UC Berkeley
Symposia

Title

Reimagining the Urban: Bay Area Connections Across the Arts &amp; Public Space | Fall 2013 Symposium

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7507x6j7

Author

Global Urban Humanities

Publication Date

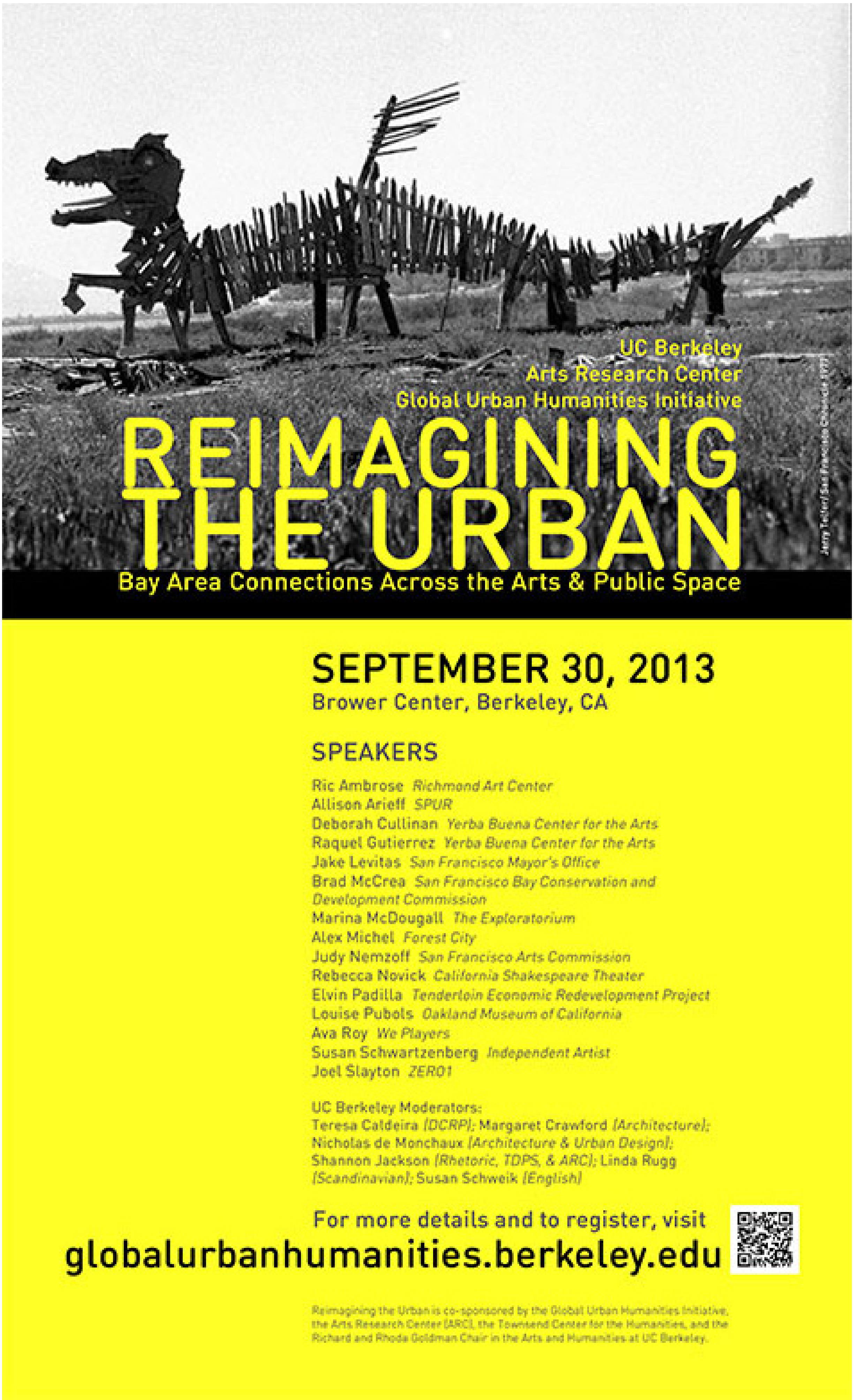
2013-10-01

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

REIMAGINING THE URBAN: BAY AREA CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE ARTS & PUBLIC SPACE

GLOBAL URBAN HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM FALL 2013

SYMPOSIUM POSTER



Jerry Telfer/San Francisco Chronicle 1977

UC Berkeley
Arts Research Center
Global Urban Humanities Initiative

REIMAGINING THE URBAN

Bay Area Connections Across the Arts & Public Space

SEPTEMBER 30, 2013
Brower Center, Berkeley, CA

SPEAKERS

Ric Ambrose *Richmond Art Center*
Allison Arieff *SPUR*
Deborah Cullinan *Yerba Buena Center for the Arts*
Raquel Gutierrez *Yerba Buena Center for the Arts*
Jake Levitas *San Francisco Mayor's Office*
Brad McCrea *San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission*
Marina McDougall *The Exploratorium*
Alex Michel *Forest City*
Judy Nemzoff *San Francisco Arts Commission*
Rebecca Novick *California Shakespeare Theater*
Elvin Padilla *Tenderloin Economic Redevelopment Project*
Louise Pubols *Oakland Museum of California*
Ava Roy *We Players*
Susan Schwartzenberg *Independent Artist*
Joel Slayton *ZERO1*

UC Berkeley Moderators:
Teresa Caldeira *[DCRP]*; Margaret Crawford *[Architecture]*; Nicholas de Monchaux *[Architecture & Urban Design]*; Shannon Jackson *[Rhetoric, TDPS, & ARC]*; Linda Rugg *[Scandinavian]*; Susan Schweik *[English]*

For more details and to register, visit
globalurbanhumanities.berkeley.edu

Reimagining the Urban is co-sponsored by the Global Urban Humanities Initiative, the Arts Research Center [ARC], the Townsend Center for the Humanities, and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Chair in the Arts and Humanities at UC Berkeley.

CONTENTS

4 SYMPOSIUM DESCRIPTION

5 SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY

7 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS

14 SYMPOSIUM REFLECTION

32 SYMPOSIUM VIDEOS

Cover Image: Jerry Telfer, San Francisco Chronicle 1977

SYMPOSIUM DESCRIPTION

REIMAGINING THE URBAN:
BAY AREA CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE ARTS & PUBLIC SPACE

A GLOBAL URBAN HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM

Location: David Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA

Date/Time: 9/30/2013

Reimagining the Urban was a daylong symposium examining art, nature, economic development and equity in the Bay Area metropolis. Artists, curators, real estate developers, environmentalists and social justice advocates gathered to discuss the uses and abuses of the region's creative and natural resources.

In recent debates over the role of art and design in urban life, "San Francisco" and "the Bay Area" figure prominently, particularly in discourses and projects that tout the importance of "creativity" in the vitalization of the urban. Recently, Richard Florida and others most closely allied with this ethos have acknowledged the limits and blindspots of the "creative class" discourse. Meanwhile, artists, civic leaders, curators, and community activists on the ground were already quite clear that the "creativity" theme only went so far toward addressing issues of immigration, social justice, environmentalism, and the stabilization of artistic and social welfare sectors.

This gathering sought to take the temperature of current urban arts debates in the Bay Area, asking how artists, designers, and civic activists have redefined the local landscape and their relationship to it. If the "creative class" discourse celebrated the Bay Area in terms that many of us question, what alternate terms might we emphasize instead? How do different cultural practices activate and/or resist a contemporary urban landscape? How do artistic and civic sectors differently understand site-specific work? How have cultural and activist organizations embraced and simultaneously redefined the role of science and technology in the Bay Area landscape? How does a wider understanding of the environmental justice in the Bay Area redefine the role of the arts in re-imagining "urbanity?" Finally, what is the potential and what are the limits of cross-arts, cross-sector coalition-building ...and what new skills and platforms are required to facilitate it?

Reimagining the Urban was co-sponsored by the Global Urban Humanities Initiative, the Arts Research Center (ARC), the Townsend Center for the Humanities, and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Chair in the Arts and Humanities, in conjunction with the course The City, Arts, and Public Spaces: Methods Across Disciplines, at UC Berkeley.

Conference Organizers:
Irene Chien, Sarah Gibbons, Shannon Jackson, Susan Moffat, Lauren Pearson

Conference Volunteers:
Meg Alvarado-Saggese, Megan Hoetger, Jennifer Lum, Kate Mattingly, Hannah Pae, Kim Richards, Nicole Rosner, Emily Saler, Hallie Wells, Alex Werth

SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY

SCHEDULE- SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

8:30 Registration

9:00 Welcome and Framing Discussion

- Shannon Jackson (Rhetoric, Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, and Arts Research Center, UC Berkeley)
- Teresa Caldeira (City and Regional Planning, UC Berkeley)

9:15 - 10:30 Session I: Creativity and "Class": Bay Area Urban Experiments

- Moderator: Margaret Crawford (Architecture, UC Berkeley)
- Speakers: Andy Wang (5M Project, Forest City) / Deborah Cullinan (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts) and Elvin Padilla (950 Center for Art & Education)
- Respondent/Discussant: Margaret Crawford

10:30 - 10:45 Break

10:45 - 12:00 Session II: On-line/Off-line: Digital Connection in Urban and Suburban Space

- Moderator: Nicholas de Monchaux (Architecture and Urban Design, UC Berkeley)
- Speakers: Joel Slayton (ZERO 1) and Jake Levitas (San Francisco Mayor's Office)
- Respondent/Discussant: Marina McDougall (Center for Art & Inquiry, The Exploratorium)

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch Break

1:15 - 2:30 Session III: What is Site in Site-Specific Art?: Comparing Practices

- Moderator: Susan Schweik (English, UC Berkeley)
- Speakers: Raquel Gutierrez (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts) and Ava Roy / Lauren Dietrich Chavez (We Players)
- Respondent/Discussant: Rebecca Novick (Triangle Lab, California Shakespeare Theater)

2:30 - 2:45 Break

2:45 - 4:00 Session IV: What is the "Bay" in the Bay Area?: Creating Nature

- Moderator: Linda Rugg (Scandinavian, UC Berkeley)
- Speakers: Susan Schwartzenberg (Independent Artist) and Brad McCrea (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
- Respondent/Discussant: Louise Pubols (Oakland Museum of California)

4:00 - 4:45 Wrap-up: Opportunities, Obstacles, Provocations

- Judy Nemzoff (San Francisco Arts Commission) and Ric Ambrose (Richmond Art Center)

4;$5 Reception, Drinks, and Continued Conversation

UC Berkeley
Arts Research Center
Global Urban Humanities Initiative
REIMAGINING
THE URBAN
Bay Area Connections Across the Arts & Public Space
Twitter: #ReUrb13
http://reimaginingtheurban.wordpress.com

Shannon Jackson introduces the symposium, where guests were able to engage further via Twitter using the “#ReUrb13” hashtag.

SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS

SPEAKER BIOS

Ric Ambrose

As the Executive Director of the Richmond Art Center, Ric Ambrose leads a talented team of artists and educators who provide an ambitious schedule of exhibits, workshops and outreach programs for Richmond and the greater Bay Area community. Ambrose has extensive executive management and curatorial experience in arts and science organizations and over the past twenty-eight years, has managed or curated more than 200 exhibitions in art, science and history in a variety of multimedia formats. He is a practicing artist whose large-scale graphite drawings are housed in many private and corporate collections.

Teresa Caldeira

Teresa Caldeira is a scholar of cities and their political practices. Her research focuses on predicaments of urbanization and reconfigurations of spatial segregation and social discrimination, mostly in cities of the global south. She has been especially interested in studying the relationships between urban form and political transformation, particularly in the context of democratization. An anthropologist by training, she has been a full professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, since 2007. She has always worked in an interdisciplinary manner, combining methodologies, theories, and approaches from the different social sciences, but she has been especially interested in reshaping ethnographic methods for the study of cities and political action. Although a growing number of anthropologists do research in cities, few constitute the city itself as an object of anthropological investigation. Her work aims at asserting the richness of this perspective, exemplified in the book City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo (University of California Press, 2000), which won the Senior Book Prize from the American Ethnological Society in 2001.

Lauren Dietrich Chavez

Lauren Chavez stumbled across the path of We Players 1st show and has been working and playing with the company since 2001. She is a healer, committed to developing regenerative resources, resilient communities, and rich culture, while facilitating individual health and the expansion of awareness. Lauren has a BA in Architecture and Urban Design, with a dance minor, and a MS in Civil and Environmental Engineering, both from Stanford University. She has professional green building and permaculture design credentials, and presently practices bodywork/massage and teaches nature awareness programs, in addition to growing We Players into a thriving non-profit arts institution. Lauren loves connecting with the gorgeous environment and engaging the layered history and creative people of the Bay Area through We Players' unique process of outreach, engagement, and performance. She currently focuses her efforts on community outreach, education, partnership development, and company administration.

Margaret Crawford

Margaret Crawford teaches courses at UC Berkeley in the history and theory of architecture, urbanism, and urban history as well as urban design and planning studios focusing on small-scale urbanity and postmodern urbanism. Her research focuses on the evolution, uses, and meanings of urban space. Her book, Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns, examines the rise and fall of professionally designed industrial environments. Crawford is also known for her work on Everyday Urbanism, a concept that encourages the close investigation and empathetic understanding of the specifics of daily life as the basis for urban theory and design. In 2005, Doug Kelbaugh characterized Everyday Urbanism as one of three contemporary paradigms of urbanism on the cutting edge of theoretical and professional activity. Another interest is Los Angeles urbanism, which led to The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment and Daily Urban Life, edited with transportation planner Martin Wachs. She has also published numerous articles on immigrant spatial practices, shopping malls, public space, and other issues in the American built environment. Since 2003, Crawford has been investigating the effects of rapid physical and social changes on villages in China's Pearl River Delta.

Deborah Cullinan

Deborah Cullinan is the new Executive Director of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts – San Francisco's premiere contemporary art center. She was formerly the Executive Director of Intersection for the Arts. Under her leadership, Intersection achieved a strong reputation as a powerful arts-focused community development organization committed to radical partnership across sectors to achieve equitable community change. Intersection is playing a lead role on the 5M Project, a 4-acre prototype for the next generation of urban development that embraces diversity of thought, life experience, and culture. Intersection has received numerous awards including an Inaugural ArtPlace America Award, The Cyril Magnum Award for Non-Profit Excellence, and the 2012 Philanthropedia Award for Highest Impact Arts Non-Profit in the Bay Area. She is co-founder of ArtsForumSF and a member of the Board of the California Arts Advocates, Californians for the Arts, and The Community Arts Stabilization Trust. She is on the advisory boards of The Center for the Teater Commons and The Catalyst Initiative. She is a Rockwood Fellow; a Gerbode Fellow; and a participant in National Arts Strategies' Chief Executive Program an initiative gathering 100 top culture sector leaders to re-imagine what cultural institutions are and how they contribute to society.

Nicholas De Monchaux

Nicholas de Monchaux is an architect, urban designer, and theorist. He is the author of Spacesuit: Fashioning Apollo (MIT Press, 2011), an architectural and urban history of the Apollo Spacesuit, winner of the Eugene Emme award from the American Astronautical Society and shortlisted for the Art Book Prize. The work of de Monchaux's Oakland-based design practice has been exhibited at the 2010 Biennial of the Americas, the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale, San Francisco's SPUR, and SFMOMA. de Monchaux received his B.A. with distinction in Architecture, from Yale, and his Professional Degree (M.Arch.) from Princeton. Prior to his independent practice, he worked with Michael Hopkins & Partners in London, and Diller, Scofidio + Renfro in New York. de Monchaux's work has been supported by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the Hellman Family fund, the Macdowell Colony, the Santa Fe Institute, and the Smithsonian Institution. He has received design awards and citations from Parsons The New School for Design, the International Union of Architects, Pamphlet Architecture, and the Van Alen Institute.

Raquel Gutiérrez

Raquel Gutiérrez is a writer, live performer, film actor, curator, playwright, and cultural organizer. She writes on art, music, film, performance and community building and creates original solo and ensemble performance compositions. Raquel earned her MA in Performance Studies from New York University in 2004. She is an expert in creating artist-community partnerships for a range of institutional and community-based organizations. She currently lives in San Francisco and manages a program called IN COMMUNITY for Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Shannon Jackson

Shannon Jackson is Professor of Rhetoric and of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley. She is also currently the Director of the Arts Research Center. Her most recent book is Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics explores the relationship between the visual arts, performance and social engagement. Past work has considered the relationship between performance and American social reform (Lines of Activity) as well as between performance and the institution of higher education (Professing Performance), and she has also written for numerous exhibition catalogues and scholarly journals on related topics. Shannon serves on the boards of Cal Performances, the Berkeley Art Museum, and the Berkeley Center for New Media. She also serves on the editorial boards of several journals, has been a plenary speaker at a variety of distinguished venues, including most recently the Tate Modern, the Museum of Modern Art, the Ibsen International Festival in Oslo, the Blaffer Museum, The Kitchen, Cooper Union, the Yale School of Drama, and Harvard's Spencer Lecture in Drama. She has organized many conferences and artist residencies with the Arts Research Center, The Builders Association, Touchable Stories, American Society of Theatre Research, the American Studies Association, the Women and Theatre Project, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Multi-campus Research Group on International Performance, UCB's Center for Community Innovation, and with the civic governments of Berkeley, San Francisco, and Richmond, California.

The Symposium audience paying rapt attention to a Symposium panel.

Jake Levitas

Jake Levitas is a designer, organizer, educator, and community activist based in San Francisco. He is currently a SF Mayor's Innovation Fellow. As the former Research Director at Gray Area Foundation for the Arts, his work was focused at the intersection of design, technology, cities, and information. As a designer and organizer, his work has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Associated Press, and other domestic and international outlets. He holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies and Economics from Washington University in St. Louis.

Brad McCrea

Since 2010, Brad has served as the Director of the Regulatory Program at the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). He joined BCDC's staff in 1998 and served as the Commission's Bay Development Design Analyst for 12 years. He has been an instructor and lecturer in landscape architecture at UC Berkeley, and has been a guest design critic at the College of Environmental Design.

Marina McDougall

Marina McDougall directs the new Center for Art & Inquiry, an R&D center for the arts within the larger learning laboratory of the Exploratorium. She also oversees the Exploratorium's new program to commission large scale, temporary works in the outdoor spaces at Pier 15. Marina was the first curator of art and design at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts and co-founded the Studio for Urban Projects. She has been a visiting curator at the MIT Media Lab, the Museum of Jurassic Technology, the California Academy of Sciences, and the Oakland Museum of California. As a curator Marina has worked at the intersection of art and science, nature and culture for over twenty years. She teaches as an adjunct professor in the graduate Curatorial Practice Program at California College of the Arts.

Judy Nemzoff

Judy Nemzoff is the Director of Community Arts and Education (CAE) at the San Francisco Arts Commission and plays a lead role in that agency's partnership efforts to support the reinvigoration of public spaces and streetscapes with the arts. Her work includes the Central Market Street Artery Project and a new district wide art investment throughout San Francisco's D10 neighborhoods. CAE continues to honor the founding intent of the program to support and strengthen access to the arts through neighborhood based programs by providing grants for artists working in neighborhood settings, serving as both landlord and funder to the City's four cultural centers and subtenants, Bayview Opera House, Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, SOMARTs, the African American Arts & Culture Complex, Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center and the Queer Cultural Center and serves the teaching artist community by supporting arts education through resource sharing, advocacy and direct service programs such as the nationally recognized WritersCorps program. Ms. Nemzoff co-chairs the Arts Education Master Plan Committee for the San Francisco Unified School District.

Rebecca Novick

Rebecca Novick is the director of the Triangle Lab, a collaboration between Intersection for the Arts and California Shakespeare Theater aims to engage artists with communities to help make change. Previously she was the founding artistic director of Crowded Fire Theater Company and has also served as an arts management consultant specializing in audience engagement.

Elvin Padilla

A multidisciplinary community development practitioner and advocate, Elvin Padilla has worked with and for diverse low-income communities for 25 years. His interest in the field began as a young man growing up in East New York, Brooklyn where he watched a once solid neighborhood deteriorate as arson ravaged housing and jobs vanished. Elvin currently oversees the development of the 950 Center for Art and Education, a transformative affordable art facility development in San Francisco's Tenderloin community. He has consulted a variety of nationally prominent nonprofits working in the fields of community economic development, the arts, affordable housing and food security.

Louise Pubols

Louise Pubols is Senior Curator of History at the Oakland Museum of California. At the Oakland Museum, her projects included a major reinstallation of the museum's history galleries and a major exhibition on the environmental history of the San Francisco Bay, entitled Above and Below: Stories from Our Changing Bay. Her recent book, The Father of All: The de la Guerra Family, Power, and Patriarchy in Mexican California (Huntington Library Press and University of California Press, 2009), explores how patriarchy informed the economic and political systems of Mexican-era California. It has won both the William P. Clements Prize for best non-fiction book on the Southwest from the Clements Center at SMU, and the Ray Allen Billington prize from the Organization of American Historians.

Ava Roy

Ava Roy is the Founding Artistic Director of We Players, dedicated to transforming public spaces into realms of participatory theatre. She has pioneered unique partnerships with both the National Park Service and the California State Park system, creating large-scale performances at park sites throughout the Bay Area. Her unique style of interactive, site-integrated performance aims to highlight the historical and natural treasures of the local landscape and encourage new ways of experiencing and appreciating these places.

Linda Rugg

Linda Haverty Rugg is an Associate Professor in the Scandinavian Department at UC Berkeley. She took her degree in Comparative Literature at Harvard in 1989, where she focused on German, Swedish, and American literatures, and she joined the faculty at Berkeley in 1999. A sustained research interest has been the investigation of autobiography and other acts of self-representation; her first book, Picturing Ourselves: Photography and Autobiography (University of Chicago Press, 1997) won the MLA's 1998 Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for the best book in Comparative Literature. She teaches a variety of subjects: the films of Ingmar Bergman, August Strindberg, Scandinavian crime fiction, childhood in Scandinavian literature and film, whiteness in American culture, and ecology and culture in Scandinavia.

Susan Schwarztenberg

Susan Schwartzenberg is a senior artist at the Exploratorium, where she leads the development of the Fisher Bay Observatory Gallery. She has been a curator, photographer, designer, and artist. Susan was a Loeb Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and has taught at the San Francisco Art Institute, the California College of Art, and Stanford University. As a photographer and visual artist, she has received numerous awards, and has taken part in residencies and exhibitions worldwide. She is known for her public art, including recent works at Stanford University and San Francisco's McLaren Park.

Susan Schweik

Susan Schweik is Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities and a recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Advancing Institutional Excellence. A former Presidential Chair in Undergraduate Education for Disability Studies at U.C. Berkeley, she has been involved with the development of disability studies at Berkeley for fifteen years. She was co-coordinator of the Ed Roberts Fellowships in Disability Studies post-doctoral program at Berkeley (coordinated by the Institute for Urban and Regional Development). She has taught and co-taught undergraduate courses in Disability and Literature, Discourses of Disability, The Disability Rights Movement, Disability and Digital Storytelling, Psychiatric Disability, Literature and Medicine, and Race, Ethnicity and Disability, among others, and graduate courses in Body Theory and Disability Studies and Advanced Disability Studies. She is the author of The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public. Her other teaching and research interests include twentieth century poetry, late nineteenth century American literature, women's studies and gender theory, urban studies, war literature and children's literature.

Joel Slayton

Joel Slayton has been the Executive Director of ZERO1 since 2008 after serving as a both a board member for the organization and chairperson of ISEA2006, which was held in conjunction with the inaugural 01SJ Biennial. An artist, writer and researcher, Joel is a full professor at San Jose State University where he served as Director of the CADRE Laboratory for New Media from 1988 to 2008. Established in 1984 CADRE is one of the oldest and most prestigious centers in the United States dedicated to the development of experimental applications involving information technology and art. Joel has also served on the Board of Directors of Leonardo/ISAST (International Society for Art, Science and Technology) from 1999 to 2008, and was Editor and Chief of the Leonardo-MIT Press Book. Joel is considered a pioneer in the field of art and technology. As an artist, Joel's artworks, which engage with a wide range of media technology, including information mapping, networks and interactive visualization, have been featured in over one hundred exhibitions internationally. An original member of the Visible Language Workshop at MIT in the mid 1970s, Joel has received a National Endowment for the Arts award for his public art spectacles, and was selected for the Xerox Parc Pair Artists in Residence Program. His research explores social software, cooperation models and network visualization. His published academic papers include Social Software; Entailment Mesh, The Re= Purpose of Information, and The Ontology of Organization as System.

Andy Wang

Andy Wang joined Forest City in summer 2012, and is helping to get the company's groundbreaking 5M Project in San Francisco designed and approved. He was drawn to the project for its combustible mix of collaboration, design, and above all, its celebration of the urban. He has a master's degree in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania, and a bachelor's degree in international development studies from UCLA. Andy's prior professional life was in both print and online publishing, where he learned the power of narrative. The city writes its own collective story every day, and he has seen his job, whether as writer or as planner, as capturing and telling that story — or even, lately, taking part in writing it.

Guests participating in panel Q+A session.

SYMPOSIUM REFLECTION

GLOBAL URBAN HUMANITIES POST SYMPOSIUM BLOG SUBMISSIONS

As part of the ongoing campus initiative Global Urban Humanities: Engaging the Humanities and Environmental Design, the Arts Research Center co-sponsored the Reimagining the Urban: Bay Area Connections Across the Arts and Public Space on September 30, 2013. Participants were asked to submit a blog post "on a keyword you see debated in the Bay Area arts, policy, and planning landscape."

October 8, 2013

Kimberly Richards: Collaboration

This posting is by Kimberly Richards, a first year PhD student in Performance Studies at UC Berkeley.

The complexity of the discourses about the city, arts, and public spaces has prompted me to reflect upon the merits, necessities, and challenges of interdisciplinary work. In order to assess the strategies that are being employed in the Bay Area to navigate this difficult terrain, I traced the conference's discussion around collaboration and recorded when the prefixes "inter," "cross" and "trans" were used so as to reveal something about the nature of the "connections across the arts and public space." This approach was, in part, inspired by the final line of the conference program, which asks, "what is the potential and what are the limits of cross-arts, cross-sector coalition-building ... and what new skills and platforms are required to facilitate it?" This loaded question acknowledges that tensions can be high when we move across these boundaries; nevertheless, there remains a sense in which navigating these movements and discovering and inventing new strategies and modes of collaboration are, in fact, the preferable—if not the only—way in which to "reimagine the urban."

Over the course of the day we heard from artists and academics, designers, and commissioners, civic activists and arts administrators, and several of these presentations were collaborative in form. We celebratedintersections of artists with communities, publics with spaces, and artistic performance in site-integrated places. We learned about the cross-pollination of audience experience within We Players' performances and the geographic specificities of building crossroads in the Tenderloin district. I admired the transparent maps that showed the movements of the city's transportation and the efforts to produce transparent agendas at 950 Center for Art and Education. Vocabulary that indicated movement across, between, and amongst artists, communities, and places saturated the discussion, revealing the essential need to work together, forge partnerships, and build bridges across different and multiple disciplines.

The benefits of collaboration were clearly articulated by Andy Wong and Deborah Cullinan, who shared their vision for 5M–an intersectional place designed to facilitate idea creation across traditional boundaries. Cullinan admitted that collaboration requires complex negotiation, but "If we are not going to see each other across boundaries, we're not going to see solutions to the problems."

Reimagining the urban is an intensely local project, and there are pragmatic and political justifications for building from the ground up, but if we really are all one ecosystem, and we've accepted that we need to work across boundaries, what collaborations might we seek beyond the legal boundaries of the bay? How can we translate and interpret good ideas in other urban centers to suit the needs in our community? Who are theinterlocutors that can and should be mobilized, and what spaces do we need to create in order to facilitate these cross-cultural collaborations?

Audience engagement at the Symposium

Christina Gossmann: Public Nature?

This posting is by Christina Gossmann, a second year in the Master of City Planning program at UC Berkeley.

The last session of the day, What is the "Bay" in the Bay Area? Creating Nature, acknowledged the elephant in the room—the Bay—but it also revealed the ambiguity of ownership surrounding this, "our" Bay. From Brad McCrea's mention of changing legal rights ("Most things you can do on land, you can't do in the Bay.") to Louise Pubols' historical account of the Emeryville shoreline as a "junky throw-away space" where artists/students/people were not afraid of "messing up," we caught a glimpse of an immensely complex puzzle: public nature.

The concept of public space is hard enough to define, let alone create, as planner after planner has learned in practice and we, as a class, have read and discussed this semester. Applied to natural space, the level of complexity around its publicness increases significantly—possibly naturally so. To enforce guidelines around public space and disallow appropriation, certain rules apply. In the face of nature's vulnerability in cases of misuse, these rules weigh heavier.

GLEN CANYON N. R.A.
CLOSED
DUE TO LACK OF APPROPRIATIONS
SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE

Above: http://www.npr.org/2013/10/03/228719015/national-parks-close-as-other-public-lands-stay-open

An exceptionally illustrative—and timely!—example is currently unfolding as a result of the U.S. government's shut-down, enacted on Tuesday, the 1st of October: America's 401 national parks are closed. Why? Because "the only way I can protect these places during this period is to shut them down," as National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis told National Public Radio earlier today. The government would expect vandalism, theft, poaching, if national parks remained open to the public without appropriate enforcement.

Curiously, and somewhat confusingly, national forests remain open. On one hand, public forests have more access points than parks and are therefore, simply logistically, harder to control. On the other hand, "those lands are open to a wide range of public activities," explains Jarvis.

This reasoning is dissatisfying to me on multiple levels, and this is where I will bring us back to "our" Bay. As Susan Schwarzenberg, Brad McCrea and Louise Pubols have engagingly articulated, the Bay is very much contested (just remember the "outlaws," imperial powers and polluting corporations all claiming a piece of the Bay). Moreover, I would argue that, unlike National Park Service Director Jarvis claims, the extent to which land can be used does not determine, or even slightly influence, its access. Again, I'd like to point us to a timely example.

Above: The Albany Bulb. Source: http://www.berkeleyside.com/2013/09/05/whats-that-san-francisco-bay-as-seen-from-the-air/

The Albany Bulb is a landfill located just off of the Golden Gate Fields racetracks. Graffiti enthusiasts, dog-walkers and the homeless have been mingling on the half-island for years. In short, the land is used extensively. And yet, illegally. The City of Albany has recently voted to begin enforcing no-camping laws at the Albany Bulb. The 70-odd homeless are expecting the authorities any day now.

My provocation is this: Maybe the question Linda Rugg raised around the extent to which we define ourselves as people living by the Bay and our impact on nature as well as nature's (creative) impact on us, could be altered to become a self-examining one: Who is the "we" interacting with nature, and does every Bay Area resident have the access or right to this interaction?

Katie Bruhn: Layers Of Reciprocity

This posting is by Katie Bruhn, a first year PhD student in Southeast Asian Studies at UC Berkeley.

Throughout the daylong symposium, "Reimaging the Urban," two particular keywords continued to jump out at me – reciprocity and layers. As I thought about these as individual concepts I realized that in fact layers of reciprocity was a much more appropriate way in which to understand the complexity of collaboration and exchange necessary in order for the projects discussed to succeed.

The first panel began with a very clear example of the mechanisms and benefits of reciprocity. Presenting together in regards to the 5M Project, Deborah Cullinan and Andy Wang demonstrated how projects such as this are the result of collaboration across sectors. Deborah Cullinan in particular stressed the importance of the 5M Project for the sustained life of Intersection for the Arts while Andy Wang described how Intersection's place within 5M has added a dynamic element to the project. Both have benefited from the other, however, what about local communities that surround the 5M Project? What is the 5M Project doing for them and how are they contributing to the development of the 5M Project?

The question of local communities was carried over into Elvin Padilla's discussion of the 950 Center for Art & Education located in the Tenderloin. Intended to benefit those that live around this site's proposed location, 950 will in essence become a physical site of reciprocity. Art organizations will benefit from the multi-tenant structure that will create affordable studio and classroom space. Those that live nearby get to use this site while also redefining as Padilla described, the current identity of Tenderloin residents as "helpless." Yet, Padilla also mentioned commercial aspects of 950, a boutique hotel, and office space. Again, we are made aware of the layers involved in this type of project. I could not help but question (as many of the audience members also did) who benefits more within these layers of collaboration and intended reciprocity? Considering the layers of interaction present in any type of development project such as 5M and 950 the question of equity emerges.

While Cullinan, Wang, and Padilla's presentations brought up the question of local community involvement in the development of new creative spaces, later presentations raised questions of government support. Joel Slayton's presentation regarding ZERO 1 mentioned various examples including the Bay Bridge light project, which he described as "deeply complicated." Such projects would not be possible without layers of mutual support, from the artists involved to the city agencies that control such public sites. The control over public space was again raised in the final panel focused on issues of environmental preservation in the Bay. Presentations by Susan Schwartzenberg and Brad McCrea, while each representing very different institutions or organizations, further highlighted how government agencies must work with local artists, creative institutions, and local communities in this process of reimagining urban space.

Each of the presentations described above touched on reciprocity and exchange in a somewhat different way. Thinking about the layers of reciprocity (or intended reciprocity) present in any public or community project reminds us constantly of the importance of equity. Be it exchange with local communities or government agencies there is indeed a great deal of give and take – perhaps not always resulting in the desired outcome. The use by some of our presenters of the word "reciprocity" signifies a desire for mutual collaboration and equal benefit across sectors. As our presenters made clear, this question is a difficult one without a specific answer. It is something we must continue to work through in order to ensure equality within the various layers of exchange necessary for the successful outcome of any project that becomes a part of our urban landscape.

Megan Hoetger: Long-Term

This posting is by Megan Hoetger, a second year PhD student in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley.

The long-term is a durational temporality. If I set this against the continuous present of the participle, 're-imagining'–the keyword which leads the title of the symposium–what kind of time do I find myself in? The call for the long-term engagement is a particularly fraught one for the field of visual art practice forcing the surface a series of questions, like: how long is enough for an artist to engage a community? How long should the dialogue be? How long does the project go? How long should the artist *be* in that space, or need she be there at all? What point, if ever, should/can she dis-engage and move on to the next community, city, country? When I shift these questions to arts organizations we might similarly ask: how long is long enough? And, coming more sharply in focus at this level, if long-term is the desired time, where is funding to sustain that continuous present coming from? How might that conflict with the very conceptual root of the continuous present action, to re-imagine? What costs must we / are we / should we be willing to pay to secure that duration temporality? And what do we imagine to be the relationship between the artist / the arts and communities across the long term?

Radical Connectivity — Joel Slayton, director of the Zero 1 biennial in San Jose, delivered a presentation on the topic of digital public art practices, which is the focus of the biennial. Slayton proposed two forthcoming changes (which a consensus has agreed are forthcoming, although whose consensus I am not quite sure): the first, radical connectivity; the second, infinite data. The former brought 'the radical' to bear on the ways in which Cloud will revolutionize our connections, shifting us into a culture of reciprocity; that is, a culture of give and take. What Slayton's proposition, as great as it sounds, seems to ignore is the basic issue of access that surfaces as soon as we begin to talk about Cloud and infinite data.

Radical parasite– Raquel Gutierrez's presentation on her work with the new program YBCA in Community brought 'the radical' to bear in a fundamentally different way, directly taking up issues of access. Gutierrez's deployment of the term was paired to with a relation based on reciprocity but with a self-recognized leechlike relation. Gutierrez is from Los Angeles and only recently relocated to the Bay Area for this job at YBCA; here with within the communities in San Francisco, as a result, is as that of an itinerant outsider. What she proposed though, was not to try to overcome that status as outsider, but the possibility of operating as a radical parasite and working within the realities of uneven power relations and precarious duration to create space for youth outreach.

Slayton and Gutierrez proposed seemingly opposing visions of a radical long-term relationship, so what do we make of the viability of the extended duration as a mode of artistic engagement? Can the relationship be both reciprocal and parasitic?

Leslie Dreyer: (In)Equality Inevitable?

This posting is by Leslie Dreyer, a first year MFA student in Art Practice.

Dr. Shannon Jackson, who co-organized Reimagining the Urban, opened the symposium with questions including, in summary: What kinds of creativity are valued and for whom? And how can collaborating across sectors create solutions rather than obstacles? Another question to ask here would be: solutions for whom? Margaret Crawford, who blogged about Richard Florida's theory and Creative Class policies "pushing up rents and displacing local businesses and residents," restated Jackson's questions by mentioning San Francisco's "success" alongside the displacement of long-time local and influential artists. I was curious how the panelists would address questions of equity and access in their strategies of "reimagining."

Session I seemed focused on creative business models for arts organizations and survival under neoliberalism, especially in the new tech boom. Andy Yang of Forest City described the 5M project, which is a 4-acre mixed use network of buildings and organizations, all of which Florida would categorize as belonging to the "creative class." He mentioned new enterprise opportunities emerging from 5M, including a "homeless to hacker" success story, which showed what is possible but perhaps not probable for the majority of the surrounding disenfranchised community. He also acknowledged the low rate of community attendance during Grey Area Foundation's (backed by 5M) Urban Prototyping Festival. I started to wonder how the arts orgs involved in the symposium interpreted "serving the community" and "community-based" art. Do they serve those fortunate enough to afford market-rate rent, those with a longer history of residency that are facing displacement, both?

Deborah Cullinan, executive director of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, emphasized wanting a "place at the table" and parity between the "indigenous" community (using a potentially controversial definition meaning long-time residents), arts organizations and developers, though she didn't explain how this parity would be achieved. She said that "instead of standing on the sidelines in protest" they were going to "throw [themselves] into the change and make it better." Unfortunately there wasn't enough time for me to ask the questions: 1) Better for whom? 2) Instead of standing on the sidelines in protest, can't we stand on top of the "table" (the one at which arts non-profits hope to sit alongside city reps, tech industry reps and developers) and not accept the change, specifically the displacement of long-time locals, as inevitable? 3) Who is not at the table, and is sitting there with "unlikely allies"(i) an act of survival of the fittest or solidarity for those who aren't invited?

In Session II the speakers described technology-driven urban arts projects while avoiding the equity question. The projects were "accessible" meaning one didn't have to be tech savvy to use or understand them. Some of them appropriated vast amounts of user data prompting Dr. Teresa Caldeira to ask how technologies that collect such data is being / could be used in this era of expanding surveillance. Joel Slayton of Zero 1 responded that it was inevitable that it would be used to surveil the public but that the arts could be a "cultural watchdog," which seemed to elude tech developers' role in public surveillance and privacy infringement.

Why were increasing inequity and surveillance imagined to be "inevitable" by many in this symposium, and what would it take to move participants to reimagine that they're not? Is our only hope as artists or arts orgs to become "radical parasites," a phrase mentioned by panelist Raquel Gutierrez, feeding off the tech industry for money and disenfranchised communities for content and perhaps more grant money (or is she using the phrase in more of a Robin Hood sense: feeding off tech to give to the poor)? I don't have quick and easy answers as to how to achieve equity in a city with such high rates of evictions, economic inequality and unaffordable housing, but I know the policy changes that we need to stem the tide of gentrification and class-warfare, starting with mid-market as ground zero, require the sheer force of the masses. Will non-profits play a role in muting dissent, a critique posed in INCITE!'s book The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-profit Industrial Complex? Will they leverage their "place at the table" to inspire support for policies that help keep the disenfranchised in their homes and in the community arts programs designed for them? In what ways can artists reimagine the urban that makes equity inevitable?

Hallie Wells: Spontaneous

This posting is by Hallie Wells, a third year PhD student in Anthropology at UC Berkeley.

What is spontaneity if not serendipity—a surprisingly pleasant encounter, saying yes to adventure, walking up the steeper street on a whim and being rewarded with the better view? Spontaneity, perhaps because of its association with creativity and positive action, popped up throughout the conference as a human potential that urban art projects and development plans should tap into. Spontaneous interactions can be facilitated by architectural and design features, as Deborah Cullinan and Andy Wang noted of the 5M Project, or by technological innovations such as those discussed by Joel Slayton of Zero1. From Jake Levitas we heard about the unexpected hand-holding with strangers made possible by the "I Just Wanna Hold Your Hand" urban prototype project, and Ava Roy gave an eloquent description—both at the conference and in her blog post—of the moments of spontaneous joy engendered by the interactions between the natural and built environment, performers, and audience members during the We Players' performances.

Spontaneity is not unique to urban environments, of course, but throughout the conference we heard calls for urban planners, arts administrators, policymakers, and artists to incorporate possibilities for spontaneous interaction into their projects. This seems particularly necessary as a means of countering the violent, painful, and troubling forms of spontaneity: police brutality, evictions, muggings, shootings, rapes, catcalls, stop and frisk, and on and on. The things that make us think twice about walking alone in certain places. The things that make us stop and stare or, conversely, avert our eyes. The things that, as Raquel Gutiérrez put it, make us hard.

Of course, many of these things aren't spontaneous at all, at least not in the dictionary sense of occurring through some inner impetus, without an exterior force. In the same way that certain built spaces and landscapes lend themselves to certain kinds of human interactions (dark alleyways at night, sunny expanses of grass ...), structural racism, sexism, homophobia, and poverty make certain kinds of human interactions predictable. We are not surprised when they happen, except when they happen to us. And when they happen enough, surprise gives way to a mixture of despair, anger, and apathy.

We may spend energy and time and money on a heart-warming project one day, and someone will steal it the next. BART platforms become murder scenes, daytime playgrounds host nighttime drug deals. In planning for the serendipitous moments of spontaneous connection, we cannot forget or ignore the possibilities for harmful confrontation. Is there a way to create projects that acknowledge these possibilities but provide opportunities—and reasons—to treat each other better?

Alex Werth: Community

This posting is by Alex Werth, graduate student at UC Berkeley.

One of the themes that we're exploring in our seminar—entitled "The City, Arts, and Public Spaces," and planned in conjunction with Reimagining the Urban—is that of publics and publicness. (See Shannon Jackson's post for an overview of these many-sided concepts.) As a budding geographer, and a scholar of urban public space, I began the semester with the view that public space is public in the sense that it is, in theory, open to universal use, and that, to that effect, it is also a space in the sense that it is inhabitable. Of course, in practice, public space (so conceived) is always subject to prohibitions and exclusions that place inegalitarian limits on urban citizenship, limits that may be challenged, and perhaps changed, through appropriations of precisely those spaces—"public spaces," like parks, streets, and civic centers—that name an ideal of publicness. I've been tested in this view, however, by the idea that we can point to neither predetermined publics nor public spaces, but rather to discourses through which publics may come into being. This latter idea can be understood simply (and perhaps simplistically) as the distinction between pre-formed and per-formed, or a priori and emergent, collectives.

With this tension in mind, at Reimagining the Urban, I was struck by the similar many-sidedness of the concept of community. We heard about LIED to ("low-income, ethnically diverse") communities, neighborhood communities, the Bay Area community (responsible for making collective decisions about the body of water at its heart), the arts community, and even the development community. Note that all of these collectives are pre-formed, or a priori. They exist somewhere. We can point to them, talk to them, represent them, and, at best, empower them (assuming we, ourselves, are members of, or have inroads into, them). I was struck by the sense that—for many of the participants, some of whom were "community organizers" or "community liaisons" by trade—the idea of community was something of a necessary concept, like a public might be for a "public official." I found this surprising because I think of the artist as affecting our shared cultural lives through the production and circulation of texts, and thus likely to acknowledge that his or her work convenes an audience, and so helps to produce, rather than merely speak to, a community.

Perhaps this performative notion of community too nears that of a public. If that's so, then we should ask: What's the relation between communities and publics? But rather than detour into that question, however useful it may be, I'd like to finish this post by proposing a concept of community as a group that shares cultural and linguistic norms, values, and practices.

So defined, a community can, on the one hand, form through cohabitation, in which common cultures evolve through shared historical and geographical experiences. In this sense, communities can come to us a priori. On the other hand, however, norms, values, and practices can emerge out of contingent, even ephemeral, circumstances, and perhaps especially through an art practice that is extroverted. We can see this notion of community, in its dual aspects and temporalities, in Rebecca Novick's post on site-specific art. In her final paragraph, she notes that, by attending a healing ritual at the Fruitvale BART station, she entered a "community" that she "[doesn't] belong to." Yet, at the same time, she explains that, "for everyone there," the performance turned the site into "a place for community sharing, somewhere where perhaps healing can begin." So, then, is or isn't Rebecca a member of the community that grieves for Oscar Grant? In the spirit of the dialogue that emerged at Reimagining the Urban, I'd like to suggest that the answer is both–and.

Martha Herrera-Lasso: Bridges

This posting is by Martha Herrera-Lasso, PhD student in Performance Studies at UC Berkeley.

Raquel Gutiérrez invites us to map the room around us: who is here and how long did it take us all to get to 2150 Allston Way. For a moment, we acknowledged the morning's journey that brought us to this place, and maybe even the bridges we had to cross to get here.

Throughout the day bridges came up again and again in the form of projects, conversation, opportunities, performances and partnerships. Deborah Cullinan invited us to think of alleys as bridges, as spaces of circulation; she spoke of creating art bridges and using them to prepare new generations for what is growing around them. She reminded us that the word and is an important bridge, a word that provides circulation in our conversation and our evolution. A concept Brad McCrea returned to when touching upon the constant search for the balance between Conservation and Development in his work.

Elvin Padilla spoke not only of the importance of bridging social work to the reality of real estate, of collaboration with unlikely allies and the complex negotiations that come from these partnerships, but he invited us to deal with the anxieties that arise from the act of crossing bridges. "Fear no art" and "Fear no tech" are indications that we need trust in order to cross, that it is important not only for us to build bridges, but to acknowledge the fears they provoke. Finally, he asks us to look at the long-term design: will the bridge be able to take the weight in the years to come?

Ava Roy and Lauren Dietrich Chávez offer a performance space in which to experience bridge crossing hoping to recreate this experience in our everyday lives. Through the element of surprise, We Players create bridges within known spaces that take us into enchanted realms, where, as one of their audience members expressed, "Alcatraz is now Denmark." But these interventions also aim to create bridges between the historic and the current in the spaces we inhabit, bridging new time and place within known spaces.

Finally, as Linda Rugg asked, what does it mean that a bridge is open or closed? How does this force us to navigate in new ways? Susan Schwartzenberg takes us to the imagined bridge – the mid-bridge that is the pier, which stops you half way, immerses you in the bay, invites you to listen, to be within it. Within it and not above or below it – because this is the danger of the bridge: it can isolate us from what lies below and what lies above it. It creates, as Brad McCrea expressed, a static relationship with what we cross over. Bridges generate movement and allow for new forms of circulation, but bridges also speak of separation. So in this continuous building of bridges, let us keep in mind how they connect and separate, where they began and how they carry our weight into the future, how the acts of building and crossing change us, and what views new bridges unintentionally obstruct while they open our eyes and bodies to these new, enchanted realms.

Elvin Padilla: Stratification

This posting is by Elvin Padilla, Director of the 950 Center for Art & Education.

Ruminations on the question of what preoccupies me-

How to bring art groups together with affordable housing groups together with social service groups together with youth groups together with parks groups together with community health groups and now, most recently tech companies, preoccupies me. the Tenderloin loses the struggle for equitable development because we are fragmented and undermine each other.

Advocacy for the arts preoccupies me. How does the following and Cy Musiker's piece read: agitating? advocating? appeasing? matter of fact? demonizing tech?

> KQED's Cy Musiker aired a piece last week critical to the city's future: San Francisco Artistic Community Wants a Piece of Mid-Market. There's good news! Supervisor Jane Kim, a big art and education advocate, is working on a special-use district to incentivize mid-Market developers to build permanently affordable space for art and education. Effective incentives could tip the scale at several mid-Market sites.
>
> At present, outstanding education groups interested in locating @ the 950 Center for Art & Education – Youth Speaks, Blue Bear Music, All Stars Project and Women's Audio Mission – would owe the city nearly a million dollars in "impact" fees in order to revitalize three devastated blocks of blighted buildings, build the Center and bring their programming to at-risk Tenderloin youth. Clearly this does not make sense, particularly with the backdrop of a wealthy city – one that's not assisting with funding the Center's development – reaping huge revenues from a surging tech-driven economy and booming real estate market.
>
> Technically, of course, it is the groups' funders that would owe the city for the "impact" of revitalizing three devastated blocks. Wouldn't it be better if we could instead direct these resources to endow a 950 Scholarship Fund for low-income Tenderloin residents? Or endow an operating reserve to help our small non-profit groups get stabilized over the first few years?
>
> From Cy Musiker's report: A few officials are listening, though. Supervisor Jane Kim represents Mid-Market, and she's working on a measure to create an arts special-use district that would reduce developer fees on space reserved for nonprofits arts. It's the kind of break that could help a Mid-Market arts company like Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, which rehearses in a building without heat or hot water.
>
> Many hope this effort from a determined art & education-friendly supervisor, combined with the hoped-for leadership from our mayor, will give the Tenderloin a fighting chance for a measure of still-elusive equitable development (or at least heat and hot water!) in the face of the historic tech and real estate booms.

I was accused of painting an us vs. them picture that's hostile to tech in my KQED interview. i don't get that. in fact, all of my writing and work at nomnic.org and tenderlion.org has been striving toward an us and them understanding, achievable largely through the arts. there's so much anxiety, anger and resentment out there and it's growing. as i see it, projects like 950 are tech's and city hall's best friend against this backlash.

Assignment: Think of how to effectively communicate the need for the arts to bridge our increasingly polarized worlds.

Failing the neighborhood preoccupies me. failing the art groups preoccupies me: Will building a new debt-free state-of-the-art facility in the most ideal of visible and accessible locations be enough to position them for successful operations ongoing into the future?

Social justice practice vs. preaching preoccupies me: will funders show up to endow a scholarship fund for at-risk tenderloin residents who want to study art? or will they do so only if it satisfies some ideological construct far removed from the realities of the Tenderloin streets.

The increasing polarization and stratification of our neighborhood preoccupies me. The housing is protected, the art spaces are largely not. We cannot live by rooms, meds and meals alone. Poverty is more than a simple question of income.

Margaret Crawford: Creative Class

This posting is by Margaret Crawford, the Director of Urban Design, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design in the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley

In 2002 economist Richard Florida published the Rise of the Creative Class. In it he argued that the best way for cities to revive their ailing urban economies was to remake themselves in order to attract a social category he called "the creative class." At the core of this group were innovative and creative workers whose importance in the new knowledge-based economy could produce new companies, attract jobs and residents, and expand consumption. These benefits would then trickle down to re-ignite local economies, based on the "rising tide lifts all boats" principle. In spite of the fact that a number of previous "silver bullets," also guaranteed to transform cities (festival marketplaces, sports stadiums, waterfront redevelopment) had largely failed, many cities enthusiastically adopted Florida's prescriptions. Planners and politicians, hoping to create the kind of vibrant place that would to appeal to the "hip and cool" instituted a range of policies that ranged from subsidizing the arts to fostering the staples of bohemian neighborhoods, such as cafes, trendy restaurants, and loft-style apartments.

Ten years later, after scholars had questioned nearly every aspect of Florida's claims, the concept was largely discredited in academia. On the ground, the evidence was not much better. The results could be either tragic (as in Michigan's "cool cities" campaign, subsidizing the arts in Detroit), unnecessary (as in planners' support of Brooklyn's "edginess"), or, more often, simply ineffective. One observer summed up its outcomes as benefitting the Creative Class while exacerbating inequality. Creative Class policies were particularly damaging to poor and minority areas, pushing up rents and displacing local businesses and residents. Although Florida's current academic position as the head of the Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto might already seem like a parody, his most incisive critic is the anonymous author of the parody twitter feed dick_florida. Described as "Talker. Doula for the creative utopia growing inside your city. Champion of the privileged since 2002. America's #1 Virtue Industry," his tweets effectively skewer Florida's mixture of enthusiasm and obliviousness.

Today, the concept of the creative class survives largely among real estate developers as the icing on the cake of standard development practices, used to sell projects to city officials and citizens. To more effectively brand their proposals, they've expanded their vocabulary to include "creative experiences," "creative currency," "creative environments," "emerging economies," "innovation" and "incubator.

Louise Pubols: Layered Landscapes

This posting is by Louise Pubols, Senior Curator of History at the Oakland Museum of California.

How will the baylands be used? And who will use them?

These two questions lie at the heart of the environmental history of the San Francisco Bay, and current debates over its uncertain future. A richly productive estuary, San Francisco is also densely urban. Its landscape is the joint creation of people and nature, locked in a relationship neither can escape from. And if you were to pick one spot around the bay's shoreline to illustrate just how contentious this relationship has been over time, you'd be hard pressed to find a more richly layered one than the wet and squishy ground underneath this wooden dragon.

This bit of renegade art once stood among many such pieces in a marshy crescent called the Emeryville Mudflats, where Temescal Creek empties into the bay. Long before weary travelers sighted it on their approach to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, long before the first Europeans finally found the opening to the bay, Ohlone people managed and shaped this landscape. They harvested and ate from the natural world, feasting on shellfish and waterfowl, making tules into watercraft and homes, and crafting shell regalia and reed baskets for ceremony and trade. One of their major villages was found just inland, and dominating the shoreline by the creek were a complex of shellmounds. The largest of these stood 300 feet long and 60 feet high at its peak, both a place where the remains of meals were deposited, and a burial site of the village's ancestors. When Spaniards first arrived, the village and burial mounds had been abandoned, and, not knowing this was a cultural feature, they called it "Temescal Hill."

In the 1870s, Americans used the land for a private park, complete with shooting range, racetrack, beer gardens, picnic grounds, and a dance hall built on the leveled top of the mound. At the same time, and into the twentieth century, citizens of Emeryville used the flow of the creek and the bay's tides to advantage, building a series of slaughterhouses along the shoreline here, dumping sewage, and later siting factories making iron, paints, and pesticides. Railways and freeways separated residents from access to the shoreline. In the 1920s, the mound itself was razed to create more room for industry. These new uses edged out eating and harvesting as the primary human use of the tidal margin.

But in the latter half of the 20th century, a new awareness of the environment came slowly to the fore. In the 1950s, the East Bay Municipal Utility District built a sewage treatment plant just south of the crescent, mitigating the classic stench the area had become infamous for. But the land, still ringed by industry and freeways, was still a bit more "backyard" than "front yard"—a private, unregulated place for working, dumping, and burying unwanted

Lively discussion extended through the closing reception.

junk. Into this sort-of private, sort-of no-man's land, artists and art students from the local area snuck in the 1960s and 1970s, erecting sculptures from driftwood timbers and junkpile boards, painting and embellishing with flattened beer cans and bits of metal.

Inspired by the environmental movement, the state began to turn attention to the mudflats and marshlands in the 1980s, and asserted that the art was damaging the ecosystem and wildlife of the crescent. Caltrans officials started removing the sculptures, and the East Bay Regional Park District acquired the property and begin to clean up the industrial contamination. At the same time, the city of Emeryville began to replace the heavy industries with retail, housing, and hotels.

This bit of tideland is now part of the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park, stretching from the Bay Bridge to Richmond, and recently named in honor of Save the Bay co-founder Sylvia McLaughlin. Every day, people walk, bicycle, and birdwatch here. But you will not find anyone fishing, digging clams, buring the dead, slaughtering cattle, shooting target practice, dumping sewage, cleaning paint vats, or making art. People pass through, they admire the view, but they do not stay.

Historian Matthew Booker has recently observed,

> "Of all the remarkable changes in San Francisco Bay's shoreline over the past two hundred years, none is more dramatic than its abandonment as a place of work....Ecologists and environmentalists who want to restore the bay—people genuinely concerned for the heritage of future generations—should remember that among the greatest losses in the past century has been human knowledge of the tidal edge, knowledge gained through working in those places. ... That fading sense of connection is a radical change, even more radical than the past century and a half of chemical poisoning, filling, draining, and diverting rivers. The greatest danger for the human relationship to San Francisco Bay is to ignore it. Removing people and their work from the tidal margin would be a terrible loss." (Down by the Bay, p.189)

The Dragon is gone. Who is the shoreline for now? How will it be used? Who gets to decide?

Shannon Jackson: Public

This posting is by Shannon Jackson, Director of the Arts Research Center at UC Berkeley.

In cross-disciplinary gatherings at ARC, we have found it worth going over territory that we all think we know, to review the staples, the bread and butter of our fields, in order to expose blindspots and to jostle ourselves into new perspectives on the heretofore obvious. But should I really reflect on the term "public"? when so much ink has been spilled on this subject historically...and from so many quarters recently? For this particular session, I guess I think I will, especially because the term is one that links some elements of environmental planning to key questions in humanist debate and artistic practice. Teresa Caldeira and I have named our forthcoming course for the Global Urban Humanities project "City, Arts, and Public Spaces" partly because the domain of 'public' 'space' seems a clear area of overlap between our fields. But of course, the term Public is so ubiquitous and its associations are so varied and contradictory. Is Public about extroversion, about visibility, about access, about openness? And how do these terms differ slightly in their associations and their politics? Does Public connote the "public sphere," the one Habermas extolled (and many feminists and postcolonial critics have revised) as an arena of bracing and vibrant deliberation, detached from the sphere of commerce as well as the sphere of the state? Or is Public referring to the "public sector," the domain of state and civic governance that is sustained by taxes, distributive justice, and ambivalent trust? Is that the same public sector imperiled by corruption, appropriation, and by the pervasive anti-state distrust circulating quite differently in both right and left sectors of society? The term Public often seems defined by its opposite. Public is the opposite of private, the opposite of hidden, the opposite of the closed, the opposite of the private sector, the opposite of the for-profit sector. But the opposing terms are not themselves equivalent. The Public can be celebrated as unfettered deliberative engagement, but, in the very next breath, the Public can be castigated as bureaucracy and state control. Publicness is the opposite of closed, from one perspective, but it is the opposite of free from another.

In my own corner of the world, I find the ambiguity around the term Public to be a source of intense mobilization and of intense confusion. For many artists, making "public art" meant exiting the confines of the studio, the gallery, or the theatre to redefine the parameters of one's medium as well the sites that housed it and the receivers who encountered it. The public art gesture was both formal and political. How such gestures understood themselves in relation to the goals of a public sphere or to the goals of a public sector is debatable. It varied internationally in contexts where questions of democracy or freedom differed thanks to local state systems and ideologies. And in many situations, the deliberative goals of the public sphere often seemed in tension with the distributive goals of the public sector. Some felt that the public sector needed to be protected by the interventions of a political art practice, and others that the public sector is precisely what needed to be combatted. Some might not have been clear on either score.

In our current moment, we are witnessing a global, if contradictory, conversation about what publicness might mean. For myself, it is interesting to see how much questions of "urban planning" are at the center of public protests rising these last few weeks–in Turkey at Taksim Square–where the prime minister's plans for urban space are a key source of outrage–and all throughout Brazil where critiques of political corruption are often focused on the infrastructural issues of urban planning (and whether the construction of hospitals or schools might be able to elicit the material support that "stadiums" seem to have secured). Of course, these and other movements have followed, rejected, and/or revised a different kind of urban public practice collected under the banner of "Occupy" and homogenized in shaky allegiances with a so-called Arab Spring. As I try to sort through the effects of this rangy and thorny network of discourses and practices, I very much look forward to deeper engagement with the fields of environmental design. Do these fields and practices have different ways of framing the competing associations of the Public? And can we develop a different way of keeping these claims in productive tension together?

Teresa Caldeira: Street Art

This posting is by Teresa Caldeira, Professor of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley.

"Street art" is the umbrella expression to refer to several forms of intervention that use the streets as their domain. It covers not only visual productions such as graffiti and tagging, but also performances like skateboarding, parkour, and break dance. The literature on street art is extensive and framed by a reference to mainstream artistic production. "Is graffiti (or tagging, or skateboarding) art?" seems to be an unavoidable question addressed again and again and consistently answered affirmatively. In my research, this approach is secondary. Instead, I am interested in asking: what is the kind of intervention that these urban manifestations make in the everyday life of the city? How do they modify and shape public space? What is the kind of political agency they produce? How do citizens engage with them in their everyday movements around the city? I consider that one of the oldest analyses of graffiti/tagging is still one of the most provocative: that published by Jean Baudrillard in 1976. He argued that the power of New York graffiti resided in their emptiness as signifiers. Their "revolutionary intuition," argued Baudrillard, comes from the perception that "ideology no longer functions at the level of political signifieds, but at the level of the signifier, and that this is where the system is vulnerable and must be dismantled" ('Kool Killer or the insurrection of signs'). Graffiti and especially tagging are attacks at the level of the signifier.

Baudrillard's argument has intrigued me during the time in which I have developed the research for my current project investigating these interventions in public space in São Paulo. It has led me to formulate questions about the type of political agency and of politics that these performances in fact enact in the city, transforming its public. Thus, the literature that I explore is mainly that reflecting on some of the predicaments of contemporary politics. I am especially interested in the work of Jacques Rancière. For him, politics is "the accident that interrupts the logic by which those who have a title to govern dominate. … Political subjects are … processes of subjectification which introduce a disagreement, a dissensus. And political dissensus is not simply a conflict of interests, opinions, or values. It is a conflict over the common itself… a dispute over what is visible as an element of a situation, over which elements belong to what is common, over the capacity of subjects to designate this common and argue over it." ('Introducing disagreement', Angelaki, 9:6, 2004). It is in this sense that I consider arguing that the practices labeled by the expression "street art" constitute a powerful form of contemporary politics.

I consider this argument in relation to other views of contemporary politics articulated by authors such as Asef Bayat, Partha Chatterjee, James Holston, and AbdouMaliq Simone. Although they have quite diverse perspectives and are far from coinciding in their analyzes, they all share a deep dissatisfaction with current views of political agency framed by analyzes of North Atlantic democracies and a commitment to theorizing politics and urban citizenship from the perspective of the spaces of the subalterns, especially from disjunctive democracies of the global south.

Margaret Crawford: Everyday Urbanism

This posting is by Margaret Crawford, the Director of Urban Design, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design in the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley

In the early 1990s, I started working with scholars, urban designers, photographers, and writers on a project exploring everyday urban life in Los Angeles. In 1999, we published Everyday Urbanism as a guide to investigating the "as-found" character of the city. We identified everyday urban space as a rich and complex public realm created by the multiplicities of daily experience– trips to supermarkets, the commute to work, journeys that included wide boulevards and mini-malls, luxurious stores and street vendors, manicured lawns and dilapidated public parks.

Drawing on both social and urban theory and highly specific local fieldwork, we portrayed such everyday spaces as a product of the intricate social, political, economic, and aesthetic forces operating in the city. By emphasizing the primacy of human experience and close-up observation of lived realities, we wanted to challenge the formalism of architecture and the abstractions of urban theory and planning.

Instead, we defined the city as a social product and a social geography, naming and drawing attention to a type of urban space that was pervasive but unknown; ignored by city planners, disregarded by scholars, and scorned by architects, but fundamental to the city's residents. To mirror the multiples spaces of everyday life, we assembled essays, both scholarly and personal, photographs, drawings, and design proposals.

The concept continued to develop. In 1994, John Chase published Glitter Stucco and Dumpster Diving, a deeply personal depiction of Los Angeles as the product of an ad hoc but democratic urbanism in which developers, homeowners, renters, retailers, pedestrians and the homeless all assert their own place in the city. In 2008, Everyday Urbanism Expanded Version appeared, allowing us to acknowledge the numerous attacks on our ideas as well as including new contributions from around the world, a demonstration of the concept's worldwide influence.

I see the Mellon Grant as a new project that has the potential to be as intellectually exciting and personally satisfying as Everyday Urbanism. In many ways, humanities based urbanism represents a continuation and expansion of the same concepts and methods; collaboration, a focus on the human subject, the inclusion of multiple voices, the creative use of a broad range of theories, and the intention to create new forms of critique, interpretation and representation. Bringing these together, we can create a new urban discipline that will make the concepts, methods and insights of the humanities operative in urban space.

Linda Haverty Rugg: Environmental Humanities

This posting is by Linda Haverty Rugg, Chair of the Scandinavian Department at UC Berkeley

(Cribbed from the co-authored Background Report, The Emergence of the Environmental Humanities, Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research/MISTRA, Stockholm, 2013, co-authors David Nye (Chair), Robert Emmett, James Fleming, and Linda Haverty Rugg)

During the last decade a new field has emerged that increasingly is referred to as the Environmental Humanities. Environmental Humanities research centers often originated either in literature departments, because of the ecocritical movement in English Literature and American Studies, or in history departments, where the field of environmental history emerged after c. 1980. Other contributors to this field have come from inherently interdisciplinary fields such as geography, the digital humanities, gender studies, anthropology, and the history of technology. Other fertile ground for Environmental Humanities has emerged at interdisciplinary centers that combine natural and social sciences with humanities, or at humanities centers that encourage research and discussion across disciplines. Several fields that have contributed much to the Environmental Humanities have already begun to bridge this divide, notably cultural geography, anthropology, and the history of technology.

The present moment is one of transition as well as growth. A generation of scholars who laid the foundations for the Environmental Humanities are nearing retirement or have already retired. They leave behind a thriving intellectual field, including several newly dedicated research centers. The Environmental Humanities are expanding rapidly and articulating concerns relevant to medicine, animal rights, neurobiology, race and gender studies, urban planning, climate change, and digital technology, to name just a few fields. Generally, there has been a growing effort to engage environmental concerns, to communicate with a broad public, and to evoke a sense of wonder, empathy or urgency, which comes largely out of humanistic training and practice. It is difficult to think of a single academic discipline that has not become engaged with the Environmental Humanities. In response to a survey of the field conducted by this committee, Australian scholar Libby Robin, suggested that the phrase Environmental Humanities: "refers to the human sciences that contribute to global change which include environmental concerns such as climate change, global ocean system change, biodiversity and extinctions, and atmospheric carbon. It is an interdisciplinary area that considers the moral and ethical relations between human and non-human others (at all scales up to planetary). Because 'the environment' has been defined by biophysical indicators and studied through 'environmental sciences' (a term that dates back just 50 years) and environmental economics, the moral, political and ethical dimensions of environmental degradation were long neglected as 'outside the expertise' of the dominant discourse. Attitudes and values are not easily measured, nor do they readily yield data that can be incorporated into modeling of future scenarios." Yet environmental problems belong to us all, and the solutions will come from all fields of endeavor, including the humanities.

Ava Roy: Temporality

This posting is by Ava Roy, Founding Artistic Director of We Players.

In my experience, one of the most unique and profound joys of working site-specifically is developing an intimate relationship with the elemental forces of the environment. While striving to build a coherent world and intricate structure (and to clearly tell the story of the play), within the sweeping scale of massive outdoor sites is challenging enough. The challenge is intensified by the completely unpredictable atmospheric input – while rehearsing and performing, we find ourselves in searing heat or bone-chilling damp cold, we face blasts of powerful winds off the Pacific, we are in turns shrouded in fog, then squinting into blazing sun… These contributions from the environment are as uncontrollable as they are magnificent. A sudden shaft of sunlight provides a natural spotlight on Hamlet as he expounds on how to catch the conscience of the King from behind a fence on Alcatraz, an eagle soars above Zeus' head as he heckles the mortals from his perch at the top of Mount Olympus (or the old rock quarry on Angel Island as the case may be), a swirl of thick fog tumbles into the fortress as Macbeth receives his crown, an ominous yet fitting portent. In less sublime alignment, a helicopter churns overhead as an intimate soliloquy is shared with the audience, or the abundant wind may carry the actors voices in precisely the wrong direction. I believe that these surprise contributions from the environment serve to heighten our awareness that what we are experiencing is a precious, unrepeatable moment in time. That this event is alive and breathing and truly dynamic. These surprise encounters with nature – within the ordered structure of the play – can help us to drop into a heightened state of awareness and appreciation for the moment. When we practice this through our engagement with the arts, we might become more facile at expanding our awareness and savoring the minute moments of beauty in our day to day lives. We might become more adept at recognizing how even in our dense, fast-paced urban landscape, nature is ever-present and is inviting us into a state of wonder. While we cannot control the elements, we can predict certain things and invite these forces into our practice of developing site-integrated art. We should consider carefully the time of day, the time of year. What is happening in the physical environment in the season we are producing the work? What plants are blooming? What phase is the moon in? What's happening in the energetic environment? If it's spring time, how does the story draw on the energy of new life? If in the autumn, how does the story connect to the darkening of the light, the transition from harvest to dormancy? With We Players' current production of Macbeth at Fort Point, the show begins when it is still day. Dusk settles as the new King takes the throne and we feel the increasing weight of darkness. As the moral and psychological standing of the main characters frays and falls apart, the blanket of night falls heavily upon us. We descend into darkness both literally and figuratively. The sun takes a bow.

Rebecca Novick: Site-Specific

This posting is by Rebecca Novick, Director of the Triangle Lab.

That's Not My BART Stop: One of the Triangle Lab projects we're producing right now is called Love Balm for My Spirit Child. It's a series of performances sharing testimony from mothers who have lost children to violence. We're calling this series "site-specific" because they're performed on the spots where each murder took place. Site-specific in its strictest definition means a performance created specifically for a non-traditional space, often using physical characteristics of that space, or of the community who gathers there, to influence what the performance will be. In a more general or lazy way, we often use "site-specific" to simply mean "not performed in a theater."

As more institutions experiment with performing work outside their traditional venues –work often labeled site-specific — I have become impatient with this term. It feels like one more artificial division of performance into professional/amateur, into important/marginal, into traditional/experimental. In fact, all our work is site-specific, we just choose to erase the impact of our ordinary spaces — with their red curtains, or their funky black walls, or their gleaming floors — on what gets performed there and who feels welcome to see it.

A few weeks ago I went to one of the Love Balm performances, the testimony of Bonnie Johnson, Oscar Grant's grandmother, performed at Fruitvale Station, the BART stop where he was shot. I was nervous on the way – I'd never gotten off the BART there, didn't know exactly where the performance would be, or what it would feel like. When I got there, to find a crowd of nearly 100 people gathered for the invocation that would open the performance, I was one of the only white attendees. (certainly an echo of the experience audiences of color might have attending an arts event at a theater with a majority white audience).

Before the performance started, a friend of mine asked me if I had brought my children (who are 4 and 6) and I was surprised by the question. "Of course not," I answered without thinking about it much, "I didn't know how I would begin to tell them this story" Then I looked around the crowd filled with children, at my other friend sitting with her Black son in her lap, and heard the privilege in what I had just said. My white children don't know the story of Oscar Grant yet, haven't yet needed to understand that sometimes the police are not the good guys, that there are places where you shouldn't go because the color of your skin makes you a suspect. Fruitvale Station is not – on many levels – my BART stop.

This ambitious and powerful performance embodied for me what site-specific might really mean. It brought me somewhere I don't go, into a community I don't belong to, to understand a story in a new way because of the place it was performed in. The woman offering the invocation poured water on the ground and — I think for everyone there — the performance began to cleanse that spot. To turn it from a murder scene to a place for community sharing, somewhere where perhaps healing can begin.

Irene Chien: Urban For Black

This posting is by Irene Chien, PhD candidate in the Department of Film & Media and the Berkeley Center for New Media at UC Berkeley

In mainstream US media, "urban" is a pervasive euphemism for black, a way to register but not directly point at African-American culture within the post-racial political paradigm of colorblindness. "Urban music," "urban fiction," "urban comedy," and "urban entertainment" are all ways to identify media made by, featuring, and marketed primarily to African-Americans without directly naming them. "Urban" in this sense gives value to at the same time it disavows the authenticity of black bodies, voices, and "street" experiences that now circulate globally in the form of hip-hop identity and aesthetics. At the same time, in contemporary cultural discourse, "urban" continues to function as a code word for the crime and poverty associated with blackness that is less inflammatory than "inner-city," "ghetto," or "the 'hood." Is the conflation of "black" with "urban" a way to erase black people from the scene so as to better commodify their cultural expressions for a global market? Is it a way to be more inclusive of other races and ethnicities when considering life in the city and its cultural expressions? What are exactly are the effects of this semantic slippage from black to urban?

Urban became linked with blackness in the context of the 20th-century Great Migration in which 6 million African-Americans moved from the rural south into cities in the northern, midwestern, and western United States. The fact that this migration pattern is now being reversed as African-Americans move back to the south and (perhaps pushed by the gentrifying effects of the New Urbanism) out of cities into poor suburbs, puts even more pressure on the dodges and slippages between race and space manifested in substituting "black" with "urban." These uses of the term urban point to a more general conflation of race with environment–black with urban, white with suburban, and Latino with rural. As we examine the urban in its many contexts and meanings, I hope to interrogate this racialization of space and spatialization of race.

Susan Moffat: Restoration

This posting is by Susan Moffat, Executive Director for the Global Urban Humanities Initiative.

In the Bay Area and beyond, ambitious creek and wetland restoration projects aim to return landscapes to an earlier, more "natural" condition. The scientists designing the projects know that it is impossible to restore a landscape to a pre-human condition when the entire watershed has been radically altered, and they make many nuanced choices in order to enhance habitats. But the public often believes the goal is to put a site back to "the way it was."

Historical ecologists including Robin Grossinger of the San Francisco Estuary Institute use historic maps and journals and quantitative methods of hydrology and geology to reveal the many past conditions of wetlands and creeks over time. They help land managers address the question of "restore to what? To when? " But the public and some advocates often seek a return to an imaginary, timeless pre-human past, one that ignores the fact that natural systems are characterized by disruption as much as by balance.

"Restoration" is one of a suite of words perpetuating an image of nature as a pristine, static object rather than a network of processes. "Restoration" implies there is an ideal state to which a landscape can be returned, just as "reclamation" to an earlier generation implied the right of humans to reclaim from the grips of desert or swamp the land that was given by God for human dominion.

The much-heralded "restoration" of the Cheonggyecheon Stream in Seoul was actually the radical reinvention of a buried river as an artful linear urban plaza with water running through it. But it is by no means a return to the river's original state.

By contrast, the ongoing restoration of the South Bay salt ponds, an area the size of Manhattan in San Francisco Bay, is successfully transforming industrial waterworks into functioning salt marshes. But as the marsh area increases, the birds currently inhabiting the industrial salt ponds (which prefer ponds to marshes) are being displaced in a kind of eco-gentrification. New reservations for these species are being constructed, but as with urban renewal, the displaced species are not always thriving in their assigned new homes. Restoration for one species means removal for another.

In cities, where human and non-human needs often seem in direct competition, the misuse of language such as "restoration" and misunderstandings about the nature of nature can lead to conflict. At the Albany Bulb on San Francisco Bay, a State Park plan conceptualized this manmade landfill as wilderness to be "preserved," "conserved," and "restored" and required the removal of long-standing outsider art and human encampments. The site remains bitterly contested by its residents, users, and environmental advocacy groups.

William Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness" is as important an essay for urbanists as for ecologists. How do we use history in decisions about altering landscapes? And since decisionmakers need words as handles, are there better words than "restoration" to talk about the reinvention of spaces shared by humans and other species in urban areas? Can art reveal the position of humans in dynamic natural systems? To Susan Schweik's point, can we talk of "editing the landscape" as we talk of "editing the city"?

Historical ecology/Grossinger-
http://www.sfei.org/users/robin

Cheonggyecheon Stream restoration-
http://worldcongress2006.iclei.org/uploads/media/K_LEEInKeun_Seoul_-_River_Project.pdf

South Bay Salt Pond project-
http://www.southbayrestoration.org/index.html

The Trouble with Wilderness/Cronon-
http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Trouble_with_Wilderness_Main.html

Susan Schweik: Editing The City

This posting is by Susan Schweik, Professor of English and Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities at UC Berkeley

Recently New York City's official adoption of a new disability accessibility icon has gotten a lot of press: a dynamic figure in a wheelchair zooming through blue space, in sharp contrast to the familiar poky, static handicapped parking-lot sign. (See, for instance, http://boingboing.net/2013/05/25/new-york-city-adopts-new-inter.html.) What I personally have found more interesting, though, is the deliberately unofficial approach advocated by one of the icon's original designers, artist and researcher Sara Hendren at Harvard's graduate school of design. She began, with collaborator Brian Glenney, with a graffiti-like sticker pasted informally over any old blue sign, with the old wheelchair icon still showing underneath. Hendren writes of the project to imagine and promote a different vision of disability and prosthesis: "There was something tempting, of course, about the idea of a wholesale re-design—just slap it on, and change the entire message. But I liked the deliberation inevolving the icon instead. I wanted to draw attention to the old image (since it's one of those that's at once familiar and utterly forgettable)—and to suggest its becoming something else. And then I stumbled on MONU journal [which]... named this very thing I'd been vaguely insisting on. MONU's claiming that it's urban editors, rather than urban planners, who are at work making our built environment. Freed from the grandiose mandate to create new utopias, replacing old with new, architects and planners of all kinds will be charged instead with 'selecting, correcting, condensing, organizing, or modifying the existing urban material.'"

http://ablersite.org/2013/06/08/life-in-the-edited-city/ "Editing" for Hendren is a kind of modest and free utopian enterprise (one very much in line with the kind of DIY ingenuity through which disabled people have always tweaked and mcgyvered the built environments around them). But editing, as deaf artist Joseph Grigely points out in his Textualterity, can also be understood as a process potentially antithetical to disability–eugenicists and neo-eugenicists "treat the body as a text," Grigely writes, one that is "to be 'edited' eclectically" till it is perfect, in much the same way as "editors treat the text as a body (describing it in pathological terms)." In many ways, cities call for the editing of bodies in these terms.

What does it mean to be an urban editor, and how are these kinds of "urban editing" practices co-existing with and challenging (or not really, or hardly) "urban planning"? Is "editing" too modest or provisional a goal or process or tactic? In what ways can urban editors or planners build new modes of disability in rather than new ways of cutting disabled people off and out?

Raquel Gutiérrez: Gentrification

This posting is by Raquel Gutiérrez, IN COMMUNITY Program Manager for Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Arriving in San Francisco, I am reminded that this city in large part is designed to the scale of the average human being, with humane commuting strategies that put Los Angeles to shame. But what makes the space here different is that there is less of it. Space that accommodates a multiplicity of households has already been spoken for but that doesn't stop a rightfully entitled newly moneyed class from coming in and taking it. It makes an object like the Google Bus an easy receptacle to fill with collective fear and loathing. Never mind the fact that our lives are that much better because Google exists. Admit it or you can just e-mail me from your gmail accounts quietly. No one has to know how much you enjoyed playing the Moog when Google honored Bob Moog's 78th birthday last year.

The ghosts of Chavez Ravine will never rest. People will be forced out and the cities they live in, they pay taxes in; the cities that have made these social contracts to take and educate our children; help us when our homes burn down; heal us when we are hurt will somehow be the first to betray.

If you've lived it, you call it gentrification or aburguesamiento. If you talk about it from a detached perspective or if you're in a planning department, you probably refer to it as displacement.

Me?

I am an interloper, first and foremost, and especially when it comes to Bay Area arts and cultural organizing. It's good to be aware of that before setting out to do community engagement for a large arts center located in one of the most fraught neighborhoods in downtown San Francisco. I arrive with open hands to greet the closed fists of folks in the South of Market neighborhood known as SOMA who are tired; weary of new people though are way too friendly to really show it. They are Filipino youth; veterans of wars and military actions in Vietnam and Kuwait; chess lovers.

We are on the verge of losing youth's voices in the same we way lose elders to death; and the scarcity mindset that kicks in producing a discourse of mine/territoriality which feels similar to Minutemen stalking men, women and children in the U.S.-Mexico desert.

Don't come here; this is mine.

People turn other people into suspects.

So how do you facilitate art-making with a community-specific agenda when community is in the middle of meeting changes? I posit that site-specificity has to be questioned as sites become contested. Specificity I dare say lacks that efficacy it once had when social practice enabled a purview contingent on a radical condition of possibility. And now these conditions placed upon sites where communities we're interested in partnering with are radical in a totally frightening ways that affect individuals whose perspectives can enrich the way we think about "the arts." So I suggest we instead think about making site-responsive community-led arts collaborations that give way to transforming the current arts institutional landscape. Respond as artists, sure, but as institutions more importantly, to what is happening on the ground, in the trenches with people that are living with the specter of change daily.

Judy Nemzoff: Thoughts On Creativity

This posting is by Judy Nemzoff, Program Director of the San Francisco Arts Commission

I'm participating in an Americans for the Arts Creative Placemaking webinar series that defines creative placemaking as, "the intersection of when place making by design has art and creativity at the forefront." This definition presumes that—by building partnerships and crafting policy that addresses defining places with outcomes that include creative, financial, and social success—you must also place creativity and art making in the hands of artists.

In looking at successful examples of creative placemaking through this lens, one would need to see artists and arts organizations at the forefront of planning and redevelopment, with government and the private sector investing heavily in a project's scope and scale. It would beg the question, "What would an artist do?" If I am responsible for establishing the merits and methods of creative placemaking in my work, the webinar reminded me that I need to step back (again) and ask more questions: What does it take to rebuild and repurpose a place with art and creativity at its core? When is arts activation a Band-Aid versus a long–term, systemic way to embrace community? How do we design projects with architects and planners that include practicing artists from the project's inception? How do we remind policymakers, however well-intentioned and whatever their background in the arts may be, that their ideas are not the voice of the artist?

I'm not sure we can continue to talk about creative placemaking without the creative makers in the conversation sooner. I want to ask an artist about a sustainable model and authenticity. I want artists to have the opportunity to participate early on in the creative solutions that define success, and then be given the tools and money to assure sustainability and growth.

Isn't it great that in so many communities across the country and the world recognizes the arts as an important contribution to the revitalization of community? Can we imagine a time when every local government agency has an arts position integral to the policy and outcomes of their work? I think we should, and the first thing every policymaker and planning wonk will ask, "What would an artist do?"

SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS- VIDEOS

SESSION 1: CREATIVITY AND “CLASS”: BAY AREA URBAN EXPERIMENTS

Video 1: (Moderated By Professor Margaret Crawford- Architecture)

- Andy Wang (5M Project, Forest City)
- Deborah Cullinan (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts)
- Elvin Padilla (950 Center for Art & Education)

ACCESS ‘CREATIVITY AND CLASS’

SESSION 2: ON-LINE/OFF-LINE: DIGITAL CONNECTION IN URBAN AND SUBURBAN SPACE

REIMAGINING THE URBAN
Bay Area Connections Across the Arts & Public Space
Twitter: #ReUrb13
http://reimaginingtheurban.wordpress.com

Video 2: (Moderated By Professor Nicholas de Monchaux- Architecture & Urban Design)

- Joel Slayton (ZERO 1)
- Jake Levitas (San Francisco Mayor’s Office)
- Marina McDougall (Center for Art & Inquiry, The Exploratorium)

ACCESS ‘ON-LINE/OFF-LINE’

SESSION 3: WHAT IS SITE IN SITE-SPECIFIC ART?: COMPARING PRACTICES

Video 3: (Moderated By Professor Susan Schweik- English)

- Raquel Gutierrez (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts)
- Ava Roy / Lauren Dietrich Chavez (We Players)
- Rebecca Novick (Triangle Lab, California Shakespeare Theater)

ACCESS 'SITE IN SITE SPECIFIC ART'

SESSION 4: WHAT IS THE "BAY" IN THE BAY AREA?: CREATING NATURE

Video 4: (Moderated By Professor Linda Rugg- Scandinavian)

- Susan Schwartzenberg (Independent Artist)
- Brad McCrea (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
- Louise Pubols (Oakland Museum of California)

ACCESS 'BAY AREA: CREATING NATURE'