

Public Abstract

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Title: ARCHITECTURAL COLLAGES: URBAN IMAGES IN LAS VEGAS HOTEL/CASINOS AND THEIR PRODUCTION OF PLACE

This essay discusses the Las Vegas hotel/casinos The New York New York Las Vegas, The Paris Las Vegas, and The Venetian Las Vegas as producers of place during the 1990's and early 2000's. This is in contrast to the common perception that themed environments are placeless. To examine this contradiction this paper will first discuss place and placelessness as it has been historically defined. Using the concept of place as a unique environment that participates in the historical, cultural, and geographical contexts of its location this paper will show how the hotels themed environments, copied from existent places, can produce their own meanings and become places themselves.

An analysis of each buildings forms, and their presence in popular imagery, will show that each hotel is not placeless due to their production of experience and meaning for their visitors. Through the context of geographer Brian Massumi's examination of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's redefinition of the *simulacra* as producers of meaning it will become possible to understand the Las Vegas hotel/casinos as producers of place due to the synthesis between the copied forms of their respective cities and the Las Vegas imagery and experiences that causes the hotel/casinos to participate in the context of Las Vegas. In this manner each hotel becomes, respectively, authentic New York Las Vegas, Paris Las Vegas, and Venice Las Vegas. This understanding of themed environments as places, even if they are the exceptions, provides architects and historians with a means of viewing the formal aspects of such in environments within the context of their geographical location, and its history and culture, rather than just as a mere copy of another place.