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Caring for Places: Looking to a Common Future

The rush to the new and the technologically driven has always been something that *Places* has resisted, especially when it requires the suppression of the familiar and the disenfranchisement of those not “with it”—not ready or able to disavow habits of mind and means of action differently formed from those in the flow.

Lately, the voices calling for imperative change have become more convincing, even as they have been compromised by a manufactured lust for media distraction.

The “RePlacing” advocated in our previous issue, as well as the review of our history prompted by the “Places 25” conference, held in May, affirm that the “new” need not be dismissive of the familiar, that technical abilities need not suppress human response or distract from human purpose: that “care” need not be abandoned as new places emerge in the physical and virtual worlds that surround and support us.

The editorial that opened Volume 6, Number 1, of *Places* (1989) stated a set of purposes for the journal. (For full text see www.places-journal.org.) I would like to borrow several sections here and re-place them in the context of our future.

“We shall always be interested in configuration.”

“We shall always be interested in how places sustain attention over time.”

“We shall always be interested in how people intersect with a place.”

“We shall always be interested in how places come about.”

We’ve done pretty well at staying with those editorial intentions, while searching out ways to give them fresh life and bring new and varied voices to the discussion. Now we must do more:

“We shall/must always account for the roles design and our expectations play in transforming nature—through what we build, cultivate, use, and care for.”

This issue of the journal turns attention to changes that reach to the foundations of society and what citizens demand of themselves and each other. Our society’s wish to suppress the constraints of place and the inconveniences of natural cycles has led to a vast consumption of energy. Wasteful transportation and building systems devour resources and degrade the environment. Willful disregard for and ignorance of long-term consequence have now brought us to the frontier of disruptive climate change.

The articles here bring with them awareness that the world we know is being changed by the global summation of what we build and how we behave. They remind that we need to do much more to change our habits of consumption and our expectations regarding travel and comfort. They also remind that there are many emerging intellectual resources for thinking more clearly about the multiple, intermingled, often contradictory outcomes of what we do.

In *Places* we have been committed to framing a discourse that is anthropocentric—not because we think the universe is centered on humans, but because it is we who can act with imagination and alter course.

Imaginative care carries us forward. The time to care is now.

—Donlyn Lyndon