Drawing time

The representation of change and dynamics in Dutch landscape architectural practice after 1985

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2. Studying landscape architectural thinking and drawing in a methodical way

2.1 Research questions, research strategy and aim
How does landscape architectural design address aspects of time, how should we understand the role of drawings in this discipline and is it, in general, possible to consider time in such drawings? Which types of representation are suited to do so? Are aspects of time taken into account in today’s practice, and if so, how? If not, why not? Either way, what is the role of drawings in this? These are the central questions that shape the research before us, and guide its ‘research design’. [1] These questions invite us to explore the phenomenon of time in landscape and in landscape architecture, and the phenomenon of drawing as a means to invoke new landscapes. This undertaking has its own challenges. As John Dixon Hunt in Greater Perfections states: ‘The subject of landscape architecture has no clear intellectual tradition of its own, either as a history, a theory, or even a practice.’ [2] That means it is indeed an exploration, with the aim to build theory. The three main components in the research question are time, drawing and landscape architecture, and these components are looked at in the context of professional practice. From the central question, a number of secondary questions on these main components and their interrelations arise. How is the phenomenon of time understood in relation to landscape architecture, and what exactly is the role of time in landscape architectural design? How are words like drawing and representation understood, and what is the specific nature of drawings in landscape architecture? And what then is a representation of time? Does a drawing by itself tell that it represents time? How are aspects of time transported via drawings? The question in what way aspects of time can be part of landscape architecture drawings implies an interest in landscape architecture drawings in general, exploring if in abstract terms it is possible to evoke aspects of time in such drawings. This also introduced a form of research by design into the work; there may be other ways of displaying aspects of time in landscape architecture drawings, so far not explored.

This research rests on a few basic assumptions. It departs from the idea that in design disciplines drawings are key. Drawings are made to represent future situations. Landscape architecture fits into that tradition. Drawings are assumed to reflect the central issues landscape architecture design deals with, and aspects of time are considered one of these central issues. Even if Hunt is very right in his comment on the intellectual tradition of landscape architecture, and even if this research therefore is explorative, it still draws upon earlier work. Existing texts, both academic and professional, contribute fragments for a theory to be built. Alongside texts, realized designs, designs on paper and individual drawings are artefacts that help to describe a state of affairs.

Research strategy
Four different strands of activities shape this research. The first is a ‘history of ideas’, based on texts and additionally designs and

Fig. 2.1 An example of 'data' in this research: Drawing for *Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord*. Latz + Partner, original scale 1:50,000, 1991. Diagram.
drawings. [3] This is more than a background; it helps to construct an argument. Sources from very different fields show how much this research is inspired by other disciplines, and reveal at the same time the potential relevance it can have for these other disciplines. The second and third strands are strongly related. A large set of drawings has been collected from different landscape architecture offices. This collection is used to explore all aspects of drawing that are relevant for the research question, and to register how aspects of time are manifest in these drawings. Therefore, these drawings are not a mere illustration - they are ‘data’ in themselves. Drawings alone, however, are not enough. What did the designers want to explore or express in these drawings, and what were their drawings expected to communicate? If time played a role in their considerations, were drawings the preferred medium to perform this? Therefore, the third strand of activities concerns interviewing, resulting in a collection of oral statements on time, representation and landscape architectural practice. It is in the combination of the two, that much insight is gained. How do landscape architects operate, and how do they reflect on these operations? How do collected drawings fit into specific inherited traditions? Do today’s landscape architecture drawings display time efficiently, and in all its aspects? If not, what does that tell about the role of time in landscape architectural design and about the role of drawings? What do designers themselves think of that? Is time perhaps communicated in other ways, or not at all? A fourth strand of activities in this research concerns design experiments: experimental drawing exercises in landscape architecture schools which were designed to test the research questions, to explore the propositions deriving from the earlier strands, and to generate new options for drawing. To some extent, these experiments verify the conclusions as drawn from the collected drawings and the interviews.

Context
The main site for this research is landscape architectural practice, and more precisely, the landscape architectural office. The focus is on Dutch offices, against the background of the specific history of Dutch landscape architecture. Having said so, the importance of Corner’s essay ‘Representation and Landscape’ makes immediately clear that the Dutch scene has something to do with the international discourse. Design offices are the locations in which designers make drawings. [4] This research focuses on drawings, not on the projects which they are part of, even if in some cases projects help to verify findings with regard to the drawings and the issue of time. In general terms, drawings are easily found: in magazines, on websites, or at expositions we encounter drawings made by landscape architects. These drawings, however, do not speak for themselves when it comes to the considerations in their making. Neither do they answer unambiguously the question if and in what way time is represented - that often is an act of interpretation. To solve this, the office must be part of the interrogation. Due to the chosen context of professional practice, this research has qualities that Umberto Eco perhaps would qualify as ‘journalistic’: professional practice to some extent is an ‘unscholarly topic, devoid of critical literature’. [5] Yet an argument can be constructed, using sources from other fields such as in this case anthropology and archaeology, and through that a scholarly position can be taken even if professional practice is ‘messy’, as Donald Schön puts it. [6]

[3] The term was coined by historian Arthur Lovejoy. For the German variant see ‘Ideen-Geschichte’ Andreas Dorschel, 2010 as referred to in Lobecke 2012.
[4] Obviously, the office is not the only site where drawings are made. Chapter 3 will address this.
Aim
Given the lack of ‘a clear intellectual tradition’ as Hunt puts it, landscape architecture did not develop a sufficient disciplinary theory on the role of time and the ways in which it can be present in drawings. This body of work is a contribution to such a theory. It intends to show the possible applications this expanded theory can have for representation in landscape architecture. Its aim is to influence education and practice, in several ways. Firstly, I want to show that despite the lack of adequate theory in landscape architecture itself, a relevant and insightful argument can be constructed with help of theory and sources in other disciplines. This should help us rethink the position of landscape architecture, its theory on representation and the implicit or explicit role of time in landscape architecture design. Secondly, I want to map how landscape architects think about the issue. Concerning the technique of interviewing to explore this thinking, there may be doubt if the registered oral statements are true, or logical. However, this is not so relevant here, as this is apparently the way landscape architects think about the issue, or want to discuss it. The profession is confronted with its own implicit considerations. Thirdly, I make a plea for the representation of aspects of time, arguing that it is a central characteristic of landscape architecture. I strive to update the theory on landscape architecture representation and to develop best practice to make the representation of time happen. To conclude, I intend to influence landscape architecture education. Both the thinking about and the representation of time should be more present in education. This research develops arguments for that, and more importantly, contributes to a framework for a new approach.

2.2 Notes on method
Although landscape architectural research developed specific disciplinary strategies, for the large part it makes use of knowledge and methods from an array of other disciplines. Recently Swaffield and Deming gave an overview. [7] Handbooks such as those written by Creswell or Denzil and Lincoln provide information on research design in general, and are followed here, as far as they are applicable. [8] Groat and Wang specify research strategies for architecture. Such books show how tactics taken from other domains can be applied, but also how design itself can be a means of research. The arts, and applied arts like landscape architecture, in recent years became their own research domain, with research strategies ranging from research on design to research for design to research by design. As a consequence an applied art, such as landscape architecture, can be an object of study for other disciplines such as art history, but also for designers themselves, like in this case. Studying drawings and conducting interviews is typically research on design. This is important, as it is a specific position not taken very often by designers. It means that the research is primarily reflective; the practice of others is the object of study. However, being a researcher and a designer has given me a lived and critical engagement with the design process, and helps me to guide drawing experiments. These are typical research by design. This is a valid research approach about which RMIT professor in architecture Van Schaik states: ‘[My motive was] to inculcate an approach to research that was not ‘about’ design, but that was research in the medium of design itself.’ [9] Hunt was already quoted, stating that the subject of landscape architecture has no clear intellectual tradition of its own. But to change that, we should not orient ourselves ‘entirely if at all’ towards Freud, Lacan,
Derrida, Foucault or Barthes; it is within landscape architecture itself that we must find ‘the grounds for an adequate theory’. [10] This research reflects on the drawing and thinking of landscape architects, and in doing that contributes to theory.

Drawings and oral statements, retrieved from interviews, are the basic sources of data in this research. [Fig. 2.1] Drawings as concrete objects in which time and its meaning for landscape can become manifest, and the thinking about time, drawing and landscape architecture are seen here as strongly interrelated. This is not that evident - as architecture historian Adrian Forty observed, ‘it is striking how little discussed language has been compared to architecture’s other principal medium, drawing’. [11] Drawings can be studied in several ways. A theoretical perspective from architecture, art history and semiology could make sense, but certainly also a perspective from ethnography or anthropology. In that perspective the process of the making and the maker become very relevant, and hence the interview as a ‘research tactic’, to again use the vocabulary of Groat and Wang, comes in. [12] Due to this amalgam of research tactics, it is evident that this research has to be categorized as a mixed method approach, and its system of enquiry is predominantly qualitative. As Leavy puts it, ‘qualitative researchers do not simply gather and write; they compose, orchestrate, and weave’. [13] Starting with the intention to collect drawings, on the road interviews were ‘weaved in’ as a crucial tactic. Experiments were part of the research from the start, as a means of sharpening the questions and with the objective to generate new results. Their scope changed over time from rather intuitive explorations to more precise narrowly focussed experiments.

The interview as a research tactic, and in particular the qualitative interview, is a known technique in the domain of anthropology and ethnography, and is extensively covered in literature. Rubin and Rubin’s Qualitative Interviewing. The Art of Hearing Data counts as one of the standard books on the topic. [14] Oral statements matter in a scholarly context, as long as they can be related to actions, are part of a culture, and give insight into thinking. In the context of this research the coherence between spoken statements and drawings is essential. Rubin and Rubin outline how to avoid the pitfalls of the journalist’s approach, and to make it a reliable research tactic. They extensively discuss the choice of interview partners, the design of questionnaires, practicalities of recording and reporting, and the subsequent steps of interview analysis, such as coding the material. Rubin and Rubin refer to Clifford Geertz who coined the term ‘thick description’ [15]. As Groat and Wang put it, a thick description of the wink of an eye ‘is one that describes not only the wink, but also what that wink can mean within the semantic systems of the culture in which it happens’. [16] Thick description implicates very precise and detailed interviewing, based on a great interest in (the environment of) the interviewee. In terms of drawing this could refer to seemingly banal aspects such as the use of certain drawing materials, or choosing certain colours. Architectural historian Robert Proctor critically assessed a series of interviews with Modernist architects to reflect on the effectiveness and reliability of the interview -or ‘oral history’- in the specific context of architecture. As Proctor puts it, ‘the significance of an oral history of architecture is in what it can tell us about the values and myths within a design culture, the images and stories to which its members hold, and their attitudes across an intervening time’ [17]. Both Dana Cuff, who announces herself

[17] Proctor 2006: 305
as a social scientist in architecture, and anthropologist Albena Yaneva contributed substantially to research on architectural design. As a form of participatory research, staying for months in the architect's office, they employed the tactic of interviewing to arrive at innovative descriptions of the discipline. [18] Such approaches informed the research at hand.

The objects of study (drawings) and the chosen tactics (interviewing) relate this research to the fields of art history, anthropology and ethnography. In the domain of anthropology and ethnography there is a lively debate on the role of images, also in relation to interviews. ‘Visual anthropology’ even became a subdomain. [19] Although the word ‘visual’ in this case does not refer to architectural drawings, and certainly not to landscape architectural ones, it suggests a link between the areas of drawing and oral statements. In recent years quite a lot has been written on ‘visual methodologies’. [20] The central thought in this is that visual material always has factual aspects (its making, its size, and its materiality), and at the same time needs an interpretative action. Such an interpretative action is necessarily related to the researcher and his background. Erwin Panofsky and John Berger discuss the broader art historical and cultural frame for such interpretations, just as William Mitchell does in his book with the tempting title What Do Pictures Want? [21] Cultural geographer Gillian Rose argued that research strategies concerning images range from more objective approaches, registering what we exactly see in the image, to a semiotic interpretation, or, as Rose puts it ‘laying bare the prejudices beneath the smooth surface of the beautiful’. [22] The architect’s

Fig. 2.2 Collage for Rottenrow Gardens, Glasgow, by GROSS. MAX., 2003.

drawing, and moreover the landscape architectural drawing, is absent in such studies on visual culture. But in methodological terms architectural drawings fit in the broad scope of visual media, ranging from photography to painting to advertisement, discussed for example in the studies of Sturken and Cartwright. This broader view on images makes sense in discussing particular aspects of drawings, such as why a drawing was made by hand, and what expectations on its appreciation guided that. How relevant such a broader view is for landscape architecture drawings, is illustrated by a drawing from GROSS. MAX., clearly hinting at advertisement. [23][Fig. 2.2] Interviews, and an interpretation within this broader scope of theories, can lay bare what sort of considerations are at stake. That these considerations may range from very philosophical to merely pragmatic in landscape architecture is not relevant. We have to accept that such considerations exist and apparently influence how landscape architects make their drawings. The way in which aspects of time are represented, or not, will also be guided by an array of such considerations.

2.3 Reading about time, drawing and landscape architecture

This research studies the area where the phenomenon of time, the making of drawings and landscape architecture -both as a discipline and a profession- meet. That area has not been explored extensively. Therefore, this study cannot rest on a stable body of literature. That is not to say there are no relevant texts - we have to take only one step outside this narrowly defined area to find a huge collection of texts that comment on certain aspects of it. Chapter 3 reports on the exploration of this collection and constructs an argument. How can the problematic be understood? To which areas can we trace its roots? What is the discourse that is revealed in this exploration?

Due to the nature of the topic at hand, texts are to be found in very different realms. Academic texts, journalistic articles and writings by designers are taken into account, just as very specific texts such as handbooks on gardening are. This study does not aim to give a complete historic overview. The focus is on the period starting around 1985, and it traces the subject back in time to, roughly, 1700: the era of gardening handbooks, revealing a perspective on gardening that explicitly includes issues of time. [24] Obviously, the issue of drawing in relation to architecture can be traced back to much earlier periods in history, but in the context of this study it only matters when this architecture perspective becomes manifest in gardening. With this it is implicitly said that gardening is considered here as a domain in which embryonic thoughts on landscape architecture are to be found. Humphry Repton (1752-1818) is the perfect start for this: he was an active writer, helped to shape the identity of the (future) profession, had strong opinions on issues of time and communicated innovative ideas on representation. [25] As landscape architecture has certainly not only roots in gardening, another very relevant starting point is the École Nationale des Ponts et des Chaussées, founded in 1747. Current writers such as De Jong and Picon revealed the importance of this engineering school, and helps us to understand its meaning in the context of this study. [26]

The exploration of literature, therefore, spans a period of time starting in 1683 and ending in 2014, if we take Diana Balmori’s
Drawing and Reinventing Landscape as the most recent substantial contribution. [27] This long stretch of time is structured by periods in which there was a rather vital exchange, and silent periods, such as the first half of the 20th century. It is also structured by certain persons, texts or even projects which are key for the development of the discourse. These are, to mention three examples, Lawrence Halprin’s The RSVP cycles from 1969, James Corner’s ‘Representation and Landscape’ from 1992, and the Dutch Plan Ooievaar from 1985, as a materialization of the debate on ecology after 1960 and its meaning for landscape architecture. [28]. These three are examples of the primary sources that are used. Individual drawings, plans as sets of drawings and text, and written arguments are also used as primary sources. De Jong and to some extent also Balmori are typically secondary literature: these sources reflect on drawings by different authors, and look back.

Concerning landscape and landscape architecture, of the many available texts, I choose to mention authors such as Bender, Leatherbarrow, Ingold and Hunt, as they throw light on the specificities of landscape and landscape architecture in this context - often from other fields, such as archaeology, architecture and history. [32] And as this study focuses on Dutch landscape architecture after 1985, yearbooks on Dutch landscape architecture are taken into account, as are texts from professional magazines - even if sometimes very fragmented, such as a crucial debate between Bijhouwer and Doorenbos via short texts in De Boomkweekerij in 1946. [33] This automatically puts specific designs, designers and offices on the stage.

The research itself must also be designed, and that shifts the focus to other domains, such as texts on research, and more specifically reflections on the nature of design, or on research by design. Reflections on the nature of design also include texts on the world of designers and their culture. Of the many sources I mention here Emilie Gomart’s article in the Dutch publication Een plan dat werkt [A plan that works] from 2006 as one of the scarce attempts to apply such thinking specifically to the profession of landscape architecture, and moreover, to address a specific Dutch culture of landscape architecture. [34]

2.4 Collecting drawings and conducting interviews

Choices and framework

As a starting point for conducting interviews and collecting draw-
ings offices were selected. This included a core group, and three other groups to test and compare findings. The core group consists of 10 Dutch landscape architecture offices founded between 1985-1995. This study focusses on their work as made until 2014. These offices are: Bosch Slabbers, DS, H+N+S, Hosper, karres + brands, Lubbers, OKRA, Quadrat, Vista and West 8. The years around 1985 were foundational for today’s landscape architecture and the start of a coherent era, as will be shown in Chapter 3. Having been founded in more or less the same years, these offices may have a comparable understanding of their profession. Obviously, a larger number of offices are available. These 10 offices however cover the main positions in terms of themes, scales, approaches, and ways of producing, and more importantly, they are present in writings on this period. Offices were not chosen for their known interest in issues of time and drawing - this had to be found out. The selection took place on the basis of more general criteria so as to have an adequate representation of the profession. To be selected, offices had to have a leading role, in terms of being published, winning prizes and being present in the debate. The assumption is that such offices are outspoken in their imagery and their thinking about the issues of representation and time. They care for their presence in all sorts of media. Yearbooks, competitions and other comparable competitive environments were important in identifying these leading offices.

To understand the work of these offices in a broader context, both offices that started more recently and offices that started much earlier were taken into account. Examples of these younger offices are Anouk Vogel, Lola, RAAAF and van Paridon & de Groot. ‘Young’ is defined in this case as founded after 1995, a period in which drawing changed substantially, mainly due to the breakthrough of the computer. However, these offices did start before 2005, to ensure that for this research they would have had enough time to arrive at built projects. Such built projects allow for the comparison of drawings, and the considerations in their making, with the actual project, if needed.

Offices that were founded long before 1985 are for many reasons of a different kind. There were less offices, many of them ceased to exist and their approach to landscape architecture was more narrow, such as being focussed on gardens and parks. Two examples of these offices are relevant as they still exist, even if under a different name. These are Buys & Van der Vliet (today MTD) and Copijn. Obviously, the firms as they exist today are guided by different persons and also different beliefs. To record this, current staff were also interviewed. In this period before 1985 the office as such was less dominant. Therefore, one state institution, DLG, has also been taken into account. There are, however, clear difficulties in doing this. Such organizations are often of considerable size, and due to reorganization or changing visions on governance the exact positions of landscape architecture groups in such departments (and their names!) are somewhat fickle, as is the case also for DLG. Evolved from parts of Staatsbosbeheer, Landinrichtingsdienst and Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken, DLG underwent various changes over the years, and ceased to exist in 2015. Both the secondary group of young offices and the offices founded before 1985 act as a check to verify findings in the core group.

To position the findings in a larger context, Northwest Europe has been taken as the area of study - time, landscape and represen-
Looking abroad was intended as a control mechanism: Are certain ‘design cultures’ distinguishable, and are such cultures of influence on the issues at stake here? For its landscape architecture history Northwest Europe is a rather coherent area. France, Great Britain, Scandinavia and Germany were identified as relevant countries and, more important, relevant landscape architecture cultures. Switzerland was added later, as it became apparent that it could not be seen as part of the adjacent design cultures, but as an important and autonomous area. Michel Desvigne (FR), Vogt (CH), Grant (GB) and atelier le balto (DE) are four examples of the offices studied to map these different cultures. To compensate for the practical constraints of the total number of offices manageable one ‘informant’ has been interviewed from each of the non-Dutch countries. The word informant is appropriate as this person is not questioned as designer, but as an expert closely related to the local landscape architecture culture. Informants were chosen for their evident overview and reflective position on the topic, as demonstrated in their writings and academic or professional positions.

Landscape architecture is also practised within local authorities, or national bodies, or within larger engineer firms. It certainly makes sense to also study landscape architecture within the very different context of city planning agencies, to look at the drawings that are produced, and the role of time in these drawings. For very practical reasons this was not possible within this study. I encourage other scholars to expand on this. The same goes for the study of other very relevant geographical areas of study, such as American or Australian landscape architecture. In terms of literature, these areas are integral to this study, but the actual practice deserves closer attention.

Tagging

Working with drawings and interviews necessitates specific tactics to retrieve information, and procedures to control and verify what has been done. This will be elaborated more in depth in relation to the interviews. To some extent however, drawings and interviews can be discussed in a comparable way. In fact this resembles the basic technique of archiving, in which items are filed in certain categories, and can be related at the same time to other categories. A flower may be of the genus Rosa, be pink and display a certain fragrance. Being pink would fit under the tag ‘colour’. In this research a system of tags has been built to order, categorize and interpret findings. In the tag system four main categories reflect the key subjects in this research: time, drawing, landscape architecture, and the context of professional practice. This system serves both the reading of the collection of drawings and the interviews. Related to interviews however it is also closely connected to the sociological theory on analysing interviews, mostly addressed as coding.

In itself, drawings could have been archived already by the office, and in some cases indeed this was done. If that happened, they

[36] See for example Rubin and Rubin 2005: 201-246. Tagging a drawing is different from tagging text. However, just as a feature of a drawing could be spoken about in an interview, it can be observed as a feature of a drawing itself. To code it implies that the feature has a conceptual meaning.
Fig. 2.3a  Three examples of the conscious use of black and white. Drawing for the *City Tunes* project by Lola landscape architects, 2010.
Collecting drawings

In general, landscape architecture is approached via its drawn or built projects. Here I want to put emphasis on the drawing itself. From this perspective it is not so important if a beautiful park results, but it is essential to be able to read the drawing as part of a drawing tradition, and to evaluate how it operated in the design process.

Drawings were either proposed by these offices, as a response to my questions, or suggested by me while preparing or processing the interviews. 10-15 drawings were chosen per office, clearly relating to issues of time, drawing and landscape as revealed in Chapter 3. One such issue, for example, was to clarify the specific meaning of black and white in drawings. Reasons for using black and white, as made explicit in interviews, vary from cheap reproduction to their value in abstraction and reduction to having an alleged coolness. [Fig. 2.3a-c] These images were put together in a book as an

[37] This book from August 2012 is part of the author’s archive.
In this book, drawings were given a caption explaining why they were taken into the collection. This image collection was updated several times, as offices suggested the addition of new images, or as new information came to light, making it relevant to ask for other images. All in all more then 500 images became part of the final research data. Some of the collected drawings have been created directly on paper. In such cases, I acquired a digital copy, be it a scan or a photo. Many other drawings have been produced digitally. The original may be an Illustrator or Photoshop file with several layers. In such cases the drawing as used here is probably only one of the many possible combinations of layers. A small fraction of the drawings were never used outside the office, or never developed from a rough sketch into a neat drawing. Most drawings however were at some point rendered neatly to present them to a client or the public. Often it is not known in which specific context they were made originally. Many drawings start as a sketch, and develop as both a drawing and as an idea, and arrive at a neat drawing that is put in a book or slideshow presentation. In that sense, the valid art historian question by what drawing technique and from what material has an image been created, is often not to be answered - just as the exact year a drawing was made. This is even more so the case, as it is often rather ambiguous what can be defined as the ‘real’ original. This also points to the fact that drawings have a context: They often are part of an argument. In some cases documents and reports were requested so as to reconstruct a drawing’s history and to determine its position within the larger argument. Websites of offices are problematic in this respect: Here, a small number of drawings and a short text stand for the larger argument in a project - considerations that guided the project and the drawings are not accessible.

A collection of 500 drawings may seem like a lot, but the number of 500 is only a tiny percentage of the substantial amount of images made in each office. The group of offices present in this research together produced about half a million ‘official’ drawings, as in drawings that were part of project documentation. The number of sketch drawings is impossible to estimate, but one can safely say that my collection of drawings is far less than 0,1% of all drawings available from the selected group of offices. As the number of drawings with a focus on aspects of time was known to be small beforehand, reasons for selecting a drawing were found in a broader circle: landscape architecture drawing characteristics in general. This concerns for example types of drawings, meanings of drawings, moments in history, or more specifically the use of a new software tool. On closer study, only a small group of drawings indeed displays aspects of time. Out of the large collection of 500 drawings, some 100 represent time in one or another way, and only half of them do so in a coherent and convincing way. The representation of time is sometimes very explicit, or even a fact. This is the case when the drawing title refers to the aspect of time, or when the drawing contains unmistakable references to time, such as a timeline. In most cases however a reading from the viewpoint of time is optional. The representation of time is implicit, so the drawing could be understood in that way. These cases have been either suggested by the office, or interpreted in that way by the researcher, as in the case of a drawing by Grant that explains how a water purification system works, and by that implicitly refers to temporal aspects of the design. [Fig. 2.4] If the implicit considerations revealed a coherent idea on time and land-
Fig. 2.4 Diagram for the *Mr Earth* project by Grant associates, implicitly representing aspects of time, 1999.
scape, these drawings were taken into account. Being notations in the way Goodman describes, drawings hand over information in a prescribed mode, yet at the same time they can be given other meanings if viewed in a particular context. A drawing can, even if aspects of time are not displayed, support a crucial step in an argument about time, or be the outcome of a set of considerations with regard to time. Interviews laid bare these implicit time aspects. If interpretations were too ambiguous, the drawing was set aside. Alongside that, a number of drawings represent time in the same way, technically. In this case, the most convincing drawings were taken into account. In the end, 40 drawings were selected as representing implicitly or explicitly in a relevant and unique way the aspect of time. These are presented in Chapter 4.

Conducting interviews

Drawings are at the same time informative and limited in their capacity to inform. Interviews intend to position drawing in relation to written or spoken text, and not to forget, the actual making of landscape itself. Especially today, drawings are very important in professional practice, and they are given layered meanings. Some meanings are hidden, others are obvious. In that sense drawings are often in themselves rhetoric. As landscape historian De Jong puts it, ‘drawings must come across as splendid and convincing, so that every drawn design gets its own rhetoric.’ [39] They are part of a game; they operate within a set of transactions to reach certain goals. How can the reaction of the client or the public be steered in the right direction? This happens most often in an implicit way. The interview as a method of inquiry intends to lay bare the meanings given to drawings. A drawing by OKRA demonstrates the ambiguity in this. In a reliable simulation of a future reality purple onions attract attention, but these are certainly not part of the proposed reality, as revealed by interviewing the office. [40] They have to be seen as a filler, and are in fact a signature feature of a typical OKRA drawing. [Fig. 2.5]

In 2011 and 2012 38 interviews were held with the 26 chosen offices and 5 informants. A list of names and dates is added in Appendix 1. The character of the interviews was qualitative and semi-structured. As an interviewer I was engaged in the conversation and actively made use of my knowledge to obtain precise and detailed information. Interviews took three to four hours. They were recorded and notes were taken. Reports were made immediately after interviewing, based on the notes and, if necessary, the recordings. These reports are not exact transcripts. The material has been cleaned up and slightly edited to arrive at a coherent text. Reports have a length of 4,000 to 6,000 words. They were sent back to the conversational partners and were amended, if necessary. In 2012 the reports of interviews and the selected images were put together in a book (available in the author’s archive).

Interviews were preferably held with two members of the office. Conversational partners received a questionnaire beforehand. An example is given in Appendix 2. The length of three hours proved to be a practical compromise between the number of questions, the conversational partners’ availability, and the general concentration span. In most cases three hours was not enough to deal with all questions, but the nature of the conversation was such that the main topics were identified (or covered). Questionnaires were not always followed in their given sequence, but used as a reference.

[40] Interview with OKRA, January 2010.
Fig. 2.5 Visualization for ‘green spine’ Wellesley Road and Park Lane, Croydon, London. OKRA landschapsarchitecten, 2009.
during the conversation. At some offices further interviews were conducted, to speak with people who were either in a different position or representing the office in different time frames. Such choices were made during the process, as a reaction to the outcome of preceding interviews. Inevitably, interviews have practical constraints. All offices generously participated, but some interviews were a bit shorter or less concentrated than others as urgent matters had to be dealt with, and two interviews lasted significantly shorter than most. [41] Not all participants took the time to do the critical correction. Those offices that took the time to correct the reports often came up with interesting additions, resulting in a second version of the report. [42] The interview project started in March 2011, and exactly one year later it was finished.

The coding technique as given by Rubin and Rubin was used to analyse the interviews, but I adapted it so that it could be applied to both the interview reports and the drawings. [43] The coding system resembles the tagging system used for databases or archives. In order to locate the main patterns the material was reorganized using a system of 150 tags. A part of the tag system is displayed in Appendix 3. Coding as a technique means that small pieces of interviews, like sentences, are labelled as addressing a certain issue, concept or opinion. These labelled pieces are regrouped into narratives or arguments. In literature we find several examples of the combination of photographs and interviews. Architectural drawings and interviews are seldom combined in scholarly work. As argued before, drawings have material qualities, which are more or less objective. These can be read and interpreted strictly on the basis of the drawing. Often however, the necessary context had to be retrieved via interviews.

Reordering, tagging, interpreting

It is a common habit in ethnography to make transcripts of interviews, and to do so as literally as possible, including ‘uhmms and ahhs’. [44] Specific groups have their own codes and languages. From an ethnographical perspective the interviewer is expected to let the interviewee speak in their own vocabulary, as a way of ‘giving a voice’. In the case of design offices this is a bit different, and therefore I use the word reports, rather than transcripts. I look at the office as a community of individual designers. My reports attempt to let the office speak as one body, more than as individual people, and to combine statements of individuals in a clear account of the office’s considerations. The issues discussed are not part of daily business. Quite often it happened that the interviewees, on reading back over the report, considered a statement as too bold and without context, to the point where they felt it as against their (commercial) interest to have it published. This shows that speaking about ideas and motives underlying design activity is a complex issue for designers. It also reveals a lack of consistent theory or controllable set of ideas and concepts in professional practice. Due to that fact, I choose to use a more neutral tone and a third person perspective in the report. Statements are condensed, grouped if necessary, and formulated in complete and correct sentences. Recordings and written notes that capture the original conversations are in the author’s archive, along with the digital files that contain the edited and corrected versions. Most of the interviews and reports are in the Dutch language. When necessary, parts of the material were translated. To give an example, a literal transcript of a small passage about a drawing is shown here, which is taken from the interview with two members of the office of Quadrat. [45] [Fig. 2.6]:

[41] This is the case for West 8 and UK informant Kathryn Moore.
[42] I received comments and additions for 23 interviews. In one case an additional interview was necessary.
Fig. 2.6 Visualization (aerial view). Watercolour. First sketch for Kop van de Staart and Eneco-area De Cultuurwerf, Drierivierenpunt Dordrecht, Atelier Quadrat 2001.
[pa]: I prefer to use watercolours without a background, without a plan, and without any further resources.. so you really just..
[nvd]: But I assume.. in such cases you need to have a plan background?
[pa]: Yes, of course..
[nvd]: Otherwise you wouldn’t be able to do it.. but do you also prefer to work without a background in a drawing with perspective?
[pa]: .. Er, yes.. that you freely.. but in fact that’s real landscape painting, so you paint a landscape in situ without a prep.. Is preparatory sketch the right term?
[nvd]: Yes.. but I also assume you choose to do that because.. err.. you don’t want to give your customer the idea that all other routes have been closed off.. It’s..
[pa]: ..Correct.. yes, that’s correct..

In the report this comes back as: PA prefers to use watercolours without a background, a plan, and any further resources when he makes a perspective drawing. In fact, that’s real landscape painting in situ, done without any preparatory sketches. PA agreed that he chose watercolours on purpose, so his customers will not get the idea that all other routes have been closed off.

Evidently, shifting from first to third person and condensing the text changes the character of the piece. But the importance is to read the interview as an exploration of the thinking of these designers in relation to specific aspects of their work, like in this case, where the material aspect of a drawing - watercolour- was addressed.

This paragraph could be tagged with the tag ‘Watercolour’, as part of ‘Drawing Means’, and then in the main category ‘Drawing’. This is one of the four main categories, alongside time, landscape architecture, and profession, representing the main issues in this research. Tagging this fragment with the tag ‘Watercolour’, numbered 2.2.4 in the tag system, is factual, as the word is mentioned literally. The categorization can also be interpretative, when it is evident the text refers to a theme or concept. For example, the same excerpt can be interpreted as a thought about drawing processes. Therefore the same piece is also stored under that tag. The system of tags is derived from literature and general knowledge. At the same time, tags are added if the interviews reveal a relevant topic. The word ‘client’ was indicated as a subcategory within the larger category ‘Profession’. In the interviews the word showed up surprisingly often, and in very different contexts. Therefore it was also added to the broader category ‘Drawing’ in subcategory ‘Professional Context’, as tag ‘2.14.2 The Client’. The excerpt above from the Quadrat interview was also obviously tagged with this, as the designers clearly relate a drawing means to an idea of the client.

In some cases, the relation between a drawing and the interview is very direct. In this piece of a transcript a drawing by Buys & Van der Vliet was spoken about explicitly: [46] [Fig. 2.7]

[nvd]: I’d like to hear what you feel, if we look at one of those drawings, about how.. how techniques used in the drawing arose; where they came from. For example, I was intrigued by the trees in that...
sectional view.

[pb]: Just cut-outs. [laughing].

[nvd]: I thought you’d used rubber stamps, I have to admit. .

[pb]: No, no, it just looks like that. [laughing].

[nvd]: I thought perhaps you’d made your own stamps.

[pb]: No, this is quite different.

[nvd]: So you just cut them out of.. of.

[pb]: No, we don’t have any stamps.

[nvd]: Did you cut them out of coloured paper? No, those trees have been splashed on, haven’t they?

[pb]: Yes.

[nvd]: So you cut them out of white paper and then splashed ink on them?

[pb]: Yes, splashed. And then um.. [silence]. Goodness, yeah. It is actually quite a good atmosphere, this above, and then all dark.

In the report this comes back as: The drawings for Van Kooten’s garden, published in the book, have been discussed. The tree shapes in the sectional drawing turned out to be made not with
rubber stamps, but from cutout paper in various sorts and tints, and then given ink splashes. [47]

Superficially seen, this is a trivial conversation. But it is not. It reveals a particular approach to the making of drawings in a certain era, including specific techniques - in this case a rather innovative use of common utensils such as toothbrushes. This drawing practice is gone today. Therefore, the conversation refers implicitly to the organization of an office, the division of labour, inspiration taken from other fields of expertise, ways of reproducing drawings and so on. This evokes Geertz’ earlier mentioned concept of thick description and Groat and Wang’s wink of an eye example of its use: It is about ‘the semantic systems of the culture in which it happens’. [48] In Chapter 4 an interpretation of interviews will be given, including several examples of such ‘thick descriptions’.

Concerning the issue of time, an example from the office of DS -commencing in 1997 and delivered in 2007- is insightful. It is related to a drawing for the Poelgeest project. [Fig. 2.8] A (shortened) excerpt from the report runs as follows: ‘Aspects of time are very present in the Poelgeest design, but not in its drawings. [...] Ecologically important habitats were designed which also looked interesting. [...] The various changes the designer had in mind or had expected were not drawn. In fact, the drawing only gives an idea of the final stage. However, that was normal then; now you would approach it differently. Nowadays, the emphasis is on processes – what is this leading to? The reason for this is partly the crisis; a phased introduction has become more important’. [49] Here the interview helped to clarify why a certain drawing did not show aspects of time, although seen from a later

Fig. 2.8  Plan drawing for Poelgeest, Leiden, DS. Started in 1997, finished in 2007.

[49] Interview with DS, November, 2011.
Fig 2.9 Etude de cartes. Drawing made by student at École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, around 1790, showing the student’s ability to represent landscape.
perspective one would expect it to do so. This seemingly practical remark transforms to a meaningful statement, as it suggests that the representation of time evolved due to developments outside of the domain of drawing, such as aspects of the profession that were given more accent in certain periods.

Today, coding is often done with specialist software, such as Orbis. It can also be done ‘by hand’. To have full control, I tagged by hand, with help of Scrivener software. [50] See, for an example, Appendix 4. The result is a categorization - nothing more, nothing less. It is an in-between step that opens up the data in a way that larger themes can be deduced from it, and that is the actual analysis. The material then transforms from a set of seeming anecdotes into comments with a specific meaning in the context of a theme or argument. Chapter 4 presents five examples of such larger narratives.

2.5 Design experiments
This research takes an actionist position. It wants to contribute to professional practice by bringing the issue of time and its notation back on the agenda, and by providing examples that can stimulate the debate amongst practitioners. For that reason not only offices are of central importance, but landscape architecture education too. The Amsterdam Academy of Architecture functioned as a laboratory in which theoretical ideas were formed and tested for the purposes of this research. [51] The Academy today offers Masters in landscape architecture, urbanism, and architecture, and consciously positions itself as a training institute for professional practice. Architecture schools today often aim at training students by simulating practice, as advanced in the work of Donald Schön for example. [52] However, schools can have a position that is more independent from practice, or can even act as laboratories for practice, as can be seen in the case of the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, founded in 1747 in Paris as an program for engineers. [53] [Fig. 2.9] The issue of the representation of time may again ask schools to be a laboratory for practice. This research aims to contribute to that by expanding on the theory and testing new ways of drawing.

In philosophical terms the role of the school as laboratory must be positioned in the domain of pragmatism. Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952) argued that theory should be instrumental. As John Dewey puts it, pragmatism ‘insists not upon antecedental phenomena; not on precedents but upon the possibilities of action’. [54] The intention of this work is to study the drawing and thinking of practitioners in landscape architecture, and by doing that to influence practice where relevant. Remarkably, the way in which Dewey speaks about testing theories to some extent fit in the vocabulary of this research: ‘The doctrine of the value of consequences leads us to take the future into consideration. And this taking into consideration of the future leads us to the conception of a universe whose evolution is not finished, of a universe which is still, in James’s terms, “in the making”, “in the process of becoming” of a universe up to a certain point still plastic’. [55] If we speak about time in the context of landscape architecture, it often concerns the fact that landscape is ‘in the making’. Design schools offer numerous ‘possibilities of action’, which introduces a research
Fig. 2.10a  Impressions of experiments. Workshop at Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paysage, Versailles 2008 and 2010.
Swaffield and Deming consider a design workshop, or design in itself, as a tricky part of a scholarly research. That design can be a research strategy is acknowledged more and more, but often it is applied insufficiently. [56] To be a reliable strategy, it should fulfil certain requirements. A main requirement is that ‘it tests or builds theory and uses a protocol that satisfies the fundamentals of research quality’. [57] In this research representational innovation is developed and tested in a systematic way. An interpretative survey via interviews helps to formulate hypotheses that can be tested in a design environment. [Fig. 2.10a-d] A design experiment must follow a clear protocol to allow for transparent observation of the process, the outcomes and the comparison of outcomes. Vital in this is the awareness of the limitation of one experiment, or to put it differently, it is vital to define an experiment as one step in
To do so, it is important to describe the restrictions and the variables very precisely, such as the number of participants, the available time, and the organization: Group work or individual work? What is the participant’s knowledge on the issue? Did he or she work on the issue before? By describing these variables, setting up a protocol and processing the experiments in a systematic manner, design experiments as a research tactic can be valid. With the series of experiments in this research I aimed to find out if, when the conditions are right, time is represented, and if so, how that is done. And: What are the consequences? Is it merely a different way of presenting solutions, or could it lead to different designs, in which aspects of time have a greater influence.

The work of offices reveals the ‘messy’ nature of design processes as they happen in reality, whereas design experiments in schools are consciously placed outside daily reality, and operate within a smaller and controlled set of conditions. Due to this setting, they can generate new ideas, and enable the study of how certain options, identified as potential innovations, can be applied. In that sense, design experiments are closely related to workshops or competitions, to use two more general terms. In fact, there is a longstanding and specific tradition of innovation, particularly in the forms of both the competition and the workshop. Such settings consciously invite deviant thinking, as brilliant and new ideas are rewarded, and as workshops or competitions also offer a ‘free zone’ to leave everyday routine aside. Lipstadt speaks about competitions as important ‘spaces’ for architects to publish ideas independent from the direct influence of clients. [58] Competitions and workshops are not restricted to professionals - they also invite students to participate - and being anonymous, they give the known and the unknown a level playing field. That fact that I do not use the more general word workshop in this thesis, but design experiments, is to stress the fact that they conform to a clear research protocol. In the context of this research, 14 experiments were done. Most of them were organized as part of modules already existing on the curriculum. For that reason they were each of a very different nature to the other. They varied from very short (one day) to substantial (seven days), from small groups (8 students) to moderately sized groups (40 students), and from very specific exercises to broader design assignments. My role was sometimes leading, and in other cases secondary, but I always brought in the same question: Can we depict time in drawings, and if so, can representation in landscape architecture be renewed?