

William L. Fox: Atacama Lab
Collection CAE1113

Introduction/Abstract

Atacama Lab was a joint venture workshop in 2007 between the Land Arts of American West Program, University of Texas, Austin, and INCUBO. Organized by INCUBO, the workshop was comprised of a one-day orientation event to introduce the environment and architecture of Santiago, followed by a ten-day fieldtrip in the Atacama Desert. Final outcomes included an exhibition at the University of Texas and a book publication. Materials in the archive include maps, research, and draft manuscripts.

Biographical Note: William L. Fox

The Atacama Lab, run by Christ Taylor who was then at the University of Texas Austin, was an outgrowth of his work with the Land Arts of the American West, for which William Fox had been the field writer for several years. Fox's expertise was in the intersection of cognition and landscape as humans converted terrain into territory, or space into place, through art, architecture, and narrative. This process is particularly visible in large open regions, such as deserts—hence his involvement with both the Land Arts and Atacama projects.

Fox, who was then an independent scholar working as a researcher at the Getty Research Institute, has published more than a dozen books about cognition and landscape, as well as served as editor of the *Land Arts of the American West* book. He was executive director of the Nevada Arts Council, has been a visiting scholar at the Getty, the Clark Art Institute, and the Australian National University, among other places, and is the recipient of fellowships from the National Science Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has been a visiting writer with the Lannan Foundation (which also funded the Land Arts of the American West program), and is a fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society and the Explorer's Club.

In a related activity, as director of the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art, he collected the Fog Garden project of the Atacama Desert from architects in Santiago, Chile for the Center's Archive Collections, the materials from the For project subsequently being exhibited at the Museum.

Chris Taylor is an architect, educator, and director of Land Arts of the American West at Texas Tech University. He studied architecture at the University of Florida and received his Master of Architecture from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard. In 1998 he was awarded the Steedman Traveling Fellowship by Washington University and spent a year in Venice Italy mapping the spatial character of the city's existence between water and sky. Taylor teaches in the College of Architecture at Texas Tech; he has also taught within the interdisciplinary design program in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin, and in architecture programs at the Universities of Arizona and North Dakota State.

Josefina Guilisasti is one of the leading contemporary artists working in Chile. Her work typically consists of multi-part painting installations that reflect on the history of art and issues surrounding representation in realist painting. She was born in Santiago in 1963, and earned a degree in art at the University of Chile in 1985. From 1990-1992 she studied scenery painting at the stage workshops of La Scala in Milan, and in 1997 participated in a workshop with Eugenio Ditténborn. From 2005 through 2011 she co-directed with Cecilia Brunson the international curatorial exchange program Incubo in Santiago, which served as the host organization for the Atacama Desert project.

Scope and Content

The *Atacama Lab Workshop* brought the interpretive frame and working methods of Land Arts of the American West to Chile, expanding the definition of earthworks and opening an exchange along the north-south axis of the Americas. Land Arts of the American West is a student field program from the University of Texas Austin designed to explore the large array of human responses to specific landscapes across time. Working in the land and studio, its investigations extend from geologic forces shaping the ground itself to cultural actions that define place. Within this context, land art includes everything from petroglyphs to roads, dwellings, and monuments as well as traces of those actions.

Atacama Lab was a joint venture workshop between the Land Arts of American West Program, University of Texas, Austin, and INCUBO. Organized by INCUBO, “a not-for-profit curatorial residency program based in Santiago, Chile that fostered “ideas related to curatorial exercises and artistic practice, whereby the exchange is understood more as a field of research than anything else,” the field workshop, related events, and consequent book were sponsored in part by BHP Billiton and the University of Texas, Austin. Upon arrival of the Land Arts of the American West students in Santiago, a one-day orientation event was held to introduce the environment and architecture of Santiago to the participating students, artists, architects, designers, and scientists, and to discuss the expanding definitions of Land Arts. These were followed by a ten-day fieldwork session in the Atacama Desert where the team explored their implications while visiting sites of art, architecture, infrastructure, science and making work in direct response to the landscape. Final outcomes included an exhibition at the University of Texas and a book publication.

Dates

2007 - 2010

Quantity/Extent

.125 cubic feet

Language

English, Spanish

Arrangement

The archive is arranged in 4 folders in the following order:

- Folder 1: Travel / Workshop Logistics, 2007
- Folder 2: One-day Orientation Event, 2007
- Folder 3: Publication Research, 2007
- Folder 4: Publication Drafts and Final Report, 2007 – 2010

Related Archive Collections

- CAE0902: *Land Arts of the American West*
- CAE1118: *Fog Garden*

Related Publications

Bowman, Isiah. *Desert Trails of the Atacama*. Concord, NH: American Geographical Society, 1924.

Gilbert, Bill. *Land Arts of the American West*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008.

Incubo. *Atacama Lab*. Chile: Incubo, 2008.

Taylor, Chris. *Land Arts of the American West*. Albuquerque NM; Austin TX: University of New Mexico; University of Texas, 2003.

Container Listing:

CAE1113: Folders 1-4, 2007

CAE Box 15

- 1 Travel / Workshop Logistics, 2007
- 2 One-day Orientation Event, 2007
- 3 Publication Research, 2007
- 4 Publication Drafts and Final Report, 2007 – 2010

CAE1113: Additional Materials

CAE Box 89

- 4-1 Project Summary: Fondos Nacionales de Cultura y las Artes