

I would like architects to consider that there is a stratum of architectural precedent, especially relevant for our time, whereby buildings enter into an equal dialogue with the landscape. Examples might be Machu Picchu, La Mesquita in Cordoba (The Court of the Oranges), Jefferson at UVA, Wright at Taliesin West, Scarpa at Brion Cemetery, Kahn at Salk Institute, much of the work of Richard Neutra, perhaps the San Francisco Art Institute by Paffard Keatinge-Clay. There are many others, but the architectural press has rarely reported on the entire story. I would refer architects to the full text of Kenneth Frampton's keynote address to the UIA in 1999 in Beijing entitled "Seven Points for the Millennium: An Untimely Manifesto." It is especially powerful coming from one who has a connoisseur's lifelong appreciation for the sculptural object:

*“ . . . the design of landscape is of greater critical consequence than architecture on its own . . . . I am convinced that architectural and planning schools . . . should give much greater emphasis to the cultivation of landscape as an overarching system rather than concentrating exclusively, as they have tended to do up to now, on the design of buildings as aesthetic objects.”*

Landscape architecture at its best is concerned with the artistic expression of the relationship between people and nature and, by extension, between technology and nature. If one considers that the numbers of people and the extent of technology are unprecedented in human history, then the artistic potential should be limitless, and this should be a very exciting time. The large extent to which buildings have become open and transparent, while the landscape has become more constructed, has led to a much larger area of overlap between architects and landscape architects, and a situation in which the intertwining of nature and technology will lead to new forms and solutions. On the other hand, landscape architects can read landscapes the way architects read cities and buildings, and clearly there is cause for alarm in regard to the health of natural systems, in terms of climate change, invasive species, and so on. As one who studies natural systems, it is hard not to feel like an engineer walking into a masonry building with diagonal cracks that have been painted over. The revolution that has occurred in architecture in regard to mechanical engineering is awaiting its corollary in landscape architecture, that is, a revolution in civil engineering.

--Gary Strang