

La cooperazione europea delle Università nell'educazione all'Architettura del Paesaggio.

Il Consiglio Europeo delle Scuole di Architettura del Paesaggio (ECLAS) e il progetto della rete tematica LE:NOTRE

Simon Bell *, Ellen Fetzer **

abstract

ECLAS ha il compito di diffondere l'architettura del paesaggio in Europa attraverso lo sviluppo di relazioni e di scambi nella comunità accademica, della quale rappresenta gli interessi all'interno di un più ampio contesto sociale e istituzionale. Fin dal 2002 il Consiglio ha organizzato un progetto tematico chiamato LE:NOTRE che attualmente è in fase di trasformazione in un istituto autonomo. Negli ultimi anni ECLAS ha portato avanti varie attività tra cui la messa a punto di un progetto per l'educazione al paesaggio, il consolidamento della rivista Jola (journal for landscape architecture), la creazione di una fattiva collaborazione fra studenti di dottorato.

parole chiave

Educazione all'architettura del paesaggio, ECLAS, forum sul paesaggio, LE:NOTRE

* Estonian University of Life Sciences, President of ECLAS Executive Committee

** Nürtingen-Geislingen University, Vice President of ECLAS Executive Committee

European Academic Cooperation for Landscape Architecture Education.

The European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools and the LE:NOTRE thematic network project

abstract

ECLAS, the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools, exists to foster and develop scholarship in landscape architecture throughout Europe by strengthening contacts and enriching the dialogue between members of the Europe's landscape academic community and by representing the interests of this community within the wider European social and institutional context. The council has organised an EU-funded thematic network project, LE:NOTRE, since 2002 which is currently being transformed into a self-standing institute. During the last years ECLAS has put many important projects on the way, amongst others the tuning project for landscape education, the establishment of a European academic journal for landscape architecture (JoLA) and the fostering of better collaboration of European doctoral students.

key-words

landscape architecture education, ECLAS, tuning project, landscape forum, LE:NOTRE

The European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools, ECLAS, is an association of university teachers and researchers in landscape architecture, whose main membership consists of university departments and faculties where landscape architecture teaching and research is the main focus of activity. The council exists to foster and develop scholarship in landscape architecture throughout Europe by strengthening contacts and enriching the dialogue between members of the Europe's landscape academic community and by representing the interests of this community within the wider European social and institutional context. In pursuit of this goal the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools seeks to build upon the Continent's rich landscape heritage and intellectual traditions.

Over the years since it was founded and in particular since the formal legal establishment of the association in 2006, there have been solid achievements that will be explained in the following in more detail:

The Annual Conference

ECLAS has been patron for a series of annual conferences that have been hosted by universities all over Europe. The themes of the conferences are related to teaching, learning and research in the field of landscape architecture and the development of the discipline of landscape architecture. The conferences have provided a major base for academic collaboration and have also played host in recent years to Doctoral Colloquia where doctoral students can come together and share their ideas and experiences with feedback from senior academics. The 2013

annual conference takes place in Hamburg, Germany, hosted by the Hafen City University from September 22-25 under the theme 'specifics'. The 2014 conference will be hosted by the University of Porto in Portugal.

Le:Notre Thematic Network Project

The EU Thematic Network Le:Notre (Landscape Education: New Opportunities for Teaching and Research in Europe) has been running for nine years. Now in its third full version it will cease in 2013. During that time resources of all kinds have been built up on the project website. The recent development of the Le:Notre Landscape Forum as an alternative to Spring Workshops has proved successful and the outreach of the Le:Notre project to many areas of landscape outside landscape architecture – the "Neighbouring disciplines" – has been enhanced by the first one held in Antalya in 2012 and the second one held in Rome in 2013. The Landscape Forum Rome was organised by the Faculty of Architecture of La Sapienza University in the period from 17th to 18th of April 2013. The forum is conceived as a complementary event to the ECLAS conference. While the conference concentrates on academic exchange among landscape architecture teachers and researchers the forum intends to address also practitioners, public authorities, representatives from neighbouring disciplines and various other stakeholders in order to discuss jointly about the landscape of a specific site. In addition to key notes and roundtable discussion several workshops and excursions are organised during which thematic groups explore a specific landscape context. During the workshops the sites visited are

intensively discussed and finally a joint publication is produced.

This discourse has four thematic sections: Urban growth and peri-urban sprawl, sustainable tourism, heritage and identities and rural fringe. The first theme was explored on the example of the EUR-quarter in the east of Rome. The sustainable tourism group visited the Via Appia regional park and the heritage team went to Ostia Antica and its environments. The rural fringe theme was explored in the area north of Ostia Antica along the river Tiber. The publication is supposed to be published in the beginning of 2014. The next landscape forum in April 2014 will take place in Malta.



Figure 1. Home page of Le:Notre web site.

The LE:NOTRE website

A powerful tool in the collaboration and the exchange of information is to be found in the Le:Notre website. It offers information on schools, programmes, staff members, literature and subjects of theses. It is also facilitates the exchange of publications that are developed by Le:Notre and ECLAS members. Further important resources are databases in design projects, landscape plans, an encyclopedia with the European 'pioneers of landscape architecture education' and a multilingual thesaurus of landscape architecture terminology. All databases build on the principle of user generated content. All registered members are able to add new and edit existing content elements and thus contribute to an ever growing body of knowledge.

The LE:NOTRE Institute

The LE:NOTRE project has now come to a crucial point because funding through the EU's Lifelong Learning programme will definitively end by the end of October 2013. Therefore, ECLAS has decided to transform the project into an institute that would be owned by the Council but managed by an own board. The institute will take the legal form of a foundation under Dutch law. The advantage of this format is that the LE:NOTRE institute will be able to implement activities that ECLAS as a membership organisation is legally not able to do (such as research projects etc.). The main objectives of the LE:NOTRE institute will be to organise different types of academic activities within the so-called knowledge triangle of research, education and innovative practice. The major difference between the institute and ECLAS is that

the former will continue to be open for neighbouring disciplines in order to allow for multi-disciplinary and innovative approaches to landscape research. ECLAS in contrast remains the membership organisation of landscape architecture academics and keeps its disciplinary limit.

Contributions to European Policy

ECLAS has become closely involved with the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe, which came into force in March 2004, being given official observer status. ECLAS has been invited to participate in all of the Workshops on the Implementation of the Convention which have been held by the Council of Europe, and papers have been presented at these meetings by members and representatives of ECLAS.

The Tuning Project: Implementing the Bologna Process, within the discipline of landscape architecture

Through its participation in the Le:Notre Thematic Network Project, ECLAS had an indirect role in helping to implement the Bologna Process within the field of landscape architecture. Activities involved the definition and weighting of generic competences, and the formulation of subject specific competences for landscape architecture graduates. The main focus of this work was within the twelve subject area working groups defined through the Le:Notre Project which became a 'core area' of the Tuning Project and was invited to participate in both the launch and the closing conferences of 'Tuning III'. The resulting document was approved by the ECLAS General Assembly and is a valuable guide for schools preparing or revising

programmes. The document is available on the ECLAS website.

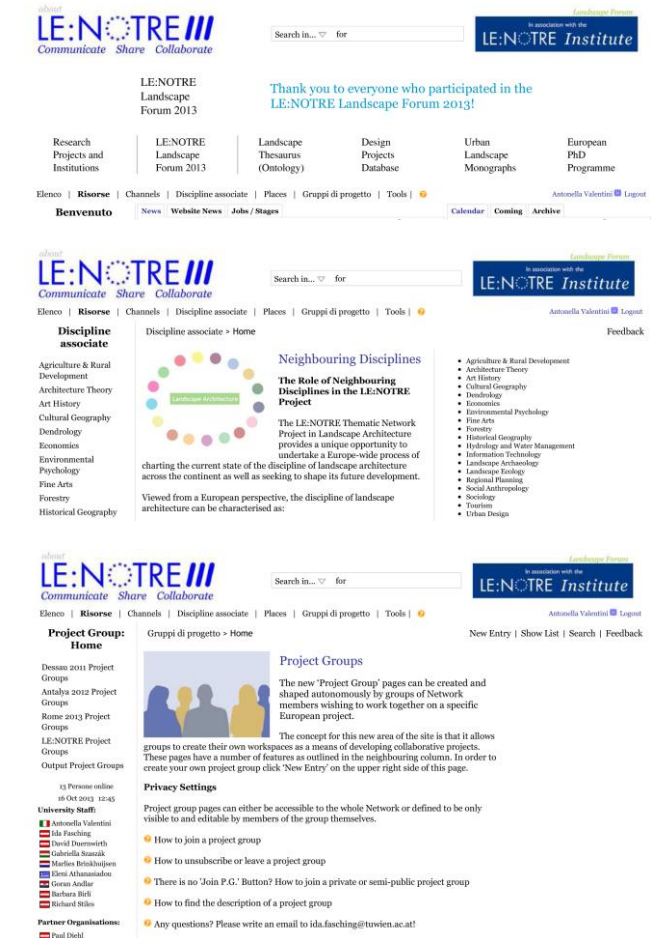


Figure 2. Three screenshot of the web site, showing the list of Resources, the Neighbouring Disciplines (agriculture, economics, fine arts...), the Project Groups.

Journal of Landscape Architecture (JoLA)

The academic journal JoLA was founded in 2006 and is owned by ECLAS. JoLA currently appears in two editions per year in the Routledge publishing house and there are plans to increase the number of issues soon. A much improved submission system was set up and all back issues are now available online. JoLA won the award of excellence from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2009.

Exploring the Boundaries of Landscape Architecture

One of the outputs of the Le:Notre projects has been to explore the relationship of various so-called "neighbouring disciplines" of landscape architecture. From the initial reports prepared by experts from a range of fields an edited book entitled "Exploring the Boundaries of Landscape Architecture" was produced and published by Routledge, the first "ECLAS badged" book and, it is hoped, the first of many more.

ECLAS Young Academics and support for young researchers

As a practice-led discipline landscape architecture is facing big challenge when trying to impose some sort of methodology on a kindly theory-resistant subject. While the positivist sciences provide a well-equipped box of quantitative tools for investigating the physical layers of our environment, the qualitative instruments from the domain of social sciences are required for interpreting the human factor. The application of methods that are also prevalent in neighbouring

disciplines has become common practice in landscape architecture research.

On the other hand, the planning and design process itself has developed into a research method in its own right: Landscape architecture can create new knowledge through design. And yet, this approach is only at the beginning of evolving its full potential. But also the product (or the process) itself can be regarded as an issue for research: We use case-study methodologies, critical analysis and hermeneutics for positioning landscape architecture in our cultural and social context. All of these can be justified approaches. Luckily, none of them tells the whole story. This is of course a reduced and obviously incomplete spotlight on the situation. But it shows the dilemma (not only) young landscape architecture researchers are facing: How can we create new knowledge?

Since 2002 ECLAS has organised regular exchange of doctoral students as part of its annual events. These colloquia are addressed to all current and prospective doctoral students in landscape architecture and related disciplines who wish to share and discuss methodical aspects of their research in a European research community. The meeting is open to all research themes and methodical approaches from across the field of landscape architecture and neighbouring disciplines.

ECLAS has gone through tremendous developments throughout the last decade but looks optimistic to its future. Thanks go to its members who make all of this happen what has been explained in this article. It needs to be reminded that most of this work is done on a voluntary basis

by academics who believe in the European idea and in the power of combining forces.

Riferimenti bibliografici

<http://www.eclas.org> European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools
<http://eclas.org/accreditation-advice.php> ECLAS Guidance on Landscape Architecture Education
<http://www.le-notre.org> LE:NOTRE Thematic Network
<http://www.eclas2013.de> ECLAS Conference Hamburg
http://www.eclas2013.de/fileadmin/data/headerimg/130613_PhD_Call_ForPapers.pdf ECLAS Doctoral Colloquium 2013
[http://www.jola-lab.eu/Journal of Landscape Architecture](http://www.jola-lab.eu/Journal%20of%20Landscape%20Architecture)

Riferimenti iconografici

All the figures are taken from the web site of the Le:Notre Project.

*Testo acquisito dalla redazione nel mese di luglio 2013.
 © Copyright dell'autore. Ne è consentito l'uso purché sia correttamente citata la fonte.*

