

It could be that the only way that a city can avoid being turned into a non-place is for it to be rescued as an anthropological site. For its aesthetics to be defined by its use and memory, instead of vice-versa

That is why we need interactions.  
Communities. Coexistence. Meetings.  
Outlooks. Negotiations.

So as to be able to read them and, through their interaction foster communities that go beyond facades, squares, parks and monuments.

It is said that site specific projects 4- no matter what kind- have the virtue of turning a site into a kind of platform for communication should thus try to avoid at all cost a unilateral discus. i. e, a monologue about the site, and focus on fostering and detecting answers based on the sit and for the site (in the best of cases) whether their intent is to question, commune or play with the site, in order to rekindle a sense of f belonging that may become rooted in individual and collective memory.

In order to think of public practice as –and incite it to be- a space for articulating and evincing the urgently required dialogue between the ethics and aesthetics of city dwellers and their city.

Calvino also said that is was pointless to divide cites into happy and unhappy ones rather he posited two other categories those that through the years and the changes continue to give their form to desires, and those in which desires either erase the city or are erased by it 5 it will be interesting to see if we can struggle with dignity in the second category of city in our attempt to reach the first knowing that in ties of danger it will always be preferable for desires to smother the city than for the city to smother desires.

#### **SCRIPTED SPACE:**

#### **The future of forgetting, of the electronic baroque, inside the imaginary recovery of Los Angeles**

**Norman m. Klein**

The United States has entered a moment of dreamy avoidance in 2003 despite the massive shock waves that the bush foreign policy has sent around the word, and despite the economic and fiscal uncertainties at home, there is a stillness- a very strange refusal. For million of people, the intense, even blind pursuit of the everyday – of normalcy in daily life- must outweigh the realization that a constitutional and political shift may have utterly transformed how power operates here.

In the midst of this avoidance dream, variations on the collective memory of cities have become extremely important. there is a return to the inner city in Chicago, Los Angeles, New york, in dozens of American cities. But the return bears the stamps of this avoidance patter. It is urban process as a social imaginary, based on a collective misremembering of what the city actually was back in 1940, essentially the target date for many of the revivals. I will look at Los Angeles for clues, at various internalized images then compare I will these to theories I am developing about on scripted spaces and -the future of forgetting -and finally, I will discuss new writing and media projects that reflect these issues.

In the eastern end of downtown La, over 500 housing unit (mostly lofts) have been added to the warehouse and flophouse district, a negligible number really, gut part of one more ·revitalization· of the downtown core. Various hotels are also being converted into townhouses. A half mile west, the new Disney hall, Designed by Franik Gehry, opens, in the fall within two miles of downtown, the price of real estate has doubled over the past four years.

Presumably, collective memory has at last found a legitimate urban expression. Mixed use has made a comeback, in Pasadena, in Venice, in downtown. And yet, clearly the older urban models no longer apply. Most of the corporate headquarters downtown are gone. In fact, at one. Wilshire Boulevard, a network of fiber optic cables has linked Asian telephone and computer lines into what architectural historian Kazys Varnelis calls "the invisible city" under the streets themselves—miles of invisible unoccupied presence, power as absence.

The most popular addition to "urban" Los Angeles this year is an outdoor mall complex called the Grove, which draws upwards of twenty million visitors a year more than Disneyland. And while the Grove is clearly a suburban bubble based on Main Street circa 1900—Very much a scripted illusion—it is located on Wilshire Corridor, the densest population center in Los Angeles (among the densest in the United States).

Indeed, suburban enclaves are being retrofitted into the urban core. The scripted space has left the walled confines of themed environments (malls, theme parks) and as many urban specialists point out has invaded the city street itself. Global tourism and advanced suburbanization have met but at the same time the United States has entered a new era since 9/11. Globalization is hardly the message being sent from the White House. Borders have restricted immigration. The airline industry remains on the edge of wholesale bankruptcy. The dollar loses against world currencies. The United States are turning inward while it expands the Monroe Doctrine outward. Formerly, just for imperialist interventions

in Latin America. Now with the Bush Doctrine for interventions in the Middle East and Central Asia.

So many of our assumptions from the nineties no longer apply, even though the phenomena seem consistent. Residents of the United States are indeed becoming tourist in their own cities. The drift between rich and poor continues to widen. The balkanization and massive immigration are as evident as ever.

And yet, the implications are different, at least in the United States. It is possible to be utterly isolationist, and still engage in military adventurism around the world. The political implications of the globalized nineties are beginning to be felt institutionally, not simply in terms of global consumerism, global tourism.

II. Scripted spaces are designed to give the viewer or visitor a highly specialized illusion. They are a theater of sorts, for a story where the audience imagines itself as a central character. Baroque cities in Europe, Rome in particular, specialized in scripted spaces. Las Vegas Boulevard (formerly called the Strip) has converted the scripted space into an urban experience of sorts. The Strip is suburban and urban at the same time, for a city that has advanced beyond gaming and tourism, has become a metropolis.

Of course, the scripted space was always deeply allied with political power anyway. It serviced the prince in 1650. Now it services a new species of power that somehow nourishes the Bush administration in Washington and this tourist version of globalized escapism in American institutions, and American cities.

III. Along with scripted spaces comes a deeply hierarchical definition of power. Scripted spaces tend to not be about egalitarian sharing of the "story". They are more about knowing your place in the world

than carving a path through the frontier. Thus, the growing importance of scripted spaces in American cities is symptomatic of the wider class differences hardening, being monumentalized. Each city is designing a Vatican to its aristocratic lifestyle. Behind these hierarchical scripted illusions lies the city itself. We can drive over two hundred years a day in Los Angeles, from the scripted spaces that are being retrofitted to the "city walks" (termed-park malls that resemble cities). The enclaves are nocturnes (reveries), but not nocturnal. They are privatized, highly restrictive, Anglo and conservative in their ideology. As a rule for the masses.

IV: The scripted space often relies on collective memories of cities that resemble the movies more than social, urban history. But we must connect this sense of movies with global media itself, and with the non-urban quality of photo and film memory. Global media have become instruments of the world of cable broadcast- is dominated by global interests primarily, even while it sponsors, or forms an Alliance with "noncoms" (far girth conservatives), in charge of the presidency and Congress. The scripting of the 2000 election, of the war in Iraqis, of Bush in this flyer's bombe suit, are all part of the staging of power. Film designers cross over between the presidency and the movie industry. News is staged via conservative think tanks, to the deliver surrogates to explain the party line.

Thus, there is a clear between the hierarchical nature of scripted spaces and the hierarchical, horizontal exercise of power by global media and the Bush administration. They are of a piece (for the moment) they belong to the Electronic Baroque, the Alliance between instrumentalized media and the presidency.

But beneath this monumentalized scripted presence, the fiscal realities of California and Los Angeles, for example, are dire. Both, city and state are struggling with deficits so vast

that hospitals, libraries of all kinds are nearly dissolving. The poor are divan farther away from the consummate, even while the same ideological drum keeps beating on TV.

Thus we begin to see a world taking shape that will probably look very different from the world that residents of the United states assumed even twenty-five years ago. The disappearance of political oversight from business, from Kyoto agreements, from capitalism at large, reinforces a trend that has been evolving anyway. A feudal anarchy lives directly underneath the enclave scripted spaces that are built monumentally in cities, on the computer and in the presidency.

Indeed, George Wabash is as much a scripted space, along with the war in Iraq as the Grove in Los Angeles. They are scattered from each other it seems, and yet centralized, share the same Anglo fantasy. They rely on collective misremembering enhanced by global media, either the cinematic city (the Grove), or the cowboy film or war the movie as an ongoing presidential campaign (the Bush campaign never stops; and now the next election grows nearer).

V. Global civilization has come of age. It turns out that it is coming apart at the seams more than achieving maturity. It may skip maturity and go directly into a collective senility. With better software, -smartll houses for a civilization hiding from its crisis for as long as possible: forgetting and erasing while the events take place.

That is the strange portrait of the United States this year- an escapist amalgam of scripted spaces from the media to the presidency to suburbanized enclaves inside deeply hierarchical cities. Its is clearly a portrait that is meeting as i speak Within another year or two, we may see what it is meeting into (or should I say "morphing". Like a special effect in Hollywood cinema?

VI. This year, I have completed two projects that play with the problems suggested by this amalgam. First I wrote and codirected a cinematic, database novel entitled Bleeding Through. Layers of Los Angeles 1920-86 (ZKM in Karlsruhe. Labyrinth/USC in LA), It is essentially the second volume of -the history of forgetting more about how photography and

VII. Hollywood films erase memory about booterism (as in my first volume). The intimacy that collective forgetting generates is similar to watching an old movie about a city that was invented purely on a movie back lot, with a back story filled with consumer fantasies, about downtowns in noir high contrast lighting. The central character in Bleeding Through, Molly may have Killed her second husband, but does not behave like a noir heroine. She is not afflicted by guilt. She feels quite at home. As she walks through streets that served as locations for hundreds of -movies murders - in and around downtown. LA Through nests of photos and films and a kind of picaresque novel (over a thousand assets in all) the viewer enters the dynamics of how collective memory is "distracted" by media. A second project covers the history of scripted spaces and lavish illusionistic environments from 1550 to the present: The Vatican to Vegas. The History of Special Effects (from the Baroque to Electronic Baroque.

But at the heart of all these projects (scripted and otherwise) is the schizophrenic divide in the city itself in 2003 in a public sector in LA that devolves into a warlord chaos- while the monuments of media politics get larger, and more constitutionally normalized. Underneath the glamor of its new suburbanized downtown, we find contradictions that will undoubtedly melt in all directions from downtown LA to Bushismo, this is one movie that does not have its third act yet. If these are the early scenes, however, the rest will undoubtedly surprise us.

Increasingly much of downtown LA has become a back lot for the movies. On many of the upper floors along Broadway, and all the way to the loft warehouse district, movies are being shot. Even Spiderman's New York was shot partly over Broadway. Sometimes movie helicopters, for an action sequence, compete with police helicopters known as ghetto birds (actually searching for crime). The two share the same space overhead but manage not to collide. One wonders how long that equipoise will last and whether cultural critics like NY self can stop using worn-out twentieth century models of disaster, and capture instead the realities of this matured Electronic Baroque word as it careens toward the future.

**STREET SINGS: Urban invocations for the World (from underneath your feet)  
Shuddhabrata Sengupta.**

I want to begin my presentation by reading from a series of notes made in the course of research for two installations by the Raqs Media Collective in the last year. I refer to these, as a line of aide memoir of images, and effects, that to mind register the city, in my thought, and in the artistic and media practice that my colleagues in the Raqs Media Collective and I enter into, when we engage with the city, as an idea, and as a provocation for our work.

**I. When the day begins in Mexico City a night begins in Delhi...  
Preliminary notes for Location <sup>n6</sup>**

On a global scale- awakening and exhaustion, love and grief, hunger and joy are all emotions that occur at the same time, in different places. When someone ends their working day in London, the office moves, across the internet to a location in Delhi where a new person occupies the virtual workspace that her distant colleague just left. She opens his file as he walks home. When it rains bombs Baghdad at night, it is time for cook supper in New York,