



TASTING THE LANDSCAPE

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Dolomiti Contemporanee: Regenerating the Landscape's Machines. Cultural Strategies and the Poetics of Pragmatism

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1. Former chemical plant of Sass Muss (BL - Italy). Factory in (of) the Landscape_2011 "Construction Site" (Photo by Giacomo De Donà)



Dolomiti Contemporanee (DC) is a project of cultural innovation that actively re-processes the nature of the mountain's cultural and anthropic landscapes.

The landscape of UNESCO's Dolomites, portrayed as such, is universally known. But, often, its identity is reduced to depressing clichés and stereotypes, that do not convey the complexity of the Asset and its real potential, both of which don't come across as adequately spotlighted. The identity of an Asset is never inscribable in a verdict or a finished and definitive form.

And the role of Culture in relation with the Assets, the environment and the Heritage, the territories and the landscapes (physical and mental), which make up the complex human habitat, is to continuously enliven, rethink, and reprocess them.

In its most authentic and profound roots, Landscape Culture isn't reduced to contemplation and tutelage, and is instead raised to responsible and effective action, in the care of the resources, their meanings and destiny; that is to say, it produces renovation and innovation.

Building, every day, the identity of Spaces: that's what a human can do. That way, they themselves generate and define their own habitat.

With "Space" we hereby mean the living complexity of the relationships between what the habitat- landscape is demanded to be (physical actuality) and what is necessary to become, in-

stead, an active agent in it (critical presence, poetic interaction).

The other way round occurs when the human relies on the definitive verb; their action becomes intransitive, and often such a thing results in a palsy of the landscapes themselves, affirmed instead of consensually forged (con-sentiti, felt-together).

The landscape is the human.

The human and the landscape are mobile, and superimposed. An unambiguous definition is a palsy.

The spirit of the human moves landscapes: art and culture are, in that way, exceptional tools, effective weapons.

Since 2011 DC has been concerning itself with great sites, both productive and civil (factories, industrial archaeology compounds, villages, or particularly meaningful buildings), in the territorial region of the UNESCO Human Heritage's Dolomites.

These sites used to be active pivots in the making of the territory (we could call them the landscape's machines), and then, for differing reasons, have stopped, ceasing to carry out their function of engines and resources inside of it.

They often are large sites, tens of thousands of square meters settlements, that have been dormant, for years or decades, in the dust of history, among the debris and sediments of a lost identity.

Their productive parables have run out, and today they stand tall, unmoving, like totems, at the centre of their emptied landscapes.

It is imperative to revive the potential of these sites, to find them new purposes linked to aspects of contemporaneity.

The policy of enhancement of the inert sites represents, broadly, an objection of the landscape's inertia, and of its stereotyped reading from lazy people, guilty of neglect in regards of important potentials and resources.

To give new value to a particular site therefore means presenting in practice, through example and good practice, the theme of the entire spatial context's essential enhancing.

The abandoned sites that DC tackles become, thanks to the construction of articulate webs of sharing and partnerships (involvement of the surrounding territory)cultural and artistic hubs,



both temporary and permanent.

An International Residency program is activated inside them.

Artists, intellectuals, women and men of culture, critics and curators, economists and landscape architects, administrators and politicians, researchers and analysts, all are sent to work inside the one-again-living spaces, whose attractive function is fully implemented.

This way, the site shows its intact potential, and carries out its function of door on the landscape, of critical (elaborative) access to the complex human habitat, at the same time.

The artistic activity and the cultural debate sparked in the reprocessed centres have as their central subject the landscape itself, the nature and environment, the nature of the mountain, the human practices, the themes of regeneration, as well as the functional solutions of reuse.

Through this kind of activity, the potential of the rekindled site becomes clear once again.

At the end of the relaunch phase, it becomes definitely active again, hosting new economic, commercial, productive, or cultural activities that the community decides to install inside it.

Dolomiti Contemporanee, Visual Arts Lab on Location, is an experimental "construction site", open to arts and science, through the action directly carried out on the landscape, which finds in these extraordinary sites its own operative collectors.

The construction site, with its driven practicality, becomes the open, glowing display of the landscape itself, while the logistic potential of the reprocessed site is given back, revived, to its territory.

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2. Nuovo Spazio di Casso (Vajont area, PN - Italy). Regeneration of the Landscape (photo from the DC archive)

3. (DC_the factories, re-launched_2012 Season (photo by A. Montresor)

4. DC_Progettoborca (former ENI Village, BL - Italy). Rekindling sites in the landscape_2015 "Construction Site" (photo by Giacomo De Donà)

5. DC_Progettoborca (former ENI Village, BL - Italy). Architecture, environment, enhancement_2015 "Construction Site" (photo from the DC archive)