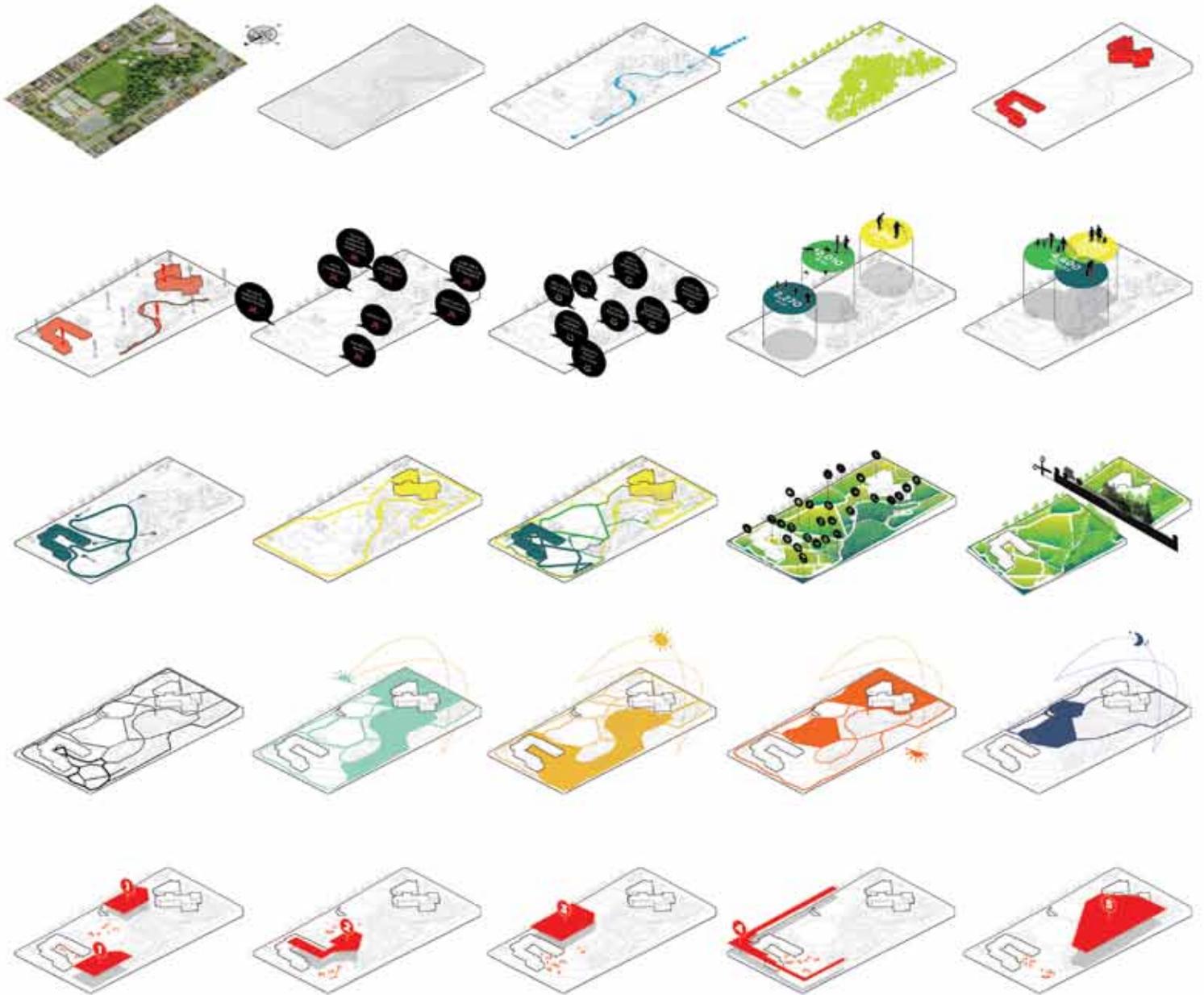


DECEMBER 2015

# SITELINES

Landscape Architecture in British Columbia



## ITERATIONS OF THE EVERYDAY

The Value of Spontaneous Urban Vegetation and its Representation | Framing the Landscape | Playing Field  
BloomBox | Philip Tattersfield Scholarship Award Winner: Cities for Engaged Citizens | Domescape at Block 51  
The Chinese and the Railroad | Shared Topic: Revealing Still Creek | Shared Topic: Let's Make New Outdoor Play



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Allison Tweedie, MLA Candidate,  
 BCSLA STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

# ITERATIONS *of the* Everyday

**With submissions from UBC Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) students,** this issue of SITELINES showcases a small handful of the vast studio projects and directed studies that were undertaken over the past year. This particular issue, Iterations of the Everyday, focuses on projects that take inspiration from the everyday landscapes and activities that we often take for granted. As students and designers, we move through our everyday with a critical eye, questioning the functionality of spaces, the construction of objects and the meaning of landscape. We deconstruct, rebuild, and then start all over again, making sense of the world through these iterations.

The issue begins with Sara Rickenbacher’s directed study, “The Value Of Spontaneous Urban Vegetation And Its Representation”, that looks at vegetation emerging in the interstitial spaces of the everyday. While many are quick to dismiss these so-called weeds, Rickenbacher’s field study analyzes their aesthetic and ecological value in order to gain better understanding of their role in the landscape. Jaclyn Kaloczi and Maxim Pravosoudov present two recent public installations, one at UBC and the other in Norway, that reframe common space to encourage the public to reconsider their own role within the landscape. Four studio projects are included that critique various nodes of the everyday: the everyday notion of play, the illusive third spaces, the role of a public plaza, and the cultural history embedded in everyday structures. Finally, we present two comprehensive design proposals that re envision the schoolyard landscape for the Vancouver School Board.

Many thanks to all of the contributors and to Mickella Sjoquist and Tara Culham for their assistance. On behalf of the Master of Landscape students at UBC, I hope you enjoy our iterations of the everyday. **SL**



Cover Image: "Let's Make New Outdoor Play",  
 by Jiffy Hoi Lun Lee, Benjamin Taylor,  
 Elaine Yilin Zeng

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# THE VALUE OF Spontaneous Urban Vegetation and its Representation

A FIELD STUDY IN  
THE CITY OF VANCOUVER



Ecological Aspects of the only site that has signs of soil formation. Image Courtesy of Sara Rickenbacher.

*"They (wild urban plants) are everywhere  
and yet they are invisible to most people"*  
(del Tredici 2010)

*"In essence, the plants that grow in our cities are a cosmopolitan array of species that  
reflect the natural and cultural history of the area."*

(del Tredici 2010; 9)

**Inspired by current literature and research on spontaneous vegetation, novel ecosystem** and the potential benefits wild urban plants have, this directed study explores the local situation, ecological as well as aesthetic values and their potential implementation in design processes. Due to the wild appearance, size and lacking visual cues of intention or care in a highly manicured environment, there is a lack of appreciation for the value spontaneous vegetation can have. It does not only provide a variety of ecosystem services, but also has cultural value due to the history, origin and original use of species. If we look into aesthetic value as well, we might be able to create a framework for ecological value and increase appreciation.

In a highly transitional city such as Vancouver, open spaces barely remain untouched. However, in between designed spaces there are patches of temporarily open land on construction sites or lots waiting for development. Their existence is limited in time and space, and the conditions we create are life-threatening, but some plants still manage to grow. Novel ecosystems evolve, often just long enough to reproduce. They "represent the wild lands of the future, the self-organized response of nature to anthropogenic impacts" (Christoph Küffer in Pearce 2015; 184). To assess these systems, a field study is used to look at local conditions on three equal patches of wild urban vegetation, following a literature review. A vegetation inventory helps to get a sense of the

plant diversity and potential ecological value, as well as the wide range of colours and textures. The information is analyzed and summarized in tables and visuals.

The main questions in this study are how the context of a site influences species composition and appearance and if there are natural mechanisms, such as allocation, adaptation and migration, that we can learn from. The research also looks at what needs to be improved by design in this specific context to manipulate the appearance and appreciation. Later on, further questions arise, wondering if a patch of spontaneous vegetation would differ from an intentional planting if they were given the same time to establish. ►

It seems surprising that the greatest variety of species exists on the site with the harshest conditions. At least 16 species have been growing on 5x5 meter patch, on no soil at all, but gravel, concrete and asphalt. On all sites only one reported species is native, but there is also no species that is officially declared as being noxious in this region. Hence many species are invasive, but they

grow in the conditions we created, where nothing else seems to be able survive and reproduce. The most determining factor for the appearance of the vegetation is the presence or absence of soil as well as the frequency of disturbance. Ecologically, connectivity to other vegetation seem to be the most important, but also the amount of flowering species, berries and conditions allowing for soil formation.

The results suggest that there is a palette of native and exotic but harmless or even profitable plants that could be tolerated or even promoted in Vancouver's urban conditions. With only little and a framework representing intention and care, one could probably not even see a difference between spontaneous and intentional vegetation.

The biggest challenge working with transitional spaces is the timeframe of their existence, since seasonal changes and successional stages can barely be observed. However it is promising to see how fast vegetation recovers after disturbance and how diverse it can be. There is also a great presence of bees, other insects and birds on all studied patches, indicating ecological value and a need to allow for this dynamic vegetation to survive, either in this particular place or in the next spot that opens up within the matrix of the city. **SL**



Some of the plants found on the sites showing the rich colours that can be found in details and might be better represented in design interventions. Images Courtesy of Sara Rickenbacher.



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# Framing

## THE LANDSCAPE

Students Jaclyn Kaloczi (MLA) and Maxim Pravosoudov (MArch) create two site specific installations exploring how framing the landscape in unique ways can alter one's understanding of space and perception of time. Their work is inspired by interest in how commonplace elements can be transformed to expand the notion of space and its making.

**Kaloczi & Pravosoudov were invited to participate in an international exhibition in Bergen, Norway** to critically explore the subject of "The Commons", and the contention of public/private urban space. Subsequently, a second competition held by The University of British Columbia awarded the students a Centennial Prize to complete an installation on the Vancouver campus. Using small scaled, site specific, playful interventions, both projects examine methods of framing the landscape in hope to see it in new ways.

### Gateways, UBC Vancouver Campus

Celebrating 100 years of dynamic history, Gateways architecturally and sculpturally connect the UBC community and its visitors to the past and present of the campus. Embracing the school's evolution over time, several Gateways are positioned throughout the University of British Columbia campus. These installations act as interactive thresholds between the present and past.

Each Gateway frames a unique view on campus, whether it is a building, landscape or landmark. Interactive digital QR codes and archival photographs are mounted on plaques next to each Gateway. These codes direct viewers to the UBC Centennial webpage where the history of each Gateway is narrated. Similar to a before and after photo set, the project enhances one's awareness of his or her presence on the campus and allows for an understanding of its history. The project inspires students to consider how he or she too can positively shape the school for years to come.

### Hardbakka Ruins Exhibition, Bergen Norway

As part of an international exhibition in Bergen, Norway exploring The Commons, Dagdrommer (daydream) captures the essence of communal space and experience. For Kaloczi and Pravosoudov, the commons are everywhere and everything is common. The creation of space cannot bear the

label of public or private, or a mix of both. Space is space, to be shared and experienced equally by all. The Dagdrommer installation explores representational qualities of space and dismisses all labels. It appears solid, but presents only a moment to be shared. It welcomes difference and rearranges it to create something new, something common. Using an ephemeral material palette, highly sensitive to wavering landscape qualities such as light, wind and reflection, the experience of the installation remains spontaneous and temporal. It is in constant change. Each moment is physically and experientially unique, allowing one to perceive it freely, commonly, and to always see current relationships in a new light. **SL**

Lawns and Reflecting Pool. **Bottom Left:** Concept Rendering. **Bottom Right:** Constructed Gateway. **Below:** Interaction with the Dagdrommer installation. Images courtesy of Jaclyn Kaloczi and Maxim Pravosoudov.



# Playing Field

The Nature of Risk studio critiques the North American playground model, which predominantly uses prefabricated play structures and is overly concerned with safety, and challenges designers to create play spaces that emphasize the natural environment and affords risk taking. Additionally, The Seven C's: an informational guide to young children's outdoor play spaces, is adopted to help inform our design. This guide outlines seven recommended attributes to outdoor play spaces: character, context, connectivity, change, chance, clarity and challenge.

The studio focuses on the small neighborhood park, Chief Mathias Joe Park in North Vancouver, BC, as it lacks design elements that would afford risky play and is currently undergoing a renewal by the City of North Vancouver. My design solution, Playing Field, explores and pushes the bounds of physical and mental safety. This is achieved by preserving the steep terrain of the site and the addition of natural elements that will afford risky play and incorporate the Seven C's. For example, rocks for climbing are introduced to afford playing at great heights and tall grasses are planted for children to run through and explore, affording the chance of feeling lost.

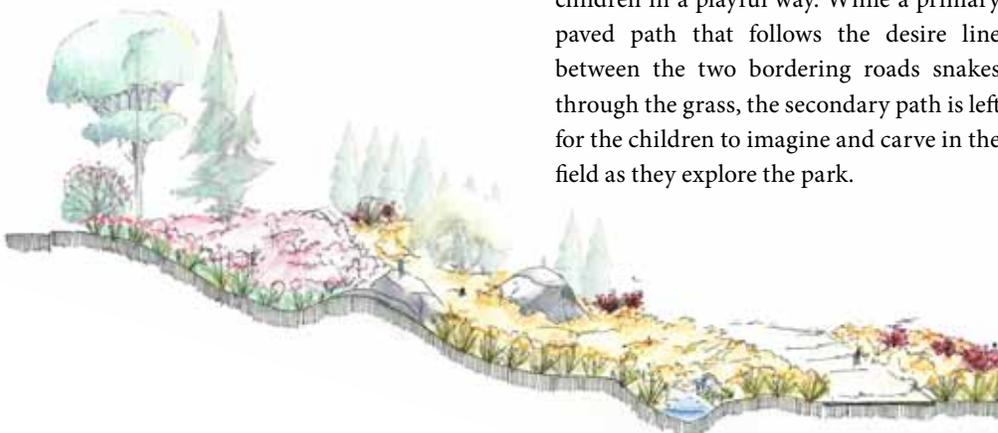


Perspective: Playing Field from a child's perspective. Seasons: Plants at different seasons. Sectional Perspective: Playing field — a new play space. All images courtesy of Dina Dudokh.

The addition of islands with a mix of plants that bloom at different times of the year and grow to different heights provides the park with continuous year round interest. With every season the landscape changes and a distinguished element is highlighted. These small gestures are beneficial to the development of children as they help emphasize change and time in the landscape.

The circulation is also meant to engage children in a playful way. While a primary paved path that follows the desire line between the two bordering roads snakes through the grass, the secondary path is left for the children to imagine and carve in the field as they explore the park.

Playing Field aims to transform Chief Mathias Joe Park into a field of spontaneous exploration that encourages, challenges and entices children. By incorporating the Seven C's and Risky Play, designers can create spaces that inspire imagination and play and support the developmental needs of children. **SL**



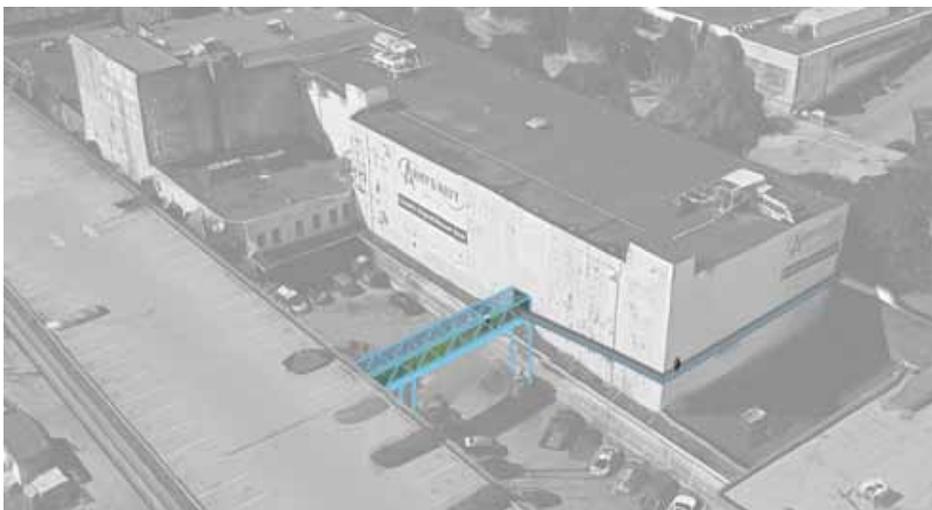
# Bloom BOX

The studio, 3rd Space, focuses on Henri Lefebvre's concept of third space as a productive condition between imagined and real space. The site for this studio is the Front Street Parkade and surrounding area in downtown New Westminster. This project is a proposed design intervention that is part of the waterfront revitalization project on Front Street in New Westminster. The project focuses on ways to create new spaces using the Front Street parkade as the site of the intervention. This three story parking structure is being partially removed, renovated, and repaired to increase its lifespan and make way for the New Westminster Mews development that will extend from Pier Park. My design solution, Bloom Box, uses the trestle bridge that spans between the historic Army and Navy building and the first floor of the parkade. This bridge is indefinitely closed and gracefully sits unused as a relic of the site's past. I am proposing that this structure could be transformed into a wildflower meadow linear park. By removing the corrugated roof adding depth to the underside of the structure and reinforcing



it in order to add soil, the conditions required to achieve this redesign are possible. Adding floor to ceiling glass windows, benches made of solid square timbers, complimentary LED lighting, and using a permeable paving system this vacant space is transformed into a place of discovery and quiet reflection. A new ramp would be built to connect the eastern edge of the structure to Columbia Street wrapping around the Army Navy building creating a sense of surprise and wonder as

people encounter this elevated park. The closed entrance to the Army Navy building that once opened up onto this trestle bridge will be replaced with a single pane of glass. This will create a dialectic between the commerce of the indoor shopping experience and the pastoral serenity of the wildflower linear park now situated in the trestle bridge. This project is informed by a desire to repurpose old, failing, and unused infrastructure to create productive new spaces for public activity within the city. **SL**



Bloom Box at night with white LED lighting. Project context with Columbia Street to the west and the New Westminster waterfront to the east. Entering the linear park from the first floor of the Front Street parkade. Images courtesy of David Stein.



# CITIES FOR Engaged Citizens

Stephanie Aitken &  
Christopher Szymberki

**After months of designing a project we traveled to Black Rock City, Nevada, where Burning Man, an arts and culture festival takes place.** We journeyed there not just to build the project, but also to participate in an event known for radical self-expression. While the challenge of a design-build is a rewarding experience and could be the source of its own essay, we would like to discuss our first hand experience of a place with a rich and dynamic public realm, a place that perpetually offers opportunities for citizens of the temporary city to engage with the world around them. We feel this is important to share because upon returning home, we noticed that Vancouver felt very different from what we had experienced in the Nevada desert. There are many lessons to be learned from Black Rock City, which can be applied to the public realm of more traditional settlements, such as Vancouver, for a happier and more engaged citizen experience.

Vancouver is a city known around the world for its dramatic natural beauty, set amongst the scene of ocean and mountains. However, according to local urban planner Lance Berelowitz, if it were not for this scene of dramatic beauty, Vancouver's "public space would qualify as one of the more banal architectural constructs of any Canadian City" (140). Over the years, Vancouver's public life has moved away from its civic centers to the edges of the city and the waterfront. This translocation of public life away from traditional uses of civic space towards that of personal leisure, has turned them into "venues of consumption" threatening Vancouver's civic spaces as no longer being places of "vital, legitimate, political expression" (Berelowitz 258).

Compared to the eroding civic spaces of Vancouver, Black Rock City is a place made for self-expression and civic engagement. The uniqueness of Burning Man's temporary

*"The moments at which [citizens] are happiest are when they are... engaged in a challenging task and doing it well." (Kay, John)*

home in the Black Rock Desert is that it is devoid of traditional infrastructure set within an inhospitable environment, and would not exist were it not for people engaging and participating at every level of the community. From our observations, we offer three key elements that empower people to engage their city and citizen experience:

**1. REGULATIONS THAT EMPOWER:** Despite popular belief, Burning Man is not a place of chaos. It is a city with operational departments; trained medical and assistance personnel; and, has clear published guidelines of conduct for its citizens. Submitting documents is necessary for art projects, serving food and alcohol, early entry, vehicle registration, burn permits, etc. While the documents are rigorous, they empower people to organize, coordinate, and ultimately to successfully participate through the means of freedom of expression and engagement.

**2. OPEN ENDED DESIGN:** Black Rock City is designed to be a setting of public and civic engagement through art, performance, workshops, etc. The city is built from what its citizens bring to it; populated with temporary homes, extraordinary artwork, and continual acts of generosity. It is a place full of spontaneous delight, evolving through the contributions of its participants, and existing by way of un-prescribed events, places, and citizen occupation. While its urban plan is formally defined through a continuing framework, the individual elements of the city shift and adapt to the emerging and evolving cultural expressions of its people. Ultimately, it is a citizen determined landscape.

**3. OWNERSHIP OF EXPERIENCE:** As the city is full of endless opportunities to express and engage, and has regulations that empower instead of inhibit; citizens are

## Philip Tattersfield Scholarship Award

The intent of the Philip Tattersfield Scholarship is to promote writing early in the careers of future landscape architects, to spark an interest in this form of communication, to diversify students' skill sets, and to improve the level of writing within the profession. Excellence in design writing should be critical and constructive in nature and engage the reader with a deeper understanding of the topic at hand.

Philip Tattersfield, LMBCSLA #001, FCSLA, (1917-2008), had a distinguished career as the first landscape architect registered in British Columbia. He was integral in shaping the BC SLA and contributed extensively to SITELINES magazine. Over his career, Tattersfield

authored more than 150 publications, briefs, lectures, and television series in North America and overseas covering philosophical and technical aspects of practice.

The 2015/2016 recipients of the Philip Tattersfield Scholarship are Stephanie Aitken and Christopher Szymberki for their essay, "Cities for Engaged Citizens".

The Jury included: Mike Teed, Chair, Sara Ahadi, Debra Barnes, Kees Lokman and Randy Sharp. Thank you for your time. Another thanks to all the students who submitted an essay.

We are also grateful to Allison Tweedie and Cynthia Girling for their tireless energy and support.



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expected to take ownership of their experience. By ownership of experience we mean that each individual is responsible for themselves and the environment around them. For example, it is the participants' responsibility to know their physical abilities and limits while climbing, jumping, swinging, or engaging with art installations. In this, Burning man offers opportunities for safe risk taking behaviors that the contemporary urban realm prohibits. Also, citizens of Black Rock City take responsibility for M.O.O.P. (matter out of place) by picking up trash and adhering to a 'leave no trace' policy. These are two examples of how creating ownership of experience leads to a more adventurous and challenging public realm where people take care of themselves, their environment, and each other.

These key elements combined with the ephemeral conditions of Black Rock City make it a place that fosters engaged citizen experience. We recognize that Black Rock City cannot be replicated in Vancouver; however, we believe that these elements can

and should be adapted to enrich and inspire a more vital and engaging public realm. It is our experience as citizens of Vancouver that the city is over-regulated, over-prescribed, and its citizens, therefore, do not take ownership or participate in the public realm. As Lance Berelowitz writes:

*"Vancouverites are being turned into consumers of, rather than participants in, their own culture, tourists in their own city, and the forms of public space are quietly being appropriated. Meanwhile, more self-generated, unregulated expressions of public life are being increasingly marginalized, both physically and socially." (270)*

As Landscape Architects we have a responsibility to the public realm. We can look to Black Rock City as an evolving example of a place that allows people to

truly engage and participate in the creation of their experience, empowering citizens to take responsibility and ownership of their city. As previously stated, an over-prescribed and over-regulated public realm demotes citizens to tourists in their own city, robbing them of the responsibility and civic participation that brings vitality and genuine happiness to them and the city. In order to establish a more vital and happy public realm in Vancouver, regulations that promote spontaneity and creative endeavors need to replace onerous rules and regulations. Public spaces should be open-ended where people can occupy and continually re-define the activities, organization, and content. Our goal should be to create a city for engaged citizens. **SL**

### SOURCES:

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# Domescape AT BLOCK 51

In the mid 1970s, Arthur Erickson, along with landscape architect Cornelia Oberlander, unveiled a comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of Block 51, 61, and 71 in downtown Vancouver. Block 71 became the site for the Law Courts and Block 61 became the site for Robson Square, but Block 51, home to the Vancouver Art Gallery, was never fully realized. Even today, the ground plain is covered with a layer of woodchips, a remnant of the 2010 Winter Olympics, and the 1967 Centennial Fountain, the central feature of the site, is in disrepair. Despite its neglect, the North Plaza is a site for small and large scale protests and events, most notably the Occupy Movement in 2011 and the annual 4:20 festival, which draws crowds of up to 25,000. With these factors in mind, the objective of the studio is to re- envision a plaza for Block 51 that accommodates large crowds and daily uses, considers the space in the context of a 3 block plan and provides the city with a landscape that supports art and culture.

The main feature of my design solution, Domescape at Block 51, is a 2 meter high dome constructed from syndecrete that spans 25 meters. The dome is situated just off the main pedestrian desire line that runs diagonally through the site. The spherical form counteracts the geometric repetition on the facade of the building, yet it's dimensions and the paving below abide to its logic. The form and spatial elements within the plaza are minimal and left open ended allowing the inhabitants of the space to inform its overall composition and meaning. Taking advantage of the existing exterior entrance to the vaults below the plaza, the dome serves the dual function of an underground performance space.



Perspective of site in the summer. Facing Hornby Street. Section showing underground performance space at night. Facing Howe Street. All images courtesy of Allison Tweedie.

Vegetation and other structural elements are carefully located in relation to the pedestrian desire line in order to enhance the shifting perceptions and experiences of the average pedestrian moving through the space on a daily basis. **SL**

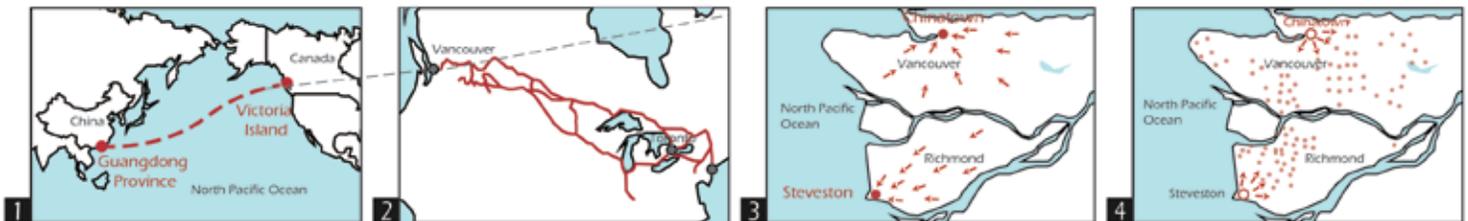
1. Herrington, Susan. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Making the Modern Landscape. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013.

# The Chinese AND THE RAILROAD

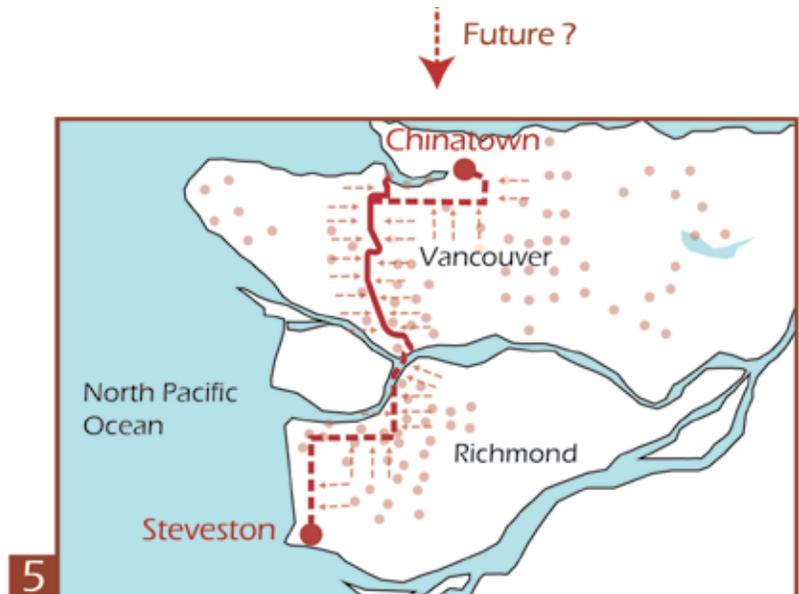
This studio, **The Contested Corridor**, focuses on the **Arbutus corridor** which links False Creek with the Fraser river and crosses multiple terrain, land uses and histories. My design intervention focuses on the contentious history of the 15,000 Chinese workers who migrated to British Columbia to build the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1881 and 1884. These men were compensated less than the white workers and worked in the most dangerous conditions. Once complete, those that survived continued to live in harsh conditions and many settled in Vancouver's Chinatown or Steveston. My design commemorates the history of these workers along this contested corridor by



Above: Perspective showing design elements. All images courtesy of Yiwen Ruan.  
Below: Migration of the Chinese worker in history.



programming various educational moments along the corridor to connect to current Chinese communities. Materials and vegetation along the corridor are also chosen to reflect this history. For example, the number of Ginkgo trees planted along the corridor represent the number of Chinese workers that died per kilometer along the railroad. Rock on the surface was chosen to represent the dangerous rocky mountains that the workers faced and, finally, water features are introduced along parts of the railroad to reflect motionless rocks as the water moves. [SL](#)



The following projects are two different takes on the same studio assignment for the Comprehensive studio in the spring 2015. This studio comprises a two-part design project. The first part is to develop a 'Kit of Parts' as a district-wide design elements guidelines book for the Vancouver School Board (VSB). The second part is to apply the 'Kit of Parts' to the chosen site, Nootka Elementary and Renfrew Park, to gauge the outcome of employing the design elements created in Part 1 and develop a comprehensive design proposal. Nootka Elementary School is located in East Vancouver between Renfrew St. and Nootka St. at 17<sup>th</sup> avenue. The school shares a city block with Renfrew Park, Renfrew Community Center, and Still Creek.

## UBC MLA STUDENT PROJECT

Mickella Sjoquist, MLA Candidate; Stephanie Aitken, MLA Candidate; Yiwen Ruan, MLA Candidate; Heather Scott, MLA Candidate  
Studio: Comprehensive Studio, Kris Fox and Kees Lokman, Spring 2015

# REVEALING Still Creek

## Play Philosophy

**Think back to when you were a kid...**

**How and where did you play?** Maybe you loved the monkey bars, or maybe you played in the forest by your house. In a study entitled, "Play Worth Remembering: Gaining Public Insights into Memories of Outdoor Play Space" by Dr. Mariana Brussoni and Professor Susan Herrington, a majority of the respondents preferred natural play spaces and listed features like sticks, plant life, trees, and rocks, as some of their favourite play elements (Brussoni, Herrington). According to the article, natural play settings provide opportunity for children to manipulate spaces and elements, enhancing creative play (Brussoni, Herrington). It also functions as a setting for risky play (as opposed to hazardous play), providing a safe environment for physical and personal challenges, which are important in healthy childhood development (Brussoni, Herrington). How can we take these positive aspects of this type of memorable play and use it to inform present day play spaces? Our proposition is to design with four core play values: authenticity, creativity, connectivity, and discovery.

## Design Concept – Revealing Still Creek

We began part 2 of the design project with three initial design concepts: bridging the gap, weaving a story, and connecting the dots. These initial concept designs encompass three key notions, respectively: create circulation and form perpendicular to the creek; use the creek to connect the schoolyard and park; create activity nodes along the creek. We later realized that our main focus should be emphasizing the creek through remediation and daylighting, as it provides the setting to realize our core play values. It also serves to unify our three initial design concepts, which we amalgamated into our final design concept, 'Revealing Still Creek.' Additionally we focus on phasing the daylighting of still creek, shared programming, the school/park relationship, and the re-use of materials.

## Large Scale Concept/Phasing

Our concept, 'Revealing Still Creek,' required us to zoom out to look at the location of Still Creek in the Brunette River watershed. Chum salmon were seen at the

recently daylight portion of Still Creek near Cornett Road and Skeena Street, and various portions of Still Creek have been the focus of stream enhancement projects in Vancouver (2005, 2007, 2009, 2011). Therefore, in line with past stream enhancements, several goals from the City of Vancouver Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, and the Vancouver Parks Board "Rewilding Vancouver" document, our proposal includes a phased daylighting of the creek starting at Nootka Elementary and progressively moving North along Renfrew Street to connect with the existing daylight portion near Renfrew Street and 14th avenue. With the daylighting, our proposal includes a greenway along Renfrew Street, which would connect the Central Valley Greenway to connect to the existing greenway at the Renfrew Ravine/Boyd Diversion.

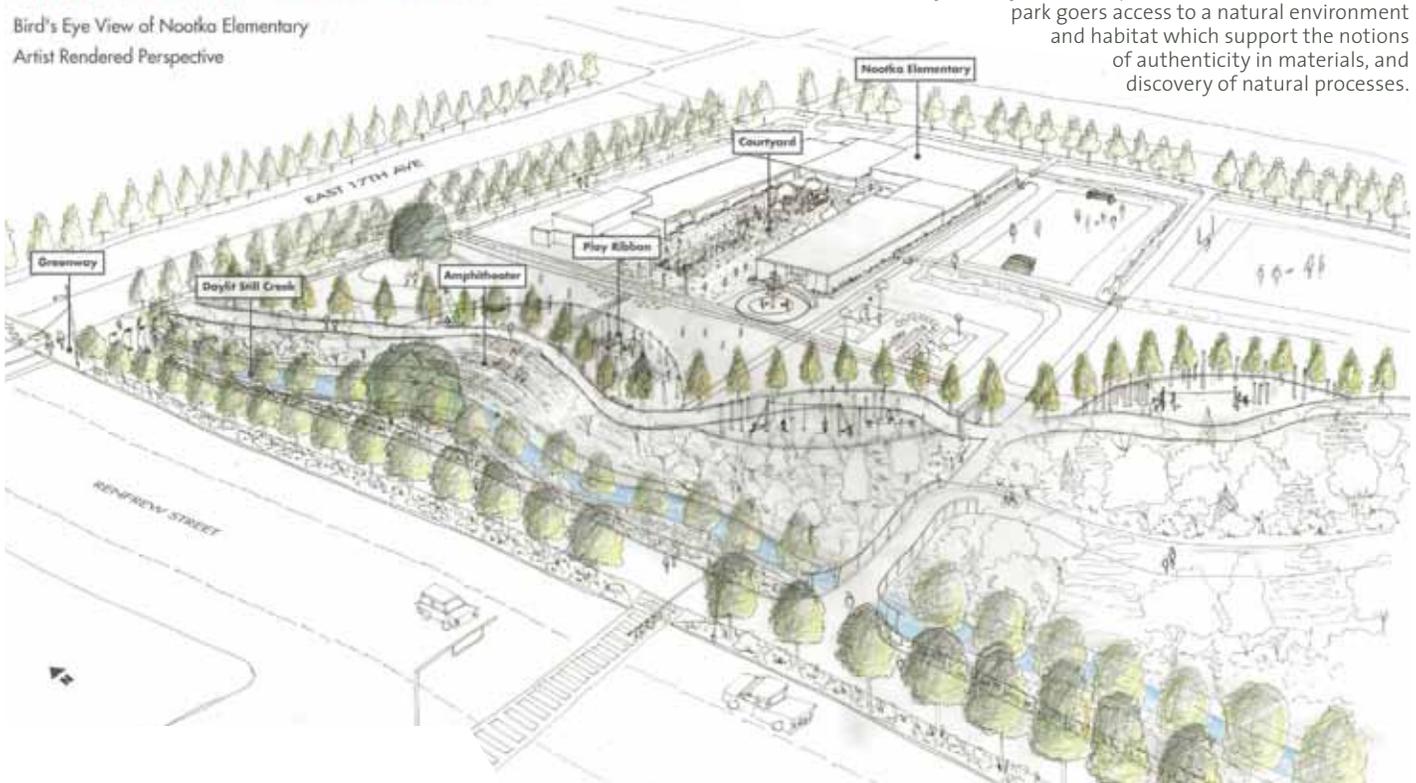
## Shared Programming

The program consists of several key program elements, the dominant element being the Play Ribbon, which extends from the schoolyard to the community center. The play ribbon acts to unify the entire site

# Play Worth Remembering

Bird's Eye View of Nootka Elementary  
Artist Rendered Perspective

Play Worth Remembering: Daylighting Still Creek into the Nootka Elementary schoolyard would provide the school children and park goers access to a natural environment and habitat which support the notions of authenticity in materials, and discovery of natural processes.



by interspersing play elements along its corridor, adjacent to the creek's riparian edge. The play ribbon houses natural play elements made primarily of wood, trunks, and ropes, which promote creative play and authenticity in materials. Rows of Freeman Maples weave in and out of the play ribbon framing or widening the play spaces to allow for varied group sizes, both individual and group play.

The south end of the park/creek area contains two anchoring spaces, the Picnic Area with a circle of Freeman Maples and picnic tables, and the Upper Lookout with a viewing platform cantilevered toward the creek. These two elements pull park attendees down toward the creek and develop a perpendicular circulation route across the creek and park, encouraging the element discovery.

The north end of the park is highlighted by the Still Creek Nootka Amphitheater, which showcases the creek while welcoming school students into the schoolyard or park users along the primary pathway. In the schoolyard area the Freeman Maples act as a divider among school space and public space, acting as a soft edge allowing public

to use the Still Creek amphitheater while school kids venture down during recess. Vegetation extends from the existing riparian area along the daylit creek to shade the water and allow for riparian habitat. The amphitheater acts as an outdoor learning area and social space.

## School/Park Relationship

To daylight the creek we re-located the schoolyard recreational activity spaces to the south side of the school, thereby creating space for both the creek and the grade change down to the creek on the west side of the schoolyard. By moving this recreation to the south side of the school, we shift the school and park boundary and create a shared space between school and park. This allows us to minimize duplicated programmed activities on the site. Additionally, we propose a material gradient change from hard to soft going from the school outward, which signifies a transition from structure (the school) to nature (the creek and park).

## Material Re-use

A key step in our design was to strategize the reuse of materials by incorporating ▶



Revealing Still Creek Master Plan: To daylight Still Creek in the Nootka Elementary school yard, the sport courts/fields will be relocated to the south of the school, which, with the help of the long linear play ribbon, creates a greater programming and circulation connection between the school, park, and community center. All images courtesy of Mickella Sjoquist, Stephanie Aitken, Yiwen Ruan, Heather Scott.

them into major elements of the design to promote our tenets of authenticity and creativity. Firstly, our design includes the re-use of trees (removed for construction and grading of the site) will be used to build the wood and rope play structures in the Play Ribbon. Secondly, the existing unused concrete kiddie pool will be demolished and reused in the school courtyard as an urbanite ground plane material. Thirdly, excess asphalt in the parking areas will be lifted and reused in the gabion seating of the Still Creek Amphitheatre.

Designing with Authenticity, Creativity, Connectivity, Discovery

By revealing natural processes and practicing truth to materials – like using sand and wood in the play area, our design promotes authenticity. Flexible spaces (Play Ribbon), malleable materials (hard to soft material gradient), and less prescribed play structures

encourage creative play, where imagination is welcomed. Linkages via the creek and to the creek create a connective network with gathering nodes, which allows for maximum exploration of the block and a greater connection to the watershed and surrounding neighbourhood. Diverse spaces, varied materials, and the revealing of Still Creek and its natural processes allow school children or park goers the opportunity to explore and discover. By ‘Revealing Still Creek’ we believe that authenticity, creativity, connectivity, and discovery can provide a more enjoyable and positive [learning] experience for the students at Nootka Elementary and the park goers of Renfrew Park. [SL](#)

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Brussoni, Mariana, and Susan Herrington. “Are playgrounds engineered for safety doing more harm than good?” The Wall Papers. 2014. Web. 13 Oct. 2015.

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# Let's Make **NEW** Outdoor Play!

**Our team believes that there is a way to think differently about playground design.** It's even in our name! We are called L.M.N.O.P. which stands for, 'Let's Make New Outdoor Play!'. There is of course the typical way of approaching school playground sites (the 'ABCs' as we like to call it) and the dynamic application of elements that is unique to an individual school site (aka the 'LMNOPs'). In the 'Kit-of-Parts' booklet, the goal is to highlight accessible solutions that could be developed in future projects throughout

Vancouver school district. The elements we parsed down were presented in a 2-step format that allow you to first consider the basic ABCs of the project in simple, low-cost techniques, before considering the LMNOPs of new outdoor play ideas. Both ABCs and LMNOPs have the power to be flexible and adaptive because their functions are open to different uses, physical and developmental stages, and imaginations of the children.

Primary users of the Vancouver School Board (VSB) playgrounds are children ages

5 to 14; however, the secondary users of the space include an entire range of ages. How do you satisfy the youngest of children who are just learning to walk backwards and jump with both feet? How do you satisfy both the introverted pre-teens and the extraverted socialites? How do we accommodate the adult users who walk through the space after hours with their pets? Or the ones who rent the soccer terraces for intramural activities? Or seniors who simply want to relax in an engaging space? These are the questions we ask to arrive at our concrete set of values by which we rate the importance of different elements in the Kit-of-Parts.

## Project Values

**LEARNING:** As adults, we have essentially unlearned play. So how then do we design good playing elements for children? What is the key ingredient for learning and for play? Of course, there is the typical conditions for learning (visual, kinetic and auditory) but we don't necessarily focus on those too heavily. We feel that learning is really a combination of all the other values.

**MAINTAINING:** As designers, we are responsible for closely observing the safety of our playscape. It is necessary to avoid injuries and issues of entrapment. This lead us to consider the best practices when implementing elements with qualities that afford risky play. It also extends to maintenance concerns over time and how that affects safety and cost of play elements.

**NURTURING:** This essential element of the pedagogy goes back to the objectives of learning. We need to let children be co-creators. We must nurture their ambitions and ideas. This allows them ▶

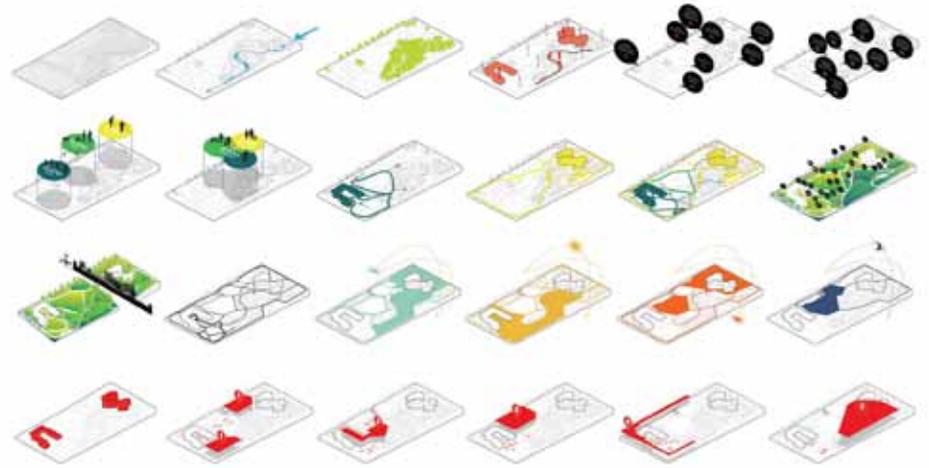


**Above:** Site Plan. **Bottom:** Perspective showing design solution.

opportunities for positive social interaction and growth, as well as physically challenging and mentally engaging experiences. Nurturing interactions that truly manifest the wishes and fantasies of our users.

**Opportunities:** This value is all about creating quantity and a variety of options, it is children themselves that will instill quality! The goal is to first increase the playability of the area and then to design the elements. We have made spatial interventions, created height differences, designed pieces that combine functions, and reinvented the use of existing elements. We want to stir up the imagination and curiosity of our children.

**Participation:** We defined three types of play: Participatory, Inclusive, and Contemplative. The first two are highly social with the differentiation being that participatory play is dependent on multiple children working together. Inclusive play simply allowing for multiple players (for example tag versus basketball respectively). The third is an observational type of play that is a necessity for more introverted children.



Design process, read from top left to bottom right.

### Site Design

The Kit-of-Parts addresses the ‘every-school’, which is the prototypical environment that represents the beautifully diverse set of facilities in the VSB. Looking at the ‘individual-school’, however, presents a unique challenge in every case because of constraints or opportunities that change from site to site. Our proposal for the

Nootka Elementary School and the adjacent Renfrew Park uses the rating system from our booklet to design a playscape that takes advantage of the numerous adjacent amenities on the site. The design is a comprehensive plan that animates the site in a layered manner, allowing all age groups to have a rich, educational, and engaging community experience 24/7. [SL](#)



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# [FREE OR LOW-COST] WAYS TO GET BCSLA CE CREDITS

CONDENSED FROM

*101 [free or low-cost] ways to get BCSLA CE Credits*

by Dr. Katherine Dunster, MBCSLA, R.P. Bio., BCSLA CE Committee Chair

- 1** **READ A JOURNAL OR MAGAZINE** (location optional), remember that Sitelines & Landscapes/ Paysages are free with membership.
- 2** **FOLLOW-UP** on an article of interest.
- 3** **GIVE A PRESENTATION** to colleagues on a topic of interest such as landscape projects visited while on vacation.
- 4** **START A BLOG** or transfer your sketchbook/journal thoughts to a blog.
- 5** **TAKE THE KIDS/ GRANDKIDS TO A PLAYGROUND** and observe how they use the space equipment. Talk to them about happiness and experiences — what works and is fun? What isn't? No kids? No problem!— ask a friend or neighbour with kids if you can tag along.
- 6** **VISIT 2, 3, 5, OR 10 MORE PLAYGROUNDS** with the same kids; compare observations and write an article for Sitelines to share knowledge gained.
- 7** **VISIT A BOTANICAL GARDEN**, nursery, or arboretum.
- 8** **WHILE VISITING 7, LEARN 5, 10, OR 20-30 NEW PLANTS.** Renew acquaintances with old plant favourites.
- 9** **WHILE VISITING 7, CHECK OUT THE SITE PLANNING & DESIGN.** Write up observations as a critique (submit to Sitelines).
- 10** **LEARN SOME LANDSCAPE HISTORY** — check TV listings (e.g. Knowledge Network) for series such as “The Victorian Kitchen Garden”  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Victorian\\_Kitchen\\_Garden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Victorian_Kitchen_Garden)
- 11** **HERE'S A LINK TO GARDEN TELEVISION**, a listing of online garden-re- lated programs, interspersed with movie trailers that have a garden / landscape connection  
<http://www.gardentelevision.ca/>
- 12** **YOUTUBE:** many choices to learn lots of new stuff or learn how people are using landscapes (e.g. parkour <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVILaXvspcU>)
- 13** **MIT OFFERS MANY FREE ON-LINE COURSES** through its open course-ware site including communities and the built environment (13 courses), culture and society (29 courses), water (12 courses) and soil (5 courses) <http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>
- 14** **MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES (MOOC) ARE OFFERED FOR FREE ONLINE** by universities and institutions around the world <https://www.edx.org/courses>
- 15** **IVERSITY OFFERS MANY COURSES** e.g. Design Thinking that you can audit for free!  
<https://iversity.org/>



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