

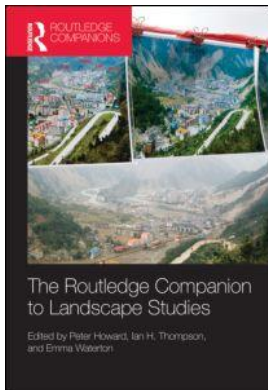
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On landscape urbanism

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Over the past decade, Landscape Urbanism has emerged as a robust alternative to the failures of modernist urban planning. Its followers, a collective of landscape architects, architects, urban designers and others, believe that the medium of landscape, because it necessarily privileges ecology over form, is the most able organizer of a healthy, post-industrial urbanity. Additionally, they hold that the city, the region, indeed the entire world should be understood as a kind of a landscape, not in the nineteenth-century understanding of landscape, i.e. pastoral, picturesque “nature,” but as an organization of complex, discreet, scalable systems that combine to make one unique environment. Furthermore, Landscape Urbanism employs the term “landscape” in several ways: as metaphor; the city is like a landscape; as model; the city will function like a landscape; and as a literal organizer; the design of the city will be driven by landscape as opposed to architecture. The result is a landscape-based urbanism that seeks to radically realign traditional disciplinary boundaries in the design professions while it breaks down the established dualisms between the synthetic and the natural, the urban and the wild. This is different from the ancient concept of *rus in urbe*, transferring the ‘countryside into the city,’ in that it is not simply erasing the city in favor of the country.

This chapter introduces the reader to Landscape Urbanism by describing its emergence, conceptual framework, how research is carried out, major works, recent developments, and also briefly touches on its critics. In design disciplines such as architecture or landscape architecture, innovative practice is often considered as a form of research, to be evaluated through critical review, an equivalence that has been recognized, for example, through the creation of design-based PhD programs in the UK and the US. Through a review of seminal thinking by its leading theorists, the chapter will trace the development of Landscape Urbanism’s overarching theories and its major themes as they relate to the innovative practices that characterize the professional landscape urbanist. A review of some influential Landscape Urbanism projects – both built and un-built – is used to help describe the practical expression of the sometimes dense theoretical framing that characterize Landscape Urbanism. Furthermore, examination of the speculative urbanism of emergent studios will help articulate Landscape Urbanism’s unique approach to urbanity and its primary method of research, i.e. innovative practice.

The emergence of an emergent theory

The public event that signified the shift from modernist planning to the systems based approach that would become Landscape Urbanism, appears to be the 1982 Parc de la Villette design competition (Barzilay et al., 1984). Though Bernard Tschumi's winning design was indeed influential for its innovative program grounded in "culture" rather than "nature" (Meyer, 1991: 16–26), Rem Koolhaas and OMA's (2009) second-place proposal, which allowed for indetermination and flux by privileging landscape and natural systems over architecture and fixed program, was the scheme that most vigorously repudiated the form-driven architecture of the time, by using program and event instead of vertical structure as the driver. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, a few short years after these designs debuted, the gestalt of Landscape Urbanism was already having a radical impact on urban design education, especially at the University of Pennsylvania where then architecture and landscape architecture students such as Charles Waldheim and Alan Berger were pushing the limits of traditional design practice under the guidance of professors James Corner and Mohsen Mostafavi. In 1997 Landscape Urbanism's formalization as a unique theoretical framework began with the Grahame Foundation sponsored International Landscape Urbanism Exhibition, held in Chicago at the University of Illinois (Shane, 2004: 3). The event included speakers such as James Corner, Adriaan Geuze, and Mohsen Mostafavi. Charles Waldheim, who coined the term Landscape Urbanism, organized the exhibition to describe the forces and events which he and others had seen coalescing over the course of the previous decade to form this new brand of urbanism, which was being practiced, at that time, by a small cohort of North American and European designers including Stan Allen, James Corner, Adriaan Geuze, and Rem Koolhaas. Almost immediately following the International Landscape Urbanism Exhibition, design schools in North America and Europe began offering studio-based masters and post-professional programs in Landscape Urbanism studies, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Toronto, Harvard Graduate School of Design, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as an influential program at London's Architectural Association, developed under the direction of Mohsen Mostafavi and chaired by Ciro Najle (NB: the University of Illinois no longer offers an independent Landscape Urbanism program).

Almost from the beginning, writing has been a primary vehicle for identifying and sorting out the tenets of this evolving form of urbanism. One of the earliest contributions was James Corner's *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*, soon followed by his *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory*. Shortly thereafter other writing and critique of the Landscape Urbanism approach style, including *CASE: Downsviue Park* edited by Julia Czerniak, Stan Allen's *Mat Urbanism: The Thick 2-D*, and Charles Waldheim's *Stalking Detroit*, was received by an enthusiastic but small, largely academic audience. But with the publication of *Landscape Urbanism: A Manual for the Machinic Landscape* Mostafavi et al. (2003) launched the first of several books on Landscape Urbanism that would, for a much larger audience, document and codify the evolving theoretical framework of this unique form of urbanism as it relates to practice. *Landscape Urbanism* was followed by the widely read *Landscape Urbanism Reader*, edited by Charles Waldheim (2006), a sweeping anthology that provided an overview of the theory and field of practice as it had been defined to that point. Following a conference of the same name, Mostafavi (2010) published *Ecological Urbanism*, an anthology that sought to further Landscape Urbanism's landscape-based approach to urbanity from a 'way of thinking' into a coherent, cross-disciplinary doctrine for practice at multiple scales. Other important writing on the subject of Landscape Urbanism includes Alan Berger's *Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America*, *KERB*, and *Topos 71*.

A definition of landscape urbanism and its theoretical framework

The theoretical roots of Landscape Urbanism come from two distinct sources. First, there are the early 1980s post-modernist critiques of modernist architecture and planning advanced by Charles Jencks and others, which “indicted modernism for its inability to produce a ‘meaningful’ or ‘livable’ public realm, for its failure to come to terms with the city as an historical construction of collective consciousness, and for its inability to communicate with multiple audiences” (Waldheim, 2006: 38–9). Landscape Urbanism contends that it is different from, and better than, modernist forms of planning and design because it recognizes that an urban setting is in constant flux and that, in order to respond to such a condition properly, the design program must be grounded in a flexible indeterminacy, as opposed to rigid verticality. This allows “any shift, modification, replacement, or substitutions to occur without damaging the initial hypothesis” (Waldheim, 2006: 41). Within this framework, Landscape Urbanism contends that the medium of landscape offers the best possible means for producing highly responsive, flexible urban settings that can adapt to the ever evolving demographic, environmental, political, and social needs of the contemporary city (Waldheim, 2006: 37).

The second root of Landscape Urbanism is found in the writings of planners such as Patrick Geddes, Benton MacKaye, Lewis Mumford, and especially Ian McHarg (Waldheim, 2006: 39). However, even though Corner recognizes that Landscape Urbanism directly benefits from the “canonical texts of regional environmental planning,” he is insistent that landscape urbanism remains distinct from that tradition, acknowledging the importance of McHarg’s *Design with Nature* but rejecting the “opposition of nature and city implied in [McHarg’s] regionally scaled environmental planning practice” (Waldheim, 2006: 38). Landscape Urbanism instead supports a condition where nature and the city are not separate but interwoven, at times indistinguishable. This blending of conditions is (theoretically) achieved through application of the four major themes of practice, discussed below.

While the premise of using landscape as the primary medium for organizing urbanity may seem straightforward, defining Landscape Urbanism has proven to be elusive, and iterations and interpretations abound. One of the most carefully nuanced is Julia Czerniak’s:

landscape urbanism, a phrase taken here to be the conceptualization of and design and planning for urban landscapes that draw from an understanding of, variously, landscape’s disciplinarity (history of ideas), functions (ecologies and economies), formal and spatial attributes (both natural and cultural organizations, systems, and formations), and processes (temporal qualities) impacting many scales of work. Landscape urbanism also suggests a particular culture of and consciousness about the land that refrains from the superficial reference to sustainability, ecology, and the complex processes of our environments in favor of projects that actually engage them. Embedded in landscape urbanism is concern not only with how landscape performs ... but how it appears ...

(Czerniak 2001: 108)

At the other pole there is the more straightforward definition provided by Ruth Durack (2004: 1): “the concept is elegantly simple. It’s a call to turn the traditional practice of urban design inside out, starting with open spaces and natural systems to structure urban form, instead of buildings and infrastructure systems.”

In *A Reference Manifesto*, Charles Waldheim (2006: 11) says that as much as anything else Landscape Urbanism signifies “a disciplinary realignment ... [in] which landscape replaces

architecture as the basic building block of contemporary urbanism.” Importantly, James Corner (2003: 58), notes that “landscape urbanism is more than a singular image or style: it is an ethos, an attitude, a way of thinking and acting.”

In perhaps the most thorough critical reading of the Landscape Urbanism canon thus far, critic and researcher Ian Thompson (2012) identifies “Ten Tenets for Landscape Urbanism,” distilling and collating the essence of the theoretical framework that supports Landscape Urbanism in a powerful, but easily understood list, as follows:

- 1 Landscape Urbanism rejects the binary opposition between city and landscape.
- 2 Landscape replaces architecture as the basic building block of cities.
Corollary: Landscape Urbanism involves the collapse, or the radical realignment, of traditional disciplinary boundaries
- 3 Landscape Urbanism engages with vast scales – both in time and space.
- 4 Landscape Urbanism prepares fields for action and stages for performances.
- 5 Landscape Urbanism is less concerned with what things look like, more with what they do.
- 6 Landscape Urbanism sees the landscape as machinic.
- 7 Landscape Urbanism makes the invisible visible.
- 8 Landscape Urbanism embraces ecology and complexity.
- 9 Landscape Urbanism encourages hybridity between natural and engineered systems.
- 10 Landscape Urbanism recognizes the remedial possibilities inherent in the landscape.

The complexity of the task at hand – exploding the disciplinary boundaries within the design professions while prescribing a flexible method for designing complex urban projects – is the reason for this glut of interpretations, but all conceptions of Landscape Urbanism agree that landscape, as a model, is uniquely suited to tackle increasingly complex, contemporary urban dynamics (Architectural Association, 2010; Waldheim 2006: 43), especially when dealing with the so called “meta-narrative of ecology” (Weller 2008: 265) and, in general, also insist on the following: there are political, environmental, cultural, economic, and social dimensions to urbanity; foregrounding the performative, or infrastructural is essential (Corner, 2003); an urban site is in constant flux, therefore place construction must remain flexible and adaptable; urbanity exists at many scales simultaneously; there is a temporal element to consider when designing urban places, i.e. change happens over time, design must recognize this and respond accordingly (Steiner, 2006: 247). Additionally, implicit in all attempts to define Landscape Urbanism is a critique of:

architecture and urban design’s inability to offer coherent, competent, and convincing explanations of contemporary urban conditions. In this context, the discourse surrounding landscape urbanism can be read as a disciplinary realignment in which landscape supplants architecture’s historical role as the basic building block of urban design.

(Waldheim, 2006: 37)

The main themes of landscape urbanist practice

As seemingly difficult as it has been to definitively identify the theoretical basis of Landscape Urbanism, in his contribution to the *Landscape Urbanism Reader* James Corner (2006: 28–32), himself a theorist and practitioner, very clearly outlines four “themes from which to organize the emerging landscape urbanist practice: ecological and urban processes over time; the staging of horizontal surfaces; the operational or working method; and the imaginary.”

The first of these four themes for the emerging landscape urbanist practice addresses *processes over time*. This means that instead of ignoring, erasing, concealing, or relocating the processes of urbanization, i.e. “capital accumulation, deregulation, globalization, environmental protection, and so on” (Corner, 2006: 28) the designer allows them to inform and create spatial urbanism. This is in direct opposition to modernist planning which sought “to contain the dynamic multiplicity of urban processes within a fixed, rigid, spatial frame that neither derived from nor redirected any of the processes moving through it” (Corner, 2006: 28). This flexible urbanism, Corner contends, will create a “more organic, fluid urbanism” that privileges process over form. In order to do this, Landscape Urbanism insists that a universal shift must happen, replacing the vertical object (architecture) with the landscape-based urban system as the central organizer of future urbanisms. For Corner (ibid.: 29) and other landscape urbanists, the so-called “soft world” of ecology offers the best model for understanding the complexity of the modern city. Corner (ibid.: 30) says that “the discipline of ecology suggests that individual agents, acting across a broad field of operation, produce incremental and cumulative effects that continually evolve the shape of an environment over time.” With this, ecology becomes not only the analogy for reading urbanity but also the basis for intervention.

But, instead of the “natural” interventions that landscape architects have developed over time (Ian McHarg’s 1967 *Design With Nature*, for example), Corner and other landscape urbanists are calling for an intervention which treats the urban condition itself as another aspect of ecology, so not only do sites have commonly understood ecologies of water, air, vegetation and so forth, they also have ecologies of the political, social, economic, demographic and so on. As Corner (2006: 31) puts it “The promise of landscape urbanism is the development of a spacetime ecology that treats all forces and agents working in the urban field and considers them as continuous networks of interrelationships.”

The staging of horizontal surfaces

The second theme that Corner outlines for landscape urbanist practice is the *staging of horizontal surfaces*. Simply put, Corner (2006: 31–2) is referring to an understanding of the multi-scaled ground plane of cities that allows it to be viewed and considered as the primary element of urban infrastructure, largely because it “sows the seeds of future possibility, staging the ground for both uncertainty and promise.” Corner uses the street grid of upper Manhattan as an example of a surface staging that is legible, flexible, scalable, and open to change over time. This understanding allows a treatment of horizontal surface that permits a higher incidence of indeterminacy and future possibility, while giving the literal landscape renewed significance.

The operational or working method

The third theme of landscape urbanist practice is the *operational or working method* which, in terms of pure representational language, asks the designer to reconsider the picturesque focus of land design and the techniques by which he or she characterizes and interprets the vast scope of urban systems and functions across a range of scales. It is from the dictates of the operational/working method that the design “terra firma” of the traditional landscape architect – the picturesque and the pastoral – are relegated to sorry seconds, in favor of the performative “beauty” of infrastructure, urban flux, and ecology. This requires a complete overhaul of representational language as well: the landscape architect’s traditional water-colors and marker renderings of mature landscapes in the best of weather are replaced with complex diagrams, views that represent temporal and seasonal changes, conceptual phasing that spans generations, and so

forth. Here the visual and analytic tools of the planner, the landscape architect, and the urbanist get combined and married to methods completely outside the design professions, such as computer programming, music, physics and modern art. All of these areas, and more, can provide the landscape urbanist with the means to tell the story of contemporary urbanity. Additionally, the working method calls upon practitioners to embrace interdisciplinary collaboration, with the landscape urbanist leading the design team. It is within the operational or the working method, therefore, that the realignment of the design professions is codified (Corner, 2006: 38).

Imagination and speculation

The first of the three practical themes of landscape urbanist practice, together recommend a path for a practice-based approach to indeterminacy that allows for flexibility in preparing for the complexity of urbanity, and better ways of expressing analyses and solutions, but are, in Corner's estimation, meaningless without the fourth theme, the *imaginary*. The imaginary is where all of these mechanisms unite to creatively solve problems and join the practical to the fantastical, the natural to the synthetic. This is primarily (but not exclusively) what differentiates Landscape Urbanism from the McHargian approach to *designing with nature*, and from a "bureaucratic and uninspired" (Corner 2006: 31–2) contemporary planning practice which, Corner says, is entirely lacking in broad understanding of the complexity of modern urbanism or the creativity needed to join the disparate but still related ecologies that make it up.

Forms of research: the university and innovations in practice

In many ways Landscape Urbanism is still in its infancy and therefore lacking a large portfolio of built work for testing, proving, or disproving any of its theoretical assertions. Currently research into Landscape Urbanism is, for the most part, taking place at either the university level or through innovative design practice. At the university level, research is primarily happening in studio-based masters and research PhD programs, however, despite a number of prominent Landscape Urbanism focused programs at schools such as the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – both in the United States – and the Architectural Association in London, to date only one PhD dissertation that tests the proposals or outcomes of Landscape Urbanism has been published in North America and only one in Europe (Shannon 2004; Bouras 2010: from a Proquest thesis and dissertation database search 15 November 2011). These papers, to various extents, question and test theories in the abstract, neither examines a built work as a test case. The fact that only a small amount of academic research has been published thus far indicates that there are major opportunities for novel academic research into the promises and performance of Landscape Urbanism.

At the level of innovatory practice, Landscape Urbanism research is more abundant but less rigorous. Through the act of designing, practitioners explore materials, systems, and the theoretical framework of Landscape Urbanism, and much like the research done by visual artists, often the completed design and the design process itself are essential aspects of the research. Additionally, commissions for public park lands often have research feedbacks built into the design requirements. For instance, because the City of New York wishes to use the new Freshkills Park as a "platform for generating knowledge applicable to a broad range of urban environmental issues" it intends to study the success of Field Operations' interventions for their impact on habitat, soil production, and water quality, as well as their impact on visitor's experience. However, the 30-year timescale of the park project means that the results of this research will not be known for the foreseeable future. As stated on the Freshkills website:

The City hopes to capitalize on this available land by collaborating on research plots and permitting access that is restricted to scientists, technicians and students. Initial projects are already underway with the United States Forest Service and CUNY Hunter. The Department of Parks & Recreation continues to seek partners in academia, museums, government and the private sector in the interest of refining and targeting research questions toward the advancement of study and the pursuit of funding opportunities.

Freshkills Park, NYC, website

The products of practice-based research consist variously of built and un-built design work with some of the most robust and innovative design research coming from North American practices such as Stoss Landscape Urbanism in Boston, Massachusetts and James Corner Field Operations, in New York. These firms, which are collaborative by nature, generally employ architects, graphic designers, and horticultural experts, but are led by landscape architects who are resolute landscape urbanists and who practice a landscape-based urbanism for which, culture, ecology, infrastructure, and imagination are the systems driving their design work.

The most well-known built project adhering to the Landscape Urbanism framework is the High Line Park designed by a multi-disciplinary team led by James Corner of JCFO. The High Line Park design takes an abandoned elevated rail structure on the West Side of Manhattan (New York) and “retools [the] industrial conveyance into a post-industrial instrument of leisure, life, and growth. By changing the rules of engagement between plant life and pedestrians.” By blending the synthetic with the organic the design strategy for the Highline, dubbed “agri-tecture,” offers “flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs, opportunities, and desires of [this] dynamic context” and “is designed to remain perpetually unfinished, sustaining emergent growth and change over time”(High Line, 2004).

Other firms that embrace Landscape Urbanism as an aspect of their practice, without making it the driving force behind it, have found great success in adopting some of Landscape Urbanism’s tenets, and, like the pure Landscape Urbanism firms, have won major design competitions. Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates, for example, while not nominally a Landscape Urbanism firm, have adopted Landscape Urbanism principles into an established practice. Recent major competition wins by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates – including Arc Wildlife Bridge Competition (Colorado), the St. Louis Gateway Arch Competition (St. Louis, Missouri), Brooklyn Bridge Park Competition (Brooklyn, New York), and the Allegheny Riverfront Park (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) – unmistakably employ fundamental themes of landscape urbanist practice, such as process over time and the operational method, while combining them with a more traditional kind of landscape architecture that summons the picturesque and the idyllic (Van Valkenburgh and Associates, 2010).

As of 2011, all speculative and built Landscape Urbanism has been in the form of parklands. The next realm of innovatory design research will come with the change in scale required to build a new city using the themes of Landscape Urbanism. In mid-2011 James Corner Field Operations won the International Competition for the Planning of the Qianhai Region of Shenzhen, a 4,500 acre site on the western coast of Shenzhen, China, with their design called Qianhai Water City. When completed, Qianhai will link Hong Kong to Shenzhen and Guangzhou and will serve as “a major new urban center – a ‘Manhattan’ – in the Pearl River Delta” mega-region. The scheme produced by James Corner Field Operations, offers a brand new, super-dense, hyper-sustainable city for a 1.5 million, where “water fingers” connect the city and function as infrastructure and recreation land while providing developable frontage. Here James Corner Field Operations uses the block structure of the Shenzhen grid to stage the ground plane for a diverse range of uses, from the recreational to the infrastructural (2011

The International Competition for the Planning of the Qianhai Region of Shenzhen. Invited competition sponsored by the Urban Planning Land and Resources Commission of Shenzhen).

Public space and landscape urbanism: the design competition

Over the past decade the practical and theoretical themes of Landscape Urbanism have been presented to the public through a series of international design competition entries. Unfortunately, many of the most influential competitions, all of which took place in North America, remain either unbuilt or are only in their initial construction phases, even years after the winners were announced, so it is not yet clear if all of the assumptions made by the designs will be realized.

The following are amongst the most influential competitions featuring some of the most well known Landscape Urbanism designs:

- *1999 Downsview Park, Toronto, Canada* An international competition to design Canada's first national urban park in the city of Toronto, with a stated goal "to promote innovative design proposals that would respond to the social and natural histories of the site while developing its potential as a new landscape" (Downsview Park, 2011). The five finalists were all interdisciplinary teams led by a landscape urbanist. The winning entry *Tree City*, led by Rem Koolhaas and graphic designer Bruce Mau, with Landscape Architect Petra Blaisse and architect Oleson Worland, offered a program driven by process and event rather than by architecture. Bernard Tschumi was placed second with his technology driven design that promised "everything is 'urban,' even in the middle of the wilderness." The winning scheme was an early exploration of the themes of Landscape Urbanism practice – interdisciplinarity, horizontality, process over time, the imaginary – and though it is still in its initial construction phases, which includes soil regeneration and a reforestation of a significant portion of the site, the influence of the designs on paper – from the winners and the runners up – has been far reaching (Czernecki, 2001).
- *2001 Fresh Kills Park Competition* The Fresh Kills competition called for a design that would transform a Staten Island New York landfill into public parkland. James Corner Field Operations' winning entry, *LIFESCAPE*, proposes to regenerate the former garbage dump into a place for emergent ecologies, recreational facilities, and landscaped public parkland. The competition finalists were again a host of interdisciplinary teams with designs that privileged indeterminacy and process over architectural heroics. The three-phased construction of the park, which is expected to take 30 years to complete, began in 2008. Ideas and especially graphic language seen in the winning entry and the finalist entries have had a major impact on the approach that newer designers have chosen to take to brownfield projects (Fresh Kills Park Project, 2011) (see Figure 37.1).
- *2007 Governor's Island Design Competition* In 2007 the Trust for Governor's Island launched the first stage of a design competition that sought to transform Governors Island, an historic, decommissioned military base in New York City, into the city's "2nd" extraordinary public park (as the competition brief put it – the first extraordinary park was, of course, Central Park). After the initial entrants were narrowed down to five interdisciplinary teams, the team led by Netherland's based landscape architects West 8 was selected. West 8's competition entry simultaneously recognizes the island's unique cultural and historic character while embracing its extraordinary ecological diversity and the design's potential for future adaptability. Using a network of overlapping systems to maximize impact and keep cost low, the park design is developed in phases over many years. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2012 (Trust for Governors Island, 2011).



Figure 37.1 The High Line Park, New York, New York, as built. James Corner Field Operations, with Diller, Scofidio and Renfro, Olafur Eliasson, Piet Oudolf and Buro Happold (source: image created by author).

Other important competitions that have served as practical showcases for the theoretical ideas of Landscape Urbanism include: 2007 Lower Don Lands Master Plan Competition, Toronto, Canada (won by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates), 2007 Eire Street Plaza Competition, Milwaukee Wisconsin (won by Stoss Landscape Urbanism); 2010 The ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition, Colorado USA (won by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates), and 2010 Lansdowne Park Competition, Ottawa, Canada (won by Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg).

The importance of the competition format to the public understanding of Landscape Urbanism cannot be overstated; it is within the competition that the freedom to experiment with the specific combination of ideas that constitute Landscape Urbanism is given free reign. Without the competitions, the support they provide to explore new ideas, their public visibility, and the notability they provide for young design firms, it is unlikely that the ideas behind Landscape Urbanism would ever have moved from the academy to the real world.

Criticism of Landscape Urbanism

Landscape Urbanism is not without its detractors, modest criticisms from within the academic world exist: Witold Rybczynski (2011), a professor of urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania, famously criticized the High Line Park as a “landscaping” project amidst the great architecture of New York City. Thompson (2012), though sympathetic to many of the

aspirations of Landscape Urbanism, has questioned its commitment to working with real communities, and its apparent disregard for existing landscape character and heritage values, while also criticizing the off-putting jargon in which landscape urbanist proposals are often couched. But the most vocal opposition has come from leaders of the Congress of the New Urbanism, an organization promoting walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development, sustainable communities and healthier living conditions, whose critique stems mainly from their conviction that major works of vertical architecture are the most appropriate organizers and promoters of urban space, not landscape. In the extreme, the founder of the New Urbanism, Andres Duany (2010) has asserted that Landscape Urbanism and Ecological Urbanism promote sprawl by privileging extant environmental features over density (Steuteville 2011). In June of 2011 Charles Waldheim gave a measured presentation about Landscape Urbanism to the 19th Congress of the New Urbanism, in Madison, Wisconsin during which he assured the assembly that landscape urbanists support “dense, low-carbon, low-emission development” and are “not apologists for sprawl” (CNU, 2011).

What’s next?

Charles Waldheim (2006: 16) acknowledges that the thinking documented in the *Landscape Urbanism Reader* begins to: “describe emergent conditions before they fully clarify themselves while simultaneously document[ing] their various sources and referents,” leaving open the possibility that not only could landscape urbanism continue to evolve and grow in scope, but that it could morph into something else entirely; this is where Ecological Urbanism comes into play. A conference and exhibition held in 2009 at Harvard GSD called Ecological Urbanism: Alternative and Sustainable Cities of the Future may have set the stage to allow Landscape Urbanism to expand its purview from a smaller scale, systems-based design theory, with practical implications relevant mainly to public parklands and former industrial sites, into a more coherent, truly cross-disciplinary doctrine, appropriate across a wide range of scales. In the book of the same name, Mohsen Mostafavi (2010) asks, “why ecological urbanism, why now?” the answer seems to be two-fold: while the environmental, political, and social state of the world has devolved over the last two decades, the theories and themes articulated by Landscape Urbanism have evolved to the point that their relevance to the larger scale of “the city” and “the region” is ready to be examined. In general the themes and concerns of Ecological Urbanism overlap with those of Landscape Urbanism to a large extent, but there are a few key differences: first the scale and scope of the undertakings has expanded to include not only discreet interventions in existing urbanities, but also full scale master planning of cities and regions. Second, the scope of the collaborative nature of practice has expanded to include not just the “big three” design professions with a few tangential consultants, but now fully enlists economists, public health specialists, sociologists, geographers, artists and others who can help synthesize a kind of urbanism that not only understands the disparate systems that make up urban places but attempts to humanely and compassionately integrate the needs of the people who occupy those places.

In his contribution to the Landscape Urbanism issue of *Topos* magazine, Stoss Landscape Urbanism principal Chris Reed (2010: 91) says “Many questions remain, for us and for others, relative to how landscape urbanism as a set of ideas and practices is played out – and refined, or even reformulated.” And, with only a few projects completed, it remains to be seen if the broad environmental, social, political problems that plague large metropolitan areas and small cities alike can be addressed by Landscape Urbanism or if Ecological Urbanism will fill this role. What

does seem clear is that Landscape Urbanism has had a tremendous influence on both students and practitioners of urban design, while improving the visibility and importance of ecology as an essential aspect of urbanism.

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