intervene between the user and building [or built environment]. These experts bring with them their own value systems that are often at odds with those of the users.”<sup>228</sup> Further, there is the continual hegemony of conceived space dominating lived space, as we saw in the previous case study.

Such conceived environments perpetuate the grave docility that has overcome many inhabitants of contemporary western cities, reducing citizens from active doers and makers to passive spectators and consumers. Capitalism, according to the Situationist International is an organization of spectacles that disallows an experience of ‘real’ - that is non-alienated - life or in the participation in the construction of the real world. The passive nature of modern life accounts for the boredom and apathetic dissatisfaction that

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>228</sup> Peter Blundell-Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till, *Participation and Architecture* (New York: Spon Press, 2005). p. xiv.

characterises social experience. Sadie Plant writes, “above all, the notion of the spectacle conveyed the sense in which alienated individuals are condemned to lives spent effectively watching themselves.”<sup>229</sup>

Many of the Plateau’s alleys show signs of life that are counterpoints to this pervasive passive attitude. Flower boxes, sometimes neatly appointed (figure 35), sometimes just basic containers, are often found in alleys. These contributions are frequently less an embellishment of personal property and more a personal contribution to community space. Occasionally, entire alleys are transformed into community gardens by the efforts of individual residents acting in concert with one another (figure 36). Reed tells the story of citizens in the Milton-Parc *cartier* of the Plateau who reclaimed their alley from “car tyranny” by digging up the asphalt.<sup>230</sup> Fearing the taxis that sped through their alley “they mobilized and converted, illegally, their alley into a park.”<sup>231</sup> I have seen privately purchased (i.e. non-industrial, commercially available) basketball nets in some alleys, which increases the alley’s already diverse uses. Alleys are home to many displays of graffiti of which some are composed of simple “tags” marking out an individual’s space. However, as much or more graffiti in alleys consists of public murals with evocative and magnetic power (figure 37).

There are small signs that there is a communal consciousness in producing alley spaces as I have described them. There are several examples of alleys that have been turned into

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<sup>229</sup> Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture* (New York: Routledge, 1992). p. 10.

<sup>230</sup> Reed is refereeing to the alley between Parc and Jeanne-Mance, and Milton and Prince Arthur.

<sup>231</sup> Reed, “Exploring Montreal’s Alleys: A Discussion on Their History, Form, Sociology, Image and Interventions”. p. 74.

communal gardens, as has been mentioned. The City of Montreal began a program in 1999 to recognize these alleys, called *Les Beautés du Plateau*. Every year since the program's inception, awards have been given out acknowledging the alleys as special green-spaces. Jennifer Maduro, who ran the program in 2005, went so far as to produce a sign for these alleys (figure 38). There are also small glimpses onto alley consciousness such as this sign posted at the end of the alley (figure 39). Obviously placed there by a resident, the sign shows both a communal understanding of the alley, and acknowledges a need to keep it clean.

Despite these small signs, it would be difficult to prove that individuals are working towards a common goal in producing alley-space. Instead, I would argue that individual efforts come together under Deleuze and Guatari's idea of "assemblage." An assemblage is a "site at which a discursive formation intersects with material practices"<sup>232</sup>

Assemblages are emotional as they are compositions of desire. In the larger space of the city, the alley represents an enclave set apart from institutional knowledge and power. In this discursive space, the material practices of people are directed by diverse desires: to have more greenspace, to create aesthetically pleasing landscapes, to act communally, to communicate personal messages. These individual practices are reminiscent of early participatory architectural projects as demonstrated in Chapter 2, such as Walter Segal's self-build method where people are given tools, in this case space, to build their own creations. Taken as a whole, the alleyscape is reminiscent of Kroll's bottom-up approach

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<sup>232</sup> Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer : On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990). p. 31.

to architectural design. The end result is similar; an anarchic space composed of diverse elements that accommodate people's diverse needs and desires.

Human participation is not exclusive to those who contribute materially to the construction or alteration of the built environment, but includes social forms of participation as well. Many activities coalesce around alleys, which contribute to a distinct neighbourhood character. Children can often be seen and heard running around and playing in alleys that are close to home and much safer than busy streets. Reed demonstrates the importance of alleys for children in their providing an "unprogrammed space" where they have room to explore and where children can test societies of their own without rigidly prescribed rules.<sup>233</sup> Families use alleys as open places for activities like sporting events, fun activities like hopscotch, or learning how to ride bicycles. Moreover, Montreal's alleys provide an integral network for pedestrians, cyclists and even cross-country skiers as transportation corridors or merely to amble in a more pastoral setting removed from the harsh auditory and olfactory conditions of streets. In these ways regular people participate in contributing to feelings of community and neighbourhood identification which is sorely lacking in contemporary cities where "community" normally takes place less in locally spatial constructs and more in the wired networks of telephony and internet, and spatially-dislocated assemblies.

Alleys thus present citizens of Montreal with an opportunity for creation and participation in many different ways; from a partaking in an environment, which more robustly

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<sup>233</sup> Reed, "Exploring Montreal's Alleys: A Discussion on Their History, Form, Sociology, Image and Interventions". p. 74.



engages the senses, to participation in tangible, vernacular history, to participation in cycles of life and death which go beyond individual human life-spans, and ultimately to participation in the sense of community and place-centeredness – all degrees of existence which are much more muffled on the street. It is in the process of participating in the space of alleys that one may intuit a correspondence between topography and a sort of local cosmology that gives presence to a greater existence beyond one's individuality. Alleys have the capacity to disclose a more holistic reality that is there for those who wish, or who are able, to perceive it.

In the course of contemplating Montreal's alleys I was often reminded of a passage in Vitruvius' *The Ten Books on Architecture* where the writer recreates the initial *poesis* of architecture. Perez-Gomez sums up the passage nicely;

the Roman writer describes how some thickly crowded trees, tossed around by storms and winds, and rubbing their branches together caught fire. Men first ran away like animals, terrified by the fury of the blaze. Eventually they approached the quieter fire and realized that it kept them warm. They subsequently added more wood to the fire and learned to keep it burning. As a result of this social event, they stayed together and uttered their first words, learning to name the reconciliatory act that had kept them alive.<sup>234</sup>

The situation of Montreal's alleys is akin to the notion of architecture in Vitruvius's creation myth. Men did not steal fire from the gods, as Perez-Gomez reminds us, and citizens did not take alleys from someone else. Beyond the initial inception of alleys as tools of utility, their institutional negligence led citizens to eventually appropriate alleys in affirmative actions that fed from their everyday experiences with them. These social and cultural affirmations have the character of language in their ability to constitute and

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<sup>234</sup> Perez-Gomez, p. 3.

communicate a meaningful participatory practice in contemporary city spaces otherwise devoid of such practices. Caught in the grid of capitalist spatiality, constituted by the hegemony of efficiency and utility, few models exist to show how or in what form urban space may evolve to better suit human needs and desires. Montreal's alleys demonstrate that alternative, and moreover more human, urban landscapes are possible through individual and communal action without the necessity of institutional initiative. This is the beauty and true poetry that alleys may communicate through their existence.

## Conclusion

With 50% of the world's population living in cities, up from 30% in 1950 and expected to reach 60% by 2030, it is clear that the world is experiencing an unprecedented migration from rural areas to urbanized environments; and the outlook for 21<sup>st</sup> century cities is bleak. In the global south and Asia, "migration without absorption" has produced the worst possible scenarios where 30 to 40% of urban populations live in environmental disaster zones with little income, no infrastructure, increasing crime and violence, and little hope for ameliorating future prospects.<sup>235</sup> In the developed world the urban situation is less dire, but still extremely problematic. Cities in developed nations continue to use massive amounts of natural resources and generate an enormous amount of waste. In both developed and developing nations, and between these nations, society is increasingly polarized: the rich live in "cities of gold" and the poor inhabit "planets of slums."<sup>236</sup> Much of the blame for these situations can be placed on current forms of capitalism. As Lefebvre has shown, because capitalist production now takes place across geographically vast areas via technological networks, "the production of things in space" has become "the production of space."<sup>237</sup> Capitalism produces uneven development by hierarchically ordering space into centres and peripheries, which spatially polarize society into economic units. It fragments space to enable its buying and selling and to maximize consumption, which contributes to the rise of individualism, social atomization and passivity. Capitalism produces homogenous spaces for the purpose of manipulation and exchange, which mitigates against recognition and valorisation of cultural, social and political differences. In this system space is subject to abstracting mechanisms to

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<sup>235</sup> Bello, "Viewpoints: The Urban World in 2050."

<sup>236</sup> Dear, "Viewpoints: The Urban World in 2050."

<sup>237</sup> Lefebvre, "Space: Social Product and Use Value." p 285.

facilitate its manipulation and thus places greater emphasis on conceptual models rather than the lived experience of human beings. Further, as Lefebvre says, history has disappeared by being transformed from action to memory and from production to contemplation and consumption. Time loses all meaning by being dominated by repetitive and circular processes, bureaucracies and cycles.<sup>238</sup> These forms of passivity and circularity can be understood as acting in concert with forms of democratic practice that limit citizen participation and thereby perpetuate the hegemony of those in power. Caught in this capitalist grid of spatiality, people have become passive, acquiescent and disconnected from their environment.

Lefebvre maintains that the only way to break through this capitalist grid of spatiality is through what Soja has termed *social praxis*, the informed action of ethically minded social actors. By all appearances these practices are on the rise. In the developed world increasing numbers of people are engaging in such urban agricultural projects as rooftop gardens, community gardens and even rooftop honey production.<sup>239</sup> Like all interventions that encourage the growth of vegetation in the city, these practices are serving to reduce pollution and energy consumption. Strategies exist to alleviate traffic and reduce pollution-causing automobiles, such as car-sharing tactics. Many forms of interventions like graffiti or stickering exist that communicate important messages that have few and obscure outlets for their dissemination. These practices are the bright spots on an otherwise dim horizon. These are the tactics that architecture and urbanism should turn to in order to become more socially and environmentally responsible.

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<sup>238</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.p. 21.

<sup>239</sup> Both New York and Chicago have citizens engaging in rooftop bee-keeping. See John Gill, "Bees on Board," *The New York Times*, May 28 2006.

The disparate case studies presented in this thesis are such exemplary practices produced by social praxis. The case studies differ in many ways, and were chosen to reflect the diversity of responses to capitalist spatiality. They take place in diverse areas; a domestic rooftop, public streets and private-public alleys. They are the result of diverse forms of social relationships with differing goals; groups of people working towards a common aim, a lone actor attempting to address many people, and an assemblage of people whose individual efforts may support and embellish upon an undeclared aggregate. The physical result of the projects are also mixed; a new greenroof, stencilled images on streets and a miscellany of bucolic and informal interventions in alleys. However, despite the strongly heterogeneous nature of the case studies there are several important commonalities they share.

The projects realized in the case studies were all initiated by citizens demonstrating a concern for their environment and they all occur on a micro-scale with benefits directly accruing to local populations. Local users of urban environments encounter problems such as traffic congestion and lack of green-space on a daily basis, and because these people are close to the situation, they are able to identify specific problems and propose specific solutions that would benefit the local community. This identification of problems in itself is an important point to note because often “problems” are identified by planners and policy makers who must address the demands of not only citizens, but of capital interests as well. Instead of going through layers of bureaucracy and by sidestepping governmental “interest groups,” participatory architecture as a process has the capacity to

respond more quickly than traditional mechanisms. For similar reasons participatory architecture can be more responsible to architecture's main audience – everyday users. Thus, the user's role in the identification and proposing of solutions holds promise to make the process of city building and maintenance more responsive and responsible to the local community. This suggests that devolution of centralized power, or the creation of a more flexible decision-making entity may be an advantage to the city as a whole.

The case studies take place in marginal socio-spatial areas; under-utilized rooftops, streets meant for vehicular traffic, and alleys that have as yet mainly escaped the eyes of planners and capital interests. Perhaps because of their interstitial nature, or the historical layers that are left as traces, or because often various people are involved in creating these counterspaces, these interventions can take on chaotic or anarchic forms. These forms, found in the otherwise homogeneous and functional contemporary city signal spaces of difference that show that alternative needs and desires can be met.

The creative user who participates in these urban architectural projects suggests to me a politically-engaged and ethically-inspired social actor whose time has come. Considering the increasing amount of attention the environment and social injustice are receiving by the media, it appears that more people are aware than ever of the challenges facing our civilization. Participatory tools and projects that are flourishing on the internet like "self-publishing" programs and sites, Wikipedia.com, MySpace.com, Flickr.com, and P2P sites contribute to a feeling of empowerment to participate in the production of space. As knowledge about global environmental and social challenges proliferates, and as these

challenges escalate, people will be forced to critically re-examine traditional practices including transportation, consumption, and waste production. I agree with Saskia Sassen when she writes “What we are going to see [in the next forty years] is the reinvention of the notion of political,”<sup>240</sup> but whereas Sassen refers mainly to citizens rights, I believe equal attention will be placed on the responsibilities of citizens as well. The power of participatory architectural interventions, beyond immediate environmental and social improvements, lies in their ability to demonstrate that responsible action is possible and happening right now.

The case studies ultimately show that urban space is contested terrain with various parties vying for their own vision and rights to the city. This is seen most obviously with Roadsworth’s unsanctioned utterances, which can be interpreted as social and environmental protests. It is seen graphically in the greenroof project, which even though the two parties involved had common interests in creating an ecological alternative to dominant forms of roofing, they differed nevertheless in their understanding of how this was to be realized. The case study on alleys demonstrates the opposition between formal/public and informal/private understandings of space, and further demonstrates the possibilities inherent when no centralized authority dominates a particular segment of space.

With accumulated capital and state interests acting in common with minimal regard to environmental degradation and social malaise, a war metaphor may be appropriate: a battle between hegemonic power and concerned citizens when it comes to the production

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<sup>240</sup> Saskia Sassen, “Viewpoints: The Urban World in 2050,” ed. Kathryn Westcott (BBC News, 2006).

and maintenance of space. Giving force to this metaphor are the increasing instances of urban violence resulting from economic polarization and the militarization of cities all over the world through increased regulation, policing, surveillance and the creation of specialized urban military units. Short of a cataclysmic environmental or social crisis, what may dampen the pace of foreign and domestic capitalistic and industrial imperialism? I agree with Lefebvre, Soja, De Certeau and others that the way forward may be gleaned through people adopting sustained and critical practices in their relationships with their local environment. The case studies demonstrate diverse responses to environmental and social threats. The point raised by the case studies is two-fold: one, to generate and propagate knowledge of these threats, and two, to suggest practices that may be employed to counter the threats. The responses engendered may not necessarily be as architecturally-oriented as the case studies, and may include practices of recycling, diminishing consumption, and buying goods strategically. In any of these cases direct benefits accrue to our environment and thus the space we live in.

On the other side of the equation, architects and planners should take note of architect Kengo Kuma who suggests that a garden metaphor in approaching the built environment is more appropriate than traditional approaches to urban planning. Instead of visually manipulating from a position “outside” the city, the gardener does not have a privileged place from where he/she can control the environment. The gardener is “inside” the garden, much like users are in the city. Further, gardeners use all their senses to engage with the garden, and this suggests a multi-sensorial and phenomenological approach to the city that takes into account the full existence of our engagement with the world.



Lastly Kuma recognizes that in the city, like gardening, “There can be no temporal ‘point’ where a goal is reached and completion is achieved.”<sup>241</sup> The city is an ever-changing landscape and the user, living in the ebb and flow of the city’s shifting nature, may be in the best position to judge fleeting tactics that address an unstable and complex environment.

One might argue that participatory architectural practices have little place in cities like Chongquin where planners are preoccupied with large-scale problems like housing 500,000 new inhabitants every year. However, I would argue that participatory practices take place in all cities, as users, especially in situations of distress, find creative ways of coping with untenable situations. For example, these images (figures 14 & 15) show a creative and unorthodox use of space in Tokyo, one of the densest cities in the world. In Mexico City legislation protects residential buildings that have been in existence for no shorter than twenty-four hours, thus encouraging participatory architecture to help address their housing shortage. Research into the capacities of users in distressed cities to creatively alter their environment is necessary to inform development policies of interventions that have local support and are addressing identified problems; this will be the topic of my doctoral dissertation.

What is called for is a planning organism that is less formal and more flexible, one that not only allows, but also creates opportunities for, participation in the built environment. This may be the most challenging and most important goal associated with participatory architecture. The hurdles that stand in the way of participation are omnipresent, ranging

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<sup>241</sup> Kengo Kuma, “Gardening Vs. Architecture,” *Lotus International* 97 (1998). p. 49.

from legal concerns, to territorial concerns, to bureaucratic concerns. Incorporating participatory architectural practices entails a risk in trying to accommodate unplanned and unforeseen outcomes; and there will be failures associated with this style of planning. However, this is a risk that must be taken if society is to take full advantage of the creative capacities of citizens, and to facilitate a reconnection between users and their environments.

The user and citizen show the way forward for architectural processes. The user produces more responsive and responsible architecture, and may do so in a way that builds community identity. Current architectural practices rarely take these issues into account. There are signs of change however. The work of Teddy Cruz is inspirational in this regard. Cruz is a Guatemalan architect working in San Diego, USA and Tijuana, Mexico. In 2005 he gave the James Stirling Memorial Lecture both at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and the London School of Economics in 2005 for his work on social housing. Cruz's work starts by distilling essences from a community's use pattern and using this as the central design program – thus grounding the work in social reality of its users. The idea is to envision housing as emerging from community activities. It is progressive because it supports a bottom-up approach that intends to catalyze the urban fabric around it. For example, the *Living Rooms at the Border* project in San Diego proposes 12 affordable residences with four other programmic activities including administrative spaces, a community centre and a garden which doubles as an informal and spontaneous marketplace – a traditional practice among Mexican people. In San Diego, where increasing density is an identified goal, this project understands density not

only as increasing population, but as increasing social choreography. His *Manufactured Site* project in Tijuana, Mexico addresses similar themes. The project explores a different set of rules for development in the informal settlements around Tijuana, which grow faster than the urban core they surround. “These startup communities gradually evolve, or violently explode out of conditions of social emergency, and are defined by the negotiation of territorial boundaries, the ingenious recycling of materials, and human resourcefulness.”<sup>242</sup> The project proposes a prefabricated frame and prefabricated construction elements, such as girders and panels, that can support the variety of recycled materials which residents bring from San Diego – such as garage doors and even whole houses. Teddy Cruz is a leading advocate of building housing and communities from local patterns and traditions while counting on the active resourcefulness of inhabitants in the process of community construction.

In surveying the ecological destruction of our world and the social injustices rendered by uneven capitalist development, increasingly ideas for our built environment are being rendered by everyday citizens who provide solutions based on grounded experiences. These solutions may look different and may not follow predetermined plans, and may come about spontaneously. They may cater to segments of the population that the abstract plans of architects do not consider. If people are to feel that they have a stake in their surroundings, and that they can positively affect their environment, more must be done to create opportunities for meaningful participation. Participatory architecture holds promise to create a more socially just and environmentally responsible world where the innate needs of humans take precedence over abstract functionality.

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<sup>242</sup> Teddy Cruz, “Urban Acupuncture,” in *Residential Architect Online* (2005).

## Figures





Figure 2: Eastern façade of the Louvre designed by Claude Perrault  
Source: <http://www.caed.kent.edu//History/Baroque/France/Perrault/louvre.jpg>

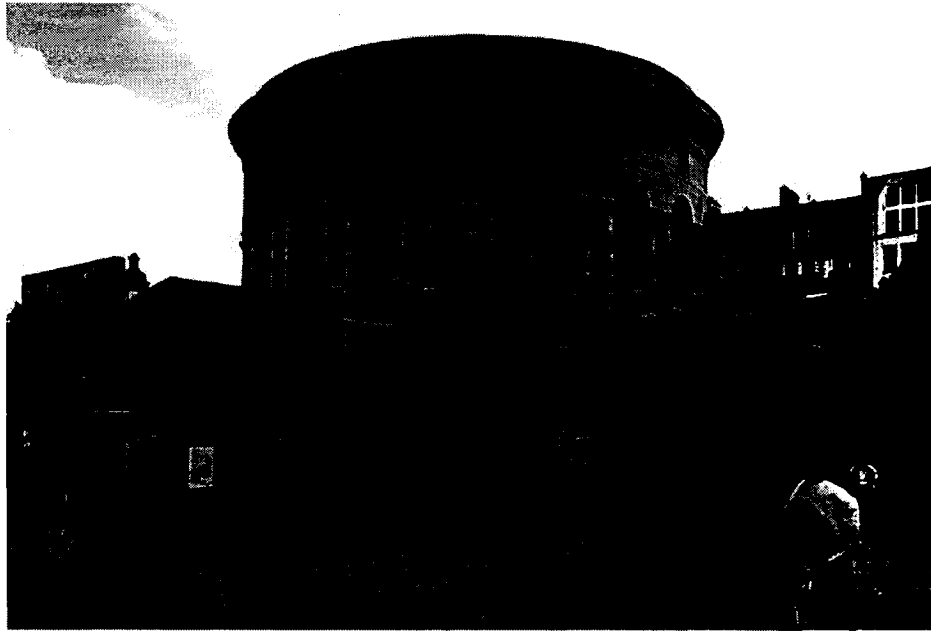


Figure 3: Barrière de la Villette, Paris, designed by Claude Nicholas Ledoux  
 Source: <http://www.brynmawr.edu/Acads/Cities/wld/05670/05670a.jpg>



Figure 4: Cité Concordia presentation panel, 1962 by Mayerovitch-Bernstein architects  
 Source: Lortie, André. *The 60's Montreal Thinks Big*. Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004, p. 110.

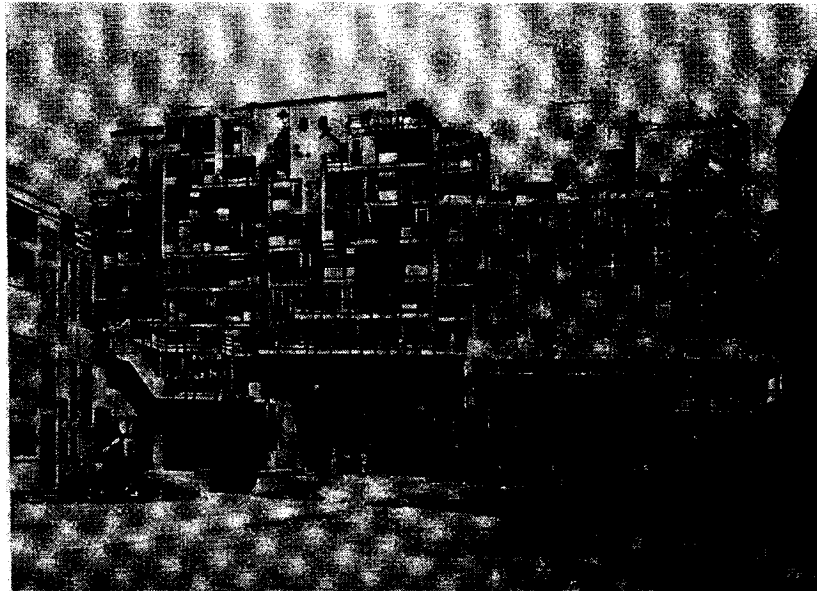


Figure 5: Maison Medicale managed by Lucien Kroll 1971

Source: Jones, Peter Blundell. "Sixty-Eight and After." In *Architecture and Participation*, edited by Petrescu Jones, Till. New York: Spon Press, 2005, p. 135.



Figure 6: Maison Medicale managed by Lucien Kroll 1971

Source: [http://www.stichtingtijd.nl/publicaties\\_lezing\\_rob\\_hendriks.html](http://www.stichtingtijd.nl/publicaties_lezing_rob_hendriks.html)



Figure 7: Found art on Ste Catherine Street  
Source: Photo by author

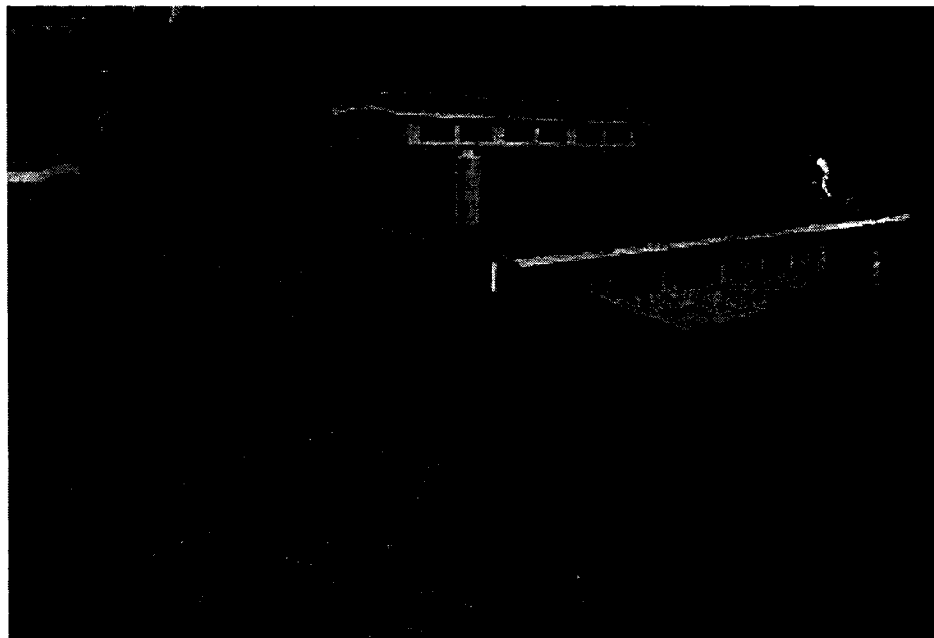


Figure 8: Greenroof in Hazelton, PA  
Source: [http://www.newfarm.org/depts/talking\\_shop/0204/CASA2.shtml](http://www.newfarm.org/depts/talking_shop/0204/CASA2.shtml)



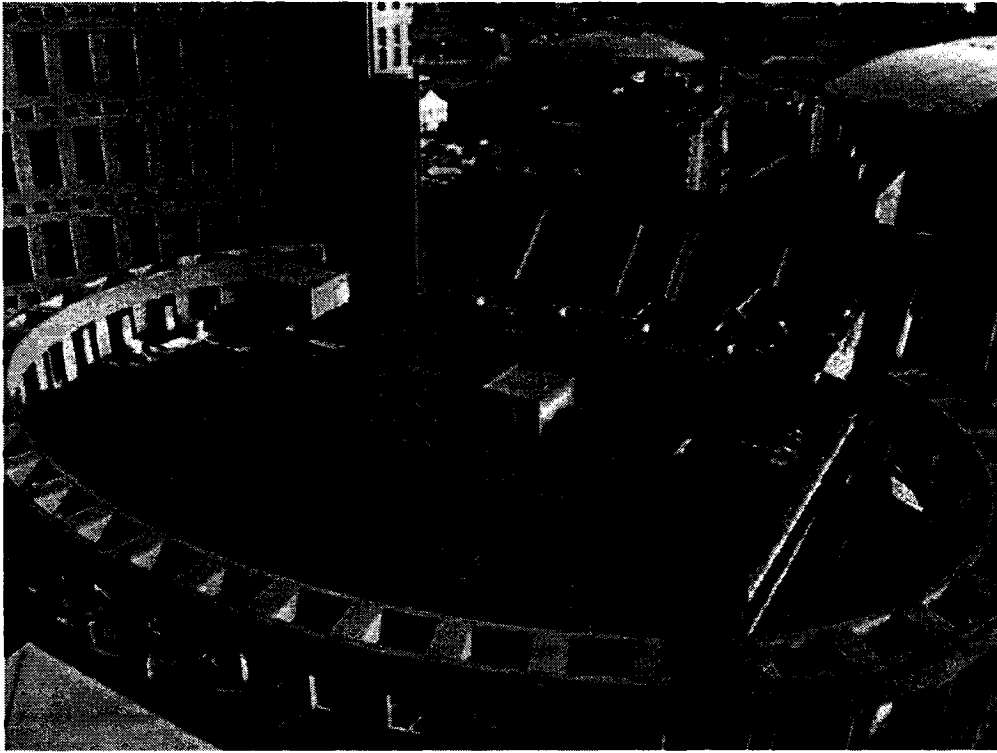


Figure 9: Greenroof on Vancouver Library designed by Cornelia Hahn Oberlander

Source:

[http://www.hadj.net/greenroofs/ecorooft\\_photos/images/Vancouver%20Library%20\(3\).jpg](http://www.hadj.net/greenroofs/ecorooft_photos/images/Vancouver%20Library%20(3).jpg)



Figure 10: Author's greenroof  
Source: photo taken by author



Figure 11: Stairs leading to rooftop access  
Source: photo taken by author

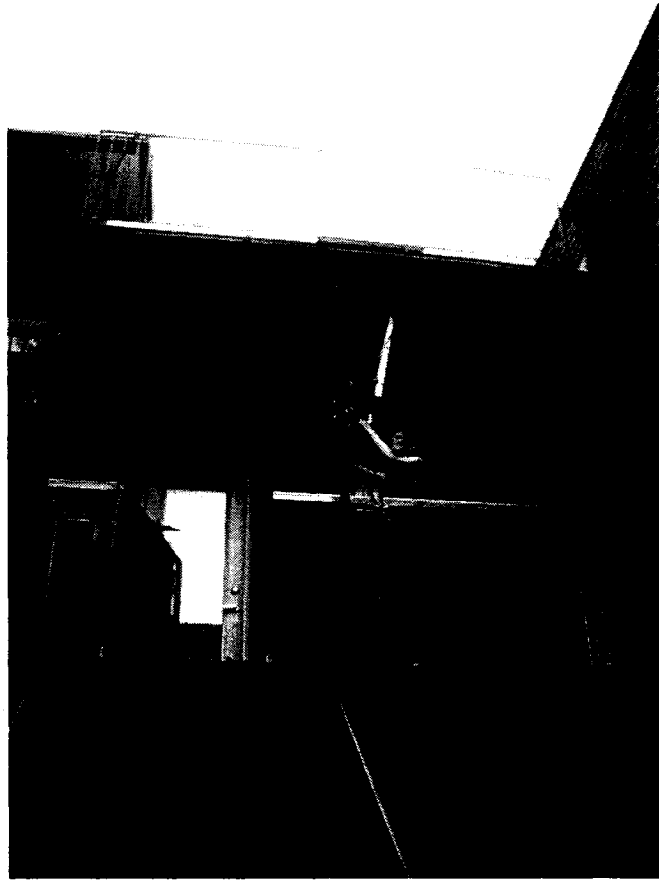


Figure 12: Ladder leading to Coop rooftop  
Source: photo taken by author

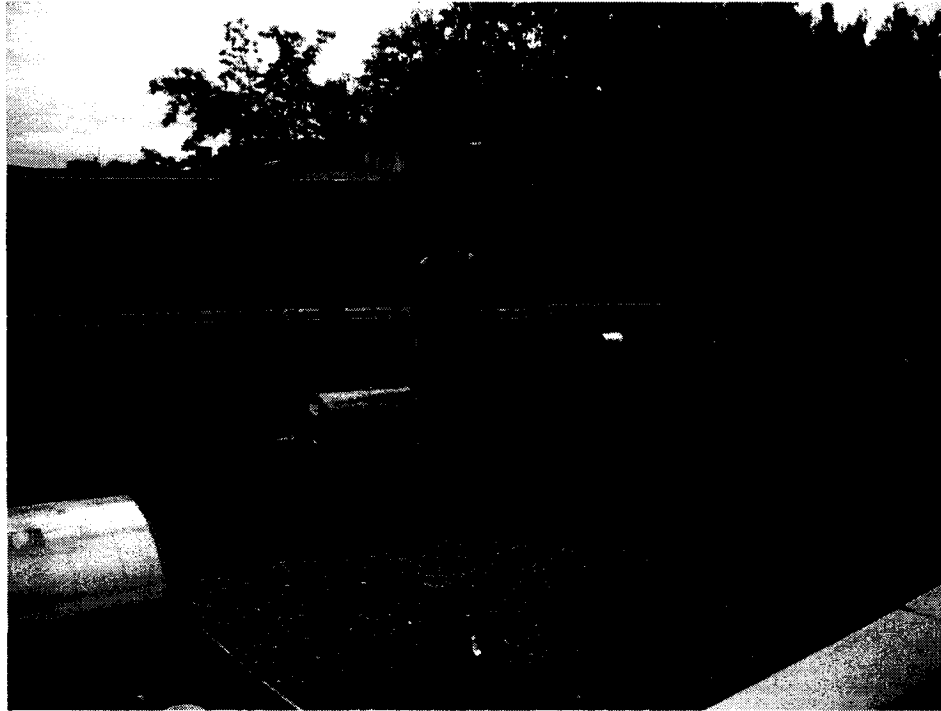


Figure 13: Guilemette in the Coop's rooftop garden  
Source: photo taken by author

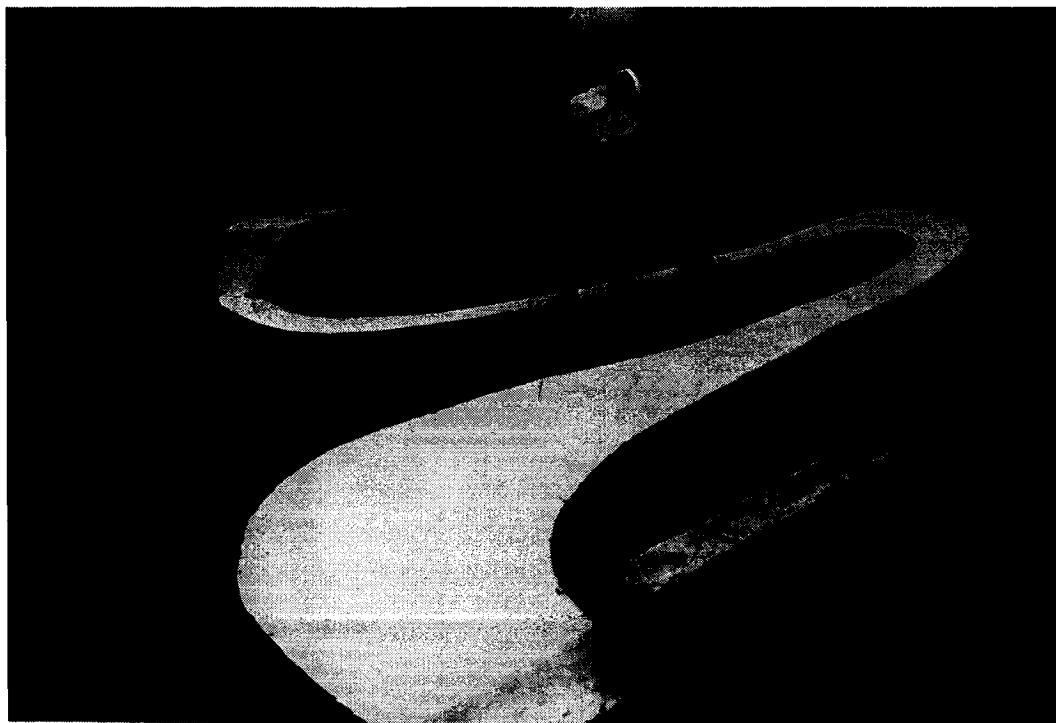


Figure 14: Street art by Cismo in Sao Paulo  
Source: Manco, Tristan. *Street Logos*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004.



Figure 15: Street art by Zys in Tokyo

Source: Manco, Tristan. *Street Logos*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004.

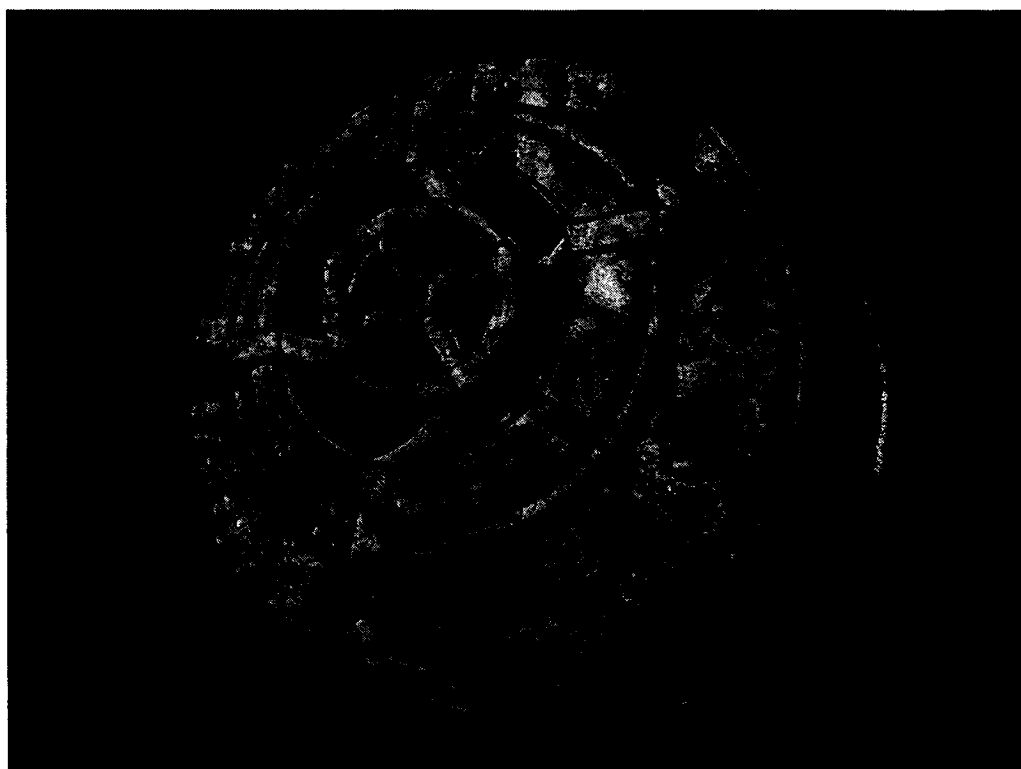
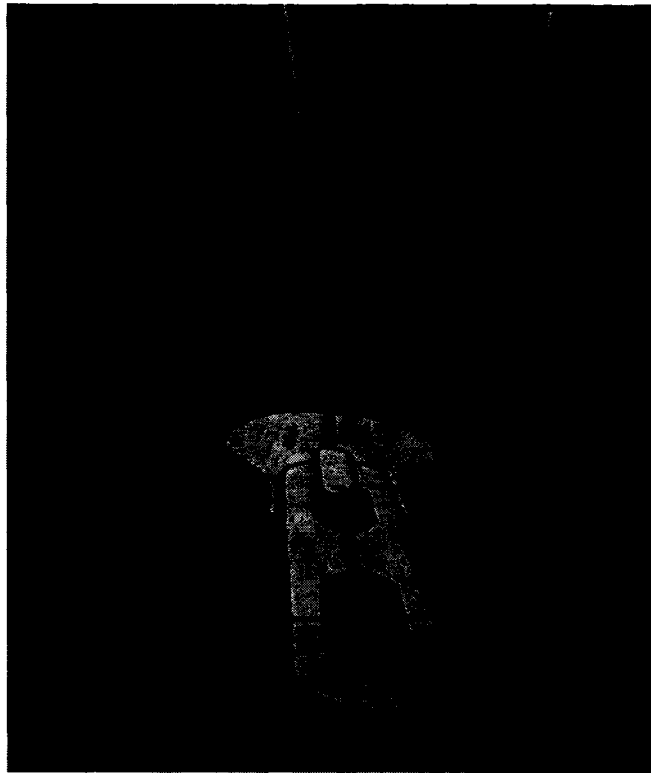


Figure 16: Submarine hatch by Roadsworth

Source: photo taken by author

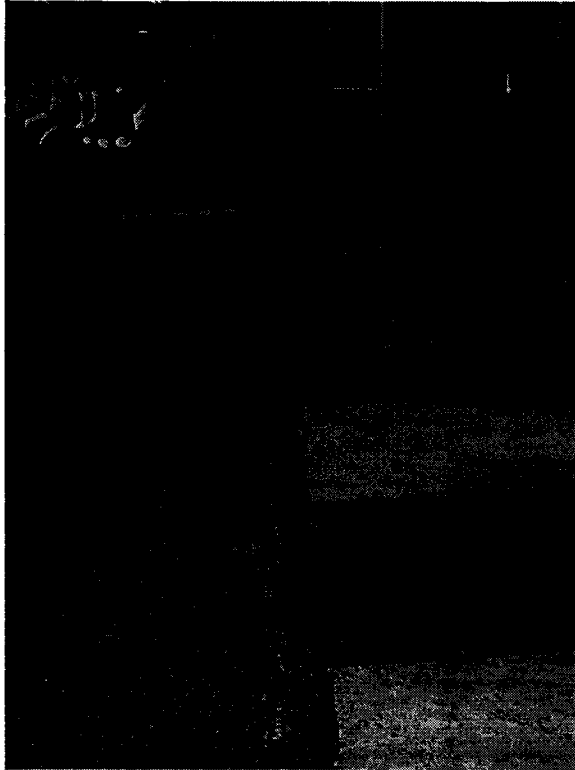


**Figure 17: Zipper-head by Roadsworth**  
**Source: photo taken by author**



Figure 18: Cardio reading by Roadsworth  
Source: photo taken by author





**Figure 19: Barbed wire and crosswalk by Roadsworth**  
**Source: photo taken by author**



Figure 20: Stanchions and crosswalk by Roadsworth  
Source: photo taken by author

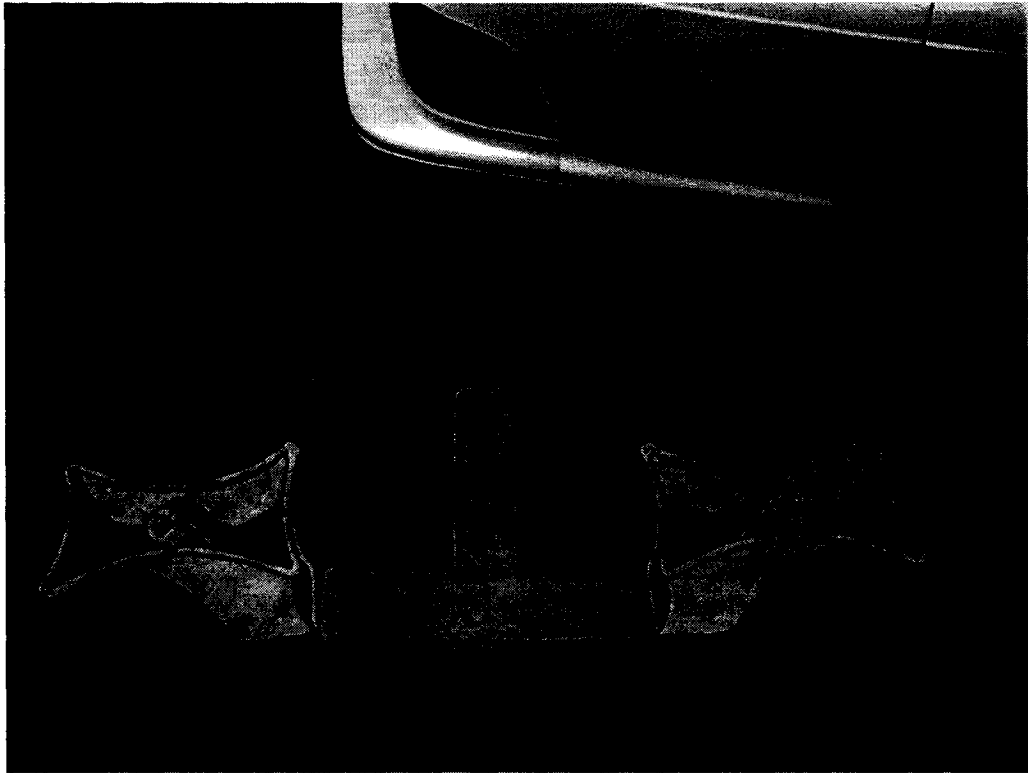


Figure 21: loudspeakers by Roadsworth  
Source: photo taken by author

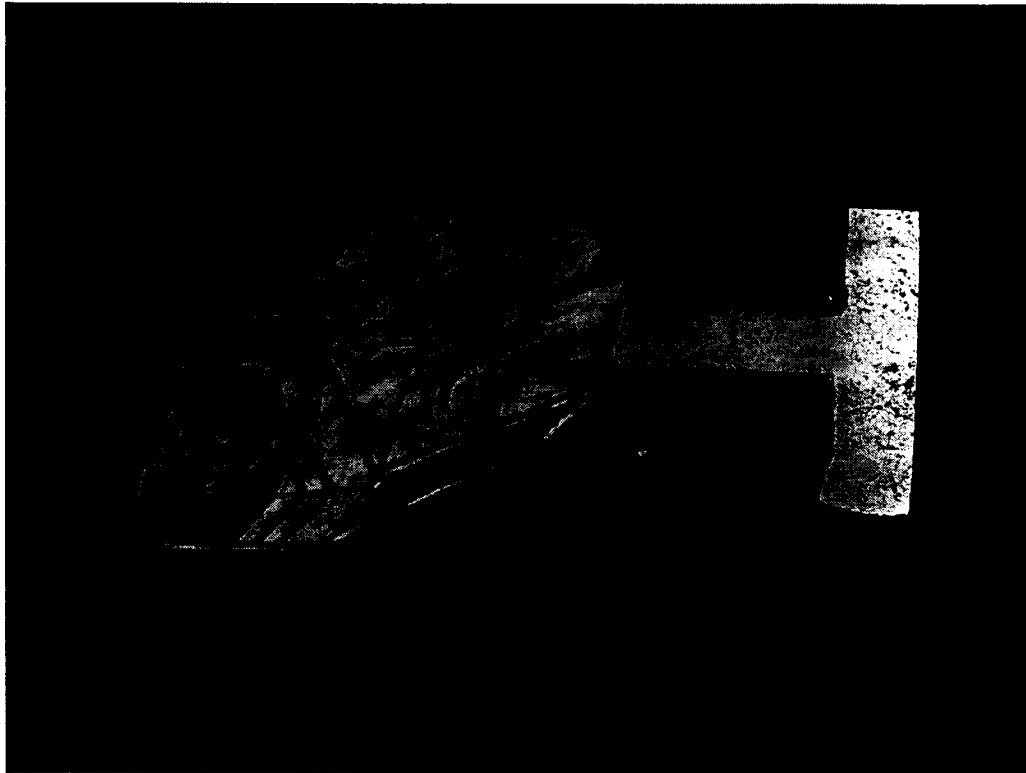


Figure 22: Surveillance camera by Roadsworth  
Source: photo taken by author

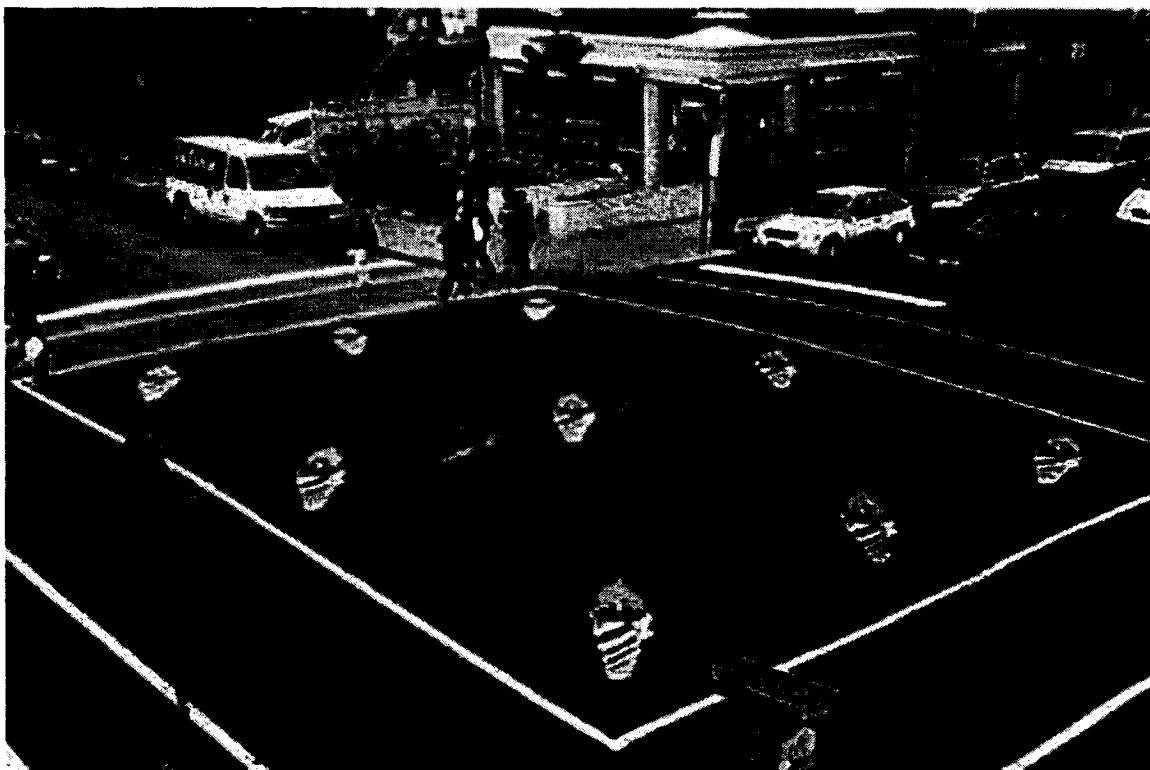
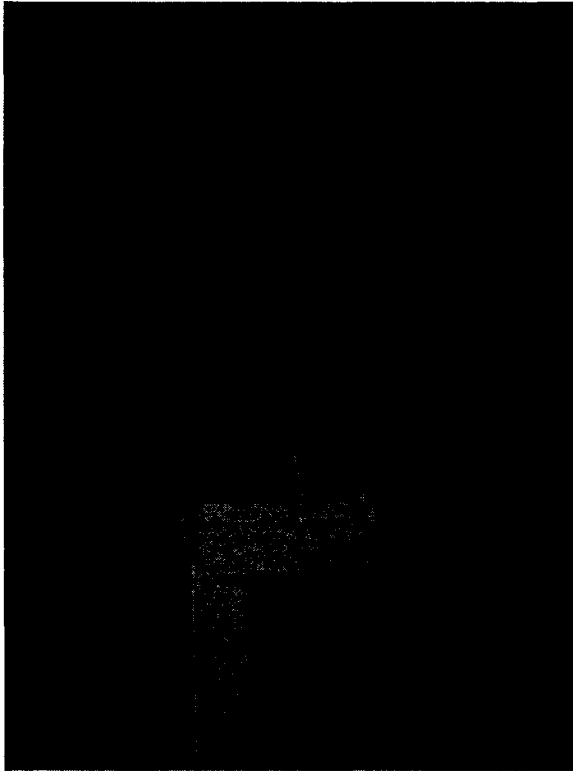


Figure 23: Ice cream cones by Roadsworth  
Source: <http://www.optimuscrime.com/?m=200407>



**Figure 24: Owl by Roadsworth**  
**Source: photo taken by author**



Figure 25: Thinker by Rodin  
Source: photo taken by author



Figure 26: Handcuffs by Roadsworth  
Source: photo taken by author



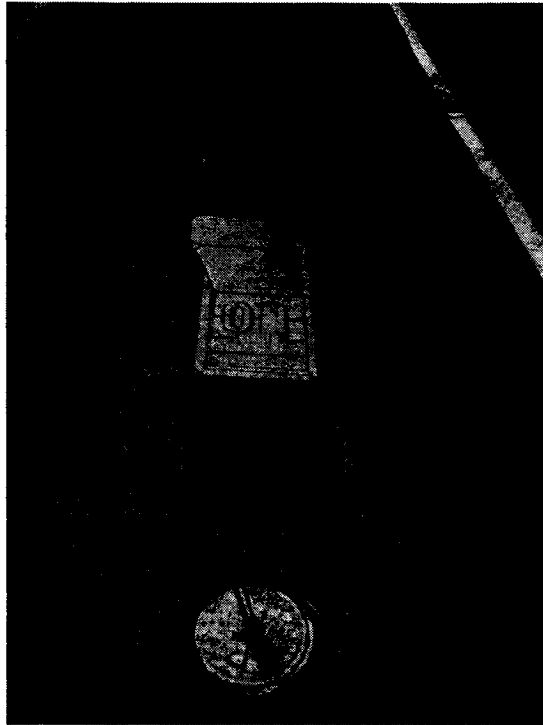


Figure 27: Light switch by Roadsworth  
Source: photo taken by author

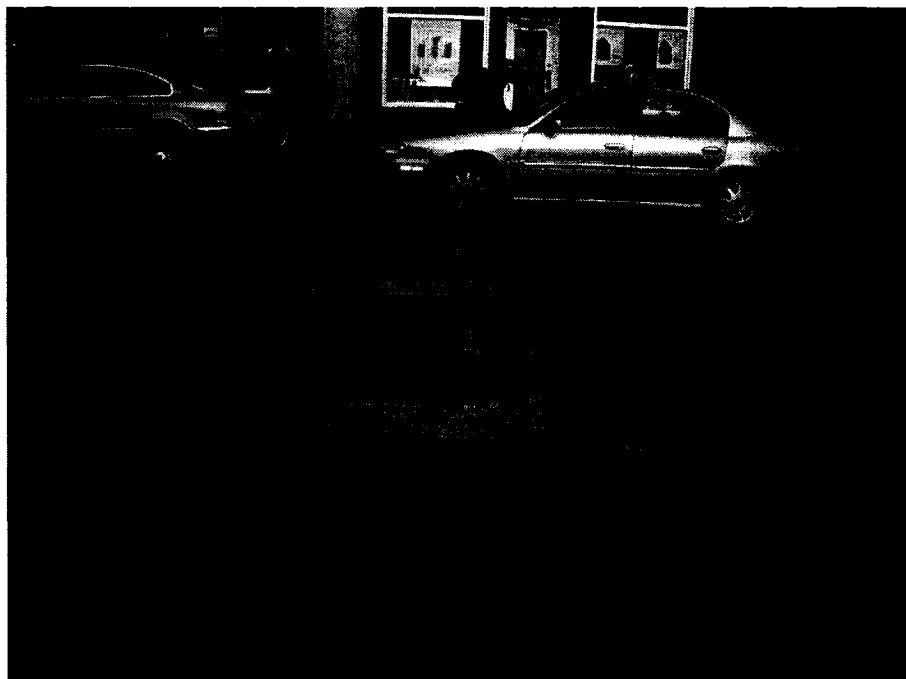


Figure 28: Bullets by Roadsworth  
Source: photo taken by author



Figure 29: Author wearing “map mask”  
Source: photo taken by author



Figure 30: Vertical garage doors  
Source: photo taken by author

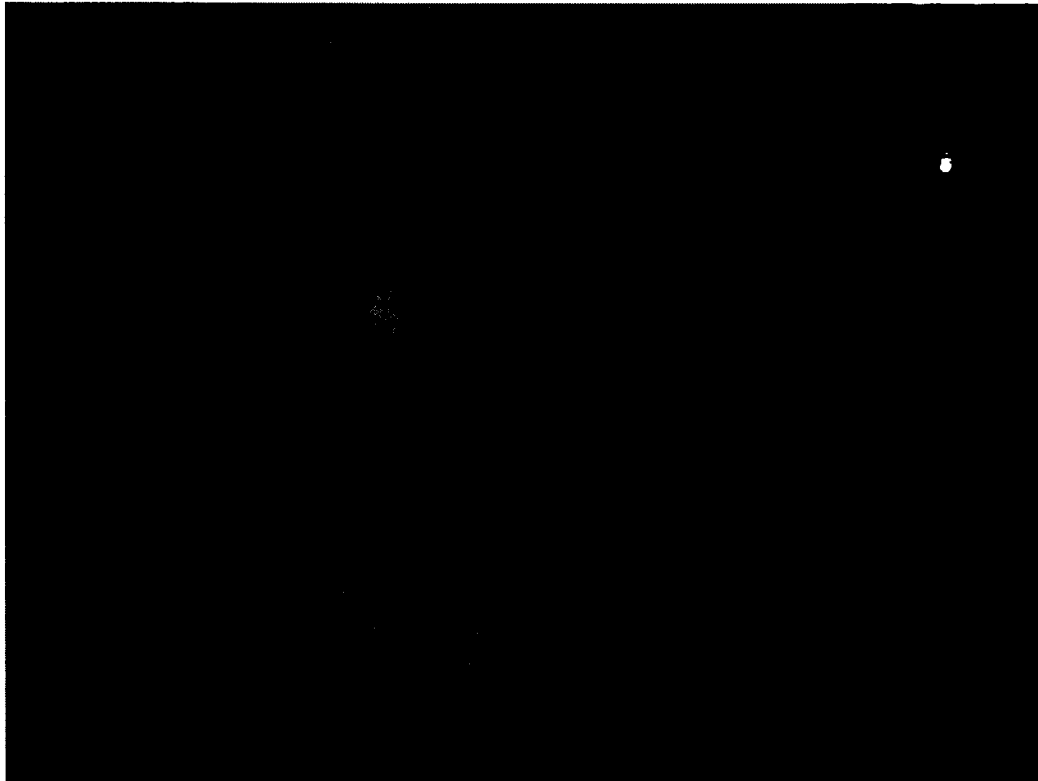


Figure 31: Frame and panel garage doors  
Source: photo taken by author



Figure 32: Doors of different sizes  
Source: photo taken by author

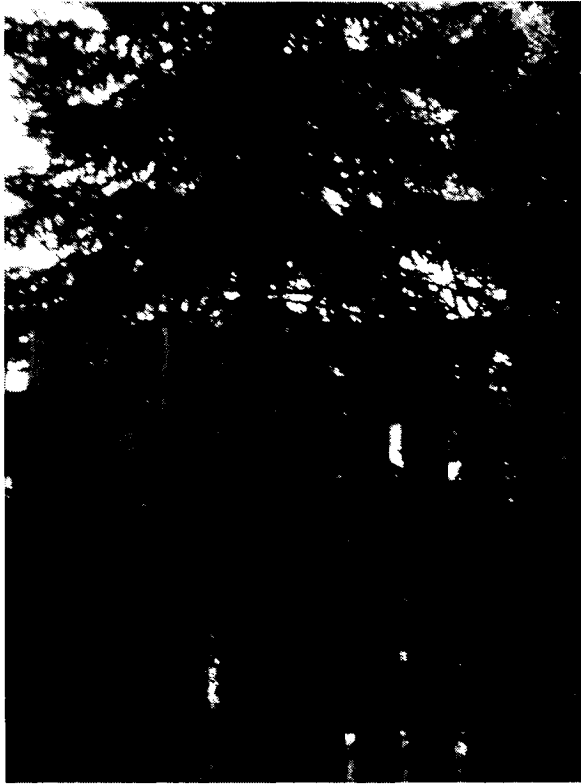


Figure 33: Arboreal fence  
Source: photo taken by author

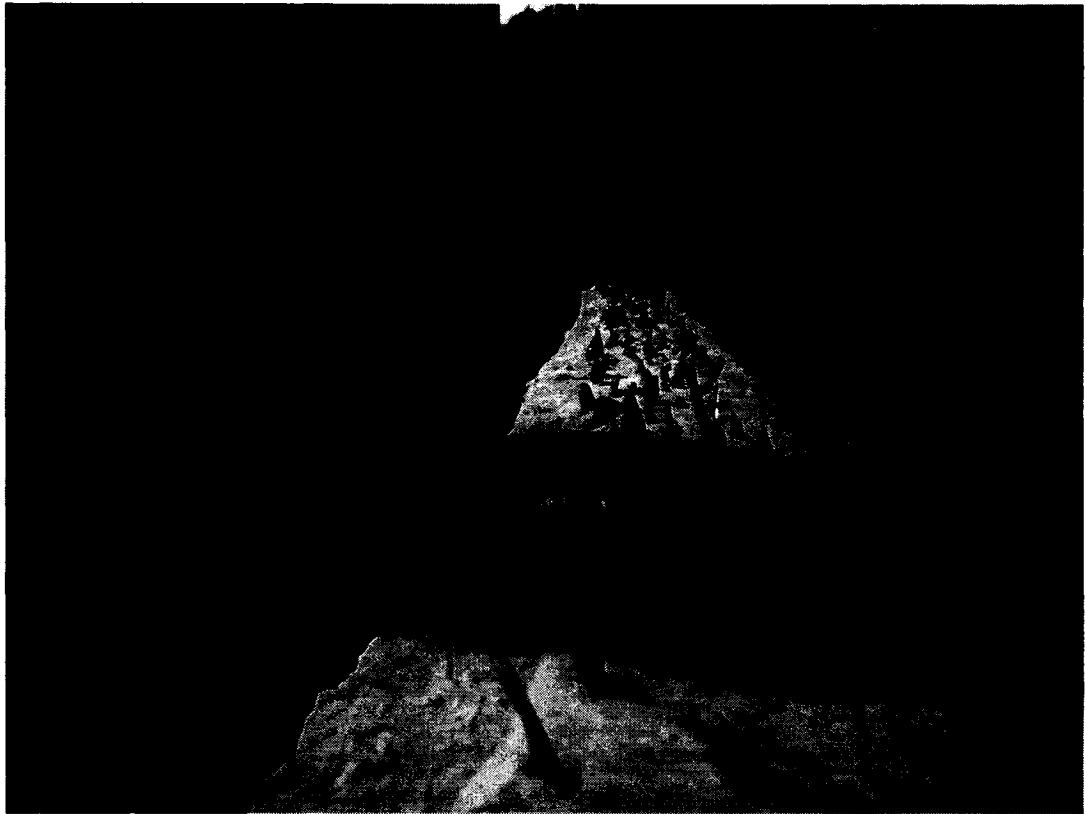


Figure 34: Glass shards atop a fence  
Source: photo taken by author

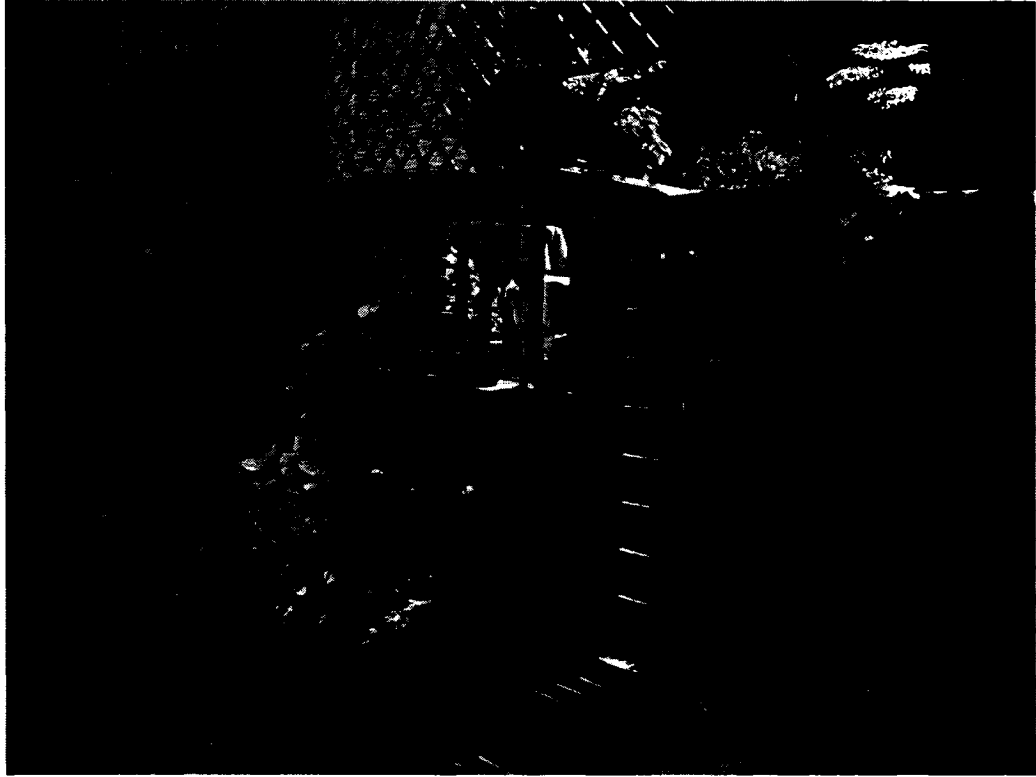


Figure 35: Well-appointed flower boxes

Source: photo taken by author

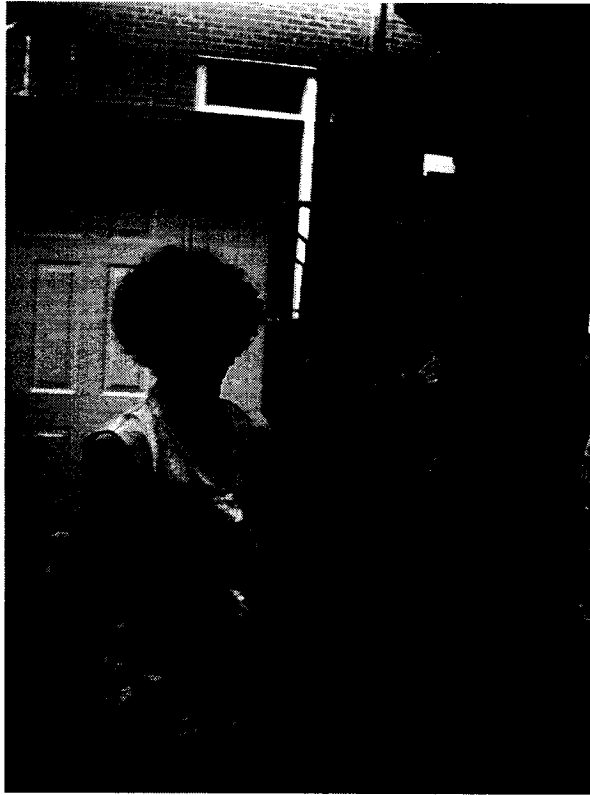




**Figure 36: Community gardens in an alley**  
Source: photo taken by author



Figure 37: Mural in an alley  
Source: photo taken by author



**Figure 38: Jennifer Maduro holding her sign**  
**Source: photo taken by author**



Figure 39: Sign displaying alley consciousness

Source: photo taken by author

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## Appendix

### Architects:

Owen Rose  
Daniel Smith

### Structural Engineer:

Tom Egli

### General Contractor:

Marc Legault

### Roofer:

Josée St-Denis

### Representative of waterproof membrane supplier (Soprema):

Marie-Anne Boivin

### Horticulturalists:

Marie-Anne Boivin  
Christian Dufresne

### Landscape Architect:

Ronald Williams

### Other members:

Stephan Archambault (fire security, City of Montreal)  
Michel Bergeron (ArchiBio)  
Pascal Caron (fire security, City of Montreal)  
Claire Frost (Communications, CEU)  
Denis Gingras (representative of Hydrotech)  
Ismaël Hautecoeur (landscape architect from *Alternatives*)  
Lucia Kowaluk (Coordinator, CEU)  
Xavier Laplace (Volunteer)  
Daniel Lauzon (landscape architect, City of Montreal)  
Karen Liu (researcher, National Research Council of Canada)  
Jacob Nerenberg (project coordinator, CEU)  
Élizabeth Radshaw (documentary filmmaker)  
Marie Tourville (representative of Coop La Petit Cité)  
Jeanne Wolfe (urbanist, McGill University)