

SEX
AND THE
SO-CALLED
CITY

THE SCRIPT

ANDRÉS JAQUE / OFFICE FOR POLITICAL INNOVATION

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CHAPTER 0

Since the release of *Sex and the City*'s first episode in 1998, New York's real estate market has doubled. As Carrie, Charlotte, Miranda, and Samantha made their way from Patricia Fields' thrift store heterogeneous outfits to multi-brand high-end opulence, and from one-bedroom rentals to The-World-of-Interiors-like-apartments, New York was engaging in an equivalent evolution.

The city progressed by sanitizing its culture, depurating its air and waters, and reclaiming its landfills. But in doing so, it pushed out a large part its social composition. *Sex and the City* anticipated what would later become a post-2008, sanitized, assets-oriented-urbanism that turned New York both bodily and territorially and reinvented humankind.

Twenty years later, New York is no longer a city. Nor is it a metropolis. Now, NEW YORK has become a transcalar composition of layered realities. A TRANSURBAN ENACTMENT, collectively crafted to produce, reproduce, and accommodate value into a new social form: HIGHENDCRACY.

As it grew, NEW YORK TRANSURBANISM also created its own forms of contestation. New York politics are not only performed through demonstrations and spoken words, but also through MATERIAL compositions. In way similar to *Sex and the City*, these transurbanisms are made out of desire, pipes, bodies, and Youtube channels.

This is what sex and urbanism are about in New York. Welcome to our alternative version of SEX AND THE so called CITY.

CHAPTER 1

In 2009, Sarah Jessica Parker and her partner Matthew Broderick released a photograph of their twin daughters, Marion Loretta and Tabitha Hodge, in their arms. This sweet scene was part of their strategy to counter the image of the twins' surrogate mother, Michelle Ross, as "the tattooed, bisexual rocker who was pregnant with Sarah Jessica Parker's twins," as the *Daily Mirror* derogatorily described.

In 2007, Dr. John Zhang, the New York-based world leader of in vitro fertilization, expanded his clinic's network (New Hope Fertility Centers) to

Guadalajara (Mexico) and Beijing, inventing what he called "International Fertilization". In the first three months of 2016, the number of wealthy Chinese couples hiring surrogacy gestation services in the US grew by 260%. Caused by an increase of environmental pollution in East Asia, 12.5% of China's population of childbearing age are infertile. In these cases, egg or sperm donations are required. Dr. Zhang implemented the three-parent baby technique, through Mitochondrial Replacement Therapy, which involves assembling the intended parents' DNA with donated, young, healthy eggs, producing embryos from three people's sex cells.

For many, getting sex cells from intra-religious donors is the priority. According to Jennifer Garcia, from Extraordinary Conceptions, couples pay twice as much for cells from tall, blond, Ivy League donors. "You can basically make a designer baby nowadays." California Cryobank, the world's leading sex cells bank, developed Look-A-Likes, a service that sorts donors according to their resemblance to male celebrities such as James Franco or Ji Jin-hee, actors whose transcontinental beauty is generally appreciated equally by Asian, Western, and Latin American tastes.

New Hope screens composed embryos before they are placed in the surrogate uterus in order to eliminate those that might carry conditions such as sickle cell anemia, Tay-Sachs disease, or muscular dystrophy. The pre-implantation genetic screening makes selecting the embryo's gender possible.

At an average cost of US \$150,000, thirty-five times the annual salary of a school teacher in Beijing and Guadalajara, genetic screening combined with in vitro fertilization and overseas surrogacy has become part of an increasingly popular scheme among affluent couples worldwide to design human genetics and the placement of embryos in order to reduce future uncertainty, gain transnational citizenship, and style their children as transcontinentally seductive.

New Hope Fertilization Lab is a highly sanitized enclosure, but it has been equipped with a 95 square inch, 6 plus 6 clear laminated glass window to make possible for clergy to bless the actual moment of lab-produced fertilization. Science, politics, economy, geography and religion get assembled through this architectural invention.

—Dr. Zhang, why did you place your office in the corner where you can see Columbus Circle?

—New York City definitely is one of the centers of the world and I think Columbus Circle, with the Times Warner Center next to us, is the center of the center. That is why we are here.

As the fictional characters Charlotte and Miranda struggled to engineer reproduction, and the real-life Sarah Jessica Parker had her daughters born through a surrogate, Columbus Circle was being transformed into the world center for the reinvention of human reproduction. Fiction, cells, and urbanism were synchronized to reinvent bodies, geographies, and societies.

CHAPTER 2

The Time Warner Center opened in 2003, two years after Michael Bloomberg was elected mayor of New York City. At that time, a new interpretation of air-rights law came into being. Air rights between lots with at least a ten-foot adjacency could be traded, which enabled The Related Companies, a real estate firm, and Apollo Real Estate Advisors to replace a zoning-permitted 26-story building with a 75-story compound. Fifty-seven percent of the condominiums in Bloomberg Tower were bought through LLC shell companies.

In 2013, Bloomberg stated: “If we could get every billionaire around the world to move here, it would be a godsend. This air-rights trading combined with the use of limited liability companies in New York as shell companies to hide the identity of real estate owners and with the 1971 421-A New York Exception Program that reduced the tax imposition of top-prized apartments to 1% of the average New York property-tax payment all three of these were enacted and coordinated by a newly coined architectural invention: the high end residential tower, such as the Time Warner Center and Bloomberg Tower.

These high end towers have not only attracted, but have actually established a new body and transnational regime: HIGHENDCRACY, based on the decoupling of demarcations where fortune concentrates and the geo-political zone that endures them.

CHAPTER 3

First Avenue Funeral Services at 2242 First Avenue is one of the 475 funeral homes operating in New York City. Even though the death rate in New York drops an average of 1.4% annually, First Avenue Funeral Home, and many of its kind, find in their architecture great opportunities to resist gentrification and the pressure of Real Estate Agents to buy them out.

Hoses used to clean instruments and furniture during the embalming process, if immersed in bodily fluids, can potentially channel those fluids back into the water system.. The cross-connection control is a plumbing device installed in all New York City funeral homes at their fresh water supply connection to prevent the possibility of polluted water back-flowing into the drinkable water distribution network. It was invented in the 1930s to react to the epidemic of amoebic dysentery that broke out during Chicago's World's Fair, and it was immediately requested by the American Society of Sanitary Engineering that they be installed in all funeral homes all around the country.

As opposed to the way that big funeral service corporations process cadavers in remote big-scale industrialized facilities, the cross-connection control device makes it possible for New York City's independent funeral homes to cohabitate in with the communities they cater to. Neighboring religious organizations, cultural networks and hospitals provide them with a steady clientele. More than 15 cadavers are daily embalmed in the 484 square foot basement of First Avenue funeral home. Most of them come from affluent suburban neighborhoods where the presence of funeral homes would push down the value of properties.

If real estate is based on spatial segregation and evacuation of toxicity, New York City funeral homes survive and resist gentrification because of their unique ability to cohabitate with toxicity. Funeral homes with their cross-connection control device contain the formula to confront real estate hegemony.

In 2015, the West Village's Westway Club closed to be replaced by condominiums. Sayvon Zabar, owner of the Latino club La Escuelita, claimed that his club had been shut down after forty-five years because "minorities did not fit into the gentrification plans of the city." In 2016, the apartment towers of Chelsea, East Harlem, and Greenpoint, with their floor-to-ceiling-glassed apartments were Grindr users' favorite worldwide locations to find lovers. Historic 1980s and 90s match-making disco venues, such as La Escuelita, were replaced by apartment towers, just as smoky, lofty, night interiors were replaced by open-plan apartments as the number-one desired architecture for sex.

These are gentrified parts of the city that have attracted investment while at the same time becoming a laboratory for online-mediated romance. Whereas the erotic industry used to occupy economically depressed parts of a city, now

places like rent-spiking Greenpoint, Williamsburg, and Chelsea have become the place of popular adult studios like Joanna Angel's Burning Angel.

CHAPTER 4

In 2013, the same year that Bloomberg stated New York's adscription to the new regime of LLC-encrypted HIGHENDCRACY, Edward Snowden disclosed more than 50,000 files on massive surveillance programs run by the US National Security Agency and the Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance. He found shelter in the room 1014 of Hong Kong's The Mira Hotel. In the coverage that the artist and filmmaker Laura Poitras, and lawyer, journalist, civil rights blogger, and media consultant Glenn Greenwald did of Snowden's seclusion, one can see how Snowden kept the curtains of his floor-to-ceiling-glassed room drawn to avoid being spotted.

New York is not a city, but a relational enactment where activist disclosure, encryption-based properties, and pornography are in dialog.

CHAPTER 5

In 2002, gay pornographer star Jake Jaxson asked Glenn Greenwald, "What do you hope to accomplish?" He answered: "To change the world." In 2002, Jaxson offered Greenwald a partnership in Master Notions Inc., an online street and viral marketing company that ended up making Cocky Boys the most successful gay porn platform, and which sexualized New York condo windows.

If San Fernando and Las Vegas were the go-to locations to make pornography, Cocky Boys' blockbuster movies like Answered Prayers turned the streets of New York into refined studios for sex, and pornified the light of the lofty interiors recreated in their headquarters in Hunters Point in Queens.

Breaking from adult films' avoidance of window backlighting, Cocky Boys' photography director RJ Sebastian's cinematography brought sex to impressive apartment windows, where young models (often dancers or former dancers) have sex suspended in New York's clear sky, framed by delicate architectural interiors with catchy art works.

CHAPTER 6

In 2006, John Heilemann stated in New York Magazine: "In the past few years, architecture has become the sexiest of arts and DBOX are its pornographers." Even though most people identify Rafael Viñoly and Debora Berke as the architects of 432 Park Avenue, DBOX was the architectural agency that was



Fertilization Lab at New Hope Fertility Center. 4 Columbus Circle, New York



Vera Scroggins. Montrose, PA



Matthew Bannister at DBOX. 15 Park Row, New York



Cockyboys Studio. Queens, NY



Ray Kemple. Dimock, PA



Twin Oaks Community. Louisa County, VA

hired in 2012 by CIM Group and Macklowe Properties to deal with the most relevant part of the building's design: inventing the way the social ecosystem of the tower would be imagined and desired.

In 2013, as part of the tower's promotional campaign, a full-color 432 Park Avenue magazine was placed together with Dior's catalogue on the desk of each room at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Moscow. On its cover, Austrian ballet dancer Vik TORY posed elegantly in a 3D model of 432's 10x10 foot window frame, in a picture shot at the Silvercup Chroma Studios in Queens, digitally introduced into the model. The magazine's interior recreates the story of a cool, affluent, middle-aged heterosexual couple, together with their two slender children, entertaining for dinner a chubby businessman in a 432 apartment.

Whereas all characters are performed by professional models, the chubby guy is a real businessman from New Jersey, a close friend of DBOX's CEO Mathew Bannister. He is a character whom the DBOX team calls the "Danny De Vito Guy" and who was meant to make the story more relatable for potential investors who might find themselves opening the 432 magazine during a bout of insomnia at Moscow's Ritz-Carlton Hotel. The 2016 Sports Illustrated bathing-suit model Christina Makowski, sitting in the window frame, seduces the businessman while wearing a respectable version (designed by Armani) of Kim Kardashian's famous Lanvin shirtless suit.

Developer Harry Macklowe claims to be the inventor of the term "helicopter views" to refer to the kind of distant views only unique apartment towers, tall enough to stand above the urban fabric, can provide.

But what is it that these windows look out at? Blue sky!!!! A sweet, vibrant, BLUE covering 80% of the building's rendering. A blueish sky that, in the case of New York's most successful architectural icon, 432 Park Avenue, was invented as a rendered reality and then taken to the detail of its architecture. The most expensive component of 432 Park Avenue is not its structure, nor its finishing nor its services, but its glass.

An Austrian-made Eckelt Lite-Wall glass covers the building's 2,136 10-by-10 foot fixed windows designed to polarize natural light so the blue part of the daylight color spectrum is intensified. Windows are fixed and not able to be opened so that the artificial spectrum provided by the windows cannot be discovered by the people inside.

The windows are a high-cost and accurate material adjustment that synchronizes the architectural detailing of the tower with the city's territorial project of displacing the environmental cost of its consumptions to rural locations in neighboring states.

CHAPTER 7

In June 2012, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection announced a \$100 million plan to convert New York oil-based heating infrastructures to natural gas. The New York City Clean Heat Program dropped the city's sulfur dioxide level by 68%, its nitric oxide levels by 24%, nitrogen dioxide by 21%, and particulate matter by 16%. It is nitrogen dioxide that renders skies into gradients of yellow to brown. Its progressive disappearance from New York skies scales up to a territorial dimension of what DBOX renderings and 432 Park Avenue Lite-Wall glass anticipated.

Sex, sex cells, billionaires, billions of dollars, and blue skies are all coordinately redistributed by means of architectural adjustments and technologies to segregate newly produced social types and newly produced subjectivities. Since 2010, based on severe concerns for public health, fracking has been fully banned in New York State. Paradoxically, since that moment, the percentage of energy consumed in New York fueled by natural gas continues to grow, now reaching 50%. Because it cannot be extracted in New York, it is extracted somewhere else, mainly in Pennsylvania.

CHAPTER 8

Since 2010, the volume of natural gas extracted in Pennsylvania has multiplied by ten. With 9,775 active unconventional wells operating in the Marcellus Shale, the state reaches now an annual volume of 5,313,258 cubic feet of natural gas extractions.

In 2012, as air quality in New York increased, it decreased in Pennsylvania: nitrogen dioxide levels increased by 20%, sulfur dioxide levels by 30%, and fine particulate matter 56%.

In 2015, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection issued an air quality alert in Susquehanna Valley.

CHAPTER 9

Vera Scroggins became the best-known anti-fracking activist in 2001 when she started the Yahoo group Citizens for Clean Water. She has intensively documented and broadcasted from her YouTube channel the violations

operated by her neighboring fracking industry.

During the first four months of her first injunction, she was banned from accessing all land where mineral rights had been leased to Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation, which constituted 40% of Susquehanna County's public space. Nowadays she is not allowed to get closer than 100 feet from any Cabot facility. Together with an extensive network of associated activists, she has composed a complex heterogeneous archive of fracking related evidence that she preserves in piles around her home.

CHAPTER 10

Ray Kemble also faces charges from gas drilling companies. For more than six years, he worked for the gas drilling industry in Susquehanna. In 2006, he leased the mineral rights of his home in the tiny town of Dimock to Cabot. He is severely ill, and he believes his disease is probably caused by the benzene he was exposed to when he worked as a truck driver transporting the sludge coming out from the drilling facilities. With a population of 1,497, Dimock is the town where Cabot first consolidated the underground mineral rights of an operational sector.

In 2008, high pressure hydraulic fracking was first tested in a 9.21 square-mile area of the town. Ray has transformed his front garden into architecture of counter-fracking activism. His neighbors left their home seven years after they leased their underground mineral rights, when their water and air were polluted and they reached a settlement with Cabot. They no longer live there. It is now a ghost house. No one is allowed to even approach the house, but Cabot keeps its grass reaped. It replaces the flowers in the house's porch and takes care of maintaining the Stars and Stripes in their front façade.

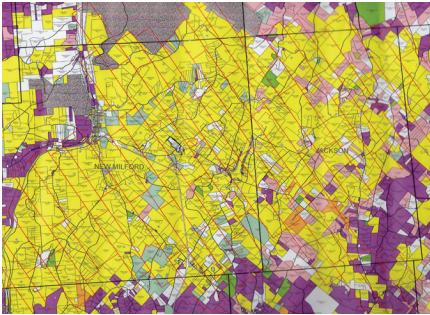
This vacant architectural normality, concealing the never-disclosed terms of the settlement, is confronted on the other side of the road by Rays monumental architecture intended to make the conflict visible. His independent use of available technologies provides collective accountability to the most invisible actor in this story: namely, Susquehanna's disputed undergrounds. But are they really so invisible? Are they equally invisible to everyone?

CHAPTER 11

June 6, 1998 is the day when the first episode of *Sex and the City* was broadcasted in the US. This was the precise time when the first "land-men," agents trained to trade the mineral rights leasing agreements with individual

property owners, arrived in Susquehanna County.

They would mainly act as individual brokers who would later transfer their agreements to larger agencies, and so on, until the small and fragmented tissue of divided lots on the surface would progressively be consolidated as a large underground mineral property concentration.



SWN Plan to Develop New Milford, PA

This map shows the way Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation unified the mineral rights of 948 land properties in New Milford and Jackson. High pressure hydraulic fracturing process starts with a well that is drilled vertically to a depth of up to 2 miles that then curves to expand up to 4 miles as a horizontal well.

The well is drilled with a long pipe that channels a pressured muddy-mix to a tri-cone rock bit. The combined action of a mud motor and Measurement-While-Drilling, a set of electronic controls that makes it possible to asymmetrically drive the flow of slurry to the bit, make the drill pipe curve so the well can expand horizontally. A grid of gas wells make it possible for gas corporations to pierce the surface of fragmented farms and homes in order to access the consolidated realm of corporative exclusivity. Through fracking, the mineral became a realm for corporative scaling up.

Between 1990 and 2008, the stock price of Halliburton's oil and gas field competitor Baker Hughes tripled. It was the effect of the commercialization of AutoTrak, a rotary steerable drilling system that pioneered the directional drilling tool that prompted the rapid expansion of fracking. the system allowed one to control the evolution of the angle of the drilling bit, bringing new levels of accuracy to the transition from vertical to horizontal well drilling.

In 1992, Baker Hughes purchased Teleco Oilfield Services Inc., a company dedicated to developing MEASUREMENT-WHILE-DRILLING technologies since the 1970s. Together they developed a new generation of tri-cone bits that included a triple combo of sensors that would transform the bits into a digital sensing device. Joined with the Californian company Dynamics Graphic Inc., they developed the digital platforms CoViz 4D, a software to produce quantitative visualization platforms of time-variant geospatial data. It is a window and a control room to a 4D reconstruction of the consolidated mineral regions produced out of the integration of big data, collected while drilling by the triple combo of sensors installed in the tri-cones drilling bits.

As the Sex and the City metaphorically announced, Halliburton's service-oriented-economy was being replaced by an asset-oriented-economy. Helicopter views, Eckelt Lite-Wall Glass, and the CoViz 4D geospatial platforms are part of a common family of architectural technologies that produce New York's main ideology: the asymmetrical social distribution of agency-providing visibility. These are the actual views New Hope's window to the fertilization lab are meant to look out at. These are the views the Eckelt Lite-Wall windows of 432 Park Avenue look out at. This is the bedrock on which the Transurban Enactment we call New York is founded.

On July 3, 2017, General Electric bought out Baker Hughes and immediately began trading in the New York Stock Exchange under the merged stock ticker of BHGE. Baker Hughes is a gigantic, \$23 billion business run by Lorenzo Simonelli, mostly unknown but with the same number of employees as Google: 70,000.

In the buyout, General Electric contributed the tool that helped maximize the financial exploitation of the exclusive access to region-scale consolidated underground mineral realms: Predix, a digital platform that makes it possible to assess the progression of the market value of the mineral property through the iOS app Asset Performance Management Cases designed as iPhone and iPad accessible. In the scarcity of remaining fossil fuel resources, the existing mineral capital has been remarketed so its value is shielded from energy-price fluctuation by reconstructing the market as a stabilized future-asset-oriented one.

The architectures of Ray's front garden and Vera's YouTube channel build mineral regions as contested, fragmented, and unstable, as a way to respond

to the associated action of Predix, BHGE, Cabot, CoViz 4D, Baker Hughes, and Teleco Oilfield Services Inc.'s triple combo of sensors, tri-cone rock bits, and land men to produce an archisociety based on exclusive access to a geopolitical region: the fluctuation-shielded mineral realm. An arena, where urbanism, and its mission to render interaction political, is urgently called to operate.

CHAPTER 12

Founded in 1967 by a group of architects, artists, and sociologists willing to experience the potential of behaviorist utopia, Twin Oaks in Virginia is one of the oldest and largest secular intentional communities in the US. Based initially on the idea of perpetual growth expanding to an associated 1000-person communal foundation. The Twin Oaks assembly decided to establish a membership ceiling of around 100 people in 2010.

Being at the center of heavily-fracked Virginia, Twin Oaks opposes gas drilling and has developed a way to reduce its energy needs by sharing their kitchen and other communal infrastructures, and to source its significant part its energy consumption with photovoltaic panels and the lumber they collect.

All members in the community work 52 hours a week. Hours worked in the hammocks workshop, or in the garden count as much as those taking care of children, or ill people. With more than 5 members, its Feminist Think Tank meets every week. 10% of Twin Oaks population considers itself gender-fluid. Their economy is based on the commercialization of the tofu and the Pennsylvania hammocks they produce. All labors are equally paid: making tofu, manufacturing hammocks, caring for ill people, or contributing to the collective children-raising.

They are not isolated; Twin Oaks publishes annually the Communities Directory Book, which contains more than 1200 references. As at 432 Park Avenue, the Community Directory Book, together with the Pennsylvania hammocks, the Queer and Gender Group, and the photovoltaic panels occupy space in the Sex and the So-Called City Era. An arena of Transurban Enactments we all live by.

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