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Closing Keynote

Reworking the Landscape Idea

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Abstract:

The idea of landscape, considered to be a way of seeing as view or prospect, is a cultural concept which emerged from new approaches to the production on the land since the Renaissance. The Landscape Idea traditionally carried cultural and moral significance because the observer remained apart. This paper discusses the difference between being within the land in contrast to being an outside observer. It suggests that the Landscape Idea should be reworked so that it can include being within landscape. The arguments for revising the idea of landscape draw from the innovative activities on marginal urban landscapes. The paper concludes by suggesting a number of ways that the reworked idea of landscape can play in design processes.

In today's era of big ideas, the 'great' idea of globalisation appears to be faltering. This is particularly evident in 21st century cities. While some cities are growing and often not doing it well, many others are shrinking, suggesting that there is a limit to how much urbanisation can be stretched over the globe, because rips and tears are appearing and the resulting voids are getting bigger. There are so many crises emerging in the concept of global urbanisation that as the renowned urban planner, the late Jane Jacobs, warned as recently as 2004, we have a 'Dark Age Ahead'.¹

The Emergence of the Landscape Idea

The concept of Dark Ages is generally associated with Medievalism which, although obscure, was not necessarily a dire age. This candle-lit period was a time for reflection and deep thought; a time for learning and studying; a time for the slow gestation of ideas; and a time for respecting the land as a place of dwelling and working, a place of worship and as a place of belonging.

During this period under Feudalism, the relationship with the land embodied a natural economy² where neither the products from the land nor the land itself, were regarded as commodities for the market place. Instead, the land was held communally, requiring duties, obligations, and customs from the lords down to the serfs and back up again, in a complex system of interlocking obligations. The land and the people were closely intertwined. At this time ideas and beliefs about the land were mystical, possibly fearful, but always respectful, where people went about their lives as 'existential insiders'³.

This way of living and working with the land began to change as mercantile capitalism gradually replaced Feudalism. Now the products from the land and even the land itself could be sold. This shifted the people's relationship with the land and according to the cultural geographer, Denis Cosgrove⁴, was the beginning of the Landscape Idea. The word 'landscape' became part of the lexicon, denoting a way of *seeing* the land rather

than a way of *being in* the land. This way of seeing, represented through art and design, was mediated through subjective human experience and hence was a social construct which was fundamentally about society and economy. Inevitably this required an associated shift from being an insider in the land to being an outsider who could view a landscape, distanced in the main through commodification.

For over 400 years the Landscape Idea evolved from 15th century single point perspectives, to the 17th century representations of horizontal extensions over the territory (Plate 1), to the elaborate connoisseurship associated with the view in 18th century formal gardens (Plate 2).



Plate 1: Single Point Perspective
Boboli Gardens, Florence (a.p.1993)



Plate 2: The 18th century Picturesque view,
Stourhead, Dorset, (a.p.1990)

By the 19th century with the rising new middle class, derived from the profits of industrialisation, the Landscape Idea's horizons diminished. It was reworked as municipal parks and mountain rambling to provide recreation for the workers. But a more serious challenge lay in the rising power of scientific and industrial thought. For scientists, the concept of 'landscape' had little value as an objective scientific term. The Landscape Idea became marginalised to scenic places (plate 3) away from powerful cities and industry. The city, rather than the land, was the focus of society now that the market dominated all aspects of life.



Plate 3: The Landscape Idea as scenic views, Alps, West Austria (a.p 2004)

Living and working in the city reinforced the Landscape Idea as a view outside the city and outside oneself. Instead intimate engagements with nature in the city were associated with small city parks and gardens.

Thus in 'landscape' we are dealing with an ideologically charged, complex cultural product, laden with symbols and meanings. Under various phases of capitalism, 'landscape' was consistently reformulated as an idea that bounded, defined or designed territory, overlain by aesthetic connotations that represented the affective relationship between land and social life.

Since September 2008, capitalism has been faltering under the Global Financial Crisis. By the 21st century, capitalism has become synonymous with globalisation and its associated anonymity. Who now determines the view? In a globalised world, where is the outside? What is the cultural construction of landscape today?

Reworking the Landscape Idea

Perhaps it is time to revisit the Landscape Idea, adjusting the view so that it looks in as much as it looks out, while we move to a new era where the relationship between people and land is more akin to medieval values. This suggests that we once again become 'existential insiders' within a system of interlocking duties and obligations related to land and place. This does not mean a return to Feudalism but rather that we can draw from its communal concepts while creating something appropriate for the 21st century (plate 4). The question is, can we reconcile the concept of landscape as a particular way of viewing from without, to include a reworked way of existentially being within?



Plate 4: City farm, Brisbane, Australia and Romanowski Park, Detroit, USA
www.northeaststreetcityfarm.org.au
www.greeningofdetroit.com

There are some indications that this is beginning to happen on the marginal lands, the holes left in shrinking cities, where empowering ideas about landscape are evolving. In the detritus of the post-industrial era and the chaotic endgame of globalisation and Neo-Liberal Capitalism, there are emerging sites of innovation and optimism. Marginal lands are allowing for the redemption of hope and a return to the original aspirations of modernity. Like the Medieval landscapes, they are sites for reflection and contemplation (plate 5), which, through their disturbing qualities, stimulate a form of creativity that keeps us engaged with deep dwelling. They act as counterfoils to the predictable city of commodities and programmed living.



Plate 5: A chair for contemplation, Sydney (a.p.1999)

Since the early 1980s planners and designers have been dominated by neo-liberal utopianism in a desire to escape the dystopia of post-industrial ruins. Contemporary theorists about utopianism question naïve utopian planning that ignores the contributions within dystopias; in particular, learning to live with disorder and diversity. The sociologist, Peter Kraftl, argues that, for good town planners decay in the present and in the future should be one of the tricks in the planners' box⁵.

The urbanist, De Sola-Morales, in his manifesto 'Flexible Differences'(1998) saw similar potential in desolate sites. He was wedded to the DeLeuzian concept of contemporary flexibility which he saw as ethically and socially responsible. He believed

'the task to be accomplished is not the conservation of the past but the redemption of hopes that we held in the past – the redemption of optimism'.⁶

Sites of Optimism

Where are these sites of optimism that are exploring a different relationship of landscape and people? In Europe and parts of USA, optimistic loci vary from actual places such as in Rome, Berlin, Lausitz and Detroit to projects such as the Shrinking Cities, IBA, and Stalker activities, to forums for ideas such as Urban Catalyst and ArchiLab.

ArchiLab in Orléans

ArchiLab ⁷ has become a major forum for research into architecture and planning the city. Since 1999, teams of designers and planners from all over the world have been invited to introduce their projects at annual Orléans International Architectural Conferences.

In early 2000, conferences explored popular themes, such as the dynamics of urban flows; alternative 'Earth Economics', and architecture for the age of globalisation. Contemporary urbanity, however, was not challenged until Archilab2004 '*From Naked City to Smart Mobs*' which explored the seminal work of Debord and contemporary Situationism undertaken by "Smart Mobs" ⁸; those new, informal organizations produced by the rise of wireless computer networks.



Plate 6: Archilab2004 posters, www.archilab.org

The curator, Bart Lootsma, made shrinking cities the key exhibits at the conference, saying '*Globalization does not just produce new prosperous metropolitan concentrations of urbanity; it also causes large areas to shrink. Parts of the "Third World" are folding into the first.*'⁹

By 2008-9, ArchiLab has gone beyond identifying the problem and now calls for strategic ways to address population decline, regional competition and globalization, presenting the European continent as the laboratory to test ideas.

The Shrinking Cities Project

Far removed from the boosterism of growing cities, shrinking cities are increasingly places for innovation because their prevalence is challenging traditional ideas of the city

and urban development. They pose such basic urban design questions as, what gives a city coherence if the built environment is no longer a continuum? Heroic master planning in this context is inappropriate; instead, it is necessary to understand how cities develop in unplanned and autonomous ways in order to undertake less orthodox interventions.

In this respect, concepts of 'weak planning' using 'soft factors' which draw from cultural developments, new forms of communication and the establishment of unexpected social networks, such as 'Post It' cities¹⁰, are emerging. This is most tangible in the subculture of youth music. Many shrinking cities have produced important new musical cultures; techno arose in Detroit and much of British punk and hip hop came from Manchester and Sheffield in the late 1970s, contributing to these cities' redevelopment in the 1990s.

Clearly shrinking cities are a cultural challenge. They put our current urban development values into question and they generate new urban cultures that demand innovative models for action.

The German architect, Philipp Oswald, took up this challenge by initiating the Shrinking Cities International Research Project¹¹. Based in Berlin, Oswald's *Shrinking Cities Project* is a daunting undertaking that aims to come up with remedies, specifically, artistic and insightful architectural and planning solutions, to the problem of shrinking cities.

Intriguingly, shrinkage is being seen as an opportunity as much as a problem. To Oswald and to his team of artists and designers, the shrunken city is a template for the city of the future, a canvas on which creative minds can develop new and better ways of living.

Shrinking Cities Project- Reinventing Urbanism¹²

Oswald hypothesizes that at some stage in the 21st century, shrinking and growth will be in equilibrium, but the processes will result in two quite different societies in terms of urban development, economic growth, lifestyles, and much more.

Through his international ideas competition '*Shrinking Cities - Reinventing Urbanism*'(2004), new ideas of the city, based on the specific peculiarities of shrinkage, were explored by inter-disciplinary teams from around the world, using four shrinking cities, Halle/Leipzig, Germany, Manchester/Liverpool, Detroit and Ivanovo, Russia. The ideas were provocative and highlighted that the shrinkage of cities radically challenges traditional disciplines of landscape design, architecture and urban planning. However, Oswald argues, this does not discharge such space-oriented disciplines from their responsibility to design.

Equally Oswald challenges the design responses to places of decline which use symbolic strategies via iconic architecture or by the artificial urban hype associated with consumerism and entertainment. He argues these modes are now exhausted.

Re-inventing Urbanism - Stage Two

In the second phase of the project (2004 to 2006), Shrinking Cities Project focused on eastern Germany, first with an ideas competition then with directly commissioned thematic works. Responses ranged from artistic performances to self-empowerment projects, from landscape interventions to planning and economic action concepts.

Berlin

Although Halle/Leipzig, Manchester/Liverpool, Detroit and Ivanovo have been pivotal case studies, Berlin leads the way in transforming urban wastelands into sites of optimism. Considered 'poor but sexy', Berlin's marginal spaces are hives of activity (plate 8 & 9).



Plate 8 & 9: Culture of the makeshift, Berlin (photographer Mark Brown, 2007)

Berlin is deeply in debt and yet is rich in creative potential derived from the numerous idealistic people from all over the world who are surging into the city searching for socially relevant solutions in a changing world. It would seem that orthodox economic measures cannot overcome Berlin's financial problems; therefore the city is an ideal exploration site for restructuring the notion of work and society. Berlin is now a laboratory with the courage to experiment¹⁷. Despite the many problems, the city is enriched by spaces of imaginative possibility. As Berlin's former Senator for Science, Research and Culture, Adrienne Goehler, points out, today Berlin thrives on being more heterogeneous, dirtier, poorer, and more squalid than all other German cities¹⁸.

To see Berlin as a laboratory means taking seriously the city's attempts to develop a culture of the 'makeshift'¹⁹. This way of living and working, where one does not know today what tomorrow will be like, requires city spaces to operate differently. The fleeting, the nomadic, the transitory, and the makeshift, which Berlin offers in abundance, match this unpredictable way of life. Marginal places are not experienced as blight, but as workshops for inspiration.

Berlin is pioneering self-help projects, mostly with high ecological standards which are capturing the interest of urban planners. Temporary gardens, cultivated collectively, emerge in the wastelands between houses. Structural ruins become movie and theatre spaces. Vacant areas are revived by cultural and social cooperatives which band together for economic production and ecological management. These 'precarious' actions²⁰, which might once have been attributed to bohemians and hippies, have become the forerunners of more highly evolved concepts and designs for future ways of working and living (plate 10 Gleisdreihof Park).



Plate 10: Gleisdreihof Park, Berlin
www.sla.dk/Images/indhold/gleisdr/gleisdr2.jpg

The organisation Milan-based group, *Multiplicity*, acting as urban detectives, search for these innovative activities in wasteland sites because as the director Stephano Boeri points out, *'It is in these sites, at the periphery of geopolitical imagery that Europe is changing most rapidly. It is here that innovations emerge and it is possible to imagine the future...'*²¹

Urban Catalyst

Another urban forum, Urban Catalyst²², has developed a unique archive for architects, planners, municipalities, developers, property owners and others from their investigations into *temporary uses* in residual urban areas. They note that conventional architecture and urban planning are increasingly unable to address the radical transformation occurring in the cities and landscapes we inhabit.

This is exemplified by the *Arizona Markets*, one of the largest black markets in the Balkans, providing work for 30,000 people in over 2000 businesses; an example of a self-planned city on wastelands²³. When the market grew to a size where problems of sanitation and fire risks needed to be addressed, the district government prepared a master plan that turned the market into a conventional shopping mall. As a result the vital and innovative market disappeared and the shopping mall is empty. Attempts to remove the Mumbai slums have similarly failed. The inability of planners and designers to grasp the significance of spontaneous, flexible and innovative development in public space highlights how much can be learnt from informal activities in wastelands.

To address this Urban Catalyst's interdisciplinary network from five European metropolises (Helsinki, Amsterdam, Berlin, Vienna and Naples) coordinated by Studio Urban Catalyst at the Technical University of Berlin, has developed models of action and strategic planning tools, which integrate the potential of temporary uses into long lasting urban developments.

Despite this, the indeterminate status of urban marginal lands and their non-planned, spontaneous 'urbanity' constitute a pronounced paradox for established city planning and urban politics. Based on marginal lifestyles, informal economies, artistic experimentation, a deliberately open public space allowing for a high degree of social and cultural inclusion, these complex qualities of animated 'indeterminate' spaces are difficult to incorporate into planning procedures. As a result 'non-planning' planners are

emerging on the urban scene. This new type of planner may creatively alter the urban agenda²⁴.

Detroit: A Different Urban Paradigm²⁵

Many Berliners see Detroit as a kindred spirit, a mystical place of great music, art and architecture, a postindustrial apocalypse that is as much a rich breeding ground for creative minds as it is a victim of late capitalism. Detroit's techno music is famous in Berlin, where there is more than one dance club dedicated to the Motor City's minimal, raw beats²⁶. For all these reasons, Detroit's raunchy reputation is seen to fascinate Germans. Despite this, the emerging urban paradigm in Detroit is different.



Plate 11, 12: Abandoned suburban Detroit, Photo Scott Hocking

<http://static.mediamatic.nl/f/cgcz/image/157/4058-310-203.jpg>

www.treehugger.com/files/2009/03/schools-out-forever-in-detroit.php

Unlike the relatively compact European city, Detroit has been an extensive low density suburbanized American city. As a result, the extent of abandonment has resulted in a kind of sprawling anarchy (plates 11,12). Yet out of the ashes something new and optimistic is happening that is far removed from the models used by planners or architects. Because of the destruction of so many houses and the demise of industry, the city now is a strange tapestry of old urban and new 'rural' spaces. The 'rural' areas, made up of more than 500 urban farms, intersect strangely with the decaying infrastructure of a big city. These community-initiated farms are resulting in a different urban paradigm for Detroit where an outer suburban ring surrounds a re-ruralised core of new farmland and forests occupying the former inner-city (plates 13,14). This rural core has been facilitated by the cooperative Detroit Agriculture Network which has assisted communities to undertake urban agriculture in a range of forms.



Plate 13, 14: Detroit urban farming ; Fabrizio Costantini / Bloomberg News

www.cityfarmer.info/2008/12/11/gms-bust-turns-detroit-into-urban-prairie-of-vacant-lot-farms/

<http://goodspeedupdate.com/2009/2534>

Although most of the farms are on squatted land, the success of the community-initiated enterprises has encouraged the city administration to develop 'Land Banks' where for merely one dollar, residents can receive the title to land, providing they maintain the land and pay taxes. Many people in the slums of Detroit are purchasing the land together, say five blocks for \$5 and establishing new collectives.

The Architecture of Resistance

Apart from urban farming, there are other ways the social collective has become strong. Kyong Park, the Director of the Detroit-based International Centre for Urban Ecology (iCUE), is working together with the local community on ways to find a new method of architectural practice, called 'the architecture of resistance'²⁷. He believes that this is resulting in an exemplary form of community sustainability rather like an extended family or a feudal village.



Plate 15: Fourth Street Band, www.detroityes.com/news/070726/601pics/301.htm

An example of this is the revitalization by a group of squatters of the almost entirely abandoned Fourth Street in West Detroit (Plate 15). From squatters on abandoned land in the 1980s, Fourth Street has become an inclusive multiracial neighbourhood with a club, a community garden, a children's playground, an open art gallery and a yearly festival that attracts people from all over Detroit. This project is under continual threat of total demolition by the city which wants to widen the highway running parallel to Fourth Street

Other grass roots programs, such as Detroit Summer, have evolved and consolidated. This multi-racial, inter-generational collective, is working creatively to bring about youth engagement in local projects, particularly youth-led media arts.²⁸ As well, intergenerational projects help youth to participate in urban revitalization projects, the most successful being the work on community gardens with Southern-born African-American elders, known as 'Gardening Angels'.

People have been moved by the image of young people and elders reconnecting with one another through tilling the soil. The result has been an escalating urban gardening movement: neighborhood gardens, youth gardens, church gardens, school gardens,

hospital gardens, senior independence gardens, wellness gardens and the uniquely North American Kwanzaa gardens²⁹.

Detroit Utopianism

Detroit's plight has generated a number of utopian gestures. On Detroit's east side a radical utopian vision is proposed for urban redevelopment drawing heavily upon an idyllic rural past. Called Adamah which in Hebrew means 'of the earth', it is a plan for a new collective of more than 3000 acres³⁰.

Adamah's creators see this as a model for development in the 'post-industrial' age (plate 16). The project relies on agriculture, including greenhouses for vegetables, grazing land and a dairy, a tree farm and lumber mill, community gardens and fish farming. The plans also include windmills to generate electricity, ivy-covered freeway buffers to help clean the air, a canal for both irrigation and recreation, plus co-housing to deepen a greater sense of community. It calls for the creation of renewed living and work spaces in such old industrial buildings as the former Packard auto plant.



Projet Adamah

Plate 16: Adamah Proposal

<http://detroit-disurbanism-project.blogspot.com/2009/02/humilite-comme-posture.html>

Originally proposed in 2000, Adamah's utopian dreaming still resonates for the architectural students at University of Detroit Mercy who recently produced a documentary on the concept. However by 2009, Adamah exists as a more manageable enterprise known as Sustainable Detroit³¹, concentrating on *inspiration and networking*. The organization now focuses on bringing together local groups that are doing inspiring, Adamah-like work, such as the five-acre community farm and orchard in Romanowski Park in southwest Detroit. Seen as a business model rather than a farm, the project's success is measured in large part by community members' willingness to put in the sweat equity needed to produce bountiful harvests that can provide food for the entire neighbourhood.

A smaller, slightly anarchic, utopian gesture, the Heidelberg Project³² by the artist Tyree Guyton, who armed with a paintbrush, a broom, and neighborhood children, his wife, and grandfather, began by cleaning up vacant lots on Heidelberg and Elba Streets. From the refuse they collected, Guyton began to transform the street into a massive art

environment (plate 17). Vacant lots literally became 'lots of art' and abandoned houses became 'gigantic art sculptures.' He also integrated the street and sidewalks into his mammoth installation. It has caused many problems with the city administrators who have recently succeeded in demolishing some of the work.



Plate 17: Heidelberg project

<http://99problems.org/2009/10/detroit-is-not-urban-wasteland/>

Micro-gestures are also evident in the work of individuals who find ways to survive as post-industrial gleaners. The ingenuity of people collecting abandoned material in post-industrial cities has been the focus of Detroit artist Scott Hocking³³. Called 'scrappers' these people rarely sleep; working through the night to reclaim discarded metal (plate 18). The scrappers are not alcoholics, junkies or beggars. Instead, like the tradition of European gleaning, they are focused on opportunistic encounters in their difficult work.



Plate 18: 'Scrappers' in Detroit, photo Scott Hocking

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/scotthocking/tags/scappers/>

Where does the Landscape Idea fit in this scene? In many ways the notion of self-help challenges the original concept of the Landscape Idea. As Detroit loses its tax base, it becomes more difficult to maintain city services. Some communities have taken it upon themselves to provide streetlights, schools, security, community centres and garbage pickup. Like the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, any attempts by the city to regain control through citywide land use plans are resisted because such neighbourhoods have developed a form of autonomy. The relationship between people and their place is free

from outside regulations; but it is not without its internal duties and obligations. Such self-help collectives reflect the geography of the informal³⁴. These are Hakim Bey's Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ).³⁵

Back Alley Bikes Enterprise³⁶

Empowering landscapes are often extensions from a small catalytic source. Back Alley Bikes began in the summer of 2000 by employees of Detroit Summer. The original purpose of the enterprise was to provide transport for the youth who traveled throughout the city during summer doing intensive community gardening. In the following years, the programs at Back Alley Bikes became increasingly popular with neighborhood residents. Volunteers managed the programs at the shop, all of which were free to the public, including bike art workshops, "Mechanics In Training" for older youth, and "Community Drop-In", in which anyone could come and work with a mechanic to learn how to repair their bike.



Plate 19: Back Alley Bikes
<http://thehubofdetroit.org/> photos by Cybelle



Plate 20: Eccentric Bikes

The bike as a symbol of alternative urbanism informed community events such as bike themed movie nights, an annual Bike Art Auction, in which local artists have contributed paintings and drawings displaying their love for the bicycle (plate 19, 20). These 'little tactics' and their associated personal stories are much more akin to acting within rather than the Landscape Idea of maintaining distance in order to see.



Plate 21: Eccentric bikes, Bat Bike
motorcityblog.blogspot.com/2008/10/haunted-bi...

Detroit's culture of cars, bikes and eccentricity (plate 21) featured in the Berlin Shrinking Cities Exhibition. The installation, '*Slim's Bike*' by Hernandez and Turner was based on finding "Slim's Bike" in the garbage after James "Slim" Thompson died in 1998. They made a documentary by interviewing people who knew Thompson or saw him riding the

elaborately decorated bike, which was 10 feet long and 7 feet high. The documentary reports the folklore that Thompson was rumoured to have done time for sex crimes, but the documentary does not prove or disprove the rumour. Instead Thompson is presented as a metaphor for the two faces of Detroit: the friendly and artistic on one hand, the mysterious and deviant on the other. This paradox, the great and eccentric along with the bad and ugly, persists.

Stalking the Margins *Stalking Detroit*

Tarkovsky's film, *The Stalker*, (1979) (Plate 22) has inspired a number of designers who are concerned about the hegemonic effects of spectacle cities on the nature of contemporary urban space.



Plate 22: Scene from *The Stalker*

<http://billsmovieemporium.wordpress.com/2009/05/26/review-stalker-1979/>

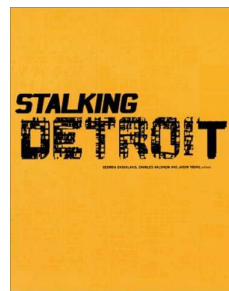


Plate 23: *Stalking Detroit* essays

Stalking Detroit (plate 23) is a collection of edited essays³⁷, exploring alternatives for the postindustrial landscape; Detroit providing the template for the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of the city's disappearance into landscape. James Corner's essay³⁸ suggests a return to flexible and open spaces, like the early commons allowing random alliances and uses that eventually program the space in loosely accepted ways. He uses the British common, Hampstead Heath in London, with its traveling carnivals, sporting events and clubs, disorganized fireworks displays on Guy Fawkes Day, and tradition of healthy walks, bicycling, nude sunbathing, and swimming as well as youth gang fights and gay activities as an example, particularly as it operates this way within the dense surrounding urban fabric of the inner city.

He suggests actions in these proposed flexible urban spaces will emerge from social codes and conventions that regulate the relationships between urban actors in post-industrial societies thus creating a performative urbanism.

Likewise Charles Waldheim sees recently abandoned spaces of the city as potential commons which can be designed through the discipline of Landscape Urbanism, which like landscape architecture, is an interstitial design discipline, operating between buildings, infrastructural systems, and natural ecologies.

Interestingly the Landscape Urbanists have a different agenda to the grass roots organizations in Detroit. Waldheim and Santos-Munne³⁹ proposed 'Decamping Detroit'; a design process which requires decommissioning the land from the city's legal control in four stages; "Dislocation" (disconnection of services), then "Erasure" (demolition and jumpstarting the native landscape ecology by dropping appropriate seeds from the air), then "Absorption" (ecological reconstitution of part of the Zone as woods, marshes, and

streams), and then “Infiltration” (the recolonization of the landscape with heteropic village-like enclaves).

They argue that this reversal of normal processes opens the way for a new hybrid urbanism, with dense clusters of activity and the reconstitution of the natural ecology, initiating a more ecologically balanced, inner-city urban form in the so-called ‘void’. But inner Detroit is not a void, it is a growing matrix of farms and self-help centres. Waldheim’s proposal seems to require that people desert their hard-won urban farms (plate 24).



Plate 24: Urban Farm, Detroit

<http://www.celsias.com/article/urban-agriculture-career-path/>

Perhaps the Landscape Urbanists’ ways of seeing is not so different from the bird’s eye view of master planners⁴⁰, made even more removed by seductive abstract representations. They seem to be similarly locked into the Landscape Idea which ensures that they view from afar, preferably from above (plate 25).



Plate 25: Views of proposals for Governor’s Island and Fresh-kill, NY

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/08/22/fresh-kills-new-yorks-next-wind-farm/>

A less environmentally evangelistic but no less idealistic response to Tarkovsky’s ‘Zone’ is promoted by the Italian collective STALKER.

STALKER in Rome

Stalker is an Italian collective of artists, architects, writers, film-makers that engage with marginal lands and abandoned areas on the edge of cities. Stalker undertakes multiple roles as custodians, guides and artists for these places through activities which seek to reveal ‘the apparently unsolvable contradictions of salvaging through abandonment’⁴¹. Unlike the Landscape Urbanists’ proposals which are developed from a distance and

made even more removed by abstract representations through complex computer algorithms, Stalker maintain that only an archive of direct experiences, such as walking, can inform responses to these 'territories'.

They guide walkers into uncertain spaces which create a sense of apprehension. But it is only in this state that one can experience heightened perceptual intensity that makes the journey/walk a series of unfolding discoveries. As the Cologne artist, Boris Seiverts, claims, one the last urban adventures is walking the urban wastelands.⁴²

Stalker argues that by defending these lands, the experience of the city is enriched by 'continuous and diffused confrontation with the unknown'. This sentiment is further evident when they suggest that this is the only way to recover 'the wild, the non-planned, the nomadic' within the heart of the city; providing, I would suggest, the intellectual and creative space for a new Medievalist way of seeing (Plate 26, 27).



Plate 26, 27: Crossing the Territory with Stalker
<http://digilander.libero.it/stalkerlab/tarkowsky/manifesto/manifest.htm>

But their way of seeing is not as melancholy as Tarkovsky's 'Zone'. Instead Stalker transforms the contradictions embedded in these places into optimistic poetic relationships, saying

*To intervene on a territory is not merely an act of planning but an act of creation, an attempt to assemble contradictions and transform them into poetic relationships: ultimately one is more attentive to modifying how space is perceived than the way space itself exists*⁴³

Their walks become oppositional atlases, revealing the people and places not included on city maps. Despite their serious intent, they exhibit a light touch in their dérive-inspired 'transurbances'.⁴⁴

STALKER and others such as MIS-GUIDE in Britain see walking as a critical practice, capable of aesthetic and social transformations of a landscape. Stalker's various 'walks' have criss-crossed Rennes, Milan, Miami and Berlin. Similar to the Situationists, in each city their walks result in an abstract map based on drifting through residual spaces. Using these maps, they present a reverse reading of the city where the urban mass turns into an amorphous background in contrast to the vitality of the city's marginal zones.

Neither Waldheim's focused environmental strategies nor the grass roots collective enterprises in shrinking cities, nor even the poetic engagements undertaken by STALKER, address Philipp Oswald's position, namely that although the shrinkage of

cities radically challenges traditional disciplines of landscape design, architecture and urban planning, this does not discharge such disciplines from their responsibility to design.

The Crisis for Designers

If the crisis does not discharge the space-oriented disciplines from their responsibility to design, perhaps seven possible scenarios for design are worth considering as representations of a reworked idea of landscape. Designing for this reworked Landscape Idea includes many ways of seeing landscape, ranging from the outsider's objectified view, to the empathetic insider immersed within landscape, to those situations which require resonating between inside and out.

Design Scenario 1: Continue the Spectacle

As Oswald predicts shrinking and growing will reach a form of stasis but there will be two types of urban formations with different lifestyles, economies, and much more. The cities derived from growth may well seek to continue to design new urban landscapes that provide the setting for spectacle and play.

The city as a complex of digital pleasure zones exemplified by the current Designated Urban Entertainment Developments will continue as themed and branded places of commodified play with its functional and totalitarian characteristics, including pre-determined promenades, organised urban events, and highly controlled environments for shopping (plate 28).



Plate 28: Khan Shatry Entertainment Centre, Plate 29: Lily Pad, Bio-cities, Solent News & Photos Kazhakstan <http://www.inhabitat.com/2007/03/26/norman-fosters-entertainment-center-in-kazakhstan/>

The spectacle may also embrace concepts for new 'bio-cities', seductively combining digital hedonism with environmental sustainability objectives (plate 29).

Design Scenario 2: Extend Landscape Urbanism's Environmental Priority

Landscape urbanism posits environmentally designed landscapes as the fundamental ordering system in the contemporary urban dispersed and fragmented condition. In terms of sustainability, this approach is highly relevant, as it is tactical, focusing on a minimal intervention to spur the most fundamental change in priorities. The preeminent concern is designing for a re-invigorated ecology.

Landscape urbanists' ideas are abstract representations, employing computer algorithms to achieve creative mapping (plate 30). Such abstraction is an extreme of distancing in the Landscape Idea, not only through techniques for understanding and representing the landscape, but also the ability for the landscape itself, molded after this abstract view, to foster stronger connections with its inhabitants.

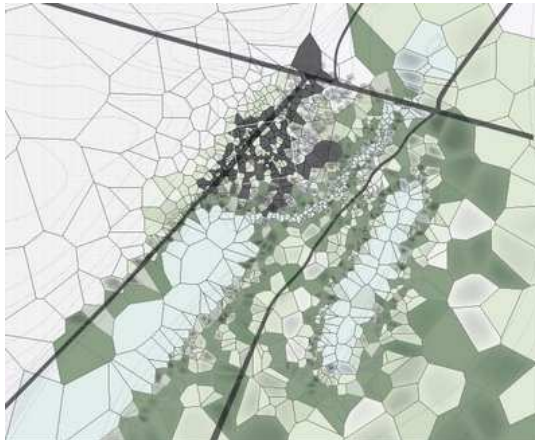


Plate 30: Landscape Urbanism mapping- site plan for Mammoth Museum
by Balmori & Assoc landscapeandurbanism.blogspot.com/2008_04_01

Design Scenario 3: Allow for Beauty in Reworking the Landscape Idea

Elizabeth Meyer⁴⁵ argues for including beauty and aesthetics into the concept of sustainability by designing landscapes that create awareness, empathy and care. She urges designers to rescue the 'visual' from spectacular design, bringing it back into the collective of senses. She calls for design as an immersive poly-sensual experience (plates 31,32,33).



Plate 31, 32,33: Recycled materials, Ballast Point, Sydney, Australia, a.p. 2009

Where ancient concepts of beauty are smooth, round, and harmonious, Meyer argues that such concepts should now include the ecological paradigm and conceptions of beauty based on the resilience of materials subject to extremes; in other words, new designs for coping with the uncertain.

Design Scenario 4: Explore Subdue Designing with Community Collectives

Community-design is often seen as unpalatable to many designers, however the ways marginalized communities have created the spaces they inhabit have inspired some artists and designers such as Vito Acconci, Lebbeus Woods, and Kyong Park from the International Centre for Urban Ecology (iCUE) (plate 34).



Plate 34: Community Garden, by *What If*, UK Graze the Roof , Glide Memorial Church, SFO
Images from <http://112.bp.blogspot.com>

The iCUE's manifesto endorses Gil Doron's architecture of resistance⁴⁶ where art and design are enmeshed into the political and social life of cities, not from corporate or institutional bodies but rather, created works in concert with the imagination and aspirations of communities. Such designs work against the tidy logic of monolithic plans and allow a community to create its own social and public space.

In this context, some cities are looking at new models for city gardens (plate 35) which involve community engagement as responsible citizenship. Harking back to the Medieval system of interlocking duties and obligations for all, from the city institutions to the homeless, these city gardens could be the locus of local food production, new forms of bartering, innovative environmental design, resilient and flexible examples for 21st century communities.



Plate 35: Urban Farming in Germany <http://www.cityfarmer.info/category/meetings/>

Medievalist values also allow for the slow gestation of reflective ideas; and time for respecting the land as a place of dwelling and working, as a place of worship and as a place of belonging.

Design Scenario 5: Explore the culture of temporary landscapes

Building on the creative ways the 'culture of the makeshift' has been explored in Berlin, designs for temporary engagement with places can provide enjoyment as well as enriching marginal lifestyles and informal economies. Such designs invest public open space with a high degree of social and cultural inclusion (plates 36-39).

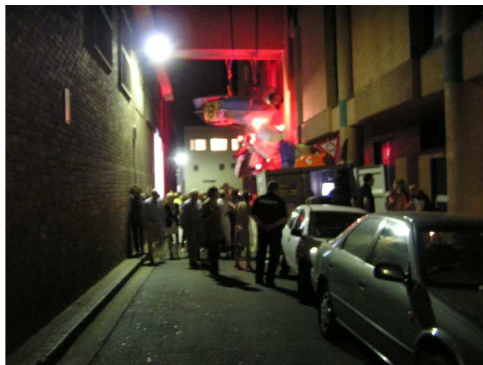


Plate 36: Live Lane, Sydney; a. p. 2009

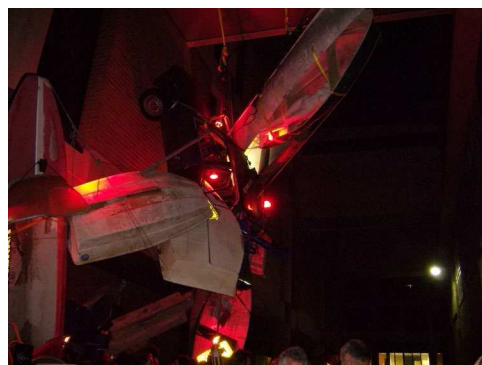


Plate 37; detail of Live Lane; a.p.2009



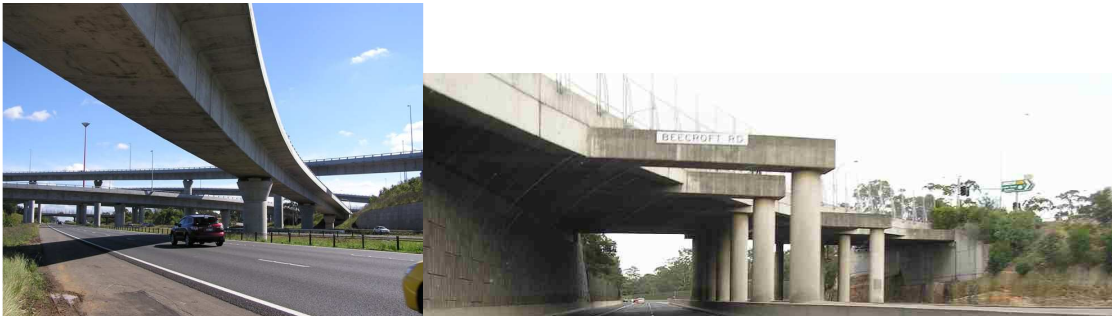
Plate 38: Ephemeral landscape, Rotterdam a.p. 2004



Plate 39: Saving a river, 'River Quiver', Pages River, Australia, a.p. 2009

Design Scenario 6: A New Language of Spatiality for Infrastructural Landscapes

The infrastructural landscapes, abandoned, functioning or new, have a drama that requires a new language for their spatiality so that these places elicit a sense of community empathy and belonging (plates 40, 41).



Plates 40,41: Intriguing spatiality of motorway infrastructure, Sydney Australia a.p. 2006

One of the winners of the 2006 design award for European Public Open Space, NL architect's Zaanstad Underpass has addressed the marginal space under motorways. The Südgelände Nature Park in Berlin is particularly interesting as it allows for flexibility and change.



Plate 42,43: Südgelände Nature Park, Berlin a.p. 2009

There are also other designers who are working with wastelands and derelict sites in open-ended and experimental ways. In contrast, the Turcot Yards in Montreal (plates 44, 45) highlight the inadequacy of landscape designs that seek to conceal infrastructure instead of comprehending the layers of meaning in these places and their surreal possibilities.⁴⁷



Plate 44: Walking the Turcot Yards
urbanphoto.net, photographer Karen Spencer, 2008



Plate 45: Art in Turcot Yards
http://brandavenue.typepad.com/brand_avenue/page/2/

The Barcelonan urbanist, Ignasi de Sola-Morales, understood the latency in such areas. Warning against expedient interventions in these residual spaces, he suggests their treatment should be undertaken within a *contradictory complicity*⁴⁸ that does not shatter the very elements which maintain their continuity in time and space. Can designers intervene in these spaces without asserting control and orthodoxy? Ignasi de Sola Morales says ‘*Only though attentive concern with continuity – not the continuity of the planned, efficient and legitimated city – but listening attentively to the flows, the energies and the rhythms which the passing of time has established.*’⁴⁹

Design Scenario 7: Developing a New Alliance with the Supernatural

In some cases, wastelands are so vast that they almost defy redevelopment. Numerous books have been devoted to the poetic work of Peter Latz in the industrial wastelands of the Ruhr Valley, but of a vaster scale and possibly more challenging is the Fürst-Pückler-Land in the south of Brandenburg where from 2000 through to 2010 a new concept of ‘landscape’ is emerging.

New designs at 24 sites in the Lausitz, an extensive region of open-cast lignite mines between Berlin and Dresden, are seeking ways to deal with one of the most extreme post-industrial landscapes in Europe today. The area is now Europe's largest landscape construction site where mountains of overburden are remodeled and new lakes created.



Plate 46: new ecologies after mining, Sielmanns Naturlandschaft, Wanninchen www.wanninchen.de

Different options were considered for these dramatic landscapes.⁵⁰ One was an extension of the existing remedial work where the biggest coal pits have been turned into lakes, waste heaps re-vegetated, and remaining industrial structures demolished. However by erasing the region's recent history, the sites become bland and monotonous. Another was to do nothing; to leave the landscape to its own devices as a kind of wilderness. But this ignored dangers of subsidence as water in the pits gradually rose, as well there was a risk of contaminating nearby waterways.



Plate 47: Emerging oases in the mining desert, Welzow-Süd open-cast mine www.iba-see.de/en/erleben/projekte/projekte

The selected option initially focuses on educational tourism and water recreation, while allowing time for ephemeral landscapes to appear and disappear, and yet unknown uses can evolve, such as the Welzow-SÜd oases (plate 47).

In these vast wastelands one can experience slow time as the pits gradually fill (plate 48). Watching the inexorable submergence of the dune-like remnants of the mining process and the plants that colonise these spoil heaps is engrossing. This indeterminate landscape where vanishing dunes become odd-shaped islets fringed by drowning plants and saplings, ultimately lost beneath huge spans of water, evokes the qualities of the Sublime, so recently lost to us with the impact of tourism on over-used wilderness (plates 49, 50).



Plate 48: The largest inland lake emerging at Cottbus Ostsee www.iba-see.de



Plate 49: Muskau Coal Crescent www.muskauer-faltenbogen.de



Plate 50: Furst-Puckler-Park Branitz, www.pueckler-museum.de

Revising the Burkean Sublime⁵¹

The Sublime was fundamental to the Landscape Idea because although the supernatural evoked terror, it could be viewed from afar in relative safety. However the concept of the Sublime varied. The 18th century philosopher, Edmund Burke, saw the Sublime as terror; whereas the philosopher, Kant, saw the Sublime as infinitude arousing the awareness of one's inability to comprehend the immeasurable. Both positions are relevant today.



Plate 51: Grose Valley sublime landscape, the Blue Mountains, Australia, a.p.1983

Is there now a new form of Burkean Sublime in the vast wastelands of former mining in Eastern Europe? Such sites arouse a sense of awe promoting contemplation and reverie. The 18th century, the Burkean Sublime is a now fading phenomenon. We are no longer in awe of wilderness. There is not a wild place left that cannot be visited by tourists. But mining wastelands evoke the awesome failure of modern industrialism. In these dark, uncertain, confusing sites lie compelling and fearful challenges to our image of ourselves as sophisticated 21st century urbanites.

The 18th century Sublime engendered humility. It was intended to stimulate reverie. Its power could overcome the excessively ordered universe envisioned by the Enlightenment. Perhaps the role of 21st century Sublime is to engender some humility

by the awesomeness of industrial failure but equally the alarm over current globalised control, particularly now that cracks and fissures are appearing.

Conclusion

The Landscape Idea as a way of seeing the view or prospect is clearly a cultural concept imbued with moral significance which emerged from new approaches to the production on the land since the Renaissance. The question posed now is whether in post-industrial times, the idea of landscape continues to carry cultural and moral significance? It would seem that such significance has been eroded with globalisation and late capitalism's commodification of landscape. In contrast, a different cultural model which looks at social and environmental responsibility has emerged from the marginal landscapes in shrinking cities. This suggests that we need to revise the concept of the Landscape Idea by reconciling seeing landscape from afar with a reworked way of existentially being within landscape.

This revised Landscape Idea results in a number of ways in which people can experience contemporary landscapes. From without, we can be humbled by the new sublime in abandoned mining landscapes. From without, we can also playfully engage with spectacular entertainment landscapes.

From within, we can engage with community, re-establishing a complex set of obligations between people and the land. Similarly from within, we can engage in a renewed sense of beauty in sustainable landscapes and resilient materials.

As well, in our re-worked Landscape Idea, we can be simultaneously without and within while we experience the drama of infrastructural landscapes. Equally as landscape urbanists, we can move without and within as we either create abstract maps or engage closely with renewed ecology.

If landscape is to be fully explored as an important idea, we need to recognize the diverse and complex forms of engagement within which we plan and design.

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