

# DANIEL LASKARIN

## Working Landscape



PUBLIC  
**ART**  
vancouver



## About the Work

At the north end of Hornby Street in Vancouver sits a small park with a series of four circular timber platforms slightly raised above the lawn along its western side. The park, with views to the snowy north shore mountains, sits between Hastings Street and Canada Place, on a site donated to the City of Vancouver by the Bentall family. The platforms look like small performance stages, in graded sizes from large to small; each has a park bench and a container holding a live tree. They often group into small tableaux, especially at midday when office workers and passersby relax on the benches to eat their lunches, listen to their music or murmur in conversation.

The picture, like its participants, refuses to remain still, and only after a brief passage of time does it become obvious that things are continuously in motion here, at a rate sometimes below the level of perception. The arrangement of trees within this modest landscape glides across itself and through—the landscape is endlessly redrawn, taking on the transitory character of the city itself. The positions of the benches, locked in their glacial revolutions, bring their riders

with barely tangible slowness toward new directions and into new alignments. As the viewer's attention is drawn into focus by these unlikely phenomena, a heightened state of alertness takes hold, revealing another aspect: not everything is changing at the same pace. The larger platform, perhaps weighted by its scale, seems the most lethargic, while the smaller platforms enjoy improved velocities commensurate with their reduced diameters—the smallest northern platform circling in a giddy twenty minutes.

The four turntables of Daniel Laskarin's public project rotate at the four durations most commonly associated with paid work: 40 hours; 8 hours; 1 hour; 20 minutes. The labour struggle to legally codify these limits as reasonable and just durations for the work schedule, allowing time outside of work for leisure and rest, began nearly 200 years ago. Gradually and broadly accepted, but never universally achieved, these time frames have conditioned the daily routines of millions for generations. Today, in large parts of the developed and developing world, the work hours are again increasing, often at an alarming rate. *Working Landscape* embeds these references to social justice and overcoming exploitation and inequity within itself, activated as palpable physical memory. Someone sitting on one of these benches may recall, as they are moved around within the time and space of the park, their own schedules, their own experiences of work, their own regimes of busyness.

Like a latent and lateral civic clock, Laskarin's installation forgoes traditional monumentality in favour of an endlessly-stretched temporality. Its soothing repetitive circularity subdues for a moment the grinding analog rotations turned up by the industrial revolution. Those who participate, wheeling with slow majesty in the free air of an urban green space, bring both work and *this* work into being.

— Greg Snider

Greg Snider is an artist living and working in Vancouver.

Opposite Installation view of *Working Landscape*, 1998–2010. Photo: Scott Massey

Above Installation view of *Working Landscape*, 1998–2010. Photo: Scott Massey



## About the Artist

Daniel Laskarin lives and works in Victoria, BC. He turned to visual art after a career in aviation, completing his BA at Simon Fraser University's School for Contemporary Arts in 1985 and his MFA at UCLA in 1991. His practice, materially and philosophically rooted in the production and use of objects, investigates ways in which art gives sensory experience to consciousness and often involves an *ad hoc* play with material and meaning. He uses a diverse range of media according to the conceptual demands of his projects, including photography and video, optics, robotics systems, installation and sound works, set design and public image projections. Laskarin has produced large-scale public commissions in Vancouver and Seattle. He has exhibited in Canada, the US, Europe, Algeria, Mexico and Brazil. After teaching studio, history and theory at Simon Fraser University and Emily Carr University of Art + Design, he joined the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Victoria.

Above Daniel Laskarin. Photo: Jessica Van der Veen

The City of Vancouver Public Art Program commissions contemporary art for public spaces. The program supports excellence in art making by emerging and established artists, in new and traditional media and from stand-alone commissions to artist collaborations. Projects at civic buildings, greenways, parks and other public spaces are funded through annual civic capital budgets. Private sector projects are funded by developments in the rezoning process. Learn more about this and other public artworks in the Public Art Registry at [www.vancouver.ca/publicart](http://www.vancouver.ca/publicart); subscribe to the Public Art Listserv to be notified of upcoming artist opportunities.



**Working Landscape**, 1998–2010, was commissioned by the City of Vancouver through the Public Art Program and with the generous assistance of Douglas Forster.

**Coverpage** *Working Landscape*, 1998–2010, 900 block West Hastings Street (north foot of Hornby), Vancouver, British Columbia. Photo: Scott Massey



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