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Nota di contenuto	Preliminary Material -- Introduction / Miles Orvell and Jeffrey L. Meikle -- Planning a National Pantheon: Monuments in Washington, D.C. and the Creation of Symbolic Space / Anna Minta -- "How the Devil It Got There": The Politics of Form and Function in the Smithsonian "Castle" / John F. Sears -- The Museum of Appalachia and the Invention of an Idyllic Past / Torben Huus Larsen -- Constructing Main Street: Utopia and the Imagined Past / Miles Orvell -- Pasteboard Views: Idealizing Public Space in American Postcards, 1931–1953 / Jeffrey L. Meikle -- "Terra Incognita" in the Heart of the City? Montreal and Mount Royal Around 1900 / Nadine Klopfer -- Grid, Regulation, Desire Line: Contests over Civic Space in Chicago / Peter Bacon Hales -- The Precarious Nature of Semi-Public Space: Community Garden Appeal, Complacency, and Implications for Sustaining User-Initiated Places / Laura Lawson -- Buy, Sell, Roam: The Airport Calculus of Retail / Kay F. Edge -- Consuming Third Place: Starbucks and the Illusion of Public Space / Bryant Simon -- The Public Space of Urban Communities / Rickie Sanders -- Walking the High Line / Eric J. Sandeen -- The Search

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Sommario/riassunto

We typically take public space for granted, as if it has continuously been there, yet public space has always been the expression of the will of some agency (person or institution) who names the space, gives it purpose, and monitors its existence. And often its use has been contested. These new essays, written for this volume, approach public space through several key questions: Who has the right to define public space? How do such places generate and sustain symbolic meaning? Is public space unchanging, or is it subject to our subjective perception? Do we, given the public nature of public space, have the right to subvert it? These eighteen essays, including several case studies, offer convincing evidence of a spatial turn in American studies. They argue for a re-visioning of American culture as a history of place-making and the instantiation of meaning in structures, boundaries, and spatial configurations. Chronologically the subjects range from Pierre L'Enfant's initial majestic conceptualization of Washington, D.C. to the post-modern realization that public space in the U.S. is increasingly a matter of waste. Topics range from parks to cities to small towns, from open-air museums to airports, encompassing the commercial marketing of place as well as the subversion and re-possession of public space by the disenfranchised. Ultimately, public space is variously imagined as the site of social and political contestation and of aesthetic change.
