

The landscape of critique

The state of critique in landscape architecture and its future challenges

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Abstract

This essay explores critique as a specific instrument to evaluate and discuss artistic products, and argues that the relatively young discipline of landscape architecture could profit from further developing criticism within this field. Based on the work of Carroll, a theory on critique is provided, focussing on the aspect of 'grounded evaluation'. An overview of the media in which criticism operates is given, including social media. Using examples from art and architecture, the role of criticism in landscape architecture is described. In so far as there is a 'recipe' for a critique, the main ingredients are given. The essay points at the difficulties for landscape architecture criticism due to the particularities of landscape and landscape architecture - the aspect of time is very important in this. As critique can be both an activity in the professional arena and an academic undertaking, the specific requirements of both options are considered. An agenda for future actions is given, including a list of projects that strongly asks for criticism, appealing to a shared feeling that these projects should be known, discussed, and visited.

Keywords

landscape architecture; writing; critique; design; practice; Superkilen; evaluation; theory; art

Introduction

In the city of Copenhagen, Denmark, a remarkable new urban open space was opened to the public in 2012: Superkilen, designed by the Berlin-based landscape architecture office Topotek 1, in a team with BIG and Superflex. Should this space be called a park, or a square, or should we come up with a new typology? This is open for discussion, and is certainly not the only topic up for debate. The Topotek 1 design is provocative for its strong colours, its sampling of garden history, and its many references to global cultures. Therefore, it prompts very different reactions, varying from praise to rejection.¹ One of the obvious issues is how the design will develop over time. Its very graphic approach may be obsolete in a few years, but at the same time the strong gesture may help to brand the place as one of the main public spaces in the city (Fig. 1; see also the previous essay on Superkilen: <https://doi.org/10.7480/spool.2018.1.1935>).

The project received prizes and was published many times. It makes an excellent candidate for a critique, on top of the existing (digital) publications that are generally more descriptive. Such a critique, and indeed a larger series of critiques, on pieces of landscape architecture, contributes to an emerging definition of what landscape architecture is today, and of what the discipline can offer to society. The Superkilen project is not only remarkable; it is also debatable in its intentions as well as its results. It represents concepts that can be understood in a generic way, both in the sense of design concepts for urban squares and theoretical concepts of how nature can be represented in a city. Critique can inspire us to visit a place like this, to sharpen our own opinion, reveal what was meant by the design, explain how we should understand it, propose potential comparisons, show by what criteria it could be evaluated, and indicate the larger lessons one can take from this evaluation. Such engagement would help a disciplinary exchange in which ideas are shared about the aims, the instruments, and the future of landscape architecture, but also support an understanding by the public of what designers produce, and how that relates to what clients ask or what users respond to.

Designers operate in the literal or metaphorical public domain – this may apply to designers in general, but is certainly true of designers of landscape. Their work touches the interest of people. It may solve a practical problem people have. It potentially answers a more ephemeral need for beautiful things. However, designer's work always locates itself in culture, be it a specific Danish culture of making and using urban open space, or the more abstract meaning given to landscape by today's postmodern society. As a consequence of being located in culture, opinions on designs can be formed by visitors, users, or people in general, and designs are discussed in many contexts – between peers or by experts specialised in the evaluation of design.

On this essay

Criticism can be defined as the expert evaluation of (in this case) landscape architectural design, typically addressing a concrete built project. 'Expert' does not necessarily relate to title, study, or profession, but to the desire to support the critique with sound arguments. This essay traces the origins of critique, explores what it might be in today's context, indicates in what direction it may evolve, and demarcates the meaning of criticism in the particular context of landscape architecture, as different from architecture or the arts in general. It also takes up the specific challenge to speak about critique in an academic context.



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FIGURE 1 Noël van Dooren invited the Danish visual artist Kirstine Autzen to portray Superkilen as it was in Summer 2017.

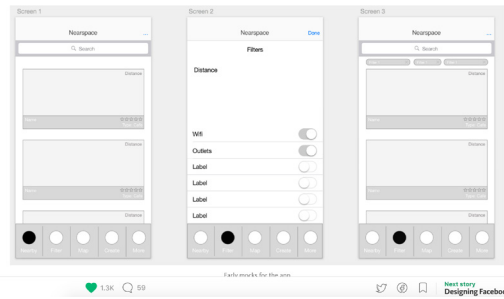


FIGURE 2 Critique and social media. Facebook recently introduced 'design critiques', in this case to discuss app design. The image is a screenshot taken from the article, displaying mocks for the app design. This app, designed by Jon Lee, concerns 'local workspace discovery'. (Facebook, July 2016. Author: Tanner Christensen; App mock: Jon Lee. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/facebook-design/peek-inside-a-facebook-design-critique-c4833efda26e>).

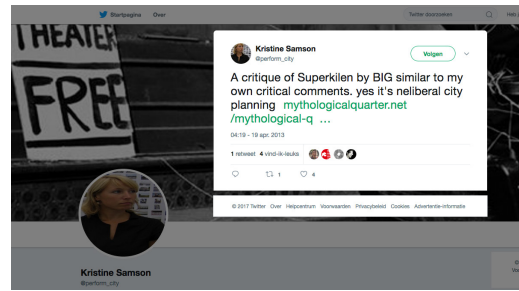


FIGURE 3 Critique and social media. Screenshot of tweet by Kristine Samson on Superkilen. It reacts on a critique by Brett Bloom in the Danish magazine *Kritik*. (Kritik, April 2014, Retrieved from https://twitter.com/perform_city/status/325207094028562434).

Criticism operates in different environments. As, for example, Treib remarks, critique is an essential ingredient of the design studio, hence the word 'crit' for interim discussions of student work. (Treib, 2004) To some extent, if we look at criticism as evaluation in a system of peer review, competitions are also a specific milieu for criticism - in this case, obviously, with regard to projects that exist only on paper or on screen. In these instances, criticism is part of a larger operation. The main locus of critique being presented as critique is its written form, in design magazines, journals or websites, and blogs, which is what this essay concentrates on. We should also mention newspapers here. Although there is no strict demarcation, one could say that moving from design magazine to newspaper, the critique shifts its target from professionals to the larger public. These days, social media also presents itself as a channel to broadcast opinions on the world, on subjects that even include landscape design, and perhaps this will establish itself as a new, accessible, and public platform for critique. A recent example of this is a Facebook initiative, inviting people to participate in design critique, in this case related to app design (Fig. 2) (Tanner, 2016). However, this essay aims to speak about critique as something much more than a few harsh one-liners. It cannot be denied that social media are part of today's political discourse, and more so, are *shaping* the discourse. Perhaps in the future we will witness a lively and well-grounded critical culture adapted to 140 characters. (Fig. 3) What this would mean for a professional culture of critique in design magazines remains to be seen. Pessimists might argue that this would be the end of any well-educated criticism. In an optimistic view, interest in landscape design, and a debate on landscape design, broadens.

Critique has a long tradition in the arts, and in architecture. For landscape architecture, with the exception of a vibrant period in the seventies, critique has been largely absent from magazines and journals.² This has changed in the last two decades – see the scholarly *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, founded in 2006, with the section *Under the Sky* dedicated to criticism of built projects, or national initiatives such as the critique section in the Dutch professional magazine *Blauwe Kamer* since 1998 and the French *Le Visiteur* between 1995 and 2003. (Fig. 4) However, despite these and other initiatives, critique in landscape architecture is not currently an established genre. Only quite recently was the study of landscape architecture itself described as one of the branches of research.³ This certainly supports the development of criticism as an independent genre of writing, and the critic as an independent specialist. This essay aims to stimulate criticism as an autonomous genre. Criticism is an important instrument that indicates innovation, transports design to non-professional worlds, and helps to shape the identity of the design disciplines. Words are important in this. In this context, Adrian Forty refers to John Evelyn, the 17th century English writer, who, in an essay on architecture, distinguished categories of persons involved in architecture, of which the last is the 'architectus verborum', or the man of words. As Forty remarks, 'Evelyn's personification of the parts of architecture expressed an important idea: that architecture consisted not just of one or two of these activities, but of all four of them in concert. Under these terms, the language through which a work of architecture is explored is no less important than the architectural idea itself'. (Forty, 2000, p. 11) In defining what critique is in general,

and more specifically in landscape architecture, and via an analysis of existing critiques, this essay aims to provide a basic argumentative scheme of a critique, and a discussion of the difficulties a critic may meet because of the particularities of the field of landscape architecture. With this, as researcher, practitioner, and as critic, I want to contribute to a culture of criticism in landscape architecture. For that reason, the essay ends with a tentative agenda. This essay supports a series of master classes on European landscape architecture schools under the title *Criticising practice, practising critique*.

Under The Sky

Thoughts on the relevance of landscape architecture: the Berlin Tilla-Durieux-Park and Spreebogenpark examined in the context of a unifying capital

Noël van Dooren

After 1989, Berlin literally became one gigantic building site along the path of the former wall. The best architects, urban planners and landscape architects were asked to transform this devastated zone into a new city center. The basic building period has ended and now it is time to evaluate the results. In this article, two very different landscape architecture projects are evaluated. Both projects are evaluated on their own merits, reflecting on their beauty and craftsmanship, but the focus is on their use, their meaning and their credibility in relation to the physical surroundings, and the ideological, historical and strategic motives that determined the way this crucial zone of Berlin developed after 1989. A main point of debate is the scale on which landscape architecture operated.

NAME OF THE OPERATION Design of the Spreebogenpark	NAME OF THE OPERATION Design of the Tilla-Durieux-Park
SITUATION Berlin, Germany	SITUATION Berlin, Germany
CONTRACTING AUTHORITY ENR Büro Berlin, Dorothea Stebbi- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft GmbH	CONTRACTING AUTHORITY Senats Department for Urban Development
PRIME CONTRACTOR Design by wsl Landschaftsarchitekten Solothurn / Switzerland Construction with Gruppe F / Berlin, Germany	PRIME CONTRACTOR DL Landschaftsarchitekten Amsterdam / The Netherlands Construction with Thomas Dierreich / Berlin, Germany
STUDY DATING Competition 1997	STUDY DATING Competition 1999
CONSTRUCTION DATING 1997-2005	BUILDING DATING 2000-2005
SURFACE 60,000 m ²	HEXAREA 25,000 m ²
GLOBAL COST 8 million Euros	GLOBAL COST 4,5 million Euros



This aerial photograph offers a good overview of Spreebogenpark. In the north the brand new Hauptbahnhof is in the south the strip of government buildings that separate the Spreebogenpark from the former Reichstag. The green square in front of the Reichstag was designed by Lütjens + Berlin. In the first stage of the competition the green square was seen as a void, but in the end different bureaus worked out their own plans.

We all remember the fascinating events in Germany, 1989. The wall fell. West and East Germany were unified again. This called for the unification of the divided capital in urbanistic terms and thus applied above all to the devastated zone along the former wall. Here, the dramatic consequences of Nazism, the Second World War and conflicting urbanistic ideologies during the cold war had left an almost empty zone loaded with symbolism and full of traces of history. This area was transformed at an incredible speed after 1989. It made Berlin the stage for architecture.

My reflections on the way this zone developed are based on a feeling that its transformation has two faces – one of impressive and remarkable progress and another of rather incoherent urban structure. In this article, two landscape architecture projects illustrate both the remarkable achievement and the lack of coherence. The first is Tilla-Durieux-Park near Potsdamer Platz, the second is Spreebogenpark between Hauptbahnhof and the brand new main station and the governmental square. These projects more or less mark the south and the northern edges of the transformation zone.

Critique

Critique in this article, is meant as this particular form of critically evaluating a realized project (1). Theory in design disciplines should be “constructed and reconstructed from particular cases” (Szeffels 2005). The learning made in all design disciplines implies evaluating realized projects. Projects are partly based on solid theory – often provided by other disciplines, such as vegetation or social sciences. On the other hand, all landscape architecture projects have a high degree of subjectivity. Critique is, in my opinion, a matter of looking at things that take into account this mix of theory-based motives and subjective arguments. Therefore, the method here fits into the category of design critics “who adopt a theoretical foundation based within a subjective paradigm” (Szeffels 2005). This does not mean that a critique shouldn’t be transparent in its argumentation. The key elements of a critique should be the questions: how is the project done, why is the project done that way, what can be learned for future projects? Critique has a lot to do with ‘steering’ and ‘making understandable’. That implies as far as possible a non-biased judgement, taking into account the motives of clients.

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FIGURE 4 In 2006, the newly founded academic journal started to publish critiques. Having written many critiques in the Dutch professional magazine *Blauwe Kamer*, publishing in the *Journal of Landscape Architecture* offered the chance to explore what criticising could mean in an academic context. (*Journal of Landscape Architecture* 1(2) page 54-55), graphic design Oliver Klein. Aerial photograph Bien + Giersch Projektagentur).

On criticism

The word critique in the field of philosophy refers to a much wider set of meanings than those we generally think of when discussing critique in landscape architecture. Some may think of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, written by Immanuel Kant in 1781, translated as *Critique of pure reason*.⁵ Both ‘critical thinking’ and ‘critical theory’ equally describe an academic mode of reflection and an academic school of thinking that cover areas far larger than criticism in architecture.⁶ These larger areas are not under consideration here. Even if it is of interest to trace the origins of the word and how critique is embedded in broader intellectual concepts, my aim is much more instrumental, concentrating on landscape architecture criticism today. The widest circle that is useful for that aim is to take into consideration the philosophy of art. A major question explored by the philosophy of art is how pieces of art can be appreciated. That is the larger frame in which this essay operates. It uses a set of related words. I understand ‘a critic’ as a specialist in the evaluation of artworks. ‘A critique’ is the written or spoken argument of a critic in which pieces of art are evaluated. The verb related to this is ‘to criticise’, and ‘criticism’ is the culture of evaluating art. The adverb ‘critical’ is associated with this, but is used in much wider circles, both in academic terms as well as in daily life.



FIGURE 5 Cover of Noël Carroll's *On Criticism*.

My understanding of such words is grounded in the work of the American philosopher Noel Carroll and his book *On criticism. Thinking in action* (Carroll, 2009) (Fig. 5). Carroll described criticism as 'grounded evaluation' - a definition that is crucial for this essay. Therefore, his understanding is very different from 'the savagely ridiculizing of whatever is reviewed', which for some is the main association with critique, and there is certainly a tradition to do so - see the work of the Dutch writer Gerrit Komrij, a fierce critic of modern architecture. (Carroll, 2009, p. 24) ⁷ Komrij's tirades against 'sluttish' and 'mendacious' architects are hard to translate, as they explore the richness of Dutch language in a very creative way. His (very cynical) opinions, however, are perfectly transmitted by what we could call Komrij's 'law on architecture models': '1) If the model is ugly, the result will be ugly. 2) If the model is beautiful, the result will still be ugly.' ⁸ Carroll acknowledges that such intense attack can be part of critique, but he looks at it in a wider perspective. Critique is an activity that supports the reception of pieces of art, by us: the public and the users. Although Carroll might not have thought of landscape architecture, for the moment this discipline can also be considered to produce pieces of art. Carroll denies the idea that such pieces are unique and not comparable, comparison being a key aspect of criticising. In his eyes, that idea is romantic, or modernist, thinking. Artworks are parts of styles, groups, and movements, and 'as members of the relevant class or category, they can be placed and then assessed in terms of the ways in which they realise or fail to realise the points and purposes of the kinds of artworks they are'. (Carroll, 2009, p. 27) In speaking about criticism, it often seems that disagreement is central. However, for Carroll to rank artworks or to express negative appraisal is not the goal. The prime goal is an evaluation if 'the means put in action were appropriate and effective'. (Carroll, 2009, p. 39) This is a service to the public: 'Criticism is strong criticism insofar as it renders its evaluation intelligible to audiences in such a way that they are guided to the discovery of value on their own'. (Carroll, 2009, p. 45)

Carroll gives an interesting restriction for critique: 'We don't criticize rocks in nature - there's no point criticizing them. They won't listen anyway.' We can only evaluate rocks if they 'enter the circuit of human affairs'. (Carroll, 2009, p. 48) In the eyes of Carroll (2009, p. 58), the critic has a task, which is to 'inform the rest of us about where and how to look at the work of art in order to get the richest possible experience out of it'.



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FIGURE 6 a) In 1995, the office of H+N+S landscape architects realised the *Molenley* project in Breda. The author was part of the design team. The reconstruction of a highway exit was combined with creating a flooding zone for the small Molenley stream. The photo was taken in 2011; in the background the in 2004 added piece of art can be seen. (Image H+N+S landscape architects.). b) In 2004, Atelier Van Lieshout was commissioned to create a piece of art for this particular site, resulting in *Big Funnelman*. H+N+S was not informed, and if Atelier Van Lieshout was aware of the H+N+S-design is unknown. Ironically, evaluating the site as it is now, the added piece of art fits perfectly, and even strengthens the earlier design. (Retrieved from <https://kunstinbreda.wordpress.com/heusdenhout/>. Image Victor Willemse.)

I understand this in two ways. First, it implies that a critique is able to really make a piece of art (or, for that matter, landscape architecture) accessible via an adequate description in text and drawings. Readers of a critique are generally not in the same location as the piece of art. A critic must first bring the reader to the piece of art metaphorically; otherwise, there is no shared ground. Second, it implies that the critic is a guide. A critic is not so much the one who states that a piece of art is fantastic or rubbish. He or she primarily shows *what it is*. More often, the words 'to read' or 'a reading' is used.⁹ To criticise is 'reading' a work of art, and this reading should enfold the particularities of it, the decisions that were taken, or the difficulties that were met. I propose that such criticism should be understood as emancipatory, in the sense that the readers should be enabled to disagree with the critic, not despite, but *because* of, the well-written argument.

Art works are, we can safely assume, made consciously. Conscious, here, is meant in a broad sense - for example, Pallasmaa spoke about 'the knowing hand', or, as suggested by others, 'tacit knowledge', guiding artists in conscious creating, even if there does not seem to be an immediate verbal explanation at hand. In the philosophy of art, this is described as the artist's intention. Should we know that intention when we use, visit, or enjoy buildings, landscapes and artworks? For some, engaging with the artist's intention distracts us from the reality of a piece of art. In 1954, Wimsatt and Beardsly introduced 'the intentional fallacy' to fight a belief at that time that one should know what the artist wanted.¹⁰ Authors that defend the idea that one should *not* know artist's intentions claim that such intentions are inaccessible and unimportant: only what has been achieved should be counted. A comparable argument is given by John Dixon Hunt in *The Afterlife of Gardens*. He states that the role of designers and their original intentions is overrated. (Hunt, 2004) During the lifetime of a garden, these intentions are often forgotten, or not known at all, and what remains is the experience of visitors and users *for what it is* at a certain moment: 'So we must give some credence and support to the argument that over the *longue duree* of its existence a great design can stimulate a whole cluster of meanings that were not intended or envisaged for the original designs.' (Hunt, 2004, p. 205) (Fig. 6ab) Carroll takes the other side. According to him, we should know the artist's intention: 'In order to assess what the artist has achieved, part of what the critic needs to do is to ascertain what the artist is up to.' (Carroll, 2009, p. 66) In fact, he states that *only* if we know the intentions are we able to judge the artwork - otherwise we have no point of reference. Additionally, intentions *are* accessible. He argues that any piece of art is part of a larger group or a category, and as such, artworks 'are underwritten by certain publicly acknowledged purposes'. (Carroll, 2009, p. 73) Therefore, knowledge on intentions can be derived from a category.

A specific park is always part of a group of parks - for the period in which they are made, for their style, for their approach - and in categorizing a park there is an opening in which to ask ourselves how this park is perceived amongst the other parks in the group. However, apart from that, the artist (or the landscape architect) probably gave his intentions - in a lecture, an article, or the explanatory text that accompanied the design. Now this type of explanation is questioned more often, and those supporting the idea of the intentional fallacy, in particular, consider such statements to be very subjective. Or even worse: they are simply a nicely made up story, because that's what designers do to sell their work, a point of view also held by Komrij. Even if we all know examples that confirm this statement, Carroll's argument is that we simply have the actual work, and this *verifies* what the designer tells us - or not. In combination with the group or category to which the work belongs, as well as the other works by the same artist, we have many points of reference by which to judge the validity of the designer's story. In some cases, this may lead us to the conviction that these were indeed mere stories told to sell the design, but in many other cases they allow insight into the thinking that guided the designer, and help us to judge what was achieved. (Fig. 8) I would rather take a position that embraces both views. In general, a well-grounded critique, in my view, takes into account the broader context, and that includes positioning the design in relation to other designs, the surroundings and the oeuvre of the designer. In that sense, one cannot escape intentions. At the same time, Hunt's realistic approach that visitors and users take the design for what it is, is equally relevant. A critic may aim to change the public's appreciation by providing them with information, including intentions, but a starting position that any design should be efficient and accessible without explanation makes also sense. In fact, it is one of the basic tasks of a critic to explicate in how far his or her critique takes intentions into account, or explicitly does not consider intentions. When taking this second road, I would expect an argument for what reason an insight into, and debate of, original intentions can be left aside.



FIGURE 7 Photo of Kongens Have in Odense, Denmark as used by a critique in *Scape* 14/2014. As Noldus and Riesto state, Erik Brandt Dam's design 'talks to us in a soft voice'. (Image by Laura Starner, year unknown).

State of affairs

In landscape architecture, we have few texts that are consciously presented as critiques.¹¹ Restricted to English texts, we could collect only a few dozen, all written in the last two decades.¹² But even if small in number, they mark a huge progression, and this collection establishes best practice, which enables us to learn how critique operates. Here I discuss two examples, and I refer to the critiques in the Dutch professional magazine *Blauwe Kamer*.

Scape 14/2014 presents a 'package' of three critiques with a thematic header: Parks and Heritage. An introduction underlines the relevance of the theme, pointing toward today's seeming evidence of taking into account the heritage of landscape, or in general, to care for 'what was before'. In a critique on Kongens Have in Odense, re-designed by Erik Brandt Dam, the authors start with a statement. (Noldus & Riesto, 2014) Many recent designs 'shout out loud' with spectacular design but turn out to be only of momentary quality. The reviewed design however 'talks to us in a soft voice, displaying a delicate intricacy'. (Noldus & Riesto, 2014, p. 123) (Fig. 7) To combine existing structures with modest interventions may increase the chances for the design to have a long lifespan. Putting it this way, the authors express a view on what is good design. The process by which the place became part of a design process is described, and the role of the municipal authority is addressed, positioning this place in the local fabric. Noldus and Riesto analyse Brand's stand towards history and the actual consequences for Kongens Have. They conclude with considerations on the general meaning of this: in how far this approach may be relevant for other places with a rich historic background.

Valois and Paradis discuss Place Émilie-Gamelin in Montréal in *JoLA* 2/2010. The subtitle of their critique – 'landscape narrative, meaning and the uses of public space' – immediately reveals a certain angle. First, the place as a designed space, its location, and its design history are described. Valois and Paradis state that the design was a turning point in Canadian landscape architecture and because of this was already an interesting example. The authors want to confront the initial intentions of the designers, the response in media, and the actual use. The overarching goal is to show that a narrative design approach allowed the design to evolve and to be used in unexpected ways. A background section describes the development of Montreal and the reconstruction of downtown Montreal, which frames this particular design process. An overview of the debate on the narrative approach is given, which supports an analysis of how the design 'realises' the narrative. A next section presents observations on who uses the space today. In a balanced way, the authors report on the intensive debate on the design: 'In the light of this controversy, one might wonder whether the manufacture of meaning in landscape design, especially in the instance of Place Émilie-Gamelin, serves simply as a key to justify choices and make the concept behind the form valid and therefore acceptable in the eyes of public authorities, experts and users. Both yes and no, in our opinion.' (Valois & Paradis, 2010, p. 80) In the conclusive section, the argument shifts from this particular place to a more general discussion: 'In other words, echoing Barnett (1997), the use of narrative to give meaning to a place must avoid being understood as a "goal to achieve" as if it were a universal thought structure. The designer's objectives must take the design's subsequent reception into account in all its affective, intellectual and sensory dimensions.' (Carroll, 2009, p. 81)

If one also takes *Blauwe Kamer* into account, differences and similarities can be noted. A striking difference is the text length. *Scape* critiques are very short - fewer than 1,000 words – but form part of a larger package. *Blauwe Kamer* critiques have a maximum of 1,500 words. A critique in *Journal of Landscape Architecture* is substantially longer – up to 5,000 words. Obviously this allows (and obliges!) an elaboration on the history of, the debate on, or the theoretical origins of a design. The Montreal example puts a narrative approach forward as an angle to do so. As a consequence, the argument is rooted in literature, and reveals a method of criticism, even if implicit. Critiques in *Scape* or *Blauwe Kamer* primarily present facts about the project in a journalistic way. An opinion on the project rests on the credibility of the authors.

This journalistic character also implies the convention to hear both sides, and enables the designers to comment on the critique before it is published. As designers in general are not happy with critical remarks in a public text, more often this opened a conversation on what *really* happened in the design process, pointing at an interesting difference between official design documents and informal accounts.¹³

Very comparable is the representation of the project in images. The tradition in architecture is followed: plan, section, visualization and photographs present the design. A text box provides basic information on the client and the year of realization, for example. However, the most important similarity is the structure of the argument.



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FIGURE 8 The 1996 Binnenrotte design by West 8. It was one of the designs for public space in Rotterdam that made the office of West 8, founded in 1987, famous, worldwide. Its novelty was 'empty' space, ready for the weekly market, but also as a stage for all that happens in cities. The design was heavily criticised for its emptiness. These days reconstruction in favour of a more diverse and green space is underway.

Ingredients of a critique

The examples given in the preceding paragraph serve to list what seem to be the ingredients of a critique, and how these ingredients can be combined in an argument. Returning ingredients are description – analysis – interpretation, or evaluation. In addition, on the basis of my work in *Blauwe Kamer* and *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, I propose a basic argumentative scheme. That scheme consists of five steps, and it runs as follows:

- *Come, look at this!* In this step the author describes the design he or she wishes to draw to our attention, and motivates as to why, indeed, we should go on reading. Why is attaining knowledge of this particular design more important than for others of the same type? What is its novelty? What are the striking features? (Fig. 8ab)
- *How did this come about?* Any design is made in a landscape that existed before the designer came in. What was it before? Somebody wanted that landscape to change: the client or the contracting agency enters the scene. Often, the conception and the making of a design is not a straightforward narrative. Think of changes in the political constellation, new insights that require an update to the design, or a shifting appreciation of the public during the design or even during the construction process. How did this all influence the design, and does it end in a coherent final result?

- *What is it now?* Landscape changes and the demands of society change. Hardly any design, after being inaugurated, stays the same for years. Therefore, it must be clear at what moment the design is scrutinised, and how that relates to the original drawings. A crucial aspect of this step is: What is its use? How does it function? Is it appreciated? That must, as Carroll also suggests, link to what the design was expected to solve. It also points at the category the design is part of, which comes with a certain expected performance.
- *So what should we think of it?* Some critiques are very personal, others try to express a common belief, or to develop a more or less 'objective' argument. Nevertheless, independent of these different roads to follow, this is the step in which, for this particular design, 'grounded evaluation' is in action. Knowing what it was before, knowing what society or a client wanted, knowing the considerations of the designer, and knowing how it works, today, what should we think of it?
- *And what is the larger perspective?* If we accept that any design is part of a category, it follows easily that a well-chosen design object, when scrutinized, learns something about other, future design tasks of the same category, about the discipline of landscape architecture in general, or about the arts and its position in society. To some extent, this step is related to the first step, as the reason for taking a design in to account is often its implicit larger perspective. (Fig. 9ab)



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FIGURE 9 Two photos of Parc de La Villette, 2014. They belong as images to a critique by Céline Baumann and Vesna Jovanovic published in *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 10(3). The critique discusses La Villette as a park -does it belong to such category?- and its development over time. (Images by Céline Baumann and Vesna Jovanovic, 2014).

Obviously, there are many smaller and larger variations on this scheme. For a certain scheme to be valid, one rule should always be respected, in my view. A critic has, to some extent, a powerful position, simply because he or she is invited at a more or less public stage. That comes with a responsibility to be transparent in the argument, and to care that any opinion is verifiable, in the sense that the reader is enabled to *disagree*. Inevitably, this involves methodical aspects. Did the critic visit the project, and did he or she do so only once, or more often? Were the designers or the client interviewed? Speaking for myself, I consider a site visit a necessary part of the process. Other critics defend the thought that the true value of architecture is to be found primarily in drawings and texts, and that the reality of a site only 'corrupts' the idea. Obviously, such viewpoints are essential and must be clear for the reader.

The above-presented argumentative scheme addresses critiques in general. The next section discusses the specific genre of scholarly critique. This comes with a slightly different argumentative scheme.

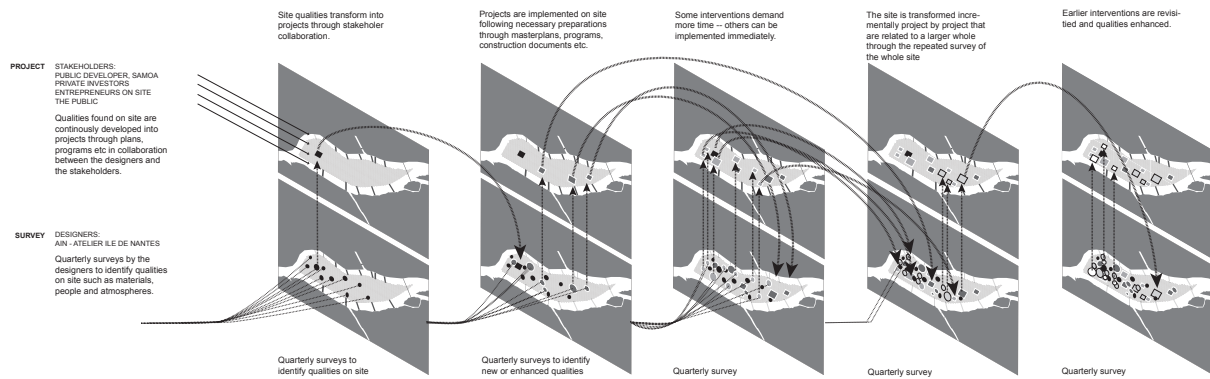


FIGURE 10 For their critique (*Journal of Landscape Architecture* 11(2)) on the Alexandre Chemetoff-design for Ile de Nantes the authors, Caroline Dahl and Lisa Diedrich, added analytical drawings to their verbal argument.

Critique as an academic activity

There is no formally defined difference between an academic critique and any other. The difference is certainly gradual. However, what is necessary in an academic critique, and perhaps not in a professional critique, is that it is rooted in literature, has a clear method, and following from these two, an explicit angle or frame in which the design is questioned.

For those thinking of academic writing as objective, critique may be difficult to accept as a scholarly genre. Critique, by definition, puts weight on opinion. Different from other forms of scholarly writing, a sentence that starts with 'I' is rather at home here. Even if that may feel very uncomfortable for some, in the vibrant debate on what constitutes academia, this hurdle of, as I would call it, 'informed subjectivity' has already been taken. Critique is only one of the many different roads of scholarly writing, as long as critique is, indeed, 'grounded evaluation', to come back to Carroll. That is to say that the design under scrutiny is approached in a methodical way, that relevant literature informs the evaluation, and that we can check the reasoning of the critic via text, drawings and other images. For design disciplines, critique is of crucial importance. The relation between design and research, or the idea that design *is* research, is still controversial. Critique enables us to reflect on design in a scholarly way that matches the particularities of the domain of design, and perhaps does so *by drawing*. (Fig. 10) Therefore, scholarly critique as deployed in, for example, the *Journal of Landscape Architecture* is not only an option - it is of vital importance for the development of a strong theoretical foundation.

The academic nature of a critique certainly refers to its method. How did the critic read the design? What sources informed him? And what is the position of the critic in relation to the reader - to us all? Who is the critic anyway? In the arts, one can observe a long-lasting debate on the question who is entitled to criticise, and on what basis. A recent series of Dutch publications reflects on criticism in the arts. Schumacher et al, writing about art criticism as an exact field, want to put forward the art historian as the obvious critic, as opposed to a practitioner in the same discipline, or an outsider. (Schumacher, 2015) Essayist Gerrit Komrij, whom we met earlier in this essay, typically was such an outsider, claiming that it was crucial not to be an art historian. In his very personal style, Komrij states that 'never since the Big Bang an historian was able to even recognize a piece of art'. (Komrij, 1983) Anna Tilroe puts it in another way: Without 'the art historian load one is much more unbiased towards a piece of art'. (Tilroe in Schumacher, 2015) In Schumacher's eyes however, the art historian background is a valuable source as it helps to position the piece of art in a larger frame: From 'a wide-

angle perspective the academic critic tries to lift his interpretation above a matter of taste'. (Schumacher, 2015, p. 14) This comes close to Carroll's argument. Apart from a discussion on the role of specific disciplines, such as art history, this points to the role of expertise as such. For me, long before having any interest in criticism, Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance* was a compelling reading experience. How to recognize quality? Pirsig suggests that less 'institutionalized expertise' and a keen eye are needed to see quality, and this is certainly a starting point for critique. In addition, Richard Sennet in *The Craftsman* wants to give credit to the public in general as being able to recognize quality to some extent. What the expert adds, in this perspective, is precision, context, and detail – an argument that starts with a well-defined question, and works its way towards a convincing and verifiable answer. For a small discipline such as landscape architecture, the question of who is entitled to criticise obviously has a specific interest. The discipline is rather small, and the number of specialized critics is even smaller. Perhaps that supports Pirsig and Sennet in stressing the importance of a keen eye - anybody who takes up the challenge should be welcomed. Nevertheless, the background argument on the nature of the critic does not lose its validity. One aim of this essay would be to also inspire and inform the interested non-expert to develop sound critical arguments, and by doing so broaden the circle of those participating in the activity of criticising and debating landscape architecture.

Swaffield and Deming in their reader on landscape architectural research put forward some thoughts on criticism. On the basis of literature, they work towards a tentative definition of critique in an academic context. Following McAvin they state that 'critique, or criticism in the academic sense implies a self-aware and systematic scrutiny of a situation or work from a particular perspective'. (Swaffield & Deming, 2011, p. 42) Referring to Bowring, an alternative approach is to speak about critique as 'the practice of evaluating design in an informed manner, based on an understanding of the content and the context of the work, and the design languages upon which it draws'. Swaffield and Deming (2011, p.42) distinguish three styles of critique in landscape architecture: descriptive, interpretative, and normative. The first provides 'a systematic and theoretically informed account of a work, the intentions of its creator, and its disciplinary and landscape context'. In an interpretive style, commentary can reveal 'new understandings and perspectives upon a work, and hence provide insight upon the wider discipline and society', by contrasting and comparing, using metaphor and analogy. Normative critique 'makes and communicates judgements upon designed works, performances or other creative acts such as writing. It evaluates the success or otherwise of a work, both on its own terms and in relation to wider disciplinary agendas and imperatives. It may also offer comment upon the appropriateness of its objectives and strategies'. As Swaffield and Deming indicate, in essence, these styles are based on different 'ways of thinking about the world', and this relates to different methods by which the critic investigates. As noted, it is probably one of the major differences between a professional and an academic critique: in the latter, one should be able to trace the method by which the critic arrives at his or her opinion. Swaffield and Deming list, for example, measurement and quantitative analysis methods under the header 'instrumental', aiming to know the 'what, where and how'. Observation, interviews and life histories fit in the 'interpretive' box and search for the 'who, when and why'. Deconstruction and creative intervention belong to the 'critical' category, interested in consequences or different options (Swaffield & Deming, 2011, p. 36). The *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, founded in 2006, is one of the only journals explicitly inviting critiques in an academic context. The editorial of 2013 throws some light on how critique may be understood in that environment. *Under the Sky*, the critique section, 'provides a platform for critical readings of landscape architecture projects (...)'. (Blanchon & Gill, 2013, p. 4) Blanchon and Gill position critique in terms of method as a form of case study, but understand that it is 'beyond mere description or illustration', referring to Clifford Geertz who spoke about 'thick description', adding many layers of cultural significance. (Geertz, 1973) 'Reading' here is meant as deciphering and appreciating 'the complex structures and processes that constitute a landscape'. This starts with description, to be understood as an active, dialogic act 'between the world as reading (survey) and the world as writing (design)'. The critic has a role in this: 'Effective description derives from predetermined objectives, from formulated arguments and hypotheses, which themselves depend on the cultural horizon of the observer.'

Blanchon and Gill restrict critique to built projects, as a critique necessarily starts with 'physical contact with the actual site, through visits, observation and intuition'. Via a specific line of questioning, authors 'make the implicit discourse embedded in the space explicit'. (Blanchon & Gill, 2013, p. 4) I want to add that the restriction to built projects is debatable: in my eyes critique can, and perhaps even should, also address unbuilt plans, if only to improve these paper ideas on the road to reality.

Because of its opinionating character, critique may have a somewhat controversial existence in the context of academic critique, but as argued, critique fits perfectly well in such an environment, assuming that the critic uses a transparent and convincing method, chooses a clear angle from which he or she wants to discuss the project, and, very important, that the evaluation touches not only the studied design as a case, but tries to generalize the findings on a higher level, for example regarding the entire category to which the design belongs.

Difficulties of critique in landscape architecture

Writing a sound critique is no easy task, and in landscape architecture in particular one cannot find so many very convincing examples of critique. The argumentative scheme as presented in this essay may assist authors who take up the challenge. However, I also want to throw light on two specific difficulties that a critic might meet. The first is commissioned work, which is in fact not specific to landscape architecture, but shared with architecture, as different from the arts in general. The second is the specific character of landscape architecture.

Commissioned work

In the arts, one encounters a range from self-initiated works to commissioned products, but in general, works originate in a rather free setting. For buildings and pieces of landscape the standard situation is that they are commissioned. A client pays the designer to do a job, and more than that, the design in the making will be supervised by the contracting agency, future users, or local authorities. This is a crucial aspect in the assessment of landscape architectural work, and the consequences for developing critique are substantial. Designers have to fulfil many (legal) requirements, and the performance of the design has to be proven. For such reasons, and as landscape architecture designs often address large and complex tasks, design is teamwork. Nevertheless, even today, designs are often understood as an individual achievement. Ayn Rand's famous *The Fountainhead* is a case in point. Interestingly enough, offices are often perceived more as an individual in this respect, than as a team. Alben Yaneva, in an exploration of the work of OMA, points out the fact that many written accounts seem to suggest, by sheer exposure of the name and the person, that Rem Koolhaas is the one who conceived the work (Yaneva, 2009).

As anthropologist, Yaneva stayed for half a year in the office, speaking with the employees and exploring the office as a space of making, using established ethnographic research methods. This highlights architecture – in this case – as teamwork. A remarkable conclusion she draws is that many design inventions are rather coincidental, in the sense that they result from the traces of earlier design processes, like a model standing around in a corridor that, as a sudden realisation by one of the designers, can solve a design problem in a current project. It is even more important to realise that – in contrast to the arts – landscape architecture projects are seldom built because the designer woke up and felt the need to design a park. A contracting

agency, or a local authority, formulated an assignment, and the designer responded to it. This resembles what happens in the design studio. The tutor formulated an assignment, and the student is judged for the intelligence, creativity or beauty of the response to this assignment.¹⁴ Writing a good assignment is an art in itself. There are many examples of built designs for which the observed quality (or failure, for that matter) was not so much produced by the designer, but by the one who commissioned the design. The Amsterdam Museumplein, as designed by Sven-Ingvar Andersson, became part of a fierce debate. (Van Dooren, 1999) (Fig. 11). Opponents spoke about Andersson as 'a friendly garden gnome' and judged the design to be a park instead of a square - a debate that revealed the strong appreciation of architectural and stony Barcelonean designs twenty years ago. However, it was the administration of Amsterdam that decided to opt for a space with a green and 'nordic' character, and to choose a Scandinavian designer. If the question were 'Did Andersson fulfil the requirements as given?' a critique cannot be other than be very positive: How well he did!



FIGURE 11 Photo of Museumplein, 2005. The image shows the heavily debated green character of the design, as opposed to a more 'Barcelonean' stony design.

However, if the question is if this particular design was relevant, at this place and in this time, the answer might be very negative. In a way, this is a variation on the artist's intention. Here, the critic must decide in how far the original assignment as given by the client is relevant for evaluating the design, and explicate his terms of evaluation. It is important to see that it also works the other way around: criticism may unravel the background of a design, and provide an explanation for what is perceived by the public as inadequate. In this particular case I could, as the critic, conclude that Andersson, even if the design may have had failures, certainly could not be held accountable for all perceived misfits.

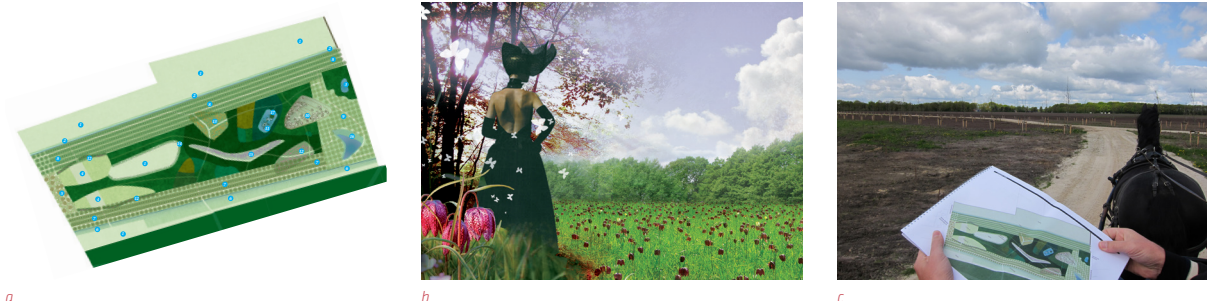


FIGURE 12 Plan, visualisation, and photograph of new estate *De Wilddobbe* in Grolloo, Drenthe. The photograph underlines the time aspect in landscape: drawings aim at a mature situation, to be reached after decades, as in this case. Designed 2008, completed 2009. Design by Strootman Landschapsarchitecten. (Image Strootman landschapsarchitecten, 2008).

The character of landscape architecture

For several reasons landscape architecture is its very own discipline. In particular, its relationship to nature poses difficulties for the critic. Many works designed by landscape architects could just as easily be understood as a part of landscape, as something which is simply there. Design, in that context, seems more a process of growth, as stated by Ingold. (Ingold, 1993; 2013) Therefore, although unintended, the statement by Carroll that we can only evaluate rocks if they 'enter the circuit of human affairs' seems to include landscape architecture. Critique in that sense is emancipatory: It tries to make us aware of the fact that landscape architectural pieces of art have an author. An important task for any critique is therefore to make clear what the piece of art is, in terms of authorship, in order to distinguish it from its surroundings and to understand it within the perspective of what it was before. This is not as evident as it may sound. A painting can be taken away. It is not so easy to take a piece of landscape architecture away as it was always preceded by a topography and a landscape. It is part of the critic's role to define exactly what the designed addition was, or perhaps even the *invention*, and how the history of the design has to be understood. The critic often has to evoke the 'before' and compare it to the piece of landscape architecture we see today. James Corner, in an important essay from the early nineties, pointed out the fact that landscape poses huge difficulties in its representation because of the particularities of landscape. (Corner, 1992) He mentioned spatiality, temporality and materiality. (Fig. 12abc)

With regard to temporality: Landscape evolves over time, one can only find an overview by moving around, and landscape can be experienced by more than just the eyes – it can be touched, smelled, or be windy and rainy. Landscape architecture operates in a medium that in many ways is dependent on time, and therefore changes over time. The chance of finding a landscape *as designed* is rather small. A recently finished building is often presented as 'the new kid in town'. A recently inaugurated piece of landscape design is different from what it is expected to become. In this sense, a critic must always be aware of what he or she is judging: the 'actuality' that Leatherbarrow speaks of, or what it was intended to be as judged by its text and drawings? (Leatherbarrow, 2009, p. 50) Some will choose the latter, with the argument that design in real life will be compromised for all sorts of banal reasons. By judging the design in terms of its drawings we restrict the evaluation to its abstract idea – to what it *could have been*. In my eyes, the intelligence of a designer to handle the banality of real life is under scrutiny in a critique. Many landscape architecture projects take years to be fully realised, and very often they are not recognised as pieces of art, so that changes are made without consulting the design. Building an argument that starts with the idea of the design can help to unravel this. In such cases, it is not done because reality is too banal, but to explain the tension between its actual state and its idea. These two difficulties meet each other in the question of what preceded the design, in terms of an assignment, the original landscape, or the history of a design

process. The reason to think that this is important is found in the claim that critique helps to improve the achievements of the discipline. By relating designed landscapes to the assignment they reacted to, and the landscape they originate from, successful approaches and promising ways of doing are detected.

An agenda for criticism

Music and musicology, or art and art history, are independent and at the same time closely related fields. Art history reflects on art – on the making of it, the author’s intention, or the position of an individual piece in the development of the arts as a whole. There is no such thing as ‘landscape architectureology’. Obviously, today’s academic landscape architecture programs also deploy research and reflection, supporting the theoretical foundation of landscape architecture, but still the study of the discipline and its products is meagre. Critique is a means to contribute to that. Critique, therefore, is a vital instrument for the development of the discipline. The forms of critique that aim to be part of a scholarly debate are especially interesting in this respect. Critique is not easily accepted as an academic activity, but I have shown that this should be turned around: critique *certainly* is a form of scholarly reflection, as long as it aims at grounded evaluation. For that reason, any agenda for critique in landscape architecture starts with the desire to expand criticism. This counts for all forms and styles of critique, but the academic form in particular needs to be invested in to become autonomous, indispensable, and convincing. Only by so doing can a body of knowledge and instructive examples be built up.

A first issue on the agenda, therefore, is strengthening the role of critique itself as part of a broader culture of reflection, credibility, and verification. Landscape architecture shares this aim with other disciplines that still can be considered young, and disciplines that strive to be acknowledged as also having academic qualities. In fact, studying such disciplines might help to better position particular aspects, such as how to relate the material thing to the intellectual idea, and the small but interesting differences between a book, a house, a piece of music or a landscape. A second issue would be to contribute to the identity of landscape architecture, whereas a third item would be much more practical: is there something like a list of landscape architecture designs that must be criticised as they are essential for the understanding of today’s practice and its larger significance? Indeed, critique also explores what landscape architecture *should be about*. (Fig. 13) This question could be the subject of a large essay on the discipline, but even by criticising a small individual piece of the design the critic can set the agenda for the profession in general. As an example I refer to a student’s critique from our critique masterclasses, in this case the 2015 Hochschule Weihenstephan Triesdorf masterclass. (Fig. 14)¹⁵



FIGURE 13 In some cases, interventions in public space are bewildering. From banal mistakes to wrong strategies, critique serves as an instrument to unravel failures, or to argue what should have been done, instead of the design as we find it.



FIGURE 14 In 2015 and 2016, several master classes were organized on critique writing: in Hannover, Alnarp and Weihenstephan. Several aspects of critique and critique writing were discussed. Very productive group discussions concerned preliminary titles of the critique.



FIGURE 15 Two images of the new extension of the botanical garden of Bordeaux, designed by landscape architect Catharine Mosbach. One of the 'striking features' of this design is that impressive pieces of French landscape are replaced by the botanical garden, including their soil strata, and that they are positioned so that we can see the soil strata, including their change over time.

The argument by Carmen Lopez and Jacqueline Wagner was that our society, and thus designed public space, often caters for young people as the preferred public. By criticising this, the critic points at a shortcoming in current landscape design. This is not to say we are obliged to share this viewpoint – on the contrary, I would take it as an invitation for debate. Not so much one specific viewpoint, but debate itself, is the goal of critique. Obviously, critique must not necessarily be restricted to an individual design. Critique can also address the entire oeuvre of an office, or a style, as in 'criticizing Modernism'. Critique can put forward previously unseen perspectives, or highlight neglected phenomena.

Then there is the list of essential pieces of landscape architecture. I propose to simply complete the criticising of these works. This concerns known projects of which the importance is obvious. A recent issue of *Journal of Landscape Architecture* presented a critical reading of Parc de La Villette. (Jovanovic & Baumann, 2015) (see Fig. 9ab) It is a crucial example of twentieth century landscape architecture, and so important that it would be very interesting to have *more* critiques written on La Villette from different angles. More recent essential works could, for example, be Landschaftspark München-Riem by Latitude Nord, or Catherine Mosbach's Jardin Botanique in Bordeaux. (Fig. 15ab) Such a list refers to an emerging idea about what is essential. Obviously, this is debatable, but it is exactly this debate that helps to sharpen our idea of landscape architecture. For that reason, it is even more important that a critic present new and previously unknown projects, as a guide who wants to throw light on something we *should* know. In doing so, the critic helps to shape a shared understanding of what are canonical examples of landscape architecture. As the landscape architecture profession has very different faces in Europe, and even more worldwide, critique is also a means to compare approaches, both to cultivate regional differences and to harmonize ways of doing. Just as in architecture, critics must chase new projects to meet our desire to know what is going on. Particularly in landscape architecture, as argued, criticism should dissect projects that have been in use for some time - for example, 5 years. I consider this a major task for theoreticians in landscape architecture: how do original designs, their intentions and their drawings relate to the actuality over time?

In this essay I focussed on critique as a written genre that is mainly disseminated via journals, magazines, and websites. The larger frame is a culture of criticism, and such a culture can already be established in that specific educational form of the design disciplines: the design studio. It is in the design studio that newcomers in the discipline can be trained in receiving criticism, applying criticism in future work, and criticising fellow students to master the genre. Sadly enough, it may be the specific culture of the design studio that feeds the persisting idea of critique as unfair and harsh. I propose to stick to the maxim of Carroll that criticism is 'grounded evaluation'. It is especially in written critique, and more particularly in its academic form, that this grounded evaluation can be explored.

Biography

Noël van Dooren is a Wageningen trained landscape architect. He is an independent advisor, teacher, researcher and writer. From 1994 until 2002, he joined the *Blauwe Kamer* board and wrote about 40 critiques - in Dutch. From 2013 until 2016, he joined the editorial team of *Journal of Landscape Architecture* for the critique section *Under the Sky*. In early 2017 he defended his PhD *Drawing Time* at the University of Amsterdam. In 2004-2009 he headed the landscape architecture department of the Academy of Architecture Amsterdam. He currently holds the professorship *Sustainable foodscapes in urban regions* at Van Hall Larenstein Velp.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- [1] A selection of digital publications on Superkilen, as approached on 20-01-2016:
<http://mplsparksfoundation.org/2013/08/09/no-bull-superkilen-is-the-next-generation-of-parks-case-study/>
<http://philosophiesresarc.net/2013/04/15/conceptual-cluster-9-ficto-criticism/>
https://www.google.nl/search?q=topotek2&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=ppmfVuPRDIrUcnftKAJ#q=superkilen+critique&start=20
<https://streetswithoutcars.wordpress.com/2014/08/25/superkilen/>
<http://dirt.asla.org/2013/03/14/superkilen-global-mash-up-of-a-park/>
http://www.mythologicalquarter.net/s/SUPERKILEN_Brett_Bloom_2013.pdf
https://twitter.com/perform_city/status/325207094028562434
<http://www.groupechronos.org/publications/blog/creativity-and-participation-as-a-social-tool-in-the-public-space-report-on-copenhagen-s-superkilen#sthash.37wX8UAE.dpuf>
- [2] In the Netherlands, this can be found back in the magazine *Plan*, but in this period broader phenomena of landscape were debated, more than particular built projects.
- [3] For an argument about research on landscape architecture see for example Lenzholzer, S., Duchhart, I. and Koh, J. (2013) 'Research through designing' in landscape architecture. *Landscape and urban planning*, 113, 120-127.
- [4] These masterclasses *Criticizing practice, practising critique* started in 2015 in Weihenstephan, Germany, followed by installments in Hannover, Germany (2015) and Alnarp, Sweden (2016). Next installments will follow, and a publication is in preparation.
- [5] See for example Kant, I. (2011) *The critique of the pure reason*. Translated version by J. Meiklejohn. Seattle: Pacific Publishing Studio.
- [6] An introduction on critical thinking or critical theory can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_thinking, or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_theory
- [7] Gerrit Komrij wrote in 1983 *Het boze oog*, which could be translated as 'The evil eye'. There is no translation available.
- [8] This is my translation of Komrij 1983, 28. The original Dutch text is: 'Er bestaan twee maquettewetten: 1) is de maquette lelijk, dan is het resultaat later lelijk; 2) is de maquette mooi, dan is het resultaat later ook lelijk.'
- [9] See for example Blanchon and Gill, 2014
- [10] Wimsatt and Beardsley did so in *The Verbal Icon* (1954).
- [11] The word 'consciously' points at the fact that there are quite a number other texts that were not categorized as critique, but could or should be understood in that way.
- [12] Obviously, other languages expand the collection. Those who read Dutch would find another 50-100 examples.
- [13] This refers to my own practical experience in writing critiques for *Blauwe Kamer*.
- [14] As illustrated by Schön (1983).
- [15] Unpublished critique by TU München students Carmen Lopez and Jacqueline Wagner (2015) titled *Even mermaids get old*.