Introduction

Vero Rose Smith

Associate Curator,
Legacies for Iowa Collections-Sharing Project
Stanley Museum of Art
University of Iowa

veronica-smith@uiowa.edu

INTRODUCTION

On a drizzly Saturday afternoon, I pouted in the back seat of my mother's white Ford Fiesta. I was five years old, bored with errands and sulky with little kid-impatience, and had just been denied ice cream. Glowering out the window, I glimpsed a colossal vanilla ice cream cone rising from the roadside weeds. Shimmering in the rain, the monumental frozen treat was a Candy Land board game come to life — I always knew I was secretly Queen Frostine! Of course, this ice cream cone was sculpted from plaster and paint. Candy-clad royal attendants did not whisk me away to my edible throne, and I still didn't procure a treat despite the renewed urgency of my shrieks. This was my first encounter with the enticing power of the shop sign. In a glorious display of literality, this mammoth ice cream cone advertised the dairy deliciousness that awaited dessert-seekers in the tiny stand just beyond.

For as long as goods have been bought and sold, shopkeepers and traders have found visually arresting ways to communicate their wares. However, signs are much more than advertisements. Sometimes, signs (like the giant ice cream cone of my childhood) are the manifestations of desire. Alternately, signs can be textually directive, informing pedestrians and drivers of the wonders awaiting them within the shop. Occasionally, the product functions as its own signage, displayed alluringly for passersby.

Unlike buildings, which are massive and exude a sense of permanence, signs are transitory. Though the structure may remain more or less the same when ownership transitions, signs let us know a shift has transpired - without signs, how would we discern that the greasy pizza place had transformed into an upscale vegan wrap emporium? Often employing design principles apparent in other contemporaneous print and visual media, signs tell us where we are

in time and place.

This special issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding is based on the theme of a recent University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art exhibition and symposium entitled "What's Your Sign?" Hosted by the Figge Art Museum in Davenport, Iowa and on view from August 26 through November 26, 2017, the exhibition mined the permanent collections for art works related to the evolution of signage and explored how have symbols of selling shifted over centuries and cultures. Additionally, the exhibition and symposium questioned the ways retail signs reflect or reject broader visual cultures and technological advancements. The articles included in this special issue (some of which debuted in the symposium) examine the iconography, typography, and materiality of retail signs and spaces as well as the cultural, financial, and geo-political forces that shaped storefronts and retail spaces in the past.

Charlott Greub interrogates the branded occupation of space as an aesthetic function of the two films separated by nearly a century. Through a nuanced examination of two films, *Les Nuits Électriques* by Eugène Deslaw (1928) and *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* by Olivio Barbieri (2005), Greub contends that signage can act as a medium for filmic experimentation and manipulation of reality. In both films, Greub determines that depictions of urban spaces are dependent on dramatically neon streetscapes that demonstrate a relationship between identity and location. Furthermore, the author argues that cinematic appropriates of signage are best understood as a political position in the century rather than as a purely chronological accounting of each individual era represented.

Similarly, Edward Snajdr and Shonna Trinch consider signage in their study of Brooklyn storefronts as a not necessarily linear barometer for cultural shift and complex hyperlocal identities over time. Snajdr and Trinch effectively track the seismic shift of explicitly descriptive and extremely wordy signs to cryptic, minimally textual signs as an indicator of gentrification. The authors argue that the more ambiguous and minimal the shop sign, the more monied and snooty the target clientele. In this way, the authors contend that retail signage functions as both a social act and a place-making tool with the power to include or exclude.

Furthering the framework of inclusion, Aparna Sundar, Flavia Igliori Gonsales, and Gracie Schafer examine the phenomenon of synchronicity in signage. In their experiments, the authors found that signs exhibiting high degrees of visual rhythm (such as a depiction of a gaggle of geese flapping in the same direction) induce a higher sense of belonging in the viewer. This sense of belonging can in turn be utilized to more effectively disseminate information. For example, the aforementioned sign featuring synchronistic flocking is more likely to convince sign-readers to forgo feeding the geese than a sign emblazoned with disengaged geese content to ignore each other and mill in opposite directions. While the authors acknowledge the limitations of their research, the practical implications of their study may assist the design processes of professionals involved in the production of signage to positively affect emotional and behavioral engagement.

Behavioral engagement is a primary concern in fully enclosed retail environments such as shopping malls, and Craig M. Berger expands the historical context of this retail form in the final paper of this issue. Berger argues that signage precedents established early in mall development have shifted in response to demographic shifts of mall-goers. Echoing the findings of Snajdr and Trinch, Berger asserts that malls have become more segmented by income level in recent decades. This segmentation has resulted in either complete desecration or a new combination of retail, office space, university classrooms, and healthcare facilities specific to the middle-class suburbs that gave rise to the shopping mall decades ago. While many malls have succumbed to ruination, those that have diversified to include amenities beyond retail have transformed into a new commons well-suited for the commuter-lifestyles of the twenty-first century bourgeoisie.

June, 2018

Image–Building: A Branded Occupation by Night

Charlott Greub

Assistant Professor
Department of Architecture and Landscape Design
North Dakota State University

charlott.greub@ndsu.edu

Abstract /

The aim of this paper is to examine the narratives of two films, *Les Nuits Électriques* by Eugène Deslaw (1928) and *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* by Olivio Barbieri (2005), using a favorite theme of avant-garde filmmakers: urban lighting in direct combination with neon light advertising.This paper offers a nuanced perspective on how film affects the understanding of neon advertising in relation to the built environment. Also, the paper explores the social, cultural, economic and political and conceptual implications of architecture as a sign through the interpretation of those who capture it.

Keywords /

Mass cultural phenomena, consumerism, image, sign and architecture

INTRODUCTION: HOW FILM TRANSFORMS ARCHITECTURE

The aim of this paper is to interrogate the narratives of two films, *Les Nuits Électriques* by Eugène Deslaw (1928) and *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* by Olivio Barbieri (2005), using a favorite theme of avant-garde filmmakers: urban lighting in direct combination with neon light advertising. The paper examines the branded occupation of space and the appropriation of strategies employed in artistic practice. The two examples are analyzed in order to explore the relationship between location, image-building and identity, and to highlight connections to wider social, cultural, economic and political issues. This paper offers a nuanced perspective on how film affects the understanding of neon advertising in relation to the built environment. Also, the paper explores the social, cultural, economic and political and conceptual implications of architecture as a sign through the interpretation of those who capture it.

AGENDAS OF SURFACE IN DESLAW AND SIMULACRUM IN BARBIERI

Deslaw's (1928) black and white film *Les Nuits Électriques* was a serious attempt to celebrate the dynamic visual appeal of modern neon light advertising within the city centers of Berlin and Paris. This film is unique in the way it captures the urban world of two metropolises by night. It is a laboratory and editing experiment presenting unified modern surface architecture to capture the commercial urban street experience of the era. This experimental movie was an exercise in rhythmic choreography, and the effect was increased by the accompanying musical score played on a "rumorarmonio," a special musical instrument reproducing the widest possible range of sounds found in cities.

While *Les Nuits Électriques* was filmed from the street view, Barbieri's *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05*, in contrast, was shot from a helicopter using a tilt shift lens technique. This visual approach transforms Barbieri's subjects to such an extent that they look fake. The result is that the urban space loses reality and seems like a filmed model, and reality thereby becomes simulation. Juxtaposing these two films creates a dialogue between the past and present to reveal both the ways film frames the perception of architecture and also the architecturalization of film.

ARCHITECTURAL SPACE AND MASS CULTURAL PHENOMENA

For over one hundred years, mass cultural phenomena like newspapers, radio, motion pictures, television, and illuminated advertising have been growing in importance, taking over from elite cultural expressions to become sites where real power resides. These mass phenomena ever more surely dominate our social imagination[1]. Architecture as a sign or as advertising has been significant since the 1920s when structures began to be designed as a sign for advertisement and entertainment. For example, Reklame Architektur, a new type of building that arose in the German metropolis during the period of economic reconstruction, created buildings that included advertising as an integral part of the façade. Examples include movie theaters and department stores, such as the Schocken stores designed by Erich Mendelsohn. Reklame Architektur was a test-run of the extreme—an architecture that is also an advertisement.

These stores were a mirror image of German politics and the economy at the time. After the failed revolutions that followed the catastrophe of World War I, Germany embraced capitalism. In 1923 the currency was reformed because of inflation, and the Dawes Plan loan from the United States began. With foreign investment and new technology, German industry and business soon recovered. Driven by the increased demand for display windows and movie theaters, Reklame Architektur presented a new kind of cultural expression in the urban context.

Ward (2001) argues in her book *Weimar Surfaces*[2] that mass cultural phenomena have been growing in importance. "As reflections of the processes of capitalist industrialization in forms clad for popular consumption, these manifestations are literal and connectional expressions of surface. They promote external appearance to us in such arenas as architecture, advertising, film and fashion" (Ward, 2001, p. 1).

MODERN SURFACES: URBAN VISUAL CULTURE IN 1920

The sites of surface in Germany in the 1920s were aestheticizations of function. They were the latest in artistic design and yet served the public. They were very much part of the industrial economy of the era, having been built up along the model of the new industrial production lines. In the Weimar years, there were continual crossovers in art and architecture. For example, the Bauhaus sought to realize its mission in applied arts for the masses, including deornanamentalized typography, kitchen units and other mass-produced furniture. Architects like Mendelsohn built some of their most radical designs in Berlin and Stuttgart for the display needs of consumerism (department stores) and the film industry (movie theaters).

The principles of Taylorism and Fordism migrated to Germany from the United States. These concepts of infinite expansion and efficiency determined the predominant system of labor, products, and capital for most of the twentieth century. They "were adhered to the Weimar Republic with a unique fanaticism born of a collective need to repair wounded nationhood in the wake of the humiliations of the Treaty of Versailles and Germanys loss of colonial and military strength" (Ward, 2001, p. 9).

Consequently, in the relative boom phase of 1924-1929, Weimar society enjoyed a concomitant upswing in architectural output that entirely matched the economic philosophy of this period. Only in Germany during the Weimar Republic did modernity's cult of surface extend uniformly into all visual fields and come to dominate culture and business so simultaneously.

Known as functionalism or Neue Sachlichkeit (New Sobriety or New Objectivity)[3] , this approach embraces

design following strictly the purpose that the building should serve (Muthesius, 1902) and was not just operative in architecture but also in all areas of design, art, photography, film and interior design. A starting point for new architecture was the invention of the curtain wall, calling for the liberation of the façade from its former heaviness by undermining the solidity of the outer wall as a barrier between the interior of a building and its exterior. This design brought absolute attention to the surface of the wall or the façade. These new spatial techniques of openness were perfect for buildings designed for a mass-mediated society because they give priority to publicity growing to gigantic proportions for promoting consumer goods like a film screen on the street.

New Functionalism's rejection of decorative style was also a host to an uncomfortable rivalry between image and text, resulting in an anti-mimetic condition of representation that constitutes the century's most concentrated systematization of surface. This design style has become one of European modernism's best-known visual codes. Those indicators related to Reklame Architektur include such terms/labels as "façade culture" (translucent display windows), "glamour" (mirrored glass), "asphalt" (reflective street), and "surface" (curtain wall). These terms appeared repeatedly in the media to describe the modern urban, commercial experience of the era. In the age of a surface architecture, building materials like glass and steel in curtain wall construction and reinforced concrete promote a perfect surface and mirror of the industrial age and suggest that key aspects of design methods were closely allied to the techniques of modern advertising and promotion.

Colomina (1994) argues that the use of such technologies is, in fact, a prerequisite for an architect to be properly considered "modern." She states: "Modern architecture becomes 'modern' not simply by using glass, steel, or reinforced concrete, as is usually understood, but precisely by engaging with the new mechanical equipment of the mass media: photography, film, advertising, publicity, publications, and so on," (Colomina, 1994, p. 73). Modernist thought was both obsessed with and repelled by visual design's most rapid expansion into the social imagination.

ELECTRICSTIMULATION AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF LIGHT: REKLAME ARCHITEKTUR

A determinant of the aesthetic value of buildings is and will be their ability to integrate, reflect and promote the purest surface of all, electric light. The surfaces of buildings must be bright, smooth, and large. From this perspective, it is not the construction, but light that matters most. The building functions not as a structure, but instead more as a spatial-physical creation and only as a phenomenon of immaterial surfaces whose substance no one regards or notes. The reflective qualities of building materials in relation to electric light was the most important criterion for the design of Reklame Architektur.

Evidence of New Functionalism "surface" style is found in the transformation through glass curtain walls introduced by modern architecture and the interrelation of outdoor electric advertising with the city street. This surface style is also evident in the evolution of the Weimar film industry, with its movie palaces and film set designs as the surfaces of German silent cinema. Further examples of surface in New Functionalism are the displays of actual commodities in the illuminated shrines of display windows.

What most transformed the power of outdoor advertising as a mass of visual signifiers was the use of electricity. Modern urban surface culture was experienced as an outdoor reading of the city's commercial life force, the street. These streets as surface in which zones of business, dwelling, advertising, and entertainment all simultaneously coexisted and intermingled were mostly located in the city center.

BERLIN IN LIGHT: LIGHT AS A LIVING AND MOVING FORCE IN SPACE

Germany's rise of electric advertising occurred during The Berlin in Light week in October 1928, when for four nights, a full illumination of the city's monuments and commercial buildings was staged by the city's major retail association. (Verein der Kaufleute und Industriellen). "Light is life" proclaimed the Osram Electric Company's adornment of the Siegessaeule

(Berlin Victory Column), which was clad with a sixty-six-foot surface of electric light (see Figure 1). This spectacle was admired by a journalist as a "tower of pure fire" (Ward, 2001, p. 109). In response to this electric celebration, there were parades and open-air concerts. Retail stores of all kinds treated the event like Christmas, with a city-wide competition for the best window display. New modernist buildings, including AEG's Haus der Technik, which was shining bright blue on the Friedrichstrasse, and the white-lit BEWAG building, were featured as examples of the latest in Lichtarchitektur (architecture of light).

CASE STUDY I

LES NUITS ÉLECTRIQUES BY EUGÈNE DESLAW: LIGHT MOBILIZES ALL THINGS IN SPACE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBC6ZvFzo4E

During four nights in October 1928, avant-garde filmmaker Eugène Deslaw observed the Berlin in Light week through his camera and created his experimental avant-garde film *Les Nuits Électriques*. Deslaw worshipped the illumination and special effects by night of Reklame Architektur in Berlin and Paris as a new form of urban lightning and promotion.

Later, Deslaw's film moved to Paris to be part of a montage between Europe's two cities of light, Paris and Berlin. The film concentrates machinic movement that is orchestrated with cartoon-like music by Theo Martelet. Martelet's score evokes sound as much through visual reference to sound sources (telephones, radios, bells, steam whistles, car horns etc.) as through an awareness of an image's potential to engender a sense of synaesthesia in its viewers.

This film championed an abstract black and white animated form that foregrounded rhythmic and compositional patterns in the tradition of Viking Eggeling's Diagonal-Symphony from 1925. Deslaw's structuring principles are diagonal layering and mirroring techniques to simulate space and to demonstrate that at night, light mobilizes all things in space (see Figure 2). Modern entertainment forms that mirror the mechanically determined speed of the

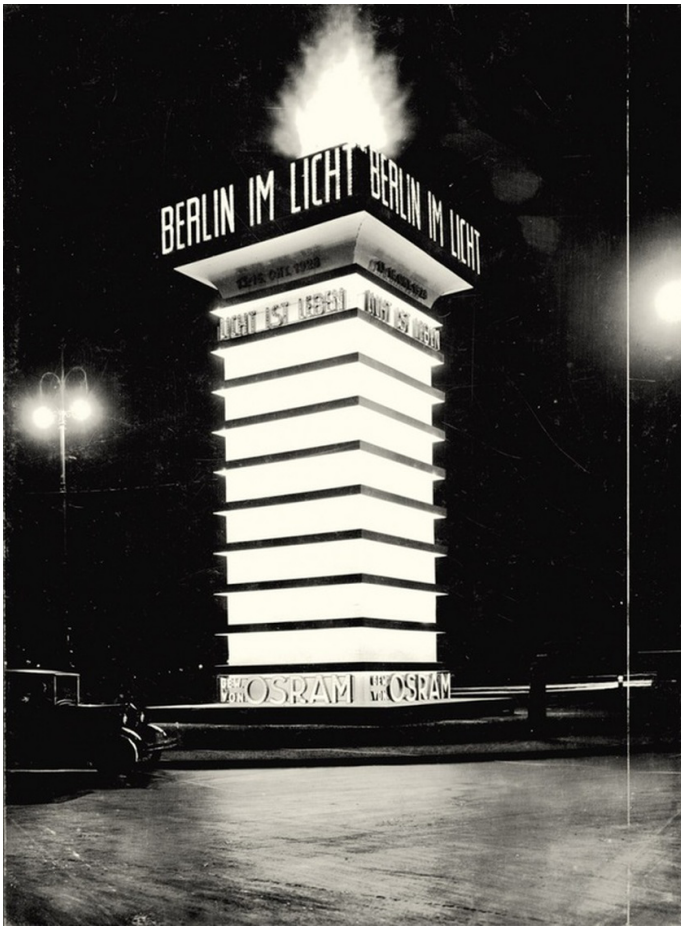

Figure 1 Siegessaeule (Berlin Victory Column)

From *Les Nuits Électriques* by Eugene Deslaw, 1928: The Osram Electric Company's electric adornment for the Siegessaeule during the Berlin in Light week in October 1928.

metropolis are clearly reflected in the film. In a later scene, a shot of a merry-go-round is intercut with a spiral spinning to increase the visual speed of the movie. This scene is evidence that the goal of this film experiment was clearly not representation but instead the creation of stimulation and simulation to evoke visual pleasure.

Figure 2 Berlin in Light (Berlin im Licht), Light is life (Licht ist Leben)

From *Les Nuits Électriques* by Eugene Deslaw, 1928, during the Berlin in Light week in October 1928

Les Nuits Électriques is indeed aesthetics of pure surface, taking film out of the studio and onto the street itself. However, this film was not a means of critiquing class differences and the suffering of actual people who live below the sheen of the Weimar surface culture. According to the logic of modern street advertising, that which lies projected behind the illuminated glass plane or on the film screen is not to be understood as a mirror of empty illusionism, but as modernity's legitimization of the masses' right to democratic self-expression via spectacle. *Les Nuits Électriques* brings to perfection the fetishization of spectacle but does so without critical awareness.

POSTMODERN SIMULATION

The postwar years have brought about a tectonic shift of urban identities away from their heterogeneous sites of modernity, and toward what Saskia Sassen has determined to be far more streamlined postmodern condition of globalization (Ward, 2001). From the Weltstadt (metropolis) of modernity, we have thus reached the global city of postmodernity.

The exterior of a city like Las Vegas, a city in the form of a strip mall, is no longer a collective theater where "it" happens like in Berlin or Paris. There is no collective in "it." The street in this context has become residue or an organizational device—a mere segment of the metropolitan plane.

Electronic transparency is replacing the traditional opacity of buildings' surfaces to the extent that we are no longer ever in front of the city but always inside it. There is only the interface (interfaçade) of monitors and control screens. All around, the tinted glass facades of the buildings are like faces or frosted surfaces. The projected message is that there is no one inside the buildings and no one behind the faces.

There is now only surface as postmodern simulation, rather than modern stimulation. We experience an invasion of electronic imagery into all things, a forced extroversion of all interior (Ward, 2001). This state is our postmodern condition– in short, a perversion of surface culture. There is nothing more to show. We have no more desire for spectacle in the modernist sense of the word because we are always constantly displaying all.

The site–specifity of the postmodern street is now the globalized centrality of transnational capital and therefore has no sense of place at all. This postmodern global homogeneity contrasts with the urban modernity that bespoke the Fordist dictates of mass production and consumption but was still host to definite sense of place. Weimar visual display was created as a spatial experience with a location that was still phenomenological and still on the street.

CASE STUDY II

SITE SPECIFIC_LAS VEGAS 05 BY OLIVO BARBIERI: MANIPULATING REALITY TO BECOME A MINIATURIZED WORLD:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-QI9znZ-yQ

The video works of Italian photographer Olivo Barbieri provide perplexing views of contemporary urban landscapes. These videos are shot from a helicopter using a large format camera with a tilt shift lens and accompanied by complex soundtracks. Barbieri's aerial portraits reduce monuments of civilization to the scale of miniature models or, as the artist calls them, "site specific" installations.

"Site Specific" is the title Barbieri gave to his series for which he photographed and filmed more than 40 cities around the world. This term is normally used to describe artworks conceived for a specific place. Indeed, his aerial shots of Las Vegas do not seem to show a real city. Thanks to a special lens and digital postproduction, they look strangely artificial instead, recalling miniature models (Barbieri, 2013). "I try to look at the world like an installation,"[4] explains the photo artist. "I have never been interested in photography. I'm interested in images," Barbieri proceeds. Site Specific shows the 21st-century city as a constantly changing construct, as an "avatar of itself," as according to Barbieri (2013, p. 7).

Barbieri realized dramatic aerial views by shooting from a low-flying helicopter to drastically alter perspective and scale (see Figure 3). The film includes four minutes of footage from a sunny day and eight minutes from a flashy night as the chopper throbs above the city, staccato engine sounds mixing with a lively score of slot machines clunking, chattering voices at a cocktail party, and artificial casino soundscapes. The American flag in neon, the Bellagio's dancing nighttime water show and much more pass by

as a colored image of the Las Vegas landscape by night rolls out endlessly to the horizon (see Figure 4). Images appear of the city's equally gigantic hotels and casinos, defining its skyline day and night as well as its megalomaniac aesthetic in form of building façades with constantly changing colored light animations.

These visuals set an absolute focus on the accentuatedly artificial and spectacular. Only a minimal portion of the overall image is crisply defined in these panoramic views. The rest is blurred by means of selective focusing (see Figure 5). This kind of vision corresponds to that of the human eye, which can only put a part of the field of vision into focus. Still and movie cameras are instead capable of presenting the entire image of an urban landscape in homogeneous focus. Barbieri uses the tilt-shift technique, which adjusts the position of the lens with respect to the image plane and also results in partial blurring.

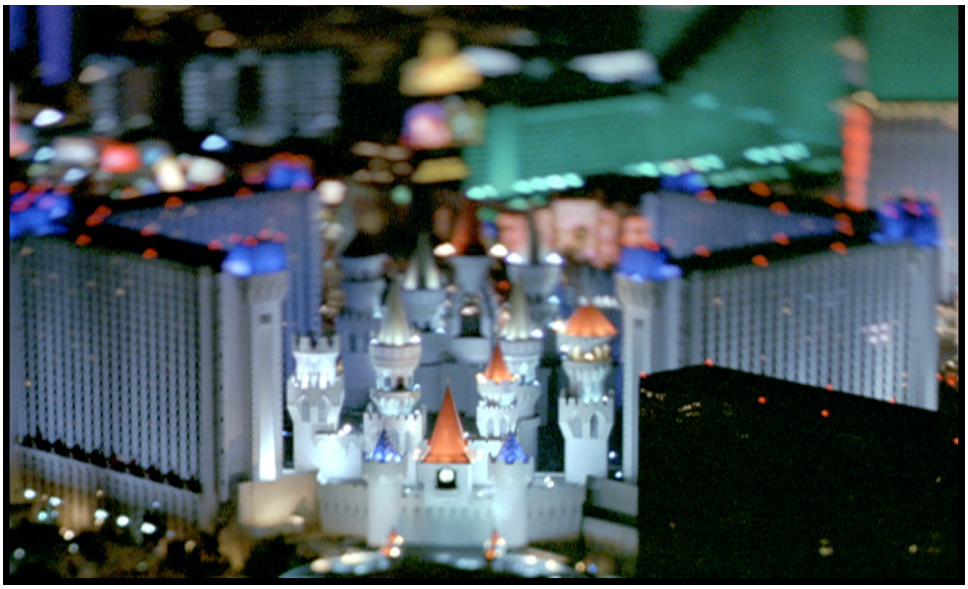

Figure 3

From *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* by Olivo Barbieri, courtesy Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York

Figure 4

From *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* by Olivo Barbieri, courtesy Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York

Figure 4

From *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* by Olivo Barbieri, courtesy Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York

The feeling produced when watching his films is one of disorientation, akin to the vertigo one may feel when gazing down from a great height. In using this technique, Barbieri highlights the ambiguity of all vision, ultimately forcing us to consider the relationship between reality and representation. In his teasing, humorous work, the real becomes fake and the fake becomes real. Barbieri claims: "All my work is about perception. It's a deconstruction of the normal way of seeing" (Barbieri, Pecha Kucha, 2016).

Barbieri's "Site Specific" series exemplifies the way in which he uses his camera to make the familiar seem strange. While the overhead viewpoint seems designed to endow the panoramic image with supposedly documentary value, Barbieri's interest is not in simply providing documentation of the place but primarily in the figurative presentation of a new way to see and understand a place, abandoning any precise and detailed scanning for a deeper sense of atmosphere.

"I started out from classical photography," Barbieri (2013) recalls, "from an attempt to describe the world around me as objectively as possible. It turned out the results of this approach showed a world which seemed absolutely phantasmagoric and unreal" (p. 6).

CONCLUSION: ELECTRIC SIMULATION VERSUS POSTMODERN SIMULATION

Both Deslaw and Barbieri use the medium of film for experimentation and the manipulation of reality and not for the purpose of documentation. Deslaw engages in abstract construction with an emphasis on surface simulation through visible electricity. Barbieri engages in deconstructivist play via surface simulation through invisible electronics. Both share the goal of reflecting how urban space functions as a vehicle for extending neon advertising as a form of representation (surface versus model) in order to

explore the relationship between location, space, image, and identity. Their distinct yet contrary approaches entail questions of image-building of urban advertising through the branded occupation of space and the appropriation of strategies employed in artistic practice. They also imply a need for a different view on the intertwined impulses of architecture and advertisement in modernism and postmodernism. These two eras must be understood not as chronological but as political positions in the century.

ENDNOTES

1 / Social imagination is understood as objective-collective-symbolic orders of and for active representation.

2 / The word surface, like superficies, is derived from the Latin super (above) and facies (face, form, figure, appearance, visage).

3 / Neue Sachlichkeit caught on as a term after being featured as the title of a contemporary art exhibition in Mannheim in 1925.

4 / Olivo Barbieri, "Appunti di viaggio in Cina" (Mantua, Italy: Publi-Paolini, 1989); and Paesaggi in Miniatura: Viaggio nell'architectura cines (Bolzano, Italy:Ar/Ge Kunst, 1991), 22.

REFERENCES

Barbieri, O. (Director), & Mezulis, M. (Producer). (2005) *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* [Motion Picture]. United States: WONDER, inc. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-QI9znZ-yQ

Barbieri, O. (2013) *Site specific*. New York, NY: Aperture.

Colomina, B. (1994). *Privacy and publicity. Modern architecture as mass media*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Debord, G. (1994). *The society of the spectacle* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). New York, NY: Zone. (Original work published in 1967)

Deslaw, E. (Director). (1928) *Les nuits electriques* [Motion Picture]. France. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBC6ZvFzo4E

Muthesius, H. (1902). *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst: Wandlungen der Architektur im XIX. Jahrhundert und ihr heutiger Standpunkt*. K. Schimmelpfeng.

Ward, J. (2001). *Weimar surfaces: Urban visual culture in 1920s Germany* (Vol. 27). London: Univ of California Press.

Old School Rules: Generative Openness in the Texts of Historical Brooklyn Retail Signage

Edward Snajdr

Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
John Jay College,
City University of New York (CUNY)

esnajdr@jjay.cuny.edu

Shonna Trinch

Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
John Jay College,
City University of New York (CUNY)

strinch@jjay.cuny.edu

"I have a saying, 'A shop with no sign is a sign of no business!'"

— FRANK SANTO
Owner of Aunt Butchie's Desserts and Aunt Butchie's of Brooklyn restaurant[1]

Abstract /

This article considers the unique features of what we call Old School storefront signs in Brooklyn, NY. These signs, which were often hand-painted and notably text-rich with large-size fonts, signaled an openness to all in a highly diverse, multi-cultural urban area. At the same time, very laconic, ambiguous and ironic gentrifying (or what we call New School) signage is replacing these Old School storefront signs at a rapid pace. Using sociolinguistic, semiotic and aesthetic analysis, we show how Old School shop signage acts as a "register of place." The openness of this register allows it to adopt and incorporate elements preferred by Brooklyn's gentrifying population. Also, we show how New School businesses begin to take on certain semiotic and textual features of Old School shops in order to survive in the face of corporate development. This appropriation of form/format, we argue, further demonstrates the effectiveness of Old School "rules," which allow these signs to remain despite accelerating gentrification and the relentless march of corporate capitalism. Old School, as a marker of history and as an iconic form of place, is a living style that represents the past, has been transformed by the present, and perhaps has the power to change the future.

Keywords /

storefronts, place register, aesthetic, Brooklyn, gentrification, diversity, openness.

INTRODUCTION:

A new type of signage is appearing on shops in Brooklyn. It is cryptic and mostly ambiguous. It is also ironic, and maybe funny. Interestingly, this sort of signage uses very few words. We argue elsewhere (Trinch & Snajdr, 2017) that this type of retail sign, which we call New School Distinction-making signage (or New School), indicates gentrification and displacement of the multi-cultural, largely immigrant and African American communities that have made this borough a home (Figures 1 and 2). As sociolinguistic texts, New School signs publicly "narrowcast" to a largely upscale, certainly highly-educated, gentrified public.[2] In doing so, they also project an exclusiveness of space to others.

Preceding and often co-existing with New School signage in neighborhoods all over Brooklyn are what we call Old School Brooklyn Vernacular (or Old School) signs. The most salient feature of these signs is their wordiness, or perhaps more objectively, their text-rich format (Figures 3 and 4).[3]

In this paper, we discuss these Old School signs and the semiotic and sociolinguistic rules they follow that made them ubiquitous and effective public texts. In addition to being text-rich, they tend to be literal and explicit. We detail how Old School signs commonly use non-standard English, a feature that contributes to their inclusiveness. We then consider how, in the face of

semiotic pressure from both New School gentrification and larger-scale corporate redevelopment, Old School signs both persist and are still newly produced. These "new" Old School signs incorporate features of both New School style and corporate signage that threaten to replace them. By continuing to operate under Old School rules, these signs promote a generative openness that allows for the adoption of new textual ideas and adapts to a changing urban context.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

METHODOLOGY AND BACKGROUND

We first noticed that there were two salient types of signs in Brooklyn's dense textual landscape in 2003 when we moved to Brooklyn to an apartment in the Flatbush neighborhood. Since then, we have conducted multi-method ethnographic research on Brooklyn's gentrification process. We also photographed and collected over 2,000 images of storefront signs in 14 different Brooklyn neighborhoods.[4]

This broad spectrum approach incorporated participant-observation, observation, ethnographic mapping, archival research (both digital and analog), and a survey of sign types.[5] In a series of in-depth and semi-structured interviews, we talked with local resident/consumers, developers, sign makers, small business owners, as well as college students and government officials. As part of participant observation we have engaged in, overheard, and noted conversations about changing commercial districts in the borough. These conversations occurred in a range of diverse settings including ball games, schoolyards, work functions, birthday parties and encounters on the street. Finally, we gathered and analyzed U.S. Census data from 1970 to 2010 for the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Prospect Heights, both areas that have undergone rapid change because of redevelopment and gentrification.

Our ethnographic and sociolinguistic approach seeks to build on current research on commercial signage and public language on landscapes, both urban and elsewhere. This work represents a wide range of approaches to analysis and theory. Some scholars have focused in particular on semiotic or design features of signage (Bestley & Noble, 2016), while others have incorporated historical frameworks to address changes in design (Drucker & McVarish, 2009). Still others have highlighted the materiality of signage and the relationship between form and function. Some scholarship has addressed what has been termed the linguistic landscape, which has until recently privileged texts over symbols, and language codes and semantics over semiotics. The range of scholarship on signage is thus very diverse and a bit disparate, ranging from historical analyses of icons and texts of 18th century American trade signs (Arpak, 2017), to the preservation of 20th century neon retail signage as monumental public architecture (Palmer, 2017). Signage as icon can mark a place and be considered generative of place identity. An example is the widely recognized "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign on Las Vegas Boulevard. This sign in particular has also been rendered both to reinforce businesses in place and to invoke the status of Vegas when duplicated or adapted on signage well outside of the city, even thousands of miles away (Nowak, 2017). Other research shows how retail sign design often emerges organically, from the grassroots of local communities, utilizing materials of once-robust industries. For example, Porter (2017) describes how mom-and-pop tire shops have used resourceful hand-painted design and an amateur aesthetic to create sustainable public texts within the landscape of rural counties and small towns. Finally, Rahman and Mehta (2017) focus on how even letter forms and typography of signage can build on and reinforce cultural notions of personality, situated-

ness and emotion, and function as urban artifacts of social narratives in place. Signs are no doubt reflective of and constituted by place and people in place.

Our case study of Brooklyn signage situates retail signage within the context of a transforming Brooklyn, which has experienced several decades of disinvestment, followed by steady and sometimes rapid gentrification and urban redevelopment. Our approach, although incorporating semiotics, materials, and aesthetics, primarily takes a sociolinguistic and anthropological lens to these commercial storefronts. We consider them as public texts that, as Warner (2002) argues, pick out their publics. Signs function as vocative linguistic devices that call to particular audiences by design (Blommaert, 2013). Sociolinguists consider shop signs as a specific genre of public text. Shop signs communicate not only what stores sell but also who is perceived to be on the street and what their commercial desires are thought to be (Lou, 2007; Leeman & Modan, 2010; Papen, 2012). These texts are read by anonymous people on the street who would generally not ask shopkeepers what their or a sign maker's intentions were (cf. Duranti, 2006). Therefore, we are not concerned with whether shops signs reflect the personalities or personal ideologies of shop owners. Instead, we consider how signs work within an area's linguistic landscape to mark and represent the social context in which people find themselves (Gorter, 2006; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael & Barni, 2010).

The cultural geographer George Stewart (1982) in his classic history of place names in the U.S. suggested that "names on the land" were the result of either conquest or custom and use. If that suggestion holds true, then the manner in which capital inscribes itself on the land should correspond to the way that people actually imagine place and make community (Anderson, 1991). Brooklyn is extremely diverse, with no racial or ethnic group emerging as a majority from its 2.5 million residents. Yet in the wake of deindustrialization and disinvestment, over the past few decades the borough has witnessed accelerating gentrification (Kasinitz, 1988; Lees, 2003; Osman, 2012; Smith, 1979; Susser 2012) in part because of Bloomberg's neoliberalizing New York through substantial state- and city-supported redevelopment (Brash, 2011). In fact, Brooklyn is now considered the second most expensive city in the U.S. (Brown, 2013), which presents a real and increasing threat of displacement to working-class and poor residents. It is in this cultural, communicative and conflicting context of substantial change that we consider the textually rich signs on Old School storefronts as placemaking tools.

SIGNS OF THE HOOD (OR NABE)[6]

Elsewhere, we have identified and described the features of the two distinct and salient styles of storefront signage (Trinch & Snajdr, 2017). Old School Brooklyn Vernacular, which represents pre-gentrified Brooklyn, is everywhere throughout the borough and is most prevalent in our data. Old School signs have many words or words that are large and take up most of the field of the sign. They also share other linguistic and semiotic features, such as additional or ancillary signs; store names that literally refer to location, the owner's first name or surname, type of business and/or products or services; reiterations or repetitions; languages other than English; and complementary symbols or pictures.[7]

In contrast to these signs, laconic, newer signs for gentrifying and upscale businesses are appearing with more frequency in the borough. We find that New School Brooklyn signage typically uses one word or a short phrase, often written in a reduced font size. We observe a widespread and systematic use of all lowercase letters, although not on every sign. The architect and radical public artist and designer, James Wines, calls these types of small, short-on-text signs "if-you-please" signage. They seem to him polite and uninspired in their diminutiveness. Wines noticed this sign style in many new-urbanist shopping streets and upscale malls around the country, invoking a timid conformity to a commercial experience of place (Wines, 2017). We have found that this type of sign in its Brooklyn New School manifestation is actually not so pleasing to some residents and consumers in the neighborhood. In addition to textual brevity (and arguably wit), these New School signs contain sociolinguistic features that indicate, following the work of Bourdieu (1990), a distinction-

Figure 5

Figure 6

making exclusivity and the exclusion and gating of certain publics (Trinch & Snajdr, 2017). The features of New School signage include polysemic or cryptic names, languages other than English (that index sophistication and worldliness, but not native speech communities), erudite historical and literary references, and ironic word play. For example, Figure 6 shows a sign for an upscale restaurant and café in Park Slope. Notice that there is simply one word on the storefront: "seed." This word, of course, could mean many things to any passerby and does not explicitly indicate a restaurant.[9]

Linguistically, the features of both Old School and New School signage thus represent two different registers of place (cf. Agha, 2001 and Agha, 2011). The Old School signs found in what has historically been a multi-ethnic, multi-class, multi-lingual Brooklyn suggest an openness to doing business with others that is straightforward and plain spoken. We often see explicit references to religion, ethnicity, national origin, or race in Old School storefronts. In Figure 7 we see the words "soul food" on a restaurant, and "hair weaving" and an image of a woman with an Afro hairstyle on a sign for a beauty salon. In Figure 8 there are explicit references to Christianity (specifically Catholicism with "Baptisms") on a bridal shop, and a syncretic (or blended), but open and prominent, reference to Protestantism and Islam on an eatery. We theorize that because of the widespread diversity, the language on Old School storefronts appears as it does because signage in this context needs to do more work than the language of signs found in other places, such as the monocultural suburbs or in small town America, arguably more homogeneous places. The Old School signs incorporate difference but seem to

Figure 7

Figure 8

say that for the purposes of doing business, the shops will not discriminate. In other words, not only are strangers allowed in, but strangers who are of other races, ethnicities, classes, nationalities and language groups (i.e., Others) are welcome as well, as indicated by the pictures or the English text on the signage.

Brooklyn's uniqueness, where a very multi-racial, multi-class, multi-cultural community is being displaced by a gentrifying community that is mostly white, upper-middle class, college-educated and English-speaking, gives us the opportunity to see how language operates to serve in the creation of first, an open-to-everyone market place and then, an exclusive market place that suggests that not everyone belongs.

Some argue that New School signs harken back to a simpler time, with more aesthetically tasteful landscapes of text. In fact, we found this sentiment echoed in the policies and practices of New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission, which sets rules for commercial signage for certain areas of the city. A couple of prominent Brooklyn-based sign makers, who have both been in business for over thirty years, noted that the aesthetic of a lot of New School Brooklyn signage is based on a 1920s design. One of them remarked: "That's what the city loves. 1920s, 1910s, you know… Especially landmarked zones!"[10] We also learned from them that, aside from landmarked areas (and there are many), there are no rules about what wording can go on shop signs. However,

in numerous cases in our data set, we found that shopowners forgo "signs" and put up awnings that act as shop signs. According to our sign-makers, the "awnings-as-shop-signs" that we collected are almost all in violation of the city's signage rules. When we showed the sign makers our multi-word "awning-as-shop-sign" examples, they responded:

Interview Subject 1: *That's on an awning. Awnings are NOT signs. Awnings are decorative objects.*
Interview Subject 2: *Decorative objects, the city said! They're to block out the sun.*

Author: *So it means that it can't be longer than 12 square feet?*

Interview Subject 2: *…Of lettering! Name of the business only!*
Interview Subject 1: *Name and address of business. So, "John's Hardware Store," right? "John's Hardware Store" is twelve inches high, twelve feet long. You can't put hammers on it. That stuff's illegal.*

Our interview subjects clarified that many of our examples are technically illegal signage in the form of overly wordy fixed awnings, which, according to the New York City Department of Buildings, are subject to fines. In fact, in 2003, the city suddenly penalized businesses for sign violations (and for many other violations of public and commercial ordinances). Fines ranged from $500 to $5,000. One city planner, in the wake of the outrage that followed in the retail business community, noted that then City Council Speaker Gifford Miller estimated "that over 90 percent of [New York City] awnings [were] in violation of the code" (Gerend, 2003).[11] In general, the city does not enforce this ordinance and as one can see from our data, Old School shop owners have largely ignored the rule.

Regardless of Landmarks Commissions or constructed ideologies of historical genuineness, Old School signage is evidence that shop owners have been doing what they want for many decades. Figure 9, from the 1940s, clearly shows the prevalence and persistence of Old School signage. In Figure 10 we see another image of a Brooklyn street in the 1970s. One might consider the Landmarks policy as prescriptive at best, and discriminatory at worst. The salient question is: Which history is the one worthy of preservation?

Figure 9

Photo by Andreas Feininger (1940s)

Figure 10
Photo by Anthony Catalano (1970s)

Sign painting was a more widespread craft in the past than it is now, cultivated through sustained and numerous apprenticeship opportunities in print shops and graphic commercial design companies. Therefore, a lot of Old School signs are hand-painted. However, materials have changed with the times and include vinyl sheeting, canvas, and plastic.

In the next section, we will consider how key features of Old School signage operate within the broader cultural context of a multicultural Brooklyn.

"DELI BEER FLOWER JUICE"

A close examination of the storefront in Figure 11 reveals something odd about the list of words on this Brooklyn deli. White asterisks separate large, white lettering on an orange field. The sign follows the form of what we identified as key features of Old School: lots of words, large lettering, and literalness. This shop is a convenience store and market. It does not have fresh fruit or an extensive range of grocery items, but it does sell lottery tickets, a service not found at every market. As the sign indicates, it has a deli counter where customers can purchase a custom-ordered, carefully-made sandwich; a cold case with a wide variety of beer selections; several types of freshly-made juices; and fresh-cut flowers. Notably to native English speakers, the sign does not say "flowers" but instead "flower."

In standard written English, the word "flower" as it is used in this context should be plural. This non-standard English form has been on the sign since the business opened and seems deliberate. Our ethnographic research has confirmed that the establishment sells a lot of flowers, so from the perspective of sociolinguistics, this use of non-standard "flower" has in no way hindered business. In fact, in Old School Brooklyn signage, widespread misspellings and non-standard word forms are the norm.

For example, on a sign that hangs perpendicular to the façade of a clothing store, we find "Courtney Washington Men and Women's Clouthier." On this signpost, the word, "clouthier," appears to be a misspelling of the term "clothier," meaning "a person or a business that makes or sells clothing." Old School signage also includes curious non-standard or archaic abbreviations. For example, on a small grocer's sign for the business called "Friend Mini Market Corp." one finds abbreviations for "produce" and "products" appearing as "Prod" in the phrases "Organic Prod" and "Dairy Prod" respectively. In other examples, we find non-standard punctuation and syntax, as is the case in the sign for a Chinese Restaurant in Fort Greene. . The phrase, on its awning in large lettering, "Chinese Food Eat In & Take Out," would require, if one followed standard English punctuation rules, a colon between the type of food served and the places

where it can be eaten. While the writing on the sign is obviously not an essay, its lack of punctuation might be notably incorrect to some educated readers. Below this phrase is "We Delivery" with the noun "delivery" following the subject pronoun "we" instead of the standard verb "deliver" to form the phrase commonly found in restaurant parlance, "We deliver."

Another example of non-standard English can be found in the non-native phrasing or non-parallel construction appearing in a sign for 168 Cleaning and Laundromat. It reads "DRY-CLEANING*DROP OFF & PICK UP*IRON SHIRT*ALTERATION." Prescriptive rules of writing Standard English require that the list be either all nouns or all verbs, but here we have a mixture of the two parts of speech. A list of all verbs would read: "Dry-clean*Drop Off & Pick Up*Iron Shirt*Alter." However, the subjects of the verb vary in this configuration. The business does the dry-cleaning, the shirt-ironing and the altering, but the customer does the dropping off and the picking up. This phrase, then, is also problematic in terms of prescriptive English grammar rules of parallel construction. In a list configured of nouns, a standard English sign might read, "Dry-cleaning*Drop off & Pick up*Shirt-ironing*Alterations."

These are only a small sample of the vast range and variety of instances of unsystematic, non-standard written English forms and/or violations of prescriptive rules of written grammar of English. As one might think, these Old School non-standard forms represent non-native usages or mistakes. After all, these signs are largely located in immigrant and in working-class communities in Brooklyn. What is interesting to us is that the commercial market place allows for and permits such usages. Small businesses seem unaffected by the standard language ideologies touted in schools as being more communicative and professional, and therefore more suited to commerce.

Figure 11

Figure 12

New School signs share a feature of non-standard English language usage with Old School shops in the form of deviation from standardized texts. However, the sort of non-standard usage that one sees in each sign type is very different. Along with grammar, syntax, constructions and spelling deviations, we see widespread, creative, and unsystematic use of type and font in Old School signs. In contrast, New School shop signs systematically incorporate a widespread use of all lowercase letters and ambiguous and polysemous word play. Thus, New School signs are brief, and they are also cryptic. Old School signs are clear, and they are also unsystematic and not uniform. In concert with the other features, we argue that although these features unique to each type of sign both show a departure from the standard, they are qualitatively different manifestations of non-standard forms that function very differently to give a certain meaning to place. If New School Shops code exclusive and upscale, perhaps targeting highly educated customers (read "gentrifiers"), then Old School shops use signage that performs inclusivity and a non-hegemonic stance towards communication as a public text. The fact that both types of texts are public is an important one. A narrowcasted message, perhaps funny or ironic, may only play with a certain audience. The literal, albeit non-standard and wordy messages of Old School make no risky moves with their intended meanings.

WELCOMING GENTRIFIERS WHILE RESISTING THE CORPORATE: LESSONS FROM THE OLD SCHOOL

All of the features of Old School signage encourage a generative openness that allows for the incorporation of new ideas, beliefs and practices and thus new messaging. This openness is evident on our Old School examples. For instance, on the side of the awning listing "Deli*Beer*Flower*Juice" is the name of the company: "Ridge Organic Inc." (Figure 12). "Organic" is

Figure 13

Figure 13

a common term appearing on the signage of delis, groceries and markets throughout our data. The word is a call to newly arriving residents from Manhattan or other more gentrified areas of Brooklyn who are searching for housing in neighborhoods that they believe will cater to their upscale needs and tastes. When we first moved to Brooklyn, a realtor driving us around the neighborhood of Kensington noted on more than one occasion that local storefronts had "organic produce," or some other "organic" merchandise. He knew this selling point because this information was displayed on the shops' signs.

However, store owners with Old School signage sometimes do not pay careful attention to the details of how their storefronts appeal to gentrifiers. In Figure 13, a sign advertises that a shop sells "organic candy." When one of us popped in to the store to ask the clerk for organic candy, he replied "We ran out. Maybe soon we'll get more."

"Organic" is just one Old School upscale vocative that seems to target newer residents in many gentrifying neighborhoods. For example, a storefront on 3rd Avenue in Bay Ridge displays the words "Gourmet Grocery" with large white lettering on a deep green background. Aside from this name, however, the shop has all the other features of Old School Vernacular signage. We have observed many handmade ancillary signs, usually simply taped onto the glass of either a store's door or window, reading "Credit cards accepted here." Until very recently, most Old School delis and markets operated on cash only basis in many Brooklyn neighborhoods. The acceptance of credit cards is accelerating, and this change is depicted on Old School signage.[13]

Brooklyn's retail landscape is experiencing gentrification from a force in addition to small, upscale businesses: corporate development. Fast food chains, national retailers (e.g., Gap, Banana Republic, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, and Victoria's Secret), and big box stores like Target and Costco are encroaching on more localized, mom-and-pop commercial areas (Figure 14). As we previously noted, many New School shops opened with minimal signage in the "if-you-please" textual politeness style described by Wines

Figure 14

Figure 15

(2017). In the wake of corporate encroachment, these New School businesses have begun to adopt Old School strategies of communicating "on the street." The most common of these strategies is the appearance of ancillary signage in front of stores, namely sidewalk sandwich boards. These extra signs advertise additional information about a business—perhaps a sale of the day or a specific item that is only temporarily available. Figures 15 and 16 show this strategy for two New School establishments. Notice that in Figure 15, the restaurant plan b has also added other Old School touches to its storefront: a plastic "grand-opening" or "used car lot" flag banner, and posted announcements on the store's plate glass window. The "if-you-please" of the original signage now seems a little more desperate, and clearly semiotically more assertive.

The competition with corporate encroachment can be fierce, and so these newer stores begin to employ the proven textual conventions of place. They often do so with gentrifying style. In the window of an independently owned

Figure 16

bookstore shop in Bay Ridge, The Book Mark Shoppe, is a smaller sign that reads: "Friends don't let friends shop at chain stores."

Equally interesting is how Old School stores have responded to the invasion of corporate retail. Figure 17 shows two images. The first is the corporate logo for Brooklyn Brewery, a local business that has grown significantly, and now distributes its products nationally and internationally, and invests in other breweries around the globe. Appearing next to it is a graphic from the awning of the storefront advertising "organic candy." The second image is not exactly the same as the Brooklyn Brewery logo, but the resemblance is unmistakably deliberate. The store advertising "organic candy" clearly mimics Brooklyn Brewery's logo in terms of font, design and style. Here, the Old School business appropriates, in its own way, a corporate icon. The sign makers whom we interviewed told us that placing corporate logos on signage is illegal.

A brochure published by New York City's Department of Small Business (2008) about sign rules and recommended practices for retailers reiterates this idea and more. It reads "Not only are corporate logos illegal, but they also mean that customers won't notice the name of your business-which can severely hamper your ability to be remembered" (New York City Department of Small Business, 2008, p. 7).[14]

The image on the right that copies the Brooklyn Brewery logo is legal but

Figure 17

probably not allowed by New York City awning rules. Could the "n" in the pseudo-corporate icon in the right side image of Figure 17 be a non-standard typo? In a way, this rendering is an homage to a known brand, and certainly, from a sociolinguistic perspective, an invitation to "come in and see."

CONCLUSION

While each storefront and each block are unique places, taken together, the collective textual landscape created by neighborhood retail shops reveals how language itself can participate in the making and remaking of place. The different sign types we have discussed-- Old School, New School, and Corporate—exist in a larger field of urban transformation that includes corporate development and gentrification, or what Hackworth (2002) defines as "the production of space for progressively more affluent users" (p. 815). Understanding this larger setting is critical to considering what it is that Brooklyn signs communicate about place. Considering signs as clearly more than just features of architecture helps us to think about them in a geographic, social and cultural sense as publicly and collectively marking place with aspects of language that have ideologies attached to them, which serve in the larger process of changing place. While signs appear in the landscape in a seemingly innocuous way, they are more than simply cultural artifacts. As social acts, and thus place-making tools, they can be profoundly political devices that regulate social interaction of users and usages of space.

We have shown how Old School shop signs materialize a particular form of communication, providing messages of openness to others and calling out to passers-by to "come in." These messages rely on specific textual, semiotic and linguistic features, which we have shown have also been adopted in some cases by storefronts with the more exclusionary New School sign type. This appropriation of form/format, we argue, further demonstrates the effectiveness of Old School "rules," which allow these signs to remain despite accelerating gentrification and the increasing presence of corporate capitalism. Old School, as a marker of history and as an iconic form of place, is a living style that represents the past, has been transformed by the present, and perhaps, if we pay attention to its value, has the power to make a place for everyone in the future as well.

Acknowledgements:

We thank Vero Rose Smith for organizing the symposium, "What's Your Sign: Retail Architecture and the History of Signage," at the University of Iowa on September 8 and 9, 2017. Thanks to Arthur DiFuria at Savannah College of Art and Design for alerting us about this event. This article is based on the original presentation at the symposium, "The New Old School: Retail Shop Signs and Openness in a Changing Brooklyn." A note of thanks to James Wines for his insightful comments and for his keynote address at the symposium, as well as to other presenters who provided feedback and discussion, and to the three anonymous reviewers who provided additional comments and criticisms. This research was funded in part by the National Science Foundation's Program in Cultural Anthropology Grant No. 0963950 and by a Faculty Research Award, Professional Staff Congress-City University of New York. Photo credits: Figure 9 (Andreas Feininger), Figure 10 (Anthony Catalano), Figure 17 (Brooklyn Brewery). All other images were taken by the authors.

ENDNOTES

1 / This aphorism is actually of unknown origin. It is commonly used in advertisements for sign makers from Brooklyn to Australia (see for example http://www.globalsigns.net.au/office-signs-corporate-signs-signag advertisers). Santo used it in an interview with us to emphasize his own business philosophy that embraces Old School signage.

2 / Narrowcasting is a growing trend in political campaign direct-mail advertising, cable television programming, and online social media that targets specific demographic groups (Goodman & Rushkoff, 2004). These strategies of communication, however, attempt to maintain the integrity of a private, perhaps even "personalized" message through the medium of the communication itself. In other words, they pick out specific "publics" (Warner, 2002).

3 / Signs could be described, compared and analyzed from a variety of perspectives. For example, one could analyze the materials used (texture, quality, manufacture), their aesthetics or style, or their level of technological formation or function, to name only a few options. Here we focus primarily on the semiotic, textual and sociolinguistic features of Brooklyn signage.

4 / The complete list of neighborhoods in our data set is: Bay Ridge, Bedford Stuyesant (Bed-Stuy), Bensonhurst, Boerum Hill, Brooklyn Heights, Carroll Gardens, Clinton Hill, Crown Heights, Ditmas Park, Flatbush, Fort Greene , Gowanus, Kensington, Midwood, Park Slope, Prospect Heights, Sunset Park, and Windsor Terrace.

5 / We asked a sample of informants (including both long-time residents and gentrifying newcomers) to look at three examples of each of the two salient sign-types that we discovered and to tell us what the signs communicated to them and what they communicated about the stores. The survey included three Old School signs and three New School signs from our photo archive (see Trinch & Snajdr, 2017)

6 / "Hood" is a colloquial term for neighborhood. "Nabe" is a newer term, often used by and associated with gentrifiers. The linguistic differences are interesting, as "hood" has semantically negative connotations (a local tough, a criminal). Both use a fragment from the original compound word "neighbor" plus "hood." Nabe, by contrast, is a neologism and has no other meaning. See for example Grabar, 2012.

7 / When languages other than English appear on signage, they often do so in Roman transliteration and/or non-Roman scripts.

8 / For example, in 2011, out of the 95 storefront addresses on Flatbush Avenue, a major commercial district in the neighborhood of Prospect Heights that runs seven long-blocks from Atlantic Avenue to Prospect Park, there were 39 New School signs, representing more than a third of the storefronts that we mapped. Notably, there were also eight corporate signs.

9 / There is also a curious diacritical mark above the name. This type of mark is currently trendy in commercial retail texts. Jaworski (2015) makes the claim that corporate signage uses otherwise meaningless diacritics and punctuation marks to create globalese, a register that transcends ethno-national language and script boundaries.

10 / Interview with authors (2017).

11 / Other crackdowns included one in Queens in 1999, and again in 2017. Another occurred in East New York, Brooklyn, also in 2017.

12 / The documentary film Sign Painters (Levine & Macon, 2013) presents personal narratives from current practitioners of this dying craft and the struggles and successes of this art form in the wake of 21st century digital graphics. Sign painting was widespread in the mid-20th century and print shops had skilled graphic designers doing all sorts of signage and advertising. The Brooklyn sign makers we interviewed apprenticed in the 1980s with "master" sign painters, who themselves had been in the business for decades. One painter got his start while working for a sign shop in Borough Park that specialized in Hebrew signage, catering to the Hassidic community in that neighborhood, but who also did business all over the borough. The business of sign making has integrated some technology, but we also learned that the manufacture of older forms, such as neon and metal-crafting still occur. They are, of course, quite expensive.

13 / Interestingly, many New Brooklyn shops do not display the small Visa or Mastercard signs on their storefront windows. Instead, these are placed discreetly on cash registers further inside the store.

14 / This brochure appeared as a resource for businesses on a couple of Business Improvement District (BIDs) websites at the height of the housing boom in the late 2000s.

REFERENCES

Agha, A. (2001). Register. In Duranti, A. (Ed.). *Key Terms in Language & Culture* (Vol. 11) (pp. 212-213), New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

Agha, A. (2011) Commodity registers. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 21(1): 22-53.

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism.* London: Verso.

Arpak, A. (2017, September). Creating shape, sign and style: Notes on the pictorial aesthetic and representational qualities of early American sign design. In V.R. Smith (Chair), *What's Your Sign? Retail Architecture and the History of Signage.* Conference conducted at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA.

Bestley, R. & Noble, I. (2016). *Visual Research: An introduction to research methods in graphic design.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Blommaert, J. (2013). *Ethnography, superdiversity and linguistic landscapes.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Bourdieu, P (1990). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1979).

Brash, J. (2011). *Bloomberg's New Yorkj: class and governance in the luxury city.* Athens, G.A.: University of Georgia Press.

Brown, R. (2013). Manhattan and Brooklyn are the two most expensive places to live in the U.S.: report. *New York Daily News*, April 13.

Drucker, J., & McVarish, E. (2009). *Graphic design history.* New York: Pearson.

Duranti, A. (2006). The social ontology of intentions. *Discourse Studies* 8(1):31-40.

Gerend, J. (2003, August). The outrage over New York City's storefront awning blitz is justified— but so are the limits. Commentary/ Op-Ed. *Center For Urban Future.* Retrieved from https://nycfuture.org/research/the-outrage-over-new-york-citys-storefront-awning-ticket-blitz-is-justified

Goodman, B. & Rushkoff, D. (Writers) & Goodman, B. & Dretzin, R. (Directors) (2004, November 9) The Persuaders [Television Broadcast]. In R. Dretzin, B. Goodman, & M. Soenens (Producers), Frontline. Boston, MA: WGBH Boston.

Gorter, D. (Ed.). (2006). *Linguistic landscape: A new approach to multilingualism*. Multilingual Matters.

Grabar, H. (2012, August 27). Nabe or hood? A brief history of shortening neighborhood. Citylab. Retrieved from https://www.citylab.com/equity/2012/08/nabe-or-hood-brief-history-shortening-neighborhood/3074/

Hackworth, J. (2002). Post-recession gentrification in New York City. *Urban Affairs Review 37*(6), 815-843.

Holleran, S. (2017, September) Grafitti, street art, advertising, and the fight for urban visual space. In V.R. Smith (Chair), *What's Your Sign? Retail Architecture and the History of Signage.* Conference conducted at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA.

Jaworski, A. (2015). "Globalese: A new visual-linguistic register." *Social Semiotics 25*(2), 217-235.

Kasinitz, P. (1988). The gentrification of "Boerum Hill": Neighborhood change and conflicts over definitions. *Qualitative Sociology. 11*(3): 163-182.

Leeman, J. & Modan, G.. (2010). Selling the city: Language, ethnicity and commodified space. In Shohamy, E. G., Ben-Rafael, E., & Barni, M. (Eds.) *Linguistic landscapes in the city* (pp. 182-198). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Lees, L.. (2003). Super-Gentrification: The case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City. *Urban Studies 40*(12): 2487-2509

Levine, F., & Macon, S. (Directors) Radar Studios (Producer) (2013). *Sign painters.* [Documentary].

Lou, J. (2007). Revitalizing Chinatown into a heterotopia: A geosemiotic analysis of shop signs in Washington, DC's Chinatown. *Space and Culture 10*(2), 170-194.

New York City Department of Small Business Services (March 2008) Façade: A guide to storefront design [Brochure]. New York, NY: New York City Department of Small Business Services.

Nowak, G. (2017, September). Meta-signage around the mega-resorts of Las Vegas: A sign of the times. In V.R. Smith (Chair), *What's Your Sign? Retail Architecture and the History of Signage.* Conference conducted at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA.

Osman, S.. (2011). *The invention of brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the search for authenticity in postwar New York.* New York: Oxford.

Palmer, J.. (2017, September). I AM A MONUMENT: Saving Toronto's Sam the Record Man sign. In V.R. Smith (Chair), *What's Your Sign? Retail Architecture and the History of Signage.* Conference conducted at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA.

Papen, U. (2012). Commercial discourses, gentrification and citizen's protests: The linguistic landscape of Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. *Journal of Sociolinguistics 16*(1),56-80.

Porter, K.. (2017, September). Make/Do: Lessons from home-made "Mom and Pop" signage In V.R. Smith (Chair), *What's Your Sign? Retail Architecture and the History of Signage.* Conference conducted at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA.

Rahman, M. & Mehta, V. (2017). Letter forms as communicative urban artifacts for social narratives. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 2*(1).

Shohamy, E. G., Ben-Rafael, E., & Barni, M. (Eds.). (2010). Linguistic landscape in the city. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Smith, N. (1979). Toward a theory of gentrification: A back to the city movement by capital, not people. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 45*(4): 538-548.

Stewart, G. (1982). *Names on the land.* New York: New York Review Books Classics.

Susser, I. (2012). Norman Street: Poverty and politics in an urban neighborhood. New York: Oxford University Press.

Trinch, .S & Snajdr, E. (2017). What the signs say: Gentrification and the disappearance of capitalism without distinction in Brooklyn. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 21*(1): 64-89.

Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. *Public Culture, 14*(1): 49-90.

Wines, J. (2017). Keynote: What's your sign? In V.R. Smith (Chair), *What's Your Sign? Retail Architecture and the History of Signage.* Conference conducted at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA.

Synchronicity in Signage Promotes a Sense of Belonging

Aparna Sundar, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Department of Marketing,
Lundquist College of Business,
University of Oregon

asundar@uoregon.edu

Flavia Gonsales, Ph.D.

Researcher at Group of Image Studies in Communication (GEIC),
Escola de Comunicações e Artes,
Universidade de São Paulo

flavia_gonsales@usp.br

Gracie Schafer

Undergraduate Student
Department of Marketing,
Lundquist College of Business,
University of Oregon

gschafer@uoregon.edu

Abstract /

The role of synchronicity in signage is investigated in two studies. Synchronicity has been theoretically linked to solidarity or a feeling of unity. In this research, we empirically investigate the effects of depicting synchronicity in signage using the visual principle of rhythm. Rhythm in images to create synchronicity in signage increases entitativity and a sense of belonging. We demonstrate key effects that can be leveraged in shaping consumer inferences in community and commercial contexts. Finally, we demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy, but only when prior perceptions of belonging are absent. Implications for theory and future research are discussed.

Keywords /

Synchronicity in signage, entitativity, solidarity, trust, belonging.

INTRODUCTION

Although images on signage are often two dimensional, the graphics on a sign can communicate complex information. Signage is intended to increase attention (Auffrey & Hildebrandt, 2017). Prior research suggests that visual information included on signage improves attention, recognition, and recall of information (Guenther, Klatzky, & Putnam, 1980; Lutz & Lutz, 1977; Shepard, 1967; Starch, 1966). Further, visual information can improve consumer judgments or attitudes (Childers & Houston, 1984; Edell & Staelin, 1983; Hirschman, 1986; Holbrook & Moore, 1981; Kisielius & Roedder, 1983). One strategy in signage that is known to increase attention is the depiction of movement using imagery. Such imagery can communicate dynamism, which can improve attitudes and increase viewer attention (Cian, Krishna, & Elder, 2014). Dynamism in imagery is defined as imagery that can evoke a sense of movement (Cian et al., 2014). Such images are known to increase responsiveness and vigilance by increasing risk perceptions (Cian, Krishna, & Elder, 2015). Movement can be conveyed in imagery using an individual entity or using a group of individuals that constitute related parts (Lakens, 2010). The current research examines the effects of rhythm or synchronicity in images and contributes to the literature on dynamism (Cian et al., 2014, 2015) and graphical identities (Fontaine & Bradbury, 2018). Additionally, we explore the graphic design techniques of expressing visual rhythm and synchronicity in static imagery and the ability of this technique to convey solidarity and sense of belonging.

This area of research extends the methods for studying signage. Research in signage and wayfinding has focused on the responsiveness of regulation or sign codes (Jourdan, Strauss, & Hunter, 2017) and legal considerations (Weinstein, 2017), and on the information included in the sign itself. Signs

typically consist of typographic information (Bullough, 2017), which needs to be accessible, readable (Garvey, Eie, & Klenna, 2016), and legible (Bullough, 2017). The placement within a sign (Schaefer, 2016; Symonds, 2017; Ward, 2017) and strategic placement of the sign (Apardian & Alam, 2017) contribute to its overall success. Given that responses to signage can be cognitive, affective, or behavioral (Kellaris & Machleit, 2016), the way information is presented in a sign is an important consideration in designing signage.

SIGNAGE, VISUAL COMMUNICATION, AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Signage is a means of visual communication. For any representation in graphic design to make sense to the consumer, meaning inherent in visual concepts must be grounded in prior experiences (Gibbs, 2011). In this case, the prior experience of the consumer is informed by the cultural context. Spatial concepts consist of orientation that can be mapped onto concepts, which are, hence, useful in branding (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The structural mapping of the meaning of these concepts on the visual field offers opportunities for communication. Movement, along with the point, line, shape, direction, tone, color, texture, and size, is an irreducible element of visual communication and source of visual information (Dondis, 1974). The ability of visual imagery to communicate movement is intriguing. In static visuals like still photos, storyboards, traffic and product label pictograms, printed advertising, and wayfinding signage, motion is an illusion; nothing is moving. Researchers have investigated how the sense of movement (dynamism) evoked by static images influences people's responses toward brands, events, facilities, places, and organizations that use or are represented by/with these images. For instance, logotypes perceived as dynamic induce a higher consumer brand engagement (longer visual attention to the logo) and, in turn, generate more favorable brand attitudes. This effect is moderated by the fitting of perceived movement with the characteristics of the brand (Cian et al., 2014). Sequel research has shown that movement perceived from static warning-sign icons induces a quicker propensity to act as compared with icons that evoke less dynamism because of the suggestion of greater risk and the increase of attentional vigilance (Cian et al., 2015).

RHYTHM AND SYNCHRONICITY

Movement may be perceived at an even frequency when the distance (or interval) between the repeated elements is identical and perceived as rhythmical when the interval between the elements varies (Leborg, 2006). In design, rhythm can be described as "a strong, regular, repeated pattern," a way to express form over time and to preserve an essential structural unity (Lupton & Phillips, 2015). Rhythm and synchronicity can be implied in static imagery by manipulating static visual elements. For instance, a graphic designer can communicate rhythm by repeating/overlapping points, lines, shapes, colors, etc. Rhythm can be conveyed by varying these features, but with a constant variation of distance, size, direction, rotation angle, texture, transparency, etc. When two or more visual elements repeatedly change in the same pattern (rhythm), they can be perceived as performing a synchronic motion. Examples are provided in Appendix A.

Gestalt principles, which are frequently used in design, encompass synchrony in static images as "The Factor of Uniform Destiny" or of "Common Fate" (Wertheimer, 1938), positing that visual elements that were "shifted" similarly "are readily seen in the sense of one." Thus, the capacity of static graphic elements to express synchronic movement and thereby evoke a sense of "belonging together" is intuitively employed by visual communicators. For example, in synchronized swimming, athletes who perform with greater precision earn a higher score on synchronization, which is defined as "to swim or execute movements in unison, one with the other and the accompaniment" (FINA, 2013). The result of this precision is a stronger perception that the group of athletes is a single entity. Similarly, simulating synchronicity in a static image can communicate a sense of oneness or solidarity.

RHYTHM AND SYNCHRONICITY

The term solidarity represents the relationships that link the members of a group to one another. Solidarity is a feeling of devotion and enthusiasm shared by these members ("esprit de corps") and a spirit involving a

body of affiliated actors that recognize themselves and others as belonging to the same social unit, identified as a collective entity (Hunt & Benford, 2004). In utopian philosophy, human solidarity is achieved by seeing strangers as fellow (sufferers) and as "one of us." Solidarity can be a creative task achieved by journalists' reports, comic books, docudramas, novels, movies, and TV programs, as Rorty (1989) postulates. Strategies that can evoke feelings of solidarity include development of a robust brand identity, emotional appeals, tribalism, and rivalry. These strategies can improve brand perceptions, attitudes, and purchase behavior (Schlesinger & Gungerich, 2011; Madrigal, 2000). When consumers identify with a brand, they become loyal and more willing to spend (Madrigal, 2000). Increased purchase intentions are a result of consumers' feelings of collectiveness, which translate into perceptions of generosity as a group norm (Madrigal, 2000). Therefore, building a brand that consumers can easily identify with is crucial and can be achieved through the adoption of group experiences, an emphasis on a unique brand history, and the creation and implementation of meaningful, ritual-type practices (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001; Watkins, 2014; Heere & James, 2007). Sports teams provide an example of the power of solidarity via their loyal and massive fan bases who perceive themselves as part of a group, not just as consumers (Yun-Tsan, 2017; Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman, 1997; Heere & James, 2007).

When consumers identify with a brand, they experience emotions that can boost positive attitudes and loyalty. Emotional appeals induce feelings of togetherness and connection between a brand and its consumers; therefore, when a brand performs well, consumers are satisfied, and brand equity is increased (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005). Brands that efficaciously utilize identity and emotional appeals to create bonds with consumers innately influence negative perceptions of rival or competitive brands (Grohs, Reisinger, & Woisetschläger, 2015; Berendt & Uhrich, 2016). This loyalty creates a tribal aspect among consumers that stems from social recognition and socialization needs (Dionisio, Leal, & Moutinho, 2008). Overall, brand awareness is increased (Moutinho, Dionísio, & Leal, 2007), emotional ties are improved (Underwood et al., 2001), brand attitudes are amplified (Schlesinger & Gungerich, 2011), brand equity is elevated (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005; Gladden & Funk, 2002), and purchase intentions are heightened (Madrigal, 2000) for brands that create an identification bond between themselves and consumers.

In the same way that solidarity can be achieved through marketing and branding techniques, the perception of unity can be evoked by visual imagery, specifically through temporally coordinated actions depicted both in static and in moving images (Lakens, 2010). Synchronic movements are more entitative than movements in different rhythms. Previous research has shown that individuals participating in rhythmic behaviors like dancing, singing, and marching have tendencies toward social bonds, cooperation, and trust with individuals engaged in the same activity (Freeman, 2000; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009). We argue that solidarity or sense of belonging can be constructed via rhythm in non-behavioral messages, such as informational (e.g., signage and wayfinding) and marketing (e.g., advertising, brand experience, and sponsorship) communication. We therefore predict that an increase in synchronicity through signage will increase a sense of belonging within a given context or community. In the studies that follow, we demonstrate the incidental effects of synchronicity in signage.

STUDY 1

The objective of this study was to evaluate whether synchronicity in signage would influence feelings of solidarity or entitativity in a retail store. We predicted that a sign using images with greater synchronicity would increase perceptions of store entitativity because

DESIGN

Participants (N = 126, M_{age} = 35.5; 61.9% female) were recruited from an online panel and offered a fee for participating. We wanted the sample to be representative of shoppers of apparel stores similar to the ones we used in the simulation and stimuli, so we included only participants who reported annual income of above $50,000 to $75,000. After providing consent, the participants were told that they were to take a survey

for a retail store. They were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Half of the participants saw the store signage with the synchronized image embedded, and the other half saw the store signage with the image that was not synchronized.

PRETEST OF SYNCHRONICITY

We conducted a pretest (n = 42) to confirm the synchronicity of signage. Images that varied in synchronicity were embedded with the signage (see Appendix B). The key manipulation was adapted from past literature (Lakens, 2010), in which movement was suggested in the imagery.

In this study, we relied on images that suggested movement of people walking in the same direction to suggest synchronicity. Participants in the asynchronous condition saw the store sales sign with an image of people standing still. Participants in the synchronous condition viewed the same store sales sign, but with an image of people walking in unison. Participants rated the synchronicity of the image they viewed by answering questions concerning the extent to which the figures in the sign were similar in rhythm, size, and color. These measures were adapted from Lakens (2010), and we intended that the signs would differ in rhythm, but not size or color. We selected two final images that varied on synchronicity based on participant ratings. Participants rated the sign with the asynchronous image lower on rhythm (M = 4.93; SD = 1.67) than the image with greater synchronicity (M = 5.81; SD = 1.10; $t(41) = 3.61$, $p < .001$). No significant variation in color (p = .36) or size (p = .14) was reported. These two images were embedded in the store signage and in images of the store itself.

PARTICIPANTS AND MEASURES

Following simulation of the store experience, we asked each participant to study the sign corresponding to his or her randomly assigned condition. After a timed period of studying the sign, participants rated their experience in the store. Survey statements were adapted from Broekman et al. (2018) to capture perceptions of the store related to entitativity, including: *I felt connected with the shoppers; I did not feel like an outsider in the store; I felt one with the store; I had a feeling of belonging with the store; and I had a feeling that I was accepted by the store.* Thereafter, manipulation checks of synchronicity using the same measures as the pretest were captured. The survey ended by capturing the demographic information of the participants.

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks:

An analysis of rhythm as a function of the manipulation indicated that the manipulation worked as intended ($M_{Low\ Synchronicity\ Sign}$ = 4.81; SD = 1.72 vs. $M_{High\ Synchronicity\ Sign}$ = 5.47; SD = 1.49; $t(122.39) = 2.28$, $p < .05$). As expected, no significant variation in color (p = .59) or size (p = .87) was reported.

Key Dependent Variable:

Entitativity. An analysis of the store-related measures of entitativity (α = .78) as a function of synchronicity in signage indicated that the participants specified lower entitativity when exposed to signage with lower synchronicity (M = 4.10; SD = 2.36) than when exposed to signage with greater synchronicity (M = 5.61; SD = 2.25; $t(123.17) = 3.67$, $p < .001$).

Discussion:

The results of this experiment indicated that visual synchronicity simulated in the imagery within a store was able to increase a sense of entitativity or belonging to the store. This visual synchronicity fostered perceptions of relating to others in the store and to the store management itself.

STUDY 2

In a store environment, the sense of control is usually higher (Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994), and the salience of an entity that controls an individual's experience in a space (the management) is usually evident (Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994). However, management is much less evident or salient in outdoor space like a park. In the next study, we wanted to evaluate whether synchronicity would influence entitativity in a space where the community is salient and whether suggested synchronicity through imagery would increase the sense of belonging to a

community. We predicted that a feeling of solidarity or entitativity resulting from the synchronicity in signage would produce this effect.

DESIGN

Participants ($N = 82$; $M_{age} = 37.90$; 61.0% female) were recruited from an online panel. They were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. As in Study 1, half of the participants saw the signage with the synchronized image embedded, and the other half saw the signage with the asynchronized image embedded. After providing consent, the participants were guided through a simulated experience of being in a park. As in Study 1, a pretest ($n = 42$) confirmed that the images used (see Appendix C) did indeed vary on synchronicity ($M = 4.14$; $SD = 1.64$ vs. $M = 4.90$; $SD = 1.39$; $t(41) = 2.79$, $p < .01$). No significant variation in color ($p = .66$) or size ($p = .46$) was reported by pretest respondents.

PARTICIPANTS AND MEASURES

Following the simulation of the park experience, the participants were asked to study the sign for their randomly assigned condition for a timed period. They were then asked to rate their experience of the park facilities. First, the participants indicated the extent of their sense of belonging to the community where the park was located by marking 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) on a Likert scale in response to these statements adapted from Broekman et al. (2018): *The park management is reliable; I would feel part of the community in this park; and I would experience a feeling of togetherness with the community that this park is a part of.* Thereafter, manipulation checks of synchronicity using the same measures as the pretest were captured. The survey ended by capturing the demographic information of the participants.

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks:

An analysis of rhythm as a function of the manipulation indicated that the manipulation worked as intended ($M_{High\ Synchronicity\ Sign} = 5.30$; $SD = 1.31$ vs. $M_{Low\ Synchronicity\ Sign} = 4.53$; $SD = 1.68$; $t(80) = 2.29$, $p < .05$). As expected, no significant variation in color ($p = .33$) or size ($p = .87$) was reported. Although the visual elements were different from those used in Study 1, this check confirmed a replication of the manipulation.

Key Dependent Variable:

Sense of Belonging. An analysis of belonging ($\alpha = .82$) as a function of synchronicity in signage indicated that the participants indicated less of a sense of belonging when exposed to signage with lower synchronicity ($M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.28$) than when exposed to signage with greater synchronicity ($M = 5.26$; $SD = 1.23$; $t(78.50) = 2.23$, $p < .05$). We found a reversal of effect related to how the participants rated the sign to be complex ($M_{High\ Synchronicity} = 3.76$; $SD = 2.37$ vs. $M_{Low\ Synchronicity\ Sign} = 4.94$; $SD = 2.32$; $t(79.52) = 2.27$, $p < .05$), but a consistent effect related to how they rated the informativeness of the sign ($M_{High\ Synchronicity} = 6.93$; $SD = 1.81$ vs. $M_{Low\ Synchronicity\ Sign} = 5.79$; SD = 2.27; $t(72.72) = 2.50$, $p < .01$). A mediation analysis using Hayes (2012) indicated no direct effect of synchronicity on perceptions of informativeness (95% CI = [−1.54; .14]) but rather an indirect effect of synchronicity on perceptions of informativeness (95% CI = [−1.07; −.049]). No effect on sense of belonging based on complexity of signage was reported.

Discussion:

The results of this study revealed that participants perceived a greater sense of belonging when exposed to signage with greater (vs. lower) synchronicity.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present research explores the potential of signage to induce enditative responses among consumers. These studies expand prior research that focuses mainly on codes and regulations towards a more pragmatic application of signage for marketers and designers. We show that that the synchronicity viewed in signage has effects on the perceptions of context or physical space where the signage is located.

Across studies, we provide evidence that dynamism and synchronic pseudo-movements within signage create a more inclusive and welcoming environment. Synchronicity and movement are produced on signage via rhythmic and repetitive patterns. In Study 1, we

demonstrate that when exposed to synchronous images in a retail store, consumers feel a greater sense of belonging. This feeling also translates to perceptions of elements within the store—the managers and other consumers. In Study 2, the same effect occurred. Consumers reported a greater sense of belonging to community in a park when the signage that they encountered was synchronous. Overall, we demonstrate that a sense of solidarity can be produced by rhythmic, synchronic movements in the imagery of signage.

Our findings suggest that synchronous signage in both indoor and outdoor environments is important for creating a welcoming environment where consumers feel a sense of belonging and solidarity with a brand. Therefore, the rhythm and imagery within signage should be carefully considered and implemented to create the positive effects revealed in our studies. Further research should examine which elements of signage, if any, have the potential to affect consumers who have a previously established connection with a brand.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

These studies investigate the role of synchronicity in signage and extend the prior literature about synchronicity in real life. Prior scholarship has established that synchronicity influences the observer's arousal, attitudes, and behaviors (Cian et al., 2014, 2015), creates a perception that moving parts are related (Lakens, 2010); and evokes a sense of constituting a meaningful unit (Freeman, 2000; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009). This current research demonstrates the effects of synchronicity through imagery on the observer's social bond.

Also, this research shows that the effects of signage on the receiver of the message are not just those literally illustrated (e.g., people/animals moving creates a sense of dynamism and synchronicity), but include cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral responses (e.g., people/animals moving create synchronicity, which in turn leads to a sense of belonging). Thus, this work highlights the complexity of meaning-making process and the need to better understand it through its three dimensions – syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic (Morris, 1938). We propose here that semiotics, the "science of signs" frequently used in marketing and consumer behavior investigations (Mick, Burroughs, Hetzel, & Brannen, 2004), can be a helpful theoretical and methodological approach to future research on visual signage signification.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

For professionals involved in the production signage, this investigation highlights different ways of conceptualizing a sign besides the iconic similarity and literality. Specifically, designers and art directors can explore this study to better combine visual elements and sign-making methods to create signage that evokes the desired cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral responses. This perspective on signage goes beyond the previous emphasis on clear, literal information-sharing. The more appropriate and effective the signage, the more positive emotional and behavioral engagement can be obtained from the patrons.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Given that these studies were conducted in a simulated environment, one limitation of this research is that we do not evaluate effects of other sociological factors. While the studies were designed to evaluate the effect of signage, we acknowledge the fact that signage alone may not change feelings of entitativity or belonging in situations where other sociological factors could affect perceptions. Future research should evaluate the effect of the context entitativity in a non-simulated environment.

REFERENCES

Apardian, B., & Alam, B. M. (2017). A study of effectiveness of midblock pedestrian crossings: Analyzing a selection of high-visibility warning signs. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(2), 26–59.

Auffrey, C., & Hildebrandt, H. (2017). Do motorists see business signs? Maybe. Maybe not. A study of the probability that motorists view on-premise signs. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(2), 100–115.

Baker, J., Grewal, D., & Parasuraman, A. (1994). The influence of store environment on quality inferences and store image. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 22*(4), 328–339.

Berendt, J., & Uhrich, S. (2016). Enemies with benefits: The dual role of rivalry in shaping sports fans' identity. *European Sport Management Quarterly, 16*(5), 613–634.

Bullough, J. (2017). Factors affecting sign visibility, conspicuity, and legibility: Review and annotated bibliography. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(2), 2–25.

Childers, T. L., & Houston, M. J. (1984). Conditions for a picture-superiority effect on consumer memory. *Journal of Consumer Research, 11*(2), 643–654.

Cian, L., Krishna, A., & Elder, R. S. (2014). This logo moves me: Dynamic imagery from static images. *Journal of Marketing Research, 51*(2), 184–197.

Cian, L., Krishna, A., & Elder, R. S. (2015). A sign of things to come: Behavioral change through dynamic iconography. *Journal of Consumer Research, 41*(6), 1426–1446.

Couvelaere, V., & Richelieu, A. (2005). Brand strategy in professional sports: The case of French soccer teams. *European Sport Management Quarterly, 5*(1), 23–46.

Dionisio, P., Leal, C., & Moutinho, L. (2008). Fandom affiliation and tribal behaviour: A sports marketing application. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 11*(1), 17–39.

Dondis, D. A. (1974). *A primer of visual literacy.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Edell, J. A., & Staelin, R. (1983). The information processing of pictures in print advertisements. *Journal of Consumer Research, 10*(1), 45–61.

FINA. (2013). *Synchronised swimming manual for judges, coaches & referees.* Lausanne: Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA). Retrieved from https://www.fina.org/sites/default/files/sy_manual_2013-2017.pdf

Fontaine, L., & Bradbury, S. L. (2018). Providing brand guidance for independent businesses: A supplement to District Signage Standards. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 2*(1), 5–33.

Freeman, W. J. (2000). A neurobiological role of music in social bonding. In B. Merker, N. L. Wallin, & S. Brown (Eds.), *The origins of music* (pp. 411–424). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Garvey, P. M., Eie, W. Y., & Klenna, M. J. (2016). The effect of font characteristics on large format display. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(1).

Gibbs Jr., R. W. (2011). Evaluating conceptual metaphor theory. *Discourse Processes, 48*(8), 529–562.

Gladden, J. M., & Funk, D. C. (2002). Developing an understanding of brand associations in team sport: Empirical evidence from consumers of professional sport. *Journal of Sport Management, 16*(1), 54–81.

Grohs, R., Reisinger, H., & Woisetschläger, D. M. (2015). Attenuation of negative sponsorship effects in the context of rival sports teams' fans. *European Journal of Marketing, 49*(11/12), 1880–1901.

Guenther, R. K., Klatzky, R. L., & Putnam, W. (1980). Commonalities and differences in semantic decisions about pictures and words. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 19*(1), 54–74.

Hayes, A. F. (2012). PROCESS: A Versatile Computational Tool for Observed Variable Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Modeling, white paper, accessed June 17, 2018, http://www.afhayes.com/public/process2012.pdf.

Heere, B., & James, J. D. (2007). Sports teams and their communities: Examining the influence of external group identities on team identity. *Journal of Sport Management, 21*(3), 319–337.

Hirschman, E. C. (1986). Humanistic inquiry in marketing research: Philosophy, method, and criteria. *Journal of Marketing Research, 23*(3), 237–249.

Holbrook, M. B., & Moore, W. L. (1981). Feature interactions in consumer judgments of verbal versus pictorial presentations. *Journal of Consumer Research, 8*(1), 103–113.

Hunt, S. A., & Benford, R. D. (2004). Collective identity, solidarity, and commitment. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 433–457). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Jourdan, D., Strauss, E., & Hunter, M. (2017). Sign code development process: Best practices. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 2*(1), 34–59.

Kellaris, J. J., & Machleit, K. A. (2016). Signage as marketing communication: A conceptual model and research propositions. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(1).

Kisielius, J., & Roedder, D. L. (1983). The effects of imagery on attitude-behavior consistency. *ACR North American Advances, 10*, 72–74.

Lakens, D. (2010). Movement synchrony and perceived entitativity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46*(5), 701–708.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Leborg, C. (2006). *Visual grammar.* New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Lupton, E., & Phillips, J. C. (2015). *Graphic design: The new basics* (2nd ed.). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Lutz, K. A., & Lutz, R. J. (1977). Effects of interactive imagery on learning: Application to advertising. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*(4), 493.

Madrigal, R. (2000). The influence of social alliances with sports teams on intentions to purchase corporate sponsors' products. *Journal of Advertising, 29*(4), 13–24.

Mick, D. G., Burroughs, J. E., Hetzel, P., & Brannen, M. Y. (2004). Pursuing the meaning of meaning in the commercial world: An international review of marketing and consumer research founded on semiotics. *Semiotica, 2004*(152–1/4), 1–74.

Morris, C. W. (1938). Foundations of the theory of signs. *In International encyclopedia of unified science* (pp. 1-59). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Moutinho, L., Dionísio, P., & Leal, C. (2007). Surf tribal behaviour: A sports marketing application. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 25*(7), 668–690.

Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, irony, and solidarity.* Cambridge University Press.

Schaefer, S. (2016). A string of pearls. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(1).

Schlesinger, T., & Güngerich, M. (2011). Analysing sport sponsorship effectiveness—The influence of fan identification, credibility and product-involvement. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing, 9*(1–2), 54–74.

Shepard, R. N. (1967). Recognition memory for words, sentences, and pictures. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 6*(1), 156–163.

Starch, D. (1966). *Measuring advertising readership and results.* McGraw-Hill.

Sutton, W. A., McDonald, M. A., Milne, G. R., & Cimperman, J. (1997). Creating and fostering fan identification in professional sports. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 6*, 15–22.

Symonds, P. (2017). Wayfinding signage considerations in international airports. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(2), 60–80.

Underwood, R., Bond, E., & Baer, R. (2001). Building service brands via social identity: Lessons from the sports marketplace. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 9*(1), 1–13.

Ward, N. (2017). Accessible wayfinding: Empathy, human-centered design, and a blank slate. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 1*(2), 81–99.

Watkins, B. A. (2014). Revisiting the social identity–brand equity model: An application to professional sports. *Journal of Sport Management, 28*(4), 471–480.

Weinstein, A. (2017). Legal considerations in sign code development. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding, 2*(1), 50–79.

Wertheimer, M. (1938). Special problems: First group: Perception, A. Perception and organisation, Section 5: Laws of organisation of perceptual forms. In W. D. Ellis (Ed.), *A source book of Gestalt psychology* (pp. 71–88). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wiltermuth, S. S., & Heath, C. (2009). Synchrony and cooperation. *Psychological Science, 20*(1), 1–5.

van Mourik Broekman, A., Gordijn, E. H., Koudenburg, N., & Postmes, T. (2018). Reshaping social structure through performances: Emergent solidarity between actors and observers. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 76, 19–32.

Yun-Tsan, L. (2017). Influence of spectator motivation and team identification on team loyalty and switching intentions of sports fans. *Advances in Management, 10*(4), 7.

On-Premise Signs and the North American Suburban Enclosed Shopping Mall

Craig Berger

Liaison for Development and Curricular Support
CD Pathways
Fashion Institute of Technology

craig_berger@fitnyc.edu

Abstract /

The first fully enclosed modern suburban shopping mall, Southdale Center, opened in 1956 and immediately established a standard for how retailers and signs were to operate within their confines. Enclosed Malls were one of the first unique building types designed for suburban automotive environments and have been a key retail economic driver in the United States for seventy years. The mall also reflected economic changes in the country and the increasing separation of income classes. Malls established a variety of sign innovations over the years, from developing strict sign guidelines, to creating formal zones with shared modular systems. This report will explore the sign advances that marked each of the five stages of mall evolution impacted design and development. The report will also show how precedents established early in the history of mall development as a center for a broad range of incomes changed as malls began to segment by class.

Keywords /

shopping malls, enclosed mall, suburban automotive environments, key retail economic driver, separation of income classes, sign innovations, sign guidelines, shared modular systems, five stages, broad range of incomes, segment, class.

THE FIVE STAGES OF SUBURBAN ENCLOSED MALL DEVELOPMENT

Stage 1: 1950-1970
Egalitarian Shopping Center

Economic Trend:

- Rise of the middle class
- Expansion of department stores as a primary outlet for retail
- Suburban auto oriented growth

Design Trend:

- European modernism
- Introduction of Environmental Graphics
- Interior malls anchored by department stores

Sign Trend:

- Illuminated channel Letter signs
- Monument signs

The years immediately following World War II were a time of rapid income growth resulting in a massive increase in discretionary spending. The widespread ability to purchase homes and cars prompted a push towards suburban development for the white working and middle class. The suburban population doubled from 37 to 74 million from 1950-1970 (Jackson, 1985). City department stores were forced to turn to suburban markets for their future survival. These stores tried to create urban-level shopping density in an automobile-oriented environment. The enclosed shopping mall congregated multiple department stores and specialty stores in one location

to create the shopping volumes needed.

Malls were among the first suburban buildings designed by architects who were heavily influenced by both European enclosed shopping boulevards developed in the late 19th century and modern postwar architecture. The result was mall buildings focused on a few key entrance gateways, built around department stores, and featuring long multi-floor interior arcades. Early malls were developed to reach a broad range of consumers with a variety of store types. (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989)

As architecture firms developed suburban retail buildings, they imposed greater control over retail sign rules and guidelines, motivated by the need comply with modern design values. This design approach resulted in the integration of environmental graphics to develop an overall identity for the mall and in tight covenants for retail signs. Illuminated channel letter signs became the key medium of expression. They allowed for some flexibility in type styles while forcing consistency in color, size and materials.

The Northland Mall (see Figure 1) was designed by mall pioneer Victor Gruen and was one of the first major enclosed centers in the country. It had a number of innovations including anchor department stores and enclosed atrium spaces meant to mirror European shopping boulevards. This mall was also a pioneer for sign development. Gruen hired Alvin Lustig, one of the most famous graphic designers of the 20th century, to develop a monument sign, landmark signs and wayfinding for the mall. Northland Mall had rigid rules for sign development focused on illuminated channel letter, a style that supported the clean lines and minimalist architecture of the building. Northland was converted from an exterior mall and still had a mix of interior and exterior signs when it opened. Later restrictions would allow only department stores and supermarkets to have exterior signs (Dugdale, 1999).

Figure 1 / Northland Mall

Photo / Elaine Cohen Lustig

Photo / Gruen Associates

Stage 2 : 1970-1985
Segmentation of the Market

Economic Trend:

- Land segmentation by income
- Income inequality
- Luxury brands

Design Trend:

- Postmodernism
- Food courts
- A, B, and C Malls

Sign Trend:

- Differentiated stores and display
- Modular systems
- Higher material investment

As the suburbs grew, they became home to members of income groups from the lower middle class to the wealthy. These groups have different tastes that do not always match. Luxury product brands began to look at suburban malls as way to raise their profiles beyond urban anchor stores and department stores (Underhill, 2004).

Mall developers and real estate analysts began segmenting malls to reach specific income groups. Malls were designated A, B, C and D to differentiate how many dollars per square foot they would generate (see Figure 2). "A" malls attract luxury brands and require more attention to store display and presentation. In this second stage, malls needed to provide more attractive environments and more ornate design approaches than the modern architectural trends of the earlier era (Stage 1) could support.

REGIONAL MALL CLASSIFICATION CONCLUSIONS
In-line Retail Sales Per Square Foot

Mall Classification	As of 1/1/13	As of 1/1/14	As of 1/1/15
Trophy	--	$800	$800 and up
A+	$625 and up	$650 and up	$650 and up
A	$475 to $624	$500 to $649	$500 to $649
B+	$400 to $474	$425 to $499	$425 to $499
B	$325 to $399	$325 to $424	$325 to $424
C+	$275 to $324	$275 to $324	$275 to $324
C	$250 to $274	$250 to $274	$250 to $274
D	Less than $250	Less than $250	Less than $250

Retail sales are for reporting inline tenants that were in occupancy for an entire year on a rolling 12-month basis divided by the GLA for those tenants. Inline mall stores include stores less than 10,000 square feet (including restaurants), but excludes temporary tenants and restaurants over 10,000 square feet and excludes Apple stores.

Source: Korpacz Realty Advisors, Inc. survey was conducted by Peter F. Korpacz, MAI, CRE, FRICS

Figure 2 / Mall Classifications (Korpacz, 2017)
Chart Credit / Korpacz Realty Advisors

The upgraded requirements of "A" malls extend to signs. The advent of the luxury mall allowed for much greater difference in store design, from thematic displays to customized signs and façades. Malls also began to invest more heavily in material details including architectural gateways and modular wayfinding solutions.

South Coast Plaza (see Figure 3) in Orange County, California, was built in 1967 and evolved into one of the largest luxury malls in the country. Stores in this mall are allowed greater branding opportunities. Considerable investment is made in common area signage and identity elements. To this day, this mall has remained profitable.

Figure 3 / South Coast Plaza

Photo / South Coast Plaza

Credit / Nandaro

Stage 3 : 1985 -2000
National Malls and Regional Malls

Economic Trend:

- International travel
- Downtown revitalization
- Decline of small regional malls
- Competition from different retail centers
- Themed restaurants and entertainment

Design Trend:

- Superstructures
- Themed environments

Sign Trend:

- Themed signs and displays

As a response to declining retail traffic, cities began to develop large thematic malls to attract more downtown visitors, starting with Fanueil Hall in Boston in 1976. The success of the "festival marketplace" coupled with a decline in business for smaller regional malls pushed developers to create very large themed environments that would combine shopping with entertainment (Judd & Fainstein, 1999).

The design of these environments combined enclosed large superstructures with vibrant thematic graphics and displays. Retailers were encouraged to be as creative as possible and specialty restaurants were integrated with retail spaces.

Regional malls further segmented during this era. Successful malls underwent major renovations that pushed entertainment and retail creativity at a smaller scale. Smaller malls originally designed to serve as community centers began to decline as other community retail spaces like power centers and main street centers were introduced and promoted. Department stores also began to decline as discount retailers like Walmart and Target moved aggressively into the suburbs.

The Mall of America (see Figure 4) in Bloomington, Minnesota, was created to combine retail development and themed entertainment. Located across from an airport and designed to attract international visitors, the mall encourages retailers to develop themed environments as a way of promoting and expanding retail tourism. The mall has become a center for major media events including some 2018 Super Bowl activities.

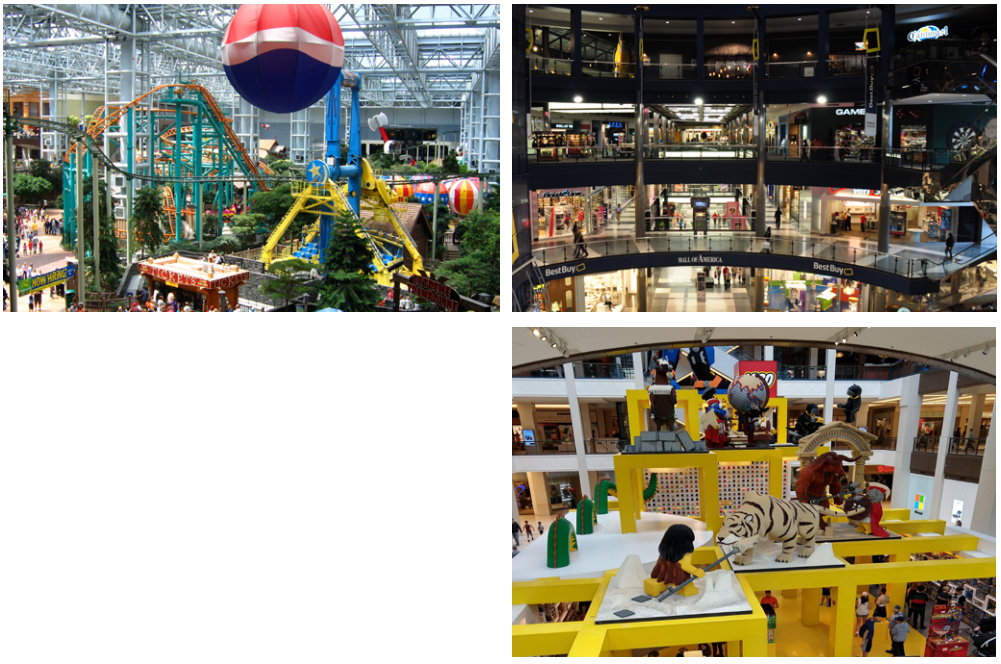

Figure 4 / Mall of America

Photo / Jeremy Noble

Photo Credit / Runner 1928

Stage 4 : 2000 - 2010
Renovation and Readjustment

Economic Trend:

- No new growth
- Decline of department stores as anchor properties
- Alternative uses

Design Trend:

- Renovation
- Architectural diversity
- Public spaces

Sign Trend:

- Branded structures
- Exterior illumination
- Interior/exterior signs

New enclosed mall construction essentially stopped in 2000 after 50 years of continual growth. Department stores, the key mall anchor, declined and then consolidated or closed. Retail space in the United States became oversaturated. Consumers came to regard malls as an experience instead of a convenience. Large mall developers responded by investing more heavily in more profitable "A" malls. This approach resulted in a small number of malls receiving a disproportionate amount of money for new development while a larger percentage of malls declined (Moore, 2013).

Interestingly the number of "A" malls as a percentage of all malls in 2015 was 20%. This number matches the number of Americans considered upper income (see Figure 5) in 2015 (Pew Research Center, 2015). This correlation also extends to the increase in luxury malls between 1970 and 2015.

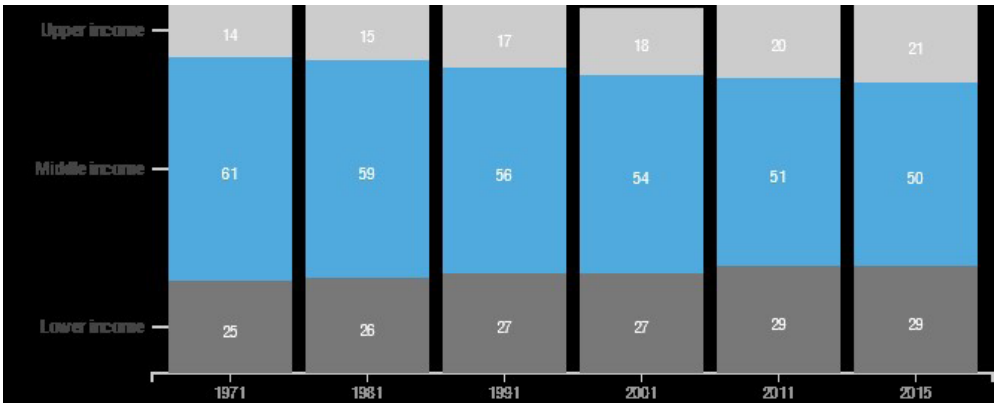

Figure 5 / Percentage of the US population in the upper, middle, and lower income levels in 2015

Chart Credit / Pew Charitable Trust

Advanced mall renovations focused on creating more exciting experiences that would mimic the best of revitalized cities, including architectural diversity and public space. Malls began to create more exciting and interesting façades and to combine the mall with public parks and residential facilities.

Figure 6 / Southdale Center
Photo / Gruen Associates (L)
Life Magazine (R)

Photo / Simon Properties (L)
Corey Gaffer (R)

Stage 5 : 2010 - 2020
Reinvention of the Mall Experience

Economic Trend:

- Online shopping
- Large scale branded stores
- Collapse of department stores
- Extreme segmentation
- Alternative uses

Design Trend:

- Dynamic environments
- Multi-floor stores
- Brand environments

Sign Trend:

- Digital signs
- Sign façades
- Double height signs

In the last decade, trends that have been building for twenty years have caused the collapse of a large number of malls. Financial analytics firm Credit Suisse issued a report that predicted that between 225 and 275 enclosed malls would close in the next five years, a number that represents 25% of all North American malls (Berger, 2018). From 2010 to 2015, 24 malls closed and 20% of all malls are currently considered troubled. Most of these are class "B" and "C" malls that are geared to the middle class while class "A" malls for the wealthy are still successful (Schwartz, 2015). Mall oversaturation combined with a rapid increase in online shopping and a decrease in the desire of younger people to socialize at malls is putting massive pressure on malls to change or close.

The major source of innovation has been class "A" malls primarily focused on the wealthy. These malls provide entertainment options and feature advanced architectural designs. Class "B" and "C" malls are being downsized or adapted into mixed uses including housing and office space (Jones, 2017).

Malls that remain are taking advantage of many of the successful design approaches developed over the last twenty years, including exterior focus, architectural integration and thematic spaces. New technologies and methodologies are highlighting signs as a key strategy for growth . In addition, the return of leading architecture firms to the design of malls has resulted in much greater innovation in both architecture and environmental graphics (Berger, 2018).

If current economic trends hold, the suburban enclosed shopping mall as an egalitarian space for shopping will be a small part of the consumer landscape as luxury entertainment oriented spaces take a larger percentage of future development

Figure 7 / Artist's rendering of City Center Bishop Ranch
Credit / Bishop Ranch

resources. Signs and identity will focus primarily on these new strategies as developers and retailers adopt lessons from each stage of mall development.

LEARNING

Stage 1 / The Expertise of Architects:
As they were in the first stage of mall development, famous architects are being asked to take part in the reinvention of class "A" malls like this new building by Renzo Piano at City Center Bishop Ranch in California (see Figure 7). After seventy years of mall development, the luxury enclosed mall is regarded as an icon to pursue in community development.

Stage 2 / Bigger Stores and More Creative Façades:
As department stores and small stores close in traditional enclosed malls, "flagship" retailers focused on reinforcing their brand name as much as retail store development are replacing them. These companies, including H&M, Topshop, and Anthropologie, are mixing with theaters and restaurants to make larger spaces where they have more control, yet still have the amenities of the mall. The result is much greater control by the stores and also more creative and expansive solutions.

The new Yorkdale Mall renovation in Toronto (see Figure 8) was designed by MMC Architecture. In Yorkdale, the new larger stores have double height spaces that allow for much greater architectural and sign innovation on the façades. Unlike previous malls with tight design standards, out-of-the-box thinking is encouraged.

Stage 3 / Digital and Lighting Spectaculars:
Luxury, themed, and entertainment-oriented malls are still doing well, but they face pressure to stay relevant. The newest approach is the spectacular.

Figure 8 / Yorkdale Mall

Credit / MMC Architects

Figure 9 / Tsawwassen Mills

Photo Credit / JPRA Architects

These malls focus on utilizing lighting, sculpture and digital effects to attract mallgoers. For example, Tsawwassen Mills in British Columbia (see Figure 9) developed an incredible combination of illuminated dynamic sculpture and façade display designed by JPRA and fabricated by Knight Signs.

Stage 4 / Conversation:

Many malls, particularly class "B" and "C" malls, are closing permanently. Some will be demolished or turned into modern archeological ruins, but most will be converted into offices, universities and healthcare campuses. These new spaces will offer a smaller retail component, resulting in a combination of retail and institutional identity. For example, after the Windsor Park Mall in San Antonio failed, it was taken over by Rackspace, a tech firm bringing 3,000 employees to the space. The renovation resulted in a complete changeover of design by Workshop No.5. This design change produced new opportunities for signs and branded space. The new owners, of course, also kept the food court. This combination of retail and institutional

identity is the future of the middle class enclosed mall.

REFERENCES

Berger, C.M. (2018, May 23). Commercial signage: The evolution of shopping malls. *Sign Media Canada*. Retrieved from https://www.signmedia.ca/commercial-signage-the-evolution-of-shopping-malls/

Dugdale, J. (1999) *Origins of environmental graphic design in the 20th century.* In SEGD Education Foundation (ed.) (Chapter 5.5).

Frieden, B. J., & Sagalyn, L. B. (1991). *Downtown, inc: How America rebuilds cities.* MIT press.

Jackson, K. T. (1987). *Crabgrass frontier: The suburbanization of the United States.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Jones, C. (2017, Aug 21). Malls become models of reinvention to cope with closing stores. *USA Today.* Retrieved from https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2017/08/21/malls-try-reinvent-themselves-cope-closing-stores/451814001/

Judd, D. R., & Fainstein, S. S. (Eds.). (1999). *The tourist city.* Yale University Press.

Korpacz, P.F. (2017). Regional mall classification methodology 2017. In *Korpasz Realty Advisors, Inc.* Retrieved from http://www.korpaczra.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Korpacz-Mall-Classification-2017.pdf

Moore, R. (2013, Feb 26). The death of the American mall and the rebirth of public space. *The International.* Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/2650284/The_Death_of_the_American_Mall_and_the_Rebirth_of_Public_Space

Pew Research Center. (2015, Dec 9). The American middle class is losing ground: No longer the majority and falling behind financially. In *Social Trends.* Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/12/09/the-american-middle-class-is-losing-ground/

Schwartz, N. D. (2015, Jan 3). The economics (and nostalgia) of dead malls. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/business/the-economics-and-nostalgia-of-dead-malls.html

Underhill, P. (2005). *Call of the mall: The geography of shopping by the author of why we buy.* Simon and Schuster.