



RARELY DO THE CAREFULLY GROOMED AND DOMESTICATED PLANTS OF INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPES MAKE US LOOK AGAIN IN WONDER, WHICH IS WHY PEOPLE VISITING THE RECENTLY EXPANDED LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART (LACMA) ARE LIKELY TO MISS THE NEW WORK OF ROBERT IRWIN, ONE OF THE CITY'S MOST RENOWNED ARTISTS.

Irwin's meticulously composed Palm Garden takes up nearly half of the landscape around the museum, and it makes a refreshing break from the predictable pattern among big-city art museums of putting familiar outdoor sculptures within a pattern of reductive orthogonal shapes.

LACMA is transforming under its director, Michael Govan. One of Govan's driving desires is for the sprawling LACMA campus, located on Wilshire Boulevard along the stretch known as Museum Row in Los Angeles, to open itself to the community and become something specifically of its place and time. One of his tricks to making this happen was to hire Robert Irwin, among several other Los Angeles artists. Collaborating with artists who are, as Govan describes them, "of the culture," has given the museum landscapes a culturally native L.A. feel. Irwin's palm trees and artist Chris Burden's lampposts are both new additions to

OPPOSITE
Robert Irwin selected palms for
the sculptural character expressed
in the cuts and shape of the trunk.

THIS PAGE
Funcraea foetida capture
Southern California light.

IMAGE CREDITS
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LACMA, opposite, ©2010 Philipp
Scholz Rittermann, this page







LEFT
A primitive-looking Chilean wine palm veils the commercial facades beyond.

IMAGE CREDIT
©2010 Philipp Scholz Rittermann

the campus and employ elements that define the city's streetscapes. Govan is blithely unconcerned with whether museum visitors perceive the Palm Garden as art or landscape.

Irwin's work has been controversial in landscape architecture circles. His early landscape interventions, works like *Filigreed Line* at Wellesley College or *Two Running Violet V Forms* at the University of California, San Diego, gave a conceptual reference for studios exploring a phenomenological approach to landscapes, where human perception is the starting point for design.

But his Central Garden at the J. Paul Getty Center drew sharp criticism (see "The Getty: Another Look," *Landscape Architecture*, October 2008). The primary gripes are that the project is elitist and, besides, poorly designed. However, some individuals who share this view, when prodded for a bit of analysis, reluctantly reveal that they have not visited the garden and passionately hold that the garden is neither art nor a successful landscape.

LACMA shares a city block with the La Brea Tar Pits, a collection of oily earthen holes where tar bubbles up and where animals were trapped and their bones fossilized tens of thousands of years ago. In 2006, during construction of LACMA's underground parking garage, the skeleton of a Columbian mammoth was unearthed, one of the largest and most complete fossil finds in the history of the dig at the Rancho La Brea site. The direct link to primordial history provided Irwin a starting point for the Palm Garden project, along with the newer fact that, in 2006, the mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, announced that the city would no longer be planting palm trees on city property.

The Palm Garden is a collection of landscape spaces forming a "T" shape. The connection from Wilshire Boulevard to Sixth Street establishes the north-south axis. The east-west axis starts at the unfortunately named BP Grand Entrance, continues between two new buildings by Renzo Piano, and ends at LACMA West, the former May Company building. The south entrance plaza off Wilshire Boulevard is dominated by Burden's *Urban Light* installation, a dense grid of antique cast-iron lampposts collected from the Los Angeles area, restored and uniformly painted medium gray. Irwin's Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) and Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) planted in the entry plaza play a supporting role; they are striking only in their vertical fortitude, architectural scale, and syncopated geometry.

At the Cantor Sculpture Garden, located just east of the entry plaza, Irwin has inserted a trim geometric order. Before the renovation, the space that became



OPPOSITE

- 1 Plants were selected for their sculptural qualities.
- 2 Common Mexican fan palms are adjacent to rare *Macrozamia moorei*.
- 3 Palm plantings have a syncopated rhythm.
- 4 Cor-Ten walls and planter boxes punctuate the geometric order of the Palm Garden.
- 5 Mexican blue palms interact with the "Renzo Red" color of the building.

IMAGE CREDITS

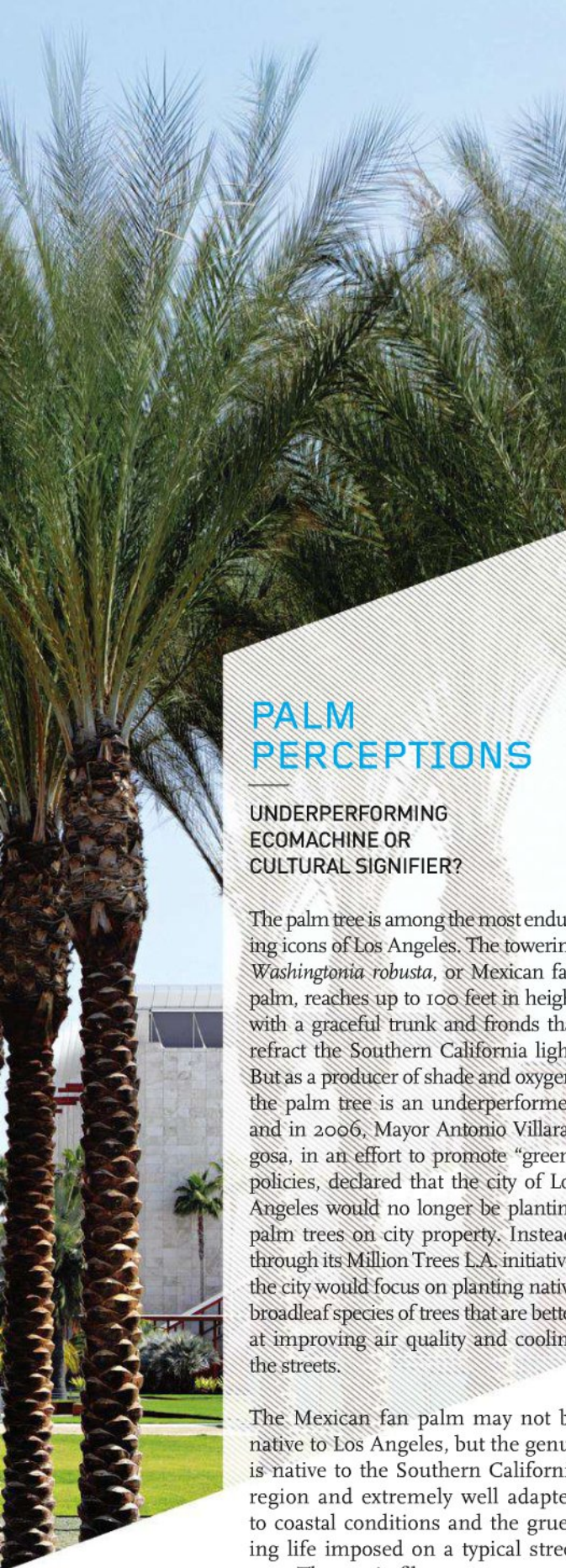
1-3 ©2010 Museum Associates/LACMA;
4-5 ©2010 Philipp Scholz Rittermann

BELOW
Hand-cut and shellacked date
palms evoke a Brancusi-like effect.

IMAGE CREDIT

©2010 Philipp Scholz Rittermann





THE PALMS BRING
A NICE QUALITY OF FILTERED
LIGHT INTO THE SPACE AND
MITIGATE THE VISUAL NOISE
OF THE ARCHITECTURE.

PALM PERCEPTIONS

UNDERPERFORMING ECOMACHINE OR CULTURAL SIGNIFIER?

The palm tree is among the most enduring icons of Los Angeles. The towering *Washingtonia robusta*, or Mexican fan palm, reaches up to 100 feet in height with a graceful trunk and fronds that refract the Southern California light. But as a producer of shade and oxygen, the palm tree is an underperformer, and in 2006, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, in an effort to promote “green” policies, declared that the city of Los Angeles would no longer be planting palm trees on city property. Instead, through its Million Trees L.A. initiative, the city would focus on planting native broadleaf species of trees that are better at improving air quality and cooling the streets.

The Mexican fan palm may not be native to Los Angeles, but the genus is native to the Southern California region and extremely well adapted to coastal conditions and the grueling life imposed on a typical street tree. The tree’s fibrous root system does not heave pavement, and the trees have amazing flexibility and strength to withstand storms. Other species of palms commonly grown in Los Angeles come from more exotic

places, like the Canary Island date palm, whose stately trunk and pineapple top is associated with affluent areas like Beverly Hills. This exotic species is suffering from *Fusarium* wilt, a fungal disease that enters the soil and cannot be removed. In the past several years, 400 trees have been killed by the fungus in Beverly Hills alone.

Mexican fan palms were heavily planted along the city streets leading up to the 1932 Olympics. These specimens, now nearly 80 years old, are nearing the end of their natural life cycle. With the city replanting with oaks, sycamores, and other native species, the skyline will scarcely be the same.

The city of Los Angeles currently has a tree canopy cover of 21 percent. The national average for urban tree canopy cover is 27 percent. And, the city’s tree canopy analysis indicates that there is a close relationship between percentage of tree canopy cover and income level, with the low- to moderate-income areas having a lower percentage of tree canopy cover than the middle- to upper-income tracts. The Million Trees L.A. web site states that “our program is not planning to replace or eliminate them [palm trees] where they are now.” But, if palm trees are not replanted on city streets or in city parks, the skyline will be transformed over time to a more pragmatic, air-cleansing, shade-making version of itself. ●

SITE PLAN

IMAGE CREDIT
Courtesy ValleyCrest
Landscape Companies

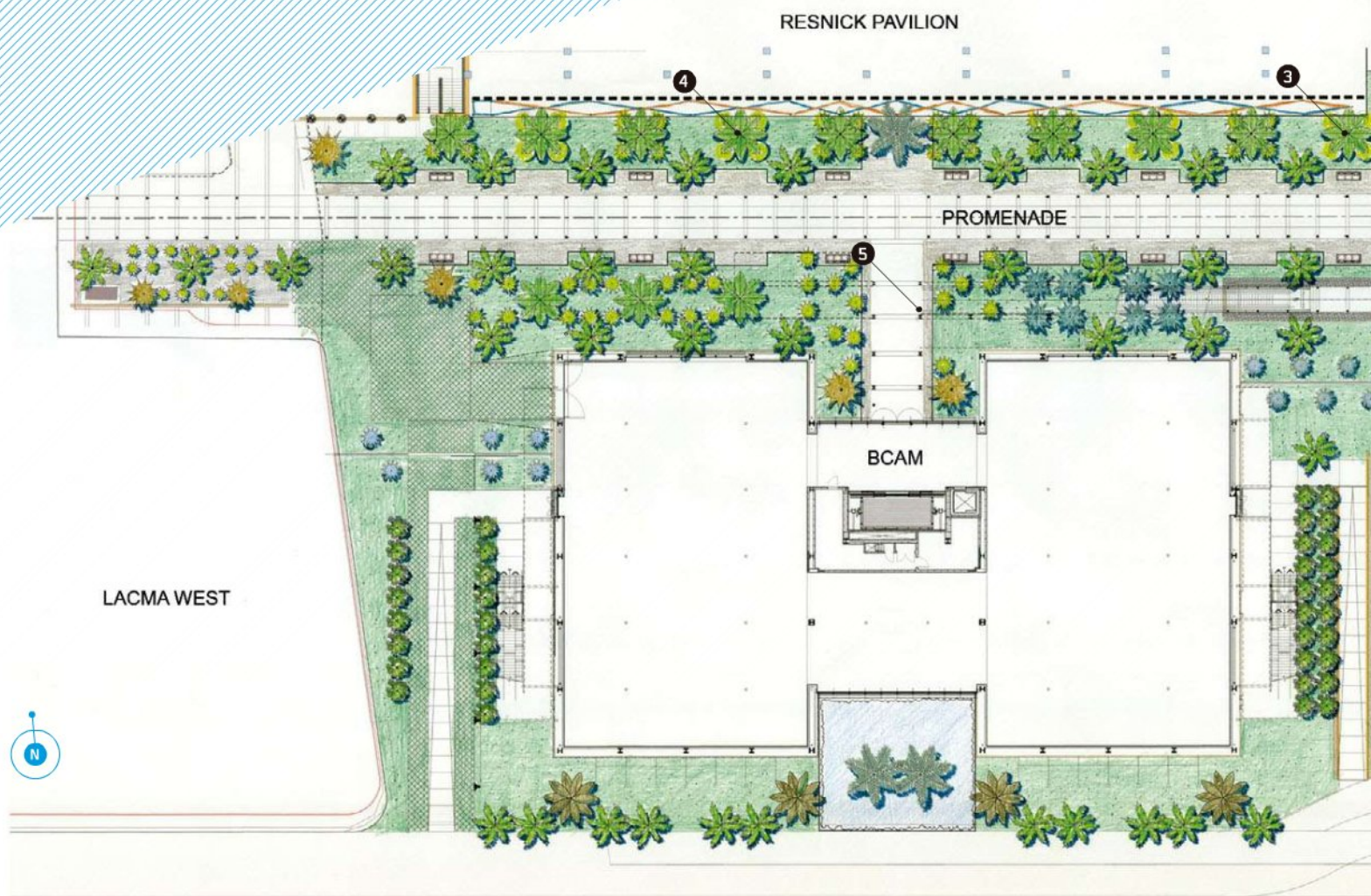
1 Palm trees located within the Cantor Sculpture Garden provide a canopy for the Rodin figures.

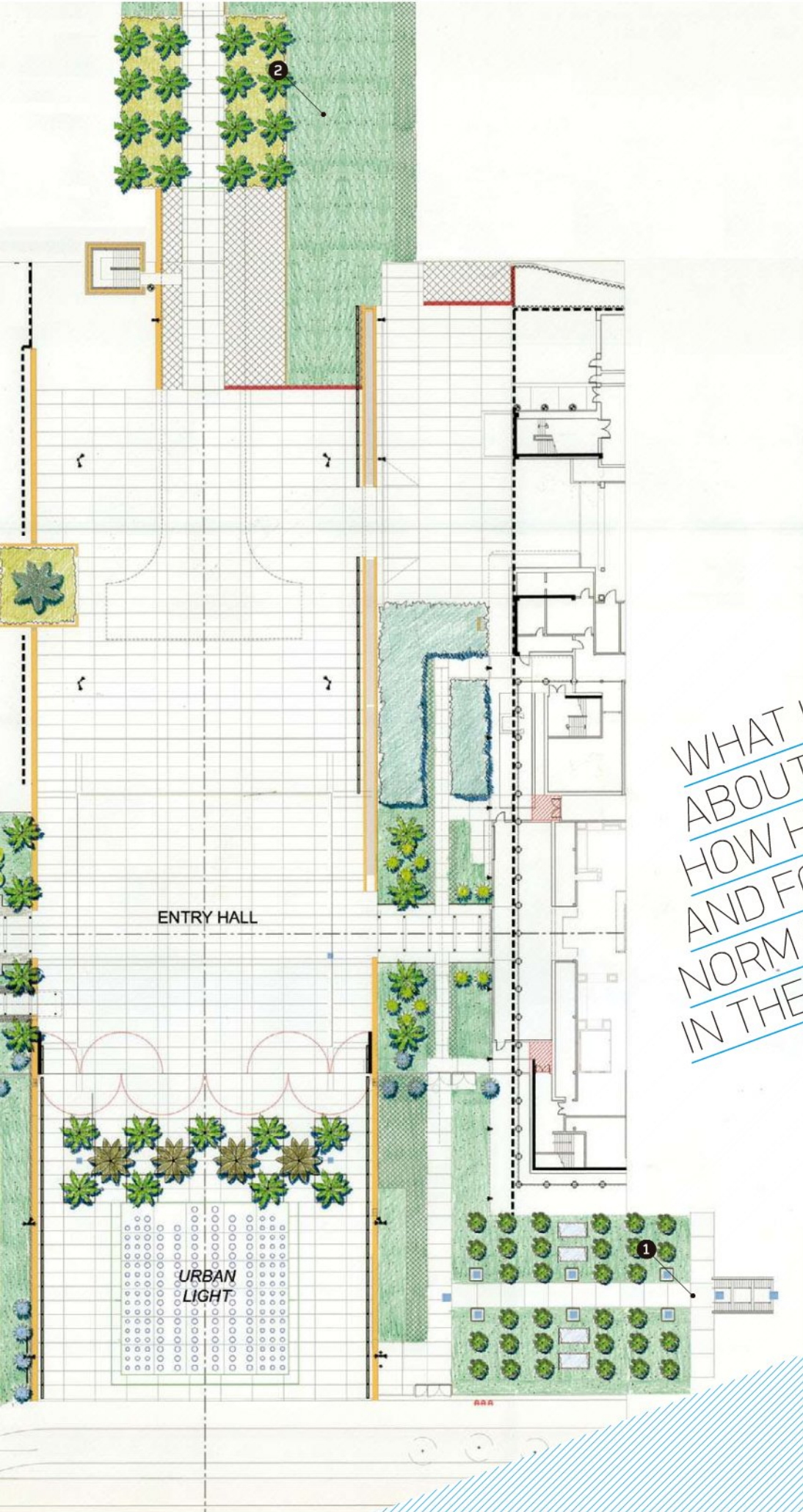
2 Grid of date palms.

3 *Phoenix canariensis* and *Furcraea foetida*.

4 Irwin increased the soil depth by adding custom-made Cor-Ten boxes and terrace walls.

5 The landscape south of the promenade slopes toward the BCAM building.





WHAT IS NEW OR TRANSITIONAL
ABOUT IRWIN'S WORK IS
HOW HE HAS EXPOSED
AND FORMALIZED WHAT IS
NORMALLY CONCEALED
IN THE LANDSCAPE.



ABOVE
Irwin has been intrigued, since boyhood, with how palm trees capture and refract Southern California light.

the sculpture garden was, as Irwin describes it, “just a mess, a completely hostile space.” The stair leading from Wilshire Boulevard, in front of the Ahmanson Building, to the upper level plaza near the Art of the Americas Building was too large and ornate for the small garden and the dissonant surrounding architectural styles imposed on the space by the surrounding architecture. Now there are 32 *Washingtonia robusta* palms that create an overhead canopy while turf and bromeliads articulate the ground plane below. Six Rodin sculptures stand on either side of the sidewalk, bisecting the space. Irwin added terraces to the center section of the staircase and placed two Rodin busts at eye level, which completes the visual trick of elongating the garden and minimizing the impact of the ornate and overscaled stair. The palms bring a pleasant quality of filtered light into the space and mitigate the visual noise of the architecture. However, the space continues to feel more transitional than contemplative.

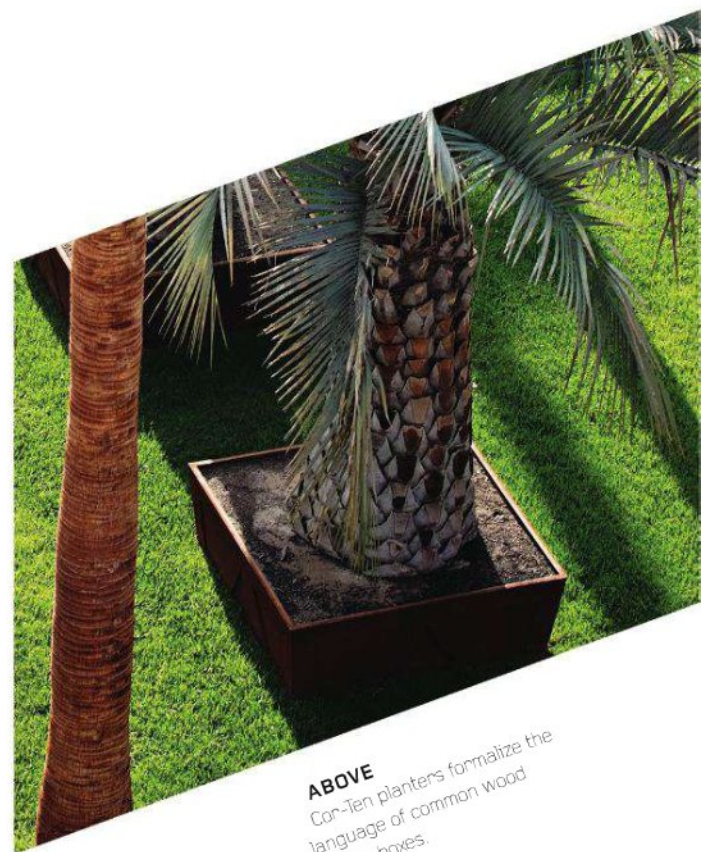
The Cantor Sculpture Garden is nice, but what is fantastic are the 16 date palms, *Phoenix dactylifera*, that terminate the northern axis of the T-shaped Palm Garden. Set on a gentle turf slope, the rectangular ground plane containing the palms is held level with tapering four-inch-high Cor-Ten steel planter walls. The palms were hand-cut by an expert worker originally from El Salvador, and shellac was applied to the trunks. The effect is striking, and the semi-reflective and modular trunks have an uncanny resemblance to Brancusi’s *Endless Column*. The reference to art history revealed in the trunks of the palms becomes even more interesting with the observation of Paul Comstock, ASLA, the landscape architect who worked closely with Irwin on this project. Comstock observes: “Here the date palm is used as sculpture, but it sustained whole societies—the Phoenician Empire was built on [date palms]!” Comstock links their cultural history with their biology and possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of plants. “We have the entire history of the evolution of plants here in Bob’s art piece,” he notes, “starting with the ferns.”

A key moment in the project occurs when you stand and look west between LACMA’s two new Piano buildings, the Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM) and the Resnick Pavilion. Several species of palms line the north side of the promenade, including *Phoenix canariensis*, *Washingtonia robusta*, and the pindo

palm, *Butia capitata*. The *Phoenix canariensis* were planted with the crowns at about five to six feet above the ground. The squat, strong-spined palm comes to near eye level, and the “Renzo Red” lines of the building intersect vertically, horizontally, and diagonally with the arcing palm fronds. Simultaneously, the variegated century plants (*Furcraea foetida*) appear to capture sunlight and radiate an internal glow set off by the blue sky and the pale travertine-clad walls of the buildings. If you have ever stood looking at one of Irwin’s dot paintings, you will experience a similar effect where this composition begins to hum.

The LACMA “Transformation,” as the museum calls it, has occurred in phases, beginning in 2008 with a temporary planting of the east–west promenade. Conceptually, the temporary phase was an intriguing deconstruction of the landscape. Wood nursery boxes containing the trees were set in an orderly arrangement, and the taller palms had Cor-Ten steel collars and a wood support structure held together with outsized Cor-Ten bolts. The irrigation system was arranged in a compulsively elegant manner, and the construction fencing had a blue-violet PVC coating. “It is hard not to be in love with the machinery of the nursery, the boxes, the collars, the mechanics of cultivation,” Govan observes. What is new or transitional about Irwin’s work is how he has exposed and formalized what is normally concealed in the landscape.

Irwin refined this language in the second phase of the renovation along the promenade. The landscape sits in soil only 13 inches deep. To increase the amount of soil, Irwin added the terraces with Cor-Ten steel walls, creating a sharp, sculptural articulation



ABOVE
Cor-Ten planters formalize the language of common wood nursery boxes.



THE SPACE THAT BECAME THE SCULPTURE GARDEN WAS, AS IRWIN DESCRIBES IT, "JUST A MESS, A COMPLETELY HOSTILE SPACE."

ABOVE
Palms are a ubiquitous feature of the Los Angeles streetscape and an icon of the culture.

IMAGE CREDITS
©2010 Philipp Scholz Rittermann, this page and opposite

of the ground plane. This terracing worked because the Resnick Pavilion is elevated approximately two feet above the promenade. Irwin did not have enough soil depth to plant the larger palm trees, so he had Cor-Ten boxes, closely resembling nursery boxes, built into the terrace. With this move, Irwin introduced a bit of humor and increased the soil depth to five feet. Across the promenade, the soil is thin and slopes approximately 18 inches back to the BCAM building. The result is an unattractive and poorly resolved space. Irwin's artistic work in the landscape is limited to an existing framework established by the architect, and in this part of the Palm Garden, the involvement of a landscape architect early in the design process could have established a better structure.

Perhaps the most compelling view of the Palm Garden is from inside the ground floor of BCAM. Richard Serra's *Band + Sequence* consumes the volume of the interior space, and the outer glass wall goes down to the floor with a clear view of cadmium yellow *Vriesea* plants alternating with magenta gray *vrieseas* and the statuesque Chilean wine palm just beyond the glass. The tops of cars and buses on Wilshire Boulevard can be seen speeding by through this primordial landscape, compressing perceptions of time and space.

Irwin insists that his approach to the medium of landscape is not a design process—"I do not do drawings," he says. Despite his protestations, Irwin *does* do design drawings, and they are quietly stunning. You will, however, need a Robert-Langdon-searching-

the-Vatican's-secret-archives tenacity to ever see these drawings. Irwin's process is perceptual. "I run my hands over things," says Irwin. He also spends a tremendous amount of time in and around the space, walking back and forth, observing the effects of light, and he responds to the material reality of the space. The Palm Garden provides a platform for an important social discourse regarding the Los Angeles streetscape and the place palm trees have in the future of the city's public places.

Irwin's Palm Garden can be perceived as a good landscape. It can also be seen as a polemic that it is within the perceptual power of the viewer to look past the simulacra and the myriad representations to the beauty in everyday existence. Collectively, what we may have forgotten is how to be in time and place. ●

JENNIFER ZELL, ASLA, IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT WITH JOSEPH FURR DESIGN STUDIO IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA.

Project Credits

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THE UNDERSTORY



SO FAR

**AT THE 100 ACRES
ART + NATURE PARK
IN INDIANAPOLIS,
ED BLAKE BEGAN WITH
THE SUBTLETIES
OF FLOODPLAIN
TOPOGRAPHY.**

BY FRANK EDGERTON MARTIN

IMAGE CREDITS

Courtesy Indianapolis Museum of Art,
this page and opposite



EDITORS' NOTE: ED BLAKE, ASLA, THE LEAD LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT FOR THIS PROJECT, DIED UNEXPECTEDLY IN AUGUST 2010 AS THIS ARTICLE WAS BEING WRITTEN.

No American art museum “collects” works of landscape architecture in quite the same way as the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA). The museum restored the 26-acre Oldfields estate next door, a superb example of the Country Place Era designed by Percival Gallagher (1874–1934) of the Olmsted office. It carefully maintains Sasaki, Dawson, and DeMay’s landscape at its main building, including a sculpture garden from the 1960s. And in nearby Columbus, Indiana, the IMA manages the Miller House, an icon of modern design, by Eero Saarinen and Daniel Kiley.

The newest landscape in the IMA’s collection is called 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art + Nature Park and, as a home to changing environmental art installations, it is the most informal of the group. It opened in the spring of 2010 and is unusual because it is set almost entirely within a 100-year floodplain of the White River. The park’s huge locust canopy and flat ground are like many floodplains found throughout the watersheds of the Wabash and

Ohio rivers. The 35-acre lake on the site’s northern half was once a gravel pit. Remnants of an electric interurban rail line and an old farm traverse the land, as does a still-functioning canal.

At the end of its first phase of building, 100 Acres’ pathways, its open meadow, and artist-designed seating still feel very raw. Yet there is something that hits you at the moment you enter. It is hard to capture in pictures, but this floodplain art park offers a magic of immersion that is both awe-inspiring and comforting. At least this is what I felt when I visited on a sultry June day with Mark Zelonis, the IMA’s deputy director of environmental and historic preservation.

After leaving the museum, we strolled through the historic gates and formal gardens of the neighboring Oldfields, once home to the prominent Lilly family. We then walked down a few hundred feet of woodland path before crossing a new metal footbridge over the Central Canal, a survivor of Indiana’s canal boom of the 1830s. The old towpath still runs along its north edge and is now used as a regional trail. On the other side of the canal, we suddenly entered a very different kind of forest composed almost entirely of honeylocust. The atmosphere grew darker and quieter, the air stiller and cooler.



BLAKE SAID HE BELIEVED
THAT IT MAY TAKE 20 TO 30
YEARS FOR 100 ACRES TO
BE COMPLETED.

ABOVE

Still a work in progress, these subtle walkways carry visitors over wet areas in the floodplain forest.

IMAGE CREDIT

Courtesy NINebark, Inc.

“Part of the unraveling of this place was to look at how it once functioned and how it functions now,” explained the late Ed Blake, the project’s lead landscape architect and the founder of the Landscape Studio in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The 96-acre site had been farmed or quarried for a long time, but as mostly floodplain, it had never been valued for building. With the completion of a new interstate on its northern edge in the 1960s, the site grew hemmed in, a kind of remainder with little apparent scenic, artistic, or economic value. The place felt abandoned, but it was never really “dangerous”; rather it was the kind of vestige where, in many towns, kids might build forts.

The IMA received the site as a donation in 1972 and identified it as the location of a new sculpture garden as early as 1996, but for many years the land languished while the museum restored the estate next door. By 2004, with the restoration of Oldfields well under way and a new bike path connecting the site to the historic city park system designed by George Kessler, the time was ripe for action.

The museum hired a team of designers that included Blake, the architect Marlon Blackwell, the artist Mary Miss, and the locally

based landscape architects Eric Fulford, ASLA, and Ann Reed of NINebark, Inc. Immediately after being hired, the landscape architects began to study the cultural and ecological history of the site. “That was Ed’s forte: learning from a site by visiting it,” remembers Ashley Norton, a landscape architect who worked in Blake’s office. Together, the team produced a site analysis/program book for the IMA’s staff and donors that describes how historically layered and ecologically rich the site is today.

“A lot of my work focuses on the specifics of place,” Blake told me when we talked in June 2010. Norton recalls that one of the first drawings for 100 Acres mapped various habitats on the site. “We planned the path so maybe one path would be on the edge of two different habitats.”

To people visiting for the first time, the site’s subtle topographic and ecological variations are largely invisible. “You’re out there and you think you’re on a flat place, but you see how varied and nuanced the land is,” Blake said. He had identified subtle “ridgelines” within the area, some only a foot higher than the surrounding environment, to serve as paths and the site for Blackwell’s visitors’ pavilion. Blake pointed out that there are important differences in soil dryness and



I HOPE THE MUSEUM CONTINUES TO LET THE PLAN EVOLVE IN AN ORGANIC WAY.

the types of plants that grow along the ridgelines, which sprout ferns, sedges, and wildflowers.

But when you walk through the site, what you notice are the vaulted spaces beneath the trees. The experience is strongly architectural, with the unfolding cathedral-like space of the softwood canopy. There is a profound sense of quiet. The locusts' collective size and the seeming infinity of the spaces beneath them make you feel rather small. The paths, raised just a few feet from the floodplain floor, give you the sensation of floating above the ground plane and drifting under the trees.

These places are not so much designed by Blake as they are revealed. He explained his two basic strategies. The first was to recover the broad open spaces of the forest by combing out invasive exotics such as honeysuckles from the understory. The second was to lead people through these spaces in what he termed "journeys" with heightened landscape "moments," such as a small grove or an opening where the sun peeks through.

Just a few hundred yards from the entrance is the visitors' pavilion, elevated just two feet above the floodplain floor. It was just about the only buildable site in the forest. Blake noted that when the site floods this area appears "like a raised island." Blackwell's low-slung, narrow pavilion, set on structural posts, is a masterstroke of modern understatement, a kind of superbly detailed kid's fort in the woods.

The visitors' pavilion is wrapped in a continuous slatted surface of dark ipe wood slats in some areas with floor-to-ceiling glass in others. Sunlight and shadows filter through, but it is the views out to the forest understory that first capture your attention. The pavilion can accommodate gatherings of 50 people inside, and more outside when events flow out onto the wood decks and outdoor classroom that Blake envisioned. Not yet fully constructed, the classroom already draws kids to sit on the wood deck. When completed, the sunken space beyond the structure will be ideal for classes of up to, perhaps, 30 students.

To the west and north of the pavilion, Blake shaped the ground plane with small berms that radiate outward like the straight arms of a starfish. Blackwell was not initially sold on this concept, but once he saw the full design, he realized that these vectors, reminiscent of the

forms that flooding had carved on the site, were an ideal way to mediate between the building and the land.

After you pass through the floodplain, you reach the first generation of art installations in the meadow and by the 35-acre quarry lake. At the water's edge, the landscape changes again with much more openness and topography visible. "I'll never forget that subtle, broad, convex shape of the meadow...it was like a thunderbolt in this landscape," Blake said of his first hike around the site.

The idea behind 100 Acres is to emphasize young and under-appreciated midcareer artists and encourage risky works of art without the need to build something permanent. Fulford explains that the IMA "viewed the land as an open canvas where artists could self-select their sites." With Blake's death, the meadow, lake trails, and planting details along the "journeys" remain to be designed. Blake was clearly drawn to the meadow's openness and probably planned to leave it open, although perhaps he would have added wildflowers.

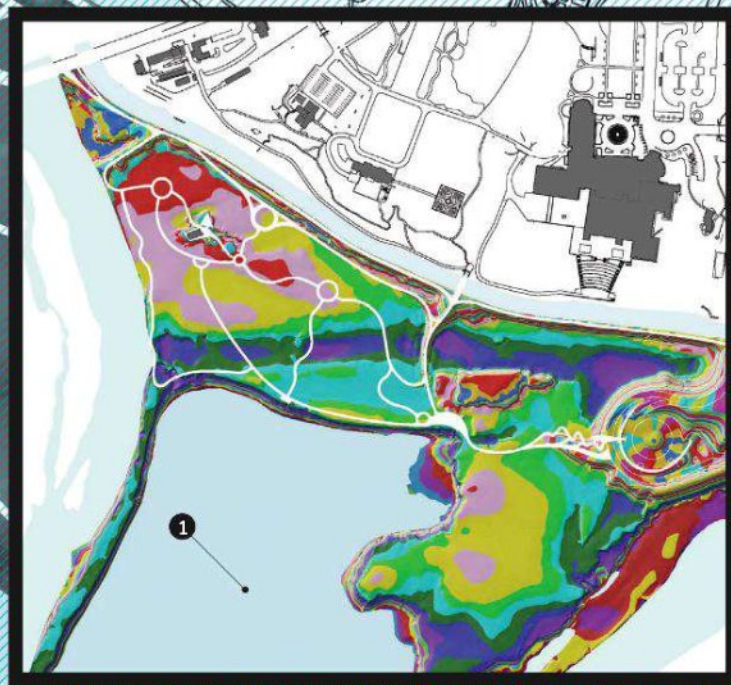
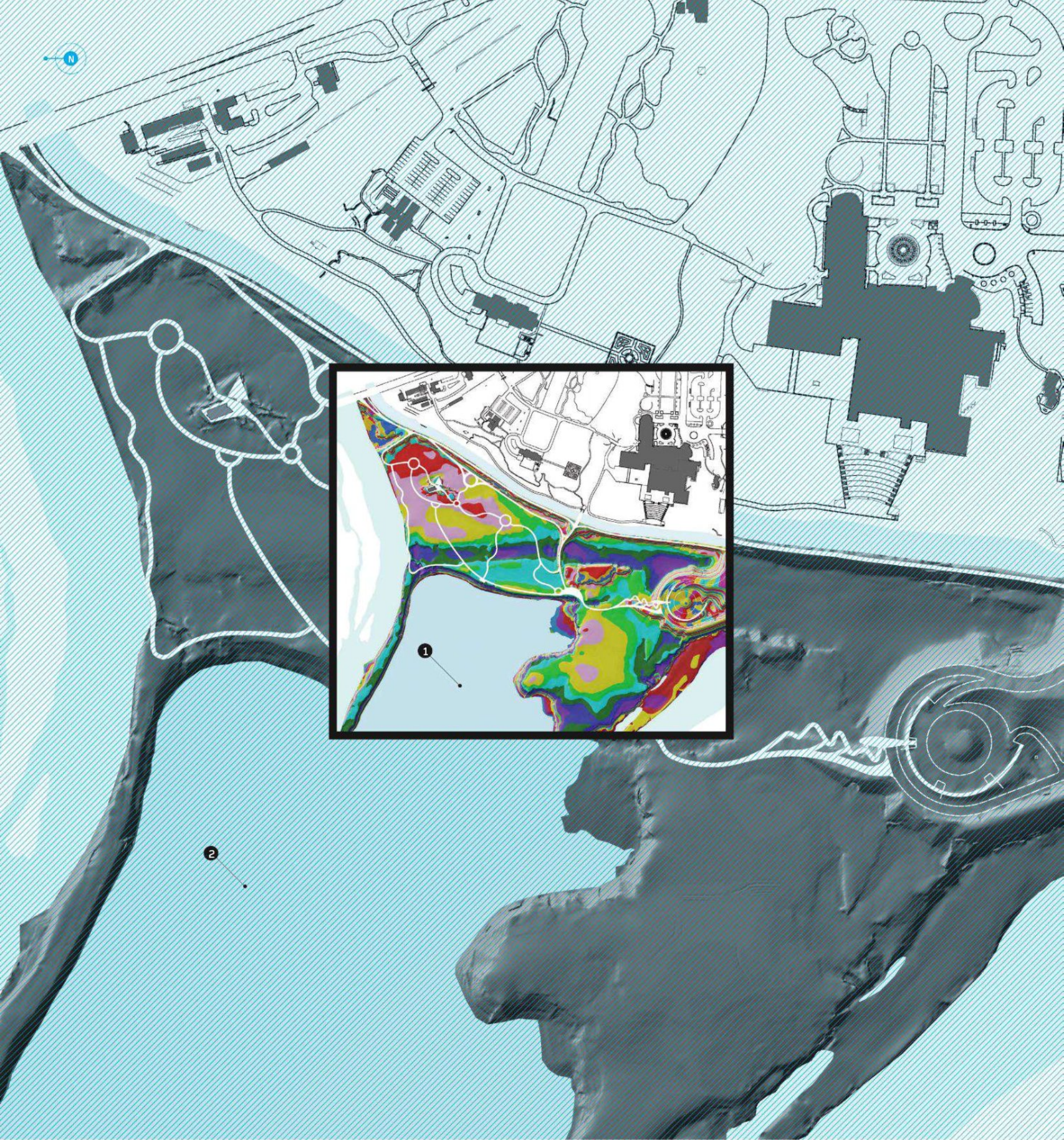
Whereas some similar sculpture gardens such as at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and Storm King have ample "Do not climb on the sculpture" signs, it's OK to climb on the works at the IMA. Kids run through the small walled and tunnel spaces of Alfredo Jaar's *Park of the Laments* and climb on the bone segments of Atelier van Lieshout's *Funky Bones* laid out as a full black-and-white skeleton in the meadow. Each of the "bone" pieces is about three to four feet high, and together they spread out like a cartoonish X-ray about

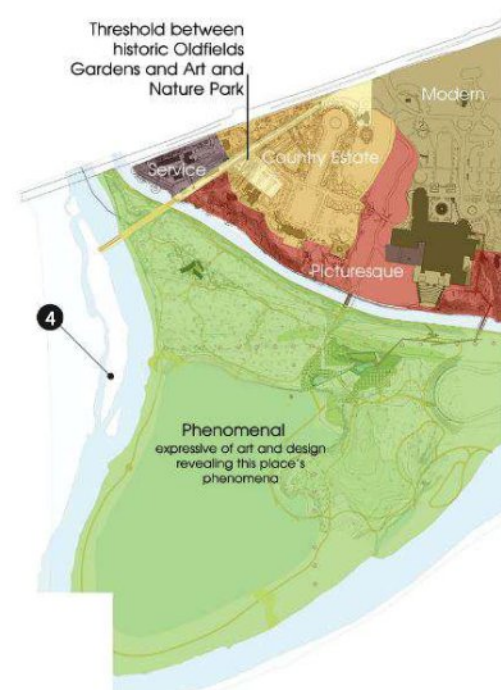
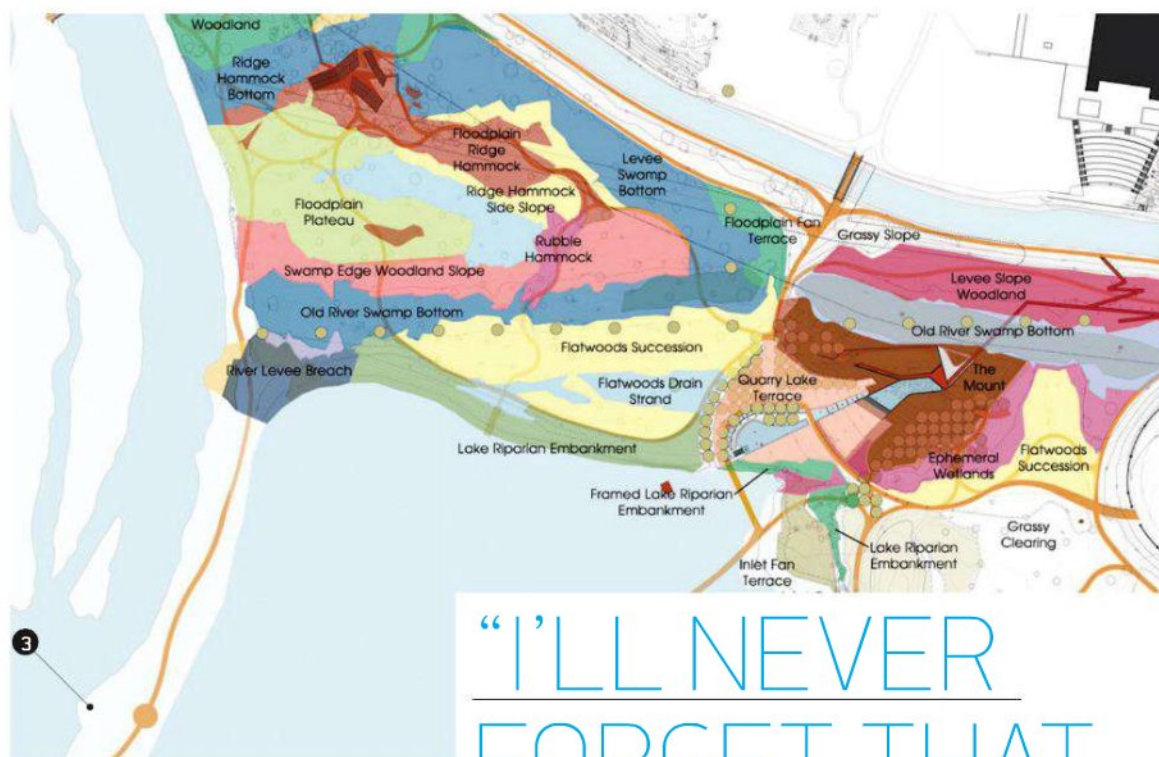
OPPOSITE

Both day and night, the visitors' pavilion makes a dramatic angular statement in the subtle topography.

IMAGE CREDITS

Tim Hursley





“I’LL NEVER
FORGET THAT
SUBTLE,
BROAD, CONVEX
SHAPE OF THE
MEADOW.”

1 PLAN

Ed Blake developed a colorful graphic palette to delineate topography and plant communities.

2 GRAVEL PIT LAKE

The old gravel pit lake will become a main focus as the gardens develop and a trail is built around it.

3 SUBENVIRONMENTS

Blake's forest community analysis expresses the varied aesthetic subenvironments on the site.

4 FUTURE

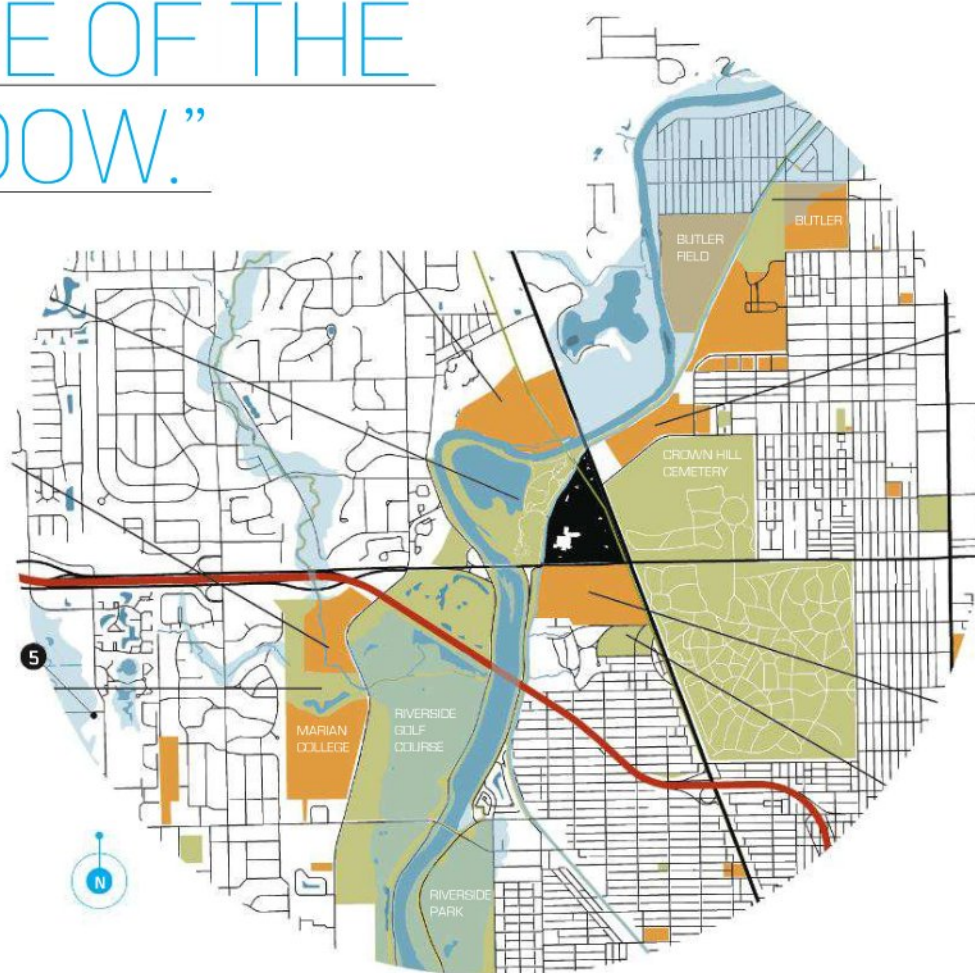
The White River shoreline is a future development zone for 100 Acres and home to some of its most varied upland forest species.

5 CONTEXT

The 100 Acres site and the museum itself are located within the grid of Indianapolis and along a key arm of its urban hydrology.

IMAGE CREDITS

1–4. Courtesy the Landscape Studio; 5. Courtesy Marlon Blackwell Architect and the Landscape Studio



THIS PAGE

Visitors enter 100 Acres from the IMA and Oldfields by crossing over the historic Indiana Central Canal.

OPPOSITE

Blake sited the paths and plank walks on subtle rises that lend a sense of floating above the ground plane.

IMAGE CREDITS

Courtesy Indianapolis Museum of Art, this page; Courtesy NINEbark, Inc., opposite

30 feet from end to end, creating an immersive setting for small children. To see the park's artwork in detail, visit www.imamuseum.org/100acres.

Blake was not involved in selecting artists, but his office contributed ideas about curatorial flexibility. His focus was always on the site as a whole with an awareness that its exhibits should change over time without becoming a nuisance for movement or maintenance. It's likely that the lake installations may be the most temporary because of the exigencies of Indiana winters. In the summer of 2010 when I visited, Andrea Zittel's inhabitable igloo-shaped floating island was the home for two students from the Herron School of Art and Design. Visitors could take a boat out to visit them or follow the course of their life on the water and their nature sightings through their blogging. Next summer, different students may return, but it is likely the island will not be lived on during the winters.

One of the floating installations is among the most eerie. The Finnish-born artist Tea Makipaa set a 50-foot-long ship called the *Eden II* on the lake. It looks like a rusting hulk fleeing from some apocalyptic horror. In an observation building on the shore, visitors can "communicate" with the ship by calling up sound and video about its mythic history, its passengers, and the ecological disaster that brought ship and occupants to this perilous, *Mad Max* impasse.

Makipaa's installation and Kendall Buster's *Stratum Pier* offer the best experience of the water. Built of emerald-

color fiberglass-mesh panels that are cut and layered into a giant topographic site model, *Stratum Pier* juts out over the water to connect visitors with the open lake.

Yet the quarried lake still seems too removed from the visitor experience. As 100 Acres evolves, the IMA should seriously consider completing the trail Blake envisioned around the lake with places to walk up to its shore. There are also opportunities to interpret water-edge species and zonation as part of a final planting design or in future artworks. With the rush to open the first phase in 2010, Blake had yet to plan the path's details, but in our conversations, he liked the views from the outer shore and the chance to make more sites accessible for future art installations.

Even as developed as it is today, the once-abandoned 100 Acres remains completely open to the public, with no locked gates at night or perimeter fencing. From the outside, the site still looks more like a nature area than it does a sculpture park. For now, nighttime events at the visitors' pavilion are lit with temporary



lanterns. It's possible that lighting may never be installed and that the park will grow dark with the sky. Blake said he believed that it may take 20 to 30 years for 100 Acres to be completed, and even longer to experience the mature spaces of the successional forests.

Yet the design of the first phase happened very fast. The IMA's curators, Blake, and Fulford worked trustingly together and were able to make quick decisions on questions large and small. The upside of this approach is that they could move very quickly toward the planned opening in the spring of 2010. With a reduced budget that precluded an entry bridge that was to be designed by Miss and additional visitor buildings, the priorities were to complete the visitors' pavilion, the base paths, and grading for the "moments" in the floodplain and meadow areas.

By spending time on the site and with the installation crews, Blake was able to survey where people lingered, needed to rest, or paused to look at an artwork or view. "We learned how, with a minimal cost, we can slip something in and make a small but significant place," he explained. He also observed that people used basic site elements in unintended ways, as with the simple concrete edging of the lake terrace. At dusk on the opening weekend, people sat informally on the edging with the lake rippling in the background—a sign that costly site furniture might not be needed. "I hope the museum continues to let the plan evolve in an organic way," Blake told me.



THESE PLACES
ARE NOT SO
MUCH DESIGNED
BY BLAKE
AS THEY ARE
REVEALED.

THIS PAGE

Because of its size and the weight of its limestone-filled gabion structure, Alfredo Jaar's *Park of the Laments* may become a permanent installation.

OPPOSITE

The soft forest character at 100 Acres heightens the material artifice and details of the sculptures and structures.

IMAGE CREDITS

Courtesy Indianapolis Museum of Art, this page and opposite





THIS PAGE

After entering *Park of the Laments* through the stone-lined tunnel on page 108, visitors step up into daylight in the lawn.

OPPOSITE

Ed Blake envisioned increasing the diversity of the forest communities over time with new plantings and thinning.

IMAGE CREDITS

Courtesy Indianapolis Museum of Art, this page and opposite bottom; D. C. Young, opposite top



In future phases, Blake also hoped to plant more advanced successional forest species in the understory around the lake and by the interurban line so that the forest can mature with such species as swamp white oaks and cottonwoods. He found a remnant of this more mature forest type that was surviving on the northern edge of the site, where the White River turns south. “When I went out there I got a sense of how majestic it was.... It’s a natural levee with sandier soil. We can create a species and spatial structure that’s more in keeping with an older and more established floodplain woodland.” Zelonis recalls Blake’s vision for the path system: “Sometimes you’d be in the deep woods, and other times looking out upon the river through knee-high grasses. Vistas were just as important as looking at things closely.”

Blake told me that, growing up in the South, he was deeply affected by the desolation of his home region, calling it a “beat-up landscape,” depleted from generations of monocropping, poverty, drought, and clear-cutting by northern lumber interests. For this reason, he is especially concerned about

long-term care of the land and the stewardship of his design projects.

Fortunately, the IMA has an awareness of landscape architecture that is unusual in the American museum world. Blake appreciated that it’s rare for a landscape architect to work with full-time gardeners such as the staff who maintain the IMA and the Oldfields estate. He knew that 100 Acres, for all its seeming informality, would require maintenance teams with specialized knowledge of native plants, arboriculture, and control of invasive species such as the honeysuckles and buckthorn that plague the site. Blake was confident that the IMA had the site crews, dedicated budget, and expertise to foster and enhance the “poetics” that he hoped to nurture in the 100 Acres woodland over time. With his unexpected passing, this long-term stewardship should focus on editing and revealing spaces that change and grow rather than rushing to add new objects such as benches, lights, and permanent structures. Blake’s ideas of revelation, rebirth, and change in both nature and art are the essence of this place where large spaces and small flashes of beauty work together. ●

FRANK EDGERTON MARTIN IS A LANDSCAPE HISTORIAN, CAMPUS PLANNER, AND REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO *LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE*.

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REMEMBERING ED BLAKE



Ed Blake died on August 29, 2010, after a series of health complications from which his family believed he was recovering. He took a long-term view of the 100 Acres project and the ecological restoration of the site, a task that will now be guided by others. Fortunately, Blake left a vision and restoration guidelines that IMA staff and other professionals can follow. He was 63.

We asked IMA staff and people who worked with Blake on the 100 Acres project to tell us about walking the site with him and collaborating in design. They are most likely the group who will continue his work at the site.

"Ed was always learning from a landscape and allowed that to form his design. He had a great respect for nature," recalls Ashley Norton of Blake's office, the Landscape Studio. She visited the Indianapolis 100 Acres project several times with him between 2007

and 2009. Of those trips, she says: "Ed was fascinated by the site, much like he was by just about any site. He had a way of discovering what made a landscape unique, what processes and habitats were present and at work that made the place like nowhere else."

"To understand Ed and his perception of the land you have to visit the Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, Mississippi," explained Eric Fulford, ASLA, and his partner, Ann Reed, from NINEbark, Inc., in an e-mail. (Blake served as director at Crosby for several years.) Collaborating with Blake as local landscape architects, they walked the site many times with him and advised on appropriate planting palettes. They recall that Blake always thought in a very long time frame, beyond the span of any one design team. "Ed viewed 100 Acres as a long evolutionary process much like the Crosby Arboretum. This landscape was never viewed as instant; it was seen more as assisting nature finding its mature voice over decades."

Mark Zelonis, the IMA's deputy director of environmental and historic preservation, will play a leading role in continuing Blake's vision for 100 Acres. "What amazed me the most was Ed's ability to observe and record," Zelonis says. "He carried a notebook with heavy blank pages on which he'd

write his observations (with a fountain pen, no less) or draw sketches."

For artist Mary Miss and architect Marlon Blackwell, working with Blake completely changed their perception of landscape architecture. Blackwell says: "I used to joke with him that he started 'before time'.... He was an agile thinker and not at all ideological. He was really willing to recognize what didn't work and was not afraid to change it."

From her studio in Manhattan, Mary Miss explained, "Ed gave me this intimate view of the landscape that I'd never really had [anywhere] before." Even though the original scope of 100 Acres was scaled back, Miss is optimistic that Blake's large-scale, ecological vision will be realized. Instead of the original entry bridge that she planned, Miss is now working on a series of small round mirror installations spread over six miles along the bike path and the White River. "I've been interested for decades in the collision between the built and the natural," she says of her desire to make visible the issues of water use, sustainability, and the White River's hydrology. Her installations along the river, scheduled to begin in 2011, "came out of talking with Ed," she says. "I think of my project as something I really dedicate to him." ●





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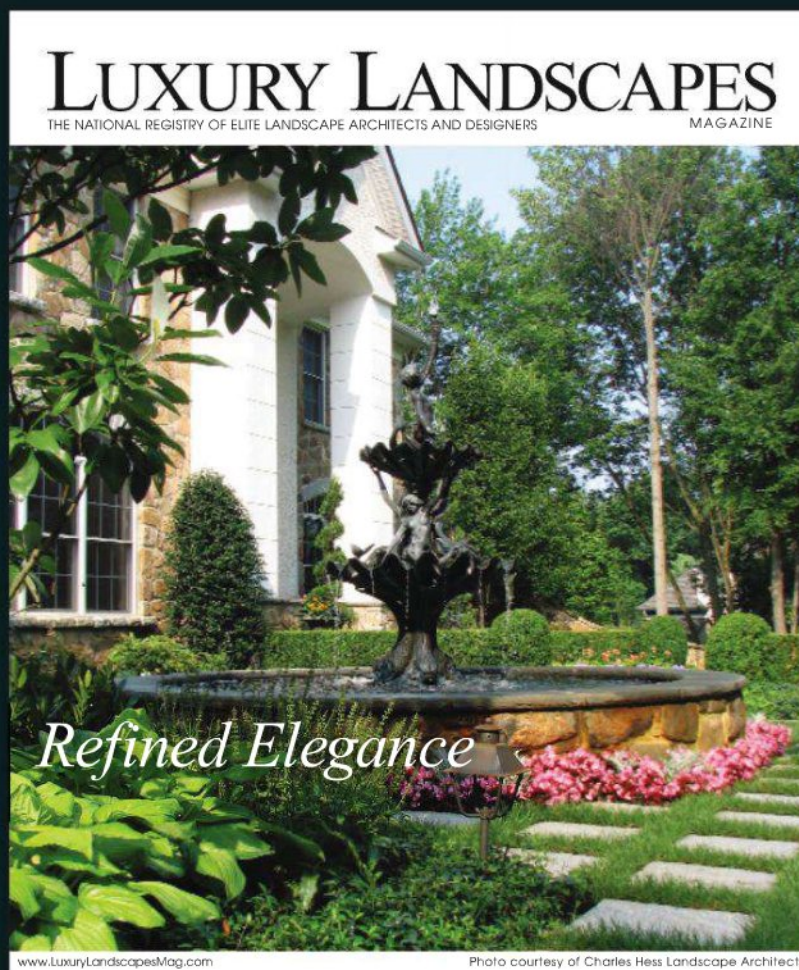
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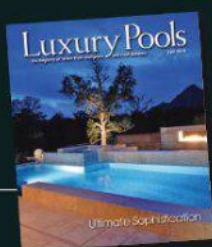


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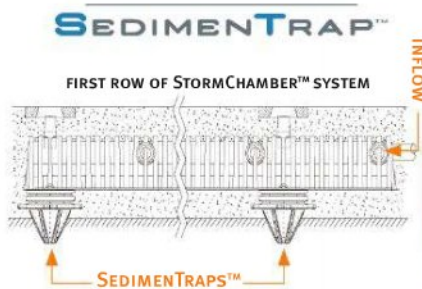


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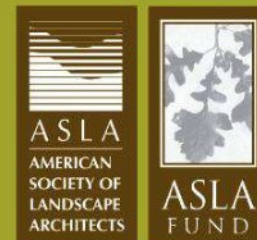
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THE BACK

EVERY TREE TELLS A STORY

A dozen significant American trees or groups of trees appear in Every Tree Tells a Story, a traveling exhibition mounted by the Cultural Landscape Foundation. It includes the planted forest of outsized specimens at the Arborland Tree Farm in Milliken, Colorado, whose tale has taken unexpected turns over the years, and also the Rio Piedras ficuses (pictured), three massive African clothbark trees that vault up and over an expressway in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The exhibit will appear at the Philadelphia International Flower Show March 6 to 13, and again at LongHouse Reserve in East Hampton, New York, from April 30 to June 20. It is also viewable at the foundation's web site: www.tclf.org.



SAVE FROM SELVE

US FOUR- ES

**AFTER A CLUSTER OF SUICIDES
LAST SPRING, CORNELL UNIVERSITY
FENCED OFF ITS GORGES IN AN EFFORT
TO SAVE LIVES. BUT THE RESEARCH
ON WHETHER SUICIDE BARRIERS
PREVENT DEATHS IS INCONCLUSIVE.**

BY DANIEL JOST, ASLA

I SAW KARL FOR THE LAST TIME ON — SUNDAY APRIL 6, 2003,

AT OUR WEEKLY SUPERVISOR MEETING. We had worked together at Cornell University's North Star Dining Hall. On the job, Karl was relaxed and witty. When the managers came up with an annoying rule that the salt and pepper shakers had to face south, he joked that it was part of their sustainability strategy, to encourage solar gain. When a friend attended a Ben Folds concert, he asked how she could stand listening to his music: "Doesn't it just make you want to kill yourself?" That comment would ring in my head for years afterward.

Karl had many friends at Cornell. In fact, my housemates were planning a party the following week, and he had said he would come. But he never made it. Four days after that work meeting, at about 5:15 on a Thursday evening, several drivers stuck in rush-hour traffic saw Karl climb onto the railing of the Stewart Avenue Bridge and jump into the Cascadilla Gorge.

For months afterward, I couldn't pass over that bridge without thinking about Karl. My stomach would tighten as I stared down into the gorge. What led him to take his life? Could I have done anything? I never did find out.

By the time I graduated in 2005, that bridge no longer haunted me in quite the same way it did after Karl's death. The six other bridges on campus never had bothered me. In fact, I often found relief from my own stresses by hanging out on the Thurston Avenue Bridge and looking out at Triphammer Falls.

But when I returned to Ithaca last summer for my five-year reunion, the eerie feeling returned. All around campus, there were reminders of suicide—tall, chain-link fences had gone up on every bridge in the wake of three suicides last spring.

I was torn about these fences. It was awful to see their marring of Ithaca's natural beauty. But it would be difficult to argue against something that saves lives—that might have saved Karl's life—just because it is ugly. I began researching suicide barriers, reading all the studies I could find, to try to learn whether they really save lives and whether there were other ways to protect people at a risk for suicide by jumping without destroying the natural beauty of the campus.

Not a "Suicide School" It's hard to imagine a more stunning location for a university than Ithaca's East Hill. Ezra Cornell's decision to locate a university between the rugged Fall Creek and Cascadilla gorges is among the great planning accomplishments of the 19th century. Cornell imagined the gorges as moats to keep out "uncongenial neighbors." But today, with seven bridges crossing over them, they are more like welcome mats.

The gorges are also a favorite local mascot. Arriving Cornell freshmen rush out in droves to buy "Ithaca is Gorges" gear. In the summer, the gorges are magnets for hikers and swimmers. In the fall, they are spectacular places to see the leaves change color. And in the coldest parts of winter, when the sidewalks are covered in slush, and salt wicks up everyone's jeans, students stop to marvel at the frozen waterfalls and the icicles that make the rocky cliffs shimmer.

But many people in the community have come to associate the gorges with suicide. In turn, Cornell has developed a reputation as a high-pressure "suicide school." Kurt Vonnegut, a Cornell alumnus, drew upon this mythology in his best-selling novel *Cat's Cradle*, published in 1963. "Aren't the gorges beautiful?" writes a character named Newt. "This year, two girls jumped into one holding hands. They didn't get into the sorority they wanted."

Twenty-nine people have attempted suicide in the gorges over the past 21 years, and most of them died. Around half of all suicides on Ithaca's East Hill involve the gorges. For some Cornellians, public suicides in the gorges "confirm" rumors that Cornell is the "tough Ivy." Others theorize that the gorges' sublime beauty lures people in.

The media has covered Cornell suicides sporadically over the years. But when two engineering students, William Sinclair and Matthew Zika, jumped and died within a week last March, the national media descended on Ithaca like never before. The students' deaths followed on the heels of another gorge-related suicide in February, and three other suicides by other means during that school year. "Does Six Deaths in Six Months Make Cornell a 'Suicide School'?" asked *USA Today*. "Do Ithaca's Gorges Invite Jumpers?" asked the *Huffington Post*. The *New York Times* ran a front-page story on the situation, and CNN, NPR, and many other outlets ran reports.

"I didn't know you went to a suicide school," a friend of mine joked glibly when we went out for dinner later that week.

Cornell's reputation for suicide is largely undeserved. The school's suicide rate over the past two decades is lower than the national average, which would predict about 1.5 suicides per year in a school Cornell's size. Before the school year that ended last May, Cornell had gone four years without a single student suicide.

The suicide rate in Tompkins County, which includes Ithaca, is not remarkably high, either. Between 2005 and 2007, the most recent period studied by the New York State Health Department, it stood at 5.6 suicides per 100,000 people per year—51 percent lower than the national average, 42 percent lower than the average for Central New York, and 16 percent lower than the statewide average. If the hyperbole about Cornell held true, those suicide rates would presumably be much higher.

The exaggerations probably persist because Cornell's suicides are more public than those at other universities. When they occur in the gorges rather than in dorm rooms, they become items of public interest and tend to be heavily reported.

The news media rarely focuses on the fact that Cornell has long been a leader among college campuses in its efforts to address mental health. In recent years, the university has been particularly vigilant in trying to identify students in need of counseling by training professors, resident advisers, and even custodians to spot signs of emotional distress among students. All students who use the university's Gannett Health Center, even for a cold, are screened for signs of depression. "Cornell and the folks up at Cornell have set the gold standard," noted Morton Silverman, an expert on suicide prevention, on NPR's *Morning Edition* last spring. "It is light years ahead of many other campuses."

"Ithaca Is Fences" But that sophistication was no comfort to Cornell's administration last March. "We are not getting the job done," Cornell President David J. Skorton told the *New York Times*. And there was concern that the recent spate of suicides might be connected; they might be a "suicide cluster."

Suicide clusters arise when already vulnerable people become aware of another person's suicide and then decide to take their own life—



SUICIDOLOGISTS DO NOT BOTHER TRYING TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO ROPE AND CORDS.

ABOVE

Activists have placed bumper stickers around campus criticizing Cornell's decision to erect suicide barriers that cut off the views of its gorges.

IMAGE CREDIT

Jon Reis/ www.jonreis.com

often in the same manner as the previous victim. Some thought the coverage of the first two suicides at Cornell may have encouraged the third student to jump, and they worried that others might follow suit.

To try to prevent more tragedies, Skorton took out a full-page ad in the *Cornell Daily Sun*, the student-run newspaper, advising students that "If you learn anything at Cornell, please learn to ask for help." Professors stopped their classes to have heart-to-hearts with their students. Friends reached out to friends they hadn't seen in a while. "There was definitely a sense across campus of everyone pulling together," says Kevin Latson, a junior landscape architecture student.

But some people argued reaching out was not enough. There would always be students who elude this dragnet of support, who wouldn't be identified in time. There was also concern that people from out of town who had seen the news coverage might come to Cornell to kill themselves—since 1990, four people from outside Ithaca already had done so. As the university began to evaluate its mental health programs, its administrators increasingly concluded that the problem involved the gorges themselves and the quick and effective option they provided for killing oneself.

During the week before the 2010 spring break, faculty and staff were stationed on the bridges to guard against jumpers. Then, while students were away, Cornell threw up eight-foot-high fences on three bridges the university owns and received permission from Ithaca's mayor to install fences on the three city-owned bridges as an emergency measure. One pedestrian bridge, which passes between two waterfalls, was closed off entirely.

Chain-link fences were chosen because they were cheap and fast to put up. Silver wires strung through classic barbed wire holders made the fences look particularly menacing. While the wires were

not barbed, the fences reminded some people of a mental hospital or a prison. "It used to be that you could walk over the bridges and look at the gorge," Andrew Ehrlich, a senior business student, told me last fall. "But now every time you walk across the bridges, you are reminded of death constantly. No one likes that."

Some students viewed the fences as a necessary evil, a sign that the university was trying to address the problem. If the fences were indeed saving lives, then they could live with them. Still, "it kind of made everyone feel a lot more sad in a weird way," Latson says.

Facebook groups appeared to protest the fences; a group called "Cornellians Who Don't Want Bridge Fences" attracted more than 1,500 people. Articles in the *Cornell Daily Sun* criticized their appearance and questioned their effectiveness. "Students hung things up on the fences," says Judah Bellin, a junior. "Underwear, flowers—things they thought would make them more beautiful or things they thought would make them look ridiculous."

Last March, in the windows of Rand Hall, the old architecture studio next to the Thurston Avenue Bridge, a senior named Timothy Liddell hung a sign that read "Ithaca is Fences?" next to his desk. This slogan was not original to Liddell, but soon it was everywhere—on T-shirts and bumper stickers around town.

Liddell and Daniel Marino, another architecture student, organized a competition to rethink the fences. Students from across campus (including the entire freshman landscape architecture studio) submitted ideas. Some were pragmatic; others were emotional. One just showed a bridge with angels standing guard.

Means Restriction Last May, Cornell invited three experts to assess the bridge situation—Annette Beautrais, a senior research scientist at Yale who had studied suicide barriers; Madelyn Gould, an expert on suicide clusters from Columbia University; and Eric Caine, the chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester. They spoke with students, faculty, and city leaders and wrote a report, laying out recommendations for the future of the fences.

The experts feared Ithaca's gorges were becoming "'an iconic site' for suicide." Unlike most hot spots, which are only a single site,

"Ithaca's bridges and gorges collectively stand as points of concern," they explained. They acknowledged the chain-link barriers were "offending in appearance" but recommended that barriers remain "until permanent safety measures can be built."

Suicide barriers are becoming a "best management practice," they argued. The growing evidence that suicide barriers save lives "could well, in the future, become further grounds for consumer-led litigation." In other words, if you take down the fences, prepare to be sued!

Removing the barriers could lead to "especially adverse news coverage," the report says. And if another person dies, "There will be media-led speculation (and assignment of responsibility) about who estimated the risk and assessed the value of the life (lives) lost versus the cost or aesthetics of the barriers."

Suicide barriers on bridges represent a larger trend toward preventing suicide by "means restriction"—making a certain method for suicide more difficult or impossible. "Most people are very ambivalent about dying by suicide," Beautrais told me. "If you can restrict access while they are highly suicidal, then the intense suicidal ideas often pass, and they don't make another attempt."

"The arguments about restricting access to jumping sites are supported by a whole body of suicide literature that [says] if you restrict access to a means of suicide, you can prevent [suicides] by that particular method," says Beautrais. Sometimes, restricting means can lower suicide rates. The "coal gas story" is a dramatic example. Norman Kreitman, a researcher from Edinburgh, showed that a drop in England's suicide rate in the 1960s could be attributed to the nationwide switch from coal gas to natural gas for ovens. It was no longer possible to stick one's head in the oven and receive a lethal dose of carbon monoxide, which was previously the most common means for committing suicide. "The suicide rates in England eventually went up, but over decades," says Beautrais. In the meantime, thousands of lives were saved.

Similar studies have found that providing catalytic converters on auto tailpipes and introducing gun control measures may lower suicide rates. Though some, including a study by Charles Rich and others in 1990, showed that when one means becomes less available, people may substitute other means.

The report to Cornell addresses the impact of bridge barriers in preventing suicide. "All studies show barriers are effective in reducing suicides from that site, without displacement to neighboring sites," the report says, "and [installing suicide barriers is] sometimes accompanied by a reduction in suicides by jumping in the surrounding region."

As the experts' opinions became more widely known, the discussion over suicide barriers became much more heated—both on campus and in the city itself—and those who disliked the barriers felt less comfortable speaking about them. "There's this whole contingent who says we'll live with this because it will help," says Liddell. "It's sort of hard to speak out against it."

No Proof That Suicide Barriers Save Lives Garrett Glasgow is a numbers guy. He teaches research methods in the University of California, Santa Barbara's political science department. He became interested in the research surrounding suicide barriers back in 2006, during a holiday dinner with his family in San Francisco. At the time, the Golden Gate Bridge's suicide problem was receiving a lot of attention. "A lot of press up here was saying suicide barriers are proven to save lives," explains Glasgow. His family wanted to know if that was true, so he started reading the scientific literature.

He says he's not convinced. "If you say, 'It troubles us as a community that people will jump from a particular bridge,' then a barrier will prevent [them from jumping from that bridge]," Glasgow explains. "But it's too much to say that the barrier will save their lives. We don't know that.... The scientific literature was being misrepresented to the public."

Glasgow has never taken a public stance on the barriers themselves; however, he has made his findings available online, and they have figured prominently in the debate over a barrier on the Cold Spring Canyon Arch Bridge near Santa Barbara. "Once you have all the facts, if you still want to build a barrier, that's fine," he says.

Proponents of barriers often cite a study conducted by Richard Seiden of the University of California, Berkeley. He looked at 515 cases of people who were restrained during suicide attempts on

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THAT

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the Golden Gate Bridge between 1937 and 1971, and discovered that 94 percent of them had not died by suicide or other violent means by the end of 1971. "The major hypothesis under test, that Golden Gate Bridge attempters will surely and inexorably 'just go someplace else,' is clearly unsupported by the data," Seiden wrote. "Instead, the findings confirm previous observations that suicidal behavior is crisis oriented and acute in nature." Seiden went on to argue for a suicide barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge.

Glasgow disputes Seiden's conclusion. "One obvious problem is we don't know how many people were serious about jumping," he says. "We have a selection problem because some of the people you are studying never intended to commit suicide in the first place. The other big problem is they weren't actually saved by a barrier; they were saved by a human being talking to them."

But there is an even more basic problem with the study: It assumes that suicidal people would go to a place with a barrier to attempt suicide, just because it was a suicide hot spot in the past, before going somewhere else. If you wanted to kill yourself, would you go to a place with a barrier when there are plenty of other options and methods available? Probably not. Especially not in a place like Ithaca where gorges, bridges, and overlooks are plentiful.

If they just put up barriers on Ithaca's bridges, it's easy to imagine people going to nearby gorge edges, which have been used for suicides in the past. If they surround all the gorges on campus, there will still be gorges in the state parks nearby, not to mention the beautiful overlooks, like the one at Taughanock Falls, a park where suicides have already occurred. If more suicides drift there, must there be a barrier in front of that waterfall as well? Do we have to erect barriers until every last life is saved and every last bit of Ithaca's beauty is destroyed?

The Duke Ellington Bridge and Other Studies When I asked Tommy Bruce, Cornell's vice president of communications, about concerns that people will go elsewhere, he pointed me to a situation in Washington, D.C., during the 1980s. When barriers went up on the Duke Ellington Bridge in January 1986, many argued that people would just kill themselves by jumping from the nearby Taft Bridge instead. But data presented at the annual

meeting of the American Association of Suicidology in 1993 showed no increase in suicides on the Taft Bridge in the years after the barrier was installed.

A chart was also presented showing that the percentage of all suicides that involved jumping dropped by more than half between 1987 and 1990, to 8 percent. This information was featured prominently in a 2008 *New York Times Magazine* article called "The Urge to End It All," which has made its way through the Cornell community and driven much of the debate. The study was also cited in the experts' report.

But it seems few people have read the actual report on this subject by Patrick O'Carroll and Morton Silverman, published in the *Journal of Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*. "Are the data provided sufficient to substantiate the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of bridge barriers as a means to prevent suicide?" O'Carroll asks in the article. "The answer is no, the data are not sufficient to answer that question, because they do not touch on the issue of whether persons who would have committed suicide by jumping from the Ellington Bridge went on to commit suicide by some other means."

Also, the 50 percent drop in the percentage of suicides by jumping (which strangely does not account for the years before the barriers went up) is hard to take seriously. A chart taken from O'Carroll and Silverman's report shows that both the number of jumping suicides and the number of other suicides varied considerably from year to year during the 1970s and 1980s, and they rarely marched in tandem. Indeed, it appears that only 8 percent of the suicides in 1981, five years before the barrier was erected, were by jumping, the same as in 1990.

Studies on the Bern Muenster Terrace in Switzerland, the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, England, and the Memorial Bridge in Augusta, Maine, have all found suicide barriers to be effective at lowering the rate of suicide on a specific site; some people have suggested they prove that suicide barriers are an effective means of suicide prevention. But "these studies lacked statistical power because of the relatively small yearly decreases in numbers of suicides at each bridge, as well as low suicide rates in general," wrote Mark Sinyor and Anthony Levitt in the *British Medical Journal* last July, shortly after Cornell's report came out.

The Bloor Street Viaduct Sinyor and Levitt's own report looks at the Bloor Street Viaduct in Toronto, which averaged 9.3 suicides annually between 1993 and 2002, the year construction began on a wire barrier called the "Luminous Veil." Among bridges during this period, only the Golden Gate Bridge claimed more suicides. So it offered the perfect opportunity to test the theory that certain locations have a greater draw than others, and that barriers in these locations will save lives, which is the argument Beautrais made to me in our interview.

Advocates for barriers often argue that certain bridges have a greater suicide attraction than others. People have, for instance, walked across other bridges to jump from the Golden Gate Bridge. "It's not every bridge and every community that has to deal with

A Few Good Precedents? At Cornell, new, temporary fences went up this summer. The barbed wire holders are gone and the new, wire-mesh structure is black and hard to see from afar. Up close, though, the fences are still pretty oppressive. This summer, representatives of the university, the city, and townspeople began to discuss permanent solutions.

The barriers should "minimize the impact on the views from the bridge and minimize the impact on the views of the bridges," says Gilbert Delgado, the university architect. He adds that they should be beautiful and not read only as a suicide barrier.

But research into precedents has been unsatisfying so far, says David Cutter, ASLA, the Cornell landscape architect. "We've looked at examples of barriers on bridges around the world," he told *Cornell Alumni Magazine* this summer, "and we haven't seen anything that is ideal for Ithaca."

The wrought-iron fence on the Duke Ellington Bridge in Washington may not be bad looking itself, but its closely spaced pickets block the natural view of the Rock

Creek valley. Glass is another option. "We could build a glass tube around the entire thing, but I think most people would find that objectionable," says Delgado. Beautrais says some of the pedestrians on the Grafton Street Bridge in Auckland, New Zealand, appreciate the glass barrier there, which doubles as a weather shelter. But keeping a tall glass structure clean would be a challenge.

One option that would preserve views is a net system below the bridge. Such a system proved an effective deterrent to jumpers on the Bern Muenster Terrace, and a net is planned for the Golden Gate Bridge, where its cost is estimated at \$50 million. (Only \$5 million of that total has been set aside so far—the Golden Gate Bridge District has decided not to use any of its own toll money for this project.)

But nets could also pose problems, particularly in a university setting. "For 18- or 19-year-olds who have been out drinking...[nets]

BUT THERE IS AN EVEN MORE BASIC PROBLEM WITH THE STUDY: IT ASSUMES THAT SUICIDAL PEOPLE WOULD GO TO A PLACE WITH A BARRIER TO ATTEMPT SUICIDE.

this," Beautrais told me. "I don't see any value in extending the barriers to the range of sites people have to jump from. Then you are faced with the sort of situation you have in hanging, that the means are ubiquitously available." Suicidologists do not bother trying to restrict access to rope and cords.

As expected, suicides at the viaduct ceased following the veil's construction; however, the rate of jumping suicide in Toronto remained unchanged. The rate of suicides by jumping from other bridges increased significantly after the barrier was constructed, and jumping from buildings also increased, though this increase was not statistically significant.

Does the Toronto study prove that suicide barriers don't save lives? Glasgow says no. In statistics, "you can never prove a negative," he says. "You can never prove that a barrier doesn't work." Beautrais turned down multiple requests to comment on this study.

RIGHT

Barriers have taken many different forms, including a glass barrier at the Grafton Bridge in New Zealand, bottom; a wire barrier at the Bloor Street Viaduct in Toronto, center; and a net proposed for the Golden Gate Bridge, top.

IMAGE CREDITS

Used with permission from Golden Gate Bridge District, www.goldengate.org, top; Geoffrey Nham/Wikimedia Commons, center; courtesy Annette Beutrais, bottom

may be a very attractive Saturday night challenge,” says Beutrais. “The other problem with nets is they get rubbish in them.”

This fall, Cornell hired office dA, an architecture firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to come up with barrier concepts. Nader Tehrani, a principal, is leading the project. Tehrani has never designed a suicide barrier, a fact that has endeared him to the Cornell community.

When I spoke with Tehrani in October, his firm was still looking at the differences among the bridges—their uses, heights, and materials. “Some are not merely conduits between one side and the other,” says Tehrani. “They are destinations themselves.” This sort of understanding can only make gorge lovers smile.

Tehrani said he had not ruled out any options yet. One area where there is currently some debate is the barriers’ height. The experts Cornell invited have stated in their report that barriers can take various forms, but for solutions other than nets “to be effective, they need to be at least 250 cm or higher and built in such a way that they do not offer a foothold for potential jumpers.” Tehrani wonders about that specified height: Couldn’t a tall, muscular athlete still jump up and pull himself over?

Similarly, there is no arguing that the waist-high rails are easy to overcome, but perhaps a thin glass panel around five feet high with no footholds and no place to stand on top would deter most jumpers.

Looking Forward There is one possibility that nobody involved in the planning process is really talking about yet: They could just take down the fences. With no evidence that bridge barriers actually save lives, this option should be on the table. Options that would block the gorges should be off the table. There is just too much to be lost. The gorges are too important for the community to obscure them without proof that barriers save lives.



There should be little concern about lawsuits, once people see the studies are not conclusive. Past cases have repeatedly shown that the families of people who jump from bridges have no case for collecting damages. “By definition, persons who used the bridge to commit suicide were not using the bridge in a manner used by the general public exercising ordinary care,” explained a California appeals court decision in favor of the Golden Gate Bridge District in 2004.

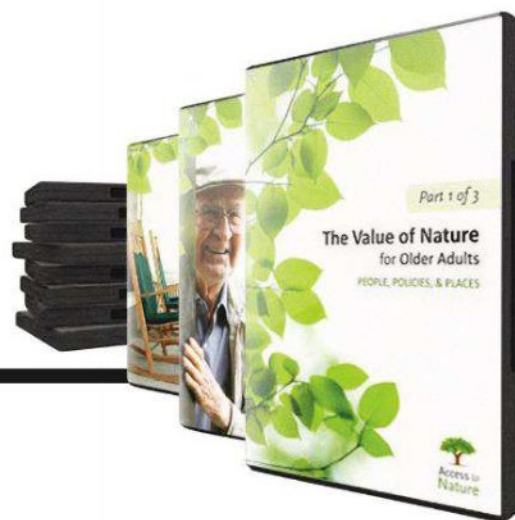
To preserve access to the beauty of Cornell’s gorges, those who care about conservation must remain engaged—not just in Ithaca, but across the country. If the beauty of a place like Ithaca is allowed to be destroyed, it makes it much harder to argue against suicide barriers in other cities and parks. And this is hardly an isolated issue. Suicide barriers are currently being considered for sites in Seattle, Santa Barbara, and New York City—to name just a few places. They were recently the subject of a segment on *CBS Sunday Morning* featuring Cornell as an example. If Ithaca puts up suicide barriers that obscure its waterfalls, what sort of precedent does this set for places like Niagara Falls, another iconic suicide site?

“[A]s in all human communities, there will be suicides in Ithaca and on the Cornell campus in the future,” the Cornell report states in a particularly frank moment. “The issue for all to consider is this: How much do you want these to be associated with your bridges and your gorges?”

But if suicides will continue anyway, we ought to focus on preserving the beauty and life-affirming aspects of the gorges, their ability to relax us and refocus our minds. Viewing Cornell’s gorges from its bridges was, for many students, their only daily connection with these wonders of nature.

“Ithaca was gorges and that was our thing,” laments Liddell. “We were really proud of that.” ●

ACCESS TO NATURE: PLANNING OUTDOOR SPACE FOR THE AGING, A DVD SERIES



**BY SUSAN RODIEK, AFFILIATE ASLA;
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS: ACCESS TO
NATURE, 2009; 3 DVDS, \$139 FOR THE SET,
\$49.50 EACH.**

REVIEWED BY CLAIRE LATANÉ, ASLA

With the baby boomers now reaching their 70s, design for older adults is gaining both understanding and importance. Along with the growing awareness of the physical and mental health benefits of accessing nature, this makes designing outdoor spaces for older adults a timely topic. Susan Rodiek, Affiliate ASLA, of the Center for Health Systems & Design at Texas A&M University has put together a comprehensive, accessible, and easy-to-use video series on designing outdoor spaces for older adults, including a compelling overview on the health benefits of access to nature. Three DVDs cover *The Value of Nature for Older Adults*, *Improving Outdoor Access for Older Adults*, and *Safe and Usable Spaces for Older Adults*. Each approximately half-hour video includes labels with the goal or objective at the bottom of each view. And each includes a special section

this series for continuing education credit, and it is being reviewed by ASLA, the National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards, and the Interior Design Continuing Education Council as well.

A good additional topic for designers would have been the opportunities and challenges of working with assisted-living communities. Just as older adults have a lot to gain from being outside, they offer valuable contributions for the design and care of outdoor spaces—horticultural knowledge, gardening experience, and time spent outdoors to monitor the success of spaces and plant health. And because of the nature of assisted-living communities, their residents are one population that usually has plenty of time to participate. This can be a challenge to designers who are unaccustomed to answering to any opinion on every topic imaginable.

During the design of one assisted-living community garden, I had a resident who objected to the California sycamore because of its allergy-inducing detritus, and another who spoke out against Forest Stewardship Council-certified furniture because of his personal experience

with managed forests in Indonesia. This same group could tell me all the places where the ground was always wet, which native plants grew well, and how the residents wanted to use their landscape. Including meaningful community participation to establish programming and design concepts is crucial to a successful outcome in any community, but especially for older adults.

As the Ronald L. Skaggs Endowed Professorship in Health Facilities Design Faculty Fellow, Rodiek certainly knows her material. In *Access to Nature* she pulls from her own knowledge and a broad panel of experts in healing environments, health research, and the needs of older adults to make an intelligent yet easily understood lesson. The result is an impressive video series that is sure to have a big impact on the quality of life for our aging population. ●

CLAIRE LATANÉ, ASLA, PRACTICES LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE WITH EPTDESIGN IN PASADENA, CALIFORNIA, AND TEACHES A SENIOR DESIGN STUDIO AT CAL POLY POMONA.

EACH VIDEO COVERS THE ESSENTIALS, AND NO MORE, AN IMPORTANT AND DIFFICULT EDITING ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR SUCH SHORT PROGRAMS.

on dementia, information vital for any assisted-living community serving this population with unique needs. These videos prioritize clear organization and easy access to the materials, just like the outdoor spaces they are illustrating.

This video series does a remarkable job conveying a large amount of information in a concise format. Each video covers the essentials, and no more, an important and difficult editing accomplishment for such short programs. The design principles are demonstrated with photo-realistic images of before and after spaces, making a clear and immediate case for each design objective. The videos are accompanied by a web site that provides supplemental resources such as additional reading, interactive exercises, and an extensive list of references of relevant research studies. These videos will be valuable for any student or educator of architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, or long-term care; they will be especially helpful for practitioners designing for older adults. The American Institute of Architects has approved



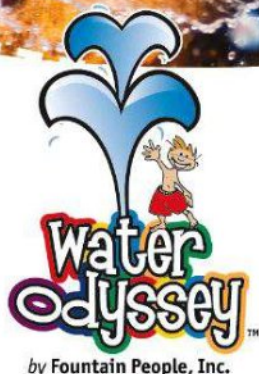
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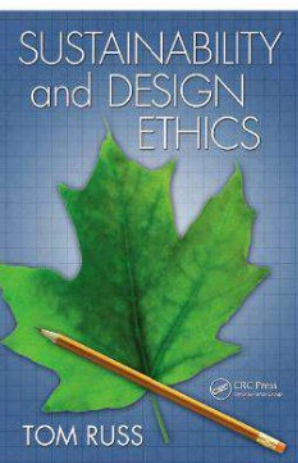
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SUSTAINABILITY AND DESIGN ETHICS

BY TOM RUSS; BOCA RATON, FLORIDA:
CRC PRESS, 2010; 176 PAGES, \$59.95.

REVIEWED BY KIM SORVIG



The central question of Tom Russ's *Sustainability and Design Ethics* is, "Do designers have an ethical obligation to act sustainably?" Reading his work, one wonders why answering is so difficult.

Russ valiantly tries to bring logic to environmental ethics, a topic horribly muddled by contemporary society. It takes courage even to mention ethical obligations these days. Individuals and companies alike believe in absolute self-interest. Anything larger is somebody else's problem, if not "socialism." When businesses take this attitude, they "externalize" costs (such as preventing or mitigating environmental damage) onto the public. Gurus like Milton Friedman and movements like the Tea Party teach that this extreme of selfishness is just fine. Russ's work strongly implies that landscape professionals, whose livelihood relies on a healthy environment, can't afford such shortsightedness.

Historically, absolute self-interest is a minority opinion. "Ethics," wrote Albert Schweitzer, "is nothing else than reverence for life." The Great Law of the Iroquois required considering "effects unto the seventh generation," while Chief Seattle warned that if humans exterminated ecosystems, "Man would die of a great loneliness of spirit." Even Jeremy Bentham, the patron saint of Reaganomics, believed each individual had a right to goods for actual use, but "Whatever is beyond this is more than his share and belongs to others. Nothing was made by God for man to spoil or destroy."

With so many strong precedents, why do the design professions need a 200-page book to persuade us of the pressing ethical need to "meet today's needs without sacrificing tomorrow's"?

Russ's argument, in summary, is this: Professions are defined by special training and knowledge, which impose special responsibilities. Foremost among these are "public health, safety, and welfare." Cultural and scientific awareness of life's interconnectedness is forcing us to extend professional responsibility into two areas not previously part of our mandate: future generations and the more-than-human world, aka "the environment." In practice, Russ notes, this balancing act among values of multiple stakeholders is far from easy.

Russ is in the rationalist tradition, tending to overemphasize practicality and seeing ethics as a matter of logical argument. It seems a loss not to cite Gandhi, the Bible, Walt Whitman, Edward Abbey, or dozens of others who have asserted human duties of stewardship. They would have helped break up some dry deliberations, but perhaps they fail the test of unadulterated logic.

Russ does a fine analysis of the Precautionary Principle, which makes proactive environmental protection a cost of doing business. He shows that sustainability fits utilitarian principles (greatest satisfaction for the greatest number), obeys the Kantian "categorical imperative" (an authoritarian twist on Do Unto Others), and matches "Rawlsian" arguments against self-centeredness. He looks at applied ethics in the codes of conduct of several professional societies, and ASLA comes out looking rather good. Such applied standards are weakened, he argues, by the corporatization of design firms, a point on which he is overemphatic, since sole proprietors have near-identical moral issues. Clearly, corporate lack of ethics is a timely topic, given the corner cutting that apparently led to the Deepwater oil rig blowout.

Ethics is a critical environmental and social concern, and so far as it goes, Russ's insight is good. Unfortunately, this book is highly repetitious, rehashing the main argument (summarized above) dozens of times. Often it tends toward cautious scholasticism instead of the persuasive advocacy that clearly motivates Russ himself. The book completely lacks concrete examples or case studies (other than the codes of conduct): It is so utterly abstract that the ethics are often generic, without specific relationship to sustainability.

DO DESIGNERS HAVE AN ETHICAL OBLIGATION TO ACT SUSTAINABLY?

Numerous errors call into question the competence (or even existence) of an editor. In one chapter two European policy documents (Wingspread Conference and Maastricht Treaty) are quoted identically in two successive paragraphs. CRC Press, best known for technical titles such as the *Handbook of Chemistry and Physics*, doesn't seem to have helped much with this essay on ethics.

I have argued for years that sustainability is about values and philosophies, not just technical "solutions"—one of Russ's main points. Despite this fundamental agreement, I cannot wholeheartedly recommend this book. Persuade your library to buy it, read Chapters 5 and 7, and save your time for a personal inventory of your own ethics. ●

KIM SORVIG IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, DESIGN CRITIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHOR WHO RESIDES IN SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO.



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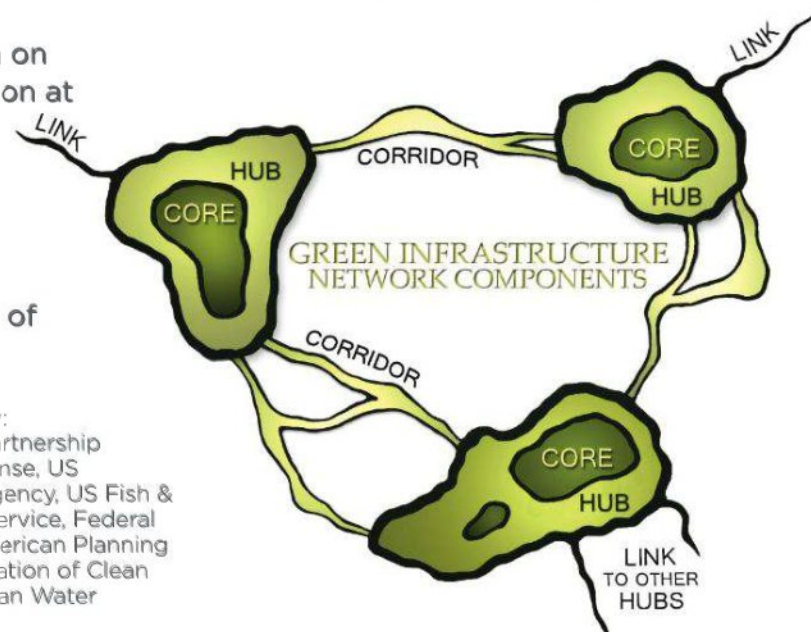
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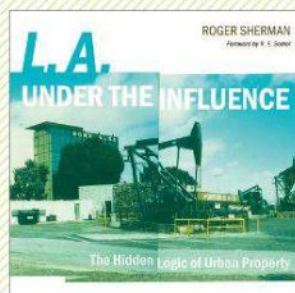
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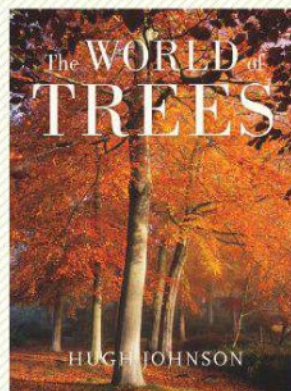


• **L.A. UNDER THE INFLUENCE: THE HIDDEN LOGIC OF URBAN PROPERTY**

BY ROGER SHERMAN; MINNEAPOLIS:
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS,
2010, 169 PAGES, \$34.95.

Aimed at architects, this book takes a look at property stakeholder negotiations and how they shape the urban environment. Dense, academic language and the architectural focus limit its interest for landscape architects to professionals and students who want to examine the underpinnings of urban property negotiations. •

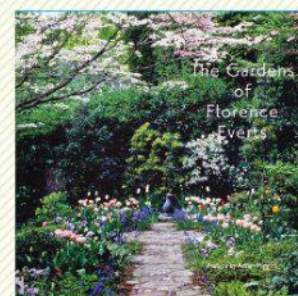
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• **THE WORLD OF TREES**

BY HUGH JOHNSON; BERKELEY AND LOS
ANGELES: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
PRESS, 2010, 400 PAGES, \$34.95.

Originally published in Great Britain in 1973, *The World of Trees* is a colorful, weighty tome to be enjoyed by tree lovers. This new edition updates information and includes more species and high-quality color photos. An opening section includes chapters on how trees work, how they're classified, and engaging historic observations on their study and cultivation. The two remaining sections are divided into conifers and broadleaves. •



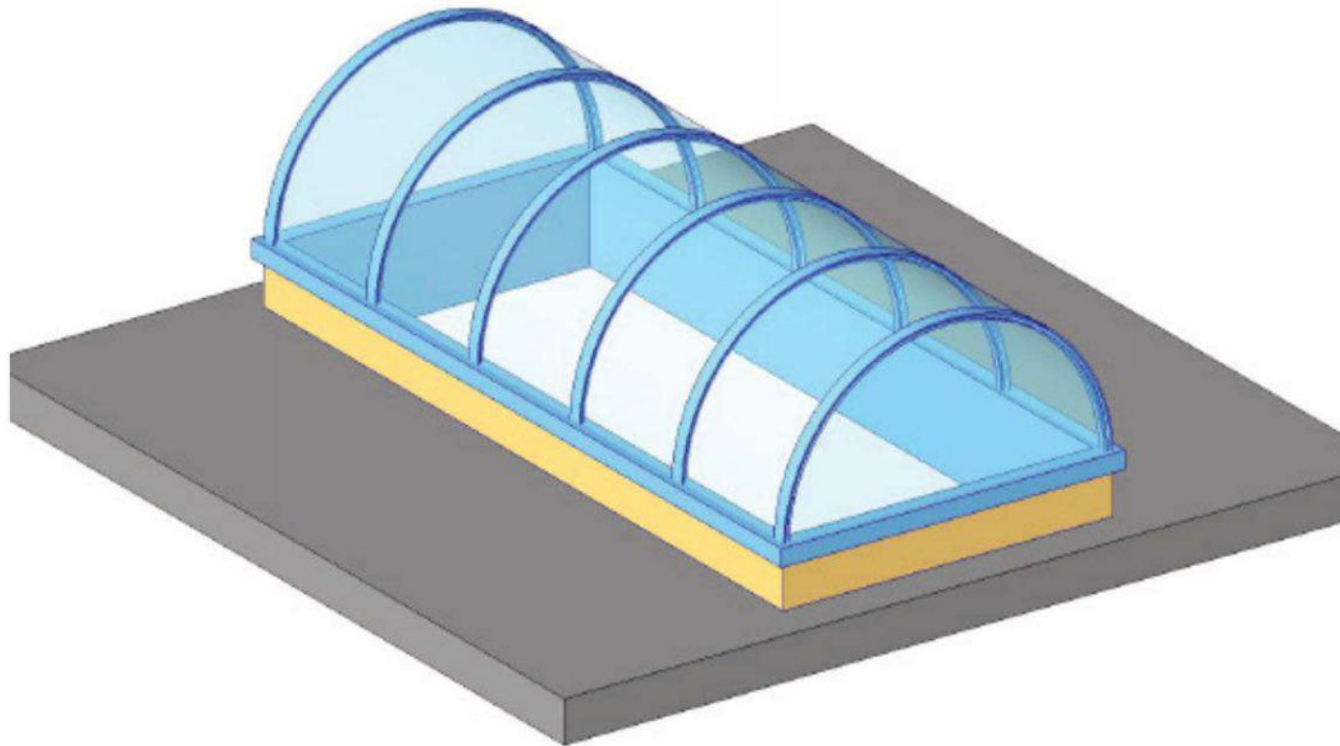
• **THE GARDENS OF FLORENCE EVERTS**

BY FLORENCE EVERTS, ASLA;
WASHINGTON, D.C.:
SPACEMAKER PRESS, 2010,
95 PAGES, \$24.95.

Florence Everts, ASLA, showcases some projects from her 30 years in practice in this monograph. Beautiful photos and a plan for each project are accompanied by brief text that gives some insight into the designer's approach to each project and some of the challenges the sites presented. •

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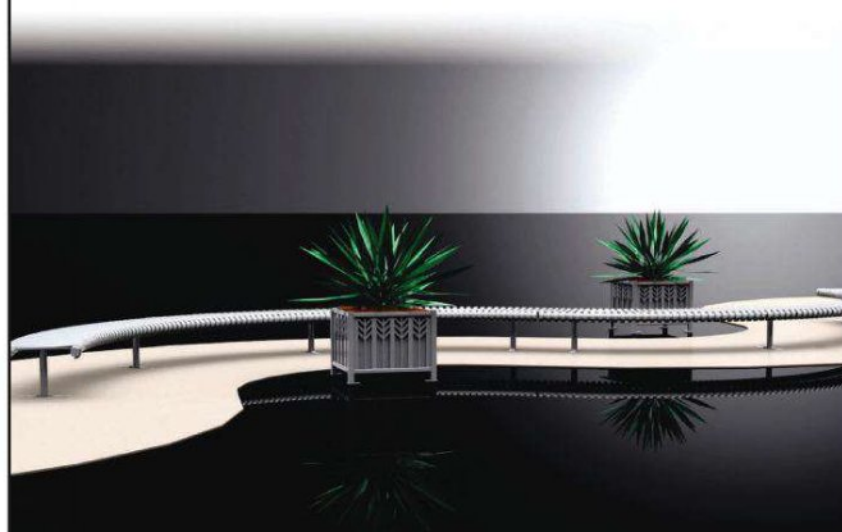
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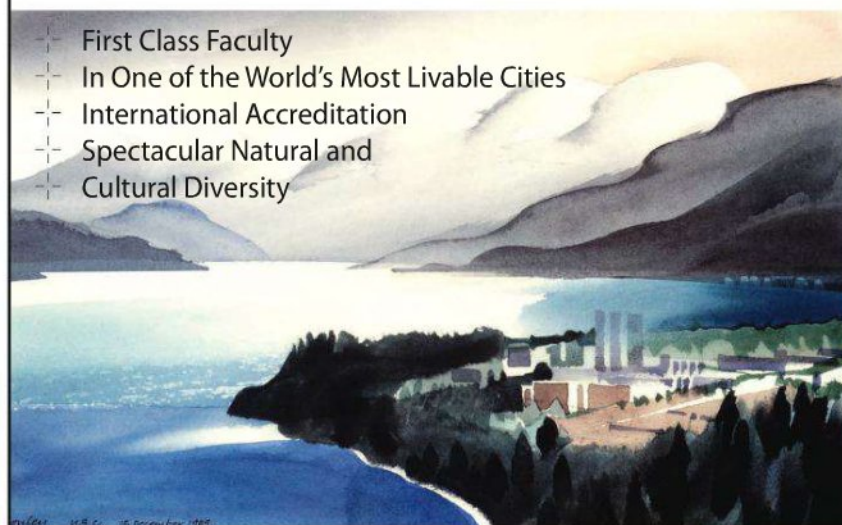
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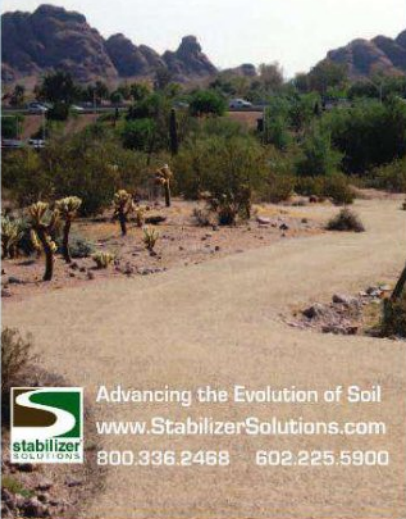
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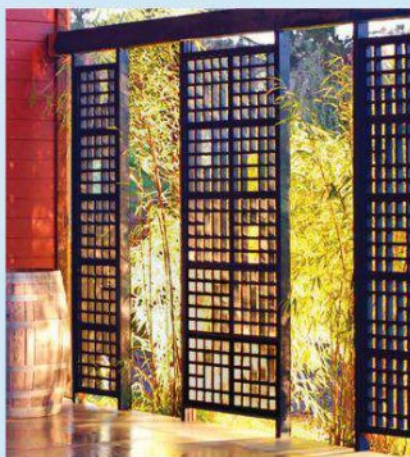
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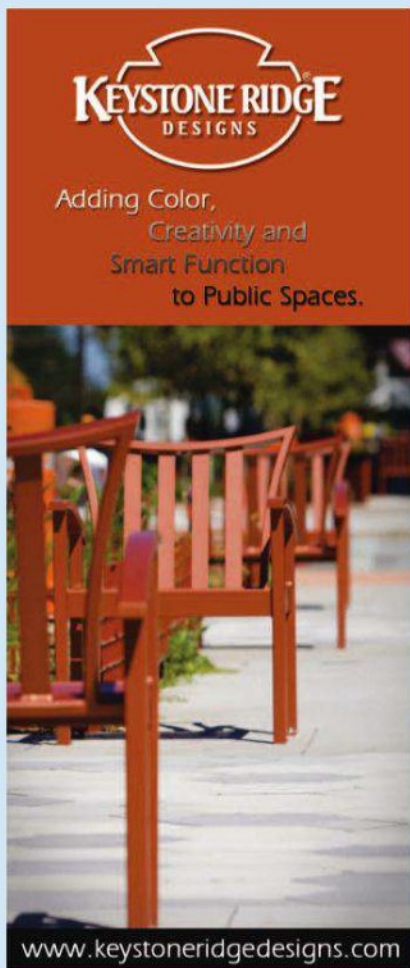


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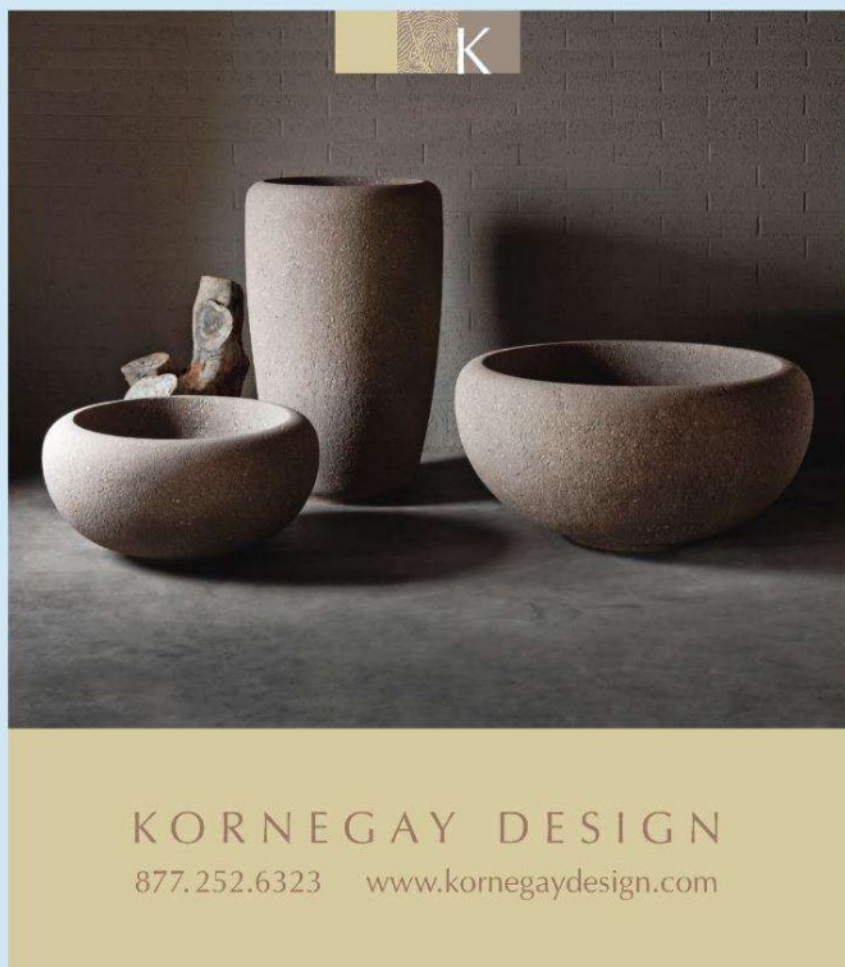


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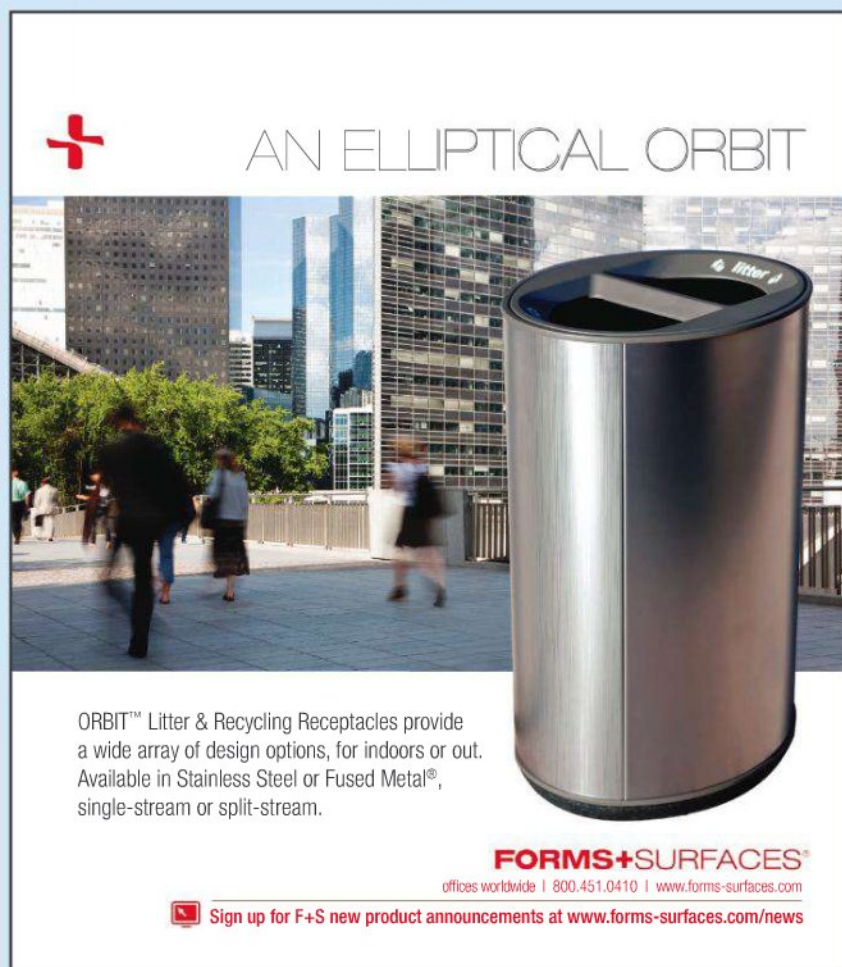
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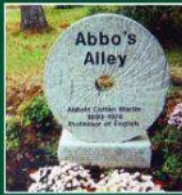
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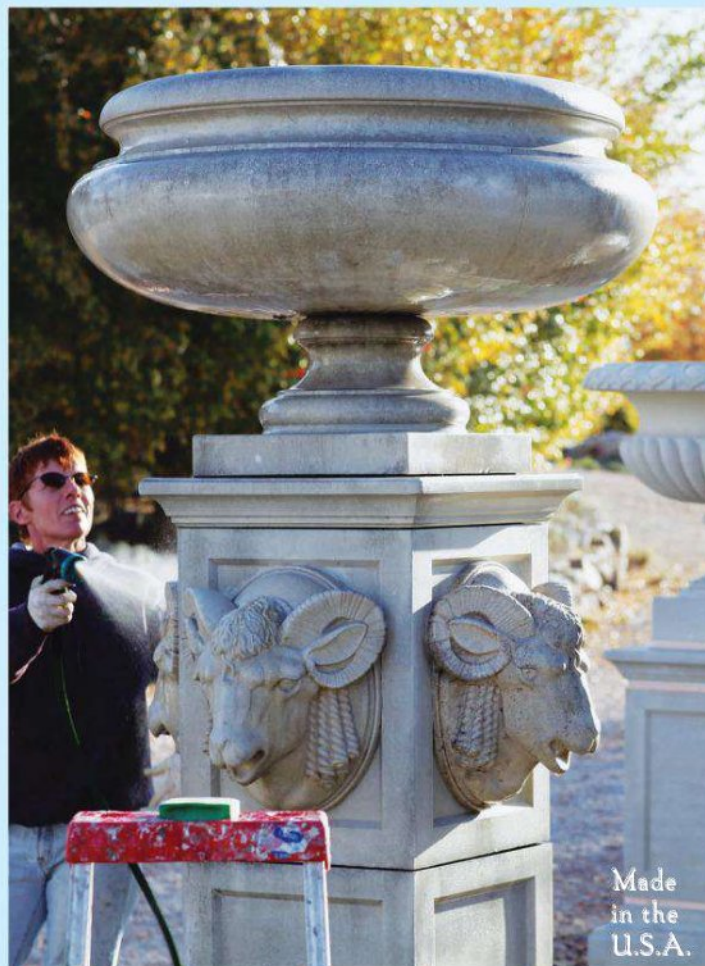


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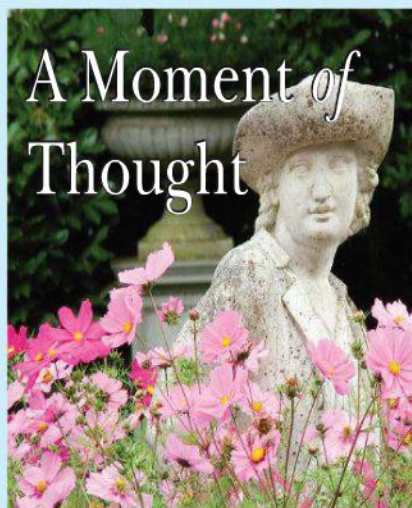


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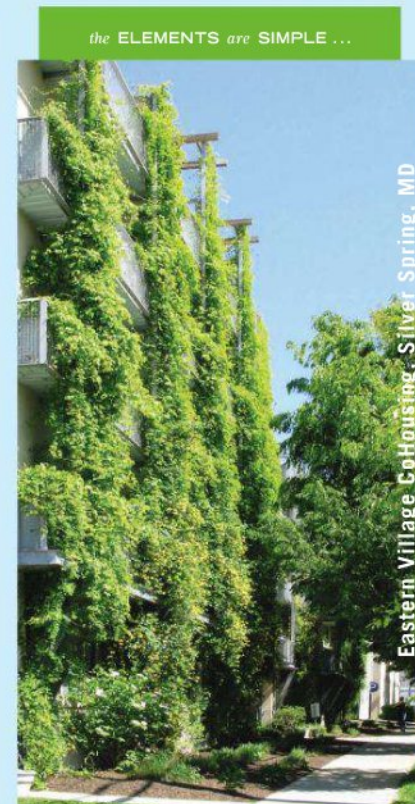


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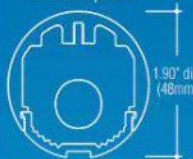
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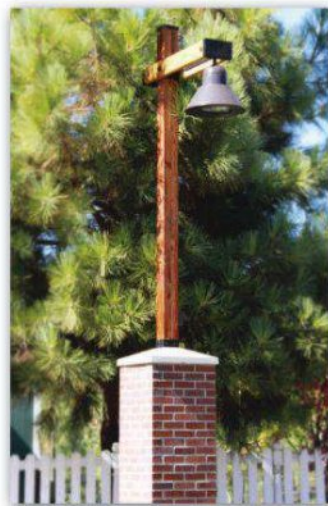
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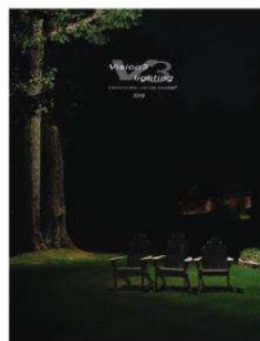
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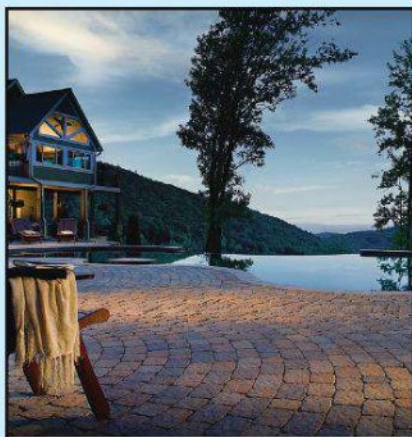
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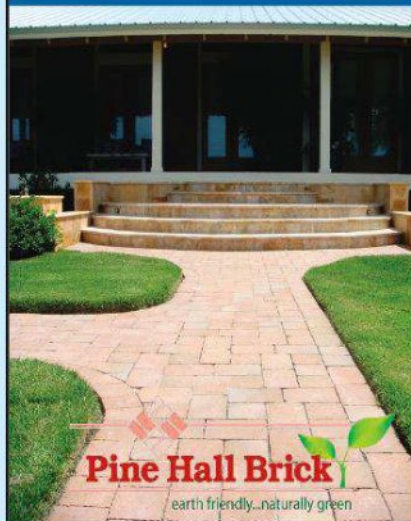
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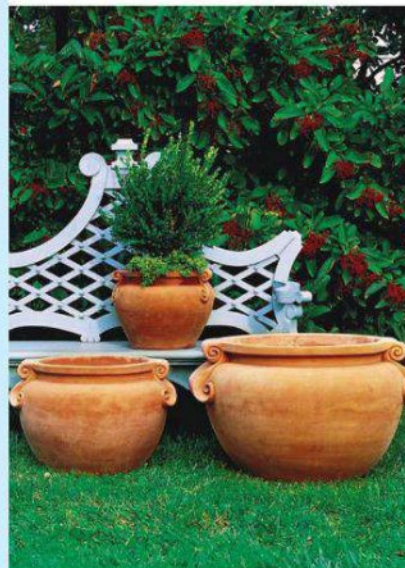
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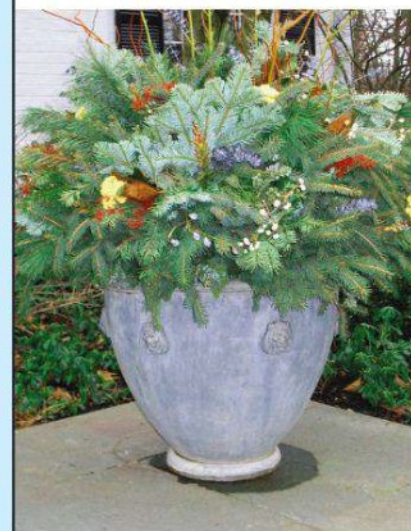
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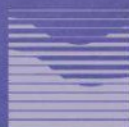
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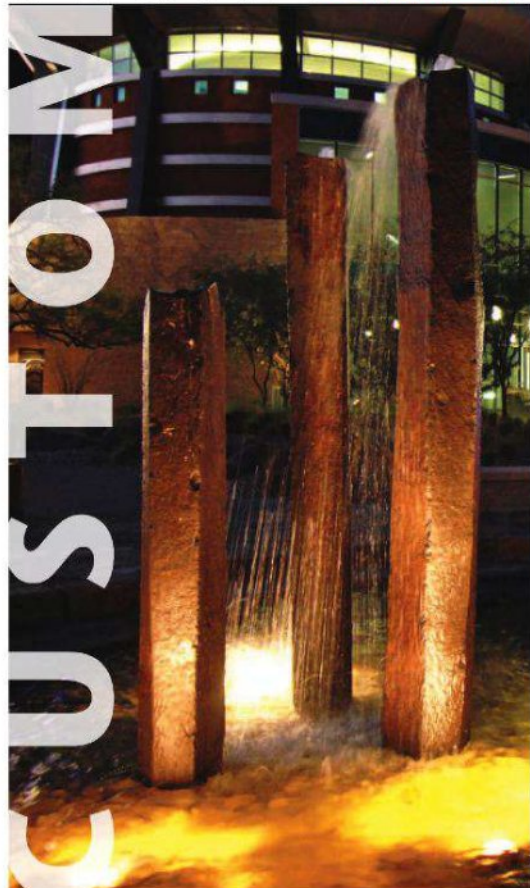
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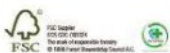


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Landscape Architects Have Many Choices in Residential Furniture

Photo courtesy of Summer Classics



More than 80 percent of private sector landscape architecture firms offer residential design services, and it is far and away the largest market for landscape architects, constituting nearly 40 percent of all billable hours in 2008. During the recession, this market has proven much more resilient than some others. Experts speculate that this could be because savvy consumers realize investment in a home's landscape has the best return of any home improvement, delivering \$1.12 to \$1.20 on resale for every \$1 invested. According to the National Association of Realtors, homes with attractive landscape amenities can command a sale price 11 percent higher than other neighborhood comparables with less attractive landscapes.

A Growing Demand In two recent surveys, *Landscape Architecture Magazine* readers and ASLA Annual Meeting attendees identified residential furniture as the top product about which they would like to learn. Designers and furniture industry leaders say that it is becoming much more prevalent for landscape architects to specify and buy the furniture for their projects.

"The variety of design styles for outdoor furnishings is amazing compared to 10 years ago," says J. Brian Sawyer, ASLA, principal of Sawyer/Berson Architecture & Landscape Architecture LLP in New York City. "Previously, we designed most of the furniture to fit into our residential projects. Today, we mostly specify the furniture and choose the fabrics and finishes."

"Landscape architects create a vision for their projects, but in the past someone else has usually selected the furniture," says Henry Andrew Hall, founder of Henry Hall Designs. "Landscape architects should be selecting the furniture to complete their design vision, and I'm glad we're beginning to see this happen in the marketplace."

Design Trends and Materials Furniture style and materials choices appear to be endless, but trends do emerge. "The most evident

trend we are seeing right now is minimalism," says Bew White, president of Summer Classics. "A return to classic, contemporary, clean lines and use of simple materials, whether it be all aluminum, weather wicker, or cast." Hall agrees: "The bigger, bulkier furnishings of the past are giving way to a new era of minimalism."

Hall sees a movement away from woven furniture, "which is a major shift, as woven has been important for quite a while." He says many landscape architects prefer teak "for a more natural feel, as long as the teak is sustainable and has qualified environmental certifications."

Stainless steel is another well-liked product, says Hall, as long as it is finished correctly. "Next to the ocean, anything can rust, but if it's at least a mile away, stainless steel offers amazing durability and is a much better product than aluminum." It is, however, also more expensive. "What's popular is a stainless/teak mix, such as stainless legs or foundation, but a tabletop or seat that's in teak."

White recommends resin wicker for its weather resistance, comfort, and flexibility of design in color and weave dimensions. Popular furniture finishes this year are black with gold tones, earth tones, and dark wood tones. Grays in metallic and bronzes are showing up as well. Black and brown finishes in resin wicker are very popular. White says fabrics are leaning toward natural-looking linens or boucles and textured solids, such as dupione or raw linen in shades of gold or gray. "Patterns are used for dimensional purposes only," he advises.



Photo courtesy of Henry Hall Designs

“Landscape architects should be selecting the furniture to complete their design vision, and I’m glad we’re beginning to see this happen in the marketplace.”

— Andrew Hall, Henry Hall Designs, San Francisco

“Greens are also important this year, but in shades of medium lime and grass green.”

Richard Arentz, ASLA, of Arentz Landscape Architects in Washington, D.C., mixes textures and materials such as plantation-raised teak with painted metals and ceramics to create a unique look. He recommends outdoor furniture groupings that look more like an interior response. Arentz also agrees on the minimalist design trend. “Modern, classic 1960s aluminum furniture by Richard Schultz seems to never go out of style. Summit is also a great collection for teak furniture.”

clients who don’t want cushions, the Richard Schultz lines don’t need them. Hugonet and other woven ‘sling’ fabrics don’t require cushions either.”

“Whether we are specifying or designing outdoor furniture, we continue to require sustainable materials and low- or no-VOC coatings to be incorporated into the products,” says Sawyer. “Currently, there are many furniture companies that meet the sustainability requirements expected by landscape architects.”



Photo courtesy of Summer Classics

Angeles,” she says. “These are great places to take clients where they can see furniture and test it for comfort. A piece of furniture you fall in love with in a photo can quickly become something you no longer desire once you have a chance to test it for your personal comfort. Henry Hall and David Sutherland are our favorite stops for wood furniture.”



Photo courtesy of Summer Classics

Performance, Maintenance, and Sustainability

Performance and durability are important to landscape architects, who are concerned about sustainability and consider maintenance and replacement cycles in making furniture selections. White agrees. “A product’s ability to last for 20 years will greatly reduce our landfills,” he says, cautioning that there is a lot of confusion about UV resistance, color retention, and maintenance, particularly in coastal environments. It is important to check warranties and to obtain written maintenance instructions when purchasing outdoor furniture.

“People generally desire low-maintenance furniture, so many clients are choosing the synthetic fibers that are weather- and UV-resistant and environmentally friendly, such as the Dedon line,” says Pamela Palmer, ASLA, of ARTECHO Architecture and Landscape Architecture in Venice, California. “For those

Andrea Cochran, FASLA, of Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture in San Francisco, agrees. “Wherever possible I look for products that are well designed and use FSC-certified wood. I believe as landscape architects we need to lead by example to preserve the world’s forests.”

Where to Find It Browse the web sites of the companies listed in this directory for information on local showrooms. Given the heightened level of interest from landscape architects, it

is hoped that many of these companies will participate in the ASLA 2011 Annual Meeting and EXPO, October 30–November 2 in San Diego, allowing the more than 6,000 attendees to see their wares in person. “As a designer of contemporary residential gardens, one of my primary reasons for attending the ASLA Annual Meeting each year is to spend hours—and sometimes days—scouring the EXPO for new styles of furniture and amenities,” says Sandra Y. Clinton, FASLA, of Clinton and Associates PC in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Both Hall and White advise landscape architects to visit their local design center. “As well as providing clients with access to better-designed furniture, landscape architects receive significant designer discounts from most outdoor furniture companies,” says Hall. Palmer agrees. “In California we are lucky to have the San Francisco Design Center in Northern California and the Pacific Design Center in Los

Visiting showrooms allows designers to test dining chairs with tables of various lines for height compatibility. “Some showrooms ‘memo’ furniture, which means they will allow a client to see it in their home before purchasing,” Palmer continues. “Busy people can test the piece in their home and agree that it is the right piece for them.”

Custom Furniture There are still those projects where it is necessary to design the furniture to meet the project requirements, thus requiring a custom fabricator.

“Last year, we designed a complete furniture grouping for a private penthouse roof terrace that required an experienced fabricator using ‘old world’ craftsmanship in their work,” says Sawyer. “We commissioned M. Cohen and Sons to build the furniture from recycled steel. The finished product was a superbly crafted set of powder-coated steel furniture frames hammered to the exact design specified. The furniture cushions and stone tabletops were fabricated by specialty tradespeople.”

While there will always be a demand for custom fabrication, Palmer pays the outdoor furniture industry the ultimate compliment. “In the past, when we wanted great furniture—especially modular furniture—we had to design it and have it fabricated by a shop,” she says. “Today there are so many great outdoor furniture designers and showrooms that it is a pleasure to incorporate their work into our projects.”

Ann Looper Pryor
Publisher
Landscape Architecture

A World of Pottery
www.aworldofpottery.com

A&M Victorian Decorations
www.aandmvictorian.com

Aardvark Antiques
www.aardvarkantiques.com

Acacia Home & Gardens
www.acaciahomeandgarden.com

Accents By Design, Inc.
www.accentsbydesignusa.com

Ace Evert
www.aceevert.com

ACHLA Designs
www.achla.com

Admiral Furniture
www.admiralfurnitureonline.com

Aerocrete Precast d.b.a. Architectural Precast, Inc.
www.archprecast.com

Agio USA
www.agio-usa.com

Aguafina Gardens International
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248-738-0500
www.aguafina.com

Al Fresco Concepts
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Al's Garden Art, Inc.
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Alfresco Home
www.alfrescohome.com

Alfresco Living
www.alfrescoliving.com

Alfresco Open Aire Culinary Systems
www.alfrescogrills.com

Alias USA
www.aliasusa.com

Alison Bies Fine Art
www.alisonbiesfineart.com

All Classics Ltd.
www.allclassics.com

Allied Molded Products
www.allied-molded.com

AllStone Group LLC
www.allstonegroup.com

Alpine Garden Art / Classic Productions
www.alpine-art.com

Altermann Galleries
www.altermann.com

Amaridian
www.amaridianusa.com

American Pottery
www.americanpotteryinc.com

American Soil and Stone
www.americansoil.com

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www.anacaracompany.com

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www.anamese.com

Ancient Mosaic Studios LLC
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Andre Harvey Studio
www.andreharvey.com

Andrew Richard Designs
www.andrewricharddesigns.com

Ango USA
www.angoworld.com

Antiqua Home, LLC
www.antiquahome.com

Apenberrys
www.apenberrys.com

Applied Metal and Stone, LLC
www.appliedmetalandstone.com

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Manassas, VA 20109
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www.arborateak.com

Arcadia Home, Inc.
www.arcadiahomeinc.com

Archie Held Studio
www.archieheld.com

Archie's Island Furniture
www.archiesisland.com

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Architectural Pottery
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www.archpot.com

Arizona Bronze
www.azbronze.com

Arktura
www.arktura.com

Art Frame Direct
www.artframedirect.com

Art of Dennis Smith, The
www.smithsculpture.com

Art of the Garden
www.artofthegarden.net

Artesia
www.artesiacollections.com

Artisan Designs
www.artisan designs.com

Artisan House
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203-563-0017
www.artisanhouse.com

Artistic Statuary
www.artisticstatuary.com

Artistry in Bronze
www.artistryinbronze.com

Asian Art Imports
www.asianartimports.com

Asian Ceramics, Inc.
Alex Abrahamian
2600 Huntington Drive
Duarte, CA 91010
800-449-6890
www.asian-ceramics.com

Astrup Company, The
www.astrup.com

At-Once
www.at-once.com

Atelier Vierkant
Belgium
www.ateliervierkant.com

Atelier-Volumes, AMT Inc
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www.betonique.com

Atlantis Outdoor Cabinetry
www.atlantiscabinetry.com

Aunco Pottery
www.auncopottery.com

Authentic Provence
www.authenticprovence.com

Ayo Furniture
www.ayofurniture.com

B&B Italia USA, Inc.
www.bebitalia.it

Bachman's Nursery Wholesale Center
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Backyard America
www.backyardamerica.com

Backyard X-scapes
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BalaZara
www.balazara.com

Baldwin Lawn Furniture LLC
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Bar Harbor Cedar
www.barharborcedar.com

Barbara Israel Garden Traditions
www.gardentraditions.us

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Canada
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www.bekacasting.com

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Bellini Home and Gardens
www.bellinihomeandgardens.com

Benchsmith
www.benchsmith.com

Best Litter Receptacles
www.bestlitter.com

Bill Secunda Studios
www.weldart.com

Birth of Venus Studios, LLC
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www.bloomholland.nl

Blu Dot
www.bludot.com

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Palatine, IL 60067
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Blue Water Fountains & Garden Gallery
www.bluewaterfountains.com

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970-622-0213
www.bobbiecarlyle sculpture.com

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www.bocagrandedesign.com

Bocabolo

www.bocabolo.com

Bose Corporation

www.bose.com/outdoor

Bouroullec

www.bouroullec.com

Bradford Lifestyles, Ltd.

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Branch Manufacturing

www.thebranchstudio.com

Branch Studio

www.detroitgardenworks.com

Brandelli Arts, Inc

www.brandelliarts.com

Brass Baron Fountains & Statuary

www.brassbaron.com

Braxton-Culler, Inc.

www.braxtonculler.net

Brian Keith Sculpture

www.briankeithfineart.com

Brickstone Studios

www.brickstone.com

Briggs Design

www.briggssculture.com

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www.brindisiamo.com

Broilmaster Premium Gas Grills

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Bromsgrove

www.bromsgrove.ca

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www.thebrookfieldco.com

Brooklynrockwerks.com

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Butler Box & Stake Inc

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Buus, Inc.

www.ebuus.com

C&G Italian Design

www.traditional-building.com/
brochure/italdes.htm

California Outdoor Concepts

www.californiaoutdoor
concepts.com

Campania International

www.campaniainternational.com

Campo de Fiori

www.campodefiori.com

Canadian Recycled Plastic Products C.R.P.

www.crplastics.com

Canyon Pottery

www.canyonpottery.com

Capital Garden Products

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Capitol Ornamental Concrete

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Champa Ceramics

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Chandler Company, The

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Charleston Gardens

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Chem Supply Co, Inc

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www.chiodoart.com

Christiansen-Arner

www.bilhenrygallery.com

Christopher Smith, Bronze Sculptor

www.christophersmithsculpture.
com

Christopher Thomson Ironworks

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Coburn Topiary & Garden Art

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www.firefeatures.com

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Dale Rogers Studio

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Del Greco Textiles
www.delgrecotextiles.com

DelGreco & Company
www.delgrecoandcompany.com

Deltropico Designs
www.97.74.6.75/content/Home/
tabid/54/Default.aspx

Desert Steel
www.desertsteel.net

Desert Steel Company
www.desertsteelsculptures.com

**Design Decor
Corporation**
www.designdecorcorp.com

Design Within Reach
www.dwr.com

**Designer Wicker &
Rattan by Tribor**
www.designerwicker.com

Designs By Garry, Inc.
www.exteriorfireplaces.com

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**Dimplex North America
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www.dimplex.com

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www.dongtamceramics.com

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Studio**
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Presume**
www.dlip.com

**Due Process Stable
Trading Company**
www.dpstc.org

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Dunford Jones
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Eagle Bronze
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Corporation**
www.easternmarketingcorp.com

Easy Way Products
www.easywayproducts.com

Ebel Incorporated
www.ebelinc.com

EcoSmart Fire
www.ecosmartfire.com

Ed Dwight Studios
www.eddwright.com/about_
eddwright/eddwright_studios.htm

Eden Outdoor Living
www.edenoutdoorliving.com

Ego Paris
www.furniture-egoparis.com

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www.eichingersculpture.com

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Element Square
www.elementsquare.com

Eloquence, Inc.
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www.empirecomfort.com

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Englishman's
www.englishmansfurniture.com

Eric Snowden Sculptor
www.ericssnowden.com

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www.essexfineart.net

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www.estudiocabeza.com/new/
english/index.htm

Ethan Allen
www.ethanallen.com

Euracast
www.euracast.com

Euro3Plast
www.euro3plast.com

Euroflues
www.euroflues.com

Evan Jones Studios
www.evanjonesstudios.com

Evo Incorporated
www.evoamerica.com

Expressions in Sculpture
www.expressions-in-
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www.fiberbuiltumbrellas.com

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Figurative Art Studio
www.figurativeartstudio.com

Fine's Gallery
www.finesgallery.com

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www.firebydesign.com

Fire Crystals
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Fire Rock Products
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Cooking Systems**
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Floatland LLC
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www.florentinecraftsmen.com

Flower Framers

www.flowerframers.com

Foremost Groups

www.foremostgroups.com

Forever Redwood

www.foreverredwood.com

Forma + Design

www.formaanddesign.com

Fran's Wicker Furniture

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Fresco Frames

www.frescoframes.com

Frontgate

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Fullrich Industries

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Galtech International Co.

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Garden Gate, The

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800-334-1078
www.thehammocksource.com

Hansen Corporation

www.hansencasual.com

Harbour Outdoor

www.harbouroutdoor.com

Health In Motion

www.sunsetswings.com

Helo Sauna & Steam/Saunatec Inc.

www.saunatec.com

Henry Hall Designs

www.henryhalldesigns.com

Hines & Company

www.hinescompany.com

Hive Modern

www.hivemodern.com

Hive Modular

www.hivemodular.com

Holland Grill Company, The

www.hollandgrill.com

Holly Hunt DC

www.hollyhunt.com

Hooks & Lattice/Planters Unlimited

www.hooksandlattice.com

Innit Designs

www.innitdesigns.com

International Casual Furniture & Accessories Market

www.casualmarket.com

International Mulch Company

www.rubberificmulch.com

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Jardin de Ville USA, Inc.

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Johnson Atelier, The

www.atelier.org

Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet

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800-868-1699
www.kalamazoogourmet.com

Kannoa

www.kannoa.com

Kara Furniture Management

Jennifer Mulholland
1028 Lakeshore Rd East
Oakville, ON L6J 1K8
Canada
905-842-6437
www.karafurniture.com

Kenian Imports, Inc.

www.kenianimports.com

Kenroy Home

www.kenroyhome.com

Kimberlee Keswick Design, Inc.

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Kosta Furniture

www.kostafurniture.com

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www.la-fete.biz

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www.laneventure.com

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www.laurarusso.com

Laurie Beckerman Design

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Lebello USA

www.lebello.com

Lee Industries

www.furniturebylee.com

Lee Jofa

www.leejofa.com

Leif Petersen Inc.

www.leifpetersenfurniture.com

Leisure Design

www.leisuredesign.ca

Les Jardins USA

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NATURE IS DEAD: LONG LIVE DESIGN

BY RENÉ BIHAN

In recent months, landscape architecture has gained a good bit of attention from an ongoing debate over the notion of landscape urbanism between a vocal critic, Andrés Duany, and its promoters at Harvard University. So the design world is publicly acknowledging the increasing value of landscape architects. But step for a moment outside our design bubble and take stock in the low awareness of landscape architecture among consumers.

Perhaps this is partially because of the West's philosophical view of nature as primordial. But primordial nature is dead, at least for most of the inhabited world. Nature—as consumers imagine it to be—is a controlled environment influenced by generations of politicians, landscape architects, and planners. The average visitor

LET'S NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE NEGLECTED, NAMELY, BUILDING A RECOGNIZABLE BRAND FOR OUR PROFESSION.

to Yellowstone doesn't recognize the role that landscape architects have played in their experience—they assume it was providential. If we seek recognition and political capital, then there is a responsibility for greater legibility in landscape design work. To secure political capital, landscape architects need to articulate clear, contemporary, and relevant design ideas.

Our situation is not helped by the mass retailers that supply the majority of landscape materials to consumers. Regardless of where you are in this country, I guarantee your “neighborhood” Home Depot has a full stock of boxwood, roses, and sod—even in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As a result, consumers place little value on locally native plant species and are confused about what constitutes nature. Indeed, the local Earth Day festival near my home in Reno, Nevada, is held in a rose garden. How can we expect laypersons spending the afternoon at Crissy Field in San Francisco to recognize the talent that went into imagining that space and not to assume it has been this way for eternity, especially when the only expression they relate with designed outdoor spaces originates from European designs of boxwood, roses, and sod?

It's not just the consumer model that is broken. The cultural preference for lush lawns influences public and commercial landscapes as well. We can no longer make excuses for contributing to the expansive panoramas of water-hogging landscapes. It is our responsibility to educate clients and provide artful solutions that meet their needs in ways that do no further harm to

our environment. My firm, SWA Group, recently redesigned the campus for a university in a major Mexican city. After persuading the client of the appropriateness of a native planting palette and a design that incorporated the natural systems of the site, we found there were no local wholesale plant suppliers who could provide native species.

This year, several ASLA award-winning projects were expertly rooted in context. Most notably, the Shanghai Houtan Park and the High Line plainly reveal themselves as products of the design elite. However, in the same *Landscape Architecture* issue that featured the best work among us—with all of these projects' staggering imagery—the magazine cover depicted an ambiguous reflected hillside in a pond of water with the silly metaphor for the 2010 award winners as a “Watershed of Innovation.” To be recognized among elite designers, we owe it to our profession to step above the clichés. The residential project profiled in the same issue in “Under the Texan Sun” is skillfully crafted, but Tuscan gardens in Texas do not represent our profession's culture of ideas. Are these the impressions we want to project to the public? Will

we recruit the best and brightest design talent when our leading publication is giving off such mixed messages?

Landscape urbanism proponents are making clear the opportunity for our greater role in designing urban environments. But let's not lose sight of the opportunity we have neglected, namely, building a recognizable brand for our profession. There is a new wave of public interest in environmental responsibility, in outdoor living spaces, in community, in recreation and alternative transportation, in gardening and growing in general. We need to advocate for a greater appreciation of our natural and designed landscapes and the differences between them. We need to educate our clients and the public about the functions of natural systems and the importance of indigenous materials. We need to lobby young people to consider landscape architecture as a career path. We are all responsible for our profession's status. When our work is so relevant to contemporary culture, what excuse do we have for being invisible?

RENÉ BIHAN IS THE MANAGING PRINCIPAL OF SWA GROUP'S SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE.



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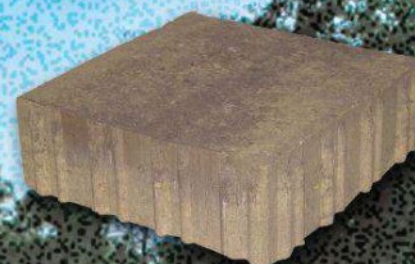
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