

# FESTIVALISATION OF MODERN CITIES

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Chair of Cross Domain, "City of the Future"  
Seminar | research and theory framework paper



Left hand side picture of Magic Kingdom, Orlando, Florida USA. Right hand side. Picture of the Duomo of Milan, Italy.  
Picture taken by the author Picture from :[www.duomomilano.it](http://www.duomomilano.it)

## A contemporary perspective on the notion of *Event*

### Event as networks

The research highlights the new spatial consequences of events and festivals in the dynamics of modern cities. Starting from the common notion of festivals as an ephemeral manifestation of cultural identity of a place, and as a recurrent celebration of cultural practices<sup>1</sup>, this paper takes the readers towards a contemporary notion of events as the manifestation of the current economy.<sup>2</sup> Most of current architectural and urban literature with intervention still treat events as a temporal manifestation<sup>3</sup> however, I argue that due to intensity and commercial purposes, events have become the consequence of permanent urban and architectural scenarios in today's event-driven society. Hence, the necessity exists to reframe events as part of the splintering effect<sup>4</sup>, and further, to consider their contribution to the birth of glo-local<sup>5</sup> patterns in modern cities. This essay highlights how events are taking a central role in determining the shapes and definitions of modern cities and cities of the future.

Starting from the second half of the 20th century, precisely as a consequence of post-Fordist economic model, there is a detachment from the labour production-based economy. Leisure, recreational and commercial activities started to gain a more significant role in the everyday life of citizens; setting the basis of a new economic model<sup>6</sup>, a new life-style, hence a new way of living and a demand for a new urban environment. This socio-economical process, followed by the information revolution in 1990 lead us to what was first defined in 1991 by Jan van Dijk as the: "Networked society".<sup>7</sup> This introduction is important towards the understanding of the way events, more specifically, networks of events, are shaping and transforming future's cities built (and non-built) environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Etymological definition of Event taken from the Italian Enciclopedia Treccani. See <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/evento/>. By definition, events are temporal manifestation of cultural heritage and traditions. Characterised by notions of temporality, memorability, and remembrance (in the sense of practice of memory, events worth remembering).

<sup>2</sup> However, a modern additional description was added, which expands the notion or the word to any event or show that attracts the public. Further investigation into the historical socio-economic evolution up until today's economic model, reframes and justifies the current expansion of the word. For further research on today's economic model, please refer to:  
-Cudny, Waldemar, *Festivalisation of Urban Spaces : Factors, Processes and Effects*. (Switzerland: Springer, 2016).  
-Richards, Greg, and Robert Palmer, *Eventful Cities: Cultural Management and Urban Revitalisation*. (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Mehrotra, Rahul, Felipe Vera, Mayoral José, Richard Sennett, and Richard Burdett, *Ephemeral Urbanism Does Permanence Matter?* (Trento: LISt Lab. 2017). Taking R. Mehrotra as my key reference, the discourse on temporality and ephemeral practice in architecture and urbanism, often corresponds to non-urban even environmental situations where temporary/ephemeral settlements form. When part of the urban context, event related architecture is often tackled in the charge-discharge effect of these temporal conditions, which disappear after the event manifestation itself.

<sup>4</sup> Graham, S., & Marvin, S. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. (London: Routledge 2002). The splintering effect forces to rethink the role of spatial scale as a boundary in an age of intensified capitalist globalization, questioning the Euclidean, Cartesian, and Newtonian conceptions of spatial scales as neutral or stable platforms. In a similar way, events as an economic asset, are creating new cross-territorial networks. (IE: Fashion linking Paris, London, New York and Milan) hence need to be addressed and studied as part of this splintering phenomenon.

<sup>5</sup> Graham, S., & Marvin, S. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. (London: Routledge 2002). As part of the Splintering effect, glo-local patterns start to develop. The authors take Canary Wharf as a clear example of how a global cluster coexists within its local neighborhood. More often, these hybrid and contrasting urban patterns start to arise across modern cities, which despite their geographic proximity, they function and respond to completely dynamics.

<sup>6</sup> Pine, B. Joseph, and James H. Gilmore, *Welcome to the Experience Economy*. (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 1998). This economic model "Experience Economy" was first used in a 1998 article by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore describing the experience economy as the next economic era which arise as an evolution of the most recent service economy. As part of this evolution, culture becomes the most modern way used to stage and sell the *cultural* experience.

<sup>7</sup> Network society is the expression coined in 1991 related to the social, political, economic and cultural changes caused by the spread of networked, digital information and communications technologies. For further information see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network\\_society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network_society)

01

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15

01 Frank Sinatra for The Sands, Las Vegas, 1961  
Advertising the Las Vegas lifestyle

02 This 1962 Tropicana advert persuading visitors to the ESCAPE

02

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Images references:  
01 & 02 <https://flashbak.com/viva-las-vegas-adverts-and-ephemera-from-sin-city-in-the-1960s-70s-29982/>

As part of my theoretical research, great attention is given to the spatial implication of the new socio-economic model of cities of the future, called: cultural economy.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence of highly connected society, culture has become the new driving motif that allows flux of people to migrate from one city to the other, following this endless running series of events from a modern city to the other.

How to deal with this new splintering phenomenon is the central theme of my research and the key question for cities of the future which promote such a strategy to claim the title of modern-global cities.

Modern cities are selectively prioritising and developing fast and efficient cross border connections to bring clusters of economic power closer together, and similarly connecting, exposing and displaying their most attractive areas to their global audience. In a constant conflictual territorial war, modern cities are transforming, stretching, reclaiming and opening up local territories for their global commercial purposes. The analysis of such spatial transformations of modern cities' urban fabrics puts this research in a wider discourse which addresses a phenomenon that began in the 1960s when new socio-economic criterias of leisure and entertainment enlarged the scope of architectural practice<sup>9</sup>.

This project calls for a further understanding on how cities of the future can maintain a balance between their global (financially orientated) and their local existence (quality of life oriented), avoiding that the global will permanently transform the local. Furthermore, it is interesting to investigate how such splintering phenomenon is also shaping a new series of 'global' (almost elterian) society which migrates like swallows, chasing the next event.

Finally, my graduation project will further investigate spatial solutions for this glo-local<sup>10</sup> necessary coexistence, aiming to provide a new perspective on how to architecturally address this global phenomenon.

## Constructing the Architecture of American entertainment

### Commercialisation of leisure time

“Events are reminiscent of traditional practices, they tend to take over the city, infiltrating alleys and streets, converting buildings and re-signifying squares, streets, parks, pathways, facades, buildings, monuments and every component of the urban fabric”<sup>11</sup>  
Rahul Mehrotra.

With this quote, the Indian urbanist and architect, Rahul Mehrotra clearly captures the essence of the traditional notion of events, overwhelming the urban fabric they manifest, and temporarily transforming the space into a celebrative stage for a cultural or religious practice that has been carried through history. In a very poetic way, the author, describes the beauty of how these events bring people together in the act of celebration and remembrance. Temporary light structures get assembled every year for these recurrences, and immediately taken down at the end of the event, leaving no physical traces or scars behind onto the built environment.

<sup>8</sup> In the twentieth century, with particular focus towards the end of it, culture became a crucial phenomenon, not only socially, but especially economically and politically. Culture was treated as a product, and municipalities start to use such strategies in order to crisis. It starts to be included in marketing strategies aimed to economic development and towards the development of a global image of the city.

For a further interest on such phenomenon please refer to :

- Cudny, Waldemar, *Festivalisation of Urban Spaces : Factors, Processes and Effects*. (Switzerland: Springer,2016).
- Larry Ray and Andrew Sayer, *Culture and economy after the Cultural turn*. (Sage Publication Ltd, 1999 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446218112>)
- Pine, B. Joseph, and James H. Gilmore, *Welcome to the Experience Economy*. (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press,1998).
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<sup>9</sup> The central role of leisure and entertainment as part of the commercialisation of Architecture ( the Architecture aimed to sell) find their roots in the analysis and understanding of American cities of the 1970's.

- Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles : The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986)
- Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. *Learning from Las Vegas*. (Facsimile ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2017)
- Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York : A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. (Rotterdam: 010, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Graham, S., & Marvin, S. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. (London: Routledge 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Mehrotra, Rahul, Felipe Vera, Mayoral José, Richard Sennett, and Richard Burdett, *Ephemeral Urbanism Does Permanence Matter?* (Trento: LIST Lab. 2017).

05



04



03

06



A series of TimeOUT magazines highlighting the central economic role of events .

From New York, Amsterdam to Rijeka(croatia) and Abu Dhabi, all moder cities (or trying to be) are advertising and selling the city in various ways.

The city pictured as a theme park (03)

Selfies sticks & social media (04)

FEAR of missing out (05)

Art and shopping (06)

Images references:

03 <https://twitter.com/timeoutcroatia>

04 <https://www.timeout.com/asia/Abudhabi>

05 <https://www.behance.net/gallery/15278619/TimeOut-New-York-Cover-and-Article-Spread>

06 <http://www.johannanock.com/index.php?/time-out-covers/>

While, Mehrotra's view may still be relevant for a series of religious/cultural events which take place in determined locations across the globe, I argue that in the last decade most cultural and religious local events have become the target of global mass flux of attention, drastically increasing the amount of visitors and participants. Moreover, many more new city-planned events have been added to the calendar of cities annually, challenging the notion of event's temporality.<sup>12</sup> Most modern cities such as London, Paris, New York, and Berlin are characterised by an intense schedule of events and festivals that transform the event as part of the everyday of city dynamics. Their constant and cyclical repetition and alternation of events throughout the whole year, dispel Mehrotra's conception of charge and discharge, of everyday versus sudden manifestation, while highlighting a constant condition of the future city that is always subject to global flux high intensity.

This new centrality of events towards a festivalised built environment, finds its origins and similarities with the role of the theme park<sup>13</sup> in the transformation of American cities in the second half of the 20th century. Moreover, the analysis of American urban scenarios<sup>14</sup> defined by the extreme commercialised entertainment culture of America in the 1960s sets up an interesting parallelism and provides insights on shaping urban patterns deriving from today's event-driven culture. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the answers to these questions are very much correlated, and the post-industrial experience driven socio-economic context is a key enabler to understand how events and festivals start to take a physical expression in the built environment and became part of the scope of our profession.

In a way, it can be argued that events have always been part of cities and embedded within their civic life. Pre-industrial cities had the role of rituals, and most recreational activities took place in theatres, while during the middle-age cities revolved around festive calendar and carnivals. However, the concept of event (in relationship to spatial design) as an urban phenomenon can only be traced back starting from the 1970s as part of the post-Fordism<sup>15</sup> period where leisure becomes part of the economic scope. Particularly in the United States of America (U.S.A.), the culture of entertainment and leisure becomes a key driver for the national economy and starts to reshape the urban territories. Space and architectural elements start to be designed and transformed with a clear architectural intention to serve commercial purpose<sup>16</sup>.

As a result of Post-Fordist economy, people started to have available leisure time. Hence the necessity of recreational activities. Theme parks, resorts, casinos became more popular across the American territory, leading to even bigger urban manifestations, such as Las Vegas' Strip, Orlando's Disneyland Theme Park in Florida and Universal Studios in Los Angeles, which clearly state the involvement of Architecture as part of this new consumption based life-style.

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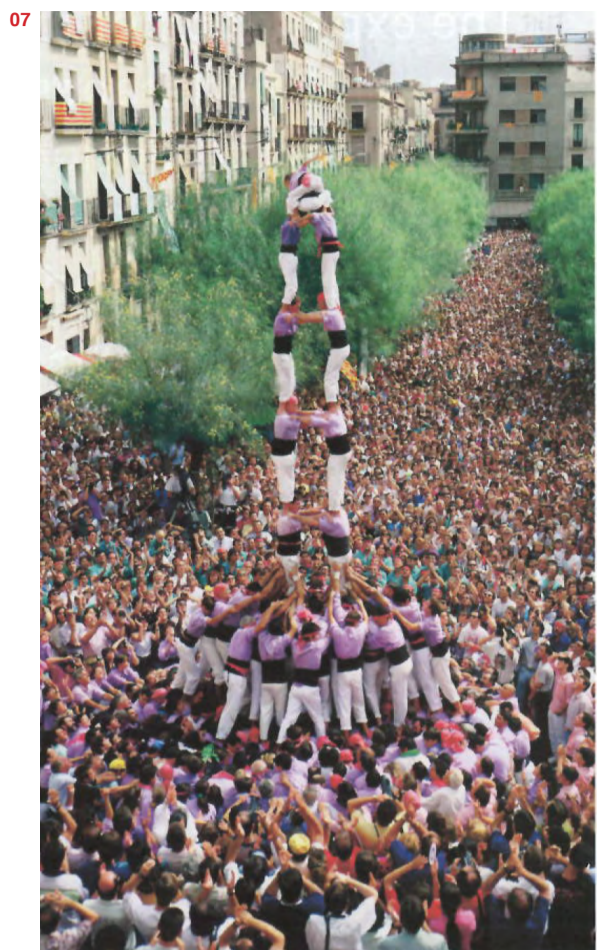
<sup>12</sup>As a continuation to the global success of Fashion Week and Design Week, Milan's municipality 2020 event-driven strategy introduced two new thematic week per month.

<sup>13</sup>Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York : A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. Rotterdam: 010, 1994. In the Coney Island: The Technology of the Fantastic, Rem Koolhaas will describe the essential role of Coney Island as the incubator for Manhattan.

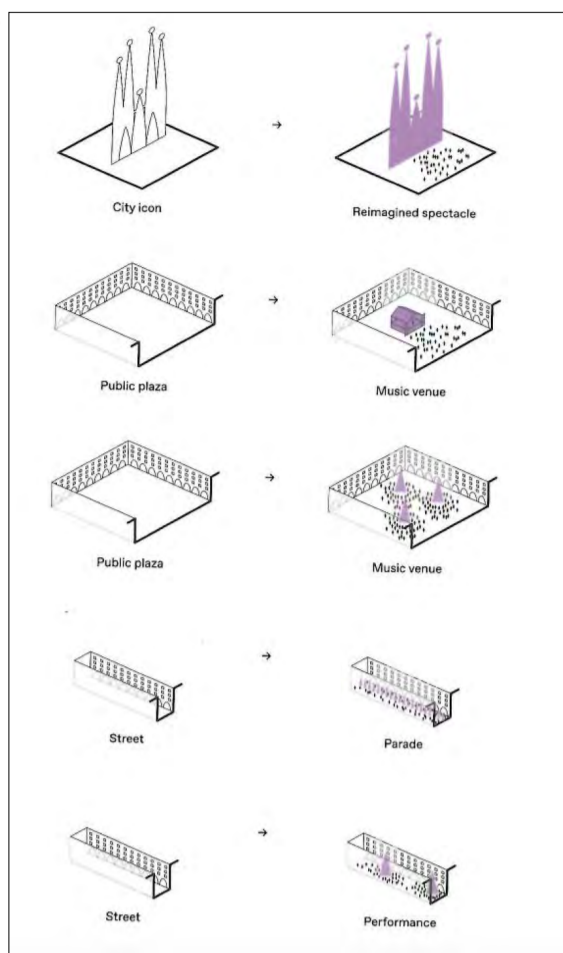
<sup>14</sup> The analysis of Los Angeles by Benham Reyner, redefines the conception of the city as an agglomeration of clusters (or as he defines them, ecologies). In his *Ecology II / Architecture II : Fantastic* we can see LA's embodiment of the experimental: its experimental shape and infrastructure, moreover the series of urban opposition between adjacent buildings and signs embrace the realm of fantasy, (divided) between commercial and cultural.

<sup>15</sup> The 1970s was the time when the economy based on the Fordist model was in crisis and a post-Fordist model of development was created. It was induced by the processes of deindustrialisation and globalisation, as well as by the appearance of new technologies. Moreover, key changes such as construction of social systems, establishment of workers' rights, and the introduction of paid holidays. Those economic and social advancements increased the financial surplus in households and the amount of available leisure time. See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-Fordism> and Cudny, Waldemar, *Festivalisation of Urban Spaces : Factors, Processes and Effects*. (Switzerland: Springer, 2016) p 22.

<sup>16</sup> The analysis of Las Vegas by Robert Venturi and Scott Brown clearly frames a new commercialised architectural language documenting signs, symbols and forms that enhance and facilitate the function of the strip to consume and amaze the visitors. Concept of staging, views and experience set up the architectural mean expressed by the Strip to impress the customers.



07



08

07 - LA Merce, Spain. Photographs of the Annual Festival  
08 - Diagram of the transformation of the public space. Stress and destress based according to the eventtaking place

Images references:  
07&08 Mehrotra, Rahul, Felipe Vera, Mayoral José. Ephemeral Urbanism Cities in Constant Flux. Trento: LISt Lab. 2017. p 94-95

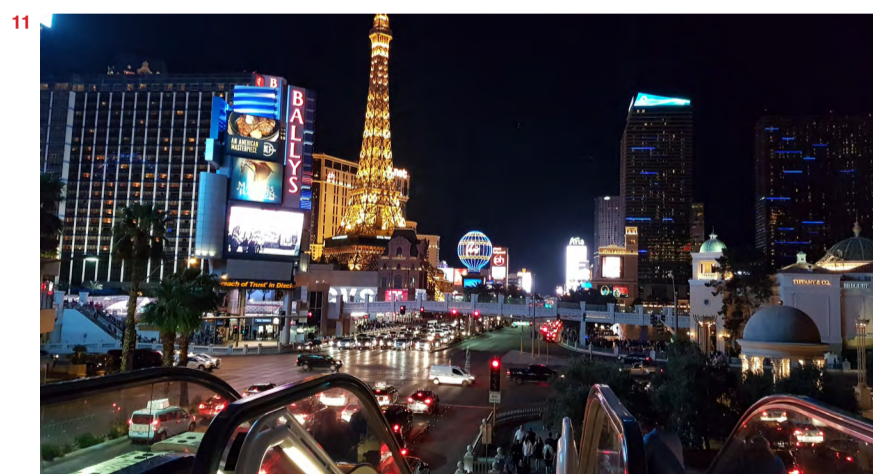


09 & 10



The trasformation of architecture to serve commercial puposes.  
09 - Johnnies Wilshire, Mlracle Mile,1962. Los Angeles, US  
10 - Aztec Hotel in Monrovia. Los Angeles, USA

Images references:  
Banham, Reyner. Los Angeles : The Architecture of Four Ecologies. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) p 115(image 09) p 119 (image10)



11

Architecture as a tool for the commercialisation of the entrainment space.



13



12

- Picture of Las Vegas Strip at night.  
- Picture of Krustiland theme park withing the Universal studios complex in LA.  
- Picture of the Main street of Magic Kingdom, Orlando Florida.  
All pictures taken by the author

The turning point is indeed the American phenomenon of Disneyland<sup>17</sup> and the role of Walt Disney<sup>18</sup> in the ideation of the parks. The year 1971, sees the opening of two major American Disney theme parks: Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Florida, and Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California.<sup>19</sup> This phenomenon started to spread nationally and globally leading to a series of Disney World resorts across the globe, from the U.S., to Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai. Around this same time, the transformation of Las Vegas begins to take place, creating the most iconic architectural example of a street that completely revolves around leisure, events and entertainment.

With the rise of the theme park phenomenon, by the end of the late 90s, the world is studded by this series of clusters that sit autonomously in any given territory from U.S.A. to Europe until Asia. The same architectural pattern is replicated and therefore, creates a new universal language that detaches the architecture from its context.<sup>20</sup> Due to this new, leisure-oriented lifestyle (and of course the media and technological development) we start to witness a higher flux and movement of people, who, freed from their previous labour condition, have time and money for other activities. Holidays, relax, retreats and get-away start to become a more ordinary, appealing and mass-related activity.<sup>21</sup>

Theme parks, resorts, casinos and all new amusement related buildings (or series of buildings), start to shape a common architectural language expressed by strong borders of fences, walls and surveillance to contain, protect and isolate such activities to the rest of the context. The concept of isolation<sup>22</sup>, privatisation<sup>23</sup>, commercialisation<sup>24</sup> and interiorisation<sup>25</sup> of the event space becomes part of the architectural discussion, which starts to deal with these new global phenomenon and thus create the first fractions within the built environment they are located in. Among the deterritorialisation<sup>26</sup> of these new global identities, it is interesting to notice how they approach an autonomous stage by forming interdependent necessary clusters<sup>27</sup>.

Related supporting activities must work together. It is clear in the example of Las Vegas where casinos, shopping malls, amusement parks, cinemas, restaurants, hotels, fountain-shows, all adiaject to each other, enhance the experience<sup>28</sup>. The guest is exposed to all the needed commodities that support the consumption and amusement experience. Most of the resort-like cases have the tendency to physically connect related activities hence, their location is often away from highly urbanised centres and looks for the desert like site where it can create its own territory. However, while clearly detached from its local context, these structures still

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<sup>17</sup> Marling, Karal Ann, and Centre Canadien D'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture (Montréal). *Designing Disney's Theme Parks : The Architecture of Reassurance*. (Paris: Flammarion, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> According to Pine, B. Joseph, and James H, *Welcome to the Experience Economy*. The experience-economy pioneer is Walt Disney. Experiences have always been at the heart of the entertainment business, a fact that Walt Disney and the company he founded have creatively exploited.

<sup>19</sup> Marling, Karal Ann, and Centre Canadien D'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture (Montréal). *Designing Disney's Theme Parks : The Architecture of Reassurance*. (Paris: Flammarion, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Cudny, Waldemar, *Festivalisation of Urban Spaces : Factors, Processes and Effects*. (Switzerland: Springer,2016) p 22.

<sup>22</sup> Easterling, Keller. *Extrastatecraft : The Power of Infrastructure Space*. (London: Verso 2014). Theme parks can be part of the notion of isolated self sufficient zones that occupy territories which are disconnected to their immediate surroundings while highly connected to other clusters. In the case of events, this notion helps defining their global role.

<sup>23</sup> Graham, S., & Marvin, S. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. (London: Routledge 2002). The notion of Privatisation and interiorisation of space are also manifested in the infrastructural connection that reduces global distances via premium infrastructural links. Also refer to the work of John Portman.

<sup>24</sup> Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. *Learning from Las Vegas*. (Facsimile ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2017) The role of signs and perception to stage the experience becomes a key architectural tool that serve commercial purposes.

<sup>25</sup> Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York : A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. (Rotterdam: 010, 1994). The interiorisation of public space, retakes the notion of Koolhaas of a manhattan skyscraper, and the way almost all activities happen within the building.

<sup>26</sup> Graham, S., & Marvin, S. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. (London: Routledge 2002).

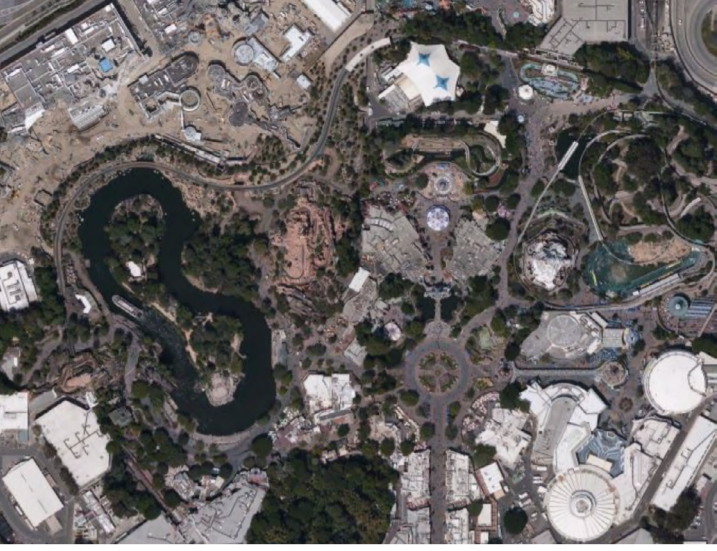
<sup>27</sup> Easterling, Keller. *Extrastatecraft : The Power of Infrastructure Space*. (London: Verso 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Alan Bryman, *The Disneyization of Society*. (Sage Publications. 2004). A. Bryan argues that the contemporary world is increasingly converging towards the characteristics of the Disney theme parks. The importance of related commercial cluster to work together to construct the experience in the theme park, it is similar to the growing trend towards modern urban environments, driven by combinations of forms of consumption: shopping, eating out, gambling, events and cinema.



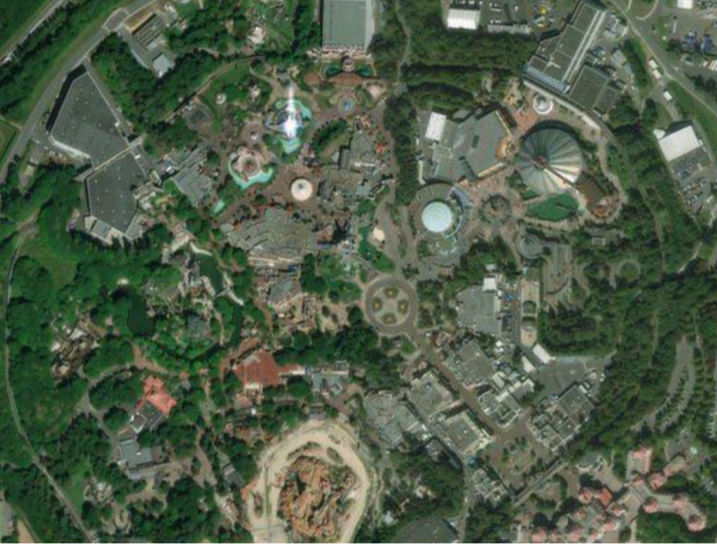
14 & 14.1

Disneyland Park, Anaheim California.



15 & 15.1

Disneyland Paris, France



16 & 16.1

Disneyland Park, Shanghai, China



17 & 17.1

Disneyland Tokyo, Japan.



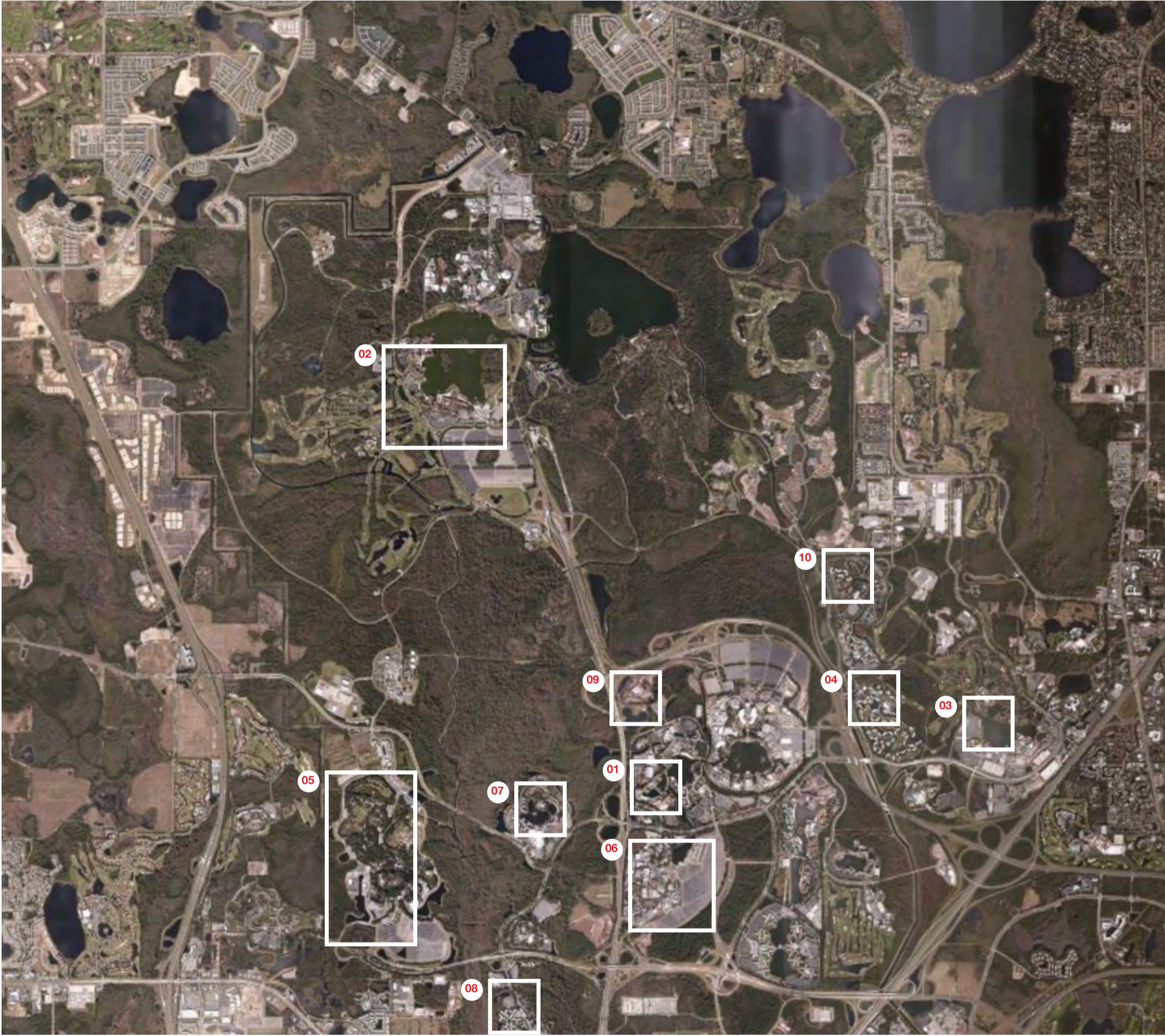
18 & 18.1

Disneyland Resort, Hong Kong.



The other five Disney theme park around the world. Screenshots of aerial views. From: <https://www.bing.com/maps>

The wider angle shows the morphology of the theme park. Clearly demarked by heavy border and dedicated infrastructure.

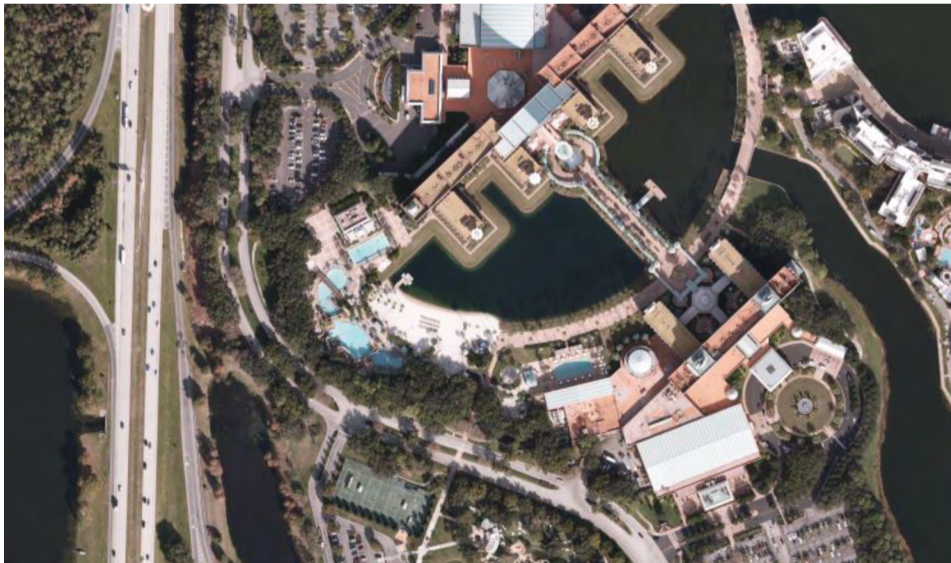


**Morphology of the Disney clusters  
Orlando Florida USA**

Dedicated toll roads, express highway lanes, direct bus, train, shuttle connections start to appear, in order to establish a direct link between airports and other global infrastructural networks and theme parks but also. In the extreme case of Orlando (Florida) these dedicated connections also appear between different theme parks within the same area and between resorts and hotels in the proximity, linked to the amusement centre.

<https://www.prepschool.com/how-magical-express-works/>

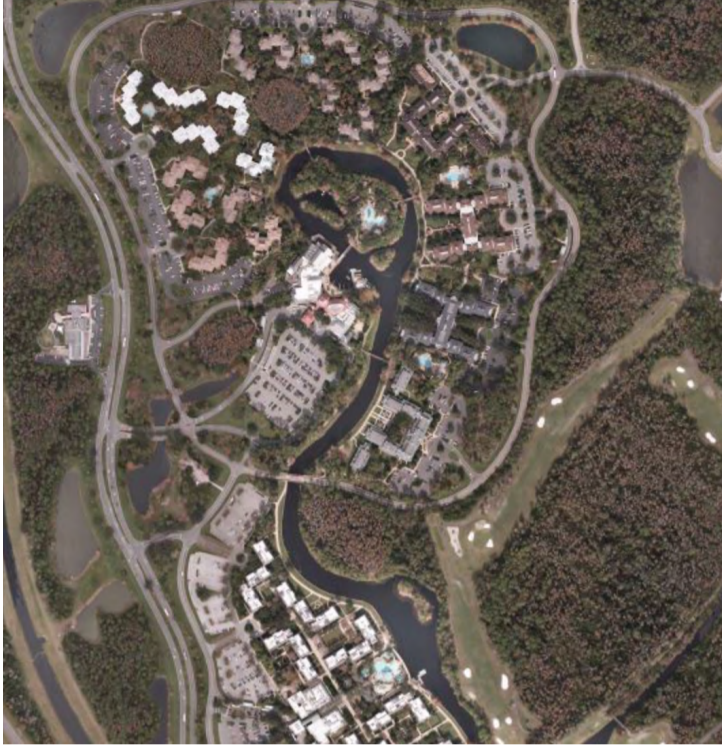
Disney Express  
Airport connection



01 - Disney Yacht club resort.



02 - Disney Grand Floridian resort.



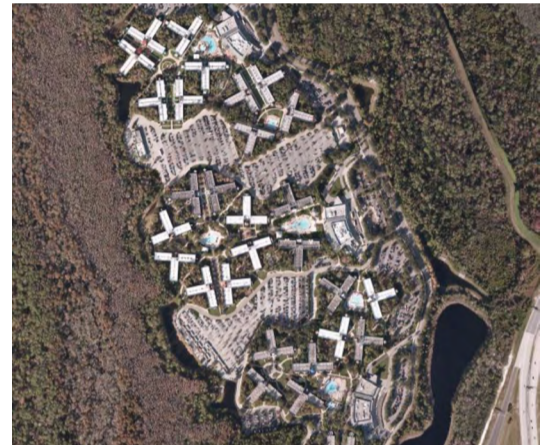
10 - Magic Kingdom Welcome show area



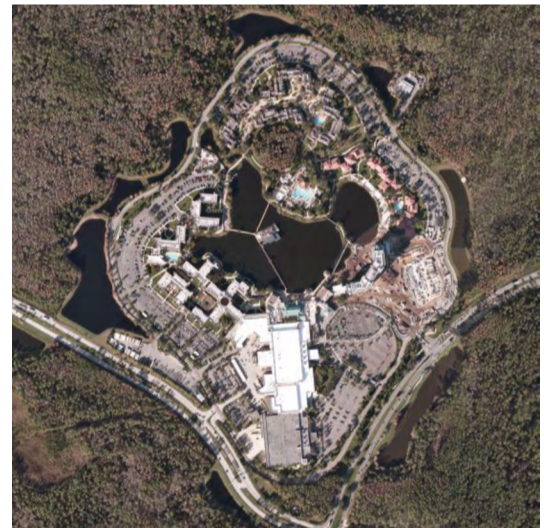
09 - Under construction / unknown



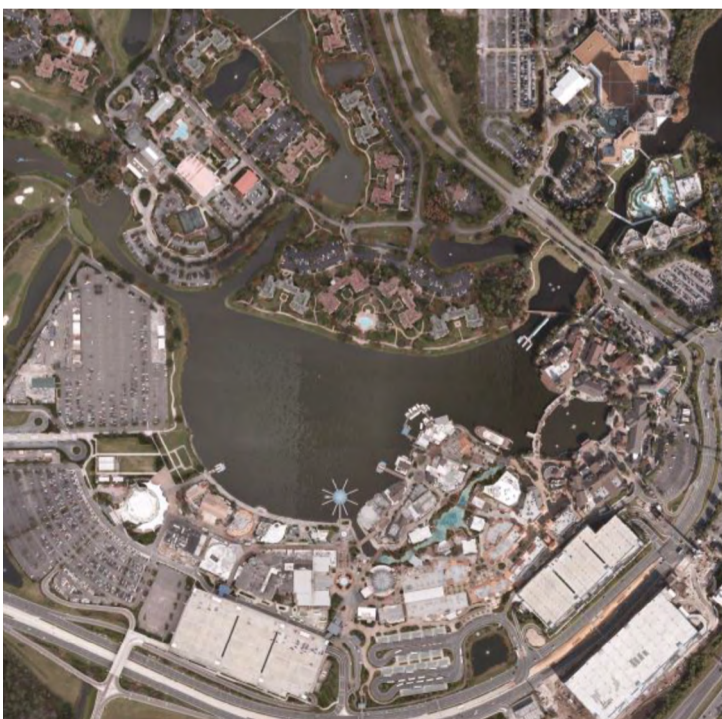
06 - Disney Hollywood studios



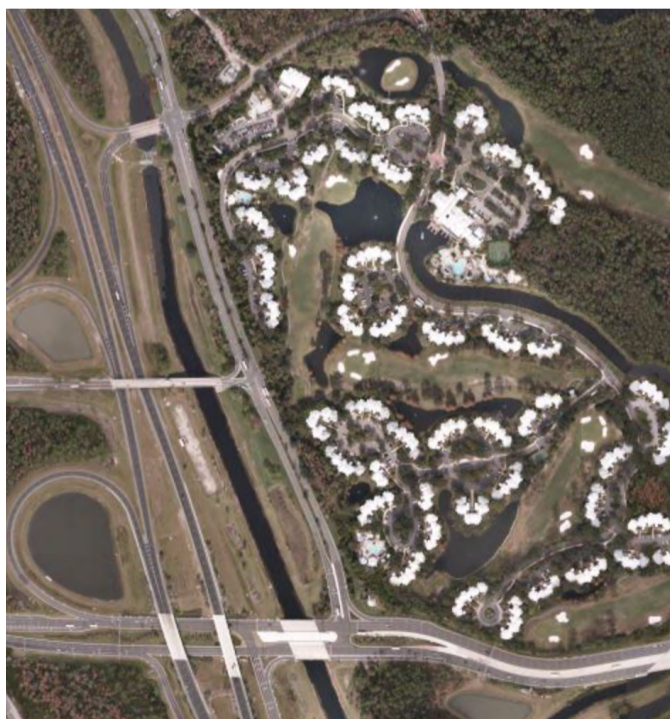
08 - Disney All stars Sport resort



07 - Disney Coronado Spring Resort



03 - Village Lake and Saratoga Spring resort



04 - Disney Old key west Resort



05 - Disney Animal Kingdom

The morphology of the theme park area of Orlando, Florida.  
All images taken from: <https://www.bing.com/maps>

rely on mass flow and visitors' capacity in order to exist, hence their necessity to be digitally and infrastructurally highly connected at a national scale and at a global international scale too.

Dedicated toll roads, express highway lanes, direct bus, train, and shuttle connections start to appear, in order to establish a direct link between airports and other global infrastructural networks and theme parks. In the extreme case of Orlando, Florida, these dedicated connections also appear between different theme parks within the same area and between resorts and hotels in the proximity, linked to the amusement centre.

However there is another way in which space is affected by the event.

On the one hand, the societal demand of entertainment, amusement and events led to this new permanent architectural manifestation (detached from its context), then on the other hand, new event-driven networks led to the birth of new 'event related citizens' which transformed the existing urban fabric into a festive-like one.

A series of bigger event-driven global infrastructural networks start to shape cities and establish global networks of fashion, cinema, art, sport, music and so on. At an international scale, modern cities start to compose and contribute to the global urban fabric of the single event. In other words, the territorial composition of the event can be read as a collage of many fragments of the hosting cities, patched together in one temporal consequence of spaces. In a sort of circus-like scenario, the event moves from one city to the next throughout the whole year chased by its circus crew (the event-specific citizens).

Parallel to its global course, events have a very local-based spatial implication. For example, in the development for Formula1, each city prepares and reserves a dedicated territory to host the event and, of course the global communities that follows the event- from pilots engineers, media, journalists to all supporters and car-racing fans. By hosting any type of event, dedicated areas of the hosting city are partially closed off, privatised and secured for the duration of the event. The social and physical infrastructure of the city needs to adapt and respond to the unusual stretch for the framed period. Local police forces, medical staff, fire brigades, and security systems must be reinforced, streets are pedestrianised, others will be closed, traffic is redirected, transport service is increased. Moreover, in specific cases, the event is so strong that the whole city (or parts of it) is permanently transformed and connected to the aura of the event, even after the event is finished. Certain streets, squares, neighborhoods and sometimes entire city centres can no longer be brought back to its original local context. Detached from its civic scope the city has been conquered by the high demand of the global community and permanently transformed into commercial and festivalised areas following the same architectural logics of the previously explained theme parks, this time within the urban fabric of the city itself.

## The birth of a new splintering effect

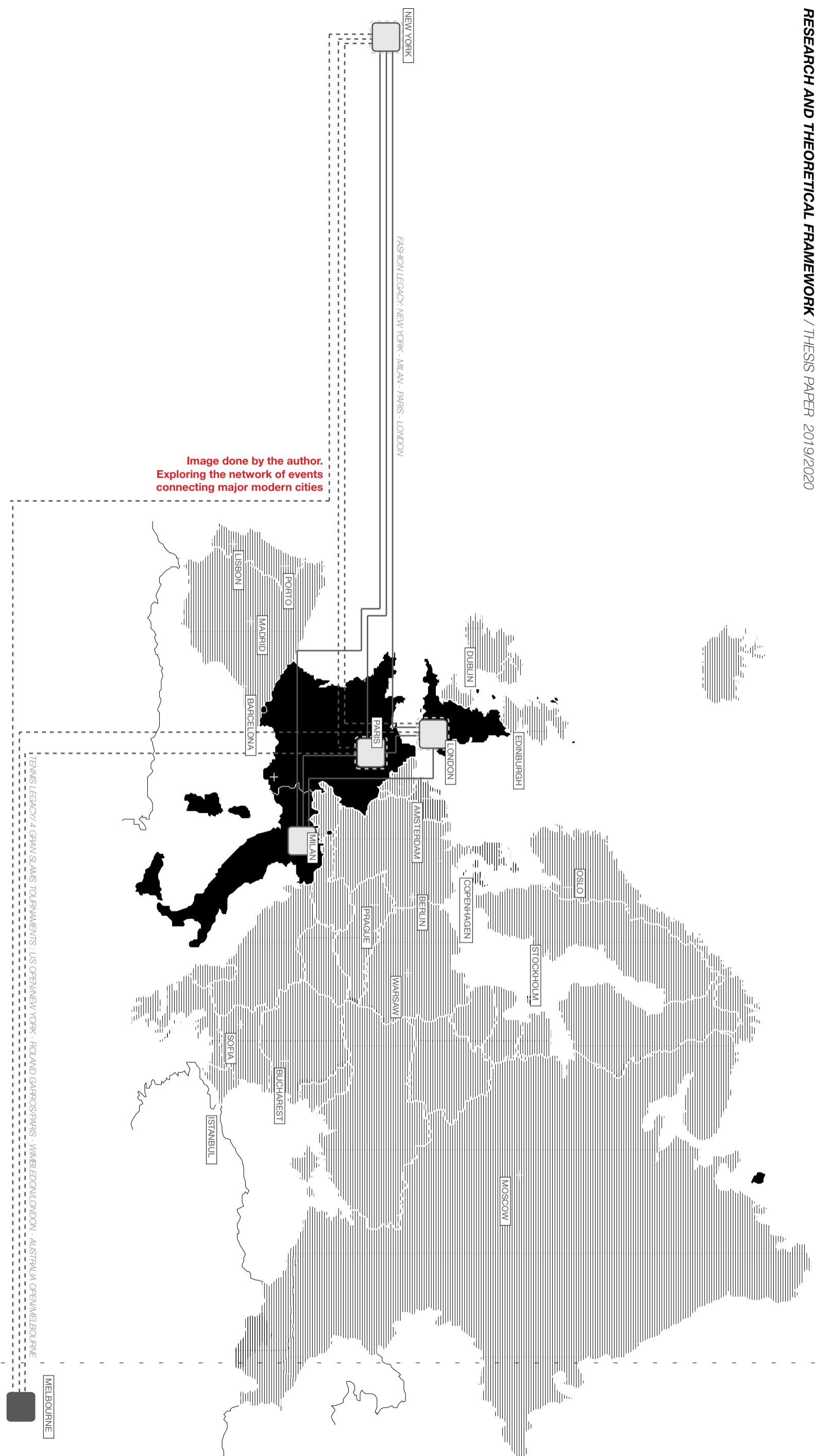
### Festivalisation of the modern cities

If we consider events as the new economics asset that moves and attracts future global fluxes, it is necessary to analyse and understand the spatial manifestation caused by previous economic assets that shaped and formed the cities of today. In other words, aiming to study, understand and exemplify events as part of the global splintering<sup>29</sup> process that defines modern cities requires economic consideration.

Technological and infrastructural development of the past decades are key enablers towards understanding modern urban scenarios. The possibility and ease (both physical and financial) of the global movement is enabling new interscalar connection that bypasses the traditional notion of territorial boundary prioritising certain areas over others. Hyper connected international networked clusters in constant communication with one another start to reshape the new urban fabric, dissolving the notion of a city as a united identity<sup>30</sup>. The analysis of flow and movement become part of the understanding of modern cities and lead to a permanent physical territorial transformation, creating a new way of reading cities as fragmented global series of networks.

<sup>29</sup> Graham, S., & Marvin, S. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. (London: Routledge 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



The work by Simon Marvin and Steve Graham in the book: “Splintering Urbanism” contributes to the understanding of the reading of modern cities by framing three key spatial scenarios deriving from economic driven infrastructural networks:

- *the formation of clusters*  
*Virtually all cities across the world are starting to display spaces and zones that are powerfully connected at international and even global distances.*
- *the formation of glocal cities*  
*Neither the local nor the global is pre-eminent in the construction of contemporary cities. Cities, rather, are bound up in a dynamic continuum of global–local or ‘glocalised’ interactions.*
- *the multiplicity of scales with the same city*  
*The current round of globalization calls into question inherited Euclidean, Cartesian, and Newtonian conceptions of spatial scales as neutral or stable platforms. Globally distant places can be relationally connected very intimately. It erodes the notion that cities, regions and nations.*

It is clear that modern cities are developing a strong dualism, dictated by the necessity to respond and address two very different communities: the local community and global one. There is a physical manifestation of such distinction in the urban fabric of these cities. The birth of “premium<sup>31</sup>” infrastructure networks, such as toll roads, airline’s business class flight, private shuttle and connection, selectively link the most valuable users and places, both within and across cities. Valued spaces are thus defined by their highly connectivity between them and other parts of global cities.

Modern cities develop premium infrastructural networks that are in the privatisation, interiorisation, commercialisation and the isolation of parts of the built environment- from the small scale to a single public space (example of Covent Garden, London<sup>32</sup>) to the size of an entire city (Las Vegas, U.S.A.).

An even more striking scenario of this premium effect can be found in the international connection of financial clusters. Canary Wharf, in London, clearly demonstrates the urban coexistence of the local and the global. The business district of this area is highly connected by fast infrastructure linked directly to the airport of London city, which facilitates the network of the London cluster and the other financial clusters across the world. Concurrently, the Jubilee line and the DLR metro system are well integrated within the design of the financial buildings of this area. Via a series of interior malls and underground links, the global guest is directly guided from the airport to the heart of Canary Wharf without ever having to step outside into the local context of east London. At the same time, the area of Canary Wharf and Poplar is characterised by its local existence of a low density, waterfront housing neighborhood where locals carry out their everyday routines making use, if needed, of the well connected infrastructure intended for the financial functions.

Having traced back the origins when event and entertainment entered the scope of architectural thinking, and having analysed the splintering effects as manifestation of its socio-economic driven context, it is clear that modern events and festivals are becoming the cause of new splintering urbanism within future cities and therefore, need to be spatially addressed as such.

The first step implies the understanding of the shift towards today’s socio-economic context. This can be traced back to what B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore first framed as: ‘Experience economy’ in 1998.

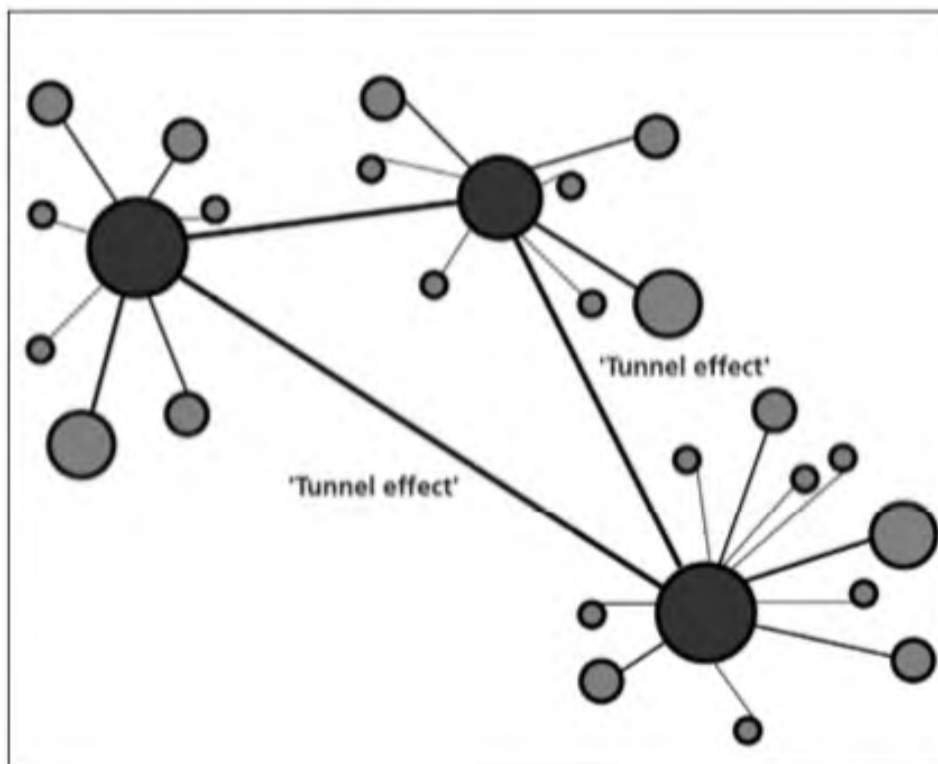
In their essay: “‘Welcome to the Experience Economy’”, the two authors position this upcoming new economic model that initially appeared in the 1960s. They state the original appearance of such a model was introduced

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<sup>31</sup> Graham, S., & Marvin, S. Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition. (London: Routledge 2002). The notion of premium has been used to classify this new elitarian urban environment that starts to shape within highly valuable and connected zones across the world, in order to serve a very valuable and elitarian class that constantly moves across global cities. As part of this phenomenon, I argue that events are shaping similar urban spaces, and serving an event-driven elitarian global class.

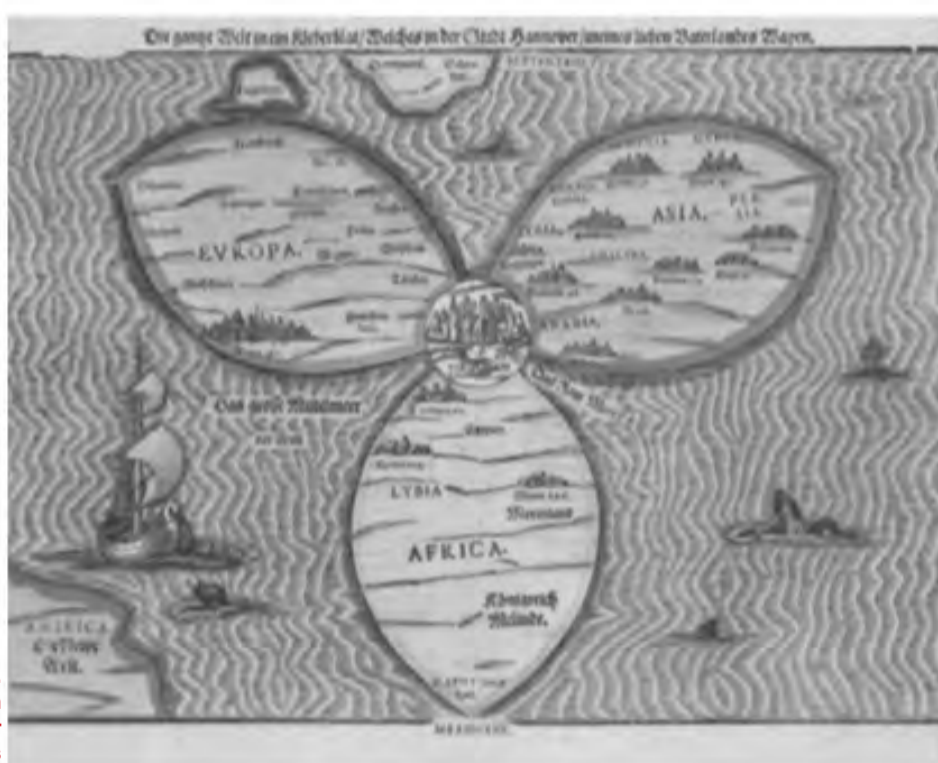
<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Despite Covent Garden, remains a public space, by the commercialisation process that took place over the years, this area is now one of the key square serving global tourism. In other words, it has been detached by its local function as a square for the citizen of London towards an event space for global entertainment and commerce.

19- Cluster Diagram and tunnel effect connecting them ,by passing the inbetween land



20 - The Glo-Local phenomenon explicited in the case of Canary Wharf

21 - Multiplicity of scale. Mapping territories based on networks and relationships over territorial distances



Images references:  
19 Graham, S., & Marvin, S. Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition.  
20 <https://londonist.com/2016/09/what-is-there-to-do-in-canary-wharf>  
21 <https://centrici.hypotheses.org/215>

by Walt Disney in the Disneyland theme parks, when he starts addressing visitors as ‘guests’. While prior economic models offered commodities as goods, and services as products, the sale of experiences touch on a more personal level which exist only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on a sensorial level.<sup>33</sup> This transition towards the notion of experience as an economic asset, supported by a strong marketing, advertising and intellectual persuasion sets the precondition of the most modern economic model positioning culture as the main experience to sell. The cultural economy includes the commercialisation of any cultural event related to films, music, television, computer games, fashion, theater concerts and food. Globalisation and the modern role of social media transformed any culture-related event into an attraction for the economic development of a modern city.<sup>34</sup>

As a litmus paper, there has also been an expansion of the etymology of the word ‘event’ to accommodate event’s new role. The notion of event has expanded from its mere traditional connotation of cultural manifestation, to a wider conception of any manifestation or performance which can attract spectators.

Most modern cities such as London, Paris, New York, and Berlin are already characterised by an intense schedule of events and festivals aimed to serve the global (and local) community.<sup>35</sup> These events are often part of a global network that puts modern cities in a sequential relationship to one another. New highly connected networks and legacies start to be created among these cities in a hub-like system where global citizens can hop on and off the city, migrating from one event to the next.

As part of this rising phenomenon, cities constantly strive to join this elitarian global constellation, giving up urban areas to the global flux, introducing events, activities, festivals with the goal to stabilise themselves among this consolidated legacy. Milan is one of the most recent examples of a city that, in the last decade, has employed an event-driven strategy in order to successfully claim a spot among the legacy and is proudly recognised today as a modern-global city, but at what costs?

## Milan: A new node to the global event network

### From necessity to Opportunity: Meeting the global standards

We live in the cultural economy where cultural events and experience have been commercialised and became the new source of attraction of international flow. Using Milan as a test bed, I will provide my perspective on this global phenomenon that affects all major cities. Cities like London, Berlin, Amsterdam or New York have already undertaken the path that Milan has recently entered, and provided a clear manifestation of the urban crisis that modern-globalised cities are facing. Despite the global recognition and appealing that surrounds the image of these cities, there is a series of downside and negative effects that come with it.

Milan’s municipality and great part of its citizens still see the initial novelty of vibrance and excitement to becoming global, while the risks of transforming it into a series of **generic patterns**<sup>36</sup> is strongly underestimated. In the wider discourse of cities of the future, it is essential to forecast and act upon future scenarios. Considering today’s socio-economic context and Milan’s strategy to focus on an event-driven economy, it is evident that such a model will cause a fundamental friction that can permanently compromise the city’s urban fabric.

As previously mentioned, these modern events act on a circus-like dynamics moving from one city to the next. As part of the must-have of modern cities, multiple events start to take place and become the new normality, the new commodity that these cities need to offer. A series of cultural thematic festivals that last from 7 to 10

<sup>33</sup> Pine, B. Joseph, and James H. Gilmore, *Welcome to the Experience Economy*. (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 1998).

<sup>34</sup> Cudny, Waldemar, *Festivalisation of Urban Spaces : Factors, Processes and Effects*. (Switzerland: Springer, 2016) p 22.

<sup>35</sup> The role of events magazines such as *Timeout*, plays an important role in the image of eventful modern cities.

<sup>36</sup> For further investigation on the concept of generic city refer to: Koolhaas, Rem, Bruce Mau, Jennifer Sigler, Hans Werlemann, and Office for Metropolitan Architecture. *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large* ( New York, N.Y.: Monacelli Press, 1998).



Economic Distinction				
Economic Offering	Commodities	Goods	Services	Experiences
Economy	Agrarian	Industrial	Service	Experience
Economic Function	Extract	Make	Deliver	Stage
Nature of Offering	Fungible	Tangible	Intangible	Memorable
Key Attribute	Natural	Standardized	Customized	Personal
Method of Supply	Stored in bulk	Inventoried after production	Delivered on demand	Revealed over a duration
Seller	Trader	Manufacturer	Provider	Stager
Buyer	Market	User	Client	Guest
Factors of Demand	Characteristics	Features	Benefits	Sensations

22- The Economy distinction chart showing the key elements for the various economic models. As it can be seen, the Experience economy relies on concepts such as Staging, Memorable, Personal, Revealed over time, Sensational.

Images references:  
 22 Pine, B. Joseph, and James H. Gilmore, Welcome to the Experience Economy. p 2

23- Milan's municipality 2020 plan of cultural events, demonstrating the commercialisation of culture towards economic goals.

Image reference:  
<https://www.yesmilano.it/en/homepage>



days focused around music, art, cinema, sport and food are subsequently filling in the yearly schedule of modern cities. From Berlin's movie festival, to Milan's movie week, to the one in London and so on, into an endless global network. The same pattern applied to all other cultural themes, all planned and advertised in english, are clearly aimed towards the attention of the global audience.

As part of this hyperconnected global society, where people can easily move from one city to another among very fast and cheap infrastructural nodes in a very short time frame, a new elitarian group is shaping. A global community, with a global identity which relies on speed, flexibility and movement. Spending a week in Paris for the fashion show to then their migration to the next location. Today's modern community relies on new requirements and a new life-style based on speed, connectivity, fast consumption and experience. A new elitarian flow that every modern city wants to host and feed as long as possible, before they take off for their next experience. A community that brings visibility, economic wealth and image to the modern city, but at the same time, disrupts, abuses and consumes the city itself.

Moreover, due to the central role of network and communication, there seems to be a shift in what defines value today. Previously, value referred to money and goods that people owned. Today's VIP circle is not necessarily composed by rich people. Value, instead, relies on the networks themselves (both social networks based on connection to people and, consequently physical network). The modern elite is strongly supported by a whole series of all-inclusive services that truly redefine the concept of premium it is no longer a matter of what someone can afford, but rather what can they get access to. Something that can not be bought, can not be accessible by anyone unless by those who are part of the premium legacy.

The future of modern cities is strictly dependent on their capability to counterbalance the global and the local existence within the same city. In a sort of conqueror and conquered dynamics, against the general notion of inclusivity and mitigation, my project aims to embrace this necessary dualism of the modern city split between local and global. The city of Milan has clearly chosen a strong event-driven strategy following the global attraction generated by Fashion Week and by Design Week, the city has recently launched 17 new thematic weeks throughout the year (pictured below) making the event a constant in the daily routine of the city. By concentrating most of the events within the city centre, Milan is contributing to the 'privatisation'<sup>37</sup> and detachment of the heart of the city as a civic place, in favour of the most valuable global community.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, the new thematic weeks can not currently take place elsewhere, because they need to be exposed to the global community. In other words, global accessibility and visibility become the first requirements to make these new *weeks*<sup>39</sup> successful. On this basis, and considering the Milan event as part of a wider, global network, I propose to relocate and concentrate all the weeks in an area at the edge of Milan, but which already offers the fastest connection possible. The area of Rogoredo is located within 9 minutes to Linate Airport, 5 mins to (Prada Foundation), 15 mins to the city centre and it is already a node of the high speed train system linking Rogoredo to the cities of Genova, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome and Naples. By sacrificing part of this area of Milan, for its global commercial purposes, I hope to both, release pressure on the existing city centre of Milan, and concurrently use the global spotlight to benefit the local side of Rogoredo<sup>40</sup>.

In order to satisfy and serve the global audience, there are a series of services that need to be present on the site which will also benefit and involve the locals. Inspired by the American examples of Las Vegas cluster, Los Angeles clusters and Magic World theme park in Florida, the Architecture will need to strategically construct and sell an experience. By the use of landmarks, signage and other architectural intervention I aim to create this duality of a front (global) and a back side (serving the locals). Particularly in this case, the alternation of the theme

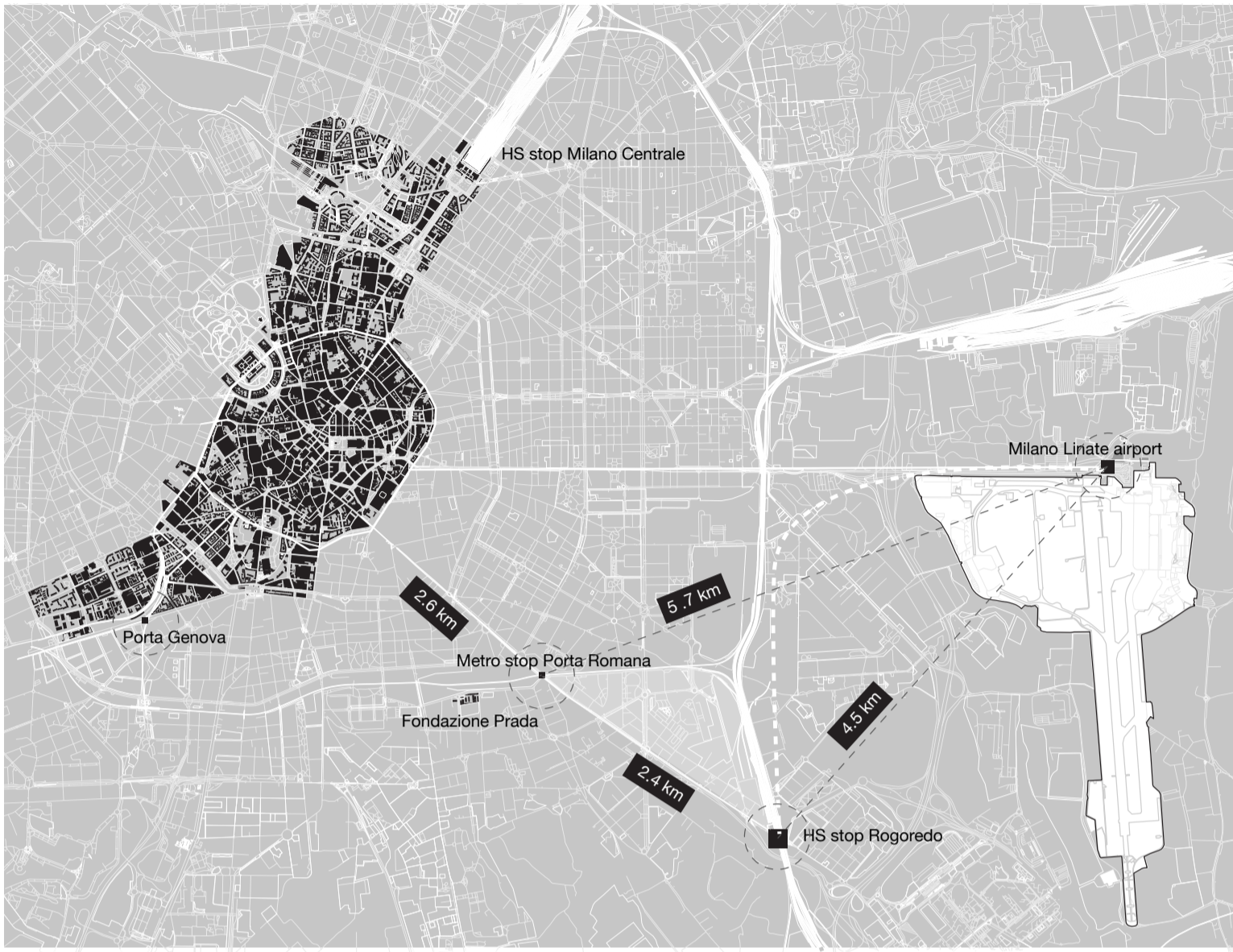
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<sup>37</sup> Similar to the case of Covent Garden, London. (refer to footnote 32)

<sup>38</sup> The center of Milan, as most modern city centres already suffers of a strong privatisation due to globalisation and its historic value. Other Italian cases like Venice, Rome or Florence are the example of the complete detachment (or commercialisation) of parts of the city centre as a civic place, which is transformed into an open air museum.

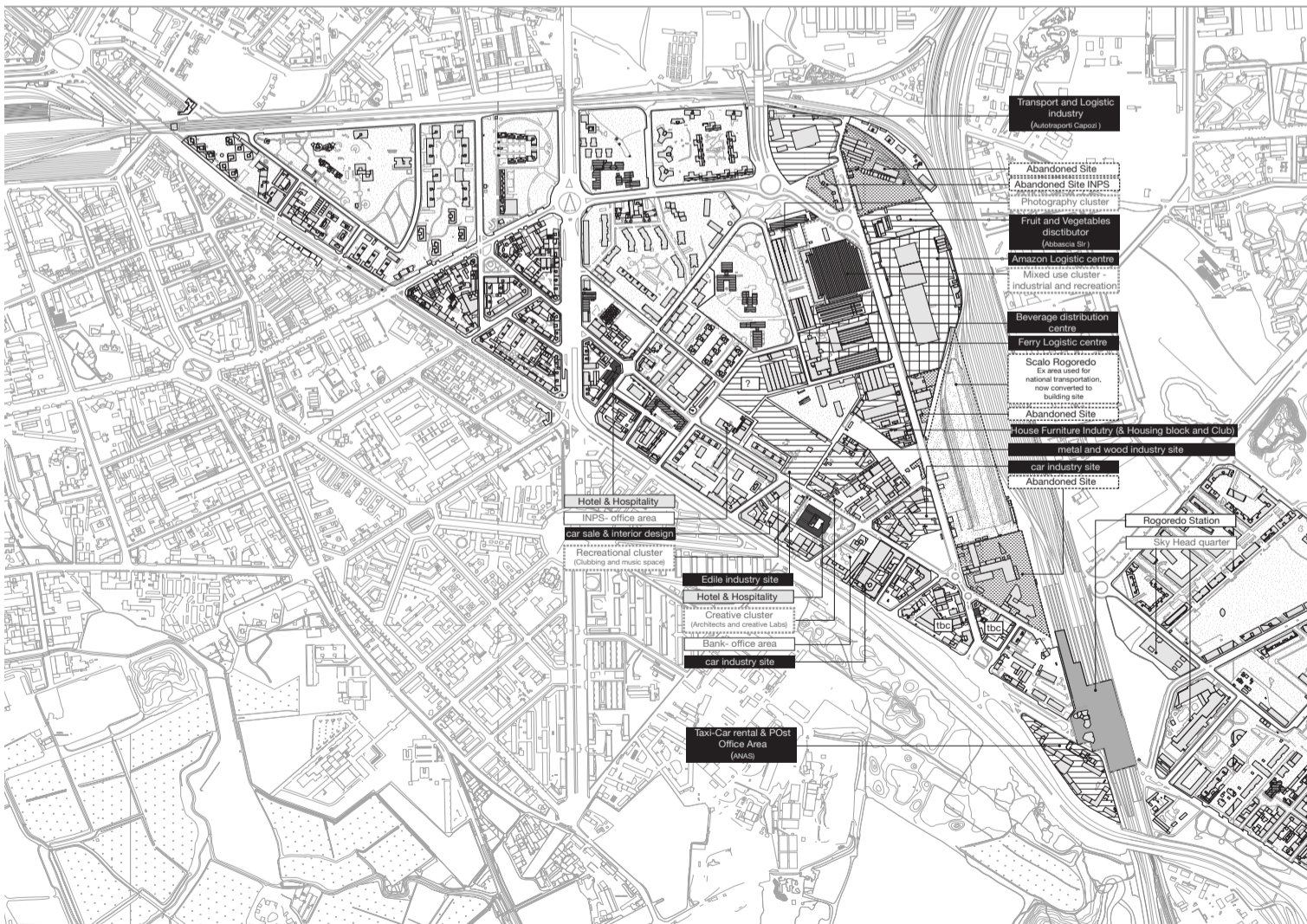
<sup>39</sup> The use of the english over italian language to advertise these events, already frames the international targeted audience. (refer to footnote 32)

<sup>40</sup> The area of Rogoredo is one of the segregated, and socially isolated areas of Milan.



24- Proximity- Accessibility and Infrastructural study of the Area of Rogoredo  
Drawing made by the author

To Genova  
To Venice via Bologna  
To Florence - Rome- Amalfi coast



25 - Existing Typology study of the Area of Rogoredo  
Drawing made by the author

of event every other week will require both a permanent area<sup>41</sup> and a flexible one which needs to be assembled and disassembled according to the week. By such logistic processes, the local industries on the site can benefit and become an essential part of the functioning of this area. Moreover, this ephemeral but constant condition already inform on a typological approach<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, in order to enhance the performance (as analysed in the case of Las Vegas) the neighborhood will need to offer a whole series of complementary services (from places to eat, sleep and so on) that will bring economic benefits to the local industries.

Despite the high connectivity already offered by the site, most of the infrastructural spaces will require a redesign that meets the global standards. Most of the individual part of the global event networks often rely on private transportation, hence the necessity (or opportunity) for the locals to provide such services.<sup>43</sup>

By exploring this duality that Architecture can offer, I intend to create the necessary balance and interdependency characterising modern global-local patterns, so that the necessary commercialisation of architecture and the urban fabric will always be designed in such a way to offer improvements and opportunities for its local inhabitants.

Learning from Disney world, The art of staging and constructing the experience via the use of Architecture, Forms, Materials, Proportions, Signs and views

Images Reference from: Marling, Karal Ann, and Centre Canadien D'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture (Montréal). Designing Disney's Theme Parks : The Architecture of Reassurance. Paris: Flammarion, 1997.



26 - Colour reference chart for World Bazaar, Tokyo Disneyland.

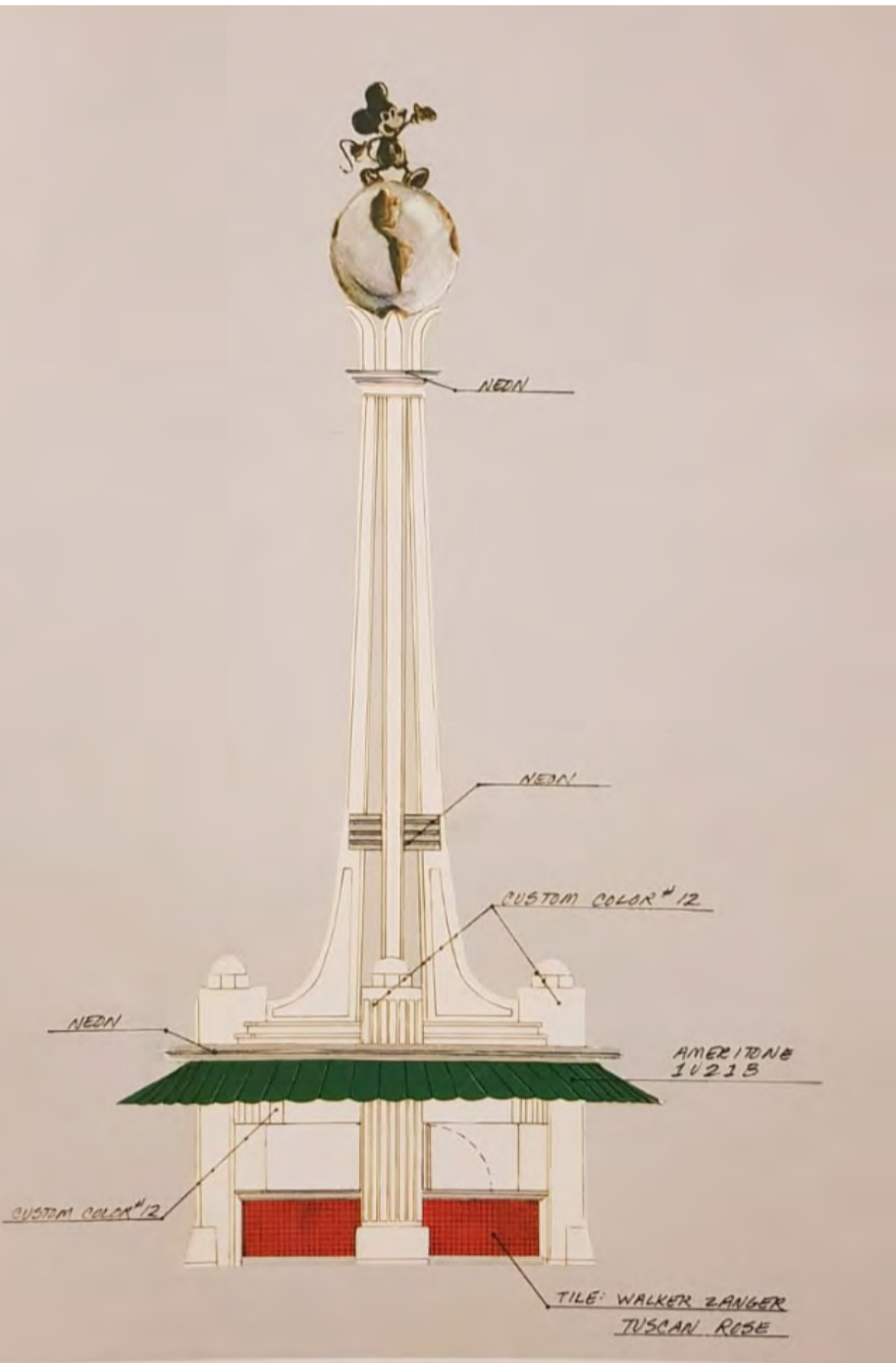


27 - Colour diagram for painting the 400 block, east side, Main Street, Disneyland.

<sup>41</sup> The permanent area necessary for the host of the global community ( meeting rooms,public spaces, conference area etc) will enrich the local urban fabric that can make use of these facilities whenever the event is not taking place. By providing an armature for the global, there is a domino effect onto the local community.

<sup>42</sup> Inspired by the concept of staging, framing, my approach will learn from techniques used by theaters and cinema industries to construct a front and a back to the performance.

<sup>43</sup> Locals are challenged to offer new service to meet the requirements of this new group, or to be part of the global service industries that will come with them.( For example, companies such as Uber, Deliveroo, Amazon, will try to establish their legacy on the new global cluster)



28 - The entry kiosk for the Disney MGM Studios theme park in L.A.

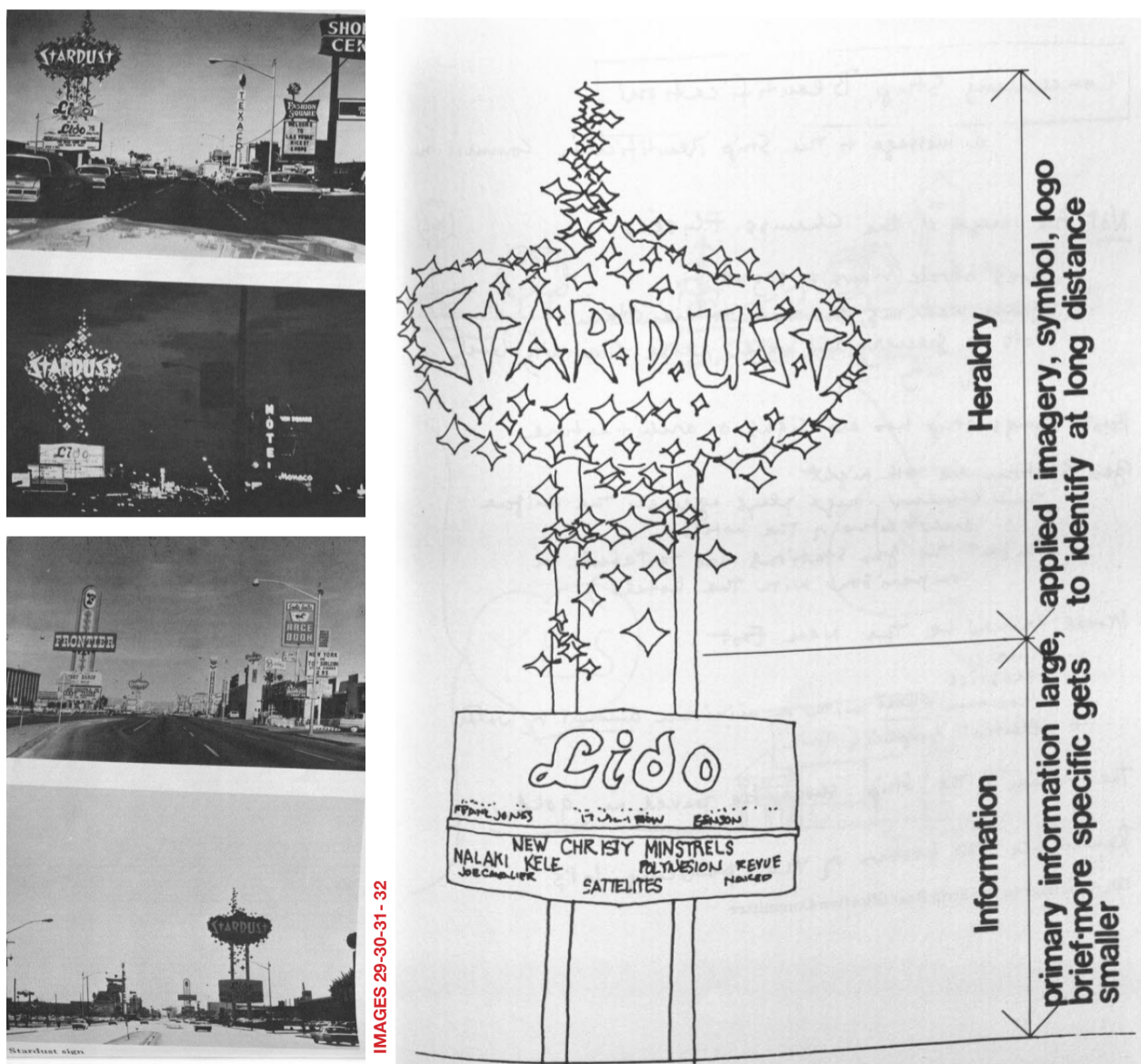
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The architecture of Pleasure and Persuasion. Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. Learning from Las Vegas.

# PLEASURE ZONES CHARACTERISTICS

## LIGHT ARCHITECTURE

lacy and diminutive  
Yamasaaki modern

## IN A HOSTILE CONTEXT, THE OASIS

desert  
ocean  
parking lots  
fortifications

## SYMBOLIC ARCHITECTURE AND GARDENS

late periods  
erotic  
arabian  
romantic etc.

## ROLE PLAYING

eclectic resort hotels of Morris Lapidus  
Versailles

MIAMI BEACH

MARIENBAD

ATLANTIC CITY

XANADU

SHOPPING CENTER

BATH

ALHAMBRA

DISNEYLAND

PERSIAN GARDEN

WORLDS FAIR

HADRIAN'S VILLA

LAS VEGAS

MIAMI BEACH

MARIENBAD

ATLANTIC CITY

XANADU

SHOPPING CENTER

BATH

ALHAMBRA

DISNEYLAND

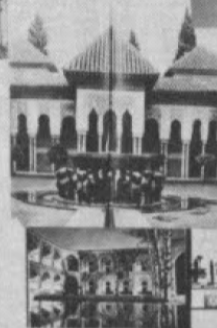
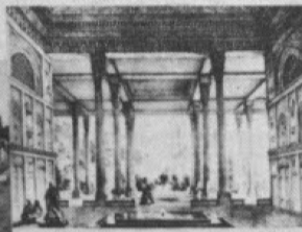
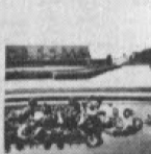
PERSIAN GARDEN

WORLDS FAIR

HADRIAN'S VILLA

LAS VEGAS

MIAMI BEACH



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