

The poetics of remediation

Marina Cervera, Executive Director of the Barcelona International Biennial of Landscape Architecture.

Landscape remediation entails a profound reflection on our connection with the Earth and our ethical commitment to the vision of Earth as a self-regulating and complex system, as proposed by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis—the concept of Gaia.

Restoration and remediation encompass the recognition of the intricate consequences brought about by the Anthropocene era, underlining the pressing need for transformative actions to combat climate change through adaptation and mitigation. While restoration aims to return a degraded ecosystem to its original or similar state, remediation seeks to manage externalities in order to attain an acceptable new state. Beyond the mere act of restoring landscapes, we are not simply revitalizing soil, water, and vegetation; instead, we are meticulously crafting a narrative of renewal. In this creative endeavour, we immerse ourselves in the delicate choreography of ecosystem revival, deftly reweaving the threads of life that were once disrupted by human interventions, thereby presenting an alternative vision for the future. The rhetoric of this vision is honed through the motto, harnessing the power of poetics, to underscore the profound role of culture in interpreting landscapes holistically.

The essence of remediation, encapsulated within the theme, encourages us to contemplate the transformative journey within the realm of landscape architecture, with a particular focus on the last three decades. This emphasis on recent developments in our field becomes particularly evident since the publication of "The Poetics of Garden" in 1993. This remarkable and unique work, authored by Moore, Mitchell, and Turnbull, provides an invaluable vantage point, offering both a panoramic perspective on gardens across the globe throughout the annals of human history. In their seminal book, the authors assert that a curated selection of gardens can serve as the narrative thread leading us to the core of a culture by deciphering the intricacies of its structural elements, artistic features, and figurative representations.

This perspective of perceiving gardens as living, breathing stories that reflect a culture's essence resonates profoundly in the conceptualization of the 12th edition of an upcoming event: the Barcelona International Biennial of Landscape Architecture. "The Poetics of Remediation" serves as the captivating theme for this 12th edition, slated to convene landscape professionals for a showcase of awards, lectures, and exhibitions from the 24th to the 28th of November in Barcelona. Since its inception, the Symposium has played a pivotal role in fostering innovation and self-reflection within the landscape design community. This is achieved through the esteemed Rosa Barba Prize for professionals and the renamed Ribas Piera International School Prize, which is dedicated to academics and students. However, it is the motto that transcends all, charting the course for the next two years and offering a suggested direction and guiding principle for the event.

During the symposium at the Catalan Music Palace, the projects finalists for both prizes and the invited keynote speakers will converge to offer metaphors through words and images. These metaphors enable us to ponder and theorize the philosophy underpinning our future landscapes. This approach aligns with the idea that landscapes themselves can be powerful symbols, encapsulating the narratives of our time and guiding us toward a sustainable future that we must collectively build. Therefore, it seems only fitting to use this communication to invite the entire landscape community to become a part of this transformative journey.

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