

6

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Paisatge

EUROPEAN  
BIENNIAL  
OF LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECTURE

BARCELONA

ROSA BARBA  
EUROPEAN  
LANDSCAPE  
PRIZE

# Liquid Landscapes

 PAYSAGE  
EDITORE



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN EUROPE SINCE 2005

# Liquid Landscapes

CATALOGUE OF THE 6TH EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE BIENNIAL 2010

6TH ROSA BARBA EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE PRIZE



Col·legi d'Arquitectes  
de Catalunya



Generalitat de Catalunya  
Departament de Política Territorial  
i Obres Públiques  
Direcció General d'Arquitectura i Paisatge



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PAISATGE





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BARCELONA ROSA BARBA EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE PRIZE  
LIQUID LANDSCAPES**

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PAESAGGIO DI BARCELLONA  
PREMIO EUROPEO DI PAESAGGIO ROSA BARBA  
PAESAGGI LIQUIDI*

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## Foreward

### PRESENTAZIONE

La Biennial Europea de Paisatge ha estat, des de ja fa 6 edicions, un dels instruments més rellevants en la consolidació del paisatge com a coneixement, com a disciplina i com a recurs comú dels ciutadans.

Cal agrair a tothom que ha fet possible l'edició d'enguany, que afronta les dificultats conjunturals amb la determinació d'un projecte sòlid i madur capaç d'adaptar-se al present mentre va definint també el futur.

**Lluís Comeron i Graupera**

Degà del Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya

Europa és una realitat diversa, ja sigui pel que fa a les seves cultures, llengües o estils de vida, entre d'altres. I també en els seus paisatges, síntesi de natura i cultura. Això no treu que els elements comuns siguin molt poderosos i puguin arribar a conformar una identitat europea des de la pluralitat. George Steiner escrivia que Europa es reconeixia per l'existència d'un tret definidor del paisatge de moltes ciutats: la presència de cafès. Llocs de socialització i d'intercanvi d'idees, tot i la tendència uniformitzadora de la globalització, els cafès perviuen en un paisatge urbà híbrid; llocs on s'acumulen elements que ens fan singulars al costat d'altres que ens fan globals. Al cap i a la fi, el paisatge és un llibre obert on continuament s'escriu i es reescriu.

En aquesta Biennial Europea del Paisatge podreu ser testimonis de múltiples expressions que tenen el paisatge com a protagonista. Catalunya és un país que destaca per les seves polítiques paisatgístiques. Sempre oberts a la modernitat i alhora orgullosos de la nostra història, els paisatges catalans, per bé que extraordinàriament diversos i en moviment, ens defineixen com a cultura i com a col·lectiu humà. Talment com la mateixa Europa, units en la diversitat i encara en construcció.

**Lluís Recoder i Miralles**

Conseller de Territori i Sostenibilitat

Para la Universidad Politécnica de Catalunya es motivo de orgullo y de satisfacción poder colaborar año tras año en la organización de la Bienal Europea del Paisaje.

La Bienal, desde su primera convocatoria y dada la trayectoria seguida y la repercusión del Premio Europeo de Paisaje Rosa Barba, es una referencia reconocida en el ámbito de la comunidad europea que cada vez va más allá de sus fronteras, como se muestra en la espléndida exposición de los trabajos de las Escuelas de Paisajismo de todo el mundo que participan en el evento.

La UPC es consciente de la importancia de la disciplina del Paisaje en un momento especialmente sensible de demanda de la sociedad hacia aquellos temas que hacen referencia y plantean alternativas válidas para el desarrollo de una macroeconomía con estímulos de inversión verde.

Por todo ello, una vez más, adelante y enhorabuena a todos.

**Antonio Giró Roca**

Rector de la Universidad Politécnica de Catalunya





## Introduction: Liquid landscapes

### INTRODUZIONE: PAESAGGI LIQUIDI

Los paisajes devienen líquidos, al mismo tiempo que nuestras convicciones, nuestras costumbres o nuestras seguridades.

Nuestros paisajes se adaptan, cambian de formas, de argumentos, de lógicas e incluso de sentido.

Estos mismos paisajes se fragilizan, temen, tiemblan, vibran y se tensan, convirtiéndose en distintos, fascinantes, irreconocibles y contemporáneos. Sobre esta idea la VI Bienal de Paisaje de Barcelona quiere transmitir, mediante un "leit motiv" de connotaciones baumannianas, la necesidad de inducirnos a pensar que los modelos aprendidos están caducando, que las referencias paisajísticas necesitan revisarse y que ciertos métodos de proyectación y gestión no volverán a repetirse.

Todo ello aunque indigesto en primera instancia, es apasionante como reflexión intelectual, como alternativa proyectual y una gran oportunidad de relanzamiento de una disciplina, relativamente joven, que basa sus valores en la agilidad de respuesta, en la facilidad de reacción o en encontrar una cierta confortabilidad en el desarrollo de procesos de proyectación complejos desde el rigor en el conocimiento de lugares y técnicas.

El destino nos separa una "chance".

Desde la tercera edición de la Bienal de Paisaje, ahora hace unos diez años, se empezó a hacer notar un impulso claro, a partir de la intensificación de la crisis ambiental planetaria, para resolver ciertas cuestiones ligadas al territorio a través de proyectos substancialmente conectados con las leyes naturales y resolviendo la conflictualidad del crecimiento con las armas y mecanismos que las técnicas, coordinadas con los objetivos bien intencionados, nos ofrecían.

Después de aquel Solo con naturaleza se observó un cierto estancamiento de las respuestas proyectuales que se sucedieron, sin poder certificar lo que, simplemente quizás, entendíamos como punto de despegue del paisajismo involucrado con la modernidad, con la ciencia más responsable y con las ideas más evolutivas y arriesgadas. Esta generalización encontraba magníficas y honrosas excepciones.

Es definitivamente después de la edición de Paisaje:Producción cuando intuimos que nuestros temores se convertían en certezas y sugerimos aquel optimista grito de alerta, que denominamos románticamente Tormenta e ímpetu, esperando

que la revisión de ciertas seguridades y modelos era parte de nuestra aportación a una situación no especialmente halagüeña, ni para la imaginación ni para soñar como ya no lo era para la profesión ni el entorno en Europa. Es por ello que insistimos en encontrar respuestas, en el diálogo y en la discusión desde las diferentes realidades europeas y acercándonos a países que nos podían aportar visiones de distinto calado a la cuestión abierta (E.E.U.U., China, etc...).

Es en esta edición, Paisajes líquidos, cuando se constata una situación de cambio, de crisis evidente y es por lo que parte de la inquietud y del interés del paisajismo se ha desplazado hacia expertos de otras disciplinas más ágiles (Sociología, Filosofía o Antropología) que aparentemente están en una mejor situación para dar con las claves de futuro de nuestra sociedad, convirtiéndose en mensajeros de unas nuevas ideas que entendimos como esenciales para nuestro cometido próximo. El objetivo del encuentro ha sido el debate sobre la contemporaneidad de nuestros paisajes en su indispensable liquidez.

El futuro ha de corroborar esta adaptación.

*Jordi Bellmunt i Chiva*





ENCUADRES DE FRAGMENTOS:  
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# PAPERS

## Liquid Landscapes



## Encuadres de fragmentos: sobre la obra presentada en la VI Bienal Europea de Paisaje

MARIA GOULA

El VI catálogo de la Bienal Europea de Paisaje muestra 267 proyectos de la obra total presentada por profesionales que se dedican al proyecto del espacio abierto. Este espacio que suele ser denominado libre o verde, en este caso es sobre todo público, una característica identitaria de la manera de hacer Europea. Pues, las obras que se exhiben aquí –sencillas o complejas, de diverso repertorio instrumental, y sin embargo todas bien implementadas, ya que para poder desplegarse han necesitado conocer datos y narrativas, historia y deseos sobre el lugar a transformar– se han de entender como intentos de defender el espacio abierto, el lugar por excelencia del despliegue cultural pero, a la vez, el lugar de permanencia variable de la naturaleza y sus sistemas. Los proyectos enseñan de algún modo la amplitud de la cultura de la intervención en el paisaje: unos yendo sobre seguro, otros tensionando la noción de la identidad como algo perenne, y otros haciendo propia la exploración de lo sutil. Sin embargo, todos proponen una transformación, que es un término menos ideológico que el de la “mejora” o la “ordenación”, por ejemplo y, a la vez, indica el cambio que vehicula el acto de proyectar. Proyectar pues el paisaje, construirlo, es decir, tomar opciones arriesgadas o no sobre su futuro, buscar in situ la complicidad de otras disciplinas que intervienen en el mismo entorno con todas las limitaciones de la compleja realidad es el rasgo fundamental de la práctica profesional del Paisajismo.

El presente texto celebra la diversidad y la calidad de la implementación de la obra de paisaje contemporáneo Europeo; es crucial hacerlo, creo, sobre todo en unos momentos de un más que probable estancamiento de la actividad en el continente. Rubrica también, la necesidad de llevar a cabo una reflexión seria sobre su fisonomía, taxonomía, evolución, e impacto ambiental y social, y como no, pensar de forma estratégica sobre su incierto futuro. Y finalmente, aunque el material mostrado en la Bienal Europea de Paisaje estos últimos años requiere muchas y diferentes lecturas sistemáticas, este texto aboga por la necesidad de ver las convergencias proyectuales que hemos detectado estos años de forma intuitiva, resultado de procesos de intensa colaboración y de aprendizaje continuo entre nosotros, convir-

tiendo muchas veces las influencias externas a préstamos adaptados a nuestras realidades. No obstante, ya que se trata de un catálogo de exposición de la obra construida en Europa me parece absolutamente pertinente no perder la oportunidad que se me brinda para comentar algunas cuestiones sobre una relación que en mi opinión es fundamental: la relación entre la obra y el cómo se representa.

Miro lentamente la obra en mi pantalla de ordenador; intento reproducir el efecto de su exposición, siempre digital. Tengo delante imágenes transparentes, líquidas, que enseñan la más reciente producción del Paisajismo Europeo. La obra se muestra, también esta vez, de forma directa mediante imágenes relativamente pequeñas, mediante fotografías que han decidido enviar los autores y hemos seleccionado nosotros; es decir, que la obra se muestra otra vez a través de ventanas favorecedoras que guían nuestra mirada hacia una realidad imposible de palpar pero, que deja sospechar logros y resistencias de los lugares. Hay que dedicarle tiempo como siempre. Dejo que me hipnotice momentáneamente el ritmo de proyección, la luz que emite cada paisaje. Primeros planos, detalles de pavimentos, mobiliario como manifestación de la innovación en el diseño urbano de los últimos años en el proyecto de Paisaje en Europa. También, encuadres cercanos hacia la vegetación sin miedo de mostrar innovaciones jardineras como parte consustancial del proyecto. Intento no impresionarme por los detalles mostrados como logro de una buena implementación y adentrarme en el fondo, cuando se me permite, de cada icono. Es casi imposible, como lo es entender el proyecto desde una planta o sección.

Se puede decir que el catálogo ofrece una visión panorámica compuesta de fragmentos. No obstante, en el encuadre del fragmento la pérdida de la supervisión de la totalidad, es decir, el acercamiento al detalle, suele ofrecer una visión menos diferenciadora, ordinaria por no reconocible. Se entiende pues que los fotógrafos o los propios autores suelen confiar en el contraste o en el artefacto cuando se aproximan al encuadre concreto, ya que es el artificio que hace reconocible en la mayoría de las veces el proyecto. Sobre todo si fal-

ta su información sobre su entorno. Entonces hay que preguntarse, ¿por qué hay ausencia de plantas? Será que los paisajistas confían en la fotografía para enseñar aquellos parámetros, aquellas características del proceso del paisaje que no se pueden transmitir con el dibujo técnico convencional? ¿es que nos hemos acostumbrado y, este catálogo no es una excepción, a usar la fotografía como prueba de la realidad y el encuadre fotográfico del detalle como prolongación de nuestra manera de contactar con ella? ¿es entonces, inevitable que la mirada panorámica que ofrece este catálogo sea una mirada fragmentada? Y aún más, si las palabras frágil y fragmento comparten raíz latina, ya que ambos son derivados del latín fragmentum –inis n. [o fragmentum –i], frangere, esta muestra panorámica se hace más frágil?

De ahí el título encuadres de fragmentos para indicar la visión panorámica pero sesgada de esta muestra y, al mismo tiempo, expresar una sensación que compartimos los que trabajamos en la producción de este catálogo: los proyectos se muestran como fragmentos autónomos de su contexto dando una parcial y, por eso, falsa impresión de autonomía. Esta descontextualización que se detecta, a pesar de que en su mayoría son proyectos urbanos, impide leer una de sus mayores virtudes, creo, la de articular y conectarse con su contexto, incluso recomponer la continuidad espacial, muchas veces perdida de los sistemas geográficos y naturales, un logro indiscutible del paisajismo contemporáneo. Debido al hecho que nos parece directa y “completa” la imagen fotográfica, cuya brutal influencia en la construcción de valores del sistema cultural occidental han interpretado tan magníficamente autores como Sontag, Barthes, Flusser, por comentar algunos nombres clave, la obra de forma casi mayoritaria suele mostrarse “desnuda”, sin rastro de las implicaciones que producen las decisiones proyectuales más allá de los límites físicos de su ejecución. Se limita normalmente en enseñar un buen hacer de un sitio que de deteriorado, abandonado, intersticial, o expectante se deviene un lugar “singular” con nombre, pero sobre todo legible y así, reconocible, fácil de identificar y recordar. Podríamos decir que para conseguir destacar, para diferenciarse en muchos proyectos de paisaje se



utiliza el artificio en representación de la totalidad de la obra como una extraña *synécdoque* que trasladada el peso del argumento central de la propuesta en la exposición del mobiliario o a cualquier detalle bien construido como muestra estática(?) de la materialidad del proyecto. Con la sobreexposición periodística estos elementos acaban siendo elementos representativos de la obra.

La gran presencia del artificio en los proyectos que muestra esta exposición sobre paisaje como consecuencia de todo lo anterior revela una de las grandes paradojas creo, del paisajismo contemporáneo: por un lado defiende el espacio abierto como lugar de oportunidad para que se desarrolle lo colectivo y que a la vez, este espacio vacío de funciones urbanas pueda llegar a ser un lleno biológico activo, concepto que tan bien ha sabido formular Gilles Clément; por otro, la exposición selectiva del proyecto donde el tema continúa siendo el artificio en contraste con un fondo homogéneo o abstracto.

Después de la explosión de diseño urbano durante los años noventa hoy en día, hay muchas voces que critican la sobreexposición de elementos diseñados en el proyecto del entorno contemporáneo. Así, que nos podemos preguntar: ¿son signos sofisticados de convivencia entre los hábitos urbanos y la naturaleza y sus procesos o resultado de la inercia de la urbanización? No hay respuestas fáciles ni generalizables; sin embargo creo, que en el escenario actual merece la pena volver a pensar lo esencial que conlleva el paradigma del paisajismo y al que seguramente debe su éxito contemporáneo: volver a definir nuestra relación con la naturaleza integrando aquellos procesos que permiten añadir valores excluidos en el terreno proyectual definido desde la arquitectura: el cambio que incluye aceptar la incertidumbre dentro del proceso proyectual, la materialidad desde la materia viva y no solo desde la textura de lo mineral, la recuperación del confort ambiental sin el obligatorio uso de la técnica pero, sobre todo, recuperar la continuidad física de los sistemas para poder volver a hablar de estructura desde lecturas continuistas de la geografía de los lugares.

El paisajismo contemporáneo más innovador ha de seguir pues reivindicando el papel de los procesos naturales y sus efectos positivos y ha de revalorizar el fragmento natural/verde/abierto. Ya que es solo una cuestión de tiempo el poder comprobar si acabarán siendo actuaciones inconexas que usan la naturaleza en fragmento como una *synécdoque* más bien con objetivos pedagógicos o bien verificar sus efectos positivos sobre el ecosistema con el cual interactúa y sobre la potencialidad de formar un sistema.

Las necesidades contemporáneas en una ciudad habitable hacen pensar que hoy en día una naturaleza domesticada ligada al espacio cotidiano es urgente. A pesar de que pueda parecer como actitud nostálgica, a modo de la "importación" de la naturaleza en los parques del XIX que muchas veces fue "en representación de", la propuesta actual habla de recuperar trazas, procesos de una naturaleza que existió y ahora se revela reinterpretada con la ayuda de un bagaje proyectual amplísimo y hipertextual, beneficio de estos últimos años que se hace constar en éste y en los anteriores catálogos de la obra Europea del Paisaje.



## POROSALIQUIDAINSTABILESCHIUMANÉURBANANÉRURALEINFINITA: L'impossibile sostenibilità della città non città

FRANCO ZAGARI

### Bet

Una conoscenza da lontano, eppure sempre toccante, mi ha legato con continuità alla figura di Bet Figueras, durante un periodo di ormai molti anni. Il suo pensiero è stato così importante per la cultura del paesaggio europeo, mai gridato, appena suggerito con straordinaria grazia e discrezione, eppure così ispirato e solido. Voglio ricordarla qui con voi, come una delle prime testimoni della grande nuova stagione catalana e quindi europea della architettura degli spazi pubblici, quel movimento che negli ultimi venti anni del secolo scorso ha cambiato radicalmente la scena urbana nel nostro stesso immaginario, e per essere lei stata una autrice sempre puntualmente presente in temi di grande apertura, come il Giardino botanico di Barcellona. Toccava a lei oggi parlarvi al mio posto, e io non la posso certo sostituire, perché se le dobbiamo i gratitudine per il dono irripetibile di una visione e di una scrittura sempre nuove e originali, che lei ci ha dato con generosità finché ha potuto, le dobbiamo anche gratitudine per come porgeva queste sue idee, attraverso il diaframma di un sorriso, di un profumo, di un colore poetico che davano alle soluzioni più semplici un'aura preziosa e irripetibile.

### Una nuova città, del tutto diversa

Oggi, in margine a tanti progetti che abbiamo vagliato in questa sesta edizione del Premio Rosa Barba, provenienti da ogni parte del mondo, per il mio discorso ho cercato un tema rappresentativo della crisi dell'habitat contemporaneo e al tempo stesso di questa novità, la volontà così netta, così caparbia di reagire che da quei disegni emana, una specie di stato nascente che mi sembra di aver colto, una consapevolezza della rilevanza economica e sociale del paesaggio e della sua urgenza politica di essere posto come una questione prioritaria. Ho scelto alla fine il tema dello spazio delle conurbazioni, dove il progetto di paesaggio è di fronte a problematiche non note in uno stato di evoluzione molto rapida, una grande questione culturale da porre al centro della nostra attenzione attraverso uno spettro critico che deve necessariamente essere diverso da quello solo di ieri, perché una grande discontinuità si è prodotta nell'ultimo secolo ed è precipitata negli ultimi anni. Anche nel paesaggio, come in tutti i momenti di grave

crisi, a sapere ascoltare, si possono osservare in filigrana fenomeni molto interessanti di segno opposto, segnali di rinascita.

Nel mio titolo uso l'espressione "città non città". Cosa è una città non città? E' difficile capirlo, è un fenomeno in piena esplosione che segue all'urbanesimo forse più forte mai conosciuto nella storia umana. Porosa (è sempre vivo il termine di Walter Benjamin), liquida (Zigmunt Bauman), instabile (molti autori), schiuma (Ugo Volli), né urbana - né rurale (Marc Augé), delle reti (Manuel Castells), infinita (Alberto Abruzzese, Aldo Bonomi), multiculturale e multinaturale (Gianfranco Marrone), quanti aggettivi per descrivere la città della nostra epoca, una città che non ha più molto a che fare con l'idea di città nella quale siamo nati, la cui sostanza sembra essere inafferrabile, indecisa fra uno stato di luogo e uno stato di non luogo. Nominare i fenomeni di dissoluzione della città tradizionale è diventata una gara fra molte interessanti teorie interpretative, con ipotesi di nuovi modelli di analisi rispetto a avvenimenti la cui dimensione e rapidità non ha paragoni in nessun altro momento storico. Lo sprawl, spazio amorfo e al tempo stesso pieno di energia, violento come una nuova invasione barbarica, fa terrore e affascina allo stesso tempo. Come sempre il caos è un ordine che non si capisce.

### Vivere secondo il bene

Sono convinto che questo magma dove le parole "centro" e "periferia" non hanno più alcun senso, sia la nostra vera frontiera. Il nostro compito è di creare dei principi di orientamento, ridare significato a attività e flussi, stabilire relazioni interessanti e sistemi strategici, introdurre nuove qualità di centralità, lavorare su ogni categoria di mobilità ristabilendo il gusto e l'interesse del viaggio. Quando avremo progettato dei parcheggi che possano dirsi caravanserragli e delle piste ciclabili che sembrino corsie di un museo potremo dire che stiamo facendo un buon lavoro. Nuovi valori etici, estetici, e di conoscenza devono essere proposti per interpretare la nostra posizione in latitudine e longitudine rispetto a quella che appare come una tempesta perfetta, che sposta radicalmente lo si voglia o no la nostra abitudine dell'abitare. La crisi dell'ambiente e del paesaggio sono due aspetti distinti e fra loro concomitanti che en-

trambi agiscono su questa condizione: il primo, l'ambiente, è più chiaro all'opinione pubblica, il secondo, il paesaggio, per ora, è meno capito ed non è sentito come una priorità. Eppure la qualità del paesaggio è una delle ragioni fondative più radicate del rapporto fra noi e una comunità, e fra una comunità e un luogo, la base di quel patto dal quale possiamo trarre le direttive una moderna concezione di cittadinanza. Non ho alcuna certezza filologica per dimostrarlo, ma credo che i concetti di città e di paesaggio giungano insieme a maturità nella storia del pensiero occidentale, paralleli e coagenti, due fra i più importanti fondamenti della cultura classica greca. La polis è infatti l'invenzione straordinaria di un'istituzione umana in perfetta simbiosi fra la comunità e il suo habitat antropico e naturale. Aristotele dice nella Politica che il fine della polis è il "vivere secondo il bene, sia in comune per tutti gli uomini, sia per ciascuno separatamente", e che l'attaccamento alla vita è "come se vi fosse in essa una sorta di serenità (euemeria) e una dolcezza naturale". Così è per il paesaggio: l'uomo filosofico, sia solo che associato, lo percepisce come un intimo valore etico che lo rappresenta, come se si proiettasse in esso una sorta di euemeria. Dunque forse conviene partire da qui, fare una breve riflessione su quale sia la nostra visione del vivere secondo il bene e che parte vi abbia una parola così facile da pronunciare, bellezza, e così difficile da interpretare nel suo essere un diritto e un dovere.

### Bellezza, responsabilità, comunità

Una aspirazione di armonia, di ricomposizione, di sobrietà sembrerebbe essere la chiave di un'idea di bellezza che aleggia nel nostro tempo, ma è solo una fra le tante idee latenti in una società ormai multiculturale. Tanto la bellezza è enunciata, tanto meno sembra essere realmente voluta. Naturalmente la bellezza, come ogni fenomeno legato a un profondo amore per la libertà, invece si manifesta spesso proprio dove più ci sorprende, perché più inattesa. La bellezza è creatività e talento, ma anche coraggio, è libertà dagli schemi, eresia, follia ... Ed ecco un'altra parola semplice, responsabilità, che ci trova in affanno. Ripartire la bellezza a essere un valore connesso a una nostra esigenza vitale, significa assumere la responsabilità di atti di governo creativi, partecipati quanto



più è possibile ma poi capaci di essere anche scelte decise, a volte difficili. Fatichiamo a renderci conto che questa è una condizione obbligata per una riqualificazione del nostro habitat: l'affermazione di un'idea avanzata di bellezza, che sia l'esercizio di una cultura estetica del nostro tempo, e parimenti di un'idea avanzata di responsabilità, che sia l'esercizio di una cultura della democrazia del nostro tempo.

Con "Saper vedere l'architettura", scritto a Londra in una settimana sotto i bombardamenti tedeschi prima di partire per il fronte, Bruno Zevi traccia un'introduzione all'architettura che è un monito di impegno morale e civile fra spazio e società. L'interazione fra bellezza e responsabilità, parole come pietre, ci porta a recuperare un rapporto stretto fra la storia di un luogo e la sua visione di futuro, perché si possa parlare a pieno titolo di un paesaggio. Certamente il paesaggio è parte importante della nostra storia, ma spesso non ne riconosciamo che un significato al passato remoto, cerchiamo di musealizzare un contesto, come nel dramma di Faust vorremmo fissare per sempre un'immagine immobile nel tempo. Ma il paesaggio è un processo in costante evoluzione, che richiede con continuità azioni progettuali. Paesaggio è progetto. Accanto ai paesaggi storici consacrati dobbiamo pensare anche, e forse soprattutto, ai nuovi paesaggi necessari per sostenerli, ai luoghi marginali e degradati, difendere, valorizzare innovare caratteri propri del nostro tempo. In effetti i paesaggi che hanno fatto parte della storia di Europa, dalla loro percezione al loro consumo attuale come un genere di turismo, sembrano avere esaurito una fase del loro ciclo creativo, o per lo meno sono incapaci di ricrearsi spontaneamente e di evolvere, così che sono sempre più come delle isole, diventano delle riserve più o meno protette, appunto perché giudicate beni rari e irriproducibili. Questo deficit ha la sua prima causa nell'estraniamento da parte delle popolazioni dalla consapevolezza dei paesaggi che abitano, vivono, conoscono. Così è di molti centri storici, di plessi archeologici e industriali, coltivazioni di pregio, aree naturali. Un po' parco, un po' museo il paesaggio è vissuto sempre più come una facility, proprio in senso tematico, una parte del territorio da tutelare come valore iconico, almeno nei suoi aspetti visibili. Causa questa che non potrebbe essere più nobile ma che è segnata da una crescente frustrazione per una eccessiva estensione fisica dei beni da proteggere, rispetto alle limitate risorse umane e materiali ragionevolmente disponibili – il patrimonio paesaggistico si è molto ampliato grazie a una maggiore sensibilità –, ed è segnata anche da uno squilibrio anch'esso crescente, rispetto a altre azioni progettuali che sono proprie della fisiologia di un paesaggio, la gestione e l'innovazione.

Così dovrebbe essere oggi una nostra consapevolezza del paesaggio, adeguata al nostro tempo, un solido anello di continuità concettuale fra nuovi e vecchi paesaggi, che non possono non essere fra loro interagenti. Non c'è futuro per un paesaggio storico senza questa proiezione critica, altrimenti diventa fatalmente sempre di più uno stereotipo caricaturale, né un nuovo paesaggio può prodursi felicemente senza la consapevolezza della storia del luogo, altrimenti si traduce solo in sterili misure materiali. È importante capire che il problema del paesaggio non è circoscritto a un immaginario agropastorale, a quanto sembri ancora non urbano o in uno stato (apparentemente) prevalentemente naturale, né limitato a un immaginario turistico. Se il dovere di proteggere il nostro paesaggio storico è sacrosanto, lo è altrettanto il compito di perpetuarne la stessa qualità nel tempo presente. Anzi i due doveri sono simbiotici, altrimenti denotano una comunità priva di memoria, di equilibrio e di progetto.

Ecco un'altra parola semplice e difficile, comunità. Il termine comunità torna con la Convenzione europea del paesaggio al centro della scena, ad adombrare la necessità politica di un cambiamento e a nutrirsi anche di un'attitudine di speranza.

#### As found

Dobbiamo non perdere mai il nostro compito critico ma dobbiamo anche amare il malato che pretendiamo di curare. Il punto è come percepire gli scenari del nostro quotidiano, con nuove forme che ne accettino la crescente discontinuità. Quali caratteri, quali qualità di nuova centralità sono necessari per rappresentare i nostri valori soprattutto dove vi è urgenza di nuovi paesaggi? Quanto è adeguato il nostro immaginario per interpretare una possibile inversione di tendenza della caduta di qualità dell'habitat? Cosa è in noi trascurato e represso?

"As found" è un tema-slogan geniale proposto dalla VI Conferenza di World in Denmark (Copenhagen University, Forest and Landscape, Research Group for Landscape architecture and –urbanism) tenuto a Copenhagen nel giugno 2010, che rappresenta bene un atteggiamento che io trovo quanto mai opportuno per un progetto della città non città.

L'approccio del progetto di paesaggio tende a privilegiare lo studio di relazioni, piuttosto che di oggetti fra loro coordinati, e tende in conseguenza a procedere per sistemi a scale anche molto diverse, non necessariamente continui nel tempo e nello spazio. Ogni autore creativo che si occupi di paesaggio ha sviluppato in questo periodo una visione laica delle aree di recente edificazione, un mondo con aspetti di degrado e di abbandono diffusi, molto vasto, troppo per poterlo affrontare

con mezzi finanziari idonei nella sua totalità. Per questo ci sembra giusto affrontare la contestualità dei siti, accettare il loro status "come sono", ascoltarli e accettarli come un punto di partenza positivo ("con una pietas che ricorda quella dell'Arpa Birmana", come dice Pier Paolo Balbo), "saperli vedere" ed accogliere le loro vocazioni a trasformarsi.

Questa accettazione non è cinica, anzi, coglie gli aspetti dinamici dei paesaggi urbani post-industriali, preferisce i particolari alla totalità, nasce come ricerca di un'opera aperta (Umberto Eco), sceglie il volgare e l'ordinario quando sono promettenti di implicazioni pratiche, il quotidiano invece dell'alta cultura, una ana-estetica curiosa e sperimentatrice in luogo di una estetica priva di angolo critico. Certamente è un percorso non privo di rischi, ad esempio di una indulgenza eccessiva per il vernacolo (Robert Venturi, al quale dobbiamo peraltro le due geniali intuizioni di Ambiguità e contraddizione nell'architettura e imparando da Las Vegas, senza le quali la nostra storia sarebbe oggi diversa), ma nell'espressione libera straordinarie energie ("Il paesaggio grado zero del linguaggio in architettura", ancora Zevi). Questo è in fondo il lascito dell'ultima produzione dei grandi maestri dell'architettura (Aalto, Wright, Corbu, Mies, Kahn), di tanti autori che non potremmo definire altrimenti che paesaggisti (Burlingame-Marx, Barragàn, Halprin, Noguchi, Kienast, Shigemori, Pikionis, Porcinai ...) e di tanti artisti a partire dagli anni Settanta, della landart (Smithson, De Maria, Heiser), o minimali e concettuali (Serra, Morris, Trakas, Warhol, Sol Lewit, Judd). L'obiettivo non facile di dare corpo a nuovi paesaggi è il tentativo di stabilire dei nessi condivisi di senso in quella dimensione non più rurale né urbana che caratterizza tanti insediamenti contemporanei. Sotto questo aspetto si potrebbe dire che i nuovi paesaggi, se capiti, voluti, progettati, gestiti da una comunità consapevole e partecipe, sono come i monumenti della contemporaneità, perché fissano nello sprawl riferimenti e caratteri vitali per la comunità.

Noi non crediamo che questa attitudine si possa definire come una anti-utopia, anzi. Lavorare in omeopatia con gli stessi elementi che troviamo nei nuovi contesti e vogliamo fare evolvere, lavorare in agopuntura per sistemi discreti, spesso discontinui, lavorare per informazioni e in rete, per flussi per punti e segmenti, nella speranza che punti di applicazione di risorse umane e materiali molto limitate, scelti in modo intelligente, possano generare virtuosi effetti indotti, tutto ciò ci sembra descrivere bene un'idea utopica. Le idee di identità e di ecologia vi hanno entrambe un riferimento centrale ma faticano enormemente per il momento a depositarsi in processi progett-





tuali unitari. L'imperativo ecologico, figlio della emergenza, purtroppo informa e trasforma il nostro modo di considerare l'interazione tra uomo e natura sopprimendo ogni esigenza simbolica (non è così per alcuni pensatori, tra i quali Lucien Kroll). Questo dipende dalle storie diverse della crisi dell'ambiente e della crisi del paesaggio, entrambe gravissime, spesso tra loro confuse, la prima con interpretazioni che privilegiano aspetti fisico-materiali in forza alle normative europee sulla sostenibilità, la seconda con adesioni invece estetizzanti e conservatrici nonostante la novità della Convenzione Europea del Paesaggio, che in molti paesi come l'Italia è ora una legge operante di indirizzo avanzata e colta. La via della ricerca di identità spettacolari e eccezionali, figlia della straordinaria forza della pubblicità, sembra circoscriversi in uno stallo autoreferenziale, produrre al contrario squilibrio e non aggregare, non suggerire né emulazione né attività indotte. La via invece di identità meno spettacolari sembra poter interagire bene con ciò "che è trovato" e essere promettente rispetto a nuove pratiche professionali.

#### Un ambito disciplinare

Il paesaggio come approccio, come disciplina, non compete con altri saperi, li integra e li completa nei processi progettuali di tutela gestione e innovazione, è spesso dirimente nel definire un ambito disciplinare, che è necessariamente molto complesso, fra cui naturalmente sono in evidenza l'architettura e l'urbanistica, discipline creative fondamentali ma non più sufficienti per diagnosi e interpretazioni generaliste che si perdono in oggetti e misure. Landscape as project è una mia intervista a molte università europee afferenti a Uniscape sul progetto di paesaggio per l'attuazione della Convenzione europea (2009). Credo che il corpo delle risposte offra un'idea chiara di un'attitudine creativa, di una esperienza acquisita e di un metodo che sono quanto mai fertili e in progress: un ambito disciplinare molto ampio e variegato è in movimento in cerca di maggiori sintonie, si sente la necessità di un colloquio ininterrotto fra tutti gli attori dei processi progettuali con nuove forme di partecipazione e concertazione, dalla esperienza degli osservatori diffusi ormai in tutta Europa si tende a serrare un rapporto più stretto di interazione continua fra diagnosi e interpretazione dei contesti in cui si interviene, in ogni momento, dalla ideazione alla realizzazione e gestione. In questa visione che segue rotte polari a volte anche molto diverse – storia, geografia, economia, architettura, urbanistica, pianificazione, agraria, ingegneria ambientale, biologia, ecologia, etnologia, semiotica, comunicazione ... – tutti concordano che il paesaggio è una qualità dell'habitat profondamente legata alla comunità che lo vive (o lo subisce), da difen-

dere e mantenere dove esista, da creare se sia assente o sbiadita.

Emergono alcune importanti questioni: Ci si chiede, ad esempio, come relazionare gli insegnamenti di paesaggio con quelli di architettura e urbanistica, come adattare le prescrizioni della sostenibilità all'attuazione della Convenzione, se la Convenzione possa essere proposta validamente in altri continenti (ad esempio in Cina). Fino a chiedersi – trovo molto interessante anche solo pensando all'habitat, che conterrebbe anche l'ambiente – se si possa immaginare una Convenzione internazionale più ampia che contenga anche quella del paesaggio. Ci si chiede infine se vi sia la capacità di convergere di tante discipline diverse su obiettivi comuni condivisi che non limitino la ricchezza semantica e il radicamento sociale del paesaggio, se siano sufficienti gli attuali approcci per la formazione di una nuova scienza del paesaggio o se sia necessario crearne di completamente nuovi, sapendo però che vi è una domanda che è certamente sbagliata, chi debba dirigere il progetto di paesaggio.

#### Il paesaggista

L'IFLA, the International Federation of Landscape Architects, definisce le competenze del paesaggista, che sono riassunte in questo punto: lo sviluppo di teorie, linee programmatiche e metodi nuovi o innovativi per la pianificazione, la progettazione e la gestione del paesaggio a livello locale, nazionale e multinazionale; Credo che il nostro lavoro di paesaggisti sia essenzialmente questo, cercare di evocare e interpretare quelle vocazioni della città che possano generare qualità di centralità che il mondo contemporaneo, segnato da una crescita per accumulazione, fa invece fatica a produrre spontaneamente. Questo approccio agisce, nella diagnosi come nella interpretazione dei temi, con un metodo fortemente indiziario, capace di cogliere il senso di un'evoluzione dinamica del territorio in armonia con il patrimonio e con l'ambiente, senza disgiungerla dalla cultura figurativa, oltre che materiale, del proprio tempo. Una delle ragioni di particolare efficacia che lo caratterizzano è una accezione diacronica alle diverse scale di progetto, dalle immensamente grandi alle più piccole. Opera prima, durante, e dopo i vari momenti della pianificazione di un territorio, con strategie di intervento del tutto particolari, processuali e partecipative, con una grande necessità di sperimentazione essendo le fattispecie sempre diverse e difficilmente tipizzabili, definite con decisioni in tempo e spazio reale secondo le esigenze. Suo fine è di esprimere quei caratteri carismatici nei quali la comunità possa rappresentarsi e riconoscersi. Questi caratteri devono avere una visibilità che

"buchi" l'esuberante folla di immagini che acceca lo spazio quotidiano. In questo quadro le idee di patrimonio e di ambiente sono state assunte dalla società come valori positivi propiziatori che si sono tradotti in immagini, secondo i nuovi dettati della cultura della comunicazione, molto vitali ma non privi di salti logici e di semplificazioni aberranti.

#### Una faccenda astrusa e complicata

Il nostro modo di saper vedere il paesaggio nelle sue nuove forme, come quelle della nuova città, non più urbana, né rurale, né naturale, deve essere illuminato da una conoscenza delle sue leggi che solo l'esperienza del progetto può cogliere nella loro integrità, di processi che dalla ideazione alla realizzazione di un'opera vedano la responsabilità di individui e comunità e poi di autori precisarsi, partire da sintesi di diagnosi e interpretazione delle dinamiche dei contesti in cui interviene e cogliere obiettivi che devono essere ambiziosi quanto le condizioni lo consentano. Difficile? Naturalmente. "Che imparino a pensar difficile, perché né il mistero né l'evidenza sono facili" diceva Umberto Eco (1997). Il lavoro del paesaggista non è molto diverso da quello di chiunque sia dedicato e appassionato, divorato, da una passione di scoperta per il bene comune. La sua forza è in un approccio, una mentalità, un'esperienza basate su una visione indiziaria che ha capacità di analizzare il contesto in cui opera se già appoggiata da un'intuizione progettuale. Non è altro, in fondo, che una vocazione comune a tutti quei cittadini che si pongano in modo creativo rispetto al territorio in cui vivono, rappresentato in un modo così esemplare da un personaggio che dovremmo accogliere ad onore fra le nostre fonti più autentiche, Sherlock Holmes di Conan Doyle. Ascoltatelo: "Oh, il mistero!" Rispose (Holmes), tornando di soprassalto alla realtà della vita. "Beh, sarebbe assurdo negare che si tratti di una faccenda molto astrusa e complicata, ma le prometto che esaminerò la cosa e le farò sapere se ci sono dei punti che mi colpiscono particolarmente." "Vede qualche indizio?". "Me ne ha forniti sette, ma naturalmente devo controllarli prima di pronunciarmi sul loro valore." "Sospetta di qualcuno?" "Sospetto di me stesso". "Come?" "Di giungere troppo rapidamente alle conclusioni."



## Room for the River

DIRK SIJMONS

*Dirk Sijmons (M.Sc. Engineering) (b.1949), landscape architect, senior consultant studied architecture and planning at the Technical University of Delft. In 1990 he was one of the three founders of H+N+S Landscape-architects. H+N+S Landscape Architects received the National Prince Bernard Culture award in 2001. From 1994 onward Sijmons is the chairman of the board of OASE, the scientific, bilingual (Dutch/English), Journal on Architecture Theory. In 2002 he received the Rotterdam-Maaskant award for his contribution to landscape theory and his role in the national debate. To this occasion his book Landkaartmos was published. Other books by Sijmons are Oorden van Onthouding (1998, about nature and design), =Landschap/ =Landscape(1998, in English 2002) on landscape design on a regional scale. In 2006 his book Een plan dat werkt (a plan that works, on policymaking and design) was published. His most recent publication is Greeting from Europe a book addressing the relationship between Leisure & Landscape in Europe (2008). Sijmons was appointed State Landscape Architect of the Netherlands for the period 2004-2008. He received the prestigious Edgar Doncker-award for his contribution to Dutch culture in 2007. From the start of the academic year 2008 Sijmons is professor Environmental Design at the Technical University in Delft.*

Throughout the centuries, space for the rivers in the Netherlands has become more and more limited. The closing of the river dikes in the mid of the 15th century were the first step. From the 15th to the 18th century the river was regulated by building dams pushing back the river to let it erode itself to navigable depth. The 19th and 20th century this work was perfected by building the smaller groynes (breakwaters) to normalize the river in its summer bed. Urbanization along the rivers did not limit the space left for the river but made the rigid corset that was already tightened irreversible. Nowadays the rivers are wedged between high dikes, while the subsidence of the soil behind the dikes is making things worse. If a flood would occur under these conditions, the amount of casualties as well as the economic and emotional damage would be huge. In 1993 and 1995 the river water reached an alarming high level and the dikes just managed to hold their own. In 1995 almost half a million people were evacuated from the river area. Climate change will effect the rivers too. Higher (and lower!) discharges will have to be met now that the Rhine will change character from a melt water/rain water to a rain water river. To meet this challenge in 2006 the Dutch Cabinet has created a package of measures called the Key Spatial Planning Decision 'Room for the River'. The main objectives are flood protection by 2015 and improved overall environmental quality in the river basin region.

Room-for-the-River is a remarkable project in many ways. After the Cabinet acknowledged in 2004 that climate change was set off and that the Netherlands had to prepare and adapt itself to it, Room-for-the-River is the first large scale adaptation project (budget 2.3 billion Euro) to make our vulnerable country climate-proof. It is to give a better flood-protection to 2-4 million people. In 2015 the Rhine braches will safely have to cope

with a discharge of 16.000 m<sup>3</sup> per second (Now 15.000 m<sup>3</sup>/s). Safety will further be enhanced in an analogue follow-up project after 2015 that will dimension the system to discharges up to 18.000 m<sup>3</sup> per second.

The project is also remarkable because the Dutch Pavlov-reaction to answer the new thread with another cycle of raising the dikes was suppressed. Instead the solution is being sought in giving more room to the river. There are six ways opening up to more safety. One could relocate the dikes to allow more room for high discharges. The second is making flood by-passes through the flood plains. Shaving off the top soil from the flood plain is also very effective. Lowering the groynes decreases the resistance for the water too. 'Green rivers' between new dams are a possibility also They can act as spatial reservations that can be used in special cases but are still able to support normal land-use. And finally removing or mitigating obstacles such as bridges or old ferry piers are also a very effective ways to lowering the mean high water. The projects in the Room-for-the-River program all use a mix of two or more instruments from this six-pack of space makers. And of course as an addition the 'traditional' strengthening of the levees are employed where urgently needed.

A real trend crack is the organization of the project. In the 20th century a project like this would have been organized top-down by our Rijkswaterstaat (1) that once was dubbed 'A State within a State' by critics. Because times have changed and we need all the support that can be rallied - remember Room-for-the-River will have an even more ambitious follow-up - it was decided that the State would facilitate and finance the project as a whole but that the execution would be mostly decentralized. In that way lower governments would be able to make use of the momentum of the pro-

ject and link local programs to the water planning project. Making local governments responsible for sub-projects would lead to more customized results and in the end would be more effective and more swiftly executed than trying thing the old fashioned top-down way. A long-list of almost six-hundred possible measures to give room to the river were identified in the preliminary phase of the project. A design study was being executed to see if coherent clusters of measures could lead to more effective and/or more elegant solutions. A shorter list of potential measures were negotiated with local governments, provinces and district water boards. Those local governments that seemed most eager to take on this responsibility almost all had own programs that could only materialize by linking up with Room-for-the-River. The State budget is of course restricted to the safety goals but sometimes the way of reaching these goals can produce synergy with a lot of local spin-off. Finally thirty-nine projects that together would be able to reach the goals set were selected in the Spatial Planning Key Decision that was approved by Parliament in 2006. The SPKD Room for the River contains a general description of the types of measures, the locations for most of the measures and the expected effects. Before a measure can actually be implemented, it has to be worked out further in a planning study in which the exact location and details are determined. An environmental impact assessment is required for many of the measures, giving local residents, authorities and other stakeholders the chance to have their say.

The last reason to use the word 'remarkable', and the motive to adress readers of Topos magazine, is that Spatial Quality was introduced in this project as the second main-goal, next to safety. The sub-projects and as well as the overall project have to





result in the improvement of spatial quality (including nature, recreation and accessibility). In my capacity as the State Advisor on Landscape I made a proposal to initiate a Quality-team that would advise the Rijkswaterstaat and the Minister, solicited and un-solicited, on the Spatial Quality aspects of these thirty-nine projects, a proposal that was also greeted by the local governments that were to be involved. This independent Q-team was established at the very start of the project, in 2006. We work with a rather broad definition of spatial quality. We define it as the consistency between hydrological effectiveness, ecological robustness and esthetical soundness with possibilities for recreational or urban development. If you could translate the Vitruvius triangle of *firmitas*, *comoditas* and *venustas* into value for the future, value for use and beauty the family resemblance is still visible. The Q-team includes an urban designer, an ecologist, a river-expert, a hydrologist and is chaired by a landscape architect. At four moments in every of the thirty-nine project the Q-team is involved, from the early start to the preliminary and definitive design where we advise on 'architectonic specifications' in the tender documents. The first three visits, discussions and advises are collegiate. The advices are sent to the project-manager and the political responsible and to the Rijkswaterstaat. Our final and more formal advise is to the Minister to report if the project has the confidence of the Q-team. This is part of a more comprehensive final proofing before the budget is made payable to the local government involved in the sub-project.

The first year the complete cohort of projects had to go out of the starting blocks. That's why the Q-team has been on the job for one day a week. Our sessions are mostly held on location so that the essential field trips can be included. We try to be an ally to the designers, ecologists and hydrologists in the project teams but also a close advisor to the Project management and the Rijkswaterstaat that feels the Q-team is their eyes and ears on the shop floor. Our aim is to stimulate the formation of design teams where the disciplines can truly work together. Where possible we try to release and make use of local knowledge. All the scales have their own specific design questions. The Q-team stimulates designing through the levels of scale: from formulating the concept to crucial details (and back!).

Room-for-the-River has to report to Parliament through a special protocol. Because spatial quality is more difficult to measure or to scale than the financial of the hydrological figures of the project the Q-team brings out a yearly report where the progress is being described in detail and the projects are illustrated by design drawings.

Looking back on 2,5 years of experience we can

conclude that the Q-team is more than accepted in this technically dominated context. It forms an integral and integrative part of this decentralized project. The Q-team's effectiveness is both preventive and curative. Preventive in the sense that the large firms that are tendering for these works get incentives to hire talented landscape architects and other designers because they know they have to face the Q-team. Curative because there is no better way to boost quality than collegiate debates and we help the designers to get in an optimal position to make their contribution. Of course the real proof that spatial quality has been enhanced will be in the completion of the works round 2015. Rijkswaterstaat is currently discussing a possible role of the Q-team during the execution phase of the works.

*(1) Rijkswaterstaat, founded in 1798 as the 'Bureau voor den Waterstaat', is part of the Dutch Ministry of Transportation and Water Management that is delegated the task of the practical execution of the so-called waterstaat, this includes the construction of waterways and roads and the maintenance of these.*



## About Expectations, Preconceptions and Beauty: Man-Made Landscapes in Dry Climates

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For landscape architects working in dry climates the question of what kind of landscaping is appropriate for a particular site and type of project is critical to answer. In dry and hot conditions the desire for green is no less present than in moderate climates, but its realization has a prize, both environmentally and economically. We know today that we have to depart from common stereotypes of 'green' beauty in order to create resilient and lasting projects. Influencing and changing people's perception and their subsequent acceptance of new types of designed landscapes is therefore an additional aspect of our work. We have to understand where these preconceptions and ideas about landscape beauty come from: it helps explaining people's pre-conditioning as a result of their emotional and cultural background, and it can give us clues about how to satisfy or modify them.

Our professional world is full of ideas as to how we will create functional, green and special projects for the future. It is those three attributes that are typically mentioned by clients when starting a new project, meant to ensure the design of successful new landscapes. Functional projects should be program responsive, site specific, cost effective, easy maintainable and socially responsible. Green projects should be sustainable, ecologically conscientious, culturally connected, but also in a more literal reading of the word they might have to answer to the public yearning for lush-green open spaces; and finally under the heading of Special we are asked to create artistic, recognizable, iconographic or unique works of landscape architecture. Most projects do not answer to all of these aspirations, many do not have to. An inner-city neighborhood park will have different design priorities than the landscape treatment of an interstate highway or of a kilometer-long urban traffic island.

And underlying, there is always the overriding expectation to create beautiful new landscapes. Achieving this goal is very much influenced by the aesthetic and emotional preconceptions of what we collectively perceive to be beautiful: as landscape architects our interventions are always instigated by people for people, or at least the needs of

people. The positive emotional response to a new landscape by its users and clients plays a key role in ensuring the future survival of any work.

In order to advocate new aesthetics for sustainable landscapes, we as planners of new landscapes and open space systems have to understand the concept of beauty and how we can use it: not only to please but also to change present preconceptions. Both Christophe Girod and Gerd Aufmkolk are mentioning beauty as a central argument and tool to make people understand and subsequently treasure landscapes that carry negative connotations. Strengthening the connection between a landscape's beauty and its 'usefulness' and productivity will help preserving it.<sup>(1)</sup> Elizabeth K. Meyer emphasizes the role of aesthetic experiences to trigger people's sense of stewardship and passion for sustainable landscapes by adding beauty as part of the architectural design language: Design that adds aesthetic experiences to the performance and understanding of natural processes.<sup>(2)</sup>

If we can convince people through our work that a desert landscape – as an example – has beauty not only because of its intense austerity and its ability to make us focus on the essential, but also because of its fragility and role in preserving biodiversity, we increase our ability to defend it against development pressures and advocate it as an aesthetic model for designed landscape projects in arid areas. Striking the equilibrium between the degree of intensive landscaping specific to the type of project and its natural setting is the most important and basic goal we strive to achieve. This is where we frequently have difficulties to convince our clients: testing beauty not on the level of aesthetic architectural design but when answering the question of what is appropriately beautiful for a particular climate, type of project and its natural and cultural environment.

What are then the reasons for the global infatuation with lush-green landscapes – preferably with some sort of water feature in it? If we want to modify the aesthetic ideal of a successful/beautiful landscape, and expand the repertoire of possible 'models', it helps to understand where our ideas

about desirable landscapes come from, at least in reference to western civilization.<sup>(3)</sup>

It was the Persians that gave us 2500 years ago the word pairi-daeza (enclosed space), describing the hunting grounds of the kings. "The Zoroastrians idealized the concept of a protected place as the origin of the world. This paradeiza gave us paradise, an ideal that was passed onto the three monotheistic religions".<sup>(4)</sup> These hunting grounds were divided into four quarters, containing irrigation channels, a central pool, and forests for wood and fruit. The mastering of rainwater retention and the management of water runoff for agriculture held the key to survival. As a result, water was recognized and celebrated as a symbol of life, and as an expression of culture, sophistication and status. Cultivated and well-tended landscapes were associated with security and plenty, the 'wild' was feared.

The design of this earthly paradise was exported by the Muslims to the Arabian Peninsula and to the Mogul gardens of Northern India, and in Europe to Andalusian Spain. Over the centuries the original design of the hunting grounds with its trees, orchards and running water in the form of water channels and fountains found its way into the design of medieval monastery gardens, renaissance gardens and filtering down in various degrees to every other subsequent landscape design style. It was such that originally formal and spiritual yet highly utilitarian paradise garden developed into an abundantly green open space with sweeping meadows, large trees and water. The word paradise has gone far from its meaning as an earthly manifestation of heaven onto becoming a marketing concept to describe and promote a myriad of different commodities: paradise holidays, cruises, resorts, paradise golf courses and islands, to name a few. Swaying palm trees along dark-blue lakes and water falls are inseparable from today's public image of a paradisiacal setting and an ideal landscape. The formal design language of these open spaces varies today, but many of them require high maintenance and large amounts of water to sustain their plantings. There is probably no better example than the man-made landscapes of the desert town of Las Vegas that so concisely illustrate



the public's desire for status-laden grass-green open spaces.

The 20th century saw an unprecedented global export of western values, including its ideas about landscape beauty. It is partially because of this that we find today the same three basic landscape building components – admittedly oversimplified – all over the world: trees, grass and water. The problem is that we are asked to use them no matter where we are and what we have to design. Municipalities, private clients and corporations all want their share of 'lush-green'. And so we are coming back to the original premise that the key to arriving at more functional, green and special landscape designs – in short successful and sustainable designs – is to influence the expectations and preconceptions about what is beautiful.

As a starting point to achieve this premise it was helpful to study the existing natural and cultural landscapes that are often deeply loved and appreciated by the public. What we understood was that landscapes which are meaningful to people – whether because they are culturally and socially rooted, productive, useful, or natural – will be perceived as beautiful. Thus the elements of these landscapes can become alternative themes for new landscape designs. Examples in Israel include the ancient terraced slopes of the Judean Hills planted with olive groves which symbolize man's survival in an otherwise inhospitable environment (Picture 1), the agricultural landscapes of citrus groves and wheat fields which's order and productiveness we understand on the most basic level as the foundation of our existence; and the rock formations of the Negev desert and the forested slopes of the northern Galilee whose sheer vastness inspires awe.

From the viewpoint of our office's experience of working in the dry climate of Israel, we will present projects that generated positive public feedback and debate through site specific designs. With these projects, we focus on five different approaches: using agriculture as a design concept, creating landscapes by taking advantage of natural processes, using abstraction to fit in, blending into the background, and strategic phasing allowing for a change in public opinion.

***Using Agriculture as a Design Concept: The Example of the Ben Gurion International Airport and the Ben Shemen Highway Interchange***

The landscape design for the international airport of Israel exemplifies the use of agriculture as a means to achieve both sustainability and cultural identification. The landscape area of the airport is a sixty-five acres site, which includes the in-

terchange and approach roads, and a central enclosed garden (five acres). Our overall approach to the airport landscape design was to relate strongly to the agricultural landscape of the surroundings: the traditional citrus groves and agricultural fields. This was done by planting new citrus groves on a massive scale (4,500 grapefruit and orange trees). The trees are planted, as in a commercial orange grove, in rows on a grid without groundcover, and plowed once a year. Hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of soil (from the building foundation excavations) were moved to sculpt the gentle slopes between adjacent roads and ramps, creating continuous ground surfaces with little surface erosion in spite of the complex topography of the road system. It was imperative to create a low maintenance landscape for such a large planting, as well as low water consumption for most of the airport grounds.

The central garden is an abstraction of the natural region with its particular topography and its man-made agricultural development, graphically presented to the view of the passersby. The design is a clear summary of the physical characteristics of the iconographic landscape from the coastal plain around Tel Aviv up to the mountains of Jerusalem. Just as in the real landscape, the garden begins with the sea, followed by palm and citrus groves, past agricultural fields, and up to the olive groves and cypresses of the Judean Hills. As the newcomer leaves the airport, he might well travel immediately through the real landscape as it is represented in the airport garden.

For a very long time the ascent to Jerusalem has been a treasured journey for visitors and pilgrims of all denominations alike. By incorporating this experience into the garden it is hoped that the traveler will have a deepened feeling for this place wherever he may go.

***Creating landscapes by taking advantage of natural processes: Afforestation Models in the Desert through Erosion Control***

Once in a while we come across a project that sets out to remedy a particular disturbance without the conscious attempt to know and fulfill its potential as a green infrastructure at its outset. The following erosion control project in the Negev desert is such an example. When it was initiated forty years ago, it was mostly void of human settlement activity. Today, this area is increasingly populated by the rapidly expanding population of Bedouins who abandon their nomadic lifestyle in favor of permanent settlements, and by the expansion of existing Jewish agricultural communal settlements. The growing and very young population of these places also has a growing need for recreational open space.

In the early 1950s, the Jewish National Fund initiated this afforestation program in the Negev desert, which was expanded in the 1960s with our participation into a broad effort of plantings combined with general changes to the topography of the ravines. Without vegetation, semi-arid lands such as these are subject to severe erosion. To limit erosion in areas of strong runoff and flooding it was decided to re-grade the wadis (ravines) and plant various types of trees in the shallow bowels that were created. Low earth dams surrounded the catchment areas to prevent rapid dispersal of floodwaters. Where big floods were known to occur, simple damming methods were employed, such as the laying of wooden posts and tree branches across the watercourse. This one-time grading and planting effort with no irrigation or any further maintenance necessary is an example of how small-scale systematic alterations in land use or techniques can trigger dramatic changes of a landscape.

These changes resulted in adjustments both to the flora and fauna of the immediate area and, in time, to the region as a whole. There are, of course, debates about the ecological meaning of these changes, which are bound to bring about the loss of some species and the gain of others. In the case of the erosion control in ravines, it is felt that positive results have arisen from this practice. The new habitat corridors, which have come into existence, have been beneficial for a great number of animals and plants. In addition, these green corridors might well turn into the future parks for the growing human population, providing much needed shade for picnics and other recreational activities. This work represents one of those open-ended projects whose full potential might only be met in the future.

***Using Abstraction to fit in: Negev Phosphate Works***

One of Israel's major mining industries is the exploitation of the phosphates in the Negev Desert. For decades the Negev Phosphate Works had been removing these materials by open-pit mining. The result has been the creation of a desolate landscape of huge holes with adjacent waste heaps some 40 meters high. Mounting public pressure compelled the company to commission a plan to deal with the ecological and environmental damage caused by its mines.

Our strategy called for new mining procedures that eliminate the open pits by refilling them once the phosphates have been removed. The area, slope, and shape of the fill deposits are predetermined in the plan and echo the surrounding crescent-shaped geological formations. The end result is that a new landscape is created, an abstraction of its natural environment: in effect a gigantic envi-



ronmental sculpture.

***Blending into the Background: Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum Complex***

The design for the Holocaust Memorial was intended to create an environment of support and reflection on the past while emphasizing its connection to the present by making it feel part of the surroundings of Jerusalem. The Museum presents the tragic history of the Jewish Holocaust of the 20th Century. Bearing in mind the subject of the Museum, we felt that the design for the new Museum complex should not draw any attention to itself, and that the landscaping of the open spaces should provide the background to the experience of the exhibitions. The design had to allow for the flow of a great number of visitors through the site in a simple and quiet way, controlling the masses of people while still allowing for private and intimate experiences for the individual visitor. In accordance with the desire for a minimalist treatment of the physical surroundings of the memorials and museum, we developed an overall language of light-washed stone-paved plazas contrasting with dense plantings of trees and bushes. Based on the same palette of materials, the individual character of each plaza was defined by different interpretations of the same design elements, by using different stone sizes and finishes, and by the use of differing tree species for each space. On the larger scale the landscape design of the site integrates the complex in its natural surroundings by the choice of vegetation and materials as well as by maintaining open views from and into the grounds.

***Strategic Design allowing for a Change of Mind: Park Herzeliya***

The site of this large urban park in the Tel Aviv Metropolitan Area (180 acres) is a historical flood basin draining toward the Mediterranean Sea via an ancient roman aqueduct. More than half of the surrounding town's storm drainage ends up on the site. Large seasonal winter ponds protected the land from real estate development in the center of an otherwise very densely populated area. This rare urban habitat for migrating birds and amphibians was however hidden from view and widely snubbed as mosquito breeding grounds. At the time of the first stage design we had no public support on any level to advocate a park design based on an ecological platform. As part of a public survey and a workshop we did know however what the public's wish list included: playgrounds, lawns, a lake and an amphitheater. We therefore made a strategic decision to design the first 40 acres as an active and intensively developed park section that addresses the first wave of demands of its projected users, hoping that the public would discover in time the value and beauty of

the winter ponds with their rich wildlife. The first stage park also contributed actively to this process of learning: earth mounds were created that afford viewing platforms toward the winter ponds and separate the active areas from the more quiet areas of the park and its surroundings: concrete-lined drainage channels were naturally rehabilitated, showing people the workings of the water; finally, the entire irrigation system of the park was based on waste-water use, making the extensive use of lawn justifiable.

Two years after the opening of the first stage we started construction on the second development stage, extending the park to the north past the winter ponds. The strategic phasing of the park's program fulfilled our expectations and those of the public, and it helped to change the agenda for the second phase: protecting the existing wetlands, letting people experience and learn about this particular piece of urban nature, with bird watching trails and observation facilities, bicycle and running lanes that provide connections to other parts of the site and to the town, and alternative sport attractions like a bicycle pump track.

***Conclusion***

As architects we strive to create successful, special, sustainable, and lasting projects. The key to achieving this goal is to mediate between the expectations and needs of clients, users and planners, and the realities and needs of the natural environment. Especially in dry climates design approaches have to be site-specific, in respect to water availability and natural processes but also in respect to people's interaction and cultural connection with these newly designed landscapes. The success and survival of these landscapes over time depends on the acceptance of the people who experience them: whether they connect to them on a social, cultural or aesthetic level, considering them interesting, useful, engaging or just simply beautiful.

(1) Symposium RETURN OF THE LANDSCAPE, Academy of Arts Berlin, May 2010

(2) See Elizabeth K. Meyer, *Sustaining beauty. The performance of appearance: A manifesto in three parts*, *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, spring 2008, p.6-23

(3) for reference and insight into the history and present path of Chinese landscape aesthetics see Kongjian Yu, *The Good Earth recovered*, in 'Return of the Landscape', Donata Valentien (Ed.), Jovis, 2010

(4) Sue Freeman, *Manuscript for the lecture 'Looking for Eden'*, Limudfest, London 2009



## Verticalscapes

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Lo que hoy entendemos por parque nace en el momento en el que alguien traza un camino sinusoidal atravesando un fragmento virgen de naturaleza y descubre lo atractivo que es conseguir que nunca coincidan las direcciones del ojo y los pies, que los caminos rodeen el objeto de la visión y construyan una escenografía de la mirada y un ballet con la motricidad del cuerpo. Este interés por la "experiencia" que se inaugura a finales del siglo XVIII como tema de orden estético basada en el empirismo, cien años después la modernidad lo reelaboró introduciendo esos caminos en los edificios –Le Corbusier los llamó acertadamente "promenades arquitecturales" y con ellos atravesaba sus proyectos que se convertían así en naturalezas muertas cinemáticas, encontrando un duplicado del jardín pintoresco en el interior de sus arquitecturas (las ventanas-paisaje unían y separaban ambos, al exterior los jardines enmarcados, al interior las naturalezas muertas cubistas, haz y envés de una concepción que ampliaba a tres dimensiones el ballet y la escenografía sinusoidal)–.

Hoy, las formas sinuosas más complejas han entrado a formar parte de la arquitectura y el paisajismo incorporando nuevas referencias plásticas, nuevas técnicas y materiales, nuevos paradigmas científicos y nuevas "dimensiones", con la incorporación del tiempo como instrumento de proyectación. Aún está por escribir la historia de esta línea sinusoidal en arquitectura y paisajismo pero también está aún por imaginar lo que semejante expansión de sus posibilidades espacio-temporales puede dar de sí en el futuro próximo. Algo conoceremos si miramos al lugar en el que surgen las ideas, esas incubadoras que son las Escuelas de Arquitectura y de Paisaje. La línea sinusoidal recibe en ellas, actualmente, una atención y una evolución vertiginosas. Vayamos donde vayamos, sea cual sea el país o el profesor, la escuela o la tendencia dominante, los futuros arquitectos/paisajistas ensayan y repiten inconscientemente pero al unísono un mismo gesto aún frustrado, casi nunca exitoso, pero con esa obstinación que solo da el estar abducido por una idea que "hay" que hacer, y que va consolidándose así como necesaria. Y lo que se modela con esta reiteración es algo que difícilmente puede catalogarse en los compartimentos de la "arquitectura" o del "paisaje",

porque busca obstinadamente fundir ambos, enroscarse formando hélices o nidos o cestos o tornados. Se trata de construir una entidad híbrida que solo la inercia nos permite llamarla momentáneamente aún construcción vertical o "arquitectura". Esta "entidad" vertical es una amalgama, un material a la vez natural y artificial, y busca construir una experiencia análoga a la que nuestros maestros modernos llamaban parque, espacio público, ágora, tecnificando para ello su hilazón sinusoidal. Al hacerlo, generalmente enroscándose sobre sí misma, genera no solo una naturaleza diferente, cuya manipulación permite construir programas híbridos, de ocio y productivos, explicados frecuentemente como ecosistemas, parques naturales, parques temáticos, laberintos, granjas agrícolas y ganaderas...También genera "entidades" autosuficientes y abiertas, parques energéticos que utilizan el viento, el agua, la luz o la tierra como materiales activos de construcción, capaces de almacenar energía y servir a la vez como recursos públicos y económicos.

A lo que asistimos con estos ensayos es a la disolución simultánea y sincronizada de los dos momentos álgidos de la modernidad: el rasca-cielos y el gran parque urbano como momentos intrínsecamente "opuestos"; a la disolución de la dicotomía entonces planteada y que hoy no está vigente, no tiene sentido como tal, pues todo, desde la vida cotidiana a los grandes titulares de las catástrofes naturales, desde lo cutáneo a lo cósmico, desde la respiración a la publicidad, nos dice que hay otro mundo al margen de las oposiciones modernas y que es ese otro mundo, su ser híbrido y múltiple, el que debe ser objeto de nuestra atención, el que se construye a sí mismo como un nuevo material –una nueva amalgama– y un nuevo tiempo –el presente, nuestro tiempo, no el de otros–.

Esta amalgama vertical es en definitiva una nueva entidad, un nuevo parque ajustado a una nueva percepción y a una nueva noción de ocio: una entidad dirigida a establecer nuevos diálogos entre los humanos y los no humanos, levantar un nuevo "parlamento de las cosas", para utilizar la expresión de Bruno Latour (cuya influencia no es desdeñable). En ella se da de forma privilegiada

la necesaria integración de arquitectura, paisaje y medioambiente. Es, por así decirlo, su culminación. Y en ello reside su interés, en ser a la vez origen y cristalización final de una comprensión "termodinámica" del espacio público capaz de fundir tres disciplinas –arquitectura, paisaje, medioambiente– en una nueva idea en la que tanto elementos naturales y artificiales como sistemas de captación energética sirven a una materialización híbrida. No es difícil vaticinar que veremos esta idea construida en pocos años, como resultado actualizado de un artificio proyectual con más de 200 años. El último parque será vertical, se construirá en todas las grandes metrópolis y dará nueva vida al paisajismo como disciplina del espacio público y el medioambiente.

Presentamos a continuación cuatro proyectos de nuestra oficina que suponen distintas formas de aproximación a la idea de "verticalscape".

### 1. Hotel M-40, Madrid

El hotel M-40 se ubica en las afueras de Madrid, en un paisaje desierto cruzado por los lazos de las autopistas, colgado en el aire sin ninguna conexión con la cota del suelo, y con entrada directamente desde la M-40. Volumen principal a modo de una montaña con las texturas y los colores escogidos del paisaje silvestre del lugar esta sujeto sobre diez torres de hormigón que lo atraviesan, con las habitaciones del hotel, una en cada planta, revestidas con vidrio de alta reflexión solar haciendo confundir y desaparecer sus volúmenes. Una vez dentro la carretera atraviesa el volumen de la 'montaña' hasta la cubierta pasando por diferentes usos públicos accesibles desde el coche, y diferentes espacios públicos con programas típicos de la vida del suburbio: centro comercial, multicines, feria de convenciones y exposiciones, instalaciones deportivas, etc. El espacio central, el gran foyer, es un parque exterior cubierto, que corta el edificio en el medio y se alimenta del sol, agua (lluvia) y aire a través de grandes cráteres que lo perforan.

### 2. Fundación Telefónica. Centro de Ciencia, Arte y Tecnología, Madrid

El proyecto propone transformar el edificio de Telefónica de Madrid en una roca accesible por fuera y por dentro, por arriba y por abajo, en un nuevo



jardín tecnificado del siglo XXI.

Planteamos el reciclaje integral del edificio Telefónica a nivel programático, tipológico y como condensador de actividad pública en la ciudad. El objetivo no es sólo transformar la estructura original –el primer rascacielos de oficinas de España– en un gran centro de producción e investigación cultural sobre las mediaciones entre Ciencia, Arte y Tecnología, sino modificar drásticamente el carácter introvertido de las oficinas utilizando los recursos ya existentes en el edificio para convertirlo en una estructura extrovertida, pública y plenamente accesible, insertada en la trama de la ciudad a la vez como un nuevo tipo museístico y como un jardín vertical, una roca a la que subir y desde la que contemplar y conocer la ciudad: un observatorio hacia fuera y un centro experimental hacia dentro. A nivel de suelo el edificio se vacía ampliando la Gran Vía con una nueva plaza y acceso al metro. El uso de cerramientos cerámicos fotovoltaicos, generadores eólicos y la propia geotermia del metro para abastecer las demandas energéticas del centro permite equilibrar el consumo y recuperar la cubierta del edificio para usos públicos.

El programa se organiza en torno a plantas agrupadas por escalas (en homenaje al libro y película “potencias de 10” de Ray y Charles Eames): cosmos, tierra, ciudad, hombre, ADN y átomo componen sus secciones temáticas.

### 3. Parque Cristina Enea

La demanda de un espacio público singular y contemporáneo exige un gran gesto unificador que resuelva rotundamente no solo la conectividad entre las áreas diferentes del Parque sino entre éste y el centro histórico así como con cada orilla o barrio implicado. Proponemos materializar una secuencia espacial que atraviesa en planta y en sección el conjunto del área de intervención abrazando todas las piezas y éstas con la ciudad de San Sebastián. Un jardín interpuesto entre las cotas altas y bajas que introduce precisamente los elementos esenciales de la estética pintoresca –la gruta, el agua y el puente sobre el río– para a la vez intensificar la experiencia del lugar histórico, implicar al río y sus riberas y ampliar drásticamente la accesibilidad del parque, ofreciendo a San Sebastián una topografía contemporánea y respetuosa con el jardín histórico, un paisaje que funde lo natural y lo artificial, memoria y futuro; el espacio público que activará el sur de la ciudad. La secuencia se apropia del área en forma de media luna que remata Riberas de Loiola para abrir desde ella paso al parque histórico lanzando un Puente Parque singular que se incrusta en el seno de la colina generando una Gruta con varios ámbitos de intensidad geológica, un jardín interior que alcanza su climax en las vistas panorámicas sobre la ciudad y hacia el Nuevo Centro de Arte

Contemporáneo, atravesado a su vez por una galería pública que nos deja a los pies del puente de María Cristina y por lo tanto del centro de la ciudad. Mediante este gesto unificador la ciudad se congrega en torno a un espacio natural e histórico que aparece investido de un sentido completamente nuevo sin apenas alterar su presencia histórica.

Los materiales vivos se utilizarán para precisar y reforzar las unidades escénicas apenas apuntadas hoy en el jardín histórico y crear con las superficies añadidas nuevas unidades que integren el Urumea, el Centro de Arte y el Jardín histórico. Se utilizará el contraste topográfico para reforzar el carácter pintoresquista de éste, el más espontáneo de las riberas del Urumea prolongadas en Lau Haizeta y dotar de estructura formal al área de tabacalera, que se organiza a modo de Salón o acceso principal, trabados todos entre sí por el jardín interpuesto y el reciclado de los excedentes arbóreos.

### 4. Estación Intermodal, parque urbano y cinco torres residenciales, Logroño.

Nuestra pretensión es aprovechar el soterramiento de las vías y estación de ferrocarril para crear un acontecimiento urbano memorable, mezcla de naturaleza y artificio, capaz de reequilibrar por sí mismo las áreas de centralidad de la ciudad. Y hemos creído desde el principio que unificar bajo un único gesto abarcante la estación ferroviaria de Alta Velocidad y la de autobuses no sólo traerá beneficios funcionales sino, sobre todo, permitirá crear un gran espacio peatonal, un parque o colina artificial, que culmina la realización ininterrumpida de un gran anillo verde donde antes las vías segregaban la ciudad en dos.

Bajo esta colina las estaciones de trenes y autobuses conforman un “landform building” que acomoda mediante su geometría triangular las formas orgánicas exteriores y las constructivas interiores, generando en torno a una cúpula central dos naves hipóstilas craqueladas que amplían a modo de ‘grutas’ la dimensión pública del parque. Mientras al norte, junto a la ciudad histórica, una gran plaza ovalada acoge las actividades más intensas, subrayadas y acompañadas por la disposición de cinco construcciones verticales, hacia el sur un telón continuo de conjuntos residenciales de altura media permite un cierre amable de la intervención. Las torres, coronadas por balcones solares, componen su sección como una hélice de plataformas o jardines colgantes, compartiendo con la Estación Intermodal lanzando una misma materialidad para ampliar el efecto unitario del conjunto. El Parque despliega el patrón triangular en parterres urbanos que, según ascienden, se van transformando en cultivos semirurales, pasando de riego por aspersión a goteros. El Parque,

la Estación Intermodal y las cinco torres componen así un conjunto que busca integrar arquitectura, medioambiente y paisaje mediante el desarrollo coordinado del espacio público, la arquitectura y las infraestructuras. (El proyecto formó parte de la exposición y conferencia Ecological Urbanism, celebrada en el GSD Harvard en primavera de 2009).





## Bet Figueras Landscape Architect

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In April 2010, Catalan landscape architect Isabel Figueras Ponsa passed away after a long disease. With her, Spanish landscape architecture has lost one of its main creative figures and striving personalities. She has disappeared in the year of the 10th anniversary of Barcelona's European Landscape Architecture Biennial, which involved an increasing number of colleagues from all over Europe and which positioned Barcelona and its architectural ambiance as a place for international meetings and intellectual exchange on landscape architecture. Bet Figueras was a founder of the Biennial and a key person for its success. And she is a founder in general, more even, a female "chevalier de la profession", having always been committed to various initiatives that aim at establishing and developing the discipline, such as the Master Course in Landscape Architecture at Barcelona's architecture school, approved by EFLA, and such as the Foundation Landscape Architecture Europe, set up in Wageningen, The Netherlands, as an observatory of the state of the art in European landscape architecture, and to which she was a member of the executive board. The core group of this foundation, Meto Vroom, Michael van Gessel, Harry Harsema and myself, were convinced that for an efficient operation a close contact with events and people in Barcelona was important. During our meetings in Wageningen we admired her capacity to communicate and moderate, with a great sense of humour and a knack for making the right sort of decision. Her presence was not only valuable but also brought wit and fun. However, besides all these commitments, Bet was also a practicing landscape architect with an oeuvre that is far too less known on an international level – we are probably all familiar with the Botanical Garden of Barcelona on Montjuic, which has received several awards and has been widely published. The Botanical Garden, though, is only the tip of the iceberg, and this is the reason we want to dedicate this last presentation of the day, the practitioners' day, to Bet's career as a landscape architect and to her built work. It is more meant to be an eye-opener, as it is almost impossible to unfold a lifetime's oeuvre in a half-an-hour talk, and I have opted to talk less and show more, in order to give you a visual overview completed by quotes of Bet's credos and a tentative line through

as seen from my European point of view. Some of shown works are part of the excursion on Sunday, to which I vividly invite you as only first-hand experience can provide you with full pleasure of spatial experience.

### Bet's Career

Bet was born in 1957, actually the same year as her husband Alfonso Echegaray who is with us today. As they both once pointed out, 1957 was the year in which Jack Kerouac published "On the Road". I leave the wider significance of this reference to your own interpretation, but one thing is sure: Bet and Alfonso have always been moving forward, and Bet's road was the one of landscape architecture. As a young woman, it lead her out of Spain where in the late 70s this discipline was not yet possible to study. She got her technically focused landscape training in Berkeley/ California and a wider culturalistic vision of the discipline in Edinburgh in Scotland, where she graduated. Scientific rigour and the search for solid concepts are the values she described as those she brought back to Spain in the early 80s. In Barcelona, she was plunged into the sparkling atmosphere of the emerging new Barcelona, into the works of urban renewal led by Oriol Bohigas in the run-up to the Olympic Games of 1992. Working since 1982 at the Bohigas Martorell Mackay office, she opened her own landscape architectural practice in 1985, along with María Jover, and participated in the making of the new city that was redefining its identity through the creation of urban open spaces – a new approach in urban planning and a kick-off for the understanding of landscape architecture as a resolutely urban profession, as seen from a European point of view. Among Bohigas' "golden feathers", all trained as architects, Bet was probably the only one considering and conceiving urban space as landscape architecture.

### The new Barcelona – rigour of uses and the art of creating public spaces

I selected two of her early works of the emerging Barcelona that show her art of creating public spaces.

#### *– Olympic Village Courtyards*

Bet realized this project together with Carlos Ferrater, and its scope consisted in breaking up the

classical Cerdá blocks in order to create an interior rambla running through them and providing the district with a new type of semi-public space. This action to turn something into something else is probably well complemented with Bet's following words: "Oriol Bohigas used to say that the architect has to take his client up the garden path. As designers we have to add something to what the client wants, on all levels. If I manage to take the client up the garden path, I have won." (original words in Spanish: "El arquitecto debe dar liebre por gato. Ha de buscar qué puede anadir a lo que el cliente demanda, desde todos los punto de vista. Si consigo dar liebre por gato he triunfado.")

#### *– Illa Diagonal Courtyard*

This project was conceived together with Rafael Moneo and Manuel de Solà-Morales, and it is interesting to observe how Bet organized the spaces on two structuring levels, the one of the Diagonal street, which is defined as the level of circulation and intensive uses and which is made of hard materials, and the one of the underlying landscape, on a lower level, which is formulated as the area of stay and extensive uses, with organic, soft materials.

Her early works of this time, the open spaces for the Olympic Village and Illa Diagonal clearly depict one of her essential convictions, namely that there is no work without a reason to exist ("nada de gratuito, todo tiene una razon de ser"). Bet strives for essential creations and refutes frivolous works ("No quiero crear obras caprichosas, obras que frivolizan"). She is convinced that necessities should direct creation more than taste, and that the site's imprint is to dominate the author's imprint. In this respect, she is not looking for formal extravagancies or yet another style, as other Barcelona designers of that time might have done, which has been ingenious in that specific historic moment and on that specific location, but unfortunately also widely and badly copied all over the world, reducing the Barcelona mindsets to formal spleens. Bet's work, as oriented to site and not to style, is probably hard to copy. The rigour of uses has to be set up in every project anew, and so is the pleasure of senses. Bet works with circulation grids and lines of contact between people and the landscape. This lesson learnt from creating public spaces can be seen in the next set of works.



### **Parks / people meet plants**

I selected five projects, less oriented towards the surrounding architectural blocks but more autonomously unfolding their existence as parks and places where people and plants meet, and where the elements of nature are cultivated in order to enrich the artificial world of men.

#### ***\_Barcelona's Botanic Garden***

This project was realized with Carlos Ferrater and Luis Canosa and transforms a 15 ha waste dump on Montjuic. The team won the international competition in 1989, and it took them 10 years until finalization. She says herself about this project: "It was the conjunction of ideas from the world of botany with those of landscape architecture and most of all architecture. We broke with the traditional way of displaying individual plants and went for grouping them into Mediterranean landscapes and ecosystems as you find them in reality." The aim was to display the Mediterranean type flora in a botanic garden while creating a public park at the same time. The park's new topography integrates everything: pathways, irrigation, illumination. It relies on a triangular grid that solves all at once – a morphologic approach. This project shows Bet at her best, interweaving her solid knowledge of botany and her urban experiences from public space.

#### ***\_Cervantes Rose Garden***

Bet started this project during the final works on the Botanic Garden, in 1998. It is about the renovation of the existing 9 ha rose and scent garden of 1965. Again, the project is made from a grid, this time an existing one as of the previous garden design. Bet decided to keep it and to create within it a new vegetal landscape, new irrigation, and new urban furniture. Today the Cervantes Garden is the most important rose collection of Spain, comprising 1800 varieties. This project shows Bet at her best again, being a specialist for cultivating roses herself.

#### ***\_Bodegas Bilbainas***

This second renovation project involves the front terrace of a winery, designed at the beginning of 20th century, in the Rioja region. The existing terrace displayed hay lined parterres and lines of old chestnuts, and opens views onto the village of Haro, located in front of the hill of the bodega. Here, Bet created new accesses and parking lots for the visitors to the bodega, and she arranged better growth conditions for trees and shrubs. We can again observe her respect for the design of old, for the movements of people that structure this place, and how she provides for the pleasure of senses through site and motion.

#### ***\_Palau Robert***

Another renovation project concerns an old palace, which since time has been open to the public and been turned into a green oasis in the middle of the dense Barcelona city centre. The building,

the park, the old palm trees of World Expo 1888 are all considered as cultural heritage, and Bet approaches with the same respect as we have seen in the previous projects. She again improves access and use for people, and the living conditions for the flora. The outstanding element of this design is a 45 cm high metal border that is laid around the vegetation areas in order to separate people and plants and to finally organize the whole structure of the park. Equally outstanding is the formalization of pathways, with a great sense for detailing hard works. Let me complement this project with the following words of Bet: "Every site has its essence and its history but also a moment (cada lugar tiene su esencia y su historia pero tambien momento). The car f.ex. changed completely the urban landscape, and so will current pedestrianization change our cities again. Interpreting the moment of a site is fundamental."

#### ***\_Tanatorio de Dalt***

Bet designed the exterior spaces of this chapel of rest conceived by Ribas & Ribas. It groups funeral services and ceremony rooms in a single building that is situated on a slope of Collserola mountains in the west of Barcelona, with breathtaking views over the city and the sea. Bet created spaces of rest on a platform in front of the building, an access zone to one side, and she had the slopes covered with vegetation. Bet interpreted these spaces as a place where life and death meet, where highly artificial urban sites celebrate their exposure to the natural elements of the surroundings, where single city spaces meet the wider landscape and form a unique universe.

### **Small urban plots in the Ensanche / open to the wider (urban) landscape**

The desire to embrace the universe can be observed throughout Bet's entire work. It is almost easy to realize on a terrace hovering over the city as we see at the Ronda de Dalt chapel of rest. It is more tricky inside the dense urban fabric of Barcelona, but Bet takes this challenge and commits herself to offer the wider landscape even in the smallest urban plot. Three small urban projects from the Ensanche show how she sets up relationships.

#### ***\_Sabadell Courtyard***

This project is about a renovation of a building by Francesc Mitjans of 1969. The first choice Bet made was to maintain the original palm tree and other vegetation she found on site. Therefore she had to keep the levels of soil and adapt the new garden topography, while renewing its structure and materials.

#### ***\_Cahispa Roof Garden***

This roof garden of an office building is conceived as a garden of contemplation, animated by views over the cityscape towards the wider landscape, especially the Tibidabo peak. It is also animated

also by a particular choice of vegetation and water features, complete with their textures and sounds, their seasonal changes, and their changes from day to night.

#### ***\_Hotel Oriental Mandarin Terrace***

Bet designed this terrace for a big hotel with Carlos Ferrater and Juan Trias de Bes. It is her last realized work, inaugurated in spring 2010. The scope was to organize a Mediterranean garden in the interior of an Ensanche block situated on a concrete cover, on top of the hotel lobby, which implied heavy structural limitations and the need to integrate the central skylights. As this garden had to develop on an artificial ground, Bet decided to highlight this ground in formulating it as a tiled floor with a special texture: She took over the 2x1 proportions of the traditional rasillas, used in Ensanche patios, and developed a new contemporary tile type with a special colour palette. Accordingly, contemporary clay pots refer to the traditional Mediterranean planters. Mimosa is the main tree species. Inside this city block, the wider Mediterranean landscape is present now, and city and surroundings can be experienced as being part of the same universe.

### **Gardens / creating sites in the wider landscape**

Bet's love for the Mediterranean garden becomes clear through these projects. The Mediterranean garden as the essence of a cultivated landscape remains for her an essential source of inspiration. For this reason I want you to have a look at her gardens, of which she has created a series for private clients, mostly situated outside the dense city on the coasts of Catalonia and Balearic islands. Here are two of them.

#### ***\_Margalida Garden***

This private garden in Mallorca features walls as structuring elements to create and dissolve the limits of the space, which is in fact a hortus conclusus. Here Bet is opening windows and views towards the valley, is modeling light, shade, and atmosphere. Let me again quote her: "The most touching moment is when the exterior space starts to interact with the built-up. Points of contact are emerging here and there, where nature starts to be domestic, turns into architecture, while still remaining nature. It is almost magic (El momento más emocionante es cuando el espacio exterior entre en contacto con el construido y se crean esos puntos donde la naturaleza se domestica y pasa, sin dejar de ser naturaleza, a ser arquitectura. Es casi mágico)."

#### ***\_Begur Garden***

Another garden project, in collaboration with Tenalorenzo architects, evolves on a steep plot a hundred metres above sea level in the Costa Brava region, on the edge of the Las Gavarres mountains. Here, two landscapes get in touch: mountains with its Mediterranean forests and the sea with its huge





expanse of a water surface. The main piece to negotiate in between the two is the water basin of the garden. The whole project is about a play of contrasts: soft vs hard materials, light vs shade, introverted vs extroverted spaces, controlled and elegant vegetation vs rustic thicket.

### **Big landscapes / qualifying the cultural landscape**

If the garden is cultivated land, and landscape architecture the art of cultivation, then this practice should not be restricted to the small scale. And as the next projects will show, Bet worked with the territorial scale of the cultural landscapes of Europe, be they agricultural or infrastructural. Four final projects show how she enriches the cultural landscape by means of punctual interventions, and that her design decisions stem from a particularly sensitive analytical approach.

#### ***— Ferrer Bobet Winery***

Bet says: "I want to create a relationship between the exterior spaces and the natural components of a particular locale, starting from visual and sensorial analyses. Besides the good development of plants, I'm aiming at structuralizing the site and lending it appropriate forms." As an example, this reorganization of the territory of a winery shows her capacity to move from analysis to structure and to form. This is definitely not a garden project, as the garden would be the opposed concept to the austere landscape found here, rough, steep, almost desolate. Bet went into a meticulous observation and collection work of local material to understand the essence of this landscape. Her method of interpretation consists of depicting the relationships between relief, vegetation, and built elements. Then she defined punctual small interventions: The road that served the construction of the main building is transformed into the main access road, the platform where materials were deposited turns into the parking space, small groups of selected trees are integrated into the austere landscape.

#### ***— Port Ginesta***

This project developed from the extension of a marina, an infrastructural zone that is primarily functional. Ports often have a landscape architectural origin, being installed in natural harbours or protected coastal strips where ships can easily moor, but with evolving technology and economy, they turned into independent structures that do not have to respect the original landscape any more. As other infrastructural works, they even refute respect to site. Even if marinas are light versions of industrial trade ports, the principles are the same. With her projects, Bet states examples for how to design ports as constitutive parts of the cultivated landscape, be they as artificial as they want, and how to integrate

these artifices ingeniously into the greater landscape context. Situated on the edge of the Garraf mountains south of Barcelona, the Port Ginesta project asked for a particular respect of the topography and stormwater drainage. Furthermore, the extension of the marina was allowed only if the public beach, that was to be consumed by the extension, would be recreated elsewhere. Bet's design proposes to decline the existing mountain landscape into the new beach, arranging it as the encounter of the rocks of the mountains with the water of the sea, the mediating element being a zone of dunes. She provides access to new beach via a driveway lined with local rocks that doesn't close off a water run-off zone but formalizes as a bridge and let the water pass underneath.

#### ***— Port San Carles***

This second extension of a marina is situated in the delta of the Ebro, and the landscape architectural challenge was to work with the flow of waters. The project makes use of an existent infrastructural element: A dyke had been built before and had created a zone of brackish water, which has become the habitat for a protected Catalan fish species, the Fartet. Bet wanted to conserve this zone as a habitat and consequently conceived all new constructions as floating structures, in order to not to disturb the course of the water. Furthermore, she modulated the profile of the coast line in order to even enlarge the habitat of the fish. At the end, the whole project downplays its nature as port infrastructure and highlights its existence as part of the delta landscape.

#### ***— Valdebebas Park***

This international competition has been won in 2009 by a team of three, namely Bet Figueras, Proap of Lisbon, and Opera of Spain. It aims at creating an 80ha park outside of Madrid, next to a new urbanization. Today, the area is characterized by agricultural land of low value, and the authorities wish for the development of a forestry park. The design proposes the park as a structure with a frame to hold it all, and with an agricultural infill of mainly citrus plantations and low budget forestry. It also proposes to observe how this area and its urbanization evolves over the next years – if the adjacent land raises in value, more budget for the park is available, and the infill can successively be changed into more sophisticated park forms. Basically, the local economic evolution will be shaping the park. Let me quote Bet again: "I don't believe in a garden that could be equally planted in Tokyo and in Barcelona. A garden that wants to be international ends up being banal because it doesn't take benefit from the paramount feature a garden can have, which is its site."

### **Bet's Heritage**

All these projects have given you an overview

about Bet's oeuvre. Still I'm convinced that it is growing, in many ways: Spanish ports take example on San Carles and Ginesta and promote them as guidelines for best practice in the design of marinas. Valdebebas park in Madrid will hopefully be built under the auspices of the Proap office over the coming years. Bet's students of the ETSAB are spreading out in the world right now, being landscape architects in her way. The Biennial drains an ever growing audience, and our Landscape Architecture Europe network is spreading out her message. Finally, Bet's collaborators at her office, Stefania Sabatini, Valentina Greselin and Giulia Manenti, have founded their own practice, called *F3paisajearchitectura*, building up their own road from the one Bet took them to. All this may lend Bet's spirit to the time that is in front of us, and in need of us.

### **Bet as a Pioneer**

I presume that the 21st century with its climate changes and shrinking resources is the one in which conflicts must be solved in another way than before. The old cowboy method is obsolete: shoot and triumph. From now on, winning means conflict solving in an open-minded, diplomatic, and elaborate way. The Dutch know a lot about this, being installed on an extremely fragile territory: they collaborate or drown. Solidarity, sensitivity, reflection, reliability, beauty – this is all Bet, these are also female qualities, and they are absolutely not restricted to women. Please share! As a female "chevalier de la profession", Bet was fighting in her very personal way, combining willpower with an unrivaled elegance and generosity. I wish that the 21st century be inspired by these values, and that Bet be our pioneer.







LIQUID CHINA  
*Sara Bartumeus*



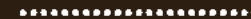
WETLANDS CONSERVATION  
AND MANKIND  
*Chen Kelin*



SPEECH ON THE WORKSHOP OF CHINESE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
AT THE 6TH EUROPEAN BIENNIAL OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
*Zhou Xiong*



THE BIG FOOT REVOLUTION  
*Kongjian Yu*



EL RENACIMIENTO DE CHINA  
*Eugenio Bregolat*

# PAPERS

## Liquid China



## Liquid China

SARA BARTUMEUS

La participación de la China como país invitado a la sexta Bienal Europea de Arquitectura del Paisaje se concretó en la tercera jornada del simposio liderada por el Profesor y paisajista Konjiang Yu, quien, a su vez, fue comisario de la muestra *Liquid China*, exposición que tuvo lugar en la Pedrera en las semanas previas, y durante, el encuentro.

El lema de la VI Bienal, *Liquid Landscapes*, paisajes líquidos, nos invitó a una doble lectura: a la aproximación más teórica que nos sugería la aplicación al paisaje de la tesis del sociólogo Zygmunt Bauman sobre la modernidad líquida donde nos hallamos inmersos, donde todo es flexible y cambiante, donde las antiguas estructuras sociales, económicas o, incluso, espaciales ya no nos sirven para entender el mundo, y a otra lectura distinta de la liquidez, más física y directa, que nos condujo a la revisión de proyectos de paisaje al entorno del agua como elemento central. La China líquida, tanto a través del contenido de la muestra como del de las intervenciones de los conferenciantes invitados, consiguió entrelazar con gran éxito ambos enfoques del lema bajo un único argumento, el del la recuperación del arte líquido y, yendo más allá, la del paisajismo, como arte de la supervivencia.

Bajo la fuerza de una imagen de Mao –aprovechando su energía– el profesor **Kojiang Yu** nos habló de la urgencia de un cambio, de la necesidad de una Revolución, la “Revolución del Pie Grande”. De manera muy gráfica nos describió la situación actual, en China y en el mundo global, del urbanismo y de la arquitectura del paisaje, utilizando con ingenio la analogía del pie vendado de la mujer china culta y urbanita, contraponiendo esta imagen a la del pie de una campesina. Y nos incitó a desvendarlo, a desatar este paisaje, al que metafóricamente hacía referencia/se refería, a desafiar los cánones estéticos establecidos que producen un paisaje estéril y encorsetado, que lo deforman hasta la ridiculez, sacrificando funcionalidad por ornamento, que lo alejan cada vez más de la belleza que conlleva su productividad. Hábilmente, desde la dualidad y la contraposición: pequeño versus grande, contrahecho pero “bello” versus natural pero “basto”, disfuncional versus funcional, sofisticado y culto versus básico

co y rústico, urbano versus rural... Kojiang Yu nos muestra cómo, a consecuencia del rápido proceso de urbanización que ha sufrido China, los paisajes productivos han pasado a ser jardines ornamentales, a ser lugares regidos por la estética del pie pequeño, apreciados por la misma élite social y urbana que rehúye características inherentes en la naturaleza como la salud, la supervivencia y la productividad.

Al llegar a la ciudad, argumenta, vendamos los “pies naturales”, canalizamos ríos para controlar la inundabilidad, pavimentamos suelos, transformamos el paisaje azaroso y productivo en un jardín ordenado y estéril, aunque “bello”. Tampoco se salva la arquitectura, deformada por edificios icónicos, tan espectaculares como inútiles, resultado de la herencia de un urbanismo de pie pequeño al que se le ha añadido el ingrediente del sueño americano, de la atracción por lo colosal. Y ante la evidencia de que con un “pie pequeño” y un “cuerpo enorme” es imposible sobrevivir, reclama con rotundidad retomar un paisajismo atado a la funcionalidad y nos urge a entender otra vez la arquitectura del paisaje y el urbanismo como arte de la supervivencia.

Al grito de la “Revolución del pie grande” el profesor Yu nos plantea dos estrategias para la supervivencia, la primera es espacial, construir infraestructuras ecológicas a distinta escala –desde el plan al detalle– que enmarquen y dirijan el desarrollo urbano; mientras que la segunda nos apunta hacia una nueva definición, una nueva estética, de lo urbano, aquella que se basa en principios ecológicos e implica sostenibilidad, un bajo coste y poco mantenimiento, la que nos conduce hacia un urbanismo ecológico.

La exposición *Liquid China* mostró el potencial de una disciplina, de una realidad paisajística emergente, que más allá de la búsqueda de modernidad, parte de una seria consciencia ecológica y nos enseña una cara distinta, la opuesta a la más mediatizada, a la que solo se hace eco de la rápida y brutal transformación del gigante asiático. Paisajes líquidos que, aunque no dejan de ser el producto resultante de este acelerado proceso de urbanización y de la crisis del agua –en cuanto a inundaciones, sequía y contaminación–, se

erigen como decidida respuesta a una incipiente preocupación sobre paisaje y medioambiente que entronca con la antigua sabiduría china en cuanto a la ordenación del territorio y a su adaptación al agua.

El comisario Konjiang Yu, no quiso enseñarnos tan solo la contemporaneidad del diseño de una arquitectura líquida que aprende de los paisajes de la China tradicional, sino ilustrarnos el concepto acuñado por él mismo, lo que ha denominado la recuperación del **arte de la supervivencia**, evidenciando el compromiso de este paisajismo naciente con los actuales retos medioambientales y ecológicos, del todo innegociables, al trabajar con un recurso escaso y vital como es el agua.

En la forma, en el diseño y desarrollo del proyecto expositivo, fue determinante la oportunidad de contar con el atilillo de la Pedrera, cedido por Catalunya Caixa, para realizar la exposición. No solo la potencia del espacio y las condiciones “líquidas” de la arquitectura de Gaudí fueron el marco ideal, sino que las restricciones impuestas por el edificio también contribuyeron a conseguir una atmósfera líquida. Una serie de lienzos con la información gráfica y escrita sobre los proyectos colgaron delicadamente de un haz de cuerdas que entrelazaban las columnas pétreas y exentas. Huyendo de la rigidez se desplegaban sinuosamente al llegar al suelo, como queriendo levitar sin límite de forma, longitud o directriz, intentando adquirir condiciones casi líquidas, como el movimiento y la fluidez, conformando en sí mismo otro paisaje líquido.

El contenido de la muestra, la selección de 15 paisajes líquidos más, producidos todos ellos por despachos de paisajismo y Universidades de la China, se dividieron en cinco categorías –**paisajes protegidos, parques, waterfronts urbanos, plazas y paisajes residenciales**– trabajos de escalas muy diversas, que van desde la escala territorial de la reserva natural nacional a la escala doméstica del jardín residencial ligado a la vivienda, pasando por escalas intermedias de proyectos de espacio público o de espacio colectivo terciario. Proyectos que, a su vez, se insertan en entornos con distintos grados de naturalidad, des de parajes protegi-



dos y de excelencia hasta proyectos de renovación urbana en contextos totalmente urbanizados, en antiguas ciudades, o de parques de nueva creación en crecimientos o ciudades ex-novo. Con el agua como común denominador trabajan sobre formas más naturales de contener la inundabilidad, la recuperación de antiguos humedales, la captación del agua de lluvia o el tratamiento del agua contaminada como temas clave del proyecto de paisaje.

El objetivo común de los proyectos expuestos en la categoría de **paisajes protegidos** es la protección y regeneración del ecosistema de unos paisajes extraordinarios para el uso y disfrute de los mismos como espacios educativos y de ocio. En todos ellos el agua juega un papel principal: en forma de corriente natural en un complejo eco-turístico, de una antigua laguna que se transforma para integrarse en la ciudad o de un parque de humedales, productivo en el pasado, que teje una red de ríos interconectados con zonas urbanas y agrícolas.

China ha experimentado, simultáneamente a una escala y velocidad de urbanización sin precedentes, una "era de **parques**". Todos los proyectos expuestos entienden el parque como infraestructura ecológica, aquella que ofrece y condensa múltiples servicios en cuanto a la gestión de las aguas pluviales urbanas, al tratamiento del agua y al control ecológico de las crecidas. A través de proyectos de restauración paisajística en espacios deteriorados en la periferia de las ciudades se plantean alternativas a las duras soluciones de la ingeniería que, en el contexto actual de rápida urbanización, están canalizando con diques de hormigón la mayoría de ríos chinos, substituyéndolas por terrazas inundables o marismas que no sólo recrean el paisaje agrícola chino y permiten de nuevo aproximarse al agua, sino que devienen auténticos sistemas de almacenamiento y de depuración del agua fluvial contaminada. Contemplamos des de paisajes más "diseñados", donde la ordenación de una nueva ciudad aprende del legado del jardín chino tradicional para establecer estrechos vínculos con el paisaje líquido de un lago, a otros que nos hablan de lo "informal", de preparar las condiciones para que la naturaleza genere un rico y aleatorio mosaico vegetal, de biodiversidad no planificada, de belleza genuina.

En cuanto a las **plazas**, tanto desde aproximaciones contemporáneas al diseño del espacio público como del espacio colectivo terciario, de oficinas y puestos de trabajo, se pudo constatar como los proyectistas han explorado en profundidad el significado cultural y social del agua, tradicional elemento de atracción y de centralidad en los asentamientos chinos. Los proyectos apuestan

por integrar desarrollo y contexto, por establecer continuidades e interactuar de manera bella y eficiente con su entorno natural. En algunos atrios el agua se revela como elemento de transición para desdibujar los límites entre espacio interior y exterior. Mientras que otras intervenciones reinterpretan el paisaje vernacular –hoy substituido por nuevas ciudades densas y compactas– inspirándose en la morfología de estanques y diques de zarzas para que el ciudadano se reencuentre con la memoria local, o recrean una estructura de canales y balsas de laminación del agua, aprovechando las cualidades secuenciales del agua que nos remiten a lo mejor de la filosofía del jardín tradicional chino, en busca de la recuperación del significado del lugar, de la truncada relación de éste con su río.

En la ferviente competición inmobiliaria que se ha producido en China en los últimos años –donde se han construido el cincuenta por ciento de las viviendas de nueva creación– el papel del jardín ha tenido un protagonismo principal, pasando de ser un accesorio de lujo a ser una dotación esencial de la vivienda colectiva. Entre millones de **paisajes residenciales** se seleccionaron para la muestra dos proyectos, dos intervenciones paisajísticas que reinterpretan el estilo de vida chino ideal, el fengshui, para adaptarlo a las necesidades contemporáneas de sus habitantes e integrar armoniosamente la arquitectura y su jardín en el paisaje. Proyectos de urbanización que, más allá de hacer participar a las viviendas de un potente paisaje emocional, superan la escala del espacio colectivo residencial para proponer conectores paisajísticos: elementos de agua y de vegetación que establecen vínculos de continuidad natural entre el jardín privado individual y el paisaje de su contexto.

Asimismo, la revalorización del agua juega un papel clave en los proyectos urbanos del paisajismo chino, tanto en la renovación urbana de antiguos muelles portuarios como en la ordenación y diseño de **waterfronts** en las ciudades de nueva implantación; tanto por la aportación de nuevos valores sociales, culturales y económicos, como por la preservación de la belleza natural y de la integridad ecológica de este sistema acuático en un nuevo contexto urbano. La regeneración de kilómetros de frentes urbanos con nuevos proyectos de reforma fluvial han transformado los márgenes de algunos ríos en parques –en corredores verdes continuos, a veces inundables aunque siempre accesibles– o en rosarios de espacios públicos más urbanizados –plazas, paseos y tarimas para cafés, muelles de pesca y miradores– que no solo han conseguido transformar sus lugares y mejorar la calidad de vida de los residentes, sino que han implicado nuevos impulsos económicos para la regeneración de barrios antiguos de la ciudad, así como para el

desarrollo de nuevos barrios de viviendas con la construcción de equipamientos culturales y centros comerciales.

Por primera vez en muchas décadas, se ha dado la vuelta al concepto de espacio público como escaparate político y algunos de estos espacios abiertos en China no han sido proyectados, por su simbolismo y dimensiones monumentales, para ser respetados y admirados, sino que han sido concebidos para ser usados y disfrutados por la comunidad. Trabajos, todos ellos, representativos de las tendencias más recientes, obras emblemáticas de un país en transformación con un gran potencial por delante, que, desde una tradición paisajística ancestral y desde su capacidad de intervención a gran escala, pueden hacer interesantes aportaciones al paisajismo de la vieja Europa.

Se puede decir más alto, pero no más claro. Aceptamos el reto y la responsabilidad a la que el Profesor Yu nos aboca.

*Los paisajes culturales que hemos heredado de nuestros antepasados son el arte de la supervivencia y son los recuerdos de nuestra adaptación a un entorno cambiante. La industrialización y la urbanización en las últimas décadas había interrumpido el proceso de adaptación y nuestros recuerdos de supervivencia se habían ido desvaneciendo.*

*Ha llegado el momento de recuperar la memoria y de continuar el proceso de adaptación y evolución. En este proceso, la arquitectura del paisaje tiene la oportunidad de asumir el liderazgo en la reconstrucción del paisaje adaptado al agua, tanto a las inundaciones como a las sequías, en la convivencia con el agua y en el tratamiento del agua como un tesoro. La clave es construir una infraestructura ecológica basada en el proceso del agua a distintas escalas, desde la nacional y continental, hasta la local y específica del lugar. Esta infraestructura ecológica proporcionará múltiples servicios de ecosistema, de abastecimiento, de depuración, de producción primaria o cultural.*

*Profesor Konjiang Yu*



## Wetlands Conservation and Mankind

CHEN KELIN

WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL-CHINA

*Wetland is the evolution of soil, water and life on earth over billions of years, an ecological landscape containing richest biodiversity in the nature, and one of the most important habitats human depend on for livelihood. Wetland provides valuable ecological homeland for the people, thus is closed linked to human living, evolvement and development. From the time when life began to social development, wetland has been making contributions to mankind all the time.*

*Wetland is among our nature's most important ecosystems. Together with forest and ocean ecosystems, they are the pillars of our living planet. Wetland plays a major role in the regulation of climate. It regulates global climate change through sequestering and releasing a major proportion of fixed carbon in the biosphere. Wetland is the natural gene pool of many species, more than 40% of the plants and animals on earth are highly dependent on wetlands for their lives. Wetland is renowned as the Earth's Kidney, Natural Reservoir, Cradle of Life and Bird's Paradise.*

*Wetland is bestowed with enormous economic values. It provides not only abundant animal and vegetable food which human depends on for subsistence, but also affluent industrial raw material and energy resources. Wetland ecosystems deliver a wide range of ecosystem services that contribute to human well-being and poverty alleviation.*

*Wetland is the cradle of human civilization. Being the interface of terrestrial and aquatic habitats on temporal and spatial spectrum, it has witnessed the evolution of civilization and history, and the changes of nature and lives.*

### I\_Wetlands distribution around the corner of the world

Wetlands are in every corner of the world, is diverse in types, and the ecological homeland that nature favored to us. Wetland ecosystems are estimated to cover more than 1,200 million hectares. The wetland ecosystem referred here includes inland and coast wetlands (such as lakes, rivers and marshes), near-shore marine wetlands (areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters), and human-made wetlands such as reservoirs and rice fields. However, this estimate under-represent many wetland types, and further data is required for some geographic regions. Of the entire global wetlands mangrove takes about 24 million hectares, coral reef 60 million hectares. Wetlands are mainly found in tropical and frigid zones, each occupying 30.9% and 29.9% of the total area. Wetland in sub-tropical zone occupies 25%, cool temperate zone 11.9%, and 2.3% in other zones.

The world's largest wetland, Pantanal of Mato Grosso in Brazil, covers 25 million hectares. This swamp holds numerous rivers, lakes and plains, among which the plain, Amazon River and the Atlantic forests are most representative ecosystems in South America. In addition to the biggest vegetation population on earth, Pantanal has also more than 1,000 animals, including 650 bird species, 230 fish species, 90 mammals, 160 reptiles and 30 amphibians. In November 2000 it was inscribed by the UNESCO as a world biosphere reserve. Mangrove in America is a typical tropical wetland.

Mangrove is the evergreen shrub and small arbor population growing on the tropical coastal marshes. It is also called forests in the sea for its ability to grow in the sea. The networks formed by the intertwining mangrove roots hold up sediments in the water from being flushed to the sea by tides. People plant mangroves in the intersections of land and sea to fix the coasts and protect the local residents living along the seashore from wind and wave attacks. Mangrove is known as the pioneer in soil formation for its ability in siltation which is 2-3 times faster than bare soil close-by. This is due to its well-developed root systems which can slow down the flow velocity and accelerate soil formation through sedimentation and siltation. Mangrove plantations could also form flat water where fishes spawn, animals inhabit and local people harvest wood charcoal and keep bees. Mangrove is a valuable gift granted by the nature.

Formed by seasonal floods of rivers and lakes, flood plain is widely distributed in the world. Kafue Plain in Zambia is a most typical flood plain. The Kafue River encircles vast areas of grassland, hot springs, swamps and forestland. The Kafue River begins to rise every December and reaches its peak in May next year, and the floods then fall back and the lowest water level comes in November. The rise and fall of water level makes the Kafue River Basin a unique and gifted paradise of birds where over 400 bird species inhabit. Opposite to the fickle flood plains, peatlands are rather stable and humid, such as the Asmat Swamp in Indonesia. Nurtured by gentle wind and rain,

this swamp is very rich in organic matter which has formed abundant peat resources over years of sedimentation. Peat is a versatile and precious natural resource. It can make agricultural fertilizers, fodders or additives, and be processed to building materials, dozens of final and semi-final chemical products used in building, chemical, and environmental protection areas. Additionally, peat is also an important energy reserve for its special features in being used as fuel.

The Waddensee beach, a part of the North Sea in Europe spreading along the coastal line of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, is wet, salty and sandy. In these areas the sea water is shallow so the entire beach is exposed at low tides. The mudflat, shoals, coastal marshes and offshore sandy islands along the Waddensee beach not only attract hundreds of seals and millions of migratory birds, but is also the most important foraging habitat for animals in Nordic area by nursing 80% plaice population, 50% sole and almost all the herring in Noordzee.

China is one of the countries in the world with the richest wetland resources. The vast, rich and diverse wetland resources in China have been playing a key role in ecological balance, biodiversity conservation, flood and drought mitigation, agricultural, animal husbandry and fishery production, industrial raw material supply, migration settlement and mitigation of population-farmland problems. China's natural wetlands (bigger than 100 hectares in area and 10m in width) cover 38.49 million



hectares (human-made wetland not surveyed), or 3.68% of the land territory in China.

Wetlands in China are categorized in 8 different regions, namely the northeast, north China, middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, coastal marshes to the north of Hangzhou Bay, coastal marshes to the south of Hangzhou Bay, Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, arid and semi-arid regions in Nei Mongol and Xinjiang, and Alpine wetlands in Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. Rivers are mainly in the east, swamps in the northeast, much less wetlands in arid areas in the west, large number of lakes in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River and the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, and many saltwater lakes and salt lakes in Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and arid areas of northwest, where there is world's highest concentration of Alpine swamps and lakes. Many unique mangroves and human-made wetlands of sub-tropical and tropical zones are found in the coastal areas from Hainan Island to the north of Fujian. China's wetland is featured for its great variety, wide distribution, regional variation and biodiversity richness.

The first wetland resource inventory in China shows that China has four major types of natural wetland (coastal marshes, rivers, lakes and swamps) and human-made wetlands. All 40 wetland types classified by the Ramsar Convention can be found in China. Swamps are 13.7 million hectares and mainly in Sanjiang Plain of northeast, Daxinganling, Xiaoxinganling, Mt. Changbai, Ruo'ergai of Sichuan and Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. Lakes are 8.35 million hectares and are grouped in 5 regions, namely eastern plain, Nei Mongol and Xinjiang Plateau, Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, northeast plain area and lakes in mountains areas. Rivers are 8.21 million hectares and unevenly distributed due to topographic and climate constraints and most are in the humid monsoon climate zone in the east. Coastal wetlands are 5.94 million hectares and mainly in coastal provinces. Divided by the Hangzhou Bay, to the north there are primarily sand beaches and mudflats composed of coastal marshes of Bohai Rim and in Jiangsu province except the rocky beaches in Shandong and Liaodong Peninsulas; to the south there are primarily rocky beaches in the estuaries and sea bays such Qiantang rivermouth and Hangzhou Bay, Jinjiang rivermouth and Quanzhou Bay, Pearl rivermouth in Hekou Bay, and the Beibu Gulf. Human-made wetlands are 2.29 million hectares and mainly in water resource rich areas such as northeast, upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers, and Guangdong.

### II\_The vital source of life

Wetland is the source of fresh water. The water used for human living, industrial and agricultu-

ral production comes from wetlands such as reservoirs, ponds, creeks, rivers and lakes. Wetland is the major storage of fresh water on earth for its ability to supply abundant fresh water and recharge ground water. Some 1.5-3 billion people in the world depend on ground water as a source of drinking water. Wetland is a natural reservoir for the water resource it provides on a sustainable basis. China's wetland holds around 2.7 trillion tons of freshwater or 96% of the entire fresh water resource available in the whole country. Wetland in large areas is the basis of ground water within a certain area, and stabilizes the water table in and around that area. When surface water transmits to ground water, the wetland purifies the water naturally by retaining nutrition and depositing waste, thus protects valuable sediments from being flushed into the rivers. This maintains a favorable water cycle and sustainable use of water resources.

Wetland is very powerful in water purification. It is of equal importance to maintain both water quality and quantity. While providing ample water resources, wetland is also very powerful in detoxification. Many plants and microbe growing in natural wetlands can transform toxic matters discharged to the lakes and rivers by human to nontoxic and innocuous matters and even useful matters through physical filtration, biological absorption and chemosynthesis and chemolysis. By absorbing and transforming some carcinogenic heavy metal and chemical materials, wetland can also purify the water body. *Cymbalaria halerpestes* (*Halerpestes cymbalaria* (Pursh) Greene), cattail (*Typha* L.) and reed (*Phragmites Adans.*) are widely used in disposing heavy metals such as cadmium, cuprum and zinc, which are highly concentrated in sewage. You may see by yourself that before a flood or during dry season, the water is crystal clear in many gullies, forest creeks, swamp and lakes, and natural rivers in the catchment where the soil erosion is slight, and the water in riverheads is drinkable. Experiment proves that if sewage flows through a cypress swamp before it is discharged to the river, 98% nitrogen and 97% phosphorus is purified and removed. This reveals the amazing capability of wetland in cleaning up waste.

Wetland can regulate and store water and mitigate floods and waterlog. In raining season and water rising period, wetland can divide excessive waterflow, regulate river runoff, recharge ground water, reduce flood peak, distribute flood, mitigate and control floods and waterlog, and maintain a regional water balance. Many wetlands are in low-lying areas and connected to rivers, therefore they are gigantic natural water storages in holding

plentiful water. This is particularly true to those reedy ponds, shoals and swamps possessing numerous fluffy grassroots and peat layers with high porosity, which could absorb and store excessive water like a sponge in raining seasons or water rising periods, and discharge excessive water stored in the flood periods to downstream or surrounding areas, thus mitigate the drought and the scarcity of water in downstream areas. When dealing with water, wetland is more powerful in flood and disaster mitigation than river, which often floods in heavy rain and dries up when there is no raindrop.

Wetland is renowned as the civil engineer of the nature for its role in breaking water and formulating silt. River, lake and coastal embankments, adjacent tidal flats, farmlands, fishing ponds, brine pans and villages are prone to erosion and wave strikes. Natural wetland can reduce water velocity and wallop. In riverside, lakeside and coastal marshes where many water plants such as mangrove, reed and common cordgrass (*Spartina anglica* C.E.Hubb.) grow, wetland vegetation can protect the embankments and farmlands, fishing ponds and villages. The periodical waves in coastal and lakeside areas can persistently erode the sand and mud from the sea or lake to the wetlands on the bank. The velocity and wallop of water containing sand and mud is reduced by the vegetation, and the sand and mud in the water is silted and gradually formed to new lands.

### III\_A treasure of natural resources

Wetland has one of the richest bio-diversity on our planet earth, containing very rich bio resources. Though nature and man made wetland covers only 12% of the land surface, it provides living space for 40% known species on this planet. Wetland is an ocean of plants. Colorful wet meadows, green reeds, pure white water lilies and seaguard mangroves; swamp plants, salty swamp plants, mangrove plants, phytoplanktons, emergent plants, benthic plants, a vital, colorful and dazzling picture scroll is unfolded by all these various plants to us. Wetland is a paradise for birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, fishes and insects to inhabit and breed. Many natural wetlands provide not only a living space for aquatic animals and plants, but also a necessary place for many endangered wild fauna especially waterfowls to inhabit, migrate, overwinter and breed.

Freshwater wetland is regarded to have the richest number of species in all types of eco-systems. The freshwater wetland eco-system, such as river, lake and swamp, takes only 0.8% of the planet surface, but 12% of the animals on earth, over 44,000 described freshwater biology in record, or 2.4% of the known species on earth are found here. Of the





22,000 described fishes, more than 8,400 are from freshwater. There are over 25,000 fresh algae species in the world, some 5,000–6,000 protozoan lives in freshwater, and many more non-aquatic living things are highly dependent on freshwater ecosystem.

As one of the countries with the richest wetland biodiversity, China is very critical in global biodiversity conservation. Statistics show there are 225 families, 815 genera and 2,276 species of higher plants living in China's wetlands, taking 63.7%, 25.6% and 7.7% of the country's total higher plants respectively. These include over 260 bryophytes, over 70 ferns, over 20 gymnosperms, and more than 1,900 angiosperms. There are 6 wild floras under Class I National Protection, namely *Isoetes sinensis* Palmer, *Isoetes Japonica*, Chinese Deciduous Cypress (*Glyptostrobus pensilis* (Lamb.) K. Koch), Water Larch (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides* Hu et Cheng), Common Watershield (*Brasenia schreberi* J.F. Gmel.), Longbeak Ranalisma (*Ranalisma rostratum* Stapf), and 11 wild floras under Class II National Protection. China has many wild fauna species, and over 700 are wetland species, in which the waterfowl are the most representative wildlife population of the wetland, amphibian are the transition vertebrate from aquatic to terrestrial life, and mammal and reptile are also important types of wetland animals. According to statistics, there are more than 260 waterfowls, over 300 amphibians, over 120 reptiles and more than 30 mammals in China's wetlands. In addition, China also has many aquatic resources, over 3,000 kinds of fishes, and a variety of invertebrates such as crustacean and shrimp.

Wetland is abundant in biological resources. Aquatic (such as fish, shrimp, crustacean and alga), poultry and floral products are the main source of food for mankind. Paddy and reed that derived from wetland are of important economic values. By feeding nearly half of the world population, rice has become the most popular crop with the longest cultivation history. The rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras are inscribed by the UNESCO as World Culture Heritage. Wetland teems with fishes. The global fishery output is more than the total production of cattle, sheep, poultry and egg. Around 1 billion population in the world depend on fishes as the primary source of animal protein. Capture fisheries in coastal waters alone contribute \$34 billion to gross world product annually. Historically many Chinese wetland areas dominated with rivers and lakes are called land of abundance. Lotus root, Arrowhead, Chufa, Wild Rice Stem, Water Chestnut and Water Shield are edible plants growing in wetland; over 250 plants such as Rough Gentian (*Gentiana scabra* Bunge),

Oriental Waterplantain (*Alisma orientale* (Sam.) Juzepcz.), Buerger Pipewort (*Eriocaulon buergerianum* Koern), Common Burreed (*Sparganium stoloniferum* Buch-Ham), Gordon Euryale (*Euryale ferox* Salisb), Cattail (*Typha* L.), Nutgrass Galingale (*Cyperus rotundus* L.), Garden Burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis* L.), Reed Rhizome (*Rhizoma phragmitis*), Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum* L.), Common Rush (*Juncus effusus* L.), can be used for medicine and therefore form an integral part of the traditional Chinese medicine; Water Larch (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides* Hu et Cheng), Fir (*Abies* Mill.), Larch (*Larix* Mill.) and *Alniphyllum* Fortunei (*Alnus japonica*) produce quality timber for us.

The ecological value of wetland in protecting species and preserving bio-diversity is irreplaceable. Furthermore, wetland provides a large number of necessary means of production and livelihood to the people. The exploitation and use of wetland resources has played and will continue to play even more important roles in driving social civilization and economic growth.

#### IV\_Regulation Climate

Wetland plays an important role in global carbon cycle. Wetland has accumulated a large amount of inorganic and organic carbon in the ecological processes of vegetation growth and soil formation due to its special ecological properties. In a wetland environment microbe activity is weak and the soil sequesters and releases CO<sub>2</sub> in a rather slow process, thus forms organic rich wetland soil and peat layers which can fix the carbon. By taking 35% of the carbon in terrestrial biosphere or 77 billion tons from the global landmass, wetland ecosystem is regarded the largest carbon pool on earth, more than the agricultural ecosystem (15 billion tons), temperate forests (15.9 billion tons) and tropical forests (42.8 billion tons). Peatlands are wetlands with highest carbon fixation capacity, storing 54 billion tons or 70% of the total fixed carbon in wetlands.

Greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane accumulated in the atmosphere will exacerbate greenhouse effect and subsequently increase the earth surface temperature, thus imposes severe impact on global climate. Wetland has substantial influence on regional climate regulation, and this critical role that wetland plays has been recognized by both Ramsar Convention and the UNFCCC. The constant energy and substance exchange between wetland and the atmosphere through the water evaporation of wetland and water transpiration of foliage maintains the local humidity and precipitation. In a forested wetland much of the precipitation goes to the atmosphere through tree evaporation and transmission, and falls back to the region in the form of rain. Mor-

ning fogs emerged in swamps could reduce the loss of soil moisture. Wetland has notable roles in climate regulation, such as increasing regional air humidity, decreasing wind velocity, reducing diurnal temperature difference and lowering atmospheric particles content. Based on a survey, the regional temperature, humidity of and number of sand storms occurred in places adjacent the Bonsten Lake, which is located in arid regions in Xinjiang, is 3 °C lower, 14% higher and 25% less than places away from the lake. Wetland's ability in the regulation of regional micro-climate in urban areas is even more remarkable due to the obvious heat island effect of cities.

Sea temperature and sea level rise, and increase in storm surges associated with global warming will impose major impacts to coastal marshes. Sea level rise will submerge many estuaries, seashores, and mangroves; sea temperature rise will melt the peatland frozen soil in frigid zones and accelerate its breakdown and loss, and further exacerbate global warming. The irregular water balance between earth surface and atmosphere caused by global warming will result in extinction of many endangered wildlife and biodiversity loss. Many deltas in the world are important stopover habitats for migratory waterbirds, and wetland changes associated with sea level rise and other climate change factors will threaten the existence of waterbirds and other wildlife. Coral reefs are very sensitive to temperature variations. They may fade even there is 1–2 °C changes within a short period, and die in large areas if the temperature constantly rises by 3–5 °C. It is estimated that 27% of the world's coral reefs are reduced due to global warming, and if this continues 60% of the coral reefs will disappear by 2030.

Rice as a wetland plant is the major food of mankind and one of the most important crops in the world. Even a slight increase in temperature will cause negative impacts on rice in tropical regions of Asia. The variation in the area of rice field will change the methane emission, which will impose critical impact on rice growth accordingly. Meteorologists noted that the overall Australian annual mean temperature for 2002 is 1.6 °C above the average over a long period prior to 2002, and the drought exacerbated by warm temperature caused the abrupt reduction of rice production in eastern Australia.

Climate change imposes impacts on wetlands indirectly through altered human activities. Because the normal water cycle is disturbed by climate change especially in arid and semi-arid regions, there is less precipitation and increase in drought frequency and duration. Human response to drought is often over-exploitation of freshwater so as to meet the demands for urban and agricultural



water use, leading to less waterflow, loss of lakes and great water table variations, and eventually cause wetland function reduction and degradation, and intensify the pressure on wetlands.

Wetlands influence the climate, is a regulator of climate; at the same time climate influences the wetlands. Wetland is the indicator of climate change.

### **V\_The cradle of human civilization**

Wetland is the homeland which human depends on for survival. In ancient times when the productivity was very low, man had to depend on an environment which has benign climate, affluent water resources and fertile soil for farming, living and assembling tribes. Looking back at history we can see that the history of human civilization is the history of rivers. By providing a reliable habitat, many big rivers and alluvial plains became the cradle for ancient human civilizations to evolve. Historically the great and long-standing River Nile fostered the construction of brilliant pyramids and the ancient Egyptian civilization; the Euphrates and Tigris are the cradle of ancient Babylon civilization; the Ganges and the Indian River is the placenta of Indian civilization; and the Yangtze River and the Yellow River together created the Chinese civilization. Without wetlands, the human society cannot thrive and progress, and there will be no modern civilization and culture. While experiencing changes of nature and life, wetland also witnesses the evolution of civilization and history.

In around 5000 BC a vagrant primitive tribe walked out of the jungles of the African continent and moved to the Nile valley, and later became the ancient Egyptians. Nile is a gigantic inland river in Africa. Every summer the abundant rainfall in the upper catchment triggers the periodical floods which erode mud and plant residuals from the upstream, and change the basins and deltas along the riverside to a waterlogged land and fertile wetlands suitable for growing corn as a result of sedimentation. In searching for a suitable residence the primitive men found this piece of land of milk and honey, and resided themselves. By draining the swamps, digging ditches, building dams, planting crops, raising stocks, and growing barley, wheat and flax, they changed this land into a famous granary. Later on they opened canals, created characters and constructed the pyramids, and at around 3000 BC they created the first unitary slave state in the world, Egypt, and sustained the Egyptian civilization by making full use of the nature-bestowed annual floods of River Nile, thus became one of the few countries in the world which could sustain its ancient civilization. River Nile is the source of life for Egypt, some 85% of

water supply, half of the food production, 25% of the power generation and most tourism revenue in Egypt rely on the Nile. As quoted by Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, "Egypt is truly a gift of the Nile". Even now there is a motto imprinted on the statue base of a God at the riverside of the Nile which reads: I am everything, the past, the present and the future.

The ancient Babylon civilization originated from the mysterious Euphrates and Tigris. Mesopotamia gave birth to the brilliant ancient Babylon. Eroded by the Euphrates and the Tigris, the rivers overflowed the watercourse and became the alluvial Mesopotamia plain. 5000 years ago the Sumerians and Akkadians moved from the hills along the riverbank to settle down at alluvial plains in the valleys, and developed agriculture by using the gifted water resources, eventually they created the ancient Babylon Kingdom, Assyrian Kingdom and the Mesopotamian civilization.

The surging Indian River and the Ganges gave birth to the civilization on the ancient Indian land. In ancient India, the Deccan peninsula was surrounded by high mountains and dense forests and possessed crisscross lakes and fertile soil. The soil brought by the Indian River and the Ganges from highland silted at downstream areas and formed the fertile Ganges River plain and delta, a vast, flat and fertile field on which people used irrigation facilities to develop agriculture and gradually changed it into a place with flourishing population and developed culture.

The Yellow River and the Yangtze River nurtured the Chinese people, and created the brilliant and long-standing Chinese civilization over the long historical process of interdependence of the Chinese people and the great rivers. Human activities could be found in the Yellow River and the Yangtze River basin as early as in the Paleolithic Age. For over 2500 years starting from the Shang Dynasty to the Northern Song Dynasty, the Yellow River basin was China's political, economic and cultural center. Right in its beginning, the Chinese civilization history is associated with wetlands.

Wetland is not only the cradle of life and source of historical civilization, but also the carrier in inheriting human culture. Wetland is endowed with profound cultural meaning and unique cultural style by human lifestyle such as fishing, collecting firewood, farming and rearing. The outstanding cultural features that wetland possesses in aesthetic, educational, cultural and spiritual aspects have covered music, culture and literature realms. Wetland is a live and lush culture, and the source of inspiration for artistic creations.

Wetland also created many important resorts,

tourist attractions, eco-tourism and recreation destinations for its magnificent and pretty natural scenes. The unique wetland landscapes provide people a place to understand, learn and respect the nature. The water bodies and wetland parks in the cities have key social values in beautifying environment and providing leisure and recreation spots for the residents.

Long-lasting wetlands are the living fossils of tens of thousands years. The information of biological and geographic evolution in the past and nowadays which wetland keeps is of important and unique value. It carries and records the changes of nature and life, and human civilization.

### **VI\_A homeland where man and nature co-exist in harmony**

For ages wetlands have nurtured mankind, who live, reproduce and evolve on wetlands. Wetland is a harmonious big family where water, reeds, trees, waterfowls, and fishes enjoy being together. The intervention of Homo sapiens bestowed this family with nimbus and civilization, thus formed a beautiful picture scroll. Wetland is a green land where man and nature co-exist in harmony.

Man began to know the wetland almost 10,000 years ago and the exploitation and use of wetland by man in various ways has a history of over 1,000 years. As early as 46 AC the Germans living in the lower reaches of the Weser in Germany began to use peat as a fuel. Chinese started lake encroachment and land reclamation in the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States Period. The terrace where water flows on the mountain is built by numerous laborious people who had lived on the mountains and along the rivers for generations, and an example of use of wetland for human well-being. Boundless green pastoral fields represent the protective approach which man uses the wetland. The successful construction of Dujiangyan irrigation system some 2000 year ago, which could irrigate 200,000 hectares cropland and has since changed the once waterlogged and drought-prone Chengdu Plain into a Land of Abundance, is one of the greatest applications of ecological engineering in China and the world, and another exceptional example of co-existence between man and nature. November 2000 this huge irrigation system that is centuries-old and has survived intact and functioning perfectly up to the present day, using immense advances achieved in ancient China without building dams, is inscribed in the World Heritage List as a cultural heritage, thus became a cultural treasure shared by all people in the world.

Wetland is generous yet fragile. In the past people





used to destroy the swamps, encroach the lakes and reclaim lands, control the water and divert the floods, exploit the tidal flats, in believing that man could conquer the nature, thus causing the rapid decrease of natural wetland area, the extinction of a large number of plants and aquatic animals, exacerbated soil and water erosion, and declined capacity of wetland in climate regulation. A report of the United Nations in the beginning of the 21st century pointed out that at least half of the global wetland has been lost due to exploitation and reclamation. These wetlands support the living of over 10,000 fish species and 4,000 amphibians. In Asia, wetland has long been used for growing paddy or other crops, causing damages to many primitive wetlands. The surface area of the Mesopotamian marshes located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in West Asia is vanishing due to excessive water withdrawals from dams and industrial development. In North America, Europe and the former USSR 139 biggest river systems are disturbed by human activities such as dams. The area of wetland in China also declined drastically since mid 1900s because of many factors such as the increasing population, over exploitation, land reclamation and encroachment, etc. Historically China's wetland covered 65.7 million hectares or 7% of the land territory, yet a survey in 2004 shows that the currently China's wetland covers only 38.48 million hectares, or 4% of the land territory, which is much less than the world average of 6%. Half of the coastal marshes in China have gone forever, 13% of the lakes have disappeared, and 40% of the wetlands are facing the threat of severe degradation.

The conquest of nature brings us wealth but also disasters: species extinction, water deterioration, destruction of coastline, flood occurrence, global warming exacerbation, ground water saltization, the 1998 Yangtze River Floods, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the 2007 Taihu Lake blue-green algae outbreak. The co-existence of man and nature is facing unprecedentedly severe challenges. Looking back at these disastrous natural catastrophes, people are thinking if more lakes and swamps had been preserved, if the coral reefs, mangroves, beaches had not been destroyed, and if... The conservation and wise use of wetland and the mankind and wetland in harmony is an urgent affair which bears no delay. The build-up of wetland monitoring system, conservation system, legislation system, action plan and policy, decision-making and comprehensive evaluation and adoption mechanism on wetland economic, social and cultural values is an imperative need.

The designation of wetland nature reserves began in China in the 1970s. Wetland International-Chi-

na, the first international environmental organization specialized in wetland conservation, was founded in Beijing in 1996. The China Wetland Conservation Action Plan was officially launched together by the State Forestry Administration and 16 other ministries after 6 years of efforts in compilation. The National Wildlife Protection and Nature Reserve Development Program, By 2010 China has established more than 550 wetland nature reserves of various types and over 100 wetlands parks and put 18 million hectares of land under protection, or 47% of the total wetland area in the country. Some 37 wetlands in China have been listed as Wetlands of International Importance, 173 wetlands have been listed as Wetlands of National Importance.

China also participated in the activities of several international conventions relevant to wetland conservation, those which China has acceded to are: the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biodiversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Combating Desertification, International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Waste and Other Matter, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Chinese government cooperates with many international organizations and China's wetland conservation is highly acknowledged by the international community.

#### VII\_For the future of wetlands

Wetland has devoted and will continue to devote itself unselfishly in various ways. The existence of wetland brings to the world more security, more colors and more hopes. As described in the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, all the services that wetlands deliver in supply, regulation, support and culture are closely related to national ecological security and sustainable economic and social development, and they support the sound development of human society. As a valuable and critical ecosystem, wetland is an indispensable part in developing conservation civilization. Wetland ecosystem service degradation and loss will harm the local community and individual health and well-being, and impede the economic development of countries in the world. Without a healthy wetland there will be no healthy mankind. The development of a healthy wetland ecosystem is our unshirkable responsibility. Care the wetland and care the ecosystem, we are caring ourselves. Protect the wetland and protect the ecosystem, we are protecting our homeland. Care the wetland and protect the wetland, for the future of wetland, for the future of our mankind,

let's create better environment and conditions for the wetland.



## Speech on the Workshop of Chinese Landscape Architecture at the 6th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture

ZHOU XIONG

*VICE SECRETARY GENERAL OF CHINA LANDSCAPE AND HISTORIC SITES ASSOCIATION*

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,  
Good morning!

First of all, on behalf of Mr. Jiang Weixin, Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China, I'd like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the organizing Committee of the 6th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture for the invitation. Secondly, on behalf of all the members of the Chinese delegation visiting this time, I'd like to express our sincere appreciation for the warm arrangement and hospitality of the organizing committee during the exhibition. Co-organized by the Government of Catalonia, the Architectural Association of Catalonia and the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, the European Biennial of Landscape Architecture started from 1999. After more than 10 years' exploration and practicing, it has become the most influential professional exhibition in terms of landscape architecture in Europe, even in the world. It especially promotes and leads the theoretical research and practices in the field of European landscape architecture, arousing attention from the same industry around the world.

It is a great honor for all of our delegation to be invited as the second non-European country of the exhibition to participate in the 6th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture. Through visits and communications in the last two days, we get to know the history and the latest theoretical achievement of the industry of European landscape architecture, as well as the newest trends of the landscape development, which is a rare study and communication opportunity for all our Chinese colleagues coming this time. As for myself, I feel extremely excited to come to Barcelona, Spain this time. More than 30 years ago, no sooner had I enrolled into university and started to learn about my major than I knew about the magic designer in Spain—Gaudi. After that, Barcelona has stayed deep in my heart as the City of Gaudi. I hoped I could see the actual architectures one day. Therefore, this visit also achieved one of my teenage beautiful dreams. On behalf of myself, may I take this opportunity to thank the Organizing Committee for the invitation. Thank you!

With splendid mountains and rivers, China has a long history and a profound cultural origin. Although it only develops for about 10 years in Chi-

na, contemporary landscape gardening (landscape architecture) roots in history and traditional developing background, which attracts the world's attention with its 10 years' exploration and practices. Chinese culture of landscape architecture derives from the aesthetics of mountains and rivers in the era of agricultural civilization of China. Then by exploration and practices throughout the ages, the traditional landscape theory is developed with the essential concept of landscape architecture in modern times. The best representative works of this theory are the Classic Gardens of Suzhou (the Private Garden in Southern Yangtze River of China) and Beijing Summer Palace (the Royal Garden in the Northern China), which are on the World Cultural Heritage list by UNESCO. Especially Suzhou Garden, within limited space and boundaries, by using unique garden construction art, combines beautiful scenery of lakes and mountains with pavilions, terraces and towers, and integrates vivid natural beauty with creative artificial beauty, so that people can experience the natural fabulous mountains and rivers without going out of the city. As was evaluated by the World Heritage Committee, there're no other gardens better than the four gardens of the historical city of Suzhou (Canglang Pavilion, Lion Grove, Linger-in Garden and Humble Administrator's Garden) to embody the ideal quality of the Chinese Classical landscape architecture. To rebuild the universe within a few feet of space. Suzhou Gardens are recognized as the model of realizing this designing thought. These gardens which were built during the 16th to 18th centuries reflect the profound conception of coming from but surpassing the nature in Chinese culture. Actually, this is the best summary of the Chinese traditional landscape architecture theory, as well as the Chinese tradition landscape culture. With the rapid urbanization of contemporary China, Chinese landscape gardening (landscape architecture) concept, which roots in the oriental traditional culture of mountains and rivers, starts to gradually contact and learn from western contemporary landscape theory. Many aspects of it develop freely like hundreds of flowers bloom at the same time, including the establishment of subjects and majors in higher education, theoretical study by planning and research institution, practices of landscape gardening (landscape ar-

chitecture) designers.

Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China is the professional supervisor and guiding department of Chinese Government in the field of landscape gardening (landscape architecture). For many years, it has attached great importance to China's theoretical research and practice in landscape gardening (landscape architecture), trying to enhance the progress of the industry.

In terms of urban planning, landscapes and historic sites planning, building design, garden design, etc, on one hand, we positively support the landscape gardening designers to explore and innovate in the process of promoting the culture of landscape architecture, and actively advocate to expand the vision of landscape gardening (landscape architecture) from landscape shaping focusing on aesthetic appreciation to environmental shaping with the concept of ecological environmental protection and sustainable development. On the other hand, we affirmatively encourage Chinese landscape gardening (landscape architecture) institutions and persons to participate more in international communication and cooperation, and welcome foreign landscape architecture institutions and persons to take part in relative landscape gardening (landscape architecture) projects in China. Especially in 2005, Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture represents Chinese landscape gardening (landscapes design) industry to officially join the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA). This kind of international communication and cooperation is getting more and more frequent. Maybe you still remember, from 28th to 30th, May this year, Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China and IFLA successfully held the IFLA 47th World Congress in Suzhou, China. Against the background of economic globalization and rapid urbanization, the theme of the congress is Responding to Nature to Achieve Harmony and Prosperity: Traditional Inheritance and Sustainable Development. 2000 representatives of landscape gardening (landscape architecture) and relative fields from across the world got together and discussed how to pass on traditional culture and art of landscape gardening (landscape architecture), meanwhile consider protection and development, in order to achieve harmonious coexistence between human beings and



the nature and to advance the healthy and sustainable development of cities. The congress not only showed the development of landscape gardening (landscape architecture) industry of China, which demonstrated that the Chinese government has taken policies and measures to construct human inhabitant environment and to protect natural and cultural landscapes for an ecological civilization. But also it provided a platform for communication and cooperation among international landscape gardening (landscape architecture) colleagues. It is of significant importance for global landscape gardening (landscape architecture) industry, to promote its development, to expand its social awareness and influence in every country, to boost its professional education and subject development, to protect global natural environment and historic cultural heritages and to improve the ecological environment for human inhabitant and living quality.

While highly valuing the theoretical research and practices, China Housing and Urban-Rural Development Ministry also devotes in the promotion and implementation of the achievements of the research and exploration, sparing no effort to apply these achievements on the improvement of the urban ecological and living environment, the protection of Chinese natural and cultural heritages, and the raise of the standard of public civilian recreation and entertainment facilities. Landscape gardening (landscape architecture) is one of our main indexes in choosing, creating and evaluating the landscape architectures, such as the Human Inhabitant Award, Creation of National Garden Cities, building up the national management system of landscapes and historic sites, National Gardens and Flowers Fair, and so on.

Thanks to the organizing committee, we are invited to display the works of modern landscape gardening (landscape architecture) of China. With the effort of Professor Yu Kongjian, the planner of this exhibition, a series of Chinese landscape projects themed with "Liquid China" can be present during the exhibition this time. The projects presented this time consist of the natural resource, the urban park, the urban open space, the commercial entertainment plaza and the landscape of residential district, divided in 5 categories and 16 pieces of work in total. Despite the limited content, these works can be described as one drop from the sea while compared with all the exploration in many fields done by Chinese landscape gardening designers. They all have the same purpose, with more ecological, more scientific and opener mind and means, to present more landscape works which agree with the characteristics of contemporary economic development, conditions of contemporary ecological environment and the trends of contemporary public aesthetic appreciation,

and serve the society. In my opinion, this should also be the object of all the people involved in this industry. I would like to take this opportunity to share this with everyone.

Finally, I would like to thank the Organizing Committee again for the invitation.

Wish the Workshop of Chinese Landscape Architecture a great success.

Congratulations on the success of the 6th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture.

Thank you.



# The Big Foot Revolution

KONGJIAN YU

PEKING UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE,  
TURENSCAPE

## 1. The "Little Foot Urbanism"

For more than a thousand years, young Chinese girls were forced to bind their feet in order to be able to marry citified elites. The healthy natural "big" feet, with a natural higher capability, were considered to be rustic and rural. On the contrary, the unhealthy deformed and citified small feet, noxiously deprived of its functionality, malodorous and with limited capability, were considered to be "beautiful".

Foot binding, together with the Mayan practice to deform their heads (along with many other culture body-deforming practices), were appreciated as a rite of urban initiation and urbanity.

Therefore urbanization began with a highly privileged class who sacrifices "function" in reward of ornamental and cosmetic values. This "Little Foot" value system has been used for thousands of years by the privileged urban minority to build and appreciate cities and landscapes. By definition, "Little Foot Urbanism" is the art of gentrification and cosmetics. Its superficial condition drives away the messy, fertile, productive and functional landscapes that are associated with healthy and rewarding people.

Today we bind the natural feet in the city with fashionable tinny high-heeled shoes, the same as we build a 500-year flood control dike made out of concrete to surround the city and keep it distant from the water. We build a fully controlled storm water management system that does not allow the re-infiltration of water to the aquifer before being flushed into the ocean; we replace native "messy" and productive shrubs and crops with the fancy flowers that bare no fruits and support no other species other than pleasing the human beings; We up-root the hardy wild grass and replace it with smooth ornamental lawn that consumes tons of water; We watch funny deformed puppy dogs and baby pigs running on the paved street with shining marbles and chasing away wild birds and native species ...

The urbanized landscapes are designed with an ornamental criterion, thereupon designing ornamental buildings such as the CCTV Tower and the National Opera House in Beijing as the landmark buildings. Shanghai and Dubai are another example; almost all of the landmark buildings are crowned with some kind of ornamental fun-

ny hats. Furthermore, the whole city becomes ornamental and cosmetic with the burden of water shortage, air pollution, global warming, massive waste of land and natural resources, gaining the loss of cultural identity.

The landscapes, cities and buildings under today's "Little Foot Urbanism" trend are alike the noxious "Little Foot" girl: unhealthy, deformed, deprived of functionality, with limited capability and malodorous. "Little foot Urbanism" is a path to death. This Little Foot dream used to be limited to less than 10% high class urban minority prior to the late half of the 20th century, now becoming a massive common dream of the population. In China alone, 18 million people are urbanized each year, immigrating to the city from the rustic rural land, willing to search the furnished urban settings. These people carry the same dream: to be "urbane", to be gentrified; to keep distance from the natural functionality and to be away from healthy and productive life. When poor developing countries that follow the "Little Foot Urbanism" encounter the "American Jumbo Dream", the scenario gets even worse. To name China and India who come after the American dream of jumbo car and houses, and whatever jumbo else. So we "jumbo" the buildings such as the National Stadium in Beijing that uses 42,000 metric tons of steel, accounting for roughly 500 kg/square; we celebrate the "jumbo" CCTV Tower in Beijing that consume 250 kg/square meter; we "jumbo" the urban squares of 10 or even 20 hectares in area of pure granite pavement with ornamental pattern. Thereafter, the land can be seen as a little donkey with a heavy burden: China has only 7% of the world natural resources of arable land and sweet water with the need to feed 22% of the world's population. China inherited its own traditional "Little Foot" and additionally was attracted by the American Jumbo Dream.

It can be imagined where the Little Foot Urbanism with Jumbo Body will lead China: two thirds of China's 662 cities are in shortage of water; 75% of the nation's surface water is polluted; and 64 of cities' underground water is polluted; One third of the national population are under the threat of drinking polluted water; 50% wetlands disappeared in the past 30 years in China. How can we

survive in the future? Look carefully: such a huge brownfield of China.

## 2. The "Big Foot Revolution" and Big Foot Urbanism

It's time for a change! We define Ecological Urbanism as the Art of Survival! At this moment, two strategies have to be taken: Strategies that will provide the alternative and guide for sustainable cities in the future:

### 2.1 The Negative Approach Urban Development Based on Ecological Infrastructure across scales.

This is the spatial strategy of urban development planning that requires the planners to understand the land as a living system, where to identify an Ecological infrastructure (EI) that will guide and frame the urban development. EI is defined as the structural landscape network that is composed of the critical landscape elements and spatial patterns. EI evidences as well strategic significance in safeguarding the integrity and identity of the natural and cultural landscapes, which in turn secure sustainable ecosystem services.

By using a minimum space, EI will safeguard the following four critical eco-services:

- 1) **Provide**, which stands for food production and clean water;
- 2) **Regulate**, concerned about the control of climate, disease, mediation of flood and draught;
- 3) **Support**, related to nutrient cycles and providing habitat (suitable living space) for native plant and animal species;
- 4) **Culture**, associated to spiritual and recreational benefits. The main objective of the Negative Approach is Smart Protection and Smart Growth. As an Ecological Urbanism spatial strategy, the Ecological Infrastructure shall be planned across scales. The national and regional EI are to be planned through the identification of strategic landscape patterns (Security Patterns) to safeguard the critical ecological processes which act as a framework directing the overall regional land use planning and urban growth pattern. At a medium scale, structural elements of Ecological Infrastructure such as corridors and patches are clearly identified and drawn to guarantee the integrity of the regional scale. In a small scale, the ecosystem services provided by the regional ecological infrastructure,



will be extended into the urban fabric and guide urban design for individual sites

## 2.2 "Big Foot" Aesthetics: Seven projects, seven principles.

A "New Aesthetic" is required to allow the operation and appreciation of ecological urbanism: aesthetics of "Big Foot", as an alternative to the "Little Foot" aesthetics. The following five projects are designed, and five of them are executed, by the author and Turenscape in the past 10 years, demonstrating some major principals that define "Big Foot" aesthetics, based on ecological awareness and environmental ethic.

### I\_The Floating Gardens of Yongning Park.

#### *Make friends with Floods:*

Modern cities that follow "Little Foot urbanism" are designed against natural forces, especially the one related to water. The nature's services of the landscape, where the cities are built, are impoverished and replaced with man made services. As an alternate approach to conventional urban water management and flood control engineering that uses concrete and pipes, the Yongning Park project demonstrates how we can live and design with the natural "Big Foot" of water. Therefore letting loose the bound of concrete on the urban water system, and take an ecological approach to flood control and storm water management, revealing the beauty of native vegetation and the ordinary landscape. The results have been remarkably successful: Flood problems were successfully addressed; the "Big Foot" native grass has been appreciated by local people as well as incoming tourists.

### II\_The Rice Campus of Shenyang Architectural University.

#### *Go Productive*

For centuries, universities are places to gentrify the rustic young generation into the urbane, so is the landscape itself. Hundreds and thousands of hectares of fertile land have been transformed into campus of ornamental lawn and flowers in the past three decades in China. As an alternative, the Shenyang Architectural University Campus was designed to be productive. Storm water is collected to make a reflecting pond, which is then become the reservoir to irrigate the rice paddy right in front of the class rooms. Open study rooms are allocated in the middle of the rice fields. Frogs and fishes are cultivated in the rice paddy to eat the lava of insects and grown up to become additional harvest for the lunch table. This project demonstrates how agricultural landscape can become part of the urbanized environment, and yet aesthetically enjoyable. Finally this productive landscape is a clear example of the new "Big Foot"

aesthetic: unbounded, functional and beautiful.

### III\_Zhongshan Shipyard Park

#### *Value the ordinary and recycle the existing*

For a long time, we have been proud of ourselves as human beings capable of building, destroy and rebuilt. Because of this human instinct, both natural assets and man made assets have been over-used and presently at the brink of survival crisis. As an alternate approach, the Zhongshan Shipyard Park demonstrates the principle of preserving, reusing and recycling natural and man-made materials. The park is built on a brownfield site where an abandoned shipyard was originally erected in the 1950s. The Shipyard went bankrupt in 1999, seemingly insignificant in Chinese history; nevertheless, the shipyard reflected the remarkable fifty-year history of socialist China. Original vegetation and natural habitats were preserved, only native plants were used throughout the Landscape design. Machines, docks, and other industrial structures were recycled for educational and functional purposes. This unconventional approach made this park a favorite site for wedding, for fashion show as well as for daily use by the local communities and visited by tourists. It demonstrated how "messy" and "rustic" can be aesthetically attractive, how environmental ethic and ecological awareness can be built into our urban landscape.

### IV\_The Adaptation Palettes of The Qiaooyuan Park, Tianjin City.

#### *Let nature work*

From the classics of Versailles and Chinese gardens to the contemporary Olympic Park and places, we have seen great efforts made to create and maintain ornamental artificial landscapes. Instead of providing ecosystems services for the city, public spaces actually become the burden of cities in terms of energy and water consumption. The Qiaooyuan Park in Tianjin City alternatively exemplifies how natural processes originate and let nature work, providing an environmental service for the city.

The site was a former shooting range. It became a garbage dump and drainage sink for urban storm water, heavily polluted and deserted. The soil presented heavy saline and alkaline properties. Inspired by the adaptive vegetation communities that dot the regional flat coastal landscape, the designer developed a solution called The Adaptation Palettes: numerous pond cavities of different depth were dug, storm water being retained; diverse habitats created; seeds of mixed plant species sowed to start vegetation and a regenerative design process were introduced to evolve and adapt in time. The patchiness of the landscape

reflects the regional water- and alkaline-sensitive vegetation. The beauty of the native landscape attracts thousands of visitors every day, the ecology-driven and low maintenance Big-Foot has become the aesthetic attraction that lure thousands visitors every day.

### V\_The Red Ribbon: Tanghe River Park, Qinhuangdao City, Hebei Province

#### *The Minimal intervention*

In the process of urbanization, a natural landscape is usually replaced with overly designed and gentrified gardens and parks. The Red Ribbon Park in China's Qinhuangdao city explored an alternative that integrated art with nature and had dramatically transformed the landscape with minimal design. Against the background of natural terrain and vegetation, the landscape architect placed a five-hundred-meter "red ribbon" bench integrating lighting, seating, environmental interpretation and orientation. While preserving as much of the "messy" natural river corridor as possible, this project demonstrates how a minimal design solution can achieve dramatic improvements, turning "messy" natural Big Foot landscape into a beautiful urban park, yet the natural processes and patterns are maximally preserved.

### VI\_Shanghai Houtan Park:

#### *Landscape as a living system*

Built on a brownfield of a former industrial site, Houtan Park is a regenerative living landscape on Shanghai's Huangpu riverfront. The park's constructed wetland, ecological flood control, reclaimed industrial structures and materials, and urban agriculture are integral components of an overall restorative design strategy to treat polluted river water and recover the degraded waterfront in a aesthetically pleasing way.

The first challenge was restoring the degraded environment. The water of Huangpu River is highly polluted with a national water quality ranking of Lower Grade V, the lowest grade on a scale of I-V. The second challenge was to improve flood control. A conventional retaining wall would continue to limit accessibility and preclude habitat creation along the water's edge, so an alternative flood control design proposal was necessary.

A linear constructed wetland was designed to create a reinvigorated waterfront as a living machine to treat contaminated water from the Huangpu River. Cascades and terraces are used to oxygenate the nutrient rich water, remove and retain nutrients and reduce suspended sediments while creating pleasant water features. 2,400 cubic meters per day of water can be treated from Lower Grade V to Grade III.

The wetland also acts as a floodable buffer. The terrace design of the wetland alleviates the ele-



vation difference between the city the river, safely reconnecting people to the water's edge. Crops and wetland plants were selected to create an urban farm allowing people to witness seasonal changes. The industrial materials from the site are reconfigured to create artful forms, new paving material for the boardwalk, and shelters.

## **VII\_The Chicago Art Field: A Propossal for North Grant Park Renovation**

### *From the Art of Survival to the Art Beyond Survival*

Ecological urbanism and big foot aesthetics call for the integration of art into the productive and rustic nature and man-made landscape. The process of "gentrification" is an artful plus to, but not a minus deduction from, the productive and healthy nature of the landscape. The Chicago Art Field is our demonstration of this principle. Due to the renovation of the East Monroe Street Parking Garage – which underlies Daley Bicentennial Plaza – the necessary removal of the Plaza altogether (which composes the entire northeast section of Grant Park) will become a step in the renovation process, ultimately leading to the construction of the new park. Chicago Art Field– The design we proposed is a cultural emblem and a canvas against which the natural cycles of the metropolitan landscape can occur. The cornfield, the identifying feature of the Chicago Art Field, is both a symbol of Chicago's agrarian heritage and a continually regenerating agricultural process. Amongst the growing crops, various activities of art installation, performance, children's playground, ice skating, meeting, and observation will find their own cycles in tandem with the progression of the seasons. The planting and harvest of the Chicago Art Field each year will become community events to mark the continued renewal of Chicago's vitality. In turn, the Chicago Art Field will become a place to observe and harvest the progress of the city.





## El renacimiento de China

EUGENIO BREGOLAT

El renacimiento de China es el principal proceso histórico de nuestro tiempo. La caída del Muro de Berlín, el fin del comunismo en Rusia y el desmoronamiento de la URSS marcaron el fin del siglo XX, pero el siglo XXI había empezado ya en noviembre de 1978, con el lanzamiento por Deng Xiaoping de la "política de reforma económica y apertura al exterior", que despertó a China de su largo sueño.

Si aceptamos que Estados Unidos, como civilización, es una extensión de Europa, la reemergencia de China es un fenómeno sin parangón desde el Renacimiento europeo. Este último, incluido el descubrimiento de América, inició un periodo de medio milenio en el que la civilización occidental ha dominado el mundo en todos los órdenes. Europa mostraba, cinco siglos atrás, una gran vitalidad, en el mismo momento en que China, después de largos siglos en la vanguardia económica, tecnológica y cultural, entraba en un eclipse. Ahora es occidente el que da claros signos de fatiga histórica, justo cuando China ha salido de su eclipse. El declive de Europa y Estados Unidos es cierto, pero relativo, no necesariamente terminal. La reemergencia de China (y de Asia en general) es, por su alcance, uno de estos fenómenos que se producen tres o cuatro veces en un milenio.

Según el Banco Mundial China ha hecho en una generación lo que a la mayoría de países les ha costado siglos. Otros dicen que en los últimos treinta años China ha comprimido el Renacimiento, la Ilustración, la Revolución Industrial y la Revolución Electrónica. Esto es, claro, una forma de hablar, pero da idea de la envergadura y la velocidad del cambio en China. Diez años atrás, Peter Woo, uno de los grandes capitalistas de Hong Kong y entonces presidente de su Trade Development Council, me decía: "Se compara a China con el Japón de los años cincuenta. La diferencia está en que entre Pekín, Tianjin y la península de Shandong forman un Japón; Shanghai y sus dos provincias colindantes, Zhejiang y Jiangsu, otro; y Hong Kong, Cantón, Shenzhen y el estuario del Río de las Perlas, otro. Tres Japoneses (ya de los años setenta, más que de los cincuenta) y mil millones de personas detrás". En efecto, lo que distingue de forma esencial a China de Japón o de los "cuatro tigres" asiáticos, es su dimensión y, a causa de ella, su impacto sobre el resto del mundo. Por

cierto, tres de los "cuatro tigres" son chinos: Hong Kong, Taiwán y Singapur; sólo Corea del Sur no lo es.

Hace pocas semanas se ha confirmado que el PIB de China ha superado, a precios de mercado, al de Japón. Si Deng Xiaoping hubiese sido, además de un genio político, profeta, y, al lanzar su política de reforma económica, a fines de 1978, hubiese dicho que treinta años después el PIB de China iba a desplazar al de Japón para convertirse en el segundo del ranking global, las risas del resto del mundo se habrían oído hasta en Pekín.

En 1978 China tenía un PIB de 140.000 millones de dólares, el undécimo del mundo y el 6% del PIB norteamericano (2,27 billones de dólares). En 1990 el PIB de China era ya de 350.000 millones de dólares, aún el undécimo del ranking mundial. En 2000, alcanzó 1,25 billones, con el sexto lugar en el ranking. El PIB de China pasó de representar el 6% del PIB de EE.UU. en 1978, a ser el 35% el pasado año. Estos han sido los hitos del más espectacular proceso de desarrollo económico de la historia, por su rapidez y por su alcance.

La profunda crisis económica del Japón durante la última década explica que China lo haya rebasado, cuando en el año 2000 el PIB del Japón casi cuadruplicaba al de China (4,75 por 1,25 billones de dólares). Creciendo al 10% se duplica el PIB en 7 años y se cuadruplica en 14. China superó estas cifras (pasó de un PIB de 1,18 billones de dólares en 2000 a otro de 4,90 billones a fines de 2009) mientras Japón permanecía prácticamente estancado (su PIB pasó de 4,76 billones de dólares en 2000 a 5,06 en 2009). Verlo para creerlo.

Las proyecciones sobre el futuro de China se ven superadas apenas han sido formuladas. Si hace una década se suponía que el PIB de China podría alcanzar, en valor nominal, al norteamericano hacia mediados de siglo, luego se dijo que sería en 2040, en 2035. Goldman Sachs hace dos años afirmaba que sería en 2027. Y en junio de este año Price Waterhouse estimó que será en 2020, proyección endosada por el Banco Mundial. Este cálculo supone que China seguirá creciendo en torno al 10%, o más, mientras EE.UU., aún enfangado en la crisis económica, registrará cifras de crecimiento muy bajas. Según Goldman Sachs en 2050 el PIB de China será de 70 billones de dólares y el de Es-

tados Unidos de 40 billones. Vista la forma en que China ha superado las estimaciones anteriores, es difícil rechazar ahora éstas, que hace bien pocos años habrían parecido descabelladas.

La moneda tiene otra cara: China se enfrenta con muchos y muy serios problemas. No podía ser de otra forma, en un país de 1.400 millones de habitantes que lleva tres décadas protagonizando el proceso de desarrollo económico más rápido de la historia universal. Son bien conocidos: el medio ambiente; la creciente diferencia de rentas entre grupos sociales y regiones; la corrupción; un modelo económico basado en la inversión y la exportación, y con consumo interno relativamente escaso; el envejecimiento de la población; los nacionalismos; y un largo etcétera.

Pero lo cierto es que durante ya un tercio de siglo China ha ido resolviendo sus problemas sin graves sobresaltos. En una ocasión le oí decir a Tung Chee Hwa, entonces Chief Executive de Hong Kong: "Greenspan me ha dicho que China tiene la mejor clase política del mundo". Se esté o no en desacuerdo con esta afirmación, y admitiendo que nadie conoce el futuro, la capacidad demostrada por los dirigentes chinos para superar los obstáculos, incluida la gestión de la crisis económica global, permiten ser moderadamente optimistas sobre su capacidad de seguir haciéndolo.

En este escenario, ¿dónde queda Europa? Zhu Rongji, el Primer Ministro chino anterior al actual, dijo en una ocasión: "China la fábrica del mundo; Estados Unidos la alta tecnología; Europa, museos y turistas". El presidente de Estados Unidos, Barack Obama, por su parte, afirmó el pasado año: "el siglo XXI vendrá determinado por la relación entre Estados Unidos y China". Es decir, Europa no está ni se la espera. Que tan demoleedores juicios se cumplan o no depende de Europa. Si ésta encuentra la voluntad política para recuperar el pulso económico, y hablar ante el mundo con una sola voz, creando una verdadera política exterior (lo que requiere, a su vez, unas fuerzas armadas europeas), Europa se sentará en la mesa de las grandes potencias del siglo XXI. Si no aparece esta voluntad política, Europa caerá en la irrelevancia, el "fin de la Historia" habrá sonado para ella.

Como he dicho al empezar, China no solamente registra un enorme crecimiento económico, sino también un proceso de cambio cultural profundo.



Toda la sociedad está en ebullición, impulsada por un gran caudal de energía vital.

La literatura, la pintura, la música (Lang Lang decía el otro día en Barcelona que cincuenta millones de niños estudian piano en china), el cine (Zhang Yimou ya es conocido por los aficionados de todo el mundo), etc. Es un verdadero Renacimiento.

Poco puedo decir sobre el objeto específico de estas jornadas, ya que no soy arquitecto ni paisajista, pero si quisiera aportar mis impresiones personales, después de diez años de vivir en China, sobre la impronta del paisaje en su cultura.

El taoísmo, una de las fuentes del pensamiento chino, subraya la unidad del mundo mineral, el vegetal y el animal. Si te concentras, puedes hablar con las montañas o los árboles. La poesía y la pintura chinas tradicionales tienen como centro la Naturaleza, mucho más que las occidentales. En las pinturas chinas la Naturaleza es enorme; las figuras humanas, si aparecen, son diminutas. Es una cura de humildad para el hombre fáustico, tan arrogante.

La civilización moderna es una civilización urbana, dominada por valores como el poder, el dinero, el hedonismo, el materialismo. Es una civilización alejada de la Naturaleza. Pienso que una parte esencial del remedio contra los males de nuestra civilización está en el retorno a la Naturaleza. La sociedad y la cultura chinas están mucho más próximas a la Naturaleza que las occidentales.

He tenido ocasión de visitar varios de los escenarios naturales más esplendorosos de China: las montañas de Huangshan, Taishan, Lushan, Emei Shan, Zhang Jia Jie; el maravilloso paisaje lacustre de Jiu Zhai Gou; o los jardines de Suzhou.

Para citar uno de estos paisajes, que me causó muy profunda impresión, Huangshan, la Montaña Amarilla; su característica esencial son las nieblas en continuo movimiento: ahora ves tres picos; luego, nada, oscuridad; luego, asoma un pico entre la niebla; luego, el arco iris. Escena tras escena, como un teatro de la Naturaleza. En lugares como éste se encuentra la serenidad, la paz de espíritu, la cura para los males del hombre urbano agobiado.

Espero que el acelerado proceso de urbanización y modernización de China no perjudique esta relación ancestral del hombre con la Naturaleza. Y creo que este culto a la Naturaleza es una cosa muy importante que el hombre occidental debe aprender de la vieja civilización china.





## Prosopopeya

ALFREDO FERNÁNDEZ DE LA REGUERA MARCH  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Se me pide que escriba sobre el futuro del paisaje, cuestión difícil, dado que el futuro, como tal, no existe.

Si por el contrario contemplo el presente, el único tiempo de la naturaleza, mi impresión sobre el paisaje es absolutamente conservadora. Creo que se está perdiendo paisaje, y cuanto más paisaje perdemos, adquiere más valor el que conservamos.

La preocupación se basa en el recordatorio de la Cumbre del Clima de Durban, relativo a que el cambio climático y la destrucción de la biodiversidad son los principales peligros que amenazan a la humanidad. Los datos son apabullantes: en 50 años la población mundial se ha multiplicado por 3,5; el consumo de metales por 7; el de plástico por 18; cada año desaparecen 100.000 especies vivas; las emisiones de dióxido de carbono y la finitud de los recursos...; seguiría un tremendo etcétera. La actual crisis señala el fin de una era de crecimiento fácil. Estamos ante un problema global derivado de una opulencia irresponsable donde la prosperidad se ha interpretado como el crecimiento económico basado en un consumo indiscriminado. Según Tim Jackson, profesor de Desarrollo Sostenible en la Universidad de Surrey, es posible la prosperidad sin crecimiento, pues ésta *va más allá de los meros placeres materiales, consiste en nuestra capacidad de desarrollarnos como seres humanos dentro de los límites de un planeta finito*<sup>1</sup>. En su modelo macroeconómico de transición para el cambio de paradigma, se plantean tres clases principales de inversión:

1. Las que favorecen la eficiencia de los recursos y su coste
2. Las que substituyen tecnologías convencionales por otras más limpias y renovables
3. Las de mejora de los ecosistemas, adaptación climática, reforestación, recuperación de humedales, etc.

El paisaje está situado, sin lugar a duda, entre los estímulos de inversión verdes y el empleo ecológico de recuperación económica para lograr la meta de la sostenibilidad.

La evidencia es que a lo largo de la Historia, una de las formas de transformación del entorno es la imperiosa necesidad humana de crear un paisaje propio, entendido éste como expresión culta y aún estética de la propia identidad. En otras palabras,

el paisaje es esa necesidad irrenunciable para la calidad de vida y su ética, el arte de vivir.

Si entendemos que el paisaje es un fenómeno trascendental, también lo es su exigencia. Dice el proverbio árabe que una higuera pensando en una higuera se hace fructífera.

Este es, pues, el presente necesario: decrecimiento estable, desvinculación, resiliencia o capacidad humana de respuesta flexible ante situaciones límite.

Cuando todo se vuelve paisaje, las acciones quedan claras. Primero, mantener la admiración por lo antiguo, pero no la admiración por lo viejo, sino por lo natural. Que el paisaje reencuentre la prosopopeya, como lograran aquellos grandes precursores a lo largo de los tiempos y de las civilizaciones, desde la representación de la ruta eclíptica del sol en los megalitos neolíticos y el cosmos egipcio, pasando por la geometría de la luz y de la sombra del pórtico griego, por el hortus conclusus romano-medieval, hasta la naturaleza toda ella como un jardín.

Que nos subleve la sumisión de los estamentos a intereses contrarios a la defensa del territorio; que nos repela la vulgaridad y la frivolidad en su desarrollo. No al despilfarro, a la arbitrariedad, al descontrol.

Recordar aún frases de personajes célebres –*en una bellota está la creación de mil bosques*<sup>2</sup>; *bajo el asfalto puede haber una tierra virgen*<sup>3</sup>; *la esperanza y el porvenir no están en los prados y en los campos cultivados, ni en los pueblos y en las ciudades, sino en los pantanos impenetrables*<sup>4</sup>; *ser original es volver al origen*<sup>5</sup>– para sustentar el ansia y la intuición de una oportunidad mejor.

Y sobretodo no a la fealdad. *En la eterna trinidad de Verdad, Bondad y Belleza, llamemos a la Belleza el don más alto*<sup>6</sup>.

Finalmente, a la juventud, que tendrá que luchar con idealismo, fuerza e imaginación en la defensa de su paisaje, aquel consejo que le dedicara el gran Ralph Waldo Emerson:

*“Sujeta tu carro a una estrella”*

1-Tim Jackson. “Prosperidad sin crecimiento”

2-RW Emerson

3-F García Lorca

4-HD Thoreau

5-A Gaudí

6-RW Emerson





CONDITIONS OF ENTRY / *Bases del concurs*

.....

MINUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL JURY / *Actes de jurat internacional*

.....

TIMELINE OF THE SYMPOSIUM / *Cronologia*

.....

THE EUROPEAN BIENNIAL OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE BACKSTAGE REPORT  
*MARINA CERVERA ALONSO DE MEDINA*

.....

CREDITS / *Crèdits*

# ANNEXES

*Allegati*



## 6th Rosa Barba European Landscape prize international jury minutes

VERBALE DELLA GIURIA INTERNAZIONALE

Jury's report. Barcelona, October 1st 2010

The International Jury:

**Franco Zagari**, Architect and Professor of the Faculty of Arqui-tectura of the University "Mediterranea" from Reggio Calabria (Italy). Former President.

**Anna Zahonero**, Biologist and Landscape Architect (Spain).

**Henri Bava**, Landscape Architect and Grand National de Prize of Landscape in France 2007 (France).

**Kristine Jensen**, Landscape Architect and winner of the last Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize. (Denmark).

**José Manuel Vidal**, Architect and Editor of Paisea magazine (Spain).

**Nigel Thorne**, President of EFLA, European Foundation of Landscape Architecture (UK).

**Marina Cervera**, Architect and Landscape Architect. Secretary of the jury.

On the evening of September 30th, 2010, after listening to the exposure of the nine finalists, the Jury meeting has taken place at 20.30 at the Hotel Central in Barcelona to make the final decision and the awarding of the Rosa Barba prize.

Assumes the role of secretary Marina Cervera.

The Commission points out once again the figure of Bet Figueras, (who was supposed to chair as President, as brought to memories by Diedritch Lisa) a way of teaching, living and working that has profoundly affected the way we think and feel about landscape.

At the request of the President, we have proceed to read the rules. The Jury in consideration the possibility of an ex-aequo prize, as the possibility is permitted but not required, and expresses the aim of avoiding this solution if possible, considering that a single prize has a stonger effect. If the majority is capable of having a winner and with a message that expresses the trend considered as the aproiate to advice the most advanced design of the contemporary landscape, the Jury will try to have a single winner. The Jury remarks the quality of the work of all competitors due to its prestige and knowledge of the profession.

The Jury opens with a long discussion thorough the nine finalists works, who all presented projects and curricula of the first order, leaving our memories nine lessons impeccable landscape. Comparing the case and the exposure must be followed by subsequent decisions of exclusion, to consider only three projects, marked with the numbers 204, 218, 280, which although all dearlyfily appreciated, after further final confrontation were valued as follows:

### **204 / MARIANNE LEVINSEN LANDSKAB MDL PLR** Denmark

*For the interest of the topic, Frederisberg recovery of the disused railway area for a school campus, treated by the author with great skill, sensitivity and exposure. Elegance and balance characteristics of this project between hard and soft Landscape, giving an example of a safe and welcoming public space,*

Verbale della riunione finale, Barcellona 1 ottobre 2010

La Commissione, composta da:

**Franco Zagari**, architetto e professore della Facolta di architettura dell'università "Mediterranea" di Reggio Calabria (Italia). Presidente sostitutivo della giuria.

**Anna Zahonero**, paesaggista e biologa. (Spagna).

**Henri Bava**, paesaggista e Gran Premio Nazionale di Paesaggio di Francia 2007 (Francia).

**Kristine Jensen**, paesaggista e vincitore dell'ultimo Premio di Paesaggio Rosa Barba (Danimarca).

**José Manuel Vidal**, architetto ed editore di Paisea (Spagna).

**Nigel Thorne**, Presidente della EFLA, European Foundation of Landscape Architecture. (Gran Bretagna).

**Marina Cervera**, segretaria.

La sera del 30 settembre 2010, dopo avere ascoltato le esposizioni dei nove gruppi finalisti, si è riunita alle 20,30 presso l'hotel Central in Barcellona per procedere al giudizio finale e al conferimento del premio.

Assume il ruolo di segretario Marina Cervera. La Commissione ricorda ancora una volta la figura di Bet Figueras, che avrebbe dovuto presiederla, così come ne ha proposto il ricordo Lisa Diedritch, un insegnamento vivo e operante che ha profondamente influito sul nostro modo di pensare e sentire il paesaggio.

Su richiesta del presidente si legge il regolamento. La commissione ne prende atto e riguardo all'eventualità di un premio ex-aequo, possibilità permessa ma non desiderata, si esprime auspicando di evitare se possibile questa soluzione ritenendo che il premio ha un effetto tanto più vicino alle finalità che lo hanno istituito, quanto è capace di avere un vincitore e con esso un messaggio che esprima la tendenza ritenuta la più avanzata del progetto del paesaggio contemporaneo, ben sapendo che è all'opera di tutti i concorrenti che si deve la forza e il prestigio del premio e che il vincitore altri non è che il loro rappresentante.

Si apre una discussione lunga e approfondita sui nove finalisti, che tutti hanno presentato temi e curricula di primo ordine, lasciando nella nostra memoria nove impeccabili lezioni di paesaggio. Comparando i dossier e le esposizioni si procede a successive scelte di esclusione, fino a ritenere solo tre progetti, contraddistinti dai numeri 204, 218, 280, i quali pur essendo tutti unanimemente apprezzati, a seguito di ulteriore confronto finale sono stati così valutati:

### **204 / MARIANNE LEVINSEN LANDSKAB MDL PLR**

Danimarca

*Per l'interesse del tema, recupero a Frederisberg di un'area ferroviaria dismessa per un campus scolastico, trattato dall'autrice con maestria, e per la sensibilità dell'esposizione. Eleganza e equilibrio caratterizzano questo progetto fra hard e soft Landscape, dando un esempio di spazio pubblico accogliente e sicuro, con soluzioni costruttive appropriate e una vegetazione molto varia e originale.*



*with appropriate design solutions and vegetation varied and original.*

**280 / PROAP JOAO FERREIRA NUNES** Portugal

*Another issue in point is the redevelopment of the historic heritage by providing a system of soft mobility for access to the Castle of Silves, a path paved with wooden ramps that climb up a grassy slope. Minimal solution is very elegant, the range of five works presented by an author who is a solid reference in the world of the contemporary landscape.*

**218 / MAYSLITS KASSIF Architects** Israel

*A complex work of urban regeneration in the run-down area of the port of Tel Aviv is the program of a landscape project whose implementation is particularly happy reveals a couple of young talents, hitherto unknown to international audiences. The creation of an area of leisure with little means of reorganization as an area previously occupied by industrial activities is carried out with two contrasted issues: a wooden sinuous paved beach square, rolling dunes and parking lot figured through a macrographia completely unexpected painted on the ground. There are two principles of highly effective reconfiguration, apparently independent of each other, in fact highly complementary, creating a highly attractive space, intensely inhabited by people, open to many different unpredictable uses, designed with an original language, simple and also very strong. The site, removed from its degradation, has the ability to express a strong quality of centrality, redefining its character for all purposes as a new urban landscape on the front of the sea.*

The Jury, therefore, a majority chose the latter project authored by the group of Ganit Mayslits Kassif Kassif and Udi, Israel, and offers it to the authorities of the Biennale as the winner of the sixth edition of the Rosa Barba European Prize.

The Jury sincerely thanks the authorities of the Biennale for the confidence of this pleasant and heavy role, hoping to be well interpreted vocations and quality of competitors. The President thanked his colleagues for the extraordinary spirit of cooperation and capacity for discussion with respect of the others position, for the wisdom and humor that are never missed.

The session will close on 1 October at one o'clock in the morning.

**280 / PROAP JOAO FERREIRA NUNES** Portogallo

*Altro tema esemplare è la riqualificazione del patrimonio storico, prevedendo un sistema di mobilità dolce per accedere al Castello di Silves, un percorso fatto di rampe pavimentate in legno che salgono su una pendice erbosa. Soluzione minimale molto elegante, scelta fra ben cinque opere presentate da un autore che è un sicuro riferimento nel mondo del paesaggio contemporaneo.*

**218 / MAYSLITS KASSIF Architects** Israel

*Una complessa opera di rigenerazione urbana nella zona degradata del porto di Tel Aviv è il programma di un progetto di paesaggio la cui realizzazione particolarmente felice rivela una coppia di giovani talenti, finora sconosciuti al pubblico internazionale. La creazione di un'area di loisir come riorganizzazione con pochi mezzi di in una zona prima occupata da confuse attività industriali è condotta con due temi: una piazza spiaggia pavimentata in legno dall'andamento sinuoso di morbide dune e dei parcheggi riconfigurati grazie a una macrografia del tutto inattesa dipinta sul suolo. Sono due principi di riconfigurazione molto efficaci, apparentemente fra loro indipendenti, in realtà strettamente complementari che danno vita a uno spazio fortemente attrattivo, intensamente abitato dalla gente, aperto a molti usi diversi anche imprevedibili, disegnato con un linguaggio originale, semplice e anche molto deciso. Il luogo, sottratto al suo degrado, ha la capacità di esprimere una forte qualità di centralità, dei caratteri che lo ridefiniscono a tutti gli effetti come un nuovo paesaggio urbano sul fronte del mare.*

*La Commissione dunque sceglie a maggioranza quest'ultimo progetto il cui autore è il gruppo composto da Ganit Mayslits Kassif e Udi Kassif, Israele, e lo propone alle Autorità della Biennale come il vincitore della VI edizione del premio europeo Rosa Barba, .*

*La Commissione sentitamente ringrazia le Autorità della Biennale per la fiducia di questo gradito e oneroso incarico, sperando di avere bene interpretato vocazioni e qualità dei concorrenti. Il Presidente ringrazia i suoi colleghi per lo straordinario spirito di collaborazione, per le capacità profuse con rispetto reciproco delle posizioni, per la saggezza e lo humour che non sono mai mancati.*

*La sessione si chiude il 1° ottobre alle ore una del mattino the jury.*





## Timeline of the symposium

### PROGRAMMA DEL SYMPOSIUM

#### Wednesday 29th September 2010

**13.30 h** Opening of the International exhibition of Landscape Schools  
*Escola Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona\_ETSAB*

#### Thursday 30th September 2010

**9.00-19.00 h** Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize finalists  
Presentation of the Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize finalists.

*Palau de la Música Catalana, Petit Palau*

The international jury, convened by the Executive Committee of the Biennial, has selected the finalists for the Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize from among the projects presented. A selection of all the presented projects, works built in Europe between 2005 and 2009, will be available for viewing at the permanent exhibition on the ground floor of the COAC and will also be included in the catalogue of the 6th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture. Speeches by:

##### **BAAS + EMF**

Jordi Badia – Martí Franch. Jardí del Museu de Can Framis.  
Poble Nou, 22@. Barcelona, Spain.

##### **Bjørnbekk & Lindheim**

Tone Lindheim. The Nansen park, Fornebu, Oslo, Norway.  
Karres en Brands

##### **landschapsarchitecten bv**

B.G. Brands, S. Karres. Langedijk Cemetery, Zuid Scharwoude Langedijk,  
The Netherlands.

##### **PROAP, Estudos e Projectos de Arquitectura Paisajista.**

##### **João Ferreira Nunes.**

Castelo de Silves Hillside, Silves, Portugal.

##### **Office of Architecture in Barcelona**

Carlos Ferrater Lambarri. Paseo Marítimo de la Playa Poniente de Benidorm,  
Spain.

##### **Ruisánchez Arquitectes**

Manuel Ruisánchez. Parque urbano en el sector Perelló.  
Can Pere Màrtir, Vilablareix, Girona, Spain.

##### **Marianne Levinsen Landskab MDL PLR**

Marianne Levinsen. The Campus Area of the Copenhagen Business School.  
Frederiksberg, Denmark.

##### **Mayslits Kassif Architects**

Ganit Mayslits Kassif – Udi Kassif. Tel Aviv Port Public Space Regeneration,  
Israel.

##### **Hosper nl Bv**

Berrie van Elderen. Park of Luna, The Netherlands.

##### **Lisa Diedrich**

Landscape Architecture & 'Scape Editor: Bet Figueras, Landscape Architect.

**20.00 h** Opening of the Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize  
exhibition

*Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya.*

#### Friday 1st October 2010

**9.00-19.00 h** Liquid Landscapes

*Palau de la Música Catalana, Petit Palau*

The Theoretical seminar will be focusing on the idea of liquid landscapes, a concept that aims to go beyond a literal reference to water without excluding it. It was borrowed from the essay Liquid Modernity by Zygmunt Bauman, a prominent thinker on Europe. The idea moreover gives continuity to the last Biennial's motto 'Storm & stress', where patterns of global crisis and the discipline's need to invent new practices were ascertained.

Debate by:

##### **Jorge Wagensberg**

PhD in Physics & CosmoCaixa Science Museum Director (Spain).

##### **Barbara Aronson**

Shlomo Aronson and Associates, Landscape Architect (Israel).

##### **James Corner**

PhD in Landscape Architect, PEN professor and Field Operations founder (USA).

##### **Stefano Boeri**

Architect and Abitare magazine Chief Editor (Italy).

##### **Franco Zagari**

Architect and Professor at Reggio Calabria University (Italy).

##### **Iñaki Ábalos**

PhD Architect and Professor in Madrid Architectural University (ETSAM), (Spain).

##### **Dirk Sijmons**

Landscape Architect and H+N+S Director (The Netherlands).

**19.30 h** Award Ceremony:

Announcement of the 6th Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize winner

Announcement of the International School Exhibition winner.

Announcement of the 1st Santa & Cole Landscape

Architecture Competition winner.

*La Pedrera de Caixa Catalunya – Casa Milà.*



## **Saturday 2nd October 2010**

**9.00–13.30 h** China

*Palau de la Música Catalana, Petit Palau.*

Under the title of "Liquid China" and by the hand of different landscape designers and governmental technicians we will overview the discipline reality in China, a big country under huge expansion and limited resources.

Speeches by:

### **Huan Liu**

Coordinator of the National Parks and Scenic Sites Association.

### **Kongjian Yu**

Landscape Architect, President of Turenscape and Dean at Beijing University.

### **Kelin Chen**

President of Wetlands International in China.

### **Sean Qiao**

AIA, President Asia of Aecom.

### **Eugeni Bregolat**

Spanish Ambassador in Andorra.





## The European Biennial of Landscape Architecture Backstage Report

MARINA CERVERA ALONSO DE MEDINA

The European Biennial of Landscape Architecture is not only a symposium or a landscape forum. It is a huge collective effort, biannually engaging local and European landscape architects in order to make of Barcelona, the gravity center of the profession.

According to existing and previous conditions, every edition should be valued as a small miracle considering the extremes of the financial crisis disrupting national and European economics. All eyes will once again be focused upon to our profession for an intensive three days in Barcelona. The empowering structure of Biennial convinces new followers on every edition, while usual participants and lecturers become part of the project itself at some stage. Some of our finalists, lecturers or contributors have had their first contact with the Biennial as landscape architecture students participating in the international landscape schools exhibition or as young professionals whose work has been compiled on the Biennial's Catalog first editions.

Therefore we could conclude we believe our project to be a collective process of professional maturation through dissemination and discussion of landscape architectural works. The event itself is merely the excuse to celebrate, meet and discuss the outcomes of the massive efforts conducted through differentiated hierarchical strategic initiatives: the symposium, the exhibitions, the publications and the complementary landscape activities.

Firstly, we will overview the basic above mentioned initiatives structuring the Biennial itself and addressing the visibility of the thematic debate.

### The symposium:

The symposium took place in 'modernist splendour' at the Palau de la Música, lasting three days and included talks, presentations by the finalists of the Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize, round tables and exhibitions where it was possible to track and discuss the evolution of landscape design in Europe and in this edition's special guest territory: China.

It must be said, the greatest part of the infrastructural team informing, registering, guiding and assessing the audience are volunteers selected

among the Master in Landscape Architecture studies. Without those devoted volunteers, we wouldn't be able to digest our public conformed by more than 650 registered and invited in last edition.

### Day 1: Presentation of the Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize finalists

The International Jury Panel Members, convened by the Executive Committee of the Biennial, had selected the finalists for the Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize from among the projects presented. A selection of all 9 firms among the 457 presented projects, all of them works built in Europe between 2005 and 2009. The Jury was specially satisfied with the finalist short list, agreed promptly and almost unanimously after several pre-finalist rounds, in during the spring meeting in Barcelona.

The 9 selected works, offered a representative and kaleidoscopic overview suitable for all audience, ranging projects from various sizes (from large parks as Hesper nl Bv in Park of Luna -The Netherlands- to medium size interventions as The Campus Area of the Copenhagen Business School by Marianne Levinsen Landskab -Denmark- to romantic small garden dimension's as BAAS + EMF project in Poble Nou, 22@ -Spain-), approaching various thematics (Karres en Brands Langedijk Cemetery -The Netherlands- or PROAP's path to Castelo de Silves Hillside - Portugal-) and offering contrasted designing approaches to the same concept in different environments: water front interventions (from Mayslits Kassif Architects in Tel Aviv Port Public Space Regeneration -Israel- to Office of Architecture in Barcelona's waterfront in the Playa Poniente de Benidorm - Spain-, large parks (Bjørbekk & Lindheim The Nansen park -Norway- or; Ruisánchez Arquitectes urban park in Vilablareix -Spain-).

### Day 2: Liquid Landscapes

The Theoretical seminar focused on the idea of liquid landscapes, a concept that aims to go beyond a literal reference to water without excluding it. It was borrowed from the essay Liquid Modernity by Zygmunt Bauman, a prominent thinker on Europe. The idea moreover gives continuity to the last Biennial's motto 'Storm & stress', where

patterns of global crisis and the discipline's need to invent new practices were ascertained. It was within this framework that the following individuals presented their points of view and debate: Jorge Wagensberg, Barbara Aronson, James Corner, Stefano Boeri, Franco Zagari, Iñaki Ábalos and Dirk Sijmons. They all defended very personal approaches to the theme and share with us methodology of work, opinions and toughs among a devoted audience.

### Day 3: Liquid China

Under the title of "Liquid China" and by the hand of different landscape designers and governmental technicians we over viewed the discipline reality in China, a big country under huge expansion and limited resources. With Huan Liu, Kongjian Yu, Kelin Chen, Sean Qiao and Eugeni Bregolat as speakers, we gave a closer look to the profession in the emerging country and underlining the final ovation to Tourenscape "Slow foot" Lecture.

Secondly we will focus on the most visible and public aspect of the European Biennial of Landscape Architecture conceived to rise awareness of the profession at all society levels.

### The exhibitions

The second strategic initiative aims to present a stage analysis of landscape architectural work. From student's projects to professional works, the compendium details the intensity of study and discussions informing landscape interventions, not only from the perspective of landscape architecture but also in consideration of the other disciplines that are linked to its study and evolution.

### Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize exhibition

A selection of 230 of all the presented projects, works built in Europe between 2005 and 2009, were available for viewing at the Architectural Association in Plaça Nova, at the permanent exhibition on the ground floor. Those projects are the ones compiled in this Catalog of the 6th European Biennial of Landscape Architecture.

### "Liquid China" exhibition

This exhibition was curated by Kongjian Yu from Tourenscape and offered a tactic overview to some



excellent projects built during the last ten years in China, in the exceptional venue of Gaudi's building, La Pedrera. Some of the projects were the curator's firm most celebrate works (Landscape Design for Midea Headquarter ,Guangzhou; 2010 Shanghai Expo Park, Tianjin Qiaoyuan Wetland Park or Yongning River Park )

Other represented international firms as EDAW (Tianjin Haihe, Suzhou JINJI Lake), Poly International Plaza, Guangzhou by SWA or EDSA (Nankun Mountain Reserve, Guangdong) or emerging offices as HANJIA and its Xixi National Wetland Park ; AGER in Landscape Design for Entry Court, Jin Lin Tian Di, Shanghai; Dylandscape in The renovation design of West Lake, Hangzhou; EADG in Da Shan Di, Shenzhen, or Hongkong Wetland Park by URBIS.

#### **International exhibition of Landscape Schools**

One year more Barcelona held the International Exposition of University Projects in the Schools of Architecture and Landscape. The organizing committee considered that the participation of the didactic works remarkably contributed to enrich the debate on the landscaping. The finally outcome represented 92 schools world wide, proudly defining transcontinental best practices in our profession.

Thirdly, attention will be drawn to long lasting results, books. We are proud to say we helped to the European professional evolution overview thorough out the 6 catalog covering a wide range of landscape intervention form 1990 to 2010.

#### **The Publications**

We are proud of our work on the promotion of the European landscape architectural professional evolutionary process via the Biennial's sixth catalogue edition covering prestigious landscape interventions from 1990 to 2010. Each European Biennial of Landscape Architecture is accompanied by two complementary publications disseminating the contents of the Biennial and the Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize.

The main publication is the catalogue. The 6th edition of the European Biennial of Landscape Architecture contains the text of the lectures and the projects selected for the exhibition. Complementary to this, we produce a booklet presenting the illustrated CVs of all lecturers, jury members, curators and organisers in order to comprehensively inform all interested parties .

Last but not least, we would like to resume the compendium of parallel activities organized during the biennial, thank to the viral effect of the Biennial in Catalan society and resulting with the most valuable initiatives to complement the experience of the event.

#### **Complementary Landscape Activities**

There will, of course, be a compendium of parallel activities organised during the Biennial, a series of valuable initiatives, supported by Catalan society to complement the experience of the event.

The importance of these activities should not be underestimated; they help to underpin the heart of the main event and are listed below:

#### **Award Ceremony**

The most amazing Award Ceremony took place in La Pedrera crowded Auditorium: the Announcement of the 6th Rosa Barba European Landscape Prize winner, followed by the announcement of the International School Exhibition winner, the announcement of the 1st Santa & Cole Landscape Architecture Competition winner and the public opinion's award.

#### **Parallel Exhibitions and guided visits to exhibitions.**

The Asian House, in the Baró de Quadras Palace offered the magnificent exhibition by EMBT untitled "Spanish architects in China".

Our volunteers gently offered their time and knowledge in order to guide visitors through "Liquid China" and "EMBT Projects for China" under previous visit confirmation.

#### **Parallel lectures and book presentations:**

The Asian House, offered an interesting series of lectures offered by "Spanish architects in China": Rosa Cervera, Javier Gómez Pioz – Cervera & Pioz Arquitectos (Madrid) and Vicente Gualart de Gualart.

Moreover Editorial Gustavo Gili S.L.presented Energyscapes. New/old energy territories. The Book presentation was offered together with Round table with the author Aleksandar Ivancic, Josep Antoni Acebillo, Jaume Sodupe and Francisco Fernández Buey .

#### **Sunday Guided Technical Visit**

The Commission wanted to point out once again the importance of the figure and work of Bet Figueras, (who was supposed to chair as President, the International Jury before her premature death). Therefore we felt the need to brought to memories by Dietrich Lisa during the Rosa Barba Day to remind us a way of teaching, living and working that has profoundly affected the way we think and feel about landscape. However the homage wouldn't have been complete without a deeper approach to her works. Consequently we devoted the usual Sunday Guided Technical Visit, to tour some of her most celebrated works, from Port Ginesta, to la Illa, Hotel Om or the Botanical Garden.

#### **Ephemeral exterior intervention**

The European Biennial of Landscape Architecture disseminate its message to the city through our greening ephemeral intervention. Strategically posted in the most touristic hotspots in Barcelona (Cathedral avenue, Passeig the Gracia front of the Pedrera, old town and University center; our trees (olive trees, Prunus Ceracifera and palm tress) announce the welcome message to our visitors and disseminate our message at social wide level.

We have explained the reason's why the European Biennial of Landscape Architecture is not only a symposium. We have listed the results achieved with small budget and huge collective effort. But none of this would be possible without a first range of uninterested volunteers, helping hand friends, well intentioned colleagues, active partners and faithful sponsors. Also the team members are crucial for success, tiny compact, efficient team proving to overcomes all difficulties. Moreover, the role of the Executive committee has to be properly praised. Almost 15 years reflecting, proposing and guiding our collective process of professional maturation.

We want to go further in dissemination and discussion on landscape architectural intervention, but we can only evolve with you, join us and enjoy being part of the project.

*Marina Cervera*





## 6th European Landscape Biennial credits

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