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The New City Reader is a newspaper on architecture, public space and the city, published as part of "The Last Newspaper," an exhibition running at the New Museum of Contemporary Art from October 6, 2010–January 9, 2011. Conceived by executive editors Joseph Grima and Kazys Varnelis, the newspaper's content centers on the spatial implications of epochal shifts in technology, economy and society today. The New City Reader will consist of one edition published over the course of the project, with a new section produced weekly from within the museum's gallery space, each led by a different guest editorial team of architects, theorists and research groups. These sections will be available free at the New Museum and—in emulation of a practice common in the nineteenth-century American city and still popular in China and other parts of the world today—will be posted in public on walls throughout the city for collective reading.

The next issue will be **BUSINESS**, guest edited by Frank Pasquale & Kevin Slavin, and **LEGAL**, guest edited by Eyal Weizman, Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths.

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TO PRINT

A Newspaper Of
Public Space

The
New
City
Reader

The New City Reader

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"The Last Newspaper" is curated by Richard Flood and Benjamin Godsill. For more information please visit newmuseum.org

The New City Reader online: newcityreader.net twitter.com/newcityreader

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UNREAL ESTATE

by Mabel O. Wilson and Peter Tolkin (SideProjects)

How much is real about “real estate” today? And what is real estate’s basis in reality? There are of course the binding legal instruments, the deeds and contracts that abstract land into “real property,” subdividing it into tracts and rendering it quantifiable for transaction. Once land becomes designated as real estate, it can be registered in MLS databases and the columns of Excel spreadsheets, crunched by brokers before appearing in advertisements perused by prospective buyers. One of Manhattan’s recent high-end listings, for example, was encoded into this brisk shorthand: \$55m 5 BD/7BA 5500sqft NYC CPW Condo. If one were to text this offering to a friend via the New York Times’ nifty new Real Estate app, it might prompt a similarly encrypted response: 4sale @ \$10g/sf OMFG!

With Craigslist, other internet classifieds and sites like Curbed thriving, daily and weekly real estate sections are quickly becoming a thing of the past. Online property listings, like news reportage, have exponentially expanded into an every-day, all-the-time posting cycle. This time compression, as Beatriz Colomina posited in the November 5, 2010, Leisure section of the New City Reader, liberates daily newspapers to focus upon lifestyle—and in particular the consumer frenzy of home buying. Current real estate reporting delves into an array of alluring lifestyle choices featuring both local denizens and home dwellers around the world. Even the marketing of urban apartments and condominiums hype amenities that trump the drab linoleum-tiled common room of old; prospective residents are lured by lifestyle perks from luxury gyms and wine tastings to private concerts and landscaped terraces outfitted with propane grills, conversation pits and skyline views. Since twenty-first century workers never seem to punch out of their 24/7 time clocks, we wonder how many folks actually have time to partake in such mirth and merriment?

Supplementing these fantasies of the perfect homestead are a lineup of voyeuristic television shows and online fare that boost DIY house hunting, delve into the lives of neurotic house flippers and showcase open-houses for luxury homes that will never be open to you or me. Real estate is so entwined with the phantasmal world of entertainment that the New York Times reported this week a reality show might be in the works that would follow the jet-setting lifestyle of a Swedish former gay porn star-cum-wildly successful Manhattan real estate agent to the glitterati. As they say, you can’t make shit this up!

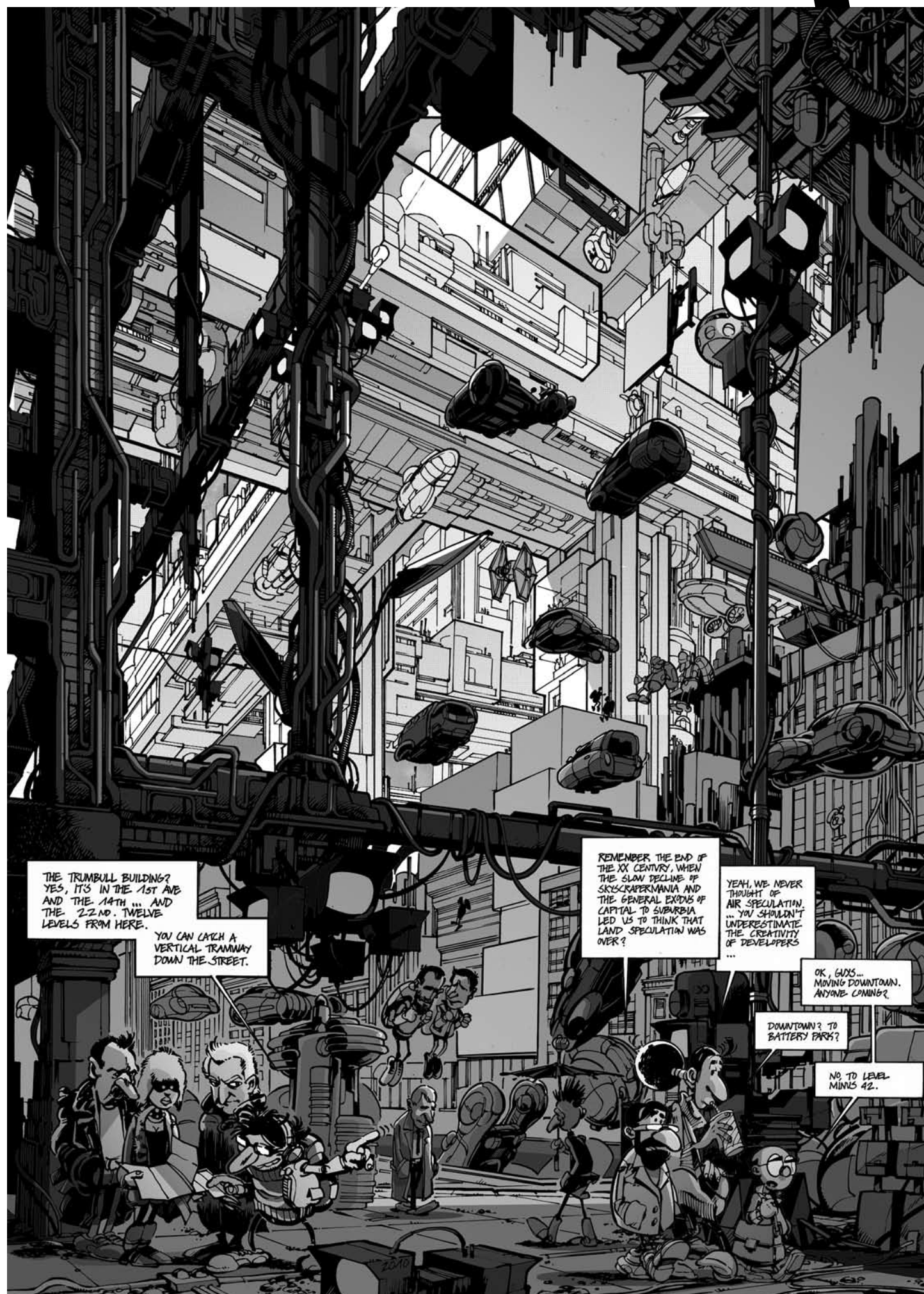
This constantly refreshed panorama of consumer-driven lifestyles feeds New York City’s—and by extension, America’s—insatiable desire for property ownership, overstuffed dream homes and sprawling quarter-acre “private estates.” However, as many foreclosed homeowners recently discovered when they contracted the toxic subprime plague, this trend’s dark underbelly reveals that these champagne wishes and caviar dreams can easily turn into our own personal Amityville horrors.

This section of the New City Reader explores how—perhaps moreso even than the fiats of global finance or mass

cults—unreal real estate really is. However, its contributors are nonetheless acutely aware that these dreams, fantasies and visions, whether good or bad, have a very real impact upon how 8.4 million New Yorkers live and work within its borders. With close to ninety percent of the popular Times Real Estate section focused upon residential property, the perception of land ownership is myopically colored as a private concern, an inflection aptly summed up in the NIMBYism of current politics that has muscled out a more robust conception of land stewardship as part of a shared public realm.

This is critical for how we—as citizens, not just residents—should debate, for example, the forthcoming Vision 2020 plan that will guide waterfront development in the five boroughs for the next ten years. Can we afford to leave the stewardship of public resources to backroom deals brokered with big private development interests? Or can we, through a more participatory process, merge our individual desires into a shared vision about a new “urban common,” one that enriches the lives of all New Yorkers and not just those who have the means to make real their dreams of a \$7m 5BD/5BA, 5100sqft, DUMBO, Duplex Penthouse + Skyline Views?

A Newspaper Of
Public Space



The New City Reader

by Mabel O. Wilson

When I ascend the grand steps in front of McKim, Mead, and White's stately Low Library on my daily trek to teach on Columbia University's campus, I am greeted by Daniel Chester French's heroic bronze sentinel Alma Mater. As our "nourishing and bounteous mother," she symbolizes the intellectual sustenance offered to all alumni, including myself, who have matriculated through the school's neo-classical uptown campus. While my downtown alma mater, New York University, may lack such an iconic tourist attraction, its alumni relations department works hard to remind its grads, about once a month, that our allegiance can be pledged one credit card swipe at a time. But what if your alma maters had developed voracious, insatiable appetites and were both hell-bent upon devouring their neighborhoods as part of their ambitious campus expansion plans? And if we were to analyze their tactics for amassing new territory, might the battle between competitive hot dog eaters Joey "Jaws" Chestnut's stuff and gulp technique (Columbia) and Takeru "the Tsunami" Kobayashi's dunk one, chomp two method (NYU) be an apt analogy?

Columbia's landholdings are the stuff of urban legends. When I was a graduate student in the early nineties, tales abounded about how Columbia was second only to the Roman Catholic Church for having assembled the largest cache of land holdings in the city. Some said that Columbia had been around so long that it still owned the land under Washington Square Park—an incursion into NYU's guarded territory to be sure. (The true story is that it was sited a bit further south, near Park Place, when it was still King's College in the eighteenth century.) Another widely circulating rumor was that Columbia held the deed for the parcel that Rockefeller Center now sits upon, its campus home

before Columbia migrated uptown to its current Morning-side Heights compound in 1897. Over the years, Columbia has stayed fairly compacted in its gated confines, choosing to build upwards and downwards rather than spread outwards. Efforts in 1968 to stake a claim in nearby Morningside Park for the construction of a new gymnasium, a facility that some believed would not be fully accessible to its predominately black and Hispanic Harlem neighbors, erupted in a spirited campus uprising led by students and the radical group SDS, taking over several buildings, much to the chagrin of campus administrators and city police.

Columbia University's recent attempt to move into Harlem has proceeded more like a game of whack-a-mole than an all-out ground assault. By accruing parcels one by one in far west Harlem, rechristened these days as Manhattanville, Columbia has amassed a 17-acre tract. Buildings are currently being cleared brick-by-brick so that Renzo Piano's master plan for a new mixed-use academic center can soon commence construction. The use of eminent domain, however, in which New York State designated some of the private properties as blighted in order to claim them for "public use," has not been implemented without considerable blowback. Attorneys representing two holdouts are currently appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse a recent ruling upholding the use of eminent domain. Despite all efforts to extricate them, it would seem some of those pesky moles are burrowing under for an extended stay.

The urban landholdings legend has been recently updated to rank NYU as the number one owner in the city, suggesting that they now possess more acreage than even the Archdiocese of New York. Indeed NYU's presence in Greenwich Village over the past twenty-five years has increased several-fold. Unlike Columbia's spatial strategy, which typifies what historian Michel Foucault characterized

as "the enclosure," a hallmark of the nineteenth century's paradigm of the disciplined society, NYU's spatial strategy approximates what philosopher Gilles Deleuze called "rhizomatic," a distributed system emblematic of our society of control. To put it in laymen's terms, NYU's tactic has been somewhat akin to the pop-up shop that never leaves.

With new dormitories, rehabbed classrooms, more offices, galleries and cafes sprouting in all directions east, west, north and south, from the East Village to Governor's Island and from downtown Brooklyn to Abu Dhabi, NYU has planted hundreds of its violet flags in locales around the globe. But with the spring debut of "A University as Great as Its City: NYU's Strategy for Future Growth," a plan to add some six million square feet of space by its bicentennial in 2031, not all of its Village neighbors are happy about being further crowded out. In the master plan conceived by Grimshaw Architects, the effort to clone I.M. Pei's landmarked Silver Towers, for example, has already met with fierce opposition from local preservation groups who packed the public hearings held by Community Board 2 this past week. Their concern may be justified as this new venture by the 800 pound purple gorilla-in-the-hood would erect the tallest structure in Greenwich Village, a condominium/hotel tower whose top floors will no doubt offer panoramic vistas of NYU's vast holdings.

Whether or not NYU will move ahead with its plans in historic Greenwich Village and elsewhere in the city will attest to how well these community groups can tactically challenge, like their uptown comrades, the legions of lawyers these institutions have at their disposal. In the end it may not be enough that the city no longer feeds the beast of these land hungry institutions. Perhaps the land grab of my alma maters can be contained in other ways—Columbia may need a lap band to curtail its appetite, and NYU may need to undertake a master cleanse to flush out the toxins. Both institutions may come to realize that they need to reign in their ambitions in order to maintain a more balanced and healthy relationship with the town and its people, who ultimately give each school that distinctive New York City vibe.



**GOWN TROUNCES
TOWN, 2-0**

BUSHWICK, Abu Dhabi—The Life Cafe that opened here in Bushwick (Abu Dhabi) in 2026 may not be able to afford the rents in 2031. “It’s getting really gentrified here,” said barista Barack Chang. “When we first opened people were sort of skeptical of Bushwick (Abu Dhabi). They didn’t think the conceptual artists like you have in Williamsburg (Singapore) would move out here. At first we were just serving the media drone-heads.”

Over the past four years, Bushwick (Abu Dhabi) has seen rents climb. According to Mohamed Sanchez, it’s not the concepters as much as the flash investors who are driving up the rents. A similar story, of course, played out in BedStuy (Qatar) in the early 2020s, when apartment values skyrocketed to \$10 million for a one-bedroom. “We were paying out of our eyes,” said Rebekkah Swensen-Chang, who has since relocated to Canarsie (Qatar). “Fifteen dollars for a cup of coffee. Seventeen dollars for bus fare. We wanted to leave Brooklyn, but where



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720 sq.ft. x 2731 W. Francis Ave Household Mutations

1920's apartment open for viewing beginning August 8th. Showing until August 22. Weekdays 10-6pm. Weekends 11-5pm.

Cozy Fourplex. Lower unit in a four unit apartment. Two bedroom, one bath. 720 square feet of wall to wall carpeting.

Located just west of Downtown LA. Koreatown/Pico Union adjacent. 2731 W. Francis Ave. Los Angeles, CA. 90005 ([google map](#))/([yahoo map](#))



THE HUNT: PART I

In August 2010, Los Angeles-based artist Carmen Argote posted a listing on Craigslist for a 720 square foot apartment at 2731 W. Frances Avenue in the Pico Union/Koreatown area. It was open for public viewing from August 8 to August 22. Interested parties were unwittingly entering an artwork entitled “720 sq. ft.: Household Mutations.”

©2010 Gallery g727, Los Angeles

to go from here?”

In Brooklyn (New York), there’s a conflict between developers who want to expand Brooklyn to new cities in South America—current discussions center around Brooklyn (São Paulo)

IS BROOKLYN (ABU DHABI) OVER?

and Brooklyn (Medillin)—and those who want to focus on preserving the early 20-teens culture of Brooklyn (Abu Dhabi).

“It’s too much, too fast,” said Maria Johnson Lopez, a resident in the Marcy Houses in BedStuy (New York). “The Life Group is just taking orders from the big developers, not paying any mind to how it is here in Marcy 1.0,” said Johnson Lopez, speaking of the Marcy Housing Google Life cooperative that has managed licensing and institutional satelliting of the Marcy projects since 2018.

Even before its release 12 years ago, the Brooklyn Google Life App Visa had potential Brooklynites lining up worldwide. “The sheer volume of applications reflected that we were on to something very, very big,” said Yasir Gregoricka, head of Human Management and Social Media. “On the one hand, it was scary. On the other hand, we knew we were creating a product that could possibly accommodate everyone, eventually. It was a huge moment.”

Now, those same Brooklynites debate questions of authenticity of their condos’ common rooms spread across 17 global arenas, watching as even more Brooklyns start development every day. “The Abu Dhabi prototype was great, but that’s just not Brooklyn anymore,” claimed one Prospect Heights (Singapore) resident, Skyving in from his local coffee shop. Prospect Heights (Singapore), perhaps the most successful neighborhood model, has often been the poster child for Life. On average, it has produced the most citizens interested in reinvesting in the Life subscription over time, surpassing even the media-focused Brooklyn neighborhoods in Abu Dhabi and Prague.

Two Trees, Brooklyn’s main developer worldwide, is eager to push the Life app forward. Demand for Brooklyn in India, Japan and Russia indicates that all units could be filled well in advance of release. Even China is considering a massive rezoning of Beijing’s virtual properties to accommodate Brooklyn (Beijing). “What we’re seeing here is Brooklyn’s amazing potential not only as a housing or job market, but as an ongoing culture-type. Every place we put it just thrives,” said Julian Chowdhury, Two Trees’ Global Liaison.

Despite concerns in Brooklyn (New York) about the rate and intensity of development, Marty Markowitz continues to be Life: Brooklyn’s biggest advocate. The aging borough president still consults on new ways to package Brooklyn’s character for global consumption. Said Markowitz, 85, “We used to say that Brooklyn was like no place on Earth. But what could be better than having the place like no place on Earth everywhere?”

“When we first opened people were sort of skeptical of Bushwick (Abu Dhabi). They didn’t think the conceptual artists like you have in Williamsburg (Singapore) would move out here.”



by Peter Tolkin
Illustration by bioLINIA

NOVEMBER 22, 2030—After years of rancorous debate between neighborhood groups about the status of what some deemed an eyesore and others praised as a work of architectural genius, the graffiti-gate debacle finally found its resolution. In a unanimous ruling by New York City’s newly elected 12 member Public Graffiti Abatement Board, the decorative “graffiti” gates at the base of the residential condominium at 40 Bond Street, developed 23 years ago by Ian Schrager of Studio 54 fame and mayoral candidate in the 2017 mayoral election, have been declared a nuisance and ordered to be removed. The board ruled that the “graffiti” design by architects Herzog and de Meuron, recipients in 2001 of the prestigious Pritzker Prize, was indeed graffiti and a defacement to the public right-of-way.

To make the determination, the board was especially focused on statements made by the architects on a now-defunct website showcasing the property (http://www.40bond.com/hdem_content.html). Here architect Jacques Herzog said of 40 Bond Street:

“We like radical positions and we try to offer them. The idea of gates came to us first. It gave us a signature, a scale and individuality. The gates introduce the scale of the townhouses. The question was what kind of structure or grid or image would they have on them. We tested different things and most of them looked too traditional but we then came up with the idea of something very chaotic which we thought could be seen as coming from urban street culture, where graffiti is part of the landscape. So we took graffiti and manipulated it on the computer, the result is radical but it was a classical process of transformation.”

Following the public hearing last week, Jenna Spitzer, the attorney representing 40 Bond Street residents, signed the NYC Graffiti Free consent form that states the following:

GRAFFITI GATE

As a Property Owner or Authorized Representative of the Property Owner, I grant consent to the City to enter the property noted below for the purpose of removing graffiti. For the purpose of this Consent, “the City” means personnel and equipment of the City of New York, its agents and employees and/or a community organization designated by the City. The City may remove graffiti in the manner it deems appropriate, including but not limited to, by power-washing, painting, or use of chemical solvents.

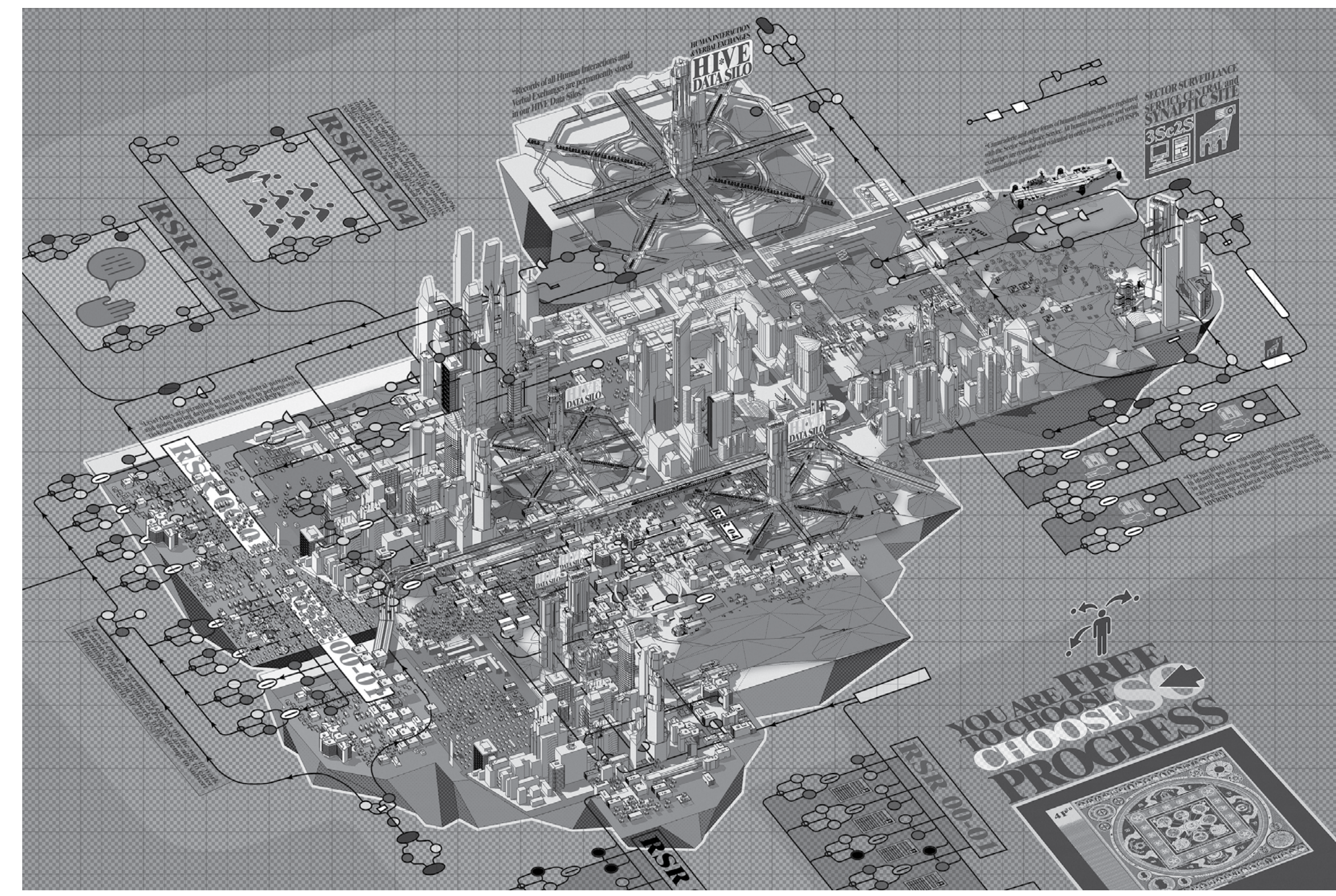
The City will, in good faith, attempt to remove the graffiti from the property. However, by signing below, I understand that: 1) the graffiti removal services shall be performed as deemed appropriate by the City; 2) the City does not in any way obligate itself to perform any graffiti removal services other than those deemed appropriate by the City; and 3) the City assumes no responsibility if the area cleaned or painted by the City does not match the remainder of the property, or if some residue of existing graffiti remains.

I indemnify and hold the City harmless from any liability for physical injury, death or property damage arising from the performance of graffiti removal services on the property pursuant to this Consent, unless such liability arises entirely from actions or conduct of the City, its agents, employees or independent contractors. This Consent shall be effective until terminated in writing by the Property Owner, or by the Authorized Representative of the Property Owner.

According to New York City officials, the city’s graffiti abatement crews will begin removal the week following the November 28, 2030, Thanksgiving holiday.

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PPPP TIMELINE

2011 “The Public Private Partnership Program was originally formed as Bloomberg Urban Management in 2011, when a group of investors coalesced under the leadership of Director Emeritus Michael R. Bloomberg to form a partnership committed to offering rationale solutions to the urban problems of the 21st century.”

2016 “By 2016 the Public Private Partnership Program had signed contracts to manage 9 cities worldwide.”

2021 “On May 21st 2021 the Public Private Partnership Program signed the first Currency Support Structure and Stabilization treaty with the United States Government. The Program’s consortium of investors agreed to forfeit their dollar holdings, in exchange for the right to issue legal tender in the three American cities managed by the PPPP. The forfeited dollar holdings were promptly destroyed by the US Government, and this rational method of reducing the number of dollars in existence without reducing the number of dollars circulating to facilitate everyday exchange has been credited with ending the dollar inflation crisis which began in 2019, while simultaneously avoiding any overall contraction within the global economy.”

2021 “The first Public Private Partnership Program Note was printed in New York City on May 27th 2021. The original Program-Note is on display in Michael R. Bloomberg’s personal Mausoleum on the top eleven floors of the Empire State Building.”

2023 “The Public Private Partnership Program acquired ADVRSPPK in 2023 and quickly began to expand and develop the new language. A flood of investment from corporations seeking to have their brand names promoted through ADVRSPPK brought an abundance of foreign exchange into the territories managed by the Program, thus dramatically increasing the treasury holdings of the Program and greatly increasing the value of the Program Note.”

2027 “On June 8th 2027 the Program note achieved parity with the American Dollar. “The strength of currency brought about by investment in ADVRSPPK allowed the Program to negotiate a new round of Currency Support Structure and Stabilization Treaties with national and regional political entities across the globe.”

2027 “The PPPP now manages [102](#) number of cities and territories.”

ADVRSPK+PPPP

In constructing the world of ADVRSPPK and the Public Private Partnership Program, we are attempting to explore some contemporary trends and magnify them into the future. Among these trends are the blurring of the lines between public and private, a societal obsession with quantification and measurement, an abiding faith in technology which enables the perception of technological sophistication to confer validity, and the trend towards the commodification of all areas of life. The political structure of our future world is provided by the Public Private Partnership Program, an ever growing, borderless political entity, which thrives and expands based on its ability to issue legal tender. The economic and social framework is provided by ADVRSPPK, a language owned and developed by the PPPP, which pays participants to substitute brand names for nouns, adjectives and verbs, during everyday conversation. The result is a world of linguistic segregation, total surveillance, and complete commodification of even the most basic human interactions.

01 CONSUMABLES	02 TRANSPORTATION/ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT
FOOD	AIK
KROGER	HE-DSJ European Aeronautics
CVS/CO	Defence and Space Company EADS N.A.
WELLOGGS	BOEING
PIZZA HUT	LOCKHEED MARTIN
JOHNSON & JOHNSON	
TYSON FOODS	WATER (shipping companies)
	A. F. Moller-Mærsk Group
BEVERAGES	Mediterranean Shipping Company S.A.
SEABECKS	CEVA
NESTLE	Evergreen Marine
BUDWEISER	Herald of
COCA COLA	China Shipping Container Lines
NESTLE	COCA
	Nippon Yusen
APPAREL	LAND
WALMART	GENERAL MOTORS
TARGET	Daimler
GAP	MERCEDES
NIKE	TOYOTA
LEVI	FORD
ADIDAS	
03 FINANCE/INDUSTRY	ENERGY
BANK OF AMERICA	EXXONMOBIL [oil]
MERRILL LYNCH	CONOCOPHILLIPS [oil]
MORGAN STANLEY	ROYAL DUTCH SHELL [oil]
JISC	TOTAL [oil]
J.P. MORGAN Chase	CEBRON
GOLDMAN SACHS	GE
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ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND	
BNP PARIBAS	
	04 MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS
	DELL
	TIME WARNER
	VERIZON
	NTEL
	IBM
	NOKIA
	SONY
	AT&T
	GOOGLE
	DISNEY
	YAHOO
	AMAZON
	TIME
	MICROSOFT

REAL PROPERTY



by Catherine Ingraham

"Real property" is the western legal term for land, tenements (real estate) and corporeal hereditaments (substantial permanent objects inherited with land and houses). Other forms of property law, such as intellectual or personal property law, have been historically structured around real property law—as if they were slightly fallen forms, as if they had left the Eden of real property. "Black's Law Dictionary" defines property as "a singular and exclusive dominion, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe." And yet there is also law which strongly or weakly constricts rights to property. Real property is thus, "a relation among people with regard to things" that is enforceable by law or custom; in either case, enforceable by principles and rules of action related to the security of persons and property.

Corporeal property—land, houses—is "real" in a legal sense but also, philosophically, in a common sense. It belongs to a world of things that lie, with a certain indisputable comfort, on the real side of ancient disputations about what is real and what is not. The ideas that anchor such disputations are treated, from a legal standpoint, as somewhat less real than land and buildings, which are the most real of the billions of things owned. Trees, for example, are not as real as land, although they run with land. In property terms, trees are under a "stewardship" that is not unlike the guardianship of children. Such a view of trees is an inhibitor to that deeper, more complex view we sometimes seek of landscapes, territories and habitats.

Over the millennia of fantastically subtle interpretations of human existence and its relation to the material world—which have given us property and its esoteric legal-judicial regulatory systems—there have been several notable misprisions and wrong turns. The early American enslavement of people, for example, required a definition of certain people as things that ran with the land or, more accurately, as things that were able to be propertied as land was propertied—alienable and transferable according to the laws which governed inherited land. Other kinds of people in that same era, such as white women, were chattel (personal property), but they were neither alienable nor inheritable.

Acting as a thing—even in our contemporary adapted state as subjects—is not easy nor, from the owner's point of view (slave owner or wife owner), does the power of ownership easily succeed in subduing life. Landowners were attracted to slavery because of the compelling prospect of investing in the reproductive capacity of human beings in order to plant them, like seeds of tobacco plants, in the land that they were being forced to work. This seemed to be, and was for a while, a eugenic fantasy of a self-generating workforce. Human life is an expensive form of life and people-as-property is always an endgame that kills the exact "things" upon which the system depends. But saying so does not mitigate its force in the formation of peoples or nations.

The principles of real property, and property in general, include an expansionist tendency that contradicts the tight exclusivity of property's domain. In this view, property is agency; property desires the neighbors' property and wants to property, if possible, everything from people to languages to architecture to rivers. Real property, in particular, keeps the courts highly entertained—families murderous around inheritances, real estate and mortgage crises, historic preservation cases, eminent domain claims, disputed international territories, ownership of wildernesses. This is why Gabriel Garcia Márquez calls the history of property an epic "human adventure" that should not be taught in the "arid afternoons" of political theory. If property is arguably the most powerful character in these adventures, we see how, as García Márquez suggests, it properly belongs to the richly imagined worlds of literature and poetry.

by John Cantwell

Since its creation nearly a decade ago, Second Life, the hugely successful massively multiplayer online game from Linden Labs, has spawned a thriving economy in which players buy and sell goods and services created within the game. With a GDP approaching that of a small island nation—The *New Scientist* estimates, conservatively, that Second Life's total economic activity approached \$600 million in 2009—Second Life has become something that would have seemed like science fiction not long ago: a virtual society with real-world financial implications.

Central to Second Life's economy is its booming real estate market, which thrives even as real-world real estate prices continue to slump. Just days ago an elaborate multi-dome complex of nightclubs created for the online world Entropia Universe sold for more than a half-million (real) dollars.

From 2001 until this past year, Second Life's terms of service were structured in a way that encouraged "Residents"—this is what Linden Labs calls Second Life players—to create content for the Second Life world: massive castles, exacting recreations of the world's major cities, scale recreations of space shuttles, anything you could imagine.

The thinking was that by allowing players to create their own content, Linden Labs was setting the framework for a much more immersive gaming experience, one that could otherwise only be built with a massive staff of programmers. In return for their efforts, Residents were given sole ownership of their creations. This transfer of ownership, from administrator to player, opened the floodgates for the markets that have come to shape Second Life. Skilled coders and designers began

hawking their wares—anything from furniture to prefabricated housing to virtual brothels—to Second Life's rapidly expanding usership.

Second Life businesses were opened, and Residents eagerly forked over their Linden Dollars, Second Life's virtual currency, which were then reconverted by retailers to real currency (Linden Dollars, or L\$, must be purchased with actual currency; the exchange rate is roughly L\$215 to \$1). Thus, a hybrid economy, both virtual and terrestrial, was born.

The value of goods and services on Second Life is largely determined by how Linden Labs prices space within the game. Since it is a virtual space, there is no natural physical limit on the area of land available in Second Life. Rather, scarcity is attached to server space. The more (rack)space a user consumes with their activity, the more money they pay.

Here's how it works: every object in Second Life is comprised of a building block called a Prim. Now here's the catch: the amount of land you own on Second Life determines the number of Prims that can be attached to your account. For instance, the smallest plot of land on Second Life can only accommodate 117 Prims. This makes efficiency a major consideration in design: a small house containing only 50 Prims is more valuable than a house of similar size containing 75 Prims. It also creates incentive to purchase more land.

The fact that real monetary value has been attached to the simple consumption of server space points to a different future for real estate: one in which virtual real estate becomes far more precious than real land. It's a transition already in process. Tech companies spend millions on vast server farms tucked out of site, while investment banks and hedge funds pay enormous premiums to use high-speed servers capable of shaving milliseconds off of transaction times.

Even as these changes occur, the legal efficacy of private virtual property remains uncertain. Linden Labs, perhaps realizing the immense value of the property it was squandering, altered its terms of service in 2009. Residents now hold a "limited license" when they purchase virtual property. In response, a series of class-action lawsuits was filed this spring, with plaintiffs claiming they were duped by Linden. In a post on the social media blog Mashable discussing the suit, several

commenters argued that the case simply highlights the difficulty of enforcing terms of service on websites. Another commenter offered a more direct thought: "Go outside."

READING THE REAL ESTATE SECTION—A GUIDE

by Brigette Borders & Minna Ninova

Real estate shopping in New York City is a lot like finding love—you know what you want, consider yourself worthy of something good and yet always wind up meeting promising prospects that turn out to be featureless sociopaths. After time, you begin to develop the hardened skin of a shrewd cynic who can smell a fake before you walk through the door. But you don't give up—you're a New Yorker. You get up, eat brunch and crack the *Times* once more. Herewith, a guide to decoding the seduction of the personals real estate listings.

COZY—Synonym for the more technical term, "teensy-weensy." A tour of the cozy apartment lasts approximately the time it takes to turn one's head from left to right. Width not guaranteed to exceed occupant's wingspan.

DOORMAN BUILDING—An apartment building whose residents happily pay 35% premiums for the convenience of being affected by city-wide doorman strikes. A must-have for aspiring patricians.

EAT-IN KITCHEN—This utilitarian kitchen's counter/prep station/wet bar will fold out to host you and one guest for a "petit" déjeuner.

EFFICIENCY KITCHEN—Often equipped with mini-fridge and powder-room sized sink, the essential amenity for New Yorkers who neither cook nor store food. Ideal for preparing Asian-fusion cuisine, such as ramen noodles.

FURNISHED—Ostensibly convenient for short-term renters who travel light; the cleanliness-concerned need not apply.

LOFT—An apartment style once popular with Manhattan's artistic elite, today's loft is any space larger than a cupboard that can be subdivided into three or more bedrooms by makeshift plywood walls. Bathrooms optional, leases improbable, sound insulation inconceivable. Highly prized as party locations in the borough of Brooklyn.

MINUTES FROM—Typically denotes any length of time between one and 59 minutes.

NEAR MAJOR TRANSPORTATION—See: MINUTES FROM.

PET-FRIENDLY—Fish welcome.

PRE-WAR—Housing style beloved for its detailing, generously proportioned rooms and tall ceilings. Fit for those with an aversion to embellishments like elevators or non-lead-based paint.

RENT CONTROLLED—To find one of these mythical gems, start with the obituaries; comparable to market-rate apartments almost anywhere else.

ROOF ACCESS—A eede-violation rooftop space accessible by one or more of the following: fire escape, ladder, drawbridge, trampoline or tall people. See also: TERRACE.

STUDIO—Sometimes synonymous with "art-space," this apartment-type speaks of a certain lifestyle—the lifestyle of having a bed next to a stove next to a toilet.

SUNNY—Includes at least one window.

TERRACE—1. A set of operable windows that will permit a smoke break for at least two people without risking defenestration. 2. A fire escape.

UP-AND-COMING NEIGHBORHOOD—This neighborhood might be trendy in ten years, doubling your value. Or it might not.

WALK-IN CLOSET—A closet. "Walking in" will be limited to small, thin children.

WALK-UP—Short for walk-up-walk-down-forget-phone-walk-back-up-walk-back-down-come-back-with-heavy-groceries-walk-up-curse-your-fate-lay-on-couch.

WASHER/DRYER—If you find one, don't think. Just sign on the dotted line.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Having witnessed the increasing fragility of the AMERICAN DREAM, the Temple Hoyne Buell Center at Columbia University envisions a potentially different future for American cities and suburbs in which URBAN TRANSFORMATION is stimulated by robust PUBLIC INVESTMENT in housing and related infrastructures. Recent research has identified PUBLICLY OWNED LAND in eight growing national Megaregions whose foreclosure rates, demographics, and economic and social indicators demonstrate a need for public housing. Currently slated for federal and local infrastructural investment, these sites constitute A NEW THRESHOLD OF POSSIBILITY in which a radical rethinking of public housing design, policy and public process could be tested. Challenging cultural assumptions concerning home ownership and associated settlement patterns, such as suburban sprawl, The Buell Center seeks to recast the notion of PUBLIC

as A COMMON GOOD,

thereby widening the current debates about the values and visions that DEFINE American culture and SHAPE its cities. An inspired alternative to the current relationship between land, housing, infrastructure and that which is considered public about our cities and suburbs must be found. Your future attention and participation are requested.

Dated the 19th day of November, 2010.

Temple Hoyne Buell Center
for the Study of American Architecture
Columbia University
Graduate School of Architecture,
Planning and Preservation



THE HUNT: PART II
Respondents arrived at the empty apartment where Carmen Argote grew up. Part A of "720 sq. ft.: Household Mutations" explored the home as a site of installation. Argote's artwork focused on the carpet that remained in the apartment. The well-worn tufted surface had accumulated a myriad of narratives, a trace of the stories left behind by the apartment's inhabitants and many visitors. The carpet's stains and tears served as a psychogeographic map that allowed the visitor to navigate his or her own personal memories of home while visiting what by all appearances was an average domestic interior.

A few years ago, a friend of mine wrote a little ditty about Bruce Ratner and Jay-Z:

Buy one, get one for free
If you need more, just follow me
To the sidewalk sale, sidewalk sale
We got bottled dreams, failproof schemes
Lots of other stuff you don't know you need
At the sidewalk sale, sidewalk sale

I was reminded of her song the other day when I took the bus to Brooklyn's Atlantic Center Mall, across the street from the hole in the ground that will one day be the Barclays Center. Groundbreaking for the project happened on March 11, 2010. So much organization, demonstration and emotion had gone in to preventing that day from happening; so much organization, calculation and presentation had gone in to making it happen. In the aftermath, what is there?

On my most recent visit, the first thing I noticed was that the sidewalks had in fact been sold, in the sense that they had disappeared. Pedestrians can no longer walk along the south side of Atlantic Avenue, as that side of the street has disappeared behind jersey barriers and a construction vehicle lane that extends from Flatbush past Sixth Avenue. The short section of Fifth Avenue that used to connect Park Slope

directly to the Atlantic Center Mall, without going all the way around the triangle at Atlantic and Flatbush, is gone, as is the Carlton Avenue bridge. The train cut, properly called the Vanderbilt Yard, was always a psychological moat. Now it is a physical one too.

On the Flatbush side of the point, the sidewalk has simply been halved, creating a tight corridor between the onrush of traffic and the high construction fence, all the way to Dean Street. The first block of Pacific, as promised, has disappeared. You can barely hear the excavation over the traffic and can't see it at all. If you loop around to Pacific on Dean, you find trash and stick-like trees, and a general sense of neglect. No one cares about this street anymore.

The loss of sidewalk is supplanted, though, by an even more significant disappearing act: Atlantic Yards, a name that located the project, has vanished as well. It was the brand for Frank Gehry's design; now the sponsor, the British financial services firm Barclays, is the headliner. Like Madison Square Garden, which hasn't been on Madison since 1924, Barclays Center is a name designed for TV, for overhead blimp shots of the "helmet," which the new arena design clearly resembles. There's nothing remotely Brooklyn about it; as of May, Russian Mikhail Prokhorov now owns 45 percent of the arena development and 80 percent of the Barclays Center's future tenants, the New Jersey Nets.

Rolling up the sidewalks and changing the name are the final steps of Phase 1 in the development process. Developer

Forest City Ratner has succeeded in alienating these blocks of Brooklyn from the rest of the borough. From the beginning, the project's press releases and largely positive press coverage in the *New York Times* played with the location and the condition of the railyards, calling them "Downtown Brooklyn" to naturalize the height of Gehry's Miss Brooklyn tower and invoking the threat of eminent domain to argue that they would be saving a blighted area.

Everything possible was done to ignore the real context, the adjacent neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Prospect Heights, which look better today than they did in 2003. Even now, when the buildings on Pacific and the north side of Dean have been reduced to dust—the block between Vanderbilt and Carlton looks like the photographs of selective demolition in Detroit—the charms of Prospect Heights are undiminished. Carlton Avenue offers an almost unbroken brownstone, tree-lined street front right up to the drop-off at Dean. The corner of Vanderbilt overlooking the yard has a new-ish restaurant, Cornelius (ha!), with a façade reading "meat" "whisky" "oysters," all served, I am sure, with a side dish of retro facial hair. Up and down Dean, new condominiums and renovated industrial buildings announce themselves with Neutraface numbers.

Across the street, it is a different story. Phase 2 has begun in what was once a neighborhood and is now a non-place. There's no way to cross from known world to known world without going all the way around the point, or further south on Atlantic Avenue. Ratner and company have succeeded

in removing the railyard and adjacent blocks from our mental maps, for the interim, because there is nothing to see there.

The latest double-edged move is Forest City Ratner's participation in the city's Urban Canvas program, which was organized by the NYC Departments of Buildings and Cultural Affairs and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation through the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. The project wraps the Atlantic Avenue side of the site in a mesh screen designed by Mauricio Lopez. I love the Op-Art design and Urban Canvas's goal of beautifying construction sites, but it has double meaning deployed here. It is artsy, just like the original choice of Gehry, and has the latent suggestion that it is a gift to the neighborhood. But the graphic appeal shouldn't distract us from the urban implications of a 228-foot, multi-year construction fence. In September, before Urban Canvas was installed, my brother, a professional photographer, was even asked not to take photographs of the site from the Ratner-owned mall across the street. Now it seems like photos are OK, as long as they are of the art and not the work.

If you just moved to the area, the arena might sound like a good idea—anything would be better than this. What was everyone fighting so hard to save? In the meantime, the rest of us hurry by on the little sidewalk we have left.

Color Mesh by Mauricio Lopez
Photo ©2010 Jesse Ross





As told to Daniel Payne

I'm the most terrifying word in New York. Maybe you just call me the "B-word." Whatever works for you. Meanwhile, I'm in your sheets, hiding in books or maybe crawling all over your nice wood furniture. And I'm not alone. I've brought a few thousand members of my family. Brothers and sisters. Cousins. We're not a problem. We're an infestation.

What can you do to stop us? Get paranoid. Make sure every guest takes a hot shower before they come over. Ask where they've been today. Not that it'll help. I'm sneaky, resilient and resourceful. I've personally traveled across continents tucked into beards and knit caps. I saw most of Eastern Europe that way, with that band, um, Deer-something. I've seen you try to use those newfangled technologies—there's that one website called Bedbug Registry...yeah, I know what a website is. Trust me, you can't track us. Log on and search, but while you're doing that, I'm busy breeding. Come back to bed, sweetie!

I see you're scared. Every time I see someone hesitate before grabbing a piece of furniture off the sidewalk, think about it, then walk away. I know: we're winning. No more can you decorate your apartments with fashionable furniture from yesteryear. That brown velour couch? I'd think twice, friend. And don't get me started on the damage we've done in second-hand stores. Take that, Salvation Army!

"Small package, big punch." That's the bedbug motto. You can't even see us, but we still send you scurrying. We don't even need our best swarming tactics at this point. My uncle Willie wandered off alone and got lost at the J.Crew building a few weeks back. In minutes you people are sending emails, calling up

experts begging for help. And if you'd known Willie like we do, you'd know he's so worthless that we don't let him open up dinner, much less close down an entire building. The guy's got a brain like a mite!

Brutus. What's that sticking out of your back, my enormous insect friend? It's a little knife, driven through that exoskeleton by me and a few thousand pals.

table (he ate like a pig). Not just like seeing Billie on that mesmerizing night at the Apollo in 1935—which was awesome. I almost wept.

I'm talking waayy back. You don't have any New York cred over me. You know I'm there in those Jacob Riis snaps, just out of sight. In those Tammany Hall days, with all those punk gangs and their stupid striped pants, that was like the Wu for me. We created an Empire that stretched generations. Yeah you panty-waist hipsters and flyweight urban explorers, you think you know me. You don't know me. If you were half as scrappy and street as you check, we'd be friends. Just not washing your hair for a week isn't gonna do it. You know the old saying, "Everybody hates a tourist?" Sing it brother.

As a vector I'm not a huge deal. It's the life of the mind that interests me—I'm always there for you. You flip on the light and see me for a split second. That just ruined your night, right? You think you wipe down the CaesarStone pretty good, but you have this blind spot in that little bridge, right between the dish rack and the sink. You never get to it, and there's always grease, and that's the good stuff. You know what, I'm going to take the long way around next time and cruise right over the fresh scrub-up in the rack next time. You would not believe what gets caught in those little spines on my tarsus. You'd howl.

The good news for us is that although everyone thinks we're getting scarce—that like you, I swallowed the Hope pill, got complacent and just checked out. No way, the word is out—the tide is turning, and this middle class thing is dying fast. I'm your statistician—you can map me right to where the economy sucks hardest. I'm your conscience, and you can sweep this all out of sight, but it doesn't stay there. The deal is: I'm where you are—if you're poor. And this income gap is just getting wider. I'm a Tea Partier! The future is briiiiight. You're looking at the once and future king.

So big up to Boehner and the new crew. We are gonna bond. Yeah, you don't gotta thank me. Thank them.

BATTLE FOR INSECT KING OF NEW YORK



As told to Alan Rapp

Well, this is awkward. I didn't want to pull this one out, but it seems like there's some unbelievers—even haters—out there. It's absurd that I have to say this, but: I was there.

Not just there like at CBGB in '77 (but I was there). Not just there at the Cedar Tavern in '52 (definitely there), easily intercepting the propitious morsels that fell underneath Jackson's

But we can't fault him for wanting to get out and about. There's so much to do in New York. Those new seats in your movie theaters are great places to hang out for a few days and meet new people. Wasn't "Avatar" great? It kind of reminded me of what we could be if us bugs could really mate with you humans. Our best researchers are working on the possibilities now; we'd love to increase our lifespan, and all you people are living so long now.

Speaking of which: sure, my cockroach friends might be able to survive nuclear Armageddon. And, yes, you almost did us in with DDT last century; our elder generations ran the Bowery before they nearly disappeared altogether. But when you people figured out that you were killing yourselves in the process—not to mention that ugly bird you guys call a beloved national symbol—the comeback was on. My ancestors spent years in foreign training camps building resistance to your so-called repellents. Now we're back to stay.

Listen, everyone's reign of terror has to end sometime. Cockroach, you had a good run, sending a lot of wide-eyed transients packing up their apartments, but every Caesar has his

by Cassim Shepard

Whether you want to live green or you're just plain broke, the new environmental and economic imperative is to make do with less. In real estate, this usually means make do with less space. Sure, there are other ways to save money on property: expect fewer amenities or live in a less desirable neighborhood. But the amount of space still drives price and determines what we consider, in legal terms, to be habitable. With fewer and fewer people able to find homes that conform to the legal standard of habitability, more and more are forced to live outside of it.

In New York, the Tenement Law of 1901 and the Multiple Dwelling Law of 1929 set minimum standards for space, light and air in an effort to protect the vulnerable against the squalid conditions typified in Jacob Riis' 1890 photographic crusade to document—and reform—"How the Other Half Lives." If Riis were to photograph the other half today, the poverty he'd find would be a lot less clustered and would probably be in unexpected places. He might find a group of impoverished immigrants in an illegal basement conversion on a nice tree-lined street in suburban Queens or sweatshop conditions in space intended to house the back-office operations of a multinational company. In other words, he'd have a tougher time identifying and illuminating any uniformity, much less spatial agglomeration, to the conditions of extreme poverty.

While the "real" in real estate refers to permanence and fixity, living in the contemporary metropolis is anything but sedentary. It's a migratory practice that often requires new forms of mobility and new ways of decoupling practices—like working or sleeping or cooking—from the spaces in which they are traditionally located—the office, apartment or private kitchen. Further, a tide of entrepreneurial innovations, from ZipCar's ridesharing to Lulu's print-on-demand publishing and the variety of experiments in co-working, base their business models around similar economic and societal shifts from hard goods to intangible services, from stocked inventories to nimble production lines, from owning to sharing.

When we think of sharing in the context of the residential real estate market, the image conjured is more likely to be of a timeshare in Bermuda than a basement in Queens. Nonetheless, contemporary practices among itinerant, impoverished and often undocumented newcomers to New York have more in common than we might expect with the networked sharing platforms popular with people on the opposite side of the digital divide.

Want to **SELL** your Timeshare or Condo? [Click Here](#)

- Do you own a Timeshare?
- Need cash for your Timeshare?
- Tired of paying maintenance fees for something you don't use?

LEARN MORE

We will sell or rent your Timeshare for cash **GUARANTEED!**

There is absolutely **NO OBLIGATION!**

CLICK BELOW NOW to take advantage of this great offer!

LEARN MORE

When I moved into my current apartment, I decided to rent a van and could have used some help, but all of my friends were mysteriously unavailable that weekend. Enter a young Ecuadorian who lurks—when he has a day off from his back-of-house restaurant job in Manhattan—among a crowd of young men in front of a U-haul rental facility in Brooklyn, looking for a couple hours of moving work from people like me. We became fast friends, and like so many conversations in New York, our talk soon turned to real estate. When he learned how much I was to pay for my new apartment—which I thought was a pretty good deal, by the way—he thought I was getting ripped off. I asked him his strategy for finding a cheap place to live. "Simple," he said, "share."

I soon found out, though, that he wasn't talking about room-mates or a live-in lover. He was talking about paying for the use of the room he sleeps in for precisely the number of hours he is there. An acquaintance of his who works the dayshift uses the room the other half of the day. On submarines, they call this "hot-bunking"—assigning more than one soldier to the same bunk, to be used in rotation—a term that has slipped into some recent analyses of undocumented immigrants and urban poverty. Both my new friend and his acquaintance seem to find this arrangement preferable to dividing up the room, bunking their beds or coming up with some other spatial solution to a problem they deemed solvable through scheduling and logistics. After all, "in this city," my new friend told me with a shrug, "work is 24 hours a day." These guys had opted into this arrangement, though it's not hard to imagine an unscrupulous landlord, not to mention a people-smuggler, introducing various forms of exploitation or neglecting basic safety in a system such as this. Still, the practice may be on the rise.

Also on the rise is the more visible practice of illegally subdividing housing space. According to Seema Agnani, executive director of Chhaya Community Development Corporation, which works on the housing needs of new immigrants in Queens, almost 40% of the new housing units created in New York between 1990 and 2005 were illegal. Some of these units are illegal because they are unsafe, others because they don't conform to zoning regulations—such as when two families live in a single family home—and others because three or more unrelated adults are sharing the same unit. I wonder how these statistics would change if we had a more accurate picture of the full range of ways people are sharing space, if the facts counted the number of people forced into illegal housing situations rather than the number of illegal units.

When it comes to understanding the contemporary city, should we be talking about space? Or about what people do with it?

OF TIMESHARES AND TENEMENTS



THE HUNT: PART III
Part B of "720 sq. ft: Household Mutations" continued at the downtown Los Angeles gallery g727. Here, Argote reinstalled the carpet into a new conceptual and physical context. Extracted from the apartment, the carpet retained the outline of the plan. Repositioned as an artifact in the gallery, the carpet transcended its role as quotidian horizontal surface. Now hung partially vertically, the brown and white abstract plane transformed into an isolated, dynamic visual element that evoked the structural nature of the object while retaining the psychology of the domestic space.

WHO MAKES THE RENT?

A tale about how the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) makes decisions about rent-stabilized housing in New York City.

If you live in an apartment building with six or more units that was built before 1974, you are probably rent-stabilized. Some buildings built after 1974 are also rent-stabilized because they receive tax abatements from the city. There are 3 million apartments in New York City, 1 million of them are rent-regulated apartments. To find out more about who makes decisions about NYC's rent-stabilized apartments, follow this 'tail' over the next few pages...

"The mayor appoints the members of the RGB—alone. So the board is going to reflect the mayor's vision. If we had a mayor that was more attuned to tenant conditions, I think we'd have a more balanced board..." One mayor may go in one direction, another mayor may go in another direction."
—Tim Collins, Former RGB Director

"Members of the RGB must have experience in finance, economics, and housing. The chair or the Rent Guidelines Board, Marvin Markus, works at Goldman Sachs."
—Magda Cruz, Lawyer & Owner Rep on the RGB

"Each year, the reports published by the RGB make it appear as if there are some skyrocketing costs that warrant rent increases. Some years it's the price of water or property taxes."
—Mike McKee, Tenant Advocate

"Owners file reports about their expenses every year. Owners should have nothing to hide, if you're breaking even or you're not."
—Jacky Monterosso, Rent Stabilization Association

"Of every dollar collected, 62 cents goes back into operating costs, that leaves 38 cents for the owner. The political question that's interesting is should we keep that ratio steady?"
—Tim Collins, Former RGB Director

"The Real Estate Lobby spends \$2-3 million every election cycle in the campaign contributions. What we do by way of money is peanuts compared to them. But we have something that landlords don't—and that's volunteers."
—Mike McKee, Tenant Advocate

"We've started doing a little bit of advertising. We just try get the message out that every owner is not a bad owner. There are bad tenants and bad owners, each side gets a bad rap."
—Jacky Monterosso, Rent Stabilization Association

"Public protest has 0% influence on the final vote. Civility is definitely valued. If the final meeting were more calm, we'd be more likely to listen."
—Magda Cruz, Lawyer & Owner Rep on the RGB

"We are using the RGB because they passed a resolution that penalizes the poorest of tenants. We believe they overstepped their authority by treating some tenants differently from others."
—Gili Dadani,

Once upon a time... there was a city of birds. It was a great city and more and more birds moved there. It grew and grew.

Soon, the birds had trouble finding nests. There just weren't enough of them, and the ones that were available were too expensive for most of the birds. The city was in sorry shape.

The mayor of Bird City created a guardian to make sure there were enough nests for the birds, and that they could afford to live in them too. He decided to name this beast the Rent Guidelines Board and gave it 9 heads.

2 to represent landlord birds
5 to represent the general public
2 to represent birds that rented nests

Every year, the RGBeast must decide how much the landlord birds can raise the rent on nests. How does the RGBeast do it?

We research and write reports.
We try to understand what tenant birds can afford...
We look at economic conditions in Bird City.
...and what landlord birds must pay to keep the nests operating.

The RGBeast also invites experts to give their opinion. Some experts come from landlord groups. Some come from landlord groups. Others are city officials.

Alone: by invite only, please

Advocates and lobbyists work with the birds represent to accomplish a number of things.

Hey TEAM! We're going to try get support from public officials, try make new laws, and prepare public testimonials for the RGBeast to hear.

The birds tell their stories to the RGBeast at a public hearing, where many other birds listen in.

Then the RGBeast makes a final decision about whether the rents for nests should increase or stay at the same level.

4% rent hike

(This gets LOUD!)

If the RGBeast makes a decision that lots of birds disagree with, they can protest the decision or bring it to court.

This tail happens again and again every single year!

WHAT would your RGB beast look like?

WHO would get to create it?

by Elizabeth Lasater & Zoe Malliaros

Undertaking an analysis of the New York Times Real Estate section, we diagrammed different kinds of content in both the newsprint and online editions and compared published data to information found from governmental sources. Our findings include:

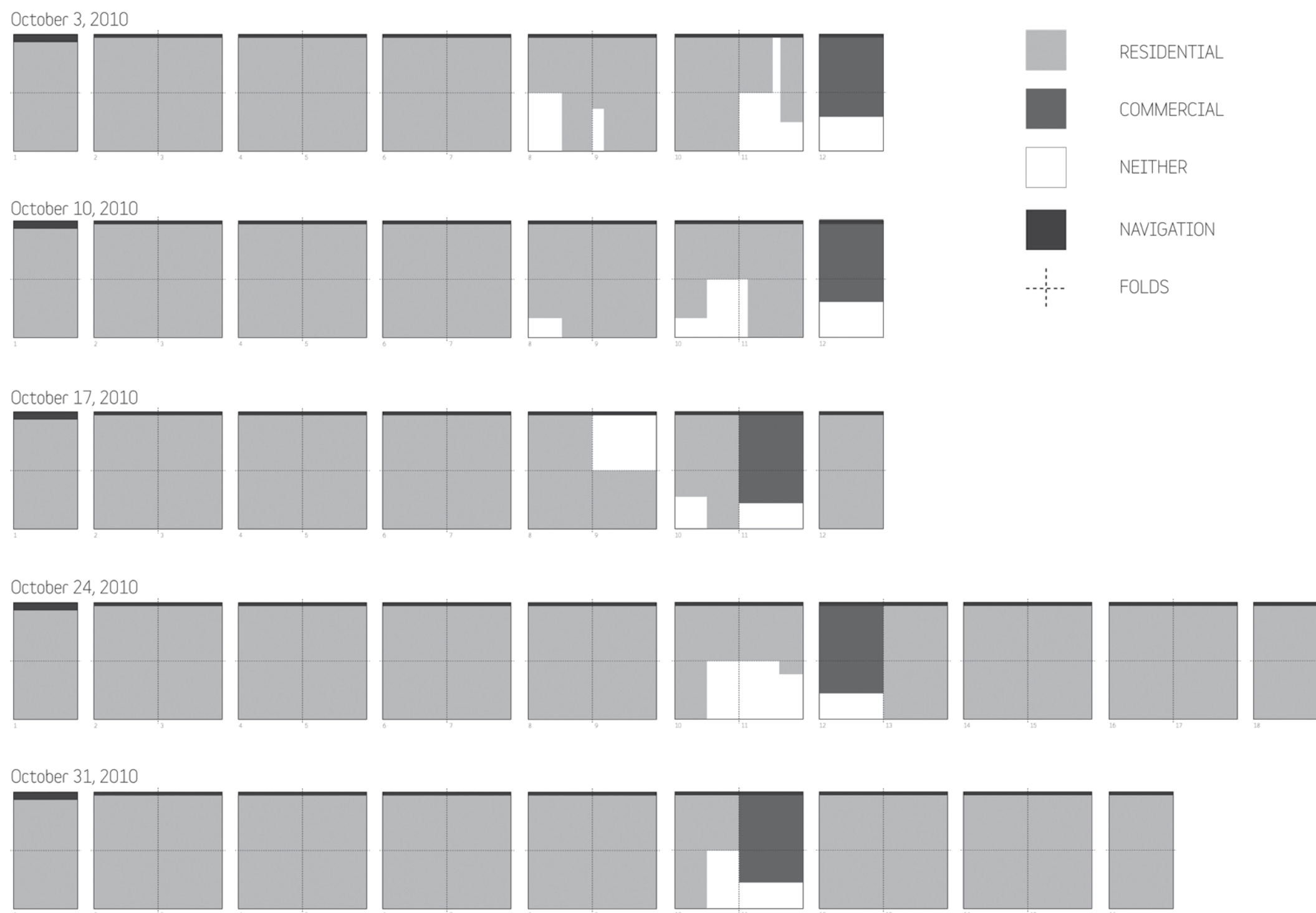
--In both editorial content and listings, the section is weighted heavily toward residential property to the almost total exclusion of commercial.

--The "Sales Around the Region" feature is skewed toward lower priced properties. The "snapshots" provided are significantly below average and median--thus favoring the lower end of the market despite representing fewer actual sales.

--Conversely, the prevalence of advertising copy that connotes affluence, especially "luxury," renders these lifestyle concepts meaningless.

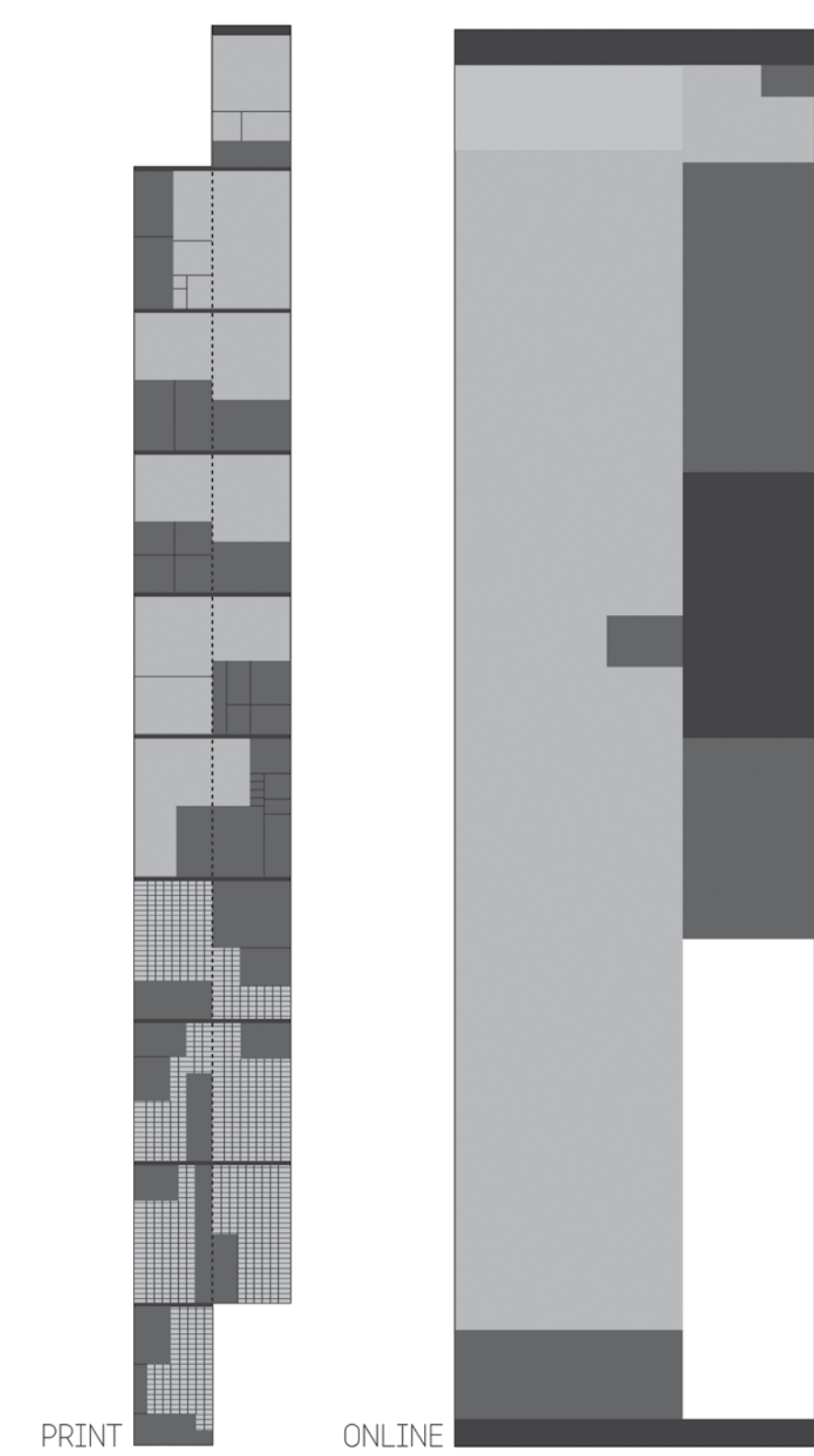
Residential Versus Commercial Content, New York Times Print Real Estate Section

The New York Times print Real Estate sections for the month of September 2010 show a pattern of content heavily weighted toward residential journalism, advertisements and classified listings. In a city where renters occupy 66% of units, residential real estate is a dream out of reach for most. But even in the worst of times for the real estate market, these fantasies still fuel a steady stream of articles and ads, implying that reader interaction is primarily for wish-fulfillment and vicarious enjoyment.



New York Times Real Estate Section, Sunday, October 24, 2010

The real estate section as manifest in a printed newspaper versus its digital counterpart expresses very different structures, reflecting an evolution in how we value and interact with its contents--journalism, classifieds and advertisements. Of these, perhaps the most radically divorced from its traditional format and nature is the classified real estate listing. The printed listings at the end of the traditional newsprint section, tightly coded and succinct due to its own cramped real estate on the physical page, are replaced in the online edition by an immediately visible search bar which offers quick, tailored access to thousands of listings, images, descriptions and contact information.



LUXURYSTYLE



LUXURY: UP TO 6,000 SF ULTIMATE MAGNIFICENT STYLE: OVER 50,000 SF OF ELEGANT STYLISH



ULTIMATE MAGNIFICENT ELEGANT BEST CHOICE

Luxury From \$895,000 to \$1,750,000

Elegant Ultimate from \$290,000

CHOICE BEST

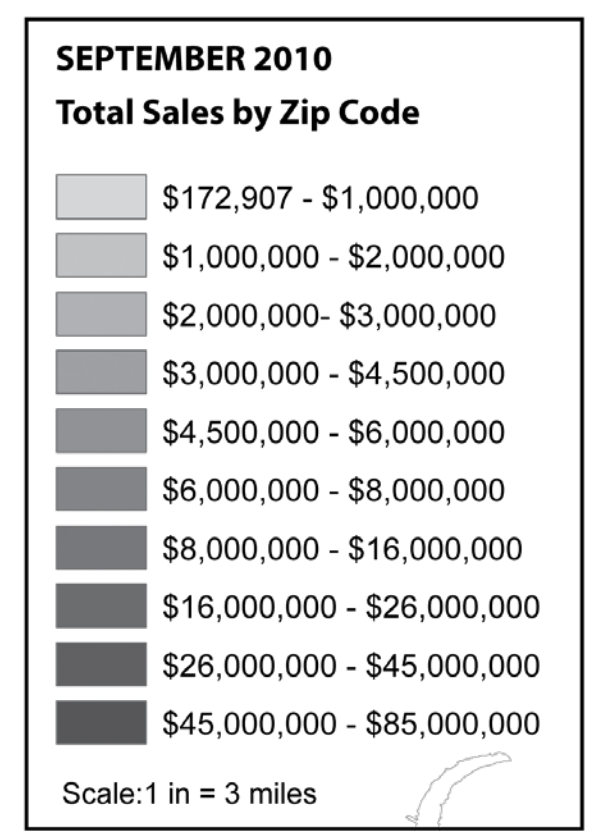
Ultimate Magnificent

201.716.3000

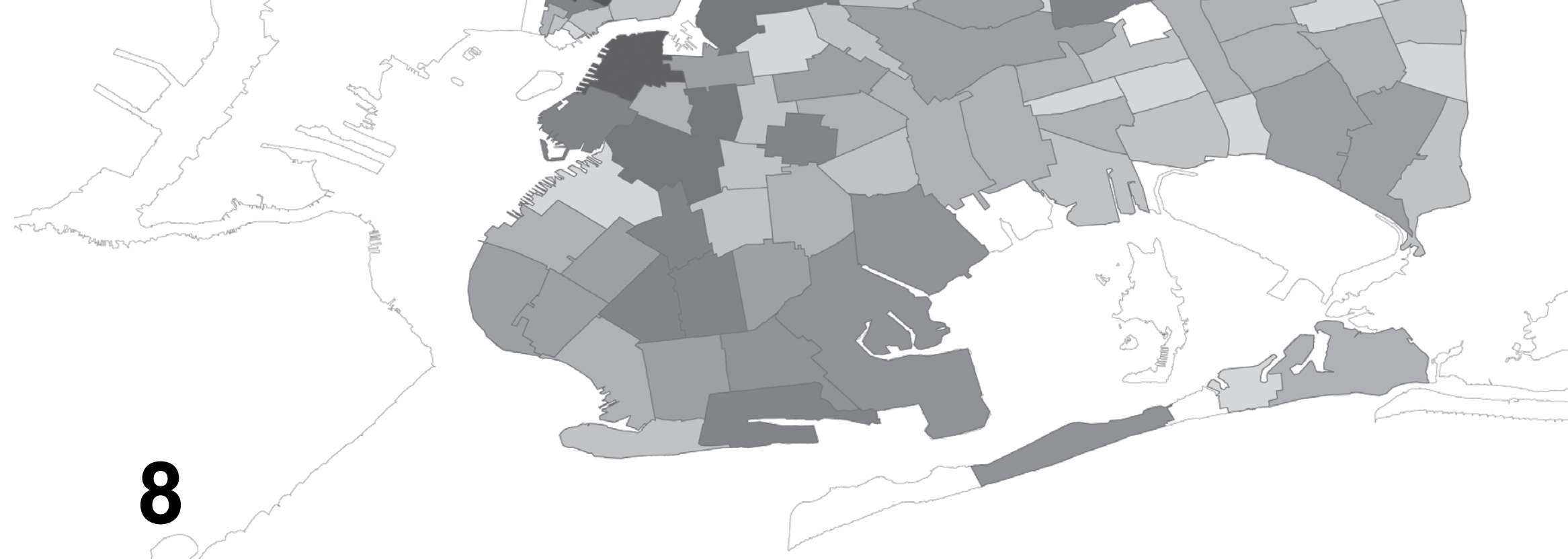
ELEGANT BEST:

STYLISH LUXURY ULTIMATE ELEGANT MAGNIFICENT CHOICE BEST STYLISH LUXURY ULTIMATE

ALL THE LISTINGS FIT TO PRINT



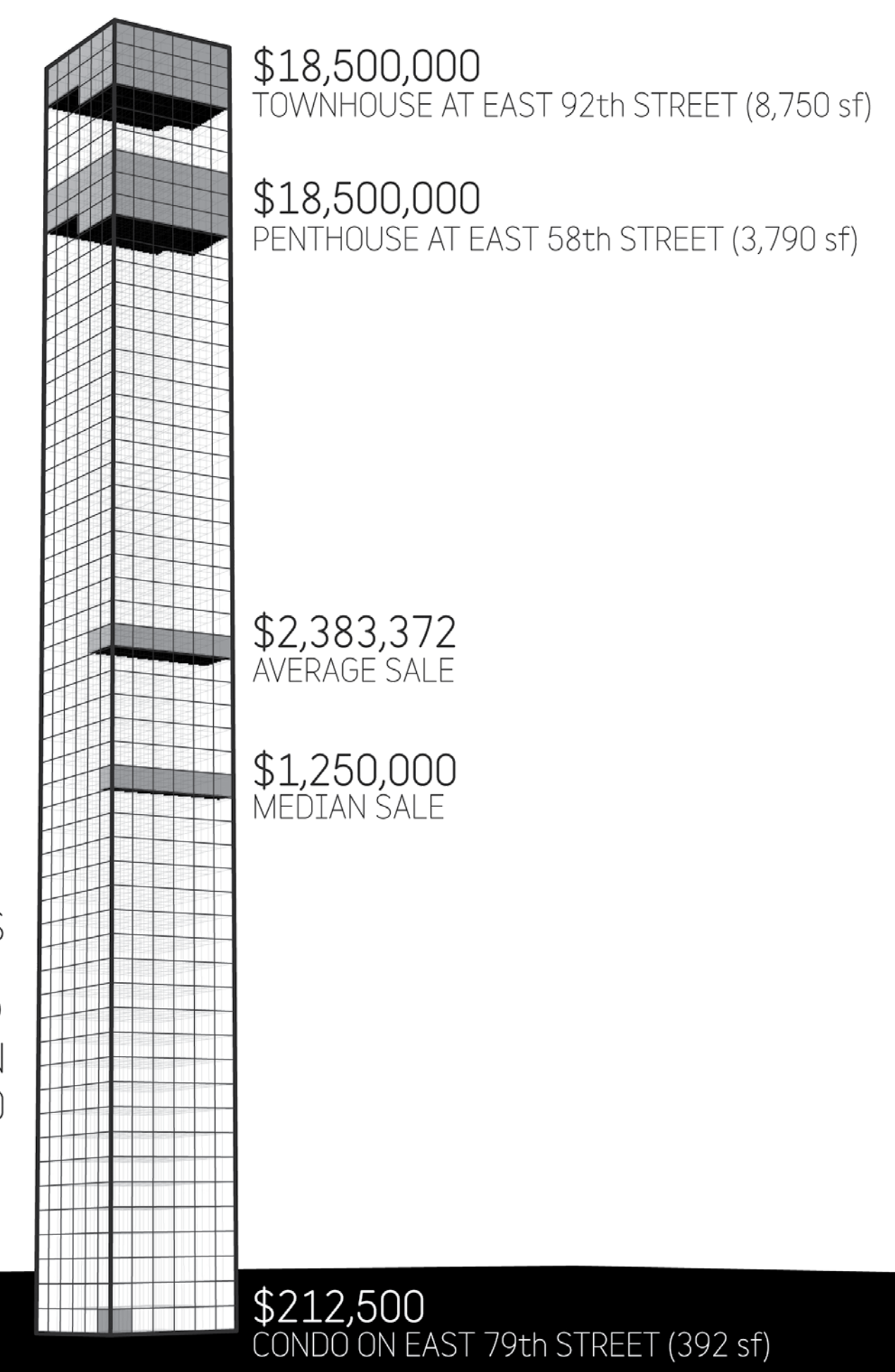
Data Source: NYC Rolling Sales, nyc.gov



Sales data by ZIP code for residential properties in New York City highlights the concentrated areas of higher price transactions in lower and central Manhattan. The data, while unsurprising in its concentration, reveals extreme disparities, with Manhattan's 10013 ZIP generating over \$81 million in sales in a month, while several others generated less than \$175,000.

Two extremes: expensive and tiny. \$212,500 may look like a bargain next to the \$18.5 million price tags in Manhattan this month, as seen in a recent sales snapshot. Yet compare this sale--for under 400 square feet--to the median sale price for all homes in the United States during a similar time frame--approximately \$160,000.

206 RESIDENTIAL SALES
\$402,789,858
MANHATTAN
OCTOBER 2010



Reinterpretations of advertisements printed in the New York Times Real Estate section on Sunday, October 24, 2010.

Above
The desperate repetition of the word "luxury" to market residential real estate renders the word meaningless and unsavory. Other adjectives such as "stylish," "elegant," "ultimate," "choice" and "magnificent" suffer from the same prodigal overuse in real estate sales copy. This erosion of meaning renders the advertisements more and more nonsensical, a pattern our version fulfills to the absurdly exploitative extreme.

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Given that the average residential real estate sale in Manhattan last month was \$1.2 million, most people engage with the New York Times Real Estate section as fantasy rather than as a real shopping aid. Playing with the "iPhone App" trope, this re-imagined advertisement reveals the subtext of the purported use and intentions of real estate apps.

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This re-envisioned ad conflates a print advertisement for the New York Times Real Estate Classified section with the campaign slogans of the recent New York gubernatorial candidate Jimmy McMillan of The Rent Is Too Damn High party.