

Will the aesthetic
be *sustainable*,
and the sustainable
the *aesthetic*



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S W A

50 X 50

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Thoughts
on
LANDSCAPE
Architecture
•



SWA Group's 50th Anniversary:

50 Years of Landscape Architecture

IN 1957, SWA GROUP WAS BORN as a seed in the North American postwar 'ecosystem.' The emerging company was a collection of designers and planners who shared ideas about collaboration, respect for the innate qualities of land, and a belief in the value and importance of art and design. We are grateful to the wonderful clients who, over the years, have helped us to play our part in growing and shaping the physical and cultural landscape of the latter half of the 20th century.

Many individuals have sustained the practice and forged creative insights with colleagues and clients, many professionals have contributed to projects large and small, many people have been initially fostered by the group and then succeeded in their own subsequent ventures. And today, many of us continue to work together to keep the vision alive.

From the strength and—we hope—the wisdom of fifty years, we are now asking questions about the future of our profession, our firm and the world that supports the firm. What will the world be like in 50 years? What has changed most in the last 50 years? What will be the most significant challenges of the next several decades and what do we, as professionals, have to do with those challenges? What kind of learning and training will we need to address the complexity of our nascent century?

At SWA, we are looking closely at how we need to change to adapt to a changing world and to take an active part in its transformation. Sustainability is clearly an important issue—everyone talks about it, but are we only painting the surface? We also have to assess the role of technology and how new design and communication tools might change our approach to problem solving. Changes in social values may also alter our practice, as well as new business structures that suggest different ways to organize a company. Not least, there may be significant changes in how we are regulated—and perhaps even larger, tectonic shifts in governance models.

As design professionals, we must step up to define the questions that need to be asked, because the answers will shape our future.

A year ago, we asked all of our staff, associates and principals to briefly express their ideas about the future and predictions for the coming 50 years. What follows, are 50 excerpts from their thoughts.

—Kevin Shanley, *President*

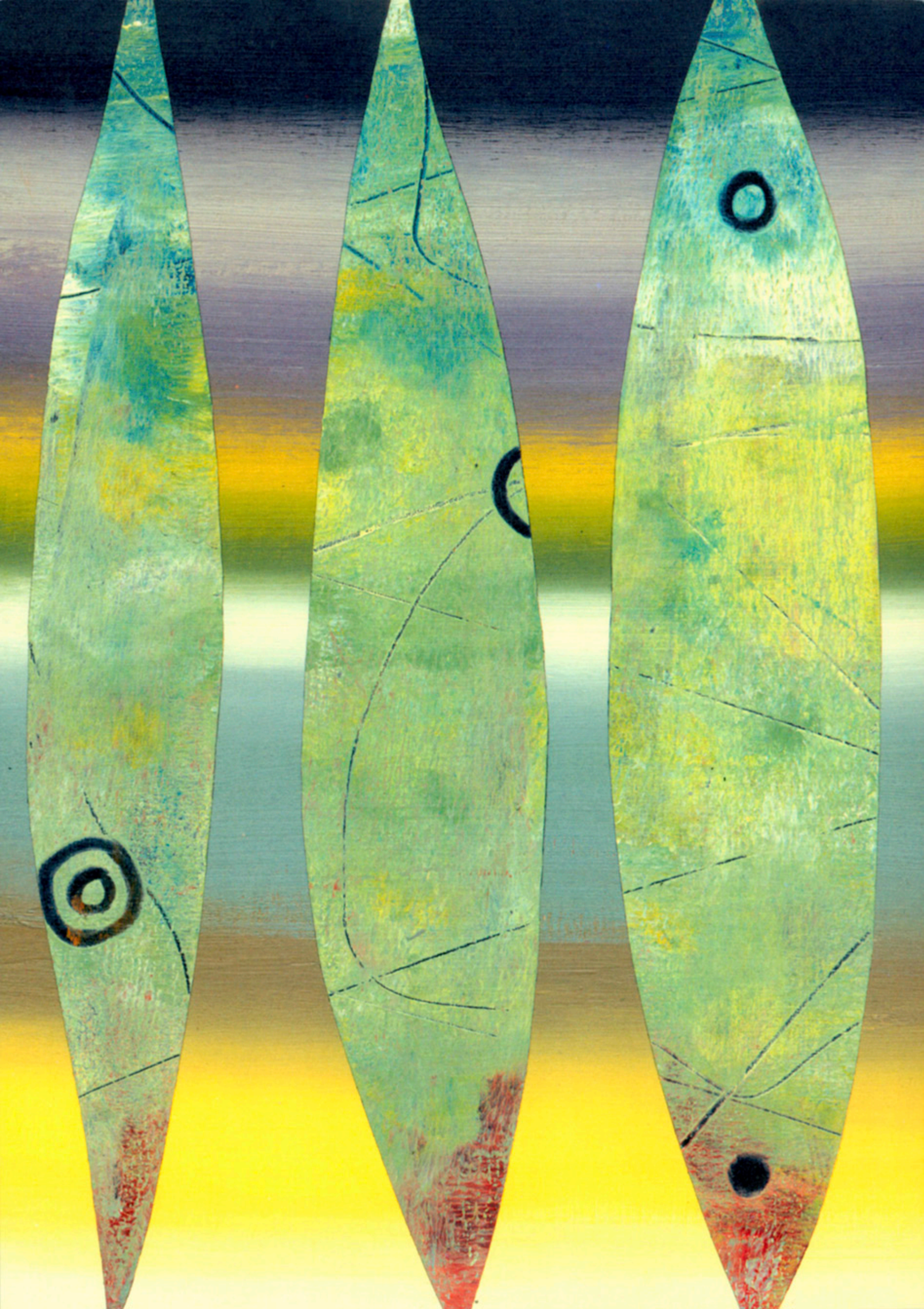


In his book *The Day the Universe Changed*, James Burke discusses the notion that **history is formed by a series of dynamic events or innovations** whose unexpected arrival dramatically alters the course of events. These bumps along the way result in a new way of looking at the world and cause society and culture to veer from its intended path.

To change the world,
you've got to

the world.

engage



Future possibilities:

Adaptation and evolution. . .

climate change. . .

population growth. . .

design for globalization. . .

urban fabric. . .

personal space. . .

transportation. . .

energy and efficiency. . .

pollution and disregard. . .

restoration and reclamation. . .

IN THE YEAR 2057 AD:

Globally: 8.5 billion people; 30% alternative energy sources used world-wide (75% in Europe and North America); rise of 2-3 meters in sea levels (some Pacific archipelagos disappear, tens of millions of people in low-lying areas of India and Southeast Asia displaced); millions of square feet of arctic tundra thaw and release CO₂; oceanic food production has plummeted with changes in sea temperature.

North America: 90% of population in metropolitan areas; radical change from carbon-based fuels to stored electrical units; heavy rail corridor use; automatic vehicle controls on interstate highways; local driving remains under driver control with a city-center surcharge per visit; regulations require food production near urban areas (extensive greenhouse farming); water is intensely managed (rain water harvesting, wastewater filtration and recycling); Sunbelt population centers expand to maximize solar energy production; most horizontal surfaces are designed to generate power (roofs, cars, pavements).





swA Group

Nayla Al Akl

Maribel Amador

Gerdo Aquino, ²³

Jessica Bacorn

Pamela Barger, ²³

Sam Baucum, ⁵⁰

Kinder Baumgardner

Matt Baumgarten

David Berkson

David Bickel

Rene' Bihan

John Brandt

Leah Broder, ²³

Timothy Brown

Lauren Brown, ⁴⁹

Ellen Burke, ¹²

Megan Callaghan

William Callaway

Ches Campbell

Kelly Carmouche

Ana Castaneda, ^{6, 44}

Chih-Wei Chang

Yoonju Chang

Shuyi Chang, ⁴⁵

Scott Chuang, ^{27, 36}

Jae Chung

Scott Cooper, ¹⁷

Nancy Coulter

Brad Cowan, ²¹

Xiaole Cui, ¹⁹

Patrick Curran, ²³

Elizabeth Curtis, ²⁹

John Cutler, ^{31, 32}

Zachary Davis, ³⁷

Alfred DeWitt

Ying Dong, ⁵

Deborah Drake

Christiane Dreisbusch

Shaobo Du

Aleksandra Dudukovic

Dawn Dyer, ²³

Neil Emick

Bonny Engler

Carla Ernst, ²⁶

Marco Esposito, ³⁴

Lei Feng

Thomas Fox

Robert Frisbie

Jennifer Gaines, ¹¹

David Gal

Cinda Gilliland

Jazzy Gonzalez

Bing Gu

Leah Hales, ¹³

Andy Harcar

Travis Hawkins

Shuichiro Hayashi

Xiongfei He

Sean Henderson

Michael Herrin

Loreen Hjort

Jui-Sheng Hsu

Ying Hu

Ying-Yu Hung, ²³

William Hynes

Roy Imamura

Cherry Intal

Akiko Ishii, ⁴⁷

Robert Jacob

Michaele Jaffe

Russ Jaycox, ¹⁵

Masato Kametani

Sehgyung Kang

Pei-Ching (Luis) Kao, ⁸

Claudia Kath, ³⁰

Lynn Kiang, ²³

Youngmin Kim, ²³

Caroline Kim

Vira Klinetobe

Ben Knoll

Goran Kosanovic

Stacey Krajewski

Huiqing Kuang

Ashley Langworthy

Dick Law

Han Song Lee

Hui-Li Lee

I-Hsien Lee

Jim Lee

Ken Lee

Margaret Leonard

Xun Li

Minhui Li, ³⁸

Sergio Lima

Chih-Wei Lin, ^{3, 10}	Karen Reeves	Travis Theobald, ⁴⁰
Huei-Lyn Liu	Rhett Rentrop	Leah Thompson
Josh Lock	Bokyoung Rhee	David Thompson, ¹
John Loomis	Rob Rider	Andrew Trodler
Lance Lowrey	Alexander Robinson	Miao-Chi Tsai
Worasak Luangsuwan	Joe Runco	Geoff Turnbull
Ye Luo	Zachary Rutz	Corazon Unana
Isabel Magdaleno	Tim Ryan, ²⁵	Carrie Van Valkenberg
Jim Maloney, ⁴⁶	Steve Rydzon, ⁴¹	James Vick
Scott McCready	Caleb Schultz	Bonita Wahl, ²⁴
Chuck McDaniel	Darren Sears, ⁴	Sandeep Walia, ¹⁶
Yan Mei	Ray Senes	Yan Wang
Sheradyn Mikul, ³⁷	Kevin Shanley, ⁴²	Roger Warner
Jeani Miles	Elizabeth Shreeve, ^{9, 48}	Mio Watanabe, ²³
Mehrdad Mohregi	Steve Sigler	Kathleen Weiss
Allison Monroe	Wendy Simon	Rachel West
Ross Nadeau, ²⁰	Monica Simpson	Sarah Wilkinson
Koichiro Nagamatsu	Scott Slaney, ²	Justin Winters
Claire Napawan	Kevin Slawson, ¹⁴	Bingshan Chen Wong
Joseph Newton	Alexander Song	John Wong
Michael Odum	Lisa Spayde	Jack Wu, ⁸
Paul Oh	Lee Stickles	Wright H. Yang, ¹⁸
Trent Okumura	Rick Story	Wan-Chih Yin
Amy Oliver, ^{28, 43}	Todd Strawn	Shuang Yu
Sean O'Malley, ³⁹	Xiaoyan Sun	Peiwen Yu, ⁷
Jason Pelaez	Kathy Sun	Ding Yuan
Eric Perez	Yige Sun, ²²	Ying Zeng
Tiffany Perez	Chunghwan Sung	Shuochen Zheng
Tim Peterson	Ricardo Supiciche	Xiaodi Zheng
Michael Pon, ³³	Qiuhong Tang	Xiao Zheng
Tanya Ponder	Bill Tatham	Xiao Zhou
Lawrence Reed	Robert Taylor	Grace Zu

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