

Environmental History 15

Mauro Agnoletti
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Cultivating Continuity of the European Landscape

New Challenges, Innovative
Perspectives

 Springer

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Volume 15

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Mauro Agnoletti, Florence, Italy

The series intends to act as a link for ongoing researches concerning the historical interrelationships between man and the natural world, with special regard to the modern and contemporary ages. The main commitment should be to bring together different areas of expertise in both the natural and the social sciences to help them find a common language and a common perspective. Interdisciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity are needed for more and better understanding of the environment and its history, with new epistemological frameworks and methodological practices. The links between human activities and flora, fauna, water, soil, are examples of the most debated topics in EH, while established disciplines like forest history, agricultural history and urban history are also dealing with it. The human impacts on ecosystems and landscapes over time, the preservation of cultural heritage, studies of historical trajectories in pattern and processes, as well as applied research on historical use and management of landscapes and ecosystems, are also taken into account. Other important topics relate to the history of environmental ideas and movements, policies, laws, regulations, conservation, the history of immaterial heritage, such as traditional knowledge related to the environment.

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Editors

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Refugees from the former Yugoslavia, Camp Ivankovo, Croatia, 1994.
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Part I
New Challenges for European Landscapes

Chapter 26

Seascape Design. A Limit for the European Landscape Convention



Daniela Colafranceschi

Abstract Talking about lands is also talking about the sea, of the sea that belongs to it and the territories that limit its shores. Because the sea is part of our perception up to the horizon and because from the horizon, we are perceived as part of it. Like a liquid landscape that holds together the geography of heterogeneous cities and multiple places, the sea is a ‘full’ and not a ‘void’. Water is not all the same, the sea is not all the same.

Article 2 of the European Landscape Convention says: “(...) this Convention applies to the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. (...)” In addition, the guidelines—Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)—mention: “(...) the landscape forms a whole whose constituent parts are considered simultaneously in their interrelations”.

It is precisely the interrelation between land and sea that makes the coastal border a fringe, a sensitive swath possessed of intrinsic value due to its sense of identity and the fact of belonging to a territory that is liquid but still ‘landscape’.

The water of rivers and lakes is an integral part of our territories; however, landscape stops there, along the coastline of our regions.

The dynamics of views and perceptions from land to sea and back to land again convey meanings that are related to use, to passage, to all the technology and infrastructure dedicated to moving, travelling, transporting and passing between coasts. Today they encompass profoundly changing cultural values that landscape design is called to interpret.

Water, as well as landscape, is a cultural product.

The ELC has been a revolution; we are all aware of this.

It has completely overturned the way of conceiving the dimension of landscape in terms of quality, identity and entity. It establishes a set of articles that affirm a concept

Thematic Session B. Landscape Design and Time—Topic 1 | Infra-Structural Landscapes Key words: Sea, cultural device, liquid public space

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of landscape which is dynamic and non-static, hybrid and not homogeneous; it directs design not towards ‘landscapes of quality’ but towards ‘quality of landscape’ in its entirety; it has consolidated its autonomy in terms of strategies, planning, design and launched a sustainable development directive in perspective.

But everything refers to territories. Everything seems to end along that line separating land from sea, even if it does not interrupt the landscape, and instead, as a hybrid entity, binds the one to the other. Water is a meeting space because it belongs to the same system.

The Mediterranean as a land and not as a sea, as a liquid landscape that holds together the geography of heterogeneous cities and multiple places is a ‘full’ space and not a ‘void’ one.

However, the sea is not all the same.

The water is special between neighbouring shores, between islands of the same archipelago, or when it is treated and transformed into land. Here, the landscape takes on the value of a liquid public space. Here, the sea is not an interruption; it is not a silence.

John Cage loved to teach us that even when sounds cease and silence comes, the music continues, but we stop listening to it.

I would like to present some examples I consider emblematic in this sense.

26.1 Straits

The closer coasts are to each other, the stronger the tension and the relationships that water weaves between its lands. This is the case of sea Straits, as a condition of mobility *infrastructure*, as a *device*, as a space for translation and modification of values, as a *system* for the conceptual, as well as the physical scale of the identification of its landscape, to be *places* in the different levels of identity inhabited by people.

For the Gibraltar Strait, critical frontier of our European continent with North Africa, the sea takes on an asymmetry between two worlds and measures a reversal of the economic, social, political and ideological balances between the two shores.

There is the Strait of Messina in which, through the Strait Park—for which I have been fighting for years—and its ‘liquid square’, two Italian regions would find the cultural system of a landscape centrality that substantiates the reasons for a ‘Metropolitan Area of the Strait’ in the objectives of its draft law.¹

An even more striking case of special water is İstanbul Boğazi, a narrow strip of sea where just 700 m separate Asia from Europe. The densely trafficked Bosphorus, privileged theatre of flows and currents, merges two continents and more (Fig. 26.1).

¹ Draft law no.142. The ‘Metropolitan Area of the Strait’ draft law aims to place the territory overlooking the Strait of Messina of the provinces of Reggio Calabria and Messina in a context of economic and social integration that enhances their respective potentialities. (<http://www.consiglioregionale.calabria.it/pl8/142.1.htm>).



Fig. 26.1 *L'acqua non è tutta uguale*. Collage 1, by Daniela Colafranceschi, July 2020

Straits are landscapes of passages. Trajectories, flows, networks identify the fabric sewn between the two sides: stratifications of identity, of ways of living, of ways of relating and moving. They are liquid spaces of translation and innovation of non-traditional landscapes. A type of sea where the infrastructure of displacement, economic, merchant or fishing activities, and the daily life of work and human relationships mark the speed, scales and times of its transit, supporting reasons, meanings and feelings.

Water is an element of interaction, an 'exchange' area of immaterial and tangible values, which merge sea and land into a unique and unitary landscape.

26.2 Archipelagos

In 2003, with resolution n.99/2003, City Council established 'Venice Lagoon Park'² then, by extension, the regional environmental and anthropological park of local interest of the Northern Lagoon of Venice was raised in 2014. Sea and islands become 'territory', even before becoming a Park, as the resolution says "the Institution must promote and disseminate knowledge and information relating to the

² "The main task of the 'Lagoon Park' Institution is the environmental and socio-economic enhancement of the Northern Lagoon area, through the definition and promotion of uses compatible with the protection of the naturalistic, archaeological, historical and cultural values of the places" (<http://www.agendavenezia.org/it/organizzatore-194.htm>).

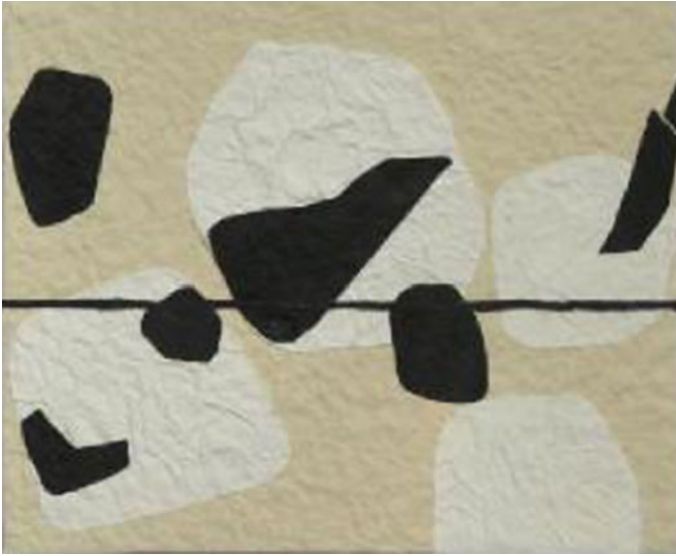


Fig. 26.2 *L'acqua non è tutta uguale*. Collage 2, by Daniela Colafranceschi, July 2020

territory of the Northern Lagoon also through the involvement and active participation of local communities, both in the planning and management of initiatives, in order to strengthen awareness, identity and responsibility of the same”.³

A lagoon ecosystem composed of cities, monuments, islands, architectures, water and sea canals. The value of a liquid in the quality of the space it conforms to is inseparable and essential. Venice is the sea of the lagoon (Fig. 26.2).

In 2010, King Juan Carlos I issued Law 44 on the Canary Islands waters, published in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* n.318. This is the only case of inclusion and attribution of the sea to a Spanish Autonomous Community, that of the Canary Islands.⁴ Thus, the spatial context pertaining to the Canaries is modified by attaching the territory of the islands to that portion of the sea inside the polygonal figure obtained by intercepting the extreme points of each island of the archipelago. The new perimeter defines a single mixed surface of water and land as a special maritime area: a unique ‘territory’. The sea of this archipelago simply does not exist (Fig. 26.3).

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ “Among the most salient extreme points of the islands and islets integrated within the Canary archipelago—according to art. 2 of its Statute of Autonomy—a perimeter will be traced that follows the general configuration of the archipelago, as established in the annex to this law. The waters within this perimeter will receive the denomination of ‘Canary Waters’ and will constitute a special maritime area of the Autonomous Community of the Canaries. State and autonomous community authority over the Canarian waters and, in its case, over the remaining maritime spaces surrounding the Canaries over which the Spanish state exercises sovereignty or jurisdiction, will take place taking into account the material distribution of constitutionally established competences and statutory as much for the aforementioned spaces as for the terrestrial ones” (https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2010-20140).

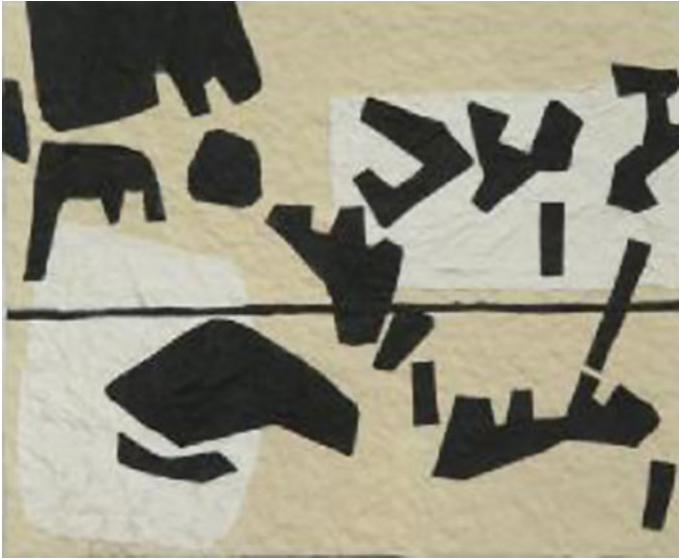


Fig. 26.3 *L'acqua non è tutta uguale*. Collage 3, by Daniela Colafranceschi, July 2020

26.3 Land from the Sea

The Dutch Rijkswaterstaat (Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment)⁵ is responsible for monitoring an area of 90,278 km² of water, 214 km of dams and banks and 2969 km of rivers and canals and recognizes water as a characterizing and strongly identifying element of the natural and urban landscape. By managing infrastructure that reclaims land from the sea and promotes the sustainable development of the territory of the Netherlands, it fosters the configuration of new agricultural and pastoral landscapes as an engine for the regeneration of the public space of cities.

The land wrestled from the North Sea becomes a 'common good' for a plural society. Water that is both an economic, urban and landscape resource. Surfaces, which are now liquid, now wet but still places, new relational spaces, new territory for communities. A country for which liquid space assumes a central strategic, social and economic role, which has both landscape and environmental sustainability values in continuous transformation. A country where water draws the dynamics of collective living by letting flows and fluids meet (Fig. 26.4).

These are examples that testify to much more than protection value; it is a clear desire to attribute a design value to the sea water of their latitudes, as a heritage that determines their future.

⁵ www.rijkswaterstaat.nl.

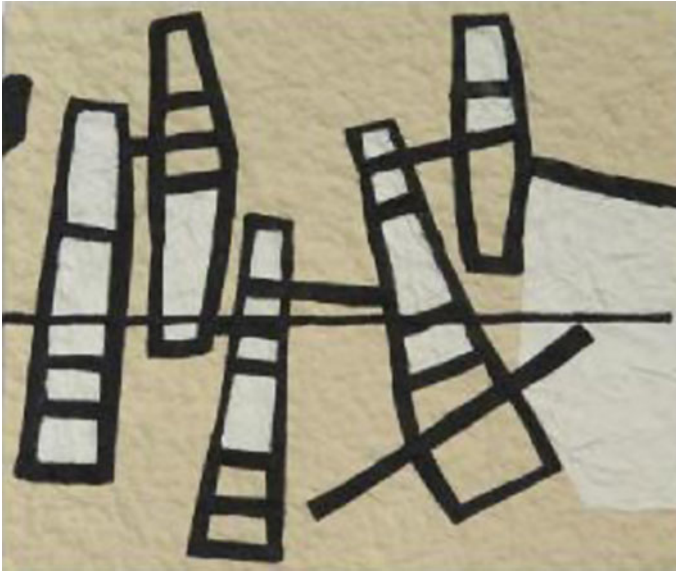


Fig. 26.4 *L'acqua non è tutta uguale*. Collage 4, by Daniela Colafranceschi, July 2020

They are landscapes defined by the journeys, habits, visits and sight of those who live or belong to them. Not because they are ‘beautiful’ but rather because they are made by people.

Even the migratory phenomenon of crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa to our countries has changed its identity, in its reasoning but above all in its feelings. Water that is full of worries, pain, expectations, death, uncertainties, abandonment. Water made of people, once living or survivors that change the value of the sea, in the dramatic landscape of transit. How do the eyes and souls of these people perceive our coasts from the sea? Where do we start to be part of their landscape?

The culture of contemporary landscape design has the difficult task of giving profound shape and meaning to the architecture of these geographies. We are called to define that margin of ‘respect’, that essential swath that allows us to maintain a relationship between the sea and its territory; we must be able to ‘measure’, based on values of quality and identity, the distance—but at the same time the relationship—that water is still able to weave between the sea and its land.

Organic strategies of thinking and fulfilling—and activating—effective, complex and broad responses cohesively, welding areas that are only apparently distinct and composed of similar sounds and pauses into a score of the same music.

In International Law, territorial waters are recognized within a range of 12 miles from the coast, then there are the ‘exclusive economic zones’ which go out to 200 miles, and also ‘international waters’, ‘navigable’ ones, ‘forbidden’ ones, ‘pertinent’ ones and so on.

But what is the right distance? How many metres from the coast is the sea still landscape? How many metres from the coast are we still able to support and perceive the tensions that, like wires, attach us and anchor us to the mainland? We must be able to read and interpret these threads.

Just as infrastructure for mobility has profoundly expanded and transformed the concept of public space and enhanced the urban quality of the relationship and exchange areas in contemporary cities, so it is with the large liquid square that is the sea, when limited portions of water combine with neighbouring lands.

The sea belongs to the territory; it is a square. It is a complex space, a landscape as a cultural device.

The European Landscape Convention could—and should—extend its important directives to this liquid territorial condition.

From here, we must activate a more widespread process of recognition of a ‘liquid landscape’ as a cultural product, a complex and hybrid space on the scale of the territories that belong to it.

(Fig. 26.5. As composition of 1 + 2 + 3 + 4).

Daniela Colafranceschi, *L'acqua non è tutta uguale*. Collage, July 2020.



Fig. 26.5 *L'acqua non è tutta uguale*. Collages in sequence, by Daniela Colafranceschi, July 2020