ueme: the underground electronic music experience

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Tim Eliasson is a well respected critic at MIT and has offered his perspectives on many of my previous projects.

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Rolando Mendoza is an MIT alumni of the Department of Architecture and currently resides in Los Angeles California, working for firms such as Morphosis and Frank Gehry Partners. He has offered insightful criticism on other projects I have proposed here at MIT.

**Julio Salcedo**
Julio Salcedo was born in Madrid, Spain. He studied architecture at Rice University and Harvard’s Graduate School of Design under Rafael Moneo and Enric Miralles among others. Salcedo has taught at the Harvard School of Design on several occasions.
The global electronic music scene has remained underground for its entire lifespan, momentarily materializing during an event, a place defined by the music performed and the people who desire the experience. As festivals around the globe begin to take shape, the identity of electronic music defines itself almost instantaneously with a strict desire to return to its roots and find a new place to redefine itself in the next moment.

The next moment is envisioned in Chicago. The city becomes a stage, through its current reputation as an event place, and through a new idea for an electronic music event alive within the interstitial spaces of the downtown. The art of electronic music, specifically the DJ and the sampling of music old and new, becomes the underlying process by which spaces are “sampled” to create a movement of light, sound and crowd through the dense architecture of Chicago’s loop.
"In the transient architectures of today's cities, spatial definition changes constantly as space is activated as much by electronic as by architectural artifacts. It is in tribute to the ephemeral nature of these inherently unstable images that the question of temporary exhibitions - whether explicitly staged or occurring fortuitously within architectural terrain - becomes important to the architecture of events."

Bernard Tschumi, *Event Cities*
to bill, without whom this thesis would never have been so important, so successful and so worthwhile.
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The global electronic music scene has remained underground for its entire lifespan, momentarily materializing during an event, a place defined by the music performed and the people who desire the experience. As festivals around the globe begin to take shape, the identity of electronic music defines itself almost instantaneously with a strict desire to return to its roots and find a new place to redefine itself in the next moment.

German techno guru Dr. Motte and 150 of his closest friends started a rave in 1989. They met at Berlin’s “Ku’damm” to celebrate and to demonstrate for tolerance and love. Since its birth, the mobile party attracts en-vogue DJs and an enthusiastic crowd of over one million people. In 2000, the Berlin Love Parade’s busiest year to date, 250 DJs on 53 wagons partied together with over a million guests. Recently, Austria, Israel, South Africa and Mexico have joined the craze and organized their own love parades, each taking on its own identity in its respective venue. In Detroit, the “birthplace” of techno music, International DJ’s unite once a year to celebrate a tradition of music unique to a city at the Detroit Electronic Music Festival. Millions of music lovers fill the streets around Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit and dance to multiple stages as everyone’s own individuality is expressed through the diverse range of music played over Memorial Day weekend.

Cities all around the country desire to allow a faceless music scene to define itself through an event, a happening which exposes those who take part in to the art of electronic music and the talent involved in the live projection of music to an enthusiastic audience underprovided for by the current “music” industry.
Theoretical

The core of this architectural thesis is to develop deployable tools for staging events that celebrate the underground electronic music scene’s inherent transparency while at the same time enabling it to be concretely imagined. The investigation of the spatial consequences of festivals like the Berlin's LoveParade and Detroit's Electronic Music Festival (Movement Festival) can be critically explored to provide a process for developing the design components for a new event which specifically celebrates the history of electronic music and the rise of the DJ. The use of the interstitial spaces of a city, the integration of built infrastructure in the staging of such a festival, and the sociological aspects related to those being influenced by the event all become influential design components to the planning of the event and its physical representations.

Physical

The underground music scene in Chicago is considered to be the birthplace of House music, a music characterized by deep, soulful rhythms and a unique beat that has come to define Chicago as a place for dance music. Designing an overarching theme for the event, as well as the event itself, that is functionally part of the city is the main goal of the installation/event. Enabling the emergence of a new form of musical representation and infecting the city on a cultural and global scale will also help to reinforce this theme as the public space of Chicago’s plazas and downtown pedestrian paths momentarily take on the identity of its own underground sound. The interstitial space created within Chicago’s downtown Loop will be the primary focal point of the event. A series of adaptable installations including mobile stages, lighting, descriptive scaffolding and sound equipment will take on new character within the existing architectural framework in the public plaza. These installations will take on new meaning during each event, influencing the next opportunity to define the
public space. Injecting life into the city is necessary to create energy around the event. The tools used in defining the event architecturally will remain "author-less" allowing the festival to take on its own identity. A dynamic theme with no clear origin will only further the amount of energy gathered to produce an interest in the underground music scene. The art of the experience alone will eventually define the event and allow it to sustain itself in Chicago as a recurring festival that constantly reinvents itself year after year.

Site Proposal

Downtown Chicago. Contrasting the traditional festival "machine" developed in Chicago over the last 10 years, this new event will take place within the Loop, an area of downtown Chicago bordered by the elevated train system which circles the business/financial/cultural center of the city.

Preliminary Study

Cheryl Hughes, Program Director for the Mayor's Office of Special Events in Chicago will be invited as a reader on my thesis committee. Her position will prove critical in helping to define a new way of thinking about festivals and their relationship to architecture within Chicago's existing built environment. The first set of mapping exercises will include an intense look at the map of downtown Chicago as well as the transition between public and private space at ground level. Civic plazas that line the streets of downtown Chicago serve as platforms everyday for rallies, protests and markets that define the life of Chicago. The Farmer's Market in Daley Center, the seasonal window exhibits at Marshall Field's and Chicago's newest architectural intervention, Millenium Park, are just a few examples. These plazas will be utilized in the design of the festival to begin to redefine a new map of a growing, moving festival within the spaces that connect them. Challenging the traditional boundaries of the city will also be incorporated into this mapping exercise. Physical, as well as perceived boundaries will begin to be questioned and scrutinized. How do Lake Michigan and the Chicago River serve as descriptive lines in the landscape of the built environment, and how will that affect the movement of the festival? Residential space contrasting retail and office space will also play a role as to how the festival defines itself physically. All of these factors will work together to influence the design of the essentials for the event.

Creating nodes of intervention, a new map emerges within the existing framework of the downtown grid. In this map will be multiple ways to connect open plazas with more intimate spaces between alleys and streets. The connections will begin to redefine the way people move through the space of downtown, contrasting the everyday commute and daily "grind" through the city streets.
Cheryl Hughes will help to provide information for a preliminary study of “festival requirements”. In general, this means there needs to exist an understanding of what is physically necessary for an event at a global scale (+100,000 people). Examples include emergency requirements, bathrooms, egress requirements, and festival guidelines that help to define what is in place in Chicago to date.

**Goals**

- Realizing a festival, directly tied to the electronic music scene in Chicago, within the interstitial space of the buildings within the downtown loop, which moves and creates a new flow of energy defined by people and the experience of the music itself.

- Creating a new perspective of the city through the event, educating those who experience the event and those who realize the event as it happens within the space of the city.

- Answering the question of whether or not it is possible to design without the signature of a “designer” and to allow the forms and technology needed for the event to define the space and become the focal point of the intervention.

- Sampling the existing layout of the city in order to create something completely new. An event that exists within time and informs the local community of the deep underground electronic music scene in a city that has earned a reputation for it.

**Chicago at a glance**

chicago landsat imagery

chicago’s downtown Loop

view of Loop architecture north from the Sears Tower

a preview of the site, chicago
a short biography

My education as an architect was immediately influenced by the people I lived and worked with in Chicago. I attended the University of Illinois at Chicago and found myself overwhelmed with physical examples of the things I learned about in the classroom. The city itself served as the perfect place for exploration as I began to think about where my profession might take me. At one point, I met a man by the name of Bill Close, a sculptor and musician living in Chicago in 1999. He had an inherent love for architecture and sought ways to connect his musical sculptures with the buildings surrounding his everyday life. As time progressed, we began to work together, building instruments in his home/studio where I lived for several months. Bill Close and his group, M.A.S.S. Ensemble pioneered the world’s largest stringed instrument, the Earth Harp. Making its debut in Chicago, this resonance-based sculpture was strung to the Field Museum while members of the ensemble danced and played its carefully tuned strings. Needless to say, the instrument drew much attention and Bill toured the country with it, enticing guests to question where the sound was coming from, the architecture or the instrument? I was able to work with Bill in designing the second Earth Harp, making use of the ideas from the first and incorporating the possibility of stringing even longer spans to higher buildings. One of the most memorable experiences was stringing Mies Van Der Rohe’s Crown Hall for an exhibition of student work at the School of Architecture.

As time went on, my interest in music grew and I started to DJ with friends who had already started playing records years before I had ever met them. I learned from some of Chicago’s best DJ’s and pulled together enough money to buy a few used turntables to set up and host events at my loft in Pilsen. Events were fascinating to me. The complexities of all the people wrapped up within the context of a place where everyone could enjoy each other, and most importantly, the music. I will talk more later about Chicago and its connection to house music, but I’d like to mention that house music is something that comes from a place and that place is Chicago.

My DJing was put on hold as I travelled to Cambridge to study for my Masters in Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I took a rare opportunity to work with my cousin, fashion designer Lisa Bruno, as she travelled with Aerosmith, designing clothing for Joe Perry. Thinking of it as a break, I realized much more about the complexities of events and crowds than I had ever imagined. Now that I think about it, the experience really did set something off within me. My curiosity was running wild, as I tried to find ways to make connections between the architecture I studied and the events that I was behind. At MIT, I played on WMBR as much as I could and pioneered a social event for the department of architecture entitled “First Aid Friday” providing social relief for an
overworked studio crowd once a month during the semester. Despite the relatively small scale, the events proved to be successful and the department funded them for two years. For a brief period, I helped to put together plans for a Beaux Arts Ball as well, but overall interest from the department for such a large scale event proved non-existent. As I continued my studio coursework, I began to investigate the architecture of events. Taking a course within the Urban Planning realm entitled Event Places, my eyes remained wide open to the idea of a valid connection of place and event.

My studio project for the semester involved a new MIT Center for Performance and my class travelled to Los Angeles to visit the Walt Disney Concert Hall during its opening weekend. With all of my interests in mind, I pushed the ideas of event planning into my program for architecture studio, understanding the importance of the public realm within the design process and what it truly means to connect form with an event. Activating public space, utilizing interstitial spaces between buildings and designing events to help draw attention to the concept itself all proved critical in my next few semesters of work.

Mark Schuster, who taught the Event Places course along with Cheryl Hughes (visiting Loeb Fellow) and Barnaby Evans (creator of Waterfire) proved to be a great source of information and guidance as he challenged my ideas and remained a primary reader on my thesis committee to help me understand my project. All of the connections I have made here at MIT have proved influential and I hope in the next few chapters, you can get a better understanding as

MIT Center for Performance was a Level III studio at the MIT School of Architecture. Bringing life to the front steps of MIT was the overall goal, as well as creating an indoor theater as well as an outdoor staging area that could be used year around for the gathering of students, display of school work and the social interaction between MIT and the neighboring community.
Sant'Elia's visions for the future are extremely vivid and look much like the vision of architects like Richard Rogers and his design for the Lloyd's of London Building, built in 1986, over 70 years later.

A diagram of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York along side El Lissitzky's Project for Sergei Tretyakov's play I Want a Baby. El Lissitzky challenged the standards of stage design by placing the stage in the center of the theater, creating a more interactive stage set which connected the crowd to the actors in a more direct way.

to why this project is important enough to exist as an architectural thesis.

Tschumi's quote which I used to introduce the thesis on page 4 really makes clear why this project is important in the realm of architecture. Tschumi's work was always centered around the idea of the event, the place and the time involved in the creation of built form.

Tschumi was only one example of inspiration for the project. There were many other topics of study that interested me and grew into what will hopefully be my life's work. The work of Italian futurist Antonio Sant'Elia represents for me something that defies logic in terms of architecture. Someone who visualizes the spaces to come, using his own talent as a designer proves to be vital in understanding how a culture moves forward and progresses towards a future for itself. His brilliant sketches constantly inspire me to visualize beyond myself and to have confidence in those visions to be representative of true perspectives of what we call architecture.

Also studying stage design, acoustics and the avant-garde through Fernando Domeyko's studio have inspired me to think beyond the traditions of what we know and define ourselves and the movements around us through the work we produce. Much of the graphic design, sculpture, and stage design dur-
Challenging tradition seems to be an important topic in my career, but, more importantly, in this thesis. Chicago's festival line-up is extremely impressive. The proposal for a new event in Chicago is not merely to challenge what is already in place. It is to challenge the way in which we design festivals, the way we represent what it is we are celebrating and the way we understand what lies beneath it all. I believe that a better understanding of the DJ is the first step in understanding how to celebrate that artform through a festival or event in a city like Chicago. It just so happens that DJ's have a unique place in Chicago's living history and represent a certain type of music that travels well beyond the boundaries of Chicago's city limits. And a passion to reuse space instead of constantly redesigning is something that can only make sampling Chicago's architecture for an event a worthwhile experience.

What I hope to accomplish in this work is to guide you through a process which looks to propose answers to questions about the design of events and the power behind a certain type of music. Electronic music-and its need to be recognized through the countless mediums which exist today-is one of the most fascinating things I have studied. Watching as sound artist remix the presidential debates of 2004 really made clear that the art behind the sound yearns to be celebrated in a way more connected to its history, and to its process.

So we begin. First, I'd like to take a look at the Art of the DJ and the turntable's impact on electronic music. Many of the complexities of live performance as well as the origins of electronic music will be briefly looked at. At the end of each section, I'd like to take a bit of time transitioning into the next, in order to keep clear the process by which I explored the topics.

Enjoy.
the art of the DJ

Berklee College of Music has a way of making history. Understanding that this college was the first in the country to teach jazz in the 1940's and rock in the 1960's helps to set the tone for the latest endeavor which they have embarked on:

"...the Berklee College of Music is once again breaking ground by offering the first course in DJing at a music college in the United States. The class, called Turntable Technique, offers students an opportunity to learn to play the turntable as they would learn any other musical instrument."

Stephen Webber, who received a masters degree in classical guitar, has stirred up much more than controversy for his new class at Berklee. His book, *Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ*, is also a hot commodity as students rush to take one of the hippest classes at Berklee since the 1960's. It's an ongoing debate as to whether or not the turntable is a valid musical instrument. In 2001, Doug Prey released a documentary called *Scratch*, which celebrates the roots of Hip Hop music and the enormous amount of skill involved in manipulating electronic music through the turntable. Considering that the movement of turntablism is only about 20 years old, Prey successfully gathered most of the founding members of the movement to talk a bit about their trade. Rob Swift, member of the four person team known as The Executioners, talked about why he considers the turntable to be a musical instrument:

"The turntable is a musical instrument as long as you can see it being a musical instrument. You’re dealing with notes, you’re dealing with measures, you’re dealing with rhythm. It’s just an entirely new way of dealing with those elements."

Berklee's press release on the offering of the class explains why it is possible to even offer a course called Turntable Technique, vindicating Rob Swift's thoughts from Scratch:

"Part of what makes it possible to offer the study of the turntable at the college level is the representation of scratching in music notation. Webber's method first appeared in his book *Turntable Technique: The Art of the DJ*, and consists of a "scratch staff" in which the movements of the record and the mixer's controls are expressed in standard musical notation. This is the first time that anyone has adapted standard musical notation to teach the turntable.

Establishing the turntable as a musical instrument recognized by society as a whole wasn't the intention at all of those who first started using the device. The origins of
Hip Hop music and the culture, which fostered and helped raise a generation of young people on the beliefs behind recontextualizing our urban environment to define ourselves to those who interact with us everyday, is best documented in Charlie Ahearn's film *Wild Style*, released in 1983. *Wild Style* portrays all the proclaimed elements of Hip Hop: Graffiti, the DJ, the MC and breakdancing, years before Prey’s documentary *Scratch* officially recognizes the importance of those four elements. The ability of the film to that was only possible through Ahearn’s goal to capture the feeling of that specific time in the Bronx.

The success of *WildStyle* is due to the fact that Ahearn’s goal seemed to be one of honesty and truth in understanding why a music comes from a certain place and how that place influenced the way the music was played, where it was played, and who it was played to. This becomes important in relation to my work because the type of electronic music played at festivals around the world is most successful when it has some sort of historic connection to a place, whether that connection be direct or indirect.

My research on festivals and electronic music is rooted in the belief that music comes as much from the performer as it does from the place where it is performed. Granted, some places have way more impact on the music than others, but it is still inherently true that a music’s strength and ability to become recognized beyond the place where it was conceived is dependent on the strength of that place. The origins of Jazz, Blues, and many other types of music were only understood and respected after those who listened to the music really understood the place where it came from. Growing up in Chicago, I remember stories of performances on the famous Maxwell Street in the 1970’s. This narrative is made clear in Aaron Malnarick’s thesis “Blue Road: What is a Music Museum”, as he traces the history of one particular type of music to its origins to help influence the final form of where it is displayed and interacted with.

As an architect, it seems only relevant to investigate these things and in many ways we do this already when considering projects for
clients or theoretical proposals. We feel the need to connect our ideas with some form of truth within the place we are building. What is also clear is the almost subconscious ability to sample forms from our own minds and use what we have seen and what we have learned to influence the way we recontextualize space. Architects do not create space from nothing. For the most part, space already exists in every condition we build, though we find ways to redefine it as need be. I am not setting a goal to convince everyone that nothing is original. Instead I want to entertain the idea that within our own originality, there exists an endless amount of information from which we have become very skilled at sampling as we create and design what we call new form.

In Scratch, Prey follows DJ Shadow, a DJ of international fame, into the basement of his most famous record store where the process of "digging" occurs. Again, this endless cache of records represents to the architect all the history and revelations of previous architects and the forms which they created to represent that. The music pulled from those piles of records represents much more than we can imagine. It represents artists whose careers have long ended, songs that may have only been heard by a scarce few and words that meant something to someone in a time much different than now. The DJ's task is not to tell that story, but to put it back out there to tell a new story, one that makes clear through itself the history from which it samples.

DJ Shadow is the most current pioneer of the sample. In it's most pure form, the sample is what drives the work of DJ's like Shadow and Cut Chemist of Jurassic 5. Shortly before the release of Shadow's Entroducing album, both Cut Chemist and Shadow were building off of the work of some of the first DJ's who utilized the sample. To Shadow, he was merely continuing something that would go on forever and his process of digging for records was in fact something that will be done for years to come.

**ladies and gentlemen, the sample**

"Creativity rests in how you recontextualize the previous expressions of others."  
Paul Johnson
In 1877 Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, also dubbed the "talking machine", or even "the memory machine". Edison had a simple goal in mind and that was to invent a more easily controlled method of creating music. The first recording Edison made on his new device was him reciting the song, Mary Had a Little Lamb. Later quoted for trying to "establish music on a scientific basis", Edison later admitted that "I know nothing about musical notation and have never tried to learn. I am glad that I don’t know. I try to form my own opinions."

Paul Johnson goes on to explain why Edison’s invention and his recital of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” are so important in his book Rhythm Science. We’ll talk more about that book in the next section, but what’s critical here is to understand how the ideas of recording, sampling and re-recording came about through technology and those using it.

George Melies (right) was responsible for the accidental discovery of film editing and the superimposition of one image over the other as he changed film in his camera over 100 years ago. Paul Johnson writes in his book Rhythm Science about the experience and Melies' passion to recreate a mistake and create striking images from the everyday use of his camera. With that launched another form of sampling, this time manifesting itself in video. Much of the video work today is done digitally, allowing even more freedom to enhance and dissect film to allow the composer to re-assemble creatively.

Transitioning into Paul Johnson’s (DJ Spooky) book will be helpful in understanding much of what we just talked about. Not only does Spooky reference Edison and Melies, he also references W. E. B. DuBois and the Situationists and their concept of the derive. Let’s take a brief look at Rhythm Science.
Rhythm Science

Paul Johnson (a.k.a. DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid)

One of the primary driving forces behind this thesis is a book written by Paul Johnson, entitled Rhythm Science. A world-renowned DJ and articulate intellectual, DJ Spooky has travelled around the world to provide musical backdrops for such shows as Ars Electronic in Austria, where he performed a piece entitled Marcel Duchamp Remixed: Errata Erratum (top right). Closer to home, DJ Spooky recently attended a conference at the Cooper Union School of Architecture for a lecture entitled Resonating Frequencies, commenting along side architects Bernard Tschumi and Anthony Vidler. DJ Spooky has also worked with MIT Visual Arts legend Joan Jonas on the installation Documenta XI.

Since the book is so extraordinary and we are limited with space, I would like to point out some of the many concepts which led to the development of my theoretical title for my thesis architect as prostitute. Labeled as the “B-Side” - the less listened-to, often overlooked track on a piece of vinyl- DJ Spooky describes the profession of the architect and makes the connection to the DJ:

"The prostitute. The oldest profession. This character is one who will end the narrative, and pass your gaze back to the idiot who started the loop cycle. Think of a scenario where you pay and or someone pays you; it’s a computational dialectic, a micropolitics of loops (again). The role of the prostitute plays on your mind like an invisible hand that caresses your electromagnetic memories. Messages need to be delivered, codes need to be interpreted, and information, always, is hungry for new routes to move through. That’s the agency thing, that’s the prostitute’s role. The stripper takes off her clothes to put on her audience, thev prostitute looks at you and says, “Who do you want me to be?” It’s a mime dance, a pantomime of desire and projection. It’s a dyslexic shuffle of autopoesis between two undercover agents who carry their orders cluthced in dead hands - the transfer of information between them is an interrelationshisp between music and art and writing."

Making the connection between architecture and prostitution is the subconscious part of this experiment. As service providers, we struggle with the satisfaction of the client and the passion which rests behind the work we do. When do we sacrifice one for the other?, or is there a way
for architecture to exist where the role of the architect is to be completely authorless in his or her endeavors? I believe the argument can be made that architects are most successful when they aren’t making a statement, when they are, more appropriately, sampling the spaces that existed long before them, and recalling form only to reassemble it with history as a benign instructor. The live manipulation of vinyl through the artform of the DJ so closely relates to the ways in which we develop ideas for space that paralleling the two can only enhance our understandings of our own processes.

For an architect, as for a DJ, the work involves the constant re-contextualization of the world around us. This is one of the most important points made in Rhythm Science. Of course, the connection between architects and musicians has been made before, and Spooky even plays off of this in his book, mentioning Goethe’s quote, “...Architecture is frozen music...”, but he goes further to ask then what? We’ve made this connection already and much of my work during my undergraduate years involved melding architecture with some form of music in order to experience the two simultaneously. In fact, it seems as the two can be one, as I mentioned earlier with the work of String Theory Productions and the active “stringing” of pieces of architecture.

DJ Spooky also says at one point that the same record can never be played for the same crowd the twice. As simple as it sounds, it feeds into the concept of sampling architecture. If we can see the architect as someone who arranges, or rearranges, space through form, then we can only hope that the mix remains unique every-time it happens.

“Music is always a metaphor. It’s an open signifier, an invisible, utterly malleable material. It’s not fixed or cast in stone. Rhythm science uses an endless recontextualizing as a core compositional strategy, and some of this generation’s most important artists continually remind us that here are innumerable ways to arrange the mix.”
precedents. A place to start
The world visits the White City

Not long after the devastating fire that destroyed the entire downtown of the city in 1861, Chicago lobbied Congress to host the 400 year anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the new world, the World's Fair. After beating out cities such as New York, St. Louis and the capital, Washington D.C., Chicago had to live up to its big name. Opening in May of 1893, the fair drew over 26 million visitors and helped to solidify Chicago's place amongst the most fantastic of the world's cities.

A first-rate second city

A vision of the corner of my soon to be site in Chicago, this picture depicts rush hour before Ford invented the Model T. Chicago declared itself the center of the nation and by 1890, most of the country's railroads travelled into Chicago, despite the more direct route being through St. Louis. Chicago's reputation of boasting itself did in fact change the way the country responded and the Second City proved to be magnetic to travellers all over the world.

Burnham's vision for a city beautiful

No only was he lead architect behind the World's Fair in 1893, Daniel Burnham also played a critical role in developing the 1909 Plan for Chicago. This plan is influential even today, as much of Chicago's parks and boulevards are revitalized under the visions of the current mayor, Richard Daley. Despite it neoclassical architecture, the plan played the role of a more general plan than as a blueprint for architecture to come. Most of the buildings designed in the plan were never built.
Grant Park in 1939. Montgomery Ward vowed to keep Chicago's lakefront park free of buildings and open to the public as a place of refuge from the city. On the right, Buckingham Fountain remains the centerpiece of Burnham's Lakefront park as Chicago's newest addition to it, Millenium Park, rises at the top left corner of the site in 2001.
Waterfire / Providence Rhode Island

Waterfire originally started as an art installation and grew to become an annual staple which revitalized the downtown area. In the 1990's, the city began an initiative to uncover the three rivers which converge in the downtown of Providence. After years of being covered by parking lots and old buildings, the city's riverfront was once again exposed and Barnaby Evans proposed an event. A series of wood fires float along the river as boats travel through the night, feeding the fires and keeping the event happening through most of the summer. Local businesses offer their own incentives as thousands flock to the river's edge to glimpse the procession of boats and light of the fires.

Aerosmith: Girls of Summer Tour / The Closed Crowd Concert Model

Despite the success of closed crowd venues like the Rolling Stones tour pictured to the right, the impact of these events is not as critical to the design ideas of my thesis topic. After touring with Aerosmith, the complexities of these events becomes way more intense than something like WaterFire. Much like the Taste of Chicago, the scale and the cost of these extravagant happenings are almost inconceivable. Studying these concerts is important because the crowd is approached much differently and liability issues change when stadiums are involved.
Chloe Town: Crowdscape

Recently published in the educational journal 306090, Chloe Town’s project takes a site in Manhattan and attempts to build an architectural project using the crowd as a building material. It’s one of the first examples of such a proposal and it references many of the areas of research I have looked into while starting my thesis, including the Loveparade. One of the events mentioned in the project is the Kumbh Mela, the spiritual cleansing in the Ganges River which draws millions of people and requires an entire city to be constructed in a flood plain for only a brief period of time.

Detroit Electronic Music Festival / Movement Festival / Detroit Michigan

Hart Plaza, Downtown Detroit. Techno music was born in Detroit and those who play techno music decided to celebrate that fact. The Detroit Electronic Music Festival, or as it is known today, the Movement festival is one of the best examples of a festival which strives to represent the music that came from a specific place. The festival itself is sponsored by the city in order to bring life back to a downtown which is inevitably lifeless otherwise. Sponsorship from Ford Motor company as well as founding members of the event leaving over small disputes almost stopped the DEMF from happening, but the music proved stronger and every memorial day weekend, hundreds of thousands of people flock to Detroit to catch an insanely impressive lineup of DJ’s, and not to mention the amazing afterparty.
The Best Seat in the House

The most impressive thing about the Chicago Air and Water show is the ability for almost anyone to experience the show from any spot in the city. Even some suburban homes get to experience fly-bys from the Blue Angels as the make turns from high speed passes and dart across the sky. The Air Show has always been a free event and it usually draws crowds in the millions over the weekend in late August. I personally have arrived at the North Ave. Beach, ground zero for the event, as early as possible to reserve myself a spot before the planes have even arrived. Many people also watch the planes do high speed passes from atop the cities many skyscrapers that line the lakeshore. The idea of the open crowd is in full effect at this festival, as the beach becomes filled with people who spread to neighboring parks and bike trails to catch a glimpse and enjoy the late summer weather.

Chicago Air & Water Show

As early as 1911, the International Air Meet pulled close to three million visitors to the lakeshore in Chicago to catch the country's earliest aviators putting on an impressive show in the skies above. Today, not much has changed, except for the planes and their daring pilots.
Tall Ships 2003 / Chicago Illinois

Tall Ship was one of Cheryl Hughes' most successful events at the MOSE. Cheryl had an impressive amount of data recording the revenue gained from the event by the city and local businesses in the downtown area the weekend of the event. The system by which the city gauges the success of the festival has grown just as complex as the planning and execution of the event. One of the most impressive things about the festival was inherent in the ships themselves. A new map along the river was drawn out (below) to direct people through the festival and basically create a unique experience to that specific event. I was very impressed by the ability of the city to adapt to the limitations posed by the vessels. The challenge of using existing infrastructure and incorporating the architecture of the city paid off as thousands poured in from the suburbs to experience the event.
An international success

Frank Gehry's Pritzker Pavilion provides the Santa Monica architect with a chance to make use of his pop-style formwork. An innovative trellis system is used to span over the lawn seating for the pavilion and is utilized to delay sound through speakers to the guests almost 100 yards away. The state-of-the-art system is coupled with the drainable lawn membrane that allows the grass to dry in 15 minutes after intense downpours.

Architecture and Planning at its best

Despite the fact that many Chicagoans like to make light of the fact that the budget and opening date of Millennium Park were drastically underestimated, many still come to Chicago's newest highlight to marvel at its success. The park offers Chicago an international taste of design, as the park features not only Frank Gehry, but many other premiere international designers displaying innovative concepts to the average visitor through stainless steel sculptures and five-story-high water structures.

Millenium Park follows in the tradition of Chicago's ability to redefine itself architecturally almost instantly. This was critical in realizing the project for Chicago, because the competition for current methods of performance are not only impressive, they are successful. The underground electronic music festival will obviously display a much different kind of music than what would be seen on stage at the music pavilion above, but even its presence has sparked such events as "Music in the Park". Music in the Park featured local DJ such as Derrick Carter, who spun records to a young crowd on a regular basis every Wednesday night for part of the summer. Many of my interviews with Chicago police on duty at that event were important in understanding how the city approaches such events with that particular kind of music.

Burnham's Plan for a green lakefront is just as powerful today as it was in 1909. The critical element in establishing Millennium Park as an idea was for the city to purchase air rights over the railways that dissect Grant Park and engineer a covered parking garage the could incorporate the program of what would become Chicago's newest recreation spot in the downtown. Frank Gehry would eventually be invited to provide Chicago with an outdoor music pavilion to replace its once temporary Petrillo bandshell which was still being programmed for events into 2000.
Grant Park during the Millennium Park Construction, 2003

In included the following set of images in order to help understand the density of the crowd which Grant Park is subject to during the summer. The park was designed and intended to be a place to escape the chaos of the city. Since the city’s success with the Taste of Chicago festival (opposite page), the model for holding events along Columbus Drive in the park has been all but perfected.
Chicago’s Taste of Chicago Festival, 2000

At the culmination of the a week long festival, the city hosts an impressive 45 minute fireworks presentation along the lakeshore. So many people flock to the beaches and available surfaces along the water’s edge that one of Chicago’s main arteries, Lake Shore Drive must be closed to vehicle traffic. What influenced me to start thinking about the crowd and an event within the buildings was the retreat of those millions of people back into the caverns of the city to catch trains back home. I had never seen the streets of the loop so full of energy during the weekend and I asked myself ‘what if the event could happen right here instead?’
aerial imagery of site. chicago/downtown loop
Site outline and modeling

Narrowing my site investigation to the area bounded by the Chicago river on the North and West and State Street to the East and Van Buren to the South, I started to model the site using both a conventional chipboard model and a 3D computer model. The 3D model would be extremely useful in studying the light quality between the buildings and testing scale. Also boardering the site on all sides but the east is the city’s elevated train line.
site analysis. identifying public space
Daley Plaza has its own unique program of events also tailored by the Mayor’s Office of Special Events to include many festivals, such as Chicagoween and the Turkish Festival. Dubbed “Under the Picasso”, most of the festivals focus upon the large metal sculpture designed by Picasso which resemble a horse. Daley Plaza doesn’t fail to have activity almost all year round. One of the highlights is the Farmer’s Market.
Bank One Plaza

Bank One Plaza is known for sponsoring very progressive crowds to attract the more youthful crowd to the impressive marble hardscape. Centered around a fountain, the plaza itself is depressed from ground level nearly 20 feet and is the most unique of the three plaza spaces. Although sampling the plazas may be redundant, reworking this space will prove to be a challenge.
Federal Plaza

Much like Daley Plaza, the increased security after 9/11 has made this relatively flat space even less accessible. Mies Van Der Rohe’s US Post Office is definitely a highlight with a roof that cries to be sampled as an elevated stage. A Calder sculpture hinges two giant, Modernist towers, dwarfing the plaza and creating an interesting facade to work with as a boundary surface.
site analysis . utilizing the interstitial
considering the overlooked

Since sampling is based off of the DJ finding that part of a song that isn't really the crescendo, the alley spaces offer the most unique opportunity to incorporate parts of the festival. Loading docks and adjacent parking garages prove to be important infrastructure in staging music and influencing acoustics.

Marble Place

One of the two alley spaces sandwiched between the three main plaza along Dearborn.

Ave. Parking Structure

The roof of this parking structure is not used for parking vehicles and the adjacent tracks offer a chance for an interesting intervention.

Service Corridor

Loading docks, adjacent parking garage and limited entry make this spot somewhat ideal for a more intimate stage.
Washington Street EL tracks

Once again blurring the line between public and private, I hope to use the stepped up entrance to the adjacent building and the parking garage as existing formwork.

Calhoun Place Loading Docks

A very strategic location and ideal for staging and acoustics. Very little is need to facilitate an event within this space.

Federal Plaza interstitial surround

Much of the surrounding property around the Federal Center is inticing and could prove to be an extremely successful staging area.
preliminary site diagrams
Extending the Dearborn Corridor
in/out/through
recognition of materials

existing lighting conditions

Using diagrams provided by the city, the plan was to rework the lighting conditions of the site and add lighting to enhance the overall plan of the event. Sampling existing lighting conditions fall under the same idea as the process of sampling the interstitial spaces talked about earlier.

crowd

Understanding the complexity of the open/closed crowd concepts outlined in Elias Canetti’s book *The Crowd*, and building off Chloe Town’s project using the crowd as a physical building material, I use the crowd to create a condition between both an open and closed genre. The crowd then initiates the plan of the event based on the scale of the individual person and the time of each staged event.

manipulation of time and space

As part of an ongoing idea brought up by Julio Salcedo during the final review, I am beginning to investigate the idea of staging events around the same specified site, but transmitting them into other areas of the city to host a virtual event in different areas. This of course starts to pose many new questions about the sampling of the architectural spaces first investigated in the project.
scaffolding as proposal generator

"Bring what is needed. Create what is wanted. Build what is forgotten. Remember all else."
scaffolding as solution

modularity: readily available modular units, easy to install with little time needed

adaptive: work as infrastructure, not only for ideas, but for physical needs in the festival

conductive: transfer power through the entire site

programmatic: sound timing, amplification and control manipulation of light, directly and indirectly

crowd mediation: physical influence of the crowd, intended movement to create a unique crowd, between open and closed

recollective: use of existing architecture, both traditionally and through this particular event

anonymous: true to the ‘authorless’ quality of the project, providing needs without the physical presence of new built architecture
3D Investigations

Much of the work at this point in the project was experimental studies using the computer program and the proposed module of scaffolding in the site.
discovering the instance
final drawing . layered diagrams
layer 01. overall site sketch
layer 02. scaffolding plan
layer 04. power/communication locations
layer 05. restroom/merchandise locations
layer 06. ems/rapid egress terminals
layer 07. primary evacuation routes
describing the rendering process

(phase01) existing light condition w/ scaffolding

(phase02) independant lighting to enhance path

(phase03) scaffolding detail and the human scale
instance02. aerial view of daley plaza and alley entrance
instance03. primary stage at calhoun place
conclusion / insight / future direction

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2. screenshot from Skratch, Prey, DVD

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1. screenshot from WildStyle, Ahearn, DVD

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“memory demands newness” - DJ Spooky