LANDCANDY
THE ANTIDOTE FOR A PROFESSION THAT HAS LOST ITS WIT

Permanence. Nature. Technology. Engineering. The perceived objectivity of these four domains can lead many landscape architects to overlook a fifth domain: that of Delight. How can one integrate a well-formulated aesthetic agenda as a landscape architect and creative professional to produce a greater cultural resonance with these seemingly neutral domains?

The profession has become charged with saving the world while simultaneously being invisible. The medium of the natural elements through which we work (landform, vegetation, water) masks the element of design to much of the general public. Are we taking ourselves too seriously while rejecting discourses common to art, architecture, and graphic design? This session will examine the synthesis of legible cultural form with measurable performance in landscape design.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the genealogy of Land Candy within Landscape Architecture at the intersection of art, architecture and landscape design.

2. Learn how to create stronger cultural, social, and political resonance in your projects.

3. Examine how the practice of Landscape Architecture should synthesize ecological performance with design expression.
Enter “LAND CANDY” …. This is a twist on the term “eye candy” used by graphic designers to describe great work; young landscape architects use the term to describe seductive illustrations. Landscape design can be as immediate and edgy as graphic design. Consider it a new layer that sits on top of Landscape Infrastructure. LAND CANDY implies “eye candy” for our profession – in the realms of ideas, graphics, and built work. Land Candy challenges the status quo, makes people a little uncomfortable, and makes us think differently about what we do. The discomfort created by splicing “land” and “candy” into a singular concept is due to the destabilizing effect of the “shallow” on the “deep”, the superfluous and the fleeting on the permanent and the unwavering. The truth is, when time scales are collapsed, the sensuous immediacy of “bad” candy is potentially more transformative for one’s engagement with the world than the earnest presence of “good” land.

SESSION OUTLINE:


I. Landscape Architecture’s place in the Design Hierarchy;
   II. Doomsday cult as context for design practice;
   III. Pleasure in the Apocalypse.


I. Diagram 1: Evolution of a Triad/Foundational Principles:
   a. Three Relationships;
   b. Evolution & Application.
II. Diagram 2: Scales:
   a. Scales: Local/Regional/Global;
   b. Nesting.
III. Diagram 3: Relational Structure:
   a. Theoretical Base;
   b. Foundational Structures;
   c. Surface Manifestations.
IV. Genealogy of Land Candy:
   a. Historical Analogues;
   b. Contemporary Analogues.


I. General Attributes:
   a. Temporal: exists between project conception and project maturity;
   b. Alternate metrics;
   c. Political;
   d. Pathological;
   e. Participatory;
   f. Experiential;
   g. Interdisciplinary/Transversality.
II. Case Studies: Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

Part 4: What? Art Attributes of Land Candy

I. General Attributes:
   a. Temporal: exists between project conception and project maturity;
   b. Alternate metrics;
   c. Political;
   d. Pathological;
   e. Participatory;
   f. Experiential;
   g. Interdisciplinary/Transversality.
II. Case Studies: Art, and Art in Medicine.
PRESENTERS:

Kinder Baumgardner, ASLA
SWA Group
Houston, TX

Kinder Baumgardner is the managing partner (and arbiter of style) for SWA’s Houston office. Kinder is a member of the Board of Directors for the Landscape Architecture Foundation, and has been a speaker at the ASLA 2012 Conference, international ULI functions, universities in the US and internationally, and at professional conventions in Texas and Canada. His recent work explores the margins between performance landscapes and interventions that highlight the beauty in dystopian precincts of the world. He has over 20 years of professional experience and has won numerous ASLA, ULI, and CSLA awards.

Natalia Beard, Affil. ASLA
SWA Group
Houston, TX

Natalia Beard received a Master’s Degree in Architecture from Rice University. Her research and design work was featured in Praxis 10: Urban Matters, displayed at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and the “Counter-Measures” symposium at the University of Texas School of architecture in Austin, TX. Through her background in architecture, painting, and graphic design, Natalia interrogates the methods of graphic communication and production in the field of landscape architecture, particularly their implications for various cultural contexts. Through her work in SWA’s Houston office she is involved with projects in Texas, China and the Middle East.

Ian Cion
Arts in Medicine Program
The Children’s Cancer Hospital
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Mr. Cion is an artist and design consultant whose work focuses on large-scale public art collaborations that engage communities in participatory design experiences. Ian is the founder and Director of the Arts In Medicine Program at the Children’s Cancer Hospital at MD Anderson Cancer Center. His work at MD Anderson focuses on using art to help patients cope with the experience of cancer treatment, with a special interest in using art as a tool for reducing pain and fear. His work with cancer patients put him within the margins between extreme technology and fine art. Mr. Cion has exhibited internationally for the last 15 years and has collaborated on landscape design projects.

Michael Robinson
SWA Group
Houston, TX

Michael Robinson pursues design and research at the intersection of landscape, infrastructure, and urbanism. Michael’s teaching in the Rice School of Architecture has focused on contemporary design techniques and large-scale infrastructural systems within ecological and urban frameworks. This yielded “Atlas of Sustainable Strategies for Galveston Island”, a compendium of graduate-level research and design, and has had work featured in Praxis and AD: Architectural Design. His seminar at Rice examines emerging large-scale design discourses and their relationship to the stable core(s) of the design disciplines. With SWA’s Houston office Michael has been involved with the design of many large-scale urban waterway projects, including the 160-acre Buffalo Bayou Park in Houston, Texas.