

**voice map trekking**

may this work serve as an inspiration to embark on a trek of exploration and discovery with the landscape

Voice map trekking requires you to embark on a journey in the landscape with the goal of dialogue. Treks can be made in rugged territories but are equally effective in ordinary places. Voice map trekking is more than a means of moving from one place to another, but rather the beginning of a period of sustained inspiration. By trekking, you will be required to wake up everyday and continue to never lose the ability to be astonished.

Voice map trekking can be done anywhere in the world and at any time. There are several pieces of gear that will make the trip more enjoyable. Bring an instrument to record your thoughts, pack some tasty snacks, and drink plenty of water. All these pieces of gear can fit nicely inside a small comfortable-fitting backpack. Be sure to dress appropriately, as voice map trekking can encounter rain, hail, high winds, snowstorms, and extreme summer heat. When covering long distances, be sure to leave an itinerary with a friend in the event that you become lost or injured.

Voice map trekking can be easily incorporated with a number of other activities, such as eating, resting, laughing, or any outdoor sports. Voice map trekking is different from other methods of moving and experiencing the landscape. It is less structured than other modes of travel. As you wander through the landscape, your travel plans will most likely change regularly. Voice map trekking will make the invisible visible and will transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.



Photograph by Author 2006 Bray Island Abandoned House

# voice map trekking

by michael klassen

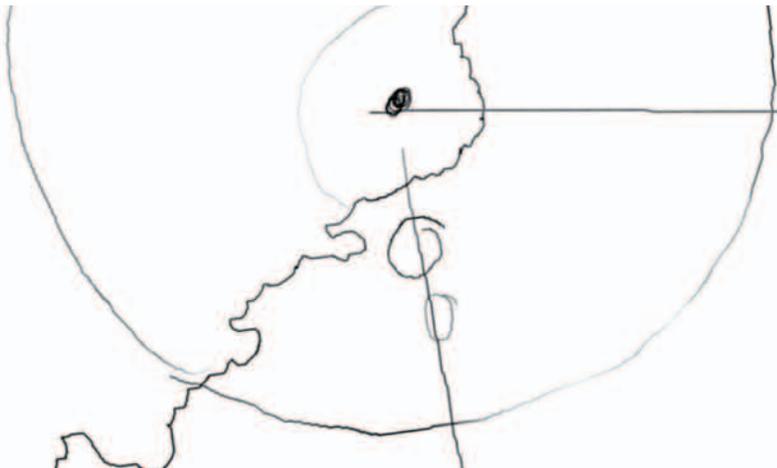
a practicum submitted to the faculty of graduate studies of  
the university of manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
master of landscape architecture

department of landscape architecture  
university of manitoba  
winnipeg

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# WORIEK e m a p

return, reconnect, way up there, bray island, suspend, somewhere along there, the canadian prairies, under here and yes - also over there. reBEginnings





# ABSTRACT

*Motivation necessitates the definition of a particular stance towards life. It employs the feeling found in cultural memory and personal experience to general meaning, wonder and expression. Motivation engenders a heightened sense of purpose*  
(James Corner, 1990, p.19)

The conceptualizing of TREK began in the summer of 2006 following a powerful landscape experience, a visit to the Canadian Arctic. This experience set into motion an engaged questioning period of my ability to fully conceptualize the value of natural spaces within both urban and rural areas and how they are manipulated.

The overall intention of the TREK is to bring together a collection of perspectives to evaluate how regions affect seeing, thinking, perceiving, and making; which can serve to set foundations for language, learning and understanding.

TREK is an exploration that is neither linear, circular nor random but rather one that fluctuates between various internal and external states of consciousness.

TREK is designed to animate a narrative of experiences and stories in the landscape; propelled by the process of movement, an engaged exploration of concepts, ideas and factors of curiosity.

TREK is intended to chronicle a developing journey of what landscape architecture is to me, to expose the integration and accumulation of knowledge and to document inspired moments.

# TREK PATHS

|     |                               |  |
|-----|-------------------------------|--|
| 08  | <b>MUSINGS</b> .....          | writings of the significance of trek         |
| 25  | <b>ITHINKISEE</b> .....       | trekking video diaries                       |
| 56  | <b>WONDER</b> .....           | trek digital sketchbook                      |
| 70  | <b>DESIGN</b> .....           | the built works and conceptual ideas of trek |
| 100 | <b>TREK REFLECTIONS</b> ..... | reflections on the trek process              |
| 118 | <b>VOICES</b> .....           | contributors to trek                         |

ANCIENT ICE SHELF **SNAPS AND BREAKS** FREE FROM THE  
CANADIAN ARCTIC  
(YAHOO NEWS CANADA, 2007)

an ancient ice shelf SNAPS AND BREAKS from the Canadian Arctic  
leaving a trail of icy boulders floating in its wake

**this**

the ice shelf was packed with  
ancient ice that dates back over  
3000 years



IS A CANADIAN GEOGRAPHY THAT

**no longer exists**

scientists treat their loss  
as a sign that the global  
climate is crossing an  
unprecedented threshold

what we are **SEEING**

is the tragic loss of  
the canadian landscape

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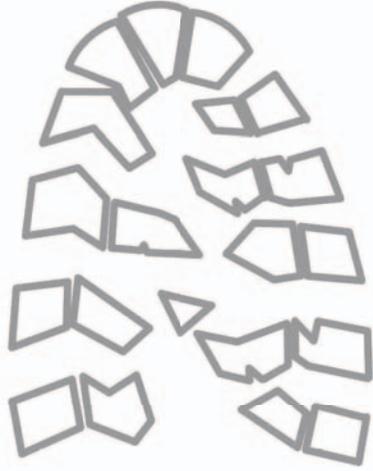
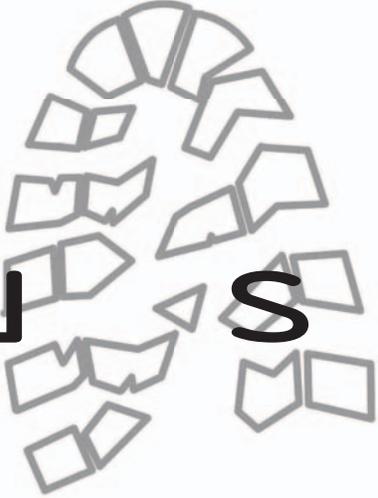
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## Voice Map Trekking

The site analysis and mapping methods employed in the design and planning professions follow a standardized quantitative and qualitative analysis of place that favors a design process which can limit creativity and render it difficult to do anything with the normative. James Corner (1999) in his essay *The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique, and Invention* states:

The techniques and procedures of mapping have not been subjects of inquiry, research and criticism. Instead they have become codified, naturalized and taken for granted as institutional conventions. Critical experimentation with new and alternative forms of mapping remains largely underdeveloped if not significantly repressed. (p.150)

This work is an exploration of the development of a design approach and method that uses voice mapping as a basis for design. The voice maps contain oral histories and personal accounts of landscape experiences. Voice mapping is employed not only as a method or for site analysis but also as a generator of ideas. Thus, it not only functions as a particular technique within an analysis method but it also provides the framework for conceptualizing an approach to dealing with particular design problems. The intent is not for this method and design approach to be a replacement or even a supplement to the traditional site planning methodologies. The inclusion of a voice map does not eliminate the requirement to complete a thorough understanding of the mechanics of a place, nor does its addition as a supplementary map guarantee a deeper understanding of place. To be effective, it is suggested that voice map trekking be woven into the existing context of the design practice and that it be approached as an engaged act of questioning, listening and active participation. To demonstrate voice map trekking, a description of its evolution from conception, to analogue and digital forms, and to its incorporation into design is provided. Concluding is a discussion on future developments and limitations.

## Context - Site Analysis

A typical planning approach commences with a detailed inventory of place. Data is collected, site inventories are compiled, and maps are created to document general site elements, key environmental and visual features, site hydrology and landforms, geology and soils, vegetation and climate, land cover and land use, site history and buildings. These maps provide the foundation through which a designer translates concepts of spatial order into spatial design. Despite the maps general coverage of the elements of place, there are doubts on whether or not they are truly representative of the spirit of the place. In my opinion, there are uncertainties on how these stratigraphic categories and representations of place are able to 'speak' to one another, or to the designer for that matter. More specifically, to what degree are people's stories, histories and voices directly integrated into these mappings? Do stories of people and place become an afterthought in the design process?

Clifford Geertz (1973) in *The Interpretation of Cultures* notes:

We need to look for systematic relationships among diverse phenomena, not for substantive identities among similar ones. And to do that with any effectiveness, we need to replace the stratigraphic conception of the relations between the various aspects of human existence with a synthetic one; that in which biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural factors can be treated as variables within unitary systems of analysis. (p.44)

Voice map trekking is to serve as a starting point in the development of systematic relationships among diverse phenomena. Personal accounts of landscape experience not only contain stories of people and place, but they also include the biological, psychological, sociological and cultural factors that Geertz speaks of. The weaving of the voice maps within standardized site analysis frameworks is intended to break down these stratigraphic conceptualizations and to set the conditions for the birth of a synthetic design approach and method.

## **Voicing a Research Framework**

In terms of the specific research framework, I first sought to position the work within a combined strategies research paradigm and more specifically a triangulation research strategy. The triangulation research strategy has been also referred to as a convergent, multimethod, and multitrait research strategy. What it refers to is the “combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (Jick, 1979, p.602). From a social sciences perspective, Campbell and Fiske first coined the idea of triangulation in 1959 and began developing the idea of ‘multiple operationism’ - the use of multiple methods to examine the same dimension of a research problem. The term triangulation, from an engineer’s perspective, is a survey mapping technique that uses multiple reference points to locate an object’s exact position in space. Multiple operationism is similar to Arne Naess’ concept of ‘enlightened skepticism’ - where the best solution to a problem is the one that offers the most possibilities (Rothenberg, 1993).

While I am content with the concept of multiple operationism, I am unsure of how it is realized due to limited examples of application in practice. Thus, I have somewhat altered the definition of multiple operationism from a combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon to a combination of voice mappings related to the study of place. The foundation of the design approach and method that I will be outlining in this work is not only a process of ‘playing with’ voices and stories of place but more specifically concentrating on the interface, interconnectivity or milieu in which the stories and voices begin to interact and come to life; for it is at these interfaces where the greatest opportunities for learning and understanding occur. The voice maps are triggered by initiating one voice, followed by another and yet another. You continue to engage a process of discovery all the while listening to the voices. Since you control the voice map, you are in a sense, the author of the story. But there is no set starting point, no real beginning nor any true finishing point. You can pause and enter the map at which ever point you would like. It is you putting together the auditory sequences and you making the associations.

Potteiger and Purinton (1988) note that this type of process should not be seen as a limitation:

These conditions offer distinct opportunities for different forms of narratives such as the gathering of past and present into a synoptic view, parallel or intersecting story lines, collages that create nonlinear associations, multiple layers of stories, and narratives open to participants. (p.10)

This is similar to the previously described unitary system of analysis by Geertz. Conceptually, the voice maps are mapping both time and space through the stories and memories of people and place. Multiple voices are being used as reference points for locating the spirit of a place. As noted by Potteiger and Purinton (1988), “landscape narratives mediate this crossing of temporal and spatial experience” (p.7) and “narrative is ultimately a language of time” (p.4).

The product and thinking of voice mapping is not only a set of dialogues intended to bring together a collection of perspectives to evaluate how place affects seeing, thinking, perceiving and making, but it is also an approach intended to set foundations for language, learning, understanding and design. Alan Tate (2005) in the book *The Cultured Landscape* writes:

The achievement of utility with beauty is the product of a radical approach based on a clear understanding of the place to be changed - only with such an approach can landscape architecture make places different. (p.57)

I too believe that a radical (in terms of forming a basis or foundation) understanding of the place to be changed is required in making places different. I also believe that the inclusion of voices directly in mapping is somewhat radical (in terms of a change from accepted norms) because of their inclusion directly within the site analysis process. In my opinion, the inclusion of these voice mapping methods can have a noticeable effect on the understanding of place and can be a key contributor to make places different.

## **Conception – The Thinking Behind Continuous Dialogues**

There were no formal precedents initially sought in the development of voice map trekking, as the intent was to allow for wondering and wandering in the landscape and for the work to develop throughout this process. However, a loosely structured framework of learning goals was clearly established beforehand to provide initial guidance. One notable learning goal was provided in a presentation entitled *Is Landscape Architecture* by David Leatherbarrow at the University of Manitoba (January 23 2007). Of the six discussed characteristics of topography, that of temporality struck me most “invite – register – recall; every surface can be understood as a calendar, clock and chronicle. A challenge was to “embark on a project with the goal of dialogue.” (Leatherbarrow, 2007). Thus, a key goal of the work was to enter into a dialogue directly with the landscape.

One notable project that I became familiar with after beginning the work was Murmur developed by Shawn Micallef, James Rousel and Gabe Sawhney. The project is a documentary oral project that collects stories and memories about place (Murmur 2007). The stories are made available at specific installed murmur stations where people use mobile phones to 'call in' and listen to stories of the specific geographical location in which they are standing. The stories are also made available through the projects website.

Voice map trekking originally began as an auto ethnographic body of work and a chronicle of a personal developing journey within the discipline of landscape architecture. Two specific landscapes were chosen as bases for testing concepts mainly because of their associations with landscapes of origin. The first site is located in St. Gertrude Saskatchewan (acquired in 1941) and the second is located near Morinville Alberta (purchased in 1894 as part of the Dominion Lands Act). Both are referred to as landscapes of origin because they represent the landscapes in which the families of my father and mother established themselves at. As the trek progressed, it became readily apparent that the dialogue was not only between me and the landscape (as originally anticipated) but with others as well. I rapidly broadened my scope and perspective to allow the work to be a trek for others as well. The voices, stories, memories and personal recollections of others became integral to the work because it provided with inclusion of multiple perspectives.

Clifford Geertz, with regards to ethnographic research as a record of human experience states:

What we are seeking, in the widened sense of the term in which it encompasses very much more than to talk, but to converse with them. Looked at in this way, the aim of anthropology is the enlargement of the universe of human discourse. Culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context. (Geertz, 1973, p.13)

And context is what landscape architecture is all about. In my opinion, what appears notably lacking in site analysis is any personal engagement with context and a strong willingness to listen. An engaged, attentive participant acts as heightened receptor and generator of information. One of the intents of voice mapping is to initiate this personal engagement with both people and landscape.

Enter the landscape architect into what Tim Ingold terms the dwelling perspective. The dwelling perspective sees the landscape as a continual record of the lives and works of people and place (Ingold, 1993). According to Ingold, the importance of the landscape to the dweller is not that the landscape tells the story but rather that it is the story. The landscape holds testimony to the lives of the generations of people that have lived and breathed within its presence and have participated in its transformation (Ingold, 1993). Perceiving the landscape is to "...carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not as much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past..." (Ingold, 1993, p.153). Information about place obtained from the dweller should not be brushed off as simple idle conversation.

The stories they tell, far from putting meaning upon the landscape, are intended to allow listeners to place themselves in relation to specific features of the landscape, in such a way that their meanings may be revealed or disclosed. (Ingold, 1993, p.171)

The stories provide an entrance into the intimacies of people and place. For an engaged listener, it is here where a simple rock, a lonely old tree, or an abandoned house takes on a heightened meaning. Reaching and crossing this interface is where true dialogue is achieved. When the landscape architect enters into a dialogue with people and landscape, it is important for these discourses to move from mere casual events into actual documented accounts (Geertz, 1973). These accounts need to be recorded such that they can not only be re-consulted but that they can be heard by others. For the purposes of this work, the accounts were recorded digitally. It is acknowledge however that these accounts can be re-lived and retold through regular storytelling events. These dialogues are to become part of a purposeful continuous conversation of the interaction of culture and nature within a complex biophysical and cultural context. Our learning of people and place is never finished but rather it is to be a discussion to be sustained.

## **The Analogue Form - ithinkisee**

An initial project completed in November 2007 provided the foundation for the voice mapping method (Advanced Theory 2007, University of Manitoba, Dr. Marcella Eaton). The project was a mapping exercise which explored thinking and seeing through everyday and ordinary landscapes. A requirement of the brief was to choose a 'companion' throughout the entirety of the project (in this case it was specifically a landscape architect), through which you were to interpret the way in which they see/saw the world. This was to be accomplished through an investigation of their design philosophy, their social position and any associated built works. My design response was the production of three sets of narrative plates: the first one being a daily photographic dairy – two photos per day – one from each person's perspective; the second being a full set of analysis mappings – two sketches per day – based directly of the photographs; and the third being a daily journal entry of how the photograph relates to the way in which the person sees the world. The product was three full sets of narrative plates, each containing a total of twenty-five 7.5"x3.5" individual plates. The narrative plates can be flipped through individually or can be laid out in sequence to form a continuous narrative. The plates can also be shuffled, like a deck of cards, and be re-organized to form an endless combination of new narratives. While individually they show heightened inspired moments, as a whole they being to show patterns of sustained inspiration. Personally, what became especially engaging with the work was reading the connections at the interface between the plates, for it is at these points where new narratives are formed, where new connection are visualized, and where the greatest leaps in learning occurred.

The importance of this specific project was that it represented an analogue form of the developing concept. It provided a personal engagement in 'playing with' voices and stories of place. And more importantly, the project personally revealed this trek interface, interconnectivity or milieu in which the stories and voices begin to interact. While content with the

product in an analogue form, a notable limitation was that the dialogue was restricted to two individuals. The voice mapping method derived in part from this experience is intended to be inclusive of a far greater number of voices.

## **The Digital Form – Animating the Narrative**

Furthering the voice maps involved next experimenting with animating the narrative in a digital form. Animate is derived from the Latin anima meaning the soul and narrative from the Latin root gnarus meaning to know (Oxford 2000-). The abandoned homestead in St. Gertrude, Saskatchewan was used as the first place for site analysis. This site was chosen first simply because it was the first formal stop along the trek completed from Winnipeg to Edmonton. In order to gain an understanding of place, the knowledge and stories of eight people who were raised on the site were sought. It was deemed important to digitally record the stories because the experimentation with these voices was to be completed following the site visit. Within a matter of thirty minutes at the site, I had collected an extensive database of knowledge of people and place. Stories included childhood rituals, particular notable events, site histories, landscape changes, and specific memories. With this newly obtained knowledge, I then spent thirty minutes re-listening to the taped stories while walking the site. Before leaving, I produced a conceptual diagram illustrating my understanding of the interaction of the stories and the landscape. The result is a map of entangled pathways that weave in and out of each other, interacting and forming loops and collecting in knots.

The next phase of animating the narratives in a digital form involved bringing together the collected stories and conceptual map into an interactive voice map. In the interactive form, the voice map functions as an analysis tool where one can sift through the leftover traces and hidden fragments of history, ideas and stories. With the interactive voice map, stories can be played individually or in combination with each other by clicking the buttons on and off. While there are no formal references on the voice map in terms of landmarks or traditional mapping conventions (e.g. site boundaries, north arrow, scale, or labels), the map does have an underlying associations with place. For example, stories of the house are contained within a cluster, and stories such as the nearby sheds are found in their rightful position in relation to the house. In fact, if one were to overlay an aerial photograph over the interactive voice map, one would begin to see the spatial associations. But the spatial associations are purposely concealed in the voice map to allow for the temporary blurring of these lines. Thus, as one wanders through the interactive map, they are essentially re-surveying the landscape similarly to the process of triangulation. However, a notable difference here is that this is not being accomplished through the eye of the survey level, but rather it is being achieved through the stories and memories of people and place. Multiple voices are being used as reference points for revealing some of the spirit of a place.

Similarly to the analogue form where the narrative plates joined, new stories are generated when the voices interact and overlap. The digital form however allows for the layering of a far greater number of stories. Wondering through the voice map offers the generation of endless combinations of new stories but it is always using the same database of knowledge. It functions somewhat as a random story generator, disrupting the flow through often non-linear storytelling. This achieves one of Corner's key characteristics of successful mappings:

Mapping unfolds potential; it re-makes territory over and over again, each time with new and diverse consequences. Mappings discover new worlds within past and present ones. (Corner, 1999, p.149)

With this analysis tool, one now has continual access to the accumulation of histories and stories of the landscape. While time constraints at this site did not permit for the design of a specific intervention, its making does represent a contribution to a 'database of stories'. Geographic Information System (GIS) databases offer immense amounts of local and regional data ranging from administrative boundaries, climate, geology, hydrogeology, land use, soils and wildlife. However, why does there not exist such a database of stories? What if the designer had access to such data or to these types of interactive voice maps during the design process? Could it be used for design inspiration, and for the generation of new knowledge about people and place, culture and nature?

While the interactive voice map functions well in its present state, the mappings do not represent a finished status.

The experience of space cannot be separated from the events that happen in it; space is situated, contingent, and differentiated. It is remade continuously every time it is encountered by different people, every time the surroundings change, every time new affiliations are forged. The struggle lies not with spatial forms and aesthetic appearances alone (the city as a thing) but with the advancement of more liberating processes and interaction with time (urbanization). (Corner, 1999, p.157)

What is to happen as the generation that grew up at this particular place age? What about the new stories of the successive generation that visit this landscape during the yearly family gatherings? What would happen if this piece of land was sold and could no longer be formally visited by the family? A request from the eight individuals who participated in this voice mapping exercise is that they would like the ability to continually add to its database and to permit the voice map to evolve with time. A ritual that has been initiated specific to this family is the addition of a designated formal 'story time' during their annual family gathering. Times such as these would permit the ability to gather extensive amounts of stories of place from a far greater amount of people than the original eight participants. It would also permit for a continual addition of stories to the voice maps. Thus, the intent is for these interactive voice maps and the associated voice databases to continue to grow with time, shifting from a traditional static map to one that grows and evolves in both space and time.

## **In the Landscape – Communicating with the Mnemonic Device**

A conference at the University of California, Berkeley in March 2007 entitled Spatial Recall: The Place of Memory in Architecture and Landscape described the landscape as a grand mnemonic device that records and registers our stories and memories (CED 2007) - mnemonic from the Greek mnemonikos meaning of or pertaining to memory (Oxford 2000-).

A further question in the development of voice mapping was whether one could build a site specific intervention that could communicate with the landscape and that would animate a narrative of personal recollections of people and place.

Richard Serra stated in 1989 regarding the steel sculpture entitled Tilted Arc:

Site specific works deal with the environmental components of given places. The works become part of the site and restructure both conceptually and perceptually the organization of the site. (Kwon, 2002, p.12)

While time constraints in St. Gertrude Saskatchewan did not permit for the design of a specific intervention, the intent at the site near Morinville Alberta was for the inclusion of a site specific work. As a preliminary conceptual site analysis strategy, I can relate to the design team of the Voie Swisse. Marc Treib (2001) writes about the projects site analysis strategy that revolved around ‘using the broom’, in which one sweeps away to reveal the accumulations of vegetation and earth – a method of sweeping and shifting through the left-over traces at the site (Treib, 2001). Georges Descombes, one of the designers on the project team describes his initial actions at the site:

I began thinking about the project by walking again and again around the site. I spent an enormous amount of time simply looking at things. I wanted to leave a mark of our own time, to overlay an unequivocal trace of our activity... in landscape architectural terms, a precise and targeted intervention suffices. (Descombes, 1999, p.82)

Similarly, I spent the first few days simply walking the entire 320 acre site. As I was walking out to the back pasture with Bob, the owner of the homestead, he brought to my attention an invisible line “this here is a dividing point between cultivated and uncultivated line” (Bob McGillis - personal conversation). The precise and targeted intervention at the site near Morinville Alberta was to focus on this line that has become forgotten to one generation and that was invisible to the successive generation. The place to explore concepts and ideas revolved around this dividing line between cultivated and uncultivated land near the ‘back pasture’. For the design, 113 found sticks are used to temporarily trace the line, one stick for every year that the land has been entrusted to the family. The initial sticks used in the design ranged from approximately 1.0m to 2.5m in height. They are representative of the walking sticks that family members typically collect prior to the ritual spring journey to view the prairie crocus blooms, however their scale in the design is purposely accentuated. The concept is such that every year, during this ritual spring journey, a new walking stick can be added each year such that the design grows and evolves.

The sticks have a conceptual similarity to the large upright menhir stones of the Neolithic age, mainly in reference to the act of altering a simple object and marking a space.

Menhirs represent the simplest objects, but with the greatest density of meaning, of the entire Stone Age. Their raising is the first human act of physical transformation of the landscape: a large stone lying horizontally on the ground is still just a stone without symbolic connotations, but when it is raised vertically and planted in the ground it is transformed into a new presence that stops time and space; it institutes a time zero that extends into eternity and a new system of relations with the elements of the surrounding landscape. (Careri, 2002, p.51)

Similarly with the found sticks, a stick lying horizontally on the ground is just a rotting stick but the stick raised vertically and secured within its place on the entire narrative structure takes on a heightened new meaning. One person that visited the design describes the sticks as the 'spirits' of people standing and watching over the place – those that have come and gone (Joan Klassen, personal conversation). For example, John McGillis was killed in action at Vimy Ridge in 1917. His spirit now takes its place on the wall, stick no. 24 representing the year 1917 on the line. A significant difference in relation to the Menhirs reference is that the sticks do not have the same permanency and durability of the raised Menhirs. The design is intended to have a structural temporal quality. While initially serving to fully expose the dividing line, the intent was for the line to be once again blurred but not fully forgotten. Each stick is secured three feet below ground surface and due to their age, break readily at their base. The livestock use the sticks as scratching posts and consequently break the sticks at their base in the process. What will eventually be left at the site will be small stick plugs in the ground. While new sticks can be added to the design every year, the plugs will remain in the ground to maintain continuity. The traced line will still be visible but you will need to look closely to see.

To further the design, the stories and histories of eighteen people were consulted for this project. The voices and stories are contained within six narrative plates embedded within the landscape and are controlled via a software program called Pure Data (PD), which through the initiation of on-site visitors, permits the projection of the voices back out into the landscape. PD is a graphical programming language originally used for the creation of interactive computer music and multimedia works (Pure Data, 2007). The stories contained in the narrative plates can be initiated by pressing a button, with one button available for each individual narrative plate. The stories can be played individually or concurrently. The control that the visitor has with the playing of the stories projects a type of theatre in place. The participant is physically engaged with the design but also present is the viewer who is actively watching and listening. In this respect, the design functions somewhat as an amphitheatre projecting voices back out into the landscape.

Similarly to the previously described analogue and digital forms, there are opportunities for stories lines to intersect, for the multiple layering of voices, and for the creation of new narratives. The difference is that the design has moved outside of the analogue and digital realms to a design directly placed in the landscape. It was important for the work to move out into the landscape to observe the 'added effect' of the physical place in the design. While the interactive voice

map from St. Gertrude functions to re-survey the landscape by using multiple voices as reference points for locating the spirit of a place, it lacks the physical engagement with place. With the interactive voice map, there are no opportunities for physical movement through the landscape or for any supplementary auditory or tactile interactions. This design placed directly in the landscape has this added sensorial attachment with place and the emotions of the visitors observed during the presentation of the work were quite remarkable.

The design as a whole functions, in terms of a mental framework, similarly to the described states of oblivion by Marc Augé - the return, suspension and re-beginning. Oblivion refers to the state of being completely forgotten or unknown (Oxford 2000-). Re-visiting the stories and the design sets the conditions for a return. As you engage with the design and begin interacting with the narrative plates, you enter a state of suspension. When the voices recede and it is silent once again, you enter a period of re-beginning. As described by Marc Augé (2004):

Return “its ambition is to find a lost past again by forgetting the present in order to reestablish a continuity with the older past” (p.56)

Suspension “its ambition is to find the present by provisionally cutting it off from the past and the future and, more precisely, by forgetting the future inasmuch as the latter is identified with the return to the past” (p.56)

Re-beginning “it aspires to find the future again by forgetting the past, to create the conditions for a new birth that, by definition, opens up into the every possible future without favoring a single one” (p.57)

The design has a temporal quality that is dynamic and that offers new opportunities for learning and understanding. Each return to the design sets the conditions for a re-engagement with the cycle. Leaving the site, the sticks and the rock may appear to resume their ordinary status but instead they remain animate in memory and their heightened meaning remain. They now serve as an indicator of the families tie to the land and provide a reconnection with people and place.

## **Reactions to the Design**

A particular initiative of the work was to make the information available to the participants that contributed their voices. This was achieved in two respects. A website was created which houses the entire practicum works and contains both the mappings completed for the St. Gertrude site and a virtual tour of the design completed for the site near Morinville. In addition, two presentations were completed for the design near Morinville to allow visitors to interact with the temporary digital intervention.

While no formal surveys have been completed or actual numbers compiled, the works contained within the website have already been visited by over a hundred people. Visitors to the site have included engineers, politicians, educators,

environmentalists, homemakers, scientists, health professionals, farmers, trades people, and artists to name a few. A total of sixteen people were able to visit the design near Morinville while I was available to set up the digital portion of the design. While these numbers may not seem overwhelming, it should be noted that this work was completed with no budget, with minimal resources and during a short timeframe.

The responses to the design and the work are in the process of being received. These responses indicate a positive attachment with the work, especially the inclusion of the voices. The importance seems not only to be hearing the voices but for them to be able to extract an attachment of place from others, an affirmation and a realization that others feel the same way that they do. While the responses to this work have been positive, it is understood and recognized that not all stories can be 'positive'. Work such as this has the possibilities of uncovering stories related to pain, hardship, deceitfulness, or death. This can bring to the surface strong ethical dilemmas regarding which stories to bring forward, and which to suppress. It should also be noted that this work was completed under the direction of an ethics protocol approved by the University of Manitoba Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board.

## **Living the Life of the Conscious Schizophrenic**

A new vision of landscape is required to reconnect the landscape and its inhabitants in order to provide a renewed portrait of region and place. In my opinion, we need to remap regions and place, not through another iteration of the surveyor's level but instead by stories, memories and personal recollections of landscape. There is a different level of connection that is achieved when you hear a person's voice; you can sense their emotions - excitement – hardship – sadness – fear. "It becomes personal when you hear a person's voice" (Joan Klassen personal conversations). Perception of place is something that we construct continually in our minds and throughout our entire lifetime. We learn to see and begin to make sense of our external environment through our experiences, categorizations and memory (Fletcher 2001). Thus as we continue to grow, language and culture begin to act as prisms to bend and shape our view, so although we start out seeing the same things, each individual unconsciously creates their own interpretation (Fletcher 2001). We make sense of the world by a history of wondering and wandering through "the accumulation of fragments, detours and incidents that sediment meaning adding up over time" (Corner, 1992, p.148). The voice mapping method and approach that I have described has helped me achieve connection with what Peter Connolly describes as dealing with life on the ground. Peter Connolly in reference to James Corner's 1999 essay;

For Corner, the importance of 'life' on the ground is central to his ambitious project. Connecting life on the ground might allow Corner to employ the instrumentality of mapping and the landscape whilst avoiding the instrumentalism normally associated with maps and synoptic overviews. (Connolly, 2004, p.202)

As emphasized by Corner (1999), large maps typically employed in the context of landscape and urban planning fail to connect with life on the ground "...maps look nothing like their subject, not only because of their vantage point but also because they present all parts at once, with an immediacy unavailable to the grounded individual..." (p.225). While the

voice mappings prepared for the St. Gertrude site may seem simplified in being ‘simply’ a map containing a network of paths with embedded stories, I see great potential in what these voice maps can be. I can begin to visualize how they can participate in the shaping of our world and the built environment simply because of their ability to connect with ‘life on the ground’. Within the simplified map is a large amount of rich and layered data waiting to be explored. All is not shown at once. Hearing one’s voice included within the mappings provides the ability for an individual to both map and position their own reality, sense of being, and sense of place not only within the physical past but within present time. If these mappings are to be included in the design process, perhaps they can provide the ability for an individual to participate in the shaping of their built environment? If these mappings are to be included within a greater regional context, perhaps they will provide the ability for one to position their voice within a greater regional perspective? I can visualize these stories of people and place being also a part of an initiative such as ‘landscape radio’, where one would be able to “tune in” to a station to hear the voices and stories of those that have lived and explored the region. Such an initiative would provide a variety of stakeholders, residents, designers, planners, engineers the opportunity of ‘getting to know a place’.

On a personal level, I am also able to visualize how these mappings can be used in practice. While sight is our most prevalent sense and provides us with over 80% of our knowledge of the external world (Porteous, 1990), seeing and perception in the external environment encompasses much more than the visual and requires the involvement of the other senses. Marcel Proust (1871 – 1922) stated that the “real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes”. These voice mappings aid in the development of new eyes for wondering and wandering through the landscape. They provide a starting point for setting the conditions where time can continually be re-constructed, teleporting to the past while being in the present, setting the conditions for projection into the future. The maps have aspects of both linearity and cyclicity and are neither entirely one nor the other. One can wonder through the prepared digital maps such as those compiled for the St. Gertrude site, however one needs to then wander through the landscape to experience their full effect. As previously mentioned, it becomes real when you hear a persons voice. From a personal perspective, after wondering wandering the digital maps and re-engaging into the landscape, I consciously found myself continually mapping and positioning my existence in reference to the multiple voices that have now become part of my being. This is similar to what Barbara Adam refers to as the ‘position of the stranger’ or what I refer to as living the life of a conscious schizophrenic.

Machine time has been reified to a point at which we have lost touch with other rhythms and with the multiple times of our existence. Most importantly, with the dominance of this reified time we seem to have forgotten that the entirety of our existence needs constantly to be reactivated and re-created in the present; that all of our past needs to be gathered up in the present and reconstructed in the light of new knowledge. (Adam, 1994, p.514)

Extending my being to include the voices and stories of others provides me with this ability to re-connect with the landscape through the position of the stranger. And participating in these voice mappings set a framework for the establishment of a multiple existence and the beginning of a life of a conscious schizophrenic.

## Extending the Narrative Structure

Places configure narratives – landscape not only locates or serves as background setting for stories, but is itself a changing, eventful figure and process that engenders stories. Every narrative plays a critical role in making place. We come to know a place because we know its stories. (Potteiger, 1998 p.5-6)

A large amount of data is collected during the site analysis phase. If this type of mapping is to be employed in a greater context, an extremely large amount of data would be collected. What is to be included or excluded? How is the data to be organized? Conceptually, I initially categorized the collected stories in accordance to the following criteria: those relating to conceptualizations of time and space, general descriptions of place, specific descriptions of place, and narratives of either landscape, people or built works. Potteiger and Purinton (1998) in *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories* provide a potential starting point in envisioning the different types of voice mappings that could be compiled for a project of larger context.

### Examples of Voices Mappings to Extend the Narrative Structure

1. narrative experiences – examples include routines, rituals, events
2. associations and references – elements in landscape associated with experiences, or events
3. memory landscapes – a place or location of concentrated memories
4. narrative setting and topos – a sequence of particular events
5. genres of landscape narratives – legend, epic, biography, myth
6. processes – actions or events cause by forces such as erosion, growth, succession, weathering
7. interpretive landscapes – elements and programs that narrate stories of a place
8. narrative as form generation – using stories as a means of giving order
9. storytelling landscapes – places designed to tell specific stories

## Future Research

In terms of future research, I have begun to conceptualize the development of the next phase in the development of voice mapping. In relation to the design process, the product would be a full series of interactive voices mappings that could be compiled and then woven and inscribed within the existing site analysis process. Extending the concept to a regional perspective, perhaps these stories become made available in a GIS database along with all other data ranging from climate, geology, hydrogeology, land use and soils. Or perhaps, as previously described, the stories become a part of an initiative such as 'landscape radio', where one would be able to tune in and hear the voices and stories of those that have lived and explored the region. In terms of a specific local design, I have begun to conceptualize a wireless device that has both 'speak' and 'listen' capabilities to handle both data entry and voice transmission. This is similar to technologies

already developed such as Bluetooth – which function as electronic devices that connect and communicate wirelessly through short-range networks. In such networks, there exists a ‘master device’ and associated ‘slave devices’, where the master device can bring into activation the slave devices within certain established ranges.

The design completed at the homestead near Morinville, Alberta represents one established local narrative station. What if there existed hundreds or thousands of these types of devices within a region? What if you could wander and wonder through the landscape and have the ability to either add to or listen to stories and memories of place? Record your stories of place in the device’s ‘speak mode’ and the device’s GPS locator will position your stories in both time and space. Then upload your data to either the local and regional server. Now wander the landscape and listen to stories of place in the device’s ‘listen mode’. It is my vision that such devices would form the foundations for the mapping of a new kind of spatiality.

## **Re-beginnings – Embark on a Project with the Goal of Dialogue**

Marc Treib in the 1995 essay *Must Landscapes Mean* states “communications theory tells us that the two parties in conversation must share a common semantic channel or there will be no communication; no meaning” (p.98).

My question is can these voice mappings operate to open this continuous common semantic channel that Treib speaks of? Based on the experiences from this research project, my preliminary response would be yes. However, additional research is required to determine how the voice mappings can function and be realized within a greater context. Treib (1997) notes that Garrett Eckbo saw landscape as “the site of the interaction of people and place” (p.2) and that landscape architecture and specifically exterior spatial design was the “purposeful formation of that interaction” (p.2). I see design as an opportunity to transfer ideas, and landscape architecture as a venue in which to transfer ideas about landscape and culture. The profession of landscape architecture has the opportunity to design places that can reach people on a very personal level – places where people may pause. To pause is to stop and rest. In the words of May (1981) a pause is a “...prerequisite for wonder, when we don’t pause, when we are perpetually hurrying for one appointment to another, from one planned activity to another, we sacrifice the richness of wonder...” (p.167). When we pause, we may begin to hear not only the rustling of the wind, the trickling of a nearby stream and the buzzing of the nearby bee but we also begin to discover a world “...of silence that is populated by a myriad of creatures and a myriad of sounds...” (p. 165). With the help of voice maps, we may also start to hear the voices and stories of people and place. And places that have become invisible because they are ‘so ordinary’ may become not only visible once again but may turn extraordinary. According to May (1981) “...it is in the pause, where we wonder, reflect, sense awe, and conceive of eternity” (p.164) - it is in the pause where the rigid chain of cause and effect is broken, where we no longer blindly follow stimulus - we long to pause, to absorb into our day-to-day existence, some calmness, some inner order in which we can call our soul our own, in which we take time to experience some beauty...” (p.180). To reach people on this level requires a design approach and method that puts the stories and histories of people and place at the forefront of our consciousness. It absolutely cannot be an afterthought.



Photograph by Author 2006 Back Pasture at 'The Farm'



i t h i n k i s e e



All Video and Associated Images Completed by Author Unless Otherwise Noted

**By John James McGillis - July 9 1994**

*Just imagine yourself 100 years ago today. Arriving in south Edmonton - met at the train station by James who had arrived ahead of the family to prepare the way. With a team and wagon they head across the North Saskatchewan river on a ferry. Just imagine driving five or six hours on a wagon without springs, on a trail and six kids out to Riviere Qui Barre. Perhaps it was raining. Can you imagine if it was?*

*James and Catherine were both 48 years old when they set out for their new life in the west, with a young family, when most people today are thinking about retirement and a good pension. The land was cheap but you paid for it with your blood, sweat and tears. When I arrived on the scene in 1925, Grandpa has already died in 1917 along with Uncle John who died saving our country. Grandma followed suit in 1926. My father Alexander had taken over the farm and I can recall that we were always short of water. He had to haul water in the winter for the stock. Luck plays a big part in everything that happens.*

*In 1928 Dad's crop was hailed out and to add insult to injury his horse caught a fatal disease called sleeping sickness. He then had to borrow money to purchase a tractor and not many people today can remember what happened in 1929 unless they are older than me. Depression. I remember times being tough and I don't know how we survived.*

*December 7 1941 Japan bombed Pearl Harbour. Things were never the same again in Alberta. Building the Alaska Highway brought money into the country and then Leduc No.1.*

Photograph by Author 2007 The Canadian Prairies

The entirety of trek was documented digitally and is chronicled in this chapter through narrative scripts and video excerpts. The videos are available for viewing in the digital submission.

wonderwander - Canadian Arctic

ithinkisee - Canadian Prairies

St. Gertrude SK

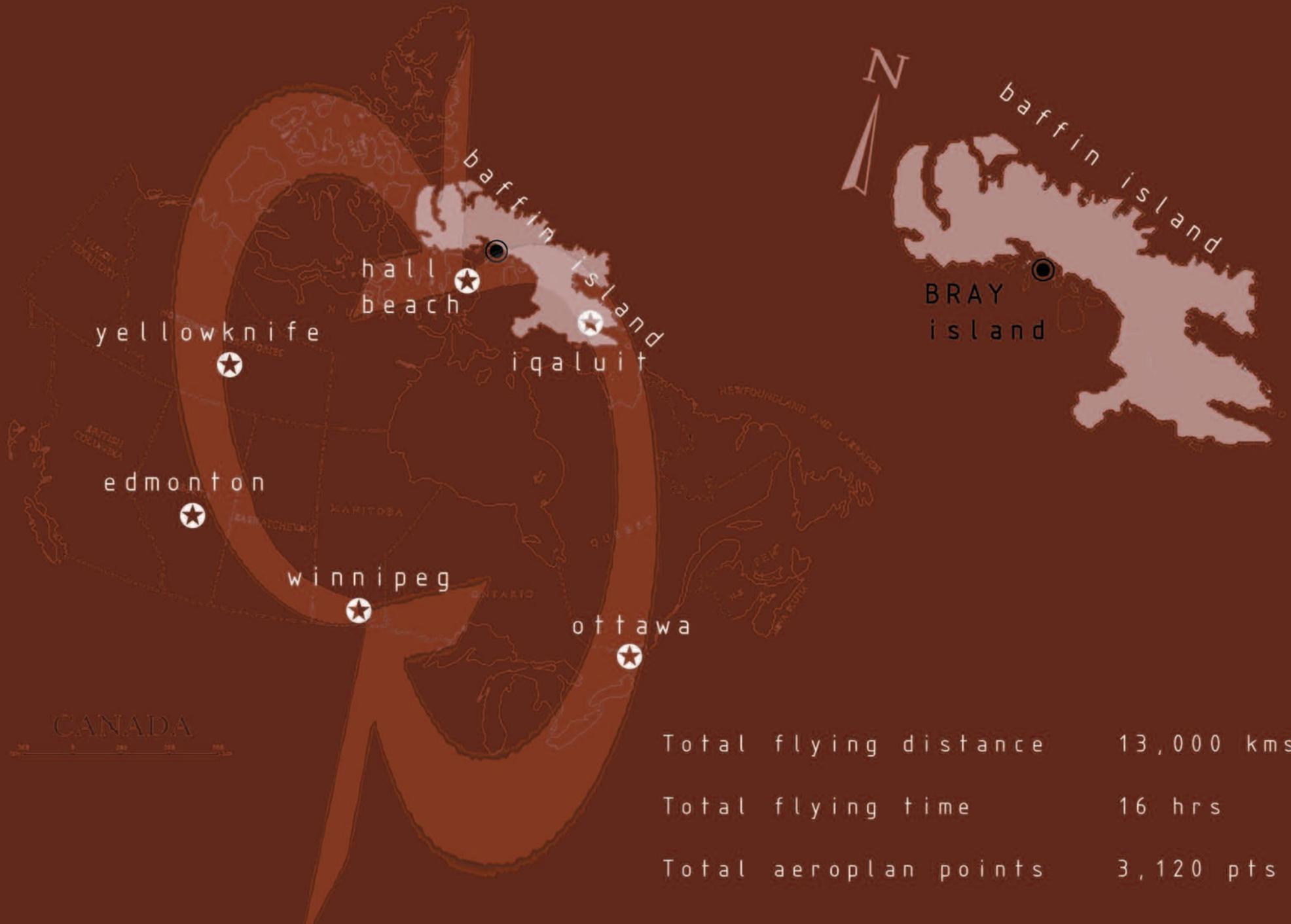
Morinville AB

Site Analysis

*Perhaps the problem lies not in the object being viewed but in the viewer. It's quite possible that one had never learned to look. For once you have learned how to look at, listen to, and analyze what is before you - you realize that the experience is ever changing. The pleasure is forever and if something is to give lifelong pleasure, two components are required – the skill of the designer in providing a powerful, rich experience and the skill of the perceiver.*

(Donald Norman, 2004, p.111)

★ north pole



Total flying distance 13,000 kms

Total flying time 16 hrs

Total aeroplan points 3,120 pts



405500

406000

407500

408500

409500

410500

411500

412500

7686500

7685500

7684500

7683500

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FOX E BASIN

bray island

wanderings



SCALE:

0 2000m

Illustrations by Author



w o n d e r w a n d e r

total video length - 11min16sec  
script and narration by michael klassen  
raw video courtesy of james mickle  
video editing by michael klassen

Place. the Canadian Arctic, Nunavut. Bray Island, located off Baffin Island, the largest island in Canada and the 5th largest island in the world. From Winnipeg, a total return flying distance of over 13,000km and flying time of over 16hrs. The average annual temperatures at Bray Island is -14°C, with a daily mean temperature of -31.8°C in January and 6.1°C in July. The Canadian Arctic is a landscape that few people get to visit, it is truly a fragile but resilient environment, complex systems at the edge of their existence. The landscape is generally low lying and flat, however there are numerous raised beaches layered throughout the landscape indicative of a fluctuating marine limit related to the deglaciation history in this area.

From the air you begin to see the landscape change, you see meanders and ripples, patterns of flow. The transitory movement of wind and water preserved in natural patterns. Everything is exposed. This landscape is an example of a landscape with limited human intervention. The Distant Early Warning (DEW) station was constructed in 1956 and operated until 1963 at which point it was abandoned. While the Canadian Arctic has been inhabited for over 4,000 years, significant building and alterations were made to this site for only seven years. It was a part of a system built during the Cold War as the primary line of air defence warning for the invasion of the North American continent. The abandoned DEW line site now takes on a whole new meaning. Today, it is a short-range radar site part of the modern North Warning System.

As a visitor to this landscape, you quickly find yourself becoming an explorer. Conceivably, you could be one of a handful of people who have step foot on this piece of ground. Starting in the shallow inland lakes you discover this foreign, leopard skin pattern, rubbery material that stretches itself across the water from rock to rock. Back on the tundra, as I moved around some rocks, you find a pinecone. You look around, here there are no trees and you know that we are way beyond the Arctic treeline. You begin to wonder how it got here. Was it transported by animal? By wind or water? Or is this truly a remnant of an old forest during an interglacial time? And then you start digging into the low-lying, flat landscape, into the thick mantle of fine-grained morainic deposits. Permafrost in this area is about 1.0m below ground surface (bgs) but in this testpit, at about 0.8m bgs, you find an organic layer of compressed leaves. Could this be



In the summer of 2006, I had the opportunity to visit the Canadian Arctic as part of a project team commissioned to complete an environmental site assessment of an abandoned Distant Early Warning (DEW) Station. The experience was a powerful landscape experience to a region that is visited by very few. This video narrates the initial conceptualizing of the practicum works.

from an interglacial time period? An interglacial time period is a geological interval of warmer global average temperature that separates ice ages. During the interglacials, the climate warmed and the tundra receded to the north following the ice sheets. Forests returned to areas that once supported the tundra vegetation. Here we are talking about geological timeframes, in this case perhaps 75,000 to 12,000 before present time.

With the field works completed, the journey home begins and I begin to reflect on the place of return, the Canadian prairies. I begin to visualize a landscape layered with evidence of human intervention and traces of landscape memories. As I returned home to Winnipeg, I return with more than a bag of rocks, some decaying leaves and a beard. Perhaps I am also returning with a new perspective on landscapes? I wonder, have places become so ordinary to us that they become invisible? And while I had the opportunity to visit the Canadian Arctic landscape, I begin to wonder, does the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes? And bringing this back into the context of landscape architecture, if so much of landscape architecture lies within the constraints that the environment puts on us, I begin to wonder. Do we really understand the forces that modify and continually shape the environment? Do we really know about how places come to be, their culture and anthropology? Do we see the leftover traces and hidden fragments of history embedded in the landscape? Do we really see that which has been forgotten, concealed, overlooked or lost? How can we more appropriately think of landscapes in terms of time? And by time I don't just mean the period of my existence but one that stretches further, that of millennia, perhaps even extend to eons. How do elements of the landscape stimulate these shifts in time that extend across a widely divergent spectrum?

If the landscape is a grand mnemonic device that records and registers our stories and memories, mnemonic from the Greek *mnemonikos* meaning of or pertaining to memory (Oxford 2000-), could one built a device to communicate with the landscape, a device that would animate a narrative of personal recollections of people and place? What form would this device take? Can landscape architecture be about revealing the nature of people, place and memory? In the words of David Leatherbarrow, *every surface can be understood as a calendar, clock and chronicle - embark on a project with the goal of dialogue*. Thus the framework for the trek is now set.

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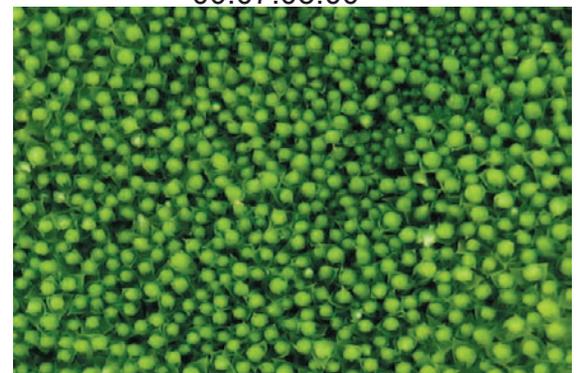
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the farm a place  
the past and how I  
old I wandered to  
everybody else was  
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from me personal m  
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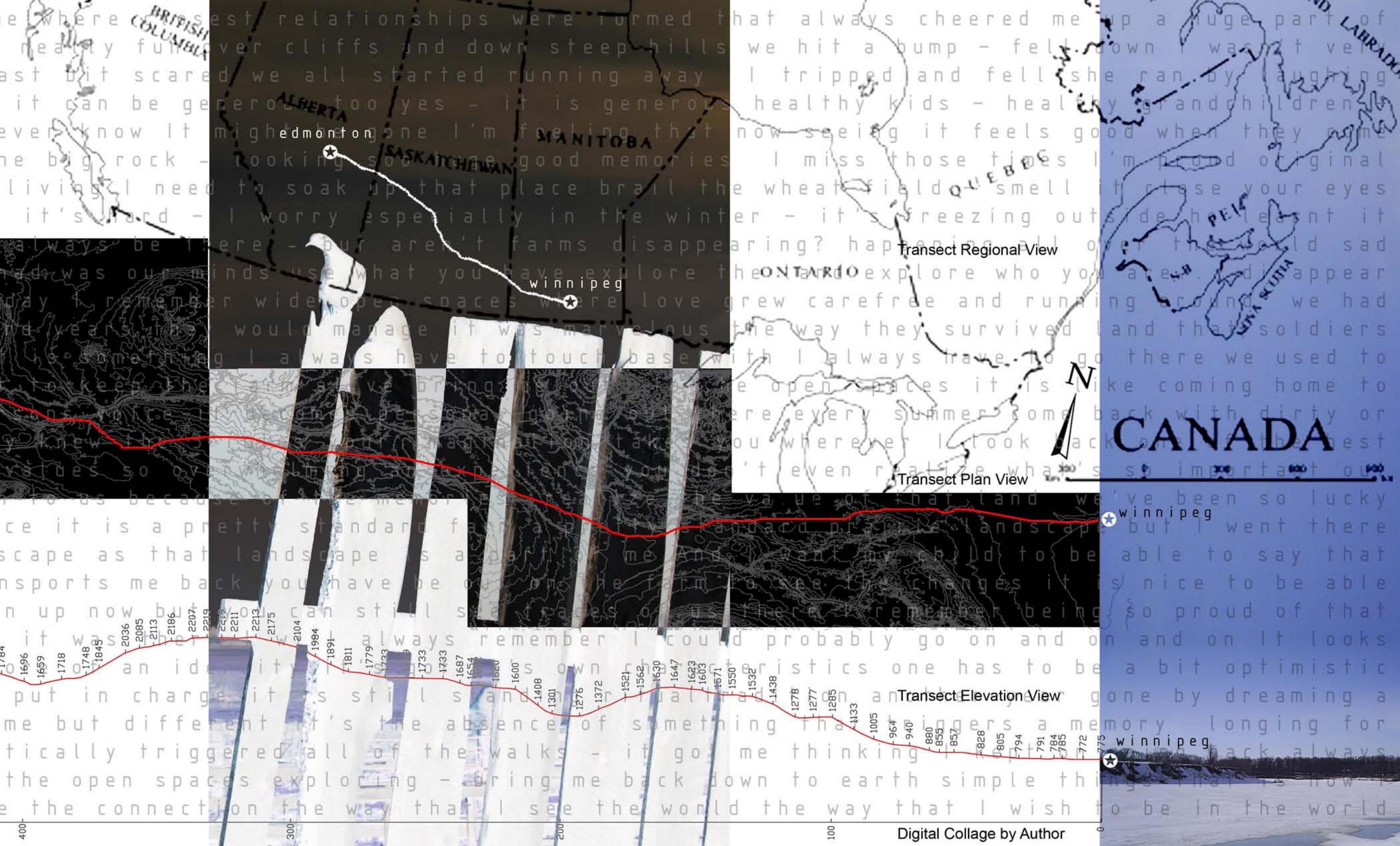
ne there to pro  
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re we have all grow  
gone I know that  
generation we got  
everything was the sa  
just saw it automa  
for the first time  
the people that mak

edmonton

edmonton



Edmonton

Winnipeg

Transect Regional View

Transect Plan View

Transect Elevation View

CANADA

Winnipeg

Winnipeg

Where relationships were formed that always cheered me up a huge part of  
nearly full we hit a bump - felt down was it very  
fast bit scared we all started running away I tripped and fell she ran by laughing  
it can be generous too yes - it is generous healthy kids - healthy grandchildren  
ever know it might be gone I'm feeling that now seeing it feels good when they come  
the big rock - looking so good memories I miss those times I'm proud original  
living I need to soak up that place smell the wheat field smell it close your eyes  
it's hard - I worry especially in the winter - it's freezing outside here it's not it  
always be there - but are farms disappearing? happening all over the world sad  
made was our minds use what you have explore the open spaces it is like coming home to  
day I remember wide open spaces where love grew carefree and running around we had  
and years in the would manage it was marvelous the way they survived and that soldiers  
something I always have to touch base with I always have to go there we used to  
I can't leave bring the open spaces here every summer come back with dirty or  
new things that you wherever I look back on the best  
values so of what you do 't even realize what's so important out  
to as because of the value of that land we've been so lucky  
ce it is a pretty standard farmland landscape but I went there  
scape as that landscape is a part of me and I want my child to be able to say that  
sports me back you have been on the farm to see the changes it is nice to be able  
n up now but you can still see the changes it is nice to be able  
it was that an identity I always remember I could probably go on and on and on It looks  
put in charge it's still that that triggers a memory longing for  
me but different it's the absence of something that triggers a memory longing for  
tically triggered all of the walks - it got me thinking I want to mark always  
the open spaces exploring - bring me back down to earth simple things that is now I  
e the connection the way that I see the world the way that I wish to be in the world



i t h i n k i s e e

total video length - 14min07sec  
script and narration by michael klassen  
video and editing works by michael klassen  
music credits - Los Gringos Locos

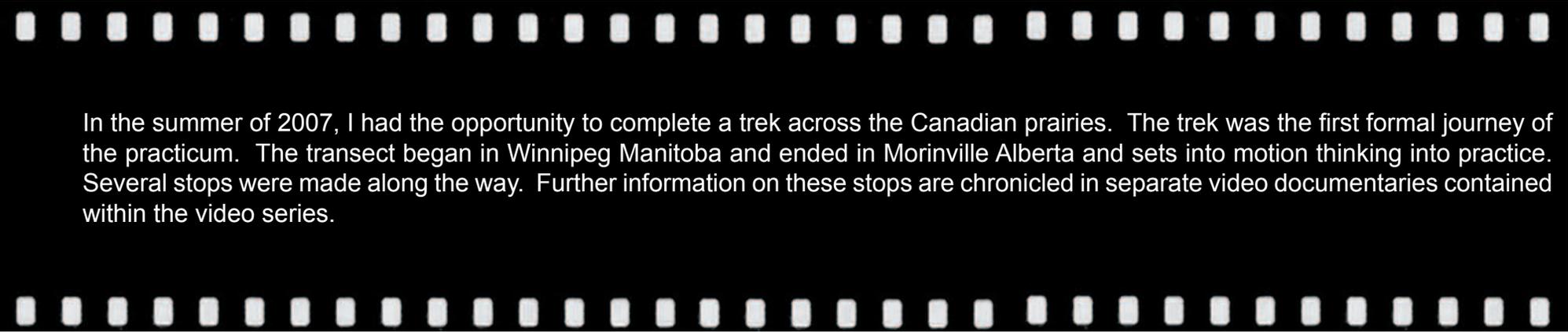
Do we really know about how places come to be, their culture and anthropology? How much do we really know about the stories and histories associated with place? Do we see that which has been forgotten, concealed, overlooked or lost? Or are we just simply analyzing the mechanics of a place? Do we really distinctively remember? If we are not a continual trek to find the very essence of this interaction between people and place then what are we really doing?

Context is what landscape architecture is all about. Enter the landscape architect into the Canadian Prairies, a region that has experienced significant landscape alterations over the past hundred years. Before the arrival of the European settlers, an extensive mixed-grass prairie and parklands extended throughout western Canada. A surge of immigrants in the early 1900's, guided by the eye of the survey level, carved out the lands in a checkerboard pattern across the region.

We are faced today with a changing environment that is rapidly shifting to respond, what are our responses to its changing identity? Perhaps a starting point is examining our personal evolving relationship with the landscape and the realization that there are gaps in our ability to fully conceptualize the value of natural spaces within both urban and rural area.

While we are able to see the face of these landscapes change, we are often unaware that seeing is an ability that we learn. We learn to see and begin to make sense of our external environment through our experiences, categorizations and memory. As we continue to grow, both language and culture begin to act as prisms to bend and shape our view, so although we start out seeing the same things, each individual unconsciously creates their own interpretation (Fletcher 2001).

A primary assumption that our brain makes is that light travels in straight lines and that the larger the image the closer the image. This is not true. The atmosphere acts as a distorting lens, it redistributes lights rays in an angular sense, concentrating them in some directions and spreading them out in others. Objects in the landscape can be distorted beyond recognition. But the environment isn't an object, it is not a bounded place but rather a region of entangled pathways that weave in and out of each other, interacting and forming loops and collecting in knots.



In the summer of 2007, I had the opportunity to complete a trek across the Canadian prairies. The trek was the first formal journey of the practicum. The transect began in Winnipeg Manitoba and ended in Morinville Alberta and sets into motion thinking into practice. Several stops were made along the way. Further information on these stops are chronicled in separate video documentaries contained within the video series.

We need wander and wonder along these entangled pathways and their interacting loops and connecting knots in order to gain a deeper understanding of a place. There are endless lines embedded within the landscape that have preserved within them the interaction of culture and nature. I am on a trek to find these hidden landscape narratives.

These landscape narratives will serve as a basis for my landscape analysis and design, such that the work can be tied directly to people and place and that a personal connection is made. These landscape narratives will serve to set foundations for language, learning and understanding. About us, about landscape, about our being and how we would like to be in the world. About seeing and how we see the world.

We need to start questioning our ability to see. We need to see with new eyes. A new vision of landscape is required to reconnect the landscape and its inhabitants in order to provide a new portrait of region and place. I believe that we need to re-map region, not through another iteration of the surveyors level but by stories, memories and personal recollections of landscape.

Garrett Eckbo believed that landscape was the site of the *interaction of people and place* (Marc Trieb, 1997, p.2) and that landscape architecture and specifically *exterior spatial design was the purposeful formation of that interaction* (Marc Trieb, 1997, p.2). I see design as an opportunity to transfer ideas and landscape architecture as a venue in which to transfer ideas about landscape. Exposing the interaction of culture and nature within a complex biophysical, social and cultural context. We are in a profession that is given the opportunity to design places that can reach people on a very personal level, places where people may pause. In the words of Rollo May *it is in the pause, we wonder, reflect, sense awe, and conceive of eternity* (Rollo May, 1981, p.164). *It is in the pause where the rigid chain of cause and effect is broken – where we no longer blindly follow stimulus. We long to pause, to absorb into our day-to-day existence, some calmness, some inner order in which we can call our soul our own, in which we take time to experience some beauty* (Rollo May, 1981, p.180). To reach people on this level requires a methodology of analysis that puts the stories and histories of people and place at the forefront of our thinking. It absolutely cannot be an afterthought.

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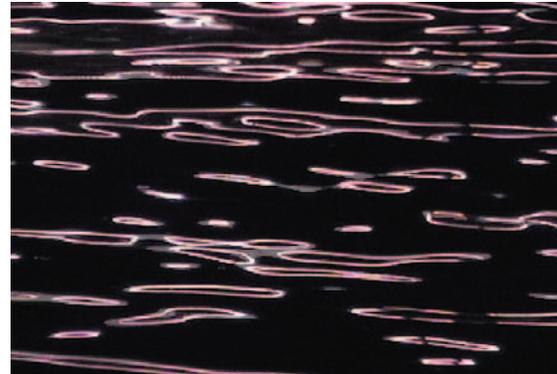
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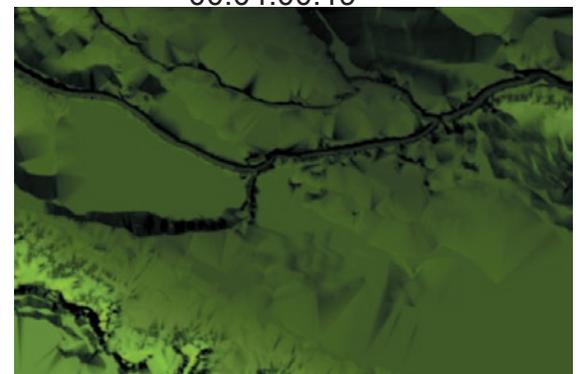
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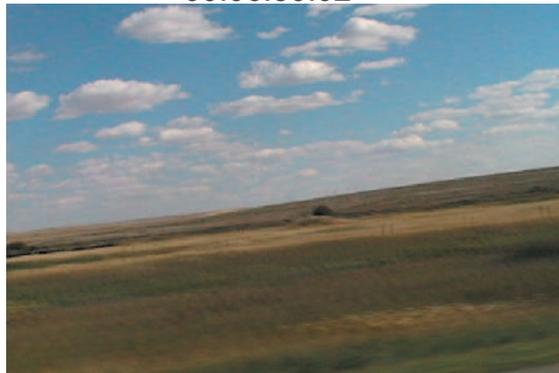
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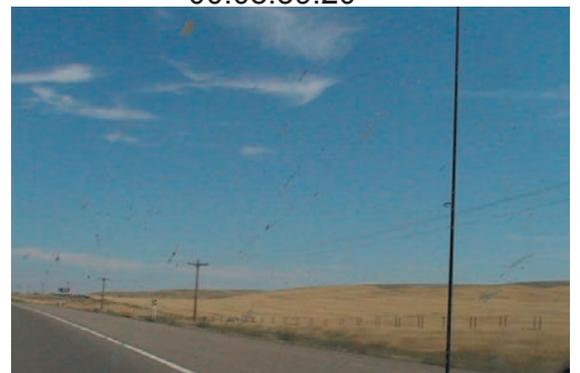
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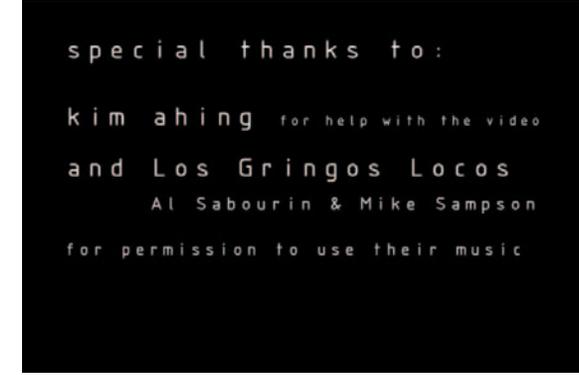
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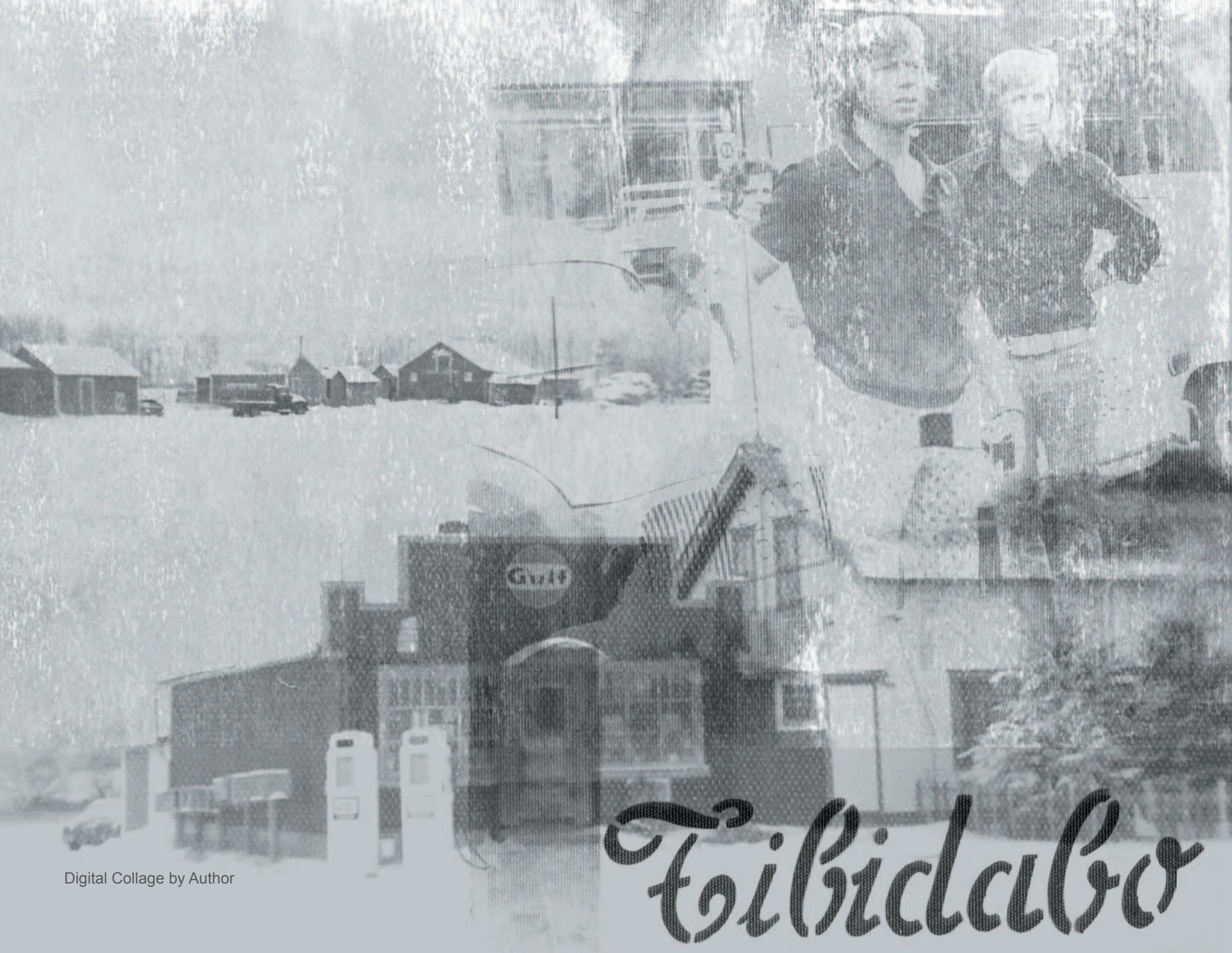


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Digital Collage by Author

*Tribidabo*

the accordion baseball under the lights  
indian rocks the garden that dog  
gone cream seperator foster huwitt  
praying the rosary WD45 the ol' brute  
john deere shaven spruce tree trunks  
shermans baking i used to rock that  
baby school house cream checks farming

s t . g e r t r u d e S K

total video length - 03min37sec  
script and narration - various voices  
video and editing works by michael klassen

*The original homestead is out at Burr. That is where grandpa Klassen, when they came to this country, that is where they homesteaded. He bought this quarter section of land in St. Gertrude in about 1941. (Ken Klassen personal conversation)*

*When you're driving out here something goes through you. You get the shivers inside. It's a very warm feeling – it's exciting – very nice. (Ralph Klassen - personal conversation)*

*All the way along, this is where this person lived, Klassen's lived here Bunse's lived there Bunse's lived there and Sherman's lived there. Somebody on each corner, just like a block. (Sandy Mouillierat - personal conversation)*

*Lots of good memories, nothing like growing up on the farm. (Wendy Klassen - personal conversation)*

*Washing that dog-done cream separator every year morning before I went to school, it was a big chore. (Pat Menz - personal conversation)*

*How many years ago? Many years ago and it still looks the same, my little rocking chair. (Denis Klassen - personal conversation)*



A visit to an abandoned homestead in St. Gertrude SK provided a site for first testing concepts and ideas related to voice map trekking. The video is a short chronicle of the journey out to the homestead starting in Humboldt SK. A journey to this homestead is carried out during the yearly family reunion.

*It's great – I just love it – like I said so many good memories. (Duane Klassen - personal conversation)*

*I'm trying to picture the yard – the way it was. (Pat Menz - personal conversation)*

*Just coming back just brings back so many memories. (Ralph Klassen - personal conversation)*

*She was up at five o'clock picking out weeds in the garden and sitting on the chair praying the rosary. (Cy Klassen - personal conversation)*

*They helped out everybody all the time – farmers would get sick and all the neighbors would get together and take off the crop. Just mom baking for everybody. That is kind of what we are like now - you want to help everybody out. Just being a good person. (Sandy Mouillierat - personal conversation)*

*I don't ever want to see this land sold but the land that we have here is never owned by anybody. It is on loan to us until we pass on but if possible I am going to try and keep it in the Klassen name. (Ken Klassen - personal conversation)*

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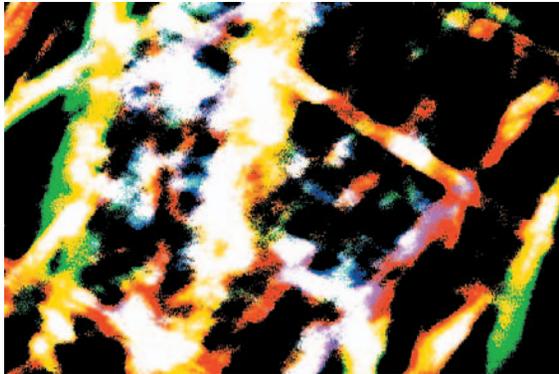
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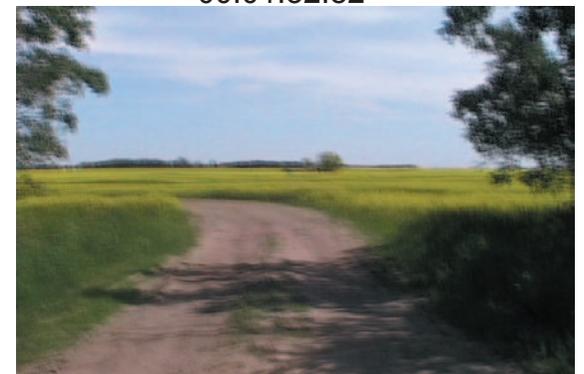
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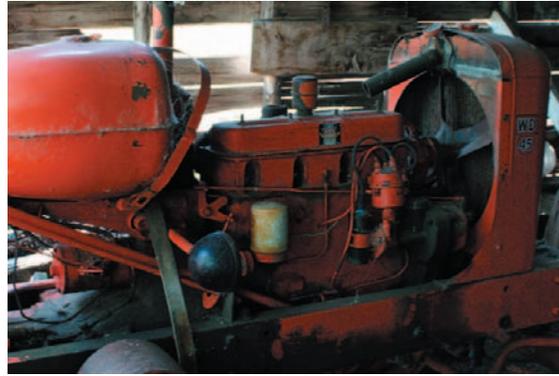
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cow poop lane roberts bush the old house the sunshine fort the beav  
bales the belarus wood deck picking weeds trike rides baseball the  
the fat pig the red barn christmas day the dugout spring thaw

HANAYAOA

back pasture

DEPUTY \* ZENOR

Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ire

1949

\* house

1962

1967

To all to whom

Whereas the Lands hereinafter described, are Dominion Lands within the meaning of "The Dominion Lands Act"

AND WHEREAS

James M. Gillis, of Township  
West of the Fourth Meridian, in the Province  
in the North West Territories, in Our Dominion

applied for a grant of the said lands and has claim to such grant having been

by these Presents We do grant, convey and

411

er dam the weirdo zone henry's fort suckers back pasture chasm and  
bridge catching mice stooking football mcgillis dares sunday martha  
cows pond hockey stinky yellow bus cartoon reruns the garden

1976

1987

2001



Illustration by Author



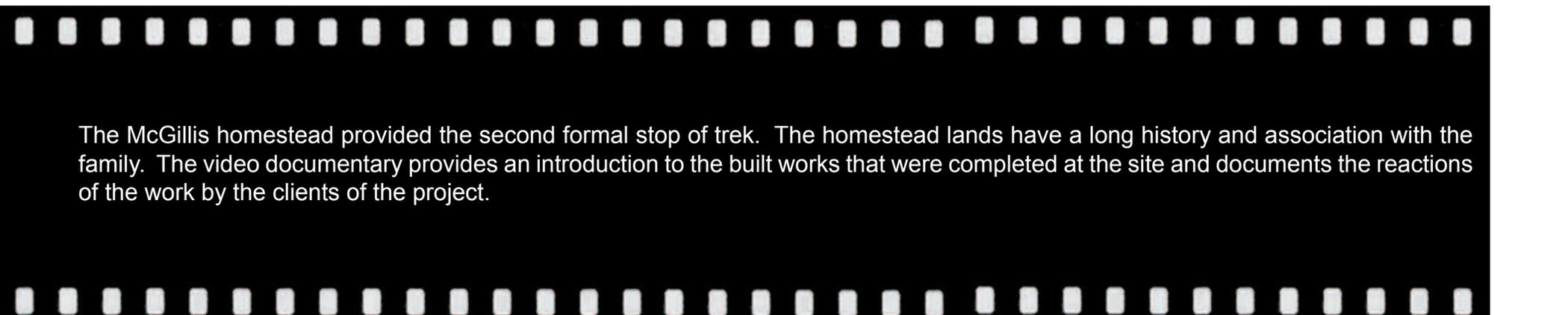
m o r i n v i l l e A B

total video length - 08min47sec  
script and narration by michael klassen  
video and editing works by michael klassen

There are such powerful memories of place and landscape embedded within the spirit and minds of the people that grew up in this place. These stories don't seem to be talked about nor frequently revealed but they are deeply important to us. The purpose of the design is to animate a narrative of these stories of place, these personal recollections of landscape. The intention is to expose the stories that are embedded within the earth and for one to be able to immerse themselves within the design which makes time visible, the histories of people and place. The concept is to use these stories themselves and specifically their voices to expose our interactions with the landscape, the interaction between culture and nature. Thus looking at design as a mode of participation in a pre-existing structure and using it as a venue in which to transfer ideas. Landscape architecture as a discipline in which to transfer ideas about landscape and culture. To use the landscape not only as a canvass but also as a device in which to know the soul of a place.

This specific place has been within this family for over 113 years now, original homestead lands obtained in 1894 as part of the Homestead Act. Here sticks were and still are an important part of the people's childhood, sticks for building, walking sticks. In the design, there is one stick for every year that the land has been entrusted to the family. Today, 113 sticks serve to trace an invisible dividing line between cultivated and uncultivated lands. A line that only becomes visible during spring with the blooming of the prairie crocus. The concept is such that every year, during the ritual journey in which the family comes out to this landscape to see the prairie crocus blooms, a new walking stick can be added each year such that the design grows and evolves with time.

To add to the analogue portion of the design, a digital portion was added in which the voices of the storytellers are played directly at the site. They are contained within six narratives embedded within the landscape itself. The stories are played randomly either individually and concurrently. Together, as the voices start to mix and join, they begin to form new stories and new narratives. It is always changing, always different, making new stories each time – different but the same as it is using the same database of stories. In that sense, it has a temporal quality that is dynamic and that each time offers new opportunities for learning and understanding. It uses personal stories and personal recollections of landscape experiences as a basis for the design, a methodology of landscape analysis that focuses on the element of time and that sets into motion continual learning and understanding.



The McGillis homestead provided the second formal stop of trek. The homestead lands have a long history and association with the family. The video documentary provides an introduction to the built works that were completed at the site and documents the reactions of the work by the clients of the project.

*“it’s a huge part of my past and how I became who I am today” (Jenina Klassen)*

*“it’s personal memory, everybody has a piece of themselves there. the stories will always be there it’s just we won’t be”  
(Bernice L’Hirondelle)*

*“it’s the absence of something that triggers a memory” (Paula Klassen)*

*“it brings me back down to earth – simple things and it’s all from childhood memories that you miss” (Paul McGillis)*

*“the good thing about the farm was that nobody told you what to do or where to go. your imagination takes you wherever”  
(Robbie Cuglietta)*

*“it’s a place that looks like everywhere else – but certainly after spending a time there it has more of an identity” (Mark Cuglietta)*

*“it is kind of like a sanctuary that nobody knows about, if you didn’t actually experience it you wouldn’t know” (Robbie Cuglietta)*

*“it becomes real when you hear a person’s voice or personal – maybe that’s the word, personal” (Joan Klassen)*

*“I can still see traces of myself there – I can see that I was as much a part of that landscape as that landscape is a part of me” (Paula Klassen)*

*“you learnt to go with the flow – nature is very unforgiving – it can be generous too.” (Helen McGillis)*

*“it signifies that we were – we are and we always will be a part of the land. It’s like our spirits are standing here protecting the land”  
(Joan Klassen)*



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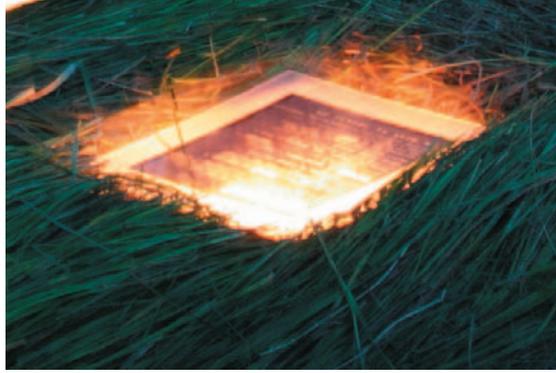
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s i t e a n a l y s i s

total video length - 04min45sec

script and narration by michael klassen

video and editing works by michael klassen

The Landscape Architect is one that is trained in the design of exterior spaces with the knowledge to explore spaces where culture meets nature. Their skill set includes the ability to translate an understanding of spatial order into spatial design within a complex biophysical, social and cultural context. There are numerous tasks in which the services of a Landscape Architect may be utilized throughout the commissioning, research, analysis, synthesis, construction and operation of a project. However, let us first begin with site analysis.

One may begin by first observing and noting site boundaries. You may be able to see both historical and current uses of the site, significant landmarks and features, notable nearby buildings and key viewpoints across the site. You may search for any underground utilities, collect municipal zoning maps, deed restrictions, easements, right-of-ways, and sift through pertinent regulations. You may observe pedestrian and recreation trails, transportation routes, transit stops, collect traffic information, note potential hazards at the site. You may even conduct a noise study.

You will most likely look into the geology and soils at the site. Geology and soils are an important site consideration because it influences the movement of surface water, controls infiltration rates and has a large impact on the placement of infrastructure on site due to its structural and physical behaviors. You may drill into the earth to investigate soil conditions.

You will observe the landforms at the site. Landforms are a significant element to consider in site planning as it affects patterns of development, building location and orientation, site design and the placement of features such as roads and paths. Excessively flat areas may result in storm drainage problems and excessively steep sites pose constraints to development with regards to instability issues and difficulties in controlling erosion and runoff.



The video provides an introduction to the traditional site analysis process that is employed throughout the profession and taught in educational frameworks. It also raises an important research question that is explored throughout trek.

You will examine local and regional hydrology features. Hydrology involves analyzing the presence, storage and movement of water both above and below the surface of the earth. More specifically, hydrology components can affect site development components with events such as flooding, erosion and deposition of materials, and affect site-specific features such as vegetation, animal life and infiltration.

You will observe site vegetation. It is an important consideration to note as it provides shade/enclosure and it aids in climate control across the site by providing shade and blocking/channeling breezes. It is also the location for animal habitat.

Climate is to be examined as it has an effect on the soil, vegetation and the people that are present at the site. Variables to consider in analyzing climate include temperature, radiated heat, wind speed and humidity. Based on the placement of the project components, shade and shadow across the site will be altered and will vary over the times of day and the different seasons. Shade and shadow casting studies should be completed to determine the optimal position of the main onsite features.

We have now looked into general site features, key environmental and visual features, geology and soils, landforms, hydrology, vegetation and climate. It appears as though site analysis is now complete. Or is it? My question is where in the site analysis process is the inclusion of people's stories – histories and voices? Do the people's stories of place become an afterthought in design process?

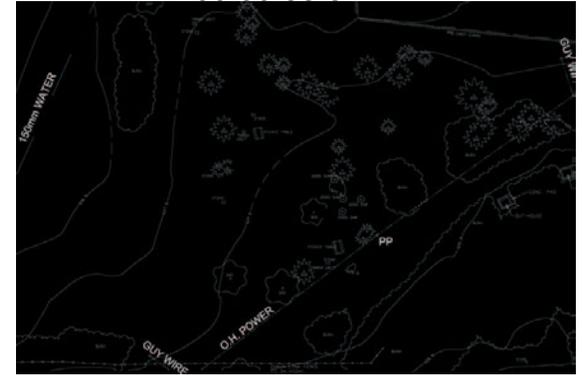
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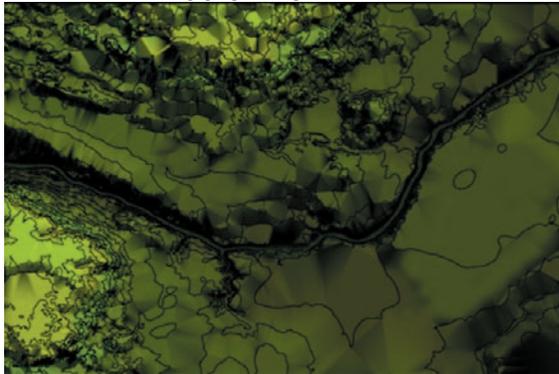
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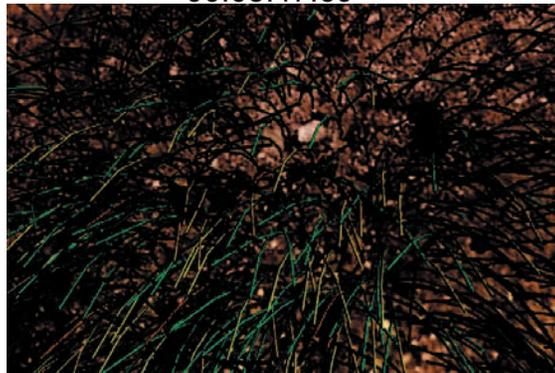
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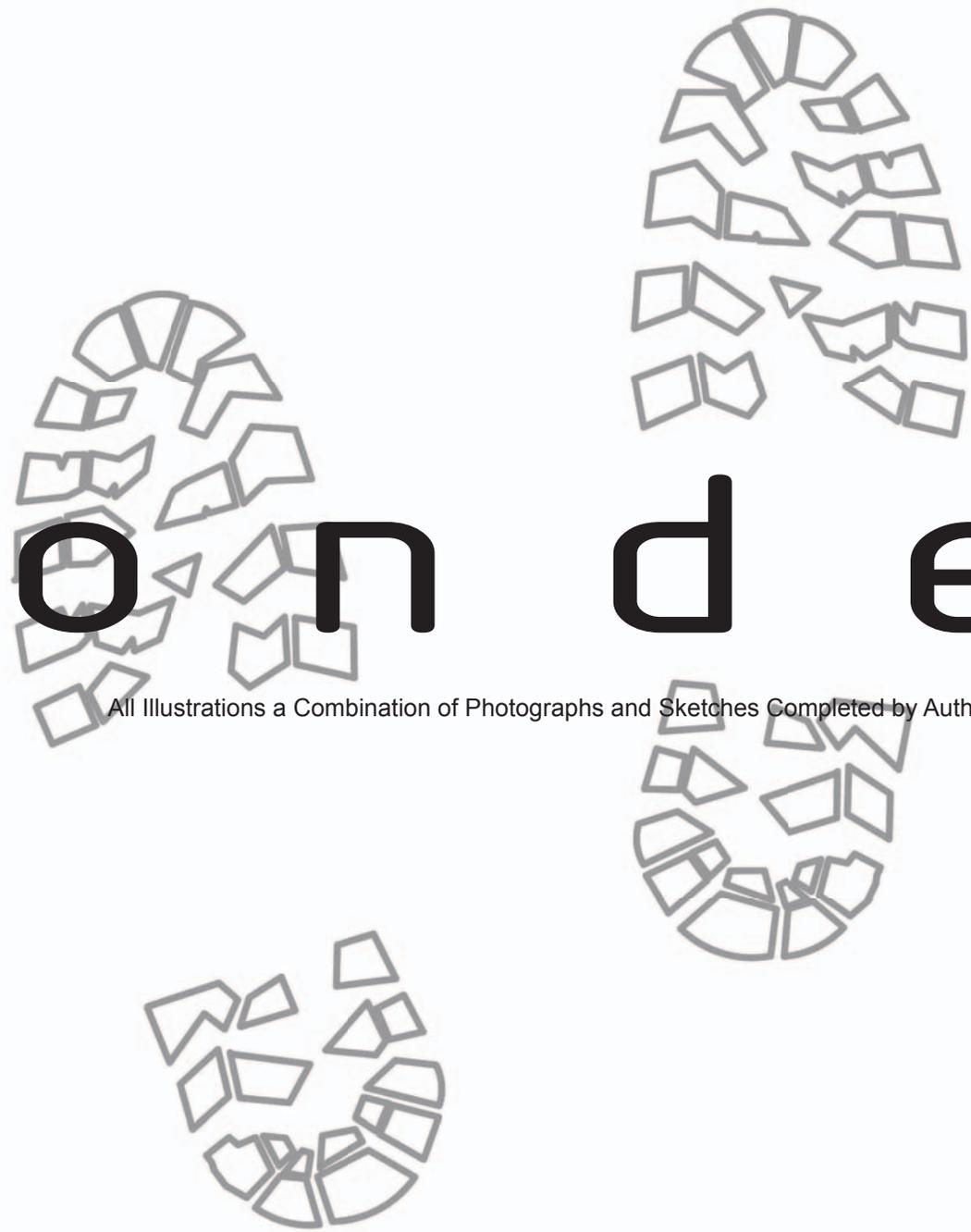
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Photograph by Author 2007 The Prairie Crocus

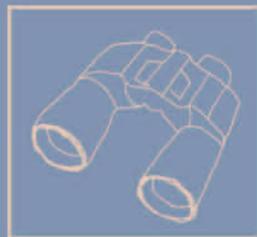
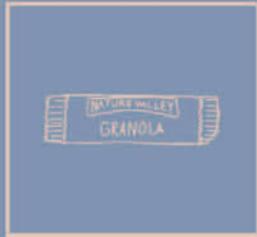
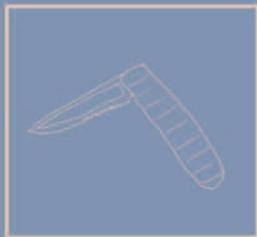
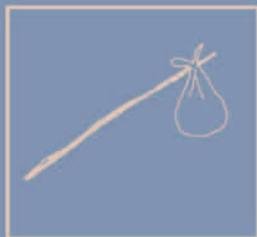
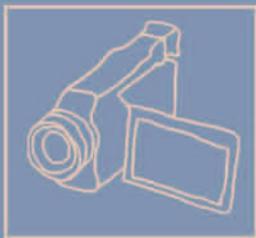
# wonder



All Illustrations a Combination of Photographs and Sketches Completed by Author

MAY 2006

trek tools



PRINCIPAL CHARACTER



John .....a wanderer who likes to wonder

CONTRIBUTING CHARACTERS

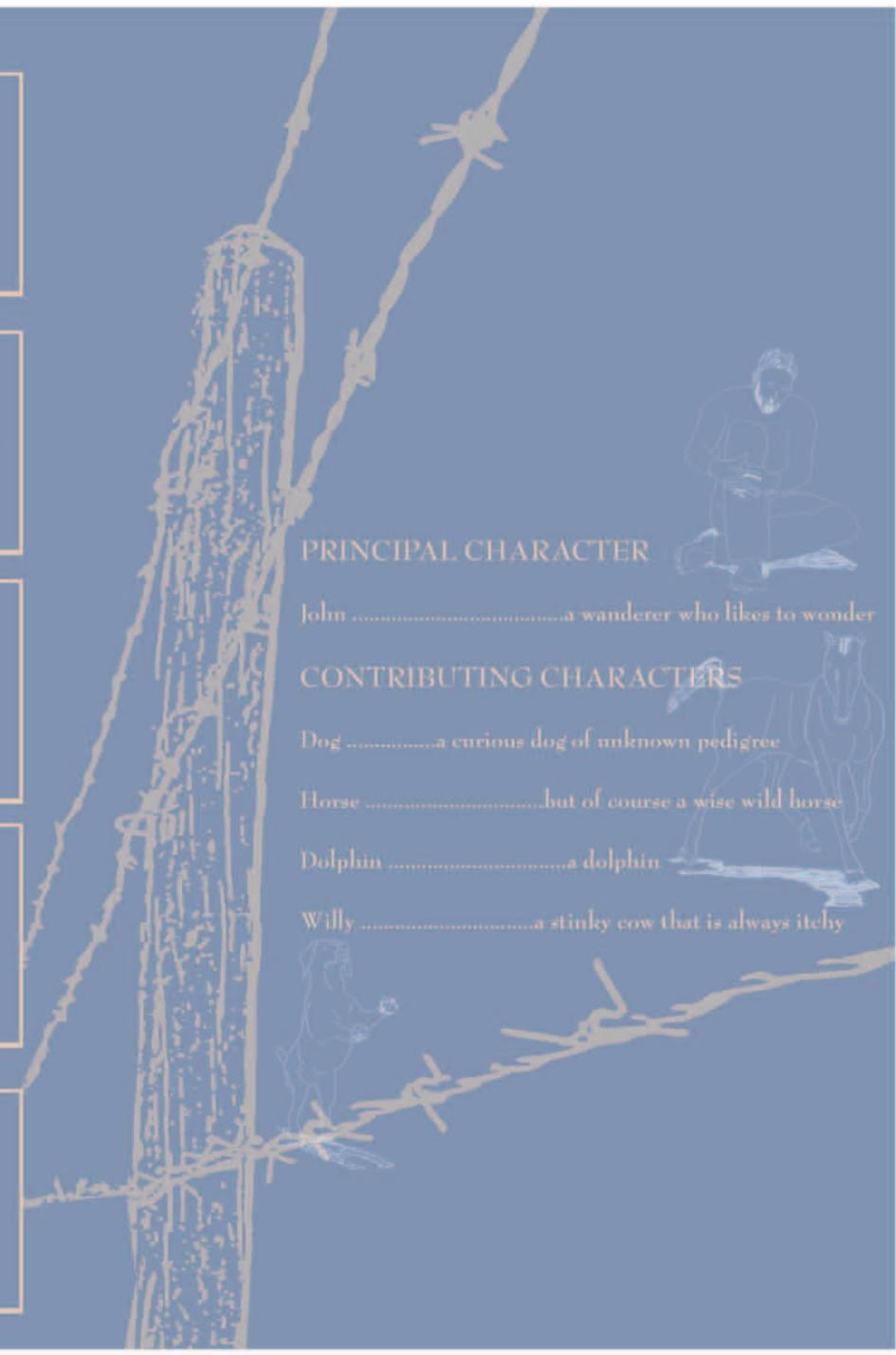
Dog .....a curious dog of unknown pedigree



Horse .....but of course a wise wild horse

Dolphin .....a dolphin

Willy .....a stinky cow that is always itchy



11 MAY 2006

WHAT IS YOUR PROPOSED TITLE FOR YOUR **practicum?**



I DON'T HAVE A TITLE OR CONCRETE IDEA AS OF YET. AND I HAVE NOT COMMITTED TO A 'SITE'. I AM STILL INTERESTED IN MY SAME ORIGINAL VEIN OF THOUGHT - AS IN THE DESIGN

AND REPRESENTATION OF LANDSCAPES AS **shifting and dynamic.**

20 JULY 2006

I'M NOT SURE WHAT I REALLY WANT TO DO. I FEEL AS IF I CHOOSE A SPECIFIC SITE - I GET TANGLED UP IN ALL THE LOGISTICS. I FEEL LIKE PLAYING, LIKE JOLLY JEAN WAS ABLE TO. IN THAT PROJECT - I WAS ABLE TO ALLOW MYSELF TO PLAY BECAUSE THE TRANSECT DIDN'T DEFINE ANY BOUNDARIES OR THE EXACT PROGRAM FOR THAT MATTER. SO, I FEEL THAT I WANT TO APPROACH MY PRACTICUM IN THE SAME WAY, BUT WANT TO SET UP AN OVERALL PROGRAM THAT WILL PROVIDE SOME FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDINGS.

**DOES THIS MAKE ANY SENSE?**

I THINK THE APPROACH YOU SUGGEST IS EMBEDDED WITH THE TYPE OF FLUIDITY YOU DESIRE IN YOUR GRADUATE PROJECT. CAN YOU WORK TOWARDS SUGGESTING A CONNECTION WITH NEW WAYS YOU ARE LEARNING TO **see experience record represent**

WHAT IS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE TO YOU AS AN ENGINEER - A NEW LANGUAGE, A NEW FORM, A WAY OF THINKING OR BEING?

MAY 2006

JULY 2006



18 Jan 2007

is it painful to think? ... david rothenberg. how proust can change your life ... alain de botton.  
i have recently got matter and memory by henri bergson ... it probably would be useful for you to read.

oblivion ... marc auge. mapping a city ... herausgegeben von, nina montmann, yilmaz dziewior, galerie fur landschaftskunst

is this kind of read helpful .... or is that just too

22 Jan 2007

thinking about significant landscape experiences from childhood until now

**pedantic?**

and of course beautiful evidence by edward tuftes. **for now**  
pedantic - overly concerned with minute details or formalisms

you talk about looking as seeing, mapping as revealing - what do you do with those discoveries - what is the action - new understanding?  
this has led to thinking about exploring these questions in relation to some of my significant landscape experiences

maybe elaborate more - who is included or excluded - who is the who in "your way of seeing the world"  
please - never Mrs! I would be Professor

JAN 2007

FEB 2007

it is locked  
then you look for the elevator

IF YOU HAD TO SUMMARIZE WHAT NAESS THINKS AN EDUCATED INDIVIDUAL SHOULD BE OR SHOULD HOLD WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HE WOULD SAY

AN INDIVIDUAL SHOULD BE OPEN TO MANY  
POSSIBILITIES

buzz the code

AN INDIVIDUAL SHOULD BE IN SEARCH  
OF THE FORCE THAT GUIDES YOUR  
THINKING

would you risk going up?

"one should hold the multitude of possibilities and pathways open at any time. the  
"best" answer is the one with the most possibilities"

would you mind coming to the village?

"we should always act as if we possessed a total view – an implicit vision of how  
we fit into the world".

feeling a bit 'disconnected' and  
would like to re-connect

AN INDIVIDUAL SHOULD EXPLORE WHO THEY  
ARE, THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS,  
AND THEIR DEEPEST WISHES

"let the world come to you and discover you  
cannot leave it"

17 FEB 2007

6 MAR 2007

COULD YOU TELL ME WHEN I SHOULD BE IN THIS ROOM OR THAT ROOM AT THIS TIME OR THAT TIME?

"WE HAVE BECOME TOO USED TO THE WORLD WONDER NO LONGER ANIMATES US AS IT DID THEN. THERE IS SO MUCH THAT WE CAN FIND OUT ABOUT THE MAGIC OF OUR SOULS BY REVISITING THESE MEMORIES OF FIRST ACQUAINTANCE"

(O'DONOHUE, 1999, P.33)

MAR 2007

SURE. SO RIGHT NOW, ACCORDING TO MY SCHEDULE, YOU ARE WHERE YOU SHOULD BE - AT THIS TIME ONLY THOUGH. I THINK. WHERE YOU SHOULD BE PRETTY SOON - I DON'T KNOW. AND WE WILL MEET LATE NEXT WEEK IN A ROOM AT A TIME TBA. ACCORDING TO MY SCHEDULE THAT IS.

OK DOKEY. NEW SAYING OF THE TERM.

GIGGLE

13 MAY 2007

I JUST WANTED TO SHARE A SMALL SUCCESS - AS YOU SPARKED IT. I FIGURED OUT HOW TO DO MY OWN 'MURMUR' SITE!

ABSOLUTELY EXCELLENT!!! THIS IS GOING TO ADD SO MUCH TO YOUR WORK AND ... TO OTHER PEOPLES UNDERSTANDING OF PLACE(S) ... KEEP ME POSTED!

GET THAT VOICE RECORDER

## TREK BOY TREK

**“Wonder is a beautiful style of perception.  
when you wonder at something, your mind  
voyages deep into its possibility and nature”**

(O'DONOHUE, 1999, P.196)

TREK boy TREK

MAY 2007



2 6 J u n e 2 0 0 7

YOU KNOW - I AM STARTING OFF WITH ALL THESE 'DREAMS' OF WHAT THIS BODY OF WORK CAN BE - I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL MATERIALIZE - BUT I WANT TO REALLY START OFF DREAMING. I HOPE THAT IT WILL CHANGE BOTH ME AND THOSE THAT PARTICIPATE.

I KNOW THAT THERE IS MUCH YOU WILL DISCOVER THIS SUMMER AND I HAVE SUGGESTED THAT YOU CONSIDER, AS YOU LISTEN TO OTHERS, HOW YOUR EDUCATION HAS CHANGED YOUR PERSPECTIVE. THINK OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL "INSIDER/OUTSIDER" - WHERE ARE YOU IN TERMS OF EXPERIENCE? TRY AND CHRONICAL THE SHIFTS BETWEEN PERSONAS.

I FEEL LIKE I AM ACTING A TAD CONSERVATIVE AS YOUR ADVISOR - BUT THINKING ABOUT YOUR GOALS AND YOUR PROCESS MAKES ME REFLECT ON THE NOTION THAT GOOD ART AND GOOD ARTISTS NEED A SITE OF REPOSE OR RESISTANCE - SO I THINK SOME OF MY COMMENTS ON YOUR EDUCATION AND THE STATE OF DISCIPLINE REMAIN APT. SO CONTINUE TO DREAM BIG. THE CHALLENGE FOR YOU IS TO HELP PEOPLE RE-VISION LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, TO SEE NOT ONLY HOW YOUR WORK CAN ENHANCE OUR PRACTICE, BUT ALSO TO RE-AWAKEN

**embark on a project with the goal of dialogue  
invite - register - recall**

DAVID LEATHERBARROW

THE WAY YOU WORK DOES REMIND ME ALOT OF THE WAY THAT ARTISTS WORK, WHICH IS INTERESTING GIVEN YOUR EDUCATION.

f o r g o t t e n d r e a m s



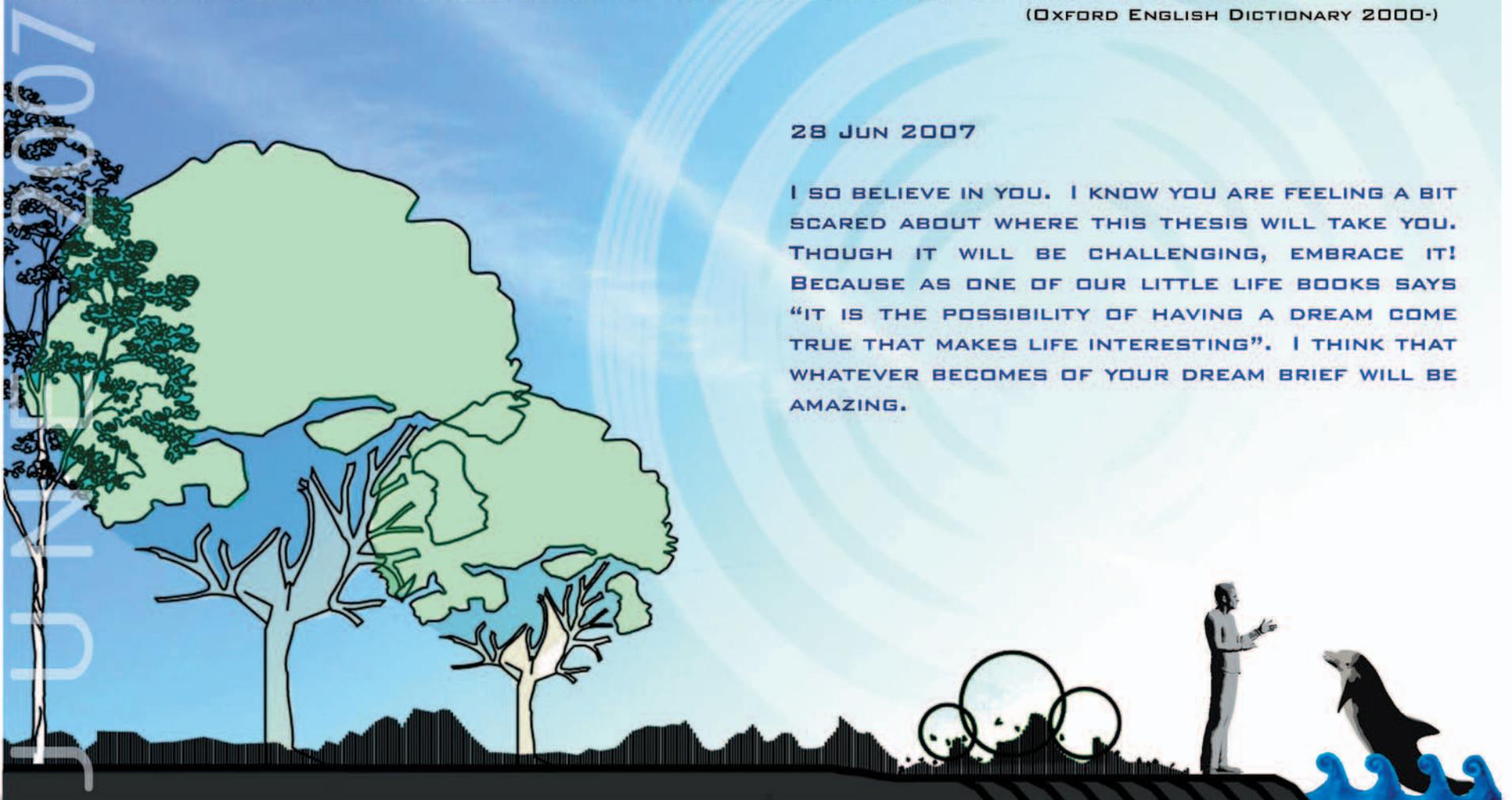
here's a thought

**BELONGING** - A WORD COMPOSED OF **BE** AS IN *to exist* - AND **LONGING** AS IN *a strong, persistent desire or craving, for something distant*. **WONDERING** - **WONDER** AS IN *to think or speculate curiosity, to be filled with awe, to doubt*. NOW REPLACE THE **O** WITH AN **A** TO GET **WANDER** - FROM THE GERMAN WORD **MANDELN** MEANING *to change* AND THE VERB 'TO WIND' AS IN *to change direction, bend, turn, meander*. **ADJUST WIND SLIGHTLY** - NOT AS IN *to bend* BUT AS IN *the air in natural motion*. **AIR** IS DERIVED FROM THE LATIN **SPIRITUS** WHICH MEANS *breath-air*. THIS BRINGS US TO **SPIRIT** - AS IN *the self or your being*. NOW WE ARE BACK TO **BEING** ONCE AGAIN AND **BELONGING** WHICH IS WHERE WE STARTED IN THE FIRST PLACE - WITH **LONGING** BEING *a strong, innate desire*. IF THAT DESIRE IS ASSOCIATED WITH **ROVING** AND **TRAVELING ABOUT** - NOW THAT IS THE DEFINITION OF **WANDERLUST**.

(OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY 2000-)

28 JUN 2007

I SO BELIEVE IN YOU. I KNOW YOU ARE FEELING A BIT SCARED ABOUT WHERE THIS THESIS WILL TAKE YOU. THOUGH IT WILL BE CHALLENGING, EMBRACE IT! BECAUSE AS ONE OF OUR LITTLE LIFE BOOKS SAYS "IT IS THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING A DREAM COME TRUE THAT MAKES LIFE INTERESTING". I THINK THAT WHATEVER BECOMES OF YOUR DREAM BRIEF WILL BE AMAZING.



17 AUG 2007

VANDALS HAVE WRECKED THE DESIGN AND I HAVE BEEN FORCED TO  
RE-BUILD

I AM SURE THE CATTLE WILL ENJOY THE WORK ... GIVE THEM TIME!  
ANIMALS ON FARMS ARE SO UNDERRATED! TREK BOY TREK

THINK OF WORKING WITH THE CATTLE - AFTER ALL IT IS CATTLE  
COUNTRY AS WELL. TAKE CARE, REMEMBER TO STAY STRONG  
ABOUT THE SINCERETY OF YOUR WORK.



AUG 2007

I know I think I look forward to thinking and seeing and trying to understand and moving the work forward again further I think I see  
I think I see I understand I will see you soon

27 Aug 2007

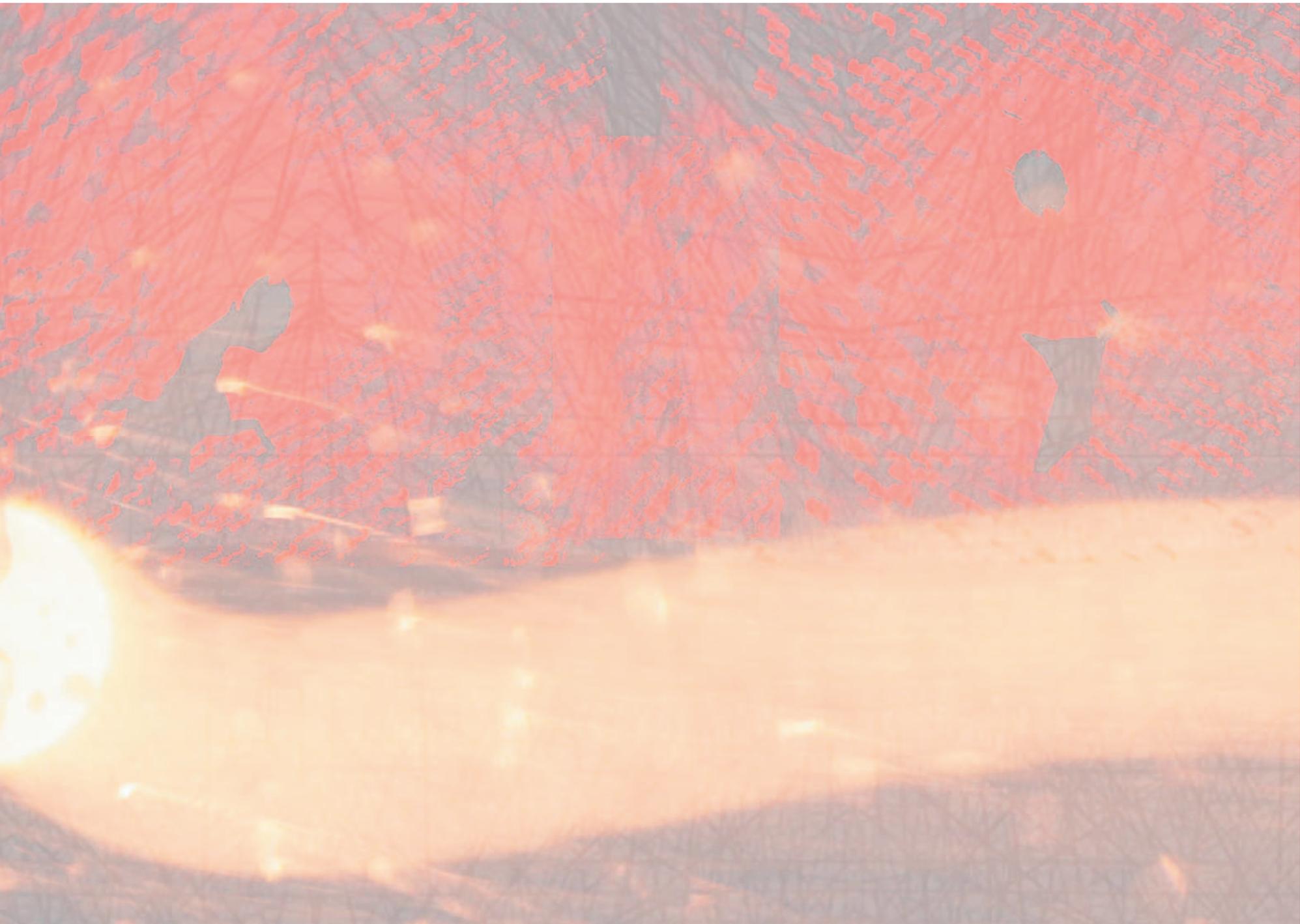
NOBODY HAS THE ABILITY TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR PATH UNTIL IT IS OVER. WHILE TREK ISN'T OVER - I DID ACHIEVE A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE LAST WEEK AND AM BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THE PATH THAT THE TREK HAS TAKEN ME OVER THE PAST WHILE. IT IS AMAZING THE IMPACT THAT 113 ORDINARY STICKS - A ROCK - MARSH GRASSES AND PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF PLACE CAN HAVE. I NOW UNDERSTAND - I THINK - WE'LL SEE - OR RATHER AM NOW READY TO START ANOTHER TREK WITH THESE NEW UNDERSTANDINGS.

ABOUT DESIGN ABOUT LANDSCAPE



"intuition is really a sudden immersion of the soul into the universal current of life, where the histories of all people are connected, and we are able to know everything, because it's all written there"

*(Coelho, 1988, p.76)*



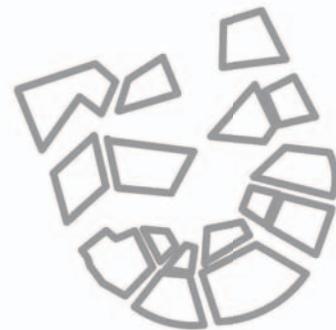
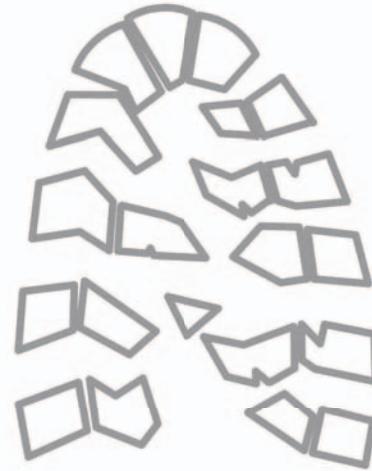
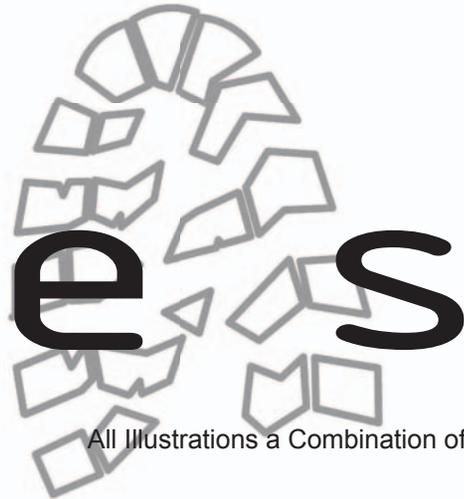
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All Illustrations a Combination of Photographs and Sketches Completed by Author

st. gertrude

NE

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W4

municipality of sturgeon



laptop



voices



flash software



voice recorder

The visit to the homestead in St. Gertrude was the first formal stop on trek. Today it is not uncommon that a designer may have (if at all) one short visit to a place for site analysis. Having never visited the site in St. Gertrude, it provided a good base to begin testing concepts.

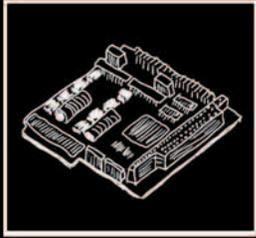
The first step in the analysis phase involved looking to the site itself for inspiration, to find the subtle and often overlooked in the existing landscape. Accomplishing this required first and foremost an intimate and gentle reading of place. In order to gain an understanding of the site, I sought the knowledge and stories of eight people that were raised on the site. Although I had never visited this site, within 30 minutes I was provided with a deep knowledge of the place in which they grew up through their personal stories. With this newly obtained knowledge, I then spent 30 minutes re-listening to the taped stories while walking the site. Before leaving, I produced a conceptual map showing my perspective of the interaction of the stories and the landscape. In total approximately 1.5 hours were spent at the site.

The next phase involved bringing together the collected stories and conceptual map into an interactive analysis map. This interactive map is now a fully functional analysis tool where one can sift through the leftover traces and hidden fragments of history, ideas and stories. Stories can be played individually or in combination with each other. As the voices interact and overlap, they generate new stories. The interactive map offers the generation of endless combinations of new stories but it is always using the same database of knowledge. It functions somewhat as a random story generator, disrupting the flow through often non-linear storytelling.

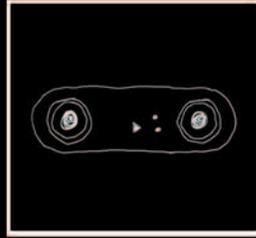
With this analysis tool, one has continual access to the accumulation of histories and stories of the landscape. One can then re-visit this interactive map at all stages of the design process for inspiration, and for the generation of new connections and knowledge about people and place, culture and nature.



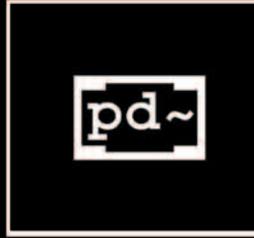
There are endless lines embedded within the landscape that hold stories of the interaction of culture and nature. This conceptual map is intended to expose these hidden landscape narratives and to set into motion a trek of discovery. The map is not a bound 'place' but rather a region of entangled pathways that weave in and out of each other, interacting and forming loops and collecting in knots. An interactive map of the above conceptual map is contained within the digital submission of the practicum works. The interactive map begins to animate the stories of people and place and encourages one to wonder through the entangled pathways and their interacting loops and connecting knots in order to deepen their understanding of a place.



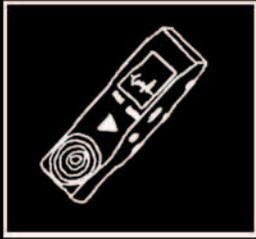
MIDI controller



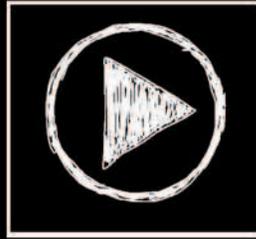
portable speakers



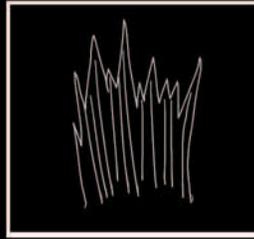
pure data software



voice recorder



buttons



marsh reed grass - lots



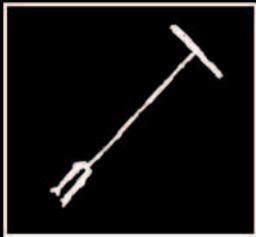
laptop



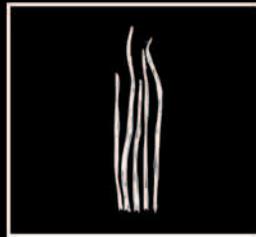
wiring



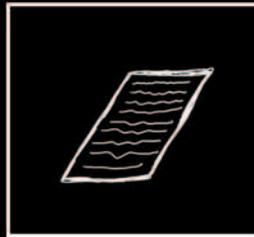
voices



hand auger



sticks - lots



narrative plates

The McGillis homestead provides the second formal stop on trek. The intention was to further the knowledge and experience gained at the St. Gertrude homestead.

If the landscape is a grand mnemonic device that records and registers our stories and memories, mnemonic from the Greek *mnemonikos* meaning of or pertaining to memory (Oxford 2000-), could one build a site specific intervention that would communicate with the landscape and that would animate a narrative of personal recollections of people and place.

Is landscape architecture about revealing the nature of people, place and memory?

As with the St. Gertrude site, the first phase of site analysis involved seeking the knowledge and stories of the people that grew up and visited this landscape. The stories and histories of eighteen people were consulted for this project. Following time spent collecting personal recollections and histories of the place and the landscape, I then spent two full days walking and exploring the 320 acre site. What I began to see was a landscape layered with memories. As I walked the site, I could hear the voices and the stories of the people that grew up and explored this place. I was able to identify and see leftover traces of history preserved in the landscape. As I was walking out to the back pasture with Bob, the owner of the homestead, he brought to my attention an invisible line - *this here is a dividing point between cultivated and uncultivated line* (Bob McGillis - personal conversation). This is the line that I decided to investigate further, the line I chose to explore and expose.

For years, many families ritually gathered at 'The Farm' every Sunday. For the children of Helen and John McGillis, Sunday's were a return to their childhood origins. For the successive generation, it served as an important imprinting landscape. As a child, my Sunday's were spent exploring this 320 acre backyard, building and learning. While the traditional family Sunday gathering ritual has now ceased, there has been a yearly event that has served to bond several members of the family, the yearly spring bloom of the prairie crocus's in the back pasture. The prairie crocus (*Anemone paterns*) is the first prairie plant to bloom every spring. These individual perennial plants may live up to 50 years or more and can extend over 30cm across and have more than 40 blossoms at one time (Nature North 2007).

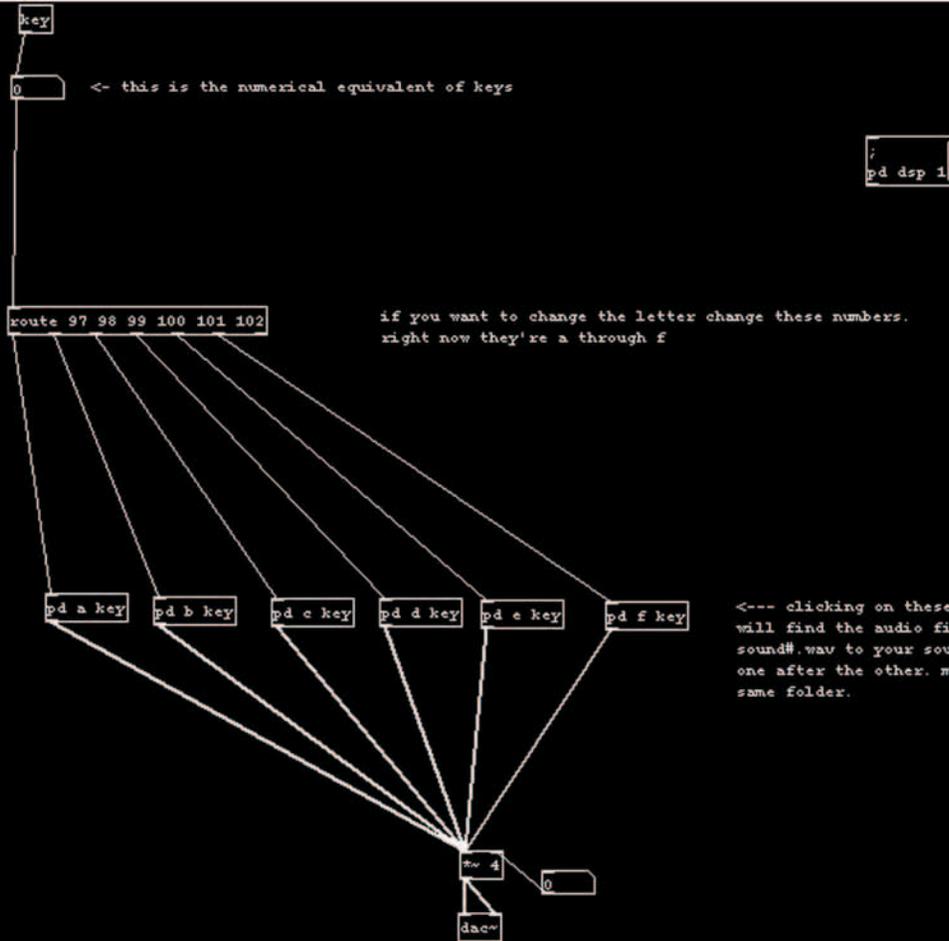
The landscape of the back pasture has become a landscape entrusted to the nine brothers and sisters, and the prairie crocus has become a lasting symbol of memorial, longevity and continual life.



'The Farm' has been within this family for over 113 years as original homestead land obtained in 1894. Here, sticks were and still are an important part of people's childhood. Sticks were used for building and as walking sticks. For the design, 113 sticks are used to trace a dividing line between cultivated and uncultivated lands, a line that only becomes fully visible during the spring with the blooming of the prairie crocuses. There is currently one stick for every year that the land has been entrusted to the family. The concept is such that every year, during the ritual journey in which the family comes out to this landscape to see the prairie crocus blooms, a new walking stick can be added each year such that the design grows and evolves every year.

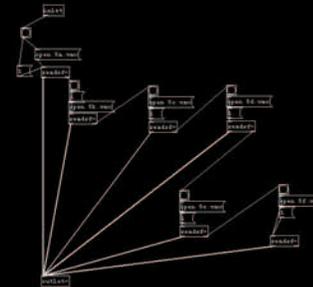
To add to the analogue portion of the design, a digital portion was added in which the voices of the storytellers are actually played directly at the site. They are contained within six narratives embedded within the landscape itself. The stories in the six narrative plates are controlled via a software program called Pure Data (PD). PD is a graphical programming language originally used for the creation of interactive computer music and multimedia works (Pure Data 2007). The program is used in this project to give people a voice in the landscape and to animate the narratives of people and place. By using the peoples stories themselves itself as input, PD is used to animate live data of place in real time and then put back into place itself.

The stories embedded within the six narrative plates at the site can be initiated by pressing a button. There is one button for each individual narrative plate. The narrative plates can be played individual or concurrently. Together, as the voices start to mix and join, they begin to form new stories. It is always changing, always different, making new stories each time. Different but the same, as it is using the same database of stories. In that sense, it has a temporal quality that is dynamic and that each time offers new opportunities for learning and understanding. It uses personal stories and personal recollections of landscape experiences as a basis for the design, a methodology of landscape analysis that focuses on the element of time and that sets into motion continual learning and understanding. The design also has the ability for stories to be continually added to its database. Thus, the intent is for the design and the associated voice databases to grow and evolve with time.

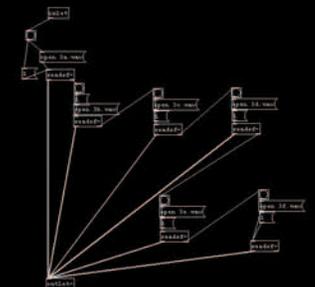


<-- clicking on these will open them up and inside you will find the audio files if you change the name of the sound#.wav to your sounds it will play them in that order, one after the other. make sure to put your sounds in the same folder.

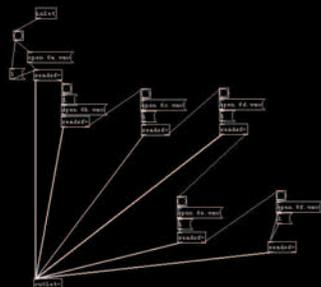
narrative plate no.1



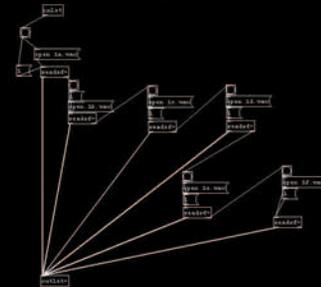
narrative plate no.2



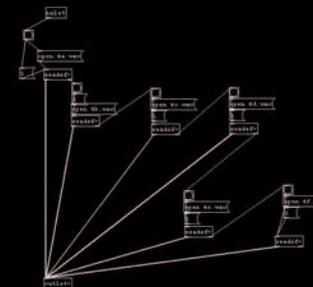
narrative plate no.3



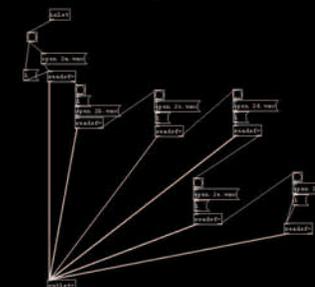
narrative plate no.4

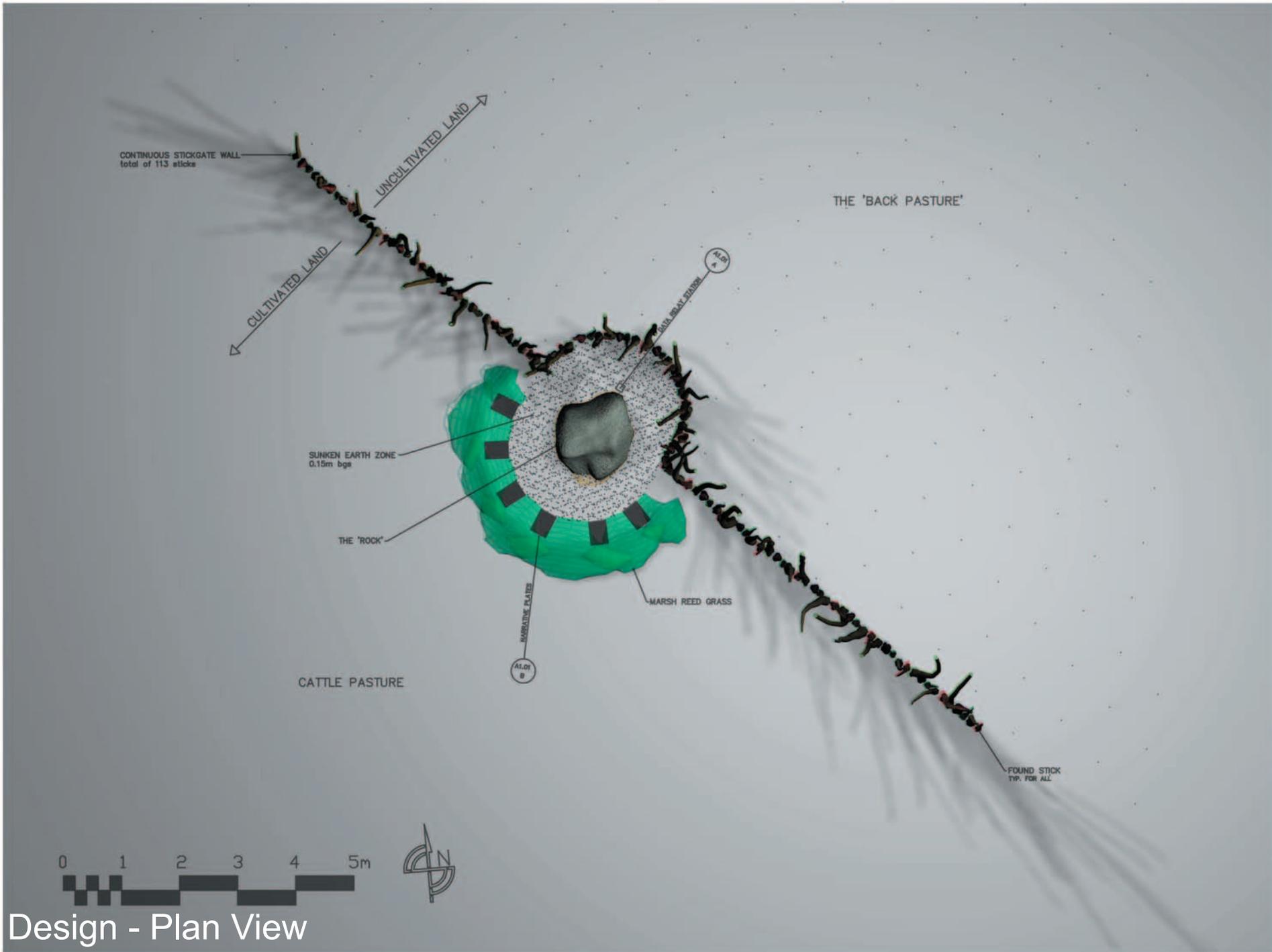


narrative plate no.5

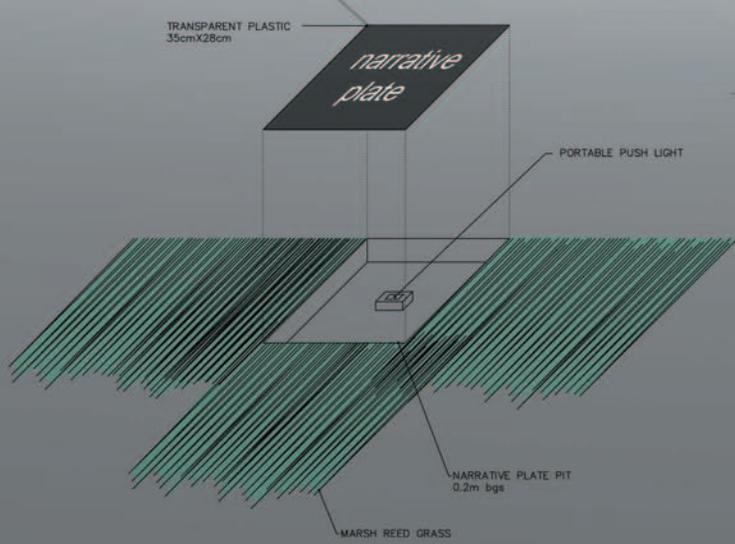
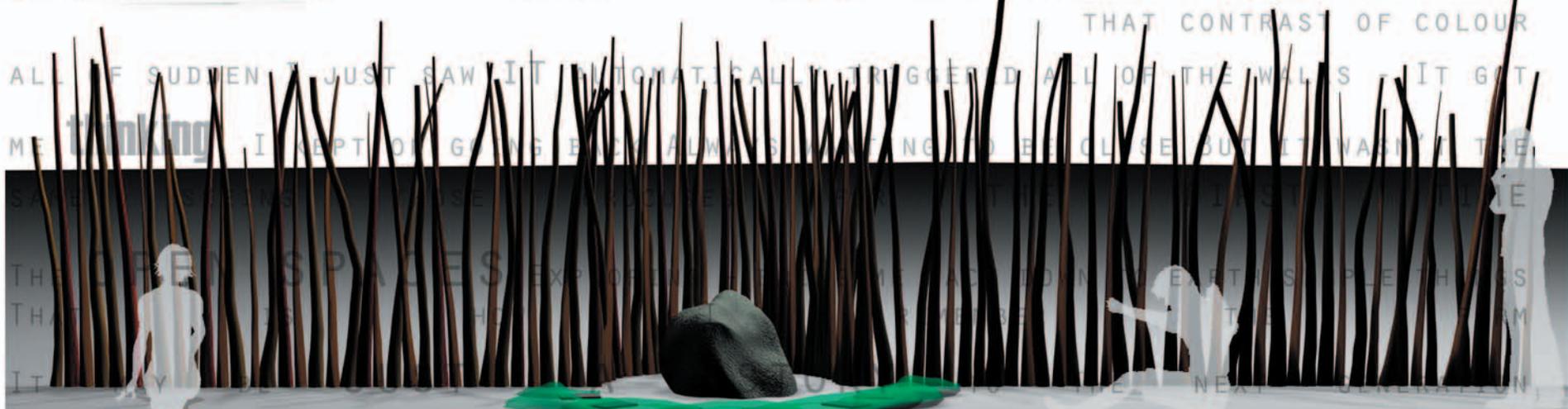


narrative plate no.6





ANOTHER YEAR GONE BY DREAMING A LITTLE ABOUT THE NEXT YEAR  
WALKING TO THOSE **places** SEEING HOW EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT  
IT'S THE ABSENCE OF SOMETHING THAT TRIGGERS A MEMORY  
LONGING FOR WHEAT FIELDS AND BLUE SKY



Design - Elevation View

EVERYBODY HAS A PIECE OF THEMSELVES THERE  
THE **STORIES** WILL ALWAYS BE THERE - BUT AREN'T FARMS DISAPPEARING? HAPPENING ALL OVER  
THE WORLD  
SAD ISN'T IT IS ALARMING WHAT'S HAPPENING

OUT IN THE COUNTRY USE YOUR IMAGINATION ALL WE HAD WAS OUR MINDS USE WHAT YOU HAVE  
EXPLORE THE LAND  
**explore** WHO YOU ARE... DISAPPEAR FOR HOURS

A PICNIC OUT IN THE BACK PASTURE WE SAT ON THE HILL  
IT WAS A REALLY NICE DAY I REMEMBER WITH OPEN  
SPACES WHERE LOVE GROWN AND RUNNING ROUND  
WE HAD THE BEST CHICKEN PIE

ALWAYS TERRIFIED FOR YEARS AND SHE WOULD MANAGE  
LAND THAT WOULD SETTLE IN THE END AND MOVE AWAY TO  
IT IS SURE TO ALWAYS BE THERE WITH



Design - Elevation View



# the farm

A **PLACE** TO GATHER - A HAPPY **PLACE** AND STILL A HAPPY  
**PLACE** FOR QUALITY **TIME** WHERE CLOSEST  
RELATIONSHIPS WERE FORMED  
THAT ALWAYS CHEERED ME UP A HUGE PART OF THE PAST  
AND HOW I BECAME WHO I AM TODAY

I DON'T THINK I CAN EVER FORGET THAT  
IT WAS REALLY FUN OVER CLIFFS AND DOWN STEEP  
HILLS WE HIT A BUMP - FELL DOWN

I WASN'T VERY OLD **I WANDERED** TO THE BACK PASTURE BY  
MYSELF I JUST SAT AND WATCHED WASN'T THE LEAST  
BIT SCARED WE ALL STARTED RUNNING AWAY

I TRIPPED AND FELL SHE RAN BY LAUGHING  
EVERYBODY ELSE WAS IN THE SAME BOAT

## GO WITH THE FLOW

NATURE IS VERY UNFORGIVING BUT IT CAN BE  
GENEROUS TOO

**YES- IT IS GENEROUS** HEALTHY KIDS - HEALTHY  
GRANDCHILDREN - HEALTHY GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

GO JUMP IN THE FRESHIES  
DON'T TAKE IT FOR GRANTED  
YOU NEVER KNOW

IT MIGHT BE **GONE**

# seeing

IT FEELS GOOD WHEN THEY COME TO SEE ME  
YES - IT FEELS EXTRA GOOD  
TO BE HEALTHY AND HAPPY  
THAT'S ALL

I REMEMBER THE **big rock** - LOOKING SOO HUGE  
GOOD MEMORIES  
I MISS THOSE TIMES  
I'M PROUD  
ORIGINAL OWNERS OF HOMESTEAD LANDS

THAT'S SOMETHING TO **cherish**  
A SENSE OF PRIDE  
IT PROVIDED A LIVING

I NEED TO **SOAK UP THAT PLACE**  
BRAIL THE WHEAT FIELD - SMELL IT  
CLOSE YOUR EYES

AND HEAR THE RUSSLING OF THE FIELDS

THE **keeper** OF THE HOMESTEAD  
TO DO IT ALL ON HIS OWN  
IT'S HARD - I WORRY  
ESPECIALLY IN THE WINTER - IT'S FREEZING OUTSIDE

HE LEARNT IT FROM ME

# personal memory

EVERYBODY HAS A PIECE OF THEMSELVES THERE  
THE **STORIES** WILL ALWAYS BE THERE - BUT AREN'T FARMS  
DISAPPEARING? HAPPENING ALL OVER THE WORLD

SAD ISN'T IT IS ALARMING WHAT'S HAPPENING

OUT IN THE COUNTRY USE YOUR IMAGINATION ALL WE HAD WAS OUR  
MINDS USE WHAT YOU HAVE EXPLORE THE LAND

**explore** WHO YOU ARE... DISAPPEAR FOR HOURS

A PICNIC OUT IN THE BACK PASTURE WE SAT ON THE HILL

IT WAS A REALLY NICE DAY I REMEMBER WIDE OPEN  
SPACES WHERE LOVE GREW CAREFREE AND RUNNING AROUND

WE HAD THE BEST CHILDHOOD HE CRIED TWICE IN HIS LIFE

ALWAYS THREATENED FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS THEY  
WOULD MANAGE IT

WAS MARVELOUS THE WAY THEY SURVIVED  
LAND THAT SOLDIERS SETTLED ON THE CHILDREN ALL GREW UP AND  
MOVED AWAY THAT STOOD OUT IN MY MEMORY

IT IS SOMETHING I ALWAYS HAVE TO TOUCH BASE WITH

I ALWAYS HAVE TO GO THERE

WE USED TO WALK THE FARM FROM THE CREEK TO THE BACK  
PASTURE

**A GUARDIAN** - SOMEONE THERE TO PROTECT

TO KEEP THE FARM **ALIVE**

# bring me out

TO THE OPEN SPACES IT IS LIKE COMING HOME TO THAT  
STRONG FAMILY BOND I CAN HEAR DADDY TALKING  
IT BECOMES REAL WHEN YOU HEAR

A PERSONS VOICE IT BECOMES **PERSONAL**  
GOING OUT THERE EVERY SUMMER COME BACK WITH DIRTY OR  
DRENCHED CLOTHES THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE WAS LAUGHING  
I WAS COVERED IN OIL I ONLY KNEW THE 3 RULES  
YOUR IMAGINATION TAKES YOU WHEREVER I LOOK BACK  
ONE OF THE BEST TIMES OF MY LIFE A TASTE OF THE LIFE OF MY  
GRANDPARENTS AND THEIR PARENTS **INGRAINED VALUES**  
SO OVERWHELMING AN EXPERIENCE YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE

**What's so important out here?**

IT IS JUST A PIECE OF LAND WITH FLOWERS ON IT - DEAD TREES  
BUT **it means so much** TO US BECAUSE OF THE MEMORIES

REALIZE THE VALUE OF THAT LAND

WE'VE BEEN SO LUCKY FOR THAT **haven**  
IT IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY HOLDING ON TO ALL OF OUR DREAMS

**our homeplace**

IT IS A PRETTY STANDARD FARM  
A PRETTY STANDARD PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE  
BUT I WENT THERE EVERY OTHER WEEK  
I CAN STILL SEE TRACES OF MYSELF

I AM AS MUCH A PART OF THAT LANDSCAPE  
AS THAT LANDSCAPE IS A PART OF ME  
AND I WANT MY CHILD TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT

# history

THE FARM IS FAMILY

A LOT OF **MEMORY AND HISTORY** SUNDAY'S- FAMILY LIFE

THAT TRANSPORTS ME BACK

YOU HAVE BE OUT ON THE FARM TO **SEE THE CHANGES**

IT IS NICE TO BE ABLE TO **GO BACK** TO IT  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE  
WE HAVE ALL GROWN UP NOW

BUT YOU CAN STILL SEE **TRACES** OF US THERE

I REMEMBER BEING SO PROUD OF THAT

STAND IN THE PLACE WHERE IT STOOD **STILL SEE**

THOSE **memories** ARE NOT GONE I KNOW THAT IT WAS THERE

**I will always remember**

I COULD PROBABLY GO ON AND ON AND ON

IT LOOKS LIKE ANY FARM SHOULD LOOK LIKE  
A PLACE THAT LOOKS LIKE EVERYWHERE ELSE

BUT IT HAS MORE OF AN **IDENTITY**

IT'S GOT IT'S OWN CHARACTERISTICS

ONE HAS TO BE A BIT OPTIMISTIC  
HUMANITY HAS A WAY OF ADJUSTING  
YOU CAN'T BE PESSIMISTIC

THE NEXT GENERATION

WE GOT PUT IN CHARGE

IT IS **STILL STANDING**

# ritualtradition

ANOTHER YEAR GONE BY DREAMING A LITTLE ABOUT THE NEXT YEAR

WALKING TO THOSE **places** SEEING HOW EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT IT'S THE ABSENCE OF SOMETHING THAT

TRIGGERS A MEMORY  
LONGING FOR WHEAT FIELDS AND BLUE SKY  
THAT CONTRAST OF COLOUR

ALL OF SUDDEN I JUST SAW IT AUTOMATICALLY TRIGGERED ALL OF

THE WALKS - IT GOT ME **thinking** I KEPT ON GOING BACK ALWAYS WANTING TO BE CLOSE BUT IT WASN'T THE SAME SEEING THOSE CROCUSES FOR THE FIRST TIME

THE **OPEN SPACES** EXPLORING - BRING ME BACK DOWN TO EARTH SIMPLE THINGS THAT IS HOW I REMEMBER THE FARM

IT MAY BE **JUST A STORY** TO THE NEXT GENERATION

THE PEOPLE THAT **make the connection**

THE WAY THAT I SEE THE WORLD THE WAY THAT I WISH TO BE IN THE WORLD EXPERIENCE OF PLAY **EXPLORE** PEOPLE IN MY LIFE WHO KNEW

SITTING AT MY GRANDPA'S FEET BEING WITH HIM AND WATCHING THIS WHEAT FIELD I DIDN'T REALIZE IT AS A KID

IT IS STILL THERE BUT THE PEOPLE AREN'T THERE ANYMORE

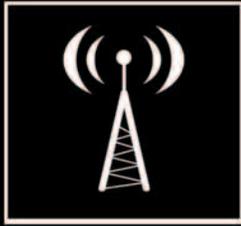
IT IS THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THE PLACE **A SANCTUARY**  
IF YOU DIDN'T ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE IT  
YOU WOULDN'T REALLY KNOW











regional transmitter - receiver



listening device  
(with GPS capabilities )

A single site specific intervention to animate the narratives of people and place was designed, built and installed in 2007 at the McGillis homestead located off Highway 642, 10 minutes east of Morinville AB. It now represents one local narrative station that has and that will continue to be used to set foundations for language, learning and understanding.



voices



radio

What if there existed hundreds or thousands of these types of interventions within a region? What would come out of this?



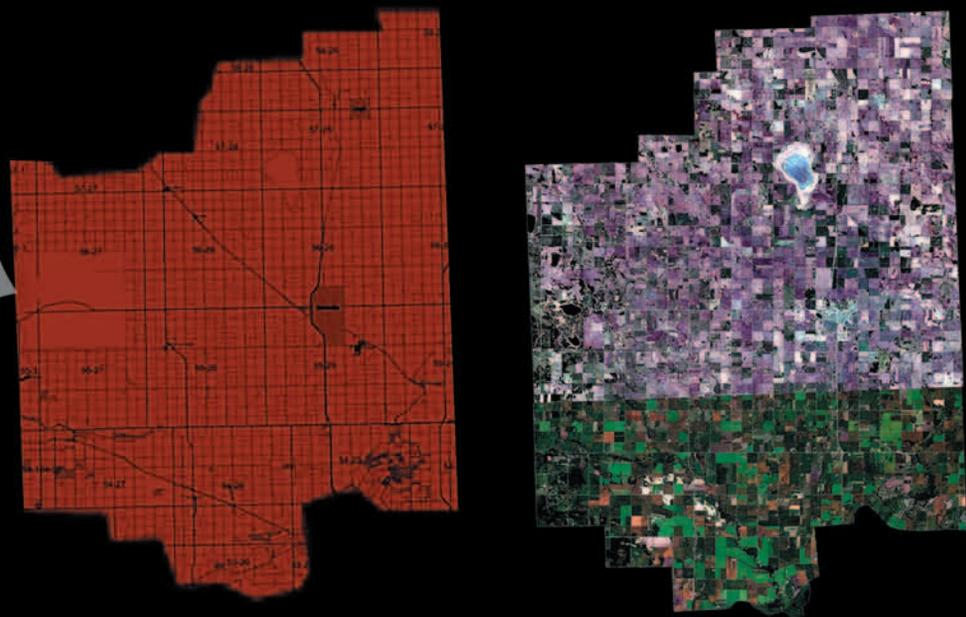
large stories database



local transmitter - receiver  
device

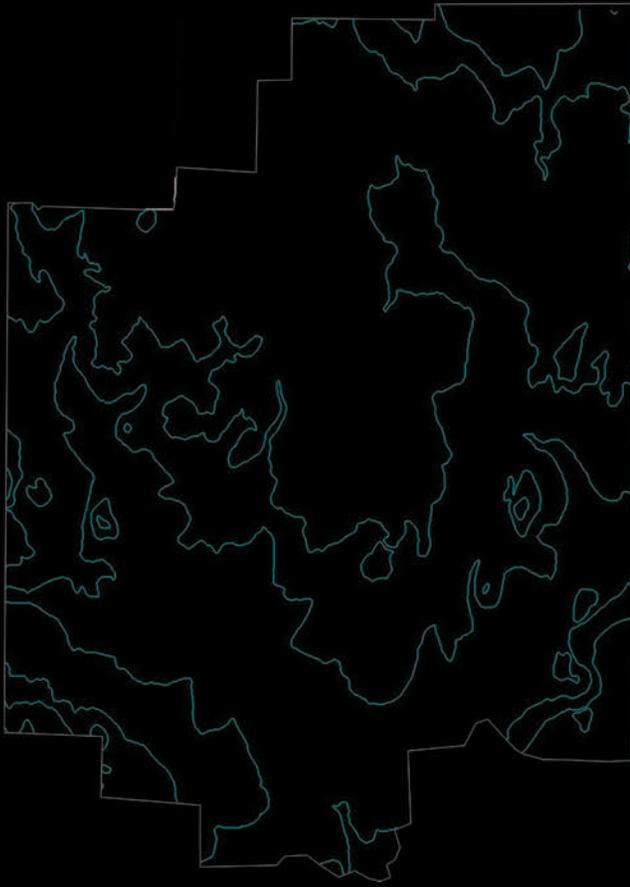


a section of sturgeon county



There are sixty-six counties and municipal districts within the province of Alberta. A section of Sturgeon County, the municipality in which the McGillis farm is located within, is used for the development of a regional concept.

The region has experienced significant changes over the years. This is especially recently prominent, given that the province has sustained the fastest population growth rates in the country and the strongest period of economic growth ever recorded by a Canadian province (Canadian Economic Observer, 2006). Each time I return to visit the region, I see the boundaries between urban and rural areas become more and more indistinguishable.

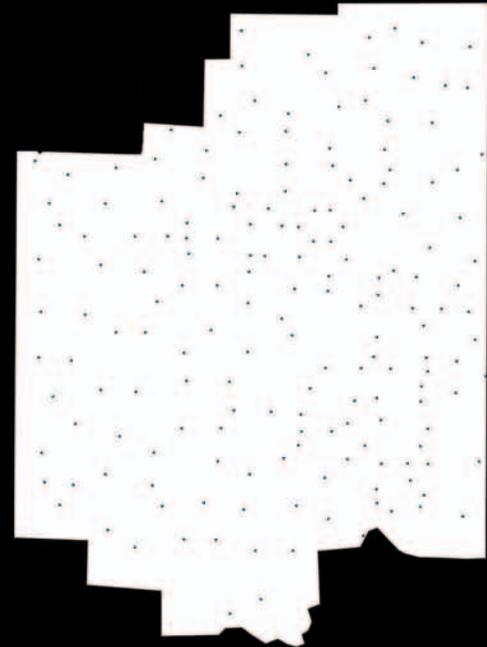


Sight, our most prevalent sense that provides us with over 80% of our knowledge of the external world (Porteous 1990), offers us all a different vision of the changing landscapes. Whether you are an engineer, politician, educator, environmentalist, homemaker, scientist, health professional, farmer, trades person, or artist – the way in which you see the landscape changing is unique and important to be implemented in planning decisions. While we are able to see the face of these landscapes change, we are unaware that seeing is an ability that we learn (Fletcher 2001). We learn to see and begin to make sense of our external environment through our experiences, categorizations and memory (Fletcher 2001). Thus as we continue to grow, language and culture begin to act as prisms to bend and shape our view, so although we start out seeing the same things, each individual unconsciously creates their own interpretation (Fletcher 2001). As the region continues to grow, and as both economic and urban developments continue to shape the region's landscape, it is evident that land, natural resources, and the physical environment will be continually challenged.

summer 2007  
McGillis device installed



map of local narrative stations



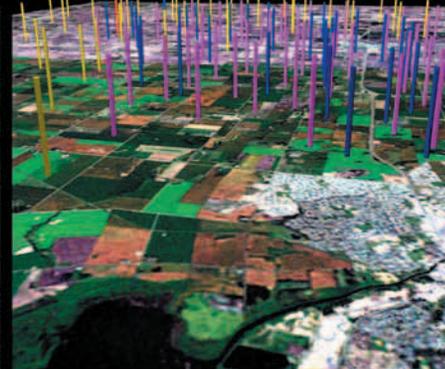
year 1  
43 devices installed



year 2  
33 devices installed



year 3  
37 devices installed



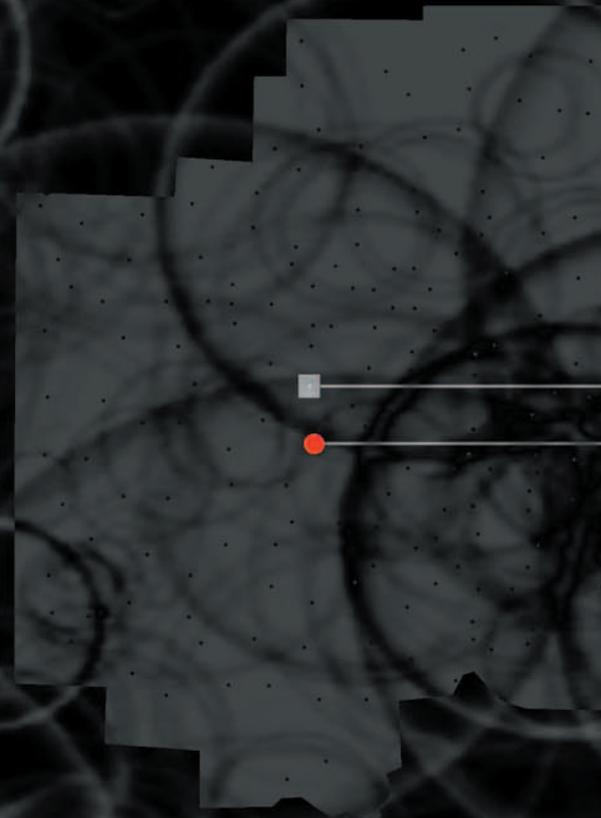
year 4  
34 devices installed



\*NOTE devices are exaggerated vertically to show spatial coverage

It is my vision that the individual local narrative stations, such as the one developed for the McGillis farm, will form the foundations for the mapping of a new kind of spatiality. Over the years, it is hoped that a wave of these devices will be designed and installed across the landscape. Thus, over time, an entire database of people's stories and histories of place could be compiled.

Illustrations by Author



The landscape provides us with a common language to draw from. Our stories and personal recollection and histories of place and landscape can serve to set regional and national foundations for language, learning and understanding. The vision is that these stories will be used as a basis for design and will provide a framework for a region to participate in the shaping of their built environment. It is hoped that this will result in communities that are self-reliant, with populations which are active, involved and share a common vision for their communities future. Local knowledge is a resource that can greatly contribute to intelligent development.

Perhaps this mentality will also transcend into other aspects of the community, including sustaining the health of the people, culture, economy, and environment of a community. All the while, the voices of the people are included, thus providing the ability for one to position their own reality, being, and sense of place in the here and now and within a regional context. They are a part of the region and not an isolated element. This is the same for place. Place is not an isolated element, but rather it is a region where many diverse activities overlap. Place is not a defined element bounded by property lines.

'Bud's Radio' - Photographed by Author 2007



# landscape radio

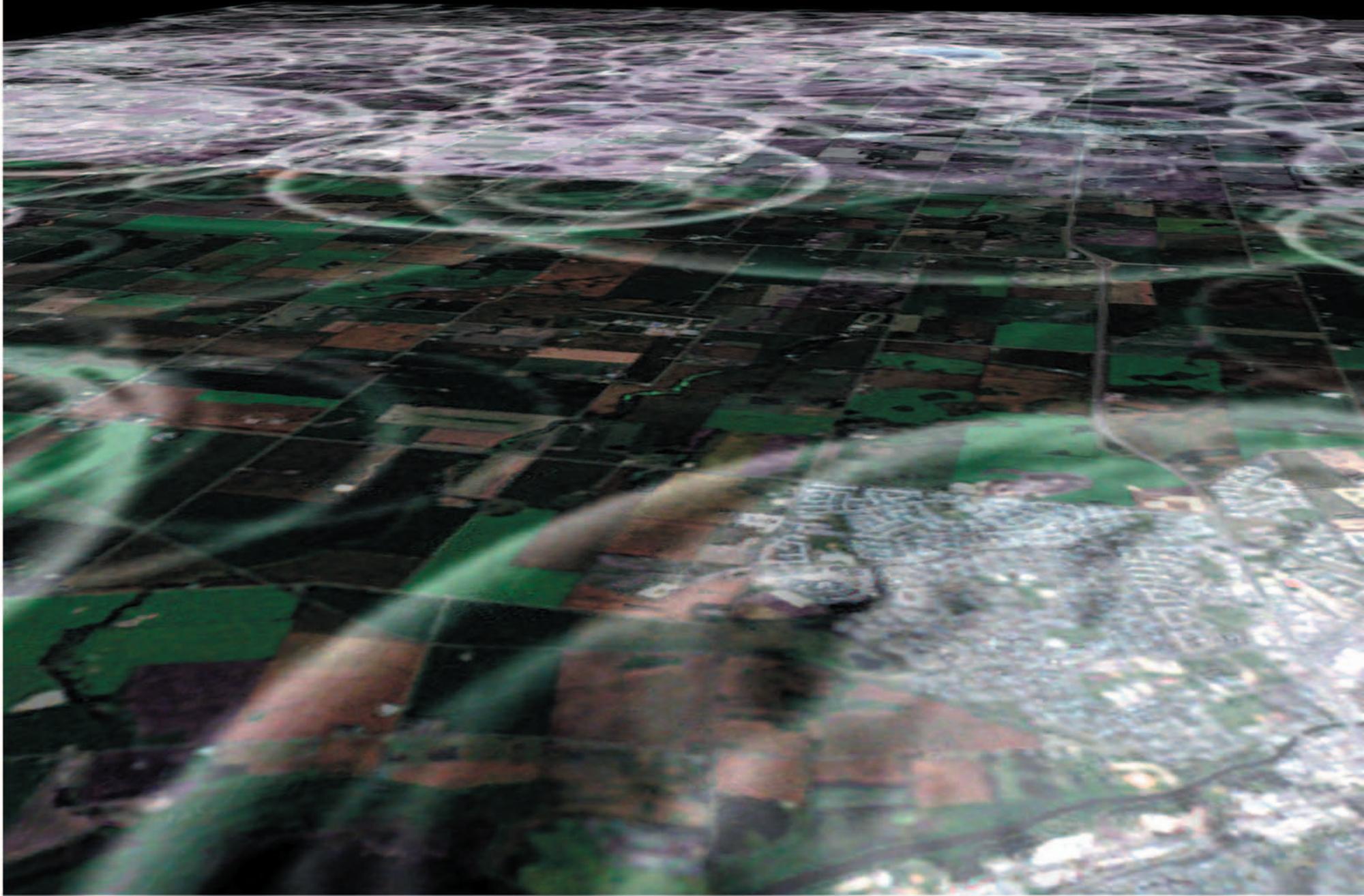
serving the people of  
the municipality of  
sturgeon

Specifically in regards to the municipality of Sturgeon County - what is the role of landscape architecture in dealing with the new forms of spatial organization created by a region pressured with increased development? What strategies are to be employed with their design?

A new perception of landscape design is required, one that is more inclusive and that encompasses a greater range of divergent perspectives. Understanding the nature of our connection with the landscape is essential, especially as we continue to move forward in its rapid transformation process. The urban and rural environment is in a process of continually transforming and the design of the communities and regions requires the participation of a wide variety of individuals of varying opinions, needs and wants. As the face of the landscape continues to be altered and changed, it is important that design includes the unique and varying ways of seeing the world. Landscape radio is an initiative designed to assist in 'getting to know a place'. Tune in to hear the voices and stories of those that have lived and explored the region.

Illustration by Author

**the region is being continually re-mapped in real-time**



**new stories are continually being added. have your voice heard**

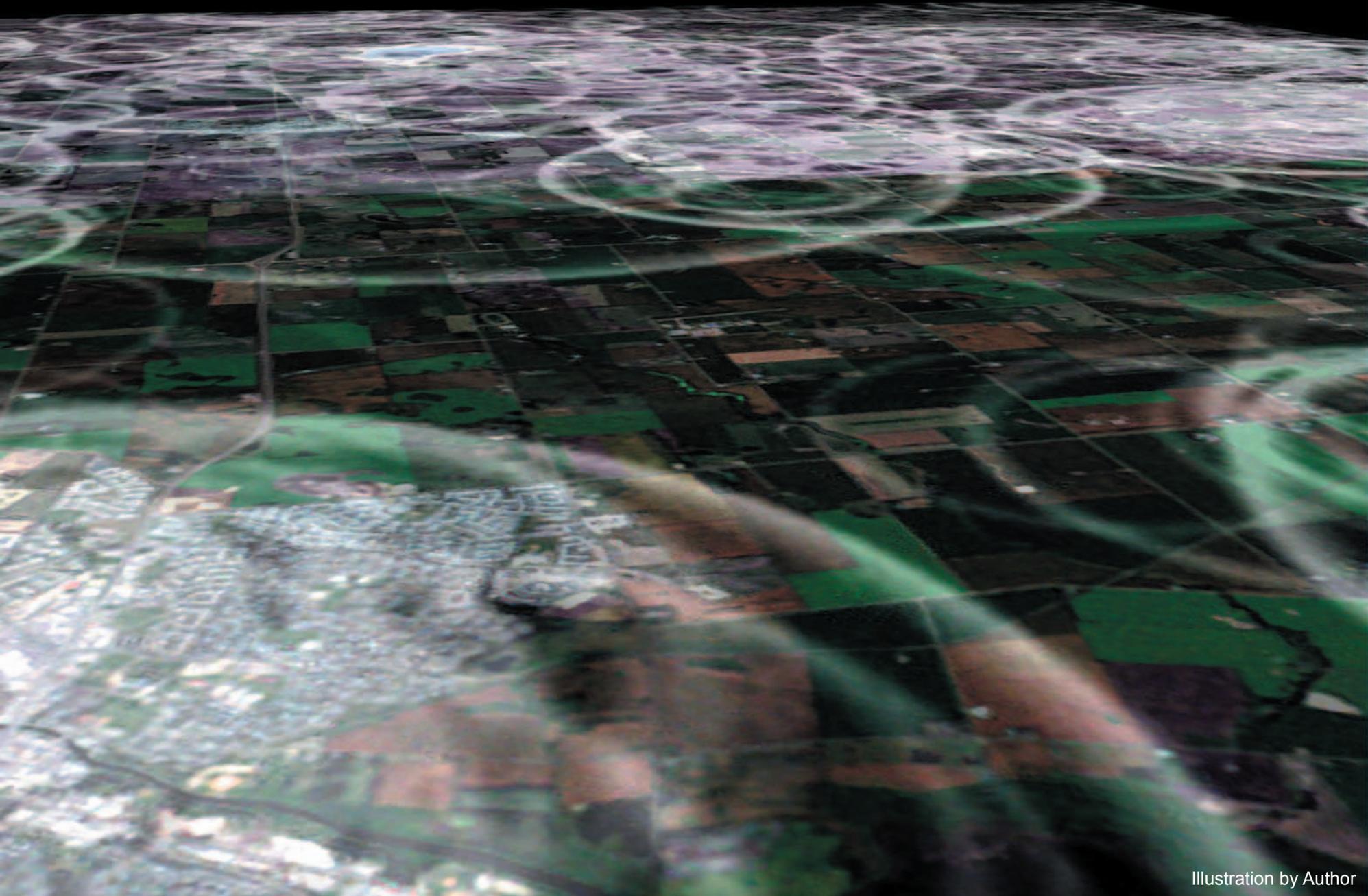
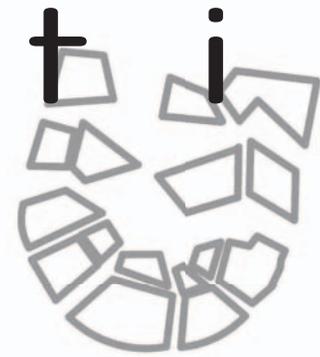
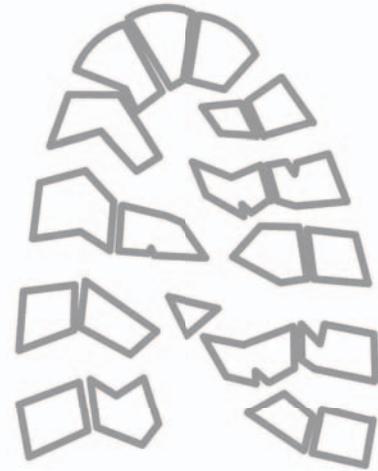
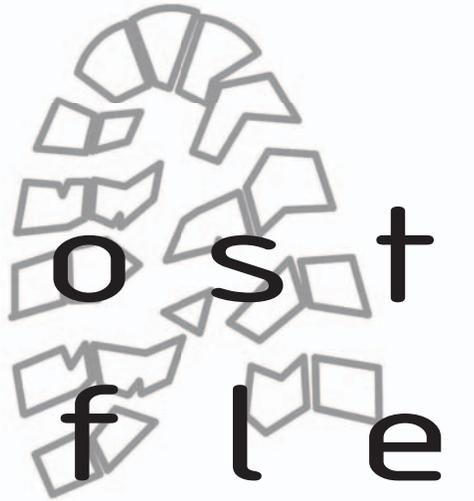


Illustration by Author

post  
reflections  
trek



i wonder if i could wander like the wind  
because the wind is free to wander

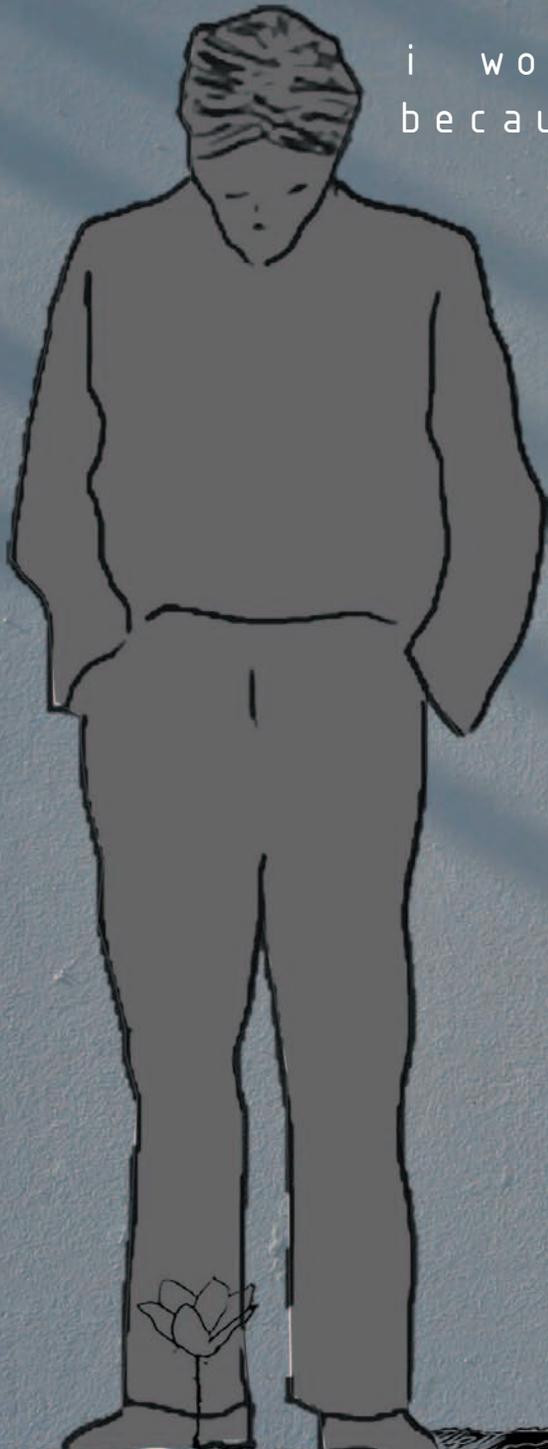


Illustration by Author

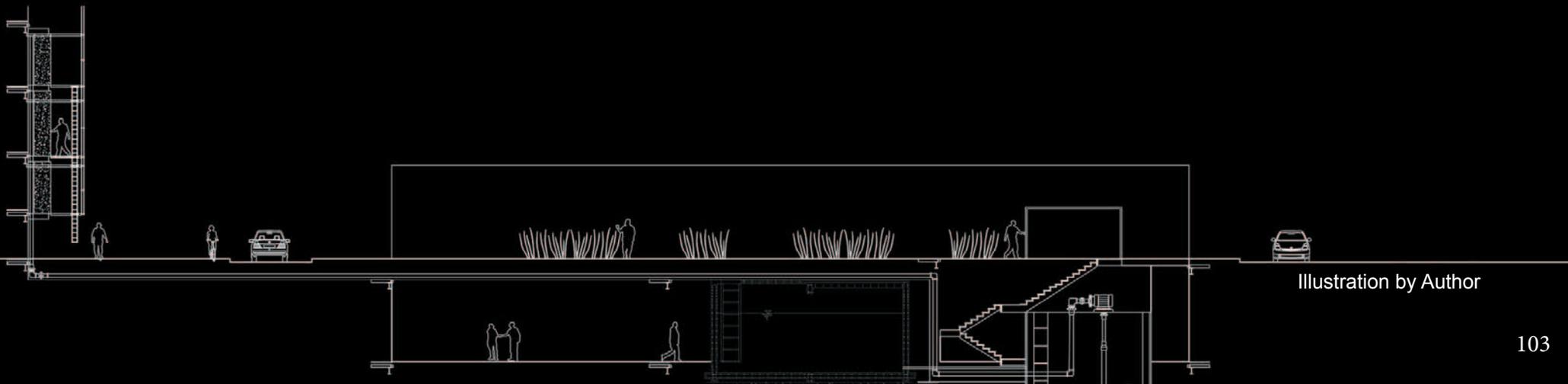
What are the rhythms of my thinking? What guides my actions? To what extent does thinking lead to the process of making? How do I negotiate my theoretical position, realizing and being conscious of all the diverse roles that inhabit my mind? How have regions and landscapes I have known affected my thinking, seeing and perceiving and how has this contributed to my works and who I am personally today?

Being an engineer and becoming a landscape architect. The period of study in the masters program in landscape architecture has been a period of re-beginnings, an engaged personal discourse with new connections that I am learning to see, experience and represent.



This has involved periods of questioning what landscape architecture is to me, initially as an engineer and has since shifted into an exploration, development, and identification of a new language, form and way of thinking and being that I am developing into.

Emerging from this internal discourse between the engineer and now enter the landscape architect is questioning how these experiences, along with past experiences, have contributed to my works and my way of thinking and being. The exploration and weaving of these expositions of self allow for the emergence of a new direction and being.



## **the multitude of information that is filtered through our minds on a daily basis**

**ANCIENT ICE SHELF snaps and breaks** FROM THE CANADIAN ARCTIC<sup>1</sup> - leaving a trail of icy boulders floating in its wake. this is a canadian geography that **no longer exists**. the ice shelf was packed with ancient ice that dates back over **3000 years** and scientists treat their loss as a sign that the global climate is crossing an unprecedented threshold. what we are seeing is the **tragic loss of** unique features of the canadian **landscape**. **ISLANDS IN THE FILTHY STREAM**<sup>2</sup> - the remote and once pristine northwestern hawaiian islands have become one of the world's great trash bins – where worldwide debris is being delivered by ocean currents. **the garbage is coming from all over** the pacific rim. This is a prime example of how **we are all interconnected** to the ocean. **RISING SEA LEVELS THREATEN LABRADOR BEACH**<sup>3</sup> – global warming is being cited as a threat to the pocupine strand – one of newfoundland and labradors natural wonders, **the sea is rising** in the cartwright area at about one-two millimeters a year – it's the kind of change **a person can notice over a lifetime**. **CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENS HERSCHEL ISLAND**<sup>4</sup> – the yukon's herschel island is being slowly **washed away** by rising sea levels caused by global warming **MELTING ARCTIC DRAWS KILLER WHALES, THREATENING INUIT FISHING**<sup>5</sup> - the ice cover in the arctic has **sharply declined** - by 2040 the ice **could be completely gone**. **NASA SCIENTISTS DETECT RAPID THINNING OF GREENLANDS COASTAL ICE**<sup>6</sup>. scientists who want to monitor the state of our global climate may **have to look no farther than** the coastal ice that surrounds the earth's largest island. the frozen area around greenland is thinning, in some **PLACES**, at a rate of more than three feet per year. any change is important since a smaller ice sheet could result in higher sea levels. **Blackout**<sup>7</sup> - at 4:11 p.m. ET on aug. 14, 2003, ontario and much of the northeastern U.S. were hit by the largest blackout in north america's history. electricity was cut to 50 million people, **bringing darkness** to customers from new york to toronto to north bay.

<sup>1-7</sup> Yahoo Canada News articles. Retried on December 26 2006 from <http://ca.news.yahoo.com>.

There is a multitude of information that is filtered through our minds on a daily basis. Faced with these overwhelming multitudes of global, regional and local dilemmas, I still find it difficult to decide on what are the most pressing issues in the first place. I frequently find myself at a loss with regards to the overwhelming scale and complexity of the environment.

This was similar to the initial mindset in conceptualizing a practicum topic. I found it extremely difficult to even formulate a topic or to define a site in the first place. **TREK grew out of these initial frustrations, as the fluidity that I desired for the practicum works needed to allow for growth and change with time.** Defining the program or the site at the beginning seemed to be only a means to an end for me. This was because defining the majority of the work at the onset did not provide me with the required level of engagement that I felt was required to develop a large body of work. Having the entire practicum goals and site initially defined lacked the adventure that I sought to embed in the practicum works.

Working under such a framework definitely had its limitations. Having no clearly defined site, no strictly defined research framework, or initial set schedule had the potential for a discontinued erratic journey which could precipitate no body of work at all. I had large initial fears of what the result of a two month drive across the Canadian prairies would generate in terms of a body of work. Because the process was not strictly defined, the body of work developed throughout the entirety of TREK. **The research questions were developed through a process of 'experiencing landscape' and involved not only searching for 'answers' but also searching for the research questions.** This required setting aside time specifically for the practicum work and for trusting in the process of discovery. The practicum was completed in one continuous engaged period of activity that fluctuated between periods of intense activity to periods of rest and reflection.

The process is not a method to simply 'get a practicum done'. If this is what you desire, then the method is definitely not for you. It required a mindset of continual learning and persistence. I had limited knowledge of the majority of both the digital and physical tools used throughout the practicum works. These were learned throughout the entire process. The majority of the initiatives began with an idea, followed by thinking 'how can this be accomplished' and then proceeded towards developing the product.

Upon reflecting on the entirety of TREK, I don't believe that I would have really done anything different. I am happy with the entire product, as it has far exceeded any of the learning goals that I had for the work. In fact, it generated far more learning outcomes that could have been established from the onset. **Most importantly though, I am extremely happy that TREK was able to move outside of a normalized static document that was to sit upon a shelf and collect dust, to a piece of work that was able to touch and change the course of those involved.** It truly did serve as an inspiration for others to embark on a TREK of exploration and discovery with the landscape. This is something that I could have never planned from the beginning. The personal level of engagement and sincerity that was embedded within the work was by no means an imitation but rather something that was truly genuine.

During my education as an engineer and now as a landscape architect, I have developed a personal and unique way of seeing the changing environment. While this has helped me to 'create order' and 'make sense' of the environment that I inhabit, it has also created internal chaos. TREK is not over. It will continue to be a journey of my being, moving to find its longing, belonging, with the self being the site itself. Returning, suspending and re-beginning. TREK will continue to search, explore, and interpret the way in which I see the world. While my decision to return to university in pursuit of graduate studies in landscape architecture had initial questions of my personal evolving relationship with the landscape, it was TREK that set into motion this journey of exploration. **TREK was a liberating project because it allowed for the flexibility and freedom to explore initial questions that lead to graduate study at the University of Manitoba in the first place.** It was an opportunity to explore my development into this 'new being' and to play with the new connections is which I have begun to see, experience and represent. TREK was an opportunity to see how I have changed after leaving my 'previous life' as an engineer-in-training. **TREK is documented evidence of these changes and was personally important to be accomplished and realized in order to 'convince' myself that I have in fact changed.**



Photograph by Author 2007

# TREK TASKS

UofM Research Methods  
Summer Employment Earth Tech  
Project in Bray Island  
UofM Advanced Theory  
Practicum Reading  
Practicum Proposal Draft No.1  
Submission and Review of Proposal Draft No.1  
Meeting to Discuss Proposal Draft No.1  
Practicum Proposal Draft No.2  
Submission and Review of Proposal Draft No.2  
Meeting to Discuss Proposal Draft No.2  
Preparation of Preliminary Presentation  
Preliminary Presentation (April 20 2007)  
Intersession Studio  
St. Gertrude Site Analysis Interviews  
RR#1 Prairie Crocus Bloom Documentation  
RR#1 Site Analysis Interviews  
RR#1 Historic Aerial Photograph Review  
RR#1 Site Analysis  
Stick Gate Concept Development  
Stick Gate Construction  
Stick Gate Digital Design  
Stick Gate Digital Design Testing

Presentation of Stick Gate  
Raw Video Review  
Script Writing  
Video Compilation  
Video Compression  
Website Concept Development  
Meeting with Mspace Staff  
Begin Learning Dreamweaver  
Website Template Development  
Website Construction  
Begin Learning Flash  
Build Interactive Voice Maps  
Testing of Website for both PC and Mac Platforms  
Draft Website Review  
Incorporate Website Review Comments  
Paper Copy Digital Diary Development  
Paper Copy Mappings  
Paper Copy Writings  
Paper Copy Review  
Preparation for Final Presentation  
Final Presentation (December 6, 2007)  
Upload Work to Mspace  
Printing and Final Submittal

# TREK TASKS

# 2006 WORKS

|  | 2006 |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
|--|------|-----|-------|-------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
|  | jan  | feb | march | april | may | june | july | aug | sept | oct | nov | dec |
| UofM Research Methods                            |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Summer Employment Earth Tech                     |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Project in Bray Island                           |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| UofM Advanced Theory                             |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Practicum Reading                                |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Practicum Proposal Draft No.1                    |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Submission and Review of Proposal Draft No.1     |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Meeting to Discuss Proposal Draft No.1           |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Practicum Proposal Draft No.2                    |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Submission and Review of Proposal Draft No.2     |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Meeting to Discuss Proposal Draft No.2           |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Preparation of Preliminary Presentation          |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Preliminary Presentation (April 20 2007)         |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Intersession Studio                              |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| St. Gertrude Site Analysis Interviews            |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| RR#1 Prairie Crocus Bloom Documentation          |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| RR#1 Site Analysis Interviews                    |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| RR#1 Historic Aerial Photograph Review           |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| RR#1 Site Analysis                               |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Stick Gate Concept Development                   |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Stick Gate Construction                          |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Stick Gate Digital Design                        |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Stick Gate Digital Design Testing                |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Presentation of Stick Gate                       |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Raw Video Review                                 |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Script Writing                                   |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Video Compilation                                |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Video Compression                                |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Website Concept Development                      |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Meeting with Mspace Staff                        |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Begin Learning Dreamweaver                       |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Website Template Development                     |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Website Construction                             |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Begin Learning Flash                             |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Build Interactive Voice Maps                     |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Testing of Website for both PC and Mac Platforms |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Draft Website Review                             |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Incorporate Website Review Comments              |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Paper Copy Digital Diary Development             |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Paper Copy Mappings                              |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Paper Copy Writings                              |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Paper Copy Review                                |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Preparation for Final Presentation               |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Final Presentation (December 6, 2007)            |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Upload Work to Mspace                            |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |
| Printing and Final Submittal                     |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |



## **RESEARCH METHODS (January – March 2006)**

The research methods course taught by Professor Karen Wilson-Baptist provided an introduction to research methodologies. In addition to the course assignments, a general practicum/thesis outline was provided as a guideline for initial direction. A useful article which helped ground the framework for my practicum works (in terms of both qualitative and quantitative methods) and in terms of a mapping methodology (both in principle and practice) was an article written by Todd Jick “Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods – Triangulation in Action” from *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24, no.4 (December 1979): 602-611. A triangulation research strategy refers to the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Triangulation from an engineer’s standpoint refers to a survey mapping technique that uses multiple reference points to locate an objects exact position. With another upcoming summer work term as an engineer-in-training with Earth Tech, triangulation from a ‘landscape architect’s perspective’ was to be an important reflection for the summer work term.

## **SUMMER EMPLOYMENT (April – August 2006)**

The intent from April to August 2006 was to work (throughout my spare time) on a practicum proposal in preparation for a preliminary presentation in August 2006. However, the work term turned out to be filled with numerous extended out-of-town work trips. This was initially disappointing because I was unable to complete any work directly related to my practicum.

Unexpectedly, one of the summer projects included a trip through the remote Canadian Arctic landscape. I had been initially designated as an alternate for the project but got included last minute because one of the project members dropped out of the project. During the trip, I began to document my landscape experiences through video, photography and sketching. Upon reflection of Trek as a whole, this trip was essentially the beginning of the practicum work as it initiated a state of exploration, learning and discovery of the experience of landscape.

## **ADVANCED THEORY (September – December 2006)**

The advanced theory course was an extremely useful course in stimulating thought regarding a wide range of topics related to and extending beyond the discipline of landscape architecture. The large amount of reading that accompanied the course work began to expand my range of my thinking and also the scope of a practicum topic, which was still undecided at this time. I also began meeting with Dr. Marcella Eaton, the instructor of the course, during this time. During this course, I completed a critique of Lancy Parc designed by Georges Descombes and the site analysis methodologies employed by Georges Descombes also served as an inspiration for Trek. In addition, the project ‘iseeithink’ completed as part of this course provided an important inspiration for the practicum works.

## READINGS (January – March 2007)

Having now completed the formal course requirements of the program at this time, I had the opportunity to devote a large amount of time to reading and writing. This was much needed. Formal meetings with my committee's co-chairs, Dr. Marcella Eaton and Professor Karen Wilson-Baptist, were also initiated during this time. Recommendations for suggested readings were provided by both co-chairs and through my own initiatives.

Below is a listing of some of the books and essays that I read during this timeframe.

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| O'Donohue, J.                      | Eternal Echoes: Explaining our Yearning to Belong                                   |
| O'Donohue, J.                      | Beauty: The Invisible Embrace   |
| Suzuki, D.                         | The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering our Place in Nature                               |
| Buurman, G. (Ed.)                  | Total Interaction: Theory and Practice of a New Paradigm for the Design Disciplines |
| Eckbo, G.                          | Landscape for Living (1950)   |
| Jackson, J.B.                      | How to Study Landscape (1980)   |
| Corner, J.                         | Origins of theory (1990)  |
| Corner, J.                         | Theory in crisis (1991)   |
| Maltin, L.                         | Leonard Maltin's Animation Favorites from the National Film Board of Canada         |
| Pirsig, R.                         | Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance   |
| Porteous, J. D.                    | Landscapes of the Mind: Worlds of Sense and Metaphor                                |
| Curtis, H.                         | Flash Web Design: The Art of Motion Graphics - The V5 Remix                         |
| Curtis, H.                         | Hillman Curtis on Creating Short Films for the Web                                  |
| Elkins, J.                         | How to Use Your Eyes  |
| Fletcher, A.                       | The Art of Looking Sideways   |
| Norman, D. A.                      | Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things                             |
| Appleyard, D., Lynch, K., Myer, J. | The View From the Road  |
| Carson, D.                         | Fotografiks   |
| Carson, D.                         | Trek  |
| Barley, N. (Ed.)                   | Breathing Cities: The Architecture of Movement                                      |
| Zohar, D.                          | The Quantum Society: Mind, Physics and a New Social Vision                          |
| Augé, M.                           | Oblivion  |
| Tufte, E. R.                       | Beautiful Evidence  |
| Rothenberg, D.                     | Is it Painful to Think? - Conversations with Arne Naess                             |
| Kepes, G.                          | The New Landscape in Art and Science.   |
| De Botton, A.                      | How Proust Can Change Your Life; Not a Novel  |
| Mathur, A., Da Cunha, D.           | Deccan Traverses: The Making of Bangalore's Terrain                                 |
| Wilhide, E.                        | Eco: An Essential Sourcebook for Environmentally Friendly Design and Decoration     |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Hunt, J. D.                               | The Afterlife of Gardens  |
| Greiman, A., Janigian, A.                 | Something from Nothing  |
| Knowles, C., Sweetman P. (Ed.)            | Picturing the Social Landscape: Visual Methods and the Sociological Imagination |
| Grady, J.                                 | Working with Visible Evidence   |
| Chapline, E.                              | My Visual Diary   |
| Cleaver, E., Health, S.                   | Mapping the Spatial in Shared Household Life                                    |
| Whincup, T.                               | Imagining the Intangible  |
| Latham, A.                                | Researching and Writing Everyday Accounts of the City                           |
| Back, L.                                  | Listening with our Eyes   |
| Suchor, C.                                | Amsterdam and Chicago: Seeing the Macro Characteristics of Gentrification       |
| Byrne, D., Doyle, A.                      | The Visual and the Verbal   |
| Spellman, C. (Ed.)                        | Re-Envisioning Landscape/Architecture   |
| Boyer, C.                                 | Cognitive Landscapes  |
| Hough, M.                                 | Cities and Natural Process  |
| Lehn, W. H.                               | Bright Superior Mirage  |
| Lehn, W. H. and Schroeder, I.             | Hafgerdingar: A Mystery from the King's Mirror Explained                        |
| Lehn, W. H. and Schroeder, I.             | The Hafstramb and Margygr of the King's Mirror: An Analysis                     |
| Curtis, D. and Carter, M.                 | The Art of Awareness: How Observation Can Transform Your Teaching               |
| Sobieszek, R. A.                          | Robert Smithson: Photo Works  |
| Murphy, P.                                | By Nature's Design: An Exploratorium Book                                       |
| Self, D.                                  | Intimate Landscapes: The Canyon Suite of Georgia O'Keeffe                       |
| Stilgoe, J.                               | Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places          |
| Lim, C.J., Lui, E.                        | How Green is Your Garden?   |
| Blackwell, L. et al.                      | David Carson: 2nd Sight   |
| Blackwell, L.                             | The End of Print: The Grafex Design of David Carson                             |
| Barmann, M., Lorenzelli, A., Chillida, E. | Chillida  |
| Jackson, D. L., Jackson, L.L. (Ed.)       | The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems          |

## **PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT (March – April 2007)**

Following an extensive period of reading, I began assimilating my thoughts and responses to the readings into a single document. The goal at this time was to complete a preliminary presentation at the end of April. Learning goals were also established during this time in addition to a loosely structured research framework. An important component of the compiled document was the identification of a longing to re-visit other significant landscape experiences, which lead to a desire to return to several 'landscapes of origin'. The idea of a Trek to these significant landscape experiences was beginning to take form.

## **PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION (April 20 2007)**

The preliminary presentation was an opportunity to formally express my thoughts and ideas in a public venue. Also, the more I began to talk about Trek, the more that it started to develop and take form in my mind. I was beginning to visualize what Trek could be and where it could go. The thoughts and discussions regarding Trek began to stimulate ideas and excitement about a journey of discovery and learning.

## **INTERSESSION (May – June 2007)**

The intersession studio entitled 'synaesthetic landscapes' was a positive studio experience and a much needed rest from the conceptualization of Trek. Synaesthetic from the Greek words *syn* meaning union and *aesthesis* meaning senses, with synaesthesia referring to a union of the senses (Oxford 2000-). It was an engaging studio and a great 'warm-up' for the upcoming Trek field works. The studio's intent focused on giving the landscape 'other voices' and on landscape process revelation and amplification, with synaesthesia being used as a metaphor for uncovering the hidden potentials and processes that are all too often buried away from our phenomenological understanding of landscape. There was both an analog and digital portion of the studio, followed by a requirement to combine the two. I found this type of framework quite beneficial and a process that I was to incorporate into the Trek works.

## **ST. GERTRUDE WORKS (July 2007)**

It was rather a coincidence that a family reunion from July 13-15 2007 was to happen in conjunction with Trek's fieldworks. While providing an opportunity to visit this landscape of origin of my father, it also provided an opportunity to document the landscape experiences of extended family members. This was a first chance in beginning to formally talk to others about 'landscape' during Trek.

## **MCGILLIS WORKS (July – August 2007)**

A small remnant of uncultivated land still exists at the McGillis farm that exhibits the diversity of the prairie landscape before modern agriculture. This small section of land, part of original lands obtained in 1894, is one that I grew up in and that served as an imprinting landscape. This landscape was to be an important place for the exploration and development of ideas for Trek.

## **VIDEO WORKS (September - October 2007)**

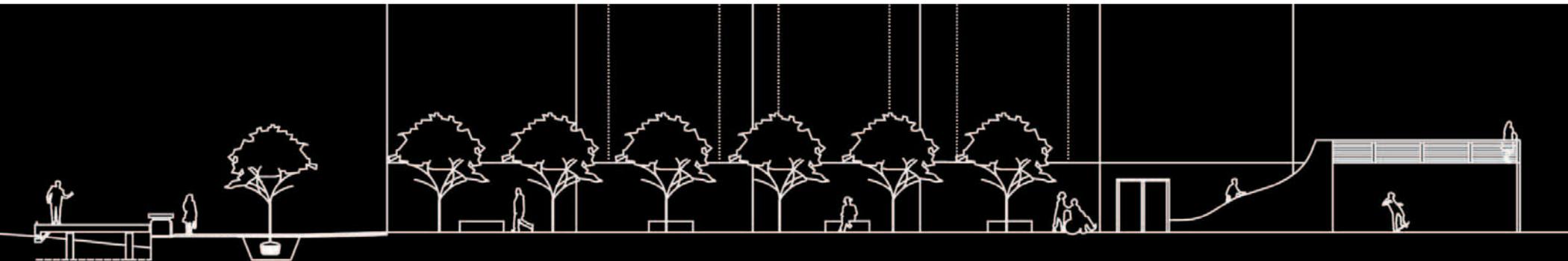
Following completion of the Trek field works, I needed to begin piecing together the many parts of the collective narratives into a coherent whole. Because the entirety of Trek was documented digitally, a large amount of data was collected that would require the conceptualization of a 'new' type of practicum document to house all the research. A traditionally paper copy would not be able to encompass the entirety of discoveries and explorations of Trek.

Video as a method of documentation has been an interest of mine since a studio project completed in my pre-masters year. This initial project was my first experience with video editing and was completed with iMovie software. I found iMovie limiting however because it only allows for one single video and audio track. To expand my capabilities for the practicum works, I began learning a more advanced video editing software program (Adobe Premier Pro), which allows for the multiple layering of audio and video. All video editing and compilation for the Trek videos were completed with Adobe Premier Pro.

A considerable downside of video works is that the subsequent files can become extremely large. Thus, all video files for the practicum works were compressed following completion of final editing. This was completed with the Macromedia Flash 8 Video Encoder. Video was compressed down to a 'medium quality' to reduce file sizes. The resulting files are a Flash Live Video file that was embedded as a Flash file within the practicum's website. The Flash file is then downloaded as a progressive download file. In total, there is over 45 minutes of video contained within the practicum works that has been compressed to well under 350MB of disk space.

## **WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT (September – November 2007)**

One of the major initiatives of Trek was to make the research available for the participants or the research project to review and comment on. This was also a requirement of my ethics submission, as all data collected by the participants was required to be made available for review by them prior to subsequent use. I also began meeting with the MSpace staff at the University of Manitoba early in the process and suggested an electronic submission in the form of a website. The MSpace staff was extremely receptive to this initiative and it now represents the first of its kind for the MSpace Electronic Theses and Dissertations collection. The work will act as a permanent digital archive that can be downloaded in addition to the paper copy.



Previous to the completion of the practicum works, I had very little exposure to website development. I was initially introduced to Dreamweaver webworks development software in the U of M 2007 intersession studio, where a website was made part of the studio's final submission. Having no experience with website development or administration, the learning curve in the development of the site for the practicum works was quite sharp. I began learning about website development by reading books and completing on-line tutorials. All interactive portions of the website were developed using Flash software. Again, prior to the practicum works, I had no previous experience with this software. I began learning Flash through any available on-line tutorials and through reading books.

### **PAPER COPY (November – December 2007)**

A paper copy was also a requirement to be completed for the practicum works. This represented an entirely new endeavour in addition to the digital copy already completed. An initial inspiration for the paper copy spreads was the graphic design of David Carson. Formal writings on the significance of Trek, its contextualization within the discipline of landscape architecture and post-Trek reflections were also included in the paper copy.

### **FINAL PRESENTATION (December 6 2007)**

The final presentation turned out to be a difficult task and an entirely new endeavour as well. To summarize such a large amount of work within a short 30 minutes presentation involved a selection process that eliminated many notable parts of Trek. While the presentation was not able to cover all the discovering and works contained within Trek, it was hoped that the presentation would stimulate a desire for those present to re-visit the work in more depth via either the website or by viewing the paper copy.

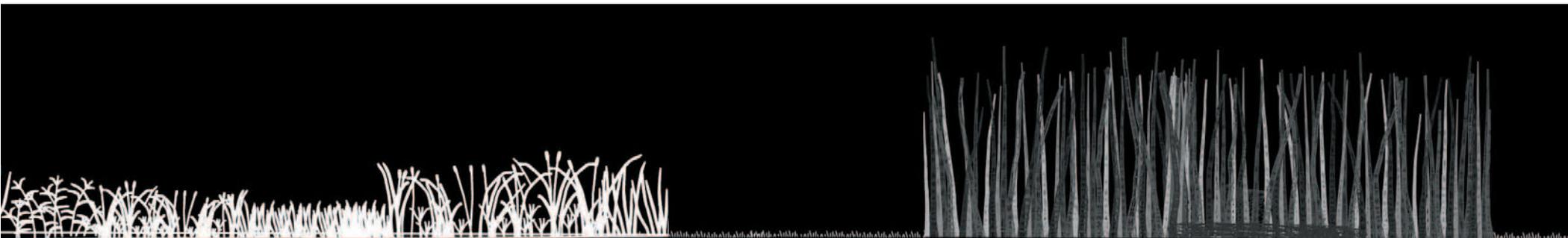


Illustration by Author

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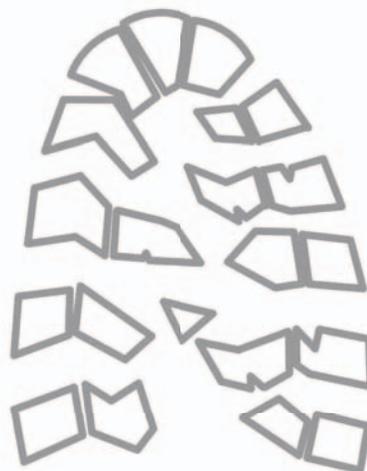
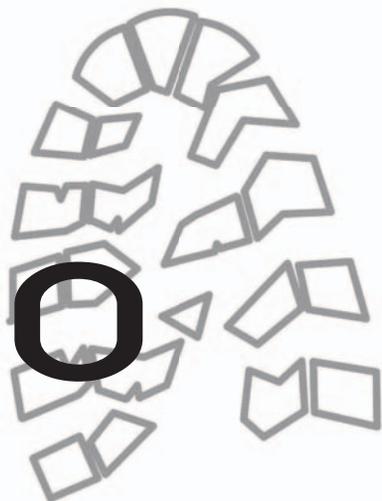
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The Ceramic Faces Collection of Helen McGillis Photographed by Author 2007



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# to my trek companions

kimberly ahing

karen wilson baptist

marcella eaton

susan herrington

cy and joan klassen

paula klassen

bob mcgillis

i hope trek has enriched your life as much as it has mine

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5,6)*

it all started with i see i think

start with the **TREE** a natural air conditioner & filter - to give us O<sub>2</sub> to **BREATH FREE** play of geometric and soft forms - from the sawtooth edge to the curvilinear contour the **LANDSCAPE** soil in my **TERRITORY** inside and outside expose traces of changing shifting **SEASONS** with its fluid walkways and striking curves **A-LIVE** walkway leads to an endpoint restriction **nature responds** the invisible becomes visible look closely & see the connection changing perspectives & hidden stories washed away always changing - pressure- break now **REFLECT** what is design landscape landscapedesign why? for everybody-me-you-plants-animals-nobody who? culture - community - the **individual** perception and their intention to making production-construction-creation-preparation failure to see the sign stop forbidden - **brave** to enter and then to re-interpret reflect on your position up-down sideways-upside down now looking up towards art objects & **conTEXT** ures shapes-contrast-roughness **see** the light out of focus to **extreme** close-up represent **time** is always moving forward step forward open the door realize your personal legend your mission here on earth

explorediscoveReveal

and so it continues. never lose the capability to be astonished.  
this is not an end but rather a discussion to be sustained.  
sounds good. jumping off.