

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS FIRST SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Exhibition Highlights Landscape Projects Playing Key Roles in Revitalization of Urban Spaces

Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery, sixth floor
February 25–May 16, 2005

NEW YORK, February 22, 2005—The Museum of Modern Art presents its first survey of contemporary landscape design, *Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape*, from February 25 to May 16, 2005. The exhibition demonstrates how urban sites have been reclaimed from obsolescence or degradation as cities remake and redefine their outdoor spaces. The projects range from innovative reinterpretations of the traditional town square to rooftop plazas, public parks and gardens, to large urban sectors ripe for redevelopment. These projects reveal the many approaches taken by today’s architects and landscape architects as they explore the relationship between artifice and nature. Organized by Peter Reed, Curator, and Irene Shum, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Architecture and Design, The Museum of Modern Art, the exhibition includes 23 projects from North America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

The projects—most of which are being exhibited for the first time in an art museum—are represented by video and animation, models, drawings, computer renderings, and large photographs. *Groundswell* uses before-and-after visuals to show the often-dramatic transformations that occur in these landscapes. The videos, most of which were made for the exhibition, are intended to give the visitor an experience of the sites portrayed. Some of the videos will be projected as large as 6 by 11 feet onto the gallery walls.

Mr. Reed said, “Nearly every significant new landscape designed in recent years occupies a site that did not exist as public space half a generation ago. These constructed landscapes reveal remarkable aesthetic and programmatic changes as designers and cities find diverse ways to confront contemporary issues associated with these sites ranging from the physical properties of the ground, their history, and new purposes.”

The projects are presented in three broadly themed sections in the exhibition. The projects illustrate how designers address the challenges of designing the urban plazas and squares with unique visual and symbolic identities, how designers are creating simulations and new topographies, and how designers and urban planners are reclaiming formerly obsolete and degraded sites for public spaces. The projects which have been recently completed or are in the process of being realized, are designed for many kinds of sites including artificially-constructed surfaces, abused and polluted sites that present numerous challenges, and sites of civil and

political strife. These issues are illustrated through a diverse range of transformations. A former fuel storage and transfer station requiring extensive remediation is being reconstructed as the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park in downtown Seattle by Weiss/Manfredi Architects (2001; projected completion 2006); Crissy Field, a military airstrip on San Francisco Bay has been transformed into a popular waterfront park with restored wetlands by Hargreaves Associates (1994–2001); in downtown Beirut, where civil war raged, the city's first public garden, Hadiqat-As-Samah (Garden of Forgiveness), has been designed for an archeological site by Kathryn Gustafson and Neil Porter (2000; projected completion 2006); and America's largest sanitary landfill is envisioned as wildlife sanctuary and place for recreation in New York's Fresh Kills *lifescape* by James Corner of Field Operations (2001–05; projected start of construction 2007). (A full list of the projects and the respective designers is attached.)

Designing the Urban Stage

Schouwburgplein (Theater Square) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, designed by Adriaan Geuze of West 8 (1991–96), exemplifies several key issues in its rehabilitation of a de facto parking lot into a public gathering place. The most iconic features of the Square are the monumental light masts, resembling industrial cranes, which cast pools of light onto the plaza. The overall imagery of the Square draws upon the city's shipping industry as portrayed in the lively video produced for the exhibition by Hectic Pictures and directed by Hans Werlemann.

In 1996, the city of Manchester, England, was the target of a devastating IRA bombing that left the city's center damaged. The master plan to restore and revitalize Manchester City Centre by EDAW (1996–present) proposed significant changes to the street and transportation network and created new and refurbished public spaces.

The new Exchange Square (Martha Schwartz, Inc., 1996–2001) replaced a tangled traffic intersection with an abstract, minimalist composition that also incorporates references to the city's industrial past. Piccadilly Gardens (ARUP and EDAW, 1998–2002) has been transformed into a modern urban park in the heart of the city that includes a broad central lawn, interactive fountain, and a pavilion by Japanese architect Tadao Ando.

Another formerly industrial city, Bradford, England, which has suffered from economic decline and a shrinking population, is the subject of a master plan addressing its revitalization. The master plan for Bradford by Alsop Ltd. (2003; projected completion 2020) calls for radical interventions to remake the city center by replacing underused and insignificant buildings with a network of parks and restored waterways where no adequate public space exists.

Other reinterpretations of the urban plaza include the rooftop Keyaki Plaza, Saitama City, Japan, by Yoji Sasaki and Peter Walker (1994–2000) with its grove of zelkova trees in a rigorously controlled Minimalist composition that is intended as a quiet refuge, and the sunken plaza called Shanghai Carpet in China by Tom Leader with Michael Duncan (2003; projected completion 2006) a rich amalgam of materials and plants associated with old Shanghai. In the designs of Christophe Girod's Invalidenpark in former East Berlin (1992–97) and Kathryn

Gustafson and Neil Porter's Hadiqat-As-Samah (2000; projected completion 2006) urban spaces address emotionally charged issues of past civil unrest while transcending cultural differences.

Simulations and New Topographies

Many projects in *Groundswell* explore the relationship between artifice and nature in various ways, including the sculpting of new topographies and the simulation of natural environments. These projects also expand on a traditional role of landscape design in correcting or concealing eyesores, whether natural or man-made, through artistic means and the reshaping of the ground plane.

The Museum of Modern Art Roof Garden by Ken Smith (2003–05), a decorative landscape to be viewed from above, is also intended as a provocative and ironic commentary on this practice. The camouflage-inspired design employs real white pebbles, artificial rocks, crushed glass, recycled black rubber, artificial boxwood, and a green plastic supporting armature. The artificial garden is a simulation of nature and a subversion of the traditional role of camouflage to hide or conceal.

Catherine Mosbach's Bordeaux Botanical Garden in France (2000–02), which also serves as a public park, simulates natural environments, cultivated fields of crops, and aestheticized nature in the form of a water garden and labyrinth. Lurie Garden by Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd. for downtown Chicago (2000–04) is inspired by the Midwest prairie with native perennials planted in contoured beds that are actually built on a slab that conceal an underground garage.

Reclaimed Sites

Many contemporary built landscapes, as seen in *Groundswell*, are situated on former sanitary landfills, defunct steel mills, and polluted riverfronts and other seemingly inhospitable sites. For Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park in Germany (1990–2002), Peter Latz chose not to erase the past, but to incorporate the infrastructure of the former Thyssen Steelworks in the new park. Latz recognized that the combination of industry and nature can evoke unexpected associations and experiences, expanding the idea of a modern park. The former San Francisco Bay military airstrip, Crissy Field (1994–2001), involved the restoration of natural tidal wetlands that had been filled and paved, and rehabilitating an historic grass airstrip. These elements are complemented by the design of new paths, activity areas, and restored dunes resulting in the transformation of a 100-acre site into a public park.

The municipal Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island, New York, will soon undergo a decades-long transformation. The designer James Corner of Field Operations, has created a master plan to address the 53 years of dumping that have created mounds ranging from 100 to 225 feet in height concealed under a protective membrane. Yet nearly half the site consists of creeks and wetlands that provide a regionally significant wildlife sanctuary. The exhibition presents a video showing Fresh Kills as it exists today and a vision of how this complicated site could be developed into a place for recreation and wildlife including two monumental landforms

that mark the site as the final home to the wreckage and remains from the World Trade Center disaster.

A website has been developed to complement the exhibition. It will feature all 23 projects in the exhibition. A brochure accompanying the exhibition illustrates a selection of projects in *Groundswell*. The illustrations are coupled with statements by the designers to convey a range of ideas and concerns regarding their approach to constructing contemporary landscapes.

Landscape Design at MoMA

The Museum published a book titled *Modern Gardens and the Landscapes* by Elizabeth B. Kassler in 1964 (republished in 1984), long regarded as a one of the definitive surveys in the field. In October 1988, the Museum held a symposium "Landscape and Architecture in the Twentieth Century." Its transcripts were published in *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century* in 1991. Most recently, the Museum mounted its first exhibition devoted to landscape design, *Roberto Burle Marx: The Unnatural Art of the Garden*, which was on view from May to August 1991. More recently the Museum presented a panel discussion *Shifting Ground: The Downsvew Park Competition* in November 2000. An outdoor sculpture garden has been a part of The Museum of Modern Art since its first permanent building was erected in 1939. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden was redesigned by Philip Johnson in 1955.

PROGRAMS

Public programs to complement this exhibition include a symposium and Brown Bag Lunch Lectures. *Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape—A Symposium* will be held on Friday and Saturday, April 15 and 16. On the first evening at 6:30 p.m. David Harvey, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York will deliver a keynote address. On Saturday, April 16, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., speakers will include designers and scholars in individual presentations and roundtable discussions. The symposium is cosponsored by The Architectural League of New York, The Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture of the Cooper Union, and The Museum of Modern Art. Two Brown Bag Lunch Lectures will be held on April 18 and 21. [See programs release for more information.]

PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated publication. A text by curator Peter Reed and a full-color plate section demonstrate how these innovative projects expand the definition of the modern landscape while responding to a variety of conditions, such as program, social function, and the transformation and reclamation of urban sites. Entries for each project provide a succinct description of the site and its transformation, and design concepts are illustrated by photographs, drawings, and models. The book is published by The Museum of Modern Art and is sold in MoMA stores and at www.momastore.org, and available to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and through Thames & Hudson in Europe. 168 pages; (ISBN 0-87070-379-X; paperback. [See publications release for more information.]

SPONSORSHIP

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No. 7

Press Contact: pressoffice@moma.org

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The Museum of Modern Art

Projects and Designers

Bordeaux Botanical Garden
La Bastide, Bordeaux, France
2000–02
Catherine Mosbach, Mosbach Paysagistes, Paris, France

Bradford City Centre Master Plan
Bradford, England
2003; projected completion, 2020
Alsop Ltd, London, England

Crissy Field
Presidio National Park, San Francisco, California
1994–2001
Hargreaves Associates, San Francisco, California, and Cambridge, Massachusetts

Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park
International Building Exhibition (IBA) Emscher Park, Duisburg, Germany
1990–2002
Peter Latz, Latz + Partner, Kranzberg, Germany

Exchange Square
Manchester, England
1998–2000
Martha Schwartz, Martha Schwartz, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts

Fresh Kills *lifescape*
Staten Island, New York
2001–05; projected start of construction, 2007
James Corner, Field Operations, New York, New York

Garonne Riverfront Master Plan
Bordeaux, France
2003–04; projected completion, 2034
Michel Desvigne, Paris, France

Greenwich Peninsula
London, England
1997–2000 (partially realized)
Michel Desvigne, Desvigne & Dalnoky, Paris, France

Hadiqat As-Samah (Garden of Forgiveness)
Beirut Central District, Beirut, Lebanon
2000; projected completion, 2006
Kathryn Gustafson and Neil Porter, Gustafson Porter Ltd, London, England

Igualada Cemetery Park
Igualada, Spain
1985–96 (partially complete)
Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós, Barcelona, Spain

Invalidenpark
Berlin, Germany
1992–97
Christophe Girot, Atelier Physis, Paris, France

Keyaki Plaza
Saitama New Urban Center, Saitama City, Japan
1994–2000
Peter Walker, Peter Walker William Johnson and Partners, Berkeley, California,
Yoji Sasaki, OHTORI Consultants Environmental Design Institute, Osaka, Japan,
and Masayuki Kusumoto, NTT Urban Development Co., Tokyo, Japan

Lurie Garden
Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois
2000–04
Kathryn Gustafson, Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd., Seattle, Washington,
with Piet Oudolf, Hummelo, the Netherlands,
and Robert Israel, Los Angeles, California

Manchester City Centre Master Plan
Manchester, England
1996–present
EDAW, London, England

The Museum of Modern Art Roof Garden
New York, New York
2003–05
Ken Smith, Ken Smith Landscape Architect, New York, New York

Northeast Coastal Park, Forum 2004
Barcelona, Spain
2000–04
Abalos & Herreros, Madrid, Spain

Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle Art Museum
Seattle, Washington
2001–06
Weiss/Manfredi Architects, New York, New York

Parc de la Cour du Maroc
Paris, France
2003; projected completion, 2006
Michel and Claire Corajoud, Paris, France, and
ADR and Georges Descombes, Geneva, Switzerland

Piccadilly Gardens
Manchester, England
1998–2002
ARUP, Manchester, England,
and EDAW, London, England

Schouwburgplein (Theater Square)
Rotterdam, the Netherlands
1991–96
Adriaan Geuze, West 8 urban design & landscape architecture bv,
Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Shanghai Carpet
Shanghai Yang Pu University City Hub, Shanghai, China
2003; projected completion, 2006
Tom Leader, Tom Leader Studio, Berkeley, California,
with Michael Duncan, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, San Francisco, California

Shell Petroleum Headquarters
Rueil-Malmaison, France
1989–91
Kathryn Gustafson, Paysage Land, Paris, France,
and Valode & Pistre Architectes, Paris, France

Southeast Coastal Park, Forum 2004
Barcelona, Spain
2000–04
Farshid Moussavi and Alejandro Zaera-Polo, Foreign Office Architects, London, England