STUD

Architectures of Masculinity

EDITED by JOEL SANDERS

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Introduction

JOEL SANDERS
Ayn Rand’s novel, *The Fountainhead*, its architect hero Howard Roark stands naked at the edge of a granite cliff surveying a panoramic view of a wooded valley below. *The Fountainhead* achieves its author’s stated goal—“the presentation of an ideal man” —by portraying its male protagonist as an architect, capitalizing on the popular cultural perception that authors of buildings, like the structures they design, embody the very essence of manhood. Conflating the male architect’s body with the landscape that elevates him, Rand’s hard-edged prose lodges both masculinity and architecture in a transcendental natural world: “His face was like a law of nature—a thing one could not question, alter or implore” (15). Roark’s robust physique, composed of “long, straight lines and angles, each curve broken into planes,” seen silhouetted against the sky, reads like a description of Frank Lloyd Wright’s famous house “Fallingwater,” also a composition of hard geometric forms set against a rugged forest setting. An unfettered and independent creator single-mindedly concerned with “the conquest of nature,” the professional architect mines his intrinsic “manly” faculties; possessing both physical and mental prowess, Roark shapes and masters the natural forces that sustain him (679). “These rocks, he thought, are here for me: waiting for the drill, the dynamite and my voice; waiting to be split, ripped, pounded, reborn; waiting for the shape my hands will give them” (115).

Rand’s portrait of the architect as elemental man vividly dramatizes how culture relies upon architecture as a foundation for the construction of masculinity, a theme this volume seeks both to explore and to challenge. Architecture and masculinity, two apparently unrelated discursive practices, are seen to operate reciprocally in this remarkable opening scene from *The Fountainhead*. Rand exploits building metaphors to articulate the theme of “manworpship,” while the portrait of Howard Roark as creator sanctifies architectural doctrine. In the novel’s central dramatic scene, the courtroom scene in which Roark is tried for dynamiting one of his own buildings “disfigured” during construction, Rand’s uncompromising male idealist defends the principles of modern architecture with arguments comparing built structures to masculine virtue, claiming buildings have integrity, just like men. Roark’s narcissistic proclamation echoes the words of Western architects and theorists from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier who, in their attempt to locate and to fix architecture’s underlying principles in a vision of transhistorical nature, recruit masculinity to justify practice. Rand’s architecture of masculinity offers one of the most dramatic, although certainly not the earliest, renditions of the notion that buildings derive from the human form itself—specifically from the unity, scale, and proportions of the male body. 


invention of the two types of columns, they borrowed manly beauty, naked and unadorned for the one, and for the other the delicacy, adornment, and proportions characteristic of women. Because of its long-standing associations with the feminine, ornament has come under sustained attack in this century from architectural modernists invested in upholding the notion of a building’s pared-down inner truth. Searching for an authentic, rational, and timeless architecture, Le Corbusier and others have found their archetypal model in the image of the male nude (“naked and unadorned,” like Ayn Rand’s architect hero) rather than in the picture of the female masquerader, embellished with clothes and makeup. But while the image of the male nude was seen to embody masculine ideals of rationality and strength, the functional imperative that requires buildings to wear a protective outer skin implicitly challenged modernism’s devaluation of ornamentation. As Mark Wigley notes, Le Corbusier’s “Law of Ripolin”—the thin coat of white wash painted on the pristine walls of modern buildings and associated with such “masculine” traits as logic, hygiene, and truth—functions, despite its apparent invisibility, as an applied layer, a form of clothing added to the surface of buildings. Recognizing the practical indispensability of this second skin for dressing the building surface, Adolf Loos recommends that designers emulate the timeless simplicity of the Englishman’s austere, standardized wardrobe. Both examples suggest that masculinity, no less than femininity, is constructed through the use of supplemental surfaces.

Even the materials employed to construct buildings are implicated in a process of architectural engendering. Coded as ruggedly masculine, wood paneling is conventionally used for sheathing recreational and professional interiors (men’s clubs, bars, law courts, corporate board rooms). Because of their hard, cold, crystalline surfaces, building materials such as glass, steel, and stone are similarly attributed masculine properties. Often these materials evoke the “manly” environments that produced them: wood conjures up a vision of a preindustrialized, predominated masculine wilderness, while steel invokes a picture of virile laborers shaping molten metals in foundries. Le Corbusier derived his lexicon of materials from building types mainly inhabited by men (factories and monasteries) as well as from the traditionally male domain of transportation (cars, ships, airplanes). But while these materials directly recall male environments, they also more subtly convey the social values associated with them. A building’s architectural integrity derives from the masculinization of its materials, made to bear the weight of all the cultural values masculinity purportedly connotes, above all austerity, authenticity, and permanence. Ironically, architects value the supplemental skins used to register masculinity precisely because of their innate, hence “manly,” characteristics. Electing to forego the use of applied ornament, archi-

3 Wigley, "White Out."
tects like Mies van der Rohe (at the Barcelona Pavilion) and Adolf Loos (at the American Bar, Vienna) favor wood and marble, materials prized for their inherent natural patterns of wood graining and marble veins.

Two projects in this volume invite us to see through the masculine garb of modern architecture. Playboy’s Penthouse Apartment for a Bachelor by an unidentified designer (1956) and Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (1958) each reveal, in their respective attempts to showcase masculine austerity, an almost obsessive concern with style. Eschewing the upholstered furniture and applied fabrics and wallpapers that conventionally define a feminine interior, the designs for both the Playboy bachelor apartment and the Air Force Academy show single-sex environments tacitly organized for the performance and display of masculine power. Playboy’s “handsome haven” places stylish pieces of designer furniture made of steel, leather, and wood—a Florence Knoll desk, an Eames lounge chair, a Noguchi coffee table—within spaces defined by wood and glass partitions. The Air Force Academy interiors and furnishings, created by Walter Dorwin Teague Associates use similar materials (dark wood paneling and aluminum framed furniture) to create orderly and highly regimented living quarters where cadets train to become men. The exhibitionist overtones of even the most spartan masculine spaces is particularly striking in the Air Force Academy design, where built-in wood closets, opened daily for inspections, reveal military uniforms custom-designed by Hollywood director and designer Cecil B. DeMille. When seen framed within the closets and hung in a series prescribed by military protocol, these uniforms reinforce the image of masculine regimentation, hierarchy, and control symbolized by the outfits themselves.

The Air Force Academy closets demonstrate how the wall dressings that adorn a building work analogously to the clothes that outfit a body. But more often than not, architecture fabricates a masculine environment by undressing rather than dressing its surfaces; less is more masculine. Thus the campus plan of the Air Force Academy illustrates how “masculine” space is created by reducing architecture to its bare essentials. Each academy building, whose design is generated from a seven-
foot grid derived from the module of a cadet's bed, is set on a vast, barren horizontal podium that levels the rugged topography to afford an uninterrupted view of the horizon. These empty plazas create an atmosphere as spare and forbidding as the bare Rocky Mountain range that serves as their imposing backdrop. The building interiors are also conspicuously lacking in detail, conveying the same virtues of cleanliness, order, and restraint connoted by the academy's spartan exteriors.

Artists Andrea Zittel and John Lindell also fabricate austere manly environments, employing the severe aesthetic associated with the rational languages of modern architecture and minimalist art. Zittel's 'A to Z' lexicon of domestic prototypes consists of reductive geometric objects that accommodate and contain household functions—eating, sleeping, bathing—within a minimum, often collapsible space. While Zittel's proposals for contemporary spartan living would seem to situate her within the masculinist tradition of the heroic modern architect, confident in his abilities to forge a rational world through the creation of standardized artifacts that obey universal human needs, her status as a contemporary female artist makes it ambiguous whether Zittel intends her interpretation of modernist austerity to be read as prescription, parody, or critique. In his installations, John Lindell both celebrates and subverts the masculine visual codes he appropriates. In Untitled, Lindell uses his signature template of abstract symbols denoting male erogenous zones to overturn the logic of the "flow chart," diagrams commonly used by natural and social scientists to represent the steps of rational processes and procedures. Conflating the language of science and geometric abstraction, the crisp black lines and abstract shapes that Lindell draws on the pristine white gallery walls map activities that fall outside the binary logic of heterosexuality—representing instead the ecstatic, even delirious geometries of gay male pleasure. Both Zittel's and Lindell's projects underscore how the articulation of masculine space often obeys a logic of absence—a logic implicitly predicated on the eradication of "feminine" excess or ornamentation.

A third project in this volume, Renée Green's Commemorative Toile Fabric, calls into question the traditional association of ornamentation with femininity by demonstrating how the ostensibly feminine surfaces of toile fabric historically embody masculine civic virtue. A commodity traded by French merchants in exchange for slaves, 18th-century toile fabric featured idyllic pastoral scenes representing an Enlightenment idealization of untamed nature. Exposing the violence of the sexual and racial economies that supported the trade in toile fabric, Green's contemporary designs for this material seamlessly splice together engraved scenes of rape, abduction, lynching, and slavery. By showing, through her visual alterations, how a material as supposedly neutral as toile fabric can encode dominant cultural ideologies, Green reminds us that the female domestic interior is not opposed to but is wholly complicit with the politics of the male public sphere.
DEMARCATING BOUNDARIES

This opposition of public and private, upon which sexual binaries like male/female and heterosexual/homosexual crucially depend, is itself grounded on the prior spatial dualism, inside/outside. Through the erection of partitions that divide space, architecture colludes in creating and upholding prevailing social hierarchies and distinctions. Working on vastly different scales—from developer house plans that sequester the housewife in the kitchen from the husband in the family room, to large-scale urban masterplans that isolate the feminine world of the suburb from the masculine world of the city—architecture’s bounding surfaces reconsolidate cultural gender differences by monitoring the flow of people and the distribution of objects in space.

The spatial differentiation of the sexes may find its most culturally visible form in the construction of the sexually segregated public bathroom. It is not by accident that Jacques Lacan chooses, as his privileged example of the institutionalization of sexual difference, adjoining public bathrooms in a railway station. Seated opposite one another by the window of a train pulling into a station, a boy and a girl misrecognize their socially prescribed destinations: “Look,” says the brother, “We’re at Ladies! ‘Idiot!’” replies his sister, “Can’t you see we’re at Gentlemen?” In this parable of what he calls the “laws of urinary segregation,” Lacan attributes the division of the sexes to the powerful signifying effects of language. But sexual difference is also a function here of spatial division. Lacan’s reduction of the problem of sexual difference to the two-dimensional surface of a pair of bathroom doors, one labelled “Ladies” and the other “Gentlemen,” conceals the more complex ways that the actual three-dimensional space of the public bathroom assigns sex and gender identity. The architecture of the public bathroom, where physical walls literally segregate the sexes, naturalizes gender by separating “men” and “women” according to the biology of bodily functions.

While Lacan shows us two bathroom doors identical in every respect except for their labels, we never see beyond the doors to the interiors themselves, which in fact are quite different. The common assumption that purely functional requirements specified by anatomical difference dictate the spatial layout and fixture design of restroom architecture reinforces the reigning essentialist notion of sexual identity as an effect of biology. Just one look inside the typical domestic bathroom shared by both sexes discloses the ways in which segregated public restroom facilities answer to the requirements of culture, not nature.

Two public bathroom renovations in this volume, one by Interim Office of Architecture and the other by Sheila Kennedy and Frano Violich, emphasize the contingent status of a cultural site generally considered functionally fixed and
inevitable. In their renovations of the public bathrooms at two urban arts centers, these design teams attempt to make visible the architectural codes of the bathroom that shape and regulate sexual identity. In their modernization of the Boston Arts Center, a 19th-century exhibition hall, *Kennedy and Violich* invert conventional gender assignments by placing the building’s new women’s room where the men’s room used to be and the men’s room in the space formerly occupied by the women’s room. Bruce Tomb and John Randolph of I/OA reconﬁgure the laws of urinary segregation by converting the bathroom at the Headlands in San Francisco, once a single-sex military latrine, into a coed public lavatory. Each design team exposes architectural remains normally concealed in a bathroom renovation. A row of freestanding “dysfunctional” urinals at the Headlands and a row of urinal ﬂoor drains left beneath the newly installed sinks in the women’s room at the Boston Arts Center are intrusive reminders of the culturally encoded urinary postures enforced by the architectural practices that govern sexual difference.

The men’s room appears to function as a cultural space that consolidates masculine authority around the centrality of phallic power. But as the lead-in essay to Stud’s section on the bathroom suggests, this particular hygienic site also operates as a theater of heterosexual anxiety. Lee Edelman argues that the anus, an orifice open to penetration, must be closeted in a stall to protect against the “homophobiaically abjectiﬁed desires” provoked by the “loosening of the sphincter.” The internal spatial boundary within the men’s room that separates the urinals from the enclosed toilets, together with the cultural prohibition against looking at one’s neighbor while urinating, actually initiate what the structure of the men’s room was designed to ward off: fear of the abject and homosexual desire. Edelman’s discussion of a chic New York restaurant’s men’s room, where televisions are installed over the urinals to ﬁx wandering glances, reﬂects on the capacity of architecture to participate in the formation of heterosexual identity by giving cultural play to the forbidden and threatening desires its spatialized boundaries purportedly labor to conceal. In the overdetermined site of the public men’s room, the door apparently swings both ways.

Philippe Starck’s designs for public bathrooms effectively challenge the conventions of men’s room architecture, highlighting and encouraging those activities and desires that standard ones elicit and suppress. While facilities for urinating and defecating are normally discretely placed opposite one another, at the Royalton Hotel in Manhattan they share a common wall; the urinal, which takes the form of a vertical steel plane, is situated between ﬂanking cubicle doors. Registering the movements of both the eye and the body, the urinal’s metallic surface reﬂects wandering glances while a motion detector, activated by unzipping ﬂies, initiates the ﬂow of a sheet of water down its face. Further rejecting the norm of the isolated bathroom fixture separated by partitions that insures an individual’s sense of hygiene and propriety, at both the Royalton and the Teatriz in Madrid, Starck creates communal sinks that make washing a truly public activity as well.
A number of the visual projects in Stud highlight the ideological instability of the partition ordinarily found in toilets, gyms, peep shows, and sex clubs. Translucent partitions counteract the visual privacy afforded by Kennedy and Violič's restroom stalls, while flexible plumbing hoses shake when flushed in 1OOA bathroom restoration, immediately undermining the authority of the undulating 1/4-inch steel privacy screen rendered tough as military armor. Looking at this contentious membrane from an explicitly queer perspective, media critic Bill Horrigan's essay, which frames architect Mark Robbins' project, Framing American Cities (New York), shows how the cubicle refers not only to toilet stalls but to peep shows and confessionals. Robbins' installation demonstrates how this vulnerable, penetrable boundary, originally designed as a spatial bulwark against the threat of homosexual predation, actually serves as an eroticized site of gay male sexual coupling. Taking as its point of departure an analysis of the peep show booths located in the gay video arcade next door, Matthew Bannister's design for a gym at the foot of Christopher Street in Manhattan also rethinks the architecture of the vanity screen. In Bannister's project this commonplace architectural element undergoes extraordinary permutations, from literal toilet partitions in the locker rooms to the colossal rock-climbing wall intersected by diving tanks that rises out of the center of the facility. Bannister manipulates and transforms the codes of conduct engendered by the complex boundary demarcated by partitions, facilitating new kinds of physical and scopic exchanges between recreating bodies at the gym.

**Distributing Objects**

Within the spaces articulated by the enclosing boundaries of architecture, any performance of masculinity requires its props. A number of the contributions to this volume consider the obsessive, even hysterical ways that men relate to the objects that surround and define them. Men's overestimation of certain fetish objects points to the vulnerability at the very heart of masculine identity. Historians attribute the crisis in masculinity to specific historical events—the industrial revolution, World War II—that transformed traditional roles both in the workplace and in the home. Psychoanalysts attribute the rents in male subjectivity to the formation of sexual identity itself, where the biological penis can never live up to the mystique of the cultural phallus. In both readings, objects are seen to locate and to reconfigure masculine identity in historically specific and psychologically powerful ways.

The urinal itself is just such a culturally weighted sign, a brace for the erection and support of male subjectivity. By facilitating the manly posture of upright urination, the urinal illustrates the capacity...
of objects to function as foils against which a performing body assumes its gender. But objects not only supplement the body; they also metaphorically stand in for it. In the famous cabaret scene of the film Blue Angel, Marlene Dietrich’s long legs and lithe torso posed seductively against the contours of a Thonet chair, theatricalizing a feminine identity in contradistinction to her masculine attire. In itself a gender-neutral object, the Thonet chair behaves almost like a human partner, providing a prop for the interactive articulation of sexual identity. In much the same way as Dietrich’s chair, Robert Gober’s urinals emphasize the anthropomorphic qualities of architectural objects. Acting like surrogate males, their protruding profiles suggest a cross-section through the male body. But unlike the polished, mass-produced, machine-made urinals whose dimensions are derived from the standard of an ideal male, Gober’s hand-made plaster urinals impersonate masculine vulnerability. Eroding the show of masculine invincibility represented by the traditional porcelain urinal, Gober’s urinals present emblems of an ideal but unrealizable masculinity, vacillating uneasily between power and privilege on the one hand and failure and insufficiency on the other.

"Boy-toys," electronic gadgets and appliances that compensate for an imperiled masculinity, figure prominently in two essays in this collection that take the postwar American male as their subject. Steven Cohan attributes Rock Hudson’s success as a playboy in the 1959 film Pillow Talk to his impressive equipment: his modern telephone, hi-fi, and electronically operated sofa-bed. All function as technological sex aids that compensate for, while nonetheless accentuating, Hudson’s fragile virility. And Ellen Lupton describes how another post-war domestic gadget, the electric carving knife, was designed to bolster the insecure ego of America’s new suburban husband. The electric carving knife, a household appliance originally marketed for women, was eventually adopted by men as a device that allowed them to perform the traditional male ritual of meat carving with greater prowess and confidence. However, in rendering simple a task that once required artistry, strength, and skill, this mechanical prosthesis also functioned as a powerful reminder of the social castration of the American male. Thus, in both authors’ accounts, mechanical objects designed to proclaim phallic mastery disguise a deeper anxiety, as American men struggled to shore up a stable masculine identity against the emasculating effects of post-war consumer culture and the corporate workplace.

While domestic prosthetics compensate for the suburban male’s imagined sense of his lost virility, at Rem Koolhaas’s Villa in Floriac a mechanical device enables its owner—a man recently confined to a wheelchair—to overcome his actual loss of physical mobility. Ironically, it is now the husband rather than the housewife who needs to be "liberated" from the "prison" of the traditional home. But while buildings for the physically challenged typically avoid level changes, this design welcomes the challenge posed by its mountainside setting. The project consists of three stacked "houses" intersected by a hydraulic lift—a moving room that allows the husband to circulate freely between floors. Its status literally elevated by the lift, the wheelchair,
once an index of its owner’s vulnerability, now confers power. Located adjacent to the lift, a storage wall vertically penetrates the house, providing the husband easy access to his possessions—books, artworks, wine—which allow him to cultivate his worldly pursuits. From the vantage point of his moving perch, floor to ceiling windows on the second level afford the husband unobstructed panoramic views. The prosthetic architecture of Koolhaas’s Villa restores to its owner visual and physical freedom, attributes necessary for the successful performance of masculinity.

Artist Matthew Barney takes this consideration of masculine performativity as the overcoming of physical obstacles even further, unveiling masculinity as an overt challenge—a trial performed under constant pressure and anxiety. Barney’s OTTOshaft, an installation mounted in the concrete parking garage at Documenta IX (Kassel), investigates how the mainstays of masculinity present literal obstacles to the achievement of gender identity. This installation’s meticulously crafted objects (exercise mats covered in tapioca, blocking sleds used in football training lathered in petroleum jelly, and collapsed gym lockers made of pink plastic typically used for prosthetic devices) define masculinity in its relation to sports, sex, and metabolic functions. Using these objects as performance props, Barney enacts a variety of masculine roles for the videos that he both shoots and displays within the installation space itself. The videos show us Barney, wearing only a harness, subjecting his naked flesh to an excruciating and bizarre set of physical endurance tests. Scaling an elevator shaft, dropping from the ceiling, and even submitting to anal probes, Barney’s contemporary rite of heroic self-fashioning parodies what it seeks to impersonate, intentionally implicating himself, in his role as male performance artist, in the very rituals of masculine display he aims to unmask.

Like Matthew Barney, George Stoll also seeks to disturb traditional notions of artistic male performance, but in contrast to Barney’s hypermasculine objects, Stoll’s artistry recuperates a domestic object usually associated with the female homemaker. Stoll’s Tupperware series alludes to minimalist sculpture; the bright colors and malleable wax surfaces of these stacked serial forms subvert the macho connotations of an American art movement notable for its excessive masculine posturing. Manhandling another commonplace object belonging to women, Vito Acconci invokes the erotic and maternal aspects of femininity embodied by that quintessential male fetish—the bra. Recognizing the overlap of clothing and architecture, Acconci’s installation exploits the tectonic affinities of wall and bra, both artifacts composed of white surfaces concealing their inner structures. Acconci borrows from the language of fashion to rethink architecture: like walls, his oversized bras not only partition space, but, like undergarments, they also literally envelop and support the body. Intended to be strapped in various configurations to the surfaces of domestic spaces, Acconci’s Wall Bras promote different modes of social engagement. When installed upright at a 90-degree angle, the bra serves as the ultimate male retreat; doubling as stereo speaker and enclosure, the cups shape a womb-like, self-sufficient environment reminiscent of a bachelor pad. However, when assembled freestanding and at right angles to each other, the cups
encourage intimate conversation between two occupants. By interfering with the traditional oppositions between feminine and masculine, domestic and artistic realms, both Stoll’s and Accocci’s work suggests alternative ways for men to engage with the everyday objects around them.

ORGANIZING GAZES

Architecture regulates subjectivity not only through the arrangement of objects in particular spatial structures but also through the organization of spectatorship within those same spaces. From panoptic prisons to pornographic theaters, numerous building types endow men with visual authority while relegating disempowered subjects—especially women—to the position of scopophilic objects. But while visual control remains a recurrent theme in the architectural construction of masculinity, in many circumstances the spatial distribution of the gaze undermines men’s culturally privileged access to vision. Several of the pieces in this volume demonstrate how specific architectural spaces work to destabilize the active/passive, subject/object, male/female binaries upon which conventional theories of spectatorship depend. This disturbance of the gaze works in at least two ways: masculine subjects endowed with visual authority can be dispossessed of the gaze through changing configurations of spatial boundaries, while even the most traditional masculine environments are capable of encouraging a transvestite logic of viewing, inviting men to be both subjects and objects of the gaze.¹³

The essay by Diana Fuss and Joel Sanders takes up the first of these possibilities, mapping the visual organization of Sigmund Freud’s Vienna office to explore the complicat-
ed play of power and transferance at work within the spatial and historical scene of psychoanalysis. This essay calls into question the traditional view of Freud’s professional office as a space of male dominance, in which patients are rendered powerless in the face of the analyst’s absolute scopic authority. The actual architectural configuration of Freud’s office and the arrangement of furniture and objects within it suggest a far more complicated dynamic between patient and doctor, a scenario in which Freud more often than not adopts a passive position while his patient is permitted to occupy the room’s center of activity. In the highly mediated settings of both his study and his consulting room, Freud assumes a spatially marginalized position, one that leaves him perpetually vulnerable to the risk of feminization.

Focussing on a very different kind of cultural arena, one perhaps more obviously overdetermined as a site of masculine performance, Marcia Ian analyzes the gym as a socially sanctioned space where men become the object of the gaze. The success of the male bodybuilder who pumps iron to “substitute the rock hard for the soft, the monumental for the human, and the masculine for the feminine” is registered through the visual admiration of his fellow bodybuilders. Within the con-
fines of the gym, whose mirrored surfaces disperse the gaze in many directions, men willingly submit to a process of scopophilic objectification, readily assuming a receptive position so that they might ultimately attain physical supremacy.

The homoerotic possibilities of the gym return us once more to one of this volume's most important subtexts: the role of architecture in the formation of the modern sexual subject. Stud's final section, "Outings," focuses specifically on the architectonics of gay male sexuality, mapping the spaces of male desire across an urban landscape of streets and parks, sex clubs and theaters, bathrooms and bars. Throughout this volume, numerous contributors draw on queer theory to interrogate the ideological production of normative architectural spaces, a process that often involves shoring up a vulnerable straight masculinity by disavowing the specter of gay sexuality. Stud's concluding essays consider instances of queer appropriation of space: gay men annexing, inhabiting, and recoding public space. Arguing against any essentialist notion of "queer space," these projects demonstrate instead the many inventive and resourceful ways men have appropriated everyday public domains in the formation of a gay social identity.

Overturning the assumption that urban queer visibility commences with Stonewall, George Chauncey investigates the many ways that the public spaces of the city have been claimed in the past by the gay community. His historical research on New York City's homosexual underground from 1890 to 1940 demonstrates that gay men have in fact appropriated as venues for social interaction and sexual desire a wide variety of urban spaces, including bars, streets, beaches, and parks. Even the piano bar, which figures so centrally in D.A. Miller's essay, has the capacity to be reclaimed as a public space that allows men to ritually assemble to sing Broadway show tunes. Only within this exclusive social space—a safe haven out of earshot of the "legitimate" theater—can the queer subtexts of Broadway lyrics finally be heard, if not performed.

The diverse physical characteristics of queer spaces resist categorization. Although gays stereotypically congregate in dark deserted sites like abandoned piers and overgrown parks situated at the fringes of the city, they just as often make contact in busy open streets and squares. Yet a common feature possessing significant spatial implications belongs to all of these divergent spaces—the central importance of the gaze. Elsewhere, D.A. Miller has written: "Perhaps the most salient index to male homosexuality, socially speaking, consists precisely in how a man looks at other men." Constantly subject to the threat of public (and even private) surveillance, gay men have invented strategies for remaining invisible to the public at large while at the same time, and in the same spaces, becoming visible or readily identifiable to one another. For this reason queers have had to depend not only on legible signs—clothing, grooming, mannerisms—but on the visibility of the look itself to identify other
queers. In his important study Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Spaces, sociologist Laud Humphreys has shown how communication through eye contact governs the carefully staged choreography of cruising. His study documents how the precise layout of restroom architecture—the location and number of urinals in relation to the placement of stalls—shapes the relay of desiring gazes that signals each player’s shifting but precisely defined role in sexual encounters. Humphreys emphasizes that the carnal pleasures initiated by visual exchanges presuppose spaces capable of monitoring and surveillance; open or broken windows and squeaking doors permit the vigilant “lookout” to detect hostile intruders.

Tom Burr’s physical reconstruction of the Plattspitz Park in Zurich clarifies not only that the space of desire is also the space of surveillance, but that spaces appropriated by socially dispossessed groups can also be reappropriated through public renovation. Burr reconstructs the Plattspitz Park as it appeared in the 1970s, when its secluded enclaves and dimly lit paths provided fertile terrain for the emergence of a gay urban space. His account describes how gays actively altered the spaces they annexed, introducing hidden paths and sheltered areas made readable to the initiated by deposits of litter and forgotten clothing. Burr’s full-scale mock-up of the Plattspitz’s design, displayed in the Landesmuseum overlooking the park itself, stands in stark contrast to the park’s current landscape, which features well-lighted sweeping vistas and open spaces. These dramatic renovations, introduced to maximize visibility, are designed to eradicate the presence of the very community that had previously so successfully carved out in the park its own private sanctuary.

Queer appropriations of the gaze undermine normative codes of spectatorship by creating a reversible look that allows men to be at once both subject and object of the gaze, both spectator and spectacle. The architecture of queer visibility troubles the heterosexist assumptions behind the look by overturning the social interdictions forbidding male spectacle. Steen Barker’s hidden camera eye documents a recently closed sex club that occupied a former movie theater. Previously, the building’s proscenium arch focused the uni-directional gaze of the audience on a discreetly framed moving image. Now the gay men who occupy the theatre and engage in openly visible sex acts consent to see
and be seen, thereby blurring the boundary between spectator and spectacle, voyeur and exhibitionist. Similarly, *Thanhauser and Esterson's* back-lit translucent dressing room doors at a fitness center register the ephemeral shadows cast by nude bodies displayed before the eyes of fellow gym members.

All human inhabitants of space, regardless of their gender identity, assume, to varying degrees, reversible and fluctuating scopic positions; gay men merely exploit a visual condition that patriarchal heterosexuality considers threatening. These essays and projects that collectively reveal the structure of a homoerotic look already inscribed within public space call our attention to the always unstable and fluid nature of all kinds of visual relays transacted through space.

The final entry in this volume, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres's* billboards, takes us back full circle to *Stud's* initial treatment of masculinity and domesticity. Gonzalez-Torres presents, in different urban settings, the same ambiguous image: bathed in ethereal light, a rumpled bed and two pillows bear the traces of two recently departed occupants. This open-ended tableau serves as a timeless elegy to all lovers (both gay and straight) as well as a more timely work of mourning, evoking the memory of those lost to AIDS. An eloquent commentary on how the contemporary domestic scene is inevitably shaped by a global medical crisis, Gonzalez-Torres's billboards sum up *Stud's* two major related themes: the permeable boundaries between public and private, heterosexual and homosexual space.

This book invites its community of authors, operating from various critical assumptions and disciplinary vantage points, to unmask masculinity—to refute, dismantle, or re-envision the diverse spatial field of male performance. The essays by cultural theorists that open each of this book's five sections explore the multifarious ways that a generic architectural site collaborates in the social production of masculinity. The visual projects by artists and architects that follow these opening essays propose new opportunities for reshaping sexual identities by reconfiguring the spaces that house them. Together, these theoretical and visual projects make visible the ideologies of gendered space: architectures of masculinity.
Circa 1977,
Plazspitz
Park Installation
TOM BURR
This landscape report was developed for a small triangulated plot of land called Platzspitz, which is situated at the confluence of the rivers Sihl and Limmat in the center of Zurich, Switzerland. Platzspitz has endured a long and diverse history as a public site, some of which is brought to the surface in what follows. More specifically, the landscape report focuses on the park's condition and character during the 1970s and, in particular, the late 1970s. Its ultimate goal is to picture the park as it may have looked in the 1970s—to imagine the condition of the park's landscape, its trees, bushes, soil and ground cover, its walkways, benches and lamp posts, its erosion and levels of maintenance, circa 1977.

UNSENSATIONAL

From the point of view of this particular landscape's management, which is to say from the point of view of the official Municipal Gardens, the 1970s was an unsensational period for Platzspitz. It was unsensational in retrospect, given the park's turbulent recent history as one of the largest and most visible "green spots" in Europe, a condition that continued into the early 1980s, and received international media attention. Moreover, it was unsensational when compared to the park's transformation in the late 1950s into a "baroque Pleasure Garden." Rows of linden trees lined the walkways, creating long, elegant riverside promenades that provided Zurich with one of its most vivid and vital social spectacles, where one went to be seen...
and to see others strolling the length of the Limmat and the Sihl. It is also deemed unsensational in light of the most recent phase in the history of Plazspitz: a massive SFr 1,200,000 renovation has restructured both the park and the park's use by its public. All traces of the 1970s have been obscured if not altogether destroyed, their canopies and throughout the wooded edges of the area, creating dense thickets of a medium height that lend a form of cover to those who wander along the pathways, and sheltered from the designated paths and into the planted regions. Yet another area of dense foliage surrounded the public toilet, a small brick and stucco building that had been built on the bank of the Limmat in 1914.

Various forms of understory, as well as additional dark clusters of louts, partially obscured one side of the small structure, producing a continuity between the dark spaces of the shrubbery and the secluded interior of the public toilet. At the third side of the triangulated

**OVERGROWN**

Mr. Stuchhalter, who became chief of the Municipal Gardens in the early 1970s, remembers Plazspitz as an excessively overgrown site. Heavy evergreen growth occurred throughout the park. Multiple large clusters of firs, madder, and holly divided the relatively small space of the park into a series of outdoor passageways and rooms; the largest of these structures were located at the edges of the park above the banks of the two rivers, and throughout the elevated hillside area, which then, as now, was occupied by the playground. These labyrinthine spaces dominated the park in the 1970s, creating numerous hidden enclaves that remained out of view from the surrounding vicinity, offering shelter and seclusion to anyone who ventured into their midst.

Plazspitz stands the Landesmuseum, the Swiss National Museum, which was completed in 1848, and which separated the park from the railroad station and the busy center of Zurich beyond. Large chestnut trees towered over the romantically conceived fortress-like structure, their umbrage increasing the darkness of the park and contributing further to its generally overgrown character and appearance during the 1970s.

**ISOLATED**

Mr. Stuchhalter suggests that this overgrown environment was a negative development for Plazspitz. The overabundance of voluminous shrubbery and the vast swaying of saplings due to generally negligent maintenance created too many isolated spaces. In his opinion, the isolated spaces led to a widespread mistrust of Plazspitz by many, and to the
A gradual decline in visitors to the park over several decades leading up to the 1970s. By the late 1970s, workers used the park during lunch time, and people brought their children to play for short periods during the middle of the day, but on the whole Plattspitz served as a passageway from one area of town to another; the bridges at the tip of the park offered quick and easy passage over the two rivers. The isolation created by the configuration of branches and foliage reinforced an existing sense of isolation. Incongruous as the inauguration of the train station in 1847 had affected the virtual separation of the park from the whole of the city. What was once a large, continuous tract of open land, sprawling out from the junction of the two rivers into the heart of Zurich, was vastly reduced by the placement of the train station across the middle of the peninsula, which at the same time rendered it largely disconnected from the hub of modern Zurich. Mr. Studhalter suspects that, against this backdrop, the isolation produced by the arid growth led to a further unattractive development: at night, the park became the domain of alcoholics, hustlers, and homosexuals, who thrived in the seclusion offered by the dim lighting, the maze-like network of pathways, and the dense flora. Had the park had the sufficient funds or foresight to curtail the overgrowth that occurred over the period of several decades, and that resulted in the unkempt and unsavory conditions reported by Mr. Studhalter, he feels that things might have gone differently. What the Municipal Gardens lacked during that period was a 'Master Plan' according to the Municipal Gardens' landscape architect, Judith Rohrer, who succeeded Mr. Studhalter and is responsible for the design and completion of the recent renovation. Had such a plan been implemented, she submits, the conditions would not have reached such extreme levels, and the park would have continued to attract a more general public.

**WEEDY**

A mixture of disturbed native woodland, abandoned ornamental planting, and much successional growth became rampant in Plattspitz in the late 1970s. The heavily overgrown conditions during this period had considerable repercussions for the various elements that constituted the existing landscape. Although serious, the vegetation conditions observed during the 1970s were not surprising in a landscape that had borne the stresses—both manmade and natural—of centuries of continued use. Some of the older trees, having reached or passed maturity, were dying out. Other stands, subject to erosion on riverbed slopes and in the areas worn by heavy traffic, showed grave signs of declining health. Roots had become exposed and the ground layer disturbed; the soil became compacted and its capacity to retain water was thereby reduced. Because of the erosion, litter, widespread throughout the heavily trafficked areas, created soil conditions unfavorable to the germination of any but the most hardy of dominant canopy species; the germination of more 'weedy' species was favored. After hundreds of years of human use as an urban park, much of the original shrub and herbaceous layers had died off, along with large portions of the understorey, and very little new planting had been done to compensate for these losses. From time to time the shrub layers had been partially reduced, in a conscious effort to improve public safety in the wooded areas. The dis-
urbed edge conditions along several of the pathways had also resulted in a dense undergrowth of shrubs and woody species, while many of the ornamental shrubs along the pedestrian paths had also gone without maintenance for many years and had become unsightly or unhealthy, and in many instances dense and overgrown.

**Sighs**

In 1979, a proposal was made to overhaul Platzspitz. "Zürich Park," as Platzspitz in its new incarnation was to be called, would feature roller coasters and monorails, a Western Saloon and a Ghost House, cafés and snack bars, and a Ferris wheel higher than the Hotel Zürich. "Zürich Park" was the brainchild of Erich Gerber, director of tourism at the time, who proposed the mini Disneyland nestled in Platzspitz as an antidote to the unpleasant associations the park had acquired throughout the 1970s and to its lack of general use. Gerber promoted his project by stating that Platzspitz would only be enhanced by such an upscale development, preferring to call his vision a "leisure park" or, better yet, a "family park" rather than by the more vulgar designation, "theme park". Gerber described his vision as running counter to the temporary fairs that travel from town to town each summer, presenting Zürich Park instead as a permanent fixture in the cityscape, one that would be conceived, constructed, and maintained as an elegant place of the highest standards, and that would draw a disenfranchised public back into Platzspitz. According to "Zürich Park" thinking, the rebirth of Platzspitz would be guaranteed, thereby creating a cultural and geographical center for Zürich's public life. In all of these respects, "Zürich Park" would stand in sharp contrast to the existing Platzspitz, a place Gerber claimed many people did not even know about, adding that the park remained disturbing, particularly at night, and in a very definite way, unsettling.

**The Place Had Style**

According to one man who frequented Platzspitz in the late 1970s, the site was very different from the way it is now. The place had style, he explains. People were running around in flowered skirts and white silk shawls, and the scene as a whole was very light and airy. 75 percent of the gay men who went to Platzspitz, he speculates, were simply curious to see who was there and what was going on. Sometimes they would meet, beneath the trees or along the park benches, and later go over to the nearby Old Mary's bar, which no longer exists. Another man explained that Platzspitz had been a contact point and cruising park for gay men at least since 1940. As he remembers it, you would walk along the river, sit on the benches, and wait for someone to talk to you; sometimes the conversations would move briskly and you would visit the toilets at the far end of the park, by the river. He went on to describe the park and the bushes, which were higher than the average man, densely planted, and offered excellent refuge, but concluded by saying that he ceased visiting the park often after the 1960s as too much crime occurred there. One woman recalled her experiences of Platzspitz in 1978, when she was seventeen years old and spent three evenings a week at the Schützenpark youth center. On each of these evenings between 10:30 pm and 11:30 pm, she would walk to the Main Station, from the Wasserwerkstrasse to the Drahteschmiedli, and over the bridge to Platzspitz. As she remembers it, it was clear that Platzspitz "belonged" to
During the 1970s, the maintenance of Platzspitz was more concerned with the continual removal of rubbish and debris left by the various groups of people who used the park than with the careful and conscientious pruning the park presently enjoys. Bottles and cans and other usual forms of recreational garbage would overflow beyond the bounds of the trash cans, and become scattered beneath and within the complex network of shrubbery, and pressed into the barren soil and mud. Many paths formed outside the original routes, and meandered in and out between small trees, shrubs, and other forms of undergrowth, and beyond the official domain of the standard maintenance. Therefore, a light to medium littering of trash would often punctuate the existing parkscape in areas, usually deep within the shrubbery, and visible from the official pathways only by way of downward glimpses and sideways glances. Deposits of bottle caps and cigarette butts, popsicle sticks and multi colored foil wrappers; discarded jars, tubes, and cans; muddy tissues; and an occasional forgotten item of clothing were left beneath the branches and only partially revealed to users of the primary paved walkways. Today Platzspitz is enjoying a period of renewal. Trees have been thinned out drastically, and more than seventy removed in the last two years. The overgrown ferns and holly bushes, which were so emblematic of the previous decades, have been cut back drastically to allow for their new growth to emerge; and now their height is being carefully maintained, allowing for an open view of the landscape in all directions. The new Platzspitz is one of sweeping vistas and long shots, both from within the triangular patch of land, from the lands museum, which borders it. It remains open to the city streets that lie just beyond the two rivers, and can be taken in quickly from all sides, viewed at once in its totality. A new system of lighting has been introduced into the park as well, consisting of powerful halogen lamps that were designed specifically for the park and that radically increase the artificial lighting of the park, further allowing it to be easily viewed from a distance. These lamps are now referred to, and available on the commercial market, as "Platzspitz lights." Although Platzspitz has for the most part been closed during the year, since its renovation, movements have already begun to reintroduce the park, slowly and carefully, into Zurich's urban life.