



“WHERE THE DISCIPLINES MEET” UNISCAPE ONLINE LECTURE SERIES

This online lecture series is part of the programme of UNISCAPE’s Year of Landscape 2020-21 launched in October to mark the 20th Anniversary of the European Landscape Convention. The series does more than simply reflect the depth and diversity of expertise and research activity across the UNISCAPE network, it harnesses this experience into a Europe-wide didactic platform.

While there really is no substitute for in situ and on-site learning and interaction, we have witnessed recently that people from around the world can share their knowledge and experience in virtual classrooms. This series is aimed at researchers and students alike, and in this spirit gathers under one roof established and early-career academics on topics ranging from theory to practice. All of the speakers come at their topics from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Landscape draws us all together. It is where the disciplines meet because it is where everything and everyone meets!

Welcome to the UNISCAPE classroom!

12 January | 17:30 (CET)

Europe, the continent of cheese. For how long?

Bas Pedroli (Wageningen University)

Europe's cultural history is a major element in European identity as reflected in its landscapes. European landscapes represent profound and continuous cultural histories. Already in early prehistory communities significantly changed their environment e.g. by animal breeding, arable crops and extraction of iron and precious metals. The Romans brought about big changes in the landscape, standardising holdings, building a military road network, serious deforestation, novel cropping systems and farming estates. What is European in this history is that the diversity, grounded in an extreme bio-physical diversity, survived to a large extent, e.g. in languages, local markets, traditions, local regulations, communal legislation. After agriculture started developing in the Middle East and Asia Minor, long before our era, gradually also the entire map of European landscapes was defined by the influence of agricultural communities and by the associated settlement forms. Indeed, permanent grassland and the associated grazing livestock constitute unique features of the historical European rural landscape. Europe can be characterised as the continent of cheese! And, to produce cheese, grazing land, cropland, scattered trees and woodland were indispensable, almost everywhere.

The typical farm type to manage this array of functions was the mixed family farm, which dominated European agriculture for several centuries. Many variations of this system still exist. Today they all struggle to survive under current market pressures, but they still contribute to the diversity of the European landscape. However, without a vision on future development of land use, the mosaic of Europe's unique landscape will gradually vanish like the colours of a worn carpet. This lecture will discuss the continuity of this landscape, based on the opportunities of a community-oriented landscape management, in search of new, suitable colours for the future landscape.

02 February | 17:30 (CET)

Landscape as a common good: wellbeing and the historic environment

Claire Nolan (National University of Ireland Galway)

The European Landscape Convention states that landscape is fundamental to individual and social wellbeing. It enjoins stakeholders to establish how landscape is perceived and valued in order to identify and preserve those aspects of place that promote wellbeing. Focusing on cultural heritage in particular, this paper will discuss these themes with reference to qualitative work undertaken in 2016 and 2017 on resident and visitor perceptions of the prehistoric landscapes of Stonehenge, Avebury and the Vale of Pewsey, Wiltshire, UK. It will review the phenomenological methods used to investigate participants' embodied, in-the-moment and everyday experiences of these heritage landscapes, and thus the intrinsic values they hold for certain individuals.

Based on this research, the paper demonstrates how the disciplines of archaeology, human geography, and psychotherapy can combine to reveal the potential of the (pre)historic environment to facilitate ontological security, existential relatedness and existential possibility. As a result, it presents different understandings of the social value of cultural heritage which may help to protect and develop landscape in ways that support individual and community wellbeing. The paper further recognises that heritage landscapes can only serve the common good in this respect if the preservation and promotion of such places also mediates the other social, environmental and infrastructural needs of the communities that live within them. Consequently, it suggests that deeper reflection on the relationship between self and environment may assist in achieving this balance.

02 March | 17:30 (CET)

Landscape and the New Mobility Paradigm

Margherita Cisani (Università degli Studi di Padova)

Over the last two decades, the social sciences have been characterized by a so called “Mobility Turn”, as many scholars dedicated their reflections on the multiple ways in which people, places, objects and ideas move (or are impeded from moving) in space and time. But how has this ‘New Mobility Paradigm’ (Sheller & Urry, 2006) affected landscape studies? And how can Landscape Studies contribute to the analysis of contemporary and historic mobilities? The proposed seminar aims to offer some answers to this issue, revolving around the different dimensions of the relationship between landscape and movement (Cisani, 2020).

On a theoretical level, mobilizing landscape means infusing fluidity and dynamism into a concept often considered static and motionless. Considering more than representational approaches (Ingold, 2002) as well as the political stances (Mitchell 2008; Cresswell, 2010), landscape become a powerful concept, vital and dynamic (Farinelli, 1991; Wylie, 2007), which bridges among various disciplines, enabling and enriching a complex understanding of many contemporary processes that relate to mobility, from commuting to tourism, from everyday mobility practices to long distance migration and dislocation processes related to economics, climate change, conflicts and humanitarian crisis.

On a more practical and project-oriented level, landscape and mobility are two strictly interrelated factors on which social well-being and environmental quality depend. Understanding their reciprocal interactions, such as in the ways in which people perceive landscapes through movement, is a key factor for just and responsible policies of landscape care, management and transformation.

This issues are at the core of the strong effort that the Department of Geographical, Historical Sciences and the Ancient World of the University of Padua is undergoing, in terms of didactics, research and public engagement, carried out in particular with the new Master Degree in Landscape Studies as well as with the Centre for Advanced Studies in Mobility and the Humanities.

30 March | 17:30 (CET)

Hidden landscapes, or underground built heritage as an opportunity for territorial regeneration.

The European case of the Three Countries Park (BE-NL-DE)

Chiara Caravello (Université De Liège)

The Underground Built Heritage is a unique, hidden cultural landscape whose spaces extend beneath and across national borders, reflecting some of the vectors of recent European history, in particular mining for the development of the industrial sector. It represents, indeed, a “socially built phenomenon” (Reichlin, 2011) or “the hidden side of a society (...), invisible flows and movements at the service of the visible world” (Occhiuto, 2020). What relationships exist between the visible and invisible parts of a [indivisible] whole? How can what the soil hides and preserves be revealed?

The Three Countries Park (3LP) is a landscape partnership and interregional cooperation platform bringing Belgium, Germany, and The Netherlands together. The lead partner, Euregio Meuse-Rhine, hosts the platform in Eupen (BE). Founded in 1976, the Euregio is one of the oldest cross-border cooperation programs in Europe. The Underground Built Heritage in this area consists mostly of cavities of various typologies, and complex networks of mining galleries from different epochs, forming territorial capital for a common identity and rural/urban regeneration across the borders.

This heritage has not been well documented and explored with regard to its cross-border development potential: protection and development policies and control measures vary broadly across the borders; some sites are strongly developed for tourism, or are protected as accessible nature reserves, while others are rather abandoned.

The paper presents experiences from work conducted over the past twenty years concerning regeneration of this cross-border territory through reconsideration of the underground landscape, starting with the project “Grünmetropole” by the Agence Ter. One main question is considered: does the shared Underground Built Heritage represent an exceptional opportunity to establish cross-border collaboration on sustainable territorial development, and resolve the current fragmentation afflicting ecological transition in Europe?

04 May | 17:30 (CET)

Agroforestry, energy plantations and landscape management: land use, biodiversity, and wildlife habitats

Sándor Némethy (University of Pécs)

Woody biomass production may have both beneficial and adverse effects on cultural landscapes regarding land use, protection and/or creation of wildlife habitats, conservation and remediation of wastelands. Establishing energy plantations on arable lands, natural forest areas or on grasslands is against nature conservation, while setting up them in depleted agricultural lands of inferior quality, polluted areas or wastelands could be advantageous for land reclamation and wildlife habitats.

The main forms of energy plantations include short rotation forestry (SRF), short rotation coppicing (SRC), agroforestry (AF) and polycyclic arboriculture. While short rotation forestry and short rotation coppicing have many similarities to monoculture, traditional agroforestry and polycyclic arboriculture provide better conditions for plant biodiversity, healthy soil formation and development of wildlife habitats. Furthermore, the more permanent cover provides shelter and biomass for feeding, which is especially important in winter, the higher architectural complexity of vegetation provides more place for nesting and feeding and the forbs in the undergrowth and young shots provide better quality food for wildlife than the intensive monocultures.

However, the aforementioned intensive forms (SRF and SRC) of energy plantations can be beneficial when connected to phytoremediation of polluted land areas, since in these cases short rotation and intensive biomass production can be desirable for fast removal of pollutants from soil and groundwater. Depending on the applied species, the scale of biomass production and the energy production technologies, woody biomass production can be an important component of renewable energy systems, but unlikely to become the main source of renewable energy production. Therefore, the solution is a complex management system, which includes land use, phytoremediation, and a system of interlinked renewable energy sources. In this way the ecological resilience of the landscape is guaranteed through well designed agroecosystems, where even the sufficient size of ecotones is provided in connection with natural ecosystems.

01 June | 17:30 (CET)

Urban landscape in the post socialist epoch

Denis Ambruš (University of Rijeka)

The topic of this lecture is the connection between the urban nucleus and the wider landscape, especially those built during the socialist era. The focus of the paper is on understanding the possible connections between the two, investigating the challenges of fostering continuity and evolution of the built environment, avoiding turning socialist era areas into separate parts of the city, non-living monuments to the past, and instead incorporating them into the evolution of the urban landscape.

29 June | 17:30 (CET)

Landscape-based Ecomuseums – conservation of landscape heritage through community participation and green circular economy

Bosse Largerqvist (University of Gothenberg)

A landscape-based ecomuseum is an area developed as an open-air museum, linking the natural environment, its ecosystem services and the cultural heritage components of the landscape into one holistic unit, focused on the identity of a place, largely based on local participation and aiming to enhance the welfare and development of local communities.

Usually, most ecomuseums are established around one certain activity, heritage category or traditions of exploiting specific natural resources. Regarding landscape conservation, the essential multifunctionality of these ecomuseums is not sufficiently defined, even if they greatly contribute to the welfare of local communities. In our opinion, modern ecomuseums should emphasize their own potential to meet environmental and societal challenges. Therefore, the new Balaton Ecomuseum in Hungary with an area of 8500 km² is being constructed on a fundamentally new concept, based on all constituents and variability of the cultural landscapes, with particular emphasis on the connection between the vulnerable natural environment and the rich cultural heritage of the region including the built heritage and traditional trades and crafts in connection with agriculture and the intangible heritage of the Balaton Region. The structure is based on an interdisciplinary system approach, where ecological sustainability, conservation of the landscape character, enhancement of the development of viable local enterprises and markets for distribution of local products and services constitute the basis of viable circular economies and development of cultural tourism in micro-regions around Lake Balaton.

This multi-layered cultural landscape concept is based on an evolutionary viewpoint: cultural landscapes are continuously changing due to natural and anthropogenic factors, and these changes have an impact on the conservation of all categories of natural and cultural heritage of the area concerned. Therefore, the term conservation includes both preservation and sustainable use of natural and heritage resources, taking into consideration the bearing capacity of the area.

07 September | 17:30 (CET)

The Architects' sense for the landscape

Renato Bocchi (Università IUAV di Venezia)

The landscape in the foreground today; the contemporary scene; is in fact a new landscape which must cope with rapid territorial change, with serious problems of resource consumption, climate change, economic crisis, and so on, and yet cannot and must not forget the themes of history, of memory and, above all, of culture. These, and more besides, form the canvas on which even newer landscapes will be sketched.

Overwriting the landscape-palimpsest is the inevitable affirmation of a serious design culture directed towards that "perception of the populations" to which the European Landscape Convention refers. The 'how' of this overwriting is to be found in a rich and profound interdisciplinary dialogue, and in the re-foundation that can derive from this for the design disciplines.

The November Talks 2020 at the IUAV University of Venice aimed to contribute to the debate around the relationship that contemporary architecture has often attempted to establish with the figurative, spatial and topographical aspects of landscape, considering also the dynamic of changing perceptions and the immanence of ecological problems. This 'turn' has fostered a rich, on-going dialogue between architects, landscape architects and "environmental" artists, in an effort to compare and combine the tools of architectural design with those of landscape design and environmental art.

The five architects invited for the cycle of talks in 2020 (Sandro Marpillero, Inaki Abalos, Joan Roig, Reiulf Ramstad, Juan Manuel Palerm) are contemporary practitioners whose research has developed the theme of new landscapes in original and peculiar ways—their design responses are deeply influenced by the landscape paradigm. This paper offers a resumé of these dialogues.

From the five talks emerged interesting proposals for observing and interpreting the landscape with the architect's eye in order to use, variously, topographical characteristics, thermodynamic values, or the hydrogeological behaviour of the soil, as inspiration for the new landscape design. On another side, some approaches emphasized the challenge of considering the landscape project as a tool of improving the social environment, transforming polluted and decayed areas of metropolitan areas. Some approaches proposed recovery of traditional aspects of building techniques to merge into natural landscapes.

05 October | 17:30 (CET)

Water as Resource and Heritage between City and Landscape

Margherita Vanore (Università IUAV di Venezia)

Hydrogeological instability and various calamities increasingly direct the pursuit of so-called "best-practice" in respect of maintenance and safety of the territory. The complexity of the phenomena we are observing, however, demands upstream reflection, so that research can extend the field of investigation beyond the specificity of "technical solutions" to encompass values as well as natural processes. As a living expression of cultures and practices that combine in a systemic vision that is capable of supporting beauty as well as sustainable living and production environments, the landscape is an essential referent in respect of current and future problems. In this regard, it is essential to understand and enhance the role of cultural and environmental heritage that is defined by water. The history of soil modeling has transmitted to us a heritage of technical forms, born of water management and aimed both at particular production processes and at making the territory safe. Revisiting water landscapes in all their complexity— in particular those of the river belt, agricultural reclamation, lagoons and delta areas — and foregrounding their heritage values can generate new design approaches capable of protecting and enhancing the landscape itself.

In such cases, the project can only be based on a specific process of reading, redesigning and reinterpreting the physical and phenomenal characters of places, and in particular earthworks, "soil architecture", built for different typologies of water management, use and production, historically and in the present. Water landscapes are still governed by an infrastructural system that ensures the life and the hydrogeological balance of emerged lands.

PARTICIPATION

All lectures will be given on Zoom platform. Participation is free.

Links at: www.uniscape.eu/online-lecture-series-where-the-disciplines-meet

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