

Itinerranze. Aesthetic, artistic and literary journeys through contemporary landscapes

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By virtue of its rich polysemy, landscape represents a privileged crossroads of aesthetic, ecological, artistic and cultural practices in the broadest sense. Undertaking an investigation into this subject also means questioning the interrelationships between human activity and the environment, as is the case, for example, in the study of forms of anthropisation of the territory. The growing attention that artists, actors, photographers, writers and poets have devoted to landscape in the second half of the 20th century has given rise to a variety of lines of research that tend to favour the material and perceptual dimension of the landscape experience. At the same time, landscape continues to be the result of constant change, of an artistic *poiesis* in which the anthropic component and the natural dimension are constantly reaching new equilibriums.

In short, landscape seems to possess a real “performative rhythm” (Messori 2021), a design and linguistic value, a sonority. As a dynamic, relational and metamorphic entity, it eludes any attempt to reduce it to an “object to be acted upon” through acts of domination and control, manifesting itself instead as a phenomenon for which the only possible form of interaction is that of co-action, of co-becoming (Besse 2020). Landscape resists any “fixed” logical-conceptual categorisation, whose reifying effects would risk leading to the loss of the essentially *aesthetic*, affective-corporeal dimension that characterises the landscape experience.

Assuming that we can talk about “experience-with” rather than “experience-of” when it comes to landscape (Matteucci 2019), this issue of *Itinera* aims to investigate how the encounter between landscape and art represents an 'aesthetic' experience capable of restoring the affective, relational, and emergency character inherent in the manifestation of aesthetic sense (ibid.). A central aspect of this experience is what Erwin Straus (1930) calls “pathicity”: the “how” we perceive our surroundings and how they affect us; the way we “feel” in a space. The latter is not to be identified so much with the “physical” space in which we orient ourselves by calculating distances and positions between places, but rather as a “felt” space which bombards us with “invitations to feel” or “atmospheric affordances” (Griffero, 2019, 2022, 2024). In this sense, the artist is someone who can collect these invitations and restore our interconnectedness with them. These invitations are not simply received and transmitted in remodelled form (according to the “telegraphic” metaphor with “reifying” results — see Boissière, 2021), but we actively contribute to their realisation while they simultaneously allow our feelings, and therefore our bodies, to “take shape”. From this perspective, artistic practices reveal the expressive nature of landscapes, as the invitations that artists experience imply deviations, negotiations, and reconfigurations of ways of feeling and behaving.

In this sense, it is possible to conceive of an inseparable relationship between artistic practice and landscape. The former participates in the metamorphic “becoming” of the latter and the non-human entities that inhabit it. It attunes itself in a fundamentally “performative” way of operating in a space (cf. Austin 1962; Butler 1988; Barad 2007; Coole and Frost 2010). For example, Karen Barad (2007) refers to a discursive process of 'intra-activity', which blurs the boundaries between things and shows the dynamic nature of matter as “a coagulation of agency” (Barad, 2007, p. 184). The relationship between art and nature, matter and artistic creativity, bodily movement and performativity, and bodily-material discourse and verbal language are just some of the issues that landscape invites us to reflect on. This makes it one of those areas of contemporary epistemology where scholars from different scientific fields increasingly collaborate.

This monographic issue aims to facilitate discussion on potential methods and practices for developing a common methodological language that can bridge the gap between different disciplines. The issue is therefore conceived as a space for encounter and exchange between contributions adopting the most diverse lines of research, with a view to promoting reflection on terminology and methodology through comparison of diverse hermeneutic approaches. When it comes to theatrical disciplines, one might consider peripatetic walks or performative landscape writing, which could provide an opportunity to explore the concept of “scenic writing as a process encompassing artistic, individual or collective planning and environmental interference”, whereby the “art of walking” can manifest itself as “a strategy of resistance” (Mazzaglia, 2024: 190–192), or as a “social, ritual encounter”, or also as “a way of redefining the presence of humans in the context of living beings on the basis of ecological thinking”.

The following questions are intended to exemplify the range of topics that may be addressed by contributions accepted for this issue:

- Research on landscape through the lens of aesthetics, visual arts, performing arts, media arts and/or literary and poetic dimensions.
- Observations, reconstructions and investigations of significant artistic, performative, cinematic and literary experiences in relation to landscape.
- Reflection on the agency of certain elements of the landscape (both human and non-human, e.g. plants, animals, minerals and geological features) and their role in artistic and literary creation.
- Artistic and cultural design as a form of co-creation with the landscape, for example through events and interventions that establish new, non-everyday relationships with places, such as festivals, artist residencies, architecture and other cross-disciplinary projects.

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