

AUDRC Research Note

Surveying the landscapes of Dubai's urban model



How are landscapes used as a tool for political legitimisation in Dubai?

- This book 'Desert Paradises: Surveying the Landscapes of Dubai's Urban Model' explores how designed landscapes can play a vital role in constructing a city's global image and legitimising its socio-political hierarchy. Using the case study of Dubai, the book explores how Dubai's rulers employ a paradisiacal image of greening the desert, in part as a tool for political legitimisation.

- 'Desert Paradises' also evaluates the designed landscapes of Dubai against the principles of the United Nations and the International Federation of Landscape Architects and argues that what is happening in Dubai represents a significant discrepancy between theory and practice.

- This book offers a new perspective on landscape design that has until now been unexplored. It would benefit academics and students interested in Dubai or the many cities in the region experiencing Dubaification.

- Praise for 'Desert Paradises:'

Desert Paradises is a superb analysis of the development of urban landscape in Persian Gulf with a focus on Dubai. This fascinating and historically informed account sheds new light on nuances of landscape urbanism and the complex politics behind it. Providing an original and impactful contribution to landscape design, history and practice, Bolleter handles both breadth and depth of the development of landscape in Dubai with balance and solid supportive arguments. This indispensable study would be an inspiring reading for experts from various fields, including but not limited to,

geographers, urban planners, designers, architects, and historians of contemporary Middle East.

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Bolleter's concise socio-cultural and econo-political overview gives way to documentation of the greed, ecological erasure, and distorted forms of practice that have gone awry in the desert 'parascap'. His ground truthed methods shed important insight for designers to reimagine new narratives for the region that can adjust imbalances before engineering gives way to total social and environmental collapse.

Alan M. Berger. Norman B. and Muriel Leventhal Professor of Advanced Urbanism, Dept. of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Links to related publications

- Bolleter, J. (2019). Desert Paradises: surveying the landscapes of Dubai's urban model. London: Routledge.
- Bolleter, J. (2009). Para-Scape: Landscape Architecture in Dubai. Journal of Landscape Architecture, Spring 09(4), 28-55. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/18626033.2009.9723411>.

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