MICRO

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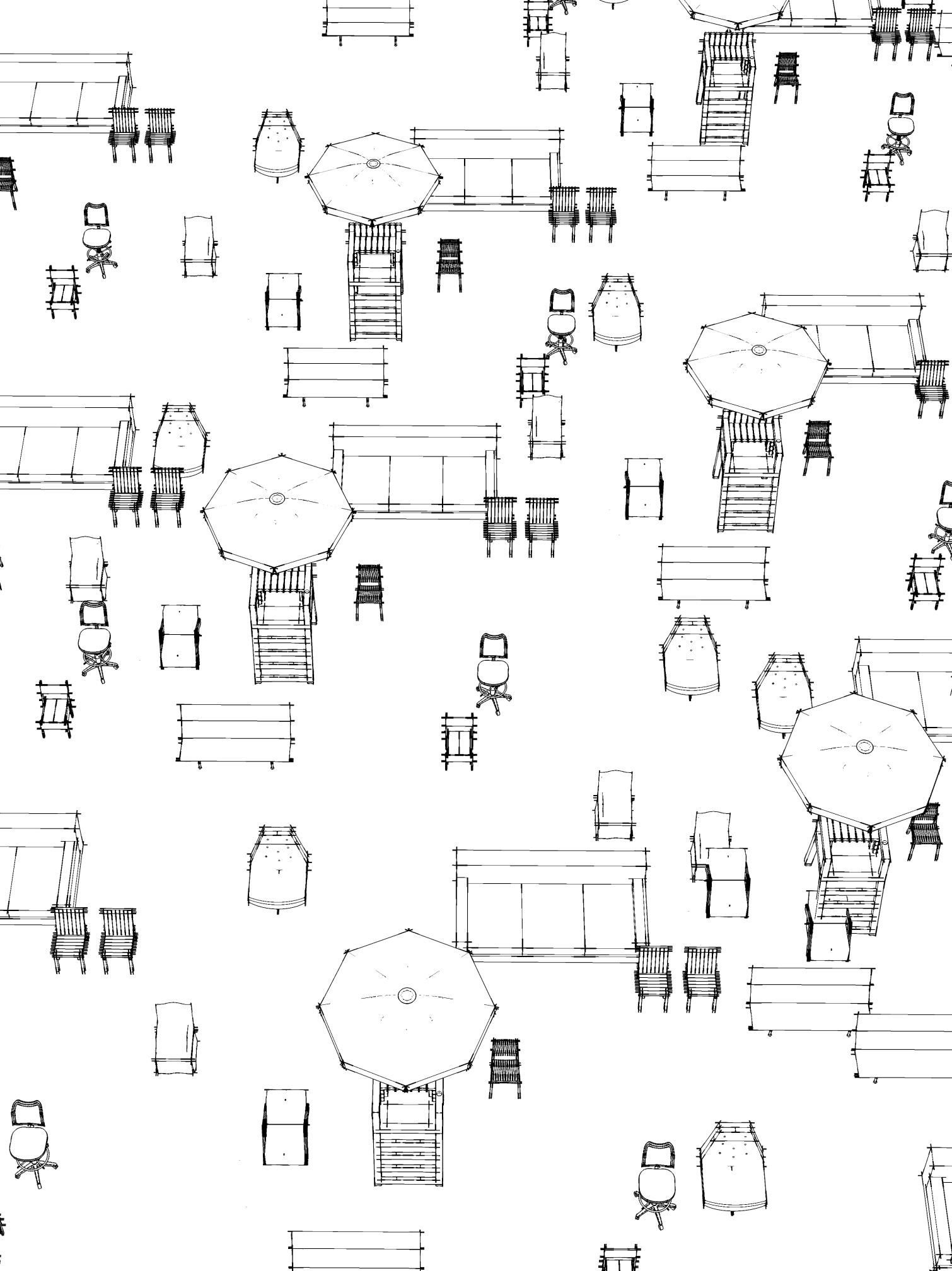

FROM THE EDITORS

Our final call was for articles to the theme ‘micro’. Rather than to evoke that which is exclusively miniscule, we meant to broach the idea of scale and its inherent implication in the built environment - especially in dense urban settings. Scale, but more specifically the dialectic between the very large and the very small, exists necessarily in every city. ‘Micro’ addresses the city through one of its fundamental characteristics, as a large collection of small things: people and the things they build. The articles in this issue of URBAN, take as their focus ideas and objects that have notable measurements, whether in terms of dimensions, impacts or aspirations.

To keep with our theme, we would like to simply (and briefly) concluding by saying thank you for your readership, contributions and support.

Love, URBAN

Angela Wheeler

A DEPARTURE FROM THE ORDINARY

THE DESIGN LEGACY OF SOVIET BUS STOPS

If you were to compile a list of the top ten least visually interesting products of the modern world, you might put bus stops right up there with dental floss and MTA turnstiles. Unless you lived in the former Soviet Union. For the most part, Soviet architecture and design is remembered for its imposing civic buildings, Spartan concrete residential blocks, and muscular socialist-realist monuments. The overwhelming mandate from Moscow to build cheaply and quickly would suggest little room for individual creative freedom.

A notable exception is in the transportation sector, the lifeline that connected the vast Soviet territories (which covered one-sixth of the Earth's landmass at the time). While Moscow's famously opulent Stalinist metro stations are widely admired, it is easy to overlook the phenomenon of the common roadside bus stop as a small but significant contribution to Soviet modern design.

One would think that the Soviet transportation authorities would have devised a universal design for this humble public structure – simple, practical, and cheaply mass-produced. While some bus stops were indeed mass-produced, their small size made them an ideal "micro project" for artists seeking a creative outlet on a limited budget. The resulting structures, many of which were built seemingly without design restrictions, became a precious opportunity for local designers and architects to express themselves.

The resulting bus stops represent a mix of styles and shapes, from swirling organic structures, to elegant geometric forms, to miniature temples of symbolist expression. Less architecturally daring projects are still often embellished with murals or mosaics reflecting local culture, history, or industries. Here, in the most mundane of social spaces (and often, in the most isolated of rural backwaters), we witness structures whose antecedents include Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe.

Sadly, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and contemporary bitterness towards the old regime means that its architectural legacy is rapidly deteriorating, presenting serious challenges and looming responsibility. The important architectural, social, and cultural resources of the past fifty years are among the most underappreciated and vulnerable aspects of our global heritage. Day by day, a steady campaign of demolition (whether by neglect or active destruction) erodes the physical fabric of the recent past, with little consideration for its community importance, design significance, or role in creating a sustainable future. Small and frequently isolated, the bus stops are particularly vulnerable to both vandalism and slow decay.

Photographer Christopher Herwig, who traveled throughout the post-Soviet Balkans, Caucasus, and Central Asia between 2002-2006, began collecting photos of Soviet bus stops as a way to challenge how we value and treat the design heritage of the recent past before more landmarks are lost. This photo series is likely the largest collection of Soviet bus stops ever assembled: "a tenuous claim to fame," Herwig admits, "and a strange obsession to have. But still, it's one that I am proud of and I hope it will help to preserve this unique and historical art form."

Herwig's favorite bus stops were designed by Zurab Tsereteli, a Georgian sculptor who rose to prominence as president of the Russian Academy of Arts. Located along the Black Sea coast in Abkhazia (once known as "the Russian Riviera") the concrete forms recall waves, shells, or sea creatures,

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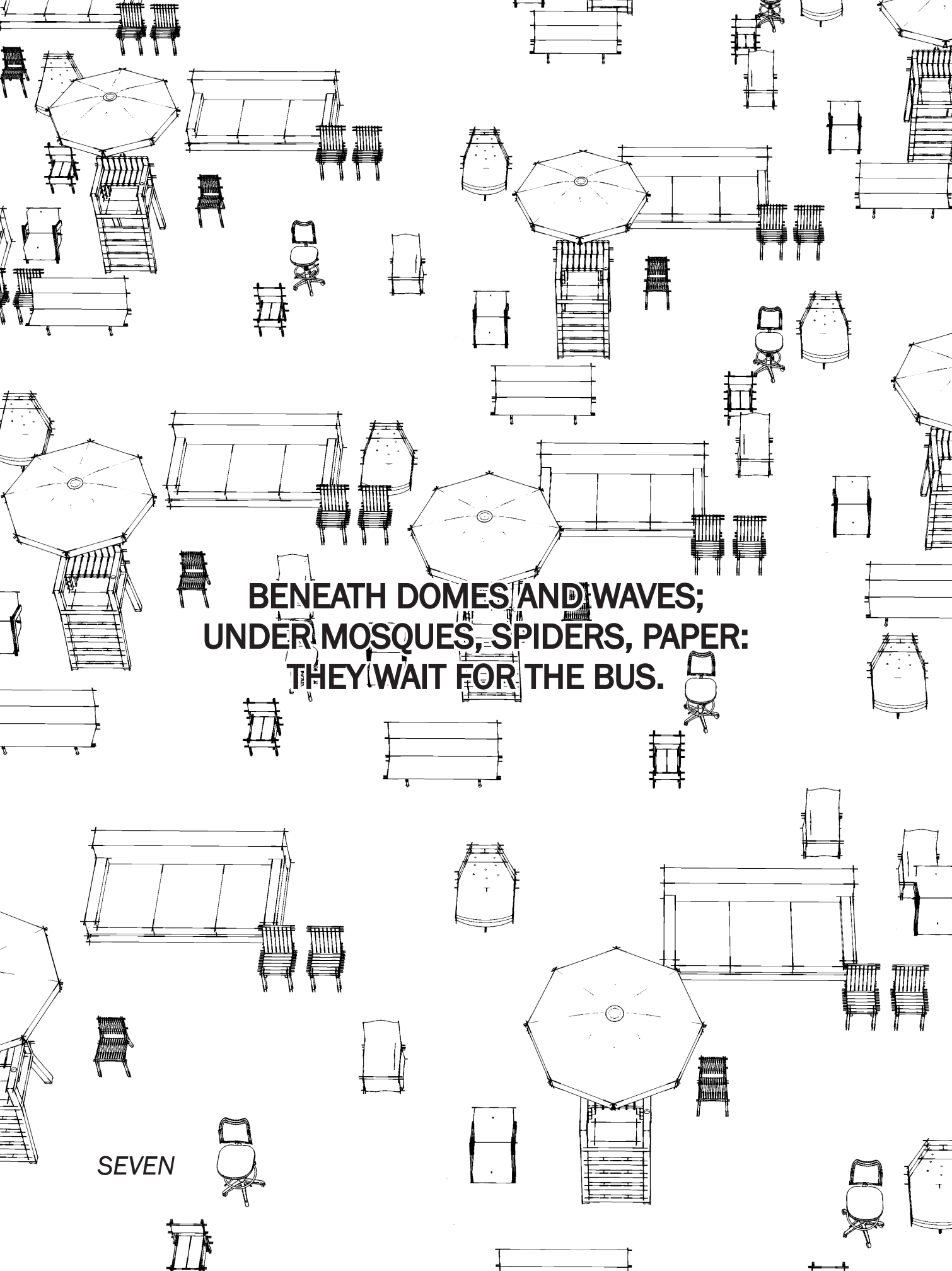
and are fully covered in bright, swirling mosaics. When asked about the inspiration behind his whimsical creations, Tsereteli simply responded that transit authorities never restricted his creative freedom and provided an almost unlimited budget. Located near major tourist resorts, the bus stops were intended to serve almost like advertisements – which actually makes the artistic effort lavished on remote bus stops in the steppes of Uzbekistan or forests of Latvia even more enigmatic.

Tsereteli offers illumination: “If you ask an artist to create something, he has to decorate everything artistically. It could be a toilet, or a bus stop. St. Petersburg? Why is it so beautiful? Paris? Why is it so beautiful? Because the hand of the artist was everywhere.”

Angela Wheeler is a 2nd year dual degree candidate in Urban Planning and Historic Preservation with an unshakeable fondness for post-Soviet spaces.



BENEATH DOMES AND WAVES; UNDER MOSQUES, SPIDERS, PAPER: THEY WAIT FOR THE BUS.

SEVEN

Logan Clark

SPACE JAM

MICROHOUSING IN SEATTLE

Across the globe, rising rates of urbanization have caused cities to struggle with providing adequate quantities of housing for their quickly growing populations. In advanced post-industrial economies, where cities are competing for a very particular type of resident, this has taken on an interesting dimension. Or rather, an interesting set of very small dimensions.

While it lacks a common global definition, microhousing refers to extremely small, almost always single occupancy apartments generally sizing in between 100 and 300 square feet. They have come into vogue with cities looking to attract high skilled millennials, whether they are tech-sector employees or "young creatives," or in cities like Tokyo that have extraordinarily high densities. Tokyo in particular has drawn attention, both positive and negative, for its 10x10 foot "capsules" which serve their residents as both offices and abodes. Developers and cities have been touting them as a way to increase housing stock and affordability in metropolitan areas, particularly for this younger set of workers with little in the way of material possessions.

However, cities have grappled with defining and setting a base set of requirements for microhousing. Seattle, with its well-established tech sector, has recently made headlines with changes to its zoning ordinances regarding microhousing amid controversy and conflict between developers, community activists, and the municipal government. The fight has highlighted many of the challenges cities face in striking a balance between affordability and encouraging density on the one hand and quality of life and issues of crime on the other.

A HISTORY

Small units designed for a single person are hardly a new concept. Single Resident Occupancy units (SROs) have existed in the U.S. since the 1930s, and prior to that, longterm hotels and boarding houses served a similar purpose. Often these units were the result of landlords illegally chopping up larger units into smaller and smaller units to take advantage of large numbers of the urban poor. As a result, between the 1960s and 1980s SROs gained a reputation as dangerous hotbeds of crime, and cities cracked down on the often illegal dwellings. During that period of time Seattle lost nearly 15,000 SROs. The residents of the SROs were overwhelmingly poor, and their evictions contributed to a growing homelessness problem.

The idea remained relatively dormant in Seattle until 2009, when construction began on a microhousing development in the downtown district. The aPodments (as they were trademarked) sparked backlash from the community. Advocates against the microhousing units in Seattle generally pursued two lines of argument. The first was mostly a garden variety NIMBYism that categorically rejected new construction, neighborhood change and greater density as a matter of principle. However, many advocates found more traction against developers by raising rather pointed questions: just how affordable are these new "affordable" units? And just who are they being built for?

The uproar over the aPodment development caused enough attention that the city began considering several new legislative proposals that would regulate micro units. The developers in the Seattle area launched a campaign to lower the minimum area of housing units to 100 square feet, which would essentially function as dorm rooms. Within these units, there would be a bathroom with a shower, toilet

and sink, and cooking facilities would be located in the common areas. Community advocates generally wanted the city to nix the new developments altogether. Eventually, a compromise agreement was struck by City Councilman, Mike O'Brien in October 2014.

Seattle's new compromise legislation on microhousing contains several important provisions. First, each unit must include a kitchen. Previous models of microhousing had eschewed individual kitchens for a common cooking area, usually at a rate of 1 kitchen per 8 housing units. Secondly, the units must be at least 220 square feet. These two provisions essentially make the microhousing units extra small studio apartments, and the ordinance says they are to be regulated as such. The coalition of developers that pushed for much smaller units (only 100 square feet) without kitchens argue that the new regulations do not allow for true microhousing to be built.

Thirdly, to appease the neighborhood activists the new developments can only be built in areas zoned to be high density urban villages and centers, unless the development is a congregate housing project for schools or non-profits.

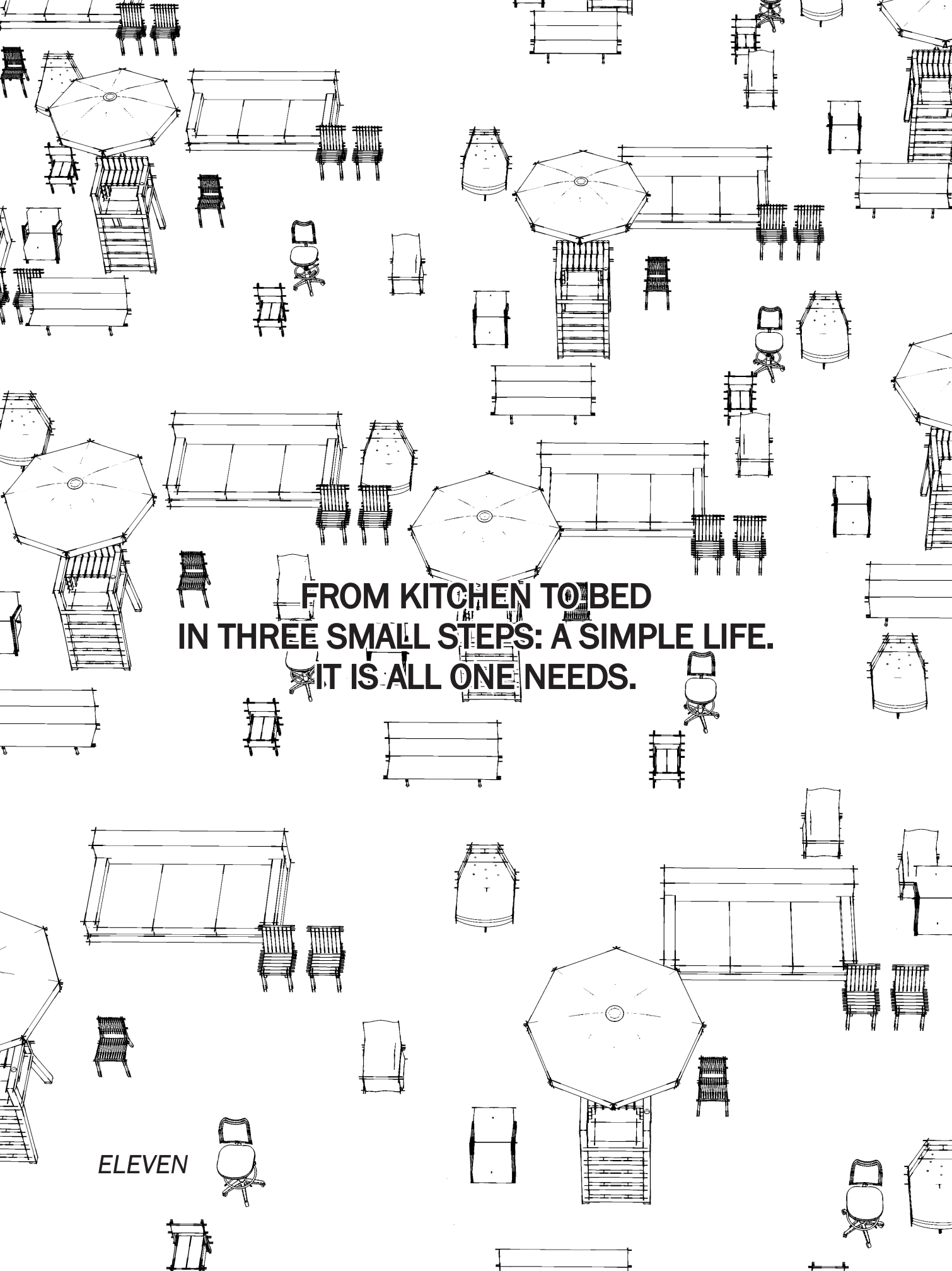
However, within these provisions there is no requirement for there to be a certain proportion of new units to be affordably priced. Although average rents for these units currently range from $500 to $700, rents have been reported as high as $1250. Without proper rent control or stabilization this could quickly erode the argument that these units are actually affordable to residents.

Furthermore, microhousing units are being marketed towards an already privileged group of people. Young, itinerant, high skill workers are sought after by cities precisely because they bring disposable income and rarely have dependents that need to be educated. Microhousing units are essentially seen as a perfect fit for these younger, more affluent professionals. Meanwhile, lower income minority families struggle with being displaced to the suburbs because they are been priced out of downtown urban areas.

A WAY FORWARD?

Cities need to find a way to effectively and safely provide microhousing to their citizenry. The continued growth of illegal SROs nationwide demonstrates that there is a market for small apartments at a lower price point that is not being met by formal housing options. However, the process of regulating these units in Seattle has raised important affordability questions. While it is too early to tell how the new units will affect the housing market, it is vital that microhousing units do not become excessively expensive as to price out and displace lower income residents. Seattle, and other cities that are suffering from housing shortages, should perhaps be a bit more skeptical of the claims of developers that are chomping at the bit to build smaller and smaller units; units aimed at serving a population whose incomes are only growing. But only time will tell.

Logan is a 2016 M.S. Urban Planning Candidate at Columbia University. As a product of exurban sprawl he is interested in the intersection of transportation, land use and economic development. He also hates big houses.



FROM KITCHEN TO BED
IN THREE SMALL STEPS: A SIMPLE LIFE.
IT IS ALL ONE NEEDS.

Andrew Lassiter

PLANNING ~~FOR~~ WITH CHILDREN

SMALL STEPS (TOWARDS CHANGE) FOR SMALL PEOPLE

The city is grown-up sized. Imagine a seven-year-old waking up in the city. She walks out of her apartment, one step at a time, stretching her little legs as far as they can reach. She strolls past the shops and cafes, wondering what's inside, imagining that, one day, she might be tall enough to peer through the tall glass windows that rise above her head. When she reaches the corner store, she saunters in, knowing the bounty of candy that the clerk keeps safely in the sky. She cranes her neck; the clerk bends over the counter, reaching down to collect her few coins. She strolls into the park, clambering up onto the bench, sitting with her legs sticking straight out into the morning air; taking her chances on the basketball court, she heaves the massive orange ball through the air. Good luck reaching the ten-foot basket!

Yup, the city is grown-up sized, its buildings, services, and public spaces merely physical manifestations of institutions whose policies and programs are also predominantly designed for the benefit of adults. What voice can children and teens have in this environment? Often none. Without inclusion in the planning process – and without the ability to vote, the practical source of political power for adults – children are unaccounted for as stakeholders.

Children in urban areas need to be accounted for in the planning process. Rapid movement of families to the suburbs has left many children to grow up in self-contained homes in low-density neighborhoods. Here, children's spontaneous play is replaced by regimented schedules and informal activities are compartmentalized, dependent upon a parent's schedule and automobile. In some of these communities, a child outdoors is perceived as neglected: last year, the blog "Free Range Kids" reported that the police detained a suburban six-year-old whose parents let her walk to the post office; Child Protective Services then sought to remove the child from her parents. Planning has actively institutionalized this life for many urban and suburban kids. It has entrenched a paternalistic conceptualization of children by prioritizing policies – roads over sidewalks, for example, or home owners over renters – that seek to contain and protect children from the outside world.

Planning often neglects the different ages of young people as well. Let's shift our focus for a moment to teens, who have far different urban spatial and social needs than younger children. Teens need free or low-cost space in which to congregate and socialize, spaces separate from those controlled by parents or teachers. Yet this space is rarely provided and, naturally, teens improvise, creating spaces for themselves in malls and alleyways, or on street corners and playgrounds. Hooligans they are often not; they are simply young folks searching for their own sense of place.

Children and teens need planning to account for them, but they also need planning to stop targeting them. While, in many cases, young people in urban places are ignored, in the worst cases they are regarded as malicious. This summer's events in Ferguson, Missouri offer one example while New York City's legacy of "stop and frisk" provides many tragic instances of young people being targeted for "crime prevention." As of 2013, at least half of all recorded stops in the city involved people between the ages of 13 and 25. Planning has helped to entrench this second conceptualization of children: that young people (especially older children) are autonomous yet irresponsible. Furthermore, planning has institutionalized this idea by designing urban space that minimizes the harm that

youth can cause rather than maximizing its benefits; across the urban landscape are parks that don't allow ballplaying, trees that don't allow climbing, and sidewalks that don't allow loitering.

SIMPLE TOOLS

The world that we leave to today's children will be our planning legacy, so how can we ensure that evolving world's success? Education, poverty alleviation, and safe spaces for children are often suggested as the fundamental solutions for planners, but including children in the planning process is less often addressed. Any type of advocacy planning calls for bringing stakeholders to the table, and who has more at stake than children?

Tailoring the format of participation for the stakeholders in question is, of course, important in any planning process. Naturally, we won't be asking kids to draft SWOT analyses or environmental impact statements. Instead, using simple tools to enable young people to build physical visions, such as Legos, drawing pictures, and talking about their neighborhood, can be an effective way to garner their input.

The education field is a good place to begin looking for examples of children's inclusion in decision-making. At the Sudbury Valley School in Massachusetts, direct democracy reigns. Students, staff, and faculty all have equal say. Sudbury's management structure recognizes children as stakeholders, while the use of a direct democracy – which is responsible for choosing leaders within the school, hiring staff members, and overseeing operations of everything from the food system and facilities to the disciplinary system – gives students the power to make changes according to their needs.

UNICEF and the city of Melbourne, Australia, have taken a more bureaucratic approach. UNICEF has prescribed standards for cities' engagement with the needs of children. Their Child Friendly Cities (CFC) campaign urges city planners to plan for the needs of children. Among numerous "building blocks" for such cities, the first – "the very essence of the process" – is participation. This means bringing children to the table. CFC advocates "promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them," not only listening to what they have to say but legitimately "taking them into consideration in decision-making processes."

In Melbourne, a 2010 Children's Plan for the city makes an effort to live up to CFC standards. It creates a policy framework specifically for the benefit of children, outlining action steps for supporting the health, safety, and well-being of children. Perhaps more importantly, the city actually involved children in the creation of the Children's Plan: affiliates of the University of Melbourne consulted young people ages 3-12, as well as the parents of infants, and encouraged drawing, photographing, and discussion about their ideas. This appears to be a long-term strategy for the city of Melbourne. By promoting the participation of children in the "design, development, and evaluation" of Melbourne and, and by further enshrining this as a human right, the plan makes it clear that planners will continue to prioritize engagement with and feedback from children.

Non-profits have also taken on a role in helping children participate in planning. The Participatory Budgeting Project, a facilitator of civic engagement with local governance, has recently started collaborating with the city of Boston to launch a budgeting process shaped by the city's youth.

Currently, youth participants are coming up with ideas for how to spend $1 million of the city's budget to improve their neighborhoods. Together with adult mentors, they will create proposals and ultimately vote on how to allocate funding. The process is not just a simulation; it is a legitimate process and the funding decisions are real. While allowing children to learn budgeting and negotiation skills, participatory budgeting also offers the opportunity for real-life decision-making with tangible results in the participants' home neighborhoods.

Another non-profit, Imagine Chicago, is an American organization created as a means to help communities imagine a better future. Imagine Chicago posits that not only will giving children a direct influence in the planning process inform the decisions that are ultimately made, it will also motivate youth and offer them visions of their city for the future. In 2001, Imagine Chicago helped to host a workshop for residents of the state of Nagaland, in northeastern India, to imagine a "dream Nagaland." Children expressed their aspirations for the future, and they were wide-ranging, intelligent, and enviable. Participants spoke of concern for everything from tax reform to predatory governance, education, and employment. "Nagaland," wrote one participant, "will be my children's land." In its coverage of the workshop, the national newspaper The Hindu summarized this "dream Nagaland" as a place of "unity, peace, love and forgiveness all over."

IMPROVE THEIR WORLD

We need to change our accepted ideas of adult-centric city planning. And many of us would, if we really listened to our young people. As the child in Nagaland knows, the future is more important for our children than it is for us. This is why we must incorporate children into the planning process. They are important stakeholders in the present, of course, but also, perhaps most importantly, in the future. Perhaps more important than impacting the world one lives in, is the ability to impact the world one will live in. As prevailing voices in education, psychology, and human development continue to tell us, children are very much a product of their environment. They are malleable, for better and for worse. We should take advantage of it - not to mold them in our likeness, but to give them a fair chance to improve their world and provide them the tools to do so.

Any planning projects that can viably incorporate children as decision-makers ought to do so. This will look different depending on the project: it could mean anything from including children in visioning, like Imagine Nagaland does, to budgeting, the way the Participatory Budgeting Project does, or putting children at the forefront of decision-making, as exemplified by the Sudbury Valley School.

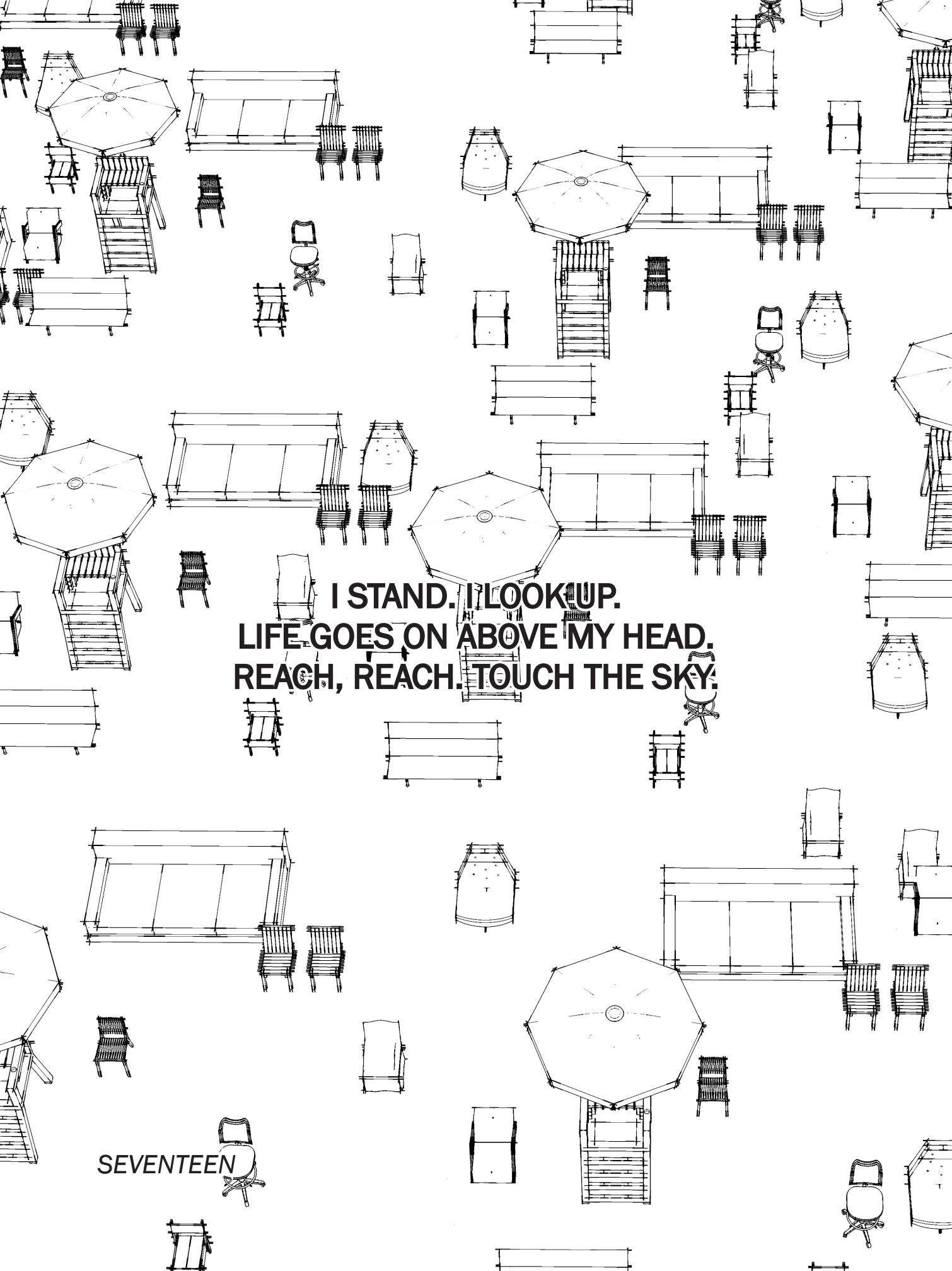
And what value do children have to planning? How can educators, governing agencies, and non-profits that engage with children – with hand-scribbled maps, Lego structures and playground photos in hand – move us toward that vision? First, adults don't always see what children do. Children's interpretation of their community can be enlightening in a way that a thousand cost-benefit analyses never can be. Second, any stakeholder group that participates in the planning process is representing itself so as not to be forgotten by decision-makers. And participation is investment. Young people who invest themselves in planning for their city's future and feel empowered to seek positive change will be likely to strive for a better city as they grow older. We need more people like

that.

Including children in the planning process represents just one small part of creating a healthy future for children. Ultimately, the methods of inclusion described above are all simply movements toward the same vision: safe, accessible, healthy, and vibrant communities where children can prosper. Inclusion must be part of a multidisciplinary approach that not only includes the unanimous tenets of planning for children - education, poverty alleviation, safety - but also commits itself to planning with children.

Children may be small, but they have a huge stake in our planet's future. We must pay attention to them. We must hear what they have to say. The process begins at the smallest human scale and remains, true to its audience, micro-oriented: many small steps toward big change.

Andrew is pursuing a Master's degree in the Urban Planning program at Columbia University after working for many years in youth mentoring, outdoor education, and disability services in Burlington, Vermont. He believes in investing in children to unlock their potential – and that planning has an important role to play. Andrew's current work is focused on creaing livable communities through bicycle and pedestrian planning.



I STAND. I LOOK UP.
LIFE GOES ON ABOVE MY HEAD.
REACH, REACH. TOUCH THE SKY.

Megan Kelly

REPURPOSING THE MORRIS CANAL

SMALL-SCALE EFFORTS CREATE A 100 MILE TRANSFORMATION

The 19th Century was a time of canal building frenzy in America. As canal technology evolved, the opening of navigable waterways to the interior of America finally became possible. Canals presented an attractive, economical, and efficient alternative to the use of pack animals to haul cargo over fragmented roads and through trying conditions. The buoyancy of water allowed boats to carry far more tonnage than land shipping.

Construction of the Erie Canal began in 1817 and was completed in 1825, spanning 363 miles from Albany to Buffalo, NY and helping spur development not only in western New York, but also into the Midwest. It became the gold standard for canal building, creating a navigable waterway from New York City to the great interior of the country, the Great Lakes in the Midwest, through the use of aqueducts and 37 lift locks, overcoming an aggregate elevation change of nearly 600 vertical feet.

At the same time anthracite coal as a highly combustible fuel became one of the key technology drivers of the industrial revolution in the United States. Around the time that the Erie Canal was being completed, George P. Macculloch, a businessman in Morristown, New Jersey, had run out of wood to power his factory, having cut down every tree in the vicinity. The discovery of plentiful anthracite coal in northeast Pennsylvania in 1807 and the refinement of its use in 1828 offered a solution for New Jersey businesses like Macculloch's, as long as the coal could be transported there, across the rugged terrain of northern New Jersey's highlands. The Morris Canal was conceived to meet the needs of Macculloch and many others in New Jersey.

The Morris Canal was built from 1825 to 1831 and eventually stretched 102 miles, from the Pennsylvania border town of Phillipsburg, NJ to the Hudson riverbanks in Jersey City, overcoming a total vertical elevation change of 1,674 feet. Unlike the Erie Canal, the Morris Canal did not benefit from an existing water source. Instead, key lakes were dammed at summit elevations and provided the water for the Morris Canal. The canal had the unfortunate disadvantage of a total elevation change of nearly 3 times that of the Erie Canal, leaving the traditional technology of the lift lock, which could only achieve 6 vertical feet per lock, both cost prohibitive and inadequate. Professor James Renwick of Columbia University devised the use of inclined planes to move fully loaded boats up and down hills on short, steep railways, earning the Morris Canal the title of the "mountain climbing canal." Inclined planes allowed the boats to be moved up to 100 vertical feet at a time, cutting shipping times down to just five days to travel the full corridor length.

Without the Morris Canal accelerating the development of northern New Jersey, the region would likely not have developed until nearly 60 years later, when the first steam-powered railroad overcame the elevations of the northern New Jersey hills. The Morris Canal became recognized as an international engineering marvel for its 23 lift locks and 23 inclined planes to transport anthracite coal, iron ore, and commodities such as grain, sugar and hay. The canal was in operation for nearly 100 years before it was decommissioned in 1924.

Prior to the decommissioning, numerous municipalities purchased portions of the canal property before being sold off to individual land owners. Municipalities also recognized the Morris Canal route as a valuable connectivity corridor of open space in their master plans, while indi-

viduals, non-profit organizations, historical societies and governments have worked to preserve parts of the canal. Over time, the majority of the Morris Canal was filled in, with some portions completely built over. The remaining parts of the Morris Canal right-of-way remained vacant, awaiting a vision, to serve a new need and purpose. Restoration started small with individual dedicated efforts to preserve the historic Morris Canal transportation corridor. In the early 1950s, the Lee family in Warren County excavated a turbine chamber (which powered boats up and down hill) for interpretation at inclined Plane 9W in Stewartsville and lived in the lock tender's home atop the summit. In Wharton Borough, John Manna realized that the lift lock which lay buried underground there could be a tourism asset to celebrate the borough's origin. The Canal Society of New Jersey, meanwhile, raises awareness of the Morris Canal and funds preservation and restoration projects.

As interest grew in the Morris Canal, the scale of parties involved grew as well. New Jersey municipalities such as Montville, Clifton, and recently Bloomfield took active roles in preserving parts of the route, while counties got involved at the regional level. Leading the way in 1981, Warren County recognized the heritage tourism value of the Morris Canal by creating the Warren County Morris Canal Committee.

Since 2005, half of the counties covered by the canal corridor (Warren, Morris and Passaic), have developed action plans for their portions of the canal, all with the goal of creating a greenway on the former Morris Canal right-of-way. A greenway is "a corridor of land or open space". The concept was first implemented in Boston during the park planning era of the 19th century, originally conceived by Frederick Law Olmstead. Named the Emerald Necklace, this greenway was a "necklace" of land connecting several parks over seven miles. In the late 20th century the term greenway would be formally defined by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, which recommended a network of greenways "to provide people with access to open spaces close to where they live, and to link together the rural and urban spaces in the American landscape threading through cities and countrysides like a giant circulation system."

Initially the greenway idea was promoted by the Canal Society of New Jersey in the 1980s and supported by established county and municipal Morris Canal Greenway action plans. To help with wayfinding and awareness, the Canal Society of New Jersey created a Morris Canal Greenway logo and established standard messaging promoting the greenway concept. But with three different county greenway plans in place, representing nearly 60% of the Morris Canal route, there emerged the need for a coordinated and comprehensive greenway vision for the full 102-mile corridor.

In 2012, a regional stakeholder came forward to fill the need for a comprehensive vision: the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), the metropolitan planning organization for northern New Jersey. NJTPA funded two greenway studies on the bookends of the Morris Canal in Warren County and Jersey City in consecutive years, which helped to raise this regional need to the attention of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The NJTPA region covers the full 102-mile corridor, allowing it to serve as a leader for the greenway's planning and implementation. In March of 2012, NJTPA hosted the first Morris Canal Working Group meeting, reaching out to the six counties (West to East) of Warren,

Sussex, Morris, and Passaic, Essex and Hudson as well as the cities of Newark and Jersey City, which all have elected officials serving on the NJTPA Board of Trustees. State agencies and non-profits were invited to participate, and membership was open to all interested parties. In the first meeting 35 stakeholders participated, representing a range of interests including transportation, economic development, heritage tourism, recreation, education and the environment.

Through the Morris Canal Working Group, new partnerships have been forged to implement the greenway. In 2.5 years, membership has swelled to over 200 stakeholders. Promotional efforts have included the Morris Canal Greenway website, www.MorrisCanalGreenway.org, and in 2014 a highly successful Morris Canal Greenway Conference attracted close to 100 participants and raised awareness of this important resource. This was achieved through illustrating the economic potential of the greenway conversion, not only for the region, but also for all the stakeholders.

Unique to this project, given its long history and large stakeholder base, the Morris Canal Greenway project is simultaneously in the planning phase (with new stakeholders continually being attracted to the effort), and in the implementation and restoration phase (for established stakeholders present from its inception). The Morris Canal Working Group provides a forum for these two concurrent greenway coordination efforts.

The Morris Canal Greenway goal established by the Morris Canal Working Group is to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the former Morris Canal right-of-way for conversion into a public greenway. When the Morris Canal Greenway is fully implemented as a multi-use trail, spanning 102 miles across northern New Jersey, local and regional trail connections will offer users the opportunity to travel thousands of miles as part of a “giant circulation system” of trails across the nation. This system of connecting trails has the potential to realize a portion of the $2.6 billion generated annually by heritage tourism in the state of New Jersey (see table on opposite page).

The Morris Canal Greenway route travels through rural lands in Mansfield, Allamuchy, and Netcong, transitioning to suburban streets in Roxbury, Little Falls, and through the historic canal town at Waterloo Village, while also extending through urban centers in Jersey City, Newark, and Paterson. When completed, the Greenway will represent different histories for different places, telling the story of the Morris Canal’s role in the development of 37 northern New Jersey towns, the Revolutionary War (shipping ammunition and weaponry), and the industrial revolution.

Culturally, the Greenway will provide a link in the “giant circulation system” ” connecting the outdoor museums of the Morris Canal’s 23 inclined planes and 23 lift locks to main streets, transit hubs and other important regional and local trails. The Greenway will repurpose this transportation corridor, from shipping freight to moving people, bicycles and enthusiasts along a historic route. Through the collective strength of working together, individual and regional efforts have brought a new level of energy to theimplementation of the Morris Canal Greenway. The international marvel once known as the “mountain climbing canal,” repurposed as the Morris Canal Greenway, will continue the legacy of a transformational transportation corridor in northern New Jersey.

Potential Trail Connections	Route	Length
East Coast Greenway	Maine to Florida	2,500 miles
Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Area Trail	Wilkes-Barre to Bristol, PA	165 miles
Liberty/Water Gap Trail	Jersey City to Columbia, NJ	130 miles

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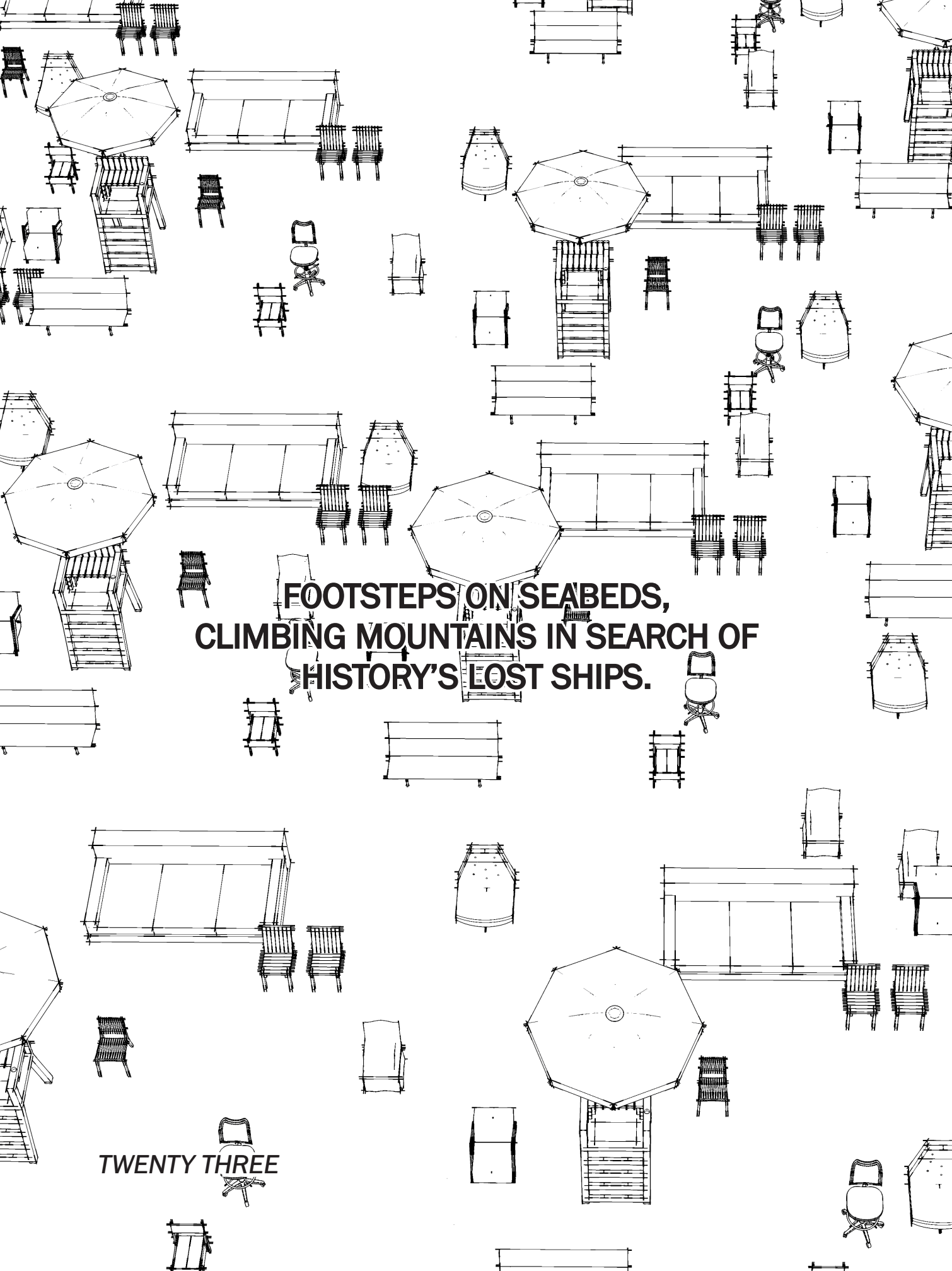
Megan is a Principal Planner with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), a Metropolitan Planning Organization. She works on a wide range of transportation topics. Under her management of a regional grant program, she identified the regional organizational need for the Morris Canal Greenway, and as such serves as the Morris Canal Working Group and Greenway project manager. She received her M.S Urban Planning in 2006 from Columbia University. Contact: megankel200@gmail.com.



FOOTSTEPS ON SEABEDS, CLIMBING MOUNTAINS IN SEARCH OF HISTORY'S LOST SHIPS.

Erica Mollon

CAN WE CHANGE THE WORLD?

Environmental degradation and extreme weather; growing income gaps and lack of access to financial resources; and a lack of recognition of sites related to historically disenfranchised groups or controversial events plague many communities around the world today. These timely issues are not limited to urban planners, historic preservationists, economists, or policy advisors but rather touch on all fields. Yet, there is not one place where our academic community can come together to work through these challenges.

Born out of a concern for these issues and a desire to try to improve conditions, a group of students began meeting to discuss these topics and to try to find ways to use our skills to solve social problems. Organized as a salon-style discussion group, we are engaging academics and students in an open dialogue about the most relevant and challenging topics, bridging different disciplines and forming connections. This is in the hope that by doing so we can encourage heritage justice, or the idea of more fairness and diversity in how heritage is preserved.

Currently existing policies and decision-making frameworks tend to work against creating fairness or do not look broadly enough to encourage equality on a global scale. One example of this is international policies on climate change — a problem which will more greatly impact developing countries but where developed countries are the ones causing the problem. It is our hope that we can look at these and challenge the prevailing frameworks that hinder fairness.

Last Spring semester in Ned Kaufman's Heritage and Social Justice class, a small group of students explored these issues and discussed ways that the preservation field could expand and work towards improving equity. According to Kaufman, the class would investigate where there were "opportunities for innovative, relevant, socially engaged conservation work." To do so, the class first looked at human rights, what defined those rights and how they have changed over time. With the understanding that all people have a right to understand and preserve their cultural identity, the group looked at the larger challenges that tend to threaten that right. When these conversations became too involved to fit into the class time, it became clear that the conversation needed to move out of the classroom. After several lively discussions, the participants decided it was time to formalize our meetings and open it up to others.

For the next phase of work, the group is looking to expand in the hopes of enriching the dialogue. Laura Groves, a dual-degree student in Urban Planning and Historic Preservation who recently joined says that she was "interested in becoming part of this group because in preservation, often times, the people who live with and in the built environment are forgotten by those working in the preservation field. As part of this group, I feel I am able to put them back into the center of the discussion and begin to make a difference in our field." Students from the law school and human rights programs have also begun attending the discussions and we hope others will join in to add diversity of thought. Each upcoming bi-monthly meeting will highlight a single topic, occasionally preceded by some recommended reading so that everyone can bring some background knowledge to the subject. Some meetings will be unstructured discussions while others will feature a guest speaker who will give a short presentation and then open the meeting up for discussion.

While it seems unlikely that a small group of concerned academics can solve the world's problems, every movement must have a beginning and it is clear that our work could make more of a difference. If through our discussions we can find ways to put our professional work and academic scholarship to more effective use in improving our school, city, or world then we will have succeeded. This is a unique opportunity in which faculty and students are seen as equals and together will come up with.

Erica is a third-year dual degree student studying Historic Preservation and Urban Planning at Columbia University. She is interested in helping communities by working with them to reclaim their heritage.

WE SAVE OLD HOUSES, WE SAVE STREETS, PARKS, RAILWAYS, BUT: CAN WE SAVE THE WORLD?

TWENTY SEVEN

Timothy Douglas

A HEARTH IN THE CITY

TRINITY CHURCH AND THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF MANHATTAN

Our tallest buildings tell a story about who we are and the city we live in. We are in awe of them and perhaps see some of our personal and supra-personal aspirations in them. Buildings like One World Trade Center, the Shanghai Tower, and the Burj Khalifa capture in glass and steel the culmination of thought, culture, and technology that make up civilization in each particular human moment. The world is enthralled by each new height and awaits another building that will elevate humanity to a new apex. In this world of soaring heights and romantic notions of human progress, it is worthy to ask: what do our old heights, the peaks already reached, the buildings that were yesterday's glory, mean to us today? A quick review of the tallest buildings in New York City's history reveals a mixed bag. Some buildings remain, sitting just a little squatter in their salutatorian position; other buildings have faded into obscurity as the surrounding skyline has enveloped them; still, others have been demolished to make way for new buildings and even greater heights.

As you venture further back in time, it becomes clear that New York existed for most of its history without skyscrapers. It is hard to picture what this skyscraper-less New York must have looked and felt like, but, for the first 250 years of its existence, New York City was a low slung port city still yet to achieve global prominence. The dominant features of the skyline, similar to many other American and European towns and cities, were church steeples. One church in particular, Trinity Church, was the highest point in Manhattan from 1846 to 1890. Merchants, immigrants, and travellers entering the port of New York during this period would not have been greeted by a glittering skyline of ever growing heights, but rather by a 281-foot neo- gothic steeple of simple brownstone.

New York in 1846 was a merchant town in a young and predominantly agricultural country. The bulk of the city's population remained on the southern tip of Manhattan, while large swaths of land uptown were dotted with farms. This also marked the first year of the Great Hunger in Ireland and, in the years to come, millions of Irish immigrants would swell into the city, changing it forever. But before that would happen, the city was working on completing the third and final incarnation of Trinity Church at the tip of Wall Street. Trinity was first chartered in 1697 by King William III of England as an Anglican parish. The first Trinity Church was a victim of the Great New York Fire of 1776 and, by 1839, the second Trinity Church had become structurally unsound and could no longer support the church's growing congregation. In response, Trinity Church hired the renowned Gothic Revival architect Richard Upjohn to design a new church. When completed in 1846, the stoic brownstone church stood higher than any other structure on the Manhattan Island, its medieval ornamentations demonstrating its purpose to the city below. Its steeple, topped with a gilded cross, soared into the sky, representing the spiritual aspirations of man in a city of commerce. It was not only the towering height of the church that was impressive: the church itself occupies an area of 82,770 square feet. Its interior is open, the ceilings endless, the buttresses massive, and it is surrounded by a green and crowded cemetery. In 1846, Trinity Church must have been a marvel to behold.

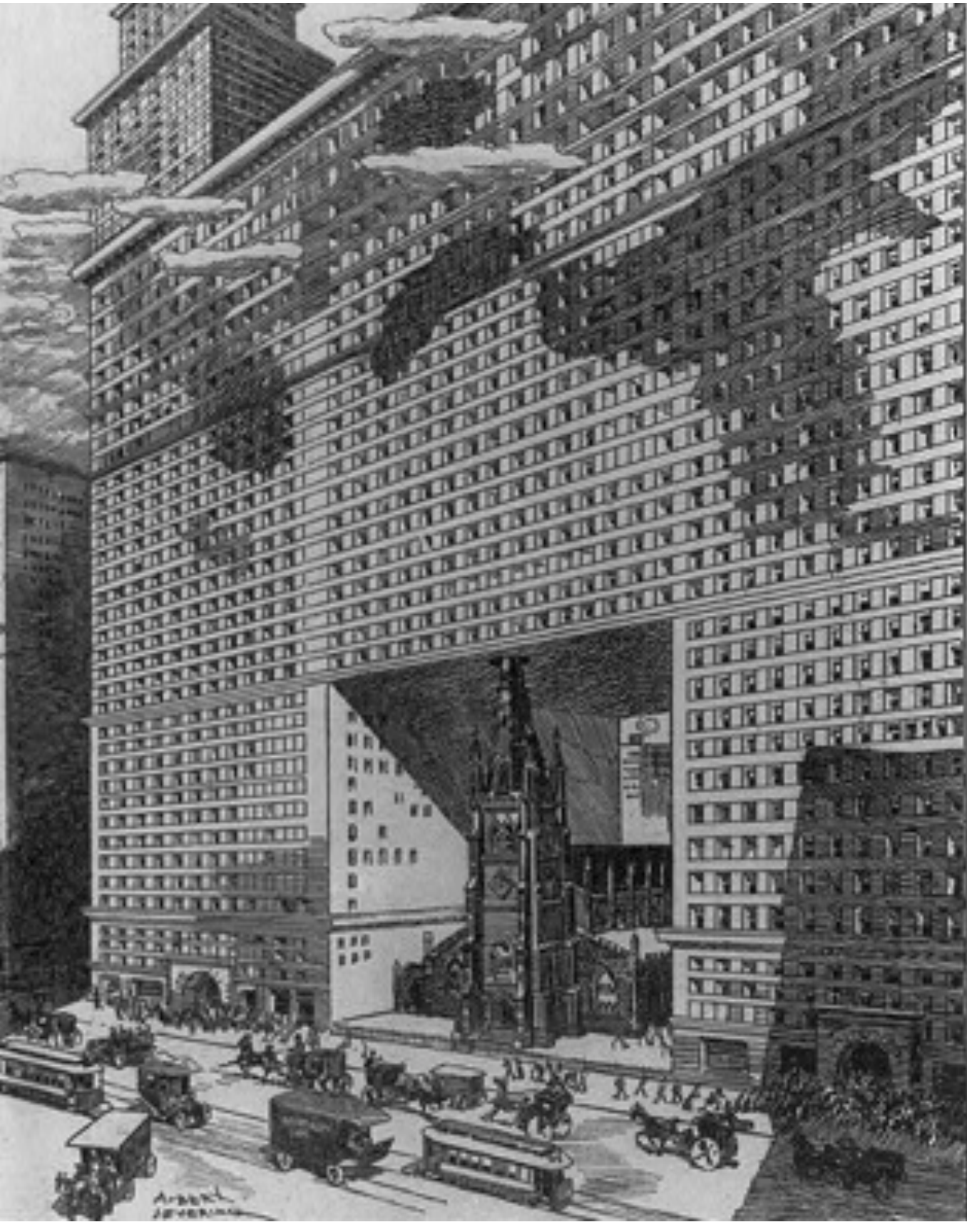
In the coming decades, Trinity Church would retain its position of prominence, but the landscape surrounding the church was beginning to change rapidly. From 1846 to 1890 New York City grew from a city still trying to find its footing to a major economic, commercial, and cultural center. The great wave of immigration began

to descend upon New York: millions of Irish and German immigrants would flood the city and, by the later half of the 19th century, southern and eastern Europeans would begin to arrive. The population of New York City would grow from 312,000 in 1840 to 1.4 million in 1890. The Civil War had left New York as the primary commercial center of the United States and greater industrialization drove the increasing economic growth of the city. Development in Manhattan moved from being primarily on the southern tip of the island to spreading towards and then surrounding Central Park. Growth was further fueled by the increasing prevalence of omnibuses and street cars.

By the end of the 19th century, New York City began to take its place as a center of international commerce and power. As the city changed, so too did the skyline. The Gothic Revival church had been the focal point for a city that had not yet found its footing and still looked to Europe for guidance; but, by 1890, New York was becoming one of the most modern cities in the world. Fittingly, the building that would ultimately surpass the gilded cross atop Trinity Church would house the most modern of industries, the newspaper. The New York World Building was completed in 1890 and housed the New York World Newspaper and the private offices of the paper's editor, Joseph Pulitzer. The building was 348 feet high and had 20 floors, the crest of American industrial might during the gilded age. Its golden-spired dome and ornate decoration was in stark contrast to the austere stones and devotional gothic architecture of Trinity Church. While Trinity was a symbol of stability and the demands of the spirit, the World Building was a symbol of the demands of progress. The building would ultimately fall victim to those demands. In 1894 the Manhattan Life Insurance Building tied the World Building for the title of New York's tallest; the World Building would eventually lose the title completely in 1899 to the 391-foot Park Row Building. In time, the World Building faded into obscurity. The newspaper went defunct and the building went through a string of owners before it was demolished in 1955.

By the turn of the 20th century, Trinity Church had already become a relic of a time long gone. The gothic architecture and open green spaces had become an anachronism in a time that prized progress and modernity. A rendering entitled "The Future of Trinity Church" shows the church completely engulfed by a monolithic office building. The church's green spaces are replaced by concrete and foundation, and the office building surrounds the church on both the North and South sides and even from above. Most tellingly, the building cuts off the top of the church's steeple and gilded cross from view, relegating it to a tiny, dark void cut into the office building itself. The romanticism of striving for new spiritual heights is literally cut off and replaced by a large, modernized commercial building. New York's particular brand of modernity, although not as fierce as the one depicted in the rendering, was thus determined. New heights had to be achieved.

A series of buildings would replace the Park Row Building as the city's highest: the Singer Building in 1908, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Tower in 1909, the Woolworth Building in 1913, the Bank of Manhattan Trust Building in 1930, the Chrysler Building in 1930, and the Empire State Building in 1931. From 1972 to 2001 the World Trade Center's Twin Towers would be the dominant structures in the New York skyline. Whereas many of the previous buildings used names to grandstand for a company or, as in the case of the Empire State Building, as a representation of the



people of the state of New York, the World Trade Center, in contrast, was strictly a towering paean to global capital, a symbolic gesture that the world's commerce was firmly planted in New York City. The two towers were daring in their simplicity, presenting themselves to the world as physical manifestations of the confidence and strength of New York and of the United States of America.

In the shadow of these towers sat Trinity Church, a spiritual hearth lost in the cosmos of world finance and power. By the end of the 20th Century, the church, once the highest point in Manhattan, was dwarfed by even the lowest of skyscrapers. Instead of being viewed as a pinnacle, Trinity had become a refuge and place of solace for lower Manhattan. Its classical architecture and surrounding cemetery, reminiscent of cemeteries in small towns across America, is a time capsule at the end of Wall Street, green and quiet. It is a welcome oasis from the concrete and steel and glass, the scale and depersonalization, that make up the rest of the financial district.

When the World Trade Center fell on September 11, 2001, New York lost its two tallest buildings. Trinity Church, located a few blocks away from the World Trade Center, held prayer services in the immediate aftermath of the attack and served as a shelter and refuge for shocked passers by. In the days and weeks that followed, Trinity Church and its affiliated St. Paul's Chapel served as a headquarters for volunteers and rescue workers. The gates in front of the church became an impromptu message board for people looking for loved ones and sharing in the collective grieving process, growing a collection of candles, flowers, and homemade signs. No longer a pinnacle, Trinity offered the city its hearth, its staid stability, precisely when the city's newer heights felt shaken and unsure. It provided a place for reflection and spiritual nourishment in the city's time of need. But, of course, New York would not be deterred from its forward movement for long. The skyline would not remain frozen in time, but would re-emerge with a new tallest tower. And the church would remain. Today Trinity Church is in the same place it has been since 1846. It is once again in the shadow of the city's tallest building and looks small and out of context in comparison. But people passing by still stop to look inside, to take a photo, to pause. They seem somehow aware that the church represents something that goes beyond New York and its development from a port city to a global center, something that grasps at a fundamental and familiar place within all of us, a contrast between where we are now and where we have come from. Beyond the chatter of phone calls in vertical office buildings and the blare of taxis ferrying suited workers, the bell tolls from within its simple brown stones and it is quiet.

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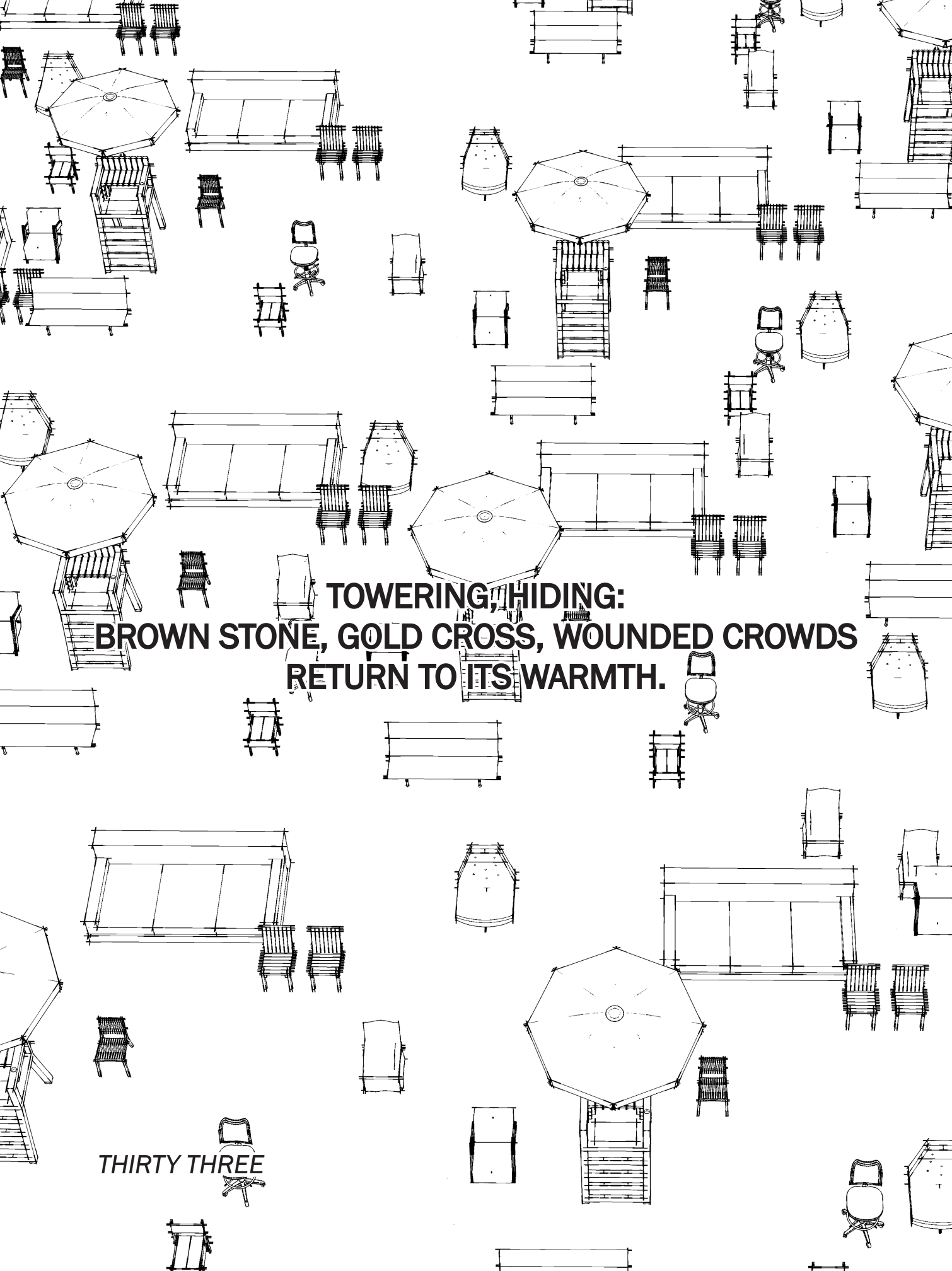

TOWERING, HIDING:
BROWN STONE, GOLD CROSS, WOUNDED CROWDS
RETURN TO ITS WARMTH.

Alexandra Guadalupe Paty Diaz

INDIVIDUALLY COLLECTED

Sucre Municipality, Petare

Planners, architects and urban designers usually described the structure of a city by determined the formal and informal areas. From decades, informal settlements have being neglected of cohesive policy to increase the quality of life of households with the presumption they are not –or should not be- part of the city. Almost ignoring their existence.

Petare, the densest slum in Latin America, is one of the strongest and biggest communities in Caracas, capital of Venezuela. Red Mountains of informal constructions, usually defined as progressive-housing, dominated Caracas landscape. But what is actually missing is the sense that the 'sculpture of poverty' is form by thousands of houses trying to provide a shelter, to men and women that work hard to survive on the tropical city. The lack of sense of humanity towards their difficult situation threatens the smart growth of our cities.

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FERRAGENS

Magda Maaoui

FOR GREATER SPATIAL JUSTICE

THE STATE OF MICRO-LOCAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

In San Francisco, two of the most controversial local measures to be voted on in November of 2013 were the Washington Street Development Initiative Propositions B and C; voters were asked to decide if it was worth it to raze a waterfront parking lot and private tennis club, and replace them with over a hundred upscale condos. The propositions were defeated. If both propositions had passed, it would have resulted in tearing down the existing structures to make way for high-rise condos, restaurants, a playground, sidewalks and other developments.

This dispute could have taken place a century ago. What sets this recent controversy apart is how it calls for micro local participation processes. This process now indeed considered central in the achievement of urban planning projects that are deemed truly inclusive. As a matter of fact, the public participatory processes are a core mechanism that lead to the implementation, development and final application of planning projects. Of course, there are specific projects which differ in terms of nature, scope, and detail from one state to another, but this signifies a recent shift in the volume of resources engaged at the micro local process.

Recent research has shown that the most successful public participatory processes are the ones that engage a larger variety of stakeholders affected by the plans or proposals (Lacofano, 1990 ; Lowry et al., 1997 ; Burby, 2003 ; Lacofano, Lewis, 2012). We can therefore suppose that a critique of contemporary citizen participation processes should underline the teleological trajectory participatory planning has engaged in, leading to an irrevocable bettering and increase of initiatives at a national level. This trajectory is in fact very complex. In the past 50 years, scholars and planners have witnessed three shifts in citizen involvement processes, which can be considered landmarks in the evaluation of participatory planning in general. From ‘maximum feasible participation’ (Economic Opportunity Act, 1964) of the residents of areas involved in projects under the Kennedy Administration, to its insider critique as ‘maximum feasible misunderstanding’ (Lowry, 1969) and now what we can call a compromise as ‘maximum feasible influence’ (Lacofano, Lewis, 2012), the evolution of micro local participatory planning is not linear and calls for a deeper critique: what can we assess from today’s citizen involvement processes in micro local and local planning projects? If a new shift had to be called for, what would it be, and which new challenges would it undertake?

A KEY MECHANISM

We could argue that citizen involvement processes are somewhat linked to the oldest American tradition: for local people to organize themselves when facing an issue, dealing with it locally. Yet, this explanation would be too determinist a reason if we did not invoke the history of past planning projects, their outcomes and their failures, and explain how participatory processes have become central to planning. Wheaton, in 1969, wrote that “there are enough cases in which the planners have been wrong and their solutions irrelevant to create the necessity for review of their judgments and the public acceptance of those judgments.” This led the federal government to abandon its multimillion dollar planning assistance in 1981, and called for renewed processes of micro local governance.

If we try to enumerate advantages to be found in the participatory processes in design and planning, we find that they prove to be time and money savers, and that they

bring to the table valuable local expertise. As in the technique of mental maps, we find that citizens possess ordinary knowledge that can help ensure that policies proposed in plans reflect local conditions and values, especially in the case of issues that concern broad public interest, such as transportation improvements, housing policies or neighborhood revitalization. Such local citizen participation should include all types of users, even the often disregarded subgroups, such as children (Lehman-Frisch, 2012).

Oakland's monthly Art Murmur shows the way local residents have reclaimed the streets of the city. Here, a collaborative art happening turns kids into Lego builders allowed to act upon the city's public space furniture.

OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE MICROLOCAL

Still, there are obstacles in place that hinder fully developed citizen involvement processes. Two of these obstacles are discussed here that constitute major contemporary issues in participatory planning. The first is that many participatory planning processes are considered only symbolic, rather than substantive. One evident reason is the lack of interest participants have expressed during the participation processes, a situation which cannot always be prevented by a system of financial compensation for participants. Many administrators believe that citizen involvement processes increase cost and waste of time, leading to individualistic controversy rather than general consensus. This belief is still hard to deconstruct.

Moreover, a second obstacle is that these types of processes sometimes result in increasing existing inequalities. Not everyone has the same capital to bring to the participation process. When the stakeholders vary too much in terms of geographic locations, or professions and interests, it results in failed situations where certain players are marginalized or excluded. Uneven distribution of power, leader manipulation, and obstructionist individuals working as "agents provocateurs" can completely obstruct the participatory process that is taking place.

A good example of this has been developed by urban anthropologist Elizabeth Greenspan on the case of New York planning issues. Greenspan goes further in dealing with obstructionist stakeholders and capital inequalities in the dialogue and negotiation processes: in her 2013 book Battle for Ground Zero, she shows how vastly differing stakeholders such as grieving families, institutions with commercial interests, and politicking bureaucrats have clashed every step of the way regarding the Ground Zero Memorial and newly built Freedom Tower.

Examples of these issues involved security concerns, design details for the memorial, or the role of the office space in the new building of the Freedom Tower. With as many stakeholders as Governor George Pataki, developer Larry Silverstein, Port Authority Director Christopher Ward, architect Daniel Liebeskind, surviving family members and activists, the general public (tourists, Lower Manhattan residents, members of Occupy Wall Street), the finalization of the building processes appeared to be a true miracle. This micro local example works as a good epitome for contemporary local participatory processes. The opening and ending quotes of Greenspan's account for it stand as an evidence for what citizen involvement in planning has meant recently in national and state governance:
'Everyone owned Ground Zero - or, at the very least, they believed they owned a

piece of it. So, they fought for their piece. For years. Some are still fighting for it.' (...) 'This means that it is partly a story about owners and politicians sitting around tables in conference rooms, but it also means it is a story about people in streets, public hearings, and living rooms voicing desires, demands, concerns, and beliefs - and occasionally garnering the attention of the influential men. It is a story about capitalism and democracy. It's a story about those who built the walls and those who wrote on them.'

PATH TO PROGRESS?

A solid grounding in national decision-making since the 1950s

A lot has been achieved since the mid-twentieth century. It is true that in all fifty states, state laws now require citizen involvement in planning processes, but apart from public hearings, the precise methods used are left to the discretion of the local government. Then, with the variety of local situations in every state, other parameters enter in line: local planners may pay more attention to citizen involvement when their actions are being reviewed by state officials, or when citizens can appeal their actions to quasi-judicial tribunals. Washington is now engaging in participatory planning in order to tackle economic, social and racial divisions. Yet, these centralized projects should not make us forget that a truly inclusive city should be built at the micro local level, and the breadth of examples of successful micro local projects to date.

Now the challenge is how to adapt to the 'information age.' This asks for increasing sophistication, as it has completely changed key components of the participatory process with the vast amount of information gathered and shared, or the shifts in actual patterns of communication and social interaction involved. This new shift represents an issue of social justice, as not everyone has the same access to social media. Which types of local projects could fit in the 'information age'? How can the public participatory process become electronically connected to be both local and global? This is a major field of exploration.

By looking at how participatory planning has been implemented at a national level, one should also keep in mind how definitions of community development and local governance have shifted through time. Furthermore, considering the changes that have taken place since WWII, current participatory planning processes now need to be sharpened and adapted to the renewed contemporary challenges of planning.

This year's local elections in San Francisco hopefully worked as an evidence of the growing crucial importance of participatory processes. San Franciscans voted Yes on Proposition F, which approved the change of a mixed-use development project on Pier 70. This proposition was slightly different from the one proposed last year. But the success of this proposition lies mainly on the fact that the project sponsor engaged extensively with the community on the overall design of the project. Not just any proposition can work as part of the city's high-priority effort to revitalize underused sections of San Francisco's aging waterfront. In other words, the people will speak.

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Rayna Elena Razmilic Triantafilo

BIGNESS

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

“The bigger, the better,” they say. “The taller, the greater,” they dream. In the record-breaking competition for the tallest building of a certain region, Chile seems proud to be winning with the tallest tower in South America. A 62-story building, 300 meters high, that will soon crown the financial district of Santiago that by mid-nineties gained the mocking name of “Sanhattan.” The photographs of this tower—postcards of a precious moment marking the economic growth of the past years and current stability of the nation—are all taken from far, far away. Only from great distance can the height of the tower be truly placed in context, since the second tallest building in the capital, a few blocks away, is 194 meter high (100 meters lower) and the third, quite far from the other two, is less than half the size of the new tower, only 140 meters tall. Almost 20 years since the consolidation of this towered-area, the rest of the skyscrapers in Sanhattan are mere figurines unable to disrupt the view of The Andes mountain range carpeted by a still predominant low-rise city that spreads over more than 64,000 hectares[1] along the valley.

While the race for higher towers usually focuses eyes skyward; the Chilean record-breaker, however, received as much attention for what took place where it touched the ground: the project squashed the neighborhood landing with a 6-story mall that also promised to be one of the biggest of the region. It delivered: as one of the top-five biggest malls in South America and opening over 300 hundred stores, 60 restaurants and a cinema complex in 2012, the massive construction crushed the commercial streets and galleries nearby. “An appalling six-story shrine to globalized materialism,” said a journalist for *The New York Times*.[2] “Chilean skyscraper casts a shadow more than a mile long,” headlined a New York online news website. As if that weren’t enough, in its ambition for bigness, the project has a 140 meters high hotel opposite to the big tower and two more buildings soon to be built, each 170 meters high. Costanera Center—the project described above—is not simply a skyscraper, but a colossal shopping platform with four towers bursting from each of its corners.

In 1995 the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas made the attempt to understand bigness and theorize about its possible virtues in the essay “Bigness, or the Problem of Large,” published in *SMLXL*. One of his five theorems stated that bigness breaks “with scale, with architectural composition, with tradition, with transparency, with ethics.” He was right. “Bigness is no longer part of the issue. It’s exists; at most, it coexists. Its subtext is fuck context,” he affirmed. In the case of Costanera Center it’s not even a matter of subtext. From its very conception, the project openly shouts: fuck context!

When it comes to the ground floor, the project provided no public spaces, on the contrary, it even invaded a small square across the avenue with an over-scale escalator that bridges from the second floor over to swallow the people coming from the subway station close by. Towards the streets, three of the four sides just fall abruptly onto the sidewalks in the form of a 600-meter perimeter blind wall, perforated by just one or two shops. The fourth side is even more ridiculous, as the structure is back to back to a 20 meter-wide line of two-story houses that face a street. The company was forced to buy one of these houses so that they could tear it down in order to give space to an underground parking exit. And we are not even addressing the implications on the traffic congestion or the polemical mitigation road project delivered and other issues that will inexorably surface once the project is fully operating in

an already overcrowded area.

Almost 20 years later, it's time to definitely say: fuck those who fuck the context. Whether a construction is perceived as beautiful or ugly is a matter of taste. Whether one likes glass, reinforced concrete or cladding is a matter of taste. Whether one finds the tower proportionate or not, or if one is willing to allow a competition between the skyline and the mountains, all those things may be consider subjective. But the integration of a project—of any scale—to the public space system and the city is not something to trifle with. Bigness is not an excuse for such little consideration towards the ground floor of the city. Bigness is not an excuse for such poor design. Bigness, in the case of Costanera Center, is not even that big.

Rem Koolhaas has praised New York's Rockefeller Center numerous times since the publication of *Delirious New York* in 1978: "Rockefeller Center is interesting because it is several architectural projects in one (...) The model of the ground floor is fascinating, although it wasn't fully realized."[3] Rockefeller Center comprises 19 commercial buildings in a site that's only three times bigger than Costanera Center's. The tallest building of the complex is a 70-story tower 260 meters high (just 40 meters lower than the Chilean tower) built in the 1930's (75 years before).

One could argue that Rockefeller Center is not a traditional "mall" but more of a shopping center. Still, it has almost 50 restaurants, over 200 shops, entertainment infrastructure and an observation deck. One could argue that Rockefeller Center is in a privileged area of New York City and that the Manhattan grid helps to fragment the whole. Costanera Center is located in one of the top financial districts of Santiago next to the river and its parks, in a neighborhood were the urban regulations encourage inner plazas and public connections in between buildings and plots. If desired, the developers could have atomized the project. They just didn't want to. It surely didn't seem profitable enough. One could argue that the economic scenarios were different. Perhaps, but both projects had to overcome an economic crisis, the first one the Great Depression and the latter the 2008 crisis, and still this point would have little relevance for the comparison. How different capitalism was then than now does not change the fortunes behind them. In any case, Costanera Center would be the one to fall short, since in 8 years of construction there will be only two of the four towers built even though the land was bought in 1986 and the project was first conceived in 1991; whereas Rockefeller Center, envisioned in 1928, had to deal with the lease of the land, and had the 14 art-deco original buildings constructed in ten years, between 1930 and 1939.One could argue that behind Rockefeller Center there was just one man, one cohesive idea. Well, behind Costanera Center there is only one man and definitely one idea, since this man has been pushing his project since the beginning of the 90's. Unfortunately for Chileans, Horst Paulmann didn't share John D. Rockefeller Jr. vision of a "city within a city" and as for what the project uncovers, he didn't seem to care much for the city in general either. Horst Paulmann is far from being a philanthropist. But why should he care? As Reinhold Martin states: "Even the so-called developer architecture is never entirely reducible to the economic interest behind it. It remains, in some sense, architecture."[4] So, why shouldn't he be held accountable? One could ask: Were there no architects involved? Costanera Center as a complex was under the development of a local prestigious architecture

office called Alemparte Barreda that coordinated their work with César Pelli's New York office, who was in charge of the tower. Shouldn't they be held accountable also?

Even if one doubts the proficiency of Chile—from designers to authorities—to successfully handle and solve projects of such scale, one must recognize the talent of its people for name-calling. Costanera Center tower is now universally acknowledged under the nickname of "Mordor." Even local newspapers, such as *La Nación*, have published articles with such reference. Mordor, for those unfamiliar with *The Lord of the Rings*' saga, means something comparable to "the black land" or "the land of shadow." Mordor is where evil resides. When Costanera Center tower eclipses the sun, it certainly looks like the movie's interpretation of the Sauron Tower of Mordor described in the books. Anyhow, despite if one is a *The Lord of the Rings*' fan, people are probably right: the project represents a source of evil, especially if by evil we understand a complete disregard for public space and for thr city's inhabitants in favor of economic interests. A source of evil, by the way, that—to everyone's surprise—meets LEED's golden category: our idea of "greenness" must be pretty hallow if it includes such devastation of the public realm.

Bigness has failed Chile's inhabitants. Or was it just the authorities and architects that failed them? Why can Chileans work with bigness? Is it really materialism to be blame for such an outcome? Or is it exclusively the retail industry in Chile to be found guilty? Costanera Center may be well considered part of a wave of polemical massive projects in the country. The common denominator for them all is "the mall." Just to name two: there's a 6-story mall under construction in the middle of the small town of Castro in Chiloe Island, known for its traditional stilt houses; and a project for a mall on Valparaiso's old port area threating the old center's view to the sea. The list gets longer by the day. What is it with the retail industry in Chile?

Due to the 2008 economic crisis, in early 2009 the project's construction was stopped only to be resumed in mid-December that same year. The left-wing President at the time, Michelle Bachelet not only attended the re-opening of the construction work, she actively participated in the announcement: the government made the project the icon of the economic reactivation. An emblem of capitalism turned out to be a symbol for a socialist representative. Mordor came to be an inexorable counterpart of Bachelet's first presidential term: a source of a necessary evil. It meant economic recovery, it meant employment, but it also meant other things that were overlooked for the sake of the moment. The message was economic growth by all means. Moreover, by *any* means: "like stupidity, evil is self-hypnotic."[5]

Eyal Weizman describes that the "international law principle of proportionality comes to determine the correct balance between rights and wrongs, common goods and necessary evils."[6] He explains that it "operates by conjuring an economy in which good and bad things can be measured, balanced, transferred, and traded."[7] That is precisely how "the threshold between sacrifice and crime" is determined. The discussion here may be of a different nature of violence than the one Weizman reflects upon. It's a violence inflicted to the public space, to architecture, to the city's inhabitants. Still, when it comes to bigness, is there anything like the theory of proportionality? When a building's subtext is fuck context, "how much is too much"? How much is a neces-

Costanera Center from Lo Curro hill. Santiago, Chile. (2013)

photo cedit: felipe diaz contardo, fotoarq.com©

sary sacrifice and how much determines a crime?

If I were to draw the line: the way the Costanera Center complex lands in the city is unquestionably a crime. A massive egocentric materialistic bomb has attacked the city. But who is to be held responsible? Why should we blame the designers? They were probably just answering to the client's whims, especially with a client as Horst Paulmann, known to be reluctant to follow any other's vision but his own. People working in the retail industry said he made the interior designers change every bit of their project for his biggest store in the mall. Why would he be any different with architects? Just as Costanera Center made Sanhattan a bunch of figurines, architects working in such projects—if they're not lucky as to have a philanthropist client—are hopeless and powerless statues. Are architects really building the city? Or is retail? But why should we blame Horst Paulmann? At the end of the day, someone let him do it. Nonetheless, why, in the chain of responsibilities that we'll probably find, did the authorities allow—and continue to allow through other projects in an almost systematical urban violence—things to happen the way they did? Who should've cared? Shouldn't other architects? Shouldn't Chileans? They did some noise. Obviously, not enough.

The problem is not that Chile wants to build malls, is how they're building them. "Bigness destroys, but it is also a new beginning," said Koolhaas.[8] Far from a new beginning, Costanera Center is paradoxically a new image of a definite past. As the first-world countries are moving away from the typology of the mall that originated this particular project, third world countries follow obsolete practices on a false pretense of leveling the field under a wrong impression of what both development and progress should look like in an urban landscape. When admiring Rockefeller Center, Koolhaas said: "instead of imitating established styles, through the use of innovative materials, programmatic enrichments and planned contextual relationships, these architects make significant contributions to urban life." That was in 1984. Almost thirty-five years later Chileans are not only imitating, they're replicating mistakes.

Nonetheless, when it comes to bigness, it is not only massiveness that can be dangerous. Bigness has a temporal scope sloping towards distortion. It's in its DNA: big projects take big time. Between the acquisition of the plot in 1987, the first announcement of the complex in 1991, and its final execution from 2006 onward, there were numerous occasions to modify the project, even to paralyze it. We can presume that there were even attempts. It's a time lapse of almost 30 years that implies several administrations at all governmental levels (state and municipality), including the last years of dictatorship that allowed such a vast plot with little regulation to be available in the middle of the city in the first place. Long-term projects need unshakable protocols. Should we hold it against all administrations then? Probably.

"The bigger, the better," they say. "The taller, the greater," they dream. However, when it comes to bigness, as far as bigness in Chile goes, the only thing that seems to be true is the fact that the bigger they are, the harder they fall. In the record-breaking competition for the tallest building of a certain region, Chile is about to be defeated by Argentina that, according to an article published in ABC News in September 2014, is planning to build the tallest tower in South America. Chile's skyscraper will lose the crown and all that's going to be left to San-

tiago's inhabitants will be a giant mirage of what was claimed to be a national glory, an indestructible reminder of what the nation is willing to accept as a necessary evil, yet also, whenever the timing of the day and the angle are the right ones, they will have a postcard of the sun eclipsed by a tall and lonely tower.

NOTES

1. Equivalent to 158,147 acres.
2. Available in: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/01/travel/a-100-weekend-in-santiago-chile.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
3. Rem Koolhaas, "The Foundation of Amnesia," in Design Quarterly, No. 125, 1984, p. 11.
4. Reinhold Martin, Utopia's Ghost, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2010, p. 96.
5. Peter Sloterdijk, Terror from the Air, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2009, p. 45.
6. Eyal Weizman, Forensic Architecture: Notes from Fields and Forums, Hatje Cantz, Kassel, 2012, p.15.
7. Ibid.
8. Rem Koolhass, et. al., SMLXL, Monacelli Press, New York, 1995, p. 511.

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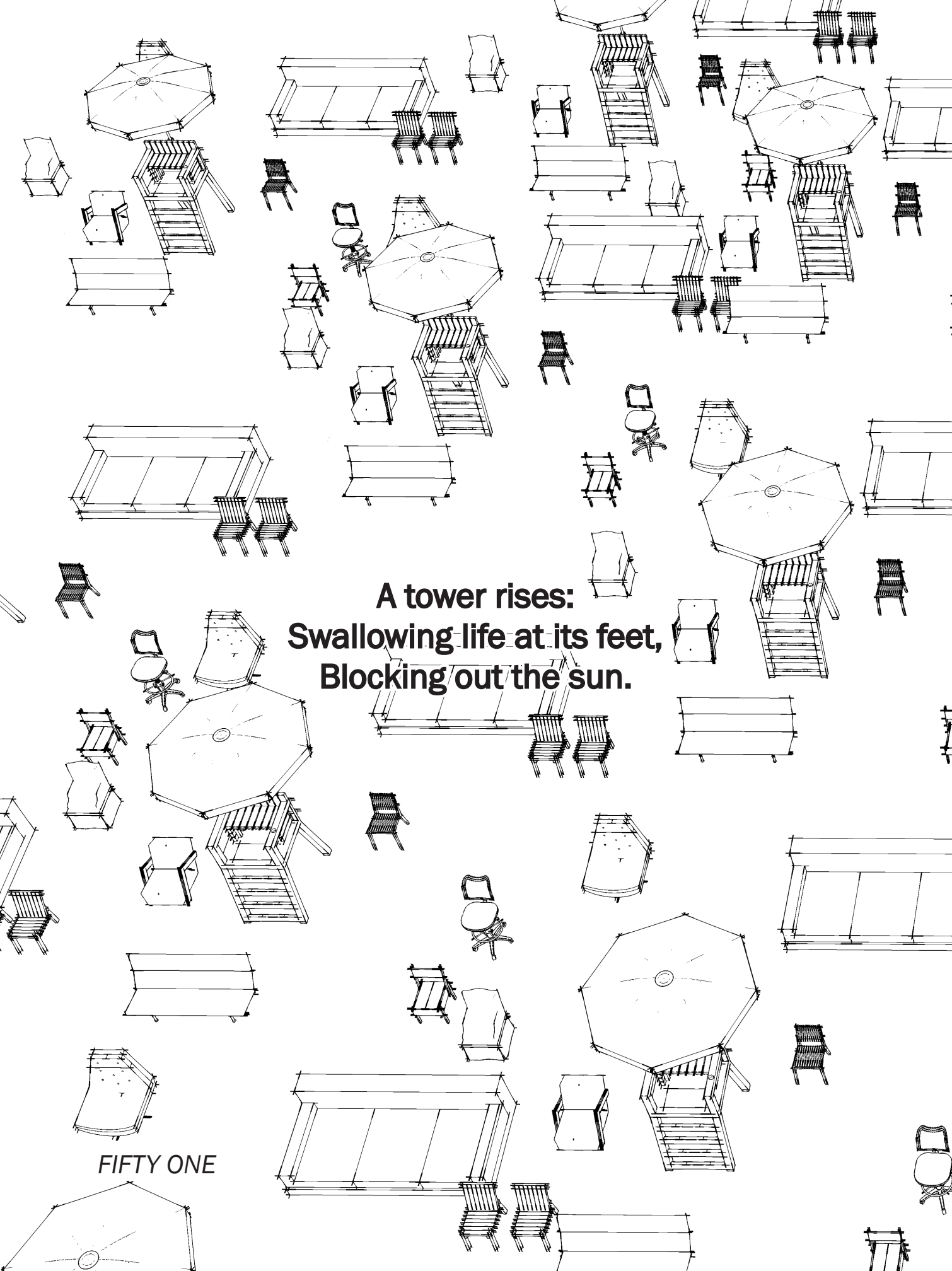
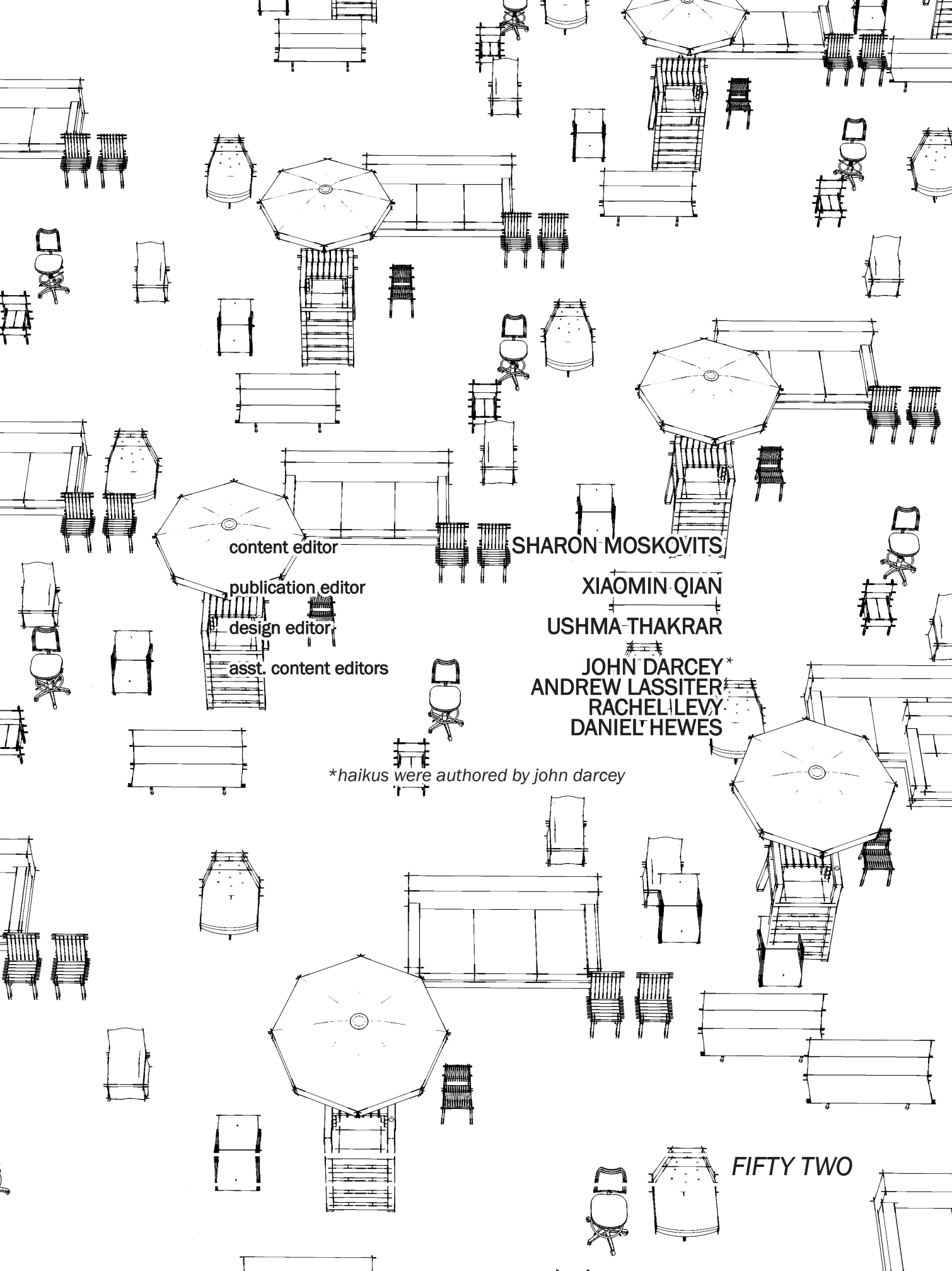


A tower rises:
Swallowing life at its feet,
Blocking out the sun.



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