

# S / t e L I N E S

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with J. B. Jackson

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La Cienega  
Chapel of San Antonio  
1982

# Letter from the Editor

Landscape expresses aesthetic tastes and cultural meanings marked by significant shifts in perception over the course of time. Design geniuses like André Le Nôtre and Capability Brown changed the course of landscape history: the first used axial and topographic geometries to create the seventeenth-century classical garden and the second abandoned formality to develop a naturalistic design language that morphed into the eighteenth-century Picturesque style and nineteenth-century Romanticism.

Writers too, including Pliny the Younger, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Alexander Pope, have played a role in landscape paradigm shifts. Twentieth-century America boasts two such original and revolutionary writers: Ian McHarg,

whose landmark *Design with Nature*, published in 1969, ushered environmental consciousness into the profession of landscape planning and design, and John Brinckerhoff Jackson, who interpreted the social history and cultural geography of heretofore-disparaged, ordinary, everyday landscapes.

This issue of *Site/Lines*, which has been coedited by Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, the Sydenham Clark Parsons Professor of History and American Studies, emerita, at Smith College and author of *Traces of J. B. Jackson* (University of Virginia Press, 2020), constitutes a literary symposium of essayists who collectively explore the subject of her book's subtitle: *The Man Who Taught Us to See Everyday America*. What emerges is a picture of a willfully unconventional observer of the quotidian who, through his creation of the magazine *Landscape*,

with its editorial flair and substantive originality, and his gifted teaching that ensured him a perennial following at two great universities, launched a new epoch in landscape history. Reminiscing about her own long friendship with Jackson, Horowitz writes in her introduction to this issue, "His baritone voice was beautiful, and as he spoke it expanded to fill the space. I remember noting the way he used the words 'we' and 'us.'" That voice resonated in the fortunate ears of those who became Jackson's students, and the brilliant contrarianism of his writing brought to the academy an entirely new valuation of the prosaic as a genre of landscape history.

In his essay "J. B. Jackson's Intellectual Legacy," Chris Wilson provides a

perceptive appreciation of the Jacksonian zeitgeist that evolved over time as the terms "vernacular" and "cultural landscape" came into common usage among historic preservationists, social and environmental historians, and landscape architects.

Laurie Olin's reflection on "J. B. Jackson and Landscape Architects" draws a distinction between Jackson the writer and Jackson the academic, while showing how his own practice as a landscape architect, teacher, and planner has been influenced by this public intellectual's worldview. Landscape observation and sketching are inextricable activities for Olin as they were for Jackson, and the same is true for Douglas Adams, who engaged in many expeditions into the broad open landscape of the American West in Jackson's company, sometimes by motorcycle and always with

colored crayons, ink, and watercolor at hand, experiences he recounts in "On the Road: Forays with Brinck Jackson."

Kenneth Helphand, another Jackson disciple, provides a twist on these road trippers' ride-and-stop method of sketching the landscape. In his essay "Motion Pictures: Drawing While Moving," he explains how he records the experience of mobility itself by drawing the fluid topography and scenery he sees from the window of a train or plane.

In "Schooled: A Lesson in Time with J. B. Jackson," filmmaker Robert Calo recalls how, as he was attempting to "capture" his subject for his documentary, Jackson was simultaneously determined to introduce him to a revelatory way of reading the landscape.

In her Place Keeper essay on Rachael Lambert Mellon's estate in Upperville, Virginia, Paula Deitz provides a profile of Jackson's diametric opposite: an aesthetically refined lover of horticulture and landscape design whose genius lay in the creation of an extraordinary garden and rare-book library. These are now being protected and developed by the Oak Spring Garden Foundation.

As always, I would like to remind our readers that the publication of *Site/Lines* is only made possible by readers who support its continued publication. For this reason we hope that you will send a contribution to the Foundation for Landscape Studies for this purpose in the enclosed envelope.

With good green wishes,



Elizabeth Barlow Rogers  
President

## On the Cover:

La Cienega Chapel, New Mexico.  
Drawing by J. B. Jackson, 1982.



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# With New Eyes: Seeing the Landscape with J. B. Jackson

## Introduction

John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1909–1996) was a perceptive and insightful interpreter of the cultural forces shaping the natural world. He wrote, illustrated, published, taught, and lectured about what he named “landscape.” It was a word that Jackson redefined. Long associated with oil paintings and formal gardens, “landscape” as Jackson reframed it encompassed the full imprint of human societies on the land. As its interpreter, he saw his task as understanding how dwellings, fields, neighborhoods, downtowns, suburbs, and roads expressed the culture and way of life of the peoples who shaped them. Jackson also gave to landscapes a fourth dimension – time. Through their evolution, landscapes were, as he wrote, “history made visible” – visible through the materiality of structures, developed land, and transportation systems.

Jackson’s principal subjects were houses, roads, fields, towns, cities, commercial buildings, and signs. To these he gave a human face by imagining the lives of those who lived in and around them. He demonstrated ways that cultural forces such as religion, technological change, and political and economic pressures gave shape to terrain and structures. He conveyed how human desires and tastes came into play, writing essays with wit as well as clarity. In 1951 he began to publish a magazine of his own creation that he titled *Landscape*. For the next seventeen years, he not only edited it but wrote for it in a wide range of voices, designed it, and drew many of its illustrations.

*Landscape* began to attract other writers and became a forum for planners, architects, and cultural geographers in and outside of the academy. With his captivating personality on the podium, Jackson built a public career as well. First he spoke at conferences and then, beginning in the late 1960s, he taught at Berkeley and Harvard, where he helped to create the field of landscape studies. Through these efforts he developed a network of think-

ers and doers. After he retired from teaching in the late 1970s, he continued to lecture through the next decade. Until his death in 1996, he wrote essays that were published in a wide variety of periodicals and anthologized in important books. His writings, university teaching, and lectures reshaped the understanding of those who read his work or heard him speak, enabling them to see everyday America in new ways.

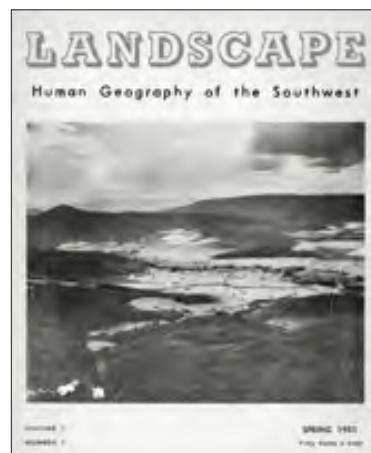
Mr. Jackson was my friend from the time I first met him in 1973. A year earlier I and my husband, Daniel Horowitz, had jointly written a review of his 1972 book *American Space: The Centennial Years, 1865–1876*. Dan and I

were then living in Washington, DC, during a research year supported by fellowships. The process of writing that review led us to the Library of Congress’s card catalog and the discovery of his magazine *Landscape*. We learned that he taught in the fall semester at Harvard.

Later that autumn, before we left the East to teach in California, we returned to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to say goodbye to friends. We also gave ourselves a farewell visit to Harvard University where we had both done our graduate

work. As we were walking across the Harvard Yard, Dan had the idea that we might meet Mr. Jackson. We located his office and knocked on the door. A resonant voice said “Come in.” A small man welcomed us into a large room in which a seminar table served as a desk. After we chatted briefly, he suggested going out for coffee. He grabbed his leather jacket and checked for cigarettes.

Once reseated at a table in a local café, Mr. Jackson did not seem small. His baritone voice was beautiful, and as he spoke it expanded to fill the space. I remember noting the way he used the words “we” and “us.” He asked about my work, which was



First issue, *Landscape*, Spring, 1951.



J. B. Jackson. Photograph by Jennifer Williams, 1981.

at that time on the history of American zoos, and conveyed to me that I was engaged in his kind of enterprise. He charged me with carrying my pursuit of landscape studies to the West. I felt elected by him, and yet I was quite conscious that he assumed I was aware of many things that I actually knew nothing about. I remember trying to explain to him that I was a historian of more limited scope – a novice – but he either wanted to have none of my excuses or pretended to misunderstand me.

It was a long visit in the café, and we walked back to his office in the late afternoon half-light. He gave me handouts that included copies of material on the balloon-frame house and the grid.

Once Dan and I settled in Claremont, California, Mr. Jackson and I began a correspondence. Receiving a letter from him was a memorable event. Each was heavy – it weighed in the hand, with the recipient’s name large in black ink on the envelope. And inside was his voice – interested, kind, and encouraging. Begun in spring 1974, our correspondence continued until his death.

Dan and I next saw Mr. Jackson when he taught a brief course at UCLA in 1978. He came to Claremont twice to lecture in the early 1980s. Accompanied now by our two children, we were invited to visit him in his home outside of Santa Fe, where we stayed for significant periods in the 1980s and 1990s. In those years we met many friends from his varied circles and got a sense of the richness of his world in

New Mexico. In January and May 1994 I traveled there alone to tape a series of conversations with him. He appointed me his literary executor.

In the mid-1990s I took it upon myself to organize a book that would contain J. B. Jackson's most important essays. I assembled a large group of advisers to help in their selection and prepared a bibliography. I wrote the book's introduction based on a full reading of his published writings, which was supplemented by library research and the conversations

recorded in 1994. *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* was published in 1997, the year after his death.

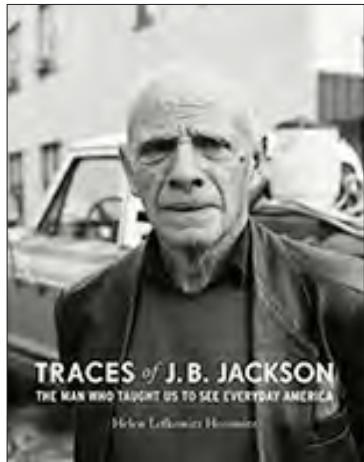
Now, after more than two decades, I have written his biography, *Traces of J. B. Jackson: The Man Who Taught Us to See Everyday America*. With its publication in January 2020, I have had my say. Thus it is not only an honor but also a great pleasure to be able, as the coeditor of this issue of *Site/Lines*, to turn to others for their recollections of

Jackson the man and their understanding of the impact he had on their lives and work.

The essays that follow allow us to see many different facets of the complex person that was J. B. Jackson: his openness to friendship; his fascination with moving though a landscape; his love of travel by motorcycle; his pleasure in new experiences; his curiosity, linked with an ability to talk to and gain information from strangers; his willingness to learn and to teach; his influence on individual lives and careers; and his intellectual legacy, both recognized and unacknowledged.

J. B. Jackson was a generative and generous human being, and it has been a delight to learn of his many gifts to others.

— Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz



### J. B. Jackson's Intellectual Legacy

When J. B. Jackson turned from Ian McHarg to speak with Louis Kahn at the 1958 University of Pennsylvania conference on urban design – flanked by the likes of Lewis Mumford, Catherine Bauer, Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, and I. M. Pei – Grady Clay, who was taking a group photo, captured the moment: Jackson had arrived at the center of the American discourse on urbanism, landscape, and geography. After projecting himself onto a national stage through his magazine *Landscape*, which he founded in 1951 and edited until 1967, Jackson taught alternate semesters at Berkeley and Harvard from 1966 to 1977; he then continued to proselytize his vision for another twenty years in quasi retirement as an essayist and conference keynote speaker.

Jackson, of course, is best known for popularizing the concept of the cultural landscape: the notion that interactions between humans and nature produce environments that are as reflective of history and culture – and as susceptible to analysis – as literature, painting, and architecture. That concept, initiated in the United States by Carl Sauer in the 1920s and disseminated by his followers in the so-called Berkeley School, long dominated the humanistic side of academic geography. Its focus on rural and village landscapes implicitly held up these preindustrial settings as coherent alternatives to the seeming jumble of the modern world. Jackson's contribution was to extend the concept not only to urban features but also to anything new in the landscape: skid rows and construction sites, triple-decker apartments and teenagers cruising the strip.

By applying the cultural-landscape concept to the entire human-made environment, Jackson brought attention to overlooked and denigrated vernacular environments. His nonjudgmental stance made him open and sympathetic to the messy everyday world that members of the City Beautiful movement and, later, modernist planners sought to reform. In historic-preservation terms, he favored an "Anti-Srape" approach, one that glories in the layers of changes visible in historic buildings, rather than a "Scrape" removal of those layers to restore a building to its (often speculative) original appearance. This acceptance of the complexity of history made him skeptical not just of the Scrape inclination in the U.S. historic-preservation movement but also of the parallel practice in the environmental movement to remove human traces from wilderness reserves, the better to uphold an

imagined dichotomy between man and nature. Similarly, his understanding of the mixed-use buildings and multipurpose spaces of vernacular and urban environments led him to question the wisdom of the monofunctional infrastructure and single-use zoning of the post-World War II era.

Jackson's eloquent, plainspoken essays, free of academic jargon and footnotes, inspired some academics to reach beyond their own discipline by writing for an interested general audience, but others discounted them as undertheorized and unsubstantiated attempts to popularize the study of cultural landscape. Jackson's inquisitive, nonspecialist stance and the wide-ranging mix of contributors he attracted to *Landscape* similarly encouraged multiple and interdisciplinary approaches. Yet the psychology of human territoriality – the development and defense of resources for one's department or organization, like the founding of one's identity and career on professional expertise – tended, then as now, to reinforce academic silos.

Jackson was one of a generation of intellectuals who helped spatialize the study of history and culture. They included not only his peers at the 1958 urban design conference but also contributors to *Landscape* such as Edward T. Hall, Fred Kniffen, David Lowenthal, Herbert Gans, Garrett Eckbo, Yi-Fu Tuan, Denise Scott Brown, Peirce Lewis, and Lawrence Halprin. Members of the succeeding generation, who matured after 1970, integrated Jackson's insights into their thinking and often cited him as a touchstone for their work. Yet more recently – say, beginning in the 1990s – scholars have often engaged these concepts through the intermediate generation's work, apparently unaware of Jackson himself (or at least without citing him). Such are the dynamics of academic influence, colored by our modern penchant for novelty: the members of each generation absorb the work of earlier generations, only to downplay the influence of their predecessors in the interest of defining new questions and theories that might set them apart from what came before.

More specific generational dynamics have also colored the reception of Jackson's work. Jackson famously used the confiding "we" as a rhetorical device to enlist readers in his cultural-landscape appreciation campaign. In the 1950s his audience was overwhelmingly white, male, and professional. "We have long held that [insert unexamined elite assumption]," Jackson might write, "but we would do well

to also consider [insert a fresh populist insight]." By the late 1960s, the anti-Vietnam War movement and the hippie counterculture typified a new antiauthoritarian zeitgeist. And yet Jackson's valorization of the vernacular resonated with his students at Berkeley and Harvard because it offered an alternative to establishment cultural hierarchies. After 2000, however, there was an explosion in the numbers of female, Hispanic, and Native American students at the school of architecture where I teach, and some of them found the patrician tone of Jackson's essays off-putting; they did not see themselves as part of his "we." Schooled in race, class, and gender analysis, these students initially dismissed him as part of a white, male elite; only through discussions did they come to understand the role he had played in bringing serious, respectful attention to vernacular cultures.

How did these dynamics play out after 1970 in the fields most influenced by Jackson and his intellectual cohort? And what has been the fate of his ideas since his death in 1996?

Beginning in the late 1960s, on the heels of the civil rights movement, the so-called New Social History sought to tell the stories of formerly overlooked groups. The movement deployed oral history and the study of material culture, vernacular architecture, and cultural landscape to fill gaps in the written records, which were dominated by the narratives of economic, political, and academic elites. A new generation of textbooks that contextualized the earlier emphasis on the history of the architecture profession with cultural-landscape,

vernacular, and urban design analysis included Vincent Scully's *American Architecture and Urbanism* (1969), Spiro Kostof's *A History of Architecture: Setting and Rituals* (1985), Dell Upton's *Architecture in America* (1998), and Elizabeth Barlow Rogers' *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History* (2001). All the authors knew Jackson's work; Kostof and Rogers discussed their conceptions for their books with him.

This democratization impacted historic preservation as well. The prevailing preservation paradigm was still based on experience with monumental buildings such as Mount Vernon or the Capitol at Colonial Williamsburg. But then entire historic districts began to be registered, inherently embodying the history of many groups. In addition, those conducting comprehensive field surveys began to think about how to expand on the preservation of static buildings to encompass ever-changing cultural landscapes. As historic-building surveys geared up across the country during the years between the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the national bicentennial of 1976, "cultural landscape" became a conceptual catchphrase in the academic programs from which most preservationists were then drawn: architecture, planning, landscape architecture, history, and American studies (a multidisciplinary undertaking sympathetic to Jackson's generalist stance). First, landscape architect Robert Melnick codified the practice of reading the cultural landscape – which he had learned from the writings of Jackson, Donald Meinig, and Peirce Lewis – into a field-survey methodology in a 1984 National Park Service (NPS) report. Next, Linda McClelland,

Timothy Keller, Genevieve Keller, and Melnick refined this in a National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes* (1989), which has remained the standard for the survey and nomination of landscapes, rural and otherwise.

Meanwhile, better-documented professionally designed landscapes – parks, gardens, and estates – now were seen as types of cultural landscapes also, and Charles Birnbaum and others developed new techniques for their study and preservation. Birnbaum systematized these in the NPS Preservation Brief *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Cultural Landscapes* (1994). He thereby established the Cultural Landscape Report as a complement to the already existing Historic Structure Report. Combined, these two approaches offer a format for the systematic documentation, analysis, and preservation planning for landscapes and buildings. With the proliferation of dedicated historic-preservation programs at universities, the Cultural Landscape Report has become a powerful, orthodox methodology, used year after year, especially by the National Park Service, to produce an important body of substantial landscape research. Likewise, such organizations as the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation, Cultural Landscape Foundation, and Foundation for Landscape Studies foster the appreciation and preservation of vernacular and designed landscapes.

A similar story could be told about how the environmental movement catalyzed the rise of environmental history in the

1958 Conference on Urban Design Criticism organized by the University of Pennsylvania, left to right: William Wheaton, Lewis Mumford, Ian McHarg, J. B. Jackson, David A. Crane, Louis I. Kahn, G. Holmes Perkins, Arthur Holden, unidentified, Catherine Bauer Wurster, Leslie Cheek, Mary Barnes, Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, Gordon Stephenson, Nanine Clay, and I. M. Pei. Photo by Grady Clay, from *Architecture*, January, 1959. Courtesy of the Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.



1970s. In keeping with Jackson's critique that the environmental movement fostered a false dichotomy between nature and humans, such historians as William Cronon, Carolyn Merchant, Donald Worster, and Richard White examined both the impacts of humans on nature and the presence of nature in cities. While most of this scholarship foregrounds ecological themes, cultural-landscape antecedents inform such classics as *Nature's Metropolis* (1991) by Cronon and *Seeing Nature Through Gender* (2003), a collection of essays edited by Virginia Scharff. Cultural-landscape thinking has also affected environmental policy directly. The Nature Conservancy, taking a more conventional ecological approach, supports scientific research and eco-regional planning for biodiversity by favoring the conservation of reputedly natural tracts outside of cities. In contrast, the Trust for Public Lands' embrace of cultural-landscape concepts in the 1990s sent it in a more urban direction (an initiative fostered by its long-time board member Cronon). These concepts helped the committed environmentalists of the trust to better appreciate the ubiquity of human interventions in nature, to want to conserve natural landscapes within urban areas, and, in recent years, to advocate for parks within walking distance of all Americans.

Finally, Jackson played an important role in the evolution of 20th-century geography. While "cultural landscape" had been a key term since Carl Sauer introduced it in the 1920s, many of the quantitative geographers who dominated the field during the 1950s and 60s were interested primarily in economic and resource development. They rejected Sauer's conception as too vague to be of use, preferring to think instead in positivistic terms of area and space (as in spatial science). But Jackson's expanded vision of landscape, which embraced contemporary and urban landscapes as well as lived human experience, was instrumental in the resurgence of humanistic geography in the 1970s and 80s. And yet he is sometimes omitted from the recounting of this period in academic geography in favor of Sauer and the Berkeley School; Peirce Lewis and Donald Meinig, with their readings of historical landscapes; and Yi Fu Tuan and David Lowen-



J. B. Jackson meeting informally with graduate students following a lecture at the University of California, Berkeley. Photograph by Jennifer Williams, 1981.

class struggle, but they, too, conceived social relations in spatial terms. Human-built spaces, they argued, both manifest and reinforce social hierarchies. Starting in the

mid-1970s, such theorists as Michel Foucault, David Harvey, Doreen Massey, and Setha Low spoke not of the cultural landscape but of social space. In Henri Lefebvre's influential *La Production de l'espace* (1974, with an English translation in 1991), the titular term "production of space" referred to the creation of public spaces by dominant cultural, economic, and political forces. Such physical settings – interacting with everyday activities and celebrations, as well as with the more ephemeral webs of memory and myth – shape a community's evolving and often contested identity in what Lefebvre termed the Social Production of Space (and which I prefer to call the Social Construction of Place).

If space has been considered a neutral, even scientific term, American architects and planners in the 1960s instead began to use the more social and humanistic term "place." (Laurie Olin examines Jackson's impact on the field of landscape architecture elsewhere in this issue.) Faculty and students of Sauer's geography department at Berkeley continued to produce compelling cultural-landscape analyses, but now a new Berkeley School, one focused on place-making, emerged in the university's College of Environmental Design. Its originators and followers included such designers and scholars as Charles Moore, Christopher Alexander, Allan Jacobs, Clare Cooper Marcus, Dolores Hayden, Spiro Kostoff, Marc Treib, and Paul Groth – leavened in the 1960s and 70s by their visiting colleague, J. B. Jackson.

On an early visit to the campus in 1962, for instance, Jackson encouraged Berkeley architecture faculty Donlyn Lyndon, Charles Moore, Sim Van der Ryn, and Patrick J. Quinn to articulate their alternatives to modernist design in an article for *Landscape*, "Toward Making Places." And whereas contemporary traffic engineers designed roads and streets solely to move vehicles, Jackson called attention to their multiple roles in social, commercial, and civic life. Later, Allan Jacobs documented this complex history in *Great Streets* (1995), providing precedents for a return to the design of multifunctional infrastructure. Working with a series of collaborators, Clare Cooper Marcus emphasized close field observations and post-occupancy evaluations in such works as *People Places*:

thal, with their studies of environmental perception. Or he is cast as an outsider to the field – an architecture critic or landscape architect – just as those in other disciplines similarly misidentified him as a cultural geographer. Don Mitchell, who infused critical social theory into cultural landscape studies with his influential book *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (1996), omits Jackson entirely from the text and bibliography of his *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (2000), consigning him instead to a single brief footnote (an ironically pedantic fate for a writer who himself shunned footnotes).

As British social historian Raymond Williams teaches us in his 1976 book *Keywords*, the evolution of certain terms reflects our changing ways of conceiving and talking about society and culture. Over the last fifty years, as just recounted, Jackson's terms "vernacular" and "cultural landscape" were central to geography, social and environmental history, and historic preservation. But to trace the spatially grounded study of history and culture in other fields during this period we must also listen for newer vocabularies: "space" and "social space," "place" and "place making," "critical regionalism," "everyday urbanism," and "landscape infrastructure." These terms were meant to avoid the romantic, preindustrial coloring of "vernacular cultural landscape," instead highlighting new concerns and interpretive frameworks.

The politically engaged practitioners of critical social theory – who increasingly foregrounded the social construction of race, class, and gender identities – often faulted Jackson for having given inadequate attention to the social dialectics of

*Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space* (1998). Meanwhile Dolores Hayden's *The Power of Place* (1995) mobilized historic preservation, oral history, and public art in support of often-overlooked urban subcultures. This socially engaged design discourse remains vibrant in the pages of *Places* magazine (founded at MIT and Berkeley in 1983) and at the conferences and in the publications sponsored by the associated Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA).

In a similar vein, John Chase, Margaret Crawford, and John Kaliski, in their 1999 book *Everyday Urbanism*, focus on the ad hoc social and commercial activities that occur in leftover spaces – the sort of ephemeral vernacular economy that Jackson relished. How, they ask, might designers and planners foster such spontaneous uses? In *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change* (2015) and a companion website, Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia disseminate imaginative techniques developed by far-flung grassroots organizations. Reflecting the DIY spirit of economically disenfranchised youth, which intensified in the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2008, the Tactical Urbanism movement has deployed low-cost guerrilla interventions to turn portions of streets into temporary parks and bike lanes, and parking lots into weekly markets. Both Everyday and Tactical Urbanists largely content themselves with small-scale redesign tweaks of existing cities.

More ambitious has been the New Urbanism movement, which since 1992 has sought alternatives to suburbia – not only to its social fragmentation but also to its inefficient consumption of fossil fuel and agricultural lands. In attempting to reform American planning and development practices, its followers have studied and sought to update the sort of higher-density, mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented development that prevailed before the rise of the automobile in the 1920s. Like Everyday and Tactical Urbanists, they draw inspiration from the fine-grained fabric of traditional cities, which provided an armature for ma-and-pa entrepreneurialism. While Jackson had fostered an awareness of the multifunctional character of pre-automobile settlements as early as the 1950s, many New Urbanists found his non-judgmental, even celebratory interest in mobile homes, suburbia, and the commercial strip suspect. For both the Everyday and New Urbanist, Jane Jacobs with her activist advocacy of traditional urbanism is a less ambiguous intellectual ancestor than Jackson.

The recent vogue for J. B. Jackson in France demonstrates that his work can find renewed relevance in times, dis-

plines, and places where people take up similar questions. A French translation of his 1984 *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* appeared in 2003, at a time when Parisian architect-urbanists and landscape architects were seeking alternatives to what they saw as the failed tower-in-the-garden model advocated by the French modernist Le Corbusier. On one hand, they drew inspiration from the traditional urbanism of nineteenth-century Paris; on the other, they swam in the international currents of Ecological Urbanism and Landscape Infrastructure design. This was manifested in such publications as Bart Johnson and Kristina Hill's *Ecology and Design* (2001), whose authors counseled their readers to learn to read the cultural landscape from Jackson and argued that "as designers, we must train ourselves to see urban infrastructure as an important part of the vernacular landscape."

Starting in the mid-1980s the leading French landscape architect, Giles Clément, advanced related, "eco-urban" design theories. To establish themselves, French intellectuals and designers are given to promulgating grand theories: thus Clément's theory of the "Third Landscape." According to this paradigm, the first landscape is nature, the second is landscape as shaped by humans, and the third includes marginal, never-developed lands such as swamps as well as industrial brownfields and the leftover edges of roads and railroad embankments – the spaces where one finds greater biodiversity than in monocultural managed forests and farmlands. Clément's related theory of the "Moving Landscape" draws design inspiration from nature's reclamation of these disturbed sites where plants can migrate, reseed themselves, and spread from year to year. His resulting design practice of seeding new parks (and portions of existing parks) and then guiding/cooperating with natural processes replaces centuries-old French geometric formalism with a scruffy naturalism – one that serendipitously aligns with reduced government-maintenance budgets under globalization.

In this French milieu, Jackson is seen as the grand theorist of "The Vernacular Cultural Landscape"; his wide-ranging essays not only complement Clément's theories but suggest possibilities for rereading the entire French landscape. He has therefore become a topic for Ph.D. dissertations, conferences, and a special issue of the leading French landscape journal *Les carnets du paysage* (2016). Likewise, Jackson and Clément's work provided the intellectual catalyst for a

multiyear, team-research initiative at the National School of Architecture at Paris-Belleville and the National Landscape School at Versailles. The project yielded companion French and English volumes titled in English *Photoscapes: The Nexus between Photography and Landscape Design* (2019), which were edited by Frédéric Pousin. A photographic exhibition in Montpellier and its accompanying, bilingual catalogue edited by Jordi Ballesta and Camille Fallet, *Notes on Asphalt: A Mobile and Precarious America, 1950–1990* (2017), extended this interest beyond Jackson to include the field photography of Allan Jacobs, David Lowenthal, Donald Appleyard, Chester Liebs, and Richard Longstreth – an indication of the breadth of materials becoming available in research archives and on websites.

In the United States, articles and reviews of books in the spirit of J. B. Jackson continue to appear regularly in the pages of *Places* magazine, *Buildings and Landscapes*, *Landscape Journal*, *Site/Lines*, and *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, even though Jackson is often not mentioned. Selections of his writing are included in thematic readers published by Routledge. But while his 1952 appreciation of courthouse towns, "The Almost Perfect Town," remained in the fifth edition of *The City Reader* (2011) in the section on Urban Space, it is being replaced in the sixth edition (2020) by Manuel Castells' "Space of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age." Always alert to changing cultural currents, Jackson would have welcomed this interest in the impact of the digital revolution, and in the challenges of sustainability, resilience, and global climate change, mass migration and tourism, squatter towns and one-day cruise ship dockings, and other manifestations of globalization.

Francophone scholars Jordi Ballesta, Bruno Notteboom, and Frédéric Pousin, and such Americans as Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Paul Groth, George Thompson, Timothy Davis, Jeffrey Blankenship, and the contributors to this issue of *Site/Lines* have begun a historical evaluation of Jackson and his intellectual comrades. Future generations will forget, rediscover, and make their own interpretations and uses of his ideas. And certainly Jackson's humanistic insights, whether acknowledged or not, will continue to resurface in design, planning, and historic preservation – perhaps even in the messy, vital, evolving, vernacular appearance and use of the cultural landscape that he loved. – Chris Wilson

## J. B. Jackson and Landscape Architects

finally met J. B. Jackson when he gave a lecture to a packed house of rapt students and faculty at the University of Pennsylvania in the mid-seventies. It was an enchanting display of intellect, observation, and scholarship, as well as the use of language to explain and persuade. The content of the lecture ranged from Jackson's experiences in military reconnaissance and the ways in which flight and aerial photography had altered our perceptions to an appreciation of the quotidian in the American landscape, which he implied went largely unnoticed by laymen and designers alike. It wasn't simply a geography lecture and wasn't really an anti-design or anti-high art lecture; it was a call to the audience to go out into the world and really *look* at it and learn about the forces at work on the landscape, both historically and today. It was pure J. B. Jackson, as I recognized, because by then I'd been following his writing for fifteen years.

Articulate and multilingual, Jackson was a public intellectual who happened to have focused his genius upon the landscape. He was tanned, short in stature, but trim and solid-looking with penetrating eyes – a cross between Telly Savalas's Kojak and Eric von Stronheim, with a touch of Saul Steinberg, whose views of America also had an impact upon me. Often on the move, Jackson somehow managed to be everywhere – at Harvard, at Berkeley, in Santa Fe, and in Europe, riding across the prairie, disappearing and reappearing like the Cheshire Cat. His presence and influence seemed ubiquitous, like the landscape itself, for those who were paying attention.

Jackson's influence, which was to be substantial, began quietly in 1951, when he brought out the debut issue of *Landscape*. There was nothing remotely like it published anywhere in the country. At the time library shelves at prominent architectural schools were well stocked with glossy magazines devoted to the latest contemporary work, often by renowned personalities. Students and practitioners alike eagerly perused *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, and *Progressive Architecture*, all published in New York; *Arts and Architecture*, published in Los Angeles; *Architecture Review* from England, *Domus* and *Casabella* from Italy, and *Shinkenchiku* from Japan. And then suddenly here was

an odd little journal that was completely different. Simply but elegantly designed with clean, black-and-white layouts, it contained articles about grain elevators, highways, ancestral patterns of land ownership in Europe and the Midwest, native American dwellings, and the cumulative effect of rural electrification. The majority of these articles were written by Jackson himself and illustrated with his own spare drawings and excellent photographs. Most revolutionary for design students, though, was the journal's suggestion that our entire landscape was comprised of a set of interrelated cultural actions. It might seem haphazard, or somehow to be the result simply of random nature, but in fact many aspects of its appearance had significance, logic, and meaning.

J. B. Jackson, who had been born in 1909, was an unusual figure. After a worldly upbringing that included an education in Europe as well as America, he had a sustained admiration for baroque architecture in his youth. During World War II he developed a cultural geographer's view through direct experience of aerial travel, reconnaissance, mapping, and warfare.

By 1950 he had eschewed the worlds of high art and iconic architecture, designed gardens, and persons associated with the upper-class social sphere into which he had been born, and had settled in the desert southwest of New Mexico, where he launched his journal. Unlike other design magazines, *Landscape* contained virtually no designs by contemporary practitioners. Instead Jackson presented vernacular and industrial structures commonly found across rural America:

farmsteads, silos, small towns and their main streets, stores, fishing docks, country lanes with rural power lines, pueblos, trailer parks, and gas stations.

Like James Agee in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941, reissued in 1961), with its photographs by Walker Evans, and Dorothea Lange in her Works Progress Administration images, Jackson argued for the dignity and logic of the unobtrusive and ordinary things that made up a large portion of the American landscape. While not overtly attacking contemporary architects and professionals, he implied that people were looking for beauty and inspiration in the wrong places and that commonly accepted histories of landscape and architecture were woefully oblivious of our surroundings – physically, economically, and aesthetically.

This perspective on the history of the land in America and Western Europe was in striking contrast to others offered by surveys at the time, whether Sigfried Giedion's heady paean to modernism, *Space, Time, and Architecture* (1941), together with his courses at MIT and Harvard, or Sir Banister Fletcher's *A History of Architecture* (1896), with its litany of buildings, monuments, names, dates, styles, plans, and photos of structures dating from classical antiquity to the twentieth century, which we were still using in my classes at the University of Washington in the late 1950s.

*Landscape* seemed to be more about us and life as it was lived in the United States. It certainly didn't tell students

Early 19th-century bank barn and outbuildings on Steiger family farm near Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, 1997. All drawings by Laurie Olin.



or faculty what to draw or design but somehow seemed germane to rethinking the enterprise of architecture, development, and the creation of community – a topic of huge importance as suburban America exploded after the Korean War.

The era of the publication of *Landscape* under Jackson's editorship (1951–1968) was a period of reevaluation of many cultural norms, at least among college students and their almost equally young professors. World War II and the Korean War were over. The anticommunist hysteria of the McCarthy era was winding down, but the Cold War and its chilling effects had led to a distrust of authorities and received wisdom. The Civil Rights movement added to

these tensions. A significant number of young people had become skeptical of government and its representatives, from national figures to local planners and developers. The fact that the FBI wanted to know all about my college roommate and a number of my friends didn't sit well with me, just as it didn't with thousands of other students. Anti-establishment satire blossomed in film, television, radio, magazines, and even comic books.

This resistance to the status quo spread into urban and environmental affairs. *The Airconditioned Nightmare* (1945), a shrill work by Henry Miller on his return to America from an expatriate life in Europe, and Alan Ginsburg's monumental poem *Howl* (1956) expressed the anguish of many of my generation. We were awash in bland commercial architecture, sprawling suburbs, monotonous cheap construction, and ugly malls filled with shoddy, unnecessary merchandise and surrounded by acres of parking lots. An entire generation of students and young designers became radicalized when "urban renewal" and the Interstate Highway System began smashing through most of America's major cities, creating



Dairy cattle behind the ha-ha on the 18th-century estate Buscot Park in Oxfordshire, England, as seen from the house. Drawn in the summer of 1970.

great swaths of devastation. Books such as *Native Genius in Anonymous Architecture* (1957) by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) by Jane Jacobs, *Silent Spring* (1964) by Rachel Carson, Peter Blake's *God's Own Junkyard* (1964), and the simultaneous exhibition *Architecture Without Architects* at the Museum of Modern Art, curated by Bernard Rudofsky, were helpful responses to this widespread malaise. The magazine *Landscape* was another.

At the University of Washington School of Architecture and Urban

Planning, where I was enrolled, landscape architect Richard Haag, who had joined the faculty in 1958, asked our librarian to add *Landscape* to the current subscriptions, and soon after that my peers and I were all eagerly reading it. While trying to sort through images of Italian Renaissance *palazzi* and lists of French classical designers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, it was something of a relief to find an article about the evolution of the balloon-frame house and its Western migration, since most of us had either lived in one or were learning how to build one. In this way Jackson's influence quickly became apparent.

In my third-year studio, I changed a design I was developing for a Quaker meeting house from one that was heavily influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park-era Prairie Style to one inspired by Shaker and Pennsylvania Dutch barns. Several other students in the class followed my lead. Our faculty was upset by what it saw as a willful antidesign development. In a subsequent studio, some of us working together

produced a civic-center scheme based upon our understanding of traditional American county-courthouse ensembles of commercial and government buildings and public space – groupings that had been explored in several articles in *Landscape*. The American landscape as presented by Jackson and a handful of others seemed to be reaffirming a particular set of democratic, aesthetic, Jacksonian (Andrew, that is) social and even spiritual values without resorting to Marxism. We saw instead that architecture and landscape design could respond to fundamental issues of community and pragmatism and to the *genius loci*. It could be elegant, accessible, and humble.

One particular essay by Jackson that I read during my last year of architecture school entitled "The Imitation of Nature" has stayed with me to this day. In it he wrote:

*As a man-made environment every city has three functions to fulfill: it must be a just and efficient social institution; it must be a biologically wholesome habitat; and it must be a continuously satisfying aesthetic-sensory experience. Up to the present we have given all thought to the first of these. There are signs that the second will receive its due attention before long; for it is already outside the city gates. But the third will be realized only when we ourselves are enlightened; when we learn once again to see nature in its entirety; not as a remote object to be worshipped or ignored as it suits us, but as part of ourselves.*

He went on to argue (correctly in my view, both then and now) that one can't and shouldn't attempt to imitate nature directly, but rather aspire to bring to cities and landscape design those aspects of nature that most stimulate and move us and that contribute to mental and physical health: water, light, air, plants, movement, and colors. What better agenda, I thought?

For the first seventeen years of *Landscape*, most students and professionals encountered Jackson much as I had: through his writing. Then, in the tumultuous year of 1968, Jackson turned over the editorship of *Landscape* to Robert Riley and others at the University of New Mexico and began lecturing at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design and the University of California's School of Environmental Design at Berkeley. The March on the Pentagon had occurred the year before, Woodstock took place that summer, and Vietnam protests and urban riots were ongoing. It was at this time and throughout the turbulent decade to come that Jackson began shuttling between these two schools, lecturing about the cultural landscape.

A public intellectual rather than an academic, Jackson maintained his distance from institutional culture, declining a full-time (tenure-track) appointment and refusing to lecture in Robinson or Gund Halls at Harvard, the two buildings where the Graduate School of Design was located. Instead, he offered undergraduates majoring in the arts and sciences classes in Carpenter Center – a pointedly anti-establishment arts-and-science facility designed by Le Corbusier on the noticeably red-brick campus. Nevertheless, the students and faculty of the design schools quickly discovered him and his message. In the arcane worlds of Cambridge and Berkeley, where cross-registration is a norm, and during a period when many openly flouted traditional disciplinary boundaries, graduate design students flocked to his classes.

At Harvard and Berkeley, Jackson presented a view of landscape and its history to a generation of students in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, and city planning that was consonant with the times – one that looked intently at the broader cultural landscape rather than at individual monuments and works of art. Even so, he did not share the sentimental, cozy, or romanticized views of culture or nature that were widely embraced by the denizens of Haight-Ashbury or the hippies living on back-to-nature communes. As a veteran of World War II's European campaign, his worldview was entirely different.

An intellectual and a scholar, Jackson had a good working knowledge of the languages, literature, and architecture of France and Germany as well as expertise in social science and geography; his free-ranging curiosity led him to become what might be thought of as both a cultural geographer and landscape historian. His lectures were well constructed, entertaining, and memorable. His slides were first-rate. But what he knew about the landscape was derived not only from original scholarship, patient inquiry, and reading in libraries and archives across Europe and America but also from wide and deep first-hand experience during his travels. His trips around the United States were legendary, and his physical presence added to his Pied Piper mystique. At times evoking Jean Genet or Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*, Jackson often appeared in a black leather jacket. He had the motorcycle to go with it, which he loved to ride back and forth across the country – always examining his surroundings carefully as he did so. He enchanted my generation.

Jackson's influence widened beyond his own classroom as one year's group of design students after another set off for professional practice in the United States, Canada, Mexico,

Sketch made of the city hall in Tombstone, Arizona, during my last year of architecture school, 1960.

Latin America, and Europe. His ideas continued to spread even after his semi-retirement in the late seventies. Students of architecture and landscape architecture at Harvard, MIT, Berkeley, and the University of New Mexico, as well as at other schools where he occasionally lectured, became teachers, writers, and editors themselves, in turn influencing another generation of students. Colleagues in academia whom I have known personally who knew or were influenced by Jackson include Bob Riley (originally at the University of New Mexico) and Terry Harness at the University of Illinois; Marc Treib, Allan Jacobs, Donlyn Lyndon (editor of *Places* magazine), Randy Hester and Linda Jewell at the University of California Berkeley; Jerry Diethelm and Kenneth Helphand at the University of Oregon; Richard Haag, Frank James, Don Sakuma, and Grant Jones at the University of Washington; John Stilgoe and Carl Steinitz at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and Peter Walker there and at Berkeley; Robert Hanna and Carol Franklin at the University of Pennsylvania; Kevin Lynch and Anne Spirn at MIT; Baker Morrow (founder of the Historic Landscape System for the State of New Mexico and director of the New Mexico Registry of Historic Landscapes) and Chris Wilson at the University of New Mexico; Erv Zube at the University of Massachusetts; Richard Hawks at Cornell; Jack Williams at Auburn University; and Peter Jacobs at the Université de Montréal. And then there is an army of others who weren't his students but were nevertheless profoundly changed by his essays and magazine. Among these are Reuben Rainey and Warren Byrd at the University of Virginia; Grady Clay, who edited the magazine *Landscape Architecture*; Elen Deming,



at North Carolina State University, who served as editor of *Landscape Journal* from 2002 to 2009; Peirce Lewis, formerly at Penn State; Charles Birnbaum, president of the Cultural Landscape Foundation; Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, president of the Foundation for Landscape Studies; Patricia O'Donnell, principal of Heritage Landscapes – and so many others. The list goes on, as Jackson's concept of the cultural landscape and its value continues to disseminate throughout the world.

J. B. Jackson's thinking broadened the study of landscape architecture, expanding a discipline with a narrow art-historical focus into one that embraced cultural geography, including the management and interpretation of cultural landscapes. In the era immediately following World War II, most plans for managing and preserving state and national parks had been inspired by historic gardens, broad concepts of natural history, or contemporary concerns such as automobile circulation. Meanwhile National Park Service (NPS) funding for the documentation of historic structures had ended in 1941. In 1956 a decision was made to reinvigorate and expand the facilities and services of the NPS in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the park system with a ten-year improvement campaign dubbed Mission 66. In part this was a response to the development of the national highway

system, which increased the accessibility of parks throughout the country. Large portions of the population were now mobile, and interested in traveling to parks in all regions of the nation.

Jackson's thinking about historic human habitation and land use proved central to Mission 66's mandate as the NPS reconsidered the educational potential of parks. Thomas Vint, the NPS director of design and construction, and his young staff envisioned a panoply of visitor centers which would provide information on not only a region's natural history or historic battles but also on the people who had made it their home: the dwellings, agricultural and grazing practices, and arts and crafts that combined to produce the rich landscapes now visited by their successors.

During this same period, as the fifties gave way to the sixties, the most obvious inspirations for contemporary and avant-garde landscape design in the United States were very different, consisting mostly of modern abstract painting and Edo-period Japanese design. And yet Jackson's cultural, regional, and ecological interests began to filter into the approaches of a number of designers. In recent decades, an abiding interest in regional and vernacular materials – often combined with an interest in the use of native plants, agricultural forms, and practices – has entered into the work of landscape architects and architects around the country. Although this aspect of their work has not been much publicized or discussed, projects of remarkable subtlety and beauty have resulted, such as Harbor Town, at Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina (1969), by Robert Marvin, and Pine Island Plantation in North Carolina, by Joe Porter and Don Ensign (1972), as well

as the remaking of Paris Pike in Kentucky (1993–2003) and the design of U.S. 93 through Montana by Jones and Jones of Seattle (2000–2008), the firm which also produced plans for the preservation and management of the Nooksack River in Washington and the Susitna River in Alaska (both 1975).

One of the most famous projects exhibiting Jackson's (previously unremarked-upon) influence is the Sea Ranch, north of San Francisco, planned and designed by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin with architects Moore Turnbull Lyndon Whitaker and Joseph Esherick & Associates (1963). Its careful planning and innovative architectural design not only retained the open pastures and hedgerows of the sheep ranch that had formerly occupied the site but also evoked the structures of the pioneer ranches and mines of the region.

Other notable Western examples of Jackson's influence are a number of early projects by Antoine Predock in Albuquerque and those of Design Workshop in Aspen, Denver, and Santa Fe. Predock's award-winning La Luz residential development overlooking the Rio Grande is a dramatic demonstration of how one can produce a thoroughly modern project that is clearly inspired by regional forms – in this case Pueblo

and Spanish colonial plans and structures.

Similarly, at Edward Larrabee Barnes Associates in New York, where I worked in the 1960s, a number of the projects handled by the office were influenced by vernacular buildings. The Haystack and Wye Island camps and notable residential works such as the Heckscher cottages were derived from the wooden Cape Cod house and its even more humble relative, the half-Cape, while the John and Sage Cowles compound in Wayzata, Minnesota, was openly reminiscent of Midwestern agricultural structures, and Barnes's U.S. consulate in Tabriz, Iran, was derived from masonry structures of the region.

For me, Jackson's focus on the vernacular architecture and landscape development of America and the western world validated a nascent fascination. In my early twenties I began filling sketchbooks with drawings of rural buildings and small-town main streets, barns and houses and stores and vehicles – often against the backdrop of the natural landscape. By the time I opened an office with Robert Hanna in Philadelphia in 1976, I had crossed the country by car, bus, and air several times; I had also spent two years in continental Europe and England drawing and studying people in their places: churches and squares, chateaux and farmhouses, vineyards and fields.

This evolving preoccupation with agricultural landscapes and vernacular village and town planning was further nourished by my immersion in Jackson's writings, which in turn influenced our design work at the firm. Between 1976 and 1990 Hanna/Olin produced corporate facilities and private estates in the Midwest and along the Atlantic Seaboard that employed traditional American agricultural organizational strategies and incorporated crops, orchards, hedgerows, ponds, lanes, walls, and traditional fences. At the same time, while teaching at Penn, I wrote a book about the English landscape and the history of its ecology, agriculture, and associated architecture.

In 1955 when Dumbarton Oaks sponsored a colloquium on regionalism in American landscape architecture and invited me to participate, the importance of understanding the nature of cultural landscapes had been fully established, and our profession as practiced in this country had matured into a truly American art. I believe that J. B. Jackson's writings and teachings were an integral part of that evolution – just as they had been in my own. – Laurie Olin



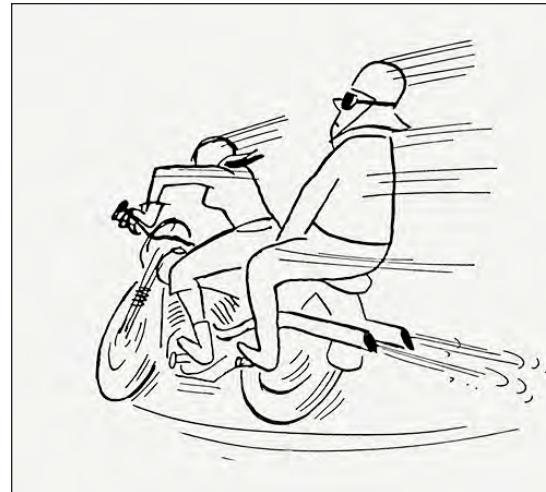
## On the Road: Forays with Brinck Jackson

met Brinck Jackson in 1969, the first year he taught at Harvard, when I was just starting a master's in architecture degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. The next year my wife and I volunteered for VISTA in El Paso, Texas, not far from Brinck's home base in La Cienega, New Mexico. Brinck invited us to come see him, and that first year we made three visits. When I subsequently returned to the Graduate School of Design, I became his teaching assistant. Over time we developed a friendship based on exploring the American landscape and discussing what we saw on our road trips together. It was a friendship that lasted thirty years.

Traveling shaped much of what was distinctive about Brinck's view of the world. In his essays he invariably conveyed the feeling that he was taking you on a journey – one that involved observation, exploration, and discovery. He was fascinated by roads, and spoke and wrote about "odology," the term he gave to their study. What was the character of a road? What lay along its margins, and where did it lead? And how did it affect the way one moved and saw and encountered others along the way? His writing and editing in *Landscape* was analogous to the way he traveled. Every essay was a new adventure: an invitation to see things in a new light.

Although Brinck liked to travel by motorcycle – always a BMW 650 – initially we traveled by car. When he bought a new BMW in 1973, however, he decided to keep the old one; suddenly there was a bike for me to ride as well. This gave us a chance to ride together for three years. Then for the next twenty-three years we went back to traveling by car. As our sketching trips became longer and frequently took place in the fall, we both found car travel less fatiguing; it also allowed for shared observations and commentary.

In Brinck's *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, he described "the vernacular" in a very particular and personal way. Architects at the time were interested in how regional building methods led to a clear-cut, orderly, traditional house style, such as the New England farmhouse. For Brinck, on the other hand, the vernacular could be found in the transitory house. For example, he was fascinated by how the mobile home had become both standardized and individualized: fixed, not mobile, and modified with canopies, outbuildings, and decks. He had a frontier, outlaw spirit and looked for that in vernacular forms. The vernacular was interesting to



A humorous sketch by J. B. Jackson, c. 1957. In "The Abstract World of the Hot-Rodder" Jackson wrote of such modes of travel, "To the perceptive individual there can be an almost mystical quality to the experience; his identity seems for the moment to be transmuted."

Brinck less for its solidity than for its revelations of contingency. It stood apart from the establishment and yet had its own very particular sense of order. This tension was a deep part of Brinck's character.

His outlaw spirit made him an intriguing figure on a motorcycle. While a small man, he had a striking presence – very focused, very anchored, and with a real sense of style. Motorcycling has a risky quality. It's not unlike riding a horse and being a cowboy. Wearing leathers – leather pants, leather jacket – makes sense not just for style but as a safety precaution if you ever have a long skid. For Brinck there was always a right way to do things, like wearing boots and a helmet in case of a crash and bringing rain gear for bad weather.

Brinck knew about accidents firsthand, since he had almost lost his right arm during his service in World War II and had been seriously injured in 1946 when he was thrown from a horse. He had a pre-ride ritual when he set off on a trip: walk around the machine to check the pressure of the tires and examine them for wear; check the lights and the turn signals; double-check that you have all your gear. Brinck would then pack his in two saddle bags and

View of farm road in foreground, field with cattle, and lines of alfalfa. Distant row of trees along an irrigation canal. A "two-cigarette" drawing by John Brinckerhoff Jackson, apparently incorrectly dated after the fact.

in a light day pack, which he secured on the rear carrier with bungee cords.

The BMW is a distinctive motorcycle – one of the heaviest and one of the most stable. It has two opposed horizontal cylinders and a drive shaft rather than a chain. It's quiet but very powerful. Brinck was conscious that when you are on the machine, there is a right way to ride. You never ride side by side, filling up a lane. Instead you "tailed," one biker riding behind the other – never in line but always offset, and keeping some rational distance apart. He didn't much like riding on the interstate, with all the consequent lane weaving. On a two-lane road, you feel much more assured, leaning from side to side as you curve through rolling terrain, in tune with the contours of the landscape. The speed and force of the air provide a sense of exhilaration.

Whether traveling by bike or car we would always stop regularly to make sketches, sometimes picking an arbitrary time to take a break; sometimes stopping to sketch something that caught our attention. Brinck smoked unfiltered Camels, so we measured a sketch by how many cigarettes it took him to complete one. A single trip might yield as many as ten sketches.

At some point in the mid-seventies we took a ride to the small New Mexican town of Tucumcari. It was a brilliant day but also the start of fall, so we both dressed warmly. Brinck wore his three-quarter-length leather coat; on the bike, sitting



upright, he struck a very distinctive figure. We stopped in Albuquerque to buy some crayons. Usually our excursions were on local roads, but this time we were planning to inspect the Tucumcari highway strip, so we took the interstate. All went as we planned, and we also explored the town itself, with its fine railroad station.

On the way back Brinck was keen to wander along a smaller road; at one point, as we were passing an irrigated field, he pulled over. "Isn't that stunning!" he exclaimed. "Look at the green of that field and the red buttes! No BLACK, the shadow is purple." He then pulled out his crayons and made a sketch of the scene. As always, he drew boldly and impulsively, capturing a lot of visual information.

That particular sketch shows the layers of an irrigated landscape, the rural dirt road following a ditch with water feeding two fields – one for grazing, the other likely in alfalfa. The angled, corrugated field is edged by the iron-red boundary buttes. Blocks of brown in the green field indicate grazing cattle; stabs of white crayon capture the wispy edges of the clouds. It was a two-cigarette drawing, done in about ten minutes. For me it was the highlight of the day.

Another memorable trip was a ride west toward Grants, New Mexico, and into Navajo country. It was a cool, squally day in early fall. It wasn't a long drive, but we had to go south from Santa Fe on I-25 to Albuquerque, and then west on I-40. The interstate granted a dramatic view of a near-desert landscape. We both sketched a line squall – a fierce thundercloud of rain, stretching across the hillside – on an eight-minute, one-cigarette break. Usually we stopped for a sketch every half an hour, but that day we pushed it, with only two stops.

We were on our way to an open-pit uranium mine – I think it was called the Jackpile Mine. I was secretly appalled, but Brinck was very keen to see it. There were discouraging signs everywhere: Prohibited Entry, Do Not Enter, Mining Activity, Pass at own Risk. As I hesitated to proceed further, Brinck pulled up beside me and said, "Well, Doug, we came this far. We're certainly not stopping here!" and I thought "OK, I'm with my mentor. Let's go for it!"

After another mile or two, we came upon this huge mine with steep side walls – then the largest open-pit mine in the world for uranium. The mining procedure called for crushing massive amounts of limestone to extract small percentages of uranium, called "yellowcake." In evidence were two



big excavators, some haul trucks, and a processing plant. Then we came around the corner and saw a trailer with a little sign on it that said café or diner, with three or four pickups pulled up next to it. All seemed quiet, and I wondered if the mine was being shut down.

With no hesitation, Brinck pulled his bike over. Setting it on the kickstand, he said, "Come on, let's go in and get a coffee and find out what's going on here." I felt very hesitant, for we were trespassing. When we entered, the few Navajo mine workers in the room fell silent. Brinck walked up to the Navajo woman at the counter and said, "Can we have a little of your cooking – do you have fresh pie? We need a snack. We just have driven all the way from Santa Fe to see your mine here."

When the woman offered to bring us some lemon pie, Brinck turned around to the silent men looking us over in a very noncommittal way and asked, "Well, can you tell me what's going on here with the mine? It looks like it's not very active right now. Is the mine shutting down? Do you have any information?"

Before long they were not only telling him about their jobs but also volunteering information on a wide range of topics. I was intrigued that he had no hesitation in asking questions. He was just directly curious. "What was the equipment that you were trained to operate?" he asked. "Where did you get the training? How long did you do that? What was that like?" Brinck was always interested in hearing a description of what

Line squall seen from several miles away, near Grants, New Mexico, 1975. Drawing by Douglas Adams.

he was looking at in somebody else's language and in getting a sense of the emotional experience of their work. I remember hearing one driver describe a haul truck so huge that you had to climb a ladder up to the cab.

We talked to these men for twenty or thirty minutes, during which almost every one of them was drawn into the conversation. Brinck asked a couple of speculative questions about the mine's future. Would it stay open? Did they want it to stay open? The men were all very anxious about losing their jobs.

After we left the diner, we spent an hour or so looking things over and taking pictures. When it was time to head out, however, Brinck's bike started to misfire. He stopped, got off, and put it up on the kickstand. He kicked the rear tire. I asked him what was wrong. "The damn bike's misbehaving," he answered. When he revved it up, you could hear the engine firing unevenly. Fortunately, there was a kit of tools built into the compartment under the seat. I laid the tools out neatly on the gravel, took out his spark plugs, and cleaned them both; when I put them back in, the bike ran perfectly. It was basic maintenance. For the next few years, he wryly addressed me as "Bud, the motorcycle mechanic." I was intrigued that Brinck, unlike most riders, had done nothing to gain a basic mechanical understanding of his machine.

When we got back to his house in the village of La Cienega that night, we talked over what we'd seen and what it meant. While both of us were surprised by the site's extraordinary scale and powerful beauty, I was critical of what the mining was doing to the landscape. He, in contrast, said, "You know, it fits in almost naturally in that landscape, the mining activity." For him, this huge carving away of the land was analogous to its formation millions of years earlier. He acknowledged the important issues of nuclear safety while also speculating about whether such a mine could be reused or recycled. Brinck wasn't afraid of the political and environmental complexities presented by the site but instead interested in examining them in an open and honest way.

After our drawing trips together we developed the habit of taping up our sketches on the kitchen wall. Often, some of Brinck's would still be there when I next returned, and others were lost altogether. I criticized the careless way he handled them; eventually, I offered to take care of his drawings for him.

Around 1982 I learned of the drawings he made during the Second World War and asked to see them. He produced a large portfolio and spread the drawings out on his dinner

table. As we sifted through them, he described the events they depicted, dating some of the drawings in pencil as he did so. At one point, I asked him about the most difficult moral judgments he had faced as an officer in the war. He told me that he had been with the Allied forces occupying Berlin before the Russians entered. One evening, he was officer of the watch when a duty soldier on guard at the crossing point came to tell him there was a German woman asking to enter the U.S. territory. When Brinck, who was fluent in German, went to investigate, he discovered an attractive, cultured woman who was desperate to come over to the American side. She was clearly terrified that she would be raped by the Russians, who were known to be wild and undisciplined. She offered him a valuable ring as a bribe, which of course he found unacceptable. He told her with great regret that no one was allowed to cross from one side of divided Berlin to the other. It was clear that he now had conflicting sentiments about that decision. "What was right?" he asked. Following military regulations was clearly important, but so was personal responsibility.

Brinck was known as a maverick, and yet he was also someone with a strong sense of order; he believed that there should be a moral code and that a good society is dependent on understanding and sharing such a code. When he looked at landscape and the people in the landscape, that is part of what he looked for. What were the social guidelines inscribed there? What was the discipline it revealed – or refused to reveal – and how could you describe, shelter, and advance that discipline?

Brinck's ambivalence about the interstate embodied this paradox in his character. On the one hand, he was critical of the way it appropriated and divided private property, slashing through farmers' fields, destroying natural boundaries, and ignoring the contours of the land. And yet he was also captivated by the way in which these highways reconfigured the landscape in the service of regulating and maximizing the steady flow of truck transport, through their careful gradation of hills and the geometrically determined radii of cloverleafs.

Brinck's deep attachment to New Mexico began early. His Uncle Percy owned a large ranch near Wagon Mound, which served as a familial touchstone throughout his solitary and peripatetic childhood and youth. In the 1980s, after he gave up teaching, he thought that he wanted to live in the state permanently and to become a kind of recluse in La Cienega. In fact, he wanted something far more intricate and complex than that. Not surprisingly, he continued to meet interesting new people, and he made some enduring friendships in

his last years. Friends and former colleagues encouraged him to keep writing, and he continued to accept lecturing invitations. At the same time, he talked of being stressed by travel and how people failed to understand that he was an older man. But even as he aged and enjoyed driving less, our periodic forays to view and draw the landscape were something he continued to value highly, for they stimulated him to stay vigilant and keep his observations sharp.

The last trip I took with him was up through Las Vegas, New Mexico, to the short-grass, high-plains district of Union County, where bison once grazed for millennia. Arrowheads have been found in this beautiful, open landscape that date back ten thousand years.

Not far outside Raton there was a road that led us up to the top of an extinct volcano, from which we could see for miles. There must have been thirty or forty cones visible. Most of the ranches were large properties, probably a thousand acres or more, and the houses on them tended to be south-facing, and nestled beneath the conical mounds scattered across the landscape. From this vantage point you could really appreciate the fluidity of the land; there had been big rains that year, and the grass moved in waves around the base of the rise.

"Isn't this gorgeous?" Brinck asked me as we stood there, looking out. "Isn't this a wonder?" But the lushness was deceptive, he reminded me. Due to the region's impervious substrate, rainwater runs horizontally through a superficial layer of soil. This means that the land easily supports grazing but not ploughing, which can turn the verdant prairie into dust. Brinck recalled visiting a ranch nearby in the 1940s and how unnerved the rancher's wife had been by the sand drifting in through the kitchen door as they talked.

At breakfast in Las Vegas on our way out, Brinck had learned that we might be able to catch a quarter-horse auction when we returned. After a day of sightseeing, looking at the landscape, and drawing sketches up north near Folsom, it was five o'clock when we pulled into town once more, and Brinck was tired and cranky. Nevertheless, he insisted that we attend.

After getting lost numerous times, we finally found the small, enclosed arena outside of town where the auction was being held. It was a wonderful setup, with trailers and horses all around, and the arena was more than half full. We watched a couple of horses go on the dock and bring good prices. Then a horse came in with a very tall, lanky rider – a handsome Texan wearing a baseball cap. The auctioneer always reads the pedigree of the animals before they enter, but this horse's bloodlines were clearly evident; it was marvelous to watch him move.

The rider had the horse gallop around the arena, come to a stop, side step, and back up with almost no discernible

direction; the placement and barest pressure of his hands, legs, and feet guided the horse perfectly. The demonstration exemplified a relationship that has formed between the two species over centuries of working together on the prairie managing livestock, and the unity between man and animal was thrilling to witness. Brinck and I left the auction at that point because we wanted to keep that image in our minds.

Although he admired certain conventions, rules settled unevenly on Brinck. He also nurtured an outlaw admiration of the experimental. As we were walking back to the car from the arena, he suddenly stopped and asked, "Did you notice the hats on the ranchers?"

"Not particularly," I replied. "Was there something distinctive about them?"

And he said, "Yes, yes, very definitely. They were all black hats. And there were *Anglos* wearing black hats." He then told me that when he'd stayed on his uncle's ranch, he'd become friendly with some of the younger Mexican-American stable hands. For entertainment, the ranch employees would sometimes go to the local school house in Wagon Mound for a movie that would be shown with a projector on a white sheet, and one of them had invited Brinck to come along. But when word got out that the boss's nephew was mingling with the employees, the foreman intervened. "You shouldn't socialize with the work force," he warned the young man. "You can't ever wear a black hat."

Brinck told me this story only a few weeks after his eighty-fifth birthday, so the next day I went out and bought him a black hat. One of my favorite photographs of Brinck shows him violating the sanctions of propriety by wearing that hat – which he hugely enjoyed doing.

How does land both shape and reflect its human occupancy? Brinck had an eye for the utility of working landscapes, leaving to others the question of nature's natural state. Certainly, the lessons of the Dust Bowl stayed with him; the importance of water and sustainable land use were ongoing preoccupations, and he held strong views on how you stabilize and restore the environment. A passage he wrote in an article on Union County provides an eloquent testament to his life's work: "The human geographer . . . rejoices to see a healthy natural order in the environment, but he wants most of all to know something of the relation between the landscape and the men who live in it; and he believes that a healthy human landscape can only be defined as one which serves as many useful and important purposes as possible."

– Douglas Adams

## Motion Pictures: Drawing While Moving

It was my good fortune to be a teaching assistant to J. B. Jackson during my graduate studies in landscape architecture at Harvard. In addition to listening to his sterling lectures, I had the opportunity to be a witness to the ways he interrogated the complexities of landscape. One piece of advice he gave was to choose some aspect of the surroundings on which to focus while looking at everything – for the landscape is everything and everywhere. I took that advice to heart and have since focused on our many modes of transportation – not only their physical manifestations but also the ways in which they construct and constrict our landscape experience.

The experience of landscape while moving through space was a pervasive concern of Jackson's. His writings are filled with insights gathered from traveling on roads and flying across the continent. He coined the term "odology," the study of roads (akin to "hodology," the study of pathways), but his interest went beyond their physical presence and cultural meaning. He wanted to understand how roads structure the experience of landscape from a moving vehicle. He described this experience with eloquence in essays such as "The Abstract World of The Hot Rodder" and "Other Directed Houses." In "Roads Belong in the Landscape," he noted that we have learned "to discover the joys of speeding, of seeing landscape flash by at an inhuman rate." Jackson also drew, and his drawings were often done during journeys on the road.

Jackson noted that a landscape can be "comprehended at a glance." How is that glance documented? How is it represented and communicated to others? For centuries landscape was captured in sketches that were later transformed into paintings in the studio. Photography, with its ability to freeze both time and space, is perhaps the most common contemporary equivalent. Film and video can convey the sensation of moving through the landscape even more directly. With these new technologies available, is drawing still of value for recording the passing landscape?

It is an article of faith that the act of drawing forces you to be stationary and focus your attention. It is commonly thought (although the proposition is much debated) that spending more time on a drawing can lead to greater insight. But what of drawings that are executed when the artist is in a stationary position while simultaneously in motion? The paradox of experiencing the stability of the land while moving through or above it is epitomized by Jerry Seinfeld's explanation of his love of driving: "Because you are both moving and standing still, and you are both inside and outside the car!" How can that paradox be captured?

Aerial view, Houston to Austin. All drawings by Kenneth Helphand.

In my travels over the past two decades I have become increasingly interested in the challenge of describing a landscape while evoking this movement through space. The process parallels the movement itself because my drawings are done rapidly, while the vehicle is in motion. They record a direct and immediate response; it is an aspect of what Edna Duffy, in her book *The Speed Handbook*, calls "speed vision." The experience has an affinity with the automatic drawing so lauded by the Surrealists as a way to bypass conscious thought. The exercise of sketching while in motion is a reminder that the impressions we have of most landscapes are almost instantaneous.

Drawing the landscape while moving through space is not a new activity. There is a long history of maritime artists drawing landscapes from the sea as an aid to navigation and mapping. As early as 1715 the British Navy was teaching such skills to boys who "shewed [sic] a genius for drawing." Britain's Maritime Academy even had a school to train such artists, and "the ability to draw and render topographic features" was part of a naval cadet's training until the mid-nineteenth century.

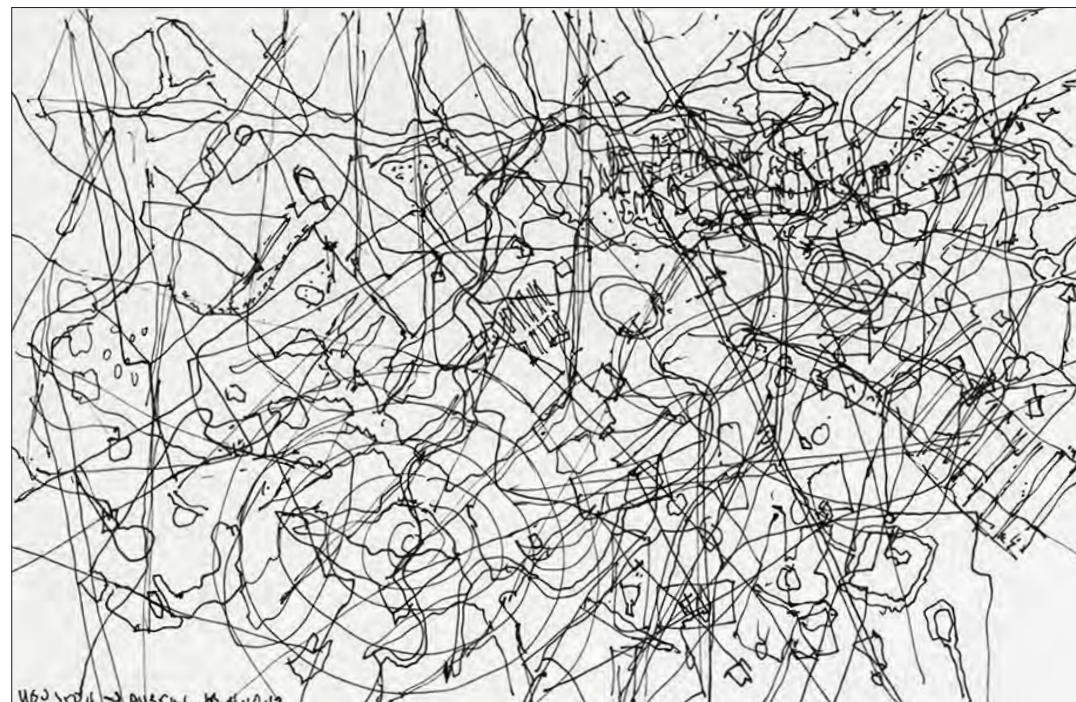
In America during this same period, the official U.S. Army Corps of Topographic Engineers traversed the American West, accompanying scientific expeditions. The topographers traveled on foot and horseback at a slow pace, sketching and

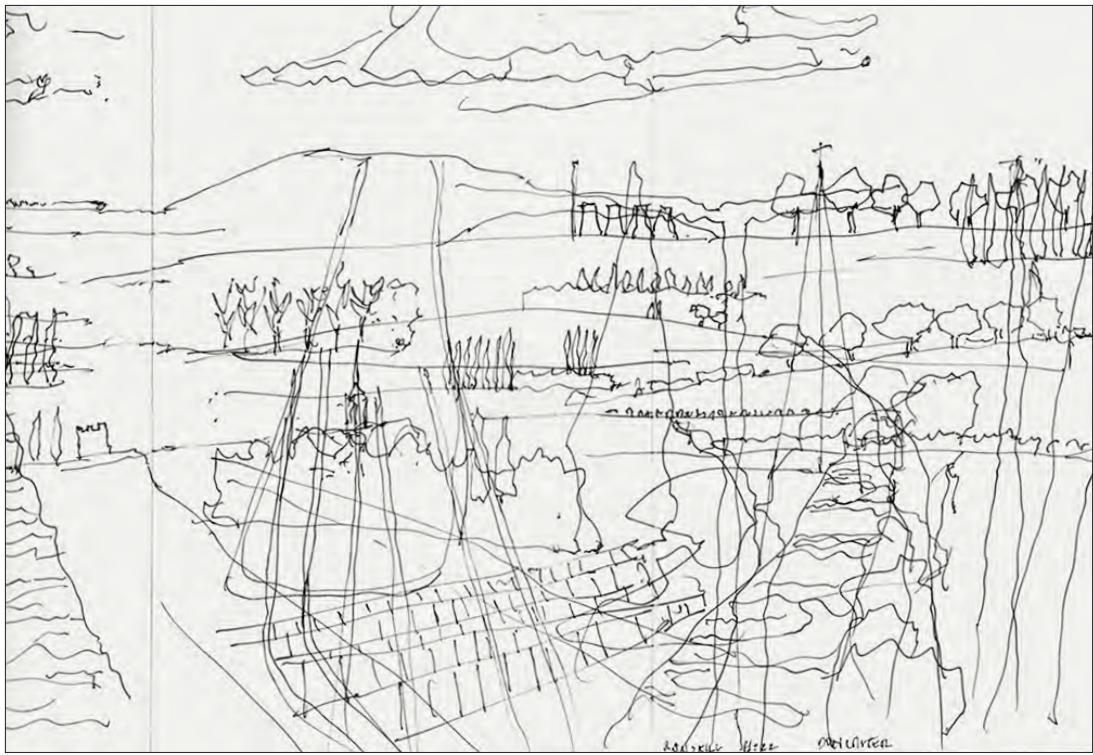
mapping the landscape. They put a premium on precision and accuracy. (It is ironic that the primary motivation for these surveys was to seek possible routes for a transcontinental railroad.) The pioneering geographical investigations of the Americas conducted by the Prussian explorer Alexander Von Humboldt cultivated what scholars have called a "topographical vision."

Topographers did not highlight the fact that they themselves were traveling through the landscape. In the last half-century, however, designers have experimented with capturing movement in two dimensions. The landscape architect Lawrence Halprin in his "motation" studies experimented with the development of a graphic vocabulary to describe and predict movement through space. Most often this was shown in filmstrip fashion, suggestive of motion and spatial progression. In *The View from the Road* (1964), planners Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch, and John R. Myer used sequential photographs, drawings, diagrams, and film while exploring the space, tempo, and rhythm of highway design. I have been inspired by these authors, as well by the Futurists who were enamored with the power of movement and speed, and by artists such as Saul Steinberg and Yvonne Jacquette.

What can we say about drawing from a vehicle – as a passenger on a boat, train, or plane? Each of these modes of transportation is associated with distinctive landscape experiences, and attempting to

capture that in drawing can offer unique insights. In a ferryboat moving at twenty-five knots you gaze at a near or distant shoreline, often while standing or seated in the open air. From an American train traveling between fifty and eighty miles per hour your view is elevated above ground level and may extend to the horizon, but speed blurs the foreground, privileging instead the unfolding panorama of middle-ground and distant scenes. The high-speed rail lines of Europe and Asia offer a different experience. In commercial aircraft





London to Edinburgh. A fragment of a 10-foot-long drawing. Note the landscape contours, hedgerows, canal, power plant, roads, houses, fields, church steeple.

expansive views. In both train and airplane we look through apertures much like the one Leon Battista Alberti prescribed almost six centuries ago in his treatise *De Pictura (On Painting)*: “First of all, on the surface which I am going to paint, I draw a rectangle of whatever size I want, which I regard as an open window through which the subject to be painted is seen.”

I think of all my drawings done in transit as “motion pictures” because they are completed in real time while on the move. One way of thinking about them is as field notes: careful but rapid observations of phenomena as records for later perusal and study. Unlike the work of topographers, however, these drawings make no claim to accuracy, but claim instead to capture aspects of the experience of passing through the landscape.

The advent of the train in the nineteenth-century was a revolutionary event that transformed not only society but also

miles above the earth, at speeds approaching the sound barrier, there is little sense of movement but there is a maplike perspective, as well as extraordinarily

mances of the nineteenth century anticipated the advent of film, the train view is intrinsically cinematic; its narrative is the tale of the ever-evolving vista. In *The Railway Journey* (2014), Wolfgang Schivelbusch has characterized voyages by rail as “panoramic travel.” He says “the railroad choreographs the landscape.”

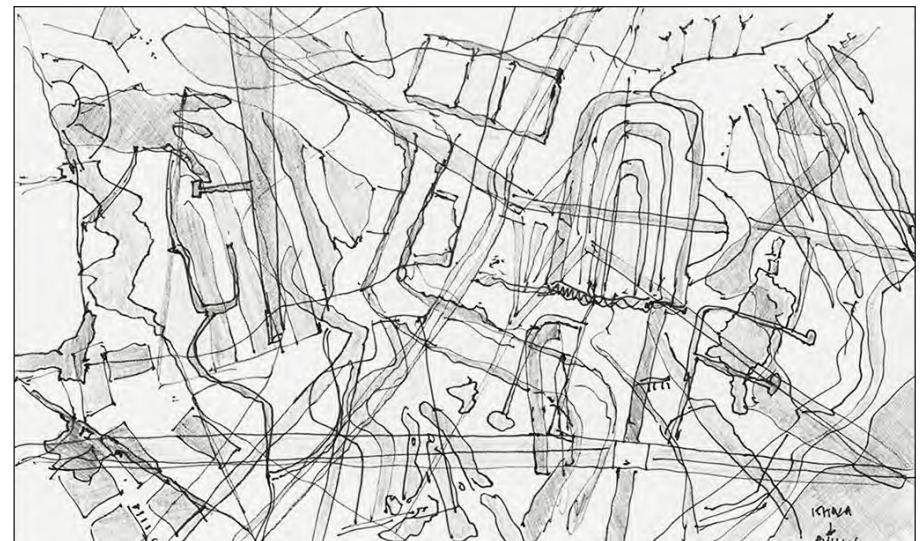
The view from a train has distinct characteristics. As the engine accelerates and the train moves out of the station, the clarity of the foreground gives way to a blur and the eye can only focus on the middle- and background, in classic painterly fashion. At the same time the view constantly changes as the distant angular view becomes a frontal perpendicular view that rapidly recedes in the distance. It is a view that has best been simulated through film, but graphic design has also attempted to capture the experience. Nineteenth-century “Iron Road Charts” were produced in an accordion-fold format, anticipating instructional filmstrips and storyboards that communicate a landscape’s narrative in freeze-frame fashion. Each drawing is the record of a journey.

the landscape and how it was experienced. People moved through space on earth faster than ever before. In an enclosed train coach the outside view passes by as a continuous scene, scrolling within a frame, mimicking the nineteenth-century theatrical experience of sitting in a theater while a painted panorama was unfurled. In 1797 Robert Barker of Edinburgh, the inventor of the theatrical cyclorama, had coined the term “panorama” as a synonym for “la nature à coup d’œil” (nature at a glance). The meaning of the term later expanded to designate a complete view of an area, and nineteenth-century artists documented this new experience. Much as the panorama perfor-

My “motion pictures” are all done in real time in an attempt to capture the aspects of the train’s movement and speed as well as the key elements and characteristics of the scene. They are rapidly drawn souvenirs and, like all acts of drawing, help focus one’s attention in a unity of head and hand. Some topographical characteristics are easier to depict than others; the shape of the terrain is paramount, as are large-scale patterns, followed by iconic or repetitive elements. In attempting to capture these qualities, the character of the land is almost viscerally comprehended. Moving at high speed foreshortens distances, and the spatial experience is condensed. The transition from one landscape type to another is quickly evident, as is the relationship between the two areas.

I have experimented with many approaches. Sometimes I encapsulate a journey on a single sheet, drawing one view of the ground atop another, so that the page becomes an overlay of afterimages – a self-conscious palimpsest. When I instead record a voyage on consecutive individual pages, the total landscape experience is only apprehended after the fact when they are assembled into a coherent progression. For longer journeys an orihon – an accordion-folded notebook – becomes a three-dimensional equivalent of the linearity and continuity of a railroad journey. When viewed together, the drawings recall nineteenth-century panoramas. After using the orihon multiple times – for travels across Britain, but also in the Pacific Northwest and between cities in the Northeast – I learned that it, too, had a precedent. In 1913 the artist Sonia Delaunay and the poet

Ithaca to Philadelphia. Drawing overlaying woods, windmills, strip mines, field patterns, rivers, lakes, powerlines, cul-de-sacs.



Blaise Cendrars composed an artist's book in which parallel strands of painting and text document the experience of riding the Trans-Siberian Railway across Russia.

The second of the three illustrations for this piece, a drawing I executed while traveling from London to Edinburgh, has elements of a palimpsest, with an overlay of hills, cooling towers, and even individual trees as well as marks indicative of traveling at a high speed. However, this image is but a five-inch panel from the ten-foot-long drawing I completed over the course of the trip, which documents a journey of 393 miles.

The view from above enamored Le Corbusier. In his book *Aircraft* (1935), he wrote, "Today it is a question of the airplane eye, of the mind with which the Bird's Eye View has endowed us." He said the bird's eye view was "a new function added to our senses, a new standard of measurement and new basis of sensation."

Today books are filled with aerial images, and the view from above is as common as the ubiquitous Google Earth. Recently landscape historian Sonja Dümpelmann, in her book *Flights of the Imagination*, noted that the aerial view was simultaneously "disembodied and embodied, abstract and experiential, rational and imaginary, factual and aesthetic, microscopic and macroscopic, detailed and contextual, harmful and essential." She refers to what she terms "aerial imagination" – a quality that can be cultivated and that drawing can foster. The author William Fox refers to this overall perception as "aereality." In the context of landscape history and theory, the aerial view can be thought of as an elevated, moving prospect commanding a grand view over the face of the earth. Looking towards the horizon and even the curvature of the planet, one is offered a slowly continuous panorama; drawings of it have elements of unrolling scrolls.

Flying offered J. B. Jackson a platform for peerless insight. In the journal *Landscape*'s first issue in 1951, he wrote, "It is from the air that the true relationship between the natural and human landscape is first clearly revealed . . . It is a picture we are seeing, an image which stirs us not only because of its beauty and vastness but because of its meaning." And yet, although flight "has given us new eyes, and we are using them to discover a new order of spaces, new landscapes wherever we look," Jackson said also "We traveled too fast, and still travel too fast for fresh thinking about what we see below." Drawing from above is an excellent way to refresh our thinking.

In commercial aircraft the schedule, unpredictability of weather, and choice of a window seat dictate one's vantage point. And yet, if a glimpse of the ground below is available,

it always displays the incredible complexity of landscape. Drawing from above encourages or even forces a focus on certain features, especially the lines inscribed on the land: roads, railroads, the meanderings of rivers, the divisions of fields, the expanses of a valley, the sharp crests of mountain ranges. For example, my drawing of a 191-mile flight from Ithaca, New York, to Philadelphia contains overlays of freeways, power lines, rivers, reservoirs, woodlots, strip mines, and field patterns.

As the philosopher Edward Casey notes, the power of the human gaze is enormous because of its ability to instantly register telltale *signs*. At an interpersonal level these signs may be about identity, personality, social class, and more. When our eyes dart over the landscape, we become attuned to different clues: changes in forms, colors, topography, vegetation. What repeats and what stands apart? I often choose particular aspects of the landscape, such as bodies of water, as a focus, and then attempt to trace their appearances through a single journey.

Inspired by my drawings from trains, I have recorded flights as continuous aerial panoramas, but ones that look down and not towards the horizon – sometimes as palimpsests and sometimes as series in which each sheet is distinct, the grand sequence revealed only when they are assembled. Often I am reminded of the air-photo interpretation course I took in graduate school. These results are experimental aerial field notes, revealing distribution patterns, surprises, and insights in scale; inevitably, a narrative emerges. Whatever choice I make, it fosters a change in mindset and a visual quest.

Why do this? Like any type of drawing, this activity results in a visual representation: an artifact that can be shared with others, a survey, a mnemonic device, or an interpretation. Like any sort of drawing, it also *draws* you into the subject in a magnetic sense. Whether you are on a boat, train, or plane, it encourages you to look out the window instead of closing the shade, reading a book, or watching a movie. Drawing often creates a heightened awareness of where one is in space and that can be exhilarating – a return to the almost magical wonder of moving rapidly through space or flying over the earth. You have to draw fast, so it forces quick decisions and serves as a record of an experience. It offers not only a viewpoint but a point of view: a glimpse into the mind and thought process of the observer who created it. Perhaps these drawings are akin to the Winged Eye – the hieroglyphic that Alberti, whose ideas are so central to how we see, adopted as his personal symbol. – Kenneth Helphand

## Schooled: A Lesson in Time with J. B. Jackson

John Brinckerhoff Jackson spelled out his intentions for my project in his very first letter to me, in 1986.

July 15

Dear Bob Calo

Thank you very much for your letter of July 10, regarding a possible film on the American Landscape. It is always a pleasure to hear from a former student and to be remembered. I am indeed interested in such a film – at least in helping you as much as possible.

In fact, I was not a former student. I had merely sat in on some of his lectures at UC Berkeley and then presented myself one day in his faculty office as a student from nearby San Francisco State University, where I was a graduate student in media studies. Jackson didn't care. He welcomed me into his office for a long chat, lent me his first book, and encouraged me to stay in touch. His courtliness was well known, but it was his inclusivity that was so stunning. One needed no pedigree to talk about landscape.

His reply to my query continued:

A TV documentary about me has recently been made (or photographed) by a group financed by Harvard, NEA and other sources. It will probably be edited and finished by the end of the year. In the course of the next months I may be involved in traveling to accumulate impressions and pictures for 2 books about the landscape of this part of the West – the High Plains and its towns and cities: Denver, Cheyenne, Amarillo etc. This is to be sponsored by Rice University, but as yet it is vague. I mention these two productions to suggest first of all that as a topic or subject I will have been pretty well exhausted by the TV program. But my interest in a newer or fresher approach to the landscape should be evident by my plan to travel in the coming months. My own interest is not only exploring a particular part of the U.S. (the general overviews are likely to be superficial) but also one aspect of the landscape. I find the expansion of cities and in particular their elegant redesigned downtown financial sectors fascinating, and also the corporate headquarters in the suburbs. But I am also interested in blue-collar communities – hard though it is to reconcile the two.

In retrospect, his message could not have been any clearer: first, that he had already supplied the requisite intellectual biography for a just-completed documentary, and second,

that he welcomed the opportunity to do something different with me. At the time, though, I didn't absorb these simply stated objectives. As any young filmmaker might be, I was taken with the possibility of working on a big canvas with a brilliant central character. But as for theme I was an empty vessel, and Jackson got busy filling it up. A few months later, he wrote me the following note.

Nov 24

I find myself particularly interested in the role of the highway and street in modern America and I'm delighted that you think there is as possibility of our working together – perhaps on this very topic, for despite the importance of the road in U.S. life, very little speculation or study has taken place on the subject; we automatically assume the point of view of the engineer and the economist, and quite ignore the social (and anti-social) function of the road or street. If we collaborate on a brief trip through city and country, slum and residential country-club streets and roads, I think we could come up with some discoveries and some pictures – with a comparatively low cost in money or effort or time. Two days ago we had 8 inches of wet snow . . .

When I visited Jackson at his ranch house in La Cienega early in 1987, that snow was still in the mountains of northern New Mexico. This meeting was to plan the film shoot that was to commence later in the spring. Jackson proposed a day trip: north to Española, Chimayó, and Las Trampas, and then east to Holman, Cleveland, and Mora – where he regaled me with stories of black magic in the town. Somewhat to my surprise, he never got out of the rental car. Every once in a while he would suggest that I get out and take a photo, which of course I did, not quite knowing where to point the camera.

Once home again in La Cienega, he suggested the idea of a road trip for the documentary – a kind of cross-section of the Southwest – that I now realize he saw as a way to distill the ideas he had first suggested in his letters. We would start in Chaco Canyon, head north to Colorado, traverse some agricultural territory, stop in Pueblo, and end up in Denver. Why Jackson wanted to start our film amid the ruins of an ancient Anasazi city that had been abandoned in the thirteenth cen-

tury wasn't entirely clear; we had never even discussed it until this moment. In fact, I had to look it up on a map. All I knew was that Chaco would be where our story would begin.

Jackson was not a film producer, but having just worked with Janet Mendelson on the aforementioned *Figure in a Landscape* documentary, he proved to be a quick study. I drew up a shooting schedule that would include several short trips in May: a day at Chaco Canyon and a day in northern New Mexico, as well as a day for a long interview at his home. We planned to talk as we went, but this last meeting would be the "official" interview, during which I imagined that my finely crafted questions would draw out the sound bites I believed I needed for the film. After the interview we would travel again – first north to Alamosa, then to I-25 and up to Denver. It was pretty much the itinerary he had laid out in his letter of a year before: a sprint through eight hundred years of American architecture that would include a variety of rural and urban landscapes.

May 4

Dear Bob

I've written on my calendar the schedule you outlined. I have one date of my own I'd like to keep: dinner with friends on May 21, a Saturday. Other than that (I can omit my daily chores at the 2 churches in town for a few days) I have no obligations, and what you suggest seems possible and very pleasant. As you say, we will have to play by ear to a large extent.

He also gave me homework:

I am enclosing one of 2 essays on the general topic of vernacular. This one is entirely New Mexico, and you may have seen it. I gave it as a lecture 2 years ago at Harvard. The second essay, which I will send you as soon as it is back from the typist, deals with commercial traffic in the city.

In the meantime, I assembled a crew: associate producer John Lovell, videographer Dana Atchley, and sound recordist Tapley Dawson. Atchley and Dawson were arriving in an RV. We all planned to rendezvous at Chaco Canyon on May 14. My production notes provide a glimpse of the progress of the project.

May 13. Arrive La Cienega 8:30 pm. Jackson has prepared Yankee Pot Roast, corn and peas, chocolate pudding for us. He looks well and is as charming as ever . . . . Jackson wants to know what to wear.

I also found this odd note in quotes – a fragment from our dinner conversation, perhaps: "Learn to love the banal."

May 14. Astounding day at Chaco Canyon. We arrive 2:15 pm, no sign of the crew. Killing time in the bookshop, Jackson buys books and muses around and then falls into an intense conversation with Tom Vaughn [the park] supervisor who leads us up to the archaeologist Dabney Ford working with a Navajo crew strengthening ancient walls. Jackson's conversation and probing questions are sensational and I suffer with every pearl: no camera. He proposes his theory of repetition and sanctity. Jackson is dressed in his usual leather jacket/jeans outfit but they are obviously impressed.

It was exactly what people like me dream about when we go to the trouble of bringing a subject to a location – except that none of it was recorded, because the crew had not yet arrived. Fortunately, Vaughn was so taken with Jackson that he offered us a cabin and hook up, so that we could spend the night and shoot the next morning.

The following day, my anxiety receded. As anyone who ever had the pleasure of traveling with Jackson knows, his conversation was a flood of insights, provocations, and observations that made the rest of us stop and look and think – all delivered in that patrician baritone. It was music.

A few days later Jackson took us on a short tour through some old New Mexico towns he wanted to introduce me to, as I later recorded in my production notes:

We get a very late start which is further delayed by running out of gas, taking Buffy [Jackson's beloved dog] to the vet, buying lunch at Alpha Beta. Finally we hit the road and set up in the van . . . . Lighting is rough and we only start about 2 minutes outside of San Jose, a dilapidated little town that Jackson wants us to see. No sooner do we stop than Sheridan McKenna comes out, welcomes us and takes us inside where his 70-year-old father-in-law sings a birthday song (in Spanish) while Jackson beams.

This was a random encounter. McKenna owned a tiny shop, the only commercial endeavor in the town. Jackson suggested they serve hot coffee to lure travelers from the interstate, although the chances of that actually happening were extremely unlikely. As soon became clear, the shabby town of San Jose was not our final destination.

Then on to Villanueva, through 4 or 5 towns that we don't have time to shoot: Ribera, San Miguel, Sena. Villanueva is an old town on the Pecos River, standing above a beautiful valley – lush with irrigated fields, with a church, a Penitente society and rooster fights.

Jackson explained to us that many of the Hispanic residents had lived there for generations, their families managing to retain title to centuries-old land grants. He presented Villanueva as a model of the vernacular – in as good a shape as one might find it.

After this excursion, we had two solid days “in the can”: great locations; lots of Jackson's wonderful, running commentary about Anasazi culture and architecture and the warmth and fragility of the vernacular; plenty of verité moments to build a film around. All that was left was the main interview, back at his home, on which we would rely to knit it all together.

Despite my aspirations, I was underprepared for this final opportunity. Things did not go well. My opening questions were halting, vague, and uninspired. Eventually, with a certain brusqueness, perhaps even a tinge of disappointment, my subject cut me off:

I want to give a speech. And you use it as you see fit, but I think it'll be useful to you to have. I want to say something to you about why I am interested in vernacular architecture. And it seems to be generally agreed [upon] among architects and art historians and [the] public at large that the number of houses,

or the proportion of houses, that have been architect-designed – well, in the United States, but also true in a great deal of Western Europe – is probably 10 percent of the houses. In other words, 90 percent of the houses have not had an architect come near them.

He went on for an hour, apologizing for what he termed an “ugly” dimension of his work that we might find unappealing – his interest in how ordinary people lived.

I think one can say, with all due respect, an establishment dwelling is one which has cost money, an architect has designed; it is to present a social image of prosper[ity] and taste and position in the community . . . versus one which is old – “That's a nice little house that didn't cost much, and people are living in it.” So an establishment building is one which does in a sense conform to traditional standards and which approaches being a work of art. It is supposed to be beautiful. It is supposed to represent all those qualities that architecture boasts of. Commodity. Solidity. Delight. Whereas vernacular is something else again. Vernacular is the house people live in – now how shall we say this? – that is a utility to them. They're not being indifferent. They're not scorning it. But they know that it is not a work of art or a tremendous investment.



The discourse that followed covered everything from privacy in Rome and the characteristics of the medieval street to contemporary child-protection laws and mid-century traffic studies – and much, much more. It was a master class that only J. B. Jackson could deliver so elegantly and so effortlessly, and he did so in his own living room in La Cienega:

The triumph of architecture and of urbanism produced the magnificent avenues and cities that we're all so familiar with and what we admire, but it does mean that the house is detached from the street life. This is fine for the middle class and upper class – they very much like this isolation. The upper classes always hated the street. It's always been something you distrust. It's identified with street smarts, street language, street dress, street – everything that's bad or common, or vulgar and loud and disorderly is identified with the street. And so the upper class doesn't mind one damn bit being detached from the street. But I think the lower class or the working class feels “Why, hell, this where we used to have a good time; it was where we worked; it was where we made a living, where we saw people. And now it's gone.”

It was as if Jackson were pleading with me to think and listen so that I would be able to understand this critical distinction he was making – not only about landscape studies but also about class across America and the world. And yet I confess that I was stunned by this philosophical treatise, overwhelmed by the density of his thought. I suddenly felt completely unprepared for the task before me. And so I interrupted his flow. I tried to get back to more conventional biographical questions. After all, I told myself, I was trying to tell the Jackson “story.”

“And if you could link it to why you started the magazine,” I began. Still, he resisted. I suspect that he felt he had dispensed with all that sort of personal background in the earlier documentary. He also couldn't believe I didn't want to hear the full explication of his thoughts on the establishment and vernacular.

Jackson: I was on this path of trying to explain what the whole – our whole adventure was!

Bob: Well, I would like to get to that. I just don't want to miss this opportunity – this may be our last chance to talk of this.

J. B. Jackson in trucker gear, leading a film crew to the vernacular. San Jose, New Mexico, 1987.

Jackson: Okay, okay, now ask your leading question and I'll –

Bob: Okay, during your years in military intelligence, how did those ideas change your ideas? How did those experiences –

Jackson: Which experiences, the military experiences?

Bob: In France and Germany, and your discovery –

Jackson: How did it change what, Bob? That isn't a very well-phrased question!

Returning to this exchange now, almost thirty-three years later, I marvel at his patience. And also at his tenacity. For after he answered all my questions, well-phrased or not – about his time in U.S. Army intelligence, about *Landscape* magazine, about his uncle's ranch in New Mexico – after all of that, he got back to the heart of the matter and gave me the footage that would become the heart of the film – whether I was prepared for it or not. His exegesis of the establishment and the vernacular was in fact a kind of guide to his wondrous way of seeing landscape. What a gift it was – and to the extent that the film we made contained even a glimpse of that, it was entirely due to his patience, generosity, trust, and absolute brilliance as a teacher.

What did Jackson think of the completed film? He was kind and complimentary of course, but reserved in his comments. I can't be sure that he felt his efforts to get me to pay attention to what really mattered in the landscape paid off in the final product. But I hope so. They certainly have for me over time.

Two years later, I had moved to New York and was working for ABC News, telling very different kinds of stories. While passing through Albuquerque on an assignment, I drove up for a late dinner – some version of the meat stew Jackson always had on the stove, finished off with black coffee and lots of cigarettes. He was very interested in the early version of a mobile phone that I was carrying and wondered aloud how such phones might change public life as they became more common. It was the last time I saw him.

His last letter had come earlier, in March, full of that charm, wit, and grace that only sweetened an unforgettable intelligence: "Come and see me. A new dog, but no new teeth. Spring is not far away and I'm writing hard (on Texas) so that I'll be free to garden." – Bob Calo

## Place Keeper: Oak Spring Garden Foundation

**M**ore than thirty-eight years have passed since I made my first visit to Oak Spring in Upperville, Virginia, to write about Rachel Lambert Mellon and her new Garden Library, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes in the style of a Portuguese farmhouse. What a privilege it was to experience that serene private domain of fields and gardens. On another occasion, for a catalogue essay I was writing, I studied the library's original plans of the Tuileries Garden in Paris at various stages. I then understood how her collection of books, many rare and some owned since childhood, had been crucial to her formation as an eminent garden designer – famously of the Rose Garden at the White House. On both occasions, I was inspired by her oversight and the perfection of the place she shared with her husband, Paul Mellon – the financier, philanthropist, art collector, and racehorse breeder.

But nothing in all those years gave a clue of what was to come, as I realized when I returned there to attend a symposium titled White House Gardens in the Twentieth Century. It was held in 2018, only four years after Mrs. Mellon's death at the age of 103. A new entity, the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, which was also one of the sponsors of the colloquium, had been founded as a seamless sequel to her life as a rare book collector and gardener. Under its auspices, much of what she had created or acquired assiduously – portfolios, botanical drawings, rare books, and scientific archives, to say nothing of her own gardens and glasshouses – is not only being preserved but also shared with botanists, horticulturists, landscape historians, and conservationists from all over the globe. Even the houses and *parterres* are maintained to her standard of beauty, as I observed on my exploratory walks between sessions.

Masterminding this venture is Sir Peter Crane, the British-born inaugural president of the foundation and our host on that occasion. He spoke of his pleasure in having the unique opportunity to oversee Rachel Mellon's legacy from scratch and the important possibilities it offered for the future of plant sciences and the environment. He brings with him a rich background in these fields. Formerly the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and more recently Dean of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, he was knighted in 2004 for services to horticulture and conservation.

I returned a year later in early spring to discover more about the ongoing development of this extensive property. Coming by car from the airport, I passed miles of meadows, horse pastures, and rustic wooden fencing, as well as the occasional village. Located in the Virginia Piedmont region between the Blue Ridge and Bull Run Mountains – visible in the distance to the west and east, respectively – Oak Spring resembles a series of villages with its clusters of houses, trees and orchards, fields and ponds, all elegantly unassuming.

On arrival, I was told to leave my belongings in the main house, in the Margaret Stones Room, which was named for the creator of the ten botanical drawings that line its walls. They underscore Mrs. Mellon's emphasis on collecting works by women – an emphasis that is being maintained by the foundation. Stones, I recalled, had lived in the town of Kew and spent many hours drawing at the Royal Botanic Gardens.

My first appointment of the day was with Andy Jackson, Oak Spring's head of horticulture and landscapes, whose office was in the main house. I was a bit early for our meeting, so I walked out into the gardens. The sloping, three-tiered *parterres* of flowers and vegetables below the house's main terrace were lined on either side by low structures with peaked roofs – again like modest village streets, but somewhere in Europe. As I enjoyed the luxury of observing them alone on this spring day, in addition to birdsong I could hear the gurgling of water from the rills and pools that brought both sound and refreshment to the landscape. The basins were painted an inky blue to increase the water's reflective qualities. Blue was Mrs. Mellon's favorite color.

I would be meeting with Peter Crane later that day, when he was due back from China, where as a paleobotanist he had been accumulating fossils for his studies in evolutionary botany. Andy Jackson had just arrived from his home in West Sussex in England, where he lives between his excursions to Oak Spring. When he and Crane worked together at Kew, Crane had chosen him to be the director of the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place in Sussex. There, in buildings surrounded by woodland, the Royal Botanic Gardens stores 75 percent of the world's seeds from over forty thousand plant species.

When I arrived in Jackson's office, he had assembled for me on his desk a selection of Mrs. Mellon's notes and memoranda in the handwriting I recalled so well, with its scattering of dashes. The germ of the idea behind the foundation was evident in such phrases as "Hopefully to weave the current interests with the importance of the past" or simply "To Save the Library." And finally, in a letter she wrote in 2007 on lined notebook paper: "My dreams are large, but I feel the importance of saving the land." At the top of the page, her signature sketch of a bare-branched tree is symbolic of the entire venture, with limbs sprouting in every direction. In the foundation's logo, her tree, leafed out, stands within an open book, signifying the unlimited possibilities of her vision and legacy.



With his long experience in conservation, Jackson brings an acute eye to preserving Mrs. Mellon's principles. As he explains, "I try to see the individual landscape through her eyes and sense of aesthetics." She treated trees both as sculptures in and of themselves and as the focal points from which her gardens – flower, vegetable, or herb – evolved. Whether standing alone in the landscape or espaliered against walls, these trees were systematically pruned, and she knew their forms intimately: how they danced, as she would say, "like firelight" or cast dark shadows. "Be careful where you plant a tree," she would warn, "because in a few years, it will be stealing the light."

I was pleased to see written proof of this preoccupation in her instructions to Clifton Brown. Clif, as she called him, began working at Oak Spring in 1988. He is now Head of Arboriculture, Conservation, and Landscapes for the foundation under Jackson. (While Mrs. Mellon signed notes to friends with her childhood nickname "Bunny," these working memoranda always ended with "Thank you, Rachel Mellon.") In the assortment of directives Jackson showed me, accompanied charmingly by her precise sketches, she says, for example, about a beech in front of the house, "Leave Height but cut back spread. – This is the same problem with – Apple Trees." About another tree covering

*Rachel Lambert Mellon in the glasshouse with her miniature topiary trees. Photograph by Fred R. Conrad.*

her bedroom window: "It Blows & Blows – Please cut it back when & how you can. – It is constantly moving in my eyes and hard to work. Thank you." And my favorite one: "There is a tree that I see from my bedroom. – that if we could or Davey prune the top it would be a better View of the Mountains." Paired with that illustrated memorandum, which included her arrow to the offending branches, was a photograph of the mountainous landscape in which the tree was barely visible in the distance. The pruning skills she so valued will now be passed down to the foundation's horticultural interns during the spring-summer session.

Jackson then drove me out to view the adjoining Rokeby property, which was once owned by the Mellons and has recently been reacquired, so that the Oak Spring Garden Foundation now comprises 700 acres. As it had done for Oak Spring itself, the organization promptly conducted and published a scholarly study of the history, ecology, and management of the new land, in order to assess its present state and determine how it will look in fifty to one hundred years. As we walked by Paul Mellon's former pastures for his race-horses, Jackson paused to explain how they were being devel-

oped into biodiverse meadows with native species and berries to increase birdlife, and how the natural streams on the property were being protected as wetlands. I learned that the farmland will continue to produce fruits and vegetables in great quantity through the Bio-Cultural Conservation Farm; recently its staff converted eight hundred pounds of five apple varieties into one thousand jars of sweet, spicy apple butter. The goal is to make the foundation a powerful instrument for change by demonstrating environmental success. "By taking a scholarly approach and adding the technical, we are achieving practical results," Jackson said.

After stopping by the carpentry workshop nearby to meet Fred Griffith, Oak Spring's master carpenter for the last forty years, Jackson and I caught up with head gardener Judy Zatsick at the production greenhouses next to the Rokeby cutting garden. Born and bred in a garden family, Zatsick studied art and natural resources at the University of Michigan and later earned a certificate in horticulture. She brings with her professional public-garden experience.

The three of us drove back to the main house together, and Zatsick ushered me into the half-acre garden of French-style *parterres*, which are all set within the whitewashed framework of linked structures descending from the house's stone terrace. She had immediately grasped the details that make this garden magically delicate: its succession of terraces stepping down into turf and flower beds and a final *potager*. Singular trees – hardy orange, American holly, and Darlington oak – anchor corners and central positions throughout, and there is an abundance of clipped box.

In essence, Zatsick said, it is a three-season bedding garden, with summer plants



grown in the main glasshouse. As she sets about restoring the espaliered trees on the walls and the cordoned apples and pears surrounding the beds, she plans to expand the palette and introduce more perennials to replace annuals, understanding that Mrs. Mellon also allowed flexibility. She is cognizant of the importance of maintaining this garden at the center of the foundation's activities. "I know that to follow this great woman requires both motivation and inspiration," she said. On one terrace, Mrs. Mellon's characteristic whimsy was present in the form of a butterfly flower bed, edged in brick.

Leaving the garden through a central gate in the lower wall, one enters the breathtaking, ten-foot-high, 127-foot allée of pleached Mary Potter apple trees: thirty on each side trained over a metal frame, with seasonal planting beds lining the path. Nothing like it exists anywhere in the world. This allée eventually passes between two reflecting pools and terminates at the twin Lord & Burnham glasshouses. Domed at either end, they are joined in the middle by a central entrance room displaying the trompe l'oeil shelves of garden paraphernalia and memorabilia, which conceal actual shelves and drawers behind them. In the glasshouses there were planting benches, as well as narrow beds overflowing with lavender blooms and silver-tinged foliage, accented by touches of yellow. Here it was comforting also to encounter the sort of miniature, potted topiary trees that Mrs. Mellon popularized in this country in the fifties and treasured for their medieval quality: rosemary, thyme, myrtle, and santolina. Everything felt at once fresh and as it should be.

A path beyond led me through a hillside orchard to the whitewashed fieldstone library, which has a sharply pitched roof and an immense sundial with a steel gnomon on the façade that faces southwest. Since my first visit, the exterior had taken on the patina of time, and the library itself had been enlarged to accommodate its ever-growing collection. The interior was illuminated by those large, square windows typical of Edward Larrabee Barnes's architecture and had the feeling of a comfortable living room with its handcrafted materials, trestle tables, and galleried bookshelves rising to the ceiling. Inside, Tony Willis, the head librarian, oversees every aspect of accessioning and conservation and has been onboard since his days as an assistant in the early 1980s.

In her preface to *An Oak Spring Garland*, the catalogue of a 1989 exhibition at the Princeton University Library, Mrs. Mellon described how the books and drawings grew from a way of life and were "chosen one by one for their special and unusual contents and design." The result was "a working library where mystery, fascination, and romance contribute to centuries of the art of gardening as a source of discovery."

During her lifetime the library published four catalogs of its rare books – *An Oak Spring Sylva*, *An Oak Spring Pomona*, *An Oak Spring Flora*, and *An Oak Spring Herbaria*. Today the library is being mined by every program the foundation has envisioned for its future, including horticultural and scientific research, botanical arts, and landscape- and garden-design history. Meanwhile, the collection continues to grow, with a special emphasis on women in every aspect of the horticultural world. At present, in addition to drawings, prints, and manuscripts, there are nearly two thousand rare volumes and more than ten thousand modern titles. Digitized surveys are now also available of the library's books covering *hortus* or garden design in sixteen different countries from the fifteenth through the twentieth centuries.

Just before my meeting with Peter Crane, I found myself recalling my 1982 visit to Oak Spring with the *New York Times* photographer Fred R. Conrad to photograph the library and gardens that Mrs. Mellon had created. I could never have imagined that I would be returning almost forty years later to interview a team of professionals devoted to protecting her legacy.

To illuminate the dimensions of this endeavor, Peter Crane described how every aspect of Mrs. Mellon's life and interests will be explored in both scholarship and practice through initiatives engaging the land, gardens, and library. As an example, he highlighted a treasure of the library: four folio volumes of exquisitely detailed botanical art that John Bradby Blake (1745–73), a young English trader for the British East India Company in China, prepared in collaboration with a Chinese artist, Mauk-Sow-U. These rarely examined volumes, along with related material, became the focus of a workshop at Oak Spring in 2017 that generated fifteen papers by scholars from Asia, Europe, and North America that were subsequently published in a single issue of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*. This workshop launched Oak Spring's conference program, which convenes experts in botanical research, horticulture, landscape history, and environmental concerns to exchange information and share expertise; such meet-

ings generally take place in the picturesque Basket and Apple Houses.

Reflecting Mrs. Mellon's devotion to the fine arts, the foundation also sponsors residencies that provide opportunities for artists to relate their art to the landscape, historic gardens, or rare editions in the library. A separate program for botanical illustrators combines art and science. In addition, women writers are welcome to pursue specific studies in plant science and conservation. To house these artists and conferees, several buildings – even the stables – have been renovated into attractive quarters for visitors. Crane credits his wife, Elinor, with scouring the region's antiques shops to furnish them.

Before departing I paid a visit to a building that has been converted into the Oak Spring Gallery: a memory house with exhibitions relating to Mrs. Mellon's life. I was accompanied by Nancy Collins, Mrs. Mellon's former nurse, now the archivist, who brings to the foundation important knowledge of Mrs. Mellon's personal history. In glass-fronted showcases there were fashionable clothes, mostly blue, designed by Hubert de Givenchy, including a long, patterned party skirt and a tailored suit, along with practical handbags and even a tea set. Mounted at the entrance is Fred Conrad's now famous photograph of Mrs. Mellon in the greenhouse. She holds a miniature topiary tree and wears her Balenciaga garden hat and a raincoat from her Foxcroft School days, and has a large pair of garden shears under her arm.

Finally, though, one does not need these reminders, for her presence is everywhere. While she lived, Mrs. Mellon created a private world for her own pleasure and edification that was dedicated to gardening and its scholarly basis. More astonishing was her philanthropic decision to share the influence and ideals embodied in that extraordinary creation far beyond its geographical boundaries. In closing my original article on Mrs. Mellon, I contrasted her preference for fixed horizons in landscape with her expansive thinking, which stretched "as far, indeed, as her imaginative inner eye can see." I repeat those words in praise of the imaginative ambitions of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, as it resolves to lead us into a more knowledgeably designed and responsible environmental future. – Paula Deitz

## Awards

### 2020 John Brinckerhoff Jackson Book Prize

The Foundation for Landscape Studies is pleased to announce the awardees of the John Brinckerhoff Jackson Book Prize for a distinguished, recently published work on a subject related to the history of designed and vernacular landscapes.

Cynthia S. Brenwall  
*The Central Park: Original Designs for New York's Greatest Treasure*  
Abrams Books, 2019

Dilip da Cunha  
*The Invention of Rivers: Alexander's Eye and Ganga's Descent*  
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019

Michael Ezban  
*Aquaculture Landscapes: Fish Farms and the Public Realm*  
Routledge, 2019

Clayton Strange  
*Monotown: Urban Dreams Brutal Imperatives*  
ORO Editions/Applied Research & Design, 2019

### 2020 Special Recognition Citations

John Beardsley  
Former director of Garden and Landscape Studies, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection

Charles A. Birnbaum  
Founder, CEO, and president of the Cultural Landscape Foundation

### 2020 David R. Coffin Publication Grant

The Foundation for Landscape Studies is pleased to acknowledge the following 2020 awardees of the David R. Coffin Publication Grant to authors or publishers of forthcoming books that will advance scholarship in the field of garden history and landscape studies.

Sarah Allaback  
*Marjorie Cautley, Landscape Architect*  
(volume in the LALH series Designing the American Park)  
Library of American Landscape History

William K. Wyckoff and Karl Byrand, editors  
*Designs upon Nature: The First Cultural Landscape History of Yellowstone National Park*  
George F. Thompson Publishing, in association with the University of Virginia Press

## Contributors

**F. Douglas Adams**, AIA, is an architect who taught for fifteen years at Rhode Island School of Design and subsequently served as visiting critic at both that institution and the University of Texas at Austin. He is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities grant for research at Brown University and has received several architectural design awards for educational and residential projects in the United States and abroad.

Included among these is the Smith Award for accessibility renovations to Elmwood, the president's residence at Harvard University. He was John Brinckerhoff Jackson's first teaching assistant at Harvard and subsequently maintained a twenty-five-year friendship with him during their twice-yearly sketching trips, which were sometimes conducted by motorcycle.

**Robert Calo** is an emeritus professor at the Graduate School of Journalism at University of California, Berkeley. He was a Shorenstein Fellow at the Harvard

Kennedy School in 2011, writing about elite media's problematic relationship to populism. He produced the documentary *J. B. Jackson and the Love of Everyday Places* in 1988 for PBS. His recent video work includes *Sound Tracks*, a global music series for PBS (2012), *How to Survive a Murder*, a four part series for REELZ (2019), and *Unadopted*, a documentary short about foster care, premiering in 2020.

**Paula Deitz** is editor of *The Hudson Review*. Her book, *Of Gardens: Selected Essays* (2011), published by Penn Press, will soon be released as an audiobook by Redwood Audiobooks.

**Kenneth I. Helphand** is the Philip H. Knight Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture at the University of Oregon. He is the author of *Colorado: Visions of an American Landscape* (1991), *Yard Street Park: The Design of Suburban Open Space* (with Cynthia L. Girling) (1994),

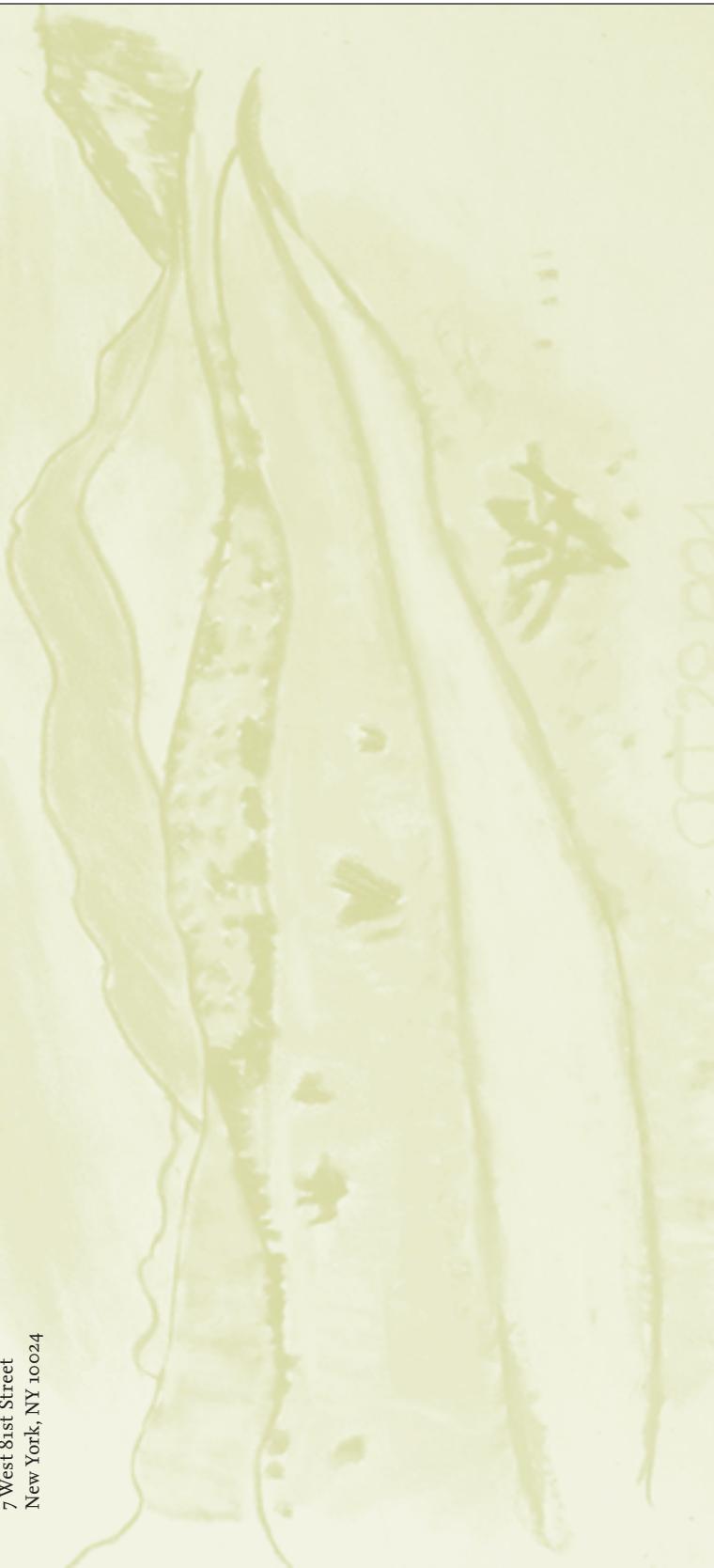
*Dreaming Gardens: Landscape Architecture and the Making of Modern Israel* (2002), *Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime* (2006), and *Lawrence Halprin* (2017). He is the former chair of the Senior Fellows in Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC.

**Helen L. Horowitz** is the Sydenham Clark Parsons Professor of History and of American Studies, emerita, at Smith College.

Her *Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America* (2002) was one of three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize in history and the winner of the Merle Curti Prize of the Organization of American Historians. She is the author and editor of many additional books, including *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (1997), for which she served as editor and contributor. She contributed "Mr. Jackson: Establishment Man, Vernacular Man, Protean Man," to *Drawn to Landscape: The Pioneering Work of J. B. Jackson* (2015), he is currently at work with Moule and Polyzoides, Architects and Urbanists, on a monograph highlighting the design and planning innovations of the firm.

**Laurie Olin**, FASLA, is professor emeritus of landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and founding partner of OLIN, a landscape architectural firm. He was the designer for the transformations of Bryant Park and Columbus Circle in New York City, the grounds of the Washington Monument in Washington, DC, and the landscape of the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles. He received the National Medal of Arts from President Obama in 2012.

**Chris Wilson** is J. B. Jackson Chair of Cultural Landscape Studies Emeritus at the University of New Mexico, where he founded the Historic Preservation and Regionalism graduate program. Author of *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (1997) and coeditor of *Drawn to Landscape: the Pioneering Work of J. B. Jackson* (2015), he is currently at work with Moule and Polyzoides, Architects and Urbanists, on a monograph highlighting the design and planning innovations of the firm.



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