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a cura di
Giulia Cazzaniga
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CAZZANIGA | RODA

OF[F] LIMITS

The term "limit" is a noun that refers to a boundary or confinement, indicating the utmost extent, with a political and geographical connotation. In the domain of mathematics, it represents a number whose difference from a function is arbitrarily small. Furthermore, this term can also be used as a verb to indicate restriction.

Considering the impact of this concept on the landscape, how could the design process respond to it?

LANDSCAPE OF[F] LIMITS

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE ON LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE

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Detail taken from

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SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE ON LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

We would like to express our gratitude to all the students who participated in the first three editions of the International Workshop. Your valuable contributions to this reflection are highly appreciated. We are proud to be part of Politecnico di Milano – Polo Territoriale di Piacenza, where this adventure began, and we are honored to have worked with our colleagues, guests, tutors and students.

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When reflecting on the landscape, reference is made to a concept that has been extensively studied but is still being redefined through research and design. One of the most fascinating aspects concerns the scale of landscape as subject, object and environment within which transformations occur, happen or are planned. One of the most related topics is where the landscape begins and where architecture comes into play as an agent of transformation. The debate is still ongoing about the boundaries between the landscape and urban areas, and when an architect should intervene versus when other disciplines take charge.

The book focuses on the concept of *limit* and its application in various fields, gathering research and design experiences that showcase the different ways the limit can be understood and interpreted by architecture. *Limit* can have varying meanings, such as confinement (e.g. property confine), the lack (e.g. a person's limits), or an edge beyond which one should not cross.

As editors of the publication, we have attempted to encourage a change in perspective among ourselves and the authors. Instead of viewing borderlines as restrictions, we see them as milestones to be reached and eventually overcome. Perimeter also serves to establish a demarcation between what we consider acceptable for our mindset and what is out of our value. The *limit* is here considered a powerful tool for controlling the project and reflecting on the discipline of architecture as well as one of the elements through which the landscape is configured.

We have decided to address this topic by dividing it into three chapters. These chapters will explore the environmental conditions and places that are often seen as boundaries, dividing lines, or interruptions in the network of relationships between humans and the land. We aim to investigate these places from a positive point of view. The three elements we will focus on are **Waters**, which will be interpreted through the river Po and its water bodies, **Enclosures**, are meant as contained

places but also containers of biodiversity and unexplored landscapes, and **Crossings**, are understood as the places where several environments or cultures come into contact and hybridize.

Convinced of the efficacy of representation as a tool for understanding and analyzing the conditions that orient and determine the project, we asked Valerio Morabito to describe the declination of limits through drawing. His interpretations are placed in the text as a parallel visual essay that proposes to compare different specific conditions of the limit as a space for the project.

We have researched a topic that has been consolidated through project experiences at the Politecnico di Milano – Piacenza Campus. These experiences occur in an intensive international workshop, directed by Sara Protasoni, in which we contribute as coordinators. The workshop has helped us focus on the theme and continuously stimulated us to promote this line of research. We also had the privilege of discussing

with James Corner, who spoke as a keynote speaker in the first edition of the lecture cycle organized within the workshop. He kindly offered us his reflections, which we have included in this volume as an autonomous essay, a compendium of different points of view and reflections proposed.

In our interpretation, the *limit* has nothing to do with the word 'end', but rather with the beginning, with crossing a threshold that can open up new perspectives, research scenarios and new impulses for landscape design.

Preface

LANDSCAPE OF[F] LIMITS

Sara Protasoni

It is not easy today to delineate the contours of a disciplinary field, that of landscape architecture, in which new ideas are continually bursting forth, at times presenting themselves as new paradigms, other times flanking previous ones, without becoming recognized alternatives.

Sometimes, they may revive forgotten or misunderstood concepts at other times asserting themselves with unexpected force only to dissolve within the space of a few years. As architects, we are called upon to investigate this complex and stratified whole, a matter made up of advancements and

returns, certainly with the determination to open ourselves up to contaminations that go beyond conventional disciplinary boundaries, but always keeping the project, its conceptual and operational tools relating to its being an anticipation of a different future condition, at the center. Even the object of our research as landscape architects appears to us today to be increasingly complex, stratified and changeable: there is now a widespread awareness that different phenomena coexist in the whole of the processes of transformation of a place, which are always unstable result of the relationships between visible and invisible,

macroscopic and microscopic elements. The space we deal with is inhabited, traversed, modified, cultivated, constructed and destroyed not only by human beings but also by animals and plants: multiple events and trajectories mark the earth's environments with traces of the presence of different living beings. In this interweaving of dynamics, time plays an essential role as a measure of spatial relations and transformations, which always raises the question of the survival and extinction of living beings, of the inertia and transformation of the elements that make up physical space. The very concept of the Anthropocene shifts our present in Earth time, measured in 4.6 billion years.

This volume aims to trace the coordinates of research around landscape architecture that is plural, hence capable of bridging projects, works and ideas developed in different places while remaining close to operability. In particular, ecology enters the field of landscape design as a combination of practices and expertise aimed at investigating the relationship between nature, technology, living systems and interpretative subjects; it becomes, as Timothy Morton has recently emphasized, a functional hybrid space for the formation of a reticular thought that can contribute to the definition of an environmental consciousness more aware of the interrelations between human and non-human and of the need to remove the rigid boundaries between the two worlds, along with the idea of Nature with a capital N, and to renounce the imposition of a human order on

the biosphere.

This place of plural research on landscape architecture is based on certain fundamental assumptions. The first is that the landscape architect is never placed in front of a situation but within it, in a context that manifests itself on several moving and interfering levels, involving him in different capacities, not only as a technician and an intellectual but also as an individual and a living being. Secondly, for each task, the designer is called upon to specify the purpose of his intervention, to identify and interpret its conditions, and to verify the degree of logical and technical consistency of the possible operational proposals. Thirdly, this collocation as part of the situations and context implies not only the exercise of a set of theoretical and practical means that refer to multiple skills and background knowledge but also the continuous negotiation between the objectives that emerge from this multiplicity of competing approaches. This condition makes the processes accompanying the transformation of territories and landscapes, between planning and implementation, extremely articulated.

Each transformation, in other words, requires the confrontation of sets – often conflicting and not always ordered within them – of social practices and values; of legal norms and constraints; of expectations, memories, desires, programs and representations brought into the field by different actors, which each time can overturn that relationship between competence and reputation on

LANDSCAPE OF [F] LIMITS



which the technical legitimacy of the planner is based. Within what could be called the new global ecological vision, this very wide range of possible and necessary actions also requires a new ethical and technical commitment to environmental issues.

The Landscape O[f]f Limits program aims to move in this broad area.

Images:

p. 11, 13 | fortified grounds photographed
by Andrea Foppiani

