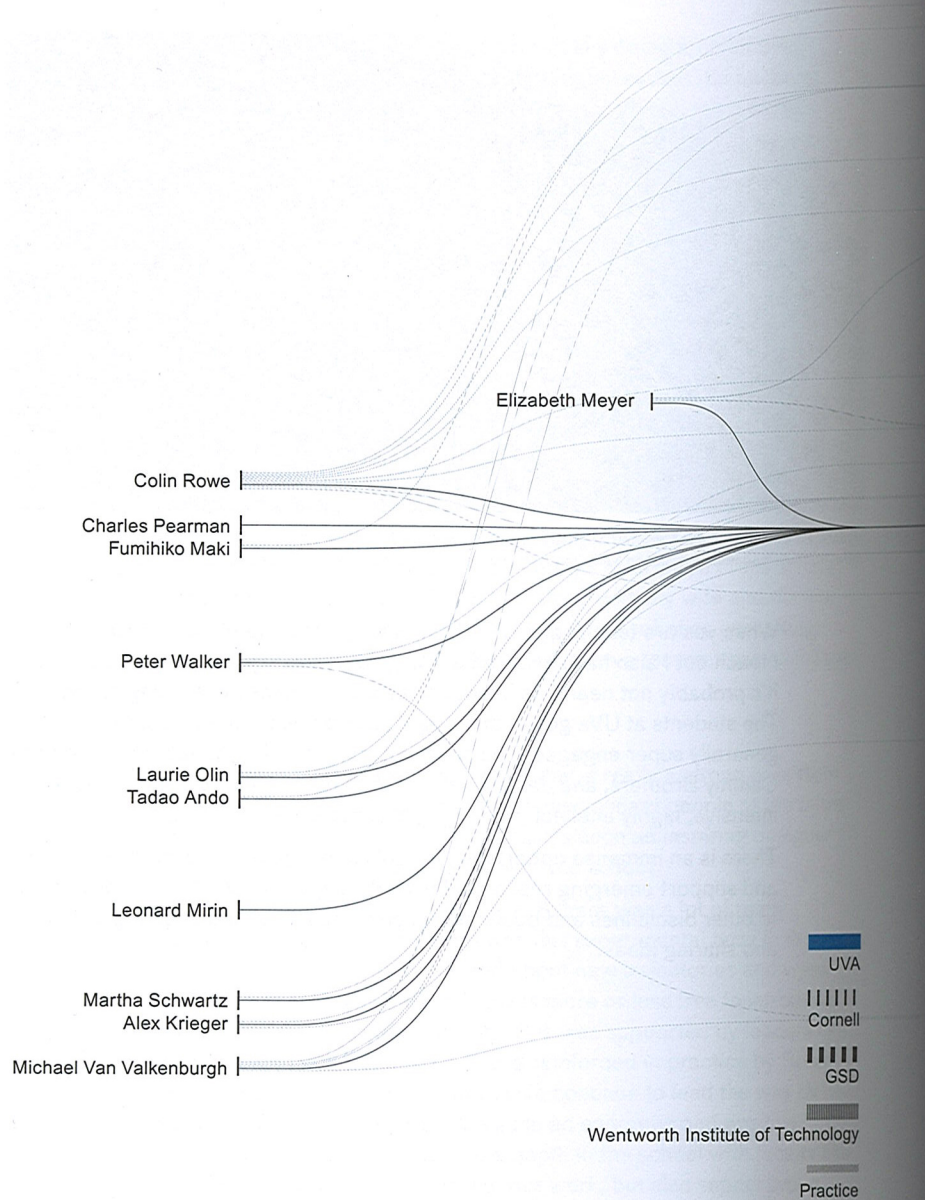




# TRAJECTORIES





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What are your most important influences and how does UVa fit in?

I attended Cornell, but at the time there wasn't a strong link with UVa anymore. Colin Rowe was still controlling thought there. He had an interest in the garden. Figure-ground was black and white, but there was always the gray of the landscape. I have a split pedigree from Cornell. I spent a summer in Japan in a program directed by Chuck Pearman and Lenny Mirin with a focus on the integration of architecture and landscape, mostly looking at traditional Japanese architecture. Some years later, when I was looking for a graduate program in landscape architecture I remembered Lenny's

recommendation of Virginia's program. I found myself in Virginia when Warren Bird was chair for a year. Beth Meyer became chair the next year.

When I applied, Warren called me into his office and said he wanted to interview me before he admitted me. I came in and he said, "So, I want to make sure that you really want to be a landscape architect, and not just an architect who knows about landscape." At the time I was unsure about my future career track, but I accepted the possibility of a shift in emphasis. It was Beth who turned me onto the idea that there's a huge opportunity to have an influence in landscape architecture. At the time, there weren't very many people practicing who were doing good work. My background in architecture does give our practice a competitive advantage.<sup>1</sup> With my licenses in architecture and landscape architecture we're actually starting to do buildings as part of our landscapes. To fulfill both sides of my interest, I teach architecture at Wentworth.

Warren steeped the program in an understanding of the place we live and practice. Warren, Will Rieley, and Reuben Rainey talked about what it was to be in Virginia: plants, ecology, topography, hydrology, how the land works, its culture and history.<sup>2</sup> There was something about being rooted in the place that was very central to my education in Virginia. I go back down to Virginia and feel like the work is still very much rooted in site. It is smaller in scale compared to some other schools. And understanding the cultural significance of sites is part of the conversation.





The Steel Yard, Providence, Rhode Island, 2010. The Steel Yard is a reclaimed urban landscape that represents the neighborhood's industrial history while also offering a campus for industrial-arts education, workforce training, and small-scale manufacturing.

What topics do you find most relevant to your work? How do you position yourself in the current discourse of the discipline?

Landscape architecture has gone more towards scientific models and ecology in recent years. Beth has really been involved in that. In some ways she has dismantled a way of thinking about design that is not necessarily related to ecology. I find that somewhat disappointing for UVA.

I'm interested in cultural influences and how they are made manifest in design. Currently we are working on a reservoir park for Brookline. I'm really interested in the history of that site and its role in public infrastructure. We are trying to make that legible through the way the site gets realized as a park.

We have also done brownfield remediation with a focus on social impact. Those are topics that we are invested in. I like to think that we know something about ecology, but we play a stronger role when thinking of the design enterprise first and then applying ecological thinking to support that.

What is on the boards?

Our latest project is a campus master plan for Brigham and Women's Hospital. Brigham's tight urban site doesn't have very much landscape. The president of the hospital created a campaign to bring nature into the hospital. We've been working on every little space that we can find to make gardens and nature a part of the visitor and patient experience.



Shanghai Bund, Shanghai, China, 2010. Nearly a mile long, the design is a series of landscapes—paved courts, gardens, urban parks, planted slopes, promenade—that relate to their adjacent condition (office, retail, residential) to bring human scale to the site.

How have you seen the discipline of landscape architecture transform over the years?

I wish I had been born a little bit earlier! The previous generation had very little competition.

There are many ways to practice landscape architecture, from Kate Orf's oyster reefs, to what we do, which is perhaps more traditional in terms of how people imagine a landscape practice, to landscape urbanism—there is a wide range. The relationship of the field to architecture is also changing in an interesting way. Architects are trying to take over landscape, even though they don't really know what they're doing in landscape. There is sort of this healthy way that landscape has become interesting to architects.

Our staff is split, almost half and half—half architecture trained, half landscape trained. People trained in architecture have to get beyond the object-based criteria or framework that they work within. There's a bit of a learning curve that Kaki and I have noted, and it takes about two years of being in our practice and working with landscape to start to figure it out.

<sup>1</sup> Mark Klopfer and Kaki Martin established Klopfer Martin Design Group in 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Will Rieley taught at UVA 1990's. He established Rieley & Associates Landscape Architects in Charlottesville in 1980.