

much more a site of collagelike invention than the ground plan. In a city that is built project by project, the figuration of the plan is limited to the shape of the given parcel, but the section is free to figure.

Unfortunately, much of Koolhaas's urban research after *Delirious New York* has consisted of vaguely colonialist slumming in exotic locales in search of more extreme cultures of congestion. (His much-hyped reflection on "Junk Space" followed by more than a quarter century a more intellectually compelling meditation on the aesthetic qualities of trash and ordinary landscapes by American writers including Donald Barthelme, William Gass, and Stanley Elkin.) Not that there is not something compelling about looking to love the city "in all the wrong places," but again, as with Venturi and Scott Brown's flirtation with Las Vegas and Levittown, there could be little development of these themes in practices limited to commissioned buildings and planning studies. Many OMA alumni follow the same path, marketing themselves as the vanguard of urban research but instead making architectural projects that try to stand in (often quite nicely) for a larger idea about the city. Meanwhile, "datascape" notwithstanding, it is doubtful that a new urban strategy has really emerged from this camp since OMA's scheme for La Villette. A groundbreaking project twenty-five years ago, La Villette revisited the horizontal linear cities of Nikolai Miliutin and Ivan Leonidov (which are intriguingly redolent of Dutch polders) crosscutting their stripes to form a loose plaid of programs, with a menu of "event-architectures" (vide Bernard Tschumi) sprinkled upon important intersections to activate the whole. Much of the work in the OMA mold has adopted the Russian Constructivist notion of the "social condenser," which was to include workers' clubs, housing and, most critically, the city as a general field of activity, and applied it, under the banner of a "culture of congestion," to other, less ideologically driven programs, yet without the utopian urban field.¹³

To be fair—and give credit where it is due—Koolhaas has raised the prospect of "big" urbanism and helped increase interest in empirical investigations of everyday forms of architecture. Perhaps he had a Dutchman's sense for the artificiality of the constructed landscape, but it is clear that, again, following Russian formalism, he has pursued de-familiarization as a planning instrument, seeking a surrealism of the ordinary. Yet hasn't this all been too blithely copyrighted in the OMA formula: *Dérive* + *Happening* + Container = Urbanism? The ingredients are all of 1960s vintage: follow a post-1968 penchant