Title
Caring About Places

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Infrastructure,
the great constructed pattern
of grids, channels, pipes
and networks
that course across the land,
sets the underlying
circumstances of our daily lives.
Landscape, too,
is a constructed pattern,
a way of seeing the context
in which we live.

Landscape paintings, whether majestically wrought with towering storms over mighty land forms or delicately inscribed with mythic figures prancing through the meadows in a pastoral dream, have become a part of the mental structure through which we process our perceptions. Summonings from other media, like Strawberry Fields Forever and the Worldwide Web, similarly beckon us towards differing visions of our relations to each other and to nature.

We need to keep alert to the implications of structured perceptions, to be cautious lest they lead us too easily along paths that no longer inform about our real circumstances. It is prudent to force ourselves periodically to step aside and wonder whether the patterns of image and thought with which we surround ourselves serve to enlighten or to obscure, whether they fashion effective ways of viewing the world or deflect our attention away from things that should be carefully considered.

Landscape, whether experienced through images or along highways and wandering paths, or as forms inscribed in the earth, has remained, until recently, the medium through which we most readily imagined the workings of nature. Growth and decay, transformation and disruption, the fusion of materials into new forms, have been rendered picturesque and digestible, their balanced shapes and colors cultivated for appreciation. Despite the large component of human cultivation and construction that underlies most landscape scenes (even the Colorado River was temporarily released from control this year so that flooding waters could restore nutrients to the soil of the Grand Canyon) the works of humans have generally been imagined to be set in opposition to the landscape.

Conversely, the infrastructure that has been built upon the land to make it habitable for communities has been separately conceived: lines drawn across a map, then towering constructions that string power from here to far away there, structures that gather and control the flow of rivers and channels that transport objects and people, subjecting them to defined purpose and the demands of the market. Whereas "nature" has been rendered as fecund, dynamic and infinitely varied, infrastructure has been cast in the mode of single-minded determination, drawn out through the structures of engineering; pipelines, canals, dams arcing across valleys, freeway channels and wires propped above the land. Lines have been the medium of control.

Gradually we are coming to see these linearly conceived structures dissolve into interactive ecologies or multiply into networks that behave in a very different way, dispersing and combining rather than collecting and separating energies, movements, resources and information. In the end the Web may not absorb us into itself, but serve, rather, as a metaphor that will help us to see the world and the constructs we make within it in a more multiple, more "natural" way.

In this issue we explore some of the diverse implications of looking to landscape and infrastructure as interwoven, reciprocal concepts. The suggestions and examples included here, multiplied and extended, can lead to the forming of cities, systems and artworks that more aptly represent the conditions in which our lives take place.

We are particularly pleased to include a place debate on the outcome of one such proposal, the Phoenix Public Art Master Plan, which we first reported in *Places* 5:4 in 1988. William Morrish, Catherine Brown and Grover Mouton prepared a plan for relating the location and funding of artworks to infrastructure improvements that were to be created in the landscape – cityscape of Phoenix. The outcome is mixed, the outreach exemplary.

— Donlyn Lyndon