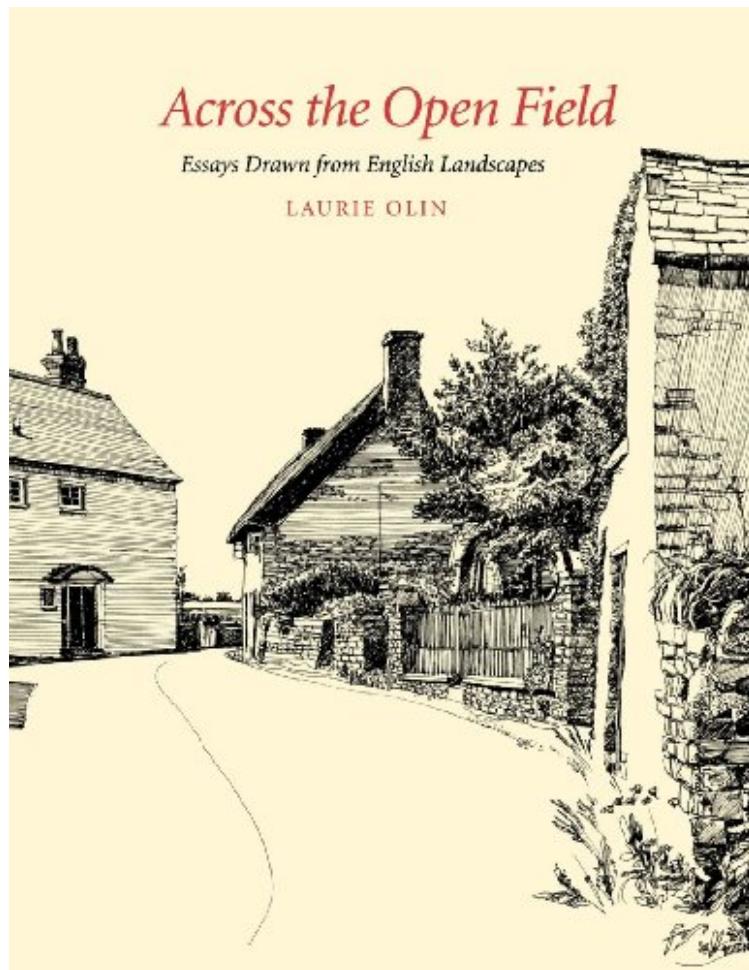


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## Across the Open Field: Essays Drawn from English Landscapes (Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture)

Laurie Olin

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**Laurie Olin : Across the Open Field: Essays Drawn from English Landscapes (Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Across the Open Field: Essays Drawn from English Landscapes (Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Insightful observations for Perceiving the English landscapeBy JBLaurie Olin immerses the novice and intellectual landscape observer in the experience of the British countryside. He reveals perceptions through drawings and writings, engaging the reader in historic as well as contemporary investigations. As an architect as well as a renowned landscape architect, Olin adds his unique slant in a beautifully told story. I particularly thought the pensive recanting of the English landscape experience important enough to require it as reading for my college design class who will travel to England next year.9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Ordinary Places, Extraordinary InsightBy Frederick R. SteinerAfter reading this book, I went out and bought a

sketch book. Now, I'm daydreaming about spending the summer in the English countryside, or perhaps in Italy somewhere. Olin inspires the reader to draw. More importantly, he explains how drawing can help us understand places and the forces that shape landscapes. One learns a greater appreciation of ordinary places and the people who create them.

"Twenty-eight years ago I went to England for a three-month visit and rest. What I found changed my life." So begins this memoir by one of America's best-known landscape architects, Laurie Olin. Raised in a frontier town in Alaska, trained in Seattle and New York, Olin found himself dissatisfied with his job as an urban architect and accepted an invitation to England to take a respite from work. What he found, in abundance, was the serendipity of a human environment built over time to respond to the land's own character and to the people who lived and worked there. For Olin, the English countryside was a palimpsest of the most eloquent and moving sort, yet whose manifestation was of ordinary buildings meant to shelter their inhabitants and further their work. With evocative language and exquisite line drawings, the author takes us back to his introduction to the scenes of English country towns, their ancient universities, meandering waterways, and dramatic cloudscapes racing in from the Atlantic. He limns the geologic histories found within the rock, the near-forgotten histories of place-names, and the recent histories of train lines and auto routes. Comparing the growth of building in the English countryside, Olin draws some sobering conclusions about our modern lifestyle and its increasing separation from the landscape. As much a plea for saving the modern American landscape as it is a passionate exploration of what makes the English landscape so characteristically English, *Across the Open Field* is "an affectionate ramble through real places of lasting worth."

"Beautifully written and illustrated with intelligent charm, *Across the Open Field* may well turn out to be a quiet classic. . . . Its studies of the particular have a universal significance: this is a book about man as an animal—;a part of the ecology—;and about man as an artist, a being with a compelling need to create beauty and order."—;Richard Jenkyns, *New York Times* "Beautifully written and illustrated with intelligent charm . . . a quiet classic."—;New York Times "These essays and the beautiful line drawings that illustrate this sumptuous work are a richly satisfying entity. . . . Across the open Field bids fair to become a classic."—;Journal of the New England Garden History Society

**About the Author** Laurie Olin is Principal of Olin Partnership and Practice Professor of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to his extensive work on landscape projects, including Bryant Park in New York City and the Getty Center Gardens in Los Angeles, Olin has written frequently on the history and theory of landscape architecture for various professional journals, for which he won the Bradford Williams Medal in 1991. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is an Honorary Member of the American Institute of Architects. He is a coauthor of *La Foce: A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany and Vizcaya: An American Villa and Its Makers*, also published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.