

in having attended the conference, reveals his continuing commitment to the ambitions of 1956: to create complex networks of urban form and place that facilitate human interaction and produce delight.⁷ Barnett contrasts 1956 with 2006 in terms of the comparative weight placed today on what are for him the three essential responsibilities of urban design: environmental stewardship, enhancing the public realm, and facilitating sociability.

The third group of essays lays out roles and categories of engagement for the practitioners of urban design. Both Joan Busquets's and my own essay emphasize distinct fields of action or what I refer to as the many territories of urban design.⁸ While the categories and emphases that constitute Busquets's and my lists differ, the overriding message of each is that there are many vital roles for the urban designer to assume. Taking a different approach to the span of urban design, Richard Sommer outlines and critiques the key twentieth-century intellectual traditions related to urban design, laments the relative current inattention to theory in contemporary practice, and demands more rigorous theoretical underpinnings for current and future practitioners.⁹

The fourth group of essays, led by Michael Sorkin's audacious assertion that urban design is at a "dead end," presents some of the competing sensibilities at work today. Sorkin cites examples of what he considers banal strategies catering to low common denominators, false evocations of bygone eras of good urbanism, and the predominance of market-driven rather than civically inspired objectives. He takes particular aim at the New Urbanists, who represent for him the arrested state of contemporary mainstream practice.

Emily Talen, in a direct rebuttal of Sorkin, sees his critique as characteristic of the misplaced faith in innovation and novelty among architects and finds his disdain for time-honored urban conventions irresponsible. Her critique is harsh insofar as Sorkin's call for innovation strongly supports environmental stewardship, an objective that the New Urbanists cannot (but in practices sometimes do) ignore. But she rightly argues, as does Peter Rowe in the final group of essays, that disdaining convention is antiurban, the Achilles heel of the midcentury Modernists, whose concern for improving cities and city life was ultimately compromised by their self-defeating sidelining of history and context.¹⁰

The Dutch duo of Michelle Provoost and Wouter Vanstiphout say the heck with both marketplace conformists (for them the traditional-