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**Essays: Landscapes of the
Pacific Northwest and Coastal California** 3
Laurie Olin: *Oyster Light: Pacific Northwest
Reflections*

Thaisa Way: *Richard Haag: New Eyes for Old*

Susan Herrington: *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander:
Canada's Modern Landscape Architect*

Kathleen John-Alder: *California Dreaming*

Place Maker 15
Susan Chamberlin: *Isabelle Greene*

Book Reviews 17
Reuben M. Rainey: *La Natura come amante:
Nature as a Lover*; *Richard Haag Associates*
By Luca Maria Francesco Fabris

Linda Parshall: *The Fortune Hunter:
A German Prince in Regency England*
By Peter James Bowman

Elihu Rubin: *Pastoral Capitalism:
A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes*
By Louise A. Mozingo

Contributors 23



Letter from the Editor

This issue of *Site/Lines* has as its thematic focus coastal California and the Pacific Northwest. In writing about the latter, the eminent landscape architect Laurie Olin, who is a native of this region, eloquently captures its meaning as place in a series of personal meditations based on memory. Olin's lifelong practice of recording his impressions of landscape in sketchbooks demonstrates his method of grounding design in an understanding of the underlying patterns of nature.

As a student in the School of Architecture at the University of Washington and later while working in the office of Richard Haag, Olin was influenced by the design theories and practice of this preeminent landscape architect. Thaisa Way, who now teaches landscape architecture at Olin's alma mater, the University of Washington, is currently exploring Haag's development of modernist landscape principles as a personal design idiom. In her insightful essay on this twentieth-century mas-

ter she pays particular attention to his two best-known and most innovative and influential landscapes, Gas Works Park and Bloedel Reserve.

Susan Herrington treats the work of another pioneering landscape modernist, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. Based in Vancouver, Oberlander's long and distinguished career over the past sixty years has included several commissions in collaboration with notable modern architects in Canada and the United States. As a woman in what was still a man's field when she entered the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1943, Oberlander, who had been influenced by Bauhaus design theory in her native Germany, asserted her independence from Harvard's then-prevailing Beaux-Arts curriculum. Herrington discusses how in doing so she was able to forge a personal style compatible with the modern architecture movement, which was still in its infancy in the United States.

Kathleen John-Alder, a former associate partner at Olin Partnership and now an assistant professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Rutgers University, looks at the Sea

Ranch in northern California. The emphasis on site and scenery at this modernist planned development resulted in what would be called today an environmentally friendly design. Al Boeke, an apostle of California modernism and New Town design principles, represented the developer, Oceanic Properties. His hiring of pioneering landscape architect Lawrence Halprin to collaborate with architects Joseph Esherick, Charles Moore, and William Turnbull resulted in a plan for a community of sensitively sited second homes built in the Bay Area style. John-Alder's essay examines how the initial design's compatibility with the environment has been compromised over time.

This issue's Place Maker is landscape architect Isabelle Greene, who has centered her distinguished career mainly in and around Santa Barbara, California. In focusing on the garden Greene designed for Carol Valentine in Montecito, Susan Chamberlin makes the reader aware of how this designer's knowledge of botany enabled her to employ the region's xeric vegetation to achieve the same kind of strongly patterned ground plane with contrasting colors and boldly delineated shapes that Brazilian modernist Roberto Burle Marx demonstrated using tropical plants. Here, as in Greene's other work, the design simplicity she derived from the Zen aesthetic of Japanese gardens can also be seen.

The Foundation for Landscape Studies is gratified to have received numerous

compliments from readers who appreciate the quality of the writing and graphic design as well as the subjects treated in *Site/Lines*. We are proud that this publication appears to occupy a previously unfilled niche in the realm of landscape periodicals and that several libraries have requested complete sets. Although you may access current and back issues electronically on our Web site, we think that reading *Site/Lines* in its paper form is still a preference among many of our readers. However, we must face the fact that funding for this option falls short of cost. Since the publication of *Site/Lines* is a donor-supported rather than a subscription

enterprise, we strongly urge you to enclose a check or provide your credit-card information on the envelope that is inserted in this issue. Donors of \$150 and over will receive a personally inscribed copy of my recently published book *Writing the Garden, A Literary Conversation Over Two Centuries*. In anticipation of your gift of any amount, we thank you for helping us to continue fulfilling this essential part of our mission.

With good green wishes,

Elizabeth Barlow Rogers
President,
Foundation for Landscape
Studies

On the Cover:

Sauk River Farm on steelhead fishing trip near the Cascade Mountains, Washington, 1967.

Drawing by Laurie Olin.

2012 John Brinckerhoff Jackson Book Prize Winners

David Coke and Alan Borg
Vauxhall Gardens
Yale University Press, 2011

Lawrence Halprin, with foreword by Laurie Olin
A Life Spent Changing Places
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011

Eugenia W. Herbert
Flora's Empire: British Gardens in India
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011

Bianca Maria Rinaldi
The Chinese Garden: Garden Types for Contemporary Landscape Architecture
Birkhäuser, 2011

Kirk Savage
Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape
University of California Press, 2011

2012 David R. Coffin Publication Grant Winners

Elizabeth Hope Cushing
Arthur A. Schurcliff (1870-1957) and the Road to Colonial Williamsburg

Alison Hirsch
City Choreographer: Lawrence Halprin and Public Performance in Urban Renewal America

Karen M'Closkey
Unearthed: The Landscapes of Hargreaves Associates

Emily Pugh
Architecture and the Cold War: The Berlin Wall and the Construction of East and West Berlin

William Tronzo
Petrarch's Two Gardens

Suzanne L. Turner
The Garden Diary of Martha Turnbull, Mistress of Rosedown Plantation

Landscapes of the Pacific Northwest and Coastal California

Oyster Light: Pacific Northwest Reflections

I'm a landscape architect who loves to draw. I have been drawing ever since I was a child in Alaska, where I grew up. When I was young, I learned about art from books – there were no galleries or art museums up north at that time – and I learned about the environment directly from one of the last truly “natural” places on earth. People often ask me how someone from Alaska happened to end up in landscape architecture, something I have wondered myself from time to time. I had certainly never heard of it in Fairbanks in the 1940s and 1950s. I started college in civil engineering, which was one of the more intellectual and creative things a person could do on the frontier. After a year at the University of Alaska, I shifted to architecture – something that seemed, if only vaguely, more artistic – and came “Outside,” as we called leaving Alaska, to study at the University of Washington in Seattle. This led to the beginning of my professional life in the city and on the islands of Puget Sound.

While my teachers were a great influence upon me – especially the landscape architect Richard Haag, for whom several of my classmates and I worked off and on between 1958 and 1970 – it was the landscape of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest that nourished and shaped my sensibility; that made me realize that designing buildings was not enough for me. I was taken by space, by natural processes, by ecology, by the life of the landscape and its creatures.

Looking back, I see that I have always been curious and that I have always tried to capture my discoveries on paper. When I was eight years old, my family moved to the woods and I began exploring my environment on foot. By the time I was sixteen, I found pleasure in sitting about in the landscape drawing. My first sketchbooks are of places – not just of people or buildings or trees, but of all of them together. I learned that if one tries to draw something, one has to see it clearly, has to look closely to learn how it is made or what gives it character. Drawing the landscape became for me a way to study and learn from the world directly, and in my years in the Northwest it was a world that was beautiful and very much alive.

Since that time I have filled nearly one hundred fifty sketchbooks, but probably none have had more to do with who I became – a landscape architect who has spent his career bringing nature and landscape to cities and people – than those I filled in my early years in Alaska and Washington. To draw one has to be quiet and sit still and look very carefully. If you do, things will reveal themselves. The world will open and unfold.

There are many stunning natural places in the Pacific Northwest: the snow-clad volcanic mountains, the green realm of the rain forests, and the Columbia River canyons and gorge. Of all the natural features of the Northwest, however, the most beautiful and stimulating for me may be the Pacific Ocean beaches with their receding cliffs, stranded rocks and stacks, and vast jumbles of logs and wreckage. Here one sees the relentless energy of the earth and its churning, chewing, regurgitating creation. From Tatoosh Island, Cape Flaherty, and Neah Bay in the north to Cannon Beach, Bandon, and Coos Bay in the south of Oregon, the coast is magnificent.

Possibly the most beautiful of all such places in Washington are the sequence of beaches and bays that form the coast just south of Neah Bay at the northern tip of the Olympic Peninsula – a collection of big, rough bays with stacks of rocks and trees standing just offshore; receding cliffs, toppling trees, acres of logs, and piles of driftwood. These will forever be associated with the Native Americans who, for millennia, have lived, fished, and set out to sea after whales from here. Each of



Driftwood on beach, Agate Point, Bainbridge Island, Washington, 1969.

these evocative places has its own shape, rocks, waves, and birds; its own moods, personality, and weather.

Beaches are ideal places to walk, scavenge, play, and eat. For generations people have built shelters in the sand from the logs, driftwood, and battered materials that wash up on the shore. In these havens they laze about, read, snack, embrace, and take naps out of sight and out of the wind: first as children, then as teenagers, and finally as adults. We walk at the margin, at the waves' edge: looking for shells, studying the spindrift and wrack, pushing the shorebirds feeding at the tidemark ahead of us until finally in irritation they take off, wheel out to sea, and swing around behind us to alight again in the shifting lines of foam.

The North Pacific is a cold ocean despite the relatively warm Japanese current that comes down from Canada and

Alaska in a big arc along the coast, sending masses of cloud and rain ashore. As such it encourages bonfires and feasts. One night my friends and I gathered our haul of fish and clams from a trip to Lopez Island in the San Juans and buried it beneath a large fire we'd built on the sandy beach. We then took a skiff out onto the moonlit bay for an hour or more, stirring phosphorescent plankton with our oars in great dreamy swirls and returning to dig out and unwrap the steamed seafood from beneath the embers. The fish was rock cod we'd caught that afternoon. It was a feast not dissimilar to others eaten on these beaches for millennia. Another fond memory is going to Willipa Bay where my friends and I would occasionally pick up oysters at the Nahcotta dock. Sometimes we would also make forays to Long Beach and Chuckanut Bay near Bellingham to gather oysters on the beach at low tide, eating them in their saltwater brine on the spot.

When I was in architecture school in the late 1950s, the taverns in Seattle closed at midnight on Saturday because of the blue laws that prevented them from selling alcohol on Sundays. My schoolmates and I would buy a case of beer at midnight, get in a car, and drive from Seattle to the mouth of the Columbia River, arriving at North Head on the ocean on the Washington side in the grey light of daybreak. We'd walk on a narrow path through banks of wet salal to look at the surf coming in on the gigantic beach, a wet plain that stretched toward infinity in the mist. Northward, unseen, the

Mushrooms from the forest,
Agate Point, Bainbridge Island,
1969.



Rocks on beach at low tide,
Agate Point, Bainbridge Island,
1969.



sleeping, rundown community of Long Beach lay.

It was always gray, windy, and wet. Somewhere off to the left in the fog or rain, across the river and ranks of foaming breakers, was Oregon. After a time someone would invariably bring up Lewis and Clark and the horrible winter they spent not far from that spot, with their tents, boats, and clothes rotting around them. Then we'd go back to the car, drive down onto the beach and head up the coast to the town. Sometimes the tide would be far out, and we would dig razor clams by hand. We'd take our haul of clams to Jeff Ollila's home on the main street – he was from a Finnish logging family there – and his mother would fry them, serving them up to us with pancakes and eggs. After that we'd get in the car and go back to school again.

In 1969 I spent over a year in a cabin in the woods on Bainbridge Island. As I painted and drew the landscape and the objects within it along the beach at Agate Point, the sights and sounds of the Northwest landscape settled into my being like so much sediment carried steadily down a river. Here I experienced how twice a day, early in the morning and at the end of the afternoon, the sun comes under the clouds and shines laterally across the water and hills, the scrubbed roads and buildings of the Pacific Northwest: shimmering on surfaces, sparkling and glinting on pebbles and fir needles alike, casting crisp, elongated, graphic shadows. Much of the rest of the time it seems the sky is covered from horizon to horizon with a luminous gray shade, like some sort of dirty, watery curtain. It is light, however, and oddly bright. There are no shadows at all and a surplus of detail, grain, and texture. I first heard this called "oyster light" by the painter Richard Gilkey,

who often captured it in scenes inspired by the Skagit River Valley north of Seattle, with its ramshackle buildings, farms, and flooded flats.

I wondered if this general, diffuse light and absence of shadows was a prompt to the native peoples of the Northwest to paint the weathered cedar planks of their communal homes, which face the grey waters, with large, black, graphic designs. The forms with which they translated animals and spirits echo the shapes of the eroded stones

and fragments of wood that line the estuaries; yet similar forms occur in the work of humans around the world (one thinks of ancient Chinese and Mayan artisans). The stunning graphics painted by the Haida, Tlinget, and Shimshian on their houses, boxes, chests, masks, and totem poles substitute for shadows that might otherwise come from carving and depth – from form as revealed in sunlight.

In this milky light I used to stare at a boulder left by a glacier that stands in the tidal zone on the beach at Agate Point, at the north end of Bainbridge Island. From the back it is an enormous, dun-colored rock covered with barnacles. On the other side – facing east out to Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula and the native settlement that contains the burial site of Chief Seattle across Agate Pass – one finds a set of ghostly faces, eyes and mouths carved by the people who came and camped here before time was remembered or recorded. The tide sweeps in and out against its base. Shellfish in the mud below the cobbles and rocks are plentiful and sweet. A variety of fish swim close. The wind blows and mist rises. Herons, gulls, and fish crows move along the shore. Above and behind the beach a young forest of cedar and Douglas fir slowly reclaim an area logged at the end of the nineteenth century. It is quiet except for the water and the wind in the trees.

Although the literature on landscape frequently mentions its appeal to the senses, little is said about sound. And yet sounds are always with us and tell us so much about our surroundings, whether we are in the mountains or by the sea. In

the Pacific Northwest, one is always listening to the movement of wind and water. There is the sound of a light breeze in the tops of the trees in a fir forest and the gentle waves lapping against a lakeshore. Like the rhythmic crashing and booming of the surf on ocean beaches and the continuous tumult of river rapids, these sounds produced a level of deep calm and well-being in me, especially at night as I descended into sleep.

I grew familiar with the remarkable variety of sounds water makes: the sibilance of a light rain as it brushes through branches, needles, and leaves in a forest; the louder cadence of a steady downpour that beats upon the surface of a body of water, hissing and sizzling as much as crashing; the plash and gurgle of a small stream as it rushes among tumbled rocks and fallen timbers of a mountain slope; the roar of a cascade as it spills off a ledge and falls freely into a gorge below; the groans and pops of ice in the sun as it warms and shrugs against constraining rocks and squeaks, creaks, and snaps under foot; the sibilant rattles

Goat Lake, Cascade Mountains,
Washington, 1963



and whispers as waves draw back on a gravelly beach.

The wind, too, has many moods. Sometimes it can be disturbing – the howl of a storm, or a moan that persists for hours or days – or merely a steady rushing noise, with the haunting rubbing of limbs keening somewhere nearby. At other times it barely catches one’s attention as it rustles dry leaves or rattles the branches of straggling plants at the edge of clearings, dying into whispers, making soft swishy sounds in tall grasses.

Alone in nature, I became more attentive to the sounds of animals, especially birds, fellow creatures that in part define our responses to the landscape. In the Northwest, the most common calls along the shores of lakes, rivers, bays, and the ocean are those of seagulls and crows. The gulls with their constant squawking and bickering and complaining – usually (it seems) from somewhere further along the shore – instill in the listener a sense of isolation and vast distances. Most of the other shore birds are relatively quiet. In the shallows herons, silently stalking small fish and crabs, emit but a single croak as

they depart the scene. Unobtrusive plovers, sandpipers, and stilts whistle or peep as they scatter, wheeling away along the shore when a person or dog arrives to interrupt their meal. By contrast the crows announce their presence with abrasive and annoying calls and disputes as they shift about in groups.

The occasional croak of a lone raven in the mountains or the northern portion of the Olympic Peninsula can startle the solitary walker. So too can the sudden, unexpected racket a Steller’s jay makes as it arrives, telling everyone that you are there and he has spotted you. These gregarious, troublesome, and noisy birds animate the landscape in broad strokes, whereas warblers and songbirds flit along the edges and through the trees, supplying an intermittent and furtive set of cheeps and chirps, with occasional trills and songs from sunny spots and clearings. Within the fir forests there is a smaller population of birds – mostly creepers and tits, harvesting bugs in the bark – and one doesn’t hear too much, except occasionally the abrupt knocking of a large pileated woodpecker. These gorgeous creatures are furtive, but their attacks reveal that there are large, older trees not far off. Likewise the liquid burbling and trilling of red-winged blackbirds announce the proximity of a clearing, with water and the tangle of reeds, cattails, willows, and alders common to the lowlands and valleys of the region. Stepping out of the silent moss and dim green shade of the forest into brilliant sun, one suddenly hears any number of songbirds singing and chattering away.

In reflecting on the part of my life spent in the Pacific Northwest, what I most remember is its sonorous quiet, its wild animals and marine life, and its luminous oyster light. At such times the words of the poet Theodore Roethke come to mind:

*“Over the low, barnacled, elephant-colored rocks,
Come the first tide-ripples, moving, almost without sound,
toward me,
Running along the narrow furrows of the shore,
the rows of dead clamshells;
Then a runnel behind me, creeping closer,
Alive with tiny striped fish, and young crabs climbing in
and out of the water...”*¹

*“I think of the rock singing, and light making its own silence...”*²

– Laurie Olin

¹ “Meditation at Oyster River,” in *The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 190.

² “The Rose,” *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke*, 204.

Richard Haag: New Eyes for Old

Richard Haag is considered by many to be one of the most influential landscape architects of the twentieth century. Although he is based in the Pacific Northwest, his projects have won international recognition for their artistic subtlety and their groundbreaking solutions to the challenges of postindustrial landscapes. Haag's designs for two Seattle sites, Bloedel Reserve and Gasworks Park, are among the most celebrated modern American landscape-design projects. Gas Works Park initiated interest in the adaptive reuse of toxic landscapes, serving as the first demonstration of bioremediation in the public realm. Bringing together science, politics, community participation, and design, Haag opened new doors to collaborative design practice. Bloedel Reserve is recognized for its poetic response to a complex landscape of environmental degradation and abuse. Haag's design suggests an alternative language that synthesizes Japanese philosophies and design principles with the nature of the Pacific Northwest landscape while grappling with the challenges of extractive industries – including logging. In the words of University of Virginia Professor Elizabeth Meyer, these projects “open up connections between both the environmental and cultural histories of a particular place – Seattle and the Pacific Northwest – and phenomenological response and ecological thinking.”

In 1958 Richard Haag was invited to establish a department of landscape architecture at the University of Washington. He accepted, moved his small practice to Seattle, and launched a career that is still busy today. The 1960s was a turning point in the profession of landscape architecture, and Haag's teaching reasserted that landscape, as the landscape architect Gary Hilderbrand has written, might be the site for “urgent and meaningful work.” He taught students to treat design as a form of civic engagement in the environment – an engagement that might even address the challenges outlined by writers and scientists such as Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring* (1962). Criticizing earthwork artists for treating land as cardboard rather than landscape, Haag explored the shaping of landforms to create dynamic spaces. The fact that his design process is a form of inquiry is evident in his drawings and notes as well as in his teaching.

With almost all of his five hundred-plus projects in the Pacific Northwest, Haag has helped to shape a regional approach to design shared with the larger community of land-

scape architects, architects, artists, and writers in and around Seattle. This approach draws on the qualities of the natural landscape and its importance to the urban culture while also expressing the region's cultural connections to Japan and the Pacific Rim. In the Emerald City, as some have called Seattle, Haag's landscapes offer an abstraction of nature in the urban context by translating the natural landscape into poetic experiences. His artful manipulation of landforms has become a recognizable element of his approach to design.

Gas Works Park opened in 1975, reflecting more than a decade of community activism and design process. The park includes 20.5 acres of land projecting four hundred feet into Lake Union, with nineteen hundred feet of shoreline. The canonic nature of the project lies in its development of methods of adaptive reuse of waste landscapes as public spaces – not merely ameliorating toxic land, but transforming it on-site in order to make both the site and the process of restoring it publicly accessible.

Almost immediately after arriving in Seattle, Haag was drawn to the abandoned Gas Works – the tall, somber black

towers; their setting on the promontory; the Olympic Mountains visible in the far distance. As well as being inherently visually dramatic, the towers served as a reminder of the city's industrial past, which had only just come to an end. When, as head of the university's new landscape-architecture program, Haag solicited ideas for the site through a national student design competition in 1963, he discovered that others did not share his vision. Of the one hundred-plus submissions, not a single proposal suggested retaining any of the existing structures – or for that matter, the ground on which they were built. Instead, the competitors proposed tearing down the remains of the industrial plant and carting the toxic soil to external landfills in order to create a public place in the tradition of Central Park. A tabula rasa approach appeared to be the only acceptable option.

In 1969, however, Richard Haag Associates (RHA) was retained by the Seattle Park Board to analyze the site and develop a master plan for a new park. Having already developed the basis of his argument, Haag recommended preservation of portions of the plant for “historic, esthetic and



Looking across Gas Works Park from atop the Great Mound, the dips and rises of the landscape clearly evident (photograph by Reuben M. Rainey).

utilitarian value.” After an intense public process, his master plan for an industrial-preservation park was unanimously approved by the park board. The board members had not only come to see the disturbed site with new eyes but also to recognize the potential in a new approach to site history.

Instead of erasing the site’s former purpose, Haag’s master plan focused on recycling its buildings and machinery: by the adaptive reuse of key structures, the rich history of the site has been both salvaged and underscored. What has been most often noted is Haag’s recycling of the gas-generator towers; the exhaust-compressor, which has been painted in primary colors; and the boiler house, which now serves as a picnic shelter. Equally revolutionary, however, was that Haag proposed preserving the poisoned soil and treating it in place. Through phytoremediation techniques being developed by a collaborating soil scientist at the University of Washington, the site would be healed and cleaned. In essence, the toxins would be broken down by means of naturally occurring bacteria from the soil and the addition of compost, in conjunction with the natural hydrological systems of the land. Plants would eventually grow on the site, further processing toxins either by leeching them from the earth or breaking them down into safer components.

The story of the park is not limited to that of the buildings and the soil; rather there is a larger narrative of the region itself: the story of land, ecologies, and cultural practices. One story writ large for the park is that of Seattle’s natural landscape as it is experienced from a modern city. Most immediately, views of and from the park engage Seattle’s iconic landscapes: water and coastline, trees and forests, hills and mountains. At the same time, the site suggests critical reinterpretations of these icons. The looming gas towers suggest industrial mountains; the toxic valleys suggest the hydrological systems that have been called upon to heal this site; and the “forest” is revealed to be a thin strip of trees separating park and parking lot. Kite Hill reminds us of the presence of toxic soils generated by the mountainous towers.

This place is not an Olmstedian respite from the city but instead a complex monument to our industrial age, both its successes and its grand failures. The movement of rainwater through the site’s undulating form recalls the ever-present toxins and tar that still bubble up periodically in the grass lawns. Similarly, the meager boundary of trees does not protect us from the chaos of the city but instead engages the dual nature of Seattle as both urban and natural, as culture in nature.

While the radical nature of Gas Works Park is immediately obvious as one approaches the site, Haag’s design for Bloedel Reserve, another disturbed site, is more subtle and requires a thoughtful eye to understand the sublime nature of the design. In this garden, Haag does not aggressively confront the viewer but rather entices and draws the participant through a series of experiences, prompting a response that is as powerful as that evoked by Gas Works Park.

Haag’s introduction to Bloedel Reserve was in 1969, when Prentice Bloedel commissioned his advice on a reflecting pool initially designed by Thomas Church. Over more than fifteen years Haag worked with Bloedel to develop the landscape – most famously creating a sequence of four garden spaces, which were designed between 1978 and 1984. Haag describes these spaces as reflecting an abstraction of principles and approaches learned in Japan, where he spent two years in the mid-fifties, immersed in the Japanese landscape. It was during this period, he claims, that he developed his vision of design as a nonstriving effort. The sense of economy, the influence of Zen, the habit of, as Haag put it, “borrowing and using parts of what was there”: all this had a profound effect on his thinking. Thus the interrelated spaces at Bloedel Reserve are not Japanese gardens per se, but gardens designed in a Japanese manner and influenced by Japanese philosophy.

One enters the first of the garden spaces along what Haag called a Ceremonial Path, the sequence beginning with a garden space adjacent to a Japanese-inspired guest house. Haag’s first move was to enclose the area by expanding several existing mounds of earth left over from another garden project so that they physically although not visually separated the new



Kites soaring above the Great Mound at Gas Works Park, below them the capped toxic soils (photograph by Thaisa Way).

selectively pruning a bog landscape that had been logged in the 1880s. Stumps, uprooted trees, and logs are carpeted in moss, fungi, and ferns as they decay back into the earth. It is a primordial place – wet, thick, and beautiful, with standing trees providing shelter and intimacy. As Elizabeth Meyer has noted, “Deep time – the *longue durée*, the thickness of time – is embedded into spaces and surfaces,” and this garden engenders a response from deep inside the visitor. The path meanders, mimicking the stroll in a tea garden, and then an end is revealed; this garden prepares one for the next stanza of the sequence.

The Reflection Pool culminates the series of formal gardens. Nearly two hundred feet long and forty feet wide and surrounded by a ten-foot-high yew hedge, the reflecting pool is silent. This is a garden composed of ground, water, plants, and sky, each in its most elemental form. It is as if Haag has

garden from the meadow beyond. He then covered the mounds in blue fescue, a color that resonated with the commonly seen grey blue of Seattle’s sky.

In the center of this garden stood the remains of the swimming pool in which the poet Theodore Roethke had drowned. Haag transformed the pool into what he titled the Garden of Planes, which was composed of two pyramids: one a solid and one a void. This was not a *kare-sansui* garden of rock and sand but instead an abstracted notion of Zen meditation and place. A large pine tree with dramatic roots shapes the corner nearest the entrance to the guesthouse. (Unfortunately, this garden has been radically altered by the current stewards and the Garden of Planes no longer exists.)

The second garden, the Anteroom, was created by



Reflection Pool at Bloedel Reserve
by Thomas Church and Richard Haag,
a glade in the woods (photograph by
Reuben M. Rainey).

peeled everything away to reveal nature at its most basic, offering a place for culture to engage.

From the reflecting pool's stillness, the visitor moves into the bird sanctuary – although in Haag's plan one can only view the sanctuary from an edge, for this is the place that is given over to nature. There is a pond in the sanctuary, and through the clearing in the woods around it one can see a series of tiny islands and peninsulas; the mood of this space, which is larger than the previous garden, is at once contemplative and interactive.

Drawing on Prentice Bloedel's description of his vision for the reserve, Haag once wrote that its gardens and landscape "represent a synthesis of humankind's immutable bond with nature, a bond that transcends time, language and culture." He also suggested that his contribution was a "cerebral exercise that paid a special tribute to Jay Appleton – it was the ultimate distillation of his prospect/ refuge theory: its geometry was the essential counterpoint to the Anteroom, the Reflection Room and the Bird Sanctuary – each space interpreting Nature in a different but complementary way." Haag's design suggests

there are others where he has choreographed an equally potent dialogue between and among users and place. Steinbrueck Park, at the tip of Seattle's Pike Place Market, might at first glance seem like a leftover triangle of urban space poised above a three-level garage. Instead, this terraced park with its circular landform suggests a small microcosm of Seattle's hills and valleys; both Puget Sound and the distant Olympic Mountains can be admired from the abundance of seating areas. The homeless, the tourist, and the local office worker each finds space within the park to experience the views, the climate, and the chatter. Haag's design for the Battelle Research Center campus, near Laurelhurst in Seattle, offers a more introverted landscape, one defined by mounds surrounding a central pond. The experience here encourages quiet contemplation.

Such designed landscapes have shaped not only the cultural and environmental image of the Pacific Northwest but also the architecture and landscape architecture practiced in the region and well beyond. Today Haag's influence remains powerful around the globe: in China he is designing new projects; in Naples, Italy, designers working on the adaptive reuse of the Bagnoli steel plant site see his accomplishments as both a challenge and a source of inspiration. – Thaisa Way

dynamic and reciprocal relationships between culture and nature and between the individual and the landscape. Bloedel Reserve, which is now open to the public, offers the visitor both refuge, in the form of enclosed spaces, and glorious prospects across the meadows to the water and islands of Puget Sound. The dynamic alternation of scale and outlook represents the experience of the Pacific Northwest – in particular, the Seattle region – where immense trees create canopied spaces while hills and cliffs offer expansive views.

Although Bloedel and Gas Works Park are the best-known designs by Haag,

Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Canada's Modern Landscape Architect

Had Cornelia Hahn Oberlander come to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1953 with the ambition of designing private gardens in the spirit of the Arts and Crafts movement, her career would have faced fewer stumbling blocks. In fact, such an ambition would have been so readily accepted that we might never have heard of her. Perennial border gardens, woodland groves, and rose gardens were at that time greatly admired throughout the city as the perfect accessories to the Craftsman-inspired domestic architecture constructed before World War II. Fortunately Oberlander had no intention of designing historically inspired private gardens. Instead she sought to create modern landscapes for the public. This type of landscape proved indispensable in postwar Vancouver, which was transforming itself into Canada's third largest city.

For more than half a century Oberlander has been designing landscapes that embrace the language of modern design with simple yet bold forms and a limited plant palette that reinforces the spatial qualities of vegetation. Her work has been strikingly public and urban, bringing water and the animate world of plants into environments of concrete and glass. For Oberlander, a modern landscape does not sit on top of a structure like a doily; rather, it is part of the roof, the walls, and the ground plane of the architecture.

This vision is beautifully evident at Robson Square, a governmental and cultural complex spanning three blocks in downtown Vancouver. Oberlander joined the architect Arthur Erickson's design team in 1974, and her input was crucial to making the central block of this project a three-dimensional canvas that expresses the natural environment of British Columbia. Indeed, more than 60 percent of the structure on this block is unrecognizable as a building. Waterfalls double as interior walls, a water basin serves as a luminous ceiling for offices below, and a series of stramps (a combined ramp and stairway system) provide access to the extensively planted upper-plaza levels, which are also rooftops. Reclining on the large convex mound designed by Oberlander, you have no idea that you are sitting on top of office space below.

Oberlander and Erickson exploited the symbolic potency of plants at Robson Square. Working together on the planting plan, they used vegetation to represent the coastal mountain

range that is the city's backdrop. They placed high-altitude plant material such as kinnikinnick on the upper plaza levels and selected for the lower levels a combination of Japanese maples, magnolia trees, and rhododendrons. Today a cherished landmark in the city, Robson Square was a major turning point in Oberlander's career – one that displayed her vision of fully integrating landscape and architecture, both formally and spatially.

Oberlander faced obstacles as a landscape architect precisely because she wanted to practice modern landscape architecture. Women were granted access to education in landscape architecture after World War II, just when modern architecture and landscape architecture gained momentum. Yet at the same time the very idea of modern design presented challenges to them in practice. The popular conception of the Modern architect was a male genius who did not rely on history to inform his design work, instead fashioning new styles by violating familiar rules and conventions and making groundbreaking use of technologies and materials newly available after the war. Women were seen as lacking both the requisite spark of genius and the technical training necessary to fill this role. Even the drawings created by modern designers no longer relied on skills obtained in the fine arts, such as painting and drawing. As construction drawings and specifications became increasingly formalized, plan views and sections, which conveyed technical information needed to build a pro-



Robson Square demonstrating the integration of plants as part of the building structure (photograph by Turner Wigginton).

ject, dominated. Again, since women were perceived as less knowledgeable in the technical areas of design, this created another barrier to their acceptance as modern designers.

Nonetheless, Oberlander had been determined since childhood to become a landscape architect. In 1940 she was accepted into Smith College's program of architecture and landscape architecture. There, Kate Reis Koch, one of her first instructors, encouraged Oberlander to look beyond small-scale residential design to the city, and to consider the relationship between landscape and urban planning – that in fact the city was a complex landscape to be planned. The Graduate School of Design at Harvard University customarily only admitted men as full-time students, but the war had precipitated a dramatic drop in enrollment. In response to this crisis, Harvard's Governing Boards authorized the Faculty of Design to admit women. On March 5, 1943, Oberlander received a letter from then-Dean Hudnut admitting her to the Graduate School of Design. Later that summer she joined the second class in the school's history to include women as full-time students. Here yet more obstacles awaited her.

A familiar tale in the history of modern landscape architecture is that of the revolt at Harvard's Graduate School of Design in the late 1930s. Initially recounted by Garrett Eckbo in *Landscape for Living* (1950), the story goes that architecture professors Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, originally part of the German Bauhaus, greatly inspired landscape architecture students Garrett Eckbo, James Rose, and Dan Kiley. Much to the distress of the landscape-architecture faculty, who supported École des Beaux-Art models of teaching, the threesome championed modern design and wrote articles in *Pencil Points* magazine (now *Progressive Architecture*) promoting a new vision of landscape architecture. Given their successful careers as modern landscape architects, it might be inferred that their rebellion had influenced the landscape architecture department at Harvard.



Cornelia Hahn Oberlander and Peter Oberlander in front of Einstein's Tower (photograph by Judy Oberlander).

When Oberlander entered the school in 1943, however, she found that many of the professors still wanted little to do with anything modern. Then-

chairman Bremer Pond, who had a fondness for topiary, was particularly resentful of Oberlander's zeal to learn about modern design. When Pond requested that students include service entrances in their residential-design projects, Oberlander argued that not everyone could afford servants. When Pond encouraged students to employ historically inspired forms and ornaments, Oberlander countered that her designs would express forms that all people could interpret. When Pond asked students to produce watercolor washes depicting their design proposals, she perfected her technique with Leroy lettering and drafted with ink on linen.

Oberlander graduated with a bachelor of landscape architecture degree in 1947. This was a feat – particularly given that many female students enrolled in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard did not continue their education after the end of World War II. Although she likes to describe herself as “this crazy girl who wanted to design modern landscapes,” her determination paid off. Arriving in Philadelphia in the early 1950s when it was striving to reinvent itself as a modern metropolis, she worked as an associate in the firm of Dan

Kiley and with architects Oskar Stonorov and Louis Kahn on several public-housing projects.

Why did Oberlander persevere? Part of the answer can be traced back to her own upbringing a continent away in Germany. She was born in Mülheim an der Ruhr on June 20, 1921, but her family eventually moved to the Berlin suburb of Neubabelsberg and became very active in the vibrant intellectual and artistic life unfolding in Berlin. For example, her father, Franz Hahn, an engineer, studied the Baukasten or “building blocks” housing system designed by Walter Gropius

and Fred Forbat in the 1920s. Made of wood, steel, and glass, these interlocking forms could be assembled in numerous ways to achieve a multitude of configurations, but with the

On top of the roof at Library Square. These mature plants help absorb rainwater and delay its flow into the drainage system (photograph by Susan Herrington).



efficiency that comes with industrial standardization. Her mother Beate (née Jastrow) Hahn was a trained horticulturalist who taught Oberlander and her siblings the art of gardening and who was familiar with modern design principles, such as creating a garden that was considered another room of the house. Oberlander recalls playing daily at her best friend’s house, which had been designed by the architect Erich Mendelsohn. Certainly, life in Weimar Germany exposed Oberlander to one of the early phases of modern architecture and design. Although her family escaped Germany in the late 1930s and eventually settled in the United States, modern design was never merely an abstract construct for her; it was a way of life she had experienced firsthand.

Another contributing factor to Oberlander’s success has been her talent in the technical areas of landscape design. Her innovations in on-structure planting have enabled her to fully realize her vision of integrating landscape and architecture. Oberlander’s willingness to undertake the technical challenges needed to realize Robson Square, for example, was one of the reasons she was hired as its landscape architect. While green roofs had been incorporated into some of the earliest First Nations architecture in British Columbia, this was one of the first urban projects to make extensive use of planted structures in public spaces connected to the street. Knowledge of lightweight growing mediums and waterproofing membranes was in its infancy at the time. In fact, the other landscape designers working on Robson Square were perplexed by the idea of plants growing in “a medium” instead of garden soil. Nonetheless, Oberlander found the right, lightweight mixture of peat, sand, and perlite, and the plants grown therein reached full maturity.

Oberlander went on to create numerous on-structure landscapes in Canada and the United States, and in the 1990s she designed a green roof for the high-rise building Library Square in Vancouver. Expanding the ecological role of the structure, she designed a landscape for Library Square that was integral to retaining the storm water falling on the flat roof. She also planted the roof much like a painted surface. It was visible from adjacent towers, and Oberlander wanted people to see it “and recall the magnificent natural landscapes that surround us.” She used a simple palette of blue and green fescues and kinnikinnick, arranged in sinuous swaths, to refer to British Columbia’s Fraser River.

The Library Square green roof has now matured. Those lucky enough to experience it firsthand are confronted with a windswept field of grasses that create flowing bands of color

and texture that appear to float above the city. This landscape has become a symbol of Vancouver’s commitment to sustainability, and it is not an empty symbol. The lush groundcovers function as a sponge, soaking up rainwater and delaying water flow into the city’s overtaxed drainage system.

Oberlander’s work on integrated green roofs brought her back to Germany in 2005. In collaboration with the Toronto firm Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects, Oberlander was commissioned to design the rooftop of the Canadian Embassy on Leipziger Platz, Berlin. This on-structure landscape was composed of a simple palette of plants that referred to another great North American watercourse: the Mackenzie River, whose length is second only to the Mississippi. Bringing the image of a Canadian river to a green roof in Berlin also resulted in a personal victory – she convinced Peter Oberlander, her husband, to travel with her. Peter grew up in Vienna and, like Cornelia, he had fled Nazi persecution to North America, eventually founding the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia and persuading Oberlander to join him in Vancouver. Although he travelled extensively as a renowned architect and planner, he had refused to return to Austria – and Germany was a country he had never even visited. Together they toured the staging grounds of her youth in Wannsee and Berlin. They also visited Potsdam to see Einstein’s Tower. Designed by Erich Mendelsohn between 1919 and 1921, the building is a quintessential example of German Expressionist architecture, and a structure they had both admired before they had even met.

Weimar influences would figure again in Oberlander’s work in 2009 when she began working as a consultant to to Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architects and the architecture firm Busby, Perkins + Will for the new visitor center at the VanDusen Botanical Garden in Vancouver. Established in 1975, VanDusen Botanical Garden displays plant collections



Entrance to the VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Centre (photograph by Stuart McCall/North Light).



On top of the roof at the VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Centre (photograph by Stuart McCall/North Light).

from tropical South Africa, the Himalayas, South America, and the Mediterranean, and from the boreal forests, Great Plains, and Pacific Coast of Canada. The garden's primary mission is to promote an understanding of plants and their fundamental contributions to life; the design team sought to express this mission in the design of the visitor center. While it was planned that Oberlander would consult on the green roof, she extended her influence beyond the roof's surface to help the architects shape the entire roof form.

During their initial meetings, the architects were intent on finding a plant that would serve to generate the form for their building. Oberlander immediately recalled the work of German photographer Karl Blossfeldt. Known for using vanguard photographic techniques to capture his imagery, Blossfeldt gravitated to an unlikely source for inspiration – plants, particularly flowers. While flowers were often the subjects of romantic art, under Blossfeldt's lens they became sym-

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bolts of the New Objectivity movement. The connections to Oberlander's work – nature seen through a modern lens – are obvious, and she quickly drew the design team's attention to the images in his 1928 book *Urformen der Kunst*. In addition, to identify native plants that could inspire the roof structure, Oberlander and the Architects Busby, Perkins+Will team consulted *The Journal of Archibald Menzies* (1794). Menzies, a Scottish botanist, accompanied Captain George Vancouver on his explorations of the Pacific Northwest. The design team settled on the leaves of the white bog orchid identified by Menzies and the architects translated its foliage into built form.

The visitor center opened in the fall of 2011. Approaching the building, you are immediately struck by its dramatic rooflines. The exterior of the roof has been planted by Oberlander, who personally oversaw the installation. Its verdant, lanceolate planes, which are visible from parts of the garden, create rolling surfaces that in no way suggest a roof of a building. The roof's underside is ribbed with wooden beams that undulate above the interior and exterior spaces.

Conceived more than thirty years after Robson Square, the VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Center is an exquisite example of how Oberlander's on-structure landscapes have come full circle. While Robson Square's landscape forms were dictated by the geometric orthodoxy of the interior structure, here the organic forms of the landscape shape the very architecture itself. – Susan Herrington

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California Dreaming

In July 23, 2009, the Sonoma County Board of Zoning and Adjustments met to consider a fifty-million-dollar expansion of the main lodge at the Sea Ranch. The proposed expansion had already received a strong endorsement from tourism officials and Sea Ranch residents. If approved, the existing twenty-room structure would be replaced with new facilities: sixty semi-detached, family-friendly bungalows; a new restaurant, bar and lounge; updated meeting rooms; a health and wellness spa; and a swimming pool.

A press release issued by Passports Resorts LLC, a resort firm catering to an exclusive clientele and the current owner of the Sea Ranch Lodge, made an aggressive case for the project, calling the proposed plan a "sensitive" update that honored the Sea Ranch's environmental legacy. Only five acres of the fifty-two-acre parcel would be developed. Ocean views from the Coast Highway, though narrowed, would be framed by LEED-certified bungalows whose sod roofs and sloped profiles honored key elements of the original award-winning designs and visually minimized the architectural intrusion. The press statement also noted that Passports had agreed to retain a public trail to a seaside overlook called Black's Point – although it did reserve the right to close the trail to the public during certain planned events.

During the meeting, a member of the Sea Ranch Design Board raised an objection to the plan. Like the lodge, the board is a legacy of the original master plan. An oversight committee, it reviews all development and construction proposals and oversees the management policies for the communal recreation facilities and open space. The group has always included members of the original design team, making this quasi-public agency in effect the guardian of the Sea Ranch's initial project objectives and the de facto gatekeeper for its community vision.

Having already forced certain concessions from Passports, the board argued that the new plan was insensitive to the planners' original design intent. It quickly became apparent, however, that this objection lacked public support – both within and outside of the Sea Ranch community. The Board withdrew its objection, and the plan passed easily in a show-of-hands vote.

The Sea Ranch Lodge, unlike the community's Hedgerow Houses, Condominium One, and Swim Cub, has never received architectural acclaim. However, it was the nominal heart of the original master plan, and its property contains

one of the community's highly prized open-space meadows. At issue is whether or not the purity of this open space should be sacrificed to allow the lodge to update its facilities to accommodate contemporary lifestyle preferences. And if so, how will this impact what is generally considered to be an iconic example of mid-twentieth-century environmental planning?

The lodge itself houses an eclectic mix of social venues and sales opportunities. These include a community post office; a gift shop; and a bar, restaurant, and lounge. There is also a real-estate office, which is strategically located to snare potential buyers dazed by the mellow glow of good food, good wine, and a golden ocean sunset. Guest rooms allow nonresidents to experience the beauty of this Northern California community. Rates vary depending upon the quality of the view and the amenities provided; large corner rooms provide panoramic views of the ocean, while secluded garden suites with fireplaces and hot tubs foster a more intimate experience.

Today members of the landscape-design community, myself included, tend to idealize the early history of the Sea Ranch, forgetting that the project has always been a well-marketed dream sold to a willing public. We overlook this fact because the original dream was so successful that it changed the way succeeding generations of designers perceived and worked the land. Indeed, the very grammar of the original proposal, with its site-specific, nonrepresentational mimesis of wind and water, established new ways to think and talk about design. The new designspeak combined a reverence for ecology and the vernacular with bold graphics and hip site happenings. The result was a trendy subversion of social norms and design standards that blended easily with a cool, laid-back, California style. But as indicated by the two sides of the current lodge debate, this story line is much more complex and layered than it seems, with the designers and the design itself positioned in the middle of a dialogue shaped by both utopian idealism and fiscal necessity.

The Sea Ranch saga began with Al Boeke, a financially savvy idealist who dreamed of creating the best planned community in the United States. An architect by training, the handsome, articulate Boeke personified all the attributes of the ambitious, self-made man. Born in Denver and raised in Los Angeles, he served in the military during World War II prior to studying architecture at the University of Southern California. Early in his career, Boeke worked for Neutra & Alexander in Los Angeles, where he was exposed to innovative open-space development projects such as Baldwin Hills in Los Angeles, designed in conjunction with the planner Clarence Stein, as



Coastline, the Sea Ranch (photograph by Elizabeth Barlow Rogers).

San Fernando Valley. However, he gravitated to project management and cost estimating because, in his words, he wanted to learn how to design and build with codes and budgets in mind: "all the things you're stuck with" before you lay pencil to paper.

In 1959, frustrated by the constraints of property-limit planning, Boeke traveled to Sweden, the epicenter of modern urban development, to see "the other perfect and opposite example." This trip, part of a study-abroad program hosted by Penn State University, gave participants the opportunity to talk with Swedish government officials about the country's integrated planning approach in which these same officials served as client, planner, decision maker, and project coordinator. In an oral history, Boeke repeatedly used the word "quality" to describe his impressions of the experience. When he returned home, Boeke read all he could on the physical and economic attributes of Swedish New Towns and immersed himself in the nuances of this rational, egalitarian, and health-conscious urban-design approach. He rebranded himself a New Town expert and began lecturing on the topic.

well as Alexander's scheme to use agricultural greenbelts to control suburbanization in the

cataloguing its attributes for the sales pitch that ultimately convinced the company president to support the project. At the same time, Boeke began informal negotiations with the ranch owner, Ed Ohlson. The discussions between the high-flying developer and the down-home rancher took place in sheep pastures and over a gastronomically eclectic mixture of local abalone and homemade strawberry shortcake in the rancher's kitchen.

As Boeke later noted, a cool, damp sheep ranch wasn't exactly the typical "New Town site." He knew that whatever was built would remain a hard sell – particularly when compared to developments in the more amenable climates of Santa Cruz, Carmel, Monterey, and Big Sur. The relatively remote location, which, according to one of the original design team members, was "three hours by car or two hours by Porsche north of San Francisco," presented another obstacle. Yet Boeke was convinced that the climate could be made comfortable enough for second-home development if he selected the right design team. Perhaps most important of all, Boeke had personally fallen for the wild landscape and believed its romantic appeal would draw a certain type of buyer: one less interested in active outdoor recreation and play and more inclined toward a quiet, meditative relationship with the land.

Boeke selected the landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, with whom he had worked on Mililani, to coordinate the master-planning effort. A letter from Boeke, dated July 2, 1963, established the project directives. These included an evaluation of the geography and ecology for all five thousand acres,

That same year, Oceanic Properties, the development arm of the Los Angeles firm Castle & Cooke, hired Boeke to oversee their operations. Flush with cash and land as the result of the recent purchase of the Dole Company of Hawaii, Oceanic sought to position itself as a major real-estate developer. Boeke built his first project, the Mililani New Town in Oahu, on Dole agricultural land. The project's financial success forced Oceanic to seek new development opportunities to shelter profits from taxes. Sights were then set on California.

Boeke first saw the five-thousand-acre sheep ranch that would become the Sea Ranch from the air. Quickly grasping the unique development potential of this vast, windswept landscape, he immediately decided Oceanic should purchase the property. He spent the next week walking the land and

an overall site plan, a schematic plan for approximately one thousand acres inclusive of lot and utility layouts, and detailed plans for five model homes. Additional memos called for the discreet accommodation of cars, and buildings clustered around preserved common land, which, Boeke argued, would distinguish the Sea Ranch from its “suburbanized” California competition. Above all, though, Boeke was a realist; he expected the design to “remain flexible” and not “too explicit” before market testing.

The schedule was tight. Boeke wanted an environmentally friendly design, but he needed to meet strict development deadlines that would allow Oceanic to recoup its investment through a relatively rapid sale of property and homes. He had already hired the politically connected engineering firm Sarles, Brelje & Race to survey the property boundary and submit design-approval packages to the county. Halprin’s office would ensure that the proposed development parcel could accommodate the desired design features – roads, house clusters, village center, golf course, swim club, and airport.

Halprin was not really known as an ecological designer before the Sea Ranch. Trained at Harvard during the Gropius era, he began his professional career in the office of Thomas Church, where he worked on the iconic Dewey Donnell garden in Sonoma County, California. In 1949, he opened his own firm. His early projects, although successful, were relatively modest gardens and urban plans in the Modernist tradition.

However, beginning with a sketchbook labeled “The Sierra Notebook,” which he used between 1956 and 1958, Halprin began to formulate a design philosophy based upon observations of the landscape’s physical properties. The basic premise called for landscape design to follow the cyclic rhythms of geologic formation and decay. In 1962, a year before he began work on the Sea Ranch, Halprin codified these ideas in an article titled “The Shape of Erosion.” This is how Richard Reynolds, the cultural geographer responsible

for the Sea Ranch environmental studies, described the approach:

You can learn the history of the land over a hundred years, the knowledge can tell you what processes are at work in the region – both constructive and destructive. From these, you can learn how to use the land, how to plan a development; where to locate buildings, roads and plantings. You do not necessarily have to conform to the processes at work, but at least, if you choose to go against them, you are in a better position to estimate the consequences and costs.

The Sea Ranch, with over ten miles of coastline; vast, windswept meadows; steep, forested hillsides; and the San Andreas Fault afforded Halprin the opportunity to explore his process-oriented design thesis at a scale that matched the High Sierra surroundings. What resulted was an innovative design whose formal logic appropriated the fluid dynamics of coastal landscape. Most notably, an analysis of the site’s wind patterns by Halprin’s office established principles that enabled project architects Joseph Esherick, Charles Moore, and William Turnbull to develop a prototypical slant-roof building that deflected wind and captured sunlight, thereby creating outdoor spaces that mediated the most unpleasant aspects of the cool, damp climate. When this form was nestled against one of the ranch’s cypress hedgerows, the sloped profile mimicked the wind-sheared form of the trees; when clustered and

dramatically placed on a cliff edge overlooking the sea, it transformed into a promontory boldly resisting the forces of erosion.

Meanwhile, Boeke, who knew that sophisticated ecological design was not enough to sell homes, hired Marion Conrad to be the project’s marketing guru. A scion of old California, Conrad skillfully used her connections with the San Francisco elite to make sure the right people and publications heard about the Sea Ranch. Part of her strategy involved an exclusive debut party. The press release for the event enticed potential clients with the slogan “dynamic conservation”: a clever branding of Halprin’s open-space design that championed land development “for human use and enjoyment without sacrificing its natural values.” Coordinated tours of the “most unusual second-home colony ever conceived by nature and man” included a picturesque walk or horseback ride along the sea cliffs past the old ranch barn at Black’s Point, panoramic views from Crow’s Nest Drive, and a stop at the new restaurant and country store.

The graphic designer Barbara Stauffacher (today, Stauffacher Solomon) polished the nature-lover-oriented sales theme. She hired Ernst Baum, a Sierra Club photographer, to memorialize the landscape at dusk and dawn. According to Solomon, the “glowing golden, pink, and amber” images captured a “version of beauty that the real-estate men, bankers, and buyers can agree is profitable, photographic and sexy.” Reasonably priced properties ranged from six thousand to thirteen thousand dollars, depending upon the quality of the view.

In 1966 Conrad convinced John Peter, the lifestyle editor of *Look*, to feature the Sea Ranch in an issue devoted to California. The two-page spread, nestled among articles on swimming, LSD, Anna Halprin’s Dancer’s Workshop, Synanon, and the rejuvenating effects of estrogen-replacement therapy, boldly proclaimed: “Fifty years from now the rest of the United States will look like California.” The article praised the Sea Ranch for “pioneering the proposition that you can develop the land without destroying the landscape,” and went on to extol the virtues of a lot layout that guaranteed every homeowner an ocean view across a native-grassland meadow. A dramatic double-page photograph that captured Charles W. Moore and William Turnbull’s award-winning Condominium One, perched above a windswept sea, dominated the two-paragraph description. No cars were in view.

Unpublished transcripts of the *Look* interview, however, tell a more complex story. According to Boeke, the Sea Ranch may have begun “as an emotional response to the land” but it quickly evolved into a complicated financial transaction that



Existing barn and original houses, the Sea Ranch (photograph by Elizabeth Barlow Rogers).

required a long-term commitment. As already indicated, the critical issue pivoted around the question of how to profit from the land without destroying its basic qualities. Boeke, in consultation with the design team, decided to develop the environmentally sensitive but more scenic southern area first. This included the lodge parcel. Boeke knew he would exert the most influence over the design and finances early in the project's development. The environmental sensitivity of the southern area necessitated a low density that both conveniently reduced cost and exploited the marketing potential of the beautiful setting. Density would then increase along with financial obligations as the project moved north, past a Pebble Beach-inspired golf course toward the river and town of Gualala. This fiscally shrewd buildup was to culminate in a pedestrian-friendly village. The Sea Ranch, Boeke observed, would evolve and "adapt itself to time, and change in the market, and change in need," as its designers and developers continued to wrestle with the issue of profit and the quality of the place.

Halprin spoke about the physical attributes of community. According to his vision, the untamed landscape would envelop built forms in the southern half of the site, whereas "dense" and "crystalline" buildings would frame the landscape in the less-scenic north. This strategy established two alternative visions of landscape design and stewardship that were seamlessly integrated with the project's finances. Perhaps in response to mounting charges of exclusivity, Halprin also stressed that the proposed village, if constructed, would anchor a community that imposed no membership restrictions on the basis of income, race, or religion. This social utopia, as it continued to evolve, would function as a living framework to safeguard the community's environmental values.

By 1967 the first stage of the project was well under way. The subdivision layout for the initial one thousand acres had been approved. Guidelines and community bylaws for the ownership and management of the open space were complete. Architectural standards for the homes had been codified in built form. Designs for a lodge and recreation center were in progress. From a design and business standpoint, all the parts were in place for the development to proceed smoothly and expensive, full-time consultation was no longer considered necessary. Boeke began to terminate services, beginning with Halprin.

Then an economic slump slowed the pace of development. Shortly thereafter, a huge oil spill in Monterey Bay led to the 1972 formation of the California Coastal Commission, which was charged with the regulation of, and issuance of permits

for, all coastal development. The commission found the Sea Ranch in violation of public-access and affordable-housing regulations, and put a stop to the project. Negotiations between the two parties remained at impasse for over seven years. Eventually, the State of California passed legislation to resolve the dispute, but not before the commission extracted concessions that forced the Sea Ranch to more fully open itself to outsiders. First, the fledgling community had to maintain five open-access points to the shoreline, and fifteen view corridors from the Coastal Highway. Second, it had to build forty-five affordable-housing units, which eventually became housing for lodge and golf-course employees. These concessions clearly benefitted the general public, but they also irrevocably changed the project's environmentally friendly fiscal structure. Most significantly, the Coastal Commission reduced the number of development parcels by more than half. As a result, the cluster-housing concept was no longer economically viable. Higher lot prices and larger homes were required to recoup development costs; the pedestrian-friendly village was never built. The policy of "dynamic conservation" then became a travesty as trophy homes were crowded together close to the sea cliffs along a "suburbanized" street system.

What exactly does this story tell us? Probably nothing that designers do not already know, as well as some things they are afraid to acknowledge. For example, design is a complex process fraught with compromise. The client is everything. Change is inevitable, and control is an illusion. And ecofriendly design, particularly when applied to a second-home resort, is an elitist venture serving those with the time and money to purchase a morally cleansing ambiance. Which brings us to the ironic fact, seldom discussed, that much environmental preservation owes its very existence to the elite's time and money. But there is also a moral here that is linked to the economic and social limits of individual agency and to hackneyed notions that dreams fade away, like the grand ambitions of youth, the promise of Synanon, or the miracle of estrogen therapy. Personally, I prefer the equally banal but less cynical adage that dreams are essential to design. Sometimes, when these dreams occur at a particular place and at a particular moment in time, they can inspire a new cultural lexicon that then forces us, both individually and collectively, to think more deeply about the harsh fate of environmental dreams within a society structured to incentivize profits. When this happens, designers have to have a little faith – buttressed by

good marketing skills – in the alternative language they set in motion.

The unvarnished story of the Sea Ranch overturns many deeply held suppositions concerning heroes and villains in development scenarios. For example, the Coastal Commission litigation did increase public access to the beach and force the construction of low-income housing. Yet, when the commission decreased the overall density in order to preserve coastal open space they inadvertently destroyed the initial, carefully crafted fiscal integrity of the project, including its close coordination with the innovative open-space plan. This in turn, tarnished the project's environmental reputation, but not its profits and popularity. Today, lots sell for three hundred thousand dollars and homes prices range from five hundred thousand to over two million dollars.

And what about the personal dreams the Sea Ranch embodied? Around the time of the Coastal Commission moratorium, Boeke left Oceanic and moved back to Los Angeles to pursue a more lucrative (but never built) New Town project on Catalina Island with Bechtel Corporation and the Wrigley family. He eventually retired to the Sea Ranch. Halprin, Moore, and Esherick took advantage of a design-team discount, and purchased some of the site's best lots and buildings. Marion Conrad never lived at the Sea Ranch. She died of a heart attack while playing tennis with friends. Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, one of the few remaining members of the original design team, recently told me she considered the project a tragic conception that marred the stark beauty of a windy, isolated sheep ranch. But she was a young designer, a single woman with a family to support, so she eagerly accepted the work. The commission bought security and helped pay for her own version of the California dream – a small house in Stinson Beach. Recently, she was commissioned to design a fiftieth-anniversary commemorative logo that will grace objects in the lodge gift shop. Shortly after receiving approval from the Board of Zoning and Adjustments, the lodge restructured finances to avoid foreclosure. The expansion project is currently on hold awaiting a turnaround in the economy.

– Kathleen John-Alder

I am indebted to the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania; the Halprin Collection; the Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley; the MLTW Collection; Katherine Smith for graciously sharing Albert Boeke's oral history; and Barbara Stauffacher Solomon for her insight and a copy of her unpublished memoir.

Place Maker

Isabelle Greene, F.A.S.L.A.

The Valentine garden in Montecito, California, made Patrick Taylor's list of the world's twenty most influential gardens, which was published in a 2006 issue of *The Garden*, the journal of Britain's Royal Horticultural Society. No mere pontificator, Taylor had just edited *The Oxford Companion to the Garden* (an update to the famous Jellicoe encyclopedia), and the list boiled it all down. It is fun to dispute his choices, but the influence of the Valentine garden on designers around the world cannot be denied. Widely written about from the moment it was finished, it demonstrated that xeriscapes (as drought-tolerant gardens were then called) could be rich with symbolism and lush with color – just about the opposite of the way they were often perceived in the popular imagination.

Undertaken in 1980 by Isabelle Greene, F.A.S.L.A., before she had even obtained her landscape architecture license, this garden is the perfect synthesis of the ecological sensitivity, sustainability, and aesthetic she has been exploring since the early 1960s. Greene uses permeable surfaces; drought-tolerant, often native plantings; foliage color and texture for interest instead of flowers or clipped hedging; and abstract patterns to shape well-proportioned spaces instead of formal design conventions. Many of the colors she chooses or the shapes and stones she plays with allude to California's natural landscape. She grew up in the southern part of the state, studying botany and hiking its sage-covered mountains, rocky arroyos, sparkling deserts, and foggy



Isabelle Greene (photograph by William Joyce).

beaches. Her swaths of colored foliage reference Roberto Burle Marx, the Modern-era Brazilian landscape architect, who has been a touchstone since her earliest commissions. Greene, however, deploys color in the service of water conservation in the semiarid West. Silver is her signature because plants with gray leaves reflect sunlight and retain water efficiently.

Greene has described herself as being daunted upon first seeing Carol Valentine's two-acre site. Although it sat at the base of the wild Santa Ynez mountain range in Santa Barbara County, it seemed removed from nature because it was enclosed by tall white walls, with a brand-new white house as its focus. After a decade of drought conditions, water rationing was in effect. When Valentine asked for a Zen garden, Greene thought, great – lots of gravel could help solve irrigation and runoff problems. She decided to put timidity aside and “go for broke.”

As it turned out, the only clearly Zen-like quality is near the front door. In this minimalist space, a pond is rimmed with irregular, bluish stones. These stones are also used to symbolically represent a stream, which flows around the side of the house and tumbles down several terraces on its steep, ocean-view side. The terraces – filled with bands of silver, gray, and blue succulents and groundcovers punctuated by spiky agaves and aloes – are abstractions of Indonesian rice paddies. Their planting patterns suggest water draining into the stream. In the absence of this academic explanation, a visitor will find a garden that is a stunning composition of swirling colors and subtle contrasts, reminiscent of the distant ocean on a stormy day. It is fascinating from any place within it. Much of the property requires no irrigation, but the parts that do are clustered for efficiency. A rose or two can be found, and an arbor provides a shady spot to sit near the vegetables, which are tucked into one of the terraces.

Her talent for landscape architecture, Greene insists, is erroneously attributed to her Pasadena upbringing as the granddaughter of Henry Mather Greene of Greene & Greene, the celebrated Arts and Crafts-era architectural partnership. And yet, when pressed, she'll concede that her abilities might be encoded in her genes. Certainly her love of gardens stems from

trips to his house with its “wonderful tactile qualities,” and the pergola festooned with wisteria and ‘Climbing Cécile Brunner’ roses that rained petals onto her swing. More important, she believes, has been the role that art has played in unlocking her creativity and guiding her toward decisions that are right for the landscape – or for that matter, life.

Now age seventy-seven, Greene has lines on her face in all the right places – from smiling and from frowning her brow when she is lost in thought. Feelings well up, causing her voice to catch in her throat, or she will be so filled with joy that she will do a little shimmy and grin. Her childlike sense of wonder is palpable, and so is her disapproval of those who don't measure up. Sometimes that judgment has been directed at herself.

Other people have always believed in Greene's abilities, however, even when she didn't. Shortly after graduating in 1956 from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a B.A. in botany, she began illustrating the botanical research of her husband, J. Robert Haller, who taught at UC Santa Barbara. A colleague asked her to illustrate his forthcoming botany textbook, and some of the drawings were selected for the First International Exhibition of Botanical Art and Illustration at the Hunt Botanical Library in 1964.¹ She remembers traveling to Pennsylvania alone to see her “prim, kind of tight-ass, careful drawings” on display, looking in the glass case, and thinking, “Hmm, not bad, needs some training. I think I'll go back to school in art.” And so she did.

Michael Dvortsak, her teacher in the Art Department at UC Santa Barbara, ignored her for several weeks in Beginning Drawing, and her confidence plummeted. Eventually he glanced over her meticulous renderings and told her she was too good for her own good. He asked her to draw with her left hand. Isabelle promptly burst into tears; then she picked up her pen and produced a drawing of great beauty that revealed both her subject and her heart. Six years went by, during which she learned to “Never make a tentative line.” Being “ruthlessly honest,” she says, was the pivotal lesson. She also figured out how to “drop below the intellect level and let a kind of knowing bubble forth” that taps all her experiences and puts her on the right track. Still, she continued to take classes. One day Dvortsak pulled her aside and said, “Isabelle, I've taught you everything I have to offer, and you don't seem

¹ Greene's botanical drawings from the 1964 exhibit are in the permanent collection of the Hunt Institute. Her landscape design is well documented in the museum catalog mentioned above and on her website: www.isabellegreene.com.

to know what you want to do with it, so I have nothing more to offer.” She left immediately, devastated, but realized he was right. She also realized what she wanted to do with her life. She wanted to design gardens.

The notion that she should go into landscape architecture came from one of the people who believed in her. Based on a few ideas she had tossed out, Dr. John Carleton asked her to design the areas around his new clinic in downtown Santa Barbara. Selecting the plants was the easy part. Her color palette was inspired by pictures in a book on Burle Marx that she loved. A second book on Japanese gardens constituted all that she knew about design. Adding her own imagination and her intuitive understanding of spatial relationships, she recycled concrete from a driveway demolition into Japanese-style stepping stones leading to a shady patio devoted to private reflection. A second, sunny patio near the entry was envisioned as a more public space. Decomposed granite (a sandlike, native gravel) replaced thirsty lawns along the parking strip, and she improved the circulation by creating a walkway for pedestrians to separate them from traffic in the driveway.

I met Bob and Isabelle Haller during this period, when I was in the fourth grade and they lived across the street near the beach in Isla Vista, not far from UC Santa Barbara. There were only two floor plans on our block of new houses, and the fenced backyards for each contained identical rectangles of lawn. Her garden, however, was absolute magic. With a lily pond, leafy shadows, dichondra to roll in instead of grass, and interesting corners to explore, it seemed like its own little world. Kids liked to linger there.

The Hallers had no children themselves, so when the marriage ended, Isabelle literally struck out on her own. Although she was on the leading edge of the counterculture, the nascent women’s movement had no bearing on this decision; she simply had to support herself. Rather than go back to her maiden name, McElwain (difficult to pronounce) or keep Haller (as the drawings were signed), she decided to try her luck as a Greene. Her grandfather had always been both supportive and loving.

Greene’s path to prominence was anything but typical. The clinic project won an award in 1966 and was written up in the local newspaper. It also caught the eye of interior designer John Alexander, who asked her to do a garden for the historic

Hunt-Stambach House he and his wife had recently purchased. The house had to be relocated to save it from demolition, and before long Greene was not only devising a Victorian-style landscape to complement the house but also siting it on the new lot and designing the carport. When Alexander’s clients, Jon and Lillian Lovelace, needed a swimming pool, he recommended Greene. The pool she designed for the Lovelaces in Montecito in 1972 set a new standard and has since appeared in numerous books both in the U.S. and abroad. Neither kidney-shaped Modern nor neotraditional Postmodern, it seems organically suited to the unusual location she selected. Hidden away in an oak woodland strewn with huge sandstone boulders from an ancient geologic episode, there are just enough openings in the tree canopy overhead to permit sunbathing. Boulders from the site trace the contours of the pool, and one of them serves as a diving platform. No one can tell it is a lap pool, including the ducks that fly in each year to nest there.

With no formal education in landscape architecture, Greene was suddenly the most sought-after garden designer in Santa Barbara. It was essential to acquire more technical knowledge for the increasingly large commissions coming her way from the big estates in Montecito, so she applied for work with every licensed landscape architect in town. They were all one-man offices, and no offers were extended. She decided to hire one of them to work with her instead. Michael C. Wheelwright agreed to help, and by 1974 they were associates. He encouraged her to take the grueling exam to obtain a landscape architecture license. She failed almost all parts of it. After no less than seven attempts and several years of three-hour roundtrips to Los Angeles to pursue course work, she finally passed the last section.

Newly licensed in 1982, she opened her own office, Isabelle C. Greene & Associates, Inc. When I interviewed her recently, she was quick to credit her associates

with “the heavy lifting.” This includes sharing design work and coping with the technology, which frees her to focus on the larger picture. She also acknowledged the masons, metal and wood crafters, contractors, and gardeners who have always played a large role in creating and maintaining the quality of the gardens.

Three views from a 1982 sketchbook, showing the Kern River plunging down a slope, illustrate the way Greene finds the patterns that give shape to her ideas. The first is a naturalistic drawing that captures the scene; the second is abstracted; and the third reduces movement to its essence with firm, dark lines tracing the water’s course through the planes that contain it. She laughs as she describes the process she developed to discover what is right for an actual job site: “I began to learn that the more comfortable I could make myself, the more likely it would come, so I’d ask for a cup of coffee, I’d sit down, I’d banish the clients, I’d do everything as boldly as I could, and finally I just learned that letting myself love something brings up the answers I need.” Now she says, “I can tell right away – I need a hollow here, I need shade, I need a sense of view, I need purple, I need a wispy bush, I need flat planes – I just know these things, but drawing . . .” She trails off as she contemplates how hard she still finds it.

This hasn’t stopped the accolades from piling up for her landscape design, which was officially elevated to the status of



Overview of Valentine garden, Santa Barbara (photograph by Russ Marchand).

art when the University Art Museum at UC Santa Barbara launched a show devoted to her work in 2005. Greene did installations in the gallery to accompany it. David Sreatfield, the preeminent California landscape historian, noted in the catalogue that her gardens are not “placed” in nature the way modernist designs typically are, but “completely embedded” in it. In his view, four of her projects (Valentine, Lovelace, Pulitzer, and Overall) “are unquestionably among the finest examples of western garden art of the late twentieth century.” Recognized as one of the originators of environmentally aware contemporary design who was practicing sustainable landscaping before the term was coined, Greene is in the history books. The American Society of Landscape Architects made her a fellow, its highest honor, in 1999. Carolann Stoney’s 2011 film, *Women in the Dirt*, positions her as the elder stateswoman of the current generation of California landscape architects. But a surprising number of the entries in her project list are for architectural consulting, and she has worked in many places throughout the country: in New York, Alabama, Florida, Pennsylvania, and “*The Happiest Place on Earth*.” Unfortunately, this last commission at Disneyland, where she was hired to design the grounds of the Grand Californian Hotel, proved to be an unhappy experience. Her designs were revised so many times by others that she refused to even see how the landscape turned out. In her work, Greene confided, the ends never justify the means: “The means are what you must get right. They generate their own ends – it’s all one organic whole, and therefore the ends will be right too.” She is glad she said no to projects she didn’t believe in even when she was hungry for work because “it’s nice to go from the cradle to the grave with a whistle-clean conscience.”

Photos of her client and fast friend Carol Valentine, who died in 2009, and Greene’s grandfather hang on the wall of her office, standing watch over her drafting table. Greene confidently states that she plans to be designing for another thirty years, but she feels she is just beginning to discover what she wants to say with her drawings. And after carting her grandfather’s piano around for decades, she is finally playing it again. Composing music is a new creative outlet. “It’s part of allowing myself to know these things beneath the intellect, and to explore them, and to feel enriched by them,” she says, remembering a lesson from Dvortsak: that’s all art is – how well you put yourself to it. – Susan Chamberlin

Books

La Natura come amante: Nature as a Lover;
Richard Haag Associates
 By Luca Maria
 Francesco Fabris
 Maggioli Editore, 2010.

Richard Haag was a child prodigy. At the age of four, while attending a national conference on horticulture with his father, he astonished the gathering of nurserymen by correctly identifying a number of exceedingly rare plant species and demonstrating his sophisticated grafting skills. Unlike prodigies whose narratives fade later in life, Haag continued to develop his precocious knowledge of plant ecology, combining it with his other gifts to pursue a career in landscape architecture. These included a highly original artistic talent, probing curiosity, strong self-confidence, and a keen sense of the power of nature to evoke the deepest and most intense emotions. By his mid-forties Haag had emerged as one of the most original and influential



landscape architects in the United States; by his mid-sixties he possessed a portfolio of built work numbering over five hundred projects, including site plans for private residences, commercial buildings, an exposition, a nature reserve, memorials, an embassy, and urban parks. Two of his

works, by overwhelming consensus of his professional peers, have become canonical – Gas Works Park in Seattle and the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island in

Washington State. In addition to coordinating the wide range of distinguished work flowing from his small Seattle office, Haag founded the degree program in landscape architecture at the University of Washington and quickly gained a reputation as one of the profession’s outstanding educators.

Given his many notable achievements over a career spanning a half century, one would expect historians and design critics to have pro-

duced a plethora of biographies and design critiques encompassing the full arc of Haag’s work. Oddly enough, this is not the case, and this neglect of the full range of Haag’s work is a large blind spot on the retina of landscape-architectural scholarship. (Haag himself has written a few articles on Gas Works Park but little else.) There have been perceptive and illuminating studies of Haag’s individual works by Patrick Condon (Bloedel Reserve), Susan Frey (Bloedel Reserve), and Elizabeth Meyer (Gas Works Park) and the Harvard Graduate School of Design sponsored an exhibition of Haag’s work in the early nineties. Also Gary Hilderbrand has authored an insightful essay on Haag as a teacher and Laurie Olin a useful but brief overview of his life and work. However, not until Luca Maria Francesco Fabris’s design monograph, *La Natura come amante: Nature as a Lover*, has anyone attempted to chart and critique a comprehensive selection of Haag’s work. The erotic undertone of the title is not derived from some sort of hyperbolic Romanticism on the part of Fabris; rather it comes from a remark by Haag himself characterizing landscape architecture as the only profession that regards nature as a lover. As such, it is an apt distillation of his design sensibility.

Fabris, an Italian scholar and academic, brings solid qualifications to his task. Educated as an architect, he is a research fellow in building technology at Milan Polytechnic. He has authored numerous essays on architectural topics and a book on environmental planning, and is a design critic who coordinates the Project and Design section of the Italian journal *Costruire*. In addition, this Tocquevillian design critic has known Richard Haag for a decade and journeyed to several of Haag’s works accompanied by Haag himself. Such professional credentials, combined with Fabris’s firsthand site observations and personal relationship with Haag, foster hope for excellence. Excellence there is, but there are also shortcomings in this well-meaning monograph.

Fabris adheres to the typical design monograph structure, a familiar workhorse approach proven to be safe, reliable, and effective, wherein illustrations far outweigh text: there is an introduction by the critic, copiously illustrated case studies with brief critical observations, a notation of the subject’s awards, a biography (in this case an autobiography written, curiously, in the third person),

and a select bibliography. Given his ten-year acquaintance with Haag, one would have expected an interview – *de rigueur* for many design monographs – but none is included. The text is presented in both Italian and English. The English translation by Jeremy Scott is for the most part clear and accurate, although on one occasion Stott errs by translating the Italian for “landscape architects” (*architetti del paesaggio*) as “landscapers,” a term regarded more as an epithet than a title by most members of the profession.

Fabris’s deep respect and admiration for his subject resonates throughout the book, which is more a celebration than a critique. His most outstanding contribution is his analysis of a broad range of Haag’s work, some twenty-six projects over a fifty-year period. The variety of the projects is remarkable, and their sophistication and quality are outstanding. For those who know mostly Haag’s canonical works, this monograph will reveal the scope of the accomplishments that have earned him the reputation of being one of the most important landscape architects of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The author’s analysis is accompanied by outstanding illustrations, many of which have never been published.

Fabris’s discussion of Haag’s engaging personality and sophisticated approach to design, as well as his analysis of specific works, is both perceptive and helpful. To his credit, he highlights Haag’s “independence of thought,” “reverence and respect for the cycle of nature,” and “intelligence that is magnanimous and perceptive.” He notes the profound influence of the Japanese design tradition on Haag and his ability to creatively adapt it to the Northwest region of the United States. He discusses Haag’s pioneering work in bioremediation to detoxify the soil at Gas Works Park in Seattle, a project that inspired new directions in urban park design by preserving the industrial remnants on the site. He praises the designer’s sequence of four garden rooms at the Bloedel Reserve for its power to inspire meditation. He commends Haag’s regional approach to design and his extensive use of the natural vegetation of the Pacific Northwest; the way he builds upon the intrinsic qualities of a site and respects its ecosystems. For Fabris, his subject’s designs are “predicated upon a balance between nature and technology,” a sensibility Haag

developed by bringing his academic career to bear on his professional work.

This overview, as far as it goes, is a good one. We can appreciate Fabris’s succinctness and his avoidance of an overblown, jargon-ridden introduction of the kind that has marred many a monograph. Furthermore, his analysis in individual case studies is often instructive. For those of us who know Haag personally, though, Fabris’s portrait of the man himself does not quite capture the extraordinary qualities of his personality. Haag is a legendary teacher whose charisma has inspired a whole generation of students. His theory class shunned the opaque and pretentious literature of much contemporary design criticism and emphasized an immediate awareness of one’s design context; he even taught his students to camp out on a site for several days to deeply absorb its intrinsic qualities. One typical Haag final exam contained two questions: “What is the present phase of the moon?” and “What plants are currently in bloom in Seattle?” There is an aura about him reminiscent of a Zen master. A conversation with him is punctuated with long silences, followed by sudden brilliant insights. One is aware of his intense, laser-like gaze that incinerates one’s academic pretensions, as well as a subtle sense of humor that keeps matters in

perspective. Haag would be the first to laugh at this characterization – but so would a Zen master.

Fabris makes some other significant omissions as well. He fails to discuss in sufficient detail some key elements of Haag’s design sensibility. Perhaps if he had included an interview with Haag this might have been avoided. (Haag’s autobiography at the end of the volume is far too brief to address these matters.) The first of these is Haag’s interest in cultural geographer Jay Appleton’s prospect/refuge theory of human aesthetic preferences for a certain type of landscape – an influence that is reflected in some of Haag’s most important work, such as the Bloedel Reserve, Gas Works Park, and his Orange County Great Park competition entry. In brief, Appleton claims there is a strong preference encoded in human DNA for landscapes that allow one to “see without being seen.” These landscapes contain “prospects” (high viewing points such as mounds and hills) and “refuges” (valleys, caves, and forest edges offering shelter and protection). Such habitats were crucial for survival in early humanity’s hunter-gatherer culture, and Appleton believes that they still deeply resonate in our brains today. We contin-

ue to prefer these landscapes in large part because of the pleasurable sensations they arouse. Haag’s frequent inclusion of symbolic mounds, well-defined edges, and valley-like forms in his site plans clearly reveals Appleton’s influence. On one occasion he explicitly interpreted his “garden of planes” in the Bloedel Reserve to his client Prentice Bloedel as a symbolic expression of prospect/refuge theory. However, Haag departs somewhat from Appleton in emphasizing the emotional intensity of responses to landscapes of prospect and refuge. For Haag they are not merely pleasurable; they evoke exceedingly powerful non-rational feelings. On one occasion he characterized them as the “rapture of the deep.” Haag clearly intends his designs to stir the most primitive depths of our brain’s limbic system.

Another key element in Haag’s design psychology is his understanding of children’s play as an expression of transcultural universals: climbing to high points, exploring cavelike spaces, digging and hiding. Haag’s highly creative playground designs are based on this understanding, which unfortunately Fabris does not discuss. This perspective, which is grounded in evolutionary biology, places Haag in the theoretical company of E. O. Wilson, Steven Pinker, Judith Heerwagen, Gordon Orians,

and Steven Kellert, and is one of the most engaging dimensions of his work.

Although Fabris does mention in a number of instances Haag’s profound debt to Japanese design traditions gleaned from a Fulbright year in Japan, more discussion is called for. Haag has a good grasp of the Japanese language and is a serious student of Zen Buddhism and Taoism. As Patrick Condon has pointed out, some of the seven stages of Zen spiritual practice are expressed in the Bloedel Reserve garden sequence, including the consciousness of the transience of all living things and the peace of *satori* or enlightenment. While Fabris attempts to bring this element of Haag’s values into focus in his case studies, his commentary mostly skates on the surface of a much deeper sensibility. This may be because Fabris is aware of Haag’s notion that his work is open to multiple interpretations, and it is to his credit that he wants to avoid imposing a lengthy and pretentious commentary. (Haag reminds one of Robert Frost who, when asked the meaning of one of his poems, simply read it again to the questioner.) Instead, the author invites us to develop our own analysis based on the apt and abun-

dant illustrations he has provided. This is welcome, but succinctness has its limits.

Also, as helpful as the illustrations are, there are some problems with the way Fabris organizes them. The lack of captions is unfortunate, but even more so is the absence of any sort of meaningful order to the case studies themselves.

Chronological arrangement would have allowed us the opportunity to trace Haag's development. Alternatively, a typological arrangement would have been useful. Instead, Fabris appears to have tossed his twenty-six examples into a box and pulled them out randomly. There is one exception. He does conclude with Haag's most recent residential project. Is he treating these works as some sort of non-rational, Zen koan arrangement, which he regards as true to the spirit of Haag? If so, it's a clever device, but a misguided one.

Despite its limitations, Fabris's pioneering study deserves great credit for its attempt to map for the first time Richard Haag's highly creative and original body of work – a vast yet hitherto little-investigated domain. One hopes that this well-intentioned and worthy first venture will serve as a catalyst for more comprehensive explorations of the extraordinary accomplishments of one of America's most distinguished landscape architects. – Reuben M. Rainey

The Fortune Hunter: A German Prince in Regency England

By Peter James Bowman
Signal Books, 2010

Hermann Ludwig Heinrich, Prince of Pückler-Muskau (1785–1871) achieved wide renown during his lifetime as a prolific writer of letters and travel descriptions, with over twenty published volumes to his

credit. But his enduring fame, at least among landscape historians, rests on his accomplishments as a garden designer; he undertook to transform his entire principality of Muskau into a landscape park, and then later dedicated himself to a similar project on a smaller scale at Branitz, another family estate. His 1834 *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei (Hints on Landscape Gardening)*, illustrating his plans and outlining his opinions on landscape design, is a landmark in the field. (The first French and English editions appeared in 1847 and 1917, respectively.) Although generally underappreciated today, Pückler's influence was considerable,

extending not only across Europe but to the United States as well, where he was admired by Frederick Law Olmsted and many other important American land-

scape designers, several of whom visited Muskau. (See the recent collection of essays, *Pückler and America*, ed. Sonja Duempelmann, German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, 2007).

Peter James Bowman's carefully researched book does not focus on Pückler as a landscape designer. Rather, as the title makes clear, it examines the prince's campaign to find a wealthy English bride during his tour of the British Isles from September 1826 to January 1829. But Pückler's ambitious plans for Muskau Park were, in fact, what sent him on his bride quest in the first place, because the transformation of his property was bankrupting him. This worry was never far from the prince's mind, and the fact that Bowman keeps it alive for his readers adds to *The Fortune Hunter's* appeal for those concerned with garden history.

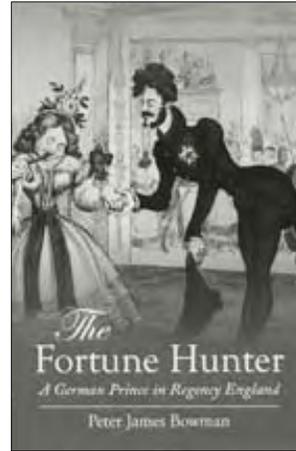
Bowman begins with three chapters describing Pückler's life before the

sojourn in England: his youth, military service, early amours (including the fact that he saved drafts of love letters so he could reuse them when appropriate), previous trips on the Continent, his first journey to England (with visits to numerous parks and gardens), his marriage to Lucie Pappenheim (who was daughter of the Chancellor of Prussia and a divorcée nine years his senior), the couple's shared devotion to his vision for Muskau, the resulting financial woes, and finally the mutual decision taken in their eighth year of marriage to divorce so that a new, wealthy bride might salvage their landscaping dreams. It was hardly surprising that the couple sought salvation in England, for many impecunious continental gentlemen were seeking the same deliverance in that prosperous country. The problems a young wife might encounter adjusting to the triangulated domestic arrangements at Muskau, where the continued presence of the former spouse was assumed, were to be worked out later.

Pückler cannot be accused of lack of effort, and the subsequent chapters of *The Fortune Hunter* provide ample proof of his vigor as a suitor. Given his aristocratic

credentials he had ready access to high society in and around London and Brighton. He visited famous sites, paid calls, dined lavishly, gambled, gossiped, stayed up all night at balls, and never failed to observe the English and their customs with a fond if incisive and skeptical eye. Throughout his adventures he corresponded faithfully with Lucie, usually several times a week, relating details of his bride search and his encounters with prostitutes (sometimes too candidly for Lucie's taste). He also described at length the places, people, events, and politics unfolding around him; lamented the weather; fretted about his health; and much else. When finally he had to admit his failure to land an heiress, he expended his meager remaining funds on further travel through more far-flung parts of England, Wales and Ireland. Once back at Muskau, after an absence of nearly two and one-half years, he and Lucie decided to publish his letters as a way of recouping some money from the trip, and they enlisted Pückler's friend Karl August Varnhagen von Ense to assist in abridging and editing them. The main objective was to remove all traces of the bride hunt and excise most proper names of individuals and estates, so as to protect the many prominent people who had welcomed Pückler as a guest.

In 1830 the first two volumes, entitled *Briefe eines Verstorbenen* (Letters of a dead man), appeared and proved an immediate success. The unnamed author and editor were identified only as a prince and his anonymous friend; both were, of course, Pückler himself. This ruse, readily apparent to the well-connected, presumably added a certain frisson to the letters' appeal. Pückler and Lucie were delighted by the substantial income these volumes generated and accordingly the remaining letters soon appeared in two subsequent volumes, again to enormous success, winning accolades from the likes of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine. The *Briefe* also caused a sensation in England under the title *Tour in England, Ireland, and France in 1826, 1827, 1828, and 1829*, translated by the spirited and learned Sarah Austin. Having discovered the author's identity, Austin herself began a passionate, years-long, epistolary relationship with him, a complementary story wonderfully chronicled by Lotte and Joseph Hamburger in their 1992 book *Contemplating Adultery: The Secret Life of a Victorian Woman*. Thus the letters were not only a publishing sensation in Germany but made waves in England and, soon after, in



America as well.

The epistles to Lucie are the main source material for *The Fortune Hunter*, but given that the published versions had been “cleansed” of all but oblique references to the matrimonial enterprise, Bowman turned to archives in Germany and Poland where he examined the original manuscripts in their full candor. He also tracked down numerous other published and unpublished letters by Pückler and his acquaintances and culled local newspapers, broadsides, and relevant material in English family archives. The women singled out for special attention in *The Fortune Hunter* are Lady Lansdowne, Mary Woolley Gibbings, Georgiana Auguste Henrietta Elphinstone, and Harriet Kinloch. When these and a few other early prospects proved unattainable, Pückler went on to woo Harriet Bonham, although in fact he was languishing for her older married sister Lady Garvagh (neither had dowries that could have saved Muskau). Next he set his sights on Elizabeth Hamlet, a jeweler’s daughter, and even employed a matrimonial agent to assist him. Rumors about his abnormal relationship with his ex-wife were circulating, and eventually it became inescapable that his circumstances were an insurmountable obstacle in proper English society,

where divorce was not only frowned upon, but rare – indeed achievable only by an Act of Parliament! Near desperation, his matrimonial aspirations seemingly doomed, Pückler was then swept off his feet by the opera star Henriette Sontag, a famous beauty, to whom he actually contemplated proposing, though the union would have had no financial advantage. Her preemptive rejection nearly undid him. Any further endeavor was rendered impossible when the unfortunate timing of an innocent encounter, misrepresented by gossips and the press, led to him being blamed for the suicide attempt of Napoleon’s scandal-ridden niece, Letitia Bonaparte. The moment had come to depart voguish London for less expensive destinations. His bride search was now over, so *The Fortune Hunter* does not accompany Pückler on these further adventures.

Pückler’s exploits have been widely discussed over the years and the unpublished letters have been examined, not least in Eliza M. Butler’s comprehensive and thoroughly engaging biography *The Tempestuous Prince: Herman Pückler-Muskau* (1929), which also recounts the bride search. Bowman, however, scruti-

nizes the prince’s pursuits in much greater detail – in particular the lives of the young women and their families; he even appends a brief epilogue on the subsequent fortunes of the most prominent of Pückler’s quarries. There are a number of illustrations, including several caricatures and portraits. An appendix contains translated excerpts from the published *Briefe* along with a few English testimonies to the impression Pückler made in British society. The bibliography of primary and secondary sources runs to ten pages and is useful for anyone wishing to pursue the subject further.

By focusing on Pückler’s many months in the English metropolis and its environs, Bowman provides an insightful portrait of both Regency London and the dandified German prince who attempted to conquer it. The chapters on London as “Capital of the World” and the sketch of Brighton as the watering place for the “fashionables” are particularly vivid. The closing chapter gives a reliable overview of the following decades of Pückler’s life – he would have many more adventures during his remaining forty years! The translations of the letters, whether from manuscripts or published versions, are Bowman’s own, and they are excellent. (He eschews Sarah Austin’s renderings, which he rightly

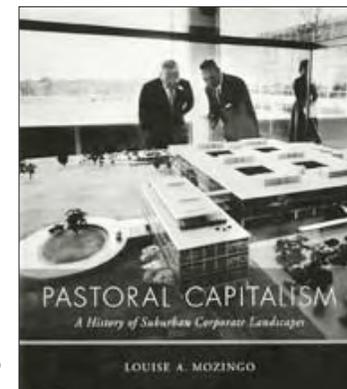
finds too loose and not always reliable). And he offers many additional tidbits, such as an elegant recipe for “Fürst-Pückler-Eis,” an eponymous ice-cream concoction familiar even today to anyone who has grown up in Germany.

Readers should be warned about Bowman’s scholarly apparatus, however, for his citations are often insufficiently specific (grouping several sources in a single footnote covering a number of paragraphs, for example). The references to the published *Briefe* are particularly troubling. Here Bowman cites only the two-volume Insel paperback edition of 1991, which is extremely hard to find. (It is not available in the Library of Congress, the British Library, or the Berlin Staatsbibliothek.) More frustratingly, he lists only a volume and page number from that edition. Given that Pückler’s correspondence has appeared in many different editions, Bowman should have provided the dates of the individual letters instead, which would allow a reader to consult any of the German or English editions. However, these lapses are exceptions in this otherwise well-researched and handsomely produced volume, which will prove valuable to anyone interested in the ins and

outs of English society as it appeared to a charming and learned – if sometimes vain and self-important – Continental traveler.
– Linda Parshall

Pastoral Capitalism: A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes
By Louise A. Mozingo
MIT Press, 2011

When Frank Woolworth made a new home in Manhattan for his company in 1913, the building was more than a functional space from which to manage the business operations of a dime-store empire. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the downtown office buildings of large financial corporations like Metropolitan Life and the headquarters of commercial or industrial corporations such as Woolworth or Singer were considered civic icons – symbols of, and advertisements for, the important role that corporations played in American society. With its soaring, steeple-topped tower, the skyscraper in the twentieth century inherited the symbolic role of the belching smokestack in the nineteenth century, becoming a sign of economic vigor



and collective prosperity. Yes, the city was congested and chaotic, but it was a productive type of congestion, one that validated its primacy as a financial hub. Little could the corporate chieftains of the early twentieth century have predicted that, by the 1950s, an altogether different model for corporate distinction would emerge: one in which suburban office

landscapes featured low-profile buildings framed by well-tended lawns, lush berms, and wooded groves. These enclaves were accessed by graded drives that led the

motorist (and the employee and visitor alike were invariably motorists) to a porte cochere, as if one were arriving at a country estate.

In *Pastoral Capitalism*, Louise Mozingo takes the story of corporate iconography into the postwar period, in which many corporations adopted precisely this strategy, commissioning campuses and modern-day villas in verdant, suburban settings as both administrative command centers and statements of patronage and

power. Greenness, Mozingo writes, was linked to goodness; the landscape itself was intended to call forth an ameliorative social influence. In the milieu of postwar America, the corporation profited from the implied moral order of the pastoral landscape. Suburban office landscapes drew on the prestigious ambiance associated with the exclusivity and appeal of the suburbs themselves.

In this handsome and well-illustrated volume, Mozingo charts the evolution of three strands of pastoral capitalism – the corporate campus, the corporate estate, and the office park – and connects these influential landscape types to the rise of managerial capitalism, with its rationalization of corporate-management functions. Introduced in the 1920s and coming to the fore amid the tremendous corporate growth of the 1940s, the system of managerial capitalism – characterized by an institutionalized hierarchy of salaried, professional managers – allowed for a potentially unlimited expansion of the corporation, a proliferation of its divisions, and a decentralization of its physical and administrative components.

In early industrial installations, management offices, research space, and the manufacturing works themselves were housed in the same

physical plant – often a collection of buildings along a river or railroad spur of a growing metropolis. But the rise of managerial capitalism established research and development (R & D) as a distinct division within the management hierarchy of the corporation. As scientists and engineers were elevated in their corporate status and corporations competed for the best and the brightest scientists coming out of universities, many companies split off R & D from the gritty, blue-collar manufacturing operations. As early as 1911, the National Electric Lamp Association (NELA), which turned out to be a covert extension of General Electric, built a campus outside of Cleveland to house its research laboratories, calling it a “University of Industry” and modeling it on the archetypal university campus with dignified, low-rise structures that framed a central green lawn. In the 1940s, important industrial corporations like AT&T, General Electric, and General Motors followed suit, creating suburban-campus settings for industrial research where young Ph.D.s could tinker in environments that mimicked the prestigious universities from which they had been drawn. In such milieus, corporations established themselves

as patrons of important scientific breakthroughs that also had commercial applications. With the rise of defense spending in the Cold War years, corporations joined universities and other research institutes as centers of scientific innovation.

In 1942, AT&T Bell Telephone Laboratories planned for a move from a loft building in lower Manhattan to a 213-acre site in Union County, New Jersey, setting a new standard for corporate research and development facilities. Frank Jewett, the president of Bell Labs, was one of the first American physics Ph.D.s to eschew academic life to join an industrial-research operation and he placed as high a value on the pastoral landscape as he did on the laboratory structures themselves. Jewett hired a well-known landscape-architecture firm, the Olmsted Brothers, to design a low-rise quadrangle, a commission that helped assure worried neighbors that the new arrival in their genteel residential area was not an industrial plant but a prestigious, scientific-research facility. Suburbanites were further comforted to learn that the well-educated employees of the labs were the type of people who would fit easily into the surrounding communities. Scientists solidified their corporate standing and social prominence by relocating to the corporate campus.

In geographical terms, pastoral capitalism implied the shift of business activities to the suburban fringe, following the trajectory of middle- and upper-class households. This move to the suburbs both coincided with and hastened the decline of city centers. As Mozingo writes, “the center city was noisy, diverse, crowded, unpredictable, inflexible, expensive, old, and messy – a dubious state of affairs for postwar capitalists bent on expansion.” Furthermore, the rise of automobile transport and the planning and construction of parkways and regional highway networks made one of its prime advantages – ease of access – less important. And while the center languished, the suburbs brimmed with optimism. Moving to the gracious subdivisions of Connecticut, New Jersey, Westchester County, and suburban Detroit, for example, was part and parcel of professional advancement and conferred class status – these neighborhoods were “predictable, spacious, segregated, specialized, quiet, new, and easily traversed.”

Distinct from the R & D campus, the corporate estate marked the company’s dislocation of its leading managers – the headquarters

operation – from the center city to suburban locations. Tired of the dirt, dust, noise, and traffic congestion of the center city, many corporations looked to the periphery for sites where they could stretch out and manage their own space. In 1950, the Hartford-based insurance company, Connecticut General, purchased 280 acres in Bloomfield, Connecticut, five miles outside of Hartford, where it built a low-rise, modernist campus. In making the move, the company decided that an efficient and attractive work environment – one that contained many employee amenities, including tennis courts and a bowling alley – outweighed the benefits of a downtown location. Connecticut General’s suburban estate was an expression of power underwritten by the patronage of distinguished architecture. The main building, a low-slung structure designed by architects from the large office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill under the leadership of Gordon Bunshaft, was lauded as one of the finest new office structures in the country. It embraced the taut, steel-and-glass curtain wall of modernist, International Style architecture. At the same time, Connecticut General’s move reflected broad disenchantment with urban environments. To celebrate the opening of the

new building, President Frazar B. Wilde organized a conference, “The New Highways: Challenge to the Metropolitan Region,” and offered his own company’s suburban estate as an answer to those problems.

Not every company could afford to own and maintain its own suburban facility. The developer-built office park, however – Mozingo’s third type of pastoral capitalism – extended the opportunity to lease space in a parklike setting to smaller firms as well as back office and branch operations, while offering easy access to the emerging network of regional highways. These office parks, based on the industrial park (planned industrial districts that began to proliferate in the 1920s), were built by real-estate developers in upper-end residential suburbs as pastoral enclaves for white-collar workers. In the 1950s and 60s, many start-up high-technology firms were drawn to suburban office parks in the Bay Area of San Francisco and outside of Boston along Route 128, a ring road completed in the 1950s. The office park was a real-estate product that was copied across the United States and beyond.

Mozingo makes the point that pastoral capitalism was not only a physical abdication of the center city but

also a civic abdication of efforts at urban reform. “Dedication to city affairs was inevitable as corporate offices stood directly on streets and corporate workers walked at least some distance through the city to work; participation in the functional and aesthetic improvement of the collective public realm was in the corporations’ own self-interest while broadly beneficial to city residents.” But the suburban corporate enclave was free from such burdens. Pastoral capitalism removed corporate leaders from the heart of the American city, “a categorical abandonment by powerful, self-interested, and economically generative entities essential to civic health.”

Not every influential corporation left the center city in the 1950s, and more attention devoted to developments in the city in *Pastoral Capitalism* would have enhanced our appreciation for the metropolitan trends it describes. How could the city fit into the emerging pattern of highways and preserve itself as a business and office center in the face of the benefits and convenience of suburban locations? For cities that were losing economic vigor, one response was to enact mechanisms

such as urban renewal and highway construction that promised to yield the same large building sites – and automotive access to them – that were available in the suburbs.

Even when corporations decided to remain in the city, they did their best to mimic the spatial standards that made suburban landscapes so appealing. For example, Lever Brothers, the American division of the Anglo-Dutch soap corporation Unilever, decided in 1950 to relocate its corporate headquarters from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to midtown Manhattan. Lever’s president, Charles Luckman, commissioned Skidmore, Owings & Merrill to create a modern office tower on Park Avenue. The design team, led by Gordon Bunshaft, turned the building’s thin slab perpendicular to the street and left the ground level as an open-air plaza. Both techniques countered the density of the city without giving up its advantages.

Other corporations, like the Prudential Insurance Company, also made a point to stay in the city. The large life insurer committed to its downtown Newark location and in 1961 constructed a gleaming, modern skyscraper on the site of its hulking 1896 headquarters. In the 1950s, when Prudential embarked on an

ambitious program of administrative decentralization, erecting regional home offices in several cities across America, corporate managers deliberately looked for locations within city limits. Together, Prudential’s suite of regional headquarters – with the company’s name always clearly spelled out across each building’s cornice line – were like little Rocks of Gibraltar, visually reinforcing the company’s faith in American cities and its magnanimous decision to invest in them when their future was not secure.

Nonetheless, Prudential eschewed the tight confines of the central business district for its regional homes and looked instead for large midtown sites where it could stretch out and build gracious campuses with plenty of car parking. The most ambitious of these projects, the Prudential Center in Boston, created a multifunctional world unto itself, with office space (punctuated by a signature 52-story tower), retail, apartment housing, hotels, and convention facilities, all built on a platform of parking garages that straddled a new, urban-highway extension. Prudential hedged on its commitment to the city by constructing a self-

contained landscape within it that the corporation could wholly control.

Pastoral Capitalism joins a growing literature that is reassessing the familiar narratives of the suburbs to reveal a more complicated place than we imagined. A combination of individual desires and corporate maneuvering produced the trend of pastoral capitalism. Has this trend subsided? Not at all, if we are to heed Mozingo’s reports on the global office landscape. Suburban research and office parks in England, France, India, and China are still deemed distinguished addresses by their tenants and provide safe, secure, and pleasant facilities for outposts of global firms.

It is both fascinating and distressing to see other countries hurrying to embrace a suburban tradition that scholars like Mozingo are now reassessing. Even as these trends play out on a global scale, there are indications that both individual and corporate energies are reversing them in some American cities. In the 1950s, corporate chieftains were convinced that brainy youngsters were attracted to a campuslike atmosphere that mimicked the university idyll. But many of the leading scientists and researchers who were once seduced by the suburbs no longer want to live there. In leading cities

across the globe today, the brainy youngsters are equally attracted to creative offices carved out of urban lofts and the funky neighborhoods that surround them – places like Dumbo in Brooklyn, Tribeca in Manhattan, and SOMA (South of Market) in San Francisco – where young workers in marketing, design, and technology sit at modern-day drafting tables equipped with iMacs.

In 2010, Google – whose headquarters is a campus in Mountain View, California – purchased one of the largest single buildings in Manhattan to house its New York offices. Google spent \$1.9 billion on 111 Eighth Avenue, a massive, red-brick structure that was built in 1932 by the Port Authority of New York and occupies an entire block in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan’s West Side. At three million square feet, the building is 50 percent larger than the Empire State Building. Where there was once a loading dock, young programmers take a break from the computer screen to play Ping-Pong. Google employees have organized the internal landscape of the structure as a microcosm of Manhattan itself, with its own neighborhoods and system of streets. The building is in a strategic location for Google’s business: it sits atop

a node in the global, fiber-optic cable infrastructure – a major interchange in the information superhighway and thus a privileged physical location for a business located in the “cloud” of digital communication. The location of the building is also a sign that many attractive and well-qualified employees enjoy urban living.

But this return to the city is a relatively recent and poorly distributed phenomenon among the formerly successful and powerful cities of the industrial era. In the late 1960s, on the heels of upheaval in many American cities, the exodus to the suburbs intensified and many cities are still recovering from that abandonment. The suburban corporate estate was the central command post for the ascendant global corporation and its far-flung industrial empire, the place from which raw-material procurement, engineering and design, and manufacturing, distribution, and marketing would be coordinated. Decisions about the fate of particular industrial plants – and the impacts of those shifting resources – could be made in the isolated comfort of a glass room with a woodland view. When reduced to numbers on a spreadsheet and examined in a suburban idyll, the corporate practices of pastoral capitalism turned

out to have negative effects on many communities, especially in North America and parts of Europe. It is all well to say that New York, San Francisco, and Seattle, for example, will come back, but what about Buffalo, Cleveland, and Detroit?

In some cities, the model of the research park is returning to the city. Is there a role for corporations to play in these places that will have positive effects for both themselves and their urban surroundings? In Detroit, a partnership between Wayne State University, General Motors, and the Henry Ford Health System, with additional support from the Kresge Foundation and other grant makers including the federal government, has created TechTown, a nonprofit business incubator for entrepreneurs. TechTown's first location in central Detroit's New Amsterdam area was a structure built in 1927 and designed by Albert Kahn as a service department for Pontiac. TechTown calls itself a technology park, borrowing the language of pastoral capitalism, but bringing technology back to the traditional center of industrial innovation: the city. – Elihu Rubin

Contributors

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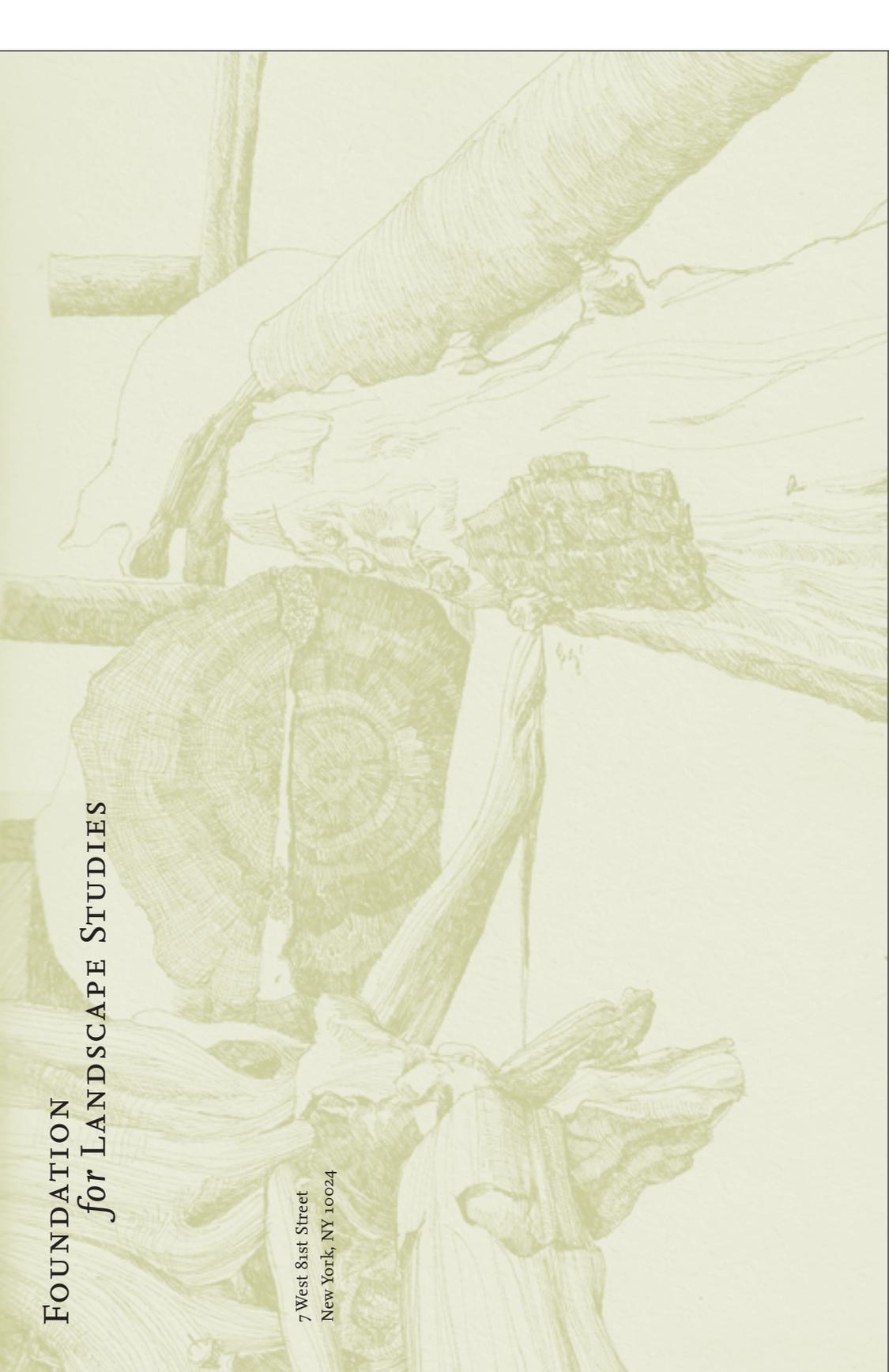
2004); and "Hirschfeld, Pückler, Poe: The Literary Modeling of Nature" in *Pückler and America* (German Historical Institute, 2007).

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