

Events

VL. International Conference on Visualizing Landscape

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The Alghero Campus of the Department of Architecture, Design and Urban Planning of the University of Sassari hosted the first *International Conference on Landscape Visualisation 'VL2024'* on 11th and 12th July.

As a pioneering edition on a topic of growing interest in both the scientific and design fields, the response from the academic community was very strong, with 61 contributions from numerous faculties, both Italian and foreign. All the authors offered new and interesting insights into the understanding and visualisation of contemporary landscapes through innovative approaches that integrate digital tools and traditional methods.

Due to the large number of participants, the conference was organised in parallel sessions over the two days, with five main thematic sections, defined by the curators as 'Research Rooms' (*Concepts and Theories, Communication and Images, Heritage, Perception and Information Systems*), according to which the volume containing all the contributions was also divided. These 'Rooms' cover a wide range of topics, from the conceptual definition of landscape to its practical implications in spatial planning and the management of cultural and natural heritage. The two days opened with institutional greetings from the Director of the

Department of Architectural Design and Urban Planning at the University of Sassari, Professor Emilio Turco, and from the two coordinators of the degree courses in Architecture and Urban Planning, Professors Enrico Cicalò and Paola Rizzi. The floor was then given to UID President Francesca Fatta and the Chairman of this first edition, Professor Michele Valentino, who introduced the first keynote speaker, Rossella Salerno. In her paper *Visualizing/ Narrating/Mapping Landscape*, Professor Salerno set out to explore the relationship between landscape and vision in Western culture. By analysing different forms of representation, from paintings to maps, she highlighted how visual perception and graphic representation have contributed to building our understanding of territory and its values, in which 'mapping' has played a fundamental role.

Following this contribution, the three parallel sessions began, which in the first morning focused mainly on two thematic areas: the one on *Heritage*, which examined research focused on the management of natural and cultural heritage and proposed innovative practices related to its valorisation and conservation; the one on *Communication and Images*, which focused instead on the different media declinations

in which the landscape is presented, whether traditional or digital; here the role of technology in the elaboration of new visual outputs and how these influence the perception of the landscape was highlighted.

The second parallel session in the afternoon introduced the 'Research Room' on *Information Systems*, where the proposed research illustrated the different applications of GIS and other technologies for the collection, analysis, visualisation and management of landscape data in support of planning strategies.

The first day ended with a presentation by the organisers of the first edition of the conference –Michele Valentino, Amedeo Ganciu and Alexandra Fusinetti– who illustrated the state of the art of 'landscape research' on landscape visualisation, analysing both the topics proposed in the call and those addressed in the papers submitted by the authors.

The analysis attempted to synthesise and summarise the variety of research proposed, using visual analysis techniques with the representation of networks and nodes. By associating each article with a metadata file –containing name, affiliation and keywords– different types of networks were presented, which made it possible to map both the topics of

VL 2024

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Alghero | July, 11-12 2024

Fig. 1. Event poster

greatest interest and the various collaborations between researchers and universities. The analysis, carried out in successive steps in which certain terms were merged and others silenced (such as the word 'landscape', which for obvious reasons was present in most of the keywords) in order to obtain a more visually ordered and readable network, made it possible to identify macro-categories that finally allowed the creation of the different 'research spaces'. On the other hand, a second data analysis linked the dif-

ferent research topics to the universities to which the authors belong, in order to highlight the degree of collaboration within the design discipline, which turned out to be very high. At the end of the speech, a round table was opened to discuss the topics raised during the first day of work, with the presence of the chairpersons of the various parallel sessions, namely Professor Francesca Fatta, Professor Rossella Salerno, Professor Carlo Bianchini, Professor Roberta Spallone, Professor Ornella Zerlenga,

Professor Elena Ippoliti and Professor Sandro Parrinello.

On the second day, the two remaining themes were proposed in parallel sessions: the *Concepts and Theories* Room, where the proposed contributions deepened the concepts and theoretical foundations underlying landscape interpretation, exploring different perspectives and offering an indispensable conceptual framework for future studies on the subject. The *Perception* section, on the other hand, analysed how people see and interact with the



Fig. 2. Chairmans round table.

Fig. 3. Picture of one of the parallel session.

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landscape, taking into account psychological, cultural and environmental factors and highlighting the importance of these aspects in landscape design and management.

The keynote speaker of the second day, photographer Davide Viridis, spoke with the paper *La linea d'ombra. Photographic narratives on the landscape*, in which he illustrated his many years of research in the field of architectural and landscape photography, exploring the complex relationship between the contemporary landscape and the changing dynamics linked to the processes of development and evolution of the territory.

In conclusion, the first edition of *Visualizing Landscape* has been an important reference point for all scholars interested in the study of landscape and its representation. By providing a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the latest research, it has stimulated numerous critical reflections on the complexity of landscape and the challenges it poses to contemporary society. The interdisciplinary approach and the use of innovative tools have certainly made a valuable contribution to the scientific and planning debate.