

# The Landscape Architecture of Richard Haag: From Modern Space to Urban Ecological Design

Thaisa Way



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Richard Haag is best known for his rehabilitation of Gas Works Park in Seattle and for a series of remarkable gardens at the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island. He reshaped the field of landscape architecture as a designer, teacher, and activist. In 1964, Haag founded the landscape architecture department at the University of Washington, and his innovative work contributed to the increasingly significant design approach known as urban ecological design, which encourages thinking beyond the boundaries of gardens and parks to consider the broader roles that landscapes play within urban ecosystems, such as storm water drainage and wildlife habitat.

Gas Works Park is studied in every survey of twentieth-century landscape architecture as a modern work that challenged the tenets of modernism by engaging a toxic site and celebrating an industrial past. Haag's work with ecologists and soil scientists in his landscape remediation and reclamation projects opened new areas of inquiry into the adaptive reuse of post-industrial sites.

Thaisa Way places Haag's work within the context of changes in the practice of landscape architecture over the past five decades in the Pacific Northwest and nationally. The book should be of interest to specialists as well as to readers who are interested in the changes in urban landscapes inspired by Haag's work.

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