

Landscapes of care
the emergence of landscapes of care in unstable territories



SOPHIA
SCOPIO EDITIONS

volume 7, issue 1 | publication year: 2022
issn: 2183-8976 [print] 2183-9468 [online]
doi 10.24840/2183-8976_2022-0007_0001_1
homepage: <https://www.up.pt/index.php/sophia>

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Introduction

About “Landscapes of Care” and how contemporary photography can help to heal a broken planet

Pedro Leão Neto

“Architecture in its broadest sense provides shelter indispensable to the continuation of human life and survival. This is evidently a form of care. Yet historically, architecture has not been considered a form of caring labor. Despite this fundamental function of architecture to provide protection for humans from sun, wind, snow or rain, and to give the support necessary for maintaining the vital functions of everyday living, the idea of the architect is linked to autonomy and independent genius rather than connectedness, dependency, social reproduction and care giving.”

Elke Krasny¹

“(…) architects have no time to lose to work on alternative models that offer paths to reach social equity within the continued intense metropolitanization of settlement structures. Given the changing nature of societies, more differentiated forms of co-habitation; greater demand for closer spatial relations of work–living–recreation; the renewal of urban farming; decentralized forms of harvesting renewable energy; leaner and smaller production facilities; all these transformations should lead to a change in the conventional zoning of uses; to a search for building and urban typologies that may be grafted on as much as possible to existing fabric and that will yet liberate future generations from the burden of the suburban era.”

Wilfried Wang²

With this 7th Volume of *Sophia Journal* we initiate our third thematic cycle “Landscapes of Care”, addressing contemporary photography and visual practices that focus on how architecture understood in a wide sense can help to heal a broken planet³. The concept of landscapes of care has increasingly been adopted by diverse areas of study, from health geography to

1 Elke Krasny, “Architecture and Care,” in *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, edited by Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny and Architekturzentrum Wien, 0 (2019) The MIT Press, 33.

2 Wilfried Wang, *On the Increasing Irrelevance of Context in the Generation of Form; or, why there is no longer a difference between an urn and a chamber pot*, Specificity, OASE, (2008) (76), 91–105, Retrieved from <https://www.oasejournal.nl/en/Issues/76/OnTheIncreasingIrrelevanceOfContextInTheGenerationOfForm>

3 Elke Krasny, “Introduction” in *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, edited by Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny and Architekturzentrum Wien, 0: (2019) The MIT Press.

the arts and architecture⁴. It allows us to understand architecture, city and territory as living and inclusive organisms⁵, constituted by multifaceted landscapes with complex social and organisational spatialities⁶, as well as exploring the concepts of space and place for care within a transdisciplinary research environment⁷.

Significant changes are taking place in diverse physical spaces all around the world and the world is growing in complexity as Daniel Innerarity⁸ points out. For this complex world of post-politics ideals, we need ambitious visions for the future and at the same time to trigger operational paths that are able to reform society, in a creative and collaborative manner, towards a better world.

Thus, this cycle of "Landscapes of Care" is giving continuity to other past ones of Sophia Journal, namely "Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries" and "Visual Spaces of Change", since all of them try to understand through photography and visual practices in what way architecture understood in a wide sense can help to give an answer to many of the problems that affect our territories. As such, we are interested in giving continuity to the interdisciplinary open space that Sophia Journal cycles allow, namely through their international conferences, linked to each annual call, capable of integrating several countries, inside and outside Europe, for debating, exhibiting and publishing a series of research projects and works intersecting the issues of the call. In our current call the key concept was landscape of care, which entails a humanist perspective upon urban transformations and its management, in contrast to the technocratic and instrumental character that tends to overpower the economic and financial logics. This means, amongst other things, being able to balance the former by integrating other important values as the unique characteristics of each place, valuating cultural heritage and concurring for a sustainable development practice and urban spatial identity, making context more relevant for architecture and the design of cities⁹, as well as allowing for a more comprehensive understanding and alternative development models for architecture, city and territory¹⁰.

4 Xiaodong Lin, Daryl Martin, Bo-Wei Chen, "Towards cultural landscapes of care", *Health & Place*, Volume 78, 2022, 102909, ISSN 1353-8292, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2022.102909>.

5 Francesco Indovina, "Citizenship and new urban realities", *City Territ Archit* 9, 8 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40410-022-00149-2>

6 Walter Nicholls, Byron Miller, Justin Beaumont, *Introduction: Conceptualizing the spatialities of social movements*, (2015), Routledge, 1-23, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315610191>

7 Åsa Roxberg, Kristina Tryselius, Martin Gren, Berit Lindahl, Carina Werkander Harståde, Anastasia Silverglow, Kajsa Nolbeck, Franz James, Ing-Marie Carlsson, Sepideh Olausson, Susanna Nordin & Helle Wijk "Space and place for health and care", *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, (2020), 15:sup1, 1750263, DOI: 10.1080/17482631.2020.1750263

8 Following the idea of Daniel Innerarity of how we are living in complex democracies (see his latest book *Democracy in Europe*).

9 Wilfried Wang, *On the Increasing Irrelevance of Context in the Generation of Form: or, why there is no longer a difference between an urn and a chamber pot*, Specificity, OASE, (2008) (76), 91-105, Retrieved from <https://www.oasejournal.nl/en/Issues/76/OnTheIncreasingIrrelevanceOfContextInTheGenerationOfForm>

10 Wilfried Wang, "The Future of the American Dream" *CENTER 22: LATITUDES – Architecture in the Americas*, (2019) Volume 3, 124-125. ISBN: 978-0-93951-33-3

We believe that Sophia Journal and its international forums are a significant contribution to the reflection towards new thoughts and research paths around the world of images and the diverse territories and realities we live in and in this way encourage society to look and act more critically, making the observer even more sensitive and knowledgeable about these subjects. A curatorial work that aims to explore and open diverse projects and ideas both to academia and society as is reclaimed by many authors and institutions. Within this context, it is worth referring that our conferences have been following other international academic events around the topics of Photography on Architecture since 2010, while trying to create a network of researchers and initiatives around this field of common interest.

Building on the former paragraphs and bearing in mind the potential of the landscapes of care concept and its scope of interest in Sophia Journal, we aim to discuss and address contemporary photography and visual practices used as instruments of inquiry and expression to identify and render visible critical situations or interventions and in this way reorienting the perceptions and understanding of architecture, city and territory. Furthermore, to encourage photography practices capable of communicating contemporary urban transformations in an innovative and exploratory way, as well as the historical and social meaning of places and regions, contributing towards a comprehensive understanding of their potential and importance in present times, as advocated by diverse authors with an interest in these fields of study and practice, many of whom have collaborated with Sophia Journal and its International conferences, as in the case of Inaki Bergera, Pedro Gadanho, Paolo Rosselli and Wilfried Wang¹¹.

We want to advance with research and work that provides substantial and interesting visual records and broaden new critical understandings about architecture, city and territory, namely through the particular insights that only photography can reveal. Theoretical and field work where architectural photography is both descriptive and interpretive, communicating original perceptions and analytical visions which simultaneously understand and interpret the buildings as, for example, in the photography projects of Mark Durden and João Leal¹² or the work of authors that question the conventions of the idea of representation and visualization

11 Inaki Bergera, "About the 4th number of Sophia, Visual Spaces of Change: Unveiling the Publicness of Urban Space through Photography and Image", *Sophia Journal*, 4(1), (2019) 3–4. https://doi.org/10.24840/2183-8976_2019-0004_0001_01; Pedro Gadanho "Image-Making After Photoshop: Architecture, Public Space and their Visual Discontents" *Sophia Journal*, 4(1), (2019), 100–109. https://doi.org/10.24840/2183-8976_2019-0004_0001_13; Paolo Rosselli, "Photography on Architecture: Visual Spaces of Change - Unveiling the Transformation of Publicness", *Sophia Journal*, 4(1), (2019), 158–163. https://doi.org/10.24840/2183-8976_2019-0004_0001_17; Wilfried Wang, "Image and Conscience", *Sophia Journal*, 6(1), (2022), 7–9. https://doi.org/10.24840/2183-8976_2021-0006_0001_2

12 João Leal; Mark Durden, "Photography as Heritage: Picturing Siza's Architecture", Work presented in International Congress on Architectural and Landscape Heritage – Malagueira, 2022. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364239707_CONTEMPORARY_VIEWS_ON_CITY_SPACES_AND_ARCHITECTURE_IN_OPORTO_DOCUMENTARY_AND_ARTISTIC_PHOTOGRAPHY_MAPPING#fullTextFileContent

of architecture encouraging an architectural practice that, as Inaki Bergera¹³ refers “feeds on images and engenders them”. Theoretical research and projects where diverse visual strategies and ideas are used when speaking about landscapes of care in varied territories exploring the tensions of scale, viewpoints, uniformity and other spatial dimensions of those territories, as well as their contradictions and conflicts.

We are also interested in theoretical positions and photography projects that defend the integration of the documentary and the artistic that is clearly understood, for example, in *Constructing Worlds: Photography and Architecture in the modern Age*, where David Campary offers a critical analysis on the inclusion of a series of photographs coming from authors who explore architecture as their artistic object, all present in this important exhibition on the universe of Photography and Architecture and in the book that documents it. Another case in point is Pedro Gadanho’s article, *Architecture Photography: New Territories in the MoMA Collection*, where he defends the legitimacy and the need to have the MoMA collection on the Photography of Architecture include creators whose works lie within the universe of Architecture and Art, Bas Princen and Filip Dujardin being two examples of authors in the MoMA collection who have participated in Sophia Journal International conferences in the past and have also been published by scopio Editions.

Thus, it can be said that with this cycle we aim to contribute to society as a whole and local communities with positive externalities coming from the network of research projects around the theme of landscapes of care exploring the use of different visual media, with a special interest on the use of image and photography, for observing, analysing and theorizing different dimensions of architecture, city and territories based on visual research and visual evidence.

The Sophia Journal’s “Landscapes of Care” cycle will also underwrite and reinforce past and ongoing research and initiatives of Centre for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism (CEAU), namely the ones coming from its research group Architecture, Art, and Image (AAI), as for example, the “Visual Spaces of Change”¹⁴ project, an interdisciplinary research project combining contemporary photography and visual documentation, investigating the creation of a network of public and collective spaces capable of catalysing emerging dynamics of urban change, which was supported through national funds by the FCT or the ongoing Contemporary Photography research project “The Idea of Álvaro Siza”¹⁵, that recognises architecture as both subject and artistic matter and explores visual strategies that move away from traditional mainstream architectural photography.

13 Inaki Bergera and Javier de Esteban, “Architecture and Contemporary Visual Culture, the Image of Realism and the Realism of Image”, (2022), *Arts* 11, no. 1: 26. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts11010026>

14 See Visual Spaces of Change research platform at <https://www.visualspacesofchange.arq.up.pt>

15 António Choupina, “DES YEUX QUI NE VOIENT PAS”, in *The Idea Of Álvaro Siza: The Museum – Serralves* by Mark Durden and João Leal, edited by Pedro Leão Neto, Porto: Scopio Editions (#2 December 2020) ISBN : 978-989-54878-4-4; Nuno Grande, “In praise of light and shadows”: in *The Idea of Álvaro Siza: Carlos Ramos Pavilion and Bouça Social Housing* by Mark Durden and João Leal, edited by Pedro Leão Neto, Porto scopio Editions (#1 December 2020) ISBN: 978-989-54878-4-4

"Landscapes of Care: the emergence of landscapes of care in unstable territories" is the title of this 7th Volume and the focus was on the emergence of landscapes of care in unstable territories, which could comprise diverse situations and territories, as explained in its open call. This volume has brought together a diverse group of researchers, architects, visual artists, and curators, gathered in this publication and its International Conference in an exercise of joint reflexivity around different perspectives and visual constructs calling our attention to territories that need critical care. Thus, while not really proposing new design solutions for those territories, the theoretical papers and visual essays do address their problems giving valuable information and perspectives that can feed differentiated design interventions and programmes aiming to repair, protect and help to re-establish the identity and configuration of those territories which for diverse reasons suffered severe changes.

Accordingly, it can be seen for example in the article "Reframing the Far North Landscapes of Care in Borealis and Hyperborea" by Esther Scholtes how it offers relevant information about the northern parts of our planet giving us a more comprehensive and updated perspective about those territories. On the one hand, this means going against the general idea of them being places free of human disruption, and calling our attention to the fact that (Sub)Arctic areas are, in fact, among the first to be profoundly affected by climate change. On the other hand, undermines the idea that the far north landscapes are just frozen, dark and threatening spaces with no life, showing us the contrary. Scholtes does all this by advancing with a theoretical work that explores the notions of relationality unearthing new perspectives about the relations that can be established between photography – the photographic series *Borealis* (2015–2020) by Dutch photographer Jeroen Toirkens and *Hyperborea* (2013–2019) by Russian photographer Evgenia Arbugaeva – and geographical concepts of 'isolation' and 'connection' in order to put forward, as the author refers, "... a type of caring that is more geographically dispersed." Creating, in this way, a 'landscape of care' that is not restricted to physical boundaries.

In fact, Scholtes article puts forwards a more comprehensive concern about our broken planet, calling our attention to the need to go beyond the places where we live and with which we are familiar, and to consider also the disparate or physically far away territories within the bounds or confines of our worries. In doing so, it it enables us to change our perceptions on these issues and creates space for ethical responsibility and to understand culture as a relational form of meaningful experiences. These are all concepts that feed on thoughts and philosophies coming from significant authors concerned with these problems as can be found, for example, in Donna Haraway's¹⁶ ontological understanding of beings and how subjects and objects are all interconnected when she writes " (...) beings constitute each other and themselves. Beings do not preexist their relatings. "Prehensions" have consequences. The world is a knot in

¹⁶ Donna Jeanne Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto : Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, Chicago, Ill. : Bristol :Prickly Paradigm ; University Presses Marketing, 2003.

motion". Other authors and ideas could be mentioned too, as the ones that understand culture as a relational form or the concept of "relational values" that allows connecting sustainability sciences, with the fields of social sciences and humanities, which as Marie Stenseke¹⁷ points out, landscape research has the potential "... to enrich the understanding of how the sustainability challenges can be more effectively and equitably addressed."

Esther Scholtes work, as well as others that are being published in this volume, is a significant example of the way photography can be used to unveil the identity, and environmental and cultural values that are endangered in unstable territories, underlining their urgent need for landscapes of care. Photography utilised as a critical research instrument for understanding and perceiving these territories in a comprehensive way, interconnected with several spatial and environmental dimensions and diverse fields of study, integrating visual strategies and fiction in their series in order to endow their critical and poetic stance in relation to those landscapes. This happens, for example, when the photographic series of Jeroen Toirkens adopts, as Scholtes explains, "(...) the anthropomorphic gesture of comparing the tree to the human being", unfolding also the temporal dissonance between the two "(...) a hiatus between the 'time' of the tree and our human temporal experience.". Then, also in the photographic series of Evgenia Arbugaeva, when she integrates in them "(...) elements of fiction and staged settings, that are slightly reminiscent of theatre decors, which are her way of connecting to the place."

In fact, the photographic series in Scholtes's article has the power to transform the narrative of isolation into one of connection and create a "landscape of care" that integrates several dimensions. By overlapping and crisscrossing the disciplinary boundaries of environmental and humanist sciences, as well as the world of Art, the borders of these disciplinary fields are challenged to think critically about contemporary changes occurring in unstable territories and to forward a message of ethical duty to care for and about those places.

As for our current 8th Volume of Sophia Journal, "Landscapes of care: photography, film, modern architecture and landscape heritage" it is concerned with contemporary photographic and visual practices used to understand and document modern architecture, building, city and territory as living and inclusive organisms, as well as heritage resources for global sustainability.

Modern architecture is a 'heritage at risk' as it belongs to a recent past that has not yet been sufficiently recognised by the authorities, scholars and general public. Our aim is to explore the ways in which photography and film can be used as meaningful instruments of research into the socioeconomic, political, historical, technical and ecological dimensions of modern architecture, city and territory.

17 Marie Stenseke "Connecting 'relational values' and relational landscape approaches", *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, Volume 35, (2018), Pages 82-88, ISSN 1877-3435, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2018.10.025>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187734351730249X>)

For this 8th Volume we were interested in theoretical and field work where architectural photography and filmmaking are descriptive, analytical and interpretive, communicating original perceptions and new understandings of modern architecture and landscapes. Photography and film projects that will allow us to show how modern buildings and landscapes have responded to and reflect the local conditions of their production and importance. Projects which critique and expand our understanding of what constitutes modern architecture and landscape, in terms of its language, locations, functions, creators, patrons and publics. Thus, we believe that this edition of Volume 8 will assemble diverse photography and film work which will allow to see the social dimension of architecture and landscape to be seen, so as to understand architecture as Alvar Aalto¹⁸ did, "as a great synthetic process of combining thousands of definite human functions" together with research of architectural culture and photographic imagery to better understand modern architecture and its historical, socio-cultural and configurational relationships, namely with the regional modernism in Europe, as is claimed by many authors and which reflects a growing academic interest¹⁹. We believe that all this will significantly contribute to a greater understanding of the potential modern architecture and landscape hold in providing a more ecological and sustainable balance and interplay between architecture and nature.

Finally, and looking back on the past year, we would like to thank all those who have contributed to this 7th Volume of Sophia Journal "".

Thank you authors, reviewers, and readers of Sophia.

18 Alvar Aalto, (1991a) "The humanizing of architecture"[1940], in *Alvar Aalto in His Own Words*, ed. Goran Schildt (1997), New York: Rizzoli, 102 – 103, "But architecture is not a science. It is still the same great synthetic process of combining thousands of definite human functions, and remains architecture. Its purpose is still to bring the material world into harmony with human life. To make architecture more human means better architecture, and it means a functionalism much larger than the merely technical one. This goal can be accomplished only by architectural methods – by the creation and combination of different technical things in such a way that they will provide for the human being the most harmonious life"

19 Most notably Kenneth Frampton, *The Other Modern Movement: Architecture, 1920-1970*, Yale University Press (2021); Besides others like Antigoni Katsakou, *Rethinking Modernity: Between the Local and the International*, RIBA Publishing (2020); Also "Reescrver o Pós-Moderno/Sete Entrevistas", Dafne Editora (2011), and Jorge Figueira, *A Periferia Perfeita: Pós-Modernidade na Arquitetura Portuguesa, Anos 60-Anos 80*. (2015), Caleidoscópio; On how both architects believe in the synthesis between intuition and reason enhanced by the artistic practice see Alvar Aalto "The dichotomy of culture and technology", in *Alvar Aalto in his own words*, ed. Goran Schildt (1997), New York: Rizzoli.