

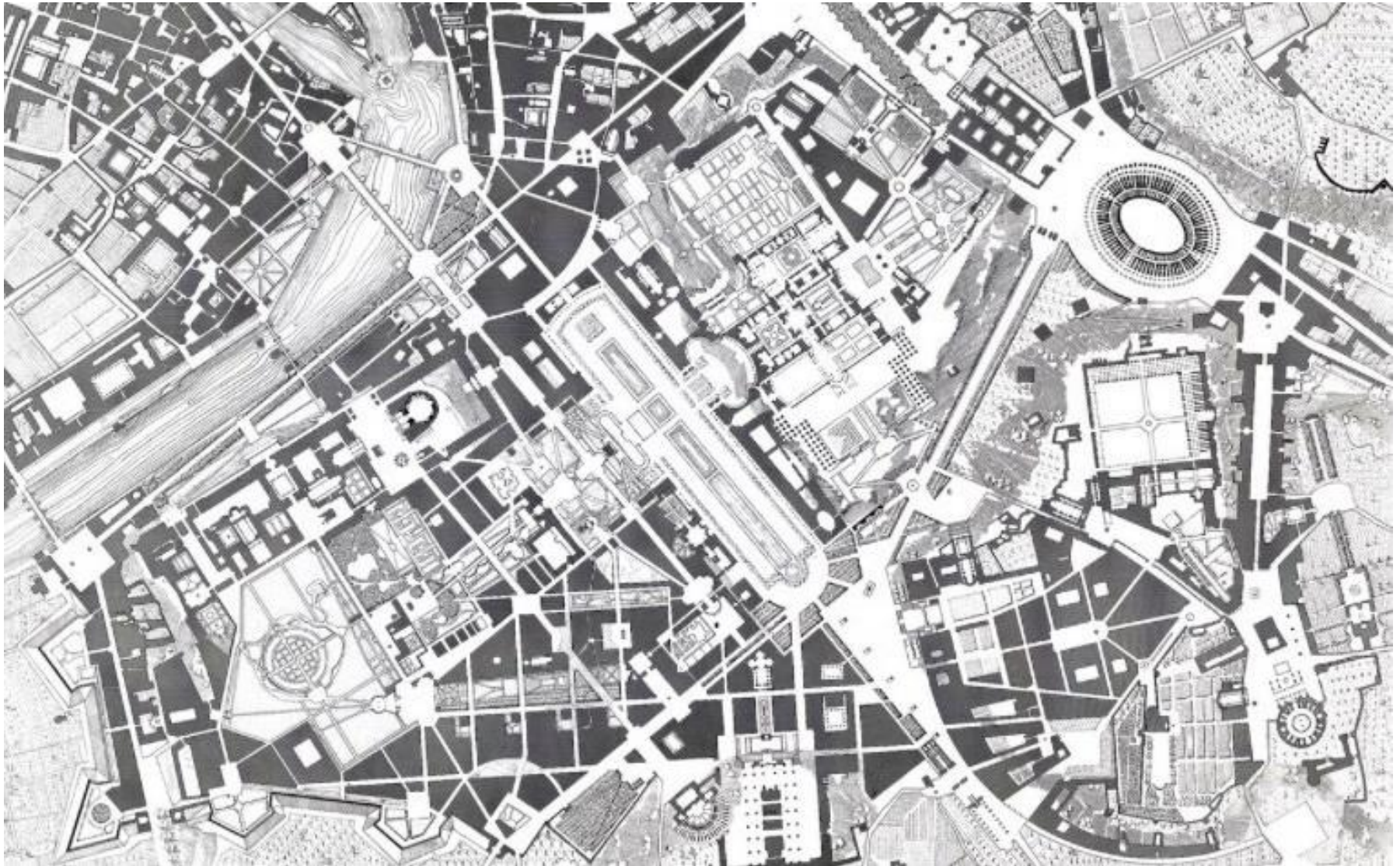
Contextualism, Collage City and Beyond

Seminar I

November 12th, 2021, 10:00 - 12:30pm EDT (NY), 4:00 - 6:30pm CET (Central Europe)

Coordinator: David Grahame Shane

Organizer: Zuzanna Jarzyńska



Contextualism, Collage City and Beyond

It seems an appropriate time to revisit Contextualism and Collage City within the framework of G.U.Design network, and the new tools of representation available in the contemporary meta-city of information.

This initial Contextualism, Collage City and Beyond seminar will investigate Colin Rowe's mid-twentieth century role in appropriating Sitte's 1890's reaction to Von Forster's 1860 imperial design for the

Vienna Ringstrasse. Rowe's critical appropriation paved the way for later iterations and code shifts that greatly expanded into a more fragmented, inclusive Collage City. It took Rowe several iterations to develop this concept with Fred Koetter and with his Roma Interrotta team. Hopefully, this and future sessions will explore strength and weaknesses of the mutations of Rowe's classical impulse as it, in its turn, evolved with urban design into the 21st century.

Seminar I - November 12th, 10:00-12:30 pm EDT (NY), 4:00 - 6:30 pm CET (Central Europe)

Michael Schwarting (New York Institute of Technology, American Academy in Rome Prize winner), *Rome; Urban Formation and Transformation.*

Esin Komez Daglioglu and **Cansu Turk** (METU Ankara) *Rowe's Legacy of Figure-Grounds and Plan Games in Texas and Cornell Pedagogy.*

Steven Peterson and **Barbara Littenberg** (Independent Scholars, Partners in Peterson Littenberg Architects), *Collage City from Roma Interrotta to the World Trade Center Competition.*

Blake Middleton (Partner Handel Architects, Independent Scholar, American Academy in Rome Prizewinner), *Practicing what we preach.*

David Grahame Shane (Columbia University, NY-USA), *Contemporary Urban Design and Colin Rowe's intellectual biography 1938-1978.*

Rosemary Wakeman (Fordham University) Respondent.

Zuzanna Jarzyńska (Columbia University, NY-USA).

Event website with zoom link [\[click here\]](#)



Michael Schwarting is an architect, urban designer and professor. He holds a B.g and M.Arch in Urban Design from Cornell University and received a Rome Prize Fellowship from the American Academy in Rome. He is a Professor of Architecture and was the Director of the graduate program in Urban Design at New York Institute of Technology. He has also taught at Columbia, Yale, Pennsylvania, Cornell, Cooper Union, Syracuse and the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies.

He is the author of *'Rome: Urban Formation and Transformation'* and articles in *Domus*, *Harvard Review*, *VIA*, *Modulus*, *Precis* and *ACSA* and a recipient of grants from the *Graham Foundation*, *NEA*, *NYSCA* and *NYS Preservation*. He was an Associate in *Richard Meier and Associates*, has had a practice with partners since 1975, and presently leads *Campani and Schwarting Architects*.

He is the President of the *Aluminaire House Foundation* 1931 restoration. He has served on the Board of the *Architectural League of NYC*, *Van Alan Institute* and is the *Trustee Emeritus* of the *American Academy in Rome*.

Rome; Urban Formation and Transformation.

Formation is ideal and utopian thinking, and transformation is the adaptation of the ideal to the real or existing conditions. The lecture examines the dialectical relationship of these in the creation of the city; ideal thinking vs. real making. In this investigation, the real making postulates a contextual theory of urban design originating from Colin Rowe's urban design teaching at Cornell University. This theory postulates that, by understanding and developing the existing urban structure, new architecture can be both integrated into it formally, socially, culturally, politically, and still be progressive. At another scale, it posits that new urban interventions can also be integrated into the existing urban structure thereby creating a greater whole and continuity, as well as resolving new urban needs.

The presentation examines Italian Renaissance and Baroque architecture and urban development of Rome as case studies, and thus demonstrates the complexity of Roman urbanism and the inter-relationship and role of Roman architecture to its urban context.

The lecture also presents an exploration and demonstration of urban analysis. Through case studies, it documents in drawings and analytic diagrams, the relationship of canonical buildings in Rome to their urban context. These are observations, recordings and analyses of an extraordinary city that can serve as precedent for how to design the contemporary city.

Rowe's Legacy of Figure-Ground Maps and the Plan Game in Cornell and Texas Pedagogy.

Figure-ground maps are among the most conventional tools of urban design pedagogies and practices worldwide. Architectural theorist and educator Colin Rowe's Urban Design Studio at Cornell, which he initiated in 1963 and taught until the end of the 1980s, was a milestone in developing and disseminating the use of figure-ground maps as a source of reference for architectural and urban composition. Inspired by Giambattista Nolli's *Nuova Pianta di Roma* (1748), which depicts the civic and religious structures in white as successive urban spaces, while rendering housing and commercial structures black as an urban *poché*, Rowe's students at Cornell Urban Design Studio utilized figure-ground maps for analyzing the urban textures based on which they bring together and distort the ideal historical forms and types. However, the use of figure-ground maps reduces architecture to its footprint and flattens the topographical features of any given site.

In fact, Rowe discovered an alternative to the figure-ground maps earlier in the 1950s while teaching at the University of Texas School of Architecture. Together with Bernhard Hoesli, John Hejduk and Robert Slutzky, Rowe invented a game where each participant successively drew on a blank sheet the plans of architectural precedents from different periods and geographies by considering their relations and the spaces in between. This Plan Game resulted in a fictional urban design project where the spatial qualities of the architectural and urban spaces were simultaneously considered and articulated. This study aims to uncover the potentials of Plan Game as a tool for urban design pedagogy and practice against the fixed and static nature of figure-ground maps.



Esin Komez Daglioglu received her architecture degree magna cum laude from the Middle East Technical University (METU) Department of Architecture, where she also worked as a research and teaching assistant from 2007 to 2012. She completed her PhD in 2017 at TU Delft, Department of Architecture, where she also taught design and theory courses at the Chair of Architectural Composition and Public Building. Among others, she has published in the *Architectural Theory Review*, the *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, and *OASE Journal for Architecture*. Her research has been published in several books, including *'Site Matters: Strategies for Uncertainty Through Planning and Design, New Urban Configurations, and Architectural Contextualism'* (Mimari Bağlamsalılık in Turkish). Currently, she is an assistant professor at METU in the Department of Architecture.

Cansu Turk graduated from TED University Department of Architecture (2018), where she also worked as a research assistant upon graduation. She received her M.Arch. degree from the Middle East Technical University (METU) Department of Architecture in 2021 with the thesis titled *'Making of the City: Uncovering the Plan Game'* supervised by Assist. Prof. Dr. Esin Komez Daglioglu. She has taken editorial responsibilities at the architectural magazine *The VOID Mag* from 2018 to 2020. Her research focuses on the interaction between architecture and urban design, representation techniques and industrial heritage sites. Currently, she is working at the culture department of Turkish National Commission for UNESCO as a sector expert.



Barbara Littenberg and Steven Peterson are practicing architects, urban designers, and educators. As partners in Peterson/Littenberg Architecture and Urban Design in New York City, their practice explored the relationship between architecture and cities through competitions, lectures, seminars, teaching and published articles.

Barbara Littenberg taught architecture at Princeton University, at Columbia University, and as an associate professor at Yale University Graduate School of Architecture for 14 years, directing the Graduate Urban Housing Studio.

Steven Peterson taught urban design and architecture at Cornell University, Columbia University, and the Notre Dame graduate program in Rome, Italy as well as the Syracuse University graduate Program in Florence, Italy. He was Director of the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies in New York.

Peterson / Littenberg have done some 20 urban designs and master plans including one of the projects in the New York World Trade Center competition in 2002. They are the authors of the 2019 book *'SPACE & ANTI-SPACE, The Fabric of Place, City, and Architecture'*.

Collage City from Roma Interrotta, to the World Trade Center Competition.

Collage and contextualism are the two methodologies most associated with Colin Rowe's work on urban design. They are the essential design concepts that connect individual works of

architecture into the blocks of a city's larger urban fabric.

COLLAGE, in urban design, is the technique of juxtaposing different works of architecture to each other and to existing urban elements in partial new compositions.

CONTEXTUALISM, in architecture, is the technique of designing buildings that are both discrete unto themselves and help form the larger patterns of a city's urban fabric.

URBAN FABRIC is a city's extended pattern of blocks, streets and spaces. This is the common denominator of all urban form historically, but has been discarded in the contemporary city's rapid growth that prioritizes individual tower development. This loss of the urban fabric has eliminated the city's capacity to define urban space or to shape the public realm.

This talk by **BARBARA LITTENBERG** addresses these issues in an analysis of the components of the urban fabric and how its restoration was essential to our World Trade Center Design Proposal.

Practicing what we Preach.

- How a thesis in the Rowe Studio at Cornell provided the tools and the design framework for the author when designing 6 major buildings built over a 20 year period in the historic city center of Boston, MA.

The presentation will reflect on some of the lessons learned in his study of a redevelopment strategy for Providence RI, and how, when engaged to design a 180,000m² mixed-use project in 1997, these could be applied successfully where previous propositions for the site had failed. The talk will briefly trace the impact of 1960s Urban Renewal on this neighborhood of Boston, how out-of-date assumptions about mixed-use projects led to the recurring failure of super-block proposals attempting to rectify the situation, and how re-generation of the urban context was based on contingent, incremental urban design deploying the hybrid high-rise typology that restored the street connecting all these new buildings.

The overview will culminate in examination of the author's design for a seventh building in this district, begun in 2016, called Winthrop Center. This 175,000m² hybrid high-rise will be, when completed, the largest PassiveHaus™ building in the world.

A market-rate commercial endeavor (as opposed to institutional or "build-to-suit"), this project represents the future of sustainable urban architecture and a model for how carefully scaled projects can generate further re-investment, and for cities to embrace density at a meaningful scale without sacrificing successful urban space making to the exigencies of getting to a Net Zero architecture.



Blake Middleton FAIA FAAR is a Founding Partner of Handel Architects LLP and Lead Designer for some of the firm's most prominent work. Blake's expertise – and passion - is the hybrid mixed-use building as a catalyst for creating sustainable, revitalized neighborhoods in dense urban environments. Recent examples include: The House at the Cornell Tech campus on Roosevelt Island (NYC); Millennium (Boston) and Winthrop Center (NYC); and Sendero Verde (NYC).

Blake's institutional and educational design work includes academic and performance buildings for the Boston Conservatory; the Flushing Meadows Natatorium and Ice Rink in New York, and the Idlewild Park Nature Center; and the renovation of the historic Santa Barbara Bowl Amphitheater in Santa Barbara, California.

Blake is a recipient of the Rome Prize and Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, has lectured widely, and has been a visiting professor or lecturer at Syracuse, Toronto, Cornell, Virginia, Yale, Harvard, California College of the Arts, and most recently Northeastern University. He received his B. Arch. and M. Arch. in Urban Design with Colin Rowe from Cornell University. His work has won distinction from the AIA, SARA, Urban Land Institute, and the Congress for New Urbanism.



David Grahame Shane studied at the Architectural Association, London (AA Dipl. 1969), and at Cornell for an M.Arch (Urban Design 1972) and an Architectural and Urban History PhD (1978) with Professors Colin Rowe and Chris Otto. He taught at the AA in the 1970's for Alvin Boyarsky and at Bennington College, before starting at Columbia in the 1980's, in UD since 1991. He has lectured widely and published in Europe, USA and Asia.

He is the author of *'Recombinant Urbanism: Conceptual Modeling in Architecture, Urban Design and City Theory'* (2005) and *'Urban Design Since 1945; a Global Perspective'* (2011) and co-edited *'Sensing the 21st Century City: Close-Up and Remote'* (Architectural Design 2005). His article *'Gardens as Public Space; A Century of Continuity and Change in the Great Bay Area'* is in *'The Emerging Public Realm of the Great Bay Area'* (2021 Taylor and Francis). His *'Notes Towards an Intellectual Biography of Colin Rowe 1938-78'* will appear in the forthcoming *'The Urban Design Legacy of Colin Rowe'* (ORO Editions 2022). A version will appear in the new translation of Rowe and Koetter's *'Collage City'* by Professor Tong Ming (2022). His Oral History of Archigram Interviews will appear on the m+ museum HK website in 2022.

Contemporary Urban Design and Colin Rowe's intellectual biography 1938-1978.

Colin Rowe transformed and changed over time, constructing and refining his intellectual and conceptual apparatus in response to his changing circumstances. There can be little doubt that the single most formative experience of the young Rowe was his time with Rudolf Wittkower at the Warburg Institute, after his earlier architectural education at Liverpool University, whose Professor Patrick Abercrombie guided the rebuilding of London after WW II. Rowe attempted unsuccessfully to adapt Wittkower's diagrammatic analyses to Le Corbusier's St Dié with his students Robert Maxwell and James Stirling.

Later with the Texas Rangers he began to unpack the Wittkoverian geometry into the urban landscape, studying Le Corbusier's League of Nations with his colleagues Robert Slutsky, Bernard Hosesli and John Hedjuk. He continued this process to recoup the traditional, classical city via Camillo Sitte in the 1950's with Alvin Boyarsky at Cornell, and then in the mid-1960's with Wayne Copper and Tom Schumaker. From this hybrid base Rowe constructed a new, meta-historical, reflexive, curatorial apparatus of the "city as museum" outlined in *Collage City* with Fred Koetter and the Roma Interrotta Team (1978).

As argued in *'Recombinant Urbanism'* (2005) many of the subsequent Urban Design movements unfolded from this layered, diagrammatic, multi-scalar approach to communal history, memory and the environment in the following half century ranging from the Neo-Rationalism, Deconstruction, New Urbanism, Landscape Urbanism, to the emphasis on Historic Preservation, Adaptive reuse and the informational city. Urban Designers still struggle with the complexity and contradictions of classical and Modern continuities that made Rowe's intellectual struggle so difficult and dynamic.