The city as an environment has room for a multiplicity of roles, among which the architect's may be not be that of unifier.

— Lawrence Alloway, 1959
aerial view of San Francisco looking east
(from Visionary San Francisco, p. 14, photo: Backwell)

previous page, aerial view of San Francisco looking west
(download from the internet)
aerial view of the central freeway before demolition, 1996

(photo: San Francisco Chronicle)
Experiencing the City

The combination of density, simultaneity and the possibility for encounter in the city is exploding with meaning. Unique urban experiences emerge from the interaction of people within the dense and simultaneous physical and narrative environment, developing urban spaces over time.
The city of San Francisco, the site is surrounded by the oval.
Entangling Structures

Engendering strategies.

The built environment participates in the arena of social relations by engaging in the construction of spaces, held in place by meaning and cultural arrangement. As a method, use, incident and narrative are implemented as devices to charge these spaces with presence. Derived from the idea that the order of the city is a function of proximity, structures within the city, or urban forms, are generated and combined in a manner designed to augment the social life of the urban dweller.
The city of San Francisco, California serves as the site for the development of urban strategies based on spatial proximity and narrative. The project is located in and adjacent to the linear space remaining after the demolition of a freeway which coursed through the urban fabric. This unprecedented spatial condition provides a place for the engagement of city-building and the continued construction of urban communities.
Projects
The strategy pursued in this series of propositions is one based on an idea that localized activities govern the act of city building.

Running Track
The entire length of the site is occupied by the track. Its surface is similar to a typical stadium track and is orange in color.

Rooms
Civic Center—in this area a tourist observation tower and a grouping of motel rooms is proposed.

Gym
Hayes Valley—the gymnasium is the central project of all of the propositions. It is a generator of community. A place where body erotics rule, where image is manifest.

Forest
A wooded neighborhood block, thick with hidden excitement and mystery.

SFLGBTCC
(The San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center)
A city-sponsored competition is underway to build a center at the corner of Market St. and Octavia. A public place for organized meetings.

Parking
A massive parking structure is placed at the termination of the elevated central freeway. The running track slides into the opposite end of the structure, creating a pedestrian path from the highway.
southeast corner of the gym buildings from track/alley side
Proposition 1: The GYM

The gym situates itself in Hayes Valley along Hayes Street at the intersection of Octavia. At this intersection the running track dips below the street grade. The buildings of the gym act to transition between the track and the streets.

Mark tied his chow to a tree while he ran into the store.
I walked along the sidewalk next to the train tracks. Looking down onto the running track, I saw two of my friends out for a run. I ran to them to invite them to the movie theater for the 3:30 showing of "Beautiful Thing."
Jack was rushing to get to the cafe for his opera date with Jason. They had agreed to meet at 6:30 so they would have time for a cocktail and then walk to the opera house.
At Hayes Street the track bends.
The building situates itself between the track and the grid of the city blocks.

"The Safeway?"

"Not *that* one, actually. The one on Upper Market. *From my* standpoint, it's a lot cruisier." He slapped his own cheek.

"Stop that. You're embarrassing the girl."

*from* Tales of the City
The city is performative. An identity is created through our own performances. Buildings participate in these structured events, influencing our actions in their physical order and responding to our changing habits in their programmatic mutability.
Circulation and property ownership patterns in the city are governed by the grid of streets.

The division of the blocks into narrow lots has created spaces in between the buildings. Transition spaces between inside and outside.

mannered body
dandy
aesthetically rendered self

To be natural...is such a difficult pose to keep up. — Oscar Wilde
to POSE: to place in a specified situation or condition, placing oneself in position especially for artistic purposes, an attitude or posture of the body, an air, affectation, mannerism

POSING: the artifice or fictionality of "position" understood simultaneously as a social and spatial location of embodiment

Beth and Christopher decided to see the midnight show of the newly restored "Vertigo." Beth commented as they entered
the theater how fabulous Christopher looked in his new D&G outfit.
Mike was walking home from the gym when he ran into Jeff. They agreed to meet tomorrow night at eight o'clock for a light dinner at the Civic Center Cafe.
The body is trained or artificially pressed into shape determined by the society as reflecting its cultural ideals.

PUMPED

self-sustaining experience, the gym is a realm of experience; "no pain, no gain" pain of exertion becoming a masochistic pleasure; telos=completion; teleios=perfect, having reached its end; self-actualization; muscle questers

metamorphosis

Narcissus

Total housing units: 305,584; owner occupied: 105,514; renter occupied: 200,070; 2.29 persons per household; median gross rent: $653.00; Work 35 + hours per week: 343,830.  

TWENTY-THIRD IDYLL

A lovesick man longed for a cruel youth, beautiful in form but not in his manner, for he hated his lover, and felt for him no tenderness. He knew nothing of Eros—what god he is, or what kind of bow he carries, or what bitter arrows he lodges in the heart. He was unyielding whenever they met and spoke. There was no solace for love's fires: no quivering of the lips, or eye-glances, or blushing cheek—not a word, not a kiss, to ease the passion. Like a wild animal of the forest watching the hunter, he looked at the man, with hostile lip, and eyes that glared at him as sternly as fate. His bitter mood changed his whole face, which lost its color because of his angry pride. Yet even so he was handsome, and his haughtiness moved the lover all the more, till at last he could no longer bear so fierce a flame of the Kythereian, but came and wept by the cruel dwelling, and kissed the doorpost, and lifted up his voice: "Cruel boy, and heartless, a fierce lioness' nursling—boy of stone, unworthy of love, I have come with this last gift for you, my hanging-robe. I will not anger you anymore, my boy, with the sight of me, but will take the road to which you have condemned me, where, men say, is the common cure for lovers—oblivion. But if with my lips I drain it, every drop, even then I shall not quench my desire. But now at last I bid farewell to your door. I know what is to be. The rose is lovely, but time withers it. And the violet is beautiful in spring but grows old quickly. The lily is white. It fades as it flowers. And snow is white, until it melts on the ground. The brightness of youth is beautiful, but lives only a little while. The day will come when you'll love, and your heart will burn, and you'll weep.

salt tears. But my child, do me one last favor.
When you come out and find me, a poor wretch,
hanging in your doorway, don't pass me by.
but stay and weep awhile in libation,
and take me down from the rope, and cover me
with some clothing from your body. And give me
a last kiss, granting the grace of your lips
to the dead. Don't be afraid of me.
I can't harm you, reconciled with a kiss.

Dig me a grave to hide my love in
and before you go, cry over me three times
'Rest, my friend.' And also, if you will,
'My good friend is dead.' And write this epitaph
that I will scratch on your wall: 'This man
was killed by Love. Traveler, do not pass by,
but stop and say, He had a cruel friend.'

When he had said this he took a stone
and set it in the middle of the doorway—
a terrible stone. And tied up the slender rope
and fastened the loop around his neck and kicked
the stone from under his foot and hung there dead.

But when the other opened the door
and saw the body hanging from his doorway,
his heart was unmoved, and he did not weep
for this strange death or defile his boy's clothes
on the corpse, but went off to the contests
at the gymnasium, light-hearted
seeking his favorite bathing-place.
And there he met the god he had scorned,
on a stone pedestal above the water.
And the statue leaped on him, and killed
that cruel boy. The water reddened
with blood and the boy's voice floated above it:
"Rejoice, lovers, for the hater is dead.
And love, haters, for the god knows how to judge."

from The Idylls of Theokritos.
Chad saw an ad in the Guardian on Thursday so he decided to go into the Metamorphosis Gym and see what they had to offer. He had heard that the steam rooms were fun.
mean travel time to work: 26.9 minutes.

Private garages along Linden Street means no street parking along the curb.
San Francisco population:

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Proposition 2: PARKING

The second proposition is the construction of a parking structure at the termination of the central freeway at Mission Street in the South-of-Market (SOMA) area. Traffic will drive into the garage from the highway and walk out of the garage using the running track.

source: Bureau of the Census
Traffic flows into the city via the bridges and freeways.
Identity: language-5+ yrs. speak English at home: 396,596 speak Non-English at home: 292,093; median income: $33,414; 100% urbanized; 25-29 yrs. 11.4% of population, highest %; median age: 36.0 yrs.; white: 388,341; black: 78,931; american indian: 3354; asian: 211,000; other: 42,333; hispanic: 96,640.  

Source: U.S. Census, 1990
Glances are exchanged as people move in and around the garage floors.

A sunbather takes advantage of the roof deck of the parking garage, catching some sun and making a few calls.

The parking structure covers a large portion of a SOMA block.
Motel Room View
Jan 8, 1997

the busy guests
Proposition 3: ROOMS

This project is located in the civic center. It provides tourist activities and motel accommodations.
the model rooms and the observation tower are placed on the track
At 9:30pm on Friday night, two SF Art Institute students held a performance along Grove Street.

The blocks of rooms are scattered over the track as it passes through the axially organized civic center area which houses city hall, state buildings, federal buildings, the city library, a large public plaza.
waiting after a run through the hunter loop and a quick drive to the room
Ken, Brad and Jan are visiting for the week from Columbus, Ohio. This is Ken's second visit to "Frisco"; Brad and Jan's first. They are going to see "Beach Blanket Babylon" tonight. Brad really likes the view from the tower connected to the motel.
The observation tower allows the visitor to get a hilltop view while being in the flat area of the civic center.
Future Propositions

future cities

The strategy set forth in these propositions is intended as a way of approaching city building as an activity which creates connections (both literal and metaphorical) between the existing and the new. It refuses the erasure of large pieces of the older city (modernist planning) as well as large scale master plans of city life. Instead it wishes to augment or heighten the activities of the city on a scale directly associated with human activity. This is not a nostalgic method, it is simply a way of building in a city that operates currently and will continue to generate a life of its own separate from design.

the 50th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge
References


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