



# **(w)rapped space:** *the architecture of hip hop*

*Theory in architecture is all too often discussed only in terms of form, ideology rarely analysed. Drawing connections between music, space and architecture, this essay-manifesto attempts to explore new paradigms of architectural spatial theory. While grounded in the marginalised African-American experience, its affirmation of the black body's identity in spaces that have historically done just the opposite is of direct relevance in a South African context.*

---

'A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential.'

Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*

I read somewhere that writing about music is like dancing about architecture. In this composition, I will illustrate the truth of those words – although not in the way the author intended – as I identify and analyse the space produced by the hip hop revolution. I plan to argue that hip hop produces a (w)rapped space that is firstly, a phenomenon of sonic organization and use created in and by a distinct social context, secondly, dependent on experience and memory, and linked to time in the form of the past, present and future, and thirdly, defined and communicated by people through patterns of use in the built environment. I will also address a specific spatial understanding of hip hop culture as it reverberates from rap music into the built environment, identifying four primary spatial principles evident in the physical manifestations of hip hop architecture – palimpsestic, anthropomorphic, performative and adaptive – that are generated in response to spaces that represent the power of oppression. This hip hop spatial paradigm at once recalls, creates and deploys new spaces that speak to the Africentric diasporian project of identity embedded in rap music. Ready for a little sumpin' sumpin' specie? I'm 'bout to break you off some.

## Social formations of sound

Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, in their 1978 essay 'Rock and Sexuality', position rock and pop music as the place where 'boys and girls learn their repertoire of public sexual behaviour'.<sup>1</sup> By drawing on theories that posit sexual subjectivity as a primary element of defining an individual's or a group's identity, and focusing on music's capacity to construct male and female identities among teenagers through socially sanctioned public sexual expression, they reject the notion of rock music liberating a long repressed sexuality and instead posit that 'the most important ideological work done by rock is the construction of sexuality'. They further argue that this construction is controlled by the 'gatekeepers' of the industry, who determine how people listen to [music].<sup>2</sup> This suggests that those who control the choices and forms of music that become available to listeners have an over-determined influence on the construction of sexuality and identity of those listeners.

George Lipsitz, in his book *Time Passages* (2001), directly links the (sexual) identity produced by music to the notion of time and applies the concept of dialogical criticism – defined as a conversation with history and critically dependent upon memory – to the study of music. It is his position that, 'one reason for popular music's powerful effect is its ability to conflate music and lived experience, to make both the past and present zones of choice serve distinct social and political interests' (p.104).

In his analysis, Lipsitz posits that the socially defined public arena – that place where the everyday interactions of society takes place – 'is the matrix of production and reception of popular music' (p.105) and memory is central to the construction of that public arena. Lipsitz argues that not only is memory necessary for the construction of music, it is also central to the construction of social context and

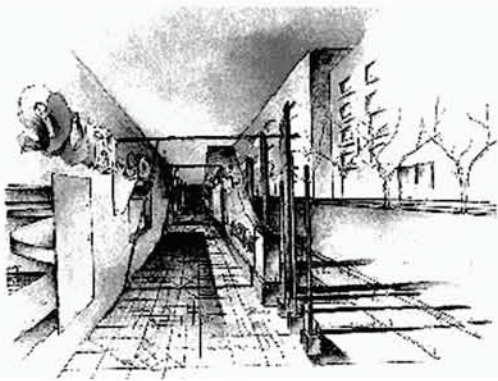
thus necessary for the construction of identity.

Finally, in his essay, 'The Sound of Music in the Era of its Electronic Reproducibility',<sup>3</sup> John Mowitt takes Lipsitz's position a step further and argues that current technology has separated the production and reception of music, and has 'privileged the moment of reception in cultural experience' (p.173), further illustrating the social context of music's construction and its influence on subjectivity and identity. Key to this argument is Mowitt's assertion that subjectivity is heavily influenced by the fact that experience 'takes place within a cultural context organised by institutions and practices', which in this case is the *institution and practices* of the music studio. He argues that the experience of hearing – and its concomitant effects on memory – is less influenced by initial *production* than by technical *reproduction* done in the studio and this phenomenon positions memory as both 'fundamental to music and profoundly social'. Mowitt proposes that a primary, if not *the* primary, reason for music's social importance is precisely this organization of sound (noise) around socially sanctioned public structures of listening that define normal – or 'proper' – ways of making sense of what you hear, a 'standard of normalcy' that helps to define a social order, or to use a better word, community. What is critical to understand from Mowitt's argument is the idea that music can *create* and *be created* by a community.<sup>4</sup> To summarise, the central themes for my project are the demonstration that music creates – and is created by – a distinct social context through experience (interaction with others) and memory (of that interaction and past interactions), and also, that musical experience and memory play an important role in constructing specific identities and with that, communities. *Sound in space creates identity*. These sonically constructed communities are linked to time through an interactive, reciprocal conversation with history that shapes the socially defined public arena in which music is produced, reproduced and received. *Music, then, becomes integral to a way of life. We live in sound defined spaces*. Albert Murray says as much when, writing on the painting influences of Romare Bearden, he states: 'and not only was impeccable musical taste an absolute requirement for growing up hip, urbane, or streetwise, but so was the ability to stylise your actions – indeed, your whole being – in terms of the most sophisticated extensions and refinements of jazz music and dance'.<sup>5</sup>

Understanding sound in this fashion is useful in positing the notion of music as an element of individual and collective identity that is: 1) a phenomenon of sonic organization and use created in a distinct social context, 2) dependent on experience and memory, linked to the time – past, present and future, and 3) defined and communicated by people through patterns of use. I will show how similar themes emerge as foundational elements of not only a notion of music, but also for a particular notion of space.

## Social formations of space

In *The Production of Space* (1991), Henri Lefebvre posits that space is a social product. He argues against the dominant western notion of space as posited by enlightenment figures such as John Locke<sup>6</sup> – that space is pre-existing – and instead proposes that 'spaces are produced' (p.84). For Lefebvre, space is experienced, or more accurately, 'lived' by bodies – or people – in motion that constantly intersect, interact, produce and reproduce, a phenomenon which he refers to as 'social space'. Social space, as defined by Lefebvre (p.102), is both *work* (the interaction) and *product* (what is created by the interaction), and can be understood



as the social activities that occur in a particular time and place that constitute – and are specific to – the establishment of a distinct social context. These social activities, referred to by Lefebvre as the group's spatial practices, facilitate the production and reproduction of both the place of, and the characteristics of the spatial relationships of any particularly defined group of people.

Lefebvre's space is reciprocal; it at once recognises, shapes and affirms the identity and subjectivity of the people that shape, produce and reproduce it.<sup>7</sup> According to Lefebvre, because social space is dependent upon people for its (re) production and people are ever present in the socially defined public arena, he concludes that "[n]o space disappears in the course of growth and development: *the worldwide does not abolish the local*" (p.102). For Lefebvre, there exists at any given moment a multiplicity of distinctive social contexts, all of which produce spaces, which as opposed to Foucault's heterotopias, "interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another".<sup>8</sup>

Furthering this spatial theory, Michel de Certeau, in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), theorises the communication and navigation of these multiple, simultaneously socially

constructed spaces and demonstrates how Lefebvre's social space becomes legible. De Certeau sees the movement through space as a way of communication with others, consisting of both experience and memory. He posits that movement through space and the *memory of experience* (movement through the world) constructs a language we use to spatially communicate. He calls this language of movements, "pedestrian speech acts",<sup>9</sup> that in fact "secretly structure the determining conditions of social life" (p.96) by implying interaction between a speaker and observer that communicates meaning.<sup>10</sup> Within a framework of communication that is reciprocally transformed and transforms, the elements of language (musical, verbal and pedestrian) are consistently chosen, appropriated, adapted and employed by people to communicate meaning that is unique to that particular group, space and time.<sup>11</sup> "Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements," writes De Certeau. "It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalise it, and make it function... In short, *space is a practiced place*. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is *transformed into a space* by walkers" (p.117). In sum, what is vital to understand from Lefebvre's spatial theory is the notion that space is produced by *bodies (people) interacting*. This interaction is specific to a time, place and social formation, but is also historical – it has a memory, a past. Space, like music, cannot be static; it is dynamic, adapted by its user for the communication of specific meanings. For Lefebvre and De Certeau, the formation of space is dependent on the interaction, the understanding of the interaction in a dialogically critical (reciprocal) way, and the memory of interaction (experience) communicated through the language of the pedestrian speech act. At its very essence, space, for them, is a "performed communication". Lefebvre, De Certeau and others have allowed me to posit the notion of space as reciprocal, and as: 1) a phenomenon of spatial organization and use, realised in a distinct social context (people interacting), 2) dependent on experience and memory, linked to time – past, present and future, and 3) defined and communicated by people through patterns of use.

This hypothesis is almost identical to the previously outlined notion of music and as such, uncovers a heretofore hidden opportunity for further critical spatial inquiry. If space is derived from experience and memory, *whose communication is performed*, AND music is derived from experience and memory, *whose form of communication is performance*, then might we not look at sound and space as a similar occurrence, constitutive of each other. If so, then space might be defined more specifically as *a socially constructed phenomenon of sonic organization and use, dependent on experience and memory, linked to time – past, present and future – and defined and communicated by people through their patterns of use*.

## Rap formations of space

So, sound mediated and performed space becomes the key to understanding hip hop's cultural creation – rap music – as the principle foundational element of hip hop architecture. How, you say?

1) Space is... a socially constructed phenomenon of sonic organization: Rap music is unquestionably a music born of technology and is, as Mowitt has concluded previously, socially constructed. The ability of the musical production (DJ, producer, engineer) to manipulate particular sounds,

**TOP**  
Concept sketch for Hip Hop Park by Craig Wilkins showing park entrance walk, which allow for neighbourhood graffiti artists to express themselves

**MIDDLE**  
Concept sketch for Hip Hop Park by Craig Wilkins showing east elevation of community bazaar entrance and tagging wall made from a combination of new construction with existing walls and site materials.

**BOTTOM**  
Michael Wyeth, *White rectangle with black strip*, 2007

breaks, ruptures in continuity and flow – recalling their existence by their absence – and mix several disparate sources of sonic pleasure into the listening experience is the core of rap music. Writing on the use of sampling in *Black Noise* (1994), Trica Rose asserts, “[r]ap technicians employ digital technology as instruments, revising black musical styles and priorities through the manipulation of technology.”<sup>12</sup> The primacy of studio/technological production has been key to the development of the rap genre and the epitome of a musical phenomenon created in a distinct social context – the studio.

2) Space is... dependent on experience and memory, linked to time – past, present and future. “Music is nothing but organized noise,” states Rose. “You can take anything – street sounds, us talking, whatever you want – and make it music by organizing it.” (p.82) As Mowitt has previously touched upon, music’s social importance is precisely this organization of noise around socially defined structures of listening. It is our shared understanding of the “correct” way to listen that is embedded in our memory and creates community. What becomes important to discern is which “community is forming in the musical technologies of the collective memory” (p.182). Black music in general, but rap music’s historical connection with the collective memory of the African diasporic community in particular, is complex and varied, and the hierarchy of its components is not at all universally agreed upon. However, what is generally acknowledged as important, essential and historical about black music are: a) its nature (rhythm, repetition, layering, flow, rupture) which recalls the link to its African origin, b) its orality (toast, call and response, storytelling griot) which descends from specific African, Caribbean and American influences, and c) its content (oppression, segregation, self-determination, self-naming) which is constituted in part by the postmodern condition of fragmentation and the project of reclaiming the black *subject* from the “negro” *object*. These elements help to link the African diaspora over distance and time to a collective memory that is Africentric in origin and nature, but is – and this is key – specific to its current locale and defines a particular type of spatial practice, a principal tenet of Lefebvre’s social space.

3) Space is... defined and communicated by people through their patterns of use: The identity created by sound is best illustrated and understood by studying the use and influence of music on the lifestyles of the diaspora. As Albert Murray’s discussion of Romare Bearden suggests, black music is really an integral part of the way blacks live and communicate.<sup>13</sup> At its most basic level, music is for the diaspora an unconscious way of being that informs both the physical and mental response to its call and is acted out in all variety of ways, subtle and not. At its most heightened, it is a recognition and celebration of an Africentric life force. But at all levels, it is important, even essential, to the *performance* of life – Paul Gilroy’s “enhanced mode of communication” – for diasporic members.<sup>14</sup> This performance of life manifests itself in a variety of ways in the diaspora, but all are inexorably linked by the project of reclaiming the black subject from the “negro” object.

Rap music is clearly a tool to use in the process of redefining self. Whereas Dick Hebdige’s well-known analysis of punk culture and music revealed as a central theme punk’s desire for an “escape from the principle of identity”, in hip hop culture and music identity is paramount. To produce a “style that nobody can deal with,”<sup>15</sup> one that is “bigga and deffa,”<sup>16</sup> is primary to rap music’s significance. With and within the music, producers express their individual and collective identity and, in a confluence of structuralist and Africentric

discourses, the music calls upon the listener to express their identity. Thus an Africentric spatial practice, and a corresponding community, is at once recalled, produced and enhanced in the music of the hip hop culture.

## Physical manifestations of hip hop space

So, what does all this have to do with space, or for that matter, architecture? This next section will specifically address a spatial understanding of hip hop culture that employs this confluence of space and music as a paradigm that recalls, creates and deploys new spaces that speak to the Africentric diasporian project of identity in the built environment. I will outline four primary principles necessary for the physical manifestations of hip hop space. The accompanying images are part of a 1994 proposal to develop a hip hop park on the near south side of Chicago. The site is a debris laden vacant lot in the midst of one to three storey warehouses. The most prominent features of the actual site are the two partial facades that remain from the former building – a faux classical “coliseum”. The project demonstrates the application of the primary principles of (w)rapped space.

1) *Hip hop architecture is palimpsestic*: The architecture of hip hop is linked to the urban context in which it was born. Part of the social context of the inner city – particularly in predominantly poorer African-American communities – is one of disarray and decay. Everyday, intentionally unclaimed, naturally deconstructivist structures are allowed to fall away, piece by piece, in unattended lots that are typically appropriated by the local residents as places for sundry and nefarious activities. These are the available – and appropriate – sites for the construction of hip hop spaces. The charge here is to remake and reclaim the black subject from the “negro” object and this calls for a remaking of these places, also the erasure of the dominant “proper” and the repositioning of these urban spaces as empowering.

Thus, the first, and most basic principle of the physical manifestations of hip hop architecture is that it be palimpsestic in nature and intent. It is an erasure of both dominant spatial understandings of “proper” and its hegemonic physical manifestations, while simultaneously – in the same location – the construction of a hip hop spatial consciousness and its physical manifestations.<sup>17</sup> Hip hop architecture is palimpsestic in the fact that it is engaged in reclaiming the subject from the object. Consistent with the foundations of hip hop’s flow, layering, and rupture, the palimpsestic nature of hip hop architecture reorganizes and rewrites the “[v]isible boundaries [of architecture], such as walls or enclosures in general, [that] give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity” (Lefebvre, p.87) IN THE SAME LOCATION of the dominant culture’s hegemonic definition of “proper” spatial use. This reorganization’s primary objective is to recapture the black subject from the “negro” object and affirm the body’s identity in spaces that have historically done just the opposite.

A specific application of the palimpsestic principle in the Hip Hop Park project is evidenced by the appropriation of space by the local youth as a place of recreation, due to the lack of available open space in their community. This park would authorize a place for the typical outdoor performances that occur regularly in this community, provide staging space for hip hop dancing, wall space for graffiti artwork (tagging) and provide portable vendor booths along a “street and corner” within the park to serve as a hip hop community flea market. Providing for the specific spatial practices of



this community assists in erasing the notion of this space as a place of vandalism and degradation, and rewrites - in the same place - a place of validation and desire.

2) *Hip hop architecture is anthropomorphic*: A principal purpose of hip hop architecture is to create a 'home place,' as bell hooks has referred to it or, for the purposes of this essay, a space that engages and employs similar identity (re)construction strategies that take place at various sites within the diaspora. Therefore, another primary principal of hip hop architecture, as it concerns reconstructing a positive black identity, is that it be anthropomorphic. Art historian Suzanne Blier points out that this is 'in many respects, one of architecture's universals... [and] is also a frequently expressed feature of architectural traditions in Africa'.<sup>18</sup>

The anthropomorphism in hip hop space is not concerned with typical western understandings of the concept that focuses centrally on the physical attributes or appendages of the body. It is instead concerned with a holistic understanding of the place the body inhabits. It is similar to the DJ/producers' call of 'who we are' and as such is intimately connected with the identity of the body *within* space. As Blier's affirms, unlike in the west, where 'architectural

anthropomorphism had its primary basis in the *valuation* of the human body as an expression of God's creative perfection, African architects more characteristically see in the human a model of life and vitality and an expression of social relationships and values.' (p.119)

As a space that is constructed by the bodies of its users, it is critical to consider the body in space and provide for its interaction in various forms and with various objects. The park provides for the specific spatial practices of the hip hop community as they define their space through pedestrian speech acts. Providing for cultural and communal use in this space brings the space of hip hop - and its subsequent architectural manifestation - into being. Thus the spaces provide for not only the tangible interaction in various forms of creating and viewing the performance of everyday life (the economic, political, communal and physical exchanges) by people in motion, but also the tactile interaction with (in)mobile objects (graffiti walls, speaker stands, vending booths) as well. The park is designed to facilitate this interaction, with the understanding that the more tangible and substantive the interaction, the more valuable and legitimate the architecture becomes.

3) *Hip hop architecture is performative*: To paraphrase Shakespeare, if all the world's a stage, and we are merely actors, then the physical manifestation of a hip hop spatial understanding is this phrase's most recent - and important - connotation. The notion of 'simultaneity' - the intersection of body and stage around the construction of identity - communicated through performance is a primary element of the diaspora and must be a part of hip hop space.

The organization of hip hop spatial understanding can be found in the deep call of the diaspora in rhythm and repetition. Hip hop architecture is the emergence - in form - of the base and the beat, the flow and the rupture, the call and response. Consequently, an additional primary principle of hip hop architecture is that it is performative. It is about both providing the stage (backdrop) and privileging (inviting) the performance where space is produced through the conjunction of people within it. The importance of performance - both the everyday and the ceremonial - in the creation of space in the diaspora, writes Blier, 'underscores the centrality of architecture itself both as a setting for everyday life and ceremonial action and as a theatre for the presentation of dramas for the community as a whole. Through these performances, key aspects of architectural meaning are given expression.' (p.200)

The design of the Hip Hop Park can be viewed as one large stage that recall historical spatial practices that are specific to this particular location. Hip hop architecture is concerned primarily with identity and central to the creation of that identity are patterns of performance that are created by the music, by the musicians and by the listeners. Each of these activities is suggested (invited) in the design by their location, but they are not fossilized in these locations. Like the transformative nature of the hip hop culture, these spaces are easily (and most likely will be continuously) transformed by the users to meet the ever complex performance of spatial and identity construction. The spaces suggested for the performance by the musicians (the central stage), and by the listeners (passively in the centre grass knolls and actively in the hip hop dance spots and the bazaar area), are designed to encourage their use as currently designed, but also their reorganization in other ways by the users, as the community continues to write and rewrite their identity in and on this space.

4) *Hip hop architecture is adaptive*: It has to be. The sites that are available for the emergence of hip hop forms necessitate

TOP

Michael Wyeth, Painted brick wall, 2008

BOTTOM

Michael Wyeth, Grey wall with three black strips  
All works by Michael Wyeth from an essay titled *Surfaces, Spaces and Shrines*, exhibited under the same title at the Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town (March 31 - April 18, 2009). These works reflect the ongoing transformation of the city of Cape Town with the many physical changes taking place in the built environment of the inner city and in residential and recreational areas," explains Wyeth

it; the people for whom the structures will be built will demand it; the availability of materials for this (these) project(s) requires it; the assemblage of these structures compels it. Hip hop architecture's diasporic dialectic is inescapable. From its vegetal and mud/clay site-specific African origins, to the design of 'shotgun homes' in late 18th century Caribbean and early 19th century America, to the late 19th century Tuskegee Institute project, to the thatched roofs of the early 20th century 'critter houses' of South Carolina, hip hop architecture is also committed to using and reusing materials transformatively and creatively, removing the hegemonic 'proper' not only from spatial communication but from symbol and material communication also!<sup>19</sup> The architecture of hip hop embodies the spirit Laverne Wells-Bowie describes as 'architecture as a cultural practice...that sense of architecture acknowledg[ing] diversity of location, that wherever folks are dwelling in space, they can think creatively about the transformation and reinvention of that space'.<sup>20</sup>

### Architecture of the site

Adapting the current material culture available in the community, the concept behind the bazaar is driven by the desire to facilitate the entrepreneurial spirit of hip hop culture and to build on its 'power from powerlessness' theme. This space is designed to facilitate young entrepreneurs, street vendors and small community enterprises that would like to reach a larger and repeat clientele, but don't have the initial capital investment for renting commercial, inventory or storage space. These enterprises provide a vital service – the underground economy that sustains many marginalized communities – but live a transient existence within the community.<sup>21</sup>

As such, the hip hop booths are a principal component of the bazaar and are designed to be easily assembled, disassembled and transported. Made from wood, metal, wire and canvas, they blend perfectly with the materials used in the park design, as the walls, flooring and booths utilise the materials discarded in the neighbourhood everyday – at once cleaning the areas of debris and adapting the discarded into the useful. The canvas covers of differing colours are intended to be utilized by neighbourhood graffiti artists to simultaneously display their skills and to announce the various vendors in the bazaar, giving the market a particularly community flavour, creating an 'architecture of the site' as opposed to the architectural ideal of 'an architecture on the site'<sup>22</sup> and adding yet another layer to the construction of individual and communal identity.

### Writing about music is like dancing...

In this essay, I have explored a particular relationship between rap music, space and architecture. Rejecting previous investigative essays that also have as their focus music, space and architecture as being inadequately probative, I have employed a counter quest for an aesthetic paradigm of architectural and sonic production, one that approaches the question of music and architecture from the inside out. In this investigation I have positioned rap music as the womb from which hip hop space and architecture are born.

Theory in architecture is all too often discussed only in terms of form. The ideology in architecture – which permeates the profession and discipline – is rarely analysed. This piece attempts to open up that discussion on a number of levels. My primary purpose in engaging in this examination of

music, space and architecture is to begin to explore new paradigms of architectural spatial theory and manifestation that are initiated from the marginalised citizenry – specifically, the African-American community. This search is for a spatial paradigm that resists the power of dominant hegemonic understandings of space embedded and accepted in architecture and creates power for the marginalised from their built environment, primarily by identifying ways they can and do express their spatial practice in physical form to affirm their validity. The revolutionary production of hip hop space in the built environment has clearly been identified as a prototype demonstrative of an African-American spatial practice and available for physical expression. In this theorising, the production of hip hop architecture is an attempt to, in the words of Carl Boggs, 'recover a sense of community outside the state-regulated and commodified universe' dependent on 'a systematic reorganization of space to enlarge the realm of public discourse and physical freedom... a new code of space' and build upon the foundations of 'expressive rather than instrumental (institutional) social relations'.<sup>23</sup>

The preeminent principle in hip hop culture and its music is one of identity. Rap music employs various specific, identity (re)defining strategies developed by the African diaspora as a result of its black subject/ negro object reclamation project. The specific spatial understanding of hip hop culture, embodied in the physical manifestations of hip hop architecture is predicated on the response to those spaces that represent an erasure of identity and, concomitantly, the presence of oppressive power. A hip hop spatial paradigm at once recalls, creates and deploys a new space of diasporian origin and produces an architectural manifestation that is at once palimpsestic, anthropomorphic, performative and adaptive. By making architecture an artefact that is 'owned' by reason of individual, community and/ or cultural relevance and reaffirms their identity as (a) people, the architecture of hip hop strives to make the built environment something desirable and therefore valuable to those inside and outside the community. Le Corbusier recognised the necessity of transformation when he argued, 'if we challenge the past, we shall learn that 'styles' no longer exist for us, that a style belonging to our own period has come about'.<sup>24</sup> The old solutions (styles) no longer apply. Our concerns, our problems at this time, are different. Architecture should be about that – about responding to society now, with an eye always toward the future. When Bones, Thugs and Harmony rap about 'it's the first of the month' or Luniz 'I got five on it', this speaks to the concerns of a broad spectrum of the populace, and suggests modes of aesthetic solutions. Where are the structures that reflect this? Where is the building that I can say 'I got five on it'? Inner city design strategies to date primarily have been developed outside of the affected community. Historically, design in these marginalised communities from an universal (read Euro-American) spatial understanding has not been 'universally' successful. Hip hop architecture calls on the architectural 'flow' to develop a space that nobody can deal with, a space that cannot be easily understood or erased, a space that has the reflexivity to create counter-dominant narratives against a mobile and shifting enemy, to quote Tricia Rose. Adds Rose: 'In the post-industrial urban context of dwindling low-income housing, a trickle of meaningless jobs for young people, mounting police brutality, and increasingly draconian depiction's of young inner city residences, hip hop style is black urban renewal.' (p.61) As such, hip hop architecture is one model for halting the destruction and deterioration of African-American urban

communities and its best hope to restore their viability as sustainable communities. The architectural entities that evolve from a hip hop spatial paradigm draw on the best of the past and the present. Employed in communities where there is a need and cry for an environment that does not repress but relieves, hip hop architecture replaces the constrictive with the supportive. It defines and emphatically declares an African-American identity. Like rap music, hip hop architecture reuses and renames space. To further quote Rose, it renders 'visible 'black' meanings, precisely because of, and not in spite of, its industrial forms of production, distribution and consumption'. (p.17) It nurtures a place where African-Americans can see a positive portrait of themselves in their environment. The Hip Hop Park project is an example of this type of effort: to listen to what's on the street and - literally - read the writing on

the wall. Because, as singer Gil-Scott Heron, anticipating Lefebvre while paving the way for this hip hop moment has so eloquently said: 'The revolution will not be televised...It will be live.'

## Notes

1. Simon Frith and Andrew Ross, *On Record: Pop, Rock and the Written Word* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990)
2. Frith and McRobbie further argue that while music is responsible for constructing gendered identities, rock is essentially a male form. Male dominated positions of power within the production and reproduction offer a variety of male sexual poses to young males but for women in rock: "their musical appeal, the way they were sold, reinforced in rock the qualities traditionally linked with female singers - sensitivity, passivity, and sweetness. For women to become hard aggressive performers it was necessary for them, as Jerry Garcia commented on Janis Joplin, to become 'one of the boys'." Frith and McRobbie summarise their position with the assertion that: "Both in its presentation and its use, rock has confirmed traditional definitions of what constitutes masculinity and femininity, and reinforces their expression in leisure pursuits." Frith and McRobbie's argument demonstrates music's ability to form subjectivity/identity - in this instance defining sexual positions by way of public activity - but as I will argue later, this is only one example of identity formation available via music
3. John Mowitt, 'The sound of music in the era of its electronic reproducibility', in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, edited by Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge: University Press, 1977)
4. Mowitt succinctly summarises and describes the idea of social order/community, complete with rules of conduct and various social categories, with a quote from Jacques Attali: "All music, any organization of sounds, is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality."
5. Albert Murray, *The Blue Devils of Nadia: A Contemporary American Approach to Aesthetic Statement* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), p.123
6. The Lockean construction of space, and its use to define place and property, is crucial to the preceding discussions for this primary reason: from this influential perspective of spatial construction (or recognition) all other modern notions in western civilization flow as either an acceptance of, a reaction to, a modification, or rejection of this perspective. To Locke, space "exists" prior to our knowledge - it is "out there" (essentialised) - discernible only by the relationship (position) of bodies within it. Perhaps "within" is a poor term, for in Lockean space, bodies "disrupt" space. The spot where a body is in space is called place, discernible only by its relationship (mathematically) to two or more reference bodies (points). As such, space is available to anyone. Lockean notions of space are held in definitive terms, available through the mind by sight and touch and apportionable on an abstracted and mathematical scale. Because space could be mathematically apportioned (this piece is this distance from that piece and is this long, this wide, etc.), land could be apportioned and the concept of entitlements - rights - over the apportioned land is established. Thus another reason that Lockean notion of space - and its concomitant notions of property and identity - is important is because this notion developed at a time when it was necessary to legally define space and place. This was done by redefining the term "property" and enabling all sorts of poor conduct
7. Social space, a relationship between nature and "activ[is]es" which involves the economic and technical realms but extends well beyond them", is built upon a triad of spatial concepts: spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces, that require intersecting bodies to be produced. This bodily triad of social space conflates to create "a social morphology; it is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism", whose spatial markers are generated by and identified in the body's "gestures, traces and marks." This dialogue with history and memory indicates a spatial application of Lipitz's earlier posited notion of dialectical criticism, as it refers to space
8. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', in *Districts*. Winter, 1986, Vol.16 No.1 p.23: "Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites... [W]e live inside a set of relations that delineate sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable upon one another."
9. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.96
10. To De Certeau, the pedestrian speech act is homologous to the verbal speech act in three ways: as "a process of appropriation" of an existing framework of meaning, as "a spatial acting-out of the place" from the existing framework in order to communicate meaning, and "it implies relations among differentiated positions" by implying

interaction between a speaker and listener to communicate meaning

11. De Certeau further asserts that memory of experience (social interaction/ historical dialogue) constructs not only the language we use to communicate, but its rhetoric - the way we use the language to communicate: "[I]t is assumed that practices of space also correspond to manipulations of the basic elements of a constructed order [and] it is assumed that they are, like the tropes in rhetoric, deviations relative to a sort of 'literal meaning' defined by the [constructed order]." For example, in verbal speech there is "proper" English, and all other uses are a derivative of that proper form, from dialect to slang. He notes that as with music and speech, space also lays claim to a "proper" form: "[I]t is assumed that [other uses] are, like tropes in rhetoric, deviations relative to a sort of "literal meaning; defined by the urbanistic system. There would thus be a homology between verbal figures and the figures of walking (a stylized selection among the latter is already found in dancing) insofar as both consist in "treatments" or operations bearing isolatable units, and in "ambiguous dispositions" that divert and displace meaning in the direction of equivocality...In reality, this faceless "proper" meaning (or "propre" sans figure) cannot be found in current use, whether verbal or pedestrian..." (p.100). Implied in this understanding of space and its use is the fact that, again as in verbal speech acts, there is a "correct" way to use the language by which all other uses are measured. So too for the pedestrian speech act, where the "proper" use is the one intended by the spatial organizer (be it architect, landscape architect, interior designer) and all other uses, from shortcuts to avoidance, are derivatives of the "proper" use and he argues that this "proper" use rarely, if ever, exists.
12. Trica Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Cultural Expression* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), p.96
13. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.76
14. Ann Daly, 'Conversations about race in the language of dance', in *The New York Times*, December 7, 1997, p.1, 44
15. Rose op.cit., p. 30
16. The title of rap artists L. L. Cool J's 1987 album from Def Jam records
17. Essential to this consciousness is the recognition that hip hop space flows, ruptures, and intersects with bodies. In hegemonic spatial structures, these things are viewed as discontinuations, accidents that were not planned (both in the architectural and the organizational sense). This is antithetical to the spatial organization inherent in hip hop. As a space formed by sound, such "accidents" are designed and expected and are considered not only as continuous, but invitations to perform
18. Suzanne Preston Blier, *The Anatomy of Architecture: Ontology and Metaphor in Bataunmáiba Architectural Expression* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p.118
19. Ibid, p.20. See also Dell Upton, *America's Architectural Roots: Ethnic groups that built America* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1966); Richard K. Dozier, 'Tuskegee: Booker T. Washington's Contribution to the Education of Black Architects', PhD. Dissertation, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1992); Susan Deynes, *African Traditional Architecture* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1978)
20. Bell hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (New York: New Press, 1995), p.157
21. Margaret Crawford, 'Contesting the Public Realm: Struggles over Public Space in Los Angeles', in *Journal of Architectural Education* (September, 1995) p.7. There has always been a need for a secondary economy in marginalized communities. In the African-American community, this economy has essentially become institutionalized on the streets of many neighbourhoods and in some ways understood as a communal right. As Crawford notes: "Defending their livelihood, vendors are becoming a political as well as an economic presence in the city."
22. Ismail Serageldin (editor), *Architecture of Empowerment* (Lanham: Academy Editions, 1997), p.43
23. Carl Boggs, *Social Movements and Political Power* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), p.49
24. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p.251