Taking the First Step: The Labyrinth and The World of Landscape Architecture

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Abstract

Having historical, cultural, and religious roots, humans have been walking the path of the labyrinth for centuries. From seashores to cathedral floors, the labyrinth is seen as a symbolic search for one’s center. The labyrinth has experienced a revival in modern life, showing up everywhere from rehabilitation centers and hospitals, to prisons and backyard landscapes across this country. The labyrinth has emerged as a form that can help humans find their internal center and place of emotional stability.

Having walked the labyrinth and believing in its healing properties, I became interested in the symbol itself. I was intrigued by the way the symbol was actually an architectural element that told the narrative of the culture that built it. While the labyrinth was on church floors in medieval times, its revival in modern times seems to be located in the outdoor environment. Since Landscape Architecture is a field based on the creation of safe and pleasing outdoor environments for humans, I chose the labyrinth as a way of looking at ‘experience’ and ‘contemplation’ in the landscape, and how the design (the creation of form) of this object contributes to the analysis.

Wanting to complete this analysis by actually building a labyrinth, I was approached by the Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center in Richmond, Virginia, and asked to design and build a labyrinth. Providing Sanctuaries with conceptual designs of one way paths, a final design was settled on and the project was built. The thesis will highlight the theory, design, and construction surrounding the object called a ‘labyrinth.’
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Dedication

To Courage…

And Seeing Purple Rain on Every Dew Drop Petal…
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I thank my father, Dennis Vellenga, for subtly instilling in me at a very young age a personal land ethic and love of the outdoors…for teaching me to fish and cut grass, and letting me sail his boat in the recent years.

To human beings who want to help and heal themselves and seek outdoor environments in which to do so.

And perhaps the most important acknowledgement goes to Jan Perrigeaux for encouraging me to take charge of my life. Painter, gardener, healer; she is the source of creative inspiration and artistic expression that drives me forward. I know this because she is my mother.
Going to walk the labyrinth for me always begins with the journey itself. Since the permanent labyrinth in Salem is a half hour away, naturally a road trip is in store. On the way to this experience, my mind begins to think about what I am looking for the labyrinth walk to do for me, what questions I want answered, and most importantly, why am I drawn to drive a half hour to have this experience. Those thoughts coupled with a beautiful jaunt through the Virginia countryside get me started on my journey, both inside my mind and on my physical body.

Upon arrival to the space where the labyrinth sits, I can feel my mind begin to get quiet. It begins to get focused, and centered and ready to embark on the walk. Standing at the entrance to the Labyrinth I continually think the same thought of “once I enter this thing I can’t leave until I complete the walk.” Whether it is my paranoid superstitious mind speaking, or my desire to commit, I do not know, but the thought is very significant. When I do take that first step inside, I start to set a pace. Since my academic obsession with this object is so intense, I usually try to put that out of my mind after a few twists and turns of the path. Thankfully I succeed, as after I’ve fully entered the labyrinth, my conscious moves through my body and I enter a new state. While I cannot define this state to anyone but myself, I can feel it both in my body and beyond. Every turn makes me more and more aware of my stature, while at the same time changing subjects inside my mind push me to an oblivion of conflicting desires, wishes, fantasies, and resolutions. After a few peeks at the center and inevitably wondering if I will ever make it there, I start to become aware of my pace. I usually start to slow down at this stage, as I inherently like to prolong the pleasure. When I do reach that final turn, each time the same thing happens. I pause, and before entering the circle, I just give it up. Whatever ‘it’ is and ‘whoever’ I am projecting to, I just do it. And then I take those last few steps to the center of this sacred walk. Safely enclosed by this space, I breathe. And I breathe deep, and I begin to think again about who I am, and who I want to be, and all those things that seem so apparent to me and how I am willing to share that with others. I stand in silence, in honor of this shape that has made me aware of what is inside of me.
“Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.”
John Berger

Human beings are visually driven. What we ‘see’ is an important factor in how we view the world and our surroundings. Well before we have the capacity to speak or understand other’s speech, we have the capacity to react to visual stimuli. Seeing leads to perception, defined as the way the human brain “gives order and meaning to the sensations it receives.”(Loftus, G-14) It is within this order that we organize our external environment, and this organization of external factors can lead to experience. Perception is crucial for the world of landscape architecture, as this profession has the opportunity through design interventions to create experiences for humans that can enrich and impact their daily lives. I have chosen the labyrinth as one of these experiences. Objects in the landscape such as the labyrinth have serious implications for the experience of life. This experience takes place through engagement, which is our internal terrain interacting with our external terrain. When our internal terrain organizes the external through seeing, we are compelled to enter and walk the labyrinth. Through seeing, engagement, and perception there is an unconscious understanding of the power of this object.

It is through ‘seeing’ that we establish our place in the world. (Berger, p.7) Seeing in this way, is a conscious choice. We only see what we want to. When we do see, we immediately become a part of what we are looking at. Seeing then becomes a relationship and connection with the situations and objects we place ourselves in. When the object takes on certain symbolism or meaning, this relationship strengthens in a conscious manner. We are what we see. When we are situating ourselves in a certain ‘space’ through seeing, our senses are affected in such a way that our mind opens to the possibilities and the experience of seeing in such a way that we may not be used to. When that space is occupied by an architectural element or ‘object’ like the labyrinth, the object is a catalyst for ‘seeing’ to establish the relationship of a humans inner and outer terrain. Thus the inner and outer terrain can react to a level of engagement. Engagement with the labyrinth leads to the act of walking the path itself.
Historically the labyrinth has come to represent, among other things, God, path, life, and center. Its symbolism carries its form, as the pattern of the labyrinth constantly repeats. Having mythological, cultural, and religious roots, humans have been walking the path of the labyrinth for centuries. From the internal space of ancient cathedral floors to the external space of seashores and various landscapes, the labyrinth has been designed, created, and built by a meshing of materials and human construction practices. The labyrinth in these terms is an architectural element that tells the narrative of the culture that built it. It could be seen as a cultural and anthropological artifact.

The labyrinth has experienced a certain revival in modern times as a ‘healing walk.’ Beyond its placement in healing gardens, there are currently labyrinths in prisons, drug rehabilitation centers, medical facilities, and numerous backyards and landscapes across this country. Modern life has alienated many from that which centers us, and the labyrinth has emerged as a form that can help humans find their internal center and place of emotional stability.

“The experience of the labyrinth, whether as a pictorial design, a dance, a garden path, or system of corridors in a temple, always has the same psychological effect. It temporarily disturbs rational conscious orientation to the point that...the initiate is confused and symbolically loses his way. Yet in the descent to chaos, the inner mind is opened to the awareness of a new cosmic dimension of the transcendent nature.” (Bord, p.103)

While derivations of the labyrinth do exist, it is inherently a unicursal(one way) path, with the only choice being that of to enter the object itself. Once inside the labyrinth, space takes on new meaning as the user is exposed to the many twists and turns of the path on the search for the center. There is a conscious connection of the mind and body in this movement. There is a ‘fluid tension’ of human movement with that of the ‘labyrinth’ as a material construct. Thus the human user organizes these internal and external factors of mind, body, and the material object(labyrinth) to engage experience. This experience defined by the labyrinth is the search for center. In this organization of sensory perception, we become aware of the space we are occupying.
The space the labyrinth occupies is a way of structuring the landscape. The landscape is a term that makes sense of the environment in a particular way.” (Feminist Geographers, p. 170) To describe a certain setting as a landscape is to describe an environment or an interpretation of an environment. (Feminist Geographies, p.170) This definition parallels the way the human mind through perception ‘sees’ and ‘organizes’ the outer terrain. In this way, the mind is a landscape of sorts, where order is created by the spatial arrangement of objects. The landscape could then be interpreted as a spatial network of elements. This type of organization reflects elements in relationship to one another. Dennis Cosgrove says that “the landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring, or symbolizing our surroundings...that is landscape as a way of seeing...” (Feminist Geographies, P. 170)

Through ‘seeing’, the landscape becomes a ‘space’ where certain elements of experience can have meaning. The labyrinth is one of these elements in space. Space can be defined as a “physical reality.” (Feminist Geographies, p.5) Because of this, we recognize that certain objects exist in space, and it requires certain energy to organize and combine them as a spatial whole. (Feminist Geographies, p. 5) Space in these terms could be seen as a cognitive process of recognition, awareness, and connection. The organizational placement of the labyrinth in space begins to take on meaning. This meaning is enhanced when humans engage with the labyrinth, thus strengthening the relationship between humans and the space they occupy, both internal and external. Through engagement, human “understandings and conceptions of space” are changed by the activity. (Feminist Geographies, p.7) The labyrinth can provide this activity, as one “can never see it in totality, nor can one express it. One is condemned to it and cannot go outside and see the whole.” (Journal of Modern Art, p. 9) The mystery of the labyrinth begins with this act of ‘organizing’ and ‘seeing’ the spatial whole.

The act of seeing is a reaction to what is represented to us in the external world. Representation refers to the way “interpretations are made of the world.” (Feminist Geographies, p. 168) Representations are the way that we make sense of the world, the environment, space, and the landscape. Representation presupposes that humans do not approach any aspect of their surroundings in a “naive and unmediated way, but that what we perceive is always represented to us through particular ways of making sense.” (Feminist Geographies, p.168) Representations then are how we construct meaning about that which surrounds us. Representations construct meaning about the world conveyed by ‘signs’, ‘symbols’, or other contextual awareness. These symbols bring specific meaning to the object in representation by their ability to be something recognizable to the subject/observer and that is that of a familiar image. (Feminist Geographies, p. 168)
It is through this recognition that we as humans organize our approach to the landscape. The landscape is not a 'neutral space', where humans pass through unseeing and unmoved. The landscape effects our senses and perception of space, again due to the conscious ordering of objects within this outer world. When the labyrinth as an architectural element is placed in the landscape, its meaning lies in this representation. It establishes itself in the space it occupies. Some users may be aware of the form and qualities of the labyrinth, while others may be 'first timers', whose curiosity has been sparked to the level of engagement necessary for experience. The ability of the labyrinth to convey this type of meaning lies in its symbolism as an experience. Upon engagement, the human user is now connected to this experience and meaning through the action of walking the path of the labyrinth.

Cassirer said symbols were to be seen as having a power of their own, beyond what lies in representation. (Cosgrove, p.2) This power seen as the symbolic form has repercussions for the mind of the user(human). Cassirer said that “for the mind, only that can be visible which has some definite form.” (Cosgrove, p. 2) The form represents a way of seeing, a way of organizing, and a way of understanding the meaning of the object. In this recognition, engagement is immediate, at whatever level. Again, when we ‘see’, we situate ourselves in whatever material conditions we are processing. There is also an unconscious understanding of the ‘power’ of the symbolic form when this happens. This power is within the labyrinth. As a symbolic form its power lies in the activity of walking the path itself, which is the main purpose and agenda of this object. Symbolism within the field of architecture is part of the design conversation. Structures throughout history have been representations of the society of humans that conceived and constructed them. Space has emerged in the discourse as the gel or fabric that holds these objects together. When the landscape is the space that these objects occupy, it is connected to the meaning of the objects themselves.

Bernard Tschumi suggests that there are two morphological variations on the discussion of space within the discipline(architecture). He cites the labyrinth as being the “empirical research that concentrates on the senses, on the experience of space, as well as the relationship between space and praxis.” (Sherer, p. 4) Opposite is the morphological condition of the pyramid, which he defines as “those trends which consider Architecture as a thing of the mind, as a dematerialized or conceptual discipline, with its linguistic or morphological variations.” (Sherer, p.4) Within this paradox, one can see how the field is caught in the tension between those thought processes that are rational versus those which are intuitive. And somewhere in the middle is design as the medium in which to flesh out these motivations.
The form of the labyrinth is marked as an experience. As designers, we should question our motives and passions in the intentional placement of objects the landscape. Within landscape architecture, we have the ability to construct spaces that reflect the theoretical aspects of the ‘labyrinth’ as that which relies on ‘the senses’ and experience. These types of environments are seen as positive for human users. The object of the labyrinth reflects this positivism in the form of a meditative and healing experience for users. The labyrinth is a way of making space distinct. Space is seen as ‘real’, as it affects our senses long before our reason. (Sherer, p. 7) Seen in this way, the labyrinth is challenging the pyramid in its quest for absolutes and rational ways of knowing and seeing, relying on its experience to affect the perception of space. As a symbol it has this inherent power.

Using the form of the labyrinth as a way of highlighting the ‘design’ (creation of form), we can begin to see how it affects the senses of its users. Tschumi states that the first moment of perception of the form of the labyrinth is enough to carry the whole experience. (Sherer, p. 7) Much of this has to do with the fact that as a form, one cannot grasp the whole entirety of this object in just one look. The twists and turns of the paths challenge the human observer. This curiosity is what causes one to enter the experience in the first place. From first glance you can ‘see’ that there is a center, and most know that the purpose of the labyrinth walk is a search for center. However, it is only in entering the labyrinth and following the path that one can reach this center. Seen in these terms, the labyrinth structures the space it occupies in such a way that engagement is purposeful, whether seen as a conscious or unconscious act.

Through experience, symbolism, and human activity, the labyrinth has the ability by effecting human senses to engage humans. The labyrinth is interesting for the theoretical discourse because of both its form, and its historical and cultural background. What is most interesting about the labyrinth in some ways is how the symbol has been repeated through time, and come to mean so much to so many. Regardless of whether the experience of the labyrinth is material or spiritual for its user, it is necessarily an experience.
Being new to the labyrinth as meditative tool, I was unaware that there are actually stages of the walk. These stages are releasing, illumination, and union. Releasing is defined as letting go of the details of life to quiet the mind. Illumination is receiving energy, new insight, serenity or whatever is there for the person walking. The center is a place of meditation, prayer, and receiving. Union is the joining to God (or higher force), joining the inner and outer worlds. Each time you walk or experience the labyrinth, you become more empowered to find what your soul is seeking. (www.kirstimd.com) I am immediately struck by the realization that unconsciously I have been in each one of these stages when walking the labyrinth while I didn’t even know of their existence. These types of revelations reaffirm to me as a designer the power this experience has for its user and the environment it occupies.

The labyrinth as it engages the individual creates a shift from the ‘ordinary’ to the ‘extraordinary’ in terms of experience. It effects consciousness, through the senses. It structures the space it occupies. Landscape architecture is a field that can design and construct this object, and create environments to heighten or enhance the experience of this object. It is important to recognize that landscape architecture necessarily has an impact upon the environment and the people within it. It is a field where innovation is looked upon favorably, as the ultimate goal as a professional is to create safe, pleasing outdoor environments for people. As a future landscape architect, I inherently believe in creating conscious and thoughtful design innovations and interventions that enhance the quality of life for humans. Landscape architecture can play a role in the creation of these environments beyond the normal cosmetic response or manipulation of physical space. While the labyrinth is just one of the environments in which this can happen, it is an intriguing and mysterious quest.
The Structure of the Labyrinth as a Framework for the Design of Contemplative Environments

Within the structure of the labyrinth itself, there seemed to be certain elements that stood out as having meaning. Analyzing these elements, I developed a framework of ideas that are significant to both the experience of the labyrinth, and any outdoor contemplative environment. They are:

1. Approach
2. Path
3. Interruption
4. Destination
5. Return

Within the structure of the labyrinth, certain elements of experience fall within these categories. The first is the Approach. At the entrance to a labyrinth, there is a releasing of life’s details. The action of taking the first step into the symbol represents the human cognition of the object that leads to the curiosity of entering in the first place.

The Path of the labyrinth is unicursal(one-way) with the only choice being that of entering the object itself. There is a conscious feeling that the path is leading you to the center. Engagement with the path happens through body movement.

Interruptions within the labyrinth happen at the turns where there is left to right brain activity. The turns of the path provide stops for meditation. Manipulations of the form of the labyrinth allow for interruptions to occur within and around the form itself.

The symbol of the labyrinth represents a ‘search for center’ as your final Destination. Having reached this destination, engagement is enhanced as a result of movement on the path.

Upon leaving the labyrinth, you Return retracing the same steps you entered on. This action evokes ‘memory’ and ‘sense’ as conscious thought says “I leave the way I came in,” and “I have been in this place before.”
The issues for the design of contemplative environments and how these ideals could be applied to any outdoor environment are:

**The Approach:** How is the entrance to an outdoor environment or setting announced? Does the entrance announce the beginning of a journey or event?

**The Path:** How do we (humans) recognize and process the path we are presented with? What do we see?

**The Interruptions:** What are the events that make you stop and contemplate? How do they happen? How do the interruptions provide the structure for the events?

**The Destination:** What are you providing for a destination in your design? What says that you have arrived somewhere? Perhaps most importantly, does the destination appropriately represent the search?

**The Return:** What conditions exist to evoke memory of space or place? Do these conditions make you want to return to that setting?
The Project...

The Site: Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center, Richmond, Virginia.

The Objective: Build a permanent labyrinth to provide a sacred space for all who enter.

Part One: In January of 2001, a presentation was made to the owner and staff of Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center of five original conceptual designs for labyrinths. In each design an attempt was made to relate the previous ideals of what is the ‘structure of contemplation’ and how could those ideals be represented in the design and construction of a labyrinth. The conceptual renderings represent the process of design, and the mental construct of a labyrinth on paper.
The grid offers a rectilinear shape based on an ancient Roman symbol. The more formal shape reflects a geometric order where movement is very intentional. Linear conditions provide interruptions for planting at four of the turns.

Based on the 7 circuit Cretan Labyrinth, The Web takes us inside the space of the labyrinth, with the interruptions for planting opportunities being on the outside of the form. Like a spider web, this labyrinth entraps you and the interruptions surround you with a sense of enclosure. The space is tightly connected.
Based on the 7 circuit Cretan Labyrinth, The Ring is a circular form with interruptions at the turns and within the form itself. By placing these interruptions in a symmetrical order, a second pattern of a cross emerges.

Within The Decision, there are two opportunities in the path to decide whether or not to continue the walk. At these spots, interruptions exist for planting, as well as outside of the form itself. Movement through this labyrinth is particularly interesting, as each side of the form is experienced before moving on to the next. At the approach to the center, two circuits of the path surround the center in a very deliberate way.
Concept

This mysterious intriguing shape offers two centers, and a never-ending path. The interruptions for experience lie in the path itself, as once walking the path and having reached either of the centers, it is up to the user when to step out and leave the shape. The Organic Labyrinth is based on one of the oldest labyrinth symbols recorded and is a one of a kind form.
The Site: Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center, Richmond, Virginia

Located at Historic Hallsborough Tavern, Sanctuaries is a unique garden center specializing in hard to find perennials and garden art. Its country setting provides the backdrop for a unique experience for customers and visitors alike. What sets Sanctuaries apart from other garden centers is its atmosphere, its product, and its presentation. Customers are encouraged to explore the garden like it was their own, and enjoy the time they spend there. Interested in the subject of the labyrinth and its healing properties, Sanctuaries felt the addition of a labyrinth in the garden setting would continue the spirit of their mission as a unique place where customers come not only to make a purchase, but to enjoy themselves as well.

Historic Hallsborough Tavern, Circa 1833
This site analysis shows the permanent structure of the elements of the site and how they relate to one another. Movement through the site is also analyzed. Sanctuaries chose the Web Labyrinth as the design they wanted built and the project moved forward.
In this rendered master site plan the objective is to see how the addition of the Web Labyrinth relates to the other elements of the site. In terms of spatial significance, the labyrinth here is seen as an extension of the ‘garden’ in both its scale and structure.
The schematic drawing shows how the trees within the structure of the labyrinth will provide ‘natural interruptions.’ Sanctuaries was interested in connecting the structure of the labyrinth with that of the principles of the feng-shui bagua. By adding points on the web, the labyrinth edge can be separated into eight different planting or spiritual zones in which to make this connection. The stages of the walk are also shown.
In this rendered master plan of the Web Labyrinth, an attempt was made to show how the barns enclose the space, and how planting the edges of the labyrinth could contribute to that feeling of enclosure. The trees within the labyrinth and their shade canopies become quite obvious in plan.
The space where the labyrinth was to be built was an overgrown spot in the garden. Enclosed by barns on two sides, the spot is very peaceful, blocking the noise from adjacent traffic on Route 60 West. Seemingly a ‘forgotten spot’ in the garden center, the site was cleared of brush and rubbish, and took on a new spatial significance as the layout for the labyrinth took place. A landscape fabric was placed on the ground before mulch was laid.
The Elements of the Project: Stone and Wood
Stone was placed on the ground over mulch to form the paths of the labyrinth. Working with the stone was part of the process as well as the grueling task of laying down 40 cubic yards of mulch. With each action, the form of the labyrinth and the space it was going to occupy came to life.
After the spatial requirements for the labyrinth were laid out and verified, the owner of Sanctuaries was asked to place the first stone. That action laid the groundwork for the rest of the process, which began to take on a significance of its own. The stone selection was important in that larger stones were to form the center and announce the entrance of the labyrinth, while smaller ones would make the path dividers. Laying out the labyrinth in a radial pattern, the form began to take shape with each stone that was placed. This was extraordinary in that unlike the Web Labyrinth design on paper, where the paths and dividers were in the shape of an octagon, the labyrinth took on a circular shape. This became apparent through the process and was allowed for in terms of construction.
The stone to stone connections were both random in terms of selection and deliberate in terms of placement. Each stone that was selected was adjusted so that a fit was made to the previous stone. This was not a random action, in that so many various sizes of stone were used. This part of the construction was taken very seriously.

Points on the labyrinth to make the shape appear more like a web.
This was the stopping point on day two of the project. Alot of time was spent looking at the labyrinth and understanding that we were about half way done with the shape. At this point, we were still unsure how the trees would fall in the path in terms of providing those natural interruptions. It was difficult to stop the project and leave, as somehow there is a feeling of wanting to continue until you are done. Both the owner and myself realized that the next day the project would come to an end, that was really the beginning, as we would take that first step into the shape and walk the Web Labyrinth.
The path that appeared was very symmetrical. It was unique in that the labyrinth shape was to now be a radial one, even though every effort was made to connect the stones in a linear fashion. It was felt that this was the shape the labyrinth wanted to be, so the change was allowed for.
The trees fell exactly where they needed to in terms of providing the natural interruptions within the structure of the labyrinth. They emerged as the connectors between the ground plane of the labyrinth and the sky above. Providing both vertical structure and canopy conditions for shade and color, the trees within the path of the Web Labyrinth are what make it unique in its form.
Asking Leigh Duke, owner of Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center to take the first step and walk the path of the labyrinth was a defining moment in this project. Quietly carrying a purple viola to the center with her, the first flower was planted within the stones of the labyrinth. With this action, the labyrinth was alive and ready for those who would follow her on the path.

Shortly thereafter, the first visitor appeared and walked the labyrinth.
Taking the First Step: The Web Labyrinth at Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center
Phase One, March 2001
Conclusions

The labyrinth that was built at Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center represents both what started as a mental construct in terms of design process, and a built object in terms of real time and space. The ‘web’ turned out to be more like a ‘circle’, and this was allowed for throughout the construction process.

A significant action that took place as a result of this project was when I was able to take the first step into the labyrinth and walk the path myself. Different from other design projects or objectives where the final product may be something to look at, analyze, and admire, with the labyrinth I actually engaged myself with the object by physically occupying the space I had imagined. In some ways, this was how I put the theory to praxis, as not only through ‘seeing’ was I engaged to walk the path, but had the knowledge that the path represented what I had constructed in my mind and on paper. This was extraordinary in terms of experience.

To date, the Web Labyrinth has come alive in that visitors have walked the path and groups have become aware of its presence. Through the act of ‘seeing’ many are intrigued by the shape and ask if it is a maze, or a knot, or a rock garden. Those who are brave enough to enter and walk the path report a healing and meditative experience. Many individuals who know about the labyrinth have expressed positive comments and encouraging remarks on how the labyrinth at Sanctuaries is a wonderful addition to the garden center. In this way, the project was very successful in meeting its original goals.

While the labyrinth is not the only environment for contemplation and experience, it is a mysterious one. This symbolic form has existed for so long, and has represented the meshing of human desire and construction practices. By structuring space in an unusual way, and representing a search for center, the labyrinth engages the individual creating a shift from the ‘ordinary’ to the ‘extraordinary’ in terms of experience. It effects consciousness through the senses. Landscape Architecture is a profession that can take away the principles of the labyrinth experience and apply them to the design of outdoor environments beyond the usual cosmetic response. These environments seek to provide enriching experiences that impact the daily lives of humans.
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Education
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Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA
BA, Sociology/Anthropology, May 1991

Professional Landscape Architecture Experience
Sanctuaries Unique Garden Center, Richmond, VA  May, 2001  
Retail garden operation: Landscape Architecture consulting and sales.

Wadsworth Golf Course Construction, Hercules, CA  June 2000 – August 2000  
Boulder Ridge Golf Club, Los Gatos, CA  
Survey staking and layout for construction of 18 hole golf course. Supervision of drainage installation crew. Experience with large scale grading operation. Familiar with daily operations and equipment on a construction site.

CDAC: Community Design Assistance Center, Blacksburg, VA  
May 1999 – May 2000  
Project Team: Streetscapes of Virginia  
Filmed streetscapes of numerous towns in the state of Virginia. Documented elements of successful streetscapes and edited videotapes for report.
Project Team: Riverfront Park, Marion, Virginia  
Design of 5 acre park on the Jackson River in town of Marion, VA. Presented ideas to town council and officials for review.
Project Team: Covington Sports Park, Covington, VA  
Consultation on design of 20 acre recreation and sports facility in the town of Covington, VA. Presented ideas to town council and officials for acceptance.
Professional Corporate Work Experience

**RRI: Recognition Research, Incorporated**, Blacksburg, VA
December 2001-July 2001
Data entry and processing of medical claims.

**Heilig Meyers Furniture Corporate Headquarters**, Richmond, VA
June 1994 – August 1997
Inventory Auditor: Extensive travel throughout southeast and Midwest conduction inventory audits and assessing store management and operations.

**Suntrust Bank**, Richmond, VA
August 1992 – June 1994
Consumer Loan Underwriting: Processing of consumer loan applications and mediation with customers and network of bank branches.

Creative Projects

[Womensstudies@vt.edu](mailto:Womensstudies@vt.edu): Film project, August 1998-May 1999
Personally co-produced, co-edited, shot camera, and interviewed students for the film [Womensstudies@vt.edu](mailto:Womensstudies@vt.edu). This film highlighted the on-line experience of students in the class Women and Creativity at Virginia Tech. The film was screened at Virginia Tech in March of 2001 and has been shown at academic conferences in the United States.

Art Installation, Lane Breezeway: Lane Hall, Blacksburg, VA
Installation of artistic medium in an academic building on the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. The art piece sought to make connections between nature and life, focusing on the vertical impression of trees in the landscape.

Professional Teaching Experience

Adjunct Faculty, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA July 2001
Teaching position, College of Interdisciplinary Studies.
Taught the course Women and Creativity, WS2224, focusing on the creative efforts of women throughout history. Emphasis on women’s contributions in film, music, literature, architecture, and landscape architecture.

References Available Upon Request