

## Landscapes of the Long Now

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Works of landscape architecture obey temporal scales extending well beyond that of other features of the built environment.

For a dozen years Reed Hilderbrand has worked to create a public park on the Hudson River at Beacon, New York. This park includes a new kayak pavilion, which was designed, built, and occupied in eighteen months. The pavilion opened in 2012. It is briskly used in the summer seasons and there is a waiting list to rent a berth on its racks. Meanwhile, the landscape continues to mature. With the final site remediation project complete, the last part of the park's design will kick off construction this spring. After two decades of effort, Long Dock Park will fulfill its promise.

So, compared to landscape architecture, the projects of architects and engineers offer relatively instant gratification. We may share the same contractually defined design phases as our architectural colleagues; we may use equivalent physical tools and identical software packages, but in working with the land, we address ourselves to palimpsests. To design with a view towards cultural histories and cultural futures is crucial to Reed Hilderbrand's craft.

The site of Long Dock Park is an American industrial artifact. Thus it bears important historical and ecological significance. Long Dock extends almost perpendicular into the Hudson, a jetty, really, because this

land had been built in the 1850s from fill to create a rail yard and depot used to ferry raw materials across the river to Newburgh. Later on, in the twentieth century, the old rail yard became a point to store coal for locomotives. Oil storage tanks were built on the site in the 1960s. A regional land trust acquired the site, after decades of neglect, with the aim of creating a great public park for the Hudson Valley in the late 1990s. Spatial forms and ma-

terials that appear in the design of Long Dock Park evoke this history without interpretation. Our project honors the man-made construction of the site, which actually offers a rare intimacy with the Hudson River, while also initiating complex ecological functions that will allow the landscape to endure.

Hurricanes Irene and Sandy both struck Long Dock Park. The landscape's design accounts for seasonal

flooding, ice floes, even hurricanes. A changing climate imperils all of our works. In thinking about sustainability, we turn to Robert Pogue Harrison's configuration: "Sustainability is linked to continuity, and to the intensely human need to know that there will be fields and farms, or wetlands or weather patterns, or mountains and meadows, long after our sojourn on earth has come to an end. Sustainability assures the natural unfolding of permanence."



*Summer solstice, Long Dock Park, Beacon, New York. Image: James Ewing*

We are motivated in all commissions to create landscape works that are coherent and powerful in their expression, to evoke that which has held human significance in the past or present, and to resist entropy of such significance over future generations. Thomas Browne warns in his 1658 *Hydriotaphia, or Urne-Buriall*, “The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the Æquinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetick, which scarce stands one moment.” We are inspired by long-term thinking, by the work of the Long Now Foundation of San Francisco, whose efforts seek to frame human activity out over the next several hundred years. To designers required to operate at the cultural and biological scales of the landscape, we feel that nothing could be more appropriate.

Images collected here are collaborations with architectural and horticultural photographers commissioned to pursue the formal, phenomenal, and human features of Reed Hilderbrand’s landscape architecture. We often seek images for their intangible atmosphere. We look for the clarity but also mystery, the immediate but also the immanent. Even in working on the final representations of built work, the challenge continues: the landscape architect’s craft is a search of the visible for the invisible.



*At the Hudson's edge, Long Dock Park, Beacon, New York. Image: James Ewing*



*Wetland from wasteland, Long Dock Park, Beacon New York. Image: James Ewing*



*From Stone Hill, The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. Image: James Ewing*





*Reflecting pool and white willows, The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. Image: James Ewing*



*Atmosphere, The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown Massachusetts. Image: Millicent Harvey*



*Buffalo Bayou Gardens, Houston, Texas. Image: James Ewing*



*Wainscott, East Hampton, New York. Image: Millicent Harvey*



*Westport River House, Westport, Massachusetts. Image: Millicent Harvey*



*Cedar elms, Beck House, Dallas, Texas. Image: Millicent Harvey*



*Across Bachman Creek, Beck House, Dallas, Texas. Image: Millicent Harvey*

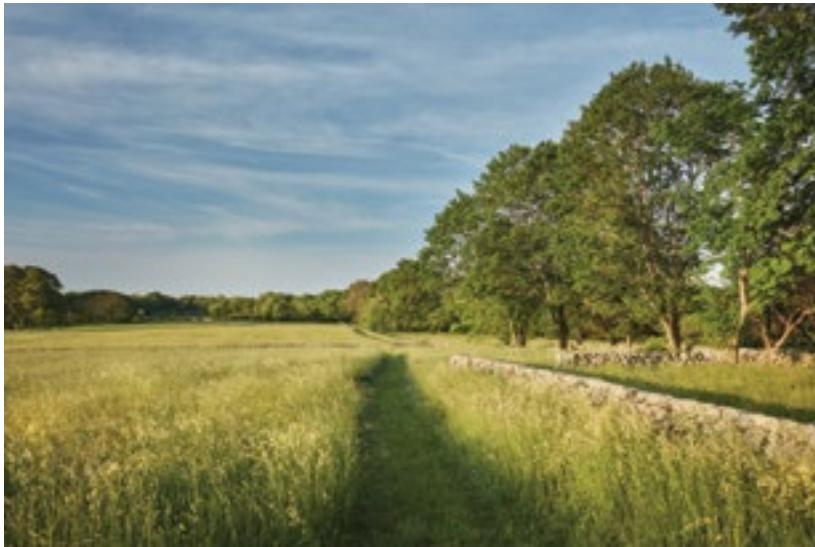
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*Panorama, Manatuck, Stonington, Connecticut. Image: Ngoc Minh Ngo*



*Stone edges at meadow, Manatuck, Stonington, Connecticut. Image: Ngoc Minh Ngo*



*Pool, Manatuck, Stonington, Connecticut. Image: Ngoc Minh Ngo*