



# **Landscape Magic in the City of Angels:**

## **Deceptive Geography, Cinematic Archeology and Celluloid Tourism**

### **Session Leader**

Chip Sullivan, ASLA - Professor, University of California, Berkeley (Role: Director)

*"Movies are...atmosphere, Séance's or Dreams"-- Orson Welles*

Generations of film and television directors have featured Los Angeles's extraordinary landscapes and urban settings across every genre. The varied landscapes of this region have the unique ability to mimic almost any location in the world or any era of human history. How are these deceptive geographies created? What techniques of scenic conjuring can landscape architects learn? This presentation will analyze legendary and iconic film locations and propose a design vocabulary to aid landscape architects in the visualization and creation of new spatial forms.

## **Learning Objectives / Script:**

### **ACT 1 -Scene 1**

How the process of **location scouting for a film** and the '**casting**' of a site can inform the process of site analysis

### **ACT 1 -Scene 2**

We will explore how the landscape becomes an '**actor**' and how it performs a **role**

### **ACT 2 - Scene 1**

To recognize how the Los Angeles region has been adapted to represent **global geographies** and a **variety of historical eras**

### **ACT 2 - Scene 2**

How does the **visual metamorphosis of the cinematic** landscape affect our interpretation of **reality**

### **ACT 3 - Scene 1**

What is this new phenomena of **film tourism** and what is its effect on the environment

### **ACT 3 - Scene 2**

We will conclude by illustrating how the elements of '**scenic conjuring**' can be applied to contemporary design



<https://goo.gl/images/V3ug8R>

## **Presentation / Program:**

### **I. Introduction and Overview of Landscape in Film**

- A. Brief history of the Los Angeles film industry
- B. Origin & development of onsite film locations
- C. Iconic film locations of LA

### **II. Setting the Scene**

- A. The film location site
- B. Developing the landscape theme
- C. Scouting the landscape, site survey & analysis
- D. Landscape reconnaissance, aesthetics and logistics
- E. Dressing the site

### **III. Deceptive Geographies**

- A. Suspension of belief; the establishing shot
- B. The metamorphic landscape
- C. Scenic conjuring, deception & presentation
- D. Landscape impersonation

### **IV. Cinematic Archeology**

- A. Cecile B. DeMille's epic film *The 10 Commandments*, 1923
- B. The legend and discovery of the lost Egyptian set of DeMille in Southern California
- C. Excavation, preservation of the landscape, and artifacts of the set

### **V. Celluloid Tourism**

- A. The growing phenomena of film tourism
- B. The film pilgrimage and journey
- C. Classic film destinations
  - 1. Home town of the Hobbit, New Zealand
  - 2. Harry Potter and Star Wars, Puzzelwood Forest , England
  - 3. Museum of Western Film, Owen's Valley, Alabama Hills, California
  - 4. Paramount Movie Ranch, California
  - 5. Hunger Games, Dupont Park, North Carolina
- D. Film location finder
  - 1. World Wide Guides to Movie Locations
  - 2. Go on Location

## VI. Summary

- A. How to merge the artificial landscape of film & fantasy with reality
- B. How to interpret this new landscape history created by film
- C. Landscape meaning and value in contemporary society
- D. A contemporary design vocabulary
  - 1. Picturing the landscape as a film location
  - 2. The landscape site as fantasy and escape
  - 3. Scenic conjuring and the metamorphosis of landscape
- E. The future of landscape and the new media

## FINALE



Curbed LA

### Further Readings

- Franklin, Joe. 1959. Classics of the Silent Screen.
- Griffith, Richard & Arthur Mayer. 1957. The Movies
- Holzman, Allan. 2010. Behind the Scenes: Rick Carter, Production Designer. DVD.
- Isackes, Richard M. 2017. The Art of the Hollywood Backdrop.
- Neuman, Dietrich. 1996. Film Architecture.
- Sennett, Robert. 1994. Setting the Scene: The Great Hollywood Set Directors.
- Tschumi, Bernard. 1994. The Manhattan Transcripts.
- Vaz, Mark Cotta and Craig Barron. 2002. The Invisible Art.

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