

made the subject of theoretical conjecture for urban design, whether at the scale of a shop threshold or a utility right-of-way. This would include an acknowledgment that in the contemporary city, an interior may perform as public a function as a street. As it was in Rome, so it is in the museum or shopping mall. In any given American suburb (the *bête noire* of urban design), the space between the edge of a building and the street is necessarily amorphous and dedicated to a complex of functional and symbolic uses. Such spaces not only combine driving and walking but also provide everything from a sense of security to sound baffling. Thus, the lawn in front of a suburban house is able to present an image of openness while achieving almost the same degree of privacy as the high walls found around houses in medieval European cities. Allowing for considerable changes in scale and use, the larger landscapes, spaces, and built structures of the new city, which is in fact a concatenation of urb and suburb, can be conceptualized in a similar way. Here, as before, there is, objectively speaking, no such thing as a public or private form of architecture, except one that follows habit and convention. A former colleague of mine would often opine to students that if she were taking a bath in an exhibition hall whose doors were secured, she would be in a private space. Therefore, keeping in mind that there has been a marked tendency toward the domestication of the built environment, we need to be receptive to the possibility of spaces that support individual pleasures by appearing open and those that spur communal engagement by appearing closed.

### **The Political Art of Urban Design**

For urban design to help build a more beautiful and just city, it is fundamental for its theorists and practitioners to understand the two-tiered nature of their enterprise. Urban design must be founded on solid research and methodological speculation *and* have proven mechanisms for cultivating and communicating with the ultimate beneficiaries of any work done: the city's inhabitants. Urban design's descent into traditionalist dogma and avant-gardist arcana most often results from confusing specialized research with generalist communication—or collapsing the two together. If one undertakes systemic research capable of modeling and figuring the city at the various scales, lenses, and vantage points through which we occupy