

Collisions Printing Co-operative

Caroline Noteboom



The Collisions Printing Co-operative is planned for a site on the south side of Ontario Street between St. Andre and Labreque in Montreal. The program includes meeting rooms, studio workspaces, a cafe, an exhibition space and printing rooms. This building is a gathering space based on a modified version of the bourgeois idea of the public space. It is a forum where confrontation, collision, debate and sharing of ideas take place prior to or in reaction to publication.

Building can actively affect the physical, political and social structure of a city. Program and building image can strengthen a political ideal. In this case, in the Montreal of today, the goal is to make pluralistic democracy more effective. This social printing station calls upon groups and individuals to make public-to publicize-their ideas, and to promote their cultures. Confrontations are integral to the idea of democracy. Acknowledging and accepting the existence of contradictions and collisions is a vital step towards an effective democracy.

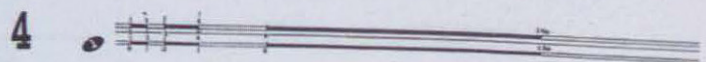
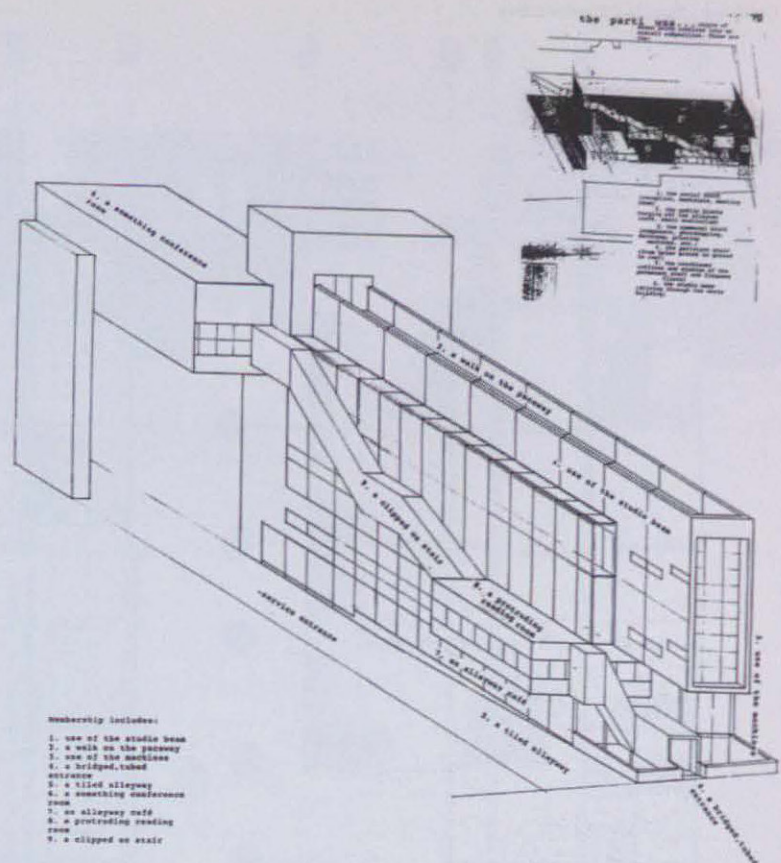
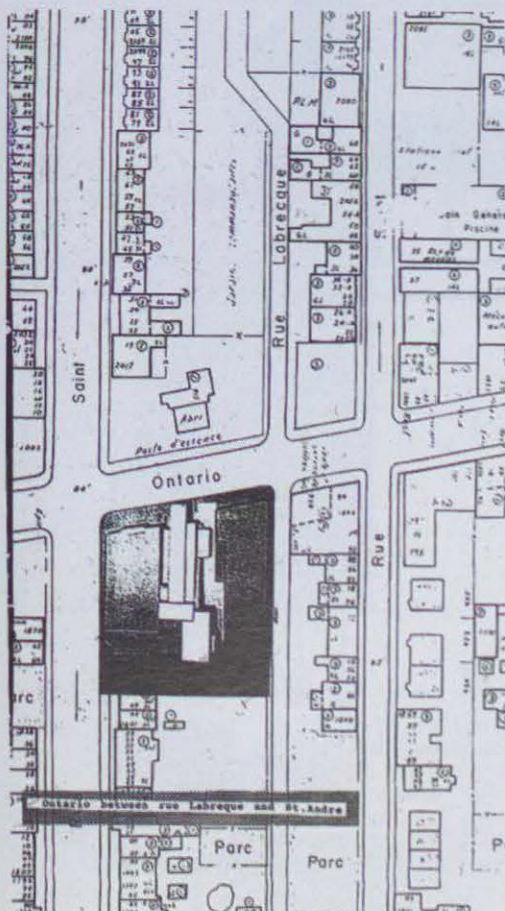
The questions are:

1. Can a new building type affect the physical/social/political structure of the city?
2. Does architecture always strengthen an ideal, whether conscious or not on the part of the creators?
3. Can the language of "constructivism," so closely intertwined with heroic Soviet communism, be transplanted to a contemporary Montreal kitchen-table press?
4. Can a building be dynamic in the sense that it takes on the task of causing people to participate within this new and improved sphere of discourse?
5. What is informative architecture?

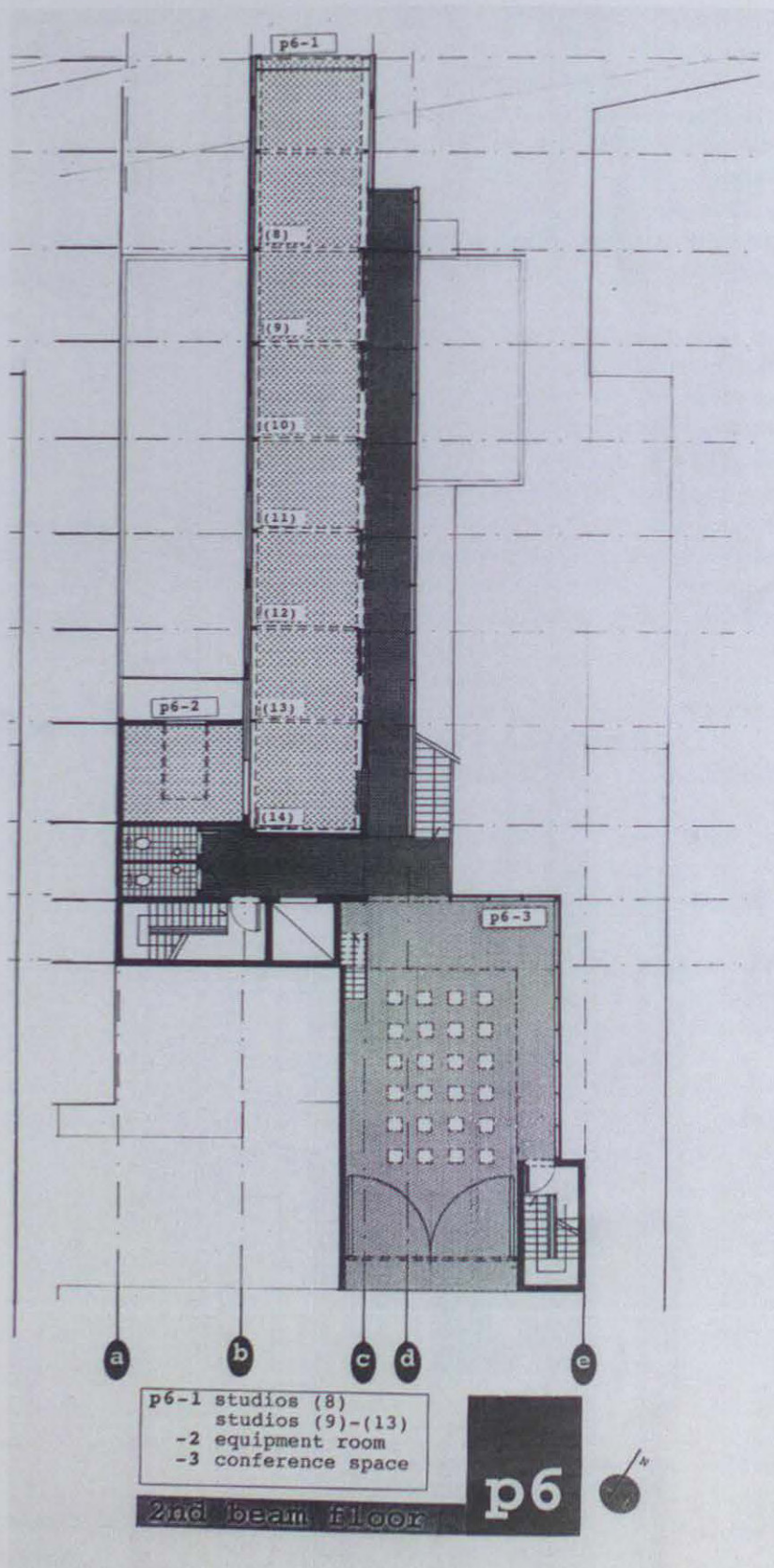
To participate actively, and to call upon the people, the building must be dynamic. It has the task of "arousing an upsurge of energetic activity."¹ Colliding or interlocking program elements, multiple bridged entrances, colour, staircases, large, informative signs, and glazing to expose the interior to the bypasser are just some of the elements of energy which are integrated into a dynamic whole. "A sense of pluralistic vitality" is "fused into the whole building" and "communicated to the public outside."²

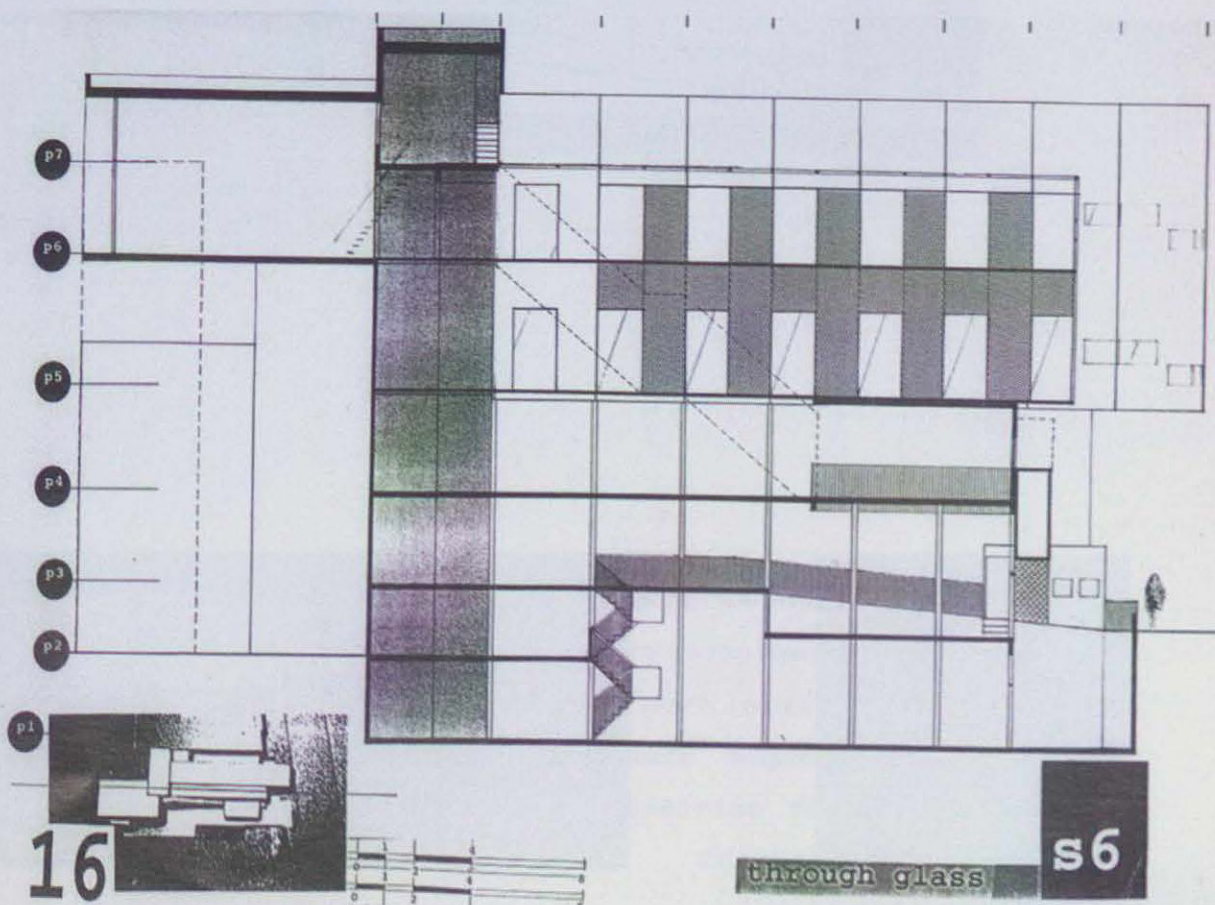
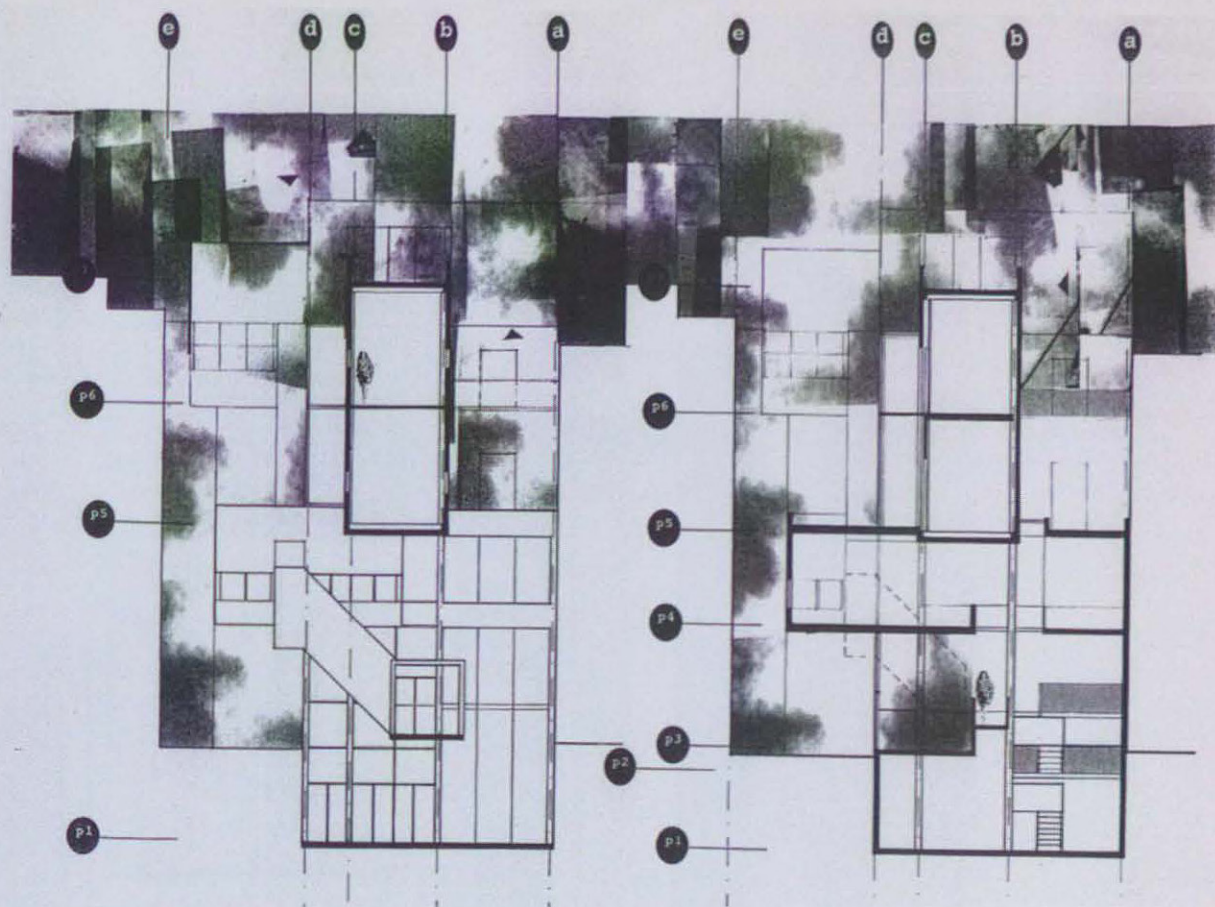
1. Alexander Vesnin, "Credo," in *The Avant-garde: Russian Architecture in the Twenties*, ed. Andreas C. Papadakis (London: Academy Editions, 1991): 46.

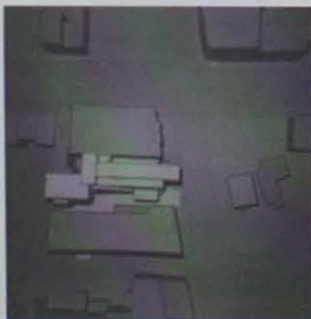
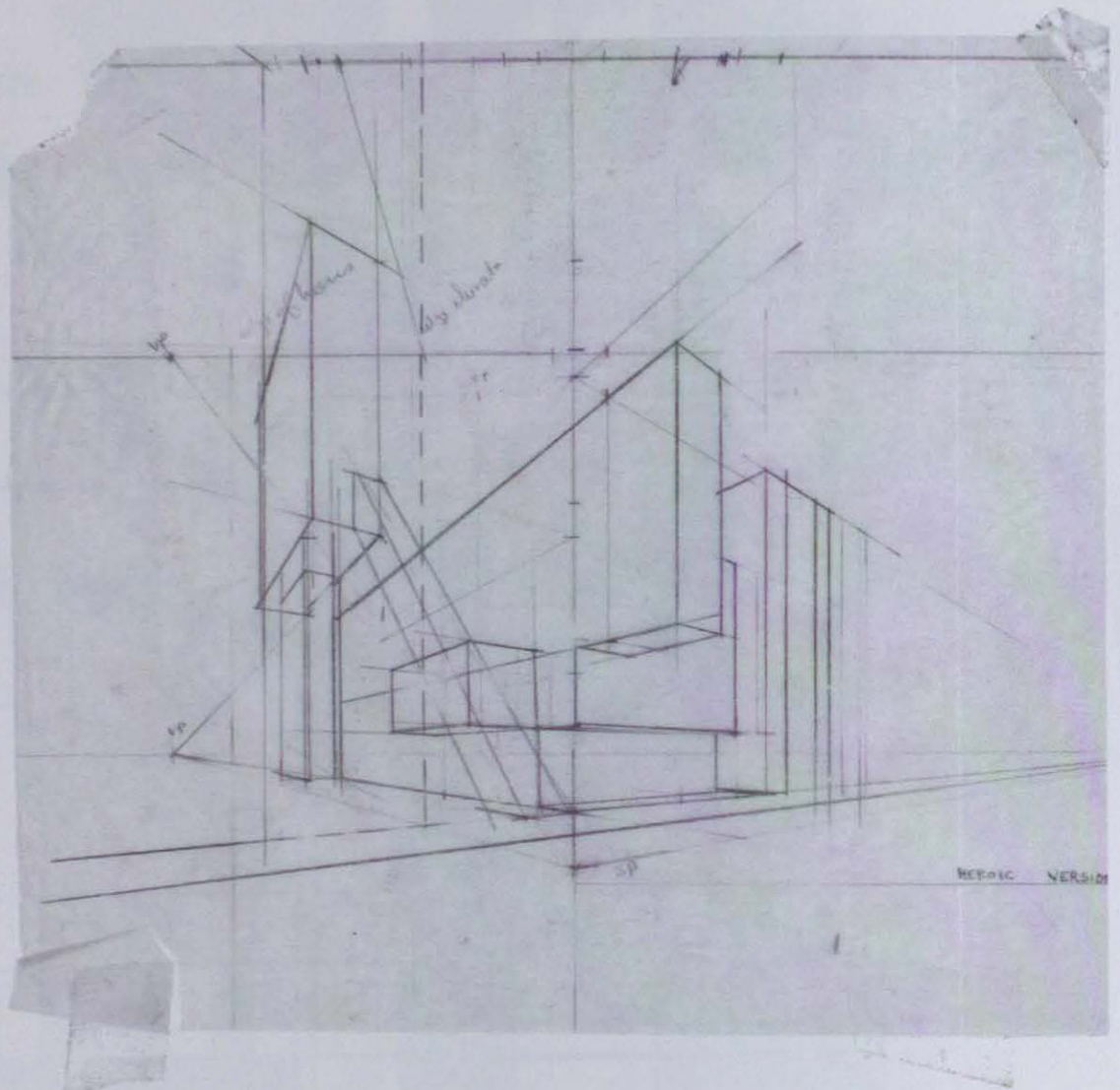
2. S. Frederick Starr, *Melnikov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978): 72.

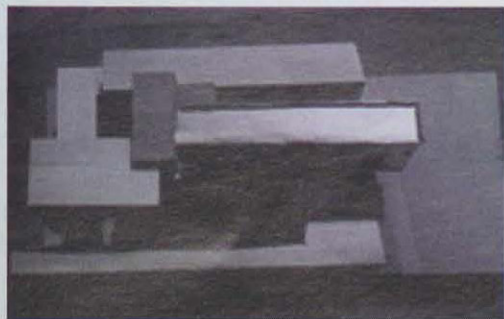
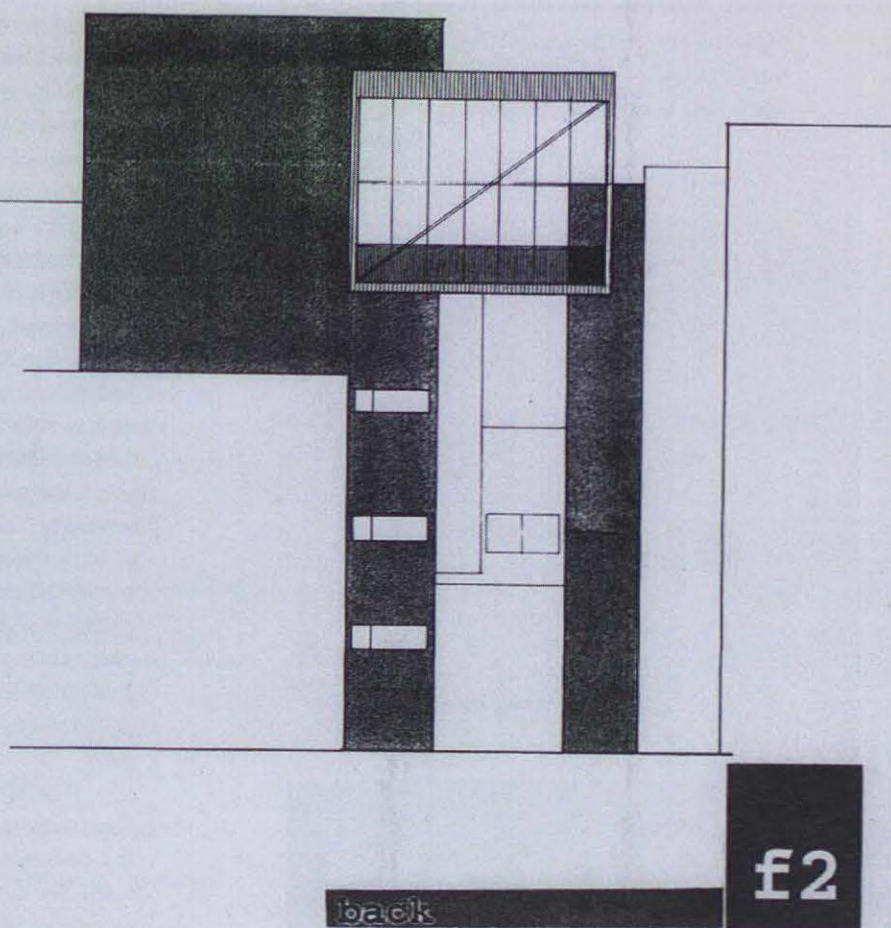


Caroline Noteboom, B.Arch McGill '96, is an S2 buildings specialist with Lew + Elbaz architects in Montreal.









More public than the public
sphere of discourse

More unknown people

More exciting

More democratic

More criticism for the buck

Cheaper