

The Center for American Placelessness

PROPOSED BY NICOLE LAVELLE • ART 471 • PROJECT #1

The real problem.

Placelessness. In our complex and rapidly changing world, capitalism, mass communication, technology and rampant urban sprawl have left the American landscape scarred with a sense of placelessness. Residential and commercial development in the decades since World War II has created a homogenized landscape devoid of cultural diversity, community involvement and purpose. The average American is uninformed of this reality and the social consequences that result from impersonal locations lacking cultural context.

Why does this matter?

The concept of placelessness merges studies in geography, urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture, public policy, community-building, and economics. Research into the concepts of space and place reveal countless intricacies and interconnected topics, disciplines and truths.

Who cares?

The American public. Stakeholders: Habitat for Humanity, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, the Bureau of Land Management, Metro, developers seeking to change their image with community-friendly planning, innovative urban planners.

Benefits

Through education, discussion and participation, the American public can be encouraged to increase community involvement in residential and commercial development to incorporate cultural context. The primary benefits of my solution are education and awareness. Through rotating exhibitions in appropriate locations, the Center for American Placelessness will effectively encourage community involvement in land-use planning solutions. The American public will become more invested in the future of development in their region, leading to the increased popularity of public and governmental organizations who seek input in development solutions.

A conceptual and visual approach

> Logo and visual identity. To encourage recognition and esteem. All museums need a graphic identity.

> A pointed and relevant location for the museum. The Center for American Placelessness will be a mobile museum, located in empty spaces such as abandoned big box stores, abandoned shopping malls, vacant urban storefronts, empty warehouses, and more. The location of the museum will serve as an exhibition in itself.

> Advertising campaign with a dual message/intent: calls attention to the museum's existence and promotes better uses for the empty buildings the museum is currently occupying.

> Exhibitions revealing the current state of American placelessness and advocating more responsible, community based approaches to planning.

Proposed exhibitions:

Jane Jacobs, urban planning pioneer

Rebecca Solnit, author and advocate of walkable communities

Industrialized agriculture (and its effects on rural, ethnic and religious communities)

Suburbanization of America (following World War II)

Industrial and office cities (Edge Cities)

Dead malls (exploring the dilemma of how to redevelop abandoned shopping malls)

Creating Meaningful Place

Regionalism