



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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Master of Science in  
ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTION CITY

*Abstract*

**THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN  
AND THE CITY, 2005/2015**

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*by*

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The distance from the scene in which the landscape design played a leading role in the transformation of public spaces is clear, particularly if we consider its current condition. This work originates from the desire to investigate the decline detectable in the production of open spaces within the European and North American landscapes in the last ten years. During this period, a decrease in investments and a decline of interest in the project of landscapes is noticeable. Indeed, the landscape design is the first suffering of the lack of funds during economical, political and institutional crises. To understand the difference from the previous season it is enough to consider the great success that the landscape practices had until the beginning of the new millennium. What remains now to be determined is the current situation of the design of open spaces, what remains of its prosperous period and what, but even more how, it changed.

To research and study the current condition of the landscape design, both in its practical dimension and theoretical development, the definition of the method of investigation is essential. Even more it is crucial to recognize the changes that occurred in the design of open spaces in relation to the project for the city or to the new social, economical and environmental needs.

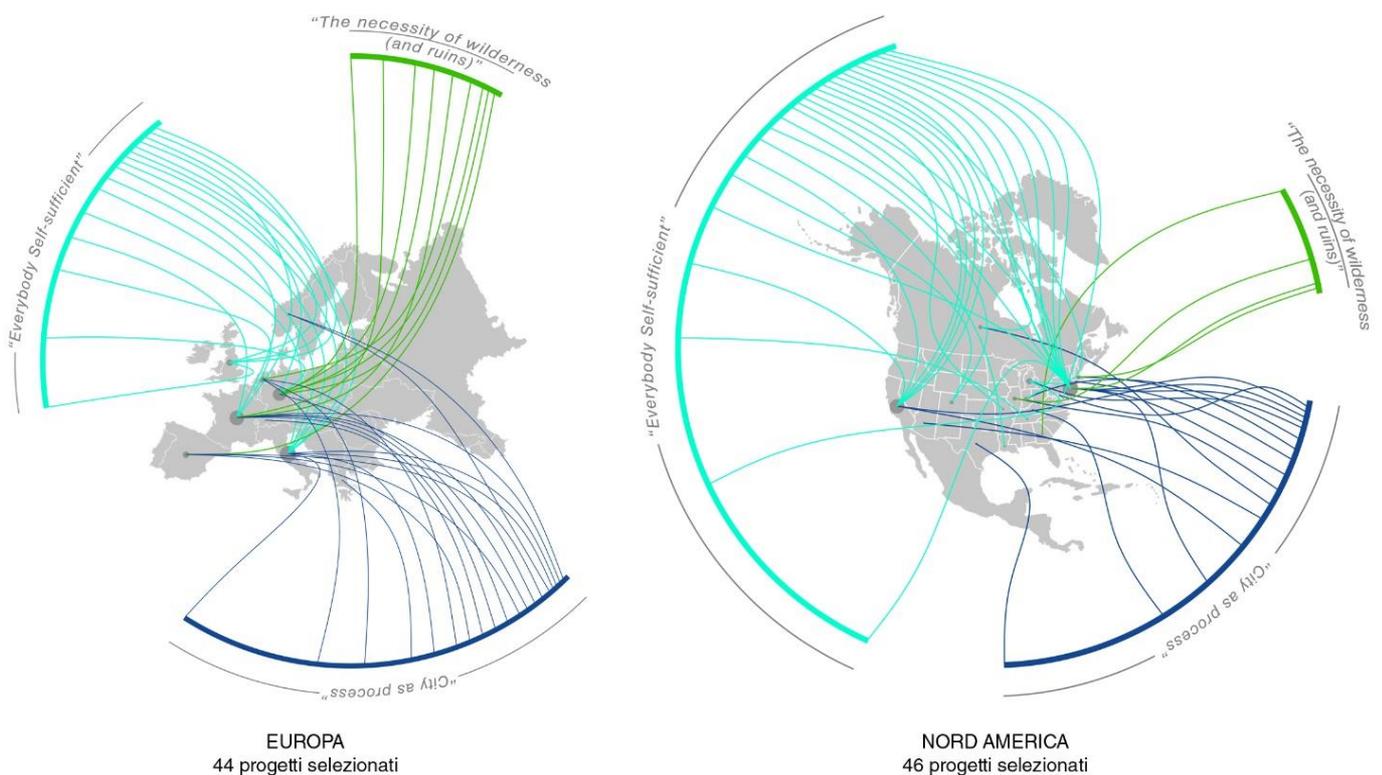


Tempelhof Park, Berlin, 2014

[www.nprberlin.de](http://www.nprberlin.de)

We selected two research strategies to be concurrently developed: the analysis of the principal dissemination methods<sup>1</sup> of the sector with the creation of an archive of the most significant experiences that have been published on one side, and a direct discussion with experts through the participation in international conferences<sup>2</sup> and the realisation of interviews<sup>3</sup>.

This work helps to highlight that the landscape design is constantly searching for new forms of legitimacy that move closer to the hard sciences, especially ecology, agronomy and botany. From this idea come the three different themes in the archive session. They are identified by evocative titles that remind to figures and cultures of the last century: *The necessity of wilderness (and Ruins)* which refers to John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *City as process* that recalls the thought of Ian McHarg and *Everybody Self-sufficient* which takes its name from an essay by Leberecht Migge. The former refers to the abandonment and the ruins as essential aspects of a territory and to the recognition of its value in cultural and environmental terms; the second get back to the teachings of one of the fathers of eco-design and the invitation to approach projects as processes; the latter refers to the desire of bringing a productive and self-sufficient dimension within the city limits.



<sup>1</sup> : The five magazines consulted are: Lotus, Topos, Landscape Architecture Magazine (LAM), Architettura del Paesaggio and Paysage Topscape.

<sup>2</sup> : Reference is made to the meetings: Landscape Urbanism, Strategies for common spaces (Milan, 2015); On the return of woods (Treviso, 2016) and Tasting the Landscape, the 53rd IFLA Congress (Torino, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> : The main professionals interviewed are: Bradford McKee, Catherine Mosbach, Bianca Maria Rinaldi, Federico Lopez Silvestre, Kristoffer Holm Pedersen of SLA and Franco Zagari.

Overall, the selected projects highlight significant trends through which the landscape project rewrites the city within specific images. Today we are somewhere else than in the past. Everything is changed and the most notable change can be seen in the passage from the exhibition of opulence to the one of thrift. Although this is not the only possible interpretation, it becomes the key through which this thesis attempts to investigate how and how much the landscape project is able, now as before, to capture and give back the change of urban and social sites.



Park am Gleisdreieck, Berlin, 2006/2014  
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