CHAPTER 3

PRECEDENT STUDIES

3. Precedent stud

3.1 Zaragoza Digital Mile
Zaragoza, Spain
2006 (not built)
MIT Media Lab

The aim of the project is to introduce the ancient city of Zaragoza to the Digital Information age. It proposes to incorporate the use of digital media into everyday aspects of life, using it to create places that are responsive towards their users, change according to their activities, information or services that are required, and becoming meaningful to the locals.

Being the host city of the 2008 International Expo and acquiring a new high-speed railway station on the western edge of town, the old train station as well as some of the railway tracks has been demolished, making a mile long strip of valuable urban land available.
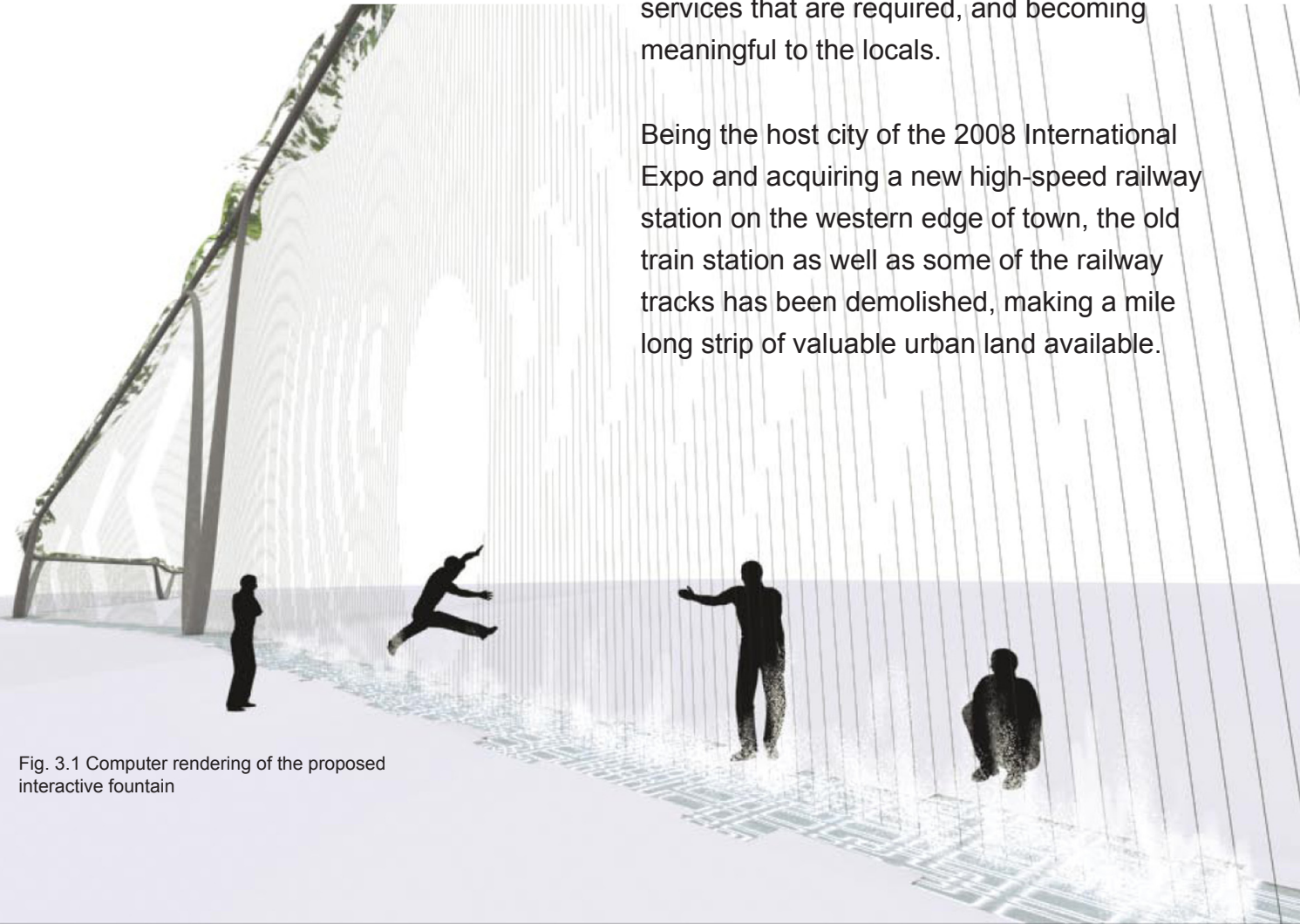

Fig. 3.1 Computer rendering of the proposed interactive fountain

The concept of the design was focused on the potential of media technology and advanced communications within the public realm.

With many examples of digital media in public squares, the designers had to come up with something new and exciting. The idea was to create physical forms that are able to change and respond to its environment and the people within it. These elements are something during the day and something completely different during the evening. Enabling users to shape their environment to their needs, resulting in a more dynamic *"open-source"*[1] environment.

DIGITAL MILE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK
Physical elements

ALMOZARA
1 GATEWAY PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE TO DELIAIAS STATION
2 VERTICAL BUILDING / TOWER
3A CLUSTER OF PUBLIC FACILITIES/ UPPER LEVEL EVENT PLACE
3B LOWER LEVEL NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE
4 LINK TO "TRIANGLE" PARKS

PORTILLO
5 OFFICE OR HOTEL TOWER (RETAIL BELOW)
6 LAWN AMPITHEATRE / PARK
7 PUBLIC FACILITIES PARTIALLY UNDERGROUND WITH PARK ON ROOF
8 PROMENADE / EVENT PLACE (DIGITAL MEDIA, WATER)
9 SUBWAY AND BUS STOP
10 RESIDENTIAL (RETAIL BELOW)

RIVERGATE
11 SYMBOLIC TOWER
12 ENTRY SPACE
13 LINK TO EXPO BRIDGE

PASEO DEL AGUA
14 PEDESTRIAN SPINE
15 LOWER LEVEL PUBLIC FACILITES
16 TERRACED PARK / STREAM
17 "WATER WALL" FOUNTAIN

Fig. 3.2 Location plan and aerial photograph of the proposed development and its location

1.The concept of open-source comes from the field of computer programming. It stipulates that anyone can modify and re-organise the source code for a piece of software. Through people's adjustments and improvements, software thus evolves to better respond to users' needs.

The effective aim of the responsive nature of the project is to promote the sense of ownership for Zaragoza's residents.

The demolition of the old station resulted in Zaragoza being separated into two parts, the old and the new. The proposal aims to knit these two parts back together with a network of community and educational facilities, public spaces that serve multiple users, and digital features.

Fig. 3.3 Collection of images showing the intent of this digital intervention.
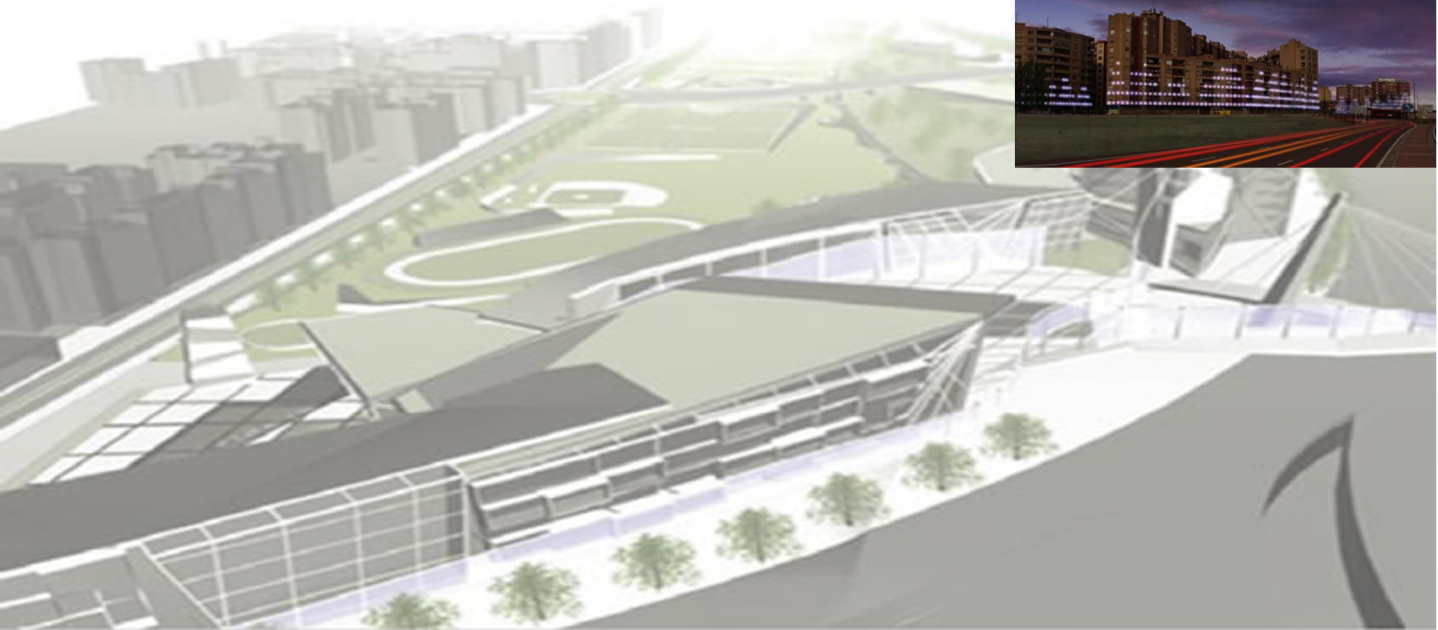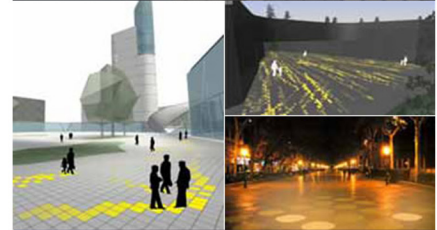
3.2 Velocity Films
Film Production offices
Johannesburg, South Africa
1996

Jo Noero Architects

"We believe
architecture is
practical and not
a fine art and it
is the question
of use which
distinguishes
architecture from
the other arts"

– Jo Noero


Fig. 3.4 Photo of the production offices

Due to the client's requirements building had to accommodate specific functions, such as film production studios, video libraries and recording rooms.
The building had to reflect the creative nature of the company, as well as being able to change and adapt, like a film set, to the future needs of the client.

The working spaces within the building were reduced to a minimum, while creating generous common areas where chance encounters can lead to stimulating creative ideas. What makes the design of the building successful is the clever way in which the internal spaces were laid out.
All the working spaces have been placed in the northern section of the building in order to enjoy the advantage of generous sunlight. Areas serving the working areas have been kept to the southern section.
Joining these two areas is a double volume internal street running the entire length of the building.
The reason for this internal street is to bring natural lighting into the building from both sides, and also to assist in achieving adequate cross ventilation.
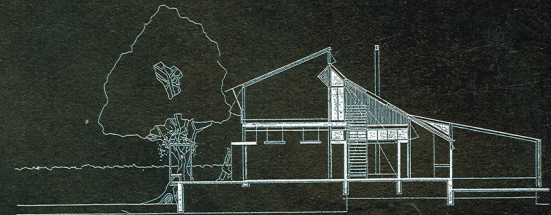
Fig 3.5

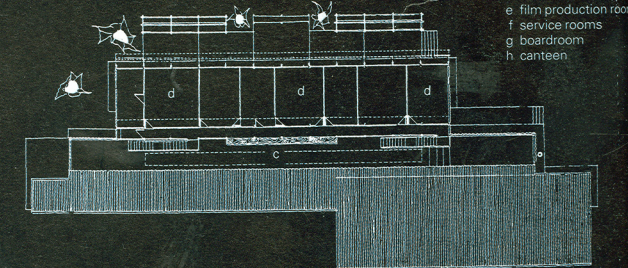diagram of sectional order
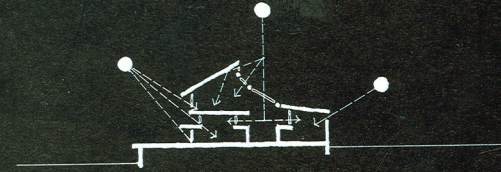
sun path
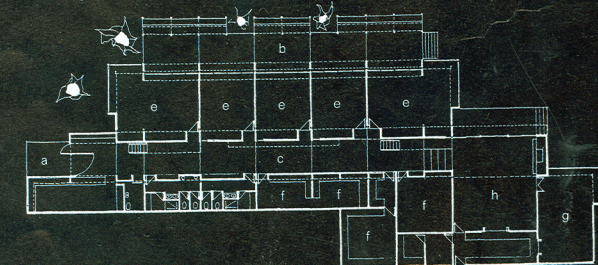
ventilation strategy

cross section

a entrance
b terrace
c internal street
d offices
e film production room
f service rooms
g boardroom
h canteen

first floor plan

ground floor plan (scale approx 1:700)

Fig. 3.6

Fig. 3.7

Fig. 3.8

Fig. 3.9

Fig. 3.10

The material selection emphasises the industrial nature of the building, whilst still giving it a contemporary South African feel. Steel and concrete was used as the main structural elements, while brick, timber and corrugated sheeting were used as infill. All materials were left unfinished where possible to emphasise the building's rugged qualities.

Fig 3.5 Architects drawings explaining the spatial qualities of the project.

Fig 3.6 The use of materials give the building an industrial character

Fig 3.7 The internal "street" connecting the working spaces with the service spaces

Fig 3.8 Outside terrace

Fig 3.9 Northern terrace with large Jacaranda trees

Fig 3.10 Entrance to production offices

3.3 Sony Centre
Berlin, Germany
Murphy/Jahn Architects, Chicago
Commissioned in 1992

In the early 20th century Potsdamer Platz was one of Europe's busiest and most vital crossroads, until it was tarnished by World War II and left divided by the Berlin Wall.

In an attempt to rejuvenate the once thriving area one of Europe's largest private –sector developments rose on the site.

In spite its typical commercial appearance; the Sony Center expresses its technological bravery in an elliptical shaped umbrella. State of the art cable, membrane and glass technology, the roof is able to protect the people against most of the harsh outdoor elements.

The Sony Centre caters for numerous businesses, film houses, restaurants, shops and apartments, making it a versatile urban environment.

Most of the buildings are pushed the street edge, in order to create an inviting and protective internalised courtyard which becomes a fluid space energised by the city. The development is focused on entertainment and manages through its mix of uses to create an urban atmosphere of life and activity within the space, without becoming artificial.
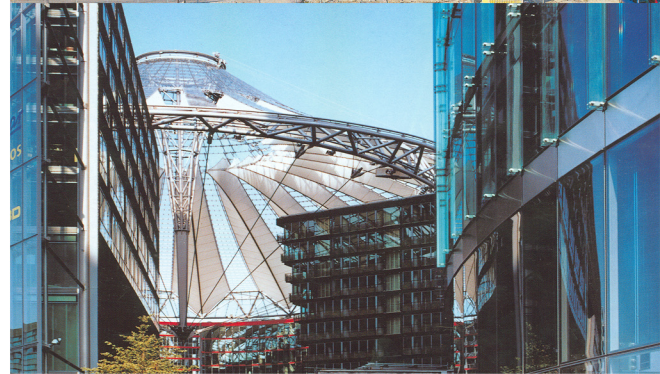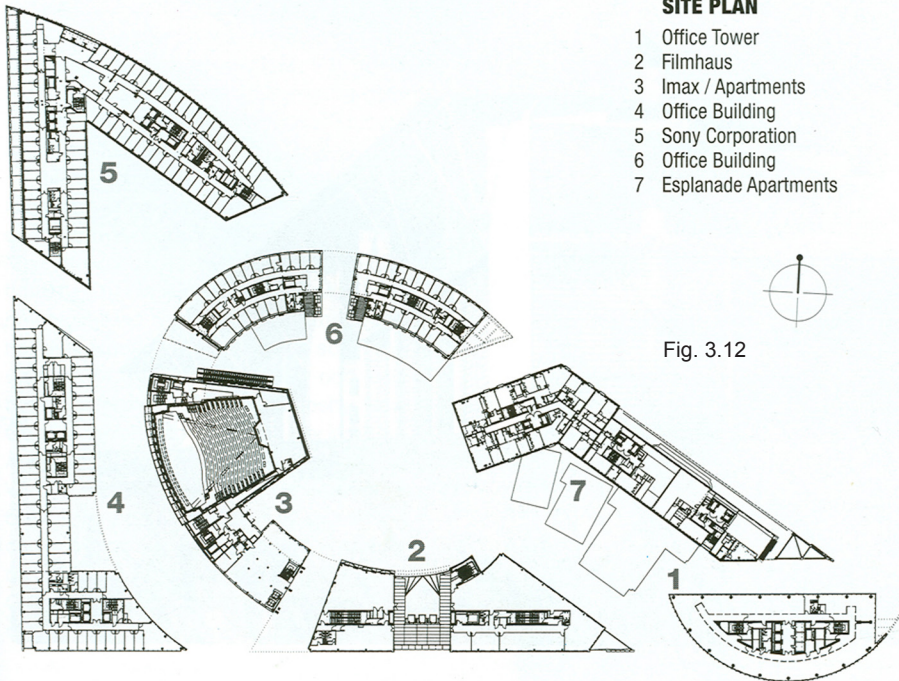
Fig. 3.13

Fig. 3.11 Roof structure
Fig. 3.12 Site plan of the Sony Centre Development
Fig. 3.13 Images of the Sony Centre

SITE PLAN
1 Office Tower
2 Filmhaus
3 Imax / Apartments
4 Office Building
5 Sony Corporation
6 Office Building
7 Esplanade Apartments

Fig. 3.12

Fig. 3.14
The popular image of
commercialism
- Times Square

3.4 Times Square
New York City, USA

One of the most iconic and celebrated public spaces in the world, New York's Times Square started of as farmland in the years following the American Revolution, but with the rapid growth of New York City soon became engulfed by hotels and other real estate.

In the early 1900's, the newspaper The New York Times moved their offices into a Skyscraper on Longacre Square, which was renamed Times Square on the 8th April 1904, and soon afterwards the first electrified advertisements appeared.
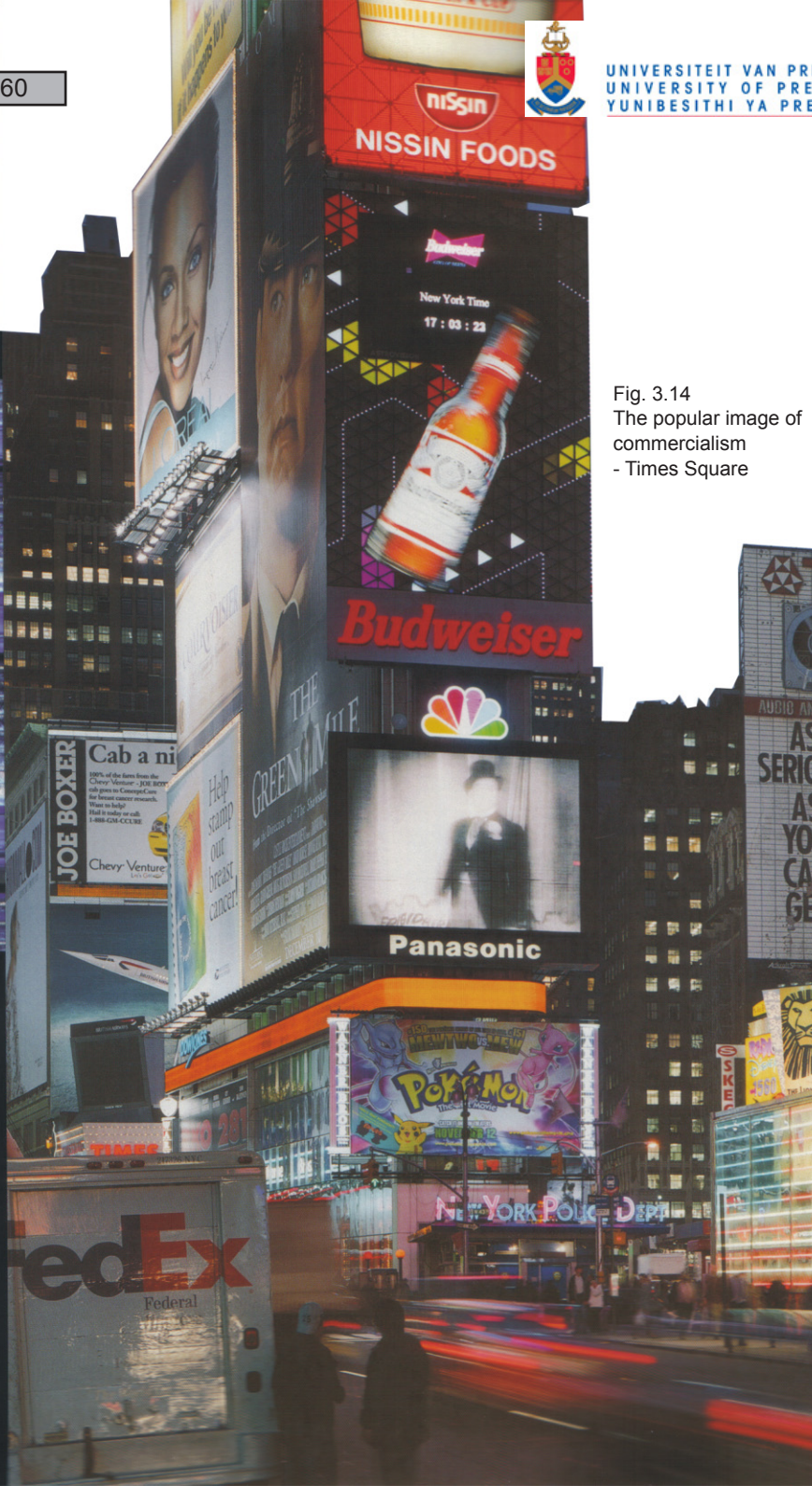
As the growth of New York City continued, Times Square quickly grew into the cultural and consumerist hub it is today. The eclectic nature and never-ending levels of activity, with hundreds of advertisements screaming for attention, ensures that this intersection offers more to consumers than any other place on earth. Featuring in movies, literature, television and music videos, Times Square is one of New York's enduring Landmarks. It is also home to numerous theaters, music halls, and countless global businesses like, MTV Networks; Ernst and Young; Reuters; etc.

Fig 3.15 Plan of Times Square

1.The Millennium celebrations on the 31 December 1999 in Times Square, reported approximately 2 million people attending the New Year's celebration.

(Times Square, 2007.)

New Media public spaces, like Times Square and Piccadilly Circus in London, have become modern day society's equivalent to the ancient Greek Agora. A meeting place where people gather in order to accumulate information or to celebrate great tidings. This is evident with the amount of people that overflow these squares during New Years celebrations.[1]

Even though Times Square might come under a lot of criticism, due to the fact of its consumerist exploitation, this space typifies what an urban public space is. A space which is able to accommodate and communicate to the multiple layers of the urban landscape and engage them in mutual participation.

Fig 3.16 Images of Times Square showing its visual popularity.

Fig. 3.17 Artist's impression of the activities surrounding Times Square