
NEW YORK

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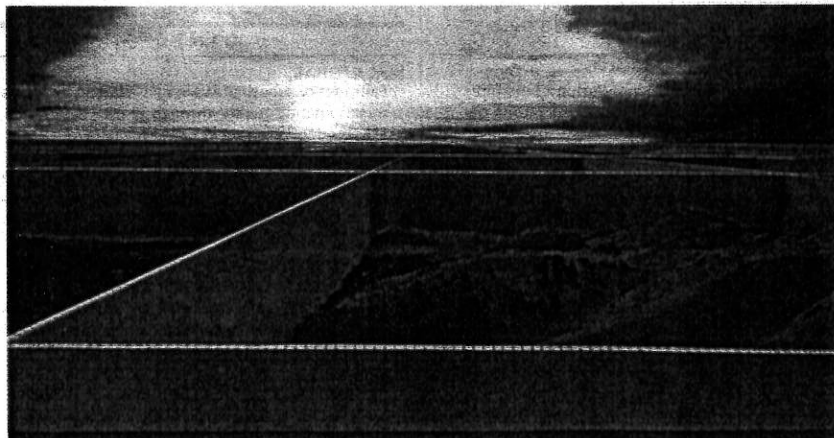
ON VIEW

DELIRIOUS NEW YORK

SUPERSTUDIO HAD A VISION OF REBUILT MANHATTAN ALL PLANNED OUT.

A SUPERSTRUCTURE PASSES OVER THE Hudson and the point of the peninsula [sic] joining Brooklyn and New Jersey. And a second perpendicular structure for expansion. . . . This is sufficient to hold the entire built-up volume of Manhattan. A bunch of ancient skyscrapers, preserved in memory of a time when cities were built with no single plan." This futuristic Gotham was envisioned in 1969 by the Italian avant-garde design group Superstudio, the subject of a three-venue show at the Pratt Manhattan Gallery, Artists Space, and the Storefront for Art and Architecture. **Superstudio: Life Without Objects** revisits the group's not-so-modest proposals—including *The Continuous Monument: An Architectural Model for Total Urbanization*,

the globe-spanning megagrid discussed above, and *Twelve Ideal Cities*, a tongue-in-cheek series of imagined metropolises that includes a "New York of Brains" and a "Continuous Production Conveyor Belt City." Behind the humorous, utopian façades lies a deadly serious critique of modernism's empty promises and capitalism's clutter, and even an awareness of the fascist potential of the overplanned, all-encompassing structures that so enthralled the era's architects. The group disbanded in 1978, but as architects and developers compete for the future of Lower Manhattan, Superstudio's unlikely feats of urban planning (which, needless to say, were never realized) echo current hopes and anxieties about a city in the making. (At Artists Space through December 19, the Storefront for Art and Architecture through January 17, 2004, and Pratt Manhattan Gallery through January 31, 2004; see "Galleries: Solos—Other.") **K.R.**



GRID PLAN: Superstudio's *First City, 2000-Ton City*, 1971, at the Storefront for Art and Architecture.