

# PhD Design & Planning Seminar

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Faculty of Architecture

Seminar

Overview of Research Areas

S O C I A L

Ph.D. Program in Design and Planning  
Faculty of Architecture - University of  
Manitoba **IN PROGRESS**  
DURING THE PANDEMIC

Q u e s t i o n / C o m m e n t s

FEB, 26

10 am-noon  
2021





**Jeffrey Thorsteinson**

**Working Title: Calming Nerves, Curbing Distraction: Architecture and Urban Design as Affective Form in Canada, 1960-1910**

**Advisor: Dr. Lisa Landrum**

**Abstract:** Walter Gropius described the ambition of his 1927 "Totaltheater" to be the creation of a building "capable of transforming and refreshing the mind by its spatial impact alone ... [for] structure can transform the mind." That Bauhäusler such as Gropius were interested in the psychologically-affective nature of colour and form is somewhat well known. Nevertheless, precisely how Bauhäusler and other Modernist architects incorporated a psychologically-determinative view of environment into architecture is under explored, as are their sources.

Sylvia Lavin's *Form Follows Libido: Architecture & Richard Neutra in a Psychoanalytic Culture* (2004) is a key work in this respect, directing attention to modern architects conception of their practice as being "gardener[s] of nervous growth." Lavin herein explores Neutra's debt to Freud while positing the architect "as an important precursor of later environmental design." Nevertheless, it is the case that many architects, psychologists, and others in early to mid-20th century Europe and North America discussed the possible beneficial or pathological effects of man-made milieux. An important source for such thinking – in Neutra's Vienna and across the West – was 19th century North American neurologist George Beard, noted for the concept of "neurasthenia": exhaustion of the nerves through the effects of modern urban, capitalist civilization. The influence of Beard's notion of the cities of "our nervous age" as a cause "over-stimulation" is diffuse and manifest in practices which may seem formally quite dissimilar, from North American antimodernism and City Beautiful planning to the "regulated simplicity" of 1920s European Neue Sachlichkeit architecture.

My research centres on the trajectory of this specific understanding of affective form in European and North American discourses on the built environment and their ultimate intersection in Canadian design practices of 1910-1960. In so doing particular attention is given to architecture's relationship to advertising and its possible role in fostering self-directed attention and mental "equipoise."

**Bio:** A graduate of the University of Manitoba and Queens University, Jeffrey Thorsteinson works with Parks Canada as a historian. He is in the process of preparing for the Candidacy Exam. Jeffrey is the author of the book *Brutalist Architecture in Winnipeg* in 2013 and co-authored the book *Green Blankstein Russell and Associates: an Architectural Legacy* (2017, with Brennan Smith).

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**Honoure Black**

**Working Title: Sites of Insurgency: Public Art in Winnipeg, Manitoba**  
**Supervisor: Dr. Karen Wilson Baptist**

Public art can engage communities, memorialize the past and promote reconciliation for the future. Contemporarily with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Ninety-Four Calls to Action, the resurgence of Black Lives Matter and other BIPOC initiatives, public art can be used to unsettle, decolonize and create sites of collaboration and participation. As contemporary artists across Canada (re)claim their storied histories by (re)placemaking and (re)mapping<sup>1</sup> the urban environment, I believe public art can offer a radical way to counter settler colonialism.

By acknowledging my position as a White female settler scholar, I conduct my research with a feminist lens, through a decolonial intersectional framework.<sup>2</sup> Intersectionality acknowledges that: "All cultures have intersections or places where people cross paths...the places where people cross paths are often meeting places, spaces where different people engage with one another..."<sup>3</sup> Sites of public art can provide tangible intersections in geographical areas, where people from different cultures and communities can gather, learn and engage. In less tangible, more theoretical ways, intersectionality provides an analytical framework that is flexible, fluid and involves a constant shifting of perspectives. This is a complex approach, but necessary as I (re)think colonial hierarchies, power dynamics and settler constructs through visual expressions of public art. In this proposed investigation I am asking: is public art more powerful when it connects to the landscape and the history of place? What is the role of insurgent public art in Winnipeg? Can we learn visually through storytelling when we (re)tell marginalized histories through public art? Are insurgent spaces a way forward in reconciliation and the decolonization of public spaces?

My doctoral research will engage my transdisciplinary knowledge of landscape theory, art historical methods, Indigenous methodologies and place-based practices. Through a series of narrative, descriptive and analytical case studies I will use strategies such as critical theory, creative ethnography<sup>4</sup> and storywork<sup>5</sup> emphasize and engage with site-specific settings. This new system of inquiry works through a transformative lens where I will function in a space between the epistemology and ontology, of both Western and Indigenous worldviews, to see with two eyes.<sup>6</sup>

**Bio:** Honoure Black is a currently a PhD Candidate and Instructor for the Faculty of Architecture on a one-year term. In prior years she has been a sessional instructor split between the School of Art and the Faculty of Architecture, teaching courses both graduate and undergraduate on art, architecture and design history, theory (art history and landscape architecture) and research methods.



**Rolande Souliere, Mediating the Treaties, (2018) Photograph by D Works Media, City of Winnipeg Public Art Collection, courtesy of the Winnipeg Arts Council.**

<sup>1</sup> A term developed by Tonwanda Seneca scholar and geographer Mishauna Goeman, who developed the Native feminist notion of (re)mapping spaces on the land; the concept of (re)mapping unsettles and reorganizes bodies in both the social and political landscapes. By using the parentheses in "(re)mapping", Goeman textually illustrates the fact that (re)mapping for Indigenous peoples employs traditional and new tribal stories as acts of continuation. Mishauna Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Intersectionality is an analytical sensibility where meanings emerge through use. As a practice it possesses a knowledge base, creates on-going questions and engages interdisciplinary writers and academics. By incorporating a decolonial lens and feminist perspective that questions power hierarchies, intersectionality can confront settler colonialism and systemic racism through public art practice. As a discourse, intersectionality gathers together ideas from different places, times, and perspectives, giving space for people to share their points of view that have often been obscured. Cited and summarized from Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019)

<sup>3</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, paraphrased by Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*, 27

<sup>4</sup> Linda Groat and David Wang, *Architectural Research Methods*, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2013), 224

<sup>5</sup> Storywork is a methodology developed by Sto:lo First Nation scholar Jo-Ann Archibald that works in opposition to the Western exclusive and dominant "story", ideologies of imperialism/colonialism. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Research, Indigenous Storywork as Methodology*, (London: ZED Books, 2019), 5

<sup>6</sup> Two-Eyed Seeing by saying it refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing ... and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all Institute for Integral Science and Health "Two Eye Seeing", Cape Breton University, Accessed January 2021, <http://www.integrativescience.ca/Principles/TwoEyedSeeing/>



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# Seminar



UM

Faculty of Architecture



**Mojtaba (Moin) Hassanzadeh**

**Research Subject: Collage: A Tool to Intensify Creativity in the Landscape Design Process**

**Advisor: Dr. Marcella Eaton**

**Abstract:** Landscape practice and education utilize various means to investigate their methodologies, ideas, and intentions in their projects. Landscape representations convey a lot about our readings of environments. They signify our interests, and in return, the interests inspire our approaches in landscape design. Landscape representations being an abstract iteration of the *real* might also conceal, poorly address, or wrongly emphasize aspects and implications of our design decisions. My inquiry argues for the intensification of spatial thinking through the juxtaposition of image fragments in collage. Spatial perception happens in intervals of time and space, manifesting different guises and nuances, partaking in the human appreciation of landscape atmospheres. Collage can expose the perception process as part of the design process.

My research examines collage as a medium that could intensify the exchanges between the known and unknown design matter and spatial substances in the landscape design process. Moreover, it argues that an amplified exposure to design-subjects in their contexts could lead to intensified representations of design questions, generating creative questions, contributing to more innovative approaches, methods, and strategies. The multiplicity of ways people demonstrates their interest and engagement in space, and how landscape architects could exploit these spatial manifestations in their design process generate the main body of my research.

At the current stage, I am analyzing what creativity, creative acts, and creative media mean in the landscape architecture design process. The ongoing research frames four main streams from the literature review: (a) landscape architecture and meaning-making, (b) the psychology of creativity, (c) the philosophy of perception, and (d) collage in arts. In the latter, I also compare collage-methodology with the conventional media used in education and practice.

The most recent scholarly endeavors to share the research frameworks above are four essays for review and publication in peer-reviewed agencies in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Italy. These essays address 1) collage as *playful* engagement in the civic aspect of designing cities 2) the questions of today, which compares the characteristics of creative questions and *relevant* questions in landscape architecture 3) a comparative study of *spatial life experiences* in the acts of drawing and collage making in landscape architecture; and 4) collage-methodology in spatial design; an *implicit* medium to study spatial structures, which investigates how humans *implicitly* generate spatial structures in their encounter with public spaces.

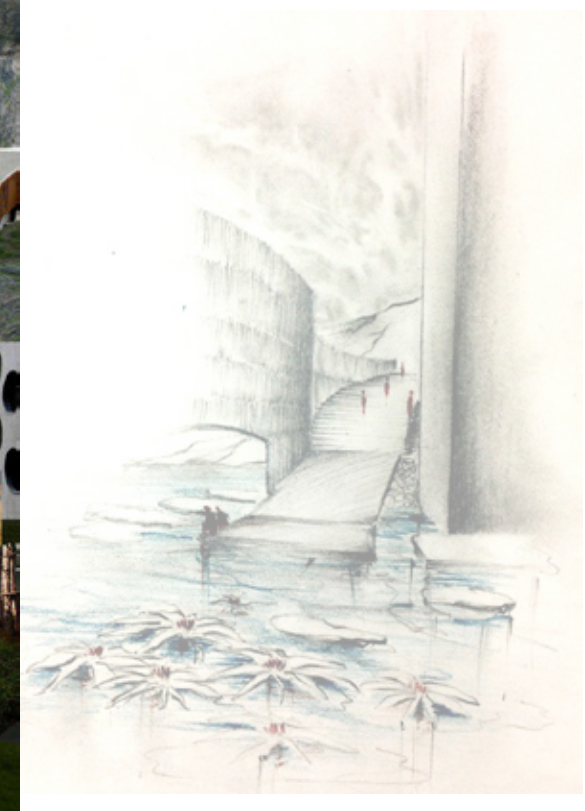
**Keywords:** Collage, landscape representation, creativity, medium, perception

**Bio:** My name is Moin. I was born in Tehran, Iran, but I grew up in Leuven, Belgium. I have a bachelor's degree in architectural engineering and a master's degree in landscape architecture. I am passionate about landscape representation through hand drawings, and I have explored collage, now the subject of my Ph.D., as a method to trigger hidden talents of the students I tutored in the past. I am currently in my third year of Ph.D. as a Candidate, and I am working on my thesis proposal.



Collage of Landscape scene, from personal archive, Contributed by Ali Zare, Landscape Architect in Tehran

Interpretation of collage-Landscape scene, from personal archive, Contributed by Ali Zare, Landscape Architect in Tehran

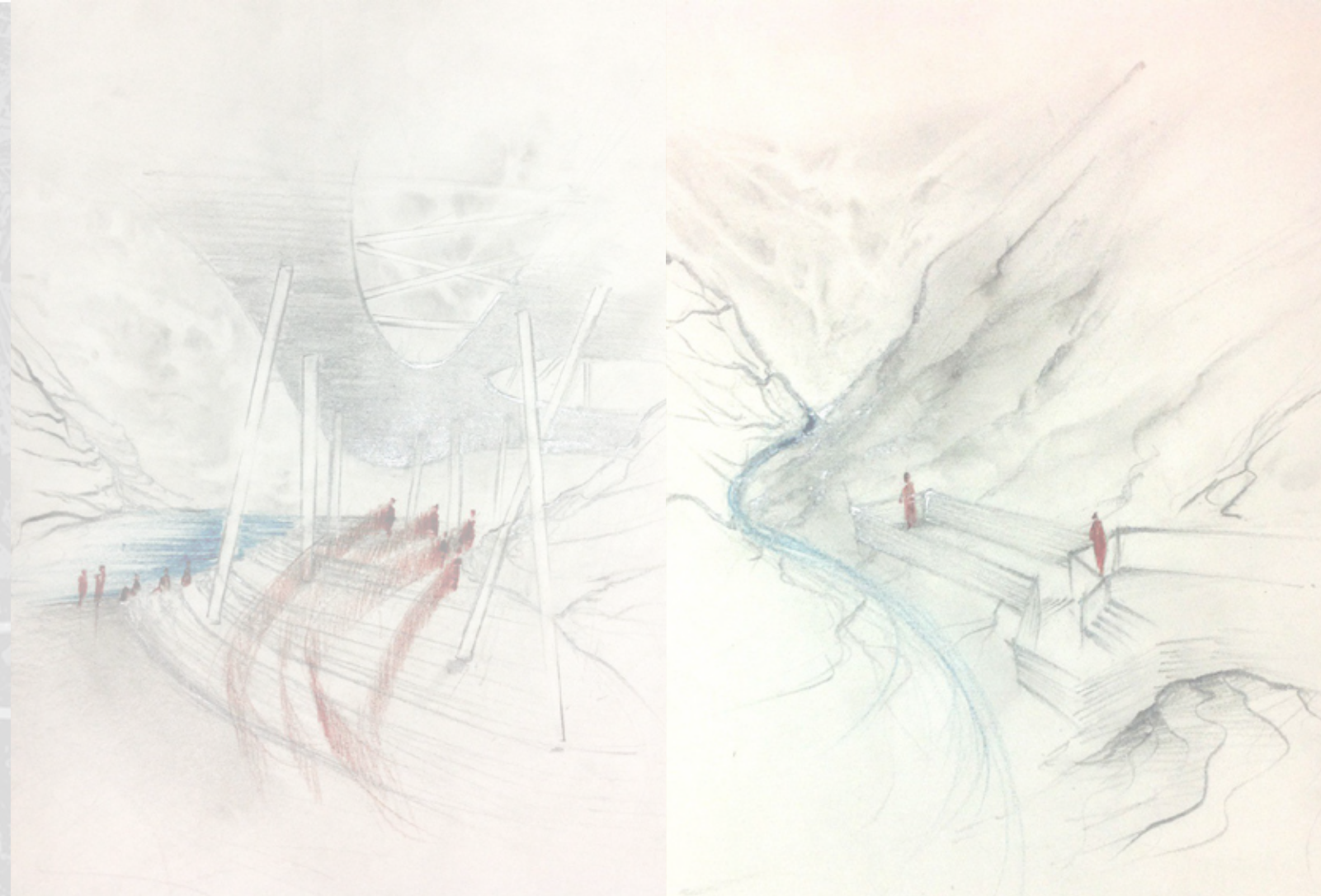


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**A l t e r n a t i v e T r a n s l a t i o n s**  
of the same collage

**PhD Design & Planning  
Seminar**



Justin Loma

## Examining how indigenous people define indigenous spaces: A comparative study of communities in Canada and South Sudan

Advisor: Dr. Sarah Cooper

**Abstract:** Many Indigenous peoples worldwide continue to occupy spaces that their ancestors have lived in and adapted for centuries. The creation of such spaces is informed by the people's cultures, beliefs, knowledge, and aspirations. Colonization served to void Indigenous spaces of their identity. However, these communities continue to resist, reclaim, and produce spaces that reflect their present reality about colonialism's legacy while connecting the past and future Indigenous communities. Today, Indigenous peoples, including those in Canada and East Africa, continue to experience challenges defining their spaces within a colonial structure. Consequently, such spaces of cultural importance, renewal, and relationship building are preferential in societies, including the European notion of urban spaces. As urban spaces continue to evolve, there is a need for the Indigenous peoples to have a renewed advocacy to lead the production of their spaces in those locations.

My proposed research examines and compares how Indigenous peoples in a settler nation (Canada) and a former multi-nation colony (South Sudan) define Indigenous spaces. My objectives are to determine what Indigenous peoples consider as Indigenous spaces, highlight the meanings that Indigenous peoples ascribe to Indigenous spaces, explore how Indigenous people participate in creating Indigenous spaces and describe the barriers Indigenous peoples face maintaining Indigenous spaces.

I plan to use semi-structured interviews and Indigenous sharing circles to collect data from 30 participants in Winnipeg, Canada, and Yei, South Sudan. My approach to the research, including interactions with the study community, and the data collection process, is informed by community-based research and Indigenous research principles. I will apply Roberts's Liminal Spaces theory's underpinnings to help me recognize the evolution of the aforementioned Indigenous spaces and the potential dilemma confronting Indigenous peoples in constructing such spaces. Also, I attempt to address how Indigenous liminality can inform the theory and practice of architecture and planning in upholding Indigenous rights to the city.

I plan to use the qualitative research software NVIVO to transcribe and code the interviews. I will narrow the codes into themes and organize them according to how they respond to the research objectives. I plan to work with the Indigenous communities to decide the best way to share the research results. The research can potentially provide insight into how non-Indigenous and Indigenous planners and architects may approach working with Indigenous communities to support the design of aesthetically pleasing, functional, safe, and culturally reflective spaces.

**Keywords:** Indigenous space, space production, liminal space, sharing circle, community planning

**Bio:** I am Justin Loma. I was born and raised in Yei, South Sudan. Before admission to this current Ph.D. Program in Design and Planning, I completed my Bachelor's degree in Human Ecology/Architecture at College of The Atlantic in Bar Harbour, Maine, and my Master's in Urban and Regional Planning at California State Polytechnic University Pomona, California, United States of America. Currently, I am a second-year Ph.D. Student at the Department of City Planning, and I am preparing for my Candidacy Exam.



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