Counterculture Plan for the Creative City

A Critique of Patterns of Flexibility and Fixity in Toronto's Cultural Renaissance

by

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Authors Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Between the years 2000 and 2010, the City of Toronto experienced an unprecedented spike in cultural construction. This building boom, ushered in by Toronto's "Culture Plan for the Creative City" and dubbed "Toronto's Cultural Renaissance," has had a lasting impact on the city's identity, shaping many of its most visible cultural landmarks. In this thesis, I look to Creative City theory and the architecture it has produced in Toronto as representative of forms of flexible accumulation which have been under development since the 1970s. Just as the free plan of the factory floor was representative of the patterns of Fordism, spectacular galleries and museums today represent new forms of capital accumulation. While finance, production, and workers have all become increasingly mobile, I argue that Toronto's "creative" architectures have all become increasingly inflexible. While architectural theorist Pier Vittorio Aureli has positioned flexible space as the edifice of expanding immaterial labour markets, I propose an alternate theory; spaces of immaterial and flexible labour exploitation take place in increasingly fixed and inflexible architectures. To make this argument, I draw on the work of geographer David Harvey, who points to the fact that flexibility is often contrarily reliant on fixity. Between the fixed architectures of the Creative City and the increasingly flexible landscapes of accumulation they occupy, there emerges a destructive relationship to culture and context; flexible geographies + fixed architectures = a tabula rasa approach to history. Any cultural policy or construction that aims to foster stable cultural growth, founded in community as opposed to consumption, must actively resist these patterns. Only through the reallocation of flexible space to the scale of architecture, and by extension the provision of creative agency to the scale of the resident, can cities plan for anti-capitalist futures and cultures deeply rooted in context, community, and place.

Acknowledgments

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Introducing the Creative City

In 2002 the City of Toronto released a culture plan for the newly amalgamated city. Unlike previous cultural policy, this document titled "the Culture Plan for the Creative City" positioned cultural development in the city as not simply a frill but as an ultimatum.[1] The document proposed that in the context of an increasingly globalizing world, Toronto risked obsolescence. A vibrant cultural scene, it claimed, was an integral component to attract and retain the creative workers and companies which would supposedly ensure Toronto's economic success. These ideas are not unique to Toronto at this time but are instead adopted from *Creative City theory,* a planning ideology that focuses on city design and economic planning within emerging creative labour paradigms. Rising to significant popularity in the early 2000s, Creative City ideology frames creative and culturally vibrant spaces as not only important but necessary for a city's success within increasingly global and competitive creative economies. This thinking fully permeated Toronto, and by 2010 the city had experienced a total redevelopment of its cultural infrastructure. Often referred to as Toronto's "Cultural Renaissance," this period saw the built face of culture in the city fully reimagined.

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1   City of Toronto "Culture Plan for the Creative City," (2003).

fig.0.1
The Royal Ontario Museum, Michael Lee-Chin Crystal, designed by Daniel Libeskind, completed 2007.

fig.0.2
The Ontario College of Art and Design Will Alsop Addition, completed 2004.
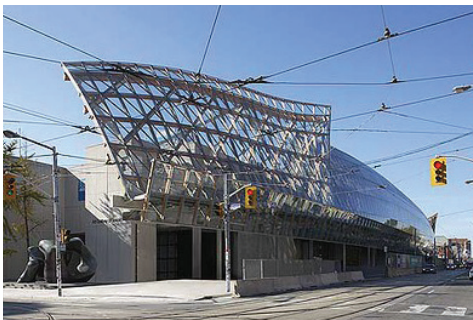
fig.0.3
The Art Galley of Ontario Addition by Frank Gehry, completed 2008.

In this period, the city invested an unprecedented $226 million in the construction and renovation of cultural buildings throughout the city's core.[2] This investment was matched by $488.5 million in funding from private donors. Today, these buildings are visible as some of the city's most iconic and recognizable features, with the Royal Ontario Museums (ROM) crystal by Daniel Libeskind as well as the Art Gallery of Ontario's (AGO) addition by Frank Gehry both completed with this funding. Other funding went toward renovations for the Gardiner Museum by Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB) and Roy Thompson Hall by Artec Consultants Inc and KPMB. The money also went toward the construction of the new National Ballet School by Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. and KPMB as well as the construction of the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts by Diamond Schmitt Architects, and a permanent home for the Toronto International Film Festival in the Bell Lightbox building by KPMB. The iconic Will Alsop addition to the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) was also completed in this decade.[3]

This period also saw a significant push for a new waterfront and a failed bid by the city for the 2008 Olympic Games, which together made up a massive swath of new development. While not explicitly referred to in Creative City documents, several other public space developments occurred in the city in the early 2000s. Yonge and Dundas square was constructed in 2002, and Nathan Philips Square began its renovation process in 2006. The development of "creative districts" and the redevelopment of brownfield sites also ramped up during this period. Both Liberty Village and the Distillery District, considered today to be some of Toronto's most "bohemian" and "artistic" neighbourhoods, began intensive development in the early 2000s. These developments have collectively redefined downtown Toronto's urban fabric in a remarkably short period, recreating most of its architectural icons and branding itself as a global city.

While superficially, the cultural construction spurred by the Creative City movement appears a win-win for cultural workers and the city's pocketbooks alike, the actual impacts of the Creative City have proven to be divisive and destructive to Toronto's creative and cultural identity. While the increased investment in cultural infrastructure may have temporarily bolstered the city's image on a global stage, its long-lasting

2   City of Toronto "Culture Plan for the Creative City," (2003).

3   Barbara L. Jenkins, "Toronto's Cultural Renaissance," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 30, no. 2 (April 2005): 175-176.

impacts have been less than promising. The period's intense focus on creating *consumptive* cultural space, and attracting a "Creative Class", has left little focus on the preservation of *productive* spaces and the retention of the existing diverse and creative communities that have animated them. Furthermore, extensive demolition paired with the rising rents that accompanied the city's Cultural Renaissance have pushed artists and longstanding diverse communities alike from the core. This displacement and the destructive tendencies of this period leave some big questions about the sustainability of Creative City investment. What cultural diversity can we imagine in a city devoid of difference? What cultural complexity will exist in a city whose residents have been displaced and whose history has been paved over?

Having first moved to Toronto in 2018, I still find it difficult to imagine the city before the 2000s and this dramatic period of change. Before beginning this research, I would have had difficulty pointing to many artistic or cultural merits the city had amassed over the years prior. Working as an architectural intern at the time, I imagine this is a sentiment shared by many of the young 'creative' residents who flocked to the city for work through the 2000s. Toronto existed for me without cultural or historical context. Throughout the course of writing this thesis, I have learnt that it is this vacancy itself that is the largest fiction and failing of Toronto's Creative City.

The Creative City while, just a moment now in Toronto's history, represents certain destructive tendencies inherent to capitalist patterns of development. These patterns, which repeat, again and again, are ultimately unstable and will never organically produce lasting, or vibrant cultural spaces and communities. This thesis looks to this culturally destructive nature of Toronto's Creative City as a case to better understand architecture's relationship to tabula rasa cultural patterns. By better understanding the shortcomings of the Creative City and capitalist urban development more broadly, I aim to identify critical features of destructive space and develop alternate routes to provide both culturally generative spaces and sites of resistance to tabula rasa geographic patterns.

In this work I explore these questions of development, cultural production, and the tabula rasa in Toronto's Creative City through geographic and architectural theory. I use these to develop a stronger understanding of architectural spaces in relation to immaterial labour patterns. I look to geographic theorists like Ute Lehrer, Stefan Kipfer, and Roger Keil, to explore the nature of development in relation to Toronto's

fig.0.4
Four Seasons Center for the Performing Arts, by Diamond and Schmidt, completed 2006.

fig.0.5
National Ballet School of Canada by KPMB, completed 2005.

fig.0.6
The Royal Conservatory, TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning by KPMB, completed 2009.

fig.0.7
Toronto Waterfront, Wave Deck, completed 2008-2009.

fig.0.8
TIFF Bell Lightbox by KPMB, completed 2010.

fig.0.9
Yonge and Dundas Square, completed 2002.

Creative City and theorists like David Harvey, and Neil Smith to better understand patterns of labour, flexibility, and fixity. I leverage this geographic work to critique popular architectural theory on immaterial labour and space, concentrating on the work of Pier Vittorio Aureli, as well as some of the work of Douglas Spencer. By contextualizing architectural ideas in relation to broader geographic theory, I develop new understandings of spaces of immaterial labour. Throughout this theoretical review, I continuously refer to the construction of Toronto's Creative City as a central case study of architecture of immaterial labor. I make use of architectural drawings, and photographs of Creative City spaces, as studies through which to test and support the theoretical concepts I discuss.

This thesis is split into four sections:

Part 1: Flexible Geography and Cultural Renaissance

In this chapter, I discuss the forces which set the stage for Toronto's Creative Renaissance and review some of the existing critique of Creative City theory.

While the Creative City emerges in the 2000s, it comes about in response to labour shifts that begin in Toronto as early as the 1970s. This time period marks a shift from industrial to primarily immaterial production. Often periodized as a shift from a Fordist to a flexible regime of accumulation, this time is marked not only by shifting forms of labour but also by the dramatic urban restructurings that accompany them. In Toronto, this restructuring takes the form of increasingly flexible development constraints and intense centralization, enforced in the 2000s by the image of a newly constructed cultural core.

Despite the creative branding applied liberally through this period, centralization has been heavily predicated on gentrification and the displacement of residents from the core. While the Creative City certainly uses the image of diversity and the arts to promote itself, it does little to protect and support actual artists and diverse communities.

Part 2: Fixed Architecture and Immaterial Labour

While part 1 of this thesis looks at the driving forces of the Creative City movement, This chapter will look to further dissect the role of Creative City architectures themselves as tools of flexible accumulation.

While the factory was the shining icon of Fordism,

I look to the galleries and public spaces of the Creative City as representative of the values and systems of flexible accumulation. I argue that, while the factory building was defined by its free and flexible floorplan, the architectures of the Creative City are their opposite, defined above all by their inflexibility, both formally and structurally.

In this section, I review both architectural and geographic theory on flexible accumulation and fixity, focusing on the work of geographer David Harvey. Harvey's work points to the fact that flexibility does not necessarily produce more flexibility but is instead often contrarily tied to the production of fixity. Accordingly, architecture responds to flexible geographies of accumulation by producing fixed and inflexible space. For Toronto, this has meant the creation of inflexible and unusable urban spaces, ironically leaving residents of the Creative City with little in the way of creative agency.

This fixed unusable city space has not only enforced exploitative urban patterns but has also been decimating to the city's cultural growth. Flexibility at the scale of urban geographies has placed creative agency in the hands of developers and governing bodies, while the scale of architecture, that of the resident, has become increasingly fixed and hostile. I argue that by relocating flexibility to an architectural scale, creative agency becomes not only accessible but culturally generative.

Part 3: Tabula Rasa History and Creative Destruction

While flexible geographies and fixed architectures have certainly been exploitative, they have also been remarkably culturally destructive, demolishing historic buildings and communities alike. In this chapter, I discuss these frequently destructive tendencies of creativity in Toronto and explain the underlying geographic and architectural patterns which enforce them; flexible geographies paired with fixed architectures produce a tabula rasa approach to context.

Through this understanding, I speculate on the potential of flexibility at the architectural scale within these systems and the potential for culturally generative as opposed to culturally destructive spaces; flexible architectures not only generate a contextual, and by extension, a culturally generative approach, but also provide a space for resistance to exploitative flexible geographies.

Conclusion: Counterculture Plan for the Creative City

In the conclusion of this thesis, I break from my theoretical

fig.0.10
Liberty Village.

fig.0.11
Distillery District.

review, and look to develop lines of flight from the thesis, collecting existing cases and concepts which in different ways try to address my critiques of the Creative City model. I point to three fundamental principles that I feel can serve as a foundation for an alternate model for creating and preserving cultural spaces. These three attributes are derived from the critiques and theoretical structure developed in the three chapters prior. I argue that spaces for generative, creative growth must be: resistant to development pressures, flexible, and contextual.

I review these three principles through a series of existing cases in the GTHA and attempt to build a vision for a new type of cultural plan, one not predicated solely on the creativity of artists but on the culture that develops in complex cities and stable supported communities.

Part 1
Flexible Geography and Cultural Renaissance

Between 2000 and 2010, the City of Toronto experienced an unprecedented surge in cultural construction. The face of the city today is largely defined by this boom period in creative building, with the OCAD, the ROM, the AGO and the Waterfront (alongside many other buildings from this period) standing prominently within the city's cultural identity today. This sudden building boom took place not just in Toronto but in cities globally and is often attributed to the rise of Creative City planning, an urban planning ideology that focuses on city design for a growing class of creative workers. Rising to significant popularity in the early 2000s, Creative City ideology frames creative and culturally vibrant spaces as not only important but necessary for a city's success within increasingly globalized and competitive creative economies. While the cultural construction of this period has been framed by planning documents as beneficial to both cultural workers and the city's economic development, the impacts and driving forces of Creative City theory have proven to be destructive to many established communities, creative and uncreative alike. In downtown Toronto centralizing and gentrifying pressures have been growing since the 1970s as the city has undergone

dramatic restructuring in response to shifting patterns of labour and accumulation. Creative City planning, while encouraging the city to invest in its cultural growth, does so in a way that adopts much of the pro-development language and gentrifying strategies which were developed through these thirty years that preceded it. This language and these techniques connect all the city's contemporary cultural initiatives directly to these pre-existing culturally destructive forces. In this chapter, I review the urban restructuring that begins in Toronto during the 1970s and examine its connections to the emergence of the Creative City. Ultimately the Creative City in Toronto has served to enforce and mask the destructive nature of centralization and gentrification in the city while failing to offer sufficient support to cultural initiatives and creative communities, making it ultimately an ineffective model of cultural support.

Setting the Stage for the Creative City: Flexible Accumulation

While Creative City theory emerges in Toronto policy documents in the 2000s, the years that precede it pave a clear path for its adoption into planning rhetoric. To understand the context of the Creative City, it is helpful to understand its roots in shifting forms of labour, namely in the city's transition from a regime of Fordist accumulation to a regime of flexible accumulation. While Fordism marked a period of rigid labour organization and industrial production, the shift to flexible accumulation marked a transition in previously industrial western states to increasingly flexible labour markets, processes, and patterns of consumption.[4] Within labour markets this has meant a transition from hierarchical factory systems to increasingly flexible and adaptable systems of subcontracted labour.[5] This was paired with a transition from entrenched unions to increasingly precarious working contracts and conditions as workers were expected to be adaptable, flexible, and at times geographically mobile.[6] Within the context of this thesis it is important to note that this period is also heavily reliant on innovation (creative labour) within commercial, technological,

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4   David Harvey, "The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," in *The Condition of Postmodernity an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, (Cambridge, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 141-188.

5   Harvey, "The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 141-188.

6   Harvey, "The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 150.

8

and organizational sectors.[7] Flexible accumulation has also been accompanied by a spike in consumption, and the expansion of consumptive markets into both experiential and spectacular realms.[8] These labour/consumption shifts, are collectively associated with the formation of increasingly centralized cities. Today these centralized nodes of immaterial labour and consumption (live/work/play space) are recognized as "global" cities. Toronto's transition to a global city began in the 1970s as it experienced significant labour shifts as well as the emergence of centralizing policy in city documents. Throughout the 1990s, the city underwent dramatic restructurings of governance and policy, with the intent to free the urban core from development restrictions, making the downtown a more flexible site for investment and development.

Planning in Toronto 1970s-1980s

In Toronto, the 1960s marked the end of Fordist production in the city as factories were closed and replaced by rapidly growing knowledge and technology industries. Between 1961 and 1992, manufacturing employment in Toronto declined from 29.7% to 18.1%, while employment in community business and personal services rose from 21.2% to 36.5%, and employment in finance, insurance, real estate (FIRE) went from 6.6% to 10%.[9] These shifts aligned with a sharp increase in cultural consumption in the city. In Toronto, this meant the beginnings of more significant investments in culture and the arts through the 1970s.[10] In particular the Toronto Arts Council was formed in 1974,[11] followed closely after by the production of the city's first ever cultural policy document titled *Metropolitan Toronto's Support of the Arts.*[12] Throughout the 1970s, the city flourished

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7   Harvey, "The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 147.

8   Harvey, "The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 156.

9   Robert A. Murdie, "The Welfare State, Economic Restructuring and Immigrant Flows Impacts on Socio-Spatial Segregation in Greater Toronto," in *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State*, ed. Sako Musterd and Ostendorf Wim (London: Routledge, 1998), 72.

10   Alison L. Bain, *Creative Margins: Cultural Production in Canadian Suburbs*, (University of Toronto Press, 2017),11. accessed June 19, 2021, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctt5hjwr7.

11   Toronto Arts Council, "About Us," Google, https://torontoartscouncil.org/About-Us.

12   Metropolitan Toronto, *Metro's Culture Plan: Redefining our Cultural Framework*, (Toronto: City of Toronto, 1994), 20.
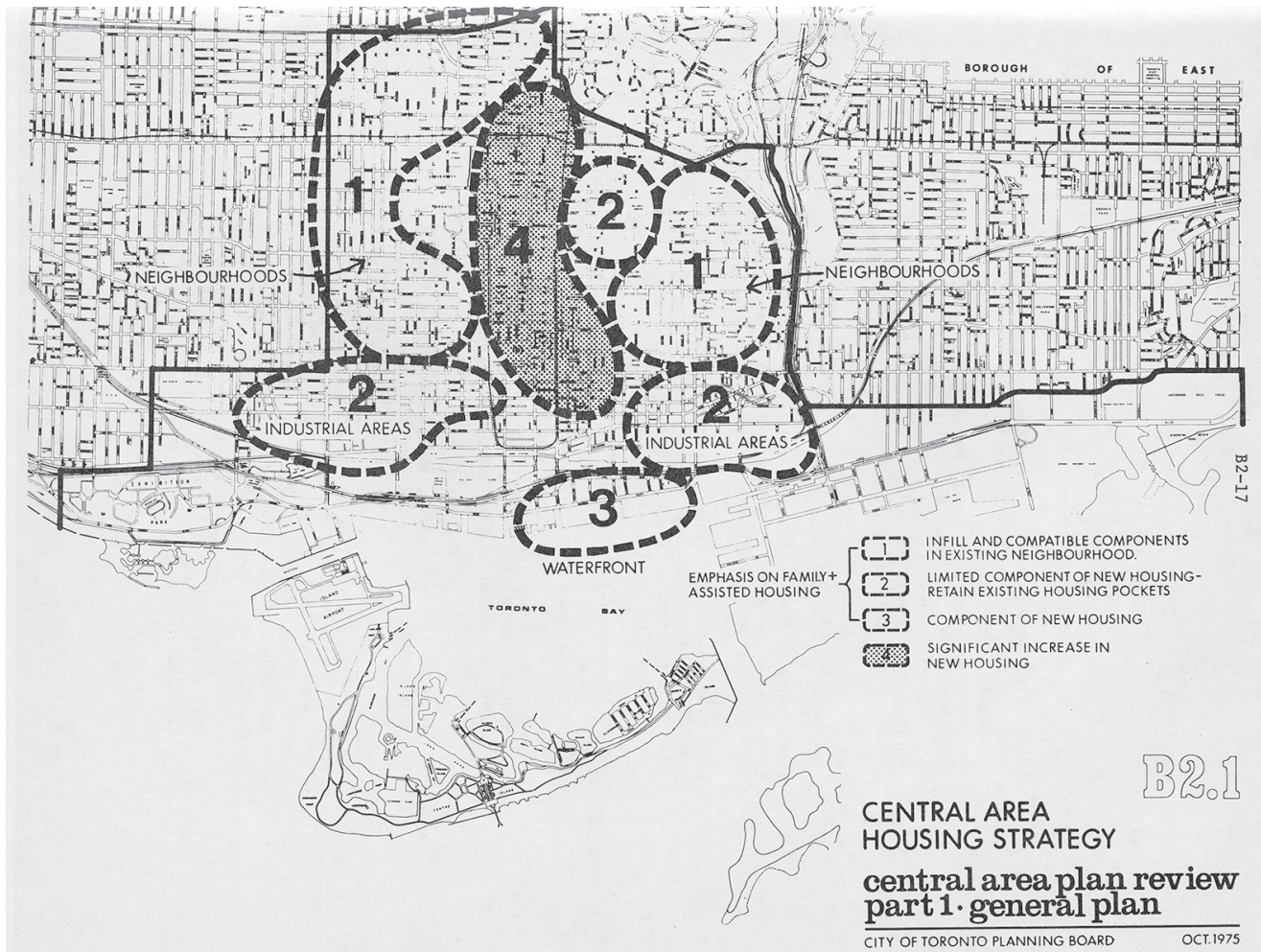
fig.1.0

1975 Central Area Housing Strategy,
the first Central Area Plan produced for the
City of Toronto.

as a site of high arts and new fringe and experimental spaces.[13]
A lively artist community developed along Queen Street in this
period with cheap rent and proximity to resources drawing
artists to the core.[14] Notably this was a period defined by the
prominent role of Artist Run Centers, spaces run for and by
artists, which created a robust infrastructure for the downtown
arts scene.[15]

These labour shifts (an increase in immaterial labour and
an increase in cultural consumption) reoriented the city's urban
development toward forms which would accommodate these
growing markets, namely towards the form of a centralized
'global city'. In 1976, Toronto approved its first Central Area

13   Bain, *Creative Margins*, 11.

14   Rosemary Donegan, "What Ever Happened to Queen St West?,"
       Fuse Magazine 44, (1986): 14.

15   Rosemary Donegan, "What Ever Happened to Queen St West?," *Fuse
       Magazine* 44, (1986): 18.

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Plan.[16] The years that followed saw a massive push for the construction of office space downtown, marking the beginning of the city's transition to a knowledge economy. Office space increased by 250% in the Central Business District between 1971 and 1991.[17] This construction marked the beginnings of both centralization and a wave of artist displacement from the core. Throughout the 1980s, significant funding cuts to the arts, paired with gentrification, began to apply pressure to arts communities and Artist Run Centers downtown, primarily along Queen and Spadina. In the 1980s, commercial galleries, expensive restaurants, and clothing stores, all became defining features of the area while Artist Run Centers were forced to relocate, in some cases multiple times.[18]

Planning in Toronto 1990s-2000s

While the city took some significant steps towards centralization in the 1980s, the next ten years marked a period of government restructuring, which dramatically accelerated this process. Recession in the early 1990s paired with political restructuring through this decade left municipal budgets strained and encouraged the adoption of an entrepreneurial, pro-development stance by the city.[19] This stance ultimately eroded development restrictions in the core and opened-up downtown Toronto as a flexible space to attract global investment and developers.[20]

Downtown Toronto's transition to a major investment platform was primarily set in motion through governmental restructuring and the city's amalgamation. In 1995, the new Conservative provincial administration, led by Mike Harris, forced the amalgamation of the previously independent municipalities of Metro Toronto into the mega-city we know today. Despite significant resistance from urban residents, this redrawing of the political boundary was pushed through in 1998.[21] This restructuring came alongside significant budget

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16   Ute Lehrer, and Thorben Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification: The Relationship Between Policies, Building Activities, and Socio-economic Development in Toronto," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 18, no.1 (2009): 145.

17   Murdie, "The Welfare State," 73.

18   Donegan, "What Ever Happened to Queen St West?," 10-24.

19   Stefan Kipfer and Roger Keil, "Toronto Inc? Planning the Competitive City in the New Toronto," *Antipode* 34, no.2 (2002): 227-264.

20   Kipfer and Keil, "Toronto Inc?," 227-264.

21   Kipfer and Keil, "Toronto Inc?," 242.

cuts and massive reform strategies. Restructuring shifted provincial responsibilities for social housing, public transit and other social expenses onto the municipal level, leaving the newly minted City of Toronto with overwhelming new budget line items.[22] Notably, this period saw increasingly dramatic cuts to culture and arts budgets within the city. Between the years 1991 and 1998, federal funding to the Canadian Council for the Arts was slashed from 105.5 million to 88.8 million.[23] Funding for the Ontario Arts Council received similar cuts, dropping its funding from 42.6 million to 25.3 million between 1995 and 1997.[24]

This belt-tightening encouraged an entrepreneurial pro-development mindset towards planning in the city. The desire to encourage investment through construction in the core led to extensive deregulation at both provincial and municipal levels. Through the 1990s, the province deregulated both development and rent controls to ease the way for developers downtown.[25]

Municipally, significant deregulation took place through the application of mixed-use zoning, which was applied liberally across the city's core throughout the 1990s. This reclassification of space removed zoning constraints and freed up land for development. Notably, the 'Two Kings' project in 1996 deregulated zoning on large areas along King street, opening up previously industrially zoned land for mixed-use condo development.[26] Similarly, the waterfront was opened up for developers throughout the 1990s.[27] The city's bid for the 2008 Olympic games (completed between 1998 and 2001) led to the rezoning of massive swathes of the waterfront as mixed-use.[28] Despite the loss of the Olympic bid, the rezoned waterfront would see intense development in the years that followed. Some critics have categorized Toronto's waterfront development as a contemporary mixed-use incarnation of old infrastructural megaprojects; both expressway construction and the waterfront redevelopment overhauled vast swaths

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22   Kipfer and Keil,. "Toronto Inc?," 241.

23   Jenkins, «Toronto's Cultural Renaissance,» 176.

24   Jenkins, «Toronto's Cultural Renaissance,» 176.

25   Kipfer and Keil, "Toronto Inc?," 241-242.

26   Lehrer, and Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification," 145.

27   Ute Leherer, and Jennifer Laidley, "Old Mega Projects Newly Packaged? Waterfront Redevelopment in Toronto," *International Journal of Urban Research* 32, no.4 (2008): 791.

28   Leherer, and Laidley, "Old Mega Projects Newly Packaged,"791.

Neighbourhoods

Apartment Neighbourhoods

Mixed Use Areas

Natural Areas

Parks

Other Open Space Areas (including Golf Courses, Cemetaries, Public Utilities)

Institutional Areas

Regeneration Areas

General Employment Areas

Core Employment Areas

Utility Corridors

- - - **Downtown and the Waterfront**
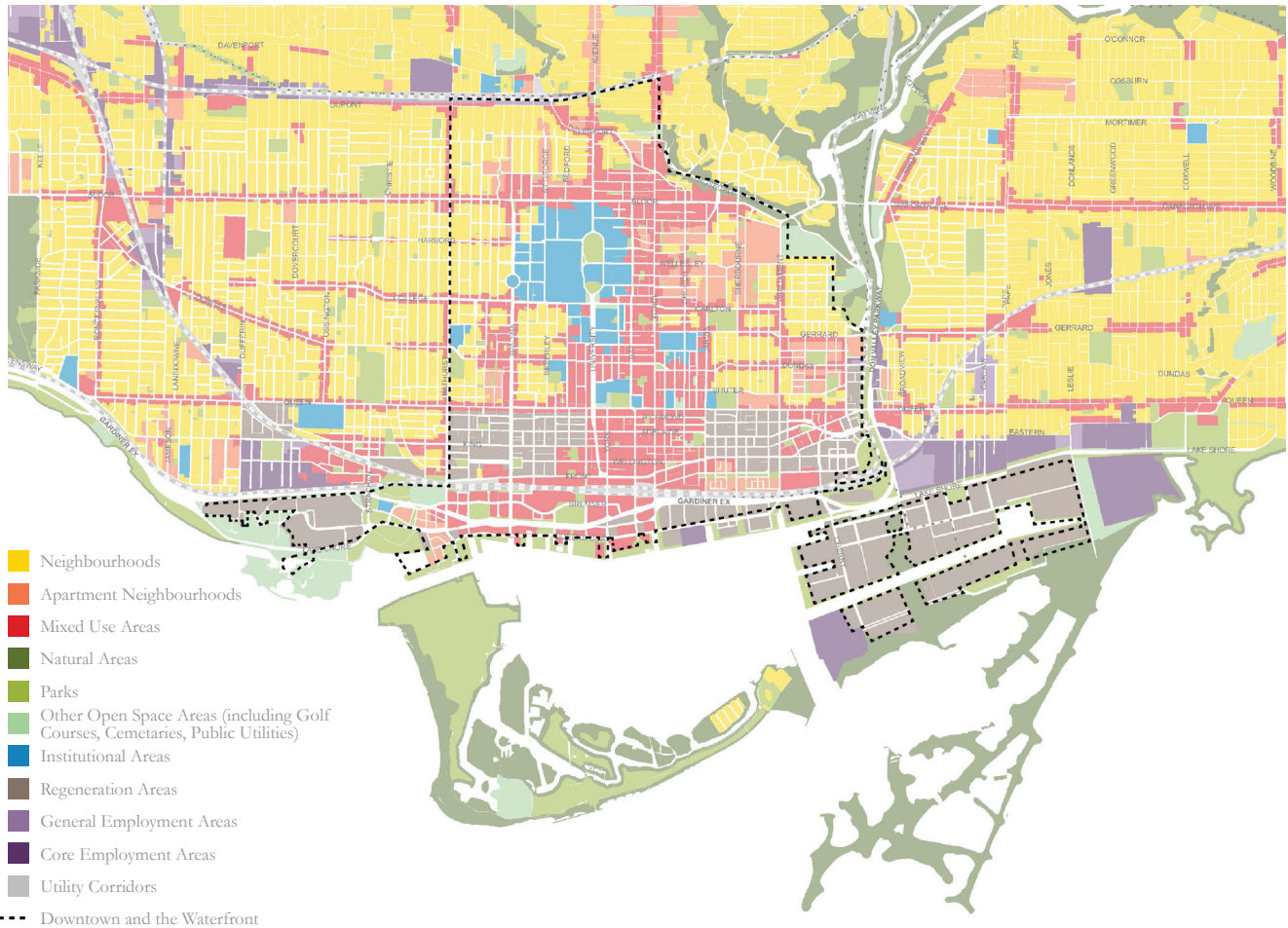
fig.1.1

City of Toronto Official Plan, Land Use, 2019. Red areas represent mixed use spaces, and brown represent regeneration areas, also effectively a mixed use designation.

of land while significantly sidestepping due public process.[29] These massive patches of flexible mixed-use would be even further expanded in the new City Plan.

The Official Plan for the newly amalgamated city, which began development in 1998 and was completed in 2002, cemented the free-for-all character of development in the core. While urban reform in the 1980s followed a centralization regime, it was heavily influenced by discourses around architectural contextuality and the value of mid-rise construction.[30] This influence would be done away with in the Official City Plan developed by the seven newly amalgamated planning departments in 2002, in favour of a pro-development, go big or go home attitude.[31] The New Plan defined intensified

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29   Leherer, and Laidley, "Old Mega Projects Newly Packaged," 786-803.

30   Julie Anne Boudreau, Roger Keil, and Douglas Young, "Official Planning," in *Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism* (Toronto; Tonawanda, N,Y 2009), 106.

31   Boudreau, Keil, and Young, "Official Planning," 106-108.

urban development as a necessity in an increasingly competitive global economy.[32] The overarching structure of the document identified three zones of change within the city; zones of big change, medium change, and minimal change.[33] The big change areas, zones designated for maximum growth in the plan, include several small sub centers (Yonge-Eglinton, Etobicoke Centre, North York Centre, and Scarborough Centre) and a primary large central area encompassing downtown and the waterfront. This directed much of the intense development and population growth of the coming years to the cities core.[34]

In tandem with this push for construction, the new Official City Plan also went a long way to further streamline the development process to incentivize development downtown and manage the significant budget and staff cuts that had been imposed on the department. In their analysis of the Official Plan, urban researchers Julie Anne Boudreau, Roger Keil and Douglas Young identify two main routes through which this takes place: the first being the removal of density and height limits on development[35] and the second being the simplification of land uses into only eight categories, broadening definitions and ultimately loosened zoning regulation in the City.[36] Together these alterations eroded some of the most significant city-sanctioned development restrictions making, density, height, and use restrictions dramatically more flexible in the years that follow and positioning the downtown core as a space free for the taking.

Impacts of Flexible Development

Although policymakers have often lauded the centralization of cities as a solution to urban issues of housing, access, and environmentalism, over the past 50 years, centralization and flexible accumulation have been associated with increasing socio-spatial polarization, residential insecurity, labour insecurity, and wage inequality. In Toronto, policy shifts have come under heavy critique for their erosion of tenant rights, their role in intensifying gentrification, and the displacement of low-income downtown residents. The negative impacts of both flexible accumulation and centralization become increasingly apparent when looking at socio-spatial trends in Toronto from

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32   City of Toronto, *Toronto Official Plan* (2002).

33   Boudreau, Keil, and Young, "Official Planning," 103-105.

34   Boudreau, Keil, and Young, "Official Planning," 104.

35   Boudreau, Keil, and Young, "Official Planning," 105.

36   Boudreau, Keil, and Young, "Official Planning," 105.
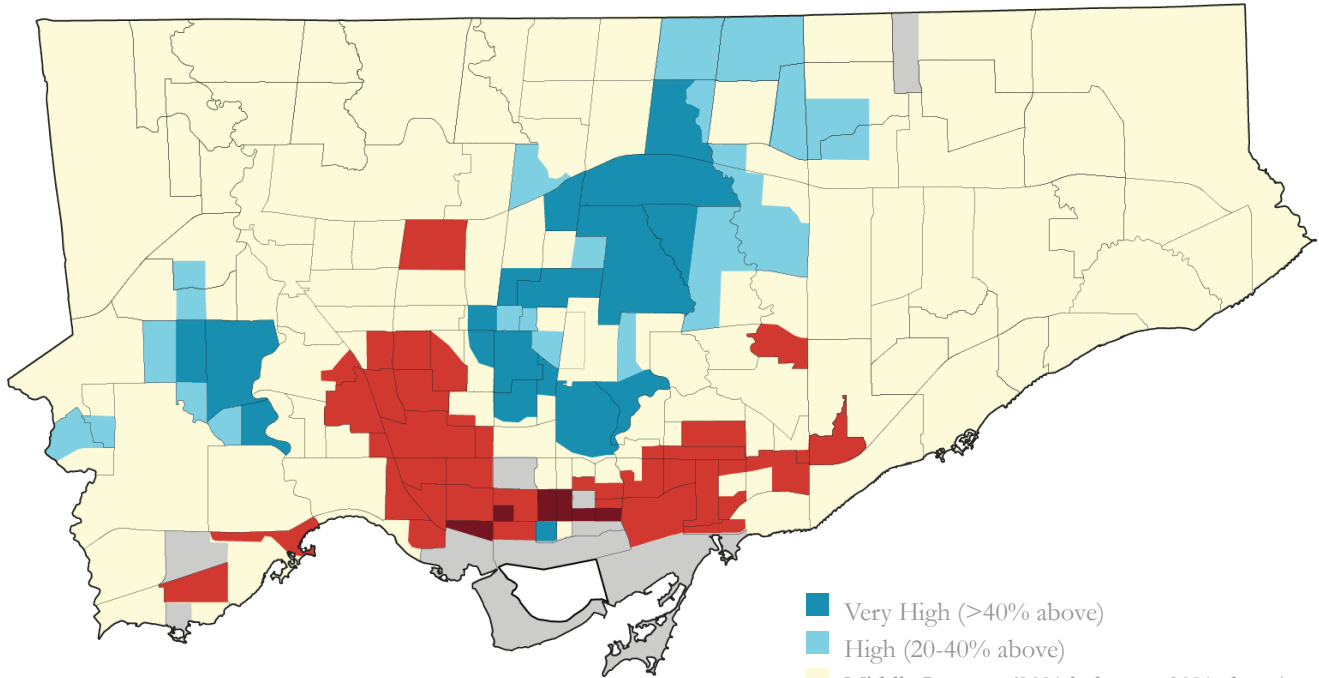
fig.1.2
Average individual income, City of Toronto
Relative to Toronto CMA, 1970.

- Very High (>40% above)
- High (20-40% above)
- Middle Income (20% below to 20% above)
- Low (20-40% below)
- Very Low (>40% below)
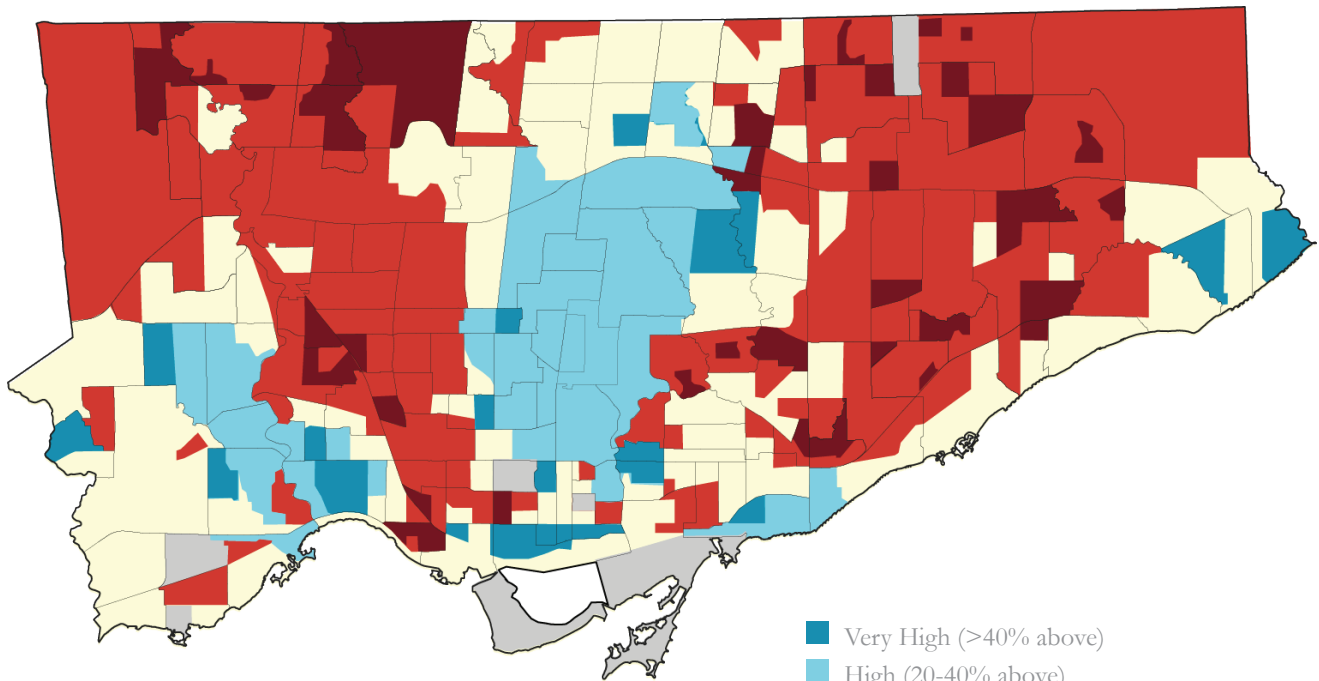
fig.1.3
Average individual income, City of Toronto
Relative to Toronto CMA, 2005.

- Very High (>40% above)
- High (20-40% above)
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- Very Low (>40% below)
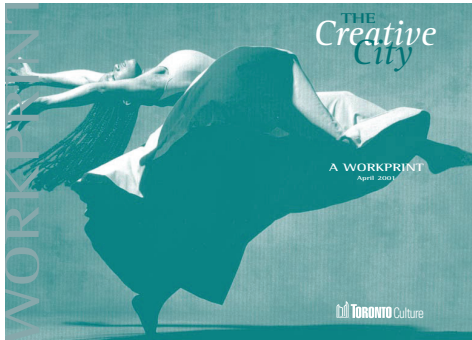
fig.1.4
Cover of *The Creative City a Workprint*,
published April 2001.
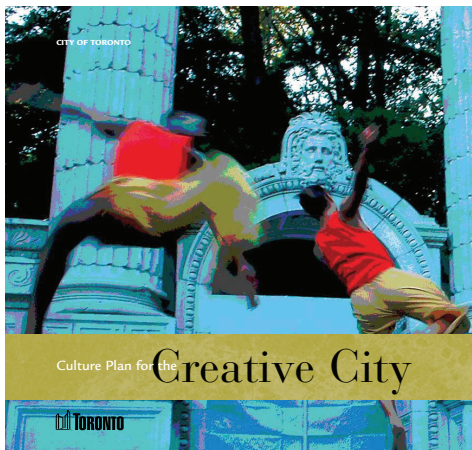
fig.1.5
Cover of *Culture Plan for the Creative City*,
published 2003.
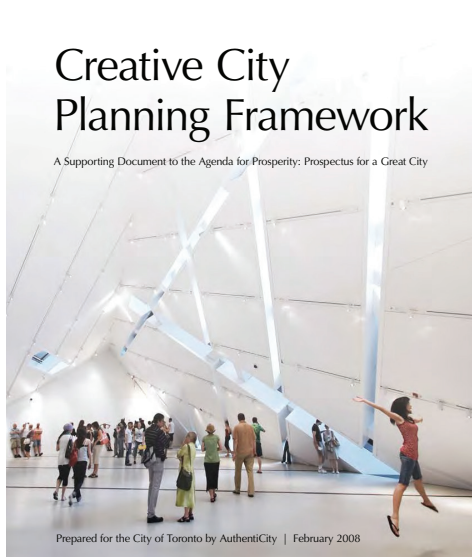
fig.1.6
Cover of *Creative City Planning Framework*,
published 2008.

the 1970s onward. A study completed by David Hulchanski looked at resident patterns tracking changes between 1970 and 2005. The study found that Toronto has seen a growing lower class pushed toward the edges of the city, a steadily shrinking middle class, and an increased centralization of wealth in the core.[37] Trends also showed new immigrant communities are increasingly locating far from the core toward the city's periphery.[38] The new plan and restructuring through the 1990s have served to both enforce and expedite these social shifts. In an article critiquing the new plan, artist Adrian Blackwell and geographer Kanishka Goonewardena note that its dilution of planning regulations and its targeted development locations make the plan fundamentally a total de-democratization of planning, protecting property owners, developers, and multinational corporations, while amounting to an attack on the cities most vulnerable residents.[39]

Toronto's Cultural Renaissance

From this context of an already rapidly centralizing and socially divided global city, Toronto began its push for creativity. The early 2000s brought about a series of new cultural policy documents in Toronto, all of which broke dramatically from the language of previous policy and accompanied a wave of construction in the city. Between 2000 and 2006, the City of Toronto released: *The Creative City: A workprint* in 2001, *Culture Plan for the Creative City* in 2003 and *Creative City Planning Framework* in 2008. These documents brought to the table a new language for cultural policy that was absent from previous culture plans, a tone of competition and urgency, one which today seems to be the recognized norm for city policy. The overwhelming message of these documents was that the City of Toronto must foster a vibrant and diverse creative and cultural scene or fall into obsolescence in an increasingly

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37   David J Hulchanski, *The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970-2005* (University of Toronto: 2010), 1.

38   R. Alan Walks, "The Social Ecology of the Post-Fordist/Global City? Economic Restructuring and Socio-Spatial Polarisation in the Toronto Urban Region," *Urban Studies* 38, no. 3 (2001): 426-429; Hulchanski, *The Three Cities within Toronto,* 11.

39   Adrian Blackwell and Kanishka Goonewardena, "Poverty of Planning: Tent City, City Hall and Toronto's New Official Plan," *Planning Network*, last modified January 22, 2003, http://www.plannersnetwork.org/2003/01/poverty-of-planning-tent-city-city-hall-and-torontos-new-official-plan/.

competitive global economy.[40] To do so, these documents lay out a plan for what they refer to as Toronto's Creative and Cultural Renaissance.

Toronto's proposed Cultural Renaissance was heralded by the construction and expansion of several cultural buildings within Toronto's downtown. In particular, the *Culture Plan for the Creative City* outlines the organization of these investments along a proposed Avenue for the Arts— a rectangular district following University Avenue. While questions of location and urban organization have largely been absent from previous culture plans (some touched on issues of access across the breadth of Toronto's boroughs and residents), the 2003 policy document introduced an intense focus on centralizing this core cultural district in the city. Despite the significant cuts to operational arts funding throughout the 1990s, in 2002 the federal and provincial government committed an unprecedented total of $257 million to cultural construction through the Ontario Superbuild Program and the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program.[41] This money would be further backed by $488.5 million in private donations, investing a total of $745.5 million in seven buildings in the city's core.[42]

Toronto was not independent in this sudden focus on the role of cultural infrastructure in urban planning. Over 150 museums in North America were renovated between the years 1998 and 2000.[43] While there were many driving factors behind this cultural boom, much of the language and ideology that defined this shift, found in cultural and urban plans alike, was adopted from the growing popularity of Creative City theory. Creative City theory was popularized in the late 1990s and early 2000s and was developed in the work of both Charles Landry and Richard Florida. Creative City theory develops ideas about urban space in a post-industrial paradigm where 'Creative' Labour is the driving force of economies. Landry points to the beginnings of Creative City theory developing in the late 1980s.[44] In subsequent years Landry and Florida's books *The Creative City* (published by Landry in 1994) and *The Rise of the*
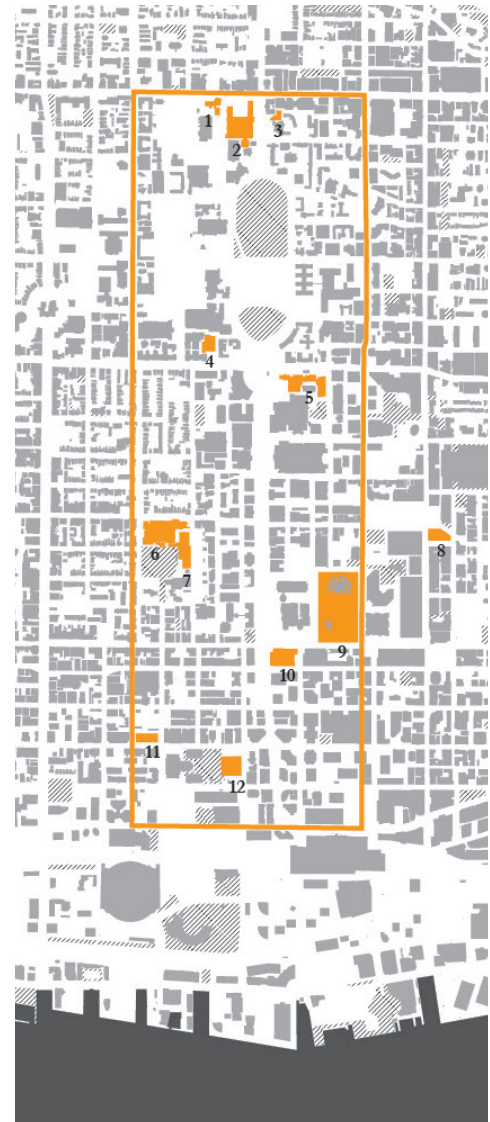
fig.1.7

Toronto's Avenue for the Arts and cultural spaces developed between 2000 and 2010.

1. Royal Ontario Museum

2. Royal Conservatory of Music

3. Gardiner Museum

4. UofT Biomedical Building

5. MARS Discovery District

6. Art Gallery of Ontario

7. Ontario College of Art and Design

8. Yonge and Dundas Square

9. Nathan Phillips Square

10. Four Seasons Opera House

11. TIFF Bell Lightbox

12. Roy Thompson Hall

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40   City of Toronto, "Culture Plan for the Creative City," (2003).

41   Jenkins, «Toronto's Cultural Renaissance,» 175-176.

42   Jenkins, «Toronto's Cultural Renaissance,» 175-176.

43   Sharon Zukin, "How to create a culture capital: Reflections on urban markets and places," in *Century city: Art and culture in the modern metropolis* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 258-265. referenced in Jenkins, "Toronto's Cultural Renaissance," 170.

44   Charles Landry, "Lineages of the creative city," *Creativity and the City,* Netherlands Architecture Institute (2005) 2.

Creative Class (published in 2002 by Florida) were seminal in popularizing Creative City theory.

Florida's work in particular has been somewhat of a phenomenon within planning circles, his book rose to spectacular popularity and Florida himself served as the face of the Creative City movement. Florida's work emphasizes the role of what he calls the 'Creative Class,' a growing group of culture and knowledge workers whom he proposes are the new middle class of the post-industrial world. Despite the implications of the word 'creative' Florida's definition includes quite a significant group of white-collar workers. His definition identifies the Creative Class by their economic function, the creation of new ideas, new technology, and new creative content. This includes those in science, engineering, architecture, design, education, arts, music, entertainment, technology, business, finance, law, and healthcare.[45] Creative City thinkers hail this so-called Creative Class as the new driving economic force in cities. Florida argues that within post-industrial economies, cities must compete to attract both this critical, creative labour force, as well as tech and knowledge companies.[46] Florida claims this can be done with a range of strategies (what Florida refers to as the three T's, Technology, Talent, and Tolerance) and the provision of the right kind of space that caters to the right type of resident. Florida's image of desirable urban space includes "authentic" space and vibrant street life.[47] For cities that have conformed to the Creative City vision, the creation of this space has largely been undertaken through investment in the built environment.[48] This investment has come in many forms, the most visible of which include spectacular museum construction and the creation of major creative districts in the city. Globally cities have also embraced a renewed focus on urban aesthetics more broadly, with streetscaping, heritage designations, and permanent art installations becoming a focal point in planning. This new promotion of urban aesthetics is paired with the promotion of coffee shops and bar culture, festivals, and all manner of street-level spectacle in an attempt to create "authentic" street culture to attract the Creative

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45   Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: and how its transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 8.

46   Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

47   Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

48   Jamie Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no.3 (December 2005): 740-770.

Class.[49]

        Unsurprisingly many of these elements are most often associated today with what is recognizable as mixed-use gentrification.[50] Critics have argued that the widespread adoption of Creative City planning by urban planners during the 2000s was owed not to its cultural payoff but instead to its ability to fit well into the political restructurings of the years prior.[51] Creative planning positioned cultural policy as a tool to first and foremost incentivise economic development. This relationship links cultural initiatives directly to the gentrifying forces that typically displace difference and creativity from urban centers. In Toronto gentrification has all but removed affordable space from the city's core, pushing low-income groups out of downtown, groups that frequently include new immigrants, artists, and a range of forms of work, life and culture. In the Creative City, culture is defined instead by the desires of a single type of resident, typically a young, single, middle class, creative worker. This narrow focus on a single type of resident creates a homogenous cultural landscape, displaces difference, and seriously limits the potential for complex and diverse cultural spaces in the city. Evidently, Creative City efforts have largely served as more of a development booster and branding exercise than an effective cultural model. They have enforced the dramatic regulatory shifts of the years prior and masked the culturally destructive nature of gentrification, loudly announcing that the city is getting more creative, just as all difference is being pushed to the periphery in favour of a monocultural vision.

Attracting the Creative Class: Enforcing Gentrification

The close relationship between gentrification and the Creative City is not remarkably surprising given the explicitly classist nature of Richard Florida's arguments. Gentrification is most often defined as class-based displacement, typically middle-class displacement of lower-class residents.[52] A central tenet of Florida's work focuses on the valorization of a new middle class, the Creative Class. This rhetoric prioritizes the attraction and shaping of the city for a single class of resident, making

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49   Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class."

50   Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," 740-770.

51   Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," 740-741.

52   Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly, "The Birth of Gentrification," in *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group, 2008), 3-36.
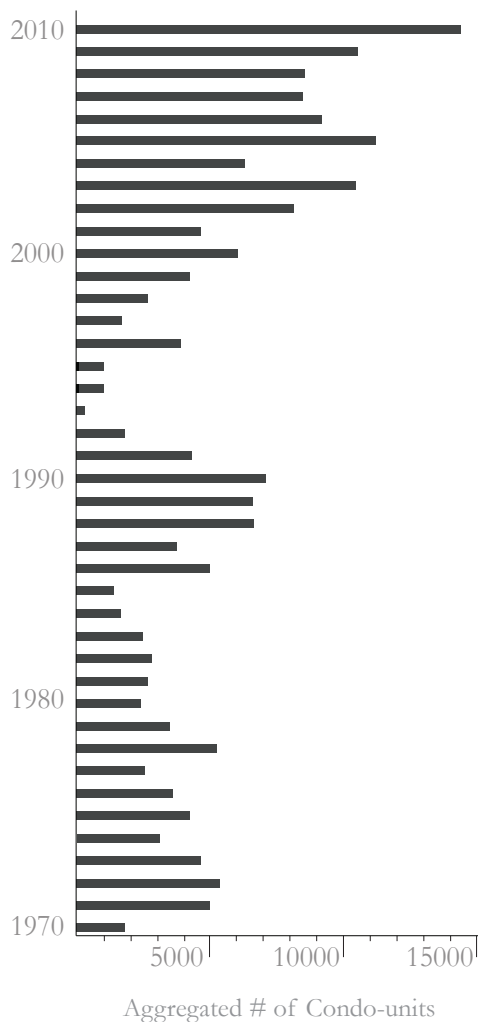
fig.1.8

Graph of aggregated number of new condo units in Toronto annually.

gentrification, not a by-product of, but the explicit goal of Creative City planning. Cities must attract this supposed 'Creative Class' no matter the cost or impact to existing residents.

Florida's work has been intensely critiqued for this glorification, as well as its misrepresentation of creative labour more broadly.[53] His work does little to address the class divisions and inequalities of the knowledge economy.[54] While Florida notes an increase in knowledge-based production as a positive, *Rise of the Creative Class* nearly entirely disregards the even larger shift in the labour force, an ever-growing service class. In Canada, service employment grew from 45% of the population in the 1960s to 70% in 1990.[55] This entire population is excluded from Florida's narrative, and by extension, from the planning of city centers. Critics of Creative City theory also note the exclusion of manufacturing workers from the Creative Class.[56] This dismissal of the production of goods as "uncreative" points to a shallow understanding of cultural production within Creative City rhetoric.[57] Ultimately Creative City theory positions the vibrant urban center as a space for the argued elite, middle-class knowledge worker, while the ever-growing service class, and the supposedly obsolete manufacturing worker, are pushed to the periphery.

Critics Wilson and Keil take a slightly different approach to their critique of Toronto's Creative City and its definitions of creativity arguing that the real Creative Class is Toronto's growing urban poor.[58] They point to the fact that real creative instincts are required not of those whom the world is built for through Creative City design policies but required of those who must adapt their own environments to survive.[59] Wilson and Keil point out that in this sense, we can see the Creative City as at its base a dystopic construct. A truly 'Creative' City would require a maximization of both poverty and an increase

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53   Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," 756.

54   Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," 756.

55   Graham Todd, "Restructuring Toronto: Post Fordism and Urban Development in a World Class City" *Problematique* 3, (1995): 114-143.

56   Carl Grodach, Justin O'Connor, and Chris Gibson, "Manufacturing and Cultural Production: Towards a Progressive Policy Agenda for the Cultural Economy," *City, Culture and Society* 10, (2017): 17-25.

57   Grodach, O'Connor, and Gibson, "Manufacturing and Cultural Production," 17-25.

58   David Wilson, and Roger Keil, "The Real Creative Class," *Social and Cultural Geography* 9, no.8 (2008): 841-847.

59   Wilson, and Keil, "The Real Creative Class," 841-847.
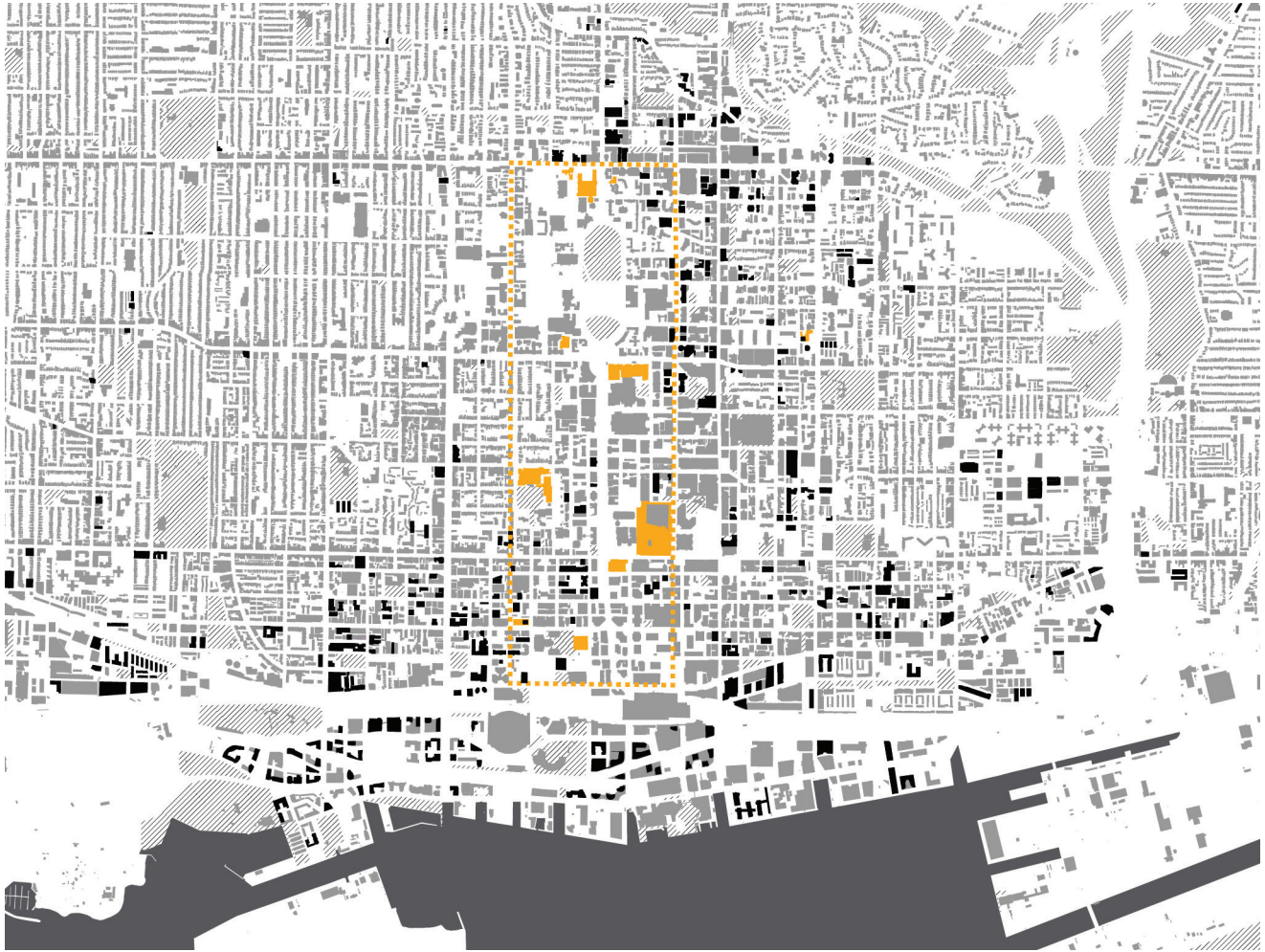
in labour exploitation.[60] In some ways, this exploitation has become much more evident in labour practices today, as a growing group of precarious workers, often referred to as the 'precariat'[61] develop as the shadow of a trophy Creative Class. Ultimately both labour insecurity and residential insecurity feature as a key component of flexible accumulation and by extension of the Creative City vision.

  While the classist rhetoric of Creative City theory alone serves to enforce gentrifying development, The Creative City also enforces centralization and gentrification through its more direct connections to condominium development. Condominium development in Toronto has been a driving force of gentrification. New build gentrification, a process

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60 Wilson, and Keil, "The Real Creative Class," 841-847.

61 Alison Bain and Heather McLean, "The Artistic Precariat," *Cambridge
Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 6 (2003): 95-97; Guy Standing,
"The Precariat," *Contexts* 13, no. 4 (November 2014): 10–12.

by which new construction drives up property values and cost of living and displaces low-income residents, is the predominant face of gentrification in the city today.[62] It has been argued that the Creative City, with its impetus for both concentrated, mixed-use development and housing for young single workers, has further supported and encouraged the construction of mixed-use condominiums as the 'right type of housing' for the Creative Class.[63] In Toronto, the city's third and largest condo boom happened alongside the city's Cultural Renaissance plans. Between 2000 and 2010, the city experienced staggering condominium growth concentrated in the urban core. In parallel, the *Culture Plan for the Creative City* focused its investments on the creation of the "Avenue for the Arts" within the epicentre of the city's condominium construction. This move located all $745.5 million in funding in proximity to the zones designated for centralized growth in the 2002 urban plan.

Creative City planning's use of entrepreneurial tactics and its reliance on private funding have also encouraged condominium development in the core. While funding for cultural infrastructure experienced an injection of government funding in the 2000s, ongoing municipal funding for arts organizations remained at 1990 levels despite a 40% growth in the city's economy.[64] The Creative City responded to this shortage by encouraging more entrepreneurial business strategies on behalf of the arts and an increased reliance on private funding. In this period, condominium development and density bonuses became a prominent source of funding for arts and culture infrastructure. The controversial adoption of Section 37 of Ontario's *Planning Act* allowed developers density bonuses in exchange for funding to local service initiatives. It has been noted that these bonuses, as opposed to funding social housing or community centers, are most frequently put towards urban investments in public art or other urban improvements, which further increase the developer's property value.[65] This model has become a key tool in the funding of cultural initiatives in the city, connecting cultural investment and cultural or artistic production, directly to developer interest

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62   Lehrer, and Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification," 140-161.

63   Lehrer, and Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification," 147.

64   Jenkins, "Toronto's Cultural Renaissance," 182.

65   Lehrer, and Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification," 148-149.

and a site's gentrification.[66]

Ultimately, Creative City theory has normalized class-based rhetoric and helped to intensify mixed-use condominium development as the standard of design in Toronto today. Culture and gentrification have become synonymous in the city's eyes as cultural support is increasingly tied directly to mixed use development strategies. The focus on shaping the city to attract a single type of resident has led to the creation of an increasingly sterile cityscape, as time and time again, the same repetitive mixed use urban forms are put in place, and difference is pushed to the periphery. The narrow understanding of creativity and culture presented by the Creative City has encouraged a Toronto in which culture is perceived as largely an advertising campaign to attract investment, development, and wealthy residents instead of something produced within complex spaces and communities.

Cultural Branding and Consumptive Space: Masking Gentrification

While the Creative City serves to encourage gentrification, it also plays an important role in masking its destructive nature. Rather than addressing the needs of diverse and creative communities, the Creative City above all serves to act as a branding strategy for the City of Toronto and its development districts. By branding the city as a diverse, creative hotspot, the Creative City falsely aligns gentrification itself with cultural growth. In reality, gentrification has proven to be destructive to Toronto's cultural and creative communities alike. The Creative City masks this in two main ways: first through its promotion of the city's diversity, and the second through the promotion of its creativity.

Diversity Branding (and Cultural Displacement)

Diversity branding is not a new practice to the Creative City but has been present in Toronto for some time. Kipfer and Keil identify this tendency developing throughout the 1990s in what they refer to as the creation of "The City of Difference."[67] In development strategies throughout this decade, a longstanding image of "ethnic harmony"[68] becomes a prominent selling

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66   Lehrer, and Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification," 149.

67   Kipfer and Keil, "Toronto Inc?," 236-237.

68   Sheila Croucher, "Constructing the Image of Ethnic Harmony in Toronto, Canada: The Politics of Problem Definition and

point for the city.[69] Kipfer and Keil critically note that these branding strategies arise alongside entrepreneurial development strategies and policing tactics, which disproportionately impact women, First Nations people, immigrants, and people of colour.[70] The Creative City continues to push this narrative of ethnic harmony, promoting marketable diversity over tangible critical work on racial equity.

Creative City planning in the 2000s continues to promote this image of Toronto as a multicultural utopia, going so far as to adopt the motto "Diversity is our strength" for the city's 2008 Olympic bid.[71] *The Culture Plan for the Creative City* equates cultural and ethnic diversity directly to Toronto's economic success and urges the city to further market its diversity[72]. While a central tenet of Florida's Creative City claims to be 'tolerance,' many argue that the use of multiculturalism as a marketing strategy for Toronto has at best adopted diverse cultural practices into models of capitalist urbanization and gentrification.[73] Diversity strategies promoted by Creative City ideology simplify diversity to only include its consumable and marketable elements (food, festivals, themed street renovations), making multiculturalism at best a branding exercise for the city and distracting from real issues and anti-racism work[74] (addressing underserviced immigrant communities, issues of access to labour and adequate housing, and racialized police violence) in favour of presenting a harmonious cultural front for tourists.

In Toronto, ethnic neighbourhood names are a clear representation of the real role of marketed culture. A study completed in 2005 evaluated several ethnically defined Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and noted that both Little Italy and Greektown on the Danforth were assigned names only after significant flight of Italian and Greek residents from the respective areas. Festivals, themed streetscaping and condo branding followed, representing and marketing the presence

Nondefinition," *Urban Affairs Review* 32, no.3 (January 1997): 319-347.

69   Kanishka Goonewardena, and Stefan Kipfer, "Spaces of Difference: Reflections from Toronto on Multiculturalism, Bourgeois Urbanism and the Possibility of Radical Urban Politics," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no.3 (2005): 670-678.

70   Kipfer and Keil, "Toronto Inc?," 237.

71   Goonewardena, and Kipfer, "Spaces of Difference," 671.

72   City of Toronto, "Culture Plan for the Creative City."

73   Goonewardena, and Kipfer, "Spaces of Difference," 671.

74   Goonewardena, and Kipfer, "Spaces of Difference," 672.

of cultures that no longer resided locally.[75] Even in BIAs that retained many of their authentic ethnic businesses after their communities rebranding, owners noted having to 'water down' or re-package their businesses to market to the influx of "yuppies".[76] Many urbanists refer to this type of shift as 'Disneyfication' in which the creation of sanitized versions of culture become 'themed' zones within the city, making them more accessible to consumers.[77]

Today, Toronto's downtown, a space that was previously a landing pad to most of Canada's new immigrants, is now largely unaffordable. The few lasting ethnic communities downtown face imminent displacement. Despite significant community protest and organizing in Little Tibet, Little Jamaica, and Chinatown, gentrification pressures continue to destroy affordable housing and displace local communities, and businesses. Meanwhile, increasingly dispersed new immigrant communities are pushed to the edge of the city, which remains underserviced, as all creative and cultural funding is put towards the creation of centralized tourism sites in the urban core.

Creative Branding (and Artist Displacement)

While Creative City theory builds on existing diversity branding strategies in Toronto, it introduces an entirely new language in its use of creative branding. The early 2000s mark a surge in the city's promotion of its own creativity. Alongside the release of the Culture Plan, the early 2000s saw an onslaught of tourism and creative branding exercises. Toronto's self-proclaimed Creative Renaissance was accompanied by a sixteen month long "TO: Live with Culture Campaign"[78] and the labelling of 2006 as "the Year of Creativity."[79] Similar branding strategies were adopted by development districts within the city, with both the Distillery District, Liberty Village and much of Queen West advertised as creative or countercultural sites. While the image of the urban artist has become a prominent marketing

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75 Jason Hacksworth and Josephine Rekers, "Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification: The Case of Four Neighbourhoods in Toronto," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no.2 (2005): 211-236.

76 Hacksworth and Rekers, "Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification," 211-236.

77 Alan Bryman, "The Disneyization of society," *The Sociological Review* 47, no.1 (February 1999): 25-57. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00161.

78 Alison L. Bain, *Creative Margins*, 13.

79 Jenkins, «Toronto's Cultural Renaissance,» 177-178.

strategy for condo development, the realities of these projects' impacts on creative communities have proven to be quite destructive. The preservation of living space for artists (and low-income workers more broadly) seems to have fallen to the wayside completely in Toronto's Cultural Renaissance. A 2019 survey by Toronto Arts Council revealed that 70% of artists surveyed have considering leaving the city, citing reasons such as rising rents and unavailable studio space.[80] Artists, often in lower-income groups, have found themselves priced out of increasingly gentrified urban space, just as it is stamped 'Creative.'

Artists have held a complex and contested relationship to gentrifying space since the 1970s. This relationship has been explored by geographers through both aesthetic and economic lenses. Economically the presence of artists on gentrifying sites is often attributed to a purely value function. Artists, an often-low-income group, seek out affordable space in older buildings. These spaces typically have proven to be the prime targets of redevelopment strategies, making artists somewhat of a canary in the mineshaft of gentrification. Geographer David Ley argues that beyond locational happenstance, artists play a central role in aestheticization and, by extension, the gentrification of urban space itself.[81] Ley argues that the presence of artists drives middle-class interest, and by extension, serves as a driver of gentrification. Indeed, in Toronto, the presence of artists seems to have been a recurring and significant marker of impending gentrification. Neil Smith notes this tendency in the 1980s in Manhattan, where developers would lease spaces to galleries at discounted rates to drive up the real estate value of properties before the eventual redevelopment and displacement of the galleries.[82]

In contemporary gentrification (often referred to as third-wave gentrification), this tendency of artist-driven gentrification is transformed into a more cohesive urban and state-imposed tactic through the Creative City. Third-wave gentrification from the 1990s onward, unlike the gentrification of the 1970s and 1980s, is significantly more reliant on large developers and state mediation, moving it far beyond the

80   Toronto Arts Foundation, *Arts Stats 2019, Going Without: Artists and Arts Workers in Our Creative City* (2019), 18-19.

81   David Ley, "Artists, Aesthetisication and the Field of Gentrification," *Urban Studies* 40, no.12 (2003): 2527-2544.

82   Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 19-20.

impacts of individual homeowners.[83] In parallel with this third wave, gentrifications aesthetic drivers are also transformed. Aesthetic drivers, which could previously be related to individual middle-class aesthetic and artistic interests, have instead transformed into a state and investor-mediated vision for urban development, The Creative City.

A prime example of this sort of branding is visible along the now intensely gentrified West Queen West (WQW). Along WQW the rail triangle, a plot of land framed by the rail line and queen street, had its zoning deregulated in 2002, and was labeled as a regeneration area, opening the site up to developers. WQW was designated an "Arts and Design District" by the city in 2003, and the rezoned site experienced rapid redevelopment between 2000 and 2010.[84] Condominiums in this period jumped on the creative bandwagon and embraced bohemian branding. One condominium in the area during named itself the "The Bohemian Embassy." The following is a poem from a promotional booklet for the condo.

"How to BE
Wear a beret.
Be the only employee of your own company.
Play the bongos.
Write poetry. And don't be afraid to read it out loud.
Don't wear a beret.
Start an art gallery.
Wear vintage clothing.
Own a cool car. But take the subway.
Know the names of all the street musicians on Queen West.
Live at the Bohemian Embassy."[85]

This type of creative branding and transformation is also visible across the tracks in what is now known as Liberty Village. Similar to much of Toronto's industrial building stock, abandoned factory buildings opened the area up to occupation by artists and squatters in the 1970s.[86] By 1990, after the

fig.1.10
Promotional billboard on Queen West for the Bohemian Embassy.

fig.1.11
Screenshot of Liberty Village BIA website, 2020.

83   Jason Hacksworth and Neil Smith, "The Changing State of Gentrification," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 92, no. 4 (2001): 464-477.

84   Michelle Van Eyk, "The Legacy of 48 Abell: Tales from a Gentrifying Neighbourhood," (Masters Thesis., University of Waterloo, 2010).

85   Michelle Van Eyk, "The Legacy of 48 Abell," 102.

86   John Paul Catungal, Deborah Leslie, and Yvonne Hii, "Geographies of Displacement in the Creative City: The Case of Liberty Village, Toronto," *Urban Studies* 46, no.5-6 (2009): 1099.
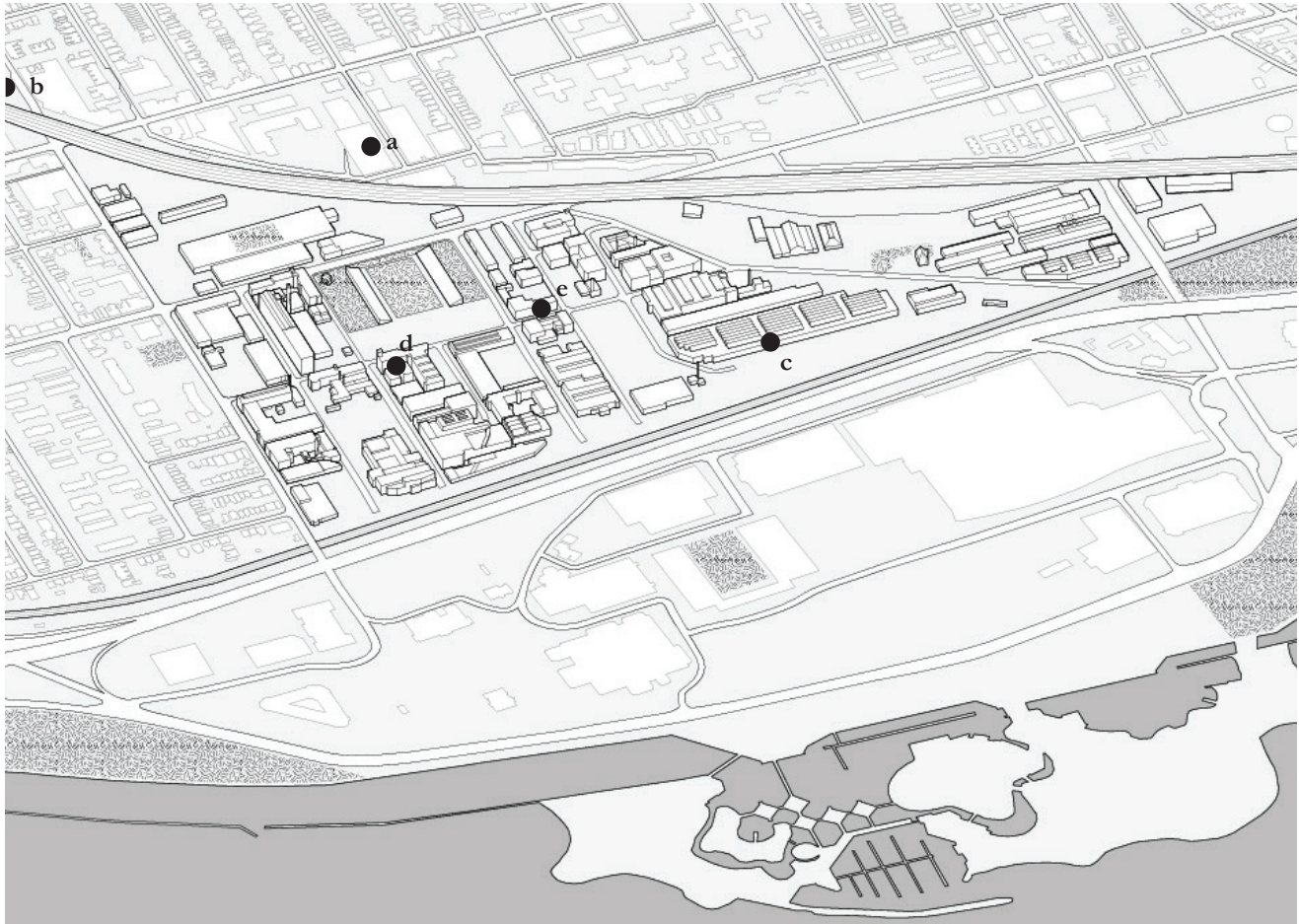
fig.1.12
Aerial view of Liberty Village in the 1990s.

Key of significant cultural production buildings and documented evictions

a. 48 Abell
80 Live/work units, residents evicted in 2007.

b. Dufferin Warehouse Building
Industrial studio space, 43 studios evicted in 2018.

c. 9 Hanna Ave
Live/work space, residents evicted from building in 2001.

d. "The Castle" 55 Fraser
55 live/work residents evicted in 2001.

e. 60 Atlantic
48 Affordable Studio spaces held by non-profit Artscape, artists evicted in 2012.

displacement of much of the arts community in the core, the Liberty Village area remained one of the last densely populated countercultural communities within central Toronto. Several buildings during this period were of note for their role in fostering this community. 9 Hanna Avenue was one such site, described as a "mythic building" by residents, it housed both live and work space.[87] Andrew Cash, a resident at 9 Hanna, described the old munitions factory as follows,

"The entrance to 9 Hanna was breathtaking, opening onto a huge expanse of empty space easily the size of a high school football field. The rooms housing the studios were built around the perimeter. Because the front door was never locked, people started hearing about this huge open space.

Especially in the winter, I met with many a surprise: a dozen juggling unicyclists practicing one night, a martial

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87   Andrew Cash, "Farewell to Mythic Warehouse: Felling of Artist Den 9 Hanna the End of an Era," *Now Magazine*, March 23, 2006, https://nowtoronto.com/news/farewell-to-mythic-warehouse
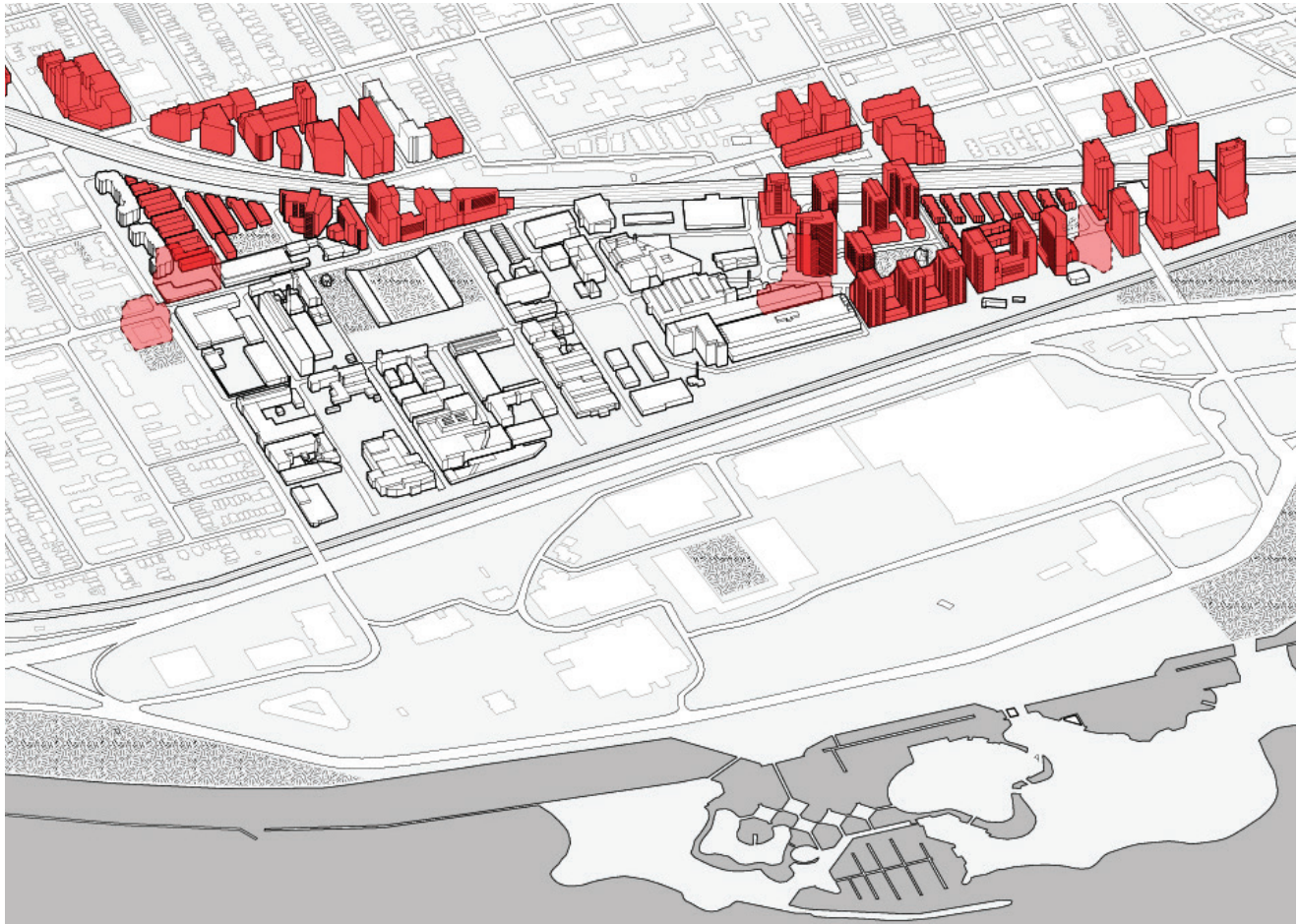
fig.1.13
Aerial view of Liberty Village in the 2020s.
■ condominiums
■ condominiums to be completed

arts group another, dirt bike racing on a Friday night, joggers on Sunday morning. All this on top of the goings-on of the regular tenants. Doubtless, no one asked permission.

It sounds like another world, another city where artists, entrepreneurs and drifters could colour outside the lines, where corporate chain stores and condo conversions hadn't sucked up just about every square foot of available, affordable warehouse space."[88]

In 1994, at a press conference hosted in the area, mayor Barbara Hall announced new economic development policies focused on converting industrial buildings to mixed use and residential.[89] She claimed that this would not only stimulate economic development but also "vault Toronto right back into the front rank of creative urban policy."[90] Through the late

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88   Andrew Cash, *Farewell to Mythic Warehouse.*

89   Lehrer and Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification" 145.

90   J. Barber, "Hall's move may solve some of out real problems," The

fig.1.14
9 Hanna Avenue.

fig.1.15
Dufferin Warehouse Building.

fig.1.16
48 Abell.

1990s and early 2000s the city would work to relax industrial zoning regulations and open-up the area to development. In the years that followed the entire site was remodelled as a creative mixed-use hub. In the late 1990s, developers championed the name 'Liberty Village' and adopted the slogan "Championing and nurturing a creative and vibrant community."[91] Many buildings were demolished and replaced by intensely localized loft, and condominium development. In 2000, residents were evicted from 9 Hanna by the city, to make way for its redevelopment as a wired high-tech complex. [92]

The buildings that did not face demolition underwent significant renovation. Industrial sites were retrofitted to host high-end office spaces, targeting television, advertising, film, design and tech firms.[93] The previous tenants, a mix of non-profits, artists, and manufacturing space, were steadily pushed from the area, either by eviction, raised rents, or the increasingly restrictive spaces of Liberty Village.[94] New forms of governance emerged on the site in 2001, through the Liberty Village Business Improvement Area (LVBIA), a board that property owners and commercial tenants are eligible to vote within.[95] The LVBIA leaned heavily on the history of the arts on the site, using its 'creative' and 'eclectic' identity, to promote the area. Despite this, it has been argued that BIAs, a private governance system widely adopted in Toronto alongside the Creative City, ultimately serve to sanitize areas for investment and increasingly commercial cultural uses, limiting the sites diversity.[96] Throughout the 2000s, graffiti was wiped away in favour of LVBIA sanctioned art installations, streetscaping, and private security staff who patrol the neighbourhood from dusk till dawn.[97]

Globe and Mail, October 19, 1995: A.9. as cited in Lehrer and Wieditz, "Condominium Development and Gentrification," 145.

91   Catungal, Leslie, and Hii, "Geographies of Displacement" 1101.

92   Catungal, Leslie, and Hii, "Geographies of Displacement" 1108.

93   Catungal, Leslie, and Hii, "Geographies of Displacement" 1110.

94   Catungal, Leslie, and Hii, "Geographies of Displacement" 1107-1110.

95   John Paul Catungal and Deborah Leslie, "Placing power in the Creative City Governmentalities and subjectivities in Liberty Village Toronto," *Environment and Planning A* 41 (2009): 2583.

96   Catungal, Leslie, and Hii, "Geographies of Displacement."; Sebastien Darchen, "The Creative City and the Redevelopment of the Toronto Entertainment District: A BIA-Led Regeneration Process," International Planning Studies 18, no.2 (2013): 191. https://doi.org/10.1080/13563475.2013.774147.

97   Catungal, Leslie, and Hii, "Geographies of Displacement," 1108-1109.

Throughout the 2000s, while the image of bohemia was adopted by the city and developers alike, its last remnants were steadily being pushed from the core. While artists mark only a small percentage of those impacted by the city's gentrification, their absence shines a somewhat damning light on the real priorities of the Creative City. Toronto's Creative Renaissance has been much more focused on spectacle, tourism, and real estate than any meaningful attempts to support existing cultural growth, in even its most recognized forms.

Artscape Case study

To track shifting forms and perceptions of creative space in Toronto, the evolution of Artscape represents a valuable case study. Artscape, a local non-profit, is most well known for its work providing and maintaining affordable art spaces in the city. Founded in 1986, the non-profit and its buildings have since shifted quite drastically to align with the city's Creative Renaissance. Today Artscape is the most well-known affordable studio provider in the city, and its trajectory points to some telling concerns about Toronto's cultural future.

Artscape describes its creation as a response to the displacement of artists from Queen Street West during the 1980s in a booming real estate market.[98] In this period (between 1986 and 1999) Artscape secured many of its early properties within pre-existing artists' neighbourhoods, namely Queen West, Liberty Village, and Parkdale. Most of these properties looked to secure and fix live/workspaces in quickly gentrifying neighbourhoods. Funding in these early projects came primarily from the City of Toronto. All of these projects were located in repurposed buildings, in which Artscape was the principal tenant.

The 2000s and the rise of the Creative City marked a pronounced shift in Artscape's operations and spaces. Artscape itself defines this period as their transition from affordable studio provider to community developer. While this transition is undoubtedly pressured by increasingly unaffordable rents in the core (several of Artscape's earlier projects shut down in this period) the language Artscape adopts is entirely that of Toronto's Creative City. Language describing Artscape spaces shifts from the preservation of studio space to the non-profit's role as a "catalyst for community growth and change."[99] In

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98 "Our Evolution," Artscape, accessed June 19, 2021, https://www.artscape.ca/about-us/evolution.

99 "Our Evolution," Artscape.
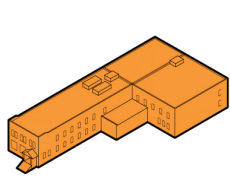
1991
Artscape Liberty Village
48 studio spaces
30 000 sqft
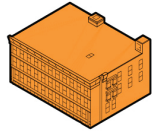
1995
Artscape West Queen West
22 live work studios, 5 work/commercial galleries, one gallery, one tenants' garden
35 520 sqft
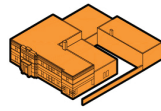
1998
Artscape Parkdale Arts and Cultural Centre
9 live/work studios, three offices, one gallery
13 000 sqft
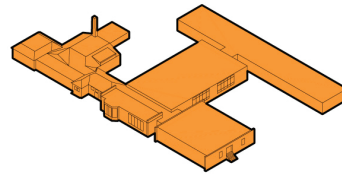
1999
Artscape Gibralter Point
15 work studios, 10 bedrooms and studios and 5 multipurpose spaces
35 000 sqft
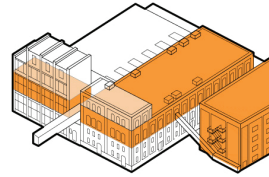
2003
Artscape Distillery District
10 retail studios, 20 office spaces, rehearsal/performance spaces and artist work studios
50 000 sqft

*unclear extent of Artscape occupancy on third floor
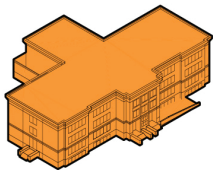
2013
Artscape Youngplace
38 studios occupied by artists and organizations, one public lounge, Cafe, and hallway Galleries
75 000 sqft
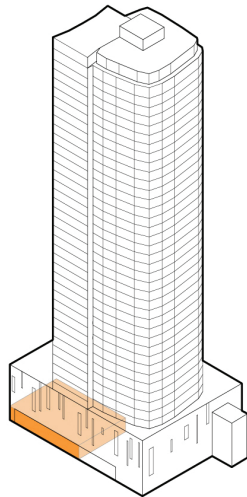
2015
Artscape Sandbox
Multidisciplinary Performance and Event Space
6000 sqft
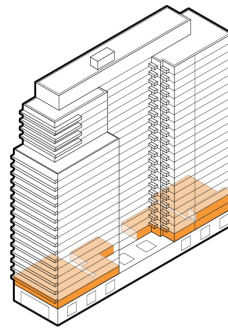
2015
Artscape Lofts at Simcoe
15 Units at below market ownership and rental
3500 sqft

*artscape volume based on number of units and typical floorplan
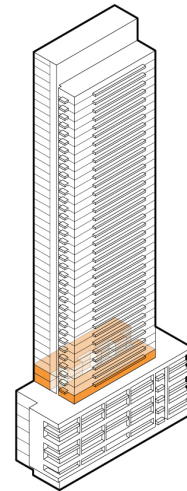
2016
Artscape Lofts at Pace
14 Condominium Units at below market ownership and rental
9200 sqft

*artscape volume based on number of units and typical floorplan

20
Ar
Co
30
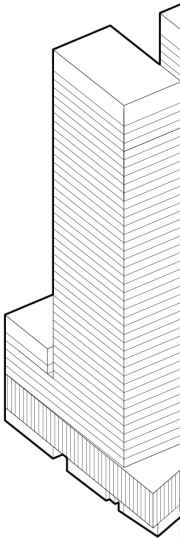
fig.1.17
Timeline of Artscape spaces between 1991-2019. Size and location of Artscape occipancy estimated in some cases. Area assumptions noted in captions.

■ Artscape occupied space
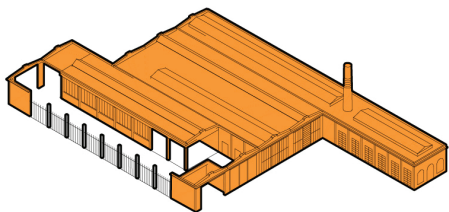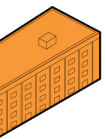
2008
Artscape Wychwood Barns
26 artist live/work studios. 12 commercial/office spaces, 1 greenhouse, 1 art gallery, 1 event venue
60 000 sqft
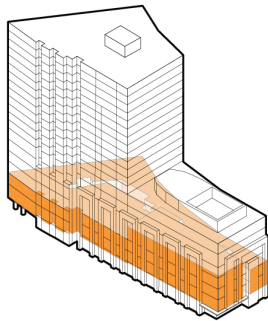
2011
Artscape Triangle Lofts
68 live/work units (48 purchased the remainder rented) and 1 ground floor gallery
55 000 sqft condo units
1100 sqft gallery

*artscape volume based on number of units and typical floorplan
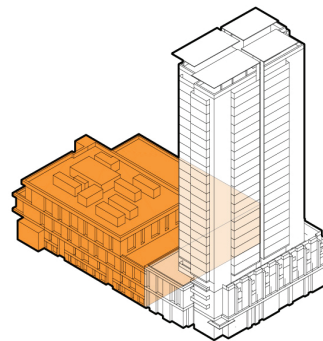
2012
Artscape Daniels Spectrum
Below market Commercial rental Seven organizational spaces (including offices, screening room, rehearsal space); Ada Slaight Hall; Show Love Café and Artscape Lounge, Hallway Galleries, Courtyard
60 000 sqft
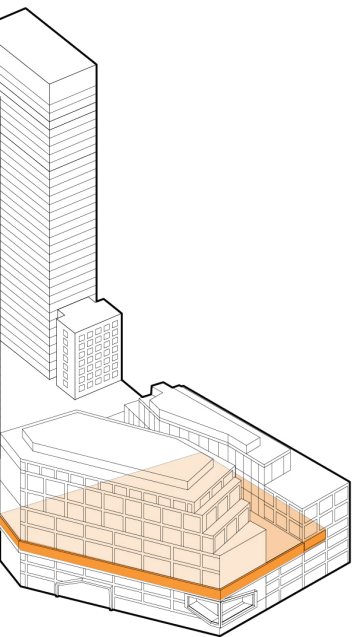
18-2019
rtscape Daniels Launchpad
work space /membership model
000 sqft
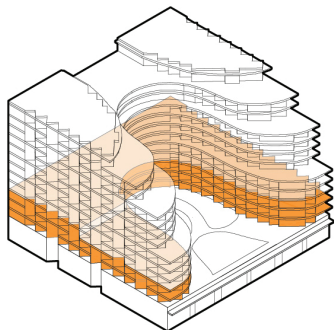
2019
Artscape Bayside Lofts
80 Affordable Rental Units (80% market rate)
unknown sqft

*artscape volume shown as a percentage of residential floor area (26%)
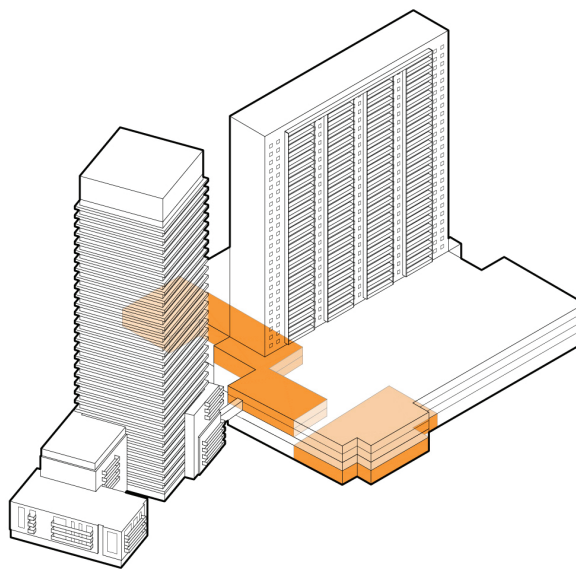
2019
Artscape Weston Commons
Indoor programming space, outdoor programming space, 26 live/work housing units, Rockport Theatre
unknown sqft housing
8200 sqft indoor
12400 sqft outdoor

*unclear size/location of housing. Best estimate shown above

the years that followed, Artscape worked directly with private developers to acquire funding and space as they transition to a directive focused on the potential of artists to revitalize spaces.

The first of these revitalization projects was Artscape Distillery District. For this building, Artscape was reached out to by Cityscape, developers who purchased the Distillery District area, in 2001.[100] The resulting Artscape development which came from this partnership was completed in 2003. The renovated space occupied two industrial buildings, the Case Goods Warehouse, and the Cannery Building[101]. The renovations created a mix of retail and work studios, office spaces, and performance spaces, managed by Artscape under a 20-year lease.[102] The renovated building became a foundational space for the intense redevelopment of the area, from industrial, to high-end retail, condominiums, and cultural tourism. The distillery project differentiates itself distinctly from older Artscape spaces through its collaboration with Cityscape and its funding model. The $3.1 million development was a mix of developer, City of Toronto, and a variety of other public private funds. $600 000 would be provided from Cityscape under the new Section 37 bylaw in exchange for height increases on development.[103] Moving forward Section 37 funding, and direct private partnerships, became a key component of Artscape's practice.[104]

The construction of Artscape Triangle Lofts in 2011 marks an even further shift within Artscape's model. This building was the first of what would be a string of condominium projects by the non-profit. The controversial Triangle Lofts condominiums project received significant pushback from residents of 48 Abell, an industrial building that previously existed on the site which contained 80 live/work units.[105] While these residents, primarily in creative fields,

100   "Artscape Distillery Studios," Artscape, accessed June 19, 2021, https://www.artscapediy.org/case-studies/artscape-distillery-studios/.

101   "Artscape Distillery Studios," Artscape.

102   "Artscape Distillery Studios," Artscape.

103   "Artscape Distillery Studios," D.I.Y Creative Placemaking Artscape, accessed June 19, 2021, https://www.artscapediy.org/case-studies/artscape-distillery-studios/.

104   Sophia Ilyniak, "The utopian city-building organization," in *Non-Profiting for "a more inclusive creative city" Tracking the gentrification frontier from Toronto's downtown to the disinvited inner-urban-suburbs,* (Major Paper, York University, 2017), 23.

105   Michelle Van Eyk, "The Legacy of 48 Abell: Tales from a Gentrifying Neighbourhood," (Masters Thesis., University of Waterloo, 2010).

fig.1.18
Photocollage of unit interior of 48 Abell by Michelle Van Eyk.

fig.1.19
Photo of Artscape Triangle Loft artist unit.

had hoped to protect their building and the city's dwindling stock of live/work industrial space, the stand-off resulted in the demolition of the industrial building. Artscape was brought on to the project to manage a gallery and 68 affordable units in the new condo building on the site, provided through Section 37 funding and to be considered a replacement for the destroyed units.[106] While attempts where made to compensate for the size and quality of the units though consultation with existing residents, the resulting condo spaces compare poorly to the vast flexible floor plans and high ceilings of the now demolished 48 Abell.[107]

In the years that followed, Artscape focused most of its projects on providing units within new condo buildings for sale or rental to artists. While Artscape has implied these are intended to potentially serve as live work space, it is unclear that any spatial accommodations have been made within these new condo units for the unique spatial requirements of arts occupants and live/work conditions (namely large spaces and high ceilings, appropriate ventilation, lighting, plumbing, and acoustics). While several of Artscape's condominium projects have focused on the creation of space specifically designed for the arts, it is important to note that these projects, with their collective and often highly visible programming are located on key sites of controversial megaprojects in the city. Both Artscape Daniels Spectrum and Artscape Daniels Launchpad,

106   Eyk, "The Legacy of 48 Abell."
107   Eyk, "The Legacy of 48 Abell."

35

which provide community space or collaborative workspaces as opposed to housing, are sited on the massive redevelopment sites of Regent Park, and the Waterfront.

In recent years Artscape has developed a new focus on the creation of "Creative Spaces Outside the Core." Weston Commons, the first project of this initiative was completed in 2019. The project is located in the center of a racialized, low-income area of Weston.[108] This city-owned property was given over to private developers in exchange for the construction of 26 affordable artist units, an arts hub, and the maintenance of a privately-owned-public space in its plaza. While the *Outside the Core* initiative seems to be an appropriate step in addressing the over-centralization of funding, (both by the city in its Cultural Renaissance as well as within Artscape's own portfolio of spaces which are all located quite centrally in the city) it is critical to note that the site selected is one slated for intense gentrification in the coming years; Weston has recently received a new major transit link to the urban core that is located directly adjacent to the Artscape site. Despite the accommodation of 26 affordable units there have already been rent hikes to the 377 units in the existing rental tower on the site[109]. This rent increase has proven to be prohibitive as some residents have already begun to move in search of affordable housing.[110] Critically, it is unlikely that Artscape's affordable housing was provided to local residents as Artscape's housing functions off of a waiting list, suggesting artists will be moving to the site from elsewhere in the city in order to "revitalize the site".[111] The project is also paired with the construction of a new 30 story apartment tower (amended from the 8-story zoning through Section 37) by luxury developer Rockport Group.[112] These 370 market rate units mark a significant foothold for impending changes in the neighborhood, signaling the start of an influx of middle-class residents and the beginnings of lower-class displacement.[113]

While in it's rebrand, Artscape has positioned itself as

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108   Sophia Ilyniak, "The Weston Project" in *Non-Profiting for "a more inclusive creative city Tracking the gentrification frontier from Toronto's downtown to the disinvited inner-urban-suburbs*, (Major Paper, York University, 2017), 36.

109   Ilyniak, "The Weston Project," 35-70.

110   Ilyniak, "The Weston Project," 69-70.

111   Ilyniak, "The Weston Project," 67.

112   Ilyniak, "The Weston Project," 48-51.

113   Ilyniak, "The Weston Project," 35-70.

a "Community Developer,"[114] it remains unclear which exact 'communities' it is that they aim to develop. Architecturally, many of the spaces provided by the non-profit today make it difficult to imagine any true artistic collectivity. While it is easy to imagine active and locally engaged communities occupying the earlier Artscape buildings, it is less clear what relationships are encouraged in the scattered condo units of the current model. While the initial focus of Artscape was on the unique spatial requirements of artists and their existing communities, its current incarnation is much closer to a below-market rate condo developer. It has been argued that the single-minded focus by Artscape on the creation of space for artists allows both the non-profit and the city to turn a blind eye to the broader cultural impacts of gentrification on communities. This is clear even in Artscape's early work and advocacy in the Queen West neighbourhood. Queen West in the 1970s was made up of 40% immigrants, yet the advocacy in this time by the Toronto Arts Council and Artscape limited the city's focus to the displacement of artists.[115] Today, with Artscape's focus shifted from preserving to reinventing community, this tendency has moved from a passive to a quite active involvement in these groups' exclusion. While Artscape's ideological shift can largely be attributed to rising property costs and funding constraints, which one imagines are unlikely to resolve internally for the non-profit, the trajectory of its spaces over time raises some clear questions for the City of Toronto about the provision, quality, and role, of future creative space in the city.

Culture and Community

While the apex of Toronto's Creative Renaissance has passed with the early 2000s, Creative City theory has had a lasting impact on the city's ongoing cultural and creative investments. As it stands, creative space today serves not to preserve or protect existing communities in the core, but instead acts as a catalyst for intensified development and gentrification. Spurred by the mass deregulations and centralized development pushes of the 1990s the Creative City serves, above all, to enforce and encourage these shifts. A focus on attracting a high-income Creative Class to the core has left little interest in the retention

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114   "Our Evolution," Artscape.

115   Sophia Ilyniak, "The utopian city-building organization" in *Non-Profiting for "a more inclusive creative city" Tracking the gentrification frontier from Toronto's downtown to the disinvited inner-urban-suburbs*, (Major Paper, York University, 2017), 21-22.

of productive or affordable space. The Creative City has instead resulted in the declining quality and quantity of productive creative space within the city, in favor of flashy consumptive cultural sites which advertise and enforce Toronto' intensified development.

This alignment of cultural policy with gentrification is not only threatening to the ongoing productivity of artists and creatives but is also remarkably threatening to the breadth of cultural value that exists beyond that which is marketable to a Creative Class. While the Creative City has focused on a definition of cultural production that happens within galleries, cafes, and design offices, this is a remarkably limiting perception of culture. While the word culture has many (at times conflicting) definitions, ethnographer Galen Cranz defines culture as the system of meaning and knowledge shared between people.[116] This definition positions community as a central aspect of local cultural growth; people growing together over time produce shared knowledge. Culture is not solely produced by artists, but something which develops collectively in stable communities, in relation to land, location, and to buildings. If culture is tied to these things, any policy so heavily predicated on displacement and demolition of community will never provide space for lasting cultural growth. If Toronto wishes to truly foster a *local* cultural identity, one which moves beyond underfunded imitations of New York and Paris, it must broaden its definition of culture and reorient its attention to the provision of spaces that actively resist development pressures and provide stability within which existing communities can continue to grow and develop uniquely local and thriving homegrown cultures.

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116   Galen Cranz, "Defining Culture," in *Ethnography for Designers* (Routledge: 2016) accessed June 19, 2021.

Part 2

Fixed Architecture and Immaterial Labour

While the previous chapter of this thesis primarily reviewed existing urban critiques of the Creative City period, in this chapter I will be discussing more closely the architecture of the Creative City itself. While many aesthetic critiques have been levelled against the spectacular buildings of this era, the role of creative architectures as spaces of labour has yet to be thoroughly examined. While the factory building was the architectural icon of the industrial age, the architectures of the Creative City represent increasingly immaterial labour economies. Abstractly, this labour transition has been most critiqued within architectural theory by Pier Vittorio Aureli, whose work has focused on flexible spaces as a means of labour exploitation within increasingly immaterial economies. However, looking to the case of the Creative City, an urban project designed entirely around the foundational concept of immaterial labour and flexible accumulation, flexibility seems increasingly absent from the architectures of the city center. While Aureli's work has focused on the role of flexible buildings as exploitative mechanisms, the exploitation we see in the Creative City today is found not in flexible buildings but instead in fixed buildings located within increasingly flexible

geographies. In this chapter, by levelling existing geographic theory against Aureli's work, I argue that it is increasingly fixed buildings that encourage labour exploitation, making truly flexible architecture a critical means of resistance to capitalist development in Toronto and beyond.

Flexibility in Architectural Theory

When reflecting on spaces of immaterial labour and flexibility, Aureli has been a prominent voice within the field of architecture. Aureli's collective works, have aimed to establish a theory for an architecture that can stand in resistance to the networked, flexible, and interconnected capitalist flows of urbanization. Aureli's work stands in direct opposition to the popular fetishization of circulation and connectivity within architectural discourse through the 1990s.[117] Instead Aureli rejects flexibility and connectivity in favour of form and fixity. These themes carry through several of his works, as he examines both the urban and architectural role of flexibility in capitalist processes.

In reflecting on the role of flexibility within architecture Aureli argues that flexibility is fundamentally exploitative. In his essay titled "Labour and Architecture: Revisiting Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt" Aureli argues that within immaterial labour economies, flexible space is the primary space of labour exploitation.[118] He states that within immaterial labour processes, the entire human experience, cognitive and creative abilities alike, are subsumed under capital. Aureli sees this subsumption as aligned with a new architectural space that can accommodate and exploit the human subject's flexibility. Aureli sees increasingly flexible space, something he refers to as "free space", surpassing even that of the industrial factory's open floor plan, as the framework for flexible labour; he argues that an increasingly flexible worker is exploited within an increasingly flexible architecture. Aureli also critically points to the expanding nature of this flexibility. He argues that given the expansion of production to include human cognitive and creative abilities, there is an accompanying expansion of productive space. Aureli claims that within immaterial labour paradigms, the exploitation of the factory is no longer contained to industrial walls, but instead exploitative "free space" extends

117   Douglas Spencer, "Less than Enough: A Critique of the Project of Autonomy," in *Critique of Architecture*, (Berlin, Boston: Birkhäuser, 2021), 102-113.

118   Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Labour and Architecture: Revisiting Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt," *Log* 23 (2011): 97-118.
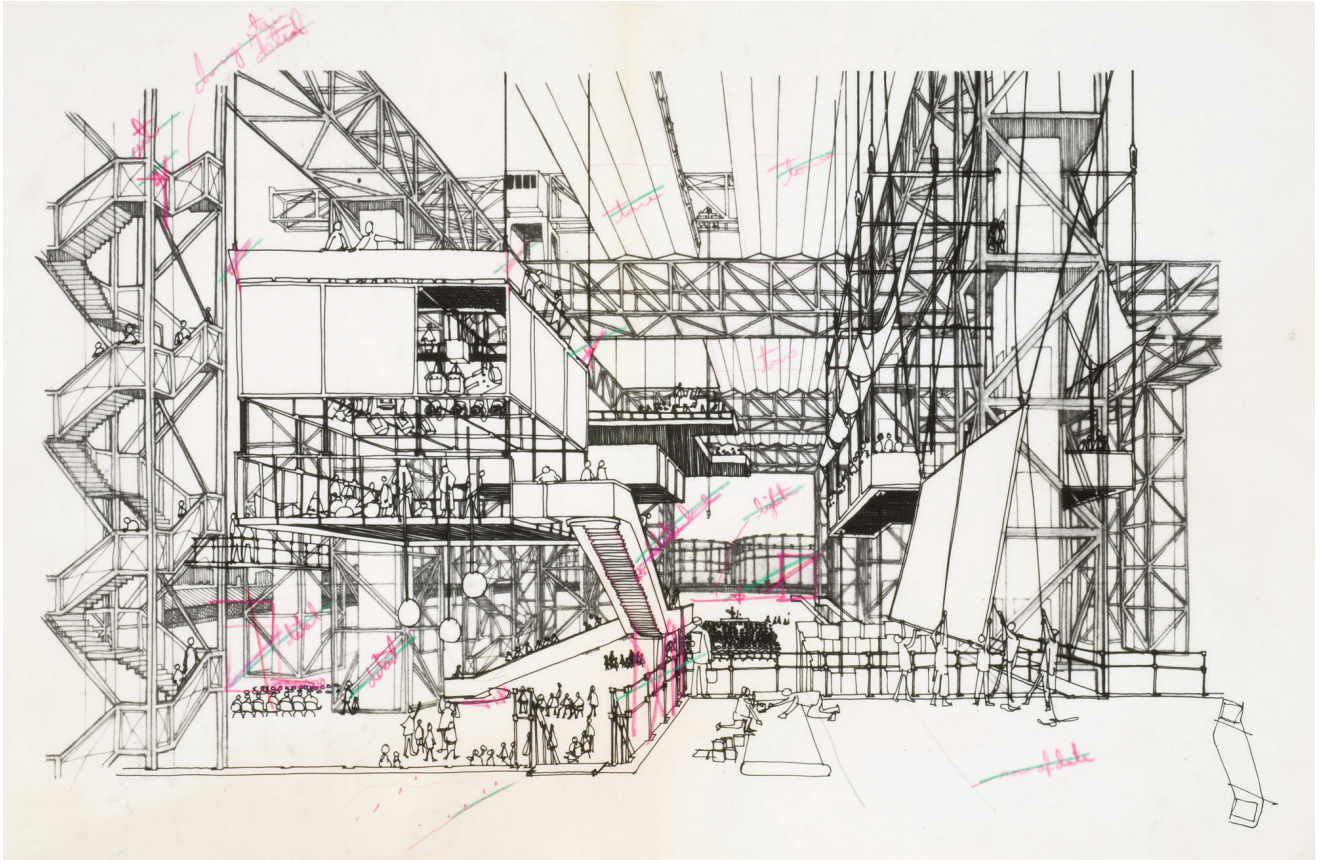
fig.2.0
Interior view of the Fun Palace by Cedric Price.

to the public realm, encompassing schools, malls, and all facets of human life.[119]

      Aureli points to Cedric Price's work as representative of these flexible forms, designed for the accommodation of leisure, education, and performance. Aureli views Price's work as representative of but uncritical towards these shifts. Price's work focused on the potential instead of the threat of creative labour and formally explored spaces that could harness new knowledge and leisure-based work. His uncompleted project the Fun Palace stands as a prime example of this exploration. Conceived of as a flexible site for productive leisure, the project was imagined as a modular frame structure that would use cranes and gantries to move parts of the building as needed, accommodating various uses. Aureli reflects on the openness and flexibility of the structure, writing that Price aimed to accommodate the unpredictable nature of human life. While Price saw this as an emancipatory act, Aureli views this from a more critical lens. The 'capturing of human life', which Price saw as a resistance to Fordism, Aureli argues is the core tenet of

119   Aureli, "Labour and Architecture," 97-118.

fig.2.1
Plan view of No-stop City by Archizoom.

Post-Fordist exploitation. Aureli interprets Price's work in the 1960s as unwittingly and uncritically prophetic of the labour exploitation to come in the years that followed. He identifies Price's work as a clear representation of the 'free space' of new production processes.[120]

Alongside architectural flexibility Aureli also approaches flexibility as a threat within urban scales. In Aureli's book, The *Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, he points to the flexibility and increasingly networked nature of urbanization itself as a driving form of capitalism.[121] Aureli refers to the work of Archizoom as a strong critique of this flexible capitalist urbanization. Their theoretical project No-stop City represents the expansion of the productive flexibility of the factory from the scale of architecture to the scale of the urban. The project, drawn as a field of dots, shows a city as pure infrastructure, with "a lift every 100sqm and a bathroom every 50 feet."[122] Aureli sees this work as representative of not only expanding domains of labour, but of the processes of capitalist urbanization more broadly. As the coordination of global flows and exchange become driving elements of capitalist production, No-stop City envisions the scale of the free plan of the factory expanded into a flexible, unbounded, and infinitely expansive urban scale of production.[123]

Aureli argues that this free form urbanization, driven by economic forces, (which he sees as fundamentally separate from political forces) has served to destroy the political potential of the space of the city (which he sees as separate from the space of the urban). He proposes that architecture is a critical site through which to rediscover the politics of the city and by extension a path of resistance against flexible capitalist urbanization. Aureli outlines the potential for political resistance through the creation of what he refers to as the "archipelago." Aureli defines the archipelago as the reproduction of the political space of the city within the bounded forms of architecture, bounds which he claims can delimit and by extension reshape the sprawling free space

fig.2.2
Plan variation of No-stop City.
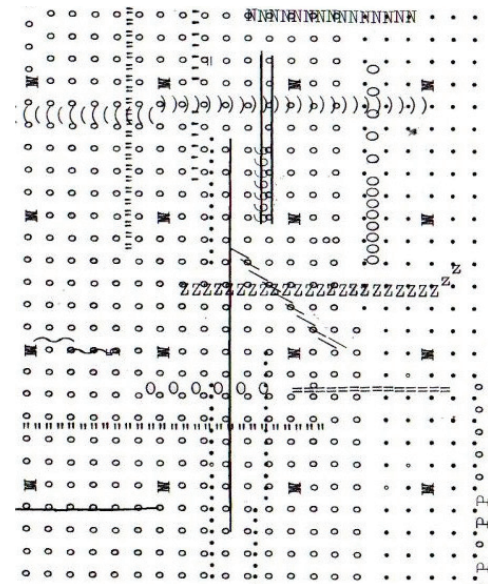
fig.2.3
Plan variation of No-stop City.
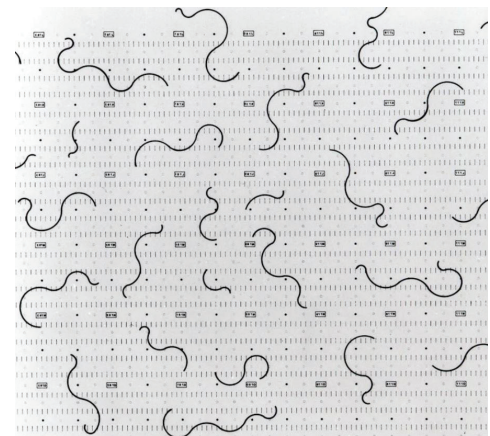
fig.2.4
Plan variation of No-stop City.

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120   Aureli, "Labour and Architecture," 97-118.

121   Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, (Cambridge: MIT, 2011).

122   Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press: 2008).

123   Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*; Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*.
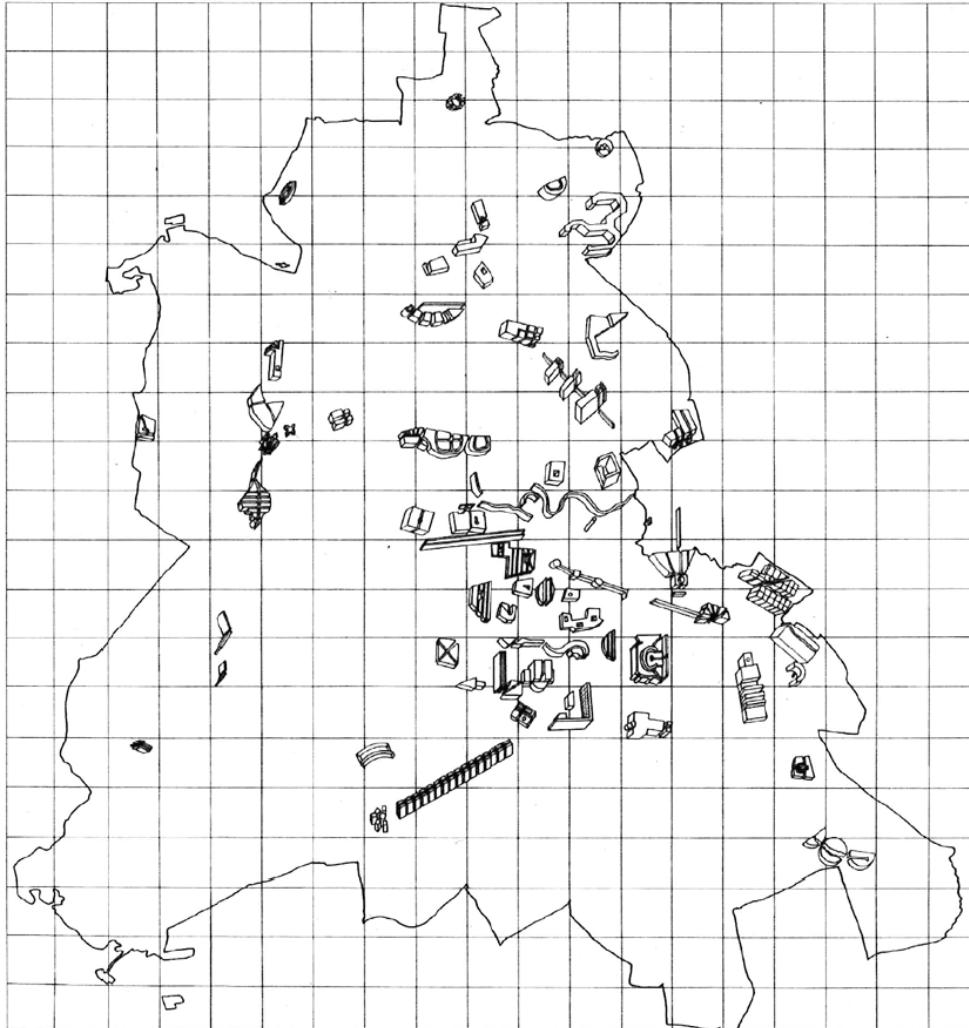
of urbanization. [124] He points to Ungers' project, *Berlin: a Green Archipelago,* to help form this argument. This proposal completed in 1977, by a group of architects led by Ungers, interpreted Berlin as a city composed of islands. In an attempt to eschew the totalizing nature of urban planning (which Aureli argues is an economic pursuit) the project envisions the city as defined by architectural parts, each imagined as a miniature city in itself. Aureli argues that this architecture of islands serves to frame and limited the unbounded nature of urbanization. [125] This conception of architecture as a

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124   Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture.*

125   Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Toward the Archipelago," *Log*, no. 11 (2008): 91-120.

collection of islands, an archipelago, points towards Aureli's understanding of a politically active architecture as one fixed in place, standing its ground, operating within but against a sea of flexible urbanization.

Flexibility in Geographic Theory

While Aureli perceives flexibility as a fundamental threat, both at urban and architectural scales, this perception is somewhat short-sighted. Theorist Douglas Spencer in his critique of Aureli's compiled work, notes that Aureli's project is fundamentally one of division, division of the political and the economic, the flexible and the fixed, the architectural and the urban. Spencer points out that through this division Aureli establishes a theory for a political, fixed, architecture, which he imagines existing in opposition to the economic and flexible space of urbanization. Spencer points to this division as a foundational flaw in Aureli's work, especially within neoliberal contexts where the political and the economic are increasingly indistinguishable.[126] Spencer argues that Aureli's work simply reverses capitalist systems and fails to actively oppose them or acknowledge the complex interconnected relationships of their parts. In reflecting further on the interconnected relationship between architectural and urban scales, it becomes quickly evident that Aureli's project of 'fixing' actually does little to resist patterns of capitalist development, and in fact, may serve to enforce them.

While Aureli argues that architectural flexibility is a core driver of labour exploitation, within the context of buildings of the Creative City, this could not be further from the truth. While *urban* processes under flexible accumulation have certainly become increasingly flexible, *architectural* space has, since the 1970s, only become increasingly fixed. This becomes increasingly evident when looking to architectures of immaterial labour within the Creative City. Throughout the 2000s, all architecture and public space in the core became increasingly inflexible and limiting to uses. This inflexibility is enforced in the form, construction, and governance of urban spaces today. The spectacular architectures of the Creative City in particular (indeed representative of consumptive and leisurely labour) are some of the least flexible buildings constructed in Toronto to date, with unmodifiable structural systems, elaborate circulation, and absurd forms restricting

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126   Spencer, "Less than Enough: A Critique of the Project of Autonomy," 102-113.

uses. It is not easy to imagine structures less adaptable than the ROM's Crystal or OCAD's floating campus. While the ideology of the Creative City is undoubtedly aligned with the immaterial labour exploitation and unbridled urbanization which Aureli critiques, expanding forms of labour in the Creative City occur within intensely inflexible, as opposed to flexible, architectures.

The work of geographer David Harvey helps to explain this increasingly inflexible nature of architecture, by providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between flexibility and fixity. Harvey's work points out that increased capital flexibility is contrarily reliant on fixity.[127] This relationship is evident in early urban patterns, whereby the emancipation of labour from land (trade and markets) was reliant on the creation of the city fixed in place.[128] Harvey argues that this relationship is unavoidable, as all capital expansion and mobility are contrarily dependant on fixed infrastructures; The extension of a frontier relies on the construction of rail lines, global trade is dependent on the construction of airports, etc.[129] The expansion of capital from material production to creative and immaterial production is no exception to this rule. The creation of the "global city" can be viewed as the fixed result of even further emancipation of labour and capital from space within global systems of flexible accumulation.

With this understanding, one can see how increasingly flexible capitalist urban space could in fact be reliant on increasingly fixed architectures. This means that ultimately, Aureli's project of architectural fixing, stands not in opposition to, but in support of patterns of capitalist urbanization. In this chapter I use the Creative City in Toronto as a case to prove this relationship between *flexible geographies* of exchange and circulation and the *fixed architectures* that they produce. I use the components of flexible accumulation as a framework through which to evaluate relationships between flexibility at the geographic scale and fixity at the architectural scale. A transition to a flexible regime of accumulation beginning in the 1970s marked the beginning of multiple forms of new geographic flexibility both in Toronto and globally. I use these elements to review existing geographic theory on fixity. I discuss the emergence of *flexible finance* and the resulting *fixing of investment* in the built environment, and then review

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127   David Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'," Geographische Revue 2 (2001): 23-30.

128   Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature Capital and the Production of Space* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell Inc, 1990): 79.

129   David Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'," 28.

Flexible Accumulation		Fixed Space	
Flexible Finance Global finance creates increasingly mobile capital	→	**Fixed Investment** The mass investment in buildings as a means to 'fix' capital	
Flexible Production Systems of production become horizontally integrated, and adaptable	→	**Fixed Nodes** The creation of global cities, i.e the 'fixing' of Development in clusters	
Flexible Labourers Labourers become more mobile and flexible, and lines blur between labour and consumption	→	**Fixed Architecture** The development of, *iconic, circulatory, programmed*, and *revanchist* space	

fig.2.6

Forms of flexibility within flexible accumulation, and their corresponding fixities.

the emergence of *flexible production* methods and the resulting *nodal fixing of development*. By reviewing this existing geographic literature and the relationships it points to, I create a jumping-off point to explore flexibility and fixity within the architectural spaces of the Creative City. This is explored in the concluding section of this chapter which looks to develop a new theory on *flexible labourers* in relation to *fixed architecture*.

Fixed Investment and Flexible Finance

The first form of fixing that is immediately evident within flexible accumulation is a massive fixing of capital investment within the built environment of Global cities. In the City of Toronto, a pro-growth mindset has been steadily building over the past 50 years. While the cultural construction of the Creative City alone accounts for massive investments in the built environment, the construction of commercial and residential space has also been increasing alongside it. The 1980s saw a doubling of commercial construction in the city[130] , while the 2000s more than tripled the city's condo stock.[131] This era is

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130   Graham Todd, "'Going Global' in the Semi-Periphery: World Cities as Political Projects. the Case of Toronto," in *World Cities in a World-System*, edited by Knox, Paul L. and Peter J. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 192-212.

131   Randy K. Lippert, *Condo Conquest: Urban Governance, Law, and*

undeniably connected to massive amounts of investment in the built environment.

This fixing can be understood through the work of David Harvey as a 'spatial fix.' Harvey sees this type of investment in the built environment as part of a fluctuating relationship between fixed and mobile capital.[132] This relationship hinges on what Harvey calls the spatial fix. The 'fixing' in the term spatial fix refers to two types of fixing: fixing within space (in our context in the construction of buildings) and fixing a problem.[133] He elaborates on this defining the spatial fix as an investment in fixed capital (often the built environment), which helps divert crisis overaccumulation tendencies in capitalism.[134]

Through Harvey's logic, the spatial fix, or massive investments in the built environment, are a response to overaccumulation. Crises of overaccumulation happen when there is a surplus of capital and a surplus of labour with an inability to interconnect the two profitably.[135] Harvey sees crises of overaccumulation as inherent to capital processes wherein the extraction of value from the worker inevitably leads to a spike in production that the worker is unable to buy back, resulting in a flooded market.[136] If these surpluses are unable to be resolved, there results a mass devaluation of both capital and labour, i.e. a crisis.[137] Harvey identifies one common mode of resolving this crisis tendency is through a spatial fix; an investment in a fixed asset, oftentimes in the built environment.[138] Large investments drain surplus capital from the market while also creating new platforms for capital accumulation (the union of capital and labour). I.e. the

Condoization in New York City and Toronto (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 28.

132   David Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix',"; David Harvey, "The Urban Processes under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," in *Studies in the History of Capitalist Urbanization* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1985), 1-31.

133   Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'," 24.

134   Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'," 23-30.

135   Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'," 26.

136   Janet L. Abu-Lughod, "Review of the Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization; Consciousness and the Urban Experience: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization, David Harvey," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 36, no. 2 (1988): 412.

137   Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix," 26; Harvey, "The Urban Processes under Capitalism," 1-31.

138   Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix," 23-30; Harvey, "The Urban Processes under Capitalism," 1-31.

construction of a factory, both fixes previously mobile capital while also creating space for expanded labour and production. In this way, Harvey notes investment flows in cycles, fluctuating between investment in production itself and investment in the built environment.[139]

In the case of Global Cities, overaccumulation came about in response to the flooded industrial market in the 1960s. Increasingly globalized trade made it difficult for Fordist industries in the West to remain competitive. This roadblock in industrial production resulted in the need for new spaces of accumulation in previously Fordist states.[140] The massive fixing of capital in the built environment beginning in the 1970s is the response to this crisis, both absorbing surpluses of mobile capital and creating new markets and a new space for capital accumulation through the creation of the global city. Even more surpluses of mobile capital would need to be absorbed as global markets opened further through the 1980s.[141] The creation of the global stock market, the global commodity, and an unprecedented mobility of funds created for the first time a truly global market.[142] This global market resulted in new capital mobility and subsequent financialization as capital interests become increasingly disconnected from place and reality. In Toronto, real estate became a key attractor of global finance[143] as the city through the 1990s sought to remove nearly all barriers to development, creating an attractive site for investment.[144] This shift aligns with Harvey's argument that capital cycles between fixed and mobile. As global finance becomes increasingly abstract and flexible, the corresponding fixing which takes place in the built environment mirrors this intensification.

Fixed Nodes and Flexible Production

The 1970s also began another process of fixing within the City

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139   Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix,'"23-30; Harvey, "The Urban Processes under Capitalism," 1-31.

140   Harvey, " The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 141-172.

141   Harvey, " The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 160-161.

142   Harvey, " The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 160-161; Allen J. Scott, "Flexible Production Systems and Regional Development," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 12, no. 2 (1988): 171-186.

143   Todd, "'Going Global' in the Semi-Periphery," 192-212.

144   See Chapter One, Flexible Accumulation

of Toronto by creating dense nodes of development and the global city itself. While Archizoom's No-stop city visualized a smooth continuous surface, the reality of construction within the global city has been anything but. Flexible accumulation is associated with increasingly uneven and nodal development. Since the 1970s, Toronto has seen strong centralizing forces. The push for intensification in the city's core has resulted in the increasingly uneven development of urban space. Beyond centralization, labour in the city appears to have rearranged itself into new clusters. As opposed to even flexible spatial development, high-end legal and accounting services have become clustered around the central business district, while clerical tasks have become increasingly clustered in nodal office parks along the city's periphery.[145] The development of creative districts has also created additional clustering within the city, the Avenue for the Arts clustered cultural institutions within the core. Similarly, creative districts (Liberty Village and The Distillery District) clustered 'creative' office space on previously industrial sites. Toronto's Creative City in this way is fixed both as a point on the globe (as a densifying global city) as well by its increasingly nodal development strategies.

Many theorists have connected flexible accumulation to the creation of the centralized 'global city.' The increasing flexibility of production mandates the creation of centralized points of accumulation. This relationship becomes increasingly evident as banks and financial centers cluster within Global cores.[146] Some authors point out that globalization has resulted in a type of 'Glocalization', where centers of economic power and control become increasingly critical to coordinating global flows of capital.[147] Just as the city's development was critical to early labours emancipation from physical constraints, the global city is integral to even further emancipation of labour from space. Industrial production was fixed in space owing to its reliance on material exchange. Immaterial labour, while increasingly free from material constraints, is increasingly dependant on interpersonal exchange, tying production not to any site but instead to the clustering of labourers. This relationship has resulted in a process of hyper-urbanization and significant clustering of the new working class in global

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145   Todd, "'Going Global' in the Semi-Periphery," 192-212.

146   Erik Swyngedouw, "Globalisation Or 'Glocalisation'? Networks, Territories and Rescaling," *Null* 17, no.1(2004): 25-48; Todd, "'Going Global' in the Semi-Periphery," 192-212.

147   Swyngedouw, "Globalisation Or 'Glocalisation'," 25-48.

city nodes.[148]

This nodal or cluster development can also be understood as a by-product of flexible forms of production under flexible accumulation. One of the key traits of flexible accumulation is the increased flexibility of production processes. While Fordist production created more monumental and specialized production techniques, flexible production begins to rely more heavily on smaller firms with a range of skills and the ability to subcontract labour.[149] This shift from vertical to horizontally integrated labour allowed for more adaptive production methods while also eroding worker rights, making precarious and contract labour the norm.[150] This shift from vertical to horizontal brings with it new spatial arrangements. While immaterial labour is free from the material spatial constraints of the industrial era and the labour constraints of unions, new constraints emerge in communication and interaction costs. The required exchanges and communication between multiple firms (transport, communication, info exchange) results in firms who interact regularly clustering.[151]

Fixed Architecture and Flexible Labour

After reviewing some of the geographic theory on fixity and flexibility, we can return to Aureli's work with new context and an understanding that flexibility and fixity are often interconnected. Exploitation of increasingly flexible labour is not necessarily reliant on flexible architecture, as Aureli points to, but is potentially reliant on increasingly inflexible architectures. This relationship points to a third form of fixing, opposite Aureli's hyper-flexible "free space;" a hyper-fixed architectural space. While the definitions we have reviewed so far have focused on fixing of material and capital, and clustering patterns, this third form of fixing can be thought of as it is most often perceived by architects, as the fixing of the useability of space through inflexible design, form, programing, and regulation. This inflexibility is evident in not only the iconic acrobatic architectures and parks of the Creative City but also in the increased policing of public spaces from the 1990's onward. Systems of governance paired with

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148   Swyngedouw, "Globalisation Or 'Glocalisation'," 31.

149   Harvey, "The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 141-188.

150   Harvey, "The Political-Economic Transition of Late Twentieth Century Capitalism," 141-188.

151   Scott, "Flexible Production Systems and Regional Development," 176-177.

strategic design have created an entirely inflexible urban space for residents in a supposedly Creative City.

In this section, I explore the different forms of fixity that have developed since the 1970s in Toronto. I will review *iconic architecture, circulation architecture*, *programmed architecture* and *revanchist space*. Each of these forms of fixity is generated by flexible accumulation. While above, I relate fixed investment to flexible finance and fixed nodes to flexible production, in this section I relate fixed architecture primarily to an increasingly flexible labourer. Workers within flexible fields of production are expected to be increasingly mobile and adaptable under new labour systems. I also discuss this labour flexibility here through the blurring lines of leisure and labour. Flexible accumulation has been accompanied critically by an accelerated pace of consumption. This acceleration has applied not only to goods but has expanded markets to include the consumption of services, experiences, and spectacle, both in traditional cultural buildings and within educational and office settings.[152] Flexible accumulation relies not only on a flexible worker but also on a flexible consumer to maintain these expanded markets. Aureli argues that within the context of immaterial labour, where exchange, language, and cooperation are the tools of work, consumption itself becomes a critical form of labour.[153]

This increase in experiential consumption, the blurring lines between labour and leisure more broadly, and the postmodern forms which have accompanied these shifts have all been of significant influence in driving the cities architectural fixity. While I feel this fixity exists across all Creative City spaces, and I will explore several different types of space below, retail, office, etc. I focus primarily on the spaces I see as most representative of expanding domains of labour and leisure. These spaces, the parks, galleries, and museums, which have spilled across the entirety of downtown during the early 2000s represent the predominant form of architectural innovation within expanding markets; these architectures designed for the facilitation of the creative urban experience represent some of the most intensely fixed spaces of the Creative City.

Iconic Architecture

Iconic Architecture has been one of the most visible elements of Toronto's Creative City. The ROM Crystal, the AGOs gallery

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152   David Harvey, "Time-space compression and the postmodern condition," in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1989), 285.

153   Aureli, "Labour and Architecture," 102.
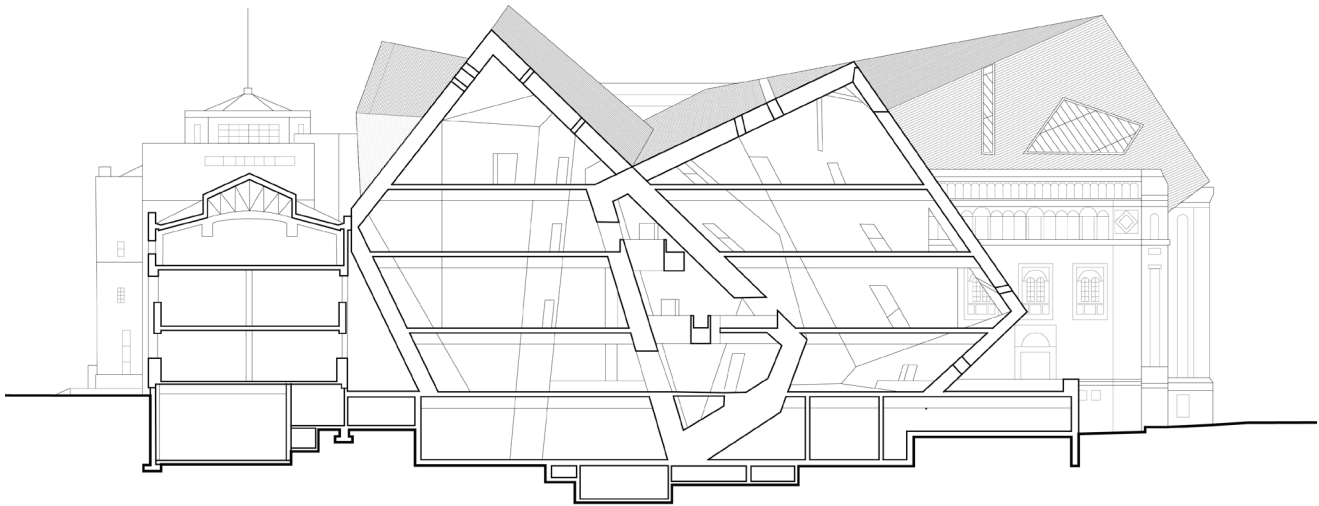
facade, and the OCAD addition are all representative of this trend. These spectacle buildings, constructed by increasingly popular 'starchitects' pop up in cities globally throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s. The focus of these buildings on impressive and counterintuitive form has consequentially resulted in intensely inflexible space, both structurally, through highly specific construction methods, and spatially through abnormal forms and rooms. This creation of inflexible architecture cannot just be written off as an aesthetic trend, but is instead a direct fixed response to emerging forms of flexible consumption at play in the global city.

Architectural critic Leslie Sklair argues that contemporary icon buildings are unique specifically in their representation of consumption.[154] Sklair argues that public space in globalizing cities is in the process of increasingly being transformed into consumerist space.[155] He sees these icons as both tools and symbols of this transformation. While pre-1950s icons served the interests of the church and state, new icons serve the interests of a transnational capitalist class and what Sklair refers to as a culture-ideology of consumerism.[156]

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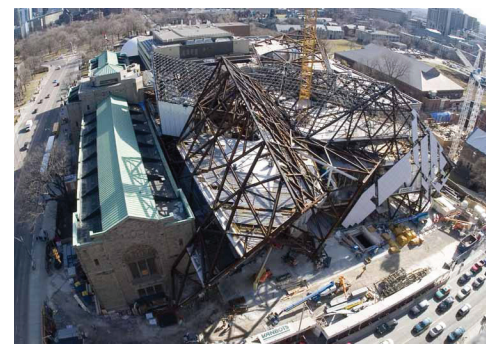
154   Leslie Sklair, "Iconic architecture and capitalist globalization," *City* 10, no.1 (April 2006): 21-47. DOI: 10.1080/13604810600594613

155   Leslie Sklair, "Iconic Architecture and the Culture-ideology of Consumerism," *Theory Culture and Society* 27, no.5 (2010): 135-159. DOI: 10.1177/0263276410374634

156   Sklair, "Iconic Architecture and the Culture-ideology of Consumerism," 136. "Consumerism – or more accurately the culture-

fig.2.9
Central Circulation stair in the AGO.
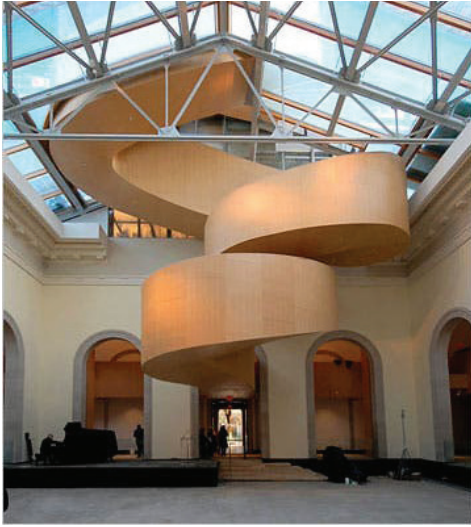
fig.2.10
Four Seasons center for the performing arts, glass staircase, and circulation facade.

fig.2.11
The Centre Pompidou, transparent circulation facade.

Consumption is certainly center stage in these buildings, many of which experienced significant gift shop renovations and the addition of café or restaurant space.

Beyond the increasingly mall-like form of the museum today, these extravagant buildings have become commodities in and of themselves. Flexible accumulation is responsible for expanding consumptive markets, namely, experiential consumption. These buildings serve as an attractor for a growing tourism industry and a new body of mobile consumers. Flexible consumers require a fixed product, i.e. the iconic building. The new role of these buildings as products has led to their increasingly abstract and unusual forms. Spectacular sculptures aim to be unique and valuable within a global context. The spectacular formal nature of these buildings creates fixed architectures to feed a flow of increasingly globally mobile consumers within a growing experiential consumptive economy.

Circulation Architecture

Another driver of fixity in this period is an increased focus on circulation in urban space and buildings. While these buildings' iconicity relates to their role as commodities, circulation in these buildings connects to their role as consumptive space itself. While iconicity outlines the role of the buildings as a product, its role as a consumptive factory creates its own unique form of fixing.

Theorist Douglas Spencer argues that circulation has come to hold an increasingly prominent role in the architecture of neoliberalism. He states that as a commodity under capitalism, architecture is employed to retrain subjectivities and present a distorted reflection of production, masking labour conditions and framing them as something progressive.[157] He points specifically to spaces that he feels highlight the communicative and cooperative images of workspace; architectures which represent smooth and fluid exchange. He sees highly visible circulation as one primary way these values are presented architecturally. As labour has become increasingly fluid and

ideology of consumerism- refers to a set of beliefs and values, integral but not exclusive to the system of capitalist globalization, intended to make people believe that human worth is best ensured and happiness is best achieved in terms of our consumption and possessions."

157   Douglas Spencer, "Labour Theory: Architecture, Work and Neoliberalism," in *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: how contemporary architecture became an instrument of control and compliance* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 74.

flexible, reliant on the circulation and the exchange of ideas, Spencer argues that the aesthetic of circulation serves to advertise an efficiency and ease to these processes.[158]

Spencer also points to the Centre Pompidou in 1971, the nexus of cultural consumption, as an early connection between circulation and cultural commodification.[159] While championing an open floor plate, the Pompidou creates a façade comprised of highly visible circulation. Spencer argues that this performance of circulation serves to represent positively increased accessibility to culture while masking a shifting relationship between visitor and art, which in the Pompidou was becoming increasingly similar to a relationship between shopper and commodity.[160] Spencer argues that the circulation within the Pompidou serves as an exhibit that reframes visitors as ideal cultural consumers.[161] This relationship between consumption and circulation is particularly clear when examining circulation within any consumptive space. While the free plan of the factory or office floorplate certainly allows for *unconstrained* exchange, it does not necessarily *maximize* exchange rates. Within shopping malls, circulation is a driving force behind design and consumption. Prescribed circulation is a key component of consumptive spaces and evidently an increasingly crucial component of public spaces in the Creative City.

In the context of the Creative City, cultural consumption has become the driving ideology for the core, and fetishization of circulation has overtaken the urban public. Galleries and parks alike built in this period are hyper fixated on the circulation of people. Both the ROM and the AGO renovations focus significantly on circulatory space. The AGO, in particular, stands as a prime example. The most designed, prominent, and expensive parts of the renovation all focus on circulation space. The main bay addition of the renovation acts as essentially a hallway prominently featuring the gallery coffee shop and a limited number of sculptures. Tellingly the hallway also recently became the waiting line for the recently acquired immersive Kusama installation, located off of an

fig.2.12
Circulation within the ROM Crystal.

fig.2.13
Circulation and coffee shop in the AGO's Galleria Italia.

158   Spencer, "Labour Theory: Architecture, Work and Neoliberalism," 109.

159   Douglas Spencer, "Festivals of Circulation," in *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: how contemporary architecture became an instrument of control and compliance* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 111-121.

160   Douglas Spencer, "Festivals of Circulation."

161   Douglas Spencer, "Festivals of Circulation."

fig.2.14
H2O park, created in the early 2000s.

fig.2.15
Harbour Square Park, created in the 1970s.

adjacent room. Perhaps reflective of the values embodied in the broader city, visitors are allowed a brief moment with the installation piece before being ushered along.

Ironically, this fixation on the mobility of people has generated increasingly inflexible spaces. This relationship is clearest related in David Harvey's work on infrastructure. Harveys understands mobility as directly connected to fixity through its reliance on infrastructure. [162] Regional mobility is dependent on intensive highway projects and global mobility on massive, fixed airport infrastructures. While Harvey refers to the scale of infrastructural circulation, within the 2000s, this relationship emerges prominently within the scale of architectural circulation in Toronto. An increased focus on paths prominently displayed and permanent circulation has created extensive fixed architectural space and, in extreme cases, subdivided space beyond useability. The relationship is clear in Toronto's Waterfront parks, where there is a defined preference for a sort of frenetic path system providing

162   Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'."

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fig.2.16
Toronto Music Garden, built in 1999.

circulation routes, but little in the way of useable open space. A comparison between Harbour Square Park, constructed in the 1970s and HTO Park, completed in 2007, clearly shows this transition. This type of circulation architecture is also popularized globally in the repurposing of defunct transit corridors. In Toronto, this is realized in the Bentway project, though its lineage can undoubtedly be traced to the success of New York's Highline, a people mover and tourism megalith for the city.

fig.2.17
Corktown Commons Park, built 2013.

This frenetic path system is a trait of what critic Frederic Jameson refers to as postmodern hyperspace.[163] Jameson uses the Bonaventura hotel in Los Angeles as a case to explore this idea, though it is worth noting he also points to Toronto's Eaton Center as a key case. Jameson points to two main traits within the Bonaventura to identify this hyperspace; First, the prominent and circuitous nature of escalators, elevators, and rotating cocktail lounges, and second a sense of the building's enclosure from the city, with muted entries and a smooth reflective façade. Jameson argues these traits together serve to create a self-contained city that is unmappable against the human body. He sees this as reflective of a new machine age and the expanding incomprehensible web of global capital.[164] This perception of postmodern architecture as its own 'urban space' lends further credence to the application of Harvey's work on infrastructure to the architectural scale. If postmodern hyperspaces are contained urbanisms, their circulation can also be seen as increasingly similar to that of

fig.2.18
Bentway Linear Park, built in 2018.

163   Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 80-84.

164   Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" 80-84.
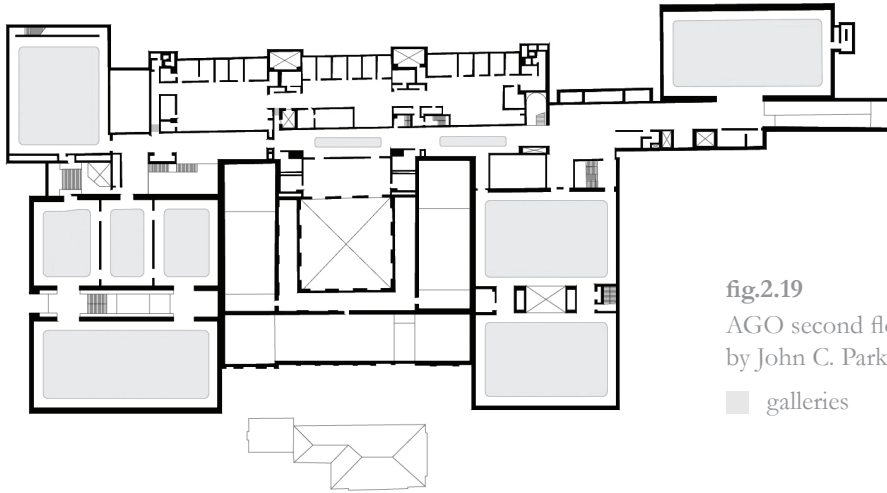
fig.2.19
AGO second floor plan, completed 1977 by John C. Parkin.

☐ galleries
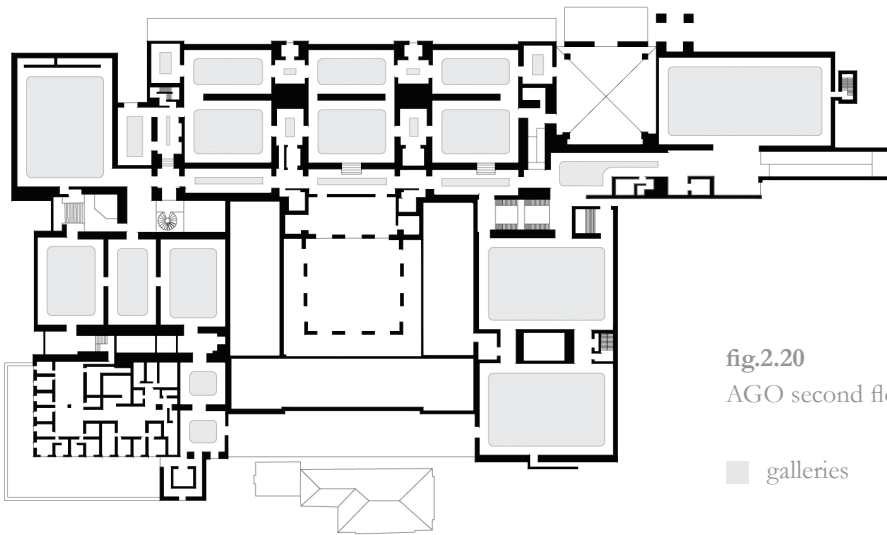
fig.2.20
AGO second floor plan, completed 1993

☐ galleries

upward addition
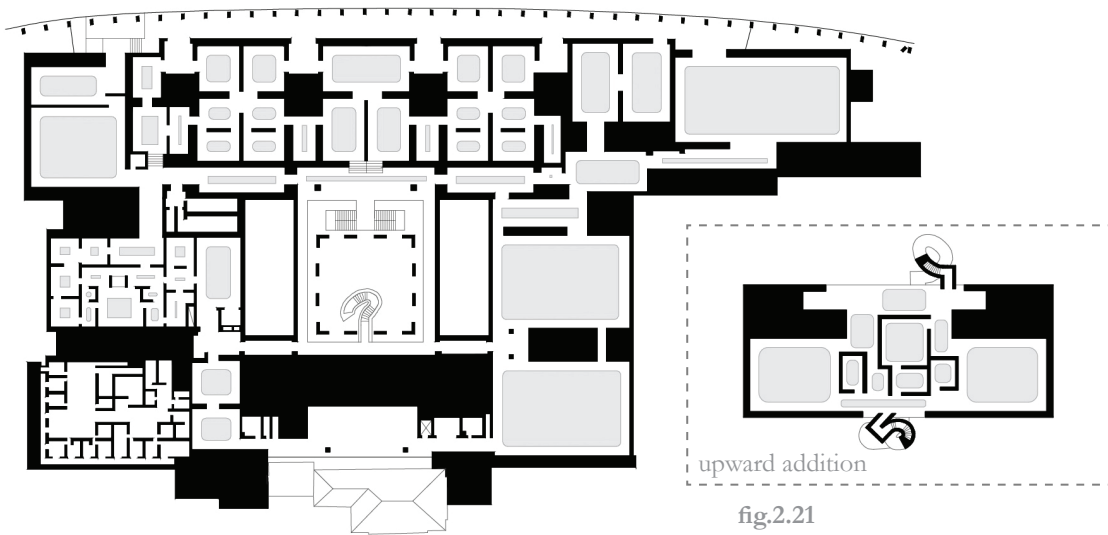
fig.2.21
AGO second floor plan and upper gallery plan, completed 2008 by Frank Gehry.

☐ galleries

infrastructure. If architecture has become increasingly like the city, then architecture's circulation has become increasingly like its expressways, defined and fixed in place.

Programed Architecture

Intense specificity and differentiation of programing in architecture creates another primary form of fixity. From the beginnings of both Post-Fordism and postmodernism, architectural space has become increasingly programmed and subdivided. A tendency towards the fragmentation and complexity of postmodernism has led to intensified and at times excessive programming and differentiation of space. While some argue that this programming represents increased flexibility, claiming an increase of programmed areas is an increase of uses, I argue that intensified programming typically results in a sharp decrease in architectural flexibility.

To examine these formal programming shifts in Toronto, neoliberal, postmodern, and Post-Fordist alike, the AGO provides a substantial case study, with three significant renovations happening between the 1970s and the 2000s. The changing forms of gallery space in each renovation reveal a trend towards increased programmatic division. Between 1974 and 1977, the gallery received a multi-phase brutalist expansion by John C. Parkin and Associates, which wrapped the old Darling, Pearson and Cleveland building constructed in 1926.[165] The floor plan shown here details the several large open galleries which defined the building in this period. The next significant addition to the building was completed in 1993 by KPMB and created a new postmodern façade facing Dundas Street.[166] In this renovation and addition, the North facing offices were replaced with a series of new small gallery rooms. The previously open Southwest gallery was renovated with office space, multiple new partitions, and additional small galleries. In 2008 the building receives its Frank Gehry Creative City addition. While a series of gallery spaces are added through upward expansion, this renovation even further subdivided the Northern galleries, as well as the West facing gallery. This renovation is also critically associated with the intense remodelling and addition of several circulation spaces

165   James Adams, "Re-Imagining the Art Gallery of Ontario – again and again," *The Globe and Mail*, January 28, 2004, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/re-imagining-the-art-gallery-of-ontario---again-and-again/article4086447/.

166   Adams, "Re-Imagining the Art Gallery of Ontario."
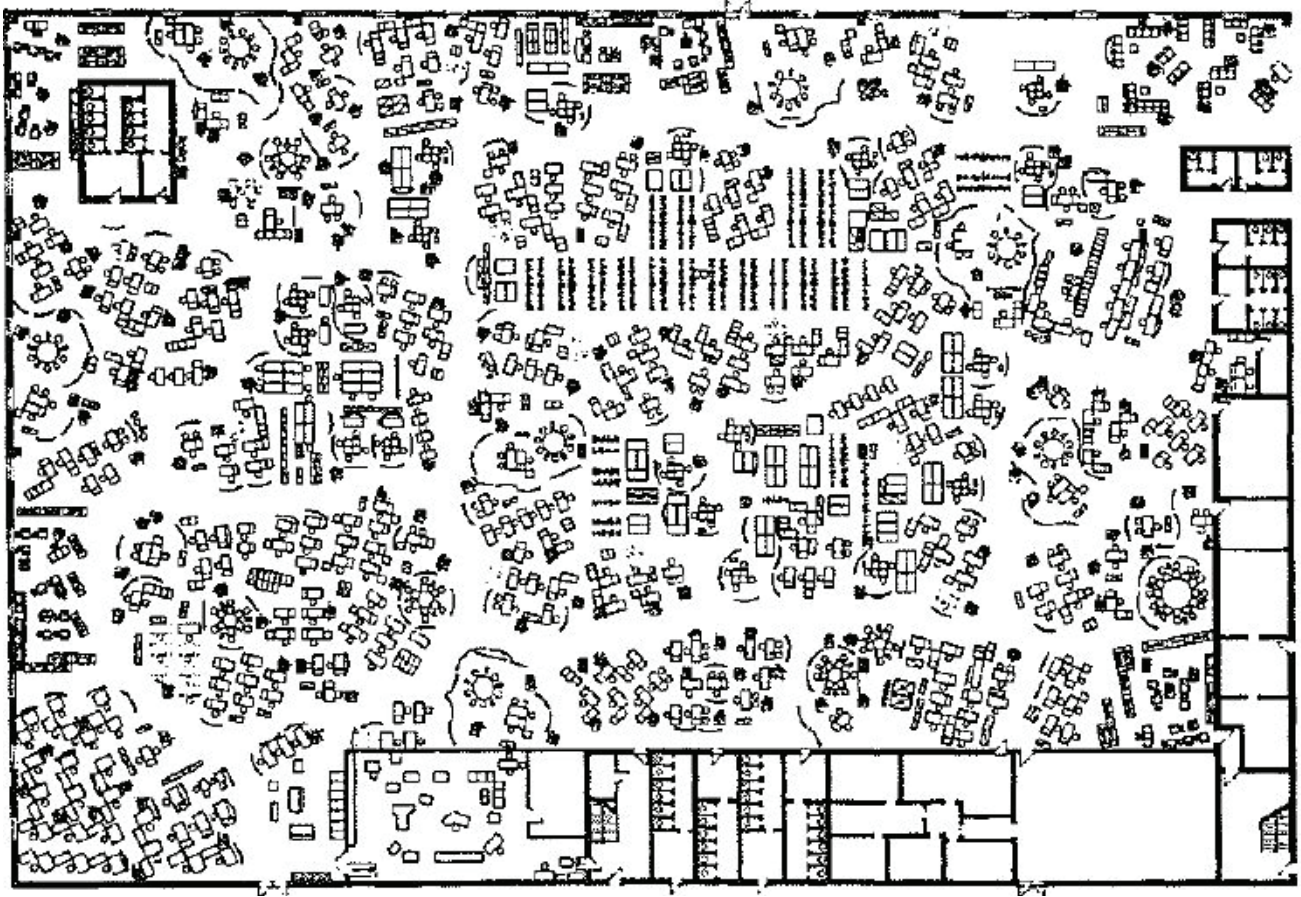
to the design, the narrow Galleria Italia, an even further compacted space.

This tendency towards over programming has also emerged prominently through new forms of work and the increased introduction of leisure space into the workplace. Theorist Douglas Spencer notes the combination of leisure and workspace in contemporary offices and campuses as characteristic of the neoliberal workspace. Spencer argues that these spaces highlight the communicative and cooperative images of labour through flexible form and circulation. He states that architecture, in this case, masks the insidious nature of the blurring lines between work and leisure.[167] While Spencer's argument about the relationship of these spaces to labour exploitation is sound, his claim that these spaces are 'flexible' warrants questioning. I argue that these spaces of increasingly flexible labour only present an aesthetic of architectural flexibility, but in reality, coincide with increasingly fixed architectural space. While these spaces certainly encourage

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167   Spencer, "Festivals of Circulation," 111-133.

Labels on sketch:
Open up the main plaza
Enter
New Entrance Building
43
Two Cafes share the Square
Typical 4-Story Tower penetrates the two existing floors
New Inner Courtyard
Outdoor Recreation
Enter
Typical 4-Story Tower
40
Reversed Dining Hall links with Auditorium
Auditorium
Spa and Fitness Center

fig.2.23
Aerial sketch of Googles California Campus.

more flexible employees, ones willing to forgo a life-work balance, intensified programming requirements within office space do not typically point to an increase in architectural flexibility. Instead, they are defined by increased divisions, through rooms, walls and alcoves, which break up the flexible form of the Modernist office.

This fixity becomes immediately evident in the campuses of tech monoliths today. While admittedly office space in North America has not progressed far beyond the Modernist open floor plates of the 1950s,[168] the shifts which have accompanied new technology point towards a much more intensely programmed office space. While Spencer discusses the open office as a neoliberal productivity tool, the open office floorplate is honed and most prominent throughout

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168   Andrew Laing, "New Patterns of Work: The Design of the Office,"
        in *Reinventing the Workspace* (London, Routledge, 2005), 29-49.
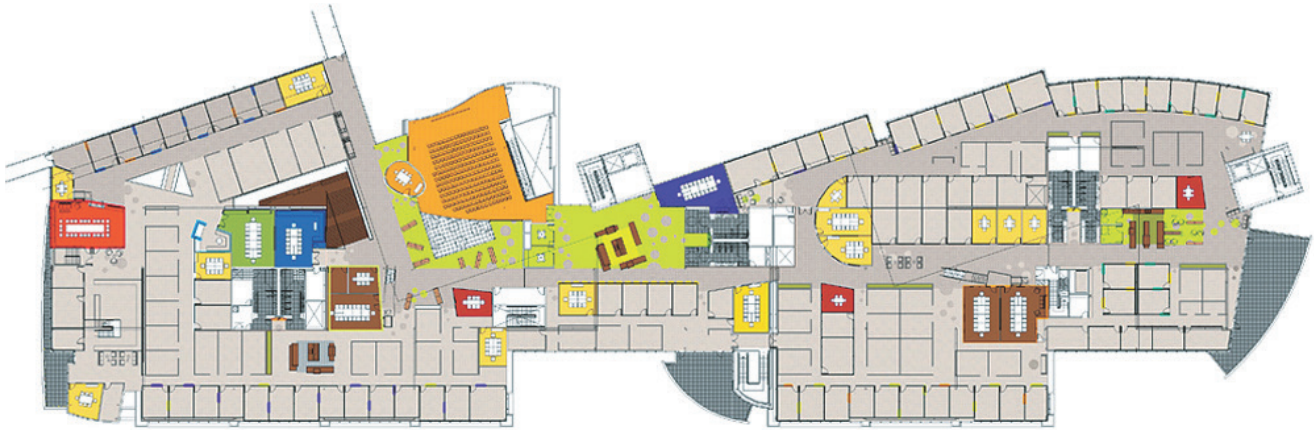
fig.2.24
Floor plan of South building on Googles
California campus.

Clubhouse   Bakery/
             Coffee Shop

Conference   Supper Club

Library   I-Bar   Terrace

Open Meetin   Open Huddle   Closed Meeting

Huddle Room   Workstation   Workroom

fig.2.25
Program Diagrams by Clive Wilkinson
Architects

the Modernist movement in the 1940s-1960s.[169] The office
spaces which Spencer discusses, those at the leading edge of
work/play/life combinations, are most visible in the sprawling
campuses of large tech companies. While not a Toronto case
the Googleplex, renovated from the existing mountain view
California Campus in 2004 by Clive Wilkinson Architects, is
exemplary of this new type of space. Its plan includes extensive
live/work balance programming and contains extensive
internal cafés, kitchens, and lounge spaces.[170] Diagrams of the
buildings show a range of forms of workspaces, with titles like
"clubhouse," "library," "super club," etc.[171] The campus also
includes an auditorium, a dining hall, a spa and fitness center,
an outdoor basketball court, and outdoor pools.[172] Similar
(though slightly less staggering) complexes have been taking
root in Toronto alongside the Creative City. Notably the MaRs
Discovery District, a 15 000 000 sqft urban innovation hub,
opened its first phase in 2005 along Toronto's Avenue for the
Arts parallel to Creative City construction.[173] Similar to Google's
campus, this high-tech office complex is defined by several
connected buildings and a range of spaces, including a variety,
or meeting, presentation, kitchen, auditorium, and exhibition
spaces.[174] A far cry from the Bürolandschaft landscaped offices

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169   Laing, "New Patterns of Work," 29-49.

170   John Meachem, "Googleplex: a new campus community," Clive
      Wilkinson   Architects.   https://www.clivewilkinson.com/pdfs/
      CWACaseStudy_GoogleplexANewCampusCommunity.pdf.

171   John Meachem, "Googleplex: a new campus community."

172   John Meachem, "Googleplex: a new campus community."

173   "Our Space" *MaRs Discovery District*, accessed July 11, 2021, https://
      www.marsdd.com/our-space/.

174   "Our Space" *MaRs Discovery District*.

of modernism,[175] these complexes instead present something much closer to Jameson's postmodern hyperspace; architecture as a contained replica of urban space. This hyperspace then leads to certain fixities as plans are subdivided and designed to accommodate an increasing specificity of program, circulation, and differentiation of space.

Revanchist Space

The final form of fixity that emerges within the global city context is found in the increased regulation and restrictive design of public space. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, a mixture of legislative and design shifts worked to sanitize the city's public grounds as a safe space for investment and consumption. This process not only actively seeks to exclude certain groups from public space but also limits the flexibility and creative potential of public spaces.

This new form of restrictive public space is heavily influenced by what geographer Neil Smith calls revanchism. Smith defines revanchism as the sharp increase in the policing and control of public spaces that takes place in Global Cities throughout the 1990s.[176] Smith relates this rise of zero-tolerance policies directly to "broken window" theory developed throughout the 1980s, which correlated petty crime and "disorderly" neighbourhoods with a more severe decline of an area.[177] This shift resulted in what has amounted to a coordinated attack by city centers on urban homeless populations and increasingly racialized policing tactics.[178] Throughout the 1990s Toronto also takes part in this shift. Not only does the city see an increased police budget through this period, but it also implements legislation to criminalize squeegeeing and "aggressive panhandling.[179] The city also takes on a "targeted policing" technique that reinforces racist and homophobic police practices in the city.[180]

In Toronto, the 1990s also mark the beginnings of what would be decades of encampment clearance projects, as the city attempts to clear the way for investment. In 2002, on

fig.2.26
Interior view of the MaRs Center atrium, featuring extensive circulation walkways.

fig.2.27
Corus Toronto office building, completed in 2010, the central atrium of this tech hub features not only "circulation tubes" but a slide to the ground floor.

175   Laing, "New Patterns of Work," 36-37.
176   Neil Smith, "Global Social Cleansing: Postliberal Revanchism and the Export of Zero Tolerance," *Social Justice* 28, no.3 85(2001): 68-74. https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768095; Smith, "The New Urban Frontier."
177   Smith, Neil. "Global Social Cleansing."
178   Smith, Neil. "Global Social Cleansing."
179   Kipfer and Keil, "Toronto Inc?," 227-264.
180   Kipfer and Keil "Toronto Inc?," 227-264.

fig.2.28
Toronto tiny house shelter.

fig.2.29
Diner with a view dining bubble below the Gardiner.

the same day that Toronto announced its new official plan that pushed for intense development of the waterfront, a massive encampment along the waterfront would be cleared by police and private security guards.[181]

Encampment clearance continues as a regular practice within Toronto today. Writing amid Covid-19 and a shelter shortage, the city has taken action to clear the increasingly prominent encampments across the city. Today encampments are located in Parkdale, Trinity Bellwoods, Scadding Court, Moss Park, Lamport Stadium, Cherry beach and elsewhere in the city.[182] Despite an inability to provide adequate shelter for residents, the city has been pushing to clear these encampments and has taken legal action against public volunteers providing aid. [183]

While protest against tent clearance in these encampments is ongoing, one particular clearance and the protest that accompanied it highlighted the biases in the Creative City's public spaces. In 2019, in what was a particularly brutal winter, the city cleared multiple encampment residents from their shelters beneath the Gardiner expressway.[184] This clearance spiked public protest from local non-profit Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) as it was followed two weeks after by a pop-up dining event located further along the Gardiner titled 'Dinner with a View,' in which customers could dine in heated bubbles below the Gardiner.[185] While not in the same location as the tent clearances, the formal similarity of the two programs (heated enclosures) paired with the stark contrast in program made a clear show for what is and is not allowed in Toronto public spaces.

Encampment clearances and revanchist policies have also been accompanied by an increase in exclusionary forms of design in city centers. Most notably documented in Interboro's

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181   Blackwell and Goonewardena, "Poverty of Planning."

182   Encampment Support Network, https://www. encampmentsupportnetwork.com/.

183   Jake Kivanc "He Built Homes for the Homeless. So the City Sued Him," *Vice World News*, last modified February 23, 2021, https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkd48k/khaleel-seivwright-built-homes-for-the-homeless-so-toronto-sued.

184   Sheena Goodyear, "Posh Dome Restaurant opens under Toronto expressway after nearby homeless camp eviction," *CBC Radio*, last modified April 2, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-monday-edition-1.5079615/posh-dome-restaurant-opens-under-toronto-expressway-weeks-after-nearby-homeless-camp-eviction-1.5079628.

185   Goodyear, "Posh Dome Restaurant."

Arsenal of Exclusion and Inclusion, exclusionary design tactics, limit the use, and the users of space.[186] Critics Smith and Walters label these built strategies 'defensive architecture'.[187] They identify defensive architecture as the design of space meant to restrict certain uses, namely by homeless populations, youth and the elderly.[188] While the origins of defensive architecture are by no means a product of the Creative City, many of its forms take root in urban cores at the beginnings of centralization and alongside downtown 'renewal projects'. Smith and Walters argue that the role of defensive architecture as it has developed in the contemporary city is to restrict residents to primarily consumption-based interactions with public space.[189] CCTV cameras, fences, spikes, and uncomfortable seating not only discourage so-called "undesirable" residents but ultimately reduce the flexibility of public space for all occupants, limiting the functionality, potential and diversity of space in the city.[190]

A clear example of revanchist and inflexible public space, implemented through both architectural and governance strategies, is visible in Yonge and Dundas Square. Renovated in 2004, the square has since been heavily critiqued for its inaccessibility.[191] This regeneration project was pushed for by the city and the local business community.[192] Previously a site for social services and 'bargain stores,' the desire to attract an upscale clientele and high-end real estate to the area was a driving force in the squares reconstruction.[193] The supposedly public square is publicly owned yet is operated by a private sector management board.[194] In order to use the space for an event, there must be a permit obtained and a fee paid of up to $2250[195]. The space is also accompanied by an 11-page list of guidelines outlining restrictions on the

fig.2.30
Toronto Police Services camera on Gould Street looking south on Dundas Street.
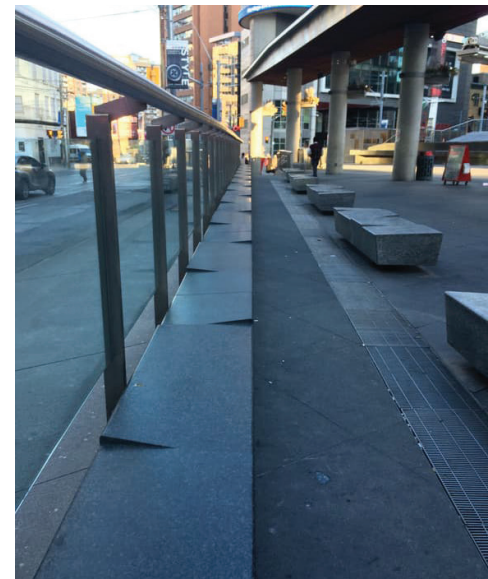
fig.2.31
Angled benches prevent skateboarders and people from lying down in the square.

186   Tobias Armborst, Daniel D'Oca, Georgeen Theodore, and Riley Gold, *The Arsenal of Exclusion & Inclusion* (New York: Actar Publishers, 2017).

187   Naomi Smith and Peter Walters, "Desire lines and defensive architecture in modern urban environments," *Urban Studies* 55, no.13 (2018), 2980-2995.

188   Smith and Walters, "Desire lines and defensive architecture," 2982.

189   Smith and Walters, "Desire lines and defensive architecture."

190   Smith and Walters, "Desire lines and defensive architecture."

191   Lehrer and Laidley, "Old Mega-projects Newly Packaged," 786-803.

192   Lehrer and Laidley, "Old Mega-projects Newly Packaged," 786-803.

193   Lehrer and Laidley, "Old Mega-projects Newly Packaged," 786-803.

194   Lehrer and Laidley, "Old Mega-projects Newly Packaged," 786-803.

195   Lehrer and Laidley, "Old Mega-projects Newly Packaged," 786-803.

use of the square.[196] Architecturally the square makes use of many common defensive design strategies. Seating is designed without backrests and at varied angles to prevent people from lying down and to deter skateboarders and surveillance of the space is also made highly visible. CCTV surveillance cameras are located around the perimeter of the square, and a security office structure sits prominently in the southern end.[197] There have been many stories of both youth and homeless people forced to leave the square by security guards for reasons as mundane as panhandling, taking photographs, and sitting for long periods of time.[198]

While only a single case, Yonge and Dundas square, represents a broader shift within public spaces of Toronto, the creation of a "safe" space for both investment and consumption in the city has required an increasingly controlled, monitored and fixed public realm. The intense focus on limiting programming to that which fits into a sanitized experience economy has quickly eroded the supportive and political potential of public space in the cities core.

Flexibility and Creative Agency

In a city increasingly defined by its "Creative" potential, all manner of flexibility and creative agency has been stripped away from architectural space. Patterns of flexible accumulation and increasingly flexible labourers have resulted in urban space, which is increasingly circulatory, programmed, and restrictive. As the movement of people has become more central to both work and consumption, architecture has become increasingly critical in maintaining prescribed routes of circulation and in creating intensely differentiated space for people to cycle through. While Aureli positioned architectural flexibility as the edifice of expanding domains of labour, it is evident within the Creative City that architecture at the expanding fronts of labour is increasingly focused on fixing the flow of its increasingly flexible residents.

While space at the scale of architecture has become increasingly fixed, the space at the scale of the urban has continually become more flexible as deregulation creates a city free for the taking. In the Creative City, flexible space,

196   Lehrer and Laidley, "Old Mega-projects Newly Packaged," 786-803.

197   Umar Mahmood, "Neoliberal Urbanism in Transforming Toronto's Built Urban Landscape: The Case of Yonge and Dundas Square," (Major Paper, York University, 2017), 33-35.

198   Lehrer and Laidley, "Old Mega-projects Newly Packaged," 798.

and by extension creative agency, is increasingly provided at a scale and scope accessible to only developers, architects, and governing bodies. Meanwhile the inflexibility of the core aids and enforces precarity and displacement as an increasingly narrow few can operate within the circuits of the global city. In the creative models we have viewed in Toronto, the scale of architecture, increasingly fixed in place, limits the resident's creative agency to that which is productive. This not only limits the use of space but also strips creative labour of its emancipatory potential.

In reflecting on the relationship between flexibility and fixity, it is possible to imagine an architecture that resists these patterns. If fixity and flexibility are interconnected, the creation of flexible space at the architectural scale might inversely impact larger exploitive flexible systems of both labour and development. In relocating flexibility to a more accessible scale, the scale of architecture, one can imagine a space of resistance and the return of creative control to the city's residents.

Part 3

Tabula Rasa History and
Creative Destruction

While the fixity of the Creative City poses its own barriers to cultural development, even more significant hurdles are imposed by its tabula rasa nature. The perception of the city as a cultural void in need of filling has led to the bulldozing of Toronto's historic architecture and the displacement of existing communities. I argue that it is this ahistorical tendency of the city, and of creative development more broadly, which not only limits but actively destroys cultural growth within the city. This absence of memory in the city is not happenstance but is instead a product of repetitive and destructive patterns which exist between fixed buildings and the volatile flexible fields of development that they occupy. Flexible geographies, by nature of being flexible, necessitate an internal process of clearing away and restructuring of the architectures which occupy them. *Flexible geographies + fixed architectures = a tabula rasa approach to context.* As buildings of the Creative City have become increasingly fixed and geographies of accumulation have become increasingly flexible, this tabula rasa tendency is even further exacerbated. As opposed to contextual growth we see the city, again and again, take a tabula rasa approach to spatial and cultural development, pretending there are neither

fig.3.0
Competition image for the construction of
Toronto city hall in the 1940s.

existing spaces nor existing communities worth supporting.

Toronto has No History

To reflect on culture within Toronto, one finds a certain amnesia to the city's past. Toronto-based artist and curator Luis Jacob has pointed out this tendency both within the city and specifically its reflections within the art scene. Through a series of writings and curatorial work, Jacob has argued that our perception of the city and its history is prone to a certain emptiness[199]. He argues that we perceive the ongoing development and changes of the city as if they were taking place on what he refers to as a 'vacant lot', a site without context or history.[200] This myth of Toronto as a vacant lot' has permeated

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199   Luis Jacob, *Form Follows Fiction: Art and Artists in Toronto*, (Toronto, Black Dog Press, 2020).

200   Jacob, *Form Follows Fiction: Art and Artists in Toronto*.

art and urban development throughout Toronto's history, encouraging the violent removal of people from supposedly empty space and a tabula rasa mindset when contemplating cultural growth within the city.[201]

Jacob points to a series of urban cases and the city's artistic history to identify this concept in Toronto. One image Jacob points to is an archival image from a competition for the construction of city hall in the 1940s. In the image, a white square is placed over the Ward neighbourhood.[202] At the time of this competition, this neighbourhood included significant groups from Toronto's, African Canadian, Jewish, and Italian communities.[203] These communities were eventually be displaced in 1950 upon the neighbourhood's demolition to make way for the winning entry. Jacob argues that this tabula rasa mindset towards both spatial and community context is something we see again and again throughout Toronto's history, with urban renewal plans frequently displacing communities and destroy existing neighbourhoods.[204]

Alongside the Ward, Jacob points to multiple other communities razed in the postwar period. Between 1940 and 1970, Modernist planning principles and an appetite for slum clearance led to extensive swathes of demolition and displacement in the core.[205] Many lower-class and immigrant neighbourhoods were demolished throughout this period. Massive housing projects such as Alexandra Park, Regent Park and St Jamestown all demolished existing communities and housing.[206] Similarly, in the 1950s and 1960s, 340 houses were razed to make way for the Gardiner Expressway.[207]

Alongside these megaprojects, significant amounts of post-war demolition took place within the central business district. The expansion of core commercial and institutional uses through the 1950s and 1960s demolished the homes of some thirteen thousand people, along with many significant

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201   Jacob, *Form Follows Fiction: Art and Artists in Toronto.*

202   Luis Jacob, "The Ward, Toronto: a Blank Space," *Canadianart*, December 23, 2015, accessed June 18, 2021, https://canadianart.ca/features/the-ward-toronto-a-blank-space/; Luis Jacob, "Inhabitants of a Vacant Lot," in *Form Follows Fiction* (Toronto: Black dog press, 2020) 44.

203   Luis Jacob, "The Ward, Toronto: a Blank Space"; Luis Jacob, "Inhabitants of a Vacant Lot," 44.

204   Luis Jacob, *Form Follows Fiction: Art and Artists in Toronto,* 43-49.

205   Jon Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice* (University of Toronto Press, 1994), 5-40.

206   Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life*, 5-40.

207   Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life*, 33.

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES
TO THE CENTRAL TORONTO
HOUSING STOCK**

14

SOUTH-EAST SPADINA   PART II STUDY

0   3000   6000 FEET

CITY OF TORONTO PLANNING BOARD   MAY 1972

REMAINING STOCK OF HOUSES

AREAS OF EXTENSIVE TOWNHOUSING

PUBLIC HOUSING

HOUSES DEMOLISHED TO ACCOMMODATE
EXPANDING CORE USES (PARKING,
INSTITUTIONS, COMMERCIAL)

HOUSES REPLACED BY PRIVATE
HIGH DENSITY APARTMENTS

fig.3.1
Summary of changes to the central Toronto housing stock, black and
hatched areas show swathes demolished in the 1950s and 1960s.

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historical buildings.[208] Geographer Jon Caulfield lists the following as lost buildings of particular note to the cities architectural history: The Temple Building, The old Board of Trade Building at 2 Front Street East, the General Post Office at Adelaide, and the Bank of Toronto at Bay and King streets.[209] In a report published by the City of Toronto Planning Department in 1972, some of this destruction is mapped in black, showing massive patches of demolition across the city.[210]

While architects often perceive this postwar period as the apex for tabula rasa development, these same patterns of demolition continue to be replicated in Toronto today. Notably, both Regent Park and Alexandra Park, two of the city's major post-war social housing projects, are being re-razed and yet again redeveloped today. Alongside these massive projects, many of the city's policy shifts throughout the 1990s further encourage tabula rasa development. Deregulated development controls, paired with extensive mixed-use rezoning, created a new terrain of availability to be razed and redeveloped in the core.

Jacob ties this recurring tabula rasa pattern back to colonial settlement, the tendency to see space as empty for the taking, an echo of colonial histories.[211] Jacob points to the first images produced for the Toronto Purchase of 1787 as a representation of this foundational colonial tabula rasa. As opposed to representing the rich and varied landscape elements that defined the region, the map shows a cleared white rectangle, A blank space for the taking.[212] This process, Jacob argues, is also encouraged through the use of the grid as a planning device.[213] Pointing to subsequent settlement maps, Jacob notes the emergence of the grid as its own tool of the tabula rasa, one which allows for the allocation of allotments and continued dispossession of land.[214] Since settlement, Toronto has been replicating these patterns, wherein land is labelled empty, free for the taking, and then violently cleared
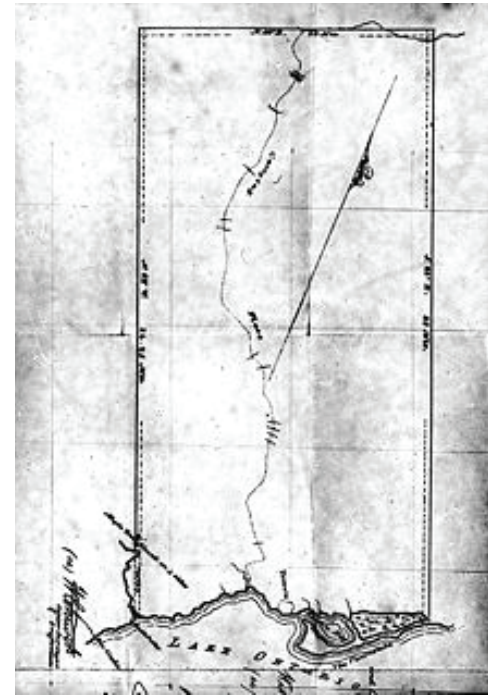
fig.3.2
Map of the Toronto Purchase, 1805.
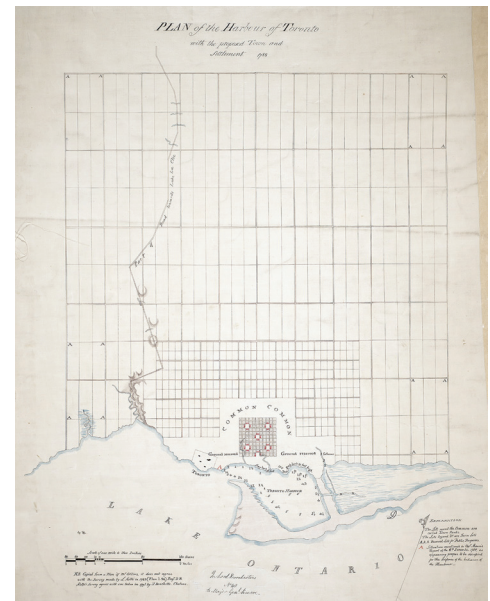
fig.3.3
John Collins, Plan of the Harbour of Toronto, 1788.

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208 Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life*, 39.

209 Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life*, 39.

210 Caulfield, City Form and Everyday Life," 72.

211 Luis Jacob, "Book Launch: Form Follows Fiction: Art and Artists in Toronto" (lecture recording) November 28, 2020, accessed June 18, 2021. https://artmuseum.utoronto.ca/video/book-launch-form-follows-fiction-art-and-artists-in-toronto/.

212 Jacob, "Book Launch: Form Follows Fiction," (lecture recording).

213 Jacob, "Book Launch: Form Follows Fiction," (lecture recording).

214 Jacob, "Book Launch: Form Follows Fiction," (lecture recording).

fig.3.4
Real Estate Advertisement for Lower West Side in New York in 1983.

and reoccupied.[215]

To reflect on Toronto's treatments of context within its culture plans, this pattern reigns true. The inability of cultural policy to recognize the displacement of artists and the demolition of deeply rooted communities as counterproductive to cultural growth points to some significant and intentional blind spots in the city's planning. Instead of recognizing the presence and value of established communities, the city has chosen to pretend as if the city were a tabula rasa in need of artistic and cultural colonization. In the context of "urban renewal," the blankness and flexibility of the vacant lot places creativity in the hands of developers and architects as opposed to residents and communities.

Creative Destruction

This tabula rasa tendency of development is not coincidental but is baked into processes of capitalist development. The repetition of tabula rasa patterns is connected to repetitive patterns that come about in response to the expansionary tendencies inherent to capitalism. The "vacant lot" emerges as a method to enforce these destructive patterns of creative capitalist expansion.

To connect Jacob's work on colonial repetition to a broader economic narrative, geographer Neil Smith provides a clear direction through his work on gentrification, which he refers to as the "New Urban Frontier." Analyzing New York gentrification in the 1980s, Smith identified a tendency amongst marketing and placemaking campaigns in gentrifying neighbourhoods to use 'frontier' imagery. Cowboys and the Wild West occur again and again in marketing strategies. These techniques position gentrifiers as pioneers settling a supposedly vacant frontier land. Smith identifies this as a recurrent strategy in urban development where desirable space is labelled 'empty' so that it can be reoccupied.[216] Just as pre-colonial land was falsely labelled 'empty,' this frontier myth re-emerges in urban cores around the 1970s alongside centralization. Downtown becomes a supposed desolate wasteland, an urban jungle, in need of rescue by developers and renewal.

Smith argues that this reuse of frontier imagery reflects a trend replicated through the history of urban development, which he refers to as *uneven development*. Uneven development, or see-sawing development, refers to the tendency of capitalist

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215   Jacob, "Book Launch: Form Follows Fiction," (lecture recording).
216   Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 12-29.

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urban expansion to operate in destructive swings.[217] While initially, capital expansion took place outwardly across space, today, these expansionary tendencies are resolved internally through the differentiation of already constructed spaces.[218] Development swings back and forth between sites as property values ebb and flow. We flip between centralized cities, suburban development and back again to centralized cities. The idea of the vacant lot can be tracked against these shifts and is consistently applied to sites of desired expansion or redevelopment. The "vacancy of local memory", which Jacob refers to, becomes a product of these volatile investment shifts. Memory is both abstracted through myth to mask this destructive tendency as well as through space as demolition makes quick work of the city's history.

This see-sawing tendency can be further understood and unpacked through an understanding of fixity and flexibility in the city, namely through the relationship between increasingly flexible geographies and increasingly fixed architectures. Fixed investment, by nature, degrades in value over time.[219] In the case of buildings, this degradation can happen through both systems decay (the eventual failure of the structure and building systems) and the obsolescence of certain types of space (If no one is producing industrial goods, a factory building will drop in value). This reduction in value eventually produces a gap between the net income from a building and the potential value of redevelopment. Smith refers to this as the rent gap.[220] When the rent gap is significant enough, a site will be slated for redevelopment, and the previous building will be demolished.[221] Put another way, fixed investment within a flexible field of development will eventually degrade in value to the point that it will be demolished to make way for new construction. Imagined spatially capital see-saws back and forth across flexible geographies as opposite ends of the see-saw degrade in value and are eventually redeveloped. In the case of increasingly fixed architectures, this tendency is exacerbated as spatial obsolescence becomes an increasingly pressing concern, and structures become increasingly inflexible in their use.

In looking to the Creative City today and the development of the past 30 years, this pattern of destruction

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217   Smith, *Uneven Development*.

218   Smith, *Uneven Development*.

219   Smith "The New Urban Frontier." 51-74; Smith, "Uneven Development."

220   Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 51-74.

221   Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 51-74.

fig.3.5
Art Gallery of Ontario addition, by KPMB.

fig.3.6
Art Gallery of Ontario addition by Gehry.

is exacerbated as geographies become increasingly flexible (urban planning shifts encourage an increasingly flexible space for development), and architecture, in turn, becomes increasingly fixed (as the space of the city become increasingly inflexible and overdeveloped). The iconic architectures of the Creative City exemplify this destructive nature. Not only are these gallery buildings decidedly acontextual, but they have also managed to be quite literally destructive to their context. The construction of the ROM's Crystal destroyed a beloved terraced addition by architect Gene Kinoshita with Mathers and Haldenby constructed in 1984. In an astonishingly frantic move, the Geary AGO renovation destroyed a facade addition that had been completed only ten years prior by KPMB. This destructive nature is carried over through much of the development in the city in the 2000s. Shifts throughout the 1990s have created an increasingly flexible space for

developers, making the downtown a supposedly blank space for the taking. While the Creative City has promoted certain heritage preservation movements, the city has still seen the continued destruction of historic buildings as development pushes through at a breakneck pace. The few buildings we do see protected are more often than not gutted of structure and reduced to little more than skins sheathing the footing of staggering condo towers.

Architecturally the condo construction of the 1990s onward is comparable to museums and galleries in their lack of contextuality, as condos climb increasingly higher through newly freed height restrictions.[222] These condos themselves, arguably the least flexible and most quickly decaying infrastructure of the new Toronto, pose some serious questions about the lifespan and fixity of space. Ultimately, the centralized development of

222   Boudreau, Keil, and Young, "Official Planning," 99-118.

the past 50 years, condos, and cultural buildings alike, have been not only remarkably destructive to context but pose complex questions about their own sustainability and longevity. These forms of the contemporary city are far from adaptable, making it difficult to imagine their future, let alone the future of a constantly changing city.

While I have framed tabula rasa tendencies as an issue of capitalist development, it is crucial to unpack these theories further and examine the role of creativity itself within destructive capitalist patterns. The geographic theory of uneven development builds on an even more foundational theory of capitalist expansion: the theory of *creative destruction*. Developed by economist Joseph Schumpeter, the idea of creative destruction seizes on the concept that a driving force of capital is indeed a creative force.[223] Under the assumption that capitalism must expand to survive, Schumpeter identifies creativity as the driving force of this expansion. The creative force Schumpeter refers to is one that is required for the opening of new markets and the development of new modes of production, i.e. an entrepreneurial force.[224] This creative force is defined as encompassing new inventions and the reorganization of existing systems to become increasingly competitive.[225]

Schumpeter's theory rests on the concept that this creative, entrepreneurial force, while productive, is also inherently destructive. He notes that in any competition, there are both winners and losers.[226] In the case of entrepreneurial creativity, loss comes in many forms; failed entrepreneurial attempts, newly obsolescent workers, and in the context of uneven development, obsolescent space.[227] Capitalist creativity, is in this way, tied to destruction. This destruction can be seen spatially through see-sawing patterns of development and the resultant destruction resulting from these swings. The notion that Toronto "has no history" can be seen ultimately as a by-product of these forces; a spectacular narrative that masks the

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223   Joseph A. Schumpeter, "The Creative Response in Economic History," *The Journal of Economic History* 7, no.2 (November 1947): 149-159.

224   Schumpeter, "The Creative Response in Economic History," 149-159.

225   Schumpeter, "The Creative Response in Economic History," 149-159.

226   Joseph A. Schumpeter, "The Process of Creative Destruction," in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (Routledge, 2013), 81-86.

227   Schumpeter, "The Process of Creative Destruction," 81-86.

destructive nature of accelerating creative production.

Countercultural Creativity

Reflecting on the definitions of culture and creativity, it is not difficult to understand how creative production and cultural growth could stand at odds.

Culture /*noun*/ the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.[228]

Creative /*noun*/ relating to or involving the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work.[229]

While in planning documents these terms are often used almost interchangeably, they read as distinctly opposed, with culture framed as a growing and collective body of knowledge, while creativity is a comparatively individualistic and, as discussed above, destructive force. Despite the tabula rasa nature of capitalist creativity, the question of creativity's relationship to culture remains open-ended. While in this chapter I have positioned creativity as primarily a destructive force, it can also be positioned as a generative force.

Above, I have argued that destructive, creative patterns are enforced through the relationships that exists between flexible geographies and fixed architectures. Fixed architectures within flexible geographies have inevitably produced tabula rasa approaches to context and history, and by extension, to culture. As opposed to falling prey to these ongoing tabula rasa patterns of cultural production, it is critical to create spaces which can act in opposition to these cycles; countercultural creative spaces. I use the term 'countercultural' here to refer to space which quite literally counters capitalist patterns of creative destruction. Instead of enforcing volatile patterns, countercultural creative space repositions creative potential as a tool of resistance, nurturing stable generative, and anti-capitalist realities.

I perceive the problem of creative destruction as primarily one of scale and, by extension, of creative agency. The production of countercultural space can be found in

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228   Dictionary.com, Random House Unabridged Dictionary, "Culture," accessed April 18, 2020. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/culture.

229   Dictionary.com, Random House Unabridged Dictionary, "Creative," accessed April 18, 2020. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/creative

	Destructive Creative Space	Generative Countercultural Space
Geography	**Flexible**	**Fixed**
Architecture	**Fixed**	**Flexible**
History	**Tabula Rasa**	**Contextual**

fig.3.9
Generative versus destructive creative space.

the reimagining of these scales. In an essay titled *The Theology of Tabula Rasa: Walter Benjamin And Architecture in The Age of Precarity*, Aureli describes the creative act as the act of "making a world." While in this text, he frames this definition in the context of capitalism's exploitation of creativity,[230] the definition also allows for an interpretation which positions creativity as an explicitly spatial act of agency. The allocation of genuinely creative space, i.e. flexible space, in the city is by extension the allocation of spatial agency. To look to downtown Toronto today, there is minimal flexibility at the scale of architecture. The real flexibility in Toronto is found at the scale of the city as restrictions and zoning have been dissolved leave the downtown a flexible space for development. This flexibility at the geographic scale places creativity and agency in the hands of those who operate at the scale of the urban, putting creativity in the hands of governing bodies, developers, and architects.

In imagining the reallocation of flexibility to the scale of architecture (occupiable space), creative control is not only returned to the residents, but in doing so, the potential for creativity becomes a generative force rather than a destructive one. In understanding the current patterns of development as *flexible geographies + fixed architectures = tabula rasa history,* reallocating flexibility (and by extension creative agency) to the scale of architecture presents an alternate relationship between creativity and history, i.e. *fixed geographies + flexible architectures = contextual histories.* While this inversion in and of itself offers no totalizing solutions (certainly purely fixed geographies are

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230   Pier Vittorio Aureli, "The Theology of Tabula Rasa: Walter Benjamin and Architecture in the Age of Precarity," *Log* no. 27 (2013): 111-127.

neither feasible nor necessarily desirable) this equation helps point towards points of action and spatial resistance within existing destructive cultural systems. It is only through this understanding of flexible, contextual growth, not predicated on displacement, that we can imagine countercultural spaces, for the support and development of shared knowledge, community, and anti-capitalist creative production.

Conclusion

Counterculture Plan for the Creative City

While the cultural building boom has passed in Toronto's core, many of its ideologies remain prominent within public policy and the minds of urban planners and architects alike. This is true both in the downtown and in many newly densifying locations across the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA). Across Ontario, growth centers have begun to adopt strategies and write up policy documents that echo the sentiments of *Toronto's Culture Plan for the Creative City.* If there is any hope for Ontario to retain and foster contextual cultural growth, we must learn from the failings of the Creative City in Toronto, and more importantly, from the increasingly culturally destructive nature of patterns of capitalist development that they enforce. Capitalist creative production will always be connected to culturally destructive patterns. Stable cultural growth requires spaces that are free to develop alternative economies that can exist not just outside of but in resistance to destructive geographic patterns.

To conclude this thesis, I reflect on the theoretical framework developed throughout the previous chapters and use it as a structure through which to point to a looser set of design ideas for a new countercultural policy. Building off

the formula, *flexible geographies + fixed architecture = tabula rasa history*, I have developed three principles for countercultural development. Each of these principles seeks to resist one of these elements and together push towards new forms and alternative models of creative space, which are generative as opposed to culturally destructive.

As opposed to supporting flexible geographies, a countercultural space must be *resistant to development pressures*, as opposed to producing fixed architectures, space must be *flexible*, and in opposition to tabula rasa history, space must be above all *contextual*. In working from these three elements, we can begin planning and designing for anti-capitalist realities that resist demolition and support meaningful and long-lasting cultural growth.

In this final chapter, I will use these three principles to quickly review the critiques I have covered, as well as to point towards a set of cases of existing systems, structures, and cultural models which I have encountered throughout my research. Each of these cases tries to, in different ways, address these three critiques and showcase and explore some of these principles already being applied in the country, city, and region. Each of these cases was chosen to explore individual elements of the above equation, and consequently any single case does not necessarily address all three of these principles, nor do all cases necessarily address only one. It is my hope that through the presentation of a range of different approaches, I can try to understand these systems as they are, not as pure polarities, but as interconnected and complex structures which require nuanced multi-scalar approaches as opposed to dogmatic and absolute formal oppositions. While the suggestions offered here are by no means of my own invention (most of them have been the battlegrounds of dedicated community members for many years), I hope that by collecting them here, I can try to paint an argument for a new approach to cultural policy, one rooted in community as opposed to development.

Resistant to Development Pressures

In the first chapter of this thesis, 'The Creative City,' I argue that Creative City policy has served as a largely destructive and gentrifying force in Toronto, displacing communities and culture alike. Cultural policy in the city has helped mask and enforce centralization. By connecting all cultural investment to development pressures, creative and cultural interests have become little more than a smokescreen for the displacement they engender. Any plan which seeks to encourage deep

RICHMOND STREET WEST
PORTLAND STREET
BATHURST STREET
ADELAIDE STREET WEST
SPADINA AVENUE
PETER STREET
JOHN STREET
KING STREET WEST
WELLINGTON STREET WEST

● CULTURAL SECTOR ESTABLISHMENTS -
TORONTO EMPLOYMENT SURVEY
(2015)

fig.4.0
Heat map of Cultural Sector establishments
around King and Spadina.

fig.4.1
401 Richmond.

and lasting cultural growth must exist in opposition to these pressures. For cities, this means developing alternate routes for cultural development which do not rely on gentrifying forces. Business Improvement Areas, subsidies from condo developers, and flashy public art installations are neither effective nor sustainable methods of cultural support.

One method of support which has been implemented with some success in Toronto removes space from market interests within gentrifying areas, either through land trusts, non-profit, or singularly minded owners. 401 Richmond is one strong example of a secure cultural node. Purchased by Margie Zeidler in 1994, rents in the industrial building has been held at below market rate, making it one of the last bastions of affordable studio space in the urban core. In 2016, 401 charged tenants 7$ a square foot for rent, less than a third of the 30$ per square foot, which could be expected of a new build in its place.[231] In the late 2000s this model was nearly forced to

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231   Murray White, "401 Richmond arts haven facing huge

dissolve owing to raising property taxes in the core. In 2012 the building's owner paid close to $447 000 in property taxes. By 2017 this amount was projected to jump to nearly $850 000 and increase to nearly $1 300 000 by 2020, both amounts which would force redevelopment on the site.[232] Fortunately, in 2017 the City of Toronto passed a new class of property tax classification for "creative co-location facilities," undoubtedly in response to the community uproar which emerged in response to the impending doom of 401 Richmond.[233] Today 401 remains a crucial space in the city's downtown, housing a high density of cultural enterprises in the area as well as a significant number of non-profits.[234]

This desire to retain flexible space in the city is also visible in the work of the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust (PNLT). Community Land trusts are structures that purchase land, which is then held in trust and put towards the community's benefit. In Parkdale, this means the preservation of existing communities against impending gentrification. In the 2006 census results, Parkdale was noted as having the highest concentration of cultural workers in Toronto.[235] Parkdale is also one of the last centrally located landing pads for new immigrant communities. In 2006 52.4% of Parkdale's population was foreign-born, with a notable Tibetan community.[236] Parkdale is also home to a wealth of community resources and social service hubs. As Parkdale gentrifies, PNLT looks to protect these residents and services from displacement.

The land trust model allows for land to be held by the community, for the community, allowing land to serve interests

tax hike," *The Toronto Star*, December 15, 2016, accessed June 18, 2021, https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/visualarts/2016/12/15/401-richmond-arts-haven-facing-huge-tax-hike.html.

232   White, "401 Richmond arts haven facing huge tax hike."

233   Kristin Rushowy, "Arts, culture hubs to get property tax relief," *The Toronto Star*, September 26, 2017, modified April 13, 2018, https://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2017/09/26/401-richmond-getting-property-tax-relief.html.

234   R.E. Millward & Associates Ltd, "King-Spadina Cultural Spaces Retention Study: Strengthening the Creative Economy in Toronto's Downtown Core," (City of Toronto, January 2017).

235   James Adams, "Toronto leads the nation in number of artists," *The Globe and Mail*, February 10, 2010, accessed June 18, 2021, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/toronto-leads-the-nation-in-number-of-artists/article1208486/.

236   Logan, Jennifer and Robert Murdie, "Home in Canada? the Settlement Experiences of Tibetans in Parkdale, Toronto," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 17, no. 1 (2016): 95-113.

outside of profitability. While PNLTs holdings only include a small amount of property in the area (a garden plot, a 15-unit rooming house[237] and a 30-unit apartment building[238]), they have already had a strong impact in the community, providing both workshops to residents, producing research on the area, and advocating to the city for the protection of existing residents.

The Milky Way Garden, PNLTs first land acquisition, clearly represents the potential of land trusts in cities. The 7000 sq ft Milky Way Garden is used by an adult ESL class

237   Rahul Gupta, "Parkdale non-profit teams up with city to acquire rooming house," *Toronto.com*, May 6, 2019, accessed June 18, 2021, https://www.toronto.com/news-story/9333053-parkdale-non-profit-teams-up-with-city-to-acquire-rooming-house/.

238   "Thirty-six units of affordable housing secured by the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust," April 26, 2021, accessed June 18, 2021, https://www.globenewswire.com/en/news-release/2021/04/26/2216916/0/en/Thirty-six-units-of-affordable-housing-secured-by-the-Parkdale-Neighbourhood-Land-Trust.html.

composed of primarily Tibetan women[239]. The site quickly became a source of food security, community and cultural growth for residents who primarily resided in apartment towers without their own yards.[240] The cultural significance of the garden is highlighted by a piece by artist Hito Steyerl titled *Free Plots*, which showed at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2019.[241] The work highlighted the specific cultural importance of the garden as a form of anti-capitalist cultural work, connecting plants to specific Tibetan stories and memories of home from the women who tend them.[242] The garden is a clear example of what the provision of space, and in this case, the provision of land, can serve to do for both cultural preservation and community vitality.

In reflecting on resistance to development pressures, another significant route is visible in the relocation and decentralization of funding. Intensely centralized funding has led to property value spikes which destroy existing communities. Looking at more evenly spread cultural funding options offers a route to resist these pressures. Geographer Alison Bain's work provides a potential way to speculate on less centralized cultural spaces. Bain explores the existing and potential cultural landscapes that exist within Canadian suburbs. Her work points to the fact that it has become increasingly difficult to locate affordable workspace in large Canadian cities and explores the growing community of artists and grassroots cultural initiatives in the affordable urban periphery.[243]

While Bain's cases include a range of structures (arts spaces in storefronts, industrial buildings, and abandoned schools), one site of particular interest is located within a suburban home. The Arbour Lake Sghool[244], an artists collective located in suburban Northwest Calgary, was founded

239   "Milky Way Garden," Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, accessed June 18, 2021, http://www.pnlt.ca/milkywaygarden/.

240   "Milky Way Garden," Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust.

241   Gelek Badheytsang, "The story behind Hito Steyerl's Parkdale-inspired art installation," Now, Oct 29, 2019, accessed June 18, 2021, https://nowtoronto.com/culture/art-and-design/hito-steyerl-parkdale-milky-way-garden; Maya Burns, "Hito Steyerl shapes a future out of free plots instead of free ports," Nov 23, 2019, accessed June 18, 2021, https://www.coremagazines.com/culture/hito-steyerl/.

242   Badheytsang, "The story behind Hito Steyerl's Parkdale-inspired art installation,"; Burns, "Hito Steyerl shapes a future."

243   Alison L. Bain, *Creative Margins.*

244   Bain, *Creative Margins,* 52. This is spelt "Sghool" owing to a lack of "c's" in the sticker kit used for the group's signage.

in 2003. The five members together occupy a suburban home with a mandate to "provide a stage for the creation and display of artistic or critical projects in a way which explores and engages our suburban setting."[245] The house serves a radically experimental art space, combining live, work and display on a single site.[246] While the group's reception by the community has been mixed (not all are as accepting of the growing wheat fields and installation pieces gracing the collective's front yard),[247] I feel the group provides an interesting case for pushing the bounds and potential of the suburban home, which is undoubtedly the most widely dispersed and decentralized architectural form in Canadian cities.

In summary, opposition to developmental pressures can be realized through alternate forms of cultural support and the redistribution of cultural infrastructure spending across the city to resist centralizing forces. The influx of centralized cultural spending which accompanied the Creative City has served to gentrify and displace artists and communities from the urban core. To counter these destructive tendencies cultural spending must decentralize. A more evenly distributed cultural network of support both provides a route to service the underserved urban periphery, as well as a path to create sustainable spaces of cultural growth, ones that will not simply be demolished ten years down the line in a booming real estate market. While Creative industries by nature have clustering tendencies, questions about scale, distribution, and the longevity of these clusters must be further explored as the current centralized cluster model is far from sustainable.

Flexibility

In the second chapter of this thesis, *Fixed Architecture,* I argue that the creation of the Creative City has shaped the city's architecture by creating increasingly inflexible and unusable space. This fixed space has encouraged exploitive flexible geographies as opposed to cultural growth. A focus on consumptive spaces has left the city totally inflexible and near unusable. To reallocate creative agency to residents, and by extension, to foster cultural growth and resist flexible geographies, the city must focus on developing spaces that are both flexible and accessible to artists and community members alike. In the case of art space, this means a focus on preservation

fig.4.4
Barley Growing at the Arbour Lake Sghool.

fig.4.5
Barley Drying at the Arbour Lake Sghool.

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245   "The Arbour Lake School," www.thearbourlakesghool.com.

246   Bain, *Creative Margins,* 66-68.

247   Bain, *Creative Margins,* 66-68.

fig.4.6
CEAC promotional flyer.

and creation of productive studio and live workspace over spaces of cultural consumption. In the design of parks and public spaces, this means removing revanchist design strategies and focusing on flexible spaces over flashy tourist sites. On a policy and governance level, this also means reducing the surveillance and policing of public space. Defunding the Toronto police budget would also align with this interest. Not only would it encourage a reduction in the policing and control of public spaces, but it would also increase funding for housing, social services, and cultural budgets within the city, ultimately increasing resident agency. In the City of Toronto 25% of taxpayer dollars go towards funding the police. This is comparable to the amount of taxpayer money spent on public health, children services, the library, and public transportation combined.[248] One can only imagine what reallocating a fraction of these funds could do for the city's cultural life.

This need for flexible city space must also be supported by simplifying bureaucratic processes which currently limit the use of public space by community members. These processes must work with and not against residents and initiatives that seek to create spaces of care on public property.

Toronto's art scene in the 1970s also provides many lessons on the value of flexible space. At this time, artist-run centers (ARCs) dominated what was a thriving arts scene fostered by affordable and plentiful industrial space in the core.[249] ARCs posed an alternate model for the distribution of artists' work by the artists themselves. In the 1970s, this meant distribution spaces occupied and maintained by artists. Some of these included: A Space, Open Studio, Trinity Square Video, CEAC, Art Metropole, the Music Gallery, Gallery 76, YYZ, Chromozone, and Mercer Union.[250] While many of these ARCs still exist today in Toronto, the spaces they occupy have converted mainly to much more institutionalized gallery models. In the 1970s, ARCs occupied a range of spaces and accommodated various uses for members of the art scene. Critically these uses were influenced by prominent political and performative streaks in the arts scene at the time, with extensive events-based works and publications produced.

The Center for Experimental Arts and Communication (CEAC) was one of the major ARCs operating in the 1970s in downtown Toronto. Between 1976 and 1978 the center

248   "Geographic Research," Defund the Police, Canada, accessed June 18, 2021, https://defundthepolice.org/canada/#central-canada.

249   Donegan, "What Every Happened to Queen Street West," 18.

250   Donegan, "What Every Happened to Queen Street West," 18.

fig.4.7
Don Blanche, main building.

was run out of a building on 15 Duncan in the Queen Street district. The building housed a library, archives, a video production studio, a performance space, a film theatre, and a punk music venue. Throughout 1976 and 1977 events where hosted nightly, a constant stream of organized exhibitions, conferences, international tours, workshops, performances, video screenings, and music events. While CEAC's presence in the core was brief, it appears to have been unique in its sheer volume of programming which circulated through the space. Tellingly the flexible open floor plan of their space is displayed prominently on their fliers. The CEAC building, and its varied programing, opens some questions about the segregation of arts programming today, namely the separation of sites of production and sites of distribution.

Don Blanche provides an interesting precedent to look to a more current case of art space and flexibility. Founded in 2009, Don Blanche is an artist residency program located in on a 60 acre lot in Shelburne, Ontario, which runs for a weeklong period hosting up to 35 artists and culminating

fig.4.8
Installation projects at Don Blanche.

in a weekend-long open house[251]. While its location sets it apart from the centrality of the Creative City, its mandate also provides an interesting case of flexibility. The program was created in response to the boom in "blockbuster arts programing" in the city. Don Blanche, a play on Nuit Blanche, was created as a retreat to remove artists from the pressures of slick production and into a space of experimentation and flexibility.[252] A seemingly anything goes attitude, paired with ample space, has allowed artists to complete work which is difficult to imagine being realized in the downtown core. Many projects leave lasting impressions on the live and workspace of the retreat. Echoing the sentiments of the Frankenbarn (the main building on the site constructed with lumber reclaimed from several barns) the site itself is continuously being shaped and reshaped, by and for its occupants.

This argument about the necessity of flexibility applies not only to the parks and public buildings but perhaps even more importantly to residential spaces. Flexible space is long-lasting space. Flexibility within all buildings serves to accommodate a range of uses at any moment and allows for ease of renovation and resistance to demolition pressures. Design for longevity (via long-lasting and flexible structures) must be mandated at a level of policy.

In Hamilton, architect and developer John Van Nostrand has made significant strides in exploring flexible housing and its potential as affordable housing. Located in Hamilton, Ontario, one of the GTHA designated growth points,[253] the firm has been working to develop 468 James Street North as a new model of condominium that does away with the rigidity of a traditional condo unit.[254] As opposed to purchasing a static unit, residents can purchase bays, allowing for the expansion or reduction of their condo as time passes.[255] This DIY model allows residents to accommodate changing home dynamics while creating an accessible homeownership model, which allows residents to benefit from sweat equity

251   "History," Don Blanche, accessed June 18, 2021, https://donblanchedonblanche.wordpress.com/about-us/.

252   "History," Don Blanche.

253   Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, *Places to Grow: Better Choices. Brighter Future Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe,* (Ontario, 2006).

254   "468 James Street North," SvN portal, accessed June 18, 2021, https://www.svnportal.com/468jamesnorth.

255   "468 James Street North," SvN portal.

they put into their units.[256]

Contextuality

The third chapter of this thesis, *Tabula Rasa History*, points to the concluding and perhaps most critical argument of this thesis. Flexible geographies of accumulation paired with fixed architectures have necessitated tabula rasa strategies for development in the city. While flexible architectural spaces can begin to disrupt this pattern, it is also critical that all development and cultural policy operate from a foundation of context and support. To operate from a foundation of support means not designing to attract a specific type of resident but instead designing with the current community in mind. Public projects should engage in thorough, extensive, and most importantly accessible community consultation, ensuring all voices are actively included in the discussion.

In the context of cultural initiatives, contextuality means locating existing cultural networks and initiatives on sites whose

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256   "468 James Street North," SvN portal.

fig.4.10

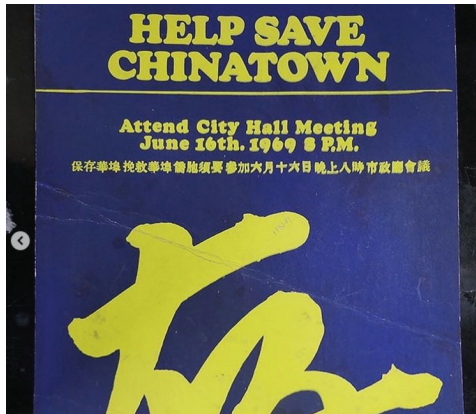Instagram post by @blackfuturesonegw.

fig.4.11

Instagram Post by @friendsofchinatown.

fig.4.12

Instagram Post by @friendsofchinatown.

residents would benefit from cultural support. As opposed to "bringing culture" to sites, initiatives should seek to support existing culture and community. Vocal community groups exist across Toronto in the quickly gentrifying Chinatown, Little Jamaica, and Little Tibet, to name only a few. All of these groups would benefit from support as they represent strong existing communities facing imminent displacement.

Architecturally contextuality connects both to the creation of flexible building stock (as discussed above) and the preservation of existing buildings in valuable ways that move beyond facadism. Maintenance and renovation must be prioritized over new builds, and new approaches to determining architectural value must be explored.

Contextuality also requires a perspective that understands and accurately reflects the history of a site. In the context of Toronto, and I imagine many Canadian cities, this means the provision of space for Indigenous practices within urban centers and meaningful engagement with Land Back organizers. In Waterloo's Victoria Park, Land Back organizers have gathered over the past year to occupy parkland in Kitchener Waterloo Region. The organizers have listed four demands of the city. 1) The waiving of fees for Indigenous communities to host events in public spaces, 2) that land in Victoria and Waterloo Park be returned to Indigenous Peoples for gathering and ceremonial purposes, 3) that the city creates paid positions for Indigenous peoples to engage with the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit on this territory, and 4) for the creation of a paid Indigenous Advisory Committee to work for the Mayors and City Councillors in helping to address issues of racial injustice, lack of access to Indigenous services and community spaces, and addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.[257] So far, after about nine months of occupation, fees have been waived, and Kitchener has passed five new permanent positions dedicated to working on equity, and anti-racism[258] but an Indigenous Advisory Council and the return of land have yet to be acted upon. Within the context of this thesis, the provision of space in particular marks a potential clear initiative and point of

257   "What is this about?," O:se Kenhionhata:tie, accessed June 18, 2021, https://www.landbackcamp.com/about.

258   Alyssa Di Sabatino, "Land back camp moves from Victoria park to waterloo park, calls on the city of waterloo to take action," November 11, 2020, accessed June 18, 2021, https://thecord.ca/land-back-camp-moves-from-victoria-park-to-waterloo-park-calls-on-the-city-of-waterloo-to-take-action/.

valuable investment in the city's cultural life, both recognizing treaty history and addressing the spatial, cultural needs of Indigenous residents today.

One arts collective that takes an interesting approach to the question of context, as well as the question of centrality and diasporas, is the South Asian Visual Arts Collective (SAVAC). As opposed to operating from a gallery front like a traditional artist collective, SAVAC actively states in its mandate that it chooses not to have a single location but instead works with community partners across the region.[259] The collective's writing discusses this as a means to push diversity mandates in their partner institutions and increase the visibility of diverse artists. In an essay by curator Sandy Saad, this choice is also positioned in relation to the failings of the white cube gallery, and its destruction of context.[260] By championing

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259   "Mandate," SAVAC, accessed June 18, 2021, https://savac.net/about/mandate/.

260   Sandy Saad, "Making Space: SAVAC's Creation of an Inclusive Canadian Cultural Arena," in *Spaceless Place*, (Toronto: Kapsula Press, 2017): 7-11.

diverse artists within multiple "white cubes," SAVAC looks to break down the sealed white cube model and actively reveal context, representing communities across the breadth of the GTA.[261] In this way, SAVAC's work is opposed to working from a tabula rasa and seeks to actively address the unique spatial and dispersed identity of diaspora communities. Within this context, the focus on exploring and championing identity over location allows for support to marginalized communities and presents an alternate perspective to issues of creative clustering, culture, and centrality. As cultural identities become increasingly dispersed across Toronto and the globe, how can we spatially reimagine creative clusters as stable and growing networks?

Conclusion

While the Creative City building boom has come to a close, its failures teach us some very clear lessons about the role of creative labour and flexible space in urban and architectural design. The Creative City era has ultimately served to enforce ephemeral consumerist monoculture, while providing little support to more deeply rooted local cultural growth. It has done this both through reliance on development pressures, its production of fixed architectures, and its encouragement of tabula rasa approaches towards culture and context.

The Creative City's full endorsement of gentrification and its explicitly classist rhetoric has only enforced and masked patterns of displacement and exclusion which destroy communities and limit contextual cultural development. Any cultural policy which looks to learn from these failures must look to resist these broader destructive patterns of capitalist development and examine structures and models which can directly address the volatility of free form urbanization. Rather than focusing on the import of creative individuals, cultural policy must as a foundation, focus on the provision of stable spaces within which complex communities and cultures of care can grow.

The fixity of the Creative City teaches further lessons about the role of architectural space in restricting creative spaces of community and care. Architectural fixity has restricted creative and cultural potential in the city to that which is profitable. Increasingly flexible patterns of urban circulation have created *fixed architectures* within *flexible geographies*. An increasingly flexible resident is caught up in the increasingly

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261   Saad, "Making Space," 7-11.

restrictive architectural spaces of the Creative City limiting their agency over new modes of production. By providing flexible buildings and public spaces in our cities, both through architectural and governance strategies, we can create space for anti-capitalist forms of creative production, which can operate in opposition to exploitative flexible patterns of labour and development.

The final and perhaps most important lesson from the Creative City is in the failure of tabula rasa cultural models. Cycles of demolition and colonial clearance are embedded in patterns of urban development today, as flexible geographies, repetitively clear away the fixed architectures that they contain. These patterns create a clear echo within the city's cultural life as ongoing tabula rasa cultural planning ignores artistic and community contexts alike, shifting and levelling space with the tides of development as it imports trendy policy and architecture. Any policy that looks to resist these volatile patterns and encourage cultural growth deeply connected to place, space, and architecture, must look to grow from the existing rich and complex context of the city. Only by supporting, promoting, and making space for existing and emerging initiatives, residents, and histories, can the city begin to develop an alternative model for cultural growth, one focused not on development and consumption but one grown from foundations of context, community, and care.

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