

Living the landscape. Towards new scenarios for re-inhabiting reclaimed farmlands

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Land reclamation—from the Latin *bonum facere*, meaning “to make good” — can be defined as the activity of adapting land and water for higher production and social coexistence. It is the concept of “integral land reclamation”, theorized and initiated in Italy between the two World Wars, that allowed for the stable occupation of new lands by creating self-sufficient, low-density settlements based on sharing and cooperation: the colonial house. Over the last century, the progressive abandonment of the countryside and the mechanization of agriculture, which reduced human stewardship, accelerated their gradual decline. Looking at the settlement model of farmhouses today offers an opportunity to rethink new self-sufficient micro-communities, capable of accommodating the functions and services necessary to sustain contemporary life within “territorial cells”. These function as elements of a proximity network capable of strengthening autonomy and quality of life, recreating the relational fabric that was once spontaneous while simultaneously introducing new sustainable development models integrated with the agricultural one.

This paper proposes to hypothesize methods for transforming the landscape to counter abandonment, with the aim of turning farmhouses into catalysts of experience. This approach is supported by the thought of J. N. Baldeweg, who interprets the landscape not from an aesthetic point of view, but as a set of physical phenomena in which architecture “carves out” space, thereby making it understandable to humans. An example is the Casa de la Lluvia, where architecture interprets the landscape, the form embraces the context, and provides a privileged viewpoint over the surroundings.

The building, interpreted as a sensory and psychological experience, allows the landscape to be experienced phenomenologically. Buildings reveal the “invisible” and manifest physical phenomena, such as light and gravity. In this vision, they become a tool to frame the context and measure the landscape, clarifying its scale and proportion in relation to nature, with the ultimate goal of raising awareness and promoting the reactivation of these spatialities.