Landscape Architecture: A Terminal Case?

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Landscape Architecture: A Terminal Case?

Abstract
Late last year, two faculty members at Iowa State University circulated a manifesto to other departments of landscape architecture, charging that the field has outlived its historic purpose. Read excerpts from the manifest below, then read what Gary Hilderbrand, FASLA; Peter Jacobs, FASLA; Elizabeth Meyer, FASLA; Patrick A. Miller, FASLA; James Palmer, FASLA; Steven Velegrinis; and Peter Walker, FASLA, and Jane Gillette had to say in response.

Disciplines

Comments
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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: A TERMINAL CASE?

Late last year, two faculty members at Iowa State University circulated a manifesto to other departments of landscape architecture, charging that the field has outlived its historic purpose. Read excerpts from the manifesto below, then read what Gary Hilderbrand, FASLA; Peter Jacobs, FASLA; Elizabeth Meyer, FASLA; Patrick A. Miller, FASLA; James Palmer, FASLA; Steven Velegrinis; and Peter Walker, FASLA, and Jane Gillette had to say in response.

AN APOCALYPTIC MANIFESTO*
By Heidi Hobmann, ASLA, and Joern Langhorst

At the start of the twenty-first century, landscape architecture is a troubled profession, more distinguished by what it lacks than the qualities that it actually possesses. It has no historiography, no formal theory, and no definition, direction, or focus. A vast schism currently exists between its academics and its professional practitioners. In universities across the nation, researchers poach methodologies from other, more vibrant disciplines. Meanwhile, in professional offices, designers yoked to the bottom line crank out pedestrian design.

We believe these problems are pervasive and chronic. They indicate that landscape architecture is not just troubled, but sick. The condition of the patient is critical, requiring immediate attention.

SIX SYMPTOMS
Proof of landscape architecture’s decline can be found in the following six symptoms:

1. Landscape architecture has lost its roots in intellectual thought, culture, and literature.

Landscape architecture hardly resembles its former incarnations. This loss of identity has occurred mainly because of its loss of vital connections to other fields. Historically, landscape architecture maintained integral and dynamic relationships to a variety of pursuits, from painting to sewerage. In eighteenth-century England, for example, landscape architecture was, in concert with painting and poetry, one of the three graces, which together influenced

*This is a condensed version of the manifesto. To read it in its entirety, visit www.iastate.edu/~isitdead.
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broader artistic ideas. In the nineteenth century, landscape architecture was tied to literary ideas and transcendentalism; practitioners like Olmsted and Cleveland worked alongside Emerson, Longfellow, and Thoreau, extrapolating literature and philosophy into built form.

Landscape architecture today has no such reciprocal connections to current music, literature, or even popular culture. Landscape architects today are relegated to the sidelines. Architects still largely view landscape architects as mere helpmates, to be ignored and abandoned when the economy is tight.

The relationship of landscape architecture to its allied professions is today parasitic rather than mutual: It takes more than it gives. Landscape architecture has replaced original and inventive thought with shameless, superficial borrowing from other disciplines. Landscape architecture today no longer creates new ideas; it simply interprets those of other disciplines in the media of turf and trees, earth, and concrete pavers.

2. Landscape architecture no longer has connections to power and politics that historically defined its periods of greatest production, innovation, and prestige.

Historically, periods of professional visibility and strength have also been characterized by strong connections to political regimes or to sources of power, money, and influence. André Le Nôtre designed for the Sun Kings just as Alphand and Haussmann created public open spaces under the dictatorship of Napoleon III. The English Landscape Gardening School and Brown, Repton, Price, and Knight were supported by the political power of wealthy landowners; Gilmore Clarke and Horace Albright linked their aspirations to the careers and public policies of Harold Ickes, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Robert Moses. In contrast, landscape architects today hide from politics and refuse to engage openly in the broader world of public policy.

Nor does the profession register on the radar screens of the powerful. In 1804, Thomas Jefferson, then president of the United States, was well versed in landscape gardening and clearly, based on his 1782 land survey act, understood the importance of land and landscape on the future development of the United States. In 2004, however, does George Bush know

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what landscape architecture is and understand its potential value? Or, more to the point, perhaps, does Bill Gates? Who, besides landscape architects, really cares about landscape architecture?

3. Landscape architecture has not replaced the loss of intellectual roots and political leverage with any new or important context or support.

In particular, landscape architecture is not tied into popular culture in any meaningful way. It has ignored the power inherent in popular culture and popular ideas.

Landscape architecture is too familiar, too seemingly simple: To build a house is complicated, but everybody can plant a tree and mow a lawn. Landscape architects have allowed others—Martha Stewart, cable TV—to promote gardening as a consumer activity. Such professional lethargy is in marked contrast to Garrett Eckbo and Larry Halprin's use of Sunset magazine to popularize their work and then leverage this popularity into more important, more durable, and more visible public work.

This is part of a continuing pattern. For example: Landscape architects, pioneers of modern parkways in the 1930s, relinquished road design to engineers in the 1950s, relegate themselves to highway planting design. In a similar way, urban planning has largely become the domain of architects, transportation engineers, and developers.

4. Landscape architecture, as currently practiced, is a deeply conservative activity.

Landscape architecture today is overly concerned with conservation. By this, we do not only mean that it seeks to conserve physical, natural, and cultural resources, but that it also seeks to conserve economic, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual resources. Landscapes today are constructed to preclude controversy, to prevent cost overruns, and to avert liability. The resulting landscapes of practice are uniform, built to CLARB standards of imagination.

In other words, the fearful field of landscape architecture takes few risks and
5. Landscape architecture today has no central or core defining values.

This lamentable situation is new. Historically, periods of professional dynamism and strength in landscape architecture are correlated with strong social agendas. In the early 1800s, the profession's gestation period, landscape architecture existed for a particularly compelling reason: the amelioration of social conditions caused by industrialization. It is no coincidence that landscape architecture gained prominence through the success of the Olmsteds in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States, where a democratic political system, combined with a huge influx of immigrants, accelerated social reform in the face of modernization.

Such professional strength, through a connection to social reform, also characterized the 1930s, when landscape architects created new typologies such as parkways and residential subdivisions, while implementing the quasi-socialist vision of the Roosevelt administration. The 1950s and 1960s were another period of professional vigor, fueled by the social ideals of Modern architecture as transformed and translated into landscape by the likes of Garrett Eckbo, James Rose, Hideo Sasaki, M. Paul Friedberg, and Larry Halprin.

In contrast, landscape architecture today lacks a compelling and unifying social agenda. Instead, it is scattered among ever-increasing and increasingly disparate types of practice, ranging from garden design to GIS applications. But these practice types define activities, and activities do not provide a professional raison d'être.

As a result, no one, not even landscape architects, knows what landscape architecture really is.

6. If landscape architecture cannot define a current direction, neither can it cope with its status as an undefined and undefinable profession.

In 1981, Stephen Krog's article "Is It Art?" unleashed a brief firestorm of vitriolic debate on the nature of landscape architec-
Landscape architecture today is distinctly anticontroversy, and as a result the field doesn’t know how to critically evaluate work or what to do with criticism when it gets it.

Is There a Cure?
If there is consensus that landscape architecture is an ailing profession, then there has also been no shortage of proposed therapies. Well-meaning members of the profession regularly offer up panaceas in the exciting guise of “redefining the profession.” Such cures vary from reforming education to “designing with nature,” “expanding the field,” “recovering landscape,” and “(de)forming, in(forming), and re(forming) landscape.”

Despite their catchy slogans, these therapies have done little to heal the patient. It seems to us that it’s time to more closely examine the many proposals to reinvigorate landscape architecture. In the following section, we dissect five of the most blatantly optimistic and most frequently presented cures to determine what, if any, promise they hold for reviving the patient.

1. The development of a critical discourse will reenergize landscape architecture’s moribund nature.

Critical dialogue isn’t a solution to landscape architecture’s problems in part because the field has never sustained a critical dialogue. Landscape architecture has never had a major critical voice, preferring commentators or observers like Grady Clay, J. B. Jackson, and John Dixon Hunt over “real” architectural critics like Ada Louise Huxtable, Herbert Muschamp, and Robert Campbell. Landscape architecture

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today is distinctly anticontroversy, and as a result the field doesn't know how to critically evaluate work or what to do with criticism when it gets it.

2. If landscape architecture could learn to present its contributions to human welfare in a more convincing manner, it would be understood and embraced by all.

This remedy proposes that landscape architecture is merely a misunderstood profession, unknown to the public at large, and that its problems will be solved by better—and more—communication with the public.

However, the inability of the profession to convey its value to the public is not so much a function of poor communication as it is a result of the profession's discomfort with its ambiguous nature. Until landscape architecture knows what it is, no one else will, either.

3. The formulation of a body of theory will unify the disparate activities of landscape architecture and provide a direction for the field.

The lack of landscape architectural theory would appear to be a problem, at least to theoretical thinkers. But is the development of landscape architecture theory a viable solution to the waning nature of the profession?

Theory is an intellectual practice, and as a field emerging from the earth, landscape architecture has always had a distinctly anti-intellectual streak, which grows stronger as a global market and service economy are brought to bear on the profession. Theory will please academics but will do little to bridge the growing gulf between academics and practice.

And what is landscape architectural theory? Much of what's being proposed as theory is appropriated from other fields—probably necessary given that landscape architecture evolved from a diverse set of preexisting disciplines. As a result, the profession's multiple areas of activity are now spawning multiple theories, theories the big thinkers of the profession would like to parlay into a unifying theory of design. But is this really possible? Seeing landscape architecture as a unifying discipline, an incarnation of cross-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity, might be heartwarming but seems a little presumptuous given the profession's current insularity.

4. Ecology and sustainable design will breathe new life into landscape architecture, which will then become the bastion of applied ecology and the protector of the Earth.

Though often presented as a new and revolutionary concept, ecology was not absent at the roots of the profession, as seen in the work of designers as diverse as Repton, Olmsted, and Jensen. Their picturesque/pastoral landscape ideal—a highly diverse landscape, a dense mosaic of different habitats, well connected and rich in ecotones—is the image that underlies,
The inability of the profession to convey its value to the public is not so much a function of poor communication as it is a result of the profession’s discomfort with its ambiguous nature.

implicitly or explicitly, most “ecological” designs to this day.

The question of whether ecology is just a green veneer for the profession or whether landscape architecture becomes ecological design is mostly semantics. The larger issue is that landscape architecture is inextricably caught in the nature-culture/art-science dialectic, and by trying to be both art and science and nature and culture, the profession does a good job at neither.

5. Landscape architecture is uniquely situated to be an experimental field less bound by formal and technical constraints and should be reinvented as such.

In light of landscape architecture’s disconnect from economic and political power, this would seem a rather grandiloquent statement. Yet despite the field’s obvious lack of power and influence to implement its own creations, the hope of a “new” experimental landscape architecture persists.

In fact, landscape architecture used to be an experimental field, aligning itself with and participating in the big cultural projects of enlightenment and modernism. Today, however, participation in a culture determined by multivalent post-modern pluralism is necessary for experimentation, and this does not sit well with landscape architecture’s conservative base values: its lack of risk taking and anticontroversial attitudes. The landscape experiment is therefore undertaken by other disciplines.

**DOES THE PATIENT HAVE THE WILL TO LIVE?**

It is also possible that no amount of medical heroics will save the ailing patient. What if, for instance, the failure of landscape architecture is contained in its genetics?

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The existence of landscape architecture as a concept, as coined by J. C. Loudon, dates only to 1840, and its use as a professional title to 1862, when Olmsted and Vaux described themselves as landscape architects. The field coalesced from a diverse set of related pursuits—among them agriculture, building, architecture, gardening, and painting/representation—in response to a particular set of political and cultural conditions, including increasing populations, urban growth, the rise of individualism, and industrialization, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

However, the forces that held a disparate set of activities together as the discipline of landscape architecture are no longer functioning. Modern conditions have given way to a set of new, postmodern social and political conditions, including multiculturalism and globalization. Unfortunately, landscape architecture is demonstrating an inability to accommodate these basic ideas of postmodernism, especially the dissolution of the nature-culture dichotomy.

We suspect that landscape architecture's critical condition indicates that the profession is on its deathbed. But should we continue to administer care? Should we really desire to resuscitate the patient? Might landscape architecture not be a field whose time has come and has now passed? Are landscape architects like other defunct nineteenth-century professionals such as farriers, wheelwrights, chimney sweeps, and bloodletters? Has landscape architecture now become a practice of nostalgia?

What if landscape architecture disintegrated back into a set of related disciplines much as existed prior to its creation? Is it time, we wonder, to just pull the plug and put landscape architecture out of its misery?

Heidi Hohmann, ASLA, and Joern Langhorst are assistant professors in the Landscape Architecture Department at Iowa State University.

As Manifestos Go, Flaccid and Unprovocative

GARY HILDERBRAND, FASLA

I've always thought a manifesto was a loaded declaration of intention, affirming and directed, like the Futurist Marinetti's roaring race car, speeding toward the new beauty without looking back. The "Apocalyptic Manifesto" seems flaccid and skeptical by comparison.

For the past six or seven years, I have asked students in my graduate seminar to write an opinion piece based on their choice of given hypotheses. These were general and probably too upbeat—"a critical momentum is building" or "landscape is becoming the site of the subject in countless related fields"—but they were directed at landscape architecture's relevance in the wider culture—something I firmly believe in.

This apocalyptic effort appeared to me rather unprovocative, but it's a healthy discussion. If this is what drives students to be consumers and ultimately producers of critical thought, I am all for it. But for me, the indeterminate nature of the field is a positive attribute, not a weakness. Why seek an autonomous, heroic status for theory, as architects used to do before they began apologizing for it? Practice demonstrates that the substance of landscape sites and projects is rich and compelling, and I don't see this declining. It's getting better all the time, and practitioners and scholars should face up to it with leadership and conviction.

Students come to the field largely because they are naively attracted to beautification or genuinely drawn to the allure of environmental correctives. It is up to their teachers to help them see landscape architecture as a transformative agent. If teachers can't discern the appreciable rise of opportunities and imperatives for practice today, and if they don't help their students appropriate landscape terms across disciplinary and cultural boundaries, then I'll agree we are in trouble.

Gary Hilderbrand, FASLA, is principal of Reed Hilderbrand and adjunct associate professor at Harvard Design School.

Hold That Eulogy!

PETER JACOBS, FASLA

Concern for the health and well-being of landscape architecture, anxiety about the direction of current theory and practice, and dismay over the repetition of design formulas that no longer correspond to current and future needs are all signs of a field and profession in flux—aware of its limitations and attempting to do something about them. "An Apocalyptic Manifesto" is one such attempt.

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the form of a project. Hence, it should be read as criticism and evaluated as such.

An ideology comprises principles that are affirmed, without elaborate justification, as self-evidently true. The field of landscape architecture has a good record of innovative manifestos. Occasionally, these are organized as the Eckbo, Kiley, and Rose articles were in the Architectural Record (1939/1940), affirming the need for a modern approach to landscape architecture. Later, Lawrence Halprin argued for a participatory approach to design in the RSVP Cycles (1970), while Ian McHarg initiated an ecological approach in Design with Nature (1969). More recently, "Our Common Future" (1987), the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, introduced the idea of sustainable development, which has informed a number of new approaches to shaping the contemporary landscape. All have contributed constructive ideas and fueled vigorous debate.

Criticism evaluates the programmatic and physical outcome of ideas and the principles on which they are based. The critic is an arbi
ter of form and of content whose credibility rests on an extensive understanding of a particular subject matter, evaluating proposals, and providing insights into projects. The field of landscape architecture defines itself predominately in terms of its ability to realize its ideas in projects.

Recently, a growing body of literature and of criticism has begun to exert some influence on theory and practice. The Landscape Series edited by John Dixon Hunt (1998), the Spacemaker Press series (1997), and more recently the first of a planned series of critical texts from the Contemporary Collection at Dumbarton Oaks (2004), edited by Michel Conan, are but a few examples of this emerging body of literature. Professional and academic landscape journals have begun to adopt a more critical tone with respect to practice. Louisiana State University School of Landscape Architecture's "Critiques on Built Works" series, initiated in 1994, is not the lonely pioneer it once was.

"An Apocalyptic Manifesto" is neither a manifesto—a public declaration of motives and intentions”—nor apocalyptic—revelatory and disclosing. It is a list of complaints and contradictory assertions—

Criticism that is rigorous, well referenced, and attuned to cultural context and that offers the reader a better understanding and appreciation of a project, process, or program is essential to a healthy profession. As a critique, however, "An Apocalyptic Manifesto" is not very rigorous. While it is well referenced in the North American context, it assumes that the field is uniformly defined and practiced worldwide; and while it provides provocative prose, it offers little insight as to how the "patient" might be healed.

Few contemporary fields are as resolutely attuned to the dynamics of culture and of nature, to process and to product, as landscape architecture. Even fewer have the seemingly continuous ability to reinvent themselves. In so doing, landscape architecture has acquired rich layers of ideas and of practice. Clearly, many components have withered and died, but this too provides a necessary layer of humus for a field of study and of practice defined in large measure by ideology, projects, and criticism. In any case, a eulogy for landscape architecture is very premature.

Peter Jacobs, FASLA, is a professor of landscape architecture at the Université de Montréal and past chair of the College of Senior Fellows, Landscape and Garden Studies, Dumbarton Oaks. His consulting practice focuses on urban design and regional landscape development.

Eyes That Cannot See?
ELIZABETH MEYER, FASLA

"AN APOCALYPTIC Manifesto" is neither a manifesto—a public declaration of motives and intentions" (as the authors claim)—nor apocalyptic—revelatory and disclosing. It is a list of complaints and contradictory assertions—

As a critique, "An Apocalyptic Manifesto" is not very rigorous.
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While pronouncing the death of the profession may seem extreme, the resulting debate is vital in shaping the future of landscape architecture in an increasingly complex world.

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intention, in the hopes of intensifying the act of perceiving and receiving that work and, yes, perhaps the conceiving of future landscapes.

Landscape architecture for me is a cultural practice, not just a professional practice. It is an act of revelation, disclosure, uncovering, and discovery—the very definition of apocalyptic. Practice is hard. So is theory. All the more reason to revel in those works that rise above the norm that Hohmann and Langhorst can’t see beyond. Sight is a facility; seeing is an art that requires practice and that must be rehearsed by each generation, on its own terms. It’s time to stop whining and start practicing.

Elizabeth Meyer, FASLA, is an associate professor at the University of Virginia. She has been a registered landscape architect for 18 years. Her most recent theoretical writing “Site Citations” is published in Carol Bums and Andrea Kahn’s anthology, Site Matters (Routledge, 2005).

The Patient Is Alive and Well

PATRICK A. MILLER, FASLA

“APOCALYPTIC Manifesto” is really an obituary, not a manifesto. The authors have undertaken a post-mortem, but unfortunately someone forgot to check the patient’s pulse—for this patient is alive and well.

There are more landscape architects, more students, more graduates, and more ASLA members today than there have ever been in the past. The profession is being increasingly called upon to deal with critical problems facing our society: human health (fighting the obesity epidemic through design for active living), green infrastructure (the cleansing veins and arteries of our cities), and safe and secure environments for our citizens.

But I suspect the authors know this and are bating us. They are challenging us not to take our existence for granted. While their method—pronouncing the death of
This is an exciting time, when more people are interested in landscape as a medium, a set of practices, and a network of activities than ever before in my lifetime.

the profession—may seem extreme, I believe the resulting debate is vital in shaping the future of landscape architecture in an increasingly complex world.

We know that the world is changing very rapidly. We must carve out new roles for the profession at home and abroad. In an increasingly development-oriented world, landscape architects must go beyond static plans and help people visualize alternate futures. We must mediate the contested ground between the natural world and human needs while maintaining dignity for all people. At no other time have landscape architects been more needed than in the developing world today.

The authors of the manifesto claim that the profession "lacks central or core defining values." I disagree. If one thing ties our diverse profession together, it is a set of values about the environment and the quality of human life. I believe these values are captured very well in the ASLA Declaration on Environment and Development.

The authors also lament the lack of a theoretical base for the profession at a time when academic practitioners are debating whether "design" and "research" faculties should be separated. I believe we should be doing just the opposite. Theories are just generalized rules that help us make decisions. If current research isn't feeding the profession, we need to broaden our definition of research to include other forms of scholarship. I believe the Landscape Architecture Foundation is doing this with its case study series. Nor should scholarship be left to the academic practitioners. It is the professional duty of all practitioners to engage in thoughtful reflection about their work. Research is critically important.
If landscape architecture is to evolve to meet the challenges of a new and more complex world.

Patrick A. Miller, FASLA, is a professor in the Landscape Architecture Department at Virginia Tech and the current president of ASLA. His article, "A Profession in Peril?" (Landscape Architecture, August 1997) was cited in the manifesto.

No Evidence Presented of "Consensus That Landscape Architecture Is an Ailing Profession"

James Palmer, FASLA

I do not see evidence presented of a "consensus that landscape architecture is an ailing profession." It seems healthy from the perspective of those in private practice with whom I talk: They have never been busier and are doing an increasing diversity of work. Certainly most of my colleagues at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry are engaged in community design and planning projects that individuals and communities seem to think are important. The state of New York (which has been antagonistic to planning for a half century) thinks many of these projects are important enough to sponsor. So it seems that we may not even have a consensus of what "ailing" means, let alone that our profession is ailing.

I find it odd that the manifesto authors expect that change will come from the mainstream of landscape architecture practice. Is the mainstream ever anything but conservative? Isn't the new and better way always demonstrated by those on the fringe?

What is landscape architecture? I believe it is the activity of planning and designing landscapes to help communities and clients understand what is appropriate and possible in their world. Landscape
architects must know about art, history, natural science, social science, and the like because such knowledge is useful in solving their planning and design problems. I agree with the manifesto authors that these other fields are not what landscape architecture is, nor do they provide the theories of landscape architecture; they simply provide useful information and theory that allow us to do what we do.

James Palmer, FASLA, is a professor of landscape architecture at SUNY ESF in Syracuse, New York. His response originally appeared on the LARCH-L Digest.

Any Creative Field Could Be Tarred with the Same Brush

STEVEN VELEGRIAS

I SUPPOSE KUDOS should be given to the manifesto authors for caring enough to prepare a challenging and reasoned view of the supposed “crisis” facing landscape architecture.

I see an equally arguable crisis in architecture, where 99 percent of buildings lack any intellectual interest and suffer from the same ailments that affect us poor landscape architects. If we look at the broad spectrum of the architecture of our times, is there any central or unifying theory to it? I think not. Architecture, just like landscape architecture, is defined today by plurality (and a great deal of pedestrian design). Ecology, art, and just about any other creative field could be tarred with the same brush.

Without the pedestrian design that typifies most design work, the jewels would be very hard to recognize. Do we actually think that Olmsted and Vaux, Brown, and Repton were the only landscape designers of their time? When we look back at their remaining work, it seems remarkable, but we don’t see the millions of other, less remarkable designs that have long since vanished.

At the end of the day, I feel comfortable that landscape architecture is not a dying profession. I still get great inspiration from people like James Corner, Richard Weller, Bernard Lassus, and Peter Jacobs,
EDITOR'S CHOICE

not to mention the countless other educators who push the landscape architecture barrow every day. But once again, I welcome the manifesto’s attempt to provoke a response.

Steven Velegrinis is a senior landscape planner and landscape architect at ICN Design International, Singapore. His response originally appeared on the LARCH-L Digest.

These Warnings May Focus Debate in an Overly Conservative and Complacent Body

Peter Walker, FASLA, and Jane Gillette

“APOCALYPTIC Manifesto” strikes a positive chord with us for several reasons. First, like the Malthusian warnings of the Club of Rome, the issues that the manifesto raises can be engaged and thereby perhaps avoided. Second, these warnings may focus and enliven debate in what is, perhaps, an overly conservative and complacent professional body. Third, the manifesto once again points out the need for a suitably diverse forum that is not politically correct and is not in the business of protecting sacred cows.

The production of such a forum involves two basic dilemmas. One is the small and geographically separated number of interested participants. Six years ago, we projected the sustainability of Land Forum on attracting 10 percent of the roughly 30,000 American and Canadian landscape architects—and 3,000 subscribers/participants. We were never able to exceed 1,500 regular subscribers. Interestingly, the European journal TOPOS has had a similar experience. Even though TOPOS is decidedly socialistic and public in its orientation while Land Forum leaned more toward capitalism and private practice, the results have been eerily similar. The second dilemma is a matter of diversity. Land Forum was—and TOPOS

Looking forward to the May issue of Landscape Architecture, which features

LA FORUM: WILL THE ICON SURVIVE?
Designers gather to debate the fate of Seattle’s Freeway Park.

THE GATES
Cristo’s temporary public art display in New York’s Central Park is examined.

MoMA
The sculpture garden at another New York landmark, the Museum of Modern Art, graces a new museum garden.

ALSO LOOK FOR
Designing with brick sculpture; the gardens of the late architect Philip Johnson; the second part of irrigation design for LEED credits; landscape architects in the Peace Corps; and more...

WE WELCOME your ideas and thoughts for future issues. Please e-mail Bill Thompson, editor, at bthompson@asla.org or Lisa Speckhardt at lspeckhardt@asla.org.
continues to be—fortunate in including both academics and practitioners as readers and writers. This was positive because one cannot expect either healthy educational establishments or practices without a common focus of discussion. Yet it remains remarkably difficult to attract both groups.

Related to the difficulties of establishing a suitable forum is a major issue that bedevils both academics and practitioners: the false comparison between the era of the founding fathers and ourselves. We are simply not the same profession that we were in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the separation of landscape design and planning in the late 1920s, we lost much of our public access and overview, a loss that was not remedied by the development of ecologically based planning, no matter how useful these techniques have proven to be.

To close on a note of hope: It is important to remember that today we are a large profession with an extensive academic establishment and a body of practitioners who enjoy a substantial market. Some offices, including ours, have developed positions of considerable public awareness with access to the holders of political power, relationships with allied professions, and a body of work that relies on expression and explorative design. Although it takes a good deal of hard work and intellectual determination, these offices demonstrate the existence of substantial opportunities for public service and for design excellence. It is interesting to note that most of these practices are the ones that participate both in teaching and in the intellectual life that exists within the current professional boundaries.

We look forward to further discussion.

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What do you think about the “Apocalyptic Manifesto”? Respond to bthompson@asla.org.