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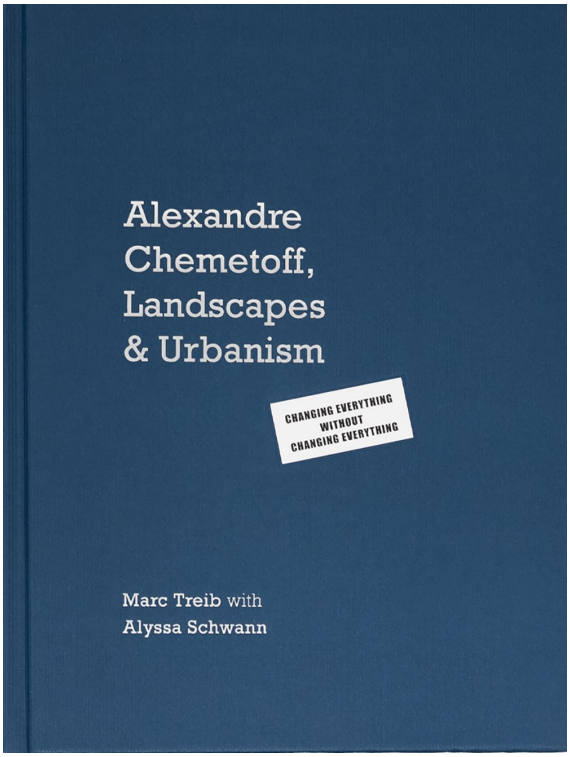

Alexandre Chemetoff, Landscapes & Urbanism

Changing Everything without Changing Everything

Marc Trieb

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Territory	World excluding USA, Canada, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines, Malaysia, and Australasia. India non-exclusive.
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- The first comprehensive study of the thinking, method, and projects by Alexandre Chemetoff, an internationally significant landscape architect and urban designer
- All new material; first book on the subject
- Joins discussions and analysis of landscape design with the design of cities, from broad views to design with plants

Alexandre Chemetoff's urban design draws on decades of designing landscapes, using new methods to reinvigorate older areas of the city and their architecture, while simultaneously proposing new buildings and neighbourhoods—an innovative and unique method. Alexandre Chemetoff's professional trajectory and practice has veered from small to large as well as large to small. In contrast to much of the verbiage about so-called "landscape urbanism," his work at city-scale draws on his experience designing landscapes, using new methods to reinvigorate older areas of the city and their architecture, while simultaneously proposing new buildings and neighbourhoods—an innovative and unique method. Early works by his office, the Bureau des paysages, such as the internationally celebrated Garden of Bamboo at the Parc de la Villette in Paris and the Place de la Bourse in Lyon are more easily identified as beautiful landscape architecture; less easily categorised are major renewal projects such as the Île de Nantes and the creation of a new neighbourhood and re-creation of an existing quarter in Nancy. While these works, products of intelligent and thoughtful design, can rightly qualify as either landscape architecture or urban design, there really is no specific term for the process that produced them.

Adopting a mode of operation intending to change everything without changing everything, designs by Chemetoff and the Bureau des paysages have eschewed any singular style. Chemetoff claims that he seeks "to construct a singular aesthetic which draws its sources from the surrounding world," and in some projects the hand of the designer may not be at all apparent. Some design proposals have challenged governments and governmental policies with an attitude he terms "attentive disobedience," in reference to naturalist and essayist Henry David Thoreau's proposal of civil disobedience. The program provided or derived may be provocative, but it only poses the question. The program initiates; the designer questions; the context enriches the intensity of the enquiry and suggests an aesthetic. "There are no places abstracted from their context, places which are not inscribed in a history and a geography," claims Chemetoff. In all, the environments created over more than forty years of practice are worthy of study and the methods employed by Chemetoff and the Bureau des paysages worthy of consideration and emulation.

Marc Treib, Professor of Architecture Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, is a historian and critic of landscape architecture and architecture and an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. His publications span a wide range of modern and historical subjects concerning architecture, landscape architecture, and art in the United States, Japan, and Scandinavia. More recent books include *The Landscapes of Modern Architecture: Wright, Mies, Neutra, Aalto, Barragán; The Aesthetics of Contemporary Planting Design; Serious Fun: The Landscapes of Claude Cormier; The Shape of the Land: Topography and Landscape Architecture*; and *Noguchi's Gardens: Landscape as Sculpture*. **Alyssa Schwann** is an environmental artist and designer whose work enfolds landscape conservation and cultural heritage across several regions. She is co-founding director of the Atelier Anonymous Global Landscape Foundation (AA-GLF), which advances community-based projects in Indigenous and intangible landscape traditions. A former tenured associate professor at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada, she taught environmental design, landscape architecture, ecology, and climate change. Her current practice, grounded in both science and art, examines forest ecosystems and ecological conditioning in the context of shifting biogeoclimatic zones.

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