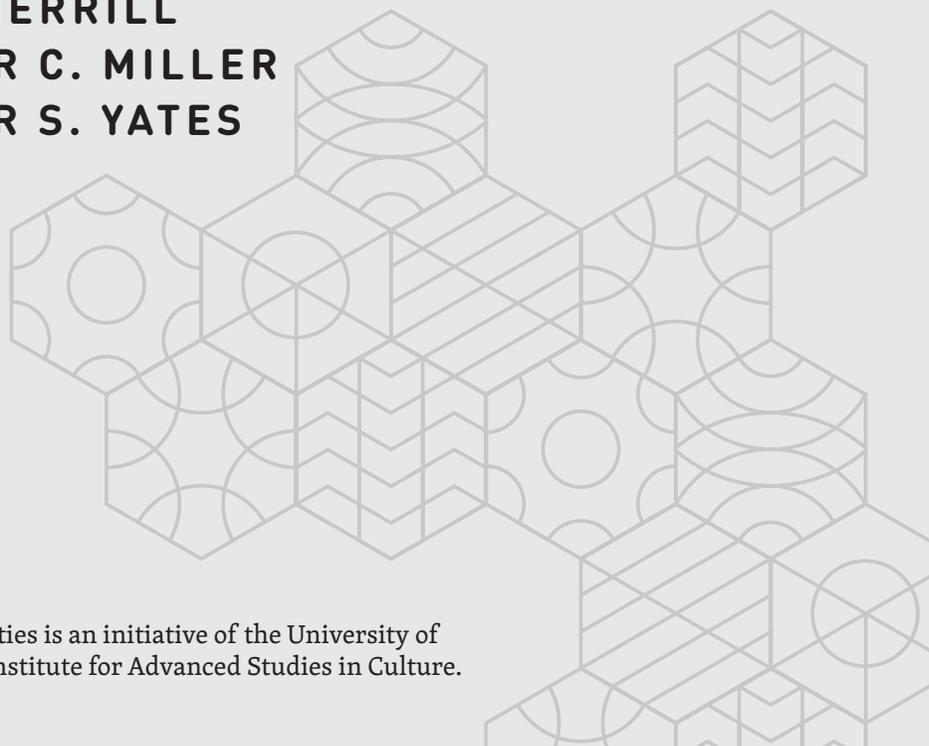

THRIVING CITIES ENDOWMENT BRIEF



The Beautiful

**ANNA MARAZUELA KIM
ELIZABETH MERRILL
CHRISTOPHER C. MILLER
CHRISTOPHER S. YATES**



Thriving Cities is an initiative of the University of
Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture.

ANNA MARAZUELA KIM, Project lead and editor
History of Art and Architecture / Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia

ELIZABETH MERRILL
History of Art and Architecture, University of Virginia

CHRISTOPHER C. MILLER
History of Art and Architecture / Architecture, Judson University, Elgin, IL

CHRISTOPHER S. YATES
Philosophy, Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, New York, NY

AUTHORS' NOTE

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THE TRUE
Human Knowledge



THE GOOD
Social Mores and Ethics



THE BEAUTIFUL
Aesthetics



THE PROSPEROUS
Economic Life



THE JUST AND
WELL - ORDERED
Political and Civil Life



THE SUSTAINABLE
The Natural Environment

COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Much like biologists think of an ecosystem as a community of living and non-living things working together in the natural world, Thriving Cities uses a framework we call “human ecology” to help us envision a city. The human ecologies of a city contain and depend upon an array of different, but fundamental endowments. Such endowments: (a) give expression to long-standing and universally-recognizable ends that are essential to human thriving (e.g., intellectual life, aesthetics, sociality, play, health and security, transcendence); (b) become actualized within specific social practices and institutional settings (e.g., universities, theaters, social media, soccer clubs, health care, and places of worship); (c) have distinctive histories that shape their present and future possibilities; and (d) interact dynamically with one another, creating both virtuous cycles when robust and healthy, and vicious cycles when depleted and weak, but also generating synergies with unintended consequences and tensions between competing goods.

The language of endowments is highly intentional. It stands in direct opposition to the language of “capital,” used by most standard and many cutting-edge approaches. Where capital denotes abstract, a-temporal, and amoral value that is at once fungible and fluid, which is to say unfixed (which is precisely the source of its conceptual strength), the language of endowments brings the dimensions of particularity and temporality back into view—endowments are the products of investments made over time and they must be maintained in the present if they are to remain available in the future. Also, attached to the language of endowments is a sense of fiduciary responsibility and obligation. Where capital functions as a medium of value and exchange irrespective of context, endowments function as a reservoir of wealth held in common—as a trust within very definite contexts. Despite its obvious strengths, the language of capital is not able to capture these essential qualities of community life, and not surprisingly, they remain empirically elusive in approaches that rely on it.

Our distinctively cultural approach, with its emphasis on the normative dimensions of common life in cities, invites us to see them in terms of six interactive (and ever-evolving) formative contexts in which we routinely see the exercise of moral agency and practical reasoning across human communities. The first three of the six endowments build on the classical ideals of “the True,” “the Good,” and “the Beautiful;” the last three are what we might call the modern ideals of “the Prosperous,” “the Well-ordered and Just,” and “the Sustainable.” Together they form some of the most recognizable horizons of the human experience.

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I. INTRODUCTION: RECLAIMING BEAUTY AS AN ENDOWMENT OF THRIVING CITIES

Beauty would seem to be a key indicator of a city's thriving. Yet it is not only difficult to define and measure, but also stands in need of some defense. Beyond the aesthetic delight we take in a well-designed city and its amenities, beauty's larger significance may be indicated by pointing to what results in its absence. As evident in slums or other forms of urban blight, human flourishing is intimately bound up with the built environment and the possibilities it affords.¹ Yet when "The Beautiful" is ranged against other Endowments, especially those that seem to more directly address fundamental aspects of thriving—education, justice, prosperity, and the like—its significance recedes from view. It is our purpose in this brief to reclaim and affirm beauty's foundational role as an Endowment of the city.

In the present study, we acknowledge the challenges posed by our Endowment, but also its great potential to contribute to the thriving of a city and its inhabitants. For the purposes of this brief, we define the realm of The Beautiful to encompass the built environment and urban design crucial to the infrastructure of the city and, by extension, the flourishing of its citizens. We also engage the role of the arts, at the level of community, in the health and vitality of the urban commons, particularly in their potential to foster imaginative responses to urban challenges and dialogue across societal boundaries. More broadly, we consider beauty in terms of the aesthetic orientation fundamental to human life and its capacity to foster attitudes of care for the urban commons. Within the discussion of these realms, we draw out the contribution of The Beautiful to thriving and its dynamic relation to other Endowments, in particular "The Good," "The Just and Well-Ordered," "The Prosperous," and "The True." We also suggest paradigmatic studies for both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of our Endowment.

Ambitiously, our brief encompasses four large domains of scholarship, any one of which might serve as its basis. Rather than attempt to engage each of them in every section, we instead focus on one or two in depth in the parts that follow, in order to address more comprehensively their significance to the Endowment as a whole:

- Architectural History (Section II)
- Urban Planning and Design (Sections II and III)
- Aesthetics and Phenomenology (Section IV)
- Arts and the Community, Arts in the Community (Section IV and the Conclusion, Section V)

As a concept that brings together (a) changes to the physical structure of the city *responsive* to human ecology and (b) the *creative activity* by which individuals and communities make a place more vibrantly their own, we explore the idea of "place-making." With this idea as a binding thread across large swaths of inquiry, we attempt to weave a richer picture of crucial interconnections between the lived experience of the city and the formation of civic virtue central to thriving cities and communities.

While the question of what constitutes beauty in a particular culture or society is open to debate, we believe that it is both possible and necessary to become more articulate in regard to beauty thus conceived. In its potential to mobilize resources of an imaginative, and at times critical and transformative, vision of what a city and its citizens might be, beauty also has the potential to bridge disparate social, economic, racial, and political divides in a time when activity of this kind is critically needed.²

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF BEAUTY IN THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF AMERICAN CITIES

The history of American cities encompasses the development of the country's hundreds of urban centers, as well as the multitude of movements, reformers, artists, architects, community organizers, planners, politicians, and policymakers involved in the formation of these places.

Our aim in this section is to give a brief overview and analysis of the key planning movements of modern American urban history. We take this history as foundational to an understanding of the deep structure of the contemporary urban condition: the physical and conceptual legacies this development has wrought and with which we now contend. In our quest to understand the role of beauty in the making of cities, this history is particularly important, for it reveals explicit and implicit connections between beauty in the built environment of cities and the welfare of their inhabitants, as well as reasons for the loss of beauty in urban settings. This history gives insight into changing conceptions of good urban planning and design; how the built environment was understood in relation to the thriving of its inhabitants; and, perhaps most instructively, the successes and struggles in this regard. Finally, it reveals significant parallels between the ideals of reformers of the past and current values in urban planning and design, the subject of Section III. What emerges when the past is ranged against the present is an appreciation of the challenge of realizing these ideals in practice: the subtle art of city-making that is at the heart of the Thriving Cities Project.

A. THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

The World's Columbian Exposition—the 1893 Chicago world's fair that took the form of a 633-acre classically inspired “White City”—is often considered the starting point of the City Beautiful movement. Inspired by Europe's great capital cities, the ephemeral city was at once distinctly modern and thoroughly American—its generously proportioned boulevards, electric street lamps, and sparkingly clean façades offering a glimpse of what the nation's cities might become. The director of works of the Columbian Exposition, Daniel Burnham (1846–1912), is credited with initiating America's first great urban reform effort, the City Beautiful movement. It was impelled by the idea that the physical re-shaping of the city would remedy perceived social ills in the pervasive tenements and slums, and complement “burgeoning reforms in other areas of society.”³ According to the City Beautiful ethos, when a city was *physically cohesive, healthy, and tranquil*, the society it fostered would follow suit.

At the start of the twentieth century, the White City gave inspiration to numerous urban renewal projects across the country. In Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Denver, Detroit, Harrisburg, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, San Diego, St. Louis, and Washington, among other cities, municipal improvement groups and planning commissions were established to restore dignity, health, and grace to the urban landscape.⁴ The strength and pervasiveness of this collective movement cannot be overemphasized. While the greatest City Beautiful projects were realized in America's capital cities, it is remarkable that by 1905 there were nearly 2,500 municipal improvement societies nationwide.⁵ In each of these organizations, the focus was not only on major city planning and urban renewal projects, but also on the creation of smaller civic works. The leaders of such groups followed Burnham in believing that public buildings and civic improvements could positively redirect the societies they served.

Though the City Beautiful advocates never specifically defined beauty, their aesthetic ideals were implicit in their urban plans. In keeping with the White City model, projects were characterized by grand “classical” edifices whose forms derived from the monuments of Greek and Roman antiquity and Europe's great cities. With Georges-Eugène Haussmann's plan for Paris regarded as the exemplar of modern urban planning,⁶ the ideal American City Beautiful was envisioned as *contained, aesthetically pleasing, efficient and clean, replete with green spaces, and open to light and fresh air*—attributes that are still prized today.⁷

How these ideals were physically realized varied greatly in scale and form. The plans for Chicago,

Denver, Cleveland, Columbus, and Washington epitomize the realization of the City Beautiful through monumental urban design. In Columbus, the capital of Ohio, this centered on the development in 1908 of an extensive new civic center—an urban mall that linked the statehouse to the Scioto River and incorporated state buildings, an art gallery, a music hall, and other public buildings along a central urban axis. Boulevards and parkways connected the core to the peripheral zones, offering “a beautiful way of going, not only from park to park, but from one quarter of the city to another.” The Columbus plan, according to its architects, was “devised looking to the organic development of the city along practical and artistic lines,” an approach, they believed, that would “result in increasing its wealth not only by improving natural conditions, but by attracting legitimate investment, and, above all, by making Columbus a better and pleasanter place in which to live.”⁸ As the recent revitalization of Columbus’s urban core shows, there has been a reaffirmation of the main lines of this plan, in addition to further development of the waterfront on which the downtown is sited.

The primary supporters of the City Beautiful movement were male, middle-class and upper-middle-class business people and professionals—individuals who were personally and financially invested in the cities in which they lived, and who had the political fortitude to push for change. In their publicity campaigns and municipal appeals, they argued that new schools, museums, libraries, and parks would improve urban life, *introducing more beauty and culture* and creating systems of greater order and cleanliness. The City Beautiful improvements would also augment commercial prosperity.⁹ It was argued that the axially planned urban center, with an organized traffic system, appealing architecture, and a wealth of cultural and recreational facilities, would create a more contented work force, attract a superior population, bring in new businesses, and raise property values.¹⁰

The fact that the chief proponents of the City Beautiful were those very individuals who would benefit most from the reforms they proposed did not escape critics. Opponents of the City Beautiful were quick to point out the hypocrisy of the movement: the fact that its advocates—professional men who had become wealthy through commerce and industry—now sought to “beautify” America’s cities by imposing their values and culture on the greater urban population, and wanted to do so at the expense of America’s free-market economy.¹¹ The strongest opposition to the City Beautiful came from entrepreneurs who argued that if the rich wanted to beautify and otherwise ameliorate America’s cities, they could do so on their own property and with their own money.

B. THE GARDEN CITY

While the ideals of the City Beautiful had a notable impact on the actions of municipal governments, the movement was ultimately impaired by its implicit limitations: its *elitist cultural agenda*, *regulation of private business activity*, and *emphasis on aesthetic rather than functional properties*. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the movement was facing a precipitous decline. However, reformers were as keen as ever to transform American’s cities. In the first decades of the century, new urban initiatives were variously manifest in the establishment of regional and civic improvement associations, the introduction of zoning regulations, and the construction of inner-city housing developments, sewage systems, recreational facilities, and new roads. But perhaps most significant was the development of public parks. Building on the park movement of the mid-nineteenth century, a new generation of advocates began to urge only the setting aside of isolated green spaces that would be open to the public, but also the creation of comprehensive “garden cities.”

The roots of the Garden City movement in America can be traced to the United Kingdom, where, in the second half of the nineteenth century, libertarian socialists and self-help moralists campaigned for social reform through a return to land-based communal living. William Morris (1834–96), an English writer, textile designer, and political activist, arguably played the most influential part in the germination of the Garden City movement. In his books and lectures, Morris argued that industrialization, coupled with society’s dominant capitalist ethos, had contributed to the cultural, moral, and environmental plight of urban communities. Social restoration was possible only through a reversion to a simpler, preindustrial way of life. This model attracted a broad following of young reformers, architects, and planners, who in the late nineteenth-century and into the third decade of the twentieth worked to

develop the first garden cities in England, continental Europe, and North America.

First among these individuals was Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928), an Englishman who is credited with coining the term *Garden City*. Strongly influenced by the back-to-the-land movement, Howard came to believe that a blend of town and country elements, when combined with other progressive urban and social planning proposals, could serve as the basis for the ideal city. In his 1898 book *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, reissued in 1902 under the title *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, he employed a “three-magnet” diagram to represent his model Garden City, the magnets being town, country, and town-country life.¹² Just as with the City Beautiful, there were no fixed criteria for the model Garden City, just a set of general ordering principles. In keeping with the aesthetic ideals of preeminent nineteenth-century landscape architects Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Garden City designers prioritized natural topography and local horticulture.¹³ But beyond serpentine walks, lush plantings, and picturesque views, the wholesome Garden City was to offer *order*, *cleanliness*, and *moral uplift*. An alternative to the overcrowded urban slums, the Garden City would be a planned community, a place where open, verdant land was abundant and cheap, and where individuals could lead simpler, healthier lives. Following Morris, Howard and other Garden City reformers believed that once individuals were transferred to a garden-like setting, they would come to see the innumerable flaws of the hierarchical, capitalist urban model, and, naturally embracing life within the *balanced, cooperative commonwealth*, they would be cleansed of the city’s many artificial poisons.¹⁴

In America, this model was translated into what was, in effect, a garden suburb movement. The Garden City’s principal advocate in the United States was Clarence Stein (1882–1975), a longtime resident of New York City who in 1923 teamed with conservationist Benton MacKaye, historian and critic Lewis Mumford, landscape architect Henry Wright, and New York real estate developer Alexander Bing to found the Regional Planning Association of America. The RPAA’s focus on regional planning and promotion of Garden City developments represented the start of a new trend. Significantly, it was within the context of regional development, not urban planning, that the American Garden City was born.¹⁵ The first Garden City in the United States was sponsored and developed in 1924 by Bing’s City Housing Corporation (CHC) at Sunnyside Gardens, an undeveloped, seventy-seven-acre site five miles from Manhattan in the borough of Queens. In subsequent years, garden cities were established in New Jersey (Fairlawn, 1924, and Radburn, 1929), Pennsylvania (Chatham Village, 1932), and California (Baldwin Hills Village, 1941).

From the onset, however, these communities functioned as suburbs, not independent cities. Not only were they too small and too close to major cities to develop strong, independent identities, but their plans were too open, with too many parks and lawns and not enough civic infrastructure.¹⁶ The success of the Garden City movement was also impeded by poor timing. With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, the resident populations of Fairlawn, Radburn, Chatham Village, and Baldwin Hills Village remained far below the CHC’s targeted range. Industry was slow to develop, and overall volume was insufficient to support the range of community services and programs that had been originally planned. It was not long before the CHC began, out of sheer desperation, to advertise Fairlawn and Radburn as commuter suburbs. By the 1930s, moreover, America’s garden cities faced yet another obstacle—the automobile. Between 1920 and 1929, the number of registered automobiles in the United States rose from 8.1 million to 23.1 million, making it increasingly easy for individuals to live at a distance from their work. Along with the opportunities opened up by the telephone, radio, electric power, and the mail system, the impetus toward suburban life was difficult to deter.¹⁷ The Garden City appealed to the middle-class citizen who wanted a well-paying job in the city but also wanted to own his own home, one with a front lawn in a quiet, secure community with parks and good public services. In the 1930s, and increasingly after World War II, the American landscape, economy, and culture were progressively suburbanized.

The Garden City movement was not only remarkable in its propulsion of suburbia. It was through Garden City reform initiatives that urban planning became an established and codified profession in the United States. The RPAA’s ability to plan, finance, and realize new city projects put American urban planning on the map, drawing renewed attention to existing planning groups such as the National Con-

ference on City Planning and the American City Planning Institute. Significantly, the RPAA provided the framework for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal housing program; thus, what had started as a New York based association concerned with regional planning came to structure some of the nation's greatest building projects.¹⁸ Radburn also set an important precedent. Although this New Jersey town was unsuccessful according to Howard and Stein's vision of the Garden City, its conceptualization as a *decentralized, self-contained community* that promoted *environmental health* and valued *open space, the automobile, and individual freedoms* became a normative model of twentieth-century American planning.¹⁹

C. BROADACRE CITY AND THE RADIANT CITY

The most controversial and influential urban planning ideas of the mid-twentieth century were those put forth by Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) and the Swiss-French architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (pseudonym Le Corbusier, 1887–1965). Like the proponents of the City Beautiful and the Garden City, Wright and Le Corbusier saw urban planning and, more broadly, the development of the “built environment” as means of social betterment. According to these architects, the environment—the location, arrangement, and relationship of people, things and spaces—was something that could be carefully controlled, even designed.²⁰ However, in contrast to those of Burnham, Howard, and Stein, the urban models of Wright and Le Corbusier remained confined to paper. Wright's Broadacre City and Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse (“Radiant City”) were theoretical, conceived *ex novo* for undeveloped tracts of land. The flexibility allowed by the fact that they were never to be realized granted the architects even greater creative license.

More so than their predecessors, Wright and Le Corbusier were able to customize the design platform on which they sought to promote their own ideals for social reform. These proposals were *not to improve existing society, but essentially to restructure it*, and in this respect they were quite different from the more measured ideals of the City Beautiful and the Garden City. As Le Corbusier wrote, ultimately there was either architecture or revolution; with architecture, revolution could be avoided.²¹ The revolutionary character of Wright and Le Corbusier's plans, however, did not mitigate their influence. In the socially and politically turbulent period following the Second World War, Broadacre City and the Radiant City provided a point of reference and means of orientation. The lofty ideals they embodied were seen as a promise of a better future, and in an era of fear, disenchantment, and destruction, they had a significant impact on urban planning initiatives of the time.

Wright believed that the problems of the American city, and the social woes it fostered, could be solved through planned decentralization. Neither urban nor rural, Broadacre City was not really a city at all, but an organic community that united the “desirable features of the city with the freedom of the ground in a natural, happy union.”²² At its core, Broadacre was founded the premise that every resident should have direct contact with the land. This, according to Wright, would save man from “mobocracy” and safeguard his natural right to individuality.²³

The residences—the building blocks of Broadacre City—were aesthetically complementary single-family homes, but intermixed in regard to income level. There was no social stratification or hierarchies of wealth or region in Broadacre. Likewise, the layout of the city at large constituted a “diversity in unity.” Factories, properly maintained and structured, Wright argued, could be integrated into residential areas. Likewise, health services, schools, recreational facilities, and businesses could stand adjacent to one another within an interwoven “urban” fabric.²⁴ By establishing *aesthetic harmony* and *coherence* in these divergent parts, Broadacre City provided a *model of social unity*.

The success of Broadacre City, as seen by Wright, stemmed from its reliance on modern technology, which enabled individuals to live apart from one another yet at the same time maintain strong economic and social communities. Wright prophesied that “the citizen of the near future preferring horizontality—the gift of his motorcar, and telephonic or telegraphic inventions—will turn and reject verticality as the body of any American city.”²⁵ The highway, for Wright, was a key agent of the modern city, both extending and uniting it, and within his model he gave great attention to traffic patterns.

Inasmuch as it represents a vision of an egalitarian unified society, Broadacre City also imagines how automobiles could transform cities, and the landscapes surrounding them.

In his faith in the rise of the personal automobile, and his planning for its extensive and widespread use, Wright was farsighted. Many of solutions he developed for Broadacre City—*mixed-use districts*, *locally based economies*, *organic architecture*, and *pollution-free factories*—likewise anticipated future urban trends, and possibly even acted as catalysts for their development. His preference for decentralized communities was closely mirrored in the exponential expansion of American suburbia in the mid-twentieth century, while his association of democracy with individual homeownership found its apotheosis in the housing boom that began after World War II and lasted into the twenty-first century. Still, to the extent that many of Wright's proposals have proven to be problematic—America's automobile-dependent cities are plagued by heavy traffic and pollution, suburban sprawl has eaten away at the countryside, and the lure of homeownership has led to real-estate speculation, overbuilding, and financial crisis—Broadacre City may be considered as having contributed to the precarious urban conditions we live with today.

Although Le Corbusier was not American, his theories of urban planning had a pronounced impact on urban developments in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. And in certain respects, his model Radiant City shared much in common with Broadacre City. Like Wright, Le Corbusier developed his concept for the modern city over an extended period, publishing his ideas in a series of manifestos. The 1922 Ville Contemporaine (“Contemporary City”) was Le Corbusier's first major project in urban planning, followed by the Plan Voisin (1925, named for the automaker that sponsored his research), and, after a series of modifications, the Radiant City (1935). Like Broadacre City, the Radiant City was an overgrown park, with sinuous walks, gardens, sports grounds, and “pure air,” a place “where noise is smothered under the foliage of green trees.... And sky everywhere, as far as the eye can see.”²⁶ Le Corbusier's vision for the modern city was in fact remarkably similar to that of Frederick Law Olmsted, and recalls the great urban parks developed by the City Beautiful proponents.²⁷

Yet the Radiant City was anything but a City Beautiful. Like Wright, Le Corbusier believed that the city of the future would be built on the automobile and other new technologies; thus, the idyllic city-as-park he proposed also included the necessary infrastructure for the incipient “machine-age civilization.”²⁸ But while Wright's Broadacre City was thoroughly organic and decentralized, Le Corbusier's Radiant City, which was designed to house three million people, epitomized the centralized city. Its residences—perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of Le Corbusier's proposal—were collective housing blocks, each fifteen to twenty stories high, which were each to house hundreds of families.²⁹ Quite different from Wright's freestanding Usonian homes, a number of which were actually built, and which were characterized by a horizontality that organically linked interior and exterior space, Le Corbusier's superblock apartments were *cells for mass living*. In his conception, kitchens and service areas would frequently be shared between families, and house size would be determined not by wealth but by spatial needs; everyone would get the absolute minimum necessary. The units' amenities and furnishings would be uniform, with everything determined by the plan—which would be “objectively” produced by experts in the “science of urbanism.”³⁰

Le Corbusier's systemized Radiant City provided a new spatial and social model for urban living. By condensing the urban center and extending it vertically, his plan realized the seemingly impossible: a city of increased population density, with a decongested center, comprehensive transportation system, and ample green space for gardens, recreation, and agriculture. Le Corbusier's proposal for differentiated “sectors” for living, working, transportation, and recreation was one element of his scheme that had a surprisingly notable impact. In the surge of postwar town planning, zoning provided planners with a ready-made system of ordering principles that required minimal research and gave the city control of its multiple developmental forces.³¹ The greatest legacy of the Radiant City, however, was the development of *high-density, centralized housing systems*—an architectural typology that was realized in variation in dozens of cities worldwide.

D. THE LOSS OF BEAUTY

In America, the Corbusian residential model materialized under the Housing Act of 1949, which created a program that granted federal money for urban renewal projects, in particular for those concerning residential zones. New York City was the undisputed leader in urban renewal in the immediate postwar period, spending \$267 million on city improvement projects between 1949 and 1957.³² But throughout the United States, dozens of cities sponsored residential building programs that aimed to solve the housing problems of the urban poor.³³ In these efforts, Le Corbusier's superblock apartment was the authoritative, albeit highly flawed, model. Noteworthy examples of Corbusian public housing schemes were developed in Chicago (Cabrini-Green Homes, 1942–2008), the Bronx (Co-op City, 1973), Newark (Hayes Homes, 1954–2000), and St. Louis (Pruitt-Igoe, 1951–1972). While Co-op City has been generally successful, the case of Pruitt-Igoe exemplifies the numerous problems of the Corbusian urban model.

The thirty-three block Pruitt-Igoe complex was developed to solve St. Louis's ubiquitous housing shortage. Slums were cleared and high-density, high-rise public housing in the form of over 2,800 apartments was erected in their place. However, huge cost cuts made during construction resulted in cheap and shoddy buildings: "steel and concrete warrens, poorly designed, badly equipped, inadequate in size, badly located, unventilated, and virtually impossible to maintain."³⁴ The population of Pruitt-Igoe presented additional problems, proving that even if the project's housing model had been successful—which it was not—it would not have solved underlying social and racial issues. After Pruitt-Igoe's precipitous decline in the 1960s, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development had the project demolished in 1972.³⁵

The development and decline of Pruitt-Igoe, although one of the most notorious instances of mid-century urban renewal gone awry, is certainly not the only example. With historical distance, many of the large-scale urban projects of the postwar period are today considered largely to have been failures. The reasons are multiple. The 1950s, '60s, and '70 were years of significant population growth, cultural and technological innovation, polemical politics and social relations, and grandiose ideals. In these years, the rate of private car ownership in America skyrocketed, and the country's growing middle class migrated from the city to the suburbs.³⁶ Cities were depopulated, and buildings and neighborhoods were abandoned. The planning initiatives enacted in these years, generously funded by federal grants and conceived by planners and civic leaders anxious to save their cities, were overscaled and impractical. Signature urban developments of the period included not only the erection of large-scale housing blocks like Pruitt-Igoe and Cabrini-Green, but also the construction of multilane expressways that carved through older city centers, and inner-city demolition and civic construction projects in which not only historic buildings like New York City's Pennsylvania Station, but whole neighborhoods, were leveled and replaced with poorly conceived Modernist constructions.

Public criticism of the colossal tabula rasa renewal projects that began in the 1950s was almost immediate. The most vehement and widely heard critique was that of the architectural journalist Jane Jacobs, who rose to action after learning of urban planner Robert Moses's plan to tear into her neighborhood of Greenwich Village with the construction of a multilane expressway.³⁷ Her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was enthusiastically received by audiences in America and Great Britain who were frustrated with contemporary planning initiatives and in search of a new ethos. Jacobs attacked the Garden City model, asserting that its "prescription for saving the city was to do the city in."³⁸ She also found fault with Wright and Le Corbusier's schemes as the projects of ego-driven architects which, in championing excessive reliance on the automobile, did more harm to communities than good.³⁹ America's cities, according to Jacobs, were better off prior to twentieth-century planning, and she advocated the maintenance of traditional, highly concentrated inner-city developments. As long as the buildings were not overcrowded, high urban densities were good. As represented by Jacobs, America's best urban neighborhoods—places like Brooklyn Heights in New York City and San Francisco's North Beach—were densely populated mix-used areas. These thriving communities had strong economies and low crime rates—the product, Jacobs said, of short city blocks, which in effect created more corners and gathering spaces, reducing blind zones and encouraging walking.⁴⁰ For the rising generation of urban planners—the proponents of New Urbanism—*The Death and Life of Great American*

Cities became the definitive handbook, and Jacobs's ideal of the walkable, mixed-use urban neighborhood the absolute model.

III. THE NEW URBANISM AND THE CHALLENGE OF A CIVIC ART

Nicholas Wolterstorff's observations on urban life in *Art and Action* (1980) capture two of the major challenges facing the Endowment of The Beautiful today: So much of what we see in cities fails to delight, and so many of our cities' inhabitants are marginalized and disempowered.⁴¹ The loss of beauty, particularly in its role as a building block for a just society, has myriad causes. In the last hundred years, the first campaign of Modernist urban renewal has had unintended consequences, including a ruinous accommodation of the automobile and suburban sprawl. The radical re-weaving of the urban fabric and, by extension, the comprehensive reshaping of the communities it supports, has produced social, political, and senseless ugliness. But even in the more recent and successful efforts to revitalize cities, gentrification has emerged as problematic. While, on the surface, beautification driven by prosperity seems to fulfill the aim of adding beauty, it too can produce a kind of social disorder or ugliness: the unjust displacement of individuals and communities, a loss of diversity and the concomitant mixing of individuals from different social strata, a flattening of complexity in the urban fabric.

In the present section, we focus on these challenges through case studies in order to identify, by way of contrast, promising trends within New Urbanist thought to reconceive what constitutes good urban practice and design. In particular, we highlight a paradigm shift from the massive, overly determined interventions of the past toward recognition of the city as a *complex ecology* whose change must be engaged with incrementally, with attention being given on a *human scale* and in a manner that cultivates *civic engagement*. The idea of the "responsive city" captures this new ethos. Metrics for perceptual qualities, which we briefly outline, reflect a growing consensus regarding good urban design according to this ecological model. The paradigm shift also indicates an increasing awareness of the social and political importance of community participation, a sensitivity that points, hopefully, to the strengthening and enlargement of The Beautiful in our cities: city-making as place-making—a new form of civic art.

A. HISTORICAL AND CONTINUING CHALLENGES TO THE BEAUTIFUL IN THE CITY

To a large degree, the human ecology of cities in America has been diminished in the Modernist planning ideal. Advanced by Le Corbusier and the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congresses of Modern Architecture), the model of residential tower blocks set amid greenswards became normative in twentieth-century urban theory. As Richard Sennett observes, in its commitment to a building's apparent access to light and air, this model offers an appearance of openness. In actuality, however, the resulting urbanism closes out the rich social formations of which cities are truly constituted.⁴² Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin for Paris's Right Bank and the residential tower exemplar, L'Unité des Habitations, in Marseille, which have been replicated from Moscow to Chicago, demonstrate the urban cost of disciplining of human life to stringent ideals of visual abstraction.

One can further see from this example how urban design is instrumentalized to strategic and political agendas. James C. Scott sees in Haussmann's plan for Paris "the idea of making a space (and the people in it) *legible* to whoever is in power by removing or simplifying inconsistencies, anomalies, and local practices.... Legibility affords measurement and standardization, and these... afford modeling, regulation, and control."⁴³ While legibility in a city may be desirable for other reasons, as we will discuss, it can also provide the conditions for manipulation and control. A related, negative outcome, as Richard Sennett notes, is the "proliferation of rules and bureaucratic regulations [which] has disabled local innovation and growth."⁴⁴

Concerning the notorious Pruitt-Igoe public housing project, Birmingham points to other legacies of Modernist style.⁴⁵ While some have claimed that residents of the project could not or did not appreciate

the architectural rationalism according to which formally pure design was universalized as democratic, she argues that they could read perfectly well the structural racism out of which Pruitt-Igoe was produced. Birmingham concludes that Pruitt-Igoe failed because the project had been separated spatially from the surrounding district, which made it vulnerable to stigmatization. Furthermore, its proposed collective spaces were not funded to completion. She records that residents referred to Pruitt-Igoe as if it were a prison: They saw no other choice but to live there out of fear of the so-called outside. Their conduct, she concludes, “suggests a general hostility toward the structures of Pruitt-Igoe and the lack of connection these structures had to anything their inhabitants could read as ‘houseness.’”⁴⁶ The project is a prime example of the absence of place-making under sub-optimal conditions in the built environment.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, gentrification represents another collateral effect of more recent urban revitalization. With regard to the Prudential Center in Boston, Rubin questions whether the public-private partnership between the City of Boston and Prudential in developing the space is one that legitimately represented the will of the city’s citizens.⁴⁷ In particular, he notes that residents of the disadvantaged neighborhood advocated that affordable housing be built there rather than towers designed to lure the middle class back to the city’s center. As is the case for large-scale urban projects generally, there was some distance between the corporation’s interests and the projection of these interests onto those of the region. Rubin concludes that the Prudential Center’s strategic role in Boston’s success, as proved in the long term, compensates for the costs.

However, in reflecting on America’s urban renewal, Putnam usefully points to the “very high cost to existing social capital.”⁴⁸ Not only have disadvantaged neighborhoods been subjected to displacement through gentrification; the residents receive no incentive to acquire a stake in the community through homeownership. This is in part due to the fact that in the past, federal mortgage loans were granted only for new construction and, initially, for those moving to racially segregated neighborhoods.⁴⁹ In cities, residents who were ineligible for the loans, or those who elected to remain, were not incentivized to own homes. Local stakeholding, which might have been the aim of federal home mortgage guarantees in the suburbs, undercut this incentive in inner-city neighborhoods.

Leidenberger blames federalism for a lack of national planning policy in the United States. As a result, it was “shortsighted municipalities” that shaped the character of American planning. The social agents shaping neighborhoods were realtors and suburban residents who “voluntarily subscribed to highly restrictive suburban covenants.” By contrast, the planning of Portland, Oregon—the unique and extraordinarily productive coordination of the work of state and municipal agencies—was the specific result of “coalition building within civil society.”⁵⁰

A further challenge to urban development related to the lack of conscious planning is suburban sprawl. Millions of Americans have a private, freestanding dwelling, use land egregiously, and live at a distance from work as well as from members of other economic classes and races. Historically, American suburbanization was conditioned by the invention of transit modes, the interests of powerful corporations (e.g., the automobile industry), and the federal mortgage guarantee program. Charles Marohn of the nonprofit organization Strong Towns has criticized the incentivized growth of the suburbs, whose demands for a sprawling public infrastructure impoverish towns and cities.⁵¹ Since a balance of public transit and pedestrianism depends on the compactness of mixed-use urban environments, the suburbs are often neither walkable nor served by public transit. Frumpkin, Frank, and Jackson, in their well-publicized work *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*,⁵² demonstrate that America’s suburbs are now more dangerous, because of obesity and vehicle-related injuries and deaths, than inner-city neighborhoods.

B. THE RESPONSIVE CITY

City making is amongst the most complex and difficult human undertakings—as complex as life itself. It goes beyond the powers of rational analysis and synthesis. Like civilization or language,

cities cannot be invented in one generation. They must be designed and built incrementally, evolving slowly and laboriously—the sum of many acts, some large, some small, some cyclic, some metamorphic. Like any self-regulating system, cities must correct and re-correct themselves continuously, with larger paradigm leaps when clearer models are put or called forth.

Douglas Kelbaugh⁵³

By the end of the nineteenth century, cities had solved many of the simple technical problems related to industrialization. It was the city as a problem of organized complexity, in Jane Jacobs's words, that had not been grasped in schemes of the twentieth century. While not without its critics, Jacobs's prescient idea of the city as "organized complexity" has recently been recast in terms of the city as a complex, human ecology.

As a feature that supports this ecology, *responsiveness* in the built environment refers to a specific attunement to what it means to be human and social. "Responsive places" are those built environments attuned to human scale over many generations, in which incremental adjustments and additions, rather than colossal experiments, are undertaken. Roger Scruton, who describes our interest in beauty as a kind of public rationality, writes that our judgments to effect beauty make "social life possible and worthwhile." He also observes that

our need for beauty is not something that we could lack and still be fulfilled as people. It is a need arising from our metaphysical condition, as free individuals, seeking our place in a shared and public world. We can wander through this world, alienated, resentful, full of suspicion and distrust. Or we can find our home here, coming to rest in harmony with others and with ourselves. The experience of beauty guides us along this second path: It tells us that we are at home in the world, that the world is already ordered in our perceptions as a place fit for the lives of beings like us.⁵⁴

The landmark study in response to the need for what are called "performing cities," the first step toward thriving cities, was published by Cervero and Kockelman in 1997. Much as Jane Jacobs had suggested earlier, they concluded that good urbanism depends on population density, land use diversity, and good design.⁵⁵ More recently, Ellin has stated that "there is now a virtual consensus among planners and urban designers about what constitutes good urbanism."⁵⁶ At the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, this consensus is manifested in three indicators: an acknowledgment of the Charter for the New Urbanism (1996) as a planning ideal, adherence to two performance metrics (a "Traditional Neighborhood District" performance measure and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development), and the ideas that were later published by Ewing and Clemente in their book *Measuring Urban Design: Metrics for Livable Places*.⁵⁷

In *Responsive Environments: A Manual for Designers*, Ian Bentley et al. argue for particular *perceptual qualities* as our expectation, in democratic societies, of good urbanism: "enriching their opportunities by maximizing the degree of choice available to them." The metrics for responsive places are permeability, variety, legibility, robustness, visual appropriateness, richness, and personalization.⁵⁸ Informing present urban design initiatives, Wolfgang Sonne tells how the civic art movement of the early twentieth century sought responsiveness in cities: the place-making role of streets that strengthen the enclosure of these public places with street-scale architecture rather than by "setting autonomous patterns"; acknowledgment of the public sphere through the meaningful enrichment of civic façades; and enhancement of the inherent liveliness of cities with a mix of uses.⁵⁹

An initial consensus seems to be taking shape on what constitutes the flourishing human ecology of the city.⁶⁰ The density transect and the foregrounding of civic buildings contribute significantly to the legibility and imageability of a city. In the warp and weave of block dimensions, orientations, and the width and connection of streets to larger networks, there is a deep structure of implicative variety accommodating the rich, bottom-up, and incremental building of micro- and macro-social structures. These myriad pleasures and meanings are the responsiveness of rich human ecology whose metrics are summarized below.

The term *permeable* describes districts affording choices for those in their public roles who pass in or through, and for those who dwell there, and secure but rich interfaces for these public and private interactions.⁶¹ In *The Connected City*, Robert Cowan records Bill Hillier's observation that the success of a place depends "as much on what routes pass through it as it does what happens in or beside it."⁶² Cowan writes that the most enjoyable cities are the ones that present the fewest barriers between people, uses, activities, and places. Sennett writes similarly of the "porous borders" in cities with open form.⁶³ By contrast, Cowan observes, "the unconnected city makes poor people poorer."⁶⁴

Varied uses can take varied forms, and draw varied people (in varied numbers at varied times) to produce a mix of activities that yield to any number of meaningful interpretations. The variety of people, for example, is enhanced when access is assured for those with limited mobility (i.e., children, older adults, and people with disabilities). Sherlock and Krier flesh this out in further detail: There should be no exclusively cultural areas and at least two of these five uses for a street or small group of streets: commercial, retail, residential, recreational, and communal (including health and education).⁶⁵ As Jane Jacobs observed, old buildings can be inexpensive incubators for new, marginal, and not-for-profit businesses.⁶⁶ The Congress for New Urbanism's Project for Lean Urbanism (2013) and similar undertakings are achieving the same result with the use of temporary buildings, even freight containers, as pioneering buildings in what, it is hoped, will eventually mature in a climax urbanism. Jane Jacobs recognized the need for a variety of businesses to keep the streets busy with, and therefore safe for, pedestrians. Just as forests are seen as having pioneer and climax states in their development as ecosystems, neighborhoods and districts can be seen as having a variety in their history and anticipated change from initial to mature states. If the urban morphology of streets, lots, and types can be coded in the foundation of a neighborhood or district, then this place will mature in time. New Urbanists have advanced "lean urbanism" as a mode of making simpler, smaller-scale urban change, as in the recent straitened economic circumstances in which bureaucratic and technical demands in larger projects continue unabated.⁶⁷ Variety is achieved using temporary buildings, even freight containers, as pioneering structures in what, it is hoped, will eventually mature into a climax urbanism.

Legibility, according to Ewing et al. and Bentley et al., measures how easily spatial structure can be grasped and navigated. Ewing and colleagues write, "The legibility of a place is improved by a street or pedestrian network that provides travelers with a sense of orientation and relative location and by physical elements that serve as reference points."⁶⁸ Lynch formulated five elements of legibility: nodes, edges, paths, districts, and landmarks.⁶⁹ Sometimes, a collection of buildings can be grasped as an ensemble or an armature only when this group is understood as framing the path for a civic ritual like a parade between two nodes. Historically, cities were legible because, looking at the whole, what was important was legibly so.⁷⁰ In the early 1900s, Raymond Unwin argued for composing cities and towns of villages—that is, having an apprehensible legibility, leading to local identity, in which all are mobilized as stakeholders.⁷¹

Imageability, according to Ewing et al., is the visual quality of being memorably distinct.⁷² Good imageability is accompanied by other perceptual characteristics; in their absence, the place is one that we are reminded to avoid. A panel of experts, as Ewing reports, gave particular mention to vernacular architecture for its imageability, but also "landmarks, striking views, unusual topography, and marquee signage."⁷³

Robust buildings and places, to Bentley et al., are those that are abundant in their affordances: They lend themselves to many purposes, both simultaneously and successively. Robust places are scaled to the spatiality of human interaction and can shape desirable microclimates.⁷⁴ Sennett describes as brittle those buildings and places shaped so slavishly to a particular use that they are abandoned and replaced when uses change.⁷⁵ Robustness supports vitality time and again because the buildings, like the Georgian townhouse, and places, like Bryant Park, New York, afford re-purposing generation after generation.⁷⁶

Visual appropriateness, in the view of Bentley et al., is that semiotic responsiveness in the built environment that yields to us, and in light of which we think and act.⁷⁷

Richness, for Bentley et al., or *complexity*, for Ewing, increases the choice and breadth of sense experiences. These are defined as aural and tangible, rather than visual, and subliminal rather than cognitive (as would be imageability or appropriateness).⁷⁸ They also have their own metrics: human scale, transparency and linkage, enclosure, and coherence.⁷⁹ Human scale “refers to a size, texture, and articulation of physical elements that match the size and proportions of humans and, equally important, correspond to the speed at which humans walk.... Building details, pavement texture, street trees, and street furniture are all physical elements contributing to human scale.”⁸⁰ Scaled, too, are city blocks; Porta and Romice have found that preindustrial cities had blocks of no longer than 1,200 feet.⁸¹ Ewing et al. define *enclosure* as the spatial boundedness we perceive by enframing buildings, walls, trees, and other elements.⁸² Places, having the several proportions that we recognize, in the relation of vertical to horizontal components, yield differing senses of enclosure in the differences one experiences in Union Square, New York, versus Chicago’s Grant Park.

Finally, *personalization* is the affordance granted in the built environment to make a place one’s own, and may be related to our consideration of place-making, to which we now turn.

C. CITY-MAKING AS PLACE-MAKING: TOWARD A NEW CIVIC ART

What forms of city-making are currently producing more justice, truth, and delight? How are cities being better shaped to support human thriving? Bohl sees a present and positive “culture of good place-making” as mirroring an ethos that existed at the turn of the twentieth century.⁸³ Writing in the early 1920s, Hegemann and Peets, acknowledging both Sitte’s interest in rethinking the aesthetic importance of urban places and Unwin’s campaign to decentralize overcrowded cities, parallel contemporary concerns about sprawl and the ugliness of cities, as described in *The New Civic Art*.⁸⁴

Today we see opportunities in several areas for cultivating thriving: housing; the reintegration of mixed use; and public engagement, in its relation to urban design, as an affordance for social practice. There is a rising consciousness of the need for both a broad range of housing types and their provision to all segments of American society. A political argument for housing is made by Fainstain in *The Just City*, in which she criticizes New York as a negative example and recognizes Amsterdam’s recent history of democratic access to housing as an exemplar.⁸⁵ There, a broad range of housing types is being pursued. Stern, Fishman, and Tilove have documented the exemplars of early-twentieth-century garden suburbs that should be considered for imitation in Transect 3 Sub-Urban or perhaps Transect 4 General Urban Zones.⁸⁶ Parolek has observed the “Missing Middle” of the housing market—that is, dwellings for those interested in more than an apartment building flat or garden apartment and less than the typical single-detached house.⁸⁷ The US Department of Housing and Urban Development has partnered with New Urbanists in the production of a public housing model to replace the eighty-year-old model in which disadvantaged populations are accommodated in residential towers on what amount to urban reservations.

The HOPE VI Program, a federal initiative to replace large-scale housing projects with smaller-scale residences in economically diverse areas, is criticized for mismanagement, and there are questions as to whether the results are so positive as to justify the uprooting of families and public housing communities. In the case of the Chicago Housing Authority’s elimination of the Cabrini-Green Homes, the *Harvard Law Review* questioned public accountability in this process of privatization.⁸⁸ Bohl provides a reminder that the federal government’s first efforts in public housing were exemplary: for example, Union Park Gardens, Wilmington, Delaware, and Hilton Village, Newport News, Virginia.⁸⁹ Cisneros and Engdahl argue that, in the nation as a whole, HOPE VI has been a successful move to subsidize residents in townhouse-type homes without the stigma of “the Projects,” by distributing subsidized housing throughout the city.⁹⁰

Mixed-use reintegration of the city reverses the 1933 “Functional City” theory of the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne, under which cities would be divided into functional zones (i.e., dwelling, work, recreation, and transport). Contemporary efforts at reintegration can be found in

public housing, hospitals, grocery stores, and schools. For example, public housing is no longer being physically isolated by what Klemek calls “race moats.” Couvillion, Kraus, and Waters project that as health systems re-conceive their organizations as components of wellness networks, hospitals will be integrated seamlessly into communities.⁹¹ McMahon, Eitler, and Thorig discern a trend, evident since the 1980s, away from single-use public schools and toward schools as places that can ensure equal access to community amenities such as meeting halls and athletic facilities.⁹² Similarly, building smaller-format neighborhood grocery stores makes fairer access to high-quality food possible.

Finally, we might consider the contributions of Design Influencing Social Practice in assessing the extent to which such social practice follows community engagement in the built environment. Hillier and colleagues see the relationship of behavior to urbanism as a probabilistic encounter afforded by a city’s spatial network in connectivity.⁹³ Stewart Brand asserts that while buildings are always predictions of how people will use them, these predictions are invariably wrong; he splits such conceptualizations of buildings as predictors into “High Road” architecture that is intended to define the projected human use, and often fails, and “Low Road” architecture that “can cope with changing requirements, appropriation, and emergent behavior.”⁹⁴ Latour, noted in Ralf Brand, describes behavior-petal design as having an attractiveness and generosity that enable one’s ability to do the desired thing.⁹⁵ Key, however, is the claim by Kaytal that architecture may have its most powerful influence toward what is desired socially when it facilitates “interaction and monitoring by members of the community.... In this way, the power of architecture to influence social norms can even eclipse that of law.”⁹⁶

Brand looks to Efremenko’s call for the inhabitants of an urban design project to be included at a higher level on the participation ladder—from users who must be placated and perhaps informed, to, at a high level, empowered partners who perhaps ultimately will be in control.⁹⁷ There must be a “fusion of horizons” by means of dialogue between the providers and users, rather than an invitation to public participation at the end as a means of validating the delivered solution or as a strategy of staving off protest when the project is presented to the public as a *fait accompli*.⁹⁸ The users, not having fixed and therefore predictable interests, must be invited into the negotiation process early as the “ultimate experts in user behavior, as co-designers.”⁹⁹ Public participation of this kind will rarely lead to rigorous and behavior-fugal designs, but, rather, to generous behavior-petal solutions supporting socially desired, sustainable practices characterized by economic viability, ecological integrity, and social equity.¹⁰⁰

Leidenberger summarizes the complexity of the present challenge: “Urban planning has always been a highly political endeavor” constituting the “enlightened public intervention for the greater social good.” Yet who defines “the greater social good,” and who forms part of the “public” that is to intervene? He continues: “Accepting a postmodern sensibility that alerts us to a more democratic and multicultural decision-making process, the key question is how professional, and thus elitist, expertise can operate within the context of a broad-based and participatory polity.”¹⁰¹

Klemek analyzes the collapse of “the urban renewal order” in the 1960s and 1970s, in particular two of its results: the planning community’s acceptance of a new methodology in which citizens are advocates for the modest ambitions of neighborhoods, and planners’ embraces a model, no longer Modernism, but, rather, the vernacular of cities.¹⁰² Krieger comes to a similar conclusion, that urban designers will have to settle for less ambitious plans, becoming instead “effective collaborators, willing participants in true interdisciplinary endeavors, and advocates for ideas not always their own, ideas that have the potential to rally others around higher expectations, not expedient solutions.”¹⁰³ Kelbaugh, a critical New Urbanist, sees the relationship of urban designers to neighborhoods and to cities as falling into three patterns. In the first of these, *Everyday Urbanism*, the designers work for nonprofits, are populist in their rhetoric, and celebrate the ordinary nature of incremental changes. In the second, *New Urbanism*, adherents’ efforts to re-urbanize cities were limited to greenfield site developments rather than cities where such re-urbanization had been made illegal by zoning ordinances, achieves, in Kelbaugh’s view, “the most coherent sense of community,” one with “Latin clarity and order.” Kelbaugh, however, criticizes this same lexicon of building types and places as potentially inimical to the very community New Urbanists seek to manifest. Practitioners of the third pattern, *Post-Urbanism*, work for powerful institutions and corporations on prestigious projects for audiences “ranging from subaltern minorities

to middle-class consumers to urbane cognoscenti and glitterati.” While “Post-Urbanists have described their discordant and exceptional insertions into the city as examples of open, democratic urbanism.... Post-Urbanist site plans look exciting ... [but] when realized, they are often overscaled and empty of pedestrians.”¹⁰⁴

The community design charrette, in which stakeholders work toward conflict resolution and, ultimately, problem solving, may be the best practice by which a local government empowers its citizens, as on-the-ground experts, to criticize a place’s weaknesses and to express, as a community, its shared values. These are processes that allow for, in Sennett’s words, the subjectivity of the incomplete. Communities, he claims with MacIntyre, will be “errant, conflictual, non-linear [and] less re-assuring, more febrile ideas of living together.”¹⁰⁵ Wendell Berry contrasts thinking locally with abstracting globally. The power of his argument boils down to this: “The right scale in work gives power to affection.”¹⁰⁶ Thinking locally, that is, applying circumstantial judgment or practical reasoning, constitutes locality and community. It follows that architecture, when scaled to place, effects one’s love for a community. To put it another way, *architectural character, as a constituting of place, embodies one’s appreciation of a particular place.*

Nicholas Wolterstorff has said, “Architecture, by expressing and shaping our forms of life, engages the way we live.”¹⁰⁷ We build for a form of life and, when built, these built forms or types then shape forms of life. Contrary to what most say, it is not just ideas that shape the form of one’s life but the built environment that shapes that form of life. The aim of a new civic art, as a form of responsive place-making, is not to re-create a city as a work of art but to provide an environment that supports the life of the city in artful ways.¹⁰⁸

IV. CREATIVE PLACE-MAKING AND AN ART OF THE URBAN IMAGINATION

We have seen how conceiving of The Beautiful as an Endowment for cities draws our attention to the significance of architecture, planning, and the physical placement of communities. The built environment is not simply a backdrop to a city’s quality of life; nor is aesthetic appeal a decorative afterthought to the functional prerogatives of zoning and development practices. How cities and their sidewalks are scaled, rather, has everything to do with how their citizens will embody such places affectively, and how such places will embody the character of their citizens’ values. Thinking through a lens of beauty allows us to regard the built environment as the formal structure through which we might fully engage in the life of a place, not just inhabit it. As we have seen, design and planning professionals have at times referred to their work as a “civic art,” the aim of which is “place-making.” While this outlook was especially prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century, as Bohl notes, the “conscious act of place-making and community building” has lapsed under more recent “zoning, policymaking and real estate development practices.”¹⁰⁹ Civic art is at its best when it envisions “more beautiful communities” and seeks to be “responsive rather than dogmatic in the application of precedents and principles.”¹¹⁰

The language of “place-making” is evoked today in a different but related quarter to which we now turn: the arts and culture initiatives that constitute yet another aspect of civic thriving. Organizations like ArtPlace America and The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), for example, seek to enable “responsiveness” on the level of reinvigorating the neighborhoods of the built environment. The focus on place-making entails active support for the artistic pursuits that make up the life of communities from within, in order to create an aesthetic architecture of our cities.

Mindful of these links between the ‘structural’ place-making of the built environment and what we will call “creative” place-making, we now shift our focus toward examining the role of aesthetics and the arts in promoting human flourishing within the city. In doing so, we elucidate both the intrinsic value of The Beautiful in the aesthetic life of urban society and its instrumental role in the service of practical outcomes. In view of this dual potential, we examine beauty as a form of “creative capital”:

a resource that at once exceeds the logic of capitalism and profitability yet actively contributes to economic and other forms of civic revitalization and participation. Our discussion also engages The Beautiful's relation to a range of existing metrics and indices, qualitative forms of assessment in particular, and its interaction with other Endowments.

The art of place-making, thus considered, reveals the dynamic way in which The Beautiful can operate as a coefficient that multiplies the creative and caring endeavors of citizens and institutions committed to promoting the public good. To envision this possibility, we document how a city's aesthetic orientation can support a fuller consciousness of an individual's place in a given community and also a richer mode of engaging the common good.

Our discussion proceeds by way of three considerations: (a) aesthetic challenges and possibilities, (b) beauty's social architecture (or art as a public good), and (c) the cultural-community value of creative place-making. Although not all artistic practices or contexts need be considered "beautiful" in order to be celebrated, for the purposes of this brief, we follow the general belief that beauty is operative in and evoked by the arts and their relationship to cultural assets and formation. By "art," we acknowledge the traditional ("fine art") focus on painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and music; yet we take a wider view to include visual art in multiple forms (i.e., performance art, theater, film, photography, design, and conceptual art).

A. AESTHETIC CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Before we turn to some of the concrete ways in which aesthetics informs the social architecture of communities and offers a dynamic resource for creative place-making, it is important to position some of the practical philosophical concerns that underlie our focus on The Beautiful's relationship to the city. These issues overlap with issues addressed in other Endowments, namely The True, The Just and Well-Ordered, and The Good. The topics we address here are *aesthetic point of view* and *aesthetic experience*; we offer them as what may be called "conceptual indicators" of the Endowment of The Beautiful.

1. Affirming the Aesthetic Point of View

Although it may seem obvious to artists and those who appreciate their work, the idea that aesthetic practices can and should evoke important claims or questions about truth and meaning in society is not one that can be taken for granted. Art theorists, and artists themselves, are often already aware of a tension felt today between the domain of scientific and utilitarian reasoning and the domain of what we may call aesthetic knowledge. When it comes to determining what are most "useful" and "trustworthy" as forms of social and intellectual capital, common sense leans in favor of the authority of the rational, factual, and pragmatic. We have noted this deference in our discussion of urban planning, and it has arisen within other Endowments more broadly, such as the status of educational policies with respect to The True, or expert knowledge with respect to The Just. It has to do with what can be called an epistemological bias—a body of assumptions we tend to make, often subtly, about the ideas and forms of expression that should count as "true" and "meaningful." Certainly, a bias toward the scientific and pragmatic is not altogether misguided.¹¹¹ However, a person or initiative invested in beauty through the arts may then well wonder: Is there not an epistemological framework that celebrates the way artistic endeavors inform and enable our knowledge of ourselves and of the world around us?

In view of these tensions, philosopher Anthony O'Hear stresses the kind of knowledge at work within the aesthetic dimension of life, observing that "even in the poorest of circumstances people have a yearning for order and beauty. This yearning will reveal itself in the ways they organize their shelter, prepare their meals, dress themselves and respond to natural sights and sounds. Aesthetics pervades human life, even at its most basic level and even in fulfilling the most basic physical needs."¹¹² The problem, he continues, is that when we set about to circumscribe what should count, formally, as significant "knowledge," this intuitive dimension falls to the side. We are, he says, "shy of beauty," even though our ordinary point of view already enjoys and assumes "the role aesthetic values ought to play in our lives."¹¹³ Art critic and cultural observer Dave Hickey makes a similar observation about the role of

aesthetics in our day-to-day “view from the terrace.” He reasons that “it’s hard to deny the fact that all of us, in the conduct of our daily lives, pursue beauty, happiness, and justice.”¹¹⁴ Aesthetic experiences, like other intrinsic aims, affect us and shape us in ways that sometimes elude the parameters of the scientific utility. Beauty in fact has the ability “to locate us as physical creatures in a live, ethical relationship with other human beings in the physical world” (italics added).¹¹⁵

These insights suggest that we need not be “shy of beauty” or the aesthetic point of view in our conceptual accounts of what counts as true, meaningful, or significant on the level of lived and shared experience. But what if this is not the only issue? Suppose we are willing to accept, indeed support, the kind of contributions that aesthetic practices bring to the lived sense of our cities and their community architecture—what then? Can we stress the value of the aesthetic point of view without implying certain norms about what artistic expression should look like, what beauty “is,” and what artistic works will ultimately best serve the thriving of cities? Our purpose here cannot extend to entering technical debates about artistic taste, form, ideology, process, or definition, important as they are. Still, in order to stress how the aesthetic architecture of cities is both already vital and deserving of more care, we need to specify some fundamental elements that speak to the question: What is *at work* in the work of art? Here, a path of affirmation becomes possible, and does so in a way that unsettles the relatively recent assumption that art and beauty are matters relegated to the detached, leisurely pursuits of the private consumer.¹¹⁶

2. Identifying Focal Elements of Aesthetic Experience

This brings us to the question of *aesthetic experience* and the way in which beauty, (broadly, and art, specifically, can be recognized and valued even in the absence of strict definition or consensus. Specifically, “how” artistic beauty stirs us, drives us, or shapes our beliefs and values—even our sense of shared identity—has much to do with an essential connection between artistry and community life. Two brief considerations inform this point and deepen our attention to the aesthetic point of view. The first consideration has to do with how the “sense” of artistic beauty can have a healing effect on the experience of alienation. In his seminal essay “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer surveys the history of Western art and draws this lesson: “We learn that however unexpected our encounter with beauty may be, it gives us an assurance that the truth does not lie far off and inaccessible to us, but can be encountered in the disorder of reality with all its imperfections, evils, errors, extremes, and fateful confusions.”¹¹⁷ In a similar vein, O’Hear observes that “in the experience of beauty we get a sense that, despite the problems of alienation thrown up in different ways. . . we are nevertheless at home in the world.”¹¹⁸ Art can indeed enhance our self-awareness as beings living in an “ethico-political world.”¹¹⁹ Artistic beauty can express and indeed inform “the ethical life of the people” in a way that allows them “to recognize themselves in their own world.”¹²⁰ Against the threat of personal confusion and alienation, then, artistic beauty helps remind us that truth and meaning are possible, and locates the headwaters of this “sense” by situating us once more in the ethical field of our interpersonal dimension.

The second consideration has to do with how works of art involve us in the very mode of their meaning. According to Gadamer, artistic beauty enables us to involve our “reason” in forms of creative “play.” To understand this point, we have to consider how aesthetic experience is not just a matter of outcome, but consists fundamentally in an activity: a movement of the imagination that involves both artist and audience. To describe this as “play” does not mean that the artist herself is beside the point, or that art is a frivolous game. It means that a work of art does its work by using forms that inspire something in the viewer: a “play” of the imagination. While works of art are autonomous, this phenomenon of “play” shows that the “work” of their meaning is necessarily participatory. It is hard to appreciate or involve ourselves in this capacity if we simply assume that works of art are “objects” to be valued in terms of their utilitarian function. Instead, we must be prepared to admire a work for its integrity, even as we contribute to the “play” that enables this integrity to reveal itself. The insight has important social implications. Extrapolating a bit, one could say that artistic meaning and beauty are phenomena relevant to human communities not just for what they accomplish, but even already at the level of their precise conditions of possibility. And if aesthetic creation and experience involve a shared horizon, it stands to reason that artistic presences in our cities do as well.

Taken together, these conceptual indicators position us well to think more specifically about the value of urban artistic practice in a democratic culture: the aesthetic architecture in which the arts communicate those needs and insights that might otherwise be lost in the swirl of pragmatic pluralism or consumer-driven models of thriving.

B. BEAUTY'S SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE: ART AS A PUBLIC GOOD

We have begun to see how “beauty” is a phenomenon that, even at the level of its aesthetic genesis, holds important possibilities for individual experience and the social order. But what about the “place” of these possibilities *within* the practical forces of urban life—the architecture of the body politic? What has beauty to do with the tangled yet vital nexus of social macrostructures, civil society, and cultural policy? How do the arts sectors of our cities stand within the push and pull of proprietary markets, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations? Again we come to an issue that concerns scholars and practitioners alike, and cannot here be addressed in full. However, some compelling indicators for training our thought along these political lines can be found in Lambert Zuidervaart’s important study *Art in Public: Politics, Economics, and a Democratic Culture*.¹²¹ Following Zuidervaart, we want to stress two points of orientation that help contextualize the Endowment of The Beautiful in this vein: (a) the nature of art as a *public good* in civil society and (b) art as an autonomous yet interconnected form of healthy *participation* in the social economy. These emphases will also reveal how The Beautiful intersects more tangibly with the Endowments of The Just and Well-Ordered and The Prosperous.

1. Civic Systems and Their Goods

Individual artists, arts and culture initiatives, and the communities that support them are well aware that the right blend of talent and opportunity is integral to the good of the city. If we are serious about enabling the practices of beauty to shape our cultural commons in a meaningful way, it is not enough simply to hope such connections will arrange themselves organically. We have to think at the level of systems, something we are perhaps more accustomed to doing with respect to issues of infrastructure, safety, economic investment, education, or health care.

Zuidervaart’s systemic attention furnishes a framework for regarding art as a *public good*. He begins by appraising the limitations that contemporary market-based economic analyses and instrumentalist political liberalism bring to this issue. Here, our understanding of a social “good” must first overcome a “cultural deficit” prone to evaluate art on the basis of benefit principles alone, and a “democratic deficit” prone to understand administrative state involvement in the arts on the basis of an insufficient conception of public justice. These concerns in many ways echo and specify the tension noted above between the rational-scientific and aesthetic points of view. Both deficits highlight the need to reposition the question of aesthetic value within a larger reflection on institutional and cultural pluralism, and the goals of a deliberative democracy. One way forward is captured in Zuidervaart’s attention to the macrostructure of “civil society.” The term denotes a site of vital interface between the proprietary economy and the administrative state, as well as that constitutive element of the democratic communication so crucial to mediating the meaning of public goods. It is here that we find one normative dimension for understanding how the arts are “societally important,”¹²² and thus a specific resource for situating beauty more conspicuously in a trajectory of public thriving.

2. Civic Participation and the Arts

Thinking in terms of the “public character of art” has to do with identifying how the body politic needs the arts and the arts need the political and economic systems that, all things considered, too often undermine creative communication and exert systemic pressures on arts-related initiatives. Prioritizing the arts in society requires the lead players (institutions, initiatives, and decision-making bodies) to recognize one another’s contributions and to exercise together a resolved *participation* in the life of public goods. The point combines the better sides of democratic idealism and pragmatic public policy. The case is not just for the good of art, but for a healthy transformation of culture. Toward such ends, we need to consider how the arts indeed strengthen civil society and merit more genuine participation

in the social economy. Doing so, in turn, requires us to consider “participation” with respect the work of “nonprofit, mutual benefit, and nongovernmental organizations,”¹²³ and how their work on behalf of the arts happens in relation to the proprietary market and government organizations. Zuidervaart acknowledges how the mission-driven character of civic sector organizations might not always comport with the capitalist criteria of the proprietary market, but says that this need not weaken the call to think of art and its public in terms of societal and structural transformation.¹²⁴ Mutual respect and recognition can go a long way. The proprietary economy needs to mitigate its more reductive models of participation, and arts organizations need to promote “artistic practices and relations that are socio-cultural goods.”¹²⁵

Alongside these points, it is important to remain sensitive to the balance between artistic autonomy and social inter-subjectivity. The balance parallels an important dynamic in our practical philosophical points about how artistic beauty works. In terms of *aesthetic production*, what the artist puts into a work is realized most fully in the event of aesthetic experience, in which viewers engage with the work. In terms of *social architecture*, the arts indeed enjoy an internal autonomy, but their underlying dimensions are always already interpersonal; as processes, products, and events, they involve multiple publics. The authenticity of any resulting *participation*, for Zuidervaart, depends on a delicate balance between intrinsic artistic worth and extrinsic practices of imaginative disclosure. In other words, what individual artists and arts sectors both do inherently involves an outward movement. Here, drawing on the work of Charles Taylor, Zuidervaart speaks about the compatibility of artistic authenticity and social responsibility within a democracy. The point parallels the ethico-political trajectory of aesthetic experience highlighted by Gadamer and O’Hear. If art is a social institution, then the goal of “imaginative disclosure” (in, for example, public art in new genres) necessarily involves the responsible contribution of collaborators, critics, and publics. The “co-responsibility in the creative process”¹²⁶ in this sense concerns the place of the arts sector within an urban society, as well as the more particular place of a given work of art within an individual’s experience of beauty in that society.

All told, Zuidervaart equips us to discern how beauty, as manifested in artistic practices and priorities, “can foster the growth of democratic culture.”¹²⁷ Understanding the public character of art is not about proving the bottom-line profitability of museums and galleries, performances and festivals, nor about extending special entitlements to appease constituencies. It is about appreciating how the arts are poised in a unique way to serve the common good. However, it is not enough to stay on this rather macro level of The Beautiful’s broader relationship to urban thriving. Mindful of this framework for art in relation to civic/social architecture, we now turn to a discussion of beauty in the more specific context of urban cultural districts and community arts endeavors.

C. THE CULTURAL-COMMUNITY VALUE OF CREATIVE PLACE-MAKING

One lesson we have learned thus far is that taking an Endowment seriously often means re-evaluating our culture’s default modes of measurement and evaluation. With The Beautiful in particular, it would be tempting now to gild the issue by reporting on the manifold ways in which the fine arts institutions and offerings of cities enhance financial profiles, invigorate consumer tourism, and refine public taste. Certainly there are important cases to be made on such fronts. However, we opt here for a more distributive milieu with respect to beauty’s role in place-making, one that has much to do with mobilizing both formal and informal artistic assets at the level of neighborhood communities and the cultural districts surrounding them.¹²⁸ This is the context in which the aesthetic architecture of a city, and thus the seedbed of The Beautiful as an Endowment, must ultimately and actively be understood.

Establishing beauty in terms of the cultural and community value of a city’s arts sector and initiatives requires attention to two overlapping areas. Drawing on recent literature within the discourses of creative place-making and the social impact of the arts, we focus here on (a) paradigmatic research models that address arts and culture as *natural assets* to community architecture and ecology, and (b) related research and practices that address the arts and culture as investments in *social value and neighborhood revitalization*. Exploring these areas will involve at least two shifts in perception—overcoming

the “widely held perception that artists play a transitory role” in community development, and, for policymakers, becoming “more sensitive to the cultural ecology within which [arts and culture] organizations operate.”¹²⁹ Exploring these areas will also involve us in concerns that pertain to issues raised under The Just and Well-Ordered and The Prosperous.

Many contemporary advocates for the arts in urban contexts have appealed to the economic matrix set forth by Richard Florida in his work on the “creative class” and “creative economy.”¹³⁰ However, there are precious few benchmarks for evaluating the more broadly “social” benefits of the arts. Important exceptions include the work (sometimes in collaboration) of TRF, ArtPlace America, the Urban Institute’s Arts and Cultural Indicators Project, and the University of Pennsylvania’s Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP). Such ventures are mindful of the fact that determining the precise contribution of community arts and culture initiatives to urban thriving is not easy, and in fact compels researchers to think more carefully about the meaning of the word *contribution* itself.¹³¹ The good news is that several emerging frameworks are indeed serving this end. We take such paradigms to be an empirical and inductive complement to Zuidervaart’s more macro-level framework for appreciating art as a public good. But what are these paradigms, and how do they engender the kind of indicators that are relevant to localizing The Beautiful?

To begin, there is the framework of *place-making* understood broadly in relation to *community architecture*, an approach devoted to investigating the mosaic matrix through which a city’s creative activity and local well-being correspond. In keeping with the insights of TRF, in which “place-making” is embraced as a necessary and deliberate goal that mobilizes and improves the creative, cultural, and economic assets of urban districts, community “architecture” names what one could call an appropriate epistemology for understanding the patterns of interaction between people, programs, institutions, enterprises, and general demographic realities. So, for example, Jeremy Nowak’s 2007 TRF report calls for “a more comprehensive view of how creative activity, particularly community-based arts and culture, interacts within cities” so that TRF might then “stimulate even more integrated and effective action in the development of distressed urban places.”¹³² Four primary elements focus this “more comprehensive” orientation. First, attention is given to *social capital and civic institutions*, the relational matrix of urban communities in which neighborhood arts centers and public cultural events become a “staging ground for community identity and a source of neighborhood stability and growth.” Second, attention to *public assets and infrastructure* focuses on how links between public and private investments can serve to enable “social change, development and wealth creation,” and on how the design and use of public spaces speaks to the priority afforded the artistic sectors. Third, the element of *economic assets and market relationships* concerns how artists “can help reveal the potential for recovery inherent in many urban neighborhoods.” Fourth, community architecture involves *the flow of information, people, and capital* in which artists and community arts centers “have great potential as intermediaries capable of spanning diverse geographies, social classes, and ethnic groups.” The combined focus of these four primary elements amounts to a deliberate emphasis on supporting community-based arts and culture activities that promote lived “exchanges of value and meaning.”¹³³ (We return to the issue of place-making in more detail below).

The next paradigm is similar, but speaks more directly to the concerns of social research and policy outcomes by addressing *community development* and an arts-oriented *urban ecology*. In their 2007 SIAP report *Culture and Urban Revitalization*, Marc Stern and Susan Seifert seek to map the modes and measures of “community capacity building” in order to better influence “community development planning and policy” toward a more systems-oriented approach.¹³⁴ Building on a body of research on Philadelphia (initiated in 1994) and other cities, the SIAP study refers to quantitative indicators that document “the relationship between community arts and neighborhood vitality” and suggest “strong links between cultural engagement, community capacity-building, and neighborhood revitalization.” To better measure and appreciate such trends, Stern and Seifert propose an *ecological* approach to ascertaining the place of arts practices within “the social landscape of the city.” (The term is different from *architecture* and *publics*’ but has a similar impetus and spirit.) Following the work of Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, and Ian McHarg, SIAP articulates a “model of neighborhood-based creative economy” that is rooted in “the community cultural ecosystem.”¹³⁵ The point is to broaden the lateral field of

concerns in order to better examine the depths of the issue. The point is also motivated in large part by a need to repair an unproductive gap between two approaches to culture-based *development*: economic revitalization and community building. According to SIAP, market-based indicators alone (such as gentrification patterns) are not sufficient to assess the contribution of a community's creative capital to overall prosperity; neither are increases in arts districts themselves consistent indicators of economic vitality. The ecological model attempts to balance research foci according to the economic and social effects of the arts, together with the roles of nonprofit, commercial, and informal forms of culture-making and participation. Attending to the neighborhood lens ultimately compels us to think in terms of the *social value* of a *creative society* and not simply a *creative economy*.¹³⁶ Expression of the need to bridge between economic revitalization and community building very much echoes Zuidervaart's attention to thinking about the art sector of democratic civil society in terms of *public goods* and *participation*.

Though rooted in different enterprises and constituencies, each of these paradigms calls for a *broader recognition of the role of the arts in contributing to cultural vitality at the everyday level of community life*.¹³⁷ Greater mindfulness of city life at the neighborhood level allows investors, researchers, planners, and policymakers to recalibrate social goods and civic health upward from the grassroots of its component parts. In so doing, one learns to conceive of "economic and social regeneration" less as distinct priorities and more as collaborative principles springing from the same root.¹³⁸ Speaking in this way, we begin to evoke what could be called a "normative" measure for appreciating art's social impact, but one justifiably won from a "descriptive" account of the way neighborhoods form communities and communities form the character of cities.

V. CONCLUSION: THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF CREATIVE PLACE-MAKING AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As we see the greatest potential for the realization of our endowment in the Thriving Cities Project within the realm of arts and culture, we conclude with the following observations.

The paradigms we have discussed in this brief certainly do not exhaust all the ways of researching or enabling creative place-making and community-based arts. As an introduction, however, they prepare us to now turn our attention to more current indicators and pose the following questions: (a) In what ways are conceptions of community architecture and urban ecology advancing on this front? (b) Are community arts and culture initiatives having a social impact? We will limit our focus to a 2013 follow-up study by SIAP in collaboration with TRF: "*Natural*" *Cultural Districts: A Three-City Study*. Echoing the sensibilities of the paradigms advanced in the 2007 SIAP report, the study offers a still more refined approach to improving "our ability to invest in and monitor the impact of the arts on community revitalization."¹³⁹ It does so by giving further nuance to place-making as "an integrated and asset-based approach to community planning and design."

Focused on Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Seattle, and specific case studies in these cities, Stern and Seifert more deliberately relate the framework of community architecture to the sensibilities of urban ecology. Attention to the creative sector is further refined in the characterization of *natural cultural districts* as "a way to rethink the relationship of the arts and culture to neighborhood development" with reference to "the community cultural ecosystem." This approach does more than simply measure the efficacy of particular organizations or projects; it also appreciates cultural districts in terms of how they can grow or cluster "a concentration of cultural agents—organizations and businesses, artists and activists, residents and visitors." Stern and Seifert then show how such concentrations of cultural assets can serve to indicate levels of neighborhood revitalization. The research reveals how, for example, the promotion of "cultural clusters" can "improve prospects that a neighborhood will see its poverty rate decline and its population increase in a healthy way."¹⁴⁰ The asset-based approach to culture and revitalization also yields findings that continue to dispel both the myth of the transitory artist and the increasing faith in narrowly market-based strategies to mend the gaps in prosperity across cities.¹⁴¹

Surrounding these points, the 2013 SIAP/TRF study in fact makes two *paradigmatic advances* toward interpreting the social health of cities and promoting the kinds of policies and initiatives that clarify the contribution community arts might make to urban thriving.

First, the emphasis on creative place-making here involves supporting a more deliberate shift in metric formulation from large-scale organizational output to smaller-scale contextual assets. Stern and Seifert justify why, “rather than applying organizational metrics to judging the likelihood of future success, funders and policy-makers may choose to encourage the cultural diversification of districts.”¹⁴² This focus initiates an alternative discourse to the kind of cultural development reasoning and projects that, as noted in the 2007 SIAP study, are too readily “directed at *others*—tourists, conventioners, high-income downtown residents, and suburbanites,” and simply hope for the “‘trickle down’ of economic benefits to the region.”¹⁴³ Electing to focus on cultural diversification and the development of cultural districts prioritizes the resources for repairing the shortcomings of the *creative economy* with a *creative society* framework for place-making.

Second, the study acknowledges the compositional complexity of cultural districts (their diverse players and missions), but stresses how such districts are assets in need of long-term care. With respect to their focal cities, Stern and Seifert show how Jane Jacobs’s early distinction between “gradual” and “cataclysmic” money still very much serves the call to a prudent “stewardship” of our cultural districts as “*vulnerable habitats*.” This emphasis allows SIAP to identify and endorse the efficacy of long-term strategies for “arts-oriented urban policy” over the shorter-term “winner-take-all” view of economic prosperity.¹⁴⁴ This point challenges Richard Florida’s “creative class” model of urban improvement and its assumption that economic competitiveness combined with entrepreneurial genius will elevate the level of civic prosperity and social goods. Examples from Philadelphia and Seattle specify how respecting the pace of “project-based arts culture” serves the health of cities better. Furthermore, cultural districts that over time have more asset diversity enjoy more success than “districts dominated by a single type of asset.”¹⁴⁵ By accentuating the timing and diversity of assets in this manner, the analysis does much to recommend the long-term resourcefulness and promise of cultivating arts and culture resources as natural endowments to cities.¹⁴⁶

As for more detail concerning arts sectors and their measurable *social impact*, the findings, while only beginning to take shape, are already tempered in a rather instructive way. One would expect the broader attention to “creative social capital” to be verified by evidence of longer-term cultural fortitude, at the ground-floor level of community-based arts projects and their contribution to diverse cultural assets. Without disavowing this expectation, Stern and Seifert observe that the social impact itself is not “now” happening: “One surprise that has emerged from [the 2013 SIAP/TRF] study has been the degree to which art and culture are divorced at the community level.”¹⁴⁷ Does such a gap suggest that a model of urban thriving that otherwise seems supportive of arts and culture assets is, in effect, cautioned by its own findings? Clearly, this is an important question.

One reason for this apparent disconnect is that the arts sector of urban neighborhoods no longer has the support of public and philanthropic policy it enjoyed from the 1970s through the 1990s. The ecology of the late twentieth century saw “the sustaining and expansion of community-based arts centers in urban neighborhoods”; such institutions were in fact “more likely than mainstream arts to draw on vernacular and indigenous cultural traditions and encourage cross-disciplinary modes of artistic expression.”¹⁴⁸ Although contemporary arts funders do support initiatives in cultural equity, “their focus tends to be on diversifying elite cultural institutions rather than feeding the grassroots,” and thus leaves community-based arts and culture initiatives vulnerable (a concern that also pertains to issues raised in the brief on *The Prosperous*). In recent decades, “the number of cultural resources and rates of cultural participation in low-income neighborhoods have declined sharply.” The issue, then, is not that entertaining the relevance of beauty (as it operates through avenues of locally scaled initiatives) is a romantic but ineffective nicety. Rather, it concerns the problem of a social architecture in which “the divorce of the arts from culture hurts the arts sector and undermines its ability to have social impact.”¹⁴⁹ Where SIAP’s 2007 study determined that narrowly market-based strategies for social impact were (in themselves) neither accurate nor effective, the 2013 SIAP/TRF study finds that a broader vari-

ant of such strategies has produced a still more troubling state of affairs—even though the research invites us to think, plan, and act under a different paradigm.

It should be evident that contextualizing The Beautiful as an asset to urban thriving in many ways centers on the idea that the artistic and creative vitality of cities can yield a pronounced impact on the social—and not just economic—strength of urban life. It also concerns us—as individuals, precisely in the context of our lived sense of who we are, how we live, and with whom we are intrinsically connected. We have suggested as much by way of indicators drawn from practical philosophical considerations, a macro-societal conception of art as a public good, and research paradigms that advance attention to the cultural and community value of urban arts sectors. Each of these touchstones speaks uniquely to the aesthetic architecture of a city, and to the manner in which *beauty is a practice through which we find and make our place amid the physical and social landscapes of urban life*. We have focused in this brief on the role of the arts in this itinerary toward creative place-making, and we have done so in necessarily technical terms. But aesthetic beauty, we have also implied, has a certain mystery to it. It does not always accommodate itself to formulaic calculations or benchmarks, and sometimes shows recalcitrance before reductive definition. Yet such is the wonder, the appeal, and the urgency of the arts. Though the aesthetic architecture of a city is not an easy matter to encircle and appraise, seeking out the place and practices of The Beautiful across our neighborhoods and broader networks allows us to engage and affirm our urban imagination all the more.

We suggest that the intersection of aesthetics and civic virtue, conceptualized in terms of place-making as a civic art, is a particularly promising area for future research. Place-making, in its varied dimensions and possibilities, captures a significant array of functions along the continuum of human ecology. It speaks to the most fundamental need of individuals to have a place in the world, as part of a community that supports their full place-making potential; it also speaks to the creative activity by which this is made possible. Although not addressed in this brief, Elizabeth Meyer’s “manifesto” titled “Sustaining Beauty” and the Biophilic Cities movement offer further platforms for exploring the dynamic interrelation between the aesthetic response to place and the cultivation of care for the shared urban patrimony at the heart of the Thriving Cities Project.¹⁵⁰

NOTES

(Endnotes)

- 1 In his study of South African apartheid within the frame of aesthetics, John de Gruchy explores the relationships between justice and beauty and injustice and ugliness, in *Christianity, Art, and Transformation: Theological Aesthetics in the Struggle for Social Justice* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001). His arguments may be usefully applied to examples closer to home, for example, to project housing in the United States and its larger social effects, as studied by Richard Sennett and others.
- 2 As an indication of beauty's potential to bring together diverse sectors of society, see, for example, Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, "People and Places: Public Attitudes to Beauty," a study in the United Kingdom commissioned by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2010, available at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/people-and-places.pdf>. See also Richard Florida, Charlotta Mellander, and Kevin Stolarick, "Beautiful Places: The Role of Perceived Aesthetic Beauty in Community Satisfaction" (Martin Prosperity Institute Working Paper No. MPIWP-008), University of Toronto, March 2009, <http://www.creativeclass.com/rfcdgb/articles/Beautiful%20places.pdf>.
- 3 Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett, Plan of Chicago, ed. Charles Moore (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 4.
- 4 See Mel Scott, *American City Planning since 1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 1–24; William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 38.
- 5 Jon Peterson, "The City Beautiful Movement: Forgotten Origins and Lost Meanings," *Journal of Urban History* 2 (1976), 429.
- 6 Stephen Ward, *Planning the Twentieth Century* (Chichester, England: Wiley, 2002), 69.
- 7 Carl Smith, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 12–14.
- 8 Austin W. Lord (chairman), Report of the Columbus Plan Commission (Columbus, OH: City of Columbus, 1908), 71.
- 9 Daniel Bluestone, "Detroit's City Beautiful and the Problem of Commerce," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47 (1988), 249.
- 10 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 82–83.
- 11 Bluestone, "Detroit's City Beautiful," 247.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 89–92.
- 13 Mel Scott, *American City Planning*, 11; Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 14.
- 14 Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning*, 24; Hall, 87.
- 15 Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design since 1880*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2004), 148–50.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 127–28.
- 17 Stephen J. Witfield, *A Companion to Twentieth-Century America* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 203; Hall, 150, 276.
- 18 Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 159.
- 19 Eugenie L. Birch, "Radburn and the American Planning Movement," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 46 (1980): 424–31. Available at University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons, http://repository.upenn.edu/cplan_papers/31.
- 20 Mark B. Lapping, "Toward a Social Theory of the Built Environment: Frank Lloyd Wright and Broadacre City," *Environmental Review* 3 (1979), 11.
- 21 Reference to Le Corbusier in *Toward a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (New York, NY: Architectural Press, 1946), 269, as cited by Jan Woudstra, "The Corbusian Landscape: Arcadia or No Man's Land?" *Garden History* 28 (2000), 139.
- 22 Lapping, "Toward a Social Theory," 12, quoting Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Living City* (New York, NY: Horizon Press, 1958), 74.
- 23 Robert C. Twombly, "Undoing the City: Frank Lloyd Wright's Planned Communities," *American Quarterly* 24 (1972): 539–40; Lapping, "Toward a Social Theory," 13.
- 24 Twombly, 542–45.
- 25 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Modern Architecture: Being the Kahn Lectures for 1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931), 91.
- 26 From Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme* (Paris, France: Editions Crès, 1925), as quoted by Emma Dummett in "An Unlikely Influence: Le Corbusier and the Garden City Movement," *Rural and Urban: Architecture between Two Cultures*, ed. Andrew Ballantyne (London, England: Routledge, 2010), 184.
- 27 Dummett, "An Unlikely Influence."
- 28 This quote refers to the subtitle of Le Corbusier's 1928 book *The Radiant City: Elements of a Doctrine of Urbanism to Be Used as the Basis of Our Machine-Age Civilization*.
- 29 Woudstra, "The Corbusian Landscape," 139–42.
- 30 Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 209–10.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 144.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 227–29.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 331.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 237.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 237–38.
- 36 Stacy C. Davis, Susan W. Diegel, and Robert G. Boundy, *Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 30* (Washington, DC: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, US Department of Energy, 2011), 175.
- 37 Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 230.
- 38 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, NY: Random House, 1961), 17.
- 39 Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 234.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 235.
- 41 Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action: Towards a Christian Aesthetic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980).
- 42 Richard Sennett, "The Open City," accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.richardsennett.com/site/senn/templates/general2.aspx?pageid=38&cc=gb>.
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- 44 Sennett, "The Open City."
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- 46 *Ibid.*
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- 110 *Ibid.*, 5, 6. Such priorities were evident in many ways among design professionals and community leaders in the late nineteenth and early centuries. Imagining and carrying out the art of good place-making, Bohl explains, was a collaborative endeavor, "a mainstream conversation in which different points of view, including the public's standards for firmness, commodity, and delight, moved pens across pages" (12-13). Bohl references this near-creedal statement by Raymond Unwin in 1909: "Civic art is too often understood to consist in filling our streets with marble fountains, dotting our squares with groups of statuary, twinning our lamp-posts with wriggling acanthus leaves or dolphins' tails, and our buildings with meaningless bunches of fruit and flowers tied up with impossible stone ribbons. . . . In desiring powers for town planning our town communities are seeking to be able to express their needs, their life, and their aspirations in the outward form of their towns, seeking as it were, freedom to become the artists of their own cities, portraying on a gigantic canvas the expression of their life" (13). But the twentieth century's fate, Bohl continues, was disappointing: "The disintegration of cultures of good place-making into ever more narrowly defined areas of expertise parallels the decline and fall of civic art throughout the remainder of the twentieth century" (13).
- 111 See Anthony O'Hear, *Philosophy in the New Century* (London, England: Continuum, 2001), 75 77. The progress of modern science has increased the reach of human understanding, for example, in domains as diverse as quantum theory, astrophysics, electricity and magnetism, and chemistry and biology (see O'Hear, 75 77). Corresponding developments in technology advance the practical benefits of theoretical knowledge in broader quality-of-life issues, marshaling what we know to be a productive collaboration between research, development, and entrepreneurship.
- 112 *Ibid.*, 102.

- 113 Ibid., 103.
- 114 Dave Hickey, *The Invisible Dragon: Essays on Beauty*, rev. ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 79.
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- 116 Leisure pursuits and recreation, which form part of the realm of The Beautiful as envisioned by the Thriving Cities Project, are not addressed in this brief, as they are typically the dimension most accounted for in mainstream assessments of city life.
- 117 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Bernasconi, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 15.
- 118 O'Hear, *Philosophy in the New Century*, 121, Gadamer notes, with reference to Plato, "To see things in the world and to attempt to confront our fate as beautiful is to perceive the world as not ultimately alien, and ourselves as not necessarily alienated" (Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 120).
- 119 Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 114.
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- 121 Lambert Zuidervaart, *Art in Public: Politics, Economics, and a Democratic Culture* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 122 Ibid., 91.
- 123 Ibid., 132.
- 124 Ibid., 151.
- 125 Ibid., 168.
- 126 Ibid., 263 64.
- 127 Ibid., 269.
- 128 Artists themselves can be a natural guide in this attunement. According to Jeremy Nowak, "Artists are expert at uncovering, expressing, and re-purposing the assets of place from buildings and public spaces to organizations and communal stories. They are *natural* place-makers who assume—in the course of making a living—a range of civic and entrepreneurial roles that require both collaboration and self-reliance." See Jeremy Nowak, *The Power of Placemaking. A Summary of Creativity and Neighborhood Development: Strategies for Community Investment* (Philadelphia, PA: The Reinvestment Fund, 2007), 4.
- 129 Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, "Natural" Cultural Districts: A Three-City Study [Report Summary] (Philadelphia, PA: Social Impact of the Arts Project, 2013), 16.
- 130 See, e.g., Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2005).
- 131 According to SIAP's Stern and Seifert, for example, notwithstanding increasing numbers of community arts initiatives, the body of data specifically connecting "community arts with the process of neighborhood revitalization," and cultural participation is still emerging. (See Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, *Culture and Urban Revitalization: A Harvest Document* (Philadelphia, PA: Social Impact of the Arts Project, 2007), 45.
- 132 Nowak, *The Power of Placemaking*, 3.
- 133 Ibid., 4, 5.
- 134 Stern and Seifert, *Culture and Urban Revitalization*, 34, 50. The 2007 SIAP study calls attention to three contextual categories that speak to community architecture and the foci just noted, and supplement our sense of what Zuidervaart pictured under the heading "publics." First, there is the *new urban reality*, which includes increased social diversity, the emergence of young adult districts, and the challenges posed by economic inequality within the evolving urban form constituted by architecture and city planning. Second, there is the *changing structure of the creative sector*, a phenomenon composed of, for example, increased performance exchange in the arts, the proliferation of informal arts activity, and emerging small markets that cater to broad (as opposed to niche) markets. Third, the urban context is marked significantly by a shift toward *transactional politics* and the interactive decision making that enables discussions and debates about "the meaning of culture in American and global society" (20), as opposed to "direct social policy" (19) and government-induced outcomes.
- 135 Ibid., 47, 65.
- 136 The particularity of the "neighborhood" level makes one more alert to issues of (following McHarg) "process and form" in "the creative adaptation of a community to its environment, and a synthesis of these factors toward the design of a humane city" (Stern and Seifert, *Culture and Urban Revitalization*, 65 66). Stern and Seifert point to SIAP findings that "document the relationship of cultural engagement to poverty reduction, population growth, the stabilization of diverse neighborhoods, and child welfare outcomes," in which case "the relationship of cultural participation to revitalization has been particularly impressive" (73). Admitting the somewhat ironic nature of the finding, Stern and Seifert hold that a "non-economic perspective on the social impact of the arts is *more likely* to generate neighborhood revitalization than an extensive focus on culture's direct economic impact" (72, emphasis added).
- 137 One primary example of this focus treated in SIAP's 2007 study is the United Kingdom's recent Creative London project. Broader in scale than discrete community arts foci, this initiative nevertheless helps establish the positive mainsprings of shifting attention from a prevailing focus on economic opportunity to one on social inclusion (Stern and Seifert, *Culture and Urban Revitalization*, 69), though without sacrificing the necessity of thinking in terms of economic goods. Characteristic of Creative London, say Stern and Seifert, is the manner in which "social inclusion and diversity are central to its role, not simply as a product of market maximization but as a result of New Labour's emphasis on merging economic and political goals" (70).
- 138 Stern and Seifert, *Culture and Urban Revitalization*, 71. Stern and Seifert continue: "For the creative economy to become the *creative society*, we need to see people as more than cogs in the economy. We need to view all urban residents as workers *and* citizens and develop an approach that acknowledges the importance of both" (71). This emphasis should not be mistaken as an instance of idealism. In this 2007 discussion, Stern and Seifert remain cautious but hopeful about the way projects such as Creative London illustrate the developing avenues of community ecology foci (on the research side) and related revitalization planning (on the policy and practice side).
- 139 Stern and Seifert, "Natural" Cultural Districts, 1.
- 140 Ibid.
- 141 Ibid., 17.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 Stern and Seifert, *Culture and Urban Revitalization*, 72.
- 144 Stern and Seifert, "Natural" Cultural Districts, 19.
- 145 Ibid., 22, 25.
- 146 Stern and Seifert explain: "A longer-term strategy would build on the social and economic benefits that cultural engagement generates in all types of cultural districts, including civic clusters. . . . Rather than using government and philanthropy to reinforce market forces, a long-view policy would compensate for market failure and promote social equity. Over time, the strategy would promote social inclusion and the productive utilization of all of the city's fiscal, human, and social capital" (Ibid., 20).
- 147 Ibid., 26.
- 148 Ibid., 26 27.
- 149 Ibid., 27.
- 150 Elizabeth K. Meyer, "Sustaining Beauty: The Performance of Appearance, a Manifesto in Three Parts," *Journal of Landscape Architecture* (Spring 2008), 6 24. For an overview of the Biophilic Cities movement, see, for example, the website of the Biophilic Cities Project, <http://biophiliccities.org/the-biophilic-cities-project>.