A Fusion of the Arts

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Richard Stankiewicz, born 1942
Louise Nevelson, born 1900
- Studied print art, student league
- Studied under Hans Hoffman
- Mexican muralist
- 1942 - Assem blages
- Guilt: Raw wood, welding, metal
- Wood, Steel, plexiglass

John Chamberlain
Abstract

As technology has grown so has the desire to search for a more potent and socially significant landscape architecture. Today's world is full of so many materials and media just waiting to be experimented with and exploited by the mind and hands of the landscape architect. But, landscape design is all too often reduced to a world of stereotypical representations of an earlier modernist movement involving such legends as Dan Kiley, James Rose, and Garret Eckbo. Design of this sort is what can be called "banner and bollard design", and it is a product of the big break from Harvard in the 1930's. These people had grown bored with what landscape architecture had to offer and felt a need for a change, but all too often bad representations of their ideas are brought back to the surface. The aim of this study is to look at landscape architecture as a whole and not a bunch of pieces as in "banner & bollard" design. To truly create a complete fusion on the arts, and, in essence, to create an art that clearly exists outside the visual confines of exhibition space in galleries or museums, and becomes an integral part of everyday life.
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1. Introduction: A Denial of "Banner and Bollard Design"

Today tradition and authority intimidate man and woman. He or she no longer dares to venture into other fields of experience, and exist as people with one calling; having no longer first hand experience elsewhere. The chase after money and power influences one's form of life, even the individual's basic feelings. He or she thinks of outward security instead of his or her inner satisfactions. All too often landscape architecture falls victim to and is swayed by these two circumstances -- money and tradition. It is money and tradition that often force us, as designers, to deny risk and settle for accepted common lackluster solutions. The reasons such conditioning stem possibly from the emphasis put on certain for subjects early on in a young students education, along with the emphasis put upon receiving good grades, and succeeding.

Education today is centered around two main areas - math and science. Art and creative thinking virtually stop from about fourth grade on. In essence, the pencil is taken out of the student hand and replaced by the calculator. As a result a student can begin to think analytically only, and become overly concerned with getting good grades. He or she will do only what it takes to get a good grade, whether the process goes against what he or she believes or not. As a student receives more and more recognition for his or her good grades, he or she becomes more and more afraid to fail. Not a risk is taken, he or she will follow all instructions, and conform at all times in order to not be laughed at or put down. Thus, in the end creative fields, such as landscape architecture, are reduced to traditional means because the majority are afraid of failure when
attempting something new, and money becomes the substitute for good grades and acts as the measure for success.

Traditional means in landscape architecture, to put a name on it, are what is called "banner and bollard design". It is a quick fix for landscape architecture, and consists of accepted elements used to hide architectural catastrophies. If there is such a process for this type of design it would go something like this:

1.) First of all, an object must fall from the sky, barreling through the earth's atmosphere at a rapid descent to finally imbed itself within the earth's crust in some unknown location. The object is, of course, architecture.

2.) Suddenly, the architect, realizing his mistake, calls upon the landscape architect to fix his or her blunder.

3.) The landscape architect, being equally moronic, feels the architect's oppressive mistake is correctable by means of potted trees, patterned pavings, street hardware (banners and bollards), fountains, and (all else failing) the installation of "public art."

"Public art is generally based on the notion that works of private art, conceived for exhibition within four walls can simply be placed or integrated into architextural contexts... the content of this integration, therefore, is the self-concious descision to install art - which is to say, it has no content" (Wines 27). An example of such a space is Daley Plaza in Chicago, Illinois. The architecture, one of Mies's monoliths, is a product of the international style of architecture after W.W. II, and is an example of an early infatuation with the skyscraper as the tensile strength of steel and the compression strength of concrete were employed
to support enormous loads. The building was a part of a revolution in the
discovery of new materials, so why wasn’t the surrounding plaza also?
Gridded paving, a reflecting pool, and a Picasso sculpture, which fell from
the sky, are all that make up the in humanity of Daley Plaza. To venture
now into the eighties we stop in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio at the Proctor
and Gamble headquarters. "The plaza, or garden, is described as a series
of frames within frames and includes flags, decorative paving, fountains,
and trellis work"(Papier 56). The space is also described to be most
impressive when viewed from above. Big deal, consideration should have
been taken at both the pedestrian scale and 14 stories up, plus the design
says very little about Proctor and Gamble. In all, the design is safe,
adequate, and most of all boring. The last remaining examples come from
a couple of simple descriptions out of William H. Whyte’s book City. He
says," Jean Dubuffet’s Four Trees sculpture on the Chase Manhattan Plaza
in lower Manhatten is one of the best examples (of public art). This is a
very large plaza and calls for a very large sculpture"(Whyte 210). What
does the size of a plaza have to do with the intent of the sculpture?
Another example is, "On the huge plaza of the Dallas City Hall, a Henry
Moore gives the a needed anchor. It is also very easy to slide down and
childern love it - always a good sign"(Whyte 210). Whyte describes
sculpture like a song on American Bandstand, and comes off sounding like
Shelly Long’s character Diane Chambers on Cheers.

Risk, taking the chance of failing, putting one’s reputation on the one
is what creates one’s reputation. In the fall of 1939 an article was
written by artist and critic Clement Greenberg called “Avant-Garde and
Kitsch”(Frascina 21). The article essentially discusses the difference
between risk- (avant-garde) and non-risk-(kitsch). Greenberg’s words
started the wheels spinning and created the goals and intent of this project and they are:

1.) To search for a more potent and socially significant landscape architecture.

2.) To create an art that clearly exists outside the visual confines of exhibition space in galleries or museums, and makes one more aware of everyday life.

3.) To create an art that does not fit above the living room sofa.

4.) To successfully fuse the division between landscape architecture, architecture, and art.

The best examples of such a fusion of the arts was the architecture of the 12th and 16th centuries. For instance, the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican is Rome. Through Julius II, Michelangelo was commissioned in 1508 to paint the ceiling of the chapel. The difficulties facing him were enormous: the inadequacy of his training in the art of fresco; the dimensions of the ceiling (some 5800 square feet); and the complicated perspective problems presented by the height and curve of the vault.

"Taking for his theme the creation, fall, and redemption of man - he spread across the vast surface a colossal decorative scheme that wove together 300 figures in an ultimate drama of the human race" (Gardener 136).

While Michelangelo was weaving together figures he was also weaving together the visual arts and architecture, so that the interior experience of the Sistine Chapel became the newspaper or television of the church in the 16th century. One other example would be the Bapistry of Florence. In approximately 1425 Lorenzo Ghiberti was commissioned to do the east doors of the bapistry. He divided the space into ten square panels, each
containing a relief set in plain moldings. "When gilded, the reliefs created, with their glittering movement, an effect of great splendor and elegance" (Gardende 97). Michelangelo is said to have declared the work "so fine that they might fittingly stand at the Gates of Paradise."

Included next is the article by Clement Greenberg to better understand the difference between the avant-garde and kitsch, which can only be best described through his words.
1 Avant-Garde and Kitsch

Clement Greenberg

One and the same civilization produces simultaneously two such different things as a poem by T. S. Eliot and a Tin Pan Alley song, or a painting by Braque and a Saturday Evening Post cover. All four are on the order of culture, and ostensibly, parts of the same culture and products of the same society. Here, however, their connection seems to end. A poem by Eliot and a poem by Eddie Guest — what perspective of culture is large enough to enable us to situate them in an enlightening relation to each other? Does the fact that a disparity such as this within the frame of a single cultural tradition, is and has been taken for granted — does this fact indicate that the disparity is a part of the natural order of things? Or is it something entirely new, and particular to our age?

The answer involves more than an investigation in aesthetics. It appears to me that it is necessary to examine more closely and with more originality than hitherto the relationship between aesthetic experience as met by the specific—not generalized — individual, and the social and historical contexts in which that experience takes place. What is brought to light will answer, in addition to the question posed above, other and perhaps more important ones.

I

A society, as it becomes less and less able, in the course of its development, to justify the inevitability of its particular forms, breaks up the accepted notions upon which artists and writers must depend in large part for communication with their audiences. It becomes difficult to assume anything. All the verities involved by religion, authority, tradition, style, are thrown into question, and the writer or artist is no longer able to estimate the response of his audience to the symbols and


references with which he works. In the past such a state of affairs has usually resolved itself into a motionless Alexandrianism, an academicism in which the really important issues are left untouched because they involve controversy, and in which creative activity dwindles to virtuosity in the small details of form, all larger questions being decided by the precedent of the old masters. The same themes are mechanically varied in a hundred different works, and yet nothing new is produced: Statius, mandarin verse, Roman sculpture, Beaux Arts painting, neo-republican architecture.

It is among the hopeful signs in the midst of the decay of our present society that we — some of us — have been unwilling to accept this last phase for our own culture. In seeking to go beyond Alexandrianism, a part of Western bourgeois society has produced something unheard of heretofore: avant-garde culture. A superior consciousness of history — more precisely, the appearance of a new kind of criticism of society, an historical criticism — made this possible. This criticism has not confronted our present society with timeless utopias, but has soberly examined in the terms of history and of cause and effect the antecedents, justifications and functions of the forms that lie at the heart of every society. Thus our present bourgeois social order was shown to be, not an eternal, "natural" condition of life, but simply the latest term in a succession of social orders. New perspectives of this kind, becoming a part of the advanced intellectual conscience of the fifth and sixth decades of the nineteenth century, soon were absorbed by artists and poets, even if unconsciously for the most part. It was no accident, therefore, that the birth of the avant-garde coincided chronologically — and geographically too — with the first bold development of scientific revolutionary thought in Europe.

True, the first settlers of Bohemia — which was then identical with the avant-garde — turned out soon to be demonstratively uninterested in politics. Nevertheless, without the circulation of revolutionary ideas in the air about them, they would never have been able to isolate their concept of the "bourgeois" in order to define what they were not. Nor, without the moral aid of revolutionary political attitudes would they have had the courage to assert themselves as aggressively as they did against the prevailing standards of society. Courage indeed was needed for this, because the avant-garde's emigration from bourgeois society to Bohemia meant also an emigration from the markets of capitalism, upon which artists and writers had been thrown by the falling away of aristocratic patronage. (Ostensibly, at least, it meant this — meant starving in a garret — although, as will be shown later, the avant-garde remained attached to bourgeois society precisely because it needed its money.)

Yet it is true that once the avant-garde had succeeded in "detaching" itself from society, it proceeded to turn around and repudiate revolutionary politics as well as bourgeois. The revolution was left inside society, a part of that welter of ideological struggle which art and poetry find so unpropitious as soon as it begins to involve those "precious," axiomatic beliefs upon which culture thus far has had to rest. Hence it was developed that the true and most important function of the avant-garde was not to "experiment," but to find a path along which it would be possible to keep culture moving in the midst of ideological confusion and
violence. Retiring from public altogether, the avant-garde poet or artist sought to maintain the high level of his art by both narrowing and raising it to the expression of an absolute in which all relativities and contradictions would be either resolved or beside the point. "Art for art’s sake" and "pure poetry" appear, and subject matter or content becomes something to be avoided like a plague.

It has been in search of the absolute that the avant-garde has arrived at "abstract" or "non-objective" art — and poetry, too. The avant-garde poet or artist tries in effect to imitate God by creating something valid solely on its own terms in the way nature itself is valid, in the way a landscape — not its picture — is aesthetically valid; something given, increate, independent of meanings, similar, or originals. Content is to be dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or in part to anything not itself.

But the absolute is absolute, and the poet or artist, being what he is, cherishes certain relative values more than others. The very values in the name of which he invokes the absolute are relative values, the values of aesthetics. And so he turns out to be imitating, not God — and here I use "imitate" in its Aristotelian sense — but the disciplines and processes of art and literature themselves. This is the genesis of the "abstract." In turning his attention away from subject-matter or common experience, the poet or artist turns it in upon the medium of his own craft. The non-representational or "abstract," if it is to have aesthetic validity, cannot be arbitrary and accidental, but must stem from obedience to some worthy constraint or original. This constraint, once the world of common extraverted experience has been renounced, can only be found in the very processes or disciplines by which art and literature have already imitated the former. These themselves become the subject matter of art and literature. If, to continue with Aristotle, all art and literature are imitation, then what we have here is the imitation of imitating. To quote Yeats:

Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence.

Picasso, Braque, Mondrian, Miro, Kandinsky, Brancusi, even Klee, Matisse and Cezanne, derive their chief inspiration from the medium they work in. The excitement of their art seems to lie most of all in its pure preoccupation with the invention and arrangement of spaces, surfaces, shapes, colors, etc., to the exclusion of whatever is not necessarily implicated in these factors. The attention of poets like Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Valéry, Eliot, Pound, Hart Crane, Stevens, even Rilke and Yeats, appears to be centered on the effort to create poetry and on the "moments" themselves of poetic conversion rather than on experience to be converted into poetry. Of course, this cannot exclude other preoccupations in their work, for poetry must deal with words, and words must communicate. Certain poets, such as Mallarmé and Valéry, are more radical in this respect than others — leaving aside those poets who have tried to compose poetry in pure sound alone. However, if it were easier to define poetry, modern poetry would be much more "pure" and "abstract"... As for the other fields of literature — the definition of avant-garde aesthetics advanced here is no Procrustean bed. But aside from the fact that most of our best contemporary novelists have gone to school
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with the avant-garde, it is significant that Gide's most ambitious book is a novel about the writing of a novel, and that Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* seem to be above all, as one French critic says, the reduction of experience to expression for the sake of expression, the expression mattering more than what is being expressed.

That avant-garde culture is the imitation of imitating - the fact itself - calls for neither approval nor disapproval. It is true that this culture contains within itself some of the very Alexandrianism it seeks to overcome. The lines quoted from Yeats above referred to Byzantium, which is very close to Alexandria; and in a sense this imitation of imitating is a superior sort of Alexandrianism. But there is one most important difference: the avant-garde moves, while Alexandrianism stands still. And this, precisely, is what justifies the avant-garde's methods and makes them necessary. The necessity lies in the fact that by no other means is it possible today to create art and literature of a high order. To quarrel with necessity by throwing about terms like "formalism," "purism," "ivory tower" and so forth is either dull or dishonest. This is not to say, however, that it is to the social advantage of the avant-garde that it is what it is. Quite the opposite.

The avant-garde's specialization of itself, the fact that its best artists are artists' artists, its best poets, poets' poets, has estranged a great many of those who were capable formerly of enjoying and appreciating ambitious art and literature, but who are now unwilling or unable to acquire an initiation into their craft secrets. The masses have always remained more or less indifferent to culture in the process of development. But today such culture is being abandoned by those to whom it actually belongs - our ruling class. For it is to the latter that the avant-garde belongs. No culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income. And in the case of the avant-garde this was provided by an elite among the ruling class of that society from which it assumed itself to be cut off, but to which it has always remained attached by an umbilical cord of gold. The paradox is real. And now this elite is rapidly shrinking. Since the avant-garde forms the only living culture we now have, the survival in the near future of culture in general is thus threatened.

We must not be deceived by superficial phenomena and local successes. Picasso's shows still draw crowds, and T. S. Eliot is taught in the universities; the dealers in modernist art are still in business, and the publishers still publish some "difficult" poetry. But the avant-garde itself, already sensing the danger, is becoming more and more timid every day that passes. Academicism and commercialism are appearing in the strangest places. This can mean only one thing: that the avant-garde is becoming unsure of the audience it depends on - the rich and the cultivated.

Is it the nature itself of avant-garde culture that is alone responsible for the danger it finds itself in? Or is that only a dangerous liability? Are there other, and perhaps more important, factors involved?

II

Where there is an avant-garde, generally we also find a rearguard. True enough -
simultaneously with the entrance of the avant-garde, a second new cultural phenomenon appeared in the industrial West: that thing to which the Germans give the wonderful name of *Kitsch*: popular, commercial art and literature with their chromotyes, magazine covers, illustrations, ads, slick and pulp fiction, comics, Tin Pan Alley music, tap dancing, Hollywood movies, etc., etc. For some reason this gigantic apparition has always been taken for granted. It is time we looked into its whys and wherefores.

*Kitsch* is a product of the industrial revolution which urbanized the masses of Western Europe and America and established what is called universal literacy.

Previous to this the only market for formal culture, as distinguished from folk culture, had been among those who in addition to being able to read and write could command the leisure and comfort that always goes hand in hand with cultivation of some sort. This until then had been inextricably associated with literacy. But with the introduction of universal literacy, the ability to read and write became almost a minor skill like driving a car, and it no longer served to distinguish an individual's cultural inclinations, since it was no longer the exclusive concomitant of refined tastes. The peasants who settled in the cities as proletariat and petty bourgeois learned to read and write for the sake of efficiency, but they did not win the leisure and comfort necessary for the enjoyment of the city's traditional culture. Losing, nevertheless, their taste for the folk culture whose background was the countryside, and discovering a new capacity for boredom at the same time, the new urban masses set up a pressure on society to provide them with a kind of culture fit for their own consumption. To fill the demand of the new market a new commodity was devised: ersatz culture, kitsch, destined for those who, insensible to the values of genuine culture, are hungry nevertheless for the diversion that only culture of some sort can provide.

*Kitsch*, using for raw material the debased and academicized simulacra of genuine culture, welcomes and cultivates this insensibility. It is the source of its profits. Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epiphenomenon of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money -- not even their time.

The *pre*-condition for kitsch, a condition without which kitsch would be impossible, is the availability close at hand of a fully matured cultural tradition, whose discoveries, acquisitions and perfected self-consciousness kitsch can take advantage of for its own ends. It borrows from it devices, tricks, strategems, rules of thumb, themes, converts them into a system and discards the rest. It draws its life blood, so to speak, from this reservoir of accumulated experience. This is what is really meant when it is said that the popular art and literature of today were once the daring, esoteric art and literature of yesterday. Of course, no such thing is true. What is meant is that when enough time has elapsed the new is looted for new "twists," which are then watered down and served up as kitsch. Self-evidently, all kitsch is academic, and conversely, all that's academic is kitsch. For what is called the academic as such no longer has an independent exis-
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tence, but has become the stuffed-shirt “front” for kitsch. The methods of industrialism displace the handicrafts.

Because it can be turned out mechanically, kitsch has become an integral part of our productive system in a way in which true culture could never be except accidentally. It has been capitalized at a tremendous investment which must show commensurate returns; it is compelled to extend as well as to keep its markets. While it is essentially its own salesman, a great sales apparatus has nevertheless been created for it, which brings pressure to bear on every member of society. Traps are laid even in those areas, so to speak, that are the preserves of genuine culture. It is not enough today, in a country like ours, to have an inclination towards the latter; one must have a true passion for it that will give him the power to resist the faked article that surrounds and presses in on him from the moment he is old enough to look at the funny papers. Kitsch is deceptive. It has many different levels, and some of them are high enough to be dangerous to the naive seeker of true light. A magazine like the New Yorker, which is fundamentally high-class kitsch for the luxury trade, converts and waters down a great deal of avant-garde material for its own uses. Nor is every single item of kitsch altogether worthless. Now and then it produces something of merit, something that has an authentic folk flavor; and these accidental and isolated instances have fooled people who should know better.

Kitsch’s enormous profits are a source of temptation to the avant-garde itself, and its members have not always resisted this temptation. Ambitious writers and artists will modify their work under the pressure of kitsch, if they do not succumb to it entirely. And then those puzzling borderline cases appear, such as the popular novelist, Simenon, in France, and Steinbeck in this country. The net result is always to the detriment of true culture, in any case.

Kitsch has not been confined to the cities in which it was born, but has flowed out over the countryside, wiping out folk culture. Nor has it shown any regard for geographical and national-cultural boundaries. Another mass product of Western industrialism, it has gone on a triumphal tour of the world, crowding out and defacing native cultures in one colonial country after another, so that it is now by way of becoming a universal culture, the first universal culture ever beheld. Today the Chinaman, no less than the South American Indian, the Hindu, no less than the Polynesian, have come to prefer the products of their native art magazine covers, rotogravure sections and calendar girls. How is this virulence of kitsch, this irresistible attractiveness, to be explained? Naturally, machine-made kitsch can undersell the native handmade article, and the prestige of the West also helps, but why is kitsch so much more profitable export article than Rembrandt?

One, after all, can be reproduced as cheaply as the other.

In his last article on the Soviet cinema in the Partisan Review, Dwight Macdonald points out that kitsch has in the last ten years become the dominant culture in Soviet Russia. For this he blames the political regime—not only for the fact that kitsch is the official culture, but also that it is actually the dominant, most popular culture; and he quotes the following from Kurt London’s The Seven Soviet Arts: “...the attitude of the masses both to the old and new art styles probably remains essentially dependent on the nature of the education afforded
them by their respective states." Macdonald goes on to say: Why after all should ignorant peasants prefer Repin (a leading exponent of Russian academic kitsch in painting) to Picasso, whose abstract technique is at least as relevant to their own primitive folk art as is the former's realistic style? No, if the masses crowd into the Tretyakov (Moscow's museum of contemporary Russian art: kitsch) it is largely because "they have been conditioned to shun 'formalism' and to admire 'socialist realism'."

In the first place it is not a question of a choice between merely the old and merely the new, as London seems to think - but of a choice between the bad, up-to-date old and the genuinely new. The alternative to Picasso is not Michelangelo, but kitsch. In the second place, neither in backward Russia nor in the advanced West do the masses prefer kitsch simply because their governments condition them towards it. Where state educational systems take the trouble to mention art, we are told to respect the old masters, not kitsch; and yet we go and hang Maxfield Parrish or his equivalent on our walls, instead of Rembrandt and Michelangelo. Moreover, as Macdonald himself points out, around 1925 when the Soviet regime was encouraging avant-garde cinema, the Russian masses continued to prefer Hollywood movies. No, "conditioning" does not explain the potency of kitsch...

All values are human values, relative values, in art as well as elsewhere. Yet there does seem to have been more or less of a general agreement among the cultivated of mankind over the ages as to what is good art and what bad. Taste has varied, but not beyond certain limits; contemporary connoisseurs agree with eighteenth century Japanese that Hokusai was one of the greatest artists of his time; we even agree with the ancient Egyptians that Third and Fourth Dynasty art was the most worthy of being selected as their paragon by those who came after. We may have come to prefer Giotto to Raphael, but we still do not deny that Raphael was one of the best painters of his time. There has been an agreement then, and this agreement rests, I believe, on a fairly constant distinction made between those values only to be found in art and the values which can be found elsewhere. Kitsch, by virtue of rationalized technique that draws on science and industry, has erased this distinction in practice.

Let us see for example what happens when an ignorant Russian peasant such as Macdonald mentions stands with hypothetical freedom of choice before two paintings, one by Picasso, the other by Repin. In the first he sees, let us say, a play of lines, colors and spaces that represent a woman. The abstract technique - to accept Macdonald's supposition, which I am inclined to doubt - reminds him somewhat of the icons he has left behind him in the village, and he feels the attraction of the familiar. We will even suppose that he faintly surmises some of the great art values the cultivated find in Picasso. He turns next to Repin's picture and sees a battle scene. The technique is not so familiar - as technique. But that weighs very little with the peasant, for he suddenly discovers values in Repin's picture which seem far superior to the values he has been accustomed to finding in icon art: and the unfamiliar technique itself is one of the sources of those values: the values of the vividly recognizable, the miraculous and the sympathetic. In Repin's picture the peasant recognizes and sees things in the way in which he
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recognizes and sees things outside of pictures – there is no discontinuity between art and life, no need to accept a convention and say to oneself, that icon represents Jesus because it intends to represent Jesus, even if it does not remind me very much of a man. That Repin can paint so realistically that identifications are self-evident immediately and without any effort on the part of the spectator – that is miraculous. The peasant is also pleased by the wealth of self-evident meanings which he finds in the picture: “it tells a story.” Picasso and the icons are so austere and barren in comparison. What is more, Repin heightens reality and makes it dramatic: sunset, exploding shells, running and falling men. There is no longer any question of Picasso or icons. Repin is what the peasant wants, and nothing else but Repin. It is lucky, however, for Repin that the peasant is protected from the products of American capitalism, for he would not stand a chance next to a Saturday Evening Post cover by Norman Rockwell.

Ultimately, it can be said that the cultivated spectator derives the same values from Picasso that the peasant gets from Repin, since what the latter enjoys in Repin is somehow art too, on however low a scale, and he is sent to look at pictures by the same instincts that send the cultivated spectator. But the ultimate values which the cultivated spectator derives from Picasso are derived at a second remove, as the result of reflection upon the immediate impression left by the plastic values. It is only then that the recognizable, the miraculous and the sympathetic enter. They are not immediately or externally present in Picasso’s painting, but must be projected into it by the spectator sensitive enough to react sufficiently to plastic qualities. They belong to the “reflected” effect. In Repin, on the other hand, the “reflected” effect has already been included in the picture, ready for the spectator’s unreflective enjoyment. Where Picasso paints cause, Repin paints effect. Repin pre-digests art for the spectator and spares him effort, provides him with a short cut to the pleasure of art that detours what is necessarily difficult in genuine art. Repin, or kitsch, is synthetic art.

The same point can be made with respect to kitsch literature: it provides vicarious experience for the insensitive with far greater immediacy than serious fiction can hope to do. And Eddie Guest and the Indian Love Lyrics are more poetic than T. S. Eliot and Shakespeare.

III

If the avant-garde imitates the processes of art, kitsch, we now see, imitates its effects. The neatness of this antithesis is more than contrived; it corresponds to and defines the tremendous interval that separates from each other two such simultaneous cultural phenomena as the avant-garde and kitsch. This interval, too great to be closed by all the infinite gradations of popularized “modernism” and “modernistic” kitsch, corresponds in turn to a social interval, a social interval that has always existed in formal culture as elsewhere in civilized society, and whose two termini converge and diverge in fixed relation to the increasing or decreasing stability of the given society. There has always been on one side the minority of the powerful – and therefore the cultivated – and on the other the great
mass of the exploited and poor — and therefore the ignorant. Formal culture has always belonged to the first, while the last have had to content themselves with folk or rudimentary culture, or kitsch.

In a stable society which functions well enough to hold in solution the contradictions between its classes the cultural dichotomy becomes somewhat blurred. The axioms of the few are shared by the many; the latter believe superstitiously what the former believe soberly. And at such moments in history the masses are able to feel wonder and admiration for the culture, on no matter how high a plane, of its masters. This applies at least to plastic culture, which is accessible to all.

In the Middle Ages the plastic artist paid lip service at least to the lowest common denominators of experience. This even remained true to some extent until the seventeenth century. There was available for imitation a universally valid conceptual reality, whose order the artist could not tamper with. The subject matter of art was prescribed by those who commissioned works of art, which were not created, as in bourgeois society, on speculation. Precisely because his content was determined in advance, the artist was free to concentrate on his medium. He needed not to be philosopher or visionary, but simply artificer. As long as there was general agreement as to what were the worthiest subjects for art, the artist was relieved of the necessity to be original and inventive in his "matter" and could devote all his energy to formal problems. For him the medium became private, professionally, the content of his art, even as today his medium is the public content of the abstract painter's art — with that difference, however, that the medieval artist had to suppress his professional preoccupation in public — had always to suppress and subordinate the personal and professional in the finished, official work of art. If, as an ordinary member of the Christian community, he felt some personal emotion about his subject matter, this only contributed to the enrichment of the work's public meaning. Only with the Renaissance do the inflections of the personal become legitimate, still to be kept, however, within the limits of the simply and universally recognizable. And only with Rembrandt do "lonely" artists begin to appear, lonely in their art.

But even during the Renaissance, and as long as Western art was endeavoring to perfect its technique, victories in this realm could only be signalized by success in realistic imitation, since there was no other objective criterion at hand. Thus the masses could still find in the art of their masters objects of admiration and wonder. Even the bird who pecked at the fruit in Zeuxis' picture could applaud.

It is a platitude that art becomes caviar to the general when the reality it imitates no longer corresponds even roughly to the reality recognized by the general. Even then, however, the resentment the common man may feel is silenced by the awe in which he stands of the patrons of this art. Only when he becomes dissatisfied with the social order they administer does he begin to criticize their culture. Then the plebeian finds courage for the first time to voice his opinions openly. Every man, from Tammany aldermen to Austrian house-painters, finds that he is entitled to his opinion. Most often this resentment towards culture is to be found where the dissatisfaction with society is a reactionary dissatisfaction which
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expresses itself in revivalism and puritanism, and latest of all, in fascism. Here revolvers and torches begin to be mentioned in the same breath as culture. In the name of godliness or the blood's health, in the name of simple ways and solid virtues, the statue-smashing commences.

IV

Returning to our Russian peasant for the moment, let us suppose that after he has chosen Repin in preference to Picasso, the state's educational apparatus comes along and tells him that he is wrong, that he should have chosen Picasso—and shows him why. It is quite possible for the Soviet state to do this. But things being as they are in Russia—and everywhere else—the peasant soon finds that the necessity of working hard all day for his living and the rude, uncomfortable circumstances in which he lives do not allow him enough leisure, energy and comfort to train for the enjoyment of Picasso. This needs, after all, a considerable amount of “conditioning.” Superior culture is one of the most artificial of all human creations, and the peasant finds no “natural” urgency within himself that will drive him towards Picasso in spite of all difficulties. In the end the peasant will go back to kitsch when he feels like looking at pictures, for he can enjoy kitsch without effort. The state is helpless in this matter and remains so as long as the problems of production have not been solved in a socialist sense. The same holds true, of course, for capitalist countries and makes all talk of art for the masses there nothing but demagogy.

Where today a political regime establishes an official cultural policy, it is for the sake of demagogy. If kitsch is the official tendency of culture in Germany, Italy and Russia, it is not because their respective governments are controlled by philistines, but because kitsch is the culture of the masses in these countries, as it is everywhere else. The encouragement of kitsch is merely another of the inexpensive ways in which totalitarian regimes seek to ingratiate themselves with their subjects. Since these regimes cannot raise the cultural level of the masses—even if they wanted to—by anything short of a surrender to international socialism, they will flatter the masses by bringing all culture down to their level. It is for this reason that the avant-garde is outlawed, and not so much because a superior culture is inherently a more critical culture. (Whether or not the avant-garde could possibly flourish under a totalitarian regime is not pertinent to the question at this point.) As matter of fact, the main trouble with avant-garde art and literature, from the point of view of Fascists and Stalinists, is not that they are too critical, but that they are too “innocent,” that it is too difficult to inject effective propaganda into them, that kitsch is more pliable to this end. Kitsch keeps a dictator in closer contact with the “soul” of the people. Should the official culture be one superior to the general mass-level, there would be a danger of isolation.

Nevertheless, if the masses were conceivably to ask for avant-garde art and literature, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin would not hesitate long in attempting to satisfy such a demand. Hitler is a bitter enemy of the avant-garde, both on doc-
trinal and personal grounds, yet this did not prevent Goebbels in 1932–33 from strenuously courting avant-garde artists and writers. When Gottfried Benn, an Expressionist poet, came over to the Nazis he was welcomed with a great fanfare, although at that very moment Hitler was denouncing Expressionism as Kulturel Bolschewismus. This was at a time when the Nazis felt that the prestige which the avant-garde enjoyed among the cultivated German public could be of advantage to them, and practical considerations of this nature, the Nazis being the skillful politicians they are, have always taken precedence over Hitler’s personal inclinations. Later the Nazis realized that it was more practical to accede to the wishes of the masses in matters of culture than to those of their paymasters; the latter, when it came to a question of preserving power, were as willing to sacrifice their culture as they were their moral principles, while the former, precisely because power was being withheld from them, had to be cozened in every other way possible. It was necessary to promote on a much more grandiose style than in the democracies the illusion that the masses actually rule. The literature and art they enjoy and understand were to be proclaimed the only true art and literature and any other kind was to be suppressed. Under these circumstances people like Gottfried Benn, no matter how ardently they support Hitler, become a liability; and we hear no more of them in Nazi Germany.

We can see then that although from one point of view the personal philistinism of Hitler and Stalin is not accidental to the political roles they play, from another point of view it is only an incidentally contributory factor in determining the cultural policies of their respective regimes. Their personal philistinism simply adds brutality and double-darkness to policies they would be forced to support anyhow by the pressure of all their other policies—even were they, personally, devotees of avant-garde culture. What the acceptance of the isolation of the Russian Revolution forces Stalin to do, Hitler is compelled to do by his acceptance of the contradictions of capitalism and his efforts to freeze them. As for Mussolini—his case is a perfect example of the dispositibilité of a realist in these matters. For years he bent a benevolent eye on the Futurists and built modernistic railroad stations and government-owned apartment houses. One can still see in the suburbs of Rome more modernistic apartments than almost anywhere else in the world. Perhaps Fascism wanted to show its up-to-datedness, to conceal the fact that it was a retrogression; perhaps it wanted to conform to the tastes of the wealthy élite it served. At any rate Mussolini seems to have realized lately that it would be more useful to him to please the cultural tastes of the Italian masses than those of their masters. The masses must be provided with objects of admiration and wonder; the latter can dispense with them. And so we find Mussolini announcing a “new Imperial style.” Marinetti, Chirico, et al. are sent into the outer darkness, and the new railroad station in Rome will not be modernistic. That Mussolini was late in coming to this only illustrates again the relative hesitancy with which Italian fascism has drawn the necessary implications of its role.

Capitalism in decline finds that whatever of quality it is still capable of producing becomes almost invariably a threat to its own existence. Advances in culture no less than advances in science and industry corrode the very society under
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whose aegis they are made possible. Here, as in every other question today, it becomes necessary to quote Marx word for word. Today we no longer look towards socialism for a new culture - as inevitably as one will appear, once we do have socialism. Today we look to socialism simply for the preservation of whatever living culture we have right now.

Notes

1 The example of music, which has long been an abstract art, and which avant-garde poetry has tried so much to emulate, is interesting. Music, Aristotle said curiously enough, is the most imitative and vivid of all arts because it imitates its original - the state of the soul - with the greatest immediacy. Today this strikes us as the exact opposite of the truth, because no art seems to us to have less reference to something outside itself than music. However, aside from the fact that in a sense Aristotle may still be right, it must be explained that ancient Greek music was closely associated with poetry, and depended upon its character as an accessory to verse to make its imitative meaning clear. Plato, speaking of music, says: "For when there are no words, it is very difficult to recognize the meaning of the harmony and rhythm, or to see that any worthy object is imitated by them." As far as we know, all music originally served such an accessory function. Once, however, it was abandoned, music was forced to withdraw into itself to find a constraint or original. This is found in the various means of its own composition and performance.

2 I owe this formulation to a remark made by Hans Hofmann, the art teacher, in one of his lectures. From the point of view of this formulation, Surrealism in plastic art is a reactionary tendency which is attempting to restore "outside" subject matter. The chief concern of a painter like Dali is to represent the processes and concepts of his consciousness, not the processes of his medium.

3 See Valery's remarks about his own poetry.

4 T. S. Eliot said something to the same effect in accounting for the shortcomings of English Romantic poetry. Indeed the Romantics can be considered the original sinners whose guilt kitsch inherited. They showed kitsch how. What does Keats write about mainly, if not the effect of poetry upon himself?

5 It will be objected that such art for the masses as folk art was developed under rudimentary conditions of production - and that a good deal of folk art is on a high level. Yes, it is - but folk art is not Athenic, and it's Athenic whom we want: formal culture with its infinity of aspects, its luxuriance, its large comprehension. Besides, we are now told that most of what we consider good in folk culture is the static survival of dead formal, aristocratic, cultures. Our old English ballads, for instance, were not created by the "folk," but by the post-feudal squirearchy of the English countryside, to survive in the mouths of the folk long after those for whom the ballads were composed had gone on to other forms of literature... Unfortunately, until the machine-age, culture was the exclusive prerogative of a society that lived by the labor of serfs or slaves. They were the real symbols of culture. For one man to spend time and energy creating or listening to poetry meant that another man had to produce enough to keep himself alive and the former in comfort. In Africa today we
2. The Search for the Avant-Garde

In a sense, it is the avant garde, being chased in this project and the "banner and bollard design of kitsch" being left behind. The idea of being avant-garde of contemporary is a hard realization. One does not wake up one morning and decide he or she is now avant-garde. No definition exists and by defining it, one annuls the potential for simultaneous explosions, transforming them into constricted spectacles on their own stage, figurations that instantly belong to the past. So if an artist of landscape architecture can never really land on the avant-garde, when can he or she feel he or she might be falling in the right direction? The following are examples of thoughts and works that have brought inspiration into this project and serve as examples construed as avant-garde. The thoughts and works are simply in list form as they appear, and no explanation will be given for each one.


1. I am for an art that is political-erotical-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum.
2. I am for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all, an art given the chance of having a starting point of zero.
3. I am for an art that embroils itself with the everyday crap & still comes out on top.
4. I am for an art that imitates the human, that is comic, if necessary, or violent, or whatever is necessary.
5. I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.
6. I am for an artist who vanishes, turning up in a white cap painting signs or hallways.
7. I am for art that comes out of a chimney like black hair and scatters in the sky.
8. I am for art that spills out of an old man's purse when he is bounced off a passing fender.
I am for the art out of a doggy's mouth, falling five stories from the roof.
I am for the art that a kid licks, after peeling away the wrapper.
I am for an art that joggles like everyones knees, when the bus traverses an excavation.
I am for art that is smoked, like a cigarette, smells, like a pair of shoes.
I am for art that flaps like a flag, or helps blow noses, like a handkerchief.
I am for art that is put on and taken off, like pants, which develops holes, like socks, which is eaten, like a piece of pie, or abandoned with great contempt, like a piece of shit.

I am for art covered with bandages. I am for art that limps and rolls and runs and jumps. I am for art that comes in a can or washes up on the shore.
I am for art that coils and grunts like a wrestler. I am for art that sheds hair.
I am for art you can sit on. I am for art you can pick your nose with or stub your toes on.
It does. Pollock, as I see him, left us at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-Second Street. Not satisfied with the suggestion through paint of our other senses, we shall utilize the specific substances of sight, sound, movements, people, odors, touch. Objects of every sort are materials for the new art: paint, chairs, food, electric and neon lights, smoke, water, old socks, a dog, movies, a thousand other things which will be discovered by the present generation of artists. Not only will these bold creators show us, as if for the first time, the world we have always had about us, but ignored, but they will disclose entirely unheard of happenings and events, found in garbage cans, police files, hotel lobbies, seen in store windows and on the streets, and sensed in dreams and horrible accidents. An odor of crushed strawberries, a letter from a friend or a billboard selling Drano; three taps on the front door, a scratch, a sigh or a voice lecturing endlessly, a blinding staccato flash, a bowler hat—all will become materials for this new concrete art.
If you haven’t been to the Happenings, let me give you a kaleidoscope sampling of some of their great moments.

Everybody is crowded into a downtown loft, milling about, like at an opening. It’s hot. There are lots of big cartons sitting all over the place. One by one they start to move, sliding and careening drunkenly in every direction, lunging into people and one another, accompanied by loud breathing sounds over four loudspeakers. Now it’s winter and cold and it’s dark, and all around little blue lights go on and off at their own speed, while three large, brown gunny-sack constructions drag an enormous pile of ice and stones over bumps, losing most of it, and blankets keep falling over everything from the ceiling. A hundred iron barrels and gallon wine jugs hanging on ropes swing back and forth, crashing like church bells, spewing glass all over. Suddenly, mushy shapes pop up from the floor and painters slash at curtains dripping with action. A wall of trees tied with colored rags advances on the crowd, scattering everybody, forcing them to leave. There are muslin telephone booths for all with a record player or microphone that tunes you in to everybody else. Coughing, you breathe in noxious fumes, or the smell of hospitals and lemon juice. A nude girl runs after the racing pool of searchlight, throwing spinach greens into it. Slides and movies, projected over walls and people, depict hamburgers: big ones, huge ones, red ones, skinny ones, flat ones, etc. You come in as a spectator and maybe you discover you’re caught in it after all, as you push things around like so much furniture. Words rumble past, whispering, dee-daas, baroom, love me, love me; shadows joggle on screens, power saws and lawnmowers screech just like the I.R.T. at Union Square. Tin cans rattle and you stand up to see or change your seat or answer questions shouted at you by shoe-shine boys and old ladies. Long silences, when nothing happens, and you’re sore because you paid $1.50 contribution, when bang! there you are facing yourself in a mirror jammed at you. Listen. A cough from the alley. You giggle because you’re afraid, suffer claustrophobia, talk to someone nonchalantly, but all the time you’re there, getting into the act. . . . Electric fans start, gently wafting breezes of “New-Car” smell past your nose as leaves bury piles of a whining, burping, foul, pinky mess.
More current and within the field of architecture and landscape architecture is Cheryl Barton’s "the Edge." The design was for the 1989 San Francisco Landscape Garden Show, and she explains, "You can't make a landscape look as natural as nature, so why bother?" Rather than attempting to make art imitate life she believes in making art look artful (Papier 77). Her garden is almost entirely of man-made materials such as aluminum and neon.
A strip of sod, branches of corkscrew willow and goldfish in bowls were the only natural elements in the project.

Another project in the San Francisco show was one done by Nancy Owens - landscape architect and artist. Occupying an 18' x 24' site site, Las Huentas was based on the backyard culture she observed as a child in a San Francisco suburb. She invented backyard boundaries with grape stakes, tree stumps, steel posts and wire mesh. A redwood fence (recycled from a suburban yard) was stained a somber gray. The grape stakes and tree stumps, marking the entry, were coated in a skin of white plaster that monumentalized these common objects while suppressing the possibility of nostalgia. In the center, a diving board hovers above a pool of red sand. Around three sides of the pool she arranged grass parterres like freshly fabricated elements on a silent assembly line. "Two apertures punched into a redwood screen created views into shallow recesses of aquamarine pool tiles. Her collage evoked the power of the commonplace as icons" (Phillips 74).
Venturing back into the art world: the painting called *Tennyson* by David Salle.

David Salle. *Tennyson*. 1983. 6’6” x 9’9”.
The word Tennyson is spelled across a field dominated on the left by a nude woman with her back to the viewer and, on the right, by a found wooden relief of an ear.

Also Jasper Johns painting *Tennyson* in 1958. Possibly a clue to the meaning behind Salle's painting, but that's not the main objective here. The objective is to simply observe and draw on any gained conclusions.

Jasper John's, *Target with Plaster Casts* done in 1955. This is a piece done in encaustic in the shape of a target. Along the top exists plaster casts of body parts - ears, noses, and other genitalia.
Eric Fischl's **Bad Boy** and Julian Schnabels **Ithaca**.

**ERIC FISCHL. BAD BOY.**

**Julian Schnabel. Ithaca.**
Enough said.

Back within the confines of architecture and landscape architecture, we find the work of the firm SITE. In 1986 SITE had a winning competition entry for the design of a transportation/communication pavilion and processional at the 1986 Vancouver World Exposition. The project was titled the "Highway '86 Processional," and carries the theme "here and now - air, land, and sea." "Highway '86" is an undulating four lane steel and concrete boulevard that rises from the sea and occupies the entire length of the central space (Wines 58).

The surface is covered with a density of every type of present-day air, land, and sea transportation.
Another project by SITE was the Ghost Parking Lot in Hamden, Connecticut in 1978.

"In contrast to the conventional use of "object art" as a decorative accessory to buildings and public spaces, this project is neither "placed" nor "integrated" in any formal sense" (Wines 35).
The work of George Segal has become both inspiring and intriguing. His work can be considered frozen happenings. His figures are cast in plaster and set within everyday situations. The effect is ghost-like making it appear something or someone once inhabited the space.

George Segal, Girl putting on Scarab Necklace, '75
Finally, the assemblage work of Louise Nevelson. She creates great reliefs of generally found wood objects and paints them monochrome colors of either black, grey, white, or gold.

—Louise Nevelson.
In all, as a student attempting to grasp and achieve the avant-garde, the climb is a very steep one. For in the artworld it is said, "One of the central accomplishments of a student is the appropriation of last years avant-garde" (Pincus - W. Witten 327).
3. Profiles

After viewing several artists attempts at the avant-garde, a list began to grow consisting of a group of individuals that, psychologically and physically, began to form ideas on how to fuse landscape architecture with art. The following are profiles of three artists who directly affected this study, and they include Jasper Johns, David Salle, and Eric Fischl.

Jasper Johns

To begin, in the mid-1950's an artist named Jasper Johns began including generic symbols, like the American flag and targets, in his work. Because of these common objects he was at first recognized as a pop artist, but as his work continued he has reinforced the understanding of his art as concerned with issues and methods of representation, very different from the ideas, techniques, and subjects of Pop Art. "Viewers cannot ignore the prescense of one of John's painted targets; such images fill the entire canvas and are rendered with the unmistakable texture of a hand-applied art medium- in this case, encaustic. Such a painted target remains the replica of a target, but it also has become an art object, with no clear significance. The puzzle of the relationship between painting and its design was set down by John's formula: "A=B. A is B. A represents B" (Kirkpatrick, De la Croix, Tansey 1070). "Johns also used items such as numerals and number charts, color charts, maps of the United States - and painted them with an absolute objectivity, an objectivity nevertheless sullied by the occasional intrusion of mysterious, romantic elements such as the plaster-cast body parts in Target with Plaster Casts" (Kirkpatrick,
De la Croix, Tansley 1070).

Johns also produced a number of sculptures of the everyday objects which, in Duschtamp's phrase, becomes a work of art because the artist says it is. By taking a coffee can filled with paintbrushes, or two beer cans, and casting them bronze, he immortalized the commonplace.

In an exhibition at the beginning of 1976 the trend to precision was evident in a group of new paintings in which Johns explored a form of tight linear, crosshatch, or "tweed" pattern in a number of variations, and it is this patterning that still exists in his works today. In a sense, Johns has begun to lead beyond the paradoxes of art-making through the "perilous night" of life itself, to evoke the title of another work in the artists latest most complex series of works (H.H. Arnason 456).

**David Salle**

Another artist whose work is often associated with John's is David Salle. "Salle often maddens his critics by working almost exclusively with appropriations, but delights supporters by compounding this vertiginous mix of disassociated elements into a new signature style of thrilling bravado, equipose, and independence"(H.H. Arnason 646). "The borrowings begin with Minimalism's stained color fields and diptych formats, continue with Jasper John's particular way of juxtaposing odd and jarring images, and, most startlingly, embrace the images themselves, plucked from popular illustrations, and from random encounters with such flotsman as comic books and how-to-sex manuals"(H.H. Arnason 646).

Bordering on the outrageous, Salle portrays the items in life which often would rather be put on the backshelf or left in our sub-conscious. Items such as sex and death, are portrayed by Salle in "near-megalomaniac
scale." Salle first creates a colored background and then will project images and trace them as "loosely brushed contour drawings, layered and floated in a collided intimacy somewhat like that in dreams" (H.H. Arnason 646).

**Eric Fischl**

Along the same lines is artist Eric Fischl. "Fischl's work is described as having an unusually high voltage effect on the viewer, not so much because of the nudity or the suggestions of alcholism, voyeurism, onanism, homosexuality, bestiality, and incest. They disturb, rather, because the obviously white middle-class suburban status of the subjects, combined with the gigantic scale of the pictures, the compositional vantage point, and the direct Manet-like naturalism of the artists painting style make it impossible for most viewers to escape implication in whatever pyschodrama Fischl has chosen to stage" (H.H. Arnason 647).

Fischl explains himself:

"I would like to say that central to my work is the feeling of awkwardness and self-consciousness that one experiences in the face of profound emotional events in one's life. These experiences, such as death, or loss, or sexuality cannot be supported by a lifestyle that has sought so ardously to deny their meaningfulness, and a culture whose fabric is so worn out that its attendant symbols do not make for adequate clothing. One truly does not know how to act! Each new event fills us with much the same anxiety we feel when, in a dream, we discover ourselves naked in public" (H.H. Arnason 647).
4. Site Analysis

Consideration for a site for this particular project evolved through a variety of criteria. First of all, the site had to have the potential to attract people, and therefore preferably exist within an urban environment. In earlier centuries the most articulated spaces were always those where the most people met, such as, the market or the church. Another criteria was that the site have some sort of existing significance tied to it. Say a significant feature such as a river, an abandoned railroad yard, an industrial complex in ruin, a theater, a myth or a legend, or maybe a historic building could exist on the site. The reason for such a criteria is to help form a concept through interpretation, and come up with a solution that becomes both mystical and familiar at the same time. The site chosen met both these criteria and lies in downtown Elkhart, Indiana along the Elkhart River.

From the beginning the location of Elkhart was blessed by three streams (the St. Joseph and Elkhart Rivers and Christiana Creek) that flow through it, providing beauty, hydraulic power, and a natural "highway" for transportation and commerce. From 1830 until 1844, many arks (cumbersome vessels resembling scows or large rafts) and keel boats had carried a variety of cargos to and from Elkhart, built along the Elkhart River, from its mouth by Island Park, as far upstream as General William B. Mitchell's warehouse at the east end of Marion Street. In the first plat drawn up of Elkhart, the Elkhart River served as the east boundary of the city, and industry grew up all around it. The finger streams that came off of the river were used to power the factories built over and adjacent to
them. As time has passed and technology has grown many of these great industrial structures had fallen into ruin and were, subsequently, torn down along the river. Since this demise the city of Elkhart has virtually turned its back on the Elkhart River, and along it set the backs of newly constructed buildings.

The site for this particular project exists on a nearly barren piece of land once occupied by a large industrial structure torn down within the past year. It is approximately seven acres in size and includes such elements as: an existing factory in the northeast corner, another existing factory near the south end, and ruins of the mechanisms once used to power the torn down industrial structure. Marking the south edge of the site is Elkhart Avenue, the west edge is the river, to the north Jackson Boulevard, and to the east a side street called Clark Street. Adjacent to the site more industrial factories sit, some in operation and others docile and empty. Directly across the river, to the west of the site, exists downtown Elkhart, consisting of both commercial and residential dwellings. North of the site on up the river, commercial dwellings stop and turn to more residential homes as the river bends to the west. To the east of the site lies a shopping strip called Easy Shopping Place, and resembles the typical chaos created by large screaming signs, fast food restaurants, and a mall-like environment. The south side away from the site includes more industrial structures, the police department, the fire department, and links of roads leading in and out of downtown Elkhart.

Environmental items to be taken into consideration that might effect design include a slope of about 30% along the bank of the river, frequent flooding along the bank, the northern flow of the river, and the existing canal intruding into the site. Besides the slope along the bank of
the river, the rest of the site is flat maintaining a elevation of around 
±735, and because buildings exist on the site, and just recently a building, 
which stood for a number of years on the site, was torn down, a safe 
assumption is that the soil can withstand building upon it. Vegetation 
consists of a few sparse oak trees along the bank and nothing else.

The view across the river greets the viewer with the sight of the 
backs of commercial buildings in downtown Elkhart. Items such as fire 
escapes, chain-link fencing, barb wire, loading docks, unarticulated 
windowless building sides, parking lots, trash cans and dumpsters, 
telephone poles, semis, and exposed machinery make up the wasteland of 
our out-of-site out-of-mind world. Along the west bank of the river 
exists the sight of an earlier attempt to "landscape" the edge of the river. 
Here, lies concrete paths adjacent to the river, a network of stacked, pre-
manufactured paver blocks, creating a retaining wall, to hold back the 
bank, and two cortin steel footings made to eventually hold pedestrian 
bridges built from them. The view to the east of the site is the chaos of 
both active and docile buildings of varying scales, much like the view 
across the river but closer.
5. Goals specific to site/program

Upon talking to the people of Elkhart to find more about the site along the Elkhart River, suggestions were made on how Elkhart would like to see the space developed. Originally the site was going to be bought by the city to development a park, but through some politicking a business owner had expressed interest in developing the site for commercial use and already had plans for a restaurant. Taking this into consideration and the series of events in the past that led to Elkhart turning its back on the river, goals were set for design of the project itself and a program began to development.

1. The first and main goal was to open Elkhart's eyes and have people both recognize the river as an amenity and get them to visit it.

2. Another goal was to interpret the context of Elkhart through design to give the physical notion of the design a familiar sense to the people of Elkhart.

3. To bring some culture admist a culturally deprived city.

4. To interweave the earlier goals set for the thesis in the beginning.

The program, designed to achieve these goals, calls for:

* The appropriation of at least two restaurants, and outdoor dining for both, along the river.

  * The design of speciality shops of an undetermined number blended with stronger anchor stores.

  * At least 5 indoor galleries for the exhibit of area artists and visiting artists work, and outdoor gallery space for summer exhibitions
and events.

* A designated space for an outdoor amphitheater along the river, along with appropriations of an indoor theater for plays such as Cats or Les Miserables.

* The existing building in the northeast corner of the site will be saved for rehabilitation, while the building on the south end will be removed because of its location to the water.

* The existing pieces of the demolished building, already torn down, will be integrated into the design and not removed.

* For parking approximately 200 spaces will be provided on the site, as plenty of parking exists off site also.

* Two pedestrian bridges will be designed incorporating the already existing footings across the river.

* Remaining space will be designated as outdoor space manipulated for intrigue, transition, relaxation, vagrancy etc.

* Examine proposals for the view across the river from the site, along with proposals for the design of the west bank.

* An assumption will be made that I have been hired to design this site, and the site could flexibly be zoned for whatever uses have been dreamed up.

* Let us also assume I have been given the right to experiment with the site in an attempt to design a project which fuses the arts with landscape architecture.
6. Concept

To begin describing the concept for this project an arbitrary investigation was done to examine the marks made during a group of art projects recently finished.

The marks made in these works, when combined, created a visual energy, a spontaneity, a vibration, as if something was actually moving the paper they were put on. The same energy was found in Jasper Johns work in the late 1970's, only his marks were more simplified and deliberate, but still energetic. With this in mind it was wondered how the energy created by these marks could be integrated into this project. So by starting in plan view I began to look at the marks individually and pull them out into larger shapes to represent the possible forms of buildings and spaces.

As the forms became more and more event I experimented with bringing.
them out in three-dimensional reliefs in much of the same manner as Louise Nevelson's assemblage sculptures. The energy evident within the drawings was still evident within the relief, and the result was a virtually unplanned, spontaneous, group of individual spaces formed through shadow outlines.

The next step was to start to apply these studies to the site chosen for this particular study. The spontaneous and crude spaces ran parallel to some of the thoughts and statements expressed in the paintings by David Salle and Eric Fischl, but instead of putting human beings in awkward, uncommon situations, it was now the landscape forced to expose itself. Within the site the architecture began to take the form of the industrial buildings surrounding the site, but what would normally be considered as the back of a building was now out front for everyone to see. Much like in Fischl's and Salle's paintings, except they forced us to look at the parts of life that we would rather put in the back of our minds and insist that they don't happen. Items such as sex, incest, homosexuality, death, and masturbation were common themes in their paintings. Within this design the items normally covered or hidden by designers are out in the open to be seen. Fire escapes, machinery, stacks of used steel drums, chain-link fencing, loading docks, trash and dumpsters, loading trucks, and tires will no longer be covered up, but painted a monochrome color to represent our out-of-sight/out-of-mind society. The existing pieces left over from other past industrial structures will be painted a monochrome color also, and more pieces will be added in the form of partial walls and old machinery. The reason for painting them one color such as white, grey, or black is to achieve the effect in George Segal's sculptures of plaster figures in everyday situations. The effect achieved is as if the
monochromatic structures have disappeared and a white outline is all that exists- equivalent to the chalk line around a murder victim.

In the end what is hoped to be achieved is a site designed as one large sculpture and not a group of individual items, or simply the placing of sculpture within the site, or attempting to integrate art. The final effect is a frozen happening and every corner the visitor turns the nervous energy builds like that in the happenings explained in Alan Kaprow's description.

Master Plan- eastbank

To simply go a little more into detail involving some of the activities within the created spaces we can look at the develop of the outdoor amphitheater. The outdoor theater was designed to parallel earlier stated thoughts in the description of the concept. Firstly, it includes parterres building up from the river drifting back into the site. One of the paterres includes old abandoned seats within it, as if an old theater existed on the site. They are painted white as if to become frozen in history and serving as a landmark.

Venturing up from the outdoor theater exists indoor gallery spaces. Their design is based around the existing industrial architecture, but plants such as trees, shrubs, and vines are allowed to invade within and throughout to a discarded left behind landscape.

To the left of the indoor spaces exists the outdoor exhibition spaces. These spaces are for displaying work of local artists, visiting artists, and installations. The display surfaces are made of chain-link to resemble the fences around loading docks, and are paved with a non-reflective surface.
The spaces are around the existing canal, and also include a portion of an entry walk called a garbage walk. This item is a walk on steel mesh allowing one to witness trash below his or her feet, and even add to it.

Billboards on the site will be used for installation purposes and giving words of wisdom, but remain as billboards.

Finally, as Elkhart slowly takes back the river a gentle reminder is left on how the river was once forgotten, and this takes the form of a philosophical link to downtown Elkhart. The link comes out of the center of the east bank site, breaks in the center, and then reconnects on the west bank turning into a pedestrian walk to the river. The break marks that point in time when the river was disconnected from the city of Elkhart, and simply forgotten.

**Master Plan- westbank**

A little out of the realm of the study was the westbank of the Elkhart River. The biggest problem here was a loss of visual energy. Items were too predictable and the drive along the river was desolate. The solution was to, first of all, sink the existing parking lots along Waterfall Drive, and create a network of pedestrian plazas on top. The plazas contained vertical sculpture to make it appear construction was going on. The final effect was is a filtered view from the eastbank of the river, and visually exciting drive along it.
7. Summary

The challenge has been set forth and a solution has been attained—A total fusion of the arts. Nothing is left to say but:

"In times of widespread chaos and confusion, it has been the duty of more advanced human beings—artists, scientists, clowns, and philosophers—to create order. In times such as ours, when there is too much management, too much programming and control, it becomes the duty of superior men and women to fling their favorite monkey wrenches into the machinery. To relieve the repression of the human spirit, they must sow doubt and disruption."

Tom Robbins
Bibliography


