

MOJI presentation

(START COLUMBIA STUDIO)

It's an honor to be here today.

Many people today are going to speak to Moji's legacy in Design and Teaching, however, **what I'd like to share most is her inspirational and innovative style of leadership.** Hers was not just a traditional 'take charge,' 'lead the troops' kind of leadership, but a unique ninja-like leadership—she designed a studio pedagogy to help instill the same traits in her students and collaborators.

My experience with Moji started with the most invigorating and intimidating studio review I have ever participated in. It was so dynamic, that it didn't even register with me till the end of the day who was actually in charge. After spending nearly 15 years in architectural practice, I had loads of experience in studio reviews. But this one was different.

I enjoyed the one to one access to student projects during the '**science fair**' style morning, but I wondered how these students were faring with multiple rounds of sometimes differing opinions?

At lunch I realized just how many critics there were—it felt like 99 reviewers for 100 students!—and many of them (here today) were very important people! Very intimidating, and hard to get a word in edgewise. I think I may have blurted out one or two incomprehensible 'thoughts', I think people thought I was coughing...

But I went home feeling energized

In reflection, this was the first exposure to a new way of leading.

I now call it the Moji Method:

(INSERT EMBRACE MESSY)

**Embrace the Messy,
Draw energy from the crowd,
Channel voices into the design process,
Allow the voices to own the future,
Make a lasting impact.**

Given my inner-mussolini, I was predisposed to a more top-down approach, and that worked ok in structured project management within an architecture firm.

However, the more I am involved in broader Urban Development, and the more I see how the world is changing, her leadership style has proven to be timely and effective.

RELEVANCE

The Urban Development process is messy, and rather than just overlay artificial (and static) organizational frameworks, Moji knew that in studio and in life, you need to work with the chaos, influence it in live-time...and leverage the energy that the myriad of actors bring to the process.

(SLIDE ANGKOR WAT)

It would be wonderful to design the picture perfect urban design solution—one that beautifully organizes built and natural form, whose design process is without confrontation, and the implementation seamless..... This of course is Angkor Wat in Cambodia—Khmer HQ.—

(INSERT SLIDE)

However, this image shows the reality--**the world is getting messier—faster, more connected, and even more dynamic with substantial economic, socio-cultural and climatic shifts.**

Yet urban development can still takes a long time, even in locations where governments are flush with cash.

As urban designers, we want to be the leaders of the development process, **but we need others to carry out the work over time, so we need to adopt a leadership style that allows the vision to be implemented by others**

(INSERT SLIDE)

This absolute mosaic of influences shape the climate where our work is practiced-- from sacred to profane, contemporary and ancient, past politics to new cash. Everyone involved has a different sense of what might be important, speaks different 'languages,' and hear different things

If you try to over control the process will find your self frustrated. **Most importantly the great ideas that you have will be dropped, since no one feels ownership for them.**

(INSERT PHOTO CITY HALL)

I experienced the need for the Moji Method while working in City Hall—For me this was a sabbatical from practice, to better understand the 'client's side,' in the development dynamic. 2008 was a unique time for New York, at the height of the messy financial crisis when development ground to a halt.

The Bloomberg City Hall (like the bullpen in the photo) actually felt like 'home'--an Architecture firm, with open work stations, project based teams.

However the project contexts and stakeholders were quite different—large complex legacy projects—and were often in their 3rd and 4th versions, like Penn Station. **This was a context where bringing an agenda to a meeting was actually an innovation.**

(INSERT WTC)

The World Trade Center was already *really* messy when I joined to lead the feasibility effort for the last building on the site—the Performing Arts Center. The City was the proxy client for a non-existent Board, and the task was to facilitate a building concept so that foundations could be built 5 floors below at the track level where construction was ongoing.

Between the City and selected resident companies who wanted the building, the Governor's Office, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, and the Port Authority that wanted to kill the project (or move it), and the private developers who seemed endlessly frustrated by this drama..... it was a miracle that there was any progress.

just arriving with an agenda was not enough—**the effort required supporting the political white noise at one strata, talking and negotiating and talking at the management level, while managing the minutia of the complex engineering problem ...**

It's still not built, but at least that effort led to the initiation of a Board of Directors, 'a client', for the project and foundations in place—the orphaned project could live....

As now had become very clear to me, after my third recession, **the physical development that I loved was ultimately driven by the state of the economy—so I decided to get under the hood a bit, and shape the underlying engine.**

(INSERT NEW HAVEN PHOTO)

I then returned to New Haven to lead a nascent Economic Development agency for the city.

In case you don't know, New Haven was the perfect city-in 1638—and then got messy during urban renewal of the 60's. Both development eras reflect top-down leadership styles, a perfect central green in an orderly nine

square grid, and then a legacy of highways that bind and split neighborhoods.

During this period I rejoined Moji for the Fall Semester as New Haven was one of the sites. **Typically, urban studios scope is broad, but this Moji studio was super-sized—an urban binge**—4 sites analysis, 2 site solutions, and many deliverables in various media. On top of it there were 10 ‘teachers,’ many of which who are here today.

This was crowd-based team teaching —not only were students exposed to the chaos of multiple influences and actors, requiring them to find ‘their own design voice’, but **students were able to experiment with leadership, stumble, and rapidly iterate on technique as much as design....** Plus—as championed by the very insistent and enthusiastic Moji, lots of production! The projects looked great.

(INSERT MILL RIVER INDUSTRIAL)

Meanwhile, back in New Haven I was trying to help maintain and grow our industrial sector, which was vital to the future of the City—we needed jobs, and the manufacturing district was at the front door of the city, and badly needed attention.

How do you build or rebuild an industry, and how do you catalyze rapid occupation of the district? You do market research, physical planning, facilitate regulatory approvals, andas I found out.... **build institutions that will generate the pipeline of talent and companies that will support the future.**

We identified the need for a ‘manufacturing incubator/prototyping shop’ – in speaking with our entrepreneurs and companies who were limited in their efforts to innovate and experiment with new products. This type of facility provides access to equipment for companies that couldn’t afford it on their own.

(INSERT MAKE HAVEN PHOTO)

I brought a diverse group of entrepreneurs together, all of whom had some expressed interest in the project. The first meeting, in my office, was very quiet...the agenda unread, the sharing really non-existent. I broadened the network of interested parties to include industrial companies, and moved the meetings off site—and the conversation started getting more lively, looser, **and others started identifying roles for themselves—they started shaping the agenda.**

Within 3 weeks the founders started a google group that grew from 13 to about 80 people, and started weekly meet-ups and hands-on workshops. Within a month the group had found a space, created a non-profit to manage the space, researched other similar institutions, and filled the place with donated tools—all self-funded. This organization has now spawned new companies, inventions, relationships-- it has grown and attracted new companies to an otherwise lackluster area of the city.

The Moji Method worked.

(INSERT MAP OF CONNECTIVE DEVELOPMENT)

In 2012 I left New Haven to participate in the MIT Sloan Fellows program—mid-career MBA. The last email exchange I had with Moji was at the beginning of this phase, and her enthusiasm and support were a huge boost.

At MIT I set about exploring the underlying dynamics of the innovation economy that seemed to be driving or restraining our growth in New Haven. The research project became a thesis, 'Connective Development,' which looks at re-tooling traditional mono-locational economic development policy with our increasingly multi-locational world.

This is a bibliometric mapping of all of the published scientific collaborations in the country in a period of 10 years. This image inspired me when sourcing images in New Haven to communicate that we were part of a larger network of activity, we were not alone.

It will take new leadership at the municipal levels to finally recognize their interconnectedness and work together—they should stop fearing the ‘competition’, embrace the messiness, and initiate a network based ‘team governing’ model to better support the innovation economy. **In other words, it *has* gotten messy out there, and the way we practice economic development in Cities actually *hinders* growth—it’s time to channel the energy, and embrace a new method. The Moji Method.**