



Tuia Pito Ora
New Zealand Institute
of Landscape Architects

Dr Simon Richard Swaffield
New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Tuia Pito Ora

Life Membership Citation – presented 5 May 2021

Simon Swaffield was born and educated in the United Kingdom, with an MA from Cambridge University where he studied geography, a diploma in landscape design at Manchester University in 1977, and a graduate diploma in town planning at Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot Watt University in 1981.

After graduation, Simon's professional focus was on environmental assessment, particularly in the oil industry, leading to working in Canada in 1982. While in Canada, Simon taught at Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design, the beginnings of an outstanding academic career.

In 1982 Simon moved to New Zealand to take up an academic appointment with what was Lincoln College's Landscape Section of the Horticulture Department, and over the decades that followed he was pivotal in the evolution of the teaching of landscape architecture in this country. Since its beginnings in 1969 the landscape architecture qualification was a postgraduate diploma. Recognising the potential for expanding the educational framework, in his role as coordinator of the Landscape Section, Simon introduced a proposal for an undergraduate degree. By 1988 the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture was established, with the first graduates completing the degree in 1991.

At the same time as putting landscape architecture education firmly on the map in New Zealand with the introduction of the BLA, Simon was himself undertaking a PhD at Lincoln University. His thesis was titled, *Roles and meanings of 'landscape,'* and Simon was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy in Resource Studies in 1991. Simon's doctoral research focussed on issues of landscape assessment of trees and plantations in the Canterbury High Country, investigating how language is political in the world of policy and environment, concluding that the various elite groups involved the term 'landscape' in ways which manifested "how the use and control of language comprises a major feature in the struggle for power over land."

With his own PhD completed, Dr Swaffield began a career in PhD supervision which vividly demonstrated his dexterity in the academic world. With students researching topics as diverse as urban thermal comfort in Christchurch, rural land use issues in Taupo, coastal environmental impact assessment in Barbados, gender segregation in the tourist landscapes of Saudi Arabia, and relationships between people and land in the Siwa oasis of Egypt, to name just a few, Simon guided students through the emerging practice of research in the field landscape architecture.

Landscape architecture's emergence as a theoretical discipline internationally has been assisted considerably through Simon's extensive body of research and publication. Landmark books include *Theory in Landscape Architecture: A Reader* (2002) and with co-author M. Elen Deming, *Landscape Architectural Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design* (2011). In 2007 Simon received CELA's Award for Outstanding Research and Communication, and in 2015 Simon and Elen were awarded the 2015 Excellence in Research Senior Faculty Award from the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture recognising *Landscape Architectural Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design* as 'an exemplary text that advances the discipline of landscape architecture.' Further significant books include: *Landscape analysis investigating the potentials of space and place* (2017) with Per Stahlschmidt, Jørgen Primdahl, and Vibeke Nellemann; and *Globalisation and agricultural landscapes: change patterns and policy trends in developed countries* (2010) with Jørgen Primdahl Swaffield. Numerous peer-reviewed



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articles and book chapters range over topics from the use of diagrams in landscape architecture, landscape as a way of knowing the world, climate change and landscape architecture, and responses to the landscape following Christchurch's earthquakes.

Simon has contributed significantly to the profession of landscape architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand, recognised in his award of Fellowship of the NZILA in 1995. Internationally he has had considerable influence on the academic discipline of landscape architecture, including as a member of the College of Fellows of the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture, a review member for the International Advisory Boards for *Landscape Journal* and the *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, and affiliate Professor at the Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning at the University of Copenhagen 2011-2020.

In 1995 Simon founded the international peer-reviewed journal, *Landscape Review*, the first peer-reviewed journal of landscape architecture outside North America and Europe. The journal remained staunchly independent, resisting being absorbed into big publishing houses, and has developed into an archive of diverse research which contributes to the discipline's development in both breadth and depth.

Simon's international profile was pivotal in a series of very successful conferences held at Lincoln University. The two Languages of Landscape Architecture conferences, in 1995 and 1995, attracted important overseas academics to Lincoln University, and cemented ongoing connections with an international network. In 2004 the first offshore conference for the North American-based CELA was held at Lincoln University, and titled 'Here or There,' focussing on issues of globalisation in landscape architecture. The proceedings of all of these conferences were published as issues of *Landscape Review*.

Over the past decades, Simon has continued to progress landscape architecture education, and was the foundation Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture, and served as programme head for around 20 years between 1985 and 2009. In addition he contributed to the wider academic management of Lincoln University through roles as the Chair of the Faculty Strategic Committee and elected Professorial representative on Academic Board. For many years Simon managed the Study Abroad programme for landscape architecture students, facilitating many Lincoln students' experiences studying at programmes internationally, as well as the numerous international students who joined the department for a semester to expand their educational and cultural horizons.

In 1998 Simon became Aotearoa New Zealand's first Professor of Landscape Architecture, both a personal achievement and a significant milestone for the profession. In 2018 Simon retired, and was awarded the status of Emeritus Professor by Lincoln University, a title which pays testament to his decades of significant contribution to the University.

Simon's passion for landscape is reflected in his recreational pursuits over the decades, including orienteering, and an enduring connection with seascapes, on the water and in the harbour setting of the Swaffield Moore home in Governor's Bay. With wife Jenny Moore and sons Matthew and Martin, Simon has been constantly in action in the landscape, on walking expeditions, supporting his sons in rowing and rugby, and getting stuck into their large garden.

Simon Richard Swaffield's award of life membership of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Tuia Pito Ora, is, therefore, a fitting tribute to his personal commitment to the theory and practice of landscape architecture, and his contribution to the profession nationally and internationally.