Timely Monuments and Persistent Camps: A Call for Exception

Written paper / verbal presentation

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The notion of exception offers a critical, untapped potential for architecture today. As an intervention within a context, an exception produces a strategic deviation that introduces transformative shifts within the existing conditions which resist a status quo. Today, in the face of increasing uncertainty and political backsliding, new forms of collective participation are necessary. When broken systems endure despite their stagnation, exception acts as a means of disruption, and as an instigator of progress by revealing the problems and/or limits of formerly accepted norms and enabling alternative futures.

Amidst this crisis of permanence, this paper poses the possibility of exception as an agent of change within physical, social, political, and temporal environments. If a space of exception is distinguished from its a context in order to support difference and dynamism, it is in the interest of architects to explore strategies for its implementation within the built environment. Through the lens of three established notions of exception---Giorgio
Agamben’s state of exception, Pier Vittorio Aureli’s architecture as exception, and the ideology of American Exceptionalism—the existing typologies of Monument and Camp will be interrogated as spaces of exception. Appearing first as opposites—the Monument an object of permanence and symbolism and the Camp as a temporary and transient bounded field—a closer consideration will reveal the shifting qualities of each that blur these formal and temporal distinctions, and inform future applications.

Building on known theories of monumentality and the camp, new hybrid typologies (Timely Monuments and Persistent Camps) will emerge. In order to activate these spaces of exception within the built environment, new architectural strategies will be necessary. These will be adaptable structures and platforms to enable and support radical forms of assembly, collective participation, and inclusive social accommodation. As interventions within the constructed environment, Timely Monuments and Persistent Camps perform within and outside of their context. They respond to multimodal site conditions, to produce a heightened awareness and critique of existing conditions, and to incite a radical and agonistic publicness. Operating as spaces of exception, they intervene in the present and support alternative futures.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Lindsay Harkema is a New York-based architect and educator, currently teaching at Syracuse University School of Architecture. She has a Bachelor of Science in Architecture degree from Washington University in St. Louis, and a Master of Architecture degree from the Rice University School of Architecture, where she was awarded the Morris Pitman Award in Architecture. Lindsay’s research and design projects explore the ever-shifting relationship between the built environment and the human ecology that occupies it, and the opportunities this dynamic creates for territorial, spatial, and political exceptions. From 2012 to 2013, she was a research fellow at the Strelka Institute for Media Architecture and Design in Moscow, Russia. Previously, she has worked for Leeser Architecture, Diller Scofidio and Renfro, Architecture + Information, and Rice + Lipka Architects. She has also taught at The New School’s Parsons School of Design. She is a registered architect in the state of New York and NCARB certified.