



# Landscape Fascinations and Provocations

Reading Robert B. Riley

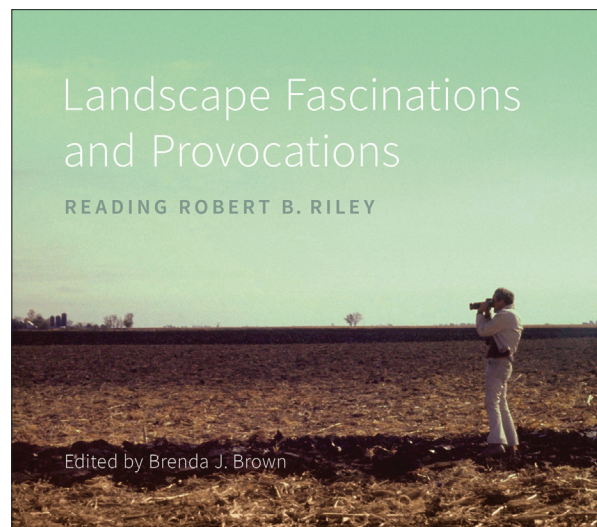
Edited by **BRENDA J. BROWN**

*Landscape Fascinations and Provocations* reflects and builds on the work of Robert B. Riley (1931–2019), emphasizing his ongoing importance for landscape studies and landscape architecture. The title of the volume represents an attempt to distill Riley’s attitude and approach. The book’s core consists of fourteen essays—six seminal pieces by Riley alternating with eight new pieces by other authors, each relating to Riley’s work in a different way.

Riley’s singular and important voice survives in his writing: lean, straightforward, erudite, clever, wryly observant, provocative, accessible, and dense. His writings reflect his love of landscapes, his wariness of jargon, and his awareness of academicians’ and designers’ potential hubris. His essays reveal a lifetime of curious probing and reflection, of serious and critical readings of geographers, anthropologists, psychologists, novelists, and journalists—as well as designers—on landscapes, their design and experience. His subjects include specific North American cultural landscapes; landscapes in literature, memory, and contemporary media; physical landscapes and technology; and the garden, nature, and meaning.

Reflecting Riley’s eclectic, wide-ranging curiosity and influence, authors of the new essays—Brenda J. Brown, M. Elen Deming, Rosa E. Ficek, Lewis D. Hopkins, Rachel Leibowitz, Achva Benzinberg Stein, Linnaea Tillett, and Vera Vicenzotti—include a cultural anthropologist, a regional planner, a historic preservationist, and a lighting designer as well as landscape architects. The book concludes with short reminiscences, assessments, and appreciations from some of the people who knew Riley (luminaries such as Michael Van Valkenburgh, Randy Hester, John Jakle, and Terry Harkness) and felt his influence as teacher, colleague, editor, mentor, and/or friend. *Landscape Fascinations and Provocations* demonstrates the ways in which Riley’s work continues to provoke others in his field to think and act in directions both new and unexpected.

**BRENDA J. BROWN** is associate professor of landscape architecture at the University of Manitoba. An artist and designer as well as writer and editor, she has published widely, and her landscape and multimedia exhibits and installations have appeared in Canada, the United States, and Mexico.



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