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TERRARIUM. EARTH DESIGN:
ECOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE
AND LANDSCAPE

A CURA DI
SILVIA MUNDULA,
KEVIN SANTUS,
SARA ANNA SAPONE

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ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE
edited by
Silvia Mundula, Kevin Santus, Sara Anna Sapone

Terrarium collects research and reflections on the relationship between space, soil, vegetation and the biotic community, linked through the metaphor of the terrarium. The book is curated by a research group from the Ph.D. program "Architectural Urban Interior Design", coordinated by Alessandro Rocca (Department of Architecture and Urban Studies at Politecnico di Milano), involved in the PRIN Sylva by the IUAV research unit.

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CHINESE GARDENS. ALLEGORICAL ECOLOGIES IN AN URBANIZING WORLD

GERARDO
SEMPREBON

This contribution proposes to read the Chinese Garden as an architectural metaphor for a measured ecology. Featured by artificial groundworks, fishponds crossed by meandering passageways, verdure arrangements, halls, and pavilions for different purposes, gardens have developed over history as magnificent architectures tailored to build secluded and controlled realities. Building artificial grounds to simulate angles of the world is an attitude traceable in different cultures. A paradigmatic example was the construction of the Parc des Buttes Chaumont, one of Paris' most important public parks. Engineer Charles Adolphe Alphand had the rock pickaxed for three years and, in 1867, gave Paris a picturesque garden imitating a mountain setting, complete with fake cliffs and an artificial waterfall. This episode witnesses the boundless confidence in man's ability to shape the habitat in which he lives at will. Such an attitude was aligned with unquestioned positivistic faiths in scientific and technological progress and envisioned no limits to the possibility of altering the morphology of sites and giving them the form of invented landscapes. It is crucial to pinpoint that these approaches never characterized the philosophy of Chinese gardens, which, following the precepts of traditional philosophies, have been constructed to reproduce miniaturized angles of the world permeated by harmony between natural and artificial elements. As clearly defined in their borders, the gardens had to evoke the interplay of correspondences, the cosmic energy animating the world, and benevolently oriented it via cosmology and rites (Jullien 2014, p. 119). Moreover, it is worth reminding that, as in classical *shanshui* paintings[†], they went beyond depicting or confronting reality as it was, projecting

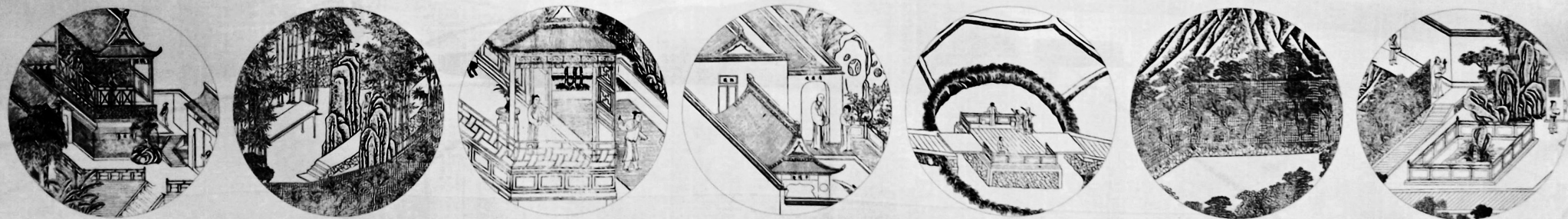
Chinese literati's idealization of relationships between human and nature, through the attainment of visual and spiritual harmonies via the composition of a timeless image of nature (Chu 2021, p. 2).

Indeed, their picturesque environment goes far beyond the mere imitation of nature and embodies the complex network of correspondences. The exhibition curated by Fang Zhenning *Stroll in HuanCui Tang* exposed at the 2017 SUSAS (Shanghai Urban Space Art Season)[‡], which represented the panorama of a notable scroll from the Ming Dynasty in Anhui style, is a striking example of the ethical and aesthetical values imbued in Chinese gardens portraying both a place for pleasure and a metaphor for living in the world. Unlike some other cultural genealogies marked by cultural fractures, Chinese historical culture has been able to absorb contrasts and dramatic changes along its evolutionary path.

Poster of Stroll in HuanCui Tang exhibition curated by Fang Zhenning at the 2017 Shanghai Urbas Space Art Season, which represented the panorama of a notable scroll from the Ming Dynasty in Anhui style. The poster emphasizes how gardens' architecture is used as a tool to frame, contemplate, and live off the landscape. Photo by Gerardo Sempregon, 2017.



CHINESE GARDEN / HUAN CUI TANG



As an expression of this striking resilience's capacity, the Chinese garden has been a spatial entity crossing time, space, and meaning, substantially preserving its tangible connotations and principles, intimately connected to intangible forms of art, poetry *in primis*. Indeed, a large part of traditional Chinese architecture can be understood as a device for observing the landscape, a cosmos animated by vital forces integrating anthropic and pristine elements, where gardens have usually embodied miniaturized reproductions of classic landscapes. Along many meticulous descriptions of Chinese gardens, one will surely realize the cultural substratum that has fed the will to create exquisite spaces for the secluded *otium* of bureaucrats working in urban administrative centers, always eager to evoke the breath of the *qi* across an allegory of traditional landscape.

The balance between anthropic and wild signs is the key to understanding the distinctiveness of Chinese gardens. In regard to this, Paolillo annotated that from the Qing Dynasty, the last before the fall of the empire, architectural elements have increased in presence to the detriment of naturalness. In his words, buildings started not seeming any more elements placed within landscaped microcosmos but frames or borders of the space inside (Paolillo 1996, p. 127). The meaning of spaces enclosed by architecture, like courtyard houses, has always epitomized fundamental aspects of life, such as the connection with ancestors or Heaven. Architecture as physical and built thresholds between different domains, such as a street and an interior of the house, or even simply two separate rooms, has increasingly shaped the spatial experience one encounters in daily routines. The open space inside buildings, creating pauses in the movement, has stimulated a vertical tension between the ground and the celestial sky, characterizing the domestic realm where life could unfold under the “watchful eye of Heaven's arch” (Ruan 2021, p. 19).

THE TWIST OF AN URBAN WORLD

China's tremendous transformations over the last decades have influenced the perceptions and understandings of human-nature relationships in its environmental and perceptive attributes. Gardens have not been immune to such transitions, and I suggest that, as controlled ecologies, they open to new interpretative frameworks.

The domain of art, especially when explored with provocative contents and forms, has provided new interpretative keys to decipher traditional meanings in fast-evolving contemporaneity.

Example of architectural elements framing space's experience and verdure arrangement in the classical garden of Suzhou Canglang Pavilion, also known as Great Wave Pavilion. Photo by Gerardo Semprebbon, 2018.



I consider the work of two Chinese figures to suggest the twists Chinese gardens as allegorical ecologies are undergoing in the wake of today's reality spatial configuration.

In 2014 Artist Yang Yongliang produced digital reinterpretations of Song Dynasty master paintings, turning the classical and harmonious balance between pristine lands and human presence into tremendously-detailed concrete jungles featuring contemporary Chinese megacities. One needs to get closer to realize that the overall picture, the classic landscape by Fan Kuan's *Travelers among Mountain and Streams* (*Xishan xinglu tu*, ca. 1000), results from a meticulous digital assemblage of images of high-rise buildings, construction cranes, and demolished sites. Yang used images of architectures as brushstrokes so that, for instance, mountains are mosaics of skyscrapers and streams are collages of packed motorways. Yang's work has been acknowledged to reflect many of the controversial aspects of Chinese urbanization (Wang 2017), also being defined as a "toxic sublime" rendering of ongoing predatory practices toward the environment (Puppin 2019). The ambiguity embedded in his almost romantic, in the sense of pan-like feeling, attitude unfolds in both the will to minutely describe urban stacking and devouring real-estate machine and synthetically evoke intense emotions at a glance, which becomes the engine for speculating and questioning the ethical, aesthetic, and contemplative outcomes of the current developmental model and its relations with the environment. Beyond grasping the dramatic transition of Chinese land, Yang's art remarks that if, on one side, urban development made life thrive in cities, on the other, it also caged these lives, illuminating the twist of forms and meanings permeating historical and contemporary landscapes in China. This shift, which has given life to differentiated exposing modalities, has been corroborated by the advancement of modern artistic techniques, primarily related to the digital production of images and other contents, which contributed to emphasizing the social, political, and environmental dimension of landscape representation (Chu 2012), with particular reference to the Ecological Civilization ideology (Semprebbon 2021). Even though human figures appear absent in Yang's composition, suggesting a remarkable gap from the ancient painting scroll, nonetheless, it may be inferred that "human interference is at once omnipresent and invisible" (Tan 2016, p. 227).

What is revealed is also a relatively connivance to what *de facto* may be assumed as a new canon of classics: the uncontrolled phenomenon of excessive urbanization as an antagonist to nature.

According to Ortells-Nicolau, Chinese development em-

bodies the connotations of a "ruination" process driven by land speculation and economic growth (Ortells-Nicolau 2017). For Kiu Wai Chu, the modern world recomposed into classical iconographies represents people's nostalgia for a lost benevolent connection with nature and tradition (Chu 2012). Nevertheless, the anthropogenic pressure on the environment also mirrors the deliberate plan of land transformation that may represent the contemporary ideology of classics, provocatively rendered by Yang with traditional iconographies. The inherent effect of the estrangement of Yang's work's first impression triggers further and deeper reflections on spatializations and perceptive impacts of social, economic, and political forces. Overcoming binary relationships like past and present, nature and city, tradition and modernity, his *Artificial Wonderlands* embrace a more nuanced dimension suspended between ephemeral and substantial, restful and threatening, organic and mechanical, generic and peculiar, perceptual and conceptual (Mickle 2016).

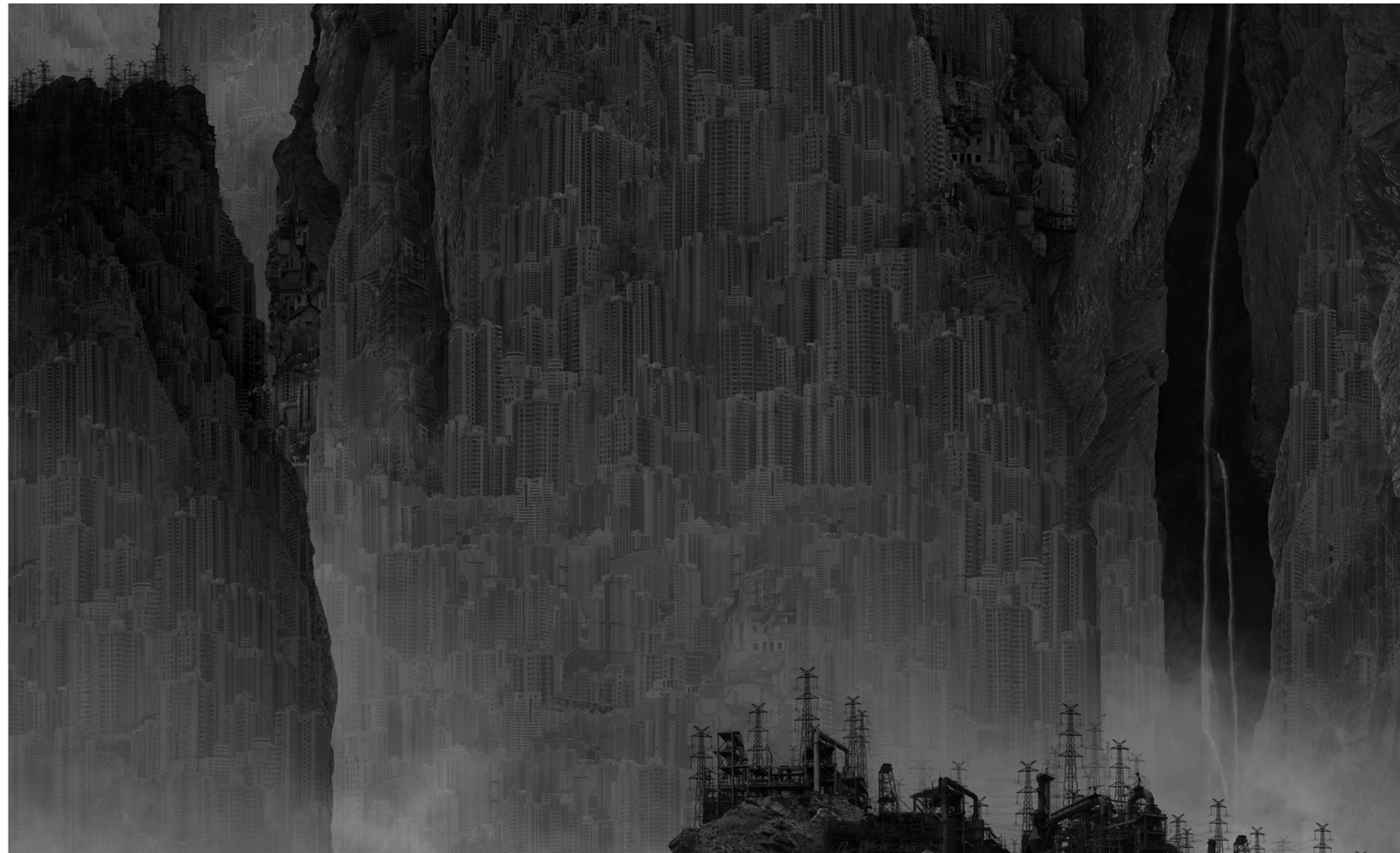
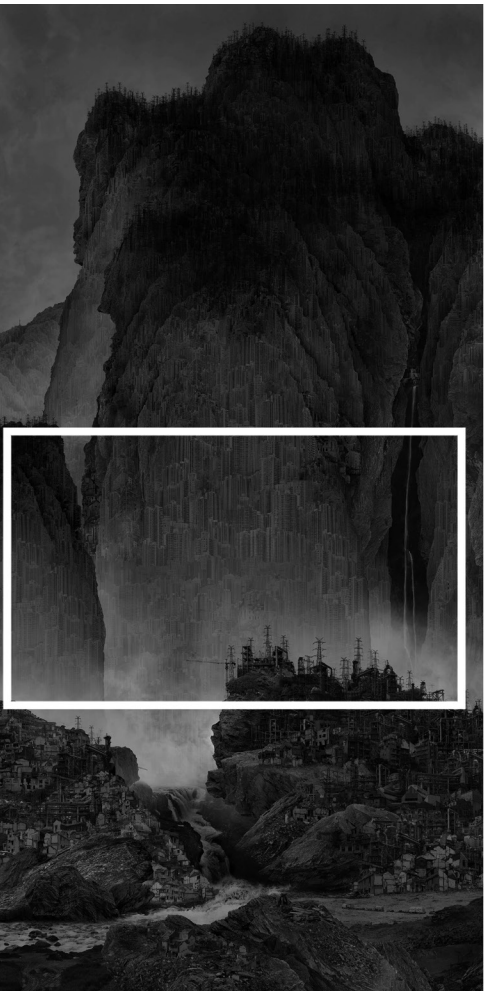
The semantic backflip reaches a climax with Ma Yansong's manifesto for Shanshui City, the utmost urban ideology reinterpreting traditional lost landscapes in contrast to the commodification of urban realities, to the "monuments of capital and power" (Ma 2014, p. 26) and to the soulless idea of buildings as "machines for living" (Ma 2014, p. 28). Here as well, it is crucial to remark on Ma's position in regard to Chinese classics' ecology. Describing Chinese classical gardens, he wrote that

what makes them a treasured cultural heritage is their representation of a distinct worldview in which humanity and nature coexist in harmony, not the fact that they happen to meet certain ecological and environmental criteria [...] the only true sustainability lies in a building's spiritual and cultural significance for residents and the community (Ma 2014, p. 46).

For him, *shanshui* is an "image of the natural world created within the subconscious to act as consolation and compensation for the struggles of political life" (Li 2014, p. 224), which he upscales at an urban and territorial scale to forge a new type of poetic living. On these bases, Ma's critique of the unquestioned application of environmental technologies moves on the grounds of the convincement that buildings and cities can offer renewed spiritual and emotional connections between humans and nature within an urban setting that is not necessarily green. The suspicion he has nurtured toward green as a panacea for all ills puts him in an eccentric position compared to the mainstream urban visions for the future of cities. Take, for instance, Stefano Boeri Architetti's Liuzhou Forest City¹¹, an upscaled

Yang Yongliang, *Travelers among Mountain and Streams*, from "Artificial Wonderland II" series (2014).

On the left is the entire artwork, and on the right is a zoom.
Courtesy of Yang Yongliang.



development of the celebrated Vertical Forest prototype, where the image of the new city derives directly from the accurate definition of greeneries on otherwise generic buildings. Another example we can cite is SOM's Urban Sequoia^Λ, the project for a skyscraper able to sequester carbon with the help of algae. In this case, a city made of buildings working like machines will implement green materials to remediate pollution in a metabolic way. SOM rejects picturesque fake figurations either of forests or natural and cultural landscapes. Ma's position appears more inclined to an allegorical reconnection with folkloristic wisdom far from an idealized imitation of the past but able to trace a contemporary Chinese identity independent from foreign models. In his words, Shanshui City

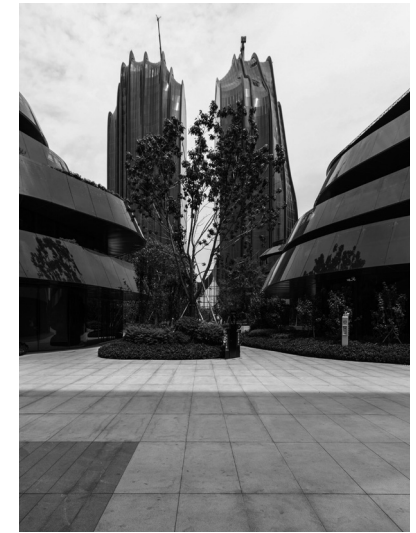
is not simply an eco-city, or a garden-city, nor does it imply modeling the city's architecture on natural forms such as mountains. Rather, it represents humanity's affinity for the natural world, and our quest for inner fulfillment, as expressed in philosophies of the East (Ma 2014, p. 20).

He often compared this idea with Louis Kahn's Salk Institute, which is a place without vegetation but intimately connected with nature, because for him "what we see is [...] ourselves resonating within the landscape of the mind" (Ma 2014, p. 65). One of the first applications of Shanshui City is the Chaoyang Park Plaza in Beijing. The two towers soar on the skyline and, from a distance, reflect on the water of nearby lakes. On the ground, dwarfed buildings reproduce a small-scale environment equipped with greenery and resting spaces protected from the bordering urban chaos. In Ma's conception, this composite of allegorical mountains, rocks, and waters triggers connections with the traditional values of *shanshui* paintings, latent but forged in the soul of the Chinese. With this in mind, we have to look at his "Fake Hills," a project that "is not a direct representation of a series of hills, nor it is a mathematically generated abstraction. It is an emotional act; its origin lies in affection" (Ma 2014, p. 174). Ma's attitude, in the end, is not so far from that envisioned by builders of the past committed to hosting emperors' tombs in reshaped hills, underground mausoleums, or other artificially made landscapes.

THE GARDEN AS AN ALLEGORICAL ELEMENT OF RESISTANCE

Augustin Berque listed four criteria for the existence of landscape as such. First, linguistic representations, or one or two words to say landscape. Second, literary representations, oral or written, that praise or describe a landscape's beauty.

MAD Architects, *Chaoyang Park Plaza*, Beijing (2017). Top left: street view between the "mountains" and the "waters"; top right: on the ground floor, smaller pavilions and greeneries evoke a more controlled human scale environment; bottom: viewed from Jingshan hill, the "mountains" lose their evocative meaning. Photo by Gerardo Semprebón, 2018.



Third, pictorial representations that have the landscape as a theme. Fourth, representations through gardens proving an aesthetic assessment of nature (not gardens for subsistence). He pointed out that such criteria can be found in many societies, but only in properly landscape societies are all four criteria (Berenson 1953, p. 186). Alain Roger found that the Chinese society was the only one deserving this title of landscape society before also Westerns ones started manipulating the four criteria in the XV century (Roger 2009, p. 41). Such an enduring and fertile tradition is undoubtedly a priceless legacy, yet it poses questions on the role it can play in present and future eras. If, in the past, gardens mirrored and reproduced an idealized relationship between humans and nature fixed in classic landscape paintings and Chinese gardens, what do they signify in the contemporary milieu?

On one side, we have seen how Yang Yongliang's reinterpretation of classic paintings became both a way to denounce aesthetic and ecological concerns that belong to a collective dimension suspended between the nostalgic regret of the lost emotive relation with nature and the acquiescence to a new urbanized everyday indifferent to both environment and landscape. On the other side, we have Ma Yansong's skeptical position on technocratic attitudes toward the construction of any living setting. His point has assonance with Alain Rogers's critique of "ecolocacy" as a design attitude solely concerned with respecting the *environment* and not the *landscape* (Roger 2009, p. 106). The initially-mentioned pursuit of earthly paradises as envisioned by ancient builders is today more relevant than ever, as the beautiful words used by Alvar Aalto remind us,

the ultimate goal of the architect (...) is to create a paradise.

Every house, every product of architecture (...) should be a fruit of our endeavor to build an earthly paradise for people. 1

If, on one side, the term paradise enlarges the extent of the aesthetic experience, evoking the peacefulness and delight of all senses, on the other, it suggests the possibility of salvation and redemption whose values rooted in the past may be reconsidered at present. If we accept this condition, Chinese gardens are not only priceless cultural assets or spectacular tourist destinations but also legacies of a precedent civilization and elements of resilience in a world moving toward uncontested urbanization.



M. Foucault, *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*, in N. Leach (edited by) *Rethinking Architecture; A Reader in Cultural Theory*, Routledge, London 1997, p. 354.

山水, *shanshui* is the word addressing classic landscape painting in mandarin. It is composed of two characters, 山 *shan* meaning mountain, and 水 *shui*, meaning water. Alain Roger suggests considering also the word 风景, composed by the character 风, *feng*, meaning wind, and 景, *jing*, meaning scene. Roger suggests that *fengjing* means the atmosphere of the landscape and *shanshui* its elements, since these two terms may indicate both the object and the representation of the landscape. See: A. Roger, *Breve trattato sul paesaggio*, Sellerio editore, Palermo 2009, p. 49.



See: <https://www.susas.com.cn/2017susas/EN-phone/index.html> [accessed 8 August 2023].



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Lecture given at the Swedish city planners' meeting in Malmo in 1957. See: A. Aalto, *The Architect's Conception for Paradise*, in G. Schildt (edited by), *Alvar Aalto Sketches*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts and London 1978, p. 158.

The reality of contemporary landscapes classics. Left foreground: the garden of the Confucian Temple in Shanghai; left background: the pressing generic city; right: Nanjing, the new “classic” landscape. Photos by Gerardo Semprebon, 2019 and 2018.



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CHIARA PRADEL

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BIOGRAPHIES

HASSAN AHMED

Hassan (Beybe) Ahmed is a Maldivian environmentalist and coral scientist. In 2007, he founded the NGO "Save the Beach Maldives". Since then, he is fighting for an ecologically sustainable development of the country, involving local communities and schools. In 2014 he started his first coral restoration project. He led projects on different islands and organised the very first coral relocation in the Maldives (2016). He believes that only through information and knowledge the community will be able to protect and preserve its natural heritage. His aim is to grow back entire reefs and restore their ecological role lost due to climate change and coastal development.

KEVIN AMENDT

Kevin Amendt is an independent researcher engaged in the study of underground quarries, their role in today's landscape and their preservation. Member of the "Studiegroep Onderaardse Kalksteengroeven", "vzw Hulpdienst Groeven" and founder of "Onderzoeksbureau MGL", he advises public and other organisations in the border region Liège (BE) - Limburg (NL/BE).

MARGHERITA AUTORINO

Born in Rome in 1997, curious explorer and patient creative, third of four children. After classical high school, she enriched her university course with two years abroad, practicing drawing at FAUP in Porto and ecology at ENSP in Versailles-Marseille, and on-site internships with Wagon-Landscaping and the Botanical Garden of Rome. In 2023, she graduated with honors in Architecture - Urban Design at Roma Tre, guided by A. Metta, presenting with C. Condemi Maglia Boscata, a landscape architecture thesis on the material and immaterial, microscopic and cosmic geographies of the Magliana Stream.

ANNALISA AZZOLA

Annalisa Azzola is a marine ecologist and research fellow at University of Genoa. She finished her PhD in Marine Science and Technologies in 2023. Her research topics include characterization, monitoring, and assessment of the ecological status and change over time of coastal ecosystems. Part of her research also focuses on assessing local and global anthropogenic impacts. Her studies are based on scientific diving techniques, including visual field surveys and photographic sampling.

BEATRICE AZZOLA

Beatrice Azzola is an architect and academic researcher. She worked in several architecture firms in Italy, Portugal and Switzerland. In 2021 she started her PhD on Italian highway architecture and landscape. She also works on the disciplinary interferences between architecture and ecology.

GINO BALDI

Architect, in 2020 founded in Bergamo with Serena Comi, Vacuum Atelier, an architecture and design studio, winner of architecture awards for young architects and architecture competitions. He holds a doctorate in architectural composition (PoliMi - AUID) (2019 -). Participates in academic conferences in Italy and abroad such as CA2RE Milan and Ljubljana (2020-21) and Conceptual Design of Structures in Zurich (2021), Workshop Urban regeneration and Industrial heritage EPFL - Lausanne (2023)

MATTIA BALDINI

Mattia Baldini is an architect, founder and member of Fuoriformato Architettura, and PhD researcher in Architecture. Theories and Design (cycle XXXVIII, SSD: ICAR/14) at La Sapienza, University of Rome. He has conducted research in Italy (Florence, Rome) and abroad (ETSA in Seville). The main field of research application concerns the relationship between the theoretical pretexts of design and their applications in compositional practice.

NADIA BERTOLINO

Nadia Bertolino, PhD, is an architect, writer and educator concerned with ethical design practices in response to socio-spatial inequalities and environmental emergency. She is Assistant Professor in Architectural and Urban Design at the University of Pavia. Formerly, Nadia coordinated the Master's Degree in Architectural Design at Sheffield School of Architecture and she was Senior Lecturer in Architectural Theory and Department Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Northumbria University, Newcastle.

FEDERICO BROGGINI

Federico Broggin is architect graduated at Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio. Since his early experiences he focused on urban and landscape design, in particular dealing with soil and water management concerns. He is part of Latitude Platform for Urban Design and Research. In 2022 he started a PhD in landscape architecture at RomaTre University. The thesis explores the world of urban soils, in particular sealed soils by asphalt, investigating their intrinsic values and potentialities in landscape design practices.

THOMAS CABAI

Thomas Cabai is an Italian architect and Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DASTU) at Politecnico di Milano, where he is also a teaching assistant in the Landscape and Infrastructure Design Studio. His main research interest lies within the relationship between ecology and built environment in anthropic territories. He is part of the National Biodiversity Future Center and is currently working on several projects of Restoration Ecology and Phytoremediation in the Metropolitan City of Milan, Tuscany and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

CHIARA CARAVELLO

Chiara Caravello is a PhD candidate in architecture in a double programme between the University of Liège (BE) and Politecnico di Milano (IT). Awarded with a FNRS fellowship, she is carrying out her research on underground quarries in the cross-border area of the 'Three Countries Park' in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (BE-NL-DE).

GIULIA CAZZANIGA

Architect and researcher, Giulia Cazzaniga holds a PhD in Landscape and Environment from Sapienza Università di Roma. Her research focuses on the impact of representation on the perception of landscape and its influence on the design of future transformations. Recently, she has applied this reflection to the River Po basin. She is part of the research team financed by Enel Green Power focusing on the decommissioning of solar power plants and she is currently a research fellow at the Politecnico di Milano where she teaches Landscape Architecture design.

AMINA CHOUAIRI

Amina Chouairi is a PhD student in Urbanism at Università Iuav di Venezia and holds a Master of Science in Landscape Architecture from Delft University of Technology. Since 2019, she has been researching and working on the Venetian Lagoon complex transitional territory, exploring the debated relations among its cultures and natures. Crucial for her is the understanding of the agency of the bare landscape - the brackish marshes, i.e. the ignition point from which to rethink the Venice-in-a-lagoon system.

FELICE CIMATTI

Felice Cimatti teaches "Semiotica e teoria dei linguaggi" at the 'Università della Calabria.

PIETRO CONSOLANDI

Pietro Consolandi is a researcher and artist based in Venice, where he co-founded the Barena Bianca collective in 2018. He is a research fellow at THE NEW INSTITUTE Centre for Environmental Humanities (NICHE), Ca' Foscari University, inquiring about the possibility to implement the Rights of Nature in the Venetian Lagoon from a cultural point of view. He also collaborates with art and ecology foundation TBA21-Academy since 2020, where he develops various collaborative didactic initiatives as OCEAN / UNI Research Lead.

CASSANDRA COZZA

Cassandra Cozza, architect, PhD, is Lecturer and Assistant Professor in Architectural and Urban Design at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Politecnico di Milano. Her research topics focus on contemporary paradigms of architectural and urban design studying changes with a design approach aimed at enhancing both spatial relationships and contexts. She is a member of the scientific editorial board of the magazines Territorio (Franco Angeli) and Ardeth (Rosenberg & Sellier).

SASKIA DE WIT

Saskia de Wit is landscape architect and assistant professor at the Section of Landscape Architecture, Delft University of Technology. She designs gardens and landscapes at her office Saskia de Wit tuin en landschap. Her research focuses on the garden as a core concept of the field of landscape architecture: the concept of the garden is used as a lens for further research into site-specificity, the sensory perception of place, urban landscapes, leftover spaces and urban forestry.

DAMIANO DI MELE

Damiano Di Mele, architect, PhD candidate at the Sapienza University of Rome in international co-tutorship with the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM). Graduated cum laude from the Iuav University of Venice after a period of training in Spain. His current research is focused on the analysis of themes related to the history and criticism of contemporary Spanish architecture in the relationship between figurativeness and structure. He participates in research activities in the GIPC group (Grupo de Investigación en Paisaje Cultural) at the Proyectos Arquitectónicos department of the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid (ETSAM), where he has been a visiting doctoral researcher since 2022.

SARA FAVARGIOTTI

Sara Favargiotti is Associate Professor at the University of Trento, DICAM. Her research investigates the multiple identities of landscapes through applied research at different scales, focusing on fragile territories, emerging infrastructure, adaptive dynamics and regenerative design. Local coordinator of project B4R. Branding for Resilience (PRIN, 2020-2024), member of the Directive Board of IASLA (since 2018), she is co-founder and scientific advisor of the innovative startup RUMA S.r.l. SB.

MARCO FERRARI

Marco Ferrari is a researcher at the University of Trento, DICAM and adjunct Professor of Architectural Design Theory at the University of Ferrara. He is project leader of PaesaggiForti project and partner and co-founder of the artistic duo AIDEL. He is particularly interested in contemporary architectural and landscape theory and in revealing the relationship between bodies, ecologies and space, questioning concepts of domesticity and intimacy in both living environments and landscape.

ANDREA FOPPIANI

Andrea Foppiani is a PhD candidate in Architectural, Urban, and Interior Design from the DASTU department at Politecnico di Milano, where he graduated with honors in Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design. His research focuses on post-logistics landscapes in the Po Valley, working through more-than-human ecologies to explore future hybrid scenarios. He is an academic tutor in design studios and is part of the Landscape Off[f] Limits International Workshop's organization team.

HERMANO LUZ RODRIGUES

Hermano Luz is a designer from Brazil and a PhD researcher in Creative Technologies at the University of Galway. He received a Master's in Design Studies degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he was a curator of the GSD Kirkland Gallery. He has exhibited and published internationally as an artist and contributed to several technological art projects. In his practice, he mixes iconic cultural heritage with contemporary digital media to inspire participatory creative practices.

INA MACAIONE

Ina Macaione, associate professor at DiCEM_Unibas, coordinates the Phenomenology of Architecture Design course. She is scientific coordinator of the NatureCityLAB. Her research is on the issues of urban regeneration, starting with the transformations of architecture, city and landscape in the process of ecological transition and Climate Change.

VALERIO MASSARO

Valerio Massaro is an architect and academic and a PhD candidate at the AA School of Architecture. He holds a degree in architecture from the University of Florence and an MPhil from the AA School (Projective Cities). He taught Design and History and Theory in several institutions, including London South Bank University, the Royal College of Art and the University of Greenwich.

DAVIDE MONTANARI

Davide Montanari graduated with honors in Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design from Politecnico di Milano where he is currently doing a PhD in Architectural, Urban, and Interior Design. His research focuses on the practices of appropriation of water within the Po River Basin to unveil protocols of exploitation and investigate future visions through the image of cyborg landscapes. He works as tutor in design studios and is member of the Landscape Offfj Limits International Workshop's organization team.

LAURA MUCCIOLLO

Laura Mucciolo, architect, is Ph.D. st. in Architecture. Theories and Design, Sapienza University of Rome. In 2022, she exhibits the ephemeral design With Mies van der Rohe into a New World (Neue Nationalgalerie) during the Hypercomfort SS by S. Bru (BRUTHER). In the year, she was guest curator with Michelangelo Pivetta and Giacomo Razzolini of the touring exhibition Isolario Venezia Sylva (curated by Sara Marini) at Dept. of Architecture in Florence. She publishes Terzo Paradiso (Libria, 2023).

SILVIA MUNDULA

Silvia Mundula is a PhD candidate at the Politecnico di Milano and a garden designer. After completing her Master's degree in Architecture in Milan, she gained a Master's degree in History and Critical Thinking at the Architectural Association in London, where she developed her interest in the theory of gardens. Her research investigates the cultural principles and the design outcomes of contemporary wild oriented planting design in Europe.

VALENTINA NOCE

Valentina Noce is an architect and researcher based in Milan (Italy). She is the founder of architectural office Sabotage Practice. She is completing a PhD in Architecture Interior and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano, where she's also collaborating in teaching activities. Bridging the realms of architectural practice and academic research, her work delves into the intersections between space and technology.

RITA OCCHIUTO

Rita Occhiuto is Professor Director of the "Lab. Ville-Territoire-Paysage" within the Research Unit in Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Liège (BE). She is member of the "PhD School in Architecture and urban planning" and of the Lepur "Research Center in Sciences of City, Territory and Rural Environment" (University of Liège), and Founder Member of "UNISCAPE - European Network of Universities for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention".

ANDREA OLDANI

Andrea Oldani is an assistant professor of Landscape Architecture at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies at Politecnico di Milano, where he is faculty member of the School of Architecture, Planning and Construction Engineering. He earned a Ph.D. in Architectural and Urban Design from the Department of Architecture and Planning. His researches on the landscape of contemporary infrastructure, are documented by a consistent number of scientific publications. Oldani curated seminars, exhibitions and editorial works.

IRENE PANCAZZI

Irene Pancrazi is a marine biologist specialising in tropical environments and their restoration. In 2016 she started to work for the NGO "Save the Beach Maldives", after witnessing a bleaching event in the Maldives and feeling the urge to take action. Since then, she was in charge of the set-up and the research protocol of various coral restoration projects. She collaborates with various Italian universities, tutoring students and supporting scientific research. Today she is one of the project managers at the NGO and shares the same dream as its founder: to grow back the whole reef and see it thrive.

MARIANA PEREIRA GUIMARÃES

Mariana Pereira Guimarães is an architect-engineer from Brazil and PhD Candidate in Politecnico di Milano's Architecture, Urban and Interior Design program. Mariana was a Marie-Curie EID-ITN research fellow within the SOLOCLIM programme (ID 861119) studying innovative outdoor water-cooling solutions such as fountains and water mists that can respond to extreme urban heat. She received a Master's in Urban Planning and Public Health from Harvard University focused on Human Health and Sustainability.

MICHELANGELO PIVETTA

Michelangelo Pivetta, graduated from IUAV University of Venice, PhD and Associate Professor in Architectural Design in the Department of Architecture of University of Florence. The field of application of the theoretical research is the project and its manifestation through the ephemeral balance between technique, construction and form. He writes essays and books addressing in parallel the didactic and professional activities as experimental opportunities for perennial and necessary verification.

MICHELE PORCELLUZZI

Michele Porcelluzzi is an architect and PhD candidate in Architectural, Urban and Interior Design at DASTU, Politecnico di Milano, in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Future Center. His research interest is focused on the concept of collectiveness in architectural and urban design. He is a founding member of the research project Assume There's a Landscape. His research activity has been published in journals including OASE (2022) and Die Architekt (2023) and exhibited at IABR 2022 in Rotterdam.

CHIARA PRADEL

Chiara Pradel, PhD Arch. (Politecnico di Milano, 2022), is a Landscape Architect and Post-doc researcher at TU Delft, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment. Her research explores ground movements originated by building activities, mainly focusing on material culture, reuse and circular baukultur. She lives and works between Milan (Italy) and Delft (Netherlands).

SARA PROTASONI

Sara Protasoni, Head of the M.Sc. in Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design Politecnico di Milano - Piacenza Campus, is Full Professor of Landscape Architecture and member of the Board of the PhD Program in Landscape Architecture at La Sapienza University in Rome. At the Politecnico di Milano she combines teaching with an intense activity of design and theoretical research on landscape. She is the author of several monographs and over a hundred essays published in books and journals in the field.

ALESSANDRO RAFFA

Alessandro Raffa, architect PhD, is assistant professor PON R&I FSE-REACT EU at DiCEM_Unibas; member of NatureCityLAB and UNESCO Chair on Mediterranean Cultural Landscapes research groups. PhD at DASTU Politecnico di Milano, research fellow Sven-Ingvar Andersson at Benetton Foundation (2020) and post-doc researcher at DAD Politecnico di Torino (2021). He is currently Fulbright Visiting Scholar at University of Florida, College of Design, Construction and Planning and Florida Institute for Built Environment Resilience.

GIACOMO RAZZOLINI

Giacomo Razzolini architect, founder and member of architecture firm filoferro architetti. He is teaching tutor at the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence. He was a research fellow at the University of Florence and Pavia for projects dealing with different themes. In 2022, he was guest curator with Michelangelo Pivetta and Laura Mucciolo of the touring exhibition Isolario Venezia Sylva (curated by Sara Marini) at Dept. of Architecture in Florence.

ALESSANDRO ROCCA

Alessandro Rocca is an architect, a professor of architecture and the Head, for the period 2019-24, of the Ph.D. program of Architectural Urban Interior Design (www.auid.polimi.it) at the Department of Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano. His recent research develops within the program of national interest (PRIN) "SYLVA - Re-think the sylvan: Towards a new alliance between biology and artificiality, nature and society, wildness and humanity" and the Ca2re European Consortium for design-driven research.

KEVIN SANTUS

Kevin Santus is an Architect, Research Fellow and Ph.D. candidate at the Politecnico di Milano (Italy) in Architecture, Urban, and Interior Design. He won an interdisciplinary grant (2020-2024) to study the design transition facing climate fragilities and its impacts on the morpho-typological aspects of the project. Besides he is a Research Consultant at the Brookfield Sustainability Institute in Toronto and contributor in DOMUSweb.

SARA ANNA SAPONE

Sara Anna Sapone is an Architect, Ph.D. candidate and Research Fellow at Politecnico di Milano. Here she was involved in teaching and research activities, such as the program G124 promoted by Renzo Piano on Italian peripheries. Meanwhile, she worked in Milan-based architecture firms, addressing urban renewal and architectural design. Since 2020, she's developing her doctoral research "Precision Wildland" within the AUID program at PoliMi and a research stay at the Landscape architecture section of TU Delft, funded by the Idea League Grant.

GERARDO SEMPREBON

Gerardo Semprebbon, PhD architect, is Assistant Professor in architectural and urban design at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DASTU) of the Politecnico di Milano. Holder of two Ph.D. titles, SJTU + PoliMi, in 2019, he has been a visiting scholar at the BUCEA. The core topic of his research covers architectural strategies of revitalization in complex settlement systems, with specific focuses on Chinese and Italian cities and territories.

GIULIA SETTI

Giulia Setti, architect, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Architectural and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano, Department of Architecture and Urban Studies. In 2022, she published a typological study of the stepwells in Ahmedabad, India. Her research focuses also on reusing industrial architecture. She worked in the Territorial Fragilities project led by DASTU – Department of Excellence 2018-2022. In 2014-2015, she developed research activities at CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India.

CHIARA TOSCANI

Chiara Toscani is an architect, educator and researcher based in London. She is currently a PhD candidate at the AA School in London in History and Critical Thinking in Architecture. She got her first PhD in Architectural and Urban Design at the Politecnico di Milano and was awarded a postdoctoral research fellow in 2010. She taught urban and architectural design at the Politecnico di Milano, tutored at AA Summer School and Ravensbourne University. Author of essays and books. For a decade, she worked as a senior architect at Cino Zucchi Architetti.

JO VAN DEN BERGHE

Jo Van Den Berghe, architect (Sint-Lucas School of Architecture 1984) with a critical reflective practice since 1986. PhD, RMIT University Melbourne 2012. Teaching experimental architectural design, KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture, where he is developing innovative drawings as the indispensable locus between Techné and Poiesis. Program director KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture 2017-2022. Visiting professor at Politecnico di Milano, EPFL Lausanne, Queen's University Belfast.

FRANCESCA ZANOTTO

Architect, PhD, she is Assistant Professor of Architectural Design at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano, where she works on ecological implications of architectural design within the National Biodiversity Future Center. In 2021 and 2022 she was Research Fellow within the Integral Design Environment Research Infrastructure (I.r.ide) – Center for Publishing Actions and Research Development (Pard) at Università Iuav di Venezia, taking part in the scientific activity of national research PRIN "Sylva".

In the same serie

✦ Sara Marini (a cura di), *Nella selva. XII tesi*, 2021.

∞ Sara Marini, Vincenzo Moschetti (a cura di), *Sylva. Città, nature, avamposti*, 2021.

∩ Alberto Bertagna, Massimiliano Giberti (a cura di), *Selve in città*, 2022.

Λ Sara Marini, Vincenzo Moschetti (a cura di), *Isolario Venezia Sylva*, 2022.

⌊ Jacopo Leveratto, Alessandro Rocca (a cura di), *Erbario. Una guida del selvatico a Milano*, 2022.

⌋ Fulvio Cortese, Giuseppe Piperata (a cura di), *Istituzioni selvagge?*, 2022.

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