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ARCHITECTURE'S CAPACITY TO CHALLENGE AND
EXTEND THE LIMITS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES

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Carretera San Vicente del Raspeig s/n 03690 San Vicente del Raspeig. Alicante (SPAIN)

eurau@ua.es

Re-design Geography of spaces

Widen the edges

Formato, Enrico¹, Garzilli, Francesca²

1. University of Naples Federico II, Department of Architecture, Naples, Italy,
e.formato@unina.it

2. University of Naples Federico II, Department of Architecture, Naples, Italy,
francesca.garzilli@gmail.com

Synopsis

Landscape project always works with nature: something perpetually transforming, expanding and retracting, without any rigid limits; it gives thickness to the edges, and looks at the "uncertainty" as one of the conditions in which the future scenarios can be prefigured.

The contemporary territory has been described by features of complexity and uncertainty; a place where edges and internal limits are undefined, dynamic, and porous. Therefore, assuming the way of thinking of a landscape architect, it can be useful to understand and design that kind of places (Corner, 2006).

The main characteristic of contemporary city is to be fragmented, that means lack of relations among places, and presence of many "other spaces" (Foucault, 2001): heterotopics, utopian and empty ones. Therefore, this kind of situation has led to disorientation, and it causes deprivation of the landscape.

A paradigm shift is required (Ricci, 2012): new ecological continuity and public uses must to be implemented among fragments.

Key words: amplify, re-connect, transform.

1. Read the context

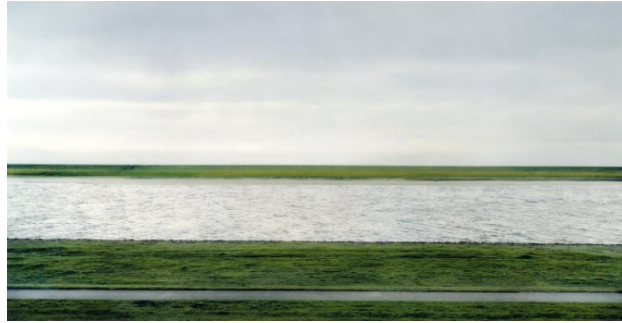


Figure 1.

The most expensive photograph in the world, Rhein II, was sold for \$4.3 million at Christie's, New York. The landscape desolation pointed out in this photograph has a specific intention: the author Andreas Gursky explains that: "It says a lot using the most minimal means [...] for me it is an allegorical picture about the meaning of life and how things are". In the image, a river flows horizontally across the horizon, between flat green fields, under a cloudy sky. He removes all traces of people and factories; to justify the manipulation, Gursky says: "the reality does not exist as such, but only as a construction". The artist, through his picture, faces us up to a critical question with a not so easy answer; a wistful and confused visions in between " bucolic dream and industrial nightmare"¹ (Gursky, 2017). A sublime image which, close to the romantic thought of Kant, recognized the human limits against nature. However, Gursky restores ordinary, quiet and "contemporary sublime", trying to give rule and sense (the irreversible sense of the flow of the river) in the Ruhr's fragmented and disordered scenario.

As a landscape architect, Friedrich's Wayfarer², has a crucial role: he embodies expectations and existential questions, his task is to question the landscape in which he is placed, seizing any replies in order to transmit them to the observer, therefore he absolves the role of intermediary. Nature, often reduced to "third landscape" as in Clément's notions, is looking for its place in the dense city and across industrial fringes, brownfields, and other urban drosses (former plants, former factories, former sheds and mental hospitals, etc). The environment thus can be seen as "liquid-center", green heart and welfare generator.

After all, returning to Gursky, this is the real sense of the Rhein in Dusseldorf and in the whole Rhur.

2. Defining strategies

As often happens, urban planning is considered a cure for a "disease", as a tool to improve a condition that is progressively worsening (Benevolo 2000, Secchi 1984 e 2000). Working with the landscape means going beyond any aesthetic view. The landscape project is able to produce concrete effects on the contemporary city, restoring the lost natural balance, acting on its metabolism. The

¹ Gursky in the 90's made it his first analogic landscape showing a fragment as part of a whole landscape. He decided what show it, even though without post production, the final image is unreal, he idealizes the landscape making it an abstraction of reality.

² "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog", Caspar David Friedrich

goal is to look at the landscape as a spatial system, with a temporal continuity: an entity generated by the development of spatial relations and flows that rejects a fragmented reality. And moreover, reusing spaces, especially dross-ones (abandoned and degraded space, etc), with their emergent memory value, is "an opportunity to fill the hiatus of the void between past and future and bind them in an action that celebrates the identity of a place and projects this identity into the future" (Nunes, 2014).

Working into fragmented and degraded territories in search of new networks and opportunities of openness horizons, allows to move away from the sectoral approach, from which they derive (Russo, 2011).

When flows find an obstacle, a limit, they end up being an organic and continuum system and they turn into a fragmented spot. Therefore working on the limits can be a good starting point with a view on a rhizomatic reconnection (Fig. 3) (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980), in order to push the vanishing lines to the infinity.



Figure 2.³

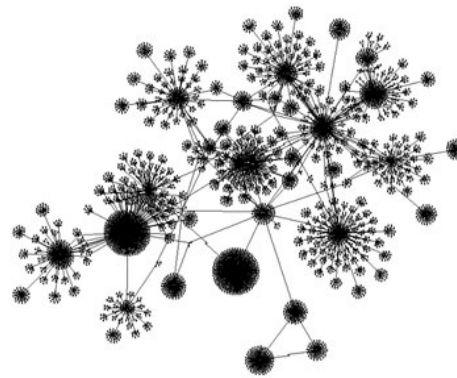


Figure 3.

The rhizomatic connection opposed to the arborescent top-down system, finds similarities in Secchi's capillary vision about mobility in the contemporary city, which is comparable with a porous and deformable sponge. Damages caused by modern city (indeed, on the contrary, comparable to a rigid and hierarchical system) are clear. The infrastructures have produced insuperable barriers and no-man lands: all spaces that today are potential resources to reconnect parties and fragments going beyond precincts and fences.

Turning over the concept of limit: "The limits interfaces, canopies, boundaries, margins, borders- constitute biological thicknesses. Their richness is often greater than the external environments "(Clément, 2005). Therefore we must look at the edges not as impassable rigid boundary, but as porous thicknesses, rich of information and able to grow.

Looking back at the "Emerald Necklace", the system of parks (Figure 4) by Frederick Law Olmsted in Boston, implemented during the nineteenth century, a strict identification of geographical structures and landscape design is that come up. Basing on these experiences, could be said that "amplified" method of

³ (Fig. 2) *New Babylon* (1956-1974) is a networked city project conceived by the Dutch artist and architect Constant Nieuwenhuys for the "total fulfilment of life", an approach to urbanism based on the freedom of the individual through the power of play and creativity. Theoretically, New Babylon has come out as a universal structure capable to branching out to colonize a territory.

management of the landscape could be a good way to provide geographical anchorage for fragmented urban territories.

Moreover, working on borders, to give them thickness, creates new possibilities. The edges define connections, not as confined "greenbelts", but as open and porous interfaces.

The interference created by different paths would reconcile the two worlds, natural and artificial, making possible a global view, as an "Amplified Geography" (Desvigne, 2012).

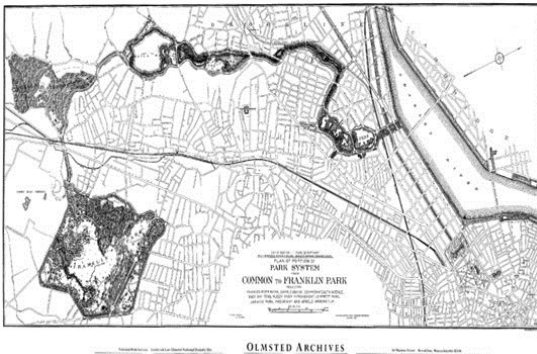


Figure 4.



Figure 5.⁴

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⁴ Euralens Centralité, Michel Desvigne Paysagiste, 2010-19 Ongoing

Biography

Enrico Formato. Architect (2001) and PhD in Urban and Regional Planning (2007), assistant Professor at Department of Architecture (DiARC) of University of Naples Federico II. He obtained the National Scientific Qualification as Associate Professor in Urban and Regional Planning in 2014. He contributes to academic researches in the fields of urbanism, urban design and landscape: Prin, "Re-Cycle Italy", Horizon 2020 Research "Repair", responsible of Urbact "Sub>Urban" for the City of Casoria. He is involved in professional design activities for open public space and urban planning. He has been scientific responsible for the Structural Plan of Casoria (2013-15). Author of monographs, articles and reviews published in books and scientific journals, national and international spread, he has been speaker at seminars and conferences, participated in exhibitions, and has been invited as tutor or referee in several design workshops. Since 2013, he joined the editorial board of the scientific journal CRIOS, Critics of Spatial Systems.

Francesca Garzilli. Graduated in architecture in April 2016 with Urban Planning thesis, aims to do the ex-psychiatric hospital Leonardo Bianchi, a hub between different urban and territorial areas. The project will be developed for intervention phases, considering the ongoing process, and open to future changes. Since 2013, thanks to the Erasmus experience at Technische Universität of Berlin, she started to work on urban planning and landscape and their central role in the contemporary city. After the degree she spent one year in Paris, where she worked at Michel Desvigne Paysagiste studio, deepening her interest in the landscape. From January 2018, she has been a PhD student with a research program in Landscape and Urban Planning at Federico II University in Naples, with a great interest in the regeneration of critical site by landscape's tools.