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I, Brian J. Turcza, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture (Master of).

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UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
Reinforcing the Social Spectrum through Architecture

A thesis submitted to the

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by

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ABSTRACT

The typical American city fails to provide people with spaces that facilitate the full social spectrum, from conversation or privacy, both of which are necessary for sociological and psychological well-being. These deficiencies are due to the propagation of sterile public spaces, compounded by stifling urban densities and shifts toward sociopolitical apathy. The amelioration of this trend requires an exploration of how the built environment affects social behavior, namely how it can prompt people to interact with each other or, conversely, to disengage from society (as a therapeutic means of rejuvenation and/or introspection).

This thesis integrates spaces for social interaction and social disengagement into the design of a performing arts complex adjacent to the riverside entertainment district of Newport, Kentucky. To design well for these concepts, they must first be interpreted as they pertain to sociology, urbanism, and theater theory. Microsociology reveals how people interact and under what scenarios this is most likely to occur, while the tenets of urbanism provide a framework for designing an array of engaging public spaces that supplement each other. Theater theory is applicable in the form of theatrum mundi – the analogy between public life and stage acting. This thesis creates spaces for social interaction by providing complementary mixed-use program, creating urban stages for which the public can claim ownership, and through reinforcing theatrum mundi. Social disengagement is achieved by complementary programmatic functions, materiality and touchability, and physical and psychological distancing from places of overwhelming sensory stimuli. The design also educates the public about performance and theater production. This thesis serves as an example for how activated urban spaces can provide the full social spectrum to the surrounding community.
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CHAPTER 1 : THESIS BACKGROUND

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All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,

*William Shakespeare – As You Like It*

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**Preface**

My interest in the impact of architecture on social interaction originated through observations of transit station culture. Through experiencing the transit systems of numerous cities, both domestic and international, I witnessed a unifying theme. Most travelers display disinterest, if not complete obliviousness, toward their fellow passengers throughout the duration of their trip. Adjacent passengers often opt to spend time reading books, plugging into headphones, or simply sitting in silent contemplation, rather than engaging each other. While this social isolation was most apparent in the transit system, the absence of social interaction is noticeable across many urban environments. My initial reaction brought me to the conclusion that social interaction was a damaged system, which required fixing.

After further consideration, I realized that while some spaces are immanently good settings for socialization, the urban dweller also needs distance from society in order to properly rejuvenate, introspect, and critique the world around them. This need clarifies why people choose to isolate themselves in transit stations. The activity
involved presents passengers with idle time, which in modern society they appropriate as an opportunity to keep to themselves. This phenomenon is especially common in transit hubs, where travelers are busy thinking about the journey ahead or the journey just completed. Attempting to insert social interaction into a building type that currently resists that behavior would be futile. Rather, a more worthwhile endeavor is to create architecture that enhances social interaction and social disengagement. In abandoning the transit hub typology, it became necessary to select an urban space that inherently supports both spaces for social interaction and disengagement from society. Through additional ideation, a performing arts theater offered itself as such a medium, with existing spatial components that encourage a range of human groupings, behaviors, and emotions. Traditionally, theaters have been places to socialize but also to reflect. This building type enables this thesis to span the full spectrum of socialization.
Problem

Modern society has created a public environment which does not afford people enough spaces appropriate for either social interaction or for social disengagement. With cities that are negligent to social needs, urbanites simultaneously and paradoxically suffer from isolation and lack of privacy, both of which can result in psychological degradation. Social interaction began to decrease noticeably after World War II as the urban centers lost their middle classes, and concurrently their spaces for informal gathering, to suburbanization. Transformations in how public spaces and work environments were perceived limited the amount of privacy, and therefore therapeutic disengagement, that urbanites had available. The current result of both these effects is an apathetic attitude toward public life. Prominent sociologist Richard Sennett wrote, “Today, public life has also become a matter of formal obligation. Most citizens approach their dealings with the state in a spirit of resigned acquiescence.” While much has changed in the 35 years since Sennett expressed this assessment, it remains true, and is reflected in the persistent lack of spaces that support social needs.

The reduction in social interaction in urban environments is caused by a fundamental shift in the manner in which city dwellers perceive the different realms of urban life, such as home and work. Theories by urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg

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suggest that tertiary places, with home and work being primary and secondary, should comprise the vast majority of urban culture. And yet, the modern urbanite is increasingly expected to be available to work regardless of time and location. The advent of the computer, phones, and more efficient means of commuting are largely responsible for this deviation, blurring the boundaries among the spheres of work, home and Oldenburg’s “third places.” Suburbanization, which puts greater distances between an individual and his/her neighbor, has also detracted from the efficacy of these third spaces, inhibiting people’s ability to socialize on a regular basis.

Recent advances in technology enable methods of interaction previously unavailable but simultaneously complicate normative social behavior. The proliferation of virtual social media seems to maintain long-distance ties, but such media do not ameliorate the fractures within the current state of face-to-face interactions. Technology does not inherently promote or inhibit socialization. In fact, when applied correctly, technology has the potential to either increase levels of face-to-face interaction or facilitate therapeutic self-withdrawal.

Many experts in philosophy and sociology have addressed issues of interaction and disengagement over the years, yet there has been a distinct lack of exploration in how the design of built environments can improve these conditions. The few

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propositions on the matter are inconclusive at best. While the underdevelopment of this set of issues complicates the thesis, it also demonstrates the potential for investigations in this area of study.

The three distinct components of these issues naturally generate a logical hierarchy of sources and theories for the structure of this thesis: First, the essential factors are borrowed from sociology and human behavioral sciences, referencing works by Erving Goffman and Norman Ashcraft. Second, Richard Sennett, William H. Whyte, Ray Oldenburg, and Jan Gehl provide critical insights into the issues of urban culture and the interactions it defines. And third, Neil Fraser offers a history of the theater, while Richard Sennett, William Egginton, and James Thompson contribute to the discussion of theater and performance theory. Synthesizing these theories will produce a design for an urban performing arts complex — with theatrical, commercial, and residential components — that encourages both social interaction and disengagement.
Literature Review

The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

As the architectural impact on social conditions is the impetus for this thesis, it is first necessary to analyze the sociological methods for perceiving interactions. This review of the literature establishes a language of social interaction that can be applied to architectural discussions and design intentions. Arguably the foremost expert in this subject is the renown micro-sociologist Erving Goffman, whose first book, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, furnishes this thesis with a vocabulary and framework to apply to socialization. Goffman’s earliest definition of interaction is: “…the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions when in one another’s immediate physical presence.”3 This simplistic definition will be elaborated upon in the discussion of one of Goffman’s other books. Goffman asserts that most interactions are based on the need for one individual to elicit information from another or to publicize information about other people. Also critical to Goffman’s theories is his concept of “front,” which he defines as “that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe

Fronts allow individuals in public to analyze social situations and act accordingly. Hence, fronts are based upon the individual’s perception of normative behavior. The idea of “front” is closely tied to the concept of “face,” which will be discussed later with its applications to performance theory.

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman also elaborates on the dynamics of groups of people in social circumstances. He describes “performance teams,” or simply “teams,” as “any set of individuals who co-operate in staging a single routine.” Goffman argues that teams cooperate in public in the sense that there is a level of concurrence necessary in allowing participating individuals to maintain their fronts. Performance teams can take the form of established, formal parties, as is the case with work departments (Fig. 1.1). Conversely, performance teams also form as impromptu, informal groups, such as people who begin talking to each other on the bus (Fig. 1.2). Performance teams can vary in the number of people and in the physical environment in which they occur. This demonstrates the ubiquity of performance in the public realm.

A pivotal point in Goffman’s research is the role of public teams as social bridges. He writes, “When members of a team have different formal statuses and rank in a social establishment, as is often the case, then we can see that the mutual dependence

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4 Ibid., 2.  
5 Ibid., 79.
created by membership in the team is likely to cut across structural or social cleavages in the establishment and thus provide a source of cohesion for the establishment.”6 Thus, teams can help in equalizing social strata and giving institutions their character. As will be suggested by Ray Oldenburg later in this review, the “leveling” of social statuses is an integral component in encouraging social interactions.

**Interaction Ritual**

In Goffman’s 1967 book, *Interaction Ritual*, he elaborates on his previous notions of interaction and face, as well as addressing the mechanics of interaction. First, Goffman redacts his previous definition of interaction, suggesting that there is no universal definition. In lieu of a conclusive definition, he offers three components that comprise interaction: a brief time span, limited extension in space, and the completion of events.7 These vague parameters contribute little to the formation of a legitimate definition for interaction as it pertains to the built environment, so it is more helpful to continue with Goffman’s previous definition of interaction.

The true value of *Interaction Ritual* comes as Goffman dissects micro-sociology, more commonly referred to as face-to-face interaction, into different components, the

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6 Ibid., 82.
most important of which are “line” and “face.” He uses line to signify “the pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which a person expresses their view of the situation and through their view of the situation and through this, their evaluation of the participants, especially himself.”8 Thus, lines convey a front. But to what end? Goffman asserts that “face” in social interactions is “the positive social value a person effectively claims for themselves by the line others assume they have taken during a particular contact.”

Fronts become an attempt to create positive social value. An important distinction to make is that fronts are displayed by the individual, whereas a face is an effect perceived by a larger group.

An example of Goffman’s terms for social interaction follows: A boss congratulates a businessman during a team meeting for his outstanding work. The businessman thanks his boss and the other people in the meeting for their recognition. But rather than take all of the credit, the businessman says that his entire team put in extra hours to get the job done. In this case, the businessman adopts the front that there was good work done and it was, at least in part, due to his contributions. The front he creates also makes him appear as a team player. His front clarifies for the other people in the meeting the businessman’s perceptions of the scenario. The line manifests itself in the form of the verbal cues, in terms of word choice, intonation, etc. The line is also apparent through the businessman’s body language. For example, he sits up confidently.

8 Ibid., 5.
while receiving his praise. He gestures outwards with his hands while duly distributing the credit to the rest of his team. Having successfully created this front, the businessman then benefits from the face the other people in the meeting perceive, namely the businessman’s sense of teamwork and selflessness.

This language is critical in discussing how an individual communicates the desire to socialize or to disengage. The complication lies in the fact that socialization is subjective; various individuals perceive the same interactions differently. These varied perceptions depend on many variables, including the person’s ethnicity, behavioral background, and the time and location of the interaction. While this variability reinforces Goffman’s conclusion that face-to-face interaction is innately subjective, he also claims that the essence of human experience resides within these interactions. He would assuredly agree that the amelioration of the built environment to facilitate more and better social interaction is a necessary investigation. More of Goffman’s work will be discussed later, as this thesis analogizes stage-acting and public interactions.

**People Space**

Norman Ashcraft elaborated on Goffman’s work in his book *People Space* from 1976. He addresses notions of social territory, privacy, interaction in the built environment, and the negative ramifications of poor social practices. First, Ashcraft
contributes to the evolution of Goffman’s definition of interaction by introducing the nuances of social territorially. Synthesizing several of Ashcraft’s descriptions of “social territories” yields the following definition: the use of behavioral precedents to create visible and invisible boundaries that the individual expects others to respect. According to Ashcraft, speech and glances do not inherently establish the scope of interaction territories because “they are temporary, even fleeting, and they do not appear to be bounded in any tangible way.” It is only once these actions are perceived and respected by others as defining space that they establish a social territory. For example, two friends decide to get together in a crowded mall. They see each other from across the mall atrium and wave. This action does not yet establish a social territory because it goes largely unnoticed by the surrounding people and because it has no longevity (Fig. 1.3). Once the friends get together and begin a dialog, the social territory becomes more apparent. Passersby recognize that there is an interaction between the two friends and their recollection of sociobehavioral precedent instinctively informs them to respect the interaction’s intangible boundary (Fig. 1.4). Just as in Goffman’s perception of the “performance team,” social territories require cooperation between the individual and another individual or a larger social entity. This concept enables this thesis to clarify

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the definition of interaction: the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions as dictated by behavioral precedent, which produces social territories.

In addition to Ashcraft’s approach to social territories, he is also a primary figure in the concern for privacy in urbanism, addressing the opposite side of socialization. In *People Space*, Ashcraft uses “privacy” to signify the option for individuals to temporarily extract themselves from public life. He recognizes that the modern city is continuously and systematically eliminating opportunities for privacy in the urban realm. Now, even within their homes, people are constantly reminded of the outside world, incapable of finding a retreat. Ashcraft indicates the consternation of the individual when establishing a personal space for him- or herself when he writes, “The status of the people present in an elevator, on board an airplane, at a large impersonal gathering may be nebulous and individuals will employ various tactics to define themselves. But no longer is it all that easy to establish status dominance in an impersonal setting.”

Examining social behavior in an elevator or crowded train will expand upon this concept. People typically carry their belongings, such as a briefcase, to their sides throughout the day. But upon entering an elevator or a crowded train, many people transition whatever they may be holding to in front of themselves. This repositioning is because social territories directly in front of any individual are much more sensitive than the ones to either side. Carrying an item in front of oneself creates a buffer between oneself and others, thus extending the minimum physical territory (Fig. 1.5). This

Fig. 1.5: Holding items in front of oneself is an indication that there is not adequate room to disengage.
buffering action is most often performed when the built environment is too confined and unsuitable for proper social disengagement. Without the option to retract from society, the individual forfeits the opportunity to relax, introspect, or critically analyze this society. According to Ashcraft, privacy can be achieved by both the built environment and behavior. In terms of the built environment, Ashcraft asserts that people define their social territories via the “physical occupation of a given space and the direction or orientation of the human body.” On the other hand, manipulating behavior to establish privacy is a sociological phenomenon with negligible impacts on architecture. Therefore, this thesis will focus on Ashcraft’s conception of how the built environment affects privacy.

Ashcraft lists three methods that architects and designers use to conform to or interrupt these territories. First is the line, which designates a change in spatial functions or controls who is able to traverse it. Architecturally, these lines are usually seen as material changes. However, it is easier to visualize this concept in the form of stanchion and rope systems (Fig. 1.6) that manage how queues assemble and control accesses to specific areas. Second, Ashcraft describes the low barrier, a semi-permeable separation that permits visual and auditory interconnection between spaces, but prohibits a physical transition. Everyday examples of this include fences and screens. The 10th Avenue Square of the High Line (Fig. 1.7) in New York demonstrates how a “screen” can

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10 Ibid., 74.
create physical separation, while still allowing visual, and to a certain extent auditory, continuity. For the third type of enclosure of territory, Ashcraft designates the literal and figurative wall, which limits physical, visual, and auditory passage. This third type can have entirely different connotations. On the one hand, as with the Berlin Wall (Fig. 1.8), it can symbolize disconnection, isolation, and fortification. From a different perspective, such as with the wall of a cocoon, an impermeable barrier signifies insulation, shelter, and tranquility.

Regardless of connotation, Ashcraft’s three spatially defining elements influence how occupants comport themselves in relation to each other. Ashcraft advises that the multifarious boundaries – visual, auditory, haptic, or otherwise – that the individual experiences going from one space to the next should be readily perceptible in the built environment. This thesis design will take into account each of Ashcraft’s categories of spatial definition as means of promoting social interaction or social disengagement.

The final insight that Ashcraft suggests to designers in People Space is to become more cognizant of the interconnectivity of spaces of different scales. He writes, “A system, or ‘field’ of human space forces us to recognize that human territories are not simply comprised of a series of discrete and separate spaces, like ten separate houses on a block, but, instead, that any particular space is also a very integral part of a larger
system of spaces…” This thesis will address in detail the spatial relationships and interconnectivity of areas of interaction with areas of disengagement at a range of scales.

What Ashcraft does not address in *People Space* are the different reasons why privacy is a necessary aspect of urban life. For the purpose of this thesis, these reasons will be classified into the four following categories, one of which is specific to the theater-going experience:

- To relax and rejuvenate
- To be introspective
- To be critical of society
- To add a different perspective on an experience

Each of these types of privacy requires different spatial configurations and qualities (Fig. 1.9). The requirements will be achieved through the implementation of Ashcraft’s three spatially defining elements.

The study carrels at the Phillips Exeter Academy Library, designed by Louis Kahn in 1967, serve as an example of how spaces for disengagement are integrated into the built environment (Fig. 1.10). Analyzing the carrels with Ashcraft’s system for socio-spatial definition in mind reveals how the disengagement is achieved (Fig. 1.11). The brick walls separating the carrels create two levels of privacy. First, they perform as a solid wall, allowing for disconnection from one carrel to the next. Secondly, the
sequence of these walls effectuates a “line,” which demarcates the zone for the study carrels in relation to the adjacent space for circulation. The boundary of this zone is reinforced by the wooden side of the study carrel, which is in essence a screen. It prevents visual distraction for someone studying at the carrel, but still maintains auditory connectivity. The window on the exterior wall also acts as a screen, allowing a visual relationship with the outside, while filtering out other sensory stimuli. Based upon how these spatially defining elements are implemented, the Exeter Library study carrels fall into the disengagement categories of introspection and experience enhancement. Using this technique of analyzing the built environment based upon its spatial definitions will indicate how the other spaces for disengagement should be designed.

The Fall of Public Man

Having outlined the concepts of social interaction from a sociological standpoint, it is now necessary to view them from the perspective of urbanism. In his 1976 book *The Fall of Public Man*, Richard Sennett initiates this investigation through an analysis of the changes in social tendencies that have occurred in the modern public realm. While numerous socio-cultural changes occurred over the past 200 years, Sennett’s
writing reveals three ultimate results in society that, in turn, disrupted social interaction: formalization, privatization, and representationalism.

Sennett claims that the public realm underwent a period of formalization during the *ancien régime*, a term that Sennett interprets as a period of outmoded feudalism and bureaucracy during the 18th century and focused in Western Europe. Consequently, the general populace became apathetic toward public life. The repetition of inauthentic interactions in the public realm gradually eroded the individual’s ability to socialize as consistently and personally as in previous centuries. To display emotions in public was considered low-class or even immoral. Theater-goers were expected to suppress all signs of emotion during performances and daily conversations in the streets were restricted to pleasantries, avoiding talk of personal matters. This ambivalence toward public life negated the function of Goffman’s concept of face, obscuring the intent of interactions.

Sennett also avers that “…the more privatized the psyche, the less it is stimulated, and the more difficult it is for us to feel or to express feeling.”

Sennett is referring to the application of traditionally public human behaviors to the private realm, such. For example, in previous centuries children would entertain themselves by interacting with other children at public locations, whereas present-day children are more apt to entertain themselves by playing video games alone. Although technology

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is not inherently to blame, one can argue that the advent of television and the internet has caused a decrease in the amount of interaction families have with each other within the home. Thus, “family time” became a public, rather than a private event (Figs. 1.12 & 1.13). As the ability to temporarily withdraw from society within private environments diminished, individuals were forced to introspect within the public sphere. Private functions became further infused into the public realm and individuals became increasingly aloof to their audience, resulting in inartistic and impersonal urban life. It is important to note that Sennett’s use of “private” differs from Ashcraft’s in that it describes a generalized movement of the public domain away from personal interactions.

Lastly, Sennett noticed the transition from a society based on presentational interactions to one based on representational interactions. In order to maintain a flourishing public life “social expression will be conceived of as presentation to other people of feelings which signify in and of themselves, rather than as representation to other people of feeling present and real to each self.”12 In presentational expression, individuals display themselves as actors but possess a sense of self, whereas in representational expression, individuals are stripped of their authenticity and left without an identity.13 People that express themselves representationally display the emotions that they think other people want to see. Thus any substance to the individual’s

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12 Ibid., 39.
13 Ibid., 108.
interactions becomes increasingly diluted. In addition to offering an explanation regarding the decreased quality of socialization in contemporary society, this argument also demonstrates the connection between the public realm and the theater, in that people are constantly acting in their daily interactions.

Presentational and representational expression are more easily conceptualized through theater or film acting. Presentation acting is a performance of raw emotion, establishing identity rather than simulating it. Examples of this concept were commonplace in silent films, where emotions were exaggerated to compensate for the unstated dialog (Figs. 1.14 & 1.15). The transition from presentational expression to representational expression manifested itself in the public realm and in stage-acting through a change in focus from emotion to character imitation. Representational acting centers around telling the story of a preexisting character. This approach precisely imitates the emotions of this other character, rather than producing original emotions. In theater or film, this technique is often referred to as method acting. Actors rigorously study their character, often assuming their identity both during and outside of performances (Figs. 1.16 & 1.17). While acting professionally, both presentational and representational expression are appropriate approaches, as both emotion and storytelling are essential. However, the propagation of representational expression in the public realm has had deleterious effects on socialization by prompting the general populace to act and express emotion through imitation, as when an individual gets plastic surgery to
look like the person they want to imitate (Fig. 1.19). Similarly, an individual chooses to act representationally if he/she smokes a cigarette simply to look like someone he/she admires (Fig. 1.20). Sennett affirms that this devolution has produced a social atmosphere that is sedate, bland, and inartistic.

Just as the aforementioned social transformation affected the quality of social interactions, it also radically altered the nature of public roles. Most notably, the individual changed from an actor to a spectator in the public arena. The spectator became a passive observer of urban life, rather than an active participant. Sennett relates the dilemma of the spectator:

“Unsure of his feelings and convinced that, whatever they were, they were expressed wholly beyond his will, this man did not desert public society. He clung to the belief that outside the home, in the cosmopolitan crowd, there were more important experiences for a person to have... If he could only prepare himself, above all if he could discipline himself to silence in public, things would happen to his feelings which as an individual he could not make happen for himself.” ¹⁴

This passivity resulted in a collective silence from the preponderance of the urban population. As Sennett reflected, “Silence is order, because silence is the absence of social interaction.” Through this logic, as the role of the public actor decreases, so does

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¹⁴ Ibid., 195.
the quality and quantity of social interaction. The related theories of stage-acting and performance will be further expounded upon in a later section.

Despite the predominance of representational acting used in today’s public realm, there are still spaces and institutions that support presentational acting. While there are no places that elicit either purely presentational or purely representational expression, certain situations involve more presentational expression than others. Determining common threads between these spaces and institutions will help determine the qualitative requirements that allow for, and even promote, presentational expression. Examples of such spaces and institutions include Speakers’ Corners, churches, sporting events, and support groups. In each instance, the individual is less preoccupied with representing a character and more focused upon presenting authentic emotions. They are also engaged in highly-focused activities and topics about which they care deeply.

The orators at Speakers’ Corners use presentational expression to engage the audience, which are most often passing pedestrians. Speakers’ Corners, the most famous of which is located in Hyde Park in London (Fig. 1.18), are open, public spaces where individuals and groups speak freely about any desired issue. The intention is that a crowd will gather to hear the speaker’s opinion. Individuals only orate at a Speakers’ Corner if they feel strongly about the topic that they promote. Thus, the display of authentic emotion, rather than represented character is implicit. A focus upon a certain
performative emotion is also necessary at a Speakers’ Corner in order to engage passersby who might otherwise continue walking.

Presentational expression is implemented at places of worship as a means of demonstrating piety, with the intended primary audience as higher beings. Many religions believe in the omnipotence of their god, obviating the need for the individual to assume an ostentatious character. This release enables individuals to concentrate upon expressing genuine emotion toward their beliefs. The devout worshiper who prays intently does not do so as pretension, but as a means of expressing commitment to his/her god. Spirituality and the life-changing rituals generally associated with it (baptism, marriage, death, etc.) are inherently a matter of emotion (Fig. 1.19). Of course, this assumption presupposes that the expression displayed at a place of worship is directed towards the given god. If the worshiper instead, or in addition, regards his/her fellow worshippers as the audience, then the individual usually opts to suppress real emotions by putting on a façade.

Using Speakers’ Corners, churches, sporting arenas, and support groups as instances where presentational expression is the predominant form of behavior, one can extract the commonalities between these examples to determine what elements facilitate presentational expression. The primary connection between these examples is that the users gather around intensely emotional and shared objectives, passions, and values. At Speakers’ Corners, people assemble because they have similar social, economic, or

Fig. 1.21 : Churches promote presentational expression.
political ideologies, and they can assume that those individuals with differing opinions would not stop to listen to the performance. In churches and support groups, individuals perceive a degree of security through the knowledge that the other people around them share a likeminded passion. Knowing that others share similar tastes, beliefs, or afflictions allows the individual to confide in them. Sporting arenas are one of the few places that unite the majority of a city, regardless of which city, to a common cause. And even though fans of the visiting team do not often relate to the fans of the home team, the visitors share a connection with each other. This signifies that in creating a place that encourages presentational expression, it is necessary to include myriad amenities where people can share intense emotions and values.

A secondary theme found in places of presentational expression is that they afford their users the opportunity to express themselves in a way that is typically discouraged in other public places. Speakers’ Corners provide a channel for people to forcefully project their beliefs. If these speeches are delivered in most any other public spaces, the orator would more likely be perceived as ranting or even insane. Sporting arenas call for people to dress and act with a collaborative, unbridled enthusiasm, to banter with fans from the opposing team, and to yell as loud as they can. Churches grant people an opportunity to share the deep passions of life and an outlet for spirituality in contrast to a public realm that is increasingly superficial and secular. And support groups encourage people to talk openly about the afflictions they share, yet often feel
compelled to hide in public. These examples reveal that public spaces that allow people to act free from the restrictions of contemporary society are mediums for authentic presentational expression.

*The Great Good Place*

Ray Oldenburg provides a less abstract account of the relationship between urbanism and socialization, ultimately proposing seven factors that together encourage social interaction. In his 1989 book, *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg discusses public spaces focused on socializing and their effects on society. He postulated that in the broad scope of life experiences, home is the first place, work is the second, and a collective of social spaces comprise the essential “third place.” Third places are most often, but not exclusively, in the form of restaurants, bars, and cafes (Figs. 1.20 & 1.21). Oldenburg would argue that the apathy towards public life that Sennett described has never and will never extend to the scope of the third place. This thesis will reference the components of third places as a model for spaces of socialization. The main

Fig. 1.22 : Restaurants represent one type of Oldenburg’s third place.

Fig. 1.23 : Coffee shops and cafes are common places for informal conversation.
contributions of *The Great Good Place* are the concept of the third place as a social mediator, the commonalities between all third places, and the benefits of third places.

Oldenburg writes that third places “represent fundamental institutions of mediation between the individual and the larger society.”\(^{15}\) The third place in the individual’s urban life is not actually a single location, like home or work, but a constantly morphing series of locations. This fluidity grants individuals the option to choose which location they desire, the time at which they arrive and depart, and who they interact with. This level of autonomy is inherent to the third place and is not present in either the first or second places. Yet, third places also act as a unifying agent that connects the individual to the larger community. As such, they are essential to the political process of democracy. They allow the individual to assume the role of the actor as an outlet for expression. They serve as an arenas for “performance teams,” which have the propensity to equalize socioeconomic divisions, thus creating a democratic environment. Also, according to Oldenburg, “Third place settings are really no more than a physical manifestation of people’s desire to associate with those in an area once they get to know them.”\(^{16}\) This trait is inevitably an indication of high levels of social


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 290.
interaction. Thus, incorporating elements of third places into this thesis will help to facilitate quality socialization.

In order to effectively integrate third places into this design, it is necessary to know what exactly they are comprised of. Oldenburg provides a framework of seven components immanent in all third places. Some of these are self-explanatory, while others require further delineation. First, a third place must be on neutral ground, meaning that it does not fall within the social territory of one individual or one group of individuals. Strangers should be encouraged to approach any third place. Second, third places act as “levelers,” which guarantee social equality through the elimination of socioeconomic classes. Third, conversation is the main activity in a third place. Fourth, third places require accessibility and accommodation. This statement holds true in the literal sense, but also in that “...the activity that goes on in third places is largely unplanned, unscheduled, unorganized, and unstructured. It is just these deviations from the middle-class penchant for organization that gives the third place much of its character and allure and that allows it to offer a radical departure from the routines of home and work.” Fifth, the third place must have a steady, but not overwhelming, flow of regular patrons or users. The regulars of an establishment are its primary source of character and often help initiate newcomers. Sixth, third places have low profiles. A garish building emanates an air of pretension and often deters potential regulars.

Fig. 1.24: Some progeny of the theater archetype are not easily identifiable. (Podium Grotekerkplein, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2009)

Fig. 1.25: The archetypal Theater of Dionysus. (Athens, Greece, c. 500 BCE.)

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17 Ibid., 20-42.
Seventh, a true third place will serve as a home away from home. This final criterion appears to encompass many of the previous requirements listed. Oldenburg elaborates on the distinction in that a home away from home will have an atmosphere of warmth, which is not innate in any of the other individual components.

There is a final component, or even prerequisite, that Oldenburg overlooks: that a third place must be an institution that is readily recognized, a “known” institution. Most often the recognition is inherent in the institution; a restaurant is usually easily identified as a restaurant. On occasion, the recognition is obscured, as is the case with the Urban Activator, designed by Atelier Kempe Thill (Fig. 1.22). At first glance, it may appear to have the ambiguity of an unprogrammed, urban space. But upon observing how people use the space, it is clearly the progeny of the theater archetype (Fig. 1.23). Consciously or subconsciously, people perceive it as such and therefore treat it as a third place. Oldenburg’s list of the attributes of third places provides this thesis with a framework with which to evaluation the capacity of the design to foster social interaction.

Aside from the obvious benefit of increasing social interaction, third places are advantageous to society in other ways. Most significant is that third places foster novelty, offering a uniqueness to prior experiences through stimulation of the outside world. This novelty is evident in a third place such as Antoni Guadi’s Parc Guell in Barcelona (Fig. 1.24). The park, inclusive of several buildings designed by Guadi,
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es a whimsical demeanor with a rare synthesis of rich colors, textures, and organic geometric forms. By comparison, Anish Kapoor adopted a different approach for his design of Cloud Gate, a reflective, stainless steel sculpture in Chicago (Fig. 1.25). Kapoor uses the curvature of the form to mirror the sculpture’s observers, the city’s buildings, and the sky itself in an original manner. These examples demonstrate novelty that engages the users with the architecture and with each other.

Through novelty, third places offer the opportunity for strangers to interact in circumstance where they typically would not. Novelty in third places attracts and mingles diverse populations. As a direct result of this diversity, third places support a vast range of conversational topics and produce performance teams, often with participants that would otherwise not interact with each other. When a performance team demonstrates the ability of the participants to prolong and enliven a conversation, it creates positive social value — a collaboration of “face.” This concept can be simplified using the example of strangers on a bus as a performance team. If the bus itself is in some way novel compared to the normative bus experience, then the strangers are more likely to interact with each other, using the novelty as a catalyst for conversation. Novelty is a component that should be present in theaters as third places. Using Oldenburg’s concept of the third place, as well as producing novelty within it, this design will amplify the theater-going experience. By interspersing elements of novelty into the design, the third places will perform more successfully as a medium for socialization,
and the theater-goers will be more engaged in their environment, and thus more focused upon the emotions of the various performances, both on stage and off.

The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces

With a base understanding of the sociology and urbanism behind social interaction, it is now possible to extract from recent experts on urbanism the design strategies that produce spaces appropriate for both extremes of social life in public. In his 1980 book, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, the notable urbanist and journalist, William H. Whyte, describes the observations, analyses, and conclusions about the utilization of parks and plazas in New York City. Using time-lapse cameras, Whyte and his team monitored almost 20 parks and plazas with the intention of discovering how the spaces were being used. As much as possible, Whyte converted the subjective experiences of public space users into quantifiable data. By interpreting this information, Whyte isolated the strengths and weaknesses of each plaza design. This analysis led to a set of guidelines for how to properly design public spaces.

Whyte concludes that the critical factor in determining the success of a plaza is the quantity and nature of its seating. Any number of factors influence the physical comfort of seating, including sitting height and depth, material, and the availability of

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armrests (Figs 1.26 & 1.27). Yet, according to Whyte, “It’s more important, however, that it be *socially* comfortable. This means choice: sitting up front, in back, to the side, in the sun, in the shade, in groups, off alone.” As demonstrated through this statement, Whyte notes that having social options, both interactions and disengagements, is imperative to a plaza’s success. While this lesson is applied specifically to chairs in Whyte’s book, the principle can be extracted and directed towards more general design strategies. Sunlight, wind, trees, and water followed as the other important factors in the design of outdoor public spaces. Although somewhat underdeveloped, or in retrospect even common sense, Whyte’s conclusions still provide an essential and concise program to guide the design of public space, especially an outdoor one.

*Cities for People*

The most recent input on designing for social interaction comes from the architect and urban designer Jan Gehl in his book, *Cities for People*. This source is organized as an objective framework for urban design and architecture to reclaim control of urban spaces. Gehl approaches the city as a medium for social gatherings, which require attention to the myriad scales involved in urban design.\(^1\)\(^9\) In the endeavor to enhance the city’s function as a meeting place, Gehl advocates for increased

attention directed towards the common spaces of the city, which he dubs the “life between buildings.” These spaces should be complex and heterogenous, and should accommodate numerous daily and leisurely functions. Gehl suggests that most of these public functions are actualized through walkability. The principle facilitators of walkability are activated public spaces with complimentary adjacencies, functionalities, and densities. These spaces create destinations for pedestrians. The addition of a performing arts theater to Newport creates a destination type that is currently absent in the downtown district. This urban programming allows people to first spend time shopping at Newport on the Levee or meeting at a bar, then walk to the nearby theater. Walkability effectively links public spaces and creates a shared experience for individuals to relate to. Gehl describes the core of walking as “a special form of communion between people who share public space as a platform and framework.” To Gehl, the redevelopment of walking strategies and infrastructure would inspire urban improvements at a host of other levels.

*Cities for People* dedicated much attention to pinpointing proper design standards for the human scale, many of which would augment social interactions. Because of the emphasis on walkability, Gehl also thoroughly addresses issues of mobility and scale. Gehl suggests designing spaces with consideration of the eye’s ability to properly perceive its environment. The human eye is optimized to function up to the comfortable running speeds of a human, roughly 6-7 mph. In a car, information is
passing too quickly for the brain to process, and one’s interest is lost in the surroundings.

To facilitate designs that are suitable for visual intake, Gehl presents a series of distances at which we visually comprehend different social elements, essentially supplying the designer with measurements for the extent of Ashcraft’s social territories. The most important ones to this thesis are as follows:

- “The second threshold value appears in the theatre or opera house, namely the approximately 25 meters (27 yards) from which facial expressions, well-articulated singing and conversation can be experienced.”
- “Finally, between seven to zero meters (7.5 to 0 yards), all of the senses can be used, all details experienced and the most intense feelings exchanged.”

Gehl’s data for these interaction thresholds comprise a framework for objectivity in a field that Goffman described as completely subjective. Gehl also equips his readers with distances between social participants at several different scales. Not to be forgotten, however, is the necessity to provide users with the ability to manage their own interaction territories. Halfway between a reference book and a personal manifesto, Cities for People converts the theories of sociology into actionable design strategies.

*The Fall of Public Man*

A central aspect of this thesis is the tie between the actor on stage and the
individual acting in the public realm. Excerpting segments of Sennett’s *The Fall of Public Man* will lay the foundation with which to illustrate theater theory in this context. The analogy of comparing public life to the theater is one of mankind’s earlier self-perceptions, dating back to ancient Greeks like Plato and Petronius. Today referred to as *theatrum mundi*, most pre-modern societies envisaged the audience of their public theater as whatever god(s) they worshiped. With omnipresent higher being(s) potentially observing their every action, the art of play-acting began to dictate normative behavior in the form of manners, gestures, and language. The population of the Western eighteenth century experienced a fundamental shift towards regarding their peers, rather than a deity, as the new audience of their public performances. As discussed earlier, this shift led from presentational to representational expressivity in the public realm as well as in the theater. In Sennett’s view, representational expression is an attempt at emulating character instead of presenting authenticity, thus attenuating the ability of society to act artistically and interact personally. The end result is that society has largely forgotten the principles behind authentic public interactions. Reinvigorating the awareness of *theatrum mundi* will help bring about a resurgence of presentational expression, and thus ameliorate performativity. An increase in the capacity of the general populace to perform will yield improvements in social interaction. Therefore, while advertising the

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concept of *theatrum mundi* is a secondary goal of this thesis, it simultaneously augments the primary goal of increasing social interaction.

**The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life**

Goffman relies heavily upon the concept of *theatrum mundi* to fuel his perceptions and explanations of social interaction. It is through performance that the “self” attempts to make its identity known. This premise is why the individual must act to establish a front. An example occurs in classrooms at any level of education. An instructor poses a question to the class, and the smart students eagerly raise their hands. Answering the question is not necessarily even part of the performance. But the confidence and vehemence with which the students raise their hands are displays of perspicacity and enthusiasm for learning. By performing this action, the student identifies him- or herself with the other students in the top of the class. It also demonstrates the student’s mental acuity to his or her peers and to the instructor.

Goffman cites Robert Ezra Park, a prominent sociologist during the early twentieth century, who described the importance of social performativity as, “…the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role… It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves.” Because one must convince others of the front one wishes to convey, an individual must
emphasize dramatic expression. Goffman explains, “While in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure.” Sennett and Goffman call for an arena or a situation in which the public can learn from actors in order to better present themselves in society. A performing arts theater that emphasizes social interaction and theatrium mundi is an ideal vehicle for instructing the public on how to perform.

**How the World Became a Stage**

William Egginton highlights the crux of the relationship between interaction, theater, and spatiality in his book, *How the World Became a Stage*. To begin, Egginton describes the decrease in theatricality in modern society. “The paradox of saying that we are living in a theatrical age, of course, is that in much of the modern world, the theater is essentially dead or dying, surviving only as an occasional pursuit of the cultural elite.” In this thesis, a performing arts theater as the building type provides the context

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for exploring these questions. For how can we attempt to act successfully in the public realm if we do not fully understand and appreciate the art of performance?

Egginton references the rhetorician and communication theorist Marshall McLuhan to provide a vocabulary for the efficacy of a space to engage its occupants. In this instance, the term “medium” is used in an abstract sense, ranging from artwork to the built environment. McLuhan reserves the word “hot” to describe a medium that either underwhelms or overwhelms the senses, prompting disinterest. A “hot” medium might be a spreadsheet, which often requires only a cursory glance to glean the important information. A busy transit hub, with its bustling passengers, piercing public address system, and perpetual arrival and departure updates, would be an example of a “hot” built environment that overloads the senses (Fig. 1.28), yet equally induces disengagement. On the other hand, a “cold” space invokes a desire to further explore the medium and investigate similar media. In a sense, the Internet is a “cold” medium, since it encourages the user to travel from site to site, gathering information. A museum exemplifies a “cold” building type because it engages people by telling a story or providing answers to life’s mysteries (Fig. 1.29). Moreover, a theater represents a “cold” building type, due both to its built conditions and to the activities that it enables. Architecturally, theaters direct one’s attention to the performance at hand, using the house as background stimuli and often with the proscenium as a transition piece. This

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22 Ibid., 164-165.
keeps the building’s users engaged, but not overwhelmed by their built environment. The ability of the activities of a theater to engage its users is self-evident. As an alternative to the impersonalization and representationism that Sennett admonishes against, Egginton points to the theater as a stronghold of socialization.

Within the theater auditorium, Egginton postulates that there are four abstract spaces of theatricality (Fig. 1.30). While these geometries may not apply to every auditorium, the essences of these spaces exist in varying degrees in all theaters. Although not explicitly stated by Egginton, interactions have the potential to occur between any two or among all of the different spaces. In fact, the ability to create interactions between unlikely zones, unlikely groups of participants within zones, or using performance methods in an unlikely zone will produce novelty and, consequently, encourage interaction. Additionally, experimenting with the connectivity of these different spaces using Ashcraft’s methods of configuring social territories can also produce spaces that are appropriate for social disengagement. Thus through theater theory and spatial analysis of theaters, Egginton contributes a method of accounting for both socialization and disengagement in theater design.

Performance Affects

With a different perspective on the theory of theater and performance, James
Fig. 1.32: Abstract spaces of theatricality
- S0 – space of the audience
- S1 – space of the stage
- S2 – space of the play within the play, anywhere within S1
- S3 – space within which no new spaces may be opened

Fig. 1.33: Spaces of theatricality in the Chicago Auditorium
- S0 – space of the audience
- S1 – space of the stage
- S2 – space of the play within the play, anywhere within S1
- S3 – space within which no new spaces may be opened
Thompson provides a current account of art’s role in society, an explanation and suggested application of the concept of focused intensity, and the implications of “affect,” which encourage interaction. Thompson draws upon the works of several intellectuals, theoreticians, and philosophers to compose a comprehensive conception of the role of art in society. According to Thompson, art’s function is twofold: “First, art is understood to have a role in the present, as a protective force with an ‘in spite of’ quality that enables people to tolerate suffering not so that they become immune to it, but so that they have the energy to continue to resist.” This protective force should have a presence in specific spaces within the architecture of the theater in order to encourage social withdrawal and rejuvenation. Second, Thompson suggests art functions as a dream of the future, with an end goal of inspiration. While this perspective does not carry much relevance in relation to the social spectrum, this idea should still manifest itself in theater architecture.

In his interpretations of performance theory, Thompson relies heavily upon the concept of “affect.” Citing Claire Colebrook, an expert on philosophy in visual arts, he affirms that art derives its meaning not through content, but through “the sensible force or style through which it produces content.” This force or style is dubbed “affect.”

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24 Ibid., 117-119.
prompts a person’s desire to connect and engage.” Therefore, affect, as a force of art, has the potential to initiate interaction. Thompson confirms that architecture is capable of producing social interaction. While the content of the art rests solely upon the artist — or in a theater, the playwright — the affect is influenced by the architecture and how the actor and audience perceive the art or performance within the built environment. In other words, spatial qualities have an impact on how occupants interpret affect.

**Proposition**

In order to contribute to the socio-behavioral enrichment of the urban realm, I will design an public space that implements both increased levels of social interaction and an opportunity for therapeutic disengagement, depending on the functions of activities associated with each, and the tendencies of the user groups. These goals will be met through flexible and interactive architecture, the activation of spaces through mixed-use programming, a select material palette, spatial arrangements, and lighting techniques. The design will serve as an addendum to the typical architectural maxim to design for how people perceive space: design for how people perceive space and how that space influences people’s behavior around each other.
CHAPTER 2 : CLIENT

Page 46  Client Character & Alignment
Page 53  Building Type Background
Because my thesis concerns both the increase and the therapeutic decrease of socialization, the building type and thus the client must be precisely defined and carefully chosen. Many buildings encourage social interaction, although typically through their typology rather than through any impact the architecture might bestow. The same phenomenon holds true for buildings that promote therapeutic withdrawal from society. Yet there exists a limited number of building types that can successfully accommodate both extremes of the social spectrum. A performing arts theater satisfies this criteria; simultaneously the contrast in socialization and disengagement would enhance the experience of the performance. A performing arts theater also felicitously represents the fundamental analogy between social interaction and stage-acting.

While several building types could inherently cover the spectrum of social functions, a performing arts center adds a level of philosophical sophistication. A comparison of a theater and a fine arts museum will reveal the nuances of each building type, which favor the theater for this thesis. Both institutions outwardly appear to be logical candidates for a study in social interaction. Both are intended to evoke specific emotions. Both require reflection of the works for full appreciation. And both can potentially prompt interaction between the users and the art, whether it be a performance, canvas, or digital media. The principal difference is that in a fine arts museum, the visitor interacts with an inanimate object; in theaters there is person-to-person interaction between the audience and the actors. This relationship is pivotal.
because observing performers teaches us how to be artistic and personal in our public interactions. As public actors, we emulate what we see on stage.

This proposed theater, which is named Theater on the Levee, is situated in Newport, Kentucky, which has a distinct lack of fine arts venues. The principal cultural impetus in the State since 1980 has been the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts in Louisville.\(^1\) While the Kentucky Center currently has only one location, it describes itself as a state institution with aspirations of extending its influence. Complementing the Louisville complex with a theater facility in Newport demonstrates the actualization of this goal.

The Kentucky Center lists several institutional goals that align with the principles of this thesis. Above all, the Kentucky Center strives to provide high quality artistic performances to the public. Also essential to the character of the Kentucky Center is its desire to foster a sense a community, both amongst the regional performing arts groups and the general public. As a hybrid public/private institution, the Kentucky Center embodies collaboration between art and government and is, therefore, structured to operate in a manner that an exclusively public or exclusively private theater could not.\(^2\) An ancillary goal of the Kentucky Center is to buoy the economic and cultural


atmosphere of the region. Lastly, the Kentucky Center has committed itself to the progress of the performing arts through technology and education.

The schematic program for the Kentucky Center in Newport is derived from theories of performance, social interaction and disengagement, and an analysis of existing theater types. These factors yield a schematic program that consists of a multiform theater with several dining and retail options and a community outreach facility. The default configuration for the theater will be a thrust stage because it engages the audience more closely with the actors. The thrust stage traces back to Hellenistic origins and is ideal for classical theatrical performances, ranging from Euripides to Shakespeare. However, with three sides open to auditorium seating, the thrust stage can potentially also be adapted to modern, interactive performances that more closely integrate the audience. Because of the Kentucky Center’s dedication to educating the public about art appreciation, the Newport branch merits a community outreach facility. The existing program in Louisville arranges visits by local performance groups to schools and hospitals, in addition to student and community groups holding classes and seminars at the theater complex itself. The Kentucky Center in Newport will emulate the goals, methods, and facilities of the existing administrative structure in Louisville.

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Thus, the general community outreach program includes classrooms, offices, and a multipurpose room.

A second location for the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts in Newport would be advantageous in terms of expanding its influence, intensifying the experience of the performance, and providing state-of-the-art technology and theater techniques for its performers and audience. The current Kentucky Center has effectively established itself as a cultural powerhouse in and around Louisville. Yet with only one location, the cultural influence of the Kentucky Center is severely restricted to a specific region and demographic profile. A satellite complex in Newport would improve this situation by drawing audience members and performing groups from other parts of Kentucky and Ohio. A new theater complex would also create the potential for the Kentucky Center to accommodate performance types that its current facility cannot support. The Louisville venues include two proscenium stages, one thrust stage with a very shallow wrap, and a small black box theater. None of these theaters permit an adequate degree of connection between a large audience and the actors. The addition of auditorium configurations that involve the audience more closely would benefit the quality of the performance.

Additionally, the new theater complex in Newport will exhibit strategic opportunities within the design to increase social interaction or increase therapeutic disengagement.

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from society. This contrast will not only provide the audience with proper measures of socialization, but it will also magnify the emotions evoked by the performers.

The Kentucky Center’s mission statement infers that it is imperative to establish a sense of community through the theater. The implementation of architectural strategies to affect social interaction in and around the theater will not only improve the quality of the performance but also manifests itself in the self-perception of urban dwellers. Generating a public environment where passersby, theater-goers, and performers have options of social interaction or withdrawal, based upon their needs, will affect the psychological wellbeing of the building users. An additional benefit comes from designing the spaces for socialization to the standards of an Oldenburgian “third place.” Third spaces instill a strong sense of community, attract “regulars,” and incite socio-political accountability. Integrating third places, such as restaurants, bars, and bookstores, into the theater complex enhances the urban fabric by providing complimentary building adjacencies and walkable distances. This multifaceted design would also encourage people to use the facility, whether for interaction or disengagement, even when shows are not playing. It is in the best interest of the

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Kentucky Center to employ an architecture that achieves social needs as a means of increasing patronage and promoting a sense of community.

While the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts in Louisville has been successful at updating individual systems within its theaters, the fact remains that most of the complex is at least 30 years old. A new theater presents the Kentucky Center with the opportunity to restore its image as a technologically progressive cultural institution. This overhaul can be accomplished both through the use of cutting-edge equipment and through reflecting advances in performance techniques in the built environment.

The critical cultural connection between the concept of this thesis and the goals of the Kentucky Center lies in their shared focus on creating an intensified theater experience in which the audience can feel comfortable with its public relationship. From an architectural standpoint, this purpose signifies delineating a range of public spaces throughout the design for individuals and groups to interact with each other, while reserving other spaces for individuals to remove themselves from society in therapeutic

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disengagement. Theatrically, the dichotomy of these opposing spaces sharpens the emotions within the performances.

Economically, both this thesis and the Kentucky Center have an interest in bolstering the profitability of Newport. Theater on the Levee would attract audience members from surrounding Kentucky cities and Cincinnati. While Newport on the Levee is a public attraction in and of itself, one easily observes that the preponderance of existing riverfront institutions are retail stores and restaurants. The focus of Newport on the Levee is on dining and shopping. A performing arts theater would furnish the riverfront with an actual event to complement the restaurant scene. Politically, by building a theater, Newport reaffirms its image as a cultural, entertainment-based city, thus distinguishing itself from the adjacent business centers of Covington or Bellevue. Replacing the existing parking lot with a cultural institution is a step towards actualizing a more cohesive urban fabric.
Building Type Background

The history of performance as theater acting, evolving from performance as a fundamental art form, began roughly 2500 years ago.\(^1\) The primitive theater that originated in classical Greece is still readily recognizable by today’s audiences (Fig. 2.1). Hellenistic rituals and plays were performed on thrust stages, surrounded by open amphitheaters. Thrust stages are still widely used today and have the potential for innovative, interactive performance that are impossible on other stage types. While performing techniques evolved over the centuries, the primal thrust stage parti remained. It was not until the 16\(^{th}\) century that the modern proscenium stage appeared. A proscenium stage is defined by an arch that frames the stage, simultaneously shielding the sides and backstage from the vision of the audience (Fig. 2.2). The proscenium configuration furnishes all of the audience members with the same head-on visual perspective. This positioning affords each viewer a more accurate and complete display of the psychological developments of the performers. However, modern critiques have decried the separation, known as the “fourth wall,” that a proscenium stage inherently creates between the audience and the actors.\(^2\) In contrast, the black box theater dissolves the formal parameters of the stage into a flexible space, often for

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Fig. 2.4: The evolution of iconic theater architecture.
exploratory performances (Fig. 2.3). These unadorned spaces concentrate both the actors and audience on the performance itself, rather than on overly-ornate architecture. The multiform stage combines any number of different stage and seating arrangements. Advances in theater technologies and in architecture have yielded moveable stage and seating components that allow each performance to customize its theater configuration for each performance.

Performance style and theater architecture have a reciprocal relationship, each impacting the other’s development. Thus, the various zeniths of performance art are often closely related to the advents of innovative theater design. This relationship dates back to the origins of theater itself in ancient Greece. The thrust stage encouraged the audience to interact with the actors and evaluate them mid-performance. While there were distinct social strata within the amphitheater, all Greeks, even slaves, were eligible to attend performances. Hence, the theater became a public arena for social interaction. Another monumental epoch of theater came about during Elizabethan England, with playwrights like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Sir Walter Raleigh. While experimental acting techniques changed the character of performances during this era, the theater parti remained relatively unchanged from that of ancient Greece. The theater was more enclosed and seating was divided into tiers, but the thrust stage

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still prevailed, as did interaction between actors and audience. The extensive use of theatrical asides created a direct connection between the actors and audience, whereas subsequently viewers were merely a third party observing the actions and dialog on stage. This relationship between actor and audience metamorphosed with the arrival of the proscenium stage.

As playwrights adapted their works specifically for proscenium theaters, there evolved a fundamentally new acting style. The fourth wall figuratively splits the actors into a separate realm from the spectators. The causes are both architectural and theatrical. Actors (on thrust stages) up until this point in history had performed towards the audience and engaged the audience, what Sennett terms presentational acting. Proscenium theaters and the plays produced on them prompted the actors to neglect the audience, or representational acting. Thus the focus of acting transitioned from presentation of emotion towards the audience to representation of the character. According to many scholars, this inward shift detracted from the theater experience. Again citing the analogy between public interactions and stage-acting, sociologists such as Sennett and Goffman have claimed that this conversion has helped to instruct people to avoid interactions. They charge that representation places an emphasis upon

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narcissistic and shameless self-expression, diminishing concerns for the rest of society, and decreasing authentic public interactions.

While this thesis’s concept of reinforcing the opposite extremes of social interaction is a two-fold approach, its precedents tend to lean in one direction. As the following examples may suggest, few, if any, well designed theaters promote elements of social disengagement:
CHAPTER 3 : SITE

Page 60  Physical Features & Experiential Conditions
Page 68  Climatic Data & Environmental Site Conditions
Page 74  Built Context
Physical Features & Experiential Conditions

The Theater on the Levee site is located in Newport, Kentucky, directly adjacent to the Newport on the Levee complex. This site offers a multitude of environmental and cultural advantages. Located within a minute’s walk from the Ohio River, and within an already established entertainment hub, this site would attract patronage from northern Kentucky and the metropolitan Cincinnati region. It will also heavily draw performance groups from Newport, Covington, Cincinnati, and other nearby communities. While there are a number theater venues in Cincinnati, the performing arts scene in Newport is lacking.

Fig. 3.1 : Metropolitan context
This site is in the entertainment district of Newport, which provides numerous dining, shopping, and entertainment opportunities. While the Newport on the Levee complex has both a movie theater and a comedy club, there are no spaces for the performing arts. Instead, there is an abundance of parking lots in this area of Newport, many of which take up space along the entertainment strip of 3rd Street. Converting one of these parking lots into a performing arts center would benefit the entertainment strip, the city of Newport, and the greater northern Kentucky and Cincinnati region.
Fig. 3.3 : Topographic map (Scale: 1 in = 200 ft)
The immediate site lies in a shallow depression with the northern edge of Newport sloping down toward the river. By default, Newport on the Levee becomes both an endpoint and a conduit between the project site and the river. At approximately 80 ft. high, Newport on the Levee is the second tallest building in the vicinity. The theater must respect and perpetuate the prevalence of Newport on the Levee while simultaneously asserting its influence within the community through a show of height. Through careful consideration of the surrounding buildings, the proposed theater will serve as a transitional element between the gargantuan proportions of Newport on the Levee and the much smaller surrounding buildings.
The buildings along 3rd Street are dense, but the panorama opens up along the site, where there is currently a parking lot. Because of a rise in grade just after the north site border, there is currently little visual connection between Riverboat Row and the site. A goal of the design is to remedy the lack of continuity to the north.
There are three primary routes for the vehicular approach. There is also the potential to provide a direct connection from Newport on the Levee to the theater.
The riverside entertainment district of Newport is relatively quiet during the morning, followed by a considerable influx of activity around lunchtime and then a robust nightlife. The buildings immediately surrounding Newport on the Levee are newer and larger than the buildings a few blocks away.
Primary environmental strategies:

- Good natural ventilation can reduce or eliminate air conditioning in warm weather, if windows are well shaded and oriented to prevailing breezes.
- Tiles or slate (even on low massing wood floors) or a stone-faced fireplace can help store winter daytime solar gain and summer nighttime ‘coolth’.
- Sunny wind-protected outdoor spaces can extend living areas in cool weather.
- Window overhangs (designed for this latitude or operable sunshades (except in summer, retract in winter) can reduce or eliminate air conditioning.
- Organize floorplan so winter sun penetrates into daytime use spaces with specific functions that coincide with solar orientation.

Secondary environmental strategies:

- Keep the building small (right-sized) because excessive floor area wastes heating and cooling energy.
- Provide vertical distance between air inlet and outlet to produce stack ventilation (open stairwells, two story spaces, roof monitors when wind speeds are low.
- For passive solar heating face most of the glass area south to maximize winter sun exposure, but design overhangs to fully shade in summer.
- Traditional homes in hot dry climates used high mass construction with small well shaded openings operable for night ventilation to cool the mass.
The need to carefully control lighting conditions around the stage precludes the heavy use of glazing in the auditorium spaces. However, this technique is applicable to other parts of the building, such as the lobby.

Theaters of the past hundred years have foregone the use of windows and glazing in their performance spaces. Yet, traditionally, actors had performed outdoors for the previous 2,000 years. It is necessary to investigate whether the absence of natural sunlight is essential to theater production. If not, then an study of appropriate sunshading systems is in order. Regardless, overhangs and sunshades can be used throughout the other spaces of the design.

Many performing arts theaters have the potential for stack ventilation with the vertical movement of their flytowers, which house the overhead theater equipment systems.
The sun angle charts for Newport signify that the effects of direct sunlight will be at their highest between April and September. During this time, they will be most problematic between approximately 9am and 5pm. Overhead shading devices are the most efficient means of blocking unwanted solar gain during the summer, while vertical fins perform better during the beginning and end of the day. During the winter, it would be advantageous to allow much of this light to penetrate into the building. This variability makes it necessary to carefully design the shading devices, so as to block summer sunlight but allow winter sunlight to pass. The massive Newport on the Levee building also provides considerable year-round afternoon shading for the site.
The sky cover chart indicates that Newport has a generally overcast climate. This trait holds especially true during the winter, when the building would benefit the most from clear skies. Thus a building in Newport would not save as much energy through thermal massing as a building in a sunnier climate.

This temperature range chart is evidence that attention must be paid to passive heating and cooling strategies. The average temperature of Newport lies outside of the range of comfort for the majority of the year. Most of this time, the temperature is too cold. Thus, passive heating strategies deserve additional consideration.
The majority of the year, wind approaches the site from the west and southwest. This directionality is especially relevant during the winter, when it will be necessary to provide windbreaks along that side of the building to block cold air. During the summer months, the wind is more concentrated from the north. Using these winds as natural ventilation would help passively cool the building, as well as any outdoor public spaces that the theater may have. This strategy will need to be carefully applied in order to insure that the outdoor spaces do not receive winds at too high a velocity.


**Kentucky Interior Plateau**

Newport is located within the Outer Bluegrass region of Kentucky. This is a hilly region that contains sinkholes, springs, entrenched rivers, and intermittent and perennial streams. “Discontinuous glacial outwash and leached, pre-Wisconsinan till deposits occur in the north from Louisville to Covington.”

The Outer Bluegrass region is mostly underlain by Upper Ordovician limestone and shale.

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**Natural Vegetation**

Any amount of natural vegetation in Newport is relatively far removed from the project site. Regardless, most of the Outer Bluegrass region is oak–hickory forest. These trees can be interspersed throughout the project site to create shading and provide wind protection.

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**Soil Types**

The Outer Bluegrass soil is primarily composed of Lowell, Cynthiana, Faywood, Beasley, Crider, Shelbyville, and Nicholson.

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**Built Context**

This figure ground drawing demonstrates the concentration of large structures to the west of the site. Medium-sized buildings occupy most of the land to the east, south, and southwest sides of the site, among excessive parking lots in need of infill. Once one proceeds far enough south or east, the buildings are more often small, single family residences. Farther south is Newport’s still rather intact “small town main street,” Monmouth Avenue. To the southeast is the large, well-preserved East Row Historic District, full of residents likely eager to walk to a diverse commercial and entertainment destination. As indicated by the adjacent diagram of the buildings surrounding the site, there are an abundance of restaurants and spaces for entertainment surrounding the site, especially along 3rd Street.

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Newport’s riverfront district has an abundance of parking lots to accommodate its visitors. This layout allows pedestrians to approach the theater from any direction. As previously stated, many theater patrons will be coming from the surrounding restaurants. Therefore, visitors’ approaches will often not be dictated by where they park, but rather by what Newport institution or amenity they come from. The Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky operates several bus routes through the downtown Newport area. Two of these buses run along 3rd Street and stop in front of the site. This routing is ideal for attracting visitors who would otherwise be uninterested or unaware of the theater.
Typical single story, urban, house.

Large Newport restaurant

Newport on the Levee

Fig. 3.44: Building footprint spectrum of the Newport downtown district
The smallest building type in this district is the single-family residence. These houses are simple, relatively unadorned, and conform to the traditional aesthetics of residential architecture. The smaller houses of Newport range from about 15 to 25 feet tall. While these houses are clustered together throughout much of Newport, one can find individual houses scattered about the northern portion of the city. The majority of these houses are wood framed, while their upscale counterparts are often brick masonry.

The medium-sized buildings of Newport represent businesses and institutions. Close to the riverfront, many of these buildings are restaurants, but they also include a church, courthouse, small hotel, and several local businesses. The maintenance and upkeep of these buildings depends heavily upon their age. However, even the newer buildings attempt to mimic the aesthetic of the older buildings, so as to blend in with their surroundings. These buildings are typically masonry.

The large buildings of Newport, namely Newport on the Levee and the Newport Aquarium, are a result of the efforts to revitalize the waterfront. These buildings are more contemporary, which is reflected in their use of materials and construction methods. Yet traditional architectural aesthetics still predominate. The massing of these buildings is typically driven by a single, large, regular form.
Established at the end of the 18th century, Newport’s initial successes came as a result of housing a military post. Newport enjoyed a quiet 19th century as it developed alongside Cincinnati, capitalizing on industries like rope and wool production. From 1940 through the 1980’s, Newport underwent a series of cultural transformations. A number of members of the mafia moved to Newport, bringing gambling, prostitution, and racketeering with them. Casinos and brothels proliferated in the area, attracting a more licentious crowd to the city. Monmouth Street, in particular, was regarded as a den of vice.
Revitalization did not begin until 1982, when the city of Newport began to restore a number of the historic houses in East Row. This neighborhood contains over 1,000 homes and boasts Kentucky’s second largest historic district. Efforts were then focused towards the redevelopment of the riverfront area. Projects like the World Peace Bell, the Newport Aquarium, and Newport on the Levee have drastically improved the image of this neighborhood.
Shading

As demonstrated by the adjacent diagram sequences, Newport on the Levee is the only building to impact the site in terms of shading. It will receive a little shading in the winter, during the early morning and late afternoon. Given that the site is located directly next to a restaurant, with several more across the street, it is entirely possible that unwanted food smells will have an impact on the site experience. Fortunately, the abutting restaurant has its waste receptacles on the far side of the building. It is also reasonable to expect that there will be considerable noise pollution coming from Newport on the Levee. Since it is imperative to the quality of the performance that unwanted noises do not cause interruptions, it will be critical to have an acoustically insulated performance space.

Fig. 3.55: Shading diagrams
Experiential Walkthrough

A performing arts theater that accounts for issues of socialization is bound to have unique program spaces. The adjacent list outlines the basic activities that this thesis will support. The initial information is intended to be generalized, while diagrams later in this chapter add definition. The five experiential walkthroughs that follow will derive a list of functions present in the theater. These samples track a hypothetical character’s actions and interpretations of the theater. To insure that all types of activities are accounted for, each walkthrough focuses on a different user category: theater-goers, performers, students, administrators, and maintenance workers.
Performer

Mike is the leader of a modern dance troupe based in Louisville. It performs at the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts in Louisville several times each year. The Center’s artistic director recently informed him of the second Kentucky Center in Newport, where Mike then set up a couple of performance dates. The day of the performance, Mike and the other group members drive to Newport. After surveying the theater, Mike starts feeling tired. He goes outside to a rejuvenation station, where he takes a nap. Feeling refreshed, he decides to stay in the nook, rehearse his steps, and prepare mentally. Looking out of a window in the nook, Mike observes that there is not anyone on the urban stage. He leaves the station and goes over to the stage, where he begins performing one of his old routines. Within a few minutes a small crowd gathers. Mike finishes his dance and invites his audience members onto the stage, where he teaches them a few moves. A family asks him about his troupe and promise that they will come back to see the performance.

Mike’s group dances well that night and the crowd seems excited about the performance. The thrust stage allows the troupe to dance farther into the crowd than many stages allow. Most theaters do not allow for much interaction between dancers and their audience, but Mike feels a closer connection to them, and he calls some volunteers onto the stage to help with a dance. After the performance, several of the people he met on the urban stage come down to the indoor stage to talk to some of the group members. He teaches them a few more steps before retiring to the dressing room.
Theater-goers

James and Linda live in Boston where Linda works for Proctor and Gamble. Linda is sent to Cincinnati for several days for a business meeting and James decides to join her. On their last night in town they decide to have dinner and see a play. They go to Newport on the Levee for dinner and then walk down 3rd Street to the theater. As they approach, they begin to hear music. When they get nearer they see that it is a jazz quintet on an outdoor stage. People are dancing around the open space surrounding the stage. James and Linda have some spare time before the performance starts, so they join in. In between songs they talk to a few of the nearby couples. One of the women grew up in Boston. They spend a while talking about how the city has changed and what they love about it. For the next song they go up onto the stage where some other people have already begun to dance. James thoroughly enjoys being in the spotlight. Linda usually does not feel the need to be the center of attention, but she appreciates the excitement that it brings.

After the song ends they head into the theater with two of the other couples that they met. They go over to the bar and get some drinks. They easily find a table that feels intimate, yet spacious enough that the new acquaintances do not feel overcrowded. They can still see the band playing and people dancing outside. They overhear someone at the next table talking about how the music was not a scheduled event, but
an impromptu decision by a local band. James half-jokes that next time he comes to Cincinnati he will bring his guitar.

James and Linda find their seats in the theater space. The other couples they have just met are sitting in different aisles, but they agreed to go out for drinks after the play. James and Linda are captivated by the performance. The actors come much farther into the audience than in other plays they have seen. At one point, Linda claims that one of the actresses was directing a mournful monologue specifically towards her. Already prone to crying, she teared up immediately. They leave the theater with a pensive, yet optimistic feeling.
Rob is a 6th grader at Holmes Middle School in Covington. Today his class is on a field trip to Theater on the Levee to learn about Shakespeare. When Robert and his friends get off the bus at the theater, they notice the urban stage. A few people are playing on the far side of the stage, but most of it is open. Rob and his friends take turns getting up on the stage and telling the jokes they know. Rob has always dreamed of being a comedian and being up on a stage makes him feel like he is getting a taste of what it would be like. He even gets some chuckles out of some of the people farther down the stage.

The class reconvenes in the theater to watch a troupe from Louisville perform Macbeth. Throughout the performance, the children are allowed to rotate in and out of the one-person experience enhancement rooms. Rob is surprised by how different it feels to view a play alone. He feels like he’s face-to-face with the performers. Some of the language is beyond Rob’s capabilities, but he understands the gist of it.

Rob’s class goes to the outreach center, where one of the actresses from the play explains some of the meaning they might have missed and gives them some pointers on acting. The class practices on the stage where they saw the performance. Before the bus comes, Rob goes off by himself to one of the urban nooks. It has been a long day and he has a lot on his mind, so he just sits and thinks for a while. He recently cheated on a test and realized that he is feeling the same guilt that he noticed in Lady Macbeth. He uses this time to think about whether he should confess to cheating or not.
Administrator

Mary has run the marketing department for Theater on the Levee since it opened. She likes to start her day by grabbing a pastry at the adjacent coffee shop, which she takes it into one of the rejuvenation stations. It is quiet and a nice reprieve from the normal hustle and bustle of downtown Newport. She eats her pastry and reflects on a fight that she had with her boyfriend the night before. She feels better having thought some things out. Before heading into the building, she plans out her day. It is easier for her to think in her little alcove without distractions.

Mary’s morning is occupied by a meeting of the department heads. A couple of times she looks out the conference room windows and wishes that she was on the urban stage instead. It reminds her of when she used to act in high school. She finds few things more exciting than being able to connect with an audience and delivers her report with enthusiasm and aplomb. Her afternoon is filled with the marketing campaign for a performance the theater will hold the following month. She mostly stays in the administration wing, often collaborating with her coworkers. Occasionally she wanders to the scene shop or the rehearsal to see how the current productions are progressing.

On her way out for the night, Mary goes over to the urban stage. A band is in the process of setting up its equipment. In the meantime, Mary performs a few lines from Our Town that she remembers from high school to the crowd assembled for the band. She gets a better applause than she expected and drives home in a good mood.
Maintenance

As a building manager, Bill gets to the theater at 6am, before Newport on the Levee and the new theater complex have woken up. He crosses the plaza in front of the building, hopping up on the stage. He dances to an imaginary audience. But as usual, nobody is around at this time. He jumps down and thinks that maybe someday he’ll actually work up the courage to dance on it when people are actually around. But that vision has to wait because Bill has a full day ahead of him.

The last group to perform at Theater on the Levee was a drama theater troupe, which needed a thrust stage configuration. Tonight’s classical music group wants an arena stage, so Bill begins his day by converting the stage and seating into the new arrangement. He does not mind, though; it doesn’t take long and he needs only one other coworker to help. Then Bill checks to make sure that the scenery and equipment are in their proper places for the performance. During lunch, Bill sits outside on one of the benches in the plaza where he can watch the urban stage.

As a Cincinnati native, Bill was excited when Theater on the Levee opened. He had never cared about the performing arts very much, but the job prospect was alluring. For the first month or two he usually walked by the urban stage without paying much attention as to how it was being used. But as time went on, he began to take more
interest. For Bill, it is just as much about seeing people interact with each other as it is about performance, though he has begun to appreciate acting and dancing more.

After lunch, the classical music group arrives. Bill spends a lot of the afternoon getting them and their equipment set up. People begin to arrive for the show. Bill has noticed that regardless of the performance type, a lot of the audience members congregate on the main stairs. He thinks it is interesting that the audience members on the stairs actually become performers for the other people in the lobby. Some seem to realize it too, making exaggerated gestures or talking more emphatically than one normally would. Before the performance starts, the second shift arrives, and Bill walks out through the plaza, which is occupied by a throng of people. As he nears the urban stage he considers jumping up and showing off his dancing… maybe tomorrow instead, he thinks.
Space Standards & Requirements

The stage and house are the driving factors in determining the size of a theater complex. Establishing these requirements first will guide the rest of the programming.

House dimensions and requirements:

Seating
- Seating width: 450mm
- Max seats per row section...
  - Gangway on one side: 12
  - Gangway on two sides: 26
- Linear feet per row...
  - Gangway on one side: 18 ft
  - Gangway on two sides: 38 ft

Option 1: Small Stage
- Seating: 600
- Proscenium width: 30 ft
- Main stage depth: 36 ft
- Wing width: 20 ft

  Number of rows
  - Gangway on one side: 50
  - Gangway on two sides: 23

Option 2: Medium Stage
- Seating: 1,000
- Proscenium width: 39 ft
- Main stage depth: 46 ft
- Wing width: 26 ft

  Number of rows
  - Gangway on one side: 84
  - Gangway on two sides: 39

  Assume row spacing at 45 inches
  - Seating dimensions...
    - Gangway on one side: 315 ft x 25 ft
    - Gangway on two sides: 147 x 48 ft

Supportable performance types:

Drama
- Greek, medieval, Elizabethan
- Asian, American
- Chinese, European
- Tragedy, comedy, farce
- Puppetry, mime, multimedia

Entertainment
- Singers
- Magic
- Poetry
- Spectaculars
- Variety
- New media
- Revue
- Headliners

Dance
- Contemporary dance
- Folk and ethnic dance
- Mime
- Ceremonial dance
- Social dance
- Street and modern dance

Music
- Symphony concert
- Symphony concert with chorus
- Chamber orchestra
- Baroque orchestra
- Recital
- World Music
- Jazz
- Folkloric
- Sacred
- Blues
- Electronic
- Pop
- Brass bands
- Country
- Fusion
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<td>Proposed Theater Program</td>
<td>Table 4.1: Proposed program areas</td>
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**Proposed Theater Program**
Wyly Theatre

The Wyly Theatre is a multiform performance space in a urban context that serves as a programatically similar precedent. The Wyly Theatre differs from this thesis in two principle ways, which are necessary to take into account when analyzing the program. First, the architect, Joshau Prince-Ramus, of REX Architecture, chose to orient the building vertically due to limited site dimensions. The site across from Newport on the Levee poses much less stringent restrictions on the building footprint, permitting a horizontal orientation. Secondly, the design of the Wyly Theatre is based on an audience capacity of 575. This thesis will have an 1,000 seat house capacity, requiring increases in area of many spaces.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>DIMENSION (ft x ft)</th>
<th>AREA (sf)</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
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<td>36 x 98</td>
<td>3,500</td>
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<td>8 x 16</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-1</td>
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<td>8 x 16 : 3 x 9</td>
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<td>-1</td>
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<td>19 x 11 : 16 x 16</td>
<td>460</td>
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<td>Women's toilets</td>
<td>16 x 25 : 16 x 16</td>
<td>650</td>
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<td>Performance chamber</td>
<td>113 x 96</td>
<td>10,850</td>
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<td>Seating boundary</td>
<td>63 x 96</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>63 x 96</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Fly tower</td>
<td>50 x 96</td>
<td>4,800</td>
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<td>Sky studio</td>
<td>42 x 96</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<td>Rehearsal room</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Laundry</td>
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<td>Rehearsal coaching</td>
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<td>290</td>
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<td>Pantry</td>
<td>13 x 14</td>
<td>180</td>
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<td>Orange room</td>
<td>15 x 36</td>
<td>540</td>
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<td>BOH toilets (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
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<td>800</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>FOH storage</td>
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<td>220</td>
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<td>Loading dock B</td>
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<td>Freight elevators</td>
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<td>160</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooling tower</td>
<td>25 x 23</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stairwell A</td>
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<td>Stairwell B</td>
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<td>144</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Passenger elevators (3)</td>
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<td>320</td>
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<td>Balcony terrace</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balcony terrace</td>
<td>29 x 98</td>
<td>2840</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>

Table 4.2 : Wyly Theatre program areas
The New Norwegian National Opera House and Ballet, designed by Snohetta, illustrates an urban stage similar to that of this thesis. It differs in many ways from the Wyly Theatre, serving as a good project for comparison. First, Snohetta’s design is oriented horizontally, which differs from the vertical organization of the Wyly theater. Secondly, the Oslo Opera uses a set stage instead of the multiform theater configuration of the Wyly Theatre. Thirdly, the Oslo Opera is a larger project than either the Wyly Theater or this thesis design, with 1,360 house seats. Studying the program of one precedent with a smaller overall area and one with a larger overall area will help position this thesis within the spectrum of theater sizes.

Table 4.3: Oslo Opera House program areas
Organizational Relationships

The diagram below illustrates a generalized, functional layout of most performance spaces. It indicates the relationships between space types and also demonstrates which users will utilize each space. For instance, theater-goers adhere to a relatively linear sequence between the outdoor space, the front of house spaces, and the performance space. Students follow a similar pattern, but also go to the community outreach space (within the administration space). Performers and the maintenance crew utilize most spaces in the building in irregular sequences.

Fig. 4.1: Basic organizational relationships
Fig. 4.2: Detailed organizational relationships
DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

The places designated for increased social interaction will be designed with regard to a select group of Oldenburg’s components of a third place: neutral ground, social equality, conversational space, accessibility and accommodation, and a flow of regulars. One of the critical design objectives is to create the sense of neutral ground while promoting the perception of temporary ownership. These components of third places will be accomplished through integrating:

- open spaces, but with elements that relate to the human scale configurations of spaces and furniture that promote interaction
- materials that are playful, but that do not distract from performances
- lighting that highlights spaces for performance
- lighting that creates spaces for intimate conversation
- and ramped spaces to accommodate people with disabilities.
DESIGN FOR SOCIAL DISENGAGEMENT

The design for spaces intended for social disengagement will be categorized into areas for rejuvenation and sleep, critical analysis and introspection, and enhancement of performances. Each category will have subtle differences, but they are all based upon the same principles. The creation of spaces for social disengagement will be achieved through the implementation of:

- enclosed, yet unrestrictive spaces that relate to the human scale
- aural insulation and to varying degrees visual insulation
- materials, often natural, that allow users to focus on self-reflection
- lighting that facilitates rejuvenation and introspection
- separation from areas of high foot traffic
- and vertical orientation.
CHAPTER 5 : PRECEDENTS

Page 102  Approach
Page 104  Qualitative Experience
Page 106  Site Precedents
Page 118  Social Interaction Precedents
Page 124  Social Disengagement Precedents
Page 130  Systems Precedents
**Approach**

The following section analyzes precedents that will provide inspiration and guidelines for this thesis design. The precedents are organized into four topics: site, interaction, disengagement, and systems.

Each precedent features several photographs along the left page and one diagram/collage on the right page. A description of the actionable principles in each precedent explains the logic behind each diagram/collage. As such, this analysis translates each precedent study into a set of strategies to be implemented into the design of the theater.
INTERACTION

Fig. 5.7 : Tree Pavilion

Fig. 5.8 : New Carver Apartments

Fig. 5.9 : Tower Malapropos

DISENGAGEMENT

Fig. 5.10 : Sleepbox

Fig. 5.11 : Bruder Klaus Kapelle

Fig. 5.12 : Alicante Tram Station

SYSTEMS

Fig. 5.13 : Wyly Theatre

Fig. 5.14 : Boundary Function

Fig. 5.15 : Staircase to Nowhere
Qualitative Experience

Spaces for interaction...

- Urban stage
- Lobby
- Grand stairs
- Restuarant
- Performance space
- Multipurpose room
- Green room

Fig. 5.16 : Interaction - Urban stage experience

Fig. 5.17 : Interaction - Lobby experience

Fig. 5.18 : Interaction - Stage experience
Spaces for disengagement...

- Urban nooks
- Rejuvenation stations
- Performance space
- Green room

Fig. 5.19 : Disengagement - Urban stage experience

Fig. 5.20 : Disengagement - Lobby experience

Fig. 5.21 : Disengagement - Stage experience
Site Precedents

Place de l’Homme de Fer : Strasbourg, France : 1994 : Guy Clapot

Place de l’Homme de Fer increases levels of social interaction by creating an urban stage. In this case, the stage is defined by an overhead canopy. The subsequent site precedents will demonstrate that there are a multitude of strategies available to create an urban stage, but because Place de l’Homme de Fer is defined overhead, the pedestrian level remains open. This canopy allows pedestrian activities to go uninterrupted, enabling a contiguous zone for social interaction. It also lets potential transit passengers continue with their daily business and socialize with the surrounding people until just before the bus leaves. Most waiting zones for transit stops screen the passengers away from the general public. The circular nature of Place de l’Homme de Fer establishes a clear center point of activity and represents continuity.
Pavement Drawings : United Kingdom : 1994 — Present : Julian Beever

Julian Beever creates temporary urban stages through his series of chalk pavement drawings. These drawings create a stage from below by engaging passersby, both actively and passively. In some instances, audience members actively participate in the illustration by playing a role in the scene. Those who do not engage directly with the artwork instead inevitably display some sort of emotion through facial expression or through body language. These more passive reactions to the artwork are still projections of emotion, amplified by the artwork as a stage. Walking around the artwork draws attention to an individual, who is often quite self-aware of the spotlight that he/she is in. Overexaggerated facial expressions and gestures become a performances intended for the audience of the pavement drawings. Because the drawings are perspectival, they can therefore only be viewed properly from a certain angle, which reinforces the presence of the urban stage, since those individuals with the prime vantage point are in the spotlight: passersby look both at the artwork and at them.
The 10th Avenue Square of the High Line is another example of an urban stage. In the High Line, Diller Scofidio + Renfro used a screen to create two reciprocal stages. In one instance, the people on the High Line tracks look down upon the streets of New York, free to observe the activities and performances below. On the other hand, pedestrians on the street notice the people behind the glass panels of the High Line above which appear, uncannily, as if they were giant LCD screens. Each group is instinctively aware that they are both observing and being observed. People display their actions accordingly, thus putting on a performance.
Grotekerkplein : Rotterdam, Netherlands : 2009 : Atelier Kempe Thill

The Urban Activator (Grotekerkplein) in Rotterdam is essentially a blank slate on which people may perform. The simple frame creates a space that can adapt to a plethora of individual and communal activities and needs. This urban stage is defined from all sides, clearly framing and highlighting the given activity within. The openness of the surrounding plaza emphasizes the Urban Activator and its performers. The neutral colors of the plaza and the Urban Activator itself concentrate the focus on the performance or activity. Different audience sizes are commodated, since the space on either side of the Urban Activator varies.
flexibility

PEOPLE CONSTANTLY ACT IN URBAN LIFE BUT AREN'T CONSCIOUS OF IT

URBAN ACTIVATORS MAKE PEOPLE AWARE OF THEIR PERFORMANCES

community ownership

novelty

simplicity
Cloud Gate : Chicago, United States : 2006 : Anish Kapoor

Cloud Gate establishes itself as an urban stage in a more abstract manner. Anish Kapoor accomplished this effect through the use of reflection. Cloud Gate mirrors the surrounding people, skyline, and clouds overhead. This visual experience is a novelty that is unique, and thereby a major inspirer of interaction. The lower portion of the Cloud Gate is reactive, meaning that people have the ability to change the appearance of the sculpture, even if just temporarily. Its reactive nature prompts individuals to observe their own skewed reflections, and more importantly, to observe the reflections of others.
The Pompidou Center is not a single urban stage, but a conglomeration of multiple urban stages. In this instance, the urban stages are defined through a gentle slope in the public square. This ramping allows people to sit more comfortably during performances. The slope also funnels pedestrians’ views down towards the building, which provides a backdrop for impromptu performances and activities. The enormity of the stage enables multiple performances to occur simultaneously, and the openness of the outdoor space guarantees that people are able to spot performances easily. The level changes, pavement patterns, and treeline at the top of the slope create boundaries that differentiate one performance from another. Once in the building, one can still maintain a visual connection with the urban stages, especially in a series of escalators that sweep across the elevation of the building.
Social Interaction Precedents

Tree Pavilion : Madrid, Spain : 2007 : Ecosistema Urbano

The Tree Pavilion in Madrid is an example of a public space that increases the level of social interaction. Locating the pavilion at the intersection of two major streets establishes the structure as a focal point for the surrounding community. The circularity of the pavilion represents social equality, with no one particular seat being better than the rest. The flexibility of the enclosed space allows for performances, group meetings, and sporting events, enabling the community to take root within it. The structure also acts as an outlet for environmental comfort. The plant life growing on its sides cool the ambient temperature by several degrees at the base. This shading provides a relief from the scorching midday heat of Madrid during the summer, capitalizing on the tradition of siesta culture. The unusual aesthetic and unprogrammed space make it difficult to perceive it as a “known” institution, which helps to incite high levels of diversity, by deferring indefinitely any preconceived notions about who the primary users are intended to be.
New Carver Apartments : Los Angeles, United States : 2009 : Michael Maltzan Architecture

As with the previous precedent, the New Carver Apartments employ a circular design as a means of promoting social equality, so that all of the residents are able to regard each other as social equals. The concept of ownership plays an important role in encouraging social interaction. In this case, individuals have complete ownership of their specific apartments, which ensures them the option of separation, if desired. Each apartment also has an equal view of the central atrium space. More importantly, each resident perceives an entitlement to the public atrium. This shared ownership prompts neighbors to maintain positive relationships with each other — a collaboration of face — thus increasing the amount of social interaction within the atrium. Partial ownership of the atrium also guarantees that regulars will be present. Maltzan designed the building to be insulated from the noise, pollution, and crime of the surrounding environment. While this insulation limits interaction between residents and the outside neighborhood, it affords the occupants an additional level of comfort and community solidarity, reinforcing the social interactions within the atrium.
David Thomas Griffin set out to create a social building with his design of the Tower Malapropos. He achieved this primarily impact through re-proportioning the ratio of private residential spaces to commercial and purely social spaces. Griffin also made the effort to disperse these components through the building, rather than clustering them. This distribution allows small neighborhoods to form within the tower. Griffin recognized that each neighborhood would need its own space to interact, so he provided levels throughout the building entirely dedicated to socializing. The presence of regulars is assured because each social level is associated with a specific set of apartments. The Tower Malapropos also utilizes its stairwells as a place to pause and socialize, as well as a vantage point for observing the activities on the floor below.
Social Disengagement Precedents

Sleepbox : 2009 : Arch Group

Sleepboxes provide an outlet for people to temporarily withdraw from the rest of society. Arch Group designed them to accommodate a range of different functions. To reference the types of disengagement relevant to this thesis, Sleepboxes support rejuvenation and experience enhancement functions. These modes of disengagement are apparent through the amenities and the degree of connection to the outside world. For example, the presence of windows and a wired workspace indicate that there is still a degree of external connection. However, the bed and the sterile materiality imply that it is not intended for introspection, and probably not for analyzing society. Sleepboxes confine the user to a small enough space to feel personal, yet spacious enough to not feel constricting.
Above all, Bruder Klaus Kapelle evokes a sense of naturalness, spirituality, and tranquility. Its physical separation from any urban spaces makes it a perfect example of a space suitable for social disengagement, allowing the users to temporarily escape from urban life. Its natural materials and construction process are immediately evident and affect a tranquil experience. These features make it a space ideal for introspection and critical analysis of society. One can both reflect inward and outward. The oculus brings the gaze upwards, sharing a similar spiritual effect with the celestial vaults of Gothic cathedrals. As with Sleepboxes, the Bruder Klaus Kapelle is intimate and confined but not constricting.
Subarquitectura adopted a different approach to affecting social disengagement than the previous examples in their design of the Alicante Tram Station. Rather than put a wall between the user and the city, Subarquitectura employed other strategies to create an open oasis in a dense urban environment. For example, each side of the tram station has only one entrance. From there, paths branch in multiple directions, separating groups of pedestrians that happen to enter at the same time. Spaced out along these various routes are benches that create nodes for people to peacefully wait for the tram without having to stand next to the tracks. The high level of greenery in the Alicante Tram Station further promotes its image as an oasis. The benches use this greenery as a foreground, while positioning the tops of buildings in the background, which is an ideal condition for analyzing society.
Systems Precedents

Wyly Theatre : Dallas, United States : 2009 : REX Architecture

The Wyly Theatre is the vanguard of multiform theater design, allowing a crew of five to reconfigure the performance space and seating into eight different arrangements in just a few hours. This flexibility optimizes the performance space and seating for each performance, based upon desired effect. The vertical orientation of the theater relocates spaces that typically flank the theater, freeing the perimeter. This orientation produces a direct connection between the performance space and the site, a rare feat in theater design, resulting in unconventional sequences in and out of the theater and the ability to fully utilize the site for congregation before the play, during intermission, and afterwards.

Scott Snibbe is an artist who uses technology to address social issues. In the case of Boundary Functions, a projector outlines the social territories of the people on the stage. As people move, motion sensors cause the lines to shift and reflect the adjusted territories. This artwork raises the awareness of urban performativity: people are acting all the time but do not realize it. Boundary Functions helps people visualize how socialization occurs and how social territories adjust to these interactions. It also demonstrates how an increase in the number of people yields an increase in social interactions, until a certain point when overcrowding takes effect. An important aspect of the installation is that the “users” do not even have to be aware that they are participating for other people to observe the morphing of social territories.
Staircase to Nowhere: Miami Beach, United States: 1954: Morris Lapidus

The Staircase to Nowhere is part of the entry sequence of the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach designed by Morris Lapidus. To reach the coat check in the hotel, one must take an elevator up to the second level. To get to the lobby, one has to return to the first level, which involves walking down a flight of stairs in front of the other guests. This Staircase to Nowhere becomes a figurative stage or fashion runway, especially during posh events, when guests want to display their expensive tastes. The most important aspect of this design feature is that it is part of the normative entry sequence. The individual actions are modified; however, the sequence remains the same. It also takes a preexisting functional element of the building, a flight of stairs, and turns it into a means of promoting performativity. It makes the guests going down the stairs aware that they are performing, while it simultaneously makes the guests watching more aware that they are the audience. The Staircase to Nowhere also presents the opportunity for anybody to become a performer.
CHAPTER 6 : DESIGN

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Fig. 6.1: Aerial view of the Theater on the Levee
Site and Urban Design

Theater on the Levee (Fig. 6.1) serves as an interstate connecting node between Newport and Cincinnati, enlivening 3rd Street and the riverfront. The design capitalizes upon the existing conditions of the site, converting the slope of the levee into an outdoor theater experience with accompanying retail opportunities and expanding the ramp up to the Purple People Bridge into an engaging urban thoroughfare. The location of Theater on the Levee within the Newport entertainment district, specifically with its adjacency to Newport on the Levee, ensures that there will be a constant flow of pedestrians through the site.

The proliferation of mixed use program throughout the site in the form of retail stores, restaurants, and residential units is critical in activating the primary spaces for social interaction or disengagement. Thus this thesis proposes multiple small mixed use buildings surrounding the theater, as well as a large secondary building that engages 3rd Street and Washington Avenue. This secondary building is comprised of a grocery store and retail on the street level, condominiums on the upper four levels and parking underneath. The gentle angling of this building affords more of the residential units a
Fig. 6.2: Riverfront elevation of the Theater on the Levee

Fig. 6.3: Medium and small zones for social interaction
view to the river and creates a green courtyard enclosed by Theater on the Levee and opening toward the river and the Cincinnati skyline.

The Theater on the Levee complex employs ramps, stairs, and catwalks to create a comprehensive system of three dimensional interactions (Fig. 6.2). This vertical movement divides the large horizontal planes into zones of differing sizes, ideal for varying-sized groups of people to claim ownership of specific platforms (Fig. 6.3). The vertical changes in the ground plane also establish small, medium, and large amphitheater arrangements for people to view outdoor performances, whether professional dance troupes or an amateur musician trying to launch a solo career. The gentle angles of Theater on the Levee convey a sense of movement, guiding pedestrians throughout the complex and creating focal points towards areas of interaction or disengagement.
Fig. 6.4: The lower ramp offers various ways to interact
DESIGNING FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

Social interaction at Theater on the Levee is achieved through the design in the form of:

- urban stages
- the use of small, medium, large, and extra large social spaces
- the walkable rooftop with complementary mixed use functions
- building elements that engage the user.

Urban stages promote the gathering of people and increase the likelihood of spontaneous conversation (Fig. 6.4). This is reinforced by *theatrum mundi*, which encourages individuals to interact with others when they are made aware that they are performing. By dispersing urban stages throughout the site, passersby are likely to find themselves intentionally or incidentally involved in performances (Fig. 6.5) and experiencing the concept of *theatrum mundi*. These urban stages and can also be appropriated for public use (rallies, farmer’s markets, blood drives, yoga classes, tai chi groups, etc.).

The walkable rooftop acts as an extension of the existing ramp, connecting the base of Newport on the Levee on 3rd Street up to the top of the theater flytower. The height changes along this sequence, both gradual and intermittent, divide the roof into staggered platforms that act as urban stages. The rooftop is activated by complementary programmatic functions, like a restaurant, water features, and viewing windows into theater spaces (Fig. 6.6). The ability to see into the backstage spaces creates an
Fig. 6.5: Medium urban stage

Fig. 6.6: The overlain scripts and images on the metal panels prompt interactions
unconventional relationship between the theater employees and passersby, making the person on either side of the window aware that they are performing, in essence.

The effectiveness of the design’s ability to prompt social interaction or disengagement is magnified by the myriad scales at which these activities occur. Benches, small platforms, and small urban stages serve as spaces for busking or for conversation between a few people, while interactions at a medium scale occur on larger platforms, urban stages, and the wide ramps that connect different levels. Interactions at a large scale happen when there is activity that spans across multiple levels or during performances at several large urban stages. For an extra large event, such as for holidays or community-wide events, such as the annual Labor Day Riverfest, the entire rooftop is occupied.

Theater on the Levee employs several features that engage pedestrians both with the architecture and with other people. The lower rows of metal wall panels are etched with famous quotations from plays. People browse through the panels aimlessly or looking for their favorite quotations. The tiles increase social interaction by adding novelty to the building exterior and by uniting people with a shared interest in the performing arts. The curtainwall of the lobby employs a similar approach toward encouraging interactions, as patterns of famous characters of theater, ballet, and opera are sandblasted onto the glass panes. People on either side of the glass are encouraged to assume the pose displayed the given character (Fig. 6.7). This opportunity encourages
Fig. 6.7: The lobby curtainwall allows passersby to assume the roles of famous characters

Fig. 6.8: Projections allow people to experience performing for a large audience
passersby to go into the Theater on the Levee, even if this was not their original intention. Even when a character silhouette is not in use, the movement of people behind it makes the scene appear to be alive. As a means of encouraging spontaneous performances, projectors display the activities of the urban stages on the opaque wall panels of Newport on the Levee’s eastern facade (Fig. 6.8). These projections present the potential for any person to experience the sensation that an actor does on a theater stage. They also enliven the otherwise bland eastern wall of Newport and the Levee and they encourage spectators to participate in the activity being projected.
Fig. 6.9: Medium and small platforms being used for yoga users to disengage
DESIGNING FOR SOCIAL DISENGAGEMENT

The Theater on the Levee fosters social disengagement through:

- materiality and touchability
- complementary programmatic functions
- physical and mental distancing from overwhelming stimuli
- and designing for the human scale.

Materiality plays a significant role in prompting people to withdraw from social environments. Being surrounded by natural materials mentally transports users out of a city associated with steel, glass, and spaces of high population density. Natural materials also encourage haptic engagement with the built environment. In the Backstage Nooks (Fig. 6.10), for example, the user is intended to feel the grain of the wood bench and the texture of the stone wall panel. By focusing on tactility, the nooks’ users devote less attention to the visual and auditory information that tie them to the social zones. These natural materials act as a signifier, indicating places for people to disengage.

As with the zones dedicated to social interaction, the spaces for social disengagement are activated by complementary mixed use functions. For example, small platforms that overlook the river are activated by a yoga studio (Fig. 6.9). Green spaces and sitting steps on the waterfront are populated by people coming from the nearby bookstore. And the rooftop garden is filled by people sipping beverages from the
adjacent coffee shop. The Theater on the Levee also provides spaces for performers and theater employees to disengage, like Rehearsal Nooks with a view of the lower plaza or Flytower Nooks that allow the occupant to observe theater production activities.

In the zones for social disengagement, the design of the Theater on the Levee establishes a degree of physical and mental distancing between the occupant and the areas of overwhelming sensory stimuli. The preponderance of the spaces for disengagement are located along or near the riverfront as a means of avoiding the crowded busyness of 3rd Street and the activities of the main Theater on the Levee plaza. This not only situates the spaces for disengagement away from the noisy areas of

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Fig. 6.10: Backstage nooks serve as an intimate space for people to observe theater production.
Fig. 6.11: The changing permeability of the wood strips offers varying degrees of disengagement
the site, but it also orients them toward the tranquility of the riverfront and the opulence of the Cincinnati skyline. The disengagement nooks are screened off from the adjoining spaces by vertical wood strips (Fig. 6.11). These slats rotate as they rise up the façade, allowing more visual continuity on the upper levels where noise pollution has less effect. Furthermore, a material change adds a subtle, but essential degree of separation to the nooks. The transition from metal panels to wood and stone indicate that the nook is a space for disengagement and an entity distinct from the adjacent spaces.

Critical to designing an effective space for social disengagement is the experience of feeling enclosed, yet not constricted. Designing a nook with the adequate level of intimacy requires attention to the human scale. The small spaces for disengagement on the levee slope are enclosed by stairs, platforms, and railings on three sides, while maintaining a connection to the river on the remaining side. The size of these disengagement platforms varies depending on the intended activities that they support; the space for a yoga class is larger than the space for an individual reading a book. Nooks around the lower ramp are carved into the building façade, with three sides enclosed by stone panels, wood strips, an observation window into the theater shop, and the final side gently angled toward the plaza. The spaces for disengagement at the Theater on the Levee are designed to the human scale by dissecting the large, open plazas and ramps into smaller, more intimate nooks.
Fig. 6.12 : Level 2 Plan

Fig. 6.13 : Level 3 Plan
Fig. 6.14: Transverse Section

Fig. 6.15: Longitudinal Section
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