I, Whitney Beege Hamaker, hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Architecture

in: College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

School of Architecture and Interior Design

It is entitled:

Starting a Conversation

This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: Vincent F. Sansalone

Rebecca Williamson
Starting a Conversation

A thesis submitted to the University of Cincinnati, 
Division of Research and Advanced Studies 
For partial fulfillment for a Master of Architecture 
In the School of Architecture and Interior Design 
Of the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning 

05.30.2008
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Bachelor of Science in Architecture, University of Cincinnati, 2006

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Our program, basically, was to drive the real-estate goons completely out of the valley: to prevent the state highway department from bringing a four-lane highway into the town and in fact ban all auto traffic from every downtown street. Turn them all into grassy malls where everybody, even freaks, could do whatever’s right. The cops would become trash collectors and maintenance men for a fleet of municipal bicycles, for anybody to use. No more huge, space-killing apartment buildings to block the view, of anybody who might want to look up and see mountains. No more land-rapes, no more busts for “flute-playing” or “blocking the sidewalk”... Fuck the tourists, dead-end the highway, zone the greedheads out of existence, and in general create a town where people could live like human beings, instead of slaves to some bogus sense of progress that is driving us all mad.
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Joe Edwards' platform was against the developers, the old-timers and ranchers—and it was brought to see, from their

It is much easier to be critical than to be correct.
Lucky Numbers 5, 8, 16, 24, 36, 40
...the insane owe their incarceration to a tiny number of legally reprehensible acts,

if not for these acts their freedom would not be threatened...
...they are to some degree, victims of their imaginations inducing them to not pay attention to certain rules.

- their profound indifference to judgement allows us to suppose a comfort within the imagination...
...they enjoy their madness enough to endure the thought that it does not extend beyond themselves.
The process of reacting to anomalies, stimuli, and irritations; to be inspired to act while having that action define the question...
When I was little my father was famous, he was the greatest samurai in the empire and he was the shogun's decapitator. He cut off the heads of 131 lords for the shogun.

It was a bad time for the empire.

The shogun just stayed inside his castle and he never came out. People said his brain was infected by devils and that he is rotting with evil. The shogun said that the people were not loyal.
He said he had a lot of enemies but he killed more people than that.

It was a bad time, everyone living in fear...

...But still we were happy. My father would come home to mother and when he would see her he would forget about the killings. He wasn’t scared of the shogun but the shogun was scared of him.
Husband, I had a bad dream.

Maybe that was the problem.

$250 REWARD
FOR ANY INFORMATION LEADING TO IDENTIFICATION OF THE PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFACING THE BUILDING.
THOSE RESPONSIBLE MAY BE ABLE TO AVOID PROSECUTION BY COMING FORWARD NOW!

IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS OR SIMILAR INCIDENTS, PLEASE CONTACT:
Anton Herfmann,
513-556-0487
Don’t be afraid, bad dreams are only dreams... Son, what a time you chose to be born.  
At night mother would sing for us or father would go into his temple and pray for peace.

Once upon a time, there was a king who ruled a great and glorious nation. Favourite amongst his subjects was the court painter of whom he was very proud. Everybody agreed this wizened old man painted the greatest pictures in the whole kingdom and the king would spend hours each day gazing at them in wonder.

However, one day a dirty and dishevelled stranger presented himself at the court claiming that in fact he was the greatest painter in the land. The indignant king decreed a competition would be held between the two artists, confident it would teach the vagabond an embarrassing lesson. Within a month they were both to produce a masterpiece that would out do the other.

After thirty days of working feverishly day and night, both artists were ready. They placed their paintings, each hidden by a cloth, on easels in the great hall of the castle. As a large crowd gathered, the king ordered the cloth to be pulled first from the court artist’s easel. Everyone gasped as before them was revealed a wonderful oil painting of a table set with a feast. At its centre was an ornate silver bowl full of exotic fruits glistening moistly in the dawn light. As the crowd gazed admiringly, a sparrow perched high up on the rafters of the hall swooped down and hungrily tried to snatch one of the grapes from the painted bowl only to hit the canvas and fall down dead with shock at the feet of the king.

‘Aha!’ exclaimed the king. ‘My artist has produced a painting so wonderful it has fooled Nature herself, surely you must agree that he is the greatest painter who ever lived!’ But the vagabond said nothing and stared solemnly at his feet.

‘Now, pull the blanket from your painting and let us see what you have for us,’ cried the king. But the tramp remained motionless and said nothing. Growing impatient, the king stepped forward and reached out to grab the blanket only to freeze in horror at the last moment.

‘You see,’ said the tramp quietly, ‘there is no blanket covering the painting. This is actually just a painting of a cloth covering a painting. And whereas your famous artist is content to fool Nature, I’ve made the king of the whole country look like a bit of a twat’.

Source: man in a pub
Then one night the shogun sent his ninja spies to our house, they were supposed to kill my father but they didn't.

That was the night everything changed. Forever.
Bandalism

Any advertisement in public space that gives you no choice whether you see it or not is yours. It belongs to you. It’s yours to take, re-arrange and re-use. Asking for permission is like asking to keep a rock someone just threw at your head.
Your dream has come true… They will pay with rivers of blood.
That was when my father left his samurai life and became a demon. He became an assassin who walks the road of vengeance and he took me with him. I don’t remember most of this myself. I only remember the shoguns ninja hunted us wherever we go and the bodies falling and the blood.
You are marked for death wherever you go, you cannot escape the shogun. My father hardly ever talks anymore. We just go a little farther every day. At night we make a fire and have our tea and listen for the ninja. We never make a sound.
Sometimes he tells me about the past and about mother. I try not to think about it, but my father can’t help it. Sometimes he gets lost in the past...

...My son, I have decided to escape, to defy the shogun. Today I will begin walking the road to hell, but you will choose your own path.
So, soon you may be seeing heaven. Choose the sword and you may join me. Choose the ball and you join your mother in death. You don't understand my words but you must choose.

Choose life or death…

Lord Naoshige said, “The Way of the Samurai is in desperateness. Ten men or more cannot kill such a man. Common sense will not accomplish great things. Simply become insane and desperate.

“In the Way of the Samurai, if one uses discrimination, he will fall behind. One needs neither loyalty nor devotion, but simply to become desperate in the Way. Loyalty and devotion are of themselves within desperation.”
...Your mother would be happy. My own son will defy the shogun. You are my child, assassin with son.

By order of our Lord Shogun in the name of the Emperor, Son of Heaven. You now have two choices, swear eternal loyalty to your master or commit hari-kari with your son.

You are wrong. I have a third choice.
You madman. We command you... Guards he defies the shogun’s orders! Guards!

Seize him. Stop him! What are you waiting for kill him, can’t you see he is the devil! Kill him!

Ohhh Mad One, bow before your shogun. We see your trap. You can never escape your fate. Submit with honor to a duel, with my son Lord Korando.
Why don't you accept? If you win the shogun will not challenge you anymore to combat. How about it?

Accept this offer or die here, now. Defeat my son in a fair fight and you win your freedom.

I agree.
My son Korando will slaughter him and his little bastard. My strategy will not fail, what sweet karma. Son in the heavens blind the eyes of this mad wolf. Fly Korando my boy, fly to glory...

...Sometimes we come to a town, but it's bad for us because we are not like other people. The towns are dangerous; the shoguns ninja are everywhere. Anybody could be a ninja even a pretty woman or a nice lady. And you never know who.

But sometimes you have to take a chance, if you want to take a bath.
Matsu, what are you doing foolish girl? That man in there is just a common beggar. Don’t you realize he is masterless samurai? He could cause trouble if he doesn’t pay or becomes violent. This is an inn for first-class.

So sorry, there has been a mistake we have no...
PHOS BRANDED SINGLE OCCUPANT TENT

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

1. **THE 'KIT'**
   - **A.1**
   - **B.1**
   - **C.8**

'KIT' CONTENTS
- A... 1 TENT TARP
- B... 2 TENT POLES
- C... 8 TENT STAKES

2. **INSERT TENTpoles**
   - **A.1**
   - **B.1**
It is a good viewpoint to see the world as a dream. When you have something like a nightmare, you will wake up and tell yourself that it was only a dream. It is said that the world we live in is not a bit different from this.
...Can I pay now and would you keep this for me? 1000 pieces of gold, I hope that's enough... Thank you.

Can we go? Mostly we just keep moving. It's safer that way. That's how I get my education just seeing things and always watching out for ninja. Sometimes I fall asleep but my father never does. That's good because one time when I was sleeping the shogun sent his soldiers for me.
Assassin show your self, it is Lord Beizen your old
comrade. I bring a message from my father your
former master. You have won your liberty but not
your sons. Your sons life will be payment for your
foul crime, the slow death of your son will be an
example to all men. Where is he? Turn him over!
Prepare to witness his agony.

Armor? You fear him so?
Ikuno Oribe said, “If a retainer will just think about what he is to do for the day at hand, he will be able to do anything. If it is a single day’s work, one should be able to put up with it. Tomorrow, too, is but a single day.”
He is the son of a mad wolf. Kill him!

Biezen my son. You pompous fool, the wolf lures you to your grave. But I would risk the lives of all my sons to see his head on a stake. Farewell my son... Listen to me lone wolf I want your head.
You cannot kill me; with my eternal vow I will destroy you. Send your ninja I’ll kill them all.

You and your son are cursed forever more...
Actually there was nothing mysterious about McGovern’s “stunning” victory in Wisconsin. The most surprising thing about it was that the national press wizards, including me, had somehow overlooked the existence of one of the most impressive grass-roots political organizations in the history of American politics. Gene Pokorn, McGovern’s twenty-five-year-old national manager for Wisconsin, had seen no special reason to inform the press about it. When the truth finally dawned on us several days before the election, I was too physically and mentally broken to cope with anything that intricate. As the deadline hour approached, I spent more and more time locked in the back bathroom of our National Affairs Suite in Bleak House, waving distractedly and yelling at Crouse to call the doctor for more drugs. When it finally became apparent that I was hopelessly out of control, Crouse went out and lashed the story together on his own:

MILWAUKEE, WISC.—The George McGovern field organization has become a legend. Gene Pokorny has been hailed as the “best young political organizer in the history of this country,” and people have begun talking about the volunteers in tones usually reserved for the guys who were in the hills with Castro.

A bunch of beautiful, euphoric, slightly drunk, very young McGovern volunteers were having a completely informal victory party in a block-long two-story brick warehouse, formerly used to store toys. They had been living there for two weeks, sleeping on the linoleum floor of the cavernous rooms.

They had all worked in the Fourth District, the Polish South Side of Milwaukee, a section that even the McGovern staff crossed...
PRESS RELEASE
January 15, 2008

An International call for ideas
WHITE HOUSE REDUX
www.whitehouseredux.com

What if the White House, the ultimate architectural symbol of political power, were to be designed today?

On occasion of the election of the 44th President of the United States of America, Storefront for Art and Architecture, in association with Central Group, challenge you to design a new residence for the world’s most powerful individual. Universally recognized as a symbol of political authority, one of America’s greatest tourist attractions and the nerve center of the world’s most complex communications system, it is the ultimate architectural embodiment of power.

Few people realize the extent of the White House, since much of it is below ground or otherwise concealed by landscaping. The White House includes six stories and 55,000 square feet of floor space, 73 rooms and 35 bathrooms, 172 dooors, 114 fireplaces, eight staircases, three elevators, five full-time chefs, a tennis court, a bowling alley, a movie theater, a jogging track, a swimming pool, and a putting green. It receives about 5,000 visitors a day.

The original White House design, by James Hoban, was the result of a competition held in 1792. Over the centuries, presidents have added rooms, facilities, and even entire new wings, turning the White House into the labyrinthine complex it is today.

What if, instead of in 1792, the competition were to be held today? What would a White House designed in 2008, election year for the 44th President of the United States, look like?

The best ideas, designs, descriptions, images, and videos will be selected by some of the world’s most distinguished designers and critics and exhibited in a month-long exhibition at Storefront for Art and Architecture in July 2008. All three winners will be flown to New York to collect their prizes at the opening party. Register now, and send us your ideas for the Presidential Palace of the Future.

JURY

Beatriz Colomina (Architectural historian, New York)
Stefano Boeri (Editor-in-chief, Abitare magazine, Milan)
Ed Gilber (Editor, Scotland + Ireland, New York)
John Maeda (President, Rhode Island School of Design RISD)
Geoff Manaugh (BLOQangle and Dwell magazine, San Francisco)
Mark Wigley (Dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Columbia University, New York)
Laetitia Wolff (Editorial director, Surface magazine, New York)
The above individuals are involved with SOUBRA and regularly participate in meetings with him in Prescott, Arizona.

The following information was gleaned from the research paper.
...I Lord Kuragawa and my ninja group greet you. We are here to report the shogun's wishes. We hunt a man called Lone Wolf who fought a duel with our shogun's heir.

My ninja women exist to serve our master's will. What was the outcome of the duel?

Terrible... We are ordered to kill him. It won't be easy. Maybe Lone Wolf would only toy with you.
Would you like to see? These are your men? Show me your strongest man.

Jin EFI

Jin EFI

don’t find a way from the room. Try an escape from the room. This is you best man? Ha! My women will execute him...
...When we are on the road we stop a lot at temples, to pray for the souls of the dead. That's how people can find my father. They hire him to kill someone they're scared to kill themselves. They put pictures of a wolf on their temple gates. My father leaves them a sign. Then we meet in secret.
When Shimomura Shōun was on service at the castle, Lord Naoshige said, "How wonderful it is that Katsushige is so vigorous and powerful for his age. In wrestling with his peers he even beat those who are older than he is."

Shōun replied, "Even though I'm an old man, I'll bet I'm best at seated wrestling." So saying, he jerked up Katsushige and threw him so forcefully that it hurt. He then said, "To be prideful about your strength while your mettle is not yet established is likely to bring you shame in the midst of people. You are weaker than you look." Then he withdrew.
end notes...
Lucky #’s 6, 7, 14, 23, 26, 37...

...The process of reacting to anomalies, stimuli, and irritations; to be inspired to act while having that action define the question.

I brandalized my heart in Cincinnati...

...Anomalies, stimuli, and irritations; to be inspired to act while having that action define the question.

This is the end, my only friend the end...

...Be inspired to act while having that action define the question.

You are born with a sixth sense and superb insight...

...Having that action define the question.

From hot dog carts and Bedouins, to busts for “photographing government facilities”...

...Question.

Jackpot

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impossible, how can a process of reactions initiated by an individual define a personal question for someone who has yet to ask (and who may never ask)?

Act II  “Lofty goals for such a humble pirates.”

Inspiration, irritation: they can be found anywhere there is no magic; a man spends several weeks walking by a leaking fire hydrant, but how long before he calls the city? You witness and participate in local and nation-wide elections every two years minimum – how long does it take to realize that everyone is speaking in tongues? These scenarios are only conjectures but the beauty of inspiration is that it can be equally effective without logical or factual basis; all that it must do is move. Say our intrepid traveler becomes disenfranchised with the branding that has invaded the political process. Feeling betrayed by the concept that more campaign signs = more votes, the realization strikes that more signs actually = more trash that no one will bother to pick up once the votes are tallied. While gnawing on this concept a material is discovered ... 100% recycled, non-recyclable plastic campaign signs. This characterizes irritations and anomalies.

A material choice becomes the building block for all investigations and informs the decisions and projects that follow; however, this is not to say that the material cannot change as projects progress. In the case of the “brandalizing” campaign signs, this material choice began as a process of collecting within a small set of self-imposed constraints. No signs were to be collected pre-election, once Election Day passed no sign was to be removed from private property, and thereafter all unused signs in the public domain became fair game. Once materials are harvested they are modified to begin participating in local and nation-wide elections every two years minimum – how long does it take to realize...
is the best fit.

...Deleuze, Guattari and the technological model...

The analogy Deleuze uses to describe his technological model of smooth and striated space is the process of creating various types of fabrics, including methods of quilting. When considering fabric, one must decide if they are defining smooth or striated characteristics inherent in the construction of the fabric. If the fabric were to be constructed based on a pattern of perpendicular or fixed directional elements it would be considered striated. Therefore a fabric such as felt that involves no weaving and has no discernable separation between fibers would be considered smooth. These principles can be applied to the creation of items composed of smaller pieces, such as quilts. How then would one characterize the differences between an embroidered and a patchwork quilt? A patchwork quilt can be constructed using an infinite number of shapes, sizes, and textures of cloth, creating an infinitely large smooth whole, despite the fact that it is constructed from striated materials (i.e. woven cloth). On the other hand the embroidered quilt that has a central motif or theme is constrained by pattern and regularity, making it striated.

This model is fascinating because Delueze makes no effort to suggest which type of space is better. Instead he makes sure to point out that it is enough that both exist and are constantly interacting and changing. While at a micro scale smooth or striated may be a desirable method, at a macro scale neither is capable of being correct or incorrect. Within my exploration the creation of smooth space is a prevalent operation, however creating smooth space or striated space is not the stated goal of the thesis. It is the creation of a dialogue through the production of space. This process is documented in order to develop a question – which may be different for the producer and the observer. It is this dialogue that drives the process forward and beyond the initial attempt to respond to the irritation, inspiration, or stimuli. At this advanced stage in the process the work that has been accumulated can be recycled and re-appropriated. As soon as questions are asked or...
criticisms made the ability exists to re-deploy the questions and the work in new ways. Juxtaposing, filtering, and layering new, modified work with the old can begin to create more informative products. The idea is to treat the object with a degree of respect while finding different ways to use it. Giving the object this level of respect offers it a degree of neutrality that it doesn’t have at first judgment. This process can never be about finding the right answer, it must be about finding the next answer.

**Act III**

“Return your seat to the upright position.”

Resembling a now-extinct barn owl, a disheveled man grinds his palms into his eye sockets while slumped over in a cheap airline terminal bench. The once-handsome three-piece pinstripe number has seen better days, rumpled as if it has been slept in for several nights. When he removes his hands from his face he reaches down to an armored brief case and draws a data line to the back of his neck. As he connects his eyes close and the REM state shows in the twitching skin of his eyelids. Mere seconds into the dive his body snaps into sudden, seizure-like spasms and freezes, his hand inches from the plug at the nape of his neck. A voice invades his subconscious.

“Doctor, you didn’t think we would just let you leave, did you?”

“I am finished… That work… That work belongs to me.”

“Do you really believe that? Your work belongs to you as much as my body and brain belong to me. You know this.”

“I suppose, but it reminds me of a story… There once was a nameless carpenter who built a castle. When he finished, he deliberately left behind the tools he had used to carve his name into one of the attic beams. He did this as proof that he was involved in the castle’s construction… Yet you would erase even that much of my sentiments.”

“Yes, because that is the fate of those who have surrendered everything to the system in order to gain power… You can’t run and neither can I.”

Moments after his palsy begins, the man in the once-handsome suit goes limp and drops from the seat to rest, limp, on the floor, his eyes now silent behind their lids.

There are 484 dots on a one-foot square ceiling tile, that’s 22 by 22 dots... Having already stated the intent of finding a question, one might begin to wonder if I have found one. The truth is, I have found several and suspect that I will continue to find more as long as I work. How can a subjective individual respond to a stimulus in a way that is self-representative, and also reflective for any other person who interacts with it? At what point does the producer release the work to the observers and allow it to take on a life of its own as a part of those observers? By admitting to and accepting subjectivity, polemics, and opinions we are able to endeavor unrestrained. Working as personal exploration does not entail ignoring the surrounding world, it only suggests that we see through different filters. While the work that is produced may be personal exploration, the second it becomes a part of a larger discussion it is changed forever. It is this type of change that allows for postproduction and development. The original work, in this sense, is a meticulously documented artifact that is waiting to be redefined. This is a method of architectural exploration; it is a way to define, determine, and shape space. While the experience may be the brainchild of the producer it becomes reality for anyone who participates within it. Once the work is released as a finished piece (in the eyes of the producer) into the public sphere it becomes an unfinished piece. Whether other individuals can physically manipulate it or not, it takes on a different life for each person; therefore it is no longer complete. As stated earlier, right and wrong, beginning and end, are not the focus. Rather it is the discourse, discontent, and affect. To engage the individual with his or her environment and inspire them to question what they see. This is where I find myself…

“...Say what’s it like up there in outer space?”

“It’s like… It’s like way out.”

“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.” T.S. Elliot
Gilles Deleuze’s theory on smooth and striated spaces from “A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia” will be used as a primary text to evaluate two case studies centered about nomadism and architecture. By comparing the nomadic work of Alv Forno from the sixties and seventies to the documentary “Dark Days” about the homeless living in New York City train tunnels using three of the models of smooth and striated space. A greater understanding of the fluid nature of the relationship between the smooth and the striated as well as the implications of those relationships on two different nomadic relationships will be obtained.

appendix...
The nomadic works of the architectural collective Ant Farm compared to the New York City tunnel dwellers featured in the documentary Dark Days form the opposing paths of translation between Deleuzeian smooth and striated spaces. Ant Farm’s sixties and seventies failed rejection of conventional architectural and societal practice through counter-cultural exploration represents the translation from striated to smooth. Conversely the desires of the New York homeless to be sheltered from the chaotic and unpredictable streets by retreating into the darkness of the rail tunnels represents a translation from smooth to striated. Smooth space being one that shifts with each movement while continuing to meet the need; these shifts do not occur in space; rather they establish different configurations of nomad and vegetation and landscape that unfold as the smooth space of the search. Striated space is best described as local movements charted with respect to already specified points, thereby imposing a plane of organization upon the movements that unfold. Nomadic space meaning a space produced through its distribution, not a space with intrinsic properties that determine the relations, but as space with extrinsic properties; the space is produced from the movements that then give that space its peculiar quality. What comparisons can be drawn between a group that chooses a nomadic lifestyle in criticism of a social system and a group that has been forced by circumstance to live a nomadic lifestyle by that same social system? What similarities might exist between two cases that are separated by twenty years, three thousand miles, and all that deteriorates in between?

Ant Farm was formed in 1968 in San Francisco by two young renegade architects, Doug Michels and Chip Lord. Eager to find alternatives to the modernist styles and practices of the time, they embraced the revolutionary spirit of the times. Their aspirations were compared by contemporaries to a toy Ant Farm, where frenetic activity takes place below the surface and collectivity is a way of life. Ant Farm grew into a loose collective of architects and artists, among them Curtis Schreier, Hudson Marquez, and Doug Hunt who would join the underground activities of the group over the course of the ten years of its existence. Originally operating out of San Francisco, Ant Farm’s activities eventually oscillated between the Bay Area and Houston, with Michels, Lord, and Schreier acting as the three principals.

Idealistic to the core, Ant Farm embraced the youth culture’s principles of communal living, sexual liberation, mind-altering drugs and utopian ideals. Within this context Ant Farm flourished, discarding many of the repressive antidemocratic assumptions that underpinned high modernist architecture. Since the many active elements of the counterculture had already begun to decolonize everyday life, Ant Farm approached its early architectural projects on the lighter side of this territory. The Ants erected inflatable temporary shelters, including their 50’ X 50’ Pillow: a structure that inverted every abiding characteristic of the conventionally built environment. Light, not heavy; soft, not hard; a perceptible whole, not an assembly of bits and pieces; curvy, not straight; cheap and fragile, not mortgage-bound; transparent, not dark.

The inflatable pillow was an embodiment of the nomad. This inflatable, polyethylene anti-monument to stability would even float away if not well anchored. Ant Farm then published the Inflation Cookbook, a how-to guide that served as an ideological prep to the do-it-yourself contingent of the counterculture. The cookbook seized the indisputable American desire for autonomy and went a long way for the group’s appeal. The inflatables effectively deflated the overwhelming inevitability of the built environment. They allowed for a kind of mimetic building that bypassed the considerable array of architect’s responsibilities, creating a weightless practice of architecture. The inflatables were also about mobility. So the Ants took to the road with travel-size inflatables turned into the purpose-built Media Van, recording their demonstrations and performances on video as they sponsored workshops at colleges over a period of several months. These young American nomads, having dodged stability and deferred self-gratification, seemed to always breathe fresh air while traveling on indifferently. There was no one to answer to and no one could get to them, especially not in the pre-cell phone era. Just as the inflatables flattened enclosure while mirroring shelter, to be on the road in the Media Van born of sameness without risking alienation. The Ants saw the road as a home, attached to the older pleasures and oddities of the fading American landscape.

Dark Days is a documentary that focuses on the homeless who inhabited the Amtrak and subway tunnels beneath Manhattan. Risking life and limb, these desperate, desperate men and
women built temporary shelters, equipped as best their abject poverty and the surrounding squalor allowed. Overrun by vermin and forced to exist with little running water and scant sanitation, the subway dwellers were accorded the small blessing of being off the streets, even if they found themselves under them. The director, Mark Singer, spent prolonged periods amongst the group, sheathing in their existence and, for long stretches, rarely rising above ground himself.

The denizens of this underground Hooper Ville are found intermingled amongst the forest of structural columns beneath the streets of Manhattan. Patchwork homes, clutching columns like strange hands, comprised of plywood scraps, packing pallets, blankets and tarps. Residents waged a constant war with the rats that grew obese on the garbage strewn throughout the tunnels. Yet within these dilapidated dwellings one finds strangely familiar surroundings; small refrigerators, lamps, hot plates, color TV’s, electric razors, and space heaters. These bits of the surface serve as reminders to what was abandoned upon moving below the surface of the sate above. Borrowed electricity was the only utility that consistently found its way down into the darkness, due mostly to the trains that routinely grind through this impromptu neighborhood (the occasional leaking water pipe served as an ice cold shower). As ‘houses’ burned down or collapsed new homes sprang up like phoencises from the ashes. As Singer notes, one of the greatest difficulties of filming the stories of these inhabitants was the uncertainty inherent in the lifestyle. On any given day, at any given moment, it was entirely conceivable that he might never see a resident again, either they simply moved on, or the tunnels became their final resting place. Over the course of the two years of filming, three of the inhabitants contributing to Singer’s project lost their lives to the tunnels. It is strange that the safety the tunnels provided was directly related to the fear outsiders had of venturing into them, which was proportional to the fear the residents had of being attacked or robbed while living outside of them. It is in this context the inhabitants of the Manhattan underground became subterranean urban nomads.

The Technological Model – The analogy Deleuze uses to describe his technological model of smooth and strated space is the process of creating various types of fabrics, including methods of quilting. When considering fabric, one must decide if they are defining smooth or strated characteristics inherent in the construction of the fabric. If the fabric were to be constructed based on a pattern of perpendicular or fixed directional elements it would be considered strated. Therefore a fabric such as felt that involves no intertwining or weaving and has no discernable separation between ‘threads’ would be considered smooth. These principles can be applied to the creation of items composed of smaller pieces, such as quilts. How then would one characterize the differences between an embroidered and a patchwork quilt? A patchwork quilt can be constructed using an infinite number of shapes, sizes, and textures of cloth, creating an infinitely large smooth whole, despite the fact that it is constructed from strated materials. On the other hand the embroidered quilt that has a central motif or theme is constrained by pattern and regularly, making it strated. Despite the seemingly disparate visual aesthetic that could be drawn between the tunnel dwellings and the Ants inflatables, there are very strong connections in relation to the technological model. Both modes of dwelling are manifestations of smooth space, but they arrive at this destination by different paths. The Ant Farm inflatable Pillow, by virtue of its polyethylene material, can be considered as a smooth fabric. Since the fabric of the inflatable is without direction or any type of fiber, how does one come to grips with the seemingly strated borders the pillow creates in its final form? Despite the smooth qualities of the building material, it has been cut into a neatly defined geometric pattern that could be considered regular. It is, however, the symbiotic relationship between the intent of the material and the form that allows the inflatable to be considered smooth space. By creating a soft object with blurred boundaries between the interior and ‘exterior’ the Ants were able to create a counter-point to the heavily regimented and strated housing typologies of the time; typologies that promoted investment, privacy and regularity. The occupants of the Pillow were physically unable to separate themselves from the outside world, while simultaneously being able to experience the interior of the massive pillow in anyway they saw fit.

In regards to the subterranean nomads, there are two distinct scales at which their space may be observed in relation to the technological model. At a macro-scale, the entire tunnel community could be seen as a manifestation of the patchwork quilt concept. As the tide of
temporary building ebb and flows there is an ever-changing patchwork of community that exists within the tunnels. The society of the tunnel is created by the relationships between people inside of the dwellings rather than the structures themselves; how they care for their personal space as well as how they observe the surrounding areas, searching for potential dangers to the way of life they have struggled to build. It is this ever-changing, expanding and contracting social tapestry that forms the societal smooth space that exists under Manhattan. At the micro-scale, the patchwork quilting is found in the construction of the individual dwellings found in the tunnels. Each home filmed in the documentary is uniquely different in character due to material availability, which is situationally identical to the genesis of the creation of the patchwork quilt. As material becomes available or presents itself the small dwellings are expanded, upgraded, or started anew, making each one a unique smooth piece on its own.

It becomes apparent that in both cases, the ability to become smooth spaces as described by the technological model experience varying degrees of success. Ant Farm strived to create a technologically smooth and nomadic solution to a societal view of what housing "should" be. While they succeeded in making a statement to counter that particular mind frame, it could be argued that their success in creating a smooth space is to a lesser degree, which appears to be by the Ants' own design. On the other hand, by virtue of the lack of options and resources, the denizens of the NYC underground have created a patchwork quilt community and housing solution strictly through their search for shelter and safety, making them inherently nomadic by the Deleuzian definition.

The Maritime Model – This model deals specifically with the lines, surfaces and points that are found in both smooth and stratified space. In the physical description of stratified space, lines or trajectories tend to be subordinate to points: one goes from one point to another. In smooth space, it is the opposite: the points are subordinate to the trajectory. This makes the line in smooth space a vector, as opposed to the dimensional quality of the stratified line. Despite the clarity of the description of the maritime model, there is the paradox of the sea. The sea would appear to be the ideal representation of smooth space, but as a result of human development in navigation bearings, meridians, longitudes, latitudes, and maps have overlaid the sea. These types of dimensional navigation saw the end of the nomadic system of navigating by wind and star alone. The significance of this example lies in its ability to begin to describe the ebb and flow that exists between smooth and stratified spaces. Just as stratified pieces could be combined into a smooth patchwork, the smooth itself can be drawn and occupied by diabolical (using diabolical here adds value judgment) powers of organization. This demonstrates above all that there exist two nonsymmetrical movements. According to this line of thought, there must then be a constant state of flux that exists between the two spaces that would create an ever-changing fluid edge at the boundary of both.

There are fascinating parallels to be drawn between the two cases in conjunction with the maritime model because of their strangely similar context with decidedly different use. Both groups are connected to major lines of cross-country transportation, while simultaneously being directly connected to the intensity of the local infrastructure of a large metropolitan city. In the case of NYC, trains make both of these connections, whether it be the subway (local) or Amtrak (cross-country). The Arts on the other hand made their connection via the Automobile, utilizing the San Francisco metropolitan infrastructure and the famous American National highway system.

In this particular model the work of the Ants becomes slightly paradoxical in regards to the creation and habitation of smooth space. While it would be appropriate to infer that the architectural ideals and goals of the infrastructure experiment follow closely to the ideas concerning smooth space, it is equally safe to say that the Arts' love affair with the automobile and their chosen method of delivery for the in fullest workshops stays from the Deleuzian concepts of smooth space and nomadism. In their travel to put on workshops for various universities, the group became subordinate to trajectories bound by points. Despite their best efforts to subvert various elements of the American consciousness the Ants were unwilling to commit fully to the smooth maritime model.

No such dichotomy existed underground. Manhattan. Despite their proximity to the various modes of rail transportation, the homeless tended not to follow such rigid forms of transportation, but instead seemed to live in the space between them. This was especially true for the men and women of the tunnels. In order to scratch out a living and find necessary food items and equipment for their shelters, they were required to traverse the streets and subterranean levels of NYC. This type of life style is much more conducive to vectors and nomadic wandering in search of the provtential oasis. In their case, “Got to find something I can sell.” So while the tunnel dwellers reside almost on top of the lines of stratification they still utilize the smooth maritime model to support themselves.

The Aesthetic Model: Nomad Art – When considering nomad art, Deleuze makes an effort to define the differences between ‘close-range’ and ‘long-distance’ vision as well as ‘optical and ‘haptic’ space. In creating nomad art, or aesthetic smooth space, one is in a closed vision-haptic space in which the eye is performing non-optical functions. Cezanne spoke of this need to no longer see the wheat field, to be too close to it, to lose oneself without landmarks in smooth space. In effect the ability to touch an object or a space with one’s mind’s eye is the key to creating the smooth nomad aesthetic. On the other hand, the strained space requires a vision of distance that is entirely optically focused, consistently oriented and keeping an invariable distance given by reference points. However, in a similar fashion to the maritime model, there still lies a great deal of edge space for smooth and strained aesthetic to emerge from one another. Due to the difficulty in evaluating the creative potential of strained spaces it offers the possibility of emergence from the smooth, thus acknowledging the ability for a changing dynamic between the two spaces.

Cezanne’s wheat field analogy touches on an important issue for those who spend days or weeks without daylight. How close must one get to an object such as a wheat field before you truly lose your self with it? How long must one spend underground before they stop realizing how desperate their situation is? The same tunnel vision that would allow for a great painting to be created provides many of the inhabitants with belief that they have found on indefinite and ideal living situation. Some even had the honest belief that the tunnel had provided them with some semblance of the good life, grabbing for themselves a piece of the American dream (free electricity). In the case of the documentary, it took a forced removal of all of the inhabitants from the tunnels and placement into section eight housing for them to realize how dire their living conditions once were. This is evidenced by the fact that certain denizens have lived in the tunnels for almost twenty-five years without leaving to live on the surface. In this regard the underground lifestyle seems to provide the close-range haptic dimension needed to provide a smooth aesthetic space.

Another element present in the subway tunnels is the free expression enjoyed by the graffiti writers, many of whom lived amongst and with the homeless. In this unique situation the graffiti can almost be likened to cave art, because the writers use the tunnels as an opportunity to hone their skills and perfect their craft in a place where few outsiders are likely to go. Depending on the traffic density, location and quality of the work, most graffiti in a tunnel tends to get painted over or removed. These are the types of traces and remnants that encourage individuals to carry on this free-form method of nomadic communication. These graffiti writers still participate in the age-old style of nomadic messages attached directly to train cars that travel and gather responses wherever a train may go. When a train comes to rest in the tunnel a graffiti “piece” is quickly applied to the outside of a train car. This is done with the intention that when the train reaches its next destination the piece will be seen by another graffiti artist and the artist will write a response before the train continues on. Therefore participating in the core of the Deleuzian nomadic ideal, there is no destination only the path that is being traveled by the artist vicariously through the artwork in hopes of reaching out to the world beyond. It is as if a bit of beauty and creativity formed in darkness rides a strained space into the light spreading a smooth space along the very situations that enable it to be nomadic.

The Ants inflatables on the other hand, have been approached from a decidedly strained aesthetic due in large part to accomplishing a goal. They sought to create a methodology and a product that would challenge the way in which people viewed habitation, especially the concepts of home and personal space. By creating a physical manifestation of this methodology the Ants have
created a striated aesthetic by utilizing a long-distance, optical model. By observing what is conceived of as a whole or complete solution, one sees beyond the extents of the project, which, in turn involves an optical form of observation. However, the infatocookbook provides an excellent example of the creative potential of the striated space facilitating the emergence of a smooth space from within it. This is realized by the nature of the “cookbook,” enabling individuals to follow a do-it-yourself methodology. There is the possibility of an infinite number of variations on the initial solution based on the creativity of the individuals who take up the teachings of the cookbook. By spreading their message the Ant Farm aesthetic itself is allowed to become nomadic as the methodologies found in the cookbook traveled from place to place and entered into the architectural discourse.

Conclusions From the Three Models - The most important conclusion to be drawn from this implementation of Derrida’s models is the non-hierarchical relationship between smooth and striated space. It is imperative to understand that neither are mutually exclusive concepts, and neither is necessarily right or wrong. The ability to objectively observe and critique both concepts allows for the greatest understanding of how the models should be used. In the end, smooth space does not exist without striated space just as striated space does not exist without smooth. When one is able to interpret the models based on fact and analysis, not preconceived notions, they can become an effective analytical tool.

Beyond the contextual and historical differences between the case studies, two distinct methodologies begin to form. The founding members of Ant Farm received their “creative” training from institutions that existed as part of the system they found themselves rejecting. In this regard the Ants utilized the offerings of the system in order to subvert the theoretical framework taught within it. All of this was done to create a critique or counter point to the culture they find themselves inundated with at the time. This represents a smooth space that emerges from within a striated space. By accepting what the infrastructure or striations of the system have to offer, the Ants were able to use the infatables and the infatocookbook to provide smooth spatial concepts in the negative space between the situations. This methodology is inverted for the inhabitants of the NYC train tunnels. Their “creative” training is a result of their current living conditions, which have nothing to do with the systemic society that exists above their homes. They have learned to survive based upon the smooth/nomadic existence that they have embraced in order to shelter themselves from the hardships inherent to living at the fringes of the system. Despite their abilities to engage a smooth lifestyle that exists between the situations that define New York City, the implicit end goal is still to re-enter the society that inhabits the striated space above them. This is evidenced by the reactions of the homeless from the tunnels that are afforded permanent section eight housing when they are evicted from the tunnels. Despite any previous affection for their former lifestyles, there is a ubiquitous rejection to the thought of returning to their subterranean habitation. Truly becoming the inverse of Ant Farms pursuits, the homeless hope to cast aside their smooth special constraints to reenter the safer confines of societies striated space.

The common thread that makes both of these cases compelling is the ability to come to grips with context and then seek to improve it in a way they see fit. Ant Farm utilized a zeitgeist spirit of the sixties and seventies to challenge a social system that was not working in their best interests. While the subjects of “Dark Days,” as well as the documentary itself, became a similar challenge to a depressed lifestyle that was a product of fear and need. Through Derridas framework of smooth and striated space it is possible to move beyond the obvious contextual differences of the two cases, so their juxtaposition reinforces an understanding of theoretical space.
Pamphlet Architecture #15: War and Architecture – Lebbeus Woods

Is there space for the hope that things will change for all who still believe in change? For optimism that holds back the glare towards the abyss? In other words, does Lebbeus Woods allow us in his work to forget the crisis of awareness afflicting modern people, the reality of the present?

Lebbeus Woods is the metaphysical architect at the edge of architecture accomplishing what is humanly possible at the outermost boundary. His “mirror images” prescribe the conditions of an inevitable awakening, of a fusion of the real and the sensual, in visions that have become true to paper form.

Woods is not a deconstructor, he does not use the method deconstruction as an excuse for complacency or an authorization for indifferent architectural expression. Although there are elements of deconstruction in his work, it cannot be defined as uncertainty, but as criticism of contemporary architectural practice. He knows that urgency prevents certainty. This could be the reason he begins to build his urban constructions on paper, in the same way that light emerges from his wind-swept ruins. Woods works to overcome the border between dream and reality.

Although Woods works purely on an abstract level of production, his work in ‘War and Architecture’ is an attempt in translation. Taking the design ideas he needs and applying them to a real life destructive situation, the shelling and potential reconstructions of Sarajevo post 1992. Woods’ understanding of the architecture of knowledge and architecture as an embodiment of knowledge, serves as an insight into the human condition that created the crisis in Sarajevo, Israel, Lebanon, and other countries deteriorating into armed conflicts. What are the architectural and moral implications that surround these unique and often ambiguous situations?

The architecture of knowledge is the knowledge on which people base their objective actions, concerning a reality independent of subjective human cognitive processes. This could be seen in the light of classical science or as an existential process. The only real difference being that a
good (amoral) scientist would choose the method that worked best and a good (morally) existentialist would choose the method confirmed by experience.

This dualistic nature is what leads to Woods belief in architecture as the embodiment of knowledge. He draws this conclusion by stating that architecture is the coalescing of activities in society, the union of many flows into a single complex stream. The real value is the determination that when society is unable to define itself in classically objective terms, it becomes necessary to embrace the ideals of fluid dynamics that lead to continually shifting ideals. This requires the removal of all distinctions between art and life, generating a singular flow. This in turn created architecture that is only concerned with fluid-dynamic structures of tissues, networks, matrices, and hierarchies. The utilization of the hierarchial is the best way to realize the potential of the human being.

The old cities are hierarchies now threatened by war, mass media, and modern mass technologies. They are the ideal embodiment of the hierarchy based solely on its complex layering of buildings, open spaces, uses, and reuses that have been created over centuries of urban absorption and development. The city has survived the influences of hierarchies that attempted to exert rigid structure onto society, all the while continuing to grow stronger and even more complex. In Woods' mind the advent of the modern mass technological cultural core hierarchies able to absorb the complexities of the 'old city,' mainly though warfare and mass media. War does more than simply destroy the physical city. It destroys all the multi-layered complexities to the point of embodying the monolithic structure of hierarchy at its most extreme form. The real question lies in the creation of a model for the new city, what form of knowledge will be used and whose ends will it represent?

Building on the existential remnants of war, the broken built landscape of war must be respected as a form that embodies a history that cannot be denied. The built form in this environment will begin to suggest new forms of thought and comprehension that will lead us to new conceptions of space and form. The human ability to integrate will create new habitable spaces that will neither celebrate the destruction of established order nor will they symbolize or commemorate it. Woods believes there is a moral and ethical commitment to accept what has been suffered and lost, but also what has been gained as a basis for a new community. The government, institutionalized authority, or commercial corporations must not do this. This is the creation of a new multi-layered society, and must spawn from below to be socially representative.

Woods has created from this cognitive process a set of representational methods to create those new heterarchical communities out of what he dubs 'freespaces.' These are another form of urban regeneration using the fluid state as a process to connect elements of the new urban fabric. This refers to the dimension that exists in the tangible but highly fluid form of electronics and instruments of the 'information age,' most specifically the flow of information between individuals on a communal scale. In terms of re-inhabiting smaller scale built forms, Woods develops the "injection," "scab," and "scar." These construction methods are meant to inhabit the spaces in built form voided by destruction. None create an exact fit, but instead exist as spaces within or over spaces, making no attempt to reconcile the gaps between what is new and old, between to radically different forms of space and thought. The new structures contain what are also referred to as 'freespaces:' forms that do not invoke occupation within the old paradigms of living. Instead they are difficult to occupy, requiring inventiveness in everyday living to become habitable. The goal being a break from traditional links to centralized authority, deterministic, and coercive systems, making the individual assume the benefits and burdens of self-organization through the continuous reinvention of existence.

How then, do we deal with the logistics of the freespace? Who inhabits freespaces, who owns freespaces, and who pays for the construction of freespaces? Theoretically the freespace would be inhabited by people from every class who had the desire or necessity to transform the patterns of their everyday lives from a fixed to fluid, from deterministc to existential. These are people of crisis, who find the old hierarchical orders too uncomfortable and oppressive to abide by their dictates of custom and law, those are the people who must perpetually begin again. In terms of ownership the next step is a logical one; those who make freespaces their own are the owners. This is not the 'survival of the fittest' ethic, but instead a form of camaraderie and compassion. It must be that those who can conceive or construct space place it freely within the common domain.

Considering the social implications of the freespace it is legitimate to question the viability of funding such projects. It would not be the banks, corporations, governments, or cultural institutions that would reach out to this radical change in habitation. In fact, these are the very authorities that have been coerced into enforcing the current conformity found in contemporary habitation. Instead money will not be responsible for the birth of the freespace, simply because money is not available to those who require the freespace. A barrier system is suggested as an initial solution to the problem along with heavy reliance ingenuity through the use of salvage. However, the end goal would be the development of a new source of currency;
information that would be exchanged in bits and bytes. As technologies are funded from below, the knowledge, ingenuity, energy, and inventiveness that have always fueled the engines of civilization will now be doing so directly for those who need it most.

Through this exploration into the transformative qualities of conflict and destruction, new tissue can be formed as a new city. The new city will require an architecture that rises and sinks into fluidity, embracing the turbulence of a continually changing matrix of conditions. Architecture will become the physical manifestation of the shifting forces, patterns, unpredictable movement, and spontaneous disintegrations of the human societal condition. Seeking an architecture ideal that comforts, but only those who ask for none, the architecture of the transient and unknown, architecture indifferent to its own destruction, abandoned yet not waiting to be filled, one that resists politicians because they cannot embrace it as their own.

"...architecture drawn as though it were already built – architecture built as though it had never been drawn"  

"The year is 2019. The finest men in America don't run for President. They run for their lives."

01.15.2008
whitney harraker

"Conflict is not something that befalls an originally, or potentially, harmonious urban space. Urban space is the product of conflict."  
Protracted and calculated conflict is a uniquely human condition as compared to the various forms of life on this planet. It is this inborn will to dominate that has given rise to society and all the
This is where the weirdness begins assuming that passivity establishes and enables the democratic process. According to Lefort the enabling card of democracy is the lack of certainty about social life, this is the precise reason that democracy can be seen as the antithesis of monarchical power structures. He goes on to argue that public space is the arena in which debate and disagreement becomes a legitimate form of decision-making. Where rights are declared not just possessed. While these two ideas seem to be contradictory, they do more to explain the ebb and flow of public sentiment and participation in the political process. Consider the difference in public opinion of the wars in Iraq and Vietnam. One conflict sparked political upheaval and in some cases open rebellion, while the other has continued to be the elephant in the room.
While producing a heavy fistful of daydream inducing imagery, one can’t help but feel that while Bachelard has a rich feel for home it is difficult to relate to. His poetics of representation or dialogue is difficult to determine how much of this is a social zeitgeist or writing meant purely for oneself.

He exhibits an interesting degree of confidence in many different relationships with nature without really qualifying it. Specifically when he talks of Rilke’s fears of “heaven’s ice,” when focused on a city rather than a country house... “The house capitalizes its victories over the hurricanes.” Based on Rilke’s many poems he ignores the qualities and scientific aspects of natural disasters that he may feel are unimportant. That while never fully delving into why a city does not or cannot have the same characteristics as the country home. He also takes a very masculine perspective on the gender roles that take part in the memory of the home, by placing women in position of caretaker and as an entity separate from men. Another area of great interest that is no explored in any great depth is the memory and place making of nomads and how they identify home.” Including the different connection that a nomad would invariably share with the natural environment as a part of their lifestyle. He speaks of feeling calmer and confident in an old home rather than a place lived in by transients. Again I feel great opposition to the statements Bachelard makes while refusing to explore or substantiate them. These are the types of discussions that can lead to understanding of home as a sedentary / normed space or a smooth / striated space.

These oppositions of space are found in the anarchitecture work of Gordon Matta-Clark. Where as Bachelard looked at what could be loosely defined as sedentary space (the home) and the prose associated with it, Matta-Clark acknowledges the dominance of striated space in a city and looks for the smooth space that has been created by that order. By documenting, purchasing and displaying the buyable but unusable spaces created by the rules, regulations, and conventions of society, he is exhibiting the creation of smooth space from striated space. Just as one can create the smooth space of a patchwork quilt from the striated fabrics of mass-produced clothing, Matta-Clark was able to find smooth spaces produced by the inescapable rigidity of a city.
The feeling of mind numbing irony becomes inescapable as one delves deeper into the struggle born from the creation of Israel. It is always astounding to see the oppressed become the oppressors despite how illogical it may seem to an outside viewer. I cannot pretend to be privy to the emotion and paranoia that has defined the conflict between the Israelis, Palestinians, and the Jewish culture as a whole, but the more I look the more insane it all becomes. For a culture that has historically been so abused and trod upon it seems their authoritative and defensive actions could be seen as inevitable. Nevertheless one would hope that their cultural experience would also lend some degree of understanding that has yet to expose itself.

The craziest part of reading “Hollow Land” was the number of times I stopped reading and thought to myself, “why does this sound so similar to Nazi Germany or apartheid South Africa?” Random detainments at check points, profiling, isolation, blatant thievery of property, refusal of essential resources, and denial in general. This went on in the United States and South Africa under the names of Jim Crow and Apartheid but according to Israelis it is somehow becomes different because the rest of the world does not understand the problem at an appropriate depth.

In my mind there are several factors that have kept this from becoming a global outrage. One, it is a religious struggle focused around territory gained through war/conquest, not a race struggle focused against supposed citizens. Here in lies a huge issue, Palestinians have no country, instead they live in ‘territory’ occupied by a state (who oppress them) they have no chance or desire of joining. At this point how can the even be called Palestinians? Does a real Palestine even exist? Second, there still exists a global guilt about what happened to Jewish people as a result of the Holocaust, making criticism of their ‘defensive’ policies a politically dangerous subject unless you opposed Israel’s formation in the first place. Third, at least regarding the United States,
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