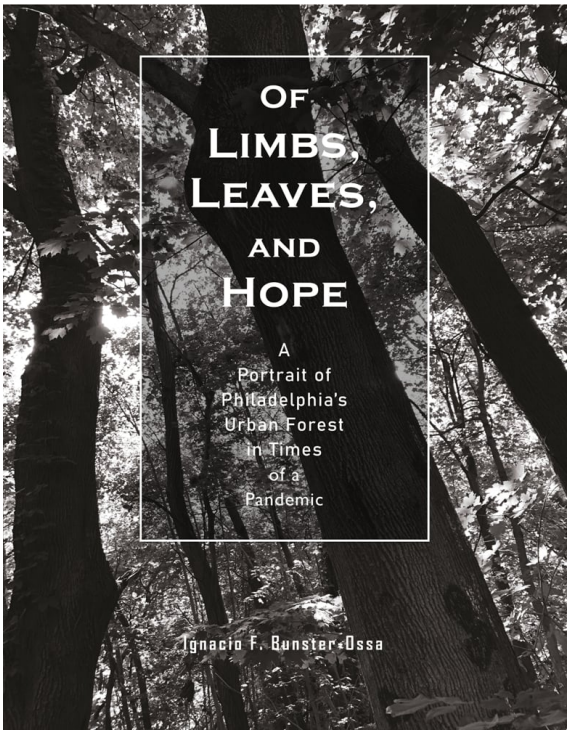
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Of Limbs, Leaves, and Hope

A Portrait of Philadelphia's Urban Forest in Times of a Pandemic

Ignacio F. Bunster-Ossa

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- In Philadelphia, nature invariably accompanies holy architecture, augmenting hope and faith in the eternal
- Alongside any critical utility, the urban forest stands as an equal, if not greater, partner
- The forest's variety of species, coupled with their adaptive habits, afford in form a limitless biophilic counterpoint

Of Limbs, Leaves, and Hope represents the unforeseen gain of biophilic relief in Philadelphia from the coronavirus pandemic. Forced to work remotely because of COVID-19, daily walks and bike rides became an essential distraction from hours of uninterrupted screen time. Photography became a pastime, and as weeks turned into months the city began to present itself anew: streets, plazas, parks, church grounds, cemeteries, and untold nooks and crannies not before seen or recorded. Trees soon began to dominate the compositions, as if beckoning to stand out against the gridiron construction. And so, the project began: to record the presence of trees as foreground actors of the everyday urban landscape. Beginning in the spring of 2020, hundreds of photographs were taken, often times of the same tree at different times of the day, under varying light conditions, and through the seasons. A sense of intimacy developed: of seeing how a plant breathes-in the city over time, silently, exhaling in return nurturing permanence and resilience.

Ignacio F. Bunster-Ossa is a landscape architect and principal at the Collaborative, a multidisciplinary planning and design firm with a focusses on community design and resilience.







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