

Bowling for Boomers pulls apart the assumed typologies and expectations attached to an ageing population and proposes a new relevant urban condition for the baby boomers.

As a demographic the baby boomers resist generalization. They are fervent individuals and their approach to ageing exemplifies this. In an effort to redefine previous generational approaches they are developing new identities – the third agers, the silver foxes, the wild elderly, the young old, transformers, revivers, or middlescents. These identities reflect not just a denial of ageing but a desire to remain highly active in their chosen pursuit.

Bowling for Boomers refuses to fall back on the tired notions of community, neighbourhood and village so often found in retirement typologies. The retirement village has commercialized community, manufacturing it through nostalgic imagery and dissolving it to merely an advertisement.

And the baby boomer is too savvy a consumer to be sold this fiction. The homogenous imagery and conformity of the cookie cutter does not offer self-differentiation. Nor does the sprawling suburb on the edge of the city satisfy the Boomers pursuit of personal freedom through consumption and leisure.

Within Auckland the bowling club provides a discreet pocket of inner-city greenery. But the bowling club represents a different era. As the baby boomers seek to distinguish themselves from their parents, traditional forms of community and age-associated activity like bowls are rejected.

The bowling club's redundancy provides an opportunity to speculate as to a condition that satisfies a new set of demands, the demands of the individualistic baby boomers. These gaps in the urban fabric provide the site of the baby boomers purchasing of personal freedom and act as a catalyst for the elevation of consumptive commerce and a dense urban culture.