

Is Landscape ...?

Is Landscape ...? surveys multiple and myriad identities of landscape. Rather than seeking a singular or essential understanding of the term, the collection postulates that landscape might be better read in relation to its cognate terms across expanded disciplinary and professional fields. The publication pursues the potential of multiple provisional working definitions of landscape to both disturb and develop received understandings of landscape architecture. These definitions distinguish between landscape as representational medium, academic discipline, and professional identity. Beginning with an inquiry into the origins of the term itself, *Is Landscape ...?* features essays by more than a dozen leading voices shaping the contemporary reading of landscape as architecture and beyond.

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**Edited by Gareth Doherty and
Charles Waldheim**

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of Landscape

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Foreword

Mohsen Mostafavi

It seems to me that Garrett Eckbo's thought-provoking text, "Is Landscape Architecture?," to which this volume is a critical, multivalent response, is chiefly arguing for a relationship – a relationship between landscape and architecture – rather than simply defining what landscape architecture *is*. By asking "Is landscape architecture?," Eckbo foregrounds the importance of relationality, or the productive zone in which disciplinary knowledge meets transdisciplinary practice.

Landscape is intrinsically caught between varied associations. The array of contributors to this volume represent a broad range of disciplines and positions, allowing landscape to be discussed in relation to fields in addition to architecture. When we ask "Is landscape planning?," for example, we are inherently discussing landscape's relationship to planning. Similarly, "Is landscape photography?" questions landscape's representation through photographic methods. Through the various chapters of this volume, you will find many glimpses of particularities of identity that emerge from these associations.

Writing elsewhere, Kenneth Frampton suggests that when you look at the Parthenon, you see a building that seems to grow out of the mountain. Even though the building is distinct from the mountain, there is a clear relationship; the visual appreciation of the building is ineluctably tied to its locality. This relationality becomes a kind of method in the work of certain architects. One particularly exciting example of the tension between architecture and landscape is the Villa Malaparte on Capri, which epitomizes the idea of an architecture that incorporates landscape but is also distinct from it. Frampton highlights an architecture that continues the argument of Eckbo, in physical terms, where architecture is architecture, and the constructed landscape is seen as a sort of integrated, holistic project. He thus opposes the notion of the architectural object and promotes examples of continuity between landscape and architecture. Asking "Is landscape architecture?" is therefore to seek an equivalence of architecture within landscape – not only to define landscape through its relationality with architecture but to speak of that equivalence.

The Centre Pompidou is one of the most powerfully charged projects in this respect in its complex relationship with the landscape of Paris. An escalator moves vertically along the outside of the structure, offering a fresh perspective on the city

in terms of one's relationship to the ground, as opposed to the more quotidian experience gained by walking or traveling by car, bus, or bike. The escalator is a very deliberate way of experiencing the city, for viewing the urban landscape. The building functions almost as a kind of camera – as a mechanism for constructing spatial relationships with the city.

Yet if you define something – a building, a landscape – in terms of something else, what is its position with regard to its own core practices and conventions? In considering the notion of relationality, it is also important to talk about distinctness, to talk about difference. Aldo Rossi was a vocal proponent of the notion of disciplinary autonomy, or the autonomy of architecture. Architecture is architecture. Poetry is poetry. Literature is literature. Painting is painting. Photography is photography. What issues are specific, distinct, to the core of landscape as a discipline, and to landscape as a certain set of practices? Such specificities are a necessary precondition for relationality with other things: you need to know the particular qualities of something before invoking a relationship. I would argue that landscape has had a harder time defining its disciplinary condition than have most other fields.

A recognized part of the problem with landscape is that it still frequently gets conflated with conceptualizations of nature, including discussions around nature and agriculture, and traditions of gardening. Inadequate attention is devoted to the artifice of landscape – the highly artificial, highly deliberate, highly constructed. In this sense, there's very little that's natural about landscape.

It is vital to argue to some degree for the autonomy of the discipline of landscape by defining landscape relative to landscape, in the same way that architecture has had a long gestation period of being able to articulate itself. In short, in examining the relationships arising from the multiple identities of landscape, it is necessary to look within landscape too.

So the question that I would most like to pose is: "Is landscape landscape?"

Chapter 12: Is landscape philosophy?

Kathryn Moore

We have lost an important connection with the landscape, a way of seeing and understanding its profound significance in our everyday life and culture. This gap in our knowledge is the consequence of a rationalist paradigm that continues to dominate western thinking, a conceptual void that threatens the landscape in the face of twenty-first-century challenges. An alternative philosophical approach argues that refocusing attention on materiality and re-evaluating the relationship communities have with the land would be an important step towards addressing the problem, but it does demand a very different role and agenda for philosophy. This chapter illustrates the potential of a new way of thinking about landscape, consciousness and design and aims to initiate a new discourse by abandoning the philosophical filters that currently obscure a meaningful engagement with the built environment. This would help to establish an expanded definition of landscape as a vital means of achieving a better quality of life and robust sustainable development.

REDEFINING THEORIES OF PERCEPTION

The main premise for this work is set out in *Overlooking the Visual Demystifying the Art of Design* (Moore 2010). Offering a redefinition of the relationship between the senses and intelligence, the book argues that perception is not just close to intelligence, but *is* intelligence. This gives a startlingly different view of the world, an entirely different way of conceptualizing perception, one that challenges the prevailing rationalist paradigm. This new approach allows us to work without the need to engage or leap between different modes of thinking, or the notion that there are fundamentally different types of truth or pre-linguistic starting points of thought.

For the first time, one of the main preoccupations of contemporary cultural debate, the argument for and against the existence of universal truth, is carried into the perceptual realm, applying a pragmatic line of inquiry that questions the very nature of foundational belief.¹ This establishes a new philosophical argument systematically questioning the existence of the sensory interface/mode of thinking – a disastrous idea that has haunted western civilization since the seventeenth

century, one that remains absolutely integral to current theories of perception and epistemology.

This radical move cuts across the separatist constructs that have habitually divided facts and values, nature and culture, art and science, language and emotions. Redefining the nature of design expertise, together with artistic and aesthetic sensibility provides the basis for a strong conceptual and artistic rationale for arts education. Stripping out the metaphysical dimension from perception shows the design process to be a critical endeavour not a mystical experience, enabling us to talk about design more sensibly. But perhaps the most significant thing this paradigm shift does for the relationship between landscape and philosophy is to bring materiality back into the picture.

Currently, landscape has an uneasy relationship with philosophy, it could be argued that it's being badly let down by it. To some however, landscape IS philosophy and a way of life, but it is also clear that many others feel exactly the same way about their own particular disciplines. From a pragmatic perspective, this professional evangelism is not really philosophy, but more a kind of "moral recipe" as Dewey wryly observes (Dewey [1934] 1980: 319). A high ground from which to make judgements about how we live our lives, often based on old values, supposedly tried and tested, a nostalgia for the way things used to be. The "desire to restore old conceptions from past epochs" thought to be "essential to the redemption of society from its present evil state" (ibid.).

Landscape is no more philosophy than poetry or mathematics. But as with poetry and mathematics, philosophy and landscape are inextricably linked. The beliefs and values we hold, our own "philosophy" if you like, determines our view of the world. The culmination of a lifetime's observations, sometimes casual, sometimes intense, of contemplation, meditation or just simply trying to work things out. It may not be clearly articulated and we may not be aware of the extent to which the sense we make of things is swayed and shaped by countless presumptions and preconceptions. These underpin our hunches, intuitions and the judgements we make, frame our view of the landscape, our experience of the landscape and inform what we might imagine for its future.

THE RATIONALIST PARADIGM

These assumptions are still very much rooted in the arcane tenets that underpin the rationalist philosophy, the foundation of all sense datum theories of perception. Each of them requires a "hidden layer" of unconscious understanding to guide us through the process. As a sensory interface, this has innumerable incarnations, for example, as a black box, separate modes of thinking, the haptic, the visual, the experiential, the mind's eye, creativity, the subconscious and something that supposedly lies just beneath cognition. These are essentially variations on a theme acting as a veil between us "in here" and the world "out there". This is precisely what perpetuates the dichotomy thought to exist between body and mind. Despite concerted efforts over the last few decades to dispel this duality, it remains

stubbornly endemic. Concealed in plain sight in sense datum theories of perception, it is endlessly re-hashed through cultural habits, anecdotes and adages. In fact, it is so common, this way of thinking is considered to be more a way of life, the nature of things, simple common sense rather than one way of seeing the world as opposed to another. It is so firmly wedged into the foundations of epistemology, institutionalised in faculties, educational frameworks and curricula, that the extent to which rationalism still pervades cultural discourse, influencing our judgements and decision-making is frankly alarming.

Having a devastating impact on many disciplines in the arts and sciences, rationalism distorts the idea of knowledge, defines intelligence too narrowly and misrepresents the role of language, the emotions and the visual. Maintaining and exacerbating the divide that exists between knowing and doing, theory and practice, this perspective continues to diminish our understanding of materiality and experience.

The rationalist inquiry tends to fall either side of what Dewey refers to as the dual knowledge thesis. Each has its own agenda and discourse, but they are bound by the same philosophy. Broadly speaking, we have positivism which searches for or presumes the existence of “real truth”, inviolable and neutrally objective and relativism, a half-world of values and subjectivity, seeking essences, archetypes and meaning. By definition they are diametric opposites, but in reality, they are two sides of the same coin.

The compelling certainty offered by a positivist view has proved seductive, but an often disastrous combination of cost effectiveness, functionality and the lowest common denominator, has fostered a simplistic and damaging impulse to categorize, measure and delineate the landscape to within an inch of its life. This is why it is fragmented into different elements, the responsibility of numerous agencies, NGOs and departments, generally considered to be a matter of bio-diversity, ecology or technology, “things that grow” that might help to “ameliorate” the impact of development.

PHILOSOPHICAL DAMAGE

In the grip of this reductive approach, the landscape has been transformed from a highly complex, symbolic and powerful economic and cultural resource into a pale imitation of itself. Anonymous, monotonous, even banal, so anodyne and bereft of meaning it is often regarded as nothing more than the space left between the highways, buildings, towns and cities, something just waiting to be taken advantage of, used up or titivated.

Apart from in the care or creation of parks and gardens, landscape is too often regarded as “landscaping”, just sticking plaster or cosmetic makeovers for areas blighted by poor spatial decision-making, a green veneer to be applied in a vain attempt to soften dysfunctional parts of the city, qualitative add-ons to be made after the major economic decisions have been implemented, provided of course, the money hasn’t run out. In contrast, the Landscape Advisory Committee

included an engineer, landscape architect, planner, architect and surveyor all working together equally, to determine the best route for major design projects such as the M40 motorway between London and Birmingham in the United Kingdom. The Committee was abandoned during the Thatcher years. We may never fully quantify the damage done by that decision.

Unwittingly or by stealth, the landscape is being shunted into a technological backwater. Instead of ideas, experience, expression and form, we have the quantification or identification of detail, of components, ticked boxes and quotas. It's a dangerous habit, easy to pick up but hard to drop. Even within the sustainable development agenda or the current trend for reinventing the garden cities, fresh ideas can be all too easily sidelined as the debate slips comfortably into a deliberation of space standards, various technologies or technical fixes, rather than a rigorous understanding of the place in terms of its physical locality, its culture, context and broader social concerns. How it might look and feel in 25 years' time if we get the aspirations right now rather than forever playing catch-up and patch up. Repairing the damage caused by a lack of knowledge and foresight.

Unfortunately the landscape is equally undone by the subjectivist argument. Philosophically, inquiry from this perspective is also compromised, underpinned by what is inevitably a fruitless quest for sensing the unconscious, subconscious archetypal structures in our minds, universal deep-seated truths, or the essence of place. Take this singing rock syndrome to its logical conclusion and the sense you make of things apparently depends not on what you see, but what you feel or understand without thinking. It is a search for meaning, for something other, without physical manifestation. This renders what you see in front of you redundant, irrelevant or even worse, an obstacle between you and what is really there beneath the surface. It is an illustration of what Cosgrove identifies as "the wildest excesses of a post structuralist treatment of landscapes as little more than simulacra, disconnected from any link with the material earth and actual social practice" (Cosgrove 1984: xxvii). We might just as well walk blindfold through the landscape.

There are also widespread implications for design in theory and practice. The nuts and bolts of the design process have typically been thought to involve a visual mode of thinking and therefore seen as innate, subjective and effectively impossible to teach. This curiously censorious view is both unhelpful and deeply undemocratic for students struggling to achieve a degree of expertise in a spatial, visual medium. Teachers and students alike should be aware that understanding and working with the visual is as critically important, fundamental even, as learning to read and write. The main pedagogical thrust of *Overlooking the Visual* (Moore, 2010) is the suggestion that the sense we make of what we see is absolutely dependent on what we know, what we have learned, in other words, what we have been taught. This applies not only to design, but to *all* critical endeavour. It's education, not black magic.

Rorty explains that from the twentieth century onwards, philosophers put forward language itself as a kind of buffer between us and the world, in other words, yet another interpretative veil (Rorty 1999: 24–25). The combination of what

Goldschmidt calls a “sweeping linguistic imperialism” (Goldschmidt 1994: 159), and Stafford describes as a “hierarchical ‘linguistic turn’ in contemporary thought”, leads inexorably to the “identification of writing with intellectual potency” (Stafford 1997: 5).² Philosophers simply stopped talking about experience and started talking about language. An approach eagerly adopted by design theorists, the humanities providing rich pickings to embellish a somewhat undernourished discipline. The problem was and remains that whilst this work might appear to be highly theoretical and sophisticated and therefore more serious or worthy, it is often jargon laden, obscure and self-referential. However highbrow or difficult some of this stuff might seem, it can still be as ephemeral as yesterday’s news, subject to the vagaries of fashion and the zeitgeist. Most importantly, though, in design theory, it is the way in which it pushes materiality and experience further down the agenda. This is theory resolutely without practice. Perhaps it’s not entirely coincidental that in order to move design forward, it has recently been suggested that in light of the advances in digital technologies, architecture need no longer rely on discourses from the humanities (AHRA 2014). Is this the recognition of a problem? And if so, is it any kind of solution?

The negative impact rationalism has had on our surroundings, the everyday places where we live and work is there to be seen in the careless, casual treatment of a hugely important resource. So in a sense, yes, landscape *is* philosophy manifested. It is there to be seen. Just think about all that lost knowledge. A glance at photographs of Tewkesbury in the UK, flooded in 2008 for example, show quite clearly that the medieval monks knew precisely where to build – if you want to keep your feet dry during time of flood, head for the high ground, head for a medieval church. The Victorian railway engineers responded meticulously to the shifting patterns of geomorphology, geology and hydrology to ensure good, safe effective drainage. Now we seem to see landscape as a limitless resource. We tip rubbish on valuable marshlands, plant solar panels instead of crops and we masterplan by cutting and pasting bits of Shanghai onto Birkenhead. Power stations have been built on fault lines in Japan, homes on friable cliffs in Mexico. We’ve built towns in Thurrock, on the Thames flood plains that aren’t flood proofed and major cities in the desert where there is limited water. Our priorities are so awry that it is now acceptable to contemplate cutting down an iconic avenue of 150-year-old “problem” trees in a Leicester street rather than lift the pavements because of cost. Let’s go for the cheaper option, lose the trees! Geographical sensibility or expertise is increasingly disregarded in the face of technological brute force. The focus is on processes rather than knowledge and checklists rather than experience. This, together with an effortless capacity to digitally enhance and manipulate structure and space, enables us to play fast and loose with the landscape. It is now plausible, even desirable to ignore the dynamics of larger scale hydrological, geomorphological, climatic or cultural systems. In effect, anything is possible!

We no longer recognize the pivotal role that landscape plays in shaping identity, culture, self-confidence and worth in everyday life. Detached from the fabric of our lives, from our experience, the stories and myths, memories and

celebrations that make up a sense of place, it is taken for granted, taken as read. It can look after itself. Its potency, complexity and value are therefore all too often overlooked within the development process. Objectified, we think of it as something out there, beyond the city, green, blue or grey a place to pass through, to visit and admire provided it's pretty enough. But ultimately, it's up for grabs, there to be used or abused, manhandled or bulldozed.

A NEW LOOK AT LANDSCAPE

The groundswell of criticism against this cultural vandalism has been evident for a considerable time now. Ian Nairn's campaign for example "to convince the public – as well as the planners – of the full horror of what is happening in England today" (Nairn 1964) and Fairbrother's "New Lives, New Landscapes" (Fairbrother 1972), in which she presents "plans to halt haphazard and thoughtless modern development" (ibid.: cover page) were significant in drawing attention to the crisis of what seemed like the uncontrollable despoliation of urban and rural England. They were asking us to observe what was happening. Look and understand, make critical, informed judgements about our surroundings.

In their singular and some might say, idiosyncratic ways, critics such as Denis Cosgrove, Simon Schama, Jonathan Meades and Paul Shephard disclose the rich cultural and social significance of landscape. Cosgrove, writing in response to the "profound collapse" in the 1970s and 1980s "disciplinary coherence, scientific method and verification, objectivity and the politics of knowledge", interprets the symbolic, social and economic ideas evident in maps and paintings, formulating what he calls the "landscape idea". Primarily concerned with the expression of politics, economics and power in landscape imagery, he admits in the introductory chapter to the later edition that he never seriously grapples with the aesthetic and emotional qualities of landscape (Cosgrove 1984: xx).

Moving us closer to a more tangible relationship with landscape, Schama "excavates below our conventional sight line to recover the views of myth and memory that lie beneath the surface" (Schama 1996: 14). He explains "what *Landscape and Memory* tries to be: a way of looking; of rediscovering what we already have, but which somehow eludes our recognition and our appreciation. Instead of being another explanation of what we have lost, it is an exploration of what we might find" (ibid). His concern for the gross neglect of landscape is clear when he adds:

in offering this alternative way of looking, I am aware that more is at stake than an academic quibble. For if the entire history of landscape in the west is indeed just a mindless race towards a machine driver universe, uncomplicated by myth, metaphor and allegory, where measurement, not memory is the absolute arbiter of value, where our ingenuity is our tragedy, then we are indeed trapped in the engine of our destruction.

(Ibid.)

Jonathan Meades drags us kicking and screaming into the ordinary landscape. Face to face with the bizarre, neglected and the obscure, earthy and controversial, he documents what he calls “his obsessive preoccupation with places, mainly British places, with their ingredients, with how and why they were made, with their power over us, with their capacity to illumine the societies that inhabit them and above all, with the ideas that they foment”. He adds “everything is fantastical if you stare at it for long enough, everything is interesting. There is no such thing as a boring place” (Meades 2012: p xiii).

Shepherd suggests science has taken the lead so much in the last 100 years that our understanding of the world is shaped by the “invisible forces: quantum physics, relativity, genetics and evolution”. Calling these four contemporary frames the “dark knowledge” that cannot be seen or touched, is his explanation as to why “the world we experience and the world we know about are different”. Arguing that it is “as though the material world has taken on a metaphysical aspect” he takes us on “a kind of pilgrims progress, a journey through this invisible wilderness, through the confusions arising from the clash between that re-engineered metaphysics and the mundane world” (Shepherd 2013).

An important aspect of the work of these scholars and critics is that it is gloriously free of literary theory. It’s a perspective we can all learn from. These texts and many others, reflect the fast growing fascination with landscape from many disciplines and organizations around the world. Connecting this thoughtful, imaginative criticism with practice, not just as background reading, but to actively inform practice is how landscape and philosophy can achieve a more productive, symbiotic relationship. But this simply will not happen with the same traditional epistemology. A radical overhaul is required here, a re-conceptualising of many of the assumptions that we currently depend on, using an interpretative definition of perception. Having used this to redefine the design process in *Overlooking the Visual*, it can also be deployed to closely examine the relationship between landscape and philosophy.

A NEW ROLE FOR PHILOSOPHY

Landscape can be described in many ways, for example, its ecological diversity, botanical or cultural significance, its history and traditions, through its evolution, spatial structure, economic value as well as the countless narratives describing the way it impacts on us and the aspirations we have for its future. This is the idea of landscape, that is to say the relationship we, as communities, individuals and nations have with the landscape in response to its materiality. It is not just an abstract, academic concept. It is not simply about technical details. It is the whole package. This holistic view is in stark contrast to the habit we have fallen into of compulsively evaluating its constituent parts.

To understand materiality in this way changes everything. The relationship we have with a place, inevitably influenced by knowledge, mood and context, locates us, not as cool observers of a world “out there”, but as an indispensable

part of that world. We are not just in close relationship with the landscape, but part of it. It is as impossible to separate or detach ourselves from it as the air we breathe. This rids us irrevocably of the object/subject dichotomy. We no longer need to reconcile the irreconcilable.

From this perspective, landscape is not only concerned with the countryside or matters of heritage, it is not just a physical entity. It is our values and memories, the experience we have of place, our culture and identity. This is altogether a more powerful, evocative idea. Landscape, what we see and experience around us, from the towns and cities to the most remote corners the world, reflects our principles and ambitions and the expression of these aspirations in form, shape the quality of this experience. This compelling new idea of landscape is what is opening up debate, encouraging different ways to articulate the social, cultural and physical context of our lives.

In the context of research methodologies in design, “Shifting inquiry away from the unequivocal towards the ambiguous” (Moore 2013b) examines how redefining perception challenges the nature and parameters of much philosophical inquiry by offering what Putnam calls “a middle way between reactionary metaphysics and irresponsible relativism” (Putnam 1999: 5). This means that essentially there is no need to choose one or the other, releasing us from endless debate between positions that are natural or cultural, scientific or artistic, theoretical from practical, value laden from quantitative. Theory and philosophy need not necessarily be metaphysical by nature. There are alternatives. Theory does not have to depend on French or German philosophy, the philosophy of language, notions of identity, difference, self, subject, truth or reason or most crucially, the impossibility of anything. Nor does it have to be packed with complex jargon or abstract language, which can often be exclusive and intimidating.

There has long been a tendency to believe that philosophy involves “a special faculty called reason”, or has a “preeminent place . . . within culture as a whole” (Rorty 1999: xxi). We have hoisted it on to a pedestal, locked it securely in an ivory tower and only a privileged few hold a key. But how does this particular discipline differ from any other? What makes it more lofty, more intellectually adroit? From a pragmatic point of view, there is no reason to suggest that any line of inquiry is any more or less valid or valuable than another.

On this basis, philosophy is just another kind of discourse and it can be put to practical use, playing a pivotal part in future-planning and decision making. Rorty, mapping out a crucial role for philosophy, explains how Hobbes, Locke, Marx and Dewey, for example “formulated their taxonomies of social phenomena and designed the conceptual tools they used to criticise existing institutions, by reference to a story about what has happened and what we might reasonably hope could happen in the future”. This is a considerable shift from what he refers to as the “politically sterile” tradition of taking the philosophy of language as a starting point for philosophical inquiry, which he suggests, represents “a loss of hope – or more specifically of an inability to construct a plausible narrative of progress” (ibid.: 232).

Here, then, the role of philosophical investigation is to throw more light on the problems of the past, to give a clue as to how to solve the problems of the future, in order Rorty suggests, to “speed up the pace of social change”. With the benefit of this philosophical hindsight, we can usefully reveal past mistakes and avoid their repetition by “having our attention called to the harm we have been doing without noticing that we are doing it” (ibid.: 237).

PRAGMATISM IN PRACTICE

“Design: Philosophy and Theory into Practice” (Moore 2013a) explores the implications of breaking down traditional conceptual and institutional silos, examines how we can operate and conceptualize ideas without relying on the notion of a sensory interface and looks at the possible outcomes for theory and practice when we abandon these resistant, arcane, philosophical constructs. Talking about landscape in this holistic way, about the idea of landscape, is establishing it at the forefront of development and as the context within which the development processes take place.

Giving the opportunity for a vastly expanded field of practice, encompassing policy, advocacy and planning, it is clear that by adopting a genuinely holistic vision of the landscape, we can avoid the splintering of the environment into components vying for control. Helping to unite, rather than divide, cutting across disciplines and hierarchies, the argument is proving very persuasive. Of course, it’s never quite that simple, that straightforward. Concepts carefully knitted together, can be painstakingly even innocently unpicked by those not familiar with the ideas or ambition of the work. If we want to move beyond existing traditions, we need to change views, change minds, change the way we talk about the world, expanding our ideas, developing a better descriptive vocabulary to help us and others see things from a different perspective. The role of language, advocacy, patience and determination in all of this is as demanding as it is vital. It requires strong leadership and support.

This new definition of landscape, central to the European Landscape Convention, underpins a number of projects that are generating considerable interest globally, including the proposal for the International Landscape Convention (ILC) from the International Federation of Landscape Architect’s (IFLA), as well as HS2LV (see below) and Big Skies Big Thinking (BSBT) in Thurrock, both in the United Kingdom.

The ILC proposal, taking this new approach into the policy arena is influencing international organizations at the highest level, directing United Nations agencies, NGOs and other civic institutions to the wider value of ordinary as well as outstanding landscape. Politicians and key stakeholders are beginning to realize the potential of the landscape to mediate between administrative, technical, social and cultural forces, recognizing that there is a more productive and effective way to deal with development and change. It is also clear that the relationship between a population and its landscape is as powerful in the everyday, as it is with extraordinary monumental landscapes such as Stonehenge, or world heritage sites in beautiful cities like Florence. It is as powerful in Birmingham, Thurrock or Salford,

Evidence of this can be seen in initiatives such as HS2LV, a proposal to transform the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail link, the UK's largest infrastructure project for generations, from a linear engineering scheme into an iconic landscape vision that would be a catalyst for wider social and economic transformation. Representing a unique opportunity to create an enduring legacy by placing the landscape at the core of the project, it has been described by Andrew Grant of Grant Associates as "continuing the spirit of all Britain's great landscape evolutions, seizing an opportunity to rediscover and celebrate the connection between communities and the countryside" (see Figures 12.1–7).

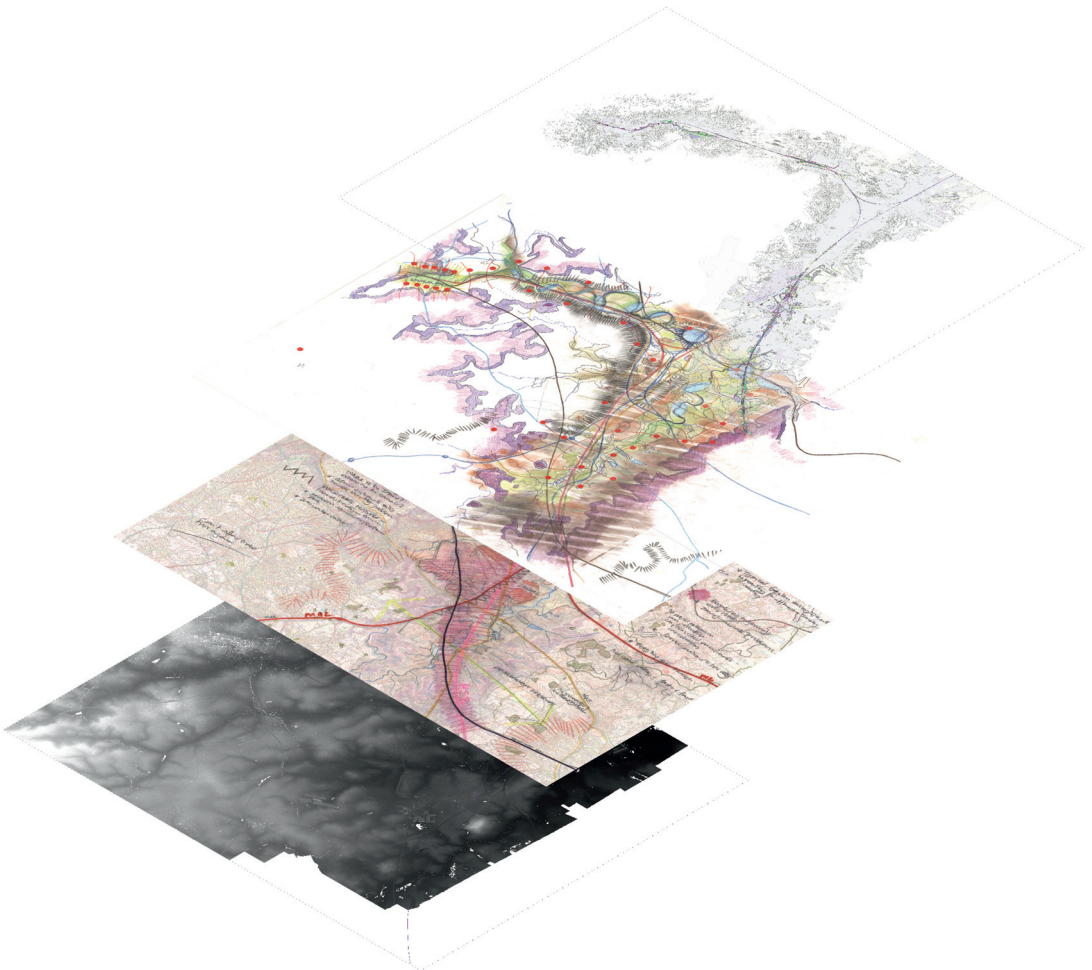
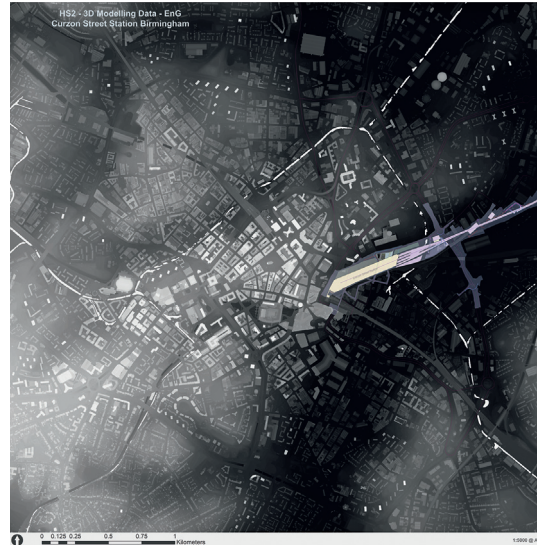
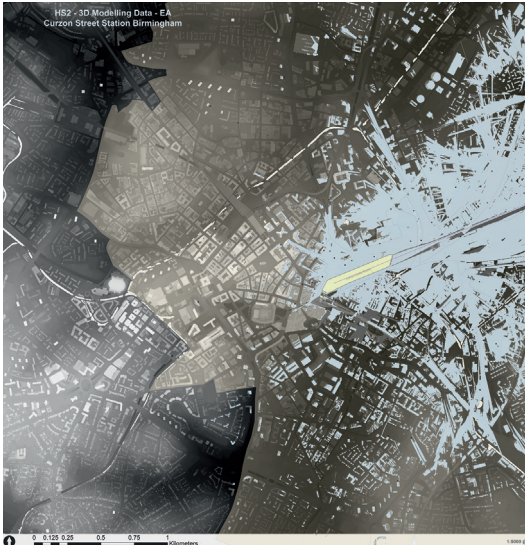


Figure 12.2

Isometric layers of data.

Moore & Cureton, isometric stack of data layers. Hand-coloured geo-referenced and ortho-rectified drawings, layout paper, © Kathryn Moore, 1M Res LiDAR Data © Environment Agency & HS2 GIS data sets November 2013 issue (inc. 2014 Rev), HS2 Ltd & Ministry of Transport.



Figures 12.3–4

Mapping Curzon Street station, environmental assessment and engineering works, Birmingham. Mapping station heights and the zone of theoretical visibility for future integration of the HSLV.

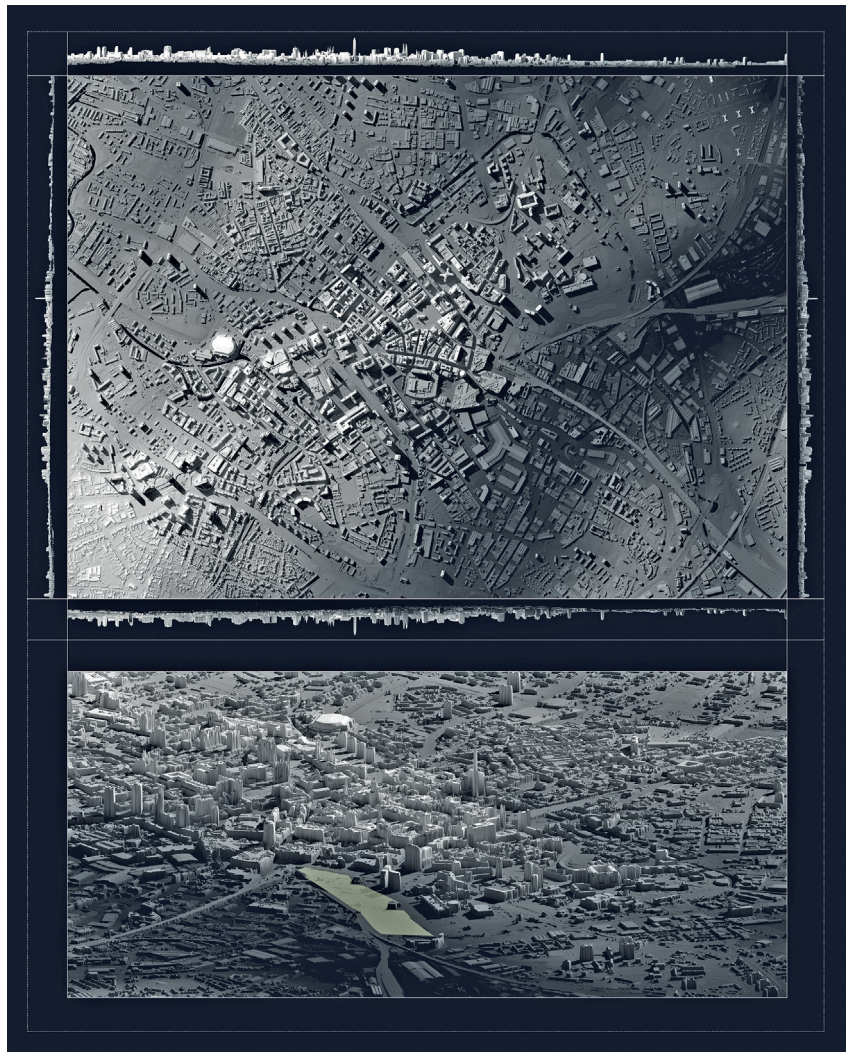
1M Res LiDAR data Copyright © Environment Agency & HS2 GIS data sets November 2013 issue (inc. 2014 Rev), HS2 Ltd & Ministry of Transport.

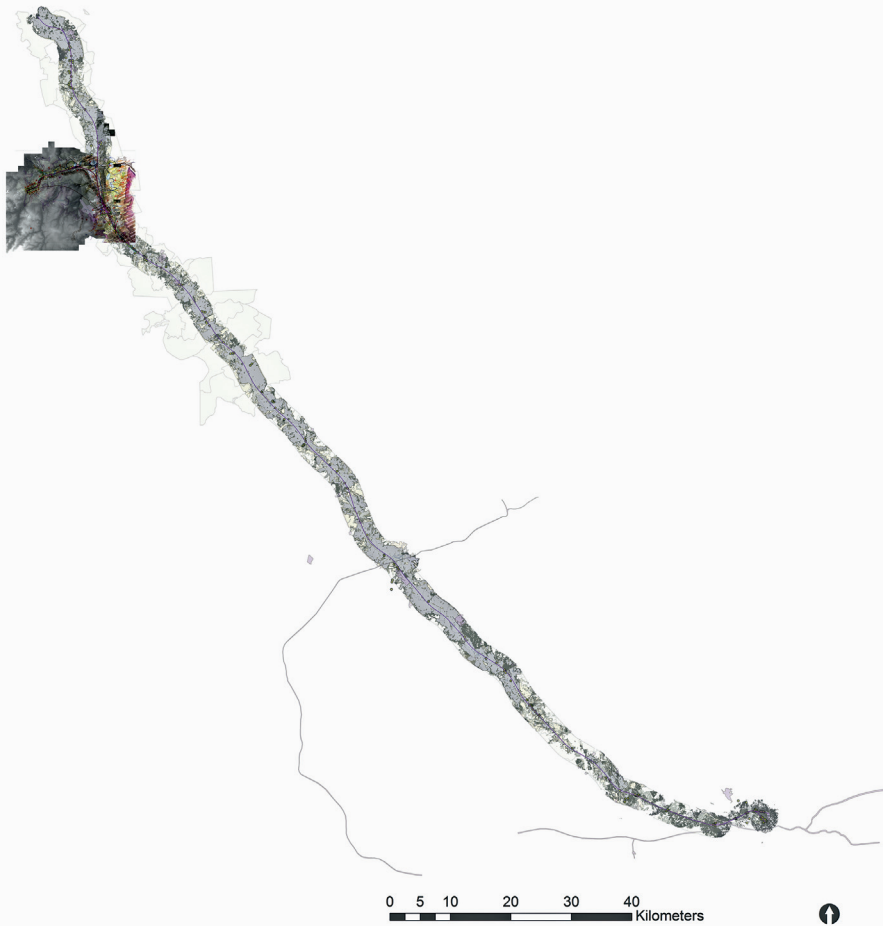
Working with the landscape as the context within which development takes place is an effective way to increase environmental quality. Conserving and highlighting the richness of Thurrock's landscape, improving degraded and derelict land and avoiding suburban spread, it will provide a mix of affordable social housing, accommodation for large families and professionals, a graduated range of densities and visual, physical connections with the water to re-establish a symbiotic relationship between local communities, the river and the landscape.

A pilot for the future, the study aims to put the city of Birmingham and beyond at the forefront of sustainable spatial development, conservation and urban regeneration, cementing its reputation as a leading global destination for business, tourism and education. It is a real opportunity to create an enduring legacy for the region and the UK as a whole. It could mean the re-imagining of an immense valley system, largely unloved and unnoticed, as the productive and sustainable heart of the region. By adopting an inclusive approach to the overall planning of HS2, it is possible to engage communities in the project, promoting social cohesion and economic development incorporating bio-diversity, culture, ecology, spatial quality and identity. Since large parts of the area are blighted by 20th century infrastructure, it is hugely important to drive home the message that HS2 will not necessarily be another blot on the landscape – if we learn some hard lessons from history, after all we do have over 200 years of industrial despoliation to put right, HS2LV could re-establish a symbiotic relationship between the city and its landscape, bringing radical change to the identity of the area.



Figures 12.5-6
Central Birmingham
super sections, plan and
perspective. This proposal
provides the impetus to
ask how it might be
possible to integrate the
stations so much into the
city regions' fabric that
they become almost
invisible, major anchors
for major investment, led
by the public realm
strategy. Shaping the
quality of the experience
people have of the city
and region, using the
stations in a positive,
progressive way to
ensure they contribute
significantly to the
quality of life.
Curzon Street station
building footprint, 1M
Res LiDAR data Copyright
© Environment Agency





Already influencing policy locally, this work has the potential to impact significantly on the planning process. Thurrock Garden City uses a similarly integrated approach to build confidence and inspire an aspirational way of working to achieve radical change in a borough that has until recently been regarded as an impoverished dumping ground for London (Figure 12.8). A measure of its success is that it is being used to create an overarching landscape vision to guide the process of development and change in Thurrock, to ensure that the area will no longer be regarded as a repository for landfill and the debris of the capital city, but as a borough with its own identity, taking pride in its relationship to the river Thames, its growing European and international reputation for arts, music, wildlife and biodiversity. Investing in its educational and cultural capital, encouraging high value productive agriculture, green industries, innovative transport infrastructure and passive housing.

The HS2LV and Thurrock proposals are helping to create a significant, contemporary, physical and cultural landscape frameworks, responsive to scale and context, respectful of tradition yet full of ideas for the future. It is the visual, spatial

Figure 12.7
HS2 full route, London to Birmingham.
HS2LV composite, 1M Res LiDAR data Copyright © Environment Agency & HS2 GIS data sets November 2013 issue (inc. 2014 Rev), HS2 Ltd & Ministry of Transport.

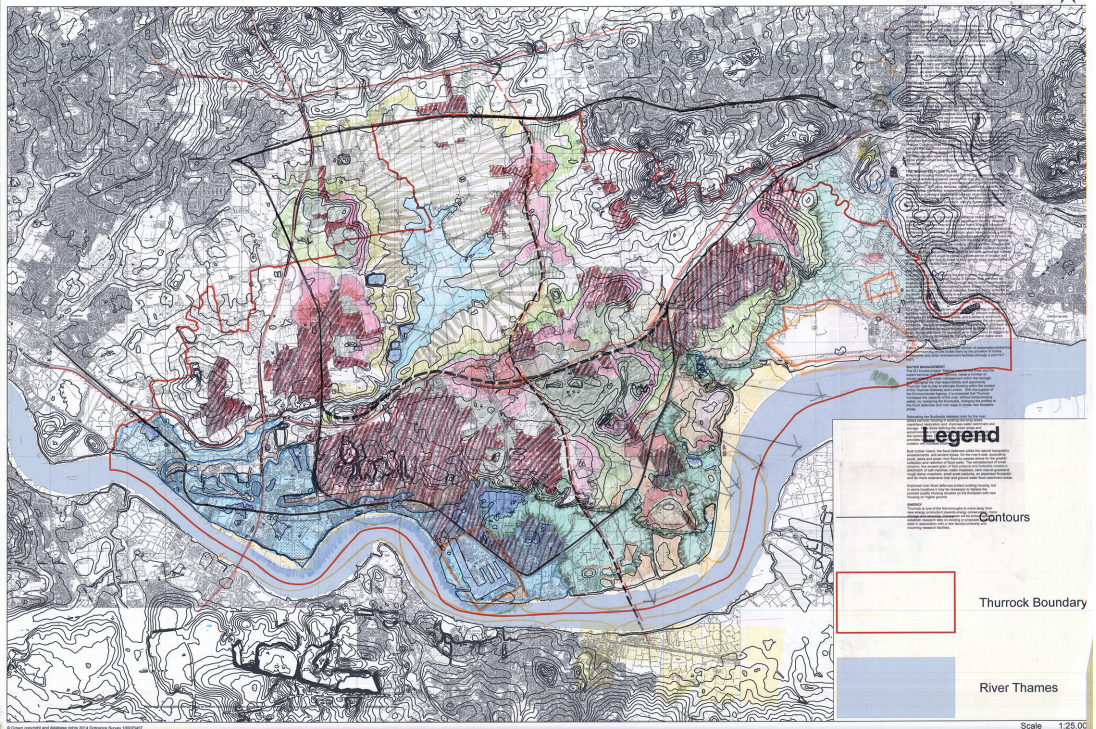


Figure 12.8
Big skies, big thinking: a new water, land, development and transport strategy for Thurrock 2015–2040. Proposing a new kind of urban living, this draft proposal is prompting debate about what the borough should look like in future, based on a holistic, integrated approach, connecting housing, transport, planning and landscape. It is firmly believed that the transformational agenda proposed will improve the quality of life, level of skills and economic prospects throughout the borough. It underpins a potential Thurrock Garden City proposal.
 Hand-coloured drawing
 Copyright © Kathryn Moore.

nature of these ideas that makes this approach so compelling. These will be significant twenty-first-century transformations. Operating seamlessly between disciplines, linking theory and practice, ideas and form, art and design, evaluating the social, aesthetic and ecological nature of both physical and imagined environments brings fresh insights and impetus to shape the future of our environment.

CONCLUSIONS

An interdisciplinary and more expansive definition of both design and landscape needs to inform professional and educational documents to help meet the challenges of a rapidly changing practice, a vision of what landscape architecture might yet become, rather than a snapshot of what it is now. Reflecting this cultural, even generational shift, landscape architects increasingly require a geographic sensibility, a strong sense of social and ethical responsibility as well as knowledge of the spatial implications of governance, finance and transport, health and education.

Looking at the spatial implications of philosophy and the philosophical implications of space and collapsing intransigent dichotomies, presents tremendous academic and practical potential. If we achieve a more supportive relationship between landscape and philosophy, it will go a long way towards providing much needed political and intellectual leadership. For decades the emphasis has been on

towns and cities, on built form, on the processes of exchange. The value of buildings. The objects of the city. As a consequence we have virtually ignored the land. Now a shift in mind-set is warranted – move the focus away from the outline of the buildings to the structure of the spaces, adding value to our relationship with the countryside, the wilderness as well as the squares and parks needed to make great towns and cities. As teachers and practitioners of landscape architecture, we need to capture the moment and gather the momentum. This is an important time for landscape and philosophy. Time for a new philosophy of landscape.

NOTES

- 1 Since its emergence as an intellectual movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century, pragmatism's main thrust has been to question and debunk the metaphysical basis of disciplines. Cutting across the "transcendental empiricist distinction by questioning the common presupposition that there is an invidious distinction to be drawn between kinds of truths" (Rorty 1982: xvi), pragmatism sets itself against the traditions of analytical philosophy, including those of language, evolutionary psychology, ecopsychology and phenomenology, which currently underpin much of design discourse. The aim of pragmatism, far from finding universal truths, Rorty explains, is: to undermine the reader's confidence in "the mind" as something about which one should have a "philosophical view", in "knowledge" as something about which there ought to be a "theory" and which has "foundations" and in "philosophy" as it has been conceived since Kant (Rorty 1979: 7).
- 2 The phrase "linguistic turn" can be attributed to Richard Rorty: Rorty, R. (1966, 1992) *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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