Foreword

DLA2022: HYBRID

In June of 2021, at the second all-virtual DLA Conference, when we were once-again disappointed, even dismayed, to have our much-anticipated annual in-person international DLA gathering curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, we were of course already looking forward to our next year's conference, and contemplating a suitable 'theme' for the call for submissions for DLA2022. There was a dominant theme in the air at the time of "a return to normal(cy)", and of recovery, and in the United States, of "building back better." But it seemed to some of us that the 'new normal' was not likely to be any kind of return, but more of a continued adventure into some substantial unknowns. And so, the idea of "hybridity" emerged, as a kind of general theme covering a wide range of dynamic and evolving processes that all seemed to have a commonality of combination, or fusion:

- the integration in the professions surrounding landscape architecture of both hand-drawing and manual-construction with computer-based and robotic techniques;
- the many combinations of analog and digital in modern culture, from music and cooking to reading and writing to banking and medicine and beyond;
- the dilemmas faced by teachers and students in 'hybrid' classrooms needing to support both in-person attendance and remote, videoconference-mediated participation, with all of the attendant technical, social, and pedagogic complications;
- the rapid emergence of 'hybrid' vehicles, combing both petroleum-fueled engines with batteries and electric motors; as part of a broader technological trajectory away from fossil-fuels and towards more renewable wind and solar energy;
- the vivid need for a new kinds of hybrid 'terrestrial / marine' (landscape & sea-scape?) design and planning in the face of the overwhelming global imperatives for climate-change related resilience.

And so, the theme was established, and slightly more than one hundred abstracts were submitted to the DLA peer-review process; of which just over sixty became the articles in this edition of JoDLA, to be presented at DLA2022 from the grounds of Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD), at the planned 'Hybrid' conference June 9-10 2022.

At the time of this writing, it is still uncertain whether or not in-person attendance at DLA2022 will go forward, even with widespread vaccination against the coronavirus; even though many of the public-health indicators of concern are at encouragingly low levels and apparently trending further in the desired direction, and many pandemic-related restrictions have been and are being lifted throughout the world, at many municipalities and institutions, we will not know until it happens; and history alone will record whether or not the 23rd international DLA conference, and the first to be held in-person on North American soil, was actually held in-person …

In any event plans for a hybrid event are in place, recognizing that part of the 'new hybrid normal' is a normalization of internet- and video-mediated collaboration, which has obvious benefits in terms of diversity, inclusion, and opportunities for international participation. Articles in this issue of JoDLA come from at least these 20+ countries (in no particular order):

United States, China, Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Czech Republic, Albania, New Zealand, Hungary, Denmark, Turkey, Australia, Singapore, Netherlands, Japan, Canada, United Kingdom, Spain, Finland, Austria, Italy, South Korea. Many authors will deposit video recordings in a shared archive, to make the contents of their presentations available asynchronously to all the world even after the conference. And all the contents of this Open Access journal are available online in PDF form to all the world, as well.

These JoDLA7 contents cover a broad range of topics, from case studies to theoretical inquiries, in the nine major historical areas of interest identified by Nastaran Tebyanian, from Penn State University, in her guest editorial in this volume, from her analysis of five years' worth of JoDLA contents: geodesign with a focus on urban systems, geodesign with a focus on land cover modeling, virtual and augmented reality, education, 3D modeling, tool development including software and UAVs, BIM, landscape perception/visualization, and climate change, particularly flooding. (She also makes some interesting observations about the different nouns and verbs frequently used in writing about these different topics.)

The particular issues of "hybridity" are addressed in some of these articles, and most clearly in the invited contributions from two of DLA2022's keynote speakers, Mirka Beneš, from the University of Texas at Austin, and Anya Domlesky, from SWA's XL Innovation Lab.

In a separate simple analysis of titles from this issue, a listing of the top eight words by frequency of occurrence (actually the top #2-#9, omitting the top #1 word 'landscape') reads like a slightly grammatically awkward imperative for digital landscape architects:

- design   (11)
- urban   (9)
- landscapes   (9)
- using   (7)
- virtual   (6)
- change   (6)
- modelling   (6)
- climate   (5)

("Design urban landscapes using virtual change modelling, climate!" is a timely challenge indeed. "Virtual change modelling" is itself at the very heart of geodesign, a topic of recurrent emphasis in JoDLA in the last several years, as Tebyanian's analysis shows. The list of the next eight most frequent words may also be read as a somewhat cryptic suggestion about how to go about this design task, with punctuation added: "Mapping point digital data, reality analysis, green information.") These sixteen keywords taken together provide a kind of rough linguistic map of topics of interest to the DLA community at this point in time, especially in their pair-wise combinations, such as "virtual reality", or "green information".

In our original call for DLA2022 submissions, we posed the question: "*What 'hybrid vigor' can the hybridization of the analog and the digital offer to landscape architects, urban/environmental designers, and planetary citizens?*"

Arguably, the broad international representation within, and the intellectual diversity of, these contributions from the DLA community; the visions and accomplishments reported therein; as well as the complexity and complications of this new/normal hybrid conference format; are all testimony to that 'hybrid vigor'. May it take root and continue to flourish. We

are already looking forward to next year's DLA2023, in-person (we hope!) and likely hybrid, too, in Bernburg/Dessau.

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