

modern city's vast, often single-purpose infrastructures. Germany's vast Emscher Park is an early and ongoing example of a project that takes on this agenda. Lurking behind landscape urbanism's appropriation of the discarded, disused, and undervalued landscapes and infrastructures of the postindustrial city lies a tacit hope that perhaps these spaces will provide an opportunity for a renewed architecture of public life. Yet I do not think that for urban design to have a political dimension, it can or should reify what the public is or where it appears.

### **The New City Does Not Have a Patron**

My appeal for urban design to renew itself by developing a theory capable of construing the city beyond the strictures of the discreet project will certainly provoke the following chorus: the architect and urban designer may only pursue such work as clients provide, and society, as such, cannot be a client. This despite the fact that after Romanticism, almost all forms of art in society—literature, painting, and music among them—have found ways to evade direct control by a system of patronage and pursue their own publics. Urban design must cultivate new publics as well: the weak, powerful, popular, highbrow, and all in between. If not the city's most omnipotent patron, the developer will continue to define urban design as a practice. This has most often meant the design of spaces and amenities that sit between discreet properties for sale or lease, reflecting a division between the access grid and dwelling-for-sale that is a simple fact of the real-estate system. By accepting this reality, the professional apparatus of urban design has been able to draw little sustenance from the aforementioned theorists, let alone renew itself, and has thus been too often reduced to trying to make a silk purse out of a pig's ear through historical verisimilitude.

It is not that the retrofitting of streets, blocks, and their attendant furniture, for example, is not an important way to think about improving a city. However, these devices must be understood within the shifting and fluid realities of shared urban space today, which can be more frankly seen and creatively manipulated when taken as a legal system of parcels and patterns of ownership within which many different architectural and landscape figures may negotiate the border between personal retreat and civic amenity. This border can itself be