

# Richard Weller, Landscape Architecture

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*Richard Weller*

Richard J. Weller, an emeritus professor of landscape architecture in the Weitzman School of Architecture, died on May 15 in Perth, Australia. He was 61.

In 1986, Mr. Weller earned a bachelor of landscape architecture from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. Before coming to Penn, Mr. Weller was the Winthrop Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Western Australia, where he also directed the Australian Urban Design Research Centre (AUDRC). In 2013, he joined Penn's faculty as chair of the department of landscape architecture in the Weitzman School, a position he held through 2022. While at Penn, in 2019 he co-founded, with Weitzman School Dean Fritz Steiner, the McHarg Center for Urbanism and Ecology. He was also the founding creative director of the interdisciplinary journal of landscape architecture *LA+*.

In four decades of architectural practice, including as co-director of the design firm Room 4.1.3 and director of the Australian Urban Design Research Center, Mr. Weller worked as a scholar and a consultant, specializing in the formative stages of projects ranging from gardens to cities. His work was exhibited internationally, including at the Venice Architecture Biennale; MAXXI; and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. His design projects included the master plan for the Perth foreshore; the master plan and landscape design for the National Museum of Australia, Canberra; and the Docklands in Melbourne. Among his many initiatives to bridge the academy and the profession, he helped write the Landscape Architecture Foundation's "New Landscape Declaration" (2016) and helped to design the Green New Deal Superstudio (2020-2021); in 2023, his work was the subject of retrospective exhibition at the Melbourne School of Design entitled *The Landscape Architecture of Richard Weller*. In 2017 and 2018, Mr. Weller was named by DesignIntelligence as one of the "25 most-admired educators" in the U.S. design industry. In 2024, he received the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) President's Award, recognizing his lifetime of achievement in landscape architecture.

Mr. Weller wrote or edited nine books and authored more than 150 academic papers, book chapters, and articles. He co-edited *Transects* (2014, with Megan Talarowski), a history of the department of landscape architecture at Penn, and *Design with Nature Now* (with Fritz Steiner, Karen M'Closkey, and Billy Fleming), a global survey of advanced ecological design projects and essays published in 2019. His books also included *Boomtown 2050: Scenarios for a Rapidly Growing City* (2005), *Beautiful China: Reflections on Landscape Architecture in Contemporary China* (2021, with Tatum Hands), and *Made in Australia: The Future of Australian Cities* (2013, with Julian Bolleter). In recent years, his research focused on global flashpoints between biodiversity and urban growth.

"Richard was as bold, witty, and beautiful as his prose and drawings," said Dean Steiner. "In grief, I find hope and joy that many others will discover Richard as I did: through what he wrote and drew and painted and designed."

The Weitzman School will hold a tribute to Mr. Weller on September 12, 2025. [Click here \(https://www.design.upenn.edu/post/remembering-richard-weller-1963-2025\)](https://www.design.upenn.edu/post/remembering-richard-weller-1963-2025) for more information and to read reminiscences of Mr. Weller.