

THE NEW

LANDSCAPE
DECLARATION

A CALL TO ACTION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

THE NEW LANDSCAPE DECLARATION

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453 South Spring Street, Suite 302
Los Angeles, CA 90013
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FIRST HARDCOVER EDITION

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453 South Spring Street, Suite 302, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

Printed in Canada

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication data is available upon request.

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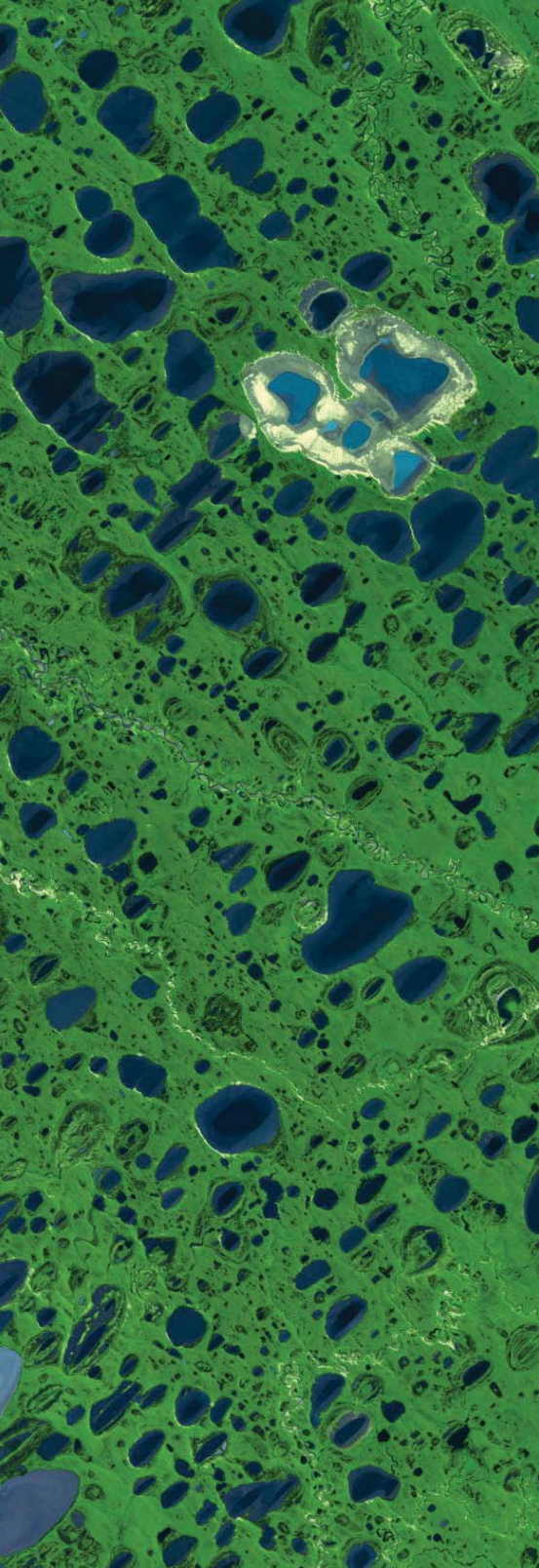
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—GRANT JONES

CONTENTS

- v New Landscape Declaration Summit and
Publication Project Team
- vi About the Landscape Architecture Foundation
- vi About the New Landscape Declaration Summit
- vii 2016 LAF Board of Directors
- ix Contributors

PART I: INTRODUCTION

- 5 Chapter 1: Our Time?
Richard Weller

PART II: THE NEED FOR ACTION

- 25 Chapter 3: Beyond Practice: Landscape Architects and the
Global Eco-Crisis
Martha Schwartz
- 29 Chapter 4: Of Wilderness, *Wild-ness*, and Wild Things
Nina-Marie Lister
- 33 Chapter 5: The Environmental/Social Crisis and the
Challenges of Informal Urbanization
David Gouverneur
- 37 Chapter 6: Evolution and Prospective Outlook
Mario Schjetnan

PART III: THE LANDSCAPE

- 61 Chapter 11: Boundary Expansion
Charles A. Birnbaum
- 65 Chapter 12: Landscape City
James Corner
- 69 Chapter 13: The Landscape Architect as Urbanist of Our Age
Charles Waldheim
- 73 Chapter 14: Connecting Humans and Nature for an Ideal Future
Feng Han
- 77 Chapter 15: Urban Ecology as Activism
Kate Orff

- xvi Preface
Barbara Deutsch
- xviii Chronology
 - xx A Declaration of Concern
 - xxii The New Landscape Declaration

- 13 Chapter 2: Text and Context: The *1966 Declaration of Concern*
Elizabeth K. Meyer

- 41 Chapter 7: The Large-Scale Century Ahead
Alan M. Berger
- 45 Chapter 8: Developing Landscapes of Resource Management
Alpa Nawre
- 49 Chapter 9: Landscape Architecture as Necessity
Kelly Shannon
- 53 Chapter 10: The Art of Survival
Kongjian Yu

- 81 Chapter 16: Landscape Beyond the Biotic: In Advocacy of a
Revised Litany
Christopher Marcinkoski
- 85 Chapter 17: For a Landscape-Led Urbanism
Henri Bava
- 89 Chapter 18: Topology and Landscape Experimentation
Christophe Girot
- 93 Chapter 19: Regenerative Infrastructure Systems through
Urban Acupuncture
Tim Duggan

PART IV: THE FUTURE OF THE DISCIPLINE

101 Chapter 20: Into an Era of Landscape Humanism

Gina Ford

105 Chapter 21: On the Future of Landscape Architecture

Carl Steinitz

109 Chapter 22: Cities for People and Cities for the Planet

Blaine Merker

115 Chapter 23: The Declaration of Interdependence: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Sustainable Happiness

Randolph T. Hester

119 Chapter 24: Manifesto about the Profession's Future

Martha Fajardo

123 Chapter 25: Landscape Architects as Advocates for Culture-Based Sustainable Development

Patricia O'Donnell

127 Chapter 26: Landscape Architecture: New Adventures Ahead

Dirk Sijmons

131 Chapter 27: Less a Declaration Than Some Thoughts

Marc Treib

135 Chapter 28: Landscape Futures

Gerdo P. Aquino

PART V: VOICES OF THE FUTURE

143 Chapter 29: A Call for Broadened Communications and Craft

Joanna Karaman

147 Chapter 30: Experimental Landscapes: The Power of the Prototype

Nina Chase

151 Chapter 31: Designing Constructed Ecosystems for a Resilient Future

Sarah Primeau

155 Chapter 32: The Reparation of our Epistemic Rift and a Return to Values

Scott Irvine

159 Chapter 33: Leadership Through Listening

Tim Mollette-Parks

163 Chapter 34: Landscape as Narrative

Azzurra Cox

PART VI: THE CALL TO ACTION

171 Chapter 35: Aesthetics Panel

Discussion of the role of aesthetics and beauty

175 Chapter 36: Ecology Panel

Discussion on ecology in the age of climate change

179 Chapter 37: Society Panel

Discussion on diversity, cultural nuances, and more

183 Chapter 38: Innovation Panel

Discussion on fostering innovation in landscape architecture

187 Chapter 39: Academic Practice Panel

Discussion on higher education, teaching, and research

191 Chapter 40: Private Practice Panel

Discussion of summit ideas as they relate to the work of design firms

195 Chapter 41: Public Practice Panel

Discussion of the role of government and nonprofit sectors

199 Chapter 42: Capacity Organizations Panel

Perspectives from membership and related organizations

203 Chapter 43: Retrospect and Prospect Panel

Doyens of landscape architecture discuss the profession

208 Special Thanks

210 Image Captions and Credits

PREFACE

In June 2016, the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) convened 75 preeminent thinkers and influencers, as well as over 600 attendees from around the world, to look at how landscape architecture can make its vital contribution to help solve the defining issues of our time. The New Landscape Declaration: A Summit on Landscape Architecture and the Future, held at the University of Pennsylvania, marked 50 years since Ian McHarg, Grady Clay, and other leading landscape architects composed LAF's seminal *1966 Declaration of Concern*, a call to action for landscape architecture to respond to what they called the "environmental crisis." Their declaration underscored the need for collaborative solutions and outlined a four-pronged strategy to multiply the effectiveness of the limited number of landscape architects because the need for better resource planning and design far outweighed the number of trained professionals.

In preparation for the summit, LAF asked a diverse group of leading minds in contemporary landscape architecture to write their own declarations, reflecting on the 1966 declaration and landscape architecture's achievements since then and offering bold ideas for what it should achieve in the future. These new declarations were presented at the summit on the first day. On the second day, nine panels, curated by theme, responded to the declarations and engaged in lively debate about how to realize landscape architecture's potential and effect real world change. This book presents those declarations in original essay form and showcases key ideas from the panel discussions.

LAF then synthesized the values, discussions, and ideas from the summit to create the *New Landscape Declaration*, this century's manifesto for the landscape architecture discipline. This poetically written, 400-word piece asserts

the essential role of landscape architecture in solving the defining issues of our time: climate change, species extinction, rapid urbanization, and inequity. The recommendations are relevant to designers across the globe, underscoring the need to diversify, innovate, and create a bold culture of leadership, advocacy, and activism.

The summit and the *New Landscape Declaration* represented a unique opportunity for landscape architects to step back from their day-to-day work, come together under one tent, affirm values, and think big.

With this book, we invite you to engage in this critical, provocative, and inspirational examination of the power of landscape architecture, and to join the passionate community working to answer the call to action in the *New Landscape Declaration* at this critical time when the talents and services of landscape architects are so vitally needed.

This entire effort would not have been possible without the vision and tireless efforts of the Landscape Architecture Foundation Board of Directors and staff, in particular our 2016 Summit Task Force. From concept to execution, Richard Weller was a driving force. Dean Marilyn Jordan Taylor and PennDesign provided tremendous support in hosting the summit. We were blown away by the speakers and attendees who believed in the power of this endeavor and traveled from as far away as China, Argentina, and Australia to attend. LAF sincerely thanks all who contributed their ideas and passion to the process. We are proud, delighted, and humbled to have led this powerful and timely effort.

Barbara Deutsch

Chief Executive Officer

Landscape Architecture Foundation

July 2017

THE NEW LANDSCAPE DECLARATION

On June 10 and 11, 2016, over 700 landscape architects with a shared concern for the future were assembled by the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Inspired by LAF's 1966 Declaration of Concern, we crafted a new vision for landscape architecture for the twenty-first century.

This is our call to action.

Across borders and beyond walls, from city centers to the last wilderness, humanity's common ground is the landscape itself. Food, water, oxygen—everything that sustains us comes from and returns to the landscape. What we do to our landscapes we ultimately do to ourselves. The profession charged with designing this common ground is landscape architecture.

After centuries of mistakenly believing we could exploit nature without consequence, we have now entered an age

of extreme climate change marked by rising seas, resource depletion, desertification, and unprecedented rates of species extinction. Set against the global phenomena of accelerating consumption, urbanization, and inequity, these influences disproportionately affect the poor and will impact everyone, everywhere.

Simultaneously, there is profound hope for the future. As we begin to understand the true complexity and holistic nature of the earth system and as we begin to appreciate

humanity's role as integral to its stability and productivity, we can build a new identity for society as a constructive part of nature.

The urgent challenge before us is to redesign our communities in the context of their bioregional landscapes, enabling them to adapt to climate change and mitigate its root causes. As designers versed in both environmental and cultural systems, landscape architects are uniquely positioned to bring related professions together into new alliances to address complex social and ecological problems. Landscape architects bring different and often competing interests together so as to give artistic physical form and integrated function to the ideals of equity, sustainability, resiliency, and democracy.

As landscape architects, we vow to create places that serve the higher purpose of social and ecological justice

for all peoples and all species. We vow to create places that nourish our deepest needs for communion with the natural world and with one another. We vow to serve the health and well-being of all communities.

To fulfill these promises, we will work to strengthen and diversify our global capacity as a profession. We will work to cultivate a bold culture of inclusive leadership, advocacy, and activism in our ranks. We will work to raise awareness of landscape architecture's vital contribution. We will work to support research and champion new practices that result in design innovation and policy transformation.

We pledge our services. We seek commitment and action from those who share our concern.

PART III

THE NEED FOR ACTION

AFTER CENTURIES OF MISTAKENLY BELIEVING WE COULD EXPLOIT NATURE WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE, **WE HAVE NOW ENTERED AN AGE OF EXTREME CLIMATE CHANGE** MARKED BY RISING SEAS, RESOURCE DEPLETION, DESERTIFICATION, AND UNPRECEDENTED RATES OF SPECIES EXTINCTION. SET AGAINST THE GLOBAL PHENOMENA OF ACCELERATING CONSUMPTION, URBANIZATION, AND INEQUITY, THESE INFLUENCES DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECT THE POOR AND **WILL IMPACT EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE.**

FROM THE NEW LANDSCAPE DECLARATION



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Chapter 3

BEYOND PRACTICE: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AND THE GLOBAL ECO-CRISIS

MARTHA SCHWARTZ

The scientific consensus is that anthropogenic climate change is now indisputable. James Hansen, the leading climate scientist previously from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and respected for many predictions that have proven to be true, recently issued a grim warning that we are nearing the point of no return when it comes to reversing or even mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

Several alarming facts provide evidence that global warming is upon us and happening faster than predicted: (1) 2015 was the warmest year on record, and this past decade is the warmest since 1880; (2) in November of 2015, a one-

degree-Celsius planetary rise in temperature was officially acknowledged (but widely believed to be conservative)—the halfway mark to the two-degrees-Celsius target or safe limit to avoid catastrophic global warming; and (3) East Siberian Arctic Shelf (ESAS) methane is being released—the most threatening fact of all.

We have exceeded the projected tipping point of 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and are now at 400 parts per million, heating up our land, air, ice, and oceans with the equivalent of 400,000 Hiroshima atomic bombs per day. Global ocean temperatures are now one degree Celsius higher than they were 140 years ago. The heated Arctic Ocean is causing

the permafrost of the ESAS to melt, releasing methane—a gas 20 to 30 times more potent than CO₂ as a heat-trapping gas—into the atmosphere. There are such massive reserves of methane in the subsea Arctic that if only a small percentage is released, it can lead to a jump in the average temperature of the Earth’s atmosphere by ten degrees Celsius.

Recent observations in the Siberian Arctic show that increased rates of methane are escaping from the seabed *now*. These facts have produced a plausible scientific prediction of a catastrophic release, or bubble, of methane occurring abruptly or in coming decades. Such a release could have an exponentially amplifying effect on global warming, launching

We must advocate for funding the development and testing of a portfolio of geotechnologies to counteract man-made global warming until the required reductions in CO₂ emissions are reached and we have transitioned to sustainable energy economies.

catastrophic scenarios more rapidly than we had anticipated.

The *1966 Declaration of Concern* correctly predicted and responded to the environmental crisis with a vision 50 years ago. The ecological planning initiatives and educational goals that were projected have been accomplished. At this point, however, we confront a drastic new challenge. In 1966, those visionaries could not foresee globalization or the population explosion with corresponding fossil fuel use and consumption that have outstripped all our profession’s good intentions and

achievements regarding sustainable development through responsible design.

I no longer believe that the work we do as individual, responsible practitioners will be able to contribute effectively to averting this long-predicted crisis because we are entering a state of emergency. We do not have another 50 years or perhaps even 15. Sadly, our excellent professional practices will become irrelevant in the face of global warming, a problem whose magnitude we are now confronting. I do not advocate putting an end to our professional excellence or our individual duties as responsible practitioners. But my message is: we must go beyond landscape architecture practice in order to broach this

critical environmental crossroads.

The questions before us are: What can be done to keep this scenario from playing out? What can we do as a group of people whose ethos is to steward our natural environment, since the impacts

are coming much sooner than expected?

My declaration is for a collective call to action. We must advocate for funding the development and testing of a portfolio of geotechnologies to counteract man-made global warming until the required reductions in CO₂ emissions are reached and we have transitioned to sustainable energy economies.

As a first priority, we should develop techniques to cool the Arctic because the possibility of a major methane release triggered by melting Arctic ice constitutes a planetary

emergency. Technologies have been proposed for rapidly cooling the Arctic on the necessary scale in the form of solar radiation management (SRM). We should be investing in research and development toward this goal immediately.

At the same time, we must focus on measures that can reduce existing quantities of atmospheric CO₂ by carbon dioxide removal (CDR) processes to lower the pollutant level and warming effects.

Finally, cutting global greenhouse gas emissions must remain an urgent priority; thus, reducing emissions from existing, new, and proposed carbon power stations, particularly coal plants, with carbon capture and storage (CCS) techniques, must be rigorously pursued.

Scientists have conceived various methods—and new ones may be discovered—to achieve these goals, so it is very

As a first priority, we should develop techniques to cool the Arctic because the possibility of a major methane release triggered by melting Arctic ice constitutes a planetary emergency.

likely to be technically feasible. But much more research and testing is needed before deployment. I believe that science can help us out of this imminent and dire situation in order to buy time so that the longer-term goal of zero carbon emissions can eventually be achieved.

Therefore, I urge our professional organizations to create a political wing with a forceful agenda to persuade our decision

makers and politicians to support bold research to save our planet's atmosphere through technologies that can prevent Arctic methane release, and sequester and capture carbon dioxide. We must exert pressure on our government to fund the equivalent of a “Manhattan Project for Climate Change Mitigation” in response to the clear and present environmental danger we are now facing, especially with regard to Arctic methane release. Such a political agenda should also have a focused social media voice. It is through these modalities that change can occur. Petitions and signatures impel those in power to exert the voice of the people. This is today's version of taking to the streets. We must become online warriors.

We are a well-educated, knowledgeable group that has the status to influence people. Together, we have the power to create awareness about this environmental emergency and

to make change. I further propose that we, as a group of dedicated landscape architects, immediately embark upon a hyperaggressive climate campaign that should be owned by the two most

important professional organizations that represent us: the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF). We must urge these two organizations to officially recognize the gravity of the situation and align with and support other actionable networks, such as 350.org, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the Arctic News, and the Arctic Methane Emergency Group,

among others, that are working heroically and aggressively on climate change policy and action.

Finally, ASLA has a lobbying arm in Washington, DC. We must exercise our full intellectual authority and political influence to strategically advance climate rescue.

In summary, I am suggesting that we shift our priorities from individual practice to group political action so as to impel our government to forge an international effort to cool the Arctic, suppress methane, and aggressively remove CO₂ from the atmosphere; take immediate and extremely drastic action to entirely curb global carbon dioxide emissions; and evolve rapidly toward completely renewable energy resources.

I have hope that the world's best scientists will find ways to buy us the gift of time so that we can avert the swift intensification of climate change. Then we will be given a second chance to learn how to live in balance with the earth. But we must act together now.

The author would like to thank Edith Katz, formerly of Martha Schwartz Partners, for her invaluable assistance.



Martha Schwartz is principal of Martha Schwartz Partners and has over 35 years of experience as a landscape architect, urbanist, and artist. Schwartz is professor in practice of landscape architecture at Harvard Graduate School of Design, a founding member of the Working Group of Sustainable Cities at Harvard University, and was appointed in 2015 as a Built Environment Expert (BEE) of the Design Council Caba.

Chapter 4

OF WILDERNESS, *WILD-NESS*, AND WILD THINGS

NINA-MARIE LISTER

And I think in this empty world there was room for me and a mountain lion.
And I think in the world beyond, how easily we might spare a million or two humans
And never miss them.
Yet what a gap in the world, the missing white-frost face of that slim yellow mountain lion!
—D. H. Lawrence, *Mountain Lion*

Humans are an urban species. For the first time in our history, more than half the world's 7.4 billion humans now live in urban settlements. We have become the single dominant species shaping the planet, from its surface lands and waters to its climate and, by extension, to the future of all other species on earth. The age of Anthropocene is upon us and we are its defining creature.

But what of the other 2.5 million species we know of so far (by the most conservative estimate)? Who in the Anthropocene will speak for these creatures and their wild places? Where will these wild things be and, through their fading reflection, what will become of the wild within the human?

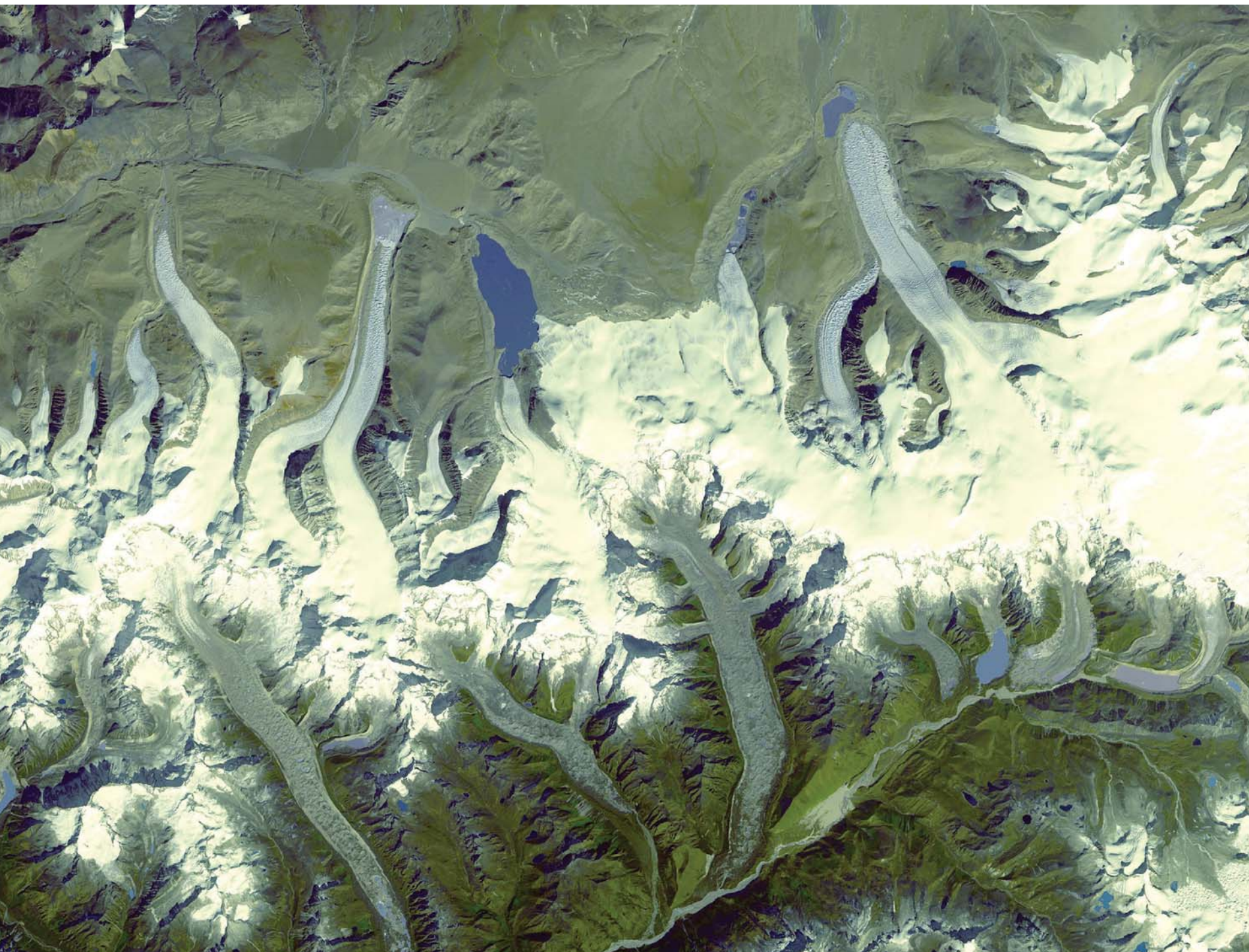
In the last 20 years, landscape architecture has risen to prominence—and in some cases to dominance—within the

PART VI

THE CALL TO ACTION

TO FULFILL THESE PROMISES, WE WILL WORK TO STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY OUR GLOBAL CAPACITY AS A PROFESSION. WE WILL WORK TO CULTIVATE A BOLD CULTURE OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND ACTIVISM IN OUR RANKS. WE WILL WORK TO RAISE AWARENESS OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE'S VITAL CONTRIBUTION. WE WILL WORK TO SUPPORT RESEARCH AND CHAMPION NEW PRACTICES THAT RESULT IN DESIGN INNOVATION AND POLICY TRANSFORMATION. **WE PLEDGE OUR SERVICES. WE SEEK COMMITMENT AND ACTION FROM THOSE WHO SHARE OUR CONCERN.**

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Chapter 35

AESTHETICS PANEL

PANELISTS

Claude Cormier, Principal, Claude Cormier + Associés

Maria Goula, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture, Cornell University

Mikyoung Kim, Founder and Design Director, Mikyoung Kim Design; Professor Emerita, Rhode Island School of Design

Chris Reed, Founding Principal, Stoss; Associate Professor in Practice of Landscape Architecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Ken Smith, Principal, Ken Smith Workshop

MODERATOR

Adam Greenspan, Design Partner, PWP Landscape Architecture

The Aesthetics panel was charged with assessing the status of aesthetics and beauty in the profession and its place in the new declaration. The following is a

condensed and edited version of the panelists' remarks and is not intended to be a verbatim or complete representation.

Adam Greenspan: There seems to be a deep-seated fear—or at least a warning—that if you acknowledge aesthetics or beauty directly, your work or the field will be marginalized. When we are thinking about a declaration for the future, it should be acknowledged that the physical designed and constructed landscapes that we create engage nature, but they are actually cultural design projects.

To this end, a central question has come up: is the aesthetic aspect of our work the most trivial or, unstated as it is, could it be the most powerful? Could conscious design be the thing that sets landscape architecture apart from science or engineering? In our increasingly virtual world, can an explicit focus on an aesthetic agenda and material design have the potential to cut through a disengaged experience of the physical, to shape people's perception?

Mikyong Kim: Maybe we are talking more about process and creativity rather than aesthetics. At the summit, we saw analytical, scientifically based diagrams that are so beautiful to us because they are methodical, conscious, and backed by scientific data, whereas the creative process or creative process of thinking relies on intuition...which comes from our subconscious. Analytics on its own is not enough to create great design. You need both the conscious and the subconscious; we need to use both hemispheres of our brain to create great work.

If we veer too wildly to one side, the data-based design, we fall into the danger of creating designs that may lack the uniqueness that we as individual, creative beings bring to the profession. And if we veer too wildly to the other side, we wallow into the subconscious and the intuitive and create work where we ignore all the pressing matters. Landscape architecture is both the art and the science of design and we need the declaration to reflect that.

Chris Reed: When taking on ecological, environmental, social, political, and economic agendas, we need to lead with design first. As a design profession, we have an obligation to push a strong and central cultural agenda. And we need to address important matters through design—the qualitative and the experiential—and do it in contemporary ways. At the end of the day, in order to get at these issues, we need to do it by moving people's hearts, triggering their imaginations, and stimulating their minds.

Maria Goula: I like the idea of reordering because it is in the core of design and has special systemic and processual implications. We do not simply need new aesthetics, but maybe multiple aesthetics.

Ken Smith: You cannot consider the question of aesthetics without addressing issues of content, meaning, and intentionality. Aesthetics are the qualitative aspects of design

that allow a designed place and its spaces, program, and forms to speak and provide meaning to human users. It may delight, confound, enlighten, sadden, soothe, or exhilarate. Aesthetics are the emotional core of what we do as landscape architects. Clearly, we live in an increasingly data-driven culture with an emphasis on quantitative metrics, prescriptive models, minimum standards, and best practices for almost all aspects of landscape performance, often to the exclusion of the qualitative concerns. Through digital means, it is easy to appropriate precedents, adopt models, and apply parametric algorithms to generate workable design solutions. Rhetorically speaking, with the prospect of artificial intelligence, one might ask, why do we even need designers and aesthetics? Can we simply model the quantitative metrics to solve the problems? And is fabrication simply the application of design standards and specifications?

Intentionality is what gives our work meaning and direction. Our aesthetics, philosophical position, interpretation of the program, working methodology, along with questions of structure, proportion, materiality, process, and fabrication, are critical to our craft and fundamental to our art. Aesthetics lie at the heart of our professional mandate. It is how and why we create meaningful places that matter to people and matter over time.

Claude Cormier: The issues are extremely complex, but this is where an intuitive element comes into play: you align

everything and the whole journey of the project is trying to keep all those things streamlined. Because in the end, when you do the act of design, you commit. And this commitment is expressed in form; and form takes time to get realized. You must have a very clear intention, higher than all of those issues, because if you just worry about the issues, in a sense, you are going to sink with them. Design helps you start floating.

Chris Reed: The discipline has made amazing strides in recovering a central and more complex role for what we can do in cities and society, but there is still resistance to engaging at the level of design experimentation, aesthetic values, and aesthetic qualities. Right now, architects still hold more cultural capital than we do. I challenge us to take on these issues, have these debates, put them front and center, be more experimental, be more out front, and hopefully we can raise our own cultural capital.

Ken Smith: A lot of times we are trying to solve contemporary environmental issues and social issues with old aesthetics. The art world does not speak with a single voice—it has multiple voices and is experimental, and it seems to me that we should be like the art world, in terms of having a panoply of aesthetics. We need to be developing contemporary aesthetic solutions to contemporary problems.

Mikyoung Kim: Most of us have a global practice and it is our obligation to not just bring a Western aesthetic when we are working in eastern Asia or in the Middle East; we have to be more open and collaborative.

Maria Goula: Good practice has always been collaborative. But there was an old paradigm to venerate or exaggerate the genius and the talent of the artistic figure leading the process. We have moved into very different horizontal processes with negotiation and constant dialogue and a lot of frustration, of course, and energy. But no one imagines working in a perfect world of having aesthetic creative production on her or his own.

Adam Greenspan: Form, design, and aesthetics need to get into the declaration because it is an important part of what we do in the world.

Chapter 43

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT PANEL

PANELISTS

Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, Landscape Architect

Laurie Olin, Partner, OLIN; Practice Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Pennsylvania School of Design

Peter Walker, Senior Partner, PWP Landscape Architecture

MODERATOR

Frederick “Fritz” Steiner, Henry M. Rockwell Chair in Architecture, Dean, School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin

The Retrospect and Prospect panel brought together some of the doyens of landscape architecture to talk about where the profession has been and where it

is going. The following is a condensed and edited version of the panelists’ remarks and is not intended to be a verbatim or complete representation.

