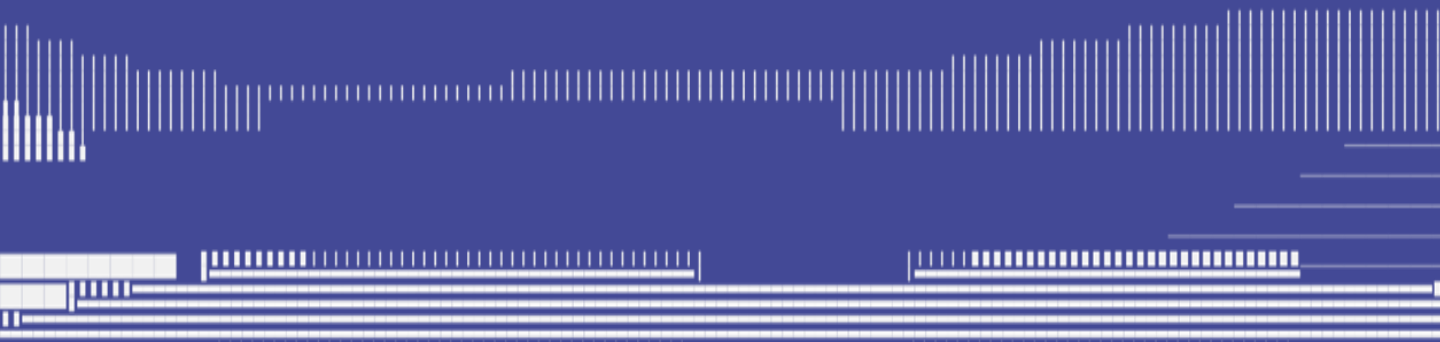


BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

IFLA World Congress
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Congress topics

Index

TOPIC 1 – Guiding cities

1.1 Guiding cities through what is alive: cities as ecosystems

1.2 Guiding cities through what is alive : Soil management

1.3 Guiding cities through what is alive: Rainwater and water landscapes

1.4 Guiding cities with society: Use, memory, artistic creation

1.5 Guiding cities with society: Participatory approaches and governance strategies

TOPIC 2 – Guiding territories

2.1 Guiding territories by changing the design of regional projects: tools for intervention at different scales, for multifunctional landscapes

2.1 Guiding territories by changing the design of regional projects: tools for reinventing territories in situations of risk and environmental change

2.3 Guiding territories with legislative and social advances in planning: Organisation of large territories

2.4 Guiding territories with legislative and social advances in planning: towards a right for nature

2.5 Guiding territories with legislative and social advances in planning: Evolution of heritage landscapes

Congress topics

Topic 1: Guiding cities

Through what is alive (ecosystems, rainwater, soil, rivers)

Cities as ecosystems

On the eve of the sixth mass extinction of species, and in the face of accelerating environmental change, we need to move from observation to action and reconsider urban ecosystems: the built and the unbuilt, the organic and the inorganic, the living, whether it be human or non-human. This objective encourages the cross-fertilisation of skills between different fields: architecture, ecology, engineering, landscape, urban planning, etc. In this context, what impact can the prioritisation of living organisms pre-existing to the project have on our urban landscapes? How can we better integrate ecological processes at different scales and their constraints into our urban areas? More specifically, biodiversity issues require us to think in terms of time, seasons, growth and senescence processes, as well as ecological dynamics and acceptance of the spontaneous. How do we choose between local and 'exotic' plant species? But also, how does the ongoing progress of 3D software offer the landscape project new ways of representing the living world and its dynamics? Can AI help us increase the value of new, mass-collected environmental data?

Soil management

Understanding the soil and its condition is a fundamental step in understanding the potential of a site to host ecological and sustainable projects. Soil not only supports plant and animal life; it is also one of the main reservoirs of biodiversity on earth. It is a major carbon sink and an essential receptacle for rainfall thanks to its retention capacity (soil also acts like a 'sponge'). Together with the flora and fauna that thrive in them, soils are our main source of food and the best climate regulators. Yet for more than a century, humanity has never neglected and polluted them to such an extent. In major cities, fertile soil has become so scarce and precious that new players such as "technical soil manufacturers" are now emerging. How can landscape architects address these issues? When is the right time to incorporate these considerations into the project? How do frugal soil strategies affect landscape design? What potential can emerge to poor or to polluted soils?

Topic 1: Guiding cities

Through what is alive (ecosystems, rainwater, soil, rivers)

Rainwater and water landscapes

The successive revolutions in town planning and architecture from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, first under the influence of hygienic thinking, then with modernity, and more recently with the concept of "smart cities", have gradually distanced city dwellers from their geographical environment. Rainwater and waterways have been channelled and buried, while nature has more often than not been reduced to a mere decorative element. These actions, based on the efficiency and rationality of engineering, have considerably reduced the resilience of our cities to the risks of flooding and heatwaves. It is now time to adopt the porous city and 'sponge' city models, where water is slowed down, distributed, infiltrated and purified, thanks to and with the soil and vegetation, according to the principles of regenerative hydrology. Having tried to manage our rivers, we now need to relearn how to live with them. All over the world, cities are changing their relationship with the rivers that flow through them and the wetlands that surround them. What tools and strategies can we implement to meet the challenge of water, both as a resource and as a factor of risk? How does this (re)valorisation of river routes open the way to new aesthetic exploration around the re-appropriation of landscapes? And how can new technologies such as drone scanning and point clouds enrich project approaches?

With society (art, design, consultation, uses)

Use, memory, artistic creation

The landscaping project also involves designing living and convivial spaces, promoting diversity, intergenerational exchanges and social cohesion. Today, when it is unthinkable to develop a project without incorporating contributions from local residents and stakeholders, as well as an educational dimension aimed at the general public, what role does the landscape architect's expertise play in the creation of shared spaces? And for what social justice? What place should we leave for uses or events, what place for art, for artistic creation, for what "landscape (infra)structure"? How can we reveal to residents and/or tourists what is "already there" or the memories of this area? Aren't these memories also great resources for project design? The landscape is our everyday living environment, but to what extent does it not also provide a setting for the best of our societies? If landscape architecture and art already have a rich history, how can we participate in the new synergies between art, memory and ecology?

Participatory approaches and governance strategies

The demand for residents to participate in projects relating to their living environment requires us to change our practices and apply appropriate methodologies and teaching methods, whether through information, consultation, co-design and co-construction. This is illustrated by the need for a 'bottom-up' approach in which the knowledge and opinions of local people and their perceptions of their environment are taken into account. This corresponds with the definition of the concept of landscape in the European Convention, which " means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors " (article 1. a.) and which leads to the definition of a "landscape quality objective" "designating " the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings " (article 1. c.). Faced with these challenges, what changes can be observed in the role of landscape architects (mediators, advisors, etc.) within multidisciplinary teams? What role should elected representatives and the technical departments under their responsibility play in these debates? What role should civil society (associations, public institutions, economic players) play? What participatory approaches should be adopted to achieve what results with the greatest possible representativeness (inclusion)? To what extent can landscape architects contribute to social equity, inclusivity, and accessibility as well as to a peaceful living together and to the health of all? What timescales should be envisaged and how should this work be remunerated?

Topic 2: Guiding territories

By changing the design of regional projects (energy landscapes, agroforestry, risks)

Tools for intervention at different scales, for multifunctional landscapes

In the context of accelerated climate change (and the risks and discomforts that go with it), in relation with the massive artificialisation of agricultural and natural areas, what role do landscape architects occupy, or should they occupy, in the planning and management of anthropized territories? How can they adopt the new technologies for data collection and AI-enabled data enhancement?

Are landscape architects making a comeback in the debate on cities and contemporary urban planning issues? What skills can landscape architects bring to multi-disciplinary teams, whether to help cities expand within their own regions or to support them in their reinvention and reconstruction? We need to look at the conditions under which the profession can operate at these scales, and at the positioning of 'urban' projects as a lever for landscape projects.

The development of hydraulic, solar and wind energy is also having an ever-increasing impact on our environments. Are we at the dawn of new "technological" landscapes and a renewal of aesthetic references? How should we interpret the resistance of local populations to these changes, and what role can landscape architects play in these debates?

With regard to territorial transformations, the rise of renewable energies and the greening of territories questions the confrontation, within non-urbanised territories, between natural territories and productive territories. The search for optimisation leads to multifunctional territories. Does this greening of the countryside put the landscape architect back at the heart of the challenges facing our agricultural, fish farming and forestry landscapes? How can these landscapes be more respectful of living organisms, soils and health, and how can we participate in their emergence and deployment?

Tools for reinventing territories in situations of risk and environmental change

In certain areas, the need to take account of the impact of natural hazards (cyclones, heatwaves, fires, floods, etc.) and their environmental consequences (retreating coastlines, soil deterioration, desertification, etc.) has led to the development of tools and methodological approaches that combine different scales of consideration. How can these tools also benefit from AI in the analysis of the exploding quantities of data provided by new reading technologies? The aim is no longer simply to protect against or control these risks, but rather to support local populations in accepting them, with the timeframes and modifications they entail. The aim is to propose resilient layouts and arrangements. These transformations are also accompanied by a necessary change in people's perception of the notion of risk, inviting projects to play an educational role in understanding the dynamics of living things, which, it should be remembered, often develop over several generations. They also encourage a better articulation between built and unbuilt areas, between landscapes and territorial infrastructures. The layouts and construction need to be designed in an integrated way rather than separately. This is leading to changes in the professions and in the make-up of project management teams. Given these changes, what role could landscape architects play? Environmental change is accelerating the pace of geographical and ecological upheaval. In addition to the potential loss of emblematic landscapes, inhabited areas are being directly threatened, for example by retreating coastlines. These changes could trigger massive population movements. How can our tools and methodological approaches as landscape architects accompany these upheavals, and perhaps limit their most significant impacts?

With legislative and social advances in planning (planning law, nature and society, heritage landscapes)

Organisation of large territories

Over the centuries, regulatory texts relating to the planning and management of territories have evolved to accompany and modify their transformations. The frameworks, scales and objectives have varied, keeping pace with socio-economic developments as well as with evolving democratic aspirations and new knowledge about the complexity of the world. The approaches and situations vary widely from country to country and the different environmental geographies. What recent advances have been made and what new challenges do these documents face in terms of managing urban sprawl, integrating the expectations of multifunctional territories and integrating and/or mitigating environmental change? What differences can be observed between countries and their contexts in terms of the development of these documents, and what impact do they have on these societies? How can landscape architects participate in these societal reflections and play a part in resolving these issues? More specifically, how can we reconcile, for example, food sovereignty, heritage 'food' landscapes, the environment and the European Landscape Convention?

Towards a right for nature

Nature and landscape are already subject to the law and will be increasingly so in the future. In France, the Loire River is the focus of a major campaign by associations and scientists to gain recognition as a legal entity and, ultimately, to create a 'parliament' to defend the rights of this natural entity. Landscape and biodiversity issues are trying to find their place in urban planning documents and in the creation of the "right to build". But how can we reconcile the complexity of concepts such as "landscape integration" or "cohabitation with living organisms" with a land law that aspires to be clear and pragmatic? How does the presence or absence of a nature/culture dualism in a society influence the way this notion is considered in legislation? More specifically, how do differences in understanding of the notions of 'nature' and 'landscape' interact with the law and planning expectations? If the concept of 'nature alongside man' is an approach to living things that is common in Western societies, what about the concept of landscape?

Evolution of heritage landscapes

The rapid pace of global warming is already having a visible impact on all landscapes, including those deemed worthy of protection because of their natural or cultural heritage value. In addition to the changes already observed (changes in farming practices, conflicts, natural disasters, etc.), the acceleration of climate change raises new questions about what defines the value of a landscape and its ability to endure beyond the transformations it has undergone. It is becoming imperative to accompany these changes by working on the collective imagination associated with these landscapes. The concept of the "cultural landscape", adopted in 1992 by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, has also made it possible to consider the heritage value of the "organically evolved landscape". These landscapes need to evolve to retain their heritage value, while at the same time incorporating the changes taking place in their socio-economic context and because of climate change. But what do we do if some of these landscapes are no longer able to adapt to their "new" environment? Wouldn't the challenge be to imagine other forms of conservation, between restoring them to their original state and replacing them in a way that preserves the spirit of these landscapes? Can virtual technologies help us to understand and communicate about historical landscapes? This also invites reflection on the protection of intangible heritage linked to know-how and the relationship between man and nature...? How can regulatory documents evolve to help regulate these issues, and what role should landscape architects play in this?

IFLA 2025 - Index des auteurs

A

Abakumova, D.	P139
Abdelkarim, A.	2.5-BO-S2-7
Acosta, S.	1.3-CO-S1-1
Adamante, A.C.	1.4-CO-S2-4
Adamu, A.I.	P191
Albert, C.	P135
Albrektsen, K.	2.1-CO-S1-5
Alday, I.	1.2-CO-S1-5
Ali, Z.	P032
Alignier, A.	P135
Allart, P.	2.5-BO-S1-8
Al Nazer, S.	P001
Amani, I.	P051
Ambroise, R.	P167
Anwar, D.R.	1.5-BO-S2-3
Archambault, S.	P188
Arcos, J.	1.2-CO-S1-5
Argant, S.	1.4-BO-S1-8
Aşar, N.	1.4-BO-S2-2
Aubert, L.	P084
Auregan, M.	P158
Aviron, S.	P135
Azou, J.-B.	2.4-CO-S1-5

B

Baadsgaard, A.L.	1.3-BO-S1-5, 1.3-CO-S2-5
Baby, J.	P050
Bacha, K.	1.5-CO-S3-1
Baghdadi, R.	P210
Ban, Y.	1.4-CO-S1-5, 2.5-BO-S2-6
Bao, Z.	2.5-BO-S1-4, 1.1-CO-S2-1, P154
Bao, Z.T.	P030
Barrioz, A.	1.3-CO-S1-2
Baş Bütüner, F.	P161
Bassiouni, W.	2.5-BO-S2-8
Baudry, E.	1.1-BO-S2-3
Bauer, K.	1.1-CO-S3-1
Beaujouan, V.	P002
Bechet, B.	1.1-BO-S2-3
Berger, V.	1.1-CO-S3-3
Berges, L.	P135
Bevk, T.	2.3-BO-S1-5
Bian, S.	P055, P066
Bilaw, C.E.	P056
Biswas, S.K.	1.3-BO-S1-2
Blanchon, B.	1.5-BO-S1-8
Blanck, H.	2.1-BO-S1-7
Blanco, M.	1.3-CO-S1-1

Rocca, V.	1.4-BO-S2-8
Roigart, P.A.L.	1.4-CO-S2-5
Rollo, J.	P201
Romero, M.	1.5-BO-S1-1
Rong, Y.	1.4-CO-S1-3, P132, P165
Rosaneli, A.	1.4-CO-S1-2
Rosaneli, A.F.	2.3-BO-S1-7

S

Sabri, H.	2.2-BO-S1-5
Sadafi Kohneshahri, P.	P181
Sandoval Vallejos, J.I.	2.1-CO-S1-1
Sangalli, P.	1.1-CO-S2-4, P053
Sangalli, S.	1.1-CO-S2-4
Santos, J.F.	1.5-BO-S1-1
Santos, S.	P087
Saxena, I.	P211
Sayan Atanur, G.	1.4-BO-S1-4
Schega, M.-L.	1.5-CO-S3-5
Schlur, M.	2.3-BO-S1-8
Schüppel, S.	2.1-BO-S1-4, 1.5-CO-S3-5
Schwartz, C.	1.2-CO-S1-2
Seker, E.	1.4-BO-S1-5
Selim, G.	1.5-BO-S2-3
Serdaly, N.	P075
Sere, G.	1.1-BO-S2-3
Serrano, A.N.	1.4-BO-S2-6
Shah, N.	1.1-CO-S2-2
Shakespeare, E.	2.1-CO-S2-3
Shao, M.	2.1-BO-S2-8, P042
Shen, C.	P026
Shen, J.	P097
Shen, L.	P014
Shen, S.	P151, 1.5-BO-S1-2
Shen, Y.	P149
Shi, H.	1.4-CO-S1-5
Shi, J.	P124, P133, P206
Shi, Q.	1.4-CO-S1-1
Shi, Y.	P074, P119
Shi, Z.	P131, 1.5-CO-S3-4, P120
Shuttle, S.	P207
Silva Gomes, P.	P076, P208
Sirami, C.	P135
Sjödahl, E.	1.3-CO-S2-4
Sjöstedt, V.	1.4-BO-S1-4
Skujāne, D.	1.1-BO-S1-5, 1.5-CO-S1-4
Smetanová, M.	2.1-BO-S1-4
Smythe, A.	2.1-BO-S2-6, P212
So Ho Lung, B.	1.5-CO-S2-6
Son, Y.	2.5-BO-S1-7
Sønderskov Rasmussen, S.	1.3-BO-S1-5, 1.3-CO-S2-5

Ting, D.	1.3-CO-S1-6
Titova, P.	P022
Tolić, I.	1.5-CO-S1-3
Tong, S.	1.4-CO-S1-1
Tontsch, P.	P123
Tóth, A.	2.1-BO-S1-4
Toussaint, L.	2.5-BO-S1-8
Triboi, N.	P187
Trouillot, P.	P040
Trovato, M.G.	1.5-BO-S2-5
Tsafack, H.	P051
Turkoglu, E.U.	1.4-BO-S1-5
Tzortzi, J.N.	1.5-CO-S3-3
Tzortzi, N.	P211

U

Udina, C.	P110
-----------	------

V

Vancutsem, D.	2.3-CO-S1-5
Van Der Spek, S.	P150
Van Etteger, R.	1.3-CO-S1-5
Vangjeli, S.	1.1-CO-S3-4, 2.5-CO-S1-2, P063
Van Oosterom, P.	P150
Vergnes, A.	1.2-CO-S1-2
Vidal Beaudet, L.	1.1-BO-S2-3
Vidal-Beaudet, L.	1.2-CO-S1-2
Vignes, B.	P212
Villa Juan, J.D.	1.3-CO-S2-2

W

Wade, E.	2.1-BO-S1-7
Wakabayashi, H.	P213
Wang, D.	P125, P214
Wang, H.	P132, 2.1-BO-S1-3
Wang, J.	P218
Wang, K.	2.2-CO-S1-2
Wang, L.	P149, P006
Wang, M.	P037, P146, P215
Wang, N.	P124
Wang, P.	1.1-BO-S2-4
Wang, S.	P163
Wang, W.	P100
Wang, X.	2.3-BO-S1-2, P008, P016, P019, P020. P025, P078, P134, P176, P180, P195, P216, P217, P220, P222,
Wang, Y.	2.1-BO-S2-8, P042, 2.5-BO-S2-7, P079 P094,
Wang, Z.	1.4-CO-S2-1, P125, P144, P150, P151, P169, P218
Wei, F.	P219

P211

Santorini's Urban Landscape: Integrating Heritage, Memory, and Spatial Design

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Santorini's urban landscape serves as both a historical and geological record, shaped by its Minoan heritage, the Bronze Age settlement of Akrotiri, and its volcanic transformations. The island's vernacular architecture, including whitewashed cave dwellings, blue-domed churches, and compact street networks, represents a tangible expression of its cultural memory. This research examines how these architectural elements function as both repositories of historical narratives and structural frameworks for contemporary urban design while offering adaptable frameworks for contemporary urban resilience.

The study explores the role of landscape architecture in preserving and interpreting embedded cultural memories through participatory design methodologies. Santorini's distinctive topography, sculpted by the Aegean Sea and shaped by repeated volcanic activity, provides a crucial framework for examining the relationship between natural and built environments in constructing place identity. The research evaluates how spatial configurations influence collective memory, social engagement, and adaptive reuse of historical forms.

Public engagement and heritage interpretation strategies are considered essential in ensuring that intangible cultural assets are recognized and integrated into contemporary urban design. Examining the interaction between traditional settlements and evolving public spaces, the study aims to identify methods through which historical narratives can be made more accessible while reinforcing a shared sense of identity. Santorini's built environment, deeply connected to its geological past, offers a model for understanding how landscape and architecture shape long-term social and cultural resilience. By investigating how traditional spatial arrangements promote interaction and community resilience, this research highlights the role of landscape architects in balancing heritage conservation with modern urban needs. The findings contribute to broader discussions on the intersection of memory, vernacular heritage, and contemporary landscape practices, ensuring that shared spaces remain meaningful, inclusive, and reflective of their historical and environmental context.

The objective of the study is to bridge the gap between heritage preservation and evolving urban development, offering insights into how participatory design, place-based identity, and adaptive reuse strategies can be applied to culturally significant landscapes like Santorini. The results will inform approaches to designing resilient urban spaces that maintain historical integrity while supporting contemporary social dynamics. By examining how cultural memory is embedded in architectural and landscape forms, this research provides a framework for integrating heritage values into sustainable urban development practices.

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