



## Finding the Formless

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1. Wasted landscapes are beautiful. Certainly some of them are poisonous, and we shouldn't eat the dirt. But they aren't as bad as many people claim. Derelict land isn't bad; it's just been abandoned.



2. Trashing a landscape takes a lot of hard work - machines running on fossil fuels and hundreds of men, women, and children working for generations. They made the stuff we want - but at a cost to all of us. The ground is soaked with toxins, but also with the sweat of human labor. The decision to so-called 'clean up' these troubled sites - which really means to camouflage them - doesn't recognize all that hard work. The impulse to erase evidence of that hard work isn't very nice.



3. Industrial standards weren't very nice either. They allowed dumping waste into earth and water to make more and more and more. Dumping crap anywhere industry wanted was business as usual. And, by the way, you the consumer, were no innocent bystander.



4. These landscapes where goods were formed now seem formless. At first glance they're a jumble of useless stuff now kept at careful distance. But they deserve a second glance - and a second chance. Industrial leftovers are good ingredients; industrial processes can reproduce healthy frictions. Still to most people, this landscape appears worthless.

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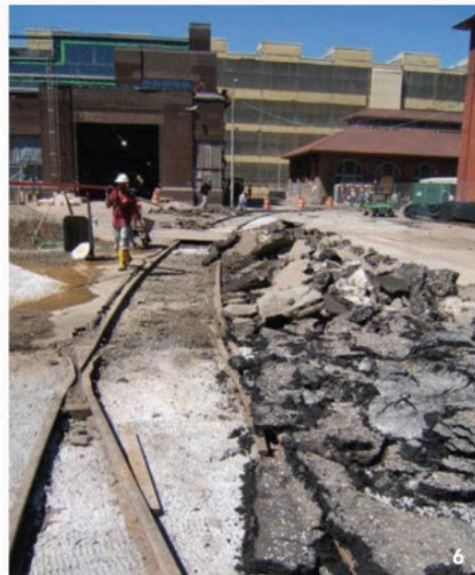
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5. Beneath the asphalt cracks, there are ambitious tracks. The concrete is full of energy, namely the human energy that poured it into place. Why throw away such good energy? Why banish it to a landfill when it's fine as is, where it belongs? And what about that stream that's working its way back to the surface? You may not be able to see it - but it's there. The wasted landscape, the formless landscape, the empty landscape, is dormant yet full.



6. I say: Go ahead, work with it! The traces of labor can be sublime. So, don't domesticate them. Simply show that the layered landscape you uncover will be full of site histories. Do it with conviction, but with caution. Use restraint. The forms you'll find are better than anything you'd be able to design.



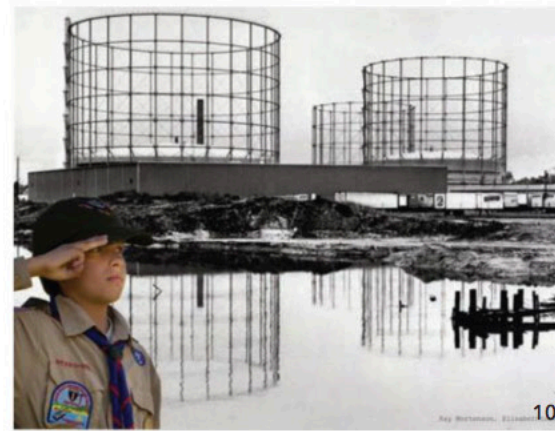
7. What will you name this landscape? It's not a park as we know it. It's not exactly a garden. It's not landscape urbanism. It's a landscape of urbanism. Perhaps a form of wild urbanism? It's 40% of Trenton. It's very, very Detroit. It's the urban wilderness we have yet to grasp and celebrate.



8. This is our Urban Frontier.



9. This is our American Icon.



10. This is our National Park.

