I want to put the mystery back into the heart of garden design, where it needs to be. It’s what lures you in through the gate, keeps you moving through the landscape, and fills you with excitement along the way.

– James van Sweden, The Artful Garden

THE NEW AMERICAN GARDEN
The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden
Acknowledgements

This gallery guide was created to accompany the traveling photographic exhibition “The New American Garden: The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden,” which debuted at the National Building Museum on October 17, 2015. The exhibition was organized by The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) and co-curated by Charles A. Birnbaum, President & CEO, and Nord Wennerstrom, Director of Communications, in collaboration with G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Senior Curator at the National Building Museum.

The production of the exhibition would not have been possible without the help and support of OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS Principals Sheila Brady, Lisa Delplace, and, in particular, Eric Groft, and Marketing & Communications Coordinator Justin Maglione. We also wish to thank the site owners and administrators who graciously allowed us to document their properties, and the photographers who generously donated their time and energy.

At TCLF, Matthew Traucht gathered information about the sites, and Amanda Shull helped organize the exhibition and secured new photography. Many thanks are also owed to Russell Hart for making sure the exhibition’s photographs looked just right. Finally, we are grateful to the National Building Museum’s Executive Director Chase W. Rynd, Senior Curator G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Vice President for Exhibitions and Collections Cathy Frankel, and Registrar Nancy Bateman for their guidance in this collaboration.

This gallery guide was written by Nord Wennerstrom.

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THE NEW AMERICAN GARDEN
The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden

A GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL TRAVELING EXHIBITION
National Building Museum • Washington, DC
October 17, 2015 - May 1, 2016
Traveling thereafter
Wolfgang Oehme and James van Sweden revolutionized landscape architecture with the creation of the New American Garden, a type of garden characterized by large swaths of grasses and fields of perennials.

Their style celebrated the seasonal splendor of the American meadow while promoting its inherent ecological, sustainable, aesthetic, and ornamental values. According to van Sweden: “It is vigorous and audacious, and it vividly blends the natural and the cultivated.” [1]

Artistically, their style evolved from the Modernist tradition, and while they were not known for creating architecturally composed hardscapes—walkways, seating, fountains, and so on—such as those associated with landscape architects Dan Kiley, Lawrence Halprin, and M. Paul Friedberg, their early planting plans show a geometric rigidity that they would later abandon until, ultimately, plants became the dominant and signature feature of their work. As van Sweden said in a 2008 Washingtonian interview: “[Our designs] did not feature lawn but tapestry-like plantings and perennials and masses of the same plant—3,000 black-eyed Susans instead of six.” [2] Significantly, the landscapes were created to be interesting in all four seasons. “Grasses dry and turn a golden color, so they’re wonderful in the fall and winter,” van Sweden observed, and “dried petals … catch snow.” [3]

This gallery guide complements the traveling photographic exhibition The New American Garden: The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden, which was presented in collaboration with The National Building Museum and TCLF in celebration of the 25th anniversary of The New American Garden: The Landscape Architecture of Oehme and van Sweden, a widely acclaimed book that introduced the world to Oehme, van Sweden & Associates’ horticulturally exuberant designs. Many individuals worked with Oehme and van Sweden on the projects illustrated in the exhibition, most notably the three principals of the successor firm, OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS—Sheila Brady, Lisa Delplace and Eric Groff—who continue their legacy. This exhibition and gallery guide are meant to be introductions to the work of Oehme and van Sweden, not exhaustive accounts of their professional activities. In fact, there are numerous well-written and beautifully illustrated books about their work, many written by van Sweden individually and in collaboration with others. Along with Bold Romantic Gardens: The New World Landscape of Oehme and van Sweden (Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1990; revised and reprinted 1998, Spacemaker Press), they include Gardening with Water (Random House, 1997); Gardening with Nature (Random House, 1997); Architecture in the Garden with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2003); and, The Artful Garden: Creative Inspiration for Landscape Design with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2011). There is also Ornamental Grasses: Wolfgang Oehme and the New American Garden, by Stefan Leppert (Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2009). This guide complements In fact, there are numerous well-written and beautifully illustrated books about their work, many written by van Sweden individually and in collaboration with others. Along with Bold Romantic Gardens: The New World Landscape of Oehme and van Sweden (Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1990; revised and reprinted 1998, Spacemaker Press), they include Gardening with Water (Random House, 1997); Gardening with Nature (Random House, 1997); Architecture in the Garden with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2003); and, The Artful Garden: Creative Inspiration for Landscape Design with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2011). There is also Ornamental Grasses: Wolfgang Oehme and the New American Garden, by Stefan Leppert (Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2009). This guide complements in fact, there are numerous well-written and beautifully illustrated books about their work, many written by van Sweden individually and in collaboration with others. Along with Bold Romantic Gardens: The New World Landscape of Oehme and van Sweden (Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1990; revised and reprinted 1998, Spacemaker Press), they include Gardening with Water (Random House, 1997); Gardening with Nature (Random House, 1997); Architecture in the Garden with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2003); and, The Artful Garden: Creative Inspiration for Landscape Design with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2011). There is also Ornamental Grasses: Wolfgang Oehme and the New American Garden, by Stefan Leppert (Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2009). This guide complements in fact, there are numerous well-written and beautifully illustrated books about their work, many written by van Sweden individually and in collaboration with others. Along with Bold Romantic Gardens: The New World Landscape of Oehme and van Sweden (Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1990; revised and reprinted 1998, Spacemaker Press), they include Gardening with Water (Random House, 1997); Gardening with Nature (Random House, 1997); Architecture in the Garden with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2003); and, The Artful Garden: Creative Inspiration for Landscape Design with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2011). There is also Ornamental Grasses: Wolfgang Oehme and the New American Garden, by Stefan Leppert (Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2009). This guide complements in fact, there are numerous well-written and beautifully illustrated books about their work, many written by van Sweden individually and in collaboration with others. Along with Bold Romantic Gardens: The New World Landscape of Oehme and van Sweden (Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1990; revised and reprinted 1998, Spacemaker Press), they include Gardening with Water (Random House, 1997); Gardening with Nature (Random House, 1997); Architecture in the Garden with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2003); and, The Artful Garden: Creative Inspiration for Landscape Design with Tom Christopher (Random House, 2011). There is also Ornamental Grasses: Wolfgang Oehme and the New American Garden, by Stefan Leppert (Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2009). This guide complements
James van Sweden (1935 - 2013)

The son of a building contractor, van Sweden was raised in a large Dutch community in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He loved plants and gardening from an early age, and he honed his gardening and design skills in the small backyard of his family’s suburban bungalow. In 1960, at the age of 25, he earned a bachelor’s degree in architecture from the University of Michigan before studying landscape architecture at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. After three years, he returned to the United States and became a partner at Marcou, O’Leary and Associates. Then, in 1975, he founded the partnership with Wolfgang Oehme that would define his professional career and introduce the world to the New American Garden, an aesthetic that challenged conventional approaches to landscape design. Based in Washington, D.C., Oehme, van Sweden & Associates, now in its second generation (and known as OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS), grew to encompass architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design, and completed many high-profile public projects in the nation’s capital and beyond.

Van Sweden promoted the firm’s ideas through lectures and books, including *Bold Romantic Gardens* (1990, co-authored with Wolfgang Oehme and Susan Rademacher), *Gardening with Water* (1995), *Gardening with Nature* (1997), *Architecture in the Garden* (2003), and *The Artful Garden* (2011). He was a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and among his many awards was the ASLA Design Medal in 2010. Van Sweden was honored by the Garden Writers Association of America, the American Horticultural Society, and other organizations.

Wolfgang Oehme (1930 - 2011)

Born and raised in Karl-Marx-Stadt (formerly Chemnitz), Germany, Oehme trained as a gardener at the Ilge Nursery and worked in his teens and early twenties at the Bitterfeld Parks and Cemeteries Department. His mentors in Europe were Hans-Joachim Bauer and the well-known gardener and plantsman Karl Foerster. Oehme studied landscape architecture at the University of Berlin’s Advanced School of Garden Design, graduating in 1954. After working at a nursery near London and as a planner in Frankfurt, he moved to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1957, where he worked for the Baltimore County Department of Parks. Oehme practiced landscape architecture independently between 1966 and 1974, and in 1975 he partnered with James van Sweden.

Landslide

The exhibition is a project of TCLF’s Landslide® program, established in 2003, which raises awareness about threatened and at-risk works of landscape architecture. It includes an annual thematic compendium, which this year is focused on Oehme and van Sweden’s significant, influential and ephemeral legacy. Unfortunately, nine of the 21 pioneering projects in Bold Romantic Gardens are now gone, including van Sweden’s own Washington, D.C., townhouse garden, highlighting the innate ephemerality of landscape architecture and the essential role of stewardship.

Landslide includes hundreds of parks, gardens, horticultural features, environmental art, and working landscapes—collectively, places that embody our shared landscape heritage. From monitoring threats to chronicling ongoing care and management, Landslide draws immediate and lasting attention to these places and rallies public support for them. TCLF’s website provides deeper knowledge and critical links to advocates working to safeguard these priceless resources for future generations: www.tclf.org/landslide.

About this Guide

This gallery guide was created to complement the traveling exhibition The New American Garden: The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden, and is divided into four sections: Bold Romantic Gardens, featuring three residential commissions and one civic project that appeared in the 1990 book Bold Romantic Gardens; Residential Gardens; Civic and Commercial Projects, and Legacy and Stewardship, focusing on threatened and lost projects, and the need for informed stewardship decisions.
Following the publication of *Bold Romantic Gardens*, Oehme and van Sweden were named “America’s most interesting landscape practitioners” by the influential landscape designer John Brookes. London’s *Daily Telegraph* said the designers “have pulled the American garden by its roots, and their revolutionary approach is gaining an international audience.”

The Federal Reserve Board Garden (pp. 14-15), composed of native plantings in tapestry-like swaths that contrasted against the more rigid shapes of the building and hardscape, is considered their breakthrough project. One artist whose work they sited at the Federal Reserve, sculptor Lila Katzen, suggested in August 1981 that Alex and Carole Rosenberg engage the designers for their Water Mill, New York, property. The Rosenbergs did and the results created a sensation. Carole Rosenberg recalls that “newspapers and magazines began calling, [and] we realized we had started something new and special.” The Slifka Beach House in Sagaponack, New York, and the Vollmer garden in Baltimore, Maryland, are other seminal projects.
Rosenberg Residence

ONGOING SINCE 1981 • WATER MILL, NY

Situated on the shores of eastern Long Island’s Mecox Bay, this sequence of outdoor rooms in a 0.9-acre garden features plant materials that thrive in the site’s difficult growing conditions. According to owner Carole Rosenberg, “Our Water Mill house was set in a magnificent garden where design blends with the natural elements of water, sky, and reed. Sweeping masses of ornamental grasses, perennials, flowering bulbs, and rare clump bamboo create a different palette in each season.”

A matched pair of images illustrates part of the garden in winter and summer (opposite), while a third shows a Henry Moore sculpture in situ (above).

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
In those early days, the firm relied primarily on residential projects. Few commercial clients at the time were interested in the maintenance and special qualities of these fine gardens. The Federal Reserve was one of those rare exceptions.

–Sunny Scully Alsup

Federal Reserve Board Garden

ONGOING SINCE 1977 • WASHINGTON, DC

The first public iteration of the New American Garden came in 1977 with Oehme, van Sweden’s first major commission, a public garden atop an underground parking garage. The original garden by George Patton was largely destroyed during a severe winter. David Lilly, a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, championed the hiring of the two. As van Sweden later wrote in Gardening with Nature, “Little did [Lilly] know that our ‘office’ at the time was a drafting table in a bedroom of my townhouse and an aging Volkswagen Squareback stocked with mulch, tools, and potted shrubs.”[8]

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
Slifka Beach House

ONGOING SINCE 1986 • SAGAPONACK, NY

In *Bold Romantic Gardens*, van Sweden described this project as a “compact composition of distinct places and connections,” in which “we took a loose, unfussy approach, relying heavily on grasses and foliage plants.” The plantings vary in color and texture throughout the seasons and offer moments of contrast, such as the tall, purple ornamental onion flowers emerging from the low-growing, yellow-blooming tickseed. The project continues to evolve and be refined; in 1998 the original house was moved further from the ocean and replaced by a new beach house in 2004.

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
Wolfgang Oehme began this project in 1962, radically transforming a typical suburban landscape into the progenitor of the New American Garden. As van Sweden wrote in *Gardening with Nature*, “Removing two-thirds of an American suburban lawn was quite revolutionary in the early 1960s; however, before long the Vollmers asked to have the remaining lawn removed and planted with perennials.” Mrs. Vollmer called the garden “an environment of serenity with a fascinating variety of forms and textures,” adding, “it changed my life.”

**DESIGNERS**

Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
For more than three decades, Oehme and van Sweden collaborated on hundreds of residential commissions, developing working relationships and great friendships with clients who became some of their most ardent advocates. As David Ebershoff, van Sweden’s editor at Random House, said, “Jim understands that the art of garden design, like the art of storytelling, is about people—that there is no point in laying a path or seeding a meadow or writing a book if it is not going to touch the people who experience it.”

In *The Artful Garden*, van Sweden wrote, “I want to put the mystery back into the heart of garden design, where it needs to be. It’s what lures you in through the gate, keeps you moving through the landscape, and fills you with excitement along the way. The sense of mystery is what turns a mere display of plants, paths, and ornaments into an adventure.”

North Salem Residence, North Salem, NY, 2015

(photography by Frederick Charles)
North Salem Residence

ONGOING SINCE 1997 • NORTH SALEM, NY

The design of this 25-acre property located 40 miles northeast of New York City is carefully orchestrated to selectively focus and conceal/reveal views. The firm collaborated with architects Elizabeth Demetriades and Patrick Walker to site the house, and deployed locally quarried stone and dense plantings of grasses, perennials, and specimen trees and shrubs, to connect the modern house with its rural, upstate setting. Flowering dogwood trees, tall grasses, and perennials conceal hard edges and overlap stepping stone pathways extending into the landscape.

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden

Frederick Charles
2015
C-print
24 x 36 inches
Outside, scale is tricky because everything looks smaller. I think the most important element of garden design is getting the proportions right and building a garden that fits into its surroundings, in the sense of the materials you use.

—James van Sweden

Kendale Farm

ONGOING SINCE 1998 • CHANCE, VA

“A well-planned garden is not one but a sequence of experiences,” van Sweden wrote in The Artful Garden, in an essay that accompanied an image of this 2,500-acre family estate that fronts five miles of the Rappahannock River. “These experiences may take many forms: a spot where you are embraced by the scents of aromatic herbs, a seat that faces you toward a beautiful vista, a walk through a flowery meadow, the fountain whose trickling water music soothes you.”

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
Sky Meadow

ONGOING SINCE 1995 • PURCHASE, NY

“This wedding of house and land,” van Sweden wrote: “... is one of the happiest and most harmonious I have ever achieved.” The chief work on this 1920s stone and shingle house set amid nine acres included the creation of individual garden rooms off the kitchen, dining, and living rooms. “By associating indoor spaces with outdoor space of a related purpose and architectural style, I could practically erase the distinction between house and garden.” [16]

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
Boxwood Farm
ONGOING SINCE 1995 • BROOKVILLE, NY
This 20-acre estate features a Georgian Revival mansion designed in the 1920s by Julian Peabody of Peabody, Wilson & Brown, and grounds by the influential landscape architect Ellen Shipman. The project began in 1998 and included new plantings throughout the property, and the addition of a forecourt, terraces, a pond, and restoration of a formal garden. Understory planting of ornamental grasses, groundcovers, and perennials beneath canopy trees surrounding the site’s lawn facilitates the transition between the highly manicured garden and encompassing forest.

Richard Felber
undated
C-print
24 x 24 inches

Harwood Residence
ONGOING SINCE 1986 • HARWOOD, MD
To wed this house with its forested, waterfront setting on a peninsula surrounded by the West River and overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, four-season plantings and informal pathways, two of the firm’s signature design elements, were employed. Of the latter van Sweden wrote: “A skilled garden choreographer … [can] use a twist in a path to turn the visitor suddenly toward a view; the turn will slow the steps and cause visitors to take notice of their surroundings.”[17]

James van Sweden
1992
C-print
24 x 24 inches

Nantucket Residence
COMPLETED 2006 • NANTUCKET, MA
The challenging growing conditions at this 85-acre coastal estate on Nantucket—principally strong winds and salt spray—called for the use of adaptable species. The ecologically sensitive planting palette includes little bluestem, switchgrass, goldenrod, and pitch pine that link the main house and guesthouses to the surrounding environment. From the building perimeter, the design transitions from formal, ordered plantings and gathering spaces to informal, naturalized planted areas that blend into the native dune vegetation.

Richard Felber
2008
C-print
24 x 24 inches

Greenwich Residence
ONGOING SINCE 1992 • GREENWICH, CT
Most of this 25-acre property with a 19th-century farmhouse, set close to a road, is wooded. Working on the remaining five acres, to create some privacy, Oehme and van Sweden relocated the primary entrance so access is now through an entry court and garden. Terracing steepened the grading of the hillside behind the house, creating a series of outdoor rooms at multiple elevations making the house appear to be on a stage.

Richard Felber
undated
C-print
24 x 24 inches
Halcyon

ONGOING SINCE 2004 • EASTON, MD

“The greatest asset” of this 85-acre landscape along the shore of the Tred Avon River, van Sweden wrote, “was the expansive views across the water. When we began work, however, the site was otherwise uninspiring.” To create structure within the site, the firm used “massed perennials and grasses, statuesque, head-high species…to informally enclose…different areas.” The plantings were “visually permeable, allowing glimpses of the areas beyond, inviting exploration.”

DESIGNERS

Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
Kiawah Residence

COMPLETED 2004 • KIAWAH ISLAND, SC

Situated at the tip of a peninsula surrounded by tidal marshes, this eleven-acre estate is nestled among native oak, pine, and palmetto trees. The house’s location on a coastal barrier island floodplain required raising the building off the ground. To bridge this vertical separation, the firm designed 5,000 square feet of balconies, steps, terraces, pavilions, and porches. Raised planters and ground-level native plantings nestle the main house, guesthouse, and garage into the surroundings.

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
James van Sweden
Sorg Residence

COMPLETED 2006 • SHERWOOD, MD

Van Sweden and his friends and colleagues Suman Sorg and Marilyn Melkonian purchased contiguous property on Maryland’s Eastern Shore upon which Sorg and van Sweden built individual weekend retreat homes (the third site is an undeveloped meadow between the two houses). Sorg, an architect, designed houses for van Sweden and herself, while van Sweden designed their landscapes. Van Sweden sited the homes inland from the bay rather than on the edge, yielding each commanding views across the landscape towards the water.

DESIGNERS

Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
Landscape architecture, van Sweden said in an interview with Washingtonian magazine, is “not just about plants.” It’s also about lighting, paving, drainage, grading, and much more. Here he was speaking specifically about his work on the World War II Memorial commission, but the complexities of creating public parks on landfills, gardens, and plazas over parking garages and in other challenging environments are often little understood. Moreover, unlike residential commissions, civic and commercial projects often have numerous constituencies with distinct agendas requiring the designer to synthesize aesthetic, programmatic, and didactic concerns.

Over the decades the firm has worked on commercial shopping centers, public parks, memorials, embassies, mixed-use developments, and other projects. Some are completely new designs, while others need to be sympathetic with an existing design or must honor a larger context (such as the National Mall).

Civic and Commercial Projects

Rockefeller Park, New York, NY, 2015

(photo by Mick Hales)
Rockefeller Park
COMPLETED 1992 • BATTERY PARK CITY, NEW YORK, NY

Transforming a flat, sandy patch of landfill in the Hudson River, this waterfront parcel is one of 26 that constitute lower Manhattan’s Battery Park City. Van Sweden, in Gardening with Nature, wrote, “The first design challenge was to shape the land for a softer, more natural appearance.” One portion was to be a “subtle reminder of the beach environment that flourished on the site centuries ago,” while the “upland reaches” feature plantings native to the Hudson River Valley.[20]

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
This commission was of considerable import to both the firm and the client. Barbara Whitney Carr, retired president of the Chicago Botanic Garden, recalled, “The design of Evening Island and the Gardens of the Great Basin were at the very heart of the garden both literally and symbolically.” Moreover, “the view [to be created] … was to be an iconic vista.” [21]

After van Sweden’s presentation for the project, in which he said he was inspired by the colors and composition of the painting Nature Abhors a Vacuum by Helen Frankenthaler, an artist beloved by the project’s lead patron, Pleasant Rowland, Carr said, “We knew this man understood our vision, knew he could create something we could only dream of, and that NOTHING could make him happier than to do it for us.” She added: “Now when Chicago Botanic Garden visitors look out toward Evening Island, they see a classic New American Garden landscape.” [22]
Americana Manhasset

ONGOING SINCE 1985 • MANHASSET, NY

This luxury shopping complex on Long Island originally opened in 1956. Architect Peter Marino was brought in to update the buildings beginning in 1980, and in 1986, the center’s owner, Frank Castagna, engaged Oehme, van Sweden & Associates to develop the landscape. The plant palettes, which are updated seasonally, vary in composition depending upon their location within the complex, and include meadow-like sweeps of ornamental grasses, perennials, trees, and shrubs. The landscape architects also designed seating, lighting, fountains, a pergola, and sited public art.

DESIGNERS

Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
Townhomes on Capitol Hill

**COMPLETED 1998 • WASHINGTON, DC**

The mixed-income housing community developed by Telesis was designed to blend with the surrounding Capitol Hill neighborhood. The 134 townhouse complex, designed by architect Amy Weinstein and completed in 1998, replaced a public housing project open from 1941 to 1988. Oehme, van Sweden & Associates designed the brick sidewalks and alternated canopy trees underplanted with groundcovers with replicas of Washington's historic streetlights. Front yards were planted with small flowering trees and shrubs, perennials, ornamental grasses, and other plants.

James van Sweden  
2000  
C-print  
24 x 36 inches

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German American Friendship Garden

**ONGOING SINCE 1983 • WASHINGTON, DC**

Designed pro bono by Wolfgang Oehme in 1983, this small garden occupies a prominent place on the National Mall. Symbolizing the bond between Germany and the U.S., the plant palette comprises species native to each of the two countries. In 1988 President Ronald Reagan and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl formally dedicated the garden, whose design contrasts highly textured, diverse plantings with an orderly, geometric form. The project was restored in 2014.

James van Sweden  
1991 / C-print / 24 x 24 inches

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National World War II Memorial

**ONGOING SINCE 1997 • WASHINGTON, DC**

This 7.4-acre memorial, which opened to the public in 2004, is centrally located on the National Mall. It was designed by Friedrich St. Florian in association with Leo A Daly and George Hartman, along with sculptor Raymond Kaskey and Oehme, van Sweden. The project, van Sweden said, “was the most difficult thing I’ve ever done.” Along with working on the lighting, paving, drainage, and grading, the firm used a palette of white-flowering plants—symbolizing the spirit of remembrance—that expands outward from the memorial’s perimeter, softening its edge and integrating the site into surrounding parkland.

Roger Foley  
2006 / C-print / 24 x 24 inches

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Washington, DC Region

A substantial body of civic, commercial and private residential projects spanning four decades of practice by Oehme, van Sweden can be found in the mid-Atlantic area, principally because the firm is located in the nation’s capital.
Francis Scott Key Memorial

COMPLETED 1993 • WASHINGTON, DC

This one-acre National Park Service site by the C&O Canal honors the author of the words to “The Star Spangled Banner.” In Gardening with Nature, van Sweden wrote, “Wolfgang and I seldom encounter projects with so many competing influences. We had to satisfy a design program that called for dramatic combinations of landscaping, architecture, and sculpture, while respecting the site’s history, natural features, and location.” Their design includes a circular, wisteria-covered arbor and a sloped meadow with 7,000 perennials, 32,000 bulbs, flowering trees, and shrubs.

DESIGNERS
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden

Barrett Doherty
2015
C-print
36 x 24 inches
Forest Park – Pagoda Circle

COMPLETED 2004 • ST. LOUIS, MO

The Pagoda Circle, located within the 1,371-acre Forest Park, five miles west of downtown St. Louis, is the site of the park’s original bandstand built in 1876 and replaced in 1925. Pedestrian bridges cross a new waterway that winds around the bandstand and cascades over concrete weirs. The renewal of this area by Oehme, van Sweden & Associates was the centerpiece of their larger involvement with the park, included 27,000 plants, along with a comprehensive program of invasive plant management.

DESIGNERS
George E. Kessler
Henry Wright
Julius Pitzman
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden

Greg Barth
2015
C-print
36 x 24 inches
This nine-acre property is occupied by twenty themed gardens, each approximately 1,800 square feet, created by renowned landscape architects and artists, a concept inspired by the International Garden Festival in Chaumont-sur-Loire, France. According to Cornerstone, the Oehme, van Sweden "garden’s ground plane, a plant tapestry, combines texture and form, color and scent, while a canopy of olive trees adds a third dimension that changes in color and opacity as the seasons advance."

**DESIGNERS**

Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
David Lilly Plaza

**COMPLETED 1986 • MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

Installed atop a parking garage and enclosed by buildings, this square (200 x 200 foot) courtyard plaza is heavily used by students of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. Named for David M. Lilly, the former Federal Reserve Board Governor who helped secure the firm’s Federal Reserve Board Garden commission, the garden was planted with a cold-hardy, drought-tolerant palette that contrasts with the traditional lawns found in nearby courtyards.

**DESIGNERS**

Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden

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**Wolfgang Oehme**

1989
C-print
36 x 24 inches
The overwhelmingly positive response to the firm’s work at the Chicago Botanic Garden, led by van Sweden with Sheila Brady, resulted in two commissions at this New York City site: Substantially reworking the Native Plant Garden and helping to update the Azalea Garden. Sadly, at this point van Sweden’s health was severely compromised and he was unable to participate. It marks a significant moment in the firm’s transition to a new firm, OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS, and a new generation of leaders.

The 3.5-acre Native Plant Garden was designed by Sheila Brady at OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS. The Azalea Garden is a collaboration: OLIN is responsible for the master plan; staff from the New York Botanical Garden and the Royal Horticultural Society designed the azaleas and rhododendrons; Towers | Golde designed the pathways and overlooks; and OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS designed the herbaceous perennial plantings.

New York Botanical Garden
The Native Plant Garden & Azalea Garden

COMPLETED 2011 • BRONX, NY

The overwhelmingly positive response to the firm’s work at the Chicago Botanic Garden, led by van Sweden with Sheila Brady, resulted in two commissions at this New York City site: Substantially reworking the Native Plant Garden and helping to update the Azalea Garden. Sadly, at this point van Sweden’s health was severely compromised and he was unable to participate. It marks a significant moment in the firm’s transition to a new firm, OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS, and a new generation of leaders.

The 3.5-acre Native Plant Garden was designed by Sheila Brady at OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS. The Azalea Garden is a collaboration: OLIN is responsible for the master plan; staff from the New York Botanical Garden and the Royal Horticultural Society designed the azaleas and rhododendrons; Towers | Golde designed the pathways and overlooks; and OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS designed the herbaceous perennial plantings.
During their lifetimes, Wolfgang Oehme and James van Sweden developed ongoing working relationships and great friendships with clients. They and Oehme, van Sweden & Associates, Inc. (now OEHME, VAN SWEDEN | OvS) created more than 1,000 projects since the firm’s founding in 1975. They also wrote extensively, so we have a deep understanding of their design and stewardship philosophies, inspirations, and values.

Along with illuminating their design legacy, this exhibition illustrates that great gardens and well-maintained public works endure because of sound stewardship, whether an ongoing collaboration between designers and their patron/stewards or other reasons. The exhibition also reveals the tenuousness of this unique built legacy—especially the private commissions. As Oehme and van Sweden saw in their lifetimes, residential gardens can be wiped away with changes of property ownership, while carefully conceived public commissions can be lost through inadequate maintenance or a desire for something new. Not all landscapes or buildings will last, but the decision-making about their futures is more thorough when their creators’ design intent and body of work are understood and valued.

Legacy and Stewardship

Ferry Cove, Sherwood, MD, 2003

(photo by Richard Felber)
Ferry Cove
COMPLETED 2012 • SHERWOOD, MD

This three-acre bayside property, with a modern house designed by architect Suman Sorg, was van Sweden's weekend residence. In the southwest corner of the site along a road, he created a pond, planted with wild rice, cannas, water lilies, and bulrush, abutted by hardy perennials and grasses. To the southeast, a dense grove of native American holly, sweetgums, catalpas, and southern magnolias provides a visual screen from passersby. To the north, beyond a pool, he experimented with native plantings. The low-maintenance landscape changed throughout the seasons, until in February, when the grasses would be cut down, and the cycle would begin again.

In 2013 the property was sold. Recent images indicate that major, character-defining elements of van Sweden's design are gone.

Nef Residence
COMPLETED 1996 • WASHINGTON, DC

For art patrons John and Evelyn Nef, the firm created a showcase for Orphée, a 10-by-17-foot mosaic, which was a wedding gift from artist Marc Chagall to the Nefs. The project, which commenced in 1977, was refined several times by van Sweden, who also designed the paving and furniture. The goal was to provide a lush backdrop without detracting from the mosaic's grandeur. In 2009, after Evelyn Nef's death, the mosaic was donated to the National Gallery of Art and is now in the gallery's Sculpture Garden. While the mosaic has been preserved, the garden for which it was created, and with which it had a unique relationship, is gone.
Pershing Park
COMPLETED 1988 • WASHINGTON, DC

This 1.8-acre park, named for World War I General John J. Pershing, was commissioned by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, designed by landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg, and opened in 1981. Oehme, van Sweden did the planting design. The focal point is a shallow pool, which the firm transformed into a water garden. The park has suffered from years of diminished maintenance, sidewalks and other hardscape elements are damaged, the fountain is dry and now a proposal to locate a national World War I Memorial on the site could lead to the park’s demolition.

DESIGNERS
M. Paul Friedberg
Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Wolfgang Oehme
James van Sweden
The Cultural Landscape Foundation

About the Artists

Andre Baranowski (Polish-American, b. 1956)
New York-based Baranowski is best known for his still life, food, landscape, and travel photographs. His work has been featured in Savoir, Better Homes and Gardens, Garden Design, Country Gardens, and annual publications in the photography industry.

Greg Barth (American, b. 1966)
Barth earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in photography from the University of Central Missouri in 1989. After working in a commercial studio, he began a quest to discover why he photographed. He is drawn to the calm of landscape and architecture, which are his natural subjects, and his work has been featured in many art and photography shows. He lives with his wife and two children in Wildwood, Missouri.

Petrá Barth (German, b. 1964)
Born in Germany, Barth studied fashion design in Milan and worked for many years in the fashion industry before studying photography at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, D.C. She is interested in communities and focuses on human, social and environmental issues. Her photography is included in the Archive of Documentary Arts in the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University.

Marion Brenner (American, b. 1944)
Brenner’s garden and landscape photographs have appeared in books and magazines, including Landscape Architecture, Martha Stewart Living, the New York Times, and Garden Design. In 1992, she collaborated on a series of cards featuring plants used to treat cancer. In 2002, she was the subject of a one-person show, entitled The Guilde Life of Plants and People, at the Bentley Museum Art Museum. Her photographs are in the permanent collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Berkley Art Museum.

Frederick Charles (American, b. 1957)
Charles is a New York-based architectural photographer. His work has been exhibited in Landscape Architecture, METE, Dwell, and LIFE magazines, among other publications. Charles has documented award-winning New York historic preservation projects such as the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum and the New York Botanical Garden’s Emil A. Haüp Conservatory.

Barrett Doherty (American, b. 1973)
After earning a B.A. in English from the University of Virginia, Doherty turned to photography to document his travels and experience while living in Tokyo, Japan. He worked as a professional photographer in New York City for a number of years before receiving an M.L.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. He has worked with Gap Japan, James Corner Field Operations, Garden + Landscape, and Friends of the High Line, his photographs have been featured in numerous publications and have won national awards.

Francis Dzikowski (American, b. 1966)
Dzikowski attended the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University’s foundation program in architecture and studied photography at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He spent a decade living and traveling abroad, photographing historic preservation projects and archaeological excavations. He taught photography at the American University in Cairo while photographing Egypt’s Valley of the Kings for the Theban Mapping Project. Dzikowski currently lives in Brooklyn, New York, working as an architectural and interior photographers.

Richard Felber (American)
Felber, who passed away in 2015, was a lifelong New Yorker. He began his photography career as a commercial photographer of still lifes and interiors, later finding inspiration to pursue garden and landscape photography. His work has been featured in magazines and books, including Martha Stewart Living, House & Garden, Architectural Digest, Beautiful American Rose Garden, and Potted Gardens.

Roger Foley (American, b. 1951)
Foley earned a B.A. in art from the University of Notre Dame with a concentration in photography. He published his first solo book, A Clearing in the Woods: Creating Contemporary Gardens in 2009, and his work has won top honors from the Garden Writers Association. His photography can be found in hundreds of books, and his commercial work has been featured in magazines, newspapers, and websites. He conducts workshops and frequently lectures for various gardening groups, including the American Horticultural Society, and the Garden Club of America.

Sally Gall (American, b. 1956)
In addition to her fine art career, Gall, who is based in New York City, teaches photography and works as an editorial, landscape, and lifestyle photographer. Her work is part of several museum and corporate collections and she has been awarded prestigious fellowships, including two MacDowell Colony Fellowships and a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Residency. Her work is published in two books of photographs, The Water’s Edge and Subterra, and has been included in numerous shows.

Mick Hales (British-American, b. 1951)
Hales was born in England and grew up in Pakistan and Nigeria. He studied photography at the London College of Printing and moved to New York City in 1982. Hales’ work has appeared in some 37 books and in more than 270 magazine articles. His editorial range includes interiors, gardens, travel, architecture, food, and sculpture.

Amy Lamb (American, b. 1944)
Lamb grew up in Birmingham, Michigan. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a Ph.D. in biology and a passion for the scientific beauty of the natural world. Lamb creates close-up images of flowers and fruit to create a dialogue between the viewer and the natural world.

Nate Mathematics (American, b. 1982)
Mathews received his M.F.A. in photography from Columbia University College Chicago in 2008 and is currently an assistant professor of photography at Northern Illinois University. His work has been shown at the Rockford Art Museum in Rockford, Illinois, in the exhibition Four by Five at the New Orleans Photo Alliance, and at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center in Eustis, Illinois. He recently curated The Space Between, a photographic exhibition at the Fine Art Center Gallery at Northeastern Illinois University.

Sara Cedar Miller (American, b. 1944)
As the official photographer and historian of Central Park for the Central Park Conservancy, Miller’s work has been dedicated to conserving the natural environment of both Manhattan’s East End and Central Park. She received an M.F.A. in photography from the Pratt Institute. She has written and photographed three award-winning books on Central Park and its enduring legacy.

John Neubauer (American)
Born in New York City, Neubauer, a self-taught photographer, was one of the many photojournalists to contribute to the Environmental Protection Agency’s documentary project in the early 1970s. His work has been published widely.

Frank Oudeman (Netherlands, b. 1966)
Brooklyn-based Oudeman grew up in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and earned his M.F.A. in photography at Bard College’s Graduate School of the Arts. He is known for his exquisitely calibrated photographs of interiors and exteriors. His work has been featured in the New York Times, Interior Design, Dwell, New York Magazine, Elle Decor, and Architectural Digest.

Brian K. Thomson (American, b. 1963)
After co-founding a successful internet-based business travel technology company and founding the Ethan James Foundation, Thomson has returned to his original passion for photography. He donates much of his time to documenting historic sites and structures for such programs as the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Landscapes Survey.

Volkmar K. Wentzel (German-American, 1915-2006)
Born in Dresden, Germany, Wentzel immigrated to the United States with his family after World War II. He went to work for National Geographic in 1937, starting a long and illustrious career. His notable assignments included early photographs of Nepal and Africa, as well as a two-year photographic survey of India. A longtime resident of Washington, D.C., his images of the city were published as a book, Washington by Night, in 1993.
CITATIONS:
3. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
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SITE PLANS:
27. David Lilly-Pearce (p.40), Federal Reserve Board Garden (p.15), Fong Cee (p.26), Forest Park—Pepagoda China (p.10), Frank F. Kurti Memorial (p.49), Garden at Prospect (p.53), Holpin (p.31), Rockefeller (p.31), Shuster (p.32), Sutle Residence (p.61), New York Botanical Garden—The Native Plant Garden and Akeke Garden (p.57), North Saline Residence (p.29), Painting Park (p.62), Rockefeller Park—Battery Park City (p.96), Muehle (p.26), Silo Beach House (p.18), Song Residence (p.30).

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Founded in 1899, ASLA is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing more than 35,000 members in 44 professional chapters and 64 student chapters. The Society’s mission is to lead, to educate and to participate in the careful stewardship, wise planning and artful design of our cultural and natural environments. www.asla.org

About Landscape Architecture Magazine
Founded in 1910, Landscape Architecture magazine is the publication of the American Society of Landscape Architects. It is published each month for more than 22,500 subscribers and newstand sales. The mission of the magazine is to elevate the practice of landscape architecture by providing timely information on built landscapes and on new techniques for ecologically sensitive planning and design. www.landscapearchitecturemagazine.org

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Support for the production of this gallery goes via web possible through a Kochdorf campaign.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF)
TCLF provides the tools to see, understand and value landscape architecture and its practitioners in the way many people have learned to do with buildings and their designers. Through its Web site, lectures, outreach and publishing, TCLF broadens the support and understanding for cultural landscapes nationwide to help safeguard our priceless heritage for future generations. www.tclf.org

Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
2007 • WASHINGTON, DC

(Seated) James van Sweden; (standing, from left) Verena James-Suhr, Eric Groff, Lisa Delprato, Charles Turner, Sheila Brady, and Wolfgang Oehme (Photo by Roger Foley)