

Landscape Matters: News from GLS



The Garden and Landscape Studies program at Dumbarton Oaks is pleased to share with you the following announcements regarding 2009-10 fellows, fellowship applications, new staff, new programs, forthcoming lectures and symposium, and new publications.



Khoy with its gardens and surrounding landscape.
Circa 1533, Iran. Artist: Matrakçı, ūhū Silāhū.

It has been a very busy year for GLS at Dumbarton Oaks, with five fellows and numerous events, including lectures by Kongjian Yu, Elizabeth Meyer, and Peter Del Tredici; a film screening, “Faces from the New Farm” by Women’s Garden Cycles held in conjunction with the D.C. Environmental Film Festival; and the annual symposium on May 8-9, *The Interlacing of Words and Things in Gardens and Landscapes: Beyond Nature and Culture*, organized by Beatrix Farrand Distinguished Fellow Stephen Bann.

The pace has been just as lively over the summer, with four summer fellows, three interns, two post-doctoral stipend recipients, and one visiting scholar all here at the same time. Five more fellows will be arriving in September for the coming academic year. In addition, GLS has initiated a program of temporary installations of contemporary art and design, with the first project, by sculptor Charles Simonds, now on view. Details on current and future activities follow.

2009-10 Fellows in Garden and Landscape Studies

To the right are the fellows who will be in residence at Dumbarton Oaks in the 2009-10 academic year, as well as our 2009 Summer Fellows:



Left to right: Director of GLS John Beardsley, Summer Fellows: Priyaleen Singh, Nicole Cuenot, Tom Hedin, Sally O'Halloran.

Staff changes in GLS

Xin Wu, former Coordinator of Contemporary Landscape Design and Asia Programs, and Shannon Leahy, former Assistant to the Director of Garden and Landscape Studies, have both left Dumbarton Oaks to pursue other opportunities. Jane Padelford, who has both a BA in art history and an MLA from Cornell, is the new assistant. Jane is a wonderful addition, as she is both very familiar with the field and very enthusiastic about Dumbarton Oaks. Michael Lee has also joined the GLS staff as a post-doctoral associate. Michael received his Ph.D. in landscape architecture with a minor in philosophy from Harvard in 2004; he has taught at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) and at the Rhode Island School of Design. His chief responsibilities will be to assemble, manage, and edit department publications, but he will also be helping to develop other department activities, including symposia, lectures, and exhibitions. Michael's experiences and interests are perfect for this position and he will also be a great addition to GLS.

Fellows

Luisa Elena Alcala, New York University in Madrid (fall only)
"Converging Landscapes: The Representation of Place in Latin American Colonial Painting"

Grey Gundaker, College of William & Mary "Wild Flowers: African and African Diaspora Landscapes and the Politics of Gardens"

Thomas Zeller, University of Maryland "Consuming Landscapes: The View from the Road in the United States and Germany, 1920-1970"

Junior Fellows

Elsa Lam, Columbia University (spring only) "Wilderness Nation: Building Canada's Railway Landscapes, 1884-1929"

Stephen Whiteman, Stanford University "Creating the Kangxi Landscape: Gardens and the Mediation of Qing Imperial Identity at Bishu Shanzhuang"

Summer Fellows

Nicole Cuenot, Columbia University "The Force of Flowers: Bringing the Outdoors In at Versailles"

Thomas Hedin, University of Minnesota, Duluth "The Gardens of Versailles during the Early Reign of Louis XIV: Three Studies"

Sally O'Halloran, University of Sheffield "The Serviceable Ghost: The Forgotten Role of the Gardener in England from 1600 to 1730"

Priyaleen Singh, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi "Conservation of Historic Gardens in India: The Florence Charter on Historic Gardens Illustrated, Expanded and Critiqued"

New Programs in GLS

In the past year, three new programs have been initiated, one in conjunction with the other departments of study at Dumbarton Oaks, and two within GLS.

A new program of post-doctoral stipends has been created in all three areas of study; two such stipends have been awarded thus far in GLS. They went to Alison Hirsch and Lake Douglas, both of whom were at Dumbarton Oaks during July. Alison recently received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and taught last year at the GSD; Lake Douglas teaches at Louisiana State University, where he is Associate Professor and coordinator of graduate studies in landscape architecture. Alison worked on preparing her dissertation on Lawrence Halprin for publication; Lake was researching the origins of the profession of landscape architecture in early nineteenth-century America. GLS also hosted a visiting scholar this summer, Ali Tehranifar, a horticulturist from the University of Mashhad in Iran. Dr. Tehranifar gave two talks on his work while he was here, one on barberry (*berberis*) cultivation in Iran, the other on the varieties of trees used in public spaces in Mashhad.

A program of summer internships for landscape architecture students that existed at Dumbarton Oaks between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s has been revived. Three students were here this summer, working half-days in the gardens learning planting design, maintenance, and historic garden conservation with garden director Gail Griffin, and half-days on research projects under the supervision of GLS director of studies John Beardsley. The interns were Emily Bonifaci and Justin Scherma from the GSD and Emily Rogers from the University of Virginia. Emily Rogers researched the kitchen gardens at Dumbarton Oaks and helped restore part of this area to vegetable production; Justin updated GIS data on the Dumbarton Oaks gardens; and Emily Bonifaci studied post-9/11 security changes to the public landscapes of Washington D.C. They were a lively addition to summer at Dumbarton Oaks and gave informative research reports in their last week here.



Left to right: Interns in the bird's nest at Winterthur Gardens: Emily Rogers, Justin Scherma, Emily Bonifaci.



Left to right: Post-Doctoral stipend recipients Lake Douglas, Alison Hirsch, and Visiting Scholar Ali Tehranifar.

Contemporary Art & Design

GLS has also initiated an occasional series of temporary installations of contemporary art and design under the direction of John Beardsley. The first project, by the sculptor Charles Simonds, was installed in late April and opened on May 8 during the 2009 symposium. Titled *Landscape/Body/Dwelling*, the installation featured clay sculptures in the gardens and museum and an installation of archival material, including books and films, outside the rare book room. Much of the work revolved around the artist's fantasy of an imaginary civilization of little people and his exploration of the analogies among the earth, the body, and architecture, all of which he conceptualizes as different sorts of dwellings. The exhibition received a full-page, very favorable review in the *Washington Post* Weekend section on June 11, 2009 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/11/AR2009061101332.html>), and will be reviewed in *Artforum* in October. The exhibition runs through October 25, 2009.



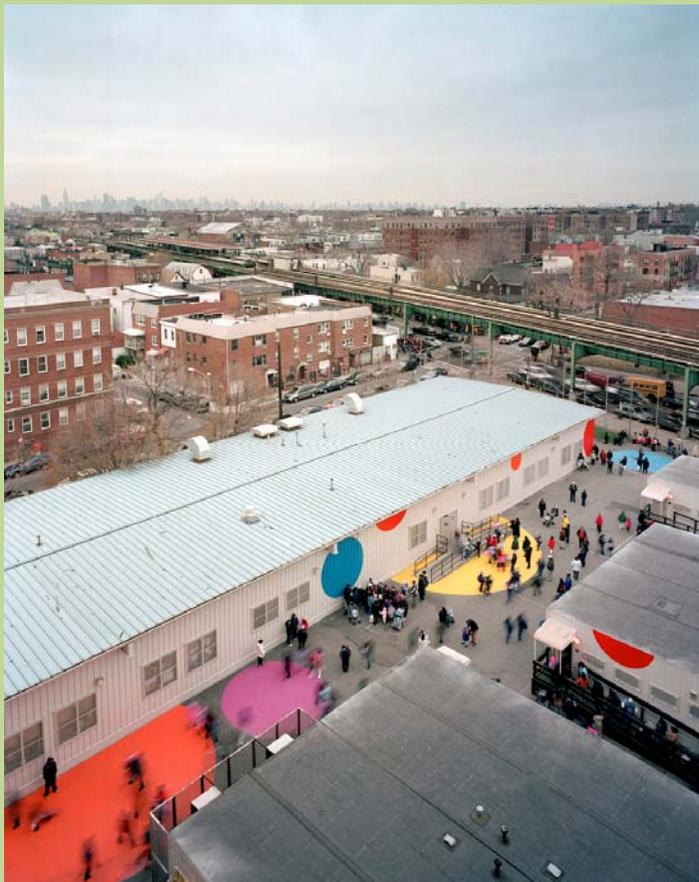
Mental Earth, 2003

Charles Simonds

Metal, polyurethane, clay, and wood

Collection of the Artist

Photo Courtesy Charles Simonds



PS 19, New York City, Ken Smith Landscape Architecture.

Photo courtesy Ken Smith.

Forthcoming Lectures

GLS will host two lectures in the fall term. The first, by Ken Smith of Ken Smith Landscape Architecture, New York, will be held on October 1, 2009. Smith, one of America's most provocative contemporary designers, has titled his lecture "biglittleskipthemiddle." He will present his work, including the Santa Fe Railyard Park and the Orange County Great Park, in the context of his preference for the small-scale artistic installation and the large-scale urban intervention over anything that might be described as either mid-scale or middle of the road. Dianne Harris, Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Art History, and History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Director of the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, will speak on November 18. A historian whose expertise includes post-war suburban development in the United States, Prof. Harris will speak on Levittown, Pennsylvania on which she currently has a book in press.

Lectures are at 5:30 in the Music Room; a separate announcement will go out for each event. Reservations are required. For reservations or information contact: Landscape@doaks.org or call 202-339-6460.

Forthcoming GLS Spring Symposium, May 14-15, 2010

Designing for Biodiversity: Wildlife Habitats

The vision of a garden shared peacefully by humans and animals is one of the most familiar tropes of landscape—and also one of the most elusive. Whether threatened by habitat destruction or climate change, displaced by urbanization, poisoned by environmental toxins, or hunted to extinction, many animal species have failed to thrive in the company of people. There is growing consensus, documented in a recent essay by Elizabeth Kolbert in *The New Yorker*, that we are in the midst of the sixth great extinction in earth history—and the first one caused by human activities. She reports that by some estimates, as many as half of earth's species will be gone by the end of this century.

What agency, if any, can design have in preserving or restoring zoological biodiversity? And at what scale? From the backyard butterfly garden to the biosphere reserve, is it possible to design for biodiversity? If habitat is preserved or restored, will the desired animal species inevitably inhabit it? If appropriate plant materials are introduced, will animals necessarily follow? Can design encompass both predator and prey species, edge and interior, common and rare? Can humans and animals coexist in these spaces and if so, how is human use to be managed? At one extreme, is it necessary for the survival of some species to exclude humans entirely? At the other, many cities are now developing biodiversity plans: can urbanized areas be made habitable for wildlife? What role might zoos, endangered-species breeding facilities, and even commercial theme parks like Disney's Animal Kingdom play in protecting and promoting biodiversity? While zoos raise complicated ideological issues, display techniques have been evolving rapidly as a result of better understandings of animal behaviors and appropriate habitats. Moreover, contemporary zoos are becoming partners in larger biodiversity protection and species survival projects.

Looking to the past, what lessons can be gleaned in this effort from landscape histories around the globe? What are the precedents for habitat design in menageries, aviaries, hunting preserves, public parks, and early zoos? To what degree have either designed landscapes or the landscapes of everyday life ever encouraged biodiversity? While landscape design has typically promoted botanical diversity, what has been its impact on zoological diversity? Animals have been allotted only the most circumscribed place in the history of garden design or landscape architecture; is there a history to recover here?

While the ideal of the Peaceable Kingdom has long motivated garden making, it seems that animals themselves—especially wild ones—have been variously excluded from designed landscapes or put in cages and systematically classified. Recently, animals have become the focus of sympathetic study and avid protection among conservationists, ecologists, and biologists. How is the growing attention to wild animals in related disciplines spilling over into garden design and landscape architecture? In an era of fuzzy rhetoric about ecological design and sustainability, can the presence or absence of wildlife provide a way of measuring the success of designed landscapes? This symposium will attempt to discover the role of design in promoting zoological biodiversity.

For further information, please contact Jane Padelford at Landscape@doaks.org or 202-339-6460

Fellowship applications and deadlines

Dumbarton Oaks continues to offer residential fellowships in three areas of study: Byzantine Studies, Pre-Columbian Studies, and Garden and Landscape Studies; opportunities include Academic Year Fellowships, Academic Year Junior Fellowships, Summer Fellowships, and Short-Term Pre-Doctoral Residencies. Application deadlines are November 1.

This year, Dumbarton Oaks is again offering a new research opportunity: One-Month Post-Doctoral Stipends; deadlines are rolling. Short-term Pre-Doctoral Residencies are now available for up to four weeks. Complete details on fellowship terms and application procedures are available at <http://www.doaks.org/research/>.

In selecting fellows, the Garden and Landscape Studies program at Dumbarton Oaks seeks a balance between historical research and investigations of current practice, between inquiries at the scale of the garden and those addressing larger landscapes. The program invites consideration of all aspects of this interdisciplinary and international field; applicants are encouraged to consider topics from a variety of perspectives. Additional information for applicants in garden and landscape studies is available at http://www.doaks.org/research/info_gal_fellowship.html.

New procedures for submitting applications online have been instituted; please check the Dumbarton Oaks website at http://www.doaks.org/research/fellowship_application.html.

Recent Publications

The following books have recently been published by Dumbarton Oaks for the Garden and Landscape Studies program:

Xin Wu, *Patricia Johanson's House and Garden Commission: Re-construction of Modernity*, 2008

Michel Conan, ed., *Gardens and Imagination: Cultural History and Agency*, 2008

Michel Conan and Chen Wangheng, eds., *Gardens, City Life and Culture: A World Tour*, 2008

Michel Conan and Jeffrey Quilter, eds., *Gardens and Cultural Change: A Pan-American Perspective*, 2008

Michel Conan, ed., *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity; Questions, Methods and Resources in a Multicultural Perspective*, 2007

Michel Conan, ed., *Sacred Gardens and Landscapes: Ritual and Agency*, 2007

Michel Conan, ed., *Contemporary Garden Aesthetics: Creation and Interpretation*, 2007

Michel Conan and W. John Kress, eds., *Botanical Progress, Horticultural Innovation and Cultural Change*, 2007

Michel Conan, ed., *Performance and Appropriation: Profane Rituals in Gardens and Landscapes*, 2007

For a full list of Garden and Landscape titles from Dumbarton Oaks and for information on ordering the books, go to

http://www.doaks.org/research/garden_landscape/doaks_gal_publications.html.