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Autor: Parish, Jacqueline / Stählin, Sabina

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INTRODUCTION

by Jacqueline Parish and
Sabina Stählin

This pamphlet represents work in progress: the Master of Advanced Studies Programme in Landscape Architecture (MAS LA) at the ETH Zurich. It presents student projects of the first year, 2003/2004. It therefore reflects a very young and fragile yet exciting phase in a teaching programme, when processes and structures are not yet established and can still be shaped, when its status is vulnerable and yet full of potential. The development of the pamphlet provided one of the first critical opportunities to review the year's work (process) as well as the output (students' projects). The aim of this publication is to demonstrate the complexity of the design process as it applies to the suburban landscapes of Zurich airport.

Landscape architecture stands as a discipline that not only reflects a certain culture but also represents an active instrument in the shaping of present and future cultures. Besides having physical and experimental characteristics, it has the ability to translate and express spatial and physical concepts, and thus to participate in today's cultural discourse. The programme intends to encourage further research to develop a professional landscape design culture that will use precise reasoning and clear argumentation to support projects. This pamphlet stands at the beginning of a research programme on a theory-based landscape design method at the Chair of Prof. Christophe Girot.

The pamphlet begins with two essays. While the first one by Christophe Girot deals with today's landscape architecture on the large scale of urban sprawl and with the teaching of it, the second by Michael Jakob outlines the strange situation that all landscape architecture finds itself in as the translation of a lost original. In the students' projects that follow, the focus is on the process of

design development in the MAS LA 03 rather than on completed solutions. The two background texts on geology and sociology exemplify two of the topics studied during the year. The essay on video and its uses as a sketching tool in landscape design introduces the content of the DVD enclosed in the back cover.

The editors wish to thank Prof. Charles Waldheim for writing the foreword, and Prof. Michael Jakob, Dr. Christian Schmid, Prof. Helmut Weissert and Fred Truniger for their important contributions to the publication. These texts represent the manifold theoretical content of the MAS LA programme. We also thank Claudia Moll, Eke Miedaner, Almuth Seebohm and Andreas Gähwiler, who assisted in the production of the pamphlet. Finally, our thanks go to all the students and teaching staff involved; this project would not have been possible without them.