

CRAWFORD: That brings up the Frank Gehry Grand Street project in Los Angeles.

GOLDBERGER: Downtown L.A. is in continual existential angst about whether it should have a conventional downtown center.

CRAWFORD: It has developed on its own into a place, but not downtown as we know it. It offers more choices to people who want to live in different environments, but it's never going to be a real downtown.

KRIEGER: Let's extend the question slightly because there are other social, political, and sentimental forces still saying, "Let's make the center the center." But let's say there are many centers. We still have to ask how to make each of them more vital and distinctive. I run a studio on Tysons Corner. That's a center.

GOLDBERGER: The problem with places like Tysons Corner is the critical urban design problem of this moment.

KRIEGER: And where we have fewer formulaic, methodological, or even political strategies for addressing it.

MACHADO: Those places do need invention. No old typologies can be deployed there, because the conditions are so brutally different. The peripheral block, for instance, is not the answer.

CRAWFORD: In response to your comment about everyday urbanism, these are the very conditions it's designed to address by retrofitting of suburban conditions such as strip malls.

MACHADO: New Urbanism will say that they want to do that too. They do it everyday.

CZERNIAK: With Rodolfo at Princeton around 1990, I had a studio in which we made a city in a cornfield. The challenge wasn't to create a civic center, but urban moments instead. We did this through the unprecedented juxtapositions of programs and activities. "Moments of urbanity" is an interesting way to think about urbanism in a dispersed condition.