

# LAND ART – THE HARMONY BETWEEN ART, NATURE, LANDSCAPE

## LAND ART – ARMONIA DINTRE ARTĂ, NATURĂ, PEISAJ

ȘTEFĂNESCU M.<sup>1</sup>, ȘTEFĂNESCU Mirela<sup>2</sup>

e-mail: mirstef68@yahoo

**Abstract.** In this paper present one of the most interesting artistic experiences from the perspective of art/ nature/ landscape architecture called land art and how the artists managed to create an harmony between natural materials, working techniques and lanscape. The art created with the specific area materials which is integrated in landscape has an aesthetic effect and also ecological aspects. Through their land works the artists seek to raise awareness of the destruction of nature by people and the effects of global warming on the environment. The interest of the artists for the unprocessed materials, the love for art and landscape has led to create wonderful works which have a special and great visual impact and from this point a view we can say that pure art we will find in the works of land art. The visual impact for these land works is very impressive both through works dimension and the harmony between the forms, the materials (plants, trees, stones, sand etc.) and the landscapes chosen for create these amazing land works.

**Key words:** land art, global warming, Robert Smithson.

**Rezumat.** În acest articol este prezentat unul din cele mai interesante experimente artistice din perspectiva artă/natură/ arhitectura peisagistă și anume land art și cum artiștii au reușit să creeze armonie între materiile naturale, tehnici de lucru și peisaj. Arta, creată cu materiale specifice zonei, integrată în peisaj, are, în principal, impact estetic dar și rol ecologic. Prin lucrările Land art artiștii vor să tragă un semnal de alarmă privind mediul înconjurător, distrugerea naturii, încălzirea globală. Interesul artiștilor pentru materialele folosite în starea lor pură, neprelucrate, dragostea pentru artă și peisaj a condus la realizarea unor lucrări spectaculoase, cu efect deosebit și impact vizual maxim, iar din acest punct de vedere putem afirma că arta pură o găsim în lucrările land art. Impactul vizual al lucrărilor land art este unul impresionant, atât prin dimensiunile lucrărilor, cât și prin armonia dintre formele, materialele (plante, pietre, nisip etc.) și peisajele alese pentru realizarea lucrărilor.

**Cuvinte cheie:** arta pământului, încălzire globală, Robert Smithson.

## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary artist, who looking for many plastic means of expression, it must find those combinations of artistic language to express him self. The artist doesn't need a cliché to be explicit and meaningful.

---

<sup>1</sup> "George Enescu" University of the Arts of Iași, Romania

Contemporary artist's tendency is to release the designs and figurative traditions of the past, in order to consecrate the contemporary world, dynamic and constantly evolving. 20th-century art has gone through revolutionary changes. As a result of the countless influences were born new styles, themes have been used and new materials, resulting in creation of an astounding variety and strength.

Land art is an artistic movement which combines in the original way the landscape and human artistic creation. These artists are trying the potential of the landscape and the environment both through unprocessed materials and the landscape chosen for their land works (Farthing, 2011).

Land art emerged in America in 1968 shortly after the publication of Robert Smithson's essay 'The Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects'. Robert Smithson wanted the people to realize their relationship with the nature and to involve in the landscape for create land works (Smithson, 1968).

The Robert's Smithson idea was that to escape from galleries of the arts from Manhattan and to give a geographic dimension between art and nature.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The purpose of this paper is to show how the artists can create landscape architecture with simple means of nature, even in the place where the work will be placed. In this way they always try the potential of various materials, techniques, location places to create spectacular works.

Land art is one of the most interesting artistic experiences from the perspective of art/ nature/ landscape architecture. The art created with the specific area materials which is integrated in landscape has an aesthetic effect and also ecological aspects (Andrews M., 2006). Through their land works the artists seek to raise awareness of the destruction of nature by people and the effects of global warming on the environment. Robert Smithson, for example to protect nature he transformed a space where industrial waste were collected in one of the most famous works of art Land (fig. 1).

The most important artists who create land work and we will look on are: Robert Smithson, Andy Goldsworthy, Jim Denevan, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Sonja Hinrichsen, Agnes Dumouchel, Richard Schilling.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The most famous work in land art is Spiral Jetty create by Robert Smithson in 1970, who represents a long way (spiral) built of mud, rocks, salt crystals and algae of the Great Salt Lake, in Utah, and it has 1500 m (fig. 1).

Although his work was laborious work was dependent on the fluctuations in water level, being subject to the ephemeral, like many works of this kind, the nature of these fluctuations in water, he managed to acquire the work of art through the crust of white salt crystals deposited on rocks with such a spectacular work.



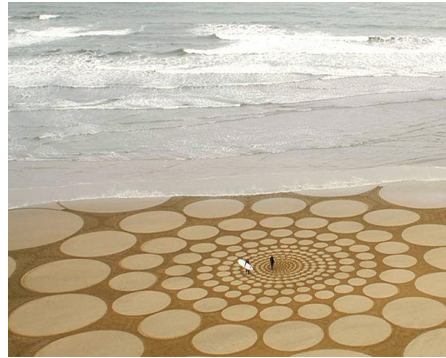
**Fig. 1** - Spiral Jetty, Robert Smithson, The Great Salt Lake, Utah  
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiral\\_Jetty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiral_Jetty))

Because land works are created in nature with unprocessed materials they are ephemeral and this land works will keep in the art history with the help of the recordings and photos.

For example Sonja's Hinrichsen land works are so interesting, she used the snow to recreate the dram winter landscape (fig. 2) or Jim's Denevan land art in sand which reworks the beach (fig. 3).



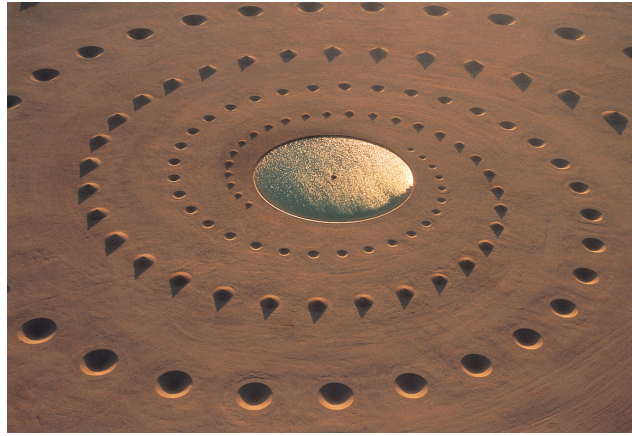
**Fig.2**–Snow Drawings, Sonja Hinrichsen  
(<https://www.google.ro/search> Sonja Hinrichsen; <https://www.google.ro/search> Jim Denevan)



**Fig.3** - Surfers in Circles, Jim Denevan  
(<https://www.google.ro/search> Sonja Hinrichsen; <https://www.google.ro/search> Jim Denevan)

For their land works the artists use a lot of creativity, sensibility, respect for the nature also they have more knowledge in the other domains.

The best example is the land work creates in Sahara Desert by the artist Danae Stratou, the industrial designer Alexandra Stratou and the architect Stella Constantinides (fig.4). They work at this project two years.



**Fig. 4 - Desert Breath, Land Art in the Sahara Desert**  
 ([https://www.google.ro/search,Desert Breath,Land Art in the SaharaDesert](https://www.google.ro/search,Desert+Breath,Land+Art+in+the+SaharaDesert))

The visual impact for these land works is very impressive both through works dimension and the harmony between the forms, the materials (plants, trees, stones, sand etc.) and the landscapes chosen for create these amazing land works (Grande, 2003). The land artists chose the special location for their works because this integration in nature of this works are more spectaculare. For instance the places: The Sahara Desert (fig. 4), The Salt Lack in Utah (fig. 1) or winter landscapes from Norway (fig. 2).

In their amazing land sculptures the artists are more intreresting about the creative process even than final result of their works. (fig. 5 and fig. 6).



**Fig. 5 - Eve IL, Agnes Dumouchel**  
 The creative process



**Fig. 6 - Eve IL, Agnes Dumouchel.**  
 The final work

(<https://www.google.ro/search client>)

The purpose of land-art - says the English land-painter, sculptor and photographer Richard Schilling - is rather a creative process then a final result. Using only what I could find in a certain place, I learned a lot about this place (fig. 7) (<http://ecology.md /md/section.php>).





**Fig. 7-** Richard Schilling (<https://www.google.ro/search?client>)

Besides the ephemeral sculptures in landscape using materials such as sand, seeking timber, snow, leaves, creating all sorts of shapes, Andy Goldsworthy created in 1997 the permanent sculpture /Storm King Wall/ in a modern sculpture park in New York State (fig. 8). The wall is made of a coil-shaped stones found there, 695 meters long, winds among trees, sink into a pond, stands out in the far plane and heading towards a deal without the trees, where it meets a highway. The Art and landscape is completed making from Andy Goldsworthy's work a symbol.



**Fig. 8 – The Wall Storm King, Andy Goldsworthy**  
(<http://greenskydesigns.com/art-in-the-landscape-goldsworthys-storm-king-wall>)

A different concept about land art have Cristo and Jeanne- Claude by using aluminized polypropylene and string for wrapping the German parliament building (fig. 9). In another project Valley Curtain (fig. 10) they used an orange cloth, steel bars, many cables, concrete to hang this curtain in the Rocky Mountains. In their works, in general, not just in the two works presented here, the two artists do not use natural materials but rather plastic, concrete and steel. From this point of view we can say that the works of Christo and Jeanne Claude not adapt in landscape, we don't see that harmony between of materials, nature, art as the work of Robert Smithson or Andy Goldsworthy.



**Fig. 9** - Christo and Jeanne-Claude  
Reichstag packed  
([https://www.google.ro/search?q=christo si jeanne-claude](https://www.google.ro/search?q=christo+si+jeanne-claude))



**Fig. 10** - Christo and Jeanne-Claude  
Valley Curtain, Rifle, Colorado

Therefore natural materials, the special places of location, the creative process are important elements in land art creations through which is achieved a stunning landscape harmony. “We appreciate the natural objects in terms of the work of art, which means that we embellish the nature” (Zaharia, 2007).

## CONCLUSIONS

The interest of the artists for the unprocessed materials, the love for art and landscape has led to create wonderful works which have a special and great visual impact. We can consider the land art works a pure art both by the fact that the artists use unprocessed materials and by the choice of the special location for their works. As a result of the countless influences were born new styles, themes have been used the materials from the place where the work will be located, resulting a creation of an astounding variety and strength.

As a conclusion the particularity of this spectacular land art creations is the symbiosis between nature and human, also his place in the universe, they were created in the natural landscape with the traditional elements of nature being subject to degradation in nature, so it is a perfect harmony between art, nature and landscape.

## REFERENCES

1. **Andrews M.**, 2006 - *Land, Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook*. London
2. **Farthing St.**, 2011 - *Istoria Artei de la pictura rupestă la arta urbană*. Editura Rao, București.
3. **Grande J.K.**, 2003, *Balance: Art and Nature*
4. **Smithson R.**, 1968 - *The Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects*
5. **Zaharia D. N.**, 2007 – *Estetica Analitică, Noi prefigurări conceptuale in artele vizuale*, Editura Artes, Iași.
6. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiral\\_Jetty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiral_Jetty)
7. <https://www.google.ro/search> Sonja Hinrichsen; <https://www.google.ro/search> Jim Denevan
8. <https://www.google.ro/search>, Desert Breath, Land Art in the Sahara Desert
9. <https://www.google.ro/search> client
10. <http://ecology.md/md/section.php>
11. <https://www.google.ro/search?client>
12. <http://greenskydesigns.com/art-in-the-landscape-goldsworthys-storm-king-wall>
13. [https://www.google.ro/search?q=christo si jeanne-claude](https://www.google.ro/search?q=christo+si+jeanne-claude)
14. [https://www.google.ro/search?q=christo si jeanne-claude](https://www.google.ro/search?q=christo+si+jeanne-claude)