

Metropolitan and rural areas: Interscapes as Interfaces?

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ABSTRACT: The fringes areas interposed between metropolis and territorial ecosystems constitute a new sort of geography of urban sprawl. The difference between urban areas and their surroundings is at present unrecognisable. From this new context, that represent a new *life environment* for a large part of human population, new perceptive dynamics and new relationships emerge. Various social manifestations reveal unexpected potentialities, ideas, hopes and desires, ignored by traditional political or planning approaches. New interpretations and more profound approaches are necessary to understand such a contemporary condition, where new *Interfaces* appear and new unexpected *landscapes* originate. From Interface and Landscape, originate a new *Interscape* where unexpected relationships and a new aesthetic arouse. Experimental appropriate approaches are essential to turn this condition: sympathetic approaches, social perception, friendly reciprocal learning and action-research. These experiential activities involve experts, people, scientific and politicians leading each other towards new dynamical *interscape* relationships, as our experiential researches demonstrate.

Key words: Life, Environment, Landscape, Interface, Interscape

INTRODUCTION

As the satellite taken at night show, and stress as a symbolic phenomenon, the landscape of everyday life for the citizens of the global world is now constantly and hectically changing. The maps of Europe, Italy and even Tuscany show how intrusive light has become in the rich, metropolitan, and industrialised areas, in sharp contrast with the darkness of the territory excluded from the urban development. A continuous light belt, more or less a kind of light seal, surrounds all the shoreline areas, while the spots representing the metropolitan areas get wider and wider as they invade the un-urban areas soaked in the darkness (Fig. 1).

Those hyper-illuminated areas are equivalent to the metropolitan landscape that being surrounded by it we know very well. Those are the landscapes forced every day on many people, the landscapes that lead to the very decline of their perception through the deterioration of the quality of life (Klee, 1959; Pizziolo, 2003a).

Many examples, though, show us that a reaction to such a widespread phenomenon is still possible. More and more often we can see the reactions and notice some disagreement surfacing with respect to the violent and unwanted changes of the life environment, and in many cases we can directly participate to this reaction. A wide variety of approaches and ways to deal with these phenomena matches different behaviours and ways to show either the personal disagreement or one's options with regard to the devastation of many life environments (Bateson, 1976). Such a direct participation (from the simple sharing of the disagreements to the actual shared "actions") means that also experts and politicians will have to dedicate a very sensitive attention to the situations, and fight in order to gain the trust and sympathy of the residents, learning and being aware of the deep meaning of their life environment, ready to start working from the inside, with the residents, in an experiencing, dynamic, protective, and choral environment managing process (Bateson, 1984).

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MATERIALS & METHODS

In accordance with the European Convention, landscapes can be conceived as complex phenomena, where human, natural life, and built environments are evolving as one, showing their different characteristics, contrasts and dynamics. Consequently, it is possible to consider Landscapes also the particular marginal condition where different realities meet, sometimes in exasperate contradiction, as the following extreme cases show (Figs. 1-3).



Fig.1. Absence of citizens Piombino-Tuscany
Proximity of the industrial environment
Inhabitants and residents are “absent” or, quite paradoxically, show up only when depicted on the façades of the buildings

Otherwise citizens get together to complain and fight against repeated and serious attacks to many historical, precious, and stimulating landscapes which they feel their own. In Florence there has been a daily fight against some decisions taken by the local administration; in La Spezia and in its bay area - The Gulf of the Poets and Painters- the residents are paying more and more attention to the constant destruction of their life environment, by now surrendered to an industrial and harbour policy that is depriving them of their life environment (Fig.4), (Pizziolo, 2003b).

The examples we are going to show offer many possible ways to deal effectively with the realities of our world under constant transformation, from the sensitive observation to the dialogue, to the friendly co-partnership,



Figs. 2 & 3. Presence of citizens
Florence 2004: presence of citizens at the rally,
protesting against the alteration of the historic
fortress built by Giuliano da Sangallo

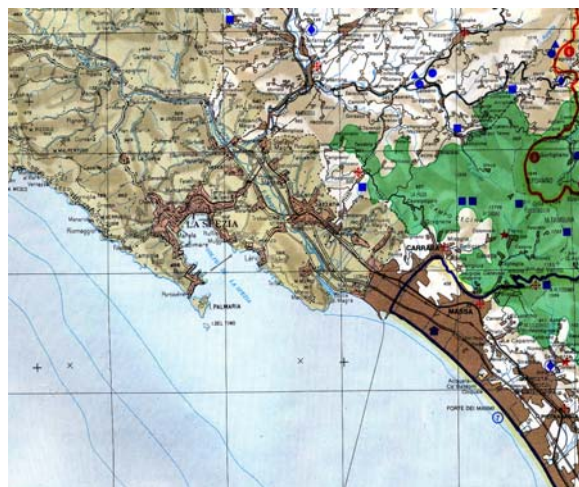


Fig. 4. La Spezia (Liguria) 2005: The famous Gulf of the Poets and its surroundings have been overrun by the activities of the docks

to a more structured research, to a research/action involving the traditional competences (official experts) and everybody's knowledge at the same level. The links and approaches we have implemented, the reflections and elaborations that have been tied in with our experiences involve a wide variety of life environments and social conditions. They range:

- from almost *desert urban landscapes*, which discourage people from visiting them (absence of citizens- in Tuscany, Piombino),
- to *places of disagreement* (Florence), and
- to *places of imagination* (not only protesting against devastation, but also suggesting new ideas and actual proposals, as the following example shows).

A group of scholars of La Spezia started a workshop in order to think upon and counsel how to show off their reaction. In this experience they imagined, projected and built a School in a ship, and a Restaurant for children, both located on the pleasant Promenade along the sea. For once, the group of scholars enjoyed the jeopardized sea promenade and invited the whole town to protect that delightful paradise they share (Figs. 5 -9).



Fig. 5. Citizens react against these macro-technological interventions and propose micro environmental new interventions as an alternative.

Vezzano Ligure, a new panorama of containers appears like a nightmare at the bottom of the village

- to *places of affectivity* (where it is possible to appreciate and enjoy the landscape of one's own), and in each reality some creative sceneries may appear (projects, actions, micro-transformations of the landscape, new enjoyments), as the citizens of Vezzano - a small

historic village, located among the Apuan Alps, the Magra River and the Gulf of the Poets- demonstrate through their creative activities. A group of citizens, while the port was spreading, got more and more concerned about the destiny of their life environment. It was at that moment that they decided: *We can react!* "see Figures"



Figs. 6 & 7. The local groups welcome People, enjoying and showing their restored fountains





**Figs. 8 & 9 . La Spezia - Liguria
Urban promenade, June 2005**

Therefore, against such an alteration, they rediscovered their forgotten values and, progressively conscious of their beautiful village, they took care of their beautiful life environment, starting a new *landscaping action*. Ancient fountains, deeply and affectionately linked to local memories, had been abandoned. The group rediscovered and restored all of them with a spontaneous project promoted by the inhabitants.

This interesting *landscaping action* began some years ago and is still successfully practiced also in other places of the local landscape. Every year local groups welcome visitors at their fountains, dressed up in traditional clothes, ready to explain them their local traditions and to offer good snacks. Every fountain is gently preserved by the inhabitants... year after year, in a tangible fascinating way, as a very choral landscaping action (Wittgenstein, 1995).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Nevertheless, it is necessary for these phenomena to multiply and consolidate, so that everyone who participates (experts and residents, old and young, schools and associations, politicians and technicians) finds references and supports, in order to develop research and action at the same time in an open shape, unconventional, with modalities belonging to the evolutionary processes.

From the impulsiveness of the reactions and social actions it is possible to get to organized activities, accepted by the institutions and acknowledged as permanent reference structures

for the citizens (active in the monitoring and social protection of the life environment of one's own but also in the proposals and participation to its transformation and managing).

The case studies we have followed so far demonstrate that this is possible in each context. Everywhere many activities are practicable, and they develop in an appropriate manner both spontaneous activities and expert researches, and go more deeply into the problems by way of the further following steps:

- Social perception
- Self-awareness of one's own life style and environment
- Creativity and minimal proposals
- Research with experts
- Involvement and merging of competences
- Continuum and resolution of social protections
- Spreading of cultural and social phenomena of creative involvement
- Interlocution with institutions and political institutes
- Change in the traditionally acknowledged instruments:

The Research-Action takes root and grows on these further progressive steps.

The research-action can be experimented anywhere problematic conditions appear, and are progressively implemented and propagated, from the level of the project both in small and wide contexts of life, to the building and garden scale, to the use of collective spaces (pedestrianization, traffic, areas for social use, etc), until the level of the plan (wide areas, areas at the city limits, parks, industrial areas, etc.).

Traditional, political or planning approaches tend to consider the problematic areas as "problem solving places", ignoring or underestimating the potentialities often hidden in these misunderstood realities. On the contrary, from the widest areas to the micro territorial contexts, these so-called "waste uncontrollable areas" constitute the places where new Interfaces teaming with life appear, new unexpected Landscapes originate, alive and ready to flourish or to vanish.

A different interpretation and a deeper approach are necessary in order to understand these unexpected contemporary conditions, going

beyond all traditional interpretations, project and planning methods or the classic terms of restoring the equilibrate coexistence between human life and ecosystems. Interfaces are often endowed with extraordinary potentialities, which have to be re-discovered, through appropriate researches/actions, in terms of social creative participation.

Complexity deeply characterizes the situation of contemporary cities and, what is more, it is shared by many themes of other subjects and affects our life on an everyday basis.

Two opposite trends appear when dealing with the issue of complexity, even dealing with the city, the territory, and the landscape:

- the reductionist trend, which aims at the biggest immediate efficiency as possible, by focusing on some “strategic” goals and neglecting all side effects, almost taking advantage of the very complexity in order to adopt “extraordinary” measures, without caring about the often devastating consequences affecting people, places and all living beings involved;
- The evolutionary trend, which takes on complexity as the basis for its own development, in discontinuity as well as in unpredictability, in a continuous creative process.

Along with the successful reductionist trends of new-economy, neo-liberism, “intelligent warfare”, and bio-technologies, also in our specific fields we can relate to the successes of the strategic urban plans and to the “mainstream architectures” which transform and target selectively our cities, consistently with urban planning in reductionist thinking.

The evolutionary thinking, on the contrary, struggles in order to find its way of achievement and often has burned its reference ideas, such as sustainability and participation, which have been misunderstood, badly used, often falsified and ineffective. Nevertheless, the evolutionary thinking has managed to deploy in various areas what should be considered its main characteristic: the activation of open processes, the creation of favourable conditions for exchange and relations, the immersion in the becoming flows. Accordingly to this idea, some trends are slowly appearing, at least within the realms of landscape and territory management.

All these things considered, then, why not trying to imagine the dissemination of those behaviours and this way of thinking just in the management of the territory?

Both in Italy and in France, within the implementation of the European Convention of the Landscape, some experiments are being spread, such as the Action Paysagère, and the Shared Landscapes. These experiments aim at joining population/life, environment/public administration/aesthetic, social awareness/shared landscape, values/research and action projects within open and discontinuous cycle processes of territorial and knowledge innovation.

In environmental planning, especially park planning; some examples of shared evolutionary temporal proposals are beginning to show up. They try to include these procedures, closer to natural dynamics, inside the body of law in force, paradoxically linked still (at least in Italy) to an extension of the urban zoning to the prevalent environmental contexts, with consequent strong operative and theoretic limits.

This is the beginning of what we may call Slow planning, the territory and landscape managing which assumes slowness, reflection, sweetness, joy, and the friendly relations and mutual reactions, as the preconditions for a renewed relation among the self, the others and the life environment, in a creativity flow, choral and material, aimed at prefiguring territorial, renewable, flatly and deeply durable figurations.

In wide suburban cities, at present dominated by virtual ghosts and real interventions of reductionist kind, everything is more difficult and controversial, but spontaneous movements, besides resisting and opposing, are beginning to implement new forms – partly spontaneous, partly inspired and prefigured – of vitality, learning, creative setting, deeply slow and friendly, which we could therefore name slow and friendly Planning.

In September 2001, in Venice, Cage, Rauschenberg, and Cunningham introduced “Interspace, a musical/scenery/choreographic event that we could define a research case - in artistic, metaphorical, and experimental terms - of the “Interaction Place.” Such is in fact the relational Landscape, almost the Environment of

the possible interactions among arts and messages, their languages and the generation of emotional reflections of the public in attendance. This doesn't happen through linear and harmonic processes, but rather through the creative richness of discontinuous procedures, through constantly varied and unpredictable processes, and through unexpected inside/outside flows.

Likewise, we think it is possible to suggest a similar procedure to deal with the city and the territory, therefore the environment – the whole Life environment-, in constant transformation. We think that this situation can be dealt with through logic beyond the systemic logic, well suited to exploit the relational dynamics and reflections, and the unpredictable creativity which continuously appears from living contexts.

The concepts of Ecological Environment and Built Environment have already been frequently investigated, especially the second one, so important from many points of view to the human society and human science. On the other side, the concept of Life Environment seems to balance the formula of those recent results, strongly conditioning and conditioned. This way the Life Environment appears to offer new perspectives, from ecological, human and social points of view, aimed at accomplishing a conscious participation of the Environment and the communities which live there to the making of the life condition, in cultural and operative terms.

We speak of Life Environment with reference to two different contexts, the first being the context of development and appreciation of life, both in an ecological/evolutionary meaning and as the primary condition for every transformation; and the second being the context of the economic, social and cultural life of people, for their becoming in progress.

The Life Environment is therefore the basic condition for the living processes. It is the material and mental requisite for the evolution and the development of human societies, the temporal space of Places and their becoming. As a result, Landscape is the material structuring of the very places, but at the same time it is most of all the social and human awareness of their deep meaning, their value, and their aesthetic value. We could as well name all the above Wellbeing, a sort of

“sustainable well-being.” (There are many researches on this subject, more than on life environment itself).

Beyond any linguistic definition, we think it is important to stress that Wellbeing and Life Environment are not for purchase or for consume. On the contrary, they are prerequisites we should reach, better yet, we should create. Following this concept, the reconstruction of our life environment becomes the rediscovery of a deep human, structural and essential dimension. This reconstruction, though, cannot be practiced through systemic and previously arranged projects. It rather has to be achieved by following the ‘Research/Action practices,’ in other words shared practices of experimentation and reflection upon the very experiment.

All of us have to acknowledge that in many countries of the world, Italy included, at present there are not the right conditions to support the fulfillment of such an experiment. Nevertheless, even if the situation is frequently confused, dialectic and conflicting, it can still become the substratum - chaotically creative and dynamic – from which an unpredictable life environment may be born, perhaps a temporary one.

At present we think that shared practices to the creation of ‘Participated Landscapes’ - which focus the attention from the city to the whole territory in which it is located- are necessary and urgent. They can be accomplished through the acknowledgement and the conscious transformation of the life environment - in ecological and cultural terms - and of the surviving and the Wellbeing, of the individual as much as of the collectivity. By community we mean all the people who live in a defined place, even if on a temporarily basis.

Our contemporary society, the community in progress, is open to different flows of people of different cultural and social status, coming from different countries and areas of the world, and having therefore a different knowledge and meanings to tribute to places and to a specific environment. In order to deal with such a specific aspect of our society we don't think it is still possible to refer to systemic and quantitative thinking, nor to systemic reasoning, profitable, as it is well known, to situations of *steady states*

For that reason, in this current and so unbalanced situation, a new thinking is required in order to deal with the society. According to our experiences, such a requirement can be fulfilled by the Relational Thinking, a kind of reasoning which develops on the basis of reciprocal relationships, plentiful of unpredictable evolutions created within the Relational Fields, in other words gravitational fields of relations, created only by the dynamics of the very relationships.

As it is easily understood, this approach is extremely useful to the participated making of the Life Environments, especially of those that happen to be inhabited in a discontinuous way, with different rhythms of the local nature, of the settled society, of the human flows passing by, yet reassembled like in a jazz improvisation, in a consonance/dissonance of blended superior rhythms.

In Europe at a scientific level, in good practice and in official documents, there are many researches and experiences designed to accomplish this. Speaking of Landscape, for instance, we find the European Convention on Landscape. When read in accordance to the innovative principles, which characterize it – not from a bureaucratic point of view – such a document can become a very important tool in the experimental drafting of new environmental and human practices. According to the Convention, in fact, besides being a complex, multidisciplinary, holistic and dynamic phenomenon the Landscape is considered also a social phenomenon. A new approach appears, the social perception of the environment, from which derives the idea of Landscape as a shared value of the habitat, in conclusion the idea of “Landscape as Life Environment.”

We believe that the concept of Life Environment is an innovative, extremely interesting idea, whose knowledge deserves to be deepened from theoretic and experimental points of view. The European Convention represents a fundamental basic reference for all new activities and the promotion of a new way of dealing with the life environment for the involved populations as we have above explained. According to all these principles, we can change the whole

approach to Landscape, walking out on the old and obsolete scientific Western-style paradigms and choosing new criteria in order to create all together a renewed and richer way of living and managing the life environment of one’s own. So we can assume theoretical principles and aesthetical suggestions - derived from the European Convention and from the musical event Interscape – as two mainstreams which flow in concert within the same research-action processes.

Sensitive and participated observation of the phenomena (by experts and citizens together), experiment and research constantly and mutually comparing (without a hierarchic power privileging a specific point of view), pre-figuration and creativity always in touch, open dialogue with the living context where social awareness-knowledge and aesthetic participation, all together, will be able to sustain and to keep the whole process alive.

Keeping these two suggestions in mind, many people can reach a renewed and richer way of living and managing the life environment of one’s own, feeling at home and being welcomed, getting out from standard perceptions and behaviour patterns, and participate in an unconventional way to the transformations of the territory of one’s own.

The following Study Cases exemplify two approaches - still in progress- of territorial planning and micro project experiences. Both have been structured on the theoretical principles pointed out, and while being developed they assume the complexity of Interscapes.

The territory of Montioni in Tuscany is a wooded promontory overlooking the Gulf of Follonica, in front of the Elba Island. This area bears witness to the former greatness of the Etruscan civilization (whose woods fuelled the iron industry) and reminds us of the mixed fortunes of the iron industry of this territory through the centuries, until the contemporary age. Recently this forest has not been considered as an industrial resource anymore, and at present the whole promontory is at risk of losing its original archaeological values and of going towards a progressive and unmerited neglect (Figs. 10 and 11) .

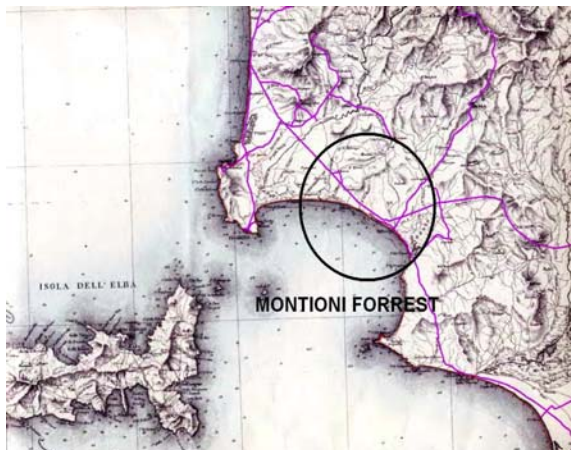


Fig. 10. The gulf of iron

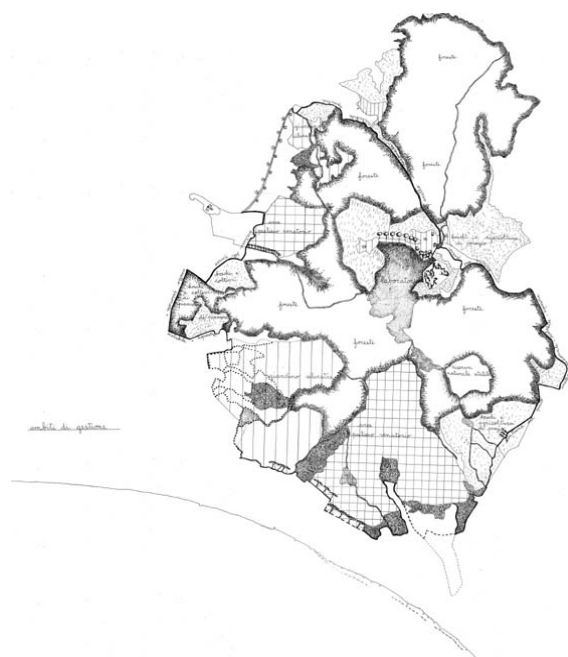
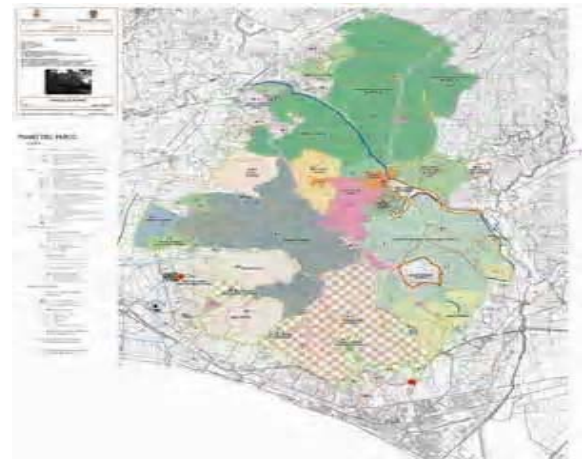


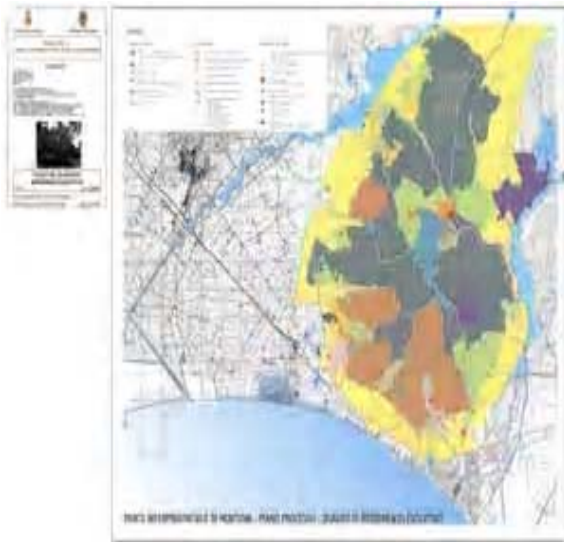
Fig. 11. Montioni panorama

Despite this, the Montioni Forest can revive by being transformed into a Park, by re-discovering its ancient history and setting of its forgotten values, in a new fresh perspective. Around the Montioni Promontory a lot of contradictory, sometimes exaggerated, conditions co-exist - such as different human settlements, a contemporary iron steel industry, intensive agriculture, tourism infrastructures - which make its revival very challenging. The Park could increasingly harmonise these latent or manifested tensions around the area, maintaining their diversities and preventing further lacerating contrasts. All these problems are not solvable anymore by using traditional planning methods.

The whole question can instead be tackled on the condition that the park is carried out through suitable tools. For this reason, innovative procedures and a new way of prefiguration towards a social construction of the Landscape

have been proposed for the Montioni Master Plan and at present their experimentation is in progress. Therefore the traditional Plan has been transformed into an evolutionary process and its rigid rules have been changed into a guidebook organised in a temporal-spatial process, where different themes, rhythms, suggestions and proposals, are interwoven -like musical themes usually do- in a sort of musical score. So the Master Plan of Montioni Forest is turning into an acknowledged system of dynamic rules aimed at evolving the life environment processes within the Park. In short, this Park can be developed by three itineraries, indicated in a framework which consists of three maps (Figs.12-14).





Figs.12, 13 & 14. The Masterplan in evolution

Multiplicity of themes, different rhythms and scientific, social experimentations work together at various levels, being involved in the same complex process. Here a new Landscape Interface as a new Interscape is concretely forming through appealing experiential activities:

A) The step zero – only apparently comparable to a traditional plan, with zoning, bonds and ‘no-doing’ list- is not a rigid system of rules. It is instead a sort of steady state map endowed of basic itineraries on which the processes go on, in the direction of a progressive complete incubation of the park. These itineraries represent also the guaranty of the sustainability and the suitable development of the whole process.

B) This map, with its itineraries, is completely dedicated to social participation in the construction of the Park. The map indicates where and how local population, visitors, experts, public policies, can experiment the ways of working together and developing the park in an appropriate manner, through a wide range of research-actions.

C) The third map shows another possible evolution of the park, achievable in the course of experiential activities, and orients the course of the progressive building of the Park and its process trends. In this Park many participated processes will be possible:

- Construction of the Woodland Gardens, as a welcoming to the park, as shared place to rediscover anthropological /natural relationships (Figs. 15-18):

- Restoration and construction of many exploration itineraries;
- Walking and biking around the ParkRediscovery of animals, from archaeology to contemporary times.
- Rediscovery of the former relationships with the towns located by the park through their often forgotten histories, cultures and social knowledge (twenty five centuries of iron industry based on the forest.

So, this multiplicity of themes, different rhythms and scientific, social experimentations coexist and evolve at different level, involved all together in the same complex process.



Fig. 15. A small, abandoned water basin, a suitable place to practice new experiences of landscaping art



Fig. 16. Animals from archaeology



The Iron Church of Follonica, the industrial town where the Montioni Forrest was exploited in the 19th century

Fig. 17. The iron church, built during the Lorena's reign, eighteenth century



Fig. 18 . Pedestrian promenade in the Forrest

Within this process a new Landscape Interface as a new Interscape is concretely developing through appealing experiential activities. In these activities many groups of experts, citizens, scholar groups, go on in integrated reciprocal collaboration, dealing with specific activities like the following:

- construction of the welcome areas shaped as woodlands gardens, where traditional agriculture and forest co-develop in a fresh aesthetic configuration;
- restoration of ancient abandoned itineraries (seasonal migration of shepherds and sheep along ancient routes; halt green areas for sheep);
- rearrangement of thematic landscape routes (roman and medieval itineraries, cycling and walker routes)
- restoration of archaeological – industrial and mining areas in relation with all the old industrial settlements, from prehistory to contemporary times.

- experiential training workshops where social education is practiced in an innovative experiential manner .The three itineraries start simultaneously ... but each one proceeds according to its own course and the Master Plan will take care of the harmony of the whole process ...This way, the Montioni Park grows!

At present, the Gulf is seriously jeopardised by an unsustainable tourist expansion and consequent degradation of its life environment. The small villages of this territory and their delightful bays are at the risk of overexploitation and poisoning devastation: industrial fisheries, tourist docks as well as shipyards and sporting infrastructures are spreading everywhere and the local life style is constantly undermined, with increasing disagreement among the residents (Fig. 19).

Here -since the year 2005 - a workgroup of citizens is involved in a participative process of research-action which is still in progress, according to a cyclical process of social perception, reciprocal friendly learning, reflections, discussions with experts, thematic workshops, and so on.

Within this cyclical process new ideas and proposals have been constantly emerging in the workgroup, and the people involved became progressively conscious of the devastating conditions of the life environment (Figs. 20-22).



Fig. 19. Le Grazie: the Bay Portovenere and its surrounding landscapes (small villages, bays, traditional Mediterranean agriculture, and nice panoramas) represent a very historic and monumental cornerstone for the Gulf of La Spezia, also famous as the Gulf of the Poets and Painters.



Fig. 20. social perception and discussion of landscape



Figs. 21 & 22 . Dreaming, thinking, counselling together, as in a fascinating play....We are able to think, and imagine our life environment as a new beautiful place ...why not? So ... We can also create OUR Map of DESIRES, conceived as an open INTERFACE, as a new WATER FRONT ... which is our very INTERSCAPE

In the course of this experience the participants have been encouraged to express their disagreements as well as to highlight their proposals, and to put at everybody's disposal their life experience, competences and aesthetic ideas. This Map of Desires - new Interscape is neither an abstract representation nor a pure dream, yet it represents a first step of the cyclical activities and at the same time the very starting point for a further participative research-action.

All these activities demonstrate that a beautiful Gulf, a good quality of life, a social management of the life environment, are within reach through a constant, friendly learning with experts and scientists.

Moreover, this first cycle of experiences showed that new relationships between local Public Bodies and new groups of citizens can be established. In the years 2006 and 2007 this experience has been successively enriched with new participative activities. At present, having been acknowledged by the local government, the group is developing a further participative workshop, focused on the area of local Water Front. This area, at present in dreadful conditions, could be transformed in a very significant Interface among their small village, its bay and the wider Gulf of Poets. This idea has been conceived by people and experts, involved together in a new participative process in order to take care of this extremely fragile interface. The care of the water front is becoming a social, cultural and creative activity, more and more deeply rooted in the resident workgroup, engaged also in this new project.

This experience allowed the very reconstruction and ecological renovation of the local landscape both of the small village "borgo" and of its bay as a new living space in the wider Gulf of Poets.

CONCLUSION

The two Study Cases of Parco di Montioni and Portovenere show that all kinds of experiences, as we described above, can be implemented in every life context, from the smallest territorial stressed realities to the widest areas which seem semi-abandoned.

From the "darkness" of the marginal landscapes new, multiple, widespread evidences

of vitality appeared, in contrast with the phenomena of globalisation that dominate the scenery of our “metropolitan night maps”, leading us “to live more consciously in the whole territory”. The examples we have showed are significant, because they allow us to understand how widespread is the social perception of the landscape and the people’s sensitivity and intelligence. These examples also show that new *Interscapes* can emerge everywhere, as the places where the lacerating tensions among social culture, sensitivity, aesthetics and trivial violence of the global world – can be transformed into fresh experiences of social researches-actions.

What we mentioned above makes clear how such a consciousness rising spurs citizens to react and fight – as in Florence – or to fight with new activities and proposals the forced and dominant political choices. Social groups, schools, associations and also not aggregated people respond with their imagination, creativity, and action (a *landscaping action*) to the growing and widespread devastation phenomena.

We imagine how to live differently in our undermined environment, we rediscover its beauties, we live in it all together, we transform or keep what has so far made our living culture, we

invite other persons to take part with us to joyful and involving events, and yet we keep dissenting...

The European Convention of the Landscape encourages and supports many of these actions, and yet it may become a starting point as well for more structured and continuous landscape actions, evolving in time, leading to the flourishing of social, scientific, creative activities, so far unknown to the official policies of territorial managing.

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