



**Beyond the Millennium: Life on the Street**  
**Moses Mitchell Studio**  
**Boston Architectural Center**  
**Master's Core 1**  
**Fall 2002**

American street culture is endangered. Most of us metropolitans tend to spend our days in cocoons of glass and polymers. It is not a stretch to say that we move between home, car and workplace. How many of us walk to work, to school, to the movies? Even in Boston, arguably America's most walkable city, the inclination is to drive: the Star Market provides a 400-car lot; Haymarket is a motor destination; loitering is strictly prohibited. While the American street is the most unambiguously public space we have, we have done all we can to remove ourselves from it.

The studio seeks proposals for the Twenty-first Century Street. Have we learned from Las Vegas? Is Newbury Street the most appropriate model for Boston? Is it possible to conceive new models of the city street given the preference for private stewardship over public use? With a few exceptions, the proposed greensward above the submerged artery may be given over to the private sector and the demands of the real estate market: what ought to be an extension of the Emerald Necklace may in fact become Louisburg Square. What are the cultural limits of the market economy relative to these issues? Is there a role for political will, or will the free market have the final say? In the new century, is a democratic landscape necessarily an utterly privatized one?

A recent critique of the state of the field reflects upon the schizophrenia of current urban design. The tendency to orchestrate behavior or obsess about appearance seems irrelevant. Perhaps it is time for an approach that is unsentimental about not only the past, but also the future: is it possible to be both Bleeker Street and Santa Monica Boulevard? One might expect this strategy to achieve a quality that is driven more by a subtle understanding of the everyday life of the city, accounting for its vagaries, and less by the desire to leave behind a collection of monuments.

The semester will be divided into three parts, all based in Boston: participants, in teams of at least two, will first map the character of a street; next, individually, a short project of a relatively ephemeral nature (perhaps a temporary structure or event); and finally, a long project which will have a more or less overt architectural expression, depending on the individual's interest. Our hope is that each proposal will have the capacity to anticipate and accommodate as yet unknown ways of inhabiting the city.

The method of the studio is rooted in the idea that as students and critics we are approaching a topic about which we are more or less equally expert and ignorant. It is also based on, and hopes to harness, the fact that together we bring a diversity of experience to our group. As in all of our studios, each participant will, with our guidance, define for his- or herself the scale, scope, and trajectory of the semester's projects.

Reading: *The Fall of Public Man*, Richard Sennett

For more information on the studio visit <http://www.geocities.com/mitchellmosesstudio>.