

Steven Tupu

INTERVIEW: Tanja Gallenmüller

Steven Tupu is the founding principal of terrain, an award-winning landscape architecture office based in New York. Terrain works within an ecological context – each project, no matter its size, is part of a network of environmental and human connections. Born in New Zealand, Steven received his Bachelor Degree in Landscape Architecture with Honors from RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia in 1993. After his studies, he immigrated to the U.S. where he accrued over 10 years of experience before launching terrain in 2004.

1 CAREER STARTING POINT

Studying Landscape Architecture at RMIT University in Melbourne and being forever inspired by fellow students and professors.

2 INFLUENCED BY

My Elders, including my Samoan grandfather Tupu Folasa and my Kiwi grandmother Winsome Castle – both community leaders, makers and uniquely resourceful. Also, Carlo Scarpa, Vladimir Ossipoff, Ray Eames, Dieter Rams and Alexander McQueen.

3 WHY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE?

I found the perfect combination of natural systems, gardening, urban life and craft.

4 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Experience the site, listen, draw, collaborate.

5 WHAT'S YOUR SPECIAL FOCUS

Creating landscapes that connect people to the site and natural systems.

6 FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Take risks – don't miss opportunities, they don't come often. Build and foster a great team!

7 OBSTACLES FOR THE PROFESSION?

Absence of creative risk taking and innovation.

8 WHAT ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

Landscape Architects have the tools and expertise to make a difference – whether its through education, small-scale interventions or large-scale infrastructure strategies.

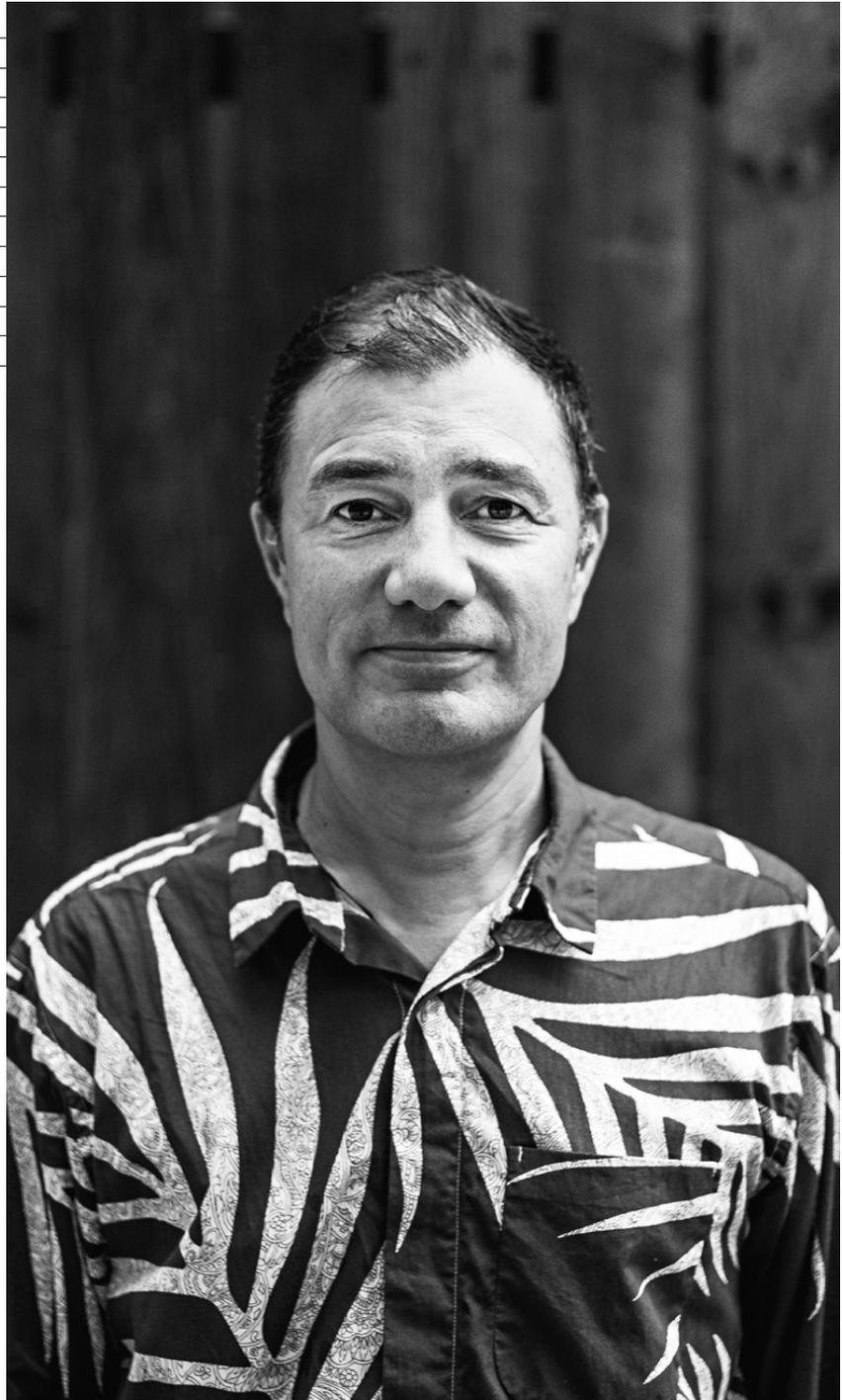


Photo: Joe Norman

Thomas Balsley

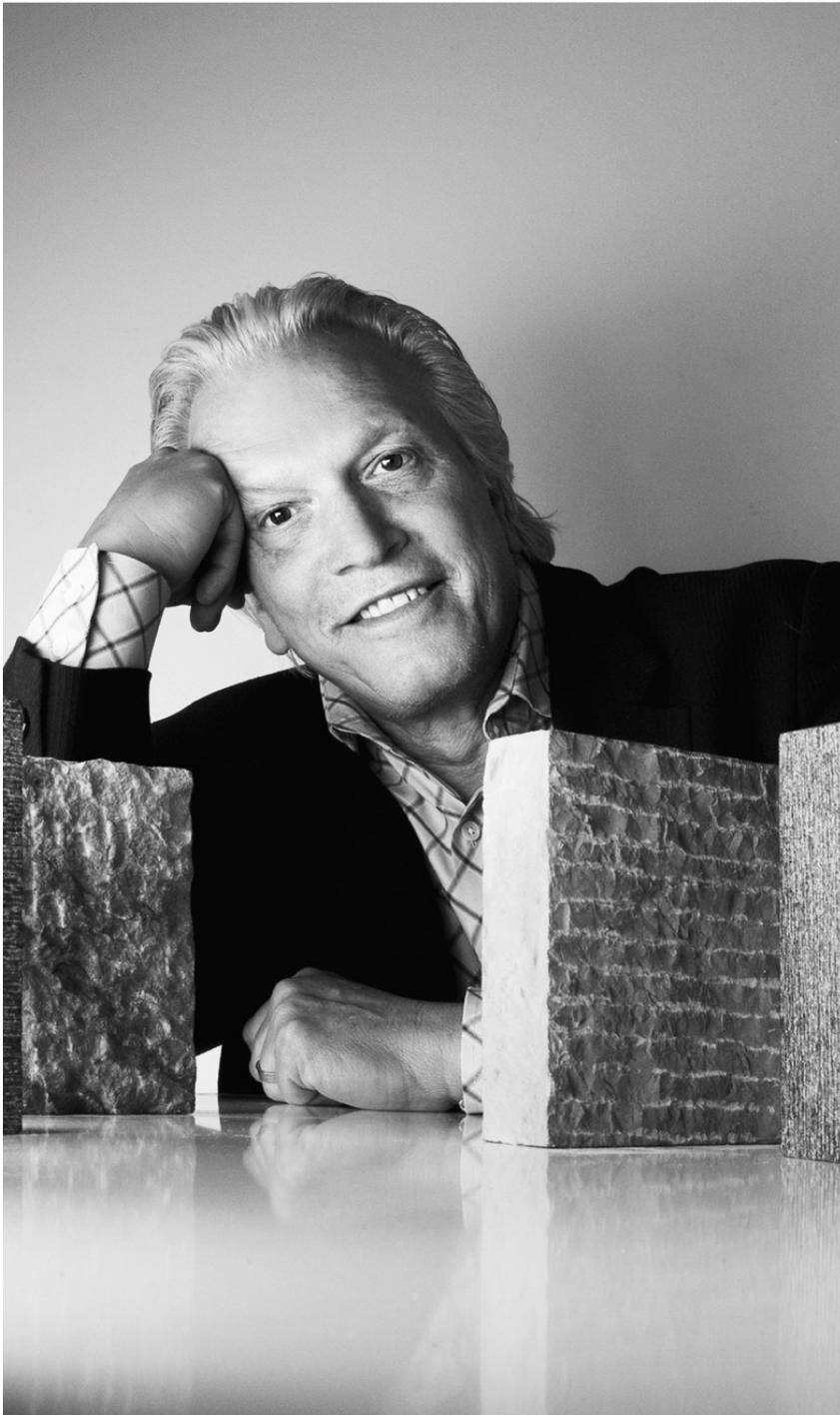


Photo: Courtesy of SWA/Balsley

Thomas Balsley, FASLA, leads his NYC SWA/Balsley studio's work in connecting people with place, each other, and the current culture of landscape urbanism. Tackling post-industrial urban issues since the 1970s, his pioneering, transformative, and provocative spaces, such as Hunter's Point Park, have sparked the public's imagination and underscored the significance of landscape architecture in the liveable resilient city. Tom is a recipient of the ASLA's National Design Medal. His work is documented in his monograph, *Thomas Balsley: Uncommon Ground*.

1 CAREER STARTING POINT

I started my practice during the recession years, spending more time understanding public design processes than finding projects or a design voice.

2 INFLUENCED BY

Paul Friedberg's gritty inner city works along with Carl Linn's environmental psychology.

3 WHY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE?

It resonated best with my naturalist background, artistic talent, and attraction to the city.

4 DESIGN PRINCIPLES?

Our design process begins with the art of listening as stakeholders throw ideas in the pot and cook up the "bouillabaisse".

5 WHAT'S YOUR SPECIAL FOCUS?

Improving the quality of the urban environment and living in the city.

6 FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Through trial and error, we have developed effective processes to synthesize the complex dynamics of public space.

7 OBSTACLES FOR THE PROFESSION

A bias in education towards natural systems and a distancing from the urban world leaves students ill-prepared for the challenges of our cities.

8 WHAT ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

We must leverage our expertise into a place of leadership in the multidisciplinary collaborations necessary to address climate change impacts.