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**THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE – BETWEEN
THE ART OF THE GARDENS AND THE
SCIENCE OF THE LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS**

BY
DOINA-MIRA DASCĂLU

The modern landscape architecture being a profession that has an important impact on the environment, tries and succeeds to cover a very wide area.

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.

The landscape architecture has as purpose the realization of an ambience that is favourable 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.

Worldly, the interest in landscape architecture grew through time. From the identification and preservation measures of the natural patrimony, which started in 1908, 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 render sensitive the public opinion and to educate the citizens in order to perceive the landscape in all its complexity, in all its hypostases – rural, urban, built, natural.

In the IIIth millennium, the creations of the landscape architects can become the antidote of the virtual reality to which we tend, forced or willingly, conscious or unconscious.

1. The modern landscape architecture, being a profession that has an important impact on the environment, tries and succeeds to cover a very wide area, but just because of its amplitude sometimes it may loses 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 engineering, 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.

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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*.

Garett E c k b o [3] says that "the purpose of the landscape architecture is to settle optimum possible physical relations between human beings and environment".

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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 XXth century.

Yet 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 an urban or territorial level. When the project is very complex, he will lead multidisciplinary teams.

2. Worldly, the interest in landscape architecture grew through time. From the identification and preservation measures of the natural patrimony, which started in 1908, 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 render sensitive the public opinion and to educate the citizens in order to perceive the landscape in all its complexity, in all its hypostases – rural, urban, built, 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.

3. The scientific research programs, launched in order to protect the environment, offer to the landscape architecture a more and more important status. 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 [5] confesses that “in the problems of the landscape architecture the professional character comes after many years of study, traveling, observation and professional experience and practice”. After his Harvard architecture studies, he observed an important thing: that the shape or the structure of a landscape project could not offer some answers, but the finding of a design “philosophy” could. He came to this 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.

4. From a general view over the history of the landscape architect profession we may date its beginnings in Italy, in the XVth 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 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 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 XIXth 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 emerge only at the end of the XIXth century and the beginning of the XXth 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 side 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.

5. 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. For example, after the catastrophic flooding of the Rhone, in 1635, in France, there was a law that forbade "mass cut away" in the mountain areas. These types of measures will also be taken in other countries, in the next centuries. In Romania, in 1852, Ion Ionescu de la Brad was the first one who drew the attention on the main properties of the forest, introducing also a classification: forest of production, anticorrosive, hydrological, sanitary, aesthetic. These properties were recognized and assumed in the first Romanian Forestry Code in 1881. The next one will introduce in 1910 the notion of "forest of protection", which denotes the evolution of the care for nature protection. In Romania, the legislative interest for the natural patrimony protection had appeared in the XXth century. In 1935, due to "The Law of the Forests of Protection", the forestry researches institute interferes, requested the proclamation of some forests as natural reservations and monuments.

These days 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. 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. It is essential for the success of the landscape projection that the architect can understand and know deeply the nature.

6. 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", "post-modernism *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.

7. Acting as an artist, the landscape architect combine 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. Certainly, the ecological priorities require a special attention. Thus

the ecological aims and the aesthetic aspirations try to interaction in a meaningful dialogue.

In the landscape architecture area, the architect, as an artist, 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.

Conclusion

In the IIIth millennium, the creations of the landscape architects can become a possible therapy, a curative and also preventive solution, the antidote of the virtual reality to which we tend, forced or willingly, conscious or unconscious.

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"Gh. Asachi" Technical University, Jassy,
Department of Architecture

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ARHITECTURA PEISAGISTICĂ – ÎNTRE ARTA DE AMENAJARE A SPAȚIILOR VERZI ȘI ȘTIINȚA INTERVENȚIILOR ASUPRA PEISAJELOR

(Rezumat)

Aflată în categoria profesiilor care au un impact important asupra mediului înconjurător, arhitectura peisagistică modernă încearcă și reușește să acopere un registru foarte larg. Poate datorită complexității ariei de preocupări, profesia de arhitect peisagist este una dintre cele aflate azi într-o nebuloasă în ceea ce privește înțelegerea și reacția publicului și a edililor orașelor față de ea.

Peisagistica vizează realizarea unei ambianțe favorabile desfășurării vieții omenești, urmărind potențarea calității vieții și a confortului urban, menținerea echilibrului ecologic. În pofda complexității preocupărilor sale, deseori, arhitectura peisagistică a fost coborâtă la nivelul amenajării exclusive a spațiilor verzi.

Pe plan mondial, interesul pentru peisagistică a crescut de-a lungul timpului – de la măsurile de identificare și conservare a patrimoniului natural, începute în 1908, s-a ajuns azi la o adevărată „politică” de planificare, reglementare, salvare și protecție. Aceasta necesită crearea unei noi atitudini față de natură, față de peisaj, crearea unei culturi a peisajului. În acest scop este necesară sensibilizarea opiniei publice și educarea cetățenilor pentru a percepe peisajul în toată complexitatea sa, în toate ipostazele sale – rural, urban, construit, natural.

În mileniul III, creațiile arhitecturii peisagistice pot deveni antidotul realității virtuale către care tindem, forțat sau de bunăvoie, conștient sau inconștient.