The Routledge Handbook of Teaching Landscape

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Written in collaboration with the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools (ECLAS) and LE:NOTRE, The Routledge Handbook of Teaching Landscape provides a wide-ranging overview of teaching landscape subjects, from geology to landscape design, reflecting different perspectives and practices at university-level landscape curricula. Focusing on the didactics of landscape education, this fully illustrated handbook presents and discusses pedagogy, teaching traditions, experimental teaching methods and new teaching principles.

The book is structured in three parts: reading the landscape, representing the landscape and transforming the landscape. Contributions from leading experts in the field, such as Simón Bell, Marc Treib, Jörg Rekittke and Susan Herrington, explore landscape analysis, history and theory, design visualisation, creativity and art, planning studio teaching, field trips and site engineering. Aimed at engaging academic researchers and instructors across disciplines such as landscape architecture, geography, ecology, planning and archaeology, this book is a must-have guide to landscape pedagogy as it stands today.

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Part 1

Reading the landscape

Landscape is increasingly an area of academic interest and concern for a wide range of disciplines, something that has been furthered by the growing awareness resulting from the widespread adoption of the European Landscape Convention. Indeed, following directly from its definition as ‘an area, as perceived by people...’, the European Landscape Convention more or less mandates us all to engage in reading the landscape. Reading may be one step beyond mere perception, but – without perception – no landscape.

The list of fields that explicitly espouse landscape in their names ranges from the humanities to the natural sciences, this time reflecting the other part of the Landscape Convention’s landscape definition ‘... whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’. The academic fields concerned include landscape archaeology through landscape ecology to landscape urbanism, although for each of these the ‘landscape’ part of their titles represents a particular specialism within a wider discipline, in the form of an integrated holistic or spatial means of framing its particular field of enquiry, rather than a sole area of concern. Furthermore, each discipline tends to view landscape in its own particular manner – when considering the same scene, each will be actually perceiving something different and specific to its way of seeing.

This is the point made in the classic essay by D.W. Meinig, ‘The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene’, quoted by Ed Wall in the opening chapter in this section, and it is perhaps even more true now, thanks to the broadened academic awareness stimulated by the European Landscape Convention, than it was when Meinig originally wrote it. Clearly, when teaching and learning about landscape, it is important to be aware of the multitude of disciplinary viewpoints from which the landscape can be read in order to understand it fully.

Within this first part of the book only a few of these disciplinary perspectives can be illuminated, with the stress being primarily on the ‘natural’ rather than the ‘human factors’. These include what is perhaps the oldest landscape discipline of geography (Marc Antrop and Veele van Eijvelde), geology (Ralf Löwner) and ecology (Wenche Elisabet Dramstad and Mari Sundli Tveit). These are complemented by an outline of teaching landscape reading to architecture students (Luca Maria Francesco Fabris and Guido Granelli), in which the ‘human’ factors dominate.

There is, though, one exception to this list of fields of enquiry fronted with the ‘landscape’ epithet, as pointed out at the beginning of Shelley Egoz’s chapter, stressing the fact that landscape is more than the sum of its deconstructed parts as dissected by different individual disciplines. Here is it asserted that although ‘everyone’ seems now to be talking about landscape,
landscape architecture is the only discipline ‘in which landscape is not a choice of scholarly approach to be adopted, but the essence of the discipline’:

However, in teaching landscape it is not sufficient to take on board the multitude of different specialist ways of reading the landscape. Again, it is the Landscape Convention that makes it clear that the landscape is the concern of everyone and not merely a playground for the ‘experts’. The growing concern with ‘landscape democracy’ as part of a wider movement for environmental rights is the focus of Deni Ruggieri’s contribution, which highlights another facet of reading the landscape – namely the question of through whose eyes is it being read, and how can we integrate wider viewpoints into our landscape teaching and learning?

It is not just who is reading the landscape that must be considered, but also how and with the help of which media or techniques the reading is being done as the medium will clearly influence the message. Using film as a means of helping to see and interpret the landscape is not just about recording impressions of spaces, but also an aid to perceiving and understanding space, which is the concern of Irina Paža and Ana Opruš’ contribution.

Thomas Oles, by comparison, is wary of capturing landscape space on film, but rather argues for finding ways of teaching students to read the landscape through a process that might be termed subjective poetic immersion in which feelings are given at least equal value with facts.

Such approaches call for a direct interaction with real landscapes in the ‘great outdoors’, and the long-term development of approaches making use of Swedish islands as live landscape models to introduce students to real-world situations and to sharpen the perceptions of students in learning to read landscapes is the focus of the chapter by Roland Gustavsson, Allan Gunnarson and Björn Wiström.

The use of a circumscribed landscape of a small island as a teaching ground contrasts with a second Scandinavian approach to reading landscapes on the ground at a different scale as defined by a whole climate zone. The understanding and interpretation of changing Arctic and Subarctic landscapes is the focus for a new teaching programme at universities in northern Norway, which is explained by Janike Kampevold Larsen.

Critique and critical approaches to both landscapes and to landscape teaching are common themes linking the final three chapters in this section, but dealing with very different aspects of reading the landscape. In the context of teaching landscape planning, Andrew Butler considers the possibilities for using landscape assessment as a vehicle for educating students to take a critical approach to the ideas associated with the landscape values that are embedded in their work.

The role of design critique in reading landscapes, rather than in landscape planning, is the subject of Jacky Bowring’s chapter, which considers how teaching analytical critique of contemporary projects can help students to understand the process of discourse about design and how this can develop and change over time. Ellen Deming’s chapter on values and transformative learning follows up on this point, showing the potential of a history class in elucidating the students’ hidden or subconscious value sets.

Recognising the importance of the historic canon of landscape projects as a basis for teaching students to read and value both designed and vernacular landscapes lies behind Marc Treib’s discussion of changing approaches to teaching landscape history.

This contribution rounds off the rich and diverse selection of ways of reading the many dimensions of landscape as reflected in the European Landscape Convention in this first part of the book.
'What . . . is landscape?'

Asking questions of landscapes through design drawings

Ed Wall

Several years ago, one of my students encountered an architect who dismissively asked, 'What the fuck is landscape?' He was taken aback by the tone of the question – but was reassured that his architectural colleague had found a place of uncertainty from within his general overconfidence. Although the student and I could easily disregard such blunt questioning, the architect had asked a question that, as designers and academics of landscapes, we frequently ask: what is landscape? The subjectivity and plurality of landscapes, as they are differentially experienced, open up more questions than they provide answers, creating rich environments for critical enquiry, exploration, speculation and practice. Such approaches to landscape contrast with many architectural traditions that focus on positions, not processes, and that can lead to attempts to provide solutions rather than facilitate investigations. In answering, rather than questioning, designers can accept misplaced assurances that they can solve landscapes rather than merely inform their future change.

More recently, a former colleague explained to me: 'The problem is that you ask your students what landscape is. You should just tell them what landscape is and get on with it.' While presented to me more politely than the question posed to my student, I was concerned by his limiting pedagogical advice. My colleague had been referring to an exercise that I had initiated with first year students where we investigated meanings of landscape. Referencing D.W. Meinig’s essay ‘The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene’ (1979), we examined diverse definitions of landscape across a range of scales and of contrasting conditions. During the design studio we discussed the short landscape manifestos that students wrote, each accompanied by a single drawing, and throughout the year we developed and returned to these declarations of landscape as we explored site-specific, process-focused design projects – asking 'what is this landscape?'

As part of these landscape investigations we would read contemporary landscape texts (such as Cosgrove 1984; Jackson 1984; Corine 1999b) alongside seminal and historic projects that explored relations of landscape (such as Geddes 1915; Howard 1902). We would also undertake detailed field studies of designed and unplanned landscapes as a means of grounding our research and design investigations; challenging our understandings through contrasting experiences of scale, unique qualities of place and processes of production and decay that revealed landscape conditions obscured by the abstracted frames of desk studies.
Students would also draw, to incrementally combine and synthesise site data, form conceptual statements and experiment throughout the development of projective designs. During the exercise, I would propose that landscape is a creative practice—defined by asking questions through dialogic relations of inventively engaging with our environments.

This chapter is focussed on the importance of asking questions. It considers landscape as a creative practice that investigates multi-scalar, site-specific relations between people and their environments, with the intention of developing proposals for future landscapes. I highlight what can be learned from investigating landscapes, experimenting with design drawings and critically questioning what is produced. As Perry Kulper explains in his essay ‘A World From Below’:

rather than framing the possibilities of drawing as related to problem solving, or limiting the role of the drawing to a metrical description of a project, ideas are augmented through an emerging visual field of study that is discovered in the act of constructing a drawing.

(Kulper 2013:59)

Based on over ten years of experience teaching the design of landscapes and cities, and a reflective review of the design projects produced by students, I discuss practices of design and how we can learn from emerging techniques. I reject the premise of providing answers to complex landscape conditions and I defend the opportunity to challenge and reinvent landscapes through critical design practices. The chapter is not focussed on addressing the question of what landscape is, or even ‘what the fuck’ landscape is. Instead, I explore how the continued asking of questions can be facilitated through strategic composite drawings and how decisions can be made throughout site-specific design projects that enquire: ‘what is this landscape?’

This chapter also reveals my frustration with representational conventions of architectural projections (such as plans, sections and elevations) that prioritise spatial forms and landscape renders that emphasise visual qualities. Often, such drawing approaches limit opportunities to investigate relational dimensions of landscapes, experiment with shifting ecologies or examine social concerns as central issues of landscape projects. Neil Spiller writes: ‘Euclidean purity is a myth, the landscape of today reveals and secretes hidden archaeologies’ (2000:87). I advocate in this chapter the creation of composite representations at key stages of the design process in order to ask questions, while collecting data, analysing findings, proposing new landscapes and communicating how these projects are produced. I highlight three common stages of design processes, hinges in design projects that can be effectively articulated through specific composite representations. First, how we collate and analyse site information, synthesised into base drawings, to establish clear statements from research findings and a foundation from which to develop proposals. Second, how we communicate the active working landscape of design projects in operational drawings. And, third, how we can represent sequences of actions and events as scenes rather than aestheticised and objectified landscape images.

Landscape?

Investigating the etymology of the term ‘landscape’ frequently forms the point of departure for research into what landscape is. From J.B. Jackson’s oft-cited description of the historical origins of landscape, in his essay ‘The Word Itself’ (1984), to John Stilgoe’s more recent treatise What is Landscape? (2015), opportunities to define what appears to be a simple term can be tempting. But the perceived clarity of landscape is misleading. Highlighting the illusory capacity of
...
landscape, Denis Cosgrove refers to John Berger’s description of landscape as a ‘way of seeing’ (1984:55), to describe landscape as:

a composition and structuring of the world so that it may be appropriated by a detached, individual spectator to whom an illusion of order and control is offered through the composition of space according to the certainties of geometry. (1984:55)

Such Euclidian approaches to space are employed in colonial appropriations, agricultural enclosures, urban extensions, residential subdivisions and privatisations of public space. These are places mapped, occupied and commodified, first as representations in landscape paintings and then as designed spaces. However, as Barbara Bender emphasises (1993:1), there are other relations with the land that are not based on centuries-old priorities for visual images, positions of power and control:

In the contemporary western world we ‘perceive’ landscapes, we are the point from which the ‘seeing’ occurs. It is thus an ego-centred landscape, a perspectival landscape, a landscape of views and vistas. In other times and other places the visual may not be the most significant aspect, and the contemplation of the land may not be ego-centred.

Through exploring these ‘other’ landscapes we can expose the contradictions of western relations with the land and establish opportunities to challenge culturally fixed ideas of landscape and reinvigorate through theorising and design.

When working with students to investigate such alternative landscapes I have often begun with reading Meinig’s essay (1979). I have employed Meinig’s ten scenes of landscape (as nature, habitat, artefact, system, problem, wealth, ideology, history, place and aesthetic) as an invitation for students to explore other definitions that relate to specific sites, conditions and times. I have also discussed Is Landscape...? (Doherty and Waldheim 2016), a compilation of essays that resonates with Meinig’s scenes and that take Gareth Eckbo’s essay ‘Is Landscape Architecture?’ (1983) as a starting point to explore contrasting practices of landscape. Gareth Doherty and Charles Waldheim pose the question Is Landscape...? (2016) to enquire of 13 different contributors landscape’s association with literature, painting, photography, gardening, planning, urbanism, infrastructure, technology, history, theory, philosophy and life. While I recognise usefulness in what can become more abstract explorations, during practices of teaching the design of landscapes I have asked students to focus on site-specific questioning of existing and proposed landscapes. In such a way the unique conditions of landscapes become the basis from which places are understood and the medium from which new futures are imagined.

Such questioning of landscapes is not about answering problems, finding solutions or claiming certain truths. Dictionaries do not define ‘questions’ solely as devices from which to produce answers, rather they prioritise the role of questions in raising topics to be enquired about, discussed or debated (OED ‘Question’ 2017). When students investigate landscapes, attempting to identify their unique site conditions, they adopt practices of research and design that do not merely result in a designed artefact but rather they work with landscapes as entities continually being made and remade, planted and maintained, eroded and aggregated (see Bender 1993:3). Landscapes are not static spaces but are relations in tension across spatial scales and temporal rhythms, intertwined with geologic forms, climatic conditions, economic imperatives and unpredictable daily lives. The questioning of landscapes by students unfolds through incrementally layered mappings and composite forms of collages and maquettes. The representations
as a ‘way of seeing’

has been translated by a detached, mimetic gaze through the commentary of art critics.

(1984:55)

agricultural enclosures to create enclosure: space. These are represented in landscape paintings and their images. There are other relations between images, positions of

point from which to view landscape, a landscape which is the most signifi-

occurrences of western relational ideas of landscape

have often begun to think of landscape (as nature, as aesthetic) as an invitation to the past and times. I have included a selection of essays that discuss ‘landscape Architecture?’ by Sarah Doherty and this year 13 different contributions to gardening, planning, and design. While I recognise some of the distortions of teaching the planting of existing and imagined the basis from which these are imagined.

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Figure 2.2 Sleep Estates by Anushka Athique, 2016
Figure 2.3  Drawing the Line/Cloud Chamber by Max Barnes, 2016

This figure is shown in colour in the plate section of this book.
create biographies of design processes, where sheets in portfolios present the stories of researching sites, precedent that has informed ideas, analysis of patterns and designs developed. Each composite drawing that the students create reflects backward to question earlier research stages of projects while projecting forward to ask questions of future designs. The creation of the base drawing, operational drawing and scene provide moments of intensely questioning what is found and proposed as well as making decisions and clarifying the future direction of the project.

**Design?**

The development of this approach to composite drawings is based on reviewing over 500 student design projects between 2007 and 2017. Common amongst the projects have been investigations into site-specific urban geographies, primarily in London, Milan, Vienna and New York, and the development of landscape and urbanism proposals. Consistent approaches include the questioning of existing site conditions, analysis of what is found and advancement of creative proposals based on the issues identified. From the first stage of projects students employed a range of methods including mapping, modelling, photographic surveys, document surveys and interviews. Research frequently extended beyond the site boundaries as students traced the material and social relations that had come to form post-industrial waterfronts, disused public spaces, dilapidated buildings and complex infrastructures. Working between fieldwork, that in some cases involved hanging out in neighbourhood pubs to speak with residents or travelling through rural landscapes in canal boats, and desk studies of library, archive and internet research revealed arrays of narratives from which students attempted to make sense of their project sites.

As more site information was collected and synthesised through analytical drawings, students adopted a diversity of ways of generating new forms. We identified that while some students made more logical steps through their projects – through research, conceptualising and then proposing transformations to a specific site – in order to develop design proposals based on their research, other students made more speculative leaps before reflecting back on how the narratives of their projects fitted together. While encouraging students to employ a diversity of design and research methods, colleagues and I began to ask students to highlight five priorities during project development. We asked students to: first, emphasise landscape processes as well as spaces; second, model sites as the basis to develop situated proposals; third, to synthesise research into single, scaled drawings; fourth, to communicate operational qualities of proposals; and, finally, to demonstrate how their designs work as well as how they look.

The latter three priorities have come to be defined by three composite drawings that make explicit the decisions made and the core priorities in the projects, highlighting: conclusions of the research edited and synthesised into a single scaled base drawing from which designs are developed; how the design works, how it operates and how it is constructed in an operational drawing; how what we see and experience as part of proposed landscapes is composed and constructed, creating scenes. The three composite drawings do not define methods of research or approaches to design but rather they emphasise important moments in projects, what Spiller describes of his work Landscape Matters as ‘new augmented ways of seeing and understanding landscape’ (2000:87). To develop this language of landscape compositions we have explored and borrowed from experimental designers, in particular from individuals whose approaches we anticipated could be adapted to represent our priorities for landscape: techniques of layering and collaging provide for incremental development of drawings, they can represent the palimpsest and recombinatory conditions of landscape and they can be contextualised within historic and contemporary landscape architecture drawings; in contrast, vector-based diagrammatic drawings can represent the workings of landscapes, operations that are often relegated as
background infrastructures or obscured by visually aesthetic priorities. Our references to Perry Kulper (Figure 2.4), Bryan Cantley (Figure 2.5) and Alexander Daxböck (Figure 2.6) reveal our interest in intersecting these two drawing approaches and to enquire beyond leading contemporary landscape architects (such as Corner, Mathur and Da Cunha). Such references embrace representational techniques that we feel can facilitate the development of landscape projects, the hinges in design processes, from reflective research to physical proposals and from spatial or aesthetic dimensions to operational qualities.

**Base drawing**

The base drawing is intended to support students to progress from reflective site-focussed research to design propositions. We ask students to gather information through a range of methods, from observations and conversations during fieldwork to archival and library research. The base drawing is the conclusion of an exploration of the elements and layers of the landscape, bringing together what James Corner describes, in ‘Agency of Mapping’ (1999a), as ‘extracts’ (1999a:229). Subsequent ‘processes of gathering, working, reworking, assembling, relating, revealing, sifting and speculating’ (1999a:218) create the base drawing to establish a framework for analysis and later proposition. We encouraged students to draw what they find, to spatialise information from interviews and to create maps that can be analysed alongside other visual representations. In order to analyse such a diversity of site information collected from contrasting methods students draw and edit what they find before ordering, layering and combining into a single base drawing composition. What Kulper terms his ‘strategic plots’ (2013:59) are important references for developing base drawings, as they ‘represent conceptual frameworks, territories, actions and relations that are delineated, or plotted over and through time’ (see Figure 2.4). The main composition of the base drawing is a scaled projection, usually in plan or sectional elevation, which combines important information gathered while researching the project sites to create a specific site profile. It is a complex research drawing that combines layers of maps, that includes spatialised elements of non-spatial data (such as information from photographic surveys and written documents), and often includes selected three-dimensional forms (see Figure 2.4). The base drawing can be understood as the unique biography of the existing site, written and edited through the students’ knowledge, experiences and contrasting priorities.

The base drawings composed by students highlight frequencies of flooding in areas of low-income housing, fragmented networks of public spaces and communities overwhelmed by urban development. Undertaking the base drawing does not limit methods of research – rather it acts as a hinge within projects to assist students to progress from research to design proposal and for them to evidence the conclusions of their research. The base drawing, prepared once fieldwork and desk studies are almost complete, marks the culmination of project research from site-based fieldwork alongside desk-based inquiries. The drawing is composed and edited, representing key aspects of the research – but not all the information collected. It highlights spaces and processes. It is analytical, bringing together, editing out and redrawing information to reveal the unique conditions of landscapes. Corner explains that such ‘tactics of appropriation, collage, abstraction, imaginative projection’ are both ‘strategies used to prompt free association’ and provide ‘liberatory mechanisms’ (1992:160). The development of base drawings questions what has been found and communicates the conclusions that have been reached – identifying the narratives that are considered important of the landscape and providing a foundation from which design ideas can be drawn.
References to Perry Kulper (Figure 2.6) reveal our interest in and leading contemporary references embrace landscape projects, and from spatial or
The base drawing is part of a projective action. As students begin to develop design proposals the base drawing becomes a tool over which to trace responses to the conclusions of the site. As the base drawing includes elements of existing spaces and processes the proposal is able to directly relate to the past and present conditions of the landscape. As Kulper realises in his drawings, ‘interests can be derived through graphic exploration, and breeding latent and unpredictable opportunities, then visualised and capitalised upon towards design speculations’ (2013:59). The iterative drawing approach is one of discovery as both unfamiliar compositions are formed and new ideas are generated. Kulper describes that working ‘through lines and composited layers rather than through the logics of construction allows [his] work to incorporate both necessary and unexpected cultural and natural considerations’ (2013:63). From the base drawing many design drawings are spawned. Thus the base drawing acts as a catalyst for an expanded repertoire of investigations, through questioning, testing and design development.

**Operational drawing**

The second composition of the operational drawing highlights how landscape projects work (see Figure 2.5). The operational drawing is designed to address Bender’s claim of contemporary western landscapes that are ‘visual’ and ‘ego-centred’ (1993:1) by emphasising working landscapes. The composite operational drawing reveals how landscapes are produced, contested and lived. It shows opening and closing, growth and decline, planting and harvesting, flooding and drought. We identified that by focussing on asking questions through the design process students could highlight how proposed designs work (and how the project is made and how the landscape is maintained) rather than how they look and that such an approach could be employed to productive means. The operational drawing prioritises processes and highlights relations of landscapes as spatial and temporal entities.

Like the base drawing, the operational drawing is a combination of drawn elements (plans, views and diagrams) but recognisable as a single composition. The operational drawings reveal that the actions of making are not limited to architectural and construction practices but also include the rhythms of events scheduled in public spaces, the daily erection and dismantling of market stalls and the everyday occupation of landscapes. Operational drawing attempts to represent what Cantley terms ‘The Thing Going Through Change’ (2013:39). These landscapes advance and recede; they accelerate and slow; they illuminate and shade (see Figure 2.5). Landscapes can be intensely managed and they can be out of human control. The operational drawing reveals these workings of landscape – as they relate to core aspects of the design proposal.

Although we recognised that students continuously considered the operations of their projects throughout the design process, we found that the operational drawing was often most effectively completed as the material forms became more defined in order to finalise the working aspects of proposals. Through the progress of their projects all students developed drawings and visual representations, including traditional projects of plans, sections and axonometric projections that were complimented by diagrams and rendered perspective drawings. Reflecting the research stage of the projects, the students adopted a range of methods to developing proposals. As design propositions were formed through periods of intense design drawing and decision-making, the range of workings from which the designs were composed were expressed in the operational drawing: how events are planned; how creative maintenance regimes are expressed; how flooding is managed or confronted.
Landscape projects work...
Scene

The operational drawing, like the base drawing, represents the entire landscape being studied. The latter emphasises key aspects of the existing conditions while the former demonstrates how the proposed landscape will work. As neither composition reveals so clearly how the landscape is seen or experienced we proposed a third drawing, the scene, as a way of simultaneously recognising and challenging the significance of visual frames and ego-centred positions in prevailing landscape design. Scenes highlight an interest in how we experience places and events. Scenes do not merely represent a view of the project, they explain places or setting for real-life or fictional events, they highlight elements from which such settings are composed and they incorporate sequences of actions and events (OED, ‘Scene’ 2017). Scenes are not defined by being the most attractive representation of the project; the Kodak moment or the money-shot that defines a project’s success. The scene shows us the construction of such events from a position of how it is experienced (see Figure 2.6). Through overlays of text and diagram the scene attempts to communicate complex qualities of experience, in the sequence of the arrival or the array of sights, smells and sounds. It provides an opportunity to represent how the view can be understood through its component parts and it can present the dynamic qualities of how and at what pace the viewer experiences the designed landscape.

The scene is also a layered composite drawing that explains the background to what we see and experience. It unpacks the construction of the image and the sequence of events that are often captured in a single image. We reference Alexander Daxböck’s collage for the Urban Satellite – from fragments to centrality (see Figure 2.6), a drawing that presents multiple perspectives and positions in addition to quantitative dimensions of time and space. The scene represents, as Meinig explains:

\[\text{The land, the trees, roads, buildings, and man are regarded not as individual objects, ensembles of varied elements, or classes of phenomena, but as surficial clues of underlying processes.} \]

(Meinig 1979:33-48)

Through overlaying otherwise invisible information on the image the scene makes visible the image frame, the actions, the trajectory of processes and the relations between elements. Scenes may highlight the potential multiplicity of positions of the viewer, or viewers, and they may include within them the viewing and transformative landscape devices. The historic role of devices used to record (e.g., cameras), measure (e.g., theodolites) and view (e.g., black mirrors) landscapes can be read in the technological interventions of landscapes, from toposcopes to mobile phones. The scene provides an opportunity to reveal the usefulness of such devices and their relation to both experiences and wider infrastructures.

Scenes, most significantly, also open up questions. Unlike contemporary eye-level computer renders that smooth over gaps and juxtapositions of collaged drawings, scenes expose these situations. Scenes are compositions where the visual elements within a view are only as important as the gaps between and the information in the background. The scene is about relations: it suggests constructions, it reveals experiences, it presents routes through and it indicates velocities. As the base drawing and operational drawing provide information, through employing layers and fragments (often incorporating collaged elements), the scene presents information but also opens up the proposed landscape to further questioning.
landscape being studied, the former demonstrates how the scene reveals so clearly how we experience the scene, as a way of understanding the scenes and ego-centred actions. It shows how we experience the scene, as they explain places and components which such settings represent. The project, the Kodak Agent, shows us the context of the urban scene (Figure 2.6). Through an exploration of the geographies, qualities of experiences, multiple perspectives and a sense of place, a scene represents, as

... and ensembles or ensembles of visual and performing, underlying processes.

Meining 1979:33–48)

... makes visible the presence of elements. Scenes often display objects, and they may have names. The historic role of objects, such as (e.g., black mirrors) changes from toscopics to urban scenes of such devices and digital elements.

... eye-level computer displays expose these situations, which are only as important as the people around them relations: it suggests that a scene indicates velocities. Through employing layers of information but also
Conclusions

I began this discussion with a blunt question asked to one of my students, a proposition by a colleague to ask fewer questions of students and a description of a site-specific approach to questioning landscapes. These scenarios provide a context for over ten years of teaching where I have attempted to elevate the role of asking questions. Through my research and teaching practices I have defended the importance of asking what landscape is, of critically enquiring of project sites, of challenging design proposals and of rethinking how we represent them. It could seem ironic that the conclusions that I draw from these experiences lead me to ask for specific forms of representation from my students. In Drawing Architecture (2013) Spiller reminds us that to teach is 'not to pollute the young mind with the fetishes and guilty vices from which the tutors themselves suffer, but to lead the students to their own Elysian Fields' (2013:17). I argue that base drawings, operational drawings and scenes open up such possibilities of landscape to provide devices of questioning and decision making in the often intractable journey of design projects. As Kulper describes of his approach (2013:59):

Design in this sense is fluid, weaving heterogeneous ideas, discussing one disciplinary set of questions in relation to another, and through the rehearsing of design skills in the drawings themselves, fusing visualisation and thinking as a relational and synthetic practice.

I have found that there is a need to draw and model inventively in order to critically question, develop and communicate new landscapes. Approaches to base drawings, operational drawings and scenes have three consistent qualities: they are developmental, in that they advance design ideas rather than merely represent them; they are composite representations that are formed incrementally through repeated collaging, layering, cutting and editing; and they provide an opportunity to represent alternative landscape relations that deny western tendencies for visually dominated landscapes, understood from ego-centred positions and prescribed by narrowly defined frames – challenging the ‘primacy of the European “viewpoint”’ (Bender 1993:1). They are also interrelated representations (see Figure 2.7) that can intersect more objective qualities of drawings with subjective experiences and they can make inseparable spatial and relational qualities of landscape.

I would argue that new forms of representation are therefore required, that open up the uniqueness of individual design projects rather than fixing alternative positions of viewing. Instead of further dissecting spatial forms of our existing or proposed landscapes (such as with plans and sections), adapting the projections (such as axonometric to perspective) or establishing new positions from which to view our landscapes (such as from eye-level to satellite), strategically constructed composite drawings of enquiry are required. Spiller proposes that we teach students to ‘design with dexterity and an understanding of what might have gone before, but also with an imperative conditioned from an understanding of what might come after’ (2013:17). The base drawing, the operational drawing and the scene mark analytical as well as representational moments in these process of designing landscapes, experimenting with site-specific conditions to test, expose and advance understandings of what landscape is.

Notes

1 For practical purposes, I use the plural pronoun ‘we’ to express the collective design work and pedagogical practices developed with students and colleagues, including when I have only informed the work of students and the teaching practices of colleagues.

2 This chapter is the result of many discussions with experienced colleagues and inspiring students, of which there are too many to list here.
3 The chapter is illustrated with drawings of graduate students (Iona Meldrum, JJ Watters, Anushka Adequate, Max Barnes) and the works of designers who have inspired the approaches discussed (Perry Kulper, Bryan Cantley and Diller Scofidio + Renfro).

4 The conclusions in this chapter are based on reviewing design projects of over 500 students across ten years of teaching, since 2007. In London, at Kingston University (2007–2013) and at University of Greenwich (2013–2017), the landscape architecture and urbanism students included Bachelor and Master’s students; projects ranged from one-week workshops to 12-month investigations. At Politecnico di Milano (2010–2017) projects included architecture and urbanism works from Bachelor, Master’s and PhD students. At TU Wien (2017), interdisciplinary projects involved students from multiple institutions and programmes.

References


