

landscape architecture

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ONTHOLD MD
A slightly irregular look at the new and noteworthy. EDITED BY LINDA MCINTYRE

RIPRAP



TRASH TREASURE

Art on the Site

Landscape architect finds beauty in an unlikely medium.

JEFF BLAKELY, ASLA, the scion of a family with deep roots in landscape architecture and the landscape of South Florida, runs the family firm and designs lovely gardens that grace Palm Beach estates. He has also studied and taught studio art at the college level and continues to pursue his interest in painting,

photography, printmaking, and glass. It makes sense that a designer's work would be enhanced by experience in fine arts and vice versa. But Blakely finds inspiration in an unusual place: construction-site dumpsters.

"I kept noticing splashes and accidental mark making on dumpsters that reminded me of some of the giants of abstract expressionism and minimalism," he told us. "I started documenting them and found a pattern emerging that forced me to examine my compositional preferences."

Jeff Blakely's photographs take dumpsters into the realm of abstract art.

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COURTESY JEFF BLAKELY, ASLA

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Blakely, also a fan of Lewis Baltz and other "New Topographics" photographers, decided to bring coherence to his found images by collecting them in book form. Initially he made small runs of handmade books on his Mac and an Epson printer in 2000 and 2001. Advances in desktop publishing, however, now let him publish volumes easily on demand. While Blakely has sold some of his artwork, he primarily works for creative edification, and any profit is an afterthought. He shares his books with other artists, family, and friends. Readers interested in his process may contact him at jeff@blakelyla.com.

Blakely says that all landscape architects should recognize that they are part of a continuing dialogue with the world around them and use that influence in their work. "Whether

By making books of his photographic explorations, Blakely adds an element of craft to a modern technology.

ter internal conversation should be encouraged to question what informs the design decisions we make and challenge our cultural, social, and other assumptions."

