

LANDSCAPES

Landscapes take many forms. The term 'landscape' acquires relevance to design through its qualifiers, from agrarian and urban landscapes to social, technological, degraded and waste landscape. The establishment of Landscape Architecture has moved landscape beyond its role as a scenic setting for contemplation – from the etymon 'pagus', meaning 'village' – and established it as a field of transformative actions that brings together aesthetic, morphological, ecological and cultural values. From this perspective, landscape interventions are not limited to restoring functional performance or visual quality. They become systemic processes of regeneration, aimed at re-establishing ecological relationships, ecosystem functions and socio-spatial dynamics, potentially giving rise to 'new landscapes'.

However, twenty-six years after the European Landscape Convention (2000), a persistent gap remains between the recognition of landscape as a resource and its actual management. The latter is often confined to formal or tactical interventions that fall short of the Convention's original cultural ambition. Prevailing aesthetic tastes displace the notion of beauty, conflating landscape – including its degradation, sanitised and uncritically embraced as an object of fascination – with territory as an undifferentiated whole. Environmental and landscape concerns are consequently marginalised precisely where they should be strategic priorities.

In this scenario, the scientific perspective offered by Technological and Environmental Design of Architecture can play a significant role in recomposing the relationships between environmental systems, anthropic transformations and settlement processes, as anticipated by Ciribini in the 1970s (Ciribini, 1978). Today, however, these relationships must be understood as non-linear. This calls for a critical examination of the landscape crisis and of the 'conflicts' that design – as an act of anthropic transformation – generates with broader environmental and social matrices, recognising the limits of interventions and the need for multidisciplinary coordination (Zagari, 2013).

In this vision of the landscape, is it possible to identify elements that might prefigure a different approach to its design? A conception of design is needed that goes beyond isolated interventions to establish synergies between environment, technology and society, moving away from mainstream, data-driven or 'overdesigned' approaches. This relationship should rather be oriented towards a notion of 'environmental landscape', understood as a 'living' material on which to develop actions in order to respond to new settlement and housing needs, as a 'project of care', continuous over time and sensitive to territorial identity and belonging: landscape design thus becomes a 'prefiguration of the desirable possible', built upon the evolutionary lines of the environment (Vittoria, 1970).

Landscape transformation should provide a creative impetus for settlement forms and technologies compatible with their environmental contexts, enabling ways of inhabiting landscape that are rooted in a sense of belonging while remaining open to ongoing transitions. This perspective brings ecosystem considerations and the mitigation of human impacts together with an understanding of landscape as a 'mediator' between reassuring perceptions and multisensory stimulation (healthscapes), giving substance to the idea of a therapeutic landscape (Tuan, 1974; Hutton, 1995). Such an approach requires an open engagement with nature – from the recent Nature Restoration Law (2024) to the debate on the 'city-nature' or on climate adaptation. Its aim is to sustain the ecological balance of habitats by recognising the interdependence of living systems and abiotic environments, in accordance with the One Health principle.

Issue 34 of TECHNE collects multidisciplinary essays and research on the design contribution to the contemporary debate on landscape, considered across its different scales. This commitment goes beyond the operational dimension to examine the reasons, methods and limits of the transformative act, within a framework of human responsibility and environmental ethics.

Contributions are invited to critically address one of the following themes:

1. Landscapes, Transformation and Care

Caring for the landscape is not the static preservation of what already exists, but the active guidance of transformations and of the interdependent relationships between environmental contexts and anthropic settlements. Its aim is to promote liveability, global health, social equity and participation, safeguarding memory and identity while addressing the conflicts that every transformation entails.

2. Landscapes, Renaturalisation and Biodiversity

Ecological restoration and renaturalisation projects are essential to sustaining biodiversity, from natural environments to urban settings. They require risk management, climate adaptation and ethical and technological responsibility to be integrated within an ecosystem-based approach.

3. Landscapes, Ecological Transition and Energy

Emerging energy and environmental demands are giving rise to new landscapes in which technologies, energy systems and ecological systems become integral drivers of design from the outset. Their role extends beyond specialist provision to reshape the forms, uses, perceptions and values of habitats.

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