

arcca

architect in the community issue

08.2

architecture california
the journal of the american institute of architects
california council

UC Berkeley Units 1 & 2
GLS Landscape Architecture
EHDD Architecture

+LANDSCAPE+ARCHITECTURE+LANDSCAPE+

The View from the Landscape
Ecology and Culture in a Globalized Society
The Potential of Landscape Urbanism
Trading Change in the Delta
Perspectives on Landscape Ecology
The Fresno ArcHop

What's Love Got To Do With It?

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arcCA, the journal of the American Institute of Architects California Council, is dedicated to exploring ideas, issues, and projects relevant to the practice of architecture in California. **arcCA** focuses quarterly editions on professional practice, the architect in the community, the AIACC Design Awards, and works/sectors.

arcCA

08.2

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arcCA is published quarterly and distributed to AIACC members as part of their membership dues. In addition, single copies and subscriptions are available at the following rates:

Single copies: \$6 AIA members; \$9 non-members.

Subscriptions (four issues per year): \$24 AIA members;

\$15 students; \$34 non-members, U.S.; \$38 Canada; \$42 foreign.

Subscriptions: arcCA, c/o AIACC, 1303 J Street, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95814, www.aiacc.org

Advertising: 877.887.7175.

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Dodge
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CONSTRUCTION Architectural Record
ENR
Regional Publications

AIACC
The American Institute
of Architects, California Council
1303 J Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95814
916.448.9082 p 916.442.5346 f
www.aiacc.org

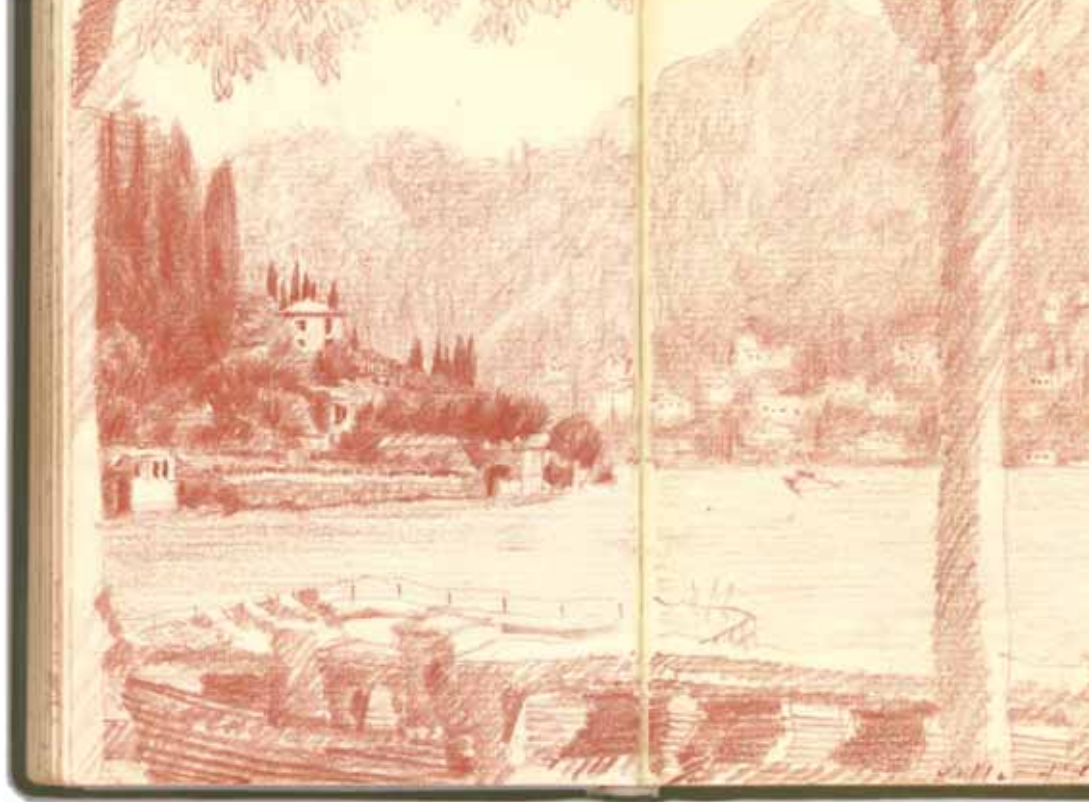
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William H. Fain, Jr., *Italian Cities and Landscapes: an Architect's Sketchbook*. Balcony Press, Los Angeles, 2007

Maybe it's a holdover from my years in academia, but the beginning of the summer just doesn't seem the time for a Powerful Editorial Message. Not that you're expecting one. I have a thought, though, which may be apt for the vacation season. One (compound) word: sketchbook.

I had the privilege of offering a continuing education session, called "Words from Drawings," at the AIA Convention in Boston in May. The idea was to suggest that, when you're trying to figure out what to write about a project of yours, you might employ the time-honored, beer-soaked napkin sketch to help focus your thoughts. This session was at 8:00 a.m. (5:00 a.m., California time), so it was a bit of stretch asking the participants to imagine they had a beer in hand. Some may have conjured a faint recollection of a Mimosa. But it turns out that, when you ask 300 architects to sketch their work for one another, you get a roar that any South End saloon would envy.

It's really not possible to tell how such a session has gone, though, because only the people who like it come up to talk to you afterward. One said, "That was great! There was such a buzz in the room!" Hell yes, with that many people talking at once. It's not rocket surgery. One person suggested that it would have been interesting to have asked for a show of hands of those who had sketchbooks with them. Perhaps AIA Conventions are not the hottest beds for *draughtsmanship*. (The new Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, by Rafael Viñoly, is handsomer than many such venues, but there's only so picturesque you can make a gazillion square feet of meeting rooms.)

I had been thinking about sketchbooks, not so much because of the session—which, as I say, was premised on napkins and other convenient scraps—but because I recently picked up a copy of William Fain (FAIA)'s *Italian Cities and Landscapes: an Architect's Sketchbook*. Our friends at Balcony Press in Los Angeles have just published this beautiful facsimile of the sketchbook that Bill kept while a Rome Prize fellow in 2002. I recommend it for both pleasure and instruction. (There is some particularly wonderful atmospheric perspective in the sketches of Lake Como, well worth emulating.)

But, a more important recommendation: let's all dig our half-filled sketchbooks out of the piles of less attractive paper on our desks and take some time this summer just to sit and sketch. And sip.

Wishing you a happy one,

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Contributors



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I read with great interest your editorial [in **arcCA** 07.4, "PreFABiana"] regarding the California Supplemental Examination. The Board is always interested in feedback on its programs.

We do hear comments from time-to-time that the prior format, which was more of an open dialogue, is a better way to test. Unfortunately, such examinations are highly subjective and do not offer a uniform testing experience for all candidates, so they do not comply with current law and testing standards.

The current format is objective and defensible. We constantly measure its statistical performance to ensure that it is working properly. One of its advantages is that it is fairer to candidates than a written examination. Being able to add to answers is not possible in written examinations.

The Board does, however, constantly strive to improve the licensure components. In fact, in September 2007 the Board voted to pursue a study of the options for formatting the examination. That study will provide invaluable data to assist in determining the best means for testing candidates to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

Sincerely,
Jon Baker, AIA, President
California Architects Board

I read **arcCA's** Design Awards issue [07.3, "Comparing Awards"] and took the journal's recommendation to heart. I used the list you had in the issue ["Amazing **arcCA** Design Awards Guide"] to create a calendar of award competitions and have been busy entering my work.

Thanks to your publication, I have been successful with several of the ones I have entered. I made the long list of 25 for the *World Architecture* "House of the Year Award" for 2007 and have won a merit award from *Residential Architect* magazine for a project I submitted that is on the boards.

Thanks for helping make this happen.

Mark L. Donohue, AIA
San Francisco

David Meckel's article, "Thanks for Submitting: Advice for the Award-Lorn," in **arcCA** 07.3, "Comparing Awards," urged architects to resubmit, resubmit and resubmit again to various design award programs. Well, after submitting the same project to three design awards to no avail, I was ready to hang it up and move on. Then I found David's article, followed his advice, and tried again. On my fourth try, my Hermosa Beach House won the 2008 Grand Award in Sustainable Design from the Concrete Masonry Association of California and Nevada (CMACN), co-sponsored by AIA California Council. Thanks for your good advice.

Robert Nebolon, AIA
Berkeley



The View

from the Landscape

arcCA asked a dozen and a half prominent California landscape architects two questions:

1. What is one thing you would like architects to know that would facilitate the relationship between the two professions? (Please don't say, "Be sure to get the landscape architect on board from the beginning of the project." That one will find its way into the magazine elsewhere.) Your answer needn't be the most important thing architects should know, although it could be. But it could also be some usefully quirky thing.
2. What do you consider the two or three most important questions or ideas or concerns motivating landscape architecture today?

Here are their responses.



Office of Cheryl Barton, opposite, Landscape Stratigraphy; above, Corporate Headquarters, San Francisco, with Robert A.M. Stern and Gensler, photo by Cheryl Barton



Cheryl Barton, FASLA, FAAR
Office of Cheryl Barton, www.toocb.com

Landscape is a noun, not a verb; it does not end in "-ing."

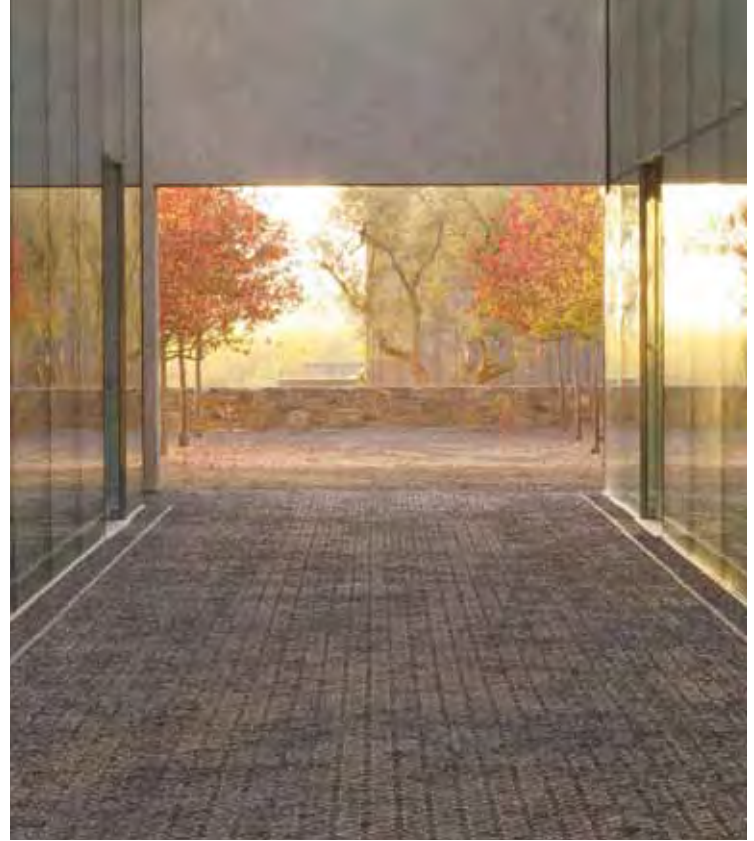
Landscape is not "parsley 'round the pig," as the Brits would say. It is the foundation for the built environment, not an appliqué after a building is conceived and constructed.

Landscape occupies that critical juncture between nature and culture. It is a potent and symbolic medium that can transform ideas and attitudes as well as place.

A site is not a *tabula rasa*; sites are deeply layered with a cultural and natural *landscape stratigraphy* that informs the design narrative. Landscapes encode multiple ideas in many planes occupying the same spacetime.



Pamela Burton & Co., Carbon Beach House, with Richard Meier & Partners, photo by Bruce Botnick



Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture, Walden Studios, Alexander Valley, with Jensen & Macy Architects, photo by Marion Brenner



Pamela Burton, FASLA
Pamela Burton & Company,
www.pamelaburtonco.com

Architects work in the vertical realm at a macro scale; for them, the elevation of a building twenty feet tall isn't large enough. Landscape architects work in the horizontal realm at a micro scale; for them, a twenty-inch grade change is a lot.

At the conception of the design process, it is crucial for the architect and landscape architect to understand and agree conceptually on the design approach. Good architects care about how their buildings are integrated into the landscape, and it is beneficial to all when architects and landscape architects understand that they are a convergence of the same process. We always think of the phrase from the musical *Oklahoma*, "Oh, the farmer (landscape architect) and the cowboy (architect) should be friends!"

Landscape architects must go beyond the pragmatic function of anchoring buildings to

a site to enliven the sensory perceptions of people visiting the building. It is our role to challenge how one perceives exterior space by conceptually defining how people see and move through a landscape. Landscape has the possibility of charging all of our senses and evoking memories and emotional responses. Landscape is about a sense of personal well-being, a sense of beauty, and a sense of pleasure. Landscape is about making people feel comfortable in spaces with their families, with their friends, and with themselves.

Sustainability should not be promoted at the expense of great design; they can and should be compatible.

The success and value of spaces are not always seen immediately; they are felt. In order to make a space resonant, proportions of spaces and the shadows defining edges are as important as how a space is used.



Andrea Cochran, FASLA
Andrea Cochran Landscape
Architecture, www.acochran.com

Landscape architects almost always understand grading—particularly site grading—better than architects. Many architects do not believe this.

Plants need dirt and water to grow, and it is very hard to make a vertical green wall. Plants are living and cannot be used in the same manner as architectural building materials.

It is helpful to explain at the onset of the project the basic tenets of the design for the building. Certain relationships are important to identify to the landscape architect, so that connections between interior and exterior spaces are appropriately addressed in the landscape design. What relationships are important to enhance or separate? What is the circulation concept for the site? Provide locations for all building openings. Explain the materials envisioned for the building.

Architects forget they have "lived" with the



Comstock Studio, Palm installation, LA County Museum of Art, photo courtesy ValleyCrest



CMG, Mint Plaza, San Francisco, photo by Sharon Risedorff

building for a long time, and some buildings are difficult to understand through plans and elevations. Computer or real models are a help.

Finally, it is important to keep the landscape architect apprised of changes in the building design and the work of other consultants. Sometimes junior staff members forget to provide timely updates.

The most important concerns today are water conservation and using sustainable materials.



Paul Comstock, ASLA, Vice President and Managing Principal, ValleyCrest Design Group/Comstock Studio
www.vcdesigngroup.com

Oh! How fun! “What architects should know” is a favorite topic among my colleagues across the globe. First off, it’s a symbiotic relationship. Landscape architects must be willing to learn about the whole architectural process, and architects to further understand the “World of Natural Changes.” A successful

relationship depends on participation in and knowledge of each project phase: from the chrysalis concept through construction, and metamorphosis into delivered landscape.

Second, dealing with growing, vibrant but perishable, organisms means that we work with life cycles that can operate independently of construction spreadsheets and critical path timelines. As landscape architects, we create environmental expressions requiring sun, moon, seasonal, and climatic cycles based in universal time. As partners to Mother Nature, we think differently about project time.

A fantastic teacher of mine, architect Francisco Behr, AIA, said simply, “Try thinking of it (the design solution) in different ways.” And the “it” is this: there is really one important concern: the classic Ethos vs. Epistemology Drama, starring Sustainability. Most designers seek a balance between being green and making the project happen without compromising the soul of the design. But, to do that, we need to re-baseline our aesthetic and create new norms to build a better, more brilliant tomorrow.



Kevin Conger, ASLA
CMG Landscape Architecture,
www.cmgsite.com

Consider the landscape as a performance based, functioning system, and strive to get maximum value from the entire landscape. Like the building, performance drives much of the decisions in a successful landscape and should take priority over consideration of style or aesthetics or preconceptions about soft or hard materials. Performance should also drive budget decisions regarding the landscape.

Landscape Urbanism: How do we make constructed environments that are dynamic, sustainable, functional, durable, inspirational, beautiful, social, and which embody ideas like democracy? Part of the solution to this is to move beyond design of the formal landscape and into issues of systems design, policy, politics, economics, etc...



T. Delaney, Inc.—Seam Studio, “Garden Play,” Cornerstone Gardens, Sonoma,
photo by Lucas Fladzinski



Nancy Goslee-Power & Associates, Beverly Hills Residence, photo by Marcia Lee



Topher Delaney
T. Delaney, Inc.—Seam Studio,
www.tdelaney.com

One word: Threshold.

Physical, as well as in terms of expectations. The Alhambra, Palladian villas, the Salk Institute, all are connected to the landscape, descending or ascending. Where is the envelope? Before you *stamp* it, where *is* it?

I’m not a supporter of the demarcation of professional boundaries. Architects should do landscape architecture and vice versa. You should really know the whole thing—how the envelope goes together.

Extend beyond the limit of the threshold. Whether in your own right, in your own studio, or joining in with landscape architects, gardeners, civil engineers, architects should address that extension.



Nancy Power
with Joanna Hankamer,
Senior Associate
Nancy Goslee-Power & Associates,
www.nancypower.com

photo: Victoria Pearson

Landscape architects are designers, not “landscapers.”

[JH] Landscape design has an inherent logic that is fundamentally different from that of architecture. Many architects want to architecturalize landscapes and gardens. I would advise architects to respect and trust that successful landscape and garden design comes from a different sensibility, training, and lineage, and that landscape and garden design is space design in a different realm from theirs, with some different rules. Architects could better their collaborations by trusting landscape designers to collaborate on the design of the whole outdoor environment. Landscape designers are often asked to “green it up” or “specify the plants,” which is like asking an architect to specify the materials for a building

that will be designed by others. The materials of our discipline—plants, stone, water, dirt, wood, steel, concrete—are specified during the process of space design, according to rules of form, texture, light, color, movement, climate, growth, and entropy and within an understanding of human physical, sensual, and spiritual interaction with those materials.

[NP] This quotation from Thomas Jefferson says exactly what I believe and feel: “No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden.” Nothing makes me happier than when I see all sorts of people so happy to be in gardens that I have designed. I design with their comfort and joy at the top of my list; I do not design just to make an artistic statement. The garden is the mezzanine between heaven and earth. It can be a spiritual and healing place, and our society is desperate for good habitable spaces. My life-long goal is to build as many as I possibly can, including the greening of public elementary schools and introducing the joy of growing your own food and flowers



Fritz Haeg, Edible Estates Regional Prototype Garden #4: London, 2007, commissioned by Tate Modern, photo by Heiko Prigge



EDAW, Tokyo Midtown © EDAW 2008, photo by David Lloyd

to children. It is no surprise that Paradise in all religions is always described as a garden.

The most important concerns motivating landscape architecture today are:

1. Nature deprivation in our culture, specifically urban and suburban culture.
2. To educate developers on the importance of landscape in our environments.
3. Our discipline's role in sustainability and contemporary environmentalism.
4. To influence the multi-disciplinary conversations about green urbanism, green infrastructure, and landscape urbanism.
5. To correct architects' perceptions of our field so that we can better influence our built environments.



Fritz Haeg, www.fritzhaeg.com

(I am actually not a landscape architect; my background is in architecture, but most current projects are commissioned by art museums.)

Architects by nature tend to be focused on buildings. This may seem obvious and simplistic, but I do not think it necessarily has to be this way. I imagine a future system of architecture education that views a building as one of many possible responses to a design challenge/problem. I like the idea of an architecture of removal, in which we become more strategic about removing structures and considering how little building we actually need to thrive as humans. In a system like this, landscape becomes the privileged form of human development, not buildings.

How can we develop open urban spaces that are more than just high maintenance, ornamental, vanity landscapes? What functions can we assign our open spaces that might also have pleasurable aspects, such as food producing urban farms and dirt cleansing phytoremediation gardens?



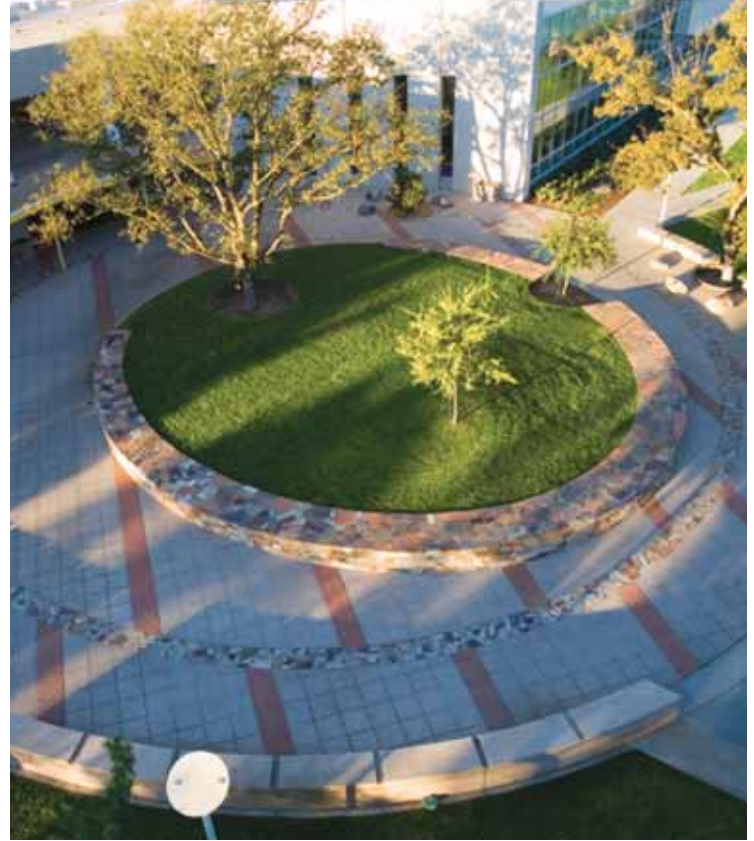
Steve Hanson, ASLA
EDAW, www.edaw.com

Well, my flippant answer would be that the world isn't flat—but of course there are many architects with a great sensitivity to site and grading—and even some landscape architects without it. But, really, from the perspective of buildings, I wish more architects understood the power of landscape to make buildings better. And often it comes back to grading. A recent example is with an urban project that is meant to define a central open space, yet the building elevations have already been set. That can be very limiting.

This will sound very old fashioned, but I think it's very important to have a big idea, and I mean a design idea—an idea that conveys meaning, sense of place, culture, whatever. This is more important than ever in the current professional *climate* (pardon the pun) where so many of the metrics for success are based on non-design criteria. Sustainability is essential, but it isn't a design idea or a replacement for one.



ah'bé, Southpark Streetscape, Los Angeles, photo by Jack Coyier



Sasaki Associates, Inc., UC Davis Segundo Commons, photo by Tim Rue



Calvin Abe, FASLA
ah'bé::landscape architects |
environmental planners,
www.ahbe.com

I would like architects to know that “the grass is greener” on this side and that all architects are welcome to practice within the context of our profession. Our profession is about engaging society and healing the planet, so there is a lot of work to be done. We need more talented people using landscape as their medium of expression.

I like to think of our practice as designing and developing “green infrastructure” for the planet. As landscape architects, we are now engaged in the regeneration of the damaged industrial landscape. We are not returning this land to uninterrupted nature, but we are healing and transforming it into a more socially balanced and environmentally sustainable system. Our profession has entered a phase in which we are designing for urban recovery.

How can landscape architects elevate the

public’s understanding of how we are generating solutions to environmental issues through our work?



Jim Jacobs, ASLA,
Principal Landscape Architect,
Sasaki Associates, Inc.,
www.sasaki.com

The biggest challenge is getting architects to truly understand the value that landscape architects bring to a team and the full breadth of scope a landscape architect can offer above just documenting plant material. Landscape architects are formally trained, licensed professionals with specific skill at understanding the broader environmental issues and context of a site. They can offer valuable input in the early site planning and building location phases. This input can establish a stronger, more comprehensive relationship of indoor and outdoor programming, with particular attention to the overall site context, constraints, and

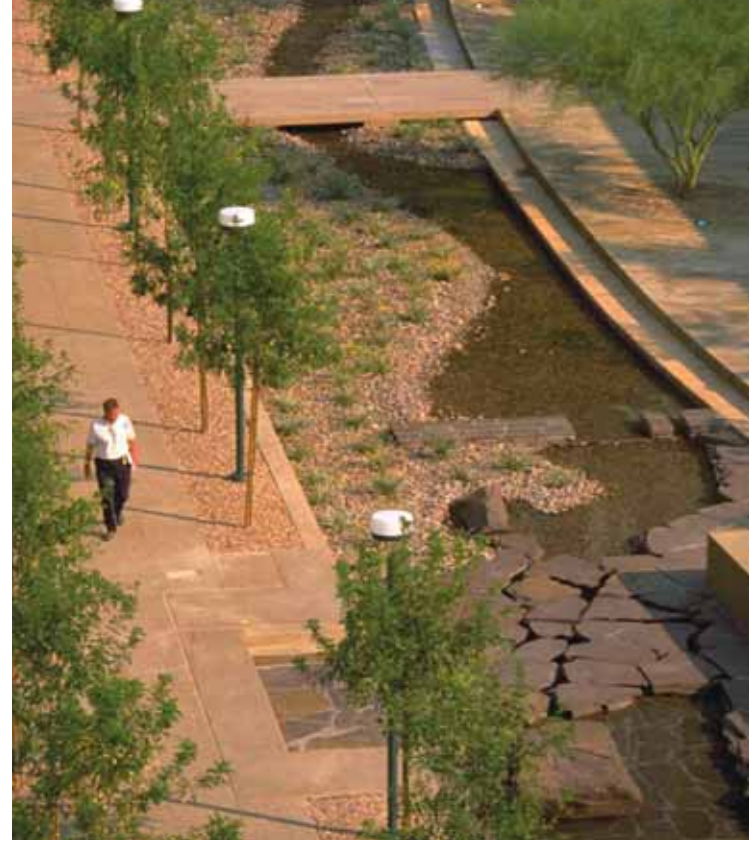
topographic issues. And landscape architects are not “landscapers.”

Landscape architecture, at least in the U.S., is stuck somewhere in the past. We must ask how to define current landscapes without characterizing them as having a resemblance to a Picturesque or Modern style. What does it mean to be contemporary?

I was thinking about urban parks and open spaces and how we have neglected to think holistically about the changing demographic. How are the urban open spaces we design actually more useable, more sustainable, for those who don’t have the option of escaping the city? As stewards of the land, how are we helping to fulfill this newfound quest to be sustainable? We truly have a lot of thinking to do.



Tom Leader Studio, "compost," installation at Ohio State University, photo by Sara Peschel



SWA Group, Lewis Avenue, Las Vegas; photos by Tom Fox/SWA Group



Tom Leader, ASLA
Tom Leader Studio,
www.tomleader.com

Why torture a plant?

Not that anyone needs to coddle the opportunistic rascals. It's just that architecturally obsessing over them is so bourgeois, apologetic, and "cart before the horse." So many architects are dying to cover their problematic walls, roofs, and obscure lobby niches with thick, luxuriant growth that they must have seen in some Merchant Ivory film or in Hair Club for Men commercials. "The building is all about landscape!" Whatever you say. Most plants object to this treatment and with good reason, since they prefer to grow out of the ground, where they can be with their other friends and congenial microbes. If you want biomass for your wall, what about something easier like twig bundles, fake orchids, or RyKrisp?

Wuthering Urbanism

After a second round of Manhattans and wasabi peas in the office, we sometimes speculate on the yearning, the thwarted passion for an "ism," indeed, to achieve "IsmIsm." God knows, poor Heathcliff spent his whole life struggling against his lack of pedigree in order to gain love and acceptance. It is less known that he was also the first landscape architect to search for a higher purpose. We all owe him a debt. But most of his papers were lost when the castle was struck by lightning, and consequently he left few clues as to the precise meaning of "landscape urbanism." Scattered among the ashes, we do find cryptic mention of some vacant lots in Detroit and an unexecuted design for a wooden bicycle. Also some quantity-based ideas for book titles such as "1,000 Plateaus," "1,000,000 Trees," "700 Impact Head Sprinklers," and "467,988 Stop Signs." Modern day believers remain undeterred, and we support their efforts to bring some mysticism and unrequited lust to the field.



Marco Esposito, ASLA
SWA Group, www.swagroup.com

The project site limit of work is always bigger than we think. Not only in terms of understanding and establishing design integrity, but also in setting up the clearest people and vehicle flows, accommodating storm water, marshalling utilities to least-visible locations and exploring non-obvious opportunities to improve the experience for everyone on the property and surrounding community. Can the adjacent street be narrowed and enhanced to become the front of the project and valuable outdoor space? Can various people and vehicle entrances be consolidated? What about that windowless one-story building . . . can we better use that space?

Using Land Carefully and Cleverly

The resource that landscape architects have the most influence over—land—is very precious and getting more so all the time. With 57 million square miles of land and 6.7 bil-



Katherine Spitz Associates, Inc., West Hollywood Garden, photo by Steve Lacap

lion people, the planet has only 5.5 acres for each of us, including wild lands, agricultural and pasture lands and towns and cities. With towns and cities about 2% of the land surface, are we using sites carefully and cleverly? Can the design team work together to invite a few more (or many more) people to each project in a compelling way? Can we design for another 1-2 increments of growth? Every time we use land carefully, we reduce the use of fossil fuels and protect natural resources.

Making Existing Towns and Cities Ever More Livable

We're in the midst of a real estate dynamic in this direction, and keeping it going in this direction is a satisfying and worthy landscape architectural endeavor.

Sheer Beauty

As review processes grow in complexity, with ever more inflexible standards and requirements, the challenge to push through built projects that are truly beautiful may not be motivating but sure requires motivation!



Katherine Spitz, AIA, ASLA
Katherine Spitz Associates, Inc.
Landscape Architecture and Planning
www.katherinespitzassociates.com

I want to remind architects that the art of landscape and the art of building have a long, interconnected history. Architectural education rarely addresses the rich and complex history of landscape design. Although many architects imbue their buildings with precedent and meaning, landscape remains the “leftover”—a bit of greenery around a building, a stereotypical plane of turf, or a planter with bamboo. My dream is that architects would expand their knowledge of history to include landscape, and that their understanding the precedents and principles of landscape architectural history would break down the conceptual barriers between building and site design.

First, landscape architecture and architecture will need to become more regional and site specific. What makes sense in temperate New England will not make sense in the

arid West, for example, which standards like LEED will need to better address. Response to the local environment will generate profound change in the look of our buildings and landscapes, especially in the civic and institutional realms. I look forward to this as a tremendous opportunity to develop radically creative, meaningful, and diverse designs. Second, the motivation to sit lightly on the land will alter our perception of the role of landscape architecture in site development. Landscape architects must become more involved in siting concepts, building orientation, and landscape strategies during the design process.



GLS Landscape | Architecture, UC Berkeley Units 1 & 2, photo here and on cover by Patrick Argast



Gary Strang, AIA, ASLA
GLS Landscape | Architecture,
www.glsarch.com

I would like architects to consider that there is a stratum of architectural precedent, especially relevant for our time, whereby buildings enter into an equal dialogue with the landscape. Examples might be Machu Picchu, La Mesquita in Cordoba (The Court of the Oranges), Jefferson at UVA, Wright at Taliesin West, Scarpa at Brion Cemetery, Kahn at Salk Institute, much of the work of Richard Neutra, perhaps the San Francisco Art Institute by Paffard Keatinge-Clay. There are many others, but the architectural press has rarely reported on the entire story.

I would refer architects to the full text of Kenneth Frampton's keynote address to the UIA in 1999 in Beijing entitled "Seven Points for the Millennium: An Untimely Manifesto." It is especially powerful coming from one who has a connoisseur's lifelong appreciation for the sculptural object:

" . . . the design of landscape is of greater critical consequence than architecture on its own I am convinced that architectural and planning schools . . . should give much greater emphasis to the cultivation of landscape as an overarching system rather than concentrating exclusively, as they have tended to do up to now, on the design of buildings as aesthetic objects."

Landscape architecture at its best is concerned with the artistic expression of the relationship between people and nature and, by extension, between technology and nature. If one considers that the numbers of people and the extent of technology are unprecedented in human history, then the artistic potential should be limitless, and this should be a very exciting time. The large extent to which buildings have become open and transparent, while the landscape has become more constructed, has led to a much larger area of overlap between architects and landscape architects, and a situation in which the intertwining of nature and technology will lead to new forms and solutions.

On the other hand, landscape architects can read landscapes the way architects read cities and buildings, and clearly there is cause for alarm in regard to the health of natural systems, in terms of climate change, invasive species, and so on. As one who studies natural systems, it is hard not to feel like an engineer walking into a masonry building with diagonal cracks that have been painted over.

The revolution that has occurred in architecture in regard to mechanical engineering is awaiting its corollary in landscape architecture, that is, a revolution in civil engineering.



PWP Landscape Architecture, Saitama Sky Forest Plaza, Tokyo, with NTT UD Architects, photo courtesy PWP Landscape Architecture



Lutsko Associates *landscape*, 897 N. Market Sustainability Gardens, Redding, CA, photography by Marion Brenner



Peter Walker, FASLA
PWP Landscape Architecture,
www.pwpla.com

Fine landscapes like fine architecture require an appropriate level of budget.

Sustainability is the result of skillful maintenance.

You should put a \$200 tree in a \$2,000 hole, not the other way around.

The most important part of almost all fine landscapes is the plantings that are alive, and therefore, require care. Like children, without this care, they won't amount to much.



Ron Lutsko, Jr.
Lutsko Associates *landscape*
lutskoassociates.com

Each discipline should better understand the other; a narrow perspective in either frustrates the other. This applies to an historic perspective as well as current

topics. Architecture has a relatively linear historic evolution, focusing on the building/building complex, while landscape has encompassed many areas of thought (architecture, ecology, art, etc.), and the importance of each has shifted over time. Landscape can thus be more difficult to define concisely. Unfortunately, most design educations do not focus sufficiently on the parallel discipline, and thus self-education is imperative to functioning fluidly in collaborative work: architects should study landscape, and landscape architects should study architecture.

Of prime importance today are the relationships between people and nature, design and ecology. Nature must be incorporated into everyday life, taking us beyond the notion of a preserved, museum-like display separate from people. This must be done in the form of high design (not mimicking nature), creating stellar living spaces that put us back in touch with our place in the natural world. Art, architecture, human health and comfort, resource conservation and habitat development all fall within this larger goal.



Mia Lehrer, FASLA, and Esther Margulies, ASLA, Partners
Mia Lehrer + Associates,
www.mlagreen.com

Architects need to expand their comfort zone. It is safer to promote a natural aesthetic to public agencies and developers, but we need support from the design team in promoting daring materials and new ways of developing the landscape. Owners look to the architect to provide design leadership.

The desperate need for open space in many areas of Los Angeles cannot be solved by public agencies alone. We need to contribute to the public open space network instead of designing private courtyards for the privileged few.

We cannot continue to cover the earth with green buildings and parking lots for hybrids. When a building and its parking cover more land than they need to, we reduce ground water resources and require more drainage infrastructure and water treatment plants.



Mia Lehrer + Associates, Civitas, Inc. and Wenk Associates, LA State Historic Park connection

We must build taller and leave more of the earth permeable.

Landscape architects historically took on the scale of infrastructure in development beyond the urbanized city. Now that our cities have overgrown the infrastructure, and neighborhoods, schools, and parks are surrounded by freeways and cut off by drainage channels, we must look at systems of delivery, conveyance, and evacuation at the scale of the city and the region. One of our preoccupations is the implementation of such large scale, long-term projects, educating the community, government agencies, and elected officials. ●

Landscape Architecture Links

Tim Culvahouse, FAIA, and Gary Strang, AIA, ASLA

Landscape Architecture Associations and Related Organizations

American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA): <http://www.asla.org>

Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA): <http://www.csla.ca>

Catena: Digital Archive of Historic Gardens + Landscapes: <http://catena.bgc.bard.edu/>

Center for Land Use Interpretation: <http://www.clui.org/>; Land Use Database: <http://ludb.clui.org>

The Centre for Landscape Research: <http://www.clr.utoronto.ca>

David Rumsey Map Collection: <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>

Earth Science and Map Library, University of California, Berkeley: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/>

Historic Landscape Initiative, National Park Service: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/hli>

Landscape Architecture Foundation: <http://www.laprofession.org>

Library of Congress American Memory Collection: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

Landscape Architecture Online (Environmental Design Library, UC Berkeley): <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/ENVI/lawwww.html>

On-Line Archive of California: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/>

Sociedad de Arquitectos Paisajistas de México, A.C.: <http://www.sapm.com.mx>

Sustainable Sites initiative: <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>

Landscape Architecture Student Associations

LABash student-run international conference: <http://www.labasho8.com>

Landscape Architecture Blogs

Pruned: <http://pruned.blogspot.com>



Is Landscape the Answer?: Ecology and Culture in a Globalized Society

Mark Rios, FAIA, FASLA

Each time I get the opportunity to leave Los Angeles, for work or adventure, I anticipate the inspiration and awe that come from discovering something new. Architects and designers need a constant stream of ideas to feed our creative curiosity and distill them into concepts for our next projects. Each trip brings a vast library of possibilities. To my disappointment, I've recently noticed that, due to our incredible technological advances, I'll seem to know what I'm going to see before I even get there, and that each place is starting to look similar to other places I've been. Globalization. We've all seen the hype. We know what buildings are going up and what they look like. Our culture, media, and technology are creating another form of "international style," one that appears anywhere, and makes my trips a little less full of surprises.

What is my fear? I'm afraid, especially in urban areas, that we are losing a sense of place. Hong Kong, Paris, Berlin, New York, San Francisco, Dubai all start to look alike. As architects, we all read Charles Moore's simple but keen observations about regionalism in *The Place of Houses*. It's easier to address these issues on a smaller local scale, but the same sensitivities to history, climate, color, culture, etc., can be the answer to our most densely developed urban areas. We know that issues of brand, style, fashion, technology, media, and travel tend to make all these cities look alike. The factors of climate, topography, materials, habitat, history, culture, religion, art, and ceremony tend to make places more distinct. It's the ecology and culture that show the greatest differences remaining in our world, and therefore have the greatest potential to create "place."

So, who am I to discuss this question? Where do I fit in? My education was both in architecture and landscape architecture, and I believe that this crossover is at the core of everything we do at Rios Clementi Hale Studios. The most influential part of my architectural education was my landscape training, and the opposite corollary rings true. At Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Carl Steinitz taught me to understand, delineate, and map the systems of the landscape.



Chess Park at the Brand Boulevard Passageway, Glendale,
photos by Tom Bonner



left: California Endowment, Los Angeles,
photo by Tom Bonner
opposite: notNeutral City Plates

Ecology was broken down into an objective set of forces that could be separated and combined to understand our physical environment. John Stilgoe opened up the world of the cultural landscape for me. I began to read the man-made landscape, to see and understand why, for example, donut shops tended to flourish on the inboard routes into a city, while bars were most successful on the side with outbound traffic. Research is the principal method to establish a sense of place.

At Rios Clementi Hale Studios, we begin a project, as many other designers do, through aggressive, thorough research into all the factors of the site and its culture. Users, clients, and program add to our ecological and cultural soup. The ingredients tend to get messy and complex as projects cross over boundaries. The intersections of topography and history or climate and social interaction create the anomalies that, for me, make a project interesting. It is this struggle between ecology and culture, architecture and landscape, that produces the best fit of a place into its context and creates

the strongest iconic set of forms.

The ideas for the headquarters of the California Endowment in Downtown Los Angeles stem from a synthesis of the site ecology with the culture of the client organization and the rich historic content of the place. Neighboring Olvera Street is the birthplace of Los Angeles; Chinatown to the north brought intriguing and unusual scale, color, and textural moves; adjacent Union Station, with its vast train yards, provided ample forms for building inspiration. As well, regional Californian influences are evident in the landscape, with the selection of plant and hardscape materials from throughout the state. The Endowment—an organization dedicated to the health of all Californians—needed a healthy work environment, both physically and emotionally. In the finished campus, building organization and form, movement and gathering patterns, materials and color, and degrees of openness to the surrounding landscape and cityscape, all contribute to the culture of a healthy place. In the end, we hope these attributes blend and

synthesize into a solution that fits.

We often work on projects that fall in between the boundaries of architecture and landscape—edge projects. Two of our urban plaza projects provide good examples of how individual ecologies and cultures create different solutions. Chess Park, for the City of Glendale, is an example of the struggle to simultaneously understand and convey the history of the game of chess, while creating a wonderful gathering place within a tough urban circulation corridor. A series of programmed events and activity areas, multi-tasking sculptural landmarks (signage, lighting, and storage), and a sustainable agenda created an active urban destination. Somewhat similar in program to Chess Park, but with a different set of site circumstances, is the proposed Quincy Court for the GSA adjacent to Mies van der Rohe's Federal Office Complex in Chicago. A Miesean grid of abstracted Honey Locust trees found on the site creates a respite in the urban environment. New shade structures—whose design is derived from abstractions of the



trees' distinctive leaf pattern—flank an array of new seating areas, providing both security and plaza amenity.

Even in our smallest-scale projects—a series of dinner plates—these ideals of ecology and culture come through. notNeutral, our product company, has issued a series of City Plates; twenty are in production with another four on the way. At first glance, they seem to be maps of each city, but on a second viewing, layers of information come through in their graphic forms. Jennifer Cosgrove, AIA, an architect in our office, did the research as well as the graphic design that produced subjective storytelling about each city: its history, landmarks, topography, and juxtapositions. The work is a synthesis of urban planning, architecture, landscape, graphic, and product design. Its final product is beautiful, whimsical, and full of information.

Not only does incorporating site-specific ecology and culture tie our work to a place, but it makes projects inherently more sustainable. Fine tuning to climate and place creates a

dynamic solution, a living, evolving organism that can adapt to and modify its environment.

Let's continue to search rigorously for definitive ecological and cultural issues for each project to help define its place. Once ideas are identified, then work can begin to exaggerate and distill them, so that they become iconic and essential to the places we are making, rather than themed or homogeneous. This means exploiting the differences in every situation in which we operate, declaring its differences, and embracing our pluralistic world. It's the way we maintain the richness of the multicultural stew. I encourage all of us to study more about landscape, its conditions, systems, and edges

My wish is that, as designers, we can help influence reality. When we go to a new place, we'll see something different. A moment of joy and wonder when we find the unexpected will come from the ecology and culture of each place. It makes our experiences fresh. Ecology and culture are the secret. Landscape is my answer. ●



What's Love Got to Do with It?

An Architect's Lifelong Relationship With Architecture and Landscape

Michael B. Lehrer, FAIA

For me, the dialogue between architecture and landscape began long before I had any idea that two such discrete disciplines even existed. Growing up next to Griffith Park in Los Angeles, I carved forts out of the bushes on the canyon hillsides where I lived. The smell of the chaparral oil that stained my hands followed me as I ran down the hill to my mother's daily call for "Dinnertime!"

As a child, I was surrounded by great landscapes and spectacular architecture, as I came to appreciate years later. Neutra's Lovell House was just over the ridge behind our house; Wright's Ennis House lined a ridge one canyon over; and Schindler's Shrage House, with a garden by Neutra, was atop the hill on the other side of our canyon. A great Soriano house was just up the street at the edge of the Park, and Barnsdall Park was a mile away. Growing up, architecture, landscape, native flora, and joy were givens in my day-to-day existence. The inseparable connection of architecture to landscape was not something I thought about as a kid. It just was.

I decided to be an architect when I was eight. I was in love with a girl whose father (S. Kenneth Johnson, the "J" of DMJM) was an architect. She brought plans of a high school he designed to share with our third-grade class. And that was it.

By the age of ten, I was entranced by Frank Lloyd Wright's drawings and seduced by his line: how the line of the building would become the line of the foliage, then extend to become the line of the topography, and continue as the picture frame. This sublime integration was the font of my sensibility about architecture and landscape. Both were orchestrated, inseparably, by the construction lines that organized Wright's plans and elevations. Beginning with drawing, Wright melded the two—architecture and landscape—into the apotheosis of place.

While I was an undergraduate at Berkeley, this sensibility incubated organically within me. Marc Treib and Ron Herman's course on the Japanese landscape was transformative. At Harvard's Graduate School of Design, this integration would become a way of life. On my first day

opposite: Lehrer + Gangi Design + Build, Water + Life Museums, Hemet, photos by Tom Lamb



there, I set eyes on this beautiful woman—a landscape architecture student, as it turned out. After flirting for three months, we got together. Love, again, shaped my life as an architect. I was 22, not looking to marry; but I knew I had met my wife, Mia, so we married several months later. It was 1976.

That year, Peter Walker returned to Harvard with Martha Schwartz. Pete’s work was becoming the canon of contemporary landscape architecture; Martha’s work would soon become the iconoclastic canon. We all became best friends. What would become a lifelong conversation among the four of us about landscape, art, architecture, and family, began over the course of the following three years. We discussed the prevailing conflicts between “design” and environmental issues, and the imperative to synthesize them. This formative idea informs us to this day.

Pete exposed us to his newfound obsession for minimalism, the classicism of Le Notre, the critical nature of the ground plane, and the landscape idea of *parterre*, that is, the design on that ground plane. We also learned that the domain of landscape is not a subservient one to the domain of architecture, rather the yin to its yang.

We looked at so much work, from Carl Andre and Donald Judd to Sol LeWitt, Walter de Maria, and Richard Long. Fundamental understandings emerged about flatness and

the orchestration of the ground plane to make “place.” We visited art galleries and arboreta. Observing Mia’s study of plants, I also began to understand what differentiated the architect from the landscape architect. The tectonic rudiments, while similar in abstract space-making possibilities, were also different. The ceiling, for instance, is virtually always the sky in landscape. Forming the larger space of the landscape could be very different from shaping architectural space. While Pete and Martha often created landscapes without plants, the sensibility was virtually always grounded in the landscape ideal of nature.

There are a few living architects—and a bunch of dead ones—who occupy a portion of my brain as an architect: Frank Gehry and Richard Meier are top among them. The lessons of their work are seared into my brain, as they are to so many architects. My year working with Frank Gehry, twenty-four years ago, is undoubtedly the most important of my training.

The mentor whose oeuvre has most differentiated me as an architect is Pete Walker. Thirty years of ongoing conversation about everything related to design—coupled with occasional projects together—have, I believe, marked my work.

The design of my own studio, Lehrer Architects LA in Silver Lake, is a robust expression of my values as an architect. It has many influences: from Gehry, a place that spa-

tially and functionally celebrates making and work; from Meier, rigorous spatial zoning that results in visceral clarity in light; from LeWitt, Judd, Irwin, Stella, et al., saturated, sensual minimalism. But I think the defining differences can be found in lessons learned from Walker. When I saw the layout of his office in Berkeley twelve years ago, it struck me as amazingly simple and smart: a bunch of finger desks coming off a wall. That is where our design started.

Formally, the office design is about a serially organized ground plane with desks extruded vertically from it. Inside and out are one, courtesy of the ground plane and its flatness. It is blasted with natural light. These relationships are real, palpable, and, for me, not negotiable. Indoor/out working space—light, air, and sound—is essential to the good life. Whether it’s the hum of our team working, the little kids playing in the nursery school next door, the sound of cars down the street, or the birds above, this is what life is about. This “groundedness” grounds my architecture.

Our work always aspires to be about architecture and landscape. The Water + Life Museums Campus, designed with Mark Gangi, AIA, and Mia Lehrer and Associates (M+LA), exemplifies this. Set in the desert against a two-mile-long dam, the buildings have to stand their ground as they transform it. The ground itself is orchestrated to bring inside out and outside



in. Using the detritus of the dam construction, the ground of the campus becomes one with the dam.

At Temple Bat Yahm in Newport Beach (with M+LA), the entire new campus is centered on the Ark in the new chapel. It is conceived as a collection of architectural and landscape set-pieces, including the Parking Park, gardens, and courtyards. Processional allées and important axes are vividly expressed as parterre.

There is always so much talk about trans-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or some other “-inary” way of describing desirable practices. I think “architect” and “landscape architect” are really disciplines and titles of desire. As the quintessential synthesizers, “trans-”this and “inter-”that is what we do, and have always done. If we aren’t fundamentally “urbanists” in what we do, we are probably not doing the right thing.

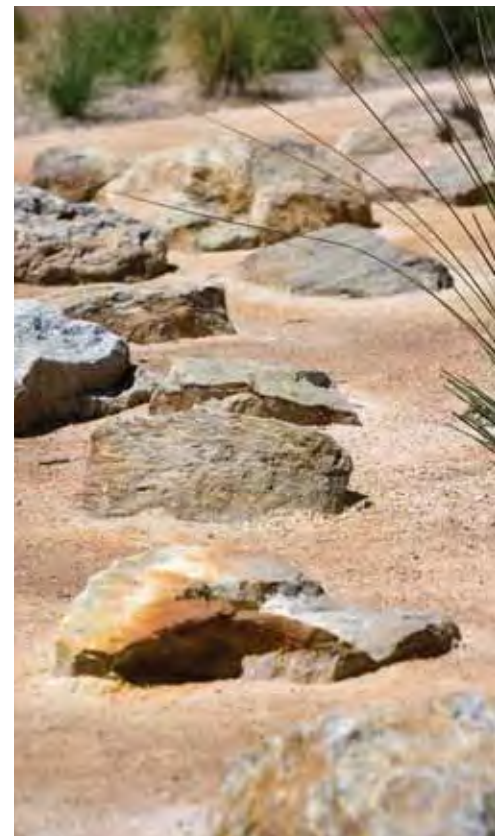
On the other hand, I know that my sustained relationship to landscape architecture, as described above, is a result of studying, living, loving, arguing, and making architecture, landscape architecture, and family with my wife, Mia, for more than thirty years. Ours is figuratively and literally a marriage of disciplines. This is our daily bill of fare. Just this morning at breakfast, Mia pulled out a drawing of a park she is working on under a bridge and we talked about it, discussing the gang issues,

the community meetings, and the exquisite possibilities of this particular design problem.

The potential domain of the landscape architect is ultimately much broader than that of the architect. This domain is the glue that binds, the great connective tissue: issues of broad infrastructure, watershed management, local projects writ into large ecosystems, great streets, and urban space. Ironically, in the academy and often in the world beyond, landscape architecture as a profession exists in the shadow of architecture. Its success will come from its internal strength and by developing strong, bright, and capable advocates. My peers and mentors are such (all too rare) exemplars.

As architects, our ability to orchestrate places of consequence begins with our embrace—marriage isn’t always possible—of our kindred discipline, landscape architecture. ●

opposite page: Lehrer Architects Office, Los Angeles, photos by Benny Chan/Fotoworks; above left and below, Water + Life Museums, Hemet, photos by Tom Lamb; above right, Temple Bat Yahm, Newport Beach, photos by Marvin Rand



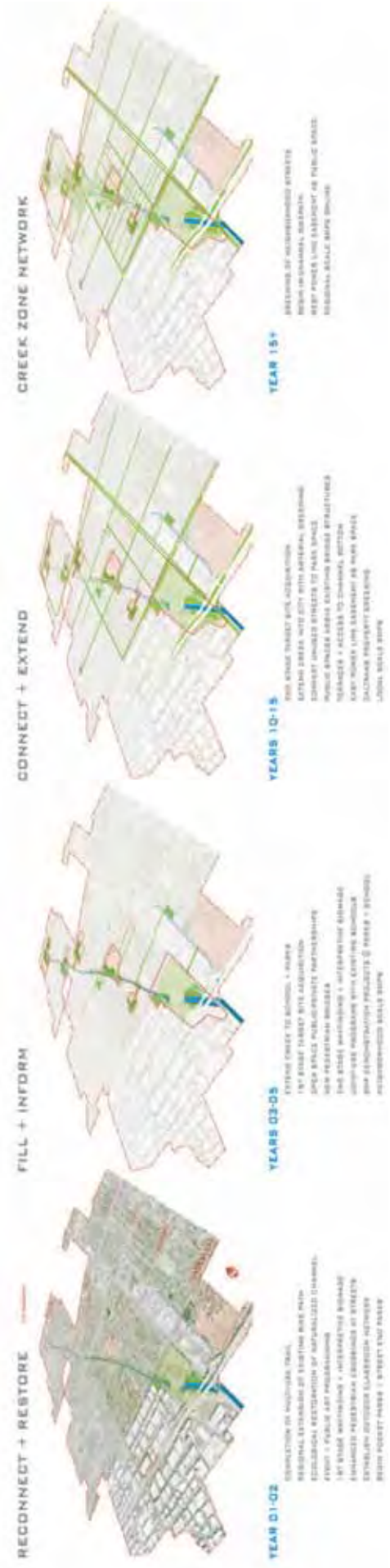
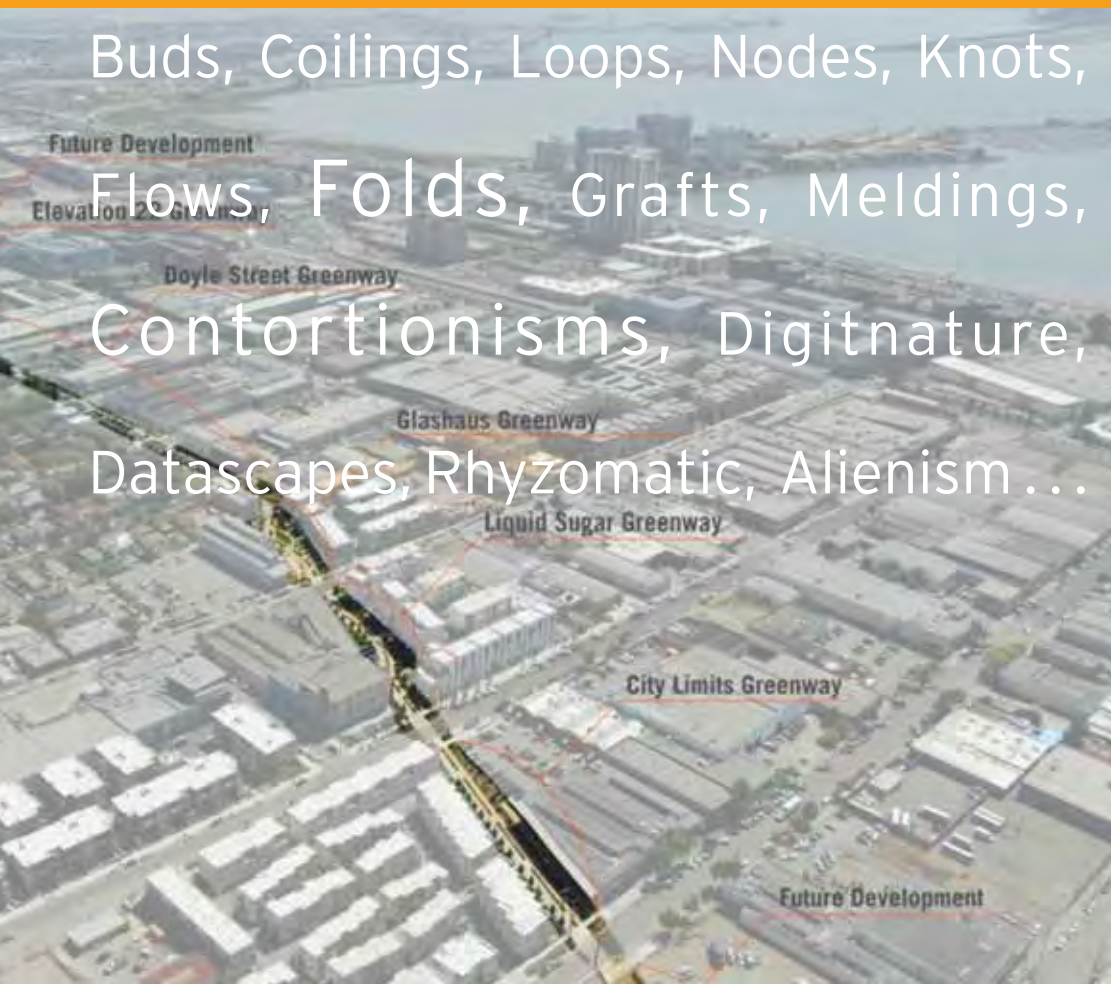
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 Conservation Development, Pixels,
 Transgenetic, Impermanences,
 Extroversion, Stains, Carpets,

Buds, Coilings, Loops, Nodes, Knots,

Flows, Folds, Grafts, Meldings,

Contortionisms, Digitnature,

Datascapes, Rhyzomatic, Alienism...



Proving...Ground:

The Potential of Landscape Urbanism in California

David Fletcher

“The lyrical play between nectar and NutraSweet, between birdsong and Beastie Boys, between the springtime flood surge and the drip of tap water, between the mossy heaths and the hot asphaltic surfaces, between the controlled spaces and vast wild reserves, and between all matters and events that occur in local and highly situated moments, is precisely the ever-diversifying source of human enrichment and creativity.”

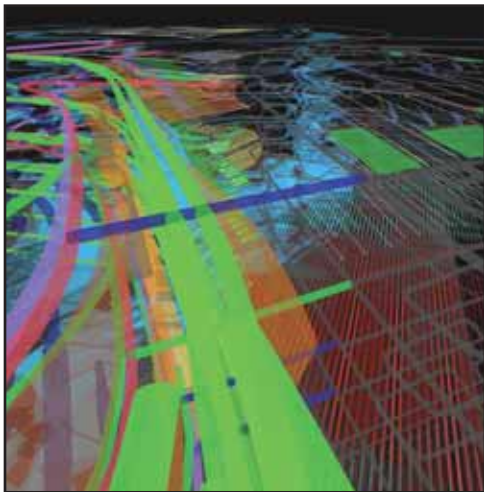
— James Corner, in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader* (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008)

“This emergent discipline (landscape urbanism) is not primarily about a sort of landscape gestalt—making cities look like landscape—but rather entails a shift in emphasis from the figure-ground composition of urban fabric towards conceiving urban surface as a generative field that facilitates and organizes dynamic relations between the conditions it hosts.”

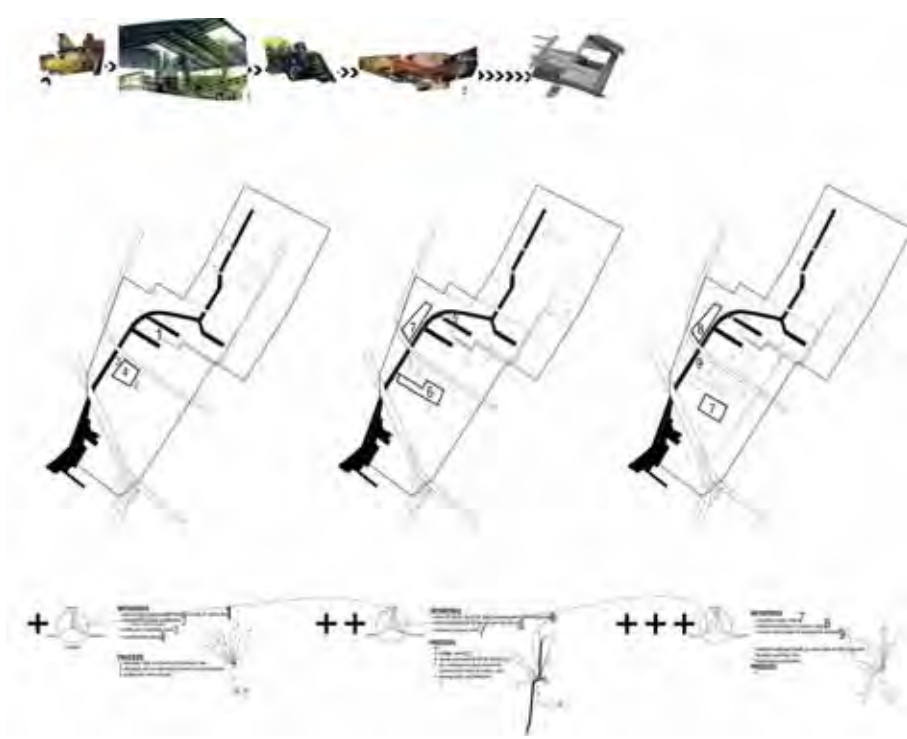
—Michael Hesel in *Landscape Urbanism: A Manual for the Machinic Landscape* (London: Architectural Association, 2003)

Landscape is becoming recognized as a powerful medium through which to address the larger environmental, social, and economic issues of our time. Increasingly, biotic systems, ecologies, watersheds, and open space are considered to be as important to the urban environment as infrastructure and built form. The very definition of landscape, popularly associated with the decorative or pictorial, is expanding to include the natural and the artificial, the lawn, the building, the city, the Sequoia grove. Field and void are becoming valued not merely as the residue of city-making, but as the medium of city-making.

Those working in the landscape medium are entering a time of “enlightenment,” brought about by the convergence of several key factors. Designers now have unprecedented access to primary data and web-based mapping sources, and we have the tools and collaborative potential



opposite left: GLS Landscape Architecture, Emeryville Master Plan; opposite right: David Fletcher, LA River Open Space Network, Los Angeles; above, Tom Leader Studio, Fresh Kills



to analyze, model, and represent the complex information available. Globally, a potentially lasting environmental consciousness, born in part of an awareness of resource scarcity, is compelling governments and communities to demand solutions capable of addressing the shifting dynamics of today's network cities. Yet, no individual environmental discipline—architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, geography, or planning—has proven effective at realizing the landscape's potential. Clearly, the expanded definition of landscape is too complex for any single discipline. We need a new synthetic practice that can address the complexities of contemporary urban dynamics.

California is the most geographically diverse state in the U.S., with some of the most extreme confluences of urbanism and ecology. Populations are rapidly increasing in coastal cities in earthquake zones where fire cycles determine the dominant ecologies. Within many of these cities, the landscape has become the locus of environmental and social debates. Recent public funding of open space bonds—such as Proposition 84, “Clean Water, Parks and Coastal Protection Initiative”—and large-scale public commissions offer great potential. Support for these bonds proves that open space

has become a priority, along with concerns ranging from the need for recreation and walkable/bikeable cities to regional water planning to the reparation of regional ecologies.

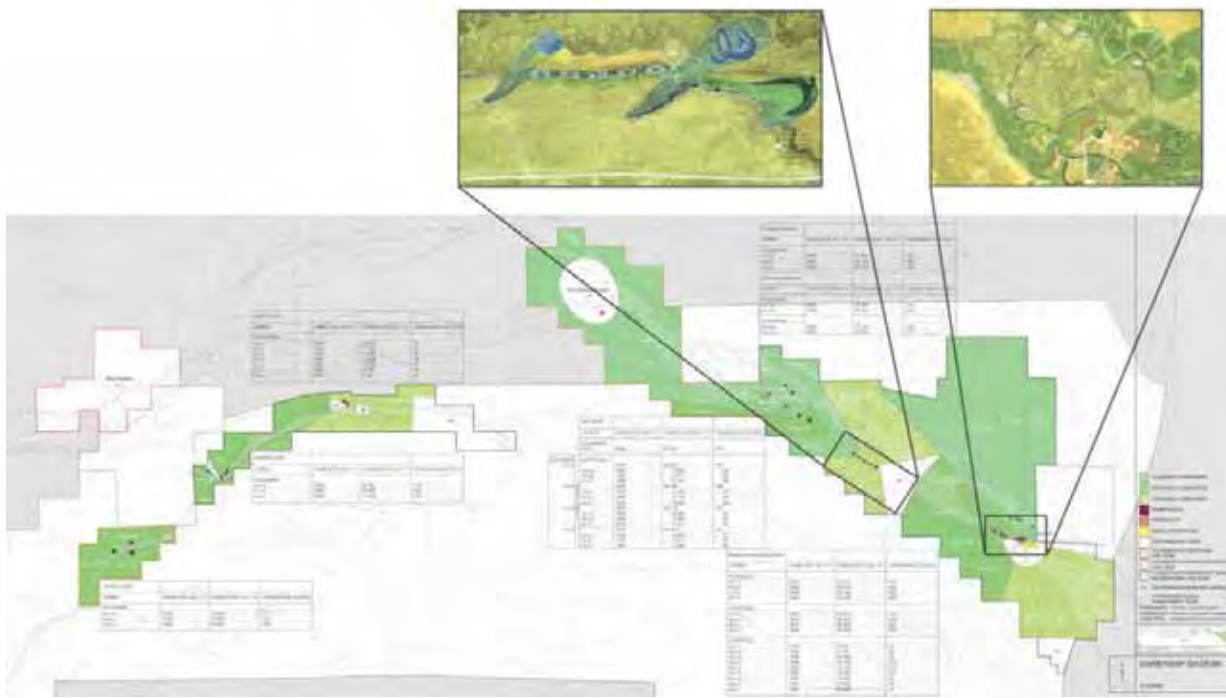
In California today, few open space projects are realized on greenfield sites; the emphasis is shifting to the infrastructural, the marginal, and the contaminated. Projects are more frequently within the post-industrial arena of military base closures, rail yards, brownfields, mining areas, transportation infrastructure, and landfills, which are in ample supply. These sites require a unique set of analytical skills, sensitive planning, and phasing strategies.

Today's competition briefs offer an indication of the complex demands placed on those who design our urban landscapes. “Multi-objective” and “multi-benefit” have become buzzwords. A park is no longer just “a park”; it must be considered within the spatial context of flows and connections, access and adjacencies. It must be culturally and historically contextual and revelatory. It must address energy conservation, water quality, pollution control, microclimate, and social interaction, while providing habitat and functioning as a component of a regional ecological and urban identity. Projects must address myriad constituents,

from soccer teams to birdwatchers, to survive public scrutiny. They must pay for themselves, with lifecycle costs carefully considered, and typically involve complex funding relationships: public/private partnerships, joint powers authorities (JPAs), and foundations. To meet these complex and often-contradictory demands requires a collaborative practice, in which multi-disciplinary teams analyze, synthesize, and ultimately design projects that may have unknown outcomes and forms.

Landscape Urbanism has emerged as the most promising discourse for integrating regional landscape planning and urban design, science and art, form and process. It combines knowledge and techniques from such disciplines as environmental engineering, urban strategy, landscape ecology, geography, and architecture into a practice that is both anticipatory and adaptive.

Landscape Urbanism refocuses landscape architecture's fundamentals: temporality, scale, ecology, infrastructure, and environmental ethos. It bridges the divisive dichotomies that plague the environmental disciplines—artificial/natural, inside/outside, form/function, human/animal, void/mass—by operating within the spaces between them. Going against



top-down, determinist models of design and planning, it investigates the indeterminate and the spatio-temporal. Rather than end-state solutions, it formulates scenarios that can adapt to change and unforeseen forces. This nascent discourse is committed to the generation of “operant” spatiality—the result of a commitment to habitat, biodiversity, infrastructure, water quality, in-situ reclamation, sustainable urban development, and energy generation. Throughout, ecological principles such as succession, normally applied to environmental systems, are applied to political, cultural, economic, and social systems. All are considered vital parts of the urban ecosystem.

The discourse was first introduced in California at the “Representing the Designed Landscape” conference at UC Berkeley in November 2000, where James Corner, of Field Operations, presented their entry for Downsview Park, a new public park on a decommissioned Air Force base in Toronto. Corner focused on new modes of analysis and representation, highlighting the use of layered mapping and diagrammatic analyses expressing the relationships among programs, ecologies, and development. He showed phased plans and montages of incremental site evolutions, generat-

ing adaptive solutions that play out over time. Firmly rooted in the legacy of Ian McHarg’s mapping and overlay techniques, this approach has inspired a new generation of practitioners, educated throughout the world, most notably at the University of Pennsylvania, the AA in London, and the University of Toronto.

It is clear that Landscape Urbanism is the most compelling contemporary model for practice. What is less clear is whether the body politic is prepared to accept the indeterminate and incremental. Public desires are more rooted in the 19th century picturesque than in the processes and “messy aesthetics” of habitat, and politicians and bureaucrats often prefer the quick-win to the incremental or unpredictable.

As landscape architects on the LA River Revitalization Master Plan team, our team prepared time-based scenarios, focusing on the river’s potential as a transportation and wildlife corridor network in which infrastructure, both grey and green, is intertwined in new, symbiotic equilibria, and where the River transforms the City over time. Through over 24 public workshops and countless agency meetings, we found people to be receptive to time-based strategies and less interested in the restoration of the river to its pre-development, “pastoral”

ideal. It became clear that community desires were remarkably well informed and supportive of innovative planning and design processes.

California could be a proving ground for an integrated, process-based practice. We must look more readily to the landscape, its systems and processes, as we reverse-engineer our cities to become more sustainable and ultimately more habitable. We are seeing significant shifts in the way we value the urban landscape, born of growing awareness of resource scarcity and the popular realization that a “park is more than just a park,” that our urban landscape is 99.9% time and must be planned to accommodate unforeseen outcomes and transformations. Landscape architects must lead the way, offering new narratives and using the tools that Landscape Urbanism has reestablished for projects of all scales—from the front yard to the urban greensward. ●

opposite left: Marcel Wilson, Gowanus Canal, Brooklyn, New York, Dirt Phases; opposite right: David Fletcher, Lake Elsinore Civic Center; above: Clark Stevens, AIA, APA, New West Land Company, Inc., Cottonwood Ranches Re-Inhabitation Plan, Daniel, Wyoming, Collective Ownership Diagram



Trading Change in the Delta

John Bass

“Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other.”

—James Madison, *The Federalist No. 10*

Design Mediation

Increasingly, architects, landscape architects, and urban designers find that the work they produce must mediate between development and public interests. This mediating role exists at every scale of development, from the back porch to infrastructure. This essay is the result of an interest I have in expanding the role of this mediating function of design work. I will discuss why and how the skill set at the core of our disciplines, coupled with information and communications technologies, might effectively mediate public dialogue on a contentious development subject. In this case, the subject is the California Delta, a place that is making the news on a more and more frequent basis.

How, or why, is any of this a problem for architecture and its associated disciplines? Our obligation to serve in the public interest gives our professions the authority of an objective platform vis-à-vis the various interests at play. In the context of any design problem, the drawings we produce are produced only after careful synthesis of the dynamic and often contentious interaction of cultural, political, economic, and aesthetic interests. Employing this analytic and representational skill set on a contentious landscape like the Delta, we can envision thoughtful and compelling design proposals at the scales of building, landscape, and infrastructure. These proposals can more fully embed the Delta’s distinctive uses, artifacts and places, historical events, and

fig. 1: Screenshot, left: Large Owner Axis, right: Lodgencamp thumbnails, Delta National Park website

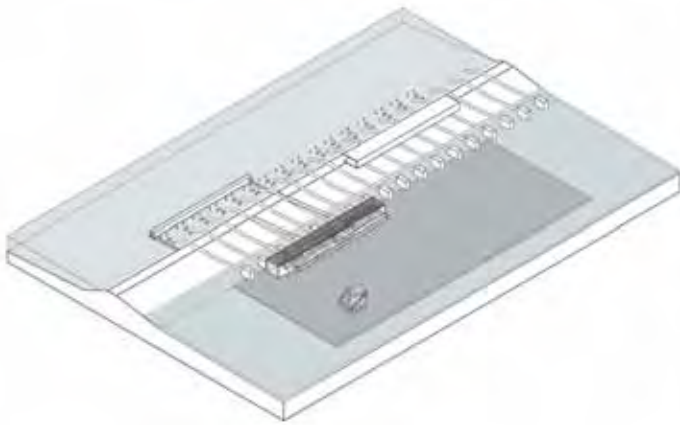


fig. 2: left, Shimasaki Memorial and pumping station; right, Bathhouse view, with farm camp building beyond

social practices in an exploration of the future of a changing public and private space.

What I will describe here is how design can reconsider infrastructures proposed through conventional planning processes, and how these infrastructures might become the sites of more complex and varied uses that embody the interests of diverse, often marginalized communities. Moreover, information and communications technologies have made it possible to engage networks of collaborators, interests, and communities tied together not only by geography but also by aspiration. I will describe a web-based forum and evolving archive that might expand community participation in discussions about the Delta's future.

A Vital Organ

Undoubtedly, the Delta's future will be characterized by change. As the source of more than half of the state's fresh water supply, the Delta is vitally important to the state's economy, and as the state's population continues to grow, its access to water supplies shrinks. Conse-

quently, a phalanx of community representatives, lawyers, hydrologists, environmental scientists, and civil engineers are studying how to increase the amount of fresh water supplied from the Delta. This is to be done by developing Delta water management infrastructure and, simultaneously, by restoring large portions of its nearly destroyed estuary ecosystem. This strategic marriage of the respective advocates of infrastructure and habitat development has produced a politically powerful coalition.

The agenda of this coalition was reflected most recently in *Delta Vision: Our Vision for the California Delta*, developed by a Blue Ribbon Panel appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger. Following a list of anodyne goals, the report is explicit in its description of the means to achieve them: state acquisition of easements across private property, improvements to and construction of levees, improvements to water conveyance and storage systems, and ecosystem revitalization projects—flood control, water delivery, and environmental infrastructures. It is less important to ask whether this

report is the product of a sufficiently democratic planning process than to ask whether the quality of the landscape and place imagined in such a vision could be improved through the synthetic, mediating skills of design.

Communities, Interests, Internet

If one is to work at a scale as large as the Delta, one needs new ways to engage with the Client. The Delta is a complicated place, with communities and interests that overlap, contradict, complement, and contend with each other. This makes it important to distinguish between what a "community" is and what an "interest" is. The word "community" is often used to describe a collection of people who are tied together by the neighborhoods, towns, and regions in which they live. But communities may also form around shared identities, outlooks, ethics, or other commonly held principles that are not based in self-interest or on geographic proximity.

The great potential of a website is that it might link people who live in far-flung places

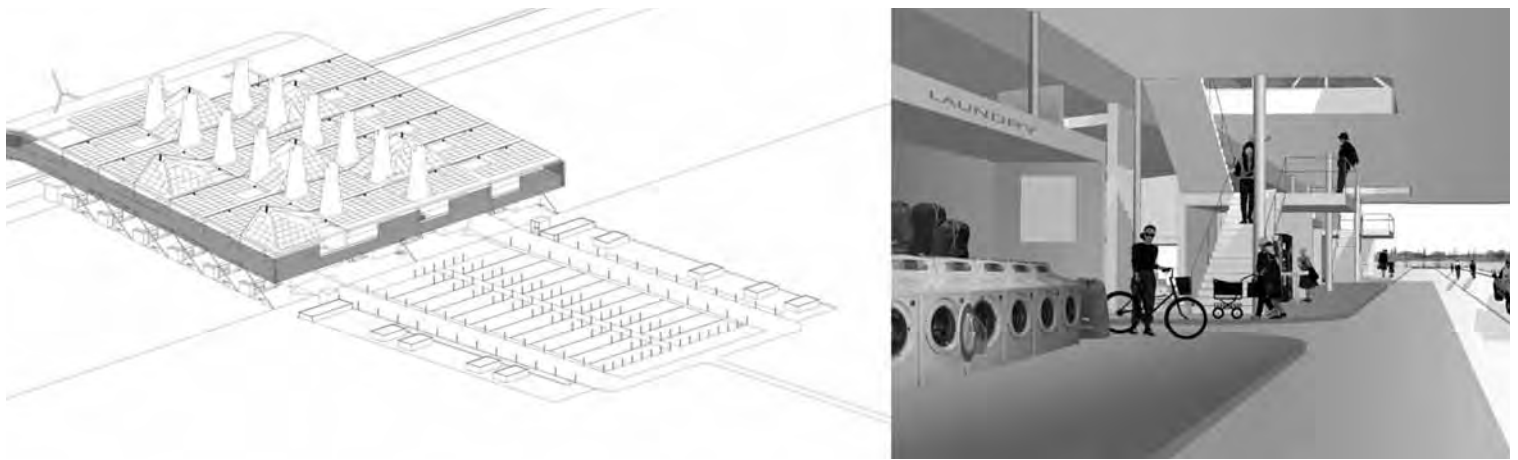


fig. 3: left, Lodgecamp diagram; right, View along levee crest

but who share the same goals and principles. The political influence of a now mature environmental movement is an example of the potential of a community that formed around shared principles, not shared location. But while their historical achievement is certainly an important one, today's Delta environmental advocates operate in a narrow world of technocratic negotiation. They could use a complementary voice and vision from outside.

The Delta National Park website can be thought of as a public meeting place in which communities and interests can engage our disciplines. The website operates on three levels; first, it provides information about the Delta through a series of links, images, diagrams, maps, and other forms of description and analysis; second, it contains a series of design proposals at the scales of sub-region, town and settlement, and building; third, it gives registered users the ability to interact with this content in the fashion of Google Earth's "Community" layer by uploading and situating comments and ideas, images and designs.

Case Studies: Shimasaki Memorial and Lodgecamp

The analysis and design work that I've done to date extends across scales from the region to the building. I've decided to focus on two building-scale examples in this essay. The Shimasaki Memorial and the Lodgecamp projects present different examples of how and what design might bring together in a broader coalition of interests and communities.

In order to galvanize a far-flung Delta community, one might create a space where the principle of recording ethnic history and the goal of historic preservation might come together. On Bacon Island, which is part of a private proposal for a water development project, there is a farm camp significant in the history of Japanese-Americans. The farm camp was the home of potato farmer George Shima, who in the early 20th century became the first Japanese-American millionaire. In the 2005 draft environmental impact statement prepared for the developers of the project, consultants acknowledged the camp's significance and recommended that a "PBS-quality"

video documentary be prepared as the method of preserving it. Considerable sums of money will be spent to reinforce the island's levees and construct large pumping stations, but it is unlikely that any money will be spent to physically preserve any portion of the camp.

My proposal for the Shimasaki Memorial expands the program for one of these pumping stations. The proposal preserves a single building from the farm camp and adds a boat landing, an archive of Japanese-American agricultural history in California, and a bathhouse. This proposal illustrates an alternative to the banal design implications of the ongoing technocratic planning processes by affirming that the Delta's future is not only as a fresh water supply but also as part of an expanding urban network of diverse uses and spaces.

The second case study addresses need rather than desire. It is also an opportunity to explore how time, migration, and exchange might be brought together in a new community of people and a rotational housing type to house them. The shortage of decent migrant

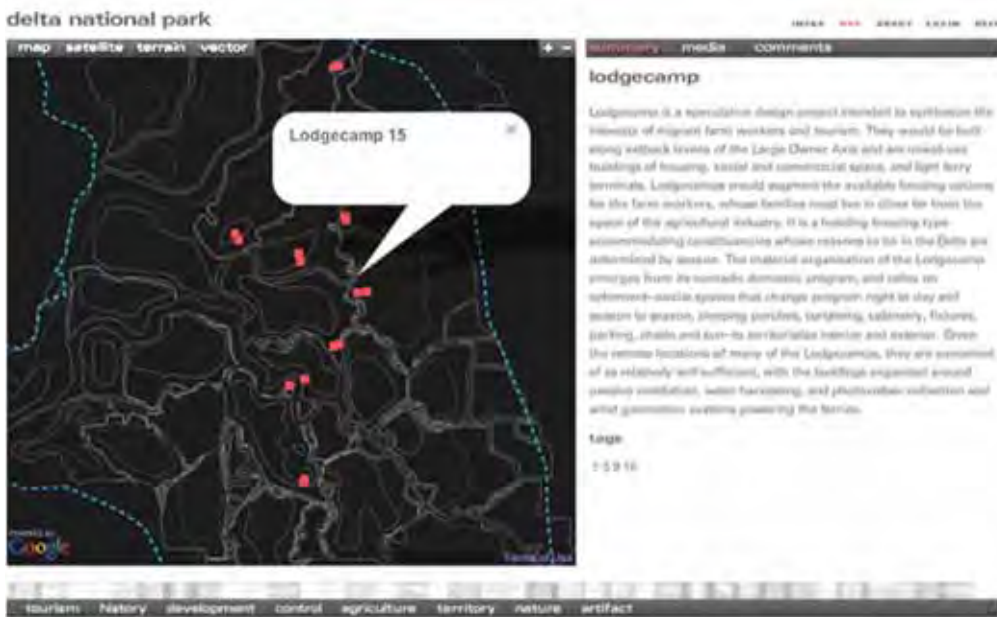


fig. 4: Screenshot, Lodgecamp locations, with Google Earth browsing and tagging example

and non-migrant farm worker housing is well documented. In 1995, James Gordon and other researchers at the UC Center for Cooperatives estimated that in California alone there was a shortfall of housing for 250,000 farm workers. Migrant farm workers, who by law and logic can only reside in the same location for 180 days, would share their housing with hunters who come to the Delta to hunt waterfowl, and bird watchers who come to watch those same birds, and a more general class of tourist who comes to the Delta to bike, fish, and otherwise recreate.

Sitting at the transition between the agricultural fields and the levee crest, the Lodgecamp is a dense, low-rise, high-density housing type that contains twenty-four housing units in a one-acre area. The units are lifted off the ground, and the ground plane is occupied by parking and an outdoor work area or shaded patio, depending on the user. A kitchen and eating area is suspended below the living and bedroom areas, which, divided by screens and curtains, are contained within an egg crate-like, plywood stressed-skin structure. Directly

above the road on the levee crest is a multi-use space that might house distance learning facilities, a day care center, and a walk-in medical clinic at certain times of year, but becomes an Internet café, deli, and social club at others.

National Park or Geopark?

The premise of the Delta National Park is that change is inevitable there, and design can be an effective means to explore the trading of private and public commodities and interests. Similar to the transfer of development rights regulations that exist in both rural and urban contexts, these trading processes could be effective tools for building broader coalitions and making design proposals that are more complex than simply infrastructure or habitat. And while the project is rhetorically called a “national” park, it is in fact more like a geopark, a distinct place under tremendous pressure to change. (Fifty-six National Geoparks in seventeen nations are currently members of the Global Network of National Geoparks assisted by UNESCO, which describes them

as areas “with a geological heritage of significance, with a coherent and strong management structure, and where a sustainable economic development strategy is in place.”)

At the scale of the geo-park, I have identified four “exchange authorities.” These are Delta sub-regions that are under specific threat and have unique opportunities to develop trading mechanisms between the various stakeholders whose interests are present there. Their extents are defined by particular geophysical situations, development pressures, and infrastructure needs. The Shimasaki Memorial and the Lodgecamp are located along what I have called “The Large Owner Axis” (see figs. 1 and 5), which is one of the exchange authorities.

The Large Owner Axis traces a north-south line between the two most important existing water-based infrastructures in the Delta, the Delta Cross Channel in the north and the State and Federal Water Projects in the south. It is part of the “Through-Delta Conveyance” option, once considered the preferred alternative for achieving increases in

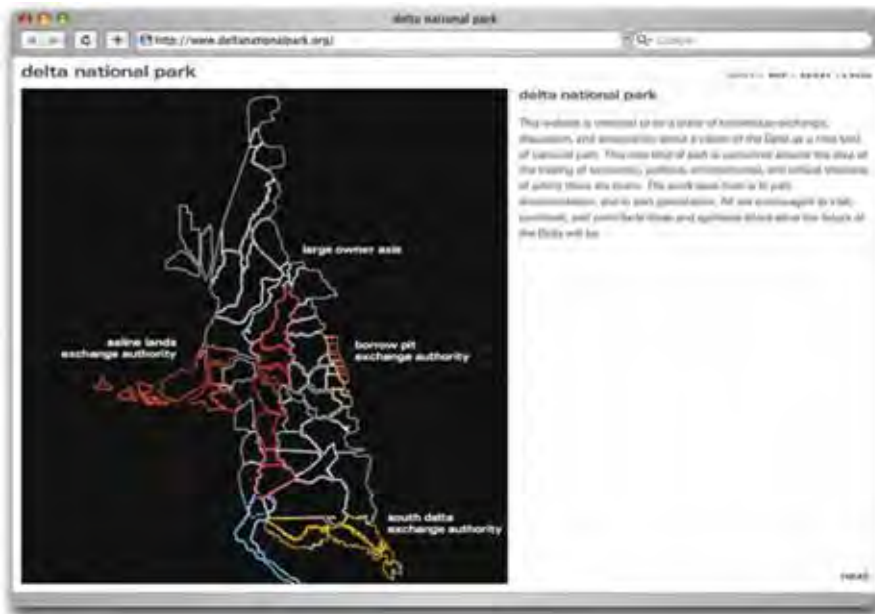


fig. 5: Screenshot, Exchange Authority map, from Delta National Park website intro

water supply. Recently, however, another water conveyance proposal has emerged to rival the through-Delta proposal. This new proposal would be constructed along the quickly urbanizing I-5 edge of the Delta. Called by the Public Policy Institute of California “Peripheral Canal Plus” in their recently published *Envisioning Futures for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*—the most up-to-date, comprehensive, and readable independent assessment of the scientific, physical, economic and political situation in the Delta—this new (or not so new) alternative runs through the Borrow Pit Exchange Authority (see fig. 5). Although I have done some preliminary mapping of the I-5 edge of the Delta, studying its suburban morphologies, infrastructures, and land uses, the new peripheral canal proposal opens up interesting design territory.

It is not in the best interest of Californians to accept a future Delta landscape that is little more than water and environmental infrastructure. The rapidly urbanizing Delta

perimeter will only increase the numbers of people who already look to the Delta to provide various types of recreational diversion. And it is already evident that developers will continue to make planned development proposal forays deep into the below-sea-level polders of the Delta, creating suburban landscapes only vaguely informed by the Delta’s specific geographic qualities.

The Delta website is intended to be a public meeting place where people with varied knowledge, skills, and concerns come to share ideas and opinions about the past, present, and future of this place. A web-based multidisciplinary project that situates alternative proposals for the Delta’s future might be able to do what James Madison was getting at when he proposed to “extend the sphere” beyond the interests of the majority. The Delta National Park website has a spatial and scalable component, and it is not only interactive but collaborative as well. The Delta is too big for an individual to handle alone, and what I’ve produced simply establishes a context for

the work of others. The site is now operational at www.deltanationalpark.org, and its public function has begun. Registered users are able to upload comments and contributions, and I look forward to fielding questions and providing direction on possible projects to anyone who wishes to join in producing content for the site. ●



2007

AIA San Joaquin - Awards Program

Paul Halajian, AIA

Design awards programs have long been a topic of debate among architects and perhaps even the public. Architects bestowing awards on other architects is viewed by some as detracting from pragmatic practice and, as such, awards programs are seen as counterproductive. Others view awards programs as a venue to recognize the most current, noteworthy work of our peers, celebrate it, publish it, and, most importantly, learn from it!

Architects in California have demonstrated an understanding of the conversation between architecture and place, climate, culture, and the diverse living patterns in California. The history of California Architecture is punctuated by a bold line that runs through the San Joaquin Valley. The quality, depth, and breadth of practice among the members of the AIA San Joaquin Chapter were recently exhibited in submissions for the 2007 AIASJ Awards Program. This year's jurors were Frank Bostrom, AIA, James Wirick, AIA, and Zigmund Rubel, AIA.

Our goal as a Chapter is to present our work to our peers throughout the state as a way of displaying the richness and variety of expression that is generated by the Valley context. Architecture is seen as a catalyst for change in this culturally diverse region that is facing climatic, economic, and social pressures unlike any other region in the state. The quality of design exhibited in the 2007 AIASJ Awards Program is a strong indication that architects in this region are being called upon to improve the quality of life through a better built environment for residents of the San Joaquin Valley.

opposite, Award of Merit, Clovis North Educational Center
Child Development Center, Darden Architects
Photography: Mullins Studio



Award of Honor

New Harvest Church
Anthony C. Pings and Associates

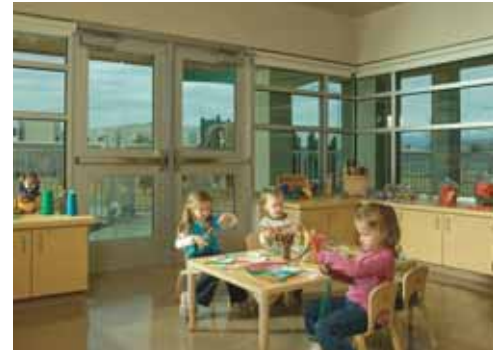
Photography: Edgar Briseño (above, top right and bottom right), Jeff Johnston (right middle)

An abandoned fruit packing plant has been adapted for reuse as a community based church. The Architects skillfully captured the youthful and playful character of the young, progressive congregation by embracing the industrial nature of the existing structures. A plaza screened from the street creates a central core, which unifies the existing structures and sets the stage for future phases. All spaces serve dual purposes to maximize efficient use of a limited budget.



above images: Before





Award of Merit

Clovis North Educational Center
Child Development Center
Darden Architects

Photography: Mullins Studio

The new Child Development Center is the culmination of a collaborative effort between the local community college district and the local school district. It is located on the campus of the Willow International Center Community College, which is being developed across the street from a new intermediate school and high school. The architects met with experts in the field of childhood development to better understand the relationship between behavior and environment. Their research addressed ways in which the developing mind is influenced by light, color, form, and space.





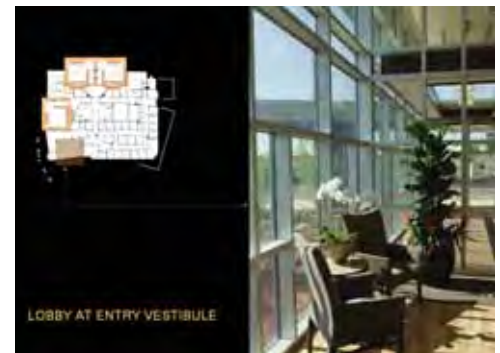
SOUTH ELEVATION AT ENTRY VESTIBULE

Award of Merit

Radiation Oncology Center
Anthony C. Pings and Associates

Above and top right, composed by Edgar Briseño, photo by
Krautestills Photography; bottom right, photo by Tika Phipps

A major healthcare provider commissioned the architects to design a prototype facility for radiation oncology within a general office complex of a highly corporate character. The facility was to have its own identity and presence, yet tie in contextually to the architecture of the complex. The project prototype was to be the “test bed” for the provider’s oncology service. The project scaled down the corporate massing to a human scale by adding a patient-based order in its massing and articulation.



LOBBY AT ENTRY VESTIBULE





Award of Merit

California State University Fresno
Science 2 Replacement Building
Taylor Teter Partnership

Photography: Steve Whittaker Photography

Science 2 is the first building constructed on the campus of CSU Fresno in the new millennium. This 72,000 square foot building provides multi disciplinary classrooms, dry labs, department offices, and faculty offices. The building program did not call for study spaces or spaces for social interaction needed to enhance learning and the collegiate experience. During the initial design phases, the architects learned that students studied in their cars, because there were no places to study near the site. Study spaces and a courtyard were provided within the program area and the project bid 7% below budget. A grand rotunda serves as a study space and marks the entry to the courtyard.





Award of Citation

United Japanese Christian Church
DKSJ Architects

Photography: DKSJ Staff

The United Japanese Christian Church was designed to meet the demands of two merging congregations. The scale of the church was kept low to harmonize with the surrounding residential neighborhood. Entry to the church is marked by a graceful, translucent canopy, which offers an embracing gesture to worshippers while providing protection from the harsh climate. The circle is a prominent symbolic and psychological theme featured throughout the classrooms, fellowship hall, and worship space.





Award of Citation

**Kern Schools Federal Credit Union
Taylor Teter Partnership**

Photography: Iger Studios

The twin, mirror-image buildings that head-quarter the Kern Schools Federal Credit Union are the first LEED certified buildings in the San Joaquin Valley. The client tasked the architects with creating a working environment that was energy efficient, pleasing architecturally, and efficient to maintain. The architects worked collaboratively with the client, developer, and contractor from project inception to meet the measurable, stated goals. The effort resulted in worldwide recognition as one of 12 Honorable Mentions in the ASHRAE International 2008 Technology Awards Program.





Award of Citation

Stanley Residence
T-Squared Architects

Photography: Jason S. Gray

This custom residence for a young family with four children is situated within the flood plain of a river, on a five-acre lot bordered by a walnut orchard and a private country club. The Tuscan inspired scheme satisfied the client's desire for European influenced design. Outdoor living spaces mediate between the mass of the two-story house and the natural character of the site by capturing views of the golf course, the orchard, and the river beyond. The architecture and interior design carefully introduce daylight as a way to create a light-filled, open feeling appropriate to the place.





Lived-Well Award

U.S. Employees Federal Credit Union
Darden Architects

Photography: Mullins Studio, HS Barsam Photography

Completed in 1980, this building is a complement to a facility designed in the 1950s by the same firm. The strength of the composition is derived from the conceptual clarity that carries from the earlier building to the later one. The composition is founded on a strength of form that transcends fad. This precept has proven to be sound, as fashion in architecture has changed over time, but the building has remained an example of late modernism done with skill. The roof form appears to float on a ribbon of glass protected by a thoughtfully designed overhang. The dramatic section is dominated by a vertical light-shaft, which admits natural light from above. A plaza and a sculpture garden expand the visual boundaries to extend the space between the two structures. ●



Then 1980



David Meckel, FAIA

Amount of world population who lived in cities in 1800

Under 3%
In 2008: over 50%
By 2050: over 65%
www.192021.org

Estimated percentage of ground surface impermeable to precipitation

35% in Fresno
90% in San Francisco
www.sciencenews.org

Size of US land area covered with impervious surfaces

An area equal to the state of Ohio
www.sciencenews.org

Length of new roads added to the US each year

10,000 miles
www.sciencenews.org

National average of tree canopy cover in major US cities

21%
San Francisco's canopy: 12%
San Diego's canopy: 8.6%
www.fs.fed.us

Landscape alphabet soup

ASLA American Society of Landscape Architects
CELA Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture
CLARB Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards
EDRA Environmental Design Research Association
SCUP Society for College and University Planning
LAAB Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board
LARE Landscape Architecture Registration Examination
LATC Landscape Architects Technical Committee
www.asla.org

Magazines you'll find in the library of SWA's Sausalito office

Garden Design
Gardens Illustrated
Horticulture
Landscape Architecture
Landscape Journal
Places
Planning
Urban Space
www.swagroup.com

Number of US schools with accredited landscape architecture programs

67
31 undergraduate programs only
13 both undergraduate and graduate programs
23 graduate programs only
www.asla.org

Recent pass rates on the Landscape Architecture Registration Examination

Legal - 73%
Analytical - 68%
Design - 33%
Structural - 57%
Grading - 24%
www.latc.ca.gov

Number of landscape architecture firms

US - 6,829 (with 43,156 employees)
CA - 978 (with 9,419 employees)
www.census.gov

Number of landscape architects in the US

33,000
www.asla.org

California landscape architects awarded the ASLA Medal

1975 - Garrett Eckbo
1976 - Thomas Church
1978 - Lawrence Halprin
1989 - Robert Royston
2004 - Peter Walker
2007 - William Callaway
www.asla.org

California landscape architecture firms given the ASLA Firm Award

2005 SWA Group
2007 Sasaki Associates
www.asla.org

Only state in the US that doesn't license landscape architects

Vermont
www.clarb.org



The Fresno ArcHop

Kiel Famellos-Schmidt

Among the public, there is a genuine curiosity about architecture and a mystique that surrounds architects. In contrast, the Central Valley's news media (print, television, and internet) exhibits ignorance and/or disregard of architecture's importance to the vibrance of a city. Our conclusion is to avoid being reactionary as opposed to fighting the media on every subpar article. With ArcHop, we take architecture to the public in an effort to educate them and give them the tools to think critically about the built environment.

The need for an improved built environment in Fresno and the Central Valley is evident. While growing rapidly, there are few examples of quality planning, architecture, and landscape. The state of our built environment does not reflect the talent and potential of our local design community. This, however, is not the state of our arts and culture, which are vibrant and excelling.

In October 2007, ArcHop was launched as a quarterly program of the AIA San Joaquin Chapter. The program emphasizes the importance of quality architecture by showcasing a gallery exhibition of architectural works and panel discussions of relevant architectural topics. ArcHop gets its name from the successful monthly Art Hop event held in Down-

town Fresno. Art Hop brings the public in close contact with artists in galleries and studios. From this interaction comes a higher understanding of art on the part of the public. We model our event on the premise of Art Hop, and also share its date and heavily trafficked venues, thus building on the symbiotic relationship between arts and architecture.

Turn-out for ArcHop has been strong. 500 people attended the October event. We had 400 for the January exhibition and standing room only for the panel discussion. The April event grew to fill two venues and nearly doubled in panel discussion attendance. ArcHop continues to grow in popularity and relevance.

In planning the forth event, we look to students. Fresno lacks an accredited architecture school. All of our brightest designers leave the region to study. The July 3rd exhibit will showcase the work of these students, paired with a panel discussion with architectural educators. ©

For more information email archop@gmail.com

Anthony C. Pings and Associates, New Harvest Church, photo by Michael Urbaneck