

The Landscape Question in the Work of Rosa Barba: The Landscape Project and the Abstraction of Territory

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Abstract

An advocate of landscaping and landscape architecture as fundamental tools in the revitalisation of urban planning in the late 20th century, architect Rosa Barba both energised and modernised the discipline of landscape architecture in Spain by delving into previously uncharted waters and approaching landscape both from a perspective of conceptual innovation and in an effort to offer a response to the issues of the day. From a stance that was simultaneously theoretical, academic and professional, she offered a critical perspective of city, territory and landscape and envisioned new horizons for architecture and urbanism through landscaping, thereby broadening the scope of these disciplines. Her work establishes relevant, pioneering contributions to landscape design and transformation that are still relevant today. The purpose of this article is to offer, via analysis of some of her principal projects, an in-depth examination of the theoretical and disciplinary position from which she approached the landscape question and explored the possibility of improving the conceptual and technical instruments and models used for the analysis and interpretation of the same in a broad, complex manner that both offers a response to the concerns of the day and establishes a theory of landscape intervention.

Introduction

Architect Rosa Barba, the driving force behind landscape architecture in Spain, established the foundations of the same as an autonomous discipline from a perspective that explored the limits of architecture and addressed landscape construction as a new condition of urbanism, delving into as yet uncharted waters and offering a response to issues of the day.

Following her graduation from the Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB) in 1971, she founded *Rosa Barba & Ricard Pié arquitectes* alongside her career and life partner, Ricard Pié. Thereafter she embarked on a professional career that, over the course of three decades, progressed from urban planning to landscape architecture and which was tragically cut short by her premature death in 2000.

Despite the brevity of her life, her career trajectory was very intense, her commitment to facing up to the

challenges posed by the historical and cultural context of the age leading her to forge a career path in a discipline so needful of reconsideration at the time as was landscape architecture, and for which she defined new methods of analysis and interpretation and designed new instruments and methodologies that together would form the basis for the introduction of landscape considerations into urban and territorial planning.

Her works constitute relevant, pioneering contributions at a time when, on a European level, excessive urban expansion in the final decades of the 20th century required new solutions for areas in which traditional urban-rural boundaries were beginning to blur and where many of the urban development models used in previous decades, these having been inspired by urban planning precepts of the Modern Movement, proved to be insufficient in terms of offering a response to the challenges posed by environments that were neither urban nor rural [1].

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Capitalising on the impetus introduced into urban planning considerations in the last decades of the 20th century, Rosa Barba focused her attention on the city, territory and landscape, in particular on issues that had been to some extent excluded from previous urban planning considerations, such as the need to address peripheral areas, border spaces, tourism territories and non-urban landscapes [2]. These territories described a field of study that, at the time, lacked both theoretical consideration and examples and experiences that would allow their administration to be undertaken. The architect, in her quest for new paradigms from which to address the complexity of the urban processes of these territories in transformation, found a perspective from which to develop her academic and professional career.

Her disciplinary contribution to the landscape debate was the result of a career trajectory in which professional projects, theoretical considerations and university teaching continually overlapped. In 1974 she began teaching at the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), obtaining a doctorate degree from the same in 1987. This initial teaching experience enabled her to acquire the theoretical and academic substratum necessary to define a new perspective from which to approach territorial issues. So, while it was her professional practice that brought Rosa Barba into contact with the landscape, it was through her teaching that she formulated the theoretical discourse that would provide the basis for her professional and academic endeavours, which focused increasingly on landscape [3].

Her love of theorisation led her to promote and establish platforms from which to encourage the study and learning of and research into the contemporary landscape. In 1993 she founded the Centre for Landscape Research and Projects (CRPP), a university centre belonging to the UPC and dedicated to research, knowledge transfer and the training of experts in landscape practices. Likewise, her determination to implement her teaching and, as such, the profession of landscape architecture, led her to champion the existence of an independent space for landscape architecture within the discipline of architecture and to promote studies dedicated to landscape architecture in Catalonia via the UPC [4]. In 1992, then, she took over the management and coordination of the Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture, restructuring and internationalising the same and reorienting its teaching towards a more professional, contemporary approach that was in line with the debates relating to landscape architecture and its teaching that was taking place across Europe at the time. A year later, in 1983, she organised the advanced training in Landscape Architecture programme with the objective of complementing the master's degree course and completing the training course at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the UPC.

However, her contribution to the debate and dissemination of landscape issues that arose around this new discipline over these years did not stop here, and her role as the driving force behind the European Landscape Biennial and her efforts to disseminate and popularise issues relating to contemporary landscape by writing journal articles such as *Quaderns d'Arquitectura i urbanisme*, *Geometría*, *Papers*, *Urbanismo*, etc., editing books [5], [6], etc., are also worthy of mention.

Rosa Barba offered a critical reflection on city, territory and landscape from a theoretical, academic and professional perspective. She defended landscape architecture and landscaping as fundamental tools for the revitalisation of urban planning at the end of the 20th century and promoted and modernised the discipline of landscape architecture in a country like Spain, where almost no tradition of landscape architecture existed at the time; a time in which the future growth of towns and cities was beginning to be defined and an ideological change outlined, a change that described a new field of work in which practically nothing had been achieved, Rosa Barba, together with other members of the Laboratory of Urbanism of Barcelona (LUB) and the UPC Department of Urban and Regional Planning, tackled the revitalisation of urban planning, participating in many of the changes that took place throughout the country [4].

During this period, her career was linked to many of the debates and concerns that would later lead to the promotion of landscape management in Catalonia, Spain and Europe during the first two decades of the 21st century [7]. As it happened, her death would coincide with the promulgation of the European Landscape Convention by the Council of Europe in 2000.

The purpose of this article is to offer, via analysis of some of her principal projects, an in-depth examination of the theoretical and disciplinary position from which she approached the landscape question and explored the possibility of revitalising the conceptual and technical instruments and models used for the analysis and interpretation of the same in a broad and complex manner that both offers a response to the concerns of the day and establishes a theory of landscape intervention.

The purpose of this research is to offer an in-depth study of the principal features of the theoretical constants of her landscape research, research that would establish the basis for her reflective activity and landscape intervention and relate to the definition of landscape, the identification of its constituent elements, its dynamics of transformation, its identity and permanence, as well as the management of and intervention in the same, and which came to constitute relevant and pioneering seminal contributions to the beginnings of an emerging landscape architecture that was in need of modernisation if it was to address urban planning and design and respond to the territorial issues of the moment.

I. Methodology

As a working methodology, this research focuses initially on the study and analysis of Rosa Barba's career trajectory during the 1980s. This period is initially addressed because it was a time of reflection for the architect in which she built a theoretical and methodological position on which she based her subsequent work. During this period, Rosa Barba resumed part of her professional work to rethink the landscape question from a theoretical and disciplinary point of view. This led her to re-examine landscape study tools and to innovate in defining new disciplinary and methodological approaches for landscape interpretation and intervention.

In this first phase of the research that addresses the approach to her curricular career, we proceed to study some of her professional projects developed at that time together with Ricard Pié, such as the drafting of various development plans for tourist areas, mainly in the coast of Catalonia and the Canary Islands, which introduced her to landscape issues as an element of reflection and projective design discipline. Likewise, her theoretical reflections were collected in various publications where the architect participated as an author, e.g., numerous articles in journals such as *Quaderns d'Arquitectura, Geometry*, etc. and as editor of books are analysed. It is also addressed in the study of her teaching experience marked in these years by her incorporation into the LUB. The purpose of this study is to reveal the theoretical position that marked her subsequent work, which became increasingly focused on landscape.

In this study, the research focuses mainly on the analysis of two fundamental texts of hers from this time, such as the article *El Project del lloc. Entre l'anàlisi de l'entorn i el disseny de l'espai* (The project of the place. Between analysing the environment and designing the exterior space) published in 1982 in the journal *Quaderns d'Arquitectura i Urbanisme* [8]. This is the first theoretical reflection on her professional and academic work and a preliminary expression of the theoretical-practical questions of her future professional development, which she expanded in greater depth in the second text that shapes her doctoral thesis entitled *L'abstracció del territori* (The abstraction of territory) [9].

In the second phase, the research focuses, based on the study and analysis of these texts, on two of her theoretical constants that dominated and were recurring in her career, forming the basis of her reflections and actions in landscape architecture in the years to come, such as the landscape project and the abstraction of the territory. The objective of this study is to reveal those constants of Rosa Barba's reflection on the landscape that appear collected in these texts – sometimes fully developed and other times simply stated –, but on which the architect spoke repeatedly, constructing a theoretical and methodological corpus for landscape analysis and intervention. These constants

are the question of place, identity and permanence of the landscape and its management and intervention.

The main features of each of them are developed in the third phase of the research. In doing so, we have kept in mind not to simplify the architect's reflections, nor to attempt to offer a complete view of her thoughts about landscape, but rather to develop those themes on which the architect established the constants of theoretical discourse on which she based her professional and academic career.

Given the complexity of the author's reflections and investigations, this third phase has been based mainly on the study of the two texts previously stated, but it has also been supported by the analysis of other subsequent writings of hers in which the architect, in her effort to disseminate and publicise issues related to contemporary landscape, she participated actively and through which it is possible to analyse the evolution of her thought and to approach her personal view of landscape. Likewise, we have delved into the study of professional works developed in the 1980s together with Ricard Pié, such as the *General Plan for Urban Zoning (PGOU) of Sant Feliu de Guíxols and Castell-Platja d'Aro*, Catalonia (1981–1985), the *PGOU of Alcañiz*, Aragon (1989–1990), the *Insular Plan of Gran Canaria and Tenerife* (1988), the *Study of the environments of the A-7 motorway*, Catalonia (1985), etc., but also in other projects carried out in the 1990s, in which the architect devoted herself almost exclusively to landscaping, such as the *Study of the Manzanares Sur Metropolitan Park*, Madrid (1995), or the *European Artemis Project* (1994–2001), developed in the CRPP together with a research group organised by herself and made up of young professionals with an interdisciplinary vocation and committed to the landscape, and who came from both professional commissions and research projects.

The study of these contributions has been carried out in this third phase with the aim of finally verifying how these landscape issues that were at the origin and motivation of much of her theoretical reflection during the eighties were acquiring relevance in later works, becoming constants on which the architect based her reflection and action on landscape, defining new instruments and methodologies for analysis, interpretation and landscape intervention and opening a wide field of reflection that is still valid today.

II. Results

The results obtained in this research have been structured in two sections. The first of them, titled "Landscape construction", aims to reveal the theoretical and disciplinary position from which the architect, throughout her career trajectory, approached the question of landscape, conquering her own disciplinary space and innovating at the time to define new disciplinary and methodological approaches for the interpretation and definition of a theory of landscape intervention.

This section addresses the discovery of the question of landscape by Rosa Barba and how the architect approached it from conceptual innovation based on a broad and inclusive vision of the concept of landscape, which led her to delve into hitherto unexplored areas and to respond to contemporary issues. Likewise, it analyses how the landscape emerged in her work as an element of reflection and a project design discipline, facing the resistance of those who defended a classical and reductionist vision of urban planning and addressing the construction of landscape as a new condition of urbanity. This led her to broaden the field of action of architecture and urban planning through landscaping and landscape architecture and to define a theoretical position that would mark her later work.

The second section in which the results of this research are collected, entitled “The landscape project and the abstraction of territory”, aims, once the theoretical and disciplinary position from which the architect approached the question of landscape has been revealed, to understand in greater depth two of the theoretical constants that were recurring throughout her scientific, academic and professional career, such as the landscape project and the abstraction of territory. Both contemplate a series of themes that would predominate in her career and around which the architect built a theoretical and methodological corpus for landscape interpretation and design, such as the question of place, the issue of identity and the permanence of the landscape, and the question of its management and intervention. Each of them is analysed in detail through the analysis of their main theoretical works and landscape intervention projects, trying to reveal not only the theoretical and methodological position from which the architect approached the study of the landscape in a broad and complex way and constructed a theory of landscape intervention around these themes, but also analysing how these came to constitute relevant contributions in the beginnings of emerging landscaping scene.

III. Landscape Construction

The discovery of the landscape question for Rosa Barba was, as Ricard Pié states, accidental [10]. The collaboration of both of them in the 1980s in the drafting of development plans for tourist areas, particularly on the coast of Catalonia and the Canary Islands, defined their professional careers, introduced them to landscape issues, prompted them to approach landscape as an element that lent meaning to the territory and initiated them in the study of the characteristics of tourism urban planning, which differed considerably from more metropolitan- and rural-based urban planning. This made it necessary for them to deal with areas that had previously not been included in urban planning projects, such as peripheral

landscapes and landscapes in transformation, and to define new instruments and methodologies that would allow these to be interpreted and intervened in from the perspective of landscape and urban planning. For Rosa Barba, then, landscape emerged as an element of reflection and projective discipline from the frontiers of the Mediterranean city and from new territories such as those associated with tourism.

The period from the late 1980s to the early 1990s was a time of reflection and change for Rosa Barba [11], and her focus shifted from architecture and urbanism to landscape. During this period, which coincided with the development of her doctoral thesis, part of her professional efforts focussed on rethinking the landscape question from a theoretical and disciplinary perspective. This allowed her to consciously reflect on what had led her from the principles of urbanism to a presentiment regarding landscape and to outline a theoretical position that would define her subsequent work. So, once she had acquired the theoretical and academic substratum necessary to support the definition of a new perspective from which to tackle territorial problems, she began to focus primarily on landscape architecture.

During the 1990s, she reduced her involvement in professional projects to a minimum, differentiating between work in the areas of architecture and urban planning and work based primarily on landscape. Through the CRPP, which she founded in 1993, she organised a research group of young professionals with whom she developed projects involving professional commissions and research. This allowed her to reflect on and explore new fields relating to landscape practice and to define an individual disciplinary space from which to offer a response to the challenges presented by the historical and cultural context of landscape.

Her approach to landscape was based on conceptual innovation. Unlike other conceptualisations that associated landscape with more singular, picturesque spaces, the likes of gardens and parks, which still prevailed in the 1980s, even in the academic sphere, the architect adopted a broader, more inclusive vision based on the understanding that every place constitutes a landscape; a vision similar to that which would be contemplated by the European Landscape Convention years later [7].

This expanded definition of the concept of landscape led her to re-examine landscape study tools and to innovate in the definition of new disciplinary and methodological approaches to interpreting, but also to designing and transforming landscape. At a time when the landscape question was confined to matters that could not be addressed by urban planning and architecture had adopted an inward-looking position concerning the environment in which it was located, Rosa Barba envisioned new horizons for architecture and urban planning through landscaping and landscape architecture. She broadened the area of

action of these disciplines by offering reflection on the idea of landscape, proposing landscape not just as a backdrop but rather as a tool that could be used in urban architecture and planning as a means of responding to the challenges posed by contemporary territory. Her architectural training led her to approach landscape from a propositional perspective, in other words, “as a design argument in the transformation of extensive urban environments” [12, 11]. Unlike other disciplines in art, geography, biology, etc., which invoked landscape as an inspiration, she preferred to approach its construction [13] as a new condition of urbanism.

From her position as an urbanism and planning specialist and her stance, which placed her on the margins of the architectural discipline itself, she championed the need for urbanism to avail of those creative processes that bore relation to the architectural project and to extrapolate them to the scale of the territory in question, given the fact that she considered the urban form also to constitute a project. “Her training as an architect helped her understand the landscape as a design issue, and her practice as an urban planner gave her the framework – the territory – and the method – the time – that would help her understand two of the fundamental vectors in the landscape debate” [14, 392]. So, she used urban planning as a means of interpreting landscape and defining a theory of landscape intervention and architecture as a tool for defining the landscape project on the basis of the architectural project. In order to achieve this, she had to deal with the resistance of those who defended a more classical, reductionist vision of urbanism. For Rosa Barba, landscape architecture was the link that could connect landscape and urban planning and define shared scenarios between urban planning, land-use planning and architecture.

This allowed her to establish a disciplinary space of her own and to innovate in defining a useful methodology for designing and transforming the landscape. Her research, centred on the possibilities of the project, led her to reflect on two of the theoretical constants that would dominate her career in the years to come and around which she would base her landscape considerations and action: the landscape project and the abstraction of territory.

IV. The Landscape Project and the Abstraction of Territory

“The landscape project is a project of time, working with the environment, designing from the void, and the transformation that surrounds us” [10, 60]. The abstraction of territory demonstrates the theoretical capacity of landscape architecture as a discipline from which to approach the reading of landscape from a propositional and transformative perspective. Both were set out in two fundamental, pioneering texts, the article *El Project del lloc*.

Entre l'anàlisi de l'entorn i el disseny de l'espai [8], published in the journal *Quaderns d'Arquitectura i Urbanisme*, and her doctoral thesis *L'abstracció del territori* [9]. In these texts, the architect enunciated a series of themes that would dominate her career in the years to come and around which she constructed a theoretical corpus centred on both the analysis and description of the landscape and its design, i.e., the question of place, identity and the permanence of landscape, as well as the management of and intervention in the same. The principal features of these are examined below.

A. Landscape as a Place

Throughout her career, Rosa Barba established a way of looking at and reading a place that transcended inherited methods of analysis and intervention. In contrast to more theoretical approaches imported from other international cultural contexts, she approached landscape through its relationship with the physical and cultural structure of the territory. Like Vittorio Gregotti, her understanding of landscape was linked to the shape of the territory, a shape that was the end result of the history of a place, a climate, or a culture [1].

In her article *El projecte del lloc* [8], one of her first writings on the subject, she listed the elements that configure landscape based on two principles that constitute a constant in her reflections: the soil, or the element that serves as support, and the cultural intervention that modifies this, in reference to the anthropic activity carried out in the place in question. The former has a more passive nature as a physical support, while the latter acquires an active role in its configuration as the result of human action. Both are considered by the architect to be essential elements in addressing the question of landscape. Their combination defines what is understood as the structure of the site, in other words, what characterises a place, makes it unique and defines its identity [8].

In this manner, Rosa Barba assumes a contemporary definition of landscape that differs considerably from earlier and later models and which leads her to associate this definition with the idea of place, this being understood as a space that contains traces of those who previously occupied and transformed it, but also as an element to be incorporated into the future via a project capable of interpreting this trace in the present.

In its territorial dimension, Rosa Barba approached landscape through an analytical study of the material variables that explain the features of a place, configure its structure, and constitute its tangible element. These consist of the tracks and road networks that make it possible to attain a clear reading of the territory by offering vantage points and sequential views and by facilitating knowledge regarding its relief, the wefts that develop their forms at ground level, which are defined mainly by

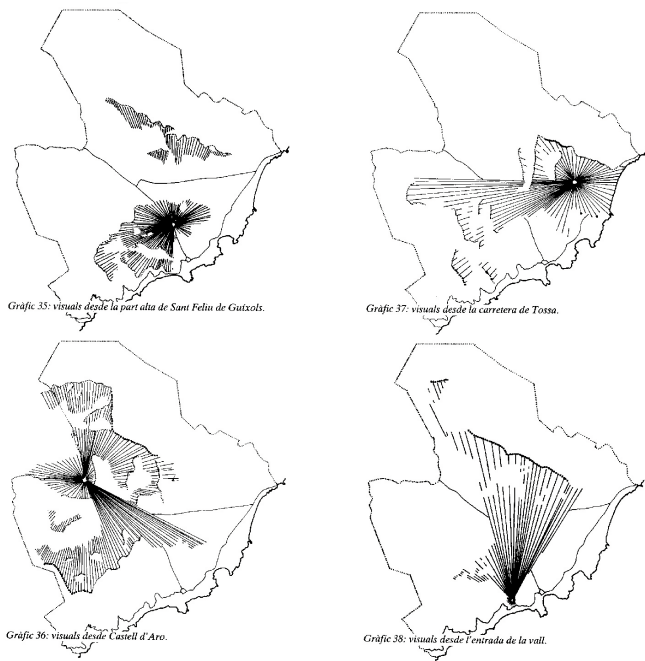


Fig. 1. PGOU of Sant Feliu de Guíxols and Castell-Platja d'Aro, Catalonia, 1981–1985. Visual analysis of Vall d'Aro from different viewpoints [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

the plots and vegetation, and the volumes and covered areas, which include the constructions, urban fabric and tree plantations, and that change the relief of the terrain on a small scale [8].

For Rosa Barba, territorial support was the starting point of landscape, an idea that led her to champion the importance of relief, not only as an element to be taken into account in the interpretation of a territory but also as a matter to be taken into account in its design, insofar as it constitutes an essential component in the resulting spatial configuration and “the primary quality of ‘identity’ of the place” [15, 20]. From her initial professional projects, then, it is possible to observe the architect’s interest in identifying the characteristics of a territory via description of both its relief, acquired through analysis of its topography, and its three-dimensionality, obtained via the study of sequences of sections, but also via those singularities that the territory presents with regard to those places in which the character of the landscape changes or stands out from the rest.

This approach to territory was complemented in the 1980s with the study of visuals, which resulted from the discovery of authors such as Tadahiko Higuchi [16], who developed a detailed study of the variability of visibility based on planes and angles of vision. While she explored this aspect in the course of her professional work, it was in her doctoral thesis that she established her theoretical foundations, stressing the importance of understanding relief on a visual level, given that she considered the visual

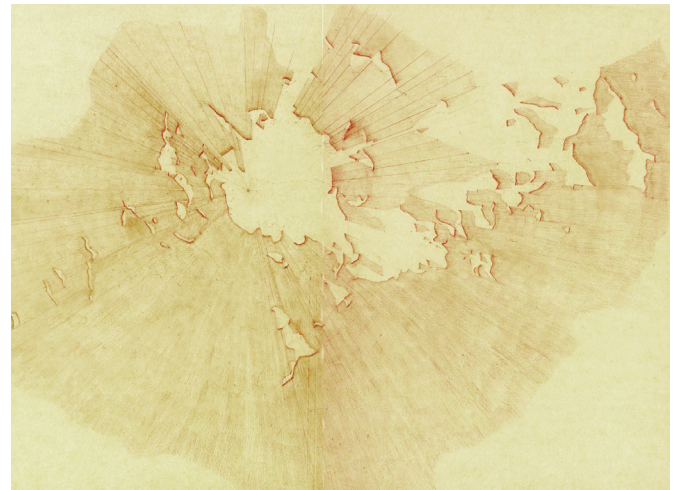


Fig. 2. PGOU of Alcañiz, Aragon, 1989–1990. Visual analysis of the surroundings of the historic centre of Alcañiz [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

potential of a territory to be essentially contained in the geometric form of its relief [15]. In this manner, she defended the need to systematically incorporate visual parameters into the analysis of a place. She also studied a series of indices for reading the visual structure of a place based on the combination of contour and fields of vision. This allowed her, as she explains in her doctoral thesis, to establish landscape units, the limitations of which were associated with the spheres of vision defined by the relief [9].

Her efforts to resolve methodological questions associated with landscape analysis led her to dwell on the visual image as an abstract summary of the perceptual processes that define a place and as a complementary aspect of territorial analysis.

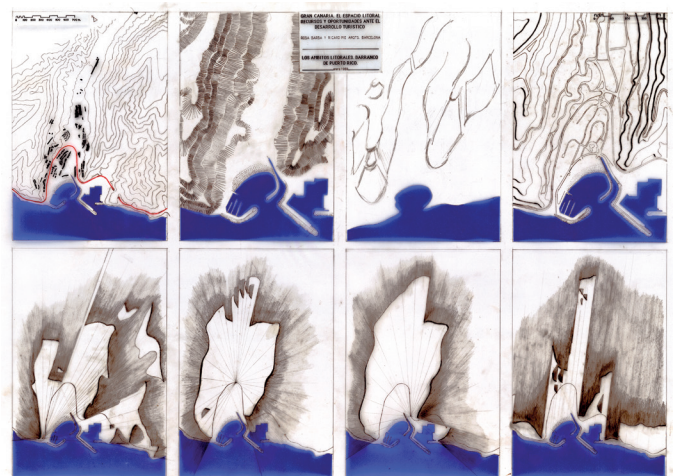


Fig. 3. Insular Plan of Gran Canaria, 1988. Hypsometric, clinometric, morphological and visual study from different viewpoints of the Puerto Rico gully in Gran Canaria [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

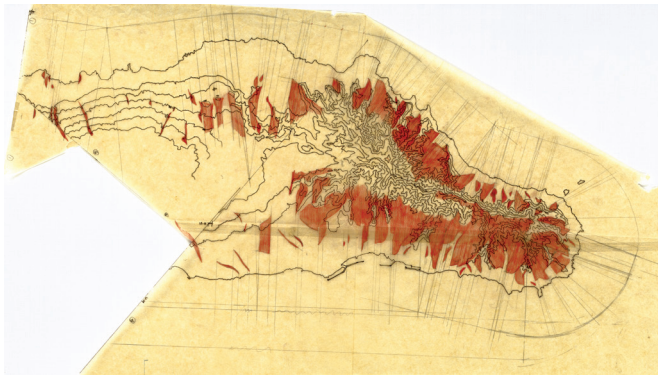


Fig. 4. Insular Plan of Tenerife, 1988. Study of the visuals of the extreme northeast of Tenerife [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

As a result, we find in projects such as the *PGOU of Sant Feliu de Guíxols and Castell-Platja d'Aro*, Catalonia (1981–1985) (Fig. 1), or the *PGOU of Alcañiz*, Aragon (1989–1990) (Fig. 2), that visual analysis assumes a pivotal role as an urban planning tool; visual analysis being the study of visibility and spatial conceptualisation of the form of the territory that defines the starting point for the drafting of both plans. In the case of the *Insular Plan of Gran Canaria and Tenerife* (1988) (Figs. 3–4), the study of visuals acquired great relevance insofar as it allowed for the delimitation of the coastline. So, transcending the traditional morphological studies, urban occupation, population, communications system, etc., it was a visual study which defined the visual scope of the coastline. This visual component also acquires special importance in the *Study of the environments of the A-7 motorway*, Catalonia (1985) (Fig. 5). This road, understood as an element that provides accessibility to the territory and, at the same time, divides and fragments it, is considered as “the vantage point and window on the space through which it passes” [17, 129], meaning the study begins with

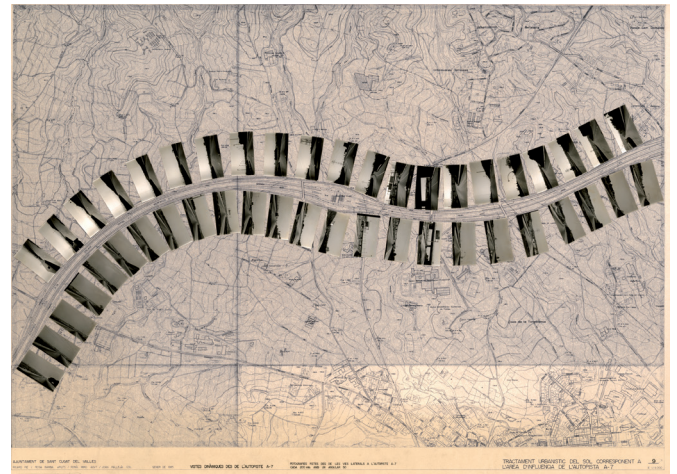


Fig. 5. Study of the environments of the A-7 motorway, Catalonia, 1985. Dynamic views from the A-7 motorway as it passes through Sant Cugat del Vallès. Photographic sequence every 200 meters [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

an analysis of the views of the territory obtained from the motorway from a mobile point of view. In the *Plan for the development of the historic centre of Pollença*, Mallorca (1991–1993) (Fig. 6), the geographical circumstances of the municipality and the visual characteristics associated with the geometric form of the relief were issues that were present in the protection of the historic centre and in the enhancement of the Camí del Calvari (Calvary Way), the layout of which links the interior with the exterior, offering magnificent views over the town. However, it would be in the *PGOU of Sóller* and the *Plan for the visual protection of the port of Sóller*, Mallorca (1992–1999) (Fig. 7), where the study of the views will cease to constitute merely a complementary aspect for town planning or the understanding of the landscape and become the basic instrument for regulating and controlling the transformations of the town [18].



Fig. 6. Plan for the development of the historic centre of Pollença, Mallorca, 1991–1993. Photomontage view of the historic centre of Pollença, on which the intervention project has been superimposed [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].



Fig. 7. PGOU of Sóller and Plan for the visual protection of the port of Sóller, Mallorca, 1992–1999. Study of the visuals of the Port of Sóller from different viewpoints [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

B. Landscape Identity and Permanence

The concepts of permanence and identity, as well as the aesthetic and other values that each landscape harbours and that make it unique and unrepeatable among the multitude of possible places and which define its characteristic features over time, are prominent aspects of Rosa Barba's concept of landscape [9].

Her interest in approaching the landscape question in its multiple dimensions, from the conceptual to the concrete, led her to study the unique nature of places associated with the permanence and identity of landscapes. The intensity of her theoretical thinking urged her to delve deeper into both notions to discover and define protocols for their identification and analysis.

As far as identity is concerned, Rosa Barba recognised that the permanences accumulated over time in a landscape define its characteristic features, confer on it its identity and lend it a certain specific value that could be referred to as *genius loci*. While she explored this question in depth in the 1980s, as can be seen in the first chapters of her doctoral thesis, she returned to it again and again in subsequent years in an effort to explain the evolution of landscapes based on how different generations have left traces and footprints of these permanences over time:

"Landscapes are constructed of layers of desires, wills, and actions, and they struggle to endure throughout the wear and tear of time and the impetus of catastrophes, whether major or minor, by means of the memory that legitimizes them in images. For this reason, each landscape bears the imprint of the one that has preceded it and leaves for the future the signs of the cultures that have traversed or appropriated it." [13, 110]

C. Management of and Intervention in Landscape

As an architect, Rosa Barba did not stop at the mere analysis of landscape, preferring to advance in the definition of proposals for modification and transformation of the same, a fact that led her to approach landscape architecture from an analytical, proactive perspective, and

design new instruments and methodologies for analysis of and intervention in the same. These were based on the understanding of landscape as an element that participates in the configuration of a territory and of the cultural content of the same. So, when proposing intervention actions for the future of a landscape, the architect pointed out the importance of prior reflection on the territorial support that sustains said landscape as well as the cultures that have preceded it in that place [19].

To this end, she pointed out, as an essential aspect, the importance of not only knowing a landscape and understanding its dynamics and the historical processes that led to its construction but also of finding an inevitable starting point for intervention in the place and a conditioning factor for the management and planning of the same, of identifying those elements that make it unique, that define its identity and lend it either a certain value or specific values. In this sense, she referred to a "practice of territorial recognition, not of a description, but rather a reading that leads us to the identification of the landscape-related values of the place with a view to a possible intervention" [8, 61].

This question accompanied her throughout her professional career, the idea of trying to replace "what is" a landscape with "how it is" in order to design a project for the space. For Rosa Barba, any landscape intervention must first identify those elements that lend the place identity and make it unique and take particular account of the permanence of the place so as not to undermine its inherent values in order to preserve it, but also to identify that which forms the bedrock of a landscape and which must not be altered if what is consubstantial to it is to be preserved.

In the *Study of the Manzanares Sur Metropolitan Park*, Madrid (1995) (Fig. 8–10), Rosa Barba began by identifying the landscape values of the site. In a space devoid of social recognition due to its natural characteristics and state of abandonment, the architect sought to recognise the specific qualities that defined the identity of each of the sections of the area and used them to draw up the design criteria for the creation of the park. So, "the metropolitan park project is born of the revitalisation of the territorial elements found



Fig. 8. Study of the Manzanares Sur Metropolitan Park, Madrid, 1995. Territorial structure of the project [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

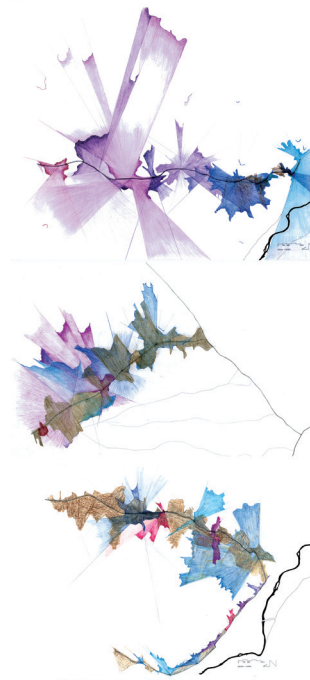


Fig. 9. Study of the Manzanares Sur Metropolitan Park, Madrid, 1995. Visual analysis of the Park from different points of view [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

within it" [20, 47]. The intervention strategy designed sought to reveal what this 2000-hectare territory was like and what its values were via the construction of a network of pathways that followed the water course and the glens which invited people to explore and enjoy the place, and acted directly on only a limited part of the land, without the need to occupy all of it. By exploiting the visual potential of the pathways, it was possible to enjoy a simultaneously global yet specific vision of each space [20].

However, in this approach to landscape intervention, Rosa Barba also considered the rights of successive generations to be able to leave their mark on the landscape through their activities and interventions, maintaining some feature of its identity in a way that would make it

possible to recognise what exists there at present while, at the same time, uniting the traces of both past and future [21].

"Landscape, above all else, is what surrounds us and makes us feel like we belong to a place. So, we have to ask ourselves what it is that makes the landscape permanent. What makes us remember it so that we can value it as such, so that we can identify it as our own and understand it as fixed even though it is actually variable? What should we do to manage it differently, since how we live and how we need it is different than before and we, therefore, must be able to modify and update it while simultaneously maintaining some characteristic of its identity that makes us remember it as our own?" [19, 11].

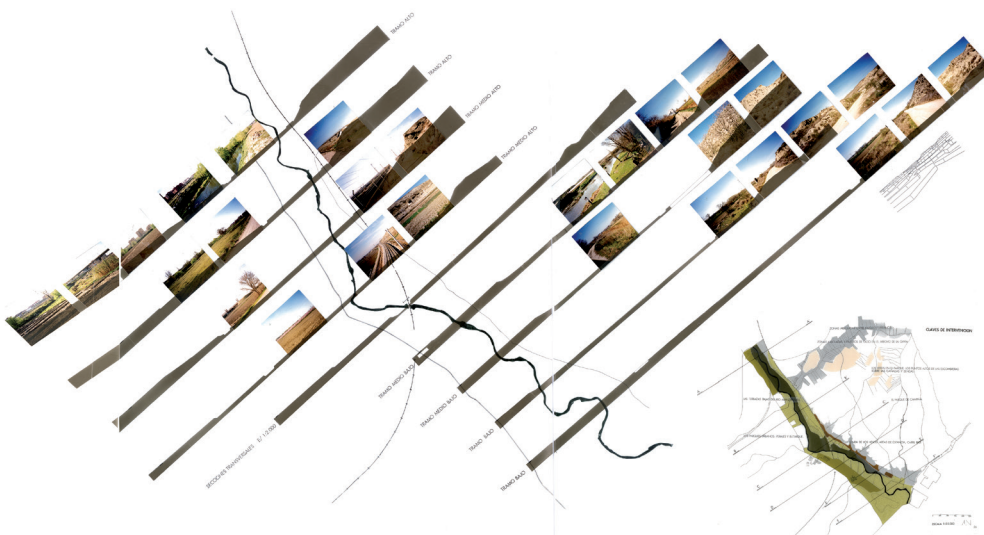


Fig. 10. Study of the Manzanares Sur Metropolitan Park, Madrid, 1995. Topographic study of the area and intervention proposals [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

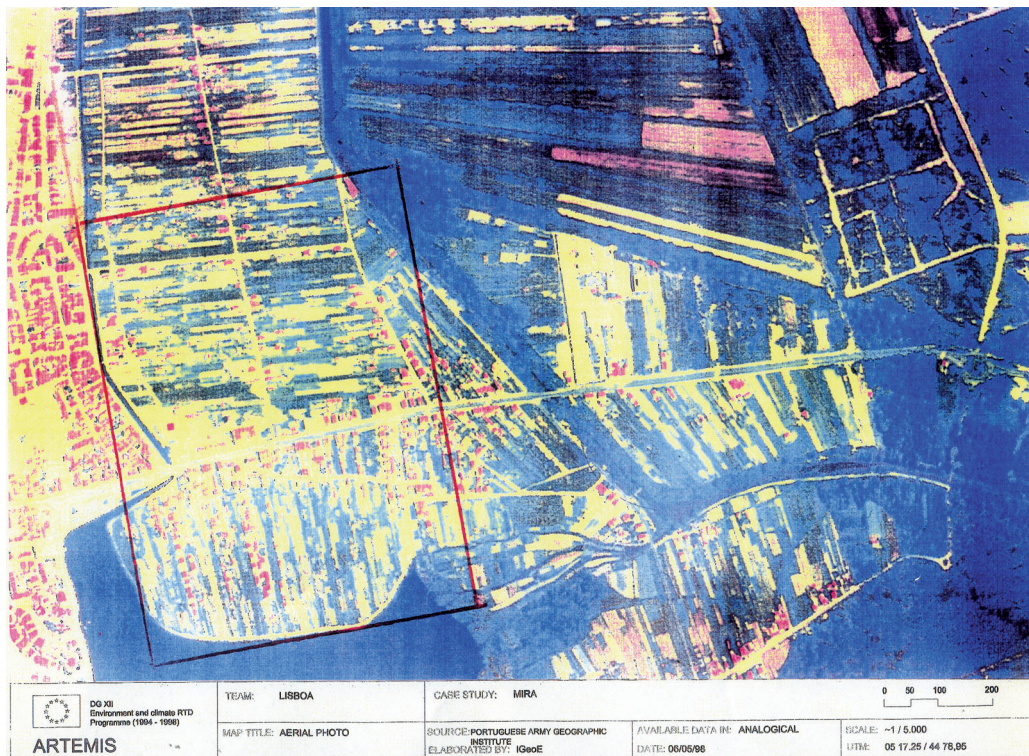


Fig. 11. European Artemis Project, 1994–2001. Aerial photography of the peri-urban environment of Lisbon, modified colour [by Rosa Barba i Ricard Pié, arquitectes].

The need to design something that was in continuous evolution, rather than definitive, led her to introduce time as an element in the design of landscape architecture. This question was fundamental for her at a time when she began to notice the speed and force with which new technological capabilities and changes in social needs were introducing transformations into the landscape that placed at risk what had hitherto been considered permanent and essential [19].

This observation, which was present in the origin and motivation of much of her theoretical reflection during the 1980s, became increasingly pressing and echoed in later works, becoming one of the main constants on which the architect based her landscape reflection and action, stressing the need to manage the transformation of landscape and define instruments with which to carry this out.

She also focused her attention on other crucial aspects, such as the change of scale in territorial dynamics and urban functions that the arrival of the new century was anticipating, transforming both the physical reality and the perception of the landscape. Transcending the dimensions of the 19th-century city in order to appreciate the city of the 21st meant the architect had to address peripheral areas, border spaces and non-urban landscapes and “design the system and the sections of a new city that covers a much larger territory and should be perceived as a whole, rather than just as a sum of differentiated parts” [22, 34].

In this sense, the *European Artemis Project* (1994–2001) (Fig. 11), which was implemented in a network together with five other university centres in southern Europe – Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal –, was established

as a research laboratory for the design and evaluation of new low-density residential patterns in the Mediterranean region that were suitable for sustainable development and the recovery of environmentally deteriorated rural areas.

In this search for new paradigms from which to address the complexity of urban processes and territorial management, Rosa Barba attempted to discover new forms of planning that could focus on the transformation of the landscape at different scales and from a more transversal vision [22]. She brought landscape closer to the numerous disciplines involved in designing a project for the territory, called for multidisciplinary in landscape management and focused her attention on responding to the needs of society, championing the importance of landscape for collective well-being but also highlighting the role of civil society in creating the conditions for landscape management that should be carried out for the benefit of the population as a whole [19].

Conclusions

A driving force behind landscape architecture in Spain, Rosa Barba approached landscape from the standpoint of conceptual innovation and with a mission to respond to current issues that sought integration into the language of design but lacked maturity and the appropriate tools. Her training as an architect with an obvious concern for urban planning and social issues led her to set herself apart from other great landscape designers of her time [4]. Likewise, her leadership capacity led her to adopt a

strategic position in the coming of age of this emerging landscape architecture [4].

In her theoretical approach to landscape, one can observe how her vision coincides with both precedents pertaining to the Catalan landscape tradition and external influences and leading figures in the international debate, the likes of Vittorio Gregotti, Kevin Lynch and Christian Norberg-Shulz, among others. However, her vision of landscape transcended this, and her particular sensitivity, her critical spirit, her ongoing work as a landscape and urban planner, her intellectual generosity as a professor committed to the public university, and her professional commitment and civic engagement led her to identify and respond to new problems and to advance in the design of a new approach to landscape that elevated it to scales previously unknown in the field of planning.

Her theoretical and methodological contributions, then, offered a response to the new paradigms associated with landscape architecture by defining new forms of landscape analysis and interpretation and designing instruments and methodologies from which to introduce the consideration of landscape in urban and territorial planning tasks, but also to consolidate training structures, via the Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture, and research through the CRPP, as well as institutional support environments for landscape architecture that were in line with the existent situation in the country and across Europe.

Likewise, in her approach to the new landscape architecture, she sought to promote and defend the existence of a space of its own for landscape in the Mediterranean region. So, in contrast to models imported from countries with greater landscape tradition, in her work, Barba reclaimed the Mediterranean as though it were her own, an idea that led her to distance herself from more theoretical models typical of other international cultural contexts and belonging to countries with more highly-developed landscape architecture in order to come closer to understanding the physical reality and transformation of those landscapes of the Mediterranean region, championing those that were less appreciated and more difficult to manage, such as peripheral landscapes, landscapes in transformation, and non-urban landscapes. In other words, places previously not included in urban planning projects.

Her disciplinary contribution to the landscape debate is the result of an academic and professional career that began in the 1970s, matured in the 1980s based on professional projects, university teaching and the development of studies and academic research, and reached its peak in the 1990s, when she devoted herself exclusively to landscape architecture, and culminated in 2000 with her untimely death. Her contributions, however, which are considered paradigmatic in terms of landscape theory, opened up a wide field of reflection that remains valid today.

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