

## **Reframing the Given**

*How can design techniques drawn from the disciplines of landscape architecture, architecture and the fine arts help to identify and incorporate landscape forces within the analysis phase of landscape architectural design process?*

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**An explanatory document submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Landscape Architecture,  
Unitec New Zealand, 2005**

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## Abstract

***How can design techniques drawn from the disciplines of landscape architecture, architecture and the fine arts help to identify and incorporate landscape forces within the analysis phase of landscape architectural design process?***

“Contemporary design processes should be as fluid and dynamic as the way in which we currently live and think.”<sup>1</sup> To achieve this we must become more experimental and abstract in our thinking as designers. My proposition is that in landscape architecture an increased attentiveness to the forces inherent in landscapes can enhance design thinking and help design processes become more dynamic. Examples of landscape forces include dynamic systems such as ecosystems, and the mobile patterns that are deeply embedded in landscapes as a result of seasonality and diurnal change. These forces are patterns of organisation whose specific, locational qualities are investigated through my research by design.

The purpose of this research, then, is to identify, unravel, and utilise the often overlooked and unseen forces operating in landscapes. My investigation is intended to allow for the elaboration of rich and intricate patterns of organisation in order to enable the deployment of these by landscape students and professionals. This involves thinking of landscape architecture as an operator and regulator of rhythmic moments occurring in the landscape, rather than as a tool with which to configure bounded terrains containing objects.

The investigation is conducted through three sites and by means of three techniques, the underlying principles for which are drawn from the disciplines of architecture and the fine arts: the first investigation utilises a competition brief for the Chelsea Flower Show and focuses on how site can be understood through the use of rhythmic landscape materials and ephemeral ideas, for example the growing qualities of plants or the concept of community; the second site, located at Boston Road in Auckland, provides a venue for technique two which demonstrates that reframing landscape site as a set of systems, for example edges, can provide new understandings of existing site qualities; the third technique utilises Cornwall Park, in Auckland, as a situation for an investigation into multidimensionality that realises overlooked potentials within the site analysis process.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Rahim, Systemic Delay: Breaking the Mold, *Architectural Design*, 70, No 3, London, 2000. pp. 6-8.

Landscapes are encoded with the ephemeral, the momentary, and with concepts of closeness and distance. The terms forces, flows, and intensities, are utilised in this project because they refer to *haecceities*,<sup>2</sup> which I understand as individual moments – the here and now of any given situation. The analysis of these, in the context of this project, foregrounds flux and movement rather than stasis. Landscapes have many forces and flows coursing through them, entwining, and pulsating. If these flows are looked at in any given time at any point in their journey they yield differing configurations and conditions. Therefore looking at landscapes in this way, from the bottom up, or upside down, enables a different viewpoint. By eluding familiar form-construction, and by viewing the landscape apart from its usual connections to objects and materiality, a new clarity becomes apparent. This occurs in much the same way with drawing: when concentration is focused on acute observation of the subject, rather than on thinking ‘can I draw?’ the outcome is unexpectedly competent. The resultant cognitive shift enables preconceptions about landscapes to be downplayed, and ways of analysing landscapes to be enhanced.

Keywords: forces, intensities, landscape architecture, contemporary design process, technique, analysis, haecceity, landscape moments.

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<sup>2</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Minneapolis, 1987. p. 261.

## Introduction

### Reframing the Given

I understand landscapes as vessels that are saturated by intensities, rather than as bounded terrains containing objects. In terms of this project intensity refers to a strata or web of landscape forces that can be woven into and through other intensities, and activated or deactivated through this intersection. Examples are dynamic systems, ecologies, and patterns deeply embedded in the landscape as a result of season change, time, and date. Other examples include soil, tree sap and water. These things have structure; however structure is not the area that this research attempts to address. The foregrounding of intensities, working with them, and actually working in a similar way to them, can produce different beginnings for landscape architects. Landscape architects are utilising tools from other areas of study in order to understand landscapes in different ways. Specific to this project the term haecceity, first coined by the philosopher John Duns Scotus (c.1266-1308), is utilised. As understood by Scotus, "...a haecceity is not a bare particular in the sense of somethings *underlying* qualities. It is, rather, a non-qualitative property of a substance or thing: it is a 'thisness' as opposed to a 'whatness'."<sup>3</sup> My use of the terms force, flow, and intensity are an attempt to be more specific about haecceity in the context of landscape architecture. They also draw on Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the term: "A haecceity has neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle. It is not made of points, only of lines. It is a rhizome."<sup>4</sup> This project attempts to acknowledge that the landscape is in a constant state of flux, composed of speeds and affects, not forms and subjects. Thinking of landscape in this way seems to determine an avoidance of stasis. If we accept that the landscape is constantly in motion, it makes more sense to think in terms of relative positions, speeds, and affects, perpetual motion and perpetual change. Landscape in this framework then is more about events and becomings. This is a way whereby the landscape is understood as being made up of individual forces and flows, each unique, yet each contributing to the overall field that is the landscape. These forces and flows do not have boundaries and do not start and finish, they are continually changing and stretch and weave throughout the landscape. When various different

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<sup>3</sup> R. Cross, 'Medieval Theories of Haecceity', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2003 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta, ed., available <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2003/entries/medieval-haecceity/>.

<sup>4</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

forces and flows come together at one time particular events emerge. This project attempts to utilise this way of understanding landscapes by providing analysis techniques whereby forces and flows can be uncovered and understood. The term 'research by design' suggests that the design phase of an overall design process will be engaged with. This project instead concentrates on the often overlooked, yet critical, analysis phase.

The end product of my work does not focus on objects situated in the landscape, yet utilises representations that suggest objectification. This somewhat polemical combination allows for the ephemeral and intangible ideas that are explored here to be articulated in languages of the scientific, such as diagram and exploded axonometric (rather like an engineers' blueprint). By this means I can bring 'logic' to the seemingly random. There is an attempt to avoid making drawings appear to move as this subscribes to the objectivity that is of lesser importance here. Rather, images that explain forces, flows, and intensities are employed. The representations are in fact rendering visible intensities and forces of the landscape rather than only representing the visible. This enables forces that have always operated in the landscape to be uncovered by means of abstraction and by reframing the given. Scholar Christopher Hight argues that landscape has been cast in the role of simulacrum,<sup>5</sup> that is, an image or representation of something else. That something else is landscape painting. Theoreticians like James Corner, Sanford Kwinter, Gilles Deleuze (1925 – 1995), Hight and others suggest landscape architecture as having other things to offer to landscape design processes, for example, dynamic systems, ecology, and patterns. It is these types of dynamic qualities that this project treats as its building blocks. Kwinter suggests that these deeply landscape-derived elements are 'complex'. Against the argument that creativity, chaos, and self-organisation are equivalent to the random, Kwinter argues that there is always an inherent logic to self-organising systems. "This complex informational space is today often misnamed by the science that studies it as chaos."<sup>6</sup> If this logic can be understood it can add to and supplement the logic we commonly associate with landscape design processes, such as physical laws and traditional measurements. Shifting focus from representations of objects and things, occurring on what Hight describes as the 'vertical cut' to a concentration on the forces that actualise the landscape, the 'horizontal cut', helps to give the more rhythmic logics an equal weighting in landscape design processes. By reframing site as a connected series of networks and forces, rather than as a confined entities, by realising the potential of the given, for example,

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<sup>5</sup> C. Hight, Portraying the Urban Landscape: Landscape in Architectural Criticism and Theory, 1960 – Present, in *Landscape Urbanism A Manual for the Machinic Landscape*, ed. M. Mostafavi, C. Najle, London, 2003. pp. 22 – 32.

<sup>6</sup> S. Kwinter, *Architectures of Time, Towards a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture*, London, 2001. p. 47.

existing site characteristics like marginal spaces or concepts of support, or retaining, and by foregrounding the ephemerality such as community, creativity, or identity, the landscape architect can contribute to the way we think about the world and in turn the way we use the world.

This investigation draws on individuality, not the individuality of the author so much as the individuality of the landscape moment. Examples of such moments are seasonal changes, hot, cold, hour and date, and community. To describe these parts of landscapes as temporal, ephemeral, or random or intuitive or subjective is not entirely accurate as such moments are about haecceity<sup>7</sup> or properties that uniquely identify things. It is these properties that this project seeks to describe and utilise. The particular qualities of the landscape that I am harnessing I refer to as forces. These forces are in themselves events. It is not their connection to objects or things that are important here. Rather, it is the forces themselves that provide the specific qualities that permeate my research. The thrust of this project is to allow for the elaboration of increasingly rich and intricate landscape forces in order to enable the tapping of these by landscape students and professionals.

The body of work submitted for examination utilises design techniques drawn from the disciplines of landscape architecture, architecture, and the fine arts. Landscape architectural and architectural techniques utilised within this project include: diagrams, operational techniques, and existing representational devices (for example, a form of projection is explored through the use of an axonometric). From the fine arts: Pablo Picasso's (1881 – 1973) variations, collage, and multidimensionality derived from the Abstractionists, David Hockney, and the Cubists are all drawn upon. The investigation is conducted through three sites and three techniques: the first technique utilises a competition brief for the Chelsea Flower Show and involves the combination of an axonometric and an operator.<sup>8</sup> This investigation focuses on how site can be re-understood through the use of rhythmic landscape materials and ephemeral ideas, for example the concept of community, or the growing qualities of plants. The second site is located at Boston Road in Auckland. The technique explores the combination of collage, variations, and diagrams which demonstrate that landscape systems such as edges can provide operational diagrams, and that by utilising Picasso's variations an enhanced visual understanding of existing site characteristics can be gained. This understanding can be further enhanced by its intersection with the temporal landscape system. The third technique utilises Cornwall Park, in Auckland, as a situation for an investigation into multidimensionality that realises overlooked potentials within the site analysis

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<sup>7</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

<sup>8</sup> Operators are activities that allow for the reframing of graphic material through consecutive applications.

process. It provides a way whereby site analysis can be encoded with aspects of the ephemeral, for example, movement systems, the erratic flight of birds, or the unpredictable running patterns of children. It also illustrates the, by now, quite familiar proposition that a landscape can be understood, not as a static site, but rather as an unfolding field of events. This document will provide evidence of contextual precedents, descriptions of my techniques, and specific reflections.

Landscape design processes can be broken down into three broad phases: research, analysis, and design. My techniques can be inserted in the analysis phase. For example, the axonometric and operator of technique one contribute to this phase by spatially organising the site through the use of specific qualities of plant material and by the use of ephemeral verbs as operators. This approach provides two important differences to other design processes: the first being the utilisation of Ali Rahim's ideas of systemic delay,<sup>9</sup> whereby any 'concrete' design moves are delayed permitting a move beyond 'deterministic thought' and therefore foregrounding creativity; the second being that an operational approach conducted within an existing representational scaffold allows, in this instant, for an organic landscape element to become the very building blocks of the spatial analysis of the site. Collage, variations, and diagram, outlined in technique two, contribute to the analysis phase and utilise site analysis in combination with Picasso's variations. This is in order to re-understand existing site characteristics as rhythmic landscape entities that are encoded with chance, change, and potentiality, rather than as static materiality and form. Collage is utilised to depict edge ecologies. This medium enables new ways of exploring existing conditions and materials, which focus on individual landscape moments, for example, transfer rates, densities, and scale change. The collages become diagrams that enable manipulation of forms and that allow the complexity of landscape systems to intersect with understandings of existing site characteristics. The multidimensionality of technique three deals with extracting and illustrating the different opportunities that looking at landscape as rhythmic individual moments offers, for example the potential for new configurations to develop because of elements being taken away or added, or through movement of differing aspects of site analysis through others, and through stacking and shifting of site analysis information.

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<sup>9</sup> A. Rahim, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8.



## Context

Rahim states in his article, *Systemic Delay: Breaking the Mould*, “contemporary design processes must be as fluid and dynamic as the way in which we currently live and think.”<sup>10</sup> And he suggests that to achieve this we must become more experimental and abstract in our thinking as designers. Thinking of landscape architecture in these terms and as a facilitator and regulator of rhythmic moments occurring in the landscape can include important concepts associated with either landscape brief or landscape site. This idea is explored in technique one. These concepts are often ephemeral notions such as the idea of community or identity. It is possible, through this frame of thinking, to utilise the words that describe the concepts as processors of site information. Rather than trying to compose a design that visually expressed the sentiments associated with words, in the manner of the Picturesque as outlined by William Gilpin (1724 – 1804), “expressive of that particular kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture,”<sup>11</sup> I wondered whether words themselves could be unpacked and understood as instruments that re-organise space. As a result, I surmised that the landscape could be articulated as a manifestation of the words. This approach differs from other design methodologies, for example landscape architect Peter Walker’s, who’s work, also somewhat aligned with the fine arts, is different from art because pragmatics (size of building platforms, road widths, proximity of services, or particularities of sound reduction) have much more of a role to play in his design process. Historically recognised canons such as Classicism, Modernism and Minimalism are also drawn on to shape his designs. Perhaps my techniques could supplement these types of design methodologies. Walker describes the characteristics of his own work in his book *Minimalist Gardens* as containing “ordering devices common to much minimal art and to traditional formal gardens includ[ing] repetition, geometry, perceived extension of dimensions, linear gesture, and visual exploitation of edges and centres...”<sup>12</sup> Of importance to this comparison, he states that “[there is a] necessity to return analysis to essential visual properties.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>11</sup> *The Oxford Companion to Art*, ed. H. Osborne, New York, 1970. p.869.

<sup>12</sup> P. Walker, *Minimalist Gardens*, Washington, 1997. p 22.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

In short, the driving forces behind Walker's designs are rich with historical and archetypal visual properties. Corner suggests a different view when he describes in his article *Operational Eidetics Forging New Landscapes*<sup>14</sup> that how the land is mapped, drawn, and visualised determines and conditions how it is shaped and understood. He argues that landscape in its present state is reduced by representation simply to expressing or commenting on conditions. He recommends that there needs to be a shift from *object appearances* to *processes of formation*.

In keeping with Corner's emphasis on processes of formation, the author Manuel De Landa<sup>15</sup> proposed an initiative based on Deleuze's<sup>16</sup> idea of topological thought. A basic structure, he suggests, can be manipulated to produce markedly differing forms, while retaining the same basic underlying code. De Landa called this a 'body plan'. He describes this idea as being akin to vertebrae that stretches across a site. The vertebrae are flexible enough to respond to different moments or events within a landscape situation, while remaining, strong enough to maintain its integrity. In much the same way as Sanford Kwinter in his article *Flying the Bullet* describes Koolhaas' work as serving to "refocus [architecture] on discovering new potential in existing conditions,"<sup>17</sup> for example Parc de La Villette, in Paris, where the essential concept was drawn from an existing structure – the skyscraper – and spread across the site in a horizontal fashion, my work draws on existing representational systems. In particular the axonometric is utilised as a framework or 'body plan' rather than as a visual image only. In contrast to perspective drawing the axonometric has no vanishing points; therefore all lines are drawn to true scale, allowing for an accurate distribution of marks within and across its framework. In addition to this my use of the axonometric allows a shift from viewing site in its totality to re-understanding site as landscape situation. It provides a framework or scaffold within which are contained coordinates or points residing in space. Momentary events, for example the different growth stages of a plant, can be located within this scaffold and with the help of an operator, be allowed to shift around within it and indeed break out of the scaffold. In contrast again to perspective, this information can then be translated accurately into other representational systems such as plan or section enabling the new information

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<sup>14</sup> J. Corner, *Operational Eidetics Forging New Landscapes*, in *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall, Cambridge, 1998. pp. 22-26.

<sup>15</sup> M. DeLanda, *Deleuze and the Use of the Genetic Algorithm in Architecture*, in, *Architecture and Design*, Vol. 72, No 1, January, London, 2002. pp. 9-12.

<sup>16</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *op.cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>17</sup> S. Kwinter, *Flying the Bullet*, in, *Conversations with Students*, ed, R. Koolhaas, New York, 1999. p. 68.

to be utilised further in a design process. Robin Evans argues in his book *The Projective Cast* that “What connects thinking to imagination, imagination to drawing, drawing to building, and buildings to our eyes is projection in one guise or another...all are zones of instability.”<sup>18</sup>

The use of operators also allows for the foregrounding of formation. They utilise verbs, for example, cut, gather, and fold to activate graphic material. They have formed a component of studio practice in the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture at Unitec New Zealand, most notably in studios devised by Rod Barnett.<sup>19</sup> He describes operators as being used to reframe site information by the production of new drawings that can radically transform our understandings of a site and its potential.<sup>20</sup> This mechanism also occurs as part of the first year architectural studios in the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and is outlined in the book *Inchoate* by architect Marc Angelil.<sup>21</sup> Operators permit me to embed into the design process concepts that are either non-physical or that are just that, concepts.

I have found it useful to take a backward step from Corner’s ‘processes of formation’ in order to gain an understanding of the types of information that can be utilised in a design process that privileges formation over object appearances. As landscape architects one of the first moves we often make when approaching the problem of design is the site visit. On a site visit many drawings and articulations of the site are recorded. One of the tools we use to record information is the camera. It is usual for many photographs to be taken on site and then analysed back in the office or studio. During this analytical phase the designer normally looks for particular characteristics of the site, for example, iconic elements, specimen trees, distinctive architecture, marginal spaces, and contextual images. This process of analysis interested me as these seemingly static types of image actually depict forces and individual landscape moments. Photographs rarely contribute this type of information to design processes. Usually the photographic records of the site would contribute information about form, locations of objects, view-shafts, material and textural conditions etc. I wondered whether there were techniques that would enable us to use the information that the photographs reveal in these rhythmic landscape moments. David Hockney states that “visual magic tends to wear out when it is based on a photographic conception of space which immobilises the viewer, distancing him from

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<sup>18</sup> R. Evans, *The Projective Cast*, London, 1995. p. xxxi.

<sup>19</sup> Rod Barnett is Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at Unitec New Zealand, see R. Barnett, Exploration and Discovery: A Nonlinear Approach to Research by Design, *Landscape Review*, 6 (2), Lincoln, 2000. pp. 25-40.

<sup>20</sup> R. Barnett, *Studio 721/2001, Project One*, class brief, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> M. Angelil, *Inchoate an Experiment in Architectural Education*, Zurich, 2003. *passim*.

the view.”<sup>22</sup> Also he places importance “on the profound relationship between us and the reproduction.”<sup>23</sup> By this he means that photographs detach us from the world. He goes on to say “how this affects our way of seeing the world, and how this in turn affects the way we depict the world.”<sup>24</sup>



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque*, and Pablo Picasso, *Odalisque, after Ingres*. From S. Galassi, *Picasso's Variations on the Masters*, 1996.

Picasso utilised reproductions in order to understand the world in new ways, which led him to the works that he called variations. These were works he generated using other painters' masterpieces as a starting point for his creative endeavours. Susan Galassi states in her book *Picasso's Variations on the Masters*,

Taking others' work as subjects for one's own – to copy, elude to, or freely transpose into new creations – has long been a staple of art...artists from Vincent van Gogh to Francis Bacon freely transposed works by their predecessors...for Picasso...they were a continuous part of his

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<sup>22</sup> D. Hockney, *That's The Way I See It*, London, 1993. p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

creative program...Picasso invested variation with a vitality that brought it to the centre of his artistic endeavour, where the creative and the critical overlap.<sup>25</sup>

In the same way that Picasso produced work in a step-by-step series where each painting referred only to the one immediately before and provided a significant abstraction from the original, I speculated that a similar process could be applied to my site photographs in order to reveal the underlying rhythms embedded in them. This manifested in technique two. Gallassi states that with variations “the structure or schema of the original is preserved”<sup>26</sup> meaning that, whilst the resultant variations on the surface bear little pictorial reference to the original source material, they are nevertheless encoded with the structural characteristics. She goes on to say that “style, technique and most importantly, content undergo transformation.”<sup>27</sup>



Diego Velazquez, *Infanta María Margarita*, detail from *The Maids of Honor (Las Meninas)* and Pablo Picasso, *Las Meninas, after Velazquez 2 (Infanta Margarita)*. From S. Galassi, *Picasso's Variations on the Masters*, 1996.

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<sup>25</sup> S.G. Galassi, *Picasso's Variations on the Masters*, 1996. p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> S.G. Galassi, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

The idea of transformation can be linked to Allen's argument in *Points + Lines, Diagrams for the City*<sup>28</sup> that the relationships between parts are important to achieving architecture that leaves space for the uncertainty of the real. The uncertainty of the real is another way of describing haecceity. As conditions change their configurations and properties alter so that if we were to record this in sequence each recording would be different to the next, therefore resulting in a number of vital and unique forces. Leading on from this I conjectured that perhaps exploring alternative ways of analysing this information could permit the emergence of devices, with which I could combine forces, for example, differing scales, transfer rates, or differing densities, (or Stan Allen's parts) and for those acts of combination to be revealed.

To this end I wondered whether a landscape system (a metaphor for processes operating in the landscape) could provide me with the generative component with which to attempt to combine forces. Systems are described by Kwinter as having the ability to "create decisive, but entirely unpredictable qualitative fluctuations in shape, activity, or organisation."<sup>29</sup> Could the site be reframed and represented as a system and therefore articulated in terms of fluctuations in shape, activity, or organisation? First I needed a system related to landscape architecture. I chose the edge. Edges offer a unique landscape context to this project. Ecologist and scholar Almo Farina indicates this importance:

Every landscape is by definition heterogeneous, composed of discrete scaled patches...these patches create a mosaic in which edges are the borders...edges assume a central role in the mosaic...edges are interpreted as true habitats, zones of tension between two different ecosystems...areas of transition...differing stages...meeting points.<sup>30</sup>

Processes or systems are always present in the landscape. Contained within the modern city there is a vast array of wires, ducts, tunnels, conduits, streets, highways and technical networks all of which contain clues and directions for creating connections. These are all systems that exist in their primary form for the delivery of information, people, goods and services. They are systems installed for a particular purpose, (to carry storm-water or electricity) but on occasion they are utilised in unexpected ways for other purposes, for example,

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<sup>28</sup> S. Allen, *Points + Lines*, New York, 1999. *passim*.

<sup>29</sup> S. Kwinter, *Architectures of Time, Towards a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture*, London, 2001. p. 47.

<sup>30</sup> A. Farina, *Landscape Ecology in Action*, Netherlands, 2000. pp. 61.

In the Indian mega city of Mumbai (Bombay), residents of informal settlements actually use the water pipe system, which distributes drinkable water to affluent gated condominium complexes, as perilous footways for transportation. But they have no access whatever to the water supplies inside the pipes.<sup>31</sup>

Landscape architects have used systems before, the system of maps for example. In *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*,<sup>32</sup> Corner explains generally that maps make visible what is otherwise invisible, however there are many fictional and incomplete characteristics of maps; and the making of and the reading of a map is never value-neutral. He gives the example of the maps of Nazi Germany where territory and figures were topographically represented in order to promote and control the 'nationalist imagination'. This leads to the idea that the representation of such systems as edges or maps may have an impact on modes of understanding. Corner gives the example of pictorial perspective in the sixteenth century influencing the depiction of space which in turn impacted on its subsequent design and construction. My technique of articulating the site as a system of edges calls on the 'inventive capacity of representation' to provoke new and alternative ways of seeing the world.

To build on Corner's idea of the inventive capacity of representation I have chosen to articulate the system in technique two with the use of collage, a medium perhaps more often associated with the fine arts. This medium makes a number of constructive contributions to my project. One of the values of collage is its ability to rise above direct representation of elements, for example, in plan, section, and perspective drawings. Collage opens up new ways of exploring existing conditions and materials. It allows a certain freeing of the mind; any preconceptions about what elements physically look like and how they work are transcended and new opportunities arise, foregrounding the subjects' qualities rather than concentrating on accurate, technical representation techniques. Robert Motherwell, in an article called 'Beyond the Aesthetic' for the magazine *Design*, observed:

The sensation of physically operating on the world is very strong in the medium of collage, in which various kinds of paper are pasted to the canvas. One cuts and chooses and shifts and pastes, and sometimes tears off and begins again. In any case, shaping and arranging such a

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<sup>31</sup> S. Graham, S. Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*, London, 2001. p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> J. Corner, *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*, London, 1996. *passim*.

relational structure obliterates the need, and often awareness of representation. Without reference to likenesses, it possesses feeling because all the decisions in regard to it are ultimately made on the grounds of feeling.<sup>33</sup>

In the discipline of fine art, collage has contributed to the expansion of the language of art and allowed a greater formal diversity and an increased expressive range.<sup>34</sup> Georges Braque (1882 – 1963), Picasso and Marcel Duchamp (1887 – 1968) were some of the early exponents of these media techniques. Collage in particular, I believe, has potential as a useful tool for landscape architects, specifically because of its ability to increase the expressive range of the designer. Diane Waldman states, “The technique of collage is ideally suited to the capture of noise, speed, time and duration...”<sup>35</sup> Characteristics, which either singularly or together fall into the category of individual landscape moments, as described earlier. Collage has the potential to do this because found images are already coded with chromatic information, textural information, various tones, marks, and forms. Without having to make these graphic decisions, the designer is free to concentrate on revealing the individual landscape moment. However, as with all media, it is necessary to ensure that the audience is seduced and convinced by a new construct; focused on the message not the medium. In a similar way, as when listening to an accomplished musical soloist we are transfixed by musical narrative and tend not to notice the instrument, or whether some notes are well played, or others not. Collage also allows layering of information, it is able to be continually ripped up, reworked, and reconfigured, each addition, or change, contributes to its configuration over time. Its ability to capture the ‘commonplace’ the actual conditions and the inherent qualities are reasons collage will be used in this project. Further, “collage has often emphasised concept over end product; it has stressed the meaning of process; it has brought the incongruous into meaningful congress with the ordinary and given the commonplace, the ordinary, a magic of its own.”<sup>36</sup>

There are many devices that enable creative design. Mapping techniques, which permit layering of different types of information, and iteration, which enables a designer to move further away from equilibrium in a controlled manner, harnessing a natural process, or the characteristics of a material, are ways of understanding and designing landscapes. Collage, also, has characteristics that may be able to be used in the same way as the aforementioned devices, as design devices, which elude assumptions about scale and the rules of perspective or drawings that are not bound to the

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<sup>33</sup> R. Motherwell, *Beyond the Aesthetic*, Great Britain, 1946. p.15.

<sup>34</sup> D. Waldman, *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*, New York, 1992. p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.



logic of objects in space. This is because momentary logics, that is, movement, time and change etc, are made up of variable factors. Collage enables these factors to be substantiated within a defined field through the use of found imagery and the act of tearing (and therefore changing), then pasting in new configurations. These activities embed and demand new relationships. Further, in *Collage City* by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, collage is used to prise open a new way of looking at urban systems. Rowe and Koetter argue that collage allows for “objects and episodes to be imported, and while they retain the overtones of their source and origin, they gain a wholly new impact from their changed context.”<sup>37</sup> Because collage is able to retain overtones from source origins, and build on this, I utilise it as a medium for the expression of existing conditions in new ways and the exploration of ecological processes operating in the landscape.

Yet in order to utilise the unique properties of such landscape moments as fluctuations in scale, density, or transferral this information must be transformed into representational devices that allow its intersection with other material. This may occur through the use of diagrams. Diagrams, according to Allen are, “an abstract means of thinking about organisation...multiple functions and actions are implicit to the diagram...the configurations that they develop are momentary clusters of matter in space, subject to continual modification.”<sup>38</sup>

This description does not seem to gel with the actual way that Allen utilises diagrams in his work described in his book *Points + Lines Diagrams for the City*, for example, the National Diet Library, Kanai Kan, Japan. He uses a fabric dyeing process as an idea generator and then the Snead Stack system as a pictorial image transferred into the design. Allen’s diagrams are often drawn from outside of the field of architecture, for example, biological diagrams such as photosynthesis, or ecological diversity patterns, importing them according to requirements of brief or site. This technique differs from mine, I attempt to draw out, using diagrams, the haecceities of edge ecologies. Deleuze and Guattari state:

It is the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate that is a haecceity; it is this assemblage that is defined by a longitude and a latitude, by speeds and affects, independently of forms and subjects, which belong to another plane. It is the wolf, itself, and the horse, and the child, that cease to be subjects to become events.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> C. Rowe, R. Koetter, *Collage City*, Cambridge, 1978. p. 140.

<sup>38</sup> S. Allen, *Diagrams Matter*, in *ANY*, Vol. 23, New York, 1998. pp. 16-19.

<sup>39</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

The American architectural theorist Peter Eisenman uses archetypal architectural forms such as the grid, the cube, el-forms, and bars, as diagrams. He sees these as the interiority of architecture or the history component to his work. My work utilises natural systems operating in the landscape as a basis for diagrams. These can be described as the interiority of landscape. Edges, for example, are ecological systems operating in the landscape. The difference between these landscape systems and say, el-shapes is that there is no formal geometric shape that defines this term. Edges can be and are described in any number of ways. The geometries Eisenman uses, on the other hand visually link his outcomes to the defining forms of his starting points.

Diagrams offer other possibilities; they are a way of harnessing the inherent systems that are so interesting for landscape architecture, for example, edge conditions, catchments, and topography. These systems do not occur in isolation from our discipline and are deeply connected to the way we use landscapes. I wondered whether diagrams could be generated from within a project and therefore subscribe to a bottom up rather than a top down design approach.

With this in mind and once again concentrating on the site analysis phase of the design process, I considered whether focusing on the moments that regularly occur, but are often overlooked in the landscape, such as birds flying, children running, and cars moving would contribute to a greater understanding of how landscapes actually worked. Again in technique three I utilised the camera to initially record the information. At this stage the pictures were just that – pictures, which contained formal notions of perspective, a particular way of seeing the image, from a distance and in a static frozen ‘moment’. Picasso’s works are often seen as distortions or abstract works, however if we introduce the notion of time to the way we think about his works, we can begin to read them differently. Take the two archetypal styles of theatre; the Italian style where the stage is a box that contains backdrops that create the illusion of distance and perspective; and the Shakespearian style of theatre where the stage juts out into the audience so that everyone who views the theatre sees something different. Picasso’s paintings can be described as working in the same way as the latter of these two examples. They are in fact just another way of seeing. It is as if the image is moving in time and we can see behind, beside and in front at the same time. This is an idea I thought would be useful for landscape architecture. What if we could articulate site information in this alternative multi-dimensional way, rather than a distanced static view as is normative with the types of methods we use to collect information and also in the way we

represent that information? Hockney gives the example of two images: one a painting by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684 – 1721), entitled *The Intimate Toilet* c. 1715, Private Collection, and the other a Picasso, *Femme Couchee* 1932, Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée de l'Art Moderne, Paris. “In the Watteau painting you are an onlooker – it is as if you are looking surreptitiously on from another room, however with the Picasso, because you can see the back and the front at the same time, you were essentially inside the painting...”<sup>40</sup>



Jean-Antoine Watteau, *The Intimate Toilet*, c. 1715 and Pablo Picasso, *Femme Couchee*, 1932. From D. Hockney, *That's The Way I See It*, London, 1993.

Landscape architecture is well suited to contribute to this many-faceted, multidimensional discourse which is generally centred on ways of designing. Specifically because the terms self-organising, time, space, ecologies, moments, and multi-dimensionality are not only deeply embedded in its discipline, but its materials and building blocks reflect these theoretical terms. Landscape is encoded with the ephemeral, the moment, intensities and forces. Looking at landscapes from the bottom up, or upside down, enables a different viewpoint. By eluding familiar form and by viewing the landscape apart from its usual connections to objects and materiality, a new clarity becomes apparent, in much the same way as when drawing, if the

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<sup>40</sup> D. Hockney, *op.cit.*, p. 102.

concentration is focused on acute observation of the subject, rather than on thinking 'can I draw?', the outcome is startlingly competent. This cognitive shift enables preconceptions about the landscape to be downplayed and ways of analysing the landscape to be enhanced.

## Technique one: axonometric and operator

A competition brief for the design of a stand at the Chelsea Flower Show provided me with base information and specific brief information. The brief stipulated that five words: community, culture, conservation, creativity and celebration be included in the investigation. It also supplied me with an extensive plant list. Technique one explores the possibilities of utilising words as processors of information, in this instance the word community. First the plant material was organised in terms of typical gardening criteria: growth rates and chromatic and textural qualities. An operator, the verb *flock*, was then used to organise the plant material in a manner reminiscent of community. Flocking was a substitute for the term community. It was selected for this study as it deals with separation, alignment and cohesion, all of which reflect how communities operate. At this point an operational framework was required; this provided an opportunity to experiment with and build on Kwinter's ideas of drawing on existing conditions, and test De Landa's concepts of 'body plan'. I utilise as a framework an existing representational device, the axonometric. The technique forms part of the analysis phase of a design process. It is my premise that utilising operators and re-framing the way axonometric representation works may help to provide new ways of envisioning and therefore utilising site and brief information. This approach enables finalised concepts to be delayed while the given material is explored creatively, in this case utilising the temporal characteristics of plant material. This technique describes how the plant material itself in combination with the use of an axonometric can be seen as a set of constantly changing and shifting entities.

### Method

1. Receive brief and site information
2. Compose framework of axonometric according to site dimensions
3. Order brief information
4. Transfer brief information into axonometric scaffold
5. Select an operator
6. Perform operation
7. Reflect on results

## Description

I chose a conventional representational technique as my 'body plan', the axonometric. The axonometric was formed based on the site dimensions (fig. 1). The axonometric is traditionally used as a device which enables a view into or over a landscape site. It is used to depict rather than to organise. Because all axial lines are drawn to true length at the same scale I was able to break up the axes into equal one metre intervals (fig. 4). The plants were then plotted onto this grid according to common gardening criteria: texture of the plant i.e. rough or smooth, the plants' chromatic qualities (in terms of hot or cold), and growth height. The x axis displays a range between rough and smooth and y axis a range between hot and cold while the z axis displays the height. The plants (see fig. 2 for examples) were distributed evenly and without bias across the site with the use of multiple axes (fig. 3).

The phenomenon of flocking can be seen as an overall system that is driven by individual responses and decisions. It is a system that can be referred to as 'bottom up', rather than 'top down'. This means that all of the little decisions and rules make up the greater whole. This is in contrast to 'the big idea' where the idea is paramount and then all other decisions are made within its structure. In *From Object to Field* Allen explains the principles behind this: "here the units respond directly to other units and have no overarching governance, their only concern is their relationship with their immediate neighbours and out of these relationships patterns can be established and mapped."<sup>41</sup> The flocking characteristics of ants, birds and fish are all examples of individual behaviour creating overall group behaviour. It seems to me that they have inherent rules built into their genetic make-up. I harness the concept of these rules in order to move forward with the operation.

In this project the plant material was shifted according to the rules of flocking, which involve separation, alignment, and cohesion. The rules<sup>42</sup> that I used were: (1) steer to avoid crowding local flock-mates, (2) steer towards the average heading of local flock-mates, and (3) steer to move towards the average position of local flock-mates (fig. 6). These rules were applied to strip one (shown in fig. 5). Strip one resides within the site, between zero metres and two metres on the y axis (depth of the site) and extends the full range between zero metres and fourteen metres on the x axis (width of the

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<sup>41</sup> S. Allen, *From Object to Field*, in *AD Architecture After Geometry*, 67, No. 5/6, London, 1997. pp. 24-31.

<sup>42</sup> These rules are adapted from the website 'Boids' by C. Reynolds.

site) and its height dimensions are from zero metres to four metres on the z axis. The strip is made up of eleven different plants (fig. 5). The area where each plant resided on the plan was broken down into equal one metre segments. The bottom right metre segment of each plant was deemed to be the anchor point from which the operation took place. In a sequence moving across the plan from plant H to plant A, this anchor segment was transferred into the axonometric ordering scaffold. To avoid crowding, the distance travelled away from the anchor piece was determined by the growth rate of the plant which was categorised as fast, slow, or moderate. The placement of the subsequent anchor segments of the remaining plants within the axonometric was determined by rule (3) cohesion. The anchor piece was positioned relative to the plant that it was next to on the plan view. The direction which the rest of each plant took was determined by rule (2) alignment: each segment having to be aligned in the same general direction as its neighbours. Variations occurred where adherence to the general alignment could be effected only by increasing or decreasing the distance the plant travelled away from the anchor piece, causing segments of the same plant to be spread on occasion throughout the overall flock. The operation took some of the plant material outside the confines of the site boundaries distorting the original axonometric (fig's. 7, 8, 9, & 10).

## **Specific Reflections**

Technique one differs from the work of other contemporary designers in that the existing techniques of axonometric and operators, normally used separately, have been combined to create a new hybrid. The ordering system allows for the material to 'hang' in three-dimensions after the initial operation ready to receive more iteration. The purely operational procedures allow situational information to remain in a state of flux, or 'systemic delay', and have the ability to continually change and alter. Influences that could affect change include other operations. For example, I could proceed through the remaining four words stipulated by the brief, allowing these to pull the flows in other directions. Alternatively other design moves based on rich historic, or pragmatic information could be used. Further, operators used in this context allow for ideas of community to be embedded in the design process and the analytic machine of axonometric and operator, which in this case utilise plant material, to produce an abstract manifestation of community. The analysis of this brief and site information actualises concepts of haecceity because it unpacks the plants, that is, it focuses on the

'thisness' of the plant, the properties that being a particular plant and no other hold. This is opposed to analysing in terms of just plant, that is, it grows, it has texture and colour. The particular characteristics of the plants are utilised in this technique.

Technique one has the capacity to become part of other design methodologies. Instead of introducing plants at the end of a project for example, it has been possible to utilise the characteristics of the plant to drive the project. Also my use of the axonometric is multilayered: it not only serves as a depiction device it also enables ordering of information.

Technique one contributes to the aims of this research by opening up unexpected possibilities for relationships between Cartesian-space and time-space.<sup>43</sup> The combinations and interactions between a representational device, plant morphology, and operational moves produce complex behaviour. The plant information acts as a flock, not a snapshot. Not only do the properties of plant growth reside within an easy-to-use and ordered scaffold enabling it to be utilised in any design process, but the technique itself, which makes use of plant categorisation, plant distribution and redistribution, has no real end. It is not the aim of this analytic tool to produce a finished design, but rather to delay the translation of base information and brief instructions into concepts. The notion of 'end' is often a convenient fiction for landscape architects, and is usually displayed by way of plans. Utilising this technique, these 'fictions' are apt to be swamped at any time by other ideas, other information, and outside influences. Why not operate within a system that accepts these interruptions and utilises them?

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<sup>43</sup> Cartesian-space refers to a system of representing points in space along three axes (x,y,z). Time-space is where momentary happenings occur, these can be recorded utilising the Cartesian-space of the axonometric system.



## **Technique two: variations, collage, diagram**

The aim of this technique is to unpick existing site elements, for example, marginal spaces, support structures and edges, in order to reveal forces and intensities apparent in a particular landscape: in this case Boston Road. The technique utilises variations, the media and theoretical underpinnings of collage, landscape systems as described by Kwinter (having the ability to create decisive, but entirely unpredictable qualitative fluctuations in shape, activity, or organisation), and draws on Allen's ideas of diagrams. The contribution to the overall project that this technique makes is, first, it utilises a fine art technique of variations in the context of landscape architecture, which enables the perspectival qualities of photographs to be transformed into planar images made up of various line weights, loose mark-making and geometric scaffolds, thus realising a different view point, one that could perhaps be described as multidimensional. This is then transformed back into perspectival view revealing a multiplicity of conditions. This permits the re-reading and then folding-in of site analysis photos to landscape design process. Second, collage is utilised to represent individual moments of an overall system (edges) apparent in this landscape. Thirdly, this technique permits the inclusion of diagrams as generative tools, which enable the meshing of systems (edges) and the new readings, unveiled, as an outcome of the variations. As with technique one this technique resides in the analysis phase of design process. The resultant drawings reveal a richer analysis of existing site conditions.

### **Method**

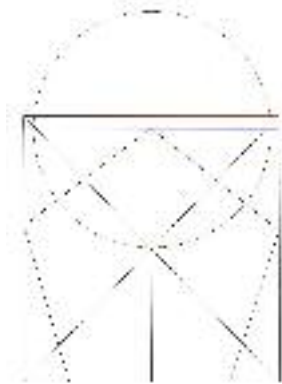
1. Record existing site information using a camera
2. Select images that define characteristics of the site
3. Perform variations
4. Select landscape system and create collages that articulate individual moments
5. Visually analyse collages and produce diagrams
6. Use diagrammatic instructions to change and alter variations
7. Reflect on results

## Description

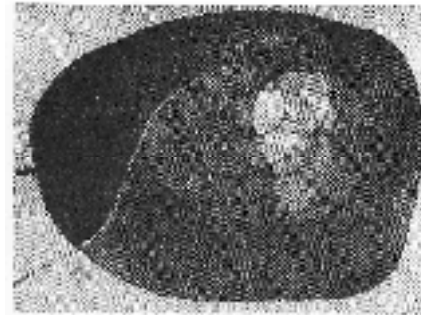
I began with site analysis photos and then traced the lines of the photographs, physically moving this drawing away from the photograph. In doing so I concentrated on the rich creative force and the expressiveness that the borrowing of variations from fine art allows. I could focus on possibilities of form invention and organisation, bought about by the transferral of the visual material from a perspectival image on to a flat plane. I was concerned with imagination and experience without the go-between of a 'subject'. Freed from the direct copies of the 'subject' it was possible to emphasise and articulate changes in level that I nominated using shadows. The resultant drawings are multi-dimensional; they can be read as either two or three dimensional entities. In the same way that each of Picasso's variations responds to the previous one only, I progressed through three variations the last of which returns to the convention of the original source material, perspective, to better illustrate the significant changes from the original images (fig's. 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15).

Next, through the use of collage, I have articulated important aspects of the system of edges. The collages are ideas surrounding scale, transferral, and density, ideas drawn from the way edges work in ecology (as explained earlier). I made the collages by using the digital source images from the initial site investigation, which contain important information about texture, materials, and colour etc. Collage 1, (fig. 16), encapsulates my articulation of changing scales in an edge. I tried to capture changes in depth as well as a sense of changes in width. The two green areas towards the outsides of the collage appear to come forward, particularly the bottom area as it meets the very dark part of the mid-section of the collage. The upper mid-section sits in a midway point in space, while the blue area sinks deeply into the collage. The three areas are linked by strips across the face, yet these strips weave through the areas sometimes foregrounded sometimes not. The main body of the collage is very detailed while the outer edges break up into ambiguous (un-scaled) white space. Collage 2, (fig. 17), articulates transfers within the edge. It has two sides which information emerges from and passes across. Information originates from one side and cumulates as it passes across the edge; this is then dumped and dispersed on the other side. It draws on the rich transfer and ever-changing nature of the edge. Colour, texture, and density help to create a sense of depth. Particle size is important to Collage 3, (fig. 18), which captures the idea of density contained within the edge. In the rich centre of the collage, particle size is smaller and tightly packed illustrating complexity. By way of contrast, at the outer edges of the collage the particle size increases, which shows a lessening of density and larger areas of the same material. As the collage progresses toward the centre this information breaks up and becomes thickened.

My diagram work draws on precedents set by artists such as David Hockney, Piero della Francesca (1416 – 1492), and landscape architects including Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900 – 1996) and Roberto Burle Marx (1909 – 1994). The work of Piero illustrates on occasion, the appropriation of Euclidean geometry as an ordering compositional scaffold, for example, his painting *Baptism of Christ*,<sup>44</sup> 1442, National Gallery, London. Burle Marx's design for the rose garden at Cliveden uses Paul Klee's *The Fruit*, 1932, estate of Mies van der Rohe, Chicago, as a compositional scaffold. Piero and Burle Marx both use an existing scaffold to determine composition; Piero's was Euclidean Geometry and Burle Marx's was Paul Klee's painting. My diagrams have utilised this idea by using the collages depicting scale, transfer and density as scaffolds for their conception. I have rationalised and explained the collages through the production of diagrams – the equivalent of Euclidean Geometry in Piero's painting.



Piero's *Baptism of Christ* with geometric overlay of Euclid's proposition 16, Book 4. From M. A. Lavin's *Piero della Francesca*, New York, 1992.



Paul Klee's *The Fruit* with Roberto Burle Marx's redesign of the rose gardens at Cliveden. From J. Jellicoe, *The Studies of a Landscape Architect Over 80 years*, 1996.

My diagrams are tools that enable landscape functions such as retaining and directing to mesh with an existing system. In the same way that, “edges are not stable, permanent borders, but change position, function and interpatch,”<sup>45</sup> these diagrams operate. They have the capacity to receive and process many types of information, for example form, materials and people, and the working drawings produced through their use illustrate the processing of this information.

<sup>44</sup> B. Laskowski, *Masters of Italian Art, Piero della Francesca*, Germany, 1998. p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> A. Farina, *op.cit.*, p. 214.

Diagrams generated from within the project have a deeper connection to the project. They are better suited to be used as methodological tools rather than as idea generators. In order to generate diagrams for this project I laid a sheet of trace over each of the collages and then attempted to work out in a mathematical manner how they worked. Diagram 1: scale, (fig. 19), contains information about differing scales. These scales are represented by the numbers 1:50, 1:100, and 1:200, each of which are commonly used in landscape architecture (these could be substituted by other scales if a project brief contains given scales). These areas were identified through visual analysis of the collage and then plotted on to the trace overlay. Where areas of differing scales overlapped, new scales were created: 1:75 and 1:150. The areas of scale differences were then plotted on to an x and y axes at 1 metre intervals creating a set of coordinates. This enabled the diagram to become a tool that could be used to change and alter information. Diagrams 2 and 3 utilise these coordinates. Diagram 2: transfer north, transfer south, (figs. 20 & 21), were constructed by visually examining Collage 2. Areas of thick transfer activity within the edges were selected and outlined. The general direction of the transfer was plotted and measured, as was the dispersal of the transferred information. The position of the original thick areas of transfer could be located using the aforementioned coordinates and plotted on the x and y axes. Diagram 3: density, (fig. 22), was produced by visually examining Collage 3. Areas of differing levels of cohesiveness were identified and plotted, their positions are identifiable because the same set of coordinates were used on the x and y axes. In short the collages were visually examined and the findings plotted mathematically.

Each of these diagrams was then tested using the support perspective generated through the variations phase of the process. Because the support image was depicted in perspectival form the challenge was: how do I transform a three-dimensional image using multi-dimensional diagrams? The x and y axes, in combination with perspectival norms, the vanishing point and the horizon line, provided me with the answer to this question. The diagrams have a set of scaled coordinates that run along the x and y axes. These axes were projected from the vanishing points that made up the perspective. The point where they crossed gave me the starting point of the perspective, and therefore I was able to accurately position the perspectival image (support form) within the 'scaffold' of the axes. The rules of the diagrams could then be carried out because the axes contained coordinates locating areas of either scale change, transfers, or differing densities. The diagrams were applied cumulatively in the order that they were produced. The scales on the y axis changed the planes of the perspective that were adjacent to the y axis and the scales of the x axis changed the adjacent planes to the x axis. The scale changes were determined by the specific scales that were plotted on the axes (fig. 23). Next, the two transfer diagrams were applied to this drawing. The locations of the original thick areas of transfer were plotted on to the new perspective depiction. The information

contained within its boundaries was then relocated and re-integrated into the drawing according to the distance and direction of that particular transfer. The dispersal was carried out by projecting the lines further out to the dispersal boundaries before the new form was closed in. The working drawings show the individual transfers. These transfers were then incorporated into the existing support form (fig's. 24 & 25). Then the density diagram was applied and levels of cohesiveness were plotted onto the results of the application of the transfer diagram (fig. 26).

## Specific Reflections

The drawings which were produced through the use of variations contain overlapping principles associated with both perspective techniques and plan techniques, such as, notions of vanishing points, sometimes multiple, and the idea of shadow to imply depth or level changes. Some of the drawings have recognisable elements in them, for instance the nuts and bolts associated with mechanics and the mouldings of distinctive architecture. Others are more abstract and rely only on the aforementioned representational techniques to convey information. The more abstract works seem to float; the white background becomes part of the whole picture rather than becoming a ground on to which marks have been made. The abstract works reveal a condition of particular value: their ability to be part of something bigger. Many Abstractionist painters, in particular Piet Mondrian (1872 -1944),<sup>46</sup> believed that in order to reveal relationships between things (or in my case the moments contained in the photographic images), naturalism must be avoided as it can veil or disguise these relationships.

This is a useful technique to introduce to any design process: if you take away the 'whatness' of a subject you are still left with the 'thisness'. This may now reveal other qualities and conditions that known perception has veiled. This technique may help to break down the strong connection between visual characteristics of photographs and resultant design moves. In terms of the objectives of this project this technique offers ways of unlocking the necessity for absolutes (in this case unlocking many ways of utilising a photograph) when engaging in site analysis, for example, the concept of haecceity, or unique properties are embedded within photographs, however through the act of taking the photograph they are made into snapshots or

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<sup>46</sup> Anon, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

absolutes. They are viewed as final and static. Utilizing this technique the unique properties can be released, for example, the support image can now be imagined as performing many roles rather than just supporting: it can be seen as containing, directing, retaining, solidifying, repeating, all of which are useful ideas to contemplate when designing as they contribute to a more complex understanding of existing site conditions. The perspectival 'form' is more than just a form, it is a container which holds these ideas and this is why I refer to it as being part of something bigger than just an image. This technique, it is hoped, will generate new paths to conceptual and creative uses of photographs within the landscape architectural design process.

The collages are my articulation of edges. There are many possible ways of articulating scale, transferral and density, however as Kwinter<sup>47</sup> suggests if there was one formula for these (which there is not) it would be like a set of instructions for those who are short on intuition. He also argues that by removing the designer from the design loop and mechanising the design process, it would render the resultant work free of subjectivity. Technique two creates generative methods; it does not focus on telling a designer how to design. An analogy can be found in the drawing of freehand perspectives. There are methods for drawing accurate perspectives, ways of ensuring accurate proportions and angles, however once these are given to the drawer it is up to them to create the drawing, which will reflect their own interests. Musical chords operate in the same way. There are many ways these can be combined and put together yet the underlying method of the chords' construction is always the same. This relates to landscape forces and patterns of organisation, it is the 'thissness' of the forces that enable stasis to be superseded within the framework of this analysis. The patterns of organisation are unique at any moment and can be described as an event. The contribution of technique two also resides in the combination of systems, and collage. Utilising collage as a medium of depiction allows systems to be less concerned with spatial layout and more concerned with alignments and connections to existing landscape forces. Utilizing this technique in any design process will propose alternative ways of ordering information that permit intensities and the idea of multiplicity of a landscape situation to emerge.

The diagrams are self-made and have grown out of the system of edges. They are not diagrams that illustrate a potential idea, like those described by Allen in *Points + Lines*. The overall purpose of this procedure is to produce techniques that may allow landscapes to be read as intensities, to realise the potentials of uniqueness in order to add to the rich histories associated with authorship, picture making, and linear process. My diagrams contribute

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<sup>47</sup> S. Kwinter, Leap into the Void: A New Organon?, in *Anyhow*, London, 1998. pp. 23-27.

to the aims of this project by utilising the media of collage. The system from which they are generated is made up of ever-changing conditions leading to the results of the diagrammatic tests not looking like either edges or the diagrams that were used to alter them, but they are forms, layouts, and vessels that not only act like edges, but their creation is governed by the way edges work. Forces existing in the site have been revealed and then intersected with an overall system in the site generating a richer understanding of how this landscape operates.

This technique can be fed into the design process at any analysis stage. For example, maps generated through a mapping process could be changed according to systems that operate in the landscape, zoning drawings could be re-interpreted according to that same system, and as is evident in this project, photographs could be unpacked and re-combined using this technique.

## Technique three: multidimensionality

Technique three utilises Cornwall Park as a site where beginning points within the analysis phase of landscape design process are reframed. In contrast to recording existing 'static' site elements and conditions as described in technique two, here examples of the forces described throughout this project are recorded at the outset. This addresses incorporating landscape forces within the analysis phase of design process and generates outcomes that explain ways that these individual moments operate in the landscape, giving directives for future design work. This technique draws on concepts of multidimensionality. The Cubists, particularly Picasso, and the Abstractionists were exponents of these concepts. The concept of multidimensionality is evident, as discussed earlier, in Pablo's work *Femme Couchee*, but it occurs, with perhaps more relevance to this technique during the analytical phase of Cubism. We find evidence of the painter dismantling objects and having analysed them into component elements rearranging them in a new order. This new articulation reiterates the sentiments of the Abstractionists. The potency and relevance of this new articulation is reinforced by the Abstractionists' belief that no imitation can ever reflect the strength and beauty in the appearance of nature. In order to depict nature fully we must find another way.<sup>48</sup> Technique three permits landscape moments recorded in photographs to contribute to the landscape design process in a way that realises a multidimensional understanding of the site.

### Method

1. Record landscape moments using a digital camera
2. Reconfigure the images to foreground the moments
3. Produce compositions that describe and explain the particular unique qualities of the moments
4. Draw the ideas or concepts
5. Utilise collage to combine drawings of concepts and explanations of unique qualities
6. Elucidate the collages through diagrams
7. Reflect on results

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<sup>48</sup> C. Harrison, P. Wood, eds., *Art in Theory 1900-2000 An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, USA, 1993. p. 287.



## Description

The first production step in this technique was the taking of photographs which tried to capture what I considered to be temporal qualities at the site. These were the transient nature of birds, impulsive running patterns, and speeds and slowness within the site. I composed the photographs in an attempt to foreground the temporal conditions contained within each picture without subscribing to ideas of outside looking in (as described earlier with reference to Hockney) or the rules of perspective. An attempt was made to highlight the intensities of the subject matter, while removing these from their context. This placed emphasis on the forces and the specific conditions of each without referencing the total landscape. This illustrates the idea that landscapes work via the communication and intersection of many strata or webs of forces and flows. I introduced colour to encode the images with chromatic data. I also increased scale, utilised repetition, and added draughted line. This was an attempt to emphasise the forces. These images were intuitive encapsulations of the information, which through my own mark-making, endeavoured to yield a richer understanding of the aforementioned temporal landscape qualities (figs. 27, 29, & 31).

I then generated a series of compositions that foregrounded concepts of matter being there one moment and not there the next and then somewhere else, and different velocities working through and past the site. In a sense these were another variation which attempts to quantify and qualify the particular way that the various intensities worked. In a similar way to the early Abstractionists the structural and dramatic qualities of the forces were highlighted, while the purely visual characteristics were suppressed. As a result of the previous compositions, and an example of my richer understanding of the situation I used a number of words to augment the images. These words were chance, change, potentiality, here, there, not there, measurable, immeasurable, thick, continuous, peak and trough.

The bird image highlights how there is transferral on site, that there are areas of chance, change and potentiality and areas of constancy and areas where there are overlaps and layers of these conditions (fig. 28). The running composition shows how scale and measurability can coincide with immeasurability, how foreground, background and middle ground deform into one (fig. 30). The differing velocities are articulated in terms of peaks, troughs, and thicknesses, on a continuum (fig. 32). The media techniques used to generate these site articulations explore new ways of measuring

conditions, through tonal range, mark-making and textural references. They also combine the representational techniques of loose drawing, draughting, collage, and printed text in order to encapsulate the complexity and the many overlapping conditions on site.

By interpreting the photographs in this way it was now possible to come up with ideas surrounding notions of transferral, stacking and shifting, and transformation. Contained within the transferral composition are ideas of things being here, there and not there. This way of understanding the flows that are moving through the site contributes to my next set of drawings. Abstraction was utilised to unpick the particular characteristics of the forces operating in the site. These were then conceptualised through drawing. This way of working differs from drawings that depict naturalistic viewpoints or drawings completed at the site as they depict ideas rather than objects and places. The ideas are articulated in drawings that show giant moving fields that shift and change angle, position, materiality, and have stacking capabilities. Two organisational structures have been derived from the running and velocity compositions. Both are meshes that have elements of measurability and immeasurability contained within them. These are layered over the giant fields forming a complex movement mesh (fig. 33). A critical aspect of these drawings is that they don't depict forms on a site. Rather they attempt to articulate ideas of haecceity that have their origins in the initial site photographs. They are drawings that help us to understand how the site is operating. In short, the forces operate through stacking, and shift in both position and angle, with two underlying movement systems functioning in tandem.

The next set of drawings utilises aspects of the aforementioned conditions (stacking, shifts in position and angle, and the two movement systems) to further develop these ideas. Because the site is operating through stacking, shifts in position etc. I utilise collage, the qualities of which are discussed earlier, to re-combine the analytical compositions (figs. 28, 30, & 32), and the images that express the ideas behind these compositions (fig. 33). Combining the 'abstract' diagrammatic drawings with sketches is an attempt to juggle reality and abstraction with a view to moving from an aesthetic to a metaphysical understanding of the forces inherent in the site. They are stacked, shifted in terms of angles, position and scale, and are ordered by the two mesh systems (fig. 34).

In order to illustrate the rich possibilities contained within technique two I have completed three more drawings which indicate this richness. The first of which is Change Chance (fig. 35). This diagram shows how by removing and adding the individual moments of here, there, and not there, differing

configurations of space could evolve and change. Stack, Shift is the second of the drawings (fig. 36). It illustrates how stacked conditions, such as flying, running, and velocities, can produce unfolding events as the concept of here, there and not there moves through them, creating a cumulative effect where there is the potential for many events to occur at once. Thirdly the drawing Move, Transform (fig. 37) shows transformations within regular structures in a site, such as ground plane, that happen when unpredictable intensities are intersected with it. The regular is able to accept and absorb this change.

## **Specific Reflections**

My drawings have folded in, and are encoded with, temporal information contained within photographs. This is an augmentation of the more usual use of photographs to determine, for instance, the facilitating or screening of view shafts, or analysis of existing landscape structures.

Images that are stylised, abstracted, and distorted can often be dismissed as not being like the world, because they don't look like the world. My work could be seen as such distortions. It is easy to hold up a photograph and say, 'see, this is what it looks like'. However, when we do this we are accepting one view-point, one angle, perspectival rules, and the concept of outside looking in. My work attempts to achieve a multidimensional understanding of site photography, in particular, images, which record landscape moments. This multidimensional perspective offers other ways of interpreting and understanding the forces and flows (made up of intensities and individual moments) that are functioning in and through the site. The process by which I have gone about this highlights the idea that landscape architecture is a regulator, meaning that this design process taps into the forces and flows, and extracts intensities and expresses them in terms of configurations and forms. This, rather than providing one solution for site problems or coming up with a static design for a bounded area, provides directives for the way the designer could go about configuring the landscape.

In order to engage with forces and intensities it is necessary to engage with what may, at first, seem to be abstractions or distortions. The 'real' views contained within the initial photographs taken at the beginning of this technique do not immediately reveal the underlying qualities embedded in them.

My results could be read as organisations of space, perspectival views of forms, or actual landscape elements. The multidimensional nature of these images suggests that understanding the unique properties of the landscape is important and is useful for future design moves.

## Conclusion

Modernist designer James C. Rose states in his essay *Freedom in the Garden*, “no absolute exists in design any more than it does in nature. It is human, perhaps, to cling to a lifeline, but we only do so when we are afraid...fear dissolves the intelligence and blocks the vision.”<sup>49</sup>

Important to this project is the idea that in order to develop new ways of understanding within landscape architectural practice and theory it is necessary to feed on the rich histories that have built the profession and also be prepared to, on occasion, inject new techniques to supplement these.

This project is comprised of three techniques intended to supplement and contribute to the development of landscape architectural analysis. There are relationships between the three techniques that build as the project progresses. Technique one utilises a landscape competition brief with specifics regarding theme, material, and site dimension. Analysis in the ‘on site’ sense was limited; therefore it was necessary to determine ways of getting underneath the nature of the information supplied. The analysis was driven by re-conceptualising the given. The words that formed an important part of the brief were unpacked by choosing a verb that described the way that, in this case, ‘community’ worked. The verb (flock) could then be utilised as a graphic activity with which to understand the materials supplied, in this case plants, within the frame of community. The nature of this technique is one of hybridity: it combines operator with axonometric.

Technique two finds ways of determining ‘invisible’ qualities within existing conditions through an analysis process. In contrast to the Chelsea competition, ‘real’ information was available to hand, because a site visit could be made. Therefore a different treatment for the analysis of the information could be employed. This involved finding graphic techniques that enabled a re-reading of the existing conditions. This revealed the underlying forces embedded in the existing. Rather than turning words into graphic operators, existing graphic devices such as collage and diagrams were employed. These tools enabled relationships that had previously been inaccessible to be foregrounded. Analysis carried out in this way illustrates how forces that are flowing through landscapes change and alter according to particularities. In this case scale, transfer, and density are the

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<sup>49</sup> J.C. Rose, *Freedom in the Garden*, in, *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, ed. M. Treib, London, 1993. p. 70.

particularities of the edge system. Technique two utilises the reframing technique variations and then the combination of diagram and collage as a vehicle for the intersection of systems with forces emerging as a result of the final variations.

Technique three reframes beginning points for landscape architects within the analysis phase of landscape design process. In contrast to recording existing 'static' site elements and conditions as described in technique two: here examples of the forces described throughout this project are recorded at the outset. This addresses the incorporation of landscape forces within the analysis phase of design process, and generates outcomes that explain ways that these individual moments operate in the landscape. This type of beginning, which differs from the previous two techniques, directs the analysis: techniques one and two concentrate on extracting and unveiling the forces, whereas the third unpicks how the forces work, what qualities they have and as a result provides some directive for how they could be used. The previous two techniques have been dealing with normative beginnings, yet suggesting other analysis techniques when approaching a design problem. This technique conjectures an alternative method of start point. It asks that the landscape architect or student record site information with forces and flows in mind.

The techniques and materials I have been working with in this research, such as systems, collage, ordering devices, and diagrams, are all a part of landscape architecture. Landscapes operate in the same way as collages. They are not based on geometric ways of seeing, but they are full of overlapping and changing ordering devices, sometimes hierarchical, sometimes organic, and they are diagrams in the sense that they allow for a multiplicity of events to unfold through their territories. Landscape architecture, perhaps more than other design disciplines, is involved with these ideas because it can utilise dynamic systems, change, and chance, as its building blocks. These building blocks are rich with dynamic information. Therefore the way we represent these landscapes should reflect this. This in turn ensures that the way we design the landscape reflects this process.

My techniques reflect ever-developing patterns in the landscape and are indicative of the temporal nature of landscapes.

Images have been produced that do not seem to be part of a subject matter that we can already categorise and this idea is introduced to the design process. This abstraction, as discussed, stems from an avoidance of naturalistic painting techniques. Doing this helped the Abstractionists to understand the world as multi-faceted place. In much the same way, my techniques break down strong connections between visual characteristics of

photographs and resultant design moves. This project offers ways of unlocking unseen landscape qualities contained within photographs. Images have been developed that are vessels or containers which hold ideas rather than instruments that depict forms.

The work develops generative techniques that accept subjectivity and utilize intuition. In combining existing methodologies and, on occasion, injecting my own inventions, I am concerned less with spatial layout and more with alignments and connections. The result is a proposition about alternative ways of ordering information that permit the more ephemeral characteristics of landscapes to emerge.

My investigation then is intended to allow for the elaboration of increasingly rich and intricate landscape rhythms in order to enable the deployment of these by landscape students and professionals. This involves thinking of landscape architecture as a facilitator and regulator of rhythmic moments occurring in the landscape, rather than as a tool with which to configure objects contained within bounded terrains. The project encourages and supplies techniques for engaging with landscape moments and in doing so reframes landscape architecture, through focusing on processes of formation and by harnessing the inventive capacity of representation. It is hoped that this work could help landscape students to think more laterally about the ways that landscapes operate. They may then be able to draw on this knowledge in order to approach design from an angle that acknowledges and utilises such landscape operations.

The project as a whole address concepts of haecceity within a landscape architectural context by attempting to extract and understand the vital and often unseen forces that flow through landscapes. The three techniques facilitate the inclusion of these ideas in the analysis phase of design process. Deleuze and Guattari talk of no origins, no destinations and no beginnings or ends, when they refer to haecceity; instead they prefer to say it is always in the middle. I have augmented the analysis phase, which resides in the middle of the design process, with concepts of haecceity. Further, forces and flows coursing through landscapes do not have boundaries and do not start and finish, they are continually changing, stretching and weaving throughout the landscape. When various different forces and flows come together at one time particular and specific events emerge. This project attempts to utilise this way of understanding landscapes by providing analysis methods whereby forces and flows can be uncovered and understood. It is my premise that foregrounding intensities, working with them, and actually working in a similar way that they work, can produce different beginnings for landscape architects and students. This research builds on the work conducted by designers and theoreticians such as Corner, Rahim, Kwinter and

Koolhaas as well as work carried out in Universities such as RMIT, in Australia and disseminated in publications such as *Technique*. Its scope is such that it begins only to uncover some of the interesting and important intensities moving through landscapes. It grapples with terms such as individual moments and intensities, which in themselves display the relative infancy of this work and the potential for further study into the application of my three techniques within landscape design processes and studios.

The representations are limited here to rendering visible some of the rhythms and forces operating in the landscape. It is hoped that this will enable forces that have always operated in the landscape to be uncovered. This has been achieved in the main by means of abstraction and by reframing the given. The techniques for this have been derived from the contemporary thinking in architecture about diagrams and from the discipline of fine art. Architecture has been drawn on for its close relationship with landscape architecture, in particular its use of diagrams and its move towards describing process and matter as ecologies. The fine arts offer the freedom to be abstract, intuitive, and experimental, whilst still having a deep theoretical underpinning. Landscape's agenda is unique. It has the capacity to utilise the freedom most often associated with art because it deals with itinerant and changing conditions, yet it also has a public responsibility to deliver purposeful outcomes. This project attempts to utilise the freedom of art in order to deliver ways of analysing that reflects the variable nature of landscapes. Further research is required into the delivery of public outcomes using these techniques.



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