Paper, Architecture, Rock

A Prototype Rock Performance Center

Ryan P. Nestor
May 1993
Department of Architecture
College of Architecture and Planning
Ball State University

Ryan P. Nestor
Paper, Architecture, Rock
A Prototype Rock Performance Complex

Bachelor of Architecture Degree Thesis Design

Thesis Committee:
Professor A.E. Palmer
Professor Arthur Schaller
Troy Thompson

copyright 1993
Dedicated to the memories of:

Brent Swift
Glenn Sabados
Tony Sak
Elwood

Special Thanks and Debts:

Sonny Palmer
Troy Thompson
Art Schaller
Bob Githens
Catherine Wheel

Corrie E. Schafer
-without you, none of this
would have been possible.
project introduction

associated research

thesis inquiry

thesis resolution

assessment

sources

contents
Presented to you in the pages that follow is the result of a year of my toils. In a quest to better understand myself, architecture, and the world we live in, I have produced a thesis that will hopefully be perceived as thought-provoking, impacting, and at the very least interesting. I have chosen to question the nature in which we view reality and specifically the relationship between the observer and the observed.

The vehicle that I have chosen to express my ideas with is what I call a Prototype Rock Performance Center. Originating from my personal love and extensive experiences with Rock music (performing, writing, recording, viewing, listening), I felt that there was no architectural type that I intuitively knew better than the Rock & Roll performance pavilion. I was also prompted by the architectural travesty I witnessed last year while working as a roadie in London for the band, Catherine Wheel. I asked myself a simple question, "Why am I carrying an enormously heavy P.A. enclosure up two flights of European-style steps in the information age that we live in?" And so the project of revamping the performance pavilion was born.
The Mass Cultural Event: 
Same As It Ever Was?

Abstract

The purpose of this exposition research is two-fold. First, it is to critically examine two mass cultural events of seemingly very different natures: the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca and the contemporary rock festival, Lollapalooza. Because these events are totally unrelated and differ radically in virtually all aspects (culture, religion, geography, etc.), a comparison of parallels between the two will yield results for the second purpose of the research: gaining insight into the primary biological human needs associated with mass cultural events. This rather elusive information defies all time periods and can be considered a vital constant in the design theory of any mass cultural event in any culture, in any part of the world.

Following the physical, spiritual, ritual, and spatial analyses of the two events, a series of parallels are formed. These parallels are considered vital constants that inform the foundational design theory of any mass cultural event.
Mecca

The first event to be examined is the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca which is performed by over one million Muslims each year. I have chosen to investigate the Hajj (as it is known to Muslims) for several reasons. Mostly because it is to my knowledge the oldest mass cultural event of its magnitude. Dating from at least 632 a.d., the pilgrimage to Mecca has successfully endured both antiquity and modernity. This seemingly timeless character leads me to believe that the primary human needs of a cultural event are being satisfied independently of the rapidly changing cultural context. The very same ritual is performed today in a radically different world as it was nearly 1400 years ago, yet there seems to be no loss of significance to its participants.

Context

The holy city of Mecca is located in the western part of Saudi Arabia about 45 miles east of the port of Jidda on the Red Sea. The city lies in a narrow valley between two bare hills. Mecca's existence is sustained by the Well Zamzam, the only source of water in the barren valley. The hills surrounding Mecca vary in height from 1,500 to 3,000 feet and inhibit the prevailing winds from ventilating the city. The character of the city was described by one westerner's account at the turn of the century as:

"a handsome town; its streets are broader than those of eastern cities; the houses lofty and built of stone; and the numerous windows that face the streets give a more lively and European aspect than those of Egypt and Syria, where the houses present but few windows toward the exterior. Mekka contains many houses three stories high; few are white-washed, but the dark grey colour of the stone is much preferable to the glaring white that often offends the eyes."

Mecca is considered by Muslims to be the "Mother of all Cities" and the navel of the Earth from which the rest of the Earth grew. They believe that Mecca is the closest point on Earth to the heavens and
that their prayers can be heard more easily from there. Furthermore, it is considered to be a sepulcher of sorts with claims that the prophet Muhammad who brought the word of Allah to the people is buried there as well as being born there. Non-Muslims are forbidden to even view the holy city under the penalty of painful death from the Islamic god, Allah.

sanctuary
At about the middle of Mecca’s principle axis, the street widens to a large courtyard with colonnades which is accessible through nineteen gates. This is the holiest Islam sanctuary, the Masjid al-Haram or “Great Mosque.” Occupying the hollow of Mecca, the Haram exists at a geographically prominent site where several minor valleys converge but leaving the Haram susceptible to massive flooding though Saudi Arabia’s climate is generally dry. The Haram is open air and completely surrounds the Weli Zamzam and the sacred Muslim shrine, Kaaba, to which all Muslims worldwide face when they pray. The Haram has undergone several expansions throughout the centuries, and its most recent expansion in 1950 left it at a capacity for 300,000 pilgrims. The shape of the Haram can be characterized as an irregular parallelogram in plan view measuring an estimated 600 feet across in its longest dimension.

shrine
At the virtual center of the otherwise open Haram interior plaza sits the Kaaba. An irregular cube-like structure massively built of Meccan gray and white marble, the Kaaba stands some fifty feet tall and forty feet in width. Access to the Kaaba is gained through one door on the northeastern wall on the rare occasion that the Kaaba is entered (normally only for three “salamn washings” per year). The door stands about seven feet above the plaza floor to protect the shrine interior from flooding. The interior of the shrine is unfurnished except for numerous gold and silver lamps which are suspended from the ceiling and supported by three wood pillars.

While the entire city of Mecca is believed by Muslims to be the navel of the Earth, the Kaaba is considered the center of the universe. The Islamic bible, the Koran,
speaks of seven heavens and seven earths, which are imagined as being superimposed upon one another. Every heaven and every earth has its center marked by a sanctuary and shrine through which an imaginary axis of the universe pierces all fourteen. At the highest of the fourteen is the Throne of God, and at all of them it is believed that the same ceremonies are performed as at the Kaaba. This establishes a higher cosmic significance to the rituals performed.

Between the eastern corner and the door of the Kaaba exists a place of special sanctity, the Multazam. It is here that the devout in their ritual embrace the Kaaba with their chests and outstretched arms to achieve the Baraka (a blessing).

artifact
The Kaaba shrine shrouds under black veil the Black Stone, the holiest Islam artifact believed to have been sent from the heavens by Allah himself. At about twelve inches in diameter, the Black Stone is of a mineral composition foreign to Saudia Arabia’s geology, but scientists believe it is actually a meteorite. The stone is built into the eastern corner of the Kaaba about five feet above the ground.

memory
The black veil which forms most of the walls of the Kaaba shrine is changed yearly. Tiny pieces of the previous veil (called the kiswa) are sold to pilgrims as souvenirs to take home with them as a physical memory of their journey.

satellites
There are several other smaller, subsidiary structures within the Haram sanctuary plaza besides the prominent Kaaba shrine. While most of these structures function as prayer pulpits from which mass prayers are led during ceremony, one domed structure is of special importance. This domed structure covers the Well of Zamzam which is the source of life
for all of Mecca’s pilgrims. The well measures some 130 feet in depth and possesses the miraculous property of continuously maintaining its water level regardless of how much water is taken by the pilgrims. The water of the well is described as being brackish, but it is widely believed by Muslims to have infallible curing powers. In addition to dipping their ceremonial shrouds into the well, pilgrims also take bottles of the water home with them to cure ailing friends or family. The distribution of the water to the pilgrims is handled by the Zamzami, a hereditary guild.

accounts
A disguised British traveler described his visit to the sanctuary complex in 1908 as this:

“The outstanding impression... is that of the unusual. It is not beautiful, it could not fairly be called majestic, but it awes one by strangeness. One feels instinctively that one is looking on something unique.”

One North African traveler’s description details a similar account of awe:

“The most magnificent Kaaba stands in the midst of the Great Mosque. Its appearance is so singular and its sight so pleasing that no tongue can accurately depict its extraordinary features nor any description encompass the beauty of its perfection.”

Finally, an Egyptian official who went to Mecca in 1909 observed:

“It is strange that everyone whose eye falls on the Kaaba for the first time will be seen to be profoundly disturbed not because his eye has fallen on something unwanted but because of the fear and awe that overwhelm him. You will see those onlookers shaken to the bones because of the reverence-inspiring sight. Some halt
for a moment in front of this supreme
grandeur in the attitude of a humble, well-
disciplined person who is aware of his
own insignificance; others shout with a
frightened voice while their tongue forms
disconnected words; others again fight
their tears and you hear from them no
sound but a weeping that chokes their
voice and breaks up their breathing. And
with everyone of them the fear of God is
proportionate to the strength of his religion
and the firmness of his faith."

journey

Muslim pilgrims journey to Mecca from all
over the world as it is obligatory as written
in the Koran for all to attempt to visit
Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Most
traveling from outside Saudia Arabia, fly
into the international airport at Jidda and
then take various forms of land transporta-
tion often in traditional caravan style
formations. The relative ease of modern
transportation has caused considerable
growth of attendance in this century.
The annual pilgrimage or Hajj takes place in Dhu-l-Hijj ("the month of pilgrimage"). This is the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and can fall anywhere within our solar calendar year. Another pilgrimage called the Umra can be performed at anytime throughout the year but is regarded as being far less significant.

At varying points of the pilgrimage (usually upon arriving at the city of Mecca) each pilgrim must spiritually leave the sphere of the profane. This is symbolically begun by the pilgrim's acquittal to the Hajj itself. The purification is furthered by the pilgrim performing a complete ablation of his body as from this point on, ceremony prohibits pilgrims to wash, shave, or cut one's hair. After ablation, the pilgrim puts on his ceremonial dress consisting of two unsewn and preferably white sheets which cover the pilgrim from navel to knees and upper body with the exception of the right arm and shoulder which remain exposed. It is after this ceremonial process of acquittal, ablation, and dress that the pilgrim is considered pure and free from the world of the profane, ready to enter Mecca. It is at this time that the pilgrim exclaims the first, "takbirat al-ihram" (God is most great), and repeats a similar exclamation at each stage of the ceremony.

While in the state of purity pilgrims are forbidden to engage in bloodshed (even the uprooting of plants qualifies as bloodshed) and also are prohibited from any sexual relations and must fast for parts of the ritual. All infringements of these prohibitions can be redeemed by giving food to the poor except for engagement in sexual relations which immediately renders the pilgrimage null and void.

As soon as the pilgrim spiritually leaves the sphere of the profane, the pilgrim journeys to and enters the Haram sanctuary through the northern gate of the northeastern colonade which is called the Bab as-Salam, or Gate of Peace. Keeping the Kaaba always to his left, the pilgrim begins the first physical engagement of the key rite by circumambulating the shrine seven times. The pilgrim's path is marked on the Haram plaza floor by a massive granite oval called the Mataf and is usually performed barefoot. The first three laps are done at a quick pace and then slow and with each lap the Black Stone within the Kaaba must be kissed or at least touched in the case when there are massive crowds present. All the while, prayers are recited and after the seventh circling, the pilgrim embraces the Multzazam area of the Kaaba as mentioned previously. Then the pilgrim speaks two prayers and drinks from the Well of Zamzam. The total distance covered in this key rite is nearly one mile.

The pilgrim then leaves the sanctuary
through the south gates with left foot forward. He then runs a prescribed course seven times between two sacred points in the city, the al-Marwa and the as-Safa covering a total distance of about two miles. At the final visit to al-Marwa, the pilgrim cuts a token piece of his hair as an offering of himself to Allah. Both the seven-fold circling of the Kaaba and the seven-fold running between the al-Marwa and the al-Safa symbolically re-enact Abraham's attempt to evade Satan.

These key rites outlined above occur upon arrival of the pilgrim to Mecca anytime within the first week of the Dhul-Hijj (sacred month). On the seventh day all pilgrims gather at the Haram sanctuary and listen to an address that along with prayer outlines the next stage of the ritual. On the eighth day, all pilgrims journey east to the village of Mina lying five miles from Mecca. Here pilgrims spend the night in honor of the prophet Muhammed, who also spent the night here in his final trip to Mecca. On the eighth day, pilgrims venture to Arafat, a village nine miles further to the east. Once in Arafat, the pilgrims hear a sermon on the ninth day and begin the Wuqf - the standing before God. From the moment the sun crosses the meridian until the sun sets, pilgrims remain virtually motionless, standing before Allah and reciting soft-spoken prayers. As the sun nears setting, anticipation builds among the pilgrims and at the signal of an elder, the pilgrims wildly disperse enroute to Muzdalifa, about halfway back to Mina. The rampage of pilgrims is so intense that Saudi police are required to suppress the most dangerous excesses.

Once in Muzdalifa, pilgrims spend the night without sleep gazing at the illuminated Mosque of Muzdalifa. Another standing with prayers takes place before the second chaotic dispersal this time to Mina. It is also here that each pilgrim collects seventy small pebbles to be used
later in Mina for the stoning of devils.

At sunrise in Mina the following day, each pilgrim throws seven stones into the Jamrat al-Aqaba which is a massive stone heap presumably formed by the accumulation of billions of pilgrims’ pebbles. With each throw a variation of a chant is recited. Other evils are stoned in Mina each with seven pebbles and the appropriate chant formulas until the pilgrim’s supply of pebbles is exhausted. Some pebbles are at a later date taken from the stone heaps of Mina to Mecca and are added to the gravel floor of the Haram plaza.

On the tenth day, the pilgrim begins the desacralization phase of the ritual which will return him to the sphere of the profane and end his pilgrimage. This is symbolized by an act of bloodshed; the sacrifice of a sheep, goat, cow, or camel (cows and camels may be shared by pilgrims). Hundreds of thousands of animals are slaughtered by pilgrims within an hour, with all valuable parts of the animal given to the poor and carcasses buried. The pilgrim then makes the sacrifice of his hair to Allah as it is all shaven. The pilgrim is now free from all previous restrictions except that of sexual relations. This ban is lifted upon return to Mecca after the pilgrim bathes in sprinkled Zamzam water and he removes his ceremonial garb.

The pilgrims then return to Mina to spend the eleventh to thirteenth days in eating, drinking, and sensual pleasures. The pilgrim is completely free to dispose of his time, except that he is obligated to throw seven pebbles at the devils each day. Concurrently, the entire Muslim world celebrates the Al-id al-Kabir or Great Festival in unison with the celebrations of the pilgrims in Mina.

On the fourteenth day, the pilgrimage concludes with the final return to Mecca. At the boundary of the Haram sanctuary, the pilgrim makes a final gesture of prayer and promptly leaves the holy city of Mecca (promptly so that the pilgrim does not lose the awe of the first impression to that of familiarity).

Though modern conveniences have eased many of the traditional hardships of pilgrimage, the pilgrims still leave Mecca both physically and spiritually exhausted giving them a lingering feeling of fatigue-induced bliss. It was not until about 1950 that Saudi Arabia could guarantee the safety of the caravanning pilgrims from enemy Bedouin attacks or even adequate provisions of food, water, and proper sanitary facilities.

experience

The pilgrim of course experiences the conscious joy of physically fulfilling a fundamental religious obligation and automatically takes a significant step towards his quest for eternal bliss, but
spiritually the pilgrimage offers the pilgrim much more. Pilgrim accounts speak of "gripping feelings of intense unity, grandeur of faith, and majesty of the Lord."

One pilgrim account states:

"The whole assembly stood there (in prayer at the Kaaba) in the greatest reverence before this highest majesty and most powerful inspirer of awe before which the greatest souls become so little as to become almost nothing. And if we had not been witness of the movements of the body and the raising of the hands during the prayers, and the murmurings of the expressions of humility, and if we had not heard the beating of the hearts before this immeasurable grandeur we would have thought ourselves transferred to another life. And truly we were at that hour in another world: We were in the house of God and in God's immediate presence, and with us were only lowered heads and humbled tongues."
Lollapalooza

The second mass cultural event to be examined is Lollapalooza, a rock music festival. Entering only its third year of existence, it is the brainchild of artist/musician Perry Farrel of the famed L.A. rock band Jane's Addiction. Lollapalooza is the most contemporary event of its magnitude and thus will serve as an excellent comparison to the age old event of Macca.

Context

The festival takes place annually in the summer months between June and August. A traveling festival, Lollapalooza entertains from 25,000 to 40,000 participants at twenty to thirty different music venues nationwide. This equates to anywhere from 600,000 to 850,000 participants per year.

Because the event travels from city to city the site is obviously not fixed though the event is normally held in the same venues in the same cities annually. The venues are one of two types: football stadiums or outdoor performance pavilions. Both of the venue types are open air and consist of the same physical elements.

Parking

The parking areas at these various venues are of particular importance in the scheme of the event. Often taking up twenty times as much site area as the pavilion or arena it services, the parking area provides a distinctive environment for the participants outside of the venue itself. The parking area is perceived by participants to be public domain and at their disposal to anyway they see fit. Functionally, the parking area accommodates parking and circulation for 10,000 to 20,000 cars and waste facilities.

Gates

All venues have a varying amount of gates for participant ticket collection and
admission. The stadium type venues normally have between eight and twenty gates and pavilions normally have between one and six gates. Each gate services a zone of seating within the venue and at some venues entry through a gate is only permitted by ticketholders whose seat is within the zone serviced by the gate and at other stadiums entry can be gained through any gate regardless of specified seating zone.

**Concourse**

Both venue types have concourse areas from which goods are vended and waste is facilitated. Commercial goods sold to participants in the concourse area are of two types: memorabilia and refreshments. The memorabilia sold consists of programs, t-shirts, hats, buttons, stickers, patches, and even underwear all adorned with the names and insignias of the multiple performers of the event. Typical refreshments include nachos, pizza slices, hot dogs, potato chips, water, soda, and of course beer. Also found in the concourse area are restrooms, first aid stations, information stations, and garbage facilities.

**Seating**

There are four participant seating types evident at the venues. In the stadium setting, seating is divided into three parts. The majority of seating is of fixed chairs anchored in tiers that climb inclines around the stadium's oval circumference. Folding chair seating is organized in rows and covers the football field area. All of these chairs are oriented to face whichever end of the oval the performance is taking place while the fixed chairs remain oriented perpendicular to the football field. In the last decade stadiums have retrofitted enclosed seating areas called skyboxes because they are located high above other seating. These skyboxes are rented or purchased by corporations or the independently wealthy and can accommodate between fifteen and thirty partici
pants. Luxury services are included in the exorbitant skybox pricetag.

At the outdoor performance pavilion three types of seating also exist. Normally, the majority is lawn seating. Basically just a simple inclined concave mound covered with grass, the lawn seating offers complete participant flexibility and choice. Areas are designated by participants on a first come first serve basis with squatter’s rights prevailing. The lawn area is located directly behind the fixed chair seating which is arranged in traditional Grecco-Roman auditoria fashion about the stage. Skyboxes are also evident in the pavilion but are not as prevalent as in the stadiums.

additions
In addition to the facilities provided by each city’s venue, the Lollapalooza event itself brings with it an assortment of extras to enhance the status quo. For
example, besides an elaborate main stage setup. Lollapalooza brings with it a smaller stage which is set up in the concourse area of pavilions and in the parking area of stadiums. On this smaller stage, local bands play at the breaks between the national acts playing on the main stage. In the vicinity of this side-show stage, many additional tents and booths are setup to vend ethnic foods, support political organizations, and showcase both local and national art. The "traveling miracle tonic vendors" of the nineties swarm this area selling everything from cybernetic smart drinks to hallucinogenic vision glasses, all of which creates a quasi neo-carnival/circus ambience found at no other popular performance but Lollapalooza.

r i t u a l

The Lollapalooza ritual begins with the attempt by participants to acquire tickets and this is an event in itself. It begins with public announcements of Lollapalooza dates, times, locations, and the line-up of acts performing that year. This information is disseminated through the same channels as the music: radio, MTV, Rolling Stone, record stores, and word of mouth. Tickets for all of the season's Lollapalooza dates go on sale simultaneously (normally 10:00 a.m. on a Saturday in May) at thousands of Ticketmaster locations nationwide. The days of camping out overnight(s) at record stores to insure the acquisition of tickets are over and has been put into fate's hand. Ticket-wanters are now regulated by the monopolizing Ticketmaster Corporation which mandates a "more fair" lottery system. All prospective Lollapalooza goers meet at the Ticketmaster outlet of their choice one to two hours before the tickets go on sale. At this time, each person is given a number from a consecutive series. And at Ticketmaster's signal a number is drawn from a hat. The person holding the matching number becomes first in line and the following consecutive numbers line up behind that person. Generally, Lollapalooza sells out its entire summer tour in less than an hour and anyone not within the first twenty places in line at each Ticketmaster location will not get tickets. Tickets can also be ordered by phone and charged to a credit card, but the chances of getting through are less likely than the lottery system.

After the lucky obtain tickets, anticipation builds for the event as there is at least one month's time lag between ticket acquisition and event. In this time preparations are made. Participants select who they will be traveling with, make travel and even hotel arrangements, and also increase their familiarity with the different acts' music that will be performed. It is during this time as well as after the event that participants exercise their "bragging rights" to their peers who were not fortunate enough to get tickets.
journey
The next stage of the ritual is the pilgrimage to the event itself. Journeying by car for anywhere from thirty minutes to several hours, the participants often travel in groups (almost always groups of people in single vehicles and often numerous vehicles in caravan style). This time is spent in intense anticipation and often is heightened by listening to Lollapalooza music on the car stereo and the use of alcohol and/or drugs. A designated driver for Lollapalooza is seriously recommended and somewhat surprisingly often utilized. This person becomes the guide of sorts and is generally responsible for his party's entire well being. Responsibilities of the guide include safe arrival and departure, staying clear of law enforcement, and sometimes retaining the party's valuables (keys, tickets, money). The journey itself represents the first stage of escape. Escape from the everyday, the mundane, the worldly; all that has driven the participants to Lollapalooza in the first place.

arrival
In the journey as the venue draws closer, participants pass other groups of caravanning participants, increasing anticipation and broadening the participant collective community. All vehicles file into the parking area oasis (a process which is staggered over time), and participants promptly exit their cars.

tailgating
Participants arrive at the venue between one and five hours before show time, and this intermediary time is spent engaging in the ritual traditionally known as "tailgating." This rite familiarizes participants with their neighbors in the parking area and generally includes a massive intake of one or more of the following: food, alcohol, and/or drugs. This preparatory rite furthers the act of escape spiritually to complement the physical escape of the journey. Degree of engagement in the tailgating rite is completely at the discretion of each participant with their primary controlling variable being their choice in time of arrival.

admission
At a predetermined time (normally mid-afternoon) the gates to the venue open
for participant admission. Participants then lock up their cars and begin migrating towards the venue, leaving their car and almost all worldly possessions behind. The admission process generally takes anywhere from ten to thirty minutes at the gates where each participant surrenders a token piece of their ticket and is thoroughly embraced by a law enforcement official to insure that no participant is entering with any worldly possession deemed unacceptable such as alcohol, drugs, weapons, cameras, or fireworks.

**Event**

After admission into the venue, participants normally first orient themselves with their new surroundings. This entails finding their seat or staking their claim in the lawn and thereby establishing a homebase. From then until the performance begins, participants either freely wander the concourse socializing with other participants or rest at their homebase. In both scenarios participants feel the latent energy of what is about to take place as they gaze at the thousands upon thousands of waiting participants and at the stage crews frantically making last minute adjustments to props, lights, and equipment. An experienced participant will observe the spotlight operators climbing into their posts high above the stage signaling that the performance is about to begin, but the majority of participants are signaled of showtime by the sudden silence of the previously playing recorded background music and video. As soon as the stage lights go on, all participants simultaneously scream and cheer in frenzied excitement.

The performance itself consists of seven or eight individual shows by various currently popular artists. The musical group line-up changes every year but the music type each group represents stays the same. In other words, each year there is a different musical group or groups representing these rock music types: American alternative, rap, industrial, and English alternative. This diversity of alternative rock music insures the diversity of the participants, a vital ingredient in the community of Lollapalooza.

Each performing group plays eight to twelve songs during which the participants dance and cheer to the music that is being amplified at bone-crushing levels (so loud that it is not possible for any participant not to feel every bass beat at the core of their being). At the conclusion of every song the participants acknowledge the performers with equally loud roars of applause. In between the different performer’s act there is an intermission lasting twenty to forty minutes. During this time, participants engage in the same activities as before the first performance began. This cycle continues until all performers have played their sets climaxing with the last performer who is generally the most popular and therefore plays the longest set. The entire performance lasts about eight hours which generally leaves participants physically drained. Participants also leave with a buzzing in their ears caused from the high decibel amplification which can last over one day. Participants promptly leave the venue after the performance and while some return to tailgating at their cars, most immediately embark for their homes, leaving behind an empty parking lot scattered with garbage as their only trace.
Observations
In comparing aspects of the radically differing Meccan pilgrimage and the Lollapalooza festival many parallels can be drawn, and it seems reasonable that these similarities, however subjective, can not be denied relevance in the design of a mass cultural event. In light of the gross functional, cultural, historical, and chronological disparities between the events, one can only assume that these parallels are more than coincidence and are of some biological human importance, timeless in their value, potentially informing a designer of the elusive basic human needs in a mass cultural event setting.
No one can deny the human need for mass cultural events, and I believe that an awareness of these vital human constants can insure the relevance of a mass cultural event to any culture, in any age.

Parallels
In both cases there is an importance placed on time of the event. The pilgrimage can only be performed in the month of pilgrimage and Lollapalooza can only be attended once a year at a specified date. This helps to insure the uniqueness of the event versus that of everyday life. It becomes impossible to become overly familiar and routine with either event.

There is an obvious significance in both events placed on journey enhancing the quality of escape and physically separating the event from the everyday. The journeys are both engaged in groups of people. Both events have a flexible time of arrival.

An oasis from the desert of the everyday is present in both events in the forms of a sanctuary and a venue. These havens are unique in the scheme of the everyday.

Both havens contain a primary focus. At Mecca it is the Black Stone within the Kaaba, a symbol of their idol, and at Lollapalooza it is the stage on which their idols perform in person.

In both events there are satellites of focus and participants attention shifts back and forth between the primary focus and satellite foci. Examples: The Well of Zamzam, Mina and surrounding villages, the parking area, the concourse, and the sidestage.

Both havens have portals of entry in which special procedures take place and the havens are open air but physically containing.

There is obvious human importance in the ritual aspects of both events. The extent of predetermination of the ritual would seem less important as the pilgrimage ritual is specifically defined and the Lollapalooza ritual is open for participant customization.

Both rituals occur in hierarchical stages with a key rite of most importance. The key rite can seemingly occur at varying points of the ritual as in Mecca it is nearly first and at Lollapalooza it is nearly last. Stages of ritual are marked by dialogue with Maccans chanting prayers at the appropriate intervals and participants of Lollapalooza applauding at each interval.

Spiritual escape is a common denominator of extreme importance in both rituals to
further oneself from the worldly and profane. *Altered states* of consciousness are achieved in Mecca by religious and fatigue induced means whereas at Lollapalooza it is generally alcohol and drug induced.

In both rituals, *sacrifice* is made. To partake in Lollapalooza one makes a monetary sacrifice, and at Mecca one sacrifices food and body (hair). *Prohibitions* also exist in both rituals.

*Anonymity* of participants is witnessed in both rituals by the uniforms (sheets and concert t-shirts) and reinforced by the sheer number of participants.

Both rituals rely on human resources as *guides*. They are the elders leading the prayer and the Zamzam of Mecca and the designated driver and Ticketmaster of Lollapalooza.

*Uncertainty* pervades both rituals as Meccans fear Bedouin attack and Lollapalooza participants fear law enforcement. Also, uncertainty is heightened by the fact that Muslims are not assured of their pilgrimage being accepted by Allah just as Lollapalooza participants are not assured of getting tickets.

In both rituals, *remnants* are left as traces of proof. Meccans bury animal carcasses and leave stone heaps while Lollapalooza participants leave garbage and graffiti and both forms marking participants' presence.

*Memorabilia* is collected by participants of both events. Bottles of Zamzam water, pieces of the black veil, concert t-shirts, and concert tickets provide participants with a *tangible memory* and evidence of their attendance.

**Conclusion**

With these potentially vital parallels exposed, the task of designing a mass cultural event in the information age becomes an easier one. By getting a glimpse of the vital human constants seemingly necessitated by the mass cultural event, a solid foundation can be laid and exploration can continue through any medium with no fear of the event in question losing human relevance.

**Sources**


*Rolling Stone Magazine, Spin Magazine, MTV, and Lollapalooza I, II & III.*
The genesis of my thesis inquiry occurred about two and a half years ago while independently researching the theories of high-energy physicist, Fritjof Capra. In his two primary publications, *The Tao of Physics* and *The Turning Point*, Capra outlines a revolution currently taking place in modern sciences. This is the realization that the previous Cartesian and Newtonian models of science and reality have been exhausted. In use since the seventeenth century, these models prescribe a way of looking at the world based in mathematical reasoning, totally separating the mind from the body and therefore the observer from the observed. The theories rely on a reductive and divisionistic method of inquiry with a common belief that all phenomena of reality can be understood by classifying its smallest component. Our society today greatly reflects these broad strokes drawn by DesCartes and Newton and evidence of their manifestation permeates the very core of our society from the way the global workforce divides itself into autonomous specialized fields to the way the youngest child is taught school subjects independently of one another.

Capra also believes that all of the world’s endless problems can be linked back to one larger dynamic at their root: the inability of the world to abandon the mechanistic view provided by DesCartes and Newton and change reality perception to the new paradigm. He views society at this most important of crossroads and provides impressive evidence to back all his claims. The new paradigm Capra speaks of is based on a systems view of reality in which the dynamic of the whole and the connections of its components are never disregarded as was the case in the reductionist model. Heisenberg summarizes:

“The world thus appears a complicated tissue of events, in which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby determine the texture of the whole.”

The interdependency and interrelatedness of all phenomena are considered holistically. A radical departure no doubt from the belief of less than a century ago that the explainable world could be reduced to the singular atom as you were probably taught in elementary school to be the building block of all (that) matter(s).

Although the majority of the various sciences are still primarily operating within the framework of the previous model, change is immanent and already evident.

**Inquiry**

The specific aspect of the systems view of reality that I chose to investigate architecturally was the relationship between the observer and the observed. Capra ex
paper, architecture, rock

explains this well:

"The electron does not have properties independent of my own mind. In atomic physics the sharp division between mind and matter, the observer and the observed, can no longer be maintained. We can never again speak about anything in nature without, at the same time, speaking about ourselves."

Architecturally, the relationship between observer and observed naturally translates into the relationship between user and building, and I believe that it is all too common in architectural design today for a rigid barrier to exist. While we, as architects, may say that we design for people, I believe this effort is all too often relegated to token pragmatic gestures to a building program. Even designs by high level, cutting-edge theorists seem to stand independently of the users they were meant to facilitate beyond some utilitarian programmatic concerns. Evidence of this can be seen in every architectural publication where you rarely see a single person in all the lavish photographs of the architecture. In short, I strongly feel that architects are placing users in an incorrect secondary role by not acknowledging them as an equally important "building material" in the architectural whole. Architecture is for people, not just for other architects. This elitist position leaves people with an architecture they are unable to interact with because they can not even speak the same language and the end result is a gross absence of meaning.

mission

My primary goal then obviously is to alleviate this less than desirable situation. By breaking down the architectural barrier between the observer and the observed, architecture can then be acknowledged as one larger dynamic and for users this will result in a richer and more meaningful experience, heightening their appreciation of architecture and their relationship with the environment.
physical manifestation
As previously stated, the project through which these ideas were explored is a Prototype Rock Performance Complex. This complex was designed for an estimated capacity of 120,000 users. The complex has no specific site being a prototype but instead is designed (ironically enough) to fit within any rural quarter square mile site of the Public Lands Distribution Survey that so arbitrarily divides our countryside into a forced and irregular grid. These quarter mile squares are accessed by two lane rural roads on all four sides. The only major criteria of site selection for the complex would be that it must be within a forty-five minute to one hour drive of a major metropolitan area in order to successfully support it.

methodology
The methodology I have developed for this project to lift the perceptual barrier between observer and observed attacks at two levels. On a more simplistic level, the complex challenges users to become part of the dynamic whole by intensified participation of experience. This is achieved by the use of the participants, their cars, and even their garbage as "building material" in the scheme of the whole. The result is a dynamic, living sculpture/mosaic for which the "architecture" provides the framework. This interaction is then documented for participant reinforcement.

On another level, the architectural barrier between the observer and the observed is confronted in a very different way. Within the framework of the aforementioned mass cultural event vital constants, the ritual of attending a rock performance is brought up to date from its archaic state to a state that I feel is more appropriate to the information age. In the process, the barrier between the observed and the observed is challenged, ironically enough, by building a physical barrier. This will be explained in detail through the course of the next segments.

ritual
The ritual of attending a performance at the complex would begin with the participants purchasing tickets so I have designed a sample ticket. The sample ticket
offers much more than today’s status quo concert ticket. The sample ticket is larger, graphically oriented, and aesthetically considered. It foreshadows the event as an abstract map of the entire complex and fixes in the participant an icon of the pavilion itself. A sense of familiarity with the complex is already being built and the participant has not even yet left his home. Reciprocating the foreshadowing aspect, the images and icons strengthen the memory of the event heightening the ticket’s value as memorabilia afterward.

**journey**

The next component of the ritual is the ever important roadtrip. A quest for escape and entertainment that departs from the participants’ oppressive urban environment to the remote rural location of the complex.

**arrival**

Upon arrival to the complex, participants come upon a static grid of seemingly homogenous elements bleakly reminiscent of the urban grid from which they have just came. This grid though is
different. It offers an emotional release by violation as participants are allowed to indiscriminately drive on to it anywhere and then park anywhere within its static elements. The cars and the participants themselves become "building material" in the massive and dynamic mosaic that is growing throughout the day with each car's entrance to the field. Participants are challenged to create their own tailgating communities in any arrangement that they wish.

ki o s k f i e l d

These static elements that participants are swarming about are multi-functioning kiosks. Totaling 606 and spaced one hundred feet apart, the kiosks are in one sense a glorified port-a-john as each one contains within it a toilet, sink, and shower for participant use. The kiosks are twenty-two feet tall and are made of scored concrete. They sit within a grass covered mound that contains a random distribution of steel, lidded trash containers. Participants are allowed to segregate their garbage as they wish for recycling.

thesis resolution
Mounted within a recessed coffer, eight foot by eight foot LCD video monitors adorn all four sides of the kiosk. These monitors at periodic intervals throughout the day display the site plan image of the entire complex taken from the bird's eye camera high atop the pavilion's spire. This image reinforces for the participants the mosaic they and their cars as building material are creating. This image is time stamped and dated and is applied to t-shirts for commercial vending to participants.

The kiosks are homogenous and orientationless within the field with the exception of a group of letters that grace each one. The letters are voids in the concrete that shadow during the day and glow at night, illuminated by the bathroom lights within the kiosk. The letters form the names of commendable rock performers, and part of the monitors' programming for that kiosk is dedicated to that performer, highlighting his life and career of music. A Rock & Roll history is chronicled as the kiosks are arranged chronologically by musical influence beginning with the
forefathers of Rock at the center closest to the pavilion and working outward. It is then possible to follow the "blues vein" from your car parked by the Eric Clapton kiosk to the Robert Johnson kiosk nearest the pavilion. In reverse, this is the only way to find your car after the event. The dedication dimension adds a shrine-like quality to the kiosk and implies a notion of physical expansion. As Rock evolves so will the complex.

p a v i l i o n

After enjoying the vibrance of the tailgating community all day among the kiosks, at sunset participants will see the helicopter carrying the performers land atop the highest pavilion wing. This signals participants to make their second journey, gravitation towards the immense sphere of the pavilion. The participants migrate inward, coming together in a 1000 foot by 1000 foot clearing in the middle of the kiosks in which the pavilion sits centered.
sphere
The performer's play at the base of the light-weight, enclosed sphere that boasts a 160 foot diameter. On the surface of the sphere the performer's image is cast by LCD in larger than life format. Traditionally, performers play in multi-function stadiums and bring in truckload after truckload of equipment to transform the mediocre and lifeless void of a stadium into a world of their choosing. And with the advent of MTV, there is now a priority of image associated with Rock and Roll, making it even more vital for performers to create an image with their performance. What the sphere gives the performer is the ultimate in image flexibility. It is architecture as instrument where the image becomes the fifth member of the classic four piece rock and roll band. The sphere's structure is coffered for the thinnest of members perpendicular to the surface in order not to disrupt the image cast. Hanging in its center is the media ball from which all images are cast. Images can be cast individually on the surface or all panels can be united into a single image or in any combination.
In experiencing the performance, participants are faced with a choice. A choice that questions the relationship between the observer and the observed in a primary way. Is it necessary to physically witness the actual performers of the event? This question is posed by the participants' choice of viewing location.

If the participant chooses not to pay to sit in the pavilion's wings, he views the sphere from the surrounding lawn. Filling the gaps between the wings up to the evaporative cooling / safety buffer pond, these participants enjoy full view of the spectacle of the sphere unlike the participants in the wings whose view of the sphere is restricted. The dynamic energy of this field of participants radiates and this human sculpture of waves and lines is again captured by the spire camera for visual reinforcement.

The question of the observer and the observed is thus posed: Will you be bound by reductivist tradition to physically witness a performance or can you make the leap of faith to the new paradigm (and the information age) and revel in the dynamic energy of the event which is merely initiated by the performer and escalated by yourself and the other 119,999 participants?

Reply.....
I formally presented this project to my peers, critics, and other professionals on April 23rd, 1993. During this review, some very interesting dialogue was generated (this is one of my personal signifiers of a successful project). Questions were raised as the project questioned them. The most vital was a question asked by one of my peers. The issue he brought up was that of the performers not being able to see the majority of the audience, knowing well that performers thrive on the exchange between themselves and the energy of their audience. In response, I felt that the performers must make the same "leap of faith" that the audience is making, and in the information age, the performers must thrive on the the energy of a live performance that is unrepeatable and cannot be duplicated. It is not MTV and cannot be played again and again. The energy of the event is then felt and not just seen.

Another question, generated by one of my critics, was that of the complex being a prototype. He asked why different cities would have the same complex. Though not the focus of my thesis never-the-less a critical point. He suggested that while this one is flat suiting the midwest, otherwise identical complexes could differ by responding to the particular topography, like a tablecloth at a picnic.

Overall, I am pleased with the conceptual and physical levels of sophistication in this project given the time I had to work with it. I realize that many questions have been left unanswered, but this exploration has served me well. It has reaffirmed my faith of the design process being the ultimate tool of learning and has also inspired me to look yet again at the built environment and its relation to people on a deeper level.

Because this stage of exploration has taught me so much, I highly doubt that it will be left to gather dust. In fact, I plan to reassemble the entire project in a couple of different formats and send it to Bono of U2, Rolling Stone Magazine, and to Mark Fisher of Fisher Park and Associates in London who design almost all of rock's massive tours (Pink Floyd- The Wall Tour, Rolling Stones- Steel Wheels Tour, U2-Zoo TV Tour).

Sources


Rolling Stone Magazine, Spin Magazine, MTV, CNN, and ROCK MUSIC.