1. Synopsis

Thesis:

To investigate the idea of providing the premises for active citizenry in a depoliticized Singapore.

Strategy:

Devising a multi-programmatic design in a high pedestrian traffic site to equate political participation to cultural participation.

The site to investigate:

Bras Basah Park stands vacant and unused at most times of the day. Two recent design competitions have promised to give the parkland a new lease of life— the Museum Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station competition and the Singapore Management University (SMU) design competition. This project will complement these two schemes.

Program:

A public forum in the city. It is an urban park with a configuration of ramped auditoriums, performance/exhibition areas, cinemas, restaurants and green parks.
“Street,” to be understood, must be profiled against the older term “way”. With respect to their mythological natures, the two words are entirely distinct. The way brings with it the terrors of wandering, some reverberation of which must have struck the leaders of nomadic tribes. In the incalculable turnings and resolutions of the way, there is even today, for the solitary wanderer, a detectable trace of the power of ancient directives over wandering hordes. But the person who travels a street, it would seem, has no need of any waywise guiding hand. It is not in wandering that man takes to the street, but rather in submitting to the monotonous, fascinating, constantly unrolling band of asphalt. The synthesis of these two twin terrors, however — monotonous wandering — is represented in the labyrinth.¹

Walter Benjamin