ENVIRONMENTAL ART AND SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE.
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The idea of speaking about the esthetics of the environment in response to a call on sustainable landscape may appear curious. Theoretically, sustainable development must make it possible to exceed apparent contradictions between economy, environment and social. Moreover, sustainable development has become a new framework for a reflexion on supposedly balanced social development on an international scale. In spite of this, on one hand, it appears that sustainable development is more preoccupied with the technical aspects of its action than with its social engagements, or that it is not conscious of the anthropological bases of environmental relationships. On the other hand, landscape is a major term, not only because it makes it possible to envisage a more democratic approach to planning and quality of habitat (European Landscape Convention 2000), but also because it allows a confrontation and an association of the æsthetic and ecological dimensions of environmental transformations. This is all the more important as the esthetic dimension, neglected by environmental research, can appeal to both the experience of forms (singular and collective) and the forms of planning, which respond to considerations of collective taste and social choices; it also involves modes of appropriation and transformation of one’s environment. Hence the question of esthetics in such a development, of an esthetics which is not satisfied with mere spectacle, with being tool for the mediatization of environmental stakes, but which goes in the direction of a taking into account the multiple sensitive links to the environment. Sustainable development and landscape will not be "sustainable" if it does not ensure a place to the concern guiding all the relations leading to environmental protection and perpetuation. Indeed, we may wonder about the validity of a politics of sustainability unconcerned about vulnerable and fragile environments, and principally centered on the ecological modernization of urban production.

Our second assumption is as follows: we think that esthetical engagement is related to some new concern for the environment which is underlined by all kind of social practices, artistic ones and also, ordinary, daily ones. Though we have to explore these practices to understand better what art can propose: new solutions, methods, technical devices, visions? Ways of preparing us to adapt to catastrophic futures? Or even the proof of a certain desarray of public institutions in terms of action? But why should we explore art, is that in someways different from landscape planning? So we think: free from preconceived schematical modes of doing, art can instore some new ways of making environment visible in public space. Moreover, we should study in what manners art and aesthetical practices contribute to sustainable landscapes, it is to say renew our representations and practices of nature.

If we go one step further, and this our third assumption, we can wonder about a strategy being based on art and esthetics to promote sustainable landscapes? This introduction of aesthetics into public debates allows the opening of public space to other types of data than the ones of science and restores the central place of sensitivity in the landscape and the richness of the individual and collective territorial links: sensory, sensitive, imaginary and symbolic systems. In some ways, the introduction of art can also value how well being is connected with the idea of participating in the construction of a common project in resistance to public policies or human behaviors which
one can describe as destructive. Indeed, esthetics corresponds to the construction of an ethics through shaping facts since ethics is not the assertion of a value out of facts, but of a value discovered in the shape of facts and which is thus co-evolutive. An aesthetic environment is part of the success of an ethics and therefore « sustainable landscape » as we will discover further on may be defined as a way of discovering and asserting (on an individual or collective level) our political choices in terms of environmental value. Before entering into the heart of the subject matter, that is, the introduction of a new dynamics of analysis into sustainable development, let us trace our research back to its origins.

**Procedures and definitions (1)**

Based on the procedures and results of prior research realized with Jacques Lolive (UMR PACTE Grenoble), this article corresponds to the objectives of a research program entitled "Environment, aesthetic engagement and public space » funded in September 2005 by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development as part of its “Landscape and sustainable environment” programme (APR PDD). The objective of the programme was to organize an international conference, held on 9, 10 and 11 May 2007 and attended by more than a hundred internationally recognized participants ; this also included preparatory seminars whose three meetings took place in 2006 and which were the subject of a collective publication in 2007. The aim was to examine the aesthetic components of public policies, environmental action and ecological art.

It is advisable, however, to define beforehand more precisely the three terms which are being used. The term « environment » makes it possible to refer to the multiple links a person or any living being forges in its relations with the world. This singular organization adapts to its environment making processes of creative adjustment ; these processes can be described as active environmentalisation. They bring into play multiple sensory links, and this confers a certain aesthetic meaning to our lifeworlds, making it significant and opening the possibility of a judgement of taste which in turn may give rise to public debate. This is a plural version of environmental engagement.

By « aesthetic engagement », we do not refer to a specialized field which would be art, or the philosophy of beauty, or even a theory of taste. One must think of an active environmental mode of knowledge which is not reserved to art or cultural monuments. This mode of active knowledge follows the reflexions of a John Dewey (1934) or, more recently, of Arnold Berleant (1992) for whom aesthetic experience is a way of registering the environment inside oneself, instead of being the subject of a passive and disengaged contemplation. Some forms of environmental mobilization, plural mobilizations within the urban framework aiming at the requalification of places of life, can be analyzed in terms of aesthetic engagement ; indeed, the categories mobilized (landscape, living space, ordinary patrimony, the beauty of gardens and floral spaces...) to justify the movements, as well as the actors taking part in them (artists, landscape planners, etc.) are evidence of this. In addition, these mobilizations testify to the plurality of the significant and ordinary links which give meaning to the environment. They give place to images and imaginary compositions of places and what they should be, including directions on how to inhabit them, thus accounting for the environment in all its richness. One should not forget the role of beliefs.
and of feelings including that of injustice, and of the fictions that enable us to live together on a daily basis.

Finally, by public space, we also designate the concrete formal space accessible to the public, as well as the virtual space of dialogue which indicates the political debate. Public space is the political construction of a common world through debate and dialogue, but it is also a concrete reality, inasmuch as it is a space of life. However, today, in the context of environmental complexity, public space is no longer only the space of debate, it has become the stake of the debate. The question of the environment, i.e. a social question, but also the natural and constructed environment, turns public space into a shared material space which must be debated publicly. Such a space is already contained in the law and contained in the public policies of landscape. Now that we have set the terms of the debate let us specify the places of ecological engagement and how artist respond to it.

Art and landscape (2)

To be quick, we determined three types of artistic engagement in the realm of environment.

First type: the artist work with the scientist (chemist, biologist, physicist, oceanographer, ecologist, etc.). Although the artists work with the scientists since the years at least 1950, this work halfway between art and science was not taken into account so much then. Today such collaborations appear normal (Box 1). Sue Spaid (2007) curated the Ecovention exhibition: Current Art to Transform Ecologies, which gathered collaborations between artists, scientists, politics, members of the local communities, town planners, architects. By ecoventions, it indicates projects of artists who employ inventive tactics to transform local ecologies; they also hybridize practices of research, and thanks to their freer creativity bring a breathing in projects and, more specifically, a better capacity to combine the cultural history and the ecological restoration. The idea is that the inhabitants are the «administrators» of this new ecology, to some extent the stewards of these lands. Beyond the specific of the production, let us examine how they are perceived. It is not one as Lynne Hull’s work shows (Box 2). Indeed, the public is that of the same park but also its employees. In the case of Brandon Ballengée, it acts rather as activism or even as journalism. Mel Chin, on the other hand, is faced with a public of experts, scientists and artists, evaluating his work under its double aspect. In artistic terms remains on only the image which testifies through time that a round of grass there was different (Box 3).

Second type, the artist gets close to the inhabitant and works with local communities: many Groundworks exhibitions (within the framework of the STUDIO for creative inquiry at the university of Carnegie Mellon, two academics seek to develop creative tactics allowing to exceed utilitarian optics with regard to nature), Beyond green: towards a sustainable art, Smart Museum of art, university of Chicago, 2005, etc. give an account of it. Certain artists choose to put themselves at the service of community with the idea of a social invention of art; fallingfruit.org, for example, gather the fruits fallen from the trees in the gardens of a suburban middle-class to give them to poorer neighborhoods... Others rather choose this posture willing to awakening consciences, to contribute to the empowerment of a community: such is the case of the collective Sitesize of Barcelona which makes metropolitan landscape the place of the demonstration. Lastly, certain artists choose the recycled form. Quality of material in charge of
history ? Truth of the posture which shows worries about the exhaustion of the natural resources ? Beauty of the invention which consists in transforming a form into another ? All that is true, but it especially remains to note the fact that the artist who shows the way of a successful recycling shows the possibility to reinvent ordinary lifes to those who do have nothing. Thus Dan Peterman, artist located on the edge of the university and of the black neighborhood of Chicago, transformed his workshop into a collective place for recycling bicycles, impress a Community newspaper, etc. (Box 4). Jeroen van Westen (interview, november 28, 2005), Dutch artist, works with the inhabitants to redefine the landscape. Far from being realistic drawings, these abstract visual forms gave birth to a « landscape designed after the river ». Collaborative approach involving inhabitants with drawing shows well the need for a landscape projection to represent future places. The public of these works is the inhabitants and generally the people concerned with these problems, the galerists, people of the local communities ; and at last, the public of art.

The last type refer to the artist who uses the same very formal language than planners and developers : for instance, they often use spatial methodology and technical devices as maps. They are close also because they work together within the framework of a project hybriding their practices ; both intend to solve an ecological problem, more on a symbolic level for the artist. Certain artists like Robert Morris taken within the game of public funding, sometimes summoned to repair damaged sites, choose a deceptive language : does it act then, as in other cases, as ecological restoration ?

**Sustainable landscape (3)**

The goal of this research is to encourage thinking about the reappropriation of living environments, with a view to introducing an environmental democracy. It is an opportunity for researchers in the social sciences and, more widely, for environmentalists, allowing fresh enquiry into relationships of individuals with the collective and questions of responsibility and environmental ethics. The question of æsthetic appreciation and ecological raised the issue of enhancing the value of places, landscapes and environments. This is sustainable landscape.

By “sustainable landscape” one therefore understands what can fit in a culture and a given materiality in a sustainable manner. Such a landscape answers, indeed, to the representations and practices of local populations, takes into account their symbolic dimensions, but also artistic, i.e. creative of lifeworlds, as well as the biological and physical dimensions of landscapes. Our interpretation of the expression “sustainable landscape” thus consists in thinking that :

- the implication of the inhabitants guarantees in some concerns the respect of social design.
- the possibility to appropriate one’s place is one of the dimensions of the sustainable landscape : it is a question of transforming the patrimonial and visual landscape in a generous design of the landscape.
- a respectful manufacture of nature, integrating its various dimensions, scientific and artistic, can take part of the reproduction of the natural resources. Such a design emphasizes the role of Utopia and the importance of the « symbolic model » that can be the artistic practices in the field of sustainable development.
- the integration of the « environmental credits » (actifs environnementaux), of which some are revealed by artistic practices, allows another thinking of the economic development.
We will give three examples of what might be an artistic participation to the evolution of territories which might hold on local narratives and link them with ordinary landscapes in urban settings.

First of all, the analysis of some urban mobilizations in Barcelona enables us to imagine an evolution of territories which is admissible by the inhabitants. We will take the example of an artistic collective, Sitesize (Sitesize 2007) to evoke the alliance between associations of « neighbors » (of districts) and the new urban collectives which allows complementarity practices. The « neighbors » are anchored in places which ones confer competences. There is a strong link between innovating SME and the presence of the artists in the past of the district of Poble Nou in Barcelona. These « neighbors » refer themselves to the genius loci, the singularity of a local ecology (the district of Good Pastor) and the memory of the material traces and narratives in conformity (workers and revolutionnary memory) to justify their fight. But how to guarantee the sustainability of these sometimes growing old communities whose members are driven out district by the restorations and the rise in the prices of housing? The debate does not lead inevitably to the conservation of the integrity of the old neighborhood.

Alliance with new collectives, composed of young radicals (anti-liberals) and animated by artists, makes it possible to disenclose these social movements. The new collectives often act in the fast zones of transformation, in the margins of the city where the urban developers restructures the city, causing the dispute of « neighbors ». They propose temporary occupations of strategic spaces (squats, gardens...). The community projects that they imagine with the « neighbors » outline the suitable trajectory which can best continue the narrative of the community of neighbors. The type of alternative project that the artists activists draw (for example Nau 21) is not any more one technical device closed and solidified in the posture of counter-evaluation; it is a collective process, a sometimes transitory moving experimentation. The Community project and lifestyles become the aesthetic production of these artist-citizens. The evolution of the territories must be in conformity with the narrative of the inhabitants, within a specific tradition. In the example chosen here, the alternative project of the artists makes it possible to consider this evolution because it combines memory of the inhabitants and capacity of invention of the artists.
Ecoartist Jeroen Van Westen

Situated in the north east of The Netherlands near the town of Emmen, is a small stream called De Runde. Signed by, the Runde is a project about reviving a landscape that was ‘dead’. [Industrial agriculture wore out the soil within 25 years after scraping of 6 meters of peat (over the last four centuries) to be used as fuel in cities, erasing a natural process that took 2 millennia to form. Only 200 hectares are left of what was once a 100 km long swamp running north to south and 5 to 40 km wide. Based on the imaginative mapping of underlaying structures with the title Hidden Wealth, sketched by the Piet Ziel (planning department of the municipality Emmen) and Harry Berg (landscape architect for the Ministry of Agriculture) a cultural process was started by artist Jeroen van Westen, resulting in bringing back a fossilised peat stream. This not about the restoration of an historic course, but about a cultural invitation to natural forces within the margins of the present and future landscape. That way the stream could become a basis for redevelopment of the area. Was getekend, de Runde is a project in which the artist is the collector of stories, stories that in their turn are used to create the stream. Having done that the Runde becomes the storyteller and the source for new stories. Of course as an artist one doesn’t just collect, the collection is meant to open as many perspectives as possible, to ‘anchor’ as many stories as possible. The selection is based on how new stories are invited and what stories they invite. The conditional design is aiming at looking for openings to convert our culture’s relationship to nature from constricting to inviting, thus striving for/initiating a change of culture. Let’s hear the artist himself: “In order to get acquainted with the area I invited Maarten van Wesemael to travel with me around in the area. We made observations, interviewed locals, stakeholders (big farmers, the local tourist board, the museum for peat history) and the commissioners (the Ministry of Agriculture, the Municipality of Emmen, Water management). It was my first step from a theoretical artistic approach to actually contributing to the transformation of a
landscape. It was explicit from the beginning that I would not design a sculpture, but rather the landscape would be the piece of art. A piece of art has an author, a creative power in charge. Since landscape is the expression of the interaction between cultural and natural forces, the author is obviously not an individual but also a combination of both. A metaphor was born that had to be developed further. Could the water that created the swamp not only be the creative force to change the dusty land, but be made visible again as a signature, an inscription of the landscape of the mutual articulation of nature and culture. If we wanted the signature tell the history of cohabitation we would need the inhabitants to tell their part. What I really hope, is to be able to stroll again near the village, I hope that our kids can play in the fields like we did, because that was so good, and now, you can hardly get anywhere on foot. The background information on the landscape design of the re-parcellation given by the commissioner used terms like Points, Lines, and Shapes. Kandinsky uses these same terms in his theoretical Bauhaus study trying to set up a framework to discuss two dimensional art. Looking for a link to emphasise the artistic qualities of a landscape, the landscape as a work of art, this was a gift. In the third dimension of a landscape I needed the extra terms Volume and Movement since in a landscape changing position means changing views, i.e. changing the relationships between objects, colours, etc. Picking up this link handed me an idea to connect the concept of a signature to the stories of the local people and Hidden wealth as described in the reports accompanying the landscape design. If I could learn the stories of the locals and the value they contribute to objects, to the locations in the landscape, I could mark them as attractive or repelling forces. Kandinsky states that a straight line is a connection between two points in neutral territory. The line will be curved towards attractive forces and bend away from repulsive forces. To create these curved lines, I had to get the people share me their experiences, their intimate knowledge of the landscape, a landscape they were not proud of in general.”

DARE-DARE in Montreal (Canada)

The experimentation of the collective of DARE-DARE was analyzed by the historian of art and geographer Suzanne Paquet from the Laval University in Quebec. In her intervention, Suzanne Paquet analyzes the role of the artists in the transformations of public space, in particular the urban place public, which produce new forms, but also new situations, new relations between the inhabitants. She analyzes two public places. One, the place Jean-Paul Riopelle, created in 2004 in the new international district of Montreal, uses public art, in fact the Tournament, a beautiful fountain of the artist Jean-Paul Riopelle, which spits flames and smoke just as easily as water, like "a desirable addition to the setting of representation of the public places, those functioning in
return like figures, symbolic systems or emblems of the city". At some distance of this recently arranged place is the Viger public garden, built also around a work of art, the Agora, a public sculpture-place of Charles Daudelin, which was conceived by its author like equipment for the use of the citizens. This place "corresponds, it, with a not very desirable image or straightforwardly undesirable (bus) the itinerant people of the downtown area make it soon a place to inhabit. » Suzanne Paquet opposes definite public space by the developers based on the formal image and alternative public spaces worked by the action of these artists and nourished by relational contribution. The intervention of artists in the new collectives allows many different fluxes in public space. It constitutes a new method of democratic breathing. These performances in the urban one express the reconquest of a political freedom which are opposed to hardened public space. They reanimate the dead policy (crystallized by the normative laws, institutions, equipment, the architectonic urban one and the places of memory) to give him again an experimental and pragmatic dimension. Transitory and mobile forms, performances of relational art, come to revivify the public space which had been monumentalized, crystallized and used..

Towards participative esthetics (4)

To involve the inhabitants in public action, the actors of esthetics (artists, landscape designers, architects) would have to format significant experiences of lifeworlds so that it can be restored, to become admissible, circulate and put in debate. For that, one could use the know-hows of the specialists (artists, novelists, landscape designers, scenographers...) and resort to the common forms of representation (environments, landscape, accounts, images...) This assumption doubles of three recommendations. The first relates to participative esthetics. The participative process must be based on the lived environment of inhabitants. Which assumption supposes the existence of a transmission chain : that the designers and the policy makers endeavour to transmit sufficient elements of the local sensitivity so that it is communicated to the other participants. This is the condition for the public discussion being enriched, and even structured by local sensitivity and esthetics. It will relate to new questions: richness of the links which attach the inhabitant to his lived environment ; the importance of these links for the inhabitants and also how the inhabitants hope for these links to be in the future.

The second recommendation relates to the combination of forms and of supports of transmission. This will to combine the narratives of inhabitants with the restitutions of landscape and environment, to mix the visuals, narratives and audios makes it possible to escape from the influence of visual (for landscape) as from the primacy of writing (for narratives) which would make the experiment less interesting.

The specialists of these kind of medias (plasticians, novelists, men of theatre...) could play a central part in this policy of forms but one should not subscribe to a too representative design where the artist would be the appointed representative of the inhabitants. The recourse to education in aesthetics for all could constitute a guarantee of a democratical process. It is thus a question of empowering inhabitants with aesthetic criterias. Thus participative esthetics could be accompanied by various workshops: writing workshops, musical workshops, choreographic workshops...
The third recommendation consists in imagining procedures of participation which can involve emotion and sensitivity. Environmental experience is not authorized in the public sphere at the present time because it conceals far too many significant and emotional data which belong to the sphere of intimacy. To be able to be taken into account in the public debate and choices, this significant and emotional dimension requires a preliminary processing, an aesthetic working. But the question is not to pass the whole of the sensitive and emotional sphere in the public domain in the name of transparency too much in vogue currently. Indeed, the richness of the experiment badly lends itself to the principle of non-contradiction which governs the exchanges of rational arguments in the realm of well stabilized strategic interests. Two characteristics of the experiment are opposed to it: necessary cohabitation of contradictions within an individual or a community and the reserve of latency necessary for the sensitivity. Force is to admit that it will be necessary to even invent procedures of participation which are not controlled exclusively by transparency and which grant a place to what is not easily explained. Procedures which, following the example of hybrid forums, do not assign *a priori* identities or interests well defined to participants.

Box 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Differences Between Science and Ecoventions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCIENCE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• scientific community</td>
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<tr>
<td>• laboratory setting/field</td>
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<tr>
<td>• background hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• goal to build/test theory</td>
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<td>• or to solve problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>• costs more as science</td>
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<tr>
<td>• major funding available</td>
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<tr>
<td>• success requires paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>• generates codified rules and specified approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• CAN end- when scientists repay funders and move on to test new theory.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ECOVENTIONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• community stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• public works/mostly outdoors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• hunches &amp; intuition</td>
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<tr>
<td>• goal to try something new</td>
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<td>• or to resolve situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• costs less as public art</td>
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<td>• requires persuading funders</td>
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<td>• success alters perspectives</td>
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<td>• alters course of history</td>
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<td>• engenders myriad approaches.</td>
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<td>• NEVER ends - must assign local stewards to protect and maintain works, which risk decay, if not decomposition.</td>
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Box 2

**Lynne Hull**

Lynne Hull, who views wildlife as her clients, has worked with scientists on and off for over a decade. Studying different eco-zones, she explores local wildlife needs in order to devise useful structures. She designs “biofeedback loops” into her projects, enabling support of one species to support other species, leading to greater biodiversity. Scientists routinely monitor her projects after they’re built to determine their effectiveness. Three such projects include *Lightning Raptor Roosts* (1994), 20-foot tall nesting platforms for eagles and hawks alongside Route 80 in Wyoming’s Red Desert; *Turtle Island* (1997), a branchy platform floating in Springfield, Illinois’ Lincoln Memorial Gardens that hosted eleven species of waterfowl, amphibians, reptiles, and insects one summer; and *Texas Text* (2000), another raptor roost fastened from reworked windmills, sited on a playa lake on the grounds of the Texas
Tech Research Farm in New Deal, Texas. In 2003, she helped French scientists restore a wetland near Ateliers des Arques, an artist residency where created Entre La Dame Blanche et L’Homme, a ladder-like marker crawling up a castle turret to indicate owls residing inside, which she hopes will secure their protection. Seeking to hear a scientist’s perspective regarding working with eco-artists, I interviewed Playa Biologist David Haukos, a US Fish and Wildlife Service employee who also teaches in the Department of Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. He confirmed that Texas Text still stands, and will for many years, given its materials and west Texas’ semi-arid climate. Raptors, such as hawks and falcons, and other birds, such as songbirds and swallows, continue to perch there and build nests on it. While it is not strictly monitored, he drives past this desolate locale once or twice a month to check it out. He was evidently more open to the idea of ecological art than his fellow workers, who were less aware of its concept and purpose prior to her arrival. He noted that his “first impression was one of amazement of the proposed concepts and how dedicated she was to fit the project into the landscape and local history.” Most important is his observation that “it took some time to realize that the project worked. By worked, I mean the work attracted attention to our little-appreciated landscapes and provided a different perspective for those that may have previously dismissed our seemingly stark landscape.” Using a playa (endemic wetland) as the center point enables spectators to realize that playas are the key to life in the High Plains and that everything is connected to playas. “Lynne was able to take a rather simple concept and readily available native materials to produce art pieces that represented local icons that connected to the natural landscape.” Haukos remains incredibly optimistic about eco-art’s potential, especially over the lecture hall setting, to alert otherwise uninterested individuals about the benefits of long-term sustainability. Regarding opportunities to work with eco-artists, he advises other scientists “to have an open mind.”

Box 3

Mel Chin

Collaborating with USDA senior research scientist Dr. Rufus Chaney, Mel Chin constructed Revival Field I at Pig's Eye Landfill in St. Paul, Minnesota, a "Superfund" site laced with cadmium. Planted for three growing seasons between 1990 and 1993, the field was formally laid out, a circle within a square, bisected by two crossed paths, signifying the earth as a target for regeneration. By contrast, Revival Field II (1992-1996) in Palmerton, Pennsylvania is a quarter circle planting in a community badly damaged by zinc fallout from nearly 80 years of zinc smelting in the area. The soils of the area have become highly toxic and the mountains near the zinc plants have been totally stripped of vegetation. Chin also created two circular Revival Fields in the Netherlands. One is a control site at Zoetermeer, a planned community near Den Haag, the other is on a contaminated smelting site near the Belgian border. More recently, Chaney and Chin collaborated with Dr. Römheld to plant several test fields at Hohenheim University. Given that phytoremediation is projected to be a half-billion dollar business, the various Revival Fields have been successful in terms of gathering data and raising awareness of the potential of hyperaccumulator plants. It was initially quite suspect as art. The National Endowment of the Arts awarded Chin a $10,000 grant for the first Revival Field, but later reneged because they considered it more science than art. Chin then plead his case to John Frohnmayer, chairman of the arts, who reinstated the grant after Chin compared the process of plants’ absorbing heavy metals from the soil to the fine art’s etching process whereby acid carves out the metal plate. The plants can be harvested, incinerated and resold as ore to cover processing costs. No less controversial, the City Council of Palmerton expected Chin's Revival Field II to generate a pretty garden, not a complex science project. But for Chin, this project is sculpture in unseen material (biochemistry and agriculture) whose aesthetic is revealed in the return of growth to revitalized soil. Chin has included more subtle symbols in the design of the fences and plot markers at each site. By introducing elements of Mayan mathematical notation, Chin references other cultures' human relationships to earth.
Experimental building is an utopian place which choses not be predetermined « I can’t say that I brought all my ideas and strategies to this situation, and then simply fleshed them out here. It was a very open and exploratory process, and that takes time. A lot of obvious things about the Building appealed to me when I first got involved in it. While I was a student at the University of Chicago, the building was still operating as a recycling center and was known as a cheap place to browse for almost anything. I immediately took a liking to it and over time came to better understand how it had come into existence. It was a chaotic but materially rich setting, partly because of the years of recycling related activities and a great reluctance to throw things away, and partly due to many small scale alternative ventures. Most of the ventures, including book and clothing exchanges, a bakery, gardens, and a bikeshop had run out of energy. Their physical remains were still more or less there, and embedded with a rich social history. It was a window into a period of time that had faded away most everywhere except in Christiania, outside of Copenhagen, and that really attracted me to it. The activities associated with the Building definitely were rooted in Sixties counterculture, and the environmental aspect was part of it, but there were other dimensions as well. Many of the people who organized those activities were still around and available when I got here, and became my friends and colleagues. So being here allowed me to unpack a period of time that was really interesting to me, and to explore social structures along with environmental and artistic strategies.

There is room for thinking about how you can act in a culture and not have to just accept the way things are. Ken Dunn and the other Resource Center people were saying there are some really neat and different ideas out there—what if we tried to put them into action? There was something instinctively activist about this situation that drew me here. It was clearly a shoe-string operation. When I came to the Resource Center they were operating probably the largest fleet of beat-up old VWbuses anywhere outside of the Third World. And yet they were engaged in a highly reasoned practice of recycling, with a very simple ecological mission, but one that took into account the social complexity across both the University of Chicago and the intensively disinvested neighborhood of Woodlawn, in addition to environmental activism. For example, the Resource Center provided a model of employment for people who had fallen through all other safety nets… » In fact, recycling helps to shape sustainable forms.

« I’m interested in finding ways to float propositions that can be very utopian. Beginning with simple exchanges of things. The bike shop is a good example of trying to build a small economy. The shop provides tools, resources, positive social contacts between adults and young people, a safe place, and job training for kids who are sorely lacking constructive things to do—and it’s fueled by old bikes donated from apartment building basements. So that kind of basic economy can become a really complex sort of thing—it is wildly utopian in terms of it gathering all the loose ends of society and then getting the most you possibly can out of it all. »
Box 5

Patricia Johanson is an eco-artist internationally reknown born in New York. Her multidisciplinary work combine art, ecology, landscaping and technical devices. Her greater works gather Fair Park Lagoon, Dallas (1981), Endangered Garden/Sunnydales Facilities, San Francisco (1988), Ulsan Park, Corée du Sud (1996), Enhancement Wetlands and Treatment Wetland, Petaluma, Californie (2003). « Over the years, as the physical size and ambition of my projects increased, I have gradually incorporated many extraneous issues into my art, such as communities of flora and fauna, restored natural ecosystems, functional infrastructure, and solutions to environmental and social problems such as garbage, sewage, and habitat loss. I have developed this hybrid art slowly, laboriously, and independently over a period of forty years... »

This artist wants to maintain a link with living processes : « Each of my projects serves as a model for an inclusive, mutually-supportive, and self-sustaining world that combines art, man, and nature. By building such projects we reconnect people with natural processes... I finally thought, why interpret living nature if you can incorporate it intact ? Why bulldoze living communities on the assumption you can create something more significant than what is already there ? I think artists have always been inspired by the natural world – colors, forms, sunlight and shadows, intricate relationships, and ultimately the mystery – because so much of what we see is beyond our ability to comprehend. »

That’s why she uses nature so to build in full cooperation her urban landscapes : « Cyrus Field, (her first project) which runs for miles through the forest near my home, was built in 1970... Cyrus Field and the forest have co-evoluted for more than thirty years, and this has served as the model for most of my later public work, such as Fair Park Lagoon in Dallas, which also celebrates the commingling of art and life ». The work of art continues to leave after her departure.

Her cosmology is visible in the shapes composed for Ulsan Park in South Korea. « I knew it was important to use the pattern of mountains and valleys to frame the public spaces, and reconnect the flow of disrupted water, the life force of the site. But the psychological key to my design was to restore living ecological communities that would sustain the beloved plant and animal guardians of Korean mythology, thus establishing resonance between local visible landscape and inner beliefs. My initial plan for Ulsan Park scattered manifestations of the dragon throughout the site, unifying trails with waterways, microhabitats, and park infrastructure... Many elements in the Ulsan Park function simultaneously as art, cultural symbol, habitat, and utilitarian structure... »
Légende : CARP PLAYGROUND - © Patricia Johanson 1996

A “Carp Playground” consists of a series of fish-scale terraces that flow from the mountainside down to the floodplain. A rivulet, manually activated by pumps, waterwheels, and sluice gates teaches children about water management as they fill reservoirs and wading pools and build cities of pebbles and sand. At the bottom of the play terraces are narrow paths that lead through wetland planting, vernal pools, and a variety of floodplain microhabitats, such as amphibian breeding grounds.

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Quelques sites publics concernant le paysage
The European Landscape Convention, 2000
http://www.coe.int/t/e/Cultural_Co-operation/Environment/Landscape/