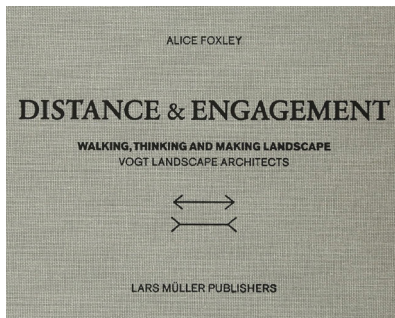


# Distance & Engagement

## Walking, Thinking and Making Landscape

Author: Alice Foxley

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What if a design process began not with drawings or diagrams from a distant position, but with walking and reading the ground through bodies? Distance & Engagement, by landscape architect Alice Foxley, reflects on the recent work of Vogt Landscape Architects. It introduces how ideas take shape through movement, observation, and physical making, responding to conventional design processes' lack of bodily experience.

The 455-page, landscape-format publication is divided into two parts. The first, text-based and about a quarter of the book, introduces Vogt Landscape Architects' design approach: „walking-thinking-making.“ Instead of starting from drawings, the practice begins with sensing and moving through the site, using physical models to refine ideas. The second part, with more images than text, presents ten built and unbuilt landscape projects through maps, site photos, sketches, and physical models to trace the process from walking to making. These include public squares, rural terrains, historical sites, and campuses, illustrating the method's applicability across varied spatial and cultural contexts. Organized around the four themes geomorphology, perception, historical narrative, and modeling, these case studies show how the process evolves from site engagement to design development. Its reflective tone emphasizes design as a process rather than a static outcome.

The book makes a compelling case for its method by balancing distance and engagement: maintaining analytical detachment while emphasizing bodily immersion. Its central claim „walking-thinking-making“ serves as a starting point for design, demonstrated through ten landscape projects. Though the approach relies on individual perception, it uses rich visual records including photographs, sketches, maps, and models to show ideas emerge from perceptual insights from walking and evolve through making. Despite varied sites and themes, each case reinforces the central claim, allowing readers to follow the logic through repetition and variation. This process-oriented narrative sets the work apart from other case-based publications that focus on results over design development. It invites readers to rethink how design evolves through direct engagement with place. With clear language and varied visuals, it welcomes non-specialist readers to discover new ways of interpreting their surroundings. Its practice-driven focus limits its relevance for readers seeking rigorous academic theory.

Distance & Engagement is not a manual with ready-made tools, but a visual reflection on the design process. Its strength lies in opening space to rethink how design begins: not from abstraction, but from movement, and lived experience. Its clarity of language, visual richness, and glossary of terms make it accessible to professionals wishing to reflect on their practice and curious non-specialists. Though it does not claim to fill theoretical gaps, it offers an alternative way, reminding us to ask: where does design begin?