

**Landscape Architecture Yesterday and Today.**  
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Syllabus

Architecture is a discipline hyper-focused on the individual building, its appearance, its details, its civic presence. It is photographed with the building at its center, and it is argued in written and spoken form on its exterior merits for the most part. Yet structures exist always in a context, built and unbuilt. Where the walls of the building reach the ground they contain a world of their own and leave out a territory labeled as Landscape Architecture. While its existence is a matter of course, its planning is often an afterthought. Development is laid out on the infrastructure of roads, services, and massing and far less on what happens between the buildings, where in fact most of our lives is spent. Furthermore, and more specific to the formal aspect of this ancient field, planting comes with its own geometry, texture, coloration, and shadows. Its arrangement in space determines a powerful and immersive architecture that precedes the building itself. This class is designed to bring awareness about the impact that Landscape Architecture has on the experience of space, whether a garden for a single-family home, a park, a piazza, an open area. Architecture and Landscape Architecture are inseparable parts of the space we live in.

**Lesson 1. ROBERTO BURLE MARX: PAINTING WITH LANDSCAPE.**

Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994) was the most revered landscape architect of Brazil. Trained as a painter he treated gardens as canvases to do his most creative work. A favorite of renowned architect Oscar Niemeyer, for whom he designed the landscaping of countless residences, Burle Marx conceived some of the most memorable open spaces of his native country, the outdoor areas of the Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro by Le Corbusier, with Lucio Costa and Niemeyer himself, and the Copacabana beach promenade. In this lecture, a new world of forms, paving motifs, tree hierarchies and transitions between hardscape and landscape will be featured in unpacking the signature of a most cherished character in 20th century design.

**Lesson 2. RUTH SHELLHORN. A MOST TALENTED LANDSCAPE YOU NEVER HEARD OF.**

Ruth Shellhorn (1909-2006) may well be one of the most under-recognized landscape architects in the history of California Modernism. Based in Los Angeles she was behind the site plans and gardens of the Bullock's department stores, devised the comprehensive circulation plan for Disneyland, the Master Plan for the University of California Riverside, and the private gardens of innumerable celebrities. She worked on the iconic Prudential Building of Welton Becket in Los Angeles and many other institutional projects large and small in the area. This lecture dives into her ideas of

what a Southern California landscape and how it complements the mythology of its Mid-Century Modern.

**Lesson 3. THOMAS CHURCH: THE GARDEN ARCHITECT OF CALIFORNIA.**

Thomas Church (1902-1978) is the Father of Landscape Architecture in California Modernism. A larger than life figure, he authored the open spaces of the General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan (1955) by Eero Saarinen, and gave an original imprint to hundreds of smaller spaces all around California. . Author of books and many articles, Church was a principled designer. This talk will dive into his design universe, his ideas, and what distinguished his approach to garden design in relation to where the discipline was in the United States and abroad. A case study involving him will show what happens when the landscape architect designs the garden before the architect does the house design.

**Lesson 4. Guest speaker: ANDREA COCHRAN**

Andrea Cochran moved to San Francisco from the East Coast where she grew up in 1981. A graduate from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cochran opened her own office in 1998 and has received numerous awards for the designs, published nationally and internationally, and a monograph on her work. In 2014, her firm was awarded the National Design Award from the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum. From private residences to public works like the Portland Art Museum and the Buhl Community Park in Pennsylvania, Cochran brings a remarkable design consistency across scales. In her delivery, we will learn about her influences and what she is after in her design endeavors.

**Lesson 5. Guest speaker: GARY STRANG.**

Gary Strang is the founder of a thriving practice, whose designs are highly visible in the Bay Area. From the Haas Business School and the Residence Halls & Bike sheds in UC Berkeley, to the Exploratorium and interventions on Market Street, to the open spaces of the College of Marin, Strang's work is idea based extending the role of the landscape architect from pure garden designer to city builders. We will hear from him the challenges and opportunities to shape the landscape of the San Francisco Bay Area, whose territory is in hyperbolic transformation under the Digital Revolution.

**Lesson 6. HARDSCAPE AND NATURE IN COTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE.**

Under the rubric Landscape Architecture the Natural and the Human Made beyond the building enclosure form a continuous environment. The public realm can be understood as a form of landscape, whether planned or contingent to chaotic interventions. This conclusive lecture raises the awareness of the audience that the relationship between buildings and context is the matter of landscape architecture. Whether small or large, the space between the buildings is where placemaking occurs and the quality of the environment, in its ever changing mixture of greenery and hard surfaces, can be fully appreciated in the community.