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Institute for Urban Design Hosts Symposium on Megaprojects

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Last weekend, the 30-year-old [Institute for Urban Design](#) hosted the symposium "Arrested Development: Do Megaprojects Have a Future?" Held at the Cooper Union's Great Hall in New York City, the all-day event brought together urban planners, architects, economists, and journalists to discuss and debate the future of large-scale projects, especially those stalled or scaled back due to the current recession—such as Brooklyn, N.Y.'s Atlantic Yards. The symposium also gave the institute a chance to announce that its springtime festival, [Urban Design Week](#), recently received a Rockefeller Foundation Grant as part of the 2009 New York City Cultural Innovation Fund.

Covering the gamut of megaproject development, "Arrested Development" was broken up into three sessions: suburbs, new towns, and the metropolis, with Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer presenting the keynote address. Although the perennial urban issues of sustainability and density were put to the panels, during the afternoon's "Megaprojects for the Metropolis" session, questions of public/private partnerships and community interest trumped any discussion of form. Foremost for megaprojects is smart planning and solid infrastructure. "Architecture is secondary to the overall deal," said architect Thom Mayne (newly named to the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities) in summing up his scheme for New York City's 2012 Olympic bid.

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