• Paper / Proposal Title:
Shaping the Taskscape: Design-Directed Methods at the Intersection of Teaching and Research on Landscape

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• Abstract:
Over a decade, as students and staff across multiple universities, academic disciplines, and design laboratories and studios, the authors have collectively grappled with anthropologist Tim Ingold’s work. We present our ongoing, experimental attempts across three master’s theses, to expand his ideas of landscape and taskscape into design-directed research methods for interrogating understandings of landscapes and shaping relationships to them. Although different, these lab-based design projects all seek to identify and draw on the generativity of Ingold’s concepts, moving beyond the realm of critique to transform them into tools for creating new modes of engagement with landscapes. This potential within these ideas is similarly explored at an undergraduate level through design studios. Here, lab work informs studio work and vice versa, with both playing an equally important part. Additionally, such work also involves a field component to ground inquiries within the landscapes they are centered on. But in the authors’ context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the country’s diverse landscapes are not just field sites for us, but an outdoor lab our workspaces extend into.
We argue that in this, boundaries between research and teaching are blurred, as they are both driven and sustained over many years within a broader pedagogy and designerly practice of questioning, inventing, and testing. Here the studio, the field, and the lab overlap; their roles merging rather than only existing for either teaching or research, or exclusively for either staff or students. Within such a program, the implicit hierarchies structuring the relationships between students, teachers, and researchers are also disrupted through a shared commitment to the challenge of finding distinctive means of investigating and designing landscapes. Just as for Ingold landscape is unfinished, so too is our quest to devise design-directed methods from his work by bringing together learning, teaching, and researching in innovative ways that maintains an explorative, open-ended quality.

• Author(s) Biography:
Mick is a professor in the School of Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University. He has co-edited a series of books on landscape in New Zealand, including Beyond the Scene, Making our Place, and Wild Heart. He is also the director of WildLab, a landscape design and research group focused on identifying ways to connect people to nature.

Cameron is a PhD candidate in sociology at the Australian National University. He is also a researcher at WildLab. His doctoral work focuses on conservation practices at Australasian ecosanctuaries. His broader interest lies in exploring the intersection of people and nature to address issues of ecology, landscape, and environment.

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