

DESIGN'S DIASPORA: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS  
OCTOBER 28-30, 2005

**Featured Speakers, titles of their talks, abstracts, and bios.**

E M I L I O A M B A S Z

**TITLE:** "Architecture And Nature: Towards A Pact Of Reconciliation"

**ABSTRACT:** Any architectural project not attempting to propose new, or better, modes of existence is unethical. This task may stagger the imagination and paralyze hope, but we cannot subtract ourselves from its pursuit.

An emerging man-made garden is overtaking the one we were originally given. I see the task of the architect to be that of reconciling our constantly evolving man-made Nature with the organic one we have been given.

We must design a "pact of reconciliation" whereby we have both, "the Building and the Garden," i.e. one hundred percent of each one, organically integrated. In such concept the building "gives back," in the form of communally accessible greenery, as much as possible of the land it covers.

In all my projects I have sought to return to the community, in the form of accessible gardens, as much, if not all, the land my building's footprint covers. A building of this nature would be accessible to and used by the members of the community at large. The architectural formula of putting the "green over the gray," or the "soft over the hard," shows a possible way to create new urban settlements.

Buildings like Fukuoka, Phoenix, EUR, Shin-Sanda, demonstrate that one can have the "green and the gray" giving back to the community one hundred percent of the ground that the building's footprint covers in the form of gardens accessible from the ground floor to everyone. These buildings present strong evidence that the prevailing notion that "the cities are for the buildings and the outskirts are for the parks;" is mistaken and narrow-minded. These projects demonstrate that it is possible to have a building and the garden, one hundred percent of the building and one hundred percent of the greenery the building's users and its neighbors long for.

**BIO:** Emilio Ambasz is principal of the Green Over Grey Studio in New York City. He is an architect, curator, and industrial designer world renowned for projects that fuse architecture and landscape—high rise buildings enveloped in verdant screens of trees, plants, and houses that virtually disappear beneath mounds of earth. A number of books have been written about his contribution including Architettura Naturale: Emilio Ambasz progetti e oggetti, Emilio Ambasz Inventions: The reality of the Ideal, and Analyzing Ambasz (Michael Sorkin, ed.). Emilio's work defies easy categorization and analysis. In his writings he serves notice of his own uncomfortable fit with conventional critical categories.

A N N C H A M B E R L A I N

**TITLE:** "Turn Style"

**ABSTRACT:** I begin with the idea of people in motion: people working, everyday guys, business people, people in planes, the homeless sleeping and scavenging in public space, the dispossessed. Everyone is performing unconsciously in public space.

Here also is where we find functional cultural objects in the interstices: escalators, elevators, people movers – the places where all kinds of peoples meet. The most interesting to me is the revolving door. It gives rhythm to its space, between the public and the private, inside and outside, between privacy and visibility. It can create a place of encounter and even a dance between strangers.

The revolving door can function as a metaphor for the role of art and artists in public spaces. Public art mediates transactions with and between strangers. It situates exchanges and interchanges that are other than commercial. It exposes the extreme malleability of space.

The turnstile can also be both disruptive and catalytic in ways that artists might strive for. Our interventions should begin a process of questioning officially sanctioned definitions of place and the veneer of consensus that protects official viewpoints. Artists should be able to ask questions about what is missing and what is needed and to imagine where we haven't been, and our projects should provoke a sense of wonder, new ideas of scale, curiosity and mystery.

**BIO:** Ann Chamberlain is Professor of Art at San Francisco Art Institute. She is a widely acclaimed and revered leader in the San Francisco artists community. Ann is interested in the unsung heroic genius of everyday life, especially in the complex know-how embedded in everyday practices, and the beauty of things people know without necessarily understanding that they know. Her recent permanent installations include the California Supreme Court, the new San Francisco Public Library (in collaboration with Ann Hamilton), Alameda County Council Chambers, Headland's Center for the Arts, the Mt. Zion Cancer Center.

M A R G A R I T A H I L L

**TITLE:** "When experiences meld in the rainforest: Inspirations rising from cultural and bio-diversity"

**ABSTRACT:** Report from the Costa Rican rainforest community of Monteverde. Monteverde was first settled by Quakers from Alabama in the aftermath of WWII searching for a place that would be more supportive of their pacifist beliefs. They intermarried with Costa Ricans and many more came to settle in the region. Over the years there have been changes (environmental and cultural) from virgin cloud forest to farming community to eco-tourism mecca. It is one possible laboratory case of the population and design dynamics we should be addressing in the symposium.

**BIO:** Margarita Hill is Professor and Chair of Landscape Architecture at California Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo. Her applied research programs

support grassroots, sustainable development practices that strengthen the ability of stakeholders to mobilize their resources towards local problem solving efforts focused on community design and revitalization. She is also interested in multi-cultural aspects of design and planning and interdisciplinary collaborations. Her current project is for the Best Practices for Sustainable Development Program of the United Nations

D O U G H O L L I S

**TITLE:** "Conversations with Natural and Cultural Phenomena" (in collaboration with Anna Valentina Murch)

**ABSTRACT:** Hollis and Murch will describe the dynamics of creating and installing "Waterscape" a permanent water feature in the Civic Center Plaza in San Jose, California. San Jose is the urban heart of Silicon Valley and one of the most intense global crossroads today. The terrain of public art in San Jose has been fraught with competing claims of different and sometimes opposing ways to shape and celebrate public space. Hollis and Murch describe how they navigated this terrain and how their previous projects led to the decisions they made here.

**BIO:** Doug Hollis grew up in Michigan and was educated at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. After college, he traveled extensively and lived with Native American families in the mid-West and Oklahoma. His art is strongly influenced by Native American culture. In the early '70's, Doug began working with natural phenomena and searching for new ways to talk about landscape and the forces which are constantly affecting it. This search ultimately led him to his current work with wind- and water-activated sound structures, and to the specific, environmental dynamics of sites. He has taught at Harvard University, Berkeley, UC San Diego, and the University of Virginia. Recent permanent installations include WIND ENSEMBLE, Port of Los Angeles, LA, CA; STARScape, New Federal Office Building, Oklahoma City, OK; MOUNTAIN MIRAGE, New Denver Airport, Denver, CO; Memorial Union North Courtyard University of California, Davis, CA (in Collaboration with Hargreaves Associates LA and artist, Anna Valentina Murch).

W A L T E R H O O D

**TITLE:** "Inserting Difference"

**ABSTRACT:** This paper will examine how heterogeneous environmental qualities, social patterns and practices, and a shifting demographic can influence the way in which we shape and maintain the built landscape. More importantly, how can standard landscape types be altered and transformed to respond to place and circumstance while maintaining their structural integrity within the city morphology.

**BIO:** Walter Hood is Professor and former chair of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the University of California at Berkeley. Walter's research interests include the critical examination and development of specific urban landscape typologies for the American city. Together they reflect and reinforce cultural, environmental, and physical complexities of the city and neighborhood landscape. Through his teaching, writing, and practice Hood advocates

the art of "Improvisation" as a design process for making urban landscapes and architecture. His current project is the landscape for the new De Young museum in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.

L E O N J O H N S O N

**TITLE:** "Ecotone/Interzone"

**ABSTRACT:** I spent the first twenty years of my life in Cape Town, South Africa: a suspended state/State, a compound, defined by a potent fume of manic, distracted calm coupled with the convulsive efforts necessary for the conjuring and maintenance of an unbearable and impossible center. This center waited, indeed yearned, for the evacuation to a well-stocked and fortified periphery. Beyond this compound, populated by the blinkered beneficiaries of apartheid, was the sonic rumble of the machines of brutality and global capital. The last twenty years have been spent negotiating the residual matrix of associated memories, myths and narratives. The location of these investigative wanderings has suggested a volatile, vivid space between edges, between borders and between memories: [e.g. an ECOTONE: a fluid liminal space between city and wilderness, the tide pools found between ocean and shore and quite possibly liberatory performative spaces between divergent cultures.] In fact the space between sovereignties, an interzone, "where one begins to glimpse a subtle, elusive set of exchanges, a network of trades and trade-offs, a jostling of competing representations, a negotiation between joint stock companies" between new communities.

**TITLE:** "Empire Postcards, A Performance Piece For 'Design's Diaspora'"

**DESCRIPTION:** Cecil John Rhodes, 1853-1902, Victorian empire builder, founder of De Beers diamond conglomerate and early architect of apartheid, intended to build a railroad from Cape Town to Cairo. This seamless corridor would serve to facilitate the plunder of the continent and provide a magisterial, time-based theatre from which would afford Rhodes a glorious sweep of the magnitude of conquest. The project was never fully realized, but the concept haunted me as a child and obsesses me still. I have come to understand this project, in essence, to function as the proscenium of the empire theatre, a fluid performative arena for the languages and images of the colonial pageant/masquerade to unfold. In my work this empire theatre aspires to synchronize with a suspended time-zone above memory. In this performance, through a post-colonial interzone, I "take the train" from Cape Town to Cairo.

**BIO:** Leon Johnson teaches art at the University of Oregon where he has received an Ersted Award for Distinguished Teaching. He creates intermedia communications performances and interactive spectacles in traditional and non-traditional sites. He works in diverse media including installation, performance, video, photography, digital and traditional print systems, book arts, painting and discrete objects. Recent performances have included "Empire Postcards: My Colonial Father[s]" in England and Toronto, a UK tour of "Faust/Faustus: A Duet For Devils" and "reMEMBERING WILDE" an intermedia performance featuring an original score by Jeffrey Stolet. His short film, FAUST/FAUSTUS IN DEPTFORD was selected for the KunstFilmBienale in Cologne, Germany, in 2003.

T O M L E A D E R

**TITLE:** "Screening"

**ABSTRACT:** Partly aesthetic impulse and partly analytic tool, "screening" has emerged as an operational device in our practice. Some instances include continuous sectioning through Roman history, New York landfills, and the Berkeley shoreline, use of scaffolds to create landscape in Sorrento and Fresno, inventories of French exhibit rubbish, use of screen doors to sift through western nostalgia, and an air filter in Los Angeles. Screening refers to the creation of a semi-transparent matrix that can register the drifts of sound, smell, water vapor, city growth and decay, landscape dynamics, garbage strata, and airborne particulates.

**BIO:** Tom Leader is the principal of Tom Leader Studio, a collaborative and experimental design office based in Berkeley, California. Tom's work is modern and rigorous with roots based in the methodology of Peter Walker & Associates, where Tom was formerly a partner. Tom designs on a variety of scales and his recent projects span the globe, including the Shanghai University Hub which is currently being featured at Groundswell, and Break Out at Cornerstone Festival of Gardens.

L U C Y L I P P A R D

**TITLE:** "Red Roadsides"

**ABSTRACT:** Within the United States, legally sovereign Indian nations fill the role of the "foreign." When the tourists arrive at the roots, at the more or less original context, the uprooted nation itself becomes a museum, the detrimental effects of tourism on internal community engender competition and fragmentation of place, an "empty meeting ground." But must cultural tourism be a downer? Are tourists really only interested in the sensational, the spectacular, and the superficial? The question of what constitutes cultural authenticity and regional substance and how to profit from it has been repeated on both sides of the touristic and institutional fence: those who look and those who are looked at are equally concerned.

**BIO:** Lucy Lippard is a critic who has always been on the vanguard of feminist, conceptual, and multi-cultural art criticism. She analyzes the ways artists respond to environmental, cultural, and political issues, and to tourism. She is the author of over twenty books on contemporary art and culture including On the Beaten Track, Lure of the Local, Overlay, Partial Recall, and the Pink Glass Swan. She steers wide of the "gotcha" school of criticism and its thinly veiled desire to shape art markets. As a result she is one of the few writers on contemporary art who is widely respected by the artists she writes about.

A N N A V A L E N T I N A M U R C H

**TITLE:** "Conversations with Natural and Cultural Phenomena" (in collaboration with Doug Hollis)

**ABSTRACT:** Murch and Hollis will describe the dynamics of creating and installing "Waterscape" a permanent water feature in the Civic Center Plaza in San Jose, California. San Jose is the urban heart of Silicon Valley and one of the most intense global crossroads today. The terrain of public art in San Jose has been fraught with competing claims of different and sometimes opposing ways to shape and celebrate public space. Hollis and Murch describe how they navigated this terrain and how their previous projects led to the decisions they made here.

**BIO:** Anna Valentina Murch is an artist who works primarily with the medium of light and whose work focuses on creating places that lead the viewer on a sensory and psychological journey that measures time and provokes memory. She received her MA in Environmental Media, Sculpture from the Royal College of Art and a Graduate Diploma from the Architectural Association in London, England. In the late 1970's, she developed many works in galleries and museums. Since 1980, her work has been involved with designing and building large public art projects that use ambient elements such as light, water, sound, and plant material to create sequences of spaces that change with the seasons and heighten awareness of the natural cycles of time. Large-scale public works have allowed her to take her personal creative investigations to another level by widening the focus to explore the definition of place and venues for community interaction. Her recent permanent installations include: St. Louis Metro System, North Courtyard at the University of California Davis, the Rockridge Public Library, and the Muni Metro Extension Shelters and windscreens located along the South Embarcadero and King Street, Francisco.

Anna has taught at Harvard, Berkeley, San Francisco Art Institute, and she is currently Professor and recent past Chair of Art at Mills College.

R O B T H A Y E R JR.

**TITLE:** "The World Shrinks, the World Expands: Information, Energy, and Globalization"

**ABSTRACT:** I will address the continued "shrinking" of the world on the one hand due to expanding information technology, which is less susceptible to entropic erosion because information is not matter or energy, basically, contrasted with what, on the other hand, I firmly believe will be a "re-expansion" of the world when the full effects of the post-oil era begin to be felt, and physical tourism becomes much more expensive due to a lack of cheap transportation fuels. This will have some fairly peculiar effects, as transport of both physical goods and humans will be constrained, while information is free to whiz around the world. It is particularly strange, because money is really electronic information, and the energy (relatively) needed to send info around the world is a drop in the bucket compared with shipping and transit. We will have a relocalized physical world and a globalized informational world. Cargill may own the bottled water plant in your watershed, and Archer Daniels Midland may own your local organic truck farm. Weird!

**BIO:** Rob Thayer Jr. is Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Davis. Rob founded the program in

Landscape Architecture at Davis which is one of only two ASLA accredited BSLA program in the state of California. Rob is a popular and charismatic teacher, an indefatigable proponent of bio-regionalism in design, and a prolific writer. His award-winning Gray World, Green Heart, has become a handbook for the green and sustainable design movement.

M I C H A E L S O R K I N

**TITLE:** "Formulary for a Sustainable Urbanism"

**ABSTRACT:** Given the rapid evisceration of the idea of locality by the onslaught of multi-national culture, new strategies must emerge for authenticating the individuality of place. A green and self-sufficient city will be closely attuned to the particulars of its bio-climate, culture, and resource base. . . . Rejecting the paradigm of the continuous sealed environment of the multi-national corridor and of the endless city of sprawl, this city will engage both the politics and the forms of its own particularity."

**BIO:** Michael Sorokin is the principal of the Michael Sorokin Studio in New York City and Director of the Graduate Urban Design Program at City College of New York. His influential writings include Exquisite Corpse, Variations on a Theme Park, Giving Ground (edited with Joan Copjec), and Wiggle, Some Assembly Required. Michael's designs are informed by a strong sense of history, especially the future, and an understanding that every building, no matter how temporary, outlives the purpose for which it was built.

L I L Y Y E H

**TITLE:** "A Sense of Place"

**ABSTRACT:** The Rwanda healing Project expands the boundaries of art as a vehicle for social change under crisis conditions. One hundred female headed households and several hundred children are involved in transforming their displaced survivors village and creating a Genocide Memorial Park. Both youths and adults participate in village construction, mural painting and the creation of other public art. The skills they acquire are applied in building other parts of the village, tending and raising animal stock, and planting fruit bearing trees.

**BIO:** Lily Yeh is an artist and humanist based in Philadelphia. In the 1980s Lily began making art with people in poor communities. She created the "Village of Arts and Humanities" transforming several blocks of the most abject area of North Philadelphia into a productive, livable and beautiful place. The Village continues as a non profit with the mission to build community through innovative art, education, and economic development. Her other recent projects include the creation of civic space in the Nairobi landfill, in Ghana, and the Rwanda Healing Project, as well as interventions in remote villages in Ecuador, China, Ivory Coast, and the republic of Georgia.

V I C T O R M A R I O Z A B A L L A

**TITLE:** "Toltecayolotl"

**ABSTRACT:** The concept of "Toltecayolotl" from which the Toltec people also derive their name informs my work. In brief, it is a philosophical idea that art, science, citizenship, and humor are, or should be, interconnected, and that we must strive to forge unbreakable bonds between them in what we do.

I have recently completed a number of art works that are functional and aesthetic components of transportation nodes: elevator doors in public buildings, the 16<sup>th</sup> and Mission BART station in San Francisco, the gates to public gardens and to the San Jose Mexican Cultural Center. In several of these I have translated the methods and approach of a fragile and intimate, small-scale, Mexican folk-art form, "papel picado" (cut tissue paper), to large-scale mild steel constructions. The subversive move of what was marginal to places of honor in the community, the transformation of the fragile into something as strong as steel, and the dependence of these new symbolic forms on a humble folk tradition are all illustrative of "Toltecayolotl," and of the value of the concept to cultural contexts quite distant from its place of origin.

**BIO:** Victor Zaballa is an Aztec originally trained in aeronautical engineering in Mexico City. He has lived and worked in San Francisco for a number of years where he is a popular and respected member of the artist community. He works in every medium including cut paper, painting, tile, steel, wood, and wire sculpture, puppet theater, and music composition, performance and musical instrument invention and construction. His performing group "Obsidian Songs," has been heard in numerous venues throughout California.

G. P A S C A L Z A C H A R Y

**TITLE:** "The World is at Home: Migration, Identity and the Reconstruction of Global Diasporas"

**ABSTRACT:** This paper summarizes and critically examines recent migration patterns, thinking about the future of migration and the effect of unprecedented human mobility and inter-connectedness on individual and group identity around the world, and especially in the United States. Drawing on recent journalism and scholarship as well as the author's own substantial field work, the paper concludes with some reflections on the relationship between "private" spaces, constructed by sub-national groups, and "public" places available to the entire polity. Arguing that new forms of individual and group identities arising from higher levels of migration are likely to endure for many years, because they arise from fundamental economic and technological changes, the author makes the case for embracing hybridized approaches to managing the major institutions of civil society and suggests an alternative framework to thinking about design in a multicultural, globalizing age.

**BIO:** G. Pascal Zachary is a journalist and writer. He is currently a senior writer with Business 2.0 (a monthly magazine published by Time Inc.). He contributes to many publications, including most recently The New Republic, The World Policy Journal, Spectrum, The New York Times and The San Francisco Chronicle. For 13 years he was senior writer at

the Wall Street Journal. He specializes in writing about international affairs, especially involving Africa and the developing world, immigration, and technology and business. He was the first Africa director for Journalists for Human Rights. In Africa, he also consulted for Amnesty International (Nigeria), the West Africa Network for Peace (Ghana) and a Merck-Gates AIDS treatment initiative (Botswana).

Gregg is currently a journalism fellow with the German Marshall Fund and a lecturer at Stanford. He has held research and teaching fellowships at Michigan, Colombia, Berkeley, and Johns Hopkins. Zachary is the author of several books including The Diversity Advantage: Multicultural Identity in the New World Economy.