Editorial

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The idea of this themed issue arose from observations within the editorial advisory board that the majority of the journal's papers tended to focus on the technical matters in urban design, be it interrogating the relationship between travel behaviour and land use (Greenwald and McNally, 2008) or landmark and tourist way finding (Norgate and Ormerod, 2012), or focusing on assessment methods (Colantonio, 2010; Gil and Duarte, 2013). The panel felt that another rather fundamental aspect of urban design, its 'artistic' side, needed to be brought into focus to rebalance the picture. The papers in this themed issue address two things: first the task of defining a possible 'art of urban design', both 'what such an art might be' and 'what it should address'. Second, having adopted a plausible definition, demonstrate, through empirical work, the art of urban design in action.

Attempts by authors to interpret a phrase that contain both 'art' and 'urban design' have led to conceptual gymnastics, but these may be made sense of by considering whether the art is of (i.e. a inseparable aspect of) or in (i.e. a discrete component of) urban design, and whether one is talking more about the outcomes of urban design, or the process of urban designing. This schema of 'of/in' and 'processes/outcomes' allows us to scope a possible range of definitions of an 'art' that is related to 'urban design', and provides the opportunity to introduce and discuss the papers in this issue.

The issue begins by remembering the life and work of Peter Hall, who was probably the most influential urban planner and thinker of the late 20th century. Falk's (2015) briefing paper then reflects on Hall's last book *Good Cities, Better Lives: Discovering the Lost Art of Urbanism* (Hall and Falk, 2013). Falk considers the location of urban design within the wider context of 'urbanism'. He argues that the exemplary practice of urbanism unavoidably takes into account urban design considerations, because it is simply impossible to talk about any sort of urban transformation or development without reference to its shape and location. He concludes that 'design' defined, not as an added-on frill, but as the spatial configurational aspects inherent in urban thinking, is a fundamental consideration of 'good urbanism'.

An art of urban design, and art in urban design

'Art' as a feature of an urban design outcome 'on the ground' is arguably a classic approach. The 'art' is the whole effect of

townscape and spatial composition, whether simply visual, or kinaesthetic. It is this 'art' of urban design that Guise (2015) sets out in his paper, in which he traces its well-known lineage in the western tradition, from Vitruvius to Sitte (albeit missing out all the Renaissance masters), to twentieth-century writers such as Unwin and Cullen. He does not, however, limit the art of urban design to the purely delightful, but extends it to the functional. He argues that the great twentieth-century townscape designers succeeded in holding the two together in a satisfactory whole by creating townscapes and urban morphologies that were both 'responsive, organic' (Guise, 2015) and visually satisfying, and able to deal with functional urban realities of contemporary cities such as vehicular traffic, and the changing nature of living, working and playing in the city.

Falk (2015), Guise (2015) and also Marshall (2015) argue that art should be a central consideration when doing urban design, and not simply involve the identification of isolated 'artistic' components that can be separated out. Art as simply a discrete component in urban design is indeed rejected as an inappropriate way of thinking about art and urban design.

Marshall (2015) argues that 'art' is a defining feature of urban design. He sets out three defining dimensions of urban design, the artistic, civic and the technical, without which urban design can barely lay claim to being a concept distinct from urban planning; it is the presence of art that makes urban design urban design. This may be seen as the counterpoint to his argument in a previous paper, that he is not persuaded that the use of scientific methods in urban design research and practice fully meets that method's standards and that urban design's self-claimed scientific foundations are deployed impressionistically at best (Marshall, 2012). In his paper for the present issue, Marshall answers his own question, 'So if urban design is not simply science, what is it?' It is an integrative 'civic polytechnic art'. He goes on to articulate the aim of this art – 'the place-signification in the medium of the urban fabric itself' – and also how this could be achieved by taking into account the specific natural topography, existing urban morphology, and the social and functional meanings of the existing place. One could say that his 'art of urban design' requires the recognition of both the tangible features of a place, as well as the more intangible ones,

which are those cultural, spiritual, aesthetic potential, or existence values associated with the place.

Of course, in practice, these features are already among the key considerations that urban designers take into account when designing. What Marshall does, however, is to make visible the foundations of a discipline that is already practised as an art. A conceptual prequel, if you will.

What then, is the sequel? And where is 'art in the process of urban designing'?

An art of urban designing, and art in urban designing

An 'artistic' approach to the process of urban designing can be defined as one that would view urban design through a lens that privileges those aspects that lends itself to being dealt with by artistic techniques. (Almost any aspect of anything can be dealt with by art or by science, but it may not be useful, or make much sense, to do so.) These are techniques and methods that are outside the scope of a scientific knowledge paradigm and methods of inquiry. One possible defining feature of an 'artistic' process is that subjective judgment is not just involved, but is explicitly made, and put centre stage as an acceptable rationale upon which design actions can be taken. This may be contrasted to the commonly held idea, although erroneous, that 'science, in its processes, is fully objective'. Another defining feature of art may be those actions or outcomes that have a less quantifiable value associated with their cultural, spiritual, aesthetic potential, or existence values beside their use and exchange values.

Two papers begin to flesh out alternative foci of the sequel to Marshall's prequel.

The presence of art could be explored through the apparent lack of it. Leach *et al.* (2015) initially assumed that objective and 'scientific' indicators would preclude, or at least, reduce the possibilities of 'creative' and subjectively grounded solutions to urban problems, but instead, found that designers and decision makers used indicator-generated results as means of opening new lines of exploration in a creative manner. Indicators can provide firm foundations for generative strategies and tactics, by enabling the plausible interrogation of possible spatial configurations. For the art of urban designing, the biggest challenge for the step following the generative one might be the effective yet non-objective coordination of information from urban design indicators that lack a central focal point to achieve an artful designed outcome. An art of urban designing may need to include mitigation of urban design conflict, and the handling of both technical and political questions raised by indicators.

Thus, within the deliberative practice of urban design, we find that there are many opportunities to break out of one or the

other 'way of knowing', whether scientific or artistic. Urban designers themselves do seem to do this already, whether they know it or not, but they too, are no strangers to getting 'stuck' in one way of knowing. Bentley and Kiddle (2015) refer to the belief held by some urban designers that 'structure', in this case types and rules, is inimical to their creative practise of their art. In the face of this, Bentley and Kiddle argue that since these structures are unavoidable, because urban design involves coordination across complex systems of urban spatial configurations, a recasting of the art of urban design as a performance, rather than the more traditional visual art, might be one way of 'breaking out' of this apparent impasse. They make the case for a script or score for this performance, which should be contained within a central memory archive held by practitioners from the multiple disciplines involved. It is the interpretation inherent within performance that entails creativity and interactivity with users. There is a tacit temporality woven into the discussions of relative rates of sub-system change, evolution of types, coordination of memory, and indeed, performance and memory itself, none of which would have any meaning except over time. This paper is thus, a sort of 'Lynchian moment' (Lynch, 1972) within this themed issue.

Harvie's (2015) paper opens up yet another front in the discussion of art and science in urban design: their interplay in urban design research, and its relationship to urban designing. The overarching aim and intellectual action of any research endeavour is mainly analytical and tends to conform to the ideal of being objective, whereas the aim and action of design is mainly synthetical, and can only be accomplished intersubjectively. This sets up an inherent tension within all research that is about design. Harvie reflectively explores this tension and illustrates, using a research-based design dissertation project, how a model of abductive reasoning can allow us to see clearly the iterative nature of the synthesis-analysis processes that designers go through, and importantly, the place of research in that cycle.

The implications for an art of urban designing are these. First, that designing requires the slipping between ways of dealing with knowledge and modes of reasoning, so that an art of urban designing will involve the abilities to be synthetically inventive and analytically rigorous, a quality more often associated with research. Second, if analysis is unavoidable, and if urban design needs to take technical matters properly into account, it follows, paradoxically, that the designer will need to resort to scientific method and content in the practise of the art of urban designing.

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