

This article appeared in Harvard Design Magazine, Fall 2003/Winter 2004, Number 19. To order this issue or a subscription, visit the HDM homepage at <<http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/hdm>>.

© 2003 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Not to be reproduced without the permission of the publisher: [hdm-rights@gsd.harvard.edu](mailto:hdm-rights@gsd.harvard.edu).

## The Emergence of “Landscape Urbanism”

*Reflections on Stalking Detroit, by GRAHAME SHANE*

In Andrei Tarkovsky's long, meditative film *Stalker* (1979), a skeptical science professor and a talkative journalist hire the “Stalker” to take them into the mysterious “Zone” dangerous for humans and sealed off by militia. The Stalker is a veteran of The Zone, sensitive to its invisible forces, hidden lines of demarcation, swaying grasses, murmuring winds, tunnels, ruins, and sudden cleansing rainstorms. He acts as guide for the other men's spiritual quests, skillfully navigating the eerie, abandoned, and perhaps radioactive area, leading his companions to “The Room,” where falsehoods will fall away and ultimate truths be revealed. This melancholy, cinematic pilgrimage, relying on memory and faith for its completion, inspired the Italian urban design group Stalker in the early 1990s to plan journeys through Rome's unknown “zones.” Oblivious to the predatory American connotations of their name, these Stalkers explored large, abandoned, often ex-military terrain inside the city, where they created happenings, pop concerts, and picnics.<sup>1</sup>

Tarkovsky's film may have also inspired Georgia Daskalakis, Charles Waldheim, and Jason Young to edit *Stalking Detroit*.<sup>2</sup> More certainly, they are following in the pioneering tracks of the photojournalist Camillo Vergara, whose repeated visits to certain disappearing sites (including many in Detroit) are documented in his books.<sup>3</sup> I first visited the ruins of Detroit with Vergara and the Columbia University Urban Design Studio in spring 1995.<sup>4</sup> Sadly, Vergara's images are absent from *Stalking Detroit*; the gap is filled by Barcelona-based photographers Jordi Bernado and Monica Rosello, who evocatively capture many of the same ghostly street scenes and abandoned vistas. American architect Robert Arens photographed another Vergara site, the controversial Heidelberg Project on the east side of Detroit. There local resident Tyree Guyton decorated the exteriors of abandoned houses with uncollected garbage and junk, much to his neighbors' dismay. These dystopian, wasteland vistas have taken on a life of their own in the media. They now appear as

# On Landscape

the height of fashion—as the background for the foul-mouthed but authentically poetic art of alienated white rapper Eminem in the movie *8 Mile* (2002).

The eight mile line marks the division between inner-city Detroit and its affluent postwar commuter suburbs. It is also a brutal racial division. In 1998, 79% of Detroit's population was African-American (14).<sup>5</sup> The 18.35 square mile Federal Empowerment Zone established in 1993 occupied 13% of the city's land. The population of the Zone (101,279) was 76% African American in 1998, with an average income of \$9,870 per family (45% less than that in the suburbs) and 63% of children under the age of five living in poverty. The unemployment rate was 29%, three times that of the greater Detroit metropolitan area. Twenty percent of all homicides took place in the Zone (145). From 1978 to 1998, the City issued 108,000 demolition permits for buildings there and lost 1% of housing stock per year to arson (14). City officials even organize the burning of vacant buildings as an urban spectacle each year on "Devil's Night" (106).<sup>6</sup>

In *Stalking Detroit*, Jerry Herron of Wayne State University, author of *Afterculture: Detroit and the Humiliation of History* (1993), and Dan Hoffman, former head of the Department of Architecture at suburban Cranbrook College, write in general terms of the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of the city's disappearance into the landscape. Herron attacks nostalgic tourists (including Vergara) dreaming of embalming the city's past glories (which excluded most of the working population). Hoffman proposes that the city be seen un sentimentally as the "Capital of the Twentieth Century," accepting its rapid ascent and its equally rapid decline as the inevitable result of technological and market forces.<sup>7</sup> Kent Kleinman (of the New York State University at Buffalo) and Leslie Van Duzer (of Arizona State

University) provide a case study of the impact of the automobile on a central Detroit institution, the 1926 4000-seat Michigan Theater (one of Vergara's discoveries). Here later owners inserted a steel parking deck system in the auditorium. You drive in through the foyer. In *8 Mile*, the upper deck of this parking structure is the venue for a rap battle.

The "After Ford" essay by Patrik Schumacher and Christian Rogner of the Design Research Laboratory at the Architectural Association (AA) in London provides the most convincing explanation for this surreal spectacle of decay and abandonment next to corporate investment enclaves. In Neo-Marxian terms, the two authors brilliantly describe the interior logic of Fordist mass production and the consequences for the traditional, closed form of the city. They map three phases in the evolution of Fordism as a technical and spatial system, matching each phase to a logical and organizational structure. In each phase of Schumacher and Rogner's analysis, Detroit plays a key role.

Detroit's ascent began as a compact city in Phase 1, "Taylorization Takes Command," with the invention of the mass production line, multi-story factories in the Detroit inner-city industrial belt. Here parts from upper floors could be sent down to the assembly line that produced 7,000 Model T's a day by 1923. Le Corbusier illustrated Albert Kahn's Ford Highland Park Plant (1909) as an icon of modernism in *Towards a New Architecture* (1927). The city's destruction began in Phase 2, when the "Assembly line concept is applied to the overall urban complex," creating a miniature "city as machine" (49) at the River Rouge Plant on the edge of Detroit (begun 1917). Here Ford dispersed the production line flows and assembly points in single story sheds designed by Kahn across an enormous suburban property, creating the world's largest industrial complex. Both Hitler and Stalin admired

this system of rapid industrialization, and Kahn built 500 plants in Russia (1929–1932). Finally the effects of Fordism and the "city machine" model of organization dissolved the city of Detroit itself into the landscape. In Phase 3, Ford dispersed production patterns, first regionally, then nationally, then globally. This dispersal created a more open, decentralized, self-organizing, and postmodern "matrix" pattern.

The problems of this postmodern organization in the landscape became obvious in the 1990s with the proliferation of sprawling cities, gated enclaves, residential communities, megamalls, and theme parks. As Schumacher and Rogner write, the extension of this dispersed system "fueled the rapid decompression of urban industrial cities and the decentralization of both mass production and mass consumption" (50). "After Ford" also charts the organizational and urban impact of this decompression in a familiar Neo-Marxian analysis of the postmodern condition.<sup>8</sup> This analysis leads to the recognition of a "Post-Urbanism," in which the center is "re-colonized" by corporate investors, which results in surprising juxtapositions of uses such as Detroit's \$350 million Renaissance Center (1976–1981) and the federally financed, driverless, empty monorail system endlessly circulating the city of ruins.

Given this "decompression," the question facing American postindustrial cities in rustbelts like Detroit is what to do about the abandoned factories and acres of vacant workers' housing, with redundant commercial strips.<sup>9</sup> How should once mighty cities shrink and die back into the landscape? The British architect Cedric Price proposed a mobile university in train carriages on abandoned railway tracks to revive a similar "rust belt" area in his *Potteries Think Belt* project (1964–1965). David Green of Archigram, in his *Rockplug* (1969) and *L.A.W.U.N.* (1970) projects, imagined the complete dissolution of the "machine city" into a series of

mobile housing units with automated service robots and buried networks set in an idyllic landscape. The terms *garden suburb* took on a new, ironic, and electronic meaning: a territory inhabited by sophisticated urban nomads in inflatable capsules, needing access to global systems.<sup>10</sup> Following this lead, the Urban Street Farmer Group in London in the early 1970s envisioned a huge recycling process conducted on a street-by-street basis creating urban agriculture. Later Richard Register in his *Eco-City Berkeley* project (1987) provided a considered ecological framework for such urban shrinkage, with many low-tech ecological lessons applicable to Detroit's dissolution into the landscape.<sup>11</sup>

James Corner, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and a founder of Field Operations, proposes "Landscaping" as a solution to the disappearance of the city documented in *Stalking Detroit*. Corner sees the creation of the voids of inner-city Detroit as a result of Ford's (and Chrysler's and General Motors') organizational and territorial evolution as industrial corporations. Corner conceives of the resultant voids as "constructions" produced by an industrial logic and as reserves of "indeterminacy," places of potential action. This "logistical and performative" future action (122), as in the past, will emerge from social codes and conventions that regulate the relationships between urban stakeholders or actors in industrial societies. These codes become embedded in "infrastructural regimes" that Corner argues, like Schumacher and Rogner, are best depicted as diagrams of organization. These diagrams show "the mechanisms necessary for something to be enacted (including erasure)." The disappearance of the city into the landscape thus becomes a part of its larger evolution over time that can be designed (just as John Soane in the 1820's imagined his new Bank of England in London as a future ruin). Corner looks forward to

"moving from both modernist and New Urbanist models of ordering the city (both of which believe that formal models alone will remedy the problems of the city, stylistic differences notwithstanding), to more open-ended, strategic models" (123).

Corner traces this performative approach back to the work of Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi, who in turn drew on the time-centered work of Cedric Price and Archigram. Corner saw Tschumi's La Vilette project (1982) as a "prepared ground" with pavilions and exceptional park regulations for Paris allowing walking on the grass, football, bicycling, kite flying, picnicking, even equestrian events. Koolhaas protected the beautiful landscape territory of Melun-Seurat by "linear voids" of nondevelopment in his New Town Competition entry (with Xaveer de Geyter, 1987). Another Dutch precedent for Corner is West 8, led by landscape architect Adriaan Geuze, whose West Market Square in Binnerotte, Rotterdam (1994-1995), provides a working example of this strategy.<sup>12</sup> The municipality of Binnerotte owns, maintains, and programs the space, which is also free at times to be occupied by local people of all ages, under the surveillance of cameras and local police.

For Corner these spaces are "prepared grounds," flexible and open, like the British commons or Indian *maidan*, allowing the "ad hoc emergence" of "performative social patterns and group alliances that eventually colonize these surfaces in provisional yet deeply significant ways" (124). A historic British commons like Hampstead Heath in London, with its seasonal, traveling carnivals, sporting events and clubs, disorganized fireworks displays on Guy Fawkes Day, and tradition of healthy walks, bicycling races, nude sunbathing, and swimming (not to mention youth gang fights and open gay activities) operates in this way within the dense surrounding urban fabric of the inner city. The

Boston Common and Central Park in New York perform a similar, much more policed, heterotopic function.

Corner points to the Anglo-Saxon performative tradition described at length by W.G. Hoskins in the classic *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955). Here the creation of the urban grew out of a constant battle with the landscape, with generations building layers of traces in the countryside over centuries. Both Ebenezer Howard in his *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1904) and Patrick Geddes in his *Cities in Evolution* (1915) sensed that the Industrial Revolution altered this delicate ecological and agrarian balance of village around a commons. They dreamt of merging the Industrial City with the old landscape tradition of small-scale, complementary town and country developments (a merger best represented by Howard's "Three Magnets Diagram"). Howard proposed that the State would ensure an even distribution of facilities in small New Towns constructed beyond a no-build Green Belt. Corner's predecessor at Penn, Ian McHarg, in *Design with Nature* (1968), continued this argument. He added the layering capacity of computer graphics to help in isolating the "no build" voids based on aesthetic, ecological, and agricultural values.

Corner also draws on a Landscape Ecology tradition that defines the landscape very broadly as a mosaic of "the total spatial and visual entity of human living space" that integrates the environment, living systems, and the manmade.<sup>13</sup> Carl Troll, who coined the phrase *landscape ecology* in 1939 in Germany, wrote, "Aerial photo research is to a great extent landscape ecology. . . . It is the consideration of the geographical landscape and the ecological cause-effect network in the landscape."<sup>14</sup> Landscape ecology grew up as an adjunct of land planning in Germany and Holland after the Second World War, reaching America only in the 1980s, when Corner was a student at Penn. In America during

the 1990s, European land management principles merged with post-Darwinian research on island biogeography and diversity to create a systematic methodology for studying ecological flows, local biospheres, and plant and species migrations conditioned by shifting climatic and environmental factors (including human settlements). Computer modeling, Geographic Information Systems, and satellite photography formed a part of this research into the patches of order and patterns of "disturbances" (hurricanes, droughts, floods, fires, ice ages) that help create the heterogeneity of the American landscape.<sup>15</sup>

Corner, in his *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*, co-authored with pilot-photographer Alex S. MacLean (1996), tracks from an aerial perspective the impact of the enormous productive industrial economy engendered by Fordism, as well as the landscape created by this pattern of production and consumption in suburban sprawl.<sup>16</sup> As landscape ecologists, Corner and MacLean try to show an entire, national, agricultural, and industrial ecology at work. Corner's multilayered drawings document both the manmade industrial-agricultural "machine city" and natural ecological systems at a sublime scale, creating vast patches of control and order in the American landscape. Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, Corner's colleagues at Penn, perform a similar survey and systematic analysis of the Mississippi's flow pattern over the centuries and the recent efforts of the Army Corps of Engineers to control them in their *Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape* (2001). Here the temporal and performative nature of the human battle with the enormous forces of the river earns pride of place. The engineers even had prisoners of war in the 1940s construct a gigantic, concrete scale model of the vast river basin so that they could measure the flows of water and efficacy of their proposed levees, canals,

and dams. Alan Berger, a graduate of Penn, uses the same graphic and analytic techniques to reveal the vast, overlooked landscape patterns created by mining, agricultural, industrial, and hydraulic operations in his *Reclaiming the American West* (2002).<sup>17</sup>

Another graduate of Penn, Charles Waldheim, turned this landscape ecology approach towards the city in a *Landscape Urbanism* exhibit of 1997, the year he established a new Landscape Urbanism option for undergraduates at the University of Illinois at Chicago.<sup>18</sup> Waldheim defined Landscape Urbanism as a branch of landscape ecology, concentrating on the organization of human activities in the natural landscape. He highlighted the leftover void spaces of the city as potential commons. Waldheim saw Landscape Urbanism, like landscape architecture, as an interstitial design discipline, operating in the spaces between buildings, infrastructural systems, and natural ecologies. These were "unseen," residual *terrain vagues* once inhabited by conceptual and land artists like Robert Smithson or advocated as marginal spaces worthy of attention by Ignasi Sola-Morales, whose death the editors of *Stalking Detroit* mourn in their dedication (9).<sup>19</sup> Following the Situationist Guy Debord's condemnation of the "Society of the Spectacle," Waldheim advocates patience and slow growth in cultivating a new urban form in these residual spaces, with the full participation of all assembled on the commons (including major, institutional landholders as well the dispossessed).<sup>20</sup>

The *Landscape Urbanism* exhibition contained an international survey of public urban spaces by designers including Adriaan Geuze/West 8, Michael Van Valkenburgh, Patrick Schumacher, Alex Wall, and several Barcelona landscape architects (such as Enric Batlle and Joan Roig, who completed Trinitat Cloverleaf Park in a highway intersection for the 1992 Olympics). American exhibitors

included Corner and Mathur, Waldheim's teachers from Penn, Mapillero/Pollack from New York, Conway-Schulte of Atlanta Olympics fame, and Jason Young/Omar Perez/Georgia Daskalakis/Das: 20 from Detroit. Corner's premiated but sadly unbuilt Greenport Harborfront, Long Island Project (1997), stood out in this show. His office, Field Operations, proposed creating a sense of urban activity around the annual raising and lowering of the town's ancient sailing ship *Stella Maris* up and down a newly created slip, with a historic, children's carousel housed in an adjacent band shell. Corner envisioned this staged, biannual event as an attractor for people, the press, and media, who would flock to the town in its off season, inhabiting the newly created commons on the harbor front to watch the ship's spectacular movements. In the winter, the ship would become a monumental, sculptural presence lit at night in the center of the small port's commons; in the summer it would return to its accustomed quayside, where its masts would tower above the rooftops.<sup>21</sup>

Corner's project in the *Landscape Urbanism* exhibition illustrates his concept of a "performative" urbanism based on preparing the setting for programmed and unprogrammed activities on land owned in common. The three projects presented in *Stalking Detroit* provide further insights into this emerging strategy, and each is paired with a commentary by a landscape architect.<sup>22</sup> The Waldheim and Marli Santos-Munne Studio proposes the most comprehensive of landscape urbanism practices in "Decamping Detroit" (104–122). They advocate a four-stage decommissioning of land from the city's legal control: "Dislocation" (disconnection of services), then "Erasure" (demolition and jumpstarting the native landscape ecology by dropping appropriate seeds from the air), then "Absorption" (ecological reconstitution of part of the Zone as woods, marshes, and streams), and

then "Infiltration" (the recolonization of the landscape with heteropic village-like enclaves). As Corner writes in his commentary, this project "prompts you to reflect on the reversal of the traditional approach to colonization, from building to unbuilding, removal, and erasure" (122). This reversal of normal processes opens the way for a new hybrid urbanism, with dense clusters of activity and the reconstitution of the natural ecology, starting a more ecologically balanced, inner-city urban form in the void.

All of Landscape Urbanism's triumphs so far have been in such marginal and "unbuilt" locations. These range from Victoria Marshall and Steven Tupu's premiated design for ecological mudflats, dunes, canals, and ramps into the water in the Van Alen East River Competition (1998), which would have simultaneously solved the garbage disposal problem of New York and reconstituted the Brooklyn side of the East River as an ecology to be enjoyed as productive parkland.<sup>23</sup> In the Downside Park, Toronto Competition (2000), Corner, with Stan Allen, competed against Tschumi, Koolhaas (who won), and two other teams, providing a showcase for their "Emerging Ecologies" approach.<sup>24</sup> This was further elaborated in the Field Operations' design that won first place in the Freshkills Landfill Competition, Staten Island (2001). Together with Stan Allen (now Dean at Princeton), Corner analyzed the human, natural, and technological systems' interaction with characteristic aerial precision. Field Operations presented the project as a series of overlaid, CAD-based activity maps and diagrams, that stacked up as in an architect's layered axonometric section. These layered drawings clearly showed the simultaneous, differentiated activities and support systems planned to occupy the site over time, creating a diagram of the complex settings for activities within the reconstituted ecology of the manmade landfill.<sup>25</sup> In the Freshkills

competition, Mathur and da Cunha's used a similar approach but emphasized the shifting and changing ecological systems of the site over time, seeking suitable places for human settlements including residences. In the first conference on Landscape Urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania in April 2002, Dean Garry Hack (who coauthored Kevin Lynch's 1984 third edition of *Site Planning*) questioned the interstitial and small-scale strategies of participants (asking, "Hyperurbanization: Places of Landscape Architecture?"). Mohsen Mostafavi, the Chairman of the AA, delivered the keynote speech, "Landscape as Urbanism," showing the Barcelona-style, large-scale, infrastructural work of the first three years of the AA Landscape Urbanism program.<sup>26</sup>

Dean Hack identified a key problem for landscape urbanists as they face the challenge of adapting to complex urban morphologies beyond that of an Anglo-Saxon village and its commons. Rifle ranges, the spectacle of the "Devil's Night," and the "Staging of Vacancy" suggested in *Stalking Detroit* may prove to be inadequate responses in an age when many Europeans and Americans live in idyllic, landscaped suburbs. Suburbanites are willing to pay a premium to visit staged urban spectacles. These spectacles can take the form of the Palio annual horse race in Siena, a parade on Disneyworld's Main Street, or a weekend in a city-themed Las Vegas casino like The Venetian, with its simulation of the Grand Canal as a mall on the third floor above the gaming hall. The desire for the city as compressed hustle and bustle in small spaces remains strong. Even in ruined downtown Detroit, small ethnic enclaves like "Greek Town" or "Mexico Town" satisfy this demand, in the midst of the void. Commercial interests like Disney clearly understand how to stage an event and create an urban street spectacle based in a village-like setting. As yet, the dense urban settings of Hong

Kong or New York, or even mid-rise urban morphologies like Piano's ecologically sensitive Potsdam Platz, Berlin (1994–1998), do not feature as part of this performative urbanism.

*Stalking Detroit* does not begin to deal with the issue of urban morphologies or the emergence of settlement patterns over time. It concentrates on their disappearance and erasure. The problem of this approach is its amnesia and blindness to preexisting structures, urban ecologies, and morphological patterns. A common ground is useless without people to activate it and to surround it, to make it their commons. Housing, however transient or distant, is an essential part of this pattern of relationship, whether connecting to a village green or a suburban mall. With this logic, the International Building Exhibition in Berlin of 1984–1987 sponsored the recolonization of vacant inner-city lots with high-density, low-rise infill blocks in anticipation of the construction of Potsdamer Platz and the demolition of the Berlin Wall. Adaptive reuse, as in the conversion of dockland warehouses or multi-story factories to lofts and apartments, is another successful strategy that has provided housing and workplaces to activate inner-city areas. These approaches have been slowly applied with some success in other American empowerment zones, such as those in the South Bronx and Harlem. Chicago, also a viciously segregated city, is rising slowly from its ashes; North Michigan Avenue functions as a great urban boulevard, comparable to Fifth Avenue in New York, populated with many strange hybrid skyscraper towers containing malls, department stores, hotels, offices, apartments, and parking lots (a form pioneered there by Skidmore Owings and Merrill's mixed-use Hancock Tower in 1966). Even in Detroit, Henry Ford's grandson is rebuilding the Ford River Rouge Plant as a model, hybrid, "green" facility.<sup>27</sup>

Landscape urbanists are just begin-

ning to battle with the thorny issue of how dense urban forms emerge from landscape and how urban ecologies support performance spaces. The linear organization of the village main street leading to a common space, with its row-house typology and long thin land subdivisions, is one of the oldest global urban patterns, studied by the pioneer urban morphologist Michael R.G. Conzen in the 1930s.<sup>28</sup> Urban morphologists look for the emergence of such characteristic linkages between activity and spatial patterns in human settlements. Such linkages, when repeated over time, form islands of local order structuring the larger patterns of global, ecological, and economic flows.<sup>29</sup> The pattern of the town square and approach street is another, more formal example of an urban morphology, focusing on a single center, setting up the central agora or forum as in a Greek or Roman city grid (and echoed in the courtyard-house typology). The Islamic city, with its irregular cul-de-sac structure, accommodating the topography, emerged as a variation on this classical model, with the mosque, bazaar, school, and baths replacing the forum and temples at the center.<sup>30</sup> Medieval European cities, also with cul-de-sacs, but based on a row-house typology, formed another morphological variation of the classical city, with market halls and cathedrals on the city square.

In *The Making of the American Landscape* (1990), edited by Michael P. Conzen of the University of Chicago, contributors illustrate how the morphology of the city shifted from a dense single center to a "machine city." This bipolar structure was based on railways creating a regional division between dense center and suburban villa edge (involving the separation of consumption from production, industry from farmland, rich from poor, etc.). In the second phase, the "machine city" of the Modernists (best exemplified by the morphology of Le Corbusier's *Ville Radiieuse* (1933) with

its slab blocks and towers set in parkland) replaced the old, dense Industrial City. With the advent of the automobile, a third morphology emerged in a multicentered pattern and isolated, pavilion, building typologies, a pattern that was further extended by airports on the regional periphery. Joel Garreau identified this as the postmodern "Edge City" morphology of malls, office parks, industrial parks and residential enclaves in 1991.<sup>31</sup>

In Europe Cedric Price jokingly described these three city morphologies in terms of breakfast dishes. There was the traditional, dense, "hard-boiled egg" city fixed in concentric rings of development within its shell or walls. Then there was the "fried egg" city, where railways stretched the city's perimeter in linear, accelerated, space-time corridors out into the landscape, resulting in a star shape. Finally there was the postmodern city, the "scrambled egg city," where everything is distributed evenly in small granules or pavilions across the landscape in a continuous network. Koolhaas and the younger Dutch groups like MVRDV continue this tradition of urban, morphological analysis with a light, analogical touch. The organizing group of the 2001 International Conference of Young Planners meeting in Utrecht, for instance, used Price's metaphors to study the impact of media and communications on the city.<sup>32</sup> Franz Oswald, from the ETH Zurich Urban Design program, also examines the "scrambled egg" network analogy in the *Synoikos* and *Netcity Projects*. These projects study the distribution of urban morphologies in central Switzerland as layers in a cultural, commercial, industrial and informational matrix within the extreme Alpine topography and its watersheds.<sup>33</sup> Schumacher, at the AA's Design Research Laboratory, has also extended his work from *Stalking Detroit* into an investigation of the role of personal choice in a dynamic, typological, and morphological matrix

forming temporary housing structures in the city.<sup>34</sup> His colleagues in the Landscape Urbanism program have also shifted to a more urban orientation, studying Venice and its lagoon.<sup>35</sup>

This rationalist, morphological and landscape tradition seems to be centered in Venice. Here Bernardo Secchi and Paola Viganò continue the typological analysis begun in the 1930s, but now applied to the voids of the postmodern city-region, the "Reverse City." Viganò's *La Città Elementare* (*The Elementary City*, 1999; it deserves translation into English) is exemplary of this larger European Landscape Urbanism movement. For Viganò, large landscape infrastructures form the basis for later urbanization. Le Corbusier's work at the Agora in Chandigarh is exemplary in its monumental manipulation of the terrain, orientation to the regional landscape, and attempt to form an urban space.<sup>36</sup> Xaveer de Geyter Architects' *After Sprawl* (2002), with its fifty-by-fifty kilometer "Atlases" of European cities made by various university groups, gives an easily accessible cross section of a wider landscape urbanism and morphological network linked to Venice.<sup>37</sup> In America, Carol Willis in *Form Follows Finance* (1995) and my colleague at Columbia Urban Design, Brian McGrath, have created a portrait of one building ecology, the skyscraper, and its typological evolution in the flows of New York in *Timeformations* (2000), viewable at the Skyscraper Museum website.<sup>38</sup>

*Stalking Detroit* is valuable for the window it opens onto the emerging world of Landscape Urbanism. Its rich background in landscape ecology offers many lessons for urban designers wanting to link structures to specific flows of populations, activities, construction materials, and time. Its greatest strength lies in a determination not to accept the readymade formulas of urban design, whether "New Urbanist" or "Generic" urbanist megaforms à la Koolhaas. Landscape

Urbanists want to continue the search for a new basis of a performative urbanism that emerges from the bottom up, geared to the technological and ecological realities of the postindustrial world. The great promise of this approach is its openness to new combinations, such as the cinema-turned-into-car-park rap battle site in *8 Mile* or the surreal *Stella Maris* as sculpture on the village green in Corner's competition entry for Greenpoint.

The problem is that the small scale, bottom-up, and eco-friendly moves advocated by *Stalking Detroit* do not address fundamental issues of social justice and equity that are also part of the foundations of a true urbanity. Other cities have not fallen prey to Henry Ford's myopia, racism, and anti-urbanism. Other successful cities have moderated their dynamic and destabilizing tendencies with pushes for justice and equality, so that wealth and information are redistributed throughout the urban network in the interest of social reproduction, efficiency, and competitiveness in a global market. Key public institutions, like New York's City College, which has as many Nobel Laureates as an Ivy League university, or Cooper Union in New York, are examples of open, public institutions that have facilitated immigrants' upward mobility for several generations. A true urban ecology provides such feedback mechanisms to safeguard its future and allows for the response of those who want to climb out of poverty. Without the help generated by such remedial institutions, without a complex morphological theory linking urban structures to ecological flows, and without housing around the commons, American practitioners remain at a disadvantage in creating a new, hybrid landscape urbanism. □

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my colleagues at Columbia, Professors Brian McGrath and Victoria Marshall, to Chairman Moshen Mostafavi at the Architectural Association and to Ciro Najle of the Landscape

Urbanism Program there, as well as to Charles Waldheim for introducing me to this concept. I also thank Bill Saunders and Antonio Scarponi for their comments on this review.

#### NOTES

1. See the Italian Stalker website Manifesto at <<http://digilander.libero.it/stalkerlab/tarkowsky/manifesto/manifesting.htm>>.
2. Barcelona: Actar Editorial, 2001.
3. See Camilo J. Vergara, *The New American Ghetto* (New Brunswick: New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1995), 215–225 and *American Ruins* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999), 48–67.
4. See Columbia University GSAPP *Abstract* 1994–1995.
5. All numbers in parentheses refer to pages in *Stalking Detroit*.
6. For Empowerment Zones see <[www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/ez/history.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/ez/history.asp)>.
7. See also Dan Hoffman's *Architecture Studio: Cranbrook Academy of Art 1986–93* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994).
8. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) and Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* (London: Verso, 1989).
9. The City Planning Commission proposed to bulldoze empty houses and decommission empty streets in the *Vacant Land Survey* (1990). Is there a role for historic preservation and collective memory? Should the City sell land back to a local Native American tribe so that it can become a reservation, allowing the construction of a casino in its emerging Arts and Entertainment District? Should the City create new parklands in the Olmsted tradition? See Witold Rybczynski, "Downsizing Cities" *Atlantic*, October 1995, <[www.theatlantic.com/issues/95oct/rybczyns.htm](http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/95oct/rybczyns.htm)>.
10. For Cedric Price's "Think Belt," see Royston Landau, *New Directions in British Architecture* (New York: Braziller, 1968), 80–87; for Archigram see *A Guide to Archigram 1961–74* (London: Academy Editions, 1994).
11. Richard Register, *Ecocity Berkeley* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1987).
12. See Adriaan Geuze: *West 8: Landschapsarchitectuur*, eds. Bart Lootsma and Inge Breugeum (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1995), 44–45.
13. See James Corner, "Eidetic Operations and New Landscapes," in *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*, ed. James Corner (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 153–169, and Corner's courses at <[www.upenn.edu/gsf/landscape/index.htm](http://www.upenn.edu/gsf/landscape/index.htm)>.
14. Quotation from Monica G. Turner, Robert H. Gardner, and Robert V. O'Neill, *Landscape Ecology in Theory and Practice: Pattern and Process* (New York: Springer 2001), 10.
15. Monica G. Turner, Robert H. Gardner, and Robert V. O'Neill, eds., *Landscape Ecology in Theory and Practice: Pattern and Process* (New York: Springer, 2001), 10, and Richard T.T. Forman and Michel Godron, *Landscape Ecology* (New York: Wiley, 1986), 619. Also Richard T.T. Forman,

*Landscape Mosaics: The Ecology of Landscapes and Regions* (Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press, 1996).

16. James Corner and Alex S. MacLean, *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).
17. Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, *Mississippi Floods; Designing a Shifting Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), and Alan Berger, *Reclaiming the American West* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).
18. The exhibition traveled from Penn, to the Storefront for Architecture in New York, to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle Campus (with a symposium at the Graham Foundation). For the Chicago Landscape Urbanism option see <[www.uic.edu:80/depts/arch/up/ucn.html#01](http://www.uic.edu:80/depts/arch/up/ucn.html#01)>.
19. Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió, "Terrain Vague," in *Anyplace* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 118–123.
20. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995).
21. See <[www.vanalen.org/exhibits/greenport.htm](http://www.vanalen.org/exhibits/greenport.htm)>.
22. In "Projecting Detroit," Georgia Daskalakis and Omar Perez of the Das 20 Architecture Studio propose building two long, low, ramped, enormous glass fingers across Woodward Avenue, the main axis of Detroit, fingers that would reflect the ruins of the baroque Grand Circus, marking the edge of the old core (79–99). Jason Young leads a group of associates in a series of site-specific interventions, all expressing "Line Frustration" with the lines of demarcation in the city, including the eight mile line. They stress the importance of the media image of the inner city and propose a Media Production Center for one site (130–143).
23. See <[www.vanalen.org/competitions/east\\_river/projects.htm](http://www.vanalen.org/competitions/east_river/projects.htm)>.
24. For Downside see <[www.vanalen.org/exhibits/downsview.htm](http://www.vanalen.org/exhibits/downsview.htm)> and <[www.juncus.com/release1/index.htm](http://www.juncus.com/release1/index.htm)>. Also see Julia Czerniak, "Appearance, Performance: Landscape at Downsview," and Kristina Hill, "Urban Ecologies: Biodiversity and Urban Design," in *Downside Park, Toronto*, ed. Julia Czerniak (Cambridge and Munich: Harvard Design School and Prestel, 2001), and Stan Allen, "Infrastructure Urbanism," in *Points + Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 48–57.
25. <[www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/fkl/index.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/fkl/index.html)> and <[www.juncus.com/release2/index.htm](http://www.juncus.com/release2/index.htm)>.
26. Mohsen Mostafavi and Ciro Najle, "Urbanism as Landscape?," in *A.A. Files 42*, (London: Architectural Association, 2000), 44–47.
27. See <[www.mcdonoughpartners.com/projects/p\\_ford\\_rouge.html](http://www.mcdonoughpartners.com/projects/p_ford_rouge.html)>.
28. See Terry R. Slater "Starting Again: Recollections of an Urban Morphologist," in *The Built Form of Western Cities*, ed. Terry R. Slater (Leicester and New York: Leicester University Press, 1990), 22–36 and <[www.bham.ac.uk/geography/umrg](http://www.bham.ac.uk/geography/umrg)>.
29. See Anne Vernez Moudon, "Getting to Know

- the Built Landscape: Typomorphology," in *Ordering Space: Types in Architectural Design*, eds. Karen A. Franck and Lynda H. Schneekloth (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1994), 289–311.
30. Stephano Bianco, *Urban Form in the Islamic World* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 153.
31. Joel Garreau, *Edge City* (New York: Doubleday, 1991).
32. International Society of City and Regional Planners, 2001, "Honey, I Shrank the Space," Congress note at <[www.isocarp.org/2001/keynotes/index.htm](http://www.isocarp.org/2001/keynotes/index.htm)>.
33. See <[www.orl.arch.ethz.ch/FB\\_Staedtebau/home.html](http://www.orl.arch.ethz.ch/FB_Staedtebau/home.html)>.
34. See Patrik Schumacher, "Autopoesis of a Residential Community," in *Negotiate my boundary!: Mass-customization and responsive environments*, eds. [+RAMTV] and Brett Steel (London: Architectural Association, 2002), 12–15. See also <[www.arch-assoc.org.uk/aadrl](http://www.arch-assoc.org.uk/aadrl)>.
35. See the forthcoming *Landscape Urbanism: A Manual for the Machinic Landscape* (London: Architectural Association, 2003), with contributions by Juan Abalos and Inaki Herreros, Larry Barth, Peter Beard, Florian Beigel, James Corner, Michel Desvigne & Christine Dalnoky, Keller Easterling, Foreign Office Architects (FAO), Christopher Hight, Detlef Mertins, Mohsen Mostafavi, Ciro Najle, Ocean North, and Jesse Reiser and Nanako Umemoto, and see also <[www.aaschool.ac.uk/graduate/lu.shtm](http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/graduate/lu.shtm)>.
36. For Bernardo Secchi, see *Prima lezione di urbanistica* (Rome, Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000). For Paola Viganò, see *La Città Elementare* (Milan: Skira, 1999) and *Territories of a New Modernity*, ed. Paola Viganò, (Naples: Electa, 2001). See also Stephano Munarin and Maria Chiara Tosi, *Tracce di Città; Esplorazioni di un territorio abitato: l'area venet* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2001).
37. Xaveer de Geyter Architects, *After Sprawl* (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers/DeSingel, 2002).
38. Carol Willis, *Form Follows Finance* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995) and <[www.skyscraper.org/timeformations/intro.html](http://www.skyscraper.org/timeformations/intro.html)>.

---

*Grabame Shane is an Adjunct Professor of Architecture at Columbia University teaching in the Urban Design Program, a Visiting Professor at Cooper Union, and Adjunct Professor at City College Graduate Urban Design Program. He is working on the book Recombinant Urbanism: City Theory and Urban Design.*