

2007

The art of perception: Robert Irwin's Central Garden at the J. Paul Getty Center

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THE ART OF PERCEPTION
ROBERT IRWIN'S CENTRAL GARDEN
AT THE J. PAUL GETTY CENTER

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Landscape
Architecture

in

The School of Landscape Architecture

by
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B.S., California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, 1993
December 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was created with the support of several individuals. My family provided general encouragement and the time necessary to follow my curiosity. I want to thank my committee members and specifically Cathy Marshall for her high expectations. I also want to acknowledge the support of my classmates who have reminded me that success is had only through hard work and persistence.

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ABSTRACT

In this study of The Central Garden at the J. Paul Getty Center was found evidence that the Central Garden designed by Robert Irwin is a postmodern garden. Beginning with an evaluation and description of the individual elements and conditions of the garden, the study then explores the larger body of artistic work produced by Irwin. This investigation also extrapolates how the ideas of modernism and postmodernism have been applied to past works of landscape architecture. The precedents provide a basis for interpretation and analysis of the Central Garden.

Direct observation of visitors at the Central Garden provided evidence of the garden's success as a perceptual work of art. Evaluating the Central Garden by how it choreographs and conditions individual perceptions is important in understanding the work as a postmodern garden. The J. Paul Getty Center is an ideal venue for a comparison between modern and postmodern forms. At the center clear evidence can be seen of the contrasting ideologies between the phenomenal and conditional concerns of Robert Irwin in the Central Garden and the Euclidian timelessness expressed in Richard Meier's Getty Center buildings and site layout.

The Central Garden is a postmodern garden because it abandons classic geometric order and presents instead a formal and organizational structure similar to what postmodern theorist and architect Robert Venturi describes as a difficult whole. The garden displays an internally coherent organization and an order not derived from the architecture. Irwin also recombined past garden types into a new composition. The Central Garden does not present an artistic conception to be translated by the user nor does the garden design imply a pure or universal form.

INTRODUCTION

The Central Garden at the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles may be considered a postmodern garden. This study argues for the placement of the Central Garden as a postmodern garden within history. During the past decade since its public opening, the Central Garden has been critiqued within the discipline of landscape architecture and garden history by landscape architects and historians, who specifically apply the values and structures of modernism. Due to such limited strictures and within this framework, the Central Garden subsequently was pronounced a failure, citing the garden's abandonment of entrenched, traditional axioms of established practices in horticulture and landscape architecture. For example, one axiom of modern landscape architecture contends that landscape must become an extension of architecture in the integration of interior and exterior spaces.¹ Yet the Central Garden in its application of structure, rejects this predetermination. This study suggests that a new set of criteria must be embraced in order to establish success or failure in landscape projects. We are living in a postmodern era, and to adhere to entrenched modernist criteria of evaluation is to ignore contemporary culture.

However, identifying problems and inadequacies of an existing embedded language of design and criticism is less challenging than proposing a polemic to a newer, postmodern idiom. While essentially a critique of Modernism, Postmodernism does not dismiss or reject an esteemed body of work, but rather forms an addition or an alternative conception, that more purely relates to the world of today. We must note that Einstein's physics did not replace Newtonian physics. Instead, Einstein's physics revolutionized the contemporary world view of his time. In the same manner, postmodernism, rather than the antithesis of modernism logically continues and builds on the continuation or extension of modernism.

Chapter One presents a case study of the Central Garden, primarily providing a descriptive and narrative method of foundation building for the chapters to follow. The case study follows the methodology for evaluating built landscapes as established by Mark Francis and adopted by the Landscape Architecture Foundation, Washington D.C.²

Chapter Two discusses the work of Robert Irwin, observing the trajectory of Irwin's work as a practicing painter and later, as a creator of site-specific installations. By placing the Central Garden within Irwin's body of work, Chapter Two provides a focus for Irwin's artistic exploration within the garden.

The Central Garden is not, as Irwin claims, the first modern garden: It is a postmodern garden. The problem of historical placement lies in a differing absorption, assimilation, and practice of the concepts presented by modernism, by the disciplines of art and landscape architecture. The cycles of visual arts have moved through impressionism, expressionism, and cubism; in this natural course, many other important disciplines in visual arts have evolved over time. Modern landscape architecture has comparatively moved through Olmsteadian socially progressive landscapes of the mid to late nineteenth century, Kiley, Rose and Eckbo's radically changed formal expressions of landscapes in the early to mid twentieth century, to what Peter Walker describes as "the Corporate Office," composed of first generation modernist landscape architects to the multi-disciplinary and large-scale planning efforts drawn from the second-generation. The visual arts have at its core representation. Paint, canvas, and bronze are flexible mediums when compared to implicit permanence seen in works of landscape architecture. Emerging from necessity, the realities of government agencies, physical space, and long-term projects involving considerable amounts of money, have created a more-abbreviated modern experiment that is arguably secondary to public service. Within strikingly different mediums,

time frames, and contexts, the implications of modernism to art and landscape architecture become correspondingly diverse.

Chapter Three addresses the theory and practice of modern landscape architecture, specifically highlighting three projects, in order to extrapolate the broader contexts of social and cultural modernism as formally applied to the landscape. The chapter is sub-divided into a triad: progress, reason, and timelessness. This section begins with a view of Philip Johnson's Museum of Modern Art sculpture garden, followed by Johnson's identification of "The Seven Crutches of Modern Architecture."³ Dan Kiley's work at The Henry Moore Sculpture Garden, at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, features characteristic modern approaches to the landscape the precedence for which can be found in Kiley's influential modern landscape architecture writings.

Chapter Three concludes with the work of Peter Walker, found at the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art in Toyota City, Japan, and a discussion of Walker's exploration of landscape minimalism. The examples of built works are necessarily narrowed to works of museums, and so limit the scope of Chapter Three to include a similar context and expression, reflecting those of the Central Garden.

Chapter Four explores an emerging postmodern landscape architecture by also drawing on three site-specific projects in an effort to expose the larger principles and affinities of each project with postmodern theory. It is too early in the progression of postmodernism to draw definitive contours around what will be described as postmodern landscape architecture. Instead, this chapter draws on the foundations of postmodernism within other disciplines as a method for making connections and comparisons to the Central Garden.

Martha Schwartz's Whitehead Institute Splice Garden in Cambridge, Massachusetts, contains remnant ideas and affiliations with literary and architectural postmodernism.

Additionally, Bernard Tschumi's self-consciously postmodern project at the Parc de la Villette is analyzed in Chapter Four along with; the competition entries of the architect/philosopher collaboration of Eisenmen/ Derrida. Finally, Chapter Four looks at Charles Jencks' Garden of Speculation in Scotland, followed by a highlight of Jencks' expressive formal language of complexity theory.



Figure 1. Inside the Bowl Garden

It may be understood as axiomatic that a garden is a phenomenological work of art: the same self-evident determination applies to the idea developed by Irwin of conditional art. All work of landscape architecture is phenomenal, even more so than architecture. Further, all landscape architecture work responds to a set of conditions. Chapter Five describes how the Central Garden is “art,” precisely because there is intention and application of qualitative and aesthetic

concerns in the Central Garden, as well as a subversion of qualitative concerns, the non-art equivalent. Irwin uses the familiar context of the garden to express ideas of a non-objective art. Chapter Five also synthesizes previous arguments to illustrate why the Central Garden is an expression of postmodernism.

CHAPTER 1: A CASE STUDY

1.1 Context. The Central Garden is located within the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles, California, surrounded by the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains. Situated between the wealthy Brentwood neighborhood and the section of the 405 freeway which angles through the Sepulveda Pass, The Getty Center is five miles north and west of the UCLA campus and approximately twenty miles north of the Los Angeles International Airport. Perhaps the most striking condition of the setting is the panoramic view it affords. The Getty Center overlooks the Pacific Ocean to the west and downtown Los Angeles to the south and east. Prior to development, The Getty Center site was an undeveloped hillside, the first break in the long sprawl along the Los Angeles basin.



Figure 2. View from the Getty Center looking toward the Pacific Ocean

Initially, development of the 24-acre site was opposed by public groups, most notably the Brentwood Homeowners Association. After an extensive public process, which included community meetings, press coverage, and a lengthy legal process, the conflict was resolved. By means of a strict and conditional use permit, issued by attorneys representing the Brentwood Homeowners Association, the four-year construction process began. The Central Garden now occupies a ravine between two ridgelines which serve as a natural pedestal for pavilions designed by Richard Meier; these pavilions comprise the J. Paul Getty Center.

1.2 Site Analysis. The Santa Monica foothills support a dry, chaparral environment with a strong, climactic influence from the Pacific Ocean; just seven miles west of the Getty Center. A mix of residential properties and open space bounds the site on the west and with undeveloped hillsides accommodating the constraints of steep slopes. The region serves as a habitat for deer, rabbits, hawks, and lizards, and therefore it is not uncommon for a visitor to come into close proximity to a buck and doe foraging for food. Behind the tall white wall that bounds the service road on the entry plaza approach, one can view a section of the Getty Center that primarily displays rock outcroppings, live oaks, manzanita, monkey flowers, and deer grass. The natural beauty of the site is stunning with its sweeping views and serene, native beauty. In this section of Los Angeles, such a vista is typically enjoyed by members of the exclusive neighborhood.

The Central Garden, resembling a large Y formation, occupies what was formerly a ravine between the bifurcating ridges. The entire hilltop, moved in parts, was subsequently reformed during the construction and foundation process. As required by the conditional use permit, many of the structures are below ground, with parts of the Central Garden on-structure, above these concealed buildings. The J. Paul Getty Center attracts nearly one million visitors per

year and employs several thousand people, affecting a considerable economic impact on the region.

1.3 Project Background and History. J. Paul Getty was a legendary oil magnate—an impossibly rich, self-made American capitalist. Getty, despite his financial resources, “had been known for his love of ‘bargains’ on the art market and his distaste for modern architecture.”⁴ In 1973, J. Paul Getty endowed \$24 million to establish the J. Paul Getty Museum at what was then known as the Getty Ranch. Located in Malibu, California, “The Ranch” cost \$17 million to build and resembled an ancient Roman-style villa. The Malibu location has recently been renovated and expanded and is now referred to as The Getty Villa. The collections mainly consist of ancient western classical art pieces. Several pieces within the Getty collections are the subject of recent antiquities scandals, fueled by a Western European campaign to bring back works of antiquities with questionable origins. Recently the Getty Trust has agreed to return two of the pieces from its collection to Greece and 40 pieces to Italy.

It is important to understand the direction assumed by the Getty Trust in developing the various programs which together form the J. Paul Getty Institute. During the architectural planning for the J. Paul Getty Center, the various branches of The Getty Institute were simultaneously reconceived and programmed. This reconception of The Getty Institute informed directions for the eventually-constructed architectural form.

The J. Paul Getty Institute consists of several branches, under the direction of the J. Paul Getty Trust. The Getty Center Museum was founded in 1953, originally as “a showcase for J. Paul Getty’s eclectic, uneven collection of Greek and Roman antiquities, French furniture and decorative arts, and European old-master paintings.”⁵ With 64,000 square feet of new exhibition

space, the Museum collection has expanded to include photographs, European drawings, sculpture and illuminated manuscripts.

The *Irwin Papers*, a collection of unpublished manuscripts, correspondence, drawings, photographs, and sketches by artist Robert Irwin, are housed in The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, protected by a special climate and a light-controlled environment. The Research Institute is located on the western ridge of the site and resembles a panopticon. Upon entering the building and obtaining a security badge, visitors to the Special Collections Library then pass onto a ramped walk that forms an interior ring for the columnar-shaped building. The circular ramp arcs and then descends around a central column skylight. Psychologically, visitors become aware of being watched without knowing exactly who or what is doing the watching. This embedded surveillance effect is an example of how the architecture responds to the program. The Getty Research Institute provides support for scholars in the arts and humanities through its research library, publications, lectures, exhibitions, and an international scholars program. The research library, in addition to the large collection of book volumes, holds print collections, sketchbooks, photographs, drawings and archival collections of architectural drawings and rare books.

The Getty Conservation Institute holds at its core certain conservation research and also conducts field work to preserve cultural sights worldwide; additionally, the institute adds study and experimentation in the conservation of its own works. The Conservation Institute was directly involved in the recent construction of The Fran and Ray Stark Sculpture Garden and Terrace which are new features within the Getty Center Campus. Displayed within these new named spaces and throughout the campus are important modern sculptural works, including artists Henry Moore, Alexander Calder, and Aristide Maillol. The Central Garden initiated such

layered visitor experiences, which in turn reflect the many interests of The Getty Institute. The Getty Information Institute, The Getty Education Institute for the Arts, The Getty Grant Program and the Getty Leadership Institute for Museum Management, and the Program of Art on Film are also funded by the J. Paul Getty Trust. The institutes similarly reflect the various and compound interests of The Getty Institute. The Getty Center project grew from a desire for the several branches of the Getty Trust to be at a single location and to share proximity. The Central Garden was developed to serve as a respite for workers and visitors to each of these institutions.

1.4 Genesis of the Central Garden Project. Originally imagined by architect Richard Meier as a Roman amphitheater with a bisecting peristyle and circular pond to be viewed from an overlook terrace, The Central Garden idea changed when artist Robert Irwin was added as a consultant to the design team. Consequently, the vision of the garden changed from an expression subservient to the dominant order and form language of the architecture to an autonomous space within the campus of the Getty Center. “In 1992, as we reviewed Richard Meier’s preliminary concept for the Central Garden area, we concluded that we wanted to introduce an overtly aesthetic dimension to the garden, to have it function as a work of art and not only as a setting for the architecture.”⁶

The program for the buildings evolved along with the architecture. Irwin recalls the project brief as having a vague program and that The Getty Trust was more interested in good ideas than in service of a program. In a correspondence from Kurt Forster, Director of The Getty Research Institute, to Harold Williams, Richard Meier, and other Getty staff, Forester observes that he could not formulate a program for the Central Garden. According to Forester, a program would be symbolic and as such, would articulate the Getty Center’s “place in the world,” and that practical considerations and budget would have to be decided upon within a symbolic

framework.⁷ This memo from Forester exposed a sophisticated recognition of the enduring, symbolic nature of the garden and anticipates the important place The Central Garden would hold within the continuum of history. This memo also marks a crucial point where the dominating nature of the architectural form comes into question. The beginning of this ideological conflict was dramatized in the documentary movie, “Concert of Wills.”⁸

Work on the Getty buildings was well underway by the time Irwin was invited to plan and oversee construction of the Central Garden. Huge amounts of the hilltop site were moved in 1987 and construction of the lower parking facility had begun in 1989; foundation work on the Museum building began in 1992. Irwin was, as he recalled, asked by the Getty staff to go to war with Meier. What was happening at this time was that The Getty Center campus was becoming too singularly Meier’s building. Irwin was brought onto the project to offer a counterpoint to the architecture. The Getty Trust’s selection of Irwin demonstrated their resolve to make the garden an expression of the multifaceted aspect of the Getty Trust and its institutions.

A letter was sent from Harold Williams to both Irwin and Meier during a series of correspondences in which Irwin and Meier were opposing one another head-to-head; the issues concerned such matters as the elevation of the terrace level, as well as exactly how and where the Central Garden would meet the battered walls of the pavilion terraces and courtyards. Williams’ letter reads, “If I were Solomon, I would resolve the difference between the two of you by cutting the baby in half, i.e., 851.”⁹ Another correspondence from Robert Irwin to Richard Meier reads, “P.S. I noticed that while it went unmentioned, it did not go unnoticed that you have simply eliminated the four radial sculptures I proposed for the platform area.”

1.5 Design, Development and Decision-Making Process. Robert Irwin began his commission at The Getty Center with a careful consideration of the existing circumstances with which he had

to respond. However, Irwin's approach differed from a traditional site analysis that considered data and quantifiable facts about the site, such as solar orientation and soil conditions. In fact, Irwin's consideration of the site was qualitative, looking not only for cues from the site, but also circumstances that would shape the decisions to be made about the site. A predominate feature that would affect his garden was the surrounding architecture: What was missing in the architectural experience was intimacy. Irwin wrestled with how his garden could take a visitor from the almost overwhelming and expansive nature of the architecture down to the intricacy of a flower.



Figure 3. Flower detail at the ravine crossing

“In my mind’s eye I see a classic structure, elegant and timeless, emerging serene and ideal, from the rough hillside”¹⁰ was Meier’s winning pitch to the Getty Trust in 1984. However,

by 1993 after years of planning and after the foundation work had begun on the Museum, Meier's vision was clearly becoming too singular. Lawrence Weschler in his book *The Getty Garden* described Meier's work as "geometry and panorama." Meier's conception of a tightly held piece began to lose support among some of the Getty staff, who desired a counter-punctual element to the project. Just as there were several individual voices within the Getty Institute, there also needed to be an expression of diversity in what was becoming Meier monolithic architecture. The Central Garden presented an opportunity of giving form to this expression.



Figure 4. Geometry and panorama can be seen in this view with the 405 freeway in the background

Meier's 1991 proposal for the Central Garden included a stepped watercourse running along his established geometry of the Sepulveda Pass axis. In his earliest sketches of the site plan for the Getty Center, Richard Meier established what would become his sacred geometry of

22.5 degrees, the difference between the angle of the 405 freeway through the Sepulveda Pass and the grid of downtown Los Angeles.¹¹ This type of abstract preciousness and strict adherence to a mysterious 22.5 degree geometry, if taken to a single level of philosophical regress, becomes absurd. As Dennis McGlade, Principle of Olin Partnership, opined in a recent interview, “Well, something has to determine something, because we wanted a coherent composition. You make design decisions based on lots of things, so things come together.”¹²

In a series of meetings presenting design proposals through 1992 and 1993, many changes in the nature and shape of the garden surfaced. Eventually, a limit of work was drawn between Meier’s building and the supporting landscape and courtyards, which were designed under the direction of Olin Partnership and Irwin’s Central Garden. Evidence of these decisions assumes a clear, physical shape.

The point at which the water passes through the runnel at the top of Meier’s terrace drops down into an amphora and is delivered to Irwin is exaggeratedly offset (see figure 5). Irwin called the amphora “the urinal,” viewing the design as a personal spite from Meier. Irwin’s refusal to line up with Meier’s established geometry emphasized the ideological conflict that had grown between the two professionals. Consequently, the Getty staff established a buffer zone between Meier’s battered walls and Irwin’s garden. The buffer zone extends from the base of the walls and outward into the garden and has become a space heavily used by picnickers, families, and individuals taking a break from the museum galleries.

Early in the design process, Robert Irwin’s intent was to expand the Central Garden to incorporate the pool Meier had proposed on the downhill side of the service road. Irwin wanted visitors to directly experience the space rather than simply look at the pool from afar. Meier’s proposal, on the other hand, was similar to the Cactus Garden. The Cactus Garden is a circular



Figure 5. Meier's amphora, Irwin's urinal.

belvedere on axis with Meier's building geometries; The Cactus Garden functions as a visual conceit for a garden, because no one except maintenance workers may actually access the cactus garden. Originally, the garden proposal included an amphitheatre and water pond, to be viewed from a terrace level peristyle bridge structure. Including the pool within the garden would require the service road to arc out around the site, outside the perimeter of the pool.

Although this plan required permit modifications, the change ultimately would allow the Central Garden more room. At this point, the Central Garden clearly moved away from being a stepped pedestal for the buildings; the Central Garden instead became its own unified whole.

Having dispensed with “geometry and panorama,” Irwin’s task was to create intimacy and presence within the Central Garden.

Thus Irwin’s proposal and subsequent constructed garden became rather internally referenced, abandoning Euclid’s geometry altogether to favor a relational and internally justified logic. Rather than the theatre at Delphi, Irwin created humanism’s answer to the oracle at Delphi. No abstracted, intellectual conceit, no god translating the divine oracle; simply, according to Irwin, “the wonder of human perception.”

The design proposal at this point closely resembled the shape that the garden would eventually assume. Irwin’s preliminary plan, submitted in March of 1994, indicated a slightly meandering path and stream and a series of stairs that follow the stream and cross it at one point. The banks of the stream were sharply contoured and a continuous row of trees followed the curve of the stream which led to the terrace level; at this point the stream passes under the terrace, spilling into the lower bowl. A path circled the bowl and formed an embankment at the lowest elevation.

Beginning at the northern and uppermost slope of the garden where the ridges open up to the ravine was the point at which the Central Garden would begin, and where Meier’s geometric plaza with runnel aligned with the 405 freeway (Meier’s Prime Meridian); there the design was stopped and Irwin’s entirely new form language began. In fact, “Meier already sensed the truly subversive aspect of Irwin’s conception, for with this garden the artist was positing an all-out argument against timeless permanence and eternal unities in favor of immediate presence and almost delirious multiplicity”¹³ (see figure 6).



Figure 6. View from lower section of the Bowl Garden

1.6 Role of Landscape Architect. Until September of 1993, Andrew Spurlock of Spurlock Porrier Landscape Architects provided Irwin with advisory help on the Central Garden. Irwin did not clearly understand the elevations of the site or how the service road might be realigned. Spurlock helped with the coordination of necessary elements such as; site drainage, balancing of cut and fill, and construction documentation. The *Irwin Papers* did not include extensive construction drawings for the garden, but did support evidence of a design/build nature to the construction of the Central Garden. Spurlock produced beautiful drawings of the proposal that were presented to the Getty Trust, as well as early grading and schematic planting plans. The artist and landscape architect began building models as a way of conceptualizing the space. Spurlock recalls Irwin having difficulty understanding the sectional information of the site, as well as the plant material. Irwin had no prior horticultural experience with plants. As a result, the artist and landscape architect developed a language for talking about plants because they were not communicating.¹⁴ Spurlock and Irwin, along with Jim Duggan, a nurseryman hired by the Getty Trust for the Central Garden, installed a test nursery in Encinitas, California. Duggan collected plants from the nursery to show to Irwin and thereby developed a means of communication. For Irwin, the horticulturists provided practical and experiential plant

knowledge. For his part, Irwin presented a new way of thinking to Spurlock, ideas about plants based on qualities and interactions, rather than controlled predictability and ecology.

For the bowl garden, Irwin produced cubist-style drawings to conceptualize the spatial experience and interactions of plants within a nested space. Typically, circles or oblong shapes are drawn to define planting areas representing a specific moment at a particular bloom cycle. Clearly, Irwin's thoughts were not about individual plants, but about the effects and the energy that would be produced in relative combination.

A singular aspect of design development, overlooked in much of the discussion surrounding the garden, is the loss of panorama from the Bowl Garden. Originally, the Irwin garden included a bridge and overlook at the southernmost section of the bowl—a bridge over the re-emerging ravine. The Brentwood Homeowners argued that this new visual access would be in violation of the conditional use permit. In Meier's scheme, the peristyle bridge formed a semi-transparent screen and the Brentwood Homeowners did not want Getty visitors to have visual access into their property. Spurlock and Irwin tried to convince the homeowners that this condition in the bowl was no different from anywhere else on the site, but were unsuccessful.¹⁵ This section then became an embankment and forced the view inward so the predominating view was of the Getty Campus, seen from the context of the garden. This brought a completely different experience from anywhere else within the center. Irwin described this view as the lynchpin of the entire center (see figure 6).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was crucial in the development of garden accessibility. Irwin had originally proposed a narrow path with intervals of stairs descending the ravine. The plan provided ramps along the perimeter of the garden and down into the bowl but ADA wanted the stream experience to be accessible as well. Irwin and Spurlock initially fought

the requirement by requesting ADA to reconsider, but the ADA did not change their decision. In response, Irwin placed a switchback ramp diagonally arcing and crossing the ravine several times, thereby replacing the narrow path and stairs and ultimately contributing significantly to the success of the project. As a result, many groups of people pass through the garden pushing a stroller, wheelchair or utilizing a walker, and these visitors are able to fully enjoy the experience of the garden. The subsidiary effect is that the ravine crossings amplify and compress the perceptual experience, taking the visitor from a panoramic view to intimate sounds, smells, and visual details at each of the ravine crossings. The diagonal arch of the ramps also functions as organizing elements, which “tune” the experience of the garden. In a lecture Irwin gave in September 2001, the artist describes how he dealt with “conditional art” at the Getty Center, because of the pre-existing conditions; his act as an artist was his response to the given conditions. “I couldn’t keep the steep slope and get the handicap down, the only way to deal with that was to make this exaggerated path, which was probably the best thing I did.”¹⁶

Irwin developed a hands-on approach to this project. Building the Central Garden became a design/build project, because of the tight construction schedule and possibly because of Irwin’s limited construction experience. As a tool for communicating with the Getty Trust, full-scale mock-ups were constructed of the azalea maze and sections of the ravine, as well as a mock-up of the fountain. After the preliminary drawings were approved by the Getty Trust and the Brentwood Homeowners, the design process focused on the test garden under the direction of Jim Duggan, and searching for consultants and each craftsman who would eventually build the garden, i.e., the stone mason, the fountain designer, and the carpenter.

Irwin had fourteen consultants working under him. He visited several quarries during this time of the design development, looking for the right samples of stones. The stones

eventually chosen were green chert from the California Gold Country, selected for the boulders at the head of the stream. Stones named Montana Kennesaw became the flanks of the watercourse; clean-cut slabs of Tennessee Blue Ridge sandstone was the chosen expression in stone for the footpaths, with carnelian granite for the terraces.

Visitors who enter the Central Garden from the north travel along a decomposed granite path, which in turn follows a zigzag route through a picturesque and carefully choreographed artificial stream. The raised banks are planted with an exuberant combination of perennials, shrubs, and annuals—arranged not for traditional horticultural compatibilities, but for the sheer, intense pleasure of perception. Forming the contrived forest enclosure is a canopy of sycamore trees “the importance of those trees is how they move light through the garden,” explains Lynne Tjomsland. Tjomsland, the Getty Grounds and Gardens manager, differentiates between the sturdy, hardworking, reliable Olin partnership-designed landscape and the intensive effort and ongoing nature of the Central Garden. “The intensity and the change, and the action of space, and the breeze and light is built into that garden, and it draws people”¹⁷ says Tjomsland. The path makes four crossings of the stream, each time bringing the viewer from the broad scale of the buildings to the intimate scale of a flower or the sound of the stream as it moves over and under the rocks. The total effect is of a hyper-real version of a forest stream (see figure 7).

The ravine flattens out onto a broad terrace with Parisian chairs and six rebar bougainvillea arbors similar in scale and form to Frank Lloyd Wright’s columns in the Johnson Wax building. The stream courses over a stepped waterfall, emptying into a shallow pool and azalea maze. From the terrace level, visitors descend into the “nested” bowl which combines



Figure 7. Planting along the artificial stream bank

and reforms several traditional garden themes, such as the English Garden tradition of Gertrude Jekyll, and the formal French Parterre gardens. As guests overlook the chadar-like waterfall that forms the northern boundary of the bowl, they view the waterfall as it becomes a retaining wall for the terrace. To avoid view-obstructing guardrails, stairs descend to a sunken platform at the edge of the waterfall, thus forming an edge from which to look down into the bowl and maze and outward, toward the Pacific Ocean.

1.7 Maintenance and Management. Critical to the Central Garden’s evolution as a work of art is the ongoing process, one which Irwin describes as “curating the garden.” This curatorial project continues to be given a considerable amount of time and effort, even a decade after its opening. Periodically, the garden is evaluated by Irwin and a group of staff and consultants,

including Tjomsland. During this curatorial process, plants are evaluated for their success or failure; the evaluation is based not on horticultural parameters, but rather in the interactions of colors and the plants' underlying formal structure. Tjomsland's staff supports Irwin's vision by virtue of the staff's day-to-day maintenance practices.¹⁸

Tjomsland describes the Central Garden as challenging to maintain and requiring an exceptionally high amount of labor. This intense effort is financially supported by the Getty Trust as the Central Garden is considered an ongoing and changing art piece, not a typical institutional garden. In fact, Tjomsland says that her crew prunes the sycamore trees that line the ravine three to five times during the summer, just to thin the leaves. This is something, she says, with which she would not burden a typical landscape maintenance crew; further, this practice would be economically irresponsible in other instances. But as she poignantly observes, "the importance of those trees is how they move light through the garden—not how they function as tree elements in a landscape."¹⁹

1.8 User/Use Analysis. Visiting The Central Garden is unquestionably a pleasurable experience, but to ascertain whether or not it is working as a phenomenological work of art becomes difficult at best. Antonia Bostrom, Getty Curator, recognizes that most people view The Central Garden as a wonderful garden and not as a work of art.²⁰ She also observes that those who are familiar with Irwin's work see it as a phenomenological work of art. Whether or not the Central Garden is viewed as a garden or as art, Tjomsland observes that many of the visitors who come to the Getty Center come to experience the garden.

1.9 Peer Reviews. Critically, the Central Garden has taken a beating—most notably from The American Society of Landscape Architects. Since the late 1960s, Irwin's work has been extremely difficult to interpret critically. After what was essentially a covert MoMA installation

in 1970, a scrim and light installation, the artist recalls, “Ironically, the more sophisticated one was, it seemed, the less chance one had of ‘getting it.’”²¹ Irwin’s friends and supporters, when seeing the installation for the first time were “rattled,” and tried to like the work, but were not sure what to make of it. Irwin said that although many artists and critics saw the MoMA piece, no one wrote about or even talked to him about it until about a year later, sculptor Richard Serra told Irwin that the work “was bothering him,”²² and Serra wanted to know why Irwin had done the piece. When Irwin’s Dot Paintings were shown at the Sao Paulo Biennial, Irwin’s work was “destroyed” by visitors after one day on view at the exhibit.²³ Museum visitors had apparently spit on the canvas and took knives and pens and attacked the content and symbol-free canvases. Another example of a violent reaction to Irwin’s work was when a patron of the Pasadena Art Museum told Irwin that he must stop doing what he was doing (paintings of lines and dots), stating that Irwin’s work was un-Christian and un-American.

More specifically, relating to the Central Garden, there has been a great divide between the popular opinion of the garden among the media. *The Los Angeles Times*, *Metropolis* and *Art in America* have all generally given the work favorable reviews. In contrast, *Landscape Architecture* has published three pieces on the Getty Center with alternating indifference and scathing criticism. The first appeared in December 1997, the same month that the Getty Center opened to the public. The article, entitled “Western Civ” by Jane Brown Gillette, was a sweeping, grand survey of the Getty Center, focusing on the Olin-designed grounds and gardens, as the Central Garden was still under construction.

The second story appeared in the October 1998 issue, “Showdown at Sepulveda Pass” written by John Beardsley. Beardsley identified the garden’s ambition as one meant to evoke an element of intimacy that was lacking in the experience of the buildings. Beardsley then

classified the Central Garden as extravagant and confusing, a pastiche of garden traditions. According to Beardsley, “What makes this garden especially disappointing is the fact that Irwin can be a remarkable artist, capable of revealing the subtleties of light and the intricacies of visual perception with the most minimal of means.”²⁴ Implicit in this comment is a preference for the reductivist landscapes popular in the 1990s. Chapter Five will argue the relevance of pastiche in our pluralistic and multi-faceted postmodern society. A similar take on the complexity of the garden was made in the December 2001 issue of *Abitare*, referring to the Central Garden’s combination of symbolism from several historic garden forms: “to do a real garden you need just one good clear idea.”²⁵

In the third review of the Getty Center in *Landscape Architecture*, written by Herrington and Gelfand, who opined that the Central Garden resembled a theme park and corporate landscapes, thus furthering the agenda of high-end entertainment, rather than a challenge to society. The authors opined that “Art takes risks. Great art changes the world.”²⁶ The critics continued by inferring that when impressionist artists used purple to depict shadows, people saw purple in the shadows on the street, and that consequently, this changed the way people saw the world. The co-authors claim the Getty Center makes no claim in the design to change human perception. Perhaps the co-authors missed the premise of the Central Garden altogether.

The Central Garden reflects a continuation of the argument posed in Irwin’s 1980 installation, “One Wall Removed” on Market Street in Venice, California. The piece was conceived and installed to prove to the Los Angeles County Museum of Contemporary Art board members that a traditional museum, dedicated to collecting art objects, was not appropriate to the changing nature of contemporary art.

Irwin's argument was that after Abstract Expressionism, art could no longer be object-based and to continue collections of objects was absurd.²⁷ Irwin's garden is a site-commissioned work of art in the contemporary realm, where meaning is no longer filled by objects, but rather held in the perceptual realm of the viewer.



Figure 8. The Central Garden

Herrington and Gelfand's example of how Impressionist art changes the world seems at best a shallow, tired, modernist notion. Chapter Five will elaborate on the postmodern view of the artist and architect. The world after Impressionism was not a new place. Purple had always existed in the shadows, but what the artists displayed was evidence that the color was always there. The pursuit of Robert Irwin's work, including the Central Garden, is to draw out the assumptions made in perceiving.

In *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, art historian David Marshall wrote, “Irwin’s design principles are the opposite of Meier’s... but in fact the design is more empirical than this, being driven by the site and by the spectator’s responses rather than by Platonic abstractions.” He goes on to observe that although an aerial photograph causes the garden to appear overworked and contrived, the garden makes perfect sense experientially. From an eye-level experience, Marshall considers the arrangement to be perfectly intelligible, with the plants in the viewer’s perceptual foreground.²⁸

1.10 Criticism. The Getty Center is most often criticized for its perceived elitism, implied by its pristine hilltop location and described as a metaphor of culture, rising above and having no relevance or connection to the gritty city of Los Angeles below. Specifically, the Central Garden is often criticized as overtly disregarding the cultural and ecological realities of the site. Where the Central Garden fails in generating a stable ecology, the Olin Partnership-designed landscape succeeds. “In Olin’s original landscape plan for the Getty Center, tremendous amount of thought was put into economies and things that just made sense in terms of water use and natural resources”²⁹ explains Tjomsland. In January of 2005, following the pilot phase of the program, the J. Paul Getty Center became the first LEED-EB (existing building) Certified Facility in the nation. The Getty Center facilities staff now moves toward more sustainable practices. Tjomsland considers the Getty Center to be among the best delivered landscapes in her knowledge. The soils are compatible with the plantings, and there is little overspray, since much of the landscape is sub-surface irrigated. Through use of biological controls and integrated pest management practices, there are only a few insects, and no biological void—a condition caused by broad-spectrum pesticide applications. Consequently, the Central Garden with its diversity of plant material is vitally active with butterflies, bees, birds, and lizards.

The Getty staff continues to receive comments from those who feel the Central Garden irresponsibly declines to follow traditional horticultural practices. Yet the Central Garden is neither a botanical garden nor an institutional garden. Those types of comments are superfluous to Irwin. The practice of landscape architecture carries the responsibility of human habitation as well as environmental stewardship. Art itself carries none of these obligations.³⁰

1.11 Limitations. Several limitations are presented at the Central Garden. The site is used by Los Angeles residents as a strolling ground, in much the way Europeans do the *passaygieste* for people-watching. Although the garden is free and open to the public, the fact remains that the garden is a privately-held institution, and thus not within an entirely public realm. The Getty Center must be accessed by car, bus, or foot to the tram level; visitors are then taken up the hill in an electric tram. Due to the remote location, access is limited to those who can travel to the garden. The Central Garden also has limited stylistic application: it can not be replicated in a public setting. Lastly, the ongoing success of the garden depends on a continual influx of money, resources, and labor.

1.12 Generalized Features and Lessons. Already, the Central Garden has a tremendous impact on gardening, particularly in Southern California. People take the concepts seen in the garden and transfer those concepts to their home gardens. The Central Garden has introduced a demand for new plants into the nursery trade, and has generated support for an exuberant planting aesthetic which is similar to contemporary European gardening trends. However, Irwin argues that the solutions presented at the Central Garden are only applicable to its particular context with its budget, climate, users, and all conditions that make up the garden. What the Central Garden evokes is an awareness of quality and presence.

Rather than focusing on predictable objects and a designer's conception, this garden argues for primary attention in the design attending to the phenomenological and sensory experience of space. The Central Garden also poses a challenge to the modernist axiom of landscape as an extension of architecture. In juxtaposition to this realm of thought, the Central Garden dynamically creates and generates its own internal energy.

1.13 Future Issues/Plans. The garden is essentially a work in progress; therefore it is unclear who will become curator when Irwin no longer oversees the task. A considerable amount of data is being collected on the plants used in the garden. At some point, the curatorial process will evolve into historical preservation, based on the records of detailed meetings with Irwin.

Richard Meier's building has a rationalist elegance that has been compared by some critics to the Acropolis in Athens, due to the architectural sense of procession, permanence, and order. Meier's buildings, replete with sequence and framing, enhance the splendid vistas of the hilltop site. Yet where Meier proposed a replica of the theater at Delphi for the garden, Irwin built the oracle.

1.14 Project Information.

PROJECT NAME: The Central Garden

LOCATION: Los Angeles, California

DATE DESIGNED/PLANNED: June 1992

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED: November 1997

SIZE: 134,000 square feet

ARTIST: Robert Irwin

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects, San Diego California,
Andrew Spurlock

CLIENT/DEVELOPER: The Getty Trust

ARCHITECTS: Richard Meier & Partners

HORTICULTURIST: Jim Duggan

ARBORIST: Barry Coate

ENGINEERS: Levine/Seegel Associates Consulting Engineers, RBA Partners, Inc Civil
Engineers, Robert Englekirk Consulting Structural Engineers

FOUNTAIN DESIGNER: Waterscape Technologies, Charles Schardt

IRRIGATION DESIGNER: Lance Sweeney Consultants

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Robert Irwin

CONSTRUCTION: Dinwiddie Construction and Valley Crest

MANAGED BY: Stephen Rountree, Director, Operations and Planning, Richard Naranjo

CHAPTER 2: THE WORK OF ROBERT IRWIN

The work of contemporary artist Robert Irwin is particularly relevant to the practice of landscape architecture. Not so much in style or technique or even in the production of “objects” of art, but rather in the trajectory of inquiry. His exploration of human perception offers quality as counterbalance to the professional demands of measured predictability and stability. Irwin places particular value in his questions. As teacher, he has influenced an entire generation of artists. Art historians have placed him at the helm of what has become known as the California light and space movement. Yet his influence within the field of landscape architecture will emerge from his works. These works overlap into the disciplines of architecture and landscape architecture, while simultaneously posing purely artistic inquiries into the wonder of human perception, phenomenological art, and conditional art.

This chapter presents a brief history of Irwin’s work, with the intent of drawing out those overarching questions guiding his artistic practice. Irwin considers his work in landscape and buildings to be an opportunity to explore different contexts for his artistic works.³¹ Building the Central Garden should not be seen as a moment where Irwin exchanges the hat of an artist for the hat of a garden designer. Rather, the Central Garden must be considered within the artist’s entire *oeuvre*.

2.1 Background. Irwin was born in Long Beach, California, in 1928 and spent his youth in Los Angeles in the 1930s and 1940s. Irwin spent summers working as a lifeguard and earning prize money as a swing dancer. Apparently, he also spent much of his time chasing girls and making “cherry” the many cars that he possessed as a young adult. This does not seem to reflect the environmental conditions expected to produce a persona that the influential art dealer Irving Blum describes as “extraordinarily ambitious, and as committed as anyone I have ever

encountered.”³² Irwin remembers his youth as an era permeated by a freewheeling attitude and a world full of opportunity and choices. Irwin experienced an exceptional amount of freedom as a young adult. While his seeming carefree youth does not align with the frequently ascetic discipline of his artistic practice, the free-wheeling life experienced in his youth accounts more for Irwin’s iconoclasm and his calm, relaxed California disposition, together with the fastidious and technical prowess displayed in his art across mediums. Some critics attempt to connect the West Coast influence to his art. For example, in a recent artist roundtable discussion at the Los Angeles County Museum of Contemporary Art, Michael Govan attempted to connect Irwin’s early work on cars to his early disc paintings.³³ Irwin quickly denies any psychoanalyzing of his work in favor of the direct experiential read.

At a young age, Irwin showed an easy facility with drawing and won prizes in art competitions. His charcoal drawing of a soldier won first prize in a military competition in the early 1950s. Irwin also began painting seascapes, very few of which survive. Irwin destroyed much of his earliest work and was notorious for not allowing his work to be photographed. Essentially his work has always been “about” precisely what the camera can not capture.³⁴ Irwin’s early figurative drawings and paintings won him favor with his mother, her friends and relatives and accounts for technical success. Yet Irwin himself believes his education as an artist began later in life, after attending Los Angeles Art Institute; Otis from 1948 to 1950, Jepson in 1951, and Chouinard from 1952 to 1954. Irwin’s aesthetic development progressed from producing figurative to abstract expressionist styles on canvas, to his line, dot, and disc paintings. In 1970, he sold the contents of his studio because as he saw it, he could no longer continue to align his artistic work with his questions; he felt no justification to simply making objects.

Irwin's 2007 solo exhibit at the Pace Gallery in New York, "*Who is Afraid of Blue Yellow Red*" continues this same artistic line of inquiry.

In the late 1950s, Irwin became associated with the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles. Irvin Blum was Irwin's first tie to New York City, the *dominate nexus* for modern art. Prior to the Ferus Gallery, Irwin's early artistic development was in association with artists Billy Al Bengston and Craig Kauffman of Los Angeles. At that time, abstract expressionism was absorbed by what has been described as "rustic" Californians.

The insularity and naiveté of their West Coast situation allowed a few West Coast artists to see the New York abstract expressionist achievement freshly. Just as the original abstract expressionists flowering in the late forties had been possible in New York because of the fresh manner in which a group of "rustic" Americans – Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell—were able to confront and transcend the by-then stylized aesthetics of the European surrealists and cubists of the previous generation, so ten years later a group of even more rustic Californians were better able to appreciate the true significance of *their* achievement than where the second generation artists who were living right there in New York, where abstract expressionism had begun in the meantime to ossify into a stylized code" (Weschler, pp. 48-49).

At this same time, Irwin toured Europe, frequenting museums and walking the streets. Walking solo until dawn, Irwin slept a bit and began walking again. During his visits to Paris, Amsterdam, Florence, and other European centers of Western culture, he absorbed the high art tradition. In those museum visits, he assimilated the imagery and technique. Once he absorbed these into his sensibility, he subsequently dismissed patrimony all together. With the exception of all but a few, the artist Vermeer was one exception. Irwin eschewed the Renaissance and high traditions as predominantly "brown" paintings.³⁵ After an assimilation and cathartic dismissal of the high tradition of European art, Irwin began to rely on his own eye and artistic sensibilities.

Curiously, Irwin's Grand Tours ended in a kind of Zen state on the Spanish Mediterranean island of Ibiza. Remote and barren, this became the context where Irwin began to "unplug" himself from culture in general. On the island of Ibiza, Irwin had no books or television. For eight months, Irwin's only human contacts were transactions of commerce with the fishermen or farmers. At this point, Irwin developed a pattern of taking-in and emptying-out his art school education, his early art works, and art history itself.

During and after Irwin's European tours, he produced works of art, showing his work at the Felix Landau Gallery in Los Angeles. Even though Irwin showed with some success at the prestigious gallery, he spent most of his time at the shoestring collaborative of Ferus. The Ferus group included those who have become important contemporary artists, such as Richard Diebenkorn and Clyfford Still. After Irwin's first one-man show at the Felix Landau Gallery, he recalls, "Once in a while you might get lucky enough to get a real look at what you're doing. I mean, just that kind of straight focus which happened at that critical point. And know that everything I'd been doing wasn't worth shit."³⁶

While Irwin's career has taken a strikingly different trajectory than those of his early associations with abstract expressionist painters, his time at Ferus projected an early influence on his work. While Irwin was not completely initiated into this group of artists until Irving Blum took the gallery in the late 1950s and retained Irwin as one of his seven Los Angeles artists. At this time in the early sixties, Blum promoted the Los Angeles art scene. After several years, Blum returned to New York without developing any serious art collecting in Los Angeles. Blum is a prominent fixture in the New York art world today.

Irwin was disturbed with how his Abstract Expressionist works shown at Ferus were interpreted by critics. Irwin did not accept how his work was described by his critics what Irwin refers to as being “Rorschached” —referring to the ink blot test used by psychologists to help evoke Freudian-like unconscious connections.³⁷ Irwin felt that the ambition of Abstract Expressionism was to empty the canvas of pictorial logic and meaning. Irwin was baffled by those who continued to ascribe meaning to abstract expressionist works.

2.2 Lines. Irwin began painting canvases a monochrome color and then applied horizontal lines to the canvas as a way of eliminating what he considered to be unnecessary gestures. For example, Georgia O’Keeffe’s watercolor, “*Light Coming on the Plains III*” is “virtually abstract but still recognizable (in the division between sky and earth) as landscape”³⁸ (see figure 9). In contrast, Irwin wanted that which could not be “read” as a narrative or even as a relic of the artist process, as in the work of Jackson Pollock. “The whole context of figure and ground was coming into question, that it was indeed precisely the abstract expressionist project to fulfill cubism’s initial ambition of collapsing the artificial distinctions between figure and ground.” (Weschler p. 55)

The line paintings, which Irwin painstakingly produced by spending days and weeks looking at the paintings, making only a slight modification to the line and then going through the self-imposed rigorous process again. Irwin produced only ten paintings between 1962 and 1964, which were essentially an exploration in the physical laws of nature as they apply to the project of painting on a canvas. The horizontal lines were moved slightly up and down in ways that were perceptually attuned to their placement. The subject became the physical properties as experienced perceptually by the viewer, who at that time was only the artist himself,

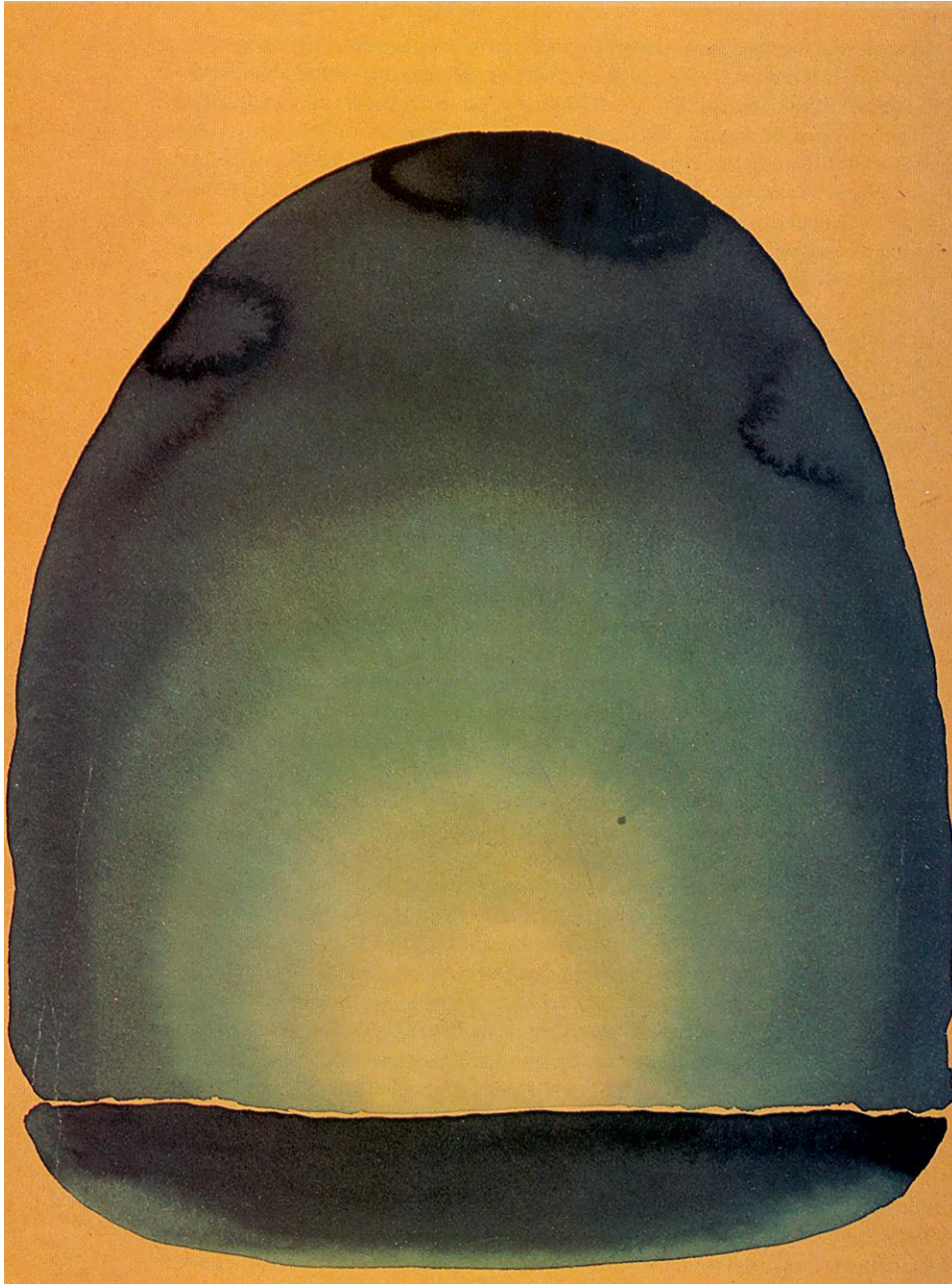


Figure 9 Georgia O'Keeffe. "*Light Coming on the Plains III*," 1917.

as Irwin had begun to isolate himself from social connections. The canvas would be off an inch or two of a mathematically-square canvas. In a similar manner, as the Greeks implied perceptual order by slightly varying the dimensions of true mathematical order.³⁹ This type of implied

rather than geometrically described order can be seen in the rings of the labyrinth in the Central Garden (see figure 10).

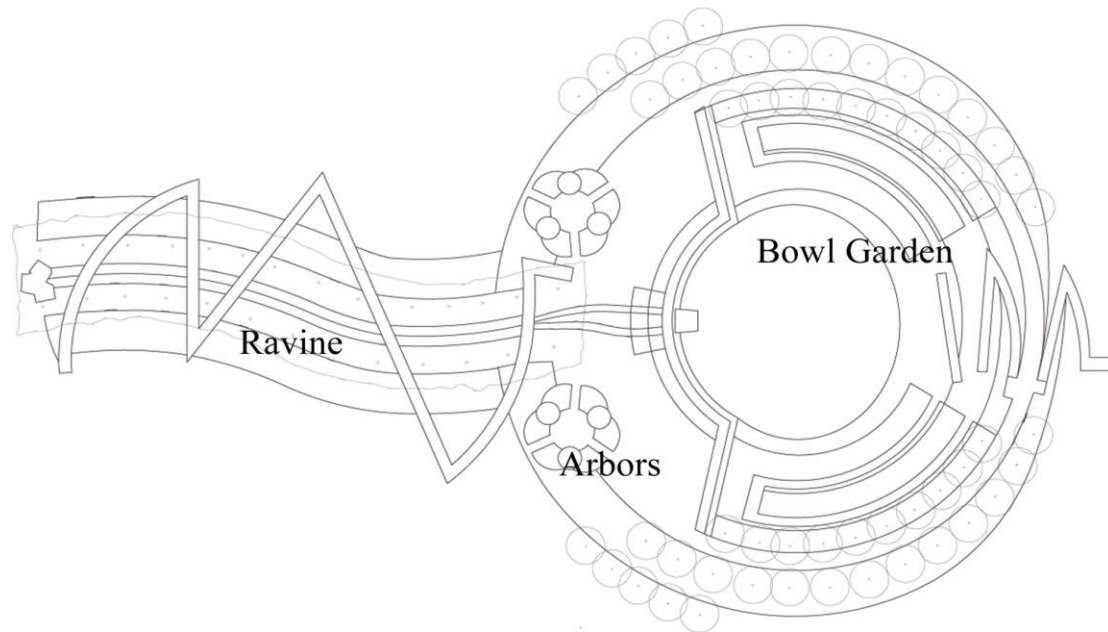


Figure 10. Plan view of the Central Garden

Irwin was ultimately dissatisfied with his early line paintings because, even though he had reduced the canvas image to a few lines on a monochrome ground, they seemed to be “about” the lines and the interaction between them. Whereas Irwin wanted to create a painting that wouldn’t be “about” anything. Weschler describes Irwin’s paintings at this point as being transitional “they are now addressing the root questions, which, as in philosophy and physics, are not about the play of superficial ideas or incidents at all. They’re about the basic relationships of the three or four primary aspects of existence in the world: being-in-time, for example, space and presence.”⁴⁰ The paintings were transitioning away from any possible articulate read relating to figure and ground and were instead an experiential process held by the viewer. This same tactile, experiential quality is what Irwin was creating in the Central Garden.

For Irwin the garden is not about water, or horticulture, or a formal expression of Euclid's geometry, it is "about" human perception and the experiential process of moving through space. The garden as medium has thrown off many of his followers and many landscape architects, because they have become familiar and comfortable with the "performance" of Irwin's art which has been predominately of a minimalist style. While Antonia Bostrom, Getty Curator of sculpture and decorative arts concedes, "Most visitors to the garden see the work as a fabulous garden with an incredible palette."⁴¹ Understanding the site commissioned work of art from the context of Irwin's artistic inquiry is essential.

As with most of Irwin's work since the 1960's, they have no existence outside of the viewer's participation. While Abstract Expressionist paintings can be discussed, photographed and talked about compositionally, Irwin's line drawings had to be confronted in person and operate in such a way that the energy and power of the piece can only be experienced directly. No image is recalled or transferable through another medium. This is why there is so little documentation of Irwin's work.

2.3 Dots and Disks. After Irwin's line drawings, came his dot and disk paintings. The curved shape of the "canvas" was beginning to bring the environment into the art experience. The dot paintings were a series of canvasses where small-colored dots were painted in a careful grid pattern alternating red and green dots so the dots actually cancelled each other out when held in view. This interaction of color created an energy and vibration in the painting. "One of the things that painters all along have known is that you build energy by the interaction between things, that one and one don't make two, but maybe five or eight or ten," (Weschler p 88). These perceptual interactions are applied to his work in the garden. For example, the red-orange

margin of the *phormium* plant glows when placed against the yellow-green and blue-green of the surrounding foliage and as it captures the sunlight. (see figure 11)



Figure 11. Where the orange foliage and flowers glow in Irwin's garden to the effect of what Joseph Albers describes as simultaneous contrast⁴²

While working on his disk paintings, in 1965, Irwin's work along with the work of seven other artists was being shown at the Sao Paulo Biennial. While Irwin never went to see the exhibition, he learned that two of his paintings had been destroyed within the first day of the show. Irwin recalls, "people attacked them, they cut them with knives, they threw things at them, they spit on them. I don't know what all was on them when they got back; it looked like Coca Cola. And they marked them all up, not just one person, apparently, but a number, because there were all these different gestures."⁴³ Irwin is still uncertain why the people in Sao Paulo reacted that way to his work, but he guesses that the paintings must have angered people as an

attack and a loss of value. An ironic response given the artist himself was dumping social, religious and political meaning out of his work entirely. Viewers supplied their own meaning to what was essentially a neutral canvas.

2.4 Scrim. The first public showing of one of Irwin's scrim installations was at the Museum of Modern Art in 1970-71, which was a covert operation, completed at night in an unused room of the museum. The museum had rejected then-curator Jennifer Licht's request to sponsor an exhibition of Irwin's work. As a result, the show was presented in a room that was not being used, and therefore the show was not officially recognized by the MoMA. By replacing the florescent tubes and alternating them with cool and warm tones, and by stretching a scrim piece below the lights, a second ceiling was formed. Upon entrance to the exhibit, a visitor could see both above and below. This work marks a beginning for Irwin of what he calls "site-conditioned" art, i.e., art that takes its formal cues from the environment, recognizing that the art object does not exist in a vacuum.

This covert exhibition was followed by similar works with scrim and lighting at Ace Gallery in Los Angeles, California. At Galerie Sonnabend in Paris, Irwin covered the lights with colored gel in complementary colors to play with effects as described by Joseph Albers in *Interactions of Color*; Irwin continued this application at Harvard's Fogg Museum and at Pace Gallery in New York.

The scrim installations became pivotal as Irwin developed the trajectory of his art into more and more site-conditioned works. While still executed inside the walls of the gallery, in *Black Line Volume* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 1975, Irwin placed a 4-1/2 inch thick black line of tape around the perimeter of the gallery forming a rectangular visual space. Irwin added lights to give the space volume and black tape at the base of the support

column. Irwin later recalls in article by Carol Diehl in *Art in America*, “about half of the museum employees asked me why I’d put the column in the middle of the room. And people would stick a hand out before stepping over the line, as if there were a scrim there or something.”⁴⁴ This transition piece addressed the environment in a way that would continue to be expressed in Irwin’s later outdoor locations.

Irwin focused his artistic pursuit toward phenomenological art and what he calls “site-generated,” as opposed to “site-dominant” works. Unlike a Henry Moore piece, which can be moved anywhere and still retain its significance, the work Irwin calls “site-generated” does not carry this type of embedded meaning within the object. Rather, the reason for being comes from the context itself. Both *Black Line Volume* and the early MoMA pieces explore meaning as site-generated.

“*One Wall Removed*” was Irwin’s 1980 installation in which he removed one wall of a studio space along Venice Boulevard in California and replaced the opening with a fabric scrim rectangle. The piece was really the embodiment of an argument between Irwin and the Los Angeles County Museum of Contemporary Art, which was meant to prove to museum board members that a traditional museum dedicated to collecting art could not reflect the changing nature of contemporary art. “*One Wall Removed*” was on a public street and had no title plaque designating the work as “Art” but yet was expressive of the contemporary ambition that no longer held “Art” to be object-based.

More recently, “*Prologue: x 18 3*” at the Dia Center for the Arts, Chelsea, New York and “*Excursus: Homage to the Square 3*” 1998-2000 are extensions of “*One Wall Removed*.” “*Prologue: x 18 3*” was installed within a Chelsea warehouse, which Irwin divided into 18 square foot sections with scrim extending to the ceiling and with door-sized entrances, allowing

passage into each interior corner. Irwin also stretched the scrim in front of the gallery windows, which tempered the natural light, and achieved what one critic described as “a dreamlike sense of irreality.”⁴⁵ Irwin seems to focus light, similar to the tall clear-story windows of Gothic cathedrals such as Chartres or Beauvais Cathedral. In these edifices, the windows create a dramatic luminosity.⁴⁶ However, Irwin supplements the religious narrative or a spiritual lifting of the soul toward heaven, with what Irwin sees as “the wonder of human potential to perceive.” Florescent tubes were also added vertically to each scrim enclosure and theatrical gels were added to the tubes in order to color the light diffused along the scrim walls. People moving through the exhibit also became part of the viewer’s experience. Other silhouettes came more or less into focus as people moved through the installation.

At these scrim and light installations, Irwin achieved what he had been after for years, a nonhierarchical art. The works could be entered from any direction and the viewer did not have any directional orientation. “For over 30 years Robert Irwin has been finding ever more economical and elegant ways to separate the art experience from the material means of its conveyance. In a two-part scrim-and-light installation at Dia, he takes this process a step further, creating a truly nonhierarchical art” (Diehl, p. 77).

2.5 Site Generated. Irwin’s scrim pieces, his installation work outside the gallery, and his teaching did not occur sequentially, but rather overlapped with one activity informing the other. From the 1970s to the current time, Irwin has been involved in producing many “site-generated” works of art. In 1979, at the University Art Museum at the University of California, Berkeley, in a piece titled “*Space as Support*,” Irwin wrestled with a particularly demanding and complex gallery space. The sculptural interior space was an effect of the complicated and visually demanding fan and stack geometry of the architecture. As a means of intervening between the

architecture and the gallery space, Irwin overlaid a second organizational scheme which arranged custom florescent tubes into an arrangement of equilateral triangles, buffering the architecture from the works displayed inside the gallery. Irwin's solution elegantly and simply mediated the overwhelming architectural expression with the intimacy of the human perceptual experience.

In 1983, at the Public Safety Building Plaza in Seattle, Irwin designed and constructed a work formed with Kolorgaard blue fencing, shaped into a square. The fence square was subdivided into nine, smaller, fenced-in squares, which were planted with plum trees and *sedum oreganium*. Irwin's original proposal for the plaza was for a hedge labyrinth that could be viewed from the office building and also walked through at ground level. The proposed labyrinth was not installed at the Seattle site, but appears with little modification in the bowl garden at the Central Garden. The work titled *9 Spaces, 9 Trees* is an arresting kinetic interplay between the layers of blue screening and the red-violet leaves of the trees.

Another project worth mentioning in this chapter is located at the University of California, San Diego. Completed in 1983 and entitled "*Two Running Violet V Forms*," the piece consists of stainless steel members with Kolorgaard fencing plastic, coated with blue-violet and interwoven into an existing eucalyptus grove (see figure 9). The setting gave Irwin the opportunity to express his artistic inquiry.

According to Irwin,

The natural confrontation is that rare occasion with the unsuspecting potential for letting us "see again." Not art per se, or ritual, but perceptual interaction with 'phenomena' unattended or overly habituated – an art that calls us to attend to the pure potential in our circumstances as a whole piece. Here the references of our knowing are not art history or the prior oeuvre of the artist, but rather the actual qualities of the situation and our "being" in it." (Robert Irwin)⁴⁷



Figure 12. Robert Irwin, “*Two Running Violet V Forms*,” University of California at San Diego.

2.6 Teaching. Irwin does not feel that society owes the artist a living and as such he has advised art students to “structure their finance in such a way that they do not have to rely on the sale of their art” (Weschler, p. 139). For Irwin, this meant teaching for a few years at a time and lecturing. During the mid and late 1960s, a majority of his income came from betting on horse races. Weschler believes that this experience has had a profound effect on the balance of logic and intuition expressed in Irwin’s art. Irwin taught at Chaunard from 1957-58 and then at The University of California, Los Angeles, in 1962. In 1968, Irwin developed the graduate program at the University of California. Irvine, Ed Ruscha and Larry Bell were Irwin’s students at this time. Irwin has never stayed long in academia in a single place, but he continues to teach in exclusive response

to invitations to lecture or invitations to participate in symposia and seminars with students and professionals.

Irwin also teaches on a one-on-one level. In a recent article in *Metropolis*, Philip Noble describes a conversation he had with Irwin on the topic of phenomenology:

“Phenomenology, the study of the experience of reality, has long been a staple canard of artists and architects who sought to dress their practices with cloudy language... phenomenology always seemed to be poorly served, tarted up to obscure.” However, the author found Irwin’s clear and incisive explanation on the subject refreshing.

To explain the phenomenal, author Noble quotes Irwin’s example of shadows, “because the shadow, from any quantitative point of view, doesn’t exist... But in the realm of perception – and we’re not getting mystical here –you can’t see without shadows.”⁴⁸ This emphasis on qualities and presence is exactly what can be difficult to grasp and at the same time is precisely why Irwin refused to have his early work photographed. Thus exists the non-object, non-hierarchical realm he explores with his work.

2.7 Recent Work. Irwin’s work at Dia: Beacon, like his work at the University of California at Berkeley, is an intervention or mediation between the architecture and the works of art displayed in the gallery spaces. In equal proportion to the severe criticism expressed by the landscape architecture community to the Central Garden, comes an apparent embrace by the architectural community of Dia: Beacon. Irwin, along with OpenOffice Architects, retrofitted a former Nabisco printing factory into Dia’s new gallery space, displaying predominantly large scale works by minimalist artists.

Dia hired Robert Irwin to select the building site and act as an architect, landscape architect, lighting designer, and interior designer. “The Dia Art Foundation disdained the prevailing trophy-museum ethos – a typically iconoclastic move for this quirky, yet influential institution.”⁴⁹ By hiring Irwin as the lead designer, the institution gained a beautifully lighted and scaled space, which showcased the work of artists and allows the building to complement rather than compete with the art displayed. While OpenOffice dealt with safety and habitability, including code compliance, the engineers dealt with building functions. While the consultants worked in collaboration, Irwin’s concern was with qualitative properties and presence.

The Dia Art Foundation was founded in 1974 by Philippa de Meniel and Heiner Friederich, with the ambition of supporting artists who abandoned the traditional museums to work at large-scale earthworks and structures, like Turrell’s Opus One. Turrell’s project presents an ambitious earth work, which resembles a large, infrastructure undertaking in scale and building material.

Dia wanted to house works of a scale that could never be displayed in their Chelsea, New York, gallery space; Dia wanted to provide artists like Donald Judd, Walter de Maria, and Richard Serra, a place suitable to their artistic concerns. The 260,000 square feet of gallery space provided the artists sufficient space to engage with the museum-going public in ways not possible in a traditional format. The design task for the renovation and remodeling of the 1929 Nabisco printing plant was a task of editing—not making—an object.

The print factory is a brick structure with paneled windows along each wall in a tightly geometric space. These architectural elements inside and the surrounding

environment outside, together with the museum program and budget, are what Irwin responds to as “conditional art.” OpenOffice worked with engineers in Aup to arrange the air-conditioning units so that the units did not cast shadows through the skylights. Much of Irwin’s architectural work at Dia: Beacon was to focus and diffuse the natural light. Here, as well as at the Central Garden, Irwin made site conditions, such as lighting, circulation, and building functions, the basis of his artistic response.

Along with this architectural work, Irwin designed the entrance sequence, including an entrance gate, parking court, and landscaped gardens and spaces surrounding the building. The parking court is an elegant resolution of vehicular requirements and aesthetic concerns. The curbs are constructed from cor-ten; a grid of Winter King Hawthorn trees frame the court. The West Garden is a walled, narrow, linear garden off the west corridor of the converted factory. The 1,200 square-foot garden is accessed by a series of axial steps and ramps and a double row of flowering cherry trees. The walled garden is tightly geometric, reinforcing its narrow and rectangular enclosure. The cherry trees are under planted with lavender, and the ends are planted with a square of Rosa “Iceberg.” Berberis, European Hornbeam, English Yew, peonies and hydrangeas make up the very traditional and gardenesque plant palette for the West Garden.

Lyn Rice of OpenOffice, in an interview with Irwin about their collaboration, noted, “What is most valuable for us in our collaboration with artists is the way in which it forces us to question our own thinking about architecture. A good example of this happened while working ... on the design of the entry sequence at Beacon.”⁵⁰ Dia: Beacon has no formal lobby; instead, the parking area functions as a lobby where people gather, making the transition from arrival to experience the art. People get out of their cars and enter the building, directly experiencing art without the reorientation of a lobby.

According to Irwin, in architecture's ambition to become sculpture, its purpose is missed, which is to compose human habitation and shelter. Claes Oldenburg noted during the Chinati Foundation Art and Architecture Symposium, in Marfa, Texas, that "The difference between art and architecture is that architecture has windows and toilets."⁵¹ The faint boundary between art and architecture is a popular topic and the subject of conferences and discussion. However, the results of these discussions seem to favor increasing the overlap between the disciplines. Irwin recalls that in a 2003 round table conference sponsored by the Weisman Foundation, which included artists and architects, "they began by having each of us introduce ourselves. What was surprising is that each and every one of the distinguished architects... Cesar Pelli, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, et al., wanted you to know that each of them were artists. Me architect? No."⁵²

To Irwin, the distinction between architect and artist is much clearer: "Whereas architecture must address habitability of spaces and places, the role of art is a pure inquiry into the human potential to perceive, know, and understand the world."⁵³ Robert Irwin continues to be at the forefront of contemporary art, both in his production of new work, and his writing and lecturing. From December of 2006 to February of 2007, Irwin's new work, "*Who's Afraid of Red Yellow and Blue*," was on exhibit at Pace Wildenstein Gallery in New York City, New York. Irwin suspended red, yellow and blue panels of honeycomb aluminum from the ceiling of the gallery. On the floor directly below were corresponding panels. "*Who's Afraid of Red Yellow and Blue*" is an example of Irwin's unrelenting pursuit of perceptual experience.

CHAPTER 3: MODERNISM

It is not the ambition in this brief chapter to recall the body of work or evolution of the tradition of modern landscape architecture, a tradition that has already been canonized in several works. *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, by Marc Treib, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape*, by Peter Walker and Melanie Simo, and *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* by Christopher Tunnard are among many important texts. What will be established in this chapter is an argument as to why Robert Irwin's Central Garden is not, as he claims, "the first modern garden."⁵⁴ This chapter will also establish the premises that the Central Garden is a postmodern garden.

Modernism did not begin in the early twentieth century; it began with Descartes. Of course, the contemporaries of Descartes, Bacon and Galileo, questioned divine or revealed knowledge and established instead a new basis for knowledge, centered not on external immutable forms but on human knowledge and observation.⁵⁵ Critical to the task of describing a formal expression of postmodernism is an epistemological understanding of modernism. In differentiating between modern and postmodern landscape architecture, it is critical to not solely rely on interpreting the "isms" through extant and theoretical works of practitioners. This chapter presents a lens for seeing. This broad, philosophic approach has become an advantage in understanding the work of Robert Irwin, because he is as much a philosopher as an artist. To understand his work is to understand his questions.

This chapter is arranged under three descriptive sub-titles: Coherence, Timelessness, and Reason. Each section will draw from a single, specifically-built garden or landscape to illustrate more universal and theoretical influences on the practice of modern landscape architecture.

3.1 Introduction. If the Enlightenment established the project of philosophical and scientific modernism, then the Bauhaus in Germany, led by Walter Gropius in the early to mid-1920s, established the project and aesthetics of architectural and later, landscape architectural, modernism.⁵⁶ Today, architectural and landscape architectural modernism has ossified into a recognizable style, evidenced by publications like *Dwell* and other popular lifestyle and shelter magazines. More telling may be the proliferation of conferences and articles focused on preserving the legacy of modern landscape architecture, iconic projects which are now the subject of preservationists.⁵⁷ While modernism's relevance and application to physical design continues to be worked out by architects and landscape architects in innovative ways, a new set of questions has been added to those of modernism, which in turn responds to the cultural, economic, and ecological realities of today. Although science has not exhausted the applications of Einstein's theories on physics, contemporary science has imagined new ways to understand the universe. With names like "Algorithmic Complexity Theory" or "Superstring Theory," these scientific theories propose an alternative model of the universe as one quite different from the universe described by Euclid, whose geometries and order are reiterated in modernist landscapes.

It is also important to note that modernism, as expressed and practiced in literature and art, differs from that which has evolved as the body of work of landscape modernism. Early modernist literature questioned Enlightenment ideals with works drawn from the naturalism of Emile Zola to the automatic writing of Gertrude Stein. The experiment of analytical Cubism for the visual arts explores the interpenetration of space and time, together with the pulling apart of pieces and reassembly of objects. Yet this experiment holds little reciprocal expression in modern landscape architecture.

The Bauhaus School originated an emphasis on regional and craft ideals in collaboration with a machine technology: “[In] [t]he functional design and industrial materials of the school’s new quarters... [by] abandoning handiwork ornament in favor of a more abstract architectural aesthetic based on composition alone, architects could bring a more commodious life to more people than ever before.”⁵⁸ It is important to note the social implications of modernism within the context of the time. The middle class or working class of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century became the revolutionary class and thus played principles into the work of landscape architect Dan Kiley. This setting will be elaborated upon in the “reason” section of this chapter.

Philip Johnson’s sculpture garden at the Museum of Modern Art will provide the starting point for a discussion on coherence and progress, illustrating how architectural modernism began to be translated into the garden, particularly as an example of interpenetration of architectural space. The Johnson-designed MoMA Sculpture Garden is particularly relevant, because of similarities to the Getty Trust, i.e., the ambitions and conditions of each project. The section on timelessness will focus on Peter Walkers’ Toyota Municipal Museum of Art.

These examples were chosen for the study’s focus on the formal expression of modernism, in a context similar to that which surrounded the Central Garden. What will appear glaringly left out of this chapter is any discussion of ecology and the important scientific achievement of developing a systematic approach to land design. This omission is fitting, because Irwin’s Central Garden plan completely ignored ecological concerns, and it made scant contextual connection with its site. Decisions about plant selection, drainage, and long-term maintenance were at the service of artistic effect. All of the built projects highlighted in this

chapter have a dominating, architectural component and thus deal with the question of landscape relations to architecture.

3.2 Coherence. Modernist thought presumes a coherent reality in the world, which can be known and described through human observation and application of the scientific method. The modern world view may at first appear intractable from landscape design, due to a focus on the notions of progress in history and science, strengthened by the evolutionary view of moving toward increased perfection. However, any comprehensive history of design points to the connections between rituals, beliefs, and social organization that influence the ways in which humans manipulate the landscape.⁵⁹ The social agenda of Progressive Era modernism is evidenced in large-scale urban housing projects and parks. For many, belief in the progress of mankind came to a stop with the atrocities of World War II. However, the continuation of a universal aesthetic and the potential for technology to improve the human condition underlies modern landscape design.

Philip Johnson, an iconoclast to some critics and an ungrounded individual to those who would have preferred the architect to stick decidedly to a more singular pursuit. Johnson's 1953 design for the garden was seminal to landscape architecture, primarily because it extended the principles of a) open plan, b) omni-directional organization, c) interpenetration, d) articulation and e) extension of the spatial concepts of Mies van der Rohe, especially as expressed in the Barcelona Pavilion.

In a forward to *Philip Johnson Writings*, architectural critic Vincent Scully says of Johnson "because the Glass House is the heart of what Johnson believes in, which is nothing less than the ageless humanist dream stated in contemporary terms and embodied in a contemporary form."⁶⁰ Emancipation of the individual is evidenced in Johnson Glass House. A more prosaic

extension of democratic living by elimination of ornament is seen as well: all accomplished in favor of a classless social hierarchy. Speaking of such ideals as expressed in Johnson's Glass House, Peter Eisenman averred, "Philip Johnson may be the last architect of the Enlightenment" (p. 10).

Perhaps the crucial aspect of modernism expressed in the MoMA sculpture garden is the engagement within architectural space of what was the implied space in cubist paintings. Cubist canvases were understood stereometrically, yet showed an absence in the pictorial logic of previous perspective and figure ground relationships. Space and time were continuous and non-linear, in contrast to the clarity of hierarchy and axis in classicist spatial organization.

Johnson's plan for the MoMA Sculpture Garden centered around two shifted rectangular pools. Johnson describes the rectangular pools as canals; each pool is bridged with thin slabs of marble and set within a paved surface of Vermont grey and white marble. The space is divided into a lower and upper level. Plantings of birch trees, weeping beech trees, and groundcover penetrate the space with a sloped planting of ground cover to accommodate the differentiation in elevation to the upper café terrace. Opposite the museum entry and enclosing the garden is a perimeter wall, joined with constructed and vegetative screens which modulate circulation and establish visual relationships to the sculptural works situated within the garden space. Laurie Olin described the impact of the spatial organization of elements in an essay on the garden: "The elements slide and shift to create a reveling and discovery of space which is not read in one singular axial view. But as can be seen expressed in the Barcelona Pavilion is a shifting non stable center. The flow of the space is more continuous and establishes a circular rather than linear movement of visitors through the space."⁶¹

Johnson worked with landscape architects James Fanning in the 1950s and Robert Zion in the 1960s. Here the MoMA Sculpture Garden articulates what has become a modernist conception of planting design. The weeping birches highlight the sculptural, organic figures of the trees, setting them off from a tectonic background of walls and screens. This effect has been used more in early modernist gardens, whereas the sculptural and architectural use of plants as landscape elements, fulfilling functional requirements, echoes the late modernism use of plants which will be elaborated further in the section on Peter Walker. The other expression of modernist treatment of planting is the singular monoculture of ground cover, which also opposes the picturesque compositions of plants of the earlier Beaux Arts tradition. The plants follow the architectural reduction of form to essential properties.

Johnson's expression of procession, in guiding how the viewer moves through the space and then how the space unfolds and reveals itself as the viewer moves through a building, is critical to understanding the landscape devices used to direct movement within the sculpture garden. The use of planting, architectural screening, and overlapping in plan produces not only an interpenetration of space, but also a juxtaposition of endlessness and multiple views. This abolition of axis will be further explored in this chapter on the discussion of the modernist axioms described by Kiley, Rose, and Eckbo.

The treatment of the garden's plantings, designed by Zion and Breen, contrast sharply with a architectural and sculptural control reminiscent of the French classicist model expressed in the work of Peter Walker. The planting in the MoMA sculpture garden is expressive of its organic forms, set off from the clear and singular vision of the architecture. Evidence of the lingering influence the MoMA Sculpture Garden has had on subsequent gardens can be seen in

the new Olin Partnership-designed Stark Sculpture Garden at the J. Paul Getty Center, which looks like a second or third generation MoMA Sculpture Garden.⁶²

In a lecture given to the students at Harvard University School of Architectural Design in 1954, Johnson described what he saw as the “Seven Crutches of Modern Architecture.” These seven crutches clearly resonate with the writings of Kiley, Eckbo, and Rose, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The succinct clarity of Johnson’s lecture is very useful in understanding the pivotal points on which modernism and postmodernism diverge. The lecture in 1954 was intended as a cautionary warning against any comfortable or synthesizing rules of functionalist architecture.

Johnson’s first warning was against the “Crutch of History or Historical Precedence” as a basis for making architecture. However, by as early as 1954, historical precedence began to be abandoned. Following this was a warning against confusing pretty drawing with making architecture. The “Crutch of Pretty Drawing” implied the dominance of a clear plan and clear expression. The next crutch Johnson warned against was the “Crutch of Utility,” which is the assumption that if a building works it is good architecture, yet all buildings work. “The Crutch of Comfort” describes the warning against relying on environmental controls in the making of architecture, followed by a warning against the “Crutch of Cheapness,” which excuses bad architecture due to a low budget, as well as Johnson’s warning against the “Crutch of Serving the Client,” which Johnson distinguishes from the art of architecture. The last warning is the “Crutch of Structure” which is especially salient today, when many consider that architecture pursuant of sculptural form is missing the human need.⁶³ Sculpture is not architecture, says Johnson, “Sculpture alone cannot result in architecture because architecture has problems that Bucky Fuller has not faced, like how do you get in and out.”⁶⁴

3.3 Reason. The Henry Moore Sculpture Garden at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, designed by Dan Kiley between 1987-1989 shares many formal similarities with Walker's landscape at the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, discussed later in this chapter. The seventeen-acre site of the Moore Sculpture Garden can be considered a synthesis to a clear set of axial relationships and a grid of trees, and to alternating bands of lawn and ground cover, which provide a sculptural and geometric expression to the grounds. The existing museum building informs the exterior garden spaces. Mirroring the building mass and volume are two bosques of ginkgo trees, with a series of lawn terraces and steps leading out to the open axial lawn area. Framing the lawn and dividing the more informal and naturalistic park areas are two allees of linden trees. Within the meandering groupings of trees and informal paths are placed most of the Moore sculptures, under the mature pines and hardwood trees along the periphery of the formal lawn.⁶⁵ Kiley, like Walker, shares a commitment to classicism and modernism. Peter Walker writes of Kiley's work, "his work *is* architecture in its rhythmic modulation of geometric point grids, its direct extension of ground planes, and its often flawless extension of interior space to the larger, continuous space out of doors."⁶⁶

Kiley's work reveals a commitment to classic French landscape design with his elegant resolution of classical hierarchy and axis, yet his work is clearly transformed with a modernist sensibility. Working from the modernist notion of landscape as an extension to buildings, rather than as separate from the building, Kiley at the Moore Sculpture Garden carefully manipulates the language of landscape, tree canopy and ground plane, to describe an architectural outdoor space. Influence of the MoMA sculpture garden on Kiley's garden may be seen in the similar monocultures and planar use of ground cover.

Marc Trieb, in his essay “Axioms for Modern Landscape Architecture,”⁶⁷ summarizes the operatives of landscape architecture at a time when Dan Kiley, Garrett Eckbo, and James Rose were writing and creating projects that would define the modern practice of landscape architecture. The principles have clear parallels with Johnson’s “seven crutches.”

Like Johnson’s first described “crutch”, Trieb’s summary axioms describe “*A denial of historical style,*”⁶⁸ and thereby embraces a functionalist approach to landscape design, taking as its premise the existing conditions of the site and program. This constitutes a foundation embedded in many objections to Irwin’s Central Garden, in regard to Irwin’s approach of incorporating several historical styles into a single garden. Modernism’s notion of an ever present now has created what postmodern philosopher Jaques Derrida described as a “culture of glass” where the traces of history and the human are erased. The notion of postmodernism recognized that history is fragmented and relative to the position of the viewer or historian.

The second axiom outlined by Trieb describes landscapes as spatial volumes rather than patterns. That landscapes are for people was addressed in Garrett Eckbo’s definitive book of the same title. Concern for the middle class was expressed in the modernist landscape. The modernist notion focuses on new relationships between mass production, home, and leisure. In the modernist sense, these relationships view a modernist garden as an occupied space, rather than a space that is merely viewed. Another axiom described by Trieb is the “destruction of the axis,” following the pursuit of the cubist conception of space. A classic example can be seen in the MoMA sculpture garden, where the space is modulated by overlapping planes, rather than by classicist symmetry. The fifth axiom summarized by Trieb is “*Plants are used for their individual qualities as botanical entities and sculpture.*”⁶⁹ This is similar to Le Corbusier’s treatment and depiction of plants in his architectural drawings where naturalistic and untouched

plants, a type of neutral field, were distinguished from plants as organic sculptural and individual elements. Nowhere in modernist gardens does one see exuberant and expressive combinations of plants. In modernist gardens, the artistic treatment of plants is similar to modernist land zoning, i.e., with contained homogenous units rather than intermixing of plant species. Another clear expression of modernist garden design is the clear and direct relationship; between the garden and the landscape. By thinking of the landscape as an extension of the living space rather than a passive expression, a break was made from a landscape that had become a decorative addition to the home or estate.

The following observation by Anita Berrizbeitia on Dan Kiley's work builds on these axioms of modern landscape architecture: Plant material is laid out according to the irreducible logic of orientation, soil types, widths of street, and climate control. In other words, the landscape elements are nothing other than [a] means to achieve specific programmatic ends."⁷⁰ Robert Irwin attempted to subvert such a conception by refusing functionalist conventions of planting design. The result at the Central Garden importantly proffers an alternative paradigm through the conception of a landscape planting that holds its own set of limitations, yet primarily utilizes plants to create experiences.

3.4 Timelessness. Dan Kiley synthesized modernist ideals with classic concepts of order and hierarchy. In a similar synthesis applied through ongoing practice, Peter Walker's work expresses the order of classic French landscapes and conceptual Minimalism. Fascinated with the work of French Formalist Andre Le Notre and at one time claiming to desire the effect of Andre Le Notre, Walker has combined this overshadowing influence with his love of minimalist art. Walker particularly embraced the sculptural work of artists Donald Judd and Carl Andre. Interestingly, the late Donald Judd was a great friend and contemporary of Robert Irwin. Le

Notre and Judd's artistic or formal practices are seemingly dissimilar, yet paradoxically, their works become similar in a strict control of natural forms, coupled with a commitment to order and geometry. Whether there are flourishes of French parterres or whether there exists positive and negative voids of a late Judd—geometry and order are primary.

Peter Walker, William Johnson, and Partners' garden in Toyota City, located in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, present an example of landscape minimalism. The landscape for the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art surrounds a recent museum structure, as well as an ancient tea house and castle. The minimalist museum, newly designed by architects Taniguchi and Associates, lies in sharp contrast to the tea house and castle. Walker resolved the discrepancy between the old and new structures by dividing the ancient structures from the museum by means of a native forest in a naturalistic setting. Then Walker defined the new structure in a clear expression, choosing a grid overlaid with direct orthogonal paths and a fractured, asymmetrical path to delineate the edge of a shallow pond. The result presented an entire landscape with clarity and purity of form and materials.

The new museum structure defines the eastern boundary of the site. A viewing terrace directly off that point overlooks a shallow pool with a "Judd-like"⁷¹ circular air fountain. The terrace extends the internal geometries of the museum building. Lining the shallow pool are diagonal bands of stone, which in turn are reflected in the diagonal bands of turf and ground cover. The sculpture gardens are to the north and south of the pond. Walker's work here is clearly a compositional expression of the ground plane. As an expression of landscape minimalism, the artistic endeavor signals a logical terminus of a modernist experiment in landscape architecture.

A description of the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art reads, “The subtleties of the dialogue between old and new are considered throughout: the entrance walkway to the new museum, while proportionally designed to the modernist scale of the new structure, uses irregular paving stones that relate to those of the ancient castle.”⁷² The entrance walkway stone pattern abstracts and stylizes the complexity of the castle into a planar composition. The typically sculptural and architectural usage of plant material is also evident in this landscape space. Trees are arranged in a tight grid and the ground cover follows the same orthogonal pattern in a slight modulation of the ground plane. This careful patterning, based on French Formalism, is presented as minimalist expression. Clearly, a subtle dialogue between old and new is more akin to an expression of the dialogic opposition of nature and science, or nature and reason.

Modernism’s belief in an Apollonian, timeless, and never-changing world of order and symmetry is rooted in philosophy and science and expressed in the work of Peter Walker. According to Leah Levy, Walker’s work exhibits “a strong commitment to the value of the abstract, the serial, and the geometric as means to accessing revelations in and through nature.”⁷³ Although Walker writes of his interest in phenomenology and of the inherent presence of moving around in a landscape,⁷⁴ that interest is not seen in his designs. The tightly controlled manipulation of space and plants fail to engage the phenomenological process of change over time in an experiential way. Walker’s work is rather characterized as timeless and immutable. In his essay entitled “Classicism, Modernism, and Minimalism in the Landscape,” Walker explains: “It is the formal reinvention and the quest for primary purity and human meaning that signify its spiritual strength: an interest in mystery and non-referential content are thereby linked to the quest of classical thought.”⁷⁵

Modernism has done much for the profession of landscape architecture by drawing more of the world into the realm of landscape architecture, and by developing a formal structure and social significance to the field. Modern landscape architecture also made important connections between artistic practice and experiment and the practice of making space. Philip Johnson's MoMA sculpture garden and Dan Kiley's Moore Sculpture Garden, together with Walker's Toyota Municipal Museum of Art garden, remain important and transformative works of modern landscape architecture; as such, these gardens provide the foundation for new experiments. According to Jane Holtz Kay, "Landscape Architects acknowledge in their art, if not in their articulation, that ancestral vision is part of their identity. In short, modernism may not be paradise, but it is one of many Edens in our pluralist age."⁷⁶

CHAPTER 4: POSTMODERNISM

The task of determining whether or not the Central Garden is a postmodern garden will be the job of historians. Nevertheless, this essay argues that the Central Garden clearly displays characteristics that align with postmodern theory and practice. Postmodern theory evolved simultaneously within various disciplines, influencing visual arts, architecture, science, and humanities. Although various disciplines diverge and apply different applications of the postmodern notion, there exists identifiable meaning and shared impulse.⁷⁷ The evolution of postmodern theory is inclusive of architecture and urbanism, most notably in the works and writing of Robert Venturi, Charles Jencks, and Jane Jacobs. Yet landscape architecture has not produced such evolving theory and practice.

A familiar refrain among design aesthetes is that they like postmodern theory—just not the buildings. This discrepancy should suggest that postmodern concepts must be further mined for emergent forms and not dismissed with the first experiment, that of applying a non-transformative combination of historical styles. It may be recalled that the relevancy of modernism in landscape architecture was endangered by an initial round of criticisms. In 1948, Christopher Tunnard noted in his forward to *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*,⁷⁸ that “If the modern movement does not achieve recognition in the next five years, it will be dead.” In like manner, postmodernism must be explored before its history is written. The ambition of this chapter is to present a coherent definition of postmodern landscape architecture. Chapter Five argues that the Central Garden should be situated within evolving postmodern landscape architecture.

In the same manner that Romanticism, Taoism, Classicism and Functionalism find expression in the landscape, the large and influential body of work in the postmodern pattern will

also find expression in the landscape. James Corner contends,⁷⁹ that landscape architects have yet to produce postmodern works. However, finding the postmodern landscape is not a matter of invention, but rather a matter of naming and discussing what has already emerged. Scant material is available on postmodern landscape architectural theory. Therefore, this investigation relies on postmodern ideas from various disciplines such as architecture, philosophy and the visual arts, to generate and extend the basic tenets of landscape postmodernism.

4.1 Introduction. Postmodernism carries the stigma of an incomprehensible, morally bankrupt, and vaguely threatening doctrine. To work against this ambiguity, this chapter defines those characteristics of postmodernism that permeate and overlap the various disciplines. The summaries presented here rely not on any comprehensive reading of the primary texts of postmodernism, but rests on the synthesis of others, most notably: *The Postmodernism Reader: Foundational Texts*,⁸⁰ *European Thought and Culture in the 20th Century*,⁸¹ and *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*.⁸² Several books by Charles Jencks⁸³ and Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*⁸⁴ also shape the discussion of this chapter. As background to a complex and infinitely nuanced body of thought, these fundamental texts provide a broad based viewpoint for revealing the influences of postmodernism on built landscapes.

At its core, postmodernism presents a critique of modernism. Just as modernism draws intellectual patrimony from the Enlightenment, postmodernism reconsiders the divide between romanticism and classicism.⁸⁵ Postmodern thought may be characterized as questioning any totalizing or universal order and offering in place of that order, a description of the contingencies and fragmentation of social life and personal experience.⁸⁶ "Postmodernism has moved beyond both Enlightenment modernity and literary modernism. It claims that objects are never simply

‘there’ as the Enlightenment assumed; objects are ‘constructed’ by cultural discourses.”⁸⁷ Such post-structuralist thinking remarkably impacted postmodern architecture by the concept that there are shifting cultural constructions which evolve through dialogic interactions, rather than coherent and immutable truths. An example of this can be seen in Foucault’s conception that madness only exists because language created madness. The concept first formed in literature and the arts, followed by architecture, and is now in evidence in landscape architecture. Cultural construction may be seen in the Central Garden as a combination of fragmented, past garden traditions into a new expression. This expression defines a new reality, absent of any revivalist longing or even a site specific past. Irwin’s disregard of an “authentic” approach to garden history disturbs modernists assumption of a universal history.

In 1926, theologian Bernard Bell provided the earliest usage of the term postmodernism when he averred that the postmodern questioned “mankind’s ability to discover the underlying principles that govern nature and societies through the right use of reason.”⁸⁸ The theologian also believed that modern faith in scientific objectivity left individuals spiritually weak and consequently, emptied life of metaphysical awe and wonder. Similarly, Irwin believes that we have habituated perceptual experience, awe, and wonder from our sensibilities. Irwin’s perceptions of awe and wonder proceeds not from spiritual sources, but rather from what he described as the wonder of human perception.

Western civilization has invested tremendous creative effort to create formal and symbolic representations of reality through science, art, and the humanities. Darwinism presented a view of history showing man and organisms evolving along a clear linear path. Alternately, postmodernism posits that history is non-linear and rejects the liberal humanist conception that society is moving toward emancipation. These postmodern ideas can be

unsettling to culture. In fact one of the reasons Robert Irwin rejects postmodernism is due to its attack on reason.

In the opinion of postmodern American poet Charles Olson, “Western civilization had closed itself off from what was fundamental or authentic to the human experience. The fully authentic experience of life was no longer possible in Western civilization because its intellectual and spiritual orientation was overly rationalized.”⁸⁹ The hostility of postmodernism to Western religion seem to diffuse when one considers that Thomas Aquinas essentially joined reason to religious faith, and that Kierkegaard claimed that faith and reason were necessarily separate. In the perspective of the pendulum swing of history, postmodernism’s attack on the totalizing or universal can perhaps be taken in stride. Postmodernism’s reexamination of mysticism, multiplicity, affinities with Romanticism, and earlier primitive modes of thought becomes a refreshing alternative to any singular deterministic world view.

The postmodern identification of fragmentation as an alternative to the hierarchies and unities of inherited cultural truths presents an equally threatening opposition to the modern belief in a unified, coherent world inhabited by coherent individuals. This unified coherent world view is based on a religious conception of God as architect putting the universe in motion, by setting the basic laws and allowing it to function on its own. A parallel picture of a coherent world is the Cartesian idea of binary opposition—good and evil, order and chaos. These oppositions do not exist in much of Eastern thought, where good and evil coexists and Hindu deities have good and evil personas, and representations of deities depict these conflicting elements as parts of a whole, rather than as separate entities.⁹⁰ This type of conflicted complexity is more typical of postmodern ideas of culture and the individual.

This chapter is divided into three sub-categories: Contingency, Organic Reality, and Fragmentation. Martha Schwartz's work on the Whitehead Institute Splice Garden will illustrate how contingency relates to linguistic theories which suggest that truth is a set of competing languages or symbols, expressed through Schwartz's subversive use of materials and symbolic references. Charles Jencks' *Garden of Cosmic Speculation* appears to illustrate these scientific theories, but presents an ideal place to explore the postmodern expression of organic reality in the landscape. David Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, described "chaotic currents of change" and fragmentation individually and culturally. This fixture of postmodern existence will be explored as it relates to the work of Bernard Tschumi at Parc de la Villette.

4.2 Contingency. Contingency clearly illustrates a transitional phase for the postmodern landscape, where several axioms of modernism began to be subverted. The progress of history and the distinction between high and low culture are directly considered in several works of Martha Schwartz. Schwartz's work may be considered avant-garde, yet it cannot be considered entirely postmodern, because Schwartz's built projects, writings, and recorded interviews reveal tendencies that are more typically modern in nature. Modernity emphasized the unique vision of the artist. In contrast to the modern individual genius, the postmodern views the artist as an example of cultural discourse.⁹¹ Schwartz has clearly sought to express her vision as art per se. Schwartz's work, stylistically recognizable, bears the imprint of the artist. Further, Schwartz's work evokes the stance of postmodern artist Robert Rauschenberg, who claimed that art could be made with anything or be about anything. Yet Schwartz's landscapes display little of the transformative nature of Rauschenberg's work. Suggesting the modern version of Marcel Duchamp, who famously signed a toilet and declared it art, Schwartz's trademark, composed of aluminum palm trees and plastic geraniums, make a similar claim.

Schwartz's work commits to the primacy of geometry and reality and the universal order so implied. Schwartz's work characterizes the first-phase of postmodern landscape architecture, based on a non-transformative collage of the signs and symbols of history and popular culture. Schwartz's work may be considered rigorously conceptual. In fact, Tim Richardson, in the introduction to the book, *The Vanguard Landscapes of Martha Schwartz*, describes Schwartz as "a leader of a tiny group of conceptualist landscape designers now practicing."⁹²

Schwartz's Bagel Garden in 1980 delivered a transformative moment for landscape architecture as Schwartz challenged the modernist axiom of truth in materials by varnishing bagels and laying them in a linear arrangement on a bed of purple gravel within a boxwood-hedged garden courtyard. Schwartz recalled, "I now realize that this little project was a powerful and lucky first-step into the profession. It kick-started my career, established me as a presence in the profession and created a mark in the sand that eventually defined the beginning of the post-modern era in landscape architecture."⁹³

Her projects rely strongly on vision and culture commentary, presented through her use of color and an irreverent use of materials and historical style, as seen in the Whitehead Institute Splice Garden. This garden, an important first step in the assimilation of cultural identity, questioned traditional meaning and brought both periphery and leftover spaces into the realm of landscape design.

The Whitehead Institute's Splice Garden in Cambridge, Massachusetts was completed in 1986; the garden represents an important work of landscape architecture. Its tiny rooftop site, a 25' by 35' space, brings traditional landscapes, through abstraction and conception, into an innovative context and materiality. Approximately one-half of the rooftop garden is constructed of Astroturf, green plastic plants and aquarium gravel, composed to resemble a French *parterre*

garden with its boxwood-like hedges and pom-pom topiaries. The other half of the garden resembles a traditional Zen rock garden, complete with raked gravel and stones of topiary pom-poms, but with the use of plastic plant material and green aquarium gravel. Schwartz juxtaposed the Zen garden along a diagonal line which cuts through the rooftop site. A faux French *parterre* subverts both the notions of truth in materials and traditional historical context. However, this is entirely a conceptual garden, and the experience becomes an intellectual one. Conceived as sculpture, the garden is meant to be viewed, not occupied. The splice garden offers no multiple views or interpretations or any sensory experience beyond the visual. This is a familiar limitation of early postmodern works, in which the impact dissipates after the initial shock or comic response.

The Splice Garden, commissioned by Director David Baltimore, was conceived as a visual landscape for a faculty lounge and adjacent classroom in the Whitehead Institute. The design of the Splice Garden responded to the given conditions of the site, i.e., a rooftop with no access to water and no load-bearing capacity, which precluded the possibility of plants that required soil. The garden had a low-construction budget and no maintenance budget, which suggested that the garden would not be a true garden, but rather a simulacrum. As a result, the garden would present signs and symbols which could only be read as a garden.

Schwartz sees the Splice Garden as polemic, in regard to the issues upon which the work is based: cultural representation, rather than the elegant execution of programmatic and aesthetic concerns. Schwartz also viewed the landscape as an opportunity to subvert the romantic notion of pristine nature which the artist thinks does not exist.⁹⁴ Much of Schwartz's work stands in opposition to the notion of landscape as an extension of architecture or worse, as a neutral podium for architecture.

Elizabeth Meyer, in the essay “Transfiguration of the Commonplace,” posited Schwartz’s work as exemplifying a postmodern practice, based on a “challenge to the conceptual boundaries of a discipline.”⁹⁵ Meyer appears to be using the term *postmodern* interchangeably with the definition of avant-garde. The exception came when Meyer observed, “by ironically folding images and materials from mass culture into ... works,” Schwartz challenged the divide between high and popular culture.

In summary, the Splice Garden subverts a few modern, sacred rules. Schwartz’s use of mass-produced materials and vernacular objects in non-traditional ways serves to turn the concept of truth in materials on its head. The Splice Garden also newly conceives the signs and symbols of a garden through a collage of elements, assuming a true garden to be a contingency of language and not a universal truth.

But capitalism in itself has such a capacity to de-realize familiar objects, social roles, and institutions that so-called realist representations can no longer evoke reality except through nostalgia or derision – as an occasion for suffering rather than satisfaction. Classicism seems out of the question in a world where reality is so destabilized that it has no material to offer to experience, but only to analysis and experimentation.” (Jean-Francois Lyotard)⁹⁶

4.3 Organic Reality. Linear systems represent little of nature. Complexity theorist Joseph Ford, quoted by Charles Jencks, wryly notes “non-chaotic systems are very nearly as scarce as hen’s teeth, despite the fact that our physical understanding of nature is largely based upon their study.”⁹⁷ Complexity uses many metaphors for its science of understanding the universe. Terms like *folding*, *waves*, and *phase transitions* are all non-linear, and comprise a new formal language for understanding the universe. This new understanding of complexity has been explored by architects Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, among many other prominent and influential architects.

Charles Jencks' Garden of Cosmic Speculation in southern Scotland represents an effort by the architect and his late wife Maggie Keswick to bring into being a new formal language. The new language would represent contemporary sciences and conversely, the world view represented and theorized by complexity scientists. Jencks, a prominent and prolific proponent of postmodern architecture and theory, crafted a garden as an important place to explore the implications of postmodern theory on landscape architecture. In a clear departure from modernist forms, The Garden of Cosmic Speculation features no linearity and no simple orthogonal geometry. Rather, the garden presents folds, jumps, and abrupt juxtapositions more akin to the model of the world described by science today. Like La Villette, Jencks' garden is really an architect's garden, a collection of objects or sculptural illustrations of complexity which are intriguing, yet relate to The Central Garden only in their similar abandonment of a Euclidian world view. Similar to Schwartz Splice Garden, Jencks' garden evolves out of conception rather than perception.

The Garden of Cosmic Speculation occupies twenty-five acres of verdant, undulating land surrounding Jencks' residence. Predominant within this landscape is a pair of curving ponds; the ponds give a three-dimensional form to Cusp-Catastrophe, thus providing an imitation of a landform poised on the edge between order and chaos. Incidentally, the edge forms the center of Jencks' Cosmogogenesis, which Jencks considers the origin of his creation. Jencks differs from postmodern philosophers, who no longer have faith that science will make the world fundamentally better, progress, or explain our origins.⁹⁸ In this manner, Jencks may be considered a neo-scientific positivist. From the excavated earth mounds, Jencks formed two spiral hills that resembled primitive earthworks. Jencks' intention for the forty-foot "snail mounds" was to signify the edge of chaos. The mounds also serve an important circulation

function for the site. The hills become a destination to climb and occupy, and visually dominate the surrounding landscape, providing a type of pilgrimage event that resonates in many traditions.

Adjacent to the snail mounds are snake mounds. John Beardsley, in “Making Waves,”⁹⁹ describes the 400 feet long snake mounds; as these earth mounds undulate across the landscape, each “takes the form of a reversing curve, facing the lakes at one end and an open meadow at the other, resolving the different views into a continuous experience.” These curves also represent phase transitions or an enfolding in which different things join in smooth transitions. Additional forms of contemporary science are located within the site. For example, the Symmetry Break Terrace features a grid of stone and turf which warps and twists, thus illustrating the ideas behind sudden leaps of the universe.

Included in the garden is Jencks’ kitchen garden, named “The Garden of the Senses.” Rather than the traditional culinary herbs and cabbages, the guest discovers an arrangement of scientific follies relating to the senses of taste, smell, touch, sight, hearing, and an added sense of intuition. Within the divisions of The Garden of Common Sense are objects of illustration, each paired with a corresponding DNA model. For example, in the sense of touch there is a hand. Surrounding the hand are plants with exaggerated tactile experience, such as nettles and lamb’s ears. What seems to be missing entirely from this garden is any layering and transformation of this new cosmogenic knowledge with what exists or has previously existed on the site. There seems to be no contextual dialogue between the formal expression of the scientific theory and the site. Other sculptural elements are models of the atom and Gaia; included with these are functional elements of gates, bridges, and fences—all meant to resemble a world having more to do with waves and folds than any of Euclid’s mathematical imaginings. Says Beardsley, “Waves

are the dominant motif in this garden: waves of earth, waves of metal, waves of stone. Jencks is trying to stir up the practice of design. He is making waves in both the literal and figurative sense.”¹⁰⁰

This garden presents a polemic for a new view of nature, one in opposition to the modernist view of a deterministic and mechanistic natural order, and presents in its stead a mutable and creative universe.

4.4 Fragmentation. Although Parc de la Villette and the Central Garden appear to share little in common, critical connections may be established from a detailed study of La Villette, generally accepted both in conception and execution as a postmodern park. Organized as a design competition by the French Government in 1982, the project brief stated that the committee would select a chief architect to oversee a master plan with subsequent architects, landscape architects, and artists, who would then complete the park with additional gardens and buildings. The scheme of Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi was selected, based on his revolutionary conception of a strategy for the park as “the largest discontinuous building in the world.”¹⁰¹

Tschumi selected the grid as an abstract device which would be so ubiquitous that it would disguise the stamp of the architect/author, and at the same time accommodate the interventions of others in the construction of the park. Located on the last remaining large site in Paris, a 125-acre site that was formerly the central slaughterhouse on the northeast corner of the city, the park includes the Museum of Science and Industry, the City of Music, the Grande Hall for exhibitions, and the rock concert hall. Tschumi understood that such programmatic uses would change over time, and that budgets would shift over time as well; therefore, Tschumi attempted to anticipate this inevitable change within his design.

Tschumi was the master planner, but the brief required that additional voices be included. The plan for the park was to compress urban development into a short time, yet not lose the complexity and multiplicity of evolutionary urban development, which happens over time with the input of many individuals. This ambition is characteristic of postmodern urbanism and responds to the writings of Jane Jacobs, in diverging from the singularity and heterogeneity of modern urbanism. Tschumi stated, “Such juxtapositions would be successful only insofar as they injected discordant notes into the system, hence reinforcing a specific aspect of the Park theory. The principle of heterogeneity—of multiple, dissociated, and inherently confrontational elements—is aimed at disrupting the smooth coherence and reassuring stability of composition, promoting instability and programmatic madness (‘a *Folie*’).”¹⁰² The La Villette project was a polemic against cause and effect relationships, as well as modernist, tightly-held relationships, such as form and function, or form and program.

The deconstruction of La Villette’s program and architecture required dismantling its conventions, and then adapting modes borrowed from literary structuralism and the cinema. By splitting architecture with its theory and substituting the fragments of other disciplines, the form and program become subversive to modernist autonomy. The same subversion of traditional theory and convention of form and program can be seen at the Central Garden.

What is not in evidence at La Villette is the Venturian concept of an implied whole.¹⁰³ Tschumi, in an effort to avoid totalizing syntheses, emphasized three organizing structures: line, point, and surface, independent from one another. This independence differs from the Venturian conception of an implied whole. Tschumi, having fragmented the program and the architecture, inserted a point grid of repeating structures throughout the site. Yet each structure is composed of pieces and parts of the same material. Tschumi noted, “The park proposes a strong conceptual

framework while simultaneously suggesting multiple combinations and substitutions. One part could replace another, or a building's program be revised, changing (to use an actual example) from restaurant to gardening center to arts workshop.”¹⁰⁴

If Tschumi's follies could be thought of as Lego blocks, each different structure becomes a combination of parts in various arrangements, with the Lego blocks spread across a field that is juxtaposed with additional systems. The building blocks of La Villette correspond to the Greek natural philosopher Democritus' Atom Theory, which proposes that natural transformations are caused not by actually changing, but by rearrangement of the basic, immutable, building blocks of the universe.

In *Finnegan's Wake* by James Joyce, the seminal modern novel provided the inspiration for Tschumi's conception of abstract mediation as an alternative approach to palimpsest, expressed by Colin Rowe. Rowe favors historical references, as opposed to singular master plans.¹⁰⁵ In a previous academic project cited by Tschumi, the text of *Finnegan's Wake* was superimposed onto a real site, London's Covent Garden. Here the text was mediated by the survey grid as points of intervention, thus avoiding synthesis in favor of the conflicting logic of the different systems. This superimposition is in opposition to functionalist doctrines and also differs from the concept of palimpsest which favors or reveals previous historical use of a site. Tschumi's idea of abstract mediation is similar to the performing arts, where the character as developed by the playwright is distanced from the character as the actor. According to Tschumi, a park should not look like a park and this can be done by calculated shifts in programmatic expectations “or some mediating agent—an abstract parameter that acts as a distancing agent between the built realm and the user's demands (at La Villette, this agent was the grid of *Folies*).”¹⁰⁶

In Tschumi's 1977 essay, "The Pleasure of Architecture," the artist opined that "Built exclusively for delight, gardens are like the earliest experiments in that part of architecture that is so difficult to express with words or drawings: pleasure and eroticism. Whether "romantic" or "classic," gardens merge the sensual pleasure of space with the pleasure of reason, in a most useless manner."¹⁰⁷ As opposed to Irwin, Tschumi uses architecture to make a garden; as a consequence, the result seems to evade pleasure and eroticism. In fact, none of Tschumi's drawings or diagrams include people or imply human presence through representation, suggesting that Tschumi's primary concern is more with tectonic form.

Tschumi's structure may be considered architectonic, while Irwin's structure is phenomenal, i.e., living plants move and change over time. Whereas Tschumi relied on the synthetic and tectonic combinations of program and site elements for complexity and multiplicity, Irwin achieves a maximum combinative effect from the interactions of plants with light, water, sun, sound and juxtapositions of view and movement through space. The challenge of contemporary landscape architecture is to rediscover presence and pleasure by choreographing the phenomenal. Inevitably, one must acknowledge that humans are sentient beings with appetites and desires which can not be satiated in the conceptual realm alone.

In 1985, Peter Eisenman was invited to collaborate with French philosopher Jacques Derrida on the design of three gardens sites within Parc de la Villette, along the Promenade Cinematique. The plans and models were developed through construction documentation. However, the proposed gardens were never built. Construction initially was delayed, then suspended, and the gardens were finally built by others.

Nevertheless, this unbuilt garden collaboration remains importantly an extension of the conceptualization of Parc de la Villette, which influenced recent architectural history, and by

association also has influenced the practice of landscape architecture and garden making. The letters between Eisenman and Derrida will be addressed further in Chapter Five. By means of these letters, Eisenman breaks ties with the post-structuralist philosopher on the point of phenomenal presence. Derrida wants to further deconstruct in form, while Eisenman wants to evoke more form in his architecture.

The garden project for Parc de la Villette was entitled the Chora L Works. Chora recalled Derrida's reading the Plutonic idea of *chora* as a receptacle or as between place and object, between container and contained.¹⁰⁸ The strategy employed for the three garden sites was to superposition several abstracted layers onto the site. Following Tschumi's abstract that mediated device, Eisenman placed the layers as follows, a) Le Corbusier's hospital project in Cannaregio, Venice—a completely different time and place, b) a scaled version of Tschumi's design for La Villette, c) the historical fortified Paris wall, d) the nineteenth century La Villette site, and e) a version of Derrida's lute diagram. This super-positioning device was intended to replace traditional narratives of time and place with analogies of the narrative. Eisenman explained, "While the site was considered as an actual place, it was also given a series of other times, places, and scales through a series of superpositions termed scaling."¹⁰⁹ The scaling was used to reveal hidden relationships between the various layers. The resulting garden plans and models are gorgeous compositions emerging from a baffling amount of confusion resulting in what is supposed to "fluctuate between many different times, places and scales."¹¹⁰

This fluctuation displaced the familiar time/space and figure ground relationships and became instead a Freudian dream work with rearrangements presenting remnants of various real times and places, composed into a new and fluctuating present. Eisenman and Derrida's superposition diverged from a traditional conception of palimpsest by inserting a completely

different time and space relationship. The new relationship created what Eisenman called an “atopia,” a place not bound by the Western tradition of place as tied to a specific site, but an “atopia” more like the Eastern notion of the floating island paradise.

4.5 Postmodern Landscape Architecture. Four stages of postmodern landscape architecture have emerged over the past 25 to 30 years. Interestingly, postmodern landscape architecture is not commonly discussed as being postmodern. Postmodernism is most commonly viewed as a recognizable architectural style, rather than as an important body of intellectual work emerging from many disciplines. It is appropriate to establish the stages or movements in postmodern placemaking as exemplary of the three projects described in this chapter. The first stage may be explained as a simple collage or assemblage of the signs and symbols of history. This type of work is non-transformative, yet begins to subvert the modernist notion of autonomy. Martha Schwartz’s Splice Garden exemplifies the first stage of postmodernist landscape architecture.

The second stage may be described as a palimpsest, which is transformative but gives preference to past-site specific history. Palimpsest also involves substitution and trace. This second stage is explored in Eisenman’s proposal for La Villette, but may be better explained in the work of Hargreaves Associates at Crissy Field in San Francisco. At Crissy Field, the past history of the site influenced the forms of new design for the space. For example, a race track, historically used at the site, is suggested in the new design, that of mown-grass, resembling but not historically recreating the former race track.

The third stage may be explained as mediation or substitution through abstract constructs. This occurs at La Villette, a non-transformative field that operates as a machine of fragmentation. The human is substituted, a choice exemplary of Derrida’s post-structuralism, which asserts that there exists no authentic meaning; rather, meaning is culturally produced.

The fourth stage is again transformative as a compositional montage, where history and culture are adapted through rearrangement to present human need, thus disallowing a pure, authentic, historical/cultural, time-space relationship. An example may be seen in Irwin's Central Garden, and is addressed in the writings of Peter Eisenman in the next chapter. In this stage, human presence is implied or evoked. At the Central Garden, the more tactile or arresting plants are placed at eye level along the ravine walk; along the lower bowl, garden plants are located to be easily touched in the overhead trellis, and smelled or touched in raised planters. The sycamore trees along the ravine are also pruned and scaled for an intimate human experience.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

In Roland Barthes' view, "Although every creation is of necessity combinative, society, by virtue of the romantic myth of 'inspiration' cannot stand being told so." Like most of Robert Irwin's works, the Central Garden was difficult to assess and formally criticize. Irwin continues to roam far ahead of the intellectual landscape and is a primary figure in phenomenological art. The profession of landscape architecture has criticized the Central Garden as a failure, primarily because values were judged on criteria embedded in academia and professional practices and values and framed by modernism. This analysis proposes an alternative framework for a critique of this garden—one placed in the context of the body of work of Robert Irwin and postmodern theory.

It is important to understand the implications that the Central Garden presents to the contemporary practice of landscape architecture. The Central Garden is more than a product of time and place, but rather must be considered as an alternative starting point for place making. A critique should not be based on designer preconceptions, yet the garden's *raison d'être* exists in the perceptual experience of its visitors. Robert Irwin was invited by the Getty Trust to complete a site-specific work of art. The Getty Trust hired Irwin to challenge the ideologies of Meier and how those ideologies were expressed at the Getty Center.¹¹¹ As explored in previous chapters, this clash of ideologies takes a clear physical form. Meier's buildings communicated a commitment to abstracts of geometric order, to timeless forms of aesthetic beauty, and to the isolation of plant material. Irwin's task was to inscribe an alternative viewpoint to Meier's monolithic expression. Irwin's elliptical bowl, meandering stream and the arcs and diagonals of the path resulted in an abrupt juxtaposition of forms between the garden and the surrounding architecture, not dissimilar to the juxtaposition of forms at Sullivan's Merchants' National Bank.

Sensory Structure in The Central Garden

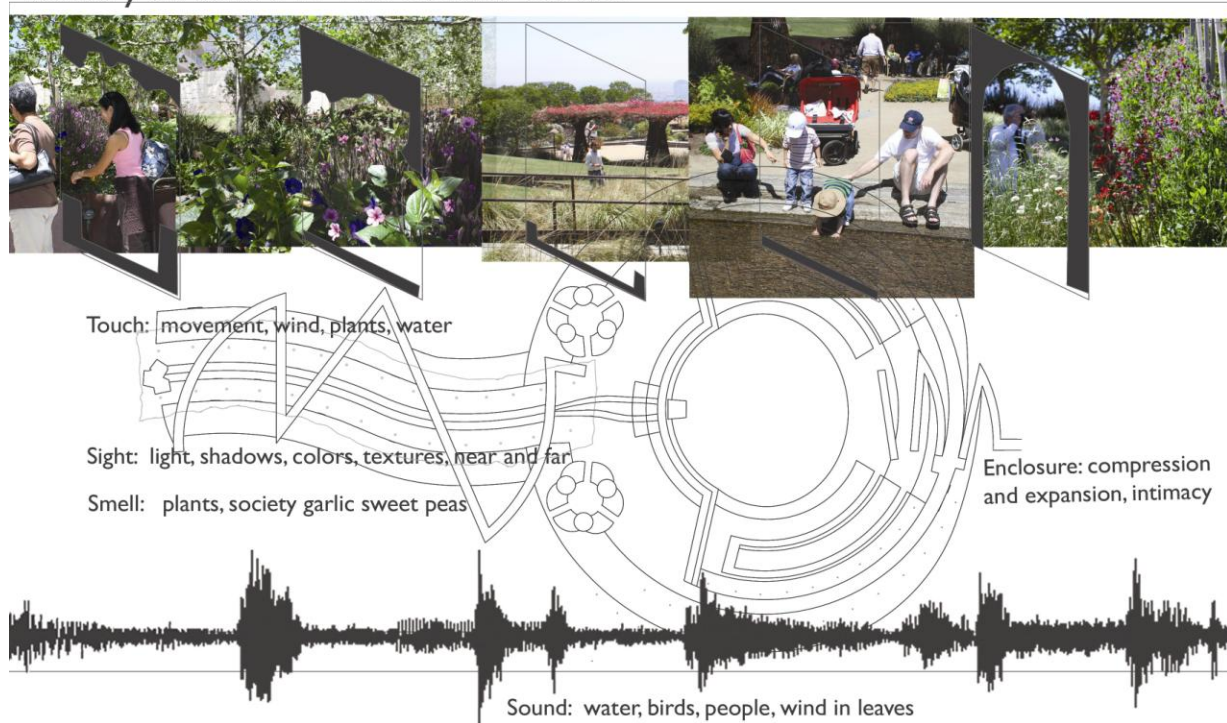


Figure 13. Diagram indicating the sensory structure built into the Central Garden

This postmodern analysis of the Central Garden acknowledges that history will find new and divergent perspectives and viewpoints with which to evaluate this garden. Representation is the process through which all enduring landscapes are transformed. From Italian Renaissance gardens to Olmstead's Central Park, to Gertrude Jekyll gardens in England. These gardens maintain spatial continuity as a signifier of time by subsequently morphing throughout history.

Even as a signifier of its time, the Central Garden is much more than a sum of its several parts. What can not be further deconstructed is the perceptual experience of an individual in the garden at a specific day and point in history. Irwin hoped that those combined perceptions, would for at least a few, resonate in a way to cause an individual to assimilate more perceptual

experiences. Interestingly, perception —or what architect Peter Eisenman calls “presentness” —is the point at which Eisenman broke with the application of Derrida’s deconstruction theory on architecture. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

5.1 Geometry. The geometry of the Central Garden is possibly the clearest rejection of a Euclidian world view. With the exception of biomorphic influences, the world view provided the foundation for architectural modernism, as explored in previous chapters. Irwin’s forms are not biomorphic nor are they naturalistic, which Irwin would argue are pre-determinations, rather than geometry and order reflecting a conditioned response to the site and program. The nesting effect of the elliptical bowl garden created a place for intimacy, while the slightly meandering ravine suggests the former ravine within the bifurcation hillside. In turn, the arcing diagonal switchbacks of the path respond to the grade of the hillside and accessibility requirements. Irwin insisted he designed nothing, but solely responded to the conditions of the site. Therefore we find that the point at which “conditional art” is defined by Irwin tends to blur at the edge of traditional practice in landscape architecture.

Some critics felt that the Central Garden was gaudy and conflicted.¹¹² The unmodern composition of eccentric plant combinations was combined with the introduction of multiple and various construction materials having no origin in the architectural materials, such as cor-ten steel, blue-grey pavers, green granite rocks and boulders, teak, and re-bar. These materials were irreverently inserted into Meier’s reductive material language of white travertine and white, powder-coated metal panels.

When Meier chose the problems to be solved with his architecture, geometric order, and extended views, the remainder of space either was left over or unsolved and did not fit into the established structure. As a result, these spaces were simply pushed to the perimeter or the

interior, the former ravine between Meier's pavilions and which is now the Central Garden. Irwin's response was to take that leftover space and wrestle it into what Venturi calls a "difficult whole." A difficult whole may be understood as a complex whole, by virtue of problems and solutions solved not by simple accretion but by careful manipulation and juxtaposition. The complex whole had to be considered in totality, rather than simply creating unity through reduction.

By responding to the architecture's lack of intimacy, an arguably overpowering scale, inflection, manipulation of the ground plane, and establishment of a structure for plantings, Irwin's garden is a composition that solved many problems in various ways. A construction worker at the Getty Center noted that although Meier had one solution for every problem, Irwin had many solutions for each problem.¹¹³

It will be beneficial here to recall architect Robert Venturi's description of complexity and contradiction, as applied to The Central Garden, in regard to internal geometry and in relation to the Getty buildings. Venturi built an argument from historical precedence for 'complexity and contradiction in architecture,' in his book of the same title. Although Venturi's argument is specifically related to architectural form, we can recall the similarity and overlap between Johnson's seven crutches and Marc Trieb's summary of the Rose, Kiley, Eckbo axioms of modern landscape architecture. Thus in a lesson from the past, we may acknowledge a similar transposition of order and formal expression.

Venturi describes the limitations of the famous claim by Mies van der Rohe that "less is more" as rejecting complexity, thus requiring architects to choose problems to be solved with their architecture; the determination must be whether as problem-solvers, these architects risk exclusion of the inherent complexity of human habitation. Alternatively, Venturi suggested that

complexity may be overcome, stating “If some problems prove insoluble, he [the architect] can express this: in an inclusive rather than exclusive kind of architecture there is room for the fragment, for contradiction, for improvisation, and for the tensions these produce.”¹¹⁴



Figure 14. The bougainvillea arbors are scaling and orientation devices when seen from a distance



Figure 15. The bougainvillea arbors provide shade at the pedestrian scale

The re-bar arbors within the Central Garden are a good example of what Venturi described as an architecture of “both-and.” Venturi uses the example of the Tower of Christ Church, Spitalfields, designed by Hawksmoor to draw out this point. The tower serves as a wall at street level, where it is seen from a single direction. The wall transforms into a tower which can be seen and recognized symbolically from all over the city.¹¹⁵ Another example of a double functioning architecture is Cloth Hall and Belfry in Bruges, Wales, where the main building relates to the pedestrian scale of the plaza and the immense tower relates to the surrounding town. The re-bar arbors at the Central Garden serve this same dual function. When viewed from the higher elevations, the center terraces, viewed from the switchbacks of the path along the ravine, use the tops of the arbor to provide spatial orientation and to appear scaled to the

pedestrian terrace. However, when viewed from inside the lower bowl garden, the arbors relate to the scale of the surrounding architecture. Therefore, the arbors act as a scaling and orientation device, and at the same time spatially define the canopy at the terrace level. Robert Venturi suggested:

In equivocal relationships one contradictory meaning usually dominates another, but in complex compositions the relationship is not always constant.. This is especially true as the observer moves through or around a building, and by extension through a city: at one moment one meaning can be perceived as dominant; at another moment a different meaning seems paramount.”¹¹⁶

5.2 History. Robert Venturi’s text may also be considered a starting point for the validity of reassembly and remaking of historical styles. Venturi described how a changing context changes meaning, when architects arrange parts toward the creation of a whole. If the architect arranges the familiar parts in an unconventional way, the new context creates a new meaning. “If he uses convention unconventionally, if he organized familiar things in an unfamiliar way, he is changing their contexts, and he can use even the cliché to gain a fresh effect. Familiar things seen in an unfamiliar context become perceptually new as well as old.”¹¹⁷ John Beardsley summarized The Central Garden as a *pastiche*, with the subtext suggesting that a pastiche is bad, preferring instead the elegant, functionalist landscapes of Olin Partnership, reflected by all the landscapes around the buildings. The Olin landscapes, while elegant, cite only a single, Western classical past and not the overlapping, conflicted, and multi-cultural history implied in The Central Garden.

The postmodern novelist Umberto Eco, in *The Island of the Day Before*, takes history as being predominately Western Medieval history, and then weaves it into an entirely new construction without resorting to revivalist historical fiction. In this methodology, one notes similarities to the work of new urbanists. Eco, however, transforms history to express the

present, employing the poststructuralist notion of “intertextuality” to shape new meaning from fragments of former texts, yet drawing recognition from the reader or viewer. “Intertextuality” was first defined by the poststructuralist philosopher Julia Kristeva to explain how signs derive meaning within the structure of a new text. Evidence of this borrowed text may be seen throughout garden history, beginning with the earliest references to paradise gardens. These early references refer or recall religious texts expressed in The Court of the Lions, Alhambra, or the Generalife¹¹⁸ or at the Sacro Bosco at Bomarzo in Italy. At Sacro Bosco, the garden maker purposefully introduced sculptural and landscape metaphors which served as a reference to viewers for epic poems such as Dante’s *Inferno*, or the writings of Virgil. The intention found at Bomarzo is similar to Jencks’ Garden of Cosmic Speculation, where Jencks created sculptural *folies* or landforms. These *folies* were not meant to evoke classic epic poems for the literate visitor, but to present contemporary scientific theories of complexity and chaos. Such comparisons can only be drawn by familiarity with these extended works. On the other hand, Irwin at the Central Garden presents no puzzle to be decoded or interpreted by the viewer in regard to references or the recall of other texts. Irwin does however create a mental puzzle in the azalea labyrinth to be solved visually, looking down into the bowl from above. Nevertheless, Irwin’s puzzle requires no former knowledge of a text.

Although Irwin was peerlessly-well versed in conveyance of meaning through the use of signs and symbols in art history, it is possible that Irwin’s garden is a complex, semiotic composition. Yet it is more likely that the inter-textuality of Irwin’s garden is accidental, or at the least, unconsidered for symbolic content. In fact, Irwin would consider any symbolic read of the garden as unimportant. Regardless of whether Irwin knowingly or naively composed the

historical references, Irwin's primacy of perceptual experience must be reinforced over artistic pre-conception.

This postmodern usage of history may be applied to other popular cultural applications. For example, sampling is used in musical works, relying on the listener's previous hearing of a song, yet the sampled fragment is transformed by layered beats and rhythms to a new composition. Another example of this poststructuralist notion of inter-textuality is evidenced in the movie *Shreck*, where traditional Disney characters join with the Grimm Brothers' characters to be transformed into a new plot line and a new whole for contemporary purposes. Therefore, it may be seen that the Central Garden reflects a postmodern view of history, which is neither linear nor bound to context, but rather open to interpretation from the viewpoint of the writer and observer. Evidence of meaning-references evoked by the Central Garden may be seen in the picturesque tradition, the English Garden tradition, Eastern Zen gardens, Indian Mogul gardens, and the modernist waterworks of Lawrence Halprin. Such references may be dismissed or considered, as the viewer determines. The unintended effect of The Central Garden may subvert the modernist denial of history, but the intent was to implement a design for traces and fragments of history.

5.3 Plants. Beyond history and geometry, the Central Garden presents an unorthodox approach to planting design. The approach declines to follow the usual path of modern separation and isolation of plant material, based on ecological suitability and the aesthetics of clearly expressed functional requirements. Neither are the plants used for sculptural effect alone, but more as a structure for courting natural phenomena. The Central Garden refuses traditional, horticultural practice in using companion plants or in the botanical garden approach, by isolating a specimen.



Figure 16. The Central Garden is hyperreal version of gardens representing no particular garden or nature. This image also shows Irwin's expert employment of the optic effects of color, less in the way the Impressionist painters and Jeykll used as the Bezold Effect of color mixing for overall compositional effect, but rather the vibration and reverberation caused by warm-cool contrasts.

The effects created by combinations and sometimes violent juxtapositions of plants are the predominant feature of the garden, allowing an incredibly rich and perceptual experience as the viewer moves through the garden. Another similarity between Irwin's garden and Eco's novel is the creation or simulation of the hyperreal. This characteristic differentiates the garden, not only from modern predecessors, but also from picturesque compositions of earlier masters, such as Vita Sackville-West or Roberto Burle Marx. Burle Marx's work expresses modernist ideals of separation of plant material and biomorphic arrangements. A bold massing of extraordinary plants tends to characterize Marx's work, as well as an overall, graphic effect. Many of Marx's public works are composed for overall compositional effect. Irwin, in contrast

to Burle Marx, has no horticultural grounding, using plants only for a combined effect at the eye level of the viewer.

Irwin's approach also differs from the painterly approach of Gertrude Jekyll who, like Burle Marx, is grounded in horticulture and thus experiences an ongoing dialogic feedback with plant climates and growth cycles to inform those decisions which are based on planting choices. Rather than the overall effect achieved by Jekyll as an impressionist painting or composition, however, Irwin's artistic background is in abstract expressionism, where the perceptual effect on the viewer emanates from energy generated by the combinations or sensations captured in the movements within space. Impressionism or landscape painting clung to pictorial realities, which abstract expressionism did not. Irwin's garden is not pictorial, because meaning is infused into the perceptions of individuals as they move through space—not from a single, framed vantage point. Irwin's plant combinations may also be compared to a Rothko painting, where the visual composition is not about blues or greens but rather, the painting assumes a combinatory effect at the edges and intersections of color fields.

The overall effect of the ravine garden and the bowl garden is of the hyperreal, as an effect that refers to a stream, yet represents no actual experience of a stream. There is no real-world reference. This perceptual effect also influenced the planting design by placing an emphasis on a quality not inherent in the materials, but in a combination of effects from light, time, sound, smell, and presence of being.

5.4 Phenomenal Presence. It could be understood as axiomatic that a garden is a phenomenological work of art, even a conditional art, since all work of landscape architects is phenomenal—even more so than architecture. Landscapes grow over time and change seasonally, even moment-by-moment, as light moves and weather shifts. Gardens are not

environmentally controlled, but rather affected by changes. Phenomena exist in the dynamics of our perceptions in experiencing the nature of the world.

However, since gardens are phenomenal by virtue of existence in the world, Irwin's setting becomes a stage that courts natural phenomena to amplify and heighten the perceptual experiences that make this garden noteworthy. It is the individual observer who holds art as a personal perception, rather than as an external object or ideological pre-conception of a designer, who most benefits from Irwin's concept of a garden. Non-objective, phenomenal art *is* about seeing, feeling, and determining what is aesthetically pleasing. Yet at those times when the viewer gains a glimpse of the power of *seeing*, that power is quickly attributed to another source."¹¹⁹ This untranslated, sensuous immediacy may be found at the core of poet Carlos Olson's work, which experimented with chance and improvisation in poems of free association.

Peter Eisenman also seeks for "presentness," which is the point where he breaks with the deconstruction theories of Jacques Derrida. In analyzing the work of architect Giuseppe Terragni at the Casa del Fascio, Eisenman observed, "... but the experience of the open window that causes the building to be an actual square cannot be known from its representation on paper or screen. The window's eccentricity – its positioned view from below, the details of its mechanism, the gap that it leaves when it is activated, depend[s] on an experiential view."¹²⁰ Therefore, the importance of the experiential can not be known from its representation in paper or photograph, but must be experienced.

Eisenman split with deconstruction by defending deconstruction's ability to resonate in language. At the core of architecture are found objects and a presence which may be invoked solely by language. According to Eisenman, "Only when you add one more reading of my work alongside your reading of it in pictures and texts—that is, a reading in the event of a building—

only there will you see the play between presence and “presentness.”¹²¹ Eisenman draws an opaque distance between presence and “presentness,” which this study will address as the quality of presence as a parallel, artistic pursuit of Robert Irwin. Eisenman replied to Derrida that “only when the thought to be [an] essential relationship of architecture to function is undermined, that is, when the traditional dialectical, hierarchical, and supplemental relationship of form to function is displaced, can the condition of presence which problematizes any possible displacement of architecture, be addressed.” Derrida insisted on the metaphysics of presence, while Eisenman called for the reality of architecture, as being inescapable and as a reality apart from language.

In the last chapter of his seminal book on modern landscape architecture, Marc Tribel writes of the work of Robert Irwin and titles the chapter, “Pointing at the Moon.” Tribel refers to a Buddhist parable that states when pointing to the moon, do not confuse my finger with the moon. The insightful reference alludes to Tribel’s opinion that it would be a mistake in analyzing Irwin’s work to confuse Irwin’s distinctive style or practice with the trajectory of Irwin’s questions. Irwin is an after-phenomenal presence, whether recalled with scrim and light in a New York gallery, or with plants, light, smells, and sounds experienced in the Central Garden. What is important is not to confuse his style with his pursuit of “the wonder of human perception.”

CONCLUSION

The Central Garden is a postmodern garden primarily because it subverts many axioms of modern landscape architecture. Irwin rejected classic geometric order in his garden and instead employed a formal and organizational structure similar to what postmodern theorist and architect Robert Venturi describes as a difficult whole. The garden displays an internally referenced organization and an order not derived from the surrounding architecture. Irwin also recombined past garden types into a new composition. Additionally, meaning is supplied by the individual visitor and is held in their perceptual experience of the garden. The Central Garden does not present an artistic conception to be translated by the user nor does the garden design imply a pure or universal form.

Several applications to future landscape projects can be extracted from the Central Garden. Treating history as a source of formal expression as separate from site-specific historic preservation or nostalgic revivalism acknowledges the multiplicity of contemporary culture. This conception holds exciting promise for future landscapes based not on one clear idea but several ideas layered, juxtaposed, and transformed into entirely new compositions.

Even more interesting is the potential for landscapes that, like the Central Garden, attune visitors to the perceptual realm of the world around. The intimacy Irwin generated by nesting the Bowl Garden to surround the visitor with the garden is a good example of designing for experiential awareness. The heightened awareness of shadows, light, movement, and sounds along the procession of the ravine also courts the phenomenal in nature. In our capitalist (or post-capitalist) society an increasing amount of value is based on quantifiable measures, the design of the Central Garden offers a counterpoint to measured values, the qualities of being in time, space and presence.

This emphasis on phenomenal presence also suggests a re-identification with romanticism. However, a postmodern landscape architecture would not be of an undisciplined naturalism, but a knowing response to what modernism has shown us to be an unnatural nature. This postmodern response would acknowledge the contradictions between man and nature and rather than pursuing a universal resolution, would satisfy the tensions inherent in any built work of landscape architecture.

By using plants to create experience, the Central Garden challenges functional use of plant material based primarily on predictability and compatibility. This challenge suggests that plant material choices balance predictability with quality and change over time. The challenge to landscape architects is to integrate phenomenal presence with the professional responsibilities toward ecology and human habitation. Without such integration the phenomenological art of the Getty Garden has limited application.



Figure 17. View within the Bowl Garden

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⁴ Lee Rosenbaum, "View from the Getty: What Its Billions Bought" (*Art in America*, May 1998). pp. 92-97.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Quote from Harold Williams in *Making Architecture: The Getty Center* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1997), p.152.

⁷ This important memorandum is located in *The Irwin Papers*, the memo is dated March 7, 1992 and was written before Robert Irwin was selected as a consultant and marks the beginning of the Getty Garden changing hands from Meier's vision to that of another.

⁸ *Concert of Wills Making the Getty Center* (Maysles Films Inc. Production: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2003).

⁹ From correspondence dated May 24, 1993 from Harold M. Williams to Robert Irwin and Richard Meier.

¹⁰ Quote taken from Lawrence Weschler's book *Robert Irwin Getty Garden* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2002), p. 3.

¹¹ See discussion and diagrams explaining the buildings contextual relationship to the site in Michael Brawn's book *The Getty Center Richard Meier & Partners* (London: Phaidon, 1998), pp 12-15.

¹² See Appendix A for transcription of the author's conversation with Dennis McGlade in August, 2007.

¹³ Lawrence Weschler, *Robert Irwin Getty Garden* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2002), p. 6.

¹⁴ See Appendix A for transcription of the author's interview with Andrew Spurlock in his office in San Diego, May, 2007.

¹⁵ See Appendix A for transcription of the author's interview with Andrew Spurlock and corroboration on this point was found in the *Irwin Papers* in a letter from Latham & Watkins Attorneys at Law, copied to Robert Irwin March 17, 1995. The letter outlines the concerns of the residents and elaborates on Irwin's modifications to the bowl to obstruct views at this place in the garden.

¹⁶ Transcription of September, 2005 lecture given by Irwin found in *The Irwin Papers*.

¹⁷ See Appendix A for transcription of the author's interview with Lynne Tjomsland August, 2007.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See Appendix A for transcription of the author's conversation with Lynne Tjomsland in August, 2007. Also see the author's upcoming story in *Landscape Architecture* titled "Making Space for Art" where the point is further drawn out about the maintenance and ecology issues of the garden as compared to the landscapes designed by Olin Partnership.

²⁰ See Appendix A for transcriptions of the author's interview with Antonia Bostrom August, 2007.

²¹ See discussion in Lawrence Weschler's book *Seeing Is Forgetting The Name of the Thing One Sees: A Life of Contemporary Artist Robert Irwin* (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1982), pp. 152-154.

²² Ibid.

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²⁴ John Beardsley, "Showdown in Sepulveda Pass" *Landscape Architecture*, (October 1998), pp.187-188.

²⁵ Francesca Marzotto Caotorta "Getty Center Garden" *Abitare* (412 December, 2001). pp.82-86.

²⁶ See Susan Herrington and Lisa Gelfand's article "The Getty: Another Look" in *Landscape Architecture* (October, 2000), pp. 100-107, and 122-124.

²⁷ Robert Irwin, *Being and Circumstance Notes Toward a Conditional Art*. (Larkspur Landing, California: The Lapis Press, 1985).

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²⁹ See Appendix A for transcription of the author's conversation with Lynne Tjomsland in August, 2007.

³⁰ See the author's upcoming story "Making Space for Art" in upcoming issue of *Landscape Architecture*.

³¹ See Appendix A for the author's transcription of Robert Irwin's lecture at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

³² Irving Blum was influential in initiating the Los Angeles art scene, with the focus being the Ferrus Gallery. Blum is probably most recognized for holding the first solo show of Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Can* paintings in 1962. Lawrence Weschler in his book *Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees*, recalls early conversations with Blum and Irwin, pp. 45-51.

³³ Art talk with Michael Govan and Robert Irwin at the Los Angeles County Museum of Contemporary Art.

³⁴ See discussion in "a note on the illustrations" in Lawrence Weschler, *Seeing is Forgetting the name of the thing one Sees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). p. ix.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 35.

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 41-42.

³⁷ See Appendix A for the author's transcription of Robert Irwin's lecture at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

³⁸ Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New: The Hundred-Year History of Modern Art its Rise its Dazzling Achievement Its Fall*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1991). p. 313.

³⁹ Marian Moffett, Michael Fazio and Lawrence Wodenhouse, *Buildings Across Time An Introduction to World Architecture* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004). p. 242.

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⁴¹ See Appendix A for transcription of author's interview with Antonia Bostrom August 2007.

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⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 28

⁴⁶ Moffett, *Buildings Across Time: An Introduction to World Architecture* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004). p. 242.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Philip Nobel, "Guest Lecture" *Metropolis* (January 2001). p. 38.

⁴⁹ James Russell, "Dia:Beacon, a collaboration of artist Robert Irwin and architect OpenOffice, asks: Do museums need architecture?" *Architectural Record* (October 2003). p. 109.

⁵⁰ Interview between Lyn Rice and Robert Irwin published in *Praxis*, # 7 p. 45.

⁵¹ Daphne Beal, "A Complicated Relationship" *Metropolis* (August/September 1998). pp. 94-95.

⁵² Interview between Lyn Rice and Robert Irwin published in *Praxis*, # 7 p. 45

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ I had dinner with Robert Irwin in March 2007 and he told me that his garden was the first modern garden ever built and that all the other stuff claiming to be modern gardens are just spaces made to look like modern paintings or sculpture. Irwin also told me that postmodernism is "bull-shit" and that we are still in the mid point of the modern experiment and Foucault and Lyotard and all them are just full of crap.

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⁵⁶ See Elizabeth Barlow Rogers *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001). Specifically the pages on "European Modernism" pp. 413-416.

⁵⁷ See discussions in *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture: Papers From the Wave Hill-National Park Service Conference* edited by Charles A. Birnbaum (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Spacemaker Press, 1999).

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Barlow Rogers *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001). p. 413.

⁵⁹ For a comprehensive look at the history of landscape design see Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Landscape Design A Cultural and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001).

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⁸⁰ Michael Drolet, editor, *The Postmodernism Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁸¹ The Great Courses Philosophy and Intellectual History *European Thought and Culture in the 20th Century*. Taught by: Professor Lloyd Kramer, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (Chantilly, VA: The Teaching Company, 2002).

⁸² Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*, Translated by Paulette Moller, (New York: Berkley Books, 1994).

⁸³ Charles Jencks, *The Architecture of The Jumping Universe A polemic: how complexity science is changing architecture and culture*. Revised Edition. (London: Academy Editions, 1997).

⁸⁴ Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, second edition reprint 2002).

⁸⁵ Michael Drolet describes postmodernisms affinity with romanticism and its “critique of rationalism and system building” but retaining traces of liberal humanism in *The Postmodernism Reader: Foundational Texts*, pp. 1-4.

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¹⁰⁹ Peter Eisenman, *Written Into the Void: Selected Writings 1990-2004*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007). p.77.

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¹¹⁷ Ibid p. 45

¹¹⁸ See Elizabeth Barlow Rogers book *Landscape Design A Cultural and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001).specificcally chapter three "Visions of Paradise: Landscape Design as Symbol and Metaphor" pp. 97-124.

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APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTIONS

Jennifer Zell, Lecture Notes

Robert Irwin Lecture, University of Alabama.

March 29, 2007

Irwin: The thing with teaching is you have to suddenly think about what and in what way are you doing a thing you have to articulate and gather your thoughts together a lot of artists never do that because they do not see it as piece and part of what they are do.

It is very helpful even clarifying in fact writing is even better because when you write you really have to think about what your proposition is how one would articulate it what kinds of precedence there are involved you have to really think something through.

Comment from audience: we have a hard time in our department making students write

Irwin: laughs, it is a deeply painful thing to do I really hate it too and I was shitty writer just terrible I mean I really had to sweat it. I don't mind talking about it the only difference between the two is the only thing you gain from writing is some accuracy. Because you are not just shooting from the hip you are really coming up with a way, a word works or doesn't, a set of relationships and do it in a way that is in keeping with what you are trying to say. In a way almost everything has been said and it is in the nuance and the only joy in the crafting something that is really intricate. One of the things I have found amazing is the dictionary there is a specific word for every feeling and thought. Some are lost but what the word tells you is that these things have been thought about before and you lay out the words and the words give you the rhyme and reason. Very rarely do you need to make up a word or add one to the lexicon.

It is the same thing as we are doing as artists which is more akin with philosophy and I think what we are doing with modern art is more akin with the pre-Socratic philosophers going way back they were much more tactile in their thinking about things more visceral far less intellectual about it far less organized. You start with someone like Plato—I taught myself philosophy. I mean I never read a book until I was like 40. Suddenly realized – I went to New York and I thought that I had some ideas that would have some resonance with these other artists. I was very naïve coming from the west coast. I thought we would have a dialogue and what I thought we would have was a conversation turned out to be a series of confrontations with these people who had laid out their rationale for what they did. They just kicked my ass, it was really painful. I was asking questing I was open each of them was taking a position and taking a stance and they really were good at and it and they were really articulate about it. There was a group of people called the NY sculptural mafia who was Bob Morris, Bob Smithson, Oppenheimer, tough people. I thought we were in a collegial relationship that we were all working at something. None of us knew what the something was. They were taking positions that were clearly defined and articulated. At the time I realized I was unbelievably naïve and of all the questions all come down to half a dozen philosophical arguments and if you understand those 6-8-12 arguments and understand proposition what the nature of those arguments 99.9 percent of all that is publicized about writing and art and life are all second generation remakes of these arguments.

Jennifer: I am trying to understand your argument about conditional art.

Irwin: Yea it is a big jump there but it is a good question.

Someone from the audience: Before we go there can we go back to the three questions that we can ask the honors students three questions to leave them with

Irwin: You start out with highly defined pictorial reality and we are deeply addicted to it. We can look at a b/w screen or a color screen and we see people and actions in there and we attribute feelings and emotions to it we are really good at it. This generation takes to this generation like a duck to water. It is the same thing with pictorial reality. Take a map and give it to a person in central Africa and it has no meaning or reality as how we move through space.

The history of modern art very, very briefly is you start with the David, coronation of a great painting but great with pictorial logic. Perspective, figures in space, it had a different kind of clarity. It starts with this reality referencing in this case the coronation of Josephine and what this means in France and in a very short time 100 years you are confronted with a white square on a white ground it is a Malavitch. His friends not just his enemies ask this is everything we know everything that has meaning is gone man it is just a desert and Malovitch says yes but it is a desert of pure meaning and feeling. What he did essentially is put feeling back into play.

Let me go back. Plato wanted a certain kind of true things that had repeatability and predictability. He wanted what he called essences. In everything and in the process of doing that is he came across experience. He could not deal with feelings because they were quixotic they were always moving around and he could not deal with them. For what he wanted they became half truths and when he was building his Republic made artists at the bottom of the rung and essentially made them third class citizens and started that thing in motion. And you follow the study of the physical sciences because when you are looking for that kind of truth and the key to all physical sciences is repeatability and predictability. All the systems of complex science are defined by it even the idea of time as laid out in increments. When you look at some milieu you can overly time Watch mutations over time or spatially. Mathematic comes to a level of absurdity 30-40 years ago one of the big arguments in the world of neurosciences and the whole world of thinking about the mind is the Skinnerian Box, a guy named Skinner said we can not deal with anything subjective because we have no concrete evidence to look at but everyone knows we have a whole subjective consciousness and that is absolutely crucial especially for a neuroscientist and if you ask you can tell me anything you can lie to me so for scientists that was not reliable information so for him we can only rely on what we can observe.

What is predictable and repeatable so we can draw certain conclusions and the absurdity of that is the increments of time is laid out I am bored and time slows way down and then it picks up when something is happening and time picks up that is not time that is a concept of time and services a concept of time and a certain way of truth or believing very useful tool but it is not time. Time has infinite properties or no properties at all depending on how you want to look at it.

But we all created structures that we can use so we have a concept of time so that we have a concept of truth. You have that whole Plutonic thing and what Malevitch is saying that zero is hey that is all fine and dandy but I am now interested in another kind of time another kind of truth. He is saying that feelings really do count that experience is an issue. The subjective of the individual really does count. The whole issue of being a contemporary is taking the idea of – the whole idea of abstract art is the loss of the figure the loss of humanism – if you stop and think about it drawing a picture of a human being is a sign which symbolizing human beings but it is not a human being. In contemporary art what Malevitch is saying what I think is put the human being back because you have to decide whether is it interesting or not do I like it do I not like it and you do in on the basis of experience this is a subjective rationality so that in a way what he is saying is that an individual sets in motion his or her own meaning. Hold an idea of a human being which is more beautiful than a sign of a human being which just indicates a certain type of human being or action. So this statement of Malevitch changes the rules. You have to think about it contextually you have this beautiful idea of David which is part and parcel of the whole idea of what Plato was trying to --you think about that there why in the world why would anyone in the world take apart anything so beautiful. It can not be accidental or incidental. In the history of the 19th century of starting out with this one form and completely taking it apart. Too many people too many backgrounds in too many parts of the world too many rationales for it to a joke or an incident. It does not have to be correct but mind you the history we are living with Malevitch is in the late part of the 19th c we as artist are playing out of that history we are still jumping back and fourth to the old idea of pictorial reality but Malevitch has established a different kind of rationale.

Mondrian laid out the conceptual structure for it. He took an object a tree and he painted the tree beautifully as a tree he was a great draftsman then he did a series of paintings over the years where he looked at the tree as an object in space. It had physicality it had weight and density he looked at in terms of its other dimensions and finally he took the thing apart and the tree became what we have are the plus minus paintings. Which were not about the tree but still he took it all the way down until it was pure energy. When you think about what is going on in physics right now they are playing with the idea that everything is pure energy and Mondrian was doing this in like 1910 1912 he was laying out the idea – actually in this great book *parallelism in art and science* is this idea that every experiment done in science artists have done prior. Arny Glimpshire. He is the director at Pace gallery in NY. We went back to NYU and he and this guy professor wrote this book. Where was I

Professor in audience: Back to the three questions

Irwin: He is a good example of someone who laid out the conceptual structure for how one were. There is a whole range of artists, abstract expressionists, who laid out the structure, Jackson Pollak, on one hand, Ad Reinhardt on the other end of it. Each of them by the way no longer had to sign a painting because they were so individually recognizable they no longer had that rationale they laid out a whole new visual vocabulary essentially and articulated it and put the syntax for it. You and all of us including myself have arrived here which brings us to a point which has a whole set of questions in it. When we were breaking the frame and ceased making objects that were discrete in space that thing became integrated nothing is independent in the world everything in integrated and in a set of circumstances when if fact you look at a painting

ask yourself is that how I see in the world in a frame. Actually when I look around in the world that is not what I see at all there is no such thing as frames. Experience in the world all around we are like an envelope with information being fed to us all the time so that the perceptual process is quite different. We talk about human beings how they see how they feel we are talking about the other side of the coin in a way.

So when you break that frame and start going off in different directions and dealing with feelings and emotions you have a problem – three questions – if you make a mark within the frame to anyone who has been looking at paintings all their life who is conversant with painting can weigh that mark against all other marks that have been made in the history of painting. A sophisticated dialogue between the frame and what is inside for years so that when I make a slight move this is an extension so we have this agreement that we have all taken on and that we are conversant with it and suddenly you break with it the obvious question is if I want to play outside of that frame one of the things I have to come up with in this generation is what will be the extended frame of reference how will I recognize if this is an art act or an art gesture when it is not within the context that I am familiar with when you break the frame you break the

The minute you walk into a museum it is art. You like it or you don't like it in a way the responsibility has already been defined the issue has been defined for you so you break the museum and you put it on a corner and how do you recognize it how do you deal with it how do you make all the decisions you need to. Suddenly it is a real question if you can't answer that question then it is a red herring it is not going to go anywhere it is a dead end. So that is question number one how do we do it

Question number 2 is when you start out as a painting in the classical sense the hierarchy always aspired to the transcendence the idea of heaven and earth. One started with the great subjects Christ on the Cross the record of Medusa were all meaning the paintings were in fact meaning structure a good example of that. You read the documents written by the church for all the arts of that period of time were quite spectacular they not only tell the artist how much gold they will use in the painting because it is a precious material and also how much cerulean blue which was more expensive than gold all these rules. Also, if you were in a contract for the last supper they would tell you who the deity was who else could be in this painting and how close to the deity down at the end of the table if they could even cast an eye at the deity if in any way they were interactive so they were not casual documents they actually told the artist what the structure of the drawing was to be and it was not just an elaboration of the text but a primer telling the artist what the order they were a primer telling the lay people their relationship to authority and the church being the authority and telling the people how and in what way they could act if they could cast an eye too what order decisions were made. The church was establishing its relationship to the community so they were not idle documents really they.

So when you start with the idea of reading a painting you see this figure that figure and the painting is a structure of meaning. Who is on top first second third all the way on back to the spirit fairies in the back. So that is by the way how you got deep space that there were structure that were prioritized and deep space was all the way back and finally landscape and the building and when you look at the history of modern art step by step you were throwing out that meaning structure. It is the king of kings on the cross and his blood of the crucifixion and then you came

down and it was the king in a red robe and then it was a Bergermeister in a red jacket and then it was a commoner in a red dress then a red apple on a red cloth and then it was just red and then white like Malavitch. So what they were doing was taking out this whole meaning structure and taking it finally down to zero.

The idea of abstraction is backwards actually means derived from or related to pictorial art. When I look at David then I look at how well it is a representation of and I can check that in the world and pictorial art I am continually checking it in the world suddenly when they put it in a painting is a painting – Gertrude Stein said a rose is a rose is a rose. It is another way of looking at it is not about the significance of the rose but about another way of looking at it as something quite beautiful essentially you are talking about another kind of understanding and you move from the quantitative realm to the qualitative realm. Qualities exist only as long as someone keeps them in play there is no such thing as quantifying – to some degree we teach design we give you the color wheel and we give you the magic proportions and a to work by – but the world of qualities is infinitely nuanced and tactile and human beings can do that and we as artist do that run our fingers over the world and that is what is called developing a sensibility and you really have in a way of seeing this red in relationship to that red.

In that these things exist in a set of relationships that are conditional they are not abstract you use red as hot or as related to the king and his robe as a sign as a symbol. But red is an experiential thing also in a sense red is very rich there are an infinite number of reds there are thousands and thousands of reds. I said last night you put up a square of red. Stare at for 30 seconds and then take it away and what do you see you see a perfect green square with sides. Why your eye looks at that red to protect itself it mutes it by putting the opposite color so much so that take the red away and there is a green square. Say when I want to paint a painting I have to essentially strategically put some green in there. It is not a green painting but I have to put some green in there so that when the eye hits the green it is refreshed and comes back and perceived red again because in a very short time a red painting ceases to be red. Ok so this whole idea that everything is in a context everything is acting and interacting. Nothing stands in a vacuum everything has a meaning when I pick my art it is a very meaningful art put your own meaning in and when I have that meaning I can take it from that studio and I can put it in my gallery and nothing has changed so nothing has changed it lives in a vacuum of its meaning. I can take it from gallery and take it all the way to New York and because it is so essential so meaningful that they should understand it which develops this whole idea of portability so that when you think about the art world as an economic machine they are one and the same thing. The problem with what I do is that it takes up the entire gallery. What are they going to do are they going to go out of business not doing anything else but just show me. Nobody every buys one they have absolutely no commercial value whatsoever. Yet, theoretically they wouldn't ask me to do it if it wasn't art. So you can see the implication for change.

You take this meaning structure all the way down to zero a white square on a white ground and now you have to define a set of relationships and what you have done is flatten out the hierarchy the hierarchy of Christ on the Cross. With education here you have the hierarchy I am a heavyweight artist I have been around for a long time and I am right here and very close to the deity all you students come in with your miserable little offerings and I can grade them and I can in a sense I can compare them with the deity and I can teach you how to be a artist and you can

grow. The whole idea about flattening the hierarchy is how do you teach? It goes with as the individual as a feeling being the whole process of teaching is in a sense has completely changed I can no longer teach you art there is no longer art per se. If you look at the history of art there are these incredible periods and each of them is spectacular and each is art but none of them is art per se. Art has changed and change and changed and throughout. The point being every new generation has to start aging starting with the history of art and the existing world we are in and having to redefine art so that is relevant to that time.

So each period of time makes an art with is a perfect reflection of its time and its moment. And it's meaning but none of them in a sense has ever captured the subject. The point of the third questions is what is the subject of art? Art over the years has been used in the service of other ideas to illustrate the text as in the renaissance paintings to articulate order to the lay people. To arbitrate social mores act as an activist in some political issue all of these things are meaningful things but they can be done in a dozen other ways. So what does art actually contribute to the overall scheme which is something you need to justify its high standard? We build all these cathedrals to art and it can't be just a tribute to these other ideas and schemes not that they aren't important

Or that it doesn't work. But does art actually do anything does it have a subject of its own.

Back to her thing when you flatten this hierarchy what flatten is a sense is deep space the highest to the lowest. When you turn that on it's side Christ on the Cross and you look at the history of modern art the burgers in the red dress and what is happening the hierarchy is flattening and the space in the painting is flattening ok so you have come to the event of Cezanne is the guy who set it in motion but the moment was analytical cubism and the phrase is the marriage of figure and ground. The marriage is that the figure and ground became not separate elements but became conditional. They are in a set of conditions and no longer separated out by hierarchy and meaning they are interlaced. The real issue for us is that is also the flattening of the hierarchy but we do this all the time. If we start knowing what good is we start knowing what bad is hierarchy is very clear in terms of teaching and understanding the importance of ideas. It works we use them all the time constantly if it is flat what would it look like because from a hierarchical structure the non hierarchical looks like chaos. I can not distinguish good bad right wrong left right suddenly have something with no distinction. But once you flatten the ground you look at painting you realize what it is you see the frame as a hierarchy is selected out it is a highly stylized learned logic it works and is brilliant. But the whole history of modern art essentially puts it at the point where you can no longer have the frame because the frame is the hierarchy what puts it in and out. Are no more or no more interesting. If you look at in terms of contemporary physics it is the same set of things. The thing about the idea is that there is a same set of ideas there are a series of secondary and subliminal ones but essentially there is not a hierarchy in nature. What you have is a continuous interactive thing as far as they can say so far is that in physics it is all pure energy. We are at a funny place we are start thing in a new way different dimension. There is a great little book work reading I use it all the time it is a book called *flatlands* has anyone ever seen or heard of it and was written about the same time as *Alice and Wonderland* Lewis Carroll also a mathematician what he found was defined a two dimensional world and defined all its rules for conduct and the premise of the book is every 50 years someone in that book is introduced to the third dimension the genius of the book is that every argument of the third dimension can be argued away from two dimensional logic. Can be

explained as not being true or as being an allusion of some kind or as not existing at all. We are living in a world where we have already dealt with intellectually dealt with the idea of a fourth dimension.

Einstein in physics etc. so we are in a sense aware of it but we are also going through the process of what it would be. Fundamentally what it would be in art is accounting for the observer. Putting in the observer. The modern art idea of putting the observer in at the center of the process and that everything is conditional in relationship to that observer is something I am acting as a artist at this time and the critical history of modern art is 200 years old and we are at the midpoint of that history and that is a whole other dialogue but we are at the midpoint and it will be a whole another 200 years before we know if it was a good idea before we know if it works. Our commitments to it right now are aesthetic commitments are interesting because it is in our realm. The people who bought into Einstein's ideas in the beginning bought into them because they thought they were beautiful. They had no proof. They have now over the last 50 years or so done series of experiments and spent millions of dollars to see if for example light bends around a magnetic prism. Because it had to under right the concepts of Einstein's physics. I am not presenting as a given or a truth we have this history these are the implications of this history these are the directions of this history and you should think this thing through for yourself it is too damned important to take my word for it you are going to spend the next 30-40 years of your life dealing with it and this lady is talking about Foucault and if she buys into that she is screwed for the next 50 years.

Very dangerous education can be very dangerous that way I am always amazed that there are 4,000 PhDs given each year for ceramics very peculiar. How do you teach someone ceramics? As an artist in ten years who knows what you will move into what kinds of materials you will work with what kinds of ideas possibilities you are going to have to invent your own tool. If you look at artists throughout history every period of art has invented a new tool a new method because they wanted to go someplace the previous had not gone to and they had to rethink even the materials. To learn a new tool to ultimately be worked into a craft is not a bad role. There is a great and meaningful world of how new ideas are interwoven into the culture the kind of day to day richness added to our everyday lives in a way the craftspeople. In effect there is a moment in time way the really good ones interweave that meld these into our everyday lives. They contribute something critical to our lives. So I will give an example of

What a non hierarchical structure is a non prejudicial structure in a hierarchical structure. You take high art and low art so that I am the artist and everybody else doing crafts or designing or clothing or whatever they are all lesser because it is structured that way from high to low. Take the thing and turn it on its side and think of it as a process of innovation as a an idea starts as in inquiry only on the basis of curiosity it is going in this direction and it may be very obscure at the beginning like a tree falling in a forest if it does not affect something and you have a process where that idea is innovated into the world. I broke it down to six or seven steps you have an individual on a line of inquiry and that person is living on the thread that the idea they are dealing with has significance that if they can think it through it is because it is thinkable it is connected in a thin way but it is connected but it is pursued by the one ambition which goes in the opposite direction which is curiosity or in philosophy wonder --The wonder of the world

discovery of seeing and knowing what has never been done before that is what is driving it – a very curious activity to be in.

There is an artist of pure inquiry if there is a resonance then it is going on in other parts of the world. So there starts to become what I call dialogue of collegueship people that are planning this activity find each other and this is before publishing papers before making art this group of people suspends judgment for a moment to ask how it might be otherwise. What are the possibilities they do not have any proof for it at all so they play with it this idea and in the process mature the idea and at a certain point there is an amazing thing that has to be done is to take this idea that is totally cerebral or totally of the heart and body and you have to transform it all dimensions to make it an intersubjective idea that is make an object write a thesis make a paper. You may have to invent a whole new language or invent a whole new tool to put this thing into the world so that it has this intersubjective potential. You can spend a lifetime in realm one just dealing with the possibility of an idea or a lifetime in realm 2 or putting into an art form or a thesis. Then we have what I call the art of art or the science of science where we begin to publish. I do what I do, I make something that reflects hopefully all these issues and possibilities that I am dealing with. You come along and look at it you are another artist and you say he if full of shit and you try and tell me why like when I went to New York and we had this running idea and we tried to discipline the idea there is already art a body of knowledge and suddenly we are bringing an idea which may be just modifies that body of knowledge or maybe just breaks it.

Or maybe it has the potential of Einstein's physics to take it apart and it can be very destructive. So the first thing you need to do is what we do in the art of art is this idea of disciplining is weigh the idea against what we already do and do not know. Why would we tear apart the whole body of knowledge just because ad hock it is a very dangerous idea take the ground out from under us. So there is this trial and error that goes on among us which we discipline this idea and begin to articulate the idea and value its worth before we modify the body of knowledge. Once we modify the body of knowledge essentially you have defined it or redefined it then we can actually go out and practice it. We go out in the world and see if we can not do something do something change something. Like I said earlier this whole history of modern art being as radical as it is non-hierarchical changes all our concepts of social order and institutions. It you look at what is going on in modern art you have two truths, pictorial reality which still works which is absolutely viable it is not an antithesis. The whole history of modern art is a co-arising, saying there are two ways of looking at the world. Things exist on two levels go back to Mondrian. Students come into my class with a board under their arm some different types of paper. They can even go to the store and there is actually a list of what they are supposed to buy and they have not made a single decision. Based on what? The history of our education and maybe the peculiarities of the teacher. So they come to the room with all this stuff and you have a room and a stand. Every sits around the teacher puts an apple up there or a red cloth or a figure or a set of abstracts and he will give you what to draw and if he is really a pain in the ass he will tell you how to draw. Essentially you have not made a single decision and you have not learned anything at all.

Professor from audience: That is why I feel my 3-D students get lost. I give them their projects but I do not give them their materials they can go to the junkyard anywhere

Irwin: We will come to that but the point at which we come to that in education. You did not teach your student you worked with your student. You worked with their sensibility you brought them along and in a sense under write. But you did not tell them what to do. In the beginning before that idea man you drew from the cast you had all these rules and they took that all away as if students could suddenly take the leap from one realm to another. And it left them wandering around out there bumping into one another because the opposite is true you have to take do what I am doing lay out this thing of drawing and then challenge them to take it away from you to challenge them to take control of their thing. I am not buying into that. OK argument debate, Why not. But you can not give it to them it takes them about a year depending on how bright they are and how dumb you are to go through this thing and the school serves them in a way by bringing all these assets. The most important thing it brings is other students who are having the same struggle so there is camaraderie and overlapping assistance group. But the sooner you get out of school as an artist the better. I always I would get everyone out of school in two years minimum in their studio and then I would go visit them in their studio.

I am running out of time where I am going to conclude this thing. This idea of the hierarchy and then you can put it into the world and begin to change things. We understand the danger of putting it into the world before it has been tested it can be very, very dangerous and destructive. You can completely screw up the social order. I mean ideas change things and are powerful and dangerous. So there is this necessity to be very rigorous in this process and once you put it into the world it begins to change things and you have the social art or the art of culture.

What I was saying about the art of the craftspeople which begin to weave it into our lives and enrich in our lives. If that does not take place this is idea of a tree falling in a forest. I do not really participate in this, although maybe I do I know for example Einstein wrote what he thought was a very simple primer so that anybody could read and understand. While he is doing that he is not acting as inquirer. Acting as a social arbiter and is articulating and make his ideas accessible to the world. We all do that we all have that ability to move up and down this scale we can also be practitioners and be involved with weaving into the culture. It is not a hierarchy also the beauty and finally you have historical form. Which is a summary of everything that has taken place but it is not everything. History is never a history of everything a history of significance. That is why a good historian is and important thing to have. A good historian is a damn near impossible thing to do I will not go in to what all of those can be. It is all this time he steps off of anomalies and is looking for inconsistencies while the historian is looking for consistencies those things which resonate as piece and part of the whole. So if you spend or I spend 30-40 years of my life looking for the inconsistencies and you spend 30-40 years looking for the consistencies then we understand we have a little trouble when we start to talk about things. We see the world very, very differently but we are totally interdependent. So there is an example of a non hierarchical structure going to your question. Also the idea of sublime with the extended frame of reference. The

The making of history which is a summary of everything that is taking place but it is not everything. History is never a history of everything but a careful selection which is why a historian is very important. Because making history without corrupting it is a damn near impossible thing to do. A good historian who does not clutter it up is a weakness which is

This is why historians and artist can not get together this guy spends all is time looking for anomalies and looking for that which has not been done and the historian is looking for consistencies the overlaps and those thing which resonate as piece and part of the whole. If I spend 30-40 years of my live looking for the inconsistencies and you the historian spend 30-40 years looking for the consistencies then we have a little trouble when we talk because we see the world very differently but we are very interdependent. So there is an example of a non-hierarchical structure

going back to the sublime and what would be an extended frame of reference and that is what I am trying to test or the game I am playing doing a garden and being an architect and all that is seeing if the difference of context is that if you walk through my garden lets say and you could reference it the history of my art the oeuvre of the arts this is an Irwin because he uses certain colors in a certain and so you reference to the history of art or if you reference the history of gardens you say this is a Greek garden this is a Japanese garden this is a French garden this is an English garden and they are all radically different styles of gardens and they represent different kinds of experiences different ways of going (58) in the world. And you could do it that way. What I mean by conditional is that when I spend time in this space in this time and in this space this represents the best of my ability to present what this space was and what this space is and it is other to what it was. This space has a history this space has an hierarchy and this space has a whole set of usages and this space is now being converted and changed. I come to this space for what reasons and why? An education. This space is loaded with implications of how it exists and it was laid out to me in this loosey goosey way it was described to me. This is where the honors students come and they hang out and they use it and etc. etc. This space is all those things or those stained glass windows (in room) are representational and represent a particular kind of architecture etc. etc. So any situation is and incredible complexity of conditions. And all those conditions..... not only that but I come to this space from where. This space is in Wyoming what is my sense of space when I come from the plains of Wyoming. What is my sense of space when I come through the streets of New York City? Because when I come to it and how I enter into it and what ideas I bring with me is ideas about construction, architecture ideas about material. In New York to example it is the granite state because there are all kinds of buildings built with certain kinds of materials and there is a whole building up of craft around those materials. The point is all those are the things which make up a space. So to the best of my ability I spend time in that space and the first thing I do is I start walking I start walking long circles around the space. What does it feel like to be in Birmingham what it feels like here how the streets are laid out what are the concepts of order. How the early part of the city the difference of the early part of the city and the later part of the city. In a simple sense the early part of the city generally follows the topography of the land and the later streets will follow the logic of the automobile and suddenly you get a perfect grid getting a feel for all those things in that situation. What I try and do is make what I do in that situation is make what I do respond to all those things which are existing cues and I do not invent or design anything. I pay attention to those things and finally assemble them in a way that they almost assemble themselves. It is not magical but that is how I feel.

So that now when the observer walks through there, and this if for you specifically, when they walk through there they have all the same clues that I have and they can make all the aesthetic judgments by saying it makes sense I like this it resonates for me. I don't like this I would have

done it differently I would have done this or I would have done that because they are working with the same basic raw material that I am. Can you do that? Is it possible? On a day to day basis? I do the garden and all of a sudden I have to I am in a situation in which I have a time frame I have a schedule, I have a problem and I have a very complex problem. I have 14 consultants working for me and I have three engineering firms working for me I have 2 arborists working for me and I have 4 horticulturists working for me or with me and I have a meeting on Monday morning in which we plan the week all the people there with all the representatives there and on Friday and by the end of the thing I have to make decisions and set because that is the way it works now but the thing I am really involved with is not just changing or making a garden but changing the whole process of how we make it a garden because that whole structure of Monday and Friday in itself and redefines and restructures the making the garden. It is the one hidden thing or orthodox thing which is orthodox is conceptually to make things different in the world and that is where I am going and I set out to go there and I end up in the same old place and the reason is because I am the same it is the hidden because I am using the same old tools and the same old methods. So one of the things I have to do is come back and look at those things which seem obvious and appear given because they have worked for hundreds of years and I have to come back and say it does not work not get me there. I have to redefine the process itself. But in the beginning of course they are not going to let me do it. So at the beginning I have to go through the process and begin to take it apart at the same time. I am living in a world with an amazing set of contradictions and maybe not necessarily completely succeeding in it doing this but what I like and what I am writing on is the validity of my questions.

What is conditional art? It is obvious it is a set of conditions. What is the phenomenological art? It means the observer is actually the decision maker dealing in the phenomenology. Phenomenology is nothing more than the fact that Unlike the Plutonic model, if I start dealing with the world as I experience it is in constant motion. It is in my action and interaction with it and it is changing and that is the fourth dimension as far as I can see right now. That is the interactive decision process that goes on in a dynamic world. We love the idea of hierarchy because it transcends our own death and it transcends our own limitations and mortality. It is a very pretty idea and we set up all kinds of structures to do that, religion concepts of high forms of culture and art all to do that. The fact is we are going to die. We can not avoid it heaven what an idea. Guys are blowing themselves up in cars right now because they are going to end up with thirty two virgins in a world that is much more beautiful much more spectacular out of the pain of this particular world. I can not argue with it but man it seems peculiar to me. The idea that I am actually am living in this world and that this world has an actual existence is a set of continuing conditions which I have the ability to reason --which is the great strength of human beings it is the one thing that we do and anything that negates reason (1 05) creates a problem as far as I am concerned it negates the issue, it walks away from the moment and the responsibility of continually reasoning is the fourth dimension as far as I can see.

Have I answered the three questions? Of course not. It is brilliant.

Audience: can you speak louder?

Iriwn: I have been talking for two long days now as loud as I can.

One of the problems here is you get up to lecture and one of the problems is you have to do it, it starts to sound like you are starting to put out truth which is why I like this format and I do not

talk loud so that it does not sound like I am putting out truth I am putting out speculation it is the best I can do to where we are and where we are going. Don't believe me more than anyone else. But hopefully I put out enough questions that for the ones that are interested their curiosity because you have to look at these things for yourself. Because as an artist you resolve all these issues how you deal with this moment in time. So we will project but don't take it too seriously my projection voice.

Jim Alexander: When you were talking about artists and art historians you reminded me of Larry Koons and Larry Bell and the responsibilities for what one does. Do you mind addressing that?

Irwin: It is a very sad story in a way. Are you familiar with Larry Bell? One person? Larry Bell was a student of mine who came to me from Birmingham high school where he was the Birmingham Braves and he was the mascot and Indian. He would run around at football. The guy had an unbelievable amount of potential this kid was exuding aesthetic sensibility even as crazy as he was. That is one the other is John Chamberlain. Is anyone familiar with John Chamberlain? Is this an art group? John Chamberlain is the guy who radically changed the history of sculpture. All sculpture up to that point including David Smith operated from an armature which is essentially a leftover figurative rationale. Put arms on it whatever it is still figurative. Chamberlain started crushing automobiles so that sculpture was suddenly not an armature anymore it was something imploded or exploded depending on how you look at it and it really changed the whole history of sculpture. Prior to doing sculpture John Chamberlain was a hairdresser OK. Larry Bell was an Indian Larry Koons was a kid I used to race motorcycles and I knew him as a motorcycle guy. He did these lozenge paintings and at the moment there was this moment going on that was called field painting. Which we will get into for a moment just for the fun of it. Field painting and he was suddenly a revolutionary figure in field painting. Basically it came from music they were like notes in space. Every one of these people made a major impact. I should say Larry Bell made a vacuum chamber and he coated glass with thin veils of color that were these magical boxes that were just that they were glass but they were floating rainbows and what have you quite spectacular. Just working from their own intuition and instinct and sensibility. A big hit on the art world. Especially in New York I knew them personally at the time they were doing this. They made such an impact in the art world because the whole intellectual community the critics and writers gave them this mantle of importance and then they demanded of them for having given them the mantle intellectual development and rationalization,. Explaining the why and how of the import of their work the three of them were not intellectuals at all. Everything was done by the seat of their pants.

They went around scratching their ass and suddenly they have this intellectual responsibility and none of them knew how to deal with it. But all of them are game players, smart and they tried to serve that purpose and explain what they had to do very, very badly and they got their ass kicked. So they all became kind of recluses and you would ask them a question and they would say ah. Bull shit and then they became literally not available. And became recluses and then literally all three of them fell apart. There was no second aspect to them. Larry Bell tried to do things that met the intellectual demands on him and John Chamberlain did a couple of brilliant shows and completely missed, he took foam the ugly yellow stuff and took and tied it up and made these what I thought were really great pieces of sculpture and sent them off to the Whitney museum

for a major exhibition and they called him up and said Mr. Chambarlain this stuff came your work came and we untied it all and there was nothing there was no art. He said you untied them all? (1:13).

The point is Larry Koons is a terrible painter. They destroyed him he must be a very painful guy. John Chambarlain made a comeback but not as John Chambarlain he is now doing again what he did at the beginning very well but that is what he is doing? The tied up stuff and all that could have happened in between where could that have gone? That world was not ready for that kind of an artist. They had an idea of what art was and how an artist would present himself what his properties are. They essentially destroyed the three. Larry Bell did things and now he does the boxes again. You could see between them the potential. To answer your question a painful thing three very sweet guys. So the art world is a real pain in the ass.

The story I want to augment with is I was aping along and I had gone step by step and I had become a pretty good painter and suddenly I painted a painting that did not begin and end at the edge and suddenly I was not a painter anymore. Which is a very revolting development but I had painting these paintings that did not begin at the beginning or end at the end. But I had a sense that I was breaking the hierarchy and breaking the frame but I did not know what the responsibility for that was. It was overwhelming. Everyone said you are dead and where could I go? I began to look around and looked what was going on in New York and Frank Stella was painting these stripes and bands and I thought you could add another band to them and you could add another band to them and they really were on that edge of.

Jennifer Zell Notes

Notes taken during dinner discussion with Robert Irwin after Lecture, University of Alabama Birmingham (March 9, 2007)

“That is what I think I did was create a modern garden”

“That other guy Dan Kiley he just created a garden that looked like a modernist painting”

Jennifer: What about how he changed the way we live – we were interrupted.

Robert: “Modernism is two hundred years old and has not find it’s bearings and it will take another 200 years to work itself out”

Irwin’s general comment was that post-modernism can not go beyond modernism because modernism has not finished the experiment.

Irwin drew me a diagram of two arrows representing science and where the one arrow on top and the other dipping down. This was to explain the progress of science.

I told him I did not get what he was representing. And he said let me begin at the beginning.

He talked about Plato and how we have to take everything he says with a grain of salt because it was interpreted to us through the church. But he talked about how Plato was interested in the

essence of things. And he threw out feeling and art from The Republic because they were not repeatable or predictable. He also talked about the Sienarian box which allowed subjective feelings to be looked at empirically.

He also described progress and gave an example of climbing a ladder and how we continue to climb the ladder one rung at a time based on the progress and assumptions of the previous generations and what happens is that you are given questions that you are not able to answer and that and you discipline your ideas and run them through your existing methodology and when you have a series of unanswerable questions you have an existential anomaly. Or you come to a fork and you can either choose to ignore or assume what is not known can not be known or realize that you can not get there from here.

He suggested I read Husserl who he says goes back to the original assumptions of the basic assumptions that become belief and that the phenomenological reduction. A wresting from the metaphysical to reclaim empiricism.

He also wants me to read William James who is a pragmatist speaking of the poetics of human beings and that human beings are responsible for their actions. This is a post structuralist approach.

He also suggested I read the dialogues between Ponty and K Sartre. And also Edmund Schultz and the phenomenology.

Jennifer Zell Interview with Andrew Spurlock, Principal, Spurlock Porrier, San Diego, California, in his office on May 8, 2007 Part 1.

Jennifer: At what point did you join the Getty Project?

Andy: The project as I understand it started in the early 1990's like 1991, I have not gone back and reviewed that, starting with the architecture selection process and program formulation. They interviewed architects and they selected Richard Meier. There were probably three – four years into when they brought Bob Irwin into the project and that was 1994 and they had involved several artists at that point and that was when Kurt Forester was on the Board of Directors at the Getty and he wanted to involve some artists in the project and one of his ideas was to do some integrative work with the artist and they started working with Bob Irwin and James Turrell doing site work and the thought was that Bob would maybe work within the central garden but he would work within the Richard Meier plan and he would create outdoor works that were integrated into the landscape of the central garden.

Jennifer: So separate basically as objects within the garden

Andy: Which might be integrated into hardscape and design or it could be separate and Bob looked at that in several different ways at that point and I would say he worked on it for nine months before he involved us. At the same time James Turrell was working on a part of the

central garden as a transition space between the upper central garden and the lower central garden and he was creating a light space that would be a skyroom.

Jennifer: What happened to that?

Andy: Basically they decided that it did not fit that well in plan and was very expensive and I think they lost interest in that.

Jennifer: It looked as if it could accommodate only 20 people.

Andy: Yea, they decided they weren't just getting their bang for the buck I think. But I really don't know the history of that. Bob in the meantime was looking at the effect on the Central Garden and he wanted to he was challenging the notion that the garden would end at a terrace and overlook a pond and he wanted to incorporate the pond into the garden. So that people could access the pond and he wanted to move the road that was dividing the two so that it would not be separating the pond from the garden. He started working on site plans to do that and he brought one of those over to me just to show it to me and to ask some questions about the grading because he was starting to present drawings to the architectural team which was Richard Meier and the facilities team which was basically Curt Williams was heading that. He was getting some support and some opposition from Meier's office and some support from the Getty. I was not at those meetings so I do not know exactly how that played out. But the questions Bob would ask me were about grading and how steep a slope he could create and how steep the walkways could be and about ADA access, some about the cross section what elevation the pond could be at how wide the road needed to be as it went around the base of the garden. I had a relationship working with Bob on proposals but not yet a built project. We had worked with him on a plan for the Miami airport for a garden area there and I had also worked with him on a plan for the Iowa museum whatever the art museum is in Des Moines Iowa, and so we were initially playing a support role and Bob was paying us and fee and we were giving him a discounted rate and we were under the table because we were friends and we were not going to meetings we were giving Bob advice and helping Bob respond to what I would call constraints that were established. And those constraints were often about the grading and site planning issues of access.

So he was preparing most of the drawings at that point for about five or six months. Then it was beginning to gestate are we going to proceed with Irwin or not and Bob was making it clear to the Getty that if he was to proceed with the site plan he would want to make site plan changes to the garden. So the Getty then said I think we need some more drawings to make that decision. So Bob explored working with Laurie Olin to do that feeling that it was not a comfortable fit for him to work with Richard Meier's office as a collaborator to further explore that issue. So he talked to Laurie Olin and then decided that he was more comfortable bringing in his own people, in as he put it, and introduced me to The Getty Trust and I went to meet with Kurt Williams who was the facilities director for the project and Gloria Gerace who was project manager for the Getty and they basically said OK we need a proposal from you guys and we want to define what it is you are going to do and the way I saw it our role was to develop a presentation for Bob that would communicate that idea his idea for the garden to the board of directors and to a certain

extent as well to The Getty management team because they were interested to communicating to the team whether they wanted to proceed.

Jennifer: That is interesting because one of the complaints he gets is that he did not engage the site but you are saying that it was his idea to move the road and bring the pond and connect it so that people can get down into it.

Andy: Yea have access to it to the lower part of the garden. Yea, people now complain because you can not get all the way into it. Originally the water was on the other side of the road.

Jennifer: Some little kid was sitting next to me and said I want to go into that really cool labyrinth but I can't.

Andy: I hear that from all sorts of people, writers and design critics. It is just so frustrating because you can not get into the labyrinth and they feel that is a real problem and. I say I don't know it is not my design.

Bob and I talked out what our role was at that time and one of the things has helped me is define what my relationship defined working with artists. I went to a lecture he gave before I got to know him and his lecture was on collaboration and mostly on working with architects which he had worked mostly with and I took it to collaborating with landscape architects and the interesting thing I got out of it was the collaboration is necessarily between two equals with a different kind of orientation that you have equal responsibility and you acknowledge the . and Bob at the beginning of this one said you know this is not going to be a collaboration this is going to be my design. And I said yea I can see that but lets talk about that. And he said the whole idea that Kurt wanted an artist to design a garden.

Jennifer: I read that and it seems like he wanted objects in a garden.

Andy: I kind of think that may be the way Kurt Forester pictured it. That he would get something like the trellises and he would get these garden elements that. But Bob wanted to expand that to a garden and I agreed that it should be an artist designed garden and I should not be a landscape architect designed garden. Because he had already had Pete Walker come in and talk about the garden and decided that is not the approach and they had Laurie Olin take a shot at it and decided that is not the direction we want to go. I said to Bob my take on the reason that is should not be a landscape architects garden is simply that it is very difficult for a landscape architect to do a garden and the reason for that is because landscape architects are orientated toward predictability and we are focused on the client relationship creating places and spaces that are predictable for the client. Because the client wants to know what it is going to look like and that it is going to be easy to maintain and that is the primary issue that landscape architects because we are client focused. And that is the way Bob had differentiated the role of artists and landscape architects is the designer always has a client and is always at the service of the client and has a mission to achieving a program whereas art is the exploration of a question. She I said as long a the garden is art it is the exploration of a question and it is not carrying out of a program. So the next thing was what is our role in the carrying out of the program and what is your role and how does that play into it. The idea was that it had to be a garden exploration of a

question in order to be art and that was Bob's role and that is art, rather than a collaboration between the two.

Jennifer: I have a hard time understanding and I do not want to get off the point too much but he is talking about this being a phenomenological art and also a conditional art and to me that is axiomatic because as landscape architects that is what we do. It is phenomenological and it is conditional we do have a program and we so have a site and we do have a program and all those conditions that make it a conditional art so it is hard to understand why is it different from any other garden. And the chair of my thesis is saying he(Irwin) thinks he invented the wheel he thinks he invented the garden and we have been doing it since 3500 BC.

Andy: That is the sad thing about the landscape or the design world response to challenge or to investigation which is defensive. That is a defensive posture. OK there is someone outside our sphere of activity who is tromping around on our turf and taking credit for something we invented and in Bob's mind that is just extraneous that is not the issue. He wanted to explore questions about plants and the questions he had about plants which is really interesting and landscape architects do not have the opportunity to explore our clients do not ask us to. But he was being asked to do that and invited and supported so why would we find that to be offensive or challenging or diminishing or patronizing so let him do that and learn what we can from his exploration of that. It was like a graduate thesis for me doing the garden because I got to see his exploration and I saw things that were quite different than the way he sees things.

Jennifer: Has your practice changed and how has it changed?

Andy: Well I just look at plants completely differently.

Jennifer: In what way?

Andy: I could see that whenever he talks about plants or sees something what he sees in plants is completely different than what I see.

Jennifer: You see it from predictability and maintenance.

Andy: I have that baggage and natural associations. My background was from plant associations and I tend to think certain plants should go together.

Jennifer: Ecologically?

Andy: Yea I have an ecological foundation so while putting plants together there is an inherent underpinning. Bob does not have that. He is coming at a plant association strictly from a visual point of view. And that gives him a certain freedom to explore combinations of plants that I do not have. and then he gets criticism on that end too because he did not consider water requirements when putting plants together and he did not consider normal garden associations. But one of the most interesting comments I got from the garden was from a guy who was just strolling up there and he walked up to me and said did you have anything to do with the design of this garden and I said well design development and

Jennifer: Were you conspicuous somehow?

Andy: I was pointing to things and moving things and he introduced himself and I can not remember his name and he said I am the director of parks in London and he said I just want to tell you that this is the only garden in America that is interesting. I have seen 30 gardens while I have been here and this is the only one where someone is not afraid of plants. He says I don't want to say that as anything we have over you Americans but whoever did this garden is not afraid of plants and it is so refreshing. And the criticism I have heard tends to be along those lines is that he was wild over plants that Bob was crazy with plants. But I think this is an interesting way of looking at it, he came in there and was not afraid of plants.

Jennifer: I think that is how I have to pose some of the writing. OK if you are looking at it from traditional landscape viewpoint. It may not end up as a success. But if you look from these viewpoints it is extremely successful.

Andy: Bob would say and I think we do not really know how successful it is yet but if I just hold onto that one idea that garden as art is an exploration of a question than it is art because I think it is very seriously exploring that question about plants in a very interesting way. And Bob put incredible energy into exploring plants. We had a nursery where we collected plants and we would go out every week and arrange the plants and then Barry Coate who is a horticulturist and I would go and look at the plants and we would talk about which ones can work together and grow together and what size it would get and Bob would grimace and say "oh shit" I was hoping this was a ground cover. You guys are just so hard on me all the time I do not know what I am going to do. But I would say come on Bob. We would have a question that would be really interesting and I would say go with it.

The question that I brought up which is something Bob really took off is the issue that the garden is backlit. Most flower gardens you walk into are designed to be front lit. that you go in from the south heading north so that all the flowers will be front lit and the colors would read strongly. But here at the Getty it is already set up as a condition that all the flowers will be back lit. Walking you come in from the North and go to the south so the sun is in front of you and you also have the glare of the ocean in the distance. And here Bob is trying to do a flower garden and so I said you got to work with the back lit condition. He was showing me photographs of Giverny and first of all I said Bob you have got to go see this garden. Because you are showing me photos and I am having just as much trouble with these photos. I use to have trouble with him when I would show him photos and he would say I don't know. I can't tell anything from the photo and that is why we got the nursery because we had to show him the actual plant but he would show me a photo of a garden and he would say this is what I want and I would say "I don't know what you are seeing here" so he went to see Giverny and that was really interesting but all the photos he was showing me were front lit and so I said you have got to think about what it is like to walk through this garden as well as what is framed in the photos and he said yea that is what I am trying to do. I am trying to make an experience about spatial sequence and so he would say what does that mean and I would say well maybe that means that a part of the garden is just about being backlit like the grasses and other plants which look really great when backlit. So then the grasses came into the picture as part of the whole thing of entering the

garden and then the thought that the experience was going down into the garden against the sun and then finally turning around and seeing at the bottom the garden front lit for the first time. It is what the event is at the end and then that became a stronger idea as the Brentwood homeowners told us that we could not have a view from the end of the garden. I do not know if you heard about that one.

Jennifer: I just read a correspondence about that when they got rid of the peristyle the homeowners wanted to review the plans.

Andy: Yes the Brentwood Homeowners came back into the picture and we had to present to them as well as The Getty to approve the garden design. The first garden design that we were working on had a bridge at the end which provided a view of the ocean as well as the view back into the garden so there was a dual finale or climax to the garden.

Jennifer: So that is obviously the other complaint?

Andy: Yes. That it is closed off at the end.

Me. And they ordered it to be three feet raised.

Andy: Yea, they wanted a screen wall. They thought that bringing people that far into the garden was a violation of the conditional use permit because Meier had kept people back on the terrace so they insisted there be a screen wall so that you could not see from that point to any of the homes. The Brentwood homeowners. So Bob came over to our office and worked on this 1/8 scale model for a couple of nights and was working with the clay and refashioning the end of the garden so that the berm would close off the garden and turn and look back to the garden and that was the climax.

Jennifer: Do you have drawings of that original proposal? With the bridge?

Andy: I think we have a digital copy of that.

Andy: These are the kinds of drawings that Bob would do. (Andy is showing me dwgs on his computer - a drawing of geometric sections of the garden) he was thinking that these would be beds and he was not sure of the site might be taller and that these eventually became the trellises. This has to do with defining spaces. Here you can see the contours where this was a little ravine with a bridge going over and if you stand here on this last bridge you get a panoramic view to the Santa Monica Bay to the canyon and then turn around and look at the flower garden. We presented drawings and we showed them the model and people said if I were standing here people could see my house. People could stand here with binoculars. And I would say well you could get an even better view on the terrace here but they would say well I don't care I do not want people standing here she would say .

These were the kinds of drawings I did initially talking about the spatial qualities these are oblique's. (he is showing me his drawing) One of the objectives of the garden was to separate it from the architecture because Meier did not want anything touching his building.

Jennifer: Was that an explicit or was it more intuited?

Andy: It evolved from everything we showed touching the building was a problem and we would have to negotiate with him so I should back up and explain how we got up to this point.

I talked about how we got involved playing a technical role. Having our coming on board playing a supporting role and having us then under a contract directly with the Getty Center and we gave the proposal to do what I called a design refinement for the board proposal. At that point they were not sure they were going to proceed with the project so we were basically working at an hourly rate. But we gave an estimate to do the drawings and then we came up with the idea to build the model and we agreed to a budget then. So we started on the drawings and I would go to some of the meetings at that point and hear some of the issues we met with the people from Meier's office and we met with Richard Meier a few times because he was not clear how the relationship would work out. He was beginning to take this kind of form where the colonnade was taken out. Then it was the issue of pulling everything away from the walls so that Meier would not have to deal with that. We suggested the idea of making a large scale 1/8 scale clay model of the site. And that was good for Bob. Bob works in plan but he was really having a hard time seeing relationships and making connections come together

Jennifer: It is a complex site.

Andy: So I would do these oblique drawings. We were making models of smaller pieces but we thought we should make a model of the whole thing. And that got fairly well-developed we brought people from the Getty to come down and look at it. This is a part of that model. (Andy is showing me images) This is the model that was on display.

We were thinking that was a study model. But when they saw it they said that would be really great for the people on the board. Like of course. Everything Meier was doing was done in models. The board was really not looking at drawings. We agreed to finish the model to present it to the board. So the board presentation was the model plan views and perspective drawings. We had perspective drawings of certain kinds of elements (Andy shows me dwgs on his computer) These are hand drawings that I did this is the kind of drawings that I did and they are fairly schematic because Bob did not want to do an illustrative. This is one of the drawings that I did and then this series of drawings that were presented to the board and this was a sequence of views of walking through the garden to show what the experience would be. So you had the model. You had the drawings. Plan view and you had individual sketches of the individual elements the Bougainvillea the planters. This was to allow them to make the decision to whether they wanted to proceed.

It was not really clear until a time after the presentation how the project would progress. There was a time where they said why did Bob have these trees right in the middle of the view corridor and Meier was really upset about that too. So a number of these drawings look at that view and why Bob thought that the trees belong in that view. So I was saying that you start at the top of the steps and this is what you see and then you are at the bottom of the steps and this is what you see. And it is all about the magic of the view as a sequence of unveiling itself sequentially rather

than seeing it all at one time which is what you can see from the terraces. And they still were not convinced and it took several months for them to decide OK this is what we are going to do. We are going to separate the garden completely from the rest of the project is going to be a separate contract. You are not working with Richard Meier we will have a contract with you and we will have a contract with Bob. You will be the prime for the sub-consultants with Bob which will be the engineers and the support disciplines that you will need so we had eighteen sub-consultants. And then you will work with the contractor and you will work like a design build because at that point we were way into construction and we were trying to meet the opening deadline and they wanted the garden for the opening. We got on a fast track process where we would complete the construction documents for design build but also needed to get permits and approvals from the city

Jennifer: Did the contractors get those permits or did you?

Andy: Pretty much the contractors got the permits but we went in and negotiated a lot of stuff with the city regarding ADA access. For instance the city did not want to approve the decomposed granite paving as an accessible surface so we went down to meet them several times to meet with them about that. There were questions everywhere about railings because we were pushing the limits where there were guard rails and where there were hand rails. So we met with the city repeatedly with them on those issues. And we also prepared mock-ups and drawings and models of things for Bob for him to review and to make decisions. And planting design when Bob didn't really know plants.

We did not really know how that was going to work. I had worked with Bob on seven or eight things but none of them had gotten to the point where there was a specific planting design. But, this one was a garden and it was all about the plants. So, we got together all the consultants, started them and got Bob involved with them in different ways because he was really hands on with the water feature and the lighting effects on the water feature. Because he had custom fixtures and all the detailing of the paving and the corners all of that the Cor-ten steel he was very much into how it fit together and how it is attached and how it fits into the wall. So we did very detailed drawings and those were design development drawings and we have a ton of information in slides because this was done before we went digital. We have slides of all the models and we have slides of all the mock-ups. We did decomposed granite gravel.

This is an example of how we were working on the water feature. Originally we were working on a wood model of it. With the idea it was part of the terracing of the stone and what was the effect of the water over that stone. This is in the water feature consultants driveway. So we mocked it up out of concrete block he actually built it with mortar. Then ran water over it we wanted to look at it with the red granite color we wanted to experiment with different colors. So then we painted it and ran water over that and it was oriented in the correct direction so that the sun was in the correct direction and we could look at it like that at different times during the day. And we wanted to look at the effect of different steps over the stone and the volume of water because he needed to know what the GPM would be for the pump and what the turbulence would be at the bottom and he did a similar one at the stream and in that case actually built a 20' section of the stream out of the real stone. And built that on the site and Bob could listen to the sound.

Jennifer: Have you ever made mock-up like that before?

Andy: No and we were looking at the channel with the broken rock in it and the rock cladding the side so this piece with it and they ran the fire hose through it and this is an image of Bob looking at the mock up. The Getty was using a section of the site to build mock-ups.

Jennifer: were these mock-ups just for the garden to show the board.

Andy: the architects were doing similar things but this was mainly for Bob. The architects were building mock up and Harold Williams would come out and look and say yes the mullions were ok for the windows. But Harold did not come out for the garden much.

Jennifer: So these were mainly for Bob?

Andy: Yes, Bob was really into seeing the effects of the mock-ups. And we made full-size mock-ups out of wood before making them out of stone on the site like the Cor-ten walls. We made wood mock-ups or had Jim Brown who is an architect make all the cornice pieces and how the hand rail fit together with the steel wall. Things like the wood in the bridges we make full-scale mock-up of them.

Jennifer Zell Telephone Interview with John Beardsley Professor of Landscape Architecture, Harvard University. (April 20, 2007)

Overview:

We talked about my thesis statement of the Getty Garden being a post-modernist garden.

John said a flurry of things about the Getty I caught that it was a recuperation of past garden forms the parterre the chadar (he listed a list of about 10 things; borrow form places in Indian water wall, naturalistic freeze simulated landscape and an artificial simulated landscape) John says it is a kind of pastiche.

Jencks also borrows from tradition mentioning Maggies Chinese garden work and interest in geomancy and the reflection in the bones of the mountains and such. John says the earth forms express geomancy and are borrowing from archaic forms. After Maggie got sick the garden became more scientific and less historic and became a science of uncertainty and contingency.

John: What do you mean by post-modern and how are you going to define?

Jencks is a science based garden of self similar patterns and slippage and collapse.

Jennifer: defined as a critique of modernism and as a questioning of a faith in science and progress and fractured identities.

I expressed that I did not understand how Jencks seems to have a scientific positivist world view. The only change is that he is using a new science for the basis of form. Whereas post-modernism generally rejects a faith in science and technology and that it can emancipate humanity which is generally a tenant of modernism.

Jencks also says that this new science and its form tie us more profoundly to nature than the modernists have did you see that?

John: Also believes that aesthetics construct social values and that architecture and the artist and writer can bridge what he calls the failures of science and religion as inadequate and lacking vision of the emergent world view of a creative and unfolding universe.

Post modern de-emphasizes the personal visions of the artist and sees the artist more as a translator or sounding board of culture.

Paraphrased quotes from the interview:

John: There are areas of the garden where self similar patterns read in the area around the terrace and where the slippage and collapse do read. As well as older archaic themes Maggie was interested in geomancy and the Chinese idea was expressed in the garden where the hills and mountains are bones of the the butterfly lakes do begin to establish a new language of form evoking the ideas of Robert Gleek in chaos theory.

John suggests I read.

The least successful part of the garden is the garden of the five senses where it reads more like a textbook.

Jennifer: the part where there are hands and floating noses and such

John: yes that part is illustrational.

Jennifer: Do you see the work of Charles Jencks and his ambition of creating a new world view translate into culture?

When I asked about the translation of Jencks garden forms in the larger culture John mentioned Maya Lin's wave field as a garden of self-similar forms as in clouds and waves. He says somebody just curreted an exhibit at the Wexner Center of glass and shifting and John wrote the catalogue titled topographies. Saying that Maya uses dynamic form and scale to shape a language of technology and changes in theory representing formal possibilities not seen before.

"Will Jencks garden create a sea change... I doubt it" if a total revolution is to happen it will have to do with energy efficiency and sustainability.

John: Then talks about the squatter settlements exhibit he is working on about making public space lighting and recreation facilities and upgrading without upbraiding the social structure of low income communities. Interventions in low income areas.

Jennifer Zell Telephone Interview with Antonia Bostrom, Getty Curator of Antiques and Sculpture. (August 3, 2007)

Jennifer: On the audio tour, you differentiate between gardens that happen to have art in them and spaces are primarily about the art and have a green element. What makes the new sculpture garden primarily about the art how is this communicated?

Antonia: Because of the whole of design of the space was to display the sculptures to their best advantage and the plant thing was designed to compliment that but the main thing was sculpture. There are gardens that the gardening the planting and the design of the garden and the plant material are as important if not more important that the sculpture occasionally you feel as though the sculpture was an afterthought. We worked from the other premise where the sculpture was our primary focus and how to best display this in an outdoor environment.

Jennifer: I am wondering how this idea is specifically communicated. You have a minimal plant selection...

Antonia: yes, there are a number of things the planting really confined to raised planters beds. We have not placed sculpture within planting in some cases they are in the middle the Noguchi are placed in the planting the rest are in what we see as three cubic outdoor gallery spaces. The Turnbull and the Miro and the first one the Henry Moore and the Shelton on the third. If you look at the plan you will see them as outdoor gallery spaces. So the idea was that you could circumnavigate the sculpture and have an uninterrupted view of them although the long view of the garden you see through this haze of Verbeena that flower. So that the way you see it is occasionally through the planting itself. Everything was carefully decided upon in consultation with the architect and the landscape architect. Who are Laurie Olin partnership.

Jennifer: What sort of specific direction did the trust give for displaying the works? How did this affect the design or layout of the spaces. Required they all be on permanent display?

Antonia: No, no we worked with William Brice who is an artist in his own right he is a Los Angeles based artist and he at the suggestion of the Stark preservation trust worked with us advising us and take place in the placement of the sculpture. It was a wonderful experience. He is a highly in tune man to both the sculptures and the Starks themselves. Fran Starks brother, Ray's brother-in-law. We worked with him and he took part in all the meetings where we were working on placement of sculpture. Was also sort of implicit approval of the Starks from him (William Brice) And everything we did we submitted plans for the approval to the Stark trust. They had to finally sign off and agree to it.

Jennifer: It talked about the works on the lower terrace moving from representational works to more abstract were these principles on deciding which works went where.

Antonia: all these groupings were generated out of the works themselves. We did not say we want the British works here but it just turned out that they looked best together. And then it came almost post facto that the American minimalist and pop art sculpture worked best together.

The French more classicizing working went with the Barbara Hepworth better, and then at the bottom to the hill went the Nogouchi.,

Jennifer: Did you use any props to help make those decisions?

Antonia: oh yes we had full mock-ups of each of the works we had complete fantastic full size mock-us so that we could do a dry-run and that was the best thing we did because for instance the George Rickey we considered putting outside on the terrace by the Harrold Williams auditorium thinking the square paddles would work very well with the square grid of the facade and it looked terrible it disappeared into the façade and we were only able to find that out using the mock-up

Jennifer: The Getty Garden is often talked about as a work of art, but garden history has not described transitional or innovative gardens in the past as art why change the language now?

Antonia: Well because it is a work of art by artist Robert Irwin. It is accessioned as a museum object. It has an accession number.

Jennifer: About the garden being art as different from the sculpture garden and the sculpture garden. How is the experience different?

Antonia: Well you would have to ask Robert Irwin that. It is his conception of how it is different. I think our public conceived of it as a fabulous garden with an incredible palette but he sees it as this ongoing phenomenological sort of ongoing and ever changing palette. And the composition is going into a base of structure. He uses the plants as another might use oil paint and I think those who understand Irwin see it as that whereas many of our public don't they see it as a garden. So there are two ways of approaching it.

Jennifer: In reading in the literature the work has not really been talked about as an extension of his gallery work but it is talked about mostly in gardening terms.

Antoina: It can be approached from different ways - from a horticultural view does it work I have my doubts, because it sort of pits against the grain. It changes continually. It is not the way vita Sack Valle West planned the white garden and knew if she planted this tuber in July white would come up. He does not plant something and six months later red comes up, I mean he just puts red in the ground so it is very different it is not a horticultural space. He is using fully grown plants to achieve that. When he wants a color he does not wait he goes out and buys it fully grown. So it is a different approach than horticulture and anyone within horticulture is appalled by it.

Jennifer: I love it. In the press material described the effort as a collaboration, but as some point someone had to decide this goes here that goes there.

Antonia: Yes, everything was done in absolute collaboration but I suppose I had the sort of say to override as the curator of the collection but we worked as a design team with the curatorial team and Richard Meier's office as well because we had their considerations to take into account

as well. They didn't really want the sculptures in the middle of the planting because that had all of the conservation ramifications. Watering and possible damage and incidental damage from water getting through. We always felt the sculptures would be served better in a slightly sparer environment than in a lush garden. My one example that I did not want it to look like is the National Gallery the sculpture garden in Washington DC. Which incidentally was designed by Laurie Olin partnership and there it is very lush and the feeling is that you are in a London Square or a Paris square and the primary purpose is to go into a space to escape the heat. St. James square Hannover square or these squares that have sculptures but you primarily go there because they are a haven of green. Whereas we were not trying to make that the primary focus whereas that is something that is attractive to a sculpture garden. And there are these spaces at the beginning and the end of your trip to the Getty where you can enjoy your environment and the natural environment and the garden within so they were complimentary. I do not think that an abundant sort of rich garden would have suited either the sculpture or the relationship with the Richard Meier architecture. They would have been contradictory to each other. With the focus and the point of this new garden was to house the new collection.

Jennifer: The mock ups at the Getty follows what was done with the fountain?

Antonia: They were so convincing as mock-ups at one point a scholar from the Getty Research Institute which overlooks the lower terrace garden exclaimed that the Getty was just dragging the sculpture around on the lawn they have no clue what they are doing or how to treat sculpture properly. And we reassured her no. no those are mock-ups and they are so convincing everyone is competing to keep them.

Jennifer: You talked about what you did not want the space to look like, are there precedents of what you did want the space to look like?

Antonia: Yes, we did a tour, I did a few trips one with the conservators who worked extremely hard at every point, they were full partners in the whole process. With them and with the designers who we went with us on two trips mainly to the east coast. We went to Storm King and MoMA, Baltimore museum of art and national Gallery of Art Washington DC and sculpture garden as well as Nasher. And also the Kimbell and I would say that probably the Nasher was really the garden and not to say we copied it but it was the general sense that we saw the beauty of the architecture working with the sparseness within the garden as well to highlight the sculpture as well. Also at the Kimbell art museum who has the Mollino who was here on a trip, designed by Louis Kahn. Wonderful tight base so that you are very aware of the base that she is on so the pedestal becomes very important as well. Volume and a think we achieved that really well with the Maiollarie and the Henry Moore piece. The woman where I think the base was a sculpture itself. In the area which I call the woman's terrace but it is the Fran and Ray Stark Terrace. There was a very famous Henry Moore Exhibition at the Forte de Belvedere, Florence in the 1970's maybe 74 75 but it was a seminal exhibition everyone remembers where the Henry Moores were arranged in the outdoor area where if we were able to achieve anything we were able to do something like that which is on the outdoor terrace which is essentially rustication you know the Getty has very rusticated travertine you can see the rustication behind the art work when on the terrace. As a fortress and beyond you have the view out into the sea

and into the garden so that was our little moment. Where we were able to , and also in the lower terrace garden where you have the views beyond.

Jennifer: Let me get this straight. On the sculpture terrace is the Henry Moore seated woman and we have her photographed where you see the corner of the west pavilion and you see her photographed against the rustication. At the lower sculpture garden where you have the Rickey the two Calders and the Heuber and adams where if you look from a certain perspective you look over the city you are on this high plateau on top of the hill and not dissimilar to what was done in Florence. From what I have heard and seen in photographs I was not actually there.

Jennifer: What conservation issues are considered when displaying the works in a public setting? Other than the don't touch signs what has been done?

Antonia: Most of them were in pretty good condition they were built for installation in an outdoor space so they had a build up of wax and some of them had to be washed and waxed and there is ongoing maintenance. Some were repainted because they needed to be repainted like the Roy Lichtenstien, the ellsworth Kelly was repainted and that was done under his guidance and with his full agreement. And he agreed to the patina.

Jennifer: What about working with the public in a public setting. I know there are a lot of don't touch signs.

Antonia: Well there are two contradictory things going on simultaneous one being that the works be publically accessible while some might have been less than accessible they were to be in highly visible areas to the general public not just staff. So we had to put them in entirely public spaces so with that brings the problem of being totally accessible to the public. Which means people might touch or sit in them so we use our staff or guards to minimize that but there is no doubt we cannot stop people from touching it they want to touch it. so that was a balance between what we or the conservation staff would ideally like and with wanting people to be near them and touch them and be able to experience them first hand so we take the risk because we have a fabulous conservation department and the ability to keep up constant maintenance program we can run that risk. With the maiollaire we have to put that explanation about lead. That is just a California law we have to declare the material but there is no problem to the public.

Jennifer: It is not leaching into the drinking water.

Antonia: No, I mean they would have to be scratching and ingesting it. It is just one of the over precautionary things we have to do.

Jennifer: Do you have a favorite spot that you like to go to/

Antonia: Probably the Willliam Turnbull the venues which I think is one of the most beautiful sculptures in the collection and one of the least known He is a British sculptor and is enjoying a renaissance in England he just had a retrospective at the York sculpture department and he is also being sold now and a new interest in his mid . That is the one in the first of the outdoor rooms. I do love that very much I think it has a fabulous and we have been able to something that they did

in Yorkshire there is a similar sculpture that is up against Yorkshire stone and it is one of the installations that were done in collaboration with the artist. So I think we were able to do it in a way that he would have enjoyed it. a satisfied. And the Henry Moore seated woman is also very good.

Jennifer: What about the baby with child?

Antonia: You mean baby and mum? Yes that is also very good and in a way that Henry Moore would have enjoyed as set in the landscape. To mirror and compliment the curves of the Santa Monica mountains and that was one of the things we could do in the garden is the large front form as well looks good in the valley that sort of pass of Sepulveda pass. The Ellsworth Kelly is also extremely elegant. Obelisk which you can see from the museum rotunda entrance all the way through rather like you might see an obelisk on a hill at a British garden.

Jennifer: yea that is amazing how you can see that from all over

Antonia: We spent a lot of time getting that to work just right. We did that with Ellsworth Kelly, moving it 3 inches to the right and then three to the left right back to where we put it in the first place. And then we had a catalogue of work and I am encouraged by my colleague and he not only signed it but he made a drawing of it so we now have a new Ellsworth Kelly drawing of what happens to be the mock-up of his own work. Which is very nice very spontaneous.

Jennifer Zell Telephone Interview with Lynne Tjomsland, Getty Grounds and Gardens Manager. (August 13, 2007.)

Jennifer: Were you involved in the plant selections for the new sculpture garden and terrace?

Lynne: Absolutely, I was invited to be part of the initial brainstorming sessions when the museum and trust were considering an implementation plan and how to go forward

A design profile and issue recognition and identification and those and it was a very cooperative process between the museum conservation, visitor services, we all had a vested interest and mine was of course in making sure it was maintainable and long lived and robust. From that point forward I was involved on an at least weekly basis through the design phases and then into the actual construction phases.

As a landscape maintenance organization we are really tickled with it because it is maintainable all the interfaces and this really has a lot to do with the attitude of the Getty and getting everyone really involved from the start -- project management being committed to a product that worked with everybody. And still presented the art work in its best light and the consequence is we have a set of gardens that functions very well for the artwork as I understand. From a facilities managers standpoint we have a highly functional garden that is manageable that will be a long term garden and we are very excited about that as will frequently you end up with edge issues or

boundary issues where you have modified irrigation systems or soil types change or plant material is incompatible, you go down the list, because we were able to work with Olin and the museum we were able to eliminate

Jennifer: Can you describe those specifically?

Lynne: In the context of having a garden surrounding an art piece there is tremendous concern for the interface between example grounds men and the art piece.

Jennifer: Like a weed wacker?

Exactly, we talked about each of our concerns , conservation the museum me from a grounds perspective what do we need to do here we don't want the artwork surrounded by great big pedestals or surrounded by decomposed granite which still takes maintenance. And certainly statues in the middle of lawn had been seen and the damage that causes and we evolved the idea that we would have subsurface irrigation on areas of unmown grass, using like Carex as opposed to some of the more traditional turf grasses traditionally used in Southern California. Carex is under the Nagouchi

Here we have a lawn and the big open expanse but we do not have mowers and weed wackers and because of the sub-surface irrigation we also eliminated a huge amount of the water impact that a garden sculpture in southern California would undergo. ...

Under the Jousts in the Lower Terrace Garden there is Dymondaii and around the statues the Dymondaii is subsurface irrigated.

Toro DL200 is a drip distribution hose that we have been using with very good success don't mention product. These are perforated hoses with valves function underground the technology the distribution valve is 6-12-18 inches depending on the spec of the hose each distribution point is two valves and if one closes the other takes over and they have impregnated in the hose herbicide so that roots don't grow in and they are positive pressure or neutral pressure so that you are only pushing out theoretically and we have gotten very good service out of this system and we have felt very confident in using it throughout it is placed in the root zone and the spec for it is 4" below surface and we know that in a sandy artificial soil that we have been living with that does not work so we set it at about 3 or 2.5 inches so we got to spec out what was really going to work and the consequence is again that the project is horticulturally successful.

Jennifer: Are you saving water?

Lynne: Tremendously, a lot of the landscape at the Getty is rooftop not all but a substantial proportion is on artificial soil that is not turf grass is 100% sub-surface irrigated and a lot of emphasis on Olin's original landscape plan for the Getty Center, tremendous thought was put into economies and things that just made since in terms of water use and natural resource and I have been doing this for 20 plus years and this is the best delivered site I have ever been on. Very little evaporation

Jennifer: How long have you been at the Getty site?

Lynne: I have been at the Getty five years.

Jennifer: I am trying to understand how these economies show up.

Lynne: To give you an example. To give you a perspective, I managed horticulture for Disneyland Resort in Anaheim for a few years, I managed for USC I was their assistant at and I have consulted to other institutions over the years so I have gotten some exposure and when I say well delivered there is very little waste because of the way the system is set in. We are using drip so there is no water overflow on the sidewalk, there is very little evaporation because it is not being emitted on the soil surface. Because the Irrigation system has a very sophisticated controller with a leak sensor sensing ability alarming ability very sensitive controlling ability and because the gardeners and staff are very well trained to be sensitive to this we waste almost no water we waste very little water. And when I say the site is well delivered I say the plantings are compatible with the irrigation system the soils are compatible across the board they are extremely well engineered we liked the soils so well on the T1 garden that was a big huge grass field and that performed so well that we literally stockpiled that soil and made sure that it met the original engineering specs by amending the top-soil and such but we used that soil again because it was so good.

Olin used a third party consultant for soil specification.

Jennifer: Talk about pesticide use and pruning and composting.

Lynne: We are one of the very first LEED certified existing building facilities. As an existing building we were the first certification after the pilot period so there are a few more now and a lot of that had to do with our attention to detail and conservation and how we handle our waste product. In terms of landscape which is my area there is a huge emphasis on for example use of native plant material on the hillsides. We are moving in native plant material as we evolve the landscape in the top of hill. We are migrating in and Olin is not divorced from this process by any stretch. We confer with them where we can and we had a tree that was diseased at the top of the hill and we chose to bring in a native oak from the hillside that we had grown as part of the original installation. Outside of the Getty research institute. There is a 10" caliper Quercus agrifolia and underneath is the native while improved is the Ceanothus. Mountain lilac. And we incorporated native species into portions of the Stark gardens.

Jennifer: What was on the lower terrace before?

Lynne: Dymondaii and Bermuda grass so we really made a step in the right direction.

With the Dymondaii this is the first installation that I have seen it used in such a large area?

We did the mass planting at the behest of Robert Irwin and we had to go through a consultant where this was not an appropriate area for turf grass. Steep slope and Divined excuse me choose whatever the ground cover would be and we deciding what ground cover that should be and Dymondaii has been so successful on a steep slope that but on a smaller scale. And the

challenge with any monoculture is that and particularly broad leaf monocultures we have weeds and when we have broad leaf weeds that is hand labor and what we know is that if you can establish control initially than finally we are good. I probably would not choose to do another massive planting of Dymondaii but because once it is well established and you get over that hump it seems to be pretty good. Solid mass and pretty stable.

The DL200 we have been working. All the irrigation systems at the Getty are highly monitored so as a consequence we pretty much now if we are low flow and we survey the conditions every morning to see how the site is and now all of our groundsmen are long term guys and they really know what to watch for and when we have problems they identify them before it becomes critical and no system is perfect. New landscapes are the most challenging and we are really fortunate in that way.

Because we are in the middle of a very urban setting we can not have say a very big compost pile. The places that would be flat would just not be appropriate for that the real estate we have is just not appropriate for that kind of use. As a consequence we do separation and we also grind a lot of our waste with a chipper and blow it back over our hillsides and so one we are building up the soils and the lining with water retention on the slopes which are slightly irrigated. In that way we try to keep out of the waste stream we really try not to haul stuff to the dump. We just don't send a lot of stuff down the hill to the dump. We really try to separate our green waste or blow it back up the hill.

Jennifer: What are you doing about Pest control.

Lynne: In pest control we are working very hard to apply a lot of observation and elimination the traditional Integrated Pest Management so we are way into early elimination of pests and we do oils and soaps we are already ahead of the game with our cultural situation we do not have over watering we do not have weed plants that draw bugs and our last resort is to go to actual agricultural chemical as a consequence since I have been here we have gone from an almost traditional program between biological to these earth friendly kind of efforts that we do we apply very limited chemical comparatively.

Jennifer: Where did that motivation come from?

Lynne: We are a public place in a lot of ways plus we have 12,000 people here and for anyone doing institutional work being able to avoid pesticide application is great very difficult to schedule it as a lot of the facilities are 24/7 so finding that window when you can apply is very difficult the liability related to using chemicals. People are highly sensitive and rightly so just in terms of liability avoidance you are really motivated. I don't particularly want my guys handling a lot of chemicals there are chances for people to get hurt. Chemicals are expensive and one of the things we have observed as we have gone down this path is that we end up with the biological void problem. For example years before me as I am not sure I would have gone down this path, they used to do 100% chemical control of the grubs in our turf grass.

Jennifer: I hate grubs.

Lynne: We do to and we are really challenged by them and predating me they had lost whole field of turf. What happened is every time they did it yea they would kill the bugs but they would migrate back up through the strata and re-infest and we started moving toward trying nematodes and over the years yea we still have grubs but they never get wacko they never just take over and kill everything. Knock on wood I mean five years in horticulture on a site is not a huge history but we just found we are a lot less at risk. In our trees we get mites but we keep throwing predator mites and then hosing them down as opposed to treating them (chemically) for problematic mites and we have consistently less problem. These things are really successful.

Jennifer: I noticed that in the central garden area there is an entire ecosystem there butterflies, bees lizards when the whole place seems to come to life but you don't have that same feeling in the monoculture sites in the rest of the campus.

Lynne: That is an interesting thing if you look at the things that are on the rest of the site they are not things that are attractive to bugs like stone pines what bugs like that and raphiolepis and star jasmine and crape myrtle these are the foundations that we have and they are not interesting or diverse the central is such a diverse planting. Now it is not a particularly environmentally sensitive planting, it is a nightmare, and yet and I would not want you to quote me there specifically but it is extremely challenging and very high labor however it is not a garden it is an art piece so it is not treated the same and that is one of the things we have to keep reminding ourselves about that garden. We put all that energy into that garden it is a small intense piece while the rest of the landscape remains this stable hardworking reliable landscape and very institutional in nature.

Jennifer: Is there a different philosophy toward the Central Garden in terms of it being an art piece as opposed to being just a landscape?

Lynne: I feel like that is a particular work in progress I field comments from those who like to say who is irresponsible that garden is in that it does not use neighbors and look at all those high water use things and why don't you put on labels. Everyone has a critique as if it was a botanical garden or if it was an institutional garden or a traditional landscape. Why don't you do this it would be so much more economical why are you using that plant because it is a real water sucker why are you planting these two apparently dissimilar things next to each other. Why are you using a tree that is you know we literally prune those trees between three and five times during the summer just to thin out the leaves.

Jennifer: Robert Irwin is particular about how those Sycamores are pruned. This is not something you would burden a landscaper with because it would be economically irresponsible. It is an artwork and the importance of those trees is how they move light through the garden not how they function as tree elements in a landscape.

Lynne: And there are lots of ways this stuff functions but that is one example.

Jennifer: Who is telling you this stuff?

Lynne: Horticulturists and gardeners in general all have opinions we are Anyone who loves what they do has opinions. And we all love to talk about what we love to do and what we care about and it can be somebody I speak to in the capacity as being in the garden and a representative of the Getty it can be in conversations at a cocktail party. I have never had anyone come into the garden and critique it in that way because I do not think anyone would be that callow. Clearly it is not just a landscape and clearly this institute is not a university this is a very different setting.

Jennifer: Who would you describe that approach?

Lynne: The Robert Irwin Central Garden is an art piece that speaks to the concept that Robert Irwin is trying to communicate. The institutional landscape surrounding the Getty edifices are supporting the architecture and the human use of that space and the interplay there is to the architecture where the garden is the interplay being to Robert Irwin's perceptions and the things he wished to communicate. So from a landscape managers perspective I go back to the landscape architects in preserving and maintaining the Getty Center for the Irwin Central Garden I go to Robert Irwin. He is the measure of our true success in that garden if communicates what he wished to communicate and we support that through our horticultural practice through our day to day maintenance.

Jennifer: How is that have you had meetings with him where you walk through the site.

Lynne: Yes, It depends on the time of the year. A number of people will be involved and the focus is how the garden is doing how he perceives it being successful how it is doing what he wants it to do what changes need to be made what areas are weak and failing and how he sees they should be evolved. If we are going into a seasonal change than we talk about what is pertaining to that seasonal change. It is really a lot about planting and a lot of times we are left to figure out the mechanical part we cover on the choices and what is the better choice. It really is about how he perceives the garden.

Jennifer: I talked to Antonia and she drew out the comparison between say Vita Scak Valle Wests white garden and her intentions for there were more of a horticultural approach where as Robert Irwin is more of an artistic approach. She said if Robert Irwin wants red he just puts red in.

Lynne: Well you know that is a really. Antonia Bostrom is from the art world and I am from the facilities world and I would hesitate to add to her analogy except to say that it is not just any red it a specific red and a lot of what we do is try very hard to find those reds or find those yellows that speak to Robert Irwin's sense of what hat should be

Jennifer: I have talked to Robert Irwin a couple of times and his idea for that garden is to have a perceptual experience and you don't have to have an art background or a horticultural background so even you as a visitor can you go there for enjoyment?

Lynne: For me as a gardener and as a person who loves space I enjoy the garden every time I walk through it. I absolutely enjoy the garden. I enjoy lots of different spaces. But the truth is there is a substantial part of folks that come to the Getty for that garden. And there is your

judgment of the masses. And any time of year Robert Irwin has defined and any change any time you walk through that garden there is something new and vivacious that takes your eye down the path and your senses down the path and he has laid out for you and how you perceive it. There is a question that way outside my purview but I know people like to.

Jennifer: I noticed that people were using it as a traditional strolling ground people of all incomes seem to come just to be there that was their afternoon stroll whereas do you see that happening?

Lynne: I think that is a really good observation I think that being at the Getty anyway is a very rich experience but the intensity and the change and the action of space and water and breeze and light is built into that garden it draws people back and it is a rare experience in an urban setting. I think part of it also is that it is a very controlled experience where you sit by the water and you know pretty much what is going to happen to you that day in this setting is going to be pleasant.

Jennifer: How is the cactus promontory maintained?

Lynne: It is irrigated it is weeded and policed and litter picked and pruned on a cycle it isn't open to the public. But wandering through the bowels of the building we are able to get out there to do the work. We engineered it so that it is a safe place for the guys to work in that there is a huge edge and a drop off we have a barrier so it is a pleasant place to work and during the year when we have major pruning to do on the Agave's things it is heavy hard work. But that is infrequent so it is mostly policing. And like everything else it is a little bit more than anybody else would do but we try to be as economical as possible.

Jennifer: You have different maintenance régimes for the same species of plants. At the Stark Garden you look like you have pruned the Crape Myrtles columnar.

Lynne: That is what is called an aerial hedge is what they have named that form so that this row of crape Myrtles is actually touching and the outside lines follow a long hedge form a square hedge form and that was highly defined and in fact in the original planting we preserved the crape myrtles we had to hold them off site and moved back into place so the hedge looks fairly uninterrupted. So we have preserved that hedge. By contrast the Central Garden they are relatively natural soft and comparatively billowy. Another example is the Sycamores.

We have pollarded and alles and we have naturalistic pruning and pollarding is the one that astounds people the most and we are actually getting our pollards at the café terrace to actually have some of that marvelous pollard knuckles at the end of the branches I saw that I have had people actually get upset with me. Asking who is allowing you to do this and that is a wrong kind of pruning and well no this is an old European strategy it has been around for a long time and is precisely what we should be doing and in fact. To develop those strategies we worked with arborist Barry Cotes. I have been doing this for 25 years and I happily follow him around and he is a mountain of interesting information for horticulturists. And he works with our guys and our supervisors in developing the strategy we go through with these trees we

**Jennifer Zell Telephone Interview with Dennis McGlade, Principal of Olin Partnership.
Friday August 10, 2007**

Jennifer: At what point did you re-join the Getty with the new sculpture installations and how would you describe your firm's involvement?

Dennis: I was called by the Getty and they wanted to put the original team back together Michael from Richard Meier's office and because of the architectural changes and so that is how we got started and involved.

We came in early on. I think they knew what sculptures they were getting and I think they may have had a general idea of where they wanted to place the pieces on the site but it was really very much a collaboration between the Getty, Antonia their conservation group and the garden people everyone together.

Jennifer: Who are the garden people?

Dennis: Lynne Tumchlin. She is a horticulturist.

Jennifer: The audio tour talks about the artists being involved in the placement of their art works and how they thought their artwork best interacted with the site. Were you involved in any of those discussions?

Dennis: I was not on the site with the artist that came with some of the work but I know they did do that. There was a gentleman who was a painter and I think a friend of the Starks. And he was at all of the meetings that involved placement of the sculptures.

Jennifer: Put this job in the context of your firm's existing work on museums and sculpture gardens.

Dennis: Compatible with that.

Jennifer: How do the new sculptures fit within the larger Getty campus?

Dennis: You go up the tram up the hill and you start at what is called the T1 level and that was just a plane of grass and a row of Crape Myrtles and it a collection of British works of art Antonia had combined together. The sculptures we grouped based on aesthetic affinities based on Antonia's the curator. So now you have a richer experience when you catch the train to go up the hill now you get off then there is wonderful layer. I do not have the actual sculptural listing. So when you get off it is sort of a sculpture trail it is a variety of things from very abstract to very representational and varies and basically the sculptures are placed so that some visitors may stumble upon them serendipitously and others may seek out the works but the idea was that the environment of the Getty will be getting more visually complex stimulating and richer as more is added to the campus it becomes a palimpsest by adding a garden or work by some artist.

Jennifer: Was layering pre-planned because you were the original designers so was there any accommodations made for acquisitions?

Dennis: I am not sure. But the thought was that it was inevitable that it would happen over time as curators change and as ideas evolve and change. Most built environments are never as originally conceived some of the exteriors there is a layering of new ideas and generally new stuff. And that trace of history over time.

Jennifer: In ecological Design and Planning, Laurie Olin talks about an ongoing experiment within the practice about bringing ideas concerning nature and cultural response. Is that experiment still relevant at Getty?

Dennis: Yes it is still relevant. The issue at the Getty is that the garden could teach the visitors about issues of sustainability. In the garden you could also read for other information rather than just aesthetic ones. Plant material that the conservators were very concerned with the plant materials and the water not damaging the works. And we were interested in issues of water use and some natives and the plants that are not native are compatible with the climate. And with a regime of measured water use are not deep flowing within the canyon.

Aesthetically it is very spare and inspired by the structural system of the building and it is of that place vis a vis the geometry of the architecture and the garden placement we were very lucky to have two or three meetings on the site of full scale mock-ups.

The Henry Moore sculpture right there and you would see it juxtaposed with the Hepworth and the Miro and we would slide and there was this sense of a visual colliding of the pieces and modulation of their own space and also give them room to read a individual pieces.

Jennifer: What qualities or presence was intended?

Dennis: The garden that has the jousts, the lower garden, has a much wider horizon and there is a Ricky there that catches your eye and opposed to the lower garden which is much more linear looks down the canyon in the other direction. So spatially there is another garden that is on a roof.

Jennifer: What sort of feeling was intended? We could start with the sculpture garden.

Dennis: I guess the feeling was that they would be a setting for the sculpture that they would not have interest but the primary focus was the art and not horticultural displays where people might have to make a decision as to what to look at the planting or the art. The idea was that it was a setting for the art and would compliment it in a good way I the way that a good picture frame would with certain kinds of paintings. And we had issues of how close people could get to and if people could touch the works because they are holding the work in trust.

Jennifer: Did that influence any design decisions balancing how the public could touch and interact with the garden?

Dennis: Some things are in pavement and you could walk right up to them and others are in planting that you can not get as close to them. But the idea was that we did not want to put a fence around it. We wanted it to look very approachable and very subtle.

Jennifer: Have you been back since the opening?

Dennis: I was there in early May or June.

Jennifer: Did you notice how people were using it? Did you notice anything particular or interesting?

Dennis: People were not allowed in yet.

Jennifer: What about the Central Garden was there any conscious effort to make connections to The Central Garden?

Dennis: Yes. I think one of the pieces the Leger was selected by Irwin to go into the garden he liked that and there was going to be a piece that was in the garden. You should confirm. The other garden (lower terrace) is adjacent to the central garden and there is no screen or anything

Jennifer: Was there any connection to the central garden in formal expression or plant material?

Dennis: The formal expression was generated from the architecture but the planting but there is a plant called Dymondaii that goes all the way around the garden the silvery grey stuff. That appears in the sculpture garden to the west of and we have added Ceanothus which appears also in the garden which. The deer ate.

Jennifer: The deer are not supposed to eat the Ceanothus.

Dennis: Yes but I have yet to find a deer that won't eat just what it is he wants to eat. So they were covering it with netting.

Jennifer: You talked about using a Mediterranean palette in a Mediterranean climate but were there any aesthetic reasons for picking the palette and are there any cases where the artwork interacts especially well with the plant material.

Dennis: We planted a sedge that used a very low water but produced a grass effect and they thought that the fine texture went very well with the works and a native sedge you will see it among other plants and how the colors worked well with the sculpture. And the cor-ten you talked about how the garden connected with the central garden and Irwin garden has cor-ten. So cor-ten appears on the T-1 level now and the other sculpture at the library and it was used as cor-ten as little retaining walls and curbs and that was used in the Irwin garden originally and just picks up that idiom and brings it in and it is a very nice. The rust color looks good up against the pieces. The Ionium and the fescue were selected for their compatibility of color with the sculpture themselves.

We also have that row of crape myrtles on the T-1 level and they bloom in the summer time so we planted underneath that rows of agapanthus and then we planted lilies so there are subtle things that go on in the planting that the pink lily and the foliage dies down and about a month later you get this stalk that so that you have subtle manipulation and you go back in September and there are these pink lilies.

Jennifer: Were the crape myrtles there before?

Dennis: Yes but they had to remove 4 or 6 for construction purposes and they were transplanted and kept on site and they survived.

Jennifer: In the same Olin essay he talks about spending years fighting determinism and some might argue that there is an architectural determinism going on how would you respond to that.

Dennis: Well something has to determine something. Because we wanted a coherent composition. As a designer you have many choices to make you can be very colorful or very controlled. So, I am not really sure determinism is a bad word. Something has to say what that was if it is not the architectural determining it than it is the sociological or biological determining it than. You make design decisions based on lots of things so things come together. You can base a design on curves or circles or spirally things or you could have a bag of plant material or architectural material on the other.

Jennifer: How might you respond the accusation that the formal expression being derived from the architecture is redundant and not responding to the site.

Dennis: I guess I would say redundant implies too much and everybody has a certain level where they experience and then they don't want it anymore. So where there are too many right angles or something is an aesthetic response or judgment and perhaps a taste issue. Redundancy. In architecture and landscape are not the same the landscape changes in a way the architect doesn't. The buildings don't lose their leaves like the trees do or the buildings don't change their color like the agapanthus did and within the geometry no matter what it is there is a dynamism within the landscape which that dynamism plays against redundancy because it is just not static and the temperature and in the morning and in the heat of the mid-day and the shadow changes and that also plays on the architecture as well. We have that seasonality and the dimension that is unique to the so much of the landscape is alive. There is this pavement and pergolas and the context is living material which changes.

Jennifer: What is your favorite place to be in at the Getty?

Dennis: There are a lot of them and I think it really depends. I have a particular affection for the cactus courtyard and the other place is under the stone pines very few people go there it is very calm and very green and bright and shiny and open to the grand horizon. I think the T-1 level is interesting and the new female sculpture terrace.

It has not changed dramatically but it has changed a bit. The porch is quite magical in the middle of the museum it has the water with the row of Cypress trees is transformed with events. The

fountain with the middle of the rock and the water. When I tell people to go to the Getty I tell them to go in the afternoon when the light is gorgeous so anytime after three o'clock and the light everywhere is a gorgeous combination of air pollution and marine layer. Aesthetically.

Sometimes the sun is very hot but you get a breeze off the ocean. There are a lot of places. It depends on how you feel at a certain time. The idea is to add more space and more places.

APPENDIX B: RECORDED DIALOGUE

Observation at the cactus overlook

5-6-07

3:45pm

During this time people seem to also continue their existing conversations and have intimate conversations at the railing and stay for a few or several minutes before moving on. People also orientate themselves geographically within the landscape by pointing. Generally most people take a photo with themselves as subject and the view in the background. Much in the same way people interact with overlooks at state parks or rest stops. The space is exposed, serene and spectacular and heroic in scale. The cactus garden is seen from this point below and is an intellectual conceit only people may notice it but generally do not comment or react to it except in the case of Linus the 6 year old who thought it was terribly mean that he could not go into the cactus garden along with the fountains the maze. The nationalities seemed to be a group of Japanese college students and some Scandinavian couple. At this time I did not see the quantities of Hispanic and Chinese and Philippine people that I observed earlier in the garden. Leading me to suspect that the gardens are used as a kind of strolling grounds in a way the museum buildings are not.

“that is a million dollar view”

people are pointing out landmarks

“ok thanks”

“want to sit for a minute or what?”

“no”

“come here look over the edge mom”

“I am tired”

“Is that circular building.....” (visitor looking at skyline)

“I am fine, I do not have to”

“laughing”

“if we are on that side”

“we were just right up here” (disoriented visitors)

“yea its over that way”

“you want me to take that?”

“I can’t see”

“let’s go back up this way... I guess”

“Billy lived over in that area he bought a house’

“all right...want to go?”

“let’s go back up”

“how are you guys holding together”

3:55pm

“you did it. I had my eyes open”

“you have to advance it first”

“you did not push the right one”

“you guys should get on that side”

“no, we are fine”

“did momma tell you about the time...”

“it might be”

“I guess this is the closest we can actually get to being in the cactus garden” (dad commenting to son)

“.....you know- I am sure they don’t want their guests to go walking in there” (dad to son)

“looks like somebody spilled coffee there?” (son to dad)

“how could that have been there for so many years?” (son to dad)

“I think she is a spy” (son talking about me)

“I think she is taking pictures of people taking pictures” (dad to son)

I started talking to the dad and son Linus, I asked Linus what he thought of the place

“everything is so mean here” (Linus)”

I ask what do you think is mean?

“the maze, you can’t get into it. It’s like so mean” (Linus)

“and that big high wall is so mean”

“you could not get to the big maze that was so neat” (Linus)

“the wall at my size, I see a view of Los Angeles, he can not see” (the dad)

we talked about school and his teacher Linus is age 6

“you only have seven left”

“pose please”

“oh it is just an incredible building”

“one two three go”

“seeing that far”

I am on top of the Getty Museum looking at the ocean” (young man on cell phone)

“very nice take a picture”

“it is absolutely gorgeous”

‘do you want your glasses on or off’

‘this might be my Christmas picture so.....’

“thank you”

4:10pm

‘this is just beautiful... yea’

“go this way”

“that looks...”

“thank you”

‘I at least made a face’

“my hair is in my face” (girls looking at photo just taken)

“why are we going back? We just went up”

“thank you, I think it worked, yea, thank you”

“all those fountains and not one....it is not fair” (Linus wishing he could play in the fountains)

“that is San Pedro cactus” (Linus’ dad)

“what are these for?” (Linus)

“lets go” (Linus)

“exactly”

“would you mind taking a picture of us”

“of course”

“isn’t this beautiful?”

“got it”

“thank you”

“ok, that is good thank you”

“there is that lawn out there where people lay out and sleep”

“you can get a bottle of wine”

“yea they sell wine”

“oh you don’t have to do that”

(guy explaining building to friends in group) “structure, anarchy, structure, anarchy, because... see that it is like on a grid and if you trace a line they all line up ... laugh yea a lot of work”

“you want me to take a picture of both of you?”

“at least you did not drop it”

“I don’t want to go back to New York”

“look at your face” (20 somethings looking at photo of themselves)

“I think my dream is to be a docent here I really would... I think I would enjoy it” (same guy who was explaining museum)

laughter

“what if this was your patio?”

“I think I need to change lenses for this one”

“all right panorama time”

“he burned out my camera”

“look at that big glooby formation there, I wonder if that is part of how limestone forms?”
(looking at one of the uncut limestone panels)

“you have LA then that is Hollywood Hills”

“Back that way you know what that hotel may be?”

“ok we are done I am burned of this”

talking in language I do not understand.

“the answer to that is yes, I like The Getty” (guy on cell phone)

4:45 pm

Recording of the dialogue of visitors while sitting at the top or north west upper corner entering the garden

May 6, 2007 12:30 pm

General observations during this time:

People are taking tons of photographs in the garden they are taking photos of flowers and details and the subject of the photographs is the plants themselves. If people are taking pictures of each other they are leaning into the flowers from the path or they are shooting themselves touching the plants or smelling the plants the only spot where the garden was used as background was at the “lynchpin point near or on the bridge looking back at the entire Getty complex with the garden in the foreground.

University of Phoenix teachers apparently taking a course for credit are sketching the garden. Today many Asian descent and Hispanic descent as well as middle-eastern descent were visiting the garden. Several in wheelchairs and walkers and all income levels seemed to visit the garden. Possible more of lower income stayed longer in the garden. I would need to quantify my intuitive from visiting the galleries and the garden.

Gardens were used as strolling grounds for working class and foreign language possibly immigrants? Or visitors. Some looked to be immigrants and others visitors.

This garden is not an intellectual conceit put a perceptual experience. A sort of compressed or hyper-reality garden. Hear birds, and strong smell of garlic and in crape myrtle ring smell sweat peas. Turning the corner where sweat peas are hidden on the trellis people instinctively stop linger and do not really know what stops them and makes them linger. Or confuse the smell of sweat peas for the potato vine or roses.

While passing through the gallery rooms visitors have head phones on and there are plaques with descriptions telling you what to see. In garden it is about discovery in the gallery experience is intellectualized.

The building puts frames around the views (to wonderful effect)

It is interesting that the entire thing is related to the grid of the city and freeway and those things are blocked from the framed view.

I hear a lot of Spanish spoken

Ladies with strollers took sprigs of flowers

There are no ear phones (find Irwin's comment "no!no!no!")

People walk around garden with earphones around their neck not on as they move around museum galleries.

There are self-appointed docents who lead a group usually a gardener and they enthusiastically assume role.

People have to get up on tiptoes to see view at lower bridge.

People are pointing, sitting, reading. There is a lady in a backwards wheelchair.

In the bridge and lower and stark area people move quicker and in the garden people slow down nobody looks at view.

"look at that umbrella look at that flower"(group of 5 in bowl).

"those are succulents"

“Ours are pretty tall”

“look this smells like garlic, we used to have this”

“looks like a little umbrella” (people taking picture and describing topiary rose)

“let’s go see the irises” (group exiting lower garden wondering what building to go into)

“look at those roses” (pointing from top of bridge to garden)

“every time you come here something changes”

“yea, some are in bloom, some are not”

“Oh God! Eww I can’t stand that smell”

“I say my allergies don’t need that”

“Wow” (couple walking)

“look at the way they pruned that”

“look up underneath that it is like a hat” (group looking at the topiary rose)

“I can see the chamber of

“This is so pretty”

“I really like this edging, can we get this” (looking at cor-10 edging)

“a rose they trained into a tree”

“trim to get the edging”

“oh, smell those garlic, I could just have a whole.....”

“what is that?”

“wow that’s pretty a little water fall over there and that whole view”

\

“too many stairs”

“this is beyond description, wonderful” (at 1:22pm)

“this is a magnificent day”

“I think Frank Gehry.....”

“look at flowers aren’t they pretty” (mother? Saying to young son)

I am now walking inside perimeter of bowl

“my mother had tons of them she would take them out and plant them again in the spring”

“oh my gosh”

“nice”

“that thing is so cool” (20 something guy walking with his arm out and touching every plant that is within reach while he walks holding his hand out and down)

1pm “this is what I want”

“go take a picture by the flowers”

“you waiting for the birds” (gentlemen from Norway? Asks about the hummingbirds that just whizzed by and he goes on to tell me they are ruby breasted something or another)

“it’s a collibrie, their mouth the tube” (same man from Norway talking to me about humming bird)

“lets go grandma”

“they are like a tomato” (people stopping at sweat peas)

“oh, a flower”

“this is like unreal” (a group of four teenage girls)

“this looks like a masterpiece” (looking at garden)

“this is a beautiful view”

“look at that flower that is interesting”

“this is what I have at my house”

“what is that smell?”

“just the top of the arbor with those roses”

“those aren’t roses”

“yes, this is very unusual, I wish I had the names. Every botanical garden has the names. This is a beautiful flower”

Guy leading tour group of garden at “just enjoy color, texture”

Now I am descending the ramp and the stream.
“can you smell?”

“those arewe have.....”

“they get smaller, finer”

“Adrinne come see this....Adrienne” (mother? To young child)

“Doesn’t this look like river rafting” (same young child looking from third bridge down stream.

“very much so” (grandfather? Confirms child)

“I wish I had a green thumb”

“these are come touch flowers”

“look, look” (to child)

5-6-07

12:50pm – at corner entrance of bowl

“mine are skinny pointy” (someone photographing a rose)

“look how.....”

“oh God that stinks, it stinks like skunk” (group of older women walking near society garlic)

“look at this down here, this would be a good place to read a book”

“look at those... my God”

(pointing and talking in Philippine)”birds of paradise”

“oh look at the big pumpkin”

“pretty”

“those orange things’

“maybe I will make a treasure hunt wouldn’t that be fun?” (man with boys)

“Susan, here garden is just...”

(Chinese visitors talking and pointing, child pointing)

“smell, you will smell - like – garlic” (mother talking to daughter wafting the air about her nose)

“I do not smell it yet” (child to mother)

“it smells like a skunk”

“boy this is beautiful” (visitor pointing and looking up, photographing)

(visitors speaking an unrecognized language pointing)

I smell sweet pea as the wind changes, garlic is the dominant smell

“oh there are those crazy.....” (pointing)

VITA

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