Everyday Urbanism
Margaret Crawford vs. Michael Speaks

Michigan Debates on Urbanism volume I
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Urban design and planning has traditionally been involved with the creation of permanent, static urban conditions – as in the implementation of infrastructure, or the designation of open spaces and actual built form. However, in reality, it is the kinetic fabric – people, temporary paraphernalia, etc., that defines the ground reality of a city and the manner in which we experience a particular urban condition. It is this aspect of the city, the Kinetic City, the landscape of Everyday Urbanism that has not received adequate attention and is the focus of our discussion in this first Michigan Debate on Urbanism.

When I arrived in Ann Arbor a few years ago, I was amazed by the local interest in the Farmers’ Market – a commonplace bazaar as I saw it! The excitement about the Farmers’ Market, the produce and crafts, what you bought there, the experience of going there, and even its very existence seemed to ignite enthusiasm in Ann Arbor. For me, coming from Bombay, where the entire city’s commercial activity is like a Farmers’ Market, this excitement was intriguing.

In Asia, and in cities of South Asia in particular, “tidiness” is not as much of a concern as in cities in the West. Architects, planners and urban designers are concerned about the organization of human activity in space, and debates on urbanism are posed in those terms. Discussions generally focus on big moves, such as planning mechanisms, laws and broader infrastructure that are taken so much for granted in the West. Therefore in Asia, when someone tidies up a street, puts paving back on a public sidewalk or clears an encroachment – reorganizes or tidies up the Kinetic City (what we are now referring to as Everyday Urbanism) they become urban heroes! It’s an absolute reversal of the West, where a premium is put on creating or facilitating “Everyday Urbanism” while in Asia architects and urban designers are obsessed with the creation of the regular or static city.

So why are people in the West so fascinated by the farmers’ market? It probably is because the farmers’ market, the bazaar or the Kinetic City has a humanizing effect in the context of low density cities where the public domain is dead – where people have no public realm to connect to each other. J.B. Jackson referred to this as the “third landscape” in his seminal book Discovering the Vernacular Landscape. He refers to the first landscape as one of mobility, temporal in its existence, which characterized the first phases in the history of settlements. The second landscape he referred to as one where people rooted themselves to a place – created settlements to make the Static City. The third landscape he suggested is, about overlaying the kinetic landscape on the static – connecting people through the creation of the temporal landscape of festivals, markets, cyclic events, etc. – rediscovering the ephemeral and the mobile.

And so when I saw the book, Everyday Urbanism, I was excited and found it refreshing because it allowed me to make a crossover between issues of urbanism in the West and the East, in developed economies and in developing economies. For it was the idea of the temporal landscape, the Kinetic City or Everyday Urbanism that I thought had universal relevance for our contemporary urban condition.

Of course, there are several questions that emerge in trying to make a case for the universal relevance of this issue. What are the prerequisites for Everyday Urbanism? Does it
necessarily mean a dynamic shifting demography and migrants to flourish? A vibrancy, which countries in Asia, and perhaps Los Angeles in the West, have? Is it about a less severe climate that allows street culture and the bazaar to emerge naturally? Is it about surplus interstitial space in the city that becomes the crucible for Everyday Urbanism? Or about transforming governance patterns and the ways local governments develop responsibilities with regard to the public domain? Is it about what we can do with the city? These questions take us to many interesting challenges, and especially those that have to do with how we take this Everyday Urbanism beyond description to actual strategy? This volume of the first Michigan Debates on Urbanism engages with this very spectrum of challenging questions.

The participants in this debate are Margaret Crawford and Michael Speaks. Margaret Crawford, who opens the debate, is a Professor of Urban Design and Planning and Theory at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She teaches courses in the history and theory of urban development, planning, and design, and her seminars have included conferences on “Contemporary Urban Dynamics,” “Contemporary Urbanism,” “Listening to the City,” and “The Culture of Cities.” She has also taught studios, where she attempts to make this theory inform design.

Her research focuses on the evolution, uses, and meanings of urban space, and her books include: Building America’s Workman’s Paradise: the Design of American Company Towns, which examines the rise and fall of professionally-designed industrial environments. She has also edited The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment and Daily Urban Life and Everyday Urbanism, from which emerged the subject of this debate and book. She has written extensively on shopping malls, public spaces, and other issues in the American built environment. She has taught at SCI-Arc before she went to Harvard University.

The respondent, Michael Speaks, is an educator, researcher, editor, and a visiting professor at the University of Michigan this year. He is also currently the Director of the Metropolitan Research and Design Postgraduate Program at SCI-Arc in Los Angeles. He has taught at the Graphic Design Department at the Yale School of Art, in the architecture departments at Harvard and Columbia Universities, and has been a researcher on the architecture faculty at the Technological University at Delft in The Netherlands.

Michael Speaks has published and lectured internationally on art, architecture, and urban design scenario planning. He is a contributing editor for Architectural Record, as well as a member of the editorial advisory board of A+U, for which he edits a series on design intelligence that has in many provocative ways brought focus on contemporary and emerging architecture around the world.
Margaret Crawford is Professor of Urban Design and Planning Theory at the Harvard Design School. Her research focuses on the evolution, uses, and meanings of urban space, as reflected in her latest books, *Everyday Urbanism* (co-edited with John Kaliski) and *Building the Workingman’s Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns*. 
What is Everyday Urbanism? It is exactly what it sounds like. It is an approach to urbanism that finds its meaning in everyday life, but in an everyday life that always turns out to be far more than just the ordinary and banal routines that we all experience. Based on the ideas of the French philosopher, Henri Lefebvre, and a number of other writers (although, strangely, not the ones Michael Speaks cites) we see everyday life as a repository of all kinds of meanings. These range from the ordinary to the extraordinary that is hidden within ordinariness. Once you start to look at everyday life, it opens up to reveal an amazing richness of meanings. This is the basis for all of our work. We want to reconnect these human and social meanings with urban design and planning, something that hasn’t been attempted for quite a while.

How do you connect urban design to everyday life? One of the ways we’ve done this is by conceptualizing what we call everyday space. It is the physical domain of everyday public activity that exists between the defined and identifiable realms of the home, the institution, and the workplace. As the physical domain of everyday public activity, it is the connective tissue that binds daily lives together. This makes it a kind of public space. Here is an example of what we would call everyday space in Los Angeles.\(^1\) It is the opposite of designed public spaces such as Pershing Square, LA’s historic public square, recently redesigned by Ricardo Legoretta\(^2\) or commercial public spaces such as CityWalk at Universal Studios designed by John Jerde.\(^3\) In contrast to these
What were they doing? They were placing prostitution zones away from the shopping areas where they wanted to encourage people to walk. Prostitution they knew needed to happen, and the city needed to underwrite it, but it couldn't do it officially, so they did it in this unofficial way.

What's all this about? What Crimson discovered in their analysis was a whole range of governmental orgware that allowed the hardware/sheds and the official city policy/no sanction of prostitution to work together to solve a problem. It's that kind of middle zone that allows a translation from software to hardware and back that Everyday Urbanism is not able to account for. I want now to show a project by Maxwan, another Dutch office that often works with Crimson, that uses the same kinds of techniques of observation that happen with Everyday Urbanism, except that it translates those into actual policy. In the case of this project, it's become the official policy for the City of Hoogvliet, a suburb of Rotterdam located near the harbor.

It's a plan that as of January last year is the official planning document for that city. The city is a small Shell town, abandoned by Shell, and left in a mess. No money. No jobs. All the industries have moved out into the harbor. Crimson was asked to create a master plan to re-energize the city. Rather than create a single master plan, they decided to catalog everything that was there. What they discovered was that there were four or five big decisions that needed to be made. From these they created a set of twenty-four scenarios that, by the end of the day, forced the government to make certain kinds of decisions about how the city would be planned.

The plan is called Logica. First they created a Logica council, a voting body with stakeholder members. They found four big choices that they wanted the city to consider. The council drew its members from the community, from business, from all over. The council voted on whether or not to make the green space small and scattered or make four or five big ones, whether to make a ring road or an axial road. At the end of the day this Logica council voted on this and came up with twenty-four permutations. It had the effect at the policy level of making the city act.

One of the problems was, the city didn't want to recognize the community; they didn't want to recognize business, the harbor. There were so many competing forces that no one was ever going to do anything. Generally it was at a standstill. They used this process as a way to feed bottom-up, to then use this orgware planning method to force the city to make decisions.
Rahul Mehrotra, moderator: One of the issues you raised, Michael, was the limitation of Everyday Urbanism, that it doesn't go beyond observation to show strategy, and how form can be made and a city designed. So I thought we would start with Margaret, and ask her to respond.

Margaret Crawford:
Among the slides I was unable to show there were forms that represented a particular strategy for making, which we called “quotidian bricolage.” The Chatsworth project is one, and I’m sorry you didn’t get to see the Fresh Pond Mall projects which use the same strategy. If you’ll look at Architecture Plus you’ll see them published.

I would say that Everyday Urbanism is accretional. It’s not big moves. The description of the Crimson project, basically is a different way of producing a master plan. At the end of the day you still have the same set of planning decisions.

What I think is more radical about Everyday Urbanism is that it is an accretional method where you do little pieces that accumulate to make changes rather than finding a new way to create a community process that is mandated by the state and decision-making on a large scale.

Is large scale good? Maybe it’s better to do it single building by single building. Maybe it’s better to have an attitude about the city. Maybe that’s what Everyday Urbanism
is actually about: an attitude toward the city that can have a number of different formal outcomes. Everyday Urbanism is a shake-shifting kind of activity that changes in all kinds of circumstances, so I wouldn’t want to have a singular formal output as a result of it. The point of it, in fact, is its multiplicity, its heterogeneous quality.

Crawford:
That’s just a version – for people who are familiar with American community planning techniques – this is just a version of community process and outcomes. I don’t see it as being particularly different. It may be more artful in the way in which it’s posed, with code words like “orgware,” but actually I don’t see it to be significantly different than what happens in planning in many different places.

Speaks:
Actually the plan was designed by Maxwan, but was designed as a game for the constituents of the city to play by choosing. What they really chose in the end, were these four or five off-on things.

Speaks:
What is different is that it’s not a plan. It’s a gaming strategy that requires the city to do one thing or another. Actually, the project is at the larger ten-year International Building Exhibition that Crimson has organized. It’s a ten-year project. This plan was in a way – I don’t want to say demagogic – but more than a plan, it forced the city to begin to act on some things. In fact, the pieces of that plan are part of a much larger living, changing plan that will happen over ten years. There are no design pieces in it. It simply says that parks have to be dispersed or that parks have to be in these four or five places. Everything other than that can happen willy-nilly in this very heterogeneous way that you talk about.
The reason it’s important for things not simply to be here and there and everyday, willy-nilly, is that a city like Hoogvliet has huge economic problems. There are no jobs. One of the things that is happening with this planning strategy is to introduce new businesses there, and there is a whole new housing scheme. There are things that need to happen on a larger scale that are not master-planned in the old fashioned way, but that are not simply additions to houses with train stations attached. There are larger scale issues at stake.

Crawford: Maybe that works in Holland, where the State has an enormous amount of power to structure this. I don’t actually see the relevance in the United States where the State is relatively powerless to plan on such a scale and with such economic power. It seems unlikely to be effective here.

Speaks: That’s a fair criticism.

Mehrotra: That’s an important difference. With that, I’d like to open the discussion for questions from the audience.

Questioner 1: A question for both of you. I haven’t really known about Everyday Urbanism, which strikes me as a kind of contrast to formal urbanism. I have two interpretations, and I’m curious which way you fall. One interpretation is to say that in America, we don’t have enough urbanism. It’s too suburban, anti-urban. This is to say we too narrowly define urbanism as formal urbanism, when in fact in America we have urbanism which is more vibrant. We just have to look more broadly. Particularly to a place like Los Angeles, where updated models of urbanism make us feel good about a broader notion of urbanism.
But an alternative interpretation would be to say that Everyday Urbanism is a kind of distraction, that in fact the search for emergent urbanism or insurgent urbanism is a way for us to take our minds off the fact that we really do have a kind of anti-urbanist tradition in the United States. And that, we have a hard time dealing with the lack of positive urbanism here. Nostalgia for urbanism and envy of European urbanism drives us to ignore the real difficulties we have with urban problems, and makes us feel good about this kind of informal or everyday urbanism. It takes our minds off of formal urbanism, which should be our goal.

**Crawford:**

That's kind of the Bob Beauregard argument in *Voices of Decline*. I don't think that paying attention to Everyday Urbanism necessarily distracts one from other urban issues. In fact, it seems to me that when you unearth everyday lives, those issues actually become present. At the heart of a lot of everyday lives are exactly those urban problems. They can't be denied. This perhaps seems overly celebratory to urban planners, but I would argue that that is partly the problem of urban planning, which is a discipline in a sense that needs problems to solve. It's very problem-oriented, particularly the more progressive parts of urban planning. So I can understand that it seems overly celebratory. At the same time, it's written within an urban discourse in response to the perceived decline argument, the argument that's put forward by Michael Sorkin and Richard Sennett of the fall of public man, that in fact there is a normative idea of public space the United States has never achieved. That idea of this loss, which is a narrative of loss, keeps people from actually seeing what's happening that's good. It's an attempt to turn that argument around.
Questioner 2: A question for both Margaret and Michael: Is Everyday Urbanism not willing to take a different trajectory? One of the cardinal ideas of Surrealism is the validation of spontaneity — what they call “automatic writing,” which is the idea that to produce literature you would sit down with a piece of blank paper and immediately start typing whatever would come into your head. It seems to me that one of the problems with this idea is that it equates spontaneity with freedom. In other words, it’s possible for some people to act spontaneously, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that the activity is not structured from various types of unconscious pressures or from various political, economic, social forces of which they may be completely unaware.

Thus my question to both of you is this: Are people who spontaneously use a parking lot or some area of the city to put on a garage sale, or whatever they wish to do, necessarily more free than the urban planners who design a city or an area of a city using very carefully planned out typologies and urban planning concepts. Does spontaneity necessarily give us more freedom, or necessarily a better result?

Crawford:
I think you are absolutely right in identifying surrealism as one of the conceptual threads that fed into Everyday Urbanism, but perhaps not so much the idea of spontaneity and freedom. The idea is that in the ordinary is the extraordinary, which is one of the main tenets of surrealism, that you can read into banal situations quite fantastic results.

I don’t know what to say about freedom as either positive or negative. But it certainly is less constraining to have a garage sale in a parking lot than to have a master plan that’s implemented, because it can vanish the next day.

Also I’d like to say that Everyday Urbanism is not totally about transitory situations; it’s also about things that could be more permanent, more long lasting, and more transformative. It doesn’t necessarily have to be
about something. This goes to what Michael was saying about the low, from bottom up. That's not quite the case. I understand why. People read that because many of the examples in the book, Everyday Urbanism, are bottom-up examples. For example, the Fresh Pond Mall is a situation that to me is in its absolute ordinariness, not in the bottom, it's right there in the middle of everyone, as urban experience.

Then, top-down, what do we mean? In the United States do we have access to the state in terms of transformation? Possibly, and it seems to me that you are valorizing the market as a positive and great thing, yet Crimson is absolutely dependent on State power for their activities. So I'm confused about that. Certainly one has to accept market forces acting in the United States as the dominant shaper of urbanism, but I wouldn't say that you shouldn't try to operate with whatever policies and state intervention that might be possible. I wouldn't differentiate between that. So I'm confused about your position vis-a-vis that.

Crawford:
I'm confused because you seem to be valorizing the market.

Crawford:
Seems to me you said Everyday Urbanism is good because it accepts market forces.

Speaks: What are you confused about?

Speaks: No.

Speaks:
Let me try to clarify that. We did a charrette two weeks ago in Detroit. There were four teams. One of the exciting things about the charrette was that it involved city officials, it involved developers, it involved economists, it involved architects, it involved what appeared
to be real world activities of which the market in this country is a principal driving force. One of the things I realized after being there only for a day, with the exception of the team that I was on, which was a Dutch team, it was decided from the get-go that there would be a design made without a real and sober analysis of the reality of the conditions that obtained on the site.

One of the realities that was not observed was a company that owned two huge pieces of land that would make impossible three out of the four proposals that were made. At the public presentation an esteemed urban planner/designer, who I think made his design after the first ten minutes in Detroit, said that our proposal, which acknowledged that this company in fact owned this land – and we knew that because they showed us the ownership chart at the time, and they showed us all the pieces of land that they owned – he said that the two Dutch members of the team were naive and that they didn’t know anything about America because in America property and ownership counted for everything.

The thing that stuck in my mind about that was in fact that this is precisely what we were basing our proposal on. It was the reality that had to be observed to make something real or something plausible. It’s that kind of reality, and this goes back to your question earlier, it seems to me that urban planners want to make a design, and in this charrette the designers made their designs, but what they didn’t observe was reality. They thought they could design their way out of reality.

The reality of that site and of that charrette was that there was a company that owned land that would make the pieces of
the big objects, the big beautiful designs that they made — turning, for example, the Detroit waterfront into Manhattan, putting a race course in there with horses or NASCAR or whatever — seemed to be slightly unrealistic, not only because it would be hard to do that, but because the land was unavailable.

In order to intervene and do stuff on that site, you had to observe a basic reality — did somebody own this piece of property? The reality in Holland and the reality here is that the market does drive the kind of planning that they were forced to do. It just so happened that Shell is a very big multinational company. It moved to this town in the sixties and left its facilities in Curaçao; it promised everybody jobs. Within fifteen years Shell had left that site because of automation and new technologies and moved all of its facilities out.

So it’s a market situation, it’s a global situation, it’s an economic situation that has to be observed. I’m not for the market, but it’s like air, you breath it. It’s a reality and you have to deal with it. It seems to me that one of the useful things about Everyday Urbanism is that it observed that you couldn’t do anything on a large scale and so you would find smaller uses. What you are talking about are vendors, those are mini-capitalists, those are market forces.

Crawford:
Yes, I understand what you’re saying. I’m struck by the Dutch example because there are thousands of towns in the United States — and I know this because of all the work I’ve done in company towns that were abandoned by corporations — yet in none of them I can name, has the State ever stepped in with an economic revitalization program. I think that that kind
of social-democratic state with economic
intervention, and even hiring young planners,
is something almost impossible to conceive of
in the United States.

I think there is another difference that
needs to be observed, which is the difference
between the urban planning and urban design,
which is significant. Urban planners are not
often operating in such a physical way. That
tends to be urban designers.

Questioner 3: I want to take Margaret back to her last example
of the shopping center, Fresh Pond Mall. I wasn’t sure what
your critique of that place was, and beyond that, I wasn’t sure
how from the point of view of Everyday Urbanism you could
critique it at all. It’s a place that’s working, certainly every day,
and fulfilling certain needs. It looks pretty awful, but people
still go there. Why in the name of Everyday Urbanism are you
generating a critique of that place?

Crawford:
I don’t think there was a critique of the place,
which is doing very well and everyone uses.
There was an idea that this could be a site for
more intensification. This is a functioning
place, but it’s a discursive comment to work on
it, more than an actuality. Maybe that leads us
to something about speculative design projects.

The idea is that it could become nudged
and tweaked to become even better, and to
become slightly more urban, and you’d create
a new kind of urbanism. I consider Fresh Pond
to be a kind of urbanism that could be better,
but not that much better.
Questioner 4: We can look to Everyday Urban space like parking lots, barber shops, and corner stores. Socially constructed in various cultural contexts, they establish real spatial roles and codes that are crucial to understanding how urbanism is to take place. Do these rules and codes that define our consensual social spaces have a place in the larger planning picture in American cities?

Crawford:
The whole point of Everyday Urbanism is not responding to the large scale, master planning, normative idea of planning, but it seems to me in all the struggles over space that occur in almost every city, that this attitude can be useful in keeping those places and encouraging them. I think it has a place, but not in the typical normative and generalizable sense.

Speaks:
Would there be a difference for you (and for the people who wrote the book and brought Everyday Urbanism into being), between Jerde or CityWalk or Celebration or a lot of forms of what people would call commodified, homogeneous everyday space or everyday activity and the more informal arrangements that you observe on the sidewalk?

Crawford:
Between CityWalk and normal spaces?

Crawford:
I'm not even so preoccupied with small bazaars. I'm concerned with supermarkets, strip malls, the places people go every day to buy food, to take their laundry, to get the dry cleaning, to get their nails done.

Speaks:
Between CityWalk and, say, the small bazaars and things along the sidewalk.
incredible water show. People go to this—it’s like a water ballet and they play Phil Collins music, and what’s incredible is that at the end of each tune in the water people clap, as if there were performing.

Crawford:
Maybe we’ve been in too many shopping malls. I’m a shopping mall scholar. (I wasn’t going to mention that; I wrote some very well-known articles about shopping malls.) This isn’t anything new. This is the way shopping malls have been developing for quite some time. The Grove is a familiar type.

Questioner 5: I’d like to follow up the discussion about these kinds of everyday practices that generate rules and codes that develop into planning. I was thinking about William Whyte’s work on the social life of small public places as you were talking, and it seems like an interesting difference. As I understand Everyday Urbanism, you are saying, on the one hand, everyday place-making practices are generative, transformative, and equal. People can take over spaces and change them by some everyday activity that happens there. Whyte says: We need to pay close attention to these generative space-making practices, and to rehabilitating programatically-designed intentional public spaces. So the implication of Whyte’s work, as I understand it, is that generative everyday activity can become part of the technique for programmatic planning even if it is always at a more local scale. That seems to me at odds with the way you’re drawing from del Sarto and the Surrealists, and the way you’re emphasizing the interstitial, fragmentary, the unplanned.

Crawford:
Actually, when you say “rules and codes,” I kind of say no. The idea of the rule and code is that you come up with a normative notion of how to make this work, which is what William Whyte is also trying to do, to come up with rules on how to make it happen. I’m interested, and I think Everyday Urbanism is
not uninterested in, design practices, but not in coming up with normative notions of how to make it happen. Rather it's based on what is already there, and working with that and encouraging and intensifying it, rather than coming up with a set of ideas that you can then operate with.

I'm resisting the idea that this can be generalized into a set of operative rules, and saying that maybe there is the accumulation of experience instead. I'm trying to maintain a resolutely postmodern position here, instead of generalizing from a set of observations in some sort of normative notion. The idea would be a cumulative notion that you can look at a lot of different things and you probably would get some ideas about how to do it again.

Questioner 6: There is a distinction between making something generalizable and making something intentional and normative. There are clearly normative rules that govern flea markets, various rules from a master plan. You can have notions about programmatic design that have built into them the understanding that ongoing activity will transform the space. That's programmatic but it's not generalizing across the bigger scale.

Speaks: That is what Crimson does, and they did this in a couple of other plans, but I don't know if it's an accretion over time — what accretes that will tell you what to do next time, if not a rule or some kind of knowledge that you accumulate to let you know it works this way and not that way.
Crawford:
You accumulate knowledge, but not by abstracting a certain set of principles from a set of examples. The fullness of the example is part of the significance of this. I agree with you, there's a shorthand for a flea market that shouldn't lead to design.

Douglas Kelbaugh: Since this was advertised as a debate, what is your reaction to each other's comments tonight? What differences or objections do you hear?

Crawford:
That's a very nice question. This is not the first time Michael and I have met and, frankly, I'm a little disappointed that our conversation has not proceeded very far in all these years. In many respects we are not even addressing the same issues. Michael is describing a uniquely Dutch situation and I am talking about the American built environment. I don't find the Dutch examples comparable or particularly relevant. American urbanists have always yearned for the power that European planners possess. In Holland the State has an enormous amount of power to plan economically, socially and spatially. In the United States, no level of government will ever intervene on such a scale and with such financial resources. I find it particularly ironic that hip young
Dutch designers like Crimson celebrate the market yet absolutely depend on State power to support their activities. They feel oppressed by the social democratic state so they valorize market forces even though the State is the one who hires them. In the US we've known for some time that market forces shape our built environment. We would be happy to have more State intervention!

There is specificity and a meaning to the American environment for better or worse and we need to focus on it: suburbia, in-between areas, everyday space or whatever you want to call it. All those strip malls and parking lots are our environment and we need to engage with them in a productive way. That is what everyday urbanism is all about, understanding the American built environment as it is rather than yearning for some other set of circumstances.

Douglas Kelbaugh: I have a question for Margaret, maybe for Michael as well. Everyday environments are pervasive in every culture, every period, every city. They are ordinary environments in which are hidden extraordinary things, sometimes even, as has been noted, surreal things. Artists and writers try to reveal them for the rest of us, as do some architects. But there's a major difference to me between the shopping mall environment that you showed and ordinary commercial places of the past. It has to do with all the cars and the parking lot.

You can crop photos of parking lots and freeways to make them look good, even artistic. You can frame photographs of autotopia, with its cloverleafs and bridges, to look beautiful, even epic. But that's through the eye of the camera lens, often from above or telephoto, but rarely wide-angle. When you are actually out there on the ground, it can be incredibly inhospitable to the human being. Whereas ordinary environments in traditional cities revolve around the human being not the automobile.

Today's ordinary environments revolve around the automobile. Nobody in those parking lots is taking sun
baths, or having picnics; and no one is wandering around the
cloverleafs of those freeways happily picking wild flowers. There
may be ordinary and there may be extraordinary aspects to
these landscapes, but are they humane or pedestrian-friendly?

Crawford:
I have a different opinion about the car. The
car is a technological marvel that is both
wonderful in its freedom and flexibility but in
many respects also destructive. But there is no
going back. I don’t care what New Urbanists
say; people will not stop using their cars. In
Europe where there is every disincentive for
car use, car use is still rising dramatically. So
the idea of eliminating the automobile is just
a dream and, for me, not even a good dream.
I don’t want to give up my automobile. The
thing I miss most about Los Angeles is driving
and parking.

We shouldn’t say the car is bad, period.
People use their cars in many interesting ways.
You have to look carefully at how cars function
in urban environments and work with that.
That’s why, for me, the parking lot should
be the fundamental site for urban design in
American cities. Today, when I arrived in your
parking lot, I met Tom Buress, who I always
used to see in the SCI-Arc parking lot. So I felt
at home. But your parking lot needs work! Its
cold out now, but if there were some trees and
benches and permeable pavement it would be
much nicer. This is where Everyday Urbanism
could help. We would start there.

Speaks: I agree with Margaret on all of that.
Douglas Kelbaugh: Michael, you mentioned the market and market forces. Market capitalism has never been stronger and yet, you'll be the first to concede I'm sure, that it's only one of the atmospheric gases that fill the air. There are conventions, institutions, laws, regulations, governments and all sorts of other controls and invisible forces. Where do they fit in with unbridled market forces?

Speaks:

At the presentation in Detroit the Dutch guys, because they observed the realities of the ownership of those properties, the Bridge Company, I think it was assumed that they were in favor of the Bridge Company, and I think a similar kind of mistake is being made by my observation that the market is just air that you have to breathe and you have to figure out how to work within it. I'm not a Milton Friedman Chicago-school economist. I'm not a free marketeer.

Let's put it this way - you, in your typology, argue that these three, New Urbanism, Everyday Urbanism, and Post Urbanism are self conscious and therefore are not participating in the willy-nilly everyday market-driven urbanism that you cite as something else. I can't imagine New Urbanism not being part of the market. In fact, whenever one asks Andres Duany why do you make these houses neo-traditional, he says, "that's what people want." That's called a market; people want to buy those things. That's why he makes what he makes. New Urbanism, it seems to me, is just as market-driven as Post Urbanism.

Douglas Kelbaugh: You are right about New Urbanism. It accepts, even embraces the market. It's the first design movement in my lifetime that is very much connected to and savvy about the market. I don't see the contradiction.
Speaks:
You said that in contradistinction to willy-nilly market urbanism, there are these three self-conscious ones, Post Urbanism, New Urbanism, and Everyday. You’re saying all three of those categories are participants in the market?

Douglas Kelbaugh: Yes. The market is inescapable in our system. But New Urbanism embraces it the most self-consciously of the three. That’s why it seems to be working. But, more than Everyday or Post Urbanism, it also embraces social, civic, and environmental ideals.

Speaks:
So at some level urbanism is impossible without acknowledgement that the market is a principal driving force, it seems to me.

Crawford:
I think everybody would have to agree upon that. I’m responding to some articles by the Crimson people who were really celebrating the market. I understand that in a social-democratic country like Holland where the State has such a heavy hand, that the market is a kind of inversion, that it’s cool and interesting, you’ve got to love the market because you feel oppressed by the social democratic state. But I think that’s a uniquely Dutch, not even European, situation.

Speaks:
What’s weird and unique about that Dutchness, is that it’s only weird and unique because it’s trying to become American.

Crawford:
That’s what I find weird and bizarre. Maybe it wouldn’t be a bad idea to have a little more control by the State. As for these Dutch people loving the market and embracing it, this is just a kind of inversion. What they have, they don’t want, so they simply invert it.
Speaks: It's a fairly complicated story about a shift in the Dutch economy in the mid-nineties from a state-controlled housing market to a market-driven market where state planners were no longer deciding who and where and what would be built, and, in fact, private developers were. That's why you have a lot of young Dutch offices because private planners didn't trust old state ideology-driven planners to make sexy new housing for people who wanted to drive cars and be like Americans. That's why you have that society.

Douglas Kelbaugh: We're finding common ground again.

Speaks: Everywhere.

Rahul Mehrotra: “Common ground... everywhere” is a good note on which to end the debate. Inherent in the structure and categorization of the debate is an implication that we have to make a choice as we go through these three sessions. But, the real lesson will be to understand and build a consensus on the simultaneous validity of these different forms of urbanism. It's clear that cities around the world are becoming highly complex and pluralistic and are dependent on diversity coexisting. Therefore, pluralism is an important notion to embrace in the contemporary world and particularly when we look at urbanism.

The lesson that we can derive from “Everyday Urbanism,” as a process, is the suggestion of a bottom up or grass-roots set of considerations that ought to be recognized in any urban system. Small moves that grow out of real needs that, if recognized, could in some way be woven into a coherent recognizable schema for urbanism - bringing to other “formal” types of urbanism the richness of human presence.

With that, I'd like to thank our speakers and the audience for having participated in this debate on Everyday Urbanism and invite them to join us for the following two debates.