

Landscape  
Institute  
Annual  
Conference

2016

# **BEAUTY, FUNCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AGE OF AUSTERITY**

## **WHAT IS BEAUTY? – HISTORY, EVOLUTION AND THEORY**

*The relevance of sublime and picturesque thought to the  
contemporary context*

Brian Evans

Professor of Urbanism & Landscape

The Glasgow School of Art

**GSA**



Six qualities at the heart of good design for urban and rural development:

- Identity;
- Safe & pleasant spaces;
- Ease of Movement;
- A sense of welcome;
- Adaptability;
- Good use of resources.

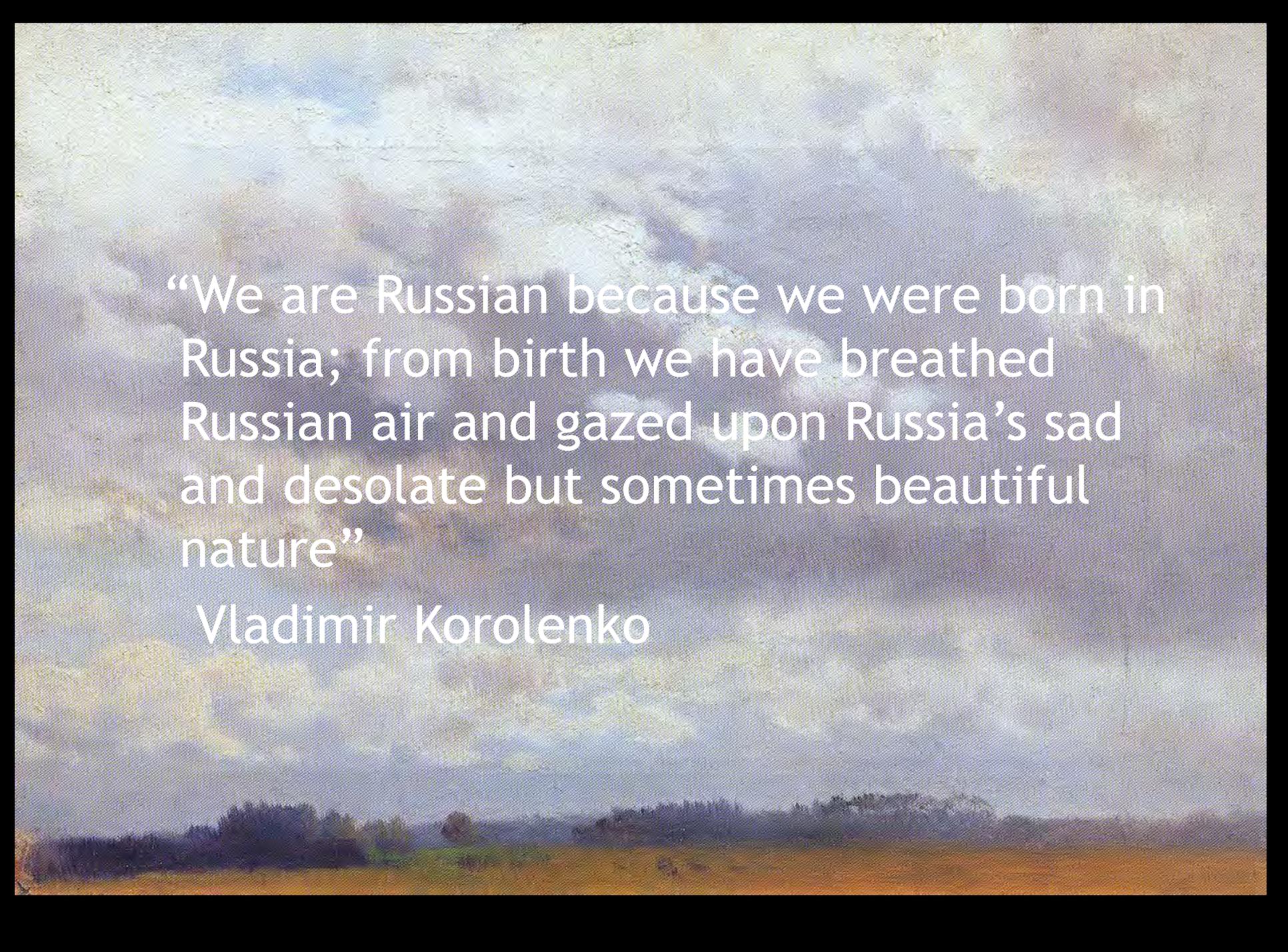
There is one other quality that many other successful places have. **Beauty** ... should be one of the objectives of (urban) design. It is less easy to plan for directly, but we may not need to. In a place that has the six qualities, **beauty** may well be the natural product of the patterns of human life and the skills of talented designers.

DESIGNING PLACES, Scottish Executive, 2001

(LANDSCAPE)  
**AESTHETICS**

Brian Evans

**GSFA**

The background is a textured, painterly landscape. The sky is filled with soft, layered clouds in shades of blue, grey, and white, with some yellowish-green highlights. Below the sky, there is a dark, silhouetted line of trees or a forest. The foreground is a flat, brownish-orange field, possibly a field of dry grass or a field of earth. The overall style is reminiscent of a watercolor or oil painting with a heavy, grainy texture.

“We are Russian because we were born in  
Russia; from birth we have breathed  
Russian air and gazed upon Russia’s sad  
and desolate but sometimes beautiful  
nature”

Vladimir Korolenko



Alexei Savrasov



Isaac Levitan



“I love the Russian landscape. You feel the meaning of Russian life, the Russian soul, better and more clearly against its background.”

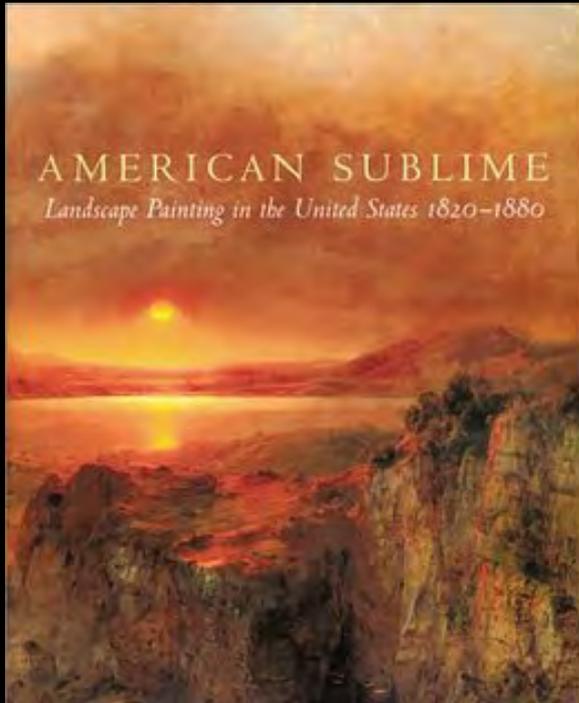
Mikhail Nesterov



Frederic Edwin Church: Cotopaxi



Albert Bierstadt: Looking up the Yosemite Valley



The Sublime: producing an overwhelming sense of awe or other high emotion through being vast or grand.



... having the quality of such greatness, magnitude or intensity, whether physical, metaphysical, moral, aesthetic or spiritual, that our ability to perceive or comprehend it is temporarily overwhelmed.

Picturesque (of a place or building): visually attractive, especially in a quaint or charming manner. Literally, a scene that would make a painting



... in common usage, a major influence on garden design, landscape fashions and ornamental walks ...

... think like artists, especially when planning 'enhancements' to the landscape on country estates.



Richard Wilson: Llyn Y Cau, Cader Idris



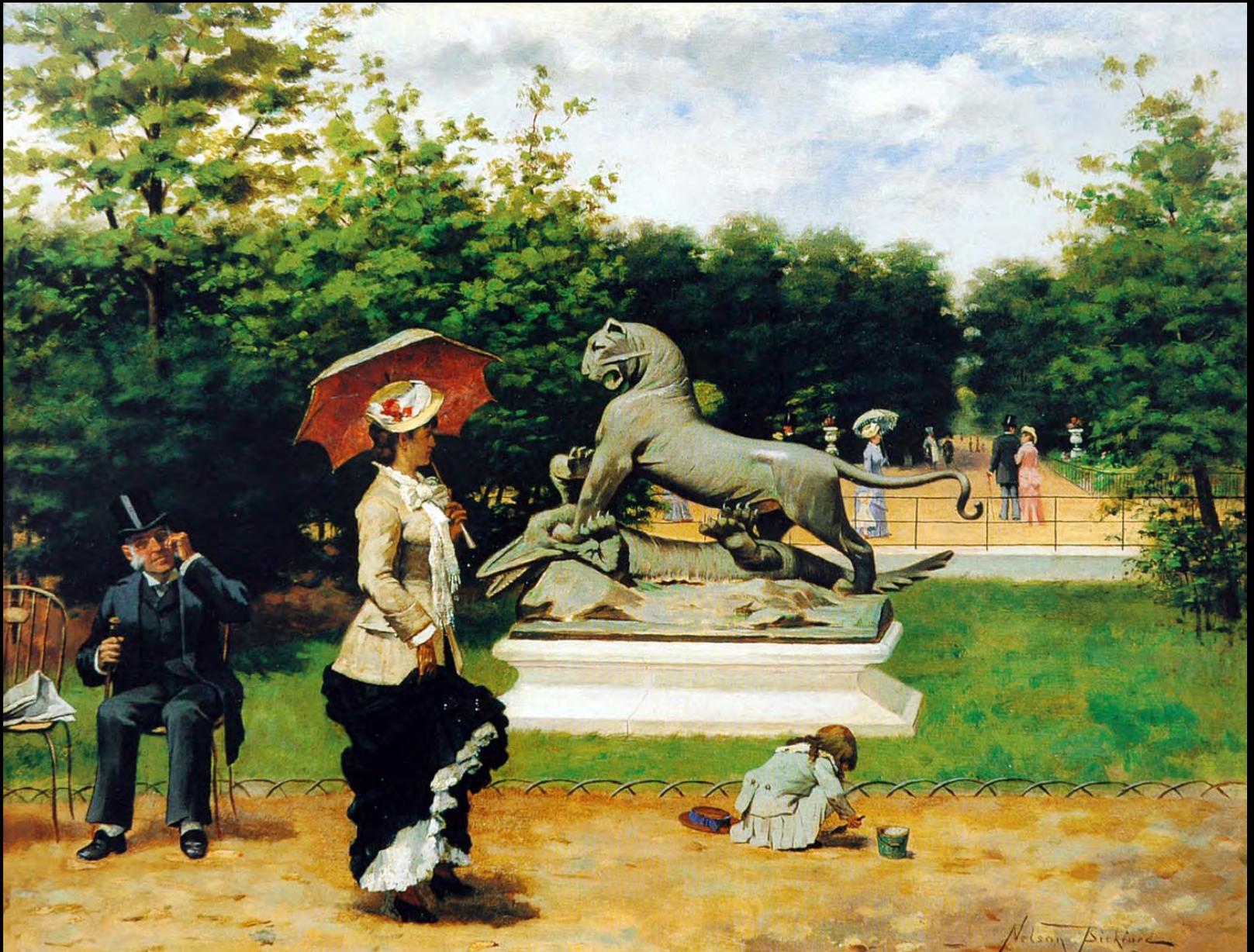
Caspar David Friedrich: Wanderer above the Sea of Fog



Caspar David Friedrich: Wanderer above the Sea of Fog



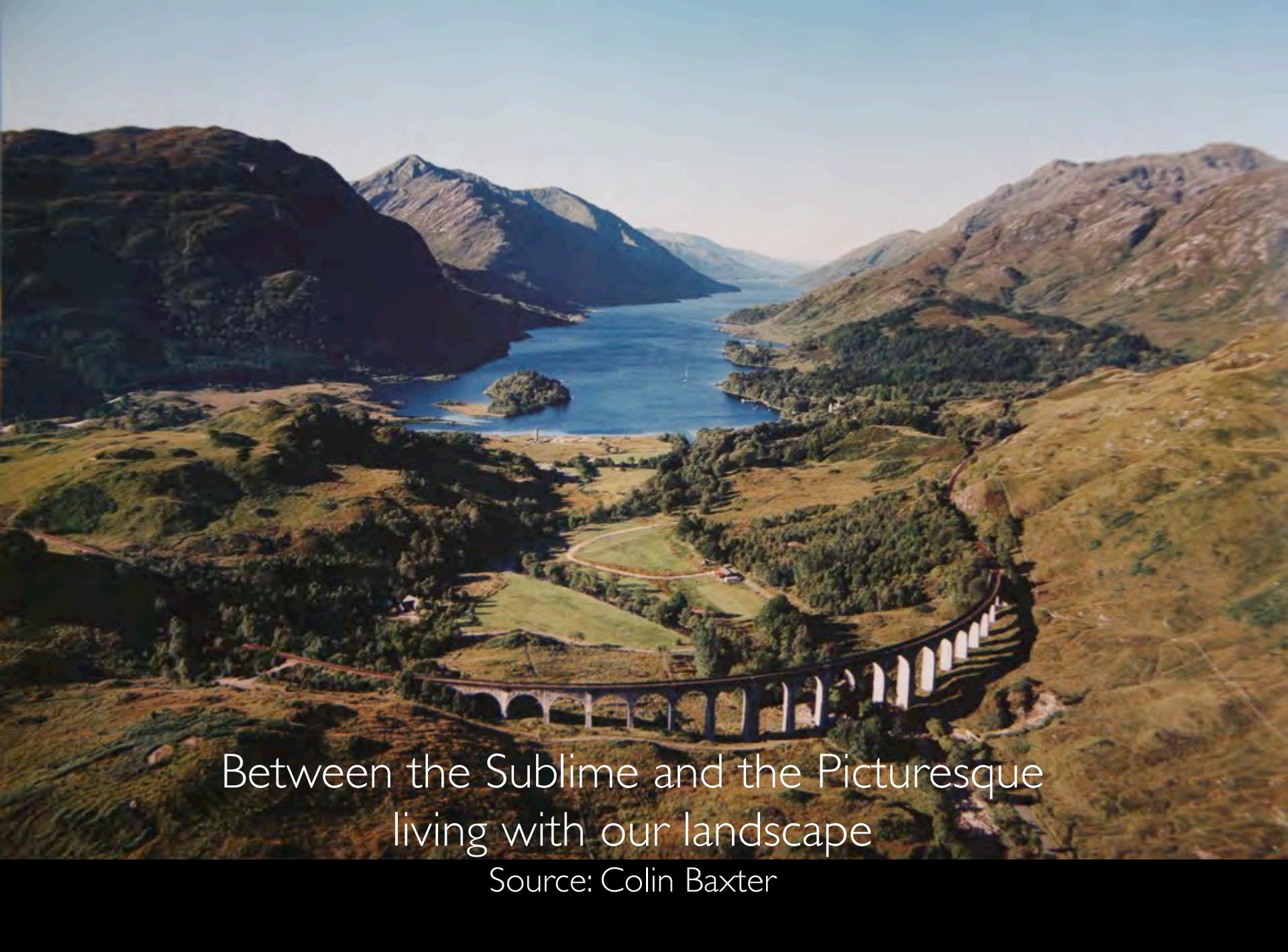
Edouard Manet: Déjeuner sur l'herbe



The Americans in Paris: Nelson Norris Bickford



Between the Sublime and the Picturesque  
living with our landscape



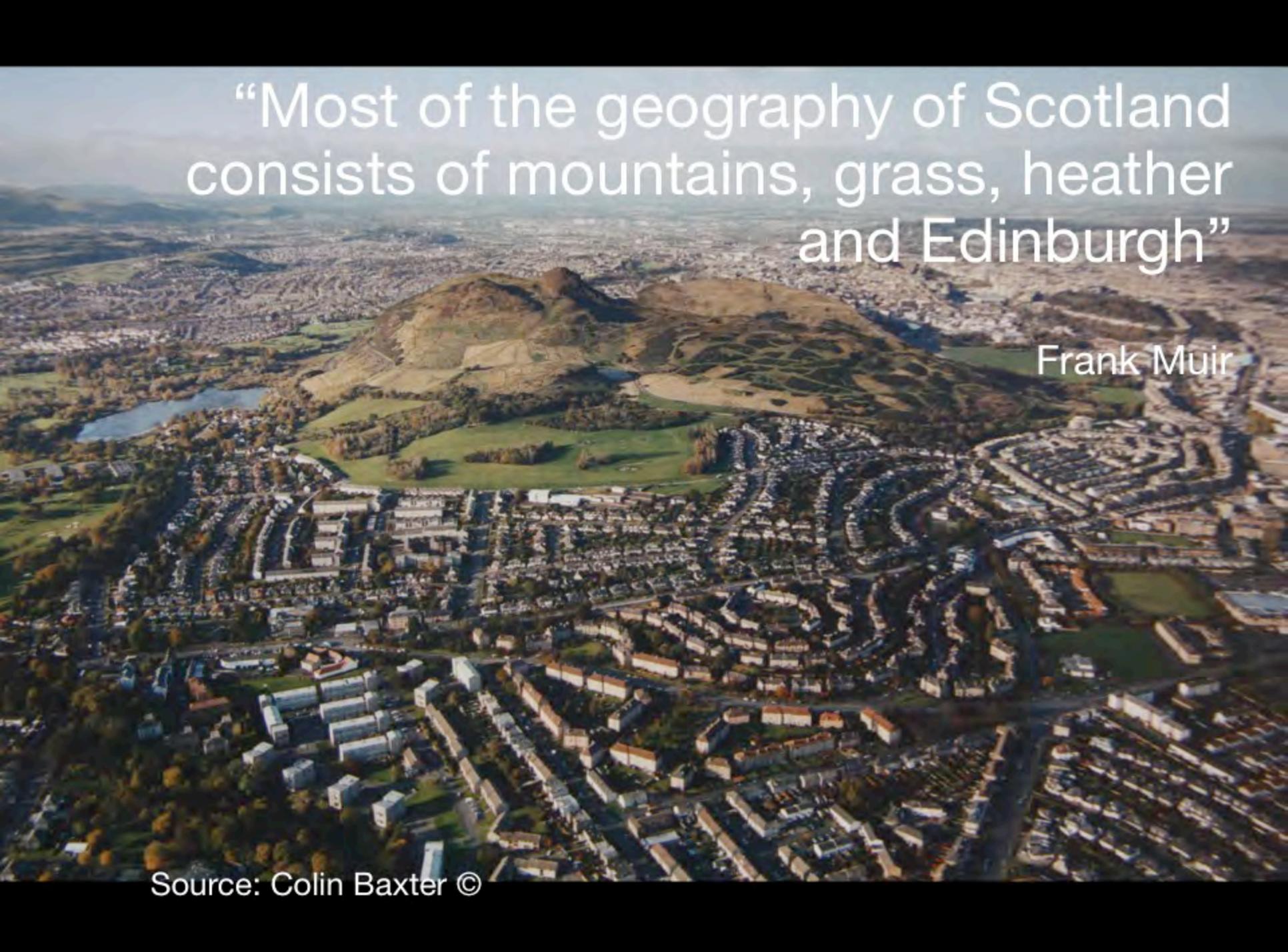
Between the Sublime and the Picturesque  
living with our landscape

Source: Colin Baxter

“Most of the geography of Scotland  
consists of mountains, grass, heather  
and Edinburgh”

Frank Muir

Source: Colin Baxter ©





Source WJ Cairns & Partners



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AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES



FUNCTIONAL UNDERSTANDING



BEAUTY

Brian Evans

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SUBLIME



PICTURESQUE

Brian Evans

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SUBLIME



PICTURESQUE



Brian Evans

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Ian McHarg opens the first copy of Design with Nature 1969

DESIGN WITH NATURE

# CITIES & NATURAL PROCESS

BASIS FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
MICHAEL HOUGH  
SECOND EDITION

# ECOLOGICAL URBANISM

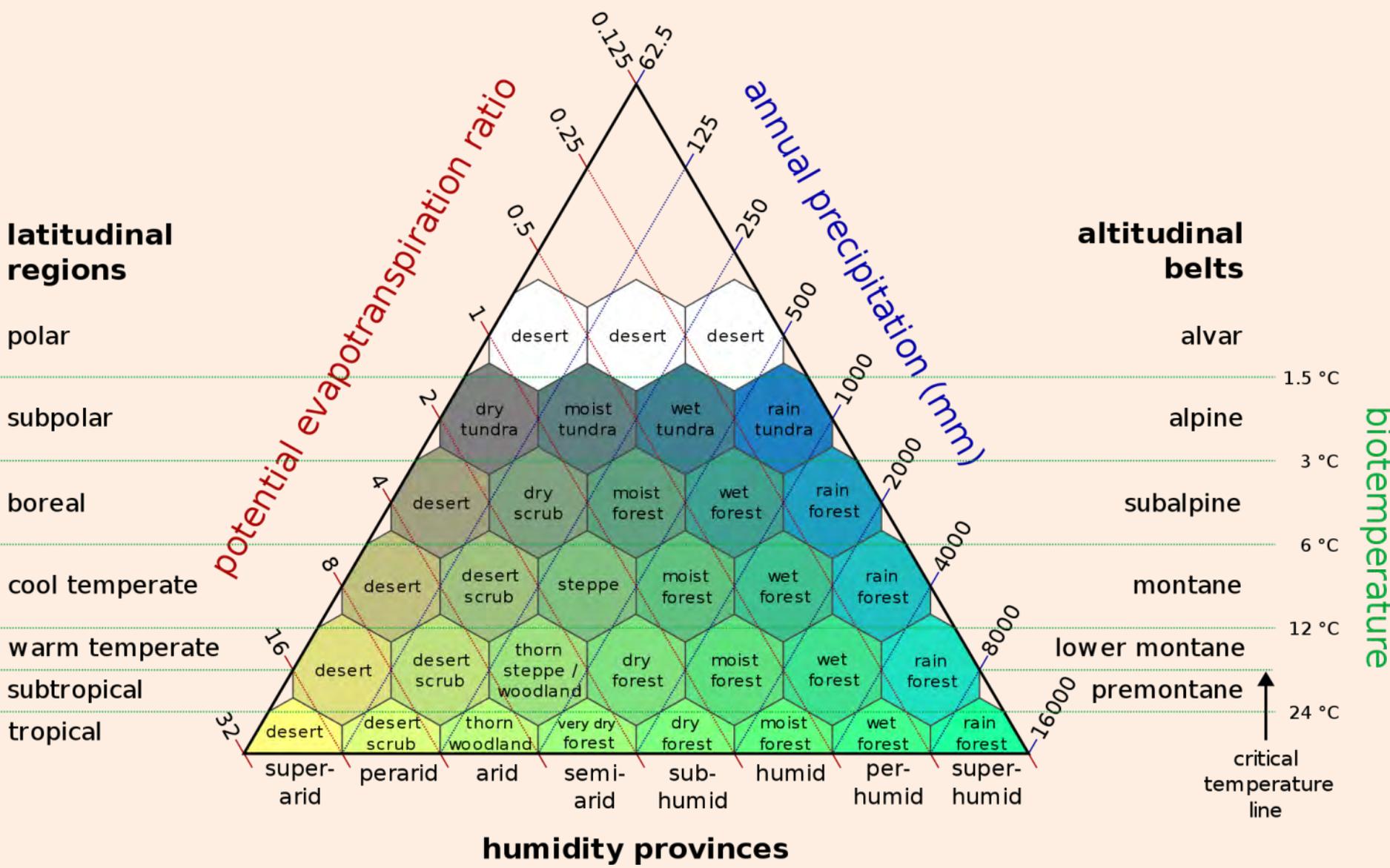
## OUT OF PLACE

*Restoring Identity to the Regional Landscape*

MICHAEL HOUGH

## Natural Process

MICHAEL HOUGH



**latitudinal regions**

**altitudinal belts**

polar

alvar

subpolar

alpine

1.5 °C

boreal

subalpine

3 °C

cool temperate

montane

6 °C

warm temperate

lower montane

12 °C

subtropical

premontane

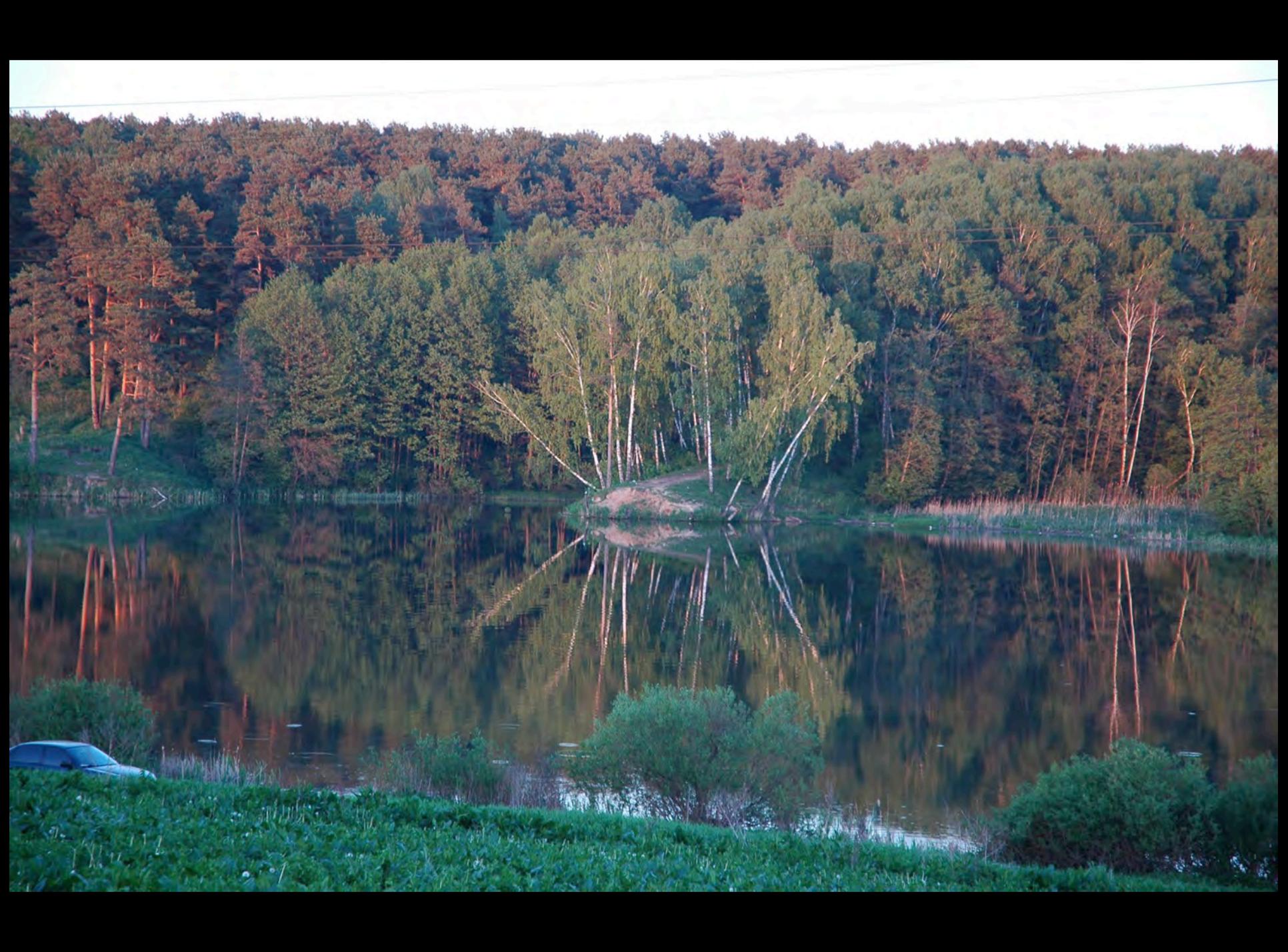
24 °C

tropical

critical temperature line

**humidity provinces**

biotemperature













*Information*



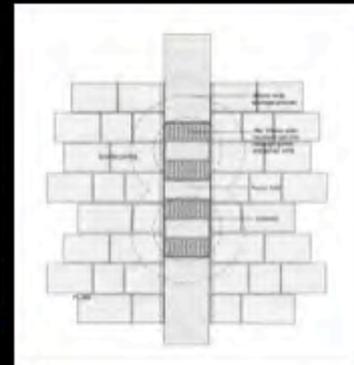
*Understanding*



*Knowledge*



*Skill*



*Craft*



avoiding failure

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achieving success







CAPITAL CITIES PLANNING GROUP  
MOSCOW 2013



CAPITAL CITIES PLANNING GROUP  
MOSCOW 2013



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FUNCTIONAL UNDERSTANDING



BEAUTY

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