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Country / City	UNITED KINGDOM
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Academic year	2017-18
Title of the project	BURROWING IN THE DARK: ALEATORY SYSTEMS AS DESIGN CATALYST IN POST-INDUSTRIAL MALDON
Authors	MICHAEL EKERS

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# PERFORMATIVE NATURE

Barcelona International Landscape Architecture Biennial

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SCHOOL PRIZE

X International Landscape Architecture Biennial

Máster d'Arquitectura del Paisatge -DUOT - UPC

ETSAB- Escola Tècnica Superior

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Avenida Diagonal, 649 piso 5

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## TECHNICAL DOSSIER

Title of the project	Burrowing in the Dark: Aleatory Systems as Design Catalyst in Post-Industrial Maldon
Authors	Michael Ekers
Title of the course	Bsc (Hons) Landscape Architecture
Academic year	2017-18
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Department / Section / Program of Belonging	School of Sustainable Environments and Design
University / School	Writtle University College

Bounded on two sides by water, Sadd's Wharf is placed in a dynamic physical context. The shift from urban to natural is apparent, as channelised river and rigid, architectonic forms of the post-industrial landscape give way to sinuous, flowing lines and expansive mudflats, water, and sky. This experientially fertile environment presents exciting opportunities for design intervention informed by both conventional site analysis and the liberating potential of *aleatory systems*.

Susan Herrington (2017:242) defines aleatory systems as the 'systematic integration of spontaneity, chance, and randomness into the design process'. Aleatory systems are evident in the methodology of Surrealists who used mediums such as *collage*, *frottage*, and *grattage* to liberate the creative mind from repressive, aesthetic and moral preoccupations. Aleatory systems are a legitimate part of design development, as a means of catalysing the creative process, drawing-out ideas, and tapping unseen potential in site and designer. They are also capable of conveying design intent, by hinting at non-tangible elements – the *experience* of landscape.

Drawing on Surrealist methodology, instinctive responses to site including 'emotional topography', 'points of intensity' and the *dérive*, were used to inform an overarching design strategy, notably to reintegrate Sadd's Wharf with historic Maldon to the south, improve walkability, and promote active engagement with the water's edge. Techniques such as collage and photo-montage, meanwhile, were a means of distilling the plethora of visual information. Through this, the subconscious was allowed to speak to new combinations and permutations.

For further information

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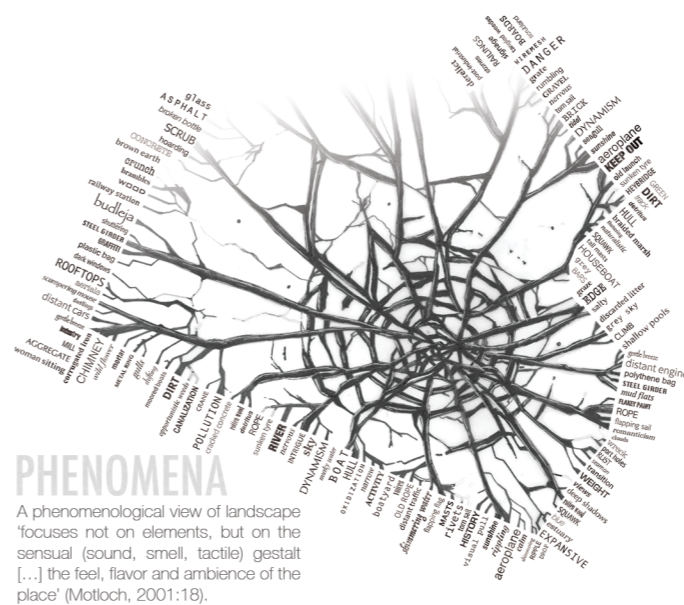
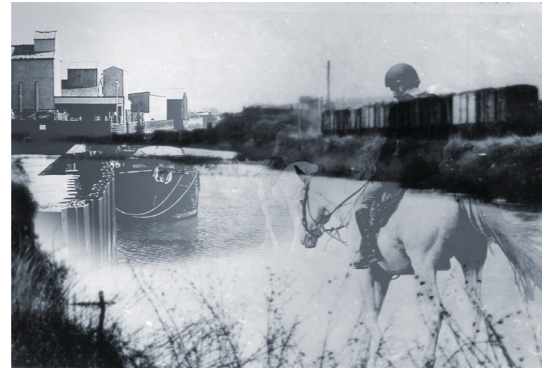
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# BURROWING IN THE DARK

ALEATORY SYSTEMS AS DESIGN CATALYST IN POST-INDUSTRIAL MALDON



## PHENOMENA

A phenomenological view of landscape 'focuses not on elements, but on the sensual (sound, smell, tactile) gestalt [...] the feel, flavor and ambience of the place' (Motloch, 2001:18).

**'INHERENT IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE MIND IS THE TENDENCY TO ORGANIZE WHAT WE SEE. IT IS SO STRONG THAT THE SLIGHTEST INDICATION OF POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS ARE ENOUGH TO CAUSE THE PERCEPTION OF A CONNECTED PATH OR A COMPLETE FORM'**  
(Garrett, 1969, cited in Bell, 1993:93)



**ALEATORY SYSTEMS**  
 SPONTANEITY CHANCE RANDOMNESS

## LANDING

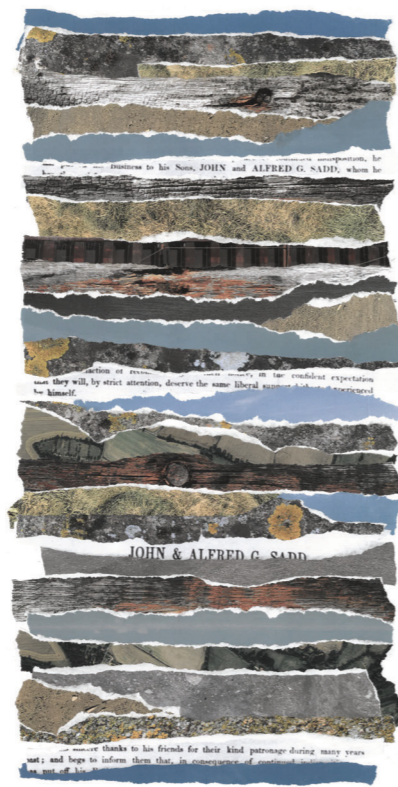
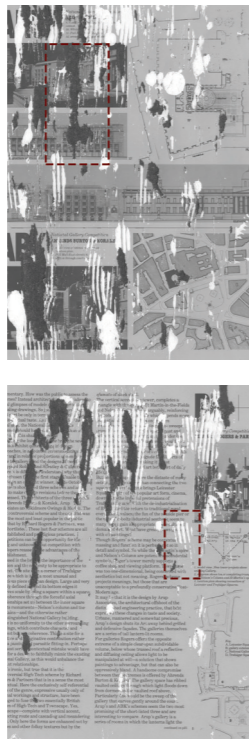
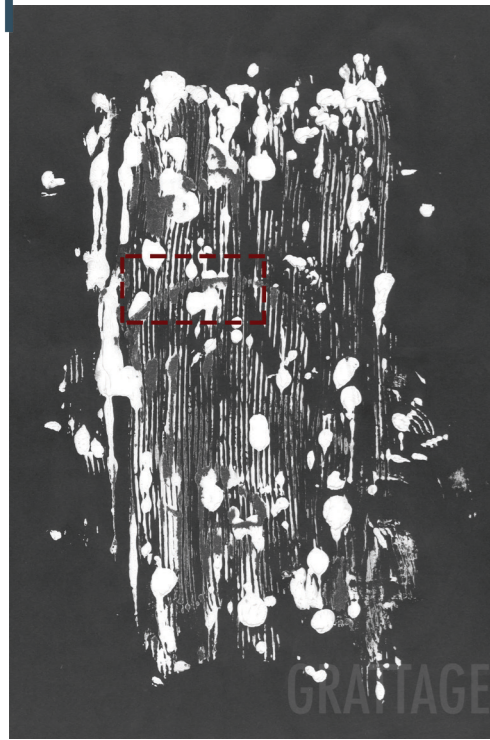
Landing: An intuitive, experiential technique undertaken when first arriving 'at site', where one's intuitions and impressions prevail' (Giot, 1999:62).

## DÉRIVE

Dérive: Drifting through the urban landscape driven by intuition rather than calculation, thereby revealing 'pivot points' in the psycho-geographic landscape (Debord, 1955).

## INTENSITY

**10**



CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

ALEATORY SYSTEMS INVITE THE VIEWER TO PARTICIPATE THROUGH IMAGINATION. FOR ARTIST AND VIEWER, ALEATORY WORK UNFOLDS...

DISTILL THE ESSENCE OF LANDSCAPE

PLANTING STRATEGY

**DESIGNED/ORNAMENTAL**  
Ornamental (non-native and cultivar) planting to suit hard-landscaped and high pedestrian traffic areas (e.g. nodal planting, track planting). Fastigate tree species planted into concourse in low-impact root management system to safeguard platform structure.

**TRANSITION ZONE**  
Gradient between naturalistic and unplanned planting (ecological succession), and designed / managed vegetation in the vicinity of Maldon East.

**NATURAL SUCCESSION**  
Integration of wild (native and naturalised) and designed (non-native and cultivar) vegetation for the effect of a wild landscape, but with a longer season of interest. Selective editing to control invasive and highly competitive plants and allow desirable plants to flourish. Strategic tree planting for screening and vertical emphasis.



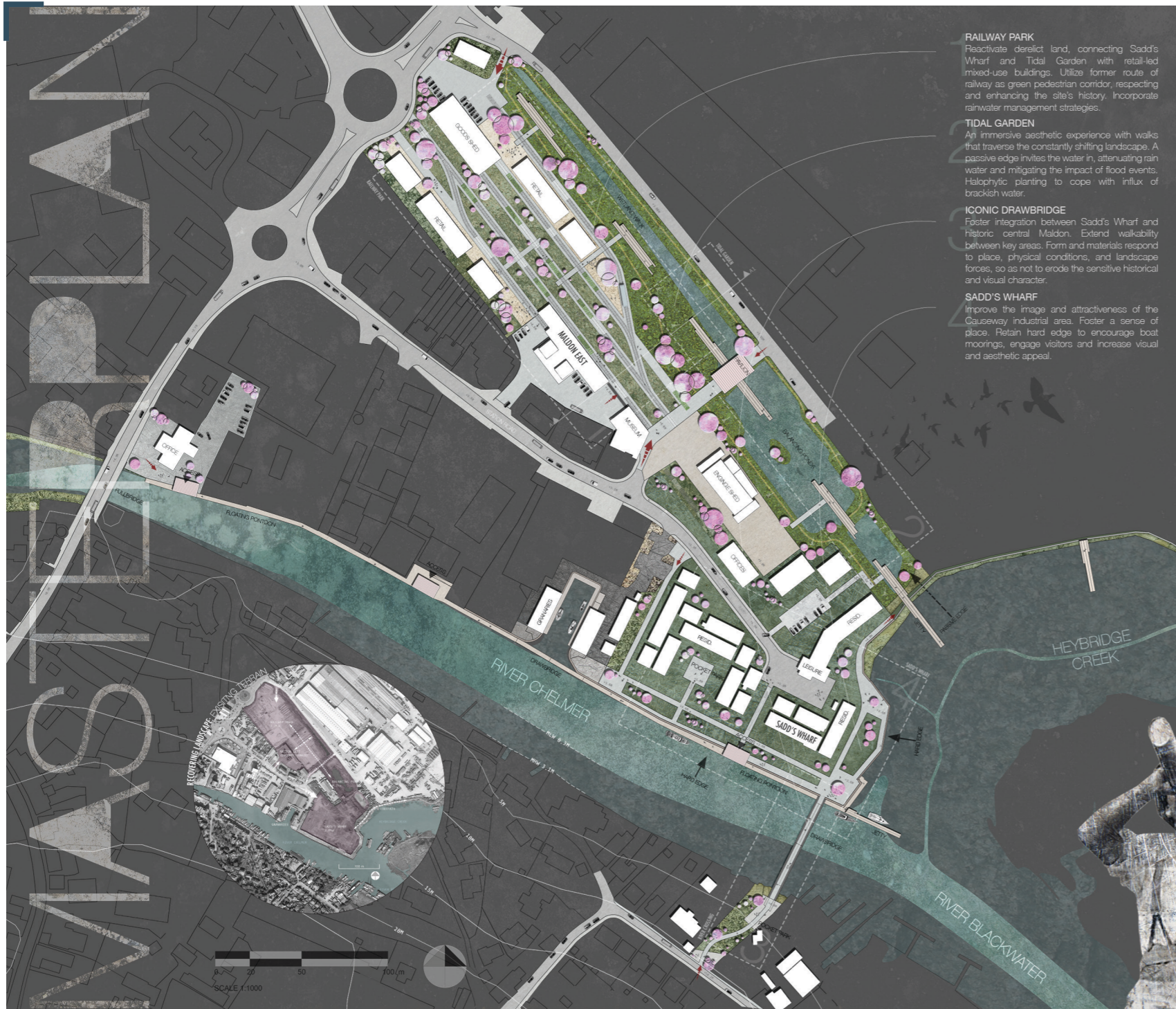
DESIGN RESPONSE

REFERENCES: Bell, S. (1993) *Elements of Visual Design in the Landscape*. London: E & FN Spon. • Debord, G. (1955) 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography', *Les Lèvres Nues* #6. Trans. Knab, K. [www.document]. At: <https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/mliu/handle/10214/1798>. (Accessed 28.03.17). • Girot, C. (1999) 'Four Trace Concepts in Landscape Architecture', in Corner, J. (ed.) (1999) *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. • Herrington, S. (2017) *Landscape Theory in Design*. London: Routledge. • Moloch, J. L. (2001) *Introduction to Landscape Design* (2nd edition). Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.



- DESIGN STRATEGY**
- Provide social and physical integration through provision of coherent, connected, and comfortable places.
  - Resolve poor pedestrian environment with matrix of interconnected routes; connect strategic foot and cycle paths with regional and national routes; improve access points, wayfinding, and legibility.
  - Enhance the setting of the riverside and promote active engagement with water's edge.
  - Extend network of interconnected green spaces, including halophytic wetland to extract or stabilize pollutants, and as nesting and feeding habitat for biodiverse species.
  - Use soft (passive) edges that 'invite the water in'.
- DESIGN OBJECTIVES**
- Optimise the health, well-being, and productivity of diverse physical, ecological, and human (physiological and psychological) systems;
  - Facilitate a new and more relevant operational environment;
  - Integrate disparate elements into a meaningful, regenerative, and sustainable landscape;
  - Respond sensitively to historical, ecological, physical, technological, cultural, and socioeconomic context.
- SOCIAL**
- Promote pluralism, social integration and social interaction;
  - Provide a positive sense of place and community;
  - Foster perceptual and associational meaning, and a sense of connectedness.
- VISUAL**
- Embrace locally relevant aesthetics;
  - Respect the vernacular matrix;
  - Synergise designed and non-designed (natural/naturalistic) elements;
  - Establish a dialogue between the architectonic forms of the urban landscape, and the sinuous, naturalistic forms of the estuary;
  - Create a landscape that respects existing forms whilst maintaining its own integrity;
  - Embrace the feeling of expansiveness (wide views of estuary and sky).





# PERMEATED LINEARITY



## RAILWAY PARK MALDON EAST



### RE-INTERPRET



### RE-ACTIVATE



### WET AND WALK

