This exhibit publication investigates new art sites at the intersections of art making and display, architecture and landscape design, and nature and environment. These sites represent and forecast the breakdown and dispersal of the iconic museum in favor of places that comingle art and its container(s) with exterior space. The title’s white cube, green maze duality captures the nature of the project (though the author himself suggests “brownfield” as the intermediate component in a three stage progression). The duality oscillates within conceptual models; the chosen sites themselves; the exhibit’s traditional museum setting; the exhibit portal, a white cube lined with greenery; and the exhibit publication, a white book filled with landscapes.

Ray Ryan, a curator quartered in Pittsburgh, travels and writes globally, with a knack for calling out new trends and practices (see also his 2006 Gritty Brits: New London Architecture). His essay here explores precedents and parallels for new art sites. Commentary by Brian O’Doherty, author of Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space (1976), appropriately frames the project. An essay by Marc Treib that discusses typologies of sculpture and landscape sites seems unessential to the project.

Six featured sites are Olympic Sculpture Park (USA); Stiftung Insel Hombroich (Germany); Benesse Art Site Naoshima (Japan); Instituto Inhotim (Brazil); Jardín Botánico Culiacán (Mexico); and Grand Traiano Art Complex (Italy). They are self-identified as a sculpture park, art sites, a nature reserve, a botanical garden, and an estate/town art complex, but have overlapping missions. Some have been conceived from preexisting places, and others developed from scratch. Some involve multiple locations or phases. They address and display various topographies, ecologies, cultures, and artistic practices. Architectural components range from art pavilions and studios to hotels and a ferry terminal. Players include old lions like Tadao Ando, Raimund Abraham, and Roberto Burle Marx and younger talents like Weiss/Manfredi, Tatiana Bilbao and Johnston Marklee. The European sites are less complete and less legible, tempting us to begin pilgrimage further afield.

The exhibit’s architectural drawings and models are largely excluded from the publication where color photographs by Iwan Baan take precedence. These compellingly highlight the visitors who explore and occupy these sites. Color-coded texts, graphics, and data are employed to differentiate and compare the sites. Detailed site plans are particularly helpful for understanding the scope of these places. MGMT designed the publication to high standards.

White Cube, Green Maze documents an important and timely exhibit seen only at Pittsburgh and Yale. It is recommended for programs and collections in art, architecture, landscape design, and museum studies.