Dynamic and temporal elements distinguish open space from built form. Landscapes are not static; they develop and change. Processes in natural landscapes occur at various speeds. Some take millions of years, others minutes. Plant life reacts on the yearly pattern of seasons and the daily rhythm of night and day. Plantings evolve over the course of their lives—they grow, mature, flourish, and decay. We perceive landscape through movement in space and time.
Environmental designers throughout history intended to control nature or to “enhance” its beauty by manipulating temporal qualities and slowing change. In contrast, many recent designed landscapes embrace a new aesthetic of ephemeral characteristics such as growth, spontaneity, and decay.

In the case of our “228 National Memorial Park” project in Taiwan, the metaphor of proliferating giant bamboo that will eventually surface above a memorial wall is pivotal to the design concept. Plants materialize the key idea...
of process in this new memorial landscape designed to achieve its meaning over time.

Comparing the situation in the 1930s with today, my “Famous Trees of California Revisited” project addresses the significance of 50 tree specimens in the natural and cultural history of California. In this publication, we intend to illustrate the development of the trees and their surroundings over the last 75 years, exploring how environmental awareness and our attitude toward design, nature, and preservation have evolved. 

Judith Stilgenbauer is an assistant professor of landscape architecture and environmental planning at the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design. She is a licensed German landscape architect and is founding principal of STILGENBAUER — landschaftsarchitekten urban landscape design in Oakland, California.
Facing page, top: The Lone Sentinel at Yosemite in the 1930s, Famous Trees of California Revisited. Photo courtesy Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.


This page, right: Diagram of bamboo growth pattern, 228 National Memorial Park project. Graphic by Judith Stilgenbauer.
