



The Hand of Man: Urban Powerpointing

Men pointing to maps, charts, and models suffuses the dreamworld of 20th century urban planning. Theirs is a choreographed performance, a kinetic act of diagramming power in relation to the spaces and places of the city. Fingers and palms extend as prosthetic conductors of authority, declaring sovereignty over territory while inviting us to play our part as onlookers in the lush drama of technocratic expertise. Hands and pointers become wands, setting the stage for deep magic, priming us for creative destruction. The repetitiveness of the gesture betrays the nervous uncertainty of the act and the unstable position of the planner in the governance of the city. But often the illusion works; we are distracted, implicated, bedazzled. We hallucinate the urban future as the bulldozers move in, churning up the city in clouds of dust. We look on, hypnotized by the dancing cobra in the house of urban planning.

--Joseph Heathcott

