

Frame and framing

a theory-based investigation into the frame as an instrument for landscape architecture

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Abstract

In this paper, I introduce the concept of the frame. The mechanisms of framing are a strategic and conceptual tool for dealing with the complexities of place in terms of site specificity. Starting from both a theoretical understanding of the frame in terms of what it does rather than what it is, and from a specific site – the territory surrounding the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, Romania – I investigate ways of working with a contested territory in a site specific, open-ended way. As the locus of a large-scale urban project for a new civic centre initiated in 1984 by Ceausescu and interrupted by the revolution of 1989, this territory is fixed in both scale and determination. The mechanisms of framing provide the starting point for rethinking the site through framing, in order to uncover, draw out, and reconfigure its specificities, providing a structure for a wide range of place-making practices to unfold.

Keywords

frame; framing; territory; site; place; landscape architecture

Introduction

The territory of the current Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, Romania is difficult to grasp as a landscape. Lacking any clear, overarching coherence, it manifests as the overlapping traces of a number of incomplete large-scale operations. The most drastic transformation of the site—the destruction of the old city fabric and the construction of the Palace of the Parliament—is also the most evident, but as the transformation was incomplete, and several other smaller scale transformations took place, the site lacks any cohesion with the landscape, and presents itself as a mix of overly determined objects in an underdetermined landscape. The territory’s problematique can be understood as part of the fixity of the site’s delimitation or framing: the project of the civic centre ruptured existing frames, or patterns of structuring the city’s urban units and patterns, and introduced a fixed, larger frame that predetermines the scale of the site. In other words, this site is not only given a priori, but is also fixed in its scale and extents through both the material and immaterial delimitation of boundaries, which further reinforce space occupations, and limit how it is understood as a place. How, then, to intervene in such a landscape, allowing its becoming to continue and the site to transform, while preserving the specificities of the site without reproducing the violent transformations that led to the landscape’s creation or reinforcing its fixed status? In this paper, I introduce the concept of the frame and the mechanisms of framing as a strategic and conceptual tool for dealing with the complexities of situating a project in a landscape, enabling a number of place making, site-specific and, at the same time, open-ended practices.

In his chapter *From Place to Site: Negotiating Narrative Complexity*, Beauregard distinguishes between site, “a social construct [...] a place that has been denatured, formalized, and colonized, its meaning made compatible with relations of production, state imperatives, and the order that they both imply”, and place, which is “grounded in lived experience”, and therefore constantly contingent (Beauregard, 2005, p. 40) on place-making practices that actively encounter the site. This understanding of site and place is useful as it distinguishes between two ways of transforming a landscape. The first is site, which is formalized, ordered, cumulative, impersonal, and multiple. A site emerges from the formalization of a number of geological, vegetal, economic, social, and cultural processes and practices through their framing, an act that includes some of these aspects at the exclusion of others. The second, place, is contingent and variable, and requires an encounter with the site. A place is made through repeated encounters with the site and, in turn, contributes to the processes from which a site emerges and continues to transform. In its becoming, a site is framed, and therefore limited through inclusions and exclusions of what is formalized, while a place emerges from the encounters framed by a site as a construct, but also with that which is peripheral, escapes or is excluded by the frame. Site without place is fixed in meaning, while place without site risks becoming unspecific, diffuse, and lost. These two notions are not intrinsically clear-cut or final: the landscape-forming processes from which a site is framed continue to unfold, and have the potential to transform the site beyond even its initial framings, while the practices from which place results can be formalized and fixed. Site and place are not definite aspects of a landscape, but methods of distinguishing how parts of landscaped are grasped and understood, and how they can hold meaning and resonate with further articulations and elaborations.

In order to intervene in a landscape as a landscape architect, a site must first be apprehended. What are the extents of this site? How can the boundaries of the site, and the components and attributes that form it be determined? As Beauregard points out, a design intervention has “[as] most common scenario [...] the turning of place into site in order to turn site into place” (Beauregard, 2005, p.55). This is a complex process of negotiation, which signifies a moment of erasure of past place making practices, and the narratives they imply, in order to generate new ones: “The scenario moves forward by the deployment of pre-existing and shared understandings as well as novel interpretations. Because there is no essence to any site, no single

truth waiting to be discovered, different site knowledges—of the architect, the investor, the bureaucrat, and others— need to be negotiated. Narratives are constructed and deconstructed prior to but in harmony with the physical transformation eventually to be realized.” (Beauregard, 2005, p.55). This negotiation becomes more difficult, and more necessary, when dealing with a contested site. The territory surrounding the House of the People, now Palace of the Parliament, in Bucharest, Romania is such a site, whose recent history was imposed in a top down, violent manner and as an explicitly political act of power over territory. This contested landscape was the result of a large-scale project for a civic centre, the construction of which began in 1986 having been initiated by Ceausescu in 1977 after the earthquake of that year.

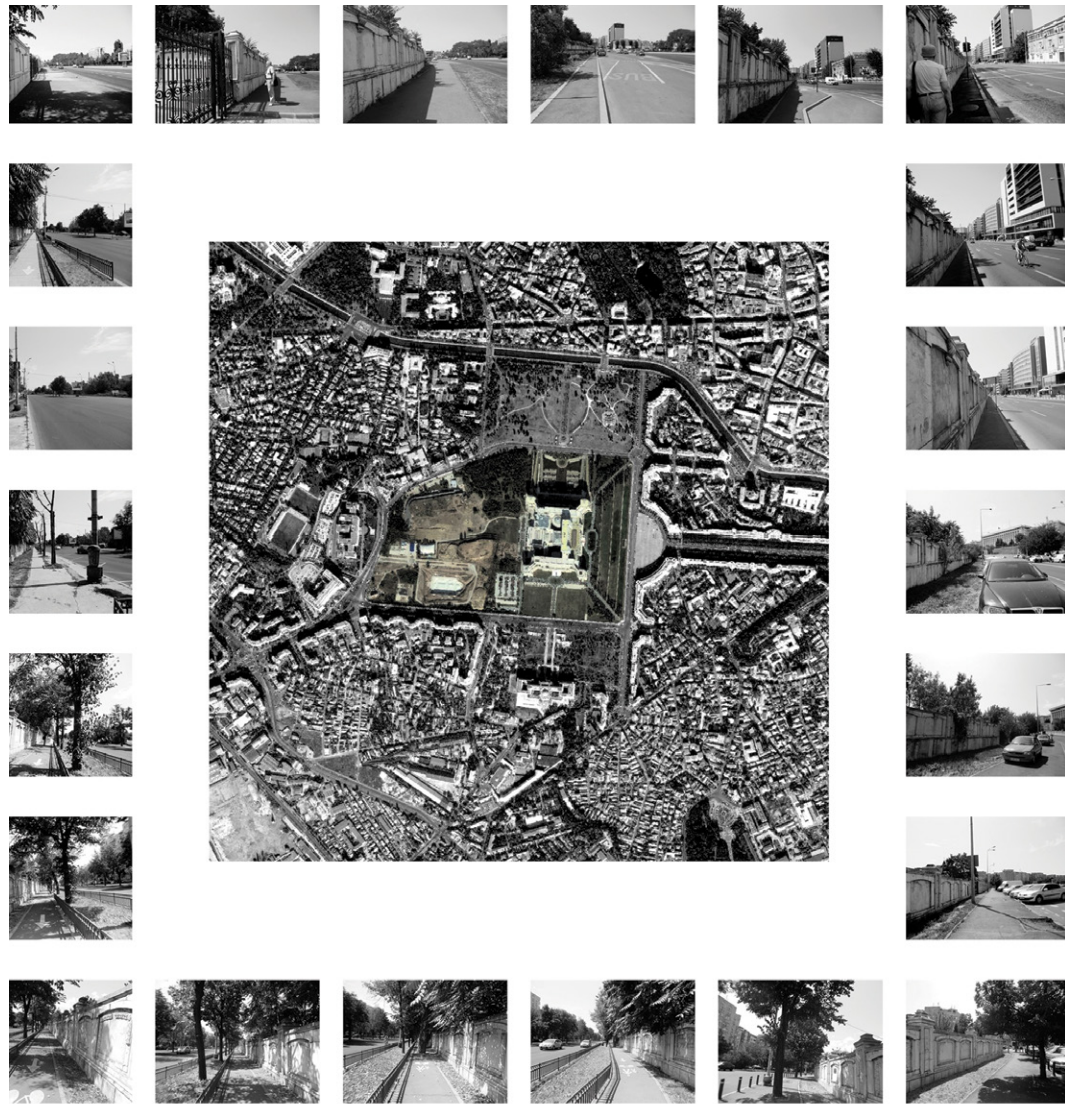


FIGURE 1 Territory of the Palace of the Parliament and wall. The Palace of the Parliament and its surrounding territory, located in centre of Bucharest, is disconnected from both the urban fabric and city life by a wall, wide avenues, and large buildings lining the site, but also through lack of programme and variety of uses. This is a framing that not only organizes the understanding of space through its material manifestations, predetermining a larger-than-life scale, but also is actively enforced through the practices it overdetermines: through the limitation of access enforced by the wall surrounding the Palace, and those it underdetermines, such as the spontaneous vegetation growing in isolated corners beyond the wall. This is experienced directly when walking along the wall - a very long walk with little variation in scale or experience. The continuous presence of the wall is coupled with a view that is fragmented and difficult to read. This experience makes clear the difficulty of reading the site beyond the presence of this wall, and furthermore, highlights its peripheral status in the centre of the city. (Photograph by Alexandrescu, 2015, p. 17). doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1135.g1497

Theoretical framework

Although, as a site, the territory has undergone both clear, formalized operations, the current lived experience of the site is largely segregated from the larger lived experience of the city, while the past lived experience was literally bulldozed away. The scale of the site alienates the human observer and makes it incomprehensible as a scene, while the limits, boundaries and related practices limit and predetermine the possible encounters and engagements with the site.

Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; 1994) provides a way of understanding the landscape that displaces the human lens in order to try to elaborate on an idea of landscape that does not require an external, transcendental set of values or ideology, nor an individual human observer. The dichotomy of the observing the landscape either from the inside or outside can be displaced by uncentering the landscape from the eye of a single observer and observing it in terms of its intrinsic specificities. Rather than resulting in a more 'objective' view of the landscape, the aim of this approach is to avoid dichotomy of subject and object, and rethink the frame as a mechanism approaching a landscape, one that is deliberate in its exclusions and inclusions, and always contingent to a territory's specificities. This could enable a site-specific approach to landscape that nonetheless leaves the making of place open and contingent to the encounters it supports.

Site problematique

The problematique of grasping the territory of the Palace of the Parliament as a site can be understood in part by the fixity of its delimitation, or framing: the project of the civic centre ruptured existing frames, or patterns of structuring the city's urban units and configurations, and introduced a fixed, larger frame that predetermines the scale of the site. The result is a site whose identity is imposed and fixed by spatial means beyond and before any other determinants or factors such as those economic (ownership, investment), legislative (property lines, zoning), social (use, programming, practices) or cultural (meanings, resonances). This in turn limits and predetermines not only the meaning of the site as a place, but also the transformation of the site.

Given the site's difficult history, the necessity of questioning how the site is presented becomes even more apparent in order to begin to negotiate the transformation of the site beyond this fixed frame. In the particular case of the Palace of the Parliament, the question revolves around how to read the site from within its own parameters, neither reproducing Ceausescu's violent actions on the site through a transcendental, totalizing vision of the site, nor returning to an idealized state of the site before its partial destruction. By examining how the site is framed through an investigation into the mechanisms of framing, the site's specificities can be uncovered in terms of both past and current processes and practices, and reframed to allow an open-ended future.

In order to develop an open-ended understanding of the mechanisms of the frame, it is first conceptualized not through what it is (material, form), but rather through what it does (inclusion/exclusion, separation), to allow for an expanded view of specific site making that is contingent on an expanded understanding of its context. The frame provides a mechanism for grasping the site immanently: from within, and on its own criteria. As developed by the geophilosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; 1994) and

elaborated upon by Cache (Earth Moves, 1995) and Grosz (2012), the concept of the frame as described here is a way of making specific, through processes of inclusion and exclusion and the enacting of a separation. This specific rethinking of the frame allows for a way of ordering the forces of the earth into territory, and subsequently into what we understand as landscape that is further framed into a specific site. The frame allows for an understanding of place as linked to a site's particularities but is also open to transformation, and in this way it can be used as both an analytical tool that uncovers these particularities to form a site, and a design tool that recombines, draws out, and reframes these site-specific elements along with new elaborations and articulations.

By exploring and revealing of the mechanisms of the frame and the framing of landscape, a series of site components are revealed that can be re-used precisely and strategically within a series of frames. These interventions are site-specific, and respond to the site both directly and in terms of re-imagining its possibilities and potentials in order to set up conditions for encounters with the site - to become a meaningful place. The key components of the concept of the frame and the mechanisms of framing are as follows:

- A the frame in itself - once no longer bound by any kind of preconfigured form (walls, etc.) or type of quality (visual, etc.), the frame becomes an ordering device that exists across different scales, and that always creates a condition of inclusion and exclusion. This further has a temporal aspect - the introduction of an interval of temporary stability.

Once the frame is understood not as the limit but as the materialization trace of boundary or cohesion, the frame can be understood as a materialized aspect of that cohesion to become expressive rather than limiting, and allowing for the sense of place to co-exist with the continual growth and transformation of a specific place. As an expressive force, the frame can select and enhance particular qualities of a site, facilitating possible encounters with a site's specificities. The frame uncovers these qualities through:

- B the mechanisms of framing, which provide an understanding of the kinds of interventions on the site in relation to both how they articulate the landscape and how they allow the continuous differentiation of the landscape to continue in new ways. Framing orders by selecting an inflection, or a quality of the territory, choosing a vector or a tendency, and introducing an interval - a relative, temporary stability - a frame (Cache, 1995);

Key to this mechanism of framing is the possibility of a quasi-frame (Cache, 1995) - a frame that provides an interval not through the imposition of a boundary, but through the tension of its constituents, as well as practices and their materializations. The quasi-frame, intrinsically not-quite-yet-fixed, has a transient stability to its cohesion that is threatened by excluded elements, resulting in a process of continual framing and reframing, with each (quasi-) frame threatening larger and smaller frames in terms of potential inclusions and exclusions. This implies:

- C a series of frames of frames, wherein the frame operates on multiple scales and every frame involves an out-of-field (Deleuze, 1986), or the possibility of another frame. The landscape can be considered as a series of nested and overlapping frames. In terms of site, this means that in any given project, there is not one singular site but a series of coexisting, overlapping, and nested sites that are framed out of the landscape;

Following the mechanisms of framing, the frame can operate in two main ways: either through assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), the intensive, heterogeneous coming together of the components that creates a condition of inclusion or exclusion through the encounter of components, or through the imposition of limit or borders, the delimitation of a boundary, the separation through an external means. These two ways of framing can be used operatively - and provide the last component:

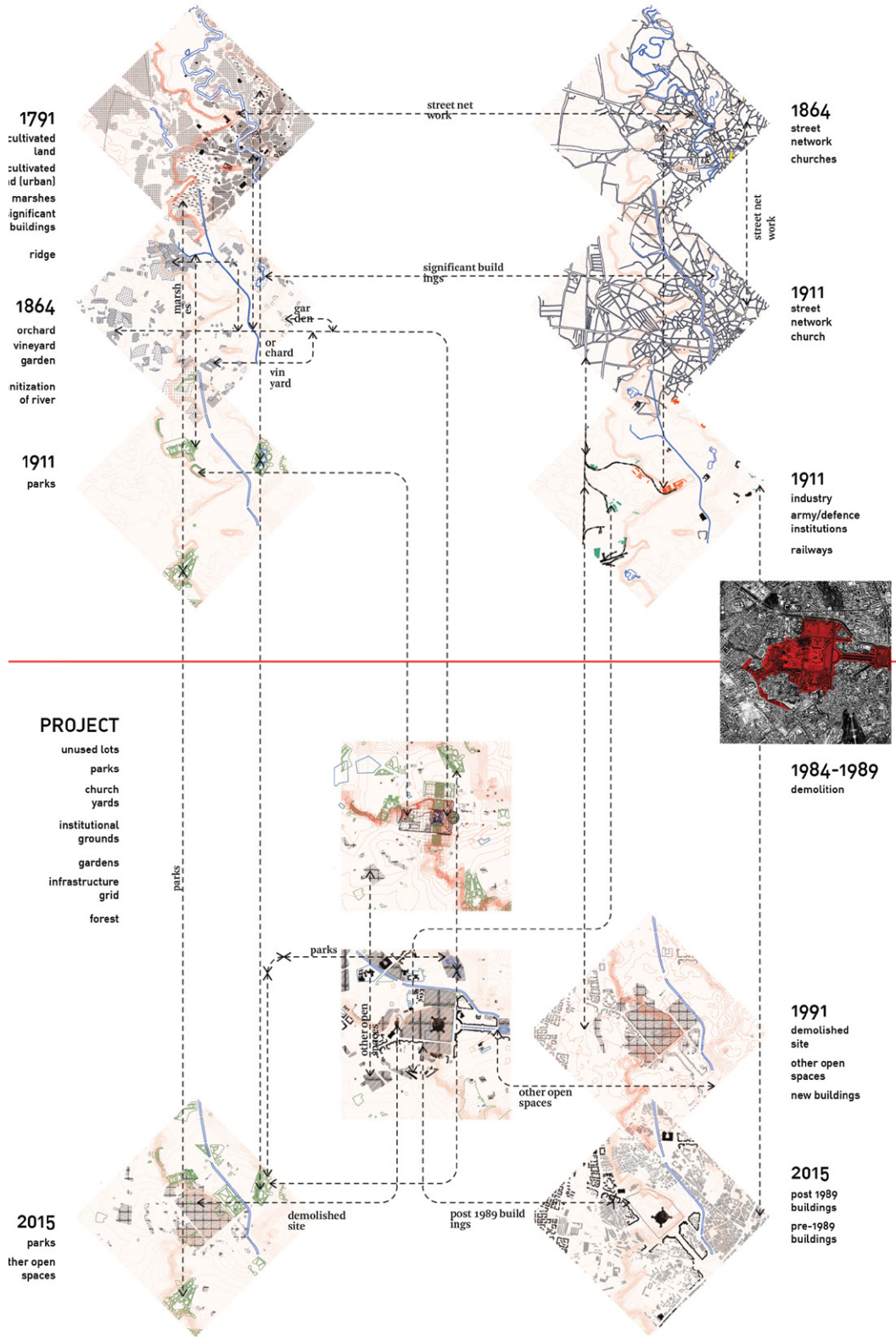
d) the frame as operative - within the context of landscape architecture interventions, framing-through-
assemblage can be thought of as a 'germ', with the potential to grow and transform, while framing-through-
delimitation can be thought of as 'gesture', with the ability to guarantee an interval (Alexandrescu, 2015).
These two operators both involve inflection, vectors, and frames, and often are present simultaneously in a
landscape intervention.

While a germ is folded-up framing, an assemblage with catalytic potential to make new frames, the gesture
is a frame that allows the germ to germinate. Germ and gesture work together as double articulation in
order to give form to site interventions. The role of the designer then becomes the choosing of which frames
to operate in, as much as the choosing of articulations and elaborations within a frame, and the act of
design becomes the implementation of germs and gesture.

Framing as a tool for analysis

Both processes and practices shape the site and give a site its specificity, which can be read in terms of
frames and framings. These site-specific particularities can be understood as inflections, vectors, and
frames, and can be traced back in time to specific practices. There are two kinds of specificities at play: the
ones concerning those that are included or excluded, and the (topological) relations between the frames
themselves. Following the speculative design project Frame-of-frames (Alexandrescu, 2015), this would
first involve a set of analyses—uncovering the existing frames of the site and their potentials, as well as the
practices of the site—a reading of the site in terms of its germs and gestures. At any given point, different
elements play a different role in structuring the city and its transformation.

FIGURE 2 Bucharest frames in time. This mapping follows the transformation of frames in Bucharest in order to understand the territory
as a continual process of framing and unframing. Rather than valuing the identity of this area as a fixed set of traces through singular
objects (buildings etc.) or patterns of objects (building ensembles, gardens or parks, etc.), these mappings seek to value its specificity, while
at the same time allowing processes (natural and unnatural) to continue unfolding on the site, creating more difference, and resulting in a
continually heterogeneous and varied landscape. This approach allows the valuing and preservation of the specificity of a given landscape,
without monumentalizing it, while also allowing it to change and grow, without erasing its past. Since 1791, the date of one of the earliest
detailed maps, Bucharest has been structured by a number of different components, which have framed both the natural landscape, as well
as the way the building of the city occurred. Initially, natural, geological features such as topography or geomorphology had most sway in
determining which areas were settled and what land uses could be accommodated. In the 20th century, Bucharest, as many other European
cities, underwent a number of transformations that coincided with the spread of industrialization and the new infrastructural needs it
required, shifting the structures of the city away from natural, geological ones to infrastructural ones. These spatially and diagrammatically
determining structures frame the city-making processes, natural and infrastructural, but also cultural, economical, legislative, etc. In this
mapping, the division between natural and artificial is less important than the relationship between new frames and the existing: the
left set of maps follows the components which draw on qualities of the geomorphology and natural processes in their framing, while the
one on the right follows the imposed structures and networks of the territory. At the centre of the map is the demolition which occurred
from 1984-1989, marking an interruption in the site's frames, but also enacting a new set of frames and frame-making practices. The
reframing of the site positions it between the two manifestations of framings - those drawn out of a landscape and those imposed, as
well as between two sets of processes: those before and after the demolition. Neither formulating an overarching historical continuity nor
favouring a particular configuration, through this frame-based analysis the site is understood as a process of framing, and reveals a set of
site-specific hints (both components and strategies) that can then be reconfigured, reused, and re-inserted to further transform the site.
(Photograph by Alexandrescu, 2015, p. 53).
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The concept of the frame can provide a flexible ordering tool for tracing the evolution and the becoming of the site. By tracing the frames that structure the place-making practices occurring on the site - the germs and gestures - through time, a frame-based analysis (Fig. 2) reveals a set of site-specific hints (both components and strategies) that can then be reconfigured, reused, and re-inserted to further transform the site. In this way, the frame becomes a tool-generating mechanism unveiling the site-specific tools, and ensures the continuity of place-making practices while allowing new ones to emerge and take place. These components are revealed without hierarchy, and without necessary causality, leaving them open to a multitude of encounters.

Bucharest, like many European cities, underwent a number of transformations that coincided with the spread of industrialization at the start of the 20th century and the new infrastructural needs it required, starting with the first urban plan in 1919 (which also coincides with the first plan in which the topography of the city is absent). As elaborated by Tudora in her book *La curte. Gradina, cartier si peisaj urban in Bucuresti*, which explores the role of Bucharest's gardens in the urban landscape (Tudora, 2009) these transformations resulted in a city shaped on one hand by the political - large-scale acts setup to organize and structure the growing city and, on the other hand, the vernacular - the city as built through decentralized, collective everyday actions and practices. These two kinds of growth often intersect, interrupt and affect one another; large scale projects remain unfinished, are modified by small scale actions or even by powerful individuals or groups, and vernacular collectives that have grown big (such as corporations or wealthy landowners) become capable of affecting the city at a larger scale.

These two kinds of framing practices are constantly materializing and dematerializing the city, setting up new spatial intervals and changing and modifying old ones, the traces of which accumulate and result in the city's fabric. What this frame-based analysis permits is less a tracing of causes and effects in the development of the city and more an identification of what are the key inflections, vectors, and frames of the site, that can be reconfigured on the site and which give it its specificity. Along with this, a set of milieu-making practices emerged from the inhabitant's everyday lives, lives lived in and out of private and public gardens, households and neighbourhoods (see Tudora, 2009).

Pieter Versteegh, in his introduction to the book *Méandres, penser le paysage urbain* (Versteegh, 2008), puts into question the primacy of built tissue as the first intervention in landscape, and the perception of urbanization being a linear process, from less urban to more urban. A frame based-approach to landscape builds on the critique and reverses the primacy of (human) built structures over territory articulation, and simultaneously reverses the relationship between landscape and city. Cities are not to be understood as urban agglomerations but rather as landscape fragmentations. What first frames territory into landscape is topography (Cache, 1995). While initially the geomorphology of Bucharest, particularly that sculpted by the river Dambovita, affected the settlement pattern of the city, which developed as neighbourhoods clustered around churches (Harhoiu, 1997). These in turn were often on topographical inflections while, in time, infrastructure and industry played a bigger role in structuring the landscape of encounters of the city. Though the topography remains an important reference point in the framing of the current city's landscape - nearly all of the city's large parks and institutions follow the ridge of the Dambovita - its role in framing these large spaces limits encounters to these designated areas. Parks and institutions are part of the everyday practices of a city, but often not part of most inhabitants' daily lives. The varying role of the topographical ridge in structuring the city and its patterns and practices of inhabitation illustrate its role as both frame and framing, and as a site determining and place-encountering element.

Between these constantly interchanging frame and framing practices that occur across multiple scales, a sense of place emerges from the daily encounters of the practices that make up the milieu of its inhabitants, and the frames themselves materialize into temporal units of cohesion or boundary: the built fabric of the city. These two aspects combine to give a specific sense of place, and are coupled in a double

articulation: the frames organize the practices into a site, structuring the milieus by setting out certain elements and drawing out specificities, while the milieus enacted through everyday practices become ordered and formalized, and generate new cohesions that, at times, materialize both informally (benches, fences, temporary structures), and formally (buildings, walls, roads). These two ways of framing create inclusions and exclusions that stifle or encourage further transformations and further framings. As a landscape making process, this mechanism is put in danger when the frame is fixed, and one singular way of framing is enforced, at the exclusion of others.

Ceausescu's project for a new civic centre violently interrupted the existing landscape-making processes with one grand, unified vision. By destroying a third of the old city's urban fabric, apart from the mass displacement, depopulation, death toll and destruction, the process of generating possibilities was annihilated. Along with all the houses destroyed, a large number of places of work, places of play, and places of commerce - the very practices that gave this landscape a sense of place - were interrupted. This was manifested not only as physical barriers such as the wall surrounding what was then known as the House of the People (today Palace of the Parliament), the avenues for vehicular traffic or the large apartment buildings lining them, but also exclusionary practices such as policing access to the area and the restrictions in place to permit only a specific population (party members) to inhabit the new neighbourhood.

The fall of the regime in 1989 left many of these works incomplete, allowing for a new set of hybrid practices to recombine them into various new milieus. The Palace of the Parliament remained unfinished and tracts of land slated for new buildings remained empty, without any new constructions taking their place. In time, these lots became overgrown. The land was further contested as ownership disputes, property speculation, and other social and economic processes were set in motion, but the fixity of the site's parameters—of the site's limit—remained unchanged.

The boundaries of the territory surrounding the Palace of the Parliament are strongly reinforced through physical barriers such as the apartment buildings lining the avenues circumscribing the site and legislative boundaries and limitations; the Palace of the Parliament is surrounded by a wall and has restricted access. These boundaries support a specific set of programmes that can occur within the site: the territory hosts monumental programmes such as the Seat of the Parliament, the National Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Cathedral of the Nation, which is currently under construction. Otherwise, the area is overgrown, underused, and utilized for occasional parking, storage or illegal garbage dumping. These activities are defined by being either institutional or peripheral, with few intermediate activities. The sense of place of the site then is either imposed through institutional constraints and conditions, or is completely contingent on the patterns of peripheral activities. This results in the history of the site and its memory being contained only in officially sanctioned constructions (e.g. the Palace of the Parliament and the roads), limiting the range of possible meaning that can be derived from this landscape, as well as limiting place-making practices, and the possible range of lived experiences, to predetermined, formalized ones.

To fragment the site into a finer grain, to add constructions of a similar grain, or even to embellish it or remove the fence, opens up the possibility for improvement on the site, but ultimately would do little to transform its status, or to address its complicated past. The question of how to deal with the limits of the site, or with the framing of the site in order to regenerate the possibility of its own existence, remains. To put it another way, the problematique of this contested site suggests that dealing with such a site is first a matter of reframing—of restructuring that which structures the site as well as its potentials—and only then is it a matter of design understood as the intervention and articulation of material and space.

Frame as tool for design



FIGURE 3 Site plan, Frame-of-frames. In its current configuration, the site framing is determined by the wall, which resonates as spatial delimitation both with the massive Palace of the Parliament, and with the residential blocks that outline the site's extents. This is further reinforced spatially by the three differing field conditions: Izvor park, to the north, the land enclosed by the wall in the centre, and an overgrown, but unfenced, field to the south, that unfolds in front of an (unfinished), large structure meant to be the 'House of the Academy'. Informed by the mapping of the site through its frames (Fig. 2), the current configuration of the site also has a number of quasi-frames - frames that once structured the site, but no longer hold prominence - such as the topographical ridge. In the speculative design project 'Frame-of-frames', the ridge is chosen as the frame from which to structure all other frames of the site, and its inflections become key components in this operation. For each of the inflections, a number of practices from the surrounding area are transposed onto the site. An infrastructure dealing with the height differences is introduced on the site, and new frames are set in place through the insertion of specific design interventions that function both as germs and gesture. These range across scales, and involve four 'gardens' that directly frame the ridge's inflections and activate them programmatically: a slow mobility path partially following the site of the wall, which links these gardens; an infrastructural grid that spans across all three fields, incorporating their territory into the site; and a wooded band that absorbs the building into a larger spatial logic, removing its prominence in structuring the site. To recall the mechanisms of framing outlined in the research, each framing component of the site—gardens, infrastructure, path, and forest—each takes on different roles in framing and reframing the site that vary across scales. For example, at the small scale, the topography is the inflection framed by the garden, while at the large scale the topography is what frames the larger site, and beyond that the topography is the vector that connects the continuous landscape at the scale of the territory. (Photograph by Alexandrescu, 2015, p. 80). doi:10.7480/spool.2016.1.1135.g1499

In order to uncover a territory's specificities, the frame as an analytical tool frames a site through the inclusion or exclusion of processes in time and practices across scales. This selection process is an act of design that identifies and deterritorializes components of the territory in order to reconfigure them. It can be thought of as an active reading of the site, having parallels to active forms of mapping (see Corner, 1999), which detaches specific components of a site, allowing them to recombine as new combinations and assemblages, and reterritorializes them back on the site.

As a design tool, the frame magnifies existing inflections to distinguish what makes the site specific into a recognizable place. A site's particularity stems from the particular configuration of inflections, vectors, and frames, and this in turn has a particular way of being legible and available for encounters. If the frame is taken as only the materialized limitation of it, its specificity comes from the outside in, through the imposition of the limit. This, however, has the potential of allowing variations and fluxes, giving rise to new inflections (immanent specificities) or vectors (immanent tendencies). These are made evident and therefore legible by separation from the larger territory through a frame. To approach the frame as a cohesion would be to understand the inflections and vectors as specific, and the frame itself, that is to say the materialization of this cohesion of the site, as varying. These two approaches, thought of as gestures—deliberate delimitations that insert intervals, and germs, which fold the potentials of a territory into a cohesion, that can expand. Germs and gestures can then be deployed strategically within a landscape's inflection, vectors, and frames in order to articulate, intensify, and elaborate aspects of that landscape into a specific site, capable of being meaningful without pre-determined meaning, and furthermore, capable of changing, growing and adapting without losing specificity. The result is the design of a place that can hold meaning without being fixed, and at the same time contain a multitude of specific sites-in-becoming (See Fig. 3).

Further steps

Once this expanded view of frame-framing is uncovered, it can then be used to determine a framework for approaching landscapes. A difficult site such as that of the Palace of the Parliament is useful in developing frame-framing as a tool because its fixed frame is large in scale and deliberately made and enforced, with lingering effects still visible to this day, making any kind of intervention necessarily require a new approach in order to not repeat past practices or results. But any given landscape can be seen as being made—either by professionals or through everyday practices—through similar framing processes. The tools for intervening in a way that is site specific yet open-ended, and uncovering a site's particularities (inflections) and tendencies (vectors) but allowing for a multiplicity of identities (frames) are also applicable to other landscapes. The lesson to be learned from this difficult site is not that frames—especially those legible as such—are always limiting and therefore do not offer value, but that they do influence certain things in certain ways, and it is important to negotiate when, and how, these frames are imposed. The frame thus becomes a tool for understanding and intervening strategically in a landscape to uncover first what it is that makes a specific site. It is a set of inflections and tendencies that allow certain practices and material configurations to emerge, read as a particular place through encounters that select certain inclusions and exclusions from the existing in order to give them a meaningful resonance.

This sketches an approach to landscape architecture that focuses on revealing a site-specific and site-derived toolkit for intervening onto different sites, while nonetheless structuring them in a contained way. It allows practices to continue, and weaves old and new senses of place into the specificity of the site, and

at the same time attempts to elude the fixing of a site into any new configuration. The specificities of this approach, through its capacity to unframe past frames and maintain this continuous possibility, attempt to ensure that this process can persist. This process necessarily requires deliberation, and therefore, the possibility for accountability for the actions undergone. A site is not given a priori, but made as part of a project to be constructed and reconstructed through place-making practices that it instigates, interrupts, and is interrupted by.

Summary and conclusion

As long as a design process maintains the same existing framework when approaching a site, and its components, the initial relations that structure the site are inevitably reproduced and maintained. By linking it to a large-scale topographical feature, the relationship between the site and the city understood as landscape is reconstructed around the landscape on a large scale. At the same time, topography is present across scales, liberating the site from metric and empirical scale. Furthermore, the possible qualities, elements, components and other deterritorialized sensations and effects are not necessarily bound by scale, allowing the reframing to act across multiple scales. Furthermore, this rethinking of the site has material effects beyond and before any built intervention is undertaken: it already affects practices/movements, which begin to gather traces and generate new interventions. This process of practices resulting from their environment and then transforming it is ongoing, and at the same time turning a site into a specific place. By anchoring the set of frames that reframe the site to topography rather than any built structure, whose scales and boundary are metrically determined, the site's dimensionality can be thought of topologically, which opens up the possibility for frames that link across the spatial hierarchies of existing frames.

Rather than predetermining the specific measures and interventions to be undertaken in a design, a frame-based approach to landscape architecture seeks to structure the understanding of the site, allowing for a site-responsive flexibility in the design, both for the reading of the site (in terms of analysis, as well as the setting up of the actual project's parameters) and for the practical intervention in it (design, strategy, tactics). This allows for a wide range of strategies, methods, and tools to be used as any given frame sees fit. As the frame of the project moves across scales, the interventions are able to remain contingent on the changing needs of the site or the users. The result is a dispersed set of contingent interventions that are nonetheless structured by a larger set of frames, and a structure that integrates them without limitation. Within this reframed landscape of frame in frames, transforming germs and gestures, it is the encounters - movements through it - the new milieus, which give it both its sense of place, and ultimately allows for its continual reframing.

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