

DECEMBER 2016

SITELINES

Landscape Architecture in British Columbia



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Profile of Alan Duncan | Engaging Us in Nature and Beauty | Landscape, Memory and Metaphor
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Sitelines is published six times per year; February, April, June, August, October, and November by the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects and is mailed to all BCSLA members, registered landscape architects, associates and affiliates. The editorial deadline is the 8th and advertising is the 16th day of the intervening months. Advertising rate information is available on request. Inquiries regarding editorial, advertising, or other issues should be addressed to the Sitelines Editor, c/o the BCSLA at the above address. To view the full-colour version of Sitelines, please visit www.sitelines.org.

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The purpose of Sitelines is to provide an open forum for the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to the profession of landscape architecture. Individual opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily of those of the BCSLA.

Beginning with this December issue of Sitelines, we will be profiling BCSLA Fellows of the CSLA. Alan Duncan, the current Chair of the College of Fellows and the Guest Editor for this issue, is the first to be profiled. In the next issue in February, two more Fellows will be featured.

To provide a better understanding of the College of Fellows and its members, here is a brief history.

The first Fellow of the CSLA was elected in 1964. CSLA at that time was primarily a central Canadian organization with no regulations over the name or practice of Landscape Architecture. In 1968, Phil Tattersfield got the BC Landscape Architects Act passed, requiring membership in the BCSLA in order to stamp landscape architectural drawings and to use of the name "Landscape Architect".

When Clive Justice became president of the CSLA, he set out to unite the provincial associations and make them a component of the CSLA. With this accomplished, the component associations began submitting recommendations of their members for election to the Fellows of the CSLA. The first Fellow from BCSLA was John Neill in 1973, followed by Clive Justice the following year. It wasn't until the CSLA Congress in 1979 that the 'College of Fellows' was formally established. Specific 'Rules for the Conduct of Operations' were adopted, outlining the structure and operation of the College and the guidelines for advancement of members to Fellowship.

Induction to the College of Fellows is one of the highest honours the Society bestows on its members. Candidates for Fellowship may be nominated by individuals through their CSLA component associations.

Members eligible for nomination for Fellowship are Landscape Architects with at least twelve continuous years as full members of CSLA. They are also recognized as having made outstanding contributions to the profession through excellence in executed works, administrative professional work in public agencies, professional university instruction, ▶



Cover Image: Messages on Prayer Flags at Victoria's Royal Oak Burial Park. Photo Credit: LEES+Associates

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professional writing, through service to the community or the public, and direct service to the CSLA.

1973	John Neill *
1974	Clive L. Justice Ibsen E. Brodersen *
1978	Philip W. Tattersfield *
1979	Raoul Robillard *
1981	Cornelia Oberlander
1982	Cameron R. J. Man Heinz H. G. Berger*
1983	Don Vaughan
1984	Douglas D. Paterson Arthur R. Cowie *
1985	John L. Lantzius *
1990	Jane L. Durante Moura Quayle
1992	Donald B. Barron
1999	Catherine Berris Donald K. Hester Jeffrey J. Phillips
2001	David Mitchell * Christopher Phillips Janet Rosenberg
2003	Alan S. Duncan Peter G. Kreuk Patrick F. Mooney David J. Reid
2004	Gerald Eckford Ronald Rule Greg Smalenberg
2005	Margot Long
2006	Brian Baker Adrienne L. Brown Patrick Butler
2008	Randall F. Sharp
2010	Victor Kallos
2011	Cynthia Girling Liane McKenna Ian Wasson
2012	Douglas Backhouse
2014	Tony Bradwell Robert Evans
2015	Virginia Burt Erik Lees
2016	Douglas Olson

*Indicates that the fellow is deceased.



PROFILE OF Alan Duncan

By Don Vaughan, LMBCSLA, FCSLA, FASLA
Photo by Stephen Le May

Alan Duncan graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from the University of Guelph in 1973 and a Master of Arts in Planning from the University of British Columbia in 1990. He was accepted as a member of the AALA and CSLA in 1982, the CIP in 1992, and the BCSLA in 1994.

In 2001, Alan was first recipient of the BCSLA Public Practice Award, was elected to the CSLA College of Fellows in 2003 and is current President of the College. He received the BCSLA Exceptional Contribution Award in 2016.

“How did I decide to become a Landscape Architect? I had never heard of Landscape Architecture and didn’t know of any Landscape Architects. When I was in Grade 13, and planning to become a high school teacher in art and geography, my sister came home for a weekend from Guelph, where she was a student, with a brochure from the program. She said that she thought I may find it interesting. I replied that, as a matter of fact, I did.”

Tell us a bit about your time at the University of Guelph.

“I was very fortunate to be accepted into the program at Guelph, the intake at that time was very small, and had some wonderful mentors there, some who became wonderful life-long friends. I was eighteen when I attended my first CSLA congress in Toronto, and I ended up seated next to Cornelia Oberlander at the banquet. It was a memorable encounter – she was as glamorous as one of the Gabor sisters – and it cemented my resolve to be a Landscape Architect.”

You’ve worked across Canada – PEI Department of Environment and Tourism, Ontario Hydro, the Planning Departments of Etobicoke and Edmonton, and the Groupe d’intervention urbaine de Montréal – as well as working for a design/build firm in Nice in 1984. What were some highlights for you?

“I had a few ‘firsts’. At age twenty, as a summer student, I was the first Landscape Architect in Prince Edward Island because I started a month before my boss. It was amazing to be given so much freedom to do whatever I thought best, almost inconceivable today.”

“I was the first Landscape Architect in the Etobicoke Planning Department in 1976, and then the first in the Edmonton Planning Department in 1980. It was there that I got very involved in planning and producing events and outdoor performances which opened up a whole new world of opportunities and excitement. It was the genesis of the Public Dreams Society which produced so many wonderful events and spawned other creative groups here in Vancouver and around BC.” ▶

You have a long history in grassroots community celebration planning, production and performance, hence the theme of this issue of Sidelines. Is that what brought you to Vancouver?

“Before Expo 86, I was working on contract for a non-profit urban design group in Montreal – a great opportunity to live and work in that wonderful city for a time. But Expo was coming to Vancouver and I thought if it was even a fraction as exciting as Expo 67, I didn’t want to miss the party. And going back to your first question, Expo 67 in Montreal, with all of its amazing design, certainly whetted my interest in design and the promise it held to creating a brighter and bolder future. It was during this time that I worked closely with Public Dreams and the Vancouver Centennial Commission.”

What made you decide then to return to school at UBC?

“When Expo 86 drew to a close, there was

very little going on, it was like being in a rain shadow of that huge event. So, after doing some contract work in Toronto (and co-initiating the Annual Winter Solstice Parade in Toronto's Kensington Market), I decided it was time to go back to school. Again, I was very fortunate. I submitted my application for SCARP at UBC on August 4th and was accepted four weeks later. That was a wonderful experience because I was mature enough to know what I wanted to get out of the program and I was offered a full slate of teaching assistant work. Apparently, I was the first LA to TA in the program – before that, they were typically Architecture graduate students.”

Did you start to work for the City of Vancouver after you graduated from UBC?

“Not quite. As my thesis neared completion and my bank account dwindled, I was lucky to be the first Landscape Architect in Vancouver’s Planning Department in 1989. And, I am happy to say I was the first of many.

It was lucky because the job description stipulated Architect, not Landscape Architect, so I was happy to be able to see that change over the following years. I received the first BCSLA Public Practice Award in 2001 I think because I worked at increasing the influence and appreciation of Landscape Architecture in Vancouver’s civic administration. I defended my thesis and graduated in 1990.”

One last question. Has licensure as practiced in BC been beneficial to you as a professional, and in your opinion to the evolution of the profession in BC?

“Actually, it has held very little interest for me. I’ve done a lot for the BCSLA and the CSLA over the years but never sat on the Board. I’d rather eat broken glass than have to discuss registration issues, I am that disinterested. It seems to me the discussion is more focused on them and us; I think focusing on all of us as us is far more compelling.” **SL**



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ENGAGING US IN Nature and Beauty

By Alan Duncan, MBCSLA, FCSLA, CIP

Image: Parade in Toronto's Kensington Market 1987 (photographer unknown)

New Reflections: An Urban Fantasy was the premier event of the 1983 World Student Games, a spectacle staged in the heart of downtown Edmonton, Alberta after a period of frenzied redevelopment in the downtown had subsided. Hundreds of people of all ages, interests, and abilities participated and thousands more came out for the experience. The following quote in a review of the event strongly influenced my thinking on public expression and creative participation in the design of the public realm.

New Reflections was, in my mind, the baptism of the new downtown Edmonton. It was a signal that the hoardings are down, that the new towers may be primarily of mirrors but good things can be reflected into them. Those of us who were there were introduced to the new downtown, forced to look at it, to get to know it. Our relationship with buildings is tied to what we experience with them, what memories they trigger. Though that huge sun-star is now gone, I'll never again be able to walk past Scotia Place without seeing it. New Reflections has given me the first point of reference to make this razed and rebuilt downtown my own.¹

His reaction to this event illustrates the powerful impact public participatory art/performance can have on our perceptions of places within our cities and our relationships to them. It is from these perceptions that associations with places are built. Places are imbued with a unique character, disposition, special memories, or, as the reviewer suggests, we make them our own. *New Reflections* resulted in an urban design response from the City of Edmonton which contributed to this area, now called Rice Howard Way, becoming Edmonton's premier bistro, cafe and entertainment zone.

Permanent works are only one aspect of public art, one that commands the most attention by virtue of its permanence as a tangible element in the public realm. But it is the intangibles that are more intriguing and leave a richer breath of legacies.



In Vancouver, *Parade of Lost Souls* around the Drive was the catalyst for the acquisition, design genesis and development of Mosaic Creek Park (led by Sarah White with Kim Perry, BCSLA) and the annual *Illuminares* event at John Hendry Park stimulated community interest in restoration of Trout Lake.

In Golden, BC, the *Snow King* event that Bill Usher initiated a decade ago, with the creative support of Paula Jardine and Cathy Stubington, was a springboard for the creation of a gathering/performance area at the downtown end of their footbridge which became the main site of the annual festival.

Less tangible results include the integrative effects of community engaged art, such as bringing together of diverse groups within the Strathcona community for *Journey to the New World* in Vancouver's Maclean Park in 1986 or Runaway Moon's creative engagements in Enderby, BC which have realized a new (and better) relationship between the First Nations community and the townspeople. The Secret Lantern Society's *Winter Solstice* processions and performances throughout Vancouver bring hope of the return of the light on the longest night of the year.

The residual effects of these types of events, often spearheaded by community engaged artists, can be much more powerful, albeit less obvious. They contribute to a more humane city by allowing us to participate in the recapture of the public essence of our communities.

Paula Jardine, Artist-in-Residence in

Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery and Victoria's Royal Oak Burial Park, looks back over decades of producing Public Dreams and writes about Landscape Memory and Metaphor. Community-engaged environmental artist Sharon Kallis talks with Steve Wong, MBCSLA, about creating a very different kind of park – one focussed on production. I had an engaging conversation with Carmen Rosen, artistic director and founder of Still Moon Arts Society and the Renfrew Ravine Moon Festival, about place making, advocating for nature in park design and the return of the salmon to Still Creek. And finally, I asked Moura Quayle, FCELA, FCSLA, MBCSLA the Chairman of the Urban Landscape Task Force, to reflect on the impact that it had on our urban landscape. One of her recommended strategies to move forward is modelling after nature and beauty. What these four women all have in common is they have, each in their own way, dedicated their lives to engaging the world in nature and beauty.

Looking forward, I am really excited about the International Ornithological Congress to be hosted in Vancouver in August 2018. It already promises to be an amazing opportunity for scientists, birders, artists, landscape architects and communities across the city and elsewhere in the province to embrace and celebrate birds. What better way to engage us all in nature and beauty? [SL](#)

1. Silvester, Reg, "Straight to the heart of the city", The Edmonton Bulletin, Edmonton AB, July 22, 1983

LANDSCAPE, MEMORY

and Metaphor

By Paula Jardine



Paula Jardine’s work incorporates elements of celebration, landscape, poetry, lanterns, parades, music, and fire. She says she is drawn to creating community events and celebrations as a way of finding her place – in relation to her neighbours, the seasons, the land, and the natural systems we are all part of. Paula created the first Public Dream – a journey through a familiar landscape seen through new eyes – in Edmonton in 1979. I first met and worked closely with Paula on the downtown celebrations associated with the 1983 Student World Games and pretty much everything else since. Paula moved to BC in 1985 as the founding Artistic Director of the Public Dreams Society which produced a myriad of parades

and community productions for Vancouver’s Centennial, Illuminares at Trout Lake, Parade of Lost Souls around Commercial Drive and many other community-engaging celebrations. A common thread through all of these was they strive to bind us together in our diversity, reflecting the needs and concerns of our varied communities. Paula received the BCSLA Community Service Award in 1994 and is currently the Artist-in-Residence at both Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver and at Royal Oak Burial Park in Victoria.

Top: Paula Jardine with Lantern, photo by deddeda stemler

Second: Lanterns at All Souls, photo by Tim Matheson

Third: All Souls, photo by Tim Matheson

Bottom: Journey to the New World Grandmother and Quan Yin, photo by Alan Duncan

For more information about Paula or if you would like to know more about her projects, including the ones described here, visit her website: paulajardine.com

I think a lot about memory in landscape, how events overlay themselves on the places where they happened. When I visit the neighbourhood where I grew up, in some ways my ability to see it as it is today is impaired by the decades of events that have inscribed themselves in my memory; the lamp post I crashed into learning to ride a bike, the snow forts that were built on the mountains created by the snow plows, the straw piled high on the burlap wrapped rose bushes my dad coaxed and nursed through the Edmonton winters. I even see the tree, the giant cottonwood tree, that stood by our house for years, plaguing my mom with the sticky leaf pods and equally annoying cotton fluff, even though that tree was cut down years ago.

I grew up by the river valley, which is similarly thick with images from my life. We used to write messages and make giant pictures in the fresh snow underneath the High Level Bridge; someone once placed hundreds of paper bag lanterns in patterns under the bridge, and I just happened to be walking across the bridge the night they did it.

I didn't think about why I wanted to do performance in landscape, I just did it. I guess it was a carryover from organizing shows in our backyards that extended itself into a career in theatre, evolved into celebration arts and now, as it's called, community engaged arts; it's a way to create the world I want to live in and how I like to spend time with people.

The first time I really started to explore landscape on a large scale was a project called *Public Dreams: The Walking Tour*. The landscape became the metaphor for what the story was about. Starting in the new, under-construction city, literally on a construction site, where we had buried an angel up to her neck in the dirt. She emerged, transformed into a raven, and invited us to find her, seek her out – and she flew away! She was the spirit of the land, and we had to journey across the High Level Bridge, from “reality” to the land of dreams. One the other side we entered the forest of dreams where poems

were whispered by unseen voices in the underbrush, as if the very land was talking to us.

It was that same underbrush that I found myself crashing through, in the dark, with hundreds of other people, to witness the High Level Bridge waterfall that Peter Lewis created, working with city engineers and waterworks. It was thrilling. Standing in the dark beneath the bridge in anticipatory awe, and then the impossible unlikely beauty of a waterfall on the prairies, everyone cheering in the dark, gathered in the glow of the reflected spotlight on the cascade of water; hundreds of people outdoors in the dark not buying or selling anything, celebrating beauty.

I still “see” the waterfall, called by the artist *The Great Divide*, whenever I see the bridge. The first parade I organized started on the High Level Bridge. It was part of the Canada Day Celebration, in the days when they still turned the waterfall on for the event, and the opening parade for the World University Games. Led by the Divine Drummers of Ghana, it featured Ralph Lee and his Metawee River Theatre Company with large illuminated fish lanterns, swimming through the poplar forest I had played in as a kid.

That parade was the first of six that we did in eight days, involving performers and artists from all over the world alongside local dancers, musicians and street performers, and many members of the public. We actually pulled people off the street for one parade, inviting them to put on elaborate costumes for a lunchtime international parade! We took over the downtown with a series of events called City Celebration, directed by the late Marilyn Wood, using city architecture as staging. Mainly the power of the event was having free range over the core of the city that had been under construction for quite a few years, and it was exciting to be able to give these new surfaces our own overlay of images and memory: from the eruption of red tape spewing from the top windows of City Hall while politicians (and Alan Duncan!) below cut through oversized red tape with oversized scissors; to the butterfly parade featuring acrobatic dancers from Sri Lanka and culminating in a ballet performance in a downtown park with the hundreds of people in attendance, dressed up for the occasion; and the final night with the giant sun image billowing above Rice Howard

Way, where later that evening we collectively reclaimed the centre of our city, in a struggle between light and dark forces that was played out with masked characters, giant inflatables and ended with a huge choir of angelic voices on the gleaming golden tiers of the bank tower that dominated the square.

That same site was the stage for the final scene in our outdoor winter production of *The Snow Queen*, an enactment of the Hans Christian Andersen story played outdoors and indoors across six blocks of the downtown core. School children, city staff, city electrical engineers, actors, film students, the local EST group, and children's bell choir were all involved. Local anarchists played the part of the robbers. Filmmakers carried puppets. The window dressers at Eaton's decorated the set for Anne Wheeler's performance as the Lapp Woman and the Finn Woman. It was so cold the clappers of the bell choir froze. The final scene was a confrontation with the snowflake warriors and the prayers of little girl, Gerda, that turn into an army of angels. The Snow Queen's army was defeated, the girl and the boy were reunited and we had a dance outdoors at 30 degrees below zero to celebrate.

Since leaving Edmonton, I continued to do events I called landscape poetry. One that lasted for many years, and ended a number of years ago because the number of people who attended overwhelmed the capacity of the park, was *lluminares*. An evening lantern procession around Trout Lake in John Hendry Park, an inner city park, it started as a relatively small procession of lanterns made by the public and a number of artists, who also created installations of lanterns along the procession route. It began in the twilight and was a literal journey into the darkness – we entered the dark forest at dusk and emerged in full night, and celebrated with fireworks when we arrived back at the start point.

We also took over the neighbourhood streets in the early days of *Parade of Lost Souls*, a neighbourhood procession around the time of Hallowe'en, that wound through streets and alleys and ended in the schoolyard with a fireworks display. I had wanted to reclaim Hallowe'en, as well as the neighbourhood, and it is still alive for me with images from those first years; the houses with eyes, the back alley shrines; Veda Hille in a tutu ▶

playing accordion in the middle of the roundabout on Charles Street; the opera singer on the balcony on Commercial Drive. The community shrine that grounded that event was an exploration of a cultural tradition of my ancestors that was not passed down to me, and I wanted to understand it and the human impulse behind it.

That aspect evolved into the work I do up at Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery, creating what we call a sanctuary of beauty for tender feelings. We fill the landscape with music, candle light, flowers and small fires for people to gather around and offer materials for people to create small tributes to their dead that they can leave on the public shrines or graves. For many years Erik Lees, FCSLA, MBCSLA oversaw the creation of a classic dolman, a stone table made from granite blocks, and offered everyone who passed by a candle to light. By the end of the evening, the dolman was completely covered with tiny little quivering candles – evidence of the souls who had passed by.

As well as the dolman, Erik's company, LEES+Associates, designed the new columbaria in the Masonic Section, a central area to the *All Souls* events. Their elegant response to people's need to leave something behind when they visit, are ledges beneath the inscribed stone niches, and these are alive with flowers and messages and small mementos. We believe that the beauty and reverence of *All Souls* has inspired people to choose this area, knowing that they would be acknowledged at least once a year, surrounded by light, music, and human regard.

This year marks the twelfth year that we will be doing this in the cemetery and there are people who cannot remember a time when there wasn't a beautiful night at the cemetery to come and remember your dead.

I think what I love most about working in landscape is the transformation from light to dark and the peaceful feeling that live flame from candles or a campfire evokes. *The Ghost Run* lantern installation was a

project dedicated to the memory of lost streams and salmon runs. Created as part of the wild salmon guild initiative, a loose collection of artists who wanted to honour the wild salmon in local parades, the lanterns were installed in various venues where salmon had formerly flourished. They were set up along the route the stream would have taken, creating a school of illuminated salmon indelibly imprinted on our memories.

Their latest appearance was in the forest alongside the salmon-bearing Allouette River in Maple Ridge, celebrating the return of the salmon rather than mourning their absence. Standing in the lantern-lit forest, with the salmon lanterns swimming amongst the trees, star lanterns suspended above and an illuminated dugout canoe seeming to float above the rushing waters of the river, I knew that I, along with the sixty or so people who wandered through, would always hold the memory of the magic of those lanterns in that forest. [SL](#)



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Sharon Kallis and Steve Wong, **A CONVERSATION**

Sharon Kallis's work has been described as an exciting marriage of collaborative art and sustainable practices. As a community-engaged environmental artist, she has championed pioneering new social experiments in urban parks and formalizing them into public park usage. She's worked with the Stanley Park Ecology Society to weave mats from dried invasive plants from the park for use to contain slope erosion or to create natural fencing around restoration areas, both of which will return to soil over time. She has been active in the Means of Production garden in China Creek Park South, a garden intended for the production of art and craft supplies where the landscape itself could be an ongoing art piece, engaging the public in wider aesthetic discussion and providing opportunities to participate in the site's ongoing stewardship. And she spearheaded Aberthau's Flax=Fibre+Food Project as a way to engage the public in the production and processing of flax.

She explained that her role is often that of a travelling catalyst: a new element in an environment, spring boarding a local community to see their own landscape from a fresh perspective with renewed appreciation and wonder. Basic weaving, lashing, and hand skills are introduced and individuals work side by side while a sculptural direction unfolds. Drawing upon a women's cultural work history and social structure, as with quilting bees, everyone's piece becomes a part of the whole.

The gradual decay and natural process of succession is embraced as the eco-system becomes the final collaborator. Work decays while birds perch, insects feast, and fresh growth sprouts on the sculptural work in-situ - participating in the eco-system, not independent of its surroundings. ▶

She has done so much more in and far beyond Vancouver (check her website: <https://sharonkallis.com/>) but I contacted Sharon to talk about her collaboration with my former Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation colleague, Steve Wong, MBCSLA, on the recently-constructed Trillium Park. It was designed as a "working landscape" planned for non-traditional park uses by the people who live in the community. As it turns out, she'd done that already in her recent book, *Common Threads: Weaving Community Through Collaborative Eco-Art* (New Society Publishers, 2014). She graciously gave me permission to excerpt and abridge it for this article.



Conversation with Steve Wong, MBCSLA
Landscape Architect and former Park
Development Project Manager

SK: We recently worked together on the community consultation group for the design of Trillium Park. The group commented on how the park will be very unique for how it will function and how the plants were chosen specifically for their usefulness.

SW: I think it will be a very unique park. The different elements include plants that community members will be using, places where we can put environmental art that will decompose with time, a place where artists can come, grow plants for dyeing, for weaving, that sort of thing. It is going to evolve as community gets more into it, as new opportunities come, and it will keep on changing.

SK: This is radically different; you are creating the space for opportunity to happen. And there is going to be a lot of community engagement in how the space is used, how it gets designed to support that. That was an incredible shift in thinking.

SW: Yes, you are absolutely correct. This is a new paradigm for the Park Board and we end up with more dynamic, better-used parks – parks that really satisfy community needs.

SK: In terms of the firsts, is there anything to where the challenges were, and how we met those challenges that would be helpful to share with others?

SW: The main challenge was, right from the very beginning, what to do with this park. I think it was the first or second steering committee meeting where someone said, "why not explore having this as an artist-based park?" It is right on the edge of the Strathcona area where there are a lot of artists and so they thought it would be really nice to have sort of a heart for the art community, a public space where all can gather to look at, to do, to celebrate. We were given ideas such as the sculpture park in Seattle and in Socrates Park in New York where they have incorporated art into these parks. But here, because it's evolving, it may not be neat and pristine like you would normally want parks to be. I guess the other challenge, to be borne out when the park opens up, is how it works being right next to two active sports fields.

SK: You mentioned something that I have written about: the idea of the park aesthetic being different from what we traditionally think of, a beautiful pristine park, like the rose garden in Stanley Park for instance. Trillium Park has a very different aesthetic, more along the lines of a working garden. A place you visit to see plants in transition, being harvested. It will have a different feel and different look with people relearning to appreciate what that looks like and being engaged in the maintenance, the process of the garden. The seasons, post-harvest versus full growth, that shift from one to the other is going to be more obvious.

SW: I think the other synergy that works

here is that the sports field is lit. That area was not all that safe before the sports fields went in; now you have people, eyes on the area, and you don't have the untoward activity going on as much as you used to. Also with the park coming in, and more eyes on the street, the entire area will feel quite safe. So we hope to build on that, for it to be a dynamic and inviting area.

SK: Thinking back to when we were meeting, how was having artists involved different from usual community consultation? Do you think the artists brought anything unique to the table?

SW: Yes, the whole aspect of growing plants for a purpose, from flax for weaving or dyeing, but also planning for the sort of the activities able to use the fenced-off area; the shipping containers, covered space for workshops and demonstrations with community or school kids, the amphitheatre, acoustic engagement and whatever artworks come in. So the arts community was instrumental in how it developed.

SK: So guaranteeing success in a way by having the end users involved in the design right from the ground up. I felt incredibly lucky and fortunate to be able to be involved from the beginning, and working from that level. Not being handed something at the end to make work, but more along the lines of growing my own flax for linen, involved from the ground up in what that final fiber will be like. It isn't like you just handed me the skeins of fiber already



Image on page 11: Community members harvesting flax for linen at Trillium Park photo by Sharon Kallis

Image on page 12: Spinning flax on wall-mounted walking wheel photo by Sharon Kallis

Image above: Sharon Kallis photo by David Gowman

created and said, "here, weave something" but instead giving me the ground to grow the seed!

SW: There is usually validity in what everybody brings to the table. So balancing those needs, you are not going to satisfy everybody, but hopefully everyone is going to be somewhat satisfied with what you do. It is a real challenge with park space being so limited. People are spending less time in their often-small apartments, especially downtown where space is tight, so many people have different aspirations for what they want to do in a park.

SK: And that is a good point, more and more parks are people's backyards. What really excites me about Trillium Park is that the design is very much intended for active use by community members. Working with Durante Kreuk Ltd. landscape architects, you've come up with a radical change from how most parks are conceived and intended.

How did the concept of active public use for the park inspire or challenge you in new ways?

SW: It inspired me and challenged me. At first I didn't know what I was getting into frankly.

SK: With the community consultation group? We held you accountable. You had to come back and report on the progress and would say "no, we can't ...", and we would say, "we won't take no, try this, go back!"

SW: Yeah, it did take more time but I think in the end we have a park that is very rich with a lot of elements that would not have been there otherwise. The consultants did a really good job of working with the community. They probably did not budget for all the meetings that happened.

SK: So that is a good point, to recognize the time for the consultation. It will take longer to go that bit deeper and understand the requirements for the space to work.

SW: For sure. **SL**

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The Abundance of the Local:

A CONVERSATION WITH CARMEN ROSEN



Artist, performer, singer, and community developer, Carmen Rosen has been active in the Vancouver arts community for three decades. She is the artistic director and founder of Still Moon Arts Society and the Renfrew Ravine Moon Festival – a multicultural celebration of the environment, art, and community (<http://stillmoon.org/>). Besides promoting and engaging in activities that link the arts, community and environment, she was immersed in the recent master planning exercise for Renfrew Community and Renfrew Ravine Parks.

AD: You worked tirelessly on the “Spirit Fish” project using art to link neighbourhoods to their local waterways and this year, you completed a public art piece commemorating the salmon called “Still Here” on Kingsway. Salmon came back and spawned in Still Creek, in Vancouver, four years ago for the first time in eighty years. The press called it miraculous. Did that impact the master plan?

CR: I loved that the salmon returned in the middle of that park planning process; their



Left image: Carmen by Still Creek 2016 by Micah Field

Top right: Labyrinth photo by Yunjan Cao

Bottom right: Turtle Bliss Gamelan by Zora Feren



AD: When you created the plaza at the south corner of the ravine, that was really place making because there was nothing there. It had been developed as a neighbourhood greenway but wasn't animated and ultimately was overtaken by invasive plants. What was your inspiration?

CR: A civic garbage strike. Because of it, during our autumn ravine clean up, rather than hauling junk out of the ravine that no one would haul away, we decided to clear out the weeds and discovered it was a big flat area and went oh, this could be a nice spot. I wanted to frame the ravine as a place of sanctuary and beauty for wildlife and for humans. I was going to ravine clean ups but I wondered, as an artist how to reframe it. Clearing this area provided that opportunity to create the south ravine garden with the mosaics and salmon bench with the community. The process was real pleasure because neighbours offered many resources that artists don't usually have access to. A local ravine steward and rock hound, Grant McKay, had recently passed away. His family found out I was looking for stones for the mosaic so they offered me rocks from his basement. I came away with two car loads of sliced semi-precious stones that he had spent a lifetime collecting and turning into earrings, necklaces and belt buckles. They also let me borrow the giant diamond saw to slice more uncut rocks. Another local rock collector, Cliff Smith, and his wife Dorothy helped me identify rocks and spent a month with me helping cut more of Grant's amazing stones into slices for the central feature mosaic in the fish mosaic sidewalk. A local woodworker, Tim Patterson, made the bench and a local Aboriginal artist, Gerry Sheena, carved the salmon onto the bench. Once we did the garden, people started noticing it and then the salmon bench and fish mosaics and then noticing there was a creek down there, and then wondering if ►

timing was impeccable! They captured the community's imaginations and everyone said they wanted the salmon to spawn right there in their local park and not just down the hill in the light industrial area.

AD: I watched your TED Talk about the return of the salmon and you were rather modest in your role in that. Why?

CR: It's funny, they want you to talk about yourself but it is really the hundreds of people who make it happen behind the scenes. The

investment in infrastructure to facilitate the return of the salmon was the result of thousands of hours of volunteers, stewardship groups, and governments working together to a common goal. I think I have more of a platform to offer and I approach it from an angle of celebration rather than doomsday, so that's more consumable by the media, a good news story. Inspiration is a better motivator than guilt. The Moon Festival is one very small piece of the puzzle. Raising awareness in a fun and engaging way works better than a 'going to hell in a handbasket' sort of way.

there may be fish in the creek. I very sneakily renamed it from Renfrew Ravine Park to Ravine Sanctuary Park as a way of getting the word sanctuary in there.

AD: The garden was very much a community creation. Was the community involved in its animation?

CR: So with the garden, we had the physical markers that stayed all year long but I wanted to create ephemeral experiences of beauty in the ravine or near the ravine that then stay with you all year long. That is the role of the Renfrew Ravine Moon Festival. Because I'd been to Public Dreams events and participated in them, every time I walk around Trout Lake, I can still see people singing in the trees and the lanterns that were there and, oh, wasn't that fun when the whole band passed under there and it is still there in my memory twenty years later. It forever changes the way you see a place because you see what you saw that night and I wanted to do the same in Renfrew Ravine. I think it has happened, it really has happened.

AD: Are there other examples of transformative changes to the landscape?

CR: Yes, I also put in a labyrinth further along the greenway, in a cleared lawn area, where the girl guides had a planter box that had gone all weedy and overgrown, so we split the planter and built the labyrinth in the middle. It changed it into an engaging public space which provides a spiritual experience in nature and was recognized in the master plan.

AD: Still Moon Arts Society's mission is to inspire vibrant and connected communities by creating artistic experiences and nurturing a passion for nature. Did that have an influence on the development of the master plan?

CR: Oh yes, how they looked at it, how they thought about using the natural ravine as an intact ecosystem, how much access people should have and, for the commu-

nity park, how it can be an area for more people to gather, not just for sports, but for arts and culture activities as well. They recognized the need for more interactive places for people to gather or have a concert in the park, so it was designed from a festival perspective as well as an ecosystem perspective. You still need playing fields but you can also have more trees and make it more habitat friendly.

AD: I asked Ben Mulhall, BCSLA, who was part of the consultant team working on the park master plan what was unique about this project from his perspective as a Landscape Architect. He said, "Working on the master plan opened my eyes to the connections artists can have to the landscape and community. We worked with Carmen as a stakeholder, an individual involved in organizing the annual Renfrew Ravine Moon Festival that takes place in the parks. She gave input on the types of public events that occur in the park, which helped to guide the conceptual design of physical amenities needed to accommodate those events. Carmen also gave something intangible, which was a deep connection to the community. Through her work as a local artist, she had developed a good communication network that helped get people out to our open house events and her presence gave a certain street-cred to the process. People could be comforted that events like the beloved Moon Festival had a voice in the planning for the parks." Does that resonate with you?

CR: Yes, we talked a lot about making the wooded ravine more accessible but didn't want a pathway from the transit station through the ravine, mainly because of the drug issues. It made sense, though, to improve access further away from the station and with more modest access points. The devil is in the details but I really like the idea of boardwalks so you have way less land erosion and less impact on the natural habitat without people trampling on

it. So people can be right in there without wrecking it.

And in terms of response to the Moon Festival, the event has gotten so popular it can be scary full. So there needs to be more bridges so that there aren't bottlenecks and more ways to circulate around, which would make it more popular for everyone to use all the time. This is all reflected in the master plan.

AD: What role do you see for Still Moon in the plan's implementation?

CR: In so many ways. I see us using our youth groups to help create wetlands or with native plantings; they are proud to have helped – it makes them feel like they belong to the ravine. We could create celebrations about each new improvement to draw awareness to them as they happen. The new lookouts can be designed to reflect the community in which they are located rather than generic. Maybe we can have a walk with bits of stories about the creek in a very poetic way, with nodes where performances can occur.

AD: And looking ahead?

CR: I would love to brainstorm how we can take the linear park idea a little further to where Still Creek will be the amenity in the light industrial lands and how to make it feel like the creek is a whole walking and performance opportunity so people are seeing it as a contiguous watershed rather than having it happen piecemeal. And at the school next to the park, the daylighted creek could become an outdoor classroom so it needs to be seen as a learning advantage, not a disadvantage. It would be great to have it all become a continuous area so the Moon Festival could stretch out and follow the watershed. That would be so very exciting! **51**

From Greenways- Public Ways to the Resilient City



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“IT’S TIME TO STOP THINKING OF OUR CITIES AS ONE PLACE AND NATURE AS SOMEPLACE ELSE. OUR URBAN CENTRES AND EDGES HOST THE VIBRANT VARIETY OF OUR CULTURE. WE SHOULD NOT HAVE TO THINK OF THEM AS PLACES TO ESCAPE. BRING ON THE GREEN SPACES, WE SAY: THE POCKET GARDENS, THE COMMUNITY PARKS, THE RIVER CORRIDORS, AND THE TREE-LINED BOULEVARDS. FOR THOSE SERIOUS ABOUT SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT, THE CITIES ARE THE LOGICAL PLACE TO START.” – *Trust for Public Land*

How many of us can remember critical pivot points in our career? Times when a unique opportunity presents itself and you have to decide to take it on – or not? One of the major pivots of my career came with a call from former-Mayor, former-Premier Gordon Campbell’s office in 1990. Would I be interested in chairing a City of Vancouver Urban Landscape Task Force? The timing was auspicious as I was about to embark on my first sabbatical as an academic – I was heavily invested in improving the public realm in the city – or at least raising public awareness about its importance – and here was a Mayor who thought the urban landscape important enough to bring a public and political lens to the topic. At our first meeting, he asked for a “reading list” – and immediately devoured Michael Hough’s book: *City Form and Natural Process*.

That was an astonishing 27 years ago. Since the publication of the Task Force Report, *Greenways-Public Ways* in 1992, we’ve engaged *City Plan* (also 1992), the *Greenest City Action Plan* (Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future 2009-2010), the *Renewable City Strategy* (2015-2050) and now I think we are one of 100 “resilient cities” (2016).

For those not even born in 1992, here is a brief summary (edited down) of the Task Force’s work from a paper I wrote for *Landscape and Urban Planning* called “Green-

ways and public ways: realizing public ideas in a fragmented world” (*Landscape and Urban Planning* 33 (1995) 461-475).

“Vancouver’s Urban Landscape Task Force was initiated by Mayor Gordon Campbell and supported by Vancouver City Council. The mandate was to (1) improve the citizens’, politicians’ and bureaucrats’ understanding of the value of the urban landscape and (2) recommend to City Council how to manage, protect and enhance it. Written with a public audience in mind, Greenways-Public Ways include chapters on urban landscape connections, urban landscape values, essential actions, urban landscape themes, and gifts and tools. The report is intended to be a resource book for continuing discussions on the evolution of Vancouver’s urban landscape, with special emphasis on the public realm. Another important purpose is that of a catalyst for action: the report identifies Essential Actions for implementation by the City to promote responsible decisions in the public realm. Last, but not least, the report is intended to inspire community groups in the city to be stewards of the urban landscape.

*There were twelve Task Force members: seven citizens, one staff liaison person and four politicians from City Council, Park Board and School Board. The citizens included a lawyer, a nurse, an environmental biologist, a community activist, an environmental educator-planner, an architect-urban designer and a landscape architect (author and chair). The project’s budget was \$60 000. This included a modest public process involving a portable display (emphasizing the mapping of the public realm and ecological areas in the city), a two-day symposium called the *City in View*, three part-time staff people, and the production and printing of an interim ▶*

Ideas Paper and the resource book, Greenways-Public Ways. The chair and the Task Force members were all volunteers. Five major themes emerged: greenway connections; truly public places; democratic streets; ecological priority; and neighbourhoods that work. These themes focused on reconnecting citizens to their public realm and to nature. But a task force is expected to be a catalyst to action. The Essential Actions spanned all five themes. The first Essential Action, which Council approved, was to adopt eight urban landscape principles for decision-making. The second Essential Action is to establish the Vancouver Urban Greenway. The Vancouver Urban Greenway is an umbrella name to include a network of public spaces and connections that would organize and structure our city. Greenways and public ways are more than physical connections. They are the heart and minds of people, an urban attitude characterized by cohesion, pride, identity and community life.”

The big question remains: How do we make things happen in the public realm? I wrote about the four forces surrounding change and urban fragmentation: technology and the culture of compliance; connections between ecological literacy and sustainability; the uncertain ethics of public life; and the relationship between education and place. And they are still with us. That being said, we are making progress in a host of different ways. In 1995, I listed a number of barriers to implementing public ideas. They are listed below with an “observational update” on what has possibly changed from my own perspective:

- the culture of conformity and compliance [new generations and new media have had a generally positive effect on our public culture];
- the lost art of public conversation [social media is a new art of public conversation and now we have organizations like the Vancouver Public Space Network <http://vancouverpublicspace.ca>];
- political or bureaucratic fear of change and the unknown [not sure we have solved this one, but we do have hope in new Prime Ministers and new city planners];
- lack of a sustainable vision for the city [this has changed for sure with much more awareness about the connection between environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being];
- public service overload [we still don't invest in and honour the work

of our public servants to the extent we should];

- lost identity with public places [we are finally getting a public space in front of the Court House!];
- visual and ecological illiteracy [we've definitely made progress on these fronts but still have a ways to go];
- participation overkill [not sure about this one – new generations have appetite for engagement] ; *and*,
- a lack of “real” examples [lots more precedent from global cities on ideas and ways to proceed].

From the Urban Landscape Task Force experience, I suggested six strategies to better implement public ideas: (1) reviving citizenship; (2) building partnerships; (3) making big moves; (4) making small moves and trial offerings; (5) modelling after nature and beauty; and, (6) educating for community-based literacy.

While these may be interesting ideas to ponder, I am left wondering if isn't about leadership. What I call “designed leadership”. Here we are. A group of incredible landscape architects with heaps of education, energy and background in design. I have discovered in the many pivots of my career that there isn't a day or even an hour that goes by that I don't use my design mindset, skill set, and way of thinking. It is who we are. But I am not sure we adequately apply the breadth of our thinking outside of being built environment designers. Can we not use our leadership in more powerful ways – whether

as politicians (yes!) or as advocates for the public realm? I still can't believe that we don't have a public realm plan for the City of Vancouver. We do, thankfully, have “sub-plans” (e.g. public art, public realm plans embedded in neighbourhood plans (Mount Pleasant)) but no overall plan for the city (and the region) as yet.

So you might ask, well, what are you doing about this Moura? As many of you know, I have pivoted fairly recently to the Sauder School of Business and subsequently, to direct the Liu Institute for Global Issues where we have launched a Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs, and we are working on creating UBC's Policy School. My hope is that by introducing what I call “strategic design” to business and policy students, that they will help us change the world. See the d.studio activities at: <http://dstudio.ubc.ca>

A note on language. Sustainability. Environment. Renewable. Resilience. It seems that we need to be flexible about language, rolling with whatever term helps move along our big picture agenda – respecting our landscapes. I am okay with leaving behind “greenest city” – partly because it read as a bit narrow in definition – for the “resilient city”. It leaves me wondering what term might be next.

A final note on Greenways-Public Ways that conveys a huge thanks to friend and mentor, Doug Paterson, FCSLA, FCELA, LMBCSLA. At the time of writing the Task Force report, Doug and I shared an “off-campus” studio at 15th and Fir. This was operations central for the Task Force and, as a result, we benefited from Doug being around to add his creative ideas to the mix. When I flip through the report, the most exciting section is still Chapter V: Gifts and Tools. This is where you can see a ton of “Patersonisms” such as: civic and sacred places, linking Vancouver to the sea and sky, sensing Vancouver, celebrations, marking time, city nights and urban walks and races. Thanks, Doug. Most of these ideas are still out there, waiting to be implemented!

Writing this piece gave me the idea to post the Greenways-Public Ways pdf (scanned by Alan Duncan years ago – thanks, Alan) on my personal website: mouraquayle.com. Happy reading and happy design leading. [SL](#)



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