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Surface, Substance, and the Status Quo: Pop Cultural Influences on Architectural Design

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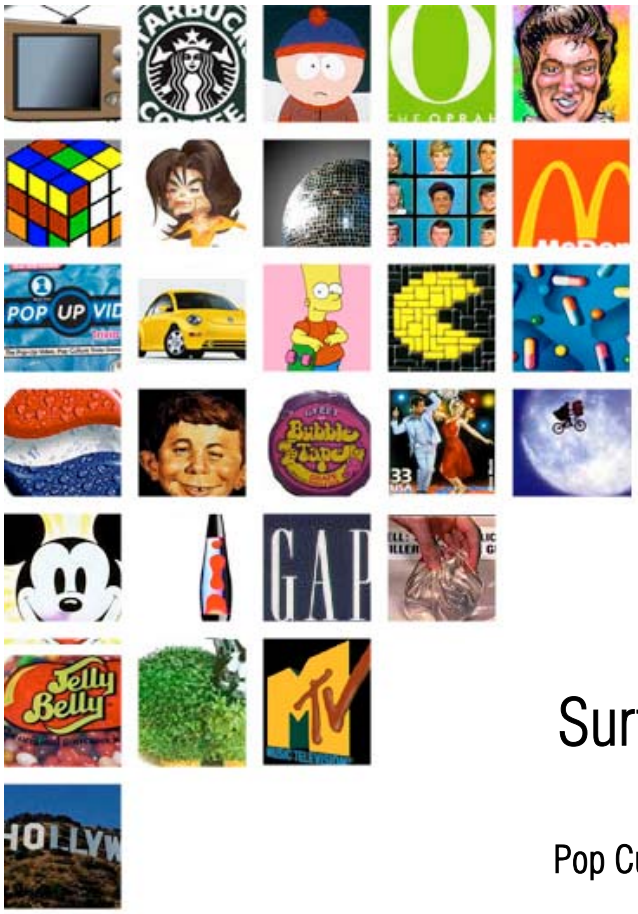

Surface, Substance and the Status Quo:

Pop Cultural Influences on Architectural Design

A thesis submitted to the
Division of Research and Advanced Studies of the University of Cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture

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by

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Abstract

An investigation of Pop Culture might reveal a set of parameters to which architecture can respond as an expression of contemporary American culture. Therefore, the goal of this thesis is to understand the plural realities of American culture—as reflected in the sometimes-controversial products of Pop Culture—and to ultimately relate these paradigms to the design of a drive-thru BOTOX Clinic in West Hollywood.

Furthermore, if American culture is permeable to Pop influence, and the "culture of the United States is inescapably and increasingly both multi-cultural and commodified,"[1] how does architecture readily respond to this culture? These investigations might ultimately deduce that if Pop Culture has propagated image consciousness through the Media, thereby encouraging the means of physical malleability such as BOTOX, then perhaps Pop Culture can influence the architectural design of a cosmetic procedure center. Likewise, if Pop Culture has also propagated the use of the automobile, thereby encouraging the automobile-oriented building type, then perhaps this design could also reflect Pop Culture's increasing dependence on the automobile as a mainstay of American living. To aid these investigations, we will consider contemporary fashion, reality television, BOTOX injections, MTV, the diet industry, tabloids, teen movies, Boy Bands, dot-coms, and other Pop Cultural products throughout. These investigations will most likely produce an understanding of the extent to which Pop Culture has permeated and influenced building design in contemporary America. The findings will then be applied to the design study of a BOTOX Clinic in West Hollywood, California.

[1] John Fiske, "Global, National, Local? Some Problems of Culture in a Postmodern World," Velvet Light Trap not cited.40 (1997): 66.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Nnamdi Elleh, for believing in this project and for opening my eyes to new areas of architectural discourse. Dr. David Saile, I thank you for challenging this thesis to make it as rich as possible. Finally, I dedicate this work to my parents, Melvin and Estelle Hall, whose support I carry with me always. Thank you.

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Introduction

"It's the movies that have really been running things in America ever since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to look how you feel about it.[2]

-- Andy Warhol, 1965

[2] Frances Anderton, "A Pop into Architecture," (Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 1.

i.1 Introduction Objectives

This thesis intends to *theoretically* explore image-consciousness as an outgrowth of Pop Culture, and *architecturally* explore the role Pop Culture plays upon our own perceptions of self and our environment. Therefore, in chapters one through four of this thesis, a proposed design for a drive-through cosmetic maintenance clinic in a place such as West Hollywood will be studied and fleshed out with theoretical discourses that examine trends in America's Pop Culture.

However, before we can discuss Pop Cultural influences reflected in architecture, we must first address a few basic issues from which our discourse will grow. First, we will address the question: What defines Pop Culture in the United States, particularly, in a place such as West Hollywood? Next, since we might consider the mass Media one of the most powerful instruments of Pop Culture, what role does the Media actually play in the production of "Pop Architecture?" Does the Media reflect this culture, influence this culture, or both? Then, we will apply these queries to our design approach and, using Francis Anderton's "A Pop into Architecture," we will examine how architects have derived inspiration from these types of Pop influences in the past.

i.2 Pop Culture

"Pop Culture" encompasses a large arena of shared experiences, whose meaning has most likely become diluted and embellished by its frequent use in the contemporary vernacular English language. To avoid confusion, it might be beneficial to explore the terms of Pop Culture from which this thesis is based. Therefore, we will look at several varied definitions of "Pop Culture," to arrive at a more holistic understanding of the phrase as it will be used here. Interpretations of Popular Culture by Ray B. Brown, Michael Bell, Norman Cantor and Michael Werhman will be considered. Then the

roles of marketing, fame, and mass media will be addressed as possible components of this Popular Culture.

In the most liberal of terms, Ray B. Brown describes Pop Culture as "all the experiences in life shared by people in common, generally though not necessarily disseminated by the mass media."[3] While this is the simplest and most inclusive definition we will discuss, it seems to lack qualifying statements describing the nature of the shared "experiences" and the term "common" tends to have several vague connotations, most likely not intended by the author. Therefore, we might need to look at a more expanded interpretation of the term.

In "The Study of Popular Culture," 1989, Michael Bell defines Pop Culture in terms of its mass appeal and accessibility. More specifically he states:

> "A creation is popular when it is created to respond to the experiences and values of the majority, when it is produced in such a way that the majority have easy access to it, and when it can be understood and interpreted by that majority without the aid of special knowledge or experience."[4]

It might be logical to conclude from Bell's definition that this Popular Culture—given its mass appeal and mass accessibility—could include the commodified products of industry, which have been created for their mass appeal and ease of distribution. This would include such Pop Cultural artifacts as McDonalds, Disney, and the Gap clothing store. Bell also lays the groundwork from which we will later explore the differences between Pop Culture and so called High Culture. The use of the word "majority" here most likely reflects the meaning of the word "common" in the first

[3] Ray B. Browne, "Popular Culture and the Expanding Consciousness" (New York: Wiley, 1973), 6.

[4] Michael Bell, "The Study of Popular Culture," (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 443.

definition. However, to use the word "majority" leads us to ask what organizes the majority, and from what larger group (ethnic, national, regional, etc.) does the majority originate?

As the previous definition characterized Pop Culture in terms of its commodified appeal, we will now consider a definition by Norman Cantor and Michael Werhman. They suggest that Popular Culture can also include man's *diversions from* commodified culture, or what they call, "the sad business of life."[5] Cantor and Werhman conclude:

> "Popular culture may be seen as all those things man does and all those artifacts he creates for their own sake, all that diverts his mind and body from the sad business of life. Popular culture is really what people do when they are not working; it is man in pursuit of pleasure, excitement, beauty, and fulfillment."[6]

While this definition is quite broad in its explanation, the "Popular Culture" described here quite possibly allows for the playfulness and the explorations of the so-called guiltier pleasures in life. These guilty pleasures, most likely characterized by their ability to satisfy some sensual desire, will be explored throughout this thesis, as the Pop Cultural desire for the newest, fastest, biggest, and best manifests itself as a common theme. Most importantly, we have seen that the term Popular Culture can include (1) the commodified products of industry (Disneyland) or (2) the individual's pursuit of commodification (status consciousness) or even (3) the individual's pursuit of distraction (the "guilty pleasure"). To continue this investigation, we will now explore the roles of marketing, fame and the Media as components of this Popular Culture.

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[5] Norman F. Cantor and Michael S. Werthman, The History of Popular Culture from 1815, (New York: Macmillan, 1968) XXII.

[6] Norman F. Cantor, XXII.

In today's late capitalist market, as defined by Fredric Jamson and John Fiske, people have more choices than ever, and the success of any idea, any business, any political stance, any product, etc. might certainly require a positive public response via a skilled marketing position. From the success of the suburban flight to the formula boy band, the sensual tendencies to which marketing campaigns play will be investigated and the resulting consumerist and materialist ideals will be explored. To illustrate, consider this: It falls from the sky, makes up a majority of the earth's surface as well as 70 percent of our bodies, and it is readily available in any household in the United States. However, put it in a plastic bottle with a sport cap, and water will sell for more than three times the price of gasoline per gallon, to make up a multi-billion dollar industry—a concept which thirty years ago would have been considered ludicrous. This is just one Popular artifact of civilized modern life that this thesis will explore—the issue of product placement in a brand and image conscious society.

This image consciousness might be attributed to the extensive role business has relinquished to marketing. According to Demographic America, to maintain success in the new century, the single most important budgetary expenditure of any business lies in its marketing capacity.[7] It might be further concluded that a designer's fruition is an outgrowth of successful presentation and image publicity. Once established as a "star," this image consciousness grows, as clothing becomes "Prada," automobiles become a "Benz" and a building becomes a "Wright."

As a primary propagator of this fame, the role of the Media might be considered one of the most powerful instruments of Popular Culture. Andy Warhol commentated, "It's the movies that have really

[7] Emile Johnston, Demographic America (Houston: Daniels Press, 1994) 127-128.

been running things in America ever since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to look how you feel about it."[8] Despite Warhol's poetic sarcasm, we should consider Media's influence on national culture and question the nature of its messages—these ideals of Hollywood, now broadcast to the four corners of the developed world. Do the images portrayed *reflect* current culture, *influence* current culture, or both?

Warhol's suggestion illuminates a central tension common in many discourses of Popular Media. Namely, how do we reconcile Hollywood, which primarily values and exports fictional *entertainment*, with a national expectation that most likely imposes some *educational value* upon its media? To illustrate this expectation, consider Vice President Dan Quayle, who, in 1992 publicly and officially admonished the CBS series "Murphy Brown" for advocating single-mother pregnancy, as one of the unmarried characters opted for a single mother lifestyle. In that instant, the nation's second-in-command elevated the *portrayal* of a *fictional* character as an endorsement and encouragement of very real life decisions. Furthermore, in the late 1990s, actress Candice Bergen, who portrayed the fictional hard-hitting television journalist Murphy Brown on the series, became an actual television magazine journalist for the Oxygen network. Once again, the duality between *fiction* and *reality*, and Pop Culture's blurring of the two into an alternate "hyper-reality", emerges as a running motif in postmodern life. Therefore, as Hollywood fiction continues to infiltrate aspects of cultural reality, we will further explore its messages and their accuracy, including messages of sex and violence as instruments of sensationalism.

[8] "Andy Warhol's Famous Quotes,"(July 2003): Princeofpop.com, 09 Sep. 2003 <http://www.princeofpop.com/>

Sex sells, and the consequent myriad sexual messages permeate this culture, most likely sexualizing our environment. These images can produce arousal, increase carnal behaviors and can serve as a source of misguided sexual information.[9] Dr. Bradley Greenberg's 1994 study on "Content Trends in Media Sex," concluded that television depictions of human behavior varied tremendously from the actualities of human behavior, and ultimately these misrepresentations resulted in skewed perceptions of sexuality by the regular television consumer. Greenberg found that extramarital affairs, violent rape and prostitution are depicted more than marital relations; males are viewed as more sexually experienced by females who watch soap operas; homosexual characters, when shown, are overwhelmingly depicted as stereotypical or sinister; and interracial couples are rarely shown in loving and long-term relationships. Greenberg's study also concluded that the most common sexual activity portrayed on daytime television is extramarital intercourse (at a rate of 2.4 times per hour.) Violent rape averaged at 1.4 times per hour, while marital relations bottomed the list at 0.72 times per hour. With this frequency of violent and sexual images, representations (or perhaps, *mis*representations) of contraception, homosexuality, safe sex, and the ramifications of STD's, were found virtually non-existent, and when these issues did surface, they were mostly considered in a cursory and/or stereotypical manner. [10] The resultant media messages conclude in unison, "sex is only for the young, the single, the beautiful, and sexual encounters are always spontaneous … and risk-free."[11] Therefore, if we recognize these findings, the context for Pop culture's obsessions over youth and beauty might become clearer. If these obsessions are accurate and the pursuit of youth and beauty dominates Popular taste, then perhaps the design of a cosmetic maintenance center,

[9] Brian Strong, et al. "Sexuality, Pop Culture, and the Media," Human Sexuality: Diversity in Contemporary America. Mcgraw Hill: New York (2002): 5.

[10] B.S. Greenberg & M.G. Woods. "The Soaps: Their Sex, Gratification and Outcomes." The Journal of Sex Research. 36 (2003): 150-257.

especially in the L. A. neighborhood of West Hollywood, might be an appropriate venue to develop an architectural discourse on Popular Culture.

To illustrate the cultural relevance of physical attractiveness, we will consider a study by Dateline NBC that aired on January 11, 2004. This study ultimately concluded, "attractive people receive preferential day-to-day treatment over those we consider average-looking."[12] In this study, an "average-looking" man and woman were compared against two professional models, and both teams were instructed to conduct similar social experiments, and their findings were secretly video-recorded. The experiments ranged from asking for directions on the street, to negotiating the purchase of goods and services, to asking strangers for money, and even the same job interview situation. In every experiment, except for the home mortgage negotiation, in which the computer input of data dictated the outcome, strangers received the "better-looking" people more warmly; this team also faired better in purchase negotiations and the job interview. In fact, in the begging for money experiment, a stranger told the male model that she was giving him money "just because you're cute."[13]

As a market response to this cultural desire for youth and beauty, the commodity of physical malleability has shown increased popularity, most likely due to the new non-surgical treatments available. As reported on Eyewitness News Five on Sunday, March 28, 2004 the new cosmetic procedures (BOTOX injections, Restylane injections, chemical peels, etc.) provide the consumer with

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[11] Brian Strong, et al. "Sexuality, Pop Culture, and the Media," Human Sexuality: Diversity in Contemporary America. Mcgraw Hill: New York (2002): 10.
[12] "Face Value." Narr. Stone Philips. Dateline NBC. NBC. WLWT, New York. 11 Jan. 2004.
[13] "Face Value."

less expensive alternatives to traditional surgery. Given the convenience and speed of these procedures, the report found an increasing number of Americans currently opting for these non-surgical treatments that can easily be completed in a lunch hour. The report also found BOTOX injections constituted the majority—twenty-five percent—of all non-surgical and surgical cosmetic treatments performed in the United States in 2003.[14] Therefore, considering the newfound and increasing popularity of BOTOX and similar treatments, as well as the speed with which they can be applied, perhaps we might begin to explore the Pop Cultural relevance of the design of a drive-thru cosmetic maintenance center throughout this thesis.

i.3 Design Approach

Therefore, if (1) Pop Culture has propagated this image consciousness through the Media; thereby (2) encouraging the means of physical malleability such as BOTOX injections; then (3) perhaps Pop Culture's influence can lend itself to the design of a cosmetic procedure and maintenance center. Ultimately, such a design would provide a place unique to cosmetic procedures, reflective of the treatments' specific programmatic, spatial and architectural needs. Since these specific treatments (BOTOX injections, Restylane treatment—described further in Chapter 4) have only recently been FDA approved, architecture has yet to create a place for them in the built environment. Furthermore, it is most likely inevitable that architecture will be solicited to design for these controversial yet popular treatments in the near future. To respond to this potential need, this design thesis will attempt to regulate the pursuit of beauty while not necessarily condoning these procedures or any of the Pop Cultural influences discussed in this study. The ultimate goal of this approach will attempt to objectively examine current Pop Cultural artifacts, from the controversial to the more socially

[14] "Nip 'n Tuck Nation." Eyewitness News Five. NBC. WLWT, Cincinnati. 28 Mar. 2004.

acceptable, to formulate just one possible architectural design, dictated by Pop Cultural significance.

i.4 "A Pop into Architecture"—A Literature Review

Since we will be using Pop Cultural influences to create an architectural design thesis, we will now examine a few design precedents discussed by critic Frances Anderton. To explore just how past architectural works have grown from Pop Cultural influence, we will consider "A Pop into Architecture," 1997, in which the author traces several issues of Pop Culture that have been realized through architecture. Primarily, Anderton examines Los Angeles based Kanner Architects, as a firm whose body of work demonstrates the influence of Popular Culture as a regional response to the increasingly commodified and commercial Los Angeles culture.

Anderton begins this discourse with a quote by Andy Warhol—a statement most likely inspired by Warhol's famous road trip from New York to Los Angeles in 1967. Regarding Pop Culture's influence on the American countryside, Warhol states:

> "The further west we drove, the more 'Pop' everything looked on the highways… even though Pop was everywhere… to us, it was the new Art. Once you 'got' Pop, you could never see a sign the same way again. And once you thought Pop, you could never see America the same way again." [15]

To understand these parameters of Pop Culture in which Pop Art thrived, Anderton continues to paint a picture of post World War II Los Angeles as a "playful commercial environment," [16] in a golden age of bowling alleys, motels, drive-in movies and futuristic diners. With a seemingly nostalgic tone, the

[15] Frances Anderton, "A Pop into Architecture," (Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 1.
[16] Frances Anderton, 1.

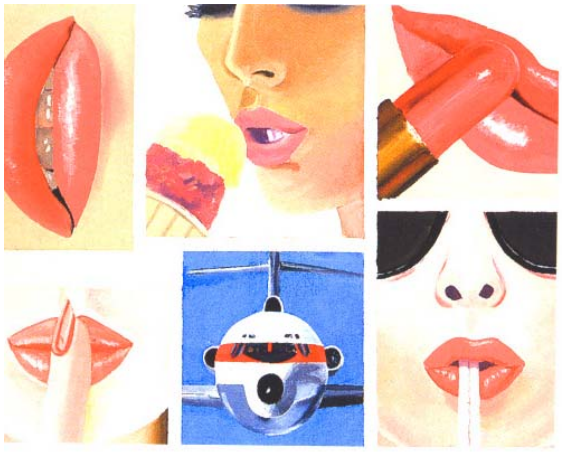
author references the shiny chrome-lined convertibles that zoomed along wide boulevards bordered by palm trees and green lawns, and tidy houses with all the modern conveniences, describing Los Angeles as a city of Hollywood and Disneyland—a city in an era of optimism. We must understand that the author's goal here is to describe the city and the era as it was portrayed in the Pop Art of the time. His intentions do **not** attempt to depict the sixties or Los Angeles from a completely historically accurate perspective. Rather, the author admits that he portrays a Los Angeles before Vietnam, the Kennedy assassination, and the civil unrest that defined the decade. It seems Andterton's ultimate goal is to introduce the spirit of the Pop Culture of the time*, as it was portrayed in Pop Art*, so that we may understand the architectural responses that follow.

Primarily focusing on the work of Kanner Architects, Anderton looks first at the main Pop influences that encouraged Charles and Stephen Kanner's work from 1946 to present-day. Anderton argues that their inspiration from the media and advertisements can be represented in architect Charles Kanner's paintings derived from photographic images and magazines. In the attached images, we can see the architect's fascination with the commercial imagery of the sixties: industrial machinery, tv-screens, blondes sucking ice cubes, blondes putting on lipstick,

"Blonde Sucking Ice Cube"
Charles Kanner, 1968

and blondes "sashaying on stilettos into stores."[17]

As we explore, it could be this fascination with commercialism in the Southern California lifestyle that most likely characterizes the architects' projects. Furthermore, Anderton describes Kanner Architects' work as the epitome of Pop Culture reflected in architecture: "These buildings… are cheerful and humorous, they flaunt exaggerated color and scale and shout their presence to a passing motorist. In short, they are Pop Architecture."[18]



"Lips"
Charles Kanner, 1968

Anderton argues that Stephen Kanner brought to the projects a shared interest in commercial imagery, as well as an interest in the retro-futurist images found in the cartoon "Jetsons," the Tomorrowland architecture of Disneyland, and the programmatic roadside architecture of Southern California. According to Anderton, Stephen Kanner believed that these largely commercial, "often dispensable buildings never got their

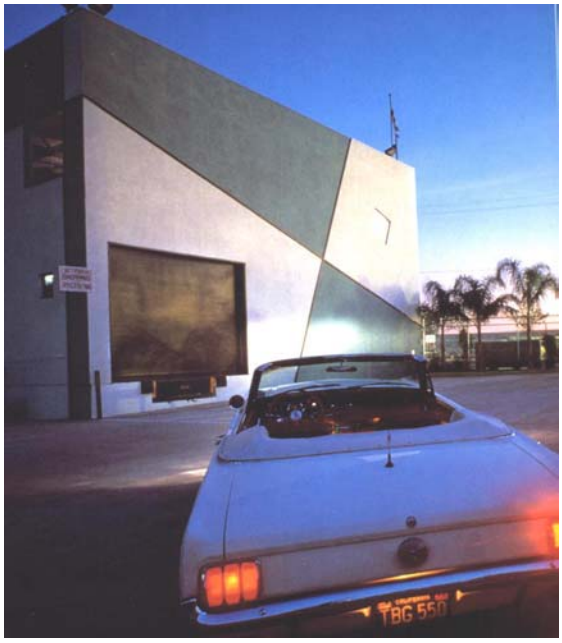
Inspiration
The Jetsons

[17] Frances Anderton, "A Pop into Architecture," (Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 1.
[18] Frances Anderton, 1.

due,"[19] and was largely inspired by those Pop artists who celebrated the commonplace and the ordinary. Anderton names Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, Ed Ruscha and Roy Lichtenstein as some of the artists from which Stephen Kanner claims to gather inspiration. Anderton maintains that the Kanners architecturally express the "Pop Art taste for the cheap and the commonplace, as well as an unashamed delight in pure surface." [20] Therefore, these artists and their contemporaries will be discussed further in chapter one, *Pop Culture and the Visual Arts*.

Inspiration
Standard Station,
Ed Ruscha, 1966

Overwhelmingly, Anderton characterizes the work of Kanner Architects as a "billboard" approach to architecture. In one example he references the showroom for convertible top fabricator, Robbins Auto Top Company, 1988. Anderton critiques the project as evocative of the automobile, evidenced by a large box adorned with green and white tilted rectangles reminiscent of motor racing, and



Robins Auto Top Company, 1988
Photo by: Mark Lohman, 1997

[19] Frances Anderton, "A Pop into Architecture," (Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 2.
[20] Frances Anderton, "2.

showcasing a façade treatment with the same "visual punch of a blown-up Campbell's soup can." [21] Perhaps we might also recognise the checkered racing flags that dot the rooftop and delineate the separation of functions within the building. Also, it should be noted here that the green, white, and black used in the façade treatment are also the colors of the Robins Auto corporate logo—colors used throughout the interior and exterior treatments.

Robins Auto Top Company, 1988
Photo by: Mark Lohman, 1997

Next, Anderton claims that Pop Architecture evolved into more of a symbiosis of Modernism and Pop Modernism, which may be seen in the Harvard Apartments, 1992, for Koreatown, Los Angeles. A project of thirteen low-cost housing units, Anderton claims the façade is evocative of a "ham and cheese sandwich of white bread Modernism with a filling of L. A. funk." [22] Anderton also notes the effort to conceal exterior clutter, such as downspouts, meters, and other

Harvard Apartments
Photo By: Mark Lohman, 1997

[21] Frances Anderton, "A Pop into Architecture," (Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 2.
[22] Frances Anderton, 3.

utility fixtures to maintain the purity of the façade. However, given Koreatown's rather rough reputation, we might also see this as a defensive measure against vandalism, since all fixtures vulnerable to graffiti are covered by the more resilient E.I.F.S. façade. In addition, we might also note the low planters that engage the sidewalk and the large bank of windows that potentially monitor the street life below. Finally, built with a budget of $65 per square foot, we might conclude that this so-called Pop Architecture responds sensitively to mass culture, not only through its imagery suited to Popular appreciation, but also by availing itself for common use by more affordable means than High Art Architecture might provide.

Harvard Apartments Interior of 'Cheese Volume'
Photo By: Mark Lohman, 1997

Andterton ultimately concludes that just as "Low" Pop became "High" Art once it was decontextualized by altering its scale, materiality and form, Pop Architecture attempts to create abstract interpretations of its sources, with the irony and critical distance typical of Pop Art. Critic David Deitcher might further support this interplay between the "Low" Pop and the "High" Art as a phenomenon in which "privileged spectators… enjoy their cultural aloofness from the 'mob' while

standing in its midst before the same object." [23] Finally, we might conclude from Anderton's arguments, that even though Pop Architecture lends itself to a more common use and appreciation than the more exclusive "pretensions of theory-based High Art Architecture, [24] Pop Culture is no less a valid arena from which a potentially rich architectural project can derive.

i.5 Thesis Organization

Now that we have a basic understanding of the Pop Cultural issues involved in this thesis, we will continue by concentrating on several specific Pop Cultural issues and their relevance to architectural design. If Art + Science = Architecture, then perhaps an investigation of the *ar*t of Pop Culture (Pop Art) and the *science* of Pop Culture (Late Capitalism) may lead us to the *architecture* of Pop Culture. Therefore, the investigation will be organized into those main areas: (1) ***Pop Culture and the Visual Arts*** will aim to investigate Pop Art as an articulation of Pop Culture into an expressive form from which an architectural response can derive. (2) ***Pop Culture and the Commodity*** will explore late capitalist culture as defined by Fredric Jameson, and the resultant human quest for body identity in a culturally commodified environment. (3) ***Pop Culture and the Built Environment*** will attempt to relate Pop Culture to architecture and urban design, through the affects of American car culture, the Media propagation of the suburban lifestyle, and the tenets of Post Modernism that most likely reflect a Pop Cultural influence. This will ultimately lead to the (4) ***Plan of Work*** in which we will attempt to apply the conclusions from the previous chapters to the design of a cosmetic maintenance and auto-detailing center in West Hollywood, California.

[23] Frances Anderton, "A Pop into Architecture," (Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 4.
[24] Frances Anderton, 4.

Chapter One:
Pop Culture and the Visual Arts

"*My idea of a good picture is one that's in focus and of a famous person.* "[25]

--Andy Warhol, 1960

1.1 Chapter Objectives

Current events, what it is to be "modern", consumer culture, and the motivations of a status-driven civilization are all reflected in various forums from political cartoons to television to fashion to music. As a commentary on this culture, Pop Art's translation of Pop Culture into an expressive form will be investigated. The ultimate aim of this chapter's investigation is to facilitate an understanding of Pop Art's influences on what might be described as "Pop Architecture" and the signature status and notoriety therein. The specific issues investigated will address Pop Art's methods of objectifying the subject and elevating the object as a means to critique popular culture and the media on which it most likely depends.

The Pop Art explored here will include the visual and plastic artwork of the last forty years influenced by Popular Culture and mass media. Extracted from these influences are the approach and conventions of representation from which the artwork evolves. Also, we will address Pop Art as a form of representation that most likely "takes as its object of scrutiny not reality perceived directly but existing representations of reality found in the realms of graphic design, packaging, the cinema, etc."[26] To do so, we will consider work from Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Michael Sandle, Steven Gregory and Tom Sachs.

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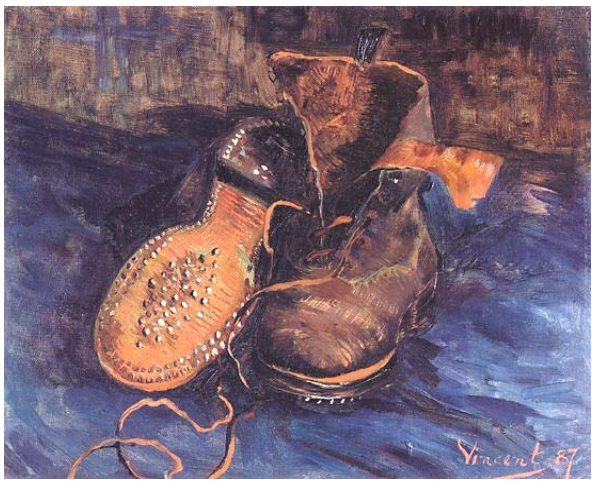
[25] "Andy Warhol's Famous Quotes,"(July 2003): Princeofpop.com, 09 Sep. 2003 <http://www.princeofpop.com/>
[26] John A. Walker, Art in the Age of Mass Media (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) 22.

1.2 Objectification

To distinguish the qualities of Pop Art distinct from earlier artistic genres, we will first address Fredric Jameson's comparison of Van Gogh's "A Pair of Boots," 1886, to Warhol's "Diamond Dust Shoes," 1980. In Van Gogh's work, Jameson addresses the subject boots, matched as a pair and working toward a common goal, as a heterosexual coupling forever married in use. The context of their object world—the peasant life of agricultural labor and its inherent poverty—can be reconstructed from the shoes, despite the work's lack of pictorial entourage. Furthermore, Jameson continues the reconstructed context of fruitless trees in poor soil contrasts dramatically with Van Gogh's use of greens and reds, reminiscent of the very vegetation lacking in the object world. This purposeful use of color, Jameson asserts, lends a hope to the object, as this "transformation of a drab peasant object world into the most glorious materialization of pure color in oil paint is to be seen as a Utopian gesture."[27] These boots most likely relate to the living and reveal a life, resting on the canvas as if posing, until their owner dons the pair for another day of laborious activity, thereby returning to the larger universal context and completing the hermeneutic gesture.



A Pair of Boots, 1886
Van Gogh

[27] Fredric Jameson Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992) 7.

In contrast, consider Warhol's "Diamond Dust Shoes." The subjects hang suspended and lifeless, not posed with the immediacy of Van Gogh's boots, but rather, discarded as if in a pile, forever useless without mates. If we accept Van Gogh's boots as a heterosexual pairing, married in use, then perhaps the random piling of these unmated shoes may be considered fetishism, as defined by both Freud and Marx. Jameson elaborates on the lifeless nature of the shoes, as if the subjects had been completely stripped of their former life world like a "pile of shoes left over from Auschwitz or the remainders or tokens of some… tragic fire in a packed dance hall."[28] Therefore, according to Jameson, there is no restoration of these shoes to the larger context of the dance hall, and consequently no completion of the hermeneutic gesture.

Diamond Dust Shoes, 1980
Andy Warhol

Marilyn Monroe, 1962
Andy Warhol

Further exploiting this objectification, Warhol's very method of screen-printing contributes to this flatness and superficiality. In addition to the inherent subject depreciation achieved by the mass

[28] Fredric Jameson Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992) 8.

production and repetitive notions of the screen printing process, the treatment of the subject regarding line work and color might also contribute to objectification. To investigate this, we will look primarily at Warhol's print of Marilyn Monroe. Warhol diminishes the detail and line work about the subject's face, consequently removing perspectival depth and bringing the foreground and background up to the same plane as the canvas. Seemingly, the only notion of depth Warhol lends to this subject is the blob of solid black without gradation to represent shadow. Other color representation of the subject is reduced to two-dimensional blobs of repetitive saturated pigment. These color blobs retain very distinct shapes which, taken together, represent the façade of Marilyn Monroe. The over-saturations of colors, most apparent in the upper-left and lower-right quadrants, continue to bleed out the image and wash the subject of details and features, resulting in a superficial flatness of the work.

To further underscore this flatness, let us contrast Warhol's suppression of depth against the explosion of depth achieved by Analytical Cubism. Cubists used a layering of viewpoints to reveal otherwise hidden dimensions on the planar canvas surface. From the frontal viewpoint of the Cubist scene, the contracted space reveals multiple dimensions of the subject simultaneously, most likely attempting to explode the depth as a means to **reveal** the

Marilyn Monroe, 1962, closeup
Andy Warhol

contents of that depth.[29] The resultant Cubist work is most likely a conglomeration of multiple views from multiple viewpoints, representing the contents of the X, Y and Z-axes from one concurrent vantagepoint. Conversely, Warhol's use of one-point frontal perspective, facilitated by the methods of depth suppression described earlier, most likely **conceals** the subject's visual depth. One may see this evidenced in "Marilyn Monroe" in which the surface parallel to the picture plane is exclusively represented, as if the screen-print was an elevation of a three-dimensional object. If we consider this substantial surface attention along with Warhol's multiple efforts to conceal the surface's depth, we might consider Warhol's screen-prints as a critique of a contemporary culture, which, in its zeal for appearance has increasingly valued surface over substance. To underscore his interest in this superficiality, Warhol exclaims, "I love Los Angeles. I love Hollywood. They're beautiful. Everybody's plastic, but I love plastic. I want to be plastic."[30]

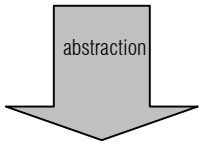
However, despite this signature superficiality and flatness, the layering of abstractions, and diluted details, those distinguishing characteristics that define the subject-as-object still remain. In this specific case, Warhol has retained and celebrated Marilyn Monroe's iconic features. The full pouted lips, the arched brow, the blonde hair and the mole are all present in the print and distinguish the otherwise relatively generic object. May we conclude these characteristics have commodified Marilyn Monroe with a branded identity of sorts, not dissimilar to the golden arches of McDonald's or the trademark insignia of Louis Vitton luggage? In Art in the Age of Mass Media, 1994, John A. Walker concurs, equating Warhol, who affirms those capitalist values of a free-market America, to the socialist realist artists of the Soviet Union who affirm the official values of their own regime. Walker

[29] Collin Rowe, "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal," The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989) 160-166.

defines Warhol's approach as "capitalist realism," for first taking the commodity as his object of scrutiny, and secondly for further "commodifying the commodity" by abstracting the subject into a mere image of a Popular conception.[31]

Let us explore this further by considering the iconographic qualities of the Marilyn Monroe screen-print as products of this abstraction process. The levels of abstraction (from subject to object) might be described in this manner:

(1) **Subject** (the person, Norma Jean)



(2) **Public Image** (the celebrity, Marilyn Monroe)

(3) **Popular image of the public image** (Warhol's screen print, representing only those qualities society remembers and recognizes as distinctly "Marilyn")

Jean Baudrillard further elaborates on these steps, defining four steps in the abstraction of the reality. He outlines this simulation process as (1) a reflection of basic reality; (2) a mask of basic reality; (3) a mask of the *absence of* basic reality, resulting in (4) no relationship with the former reality. In other

[30] "Andy Warhol's Famous Quotes,"(July 2003): Princeofpop.com, 09 Sep. 2003 <http://www.princeofpop.com/>
[31] John A. Walker, Art in the Age of Mass Media (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) 45.

words, the subject aims to achieve its own simulation. Baudrillard concludes these simulations, prevalent in the Media, art, and Pop Culture itself, have confused reality with fiction, creating "a new cultural hyperreality"[32]—a notion we will explore later as an inspiration for architectural hyperspace.

Subsequently, Roy Lichtenstein's ben-day dot paintings might also achieve similar goals as Warhol's screen-prints. Lichtenstein's work most likely celebrates what was automatic in his images of inspiration: starbursts signify explosions, balloons contain dialogue and thought, streaks imply movement, and the ben-day dots suggest the very simulation of comic image production. Silvio Gaggi argues that in Lichtenstein's "Hopeless," 1963, the subject is not the *young girl,* but rather, the subject is the *image* of the young girl. Furthermore, Gaggi continues, if we accept that the painting is an image of an image, then the depiction is not a stereotypical depiction but a *depiction of a stereotype*. Perhaps this painting may then be considered a parody of an implied *meta-painting* or inner-image contained within a larger, framing work—a comic book image within an image. To frame this meta-painting, and in substitution of a literal frame within a frame, Lichtenstien most likely adopts a critical distance to the subject without which, Gaggi

*Hopeless,*1963
Roy Lichtenstein

[32] John A. Walker, Art in the Age of Mass Media (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) 122.

concludes, the work would not be a parody of an implied painting, but rather an imitation of a former work or convention.[33]

1.3 Elevating the Object

As Warhol and Lichtenstien presumably *preserve* and ultimately expose the object's manufactured identity, Claes Oldenburg, along with Coosje van Bruggen, seems to *transform* the familiar object by a process of visual free-association perhaps resulting in a commentary on commodity fetishism. Most likely, Oldenburg chooses commonplace subjects, such as household items, which seem to have been formerly obscured by their own familiarity and domesticity. Therefore, the artist ironically uses the term "monument" in his writings since his non-heroic subjects blatantly diverge from traditional conceptions of civic sculpture.[34] As in "Plug," 1970, or "Trowel I,"1976. Oldenburg elevates the commonplace by changing the

Plug, 1970
Oberlin College, Ohio
Claes Oldenburg

***Trowel** 1*, 1976
Otterlo, the Netherlands
Claes Oldenburg

[33] Silvio Gaggi, Modern/Postmodern: A Study in Twentieth-Century Arts and Ideas (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) 59-60.

[34] Julie Springer, "Claes Oldenburg: Making the Ordinary Extraordinary," School Arts Jan. 1999: 31.

object's physical setting, material and scale. Through these alterations, the viewer is forced to reconsider those attributes of the object taken for granted and jaded by everyday use. This dynamic duality between the everyday identity and the new represented identity is a phenomenon Oldenburg calls parallel realities. Once again, questioning the nature of reality becomes a motif in contemporary Pop Art.

Among Oldenburg's first monumental sculptures used to explore these parallel realities, "Geometric Mouse," 1969, was created in five sizes, ranging from an ear diameter of nine feet (scale X) to an ear diameter of six inches (scale D.) Derived from one of the most recognized icons in American Pop Culture—Mickey Mouse—the colossal scale Oldenburg gives the monument most likely represents the icon's virility through the sculpture's physical size. Due to its black color, the smaller scale C version lacks depth, achieving a Warhol-like flatness—emphasizing the linear and planar qualities of the work. Furthermore, the similarities in form between Mickey Mouse and an old-fashioned film camera are commented on by the eyes, which, operating as shutters, are represented by old-fashioned window shades.[35]

Geometric Mouse—Scale A, 1969
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
Claes Oldenburg

[35] Julie Springer, "Claes Oldenburg: Making the Ordinary Extraordinary," School Arts Jan. 1999: 31.

Oldenburg's interest in commodity fetishism via the elevation of objects might be explained by Jaques Lacan's central analysis in his "Seminar XI." While Lacan specifically addresses Georgia O'Keeffe's "Red Canvas," the dynamic Lacan explores between the object and the viewer might also apply to Oldenburg's work. Lacan asserts that the object becomes an alien "thing," the viewer becomes another kind of thing, and the relationship between these two things is the phenomenon known as the "gaze." According to this theory, objects not only receive the gaze, but also gaze back upon the viewer. Lacan states:

> On the side of things, there is the gaze, that is to say, things look at me, and yet I see them. This is how one should understand those words, so strongly stressed, in the Gospel, 'They have eyes that they might not see.' That they might not see what? Precisely, that things are looking at them" [36]

From Lacan's viewpoint, visible objects are not spread out statically before a dynamic and controlling eye to gather. Rather, Lacan asserts that the eye that is controlled by these objects—it becomes the recipient of a vision that dynamically shows itself. Most likely, Oldenburg uses this dynamic treatment of the subject, evidenced at very least by its imposing scale, to monumentalize an object otherwise camouflaged by its own Popular familiarity. Therefore, the artwork might be considered an object with a subject, an object representing a subject's way of looking, which temporarily coincides with ours.

1.4 Criticisms of the Media

A more contemporary example of sculptural Pop Art, "A Mighty Blow for Freedom…Fuck the Media," 1988, may be considered a literal and explicitly antagonistic response to mass media

[36] Peter Schwenger, "Red Cannas, sardine cans and the gaze of the object," Mosaic (Winnipeg) 35.3 (2002).

culture—an outright rejection of the Media and its power to manipulate opinion and distort reality. Here, Micheal Sandle starts with the logo of a film company as the structure of the sculpture. Instead of the man hitting a gong in the logo, the subject is equipped with a bludgeon shattering a television set. As Lichtenstein used lines to emphasize movement and speed, Sandle here emphasizes the violent swing with an arc-like line of motion resulting in a collision of the bludgeon and the T.V. John A. Walker, however criticizes this work, claiming Sandle's approach is clear in his resentment, but does not clarify the motivations of his violent resentment.[37]

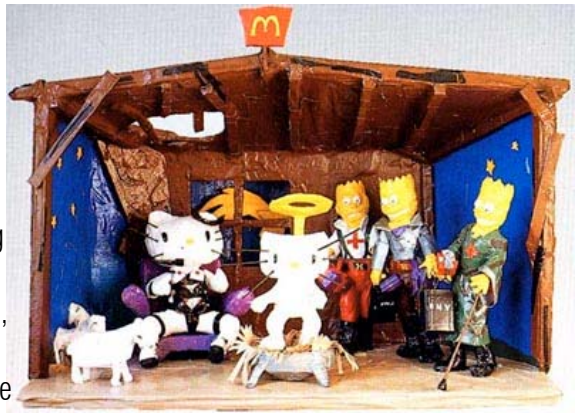
A Mighty Blow for Freedom…Fuck the Media
Milton Keynes, England, 1988
Micheal Sandle

Paparazzi
Milton Keynes, England, 1996*i*
Steven Gregory

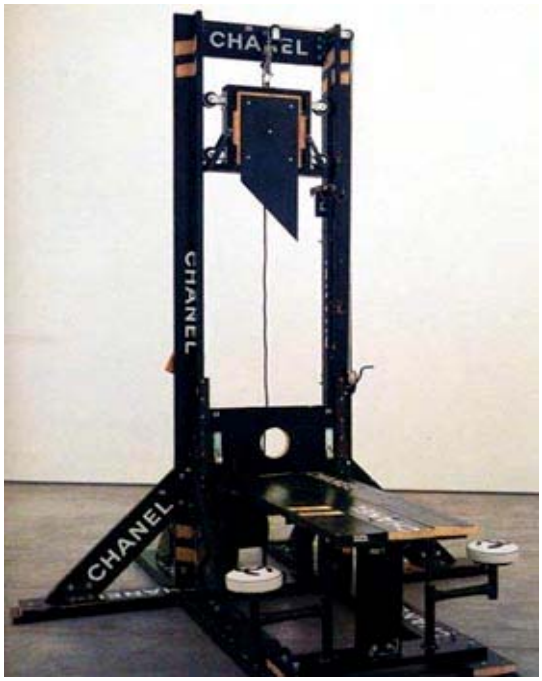
Compared to Sandle's sculpture, Steven Gregory's installation "Paparazzi" is a more implicit criticism of this mass media. Perhaps influenced by the untimely death of Princess Diana in 1996, the menacing bronze cameras-heads with legs are placed around the plaza as if stalking about, like

[37] John A. Walker, Art in the Age of Mass Media (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) 15.

vultures, in search of potential victims to both immortalize and dehumanize with one click of their heads. Whereas Warhol suppressed the more human qualities of his ***subjects***, Gregory attempts to dehumanize the ***viewer***, by reversing Warhol's common celebrity representation, establishing the viewer on the **other** side of the glossy photographs and tabloid headlines that line supermarket shelves and infiltrate nightly television programs. Gregory's critique on this pursuit of celebrity through the countenance of the rich and famous, is enhanced by the sculptures' placements in the plaza—on the periphery, half-hidden behind plantings, and around blind corners. This lends a sinister covertness to the installation, perhaps intended to startle viewer upon approach, as the title suggests.



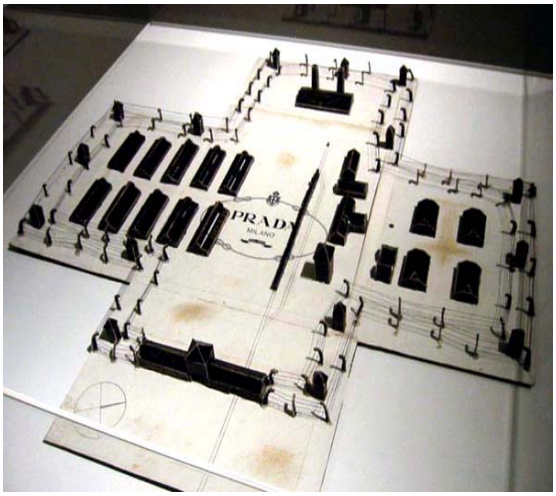
Hello Kitty Nativity, 1994
Tom Sachs



Chanel Guillotine *1998*
Tom Sachs

Influenced with branding and advertising and their roles in contemporary society, Tom Sachs takes a more literal attack in his criticism. To explore this notion, Sachs attaches common trademark

symbols to more reverent imagery, as in his "Hello Kitty Nativity," 1994 and "Chanel Guillotine,"1998. This notion is also explored in Sachs' controversial "Prada Deathcamp" about which the artist comments, "Fashion, like fascism, is about loss of identity." [38] The artist's approach to political statement mirrors the promotional tactics publicists use to market products. Advertising today exists on vehicles, sides of buildings and even in the names of civic centers and stadiums, with little regard to the object upon which the logo or trademark is attached. As Jennifer Saunders of the BBC exclaimed, "The great institution of P. R. … has taken everything sacred and natural and holy and cherished in the world and attached it to a toilet cleaner."[39] Sachs' art illustrates through hyperbole this very approach.



Prada Deathcamp, 2000
Tom Sachs

[38] "Jewish Museum creates a stir; Exhibit takes unusual tack in explaining the Holocaust," The Washington Times 14 Mar. 2002: A07.

[39] Dawn French, Lifestyle, Glamour and Gloss (New York: Queensgate Press, 1994) 32.

1.5 Chapter Review

Exploring celebrities, icons, common objects, and the mass media, Pop Art investigates those aspects of everyday life, with which the hoi polloi can identify and relate. The alienation of the subject achieved by Warhol's celebrity screen prints and Lichtenstein's ben day dot paintings represents the final stage in a series of abstractions. This objectifies the subject, resulting in an image within a larger, framing image—an image of an image. Inspired by commodity fetishism, Oldenburg elevates the commonplace object by altering its physical setting, materiality and scale to underscore those attributes of the object which have been obscured by its own familiarity. Blatantly critical of the Media and its influence on contemporary society, Michael Sandle's work encourages us to reject mass media and the values it panders. Furthermore, Steven Gregory's installation "Paparazzi" places the viewer on the opposite side of the tabloids, startling the viewer with half-hidden lurking camera-heads invading the privacy of the innocent on-looker. Finally, comparing fashion to fascism, Tom Sachs repeats the very process of advertising in late capitalism, in that the artist randomly layers common trademark symbols and logos upon more reverent, solemn and sometimes sacred imagery. Consequently, through these various approaches to Pop Art, we achieve a deeper understanding of the Pop Culture that pervades late capitalist life. What therefore is the nature of this late capitalism critiqued upon so fervently in Pop Art? How does our culture respond to this increasing commodification? Ultimately, how can architecture?

Chapter Two:
Pop Culture and the Commodity

"I met someone on the street who said wasn't it great that we're going to have a movie star for president, that it was so Pop, and (laughs) when you think about it like that, it is great, it's so American."[40]

--Andy Warhol, 1980

[40] "Andy Warhol's Famous Quotes,"(July 2003): Princeofpop.com, 09 Sep. 2003 <http://www.princeofpop.com/>

2.1 Chapter Objectives

To better understand the role of Pop Culture in a late capitalist society and its affects on architecture, it is first necessary to distinguish and define "late capitalism" and its proponents. The past few decades of American culture have witnessed several benchmark shifts in most arenas of popular society. In the former section *Pop Culture and the Visual Arts*, we touched upon the socio-*cultural* changes characterizing the shift from modern to postmodern society as expressed through Pop Art. The coinciding socio-*economic* changes may be reflected in the recent shift from early capitalism, or a Fordist society, to late capitalism, or a Post-Fordist society. As these societal shifts become increasingly fluid, perhaps we may also better evaluate Pop Culture's representation of cultural plurality in architecture. To illustrate this, using the Westin Bonaventure Hotel as a model of "hyperspace," we will explore these socio-economic shifts as touchstone from which an architectural argument can derive.

2.2 Late Capitalism in American Culture

Capitalism in the early 1900's maximized profit with production according to very few organized class, gender and racial differences. Fortified by mass-production and mass distribution, the resultant commodity was general and adequately generic to appeal to multiple markets with a singular product. Consider McDonald's "Millions and Millions sold" slogan or Henry Ford's Model T, about which he stated, "You can have any color you want, as long as it's black."[41] Known as "Fordism," this philosophy developed as a homogenizing social force that attempted to erase any differences that might hinder a smooth circulation of commodities. Only after capitalism realized the need, or perhaps, the profit potential of market segmentation, demography emerges as a social

science, defining the crux of mid-capitalism. This segmentation used very distinct divisions such as class, gender, or race to tailor commodities for predetermined market groups. However, we might consider this first attempt at market segmentation as more of a cursory quantitative analysis of a culture rather than a qualitative response to a culture. The resulting predetermined market segments were divided by an "if this, then not that" black or white approach, dependent on stereotypes, to divide consumers and force them into insular preset consumer groups.

However, as the trend toward globalization increases, as indicated in the 2000 United States Census, this broadening mobile and migratory global society might experience an increasingly fluid social order. For instance, if demographic trends persist, no single racial group will constitute a statistical majority. Therefore, to define the culture of mass "Pop" for this dynamic state will demonstrate an increasing challenge for late capitalist demographers. John Fiske reports that the "casualty of such a mixture is the depletion of a so-called national culture" and since "culture is always a product of history," when histories become varied and multiple, the resultant culture becomes a layered hybrid of experience. [42]

As a response to this fluid cultural pluralism, capitalism and Pop Culture must once again reconsider its approach, favoring batch production for smaller market formations over the mass production popularized by early capitalism. However, Post- Fordist tendencies have redeveloped the black and white divisions of market segmentation to recognize the plurality and fluidity of contemporary social groups. Post-Fordism acknowledges that membership in one particular social group may or may not

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[41] Margarite Fostina, Free Modern Thinkers (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) 18.

[42]John Fiske, "Some Problems of Culture in a Postmodern World," Velvet Light Trap not cited.40 (1997): 57.

overlap membership in another. Consequently, the late capitalism of today's marketplace favors a trend toward "multiple, diverse, short-lived products produced for multiple, diverse and fluid markets."[43] Perhaps we may best view this evolution toward Post-Fordist theory by Figure 2a below.

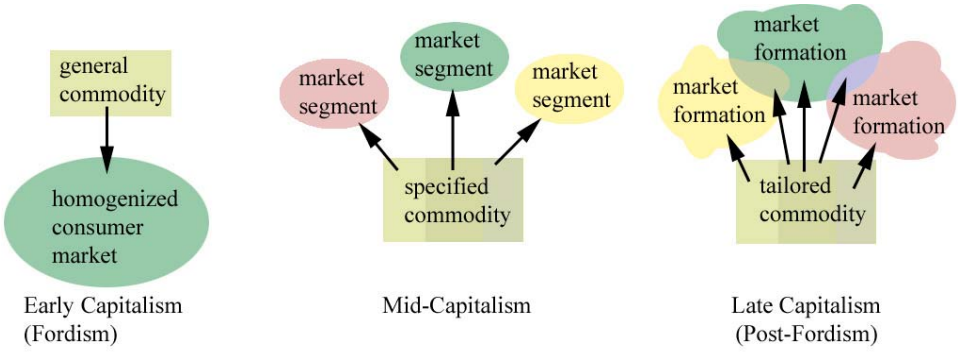

Figure 2a

Primary Shifts in Capitalist Ideals
Timothy Hall

John Fiske refers to these increasing minority social groups as "social formations" since they are constantly in process, reforming their boundaries, members and defining characteristics. However, is imperative to understand that these diverse social formations are naturally occurring phenomena, **not** market creations—it is the late capitalist **goal** to match each dynamic social formation with an appropriate *market* formation. Therefore, if late capitalism is successful in this strategy, and the production of commodities coincides with the marketing of identity, this might ultimately result in the commodification of people.[44] Similarly, one can argue that it might result in the commodification of architecture.

[43] John Fiske, "Some Problems of Culture in a Postmodern World," Velvet Light Trap not cited.40 (1997): 63.

2.3 Creating Place for a "Placeless" Culture

Is it therefore logical to postulate that the architectural industry of a postmodern (and consequently Post-Fordist) society, under the same late capitalist parameters for its "production of space,"[45] is no less subject to an increasingly commodified and culturally plural market environment? If so, how does architecture acknowledge this paradigm, and what are its implications? If not, can architecture afford to deny the cultural shifts explored above, perhaps relinquishing power to the developers and financiers who, in jostling for authority over the built environment, may freely explore the possibilities of late capitalism?

To address the first question, we will compare Lucy Lippard's arguments in The Lure of the Local: Sences of Place in a Multicentered Society, 1997, with the late capitalist struggle to reconcile a socially fragmented culture. Lippard contends that since our perceptions of identity are rooted to place and history, and America's cultural plurality is symptomatic of the placement, replacement and displacement of social groups, the resultant cultural plurality exacerbates man's struggle to locate himself within a defining cultural context. Consequently, from this rift between man and his context (or place), we might explore contemporary man's disconnection with history and nature, his spiritual depletion, and his very alienation from a sense of self and wholeness. We also might underscore Lippard's arguments as Heideggarian in influence, since Martin Heidegger's notions of dwelling and place recognized the existential "homelessness" (or placelessness) of contemporary existence. Moreover, Lippard challenges late capitalism's attempts toward segmentation, claiming the notion of

[44] John Fiske, "Global, National, Local? Some Problems of Culture in a Postmodern World," Velvet Light Trap not cited.40 (1997): 59-63.

[45] John Fiske, 62.

"place" has become generic and commodified to better accommodate the expansion of capitalism through the abstraction of space, further alienating the human from his "place", and ultimately, his sense of self. Lippard's remedy for this has been criticized as "a vision that favors the 'return' to a vernacular, non-urban sociality of small-scale spaces and face-to-face exchanges."[46]

Lippard's reply to late capitalist culture provides a somewhat negative tone that most likely captures contemporary man's disillusionment with his environment. However, through the author's distress over the "placelessness" of contemporary culture, could Lippard's response in rectifying this distress be lacking in its concessions for the realities of contemporary life? Lippard seems to advocate, with substantial reason, face-to-face exchanges over digital interface, local specificity over commodified environments, and a return to the pedestrian main street instead of the strip malls of suburbia. However, in Lippard's zeal to reconstruct the vision of a bygone past, her otherwise cohesive response seems to under-address the ramifications of *recent* history. In the context of this late capitalist culture, cyber technology, "hyperreality" (discussed later) and the suburban infrastructure, are only a few inevitable realities from which the architect cannot escape. Therefore, *despite the appeal* one might regard in the sentimentality of Lippard's work, the feasibility of such an archi-cultural revolution might require more efforts than architecture alone can muster. Can architecture completely re-direct the overwhelming socio-cultural trend toward a commodified and hyperreal existence? Can public space produce inter-personal exchange, or is face-to-face interaction diminishing, regardless of the space provided for it? Perhaps we've just brushed against another attribute of the postmodern sensibility—perhaps architecture, even with the best of intentions, must

[46]Miwon Kwon, "The Wrong Place," Art Journal 59.1 (2000): 33, Questia, 5 Nov. 2003 <http://www.questia.com/>.

first reconcile its own ideology with the existing cultural parameters to influence change. In other words, if a society needs a cultural change, perhaps architecture should first work within the cultural reality to *expose the need for change*, before suggesting the alternatives, or the "ideal." Does this approach oppose the presumed modernist ideal of attempting revolutionary change upon a culture that might not be considered ready for it? John A. Walker concurs, claiming:

> "Some [Modernists] were inspired by utopian visions… and wished to sweep away the old in order to create a brave new environment which would in itself improve human behavior. They saw themselves as experts who knew best, and as a consequence tended to impose their architectural and town planning solutions on the masses without regard to popular tastes, and without any consultation." [47]

2.4 Hyperspace: Articulating Late Capitalist Culture

Therefore, if we do choose to embrace and work within these new cultural paradigms, what are their implications on architecture? First we will define the notion of architectural hyperspace with respect to late capitalist conditions and a reflection of new cyber-realities. Then we will consider the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, since it has been critiqued as a "historically unprecedented experience of hyperspace that, for [Fredric] Jameson, serves as an emblematic instance of the originality of postmodern space."[48] Perhaps through this discourse on the Bonaventure Hotel, we might better understand this notion of hyperspace and its role in the contemporary environment.

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[47] John A. Walker, Art in the Age of Mass Media (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) 88.
[48] Miwon Kwon, "The Wrong Place," Art Journal 59.1 (2000): 33.

Hyperspace

According to Columbia University's Casualties of Culture, 1998, the term "hyperspace" refers to the difficulty of locating clear boundaries within social groups, nations, peoples, races, genders or even physical objects and space. This difficulty we have already explored in terms of the cultural pluralities of the marketplace, defined previously as Post-Fordism. We have also discussed contemporary man's philosophical need to locate himself within an increasingly obscure and "placeless" society. Therefore, hyperspace may be viewed as architecture's expression of a culture whose vague social boundaries and plural market environment have heightened man's struggle to define himself. Consequently, architectural hyperspace's digital counterpart, "cyberspace"—the realm where digital information is stored, processed and shared with billions of people—eliminates the need of geographical space altogether. Ironically, cyberspace, in its inclusiveness to express all possible ideas about any subject has created an arena in which one may become lost, misguided, and bewildered in one's quest for answers. Likewise, some architectural projects, in their zeal to construct mega-block structures, underground cities and super malls, to maximize consumer choice, can easily "displace and alienate the user by the very size, scale and interior navigational dilemmas such a… colossal project requires."[49] To examine how exactly the hyperspacial effect can achieve a perceived sense of this potentially confusing totality, we will now examine John Portman's Westin Bonaventure Hotel.

Westin Bonaventure Hotel

The Bonaventure seems to embrace the notion of placelessness, first by its connection, or rather, *dis*connection to the ground and its surroundings. From the Third Street approach, the building

appears to be floating above the urban fabric below, as a hovering space ship, further accentuated by its shiny cylindrical towers. This seemingly dissimulating perception is also emphasized by the mirror-like quality of the curved glass exterior that appears to visually repel the city outside. Jameson's central analysis concludes that this achieves a "placeless dissociation of the Bonaventure from its neighborhood: it is not even an exterior, inasmuch as when you seek to look at the hotel's outer walls you cannot see the hotel itself but only the distorted images of everything that surrounds it." [50] Therefore, if we recall the previously discussed social fragmentation and plurality, the social commentary on cultural disorientation becomes a bit clearer.

Hovering above the ground
Westin Bonaventure Hotel
Photo by G.K. Graphics, 1998

Reflecting/ repelling the outsideworld
Westin Bonaventure Hotel
Photo by G.K. Graphics, 1998

Disorientation is further explored by the seemingly disconcerting spatial immersion once inside. The three unceremonious, unhierarchial entranceways

[49] "Hyperspace," Casualties of a Culture. (New York: Columbia University, 1998) 4.
[50] Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992) 42.

lead to a virtual maze of corridors, stairs and escalators before arriving at the front desk and the lobby atrium. Traditional notions of spatial organization and circulation seem to dissolve, along with the human body's ability to locate itself within this "total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city." [51] Therein, perhaps the building has achieved the first goal of hyperspace: possibly, to disconnect the environment so thoroughly from its surroundings, perceptually, functionally and symbolically, to both achieve a completely insulated environment, and bewilder the human enough to accept it.

Surfaces upon surfaces
Interior Lobby, Westin Bonaventure Hotel
Photo by R. T. Tucker, P2000

Perhaps the resultant interior environment, insulated from external influence, becomes a type of blank slate, through which the Bonaventure continues its social commentary. Jameson comments on the streamers hanging in the lobby as a systematic approach to distract and obscure a full spatial understanding of the space, while its concurrent sense of visual busyness distracts from the otherwise cavernous void of the interior space. Furthermore, Jameson claims there is no vista point from which to understand the depth of the space—the visual cues in the environment read as surfaces upon surfaces. Perhaps now we might glimpse at possible parallels between Warhol's

[51] Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992) 42.

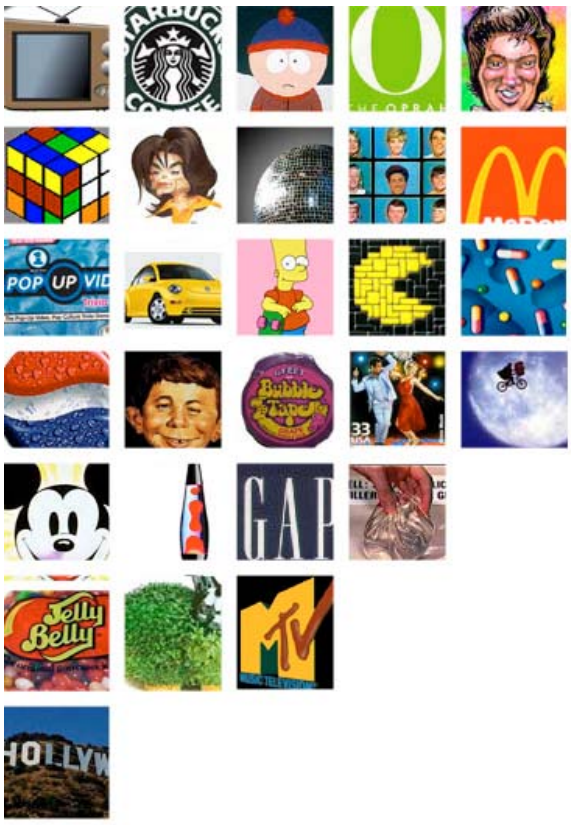
celebrity screen prints, discussed in the previous chapter, and the Westin Bonaventure Hotel. The use of layering to suppress depth, the use of visual busyness to conceal and fill emptiness, and the superficial surface flatness are all similarities we might hypothesize between the Bonaventure Hotel and Warhol's print of Marylin Monroe.

2.5 Chapter Review

Popular American culture continues to be strongly influenced by the forces of its engulfing economic system. We have seen how Late Capitalist and Post-Fordist theory realized the need to produce for specified and fluid social formations, and the resultant plethora of choices flooded the marketplace with goods produced for specific identities, and identities created for specific goods. These identity creations, Fiske concluded, could ultimately result in the commodification of people, as contemporary man struggles with the development *and purchase power* of his own identity.[52] This, combined with the individual's difficulty to pinpoint his philosophical identity in a culturally plural society, further exacerbates man's struggle to place himself within an increasingly "placeless" culture. Therefore, we might conclude that the market response to this need has begun to sell the intangible—the identity—by attaching emotion, status and individuality to batch-produced inanimate objects, which becomes overwhelmingly evident in any television or print media advertisement. Continuing with that motivation, we could possibly we can begin to accept this culture's fascination in treating the body as a commodity, further augmented by the new means of physical malleability, including plastic surgery, BOTOX injections, body piercing or even hair coloring. Furthermore, as society becomes increasingly focused with the pursuit and purchase of

[52] John Fiske, "Global, National, Local? Some Problems of Culture in a Postmodern World," Velvet Light Trap not cited.40 (1997): 59-63.

identity, architecture echoes this quest through the development of hyperspatial constructs, as seen in the Westin Bonaventure Hotel. Therein, man's ability to physically locate himself within a purposefully disorienting environment is diminished. Layered with visuals, and designed to ensure that a total and holistic spatial understanding can never be reached from within, the hotel reflects one's inability to absolutely locate himself within the built work, or, quite possibly, society as a whole.



Chapter Three:
Pop Culture and the Built Environment

"The further west we drove, the more 'Pop' everything looked on the highways… even though Pop was everywhere… to us, it was the new Art. Once you 'got' Pop, you could never wee a sign the same way again. And once you thought Pop, you could never see America the same way again."[53]

--Andy Warhol, 1966

[53] "Andy Warhol's Famous Quotes,"(July 2003): Princeofpop.com, 09 Sep. 2003 <http://www.princeofpop.com/>

3.1 Chapter Objectives

In this section we will consider some of Pop Culture's more direct influences on the built environment, focusing on car culture, suburban culture, and architectural design, respectively. The primary questions to be investigated will be (1) Can we describe suburbia as a Pop Cultural phenomenon that uses transportation as a catalyst for new ways of building? (2) How does Pop Culture propagate the suburban lifestyle through the Media? (3) What conclusions from *Pop Culture and the Visual Arts* and *Pop Culture and the Commodity* are evident in architectural design?

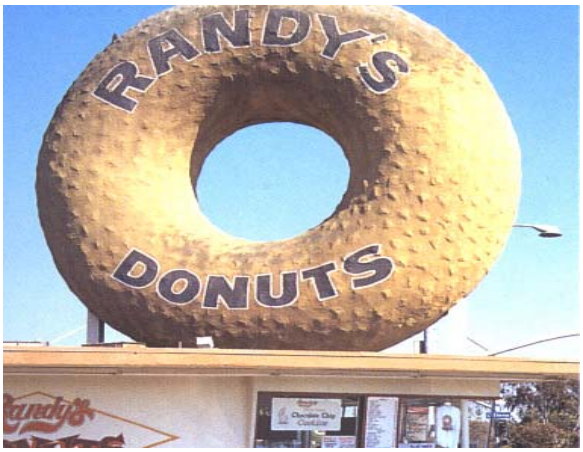
3.2 Car Culture

Perhaps one of the most important Pop Cultural contributions to urban design could be the influence of the automobile. The iconic status of the automobile and its car culture milieu might be investigated as a singular controlling force in the built environment. Therefore, we will address this question: If Pop Culture has encouraged car culture through media propaganda and other means, and if car culture can be described a catalyst for the built suburban environment, then may we conclude that the suburban environment is a direct descendant of Pop Cultural ideals?

In the 1920s, tire manufacturers, oil companies and other automobile industry supporters lobbied successfully for large motor highways funded by government tax revenues. Since the mass transit lines of the era were privately held interests, the subsidized road system quickly enveloped the American countryside and lead to the demise of most mass transportation companies. Those

companies that did survive were eventually bought up by domestic car companies and dismantled. Even those highways which were intended to bring life to the city via road access, such as the Pasedena Freeway that was planned to bring shoppers downtown, had the reverse affect and took more residences to the suburbs.[54] The Popular notion to decentralize had finally overcome planning strategy and most likely with the increasingly affordable car, the means to do so had availed itself to the majority of the middle-class population. Furthermore, according to American Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality, 2002, as road-side real estate became available, billboards, other signage and the building-as-sign building philosophy began to dominate the suburban landscape in efforts to entice drivers-by from a distance. Robert Venturi refers to this architecturally as the "decorated shed" theory in which the building form, colors, logo and signage motifs all serve as an

Roadside spectacle
Pann's 50's style Diner
Photo By: S Kanner, 1997



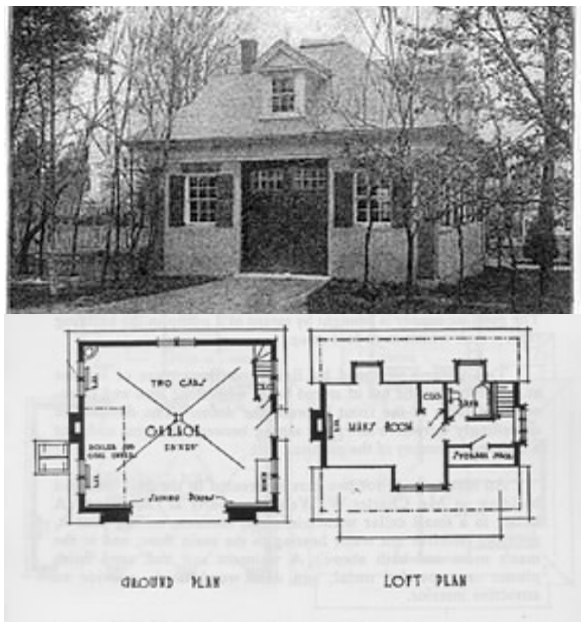
Roadside spectacle
Randy's Donuts
Photo By: S. Kanner, 1997

Roadside spectacle
Photo By: S. Kanner, 1997

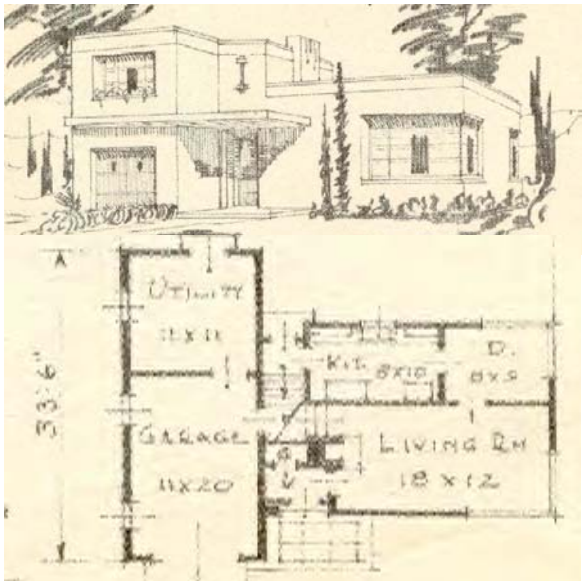
[54] Myron Orfield, American Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002) 16.

advertisement—both explicitly and *implicitly* for the products sold within.[55]

To accommodate this newfound dependence on automobiles, several new building types were needed. Created as a toy for the wealthy, cars were first kept in stables, far away from the main dwelling. However, as increased numbers began to rely on this vehicle as their sole mode of transportation, the garage emerged as a detached structure specifically designed for the automobile, until the early 1940s's when progressive houses began to feature attached garages as a necessity for modern life[56]. Drive-in theatres and restaurants and the gas station/ convenience store combination also emerged as a mainstay of modern America, to most likely to serve the increasing car-driving population as a result of a rejection to the urban pedestrian city. The



Garage Outbuilding with Loft, 1923
From "Garages and Motor Boat Houses"

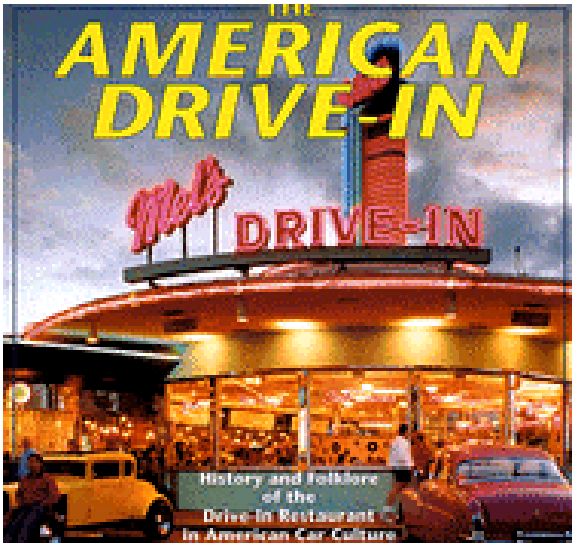


Suburban Home, 1941
From "Sketchbook of Vintage House Plans",1987

[55] Myron Orfield, American Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002) 27.

[56]Gregg L. Canter Sketchbook of Vintage Houseplans (Chicago, Newcommons Press, 1987) 43.

interstate highway system most likely also brought about the need for the road-side motel, and the shopping strip center appeared as a service to the increasing suburban population, with its large banks of parking surrounded by retail services, all contained within the area of a city block. Through an exploration of these architectural building types as a response to Popular car culture, creating new architectural building types for "post-modernity" might be facilitated.



The American Drive-In, Cover
By: Micheal Carl Wright, 2002

3.3 Suburban Culture in the Media

In addition to the car culture propagated by Pop Cultural means, more direct connections of media propaganda and the suburban lifestyle might also be made. Therefore, we will view some of the Popular media promoting the suburban lifestyle, ranging from early nineteenth century domestic manuals to contemporary television shows. To do so, we will address the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing and Catharine Beecher as predecessors to the more current promoters of suburban culture today.

More than one hundred years before media mogul Martha Stewart propagated the joys of household entertaining, handcrafted decorating, cooking and housekeeping, Andrew Jackson Downing portrayed what the countryman's house should be in The Architecture of Country Houses, published first in

1850. Downing's focus on the country house (the word "country" here meaning separated, as opposed to the "attached" town house) questioned this nation's current residences and gave new alternatives for housing in a rural or semi-rural setting. Perhaps it was the earlier bucolic vision of Thomas Jefferson's America that inspired this analysis of semi-rural living in all its forms, be it a farmhouse, cottage or villa. Among these, the farmhouse is most likely reflective of the Jeffersonian ideal of a nation of self-sustaining farms. Downing approaches the suburban cottage as a distinct art form, which had previously been designed as tiny English mansions with reproduced and inappropriate ornamentation, and climatic-insensitive design. [57] Throughout his writings, Downing maintains that a significant, fitting and tasteful semi-rural dwelling is an important means by which to signify a nation's education, prosperity, and progress. The social value of the individual home also seems to be emphasized, with great importance placed on the home as an extension of self, an outlet for individualism, and a container for the base root of all society: the family.[58]

Expanding on Downing's position, Catharine Beecher's nineteenth-century domestic manuals gave advice on running the proper suburban home, with such titles *as Proper Hours for Rising and Retiring* and *Economical use of Nutmegs*. In the 1840's, Beecher gained national fame from her book Treatise on Domestic Economy, in which Beecher disparages the city with its evils and industry and claims "family life can best survive in a semi-rural setting."[59] Ultimately, the writings of Catharine Beecher may be considered handbooks for the achievement of an intangible—the Christian home—

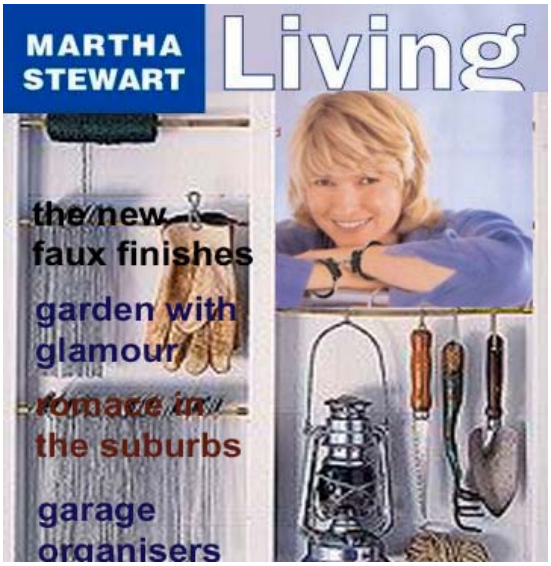
[57] Andrew Jackson Downing. The Architecture of Country Houses. New York: Da Capo Press, 1968, 14-30.

[58] Andrew Jackson Downing, 14-30.

[59] Nicole Tonkovich, Domesticity with a Difference: The Nonfiction of Catharine Beecher (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997) 26.

by tangible means - clean floors and proper ventilation. The woman of the house, by her work and by her supervision of the servants, determines the moral character of the suburban home.

Remnants of these suburban ideals may be reflected in Pop Culture today, as the do-it-yourself mentality has encouraged the suburban homeowner to develop and define his own space by his own means. This might be evidenced in the icon status of Martha Stewart, whose "Living" magazine and television show promote methods of decorating, cooking and gardening within the suburban or rural setting. The explosive popularity of home-improvement television shows like "Trading Spaces" and networks like HGTV (Home and Garden Television) and DIY (the Do It Yourself network) most likely also reflect these ideals. Additionally, the successes of home-improvement mega-stores such as Home Depot and Lowes provide the middle-class homeowner the *means* to complete a project, as well as the *need* to watch the domesticated television described above.



Living Magazine, Cover
Martha Stewart, 2002

Perpetuating the Suburban Dream
Home Depot print ad, 1999

3.4 Conclusions for Architectural Design

To underscore the cultural influences we have discussed in this and previous chapters, we will now directly observe some architectural manifestations of Popular Culture. To do so, we will first look at John A. Walker's argument contrasting the tenets of Modern architecture against the Pop Cultural influences that are possibly reflected in so-called Post Modernism. Next we will examine the flagship design for In-N-Out Burgers, 1997, as a result of these sensibilities, car culture, and the building-as-sign philosophy. Finally, we will conclude with works characterized as "Signature Architecture" by Frank Gehry and Robert Venturi, that most likely also exemplify this building-as-sign motif, as well as other Pop Cultural conclusions made throughout this thesis.

In "Cultural Pluralism and Post-Modernism," John A. Walker attempts to define the Post Modern sensibility as one that works within the bounds of Popular Culture, as opposed to the Modern sensibility which, he claims, focused on utopian ideals without regard to Popular taste. To understand this argument, we will first step back and summarize Walker's conclusions on Modernism. Walker claims that Modernists resisted the sentimentality and historicism of the academic art of the nineteenth century, and rejected the eclecticism of Victorian design, since the machine age demanded a new style based upon the engineering principles of technology. Since Modernism had initiated a break with the past, Walker explains that novelty and innovation, without regard to history and tradition, allowed architects to "reject what has gone before." [60] Perhaps we might interject that this rejection of tradition became a tradition in itself, leading Harold Rosenberg to describe Modernism as a "tradition of the new." [61] Walker also addresses the modernist rejection of

[60] John A. Walker,"Cultural Pluralism and Post Modernism" (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) 88.
[61] John A. Walker, 88.

ornamentation, claiming Modernism regarded such superfluous building decoration as uncivilized as the body tattooing of primitive cultures. Walker claims most Modernists rejected regional and vernacular styles, in favor of the International Style, since the "tenets of Modernism were universally acceptable." [62] Finally, Walker concludes Modernist architecture was inspired by utopian and socialist visions, aimed at developing the ideal environment, with little regard to the capitalist system or other relevant Pop Cultural influences.

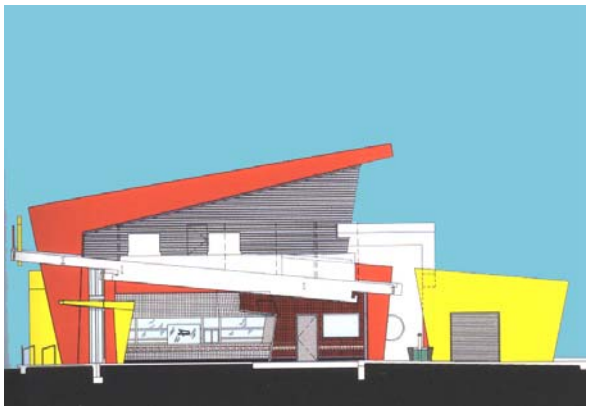
If Walker's conclusion here is correct and the Modern movement developed without regard to Popular Culture, can we characterize its reaction, called here *Post Modernism* as expressive of some Pop influence? To investigate, we should consider Walker's description of Post-Modernist ideals, with respect to the Pop Cultural concerns of this thesis. Just as the Modern heavily favored one style for the modern age, we could possibly describe Post Modernism as a plurality of styles, most likely reflective of today's increasing cultural diversity and plurality. Walker agrees, claiming that Post Modernism exhibits no one particular style— eclecticism, hybrids of old and new styles, and the recycling and parody of older styles are now acceptable. New ornamentation, according to Walker, further supports this plurality and also attempts to break up the Modern façade to a more human scale. Furthermore, we might conclude that Post Modernism values an ambiguity of styles over the simplicity and purity of Modern architecture. Walker explains that the mixture of high and low culture—fine art and commercial art—encourages an architecture with multiple meanings, capable of "pleasing different audiences with different levels of sophistication and knowledge." [63] Walker finally concludes that Post Modernism tends to view architecture as a language of sign systems

[62] John A. Walker,"Cultural Pluralism and Post Modernism" (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) 88.
[63] John A. Walker, 88.

capable of communicating messages with ornament, bright color, form, etc. Perhaps we might see examples of this communication—be it humor, social commentary, satire, or even playfulness—in the architectural examples that follow.

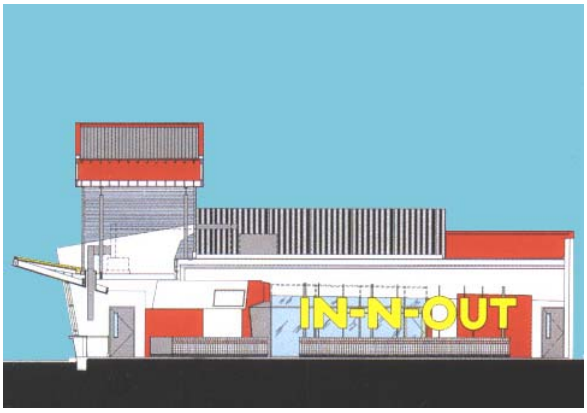
In this chapter, we first traced the evolution of car culture and briefly addressed how architecture responded to this culture as it developed. To illustrate just how a contemporary architectural design can derive from these influences, we will now look at the design for the Los Angeles fast food chain, In-N-Out Burger, 1997, by Kanner Architects. We might view this design as a contemporary interpretation of car culture, the fast food craze, and the *building-as-sign* architectural philosophy. According to the architects, the catalyst for the design was the company logo, from which the architects generated a three-dimensional expression of the In-N-Out Burger sign. In the attached images, we can see this similar form used throughout—in the wall and roof forms, as well as the entrance and drive-thru booth. Also, the company's corporate colors—

In-N-Out Burger Logo
Photo By: Timothy Hall, 2002



East-West Section, In-N-Out Burger
By: S. Kanner, 1997

yellow, red and white—are used inside and out. In addition, the architects' goal was to pay homage to the roadside diners that dotted the Los Angeles landscape in the fifties and sixties.[64] We might see this in the use of the dynamic forms and materials that characterized the interest in space-age technology and futurism of that specific era. Charles and Stephen Kanners' work here has been critiqued as:



South Elevation, In-N-Out Burger
By: S. Kanner, 1997

> "A contemporary interpretation of drive-by architecture, featuring strong sculptural forms, each defining a different function… Each [façade] makes a strong connection with the street. Despite its boldness, the design is contextual, tying with the neighboring commercial strip and very much in keeping with the nearby gas stations, also expressive of car culture."[65]

South Entry, In-N-Out Burger
Photo By: Mark Lohman, 1997

The philosophy of building-as-sign might be more literally considered in Frank Gehry's Chiat Day Headquarters, 1991. In *Pop Culture and the Visual Arts*, we discussed the elevation of the object

[64] Frances Anderton, Pop Architecture Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 40.

popularized by Claes Oldenburg's monumental sculptures. Oldenburg's collaboration with Frank Gehry on this project has been criticized as "essentially an exercise in Pop Art applied to a conventional, territorially hierarchical office building."[66] Just as Kanner Architects used the In-N-Out Burger logo to transform the building into a billboard, we could possibly consider Gehry's use of the iconic binoculars as an external billboard for the corporate entity within. We might also see this same approach in Gehry's Molecular Sciences building in which the massing seems to be evocative of a molecular structure itself.

Chiat Day Venice Headquaters, 1991
Designed by: Frank Gehry
Photo by: Coast Cards

Molecular Sciences Building, 1998
Designed by: Frank Gehry
Photo by: T. W. Hall

The use of iconography and form is also evident in several works by Robert Venturi. In his house for Vanna Venturi, 1964, we might describe the formal qualities of the work as abstractions of the Popular notions of "house", with the emphasized gable and chimney masses, the foursquare window, and the over-scaled entryway. We might

[65] Frances Anderton, Pop Architecture Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 1998) 40.
[66] Peter Wisloski, "Billboard Building," The Architectural Review, Nov. 1999.

therefore describe Venturi's work as an image (the interpretation of house) within a framing image (the Popular conception of house)-- an abstraction of a Popular impression. Furthermore, as we have described work by Warhol and Lichtenstein by similar means, it might be possible to view this project as an interpretation of the Pop Art of the time.

Vanna Venturi House 1964
Designed by: Robert Venturi
Photo by: Coast Cards

From these conclusions, and the conclusions in the previous chapters, we might create a basis from which to develop an architectural design thesis. Among other goals, such a thesis should attempt to (1) relate the influences of Pop Art to architectural design, as outlined in Chapter One. (2) Express the treatment of the body's identity as a malleable commodity, as explored in Chapter Two. (3) Draw upon the influences and precedents of car culture and suburbia explored in Chapter Three. Ultimately, the overall goal of the design thesis should attempt to synthesize these influences of Pop Culture with an architectural design, in an articulate and evocative fashion.

Chapter Four:
Plan of Work: Site and Program

"I love Los Angeles. I love Hollywood. They're beautiful. Everybody's plastic, but I love plastic. I want to be plastic." [67]

--Andy Warhol, 1981

[67] "Andy Warhol's Famous Quotes,"(July 2003): Princeofpop.com, 09 Sep. 2003 <http://www.princeofpop.com/>

4.1 Chapter Objectives

In this final section we will specifically address the architectural plan of work to explore the Pop Cultural notions addressed in the previous chapters. To do so, we will view the design portion of this thesis as a direct outgrowth of the issues we have discussed. Specifically, if Pop Culture has propagated image consciousness through the Media, thereby encouraging the means of physical malleability such as BOTOX, then perhaps Pop Culture's influence can lend itself to the design of a cosmetic procedure and maintenance center. Likewise, if Pop Culture has also propagated the use of the automobile, thereby encouraging the automobile-oriented building type, then perhaps this design could also incorporate car-friendly services, such as auto detailing, as an outgrowth of Popular conceptions. The resultant combination of cosmetic treatments for both the car and body would most likely be representative of the Pop Cultural phenomenon of defining who we are with what we drive. Ultimately, such a design would provide a place unique to cosmetic procedures—for both the car and man—and would reflect specific programmatic, spatial and architectural needs. Therefore, the resultant design project will be a cosmetic procedure/ auto-detailing center, considered for the site at 8605 Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood. To support these design selections, we will explore the site's neighborhood, the cultural body of Los Angeles, the various cosmetic procedures to be included, and the design's unique program requirements, respectively. As we will explore below, the selections of both the site and the building type are closely tied to Pop Cultural influence, and both might serve as fertile venues to explore several simultaneous conceptions of Pop Culture.

4.2 The Site

Building upon the issues of social fragmentation, image consciousness, suburban car culture, and the pursuit of celebrity, I chose the media hotbed of Los Angeles as a lab in which to explore these ideas. More specifically, the suburb of West Hollywood was chosen for its proximity to Hollywood and Beverly Hills. To understand the selection of this site, we will first address the neighborhood of West Hollywood, with respect to the proposed site, 8605 Santa Monica Boulevard, 90069. Expanding this investigation, we will explore the encompassing megalopolis, Los Angeles, supplemented by Mike Davis' qualitative analysis in City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles. This will ultimately explore those inherent qualities of Los Angeles that might be considered products of a Pop Cultural influence.

8605 Santa Monica Boulevard

Within Los Angeles, the proposed site for the cosmetic procedure/ auto-detailing clinic is located at 8605 Santa Monica Boulevard. The corner site, formerly a Shell gasoline station and convenience store, was chosen for its existing neighborhood business demography as well as its possible accommodations for the automobile. The neighborhood businesses surrounding the

Proposed Site
Neighborhood Overhead, NTS
Photo by Terraserver.com

proposed site include a 24-hour Fitness gym, a Starbucks, the Cosmetic Surgery Group, California Mystic Tan, Just Tires and various independent clothing designers.

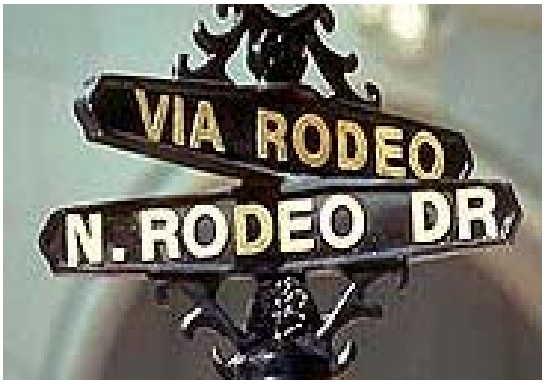
Los Angeles: Product of Pop Culture

To explore the qualities of the Los Angeles cultural and built environment, we will consider Mike Davis' central analysis in City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles. Davis hypothesizes that the city's future lies in an exploration of its diverse parts—a conglomeration of contradictions. Davis controls his exploration by giving an overview of the intellectual and social climate indicative of the L. A. cultural scene. To do so, he addresses the city's recent fabrications: intellectualism as a fad, idealized bodies as commodities, and the broadcast potential of its "alter-ego" Hollywood, to name a few. Furthermore, Davis historically follows Hollywood's first explorations of the "American Dream" through 1950's television that showcased the Southern California lifestyle as the standard for American living. Combined with the New Age spirituality movement of the 1960's and

Downtown Los Angeles
Photo by G.K. Graphics, 1999

Hollywood Sign, Griffith Park
Photo by T. W Hall, 2001

1970's, rooted in this metropolis, Davis ultimately concludes that Los Angeles has constantly been on the social cusp of Popular American history. Therefore, further investigation of Los Angeles might provide more tangible evidence to some of our previous theoretical investigations.



Rodeo Drive Sign, Beverly Hills
Photo by T. W Hall, 2001

If social fragmentation and cultural plurality have a face, could Los Angeles serve as one of its physical manifestations? To explore this, as well as the power struggle among the various mini-cultures of the region, we will outline several of Davis' conclusions. (1) The region's economic base is a dynamic and unpredictable creature, constantly reconfiguring its power to reflect the changing needs and demographics of its *elite* constituency. (2) Unlike other American cities, a dominance of Jews and Catholics hold a majority-controlling stake. (3) The sprawling geographical development of the city has weakened the central municipality. (4) Current-day Los Angeles holds more ethnic and class diversity than New York, and requires more people-oriented, localized government controls. (5) Undocumented immigration of a Latino labor class, mixed with an influx of Asian investors to the region, have caused a cultural stratification between those who work, those who vote, and those who profit from the region.

In addition, status consciousness and security are two contemporary notions most likely embodied in the Los Angeles real estate market. If "Los Angeles homeowners… love their children, but … love

their property values more,"[68] what commentary does this make for retaining value in the presumably over-inflated Los Angeles real estate market? The very definition of community may also be questioned, as a singular street address can define race, class and home value, most likely fragmenting an already discontinuous L. A. culture through the controls of a Home Owners Association. The current trend of self-imposing strict neighborhood regulations in effort to defend real estate values is a phenomenon Davis defines as the "most powerful social movement,"[69] of the last decade.

Additionally, to further preserve these manicured lawns, large mission style houses and ocean-side palisades, postmodern culture tends to propagate the need for security in effort to combat a perceived and largely sensationalized internal security threat. Davis claims that the "Second Civil War"[70] of the streets, dating back to the 1960's, has spurred a demand to defend public and private space. In turn, these security measures have most likely become a commodity marketed by paranoia, which could potentially result in a tangible representation of class

Belligerent Lawns
Photo by Robert Morrow, 1990

[68] Mike Davis, City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles, New York, Verso (1990): 153.

[69] Mike Davis, 153.

[70] Mike Davis, 224.

divisions. Moreover, Davis suggests that this cultural perception of threats is not a function of crime rates, but rather, the media has sensationalized Los Angeles street violence to an inflated degree. Consequently the middle class of the San Fernando Valley, geographically divorced from the perceived dangers of South Central, remains fearful of downtown L. A., even though Davis' studies show the majority of crime is self-contained by class or ethnic boundaries. Once again we potentially see the duality of fiction versus reality, as the otherwise hyperreal need for security and status becomes exaggerated by media controls. Davis refers to this perceived cultural need as "the fate of those suburbanized California working classes who cling to their tarnished dreams at the far edge of the L. A. galaxy."[71]

Public??? Library
Photo by Robert Morrow, 1990

Despite Mike Davis' relatively candid response, we might now appreciate the evolution of Los Angeles into this conglomeration of cultures and contradictions for which the city is now infamous.

[71] Mike Davis, Mike Davis, City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles, New York, Verso (1990): 376.

The author presents Los Angeles as a city with as many differing ideals and perceptions as it has zip codes. Despite the few biases which creep into this LA native's investigation, he leaves the speculation on the future of this megalopolis up to the reader. The future of Los Angeles is therefore as fragmented and dynamic as ever, most likely susceptible to, and dependent upon, the Pop Cultural influences mentioned immediately above and throughout this thesis.

4.3 Design Considerations

In this section, we will narrow our investigation from the site and neighborhood to the specific design considerations of the proposed building. To do so, we will explore the services that will be provided by the cosmetic procedure/ auto-detailing clinic so that we may eventually develop a program appropriate for BOTOX injections, Restylane treatments, and auto detailing. Through an exploration of these cosmetic treatments, we might better understand the design's attempt to acknowledge the potential violence undergone by the body for the sake of aesthetics and commodified beauty. However, we must note that the cosmetic treatments included in this project have been carefully selected as less-invasive alternatives to traditional cosmetic surgery. These procedures have also been considered for their low recovery time and mass availability, ranging in price from $200 to $500 per treatment, as a more acceptable alternative to the traditional face lift, for example, which can require a lengthy recovery period and cost more than $10,000. In addition into these services and the automobile services, the design will also provide for a healthier combatant to aging—the juice bar—as an extension of the lobby/ waiting area. This will be located so that it can be used in conjunction with the other functions of the facility, as well as made available to the general public, who may not be interested in the other services of the facility. To further explore these design

considerations, we will now investigate the BOTOX and Restylane cosmetic treatments so that an appropriate programmatic response can follow

BOTOX Treatment

In this section, we will explore the uses of BOTOX, the BOTOX injection procedure, and the side effects of treatment. Derived from botulinum toxin A—a form of botulism—BOTOX is a therapeutic muscle-relaxing agent that temporarily paralyzes motor nerve endings, eliminating only those muscle contractions near the injection site. Though fatal in large doses, the diluted form of the botulonuim toxin found in BOTOX merely interrupts nerve impulses to the targeted muscle group. These injection treatments have been used to temporarily treat cervical dystonia, strabismus and other involuntary muscle spasms since 1989. Finally, in April 2002, the Food and Drug Administration approved the use of BOTOX Cosmetic to treat facial wrinkles resulting from such muscle contractions. While laws vary from state to state governing the BOTOX procedure itself, in both Ohio and California, BOTOX may be injected by a licensed esthetician who has undergone specific training and licensing to perform the injection procedure.

Only those wrinkles caused by muscle contractions of the face may be temporarily eliminated by BOTOX injections. These can include the forehead lines, "crows feet" around the eyes, and frown (or glabellar) lines. Furthermore, depending on which muscle groups are targeted, the client may not be able to raise the eyebrows, squint, or frown following the treatment. Furthermore, those wrinkles caused by the loss of skin elasticity, due to smoking or sun exposure, for example, are not treatable by this procedure. Costing about $400 per treatment, the visible affects of BOTOX occur within a few

hours and last approximately four to six months. Therefore, a regular routine of injection maintenance is required.

The negative stigma attached to BOTOX and its relationship to botulism has presented a public relations challenge for the marketers of BOTOX to overcome. However, statistics show this procedure is accompanied by relatively few side effects. Less than 2% of BOTOX Cosmetic clients experience temporary bruising at the site of injection, which fades within a few hours. Headache is the most common side effect in the treatment of glabellar lines (13.3% of clients), followed by nausea (3.0%), pain in the face (<3%), and flu-like symptoms (2.0%). Most side effects were reported as mild and most (98%) only occurred during the first week following treatment. [72] Therefore, as more Americans discover the pros and cons of the procedure, as the almost 2 million Americans did last year, the application of BOTOX Cosmetic might present an interesting new trend to explore architecturally in this thesis regarding the Pop Culture of an evidently youth-obsessed nation. [73]

Restylane Treatment

Like BOTOX Cosmetic, Restylane is also an injectable treatment, requiring much of the same equipment and architectural requirements of BOTOX. However, unlike BOTOX, Restylane is defined as a "Soft Tissue Filler," since the injected substance is intended to fill in the wrinkles of the skin, rather than relax the muscles behind the skin. Therefore, Restylane is capable of diminising those wrinkles caused by loss of skin elasticity, not treatable by BOTOX Cosmetic.

[72] Micheal D. Lemonick, "The Pros and Cons of BOTOX," (2002): Questia, 5 Nov. 2003 <http://www.questia.com/>. Statistics on side effects were reported on April 29, 2002.

FDA approved in December of 2003, Restylane is made with hyaluronic acid, which is a substance normally found in the skin that adds volume and fullness to the skin's surface. Since there are no muscle-relaxing agents in the Restylane treatment, the facial paralysis typical of BOTOX is non-exsistent in the Restylane injections. Also, since Restylane is mostly comprised of natural substances found in the skin, the only major side effect reported has been temporary bruising near the injection site, found in 3% of all patients. [74] Following treatment, full results will show within 24 hours, and last up to six months.

4.4 Program Requirements

To develop the program requirements for the cosmetic maintenance/ auto-detailing center, it might be beneficial to first address this project as a merger of two more common building types: the cosmetic procedure clinic and the drive-thru service center. In so doing, the resulting spatial requirements listed below attempt to reflect the needs of both building types as well as the more specific requirements such a merger will demand. The resultant areas are addressed non-architecturally specific when possible, to allow enough latitude for a fuller architectural investigation, and are subject to change as more research (theoretic or pragmatic) dictates. The square footages listed are liberally approximated and may also be modified as the design investigation evolves.

Entry/ Reception: 200 s.f.: This area will support the receptionist and the functions of account management, reception, and new client evaluation. This area will mainly serve first-time clients waiting for consultation (via pedestrian access) and repeat clients (via vehicular access). Visual access to the vehicular entry is needed. Proximity to Account Storage, the Bathroom and the Consultation Area is desired.

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[73] "Cosmetic Fillers," (17 Apr 2003): CNN.com, 12 Nov. 2003 <http://www.cnn.com/>.
[74] "FDA Approves New Wrinkle Filler," (15 Dec 2003): WEBMD.com, 24 Feb. 2004 <http://www.webmd.com/>.

Waiting Area: This area will house the check-out facility and a juice bar made available to patrons of the clinic and to the general public

Consultation/ Procedure Office(1): 300 s.f.: First-time clients and the esthetician will occupy this area under normal daily procedures. Here the esthetician "maps" the clients face, and discusses the benefits and side effects of the procedure. Consultations can take 30-45 minutes, and the client need only have a formal consultation once, unless problems arise later in the maintenance process. The first-time injection procedure can follow, directly in the Consultation area, with all subsequent treatments to be done in the Procedure Offices. Proximity to the Bathroom and the Entry/Reception is desired. An eyewash station, sharps disposal containers, and hazardous waste disposal must be located in this area.

Procedure Offices (2), 200 s.f ea.: In this area the application of BOTOX and Resylane will occur. Also, these should be private rooms, also available for client consultation and office space for the estheticians. Proximity to the Cold Storage and the esthetician Washroom/ Prep Area will facilitate the movement of clients through the clinic. Proximity to the main circulation is desired. An eyewash station, sharps disposal containers, and hazardous waste disposal must be located in this area.

Account Storage, 65 s.f.: This will house all hard copy documentation regarding clients' financial and procedural history. Proximity to Entry/Reception desired.

Men's Restroom 1: 75 s.f.: ADA compliant bathroom for the receptionist and client use. Proximity to the Reception and Consultation Areas is desired.

Women's Restroom 1: 75 s.f.: ADA compliant bathroom for the receptionist and client use. Proximity to the Reception and Consultation Areas is desired.

Men's Restroom 2: 75 s.f.: ADA compliant bathroom for the automobile servicer's use. Proximity to the automobile work area is desired.

Women's Restroom 2: 75 s.f.: ADA compliant bathroom for the automobile servicer's use. Proximity to the automobile work area is desired.

Cold Storage, 50 s.f.: To house the BOTOX Cosmetic and Restylane substances (420 vials maximum) and other refrigerated goods related to the application procedure. Proximity to Procedure/ Application Area and Consultation Area is desired. . This need not be an actual space—smaller cold storage areas can be located directly in the Procedure Offices.

Bulk Storage, 175 s.f.: Storage for non-refrigerated procedural supplies may be located in one central area or several satellite locations. Proximity to Procedure/ Application Area is desired.

Offices Space(2), 150 s.f. ea.: These will accommodate the estheticians during the intermediate times between procedures. These inter-procedural activities include ordering medical supplies and other clerical procedures best accommodated by a desk and computer. They need not be separate. Proximity to the Procedure/ Application Area and the Washroom/ Prep Area is desired.

Washroom/ Prep Area, 125 s.f.: This area will accommodate a sink, toilet, storage of eye goggles, rubber gloves, aprons and other barrier supplies to aid in the esthetician's preparation for the injection procedure. This need not be an actual space—mini-prep areas can be located directly in the Procedure Offices.

Kitchen, 200 s.f.: A kitchen for the preparation of juices to be served in the Waiting area. Proximity to the Waiting Area is required. The checkout counter may double as the front bar to the juice kitchen.

Equipment Storage, 150 s.f.: This will house the mechanicals needed to support building function. The HVAC, Water Heater, Electrical Panel and other system housings (i.e. security system, automation, exhaust motors etc.) will be housed in this area. Proximity to exterior for service maintenance might be desirable.

4.5 Chapter Review

Los Angeles has close ties to the Media and we have seen how it grew from Pop Cultural influence, and investigated some of the qualitative factors that distinguish Los Angeles culture. This contributed to the selection of the site at 8605 Santa Monica Boulevard in the neighborhood of West Hollywood. The site itself—an existing gas station—was chosen for its surrounding neighborhood of cosmetically oriented businesses. The well-traveled Santa Monica Strip also lends itself to automobile-oriented businesses, as evidenced by the existing neighborhood demographics. Therefore, the site should aid in the design of the cosmetic maintenance/ auto-detailing center. Also, since Pop Culture has propagated image consciousness through the Media, thereby encouraging the means of physical malleability such as BOTOX and Restylane injections, then we might explore Pop Culture's influence through the design of this cosmetic procedure and maintenance center. Ultimately, this portion of the design will attempt to provide a place unique to cosmetic procedures, reflective of the treatments' specific programmatic, spatial and architectural needs. Given the very recent popularity of BOTOX and Restylane injections, it is most likely

inevitable that architecture will be solicited to design for these controversial yet popular treatments in the future. To respond to this potential need, this design thesis will attempt to regulate the pursuit of beauty while not necessarily condoning these procedures or any of the Pop Cultural influences discussed throughout. The ultimate goal of this design approach will attempt to objectively translate current Pop Cultural issues—from the controversial to the socially acceptable—into an architectural design expressive of current Pop Culture and responsive to its perceived needs.

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