

**Maya Lin: Systematic Landscapes** / Richard Andrews and John Beardsley.-- Seattle, WA: University of Washington; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, November 2006.--112 p.--ISBN 0-300-12120-2 (cl.,alk.paper): \$40.00.



In 1981, Yale architecture student Maya Lin won the competition for the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. Since graduating, she has created equally evocative monuments including the *Civil Rights Memorial* (1989), *The Women's Table* (1993), and the *Confluence Project* (in progress), yet Lin resists being defined as only a designer of commemoration and has produced works of architecture, land art, and sculpture. A committed environmentalist, she is concerned with how the viewer experiences the natural world and landscape. Borrowing tools from the geologic sciences and computers, such as sonar views of ocean floors or satellite images of earth, Lin has translated these technological readings into sculpture.

*Maya Lin: Systematic Landscapes*, published in conjunction with a recent traveling exhibition, documents her latest work, most of which was created in 2006. It contains short essays by Richard Andrews, director and curator of the Henry Art Gallery, who discusses the works in the exhibition, and John

Beardsley, senior lecturer of landscape architecture at Harvard, who reviews her previous work to demonstrate her continued desire to create experiential site-related spaces.

Both essayists quote extensively from Lin's own book *Boundaries* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2000), wherein she described her intuitive creative process, and both draw a parallel between her work and Zen gardens. By focusing on the contemplative function of such gardens, the authors deny the daily monastic labor necessary to their maintenance. The precision and labor involved in the construction of Lin's sculptures is not fully explored, nor is her work related to the large-scale, labor intensive installations created by contemporary Japanese artists like Koichi Ebizuka and Takamasa Kuniyasu, who employ similar intuitive processes and natural materials in their interpretations of nature. Rather the authors situate Lin in the canon of established twentieth-century environmental artists, ranging from Richard Serra and Andy Goldsworthy to Isamu Noguchi; they contrast western and eastern sensibilities, by examining an American focus on materials and a European romantic aesthetic with an Asian connection to nature.

The strength of this catalog is Lin's work. The three large installations and nineteen smaller pieces are beautifully lighted and photographed; many of the 108 color illustrations are large, some covering two pages. Lin's art transcends disciplines, and it is the depth of the work, as well as its breadth, that makes this catalog a worthy addition to art and architecture libraries.

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