

Implementation of an elevated ground in urban cities

Michelle Hook¹, Loran Newman¹

¹University of Florida, Gainesville FL

ABSTRACT: The horizon exists as an understanding for humans' perspective of what is measured visually and what continues to exist beyond the ability to observe. As architects, we are to challenge the interpretation of this line while still keeping the occupation of a place integrated within the context of the city. A means of doing so is to replicate an existing occupiable horizon with a duplicated one. This incision can then begin to vertically layer the available prospects of the original to service any extended needs.

One such case study can be found in Hong Kong. Research through literature gathered reveals an application of a "Duplicated ground" as termed by Shelton, Karakiewicz, and Kvan in The Making of Hong Kong. This concept was initiated to assist the density created by rapidly growing population of Hong Kong and was started with just one link between two podiums. This concept later grew as a successful means of transportation for pedestrians. During our personal travels in Hong Kong, this method of access became our most dominant route, allowing us to experience the city at multiple dimensions. Another advocate for this concept of pedestrian bridges was Harvey Wiley Corbett with his proposal of the "Modern Venice" in 1924. In the text, Delirious New York, Corbett, a prominent thinker about Manhattans city structure, saw the potential of this concept to create second story pedestrian walkways carved out of the buildings. However this concept superseded its time and is a reality just now being introduced within cities.

This research encourages us to question the three dimensional infrastructure in other cities such as New York City. By creating a new urban layer, the production and interconnectivity of the city would increase and provide aid in the transfer of industry, education and daily living. A similar goal to that of the Architectural Research Centers Consortium's goals in facilitating engaged research intended to develop a more comprehensive infrastructure. Possible nodes of development in the city have already begun to imply this concept of design planning such as the High Line. There are also potential areas that could benefit from this design including the junction of Delancey St. and Essex St. where there are recorded concerns of speeding, red light running, and short crossing times. A possible solution would be to provide alternative methods of pedestrian access through the implementation of an elevated pedestrian bridge.

This presentation serves to explore how we as architects can begin to implement the idea of "Human Scale" back to the infrastructure of a growing urban fabric. Specifically studying the Lower East Side in Manhattan, replicating the horizon that everyday pedestrians occupy and elevating it to podium level allows for increased productivity. This application can also provide a more direct connection of programs in an environment that considers pedestrian safety while also providing additional green space. This investigation corresponds with the open category as one that is redefining the horizon that exists within New York by creating a pedestrian infrastructure. This research also relates to building types and design methods in regards to the fact that we design the podium link with consideration of programs and building types that we are connecting.