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EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURE:
DEVELOPING A CONTEMPORARY AUTHENTICITY

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"There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission. We will control the horizontal, we will control the vertical. We can change the focus to a soft blur, or sharpen it to crystal clarity. For the next hour, sit quietly and we will control all that you see and hear. You are about to participate in a great adventure. You are about to experience the awe and mystery which reaches from the inner mind to the outer limits."

*The Outer Limits, 1963 television series*
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"If it doesn't piss off a healthy number of people, then we've done something seriously
wrong." And I agreed. I hope it rattles people. I hope it dunks it very squarely in your lap,
because I think one of the things we strove very specifically to do with this, was on some
levels to retain a kind of moral ambivalence or a moral ambiguity, not to deliver a neatly
wrapped package of meaning into your lap. No comfort in having been told what you
should make of it, or what the there was. The intent is to point a finger at certain things
and name them, and dump it in your lap and say, "what do you make of that?"

edward norton

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SUMMARY

A very common position for students and practitioners of architecture to take is to condemn the everyday built environment; to stand and reject the "ugly and banal", the "big box" commercial spaces, the ubiquitous fast food franchises and "cookie cutter" neighborhoods.

The everyday built environment is seen as the proliferation of placelessness, an inauthentic charade to disguise the meaninglessness of contemporary life. However, it is the opposite that is true, everyday environments are potentially the most authentic and meaningful built form.

Contrary to the aforementioned paradigm, architects are truly responsible for the proliferation of placelessness, creating meaningless and image-driven buildings that are justified only by the abstract, obtuse and arbitrary concepts of intended meanings.

Everyday environments structure life and provide a background upon which to live. It connects to the public in a way that formal architecture cannot, it is understandable and meaningful. Everyday environments are not the image, self-expression and metaphor-driven buildings that characterize the architectural masturbation of trained professionals.

Everyday environments are potentially the most authentic built form if they would simply become what they are prescribed to be. These environments are functional, programmatic and above all, economic. The environments that regularly receive extensive criticism, should be employed as a model for design. Everyday environments deserve only one complaint. Everyday environments are unsuccessful because they exist as the background of life, but yet they are trying to capture attention.

The following development of the dichotomy of image and authenticity and everyday environments and architecture is an attempt to begin to develop a new perspective and a new way of understanding the constructs of contemporary society. The discussion will not resolve any broad sweeping world problems, it will not resolve even an isolated or localized problem, but it is an attempt to bring about an awareness and questioning to issues that are relevant and critical in the cultural development of today's society.

This is a discussion of what are thought to be identified problems with contemporary culture, it will not resolve anything. The purpose is to make people realize that their is a problem in today's consumer culture and built environments. Presently, the most frightening contemporary problem is that people do not know their is one. This is an attempt to induce awareness.
01.1 CONSUMERISM
Contemporary society is a culture built upon the constructs of consumerism. The proliferation of images, products, and an omnipresent stream of commercial propaganda are constant reminders of consumerism. Consumerism has come to replace substance and meaning with calculated image and spectacle. The dominance of consumerism has resulted in the inflation of the importance and presence of image in contemporary culture.

01.2 IMAGE
Everyday life is inundated by image. The present dominance of meaningless and arbitrary image-making is degrading society, reducing the participants in its ‘culture’ to image addicts, craving nothing more than the narcotics of spectacle. The degradation is already apparent: television, cinema, newspaper, magazines and the internet provide an instant aesthetic and visual seduction, breast implants and cosmetic surgeries have become commonplace as bodily invasive forms of image enhancement, tourism, theming, celebrity magazines, and every aspect of popular culture (if not ‘high’ culture) has been consumed by an image obsession.

01.3 AUTHENTICITY
Presently, contemporary culture is lacking a form of honesty or authenticity. Authenticity is the notion of truth and meaning that is desired and deep within much of contemporary society, but is disguised, hidden or falsified by the prevalence of superficial images. Authenticity is an ideal of honesty and essence that does not rely on image and aesthetic to create impression, but instead allows meaning to evolve from an inherent sense of purpose and function.

01.4 EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS
The notions of consumerism, image and authenticity occur everyday in contemporary life. In the United States, the contemporary paradigm for most of the population’s everyday life, is the suburb. The suburban environment is the everyday environment, because for most, it is the most frequently interacted with on an everyday basis. The everyday environment is steeped in the constructs of consumerism and dominated by the prevalence of image and aesthetic. The everyday environments produce a very calculated image to perpetuate their success, growth and development. However, it is generally thought that the image and quality of everyday environments exists in a relationship with built form created by architects, and that the two represent a dichotomy of design quality.

01.5 ARCHITECTURE
Everyday environments are usually thought to be lacking a design quality or aesthetic appeal. The profession of architecture could facilitate the improvement of the lacking sense of design quality or image creation, in everyday environments. However, the
INTRODUCTION

of architecture develop from an egotistical and arbitrary source, whereas they should derive from ideas with social relevance. The everyday environment exhibits a social relevance, because people interact with and understand these buildings daily. It appears the profession of architecture could learn from everyday environments and not vice versa.

01.6 EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS VISITED

The profession of architecture has become deficient in meaning and substance because the primary pursuit has become the creation and circulation of images and spectacle. Everyday environments are not in need of a form of professional make-over. Instead, the profession of architecture could benefit from emulating the everyday environments. The notions of image and authenticity develop from the fundamental difference between the everyday environment and architecture. Architecture develops image as a major consideration of design, whereas everyday environments place other aspects of the design first, namely economy, purpose and function. It will be discussed that the everyday environments are in fact more authentic than architecture, and that they should be emulated in architecture and other facets of life as pure and honest manifestations of contemporary culture.

01.7 CONTEXT

The beginning of exploring the notions of image, authenticity and consumerism as they exist in the everyday environment involved choosing a specific context representative of that environment. The Midwestern capitol city of Indianapolis, Indiana exemplifies many conventions that represent the ubiquitous everyday environments that exist in the nation. The Northern suburbs of Indianapolis are particularly driven by the aforementioned paradigm, and two of those suburbs, Carmel and Fishers were chosen for further investigation. One viable residential and commercial street corridor, 116th Street was chosen as the specific context, in which to examine the theoretical assertions made in discussing image and authenticity.

01.8 BUILDING EXPLORATION

Within the context of 116th Street in the Northern Indianapolis suburbs a building exploration was completed. The building exploration became an experimentation in deriving specific built form from the aforementioned theoretical precepts. Specifically, the building exploration is an entertainment retail facility, a building type that provides a pragmatic framework for theoretical experimentation. A building that is located within the context of the everyday environments [116th Street], involves a program of consumerism [retail], and allows for an investigation into the notions of image and authenticity, and thus presents a means by which to illustrate and discuss the established dichotomy of everyday environments and architecture.
02.1 CONTEMPORARY CONSUMERISM

Consumerism exists in the context of many other components of society [civility, economy, politics, etc], but in contemporary society it has come to dominate all else. In the United States, consumerism began as a way to integrate a diverse society into a mass culture. Today, it has become out of control as a cultural stimulant, an addictive narcotic creating dependencies on image, consumption and materiality.

02.2 CONSUMERISM_IMAGE

A consumer economy finds its reality in appearances. "We come to understand who others are by analyzing their possessions as indicators of their character. The individual acquisition and use of goods has become the predominant way that Americans make meaning of their lives." The image orientation of contemporary consumerism is reinforced by the present electronic age, and the capacity of the variety of electronic media to provide constant aesthetic and visual stimuli.

02.3 HEDONIC CONSUMERISM

The prevalence of image in contemporary society and consumerism has propelled consumerism into a new manifestation. This manifestation is a form of modern hedonism, hedonic consumption. Consumerism has historically provided the necessities of a functioning society, but has now shifted from a need based consumption to a purely pleasure-seeking and hedonistic consumption. Objects are produced, owned, and replaced primarily to meet needs other than those that Maslow would term purely "physiological" [the necessary functions of an organism].

Hedonic consumption is highly dependent upon an illusory level of interaction based on aesthetic visual images. However, this manifestation of consumerism requires a new aestheticization, a need to pay much more attention to the image, visual and aesthetic elements of the processes of consumerism. An image orientation exemplified by obsessive product and package design, advertising aesthetics and the design management of corporations [company emblems, architecture, interior architecture and environments, and even details like the physical appearance of personnel]. These phenomena are not solely contemporary occurrences, having existed for many decades, but presently consumption without these prerequisites is impossible. The image orientation of consumerism has become more important than the consumption itself. Many consumers enjoy the fantasy and image of a product, more than the product itself, upon consumption.

02.4 CONSUMERISM_EVERYDAY

Image has been established as the dominant component of consumerism, and accordingly image is also the dominant component of contemporary culture. Image has infiltrated contemporary culture in nearly every component of everyday life.
03.1 IMAGE CONSUMPTION

Generally, any element that exists solely for the fabrication of aesthetic, or the creation of a desired visual effect can be considered image. Image is an inauthentic charade, effective in disguising the meaninglessness of contemporary consumerism. Image is so deeply rooted in everyday life that it is hard to identify. Image is television, billboards, movies, radio, clothing, cars, consumerism, and add your own. Image is everywhere.

03.2 IMAGE EVERYDAY

The presence of image in contemporary society occurs on all levels: politics, economics, fashion, entertainment, media, architecture, etc. However, there is one contemporary environment whose success is particularly correlated with image, suburbia. Suburbia depends on image and mass media to exist. “Suburban domesticity [is] a domesticity of ordered display and understated consumption in which judgements of taste and style define social position and coincidences of taste and style defined communities.” The everyday environments of suburbia are the environments that image has come to dominate. Fast food franchises have branded themselves with corporate images or themes, retailers have done the same, houses project an image of historic styles, banks, insurance offices, strip malls, all have prescribed to a form of image.

03.3 IMAGE ARCHITECTURE

The profession of architecture has been equally adversely effected by the affluence of image, as contemporary culture and everyday environments. Architecture has become a whore house, an instrument whose purpose is nothing more than to facilitate ephemeral, superficial, egotistical and hedonistic pleasures, in lieu of any pursuit of a deeper substance or meaning. The profession of architecture and the built environment have come to suffer due to the image obsessed culture. The profession of architecture has come to specialize in the creation of image. The sleek stylish and trendy titanium clad curvilinear form of a fresh water south amazon tropical fish in the motion of swimming is an image, nothing more.

03.4 REDUCE IMAGE

If a solution to the overabundance of image in contemporary society is a reduction of the aesthetic orientation of today’s culture, then something must come to replace it. The reduction of image would facilitate the increase of authenticity and honesty, resulting in a greater sense of meaning in contemporary culture. As has been mentioned, the production of image can be tempered and reduced, if it is not the primary motivation driving creation. Anything that exists visually will inevitably have an image, but the fundamental difference is found in the process of the creation of that image, and whether or not it developed for a reason or purpose, or if it was a coercive and calculated visual seduction with only the purpose to create an aesthetic.
04.1 DEFINING AUTHENTICITY
Authenticity is perhaps a term that is accompanied by a certain ambiguity, but justly so. It is a term that many members of today's culture feel a longing for, but has yet to be identified or quantified. The lack of meaning and substance in contemporary culture and society has left a longing in consumers, a sense of disenfranchisement and dissatisfaction. It is this awareness of something amiss that the ideal of authenticity represents, and it is also for the vagueness of this awareness that a certain ambivalence in the following discussion occurs.

04.2 ACHIEVING AUTHENTICITY
Authenticity is the idealistic belief that an object's aesthetic qualities should result from the conditions that create that object [purpose, economy, material, construction, etc]. The appearance of something should develop directly from the conditions by which it exists, and no element should exist solely for the creation of an image or aesthetic. If every element exists for a purpose and reason, aside from aesthetic, than the object should retain a form of its own essence in the resolution of its outward appearance. Accordingly, authenticity is an ideal of honesty and essence that does not rely on image and aesthetic to create impression, but instead allows meaning to evolve out of an inherent sense of purpose and function.

04.3 IMAGE VERSUS AUTHENTICITY
Undoubtedly, certain levels of authenticity have and still do exist, but generally, as was summarized in the evolution of consumerism, their has always been a level of a calculated creation of image. Historically, employing spectacle or image is not new or different, but today the extent to which image now permeates modern life is. Spectacle has become both the means and ends of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Image has become a purpose in itself. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find a relevant identity or to even define a relevant identity, in a world of what is superficial and spectacular.

04.4 AUTHENTICITY_EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS_ARCHITECTURE
Americans put great emphasis on appearances. "We express our public images on the front of our buildings, and more than other cultures, we put great stock in how well others think we are doing." The front of buildings is the facade that people care about and see and interact with most often, but it is the front that is the least meaningful and authentic. The substance and honesty of a building is found in its back facade. The front of a building can arbitrarily develop any style possible to project an image. However, the back of a building is developed from purpose, relevance and need, storage entrances, delivery bays, trash collection. Every element of the rear facade is not projecting an image, but is creating an image from a necessity of purpose and function. It is authentic.
05.1 DEFINING EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS
Since the suburban environment is the paradigm for the majority of the nation's daily interactions, suburbia is the everyday environment. The everyday environment is the environment that surrounds the routine and pattern of everyday life. The houses that are inhabited, the stores in which goods and services are purchased, the malls that accommodate shopping, restaurants eaten at, and offices worked in. The everyday environment is most easily recognizable in suburban environs and is ubiquitously exhibited in the proliferation of 'cookie-cutter' houses, 'big boxes', and nondescript office parks and strip malls.

05.2 WHY EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS?
The investigations into the dichotomy of image and authenticity began as an exploration of the everyday environment. Something was thought to be amiss in the everyday environment. The everyday environment as viewed by many design professionals and many of its users seems to be problematic and lacking a certain design quality or image. The initial intention was to devise some way to improve quality and aesthetic in the field of the everyday environment.

The present American dream resides in the everyday environment. The proliferation of such ideals is a response to a certain image or symbolism produced by consumerism. It is based upon the proliferation of consuming the suburban ideal.

The everyday environment is a reflection of these ideals. Architecture is "a mirror of our culture, a tangible expression of our way of life". Everyday environments develop a strange juxtaposition of suburban consumerism. Providing the utility of economized building, while providing a suburban imagery that feigns styles and facades to hide that same consumerism.

05.3 EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS_IMAGE
Everyday environments project a certain image of recognizability, 'cookie cutter' houses, 'big box' commercial spaces, ubiquitous fast-food chains, nondescript office parks and strip malls. The image and fabricated aesthetic of the everyday environment is a form of consumer association and corporate branding. Consumers are comforted by the fact that a Meijer grocery store will appear aesthetically and in layout the exact same anywhere in the nation. The everyday environments undoubtedly develop an image from consumerism and public perception.

05.4 EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS_ARCHITECTURE
Generally, a disparate dichotomy occurs between the field of professional architecture and everyday architecture. The field of professional architecture is generally considered to have a higher design quality than everyday architecture. The professionals view the field of the everyday environment as lacking certain qualities and refined aesthetics. Improving the everyday environments will not come from the skillful and crafty make-over of a design profession tacking on a fabricated aesthetic.
06.1 DEFINING ARCHITECTURE
The everyday environment is usually suburban architecture that possesses a certain anonymity with an unmentioned 'author'. To make the distinction, in direct opposition with everyday environments is architecture, that is buildings designed by acknowledged professionals.

06.2 PROBLEMS OF ARCHITECTURE
The profession is deeply engulfed by the precepts of image. Young designers are trained internally develop artificial concepts that are arbitrary and irrelevant to the culture in which they are built. Presently, professionals exist primarily only to provide a certain image or aesthetic for buildings, that an untrained individual could not. The presence of image is not problematic, but the extent to which image is the controlling factor of professional design is problematic. Architecture is no longer a socially informing and conscious exploration. Architects have become only unquestioning handmaidens of consumer capitalism, and advocate 'high culture', but nothing more. Architects with their carefully honed aesthetic concerns fail here, since they live and die to create a world according to their own narrow ideology. The narrow ideology of the profession, reflected by the architects' ego and hubris are the conventional components of the profession that need to be subdued. Presently, the profession is operating on a system of heroes and rock stars. Designers lose sight of the qualities of subtlety and quality, as they become seduced by the attractions of aestheticism and the spectacle of the 'Bilbao effect'.

06.3 BILBAO EFFECT
The problems of the profession can be exhibited by what some critics have referred to as the Bilbao effect. The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain did in fact develop an exciting resolution of form, materiality and space, but above all has created a spectacle of architecture. While at first glance a well-resolved building design, it exemplifies the aesthetic inflation in design and egotistic, heroic and inauthentic tendencies of image and visual seduction in the profession. Many buildings are very successful as spectacle and purveyors of image, but exhibit little to no depth, relevance or authenticity to their inherent purpose [building type] or the context [culture].

06.4 ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL
Architectural schools focus students on the production of a project, conventionally drawings and models. The focus should not be such requirements, but the process of design and thinking. An emphasis upon requirements, resolution and product allows no room for meaningful examination or substantive thinking, but perpetuates only the pursuit of seductive image and aesthetics.
EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS REVISITED

07.1 EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS_AUTHENTICITY
The authenticity in everyday environments is found in their lack of design. The anonymity of the environment and its purposeful subservience are reasons to emulate its qualities in the desire to achieve a greater authenticity. The everyday environment is the most authentic built form today, because it has become background, secondary to purpose, function and consumerism. Architecture should emulate the background qualities of everyday environments, conceding to the other images in society and ending the unrelenting one-upmanship exhibited by contemporary consumer culture.

07.2 EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENTS_ARCHITECTURE
Initially the environment of everyday was chosen as the mode of investigation, because it was the preliminary intent that in some way these environs were in need of improvement, requiring the aid and expertise of design professionals in the field of architecture. However, the fundamental problem with everyday environments is that they exhibit any image at all. Everyday environments do not need an improvement of their image, but an elimination of it.

The vary nature of the everyday environments should result in the absence of all image, and simply exist as the background and structure for daily life. The architecture itself becomes secondary and subdued, allowing the activity of life to provide the image and aesthetic. Instead of architecture always made spectacular, monumental or special, architecture should become anonymous, indistinguishable background for life. The appeal is the lack of distinction, architecture will no longer compete for attention, but will allow the activity and vitality of its purpose and functions become the primary form of interest, image and spectacle. "An architecture that suppresses authorship, denies celebrity, and flirt’s with invisibility: an architecture of the everyday."^3

There is no need to design in new abstract shapes or historically grounded forms, whether modern, vernacular, or Victorian, according to one’s ideological allegiance, here the honesty and inherent purpose would result in all the architecture, without reliance on image or aesthetics. Instead of designing seductive shapes and forms, one would distill the purpose or essence of the project from which everything would derive. Everyday architecture will be most successful when it becomes sterile and banal, exhibiting no distracting visual seductions or calculated images, but quietly structuring the activity that occurs in its environs. In so doing, everyday architecture will find an authenticity, that will help to exemplify its purpose and place in contemporary culture, and people’s lives.

07.3 THE AUTHENTIC EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENT
The role of architecture is not to entertain or thrill, but to structure an understanding of the world and social existence. Instead of structuring and integrating experience, buildings frequently contribute to disorientation and meaningless. The task of architecture is not to free buildings form anything but to weave them into an existing cultural continuum that has collective significance and relevance.^26

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08.1 SUBURBIA
The theoretical context has already been established, and has been explained as it exists within the constructs of consumerism and everyday environments. Specifically, the consumerism discussed and the ‘everyday’ most often occur in contemporary society in the suburb. The suburban context is an environment that has proliferated in the United States since approximately 1950 and continues to exist as an environment driven by consumerism, image and the mass media.

08.2 MIDWEST_UNITED STATES
In the United States, the Midwest is a geographic region that exemplifies national trends of suburban development. Much of the Midwest has been, and continues to develop, based upon a suburban paradigm. The locations of cities and city centers have been established, but most new development and growth continues not in the revitalization of urban cores, but in the expansion of the periphery. It is within the creation of the periphery that the aforementioned problems of consumerism, image and authenticity are most critical, because it is within these environments that the majority of Americans live their lives.

08.3 INDIANAPOLIS_INDIANA
In the context of the suburban Midwest of the United States, the primary context of study and research was the Indiana capital city of Indianapolis. Indianapolis exhibits many suburban qualities representative of much of the development on a Midwestern and national scale. The city is consummately automobile dependent, sprawling, consumer-based and free to develop in every geographic direction, unencumbered by any natural or man-made barriers. The established urban core of Indianapolis is undergoing a revitalization, but has been left to decades of neglect in favor of strong and continuing development of the periphery. Among the suburbs, the Northern Indianapolis suburbs have recently grown particularly fast and represent the present state of upper middle-class consumer communities at the outer edge of the city’s development.

08.4 CARMEL_FISHERS
Of the Northern Indianapolis suburbs, the focus of study were the communities of Carmel and Fishers. Carmel and Fishers are two neighboring suburbs quickly growing and swelling on the city’s Northern edge. Predominantly Caucasian upper-middle class, the communities are steeped in consumerism and consist primarily of neighborhoods of homogenous housing and clusters of commercial franchises.

08.5 116TH STREET
In the suburbs of Carmel and Fishers, 116th Street is a major commercial and residential corridor that connects the two communities. Specifically the area of study of everyday and suburban consumerism was 116th Street between US-31 and Interstate-69.
09.1 CARMEL_FISHERS
The site is located between the aforementioned Northern Indianapolis suburbs of Carmel and Fishers. The location of the site is along the 116th Street corridor, on one of the few remaining empty sites between the two concentric circles of growth of the two suburbs.

09.2 116TH STREET
As mentioned, 116th Street represents a viable commercial and residential corridor that connects the Northern Indianapolis suburbs. The building to be designed for the site will be discussed in further detail in the next section [010 PROGRAM], but will suffice to be described presently as an entertainment retail facility. As such, its location along a viable and visible commercial corridor is critical. Indianapolis is a city of the automobile, everything is accessed by private transportation. As such, the retail entertainment facility will be accessed through existing vehicular corridors and traffic patterns.

09.3 116TH STREET_ELLER ROAD
The existing vehicular corridors are that of 116th Street and Eller Road. The open site exists on the Southeastern corner of the intersection of 116th Street and Eller Road. As mentioned, this particular site is located directly between the suburban growth of Carmel and Fishers and represents a highly trafficked and visible location. The site exhibits extensive street frontage on the intersecting streets and is afforded excellent site lines from East and West bound automobile traffic on the heavily trafficked 116th Street. The site has a gentle incline away from the street intersection and is slightly wooded near its inner property lines.

The site was chosen because of its location in relation to the local commercial developments, but also because it possesses a certain ubiquitousness and ambiguity. The nondescript nature of the site allows a building solution proposed for it to represent a building solution that could occur anywhere in the Midwest, or more generally, anywhere in the United States. Specifics of conventional site analysis [views, drainage, climate, sun, vegetation, lighting, etc] were analyzed and considered, but not critical in the design of the retail entertainment facility, because the solution was decidedly created to have a certain non-specificity and universal applicability.
10.1 **00_01 DUPONT BENEDICTUS STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION**

The program for the building exploration was adapted from and used for the 2000-2001 Dupont Benedictus Student Design Competition. The competition is sponsored by DuPont and administered by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture in cooperation with The American Institute of Architects and Union Internationale des Architectes.

The competition is the ninth in a series of student competitions involving the innovative use of laminated glass. The 2000-2001 Dupont Benedictus Student Design Competition challenged students to design a multipurpose entertainment retail facility at a specific site of the student's choosing. Criteria for judging included successful, creative use of the material in the design solution, successful integration of the design into its surrounding context, successful response to the environmental context, and successful response to the basic architectural concepts such as human activity needs, structural integrity, and coherence of architectural vocabulary.

10.2 **COMPETITION CHALLENGE**

As the United States' economy continues to surge, it is projected that store construction will recede by five percent in 2000-2001. The retail industry is threatened by warehouse stores offering bargain prices and the Internet offering the ultimate convenience. To combat this reality, the retail industry has begun to include entertainment options into the traditional mix of retail shopping districts. State of the art cineplexes, full-service restaurants, and sidewalk cages have been added to traditional shopping malls, making "experience shopping" far more appealing to a broader range of individuals. Retail industry leaders understand that if they create an enjoyable place for a movie and dinner, then patrons will likely spend time exploring the shops and making purchases—and securing the retail economy.

The entertainment retail facility creates a new social center in suburban locations. In suburban settings, the entertainment retail facility can easily serve the diverse needs of families, offering a variety of experiences for each member of the family, as well as common places for the entire family to enjoy.

A design solution utilizing transparencies also allows retail merchants to showcase a greater array of merchandise, which should be reflected in the store design layout. Glass provides the possibility of allowing every level of the entertainment retail facility to be viewed as equally marketable and engaging. Serious consideration should be given in design solutions to acknowledging existing traffic—both pedestrian and vehicular—that will utilize space, and means of attracting their attention should be addressed, especially at the upper levels. The success of the design solutions will weigh on the relationships created between the components of the entertainment retail facility and how they relate to each other, and the user's experience created by the architecture.
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11.1 PRECEDENT STUDY

The precedents studied were not employed on a level of specificity, but examined conceptually and theoretically. The context of the everyday environment was studied as a precedent and accordingly each element of the program [retail, theater and restaurant] was studied in these environments to understand their conventional development and their present resolution in contemporary society.

11.2 RETAIL FACILITIES

Shopping has become the past time of Americans, and as such, retail facilities proliferate in the everyday environment. Commercial space exists everywhere and is still placed at a premium. Specifically, spaces and buildings dedicated to contemporary retail consumerism were studied as they exist. The linear mall, established in the 1960s, develops an enclosed interior system of retail, and occasionally other functions. The linear mall is internally oriented usually on a double loaded corridor, the exterior surrounded by vast expanses of parking and dependence upon signage and symbolism to draw consumers. Retail facilities of this type have developed the magnet system of placing consumer-drawing and important functions as anchors to the building at corridor termination points. The strip mall is a derivative of the linear mall, but is automobile oriented and involves retail functions oriented adjacently to create a elongated building oriented towards expanses of parking. Stand-alone retail and big-box retail facilities create large interior volumes for consumption, little exterior adornment, large expanses of parking and dependence upon signage to draw consumers.

11.3 CINEMATIC FACILITIES

Presently cinematic facilities are occasionally integrated with retail facilities or more often found as stand-alone facilities. Integrated retail and cinematic facilities separate the two functions and usually place a small number of theaters into a cluster at some location in the retail facility. Stand-alone theaters have recently become massive and can reach theater numbers upward of twenty four. These facilities are internally oriented black-box theaters generally with a common concession entry area. The building is generally surrounded by expanses of parking and dependent upon only the name of movies on a theater marquee to draw consumers.

11.4 RESTAURANT FACILITIES

Restaurant facilities are often integrated into retail facilities in various forms. Restaurants either take the form of a conventional retail space or become a collection of eating venues in a ‘food court’. Stand-alone restaurant facilities in everyday environment usually are internally oriented, and depend upon a form of restaurant and architectural theming and signage to draw consumers.
12.1 THEORY DESIGN OBJECTIVES
The design objectives for the retail entertainment facility were derived from a response to purpose and human activity, rather than aesthetic and image. The following design objectives are an attempt to quantify the aforementioned discussion and experiment, through an effort to resolve theoretical concepts into a specific pragmatic example. The following design objectives, building as background, social articulation, authenticity and consumerism, should not be viewed as the only method by which to achieve the goal of a greater authenticity, but should be viewed as a specific example that arguably through the design objectives, process, and resolution, does achieve a greater authenticity in relation to the conventions of the established precedents.

12.2 BUILDING AS BACKGROUND
The first objective was to develop the building as background or a backdrop or structure for life. The building should become background for the activity and purposes of the building type. It should become a backdrop for the consumption of goods provided by the retail entertainment facility and structure the experience and activity of the consumer. The expression of the building should derive not from form making or aesthetic fabrication, but the excitement should instead derive from the display of consumer products and the activity and vitality of the consumers themselves.

12.3 SOCIAL ARTICULATION
The second design objective was social articulation. Spatial experience, people and activity create interest and interaction between functions, replacing image. Public space and the interaction between functions become critical aspects of the design solution. Social articulation is closely related to building as background. The building becomes background, allowing for the articulation of the sociability and vitality of the activity inherent in the building. Social articulation also calls for an examination of the conventional relationships of functions and spaces, and required an adjustment to those conventions to improve sociability and consumerism.

12.4 AUTHENTICITY CONSUMERISM
The third objective was to develop an authentic response to consumerism. The building should not try to conceal or aestheticize consumption, but should instead act as a means to structure and aid the consumption inherent to the building type, retail entertainment facility. The design should achieve a greater authenticity because all design resolutions are created from a purpose [i.e. consumerism, sociability and background architecture] other than image-making or fabricated aestheticism. The building, like the suburbs, exists for consumption, and as such, should exemplify it and create an environment conducive to consumerism. The building should be composed in such a way as to provide displays of consumption integrated into the building design, to identify consumption in the environment.
13.1 ACHIEVING AUTHENTICITY

Achieving authenticity is a daunting task, even the task of defining or describing authenticity is difficult. A certain ambiguity exists surrounding the term. The exploration has been established and constructed in such a way that it might achieve a greater authenticity, a greater honesty and relevance to the building's inherent purpose.

13.2 METHODOLOGY

The design methodology that developed can be quantified only by a discussion in terms of what was meant to be deviations from a 'conventional' design process, as taught in architecture schools.

13.3 CONVENTIONAL DESIGN

When fostering a design process, architectural schools most generally teach students to rely upon the creation of some form of a concept, from which all design decisions will be made. The concept can derive from nearly anything, and is viewed to be successful when it is carried holistically throughout the design resolution.

13.4 AUTHENTIC DESIGN

The establishment of a concept from which all design decisions will be made is not a convention that was abandoned for the methodology of achieving a greater authenticity. The aforementioned design objectives [section 012] are the design concepts that guided every design decision in the resolution of this specific project.

The design convention that was deviated from, was the initial process of choosing a design concept. Generally, little concern is exhibited for the relevance of the initial choice of a design concept, the process of defining and refining a concept is generally left to the discretion of the designer. Often the reason for choosing a concept is superficial and meaningless. An increase in authenticity can easily be created if more concern, care and thought were taken into consideration while choosing a design concept and subsequent direction for design development.

An authentic design concept is one that exhibits a relevance to the culture in which it was built [specifically for this project, consumerism] and a relevance to the purpose of the creation of that building [specifically for this project, the display and consumption of goods and services]. If these two notions of relevance and an aspect of honesty to that notion is examined in the choice of selecting a design concept and carrying it through the design, a greater authenticity can be achieved.

This specific design exercise is not even necessarily about creating a new and different resolution, it is about searching for a more authentic and relevant methodology to create that resolution. Accordingly, it is in the methodology and processes of creation, that design can release itself from the arbitrary and superficial creation of image and aesthetic and instead create a more meaningful, honest, purposeful and relevant authenticity.
14.1 DESIGN RESOLUTION

The building exploration developed every design decision from a purpose or objective, no creative decision was solely to produce an aesthetic or image. The design solution employed transparency as a device to allow the products and activities of consumerism to come to the foreground, and allow the architecture to become background. The building acts as a display for its inherent consumer products and consumer activity. The building attracts attention from passing consumer not through signage or architectural imagery, but by allowing the interior of the building, the activity and consumer products, to be visible. The front face of the building, facing both 116 Street and Eller Road is exaggerated and becomes a large display case for retail products.

The pursuit of authenticity called for the reexamination of conventional relationships of the program functions. The major design component was the establishment of a building module that combined the consumer functions of the building [retail, theater, and restaurant]. The module broke the convention of generally separating functions and placed them in close proximity to increase the interaction and subsequently the consumption of the different pragmatic functions. The module assures that consumers will be exposed to every opportunity to consume [retail products, movies, food and drink], even if they came to the facility only with intentions to quickly get only one of them. The module articulates and reinforces consumption, allows the construct of foreground and background to take form and creates an economic and understandable layout.

14.2 DESIGN EXPERIENCE

After parking, the simple layout of the building is easily discernible. A transition is made from the parking cube to either end of the retail entertainment facility. The facility is accessed by a single-loaded circulation spine, allowing the consumer to focus on one side of the corridor, providing high retail visibility. The other side of the corridor will afford the consumer views alternately of nature and the parking cubes. No seating is provided for by the circulation spine, but rather in the consumption modules, to place the consumer with the consumable products.

Travelling down the circulation spine the consumer is drawn into the modules of consumption by transparency and depth. The modules allow for an efficient, expandable and changeable envelope to structure and provide a backdrop for consumerism. The basic layout for the module is a centrally located solid, black-box theater enclosed by two levels of retail. The solid box of the theater enclosed by the transparent retail provides a backdrop for the display of consumer goods. The modules are highly visible from the street and the circulation spine. The theater is flanked by two retail spaces on the first floor. Also located on the first floor, is the ticket/concession stand for the theater. The
entrance of the theater is a ramp around its exterior that will purposefully take the consumer past the retail products and deposit them at the top of the theater's stadium seating. The modules improve the relationship and interaction between the three consumer functions [retail, theater, restaurant] by increasing their proximity, interaction, and visibility. The module layout allows for the opportunity for interactive target marketing amongst the three functions [like a sports bar, action movie, sporting goods store module].

The modular pods are separated by support spaces that create a regular rhythm of retail, allowing for separation and branding. The intersection of the two legs of the "L" building, becomes an integral public gathering space.

The building is designed to attract the traffic's attention, the street elevation is exaggerated to provide frontage on the corner site. The consumer is drawn to visible product displays and decides to consume, depositing the car in one of the convenient and visible parking cubes. The parking cube, much like the existing model of large expanses of parking, is a symbol of vitality and convenience, plainly displaying patrons cars and the life and activity of the facility. However, unlike the existing model, the parking cube does not obscure the view of products to passersby and provides a more convenient connection to the consumer.

14.3 REFLECTION
The design exploration was successful in producing a more authentic building solution for consumerism and allowing architecture to become background. The emphasis of the building exploration upon achieving a greater articulation and accommodation of consumerism was successful in that it honestly reflected the intention and purpose of that consumption. Developing a social articulation through public space was less successful than the other objectives, but a certain level of social articulation did occur within the constructs of the consumer modules which resulted in an increase in interaction.
15.1 SUMMARY

"In this world you just do not know where you stand; you are led astray by mirages when you try to connect a signifier to a signified—declaration, declaration or propaganda by which what you should believe or be is signified. If you allow the swarms of signs [image] to flow over you from television and radio sets, from the films and newspapers and ratify the commentaries that determine their meanings, you will become a passive victim of the situation; but insert a distinction or two— for instance [image and authenticity]- and the situation is changed: you are now the active interpreter of signs." 21

An attempt has been made, through the explorations of image, authenticity and architecture to discover a form of meaning, or discover an essence in contemporary society. In today's culture, the inundation of images, messages and symbols are distracting, and tend to deafen the senses to anything of real substance. By interpreting the culture employing the aforementioned focus, perhaps a more valid form of meaning or relevance would become apparent, it is difficult to tell if it has. On a symbolic level, the notion of image represents anything in society or personal life that is distracting, dishonest, or deceitful. Anything that attempts to conceal truth or meaning, to project a coercive message. At this level the notion can be applied to anything [contemporary culture, consumerism, architecture, etc]. On the same symbolic level, authenticity as an idea represents anything that is honest, speaks of an essence and is inherently meaningful because it is not disguised to be anything, but exists solely to fulfill a purpose. Similarly, the notion of authenticity can also be applied to nearly any aspect of life.

15.2 ACHIEVING AUTHENTICITY

It is hoped that the means by which to achieve a greater authenticity have become evident throughout its discussion. The achievement of authenticity will undoubtedly result in a greater meaning in personal life and society. The simplest and most general way to describe a methodology for such achievements would simply be to ponder the purpose or reason of existence for any object, than articulate it accordingly. No component should exist solely to project an aesthetic or visual image that does not consummately reflect the purpose or intention of its existence.

Specifically in architecture, many methods of achieving authenticity are available, regionalism, site specific design, cooperation in design, designer as a facilitator, infill systems. The goal is to develop an architecture that would be similar to the perfect mathematical resolution to a problem, where only one possible answer to the design question could be proposed if all design considerations [site, climate, use, purpose, structure, etc] were honestly examined and answered.
15.3 DISCOVERIES

Several important concepts and ideas have surfaced from the study of image and authenticity, particularly as they relate to architecture, their summary will conclude this discussion. First, a conclusion about the general state of contemporary culture, the mistake should not be made to believe that meaning in culture and personal life will develop from any material or quantifiable object or possession, the purpose of the paper was to search for a meaning to an extent, and touched on the making of meaning in life. However, the meaning discussed was perhaps more properly termed as finding an understanding of where society is currently and developing a discussion of relevance and meaning in the context of culture.

The first conclusions as they relate to architecture are the discoveries that the absence of image, becomes a form of image in and of itself, and that the polarity that was established for this discussion between image and authenticity is not entirely necessary or realistic. The abrogation of image becomes a process of image-making anyway. The absence of image is impossible to achieve in architecture because it is a visual product. Therefore, the emphasis should be place upon the precepts of process for its production, the inevitable end product is a visual image. However, it is still justifiable to improve authenticity, by allowing the visual image to result from other consideration and to avoid the creation of that visual image as the primary focus. The related discovery of the unnecessary and unrealistic polarity established between image and authenticity is an equally valid conclusion. The issue at hand is not black and white, containing many areas of gray, one of which is the aforementioned fact that image will always exist. The necessary next step, if image does always exist is to discuss how the creation of that omnipresent image can become a more authentic and honest process, resulting in a more authentic and honest image. This point has been briefly discussed, but could benefit from further research.

The final and most important and critical conclusion and discovery is explicitly an architectural conclusion. In reflecting upon the process of exploration and discovery producing this discussion, it was found that it was highly a reactionary topic. The profession of architecture has become inundated by the production of image and operates presently on a highly heroic and egotistically driven paradigm. To a certain extent architects have become rock stars and have lost focus on the actual content of their work and have instead been seduced by the spectacle of media. It has been recognized as the Bilbao effect, by some critics identifying a similar problem, it is seemingly a recent development. As a young professional, I have recently noticed its prevalence, especially in the context of the design school. Students attempt to outdo each other with aesthetic and image and seem to miss the point, of substance, meaning, thinking, learning, and explora-
tion. Worse yet, is the fact that the constructs of the studio, and the mentorship of many professors, contribute to this shallow aesthetic competition in lieu of substantive thinking, questioning and examination.

The task at hand is to attempt to eliminate or at least subdue ego in architecture. The notion of designing and exploring "background" architecture was a very relevant and significant exercise in subduing the urge to create an egotistical and visual architectural masturbation that characterizes the training and practices of the profession.

The meaning and substance associated with built space and form is lost in a movement of fabricated aestheticism and image making. The regime of spectacle has encouraged an overall ephemeralization of architecture, in which the circulation of images supersedes all other criteria. Presently, buildings have become nothing more than trendy fads, trying to create the next spectacle or popular image. The relevance of architecture is as fleeting as pop music or sitcom ratings, operating more on gimmick, widespread appeal and recognizability, than on subtle quality, honesty and social relevance. For instance, architecture magazines, architecture schools and the work of architectural students, such as the thinking in this discussion are conscious agents of this process. However, as a method to enhance the dichotomy of image and authenticity, images have been separated into a dichotomy with text and image to enhance the discussion.

If to conclude the statement was to be made to: "STOP READING THIS PAPER AND GET REAL!!!", chances are the message would be absorbed and neutralized by the context of the flow of pictures and graphics that accompany the thinking, to eventually be recomposed as a harmlessly ironic blurb wedged between images and other conventions of visual seduction, or worse it would appear staged, because of its eccentricity, as a show in itself.

The institutional domain of architecture has become separated from the general flux and priorities of people's daily lives. Architecture is exclusive and authoritative, relying on an educated audience. It would become more meaningful if it were derived from existing structure, pattern and convention of everyday life.

The profession should not experiment and tirelessly search for the next big thing, but instead take a moment to learn from the everyday environments. Create an architecture that is bland, devoid of character and image, but yet exhibits the purpose for its existence. Perhaps by avoiding the production of image, the buildings could reverse the media and begin to develop again a social commentary and polemic about the confines of spectacle and consumerism.

A sterile architecture will also emphasize the audience, contextualizing architecture into existing frame of reference and social behaviors. The public relates to the everyday
environment, and as such, could more easily relate to an architecture that is devoid of fabricated architectural images and aesthetics. Design is not an expression of self, others will automatically view the end product as an expression of you.

Accordingly, it is not the everyday environments that will benefit from the assistance of professions, but vice versa. The profession of architecture could greatly benefit from a more subtle and quiet approach to its production. The present paradigm for the training and practice of architectural professionals allows only the creation of ego and heroes. The profession needs to become background and find a form of the anonymous sterility that is scoffed at in the everyday environment.
16.1 WORKS CITED

16.2 IMAGES CITED
1 front cover collage
2 consumerism collage
3 image collage
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4 authenticity collage
5 everyday environments collage
6 architecture collage
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10 program collage
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12 design objectives collage
   [refrigerator p. 041]
13 design process collage
   [masturbation p. 083]
14 design exploration collages
15 back cover collage
APPENDIX_AUTHOR BACKGROUND

17.1 RELEVANCE
I believe the positions and thinking formulated in the preceding discussion are a direct result of my upbringing and the context of my background. Accordingly, a brief explanation of that background and point of view greatly inform the position that has been presented.

17.2 KALAMAZOO_MICHIGAN
The Midwest has been the context for the exploration of image and authenticity in everyday life. The Midwest was chosen because as mentioned it is generally representative of national trends, but also because it has been the context of my life. I was born in 1978, in Kalamazoo, Michigan and raised there in the home where my parents still presently reside. The home is typical of the everyday environments discussed and is near the Western periphery of the established urban nucleus of Kalamazoo, a city of approximately 90,000 people. The suburban neighborhood is isolated, but located near one of the viable commercial corridors in the city. I attended high school at Kalamazoo Central High School, a school also on the periphery, but exhibiting a diverse student population.

17.3 MUNCIE_INDIANA
Upon graduation in 1996, the Midwest continued to be my home as I moved to Muncie, Indiana, to study architecture at Ball State University. Muncie exhibits less vitality and activity than Kalamazoo, and is highly dependent upon the university to energize the community. Muncie, a city of approximately 70,000 people, is about an hour drive North of Indianapolis. In Muncie, I lived on campus for two years, then within walking distance of the campus in an apartment for the next three years. In my fourth year, I continued exploring the Midwest, interning and living in Dayton, Ohio for approximately six months.

Several Midwestern cities have been home over the last 23 years, and I believe over my experiences in the geographic region the one characteristic common to all places is homogeneity. Many of the problems exhibited by one community are equally as apparent in innumerable others in the Midwest and more generally in the nation. The Midwest is the status quo and seems to be the average of the nation, it exhibits no extremes, but exemplifies the average majority of all that is stereotypically American. Having lived in several areas of the Midwest and having always lived in the context of the suburban everyday, an exploration of both environments is appropriate and relevant.

The environments that are the context of my background were chosen for study and exploration not only for their appropriateness, but because I believe a dialogue about these environments needs to begin. The environments in which the majority of Americans live, and are being raised, should be, if nothing else, examined and questioned. My intention is not to resolve any broad generalized problem, but to attempt only to induce an awareness of these environments.