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According to a famous architecture historian, the concept of a central nation state--initiated in France--developed with the visual and spatial practice of classical gardens, fortresses and cathedrals: the shape of France expressed ideals of the shape of a garden..

Questions have arisen on the political implications of recent land art: if an ecosystemic and entropic concept of garden emerges, what will be the corresponding concept of political space? Specifically, what would be the concept of administrable space given Smithson's Spiral Jetty and Tilted Ring, Oppenheim's Ocean Piece, Beuys' marsh performances, or Schneemann's critique of agriculture, Illinois Central? In these works, land is seen as no longer subject to rectilinear order. It slopes, it drains, it functions as a site for transfer, via animals, plants and water, of nutrient salts. If one were to build functioning earthworks with the vocabulary of land art rather than that of Platonic forms, one would have to work within entire salt-water circulatory systems. A "great western saltwork" requires a space with salt and water cycles.

Using paradigms from land art, this architect has conceived of regions which are water basins--not the freshwater river basins we know conventionally, but saltwater basins, ocean basins, basins which encompass all the nutrients, salts and soils within any concavity of the earth's crust. The planet appears as an irregular sphere with shards of ocean bottom heaving up, tilting and colliding, leaving slopes and hollows for the subsidence under gravity of soils and waters into vortical patterns. Each basin can accommodate the structures of land art, and each basin can be surveyed and ecologically-administered as a unit. Each basin, then, could become a political space. Instead of nations, there would be basins.

Since each basin could achieve self-reliance on its own body of soils and waters, each basin could be managed for prosperity on its own, by itself, without interference in the affairs of other basins. Satellites can reveal the shapes and processes of these basins so that their respective, separate identities become clear to all.

So, while voices deplore the nuclear arms race between large-sized nation states, an architect proposes satellite surveys and rational administration of differently sized but equally developable, equally self-sufficing, basin states. While some speak of world peace, which characteristically precedes world wars, architects can integrate the discoveries of recent artists to establish world pieces. As each basin state becomes reality, we might echo history and remark, "Piece in our time."