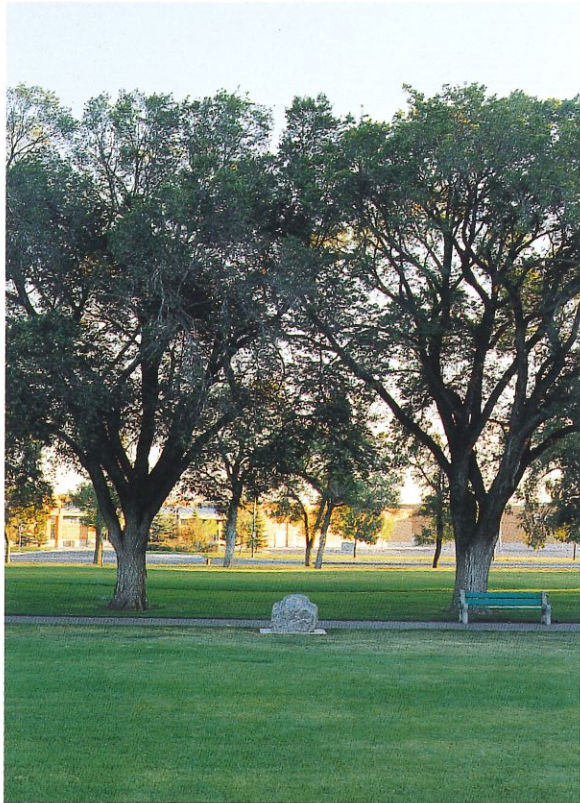

NATURE REDUX



Carl Granzow

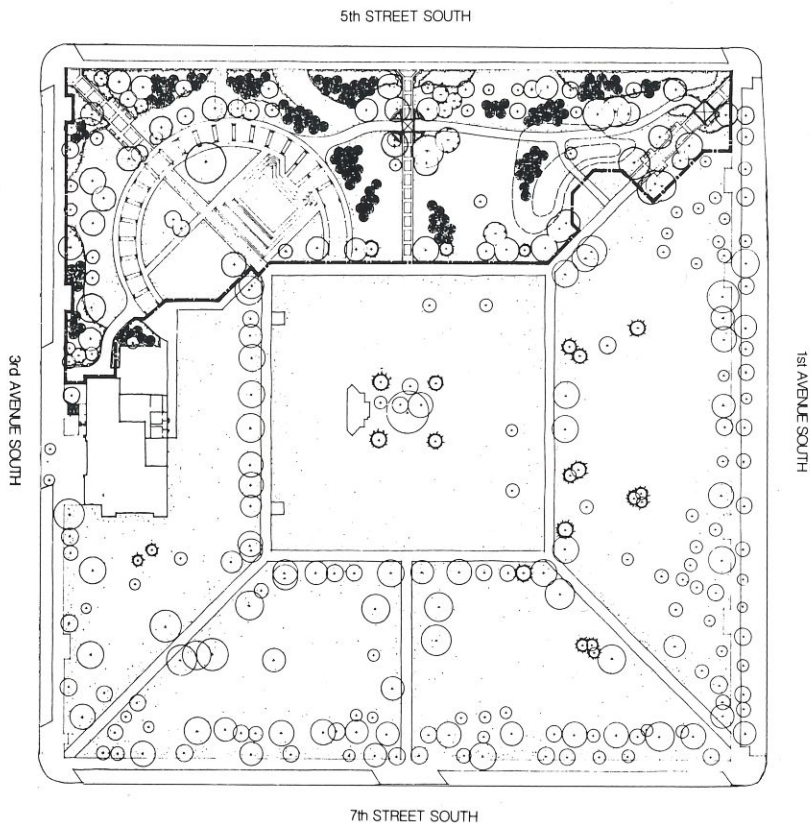
Bart Habermiller

Susan Shantz

Laurie Walker

Tim Watkins

NATURE REDUX



Carl Granzow

Bart Habermiller

Susan Shantz

Laurie Walker

Tim Watkins

SOUTHERN ALBERTA ART GALLERY

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

Nature Redux

Southern Alberta Art Gallery

August 3 - September 29, 1996

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THE CANADA COUNCIL
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LE CONSEIL DES ARTS
DU CANADA
DEPUIS 1957



The Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts

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Carl Granzow, *Eccentricities*, 1996

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed to the success of the exhibition *Nature Redux* and this publication. It is my pleasure to convey our thanks and appreciation for their efforts. The artists — Carl Granzow, Bart Habermiller, Susan Shantz, Laurie Walker and Tim Watkins all displayed remarkable enthusiasm and commitment to our project. Tim Watkins first approached us a number of years ago with the idea of an outdoor sculpture exhibition in Galt Gardens Park, which is adjacent to the gallery building. An unusual opportunity presented itself in 1996 when the gallery building was closed for renovations during the month of August.

Bart Habermiller and Tim Watkins acted as co-curators of the exhibition and suggested the title *Nature Redux*. The three additional artists — Granzow, Shantz and Walker were selected because their practices are oriented towards site work or the utilization of natural materials. All of the artists were given information regarding the history of Galt Gardens and asked to produce work specific to that site. Their response was admirable, providing works that reflect not only the rich past of the park, but also the concerns of their individual practices.

Nancy Tousley, Calgary writer and critic, kindly agreed to contribute to our publication and, through her research, has provided a context for the project. The framework of historical and contemporary quotations she offers addresses the broader concerns of landscape and art while also conveying the history of the Galt Gardens site.

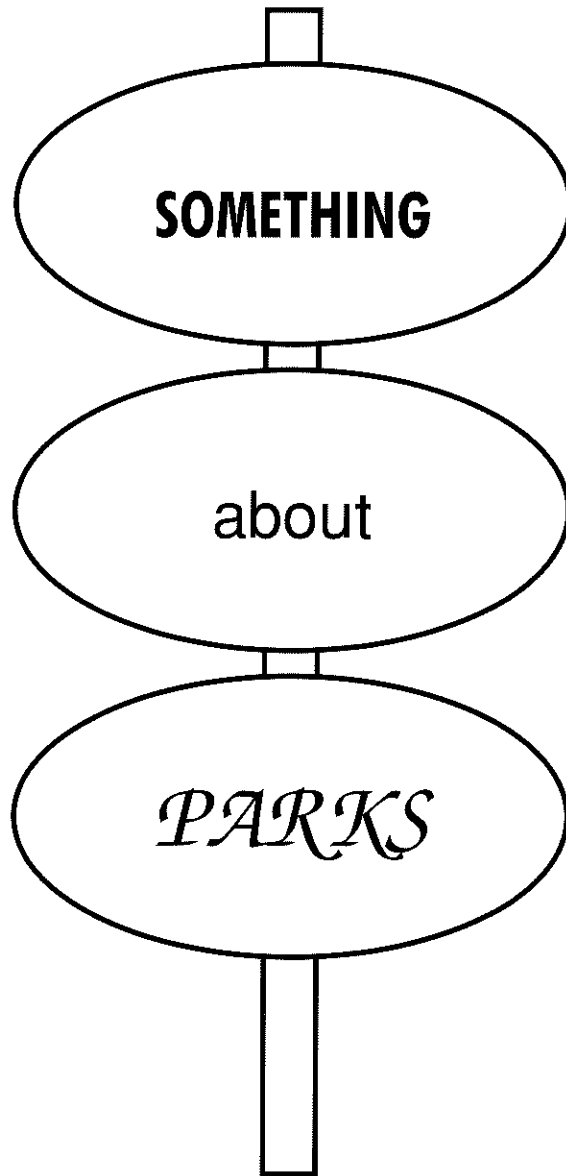
We invited David Garneau, Calgary critic, artist and writer, to provide a text for the publication which addresses the work in relation to the parameters of the exhibition. Garneau's scholarly background in both art and American literature proved ideal as a base from which to discuss the complex issues surrounding art and landscape. His presence during the installation of the site works brings an engaging immediacy to the writing and allows for a thorough examination of the "public" aspect of the artists' labours. Garneau deftly manages to interweave the past and the present in his multi-layered text, thereby providing the reader with a sociology of the park within his critical assessment of the work. We are appreciative of both writers' efforts to make this publication a document which extends the exhibition beyond the specificity of the works.

Nature Redux required extraordinary technical assistance and we are most grateful for the generous contributions of the City of Lethbridge Parks and Electrical Department, Flexahopper Plastics Ltd., Lethbridge Custom Canvas Ltd., McLellan Fencing Inc., Mountain Minerals Co. Ltd. and National Salvage Co. Ltd.. The artists and our technician Pat Horrocks received welcome support from Tammy Izsak, Mary Kavanaugh, Marianne McTrowe, Robin Moody and Debbie Strub.

Judy Cheung spent several days photographing the works on site, sometimes under precarious weather conditions; we are thankful for her perseverance. Charles Cousins in Calgary has skillfully woven together the elements of our project to create a handsome document of the event.

Finally, we are pleased to acknowledge the financial support of The Canada Council Exhibition Assistance Program and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts which has made possible this exhibition and publication.

Joan Stebbins
Director/Curator



Nancy Tousley

WHY MAKE A PARK IN A PRAIRIE TOWN?

Once known for its coal mines, Lethbridge, Alberta straddles a coulee system cut by the Oldman River running through a vast and magnificent grasslands prairie. The natural environment is spectacular. When the wind blows, which seems always to be the case, the rippling grasses might be the hair of a huge sleeping dog or an inland sea with a running tide. The surface of the treeless land is alive. To the north, south and east, the horizon is a long way away. The Rocky Mountains lie off in the distance to the west.



In this landscape, the park is a postage stamp, a spot.

No, as the crow flies,
it is a speck,
insignificant in any context
but that of
the
town.



*"The overriding feature of every vista
and every event in the western interior was that
they were all created by the unaided forces of nature.
Here was the world, William Butler commented in 1872, as it had taken
shape in the hands of the Creator."*

Gerald Friesen, THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES: A HISTORY, p. 9

*


“The new arrivals found themselves in country that defeated the best efforts of the eye to get it in sharp focus. It went on interminably in every direction. In late summer (the season recommended to homesteaders as the best time of year to come to Montana), the yellow land looked like bad skin — a welter of blisters, pimples, bumps and boils. With no trees to frame it, no commanding hills to lend it depth and perspective, it gave people vertigo. You couldn’t get your bearings — or, rather, you had no sooner selected them than they went absent without leave. Was it this pimple? or that one? — or that one over there? It was scary country in which to take a stroll. You felt lost in it before you started.

It was not quite raw *land*, but nor was it *landscape*.”

Jonathan Raban, BAD LAND: AN AMERICAN ROMANCE, page 51

ne eye to
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Click. Click. Click. Click. Click. Head swivelling like an owl's, I tried to shoot my own panorama in 40-degree liths, but the exercise only emphasized even further the inadequacy of the lens, its congenital tunnel vision. Or, rather, it revealed my own congenital tunnel vision. Bred to looking at landscape as if it were a picture, to the posted scenic viewpoint, I was responding to the prairie like a shut-in taking his first walk across a blinding city square. It was all periphery and no centre, and I could feel my eyes doing some kind of callisthenic work-out in their sockets.

Back at the wheel, I blamed the landscape painters for my habitual telephoto view of things. It would take a very long, narrow-angled lens to frame Flatford Mill or Salisbury Cathedral as John Constable painted them - and the art of the traditional landscapist is all about excluding most of what the eye naturally sees and focusing on a tight rectangle, a 'vista'. Jonathan Raban, *BAD LAND: AN AMERICAN ROMANCE*, page 63

A VISTA

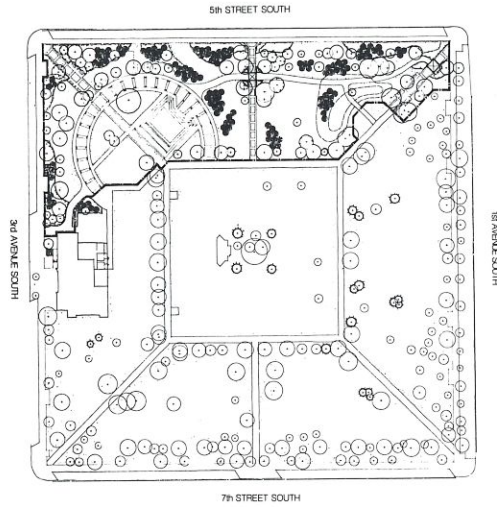
A TIGHT RECTANGLE

A PARK

park (*pärk*). n. 1. an area of land, usually in a natural state, for the enjoyment of the public, having facilities for rest and recreation, usually owned, set apart, and managed by a city, state, or nation. 2. an enclosed area or stadium used for sports: *a baseball park*. 3. a considerable extent of land forming the grounds of a country house. 4. *Brit.* a tract of land reserved for wild animals: game preserve. 5. *U.S.* a broad valley in a mountainous region. 6. a space where vehicles, esp. automobiles, may be assembled or stationed. 7. *Mil.* a. the space occupied by the assembled guns, tanks, or vehicles of a military unit. b. the assemblage so formed. c. (formerly) the ammunition trains and reserve artillery of an army. — *v.t.* 8. to halt (one's vehicle) with the intention of not using it again immediately. 9. *Informal.* to put or leave: *He decided to park his package at her office. She parked the car at Grandmother's house.* 10. to assemble (equipment or supplies) in a military park. 11. to enclose in or as in a park. — *v.i.* 12. to park a car, bicycle, etc. 13. *Informal.* to engage in love-making in a parked car: *They used to park for hours on the drive near the water tower.* [ME < OF *parc* enclosure < LL **parric(us)* < Gmc. See PADDOCK¹] — **park'like**, *adj.*

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, The Unabridged Edition





A PLAN OF GALT GARDENS PARK

The entry for **park** in
The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
provides
a capsule history:

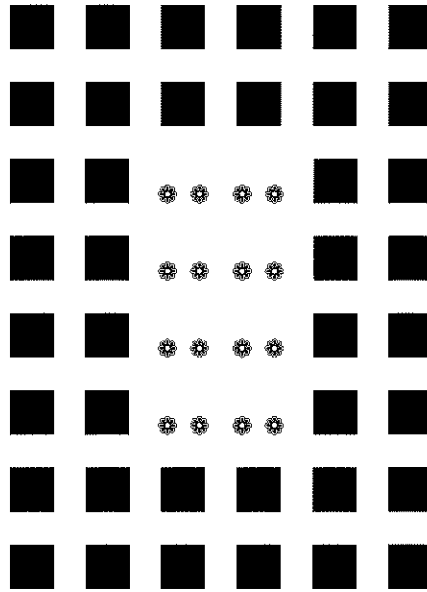
1. An enclosed tract of land reserved for hunting, held by royal grant or prescription and stocked with deer etc. Now chiefly *Hist.* exc. in proper names. ME **b** A large ornamentally landscaped area, usu. with woodland and pasture, attached to a country house, and used for recreation and occas. for keeping deer, cattle, or sheep. Freq. in names of estates. E18. 2. An enclosed piece of land for pasture or tillage; a paddock. *dial.* LME **† b** An enclosure into which animals are driven for slaughter; a corral. *US.* L18-M19. 3. An enclosed area for public recreation, usu. large and ornamentally landscaped, esp. in or adjoining a city or town. Freq. in proper names. M17.





NB: A park is
an invention with cultural,
botanical, historical,
social, economic, and
political significance.

A part of the urban
environment, it represents
nature extracted from
nature, an ornamental
reminder of nature, an
arcadian echo, a preserve,
a simulacrum, artificial
nature. *Nature redux*



“ . . . The anonymous American grid was not chosen for military convenience, as in the ancient world, or bureaucratic standardization, as in the Laws of the Indies. It was adopted for easy and rapid real estate development, but it also turned out to be an ideal accommodating device for a tolerant society.

Seventeenth-century grid planning did incorporate a new type of urban space for which there was no contemporary European precedent: the broad tree-lined residential street. This emphasis on trees was distinctive, and was epitomized by the characteristic American habit (popularized, if not invented, by William Penn) of naming streets after trees. Surrounded by nature, American town builders reacted not by emphasizing the contrast between the natural and the man-made, but by incorporating natural elements in the town as much as possible, whether as green squares, tree-lined streets, or ample gardens. There were practical reasons for this interest in greenery. The summers of the eastern seaboard of North America were extremely hot and humid, more so than those of northern Europe, first home to most of the early immigrants. Spacing houses far apart and planting large trees for shade created a more comfortable town. The desire for cooling greenery continued in the nineteenth century in enormous undertakings to build large urban parks (New York's Central Park, Montreal's Mount Royal Park) and to create urban lakes (Minneapolis, Denver, Seattle), urban wilderness areas (Philadelphia, Toronto), urban lakeside recreation areas (Chicago). It is also part of the motivation that produced nineteenth-century garden suburbs. In some way this “naturalization” of the city represents an unconscious move away from the man-made and toward the American Indian urban model, in which architecture was subordinated to the landscape.”

Witold Rybczynski, CITY LIFE, pages 80-81



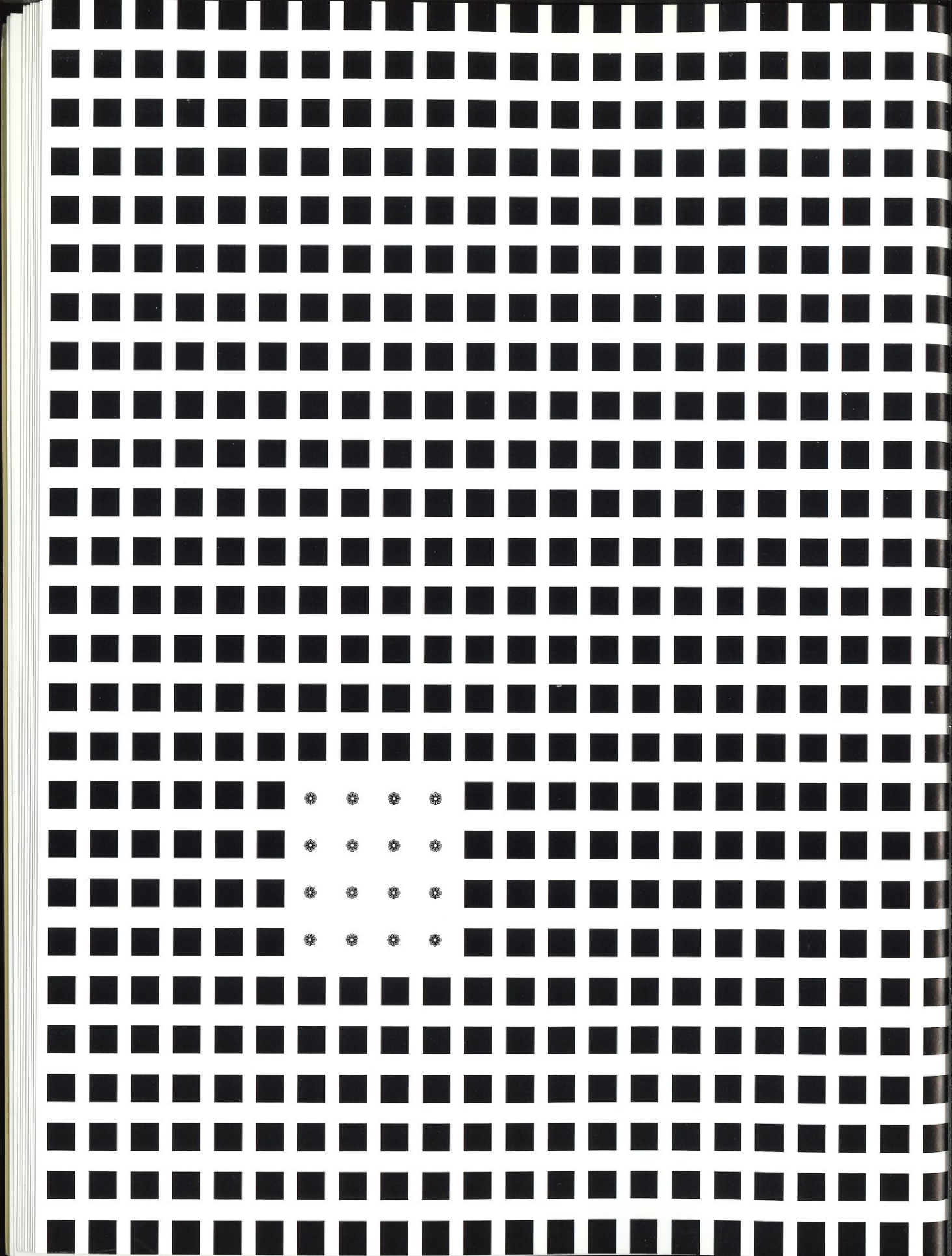
Frederick Law Olmsted, who was a farmer, a reporter, a transcendentalist and a designer of parks planned most of the great city

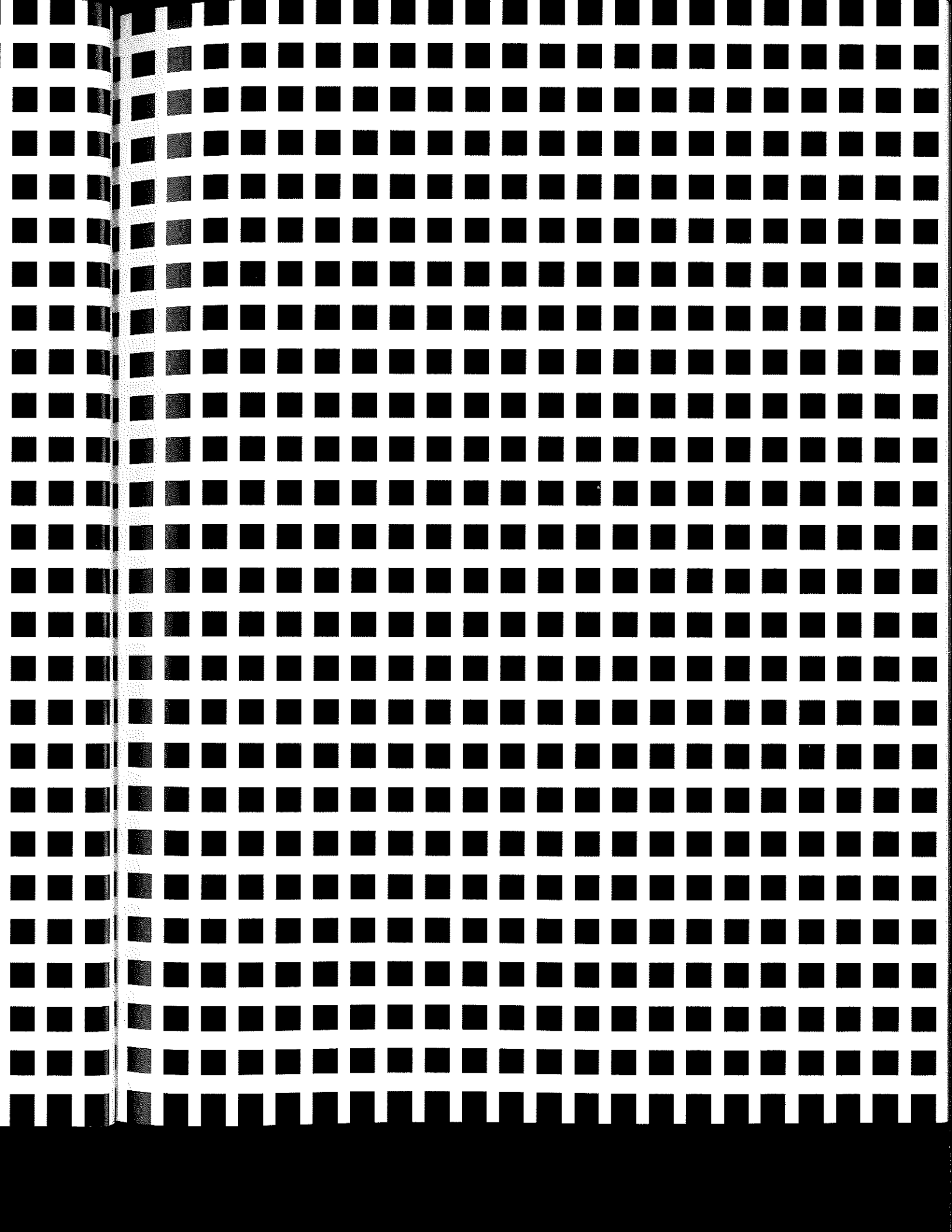
parks in North America during the mid- to late-19th century and exerted an enormous influence on landscape architecture. "A small ornamental footbridge does bring together what Olmsted saw and thought as a reporter and what he put into his parks. He developed, in a fragmented and improvised way, a prescient belief that the basis of democracy lies in what we now call civil society but which he, using a better name, called 'commonplace civilization.' The pressure that drove him from one career to the other was the pressure of this discovery. When we walk in the Park, what we are seeing is not a protected bit of nature but something more original: a democratic playground, a liberal common, the ideal anti-plantation. . . Building a better park was a way of helping to shelter commonplace civilization. A liberal society couldn't tell people what games to play, but it could build a park where they could play them."

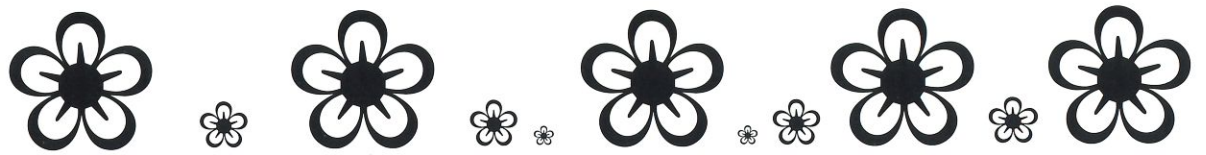
Adam Gopnik, "A Critic at Large: Frederick Law Olmsted and Central Park,"
The New Yorker (March 31, 1997), pp. 96 and 101.

The largest European parks, like Paris's Bois de Boulogne or London's Hampstead Heath, were outside the city; central urban parks were limited by the cost of acquiring land. London's Victoria Park, for example, which was laid out in 1842, is about 200 acres, and the older Hyde Park is smaller than that; the Tuileries gardens is only 56 acres. Since the construction of urban parks in America coincided with the early stages of cities' growth, it was easier and cheaper to appropriate empty land for park building, and Olmsted was able to achieve an unprecedented scale in many of his parks: Mount Royal Park in Montreal, one of his smallest parks, covers 450 acres. Brooklyn's Prospect Park is more than 500 acres; Central Park spreads over 840 acres; San Francisco's Golden Gate Park is more than 1,000 acres, and Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, the largest urban park in [North America], encompasses about 3,800 acres.

Witold Rybczynski, CITY LIFE, pp. 125-126.



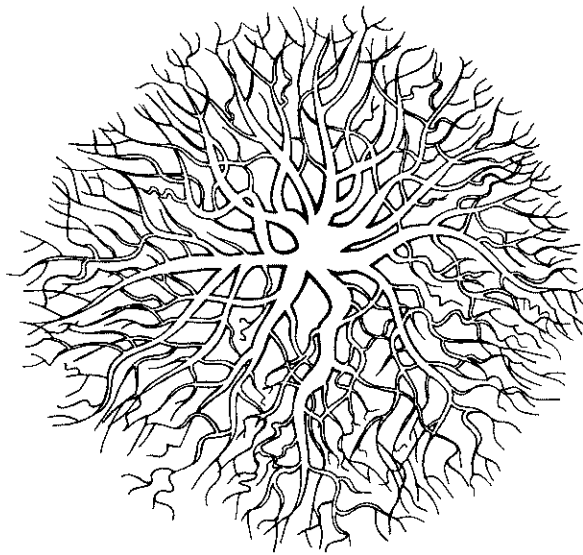




 A park was in the original
 plan of Lethbridge drawn
up in 1885.  The ten-acre plot,
where Galt Gardens Park  is
now, was to serve  as park and
playground  for the major
urban  centre expected to grow
up around it.   



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A BREATHING SPACE



At first the treeless open space up on the prairie above the coulee was known simply as the square, then *The Square* or, sometimes, *The Public Square*.



"The business district began to develop on the west and south sides of the park and somewhat later on the east side. At the time the Square was simply an expanse of native vegetation. Nevertheless, it proved to be useful as a place to tie up horses and park travois, carriages, stage coaches and wagons or as a location to rest oxen from the increasingly fewer bull trains. From this circumstance a local myth has evolved, namely, that the Square was set aside by the Galts as a turning around place for the bull trains from Fort Benton." Alex Johnston, LETHBRIDGE: GALT GARDENS PARK, p. 4.

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ARK, p. 4.

APPENDIX 11
Description of Galt Gardens Park

A 9.16-acre [3.71 ha] park, located between 1st and 3rd Avenues and 5th and 7th Streets South. The park was located on the first (1885) town plan after approval from Elliott Torrance Galt, general manager of the North Western Coal and Navigation Company, Limited, and Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, founder of the company. In 1885 it was a ten-acre [4.05] open space, called The Square, designed to be a park and playground, and a breathing space, for the city that Elliott Galt and his father were confident would one day grow up around it. Thus the property, variously called the square (1885-c.1890), The Square (1885-c.1900), The Public Square and occasionally The City Park (c. 1900-1909), Galt Park and occasionally Galt Square (1909-1913), Galt Gardens (1913-1980), and Galt Gardens Park (1980) was the first of 75 parks and playgrounds in the City of Lethbridge or under development there in 1988. Since 1909 the name has commemorated the Galt family, notably Elliott and Sir Alexander, which developed Lethbridge. Part of the property was donated to the City of Lethbridge by Elliott Galt and his half-brother John Galt in September 1908, turned over to the city by the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company in August 1910, and formalized by act of the Alberta Legislature in December 1910. The remaining 200 feet [61 m] square central Reserve was transferred from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to the City of Lethbridge in September 1926.





SOME PARK HISTORY

From LETHBRIDGE: GALT GARDENS PARK by Alex Johnston

■ 27 March 1889, The Lethbridge News: "Now that spring is again opening and the **baseball** and **cricket** clubs have organized, the question of **fencing** the square comes up once more for consideration. Last fall a subscription list was started and some money was collected. The NWC&NCo promised to supply the posts if citizens would dig postholes and enclose the square with light chain. Such action would prevent thoughtless teamsters from driving across the playing fields and improve the appearance of the town." (Quoted page 4)

■ A *bandstand* was erected on the Square in 1889. It was simply a raised platform of raw lumber decorated while in use with bunting of various colors. (Page 4)

■ Responsibility for planting of **trees** on the Square was formally assigned to the Board of Trade by Council on 1 May 1891. However, Board of Trade members voted against taking any action until an assured source of water to care for the trees could be obtained. (Page 9)

■ On 3 June 1906 council asked the Lethbridge Iron Works to fabricate about a dozen iron **benches** for the Public Square, each bench to be ten feet [3.0 m] long. Three sides of the Square were to be plowed and **cinder paths** built; the north side of the park had already been done. (Page 4)

■ Gradually improvements were made to the first bandstand. The building that resulted was called the **publicity building** and consisted by 19 April 1909 of an elevated bandstand with bell-



shaped roof, which was reached by an outside curved staircase. It sat atop one glass-fronted room. The room was used to **display** samples of locally grown grains and grasses as well as carefully chosen photographs of the region, and to distribute the wildly optimistic promotional literature of the day. (Page 7)

■ An assured source of water became available on 4 September 1900 when **irrigation** first reached Lethbridge. Ditches were constructed throughout the town and trees were planted in two neat but monotonous rows around the periphery of the park in 1901. (Page 9)

■ **Circuses** were permitted to set up on the north end of the park around 1909, for example, the C.W. Parker Shows played Lethbridge on 12-16 July. A correspondent noted that heavy wagons drove over boulevards and grassed areas to deliver materials, circus animals and other equipment to the site. (Page 7)

■ . . . the property was described as "**an unsightly commons**" as late as September 1909. (Page 9)

■ The first real attempt at **landscaping** took place in 1910. (Page 9)

■ The park gradually took on the air of a *formal garden*. (Page 9)

■ A \$34,000 Carnegie Foundation-funded **public library** was built on a site in Galt Gardens opposite 6th Street South and was opened without fanfare in January 1922. (Page 7)

■ On 25 September 1944, Walter Gurney applied to the city to lease the former Board of Trade building (*the aforementioned bandstand*) as a **museum**. His application was approved on 19 October and Gurney's Museum (*of curios and oddities*) became a fixture in the city. (Page 7)

■ The renovated Carnegie library reopened as the **Southern Alberta Art Gallery** in 1976.

A war
memorial was
discussed in
Lethbridge as
early as 1918.

Civil War
monuments
dominate in
American Cities.

In Canadian
cities, towns and
villages, it is
memorials to the
Great War of
1914-1918.

They stand in public squares
and parks or in front of legion
halls, columns and shafts and
bases bearing soldiers militant,
with bayonets levelled forever

against some unseen foe; soldiers in
extremis, struggling through mortal grief
and danger; and soldiers pensive and at
rest, the horrors at last behind them.

The Cenotaph in Galt Gardens Park
recalls the futility and the sacrifice, the
hysteria and the heroism of the Great War
Years. Sculptured by Coeur de Leon
McCarthy of Montreal, it was unveiled on
7 June 1931. It cost \$10,232, of which
\$8,500 went to the sculptor, all raised by
public subscription. The memorial
embodies a Canadian soldier,
surmounting a pedestal, the whole
attaining a height of 23 feet (7.0m).

The pedestal is of selected granite
quarried at Granite Island, Vancouver. It
measures three feet (0.9m) square at the
cap, on the face of which is a bronze
wreath of maple leaves and poppies...

The statue is of a Canadian soldier cast in bronze in full marching order, standing with
arms reversed. It measures nine feet (2.7m) high at the plinth...*Alex Johnston,*
Lethbridge: Galt Gardens Park, *p.11 and p. 12*

The Cenotaph, 1931

Bronze

Coeur de Leon McCarthy

The first sculpture commission for
Galt Gardens Park





“The square is one of our most valuable public assets. It enhances the value of every property facing upon it. One of the most pleasant sights in Lethbridge, both to the eye and to the mind, is offered by the groups of young men and boys who find in the square every summer evening a place for athletic games they would otherwise lack.” **Editorial, Lethbridge News, 8 June 1906**

Quoted in **LETHBRIDGE: GALT GARDENS PARK**
by Alex Johnston, p. 4



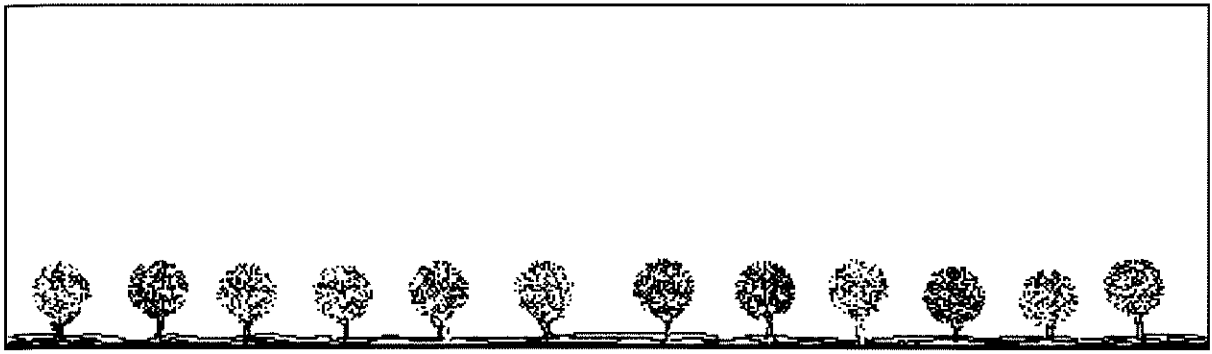
Anti-social behavior (in the park) was not brought officially to city council's attention until 26 July 1965, when it was reported that Galt Gardens were being used by transients. There was much litter, considerable drunkenness, panhandling and begging. Council members called for a by-law to stop it.

This behavior, which was never as bad as was portrayed in sensationalized feature articles and in letters to the Editor, has continued. There is no doubt that in the past decade or so, the public perception of the park was such that people simply stayed away from the place. These penalties seem to have been eased in recent years as the realization has grown that anti-social behavior in Galt Gardens Park is simply a manifestation of much greater social problems elsewhere.

LETHBRIDGE: GALT GARDENS PARK by Alex Johnston, p. 10

Over the 103 years of its existence, Galt Gardens Park has evolved from an expanse of native prairie to a civic playground, a meeting place, an ornamental park, and finally to a sedentary sitting-down type of park. In 1988, it was undergoing still another major change in use, the type and direction of which was difficult to discern.

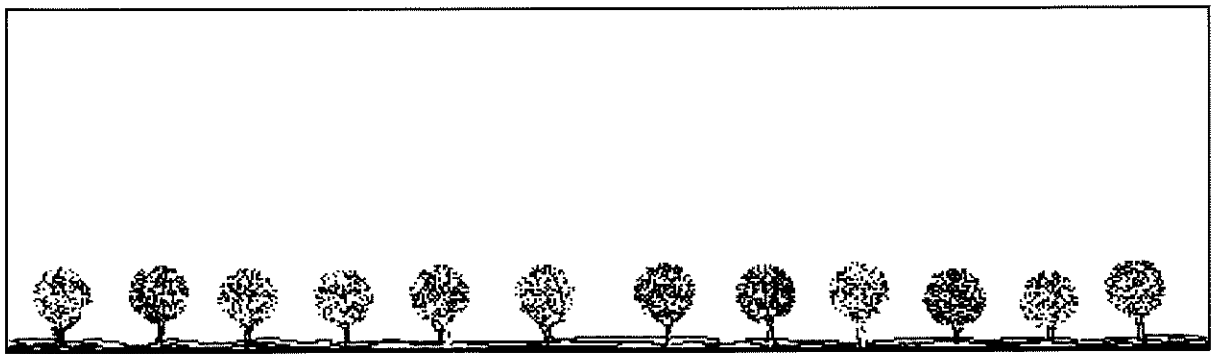
When Montague Aldous in February-March 1885 surveyed the ten-acre [4.05-ha] area, its cover consisted mostly of blue grama *Bouteloua gracilis* and fringed sage *Artemisia frigida*. This is the vegetation type called by modern environmentalists "Shortgrass Prairie," but classed nowadays as poor condition Mixed Prairie. Other prairie species that would have been present include needle-and-thread *Stipa comata*, western wheatgrass *Agropyron smithii*, June grass *Koeleria cristata*, Sandberg's bluegrass *Poa secunda*, pin cushion cactus *Mamillaria vivipara*, winterfat *Eurotia lanata*, and a variety of forbs. Native vegetation cannot stand much "wear" so we may assume that the feet of cricketers, ballplayers and their fans soon created much bare ground.

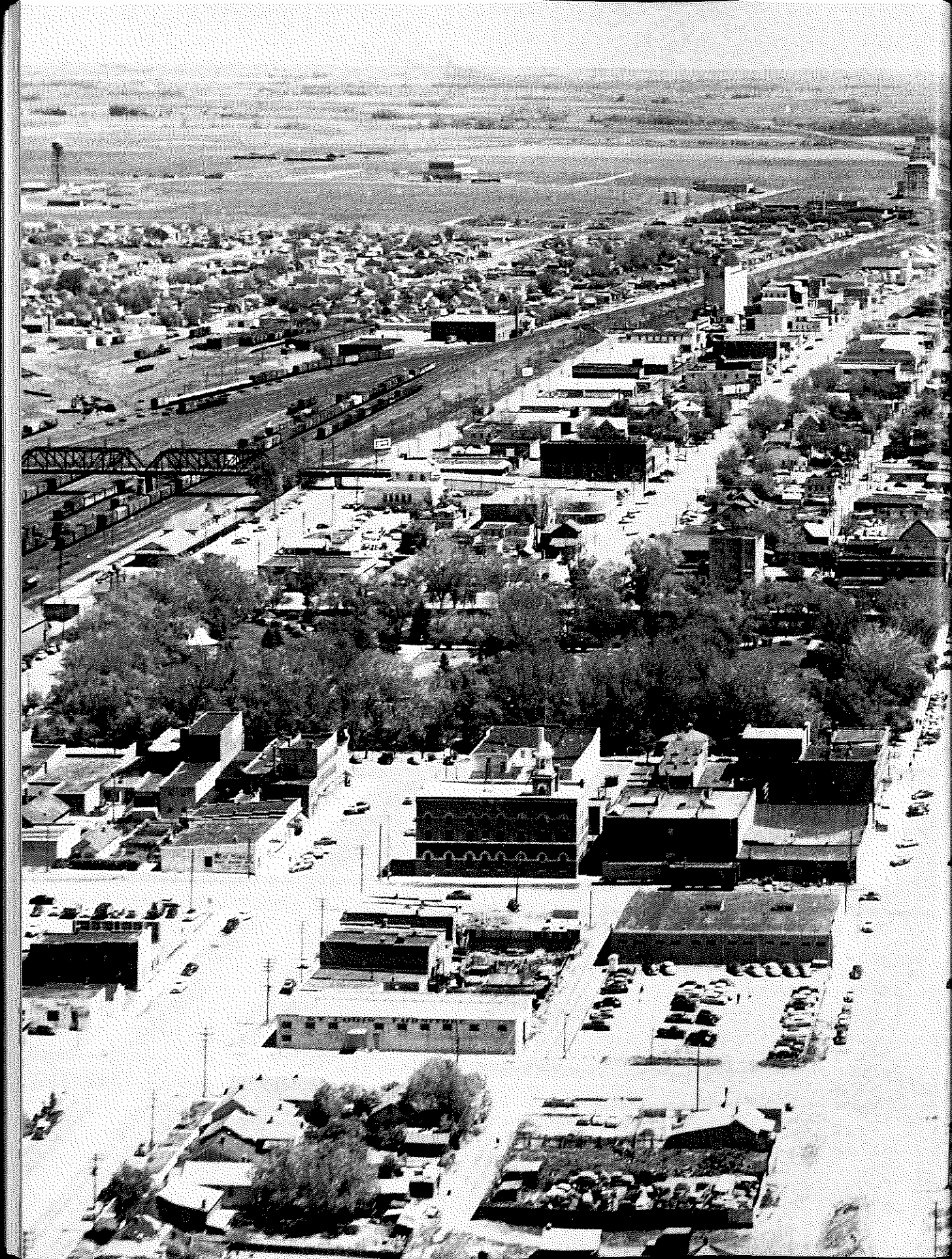


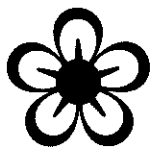
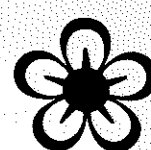
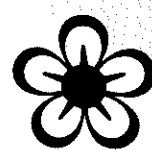
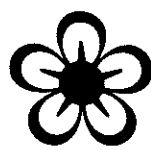
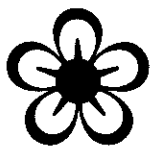
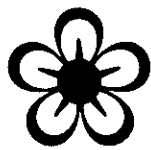
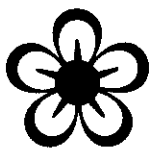
... Versions of the English park persist right through the Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist landscape work of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and an impoverished version of it — lawn-and-trees — is still the mainstay of contemporary municipal park work.

Pastoralism has a long history in Western culture. It promotes a view of nature as a kindly mother, a refuge from the demands of urban life. The Earth, in this view, is a garden of Eden, generous and fertile. Mother Earth provides us with food, rest, diversion and solace. Nature in this tradition — and it is an ancient tradition, predating both science and Christianity — is an analogue of the female body. The pastoral tradition is the obverse of another Western tradition — equally primal — which understands nature as chaos and death.

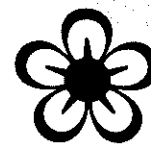
ALEXANDER WILSON, *THE CULTURE OF NATURE*, PAGE 94



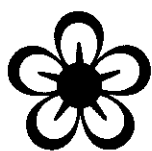




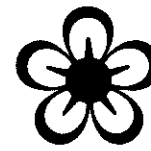
*N*ature is in part a human



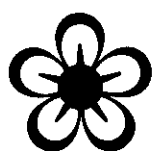
construction after all.



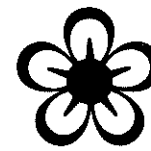
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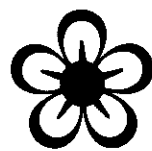
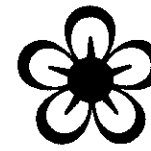
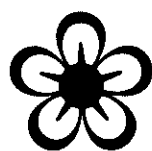
our culture's ideas about nature



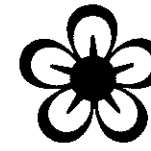
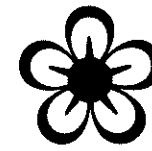
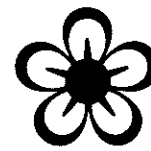
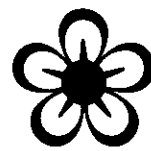
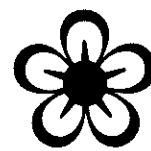
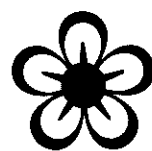
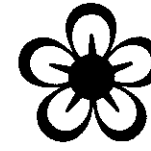
are already out there on the land itself



as we move around it.



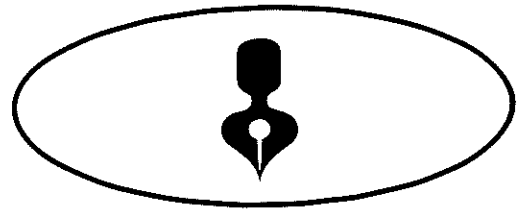
Alexander Wilson, *THE CULTURE OF NATURE:
North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez*, p. 124



*Once the heart of
the town, Galt*

Gardens Park has been displaced by the growth of the business district, especially after a downtown mall opened in the late 1980's, repeating an urban history being written in small cities all over North America.


The park created by the Galts in the late 1880's combined the influence of the eighteenth-century English park and the democratic park of North America. Out on the edge of the prairies, where non-native trees and lawn grasses could be cultivated only with irrigation, a park was as much an emblem of civilized European or eastern life as it was anything else. On the prairies, it was imported nature. Now it is an artifact of industrialization in a post-industrial world in which the mall is assuming the park's role as a place for getting together and recreation.



In their designs for the enclosed shopping mall,

designers have altogether abandoned the exterior of the complex. Inside, however, something else is going on. In the chic upmarket malls of wealthy areas, plantings are lavish: trees ten to twenty metres tall, formal hedges, fountains, beds of massed tropicals, often in the late nineteenth-century ornamental style that had been banished by modernism. Many malls, in fact, consciously imitate glass-roofed Victorian botanical gardens. Even in the shabbiest of contemporary malls there are constant references to gardens and to nature.

Alexander Wilson,
THE CULTURE OF NATURE,
pp. 107-108

nature  redux



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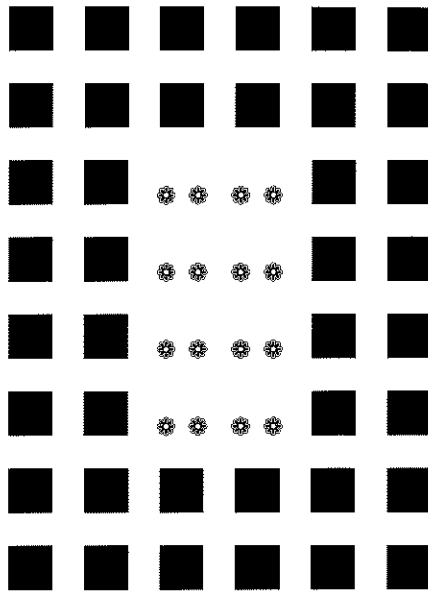
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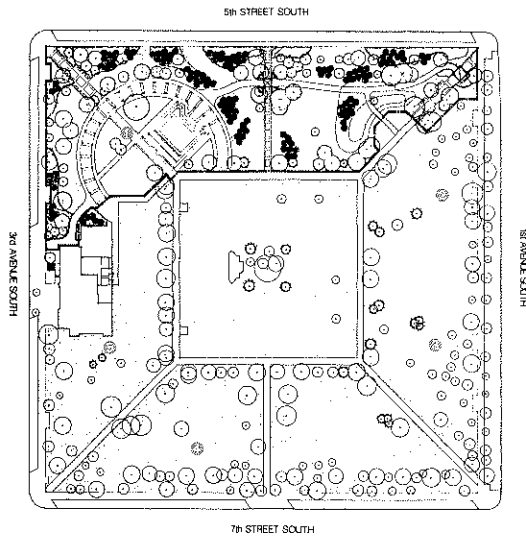
Photographs

Town of Lethbridge on 20 November 1886, taken from about 10th Street and 4th Avenue South
Sir Alexander Galt Museum p. 11

Temperature was 53 degrees F, there was no wind, and Lethbridge won the baseball game, which was played on The Square (now Galt Gardens), by a score of 13 to 1.
Sir Alexander Galt Museum p. 26

An aerial view of Galt Gardens and downtown Lethbridge in 1930.
Sir Alexander Galt Museum p. 30

Railway yards, Galt Gardens and vicinity about 1950, looking east.
Sir Alexander Galt Museum p. 34



❶ Susan Shantz

❷ Carl Granzow

❸ Laurie Walker

❹ Tim Watkins

❺ Bart Habermiller

NATURE REDUX: MULTIPLE NATURES

David Garneau

I: PERFORMING THE INSTALLATION: THE LABOUR OF THE WORK

I watched Laurie Walker, Bart Habermiller, Tim Watkins, and Susan Shantz build their sculptures in Galt Gardens Park (Carl Granzow was ahead of schedule). They dug, drilled, wired, cut, mixed, watered, and laboured much like other outdoor civic workers. But the things they fabricated and tended were anything but familiar. And as they worked I am sure I caught a flash of awkwardness light each of their faces at various times. These were moments when the unusualness of their activity or the strangeness of the site/sight—of committing a private act in public—seemed to catch up to them.

*W*HEN A GARDENER TEARS up a lawn to put in a bed of marigolds, everyone recognizes what she is doing and acknowledges the necessity of this small violence. We may even offer advice. But when Susan Shantz carves meters of obscure phrases into the turf of Lethbridge's most prized civic park, uncertainties arise and are addressed to the working artist in the form of a look: What's going on? Is this vandalism? Who authorized this? Who is your supervisor? What does it mean? Are you making fun of us?

A civic worker's labour is accountable, easily explained. The work of contemporary artists is often less straight-forward, usually done in private, and can be difficult to justify—particularly the 'why' of the process. Artists working in public may therefore be defensive. They know that artspeak explanations will not do and that something is lost in the translation from visual language to colloquial speech. Even if or especially if no words are exchanged, this difference in discursive spheres is palpable. When the art world encounters the utilitarian world the horizons and absurdities of each become visible.

What does it mean?

What do you think it means?

And so, during the week of installation each artist's body became a public spectacle. We watched Laurie Walker excavate a hole for her hermetic glass vessel and coal-egg, Bart Habermiller pile a ton of industrial waste plastic against the gallery, Tim Watkins dig holes for his enormous culvert pipe flowers, Susan Shantz carve calligraphic graffiti into the lawn, and Carl Granzow band trees and dig even more holes.

"I'm not exactly sure what they're up to." (1)

While becoming art these sites were also sights of disruption. And perhaps, like ardent lovers nudged into self-consciousness by the gaze of a passerby, the *Nature Redux* artists recognized their incongruity and had moments of embarrassment: each saw him or herself being seen making a scene.

"They're not just walking, they're cruising."

Parks are mildly carnivalesque spaces where rules are relaxed, "a breathing space" where social distance is paradoxically eased and heightened because some 'anti-social' behaviours are tolerated.(2) These artists, then, were not only spectacles but also potential subjects of interactivity.

Young Man: "Oh ya, I see a lot of people checkin' out the things here.

David: "Checking out the sculptures?"

Young Man: "Oh ya. I've spread the word."

David: "Which one do you like?"

Young Man: "To tell the truth. This one right here. Serious."

Laurie: "Oh, really?"

Young Man: "Sure, it's a surprise. You're riding along and then it's boom, wow, check it out!"

Laurie: "It's not something I thought about. He's riding his bike and could have fallen into the hole." (Pause.)

Young Man: "Are you guys together?"

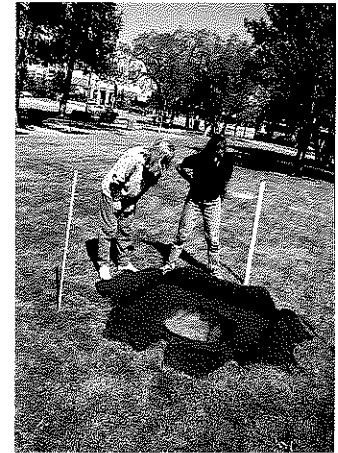
Laurie: "No."

David: "No."

Young Man: "No?"

Laurie: "No. He's going to be writing about it."

Young Man: "Oh..."



"I don't like it. It's like the park's a construction site."

Construction sites and works of art are veiled until the opening, their making concealed. *Nature Redux's* public exposure of this usually private process creates suspense, even irritation, a gap where the aesthetic/pleasure-seeking gaze is disturbed by an unfinished site. In this collision of art and park narratives, meanings are debatable. Nothing is settled. Everything is its self and some thing else: familiar materials are also art materials, regular work is also art work, and ordinary persons are also artists. Nothing is as it seems, or no thing is only as it appears. But unlike most public works, even when



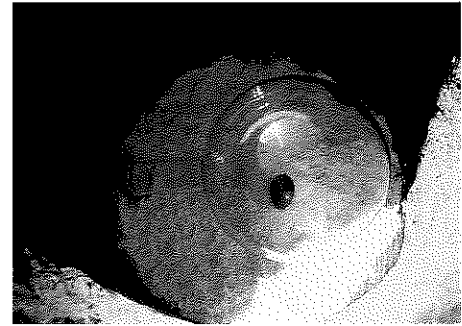
Laurie Walker, *Untitled*, 1996

completed the suspense continues. These uncommon, hybridized sculptures are not easily assimilated. They continue to puzzle because their visual language appears to disturb the symbolic order of the park.

"It'll take years for the grass to look even again." (A uniformed observer.)

The five outdoor installations in *Nature Redux* respond to their social responsibilities and somewhat carnivalesque positioning by conflating worlds: art worlds and garden worlds, private and public spaces, science and art, nature and culture. The art gallery is dissolved and the garden park's cultivated sense disrupted. Hybrids of high culture, horticulture and agricultural forms, these sculptures play on gallery art, gardens, graveyards, monuments, junkyards, coal mines, crop circles, and creation myths. They embody the collision of our multiple natures. They are concrete concepts, manifest irresolutions, embarrassing open questions requiring time and thoughtfulness for meaning, and magic for protection.

Mere things—grass, stones, coal, steel, plastic, glass—are transformed by the alchemy of artistic practice and the generosity of creative reading into works of art; art that exceeds the protective walls and language of the gallery and the pre-scribed meanings of the park. But like stirred oil and water, the meeting of these disparate worlds does not form a mixture, a stable medium.



II: LAURIE WALKER'S UNMARKED CHAMBER

A cylinder of soil about an arm's length deep and across has been removed from the north-east corner of Galt Gardens Park. The floor of the remaining chamber is carpeted with a white mineral, and the opening screened by a grid of thin, black metal rods that extend under the turf. This grate protects the hole's fragile contents: a glass vessel with a spherical belly and a neck about a hand-span long sealed with a cork. Lying within the globe is an egg-shaped piece of coal.

At night, miles and months away, I hover transparent above the aperture. Inside, its black pupil stares past me to the heavens. Through me and the clear night shine stars, their light received by the convex and concave cornea creating a microcosmic universe floating in a space just beyond the boundaries of the glass. The grate is also reflected, wrapping a grid around the stars to create a cosmos out of mystery.

Staring at the black egg, a black hole, a negative space absorbing the light of this system, the glass dissolves, eye with it.

The initial charm of Laurie Walker's earth-work, *Untitled*, is its gentle surprise and vulnerability—you stumble upon it. There it is, a hole in the grass, a rupture of expectations, a visual gift for those who stray from the path.

Young Man: "It's kinda secluded, not sticking up. You don't see it from miles away, ride toward it and before you get there you're already bored of the sight."

The contents lie exposed like an open secret or grave or an uncovered seed. It would be easy to tear up the screen and steal the unusual bottle and precious coal-egg. Perhaps even before begging meaning, this sculpture requests care, tending, guardianship. You find yourself wanting to hide its existence from others while you contemplate it.

"That's a real nice jug. I've never seen a round one like that. I hope nobody takes it. I don't think they would. I hope not."

The symbolism is alchemical. Coal is the *nigredo* or *prima materia*, the base material to be transformed into gold through the Great Work. The egg shape indicates that it "already contains in embryonic form everything that it will need to reach maturity, the yolk suggesting the anticipated gold" (Biedermann 112). The glass vessel or aludel is a uterine chamber in which gestation and 'birth' occur. "The *bas bene clausum* (well-sealed vessel) is a precautionary measure...the equivalent of the magic circle" (*Psychology and Alchemy* 412). The hole is like the athanor or furnace—coal is produced by millions of years of pressure and heat from the earth on ancient vegetation. That carbon can be compressed from black to clear, from coal to diamond, dark to light, was seen by alchemists as an expression of Nature's alchemy—human alchemy is Nature accelerated.

Alchemy is a creation myth. Its first text is Genesis.

In the popular imagination, alchemists were pseudo-scientists who tried to turn base metals like lead into gold. Their apologists claim they precursed chemistry. But the few adepts who knew the Great Work was a search for the key to divine mysteries in both matter and Self saw those preoccupied with lucre and chemistry as failures, 'Puffers', who missed the point (de Givry 350). As psychologist Carl Jung was the first to exhaustively demonstrate, the ends of the 'true' art were not scientific but spiritual. Alchemy was "chemical research work into which there entered, by way of projection, an admixture of unconscious psychic material. For this reason the psychological conditions necessary for the work are frequently stressed in the texts" (*Psych. and Alchemy* 476).

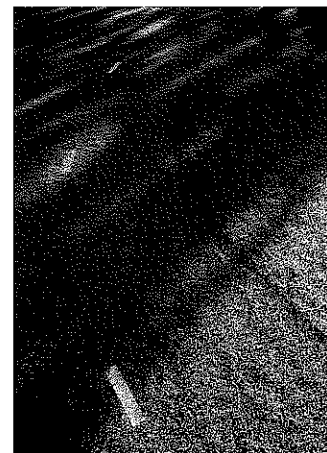
Alchemists followed ancient formulas and rituals hoping to obtain the numinous philosopher's stone. While often described as gold, the goal was no mere metal but an im/material substance born from the *mysterium coniunctio*—gold as an incorruptible metal and a shining symbol of both the sun found in earth and the Son of God on Earth (*Psych. and Alchemy* 212, 343). It is a material symbol (like Christ) of unification. When found, it would heal the divisions of the universe: Earth and Heaven, God and people, masculine and feminine, material and metaphysical. The Great Work, then, is the manipulation of symbols to transform both matter and the practitioner—a process rather than an end.

But, of course, this reading is hindsight. Jung acknowledges that most alchemists thought they were making gold, only a few saw it as a spiritual activity paralleling Christianity—though with the alchemist, rather than God/Christ, as the creator/ Redeemer (*Psych. and Alchemy* 477). In other words, adepts were unconscious of the full (our?) meanings of their work but were compelled because it satisfied a spiritual need, it offered a sense of control and symbolic meaning (like dream interpretation, astrology, religion, psychoanalysis, art making and interpretation?)

Through art (the process of learning) the whole mass of base metals (the mental body of ignorance) was transmuted into pure gold (wisdom), for it was tintured with understanding...Through faith and proximity to God the consciousness of man may be transmuted from base animal desires (represented by the masses of planetary metals) into a pure, golden, and godly consciousness, illuminated and redeemed. (Hall CLIV).

Before becoming a hole, Walker's installation was a spell-binding circle, a mandala marking a boundary between the meanings invested in the park and an uncanny space of possibility within this underworld chamber. But what does this piece mean here?

To a tape recorder: I can imagine viewers carrying a mental image of this sculpture for years, occasionally finding resonances and analogies in their private lives. It could work its symbolic magic for them as it did for the alchemist. I can also imagine some telling their grandchildren about the mysterious hole in the park, in the same way that more than half a dozen people told me about the two-headed calf that used to be in Walter Gurney's 'museum'—both missing from the physical park, but not the memorized one, for over 35 years. But what does Laurie Walker's "*Untitled*" mean here? What has alchemy to do with Lethbridge and area?



**Black Diamond, Blackie, Carbon,
Coaldale, Coalhurst, Diamond City.**

This city was founded on coal. By labouring deep in the earth with dark, base material (a black gold), miners helped build a shining city above ground. And as Lethbridge grows further from its 'dirty' roots and forgets its ancestors this sculpture is an open mine or grave, a poetic memorial to the Great Work that made Lethbridge possible.

Carbon is the building block of life.

[L]arge scale mining did not begin until 1885, when the North Western Coal and Navigation Co., directed by Sir Alexander and Elliott Galt, completed a railway from its mines in Dunmore on the CP main line. The colliery created an instant town, soon called Lethbridge (after North Western Coal's president, William Lethbridge) (*The Canadian Encyclopedia* 1203).

"There was a myth among miners that coal grows." (Laurie Walker)

If any would grow metals, he must first learn the secrets of metals; he must realize that all metals—like all stones, plants, animals, and universes—grow from seeds, and that these seeds are already in the body of Substance (the womb of the World Virgin)...the seeds of spiritual gold and material gold are ever present in all things. The metals grow throughout the ages, because life is imparted to them from the sun" (*Hall* CLIV).

To a tape recorder: I was just now talking to my Aunt. She told me that her son dug a little hole, put in a small stone and buried it. When asked what he was doing, he replied, "I want to grow a big rock like the one in the neighbour's yard."

III: PERISHABLE MONUMENTS: The Genre/Genus

Most public sculpture is conservative. Representations in permanent materials conserve the idealized memory of lost or displaced things and people: steel wolves; wooden gods; plaster saints; marble prophets; bronze heroes, leaders, soldiers, Indians. Our abstract civic sculptures also preserve the status quo. Even when they are more than architectural accents and echoes, their aesthetic challenges rarely shake the utilitarian world. When they do, it is usually because they are ugly or in the way. (3)

Most permanent public sculpture in Alberta is designed to articulate the (idealized and edited) wishes, hopes, memories, histories, propaganda, and public sentiments of those who commission them, or they are non-objective, non-objectionable—designed to give nothing away. They tell our master narratives or do not contradict them. Civic sculptures are the official expressions of a community rather than personal expressions of an individual artist. Perhaps in order to remove the possibility of artistic expression in monuments, reduce 'unofficial' readings, and save money, sculptural monuments are gradually being displaced by didactic plaques.

There is—or at least until this happened there used to be— a statue of a royal lady on a horse on the lawn in front of the beautifully domed Legislative Building [Edmonton]. Now a simple cairn has been put up by the Historic Sites and Monuments people, and on it the inscription "To this land of prairie, foothill, mountain and river, where the Indian roamed..."

[Hazard Lepage's blue stallion, Poseidon, rears up to challenge the metal imitator and is observed by a group of politicians.]

A man of ministerial voice announced the bronze horse to be superior: "The artist has done it. In bronze. Forever."

The man's colleagues repeated these words and nodded. "Forever. In bronze." They applauded briefly.

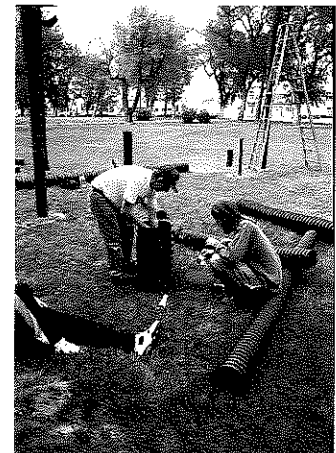
One lady alone was so reckless as to defend the mortal blue stallion against his critics. She praised loudly the fulness of Poseidon's natural endowment, pointing out that the artist, in casting his bronze model somewhat larger than life, had in fact erred in making its parts ridiculously small.

(Robert Kroetsch, *The Studhorse Man* 34-35.)

While the meanings of public art objects are usually over-determined or nearly empty, works designed for contemporary art galleries are freer to experiment, dissent, perform the personal, and have multiple meanings. They are afforded this luxury because they are just passing through.

Contemporary works not likely to be commodified or be permanently installed are freer to avoid reiterating dominant narratives. But they also have less social impact because they are transient, impermanent and somewhat hidden from the general public. Similarly, very temporary, even perishable public sculptures—parade floats, hedge mazes, flower beds or shrubs shaped like animals, snowmen, ice and food sculptures, crop circles—are most successful when carnivalesque, when disruptive or playful with the everyday order.

Nature Redux plays in the space between these two genres—it has mixed expectations.



- While in a very public outdoor space, these art works are still under the protection of the (nearby) gallery.
- While temporary and having some carnivalesque qualities, most of the sculptures also operate like monuments.
- While they celebrate the history of the park and city as the other monuments do, they do so in less didactic, more poetic ways.
- While many of the installations are discrete, they do not blend in with the conventional visual language of the park, its monuments, signs and structures. They speak a related visual dialect but tell alternative or forgotten stories. These works are not explicitly opposed to the dominant discourse—as many avant-garde works are—so much as they are communitarian in an untraditional, non-authoritarian way.

IV: THE CULTIVATING GAZE: THE SITE, LINES

Sometime in the late Summer or Fall of 1884 Elliott Galt and his father devoted an hour or two to the drawing up of a town plan. Sir Alexander probably

concentrated on town and street names, as this gave him a chance to flatter officials and gratify the vanity of shareholders of his various companies. Elliott likely sketched the plan, which consisted of a simple grid system of streets and avenues South of the proposed railway station. (Johnston 3).

Carrying in their heads straight lines and grids, father and son knew without speaking the design of Lethbridge. Their schema came from the grid of ledger books and railway lines. Their prairie was a *tabula rasa* awaiting inscription. The new transcontinental railway was itself a narrow grid of rails and ties whose ruling form at once required and prefigured surveying and section lines and the mapping that made of this land a territory.

Territory, an extent of land under jurisdiction of a ruler or state; organized division of a country; sphere of action or thought, province. (*Oxford Dictionary*)

This moving grid cultivated Canada, tra(i)ns forming land into property— something from nothing.

No town without a train/no train without a town. (Aritha van Herk 19)

No terrain without the train.

Prairie towns have conceptual rather than organic origins. The ambitious ones sprung wholly formed from the heads of their fathers. They are pre-conceived—drawn in an hour or two, in advance of their populations. Organic settlements leave growth rings, traces of inhabited negotiations in walls, competing fortresses and monuments. Our towns express an expedient vision rather than a living struggle. Their pre-forming lines plot the future.

The graveyard is the town in microcosm.

Unlike ancient cities, western Canadian pioneer towns do not have mythic or romantic founders. But this is not to say they are without founding myths. Prairie towns are orderly expressions of their ancestor's deepest desires. They are utopian. Our creation myths are logical—or at least reasonable.

Most eastern Canadian cities began as walled settlements. Their origins are in anxiety about the outside: nature, First Nations, competitors. (4) But grid cities presume peace, prosperity and orderly growth. They claim and occupy their territory virtually without resistance. It is an institution that tries to conquer history by forgetting, re-ordering, or consuming it.

Disorder is unimagined in this un(a)mazed space.

V: SUSAN SHANTZ'S BREATHING SPACE: A HISTORY LESSON

A man sleeps on a bench. Two others are asleep under a huge tree. Someone staggers to the outdoor washrooms. A pair of neatly dressed women stroll past. At noon, imperceptibly at first, small groups

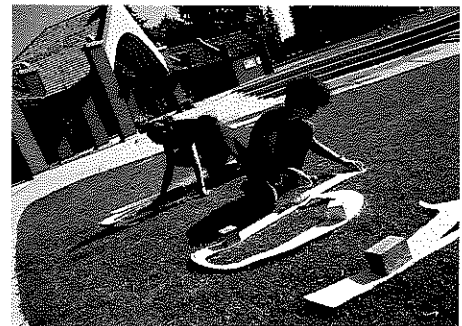
gather purposefully. Soon there are dozens of men, women, and children in old-fashioned dress: wide-brimmed straw hats, suspenders, neat work clothes, peasant dresses, blue polka dot kerchiefs. Hutterites are talking quietly and eating home-made lunches at picnic tables. It could be 1996, 1956, 1926.

In from the south-west corner of the park is an entertainment area. It has a square pit with concrete seats and a raised stage. There is an arc of grass radiating from the bandstand, it is bordered and subdivided by sidewalks. Along the curved promenade there are large, calligraphic letters carved into the lawn and filled with red shale. The phrases are "a breathing space" and "a turning around place." A laser-cut steel version of these words appears in two arcs (French curves?) on the outside north wall of the Southern Alberta Art Gallery.

"A breathing space" refers to Sir Alexander Galt's intention for The Square, his gift to the city. "A turning around place" refers to "a local myth...namely, that the Square was set aside by the Galts as a turning around place for the bull trains from Fort Benton. Round Street, it was said, was so-named because the bull trains turned 'round there.'" (Johnston 4).

Like other monuments in the park, Susan Shantz's is a reminder of that site's history. But it is also an anti-monument, an intervention that questions the veracity of monuments and shows how oral history and popular re-readings change history.

In the turf version you can't see the words at a glance, you have to walk to read. You must hold the accumulating parts in memory as you gather them, and once you've collected the letters you may have to retrace your steps, walk through them again to re-collect the words and check your memory. When I walked the text I was conscious of my footsteps beating out the letters. I was aware of the sympathetic rhythm of my breathing, and, to make sure I read the text right, there was some turning around. My performance of reading reflected the text I read.

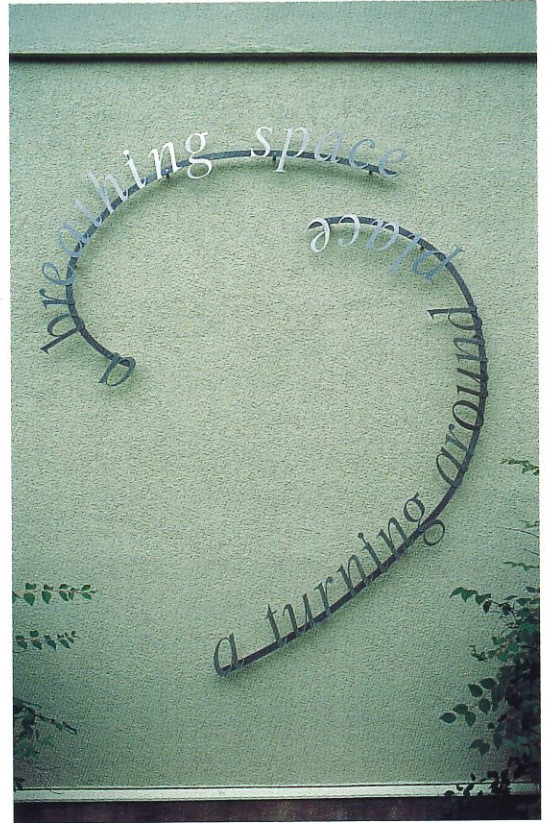


To the non-resident the installation is nearly depleted. I might think about the park as "a breathing space" and about how a walk there entails turns, but where else am I to go? The gallery wall version could be a slogan: like parks, art galleries offer a chance to catch your breath, even turn yourself around(?). There may even be a playful analogy between how cultivated nature and cultivated works of art function. But in the end, these are letters especially addressed to Lethbridge citizens.

A deeper reading requires Alex Johnston's short paper on the history of Galt Gardens Park. This is readily available from the Sir Alexander Galt Museum and was Susan Shantz's source. But local readers may know the second phrase through oral history. It echoes several formulations that account for why such a large space was left empty in the middle of the city and why the street bordering the park is called "Round Street": "a turning around place."

As previously mentioned, local tradition says that Round Street was "so-named because the bull trains turned 'round there'" (Johnston 4). But this claim is false; it was named after Edmund Round. Interestingly, Johnston does not say this story is wrong, he calls it a "local myth"—a phrasing that is sensitive to the fact that traditional use can supersede originary facts.

So what has Susan Shantz done? The first quote, while not the words of The Galts, records their intentions. They are official words. That they are memorialized, inscribed by Shantz in the very soil



Susan Shantz, *A Breathing Space*, 1996

next to a documented inaccuracy, suggests that the popular mis-reading may be an intervention, a collective re-reading of the name of the street and the meaning of the park.

Recall:

Sir Alexander probably concentrated on town and street names, as this gave him a chance to flatter officials and gratify the vanity of shareholders of his various companiesRound Street was named after Edmund Round, a shareholder in the Galt company. (Johnston 3-4).

The streets were named prior to their occupation. Their names commemorate backroom corporate deals among non-residents and not the experiences of a community. By a strange turn this sculpture seems to suggest that the "local myth" arose to make meaning of an otherwise meaningless name. The myth was a popular re-reading, a turning of the tables, that actively forgot Edmund Round from history and replaced his memory with a more significant one: a reminder of that site's historical relationship to ranching and transportation.



To a tape recorder: The city, the blocks of commerce, are replete with communication. The relative emptiness of the park, its vacuum, attracts speculation and draws out/in oral history. If you are a visitor and want to know the local histories, go to the parks and engage in conversation.

Susan Shantz's installation finds poetry in an official script by turning it on itself. Her earth poem also mixes the visual vocabularies of calligraphy and piece quilting with agricultural furrows and horticulture's rock borders to hint at cultivated meanings beyond words. But amid the beautiful lines is a sense of wounding. The red shale in the cut earth suggests scarring. This could be a performance of the fact that human cultural action often results in a wounding of nature; art is not immune but implicated in even these small violences. But there could be more personal and yet site-specific readings that elude us.

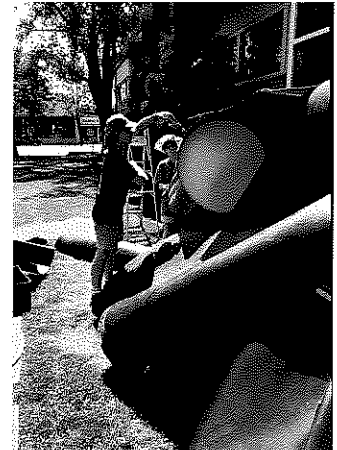
Shantz has a Mennonite heritage. Mennonites, like Hutterites, immigrated to Canada to flee religious persecution. Both groups are pacifist, both emphasize separation from the world and nonconformity with state institutions, especially those that might intrude on the separation of state and religion (*Canadian Encyclopedia* 1031-2, 1335-6). This park, especially the area of Shantz's text, has been quietly frequented by generations of Hutterites. The garden park is both part of the city state and yet separate from it; a "breathing space" within the world where they must do their trade. Perhaps Shantz's poem (on the surface) is an attempt to make contact or at least acknowledge a kinship, share "a breathing space" with (a) people not memorialized in this garden—except in their own oral history and by their continuing use—and cite this place as a sacred site.

Robert Kroetsch, an Alberta-born novelist and poet suggests: "In ethnic writing there is often an attempt at healing by the rewriting of myths. The myth most often retold, at least on the surface of ethnic writing, is the garden story...the image of the garden recalls the question of naming that is so central to the Genesis story" (Kroetsch, *The Grammar of Silence* 89). Shantz's written intervention, her rock garden of red shale, may narrate a personal healing. The earth now speaks and the stories it tells renames and re-figures this site, acknowledging the possibility of oral truths, unofficial stories and unscripted histories—a re-turning of the repressed.

VI: THE GARDEN: NECESSARY CENTRE

In the midst of Lethbridge's utilitarian design is a necessary anomaly, Galt Gardens Park. The ten-acre site began as land set aside, an absence of development, "a breathing space—for the city Elliott Galt and his father were convinced would one day surround it" (Johnston 3). The idea of leaving a field in the middle of an imaginary town already surrounded and penetrated by nature (which is, even today, not far from the park), is odd enough to hint that something more is going on. This space is, to paraphrase Derrida, an absence at the center that expresses a desire.

The Square is not a section of preserved prairie but a lush garden park with non-indigenous grasses, flowers and trees. The 'nature' presented is not like that which surrounds the city. While 18th century picturesque parks and gardens imitated landscape pictures, especially Romantic paintings of Italian landscapes, Galt Gardens Park is further down the mimetic chain. It is an imitation of—or compensation for the lack of—proper, European and Eastern Canadian-type, nature/landscape.



The peonies presented by the Prince of Wales, which were placed in the Gardens showed very well for the first year and look very promising for a profusion of bloom next season...The Gardens as they are will make a fine setting for the program to be gone through when the Governor-General and Lady Willingdon visit the city Thursday.

(*Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 9 July 1928, cited by Johnston 10.)

colonization displaced:

blue gamma *Bouteloua gracilis*, fringed sage *Artemisia frigida*, needle-and-thread *Stipa comata*, western wheatgrass, *Agropyron smithii*, June grass, *Koeleria cristata*, Sandberg's bluegrass *Poa secunda*, pin cushion cactus *Mamillaria vivipara*, winterfat *Eurotia lanata*, forbs. (4)

but their (re)naming was the first displacement

Lethbridge was built on coal. The land is arid; agriculture only came with the massive irrigation project initiated by Elliott Galt and designed and built by the Mormon community around Cardston. Galt Gardens Park is, therefore, also a celebration of the conquest of this near-desert. Its fragile flowers constitute a display of the wealth irrigation brought. (5) This is a narrative the Mormon irrigators knew well from their settlement of Utah and is a symbol all Christians would have recognized without comment.

[O]ne meta-narrative that has asserted itself persistently in the New World context...is the myth of the new world, the garden story. The dream of Eden.
(Robert Kroetsch, *Disunity as Unity*, 32.)

The garden is the Alpha and Omega myth of western and mid-eastern civilizations. According to our earliest religious stories it is our place of origin and the place to which we ultimately return. Throughout the Old Testament and the Qur'an God promises believers "Gardens of Eden," "the ultimate abode" (*Qur'an* 242), "gardens underneath which rivers flow" (*Qur'an* 87). (6) This is a powerful concrete image for people living in arid climes.

Prairie gardens, especially floral gardens, are acts of will imposed on the wilderness. The verdant park is proof of the conquest of nature and evidence of God's providence. But it is also a pride, a hyperbole. Because young prairie towns were haunted by their ghost-town neighbours they required grand material symbols of confidence, of grace—even in advance of their construction—to ward off failure. Such a sign doubles as a reminder of what they had to lose.

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made
By singing:—'Oh, how beautiful!' and sitting in the shade,
While better men than we go out and start their working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken dinner-knives.
Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees,
So when your work is finished, you can wash your hands and pray
For the Glory of the Garden, that it may not pass away!
And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!
(from "The Glory of the Garden" by Rudyard Kipling)

VII: BART HABERMILLER'S COALBANKS

A huge, black, plastic, crazy quilt swells up from the earth and over the south-east corner of the Southern Alberta Art Gallery. The polypropylene wave or growth has picked up or produced other bits of plastic, accents of white, pink, blue, and red: two children's slides, parts from other large toys and containers. Just as the grid that covers the hole in Laurie Walker's *Untitled* seems to continue under the grass like lawn interfacing, this bulky form looks to be part of a larger, subterranean being that has risen up to consume the building.

Made of triangular patches of thick, industrial plastic screwed together like the hull of a much-repaired ship, the undulant skin references not only manufactured but natural forms. Like a cubist still



Bart Habermiller, *Coalbanks*, 1996

life, it is a strange hybrid of nature and culture. It is disruptive, an irruption of chaotic energy upon the orderly park.

Is this a habitation? a climbing toy for children? The thousands of sharp screws that poke into the interior space suggest that it is not intended for visitors. The outside looks like a good climbing surface and the slides are inviting, but a fence, sign, and roving security guards discourage that use.

So what is it? The title recalls the city's coal heritage; Coalbanks was Lethbridge's first name. And there is a possible pun on art galleries and galleries in a coal mine. The title's compounding the founding natural resource (coal) and economics (banks) might hint towards labour history. The title and wire fence might refer to the closure of many local coal mines in the 1950s. The fence might even elicit the memory that during WW II Lethbridge was home to one of Canada's largest prisoner-of-war camps for captured German soldiers.

The artist explains that the piece is about plastics (a petroleum by-product) being the 'new coal' for Lethbridge. It shows that the city has diversified to include manufacturing industries. But there aren't enough sweet words or historical allusions to transform this behemoth into a monument to Lethbridge industry. Within the aesthetics of garden parks, this sculpture is an eye-sore. This rolling pile of recycled plastic is not what the Galts had in mind for their park. It is the sort of thing one would clear away, not build. It must be temporary.



Habermiller has made a career of transmuting found objects into art. His site-specific sculptures are bold gestures populated by small, personal items whose narratives, like a trailer court seized by a tornado, are caught in the impersonal current of a larger statement. However, despite the power of the central form, the nostalgic bits of junk are what catch your eye and imagination. It's like sifting through an apartment dumpster and trying to assemble the lives that left these traces. Habermiller's earlier *Frank* and *Graceland* sculptures tend to be funny and funky kitsch with just enough dark edge and social conscience to be engaging over time

Coalbanks is different, more serious. Perhaps prefigured by another earlier sculpture *Firestone Falls*—a cascade of rubber installed in the Triangle Gallery, Calgary—*Coalbanks* uses impersonal parts within an impersonal whole to create a site of absurd sublimity. It is reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci's late, apocalyptic *Deluge* drawings of water and wind currents destroying whole villages. Nature here is cataclysmic, magnificent, and unconscious of God and humanity. In these drawings, as in *Coalbanks*, there is little room for cultivating projections. The few moments of levity, provided by the two slides and other brightly coloured fragments, act as accents that actually heighten through pathos the aggression of the black muscular wave—much like the overwhelmed little figures in the da Vinci drawings. The unusable slides are like life-jackets floating on the sea after a plane-crash.

Like a cooled lava flow, *Coalbanks* is a frozen dramatic moment in the passage of a dispassionate material force. Given the context, the sculpture can be seen as an antithetical response to the cultivated version of nature offered by the garden park. Habermiller's nature is turbulent, disruptive, unpredictable wilderness without names or reasons. Given the history of mine disasters in this region in the first half of this century—the Frank Slide comes to mind—this sculpture becomes a monument.

But our relationship to consuming nature is not limited to the past. Just prior to the opening of *Nature Redux* the curator, Joan Stebbins, and her husband lost their home to fire. And as I write this, two men logging at the bottom of a pit in the Coal Mountain Mine, near Elkford, B.C., have died under what the Herald described as "a river of rock." Habermiller's *Coalbanks* ironically proposes that the natural resources that made the city and culture and gallery possible will eventually consume and persist beyond them.

We've all lived in a little town too long. The wilderness here makes us uneasy. I felt it first the night I walked alone along the river bank—a queer sense of something cold and fearful, something inanimate yet aware of us. A Main Street is such a self-sufficient little pocket of existence, so smug, compact, that here we feel abashed somehow before the hills, their passiveness, the unheeding way they sleep. We climb them, but they withstand us, remain as serene and unrevealed as ever...We shrink from our insignificance. The stillness and solitude—we think a force or presence into it—even a hostile presence, deliberate, aligned against us—for we dare not admit an indifferent wilderness, where we may have no meaning at all.
(As For Me and My House, Sinclair Ross 99-100)

VIII: UN-NATURAL GARDENS

Our civic gardens are unnatural. They contain nature but not Nature. Nature is what is outside, elsewhere. Nature takes care of itself. Gardens are made by people and need people to tend them. Gardens are for people in a way that Nature is not.

Each garden retells the creation story.

Western culture is not premised on a return to nature but on a Fall into an accursed Nature—from pattern into chaos. According to our foundational stories, the first person was made prior to the plants and animals (*Genesis* 2:7), they were made for him to name and cultivate (2:15, 19). But this was not Nature, it was a garden, The Garden, a liminal space between God and Nature. The Fall was from the Garden into Nature, the Wilderness. A fall from harmony and order and into the struggle between Nature and culture, instinct and consciousness.

We are structured like a garden.

Our bodies are our gardens, to which our wills are gardeners.
(Shakespeare, Othello 345)

In the Genesis story (capital 'N') Nature is the consequence of consciousness. It occurs as the result of eating from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (2:17). We invent Nature as our defining opposite. Nature is Culture's unconscious, its Other. (Capital 'N') Nature is an imaginary place/being that exceeds non-human-made things (nature).

Western gardens are imaginary spaces constructed by the will. While Japanese gardens are "designed for all seasons, acquiescing in their changes and making the most of them" (*Creators* 145), prairie gardens are either on or off, in or out of season. Many of our gardens are made up of non-indigenous plants, annuals, flowers grown to near maturity in hothouses. Such gardens express an image of life as occurring in short bursts of beauty followed by death and a succeeding generation. Such gardens cultivate a view of life as perfect but static.

Does the Garden of Eden have seasons?

The Japanese garden aesthetic has fewer anthropocentric desires and narrates a universe within which each object's existence, including ours, is only "a phase of incremental transformations between seed and dust, in a continuous exfoliation or perturbation of matter: at no point does the object come under an arrest that would immobilize it as Form or eidos" (Bryson 97). The Japanese garden is perennial rather than annual.

Like alchemy, the western garden is a symbolic attempt to restore an imagined harmony through the capture and cultivation of nature. The garden is an expression of our desire to either return to or end up at a moment and space beyond problems, divisions, consciousness. The Garden is our collective dream—it is utopian. Our gardens are a living metaphorical space, a temporary expression of the hoped-for ultimate space.

The ultimate garden is the graveyard.

Canadians seek the lost and everlasting moment when chaos and order were synonymous. They seek that timeless split-second in time when the one, in the process of becoming the other, was itself the other. The city of such dreams is unrealizable.

(Robert Kroetsch, "Beyond Nationalism: A Prologue" 68)

"It is just man's turning away from instinct—his opposing himself to instinct—that creates consciousness. Instinct is nature and seeks to perpetuate nature, whereas consciousness can only seek culture or its denial. Even when we turn our back to nature, inspired by a Rousseauesque longing, we 'cultivate' nature...And here we are beset by an all-too-human fear that consciousness—our Promethian conquest—may in the end not be able to serve us as well as nature."

(Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 95-6)

I left civilization to look for Nature. But with my every step and glance Nature fled, leaving only trees, grasses, stones, animals, scents, sounds, temperatures, and everything else known or knowable.

Nature returns with the sleep of reason, when names are forgotten, when the future is inconceivable, when what is is.

I wanted to go from 'looking for', to 'Being in', to 'Being-with', to Being, to , but I can't imagine it.

IX: TIM WATKINS' INDUSTRIAL PLANTS

Northeast of *Coalbanks* is a fantastic garden. Seven black, plastic trunks of varying thicknesses shoot straight up from the earth toward the noon sun. They unfurl their steel leaves to absorb the light. Three bloom scarlet petals that rotate in the wind.

Or...

Seven steel water lilies float high overhead, their dark, ribbed roots drop through the air and find anchorage in the soil below. The stamen of the flowering towers is a light which shines after dusk. The lights are fed by solar panels that collect energy during the day.

Eight shorter stalks ranging from two to six feet are growing and have yet to bloom, or are felled mature plants. The fact that nine tubes lie on the ground, and that the title of Tim Watkins' sculpture is *Falling*, supports the latter reading. The cut shafts lose their art-magic and become mere lengths of plastic culvert pipe. Or, you might see them as being harvested like logs; perhaps their flowers have been collected and the useless stalks have been left to rot.

From a distance, the black stems of these ancient-seeming artificial plants blend in with the natural and industrial shapes of the park. Up close, they look like a hybrid of the park's trees, flowers, and lamp posts. Is this the logical outcome of a utilitarian society? It is as if in some dystopian future the Parks Commission is replacing the expensive-to-tend vegetation with clumsy simulations and then fitting them with lights to make them really useful. Or, in a Sci-Fi nightmare, have the plants themselves fused with the lamps and underground culvert pipes to create a hearty new species more suitable to this mixed culture/nature environment? This multi-use, utilitarian, industrial park image is reinforced by the fact that these devices use Lethbridge's abundant and signature renewable resources: solar and wind power.

"It's true! The city occasionally issues wind warnings for children under 40 pounds."

Perhaps these flowers are more than autotrophic (self feeding). Are these industrial plants also collecting and storing energy for the city?

Did I mention the crickets? Even before you see the installation you may hear it. The solar panels also power electronic crickets that chirp from inside the pipes in a surprising variety of patterns throughout the day. They are louder and faster on sunny days and get slower and quieter toward dark. At a certain distance they seem real, as if the park had reverted to nature. Up close they are more mechanical and the trick brings a smile.

"Hey! Dad, there's bugs in these pipes. Where's the bugs?"

But there may be a sinister possibility. Are these fake crickets producing pleasant background 'nature' sounds, or are they calling to real crickets? Is this a cricket trap?

Tim Watkins' playful sculpture garden is linked to Habermiller's *Coalbanks* through the use of black plastic and the reference to petrochemical products. Watkins extends the industrial references by using culvert pipe—well recognized in this well irrigated part of the country. His huge ancient plants may also

be meant to remind us of the prehistory of coal (though carboniferous plants, swamp plants that eventually became coal, were not flowering).

Falling is a bitter-sweet sculpture that is ambiguous about the ecological and technological place we have fallen into. It could be a metaphor of our misuse of nature, or even a displacement of nature by technology. *Falling* suggests (in a Heideggerian, and Christian sense) our loss of innocence, authenticity, our Fall from grace, from the Garden. Perhaps the sculpture narrates how every garden is an imitation, artificial, a fallen state of nature. It seems to propose a (dystopian or utopian) future where an exhausted nature is replaced by hybrids that acknowledge and have fun with their artificiality. Watkin's garden is to Galt Gardens Park what Las Vegas is to architecture. Or, as does *Coalbanks*, maybe *Falling* tells the story of how, despite us, nature will find a way to persist by adaptation; or, perhaps we will.

To a tape recorder: It's the most absurd thing. Tim is finishing up his installation. He had to make some holes in the ground to anchor his culvert pipe flowers. Now he's watering those spots. It looks like he's watering his artificial plants—and I'm not the only one who's noticed!

X: CARL GRANZOW'S CROP OVAL

I'm looking for Carl Granzow's sculpture, *Eccentricities*. At the north end of the park—before I wrote this and before the other installations were started—I've come across a rectangular stone. It's set into the turf like a flat grave marker—so a lawn mower can go over it. But this is smaller and looks like the top of a regular headstone, as if neglect and time has nearly covered it over.

To a tape recorder: I see another and another. Their trajectory is curved. It looks like a circle. I'm running along the rim, but because I can only see two of the widely spaced stones at a time, it's hard to make out the exact arrangement. I'm crossing in several places and am sure that it is a circle, but it feels irregular. Some stretches along the curve seem straighter than others. It is probably an illusion.

It's two weeks later. I can see the shape clearly. Granzow has asked the grounds keepers to let the grass within the stones' perimeter grow. It is a few inches higher than the rest. The shape is an ellipse.

Ellipse, A plane curve such that the sum of the distances from any point of the curve to two fixed points, called foci, is a constant: a conic section.

Ellipsis, 1. The omission of a word or words necessary for the complete grammatical construction of a sentence, but not required for the understanding of it. 2. Marks (... or ***) indicating omission. (*Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary*)

Eccentricities is both an ellipse and ellipsis. The line or orbit is not continuous but broken. The piece consists of a series of static markers that we, in pacing them out, read into an elliptical trajectory. Just as films are made up of images interrupted by imperceptible black flashes, so is this installation made up of 'stills' that we animate. We charge the absences with significance; we see (an invisible path) through them to the next event—illustrating a very western notion of time, as the measurement of events. *Eccentricities* is a time-based sculpture that dramatizes our habit of looking for patterns, animation, intention—signs of life and intelligence.

Like Susan Shantz's installation, Granzow's requires the participant's body to activate its meanings. You read at your own pace. Look at it from the air. It is a textbook's simple dash-diagram of a planet's orbit. [It resembles the illustrations sent to space on the Voyager space ship in 1977 to give potential non-Earthers a description of us (well some of 'us'), our culture and place in the solar system.] And there I am running the course, being a planetary body. [You can just imagine school children learning about the movement of the planets with this sculpture. Someone plays the Earth, another the Sun. Other students calculate the appropriate changes in speed as the Earth approaches and leaves the Sun's gravitational field. Earth turns on her axis as she walks her orbit. She holds out a ball, the Moon...]

Months later I still feel a loss for the first sculpture, the one I couldn't quite see. I am surprised now how much I wanted it to be round. I was even willing to discount my experience to make it round. The ellipse just doesn't figure prominently in world symbolism, or garden designs. It's the circle that counts.

"I'm just waiting for some Druids to start dancing around here at night." (a groundskeeper)

My desire for this piece recalls the effort astronomers maintained for centuries to impose a spherical, concentric logic on our eccentric solar system. The Ptolemaic model was 'common sense', a beautiful geometry, a comprehensible system—if not true, it was true enough. But as observations improved with the aid of better telescopes, the geocentric model required "wheels within wheels"—Epicyles, deferents, equants, and eccentrics—to explain the new and seemingly anomalous observations (*Discoverers* 294-300). These complications were necessary to support not only the concept of the Earth and people as centres of the universe, but also the universe as the highest marriage of metaphysics and material. The Copernican, heliocentric, and elliptical (ex-centric) universe was elegant and true in its own way but it lacked the seeming archetypal truth of circles.

The second sculpture is like a reverse crop circle, tall grass grows in the center while all around the grass has been cut, except, of course, crop circles are circles. Is *Eccentricities* a scientist's rebuttal? After all, if crop circles were made by aliens wouldn't they reflect (like the Voyager images) the geometry of the universe rather than the preferred symbol of humans? As early as 1958, Carl Jung argued that Flying Saucers (U.F.O.s) are a modern myth, the projection of mandalas into the skies during an uncertain time. Granzow's crop oval may be a less satisfying symbol but better science (fiction). Or perhaps this is a compromise: the scientific oval hybridized with indigenous tipi rings and European sites like Stonehenge—a white man's medicine wheel?

Eccentric, ...Chiefly used of circles of which one is within another. Eccentric orbit: in the Ptolemaic astronomy, an orbit not having the earth precisely in its centre (afterwards sometimes used in a

Copernican sense: an orbit not having the sun precisely in its centre. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

The Tyndal stone oval is unevenly ringed by trees around which Granzow has placed steel bands, each inscribed with an astronomical fact or bit of scientific theory. The whole piece can be seen as a didactic teaching aid, but there is something ironic about needing to inscribe scientific truths on steel bands on trees.

To a tape recorder: Two women are reading the bands. They are following the ring of trees and, because they have to circle the trees to read, their bodies create eccentric orbits like the 'wheels within wheels' that had to be devised for the Ptolemaic model.

"A shooting star is a grain of interplanetary dust striking our atmosphere at a speed of up to 20 miles per second. 410 tons of cosmic dust fall on Earth's surface each day." (*on one of the bands*)

The ancient practice of carving humanistic truths—ideals aspired to rather than self-evident facts—on buildings, or recording history on plaques, reminds the citizenry of abstract ideals and preserves fragile history. But science is about facts, the way things are. Isn't it? Granzow's gesture reinforces the notion that science is a human activity, a process: it is about thoughts about our perceptions of things, events, processes, etc., not the things themselves. Its methods, facts, and axiomatic beliefs are not self-evident but have to be learned, maintained, and challenged across generations. Just as prairie towns look at their ghost town neighbours and their forgotten histories, and gardeners look over their shoulders at the surrounding wilderness, scientists are haunted by the Middle Ages and the (near) loss of science, its forgetting and being displaced by common sense and myth. A period that functioned, had truths, and lived (for the most part) without science.



To a tape recorder: I'm looking at penknife carvings in some trees just behind the gallery. They are nearly worn off, grown off, even torn off, hearts with initials. Tie this to Granzow's piece and the idea of a desire for reification and permanence and yet the irony of putting those messages in a temporary form.

Granzow's bands or rings contain messages of fidelity sent to the future. While these tree rings are strong there is the fact that the trees will eventually fall or continue to grow and burst the rings.

"Gravity acts indiscriminately and attractively between all particles." (*on one of the bands*)

Most of the things referred to by the texts are extraterrestrial. Putting them into words and binding them to trees seems a form of magical thinking, an effort to make them more real, less abstract, as real



Tim Watkins, *Falling*, 1996

as this tree here. Perhaps this is a science memorial, an attempt to reify scientific ideas. And yet, knowing that this is an impermanent sculpture alters the meaning, brings back the threat of the loss or instability of knowledge.

"Any observation on an electron or on any other physical system necessarily involves some interference with it."(on one of the bands)

It is as if, rather than setting science in opposition to nature, Granzow is demonstrating that everything is subject to the same laws. Nature is these laws. And yet Nature is also always other than our perceptions and science is not a separate realm but bound up with the rest of culture. In a surprising inscription, Granzow quotes science's creation myth: "Concepts are free creations imposed to order sense experiences." Conceptualization is a cultural act "imposed" on nature to "order [our] sense experiences." Perhaps this stone oval operates like alchemy. It is a ritual site that attempts to unite seeming opposites less by logic than embodied metaphor.

XI: TROPING (IN) THE GARDEN

The garden gives nature a location, a place where it is contained and yet also absent. Nature is a subject of conversation here. Like the garden, Nature is something we created and cultivate.

Nature is also a tropos, a trope. It is a figure, construction, artifact, movement, displacement. Nature cannot pre-exist its construction. This construction is based on a particular kind of move—a tropos or 'turn.' Faithful to the Greek, as tropos nature is about turning. Troping, we turn to nature as if to the earth, to the primal stuff—geotropis, physiotropic. (Haraway 296).



Nature Redux turns constantly: there's Walker's magic circle; Shantz's curving graffiti about turning; Habermiller's undulant wave that threatens to re-turn the gallery to the earth; Watkins' rotating flowers; and the participants who revolve through Granzow's universe. But there are also the tropes on memorials and gardens, graveyards and townsites, about turning to and from nature. *Nature Redux* is an unusual turn in the park, a temporary disruption that plays on conventions and offers a few alternatives that expand this imaginary site.

I'm talking to two grounds keepers about the sculptures.

about adv. 1. Approximately; nearly: about noon; about right. 2. Informal Almost; not quite: about finished. 3. Nearby; in the vicinity: to stand idly about.

I'm talking to the artists about their work.

about (continued) 4. To a reversed position; around: Turn your chair about. 5. In rotation; around and around. 6. In every direction; to all sides: to look about. 7. Here and there, as without direction: to wander about. 8. On every side of; encircling: walls about a city. 9. On the point of; ready to: about to speak.

NOTES

- 1) All uncited quotations are the voices of various people I recorded in Galt Gardens Park in August.
- 2) "Anti-social behaviour was not brought officially to city council's attention until 26 July 1965, when it was reported that Galt Gardens were being used by transients. There was much litter, considerable drunkenness, panhandling and begging...This behaviour, which was never as bad as was portrayed in sensationalized feature articles and in Letters to the Editor, has continued. There is no doubt that, in the past decade or so, the public perception of the park was such that people simply stayed away from the place." (Johnston 10). "Circuses were permitted to be set up on the north end of the park around 1909..." (Johnston 7).
- 3) For example, in 1989 Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc"—a huge steel wall that cut across a public square—was removed by a government agency. The decision was upheld by the U.S. District Court where the work was judged to be lacking in aesthetic appeal.
- 4) Literary theorists of Canadian identity like Northrup Frye, Margaret Atwood, Gaile McGregor (*The Wacousta Syndrome*), but not Robert Kroetsch, tend to narrate 'us' from within this Eastern Canadian fortress mentality. Prairie folks have some of this fort mindset, but most of our narratives concern space: the irony of getting lost in nothing; being nowhere; leaving to go somewhere that exists, that has a history. Prairie identity seems more about a relationship to the emptiness rather than the fullness of nature.
- 5) List from Johnston 9.
- 6) The town council wanted to plant trees as early as 1891 but plans were delayed "until an assured source of water to care for the trees could be found." It was in 1900 "when irrigation first reached Lethbridge" and trees soon followed (Johnston 9).
- 7) The *Book of Mormon* has similar passages regarding the last days: "For the Lord shall comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord." 2 Nephi 8:3. I'm not a scholar of Mormonism; I found this in the *Book of Mormon* in my motel room in Lethbridge.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Carl Granzow lives and works in Lethbridge, Alberta. He received an M.F.A. in sculpture from Arizona State University (1974). He has taught at the University of Lethbridge where he is a Professor of Art since 1979. Recent solo shows of Granzow's work include exhibitions at the Boulder Art Centre, Colorado (1990); Crowsnest Pass Art Gallery, Frank, Alberta (1992); The Works, Edmonton, Alberta (1993); Art Gallery of South Okanagan, Penticton, B.C. (1994); Kenderdine Gallery, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon (1994) and the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge (1995). Recent invitational group exhibitions include The North American Sculpture Exhibition, Foothills Art Centre, Golden, Colorado (1990); Metall und Licht, Handwerkskammer, Koblenz, Germany (1991); Messe am Rhein, Handwerksmesse, Koblenz (1993); Prairie Visions, College Centre Art Gallery, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan (1994); and In Retrospect 68/86, University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, Alberta (1995), and Picturing Time (1996), Edmonton Art Gallery. In addition to institutional exhibitions of his work, Granzow has carried out a number of performance-related site works.

Bart Habermiller lives and works in Calgary, Alberta. He received an M.F.A. from the Art Institute of Chicago (1990). Recent solo shows of Habermiller's work include exhibitions at Neutral Ground Gallery, Regina (1987); Off Centre Centre, Calgary (1987); Gallery 2, Chicago (1990); North Wing Gallery, Chicago (1990); Stride Gallery, Calgary (1991); Muttart Art Gallery, Calgary (1991) and Gallery Six, Santa Fe, New Mexico (1993). Recent invitational group exhibitions include Elemental Instincts, The Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary, (1988); Makers of Metaphor, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge (1988); Graceland Art Rodeo, Calgary (1989); Sound Works, Chicago Film Makers (1989); Built on Sound, The Betty Rymer Gallery, Chicago (1990); Graceland Art Rodeo, Calgary (1990); Recycled Art, The Triangle Art Gallery, Calgary (1992); Art Rodeo, Tompkins Park, Calgary (1992); Interiors: Domestic Objects by Artists, The Triangle Gallery, Calgary (1993); The End of Modernity, Glenbow Museum, Calgary (1994); Pixel Pushers, Glenbow Museum, Calgary (1995) and London Life Young Contemporaries, London Regional Art and Historical Museum, London, Ontario (1997) (touring). Habermiller is known as founder of the Graceland Art Rodeo, a site-related sculpture and performance event in Calgary.

Susan Shantz lives and works in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She received an M.A. in Religion and Culture from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo (1985) and an M.F.A. in Sculpture and Interdisciplinary Studies from York University, Toronto (1989). She has taught at York University and Wilfrid Laurier University and is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Saskatchewan. Recent solo shows of Shantz's work include exhibitions at Ace Art, Winnipeg (1991); AKA Artist Centre, Saskatoon (1992); Muttart Art Gallery, Calgary (1993); University of New Brunswick Arts Centre, Fredericton (1993) and Articule, Montreal (1995). Invitational group exhibitions include The Language of Paradise, London Regional Art Gallery, Ontario (1985); Celebration of the Human Spirit, McIntosh Gallery, University of Western Ontario (1988); Gathering, Cambridge Art Gallery, Ontario (1991); Re(dis)covering, Eastern Edge, St. John's (1992) and Natured, Mercer Union, Toronto (1995). In addition to exhibitions of her work Shantz has collaborated with other artists on multi-media performance and video pieces.

Laurie Walker lives and works in Montreal. She received an M.A. in Visual Art from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax (1987). Recent solo and two-person shows of Walker's work include exhibitions at Galerie Christiane Chassay, Montreal (1989, 1991, 1993, 1996); Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Alberta, (Eye of Nature, 1989, with Bill Viola); Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge (1990); Centre culturel, Université de Sherbrooke, Quebec (1991); Oakville Galleries, Ontario (A material writing of things, 1994); Musée d'art contemporain, Montreal (Seeing Blue, 1994); Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario and Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph, Ontario (Rise and Fall, with John Dickson) and Musée régional de Rimouski, Quebec (voir, savoir, croire, 1997, with Bruno Santerra). Recent invitational group exhibitions include the Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, (1984); Anna Leonowens Gallery, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax (1985); Tombeau de René Payant, Maison de la culture Côte-des-Neiges, Montreal (1991); The Collector's Eye, Musée d'art contemporain, Montreal (1996); Espaces baroques et figures allégoriques, Centre d'art de Baie-Saint-Paul, Quebec (1996); New Science, the Edmonton Art Gallery, Alberta (1997) and En cause: Brancusi, Axe Néo-7, Hull, Quebec (1997).

Tim Watkins lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He received an Honours Diploma from the Alberta College of Art (1979) and studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, and the Banff School of Fine Arts (1978-79). Recent solo shows of Watkins' work include exhibitions at Leonardo di Mauro Gallery, New York (1986); Nassau County Museum of Fine Art, Roslyn, N.Y. (1986); Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge (1988); Mercer Union, Toronto, (1990); Sir Wilfred Grenfell College Gallery, Cornerbrook, Newfoundland (1990); Glenhyrst Art Gallery, Brantford, Ontario (1992) Paul Kuhn Fine Arts, Calgary (1989, 1994) and the Kelowna Art Gallery, B.C. (1998). Recent invitational group exhibitions include Noah's Ark, Central Park, New York, (1989); China June 4th, P.S.1, Long Island City, New York (1990); Metall und Licht 91, Handwerkskammer, Koblenz, Germany (1991); Pull of Kinetics, Snug Harbour Cultural Centre, Staten Island, New York (1992); Hubcap Heaven, Route I-70, St. Louis, Missouri (1993); Art Rodeo 93, Calgary (1993); Conversations with Artists, Madelyn Jordon Gallery, New York (1993); Adventures in 3D, Staten Island Children's Museum, New York (1994); JCB Credit, Rockefeller Place, New York (1994) and Conversations - Favorites, Madelyn Jordon Gallery, New York (1994).

LIST OF WORKS

Site works, dimensions variable

Carl Granzow

Eccentricities, 1996

Manitoba Tyndal stone, grass, stainless steel

Bart Habermiller

Coalbanks, 1996

recycled polypropylene

Susan Shantz

A Breathing Space, 1996

grass, shale, laser-cut stainless steel

Laurie Walker

Untitled, 1996

glass flask, white sand, coal, cork, painted steel grate

Tim Watkins

Falling, 1996

plastic culvert pipe, steel pipe, car roofs, polyethylene piping, solar panels,

