CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
The Designed and the Ad Hoc: Dynamic Remakings of Street Space in New York City

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• Abstract (300 words):
The pandemic has added to many of our interests in streets and how their spaces where cars drive, bicycles are ridden and people interweave are shifting and providing challenges, due to the increased need for open-air, spatial distancing. The ingenuity of food establishment owners aligned with a financial necessity has provoked a rapid interest in seizing available adjacent or nearby street space, utilizing sidewalk zones and re-imagining small parklets. The urbanism resulting, consists of both the imposed formalization of compact designs, and the forcing or inviting of ad hoc conditions. The new atmospheres and physical environments range from intensely crowded socialization (even with distancing required and masks worn) controlled through organized, linear, open-air constructions of many materials, to a series of gazebos, lean-tos, trailers, tents or even bubble set ups. The typology is growing and morphing to be both serious and fun, and includes permanent and temporary conditions. Atmospherically, notions of “village cafes” or “urban beaches” expose creative spaces promoting moveable built in or bring one’s own furniture. Varied décor includes potted trees, reflective tapes, lighting, wires and heaters, encouraging refuge, socializing, and eating/drinking. The semi-enclosures with myriad signs and other paraphernalia also offer a variety of real and underacknowledged attention toward safety.

The author, an architect who teaches “urban interiorism” is fascinated by the turmoil, and recognizes a palpable optimism from the increasingly reconfigured street-scape energy (Author: 2021). This paper will highlight field work documentation that compares a newly
designated pedestrian via with a series of street/sidewalk constructions that connect different Brooklyn neighborhood populations and needs. City “psycho-geographical” qualities, as well as observed dynamic characteristics and identities still emerging will be illustrated and discussed (Debord: 1958; Benjamin: 1999; Stavrides: 2010). A selection of Individual and collective designed uses will be mapped and combined with a visual narrative speculating on questions of continued urban freedom, and what these internal/external spatial experiences are teaching us (Harvey: 2008; Sennett: 2018; NYC Open-Air codes: 2020).

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

**Alison B. Snyder** is an architect, designer and professor at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Her interests, pedagogy and scholarship are informed by how the interior is understood through its integration with architecture, the arts, and locality. Asking socio-cultural questions to consider what propels spatial transformation and adaptability over time, Snyder conducts urban and rural field work, often in Istanbul, Turkey and New York City, to analyze and interpret monumental and mundane settings. She is recipient of a Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts grant for her work on light and the Ottoman Mosque, as well as other grants for work on globalizing domestic spaces of Anatolian villages and conditions of interior urbanism found in Istanbul. Snyder directed the Interior Architecture Program at the University of Oregon, and chaired Pratt’s Department of Interior Design.