The Design Commission for Wales invites you to join us at Ruthin Craft Centre on Friday 9th October for our Landmarks Conference...

...a day exploring the relationship between the natural resources of the Welsh landscape and human intervention.

>www.dcfw.org  >www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk
Landmarks is the Design Commission for Wales’ autumn 2015 exhibition and events which explore the relationship between the natural resources of the Welsh landscape and human intervention, informing and inspiring a future for design in the landscape.

The Landmarks Conference, with expert speakers, interactive workshops, networking opportunities, and exhibition viewing will take place on 9th October 2015 at Ruthin Craft Centre. Aerial photographer, Alex MacLean will share images from his aerial survey of Wales conducted exclusively for Landmarks.

The Landmarks Exhibition, opening at Ruthin Craft Centre on 25th September 2015, and open to the public until January 2016, has been originated and curated by the Design Commission for Wales to be accessible to a wide audience. The exhibition features the work of designers who creatively and critically highlight the value of good design interventions in the Welsh landscape.

A Landmarks Publication, produced in conjunction with the conference and exhibition, acts as a lasting reference to the complex issues and challenges of working with the Welsh landscape. It includes a series of illustrated essays by design professionals, academics and artists alongside excerpts from the exhibition. All conference delegates will receive a copy.

Landmarks considers a wide variety of issues including energy, sustainability, rural housing, industry, infrastructure, economy, tourism, biodiversity, climate change, transport, well-being, design, planning, landscape, conservation and innovation.
Tickets
The Landmarks conference in Ruthin is a free to attend, but places are limited. Please book your place on Eventbrite via our website www.dcfw.org/landmarks-conference/

If you would like to be informed about future Landmarks events around Wales, please let us know by emailing connect@dcfw.org or calling 029 2045 1964

About Landmarks
With its magnificent mountains, verdant valleys and characterful coastline, Wales is renowned for the beauty of its natural landscape. Yet, over centuries, it has been transformed by the designs of mankind. Farming, industry, transport, energy, wars, religion and tourism have all left their marks on the Welsh landscape in the form of field boundaries, deforestation, roads, canals, quarries, mines, power stations, factories, monuments, pylons, wind turbines and the like.

In the past, people used and adapted their local surroundings out of necessity to provide food, fuel, shelter and communication. Today, our romantic attachment to the ‘natural’ landscape means that we tend to focus on conservation and preservation, deeming any significant new interventions negative. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) process is intended to assist decision making. But does it encourage valuable good design or restrict us to camouflage and mitigation in practice?

Demands on the landscape - historic conservation, habitat enhancement, improved transport connections, renewable energy, economic farming, jobs, culture and communities, health and well-being, water management, communication infrastructure and attractive tourism - are often in conflict. There are many issues which must be considered by the designers, planners and decision-makers shaping the Welsh landscape.

Through an exhibition, conference, publication and satellite events, the Design Commission for Wales seeks to dig deeper into the relationship between natural resources and human intervention, informing and inspiring a future for design in our landscape.
Conference Programme
9th October 2015 at Ruthin Craft Centre, Wales

10.00  Registration, Refreshments & Landmarks Publication

10.30  Welcome & Introduction
—  Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW
—  Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW

10.45  Landscape of Man Presentation of aerial survey conducted exclusively for Landmarks
—  Alex MacLean, aerial photographer, USA
—  Discussion

11.15  Workshop with Alex MacLean
—  How to conduct a regional aerial survey (You do not have to be a pilot to do this!)

12.10  Refreshment Break

12.30  Interpreting Landscape
—  Mary O’Connor, Urban Landscape Design, WYG
—  Wayne Forster, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University
—  Discussion

13.30  Lunch

14.15  Marking Landscape
—  Paul de Kort, Artist, Netherlands
—  Discussion

14.45  Landmarks Exhibition Tour - sponsored by Manorhaus
—  Designers’ talks: Rhian Thomas, Andrew Docherty, Kieren Morgan
—  Tour of Landmarks exhibition

15.25  Refreshment Break

15.45  Landscape Intervention
—  Steve Messam, Artist - presentation
—  ‘Walking’ workshop

17.15  Summary & Closing Remarks
—  Discussion
Speaker Profiles

Alex MacLean, Architect/Aerial Photographer, USA
Alex MacLean is an award winning American aerial photographer, a graduate of Harvard Graduate School of Design, with a master’s degree in Architecture, and the author/co-author of over 11 books. His descriptive images provide clues to understanding the relationship between the natural and constructed environments. Oblique aerial photography is a powerful way of collecting, analysing, and sharing visual information about cultural landscapes. MacLean has been commissioned for many topical and regional illustrative aerial surveys over the past 40 years, including a comparative survey of Venice and Las Vegas for the Berlin Academy of Art, a regional survey of Kansas City, US for the Kansas City Design Center, and a survey exploring housing densities across the US for the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy. Covering the topics of climate change, resource use, and preserving regional character, all of these projects have resulted in major exhibitions or publications. Most recently, MacLean documented the extraction of tar sands in Alberta, Canada, and their transport to processing refineries in the Midwest, and along the American Gulf Coast.

The Design Commission for Wales is collaborating with MacLean to produce an aerial survey of Wales for their 2015 Landmarks Conference. This survey will record the current conditions of selected areas and topics of the Welsh environment, to capture the physical and historical character of the region, and document contemporary planning issues and demands on the landscape. The images will aid in better visualising the nature and context of the human impact on the Welsh Landscape, and will be presented at the conference.

http://www.alexmaclean.com/

Mary O’Connor, WYG
Mary O’Connor FLI is an Associate Director at WYG. Her professional expertise is in the field of landscape planning and environmental impact assessment, in particular, landscape and visual impact assessments, green infrastructure and master planning, and landscape design for new developments. Her work extends across the energy, industrial, commercial, minerals, highways and housing sectors, public consultation and working with local communities. Mary has given evidence to a number of public inquiries, concerning the landscape and visual aspects of developments.

Mary has been active in The Landscape Institute, including as a member of Council, and was Honorary Secretary when the Institute was granted its first Royal Charter. She had previously represented the profession in Northern Ireland on Council, and had been Chair of Landscape Institute Northern Ireland, and continues as a member of Landscape Institute Wales committee. She has been active also in developing best practice guidelines. She is a member of the Advisory Panel for The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment’s Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, published in April 2013 (GLVIA3). She has acted as adjudicator in a number of Landscape Awards schemes, including the Landscape Institute Awards. Mary was elected Fellow of the Landscape Institute in 2015.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) sounds like a dry procedural undertaking for the purposes of satisfying statutory requirements, in relation to applying for planning permission or other consents for development proposals. That is, of course, one of its principal purposes: to identify the ‘likely significant effects’ of the proposals on these aspects of the environment. But it also provides the basis for holistically...
designed development and robust decision making. It supports the integration of development into its surroundings and decisions about the form and layout, appearance and details, so that the development will be a well-thought-out, sensitive and beautiful landscape in itself.

http://www.wyg.com/uk/urban-and-landscape-design

**Wayne Forster, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University**

Dr Wayne Forster is deputy head of the Welsh School of Architecture - one of the UKs leading schools of Architecture. Wayne’s role in the School centres on activities in academic leadership in design, teaching and learning and practice based research through the School’s Design Research Unit (DRUw) which was set up to pursue design based research. In his approach to architecture, emphasis is placed on the geographical context of the building - on topography, climate, light and tectonic form and energy use and sustainability. This has dominated much of his work over the past 25 years both in the design studio and in more orthodox research work - the use of local materials, building techniques based on tradition and innovation and especially the design of the building envelope in response to an appreciation of the local climate are all constituent parts of critical enquiry and practice. The aim in the studio is for an architecture that can encompass, for example, culture and nature, and the public and private arenas, creating ‘a place-conscious poetic’. This practice is based on ideas related to Pragmatism and based on the premise that ‘Theory and practice are not separate spheres; rather, theories and distinctions are tools or maps for finding our way in the world’. As John Dewey put it, there is no question of theory versus practice but ‘rather of intelligent practice versus uninformed practice.’

DRUw has won a number of design awards including RIBA awards for design in 2001 and 2010 and for research conducted in UK Universities in 2013.

http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/archi/

**Paul de Kort, Artist, Netherlands**

The Dutch landscape has been modified over the centuries by generations of planners, engineers, hydraulic engineers, generals and peasants. The fascination of artist Paul de Kort (1961) lies in these traces of human activity that have lost their function, but remain visible like scars in the landscape. Quite often it is these traces that we cherish as spatial quality. For a ‘good listener’ the landscape tells many fascinating stories that are hidden under and behind the visible landscape. With his art he wants to show himself to be ‘a good listener’. He wants to be touched by what he has come to see and what he has come to understand, so he can tap the unsuspecting passer-by on the shoulder and whisper; “Look ... there ...” so more people will become ‘good listeners’… because ‘good listeners’ are more involved.

We have organised and orchestrated our landscape for centuries.
We develop it, we build roads and cities.
We built polders and put them under water again.
We (under)mine the landscape and burn what we find.
We abuse, rob and injure it...

Then ‘Time’ comes, with its old friends - erosion and habituation.
‘Time heals all wounds’, says an old proverb.
The landscape absorbs the wounds, and it is precisely those ‘healed wounds’ we will label later on as spatial qualities.
We have become accustomed to them, the landscape has encapsulated them and in the end we are even
going to love and cherish them. This is the path along which our organisation becomes organic, and once our organisation is organic we feel at ‘home’.

http://www.pauldekort.nl/

Rhian Thomas, Architect
Originally from St. Asaph, Rhian Thomas is an architect at Loyn+Co Architects in Penarth. She joined the team in 2013 and has played an integral role in delivering bespoke projects that build on the studio’s consistency of language and techniques. Having established a strong reputation over the years for designing and creating quality architecture, Loyn+Co has recently been commissioned to design several significant residential masterplanning proposals, including Northcliff in Penarth for which Rhian is project architect. Rhian graduated from the Welsh School of Architecture (WSA) in 2003. Between 2005 and 2013 she worked at the Design Research Unit Wales (DRU-w), and formerly at Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis. She continues to combine work in practice with teaching at the WSA. Rhian has a particular interest in design in cultural landscapes, and using fieldwork techniques as a way of understanding site and how this can inform composition and form. She has always taken pleasure in the way work is made, and continues to find new and exciting ways to represent ideas. She has exhibited at the National Eisteddfod of Wales, the Mission Gallery, Ruthin Craft Centre, and for a pop up art collective in Cardiff.

fieldcollective
In 2010, Rhian Thomas established fieldcollective with Rob Stevens as a platform for exploring the territory between architecture and other creative practices. This ‘in-between’ space amid orderly and established ways of working provides opportunities for exploration, innovation and generating new dialogues between art, architecture and its surroundings.

Andrew Docherty, Architect, Rural Office for Architecture
Andrew Docherty is a senior architect at Rural Office for Architecture. For the past three years, since joining the practice, he has been project architect for Caring Wood in Kent, a ground breaking carbon neutral country estate. Andrew is a former tutor at the Welsh School of Architecture, and before entering the profession, trained as a ceramicist. He has a keen interest in ornament and pattern language in architecture. Andrew formally worked for White Design in Bristol on a range of eco and sustainable low energy buildings. These included award winning schools and the development of an innovative 180 bed sustainable hotel for the Eden Project.

Kieren Morgan, HASSELL
From a lush green canopy in the bustling heart of Melbourne, to a 4km line of paint linking outdoor games through the streets of Sydney, to the suspended felt hammocks of a Clerkenwell ‘sleeperie’, and cascading curtains inspired by The Great Gatsby in a courtyard in Montpellier; HASSELL has developed a reputation as architects and designers who look beyond traditional discipline boundaries and draw inspiration from vernaculars not normally associated with the field in which we work.

Our award winning and diverse portfolio of temporary installations, pop-up events and immersive experiences draw on broad influences, and our designers are able to pragmatically deal with the diverse needs of a space and narrative. We look to explore, push boundaries and experiment with ideas. Good design should be informed and well-rounded, and this cross-fertilisation between expertise offers us far greater opportunities for explorative design. As with all our work, our starting point is always a clear understanding of the client brief, and our approach to installations is the same as our approach to architecture; we make spaces for people. How they tell a story
and how they interact with these spaces is what makes them unique. How can we stimulate engagement and interaction, whether the intention is to be playful, inspiring or provocative? High impact temporary projects with substantial design value offer unique and memorable experiences, connecting people with the organisation behind them.

**Steve Messam, Artist**

Steve Messam is an environmental artist based in the North of England. With his site-specific installations, he sets visual accents in rural or urban settings, which include historical relics and vacant architecture that make us perceive the familiar environment in a new way. He is also interested in space: the interaction of art and audience within confined and open spaces, the role of aesthetics and the physical experience.

As an artist Steve Messam has worked primarily outside the gallery environment for the past 18 years. His works include ‘Beached’ (2007), in which he filled a beach with thousands of sandcastles and paper flags; ‘PaperBridge’ (2015) - a functioning packhorse bridge made from 22,000 sheets of paper in the Lake District; ‘Clad’ (2009) - a traditional timber-framed cottage wrapped in the fleece of 300 local sheep in Newtown, Wales and ‘Carpet’ (2013) - an installation of 25,000 jars of coloured ink in Lindisfarne Priory. He created the first off-site installation at the 2006 Shanghai Biennial and created a number of site specific installations across the Venetian Lagoon during the 2009 Venice Biennale. Steve regularly works with private businesses and the non-arts sector exploiting the parallel values of art and landscape and working towards a more sustainable model for individual rural arts practice.

Steve Messam’s landscape works seek to explore the layers of narratives within rural landscapes. These work as part of the wider landscape, frequently drawing on existing uses of the land and utilise an understanding of the geological, cultural and agricultural practices already being used to shape the landscape. From working with farmers as designers of the landscape to re-imagining vernacular architecture, Steve’s ephemeral site-specific art installations uncover the stories of place and help a deeper understanding of landscape.

[http://www.stevemessam.co.uk/](http://www.stevemessam.co.uk/)

**Venue**

[www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk](http://www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk)

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