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Editorial
GARY BOYD

While *landscape* is a difficult and complex word, one whose ubiquity precludes precise definition, its most persistent meaning concerns a connection between land and seeing. In his book, *Landscape and Western Art*, Malcolm Andrews argues that while *land* is a 'raw material', *landscape* is 'already artifice', something which has been selected, edited, and codified by its relationship with the gaze. He suggests, moreover, that this occurs stealthily and we unconsciously accept the pictorial nature of landscape as one the chief criteria by which we understand our environment. By this process, he argues, we tend to become 'detached consumers' imbued with 'visual prejudices'.[i]

This observation became clearer to me on a recent trip to an island on a lake in the Irish midlands. As we approached by boat, the island seemed devoid of any pattern of settlement. However, on disembarking we found, towards the centre of the island, and masked by a continuous belt of trees, the remains of a community last inhabited, it seems, in the 1940s. This was significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, surrounded by the great horizontality of the expanse of the lake and the possibility of extensive views north and south, and east and west, the settlement resolutely ignored the *landscape*. Instead, it withdrew from the edges of the island and further occluded the view by shrouding itself in trees. Moreover, and to my mind most significantly, despite the small size of the settlement – numbering at most ten houses – it was arranged almost urbanistically. It contained a small public street off which semi-public spaces were arranged. These led in turn to the private realm of the dwelling places themselves. In other words, the settlement was configured according to criteria that were anything but aesthetic. Rather, it responded to a precise series of functional triggers. It clung to the centre of the island to avoid the seasonal flood at its edges, sheltered itself from the ferocious winter winds behind trees, and clustered itself densely, not only to achieve the optimum amount of pasture or arable land, but also to pool resources and maximize efficiency, and allow the communal supervision of children etc., etc. In this ruined settlement, only one site has been rehabilitated. This is the one closest to the shoreline where, in the last decade or so, a new house has been built conspicuously overlooking the water and altering the discrete seclusion of the rest of the village. It is owned and occupied, in summer, by an English poet whom in my mind's eye sits in silence, pencil in hand, gazing in contemplation on the sublimity and seemingly timeless traditions of the *landscape,* safely isolated from the world at large. A passive spectator his livelihood, as much as it may be influenced by his surroundings, is ultimately not derived from this locale, but from elsewhere in the world he is escaping. However attractive this may sound, the poet's preoccupations, when extended to the rest of the population, are problematic. Here, the countryside is misconceived as a stark counterpoint to the city, one which offers simplicity, tranquility and unending stasis.

In fact, the countryside is a thoroughly modernised and complex entity which only masquerades in the guise of an unaltering rural idyll. Indeed, historically, rural modernisation often preceded that of the city and today the same conditions which act on the urban process are present here and to a similar intensity. This demands an understanding of these forces which goes beyond the passive consumption of an idealised *landscape* to engage with the functional challenges of today as the island village dealt with those of the past. Some of the complexity of these contemporary challenges is suggested by the diversity of material contained in these pages which ruminate on the nature of time, space and land; investigate the perception and definitions of terrain, territory, border and boundary; explore the signs, meanings and themes embedded in landscape and how they are used; describe the process and consequences of mapping and representation; and describe and suggest techniques where the apparently ephemeral qualities of conflict, community, work and play can become the instigators of new spatial relationships. All somehow challenge and extend the limitations of *landscape* to suggest ways in which to research, understand and ultimately act in the matrix of forces which both straddle and confound the boundaries between town and country.

[i] Andrews, M., *Landscape and Western Art*, Oxford University Press, 1999. pp 1-3.

Neo-Rural Architecture
DOMINIC STEVENS

Neo-Rural Architecture
What are the functions of rural Ireland?
a) for looking at, an example of natural beauty to be preserved as much as possible in its present state?
b) for farming, for the production of food?
c) for the production of energy?
d) a place to live, where community can happen outside centres of population?

When we look at rural Ireland, what do we see?
We do not see virgin landscape, the wild wood, *uhrwald*.
What we see looks the way that it does because of layers of historical use, because of occupation by man and because of constant ongoing work in response to farming technology, economics, legislation, and the desires of society.

The ditches dug by hand, the hedgerows grown as field dividers, cut each year. Walls built, fences erected. The fields, planted and harvested or grazed by livestock and mown for hay, weeds suppressed, fertilizer spread. Forestry, planted and managed, thinned then harvested.

Our rural landscape is as man-made as the skyline of Manhattan.

Recreation

For both city dwellers and rural people the countryside can be a place for recreation: a magical place full of the wonders of nature, the pleasure of peace, and the enlivening effects of fresh air. This is particularly important to urban people as it stands in contrast to many of the negative aspects of city life. In Ireland, where many people living in cities are of rural origins, this contact with the countryside is essential to their well being.

Nostalgia

The visitor to the countryside is visiting a memory, or an idea. The countryside becomes a place for the indulgence of nostalgia. In contrast to the countryman who wonders at, or is even scared of, the changes to his capital city in between visits, the urban citizen visiting the countryside wishes it to be just as he remembers it; changes are by and large unwelcome. We have accepted modernity in the city. We must carefully set about defining what the modern countryside could be.

Farming

Farming practices are currently in a state of flux. Due to both the difficulties of making European farming compete on a global market and the food scares caused by intensive farming practices, the highly mechanised factory farming of the late twentieth century is being questioned across Europe. How the modern countryside is used, and what it looks like will be in part defined by shifts in agricultural policy and practice. The architect working in rural areas must understand and respond to these shifts.

History

Settlement patterns in Ireland have always responded to the technology and socio-political structures of the day. In the past rural inhabitants have endeavoured to be as comfortable as possible, while not occupying land otherwise useful for farming. Traditional vernacular settlements responded to water supply, wind protection, dry ground, locally available building materials and the need to establish an interdependent community. This led to a land-use system consisting of joint farms, worked co-operatively by a group of kinsfolk. The area of land farmed was coextensive with the modern townland, the settlement consisting of a *clachan*, a loose cluster of five to ten houses. These clusters were sited carefully and looked a certain way, normally very similar to each other.

This system was seen as an obstacle to progress and improvement and was altered by the colonial state during the nineteenth century. The land was divided up into separate holdings by the landlords and the inhabitants of these *clachans* were forced to live in dwellings scattered at intervals throughout the countryside.

Massive depopulation due to emigration and a drift towards urban centres has happened throughout the twentieth century leaving rural populations decimated to a point that there is, in many cases, simply not the critical mass of people needed to form what might be called a community.

The identity of the townland has remained and, until recently, so has the co-operative *meitheal* system whereby neighbours helped and depended on each other. This system of shared labour helped keep the sense of community alive in rural Ireland and facilitated – through the pooling of the community's building skills – the construction of cheap houses, thus allowing a community to depend on each other and not on mortgages raised in a national bank.

Bungalow Bliss

This colonial reconfiguring of the settlement pattern – this forced 'scattering' – together with new technologies, has allowed buildings to occupy hitherto impossible sites. This allows an attitude to view – to visually command and control – arising from classical attitudes derived from the 'big houses' of the ejected rural aristocracy. The possibility of privacy as opposed to the necessity of proximity and interdependence. The modern house builder responds to history, uses the technology of the day, informed by legislation, and arrives at a pragmatic built form, just as any other vernacular form is derived.

'Not as pretty as the mud-walled cabin,' says the nostalgically inclined

'Much more comfortable,' replies the house dweller

Townland

The problem with settlement in rural Ireland is not what it looks like. The problem is that the basic building block of rural community has been forgotten. In the *clachan* system there used to exist a strong community base outside of the villages, the shared farm/townland. People used to live closer to each other, they used to party in each others' houses, help on each others' farms. For hundreds of years, before the meddling of outsiders, these were, in modern speak, 'sustainable communities' albeit at a very basic standard of living. There was life outside of villages, out there where the buses don't run.

Who lives out there now?

When I examine who I am building houses for in rural Ireland, it is all people who are moving from the city to the countryside. They are not 'drop-outs' or 'good-lifers'; they are all people carrying out hitherto urban activities, but who want a better quality of life. The statistics show that at least 15% of the urban population work with knowledge that can be transmitted anywhere in the world via the internet. These are information workers – translators, computer-programmers, designers, lawyers ...

In parallel to this, the reality in a lot of farming households is that farming income is supplemented by part-time work. My neighbours, all farmers, are also barmen, teachers, teleworkers, civil servants, journalists. Everybody multi-tasks – the architect herds goats, the farmer writes software. The current pattern of rural life doesn't fit an urban produced stereotype anymore.

Neo Rural Life / Intensification

Technology has presented us with a new way of working away from centralised areas of commerce. The rural landscape becomes an even field of multiple connection points superimposed upon other layers historically situated in the landscape. Sharing lifts, caring for the elderly, having a party – a critical mass of people needed for entertainment, company, culture, will once again inhabit the landscape: the entire territory is now inhabitable. Living and working in the countryside, the city becomes the place to visit, for occasional meetings and for leisure – a quick ride on the high-speed train quickly allowing you to indulge in your nostalgia for twentieth-century city life.

Reforming the land

New technical/social/political/economic situations always provide the opportunity to usher in new architectures. Just as the street, the urban fabric and city life are the places of analysis for the city project, the landscape, the natural elements, patterns of farming and previous and projected forms of settlement are where we must begin in rural Ireland. We can put aside the misleading man-set-against-nature definition of architecture in the landscape and begin to understand the landscape as a series of layers of occupation and change, in constant flux, reflecting changing patterns of agriculture and work, of affluence and poverty. People's houses and work places become just another layer of occupation. The work for architects is to define what this new rural architecture is, to seriously take on the challenge of understanding shifts in rural life – to realise that this is the important architectural project for the coming years. What this becomes is open – dwelling patterns that co-exist with new farming techniques? Process driven light architecture – dwelling as crop rotation? Houses as land dividers? Communal forms of living – a strewn confetti of *unité d'habitation* blocks? A relationship with infrastructure – linear development along roads, under roads, snaking through the landscape? The relationship between building and landscape will become closer, the building no longer being hosted by the landscape, rather becoming an operative part of the landscape in which it is sited.

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2

Landscape in the Work of John McGahern
BRIAN WARD

In his essay, 'Figures, Doors and Passages' Robin Evans draws attention to the almost complete lack of description of place in sixteenth-century Italian literature. The writers were engrossed in the human relationships on display in society and so 'topography, architecture and furnishings are ... absent, not even raised as backdrops to the intrigues, cabals, triumphs and catastrophes'.[i] Evans attaches significance to this. He suggests that it demonstrates, not only the primacy given to the relationships between people in the society being portrayed, but moreover that, in general, landscape and architecture exist only at the periphery of our attention

John McGahern's work is concerned with the internal world of the mind. As he explains: 'Each of us has a private world which others cannot see and ... it's with the private world that we all read. It's a spiritual, private world. And the only difference between the writer and the reader is that he (the writer) has the knack or talent to be able to dramatise that private world and turn it into words'.[ii] The prose that accrues from McGahern's dramatisation consists primarily of dialogue, simple character sketches, and the thoughts and actions of the protagonists. Descriptions of the context for this action are often supplied extremely sparingly, with their frequency varying from novel to novel. Given what Declan Kiberd calls the 'extreme truthfulness, accuracy and demonstrable honesty of [McGahern's] writing', one is probably justified, like Evans, in attaching weight to those moments when the external world 'penetrates into the narrative'.[iii] The carefully-weighted authority of the prose would suggest that these moments are only detailed because of the impact they are having on the private world of the characters concerned.

Descriptions are most common on the rare occasions when the characters travel through the landscape, seeing parts of it that would be outside their normal routine. Moments of departure and arrival are also sometimes marked by an attentiveness to surroundings. But McGahern's most poetic descriptive passages are reserved for those moments when the beauty of his native Leitrim/Roscommon area pierces through his characters' personal preoccupations. They suggest that landscape is a constant which may offer a release from the constraints imposed on a character's mind by circumstance or culture. This very particular use of landscape can be traced through the

four novels based in McGahern's locality – firstly in *The Dark, The Barracks* and *Amongst Women*, and then, in perhaps a more sustained and developed form, in *That They May Face the Rising Sun.*

The Dark presents a starting point because, of the three books, it combines perhaps the least amount of spatial description with the strongest yearning for escape. The main protagonist, Mahoney, is a teenager trying to decide what to do with his life. He lives under the considerable shadow of his dominating, abusive father and has little concern for the surrounding landscape – only spaces offering release from this shadow seem to be worth depicting. Thus, a rare leisurely morning of fishing on the Shannon may elicit a line such as '...the boat was sliding in it's own ripple in the narrow reaches of the river, in the calm under the leaning trees of Oakport, wood strawberries in the moss under the heaviest beeches, cattle in the fields the side facing the wood ...,[iv] but in general, the background sketches are so perfunctory that the reader has only a vague sense of the setting. It is of no interest to Mahoney – his driving ambition is to get away from his current situation – and so the bulk of the text deals with his internal struggle to formulate that escape. Mahoney is top of his class so there are escape routes open to him. Unfortunately, in a teenage mind formed amidst the puritanical constraints of Irish Catholicism, many of these routes are being obstructed. Only in heaven can real redemption be found. Mahoney has the potential to go to college and become a professional or to take a job with the civil service, but he cannot evade the feeling that he ought to be a priest.

What was you alone went to Him, not roses and vegetable garden and semi-detached house and young wife and children and the Ford or Volkswagen for Sunday outings from the Dublin suburbs you took to Him if you got the Junior Executive Exam for the Civil Service, but whatever was you alone.[v]

An image of Dublin suburbia may offer release but not the chance of perpetual salvation. We never get a feeling for what Mahoney's heaven is like, but are offered instead descriptions of the earthly landscapes associated with the Church. Mahoney's perception is heightened when he is in his school grounds or the house and garden of his cousin, Father Gerald. He takes an interest in the kinds of spaces he would inhabit should he become a priest and tries to picture living alone in the presbytery, in the 'utter sense of decrepitude and dust – the clocks, the bulldogs, the mahogany case of books, the black leather armchairs, the unlived in room'. 'At least,' he reasons, 'in your own room there was life no matter what little else.'[vi] When he eventually gets to Galway to attend university, he finds it similarly unfulfilling.

You were only hours here yet, and it was not easy to keep hold of the dream, wild grass and sea and broken fish-boxes same as anywhere, this was the University town, but it was more solid concrete and shapes and names with sea and sky and loneliness than any dream ... the obsession that there was never possibility of possession or realisation, only the confusion of all these scattered images.[vii]

The novel ends unresolved as the teenager is thwarted by his mind's inability to reconcile the certainty that he has to escape his father with a feeling of discontent in any of the places offering escape. *The Dark*, though, highlights a theme common to McGahern's work – the mind's need for hope. In his desperate search Mahoney also hints at the idea that it may be found in the spaces around us.

The Barracks depicts Elizabeth Reegan who marries a widower with three children – a disillusioned and ill-tempered police sergeant. A former nurse in London, she now finds

herself raising a family in the accommodation provided at the rural barracks. McGahern describes her immersion in the repetitive, and occasionally satisfying, details of domestic life. Early in the novel though, she is diagnosed with cancer. She correctly senses it to be terminal. Reegan, having lost a wife previously, is unable to offer the emotional support she needs and Elizabeth is essentially alone with her suffering.

It should all make you want to cry. You were lonely. The night was dark and deep. You must have some wish or longing. The life you lead, the nine to five at the office, the drudgery of a farm, the daily round, cannot be endured without hope.[viii]

Yet she stoically refuses to succumb to despair. She had returned from London because she was tired of what the city had to offer her. She takes responsibility for her decision to live in the countryside. The novel is sparsely peppered with short accounts of her new surroundings, hinting at a consciousness of their permanent residence on the periphery of her attention. The details of the internal world of the barracks often add to an underlying sadness, but on some level she comes to rely on the wonder of nature for the relief that she craves. On two occasions the hard beauty of the view from the barracks' window hits her forcibly.

She went to the window to touch the heads of the daffodils with her fingers. The sun had gone down close to the fir-tops across the lake. The level glare stained a red roadway on the water to the navigation signs and the grass of the river meadows was a low tangle of green and white light. It came so violently to the window that she'd soon to turn away.[ix]

It was so beautiful when she let the blinds up that, 'Jesus Christ', softly was all she was able to articulate as she looked out and up the river to the woods across the lake, black with the leaves fallen except the red rust of the beech trees, the withered reeds standing pale and sharp as bamboo rods at the edge of the water, the fields of the hill always white and the radio aerial that went across from the window to the high branches of the sycamore a pure white line through the air.[x]

The Barracks introduces us to the notion that one can find a comfort from the travails of life in the surrounding landscape. Elizabeth seemed open to that idea and the landscape responded to her. In *Amongst Women*, Moran, the prototypical McGahern father-figure, has a very different attitude towards nature. He is a dominating, complicated man, who forces his family to tip-toe around his moods. A local leader in the War of Independence, he invested the pension he received on leaving the army in land which he farmed hard for the rest of his life. Throughout the novel nature is seldom mentioned in the context of Moran's viewpoint. When it is, there is usually a link to farming.

The next morning a white mist obscured the dark green shapes of the beech trees along the head of the meadows and their sandals made green splashes through the cobwebbed pastures. A white gossamer hung over the plum and apple trees in the orchard. A hot dry day was certain. Not even by evening would there be a threat of rain ... By evening most of the hay would be saved and it could be put out of mind for another year.[xi]

These allusions to the worry associated with hay-saving hint at the tensions involved in Moran's relationship with nature. Some of these are relieved through violence. Early in the book he shoots a jackdaw through an open window, 'that bloody bird has been annoying me for days'.[xii] A day in the fields with his son Michael puts him in good humour because, 'this man and me are after slaughtering a few trees out there'.[xiii] Asked to find some holly with berries, he drags a huge branch through the front door and dumps it in the middle of the living room. An economic reliance on the ungenerous Leitrim soil, linked perhaps to a disappointment in the Ireland that had emerged from the War of Independence, has clouded Moran's view of the landscape. One is reminded of Patrick Kavanagh who, Dermot Healy suggests, humanised nature and wrote about a sod of turf or a ditch as if it was the other person in a soured relationship.[xiv] Indeed, Moran admits 'instead of using the fields, he sometimes felt as if the fields had used him'.[xv] And yet, with death approaching, he habitually slips away from his house and family to seek consolation in those fields; the cataloguing of each object he encounters on his route to the meadow perhaps indicating a new-found interest in the surrounding world.

Past the old pear tree in brilliant white blossom against the wall, last year's nettles withered and tangled in the abandoned mowing machine beneath the tree, the corrugated roof of the lean-to he had built as a workshop for wet days, and on to the meadow. It was no longer empty but filling with a fresh growth, a faint blue tinge in the rich green of the young grass. To die was never to look on all this again. It would live in others' eyes but not in his. He had never realized when he was in the midst of confident life what an amazing glory he was part of.[xvi]

Reading *The Barracks*, *The Dark* and *Amongst Women*, one is also reminded of Kavanagh's description of the poverty of the Irish rural poor as a mental condition: 'it is anxiety about what is going to happen next week, it is about lack of enlightenment to get out, it is about living in the dark age of the unconscious and screaming when you see the light'.[xvii] Although his characters are never destitute, it was of a similar mental set, a combination of hopelessness and a dour Catholicism, that McGahern wrote in these three books. The strength of his work lies in his ability to portray this mentality with such skill that it becomes an entity in itself. It can, therefore, be presented as a mental structure which just happened to be prevalent in the people close to him, as he grew up in the middle of the twentieth century. From a historical perspective, it can be seen as a mentality temporarily overlaid on his native landscape and through which the landscape is seen (or indeed, ignored). If, *The Dark* is a study of how that mental set could be constructed such that redemption seems impossible, both *The Barracks* and *Amongst Women* allow the characters occasional glimpses of the life-affirming beauty of nature. This suggests either, that a capacity to occasionally see this quality of nature was part of that mental filter, or that the beauty of the world slipped through despite it.

What they see in these glimpses is perhaps best suggested by reference to Isobel Nolan's essay on the painter William McKeown. She feels that the space created in his paintings is based on those solitary moments where one experiences the beauty of nature, not simply for its 'visual loveliness, but [for] the way in which [it makes] us feel connected to life, to something that is wonderfully unknowable. The inscrutability of nature, its ultimate resistance to our consciousness, is expressed as positive, non-threatening, and natural'.[xviii] The artist himself speaks of a local lane he sought out as a child, '... a place I went to when I wanted to escape. There was a sense of expansion there, of happiness, of not feeling separate from nature. In the summer the blossom was overwhelming. Nature can create or trigger a sense of home inside of us'.[xix] This replicates McGahern's own memories of a childhood lane he walked with his mother. He believes the 'extraordinary sense of peace and security [and happiness]' experienced in this place is the root of similar feelings in other places.[xx] It could be suggested that Elizabeth's window and Moran's meadow elicit comparable responses in his characters.

That They May Face The Rising Sun, McGahern's most recent work, details the passing of a year in the late eighties amongst a small community living around a lake. I believe that it can be read as an attempt to stretch the revelatory moments described in *The Barracks* and *Amongst Women* to the length of a novel. The reader is not plunged deep within a character's mind as he was in the earlier novels. Rather, the narration occurs from a greater distance so that instead of moments of beauty being framed by a character's fraught mentality, it is now the landscape in all its glory which frames the action. There is consequently a marked increase in the amount of description devoted to the countryside, with passages appearing, for instance, in the middle of conversations.

'You'll have to have a word with him. The two of you will have to talk.
'The Shah stopped, dumbfounded. Close by, the berries of a rowan were starting to redden. On the branches of a whitethorn a small bird, a robin, was singing. A single crow lighted silently in the bare field.
'We don't talk,' he said'.[xxi]

A sense of peace runs through the novel with nature permeating the prose. So much so that, as Declan Kiberd points out, at the beginning of the book, before one gets to know the characters, the unattributed dialogue often reads like birdsong.[xxii] The impression is given that a person living by the side of a lake is as important as a bird singing above it – all life is transient within nature but is somehow connected to this larger life. The comfort that Elizabeth and Moran previously found in this realization is not presented as one or two profound private incidents but seeps through the whole novel as a series of smaller, unstated moments. Nature has moved from the periphery towards the centre of the protagonists' attention as they seek and find hope in the landscape around them on a more regular basis than even Elizabeth before them.

It is tempting to suggest that the difference between the treatment of landscape in the earlier novels and the latest work is reflecting a change in the collective mind-set through which the landscape is seen. In a recent interview McGahern spoke about the rapid changes in Irish society, stating that, 'Ireland is a peculiar society in the sense that it was a nineteenth century society up to about 1970 and then it almost bypassed the twentieth century ... it has changed more in the last 20 years than it has changed in the previous 200 ... I think most of them are changes for the good'.[xxiii] *That They May Face The Rising Sun* positions itself, therefore, at the end of that relatively short period of change when Ireland teetered between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries – between a rural society and an urban one. While documenting the final stages of an old way of living in the Irish rural landscape, the spotting of white pleasure boats in Rooskey in *That They May Face The Rising Sun* also hints at a new way of using that landscape. In *Amongst Women*, there was mention of the Sligo coast as a holiday or a day-trip destination, now 'foreigners and people from Dublin'

are employing the less sublime landscape of Leitrim in a similar way – as a relief from urban life. *That They May Face The Rising* Sun reiterates this interpretation of the ordinary rural landscape in the 'private worlds' of the (predominantly urban) readers, mirroring the sense of release that Mahoney previously imagined in suburbia.

While there may indeed be wider sources to McGahern's use of more spatial description in his most recent work, it is perhaps more prudent to remain closer to the text. McGahern is careful to write only about that which he knows and he has also said that he is too old to understand Ireland's new ways of life. We should probably not look to McGahern to understand the impact the landscape has on a day-tripper on the Shannon. For while most definitely fiction, McGahern's characters would seem to have autobiographical roots. One can equate Mahoney with the teenage McGahern, Elizabeth with his mother, and Moran with his father. In which case, the main character of *That They May Face The Rising Sun*, Ruttledge, would to some extent represent the McGahern who has lived by a lake in Leitrim since the mid-seventies, and who farms on a part-time basis.

What we can say with some certainty then, is that *That They May Face The Rising Sun* is the closest we have got in his literature to McGahern's own perception of the landscape. The novel would suggest that the author is very aware of his surroundings and the profound effects they can have. But what also emerges is McGahern's reflective view of the countryside, one which has had to measure up against a more dismissive attitude from people who share the same strong, if troubled, connection to the landscape as Moran. At one stage in the novel, for example, two characters mockingly listen to the sounds around them in the Ruttledges' front yard:

Descriptions are most common on the rare occasions when the characters travel through the landscape, seeing parts of it that would be outside their normal routine.

Another thing that brought them here was the quiet. 'Will you listen to the fucken quiet for a minute and see in the name of God if it wouldn't drive you mad?'
... both men flung themselves into a comic, exaggerated attitude of listening, a hand cupped behind an ear ... In the held minute, the birds seemed to sing more furiously in their branches. Bees laboured noisily between the stalks of red and white clover. Cattle lowed down by the lakeshore. Further away, cars and lorries passed on the main road and from further away still came the harsh, heavy clanging of a mechanical shovel as it cleared a hedgerow or dug the foundations of a house.[xxiv]

There is, then, a toughness to McGahern's love for the landscape. It is not dependent on a preciousness nor a sentimentality – indeed the force of the moments described above suggest that the power of landscape lies in its inscrutability and that an overly romantic approach might suggest meanings which would falsely dilute its mysteries. McGahern's latest novel presents us with a mind-set broad enough to allow a sense of release to be sustained throughout the four seasons by a Leitrim lake. To achieve this, his feeling for the countryside has had to be expansive enough to include that which others would rather exclude. It perhaps addresses, therefore, a common difficulty in reconciling a sensitivity towards nature with an understanding for those real people who live within that nature. McGahern's literature suggests that the landscape of which he writes might be robust enough not to be tarnished by people and their habitation. Hence the navigation signs and radio aerial are integral parts of the beauty Elizabeth sees outside her window, and the mention of JCBs, scrapyards and quarries in *That They May Face The Rising Sun* does not intrude on the feeling of release intrinsic to the book. The continuing history of people living in the landscape has added interest to that landscape. Indeed, one wonders whether McGahern would write about an unpeopled landscape.

'You see nothing at home. Nothing,' Jamesie complained.
'You see the birds and the sky and the tracks of the animals,' Ruttledge said teasingly.
'Nothing. You see nothing. People are far more interesting. You see more in one day out than at home in a month'.[xxv]

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[vi] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
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3

Music and Place: Connecting the Past to the Future
MARTIN HAYES

Image from: Timothy O'Grady and Steven Pike – *I Could Read the Sky*, Harvill Press, London, 1997.

My first love musically was traditional music. I learned to play the fiddle from my father who was also a fiddler. To this day I speak with a Clare accent, which was invisible to me as a child. The music I was learning to play at that time was also part of a local musical accent and both of these accents have remained with me.

The music that I play is based on the musical style of East Clare. We cannot talk of this style without also speaking of where it comes from: it is by definition linked to place. This tradition has an indefinite and porous geographic border that overlaps into Southeast Galway, North Tipperary and West Clare. Even though there are many musicians who play in this style it is also worth noting that no single musician can be said to encapsulate its totality. What you have instead is a collection of musicians who subjectively interpret the shared tradition of the region. In varying degrees they share repertoire, tempo, melodic variation and any number of techniques that can be applied to the playing of various instruments. There is a broad consensus on what constitutes good or bad music, what is an appropriate variation or tempo, what is a good melody. These points of view are passed on along with the music and end up as the foundation of broad aesthetic consensus. The style has developed slowly over time in an unselfconscious manner, absorbing influences gradually. This gradual absorption was due mainly to relative geographic isolation. Outside influences were not necessarily rejected but instead were sifted through and adapted to the style if they fitted. Relative geographic isolation leads to idiosyncratic variations of style.

That landscape and geography may have affected the development of the style is difficult to determine. I believe that it has an indirect and abstract impact on the feeling that is expressed in this music. For example, one can easily hear the urban connection in Hip-Hop and Be-Bop and also the rural roots of traditional music. The topography of East Clare is varied. It has hills and valleys, bog land, wooded areas, arable land and wet land. It isn't easy to make literal connections; it can only be said that the landscape we inhabit has an impact on our experience of life in general. We all experience this in our own subjective way and we can, to a greater or lesser degree, be in tune with the feelings that the area inspires in us. I, along with many of the musicians from the region have a strong sense of belonging and connection to the music and consequently the place itself. When I play, I will on occasion allow my imagination to dwell on certain locations, views and memories. I will sometimes play music that in my imagination fits with a quiet summer evening in Feakle or a long wet wintry night up the side of the mountain where I come from. These images and the feelings they generate often become the fuel that gives feeling and expression to the music. Some of these relate to the struggles and the joys of life as well as the memory of people and events. These images can spark a chain reaction of feelings and emotion. The feelings from these images generally seem to be appropriate and in harmony with the nature of the music itself. The place has an impact on the music, but only through the subjective interpretation of the musician. The overall character of the music from this place is gentle, plaintive, intimate and earthy. Perhaps this reflects the rolling hills, the empty bogland, the many hidden roadways and quietly tucked away valleys. The earthy feel of this music may be a result of the close connection that these people have had to the land.

I listen to all forms of music and absorb ideas and inspiration from many diverse sources. Previous generations of East Clare musicians had time to gradually assimilate a slow dribble of influences which could be absorbed without having to set up artificial barriers to the outside in order to preserve their style. Preserving a regional style was not an issue in times past. In order to preserve a regional style at this point in time, one almost feels pushed to compartmentalize various influences while trying to hold onto the old style by means of a literal replication. This creates a situation where musicians often shut their ears to outside influences and aim at preserving tradition as vocation by mimicking the past. The opposite can also happen. If people find this situation too limiting there is a chance they will mix and match influences in a manner that undermines and devalues the tradition. This can kill innovation within the tradition and create versions of the music that are dominated by fads and shallow trends. As with all art forms, the secret is finding a way forward that is sustainable, balanced and authentic. I imagine that words like sustainability, balance and authenticity might similarly apply to the world of architecture. So too would place and the concept of artistic expression needing to work in harmony with a particular locality. The problem of matching the past to the future is something that architecture and traditional music share in common.

Martin Hayes is a fiddler from East Clare, based in Seattle.

4

Bungalows from Space
STUART GREENE

Satellite mapping of Urban Expansion

The physical repercussions of Ireland's economic growth during the last decade can be clearly seen from space. Man-made satellites have witnessed the spreading of its cities, the fragmentation of rural Ireland and new infrastructure developments since the 1970's. These 'earth observing' satellites can view, in a single image, a swathe as wide as the country or zoom in to identify back gardens. Up to date maps and geographical data of Ireland's growth are necessary tools for planners, economists and policy makers. The most recently released map gives us information on changes in land use between 1990 and 2000. While this *European scale* map can supply some useful information, a good understanding of its intended application and, therefore, its limitations is needed to get the most from it. There are other techniques within the discipline of *remote sensing* that, as we shall see, are better suited to describing peculiarly Irish phenomena.

LANDSAT is a series of American satellites, orbiting 800km above the earth's surface, which carry an imaging device known as the Thematic Mapper (TM). This camera points toward earth and records large-scale images (capturing half a dozen counties at a time) with a resolution of 30m – which means objects have to be this size at least in order to be imaged and often much larger if they are to be identified. It does this not only in normal visible light but also in a series of infrared wavelengths.[i] These wavelength ranges are known as *bands* and the TM has 7 bands. Images from this sensor formed the backbone of the CORINE mapping programme.[ii]

The CO-ORdination of INformation on the Environment, or CORINE programme, was instigated across the European Community from 1985-1990. Its aim: to provide a uniform database of land cover type across the whole of the community. This data was to be used in large scale national and regional spatial planning, from habitat protection to transport planning. Images from LANDSAT were compiled and printed onto hardcopy. Each member State had a production team who, using uniform guides on colour, texture and context, divided up the image into different thematic zones. There were 3 levels to be considered. The first broke up the land cover into 5 types:

Artificial surfaces
Agricultural areas
Forests and semi-natural areas
Wetlands
Water bodies

Each subsequent level further subdivided the themes so that level 3, the level we will be looking at, had 44 different land cover themes. To achieve this, the interpreters used different combinations of bands. One particular combination, known as a *false colour composite*, replaces the blue component of an image with information from an infrared band. The result is a Martian looking landscape where vegetation shows up as bright red because vegetation reflects strongly infrared light. In this type of image man-made areas look blue, while forests appear blood red and water is black. Using the identification guides and their own judgment, the mappers drew lines around contiguous areas of an image representing one particular theme. However, because the rules of the programme insisted the smallest area that could be mapped was 25 ha, many heterogeneous areas were mapped and labeled with the most predominant land cover type. The lines that were hand drawn on the images were then digitised into computer formats.

CORINE LAND COVER CLASSES 1990	2A	2B	3A	3B	3C	4	5	TOTAL CHANGE	MEAN ANNUAL CHANGE	1
Land cover flows: Consumption of land by urban spaces 2000	Arable land & permanent crops	Pastures & mixed farmland	Forests and transitional woodland/scrub	Natural grassland/heathland	Open spaces with little or no vegetation	Wetlands	Water bodies			Artificial surfaces
Urban development infilling										698
Development of green urban areas	42	849						891	89	
Urban dense residential sprawl										
Urban diffuse residential sprawl	1870	13408	222	28		15		15544	1554	
Spread of industrial & commercial sites	777	1207						1984	198	
Spread of transport networks	221	1029						1250	125	
Spread of harbours		16					41	57	6	
Spread of airports		111						111	11	
Spread of mines and quarrying areas	546	1940	79			120		2686	259	
Spread of dumpsites										
Construction	855	1775						2630	263	
Spread of sport and leisure facilities	1256	5302	71		190	86		6905	691	26
Urban recycling of urban land										724
"LAND UPTAKE BY URBAN DEVELOPMENT" TOTAL 1990-2000	5568	25537	372	28	190	222	41	31958	3196	
Mean annual land uptake by urban and infrastructure development, as % of 1990	0.14	0.06	0.01					0.04		
Origin of urban land uptake, as % of total uptake	17.4	79.9	1.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	100.0		
Land Cover 1990	402865	4350059	515012	153132	1390423	687739	687739	7562571		102275
Net change	141493	-185616	116900	-1649	-191413	-1451	-1451	0		31957
Land cover 2000	543472	4165443	631912	151488	1199010	686288	686288	7562571		134232

fig. 1 Type of land consumed by different types of urban expansion 1990-2000 (all areas in ha). All data from CLC2000.

With these controls a map called the CORINE Land Cover 1990 (CLC90), was produced. This was the first time something on this scale had been attempted and there were problems with the quality control of maps. So, when it was proposed to produce a map for 2000 (CLC00), a major component was the revision of CLC90. This was possible because of the huge advances in computing techniques in the field of remote sensing. The revision of CLC1990 and production of CLC2000 for Ireland (carried out under the management of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)) used a hybrid method where revision of 1990 and production of 2000 were performed simultaneously. The same 44 themes where used in 2000 as 1990 and so land cover changes over the decade can be mapped.

Land cover change 1990-2000.
The broad-brush results of the CORINE land cover change project areas are as follows:

Artificial surfaces increased by 31% (to 134232 ha or 2% of the national territory)
Arable land increased by 35% (543472 ha / 7%)
Pasture decreased by 4% (4165443 ha / 55%)
Forests and transitional woodland increased by 23% (631912 ha / 8%)
Wetlands decreased by 8% (1199010 ha / 16%).[iii]

The biggest changes in land cover are both agricultural. Between 1990 and 2000, 226441 ha of pasture turned to arable.[iv] While this was partly due to a change in beef production practices, it should be pointed out that distinguishing between arable and pasture can be difficult. This internal agricultural conversation need not concern us. The second biggest change is the growth of forestry. This is a result of government policy to increase the amount of forestry in Ireland from its historically low levels to a European average (about 17% of the country). According to CORINE, most of the new planting has happened on wetlands. However, CORINE at this level does not distinguish between intact bogs and exploited ones, so it's difficult to gauge the overall impact on Irish habitats.

The change that most concerns us is in the growth of artificial surfaces: these are broken down in level 3 into 11 different classes. Fig. 1 shows the changes in land use as they relate to artificial surfaces. It shows, for example, that there were 1775 ha of *land under construction* in 2000 that had been *pasture* in 1990. The biggest change is an increase of about 15000 ha in the area of land under the *diffuse urban* theme, which is a suburban matrix of housing with gardens and green areas (this also includes small urban areas in a rural context). There has been no increase in continuous urban cover, i.e. high-density building with little or no greenery (a total amount of 5014 ha is present in the State). Fig. 2 shows that housing is by far the biggest driver of urban development. The dark areas overlaid on the satellite photograph of Dublin from 2001 (fig. 3) show new areas of artificial surfaces arising between 1990-2000, illustrating how the construction of the M50 around Dublin has acted as the seedbed for some of this growth. Nationally, this amounts to an increase in artificial surfaces from 1990 to 2000 of 31957 ha, which is almost three times the size of Dublin City (about 11500 ha). This also equates to a rate of increase of about 3200 ha per year. Compare that with an average annual number of planning applications (total floor space) for 1998 to 2003 of about 1300 ha per year.[v]
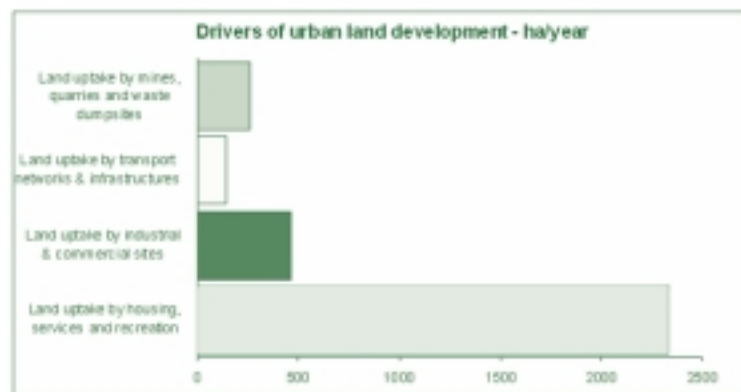
fig. 2 Drivers of urban land development ha per year. All data from CLC2000.

There are serious limitations to respect when analysing this data. This data was compiled for use on a regional scale. Once one is below, say county scale, its usefulness is reduced. When one looks at an area marked as *peatbog* this does not mean that all areas within that area are peat bog – just, probably, a majority. The aim in CORINE is to achieve accuracy of 85%. When revising the CORINE map, only changes greater than 5 ha were recorded in the CORINE land change map. Because of the minimum mapping area of 25 ha, many small-scale changes cannot be interpreted and undoubtedly CORINE is unable – and indeed was not designed – to monitor the disintegration of rural areas at a local scale. The imagery used cannot identify one-off housing and very small developments and, indeed, if a development was much less than 25 ha it was not noted. Therefore, CLC cannot by its nature deliver a very accurate assessment of surfaces.[vi]

Bungalows from space
CORINE can help in identifying long-term trends on a regional scale, the measurement of Urban Sprawl being a classic example. There are many different definitions of sprawl and some analysts only look at area/population ratios. But to get a full assessment of an urban area in the *act* of sprawling you need to look at rates of growth: 'at a metropolitan scale, sprawl may be said to occur when the rate at which land is converted to non-agricultural or non-natural uses exceeds the rate of population growth'.[vii] As the CORINE land change data presented here has only just been released; there has been no chance to construct a measure of sprawl (such as a sprawl index). The other big housing issue, however, is one-off housing in a rural environment. The growth in rural housing has been spectacular, outstripping the growth of other settlements.

In terms of totals, increases in rural development are out-accelerating urban increases. For instance, rural connections in 1999 rose by 23% on the previous year compared to a rise in total house completions in the same period of 9%.[viii]

As noted above, CORINE can do nothing to monitor this phenomenon. There are other sources of data, most of them in a non-geographical format like data from the Central Statistics Office, local authorities etc. Unfortunately, there is no requirement for planning applications to be stored in a uniform digital format (there are plans to introduce an Irish Spatial Data Infrastructure but this is at an early consultation phase – and there will be no compulsion to adopt). The local authorities have different storage media and different requirements when identifying the area under application. *An Post* has an address database of every household in the country and this could be used for some applications.
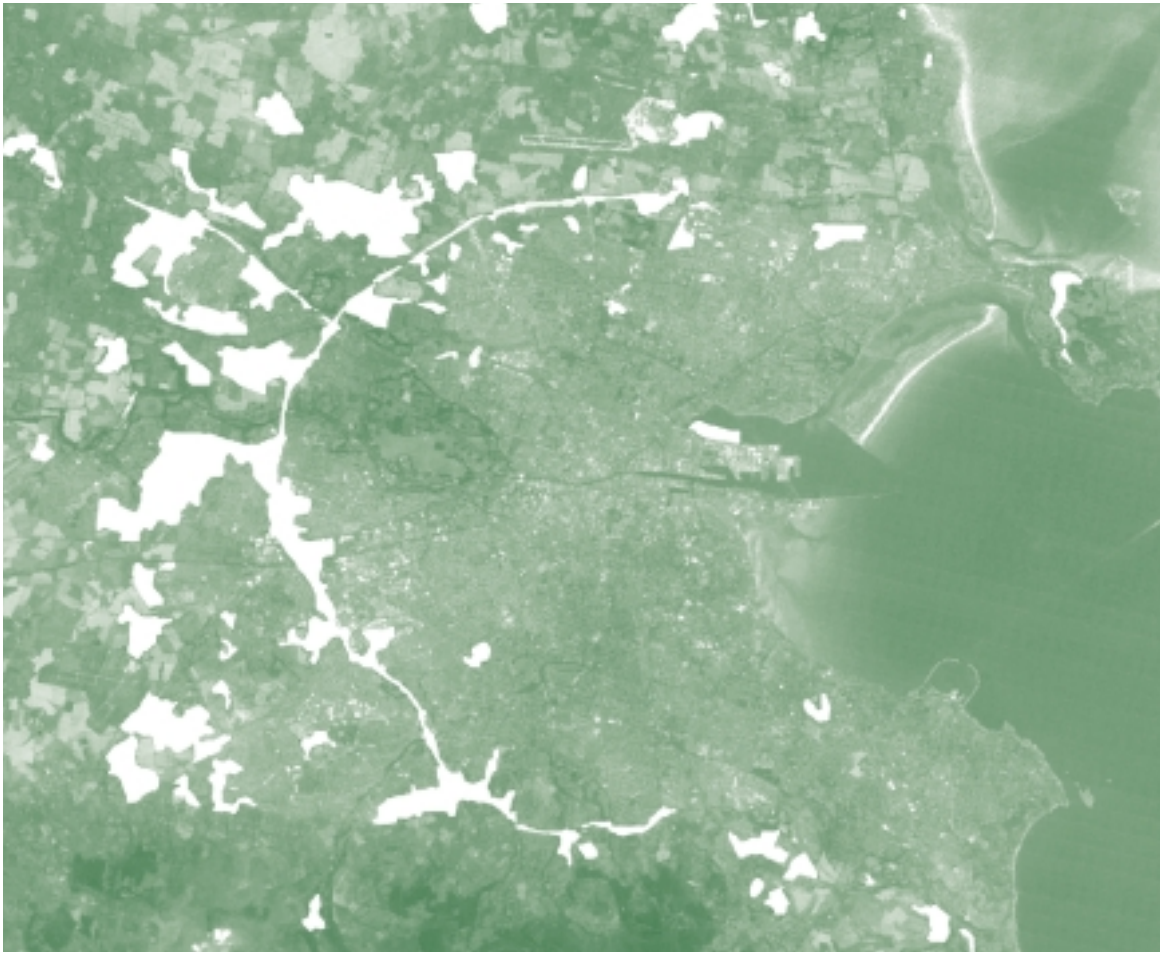
18

*fig. 3 New Urban development in the greater Dublin region between 1990 and 2000. Image: True Colour + ETM
Greater Dublin 2001. Overlay: All data from CLC2000.*

If we want to see, both geographically *and* temporally, where all the new housing has been built during the last decade of boom, then we need to use remote sensing at a different scale than CORINE. There is a national aerial photography database from the Ordnance Survey that can act as a base-line to identify dwellings in 1995 (this photography is periodically updated). To look for new dwellings in 2005 there are a number of extra data sources. ASTER is an experimental satellite sensor with infrared resolution of 15m. This can just about pick out one-off housing in rural areas and the data is free, although it may not cover the whole country. There are two hyper-spatial satellites, Quickbird and IKONOS that have black and white resolutions of up to 60cm that matches the resolution of aerial photography. They have archived images for Ireland. These satellites can also be 'tasked' to record and transmit imagery from an area when and where needed, so would be ideal for monitoring development hotspots. Finally, it may be possible for RADAR imaging to detect one-off housing. Unlike the other satellites discussed, RADAR satellites are active sensors, in that they send out a signal and record the strength of the returned signal. There is data from RADAR satellites going back into the 90's so this method could be applied retrospectively.

All the information needed to get a good grasp of the geographical nature of housing development is out there. It could be slowly collated from local authority planning applications or it could be imaged directly through remote sensing. The former would probably be finished long after the current housing boom. The latter could be done as quickly as planners want.

Stuart Green is a member of the Spatial Analysis Group, *Teagasc*.

References:

[i] This term is not to be confused with its common meaning of thermal infra-red – only a component of the infra-red spectrum recorded by the sensor is emitted as a result of the surface temperature.

[ii] Büttner, G., Feranec, J., Jaffrain, G., *CORINE Land cover Update 2000*, EEA, Copenhagen, 2002. http://europa.eu.int

[iii] Weber, J-L., *LAND COVER Change ACCOUNTS based on CORINE Land Cover Ireland*, Land & Ecosystems Accounts project. EEA/AIR3/SAG, http://dataservice.eea.eu.int/dataservice 20004

[iv] *Ibid.*

[v] Central Statistics Office, *Planning Permissions 3rd Quarter 2004*, Ref 250/2004, ISSN: 0791-2978. www.cso.ie. 2004

[vi] All CORINE data is available, free of charge for individuals, from the Environmental Protection Agency.

[vii] The Environmental Protection Agency, '*Why should we be concerned about sprawl?*' USEPA, 2001. www.epa.gov/region5/air/sue/sprawl/htm

[viii] These figures come from the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) who have a definition of 'rural' that may not be accepted by all. Department of the Environment and Local Government, *Irish Spatial Perspectives: Rural and Urban Roles*, 2001. http://www.irishspatialstrategy.ie/docs/report13.pdf

5

Landmarks: Beyond the Big Tree
JIMI SHIELDS

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

Philip Larkin, *The Trees.*

Water
The question, 'what is your position?' bears much greater significance when posed at sea. In the absence of terrain, seamen once relied on celestial observation and calculations to pinpoint their position. Now the military – typically forcing the hand of invention – have developed *The World Geographic Reference System*, a single grid that covers the entire planet. It is a simple and rapid method of expressing latitude and longitude.

Earth
With regard to our own personal explorations, according to Aldous Huxley in the *Doors of Perception*, at ordinary times the eye of the beholder 'concerns itself with such problems as where, how far, and how situated, in relation to what?' He goes on to suggest that, as autonomous travellers, 'in so far as we are animals, our business is at all costs to survive'.[i] It is necessary, then, that we manoeuvre as highly efficient navigators, ably charting the least hazardous route from A to B. By accessing our own inbuilt coordination system, we use our perceptual abilities to decode relationships within a given pattern or viewpoint, this is our picture space; our brain the filter by which the implicate order of things is made explicate. Henri Bergsen, the French philosopher, stated that, '... the function of the brain is in the main eliminative and not productive'.[ii] To various degrees, we all have the capacity to record the environment in which we operate. We then formulate mental maps punctuated by landmarks and later use these records to navigate our way through life. We proceed by recognition, the process of acquired information checked with our cerebral databases.

In the early Anglo-Saxon language the noun *land* meant the same as in modern English, while *mark* is found in almost all European languages and derives from the Latin *margo* meaning "edge" or "boundary". A *landmark* is some mark, line or object used to indicate a boundary without which a place would lose much of its identity. There are certain natural landmarks which may impact
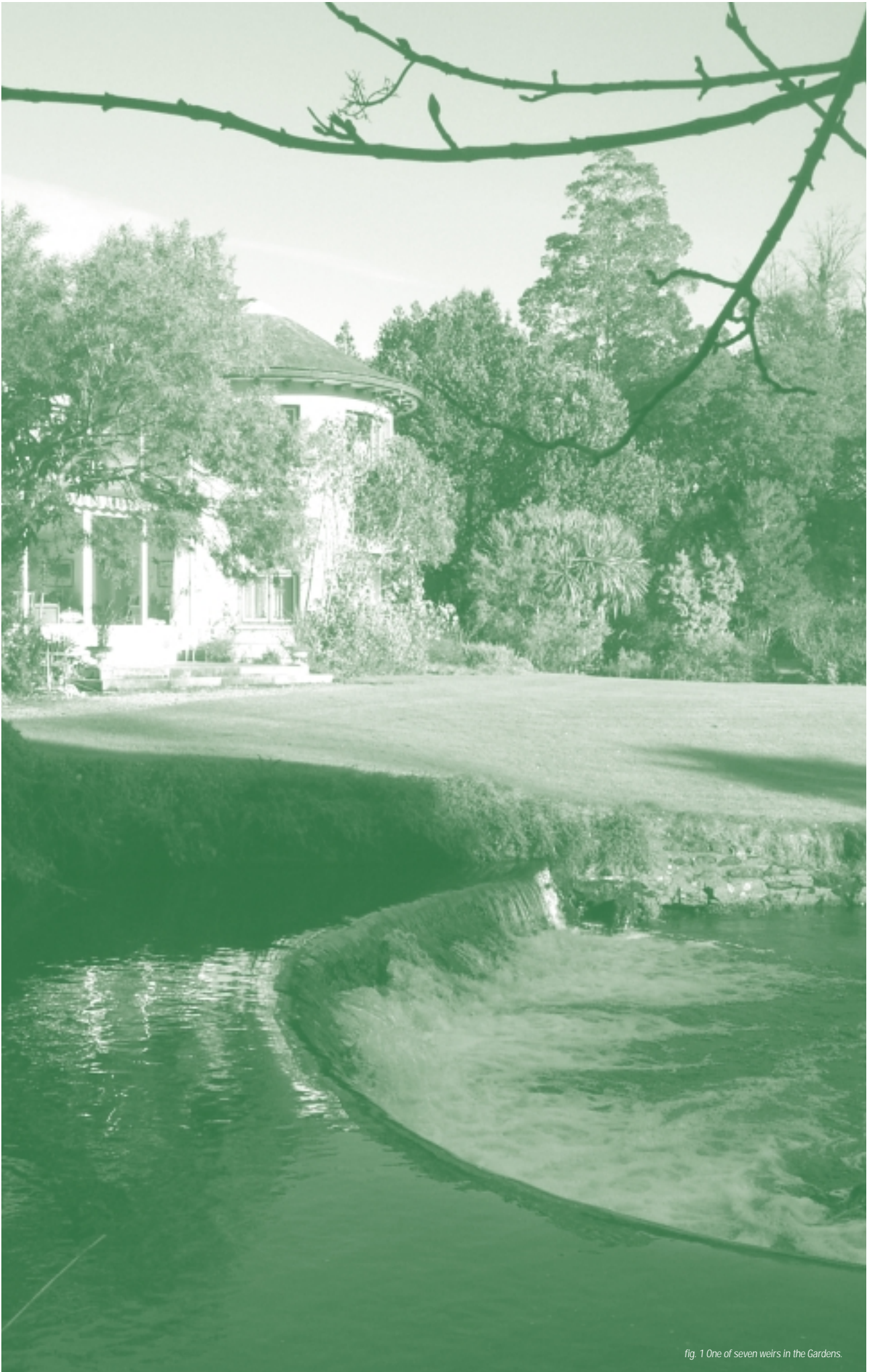
fig. 1 One of seven weirs in the Gardens.

on the plan of a city or an area — for example, mountains, valleys, canyons, forests, rivers and other bodies of water. Most create a boundary or edge and often, a likely impetus to create place. It is the River Vartry that defines Mount Usher Gardens. She acts as the umbilical chord by which the unacquainted visitor retains a link to the knowledge of their whereabouts. Even while out of sight, the sound she generates at her intermittent weirs serves as a guide, maintaining a relationship between visitor and river and ultimately between visitor and garden (fig. 1).

Mount Usher Gardens, the landscape in which this writer negotiates *his* daily life, is one of the greatest existing Robinsonian Wild Gardens. The ethos of this naturalistic style, pioneered by the great Irish horticulturist William Robinson, is perhaps most famously illuminated in his book *The Wild Garden*, first published in 1870. Situated only two miles west of the Irish Sea and 27 miles south of Dublin city, Mount Usher sits in a sheltered valley of the River Vartry as it flows down from the Devil's Glen. The 20 acres comprise of lush naturalistic woodlands and gardens, all shaped by the principal axis of the river. The paths throughout are informal, while the rich alluvial soil, high sunshine hours, 30 inches of rain per annum and mild winters, give way to the harmonious mix of tender rare exotics and hardy natives. The harmony of colour, the magnificent setting, and the 5,000 different species of plants make Mount Usher Gardens the famous Robinsonian garden that it is.

Fire

In consideration of man's navigational skills, it is often easier to fully appreciate our own natural abilities when we look at the work of scientists who excel in artificially replicating the brain computations that we take for granted. Consider, for example, the task of the NASA-designed Mars Exploration Rovers, *Spirit* and *Opportunity*. While the Rover is stopped, images from its cameras are captured and processed, into a set of (x, y, z) coordinate points. The resulting map of points is processed into a set of terrain features (steps, slopes, roughness) which serve as a three-dimensional model of the actual terrain in front of the vehicle. A Mars Exploration Rover will gather between 6,000 to 10,000 points of measurements for every step that it takes. Moreover, as this information is gathered, it will also rely on an earthbound team of scientists to map the route to its destination.[iii]

fig. 2 This Sycamore Maple marks the edge of the "Private Area" within Mount Usher Gardens.

fig. 3 A famous perspective within the Gardens: one's eye is drawn toward the Bosnian Pine in the distance.

Some would say that we as humans are unique in that we experience *temporary by-passes*, that is, periods of contemplation or inspiration, when we are released from survival duty. While apparently rapt in the bosom of safety, routine can often trigger deeper observations as we begin to communicate with the landscape that surrounds us. At Mount Usher that landscape is marked throughout by the Noble Tree (fig. 2). The Tree for us somehow occupies a moral ground. There is a silent knowing, a non-linguistic transfer of information – a reassuring set of coordinates issued by another living entity. The Datum Pitch of the place (the landscape) sets the key in which the theme (a network of landmarks) is rendered. As with a piece of music, each part is at once individually important yet each part of a perceived whole. We function on a level that perceives totality by differentiation. Subconsciously, we read the structure and rhythm of our home territories until gradually routine alters the scale of an increasingly personal set of landmarks by which we 'mark' and recognise the land. While treading to the beat of our daily worries that same branch will consistently tap us on the head as if to say in a hushed confirming tone, '... still here'.

Air

This contemplation can, as in the case of the man himself, take on Platonic proportions. The triangle was thought by Plato to be the building block of the universe. He presented this idea and others about creation, such as the universe being created to resemble a geometric progression, in the *Timaeus*: fire/air = air/water = water/earth. To recognise a triangle formed in plan view by three notable specimens within Mount Usher is to know exactly where you are in the Gardens. As familiarity with the garden grows, one notices how particular trees play different roles in various compositions. A specimen may function as the focal point of one composition while acting as support or background when viewed from another perspective. The perceived position, scale and importance of these landmarks will, in effect, change according to one's viewpoint (figs. 3 and 4). Though these markers may, in fact, be fixed, it is the temporal qualities of nature that produces the magic. Like passing clouds, compositions of light and shade come and go not to be noticed but only to be as they are. Once observed, however, the dynamic forces created between the poles of static form and the stirring elements will lift the scene beyond the nuance of survival to levels of perplexing beauty. As John Constable put it, 'No two days are alike, nor even two hours; neither were there ever two leaves of a tree alike since the creation of the world'.[iv]

In short, for every conceivable journey that we make, we all navigate by landmarks that are relevant to us. Successful Navigation = Survival. We survive so that we might be free again to breath the fullness of another inspired moment. This is living.

Jimi Shields is an Architect/Musician and partner in *thirtythreetrees* with Maria Vlahos who is Head Gardener at Mount Usher Gardens, County Wicklow.

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[ii] Bergson, H. cited in *ibid,* pp 20-23.

[iii] Work has now begun on what is called the *Natural Landmark Based Navigation* project, whose overall goal is the development of an autonomous Rover. This will use vision to improve estimates of its own position etc. by referring 'to naturally occurring terrain features as landmarks'. Matthew Deans, The Robotics Institute, Carnegie Mellon University.

[iv] Constable, J., cited by Nicholas Pioch in 'webmuseum', www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/constable/

fig. 4 The same Bosnian Pine acts as support to the vibrant colour of the Maple Walk.

6

Belfast flags, boundaries and bunting: the landscape of territory
DOMINIC BRYAN & GORDON GILLESPIE

The conflict in Northern Ireland has often been defined through the use of public space. Flags, walls, murals, parades, gates, memorials, buildings such as police stations, churches, council offices, courthouses, prisons, even fire stations all come to demarcate and define the space through which politics is understood and lived in Belfast.[i] From 1967, civil rights demonstrators were excluded from marching into town and city centres. In 1992, Sinn Féin were given permission to march through the centre of the city of Belfast and in 1993, Gerry Adams made speeches to a crowd at an internment rally outside City Hall. To the best of our knowledge this was the first time, in nearly two centuries, that a major public event reflecting the politics of Irish nationalism had been allowed into the centre of the city. Although Unionists protested against the rally, its significance appeared minimal at the time. However, in retrospect, it can be understood that significant changes in political circumstances were being experienced through the use of public space. Republicans now routinely hold rallies in front of Belfast City Hall with the statue of Queen Victoria sometimes holding the Irish tricolour which has been placed in her hand.

Public space, the use of symbols, the enactment of rituals are not epiphenomena in the conflict, they are central to the way people experience life in the city. The journey to and from school takes children on buses that cross the ethno-political boundaries of the city. State schools, with their predominantly Protestant students, and Catholic maintained schools are not necessarily in areas of population that reflect their student body. The ugly protests of Loyalist residents outside the Holy Cross Roman Catholic primary school in 2001, in the Ardoyne/Glenbryn area of the city – a dispute sparked when Loyalist flags were place on lampposts outside the school – is an extreme example, but only one of many. The children of Belfast have to cross ethno-political boundaries everyday. Their uniforms give them away. They are aware of the points on the bus route when other Catholic or Protestant students are likely to get on the bus. Even at times of apparent peace this knowledge makes a difference. They are effectively wearing symbols of political identity.
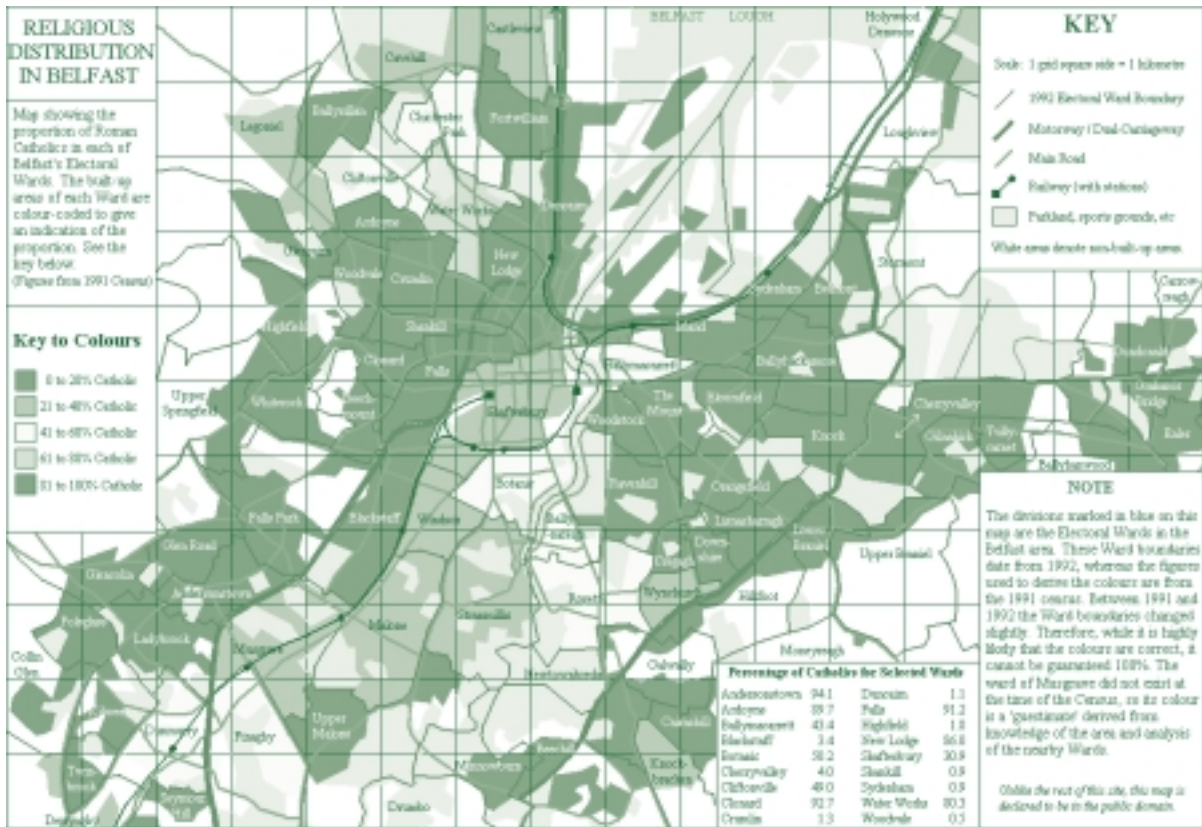
Belfast, the geography of religion

The city of Belfast of course shares many of its traits with other industrial or post-industrial cities in the world. The collapse of old industries leaves high unemployment, significant issues of policing and housing problems. This in turn leads to attempts to regenerate by attracting service industries, building new shopping centres and – for those cities which happen to be located near the sea, a major river or a lake – the inevitable creation of a waterfront development. For many comparable cities, issues of territory and policing are also central. Commercial arenas such as shopping centres become the space where young people engage with the fetishized world of marketing and where private security firms are hired to keep an eye on them. But Belfast stands apart. Fred Boal argues that, unlike other cities, which are simply divided cities, Belfast is a *polarized* city where 'simple service delivery questions and planning decisions regarding the use of space are transformed into conflicts'.[ii] In other cities, socio-economic division may exist in both ethnically homogenous and heterogeneous societies, but in polarized cities ethno-nationalism can lead to a strategy of separatism. What's more, the territorial divisions that have been a part of Belfast for 200 years show evidence of becoming more marked, not less.

... violence at interfaces between communities continues to affect lives, property, business and public service; while levels of tolerance and respect for diversity within the Protestant and Catholic communities has been improving, there is evidence that they have decreased recently; housing has become more segregated over the last 20 years; around 95% of children still attend non-integrated schools; there are high levels of racial prejudice in Northern Ireland and the situation has recently become worse; there is little change in the extent of inter-community friendship patterns; in some urban areas further divisions are emerging within local communities; and people's lives continue to be shaped by community division.[iii]

So, in spite of a much-vaunted peace process, the city of Belfast is more divided than ever. And this provides an enormous policy problem in areas of policing, planning, public order and community safety. How is this division to be managed? The large interface walls that separate many housing estates suggest that the predominant policy is one of 'high fences make good neighbours'. If you can manage the transport of children through the interfaces; if you can provide facilities and services, from health centres to swimming pools, to communities both sides of the wall; if you can manage population shifts with empty derelict housing on one side of the interface while there is a shortage of housing on the other; if you can cope with the young children who hang around the liminal spaces of dereliction at the interfaces, goading each other; if you can manage the parades that have 'traditional routes' that cut into more contemporary communal boundaries, then perhaps such a policy might work in the long term. But more than likely, it will only keep the peace for a short period until conflict reveals itself at the margins and yet more walls need to be built. We are not aware of one single interface wall being taken down. And anyone living close enough to these boundaries will tell you about the routine shower of object – stones, ball-bearings, marbles and golf balls – that are fired over even the highest fence. It is a rare house, near the interfaces, that does not have some protection for its windows.

Let us provide another example that is equally indicative of the problems: flags. One cannot drive around the roads and lanes of Northern Ireland or the streets of Belfast without noticing the range of flags that adorn lamp posts and telegraph poles as well as certain buildings, and not infrequently, people's homes. The flying of flags at particular periods of the year has long taken place in Northern Ireland. More recently, however, there has been a proliferation of this practice with flags often left flying for much of the year. From Easter onwards, various days of commemoration in Unionist and Nationalist areas will lead to new Union flags or Tricolours and other flags being attached to good vantage points. Some, more often in Nationalist areas, are taken down a few weeks later, but many remain until the wind and rain of winter reduce them to tatty shreds. There always seems to be something symbolically significant when the Irish tricolour loses the Orange section.

In Loyalist areas the Union flag is frequently accompanied by flags representing either of the two main loyalist paramilitary groups: the UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) and the UDA (Ulster Defence Association). During the loyalist feud between the two groups, centred on the Shankill Road area of Belfast, the number of loyalist flags increased dramatically. It became possible to define, almost down to a particular lamppost, where a UVF controlled area finished and UDA controlled area began. In a small survey carried out in 2001, 16 Ulster flags (the old flag representing Northern Ireland), 17 Union flags and 16 UVF flags in Donegall Pass in south Belfast were counted. Two hundred yards away in the equally loyalist area of Sandy Row, there were 11 Ulster flags, 12 Union flags, no UVF flags, but 18 UDA flags. There is quite a wide variety of loyalist/unionist flags whose forms have changed over the years, reflecting political circumstances through the use of different symbols. Most of the flags, many of which seem to be made in Taiwan, are cheap polyester and very quickly fray at the edges, so that by the winter they are little more than scraps of cloth. The Union flag is frequently used in conjunction with other symbols, sometimes appearing on the Ulster flag (red cross of St George on a white background, with a red hand in a six pointed star), but also appears with pictures of the Queen or with other emblems of Northern Ireland. The Scottish flag, the *Saltire*, is also very common representing the strong Ulster-Scotland link. The paramilitary groups have a range of flags but they have recognisable colours and symbolic themes. Nearly all of them use the red hand in some form or another. The UVF have the red hand surrounded by the words 'For God and Ulster'; the Red Hand Commando have wings attached to the red hand; the UDA, a crowned crest under which is written 'Quis Separabit'; the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) have the red hand as a
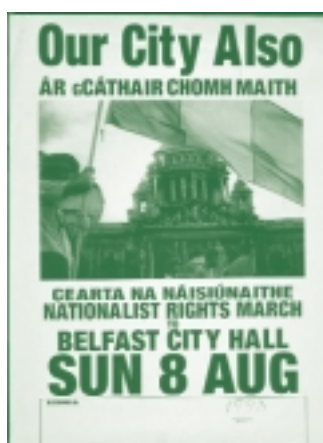
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High fences make good neighbours

clenched fist. The UVF tend to use a crimson or purple colour, the UDA use light blue, while the UFF commonly use black. UDA flags frequently carry the slogan 'Simply the Best' taken from the Tina Turner song.

While some of this is 'popular' (in that sections of the community welcome the appearance of flags, bunting, murals and painted kerbstones) some displays are not. *The Life and Times Survey* (http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/) has contained a series of questions over attitudes towards flags and murals since 2000. One striking statistic from both the 2001 and 2002 surveys is the level of ambivalence in both communities towards both the Union flag and the tricolour. When asked in 2002 how they feel when they see the Union flag 43% of Protestants and 77% of Catholics feel neither proud nor hostile towards the flag. The same question asked about the tricolour produced figures of 42% for Protestants and 70% for Catholics. Similarly, 79% of Protestants and 77% of Catholics said that at no time in the previous year had they felt intimidated by *loyalist* murals, kerb painting or flags and, for the same period, 70% of Protestants and 86% of Catholics said that at no time had they felt intimidated by *republican* murals, kerb painting or flags. However, these figures are revealing in another sense. They suggest that around 1 in 4 or 1 in 5 of the population *do* feel intimidated. Given that it is likely that people in particular geographical regions are more affected than others, the figures suggest a significant problem and may highlight the influence of residential segregation.

In 2003, the *Life and Times Survey* ran a further set of questions on paramilitary flags. These suggested that 66% of people strongly agreed or agreed that the police should remove paramilitary flags throughout Northern Ireland (60% of Protestants and 75% of Catholics). Only 11% disagreed. 25% of people agreed that paramilitary flags are an important expression of culture, 47% disagreed or strongly disagreed (the figures for Protestants and Catholics are very similar). 65% of people supported special laws banning the flying of all paramilitary flags in Northern Ireland, with more support amongst Catholics (72%) than amongst Protestants (58%). Only 10% of people disagreed. When asked if the flying of paramilitary flags should be allowed in some neighbourhoods only 13% agreed (similar for both Protestants and Catholics), while 61% disagreed. Around 23% of people thought paramilitary flags should be allowed at certain times of year but again, 53% disagreed. These figures seem to give quite a clear and consistent attitude within both communities towards paramilitary flags. Since the flying of

specifically paramilitary flags is much more common within the Protestant community, it is interesting that although negative attitudes towards the flags here are not quite as strong as in the Catholic community, they are nevertheless significant. It should, however, be pointed out that it is unclear what is considered a paramilitary flag. In the arena of symbols, context is everything. It may be that some people would consider the Irish tricolour, in particular contexts, to be a paramilitary flag. Similarly, the Union flag, when flying in conjunction with other paramilitary flags, could be considered threatening. It may also be that people might not consider certain versions of UVF flags to be paramilitary in nature, but rather historical, reflecting the founding of the organisation in 1912. Surveys do not, of course, reveal some of the nuances of understanding. The figures nonetheless, indicate quite widespread support for more legislation and stronger enforcement to deal with the flying of paramilitary flags. However, when the *Life and Times Survey* asked if people thought laws to stop paramilitary flags would be enforceable, 50% of people thought they would not and only 20% thought that they would. This would suggest that people are realistic about the difficulties involved in particular communities. The flags are frequently put up by the paramilitaries and carry with them the threat, or perceived threat, of violence. Moreover, the flying of flags do carry some degree of local support. But then, how do we know how much support they have? After all, the intimidated will tend to keep quiet and keep their heads down.

So what are the policy options? The legislative position is unclear. In 1954, the parliament at Stormont passed the *Flags and Emblems (Display) Act* which gave powers to the police to order a person who erected an emblem to remove it if a police officer felt it was likely to cause a breach of the peace. Failing to do so was an offence. This act might not have been so unreasonable had it not been that the Union flag was exempt. Indeed, the Act – which was only repealed in 1987 – was introduced to deal with the proliferation of Tricolours at events in the early 1950s. One policy option today is to introduce legislation that specifically deals with the flying of flags in public. Flags that are within work places are covered by the *Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order*, which has a Fair Employment Code of Practice that suggests employers should 'promote a good and harmonious working environment'. But while employers might have to remove flags, what about the public buildings and lampposts around the workplace? There is a range of legislation that could be, but is rarely, used. Many paramilitary flags could fall under anti-Terrorism legislation and incitement to hatred, but it can be difficult to obtain prosecutions. The more routine approach would be to utilise public order legislation and act if there appears to be provocative conduct or a possible breach of the peace. Yet decision making on this issue is driven by the particular contexts. In addition, especially where flags and kerb-painting are concerned, action from the police – without the broad consent from the local community, or from groups with power – could lead to a proliferation of flags and paintings. As such, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) have been and remain reluctant to remove flags or to prosecute, unless there is likely to be broad local backing for such an approach.

Despite the attention of numerous governmental agencies and NGOs – and some progress in the understanding of the problem and some success in limiting the proliferation of flags – no clear policy has emerged to deal with the issue. This is in part because flags also provide a significant problem on official buildings. After the signing of the Multi-Party Agreement in 1998, for instance, there were a range of almost farcical disputes over what flags should fly over which government departmental buildings. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at that time (then Peter Mandelson) introduced the *Flags and Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order* that designated 'notified days' on which the Union flag should be flown and on which particular government buildings. However, this legislation does not cover local councils where disputes have continued unabated. Some Unionist control councils not only fly flags on the main council building everyday of the year, but on other buildings run by the council, such as swimming pools and other leisure amenities. As, technically, they are employers, one could ask if this contravenes the employment legislation cited above. In addition, it could be argued that Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act is being contravened. Section 75 imposes a statutory duty on public authorities to carry out its functions with due regard to equality of opportunity and to the desirability of promoting 'good relations between persons of different religious, political opinion or racial groups'. However, Unionist councillors might point out that there are examples of councils in the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland that fly the national flag over their buildings every day.

All of which returns us to the management of public space in Northern Ireland. The existence of 'territories' costs money, frequently demands duplication of services, and makes regional and local economic development more problematic. The everyday behaviour of people all over Northern Ireland is dictated by the demarcation of public space through flags, murals and kerbstone painting. Many service providers have to cope with the difficulties created by this demarcation of space. 'Symbolic conflicts' are part of the environment in which violent conflict is perpetrated. The meaning given to buildings, to areas, to space is part of the lived experience of being in Northern Ireland. It reflects many of the changes that have taken place but also the elements of the conflict that remain embedded. But for a more integrated and harmonious society to develop in public space, symbolic space has to be managed. This is the challenge for a range of policy makers, from police officers, to planners, to politicians.

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7

Proto Politics: Mapping and Identity in Donegal – Speculations and Realities

RAUL BUNSCHOTEN & GARY DOHERTY

Ever-increasing local, national and international flows of people, ideas, goods and information are shifting territorial boundaries and identities and changing how we use, and see, the landscape. Emergent perceptions of territory demand new methods of management and design. Interventions demand a more all-embracing, proto political, approach.

Territory can be both subjective and very real. Notions of territory and borders cause conflict. Conflict creates a dynamic that becomes embedded in culture. The Irish landscape has been shaped by conflicts for millennia, affecting both the national psyche and the land. The Viking, Norman and Elizabethan invasions all left very definite spatial consequences; ruined castles and monasteries; placenames; and a network of towns and villages that can usually be traced back to one conquest or cultural condition or another. What are the current conflicts? How can they be managed

and utilised to give physical form and a new nomenclature to contemporary Irish society? And who, in fact, is that society, given that now there are now almost half as many residents in Ireland as tourists annually?

Questions like these demand a system of working that can cater for and manage the desires and agendas of differing individuals and user-groups existing in a place, and give them a voice in its future. Traditional master planning has failed. By zoning in activities, other activities are inevitably zoned out and society can actually become further segregated and divided. Society, moreover, no longer stays still enough for master plans to be completed. How can progress be made by not creating or reinforcing boundaries? How can voice be given to all? And how can a flexible enough system, one that changes and morphs over time depending on the forces affecting it, be devised?
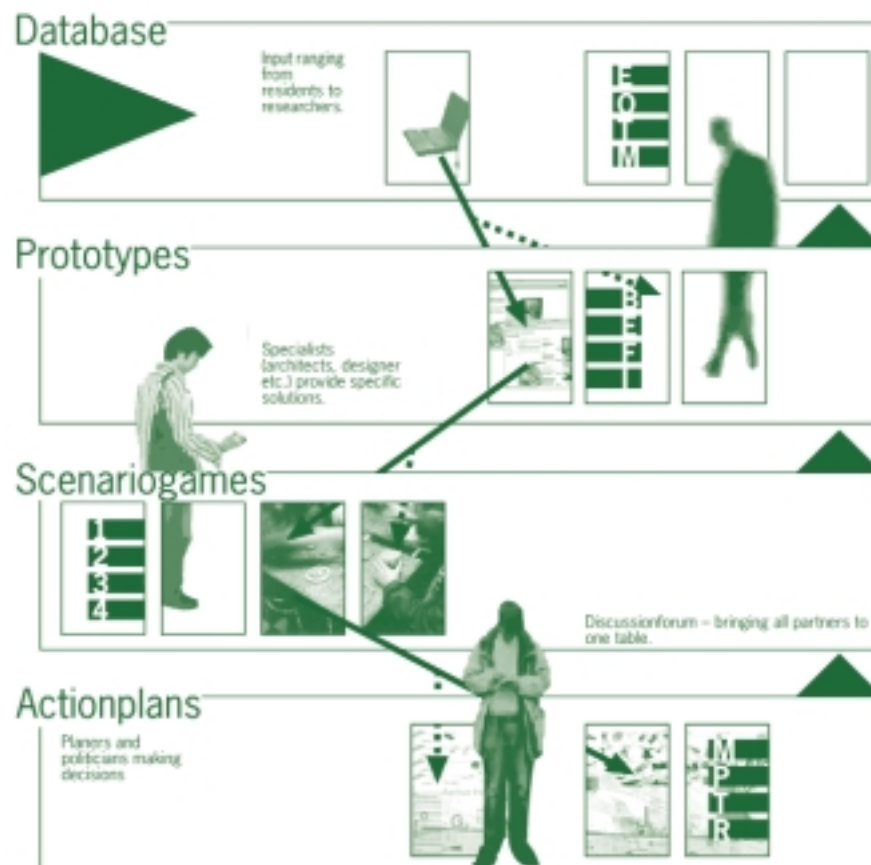

fig. 1 The process of the Urban Gallery

Gary Doherty, landscape architect, joined CHORA architecture and urbanism, in 2000. He brought Raoul Bunschoten, principal of CHORA, to Inishowen – the most northerly part of Ireland – to discuss a project for a village environmental scheme with the Ballyliffin Residents' Association. This initial contact evolved into a wider research into the territory inhabited by the the thirty-eight community organisations that exist in the wider Clonmany parish where Ballyliffin is situated. This lead to a project about territory, identity, and what we normally call proto urban forces – forces that create the conditions for urban change. Since then we have worked on various projects in the area. Inishowen is not exactly urban, but is only an hour's flying time from London, and many people come from Sweden, the USA, Japan and other countries, specifically to play golf on its famous links (the second biggest tourist attraction in Co. Donegal).

From initial contact with the various groups and later with community committees, we realised that the local proto urban forces were essentially political in nature. Systems of governance and decision-making were transforming, and often forced to transform, under the pressure of global forces acting locally. This is not new, but we realised that the various projects we became involved in had a proto-political component: each, somehow, would contribute to the transformation of the governance and decision-making structures of parts of Inishowen.

The idea of architects being involved in proto-political projects emerged only gradually in our work in Inishowen. It is, however, linked to other work by CHORA on what we call *Urban Curation*. Here, the architect works as a curator of proto urban conditions, effectively deploying their inherent conflicts to make positive opportunities through the organisation and sometimes design of innovative projects. This process is linked to the *Urban Gallery*, a prototypical planning tool that combines aspects of public space, the pooling of knowledge, negotiation processes and joint communal action (fig. 1). The *Urban Gallery* is aimed at tapping into local conflicts and harnessing their dynamic energy. The product is always more than design or construction: it aims at an effective management of the ongoing changes generated by single projects, and at coordinating the dynamics of the environment in which projects take place. While the *Urban Gallery* is a prototype for an interactive planning tool and curatorial device (further explained on www.chora.org) it is also an incubator of prototype projects for a village, town or region. Prototypes, the first or primary type of something, are projects that trigger further reactions, processes and events. They do not sit in isolation, but are networked into society.

We have chosen four examples from a range of projects to demonstrate some of this in practice, in a tentative, experimental and rather inconclusive way. The projects are very different in scale and scope and only one of them, the map project, has been realised so far.

1: Lough Foyle Area Planning
Lough Foyle, the inlet on the north coast separating the Inishowen peninsula in Donegal from County Derry in Northern Ireland, illustrates many of the tensions existing in the contemporary Irish landscape. Despite being the location of an international border, the exact line of this border has never been determined. With rising demand for leisure pursuits, coupled with increased access and prosperity resulting from the Northern Ireland Peace Process, the lough is emerging as a public space rather than border zone. Cruise ships are just one of the new constituents using the lough, a space overlooked on both sides by many thousands of largely rural dwellers. This public space transcends traditional political structures (four local authorities border the space) and demands a new identity and way of management. How can identity be designed? And how can a management plan be created that also addresses the rich but delicate fauna and flora of this lough? Of course, this area is not unique in being a border zone that constitutes a recognizable recognisable spatial entity. We call this kind of space a *Liminal Body*. It is a threshold space and yet incorporated as an entity. Other examples of *Liminal Bodies* include the Peak District in England, encircled by the cities of Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield; the Baltic Sea which is emerging as a new marketplace because of the accession of the Baltic countries as new EU members; and the Taiwan Strait, the sea separating Taiwan from mainland China which, while a place of intense exchange between the two countries, is still a site of imminent conflict.

A small anecdote during a preliminary planning meeting with politicians illustrates the ambiguity of a place such as Lough Foyle. The meeting was held in a pub. We had brought a map of the lough from London (fig. 2). Several scribbles soon emerged in the margins about financial amounts allocated for harbour improvement projects related to the cruise ship industry. Suddenly, one of the politicians looked closer to the mouth of the River Foyle, straddled by the city of Derry and, taking a pen, drew a line through the river. It seemed a bit rash to start drawing bridges at this stage of the discussion. But, as it happened, the name Londonderry was written through the river, and the politician had scored out the 'London' part. This changed the whole discussion which then became about naming and identity. The name of this city is itself disputed. Different people use different names and this double branding brings an unfinished conflict into the planning process for the Lough Foyle Area. Indeed, despite a strong desire from all parties and a clear need, there is no joint planning policy for Lough Foyle yet.

Branding is one of the four criteria that we use to test innovative prototype projects. The others are *earth*, *flow* and *incorporation*. with: *branding*, *earth*, *flow* and *incorporation*. Any new project is given a performance profile according to these criteria. *Branding* is about naming, creating identity, but also reflecting memory and history. *Earth* denotes the spatial extension of any project. *Flow* introduces the temporal aspect and addresses movements of money, information, traffic or natural elements. *Incorporation* indicates any legal aspects, ownership, management and organisational structures. We had proposed to describe a taxonomy of constituent elements in the Lough Foyle Area for
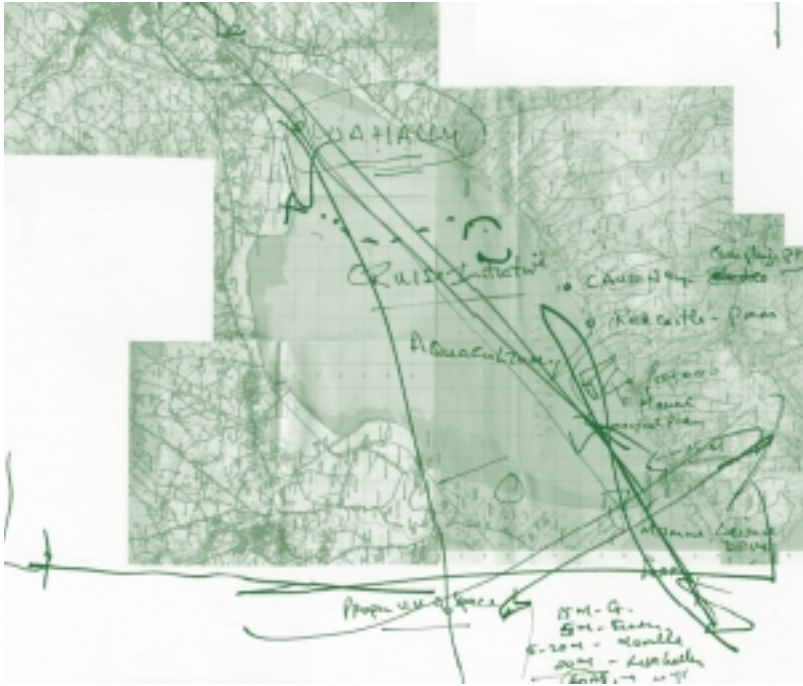
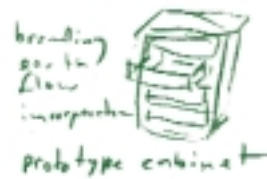each of the four layers. A cross-border organisation that will become the embodiment, or incorporation of the *Liminal Body* of Lough Foyle is ultimately needed to initiate and sustain projects to address the whole of the area. However, we knew that this was not yet on the table. So, instead of suggesting such an organisation, we proposed to make a study of the main ingredients from which prototype projects could be constructed. Through combinations of these ingredients, stakeholders who were ready to become a kind of caretaker-body for Lough Foyle could be found: in effect an embryonic form of governance. After the Lough Foyle proposal we transferred this approach onto the Clonmany Area.

2: Clonmany Area Pilot Project

The Clonmany Area is a parish with three small villages nestled between mountains and sea in the west of Inishowen. The parish has no other structure of governance except the County Council whose remit stretches over a very much larger territory. The search for a community centre in Ballyliffin transmogrified into a search for a development plan for the whole Clonmany Area. The Clonmany Area Pilot Project group was formed to further investigate the need for facilities that could be shared by the thirty-eight groups.
Again, we felt it needed a tool. We sketched out the four

layers as the necessary taxonomies with which to create specific projects. This time, however, we presented it as a cabinet with four drawers (fig. 3). Each drawer held ingredients related to one of the four criteria. It was important that the ingredients already existed in the area: the history group works with local memory, the residents' associations were interested in safety for pedestrians walking along roads at night, etc. Various ambitions and operations were to be sorted and put into the relevant drawers and interconnected. The project was revived two years later. Then, we decided to make four maps representing the four layers, and to make the first version of a prototype map, a map that people and groups from the community could use as a basis for negotiations. Below follows an abbreviated version of the texts that accompanied the four maps:

Branding/Landscape of Signs and Names: What defines the space of this parish most, in terms of human marks and names? Driving along Clonmany's roads we see signs erected to advertise something, to seduce people to some place, to tell about a town centre, to sell gas. There are the older signs too, the church spires, the façades of important buildings, the fronts of the new fake-old cottages that look like a fantasy Ireland, and the really old landmarks, the standing stones, the dolmens, the rock carvings. Signs,

landmarks and other symbolic objects and images tell a story about the space, its inhabitants, and create a partial identity for those moving through it at speed, or who stay only for a short sojourn. Branding a landscape is a powerful action: it is about selling it, or something of it, about convincing somebody about the value, about something to see, to remember it by, to take away. But the landscape has many invisible placenames too, many of which are being forgotten and are losing their meanings. 'There is a name for every stone about here, sir, and a story too' said the playwright, Brian Friel. This map attempts to situate some of the names and to record new names arising from the myriad of new holiday homes being built.

Earth/Landscape of Colour: The earth layer is about all aspects of space, the earth on whose surface we live, the sea, air. It is about territories, about spaces we limit, delineate, about parish boundaries and national borders. The earth layer is also about the substance of the space we live in, the ground we farm, cut into, sleep on, the air we breathe, the sky we see in the evening. The Clonmany Area has a rich geological composition, some parts are speckled with distinct pink-coloured glacial deposits from the last ice age. The ocean is ever powerful, creating mists, and ever-changing hues from slate grey to magic aquamarines. But the earth is also about the plants on the surface of the land, the many shades of green, the soft grey-greens of the

mosses and lichens, and a full spectrum of seasonal colours. The brilliant yellow of the *Ulex europaeus*, the purple of the *Erica carnea* and the whites of the *Crataegus monogyna* in the early summer. Above all, there is the ancient brown of the peat fields on the higher plateaus, scratched like a Rembrandt etching, that have fuelled households for hundreds of years.

Flow/Landscape of Movement: With its visitors having quite precise goals (it's not unusual for visitors to come specifically from Tokyo or Boston to play golf on the Ballyliffin Golf Course; to visit , visiting the annual Charles McGlinchey Summer School on history and culture; to immerse themselves, or immersing oneself in the songs of the annual Come-all-ye music festival every March) the roads are like metro lines, transporting visitors to their destined goals. Most do not veer far off their trajectories, sticking to a fixed programme of mobility. Only the wanderers look for places to walk, to move into the landscape and discover the wealth of archaeological sites andscenery. A landscape like the Clonmany Area is a space with many categories of mobility, many of which are not merging into greater flows, but remaining dedicated to a user group. Mixing and playing with flows is one way a landscape can change its identity, or can be experienced in a different way.

fig. 6 Colgan Hall: structure

fig. 7 Colgan Hall: fibre cement panel

Incorporation/Landscape of Institutions and Businesses: What constitutes the parish as a communal space for living? Primarily, it is its administrative constitution. In this case the parish is a subdivision of a county and the religious subdivision of a diocese. In many other European countries Clonmany would be a municipality, here it is a proto-municipality with no official local administrative body. But perhaps its more concrete constitution is its large number of groups, associations, clubs, and other forms of meeting and joint living. The Clonmany Area has thirty-eight associations of various kinds including three local town committees, several sports teams and many other, focused groups. These are the backbone of the community organisation, the main substance and link with organised government. Parallel to them there are many individuals, non-affiliated, alone. , occasional joiners, or the simply absent. This rich landscape of communities is both the strength and also the weakness of the area. Hard decisions are hard to make, consensus hard to reach. But the fluidity of congregational life is also something very contemporary, very urban and cosmopolitan. Europe's fringes are sometimes very central in its cultural formation. The map becomes an enabling device to negotiate and build the future. (fig. 4)

3: 3 Acts in 117 Signs

One cultural prototype we had developed earlier was used to launch the Clonmany Area Pilot Project. It was designed as a temporary public art project and attempts to bring the local and non-local communities of the Ballyliffin and Clonmany areas together through cultural and educational goals. The project is about reading a landscape through a text inserted in that landscape. By situating the text of local playwright, Brian Friel's masterpiece *Translations*, on signs along 6.2km of footpaths in three different locations, or *acts*, the project asks whether landscape can animate text as well as text animate landscape? Can drawing a line through the landscape, help us to understand that land better? And can that land help inform the text?

fig. 8 Colgan Hall: elevation with panels and names

Instead of theatrical scenes, there are 117 signs, each 300 x 560mm, erected on poles 50m apart (fig. 5). Thus, it becomes Three Acts in 117 Signs. The ubiquitous road signs reflect an accepted aesthetic and hint of the cheeky sort of improvisation inherent in Friel's work. Each sign is an epiphany of sorts and reminds us of the old local practice of the *turas* (an annual pilgrimage, or journey, to holy wells at which prayers were recited along the way). Thus, a well-known and internationally acknowledged play becomes the translator of a territory, and, once the text is embedded in the land, a guide to a meta-landscape. The project was to be erected only for a period of three months or less. Unfortunately, the project was rejected by the planners on the grounds that signs are not permitted in the open landscape and that no legislation exists to allow for the placing of temporary public art projects.

4: Colgan Hall

Until fairly recently, the Colgan Hall in Carndonagh, built as a church hall in the early 20th century, was the cultural venue for the community. Its decline was accompanied with threat of demolition. However, a committee was formed to renovate the hall – while retaining its historic facades -as a centre for all the community. The project grew from the concept of a fairly small extension to a more substantial community development when several local groups expressed an interest in coming on board. We worked closely with the committee to develop a design. The core of the project was an extended hall that would meet professional standards for theatre and musical performances. But the growth of the project – eventually it was to include both commercial as well as non-profit organisations - meant that the structure reached a certain scale where the actual construction process could play a significant role.

We wanted to create some spaces that would be for non-defined community uses, facilities for prototype programming events. The main construction was made up of four prefabricated concrete walls slotting into each other forming, in plan, the symbol of the St. Bridget's Cross (fig. 6). Together, the hall and extension occupied two quadrants of a cross that was formed by two pedestrian pathways crossing and linking different parts of the town. This included a hidden piece of nature along a small river running through the settlement. While the flexible spaces, especially the *engawa* or long room of the hall, stimulated a variety of new community activities, we wanted to involve the population in the building process itself. We especially wanted to link the coming generation to its fabric and to allow them to appropriate the building.

We proposed using fibre cement for the skin of the extension, a technique we have experimented with over many years. We sourced a local manufacturer to produce the panels *in situ* in a temporary workshop facility. During one summer all the school classes would come through one by one and help fabricate the panels (fig. 7). In combining our experience with fibre cement and our experience in leading workshops, and in involving all the children of the area in hand-texturing the outside panels of the building, we would create a type of map of the future community (fig. 8). This process has a proto political aspect in that it engenders active involvement in the creation of a new community centre. There is also an element of collective memory and consciousness built into the design process. The project, moreover, could enhance the self-organising capacity of the community in cultural terms.

In order to achieve the latter, we tried to combine two separate fields of operation: the management of the building community and the orchestration of cultural affairs in Carndonagh. We proposed that the committee would begin to perceive itself as a management committee of the building, and as such become curators of its life. This focus, and the building up or drawing in of the necessary expertise, would again be of great use for the complex process of fundraising and the creating of a firm set of commitments from users of the future building. The management committee would become a kind of municipal curator of both cultural events and communities as well as of a re-evaluation of the identity of the town centre. The need for proto political activity became clear to us when the committee effectively collapsed. At a point when strong leaders with both visionary and pragmatic abilities were necessary, they were, unfortunately, absent.

Nurturing visionary leadership and management skills in prospective clients or committees dealing with landscapes, territories, town spaces or public buildings is increasingly important. As world orders change, old boundaries shift and we must adapt and provide leadership for the re-working of those spaces. The architect's role is not just to work with conflicts but sometimes to even stage them. By organising and designing spaces for a society to define itself and its own evolution, the architect has to play a didactic role. This must be extended towards decision makers, clients and communities to show them how projects have the potential to transform a society, rather than merely solve problems. The key to this is being able to play with all the layers of the structure of a community and to invent new connections. This, however, has to be based on local knowledge and on the existing actors who form the constituent parts of the dynamics of an environment.

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8

Phoenix Park fold
ANTOÍN DOYLE

The Phoenix **Park** and Sandymount **Strand** are two geographical contemporaries in Dublin **City**. They act as two polar landscapes; environmental conductors that are linked through topography, boundary, scale, form, use and nature.

The **River** bounds and binds them. Both lie to the edge of the centre of the City; the Park to its west, north of the River, and the Strand to its east, south of the River. Each of their reactions to the River is equal; the Park with a high stone wall and the Strand with a decisive stone line contained in the Great South Wall.

The **Strand**, by its nature, changes constantly, consistently captured in Dublin's daily tidal tables. Edges are defined by wave, sand, grass and rock, which are continuously worn by their unending contact with one another. Its damp base reveals a recognisable but shifting landscape of contours and sub-rivers. The Strand is never the same Strand that you go back to, which is why you do.

The **Park**, when compared with the Strand, seems immovable, even unchanging. However, it is just that its seasons have a looser fit into their timetable than the predictable movements of the ocean. The wall and railing boundaries of the Park, though more fixed and rigid than sand and water, face more long-term acts of erosion. Previously, the Park boundary used to extend further south including land across the river.

The **Park** and **Strand**, somehow both tied and separated by the **River**, fold into each other's space and, rare in this city, complement each other's existence.

Antóin Doyle is an architect currently working in Dublin.
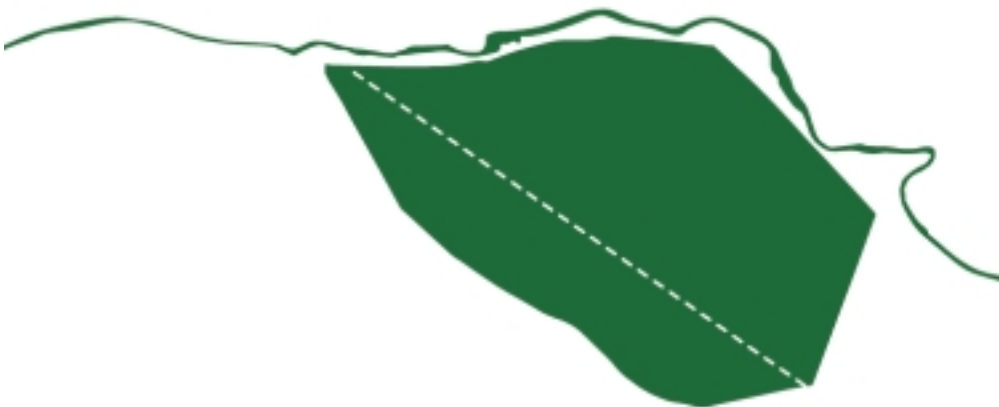
9

Profitopolis, or, The Corporate Landscape of Theming
TATJANA SCHNEIDER

Our everyday life is increasingly characterised by the exchange of experiences. This is reflected in the escalating use of themes in order to market and capitalise on services and products. The built environment is just one of them.

Theming as a strategy, for the architectural container as well as the spaces and products accommodated within, is used to create an experience which can be of a historical nature, or be created around a fantasy. It allows the utilisation of exotic or foreign attributes as design devices in otherwise undefined spaces and seeks to create an environment that is at the same time as multi-sensual, stimulating and attractive as it is spatially and temporally defined. The mechanisms behind this process are concerned with the deconstruction of the continuum of history, space and time, and their recycling in carefully selected singular fragments. Today, it is constituted by three major processes: the disembodiment, the idealisation and the commodification of an object, a building or space in general (fig.1 Mediterranean Harbour, Disney Sea, Tokyo).

Although the term 'theme', and its usage in relation to the built environment, is a relatively new fabrication, the mechanisms of what we today call theming or themed environments have been used throughout history. It was used by the Romans within their state-financed institutional buildings as well as in private developments like villas or country houses. It played an important role in the development of the building of Gothic cathedrals. And, since the nineteenth century, style wars, with competing modern, post-modern or again classicist fashions, effectively turned our cities into stylistic theme parks. While theming as a method can be regarded as trans-historical, a change in emphasis occurred from the second half of the nineteenth century when, instead of typically being used for personal pleasure, religious or political reasons, its central purpose became inextricably linked with the consumption of commodities and the circulation of capital. With the invention of the leisure industry in the 1850s, new building typologies

emerged to amuse and entertain the masses, many of which had themes applied to them – department stores, arcades, movie palaces, public baths. Indeed, sometimes even factories were given a theme.

Meanwhile, existing places and spaces were also being re-branded and commercialised. In France, for instance, with the overthrow of the monarchy and the expropriation of the aristocracy during the French Revolution, a whole number of formerly privately-owned spaces, such as pleasure gardens, were opened up to the (paying) public and started to enter the realm of the everyday. Competition between such establishments meant that new attractions were added to these landscapes, which were no longer about the re-creation of the sceneries of an idealised rural life (or other simply exotic places and buildings such as Chinese tea houses) but increasingly concerned the quick enjoyment and amusement of the visitors through fun rides like the carousel or the Russian swing, a forerunner of the Ferris wheel. The existing buildings within these gardens were, however, also appropriated by the new owners. One of those early commercial enterprises, *Le Grand Tivoli* in Paris, used the farm buildings that had been commissioned by the former aristocratic owners as backdrop for a spectacle that showed hired actors performing as the aristocrats who had once themselves, in the same place, played at being peasants (fig.2 *Petit Trianon, Maison de la Reine*, Versailles). The development of *Le Grand Tivoli*, as one of the first commercial leisure enterprises, marks a significant moment in the history of themed environments – when a landscape of private pleasures became consumable by a general but nevertheless select public.

The nineteenth-century growth of the leisure industry, and the places associated with it, was, however, inextricably linked to the changes in the way labour was organised and especially the legal regulation of working hours. This helped to stimulate the rise of a 'consumer society' whose free time activities became increasingly prescribed and commercialised. In his

PARIS EXHIBITION, 1867.
COOK'S ANGLO-AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TOURS.
RETURN TICKETS TO PARIS AND BACK,

seminal book, *Late Capitalism*, for example, Ernest Mandel describes a shift from recreational activities organised by young workers' associations to commercialised holidays, excursions and sport. Or, to put a theoretical gloss on it, the absorption of the cultural needs of the proletariat into the capitalist process of commodity production through the privatisation of the recreational sphere. This process was invigorated by companies and corporations who extended the boundaries of commodity production into the creation of environments as total institutions (fig.3 poster for Cook's Anglo-American and European Tours, 1867).

Developments boomed that provided, if only for a short period, relief from conditions of everyday life. *Le Grand Tivoli* and other developments of that time such as the *Prater* in Vienna or *Tivoli* in Copenhagen, provided activities within the context of architectural and landscape spaces that were as much removed from the outside world as possible; in principle not unlike the set-up of a Disney park (fig.4 *Tivoli*, Copenhagen 1887). Days at *Tivoli* or the *Prater* were fun days out for those who could afford it with the entrance fee the first step of segregating those parts of society who could pay from those who couldn't. The gate would then give way to an environment that was privately controlled but purported to be a public place; the city on the outside was replaced by a measured, organised and undisturbed experience, promoting a fusion of entertainment and consumption.

The technology of rides, the scale of amusement and the choice of themes advanced as competition grew, not only from within the cities themselves (from theatres and cinemas etc), but also with the development of national trade shows into international expositions. Beginning with the first of the world expositions, the *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations* held in London in 1851, these events became stage sets for the display of military achievements and showcased cultural superiority in the context of the expanding empires of France and Britain respectively. Architecture, supplemented here by 'natives', was used as a tool for summarising a foreign nation's culture (fig.5 *Exposition Universelle*, Paris 1889). Residential dwellings, as well as the religious buildings of colonised lands – ranging from South East Asia to Egypt and Morocco – were designed by architects of the imperial powers and exhibited in re-created indigenous villages. Here, 'native' people had to live their daily lives in fenced-in enclaves under the close observation of the European public. While these displays started to slowly disappear during the first three decades of the twentieth century – as it was becoming more and more difficult to justify their inherent racism – organisers of world expositions began to replace the display of colonial architecture with ever bigger architectural compositions from their own countries (fig. 6 *An Clachan*, Great Exhibition, Glasgow 1911).

As much as these buildings and ensembles, ranging from Chinese pagodas to traditional Breton farm houses, were political and ideological statements of the powers that had re-created them, they were also used in the promotion of tourism, through private companies or by the State and its institutions. The commercial success of such exhibitions helped to initiate the proliferation of buildings dressed up in exotic or historic motifs which pervaded the European city in the late nineteenth century. In a marketplace that was increasingly competitive, buildings and spaces not only used themes in order to differentiate themselves from one another, but also to create an identity for their products and services ranging from cigarettes and carpets to bath-houses and cinemas.

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6

Over the last 150 years only the scale and proliferation of themes have changed. Today, themes are generally applied to all things to be consumed and more specifically to buildings and spaces that are dedicated to consumption: housing and travel, shopping malls, etc. More recently, however, this has been extended to urban re-development on a big scale. Travel or tourism in particular seems to be one of the main forces behind the transformation of cities into either world heritage theme parks or 'Cities of ...' – sport, love, culture, shopping, and so on. Having an internationally marketable brand identity based on the very principle of theming – where the culture, spaces and buildings of a city are deconstructed, simplified, idealised and subsequently sold as a product or attraction to a receptive and paying audience – will help on the one hand, it is believed, to lure in some of the almost one billion annual global travellers. On the other hand, this brand identity is based on the developing firms' operational context. Here, public space is replaced by social, economic and spatial mechanisms of control.

This transformation of cities into places where multinational corporate off-spring proliferate in the form of clothing, food, and entertainment chains, has led to the creation of districts and spaces where formerly public space is now privately secured and controlled. This tendency has been further enforced over the last few decades through developments executed by amusement businesses and entertainment firms who have recently emerged as the major investors in an increasing number of inner-urban large scale developments. Companies such as Disney, who had produced highly regulated and enclosed environments for undisturbed fun, have now found the opportunity to transpose the successful totalitarian principles of the theme park to the city at large in projects such as the redevelopment of Times Square in New York.

Yet, developers and many architects alike contend that theming is outstanding in its capacity to flexibly and intelligently fulfil today's requirements towards the production of space. Jon Jerde, the architect behind such developments as *Canal City* in Hakata and *City Walk* in Los Angeles, for instance, proclaims that his intention was to create inviting, evocative places where people feel safe, comfortable and happy. Critical writers on architecture, urban planners, political scientists, and sociologists, however, have expressed concern about the undemocratic implications of such uses of space. They cite its privatization and gentrification, its control by large corporations who impose – implicitly through architecture and explicitly through CCTV cameras and other systems of surveillance – the restriction of access to and movement through such sites. They also remind us that global corporations do not have any specific interest in an inclusive approach towards urban design but only in the maximisation of profits.

The use of themes as a means of camouflaging and beautifying those schemes' inherent exclusive and selective agendas on the one hand, and their shareholders' avarice on the other, evidently cannot be the basis for a collective, inclusive and responsible form of society. Instead, a democratic form of decision-making must be fostered, one which goes beyond the glamorisation of State and corporate power and which does not disadvantage the already disadvantaged, but rather relates to the requirements of all people. To achieve this, we must begin to reclaim the built environment; through highlighting current development processes, unveiling their underlying ideologies and methods, as well as engaging in political action on a personal as well as on a communal level.

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10

Stalker e i Grandi Giochi del Campo Boario
FRANCESCO CARERI & LORENZO ROMITO

STALLE →

CENTRO INTERCULTURALE/LABORATORIO DI ARTE URBANA ARARAT

Map of Campo Boario, from Biennale Giovani Artisti.

C.S.O.A VILLAGGIO GLOBALE

BIENNALE DEI GIOVANI ARTISTI DEL MEDITERRANEO, FITNESS, FESTA DELL'UNITA', ENZIMI 1999

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Stalker is not a group, it is an inter-related open system which is growing and emerging through its actions and through all the individuals that operate with, for and among, Stalker. It is a collective subject which engages actions and research to catalyse creative motions in time and space, to produce self-organised places, environments and situations. Stalker does not have one physical body, not even one of the persons who gave life to it. 'We' has always been an entity which comprises 'others', who, without pretending to be us, participated in the activities, becoming 'us' in their/our actions.

After exploring for a few years what we call the 'Actual Territories' – the areas around the city's margins and forgotten urban space – in 1999, Stalker-Urban art lab began to interact with the nature of those spaces and their inhabitants in a more structured way.[1] This new experience has been carried out in *Campo Boario,* which is located in an ex-slaughter house in the Testaccio area of Rome, and is a site which has had no land-use designation since 1975. Since then, the sedimentation of time and the absence of any kind of design project have made this place a paradigm of culturally diverse self-organisation and cohabitation. The slaughter house is located in a central area within the ancient walls of the city but it is hidden by the Tiber river, the rail-tracks, and an ancient dumping place of Roman amphorae called *Monte dei Cocci.* It is the perfect *cul de sac* where uncertainty and instability manage to settle away from sight.

Campo Boario is a rectangular courtyard measuring about three hectares. Here, different communities, extraneous to the 'normal' life of the city, live together in this large space. The caravans of the Roman *Calderasha* community are settled here for almost the entire year. They are an Italian nomad community, highly skilled in working raw metals and have been present in the area since 1500. The stables are occupied by the *cavallari* – the drivers of the horse-drawn carriages which take tourists on trips around the city of Rome – and their three hundred horses. On the opposite side there is the *Villaggio Globale,* Rome's most famous *centro soziale,* which is self-managed by its occupants and where numerous intercultural activities take place over the course of a year. Other parts of the space are inhabited by different foreign communities; especially from Senegal and north Africa; by Italian homeless men and women; and by anyone

who cannot find a place somewhere else. The result is a strange cosmopolitan and multicultural universe living in the surreal city of Pasolini and Fellini, a universe which no one would imagine in the centre of modern, tourist Rome.

Stalker was invited to participate in the *Biennale dei Giovani Artisti* in May 1999. The art exhibition took place in an area adjacent to the *Campo Boario.* Stalker proposed to integrate the Kurdish refugee community from Turkey – who had arrived when their leader Ocalan came to Italy to ask for political asylum – into the already existing multicultural context of *Campo Boario.* After Ocalan was arrested, the Kurds who remained in Rome built a small paper village called 'cartonia' (in Italian 'cartone' means paper) near the Colosseum. *Cartonia* was a place of encounter, where the citizens of Rome were always welcome. It had a short life, was soon dismantled and the Kurds dispersed throughout the city.

Stalker organised a workshop entitled 'from Cartonia to Piazza Kurdistan' which involved the students of the school of architecture of Rome, the organisation Azad, and the Kurdish refugees. Stalker decided to occupy and restore the building which in the past had housed the *Campo Boario*'s veterinary clinic. The building was named 'Ararat', which is the name of the sacred mountain where Noah landed after the Flood. During the following months, Ararat became the gathering place for the Kurdish community and a workplace for artists, architects, researchers and citizens, who were invited to share in the experience of the space. Ararat represents the entrance door to *Campo Boario,* a space which many would not have otherwise gone into: it is a place which invites others to comprehend the complex and dynamic forces of *Campo Boario* and allows them to permeate its physical and cultural boundaries.

Without any public financing or help from the city administration, the space in front of Ararat was transformed into a giant playground. For three years, from 1999 to 2002, this large asphalt space hosted big collective games: the *Carta di non identità* (*Non-ID Card*) which was distributed to all the inhabitants on *Clandestino Day;* the *Pranzo Boario* (*Boario Lunch*), a big circular dining table where Kurdish food, gypsy goulash and Japanese seaweeds (cooked by Asako Iwama, Japanese artist and architect) were served together; the *Globall Game,* during which two thousand

Globall Game/Transborderline
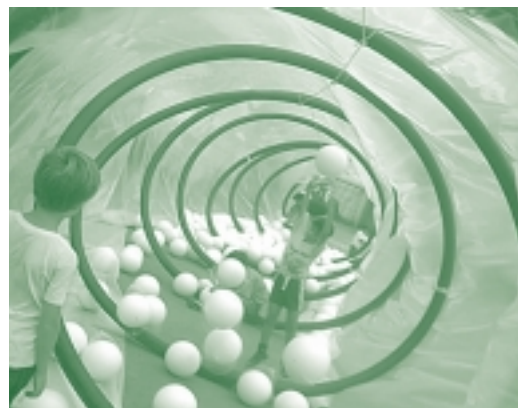
soccer balls were scattered and used to write and collect stories of *Campo Boario*; the *Transborderline*, a spiral space which symbolically represented a permeable and inhabitable border, which was then illegally installed on the Italian Slovenian borderline; and the *Tappeto Volante* (*Flying Carpet*), an itinerant ceiling which traced the *mucarnas* of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo using ropes and copper. Many other games and actions without names were also played, leaving no visible traces but contributing to the transformation and emancipation of this space. Today, Ararat is a mandatory stop for all Kurdish refugees who pass through Europe – more than three thousand until now – and is the main gathering place of the Kurdish community in Rome. Part of the asphalt has been negotiated with the *cavallari* and transformed into the *Ortoboario*, a public garden where sunflowers and fruit trees are planted. In this common space, the *Newroz* celebration takes place every year. This is the Kurdish new year party during which the entire community gathers around a fire and dances to remember the time when Babylonians were chased out from the territory of Kurdistan, and to remember today's liberation fight carried on by fifty million Kurds who live divided between four different nations – the world's largest stateless people.

Much time and energy was needed to find the right way for Stalker to arrive in the *Campo Boario* and engage with its inhabitants. The first step was to overcome many cultural barriers, to open up to what seemed difficult to comprehend, to win over fear and ethical complexes, to find the peace and serenity to avoid judgments, and to run away from predetermined certainty. We had to change our usual point of view to look at the world as if it was an inhabitant of that particular space. We had to share the illegal conditions of the occupants, take on daily responsibilities, comprehend and observe the equilibrium, the rules, and the visions. We realised and recognised, from the inside, the capacity of the space and its inhabitants to

Pranzo Boario (Boario Lunch)
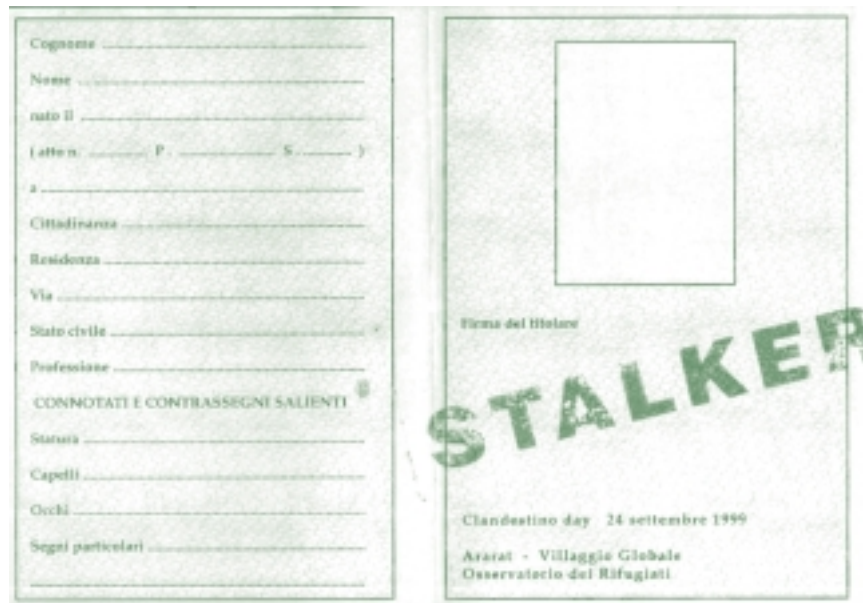
self-organise and thus avoid its own destruction. There were no laws and no written rules, every existing situation was produced by negotiations between communities and individuals.

In every corner, there are invisible boundaries, never marked and always ready to be changed. Everything lives in equilibrium, an unstable state which has developed in time through the history of the space itself, where no one is the owner and no one has real rights. This equilibrium has been found through temporary negotiations (which avoided deep traumas), through arrivals and departures, and through borderlines and new passageways. Initially, Stalker was received with much indifference but soon this changed to curiosity for this strange tribe of artists and architects, who didn't want to draw or design or create anything, who were not political activists nor social services or public institution representatives. This ambiguity of roles was the key to our becoming the organiser of the collective games and to our success in involving the inhabitants to both play and challenge themselves by playing. Stalker has slowly found the way to operate and become part of the ongoing transformations of this space, proposing playful activities and methods, and extracting and enlivening its complexity.

Campo Boario, like many others in different cities and countries of the world, is an urban area produced by the globalisation process. These are areas which seem extraneous to our culture even though by now they are part of it. They are beginning to emerge in the way we perceive our cities, in our mental maps. In these places the city forgets all its masks and becomes naked, showing what the city itself doesn't yet know. Here, no traditional projects are accepted, and architects can leave behind their certainty and their projects to find the way through unknown processes involving many different actors and many different levels of perception and action. Here, we are beginning to define new tools and methods to develop the self-representation of these realities, producing neither objects nor projects, but only paths and relationships. The discipline becomes hybrid, moving from architecture to public art, something we can start calling 'civic art'.

Campo Boario needs neither art works nor public architecture to define its clear identity. Its characteristics are its uncertainty and indefiniteness and the self-organisation of its physical and social spaces. The challenge is to produce a public space starting from these premises. The interest in operating in these areas lies in trying to involve the inhabitants' creativity and inventiveness to produce a real melting pot of cultures, where architecture and urban art is only one of the cultures involved. I don't mean that we have to ask those who have different problems to turn into *urb-artists*, but only that they should be prepared to assume an active role inside a transformation game where everyone participates in building up rules, sharing the general aims, and attempting not to waste any human skills or qualities.

As with any experiment, it's an experience that often involves a series of unsuccessful attempts, miscalculations or wrong approaches – but also unexpected and sometimes inexplicable successes. In fact, the real difficulty is the creation of the right interactions to stimulate ways in which to make manifest the problem. This creative process is very similar to a biochemical transformation, where differentiated forces operate. It is necessary to catalyse ongoing transformations while trying to eliminate any idle prejudice and conflict, to direct useful energy towards change by means of playful devices, and to seek new configurations of sense and space by means of the relationships which arise during the process.

Carta di non identità (Non-ID Card)

Being 'present' is often necessary to operate according to the aforementioned steps. Being 'present' means to sympathetically observe, to have no judgment, to pay attention to the processes, to try to read and interpret the emerging dynamic and the creative definition of relationships, and to leave behind competition and conflict. Being 'present' activates a unitary process which binds the observation of the world with the contribution to its transformation and evolution.[ii] The evolution is not a gradual and continuous process and it cannot be foreseen. For this reason any planning activity cannot be structured on the definition of a clear objective, but must instigate changes of perspective and try to upset equilibrium by means of *detournements*. This creative restlessness brings all involved actors to redefine their own position, their own vision of daily life, by playing.

This way Stalker could be anyone. Stalker is a desiring community where no one belongs and where individuals encounter each other. It is an unstable entity, *a temporary community which is founded on possibilities, on desire, on intention, on promise and waiting.*[iii]

Such desiring power is Stalker's hypothesis, '*transgressive excitement, tension in motion, energetic investment in the future*'. Stalker will then come to life, without consuming its own desire, without losing it, and become something else, an autonomous entity, living away from chaos. It will be generated by desire itself and not by determination. By 'coming to life' it generates a space, which is an ethic, political, and aesthetic space, a real, autonomous, living space, a territory made up of environments, situations and places, which have been taken away from chaos, from idle and ratified dominions, finding its way from destruction and destructors, re-establishing a creative circularity which has been taken away from us by the transformation of life into merchandise.

This is Stalker's necessary ethical, political and aesthetic approach. Without these premises, Stalker runs the risk of turning out fixed games ...

Francesco Careri and Lorenzo Romito for stalker (ON / osservatorio nomade > Roma).

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[iii] Berardi Bifo, F. – *Felix, narrazione dell'incontro con il pensiero di Guattari, cartografia visionaria del tempo che viene*, Luca Sassella Editore, Rome 2001. pp 20-23.

11

Reality – Geometrically Demonstrated

BEA McMAHON

Understanding how geometry works gives us our so-called 'natural' understanding of how we relate to the world, how we describe and classify nature and ourselves. Our thinking is still very much structured by an idea that is 300 years old (Descartes - 'I think therefore I am').[i] I am currently making work using a contemporary physics understanding of geometry, and seeing what happens.

I got my title for this piece from Spinoza – he wrote a book called *Ethics: geometrically demonstrated* – which might explain more about where I'm coming from. To think about geometry is very abstract, it covers any situation we can imagine. It creates pictures in your mind of things that can never exist nor be visualised.

The Greeks created Euclidean Geometry – flat plane geometry made by the comparison of 3 surfaces – which relied on observation (sensory). Then about 1500 years later came Descartes and Cartesian geometry, joining Euclidean geometry with algebra. Descartes' thesis relied on reason and abstraction that was independent of our senses – thought was considered independent from matter and matter from thought. He paved the way for Newton's formulation of classical mechanics, which brought the mechanics of heaven and earth into one general system. Maxwell and Faraday gave mathematical structure to fields for the first time. This was the point where nature stopped being visualised as a machine-like structure, and was thought about in purely abstract terms.

This abstraction led to a shift from empiric knowledge to transcendental knowledge paving the way for Einstein's Relativity theories (1905 and 1915). Gauss and Riemann had made new geometries in the late 1800's that Einstein needed for his General Theory. This theory undermined the 'universally' true nature of Euclidean geometry and all the philosophy that went with it. The question as to which geometry was correct, now became an empirical question, that is, which truth was best in a particular situation.

Einstein's *General Theory of Relativity* established a connection between the manifold (many-d bendy geometry with a lot of rules and regulations) and the distribution of masses in the universe. Quantum Mechanics was the cause of much confusion among physicists – they like us were stuck in a Cartesian separation of *I* from the world, and the fact that the observer had a part to play in determining the outcome of experiments did not fit with the mathematical formalism. The notion of 'describing what happens' in quantum mechanics is turned on its head, real physics concepts can only be applied at points of observation; the space between observed results is expressed as a sort of probability matrix with symmetric properties. Heisenberg said, in describing how we articulate quantum mechanics, '... it is not a precise language in which one could use the normal logical patterns; it is a language that produces pictures in our mind...'[ii]

Waste Management in Dublin City and the Arrival of Kofi Annan

In the Autumn of 2004, I made an experiment to try and live in 'space-time'. I made 13 space-time points which are a 3-d point in space (marked by digging up a sod) coupled with a particular time. To keep my data as random as possible, I deliberately did not set out with 13 pre-determined points, but instead allowed them to be revealed sequentially. Details surrounding the event of making the space-time points were noted. To investigate the nature of these space-time points I logged further details about them during a time interval. To provide random sampling of information, I limited any documentation to national news stories relating to any point that appeared on the TV during the months of September and October 2004. I returned the grass at the beginning of November, which plugged up the time interval.

Reality is normally delivered to us with events ordered in continuous time independent of their location in space. In this situation, the only observable quantities are news stories, which are predetermined by a fixed location. This snapshot of history is then presented according to the chronology of the digging of sods. The subjective nature of the experiment – the fact that I created each point – is in contrast to the Cartesian partition of *I* and the world. It is interesting because I didn't have anything to do with the data collected yet I am inextricably linked with it. This is at the root of quantum theory.

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[i] Foucault, M., *The order of things*, Routledge, London, 1989 (first published, 1970). [ii] Heisenberg, W., *On physics and philosophy*, Pelican Books, London, 1989.p. 169.
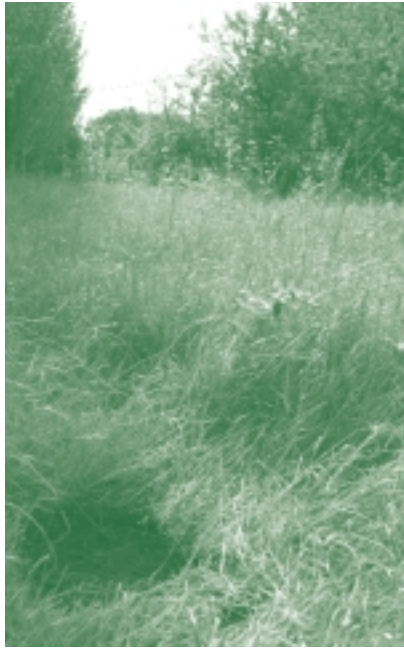
6.10.04 - 8.10.04
Auburn Roundabout

Protesters block the N3 road at Auburn roundabout. They are objecting to a 20 tonne barrier placed on their road.

Auburn Roundabout

14.47
31.8.04

Phoenix Park

15.56
31.8.04

Tolka River, Ratoath Road

17.48
1.9.04

26.10.04
St. Anne's Park

Locals raise opposition to a proposed waste facility in St. Anne's Park at an oral hearing of An Bord Pleanála.
Dublin City Council is seeking approval for a green waste and civic amenity recycling facility. It would be located on part of a site currently used for green waste in the northwest corner of the park and would consist of three single-storey buildings, one of which would be for shredding green waste.
It was estimated it could accommodate 25,000 tonnes of green waste per year, and 4,500 tonnes of household waste.

Elmgreen golf course

22.20
1.9.04

12.10.04
Elmgreen Golf Course

Eleven out of the eighteen greens in the Elmgreen golf course are vandalized.
Slogans 'Eddie Garda Scum' and 'Open our road' are dug into the greens, an estimated €60,000 of damage is caused.
It is understood the vandals climbed through bushes on the 16th fairway.

Newcomen Court

20.25
1.9.04

14.10.04
Old City Dump

A 20 tonne concrete barrier is removed from the Finglas end of New Dunsink Lane. It was the reason for civil unrest as it blocked local access to shops and facilities. A temporary barrier is installed half a mile up the lane at the site of the old city dump. This will remain in place until new engineering works are put in place to restrict illegal dumping in the area.

New Dunsink Lane

10.52
x.0.04

4.10.04
New Dunsink Lane

Dublin City and Finglas councils erect a 20 tonne concrete barricade at the Finglas end of New Dunsink Lane in an effort to stop illegal dumping in the area.
This action cuts off access to the shops and facilities in Finglas, affecting the 400 residents of New Dunsink Lane. No notice was given to residents that this action would be taken.

Botanic Gardens

8.10.04 -10.10.04
Ratoath Road

Riots occur on the Ratoath Road when gangs from the settled community start by pelting members of the travelling community with stones. Later both groups turn their attention on the 150-strong force from the Garda Public Order Unit.
Nightly clashes continue for 5 days.

Bull Island
10.46
1.9.04

St. Anne's Park
21.10
1.9.04

19.10.04
Dunsink

Six people are arrested following a Gardai raid on sites at Dunsink. In the operation, beginning at 7am, 200 Gardai are deployed, including members of the Garda public order unit wearing full riot gear. The Garda helicopter is also present.
Gardai seize a DVD burner, fireworks, and weapons including bows, air pistols, spear guns, a bulletproof vest and stolen goods including power tools.
All six people are released without charge.

Dunsink
10.15
5.9.04

Clinche's Court
10.01
5.9.04

Old City Dump
10.36
5.9.04

16.10.04
Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park

Kofi Anna arrives at the Government's guesthouse Farmleigh in the Phoenix Park, Dublin.
He is addressing the National Forum on Europe at Dublin Castle on the subject of EU-UN cooperation.
He welcomes EU plans to establish rapidly deployable military units or battle groups which could be made available to the UN to help deal with crisis situations around the world.

Farmleigh House
16.14
5.10.04

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OMA's Pleasure Garden

VINCENT DUCATEZ

An Urban Park for the 21st Century[i]

In May 1982, the newly elected left-wing French Government launched an international competition for a new urban park in Paris on a site containing disused abattoirs on the periphery of the city. Stated as a new departure, the brief called for a recasting of the traditional Parisian park around new notions of form and function: a park for the 21st century. Matching this ambition, 850 applications were registered and ultimately 472 projects from 42 different countries were submitted. The jury selected 9 joint first prizes for an unplanned second stage, before Bernard Tschumi finally won the competition and built the park. Nowadays largely forgotten, another finalist project, by OMA (figs 1 and 2), was at the time both widely publicised and debated by architectural critics. In fact, it can be argued that the project forms a seminal and pivotal moment in the development of OMA's *oeuvre*, one which perhaps provides a key link between Koolhaas' earlier textual explorations of the city and the development of his later attitude towards urban form. Indeed, its creators, Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis, suggested that it exemplified their vision of the city: a metaphorical metropolis embodying a *culture of congestion*.[ii]

OMA vs. Tschumi

The two projects started from a similar approach, namely that the brief's functional elements would be atomised throughout the entire surface of the site to create conditions for unexpected encounters between, say; music, sport, technology and vegetation. The main elements of the park, existing or planned, are inserted as found objects. The edges of the park are not designed with a precise interface, although the existing limits – an elevated motorway, a canal and a major traffic artery were already unambiguously set. OMA overlapped five different layers, each with its own logic (fig. 2). On one of them, punctual grids are calculated according to a mathematic formula for each repetitive set of functions, the resultant combination of the different grids creating *spheres of influence* and *random and accidental grouping*. Within this process, OMA tried to achieve a multi-facetted confrontation between a rapid succession of the most varied activities, resulting in the park being sprinkled with what they described as *tectonic confettis*. This method, which combines *architectural specificity and programmatic indetermination*, formed the support for strong architectural elements: a circular forest with a marble floor from which smoke rises randomly; vegetal masses forming a series of almost sliding screens; a ziggurat hill; a Newtonian skyline which transforms the planned IMAX cinema into a model of Saturn, and finally; islets of trees and plays of colour, texture and undulating ground which further accentuate the re-composition of the site as a succession of bands (fig. 3). Tschumi's project differed in that it proposed to fuse the atomised pieces of the brief with a mannerist language using familiar elements: three formal systems of points, lines and plans. Both projects were immediately published widely, as much for the interest in this large international competition and its winners – young architects known for their writing – as for the singular brief and imaginative responses: Tschumi's resurrection of Constructivist imagery or OMA's joyful patchwork of coloured stripes.

fig. 1 OMA at La Villette: Alex Wall's drawing

fig. 2 OMA at La Villette: detail of model

fig. 3 OMA at La Villette: the punctual grids

A new paradigm and the school of Manhattan

By editorial coincidence in 1983, *International Architects* presented the two winning projects alongside a review of the French architectural scene. Introducing the generation of post-68 young French architects, the editor suggested a new paradigm was emerging. This can briefly be summarised as the rediscovery of an architectural culture and a renewed interest in the existing city, designed to replace the technocratic urban projects of late CIAM's functionally-driven cities. The two proposals by Tschumi and OMA can be linked to this global shift. In their rediscovery of urbanity, however, the city they are concerned with is not the historical European city, but a desire for a liberal and mythic metropolis of which Manhattan is the built incarnation.

With the award of the joint first prizes, the jury for *La Villette* unconsciously recognised a dynamic intellectual milieu emerging from New York. The purpose here is not to establish precisely the history of this milieu but to understand that OMA and Tschumi's positions were born out of a plural if sometimes contradictory debate whose luminaries included: Peter Eisenman, Kenneth Frampton, Charles Moore, Manfredo Tafuri, the Smithsons, O.M. Ungers, Aldo Rossi, Denise Scott Brown, Leon Krier, and the influential shadow of Philip Johnson. Their reflections on modernity would be redefined under the hastily erected but influential banners of post-modernism, neo-modernism, historicism, neo-rationalism and deconstructivism. Despite the inevitable differences and nuances of opinion, one consistent feature of this debate can be described the primacy of architecture as a formal art above external interests such as social aspects or structural rationality. For OMA, however, by using notions such as the Russian Constructivists' 'social condensers' or 'congestion', the discourse will expand beyond the limits of a purely formal reflection to seek a programmatic basis from which to act.

Koolhaas, Neo-functionalism and Pleasure.

Presenting his project for La Villette, Bernard Tschumi wrote:

The competition for the Park de La Villette was the first in recent architectural history to set forth a new programme – that of an urban park which proposed that the juxtaposition and combination of a variety of activities will encourage new attitudes and perspectives. This programme represents an important breakthrough. The 1970s witnessed a period of renewed interest in the formal constitution of the city, its typologies and morphologies. While developing analyses focused on the history of the city, this was largely devoid of programmatic justification. No analysis addressed the issue of which activities were to occur in the city. Nor did any properly address the fact that the organisation of functions and events was as much an architectural concern as was the elaboration of forms and styles. The Park de La Villette, in contrast, represents an encouraging and integrated programmatic policy related both to the city's needs and its limitations.[iii]

Tschumi, therefore, shared OMA's position regarding the inadequacy of the historicist project for the future of the European city. Koolhaas, however, was even more vehement, criticising 'the 'new' historicist and typological architectures ... that approve the past', and create 'a situation where novelty will be rare, invention shocking, interpretation subversive, and modernity ever more exotic'.[iv] To overcome this stylistic stasis, OMA suggested that there were 'two families of antecedents from which one might draw inspiration: the painterly and the
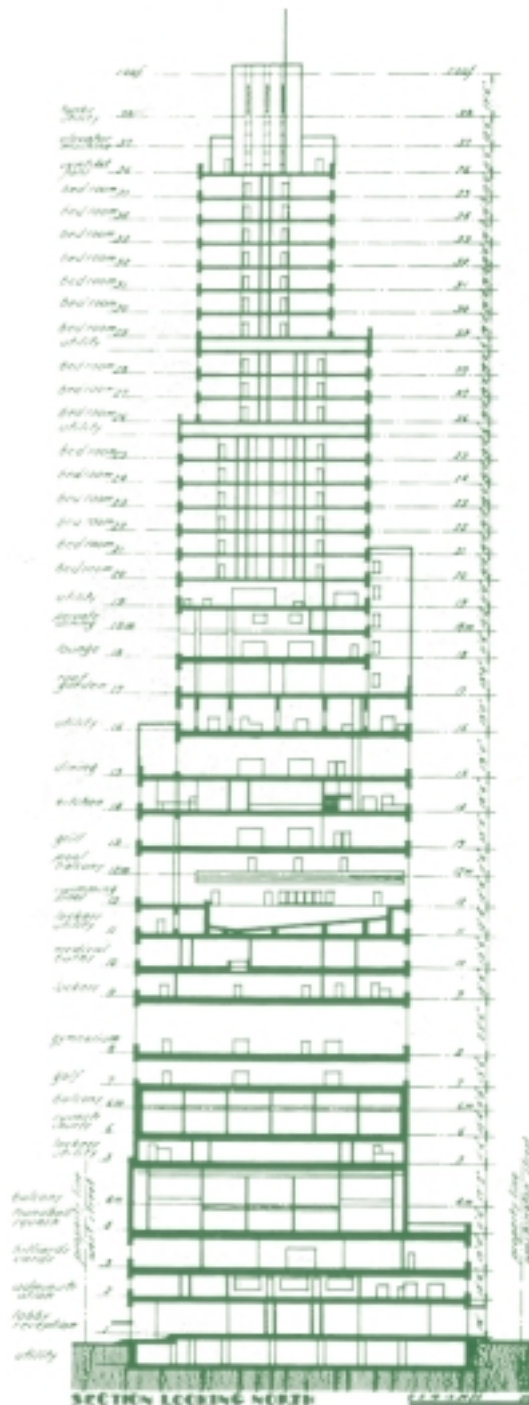

fig. 4 The Downtown Athletic Club from Delirious New York

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programmatic'.[V] This, then, is not a choice between function and aesthetic but, on the contrary, an explicit attempt to reach a synthesis without renunciation or moral castration. Because, according to Marco Tabet, Koolhaas' project at *La Villette* 'was based on a exploration of the metropolitan unconscious, [it] widened the path opened by Walter Gropius' functionalism'. He suggests that Koolhaas invoked a critique of functionalism through the lens of pleasure using a methodology (paranoid-criticism) borrowed from the Surrealist painter Salvador Dali. This allowed Koolhas to rediscover Manhattan with its culture of 'metropolitan congestion as a result of a collective will, as opposed to the decongestion of Le Corbusier's *Radiant City*'.[VI] It is, then, necessary to revisit Koolhaas' prior experiences to *La Villette*, in New York and Berlin, to further understand how he proposed, with the use of methods borne from Surrealism and by invoking a fantastic metropolis, to exceed the puritan limits that dominated the ideologies of modernist rationalism.

New York
For Koolhaas, *La Villette* is intrinsically linked to his reading of New York and its 'culture of congestion'. *Delirious New York* is filled with dream-like descriptions of the metropolis, borrowing from ecstatic prose of Baudelaire. For its author, 'the book proves that Manhattan was deliberate from an artistic point of view and not only from an economic one … economic process camouflaged the true purpose which was to create a new culture'.[VII] To illustrate his text 'La Villette/New York', Koolhaas displayed side by side the section through the Downtown Athletic Club and the plan of the Park (fig. 4).[VIII] If the graphic analogy between the storeys and the bands is obvious, it is more the *tectonic confettis* than the programmatic stratification that provoke a far-reaching interpretation when the scale changes from park to city. Elsewhere in OMA's text, references for *La Villette* are explicit: Leonidov's *Club of a New Social Type*, typifying the Constructivist concept of 'social condenser'; Cedric Price's *Potteries Thinkbelt*; and Archigram's *Rokplug*. But, it is the invisibility of the organising network and, furthermore, its lack of importance, that distinguish *La Villette* formally from the seminal projects of the late modernist era such as the Smithson's *Berlin-Haupstadt*, or most of Archigram's cities. In *La Villette*, there is no need to express and make intelligible spatial or logical continuities or to develop a rhetorical infrastructure. Spontaneous and organic happenings of singular and discontinued events throughout the neutral fabric of the city are sought. Therefore, the main idea consists in the staging of events, *the programmatic imagination*. These are materialised around the hot-spots of an invisible network; social condensers being the moment of extreme intensification in quantity and quality of metropolitan congestion. Once *La Villette* concepts are applied to the whole metropolis, Koolhaas' reflections on the city are becoming obvious: oases of condensed metropolitan intensity scattered across the *junkspace* of *Broadacre City*. What other purpose had the Downtown Athletic Club in New York than to offer *redemption by excess of hedonism*?

Berlin
If Koolhaas' name will forever be associated with New York, it was in Berlin that the idea of hot-spots emerged. In 1971, Koolhaas, a second year student at the Architectural Association in London, discovers in the Berlin Wall, the ambiguous power of architecture and its capacity to radically change a city and the behaviour of its inhabitants. They must chose to be prisoners inside the wall but to benefit from a democratic and consumerist society, or be free outside the wall but live under the Soviet regime. This dilemma was further explored in 1972 with the *Exodus* project (fig. 5). Here, two parallel walls, openly inspired by Superstudio's *Continuous Monument*, slice through the loose fabric of London to create a

zone where the most metropolitan programmes are condensed. The inhabitants chose to become voluntary prisoners of architecture, leaving the suburban qualities of London to enjoy the intense pleasures of the metropolis. A similar pattern is at play in *La Villette*, where one can choose to be either, within the park with its metropolitan congestion whose unambiguously defined limits avoid the weakening of the experience, or to be within 'the plankton of suburbia'. The role of the interface and the autonomous nature of the project against its immediate physical context would become a recurrent aspect of many of OMA's subsequent projects.

In 1977, Koolhaas and Ungers revisited Berlin for a symposium dealing with the city's future. A series of maps was established, showing the broken up reality of a former capital city torn apart by the Wall, largely destroyed, with an uncertain future, and where only disparate urban ensembles seem to float on a sea of greenery: a *green archipelago* of urban islets (fig. 6). To the ultra density of Manhattan, the Berlin encounter presents the opposite; a theorisation of the void between the banality of the hinterland and dense nodes where metropolitan congestion is intensified. *La Villette* becomes its first demonstration allowing OMA 'to define what the void could be by showing that, even without architecture, without its substance, we could develop for a large number, vast metropolitan areas.'[IX] With Berlin, the premise of a redeeming project for the territory of the European metropolis appears. This project doesn't draw from historical forms – no longer possible for Koolhaas – nor the *Beaux Arts* tradition of idealistic formal projects for the metropolis. In Berlin or at *La Villette*, there are no elaborate urban compositions or spatial articulation for Baudelaire's nineteenth-century *flâneur* but rather, hot-spots which concentrate the metropolitan feeling and are ultimately intensified by their extreme autonomy.

Only a new urbanism, devoid of harmonic pretence and global coherence, can transform tensions and contradictions that have torn apart the historical city in new qualities. These projects celebrate the end of sentimentalism.[X]

The Naked *Grosstadt*
The Berlin maps and the *La Villette* diagrams of *tectonic confettis*, recall the *Naked City*, a mental map made of disparate parts of Paris linked by enigmatic arrows constructed by Guy Debord and Asger Jorn for the *Situationist International* (fig. 7). This map was a manifestation of *psychogeography*, the technique by which the Situationists both navigated and placed value on the city. *Psychogeographic* areas are remarkable places where intense moments of life are experienced. The arrows are not true routes or existing axes but *hasty passages* born out of *drifting* experiments, poetic and delirious wanderings through the *various atmospheres* of the metropolis.[XI] In other words, they emerge from a programme whose definition reaches beyond the rational to encompass emotions and feelings. There is, then, a strong similarity between the quality of urban experiences described by Debord and Jorn and *La Villette's* ambitions where, 'the frame of the competition is used as a basis for the most intense speculative activities … this system is and remains a support for adventures'.[XII] The relationship between Situationism and OMA is evident elsewhere. The plastic language of the 'heroic period' of modern architecture that OMA were still playing with in the 1980s, ultimately evolves to embody the atmosphere of the Situationist artist/architect Nieuwenhuys Constant, with his *New Babylon* providing the paradigm for *Agadir*. Meanwhile, the invention of the 'trajectory' – seen in the Kunsthal and the Educatorium as well as elsewhere – appears like a hypertrophied, atmospheric, fleeting, *Situationised* version of Le Corbusier's architectural promenade.
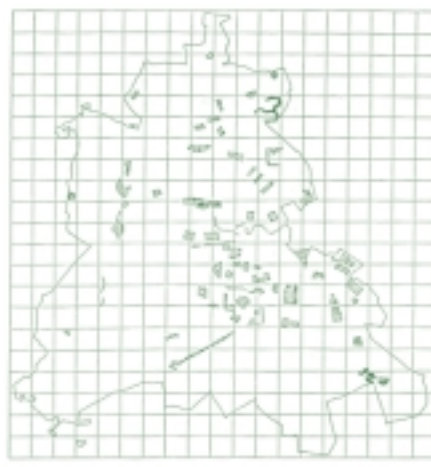
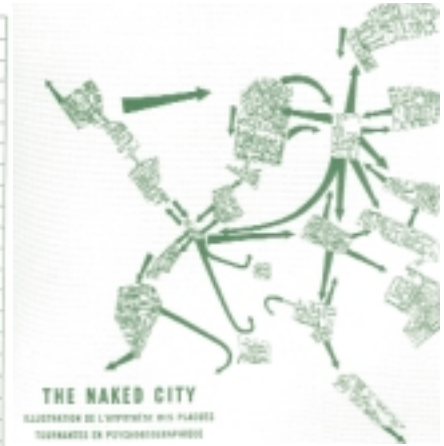fig. 5 The Exodus Project   fig. 6 Berlin, the green archipelago   fig. 7 The Naked City

The notion of an emerging impulse to widen the remit of programme to address emotions and other individual conditions is further strengthened by the probable influence on Koolhaas of the writings of Georg Simmel. Presenting *La Villette*, Koolhaas wrote that, facing the demands of the metropolis, 'architecture follows the forces of the *Großstadt* like a surfer riding a wave'.[xiii] This allusion to *Großstadt*, the German word for metropolis (already present in the name of OMA's cultural wing, the Großstadt Foundation), is not a neutral expression but refers specifically to Simmel's Berlin. Simmel (1858-1918) was a sociologist who wrote extensively on the relationship between the individual and culture, society, economics and the city. He suggested that, in the metropolis, because of the density of occupation and critical mass, traditional social codes are effectively weakened causing an increased sense of individuality. The city, then, is a site of heightened individual freedom but where, paradoxically, the emancipated resident – a small cog caught in an enormous organisation – is also liable to experience an increasing sense of alienation. Simmel proposed that, in response to this condition, a new urban sensibility could be discerned in the residents of cities as they attempted to preserve a subjective inner-life against the endless power of the metropolis.

Perhaps refuting the popular critique of Koolhaas as cynical, his use of Simmel's concepts suggests a true interest in humankind and a non-utopian but optimistic way of thinking about society and the way it evolves. For Koolhaas, *congestion* and its resulting *hybridisation* and *mutations* are not ends in themselves: 'congestion is interesting only as it produces mutations, simply because of the great number that forces things to be different, invention ... If mutations happened initially as pure necessity, they became refined, becoming their own culture'.[xiv] With *La Villette*, Koolhaas 'rediscovers ... urban design, this exercise in critical imagination that tries, despite difficulties, to foresee the future, to anticipate and to address demands before they become impossible to satisfy'.[xv]

Pleasure Garden
Historically, pleasure gardens have always been representations of the world. Here, in laboratory-type conditions, at a malleable scale, new architectural forms and organisations emerged to challenge convention, while an extensive use of symbols engaged and often shifted cultural perceptions. This, when applied to OMA's *La Villette*, reveals the importance of this project as a means to understand OMA's city. In *La Villette*, this artificial *Arcadia*, where function is displayed culturally and formally to create new forms adapted to the 21st century metropolis, Koolhaas' journey has evolved from his Baudelerian incantations of a mythical Manhattan – where congestion serves to *redeem by excess of hedonism* – to the theorisation of an urban model discovered in Berlin's ruins. Here, one can see how Koolhaas' renewal of functionalism borrowed openly from rationalist discourse and the formal heritage of 'heroic modernism' and from the cultural dimensions of Surrealism and Simmel's metropolis, to become both delirious and hedonist: a practical formulation of the *International Situationist* project. As Koolhaas himself revealed in 1983:

My whole life, I have been torn apart between a kind of Puritanism and a kind of Hedonism, or rather, I tried to combine both.[xvi]

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[iii] Tschumi in *International Architect op cit*.

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[v] Wall, A. in *International Architect op cit*.

[vi] Tabet M., *La Terrifiante Beauté de la Beauté, naturalisme et abstraction dans l'architecture de Jean Nouvel et Rem Koolhaas*, Paris, 1996.

[vii] Raggi, *op cit*.

[viii] Koolhaas, 'La Villette/New York' in *OMA/Rem Koolhaas, op cit*.

[ix] Koolhaas, interview with Patrice Goulet in *AA 238* op cit, p 8

[x] Koolhaas, 'Seize ans d'OMA' in *OMA/Rem Koolhaas, op cit.* p. 47-48

[xi] For further information see Sadler, S., *The Situationist City*, Cambridge, London, The MIT Press, 1998.

[xii] Goulet in *AA 227, op cit.*

[xiii] Koolhaas, 'La Villette/New York', *op cit*.

[xiv] Raggi, *op cit*.

[xv] Koolhaas, 'Seize ans d'OMA' *op cit*.

[xvi] Raggi, *op cit*.

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Landscape Urbanism: Landscape without trees

AOIBHEANN NÍ MHEARAIN

In recent years we have witnessed an important shift: every location has begun to be regarded as a landscape, either natural or artificial, and has ceased to be a neutral backdrop, more or less decidedly sculptural, for architectural objects. With this change in point of view, the landscape becomes the subject of possible transformations; no longer inert, it can be designed, made artificial. The landscape has become the primary interest, the focal point of the architects.[i]

In our changing perception of nature and its laws over the last century, the understanding of the theory of evolution, that is, of a species' responsive adaptation to its environment over time, has become common knowledge. Similarly, the term 'ecology' – the understanding of the relationship between an organism and its environment – has also entered into our everyday vocabulary. Conceiving ecology and evolution as processes aids our understanding of the range of complicated factors which affect the environment, and thus informs our attempts to engage with it. The interconnected relationship of the species and elements that compose nature produce systems that, because of their interdependence, are in a constant state of flux and adaptation. Natural processes, therefore, can be considered, intrinsically, as indeterminate. And, this indeterminacy is recognised as not a weakness of nature, but its very strength; a capacity for open-endedness and adaptability is critical to the survival of natural systems.

Kenneth Frampton, in his 1999 lecture *Megaform as Urban Landscape*, spoke of the 'space-endlessness of the megalopolis' and characterised the contemporary urban condition as unpredictable, uncontrollable and contingent. He suggested, moreover, that its rate of development was 'at a speed and scale which totally outstrips anything that urbanized society has experienced in the past'.[ii] In discussing how to operate in this 'megalopolis' at a meaningful scale, he spoke of elements at the crossing point of architecture and landscape as possible means. He conceived of 'a remedial landscape that is capable of playing a critical and compensatory role in relation to the ongoing, destructive commodification of the man-made world'. Thus he moved away from an emphasis on the singular built form in favour of a more unifying element, as a means of envisioning possible alternatives for our urban futures.[iii]

This way of thinking, broadly defined as *Landscape Urbanism*, has emerged in recent years from a convergence of reactions to the contemporary urban condition. These responses all point to the possible role of landscape in addressing the complexity of issues facing the many professions who operate on the scale of the city. Landscape, when considered as embodying 'culture and nature, art and science, the collective and the personal, the natural and the artificial, the static and the dynamic', possesses a potential much greater than allowed by its traditional role as visual salve to the tourist and city dweller.[iv] Landscape can play a role as a strategy for intervention in all types of sites, at ranges of scales – from re-mediating post-industrial sites, to re-configuring the urban and sub-urban, and structuring growth for greenfield sites. But, more specifically, *Landscape Urbanism* proffers the conceptual potential of landscape as an analogy for urbanism. It creates, therefore, a spectrum for architectural practice, ranging from the very practical application of landscape techniques, to the use of the abstracted ideas of landscape as the means of (re)conceptualising projects.

To understand the context from which this thinking comes, one needs to consider the contemporary reading of nature from which it draws. This attitude sees nature as embedded in culture, rather than distinct from it, rejecting the opposition of the natural/artificial, of country/city. Attendant to this redefinition of nature – to include its traditional opposite – is a broadened recognition of the multiple forces acting on our environment, allowing us to recognise 'cultural, social, political, and economic environments as embedded in and symmetrical with the "natural" world'.[v] The traditional effectors of change on the urban form – politics, economics,

Park

City

 demographics, social – are, therefore, now understood as equally active in the natural world. And so, 'continuous networks of inter-relationships are developed between the two – previously opposed – domains of the natural and artificial.[vi] What the writing on *Landscape Urbanism* tends to ignore, however, is that this reading of nature is another, newer, cultural interpretation of nature and not, as is sometimes intimated, a realer, truer revelation of it. Nevertheless, through this re-assessment, *Landscape Urbanism* attempts to re-position the use of landscape – in both its direct application and its conceptual potential – as a relevant operating method in an environment of interconnected processes subject to dynamic change.

The rapidly changing and spreading urban conurbations that Frampton describes, are subject to the increasing mobility of population and capital, as well as the forces of land speculation and the concomitant rapid development of buildings whose programmes are increasingly left uncertain. The city is, therefore, no longer a definable, centrally focused and controllable entity. This reality is – refreshingly, perhaps – not berated, but embraced as a new challenge, offering the opportunity to operate on the scale of landscape. And so, as Charles Waldheim describes, 'the very indeterminacy and flux of the contemporary city, the bane of traditional European city-making are precisely those qualities explored in emergent works of *Landscape Urbanism*'.[vii] When the city is considered as an entity that is constantly facing and open to change, a resonance can be found between urban development and natural systems, a resonance which is generated by indeterminacy.

But how then, does one operate with the understanding of uncertainty as being present within all environments, built or natural? One strategy is to use indeterminacy as a tool itself, to move away from the traditional solutions of fixing every component of a design. When considering the finalist entries for the 2000 Downsview Park Competition – a competition for the transformation of a 320 acre ex-military base in Toronto into a federal Park – Anita Berrizbeitia outlined this strategy.

> *Engaging scales of undecidability is a social and political strategy, a tool for interference against proposed solutions that would be permanently static and definitive on the site.*[viii]

Indeed, the competition brief requested that the 'nature and humanity' that would come to inhabit the park should be treated as 'dynamic phenomenon, constantly changing and interacting ... ever new and ever surprising.[ix] Of the five short-listed entries, perhaps four could be said to have addressed this criteria, and of these, the OMA/Bruce Mau and Corner Allen entries did so most conspicuously.[x] Both projects start from the basis that the park is an adaptive element where, dependent on multiple factors, significant changes will be possible over time. Although both teams engaged the forces and systems of nature in following this approach, they did so in markedly different ways. Corner Allen's 'Emergent Ecologies' uses nature as a tool to work within a 'flexible, contingent environment'. Here, the natural systems they design with come to react flexibly to this contingent environment, creating a dynamic relationship between the park and its surroundings. The word 'emergent' in the project's title, also evokes the evolving nature of the park as a consequence of its interaction with natural processes. Indeed, this aspect of the design, as well as the detailed working of the 'horizontal' ground surface, are highlighted in James Corner's own writings, as strategies which are central to *Landscape Urbanism*.

The winning scheme by OMA, on the other hand, uses nature as a tool for implementing much more abstract ideas. These are less to do with the practical application of landscape, but rather, its conceptual potential. This approach favours the figurative over the literal. The planting of 'tree clusters' throughout the park, the '1000 pathways' and the regeneration of the park's soil, draw from the traditional vocabulary/strategy of landscape and park design – if, perhaps, in a more sophisticated and graphically enticing way. Here, however, they are implemented as abstract ideas for a conceptual design end. By thinking of landscape in the abstract, they engage its potential as a structuring device

that is also adaptive and open-ended. Thus, the OMA submission treats the park 'as an adult soon capable of sustaining itself, rather than a child in need of eternal care', a statement which perhaps encapsulates the potential of this park to grow into the city ('grow the park', 'form a tree infrastructure') and thus implement a new landscape order on to urban form. Planting 'will serve as the catalyst of urbanization' with the identity of the park coming from 'vegetal clusters rather than new building complexes'.

When engaging indeterminacy, what becomes critical is what is fixed and what is left open, that is, the exact degree of design intervention. In nature, though the outcome of its processes is difficult to predict, the presence of systems and ways of interacting is evidence of an underlying order. In nature, the apparently 'incoherent or complex conditions that one might initially mistake as random or chaotic can, in fact, be shown to be highly structured entities that comprise a particular set of geometrical and spatial orders.'[xi] So, the natural world is not wholly flexible, but relies on a balance between what is determined and what is not; between what is open and what is closed; and between relationships that are allowed and not allowed to affect change within a particular structure.

The key determined elements of the OMA scheme are the 'tree clusters', the '1000 pathways' and the very practical regeneration of the soil. The pathways and clusters are not, however, fixed in place; they remain as diagrams only – and it is intended that they will disappear, widen and grow in response to the uses of the park over time. While there is the possibility of future building within the park, the areas for any development are not defined nor programmes proposed. Rather, it is suggested that the park can develop land as required and appropriate to sustain itself financially. Thus, the park becomes an 'evolving' entity, one which will be shaped according to the forces of its users, the elements, and financial need. If one considers the natural analogy further, however, one will see that it requires the existence of some underlying structure. What this will be in OMA's vision of the park, however, is left unclear.

OMA's competition entry text emphasises, as the project's strength, the park's openness to practically any possible future (while, of course, only representing the positive ones; healthy, young joggers, tranquil scenery etc.). If then, anything is possible, what weight has been given by OMA's design to possible futures for the park? Critically, it does not draw on or respond to the one fixed element that the brief offered – the site and its contexts. The project thus appears completely rootless and remains in the sphere of the abstract. In so doing it perhaps rejects the area of most possibility and perhaps even responsibility of the architect. Indeed, the thought that there is *no* 'design end' in this project begins to emerge. This, in turn, points to a sort of design nihilism, where ideas – rather than real strategies – are proposed as solutions. It is not, perhaps the openness engendered by natural systems that is being fostered by the OMA scheme, but rather an unstructured looseness, one which seeks legitimacy through an argument for indeterminacy and the *apparent* analogy of nature.

Downsview, OMA Entry

Aoibheann Ni Mhearain is an architect. This text is the product of group work carried out during a masterclass held in the Berlage Institute in December 2004 entitled 'Towards a Phylogenetic Landform: The Future of Landscape/Urbanism'. The group were Aoibheann ní Mhearáin, Christian Chaudhari, Soo - Sukyeong Kim, René Kuiken, Ivonne Santoyo Orozco, Martin Sobota,

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[vi] *Ibid.*

[vii] Waldheim, C. 'Landscape as Urbanism'.

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[x] The five shortlisted entries were 'Emergent Landscape' Brown and Storey Architects, Toronto; 'Emergent Ecologies' James Corner, Field Operations + Stan Allen, Philadelphia/New York; 'A New Synthetic Landscape', Foreign Office Architects, Tokyo; 'Tree City' Rem Koolhaas, OMA, Rotterdam, Bruce Mau, Toronto; 'The Digital and the Coyote' Bernard Tschumi, New York.

[xi] Corner, J. in Charles Waldheim, (ed.) *op cit.*

Downsview, OMA Entry

14

The Aesthetics of Environmental Architecture and Landscape, Territory, and Terrain.

ALLEN CARLSON

To recognise that aesthetics is concerned with appearances is not necessarily to relegate it to the realm of the superficial. Even though the aesthetics of environmental architecture dwells on the appearances of the relationships between structures and their environments, it need not be restricted to questions of whether such relationships are simply 'pleasing to the eye' or 'pretty'. Rather, the basic question is whether structures reside in their environments such that they *appear as they should* and this emphasis, moves the matter beyond simple appearances. This is because the appearance of appropriateness of a thing depends not simply on how it looks to us, but also on what we know about it. Thus, a structure appearing appropriate within its environment is a function both of its nature and the nature of the environment in which it resides. Since this requires knowledge of the nature of both structures and their environments, such appreciation and assessment is not simply a matter of looking. Rather, it is looking with an eye and a mind informed about the history and the function of both structures and environments. In the former case, this means knowing why and how structures are made as they are and, in the latter, why and how environments have come to be as they are. It can be argued that there are three different ways of conceptualizing environments, as *landscape*, *territory* and *terrain*. A knowledge of the why and how of environments as they are understood under these concepts is, therefore, crucial to any aesthetic appreciation and assessment of the architectural structures found within them. We begin in reverse order, starting with the simplest, terrain, and proceeding to the most complex, the concept of landscape.

Our word 'terrain' derives, as does 'territory', from the Latin *terra* meaning earth and comes to us by way of French. Here, the emphasis is placed on the idea of ground, its physical surface and the resultant features of a tract of land. The notion of terrain, therefore, is akin to that of topography. Thus, to appreciate an environment conceptualised as terrain requires recourse to knowledge provided by natural sciences, firstly geology and secondly, ecology, botany, and zoology. Such sciences tell us how an environment came to be as it is and why it looks as it does. Consequently, with regard to terrain, environmental architecture should be aesthetically appreciated and assessed in relation to these terms. To be considered, for example, are questions such as whether the design, the actual shape, size, and proportions, of structures appear appropriate in light of the geological lay of the land, or whether the building materials and methods appear appropriate in relation to both the land's geological and biological features.

One might claim that particular styles and structures of certain architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's 'prairie style' or some of his works, such as *Falling Water* (1935-37), are aesthetically environmental in the sense of terrain. Concerning the former, Wright observed: 'A building should appear to grow easily from its site and be shaped to harmonize with its surroundings if nature is manifest there. The prairie has a beauty of its own and we should recognize and accentuate this natural beauty, its quiet level. Hence, gently sloping roofs, low proportions, quiet sky lines'. Likewise, the buildings of California's well-known *Sea Ranch*, with their low sloping profiles and sod roofs, might be said to appear as they should when their environments are conceptualised as terrain. The hallmark of *Sea Ranch* is 'the attempt to blend man-made structures with their natural setting'. Within the realm of vernacular architecture, structures, especially less modern ones, are frequently aesthetically environmental in a somewhat similar way. Consider thatched, palm-fronded, or hide-covered dwellings of so-called primitive peoples the world over, or the low sod-roofed and sod-walled huts of the first European settlers on the western Canadian prairies. In regard to terrain, aesthetically appropriate vernacular environmental architecture is frequently more a matter of necessity than of design.

Turning now from 'terrain' to 'territory', it is noteworthy that, while the latter has the same Latin source, *terra*, and the same French connection as the former, in Middle English the land in question becomes not just a tract of land, but rather *terra-tory*, the land around a town. Thus, unlike terrain with its topographical emphasis, territory takes on a geographical sense. It indicates a geographical area of land surrounding, belonging to, and/or under the jurisdiction of a town or some other source of authority. Consequently, there is the recognition of a distinct and central element of human (or other 'territorial' animal) involvement and influence in environments conceptualised as territory. This means that to understand the why and the how of a territory typically requires more than natural science. Equally important are history, geography, and other social sciences such as anthropology and sociology. When considered as territory, knowledge of human history and culture tells us how an environment came to be as it is and why it looks as it does and thereby reveals what kinds of structures look as they should. Moreover, it is worth noting that while territory is, as it were, a macro-concept, there is a closely analogous micro-concept, that of *place*. In the sense in which a geographical area of land can be a people's territory, there is a parallel sense in which a (typically much smaller) area of land can be a person's place. Thus, many of the aesthetic insights contained in the literature on the concept of place are equally relevant to that of territory.

What then can be said of the aesthetic appreciation and assessment of environmental architecture when environments are conceptualised as territory? What kinds of structures appear appropriate and look as they should within environments understood in this manner? An important clue is revealed by the analogous micro-concept of place, for, aesthetically speaking, one's own house typically appears appropriate in one's own place. In a similar way, the kinds of dwellings that are characteristic of a people are those that typically look as they should in their home environment when it is understood and appreciated as *their* territory. Moreover, this is true not only of dwellings, but even more so of the other kinds of structures within a territory, for a people's territory is not just the environment in which they live, but also that in which they make a living.

Consider again the case of the Canadian prairies. The land is flat and open and ideal for the agricultural function to which it has been put, that of growing grain and other seed crops. Given this, the towering grain elevators and crop storage depots that stand in sharp contrast to the environment considered as terrain, nonetheless look precisely

Prairie Sentinels by Horst Baender

as they should within that same environment if it is conceptualised as territory – a territory of grain fields, belonging to farmers. Moreover, a people's territory is a place not simply for work but also for worship and thus, the onion-domed Russian Orthodox churches that dot the grain fields of the western Canadian prairies also appear appropriate, for the land is the territory of immigrant farmers from Ukraine. On the prairies of Canada, as we change our conceptualisation of the environment from terrain to territory, grain elevators and onion-domed churches replace sod huts as the aesthetically appropriate vernacular environmental architecture (fig. 1).

Beyond terrain and territory is 'landscape', for any landscape will be constituted in part of terrain and almost all will be constituted from someone's territory. The concept of landscape, however, is very different in kind from that of both terrain and territory. Its origin is disputed. It is often claimed to derive from Dutch, but here it seems more appropriate to follow the tradition that traces it to a combination of Old Irish and Old English, which renders it as open space that is divided or split apart. From this idea it is a short step to the contemporary meaning of a stretch of land that is separated out by the eye such as to constitute a view, especially a vista or a prospect. The fact that a landscape, in contrast to a particular terrain or territory, is *constituted* by the eye, and the mind of the appreciator, is central to the concept. It was recognised over a century ago by George Santayana. In his classic work, *The Sense of Beauty*, he characterises the landscape as 'promiscuous' and 'indeterminate', adding that, 'it almost always contains enough diversity to allow the eye a great liberty in selecting, emphasizing, and grouping its elements.' The upshot, Santayana concluded, is that a 'landscape to be seen has to be composed ... then we feel that the landscape is beautiful.'

As both the origins of the concept and Santayana's observations suggest, a landscape is, in one sense, essentially a view or a scene composed by the appreciator. It is perhaps best thought of not as a particular stretch of actual land, but rather as more like an image, not unlike more conventional images such as those of landscape painting and photography. Consequently, with the conceptualisation of an environment as landscape, there is great potential not only to bring out, but indeed to enhance the aesthetic dimensions of environmental architecture. To *create* a landscape we, the appreciators, take the raw aesthetic resources that are available in terrain or territory and, to use Santayana's term, *compose* them into a landscape. In doing so, we may select a point of view, a scale, and a perspective and utilise standard artistic techniques such as framing, blocking, and cropping so as to enable structures to appear within the landscape in the most favourable light. We are all familiar with the sketches and models that architects use to present proposed buildings and developments to their clients. In the way in which such sketches and models typically present the future structures as looking completely appropriate in their future environments, so too can the landscapes that we compose make the best of the appearance of environmental architecture.

Implicit in these remarks is the suggestion that well-designed architectural sketches and models can make not only environmental architecture appear appropriate in its environment, but can also make almost any structure, environmental or not, look as it should in its environment. In a similar fashion, well-composed landscapes can make almost any relationships between structures and their environments appear, if not completely appropriate, at least more appropriate than they in fact are. This point, that aesthetically appropriate environmental architecture can part company with architecture that may or may not be environmental in other senses, is most evident when environments are conceptualised as landscape. Environmental architecture that appears appropriate in its territory and especially in its terrain will typically be environmental in a number of other ways, but this is not necessarily the case. Grain elevators, however appropriate they may appear within an agricultural environment of farms and fields, could yet be resource wasteful and energy inefficient. A little house on the prairie could exemplify Wright's 'prairie style' and nonetheless be an ecological disaster. And while *Sea Ranch* attempts to 'blend man-made structures with their natural setting', it recognizes that 'to live lightly on the land' is, although desirable, a separate matter.

The concept of landscape brings out clearly two significant facts about the aesthetic appreciation and assessment of environmental architecture. First, the concept of landscape forcefully underscores the point made at the outset of this essay: that aesthetic appreciation and assessment is not simply a matter of appearances. Rather, it concerns how structures and their environments appear to the eye and the mind which is informed about the history and the function of both structures and environments. A well-composed landscape, much more so than an environment conceptualised as territory or terrain, can make structures look quite appropriate within their environments – until we know more about the true nature of the relationships between them. Second, the consideration of the concept of landscape cautions against the dangers of focusing exclusively on the *aesthetic* appreciation and assessment of environmental architecture. Because of the ways in which aesthetically-pleasing landscape compositions can be misleading and even deceptive about the extent to which architecture is fully environmental, the concept of landscape reminds us of the fact that the theory and practice of environmental architecture concerns the ecological and the ethical as well as the aesthetic. Thus it requires that all such matters be taken into account in the appreciation and assessment of structures within their environments.

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15

Laboratory Landscape
MICHAEL PIKE

The garden is always a problem of time. Time completes the idea.
Roberto Burle Marx[1]

For Roberto Burle Marx a garden was its making; a process of continual discovery and creative involvement. Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1909, Burle Marx originally trained as a painter and musician, before landscape design became his primary passion. He developed an interest in botany and horticulture from an early age, inspired by the artistic and intellectual pursuits of his German-Jewish father and by the gardens of the family's estate. The family moved to Berlin in 1928 and there, Burle Marx visited the Dahlem Botanical Gardens to see specimens of Brazil's flora. This alerted him to the extraordinary beauty and diversity of the native plants of his homeland and, when the family returned to Rio de Janeiro in 1935, he turned his attention increasingly to designing gardens.

In landscape design, Burle Marx discovered a complex mode of life that was not autonomous or self-referential, but was instead open and inclusive, allowing him to freely transpose techniques and principles from his other creative endeavours. In this way his gardens became a constant search for synthesis, an osmosis between different artistic domains, between building and landscape, between organic forces and static forms. This liberating strategy of transposition and overlay makes his landscapes feel more collaged than designed, drawings being used merely as statements of intent, points of departure in an open-ended process that used intuition and instability as primary material. Nowhere is this more evident than in the *Sitio Burle Marx*, his former country estate, located 60km from the centre of Rio de Janeiro. Unlike his other designs – commissions of finite duration – his ownership of the *sitio* gave him the opportunity to understand, refine and work with a landscape over time. These gardens became a kind of laboratory, a testing ground where temporality was a subject for exploration.

The *sitio* occupies the 90 acre site of an abandoned banana plantation and is laid out across a north-westerly slope overlooking a valley of mangrove swamps (fig. 1). At the bottom of the slope are the nursery gardens which contain an extraordinary collection of more than 3,500 plant species which Burle Marx amassed on his travels into Amazonia (fig. 2). Throughout his life, he organised expeditions into the Brazilian forests, accompanied by scientists, designers and gardeners. These became a fundamental part of his design process, enabling him to study at first hand the structure and richness of diverse tropical regions and to discover new plant species for inclusion in his nursery. This collection became a kind of enormous larder, storing the ingredients for his experimentation, not only further up the slope of the *sitio*, but also throughout the continent. A paved road winds its way up to the old house which, like the gardens, was continually being transformed – by the addition of new rooms, workshops and verandas lined with hand-painted tiles (fig.3). These semi-external spaces create a kind of blurring of the boundary between the house and the garden, giving a sense that building and garden are simply differing intensities of occupation, occurring within a more or less continuous space.

Burle Marx was an avid collector, not only of plants, but also of pre-columbian pottery, local ceramics and modern sculptures, and a sense of the collector pervades the house, studios and gardens. There is a feeling that on a daily basis new plants or artefacts were once added or discarded, a feeling of dynamic process – a constant oscillation between thefragments of different eras. The use of artefacts in this way also shows Burle Marx combining the art of the painter with that of the landscape designer, setting up these systems of contrast that constantly reaffirm the presence of art in the poetic realm of the garden. Directly in front of the house is a simple rectilinear lawn which interrupts the natural slope, making the transition from the house to the garden.

Forming one edge of this terrace is another example of Burle Marx's eclectic collecting – a complex wall of granite blocks salvaged from old demolished houses, arranged as a series of advancing and receding planes that form ledges and niches for rock plants (fig. 4). Part-wall, part-garden, this construction seems to epitomise his constant search for a synthesis between building and landscape. The pursuit of a fusion between building and landscape is perhaps most completely realised in the 'green room', a semi-external space built to the south of the house and used for parties and entertaining. Covered by a concrete roof that becomes a pergola made from thin concrete beams, the ground surface steps down to a pool that receives a thin film of water spilling down from the roof above. Characterised by the diffuse sunlight through the pergola and the wall of water, this extraordinary place feels like it is stretched in time and shaped by the experience of moving through it (figs 5 and 6).

This part of the gardens, geometrically structured and highly constructed, is typical of Burle Marx's work from the 1950s. The exploration of composition in his paintings, in keeping with the post-Cubist tradition, is transposed into a sculptural and architectonic treatment of three-dimensional space. A desire for control is embodied in the systems of correspondences and resonances he establishes between architectural forms and plant structures. In contrast, the surrounding gardens take many forms and in a way were constantly making themselves, in partial independence from the actions of the designer or the gardeners. Burle Marx laid out an original plan, a kind of general intention, that quickly became less important than his continuous on-site editing and the constant growth and mutation of the plants. In this way temporality became a vital component of the design process, where the emphasis was not on a homogenous totality, but instead on a series of scripted scenarios, projected into the future and allowed to grow in, and evolve over, time.

The further one moves from the house the more spontaneous and wild the gardens become, creating an impression of a gradual transition from the constructed human landscape to an existing natural landscape. In seeking to integrate the *sitio* into its

Fig 1

65

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

surroundings, Burle Marx deliberately hides the boundaries, following the approach of the invisible 'ha-ha' in the English garden. Towards the edges of the site, more and more of the existing trees and features are retained and the scale is increased to heighten the sense of the encroaching rainforest. These outer gardens do not seem to be influenced by paintings or graphic representations in the same way as those closer to the house. Instead, new aesthetic effects seem to emerge from manipulations of traditions in landscape design and from a correspondence with time and instability. Burle Marx's paintings from the latter stages of his life still have evidence of an organic condition, but here it appears that it is the landscape artist who influences the painter. His paintings of the 1970s, where silk-screen garden plans are printed onto the canvas and superimposed one on top of the other, seem to show Burle Marx transposing the experience of gardens into the activity of painting. The paintings become increasingly biomorphic, seeming to originate from living texture, attempting to convey the temporal dimension of the garden.

Time is a fundamental variable in landscape work. Gardens cannot be designed and controlled as a totality, but instead must incorporate change, impermanence and instability as constant components. In the *sitio*, Burle Marx embraces this 'fourth' dimension and makes it a subject for exploration and artistic expression. His vast collection of tropical plants enabled him to turn the gardens into a form of laboratory, a place of open-ended transformation where it becomes impossible to separate the artefact of his designs from his associative and constructive processes.

> *The plant enjoys, at a very high level, the property of being unstable. It is alive while it changes itself. It suffers from constant mutation, a disequilibrium, the purpose of which is its own search for equilibrium.[ii]*

Text: Michael Pike. Photographs and drawings by Grace Keeley. Michael Pike and Grace Keeley are directors of gkmp architects.

References:
[i] Quoted in Vaccarino, R., *Roberto Burle Marx Landscapes Reflected*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2000, p. 43.
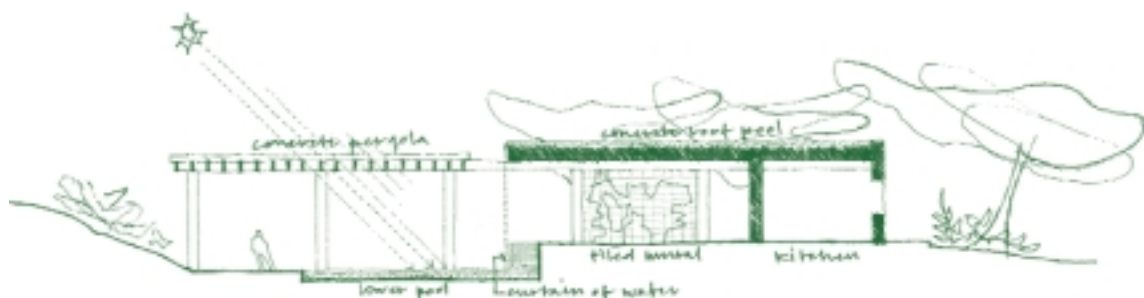[ii] *Ibid.* p. 45.

Fig 6

Fig 5

16

Makescape - my diary of landscape

ANNA RYAN

10.38 p.m. Thursday 13 January 2005: I have just completed a large piece of writing 'on landscape' for my PhD thesis.

10.42 a.m. Monday 17 January 2005: I have missed the deadline of last Friday 14th to submit my piece 'on landscape' to the *building material* editorial team.

Late October 2004 – Mid January 2005: As an architect engaged in postgraduate research in a department of geography where I am surrounded by physical geographers, historical geographers and cultural geographers, I have spent a large portion of the past few months submerged in various writings on the term 'landscape'. Covering as broad a scope as possible, my reading has led me into many fields of exploration. From art critics to academic geographers, from historians to landscape architects, it appears that each group has a different take on the meaning, position, and approach to landscape. The deeper and deeper I have gone into these areas, the more muddied my understandings have become. It feels as though my own once-clear understandings of what landscape is, or could be, are becoming lost in a mire amongst these competing meanings. Landscape: A cultural construction? A social process? A physical thing?

I attempted to bring these varying meanings together in the writing I completed last Thursday. Yet I am not at all satisfied with that text. I cannot find my own position within it. It does not serve its purpose for me: to further, and clarify, my understandings through the thoughts, ideas and writings of others. For me, landscape, this dynamic and contested concept of a highly interdisciplinary nature, is not comfortably, nor easily pinned down into such a piece of rigidly constructed academic writing. Is there another way?

> *To be interdisciplinary you need be between two places. But how exactly is the relationship constituted? Is the interdisciplinary operator one who straddles two, one who maps the tears and the rifts, the places where things have come apart, and the overlaps and the joins, the places where things come together. Or has s/he come from elsewhere, arrived as a stranger in town? The experience of being someone new in town, is a different experience altogether. Here one place has been left and a new unknown terrain entered. What do you do? Match the new to meet up with the standards of the old, or allow yourself to be changed by your new surroundings?*[i]

Looking at my approach to research work, and to writing, a cycle or pattern seems to be emerging. Periodically, I produce an academic piece of writing in progress, learning to do so in as conventional a manner as possible. And immediately afterwards, I find myself needing to let off steam in a more confessional type of piece ... like this one is turning out to be ...

11.54 a.m. Monday 17 January 2005: I commence the writing of my (current) 'take' on landscape.
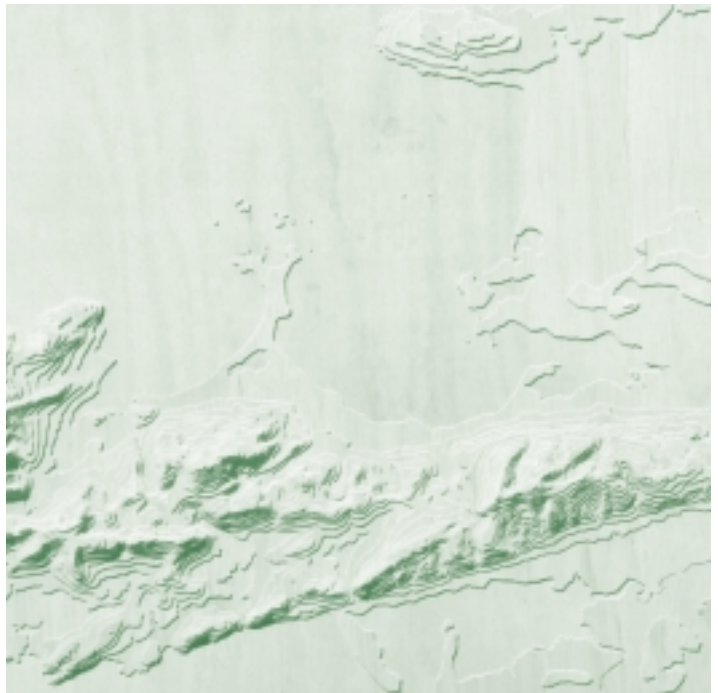
making land

Twelve months ago, in January 2004, I began to construct a model of part of the Dingle Peninsula in Co. Kerry – one of the research sites for my thesis. Having spent a number of months conducting research in methods entirely new to me (out there in another discipline, being that 'someone new in town'), I felt the need to return to a way of working with which I was very familiar, a way of working that felt comfortable.

I bought a piece of 15mm plywood, had it cut into a square of 800mm x 800mm, and, taking Sheets 70 and 71 of the 1:50,000 Discovery Series, I began to draw. Tracing out every fifth contour marked on the bluey-green Ordnance Survey maps, I began a process of elimination, deciding what would, and what would not, appear in my horizontal depiction of this piece of land. A multicoloured series of curving pencil marks developed: from Tralee in the east, to Brandon Point as it dips into the Atlantic in the west, and from Inch Strand in the south, to Kerry Head in the North, I plotted the extent of my model. My pencil began to mark the mountainous ridge as it crawled above the lower slopes of the peninsula's spine. I was clear in my aspirations for this model from the outset: my elimination of settlements and rivers was very deliberate.
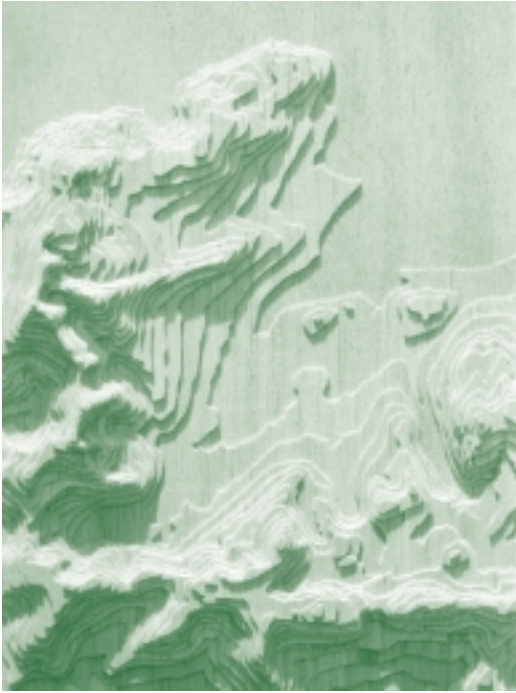
Mount Brandon (model)

Overall view of model
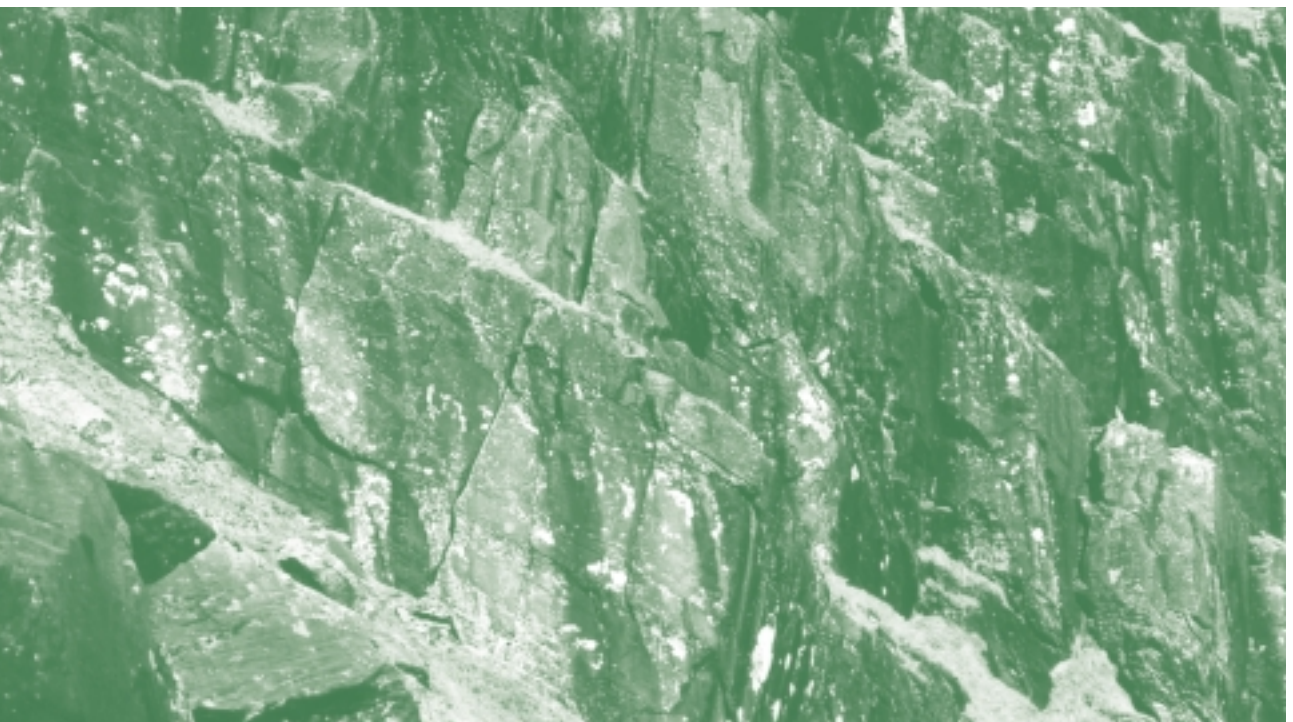
Mount Brandon (on walk)

I wanted to concentrate on the form of the land: its rising and falling, its meeting with the sea. In other words, I wanted to build the ground. Just the ground.

walking land

Nine months ago, last Easter Sunday, the 11th of April 2004, I, along with a group of friends, attempted to climb Mount Brandon, the second highest peak in the country, rising to 3127 feet on the Dingle Peninsula. The visibility was poor as we drove through the village of Cloghane and the drizzle persisted as we began to walk up towards the clouds as they rolled over, around and about us. Damp and muddy, the initial incline pressed into my already tired legs and I quickly fell behind the main group of walkers. Needing verbal encouragement all the way along the early part of the slopes, I walked almost reluctantly, filled with negativethoughts that I would not be able to make it to the top.

Each time I neared the group, they moved off again. Eventually they rested long enough for me to reach them. Turned towards me, they were looking over my head, back towards where we had come from. Looking to the east, the clouds having lifted off this lower part of the mountain, we could see Tralee Bay and Brandon Bay and the sandy Maharee peninsula pushing northwards, dividing the two bodies of water. Looking off the mountain, its elevation transforming it into viewing platform, I photographed the distant views. Using the camera's zoom function, I could not see the ground I was standing on through the lens. The land itself disappeared as I worked to (re)present my experience of it.

writing land

Etymologically, the word topography means the writing of a place. It combines the Greek word *topos* (place) with the Greek word *graphein* (to write).ⁱⁱ This text is writing the ground of Brandon Mountain. Thus, this text *is* topography, in its original form.

The way up the steep slope turned in on itself. Moving from what felt like the outside, to the inside of the mountain, we turned into the west, as the path carved its way right into the rock. Ascending in a slower, more horizontal manner, our path was perched mid-way along a wall of this rock. No longer on the (out)side of the mountain, and suspended vertically on this wall, it felt as though we were walking into the depth of a mountainous room. With the clouds now swirling above the summit, concealing it out of sight, and the ground falling sharply to a corrie lake below as it formed the floor of the room, hard on my right was the steeply rising slope, close to vertical in its gradient. Stopping, and looking to my left towards the opposite wall, far across the open, I could see the mirror image of the steep presence on my right flattened out, presented before me: horizontal sheets of rock raised, lifted and angled by some unknown force of time and might. A jagged wallpaper of mossy growth, lichens and weathered stone.

I took a photograph. Across.

Looking again at this photograph that I took, the scale is very difficult to read. It is as though the wall, isolated from the physical mass of the mountain, and communicated as an image, becomes something else. The view, (the scape), confuses the nature of the land.

body ground

As I moved forwards, further and further into this external in-mountain room, I slowly found myself back with the pencil in my hand, tracing and re-tracing the stepping contours on the Discovery map. It suddenly hit me! I could place exactly where I was! The ground I had drawn, re-drawn, cut, glued and looked at rise, layer by balsa-wood layer, was here beneath me.

I was now (re)registering every contour that I had cut, but now with my feet rather than with the point of the scalpel. It all made sense to me! This steep ridge, curving into the slope, had been tricky to draw, cut and glue, level above level. Now land and its landscape came together, through me, through my body. I, physically, was the point of contact. I had made the connection through the act of walking carried out by my legs and the act of cutting made by my hands.

Now at the back of the mountainy 'room', the realisation of this bringing together of the physical and its representation through my own body's movements really excited me! I knew now I would make it to the summit! The last part of the ascent, the vertical rough scree, required four bodily points of contact with the mountain. My hands, previously needed to navigate the landscape, were now needed to navigate the land. The connection between land and landscape was finalised. My physical experience. Me.

blurry landscape

In our contemporary world, the term landscape is so ubiquitous that its usages, for me, end up blurring all boundaries of its definition. Has the word landscape taken over from the word land? Are the terms land and landscape interchangeable? I look back to the piece of writing I completed last Thursday, to two writers I quoted in my text. The art historian Malcolm Andrews writes, 'something significant has happened when land can be perceived as 'landscape''[iii] He talks of land being processed into landscape, and landscape being processed into art, and concludes that, 'Landscape ... is mediated land, land that has been aesthetically processed.'[iv]

The literature specialist John Moss writes,

Mount Brandon being constructed (on model)

> *Can you envision a difference between landscape and the land? ... The land is whatever is there independent of human awareness; the condition of nature as entirely separable from human perception, from human experience. Yet that is not quite so ... The land is human-scaled, a projection of how we could imagine the world to be, if we were not here. It is a projection of our absence, the denial of Kant and his heirs: self-realization of nature without human knowledge. If you accept this, then the land, as defined, is a concept familiar to people in times before Stonehenge and Eden: if you think yourself a creation of the world, the land is the context that precedes you. But if you think your monoliths, whether of rock or theology, centre the world and empower your dominion over its destiny, then the notion of land is beyond you. You are stuck in landscape, Wittgenstein's world perceived, Hegel's inevitable completion of human design. So to return to the question, the actual difference between landscape and the land is not important. That you can see the difference at all is what counts.[v]*

View off Mount Brandon eastwards (on walk)

I have, many times, visited, walked, sunbathed, slept, and driven across the Dingle Peninsula. Now, I have a timber version of the Dingle Peninsula in my room, sitting on my bookshelves, angled against the wall. By making this model, was I representing a piece of land? Was I representing a piece of landscape? Or ... was I making a landscape? By taking a photograph on, and of, Mount Brandon, was I representing a piece of land? Was I representing a piece of landscape? Or ... was I making a landscape?

12.28 p.m. Tuesday 18 January 2005: ... Landscape? ... For me, the question mark remains.

Detail of model showing Mount Brandon, Brandon Bay and Maharee peninsula

Anna Ryan is an architect currently working on her PhD. at University College Cork, is funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, and is a studio tutor at UCD.

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[i] Jane Rendell, 'travelling the distance / encountering the other', in Blamey, D. (ed.) *Here, There, Elsewhere*, Open Editions, London, 2002.
[ii] Hillis Miller, J., *Topographies: geography in literature*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995. p. 3.
[iii] Andrews M., *Landscape and Western Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999. p. 1.
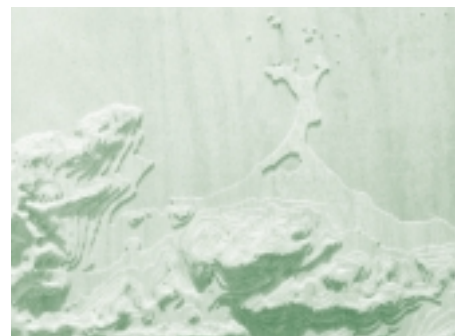[iv] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[v] Moss, J., *Invisible Among the Ruins, Field Notes of a Canadian in Ireland*, University College Dublin Press, Dublin, 2000. p. 63.
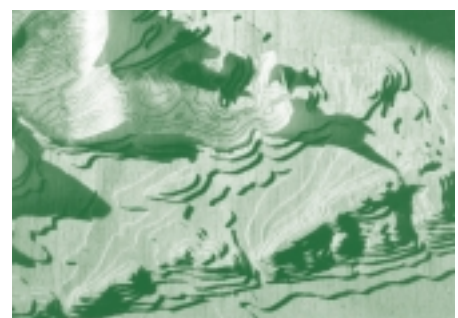
Detail of model under construction

17

John Hunt: an obituary
JOHN TUOMEY

John Hunt died in August 2004, aged 47. Born in Limerick in 1957, he grew up in the Howth home of his adoptive parents, surrounded by their extraordinary collection of art and antiques, which is now on permanent display at the Hunt Museum in Limerick. His generous contribution to Irish cultural life and his dedication to the establishment of the museum are matters of public record.

In the autumn of 1985, the AAI first approached the Arts Council to seek support for the introduction of an annual awards scheme for excellence in Irish architecture. John Hunt was the Visual Arts Officer. He explained that the Arts Council would not be, at that time, in a position to fund an awards scheme for architects and had, as yet, no grant scheme in place for the encouragement of excellence in architecture. Notice was short, at this late stage in the financial year. The AAI was not yet a recognised recipient of Arts Council funding and such an initiative could take time to become accepted as an element of policy. He suggested a quicker route to get things started. There was a residue in the funds available for travelling exhibitions. The Arts Council might be able to support a well organised exhibition that could travel to various venues around the country; funds could be made available to provide a catalogue. With the minimum of bureaucracy the deal was done – the first annual travelling exhibition of New Irish Architecture was set in train and the door opened for what has now been twenty years of continued Arts Council support for the AAI Awards.

Although his working life was committed to the visual arts, John Hunt was interested in archaeology and architecture. His postgraduate dissertation at UCC was on the subject of tower houses in County Clare. His father had restored the tower house at Craggaunowen as the centrepiece of a pioneering project in experimental archaeology. Following his father's death in 1976, John Jnr. became chairman of the board of the Craggaunowen Project, which includes among its displays the square-sailed leather boat in which Tim Severin recreated St. Brendan's legendary voyage across the Atlantic. Liam McCormick designed the tall pyramidal glasshouse that shelters Severin's boat.

John Hunt is remembered from his schooldays at Glenstal for his wry humour and disregard of inflexible authority. He should likewise be remembered by the AAI, as the man who made the move that brought architecture closer to the cultural programme of the Arts Council.

John Tuomey is a partner in O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects.

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