ASLA 2019
Experiences & Reflections

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Friday kicked off the deep dive session about landscape performance and the Landscape Architects' role in ensuring landscapes carry out their intended functionality. This included many aspects of sustainable site design and how landscape architecture can be crafted into a defensible science. During the beginning phases of the project's design, measures taken to reach a defensible design were considered before the methods of the actual design were formulated. Creating a scientific approach by asking what kind of data sets need to be gathered, what physical limitations are present, and what results are desirable are crucial components to building a defensible method of design. In order to achieve a method of designing with concrete scientific foundations, the landscape architect's role includes conducting measurements of the sites biologic and hydrological functions which build a library of scientific data to back up a strong landscape design.

Defining Inclusive Landscape Architecture

As stewards for public spaces, our profession is not new to making space available for everyone. This education session however, gave insight to the true meaning of equitable, diverse, and inclusive landscapes. As for the parks in the five boroughs of New York City, data has shown that proximity and quantity of this green space is readily available across the city. What is often times excluded from this data is the quality of this open space and how attracted people are to use it. Mitchell Silver, commissioner of NYC parks not only presented recent improvements to failing public space around the city, but also what it meant to give equitable and inclusive properties to these spaces. The lasting message from his presentation reminded landscape architects in this scope of work is that "improving the landscape too well" for fear of changing the neighborhood's dynamic is irresponsible. The means of adding diversity and inclusivity to landscape design is obtained through a diverse value of perspectives and fairness to all who want to interact with it. Our responsibility is not to fight these problems by limiting design, but rather to design the landscape in an abundance that will promote a fair and enabling atmosphere for all.
Experiences

Balboa Park

In the few spare hours that I had away from the main events of the conference, I took some time to hike from the Gaslamp District up to the historic and world famous Balboa Park. The lath structure of the Botanical building caught my eye and proved to be an excellent opportunity to photograph a wide array of plants in a unique lighting situation. Tropical palms, towering cyads, and vibrant orchids all found different beams of the afternoon sunlight through the permeable structure overhead. This biological oasis gave me time to reflect on the list of education sessions that I had attended that weekend.