

3 | **WORK** FALL 09



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WORK is the third issue of MAS Context. This issue explores how WORK is changing the landscape of our environment and determining the decisions that are affecting our cities. WORK diagrams economy, analyzes workplaces, studies appropriation of public space, interviews entrepreneurs, and portraits isolation. Discuss, Enjoy, Share, Participate.



BARBER IN SHANGHAI

WORK [wɜːrk]

noun:

1. exertion or effort directed to produce or accomplish something; labor; toil.
2. something on which exertion or labor is expended; a task or undertaking.
3. productive or operative activity.
4. employment, as in some form of industry, esp. as a means of earning one's livelihood.
5. one's place of employment.
6. materials, things, etc., on which one is working or is to work.
7. the result of exertion, labor, or activity; a deed or performance.
8. a product of exertion, labor, or activity.
9. an engineering structure, as a building or bridge.
10. a building, wall, trench, or the like, constructed or made as a means of fortification.
11. **works**,
 - a. (used with a singular or plural verb) a place or establishment for manufacturing (often used in combination).
 - b. the working parts of a machine.
 - c. Theology. righteous deeds.
12. *Physics.* force times the distance through which it acts; specifically, the transference of energy equal to the product of the component of a force that acts in the direction of the motion of the point of application of the force and the distance through which the point of application moves.
13. **the works**, *Informal.*
 - a. everything; all related items or matters.
 - b. harsh or cruel treatment.

origin:

bef. 900; (n.) ME worke, OE worc, r. ME werk(e), OE weorc, c. OFris, OS werk, OHG werah, werc (G Werk), ON verk, Gk érgon; (v.) ME werken, deriv. of the n., r. ME wyrchen, OE wyrcean; c. G wirken, ON verkja, Goth waurkjan

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WORK REVIEW

'Work' yields 1,640,000,000 results performed by a Google search. Every day we are witnessing a massive creation of research, reports, charts and diagrams explaining the complex system of work. The 'Work Review' visualizes selected elements in this system. A 40 degree review instead of a 360—a work in progress.

CALIFORNIA, 14TH DISTRICT

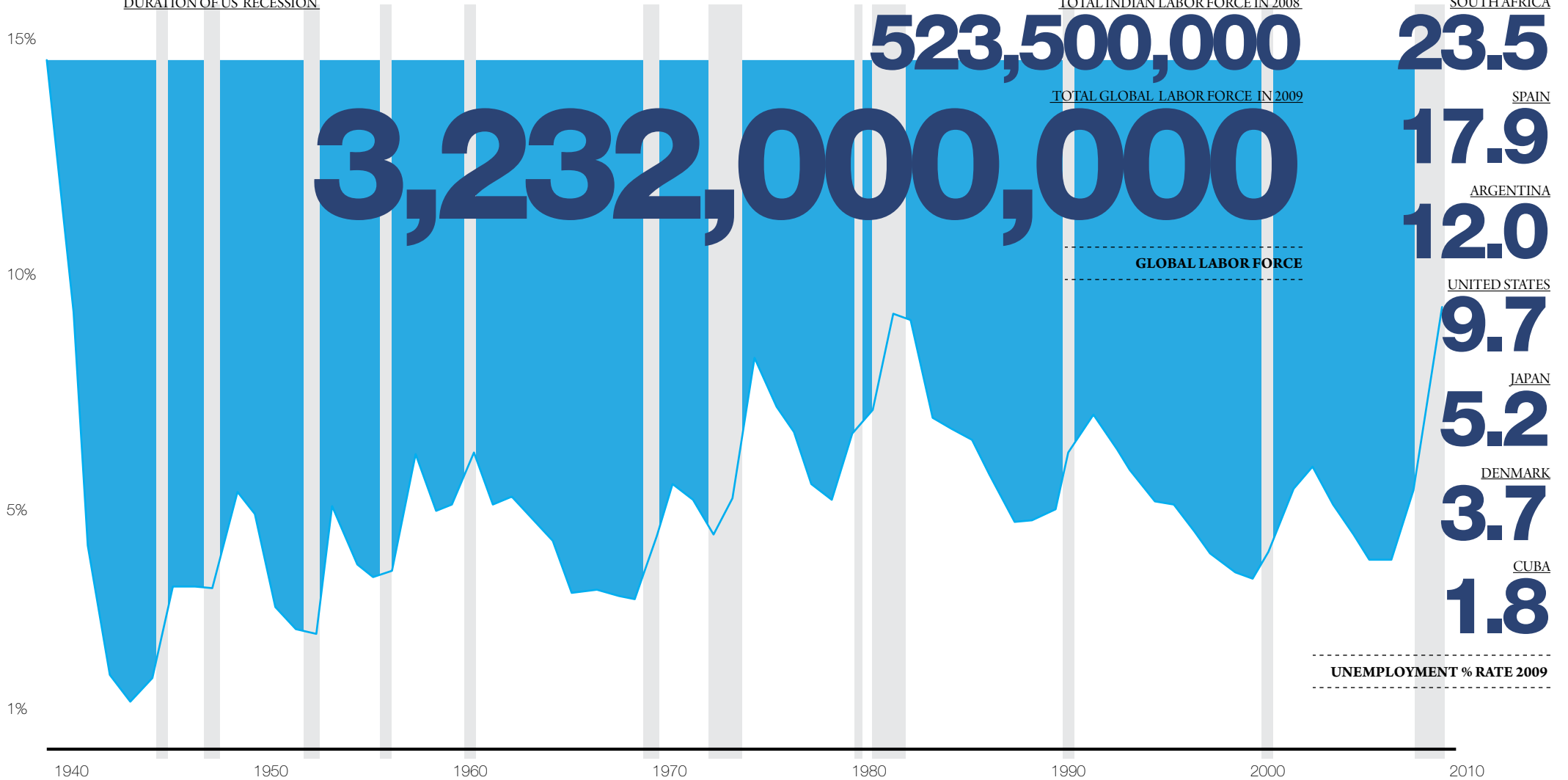
1ST **63%**

MICHIGAN, 13TH DISTRICT

435TH **38%**

WORK QUALITY, WELL-BEING INDEX 2008

DURATION OF US RECESSION



US UNEMPLOYMENT % RATE 1940-2009

US MULTIPLE JOBHOLDERS

7,100,000

US PART TIME PERSONS FOR ECONOMIC REASONS

9,100,000

PERSONS WHO CURRENTLY WANT A JOB IN THE US

5,728,000

US UNEMPLOYED WOMEN IN 2009

5,900,000

US UNEMPLOYED MEN IN 2009

9,000,000

US WORKING CLASS UNEMPLOYMENT 2009

15.2%

US SERVICE CLASS UNEMPLOYMENT 2009

9.0%

US CREATIVE CLASS UNEMPLOYMENT 2009

4.4%

TOTAL US UNEMPLOYMENT AUGUST 2009

14.9 MIL

US WOMEN EMPLOYEES 1949

17 MIL

US WOMEN EMPLOYEES 2009

66 MIL

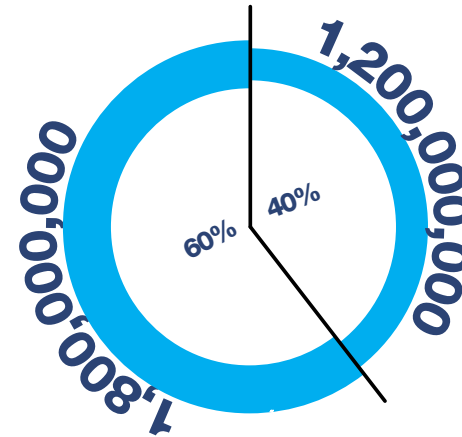
US MEN EMPLOYEES 1949

41 MIL

US MEN EMPLOYEES 2009

74 MIL

GLOBAL MEN & WOMEN EMPLOYMENT 2009



CHAD

53%

CAMBODIA

45%

AFGHANISTAN

30%

SENEGAL

22%

ALBANIA

12%

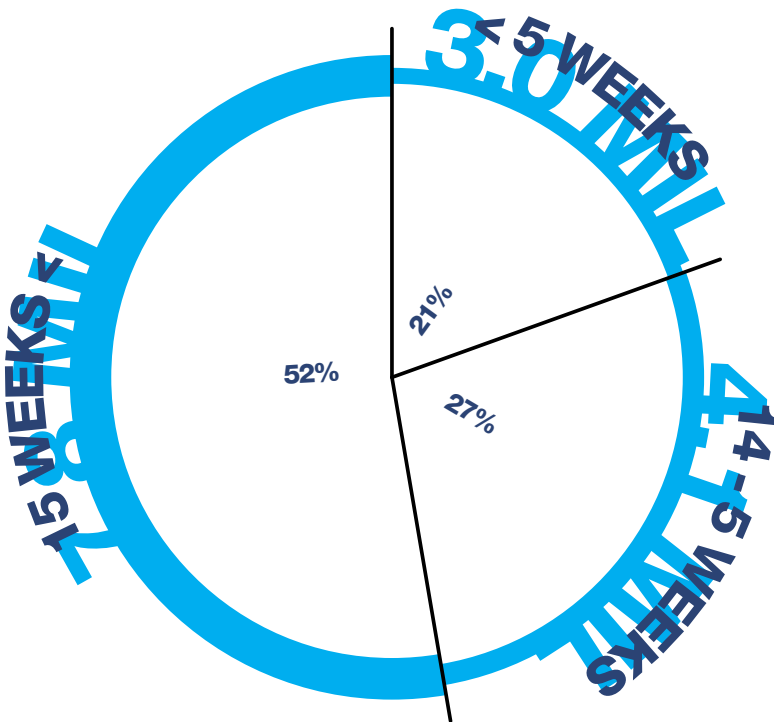
BRAZIL

6%

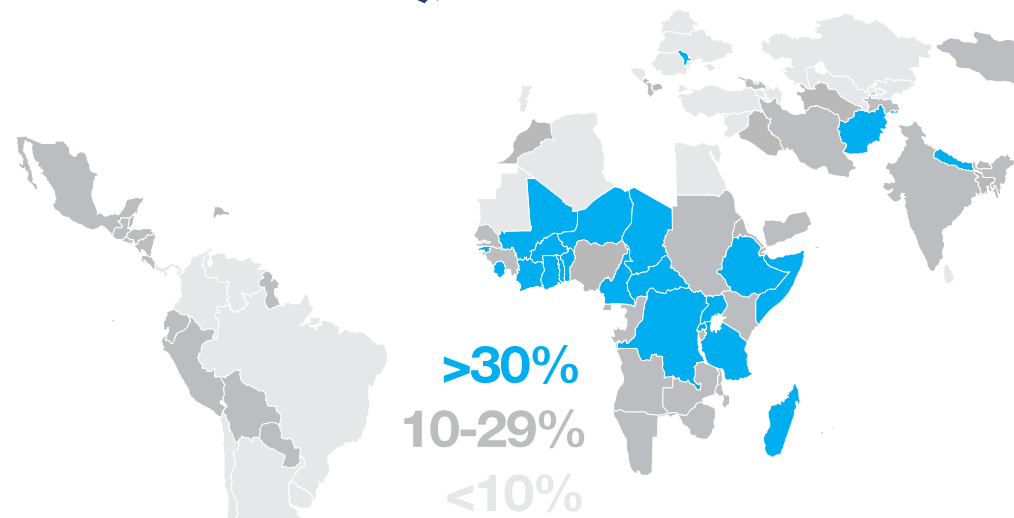
WORLD

158,000,000

CHILDREN AGED 5-14 YRS. ENGAGED IN CHILD LABOR 2009



US UNEMPLOYMENT DURATION 2009



LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

10.4 MIL

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, NO COLLEGE

34.4 MIL

SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE

34.9 MIL

BACHELOR'S DEGREE & HIGHER

43.5 MIL

US EMPLOYMENT BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION 2009

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

\$22.60

NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

\$19.00

LOS ANGELES, UNITED STATES

\$17.40

OSLO, NORWAY

\$15.80

CHICAGO, UNITED STATES

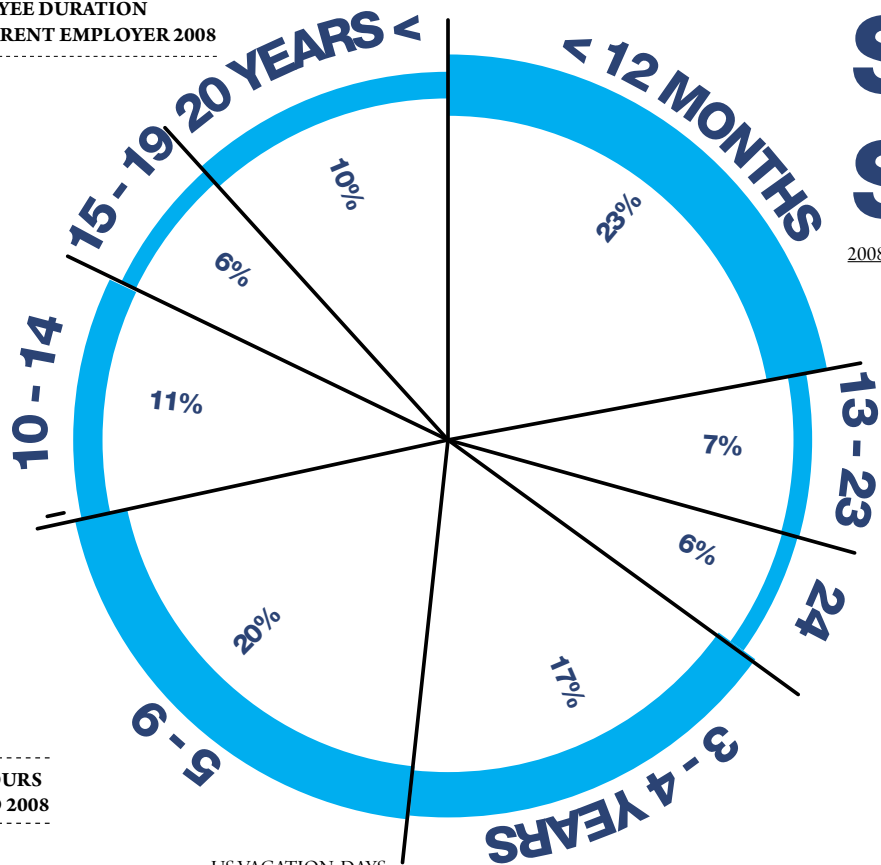
\$14.90

BERLIN, GERMANY

\$13.50

CITIES NET PAY PER HOUR 2008

US EMPLOYEE DURATION WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER 2008



ANNUAL HOURS & HOURS PER WEEK WORKED 2008

2,316

2,122

1,871

1,798

1,673

US VACATION DAYS GIVEN BACK 2008

436 MIL

VALUE OF US VACATION DAYS GIVEN BACK 2008

\$63 BIL

THE COUNTRY OF COMOROS GDP (PPP) 2008

\$752,000,000

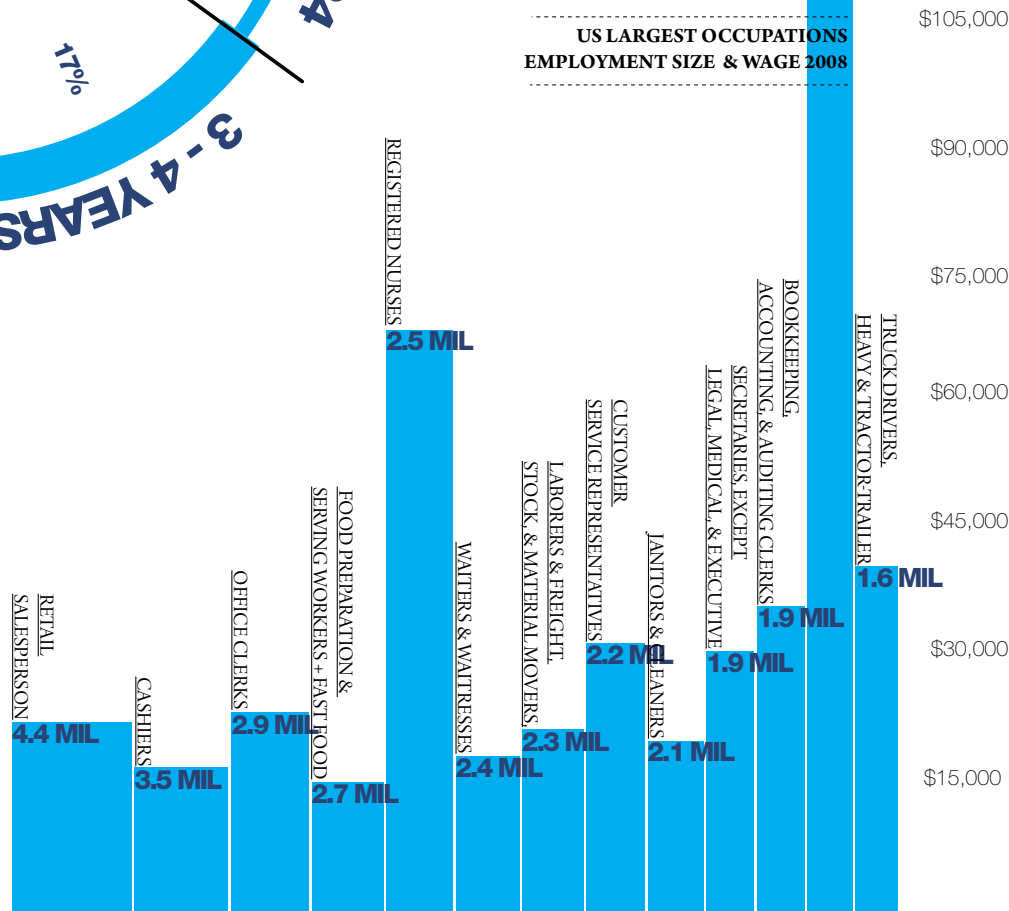
2008 HIGHEST US CEO COMPENSATION: BLACKSTONE GROUP'S CEO

\$702,440,573

2008 HIGHEST US CEO COMPENSATIONS: OIL OR NATURAL GAS COMPANY



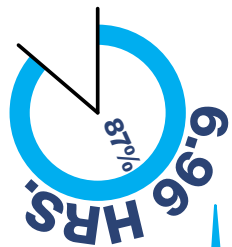
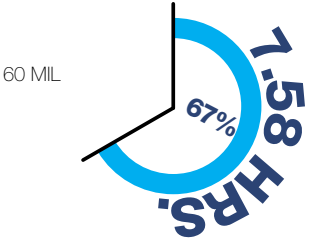
US LARGEST OCCUPATIONS EMPLOYMENT SIZE & WAGE 2008



WORKED ON AN AVERAGE DAY

WORKED AT THEIR WORKPLACE

WORKED AT THEIR HOME



US EMPLOYED PERSONS
WORKING AT THEIR HOME AND
AT THEIR WORKPLACE 2008

60 MIL

50 MIL

40 MIL

30 MIL

20 MIL

10 MIL

MAJOR US LOCKOUTS AND STRIKES 1968
470

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

DAYS IDLE DUE TO US WORK STOPPAGES 1940-2009

US SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS 2008



US WAGE & SALARY WORKERS 2008



PLANNED AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS BY 2016



US WORKERS WITH WAGES AT OR BELOW THE MINIMUM 2008

2.2 MIL

LARGEST WORK STOPPAGE: WORKERS INVOLVED 2008

27,000

LARGEST WORK STOPPAGE: DAYS IDLE 2008

1,053,000

LONGEST WORK STOPPAGE 2008

63 DAYS

MAJOR US LOCKOUTS AND STRIKES 2008

15

MOST US WORKERS ANNUALLY INVOLVED IN WORK STOPPAGE

1952
2,746,000

1971
2,516,000

1970
2,468,000

1967
2,192,000

1968
1,855,000

2001
99,000

1999
73,000

2008
72,000

2006
70,000

2002
46,000

FEWEST US WORKERS ANNUALLY INVOLVED IN WORK STOPPAGE

PUBLICS WORKS

According to Mike Davis (2000), the dystopian “cold” frozen geometries of US cities are being countered by Latino populations offering “a ‘hotter’, more exuberant urbanism” that is “tropicalizing” the city with colors, smells and new public spaces. Yet, in Mexico, debates about public space draw deeply pessimistic observations of a growing commodification and ‘globalization.’ Maria Moreno-Carranco takes a different perspective. Drawing from the “Megaproject” of Santa Fe in Mexico City, the largest urban development projects in Latin America. Through examining everyday practices she shows how urban spaces have been renegotiated and reframed. Although partially privatized, appropriation through everyday practices opens spaces to the possibility of transformation and subversion of their intended use. Everyday contestation reveals “the local production of the global.”



FOOD “STAND”

PUBLICS WORKS: REINVENTING STREET VENDING IN GLOBAL MEXICO CITY
MARIA MORENO-CARRANCO

High on the profile of city imagineering is the megaproject which has become increasingly prominent on the urban landscape as multinational corporations and local or regional counterparts convince politicians and planners of the fundamental need for competitiveness in the global economy.

What is more immediately apparent in the megaproject is their deliberate aim to be, and represent themselves. The more generic the city, the more vital it becomes for inhabitants to struggle to reinscribe meaning and identity in these projects through everyday life practices that might subvert the original intended uses of the spaces. Sometimes these attempts to reinscribe meaning takes the form of overt resistance, at others small everyday behaviors may emerge provoked, ironically, by the projects that seem intent on their repression.

Santa Fe, Mexico City

With the aim of making Mexico City more attractive for global capital, the city government initiated the Santa Fe urban megaproject at the beginning of the 1990s. The location of sand mines and the city's western garbage dump, Santa Fe was described by the city government as underutilized and as such an ideal place to develop a megaproject. Although the government also described the area as "populated by a small group of people", in reality approximately 2000 garbage pickers, had lived there for decades and were displaced in order to build the megaproject.

The Santa Fe megaproject was to convert the rubbish dump, sand mines and squatter areas, into the home of transnational companies, a U.S. style shopping mall, services such as cafes and restaurants, private schools and universities, hospitals, high end gated communities and apartment buildings. Data on the population of Santa Fe varies widely, but a reasonable estimate is that around 10,000 live there and approximately 100,000 workers, students and visitors commute to the area during weekdays. The 'success' of Santa Fe is predicated on spatial segregation, exclusion, and privatization of the city space. Urban developments in the area are advertised with strap lines such as "City Santa Fe: Welcome to Civilization. Exclusivity in the best location" or "Grand Santa Fe: Located in the heart of Santa Fe, the financial, commercial, business, cultural, educational and residential center of the 21st century."

Aerial view of Santa Fe, Mexico City



View of Santa Fe, Mexico City



Global public space and every day practices

Global urban practices seem to overturn the modern ideal that conceptualizes public space as democratic. In Santa Fe, at first sight, the “local” appears to be erased by the “global”. But I witness that spaces are opened to wider ‘publics’ through informal practices. These practices respond to and break through the design of the megaprojects for social groups and cars. In Santa Fe, few concessions were made to the needs of lower or middle level employees: there are no places at walking distance to eat or to shop at convenience; pedestrian crossing points, benches or garbage cans are few¹. Spaces, however, have been appropriated and contested (an inherent quality of public space), with street vending gaining a foothold due to the lack of services in a complex intermingling of formal and informal practices.

In Santa Fe, streets seem rarely used by pedestrians, except around lunchtime when office workers come out of the buildings and walk to cars with open trunks, that appear only around lunchtime and sell all kinds of hot food. In Santa Fe, the vendors in the cars inform customers on daily specials and take orders on their cellular phones while giving out food menus written in small pieces of paper and charging for lunch bags. This is the *new* modality of street food stands: using cars that are “less damaging” to the image of this supposedly pristine and well-organized global space and technology to interact with their customers.

One of the most interesting characters in Santa Fe’s public space is a woman, always dressed in jeans and a baseball cap, who goes by the name of “Jenny”. She claims to have been an administrative assistant in one of the top lawyers firms that moved its offices to the area. She saw a business opportunity and decided to quit her formal sector work and become a street vendor. Today, she owns a van from which she sells an incredible variety of goods such as candy, cigarettes, soft drinks, homemade sandwiches, and over the counter medicines. Jenny makes five times more money as a street vendor than what she used to make while working for the lawyers office (a secretary salary is about \$600 USD a month) She is an established informal business, big enough for delivery vehicles of transnational food and beverage companies to serve her car as if it were a formal store.

Street food stands, like Jenny’s, keep being removed by the police managed by the neighbors association, the only authority in the area whose primary concern with street vendors is their “dirty” and “bad” image. But stands keep reappearing in different spots. It is a continuous fight between the sellers and the neighbors association. The association has tried to remove Jenny several times, but she has found strategies to remain in business. She

1. Indeed, while there are pavements in the business areas, between these and the drop-off points for transport there is much less if any provision. Open areas are criss-crossed with spontaneous paths, crossing points have been informally set up. Passengers of mini buses have to endure rapid drop-off and pick-ups from unscheduled locations, often on the side of the freeways, while some companies have responded to the lack of transport for non-car owning workers by providing coaches.

Construction workers buying lunch



Construction workers enjoying public space



Jenny's mobile store



refuses to move claiming a right to earn an income good enough to send her two kids to school, and the right to use the city space in order to do so, even if, as she believes, it belongs to the buildings' owners.

In the city, other jobs linked to informality have appeared around the megaprojects in numerous guises. By design, the roads and green areas of Santa Fe are for circulation and image, but to the construction workers, cleaners, porters, office workers and others they become places for catching a nap, eating something, talking or having a soccer game. For a few moments these superfluous spaces appear to be alive, full of people and activity.

The malls and other areas of the megaproject are not accessible to all. The extremely high prices make it impossible for most Mexicans to buy anything there. Nonetheless, different forms of appropriation are present. Let us consider 19 year old Alan whom I interviewed while he worked handing out pieces of paper advertising the women's gym Curves at a traffic light in Santa Fe. He earns less than 150 USD a month but Alan claims that simply visiting the mall makes him feel like "having money". He and his friends go to the shopping center to see *güeritas* (blonde girls). He says that a few of the *niñas fresa* (rich girls) will talk to them and even invite them to raves, but they have no money to go. They also look at the clothing and music stores to see what is fashionable. After getting some ideas Alan and his friends go to *Tepito* – the largest market of pirate products in the city- and they buy almost identical items at prices they can afford. To Alan many girls from his neighborhood go often to the mall and even if they cannot buy anything just by being there they feel *fresa*.

Rather than represent a separation of public and private, rich (inside) and poor (outside), and global and local, the malls offer a tangling of these categories, indicating once more that these distinctions are not separate and dualistic. On the contrary, I see them as mutually constituted: the private becomes public as the private space of the mall allows more social interaction than public areas. Mimicry surfaces. As the rich seek to copy the lifestyles of Miami, Milan, Paris or London through the acquisition of 'originals' so people like Alan acquire the pirate versions. The slippage between the "original" and the "copy", the possibility of resistance through appropriation is opened and the impossibility to be part of a certain consumer culture is challenged through the informal markets. The shopping mall has become a place for encounters where a desire for inclusion and a desire to be alike through consumption of similar brands, some original some not, can be played out.

Interior and exterior views of commercial malls



Conclusion

Architects and planners may be failing to fulfill humanity's need to have obviously meaningful cities in preference for taking the transnational coin, but people are investing these landscapes with their own meanings. While we are familiar to looking past places that seem superfluous to the megaproject, megaprojects themselves are cut across with small interjections of everyday life beyond the intention of administrators or architects. Before we decry spaces as bland, generic, or shallow, we must consider the possibilities for heterogeneity and the recreation of public spaces. In Santa Fe, space is being actively produced, which induces us to think about the dynamic and complex interplay of all space.

Various unintended uses and meanings have been transposed onto the claimed 'global', managed and controlled space of Santa Fe. These meanings have been made possible largely through informal practices, producing a particularly local version of the global, not as an effect of global forces but as an imaginative involvement with and thus constitutive of globalization (see Hart 2002). Of course, this process benefits some more than others, but just as importantly different people appropriate the space in very diverse ways. The right to the city manifested through use value, in these spaces created exclusively for exchange value, open up the possibility to conceptualize Megaprojects as more than merely self-referential imitations of a "global" everywhere.

Santa Fe simultaneously produces a new arena of negotiation and conflict, creating new forms of exclusion particularly for the poor. Although this site is in some senses private, it is briefly and without strategy, public in ways that are not exuberant, colorful or rhythmic, as Mike Davis might imagine, but quiet, respectful, hard-working and effective.

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ISOLATED BUILDINGS

The study of the built environment has taken on special significance in the current economic downturn. Driven by the collapse of the global real estate market, much of the nation has been visibly affected by the recession. Entire skyscrapers wait for businesses to fill them while formerly booming cities could house whole towns in their vacant condominiums.

Photographer and sociologist David Schalliol engages the discourse about the recession through his Isolated Building Studies.



ISOLATED BUILDINGS

DAVID SCHALLIOL

This vacancy has stoked a concern about what we build and for whom we build it, but the discourse about the downturn rarely touches on more than recent history. Obvious facts are ignored: empty buildings and stalled construction projects are not merely symptomatic of the current national climate; tremendous variation in economic health exists between neighborhoods; work life is affected by its historical conditions. Local nuance is subsumed by national generalities.

In order to systematically examine the current economic and social health of neighborhoods, we can turn to the built environment for a unique window into the character of a place.

The urban landscape photographs on the following pages are drawn from the Isolated Building Studies, a photographic series exploring urban neighborhood change and social stratification. While the Studies document residential, commercial and community structures, the photographs excerpted here highlight small commercial buildings to contextualize places of work.

Generally, isolated buildings are useful for addressing the above issues because they are immediately recognized as unusual. As urban buildings, their form illustrates their connection with adjacent structures: vertical, boxy, confined by palpably limited parcels. When their neighboring buildings are missing, a tension emerges because their urban form clashes with the seemingly suburban, even rural, setting. Thoughtfully engaging the landscape requires further investigation to resolve the tension. It is from this fundamental friction that the Isolated Building Studies launches.

In Chicago, the answers to questions about isolation often involve economic downturns, race riots, white flight and intentional divestment, but once answers to the initial question about isolation are suggested, even more fundamental understandings can be addressed.

Commercial structures are featured in the Studies to signal the concurrent connection and detachment commercial institutions have with residents in rapidly transforming neighborhoods. Whether occupied or vacant, the presence of commercial buildings seems simple. After all, if a building's commercial establishment is open, it is a center for work and consumption. If a building is closed, it is not. In some basic sense, the building's fate is tied to how well each business is adapted to the needs (or, perhaps, desires) of a community and its economic context. But, as such, they are more than places of

work; they become representatives of the state of work in a community. They suggest that work is desired and offer cues about who is privileged to access it.

Additionally, because so many commercial buildings located in residential neighborhoods were built on limited budgets during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they occupy a distinct meso-level of construction. On one hand, they typically required more capital to construct than simple residential structures but considerably less than major office buildings. On the other hand, small commercial buildings are often mixed-use buildings with storefronts below and residential units above. In these cases, they are simultaneously the loci of home and work life – sometimes for the same people.

As such, while buildings were often designed to fit inside a community of other buildings, the individuals or small groups who built these small commercial structures were able to express their idiosyncrasies in ways impossible for those on the committees that built larger structures. While we typically make our lives inside buildings designed for others' use, these buildings are personalized monuments to a new urban life. Not only do we stroll under the names of stores, families, and children enshrined above our doors; we live within their new understandings of work and play.

But reading the built environment isn't simply seeing how one structure began. It is also reading the history written in buildings and their environments through the alterations made by subsequent owners, tenants and others. These alterations were made for a variety of purposes: to conform to the fashions of the day, the particularities of a tenant, or, perhaps most relevant today, financial limitations. As building owners and tenants made places their own, bars were squeezed into produce markets and offices were carved out of bedrooms; awnings were installed, handwritten signs emerged and infrastructure lingered despite its obsolescence. Neighboring buildings similarly changed or were demolished.

Through reading this landscape, we see that whether isolated buildings are volunteers or survivors, they reflect a similar position in our history: one in which individual structures are privileged over the continuity of a neighborhood. Yet, like us, they are individuals inextricably linked to their surroundings. As their cities and neighborhoods rise and fall, so do their fortunes.

This historical moment is important for understanding the economic downturn, but we must consider more than the present. As we experience isolated buildings we engage the past and future by which these commercial buildings are bookended. We labor within the limitations and aspirations of those who created our neighborhoods – perhaps as much as we do within our own.







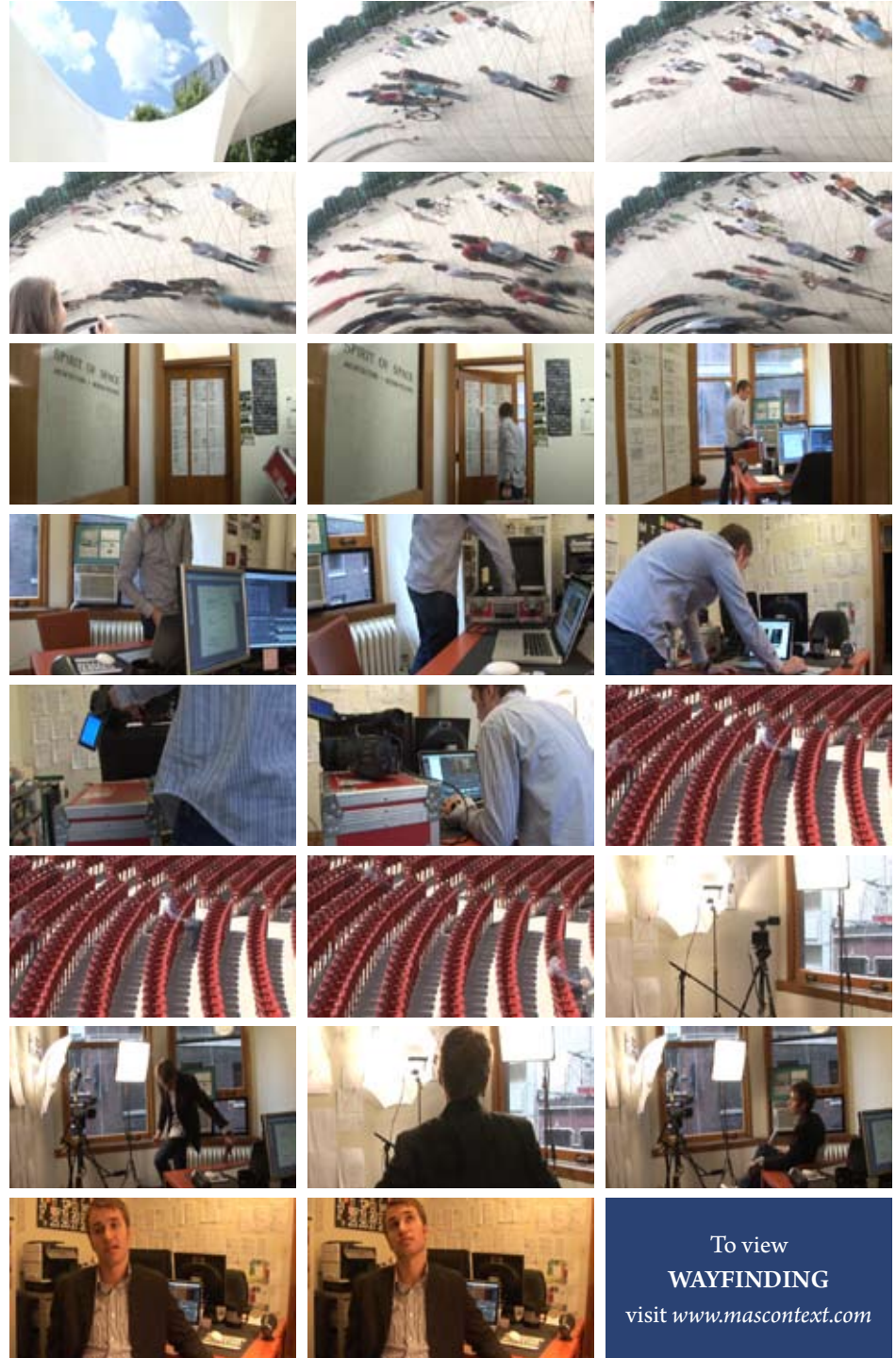
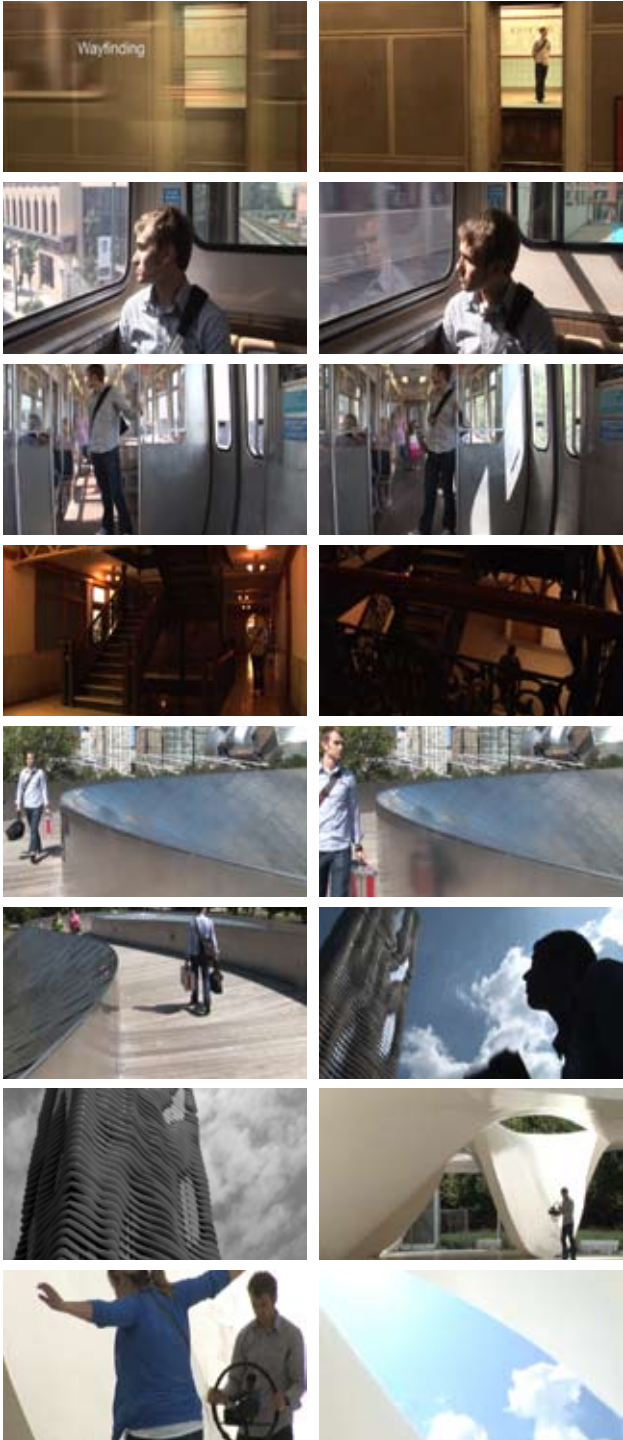








WAYFINDING
 A film by
DEAN STORM

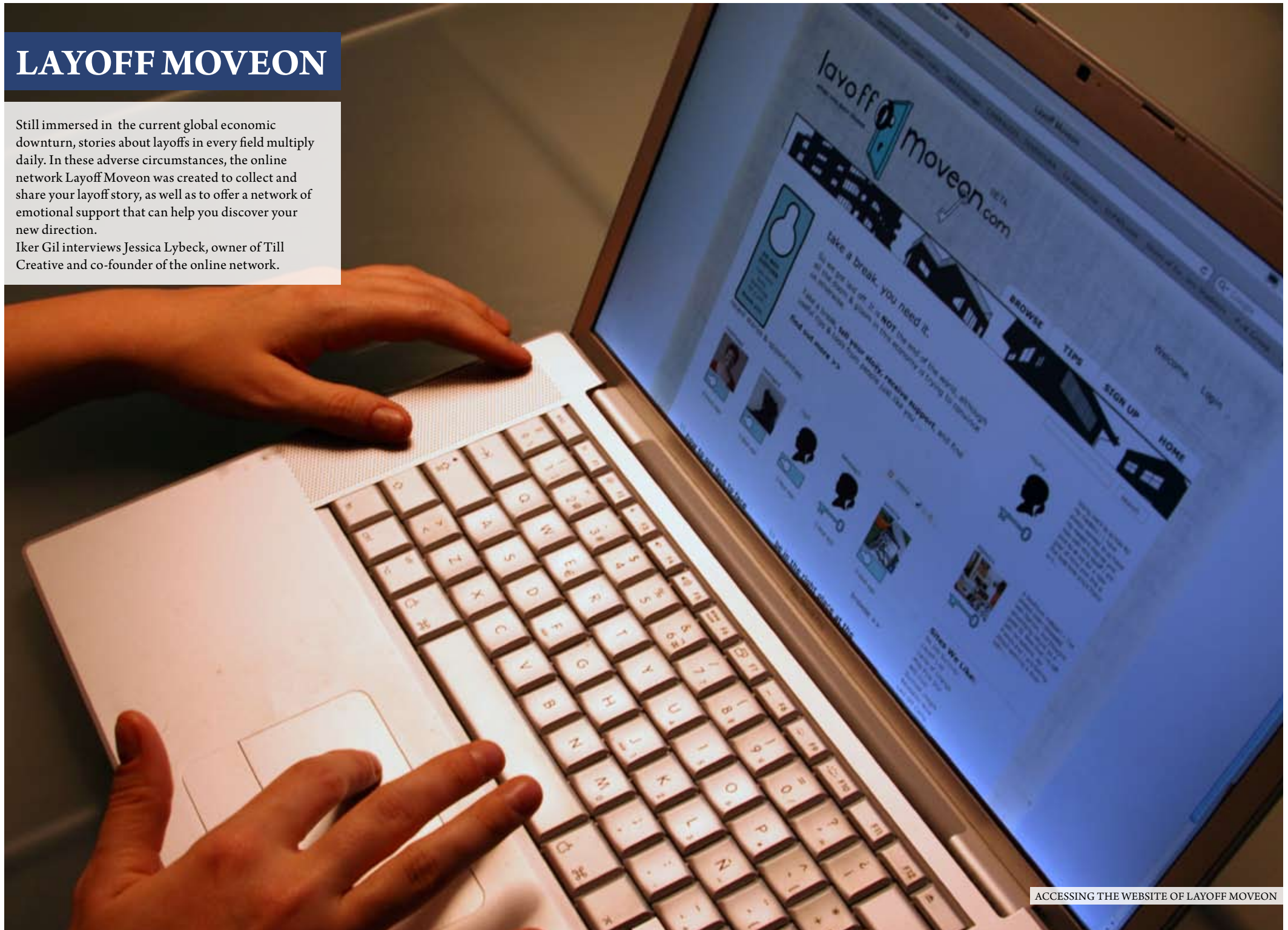


To view
WAYFINDING
 visit www.mascontext.com

LAYOFF MOVEON

Still immersed in the current global economic downturn, stories about layoffs in every field multiply daily. In these adverse circumstances, the online network Layoff Moveon was created to collect and share your layoff story, as well as to offer a network of emotional support that can help you discover your new direction.

Iker Gil interviews Jessica Lybeck, owner of Till Creative and co-founder of the online network.



LAYOFF MOVEON

IKER TALKS TO JESSICA AT MAS STUDIO OFFICE

IG: Tell us a little bit about your background.

JL: I went to school at University of Wisconsin Milwaukee for Architecture and later I added a Minor in Business, basically because I like people and I saw that the design field was a lot more about solving problems sitting at a desk with your pad of paper more than it was about solving problems for people. During my time at University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, I actually got an internship at a local design build firm and none of them are architects, they are actually artists. They would do interiors, furniture, sculpture, painting, and all of these crazy things and they weren't very good at getting paid for it. I actually pushed them to do sales rather than doing design work, although I ended up doing a little bit of design work. I thought it was really interesting to see how people got exposed to design, exposed to work, and how this interaction between these artists and the people that could actually purchase their work, how they could work together. That was part of my influence. I always knew I was going to be somewhere in business, somewhere in design, but I never wanted to be an architect, even though I have an architecture degree. I love the process of solving problems and to me design is a great process to do that with. It is visual and people understand it, and that's why I fell in love with it. I always thought it was more of a tool to get things done than it was to just create things that are pretty. I enjoy functional applications of design. After school, my last semester was actually spent here in Chicago. I applied to probably eight different firms across the US, seven of them were interior design firms, because that's what I focused on in school, where I thought people actually touched architecture was through interiors, and then I applied to the SOM Urban Design & Planning studio in Chicago.

IG: Which makes a lot of sense ... (laughs)

JL: Well, I did some traveling while I was in school and I just felt like design was something that could help people in general. I didn't know what that meant at all. My professor at the time, who was a

partner in Interiors at SOM, knew the partner in charge of Urban Design & Planning and thought it could be a good fit. I went in there, and it was completely different than anything that I had ever done before, which was a new challenge in and of itself, so I knew I wasn't going to be doing something that I already knew how to do. It was a completely new thing. It was about people because in urban environments you are constantly trying to shape their space for more people than an office building, for example. So I got involved with urban design, and it was great. I feel like urban design was the perfect place for me, because it is really about sales, is about having really big ideas and then explaining those and showing that people need to take action to a boardroom. If you can't explain your idea and you can't break it down into the lowest common denominator you don't get anything done. Learning how to visually explain concepts and principles, and working with all kinds of different people and different filters was a great framework for pushing forward with what I am doing now.

IG: You are kind of a salesman of ideas.

JL: Yes.

IG: Maybe sometimes the Urban Design & Planning studio was less of designing and more about selling ideas.

JL: And getting people excited too, because if they don't get excited about the idea, then they get this nice shiny document that they put on their shelf and they never do anything with it. Then you don't accomplish anything. Probably about a year into my time at SOM, I went back to Milwaukee and I had a friend who owned a boutique and she was going to be moving to Brady Street, which is basically the big shopping center in Milwaukee. And I was asking her what her plan was, "So you are going to go to this new space, what's your plan?" At that time, she had beautiful clothing but she had pink satin on the wall, she had just the most confused brand you have ever seen in your life. How can you be that good at designing clothing and not have any clue about how to put together...

IG: ... how to package the whole thing?

JL: Exactly. So I asked, “What is your plan?” And she said, “I am going to bring this, and put this over here, and do this...” And I said, “Ok, I’ll help you.” (laughs) It started with doing the interiors, just planning how she was going to fit into her new space, but then it went back into defining what was Brown Fox Boutique all about. Then it bridged from the interiors to doing her logo and branding to figuring out her marketing strategy. How are you going to get people in the door? It was natural for me to try to strategize the process that was going to help her be successful. To me, the same process by which you design an interior environment, you apply that to the process of designing a marketing plan or designing a logo.

IG: Again, maybe because design is more a process to address problems than just making things.

JL: I had a presentation in Pecha Kucha last year and in that presentation I explained design as the ability to see the path between where you are now and where you want to be. If you are designing a building, most people see an empty lot and then they see a completed building, and they have no idea how those things interact. Designers don’t necessarily know all the answers but they know when to ask questions, they know when to do research, they know how to build a foundation, they know how to then from there apply structure that then apply all these different principles that eventually become a building. So for my friend, what I hoped to do was imagine where she was then, and she knew where she wanted to be, which was some place successful with her boutique, and then just layout the steps in between there. I didn’t have all the answers, it was my first project, but I can do a logo, I can do a marketing plan, I can do all these things. It was creative and fun. That was my first “in” to the business world. I was up every night and was so excited about concepts. I hadn’t done that since school where you are thinking about things and can’t wait to wake up and do it again. Initially, I did want to work for somebody else, I wanted to work for start-ups through somebody else. Because I couldn’t find another firm to learn from to do what I wanted to do, I decided to create my own firm Till Creative.

IG: Once you had Till Creative set up, how did Layoff Moveon come into play?

JL: Last July, still working at SOM, I decided to quit to take on Till Creative. I walked into the partner’s office and said, “I am going to pursue this, I don’t know what I am doing but that’s what I want to do, I am going to start this company”. They offered me part time so I went part time and that was basically paying my bills while I was formulating my company and working with a couple of new clients. But then, the economy went south and I got laid off of my part time job. Here I am, I have a handful of clients, pretty low paying... the things that were paying my bills no longer pay my bills and I decided that I needed to get a part time job. So I go out, college educated, my resume all shiny, and I am just trying to find a freaking serving job. I just want something to help pay the bills that I can work nights and I can still time to do my own thing, something flexible. If you have another office job, you have to be there specific times, you can’t get out if you have client meetings, all that stuff. I did not want to deal with it. I set out to find something simple, a serving job. And it was the most difficult thing I have ever done in my life. I sat there, day by day, calling 50 restaurants and bars a day, putting together resumes, constant rejection, wasting time all day. You go visit these places and they don’t want to talk to you. You are putting all this college education behind, trying to find something as simple as a serving job, and it was so frustrating. I was looking around thinking that there were 7 million people at that time that were unemployed, that were doing the exact same thing I was everyday, spending all this time on the computer, trying to find something somewhere but yet they could not relate to the people that were closest to them through those online outlets like Facebook and things like that because they are not in the same boat. Throughout this process of finding a job, I learned a lot, I learned a ton about how to get face time with people that you needed to get in front of in order to find a position, resume tricks and things like that, and I learned just from doing it. How can you connect with other people that are just doing it? The idea was to make a Delicious-type site of tips to finding jobs. And then, really the emotional aspect of being laid off is that you feel like nobody else is going through what you are going through, you are scared, you are unhappy, you are doubting yourself but really confident about your next step at the same time, this whole complex thing. I was only in for three weeks or something like that, but it seemed to me that there needed to be space to take on those challenges. I didn’t find

one so I decided to make one.

IG: Is there any common member profile? Is there any specific market that people are trying to get in?

JL: It's varied. I think the common thread is people that are at their low and are looking towards their high. Layoff Moveon is more about the emotional context of things than it is about action. It is also about action, but it is about dealing with what it is going on, dealing with that by sharing with other people that know what it is like to have that going on. People that want to share their destructive story of what happened, "I have been in a company for 20 years, and they call me in one day, they tell me that I was their right hand man and then they call me in and they say you are done, and they escorted me out of the building" or something ridiculous like that. Then there is a point where you move on, what are you doing now? what are you doing for yourself? how are you moving forward? The great thing about this recession is that people are starting to think a little bit further outside of the box. Whereas if there were plenty of jobs available, people might stay within the same industry that they might hate or look for something similar or not really expand their horizons. This is allowing people to expand upon what they really want to do rather than what might normally be the logical next step.

IG: How many members do you have and how is it progressing?

JL: We have 607 members, as of this morning, I checked before I came (laughs). It has been a slow progression, but we have actually had a little over 20,000 unique visitors come to the site. So, 600 people have chosen to share their story and the rest have come to read their stories. What is great is that I have gotten emails from users saying that this is part of their process of moving on. In my mind it's been successful.

IG: Will Layoff Moveon stay online or explore other avenues, such as organizing some type of work meetings?

JL: It is one of our interests. However, I feel that we have created the emotional niche and there are plenty of other resources that

are providing the physical, meeting, networking niche. There is an organization called Layoff Camp that I was involved with here in Chicago which hosts informal seminars and discussions regarding ways to move forward through entrepreneurship, or other means. We started Layoff Moveon with the idea that this is something people need, they need it now, and they might need it again in 5 years, 10 years, or 20 years. I see it as being more cyclical, so as the economy goes down and jobs are lost, the site becomes relevant again. Maybe we develop as technology changes, as platforms change, we change the nature of the site. It is really meant to fill a temporary need over a long period of time.

IG: Did you expect the big media interest in Layoff Moveon?

JL: You know, it was interesting because part of what I have learned through Layoff Moveon is how to put together a really comprehensive social media campaign. There is all this buzz about Facebook and Twitter right now, but I have really put together a process and learned how to use them as a toolset to get exposure and all of the coverage that we received for the website came through my activity on those simple sites. We were a little bit surprised, it is not easy to get into the Wall Street Journal or Glamour or other long-range publications like that. I guess it was a little bit of beginner's luck and, really, a lot of hard work. I had an intern who helped me implement the social media marketing campaigns that we put together. I don't think it was actually as much of a surprise as it was a happy thing that what we were working towards worked well.

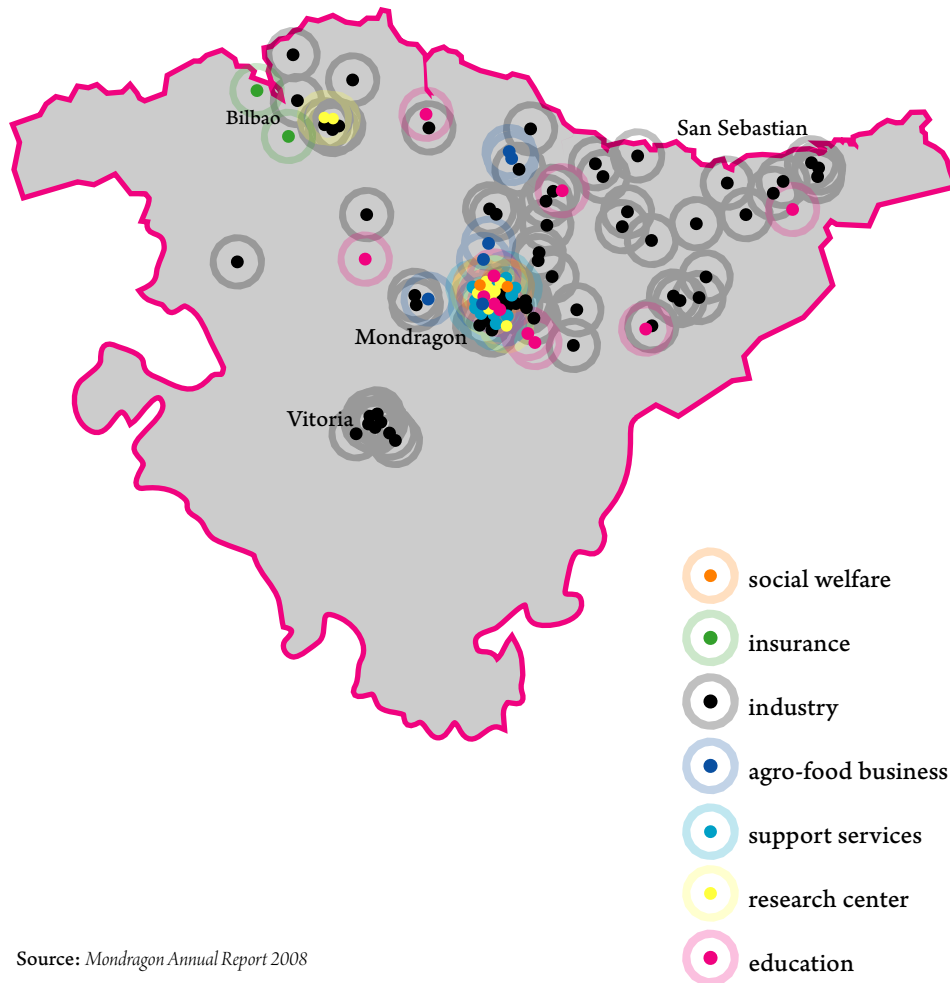
IG: I think this takes us back to the beginning of the conversation, that design is about creating a process that right now you are applying to Layoff Moveon but when the conditions change, it can be applied again for the new situation.

JL: My business partner Josh Cotten did the backend database. When we started Layoff Moveon, we were actually hoping to make some money through advertising, which did not really work out, but we essentially got a 4 year degree in 4 months, that is how we look at it. That is the takeaway and now we can apply that problem solving in other situations as well as providing something that is been useful to 20,000 people in the process of getting over a layoff.

MONDRAGON

Mondragón Cooperative Corporation is considered the most successful example of worker-owned enterprise in the world. Founded in the Basque Country of Spain, the MCC's reach now extends across the globe. Designer Jacob Chartoff diagrams the cooperative that stands at the head of the business ranking in the Basque Country and seventh in Spain overall.

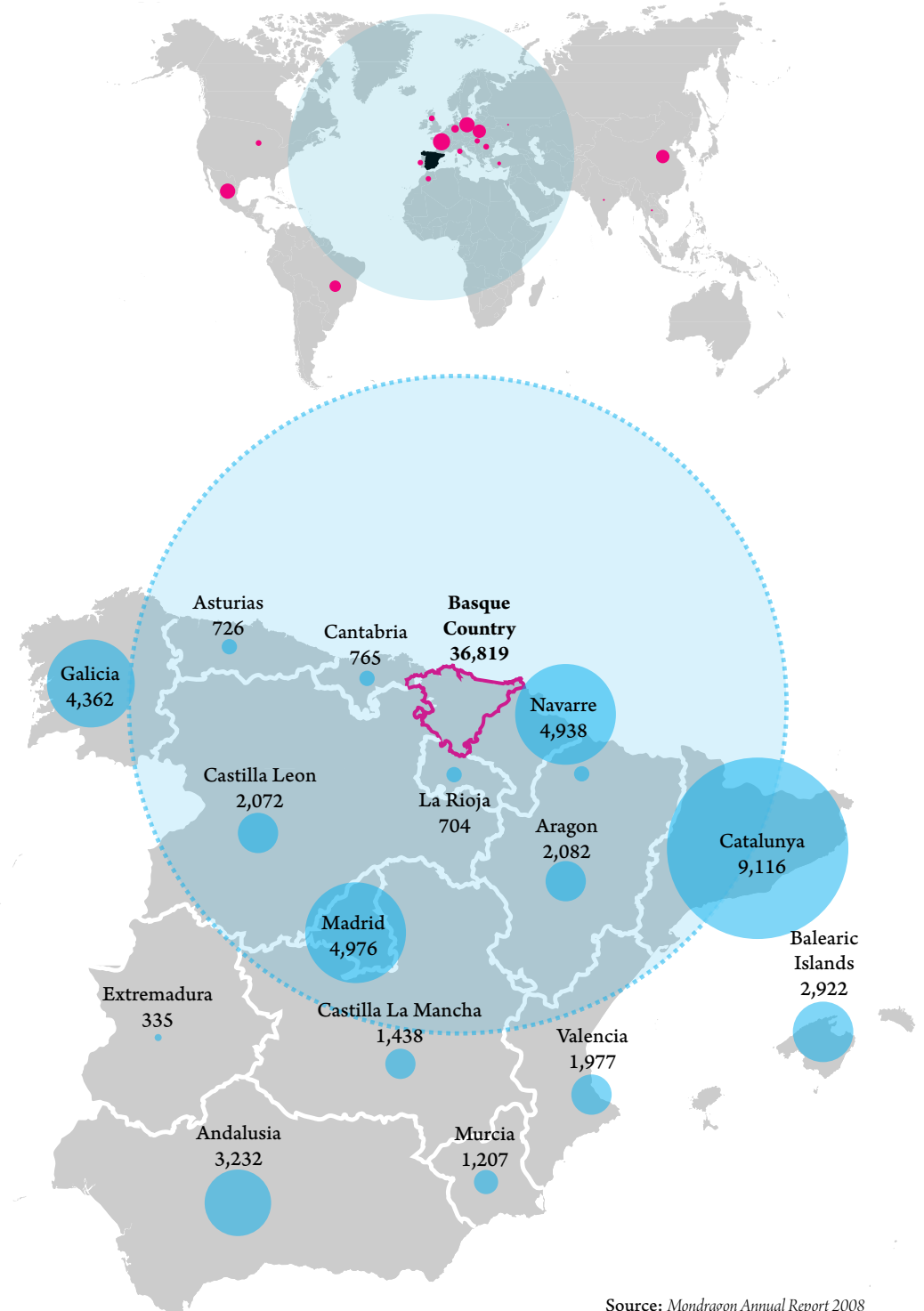
CO-OPERATIVES IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY



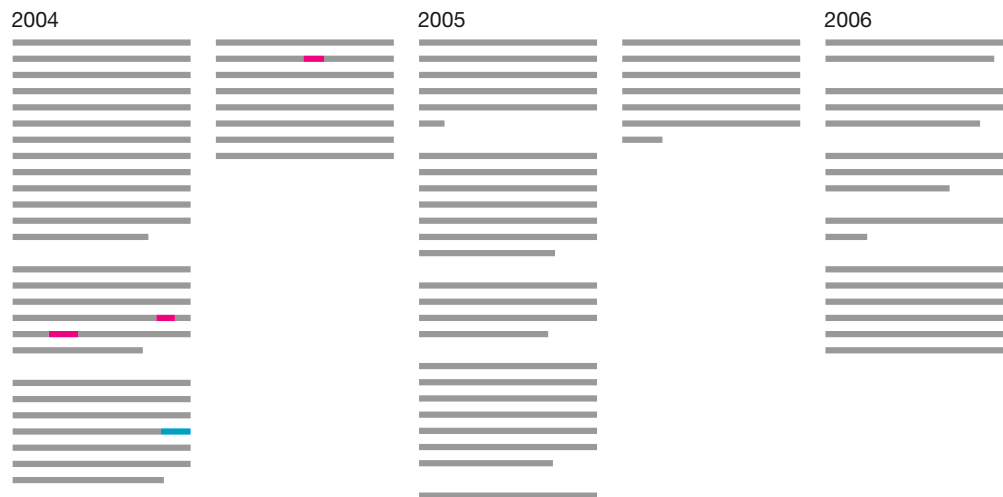
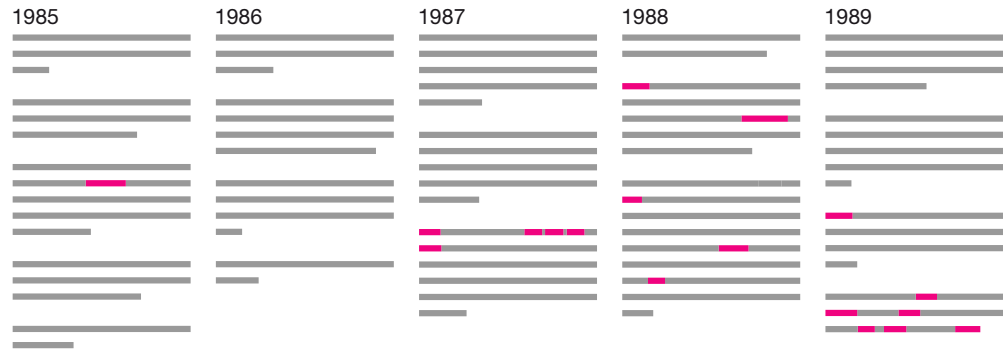
Source: Mondragon Annual Report 2008

MONDRAGON

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BY REGION

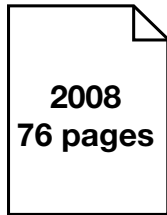


Source: Mondragon Annual Report 2008

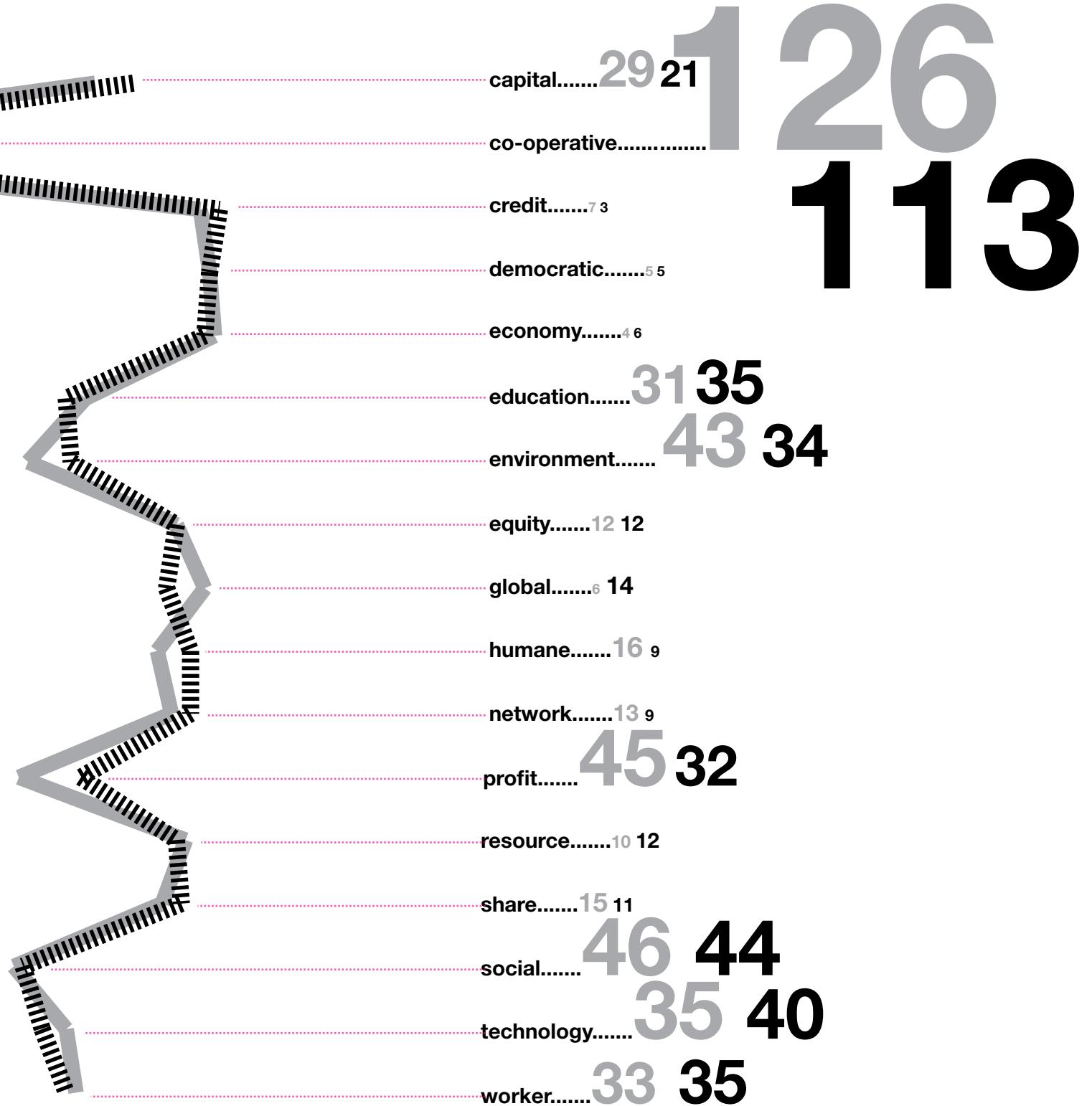


ANNUAL REPORT WORD COUNT

MONDRAGÓN ANNUAL REPORTS



The Corporation's Mission combines the core goals of a business organisation competing on international markets with the use of democratic methods in its business organisation, the creation of jobs, the human and professional development of its workers and a pledge to development with its social environment.

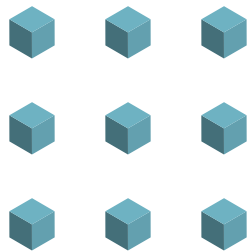


Source: Mondragon Annual Report 2008
Mondragon Annual Report 2007

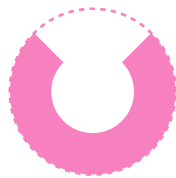
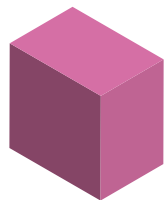
STRUCTURE OF A CO-OPERATIVE

A co-operative is owned by its members and everyone who works at the co-op must be members. Management is responsible and accountable through directors to members. Directors are elected by and from members. Each member of the co-op has one vote regardless of the size of his/her capital account. The board of directors can appoint and dismiss the top executives. The chief executive attends board meetings to give expert advice when required. He/she does not have a vote.

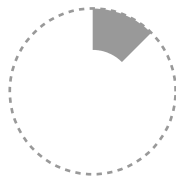
ORIGIN OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT NEEDED TO ESTABLISH A CO-OPERATIVE



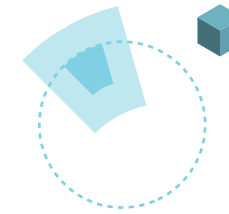
12.5%
provided by members upon joining



75%
provided by bank, repayable over ten years at below market rates



12.5%
provided by state, as a low interest loan aimed at job creation



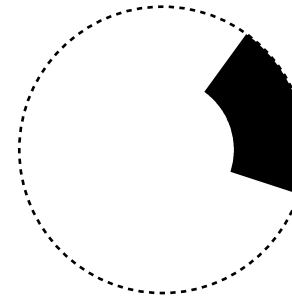
Of the members initial contribution, 75% goes to the capital account for the member which receives up to 6% interest, and 25% goes to the co-operative reserves.

Members can only access their capital account upon leaving the co-op, but can borrow against it at a low interest rate.

SURPLUS ALLOCATION



70%
is distributed to the capital accounts of the members, proportional to wage



20%
goes into the co-op collective reserve



10%
is allocated to the co-op social fund to benefit the community

WORKPLACE

Going to the office today is not much like going to the office of the past. And what's in store for the office of the future is probably even more drastic of a change than that. The evolution of workplaces in America continues to change as we change *the way* we work. As companies rethink the work process, designers need to rethink the workplace.

Designer Liz Potokar gives us an overview of the office organizations and the current work trends.

WORKPLACE

LIZ POTOKAR

Before beginning to understand the evolution of workplace trends, it is important to first understand the major influences that shape the work environment. Organizational culture has been thoroughly studied by a number of designers, researchers, and educators as a relevant industry subject. Haworth Office Furniture is one company who has published several documents on the topic. Bruce M. Tharp, of Haworth, explains four organizational types, their values, and their spatial implications in the office (*Four Organizational Types*, 2005). These four cultures fall on different ends of a two-dimensional spectrum of characteristics typical among successful organizations. The two-dimensional matrix was originally developed at the University of Michigan as the Competing Values Framework in the 1980s. Tharp built upon that framework to define the first value dimension as “flexibility, discretion, and dynamism at one end of the scale with stability, order, and control on the other... The second value dimension is marked by internal orientation integration, and unity at one end of the scale with external orientation, differentiation, and rivalry on the other.” From these two scales, four organizational cultures—Hierarch, Market, Clan, and Adhocracy—emerge.

Hierarchical cultures stress the values of standardization, authority and a disciplined organization for management. Think of stereotypical large, bureaucratic corporations, such as government agencies and law firms. Market cultures also value standardization and order, but they maintain an external focus and encourage variation over integration. Market organizations are concerned with competitiveness and productivity. They value client relationships and strategic positioning. Work in finance and insurance demonstrate this culture, as they are highly competitive fields, focused more on output instead of process. Clan cultures move away from standards and toward flexibility and discretion. Group loyalty and internal relationships are critical. The organization places emphasis on collaboration and compromise. Family-owned businesses that are passed down from generation to generation typically are clan cultures. Lastly, ad hoc organizations value flexibility and innovation. A prototypical adhocracy would be a high-tech company like Google. Dedication to experimentation and thinking outside the box unify the organization. Success to an adhocracy means staying on the cutting edge while maintaining status as an industry leader.

So when it comes to the physical workplace, what trends are we departing from and where are we heading? Office environments have come a long way since the “Great Workroom” at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Johnson Wax Building built in the late 1930s. The largest span of space in the building, the Great Workroom, housed rows and rows of desks where the employees did methodical work for a boss they often didn’t see. This concept still had a lot of influence in the 1980’s, as process and efficiency still were a company’s only measure of success. Offices were designed similar to an assembly line, and uniformity was a reflection of control. The hierarchical culture had a lot of influence during this time period and statuses were often defined by the individual’s workspace (i.e., only partners were located in the corner offices). As technology swept its way through the 1990’s, the workplace environment looked at ways of improving the typical process of doing work. Technology influenced all aspects. The workplace focused on digital tools and a more dynamic process of work. Flexibility was critical as technology changed faster than most companies could keep up. The workplace had to be designed with capability to be easily changed for future use. Today, workplace priorities have built upon both the efficient process and integrated technology to include a people-centered approach. The following workplace trends have sprung from these priorities in today’s work environment.

Many of these “trends” have longer life spans than others and sustainability is one example. Sustainability may even be more than a trend. Either way, it is an increasing focus for corporations in terms of investor relations, stock value, and customer opinion. More and more clients are asking designers to incorporate sustainable design. One way for designers to think sustainable during the planning phase is to follow a “chassis-planning concept”. This method of space planning creates a sustainable interface between architectural and interior components. It ensures a lasting integration of the planning drivers over the project life cycle. Other sustainable concepts in the workplace: increasing daylight and views, using renewable and recycled materials, shrinking the work place footprint, and incorporating user-controlled comforts.

The emergence of the distributed workforce has influenced another trend of the “third place”. In various markets, the third place relates to an environment third to someone’s home and office. People trying to escape the headaches of the office and home might frequent their third place to meet with clients or focus on completing a project. This third place may be a local

restaurant, hotel lobby, or neighborhood Starbucks. Today, many people are able to do their job just about anywhere (thanks to wireless technology). Some companies have begun to realize they can cut back on facility costs by reducing the number of full-time employees coming into the office. The use of touchdown spaces provides employees with temporary workspaces when they do come into the office.

When they aren't at the office, third places pop up as satellite offices, home-based offices, coffeehouses, and rental on-demand offices. Workspring, a concept developed by Steelcase Inc., offers people the opportunity to reserve spaces designed for collaboration. These spaces come fully equipped with business and hospitality amenities. In addition to physical environments, there are many different ways to virtually connect a distributed workforce. There is a variety of software and Internet sites that allow distant employees to create a virtual office, connect with co-workers, and collaborate on projects. This mobile freedom not only helps workers away from the office, but the workers who have no office at all. Mobile self-employment is what Daniel Pink found to be the new way of work in his first book, *Free Agent Nation*, in 2001. Pink explained many Americans are leaving their nominal jobs and "becoming self-employed knowledge workers, proprietors of home-based businesses, temps and permatemps, freelancers and e-lancers, independent contractors and independent professionals, micropreneurs and infopreneurs, part-time consultants, interim executives, on-call troubleshooters, and full-time soloists." He estimated that one-fifth of the work force is working on their own. Pink defines these workers as free agents, "working solo, operating from [their] home, using the Internet as [their] platform, living by [their] wits rather than the benevolence of a large institution, and crafting an enterprise that's simultaneously independent and connected to others." The third place becomes essential to these free agents who often rely on coffeehouses for free office space and Internet access in exchange for purchasing their daily caffeine intake.

The role of the office transforms as the number of distant employees increases, but the workplace is still important to highlight brand and secure loyalties. All the organizational culture types have a spectrum of values and every company carries their own beliefs and mission. Companies have now realized they can establish pride and increase employee retention rates if these values are communicated effectively and boldly throughout the work environment. Communication graphics, signage, and architectural brand elements are just some of the many ways companies can achieve this.



Workspring space in Chicago



Working on a tea shop



The open vs. closed office plan debate has gone on for decades. Of course, no plan works well for all types of companies, but today, the majority of companies are looking for openness. Over the years, the panel heights have continued to lower in height. From tall cubicle walls to barely-there dividers on benching applications, the workplace is seeing this height reduction as it opens the space up for access to daylight and views. This works best for clan and adhocracy cultures where collaboration is critical to the success of the company. In market and hierarchical cultures, where there is a need for more “heads-down” work, the need for privacy can affect how much openness is too much. In all cultures, spaces for private meetings and even private offices are still applicable, but they are becoming transparent to emulate openness.

In addition to the individual workspace, work environments also need to provide places for groups to gather and interact, places for people to meet—may it be formal, casual, planned, impromptu, face-to-face, or virtual—and teaming areas for long-term project use. Today, collaboration is aimed at innovation. Gaining popularity are alternative conferencing applications, such as lounge conference spaces, breakout spaces with integrated technology, and centralized café spaces. Flexibility plays an important role in these new types of meeting spaces, so companies can adapt to changing needs. Again, collaboration spaces are more critical to Clan and Adhocracies, but all cultures require some form of meeting space. When Clive Wilkinson Architects designed the headquarters for Google, a well-known adhocracy, they conceptualized thirteen different settings for collaboration. The work settings range from very casual settings that spark innovation, such as a clubhouse and i-bar, to more typical enclosed meeting spaces for focused collaboration. In any circumstance, the spaces allow for flexibility and reconfiguration to meet the specific needs of the employees.

As the types of spaces in the workplace change, so will the furniture within the space. Rarely do we find rows of desks with people processing words and numbers. Today computers do the processing and the majority of employee work is people-centric—whether it’s customer-based, group-based, or digital community-based. The need for collaboration is critical for an increasing number of jobs, so office furniture is responding. Benching applications are the newest request from American corporations. Benching workstations support collaboration by providing only minor dividers between team members sharing one large work surface. Also, the need for furniture to be flexible continues, but this no longer translates to adding casters. Today, flexible furniture is lightweight, multi-functional, and integrated with technology.

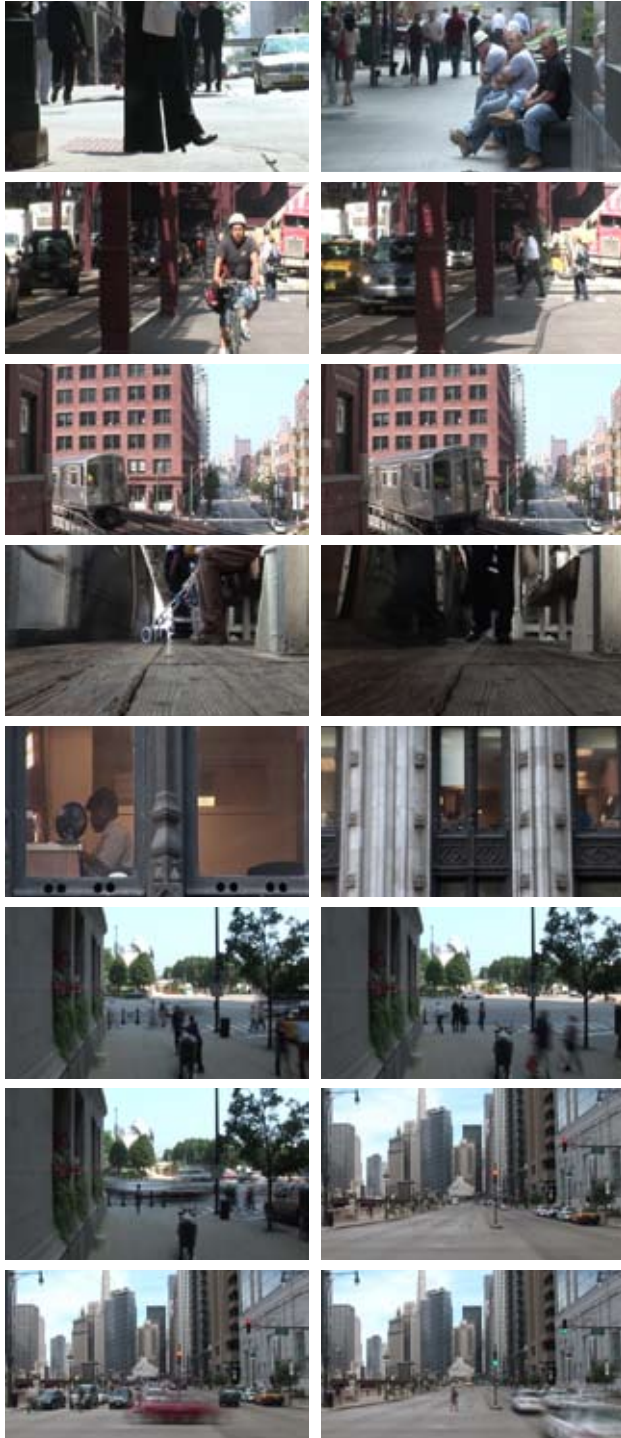
Google
Headquarters in
Mountain View,
CA, designed by
Clive Wilkinson
Architects

© Benny Chan /
fotoworks



The two most important influences in the workplace of the future are technology and mobility. For many (but not all), work in the future will consist of independently working at home and spontaneous team meetings. These team meetings might be held in a rented space or online. Markets and Adhocracies, with their external focus and reliance on technology innovation, will more easily adapt to the move away from typical office environments. Despite the variety of “office-replacements”, typical workplaces inevitably will still be around for certain industries. Organizations with Hierarchical and Clan cultures need the structure and internal focus that central work environments offer. However, it will be critical for those work environments to serve as a meeting point, supporting collaboration of all types. They must bring together the real and virtual employees, maintaining their company culture and facilitating efficiency.

A CITY AT WORK
 A film by
 SPIRIT OF SPACE

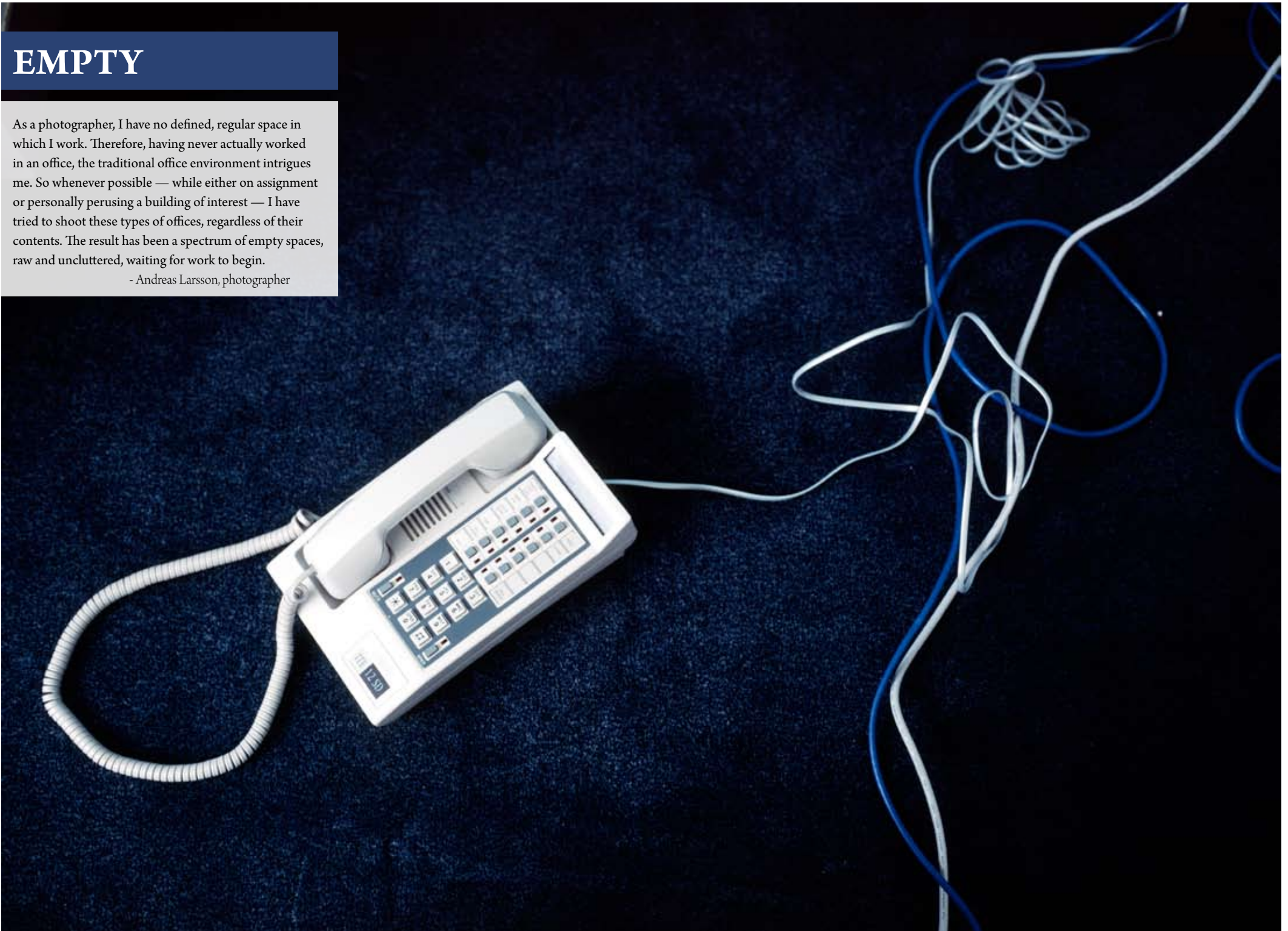


To view
 A CITY AT WORK
 visit www.mascontext.com

EMPTY

As a photographer, I have no defined, regular space in which I work. Therefore, having never actually worked in an office, the traditional office environment intrigues me. So whenever possible — while either on assignment or personally perusing a building of interest — I have tried to shoot these types of offices, regardless of their contents. The result has been a spectrum of empty spaces, raw and uncluttered, waiting for work to begin.

- Andreas Larsson, photographer

















FARMER'S WORK

Architect Kathryn Clarke Albright's interest in a farmer's work arose from studying farmers markets as civic institutions and the types of markets in America. Conversation with many vendors revealed the choice to farm and the pleasures that the demanding work provides. Their daily ritual is accompanied by sweet surprises. Their cherished independence is complemented with camaraderie at the market. Their children benefit from a sense of community at the market. Conversations transform into lasting relationships.



FARMER'S WORK: A WAY OF LIFE

KATHRYN CLARKE ALBRIGHT

It is universally accepted that work is labor and requires exerting purposeful effort. Most farmers I know would agree that whether plowing a field, harvesting a crop, or selling the bounty, all require work to some degree. The gains resulting from a farmer's work are measurable by the sustenance provided and monies earned. However, there are by-products and/or pleasures resulting from most kinds of work that have value beyond the anticipated. In the situation of farmers' work there are the purposeful pleasurable outcomes as well as unanticipated joyous ones.

Over the past two centuries of America's existence, agricultural labor efficiency has increased from 27.5 acres per worker in 1890 to 740 acres per worker in 1990.¹ Mechanized farm equipment has reduced the time it takes to tend the fields; fertilizers and pesticides require time to apply but increase yields per acre. And a farmer's work continues to change and evolve as advancement in science and technologies alters a farmer's work on large and small farms alike. Due to innovations and other forces there are structural changes in farming that have altered the way the United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] assesses farming today.²

Farms across America have dwindled since their peak at 6.8 million in 1935, although there are more mouths to feed. Today the USDA estimates there are over 2.1 million farms in America with 90 percent family owned and operated.³ However, since 2002 the number of small farms has increased 2 percent per year although the number of acres that comprise small farms has decreased. Until 2002 the USDA defined a small farm as consisting of 200 acres or less; today it considers under 50 acres to be a small farm. Between 1982 and 2002 the number of farms with fewer than 50 acres increased by 17 percent. According to the USDA 2007 Census, the number of small farms grew in 39 states, and in 21 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, increased over 5 percent.⁴ Notably, the farmers who sell at Blacksburg Farmers Market in southwest Virginia cultivate between 3 to 8 acres for their organic produce that garners in sufficient income.

Many of the farmers I have met over the past decade have chosen farming as a way of life for many reasons. Tenley Weaver of Full Circle Organic Farm located in Floyd, Virginia offers this encompassing view. "The farmers I know are very educated people, most of them have college degrees. They have had other professions and have many other options besides farming.

"We feel drawn to grow food. It is an incredible intellectual, physical, and emotional challenge of producing a crop. It is really a deep broad field, that has to do with the sowing of the crop at least as much as to do with the selling of the crop. It is a whole way life."⁵ Her partner, Dennis Dove, who once taught in the College of Agriculture at Virginia Tech, concurs about the knowledge required to be a successful farmer, and often shares his wisdom about growing heirloom tomatoes and organic practices at local farmers markets, as well as regional agricultural events.

While it requires physical labor and lots of it, farming offers the capacity to live one's beliefs in a direct way and alters how each farmer views their work. The independence it affords is often cited as a primary benefit, yet family is a strong factor. Lauren Cooper of Greenstar Farm in Blacksburg, Virginia sums it up; "my husband [Andrew Schenker] and I choose organic farming as a way of life because we are interested in creating a livelihood for ourselves that didn't clash with our ideals. We wanted to be able to create for ourselves a way to earn an income on our terms and to be able to feel good about how our lifestyle affected the environment. Our farm is intended to be a sanctuary for people and wildlife as well as a livelihood."⁶

It is good news that the number of small farms are gradually on the rise and, even better, the number of farmers markets in America has nearly tripled from 1,755 in 1994 to 4,600 in 2008, and with an unofficial count of over 4,800 in 2009.⁷ This is important to the economic and ecological vitality of local communities in the face of globalization due to technological advances. At least two of the new digital technologies, specifically websites and email enabled by the Internet, have increased even the smallest farmer's reach of distribution and farmers markets capacity to attract patrons. There is also an increase in the heightened awareness of the nutritional benefits of eating organic food as well as fresh food that has traveled less than 100 miles from farm to table.

This renaissance in farmers markets and small farms has brought additional meaning and value particular to each farmer. Fulfillment in a season's work can be found in ritual coupled with surprise, independence paired with camaraderie, raising children with a sense of community and conversations that become relationships. Farming is a chosen way of life. In 2007, 22 percent of all U. S. farms have been in production 10 years or less.⁸

FARMER'S WORK: A WAY OF LIFE

“The challenges and joys of farming can be the same. We did choose farming as a way of life for the independence to raise healthy food and kids, and to care for our part of the community and environment— economically and ecologically. In 2002, we found our home in Floyd and began reclaiming fields and farm buildings to prepare for our future full of new markets, a few interesting value-added enterprises and our beautiful children. We took what we learned from our mentors to create a farm business of our own.”⁹



Johanna Nichols, Five Penny Organic Farm, Floyd, Virginia

“We chose farming as a lifestyle, not a profession. Having lived and worked in cities, I needed a job where I could work outside independently. Farming allows us (wife, Gwynn Hamilton and daughter, Zoe) to eat three meals together every day, get eight hours of sleep every night, and have Zoe with us all day long. We’ve managed Zoe’s first five years without childcare besides Mondays with grandma.”¹⁰



Bert Webster & Gwynn Hamilton, Stonecrop Farm, Newport, Virginia

FARMER'S WORK: A WAY OF LIFE

“Most of the work in farming is hard, heavy, dirty work; my wife makes me undress before I can come into the house, and rightly so, because I am usually filthy. What pleasure could there be in baling hay in the hot sun, body covered in hay dust, sweating profusely? The pleasure comes from looking ahead to the next winter, when you haul hay out through six inches of snow to a waiting herd and watch them eat what you worked so hard to preserve. There is also delight when someone takes the time to call and say that the steak they bought from us is the best they ever had. It all seems worthwhile.”¹¹



Phil Moser, Shadowchase Farm, Craig County, Virginia

“When I (Tenley) started to become interested in agriculture in my early twenties I was so amazed at what farming is really about and how deeply you have to understand the natural system and the soils and the workings of the craft and nature together. You also have to understand the workings of the markets, you have to understand and be on the top of national trends of which vegetables are selling and which are not cool anymore.”¹²



Dennis Dove & Tenley Weaver, Full Circle Organic Farm, Floyd, Virginia

Ritual & Surprise

The planning and execution of the repetitive actions that are inherent in farming suggest there would be predictability of the outcome and the surprise of unanticipated results would be limited. Some disruptions in daily routine can be offset through regular attention to maintenance of things such as machinery to avoid breakdowns that cause delays. And although there are known seasonal weather patterns, Mother Nature is full of unpredictability that tests a farmer's ability to anticipate and compensate for a multitude of variables. Other surprises defy any relation to the routine or rituals of farming.

The routine of work on the farm spills over to farmers markets where the ritual of setting-up of each stall each time involves particular placement of the bounty of a day's harvest, and yet when the patrons arrive to shop there is a sense of surprise and joy in the air. Alice Waters, acclaimed chef of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California asserts that "there are times of the year when we can hardly wait to go to the farmers market, in anticipation of the treasures we will find there."¹³

Independence & Camaraderie

The repetitive interaction among vendors selling at farmers markets offers camaraderie that serves to counter balance the hours spent alone in the fields on the farm. For farmers independence is treasured autonomy that is often viewed as one's perceived control over the outcome of one's work. Nonetheless, self-reliance has a partner in camaraderie.

Both farmers and patrons value the solidarity that gathering on a regular basis provides. Most share appreciation of the work involved in producing the goods they sell, some commiserate about various difficulties entailed in farming, and others exchange stories of recent travels or their children's achievements. There is always a tale to tell and someone to listen.

The camaraderie of social interactions for common purpose allows for casual conversations over time to evolve into lasting relationships. Camaraderie between vendors and patrons at the market fills many needs that the autonomy of independence cannot. The camaraderie leads to a sense of community among diverse groups of people who share an interest in fresh, local food and handmade goods.

Children & Community

For many the choice to farm centers on family. The rituals of farming find resonance with the daily activities of raising a family, both require performing particular activities daily, weekly, and seasonally without fail. Phil Mosser observes, "watching my children eat and love everything that we raise is an incredible experience and makes all the hard work seem small."¹⁴ Phil 'retired' from 20 years as a builder in Virginia Beach for the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors while providing for his family.

Farmers often bring their children to the market and they help in the selling of the goods. For some who home-school their children, the market offers necessary opportunities for socializing. The relationship among children, whether farmer's, vendor's or patron's is typical for most public settings, yet many patrons develop special bonds with children of vendors and bring them gifts annually on their birthdays.

Like many public gatherings, coming to the market provides children with a better understanding of customs of the society in which they live.

Conversations & Relationships

Appreciation between vendor and market patron usually begins with conversation about the food being purchased. The exchanged words convey a mutual rapport. There is a sense of companionship among patrons and farmers although each has very different daily routines.

Farmers who sell at farmers markets know their customers by first name, know a bit of their lives and receive gifts from them. Some patrons visit the vendors farms. "In contrast to the anonymity of food bought from a food conglomerate, farmers and others marketing local food should not take for granted the appeal of "food with a face"-- food that has a unique and important story behind its creation."¹⁵

UC Davis professor and environmental psychologist Robert Sommer observed though years of research that shoppers have up to seven times more social interactions at a farmers market as they do in a supermarket. For most people, the plethora of ways to communicate via the Internet or cell phone has not replaced the worthiness of face-to-face conversation.

RITUAL & SURPRISE

“Our favorite rituals are letting the chickens out in the foggy mornings, unrolling a bale of hay to mulch a bed, checking the rain gauge but the surprise of farming is the lack of control. When we imagined our farm, we thought we could plan out the whole thing at the start of the year. Instead, it feels like every day we evaluate what’s going on and react to it. Even crop rotation and seeding plans are constantly revised.”¹⁶



Gwynn Hamilton, Stonecrop Farm, Newport, Virginia

“We plow the fields and plant seeds every year, but it is almost just magical that I can put seeds in the ground and in five, ten, or fifteen, weeks harvest a product. That’s the magic that led me through graduate school, through my Ph.D. I have taken a lot of courses in the area of plant biology, and I still don’t know what the magic is. And then there is the magic that happens after a period of soaking rain in the spring. I walk certain areas of the forest that surround the fields and find shitake, morels and other mushrooms.”¹⁷



Dennis Dove, Full Circle Organic Farm, Floyd, Virginia

INDEPENDENCE & CAMARADERIE

“You are your own boss and you are doing something you really care about. You feel good about it. No day is ever the same and that is a good thing. I think of all the Saturday morning camaraderie at the farmers market and the festive atmosphere. I just love it. You meet so many people and make so many connections. The market is not just about buying produce, it is a whole social circle.”¹⁸



Sharon Morley & George Hall, Idyllwood Farm, Floyd, Virginia

“There is feeling of independence fostered by the way we farm. We have sold at the Blacksburg Farmers Market for 18 years and have built a loyal customer base. They love not having to deal with the ‘middleman’ or whims of the wholesale market. Every winter we review our profits, both financial and spiritual, of the previous seasons and adjust our growing and marketing plan for the upcoming year. There is also camaraderie with other vendors that has developed overtime and built upon dealing with the weather, inevitable problems and issues that we work out democratically through meetings.”¹⁹



Lauren Cooper, Greenstar Organic Farm, Blacksburg, Virginia

CHILDREN & COMMUNITY

“The quieter moments when you have longer conversations. People come to me to ask about herbs for different ailments, and just for talking. I think that people really enjoy farmers markets because of personal conversation and sense of community. Our children have grown up ensconced in the farmers market. Our daughter, Kaily, is a cellist and often performs at the market’s First Wednesday music series. She looks forward to the market, helping to set up and selling her cookies. Our six-year old son Julian enjoys socializing. Our children benefit from relationships formed at the market and have a sense of belonging to a community.”²⁰



Lauren Cooper, Greenstar Organic Farm, Blacksburg, Virginia

CONVERSATION & RELATIONSHIPS

“I learn a lot from the customers because we have international travelers visit Blacksburg every week. I get to take an imaginary trip to Spain or hear about someone’s trip to Prague for a music concert. You feel like you’ve been on a trip after conversation at the market. Also one minute I am selling coriander to someone from southeast Asia, and the next minute I am selling someone a jar of homemade plum preserves. The mixture of people gives you a sense of being involved with a world community even though I haven’t left my home.”²¹



Ron Holdren, Green Market Farm, Pembroke, Virginia

Sustainable Agriculture in the 21st century

The essence of a farmer's work that has been presented here is work that matches ritual with surprise, joins independence with camaraderie, unites children with a sense of community and transforms conversation into relationships. Farming as an occupation of necessity has transformed into one of choice for many due to these by-products of subjective fulfillment that meet their own needs as well as interests of patrons.

The increase in the number of farmers markets and small farms in America is a trajectory that is changing how people view the necessity of agriculture for our collective well-being. Recent publicity of detrimental practices of ginormous-scaled mono-culture farming has given the general public a better understanding of the importance of sustainable agriculture and eating locally grown and raised food.

The structural change that more smaller farms promotes includes the formation of cooperatives and other networks of multiple farms whose ecological practices counter the so-called efficiencies of extremely large farms that grow with degenerative practices that require large sums of money. One fairly recent example of structural change that alters how farmers cover their initial seasonal costs is Community Supported Agriculture, CSA. Robyn Van En of Indian Line Farm in Massachusetts introduced CSA in 1985. The concept is based upon building a network of patrons who buy shares "subscriptions" in a season's crop prior to harvest, thus providing farmers financial resources at the beginning of a season which gives them more control over the business of farming. In 1990 there were 60 CSA's and today due in part to farmers' web sites and email, there are over 1,300 CSA farms.²²

In Floyd, Virginia over the past decade several farmers have formed what they refer to as 'value-added' enterprises that build upon each other's production. In 1998 Dennis Dove and Tenley Weaver created Full Circle Organic Farm, and soon thereafter founded a co-op Good Food for Good People, GFGP, that led to opening Green's Garage in 2006 which is home to their fruit share CSA and GFGP. Johanna and Brett Nichols started Five Penny Organic Farm in 2002 and sell their produce through the co-op GFGP at Green's Garage. A few years ago they expanded their crops to include those needed to make beer. They opened Shooting Creek Farm and Brewery in 2009 and sell to local restaurants and beverage stores.²³ Tenley and Dennis farm without digital technologies but rely on the Internet to operate Green's Garage. Many small, family-owned farms across America employ the Internet to increase their supply to a regional base of consumers who, given the awareness, will support sustainable agriculture.

Although changes in a farmer's work in the 21st century now necessitate a few hours a week at the computer as well as at the farmers market, it will always require hours in the fields working the soil as they always have. "Technology is not changing agriculture. Agriculture itself is changing and the technologies are just a set of tools to deal with those changes and enhance natural resource and agricultural decision-making."²⁴ Sustainable agriculture appears to be gaining ground at the human scale where the gratification of farming extends beyond the labor of work.

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TEAM

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MAS Context website visits as of September 21: **Over 41,500**
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Our first two issues focusing on the topics of MORE and EVENTS have been received exceptionally well and we are extremely happy with the collaborators that have been involved. WORK is our third issue and we are excited to see the growth and development of this journal. If you are discovering us through our third issue, check out the first two, all of them available and free.

If you want to receive notifications of future issues of MAS Context, send us an email to subscription@mascontext.com.

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We want this journal to reach as many people as possible. That's why it's free. We want to create a debate about what is happening in the places we live, work and visit. Share the digital file posted on our website with anyone you know, print a bound copy at Lulu for yourself and give copies to your friends and enemies.

Visit

Check www.mascontext.com to access all the content that was produced for each issue. One great thing of MAS Context is that we are teaming with Spirit of Space for every issue, so they can create a film with their vision of the topic. You will be able to enjoy that and more in the website.

Participate

We want you to submit your work to the journal to give a broader perspective to the topic chosen for each issue. If you are interested in the next topic, send us your essay, photographs, projects, diagrams, studies... We have our ideas and we want to incorporate yours.

Host

A journal is a good tool to share opinions and visualize possibilities, but we want to go beyond that. We want this effort to become something bigger, to generate events that share knowledge and discuss the issues identified in the journal. We are talking about having a launch event for each issue, lectures, installations, exhibitions, and festivals. If you have a space that we can use for any of these events, people that would be willing to help, or a donation to produce these events, let us know. MAS Context would love to partner with you.

THE UNIVERSITY ISSUE 09

As part of our commitment to establish networks and platforms that facilitate discussion around design, we are producing a supplemental issue called THE UNIVERSITY ISSUE.

This special issue relates some of the most promising architecture work developed in universities around the world during the 2008-2009 academic year. This work will be selected by curators directly involved at each of the universities. We want to know and share what is produced in different contexts, establish parallels, understand challenges, and discover opportunities.

Our hope is that this issue starts a solid structure of relationship and discussion between universities and the design community.

THE **UNIVERSITY** ISSUE 09 will be published on December 21 along with our WINTER issue.



4 | **LIVING** WINTER 09

Our next issue will focus on the topic of **LIVING**. We will explore the living conditions in several areas of the world, from the policies to the realities. We will focus on urban proposals, buildings, products, trends and habits that make life worth **LIVING**.

Of course, we want to hear **YOUR** opinion. Send us your contribution in form of an essay, photographs, diagrams, or case study.

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4 | **LIVING** WINTER 09 will be published on December 21.

