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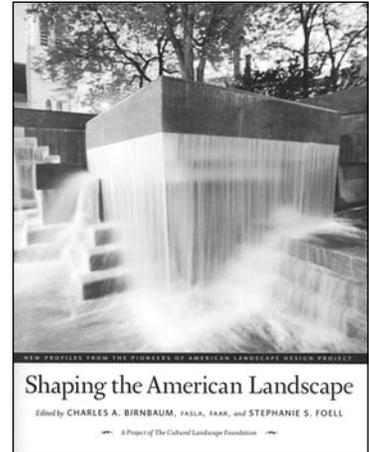
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Charles A. Birnbaum and Stephanie S. Foell, eds. ***Shaping the American Landscape***. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009, 446 pp., 462 black-and-white and color photographs, plans and illustrations, cloth, \$65.00, ISBN 978-0-8139-2789-3.

Encyclopedic in its conception, *Shaping the American Landscape* presents an inclusive roll call of individuals whose careers and practices touched all aspects of landscape architecture in the twentieth-century. This volume recognizes and celebrates important landscape architects, educators, garden designers, urban and regional planners, political and social activists, civil engineers, journalists, and horticulturists. The theoretical and built works of this group substantiate the agendas, imperatives, and directions that created significant landscape design in the last century. The individuals chronicled brought forth new typologies and design paradigms. Their work embodied cultural attitudes about place, site, and design, forming the contemporary basis for thinking about the built and natural environment in which we live, work, and play. This book prompts us to take note, to be inspired, to deliberate and evaluate, and to identify significant works for preservation.

Shaping the American Landscape offers a rich array of biographical surveys of individuals whose projects range in scope from golf courses and waterfront promenades to private gardens and corporate headquarters, from highways, parkways, and national parks to urban parks and plazas, from suburbs to public works and design publications. The scope and depth

of *Shaping the American Landscape* is due to the editors — Charles Birnbaum, founder of The Cultural Landscape Foundation [TCLF], and Stephanie Foell, an architectural and landscape historian. This book builds on earlier TCLF compendiums, notably *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture I: Proceedings from the Wave Hill Conference* (1999) and *II: Making Postwar Landscape Visible* (2004).

Birnbaum's vision and passion, and his sweeping grasp of twentieth-century American landscape architecture, allow this newest volume to expand the range and scope of the previous publications. Birnbaum's unsurpassed efforts, notably his publications, such as *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (2008) and his leadership of TCLF, have launched a body of work dedicated to landscape architecture and its preservation in both scholarship and built works. Recognition for *Shaping the American Landscape* must also extend to Boyd Zenner of the UVA Press, whose support for landscape architecture continues to bring forth works of both substantive scholarship and general interest.

Shaping the American Landscape is well organized and accessible, with a helpful introduction. The text is dominated by "The Pioneers," the 151 abundantly illustrated essays penned by scholars and topical experts, conveniently organized alphabetically by last name, with helpful cross-referencing. The book also includes a short section on "Sites Accessible to the Public," briefs on the numerous "Contributors," and a well developed index which also references related TCLF-sponsored publications dedicated to raising awareness and creating dialogue about America's cultural landscapes.

Despite the large number of contributors, the essays maintain a generally high quality. The tone is seldom pedantic, being instead engaging and informative. While the editors don't state how they selected authors – or how they came to choose the names of those presented – there are cases where the author is drawing upon either personal knowledge or a developed expertise. This approach contributes to the overall value of the collection and greatly overshadows any minor editorial copy errors in the text. Another minor oversight is the lack of references within the essays to the beautiful color

plates, although most essays are typically illustrated within the body of the entry with portraits, plans and drawings, and photographs of sites.

The result is a handy, pleasing reference book that features a fascinating group of individuals. The assembled information is sure to intrigue novices as well as those familiar with key individuals of the last century. This survey forms a base of information worthy of further study and elaboration; it is an essential step in helping to locate landscape architecture sites and designers whose work warrants preservation. But it is also just a first step – a springboard to produce critical examinations and interpretations of the meaning and overall trends of twentieth-century landscape architecture in North America.

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