

**TOWARDS A COOPERATIVE ARCHITECTURE**

By

Nicholas Stipinovich

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Chris Perry, Thesis Adviser

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## ABSTRACT

Toward a cooperative architecture investigates two separate historically significant events and uses cooperative theory as means of exploring the potential of an evolving architectural discipline and urban environment.

An investigation into the architectural discourse during the post-World War II period revealed a growing schism in architecture. The discipline was torn between two ideologies, architecture as an inwardly focused discipline and architecture as an outwardly focused one. The inwardly oriented group looked back to precedents from the Renaissance to provide meaning that modernism had stripped away, and an architecture that was outwardly focused attempted to fully integrate architecture and technology, thereby attempting to live up to modernism's initial premise.

Then, as part of the *Cultural Now Project*, an initiative of Thom Mayne, Karen Lohrmann and UCLA School of Architecture, the City of Troy, NY was investigated to determine the complex intersection between public policy, urbanism and culture that resulted in the post-industrial city we know today. Troy, NY was once one of the country's wealthiest cities, benefiting from both its unique geographic position and its resourceful residents, and the founding of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1824 was a direct result thereof. Initially a mutually beneficial relationship existed between the city and RPI, and both entities flourished, but when industry left Troy a schism emerged that still persists.

The proposal is to design an extension for the RPI School of Architecture to be located in Troy's downtown region. The new school will attempt to address the schisms in both architectural discourse, and between RPI and Troy by exploring the potentials of cooperative design strategies. To facilitate the relationships, the proposed school will be fractured into small autonomous units, or studios, to be dispersed throughout the city. The resulting network of fragments will also allow for spontaneous and unexpected interactions that a traditional American college campus does not allow for.

Cooperation theory will be an instrumental factor in the design process of the school and the curriculum, thereby attempting to address the social schism in the city as well as to further the discipline of architecture.