

# Integrated Urbanism – The Role of Landscape Strategies for Hyper-Dynamic Urban Change

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## 1. Definition of Landscape for The Urban Discourse

Landscape is an oscillating term. The enumeration of physical and metaphorical terms of landscape compounds are confusing like: City landscape or urbanized countryside /countrified city, urban landscape - posturban landscape, natural landscape or romantic landscape, cultural landscape - regional landscape, drosscape - infrastructural landscape, logistic landscape.

Landscape contains ecological, geographical and visual parameters and their transformation through anthropogenic use.

Looking at cities worldwide the built up city and the surrounding landscape are blurred. That applies specially to metropolitan regions. None the less city is not landscape and landscape is not city. Landscape is a man-made cultural and aesthetic product. It is initially formed by natural powers. It offers natural resources and near-nature impressions but it is not **nature** by itself, although in vernacular use landscape is mostly called nature.

In landscape coincide three categories: 1. Natural elements 2.its transformation into culture and 3.its visual perception as aesthetic concept.

“What landscape finally differentiates from the city is, not its cultural shaping nor the category of aesthetical perception. In the deepest core the term in differentiation to city implies a **vision** of nature in landscape “(das Aufscheinen von Natur in Landschaft, Wolfrum, Sophie) <sup>1</sup>



*Natural Ice Age Lake Mazursky Poland 2011*

In my short outline I will present to you the concept of landscape along different theories of urban discourses as an important strategy in dynamic urban processes.

My colleague Antje Stokman argues:“In contradiction to Architecture Landscapes grow slowly and change a lot over the years, they are not static and are never completed, they are based on ecological processes. Landscape creates impulses for a productive interaction of natural ecosystems, technical infrastructure and human environments.”<sup>2</sup> In the context of our Congress motto landscape takes over the role of a retarding element in “fast forward” developments.

Open agricultural fields play a decisive role in the urban fabric. They stay under pressure between fast changes and reforms and the need of the public mainly for outdoor activities. The design process for the “left-over – areas” aims to bind all the self-relying functions to a more spatial and functional network. Landscape in metropolitan areas is based on

infrastructure; it has a status of an urban public space network. Concepts for city-landscape in metropolitan areas afford flexibility and adaptability and new alliances of actors – citizens, stakeholders, farmers etc., which is renowned practice in Germany as a combination of “bottom up and top down” strategies.

## **2.Landschaftspark Landscape Park**

These open fields are often a blocking minority for the benefit of a better liveability. Parallel to the interdisciplinary urban discussion at the turn of the century landscape architecture projects strengthened the perspectives of urban development. Already in 1994 my team came up for our client the Region of Stuttgart with the idea of a Regional Landscape Park for the inner belts in a region with 2,6 million inhabitants, nearly 350 square km.<sup>3</sup> This strategy for the qualification of landscapes turned away from the highly formalized legal Landscape Plan with its bans and was designed to ask more respect and understanding for the natural environment with its hidden ecological effects and visual qualities. Lots of misunderstandings about the meaning of Landschaftspark were a long lasting barrier to put it into existence. The connotation with an English Garden made the farmers fight against it. the Regional Landscape Park is landscape which fulfills the task of public open space in an urban context. Urban Agriculture is very essential for it. Now after nearly 12 years of discussion Landschaftsparks are spreading over the different regional landscapes of Germany and the Stuttgart area like the Filder , where the airport of Stuttgart lies. <sup>4</sup>

You certainly know that the IBA-International Building Exhibition Emscher from 1989 to 1999 in the former steel industrie Ruhr area. It made the idea of qualifying urban landscapes a success mainly as conversion concepts for drosscapes and abandoned industries. The Emscher Landschaftspark succeeded in 2011 as a Productive Park.<sup>5</sup> Agrarian and forest areas are integrated in a concept of Urban Agriculture, local production and consumer cycles, which afford a strategy to integrate the farmers. Not at least, because the maintenance of such large areas cannot be organized by public money. To generate “ecosystem and landscape services” that means to get social benefits in a holistic approach. Above ecological parameters design is absolutely necessary for the cultural understanding of the environment. <sup>6</sup>

The Ruhr Area has become a touristic attraction. The former coal and steel production industry Zeche Zollverein near Dortmund has become a World Heritage site.

As Landscape Parks and Urban Agriculture are a recognized urban planning practice they are suitable tools for rapid urbanization developments mainly for large territories. Landscape Parks can be flexibly used and maintained in accordance with their design of natural powers. They value qualities of healthy environments and help regions and cities to stay competitive. And as I argued before they mitigate as retarding elements the results of hyper dynamic urban developments.

## **3.Landscape Urbanism<sup>7</sup>**

“Landscape Urbanism emerged over the past decade as a critique of the disciplinary and professional commitments of traditional urban design and as an alternative to “New Urbanism” .I quote Charles Waldheim in his article for TOPOS 2010<sup>8</sup>. “Landscape urbanism proposed a critical historically informed reading of the environmental and social aspirations of modernist planning and its successful models. ....landscape offered a medium of urban, economic and social order.” <sup>8</sup>

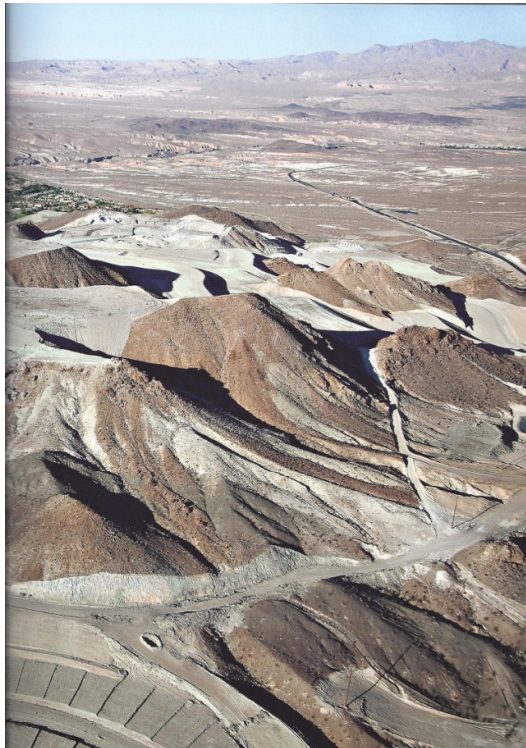
Landscape urbanism is not only an ecological informed planning practice it reveals a high design culture – as the projects of the office “Stoss Landscape Urbanism “ show, which were awarded with the Landscape Award 2010.

#### 4. Return of Landscape

Donata Valentini<sup>9</sup> as one of the directors of the Akademie der Künste ( Academy of Arts ) in Berlin offered 2010 in the exhibition “ Return of Landscape” a resume of the role of landscape in cities. I quote the text of the Catalogue:

“It is time to wake up.; reality has caught up with us. Climate change will produce disruptions in the landscape that have not been experienced before. It ( *the exhibition* ) tells the story of subordination and dependence, of increase in knowledge of apparent dominance of nature, of new boundaries, and of the necessity to get closer to the landscape again.

The comparison of the two cities Venice and Las Vegas seem to be incomparable at the first sight but they are exemplary for a historical transformation of landscapes into cities: Venice in the marshy islands of a lagoon and Las Vegas in the middle of a desert. There coming into existence was different but they are becoming more and more alike – both have an uncertain future. The environmental problems are speeding up. They try to solve the growth problems and master the environmental decay with the innovations of technical engineering. It needs other strategies “<sup>9</sup> – landscape strategies.



*Las Vegas – Venice The Return of Landscape 2010 Donata Valentini (ed) Alex S.Maclean Fotos*

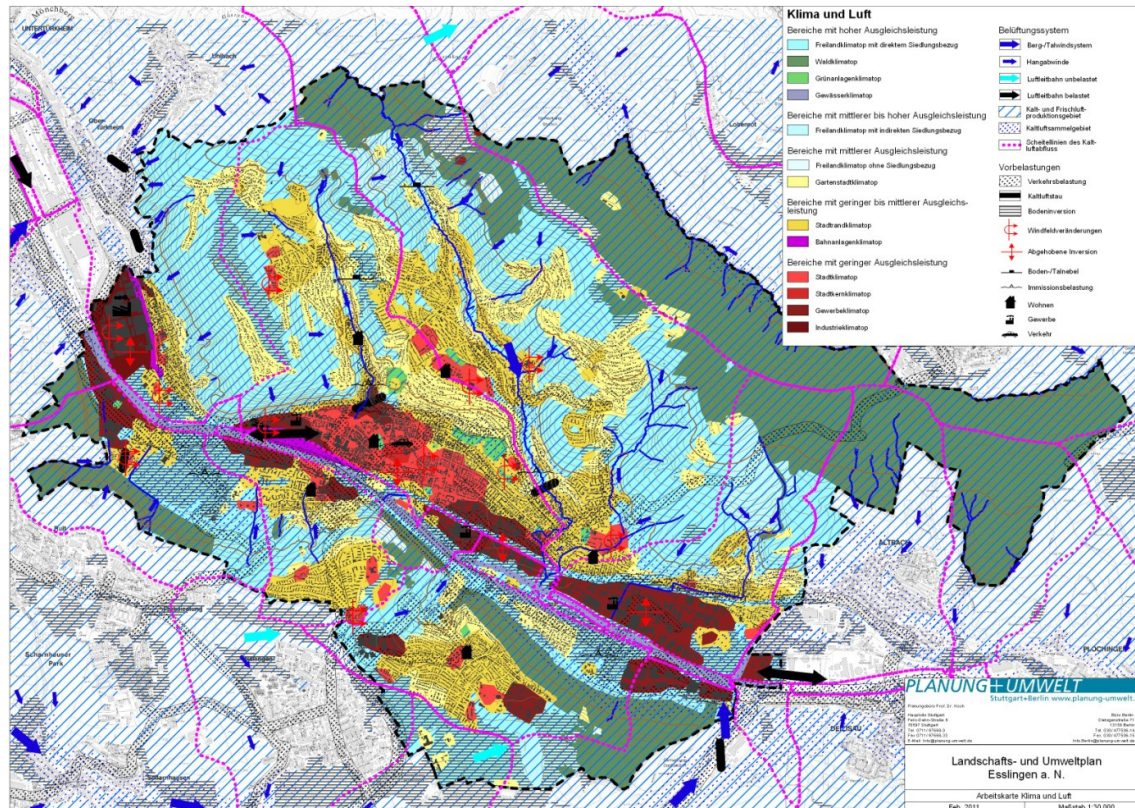
#### 5. Integrated Urbanism

The challenge of our times concerning rapid urbanisation is next to social integration to manage the effects of climate change.

##### ***Heat islands in dense cities***

Concerning the effects in dense cities climate change asks for the knowledge of the local climatic conditions. Knowledge of the climate potential of cities has been a subject for landscape planning since the 70s of the last century. Therefore climate charts - like the actual one of Esslingen - are integrated into the legally binding Landuse Plan. To densify cities instead of further development into the periphery is a contemporary planning goal in

Germany. That makes it necessary to know where the movements of fresh air are located to diminish the effect of the urban heat complex.<sup>10</sup>



Planung + Umwelt 2011 Stuttgart/Berlin Klima und Luft Landschafts- und Umwelplan Esslingen

### Flood risk management

In 2013 we all will look to the metropolitan city of Hamburg. Hamburg will manifest in the IBA the International Building and Garden Exhibition what a sustainable city of the 21. Century can be. One of the effects of climate change for this city in the estuary of the river Elbe will be the rising water level. The designed dealings with the extreme water dynamics of the Elbe island were thoroughly investigated by an interdisciplinary team *Urbane Landschaften* and published 2008 as *Wasseratlas*.<sup>11</sup>

The interpretation of the water-land topologies show very elaborately the interaction of the anthropogenic influences with topography and water. The water atlas is an example of an innovative interdisciplinary, spacious-dynamic instrument for designing city landscapes in lower lying coastal areas- worldwide. The balance between land and water - as an ecological balance - is an important aspect of sustainability: land, water and ecology are interacting **systemic** in a landscape and they compete in different levels of the urban complexity. Today in most collaboration processes like for the IBA Hamburg many disciplines, architects and city planners, landscape architects, sociologist and engineers work in a team and are equal partners. This process can be addressed as Integrated Urbanism.

**Integrated Urbanism** means trans-disciplinary solutions – combining urban planning and management, ecology, social culture and engineering. Trans-disciplinary means also to integrate concepts of mobility for people and goods (logistics). Mobility is the strongest power which forms our agglomerations.

Nowadays the spatial appearance of landscapes is a product of the global economy. That changes our living environments to a great extent. In this context the concept of landscape has to leave behind the images of city and landscape of the 19<sup>th</sup> century like the image of an idealistic countryside of arcadia. The landscape of today specially in metropolitan areas is a "total Landscape." <sup>12</sup> Technical infrastructures, large logistic complexes, shopping and amusement districts transform our man-shaped natural landscapes with a network of their own logic - of an international communication infrastructure .<sup>13</sup> They are a visual manifestation of hyper dynamic developments.

## 6. Conclusions

Landscape is associated with open fields which -at least in Germany – are public accessible. Landscape is a U S P unique selling position - a branding - –because it offers distinctiveness which agglomerations often lack.

Landscape offers openness - chances of changing acquisitions for retreat and recreation and Urban Agriculture.

Landscape offers ecological and cultural regeneration - it has a **decelerating** character. These potentials can be brought into cities by landscape - that makes landscape an urban element.

Landscape Urbanism and the thesis of the Return of Landscape called not only for respect of the natural powers but also for their integration as a main agent in urban design and metropolitan management. To create city with landscape – mit Landschaft Stadt machen – that is since a decade a paradigm shift in landscape architecture and urban design. The emancipation of landscape is in the center of interest not only in the discourse of the renaissance of cities also for rapid urbanization, energy transformation and climate change. Landscape Architects work as partners in trans-disciplinary teams. Integrated Urbanism approach offers the integration of natural powers, economic and social necessities into design strategies managing our living environment in a dynamic urban context.

## References

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- 13 Klauser, Wilhelm 2012 „ Landschaften der Risikogesellschaft“, Service Architekturen, ARCH+, Zeitschrift für Architektur und Städtebau Nr. 205, Aachen