



Aerial of downtown Los Angeles, California, 2002. Photograph by Tom Poss, www.tomposs.com.

bundling together of building pods, beyond which there was an inchoate world of everything else.

This was certainly not my view of the city or of urban morphology. To me, the city is composed of a nesting of regional worlds that extends from the spaces of the individual body and building through multiple levels of human activity and identity to metropolitan, regional, sub-national, national, and global scales. At each level, formal patternings and cartographic designs define many different but distinctive and often changing geographies—those of built forms and land uses but also of income, education, ethnicity, political preference, industry, employment, and so on. Furthermore, each level or scale interacts with the others, creating a complex web of relations in between the local and the global. Every building or cluster of buildings, whether a cardboard shelter for the homeless or the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, is set within these many layers and is always involved in both shaping and being shaped by this geographical positioning.

The theory and practice of urban design need not explore the full complexity of this evolving multiscale spatial configuration, but at the very least it should not close itself off from it, especially at a time when cities all over the world are experiencing an extraordinary re-configuration arising in large part from extraurban forces such as globalization. To a significant extent, however, much of urban design