

FRONTIERS IN URBAN LANDSCAPE RESEARCH

Mellon Initiative in Urban Landscape Studies
Garden and Landscape Studies
Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection
Graduate Workshop
November 20, 2015

Schedule

- 9:00 – 9:15am Registration and Coffee in **The Oak Room, Fellowship House**
- 9:15 – 9:30am *Introductory Remarks by **John Beardsley**, Director of Garden and Landscape Studies & **Jeanne Haffner**, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Urban Landscape Studies*
- 9:30 – 10:20am **Molly Briggs, “Beyond the Path: Assessing the Transporting Capacity of Urban Landscapes with Dynamic Isovist Imaging”** (p. 2)
- 10:20 – 11:10am **Margot Lystra, “Drawing the Hybrid Freeway: Urban Design and Non/Human Relationship”** (p. 3)
- 11:10 – 11:30am Coffee
- 11:30 – 12:20pm **Abbey Stockstill, “The Mountains, the Mosque and the Red City: Locality in 12th-century Marrakech”** (p. 3-4)
- 12:20 – 2:00pm Lunch in the **Lower Level Refectory**
- 2:00 – 2:50pm **Dwight Carey, “Planned Authority: The Urban History of French Imperialism in a Senegal River Town, 1659-1810”** (p. 4-5)
- 2:50 – 3:40pm **Eyun Jennifer Kim, “History, Narrative, and Recovered Nature in the Cheonggyecheon Restoration”** (p. 5)
- 3:40 – 4:00 Coffee
- 4:00 – 4:50 **Stephanie Strauss, “Betwixt and Between the Great Yax Ha’: Maya Kingly Sight Across the Usumacinta River”** (p. 6)
- 4:50 – 5:30 Discussion
- 5:30 – 6:00 Reception

Beyond the Path: Assessing the Transporting Capacity of Urban Landscapes with Dynamic Isovist Imaging

Molly Briggs, Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Landscape Architecture
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This talk describes the development of a panoramic imaging tool for representing landscape experience. Like park systems in a number of American cities, Chicago's park and boulevard system was designed during a late-nineteenth century resurgence of popular interest in the spectacular immersive experiences afforded by panoramic paintings. The city's inland "West Parks" were designed and marketed in terms related to those expressed by panoramas. Planned and built during explosive urban infrastructural growth and social change, the parks endured even as their use, maintenance, valuation, interpretation, and surroundings transformed during the twentieth century. Once understood as expansion points in a circuit of boulevards, but no longer (and possibly never) experienced in relation to such a graphic pattern of urban motion, the West Parks are now separated from their panoramic origins. Yet, they continue to embody panoramic functions and features, and in these can be seen not only the liabilities of obsolescence, but also the parks' undervalued transporting capacities. The combination of isovist imaging and 360° photography with subjective cartography distills panoramic history and engages the role of embodied motion in landscape perception. The talk presents an isovist map interface for Douglas Park, describes its grounding in historical analysis of panoramic experience and design applications, explains how such a map is built, and interprets this imaging mode's formal, narrative, and metaphorical threading of past with present. Finally, the talk raises questions about the tool's limitations and its potential for integration with other methods.

Molly Briggs is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her in-progress dissertation, *Seeing Through Chicago's West Parks: Landscape Perception and the Panoramic Uncanny*, interprets the period design and reception of Chicago's large inland parks, and the boulevard system more broadly, as iterations of the "panoramic uncanny" – a painterly, spatialized, and embodied mode of perceiving place, motion, distance, and representation. She holds an M.F.A. in Printmaking and Photography from the Department of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University, and a B.F.A. in Painting from the School of Art and Design at UIUC. She has been the recipient of numerous creative, research, and teaching awards, including the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship, a national competition administered by the College of Fine and Applied Art at UIUC (2014) and the Dockery Thomas Fellowship in Garden History and Design, administered by the Landscape Architecture Foundation and the Garden Club of America (2013). She is also an exhibiting painter; her artistic work, which explores the interaction of representation and the real in landscapes, has been exhibited extensively in the United States and is held in public and private collections in the U.S., Europe, and Japan. She has taught art and design at the research one university level since 2000 and is consistently ranked on UIUC's "List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students." She currently instructs courses in drawing, design, and creativity & entrepreneurship.

Drawing the Hybrid Freeway: Urban Design and Non/Human Relationship

Margot Lystra, Ph.D. Candidate in the History of Architecture and Urban Development
Cornell University

In the midst of 1960s controversies over plans for urban US freeways, several architects, landscape architects, and planners experimented with environmental and ecological approaches to freeway design. These proposals represented urban infrastructures as hybrid landscapes: complex compositions of interconnected natural, social, and technological elements. The designers' methods were tacitly hybrid as well, mixing cybernetic theories and scientific references with arts-based drawing techniques that positioned humans as embodied mediators of natural forces. This paper presents three such freeway experiments, led by Kevin Lynch, Lawrence Halprin, and Ian McHarg, respectively. Drawing on Environmental History and Science and Technology Studies discourses that articulate the relational co-imbrication of entities traditionally assigned opposite sides of nature/technology and human/nonhuman divides, I elucidate the hybridities of both infrastructural sites and freeway design techniques, illustrating how urban environmentalism and ecological design evolved together through the 1960s. I also explore resonances and tensions among different disciplines' understandings of hybrid landscapes, asking: when engaging frameworks and methods from other disciplines, how does one find a balance between fidelity to the source and relevance in one's home territory?

Margot Lystra is a PhD candidate in the History of Architecture and Urban Development at Cornell University, and holds a Master of Landscape Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Swarthmore College. She has taught landscape architectural design, representation, theory, and ecology courses at California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo and University of Detroit Mercy. Her dissertation, "Drawing Nature, Drawing Self: Tacit Knowledge and Ecocentrism in Designing for Urban US Freeways, 1958-1968," investigates how experimental drawing techniques of 1960s freeway designs manifested shifting human/nature relationships. Research interests include design representation, urban environmental history, infrastructural landscapes, and histories of technology. Her work has been published in *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, *The Next American City*, and *Crit - Journal of the AIAS*. As a designer, Margot has worked for Conger, Moss, Guillard, the Detroit Collaborative Design Center, and various San Francisco-based landscape architecture firms.

The Mountains, the Mosque and the Red City: Locality in 12th-century Marrakech

Abbey Stockstill, Ph.D. Candidate in the History of Art & Architecture
Harvard University

In the architectural idiom of the medieval Muslim West, the competitive architectures of the region's petty kingships consistently looked abroad for the stylistic choices expressing hegemony. The most notable exception to this pattern may be the architecture of the Almohads, a 12th-century dynasty rooted in a Berber religious movement and whose imperial architecture rejected foreign references in favor of a highly localized idiom. This distinction is clearest at their imperial capital of Marrakech, where the Almohads embarked upon an ambitious building program that involved rebuilding the city walls,

razing or whitewashing their opponents' monuments, and constructing their own. Built almost entirely in locally sourced materials, most prominently the red sandstone that would give Marrakech its moniker of the "Red City," the dynasty's architecture reveals a vernacular element underlying its monumentality that speaks to the surrounding mountain and desert landscapes. Part of a dissertation exploring the symbiotic relationship between Marrakech and the dynasty's congregational mosque, the Kutubiyya, this paper will explore how the Almohads integrated the landscape into the urban fabric of Marrakech by examining how the city was oriented to reflect upon the Almohads ancestral and tribal home in the Atlas Mountains, and how color and materiality emphasized this locality. I hope to draw a connection between this visual locality and the Almohads' ethnic heritage, though the vernacular nature of Berber architecture as well as the problematic definition of "traditional" architectural practices has made this a methodologically difficult task.

Abbey Stockstill graduated with a BA in Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations from the University of Pennsylvania in 2011 before beginning her postgraduate studies at Harvard University, where she is currently a PhD candidate in the History of Art & Architecture. Having returned from fieldwork in Morocco and France, Abbey spent the summer participating in the NEH Summer Institute in Barcelona, discussing topics concerning the field of Mediterranean studies in the medieval and early modern periods. Her dissertation centers on issues of identity and landscape as they relate to the architecture of the Almohad dynasty, a 12th-century Berber dynasty that controlled the Muslim West. Through an exploration of the symbiotic relationship between the city Marrakech and its primary mosque, known as the Kutubiyya, Abbey hopes to demonstrate how the dynasty took inspiration from their local environment in crafting a visual idiom that spoke to their North African heritage.

Planned Authority: The Urban History of French Imperialism in a Senegal River Town, 1659-1810

Dwight Carey, Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Art History
UCLA

In 1659, the colonial governors of Saint-Louis, Senegal envisioned a town that quickly became the largest French enclave on the African continent. A provisional plan for Saint-Louis catalyzed this process. This drawing depicted a European fort separated from African compound houses that stood on a different sandbar within the surrounding estuary. Nearly one hundred years later, French leader, Pruneau de Pommegorge, devised a similar plan. This time, Saint-Louis appeared as an orderly encampment organized around the French fort and devoid of African houses; once again, African structures sat on a neighboring sandbar. Yet the separation of African and European architecture was also a matter of legal policy. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the French colonial government outlawed the construction of compound houses in the town. Previous scholars, particularly, Mark Hinchman and Jay Edwards, have argued that seventeenth and eighteenth-century Senegal witnessed the relatively fluid blending of African and European architecture. My paper, however, challenges this notion. I examine the ways in which urban planning and urban rules worked against architectural mixture in early Saint-Louis. Furthermore, I contend that plans and subsequent policies were the first mechanisms to secure French power through figuring France as an entity with absolute control over the placement of African homes. Thus, I critique the role of urban planning in the entrenchment of French authority in West Africa. In considering the initial plans for Saint-Louis, I elucidate the antecedents for the systems of segregation that defined French colonialism during the twentieth century. From a methodological perspective, this paper asks how scholars can locate African agency when discussing the

architectural manifestations of colonial power. Therefore, I address both the historical and the theoretical implications of early colonial urbanism in Saint-Louis, specifically, and in French Africa, as a whole.

Dwight Carey is the Mendenhall Dissertation Fellow in the French Department at Smith College. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art History at UCLA. He is currently finishing his dissertation, titled "Building the Creole Empire: Architectural Mixture in the French Colonies, 1659-1810." This project examines the historical processes that engendered a uniform architectural style in the three most active trading centers of the first French empire: New Orleans, Louisiana; Saint-Louis, Senegal; and Port Louis, Mauritius. More broadly, Mr. Carey specializes in the art and architecture of francophone cultures worldwide. His research investigates the built environments of French colonialism as well as issues of gender, sexuality, and urban development in early modern societies in Africa, the Americas, and the Indian Ocean. He has received support in the form of the Fulbright-Hays Fellowship, among other grants. In the spring of 2016, he will teach a course on French colonial cities.

History, Narrative, and Recovered Nature in the Cheonggyecheon Restoration

Eyun Jennifer Kim, Ph.D. Candidate in the Program in the Built Environment
University of Washington

The Cheonggyecheon Restoration project has been described as simultaneously a recovery of and break with the past, reflecting the tenacity of historical discourse in evoking collective memory and the lingering effects of history of place in determining place identity. It has a complex set of conditions that complicates its identity as a landscape: in addition to the technological production of nature, the re-introduction of nature in the city carries a nostalgic sensibility by evoking a connection to the land and space that might have been lost for the urban dweller and in the process, may reflect a latent connection to nature that is central to the identity of Seoul. However, this return to nature is not without complications that raise questions of authenticity, the ethical implications of creating and building "nature" through advanced technological means, and the social, cultural, political, economic and historical impacts that might arise as the city changes through the addition of its new urban landscape. In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre argues that "nature creates and does not produce." Lefebvre would then argue that the Cheonggyecheon Restoration is not nature but production, yet in the context of an overbuilt city, production might be the only means to restore nature. My paper will examine the shift in the identity of Seoul's urban fabric with the recreation of an ancient stream and the insertion of nature into an urban landscape.

Eyun Jennifer Kim is a PhD candidate in the Program in the Built Environment at the University of Washington, and she is currently doing her dissertation fieldwork research in South Korea. She holds a Master of Architecture from SCI-Arc and is a licensed architect in New York State. She has worked in architecture and urban design offices in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and New York City. She also spent two years in the doctoral program in English at CUNY Graduate Center and earned an en-route master's degree before switching to architecture school. She graduated from Pomona College with a BA in English.

Betwixt and Between the Great Yax Ha': Maya Kingly Sight Across the Usumacinta River

Stephanie Strauss, Ph.D. Candidate and Harrington Doctoral Fellow, Department of Art and Art History
University of Texas at Austin

The milky green waters of the Usumacinta River wind over 500 miles of northwestern Guatemala and southeastern Mexico. In antiquity, the Usumacinta facilitated trade and travel between Maya settlements both great and small, including the city of Yaxchilan, one of the most powerful ancient Maya urban centers. From the construction of steep settlement terraces along the water's edge to the isolation of the city's sacred core on the southern riverbank, ideologies of both cosmological and lived space pervade Yaxchilan's ancient urban plan. Yet close epigraphic analysis of the city's inscribed stone monuments indicates that ancient notions of urban space and orientation exceeded the bounds of the city itself. As a case study, this paper explores Temple 44, a shrine to the reign of *Itzamnaaj Bahlam*, the 15th king of Yaxchilan. Commemorated around 732 C.E., Temple 44 paints a very specific picture of politics in the Usumacinta region and beyond – glyphic references to the cities of *Buk Tuun*, *Namaan*, and *Hix Witz*, among others, orient the viewer to the surrounding political landscape, just as the building itself orients the physical body to these distant polities. A close study of Temple 44 thus poses a challenging methodological issue for the study of ancient Mesoamerican urban landscapes: how can we more fruitfully track and theorize such subtle intertextual and interspatial narratives in ancient Mesoamerican art and architecture? This question is especially pertinent to the study of monuments from even earlier and less secure urban contexts, such as the undeciphered Epi-Olmec monuments of the Late Preclassic period.

Stephanie M. Strauss is a Ph.D. Candidate and Harrington Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. Strauss' research explores the interconnectedness of text, image, and space in early Mesoamerican art, and builds upon an interdisciplinary background in archaeology, linguistic anthropology, and art history. Her dissertation focuses on the spatiality and indexicality of Epi-Olmec art and writing across the Late Preclassic Isthmus of Tehuantepec (ca. 300 BCE – 250 CE). Strauss earned her M.A. in Anthropology at George Washington University and her B.A. in Anthropology and Latin American Studies at Yale University. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Strauss worked as a contract ceramicist and exhibition writer for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. Strauss' paper "Betwixt and Between the Great Yax Ha'" explores the intertextuality of architectural monuments at the Classic Maya urban center of Yaxchilan; and more specifically, how the inscribed texts of Yaxchilan Temple 44 are oriented – both physically and linguistically – to distant rivals on the landscape.