

79 2012

Small Scale Interventions

SPAIN INSTALLATIONS IN THE CAP DE CREUS NATURAL PARK • **DUTCH WATERLINE** REVEALING HISTORICAL LAYERS • **BELGIAN COAST** WILLOW STRUCTURES • **MEXICO** EPHEMERAL LANDSCAPES • **EASTERN NEW YORK STATE** STONE RIVER • **CHINA** TRANSFORMING A WORKING LANDSCAPE • **CHILE** PANORAMA OF THE COAST • **NORWAY** FOREST STAIR • **FRANCE** PLACES FOR DISCOVERY IN THE ARCAÇON BAY • **NORWAY** SHELTERED TREES IN GJØVIK • **ENGLAND** A BLAZE OF LIGHT • **FRANCE** ROAD WITH A VIEW ALONG THE ARDECHE • **SPECIAL LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS**



Sharp as a Knife

The Dutch Waterline, a historic defence system, is nowadays a cultural heritage site which has been developed as an important recreational area. A series of interventions add a contemporary layer to the historic defence features.



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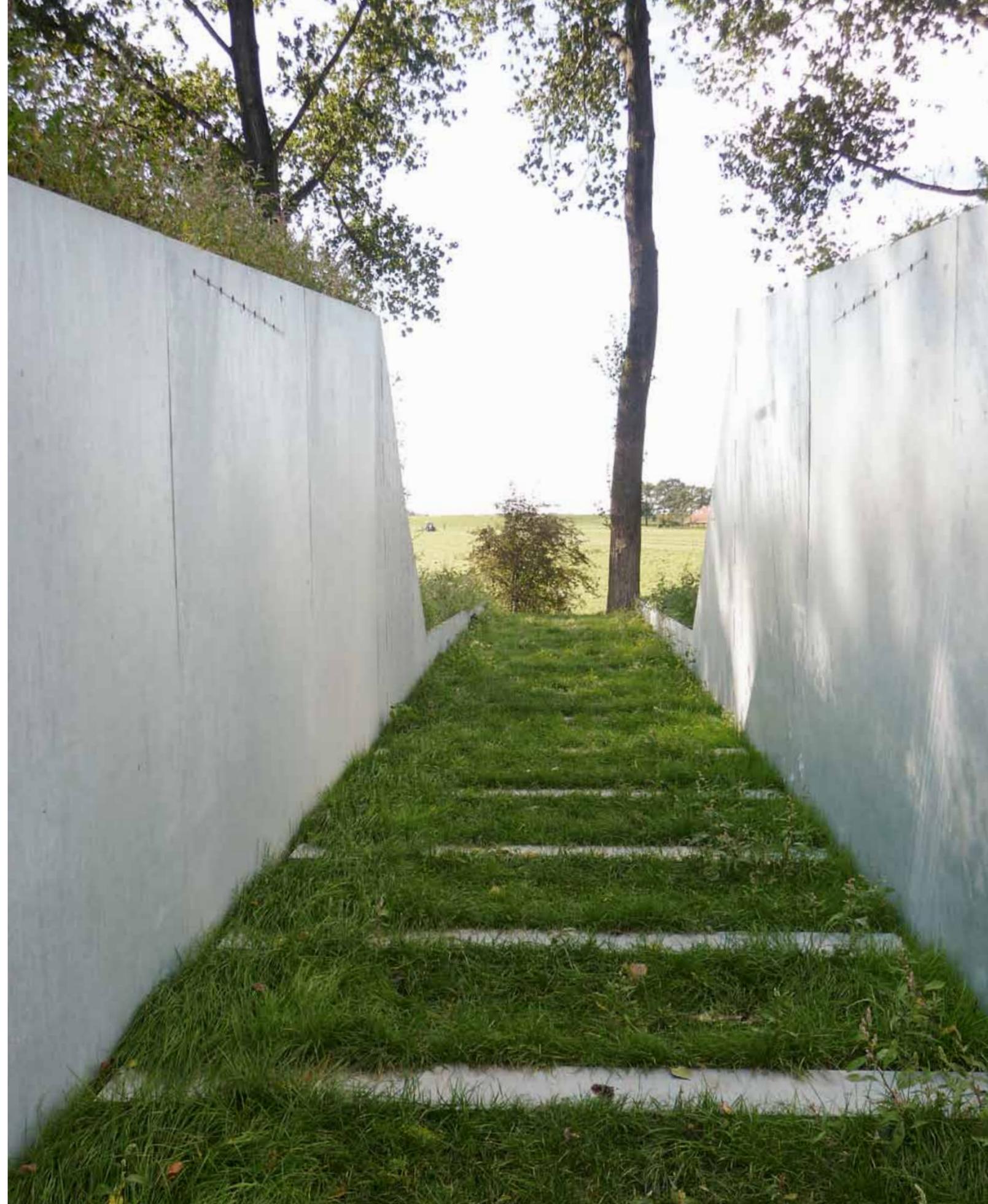
Sometimes, a landscape intervention can be almost the same thing as taking a single photograph that explains an entire situation. Contemporary signs in the landscape contribute to the transformation of traditional, rural landscapes into today's urbanized, post-productive landscapes. These signs are related to recreational use of historic landscapes like the Dutch Waterline – *De Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie* – a former defence system.

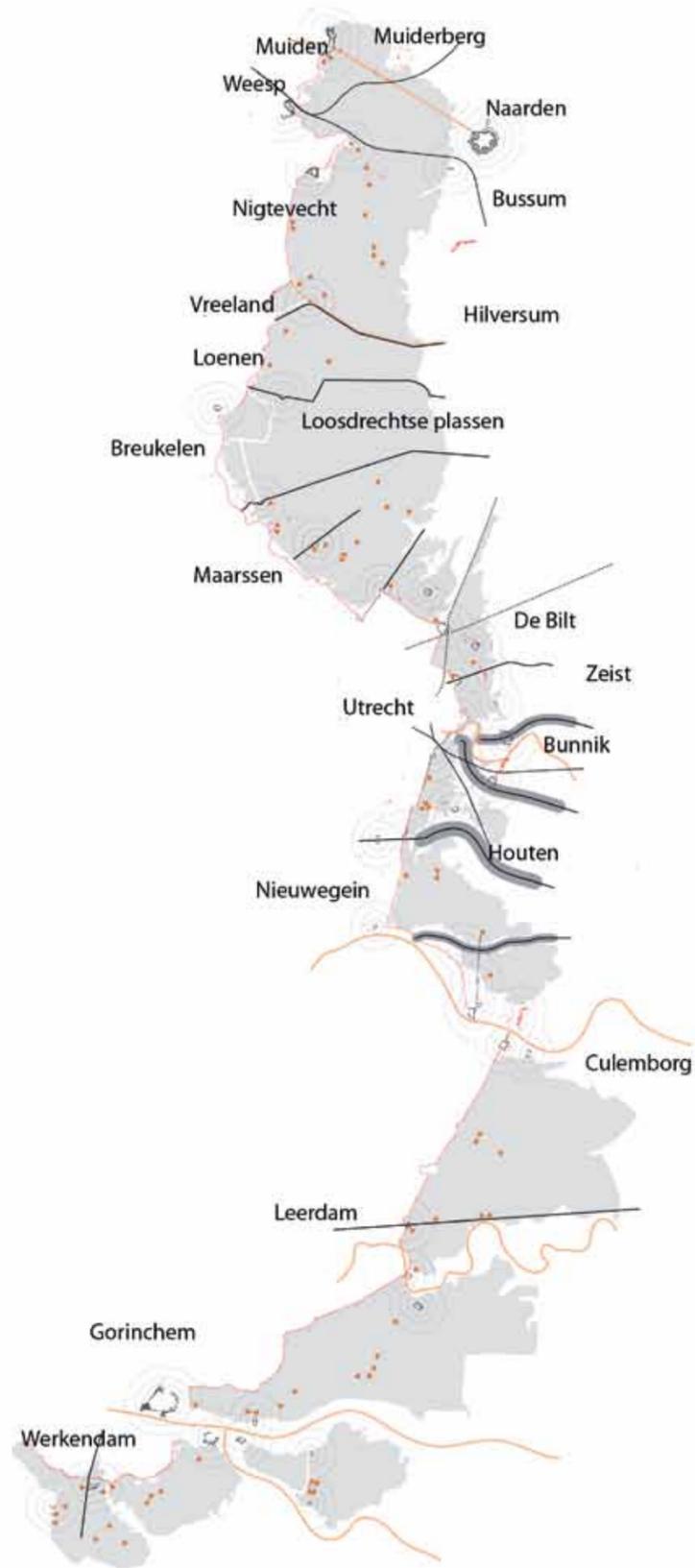
Small interventions contribute to recognizable and readable landscapes that reveal history rather than function simply as design elements or reconstituted elements.

Dutch Waterline

The New Dutch Waterline was constructed in the 19th century to defend “Fortress Holland”, including Utrecht, against enemies from the east. The Main Defence Line of the Dutch Waterline is about 85 kilometres in length and runs through three different types of landscape. The structure was designed to create a resistance zone, taking advantage of the fact that the Netherlands is close to sea level and can be inundated. The Line, which had additions in the 20th century, contains intensively and extensively defended zones. In its totality, it forms a complex system of elements. Spread along it are a sequence of citadels, a great many smaller objects such as sluices and other water-scientific works, and later-added bunkers. The Main Defence Line is special: Hidden and tucked away, in its purest form the Line

Interventions along the Main Defence Line such as cuts, which allow a view of the landscape, give visitors an understanding of the structure. The cut along the Shielded Community Road, designed by OKRA and BunkerQ, demonstrates the original heights and proportions of the defence wall.





is a secret boundary between wet and dry areas and therefore it is closely connected to the underlying landscape.

Today, the military structure is a relic in the landscape, but because of its cultural heritage it is interesting for recreational purposes. A wide range of recreational uses has developed for it. This recreational use makes sporadic contributions to the preservation of its elements, with the forts in particular benefitting. However, the structure and integrity of the Line as a whole is slowly being lost. That prompted a call for an approach that covered all elements. As part of an overall strategy, OKRA developed an “r-economic scenario” consisting of interventions on the ground, and a virtual layer using modern technology – a combination of military and computer-gaming – to create a variant of night-vision goggles.

Recreational route on the Defence Line

OKRA’s studies of the Main Defence Line, with the goal of creating a recreational route, aim to link the individual elements to the larger system. An intricate recreational network runs through the Line and its landscape, one mainly used for day recreation, outflow from the city, and longer vacation stays.

The most important issue to be tackled was continuity within the characteristic Line zones. The Dutch Waterline’s three types of landscapes offer different opportunities for envisioning the Main Defence Line. The extensive water in the northern area (the Vecht area and the lake area)

The New Dutch Waterline was constructed in the 19th century, providing the Main Defence Line in the west and inundation fields in the east. OKRA developed a vision for a legible landscape by crosscuts at strategic locations.

offers an opportunity to see the Waterline in a state of inundation. In the central area around Utrecht, the Main Defence Line can become part of a recreational landscape, and a large number of visitors can reach the Main Defence Line in a short period of time. South of Utrecht, a relatively continuous line offers the opportunity to create a continuous route, linking the old fortresses to each other.

Cuts in the Defence Dikes

Especially in the river area, it’s possible to understand the relationship between the Main Defence Line and its intensification in the form of access, citadels, and bunkers.

To illustrate the different situations, OKRA has proposed a sequence of “cuts” through the defence dikes. Unlike river-protection dikes, defence dikes can be cut and offer the visitor the opportunity to see behind the scenes. Historically, the access defended by Fort De Gagel was one of these places, with a cut to control the inundation process. The cut reveals the hidden story. A long and narrow water table is designed, cutting through the dike, accommodating a thin film of water. With a cut edge on both sides, an increased water level is represented. The table cuts the access asymmetrically, directing the view of the visitor to the south and openness. It connects to an existing path and ends with a vantage from which one has a beautiful view of the scattered series of bunkers in the field.

At the Plofsluis, one of the most appealing elements of the Waterline, OKRA proposes a cut

The New Dutch Waterline has been transformed from a military landscape into a recreational landscape. This has been encouraged by a bicycle route along the Main Defence Line and access to the water at the Shielded Community Road.



NEW DUTCH WATERLINE – SCENARIO “R-ECRONOMIC” LANDSCAPE, 2001
 MAIN DEFENCE LINE, 2006
 Location: Provinces Utrecht, Zuid Holland, Noord Brabant
 Client: Projectbureau Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie
 Vision: OKRA

The Shielded Community Road reconnects the fortresses Werk aan de Korte Uitweg, Lunet aan de Snel and Fort Honswijk. The design team added contemporary elements like stairs.



line through the dikes, passing through the polder and ending in the canal. By removing vegetation in the west, the contrast between closed inland and open foreland is strengthened. The path leads over the dikes via staircases, and ends with a barrel in the water to which the path leads down. From there, a visitor will have a dramatic perspective, low and right across the water.

Shielded community road

In this southern area where the former defence line is situated in the river landscape, the project of Gedekte Gemeenschapsweg (“Shielded Community Road”) has been realized. This road with its artillery positions has been made passable again by OKRA and BunkerQ. It reconnects the fortresses Werk aan de Korte Uitweg, Lunet aan de Snel, and Fort Honswijk. Contemporary elements have been added to the dike, such as steps and a large cut-out of the embankment. The poetic side of our approach is creating a “cut as a sign of intervention.” By making cuts, design can be connected to explanation. The galvanized metal cut shows visitors how the embankment is made, and demonstrates the difference between a military dike and a sea-defence dike. What is intriguing about restoring the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie and adding new elements along it is that it not only contributes towards historical awareness and an understanding of cultural heritage, but it also makes the landscape around the cities more accessible and enhances recreational activities.



VIER LUNETTEN
Client: gemeente Utrecht
Strategy: OKRA, 2006

SHIELDED COMMUNITY ROAD
Client: gemeente Houten
Strategy: OKRA and BunkerQ, 2006

Top and middle: People can experience the legible landscape of the Main Defence Line, created by “cuts” in the landscape at Noorderplassen and at Plofsluis.

Bottom: A landscape strategy that relates the ecological and recreational network to the former military landscape offers opportunities to add contemporary layers.