

**Landscapes in the Making**  
Garden and Landscape Studies Symposium  
Dumbarton Oaks Washington, DC  
May 6 to 7, 2022

**Abstracts**

**Friday, May 6**

**Jay Cephas**, Princeton University

**The Labor of Landfills: A Social History of the Bronx Salt Marshes**

This paper investigates the social life of the trash dump as a modern urban landscape in part by analyzing the role of landscape transformation as both a practical tool of urbanization as well as a discursive tool for articulating the changing relationships between urban geographies, land-forming technologies, and the modes of labor necessary for spatial change. In particular, this paper focuses on the transformation of the salt marsh wetlands in the northeast Bronx into New York City's largest public park and its second largest municipal landfill. Beginning with the formal establishment of Pelham Bay Park in 1888, this social history of the Bronx salt marshes traces the labor, landscapes, and technologies surrounding both the sanctioned and unsanctioned uses of the marshes as dumping grounds throughout the twentieth century. The central argument here contends that the mechanisms for transforming the city's trash into usable land reveal the urbanization of the northeast Bronx as a co-production of municipal waste policy, landfill design, earth-moving technologies, and manual labor. The accumulation of waste in the dump exposed the excesses of modern industrial life, while the scenography of the park attempted to obliterate manual labor. Yet both of these landscapes depended heavily on the ragpickers, gleaners, cartmen, and teamsters who collected and sorted waste; technological tools such as the shovels, tilt carts, spreaders, trucks, and excavators that moved both trash and earth; and engineering design concepts that dictated how urban refuse would become urban land.

**Mars Plater**, Dickinson College

**"Poor People's Park": Downtown Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century New York City**

Tompkins Square on Manhattan's Lower East Side was known as a "poor people's park" in 1874, but the spot was officially a parade ground for the National Guard. When soldiers were not drilling, German Americans who lived nearby relaxed, slept, peddled, played, and protested there, but they dreamed of a real park with grass, trees, and flowers. Hoping to evict the military from Tompkins Square, members of this immigrant community lobbied municipal leaders, submitted petitions, and organized mass protests until their demands were met in 1879. I frame this advocacy as a forgotten vein of environmentalism that mobilized working-class immigrants to fight for equitable access to urban green space. While analyzing the values that these "downtown environmentalists" shared, I also explore the frictions that divided them. Political beliefs, time spent in the United States, profession, income, and gender shaped diverging notions about what kind of park Tompkins Square should become. Though the most affluent and influential members of the community were ultimately able to commandeer the design process to shape the landscape and determine regulations to govern the space, rulebreakers and radicals pushed back to make the park their own.

**Colleen M. Stockmann**, Gustavus Adolphus College

**Stewarding a Fractured Landscape: Potted Plants in Tenement Housing**

In a 1937 photograph of a five-story tenement façade, leafy vines emerge from several planters on the top floor fire escape. Greyscale greenery punctuates an otherwise gridded assembly of brick, windows, and railing. The interplay of architectural elements and improvised potted plants signals a creative stewardship of landscape fragments amidst the towering urban breezeway. Tenements emerged during the mid-nineteenth century from an increasing need to

accommodate millions of immigrants arriving from Europe. These dwellings were overcrowded and underserved; reformers and city officials often documented the derelict conditions leaving a trove of photographs which have not yet been read as a study in crafting landscape. Through a visual survey of New York tenements, this paper examines how residents cultivated a fractured landscape amidst the dense design of their urban environment. Focusing on the decades surrounding a pivotal 1901 housing reform act, I examine floor plans, photographic documentation by reformers including Jacob Riis, plat maps, popular literature, as well as paintings and illustrations depicting tenement dwellings. I show how windowsills and fire escapes created an architectural infrastructure for resistance and cultural continuity through plant care. Considering grape vines on laundry lines, paper flowers, and stoop flora as part of the topographic or unbuilt environment, we may further understand the roles that marginalized city dwellers played in stewarding and shaping landscape. Beyond park systems and ground-level green spaces, I argue that looking at the mini gardens of historic tenements yields new perspectives on who transformed which landscapes and how.

**Ann C. Huppert**, University of Washington

### **The Making of Il Gesù in Rome: Labor in the Urban Landscape**

The Jesuits secured noteworthy patronage and employed leading designers for the creation of their first church in Rome, which reshaped a key node within the city center. The roles of these individuals, along with the design evolution and architectural form of the building have all been well explored. By contrast, the vast extent of labor involved in creating Il Gesù remains largely unstudied. An account book covering the construction period for the church records the materials procured and the individuals involved in the process of construction. This crucial source registers a wide range of skilled and unskilled workers. Some appear by name, others simply by the quantity of their work. Many were immigrants, coming from outside Rome and therefore considered and labeled as foreigners. We may not be able to append identities to these anonymous laborers or full biographies to the named workers, but their toponyms allow an understanding of how immigrant groups participated in the burgeoning construction enterprises that established the urban landscape of early modern Rome. The accounts also signal the movement of goods into and across the city, linking individual carters, quarrymen, stone carvers, woodworkers, mule drivers, and metal smiths to zones within the urban boundaries as well as to source locations beyond its walls. The canonical understanding of this monument focuses on the highest echelons of Roman society, but another story is possible. Collectively, the individual account records provide the means to chart the interconnections between people and materials, and to illuminate daily activities of labor on the construction site.

**Michelle Arevalos Franco**, The Ohio State University

### **Migration and Maintenance: Mesoamerican Making of Landscapes in ‘El Norte’**

Focusing on sites of construction and maintenance connected with the building and landscape trades, this paper positions migration from Mesoamerica, and the lands-people-knowledges entangled in that process, as pivotal contributors to the everyday and sustained making of landscapes in the United States. Through seasonal and repeated migration, either undocumented or via guest worker programs created for the continued function of industry, migrant laborers develop direct and sustained relationships of physical care with discrete landscapes over time—a unique position among the trades and professions that otherwise “touch” landscapes. The argument is further contextualized through the political economy that spurs northward migration, connecting the movement of people and knowledge for landscape labor as part of the ongoing colonial project of wealth transfer out of Mesoamerica. The research here draws out the region’s long history of agricultural dislocation as it is physically inscribed in the northern landscape through the maintenance of gardens, golf courses, and parklands throughout the country. Problematizing the general assumption of migrant workers as “unskilled,” the paper argues that embodied knowledge is a form of wealth that is adapted and applied to new locales, climates, and ecosystems as individual persons are transformed from producers in Latin America to wage laborers in the United States. Situated in two environmentally distinct North American cities—Los Angeles, California and Columbus, Ohio—the research applies an embedded ethnographic approach to prioritize the narratives of migrant landscape laborers through their daily and perennial sustaining, caring for, and making of landscapes in “El Norte.”

**Sarah Lopez**, University of Texas at Austin

### **A Comparative Life: Mexican Stonemasons and Quarrymen on the Fridges of Global Capital**

In the long journey from an embedded geologic entity to a salable product, “cantera,” a rhyolite stone made from volcanic ash, passes through various sites and hands as jagged rock is transformed into something recognizable. Ultimately the Mexican stone will become part of another embedded landscape: that of suburban homes in Texas’ hill country and architectural details on Mexican restaurants in greater Los Angeles. This talk focuses on the front end of architectural production by examining the labor (manual, sculptural and technical) necessary to moving the stone from the quarry to shipping-palette. Rather than merely identifying a ‘supply chain’ in global building trades, I examine to the people and places transformed due to binational or global building trades as an interrogation of the fundamental relationships between people, the environment, and spatial imaginations. Small, niche businesses both supply US building materials and remake places in Mexico, imbuing cantera with specific meanings that are carried to and re-embedded in US landscapes. Labor is here elevated as fundamental to garnering a more complete and accurate picture of not only how architecture and landscapes are produced, but also what they signify and come to represent.

### **Saturday, May 7**

**Antonia Weiss**, University of Amsterdam

#### **A Garden of Scrawls and Scribbles: Amsterdam’s Notarial Records as Evidence of Everyday Landscape Creation in the 18th-century City**

Legal records have long been a mainstay of social historians, who rely on this material for reconstructing the lives of those that are traditionally underrepresented in historical accounts. To date, however, this type of historical record has remained a largely untapped source within the field of garden and landscape history. This paper explores how legal records can be used to reconstruct the history of the urban landscape and discusses how such material might alter our understanding of what constitutes urban green space, how it is made, and by whom. The paper focuses on the Amsterdam ‘tuin’, the private urban garden, during the long eighteenth century. It examines this space on the basis of about three hundred selected records from the notarial archives of Amsterdam. Containing a great variety of deeds, from prenuptial agreements to witness statements, the notarial archives offer an unparalleled insight into the everyday life of men and women from different social classes in one of the most urbanized societies of the early modern period. Synthesizing fragments of evidence and selected anecdotes into a comprehensive picture, this paper introduces us to the ‘anonymous’ historical actors who collectively created the urban landscape. Amsterdam’s gardens, I argue, were not just made by those handling spades, rakes, and watering cans; rather, they were the combined product of legal and material conditions, and the social relations and practices to which these in turn gave rise.

**Olanrewaju Lasisi**, The College of William and Mary

#### **Common Space, Different Place: Interpreting the Dynamics and Fluidity of Ijebu Palatial Urbanscape**

The Ijebu-Ode Royal Palace complex is located at the center of multiple enclosures in the Ijebu Kingdom of South-Western Nigeria. Although it has ceased to function as the seat of political power since the late 19th century, this defunct palace ground still performs other functions including religious and political functions, some of which are practices associated with it in the past. Recent archaeological surveys, excavations, and participant observations of ritual practices in the palace complex provide empirical data that reveals the fluid nature of this landscape in the past, the dynamic character it takes in the present, and its relationship with the kingdom’s enclosures. This paper describes the fluid character of the Ijebu monumental enclosures and the central palace complex as they manifest the practices of power politics and serve as both the architecture of the sacred and the mundane.

**Desiree Valadares**, University of California, Berkeley

#### **The Law of the Land: Homesteads, Canneries, Internment Camps and Marine Parks in Southeast Alaska**

In 1902, Portland businessman J.T Barron acquired land to establish the Thlinket Packing Company in Southeast Alaska. He filed a mining claim for a plot of about 12 acres and used loopholes in the Homestead Act to acquire additional property along the shores of Chatham Strait, Lynn Canal and Icy Strait. In this paper, I focus on the legal landscape of the now defunct Funter Bay cannery, formerly, known as the Thlinket Packing Company, in Southeast Alaska, just 20 miles

away from Alaska's capital city Juneau. I show how ideas of property, ownership and land tenure evolved with the passage of Homestead Act, introduced in 1898 in the then-Territory of Alaska. By tracking the legal history of this site, I show how this "landscape in the making" was shaped by various, and rather unlikely, loopholes in existing land use regulations. This research blends oral histories, onsite fieldwork, archival research in legal, cartographic, and pictorial archives to trace how former cannery landscapes in Alaska, with ties to Second World War internment or confinement history, are at the forefront of debates on public land, labor history, wartime injustice and land dispossession.

**Lisa Johnson**, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

### **Multilocality of an Ancient Maya City: Archaeology, Tourism, and Indigenous Landscapes of Palenque, Mexico**

The anthropological study of place often finds that the shaping of landscapes is a continual process implicating many hidden actors whose traces persist centuries beyond their lifetime. This is especially true of places valued for their historical narratives, such as archaeological sites. In this paper, we consider the construction and shaping of the ancient Maya city of Palenque (Chiapas Mexico), as the result of a process involving many generations of indigenous Maya who worked together for a common purpose. The history of those who physically shaped, built and signified the Classic Palenque cityscape (300-900 CE) is often absent from the archaeological narratives, which tend to focus on the design of major buildings and central plazas. As archaeologists we may find ourselves confronted with multiple, overlapping, sometimes competitive interests for the place we call an archaeological site. An archaeological "site" exists through a history with many narratives. As a place declared a UNESCO world heritage site, the ancient Maya city of Palenque has been deemed important not only to local Mexican citizens, but to the world. We consider how places are politicized, how they are made sacred, and how an ancient city can serve as a powerful monument to contemporary identity narratives. This paper follows others that suggest concepts such as multivocality and multilocality are essential for understanding just how a single place can evoke multiple meanings, emotions, and memories.

**Dane Carlson**, Principia College

### **Tied Across Time: The Future of Making Landscape in the High Himalaya**

In the high desert of Nepal's Mustang region, landscape history is made through shifting relations between people, climate, and land. These relations are typically historicized through exclusive social histories of indigenous cultures and made peripheral by the technocratic visions of development agencies. The deeper landscape history of Mustang, a history tied with presents and futures across time, makes clear that history is caught in the intertwined practices of diverse landscape makers, in the practical effort to settle, dwell, and labor. Mustang has always been a difficult place to inhabit, and the conditions of landscape-making continue to shift. In the villages of Samdzong and Dhey, the shifting availability of water drives shifts from centuries-old sites to new settlements. Despite narratives of these shifts as novel dislocations, extant documents describe village movements in past centuries as acts of refuge-making or responses to destroyed water infrastructure. Each land-based adjustment demonstrates the making of landscape as a practice tied across time, and that those who do the work of making landscape are inseparable from its trajectories. In this paper, I suggest that since these movements unfold across the deep past and present, the constraints of making landscape in high desert conditions force a resettlement that will be a major part of the uncertain future in Mustang. As shifts unfold, an increasingly diverse cast undertakes the perennial work of landscape-making: established farming communities, tenant farmers, migrant herders, traders, pilgrims, bulldozer operators, seasonal herb gatherers, and many others.

**Andrea Roberts**, Texas A&M University

### **Landscapes Remembered: Visual Cultures of African American Placemaking in Texas**

Texas freedom colonies are landscapes in which African Americans created free independent places after June 19, 1865. Formerly enslaved peoples founded most freedom colonies in secluded rural areas though some emerged in major cities. These communities thrived until racial violence, and economic opportunities in cities precipitated an exodus leading to drastic declines in population by the 1930s. Since 2014, Roberts has interviewed African American descendants of these colonies. She has documented more than 400 origin stories described by descendants, public records, and other stakeholders. She created [The Texas Freedom Colonies Atlas and Survey](#) in 2018 to crowdsource surveys from descendants around the state and the world. The publicly accessible virtual archive contains memories, assessments of

current conditions, official landscape histories, origin stories, and visitors' documents, images, and videos. This paper will analyze this crowdsourced content generated by public users and the research team using the StoryMap platform. She identifies the types of structures, buildings, and objects associated with each survey to discern how study participants characterize placemaking processes. Do they begin as an idea, a building enterprise, or another event? How do survey participants represent the settlement in text versus images? How are pictures instrumentalized to construct new social and cultural settlement histories? Do personal memories about recent experiences in the landscape still reveal insights into how the history of how the freedom colony was founded? The author concludes that church images and stories are most often shared to depict African American placemaking.

### Speaker Biographies

**Dane Carlson** is a landscape designer and researcher. His practice works toward collective action with landscape makers in Nepal in struggles against climate crisis and chronic disaster making. He is an Assistant Professor of Studio Art at Principia College and an environmental design strategist at The United Nations Office for Project Services.

**Jay Cephas** is Assistant Professor in the History and Theory of Architecture at Princeton University where he conducts research that explores the relationships between labor, technology, and identity in the built environment. Jay's recent publications include "Picturing Modernity: Race, Labor, and Landscape in the American South," which traces the ways in which Black labor served to reinforce racialized landscape production in Georgia; and "Agricultural Urbanism in Detroit," which examines the changing meaning of urbanism in the post-industrial city. In 2020, Jay was awarded a Graham Foundation grant to support the Black Architects Archive, a repository of under-represented architects from across 200 years of history, and in 2019 Jay served as a W.E.B. Du Bois Fellow at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

**Michelle Arevalos Franco** is an assistant professor in landscape architecture at The Ohio State University. Her research commits interdisciplinary design practice to the intersecting projects of justice, decolonial relationality, and post-capitalist futures. Her work connects the institutional, ecological, and legal construction of landscape to the collective power of ritual, duration, and narrative. She is founder of The Bureau of Common Lands and Waters, a collaborative agency for the restoration of commonlands. Her most recent landscape designs were for Oehme, van Sweden & Associates in Washington, DC. She holds a master's degree in landscape architecture from Harvard's Graduate School of Design, where she received the Peter Walker Partners Fellowship. Previously, Franco was program director of The Richard Avedon Foundation in New York and studied photography in the Sonoran Desert, where she received a bachelor's of fine art, magna cum laude from the University of Arizona.

**Ann C. Huppert** is an associate professor of architectural history at the University of Washington. She is the author of *Becoming an Architect in Renaissance Italy: Art, Science, and the Career of Baldassarre Peruzzi* (2015) and has published in collected volumes and journals, including the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* and *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*. Her current research focuses on construction sites in Counter-Reformation Rome and redefines architectural authorship by elevating practical knowledge alongside the theoretical knowledge long considered solely the purview of the architect. This work has received support from the American Philosophical Society, the Kress Foundation and the National Humanities Center.

**Lisa Johnson** is an archaeologist and an assistant professor-in-residence of anthropology. Her research is concerned with the materiality of ritual practice and more recently the historical and socio-material processes of urbanism. Her work primarily focuses on the Classic Period Maya (250 - 900 CE). She has conducted fieldwork in Belize and Mexico and is currently a member of the Proyecto Regional de Palenque, an interdisciplinary and international team focused on the investigation of urbanism at the Maya city of Palenque, Chiapas Mexico.

**Olanrewaju Lasisi** is a sixth-year doctoral candidate at the College of William & Mary. He is currently a Garden and Landscape Studies Junior Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks. Olanrewaju's research examines the intersection of architecture, ritual, and astronomy in making the cultural landscapes of the Ijebu kingdom of southwestern Nigeria. Olanrewaju has carried out extensive research in the Yoruba region of West Africa. His research has been funded by several organizations including the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Washington Explorers, and the College of William & Mary.

**Sarah Lopez**, a built environment historian and migration scholar, is an Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Lopez' book, *The Remittance Landscape: The Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA*, was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2015 and won the 2017 Spiro Kostof Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians. Lopez researches and teaches at the intersections of migration, ordinary landscapes, urbanism, and spatial justice. In 2016, Lopez was a Princeton Mellon fellow. Currently she is a Mellon Fellow in Urban Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks.

**Mars Plater** is a historian who studies the green spaces of nineteenth-century New York City, focusing on the class conflict and struggles over racial justice that shaped these landscapes. Mars has taught U.S. and Environmental History at Rutgers University, Bard Microcollege, and Dickinson College and has given public lectures at a number of museums and parks. Mars has published their research with the *Journal of Urban History*, *Gotham Blog*, *History News Network*, and the Hudson River Maritime Museum. When Mars is not working on their first book, they love hanging out with their no-eyed cat Simón and walking the Rockaways.

**Andrea Roberts** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University. Her 12 years' experience in community development, housing, and government administration inform her efforts to move disappearing African American communities from the margin to the center of public discourse and research. As Director of The Texas Freedom Colonies Project™(TXFC), she trains students, researchers, volunteers, and descendant communities to document social histories of endangered African American landscapes using an interactive mapping tool. Dr. Roberts is also the Owner of Freedom Colonies Project, LLC, a consultancy serving historic preservation organizations. She is a member of the Texas State Board of Review and National Monument Audit Advisory Boards. The Vernacular Architecture Forum, the Urban Affairs Association, and the Whiting Foundation have recognized her engaged scholarship. She is currently writing a book about Black historic preservation practice for The University of Texas Press.

**Colleen M. Stockmann** has a PhD and MA from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in Art History and holds a BA in Studio Art from Macalester College. Stockmann specializes in the visual culture of North America and the Atlantic World with a focus on landscape and ecocriticism. Stockmann's current book project places into conversation horticulture, drawing, and diagram to examine the politics of plants and vernacular art praxis in the Atlantic world over the long nineteenth century. This work has been supported by The Huntington Library, Consortium for the Study of the Premodern World, and the Social Science Research Council. As an assistant professor of art history at Gustavus Adolphus College in St Peter, MN, Stockmann teaches a range of courses including a networked global history of pigments and the history of data visualization in print culture.

**Desiree Valadares** is a PhD Candidate in Architecture: History, Theory and Society at the University of California, Berkeley and is trained in landscape architecture and architectural history. She writes about land, territoriality, and empire in Canada and the US with a focus on the aftermath of Asian migration (wartime forced relocation) and Indigenous intersections in the Pacific.

**Antonia Weiss** is a trained architect and a practicing historian. She received her BA in Architecture from Cambridge University and her MArch from Princeton University. She has worked for leading design firms in the UK, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Since 2018, she has been a PhD Candidate in History at the University of Amsterdam, where her work is funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). For her doctoral thesis, Antonia studies the gendering of urban nature in eighteenth-century Amsterdam and Berlin. Her first publication, which discusses the impact of early modern gender ideology on German garden theory, will appear in 2022 in 'Eighteenth-Century Studies'. Next to studying historic gardens and landscapes, Antonia is also developing her own horticultural skills in her garden on the Dutch peninsula of Marken.

### **Symposiarch Biographies**

**Stephen Daniels** is Emeritus Professor of Cultural Geography at the University of Nottingham, where he has worked since 1981. From 2005-2013 he was Director of the UK Arts and Humanities program in Landscape and Environment. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2010. Stephen is author, co-author and editor of a series of books on histories of landscape art and design including *Humphry Repton. Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* (Yale University Press, 1999), *The Iconography of Landscape* (with Denis Cosgrove) (CUP, 1988), *Fields of Vision* (Princeton University Press, 1992), *Art of the Garden* (Tate, 2004), *Paul Sandby Picturing Britain* (Royal Academy, 2009) and *Landscapes of the National Trust* (National Trust 2015). A recent essay is 'Repton for Real: The Practical and Pictorial' in *The Shape of the Land: Topography and Landscape Architecture*, edited by Marc Treib.

**Dell Upton** is Distinguished Research Professor of Architectural History at UCLA and Professor Emeritus of Architecture at UC Berkeley. He earned his Ph.D. in American Civilization at Brown University. His books include *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (2008; winner, Society of Architectural Historians Spiro Kostof Book Prize); *What Can and Can't Be Said: Race, Uplift, and Monument Building in the Contemporary South* (2015) and *American Architecture: A Thematic History* (2019). His current research focuses on the rural Black landscape in the American South after 1865 and on statue-building since antiquity.

**Thaïsa Way** is the Director of Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks. Way holds a PhD from Cornell University. Prior to coming to Dumbarton Oaks, Way served as founding director of Urban@UW, a coalition of urban researchers and teachers collaboratively addressing complex urban challenges, and as Chair of Faculty Senate at the University of Washington. Way has published and lectured on feminist histories of landscape architecture and public space in cities. Her book, *Unbounded Practices: Women, Landscape Architecture, and Early Twentieth Century Design* (University of Virginia Press, 2009) was awarded the J. B. Jackson Book Award in 2012. A second book, *From Modern Space to Urban Ecological Design: The Landscape Architecture of Richard Haag* (University of Washington Press, 2015) explores the narrative of post-industrial cities and the practice of landscape architecture.