

Landscapes, Urban Architecture and Nature between Beauty and Relation

Giacomo Fronzi*

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the philosophical resurgence of landscape aesthetics in late 20th-century thought, reclaiming natural beauty from ecological and scientific discourses through key works by Paolo D'Angelo and Rosario Assunto. D'Angelo's analyses in *Estetica della natura*, *Filosofia del paesaggio*, and *Il paesaggio* emphasize experiential dimensions – imaginative, emotional, and identificatory – bridging nature and artifice while addressing postmodern shifts beyond modernity's artificial dominance. This paper critiques contemporary architecture's failures amid urban sprawl, invoking Simmel's metropolitan pathologies, La Cecla's call for sociability, and Romano's theory of urban beauty rooted in European collective themes.

Transitioning to the megalopolis, the discussion contrasts ancient *pólis* closure with Roman *civitas* openness, advocating relational, polyvalent designs that restore discontinuity, belonging, and ethical-aesthetic regeneration. Ultimately, beauty emerges as salvific, harmonizing ecology, history, and human survival in inhabitable urban landscapes.

KEYWORDS

Landscape, Aesthetics, Beauty, Pólis, Urban Architecture, Ecology

El paisaje tiene
telarañas de siglos.
Archivo de crepúsculos
y de noches.

Federico García Lorca, *Melancolía vieja*

1. *Landscape and Philosophy*

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, more books devoted to landscape were published than in the entire remainder of the century. As Paolo D'Angelo observes in his *Estetica della natura*, “la bellezza naturale è tornata per tutt’altre strade da quelle che Adorno avrebbe immaginato. A riproporla è stata non tanto

* Università degli studi di Bari Aldo Moro, giacomo.fronzi@uniba.it

la filosofia, quanto l'ecologia" (D'Angelo 2023, p. 57). Yet, thanks also to D'Angelo's theoretical and philosophical commitment, in the very last decades the theme and problem of natural beauty have been reclaimed from an exclusively technical-scientific or environmental-scientific discourse. They have been placed once again in relation to aesthetic appreciation, thereby extending the horizon of the beautiful, which in the meantime had become detached from the world of art.

D'Angelo writes in *Filosofia del paesaggio*:

potremmo dire che se la modernità è stata segnata dal predominio dell'artificiale sul naturale, dalla temporalità intesa come progresso, dal rifiuto della dimensione paesaggistica, è l'epoca che è venuta dopo – chiamatela, se volete, postmoderna – a riabilitare il paesaggio, elaborando una nuova visione dello spazio e rifiutando come semplicistica l'opposizione tra artificio e natura (D'Angelo 2014a, p. 12).

By altering the perspective within which landscape could be situated, philosophy – and aesthetics in particular – was compelled to recalibrate its gaze. After the oblivion to which it had been consigned through Hegel's exclusion of natural beauty from the domain of aesthetics (now redefined as philosophy of art), landscape re-emerged as a privileged object of analysis. This was especially so following the publication, in 1973, of *Il paesaggio e l'estetica* by Rosario Assunto. In this and in subsequent works, Assunto – developing a proposal that he himself summarised in the formula “estetismo speculativo” – thematized natural beauty, landscape, and the garden, assigning them renewed centrality within aesthetic experience as such.

Certainly, as D'Angelo emphasises in *L'estetica italiana del Novecento*, the conception of beauty envisaged by Assunto is Platonic and Romantic. It is a beauty that transcends experience and presents itself as a mode of being. From this perspective, “l'estetica è parte dell'ontologia, e la bellezza è presenza assoluta, garanzia di verità, anzi tutt'uno con la verità stessa” (D'Angelo 2014b, p. 345). In the following decades, philosophical reflection on landscape arguably became more this-worldly. It did so also in response to an increasingly complex network of issues whose scope places the very existence of the human species in serious doubt.

For over twenty years, D'Angelo's own reflection has sought to respond to this philosophical and cultural demand, beginning with the first publication of his *Estetica della natura*. It has developed across several levels and has underscored, with refined conceptual versatility, the centrality of natural beauty beyond a purely subjectivist account of our relation to landscape. On the

one hand, D'Angelo has focused on the “experiential” aspects of landscape perception. These are not reducible either to cognition or to the merely sensory sphere. Rather, they are characterised by a combination of imaginative, emotional, mnemonic, and identificatory components from which value judgements about what we see emerge. On the other hand, particularly in *Il paesaggio. Teorie, storie, luoghi*, the philosopher has explored the possible articulations of a discourse on landscape capable of suggesting hypothetical solutions for achieving a much-needed balance between the natural and the artificial, between conservation and progress.

Il paesaggio has the great merit of bringing together a careful and meticulous reconstruction of the theories (or philosophies) of landscape with an ongoing investigation into how the dialectic between landscape and history, human beings and nature, past and present, has manifested itself in specific locations in our country, particularly in Lazio and Apulia. The variety and richness of the philosophical references are harmonised within a discourse structured in three parts, corresponding to the book's subtitle. It addresses both questions related to the analysis of the aesthetic experience activated by our relationship with landscape and the description and in-depth examination of its characteristics. At times these are evocative, as in the case of the profound silences and the natural environment of the Alta Murgia. At other times they are dramatically problematic, as in the case of the Salento landscape ravaged by Xylella, places dear to the Author.

This is a work of great value. It can help us to look at landscape – quite literally – in a different way: more consciously and, in a complex age such as our own, potentially more productively.

Another text of extraordinary importance in landscape studies, first published in 2010 and republished in 2014, is the aforementioned *Filosofia del paesaggio*. In this work, the author opens by observing that, according to a widespread conviction, landscape is something easy to understand and to address, something already fully assimilated. It may be so now. It was not so forty or fifty years ago. Sensitivity to landscape, its knowledge and its protection, are in fact relatively recent acquisitions.

Landscape, indeed, is not an immediate datum but “il prodotto di una elaborazione”: “per *vedere* un paesaggio c'è bisogno di qualcosa di più di un occhio che lo scorga: ci vuole anche una riflessione che lo costituisca nella sua diversità dal mero dato sensibile” (D'Angelo 2014, p. 13). From the standpoint of aesthetics, to speak of landscape means

sottolineare che nella percezione di un paesaggio noi compiamo un'esperienza di natura diversa da quella conoscitiva o puramente sensoriale, un'esperienza che organizza quel che vediamo sulla base di componenti immaginative, emotive e identificative, rivelandosi attraverso una soddisfazione o insoddisfazione che mette capo al riconoscimento del valore di ciò che vediamo (pp. 13-14).

Feeling, modernity, history, environment, identity: these are only some – certainly among the most important – of the elements that come into play when landscape is approached philosophically. To these must be added the overarching question of the survival of the human species on this planet. The problems connected with the global ecological crisis have called scientists, architects, geographers, botanists, and urban planners to renewed commitment. The relationship between nature and architecture, between natural and urban landscape, between pre-existing realities – whether constituted by historic architecture or by natural sites – and new structures, requires a theoretical and philosophical approach that duly takes into account the future of humanity on the planet.

At this point, the discussion begins to expand so as to include urban architecture and the ways in which interpersonal relations may be (re)configured within it.

2. Architecture between Metropolitan Labyrinths and the Need for Sociability

Contemporary architecture is confronted with enormous problems, linked to environmental impact, the habitability of cities, the degradation of peripheral areas, and the climate crisis. With regard to these issues, architects – taking up a polemic raised by Franco La Cecla – appear to have lost some sense of a profession that is not merely useful, but decisive for the development of a community and a territory.

The problems associated with the global ecological crisis call architects and urban planners to a further commitment. The relationship between nature and architecture, between natural landscape and urban landscape, between pre-existing realities – whether constituted by historic architecture or natural sites – and new structures, requires a constructive approach that duly takes into account the future of humanity on the planet. It also requires careful attention to the theoretical reflection that has developed around these themes since the second half of the twentieth century.

Too tightly entangled “nel tentativo di partecipare al Casino Capitalism” (La Cecla 2008, p. 112), architects seem to have lost

the sense of public space. They appear to have relinquished the idea of human coexistence as a dialectic between identity and difference, between past and present, between the “è stato”, the “è”, and the “non ancora”. In doing so, they have failed to recover a fruitful relationship with the only true recipient of their work: the human being.

The “archistar” has dramatically closed the communicative channel with the “mente locale”. No longer does he listen to it, and he seems interested in it only superficially. Yet the local mind is not shaped solely within contexts of degradation, difficulty, precariousness, or insecurity. It is formed also – and above all – within a dimension of “collective joy”. To be “against the architecture” means, for La Cecla, to take a stand in favour of a conception of architecture as a practice that is useful to human beings, as a discipline open to their necessities and needs. It also means endorsing an architecture capable of sustaining that collective joy of which the American journalist and writer Barbara Ehrenreich speaks, and to which La Cecla himself looks.

A new architecture must be capable of moving across different planes and levels. It must shift from the individual to the collective, from the present to the past and to the future. It must take care of the positive development of humanity and of the planet as a whole.

The scenario within which architects and urban planners are required to act may be the small town or the megalopolis. It is evident, however, that these two extremes – as well as the intermediate degrees – raise questions and problems of very different significance. The fears expressed at the beginning of the twentieth century, concerning an uncontrollable increase in the inhumanity and alienation of human relations within the newly formed metropolises, emerge clearly and are woven into an exemplary synthesis in Georg Simmel’s essay *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903). The metropolis described by Simmel displays features, dangers, and pathologies which, notwithstanding obvious historical differences, are still discernible in contemporary megalopolises. Like the Simmelian metropolis, they are places in which the tendencies of the present age are concentrated and intensified.

By subjecting the individual to unforeseen experiences, abrupt contrasts, and the rapid alternation of images and stimuli, and by ultimately creating new and different psychological conditions,

The metropolis exacts from man as a discriminating creature a different amount of consciousness than does rural life. Here the rhythm of life and sensory mental imagery flows more slowly, more habitually, and more evenly. Precisely in this

connection the sophisticated character of metropolitan psychic life becomes understandable – as over against small town life which rests more upon deeply felt and emotional relationships. These latter are rooted in the more unconscious layers of the psyche and grow most readily in the steady rhythm of uninterrupted habituations (Simmel in Wolff 1950, p. 410).

For an analytical gaze such as Simmel's, however, these differences reveal a dual connotation. They are symptoms, at once, of freedom and of solitude. Metropolitan man has freed himself from the prejudices typical of the provincial individual. At the same time, this very freedom gives rise to a profound distrust and indifference among individuals, among the members of one and the same – albeit elephantine – community. The metropolis is both a source of isolation and a source of individuality. Lost in a sea of indistinction and conformism,

man is tempted to adopt the most tendentious peculiarities, that is, the specifically metropolitan extravagances of mannerism, caprice, and preciousness. Now, the meaning of these extravagances does not at all lie in the contents of such behavior, but rather in its form – “being different,” of standing out in a striking manner and thereby attracting attention (p. 421).

Even these brief references to Simmel's arguments suffice to bring to light certain elements that are significant for our discussion and that will be taken up and expanded in the following pages. At an introductory level, two may be indicated here.

Metropolitan life throws into sharp relief the theme of diffuse aestheticisation. On the one hand, this is linked to an almost infinite horizon of possible aesthetic experiences. On the other, it is connected with the near-exclusive affirmation of outward appearance over the contents of the spirit.

The second element concerns the particular intertwining of the sensible (aesthetic) level and the intersubjective-relational (ethical) level that permeates contemporary existence. In its positive traits as in its negative ones, in its most humane aspects as in its most aberrant, such existence remains inevitably anchored within the urban context. It is therefore a matter of taking a position. It is a matter of choosing responsibly whether to proceed along one's path while remaining distant from the destinies of other human beings, or to conceive the reality in which we live as a context within which our actions – individual and collective – may contribute to the harmonious progress of humanity.

For a city conceived as “un luogo di circolazione di un materiale consistente che fluisce come un fiume tra sponde di allegria” (La Cecla 2008, p. 117), it is necessary that there develop

nuova competenza, una disciplina attenta, vivace, profonda, quella dei sopralluoghi, dei conoscitori delle forme di vita e dei tipi di abitare, dei visionari concreti, scienziati dell'umano che non si permettano di sentirsi superiori a esso come ogni stupido piccolo artista di provincia, ma che vogliano imparare la danza per poterla difendere tra nuove sponde di allegria (*ibid.*).

3. *The City: Old and New Models*

To be concerned with the harmonious progress of humanity means that new architecture, for its part, cannot evade engagement with the most significant pathologies of contemporaneity: from the problem of social degradation to the delicate issue of environmental compatibility; from the gradual drying up of the “relationality” of architectural and public spaces to questions relating to alternative energy sources.

This specific way of thinking about and practising architecture is primarily connected with urban and residential spaces. In relation to these spaces, a dialogue is created – or at least architecture recognises this as an issue with which it must engage – both among the subjects who “inhabit” them and between urban, extra-urban, and suburban fabric. The traditional and clear-cut distinction between “inside” and “outside”, between city and countryside, refers in fact to a model of the city that has now passed away. In recent decades, the model of the “città territorio” has been replaced by that of the so-called “città continua”: the horizontal city that dilates and expands without limits and without form – in other words, the contemporary megalopolis.

Urban architecture is the discipline that organises, reshapes, regenerates, and constructs the urban fabric and the architectural spaces of the city, in dialogue with their natural context and landscape. At the heart of urban architecture, therefore, lies the new contemporary city, with its dynamics and its (dis)articulations, its contradictions and its potentialities. To attempt to penetrate the problematic soul of contemporary urban realities means beginning from the recognition that they display original features which place them in antithesis to traditional urban forms. It is from this difference that reflection must begin anew.

What are the principal novelties that have intervened in relation to the model of the city that characterised processes of urbanisation in Europe for centuries?

First and foremost, the limits that defined the traditional city have disappeared, whereas the contemporary city tends no longer to possess them. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the city was sep-

arated from its surrounding context. The boundary that marked it – symbolically and physically coinciding with the city walls – strengthened the spirit of identity. Both the walls and the gates of access fostered the development of a sense of belonging, one that nevertheless remained open, albeit in limited measure, to exchanges with the external environment.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the city began to expand and to extend beyond all measure. This led to the loss of identification and, conversely, fostered the citizen's disorientation within the urban space – a space in which hierarchies and reference points had vanished. What is lacking in the great contemporary metropolises is an aspect that may properly be described as aesthetic. It does not concern exclusively the degree of artistry or beauty of urban architecture. Rather, what tends to dissolve is the “shared feeling”, the “sentiment” of belonging.

If it is true that

lo spazio aperto della Polis è un elemento fondativo di pari rango e nessun senso comune sussisterebbe ove questo spazio fosse rimosso d'autorità (come accade nei regimi totalitari) o fosse pervertito nel territorio asfittico (quand'anche globalizzato [...]) di un oikos generalizzato e livellato, in cui è da supporre che la medesima facoltà di giudizio verrebbe messa in disarmo e la stessa aisthesis [...] contratta e canalizzata in una sensibilità capace di incontrare nient'altro che le forme sociali – e le tecniche – della sussistenza biologica (Montani 2007, pp. 24-25)

then the attention devoted to public urban and architectural space (as well as to private space) ought to manifest itself under the sign of safeguarding its ultimate communal aim.

In order better to understand the development of the post-metropolitan (or megalopolitan) model that characterises our age, a further step back is required, reaching to the distinction between the Hellenic model of the *pólis* and the Roman model of the *civitas*. Whereas the *pólis* was “fondamentalmente l'unità di persone dello stesso *génos*” (Cacciari 2008, p. 9), thus referring to an organic whole that precedes the very idea of the *polítes*, the *civitas* was the result of the aggregation of persons differing in religion, ethnicity, and customs. It represented an idea that follows that of the *cives*. The *pólis* looked to the past (embodied in the *génos*), while the *civitas* was projected towards the future. What sustained the *civitas* was not “un fondamento originario quanto un obiettivo” (ivi): not an original foundation, but a goal – the *imperium sine fine*, the *civitas mobilis augescens*.

From these premises the models of the city and, subsequently, of the metropolis were developed. The soul of the metropolis is

essentially that of an undefined space within which the logics of market and industry destroy the idea of a “condivisione comunitaria degli spazi” (ivi). The limited and delimited model of the city is thus superseded in favour of a progressive and unlimited openness.

The metropolis, ultimately, is the highest realisation of the Roman model. It is the perfect *civitas mobilis augescens*, in which general and continuous mobilisation produces the progressive thinning of the *humanity* of interpersonal relations, shaped by the logic of production-exchange-profit.

Along this line of development, we reach the contemporary model: that of the megalopolis, the continuous city. Contemporary megalopolises confront us with the question of the types of material and immaterial relations that are generated within the urban fabric and space. The megalopolitan space is formless, undefined, standardised, and standardising. Unlike the traditional city, it no longer represents a laboratory for the research and exchange of experience. Rather, it launches a “sfida radicale a tutte le forme tradizionali della vita comunitaria” (ivi).

Urbanistic degenerations – to which correspond undeniable social degenerations – seem to revive the *vexata quaestio* concerning the superiority or otherwise of the modern over the ancient, of the “uncertain” present over the “certain” past, of the *novum* over the *vetus*. In reality, neither contemporary nor future human beings could recognise as their own – and recognise themselves within – the ancient urban spaces, even while acknowledging in them a social, architectural, and communal equilibrium that has now been lost.

This equilibrium dissolved also in connection with the ambiguous and problematic dialectic between openness and closure, which in contemporaneity has assumed almost tragic features. Is community more readily generated in open space or in closed space?

Closed and delimited space favours the creation of community. At the same time, however, it signals a need for isolation and privacy. Openness, by contrast, evokes the ideas of flow, mobilisation, communication, encounter, and transit. It also evokes indistinction and indifference.

Although the contemporary megalopolis has been constituted as the “heir” of the model of the *civitas* rather than of the *pólis*, contemporary man is faced with the following dilemma: to cultivate the idea of the *pólis*, of the city-as-dwelling, of the well-delimited space that can enable “scambi sociali, relazioni ricche e partecipare”, or to embrace “la grande idea romana, gente che viene da tutte la parti, che parla tutte le lingue, che ha tutte le religioni, un’unica legge però, un senato, un imperatore e una missione?” (ivi).

The present condition, in which human beings no longer inhabit the city – whose boundaries no longer exist – but territories, represents either the triumph of cosmopolitanism and the realisation of the dream of uniting humanity within a single boundless city, or the end of “ogni ‘forma’ comunitaria” (ivi). In the traditional city, moreover, there prevailed a “corrispondenza tra i tempi delle funzioni dei lavori, delle relazioni, e la qualità dell’architettura, dove l’architettura arricchiva, potenziava la qualità dell’insieme” (ivi).

Post-metropolitan development, by contrast, has destroyed this equilibrium among spaces, themes, places, and functions. It has produced a false democracy. It has dismantled the positive and identity-forming discontinuity of spaces and volumes, favouring instead a continuity that is in reality flattening and homogenisation. This continuity also underlies the absence of recognisable architectural spaces and objects.

The form of the traditional city has been replaced by the formless megalopolis, where the element of measurability disappears and the urbanised continuum fosters the absence of hierarchies and recognisable elements. It encourages the privatisation of public space and the fragmentation of the void into formless spaces. In doing so, it negates hierarchical urban architectural structures, within which different relations of importance operate inside the system.

It is precisely in the question of the relationship between spaces, times, and functions that Cacciari identifies the locus within which possible solutions may be sought. Contemporary humanity needs to reconvert buildings and spaces into places that are genuinely inhabitable and correspond to present-day functions, needs, and problems. It must overcome “monofunzionalità” and instead realise “edifici davvero polivalenti”, “dove la compiutezza formale del luogo s’accorda all’universalità delle informazioni che vi riceviamo, laddove l’individuale stesso ci comunica l’universale” (ivi).

4. *The Beauty That Saves*

It would seem, then, that the key words of the new urban architecture can only be discontinuity, relationality, polyvalence, and multifunctionality. But not only these. There is also *beauty*. It is precisely to the aesthetically and ethically significant problem of the beauty of cities that Marco Romano has devoted himself for thirty years, notably in four volumes that articulate an original *theory of urban beauty* (cf. Romano 1993, 2004, 2008, 2016).

The premises of this theory are observational in nature. According to Romano, they are incontrovertible: all European cities have featured the same thematised streets and squares, always constructed according to the same criteria. Throughout history, collective themes have appeared in succession. In relation to them, the problem has constantly arisen of how and in what manner to arrange them in order to achieve the most beautiful result, thereby expressing a profound and unmistakable *desire for beauty*.

Romano is right to maintain that, behind our ecological arguments, we should perhaps foreground the fact that, prior to the technical dimension in our lives, there exists a symbolic dimension. In a discourse on architecture and urban planning, this means that societies construct environments appropriate to their own organisation. Over the course of a thousand years, European society has built an ecologically appropriate environment for its particular form of social life: an open, mobile, democratic society. Any "citizen" (that is, a householder faithful to the city's statutes) may pursue his or her ambitions by virtue of these characteristics, which distinguish it from other types of society.

The European city displays, for example, a distinctive feature: the façades of houses are decorated, since the greater or lesser degree of decoration clearly signals the social status of the family that inhabits them. The decoration may be rich or modest. Yet, in the European city, no one entirely renounces a minimum of ornamentation, even if it consists only of simple flowers. The meaning of this lies in the fundamental ecological condition of the European citizen: the possibility of possessing a house within which to express one's individuality.

According to Marco Romano, European society has constructed cities characterised by collective themes that recur in every city and enable each of them to situate itself within the European geography: the town hall, the principal church, the theatre, the museum, the library, and so forth. Cities have always measured their rank against one another through the quality and distinctiveness of these collective themes, which are constant everywhere. It follows that the mobility of the European citizen, and the ease with which he or she may integrate into any city, are guaranteed by the recognition, in the new city, of the same collective themes present in the city of origin.

Naturally, the great differences among European cities are linked to the quality of their architectural choices, while remaining firmly anchored to a fundamental need for beauty. They have expressed this need in different ways, yet remained faithful to a common

schema, within which certain elements are constant: the main street; the monumental street (with its most important buildings); the triumphal street (with a terminating backdrop, such as the Arc de Triomphe in Paris); boulevards; promenades and tree-lined avenues (introduced in the sixteenth century) leading towards the city's exit.

It was possible to build beautiful cities because emphasis was placed on the creation of sequences that coherently articulated the urban fabric. Thanks to the presence of collective themes analogous to those found at the city centre, these sequences also enabled the qualification of areas more distant from the centre, fostering in their inhabitants a sense of recognition and belonging.

At the exact opposite pole stands the contemporary periphery, understood as a degraded zone, as a desert of meaning. It is characterised precisely by the absence of collective themes and symbolic signs capable of defining a sense of belonging to the city. To feel that one belongs to a city means to be able to carry that city "within oneself": that urban context in which routes and spaces are clearly identifiable. It means making possible what the contemporary megalopolis denies, namely the inhabitant's internalisation of the structural map of the city, so as to identify it with his or her own psychic map.

The challenge of contemporary architecture is, ultimately, that of creating genuine sharing. It is to foster the emergence of a *sensus communis* by relying upon the strength of those symbolic elements that the contemporary megalopolis lacks. In it, by contrast, "la perdita di 'valore simbolico' [...] cresce proporzionalmente; assistiamo, o ci sembra di assistere, a uno sviluppo senza meta, cioè, letteralmente, insensato, ad un processo che non presenta alcuna dimensione 'organica'" (Cacciari 2008, p. 58). Improving dwelling, however, does not simply mean rendering it secure, stable, and sustainable. It also means making it beautiful, supporting an architecture that promotes a general and profound process of both ethical regeneration and "rigenerazione estetica" (Romano 2004, p. 19).

Less aesthetics, more ethics ("Less aesthetics, more ethics" was the title – and thus the theme – of the Seventh International Architecture Exhibition [Biennale Architettura, Venice 2000], directed by Massimiliano Fuksas), but, when necessary, also its reverse: *Less ethics, more aesthetics*. The ethical, socio-anthropological, and aesthetic levels must be central within the horizon of a new urban architecture which, above all, should conceive of itself as *relational architecture*. It should propose models that stimulate exchange, encounter, and communal modes of experience, abandoning a cynical "atteggiamento

passivo o complice, rispetto alla distruzione della vita e all'enorme sviluppo delle megalopoli" (Fuksas 1999-2000, p. 23).

The relational work of art, clearly defined and described by Nicolas Bourriaud, proposed itself as a social "interstice", endowed with meaning and autonomous in relation to the general system within which it was situated. Yet it could realise its "ethical" objective only within strongly limited temporal boundaries. Contemporary (ethical and relational) architecture, by contrast, possesses the possibility of creating urban "interstices" with far broader temporal horizons: genuinely inhabitable places, relational and communal public spaces capable of overcoming the "solitude of the global citizen", ultimately contributing to "una città meno discriminante e più bella" (Romano 2004, p. 19).

Neither boundaries nor openings can or should disappear, since there is no openness without boundaries and no boundaries except within a space that would otherwise be indefinitely limitless.

Territories must be reconsidered and re-experienced in their mobility,

elastici, deformabili, capaci di accogliersi l'un l'altro, di penetrare gli uni negli altri, spugnosi, molluscolari. Non si tratta di un'operazione di soppressione del confine: qualsiasi corpo presenta confini, pena l'annullarsi. Né si tratta di confondere anarchicamente le relazioni fra i diversi tempi dei diversi luoghi. Si tratta piuttosto di accordare senza confondere, facendo vivere l'intero nella qualità di ogni parte (Cacciari 2004, p. 58).

For this reason, aesthetics too – both as a theory of sensibility and as a reflection on art and architecture – cannot exempt itself from addressing the questions connected with urban landscapes and with dwelling, understood as a fundamental and decisive element for human survival and existence. And even with respect to this leanings, Paolo D'Angelo's research remains an unavoidable and always extremely productive reference.

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