

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, THE ANTIDOTE OF POLLUTION AND VIRTUAL REALITY IN THE THIRD MILLENIUM

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ABSTRACT - *In the third millennium, the creation of the landscape architecture can become a possible therapy, a curative and also a preventive solution for all kind of pollution, the antidote of the virtual reality to which we tend. The modern landscape architecture, being a profession with an important impact on the environment, tried and succeeded to cover a very wide area. From the strategic territorial systematization to the design of the individual yards and gardens, from the ecological recuperation of the polluted and degraded urban spaces to the designing and the rearrangement or the rehabilitation of the public squares, from “vegetal urbanism” to “green spaces”, from micro to macro landscape, its purpose consisted in finding the most adequate methods, principles and technologies, for the harmonization of the empty or planted spaces with the constructed spaces, from the isolated constructions to building ensembles. Because of its complex preoccupation field, the profession of landscape architect may find itself in a confusion regarding the comprehension and the reaction of the public and cities’ mayors.*

Key words: landscape architecture, environment, art,
science, harmonization

REZUMAT – *Arhitectura peisajului – antidotul poluării și al realității virtuale din mileniul al treilea. Pentru mileniul al treilea, creațiile arhitecturii peisagistice pot deveni o terapie durabilă, o soluție curativă și preventivă pentru orice fel de poluare, antidotul lumii virtuale în care se pare că trăim azi, forțat sau de bună voie, conștient sau inconștient. Aflată în categoria profesiilor care au un impact important asupra mediului înconjurător, arhitectura peisagistică modernă încearcă și reușește să acopere un registru foarte larg, ce riscă, uneori, să-și piardă coerența din cauza amplitudinii sale. De la sistematizări strategice teritoriale pînă la*

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reproiectarea curților și grădinilor individuale, de la recuperarea ecologică a spațiilor urbane poluate și degradate până la proiectarea sau reamenajarea piețelor publice, de la “urbanism vegetal” până la “spațiile verzi”, de la micro la macro-peisaj, scopul ei constă în găsirea celor mai adecvate metode, principii și tehnologii de armonizare a spațiilor libere și plantate cu cele construite, de la construcții izolate la ansambluri de clădiri, la așezări și teritorii. Poate, datorită complexității ariei de preocupări, profesia de arhitect peisagist este una dintre cele aflate azi într-o nebuloasă în ceea ce privește atât înțelegerea cât și reacția publicului și edililor orașelor față de ea.

Cuvinte cheie: arhitectură peisagistică, mediu, artă, știință, armonizare

INTRODUCTION

The respect for nature has evolved as the people learned from their own mistakes, from the natural disasters caused by ignorance or avidity with which nature had been attacked. Nowadays, the landscape architecture tends, more and more, to a specific, and independent language. It gathers both the potentialities of art and science of architecture and urbanism. It also receives a new expression from the changeable timeless relationship between man and nature. It is essential for the success of the landscape projection that the architect can understand and know deeply the nature. Being a profession that has an important impact on the environment, the landscape architecture tries and succeeds to cover a very wide area, but just because of its amplitude, sometimes it may lose its coherence. From strategic territorial systematizations to the redesign of the individual yards and gardens, from the ecological recuperation of the polluted and degraded urban spaces to the designing and the rearrangement or the rehabilitation of the public squares, from “vegetal urbanism” to “green spaces”, from micro to macro landscape, its purpose consists in finding the most adequate methods, principles and technologies, for the harmonization of the empty or planted spaces with the constructed spaces, from the isolated constructions to building ensembles, to human settlements and large territories.

Together with the environment engineering, economic geography, urbanism and territorial arrangements, the landscape architecture plays an important role in the policy of the environment protection. Its activity field includes both human settings and macro-landscapes. For this profession one needs to have good knowledge of many scientific fields: botany, horticulture, geology, climatology, geography, aesthetics, art history, architecture, urbanism and territorial arrangements. Because of its complex field, the profession of the landscape architect may find itself in a confusion regarding the comprehension and the reaction of the public and cities' mayors towards it (Dascălu, 2005).

**ART AND SCIENCE, BUT ALSO CURATIVE AND PREVENTIVE
SOLUTION FOR ALL KIND OF POLLUTION**

Garett Eckbo says that “the purpose of the landscape architecture is to settle optimum possible physical relations between humans and environment“.

In the IIIrd millennium, the creation of the landscape architecture may become a possible therapy, a curative and preventive solution for all kind of pollution. A serious concern for the landscape architects comes from the fact that the human pragmatism succeeded, with ingeniousness and intelligence, in damaging the unique equilibrium of the Earth. The gravity of the pollution problems made possible for “science” to occupy an important place in the landscape architecture, sometimes in spite of “art”. The anxieties of the architects seem to have their origin in a kind of “recoil in front of the art”. (Simonds, 1967; Weilacher, 1999).

The landscape architecture has as purpose the realization of an ambience favourable to the human life progress, having in view the increase in life’s quality and in urban comfort and the maintenance of the ecological equilibrium.

Despite the complexity of its concerns, the landscape architecture has been often found at the same level with the exclusive arrangement of green spaces.

In time, it was named “the art of the gardens”. The denominations like “landscape architecture” or “landscape design” belong to the XX century. These denominations do not point out the complexity of this profession. The landscape architect has to be able to conceive design, control and realize simple or complex compositions, at urban or territorial level.

From a general view over the history of the landscape architecture, we may date its beginnings in Italy, in the XVth century – Renaissance time. Renaissance was a period in which creators felt to be like “*homo universalis*” and compared themselves to the sages of the Antiquity, who had an ample knowledge of the surrounding universe. In this context, the interest for the art of gardens raised the problem of accumulating practical knowledge: geotechnical, architectural and aesthetical knowledge. In the XVIIth century, the complexity of the baroque and classicism gardens imposed the necessity of technical, mechanical and hydraulic knowledge. In the XVIIIth century the garden was turned into a work of art, but there is also a dilution in the knowledge area required by landscape architecture, due to the so-called “free-scenic” landscape style, that took over the nature’s model.

At the end of the XIXth century – the beginning of the XXth century, schools in which one could study landscape architecture and societies interested in its promotion have been created: in 1989, “The American Society of the Landscape Architects”, in USA and the Versailles School, in France.

At the political level, the interest for landscape architecture was promoted in France. In 1970, Environment Ministry, National Centre of Studies and

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Research of the Landscape were created, and in 1976, the Versailles School was recreated.

In the last decades, another facet of the profession of landscape architect became interesting, that of “the architect who works in the restoration and preservation area of historical gardens”. This branch needs a good knowledge specialized in the areas of rehabilitation, restoration and preservation of the built and natural patrimony.

The landscape architecture has become a subtle territory, found between science and art, covering a wide area of subjects, directions and variations on various themes, which can be interrelated. The landscape architecture is the territory of the connections that offer personality: horizontal–vertical, close–open, light–dark, shade–half dark, full–empty, straight–curved, soil/terrain– sky, ascendant–descendant, relax–action, nature–construction, reality–fiction, continuity–discontinuity, rhythmic–non-rhythmic, symmetry–asymmetry, play–therapy, etc.

The architectural theoretical fights, as “functionalism versus culturalism”, “postmodernism versus modernism”, “high-tech versus romanticism”, etc, try to influence the landscape architecture field, too.

Beyond these theories, we discover that art in nature succeeds in getting away from the interior of the built spaces and creates more and more harmonious exterior spaces, integrated in the environment. Many contemporary landscape interventions in the urban and natural scenery illustrate this process.

Acting as an artist, the landscape architect combines the artistic spontaneity, the intuition and intelligence with the rigorous scientific projection. The purpose is the integration, as subtle and harmonious as possible, of the built surroundings in the environment. The ecological priorities require a special attention. Thus, the ecological aims and the aesthetical aspirations try to interact in a meaningful dialogue.

The principal aim of the architect is that the human being, with his personality and aspirations, can live in built surroundings that do not smash him, transforming him in a simple mathematical or informational element of a high-tech gear. Thus, the landscape architecture can become the antidote of a virtual reality to which we tend, conscious or unconscious.

CONCLUSIONS

The interest in landscape architecture has grown with time. From the identification and preservation measures of the natural patrimony, which started at the beginning of the XXth century, today, a real “policy” of planning, settlement, salvation and protection has begun. This requires the creation of a new attitude towards nature, landscape, and the creation of a landscape culture. Therefore, it is

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necessary to sensitize the public opinion and to educate the citizens in order to perceive the landscape in all its complexity – rural or urban, built or natural.

The negative effects of the urbanization and the damage of the ecological equilibrium have resuscitated the interest for landscape architecture. This interest has also grown at the same time with the explosion of “fashion” of gardens in the individual residences.

The scientific research programmes for protecting the environment, offer to the landscape architecture a more and more important statute. It participates both at the nature preservation and at the urban area humanization, but also at the improvement of the energy balance survey.

As we mentioned before, the profession of landscape architect involves not only a multitude of knowledge from various fields, but also an important practice. J.O. Simonds says, “In the problems of the landscape architecture the proficiency comes after many years of study, traveling, observation and professional experience and practice”. After Harvard architecture studies, many years of traveling to various countries and accumulation of a lot of observations and a period of real professional experience, he noticed that nature, through all its aspects, constitutes for the landscape architect an eloquent demonstration of the universal principles for creating the shapes that he tries to understand and apply in his work. Nature reveals to him its “laws” of composition, primordial laws that can become basis for each of his projects.

By knowing and respecting nature and environment, the landscape architect should find a deep and judicious philosophy of landscape creation.

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