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<td>Wageningen : European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools</td>
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Landscapes transitional, modern, modernistic, modernist

Marc Treib

University of California, Berkeley, USA

Published online: 24 May 2013.

To cite this article: Marc Treib (2013) Landscapes transitional, modern, modernistic, modernist, Journal of Landscape Architecture, 8:1, 6-15, DOI: 10.1080/18626033.2013.798917

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/18626033.2013.798917
The term ‘modern landscape architecture’ normally qualifies those twentieth-century designs that looked ahead, rather than to the past. To be more precise, however, we might add to the broad category of ‘modern’ the sub-categories of ‘transitional’, ‘modernistic’ and ‘modernist’. Seen in this light, modern refers to twentieth-century landscapes that derived from the materials, technology and social needs of the times, but with no restriction on vocabulary. Modernistic landscapes borrowed in a similar way, but more superficially, retaining the spatial structure of historic landscapes—as did transitional works, including those rooted in naturalism. Modernist, then, specifically applies only to those landscapes that deliberately proposed and tested new spatial and formal ideas, often adapting graphic idioms drawn from the modern plastic arts.

In 1938 the Canadian landscape architect Christopher Tunnard called for a modern garden in accord with contemporary life, arguing that the modern condition demanded a new aesthetic expression. [1] Much of Tunnard’s argument was predicated on ideas then circulating in the world of English architecture; much less so in the making of landscapes. Architecture, unlike landscape design, was profiting from—and deriving a new aesthetic from—the flood of new materials and technologies coming into common use: structural systems of steel and concrete, window glass now available in large panes and the elevator that made tall buildings practical. [2] Landscape architecture could not rely on new materials to an equal degree. Then, what factors might drive similar innovations in landscape architecture expressive of the modern condition? How does one convey ideas of modernity using living materials that are inherently ‘conservative’—plants and trees that have existed for centuries and will continue to exist in those forms far into the future? What, in fact, might constitute a contemporary landscape in accord with, and expressive of, modern life? While many practitioners, including some of the best-known, believed they were engaged in the production of modern landscapes, today we may question the radicalism of their designs as inventions in space and form, if not in programme and social efficacy. We may even question the basis of their ideas or the retention of vegetation as their primary material. Our first task, then, is to try to define modern landscape architecture, of which the modern garden was a part.

In 1938 the Canadian landscape architect Christopher Tunnard called for a modern garden in accord with contemporary life, arguing that the modern condition demanded a new aesthetic expression. [1] Much of Tunnard’s argument was predicated on ideas then circulating in the world of English architecture; much less so in the making of landscapes. Architecture, unlike landscape design, was profiting from—and deriving a new aesthetic from—the flood of new materials and technologies coming into common use: structural systems of steel and concrete, window glass now available in large panes and the elevator that made tall buildings practical. [2] Landscape architecture could not rely on new materials to an equal degree. Then, what factors might drive similar innovations in landscape architecture expressive of the modern condition? How does one convey ideas of modernity using living materials that are inherently ‘conservative’—plants and trees that have existed for centuries and will continue to exist in those forms far into the future? What, in fact, might constitute a contemporary landscape in accord with, and expressive of, modern life? While many practitioners, including some of the best-known, believed they were engaged in the production of modern landscapes, today we may question the radicalism of their designs as inventions in space and form, if not in programme and social efficacy. We may even question the basis of their ideas or the retention of vegetation as their primary material. Our first task, then, is to try to define modern landscape architecture, of which the modern garden was a part.

One definition of modern applies to the ideas, values and objects created during the period in which we live. That notion of modern is notoriously shifty, however, since the times are always changing; what is modern today will not be modern tomorrow. In 1866 Paul Letarouilly titled his book Les Édifices de Rome Moderne, although the buildings he presented dated from much earlier years. [3] Today the book is a document of centuries even further in the past—and hardly modern. Some two centuries after Letarouilly, the American architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock called his pioneering study Modern Architecture, that is, concerning a particular architecture from the twentieth century. [4] He championed what has come to be called the International Style, in opposition to what he considered a retrograde classicism. So, defining modern as being ‘of our time’ is obviously insufficient—the idea of modern is itself too dynamic. Is modern, then a style? Must the garden or building in some way look innovative, perhaps by borrowing forms, materials or spatial ideas from the period’s sister arts? That is probably closer to how we normally regard the idea of a modern landscape—but I would suggest that the term remains too inclusive and unspecific.
The literary theorist Marshall Berman advanced a triad of terms that might provide a useful framework for studying the landscapes of the twentieth century. These are modernization, modernity and modernism. Modernization traces the shift from agriculture to industry, the country to the city, lower to higher population densities. Modernity, in Berman’s view, is the consequent state achieved by modernization; we dwell in a state of modernity. Modernism, by extension, qualifies those arts that consciously attempt to enfold or express that state of modernity. That is to say, modernist works are those which use the attitudes, materials and technologies offered by contemporary conditions as the basis of the formal creation. We can debate whether this definition can ever hold true in landscape architecture, where we rely to such a large degree on living materials whose physical properties elude their times. Regardless of the resultant form, the forces behind landscape design—current technology and horticulture, social values, policies and programmes, and individual behaviour and response—still condition the making of our landscapes.

Do not revivalist landscapes such as the great estates of Edwardian England or the restored landscapes of André Le Nôtre in late nineteenth-century France express their social conditions? Of course they do, and the economics behind them as well. And the new technologies used to realize them. But should we regard these gardens as modern? [6] I think not. But what of the splendid gardens of Gertrude Jekyll from this same period [Fig. 1]? In terms of her planning and the resulting spaces? Rarely, if ever. Jekyll’s gardens too closely followed more traditional arts-and-crafts models characteristic of turn-of-the-century England. However, in terms of applying advanced ideas about colour theory derived from the work of the French industrial chemist Michel Eugène Chevreul, Jekyll’s gardens were quite modern, as were her horticultural methods as science. [7] Thus we need to consider the relation of horticultural practices to design ideas, as each can symbiotically feed the other, or hamper its development. Were we to include Jekyll’s gardens under the rubric of modern, we would require a definition of modern that embraces all these various categories of landscape design—or a division between form and making. In Jekyll’s case, the horticultural technique was modern but not the form of the landscape that resulted.

To the term modern, then, we might propose the further division into modernist—and even a third and fourth group, transitional and modernistic. Modern then refers to twentieth-century landscapes that relied on the materials, technology and social needs of its times. According to one ideal, its forms would reflect these parameters. Transitional landscapes advanced new ideas in certain areas but remained rooted in the past. Modernistic landscapes retained existing spatial structures while borrowing from the modern plastic arts, but somewhat superficially. Modernist becomes a sub-category of the modern, landscape designs that deliberately tested new spatial and formal ideas, at times adapting the graphic vocabulary of modern plastic arts such as painting and sculpture—that is to say, aesthetic aspects of the zeitgeist. To be modern or modernist, one need look forward rather than backward, expressing the condition of modernity rather than the conditions—and forms—of prior eras. Admittedly, there can never be a complete dismissal of what has preceded us: despite new developments in formal language, for example, we continue to create traditional landscape types such as the park and garden. Nevertheless, we can distinguish between a modern twentieth-century garden and a modernist one.

In Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review, first published in 1993, I suggested seven characteristics or axioms of modern landscape architecture. These were: a denial of historical styles, the destruction of the axis, a stress on space rather than pattern, a concern for people and use, plants used for their sculptural form, the integration of building and garden and borrowing forms and shapes from modern art. [8] Viewed some twenty years later this list, for the most part, appears to remain valid, although it probably applies more aptly to the United States—particularly California—than to Europe or Asia.
Figure 3 Pietro Porcinai, I Collazzi, Florence, Italy.

Figure 4 Gabriel Guevrekian, Noailles garden, Hyères, France, 1927.

Figure 5 Pierre-Émile Legrain, Tachard garden, La Celle-Saint-Cloud, France, c. 1924. Plan.

Figure 6 Pierre-Émile Legrain, Tachard garden. The stone platform.

For one, designers creating landscapes on historical sites—in Europe or Japan, for example—experienced far different pressures than American landscape architects transforming rural or pastoral land. Thus, a categori
cal dismissal of historical styles and/or the axis was often inappropriate, if not impossible, for some landscape architects in the twentieth century. So, I would probably have to temper that original list to be less restrictive and more inclusive, looking more carefully at landscapes internationally. In the end, as in architecture, there have not been one, but many modern landscape architectures—varying with the nation, the region and even at the scale of the local. And admittedly, there have even been many modernist landscape architectures as well.

Where, for example, should we position the Woodland Cemetery outside Stockholm, designed by the architects Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz from 1915–1940, or any of a number of gardens by the Italian landscape architect Pietro Porcinai? All the elements of the cemetery—the meadow, the grove, the earthen knoll—have existed for millennia (Fig. 2). Yet in their combination, within the spatial structure in which they melded, a modern landscape was formed. Was it modernist as well? Perhaps. But it was certainly modern.

Porcinai’s classic 1938 garden for I Collazzi in Florence accepted the dicta of a landscape and villa dating to the sixteenth century, modulating what existed while uncompromisingly inserting a swimming pool smack in the middle of the prato (Fig. 3). [8] Classical on first read, the garden was modern in its willingness to twist tradition and the expectations of visitors with an attitude that departed from the bonds of historical practices. Were these two landscapes as radical in their modernity as the more obviously artistic gardens in California from about the same time? Probably not. And yet they were modern in a way in which Jekyll’s gardens were not. Sadly, there is no clear and fast dividing line between the modern and the modernist. Instead, there exists a foggy zone in which parameters such as programme, type, terrain, vegetation—as well as forms, shapes and spaces—vary in the power of the role they played in directing the design.

Rather than revisiting the axioms for a modern landscape architecture proposed two decades ago, let us look at one track in the evolution of modern landscape architectures and identify several versions. Although certainly not exhaustive, these will include the modernistic garden-as-tableau, naturalist modernism—which was, and remains, a dominant strain in Swedish landscape design, and to a lesser extent in Great Britain—and the social and functional landscapes of high modernism.
Modernistic
In the years following the end of the First World War, living conditions had changed rapidly and radically throughout Europe and America. In the United States it was a time of growth and celebration—the so-called Roaring Twenties. In many European countries—war-ravaged Germany for example—massive inflation and high unemployment stilled any real recovery and ultimately led to totalitarianism. In France, artists and politicians called for a ‘return to order’ that signaled a return to classical ideas, harmony and repose. Yet despite this nostalgia for centuries past, a number of landscape designers made explorations into new forms of landscape, especially gardens.

During the 1920s French landscape designers introduced shapes with jagged edges and stark geometries inspired by cubism: Gabriel Guevrekian’s Garden of Water and Light at the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Moderne in Paris, or his 1928 Noailles garden in Hyères are among the best-known illustrations of the type (Fig. 4). Like Paul Vera’s 1930 courtyards for Jacques Rouché, these gardens appropriated a vocabulary drawn, however superficially, from contemporary art movements like cubism. At first they appear new—and modern. A more careful regard, however, uncovers their reliance on historical elements such as the parterre, symmetry and their composition as a visual subject—what Dorothée Imbert has termed the jardin tableau. [10] The formal vocabulary of these works is contemporary; their spatial structure is not. These are modernistic and represent a kind of jazz-age classicism.

The radical departure from tradition came in 1923, with Pierre-Émile Legrain’s renovation of the Tachard garden in La Celle-Saint-Cloud. [11] The Tachard plan composed a configuration of elements arranged in space—almost in the manner of the cubist collage, with a structure unhampered by classical devices such as the axis or the grid (Fig. 5). Of particular note were the stone platform and the placement of the tree trunk within it—a suspected influence from the sculptor Constantin Brancusi (Fig. 6). [12] The American landscape architect Fletcher Steele qualified the composition as displaying an ‘occult unsymmetrical balance’—that is, a composition dynamic yet in equilibrium. [13] Here were planted the seeds for a modernist landscape.

Transitional modern
In the course of his life as a landscape architect Christopher Tunnard actually designed very few projects, certainly less than twenty. Of these, the best known is the 1938 garden for St. Ann’s Hill in Surrey. The new house by Raymond McGrath was built on the site of an eighteenth-century estate and incorporated the remains of the prior landscape into the new design. Tunnard reframed the reading of the historical landscape using a curving swimming pool and flower pond as a counterpoint to the round and radiating forms of the house and its attached courts (Fig. 7). The modernity of the architecture shone in the stark white walls of the house and the geometry of its plan. Walls continued outward to protect courtyards that expanded the living spaces of the house—a unity quite characteristic of both modern architecture and landscape architecture (Fig. 8).

In photos like Figure 7, the house, but to a lesser degree the landscape, appear uncompromisingly contemporary. Yet other views taken throughout the site—especially today when the vegetation has matured—suggest a different reading: that the renewed landscape appears as a prolongation, rather than reinvigoration of the eighteenth-century countryside (Fig. 9). [14] Despite the enormous impact of Tunnard’s book on landscape design, seen today his designs hardly look modern, much less modernist. The shapes of his swimming pool and planting beds at St. Ann’s Court are freely curved, yet they function in the manner of the classical parterre—insufficient to represent a true departure from tradition. The modernity of the project is only partial.
Naturalist modern

The proposed definition of modern landscape was intended to welcome landscapes with programmes, technologies or materials, rooted in modernity, but reticent to express those conditions through innovative form. In this category would fall landscapes that maintained either the naturalistic aesthetic—or retained areas of undesigned, if managed, terrain. This might be termed ‘naturalist modernism’ or perhaps ‘modern naturalism’. This group would include certain of G. N. Brandt’s works in Denmark, but even more so the landscapes of Erik Glemme and Sven Hermelin in Sweden (Fig. 15). Vegetation and landform in these works appear natural and hardly modern; their address of function and social purposes, however, evidence a modern society.

It was G. N. Brandt who challenged the older Danish landscape traditions, formal and romantic, with a hybrid approach that incorporated both styles. [15] His 1918 Hellerup Strandpark north of Copenhagen, like much of his work, resembled the collaborations of his English contemporaries Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens. But in certain moments during the 1920s, within the Ordrup Cemetery, for example, Brandt linked naturalism and modernity to create a landscape tinged with a newer way of thinking (Fig. 10). The project for the municipal cemetery was itself a product of the modern era, when new laws ranked issues of sanitation and health over religious sanctity. Brandt’s 1926 Mariebjerg Cemetery in Gentofto in Denmark had responded accordingly with a mixture of traditional formality and a naturalism touched by modernism. Allowing grasses within one zone of the cemetery to grow to their mature height, mowing only paths for circulation, Brandt laid the foundation for a naturalist modernism, albeit one in transition.

As Brandt stressed in his 1930 essay ‘Der kommende Garten’, the modern garden must serve as a retreat from the pressures of modern life. [16] It must be secluded and green; it must serve as an antidote to the fast pace and poisons of stress that accompany modern urban life. To be modern in landscape practice, one must confront the problems conditioned by modernity. In Brandt’s own garden, adjacent to the Ordrup Cemetery, walls contained the space in a manner dating back at least until the Renaissance, yet the greenery that filled the space hardly rehearsed the classical tradition. In this mixture of masonry enclosure and mannered naturalism, paired with his nascent efforts in the cemetery, Brandt was a transitional figure who demonstrated that one can be modern without being modernist.

The advent of the modern Swedish park was rooted in the project for social democracy, dismal health statistics and the need for urban green space. In the specific case of the Marabou chocolate company in Sundbyberg, the park was to function as a balm—both physical and psychological—for the employees at work in the neighbouring factory (Fig. 11). Sven Hermelin’s design for the Marabou Park mixed areas of formal design with those more freely composed, executed with a rich palette of plants and trees. [17] Although completed at the end of the 1930s, the park could almost be taken as the product of some three decades earlier. Its look was hardly the issue. The issue was health; and as an oasis, especially in the warmer months, the park functioned admirably.

Many of Erik Glemme’s designs for the Stockholm Park System performed in a similar way: each was contrived in terms of what the landscape could do, rather than express any formal ideology. [18] Parks like the Tegnérlunden or Norr Mälarstrand, appear as a fragment of a natural landscape that had somehow survived the urban development of its surroundings. In actual fact, Norr Mälarstrand occupies land filled to create a waterside promenade linking the large Rålambshov Park with Stockholm’s centre city (Fig. 12). In designing the parks, Glemme made little effort to introduce a radically new vocabulary. His trees and shrubs were native species. His paving and walls were local granite, and the small-scale structures for cafés and cover purposely drew on the nineteenth-century gazebos and pavilions of the Swedish country house and the farm structures built for drying hops. Under Holger Blom, who reigned as head of the park department for almost fifty years, park design was an integral part of the social democratic agenda, as social space in which differences in class or wealth were smoothed over if not completely erased. The programme for the parks was modern; the vocabulary with which it was enacted was naturalistic.
Modernist
As there were many moderns, so too were there many modernisms. To restate, what distinguished the modernist from the modern was a new spatial sensibility—often influenced by modernist architecture—and/or a vocabulary that drew upon recent investigations in the plastic arts. At a gross level the distinction could also be made between a more classical modernism that transformed and energized a classical spatial structure, and one which more vigorously applied a freer spatial structure coloured by more painterly or sculptural sets of forms such as the biomorphic. In the former category falls the early work of the Japanese architect Sutemi Horiguchi. In Gardens in the Modern Landscape, Christopher Tunnard published images of the garden that complemented Horiguchi’s 1930 Kikkawa house, which had been built in the western International Style. In the small courtyard, Horiguchi deftly composed circular shrubs and stones and a small fountain—representing the ‘occult balance’ about which Fletcher Steel wrote. The majority of the garden, however, was assigned to lawn with shrubs massed on the periphery for reasons of both space and privacy.

The garden for the 1934 Okada house, however, is more instructive (Fig. 13). In his search for a modern Japanese garden, Horiguchi looked not to the contemporary arts, but instead to the paintings of the late-seventeenth-century Rimpa school, in particular works by Tawaraya Sotatsu and Korin Ogata. [19] As those artists had positioned birds, trees or flowers against a simple ground of gold leaf, so should the modern garden set its plants against simple grounds, Horiguchi wrote. The precision with which he executed the Okada garden elegantly embodied this thinking: a small area of lawn played against a linear basin, with plants and grasses carefully used as sculptural form.

Many, but not all, of the American Dan Kiley’s landscapes would also fall under the rubric of classical modernism, of which his Miller garden of 1955 is the most iconic. In its design Kiley relied entirely on rectangular zones, yet in their juxtaposition and overlay—and most of all in their visually sliding planes and open corners—modernist space resulted (Fig. 14). [20]
Throughout a half century of practice Thomas Church relied to a large degree on classical elements and compositions given a modern spatial sensibility, but the biomorphic vocabulary drawn from surrealism prevailed in his most advanced designs. The 1947 Donnell garden in Sonoma County, north of San Francisco, is the best known of these. In plan, the design echoed the Tachard garden’s dynamic equilibrium, with small buildings that contained the garden space on two sides and a grove of Californian coastal oaks and a stone retaining wall on the others (Fig. 15). Church tells us that the inspiration for his design came from the surrounding landscape, from its snaking rivers and seasonal meanders that form during the wet winter months. During design, these natural forms metamorphosed into biomorphic shapes perhaps inspired by the paintings of Joan Miró and Yves Tanguy, the sculptures of Isamu Noguchi and Jean Arp, and the designs of the architect Alvar Aalto. The dominant swimming pool, which appears freely formed, was in fact the product of compass arcs and straight lines. To underscore the modernism of the design, an abstract sculpture by Adaline Kent was used as the formal pivot to the scheme—its own shapes sharing the biomorphism upon which much of the ground plan had been developed. Once gain, it was less the nature of the individual elements, and more their relation to one another that dismissed the classical axis and replaced it with a multiplicity of approaches and paths that magnified the possible spatial experience and sequential views on site.

Garrett Eckbo was more advanced in his application of modern art to his garden designs, but he too maintained an empathetic vision of people and landscape. Eckbo held a vision for the larger landscape of which the garden was only a part, understanding that landscapes ranged in their degree of design from the wild to the rural to the urban. Landscape architecture embodied the relationship between people and the landscape. While working for the Farm Security Administration during the Depression years, Eckbo designed a series of camps for the migrant agricultural workers displaced by the drought and economic failure. His design echoed the Tachard garden’s dynamic equilibrium, with small buildings that contained the garden space on two sides and a grove of Californian coastal oaks and a stone retaining wall on the others (Fig. 15). In 1950 Eckbo published Landscape for Living, a manifesto for landscape practice as well as a compendium of his firm’s work until that time. In the book he noted that the human habitat involved both the social and the physical spheres, and that it was the landscape architect who shaped the relations between the two. Shaping space was prime, but one required a vocabulary by which to enact these values. Enter the influence of the Bauhaus painter Wassily Kandinsky and related artists with their interplay of vectors and skewed lines that terminated in circles. The unrealized Burden garden north of New York City from 1945 reads almost as a literal transposition of Kandinsky’s Composition VIII—at least in plan (Fig. 17). But Eckbo considered the section as much as the plan, and in his designs circles and lines in plan were transformed into animated volumes in space. The diagonal line perceptually extended the literal dimensions of the site, the curving wall enclosed the garden space and ended the movement from the house. His designs always incorporated a tight relationship among form, perception and movement.

In his writings Eckbo dismissed the distinction between the formal and the informal manners, noting that both were needed. ‘Straight lines and free curves lose force by isolation’, he believed, ‘in juxtaposition each helps the other to stronger expression’. This was a key to his garden designs, especially from the late 1940s into the 1960s. The Goldstone garden in Los Angeles, dating from this period, displayed both the influence of Kandinsky and Eckbo’s own management of space, walls and vegetation (Fig. 18). Given the limited size of the site, the swimming pool dominates the design, while paving patterns, walls of concrete blocks and recycled glass bottles, and a few trees instigate visual and physical movement. Eckbo also centred his interests on the application of new materials to his designs. “When in 1959 he was approached by the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) to design a garden for the Forecast program using their standard shapes and screens, he willing accepted—renovating his own garden as a showcase for the material (Fig. 19). New shapes, new spaces, new materials—very modernist.
In Japan, the gardens by Mirei Shigemori contrasted markedly, in client and manner, with those by Sutemi Horiguchi, or any of his foreign contemporaries. [26] While Horiguchi’s work, especially the early gardens, was characterized by a classical tranquility, Shigemori’s was painterly, active and baroque. His landscapes maintained, although significantly reshaped, the elements of the traditional garden. Stones stood vertically in striking contrast to the horizontal rockwork of tradition, beds of gravel and plants occupied sweeping curves, outlined with mounds of earth or thin borders of concrete (Fig. 20). The symbolism behind the design was often more intentional than in Horiguchi’s landscapes, with an interpretative programme accompanying the realized garden. In all, Shigemori’s gardens were emphatic and assertive, reflecting his early training as a painter. If Horiguchi’s gardens bore sympathies with landscapes by Dan Kiley, Shigemori’s landscapes showed certain affinities with Church’s modernist designs or those by Roberto Burle Marx in Brazil.

The twentieth century witnessed new landscape types based on new spatial structures and new landscape elements and materials, both living and mineral. The social movement to improve the health of the Swedish citizen led not only to the Stockholm Park System, but also to swimming beaches and other sites of outdoor recreation. Increased automobile pro-
production and ownership conditioned a new regard for the road, in particular the highway and motorway. In projects such as the Reichsautobahn in Germany or the Blue Ridge Highway in the United States, landscape architects at times played an active role in the design, while at other times they played only the role of critic.

Widespread industrialization generated widespread spoilage, and even in the early decades of the century efforts to ameliorate this ruination solicited landscape architects to aid in restoring what had been lost. One of the early efforts was at the Hope Cement Works in the Peak District of England, where Geoffrey Jellicoe was commissioned to aesthetically reshape the land after the extraction of resources had been spent. In time, the aesthetic reshaping of the land—particularly in the deserts of the American Southwest—led to a sculptural movement: land art or earthworks. Perhaps it also bolstered the making of landscapes entirely as an aesthetic enterprise, for example the gardens and plazas by Isamu Noguchi. But the large-scale shaping of the land began with projects propelled by engineering and remediation.

Conclusion

The suggested four-part subdivision of landscape architecture normally termed modern will hopefully lead to a more focused investigation—aesthetic, social, environmental—of the gardens and landscapes of the twentieth century. [27] As I have tried to show, the term modern is too broad to be definitive without further qualification. Perhaps by looking more carefully within that one broad category—by creating the sub-categories of transitional, modernistic, modern and modernist—we can begin to better understand the ideas and intentions behind these landscapes. Modern, as a rubric, necessarily enfolds its three subdivisions; modern alone is too inclusive and remains incomplete. I have few doubts that some scholars in the field will take issue with these classifications, as even I myself might in time. Hopefully, it will at least serve as a start.

Acknowledgements

Some of the ideas presented in this essay were first proposed at the symposium on Pietro Porcinai, Dessiner sur l’herbe 7, Università IUAV di Venezia, 3 December 2010. I thank Luigi Latini for inviting me to participate. I also thank the two anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and the impetus for further thinking.

All photos by Marc Treib unless otherwise noted.

Notes

2 Typical of these publications was F. R. S. Yorke, The Modern House (London: Architectural Press, 1934).
3 Originally published in three volumes the book was characterized by sumptuous production standards. Paul Letrouilly, Les Édifices de Rome Moderne (Paris: A. Morot et Cie, 1890).
5 Marshall Berman, All That’s Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity (New York: Penguin, 1982). While a book examining literature beginning in the late 19th century, the ideas are relevant to landscape architecture.
6 I am well aware that for many scholars in history, art history and other fields ‘early modern’ dates as far back as the 14th century. However, I am restricting my period of inquiry from the late 19th century through the first two-thirds of the 20th.
7 Michel Eugène Chevreul, The Principles of Harmony, a Contrast of Colours, and Their Application to the Arts (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853 [English translation]). Jekyll herself wrote about colour; these articles were collected and augmented in Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden (London: Country Life, 1908).
8 The axioms were never intended to cover all countries and all periods, but only to provide a general lens for looking at the subject. Marc Treib, ‘Axioms for a Modern Landscape Architecture’, in M. Treib (ed.), Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), pp. 36–37.
10 For a background on the French gardens of this period, see Dorothee Imbert, The Modernist Garden in France (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
11 Ibid., pp. 109–123
12 Steele was both accurate and comprehensive in his coverage of the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris. Regarding the Tachard garden he wrote: ‘Nothing new in the rear lawn—nothing save the relation of the parts and the use of what we formerly called formal elements arranged in occult symmetrical balance. In fact, the most arresting feature is the manner in which the main axis of the composition has been shattered and the cross axes diminished’. Fletcher Steele, ‘New Pioneering in Garden Design’, Landscape Architecture, April 1930, pp. 172, 177.
13 Garrett Eckbo, then a landscape architecture graduate student, was so fascinated by a published photo of the Tachard garden that he made a tracing of the garden’s zigzag boundary.
The motif became more common in the work of the half-generation older Californian Thomas Church, e.g., in his Martin garden in Apros from 1947. See Marc Treib (ed.), Thomas Church, Landscape Architect: Designing a Modern Californian Landscape (San Francisco: William Stout, 2003), pp. 88-93.

14 Despite the title of his book, Tunnard considered space discussing the English landscape garden and the picturesque.

15 The major study of Brandt’s contribution to Danish and international landscape architecture is Lulu Salto Stephensen, Garden Design in Denmark: G. N. Brandt and the Early Deades of the Twentieth Century (Chichester: Packard Publishing, 2007).


17 The Swedish journal Utrblick Landskap devoted its entire vol. 1, 1985 to Sven Hermelin. See also Johan Börjeson and Helena Selder (eds.), Marbou Park (Sundbyberg: Marbouparken, 2005).


21 All the existing drawings and many photos are included in Marc Treib, The Donnell and Eckbo Gardens: Masterworks of Californian Modernism (San Francisco: William Stout, 2007).

22 Published in 1950, Eckbo’s Landscapes for Living (New York: Duell, Sloan, Pearce), followed Tunnard’s Gardens in the Modern Landscape Architecture, and remains the best source of his ideas and work. See also Marc Treib and Dorothy Imbert, Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

23 The Farm Security Administration, a 1930s New Deal programme, was established during the Great Depression to aid small farmers in the eastern United States and migrant agricultural labour in California and certain western states. The migrant camps, designed by the team of which Eckbo was a part, were regarded as social and hygienic sanctuaries by John Steinbeck in his novel Steinbeck in his classic novel The Grapes of Wrath (1939). On Eckbo’s contribution, see Dorothy Imbert, ‘The Art of Social Landscape’, in Treib and Imbert, Garrett Eckbo, pp. 115-143.

24 For a comparison of Wassily Kandinsky’s 1925 Composition VIII and the plan of Eckbo’s 1945 Burden garden in Westchester, New York, see Treib and Imbert, Garrett Eckbo, pp. 62-63.

25 Eckbo, Landscape for Living, p. 48.


27 Because they looked backward rather than forward, rehearsing both the programmes and forms of older designs, I exclude revivalist landscapes—such as the estate gardens of Edwardian England or the Country House Era in the United States—from being called modern. What to do with postmodern-vernacularist landscapes will require additional thought.

References


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Biographical Note

Marc Treib is Professor of Architecture Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, a practicing graphic designer, and a noted landscape and architectural historian and critic. He has published widely on modern and historical subjects in the United States, Japan and Scandinavia, including: A Guide to the Gardens of Kyoto (1980, 2003); Thomas Church, Landscape Architect (2004); Settings and Stray Paths: Writings on Landscapes and Gardens (2005); Representing Landscape Architecture (2007); Drawing/Thinking (2008); Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape (2009); and Meaning in Landscape Architecture & Gardens (2011). Forthcoming are John Yeon, Architect and Conservationist, and The Landscapes of Modern Architecture: Aalto, Barragán, Mies van der Rohe, Neutra, Wright.

Contact

Marc Treib
mtreib@socrates.berkeley.edu