

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

## ARHITECTURA PEISAJULUI ANTIDOTUL POLUĂRII ȘI AL REALITĂȚII VIRTUALE DIN MILENIUL AL III-LEA

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**Abstract.** *In the III millennium, the creations of the landscape architects can become a possible therapy, a curative and also preventive solution for all kind of pollution, the antidote of the virtual reality to which we tend, forced or willingly, conscious or unconscious. The modern landscape architecture, being a profession that has an important impact on the environment, tries and succeeds to cover a very wide area. 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 consist in finding of 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. Because of its complex preoccupations area, the profession of the landscape architect may find itself in a nebula regarding the comprehension and the reaction of the public and cities’ mayors towards it.*

**Keywords:** *landscape architecture, environment, art, science, harmonization*

**Rezumat.** *Pentru mileniul al III-lea, creațiile arhitecturii peisagistice pot deveni o terapie durabilă, o soluție curativă și preventivă pentru orice fel de poluare, antidotul realității virtuale în care se pare că trăim azi, forțat sau de bunăvoie, 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 sistematisări strategice teritoriale până la 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 a edililor orașelor față de ea.*

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

The respect for the 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 heads, more and more decisive, for a specific, independent language. It gathers both the potentialities of art and of the 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 consist in finding of 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 enginery, economic geography, urbanism and territorial arrangements, the landscape architecture plays an important role in the policy of the environment protection. Its activity domain 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 preoccupations area, the profession of the landscape architect may find itself in a nebula regarding the comprehension and the reaction of the public and cities’ mayors towards it.

### **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 human beings and environment“.

In the III millennium, the creations of the landscape architects can become a possible therapy, a curative and also 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 endangering the unique equilibrium of the Earth. The gravity of the pollution problems made possible for the “science” to occupy an important place in the landscape architecture, sometimes in spite of “art”. Maybe that explain why the landscape architects’ creations sometimes marked out professional anxieties in the domain of the aesthetics. These anxieties seem to have their origin in a kind of “recoil in front of the art”. In time, there have been many attempts of the landscape architecture that seem to get over the old opposition “science versus art”. These attempts can be named “art creations in nature”.

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

Despite the complexity of its preoccupations, the landscape architecture has been often lowered to the same level with the exclusive arrangement of green spaces.

Through time it was named “the art of the gardens”. The denominations like “the architecture of the landscape”, “landscape architecture” or “landscape design” belong to the XX century. These denominations do not yet 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 an urban or territorial level. When the project is very complex, he will lead multidisciplinary teams.

From a general view over the history of the landscape architect profession we may date its beginnings in Italy, in the XV century – Renaissance time. It was a period in which they were aware of the need that the creators felt to be like “homo universalis” like the sages of the Antiquity, those who had an ample knowledge of the surrounding universe. In this context, the interest for the art of the gardens arose the problem of accumulating various practical knowledge: geotechnical, architectural, constructional and aesthetical. In the XVII

century the complexity of the baroque and classicism gardens imposed the necessity of technical, mechanical and hydraulic knowledge. In the XVIII century the garden is being turned into a work of art, but there is also a dilution in the knowledge area required for landscape architecture, due to the so-called “free-scenic” landscape style that took over the nature’s model. On the other side, in the XIX century, due to the fashion of the great public gardens, the profession of the landscape architect is brought in the foreground of the high society.

The establishment’s necessity for special education and for tutelary forums emerges only at the end of the XIX century – the beginning of the XX century. There started to appear schools in which one could study landscape architecture and, also, started to appear societies interested in its promotion: in 1989 “The American Society of the Landscape Architects”, in USA; The Versailles School, in France.

At a political level, the interest for landscape architecture is promoted in France. It is created, in 1970, an Environment Ministry, a National Centre of Studies and Researches of the Landscape and in 1976 The Versailles School is being recreated, adding some studies of the territorial arrangement. After the event, these initiatives have extended also in other countries.

The last decades, due to the care they had for the historical patrimony’s protection, to another facet of the profession of landscape architect was paid attention: that of “architect who works in the restoration and preservation area of historical gardens”. This branch needs, beside the other knowledge that we mentioned before, 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, closed– 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.

But beyond these theories we discover that art in nature, taking over the virtues of the landscape morphological elements, 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. For sure, the ecological priorities require a special attention. Thus the ecological aims and the aesthetical aspirations try to interaction in a meaningful dialogue.

In the landscape architecture area, the architect can explore new horizons still unapproached. The principal aim is that the human being, with his personality and aspirations, can leave in built surroundings that do not smash him, transforming him in a simple mathematical or informational element of a high-tech gear on which the society may

lose control. Thus the landscape architecture can become the antidote of a virtual reality to which we tend, forced or willingly, conscious or unconscious.

## CONCLUSIONS

The interest in landscape architecture grew through time. From the identification and preservation measures of the natural patrimony, which started at the beginning of XX-th century, it became these days a real “policy” of planning, settlement, salvation and protection. This requires the creation of a new attitude towards nature, towards landscape, the creation of a landscape culture. Therefore it is necessary to sensitize the public opinion and to educate the citizens in order to perceive the landscape in all its complexity, in all its hypostases – rural or urban, built or natural.

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

The scientific research programs, launched in order to protect 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 implies not only a multitude of knowledge from various fields, but also an important practice. J. O. Simonds confesses that “in the problems of the landscape architecture the proficiency comes after many years of study, traveling, observation and professional experience and practice”. After his Harvard architecture studies, he came to an important conclusion after many years of traveling in various countries, after he accumulated a great deal of observations and after a period of palpable professional experience.

He observed that nature, through all its aspects, constitutes for the landscape architect an eloquent demonstration of the universal principles of 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.

The problem is that the shape or the structure of a landscape project could not offer some answers, but the finding of a design “philosophy” could.

So, through the knowledge and the respect for the nature and for all kinds of environments, the landscape architect should find a deep and judicious philosophy of landscape creation.

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