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“tactic” as a subversive act
to the proper or “institutional”

by

Jaime A. Lara

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

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May, 2000
ABSTRACT

“tactic” as a subversive act
to the “proper” or “institutional”

by

Jaime A. Lara

The thesis is the exploration of the urban vernacular and the “tactical” practices that redefine and reappropriate the “strategic”, “proper”, or institutional. The concern of the thesis lies in the “fringe”, or “marginalized” areas of the city – the residual spaces that rely on “tactics” to attain a temporal, improvisational, and ephemeral quality. Hip hop culture, consisting of rap, break dancing and graffiti, is utilized as an illustration of the “tactics” that subvert the strategic. The emphasis of the project is to reappropriate and redefine the theatre as a community center that is made up of cultural and entrepreneurial programmatic elements. The design sets forth a set of architectural “tactics” that regard architecture as a “prop” for the “performances” that establish spatial form and relationships. A series of “tactics” that aim to create and redefine zones within an existing shell to denote and activate the “new” and old programmatic elements.
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The previous images were acquired from Hip-Hop magazines: The Source, Rap Pages and Vibe. All other images were taken by the author.
Preface

The following thesis stems from the Cabrini-Green study but it emphasizes on the social, economic, and political aspects of the housing problem. Rather than providing dwellings, the project proposal seeks to provide the means for dwelling. In this sense, the idea is to empower the residents of the Fifth Ward by providing them with a building that is both a cultural center as well as an economic base for the community. The project is sited on Lyons Avenue in the Fifth Ward at the location of the abandoned Deluxe Theatre. The design proposal departs from the cultural context of the Fifth Ward in order to maintain the sense of "community" that seems to already exist in the community. The "tactical" practices of hip-hop culture are referenced to try to stimulate and enliven the design, and to create a building that has a temporal and ephemeral quality.
Introduction

The following project is a result of an ongoing interest in public housing and the socio-economic and political ramifications that are often associated with it. The term public housing, or "mass" housing, has historically carried with it a negative stigma; making it a controversial issue and one that demands special attention. The project departs from an architectural examination of Chicago's public housing, with an emphasis on the infamous Cabrini-Green Gardens. The megablock "communities" study aims to decipher the architectural configurations that a city like Chicago employs to meet the growing demand for housing and battle the devastating effects of homelessness. The driving question behind this study and the thesis is whether an architectural movement or typology, i.e. the Modernist project of the 1960's and the recent developments of the New Urbanism movement, can ameliorate the housing problem. The aim is not to find a solution but to better understand the problem to arrive at a "suitable" design proposal.

megablock "communities": Cabrini-Green Gardens

The latest chapter in the housing struggle directs our attention to the city of Chicago's redevelopment efforts of Cabrini-Green Gardens - "the poster child" of public housing and a crucial experiment that will have a national impact on housing, urban planning and the architectural profession. Cabrini-Green occupies 9.3 acres on Chicago's Near North Side and the city's redevelopment effort has a scope of 65 acres, making it one of the largest projects since the Modernist era of the 1960s. The proposed redevelopment project centers on the concept of "community". The project is supposed to achieve two things: break down the isolated concentration of poverty which sociologist argue is the root cause of Cabrini-Green's troubles; and attract private capital to achieve a social good in an era of diminished federal spending.
Chicago, home of the first skyscrapers, the Sears Tower and the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe, is an appropriate departure point for the investigation of housing. Although its been considered the creative center of American architecture for more than 100 years, it can be said that "[t]he very city that gave the world the architectural glories of Sullivan, Wright, and Mies also has produced the nation's most nightmarish concentration of public housing - the Poor House as well as the Prairie House." (AR 2/97, p.84) As architectural critic for the Chicago Tribune Blair Kamin notes, "[o]ne of the errors made during the urban-renewal programs of the 1950s and 1960s was the wholesale bulldozing of inner-city neighborhoods deemed slums by Modernist planners. Both physical and social fabrics were destroyed. That helped lead to the social instability that ultimately undid projects like Cabrini-Green and Pruitt Igoe." (AR 9/97, p. 65)
An examination of the Chicago Housing Authority’s (CHA) architectural configurations and
typology reveals that density became the driving force behind the public housing developments in Chicago.
However, architect Julian Whittelsey suggests, in his April 1951 article in Progressive Architecture - New
Dimensions in Housing Design, that the introduction of the high-rise apartment building was not only the
result of the CHA’s need to build more densely on the areas it had available; but could also be attributed to
the architects hired by the CHA to design the apartment buildings of the early 1950s. The architects hired
at the time - Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Loeb, Schlossman and Bennett, Loewenberg and Loewenberg;
Keck and Keck - had all shown in their work that they were committed to modernist styles in architecture.
They had obviously felt the impact of Mies van der Rohe’s 860-880 North Lake Shore Drive apartments
(1948-51), buildings that set the tone for a whole generation to come. As Ross Miller argues in his article,
Poor Architecture: A Cautionary Tale, that enamored by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s desire for pure form
and Le Corbusier’s vision of great megablock cities, architects used public housing as a grotesque proving
ground for both. Miller maintains that Mies’s ideology of bare-bones structure and algebra of square
footage, where every unit of space was equal to every other unit, was interpreted literally and placed
awkwardly within Le Corbusier’s essentially anti-urban idea of planning. The result was monotonous
towers, reiterated endlessly in Chicago on moonscapes created by the bulldozing of whole neighborhoods.
In the 1950s, with minimalist glass-and-steel apartments on the lakefront:

“Mies demonstrated the expressive beauty of a building’s structural
components when made of the finest industrial materials. However,
huge firms like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill took Miesian rigor as a
style and re-applied it indiscriminately to big social projects like the
Harold Ickes (1955) and Governor Henry Homes (1957). SOM
exposed the concrete frame and used brick infill in a way that Mies
might have technically approved, but they drained it of its spirit by
neglecting to question the appropriateness of high rises for dense
family housing... The high-rise’s one-time design costs, flat plates,
and regularized concrete bays made them economical and profitable,
while their prison image of surveillance and control made them easy
to sell to a public wary of underclass revolt.” (PA 8/92, p. 72)

Furthermore, as Wim de Wit argues in his essay The Rise of Public Housing in Chicago: 1930-1960, that
similar high-rise buildings, set back from the street’s lot line to create a small plaza; and with a steel or
cement structure and a skin made mostly of glass, became the “oft-repeated fashion” regardless of
whether the building was designed for apartments, offices, or a hospital. In his view, it is no wonder that
public housing projects were assimilated to this fashion, especially when one considers that the standardization
and repeatability of building elements promoted by modernist architects significantly reduced the unit
cost of these dwellings. However, we can note that:

“[a]t least one major problem with respect to high-rise building in the
modernist style, a la Mies van der Rohe, very quickly emerged: such
buildings often do not relate well to their environment. Because they
are set back from the street and have plazas in front or on all sides around them. they are more like isolated islands than integrated components of a city street. High-rise apartments designed for public housing were no exception to this problem...But in a project such as the Jane Addams Houses, which was only four stories high, a resident could still relate to the open areas surrounding the buildings; in high-rise buildings of seven or more stories, this was no longer possible. Even starker in design than the 1930s buildings, the high-rise towers of the 1950s and the 1960s did not foster the development of a sense of community among the tenants, in spite of the many programs set up by building managers to encourage people to feel proud of their apartment, their building, and project as a whole.”

(Zykowsky, p. 241)

In an effort to ameliorate the effect of high-rise housing architects tried many different strategies which had unexpected and sometimes unpleasant results. An example of this is the opening of the southern façade of Prairie Avenue Court by architect George Fred Keck in 1951. Keck believed that he could create passive housing through this simple adjustment, which in his mind would lessen the effect of Chicago’s punishing winters and at the same time eliminate claustrophobic double loaded corridors. To his dismay, he only succeeded in popularizing open galleries, which later became one of the detested element of public housing. Moreover, these balconies were then chain-linked from concrete floor to overhang to keep small children from falling – creating a caged outdoor space, which made the residents feel like caged-in animals. In addition, projects like the 28 identical sixteen story Robert Taylor Homes, because it was poorly sited and it had one open façade, in winter it became a “deep freeze”.
Although the Chicago Housing Authority remained committed to providing decent housing for Chicago’s poor population, the initial response to the need for public housing, soon degenerated into a formula to house as many people for the lowest cost possible. CHA’s housing typology is primarily based on three models - the gallery plan, the skip-corridor plan, and the central-corridor plan - all inherently similar except in scale. The “success” of Ogden Courts and the Jane Addams Houses, which were only four stories high, depended on the scale and density of the project. However, in Chicago “so much emphasis was placed on building quickly in order to house workers engaged in industries converted to war production that the original standard of high-quality housing was significantly diluted...[T]his lowering of quality had a lasting impact on postwar housing; [and] the standards were never raised again.” (Zykowsky, p. 238) This inevitably set the stage for projects such as Robert Taylor Homes and Cabrini-Green and undoubtedly contributed to the “slum” conditions that exist today.

Traveling on Chicago’s Dan Ryan Expressway, one inevitably encounters at a distance one of the city’s most infamous public housing developments. This vast expanse of the 1960s high-rise towers including housing developments like the Robert Taylor Homes, which has come to represent the failure of Chicago public housing, Stateway Gardens, and Cabrini-Green – the “poster-child” of public housing. With 3,200 units and an estimated 7,300 official residents, living in Cabrini-Green today means facing the constant danger of gang shoot-outs and drug related violence. Blair Kamin, clearly depicts the deteriorating conditions of Cabrini-Green on his account on one of the development’s buildings:

“To get to Rachella Thompson’s apartment, No. 506 at 1161 north Larrabee Street, you walk past a dirt front yard strewn with shard of glass into a lobby (though that is certainly too grand a name for it), where a cloud of flies engulfs your head. No sign points the way to the elevator, so you ask a thin, young boy smoking a cigarette to direct you. After he does, he looks you straight in the eye and asks: ‘Can I have 50 cents?’ The elevator has steel walls, painted black and covered with graffiti, profane and otherwise, that has been there, Rachella says, for as long as she can remember. Once the elevator clanks to a stop, you exit and make two left turns to reach the door to Rachella’s apartment. A sign
on the door used to spell out ‘Thompson.’ Now, several of the letters are missing.” (AR 9/97, p.63)

Cabrini-Green sits on a site formerly know as “Little Hell”, a Near North side slum with “vermin-infested, garbage – strewn alleys and dangerous streets in which residents endured a rate of violent crime 12 times that of non-slum neighborhoods.” (ibid., p.86) From 1941 to 1943, the CHA constructed 55 barrack-like row houses and named them for Mother Frances Cabrini, a Chicago nun and the first American born saint. However, to lower per unit costs the CHA turned to high-rises designed by Amstader’s firm, A. Epstein and Sons. Situated in a park like setting and ranging in height from seven to nineteen stories and had exposed concrete frames with red brick infill. As Kamin maintains, “[t]hey were literally poor man’s Mies, bereft of both the expensive materials and the uplifting spirit the master brought to the structurally expressive 860 and 880 North Lake Shore Drive apartment buildings completed four years earlier. Today, as if to underscore their monotonous, institutional quality, Cabrini residents call them ‘the Reds’.

Their counterparts, north of Division Street, ‘the Whites’, eight high-rises with whitish-gray concrete frames, went up from 1959 to 1962. Fifteen and sixteen stories tall, they were named for Chicago labor leader William Green and designed by Pace Associates. ‘The Whites’ were poor man’s Corbu.” (ibid., p.86) As Kamin notes, there are 65 to 144 units per high-rise, a density that worked well when
the project was largely inhabited by the working poor, but proved troublesome as the percentage of jobless and desperately poor residents soared. He argues that many of the problems of Cabrini-Green were fomented by the real architects of public housing's demise - politicians and bureaucrats, both national and local - and they were compounded by a disregard for the Modernist ideals of light, air, and green space. When superblock open space was paved over, the tower in the park became the tower in the parking lot. The Corbusier-inspired "tower-in-the-park model appears to have exacerbated fundamental problems: its lack of defensible space, for example, enabled ground-floor lobbies to be turned into drug supermarkets. When children threw garbage out of open-air galleries, which the architects intended to be "streets in the sky", the galleries were fenced in with chain-link, reinforcing the prison-like image of public housing.

Among the subjects of continual fascination is the fact that Cabrini-Green houses Chicago's poorest of the poor, while butting up against some of Chicago's most affluent areas, "including the so-called Gold Coast along Lake Michigan, as well as the boutiques of Oak street, which cater to talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, the billionaire Pritzker family, and those who are merely millionaires." (AR 2/97, p.85) In this sense, very few public housing developments sit alongside such vibrant neighborhoods, offering them such a tightly woven urban fabric to which they can connect. Despite its proximity to this "rich urban fabric, its "physical isolation is palpable, with poorly stocked, over priced grocery and liquor stores a short walk down aptly named Division Street from Starbucks. The visible walls that fence off Cabrini-Green are snaking elevated tracks and dead-ends in the Chicago street grid." (ibid., p.85) However, since 1995, when Henry Cisneros - former Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - approved a takeover of the scandal-plagued Chicago Housing Authority, the Republican-controlled Congress had slashed the agency's $25 million budget by nearly a quarter. This means that the federal housing authority will not lead the efforts of turning Cabrini-Green into a "community", leaving the task up to private developers and city agencies. An effort that envisions a low-rise mix of townhouses and flats, in which public housing units will be indistinguishable from those selling at market rates, plus new schools, parks, a police station, and stores. About 2,600 housing units are to be built, nearly 800 of them for public housing residents. The area in question goes far beyond, the borders of Cabrini-Green - in effect, knocking down the walls between "project" and "city" and making it one of the biggest and most debated redevelopment projects since the height of urban renewal in the 1960s. As Kamin argues, "[this project] represents a major shift, because the not-so-hidden agenda of public housing in Chicago has long been to isolate very low-income blacks from whites, as if the high-rises were file cabinets for the poor. The most chillingly visible manifestation of this policy is the nearly three-mile-long stretch of battered towers along the South Side's Dan Ryan Expressway that includes the Robert Taylor Homes... (Chicago's worst) public housing project." (AR 2/97, p.88)

The significance of the redevelopment efforts at Cabrini-Green are so great to the city of Chicago and HUD, that they have embraced the New Urbanism by hiring a team led by the Chicago office of Ann Arbor, Michigan based planners JJR Inc. The JJR team consists of Boston architects Goody, Clancy and Associates, who used New Urbanist principles to shape the transformation of Boston's Columbia Point housing project into a successful mixed-income complex know as Harbor Point. As Kamin suggests, for
the New Urbanists, Cabrini-Green provides a chance to disprove claims that their movement is largely concerned with upper-middle-income, suburban housing, masking sprawl in the town—planning traditions of yesteryear. He believes that whatever their formal inclinations, all architects arguably have a stake in what will affect the public perception of architects as well as the profession’s view of itself. Moreover, that if Pruitt Igoe spawned the myth that poor design caused public housing’s woes, Cabrini-Green offers a chance to refute that falsehood and it also “provides an opportunity to broaden the sense of social mission a select group of firms kept alive during the era of “starchitects” and mass-marketed tea kettles, bird houses, cookie tins, and fish lamps.” (AR 2/97, p. 85) Undeniably, though, the redevelopment’s success hinges on a socio-economic issue: Whether Cabrini-Green residents can begin to join the mainstream of American culture. As Kamin argues that architects tend to fixate on the product of design. Yet at Cabrini, designing the process is equally significant, especially insofar as it can be adapted to the complexities of public housing, which differ from development to development, building to building, family to family. Similarly, he maintains that “the process ought to recognize the limits of physical planning, as the award-winning, low-income housing architect Christine Killory has suggested. ‘We are firmly committed to the proposition that architecture can change people’s lives,’ she says, ‘but not everybody’s and not immediately and not on its own.’” (AR 2/97, p.89)
The demolition of a select Pruitt Igoe towers, reflects the American fantasy of "wiping the slate clean and starting anew". However, the "lack of architectural interest in most inexpensive housing is not an inherent limitation of housing as a building category but is instead a function of the ideology and political economy of the system that delivers it." (JAE 2/93, p. 130) In this regard, architect Michael Pyatok argues that "[t]he housing problem cannot be addressed without first recognizing that its caused and proposed solutions are the by-products of deeply rooted inequalities of class, race and gender." (ibid., p.147) For Pyatok, successful housing design must involve the inhabitants themselves from the outset of the design process. The "day-to-day emotional and physical efforts invested in the home as a life process are trivialized and distorted if they are undertaken solely or primarily to increase the resale market value of the house. The user-based model conceptualizes housing as an untidy, social, economic and political process, rather than a photogenic commodity for sale." (ibid., p.148) Contrary to the site planning of the last three to four decades, Pyatok believes that nothing is really gained in a social sense, other than sheer trouble, by connecting rear yard areas for shared use beyond thirty families. Moreover, designing affordable housing for lower-income households for Pyatok means that we must satisfy the cultural conceptions, preferences, and expectations of the surrounding neighborhood to facilitate acceptability and weaken "NIMBY" (not-in-my-backyard) resistance. As he states:

"[f]rom our experiences in dealing with Nimby attitudes, the more that new lower-income rental housing reflects a vision of the good life as understood by low-and middle-income homeowners, the better its chances of being accepted into the neighborhood...He believes that housing competitions that focus on the single-family house should be more explicit about whom they are helping. Also that ownership of the single-family house should be more explicit about whom they are helping. Also that ownership of the single-family home is virtually impossible for households below 80 percent of median income and is difficult in many regions even for those earning from 80 to 120 percent of the median." (ibid., p. 155)

In this regard, he believes that efficient design, smaller units, and modular or prefabricated construction systems cannot solve the underlying problems of high land costs, low and unstable wages, and poor credit ratings that lead to high rates of foreclosure. He argues that a focus on single-family home-ownership in competitions tells us more about the class bias of the competition organizers who are too often unfamiliar with the real struggles of those with lower incomes and that its also questionable from an environmental and regional planning perspective whether we should promote the sprawl created by detached single-family living. In his view, low-rise, higher density, multifamily housing is the challenging community planning problem of today and the future, not just for lower-income households, but for all income groups whose lower density lifestyles have been a financial burden to all of society.

What then, does the future hold for the 1950s and 1960s megablock projects like Cabrini-green and Robert Taylor Homes? The city of Chicago's commitment to redevelop Cabrini-Green suggests an
attempt to rethink the public housing question. The failure of the low-income high-rise ended the social plight of Modernism, replacing it by a general stigma, both in the architecture profession and the public, towards “mass” housing. The demolition of a few of Pruitt Igoe’s towers illustrates the “wipe the slate clean” mentality behind the housing problem up to now. Chicago’s aim at redeveloping the dilapidated towers at Cabrini-Green opens a new chapter in the history of housing and it seems to point to a possible shift in perception in terms of “mass” housing. Although the failure of Modernism signified a paradigm shift in architecture, it did not discourage those who today are committed to “social” “responsible” architecture - architects like Michael Pyatok who continue to believe in the potential of architects to make a positive contribution in the field of low-income housing. Contemporary “mass” housing developments have changed from the megablock Modernist strategy to that of single-family and multi-family dwellings. The scale of housing projects has been reduced, perhaps as a result of the failures of projects like Robert Taylor Homes, Pruitt Igoe and Cabrini-Green. As Michael Pyatok’s work suggests, the density and scale of megablock high-rise towers has been compressed to a more contained and less dense form. The rejection of megablock projects over single-family and multi-family dwellings can be regarded as an attempt to find the balance between “individual” and “collective” – its an attempt to define “community”.
thoughts on HOUSTON

Bayou City
Most of the development occurring in Houston is aimed at energizing the city, and also create the image of "Downtown: Capitol of Houston". The restructuring of Downtown is not only an economic venture, but an attempt by the city to create a "Houston community", to foster a Houstonian identity. But in order to aid economic growth and development in Houston, the restructuring efforts have to be synergetic to the redevelopment of the marginalized, fringe areas of the city - the "inner-city".

A FRAGMENTED CITY
thoughts on HOUSTON

Space City
Home of NASA's Manned Space Center, Houston is regarded as "space city" in much of the literature. However, the city's tendency towards sprawl also makes it a city of spaces - more specifically a city of vacant spaces. Spaces where empty buildings sit or the vegetation grows wild. Areas of "growth" exhibit what Michel Foucault calls "strategies" - or spatial practices that articulate the lines of power, the spaces of the "proper" (and property). The boundaries of control.

A DEVELOPER'S CITY
thoughts on HOUSTON

The Wards
Originally the wards were political districts but with time have come to demarcate the marginalized areas of the city. Economically depressed areas in which one finds instances of what Foucault terms "tactics" - the multiplicity of ways that inhabitants subvert and reappropriate urban space in defiance of power and control. While resistance is still unfolding around the ever-present social and cultural divisions in this city, it is also emerging in more individualized and everyday practices. One particular form of this tactical counter-move by its inhabitants is the ubiquitous phenomena of graffiti.

FRINGE CITY
thoughts on HOUSTON

Second City
As Mike Davis suggest, "the dual influx of interantional finance with low-wage immigrant labor has created a "third world second city". Within the space of a thriving first world capitalist city, engendering a spatial frontier of social contradiction...also, the same processes have furthered the economic marginalization of Hispanic and African American communities, creating massive pockets of unemployment and crime...". (Mike Davis, 1989, 48-49; 1991, 306)

Deluxe theatre

A FORGOTTEN CITY
THEORY THAT EXPLAINS TACTICS

"Residual", or "marginalized" spaces that use "tactical" practices that make them spontaneous, temporal, and improvisational.
WHAT HIP HOP IS:

Hip hop culture thrives on "tactical" practices that aim to subvert the "strategic", "proper", or "institutional".

Dj takes medium and uses it as an instrument

Hip hop culture includes forms of expression that are rooted in creativity, spontaneity and improvisation that make them versatile, pervasive and adaptable; and because of the subject matter are often seen as counter to mainstream practices. Hip hop is the culture from which rap emerged and that initially consisted of four main elements: graffiti art, break dancing, dj-ing (cutting and scratching) and emceeeeing (rapping). Hip hop is a lifestyle with its own language, style of dress, music and mindset that is continuously evolving.
strategies establish a 'proper' place, other spatial or institutional, such that science triumphs over time. Political, economic, and scientific rationalities are constructed, on the strategic

ACCEPTANCE OF HIP HOP

Acceptance of a stigmatized culture into mainstream culture.

"Where hip hop once attacked the mainstream, to all intents and purposes, it now is the mainstream. It has become the hub at the centre of America's cultural wheel."

(Alex Ogg. The Hip Hop Years: A History of Rap)
"One movement has been prominent in the shaping of urban culture in the last twenty-five years: it is hip hop. Born in the midst of a soundtrack to block parties, New York City spread across America and then the world, constantly reinventing itself from Afrika Bambaataa's 'Planet Rock' to the rise of West Coast rap, hip hop has been used as a party music, a protest tool, a way to provide a sense of belonging. Today it is a multi-billionaire industry that dominates sales worldwide, influencing international fashion and youth culture. As hip hop's direction, hip hop remains volatile and innovative multi-page art."

(Alex Ogg, The Hip Hop Years: His...
HIP HOP AS MAINSTREAM

The acceptance of hip hop culture has led to its proliferation into the mainstream as a viable market.

hip hop as:

dress

music
HIP HOP AS MAINSTREAM

hip hop as:

language

mindset
COMMERCIALIZATION OF HIP HOP

Hip hop is a commercial phenomenon that has saturated the pop market as well as the internet.

In a world where information plus technology equals power, those who control the editing rooms run the show. DJs are editors of the street, using technology to structure an alternate sonic reality. They are the first musicians to turn a medium into an instrument.
HIP HOP ON THE INTERNET

"For more than 20 years," Harry Allen (rapdotcom@aol.com) has been involved with the hip hop scene as a journalist for The Village Voice, he was the truism that 'hip hop is a business and banks are reaping the profits'. As the Media Assassin, Allen has fought to keep the rap group 'The C.I.C.' working and the hip hop scene alive while not believing the hype. In 1994 Allen created the RhythmCultural Institute; an organization dedicated to keeping for the future, acquiring, defining, and promoting the expansion of hip hop music and culture. Larry Allen has turned his attention to the digital realm, focusing on the confluence of hip hop culture and the information revolution. Embracing technology and the internet, he created the newsletter rap dot com and is developing a Larry King Live-style talk show with Chuck D under the aegis of their multimedia production company, Scramble. Allen aims to 'educate and excite, inform and infuriate...'"

(Matt Harber. Wired - 3.11.1995)
Graffiti: as a demarcation of territory.

Graffiti is a ubiquitous urban form of expression that seeks to redefine and reappropriate the "fringe", or "marginalized", urban spaces by using the city as a canvas.

"tag": a "throw up" - temporary, spontaneous and fast.
Graffiti: as a form of identity.

The history of the underground "art movement", or graffiti, begins in Philadelphia during the mid to late 1960s, rooted in "bombing" which consists in the writing of as many "tags" as possible, sparked when writing shifts from the streets to the subway.

"tag" : a "throw up" - temporary, spontaneous and fast.
Graffiti: as "art".

The next development in the history of graffiti is the rendering of "tags" in larger scale. Due to an increase number of "tags" on the streets, "writers" began to increase the thickness of the letters and would also outline them with additional colors - also known as "masterpieces".

"piece" : essentially a "tag" that is larger in scale depicting a "style".