“The natural sciences are concerned with how things are . . .
Design, on the other hand, is concerned with how things ought to be.”
—Herbert Simon, The Sciences of the Artificial, 1969

A thesis is a thematic proposition offered for discussion and debate, typically developed through a piece of original research specific to an academic discipline at the culmination of a program of study. Theses are produced in various methods and media appropriate to the disciplinary commitments of academic fields across campus. Design theses are pursued through the methods and media specific to the design disciplines, through design research. Design research most often refers to the process and products of knowledge produced about and through design, as distinct from knowledge produced by research methods associated with the humanities or the sciences. It can be characterized by its means and methods, as well as by its sites and subjects for work, as well as the dissemination and reception of its propositions.

Design research is propositional and projective rather than simply empirical or descriptive, and it is predicated on intervention in the world rather than simply describing the world as found. Design research is characterized by its capacity to propose alternative and better futures while simultaneously producing disciplinary knowledge in design. Thesis projects pursued through design research exhibit a dual valance, standing as a form of disciplinary knowledge and as propositions for intervention in the world. Candidates in the Master in Landscape Architecture Program elect to pursue independent design theses at the culmination of their graduate work. The projects presented here represent original thematic propositions put forward through design research to stimulate discussion and debate. In this sense, they are as much about design discourse and disciplinary formation as they are propositions for how things ought to be.
Harvard Graduate School of Design  
GSD 9342 MLA Design Thesis  
Spring 2018

FINAL REVIEWS Thursday 10 May

09:45  [Stubbins]  Introductions

10:00  [109]  Annie Lang, “Knowledge Grounds”  
(advised by Robert Pietrusko)

(advised by Jill Desimini)

12:00  [522]  Ernest Haines, “Turnpike Metabolism”  
(advised by Robert Pietrusko)

Bradley Cantrell, Virginia  
Julia Czerniak, Syracuse  
Mikyoung Kim, Harvard  
Christopher Marcinkoski, Pennsylvania  
Jason Young, Tennessee  
(hosted by Robert Pietrusko)

14:00  [109]  Alison Malouf, “Ghostworlds”  
(advised by Silvia Benedito)

15:00  [the Pit]  Shimin Cao, “Islandscraping”  
(advised by Francesca Benedetto)

16:00  [109]  Sonny Ming Qi Xu, “Borderhood”  
(advised by Sergio Lopez-Pineiro)

17:00  [123]  Min Yeo, “Wild”  
(advised by Craig Douglas)

Neeraj Bhatia, California College of the Arts  
Bradley Cantrell, Virginia  
Julia Czerniak, Syracuse  
Chris Reed, Harvard  
Ashley Schafer, Ohio State  
(hosted by Craig Douglas)
Harvard Graduate School of Design
GSD 9342 MLA Design Thesis
Spring 2018

FINAL REVIEWS Thursday 10 May

08:45  [Stubbins]  Introductions

09:00  [122]  Ahran Won, “Seosengwon”
(advised by Niall Kirkwood)

10:00  [121]  Emily Drury, “How to do Things with Plants”
(advised by Silvia Benedito)

(advised by Belinda Tato)

12:00  [121]  Rhea Shah, “Decolonizing the Forest”
(advised by Dilip daCunha)

Neeraj Bhatia, California College of the Arts
Danielle Choi, Harvard
Alissa North, Toronto
Kees Lokman, British Columbia
Ashley Schafer, Ohio State
(hosted by Silvia Benedito)

14:00  [121]  Kelly Clifford, “Waste/Wealth Accumulations”
(advised by Rosalea Monacella)

15:00  [122]  Tami Banh, “Water Assemblage”
(advised by Robert Pietrusko)

16:00  [121]  William Baumgardner, “Tirana Freescape”
(advised by Anita Berrizbeitia)

Toni Griffin, Harvard
Kees Lokman, British Columbia
Christopher Marcinkoski, Pennsylvania
Alissa North, Toronto
Jason Young, Tennessee
(hosted by Rosalea Monacella)
Francesca Benedetto is design critic in landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Silvia Benedito is associate professor of landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Anita Berrizbeitia is professor and chair of landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Neeraj Bhatia is assistant professor of architecture at California College of the Arts.
Bradley Cantrell is associate professor and director of landscape architecture at Univ. of Virginia.
Danielle Choi is assistant professor of landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Felipe Correa is associate professor and program director of urban design at Harvard GSD.
Julia Czerniak is professor of architecture and associate dean at Syracuse University.
Dilip daCunha is adjunct professor of landscape architecture at University of Pennsylvania.
Jill Desimini is associate professor of landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Gareth Doherty is assistant professor and program director in landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Craig Douglas is lecturer in landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Toni Griffin is professor in practice of urban planning at Harvard GSD.
Mikyoung Kim is design critic in landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Niall Kirkwood is professor of landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Kees Lokman is assistant professor of landscape architecture at University of British Columbia.
Sergio Lopez-Piñeiro is lecturer in landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Christopher Marcinkoski is associate professor of landscape architecture at University of Pennsylvania.
Rosalea Monacella is design critic in landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Alissa North is associate professor of landscape architecture at University of Toronto.
Robert Pietrusko is assistant professor of architecture and landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Chris Reed is professor in practice of landscape architecture at Harvard GSD.
Ashley Schafer is professor and chair of architecture at Ohio State University.
Belinda Tato is design critic in architecture at Harvard GSD.
Charles Waldheim is professor of landscape architecture and director of OFU at Harvard GSD.
Jason Young is professor and director of architecture at University of Tennessee.