

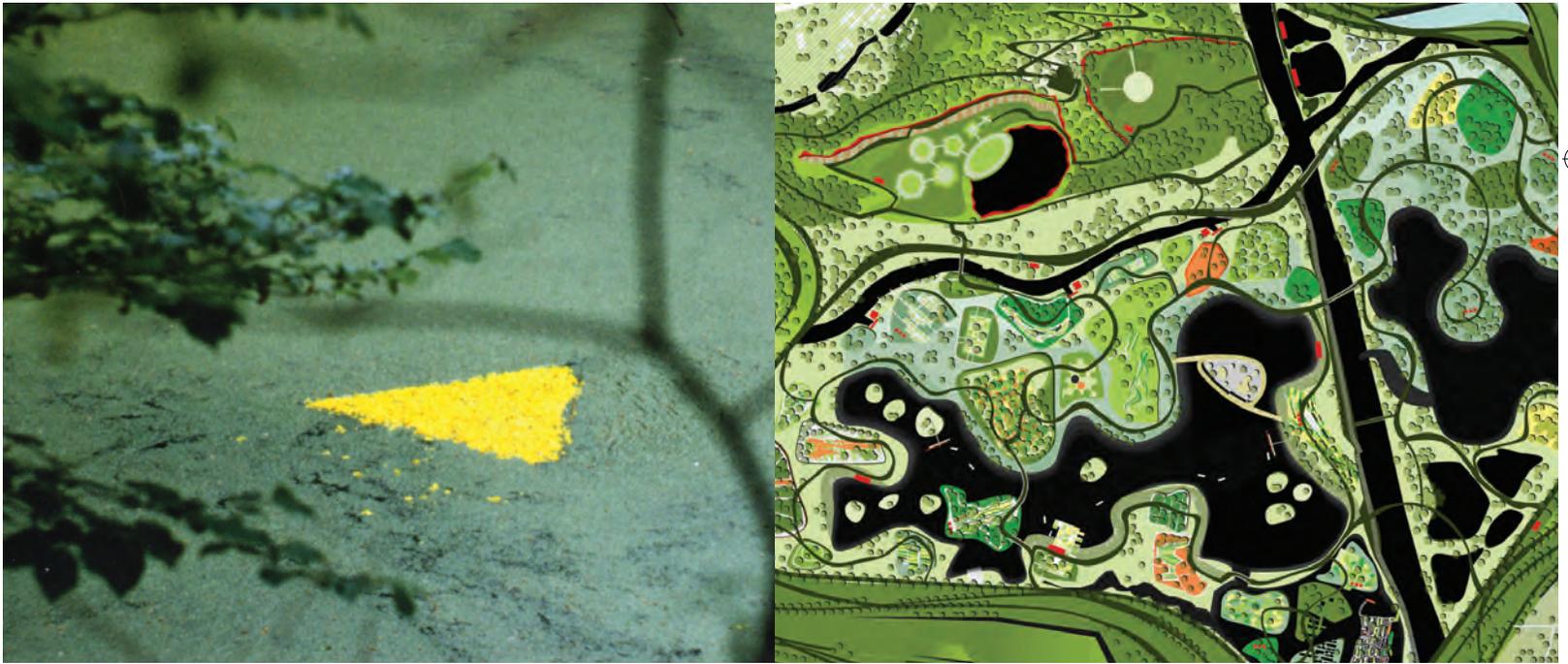
DEAD ON ARRIVAL

drawings,
objects,
inhabitation,
landscapes,
cities,
atmosphere.

GONE, NEVER TO RETURN + CHENSHAN BOTANIC GARDEN

Straub + Thurmayr

Dietmar Straub and Anna Thurmayr run a landscape architecture firm. Their designs explore the relationship between the city and the landscape, between architecture and open space, on a variety of scales, from regional planning and urban development through to individual properties. Their professional work primarily involves participating in competitions and developing landscape architecture designs for parks, squares, courtyards, cemeteries, city districts, residential zones, green spaces, public and private gardens, and urban development projects. They have received many prizes and awards. They have a particular passion for gardens.





Gone, Never to Return

Perhaps our first garden.

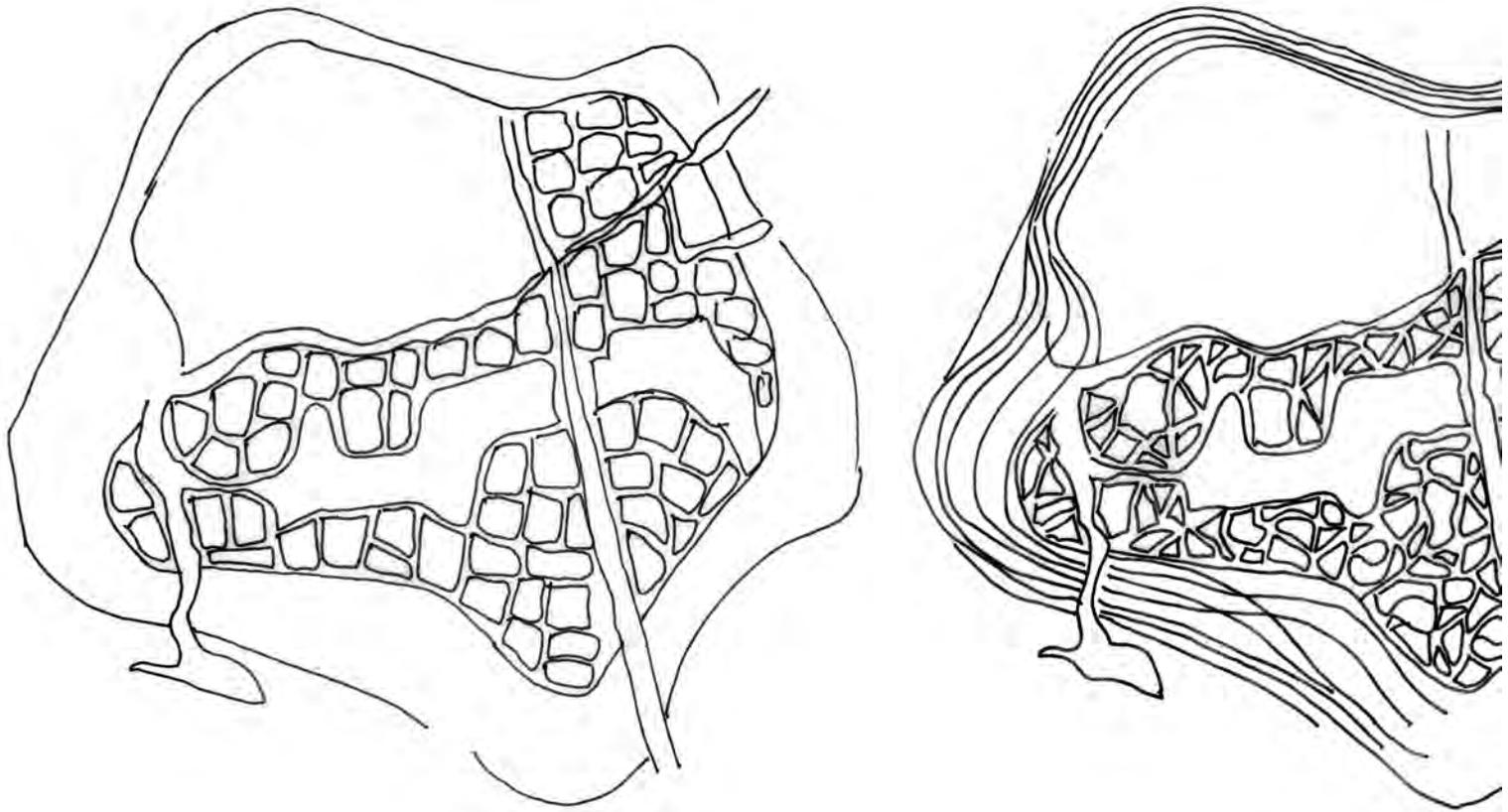
Here we see a garden in the process of being created, the garden as a single moment in time. Rather than being a place, this garden was purely a moment in which to reflect on the world with all our senses and feelings. We never drew this garden, we only photographed it. It simply came into existence and was visited for a brief moment.

We create new concepts through a type of poetic transport, transporting just a little of the meadow into the water on the hill. Three precise triangles of hazelwood planted and filled with sulphur-yellow rape blossoms are set out in the emerald green water. The objects become a focus of attention for passers-by, while children use them as target practice for well-aimed stones. A moment of diversion from everyday life; a slight flicker of interference in the landscape. Thundershowers in the middle of the night...



Sulphur yellow rape blossoms





Initial sketches

Chenshan Botanic Garden Shanghai

Drawing an Idea

These images show the main idea for the project that we sketched on a trace paper as a kind of schematic drawing. Instead of a flood of images containing promises that are hard to keep, we concentrate firmly on an original idea in the form of a drawing or graphic.

We think that the drawings we create should conjure up experiences and should leave out everything that is superfluous. The key is drawing the idea, drawing the future experience, and drawing it without dimensions, without compasses or a ruler.

Design – The Garden’s Soul

Landscapes are subject to constant transformation: just as you can incorporate a park into a city, you can also incorporate a garden into a landscape.

The large garden will occupy a farmland area and will prompt a multilayered transformation. The task facing the architects and landscape architects is to create the motifs for the cultivation of the site and translate them into a design.

The garden has a very specific contour within the landscape, the course of which can be followed on foot, by bicycle or by car. The spatial composition is both simple and clear. The transformation of the site is effected on the basis of three motifs, which form the body of the garden: the ring, the hill, and the water in the eye of the ring. These three spatial motifs constitute the garden’s soul.

A Culture of Difference

The aim is to discover and reinforce the innate power and presence of the existing ‘nature’ and landscape in order to develop opportunities to integrate with this landscape. The garden is carved from its environment: a ring consisting of



Masterplan competition phase 1

shaped ground, buildings, plants and access routes encircles the existing hill like a shell, clearly defining its position. The ring and the hill take on a lofty, sculptural presence in this otherwise flat landscape.

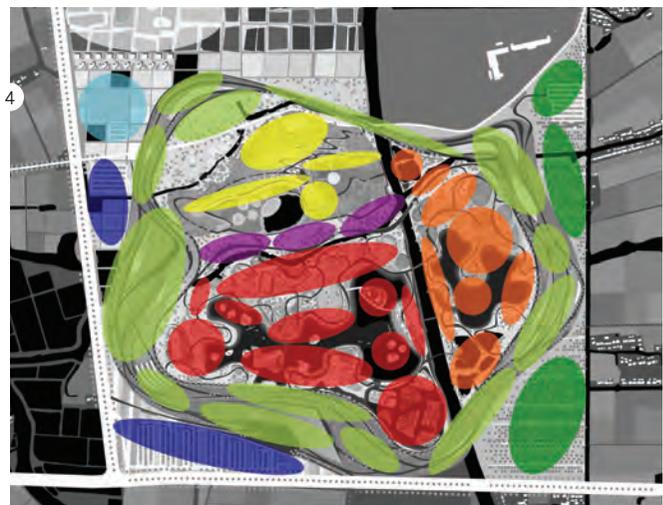
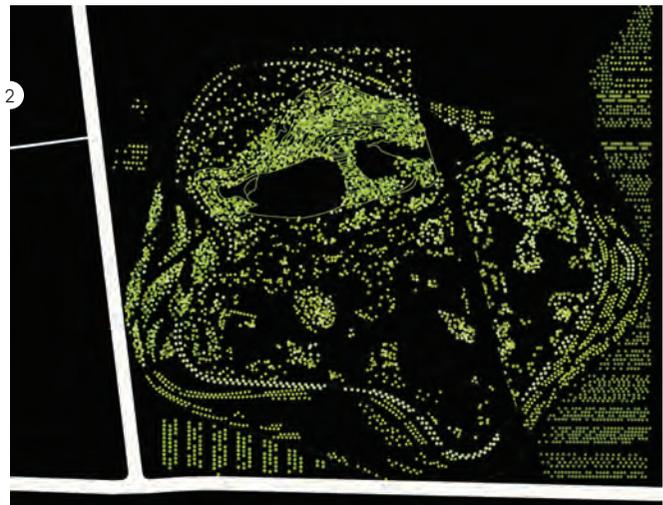
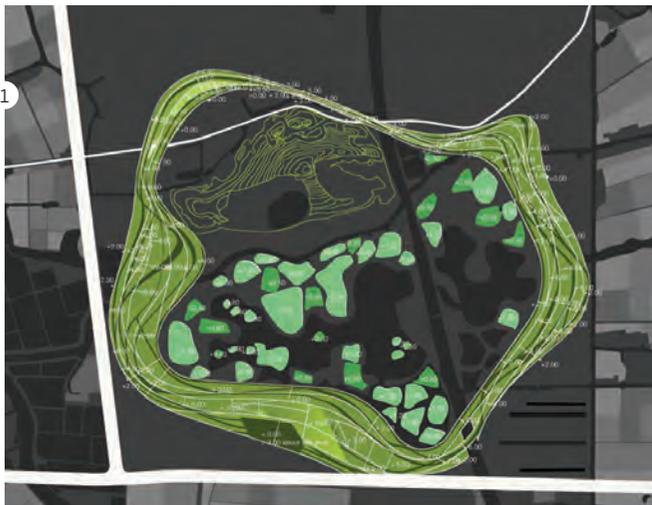
The Ring

Simply arranged over the existing space, this settlement also represents a protective measure for the future of the garden. The ring becomes a highly concentrated place, both in aesthetic terms as well as in ecological and functional terms. A large proportion of the proposed schedule of buildings and themed gardens will be concentrated and implemented in this space.

The aim of our concept is a voluminous loop, which will serve to occupy the horizon and catch the eye in this flat, man-made landscape. The ring offers visitors a goal and a sense of security, as well as a magnificent view into the

garden from a raised location. The fact that the trees catch the wind means that it will be possible to cultivate things inside that do not appear outside.

We shall be embarking on a game with diametrically opposed qualities, which can be described in a bold and simple style as the relationship between the wilderness and the garden. The sculptural form of the land also takes on ecological value, since the variations in elevation offer opportunities for plants that would not otherwise be found in this landscape. The movements of the slopes, the delicate shaping of the ground and the plants combine to make the ring into a spatially flexible event. Light, views, space, clearances, shadow, vegetation and architecture all combine into an eventful whole.



1. Mass Balance 2. Trees 3. Water System 4. Plant Concept,

The powerful lines composed of bodies of earth, trees and access routes not only create clear orientation within the garden, but also form dikes to protect against flooding.

Plant Concept for the Ring

In this concept, the trees, access routes and shaped ground combine harmoniously and complement each other. The trees are planted and the ground sculpted in relation and proportion to the access routes. This will provide a wide variation in how the spaces are configured along the length of the ring: small woods, avenue-like rows of trees, islands of trees set between curving paths, crooked treelines, shady groves and beautiful solitary trunks.

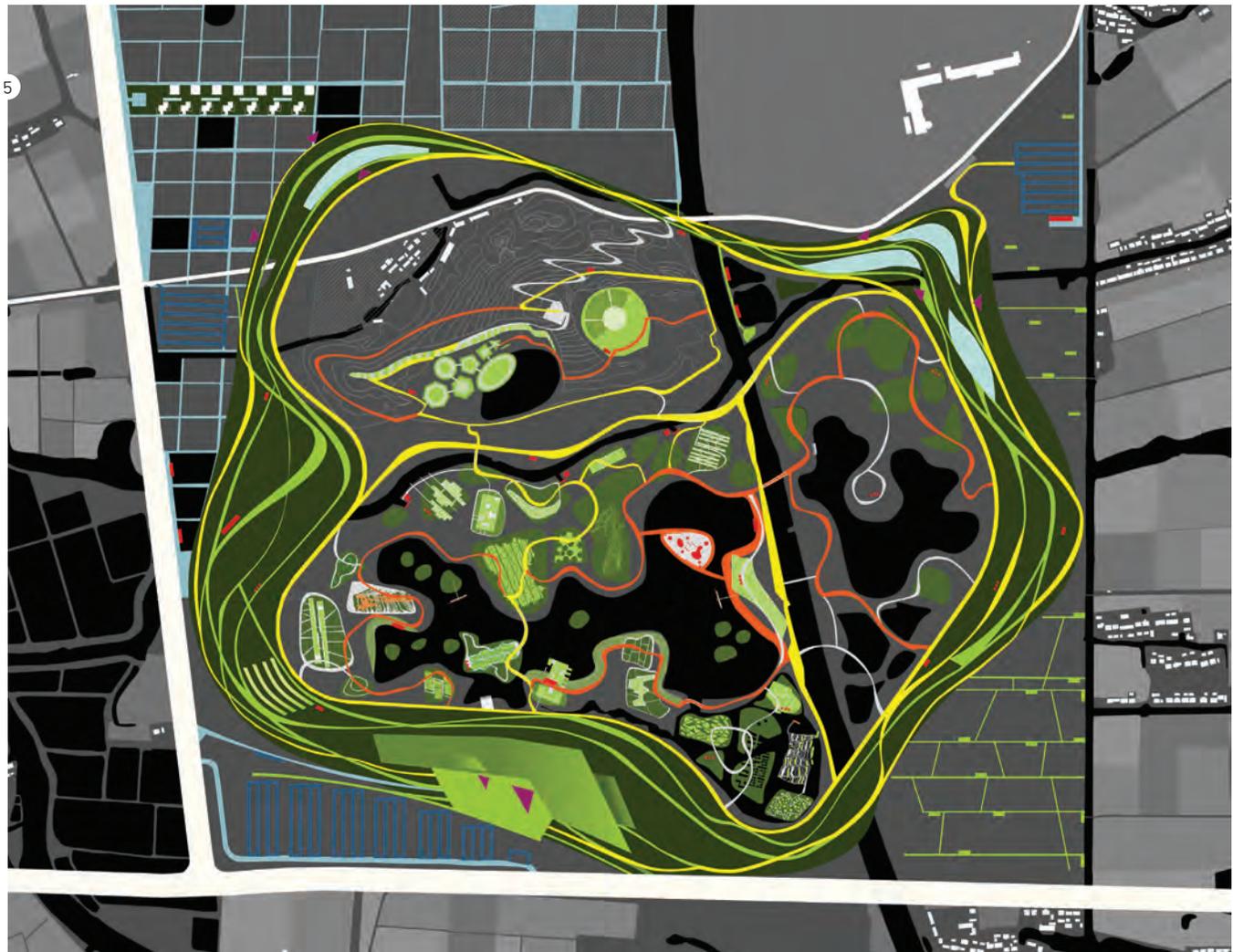
The growing conditions for trees on the overall site are relatively unfavourable due to high ground water levels, high soil salinity and strong winds. Favourable growing

conditions for the trees in the botanical collection can be provided on the folds in the ring's terrain.

These more favourable growing conditions for trees make the ring a good choice for the arboretum. Trees from all sources shall gather on the loop, with the whole effect being one of playful interaction with the light and the moving shadows. There will still be sufficient light beneath the trees to allow ground plants to blossom in the spring. Other spaces will be filled with grasses, ferns and herbaceous perennials.

Gardens, Gardens, Gardens

Themed gardens occupy the ring and articulate the scenic subject matter of the various events and attractions. The gardens are small refuges from the lines of movement. As horticultural archipelagos, they are not merely places, but also moments provided for us to reflect on the world. These



5. Infrastructure

gardens represent a further attraction for the visitors in addition to the buildings. The plants here are arranged on the basis of thematic groups.

Mental Topography

The emblematic form of the design was not the aim, but rather a desired side-effect for the mental topography of the location. The form is not subject to decorative principles, but is instead judged on the basis of its individual expression and its spatially functional qualities. The powerful dynamics of the spatial elements, for example, provide clear orientation in both a general and aesthetic sense and contribute to the functional economy of the garden. The 200 ha Chenshan Botanic Garden landscaping project shall be completed in time for the start of the Expo in the year 2010.

Chenshan Botanic Garden Shanghai
Project Team

Landscape Architects: Straub Thurmayr
Architects: Auer + Weber + Assoziierte
Landscape Architects: Valentien + Valentien
Project Coordinator: YiJu Ding
Competition Phase 1: August – October 2005
Competition Phase 2: December 2005

