

which through subsequent translation become integrated in other ideas and incidents. They put great stock in the integration of meaning through “fields of reference” and “textures” of symbol and allusion. Colin Rowe, Oswald Mathias Ungers, and their cohorts at the architecture school adapted the contextualist philosophical model and its critique of positivism, which they associated with Modernist architecture and planning, to a mode of urban design.⁸ Rowe’s mature ideas on urbanism were collected in *Collage City*, written with Fred Koetter. Ungers’s ideas can be best gleaned from the projects he produced during these years and by the alumni of his office, Rem Koolhaas among them. In the 1960s, Ungers brought new attention to the architecture of Russian Constructivism from the 1920s. He helped usher in a Postmodern urbanism by revisiting Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s typological experiments, rescaling the typical Berlin perimeter block, redressing it in an abstract, cubic aesthetic, and reconfiguring its program as a concentration of functions that would allow it to perform as a city-in-miniature. If planning was impossible, the city could be rebuilt as a series of archipelagos. OMA’s emergence is impossible to understand without this formulation. Ungers’s ideas bridge two of urban design’s three main phases of development since the mid-twentieth century and, by way of Koolhaas, anticipate the third.

Urban Design I: Shoring Up the Center

In urban design’s first major phase, from the 1950s to the late 1960s, the organizing principle in the rebuilding of the decaying city center was a revision of the language and technical capacities of Modern architecture away from their radical application in the Radiant City of Le Corbusier and the Zeilenbau housing of Hilberseimer. For these first-generation urban designers, Modern architecture was fine at the scale of a building, but the old cities, as the proper seat of high culture, had to be rebuilt with an eye to retrieving historic patterns. In the place of the Radiant City they essentially redeployed Garden City compositions with a more muscular character and larger dimensions. Edmund’s Bacon’s work on Philadelphia from 1949 to 1969 represents perhaps the fullest expression of urban design as an attempt to shore up the center and exemplifies the range of urban design’s earliest strategies.

Later, this notion of shoehorning Modern architecture back into a preindustrial frame was given a more theoretical pitch in a series of