

LANDSCAPE AND AGENCY

Critical Essays

Edited by Ed Wall and Tim Waterman

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11

POST-LANDSCAPE OR THE POTENTIAL OF OTHER RELATIONS WITH THE LAND

Ed Wall

Have we reached a post-landscape condition? Have prevailing visual relations between people and land, exemplified by English traditions of pictorial settings, individual perspectives and enclosed properties, reached a conclusion? Has a particular frame of landscape, which Denis Cosgrove describes as a 'way of seeing' (1985, 45), come to a close? Conceptions of landscape, that emerged in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England and that have continued to be reinforced through contemporary architectural representations and designed transformations, package landscapes as scenic backgrounds and frame tracts of land as spatial products. While referring to these dominant relationships with the land, Barbara Bender reminds us that there are many other ways of conceiving of landscapes: 'when the word "landscape" was coined and used to its most powerful effect, there were, at the same time and the same place, other ways of understanding and relating to the land – other landscapes' (1993, 2). What she describes as contrasting, and often contradictory, constructs of landscape, defined through individual and societal relations with our environments, have grown and receded in relevance. Landscapes are defined through specific economic, social and spatial contexts. So while dominant pictorial ideas of landscape may endure for some people in countries influenced by Anglo-Saxon traditions, other landscapes are configured through contrasting material, ecological, cultural and symbolic relationships with land. In this chapter I explore two inseparable contemporary London landscapes, Paternoster Square and the Occupy London Stock Exchange (LSX). Raymond Williams proposes: It is possible and useful to trace the internal histories of landscape painting, landscape writing, landscape gardening and landscape architecture, but in any final analysis we must relate these histories to the common history of a land and its society. And if we are to understand changes in English attitudes to landscape, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, this is especially necessary. (*Williams, 1973, 120*) I question a continuation of these English landscape traditions that embrace: predominantly *visual* approaches; scenes considered from static *positions*; and singular perspectives *framed* as representations and urban spaces, enclosed and transformed through design. Raymond Williams proposes:

It is possible and useful to trace the internal histories of landscape painting, landscape writing, landscape gardening and landscape architecture, but in any final analysis we must relate these histories to the common history of a land and its society. And if we are to understand changes in English attitudes to landscape, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, this is especially necessary.

(Williams, 1973, 120)

Strong associations between the growth of European capitalism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the emergence during this time of a new way of understanding landscape provide a point of departure for this questioning. Bender states: 'True, the word was originally coined in the emergent capitalist world of western Europe by aesthetes, antiquarians and landed gentry' (1993, 1). The appropriation of what was often common land, and its subsequent enclosure, engrossment and commodification, marked a significant moment in the development of distinctly English landscapes. Kenneth Olwig describes:

first representations of landscape scenery in painting tended to be views seen from the window of the urban patron whose portrait was being painted and that the same persons who imported Dutch surveyors and engineers to England to restructure and rationalise their properties, imported landscape paintings and hired landscape architects.

(Olwig, 1993, 332)

Market relations began to supersede what had been feudal arrangements with the land and its peasantry. Lords became landowners, evicting and relocating populations, collecting rents from tenant farmers and transforming land into property that could be bought and sold. This rupture in social and spatial relations simultaneously facilitated the growth of capitalist economies. Over the subsequent centuries enclosed lands were refashioned as scenic settings for this recently landed gentry. Fences and walls of enclosure were removed or hidden from view (often replaced with ha has) in attempts to control access, dictate views and make claims to extended landscape views of borrowed scenery. John Dixon Hunt's detailed critique of what later became known as the picturesque, explains that the results of 'a growing preference for form at the expense of the ideas that might be expressed through it . . . are unfortunately still with us today' (1994, 16).

A continuation of representing and reconfiguring environments through visual images has explicitly informed contemporary landscapes over the last three decades: these landscape techniques have been employed in the privatization of public spaces; they have contributed to elevated land values; and they have dictated the accessibility, uses and activities of urban redevelopments. As visual techniques from landscape painting are co-opted in architectural computer renderings to facilitate aggressive real estate markets, picturesque approaches continue to misrepresent how designed spaces will manifest in use and form. These scenic priorities require increased control over urban spaces, which are frequently sought through enclosures and ownership of sites and the subsequent architectural conditioning and



FIGURE 11.1 Denied access to Paternoster Square, Occupy LSX encamped at the bottom of the steps of St Paul's cathedral in 2011. Image credit/permissions: Ed Wall, 2011.

management of what activities will be undertaken and by whom. What results is a continued transfer of land to commercial interests and narrowly controlled access to refashioned urban spaces, many which are claimed to be public.

The circumstances around this exploration of landscapes are situated in London, in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis. Bender describes that:

The way in which people – anywhere, everywhere – understand and engage with their worlds will depend upon the specific time and place and historical conditions.

(1993, 2)

Following an economic recession, which saw severe government cuts across the UK, increases in university tuition fees, further privatization of public services and restructuring of state spending, several commentators and critics described the end days of capitalism (Fisher, 2009; also see Harvey, 2015; Mason, 2015). During this time, once accepted crises of capital were questioned as politicians and economists grasped for an understanding of the magnitude of this particular financial turmoil and how to appropriately respond. Although London continued to operate much as it had before the crash, previously accepted economic certainties were severely undermined. David Harvey writes in *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (2015):

[But] what is so striking about crises is not so much the wholesale reconfiguration of physical landscapes, but dramatic changes in ways of thought and understanding, of institutions and dominant ideologies, of political allegiances and processes, of political subjectivities of technologies and organisational forms, of social relations, of the cultural customs and tastes that inform daily life.

(Harvey, 2015, ix)

Ideologies of capital had been challenged and their relationships with cultural and social practices were strained. Political positions became more polarized and contested, over agendas of economic austerity, policies of accommodating or denying immigration and approaches to public services, such as education, health and transport. Simultaneously, new landscapes of intense control, through security, gating and fencing-off, which had intensified since the privatizations of the 1980s and 1990s, were countered through the resistances of protests and demonstrations. The shutting down of parts of London by landowners and by workers' protests, student sit-ins and collective occupations attempted to redefine social relations through reclaiming public spaces. These contrasting politicized London landscapes undermined scenographic promises of managed, pacified and comfortable urban spaces which had accompanied the marketing of many of the spaces that were reclaimed. New landscapes became defined through mass demonstrations, which gathered in public spaces along Whitehall, in Trafalgar and Parliament Squares, and through the spatial appropriations of sites across the capital. In particular, attempts to demonstrate outside the Stock Exchange in Paternoster Square, defined as Occupy LSX, and their encampment at the bottom of the steps to St Paul's cathedral brought issues of economy, politics and landscape into immediate proximity.

Witnessing claims to the end of capitalism and the emergence of alternative ways of defining landscapes led me to question prevailing landscape practices of urban redevelopment: if capitalism emerged in the fifteenth century (together with scenographic approaches to landscape) – and if this economic model was to come to an end at the beginning of the twenty-first century – would accepted traditions of landscape be correspondingly challenged? Would a post-landscape condition emerge to question a prevalence of visual approaches viewed from ego-centred positions and controlled by static frames? In this chapter I take these spatiotemporal contexts to explore three underlying conceptions of scenographic landscapes: an emphasis on *visual* concerns; static and limited *positions* from which views of spatial landscapes are observed; and narrow, impermeable *frames* constructed to contain and control landscapes. I propose that reconceived landscape relations, which address political, cultural and environmental anxieties, have the potential to correspond more closely with notions of public space. And I advocate that these post-landscapes are not products but are always in the process of being made and remade and where 'people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate it and contest it' (Bender, 1993, 3).

Inseparable landscapes

On 15 October 2011 the Occupy movement gathered outside London's Stock Exchange, in Paternoster Square, to protest against a range of issues including the

adequacy or appropriateness of responses to the economic collapse that had unfolded over preceding years. Occupy protests in London reflected corresponding occupations in New York and followed other mass demonstrations in London about student fees and workers' rights. As protestors assembled in Paternoster Square the demonstration was thwarted by police and private security guards. They had been instructed by the square's owners, through a court injunction, to restrict access. Mitsubishi Estate Co., the private landlord of Paternoster Square, continued to exert its control by filling the space with a mesh of steel barricades. Barriers were set up at each entrance with signs proclaiming the private nature of the land and threats of random bag searches and trespass. The public space of the square was closed down as the owners asserted their rights of private property. Signs were erected stating:

Paternoster Square is private land. Any general licence to the public to enter or cross this land is revoked forthwith. There is no implied or express permission to enter the premises or any part without consent. Any such entry will constitute trespass. Limited consent is hereby given, but can be revoked at any time, for entry on to the accessible parts of the square, solely for access to offices, retail units and leisure premises for genuine building, retail and leisure purposes. Visitors must at all times comply with the directions given by our security personnel.

(Sign at Paternoster Square, October 2011)



FIGURE 11.2 Paternoster Square, during the Occupy protests of 2011, was fenced off from undesirable protests, people and activities. Image credit/permissions: Ed Wall, 2011.

As the Occupy protesters were blocked from bringing their concerns to the door of the London Stock Exchange, they found refuge in an interstice between St Paul's cathedral and the exterior building walls of Paternoster Square. When the occupation was denied access to the square, the protestors exposed that what was promised to be public space in planning was actually private and its owners were prepared to strongly assert their claims over this protected property.

The private nature of the land was less explicit in the planning applications for Paternoster Square that were submitted to and approved by the City of London in 1999. The masterplan was prepared by William Whitfield following a previously approved plan led by Terry Farrell (1990). The plans proposed replacing a complex of offices, designed in modern architectural forms and materials, that filled a site of historic streets heavily damaged during World War II. Whitfield's and Farrell's proposals succeeded following other abandoned plans, during the 1980s and 1990s, which had been considered an affront to the historic setting adjacent to St Paul's cathedral. Disagreements over architectural styles and poor financial returns had been the main causes for the contested and abandoned designs for Paternoster Square, which had drawn the attention of architecture critics and conservationists, such as the Prince of Wales. Through the masterplans of Whitfield and Farrell, Paternoster Square was designed following a tradition of landscape which prioritized scenic qualities, individual views and private enclosures. Behind debates about reinstating historic streets, re-establishing vistas and choices of materials, Paternoster Square remained a commercial development which needed to maximize the financial value of the land on which it sat. Mitchell and Staeheli describe a 'practice of property' which includes the 'relations, regimes and struggles over what property is and how it is deployed' (2008, 128). These relations are exerted through exchanges and appropriations of land, and in the case of Paternoster Square, through masterplanning. These practices of property employed landscape as a visual medium to persuade planning officials and future tenants of the value of embracing the development.

Once established outside of the square by St Paul's Cathedral, Occupy LSX grew as an accumulation of large tents for communal purposes, housing the kitchen, bookshop and workshops, and smaller tents in which protestors would sleep overnight. Its forms, representations and actions contrasted with the design and management of the adjacent Paternoster Square development. The unfamiliar makeshift appearance of the public space formed by Occupy LSX represented an embrace of people and issues as well as organizational structures which denied hierarchies of control. After visiting Occupy LSX, Doreen Massey described:

It was deliberately open, in contrast to the cathedral and the houses of finance all around . . . People came by all the time to listen, to argue. It was a place explicitly of debate.

(www.publicspace.org, 2013)

The protestors appropriated the physical space of London to explore and find representation for critical economic and social concerns. Mitchell describes the importance of 'making claims' to public space (Mitchell, 2003, 142). He describes that 'then as now

public spaces were only public to the degree that they were *taken* and made public' (2003, 142). Analogously, the privatization of land continually needs to be re-enforced – through regulations, security guards and at Paternoster Square the re-enclosure of what was threatened to be taken back as public space. Through employing traditional landscape techniques for taking over public space, Mitchell writes, 'propertied classes express "possession" of the land, and their control over the social relations within it' (1997, 323). While Occupy LSX finally settled in an in-between space of London to form a new public arena the owners of Paternoster Square gated their public space to reassert their private rights. For several months the sites were inextricably tied together. As privacy and control was tightened and calls for openness and change increased the contrasting conditions of active occupation and securitized enclosure were exacerbated.

Visuals

Cosgrove writes, 'In England, *landscape* popularly denotes an artistic tradition of painting and garden design, historically associated, above all, with the parkland vistas of the eighteenth-century landed estate' (1999, 222). This historic Anglo-Saxon definition of landscapes as visual images and aestheticized spaces opens up contradictions between what is perceived and what is experienced. Harvey describes the 'most important contradiction' of capitalism as 'that between reality and appearance in the world in which we live' (Harvey, 2015, 4). Through the redevelopment of Paternoster Square, its owners and design consultants made claims through drawings to be producing public places alongside which were written promises of 'open public spaces' (Paternoster Associates, 1990). The claims contrast with the assertion of private rights of property through routine patrols of security guards and the confrontation with Occupy LSX protestors who were denied entry. A focus on visual qualities undermines other landscape relations. James Corner explains:

The pictorial impulse denies deeper modes of existence, interrelationship, and creativity; it conceals the agendas of those who commission and construct it, and it seriously limits the design and planning arts in more critically shaping alternative cultural relationships with the earth.

(1999, 158)

During the months of Occupy LSX the masterplan renderings of a contented public with commercial activities unfolding in the square, drawings which had facilitated planning approval, were contradicted by scenes of less controllable activities of protest and public demonstration. During moments of Occupy LSX ambiguities of what the developers had promised as public space were exposed. What Harvey describes as the 'masks, disguises and distortions' (2015, 4), which had been presented in the masterplan, were removed to reveal a private estate claimed as public space. Expropriations of public spaces by private interests were laid bare, while claims to the provision of public spaces, through which the landowners were afforded additional allowances during the planning process, proved an illusion.

When urban redevelopments are planned in London they are accompanied by picturesque renderings of pristine squares and streets animated with beautiful, diverse and happy people. In *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (1983), John Barrell writes of eighteenth-century landscape paintings:

by studying the imagery of the paintings, the constraints upon it, and upon its organisation in the picture-space – we may come to see this unity as artifice, as something made out of the actuality of division.

(1983, 5)

Attempts by its designers to illustrate the sociability of a redeveloped Paternoster Square through scenic relations belie the editing of images that show comfortable idylls and accessible spaces. Corner writes that architectural works that aim to improve lives are ‘reduced under largely representational regimes to simply expressing or commenting on that condition’ (1999, 158). Analysing the planning drawings accompanying the Paternoster Square masterplans, we see contemporary urban landscapes adopting scenographic conventions to persuade the viewer of conditions that could not exist and a future that would not unfold. Acceptable social relations, which include welcoming servile doormen, diverse demographics of business people and well-behaved young children, are found across Whitfield’s computer-generated renderings and the classically styled watercolour paintings by Edwin Venn for Farrell. Missing from these scenes is the less desirable presence of homeless people, smoking teenagers or political activists, people frequently deterred, and occasionally barred, from London’s private estates. Masterplan images of Paternoster Square do not just give a false impression of architectural forms, instead as Barrell claims for eighteenth-century paintings, hidden social agendas are bound up with these idealized scenes. When low-paid workers are depicted, such as doormen to the private buildings, their appearance is made acceptable through their welcoming demeanour. However, and further to Barrell’s findings that ‘the labouring, the vagrant, and the mendicant poor could be portrayed so as to be an acceptable part of the décor or the drawing rooms of the polite’ (1983, 28), undesirable groups are unable to be included in the drawings, and the spaces, of contemporary redevelopments. They present both an unacceptable and uncomfortable presence. Sanitized landscapes are promised in masterplanned scenes, through the removal of contestation, the regulation of unstable social relations and the presence of security personnel. In this way, public spaces as architectural containers in which activities occur are so tightly managed that the potential for public actions is rendered impossible. Critiquing the paintings of Gainsborough, Morland and Constable, Barrell claims that ‘the point of the exercise [of the landscape painting] was to suggest that no disjunction existed, and in that way to offer a reassurance that the poor of England were happy’.

Despite the contemporaneity of the computer renderings in Whitfield’s proposal both masterplans allude to traditions of landscape painting. The designs of the masterplans established the magnificence of views of the dome of St Paul’s cathedral

while more functional features of the development are obscured, or as in the case of the ventilation shafts, disguised by Thomas Heatherwick as giant sculptural follies. In contrast to the totalizing masterplan proposals, realized for Paternoster Square and the marketing materials published by its owners, Occupy LSX provided a collage of scenes, ideas, voices and messages. The appropriation of the site adjacent to St Paul's cathedral unfolded by taking and remaking public space rather than fashioning a singular image of protest. Walking through the site, between the common spaces and the private tents in which protestors would sleep overnight contrasted with experiences of architecturally designed public spaces familiar to London. Instead of fountains, lighting and selectively positioned seating, which has become archetypal of well-funded privately led developments, such as *More London*, *Kings Cross Central* and *Paddington Waterside*, a visual aesthetic of low-cost tents and makeshift signs took its place. During Occupy LSX, the veneer of a pictorial landscape, or what Harvey terms the 'surface appearances' (2015, 4), had been removed to present the realities of contested issues and negotiated politics presented in space.

Positions

Traditions of landscape painting present singular perspectives, rendered from static positions of power. As it became defined in England, landscape was a visually and spatially dominated practice, which Cosgrove claims was 'bourgeois, individualistic and related to the exercise of power over space' (1985, 45). It was also 'employed initially to represent spaces of the city' (1985, 49), utilizing linear perspective and privileging the position of the individual viewer. John Berger explains in *Ways of Seeing*: 'Every drawing or painting that used perspective proposed to the spectator that he was the unique centre of the world' (1972, 18). Raymond Williams elaborates, 'For what was being done, by this new class, with new capital, new equipment and new skills to hire, was indeed a disposition of "Nature" to their own point of view' (1973, 123). As landscape painting evolved into the design of landscape space, these ego-centred landscapes conflicted with collective ambitions in and for public spaces. As we have seen in Occupy LSX, and as Bender attests (1993, 2), the way in which landscapes are made and remade opens up multiple and contrasting ways of engaging with our environments. That individuals and groups can simultaneously conceive of and engage with a plurality of landscapes denies static positions and fixed viewpoints – and suggests dynamic potentials of landscapes that are less constrained through narrow visual approaches.

The redevelopment of Paternoster Square was proposed from selected viewpoints, which borrowed scenery, including the dome of St Paul's cathedral, and excluded unresolved architectural spaces and less attractive service features necessary in any urban development. While singular perspectives from the owner's window are not explicitly framed, as Olwig cites of historic landed estates (1993, 332), the views presented in the masterplans are for the benefit of planners who were to be persuaded to approve the proposals and future tenants who were courted to rent office spaces. The control of views was of little concern in Occupy LSX. Instead, non-hierarchical structures

of debating and collectively occupying the spaces between St Paul's cathedral and Paternoster Square provided for shared rights and a multiplicity of viewpoints. Attempts by the mainstream media to frame the issues of Occupy LSX (and other Occupy protests around the world) were frustrated by the openness of the debates around issues including the immediate economic crisis, the impacts of austere government policies on education, and unaddressed environmental urgencies. Occupy refused to be defined by a single issue or position. In contrast, the imperatives for economic return generated from the development reflect the singular priorities of their corporate owners, Mitsubishi Estate Co., and their managers Broadgate Estates.

Frames

The gated (or fenced-off) landscape inaccessible within the bounds of Paternoster Square contrasts with the permeable and open spaces of Occupy LSX which found presence in the shadow of St Paul's cathedral. John Tagg explains that the frame 'produces the distinction between the internal and the proper sense and the circumstances' (2009, 246). Over three months the Occupy protesters created alternative forms of public spaces, with their own newspaper, canteen and a bank of ideas. A different order was established across the landscape of Occupy, a presence that was frequently challenged as illegal, with divergent forms of public space from that of Paternoster Square. How Occupy was arranged, what activities were undertaken and many of the complex relations established with local businesses and organizations represented a plurality of ideas, negotiation and debate. Massey describes the openness of the Occupy camp which contrasted with St Paul's cathedral and the highly controlled access to the finance offices in Paternoster Square (www.publicspace.org, 2013). She recalls: 'It was a place of contestation, it was a place of ideas, it was a place of negotiation, and it became, of course, a place which was utterly contested.' The restrictions to Paternoster Square as an open space, as it was filled with an entanglement of steel barriers, and the Occupy protests outside of the square frustrated the scenic intentions of the landowners. On both sides of the buildings that encircled Paternoster Square, the development, which was designed to frame selective views of St Paul's cathedral, was reconstituted through layers of security fences, protestors and enclosure.

Framing of landscapes can be associated with the enclosure of spaces and commodification of land. Cosgrove explains: 'Landscape was, over much of its history, closely bound up with the practical appropriation of space' (1985, 46). Once spaces were taken they could be contained by physical walls, fences and gates and through legal mechanisms of ownership.

Landscape was framed and reified as a cultural object, to be bought and sold as cultural capital on the burgeoning new art market, much as land itself was being divided up and according to the geometric coordinates of the map, to be sold and traded on the property market.

(Olwig, 1993, 331)

The framing of landscape offers a practical means through which specific views are claimed, presented and controlled. The frame affords individuals and organizations that control landscapes an image to edit what is seen, deciding what is included in the landscape and what is excluded from future spaces. As contemporary landscape architects are employed to design public spaces, how they promise new scenes through their drawings can secure potential contracts with their clients and the approval of their projects in the planning process. What designers and their clients choose to include in these landscape scenes, and who is excluded, opens up contradictions in the production of architectural spaces, and especially for developers who claim to provide public access or represent shared concerns. Techniques of framing landscape pictures and space express forms of control – Tagg describes the frame as a ‘technology of discipline’ (2009, 236) – exerted in the spaces of urban developments through physical barriers, gating and surveillance along with legislations which determine who is permitted access and what they may do once inside. Controls, expressed through physical and legislative frames, aim to control the image of landscapes – visions constructed to enhance the value of privately owned developments and to obscure what Harvey terms, ‘the distortions of what is really going on around us’ (2015, 4). The frame, as a device, mediates landscape relations between people and land. But not every practice of framing can be associated with individual ambitions for control and commodification. Harvey reminds us that ‘not all forms of enclosure can be dismissed as bad by definition’ (2012, 70). The enclosure of land for common purposes, or the appropriation of spaces as witnessed during Occupy LSX, highlights the importance of taking back public space while providing clues to the permeability of landscape boundaries. The public space of Occupy LSX suggests that terms of landscape can be inventively reframed through notions of accessibility and engagement rather than exclusion and control.

Post-landscape?

Have we reached a post-landscape condition? Have new designs, representations and physical forms been realized which provide for collective actions and alternative relations with where we live, work and visit? In *Recovering Landscape* (1999), Corner describes his inspiration for advocating a ‘recovery’ of landscape as ‘less the pastoralism of previous landscape formations’ but instead the ‘yet-to-be disclosed potentials of landscape ideas and practices’ (1999, 1). But as economic and political contexts shifted, during the global economic collapse and the subsequent recession, can we identify an emergence of alternative practices and landscape forms? Concerns for ecological restoration and programmatic approaches to landscapes are emphasized by Corner whose firm Field Operations designed the master-plan for New York’s Fresh Kills Park (2006) and realized the rehabilitation of the High Line as a public park.¹ However, Corner describes that ‘massive process[es] of deindustrialization’ have placed new complex demands on land-use planning requiring the ‘accommodation of multiple, often irreconcilable conflicts’ (1999, 14). Landscape projects that remediate and repurpose polluted post-industrial sites have

gained currency in urban redevelopments, building on the work of land artists such as Mel Chin, and landscape architects like Peter Latz.² But while we can identify inventive approaches that decontaminate formerly abandoned landscapes, few contemporary landscape or urban design projects have confronted their contribution to increasing land-values, displacement of remaining industries and aggressive gentrification. Environmental recovery of landscapes facilitates urban redevelopment, provides a foundation for spatially and aesthetically reproducing cities and furthers opportunities for economic returns for individuals and organizations that own brownfield sites. Projects improve ecological conditions but fail to address, and in many cases exacerbate, businesses displaced, jobs lost and individuals excluded from renewed urban areas. While in some cases, as Cosgrove claims of recent critical thinking, 'landscape is approached as a spatial, environmental, and social concept rather than as a primarily aesthetic term' (1999, 223), prevailing landscape practices remain tied to economic priorities. And although Corner reminds us that landscape is inextricably 'bound into the marketplace' (1999, 157) neither his writing nor his landscape practice provide clues for how these relations can be uncoupled or rethought.

The contexts of Occupy LSX were specific to a distinct period of economic and political development in London. What occurred as protestors were denied access to Paternoster Square and were forced to occupy the site by St Paul's cathedral was a rare elucidation of the contested landscape of democratic public space. But while the economy may fail or, as Harvey explains, 'stutter and stall and sometimes appear on the verge of collapse' (2015, 11) and while new forms of landscape may appear to emerge in the form of collective actions, the political responses and approaches to London's designed spaces have continued almost unchanged. London's free-market economy, and those of most cities around the world, continue with negligible response. Neither has a post-landscape condition materialized. Projects that succeed in challenging relations between land and economic priorities become increasingly difficult to achieve as private interests and commercial architectural practices dominate urban redevelopments. The construction of new buildings and open spaces accelerated in the years after the 2008 economic crisis, as the spatial commodification of the land on which London resides provided a refuge from less confidently performing stock markets. As property prices increased a literacy of, and discontent with, privatizations of public spaces and the effects of gentrification has widened. Relations between urban development and the displacement of residents from London housing estates and between the design of public spaces and the exclusion of homeless people are increasingly evident to the public. This has led, as Ben Campkin describes in *Remaking London* (2013, 5), to a 'growing scepticism' of the claims made by politicians, developers and architects that they are improving urban areas through development.

Contradictions are exposed as landscape techniques are employed to redesign public spaces. The prioritization of views of public spaces and the adoption of public realm as controlled settings which frame new urban developments frequently

denies the lived qualities, the potential for politics and the unpredictable nature of shared spaces. Many new landscapes are claimed by developers and their urban design consultants, to be public places – fulfilling planning obligations through creating attractive settings for their residential and office developments. But Corner explains that the ‘veil of pretence that landscape erects is not, however, impermeable’ (1999, 157). When these urban redevelopments are completed the presence of poor doors, anti-homeless measures and anti-skate materials, coupled with the enforcement of private regulations, expose the lies of many claims to make public spaces. Mitchell identifies these contradictions, asking ‘Landscape or Public Space?’ (1997, 322), and claiming that ‘aesthetic judgments have the effect of valuing the spaces of the city as landscape rather than public space’ (1997, 324). He describes a ‘particular definition of “landscape”’ (1997, 323) more closely associated with centuries old fixations of landed estate owners who express dominion over spatial, visual and social settings. Citing Lefebvre (1991), Mitchell considers the illusion of landscape which promises both control and comfort.

In contrast, Bender (1993) points to other ways of conceiving of landscapes – ecological and political relations between people and their environments that are difficult to contain or define. These contrasting conceptions of landscapes, as plural entities, appropriated, contested – ‘not so much artefact as in process of construction and reconstruction’ (Bender, 1993, 3), align more closely with notions of public spaces (see Massey, 2005, 2013), public sphere and publics. Critiquing Habermas (1989), Fraser’s description of the public sphere resonates with Bender’s assertions for landscape: Fraser states that the public sphere is ‘a site of the production and circulation of discourses’ (1990, 57) where there is ‘a plurality of competing publics’ (1990, 61). Similarly, when Massey (2005) describes public space she emphasizes the interrelations and processes which produce a plurality of spaces. Massey claims:

As well as objecting to the new privatisations and exclusions we might address the question of the social relations which could construct any new, and better, notion of public space.

(2005, 153)

Should we therefore consider alternative approaches to landscapes, which are defined by multiple and competing relations? Could new ethics be embraced by landscape architects and urban designers as they are employed in the making and remaking of public spaces? Could temporal frames and spatial bounds be challenged through projects which defy property ownerships and time-frames of urban redevelopment?

If a post-landscape condition is to be sustained relations that address a prevalence of *visual* priorities, static and limited *positions* and narrow, impermeable *frames* will need to be addressed. Alternative approaches to landscape will need to be recovered, invented and practised, reflecting Cosgrove’s belief:

Landscape today is unbounded, flexible, and mobile, composed of forms, connections, and spaces that can neither be contained within conventional frames nor pictured according to the scopic conventions of a distanced, authoring eye.
(1999, 221)

If a visual domination of landscape is to be challenged, could landscapes be reconceived through how they work rather than how they look – so that the architectural drawings and constructed spaces more closely accommodate what Mitchell terms the ‘messy realities of everyday life’ (1997, 323)? How could multiple and collective positions be encouraged in landscape – reflecting expectations for public spaces which represent shared issues and ambitions? And how could we reconceive landscape frames – as permeable, dynamic and shared edges to our images and spaces – which encourages us to look beyond its bounds for what is also happening outside?

Alternatives to scenographic conceptions of landscape could be established while still accepting landscape as a creative medium. Written manifestos have provided means to represent relations between people and land, and which challenge a dominance of visual approaches. In *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* (1969), Mierle Laderman Ukeles challenges distinctions between ‘development’ and ‘maintenance’, describes development as ‘pure individual creation; the new; change; progress; advance; excitement; flight or fleeing’ and maintenance as ‘keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight’. She uses the written form of the manifesto to lament the limited opportunity which maintenance allows to explore ‘life’s dreams’ while development offers ‘major room for change’. While Ukeles does not explicitly refer to activities of street cleaning, private security or maintaining the condition of public spaces, which are synonymous with private urban developments in London, her manifesto opens up questions of how we people can relate to urban spaces and urban development. Her juxtaposition of the actions of ‘development’ and ‘maintenance’ also resonate with leading contemporary landscape architecture practices, such as EMF (Estudi Martí Franch) whose working-through diagrams reconsider landscapes of Girona to embrace incremental phases of maintenance rather than singular transformations of landscapes through masterplans.

Addressing ego-centred approaches and singular positions from which landscapes are viewed through urban redevelopment are challenged if we consider Occupy LSX as a landscape. The non-hierarchical, participatory relations that defined Occupy challenge Lefebvre’s critique of landscape as an illusion and in what he describes as the ‘delusion of being a participant in such a work’ (Lefebvre, 1991, 189). Belief in single architectural authors and trust of individual private landlords could be challenged through understanding the ways through which Occupy emerged and unfolded in space. A written manifesto initiated by the Department of Public Space,³ and inspired by Michael Sorkin’s *Local Code* (1993), adopts social media platform Twitter to encourage students, urbanists and wider publics to collectively author a design code for public spaces in London. The code can be read through

MANIFESTO!

MAINTENANCE ART

Proposal for an exhibition "CARE"

Mierle LADERMAN UKELES
© 1969

I. IDEAS

- A. The Death Instinct and the Life Instinct:
The Death Instinct: expansion, individuality, Avant-Garde par excellence, to follow one's own path to death—of your own thing, dynamic change.
The Life Instinct: utilitarian, the eternal return, the perpetuation and MAINTENANCE of the species, survival systems and operators' equilibrium.
- B. Two basic systems: Development and Maintenance: The scotch of every individual: after the structure, who is going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?
Development: pure individual creation, the new, change, progress, advance, excitement, fight or fleeing.
Maintenance: keep the dust off the pure individual creation, preserve the new, sustain the change, protect progress, defend and protect the advance, renew the excitement, repeat the fight.

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MAINTENANCE ART

- show your work—show it again
keep the contemporary art museum growing
keep the home fires burning
- Development systems are partial feedback systems with major room for change.
Maintenance systems are direct feedback systems with little room for alteration.
- C. Maintenance is a drag, it takes all the fucking time (it.)
The mind boggles and chafes at the boredom.
The culture confers lousy status on maintenance jobs = minimum wages, housewives = no pay.
clean you desk, wash the dishes, clean the floor,
wash your clothes, wash your toes, change the baby's diaper, finish the report, correct the typos, mend the fence, keep the customer happy, throw out the striking garbage, watch out don't put things in your nose, what shall I wear, I have no sex, pay your bills, don't litter, save string, wash your hair, change the sheets, go to the store, I'm out of perfume, say it again—he doesn't understand, seal it again—it leaks, go to work, this art is dusty, clear the table, call him again, flush the toilet, stay young.
- D. Art:
Everything I say is Art is Art. Everything I do is Art is Art. "We have no Art, we try to do everything well." (Balinese saying).
Avant-garde art, which claims utter development, is inflected by strains of maintenance ideas, maintenance activities, and maintenance materials.
Conceptual & Process art, especially, claim pure development and change, yet employ almost purely maintenance processes.
- E. The exhibition of Maintenance Art, "CARE," would zero in on pure maintenance, exhibit it as contemporary art, and yield, by utter opposition, clarity of issues.

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MAINTENANCE ART

II. THE MAINTENANCE ART EXHIBITION: "CARE"

Three parts: Personal, General, and Earth Maintenance:

A. Part One: Personal

I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife.
I am a mother. (Random order)

I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately) "Art"

Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art. I will live in the museum and I customarily do at home with my husband and my baby, for the duration of the exhibition (Right? or if you don't want me around at night I would come in every day) and do all these things as public Art activities. I will sweep and wax the floors, dust everything, wash the walls (i.e. "floc" paintings, dust works, soap-sculpture, wall-paintings) cook, invite people to eat, make agglomerations and depositions of all functional refuse.

The exhibition area might look "empty" of art, but it will be maintained in full public view.

MY WORKING WILL BE THE WORK

B. Part Two: General

Everyone does a hell of a lot of noodling maintenance work. The general part of the exhibition would consist of interviews of two kinds:

1. Previous individual interviews, typed and exhibited:

Interviewees come from, say, 50 different classes and kinds of occupations that run a gamut from maintenance "man," maid, sanitation "man," mail "man," union "man," construction worker, librarian, grocerystore "man," nurse, doctor, teacher;

museum director, baseball player, sales "man," child, criminal, bank president, mayor, moviestar, artist, etc., about:

- what you think maintenance is;
- how you feel about spending whatever parts of your life you spend on maintenance activities;
- what is the relationship between maintenance and freedom;
- what is the relationship between maintenance and life's dreams.

2. Interview Room—for spectators at the Exhibition

A room of desks and chairs where professional (?) interviewers will interview the spectators at the exhibition along same questions as typed interviews. The responses should be personal.

These interviews are taped and replayed throughout the exhibition show.

C. Part Three: Earth Maintenance

Everyday, containers of the following kinds of refuse will be delivered to the Museum:

- the contents of one sanitation truck;
- a container of polluted air;
- a container of polluted Hudson River;
- a container of ravaged land.

Once at the exhibition, each container will be serviced:

purified, de-polluted, rehabilitated, recycled and conserved by various technical (and / or pseudo-technical) procedures either by myself or scientists.

These servicing procedures are repeated throughout the duration of the exhibition.

FIGURES 11.3–11.6 Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969* 'Proposal for an exhibition: "Care"'. Written in Philadelphia, PA, October 1969. Image credit/permissions: Copyright Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.

individual tweets, such as miniature manifesto ‘Public Space is where people do their own private things’ (www.twitter.com/cuongmay90, 2015). Simultaneously, through selecting specific hashtags, #LondonPublicSpaces and #PublicSpaceCode, collective statements, demands and debates can be read. Challenges to traditional structures of power, such as how ownerships of the vast landed estates are reinforced through their design, management and use, are difficult in the context of prevailing capitalist economies and a politics of prioritizing commercial redevelopment over other public concerns. However, rather than large, comprehensive master-plans which represent ambitions of single landowners’ combinations of smaller-scale actions, spaces, buildings and actions could afford a multiplicity of relations, remaking the city as a ‘participatory landscape’ (Corner, 1999, 159). In contrast to singular perspectival approaches to painting, Berger cites Cubist approaches to collage that represent multiple viewpoints within the same image (1972, 18). Corner elaborates on the potential of ‘[h]ybridized and composite diagram techniques [which] will allow even further advances in landscape formation because of their inclusive and instrumental capacity’ (1999, 166). Again, corresponding more closely with notions of public space, the potential plurality of publics, competing and being contested, suggest how collage approaches could be conceived of in representations and realized in space. Collages, as well as abstractions in the form of diagrams, prove more difficult to contain in static frames and can encourage a questioning of what is not included in the drawing, what is beyond the perimeter of a development or

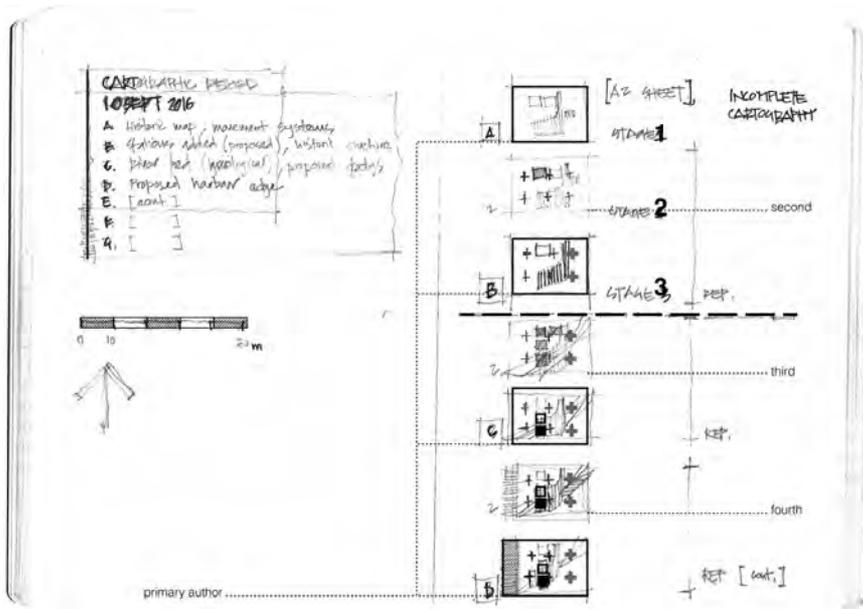


FIGURE 11.7 Co-authored maps, such as Incomplete Cartographies, can entwine contrasting and hidden narratives to establish future design proposals. Image credit/permissions: Ed Wall, 2016.

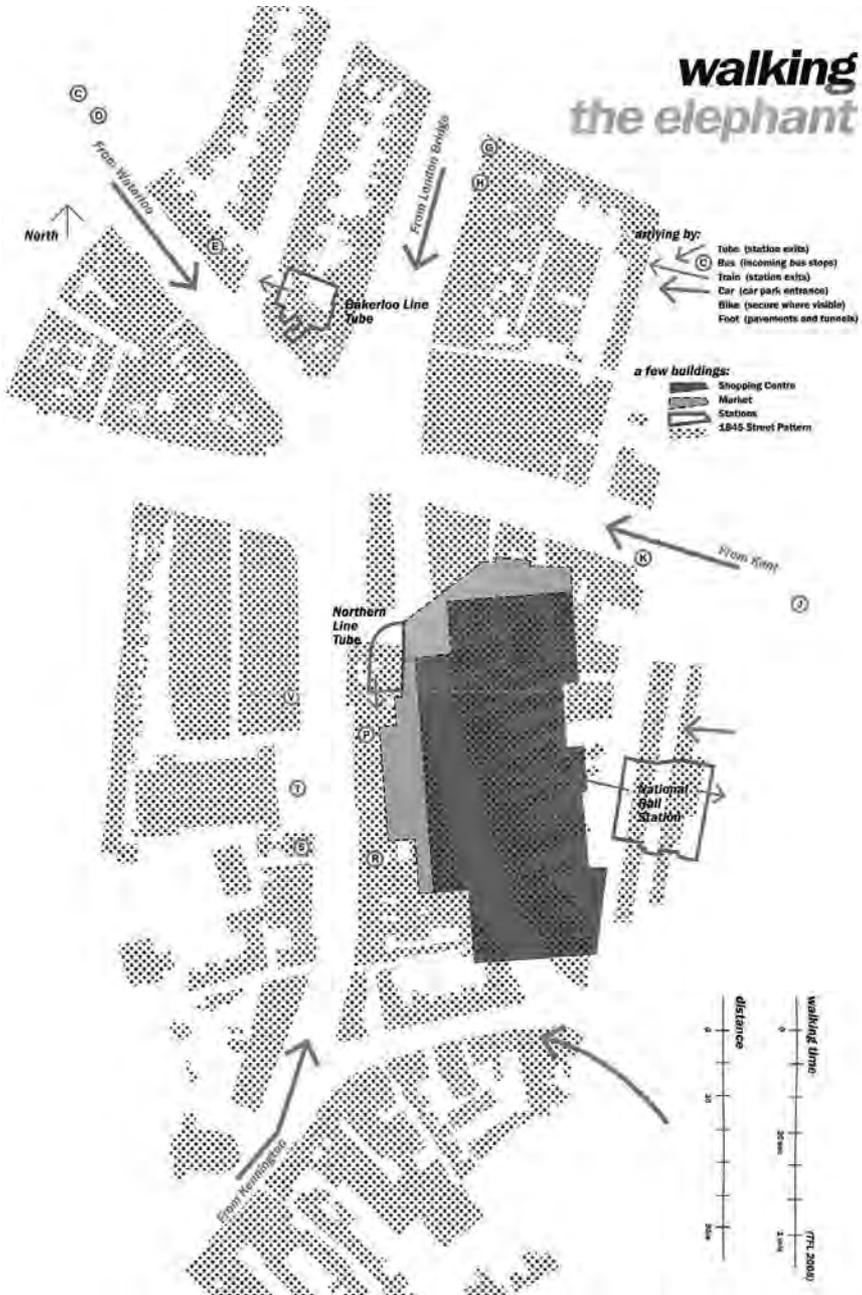


FIGURE 11.8 Research map for *Walking the Elephant* (Dawes and Wall, 2013). Image credit/permissions: Ed Wall, 2013.

what is not considered in a particular frame of landscape. Hybrid techniques, such as *Incomplete Cartographies* (Wall, 2017), also provide opportunities for collective participation, through more accessible, less professional means of production than architectural drawings. And they blur distinctions between urban design disciplines that propose new spaces and research practices which reflect on past conditions.

Reconsidering frames which have the potential to contain (or open up) and define (or question) landscapes could challenge the legal and physical enclosures of landscapes. *Fake Estates* (1973–1974), by artist Gordon Matta-Clark, is a project of small parcels of land bought in auction from the City of New York. The fragments, which the City had considered untenable, are described by *Cabinet Magazine* (2009) as ‘gutterspace’ where ‘unusably small slivers of land sliced from the city grid through anomalies in

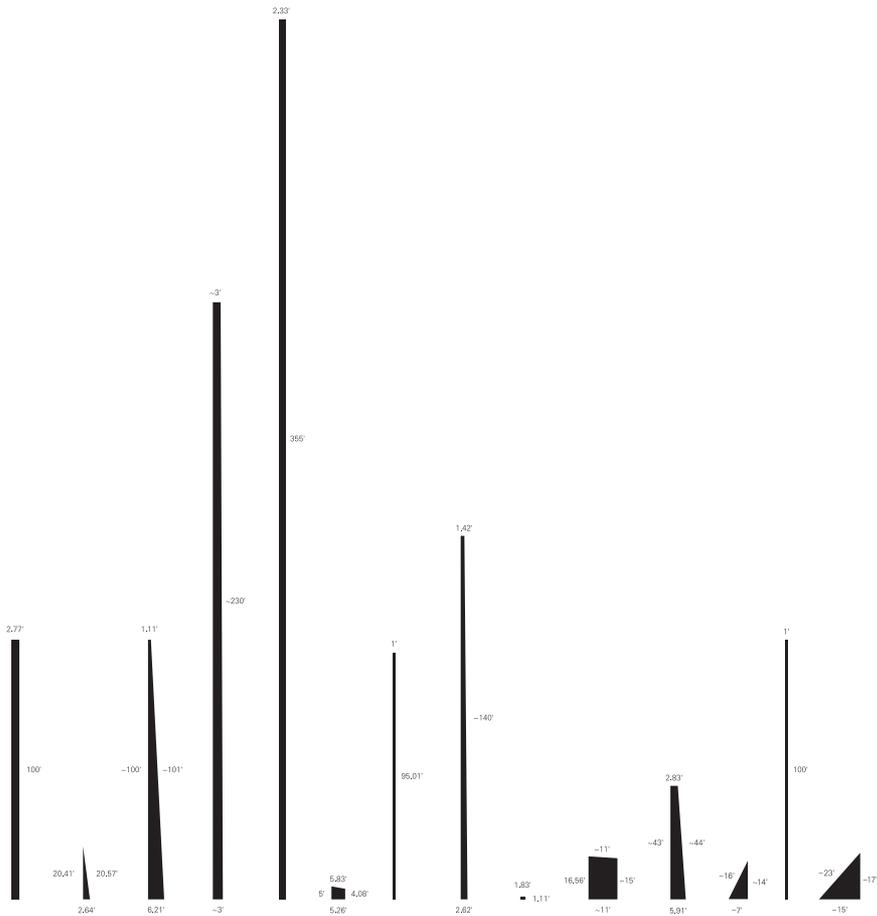


FIGURE 11.9 Odd Lots, an exhibition of Gordon Matta-Clark’s *Fake Estates*. Image credit/permissions: Courtesy *Cabinet Magazine*.

surveying, zoning, and public-works expansion'.⁴ They were bought by Matta-Clark as he considered them for future artworks and interventions. However, following the artist's death in 1978 the unfulfilled project was archived for several years and the land was returned to the ownership of the City of New York. In 2005 a group of artists, including Ukeles, were invited to participate in a two-venue exhibition, *Odd Lots, Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's Fake Estates*. The exhibition aimed to 'de-emphasize[s] the image' of Matta-Clark's work to explore his concerns for 'dematerialization, use value, and systems of social organization'.⁵ *Fake Estates* questions issues of land ownership, the exchange of land between public and private interests and it highlights contrasting values of land, from the twenty-five dollars paid by Matta-Clark for each lot, to the negligible use-value that the land had to the municipality. In the context of urban development, projects such as *Fake Estates* contrast with large-scale masterplanning efforts but resonate with the need of developers to accumulate multiple parcels of land, either through agreement with owners or through the employment of legal mechanisms where land can be taken without consent. The project also highlights the legal and political mechanisms, which are bound up with ecological and spatial challenges, which alternative architectural practices need to engage.

Have we reached a post-landscape condition? Although it is difficult to claim that a post-landscape condition has sustained since Occupy LSX, we should be reminded that 'to continue to construe the practice of landscape as the creation of seductive and beautiful images is only to forestall confronting the problems of contemporary life' (Corner, 1999, 158). As if describing the 2008 economic collapse and the public demonstrations that followed, Harvey states: 'Situations arise, however, in which the contradictions become more obvious. They sharpen and then get to the point where the stress between opposing desires feels unbearable' (2015, 2). After 2011, when Occupy protestors claimed new spaces and defined new landscapes in London, discontented voices receded and spatial and visual redevelopment of the city continued apace. As Bender explains that landscapes depend on the temporality of their contexts, whether cultural, social or spatial, we could expect a fleeting ephemerality of landscapes which are continually contested and remade. At moments such as the years after the economic collapse and the evictions of Occupy protestors from sites across London, Harvey claims: 'The genie is, as it were, temporarily stuffed back into the bottle' (2015, 3). However, new conditions will undoubtedly be established, challenging visually formulated relationships with the land and creatively disrupting other narrowly perceived and overtly controlled landscapes of our cities.

Notes

- 1 The first phase of the High Line opened in 2009 with the final section due to open in 2017.
- 2 See Mel Chin's Revival Field (1991) and Latz and Partners Duisburg Nord Landscape Park (1990–2002).
- 3 <https://twitter.com/deptpublicspace>, 2016.
- 4 www.cabinetmagazine.org/events/oddlots.php, 2016.
- 5 www.cabinetmagazine.org/events/oddlots.php, 2016.

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