

1 / PARC DEL CLOT

An emotive game of complex interactions between the near and the far and between the past and the present.

2 / PARC DE L'ESTACIÓ DEL NORD

Sculptural Blue and Pine Green in the Parc de l'Estació del Nord.

PROFESSOR WORK

We Did Not Bring the Trophy Home, but... Some Good Reasons for Traveling

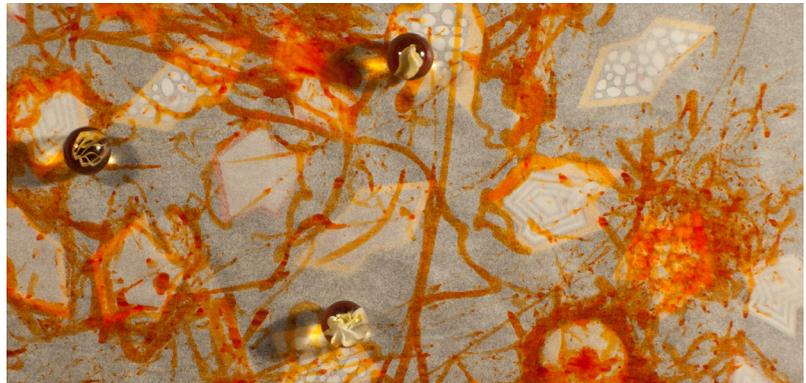
Dietmar Straub

Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture
Project site / Barcelona, Spain

"Dear Mr. Dietmar Straub and Ms. Anna Thurmayr, Congratulations we are glad to inform you that your project FOLLY FOREST _ A Dance Floor for 100 Trees - Manitoba, Winnipeg - has been selected and therefore is one of the 11 finalists running for the Prize. ... We received 452 projects, of which we selected 11 finalists. We will be honoured to have you present at the Biennial. Looking forward to meeting you in Barcelona".

One always hopes, but we were quite surprised when we got this invitation from the Catalan Capital in June 2014, to present our work to the Rosa Barba Landscape Prize 2014. The organizers believe it to be exemplary and fitting project under their best practices criteria. We used this invitation from the Biennale in Barcelona as an opportunity for a field trip. We offered students in our program a chance to join us, to attend the Biennale, and to explore the city. Rebekah Brubacher, Kevin Eidick, Sean Gallagher, Meaghan Pauls, Katherine Walker and Jonathan Watts chose to accompany us on our journey.

As students, Anna and I made a public open space pilgrimage to Barcelona 20 years ago. I was strongly attracted to all the new parks, gardens, and squares in Barcelona, which were an integral part of the overall strategy for the urban renewal of the existing city. Last year, together with our students, Anna and I went back to all these places and this urban voyage of discovery, and thus became an exercise in monitoring parks. What a great opportunity to focus on the historically and locally significant idealized view as a *strangers* in the city.



FOLLY FOREST _ A DANCE FLOOR FOR 100 TREES
Straub Thurmayr CSLA Landscape Architects
and Stadtplaner
Photo - Phoebe Chard





FIELD TRIPS AND POETIC SURVEYS > On a global level, we have become enthusiastic travellers in an ongoing journey to explore and discover new things. On a local level, our journeys of discovery begin right from our very own doorstep.

Talking about a subject can only take you so far, so I ensure that my students are on the move. Field trips and excursions outside of the classroom help us seek out powerful and vital examples of landscape architecture, both in our immediate environment and in other countries and cultures. The destinations of our journeys are places, which feature landscape designs from both the present and the past.

The key is getting to experience and understand projects up close. Spending time in a park or urban garden can help us to understand how these places provide freedom, by allowing us to slow down the pace of life in the middle of a big city. At the same time, we also learn a lot about aspects of design, such as landscape and ecology, water and light, stone and shadows, details and materials, stillness and hectic urban energy.

Leaving our normal environment behind helps us learn to fix images in our heads, interpret light and shadows and observe the world and everything in it. Sometimes we need to take a break from investigating

the soul of architectural design – discuss the soul of a good glass of wine among friends. It is important to maintain some distance from our work in order to ensure we do not lose ourselves in it.

A LANDSCAPE FOR YOU * > It was a huge honour to be finalists of the Rosa Barba International Landscape Prize, which has become the most renowned prize for landscape architecture in Europe, now opened to any project around the globe. The prize is named for Rosa Barba Casanovas (1948 - 2000), who was an architect, urbanist, planner, and founder of the Landscape Architecture degree program at *The Barcelona School of Architecture*.

Folly Forest, a humble project we designed and realized in Winnipeg, was the *built* reason for the invitation, standing side-by-side with such famous projects like the *High Line* in New York, US, designed by James Corner Field Operations, or *Quinli Stormwater Park* in Heilongjiang, Harbin, China, designed by Kongjian Yu Turenscape, or the Landscape restoration of the *Vall d'en Joan* landfill site, Garraf, Barcelona, España, designed by Enric Batlle and Joan Roig, just to name few.



“The announcing of this year’s event suggests interest in discovering new ways of action. While exploring inhospitable areas and guiding discussion towards rethinking old certainties and providing new sensitivities certitudes. A landscape for you wants to be present at the discussion of what should be the landscape design and planning nowadays, aiming to provide a plausible [and exciting] future” (competition announcement).

The 8th Biennale provided a compressed forum to review the state of *play* in landscape architecture, to exchange good practices and to assess the need for further development of practically applicable methods. Built examples, social and cultural projects, dialogues and publications were presented by outstanding personalities from professional practice.

Our presentation was called *Humble Project Thinking*, and we portrayed an unconventional approach that served as a theoretical background for other projects of this nature. We believe the real reason *Folly Forest* was amongst the finalists of this prestigious event was due to magic of the *real* ... and the decidedly humble.

A CITY FOR YOU > Barcelona used the wind of 1992. Within the framework of the urban renewal and on the occasion of the 1992 Summer Olympic Games, a public space program was initiated and established in Barcelona. Since then, Barcelona has become a place of pilgrimage for architects, landscape architects and city planners from all over the world. Today Barcelona is one of the most thriving and attractive cities – for reasons beyond its Mediterranean climate.

During the excursion to Barcelona, we discussed the Cerda City and the ramblas, the connections between Gaudi and Mies, the coastal city and the city hill, the role of climate, and the per-formative power of well-designed public open spaces. Our destinations included parks, urban gardens, streets, squares, exhibitions, memorials, galleries, tapas bars and remote urban places.

I believe that education, research and practice, as well as interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary discourse, are indispensable sources in my search for innovative ways to apply landscape architecture as a cultural, social and spatial transformer for everyday landscapes. This stringent critical approach through practice is a constant motivation for the generation of theories and different methods for possible approaches.

The respect for landscape architecture derives from strong designs and the integration of ecological, social, ethical, and economic issues. As a teacher and as a practicing landscape architect, I believe in the *Magic of the Real*, to use a term from Peter Zumthor, and I trust in humble project thinking.

APROPOS / THE TROPHY WENT TO ... > On the last day, late in the evening, Michael van Gessel - the Dutch landscape architect and chairman of the jury - built up an arc of suspense in front of a jam-packed auditorium. He obviously enjoyed the game with the bottled curiosity in the audience of students, landscape architects and academics from all over the world. The sharp brilliance of the pointed remarks showed a preference for a witty jest over long-winded descriptions. The critical positions of the six jury members produced an obvious tension which revealed the transparent and traceable decision-shaping process.

The jury decided that Auckland Waterfront: North Wharf Promenade and Silo Park, Auckland, New Zealand by Perry Lethlean_TCL Studios was to be awarded the best of the best.

* *A Landscape for You* was the motto of the 8 International Biennale of Landscape Architecture in Barcelona, Rosa Barba International Landscape Price 2014

> Photos 1-6 by Dietmar Straub



3 / *Barcelona Pavilion* - Don't miss Mies once you are in Barcelona!
4 / *Jardí Botànic de Barcelona* - The best gardens are those you never want to leave again
5 / *Coastal City* - But there is more than Mies!
6 / *Landscape Balcony* - Enjoying the beautiful scenery and the stunning view