

TERRA NOVA: AN INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE ART PROGRAM*

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* This article is recollected from the fragmented notes and illustrations of the artist.

One of the main problems that we have with landscape today, is the far-reaching suppression of our co-responsibility for its condition. What is needed is a revision of our attitude to nature and landscape because when the object of interest is destroyed, the basis of this interest is also eliminated. Here, nature is defined neither as a thing nor as an assembly of things. It is not external or internal, it does not surround us, it is not available, it can neither be destroyed nor loved.

Nature is a word without antonym. Nature is an encompassing objectless concept, a condition of movement. Environment that surrounds man, on the other hand, is a more exact expression than nature because nature is the concept that includes man. Man is an aspect, a part of nature. He can influence and destroy the environment but not the nature. Man may step out of his historical existence, out of the world's evolution, but nature remains the same. Nature is landscape here, perceived and imagined from the point of view of ideas, values or standards, with its origin in the development of the historical subject. What we do in and for landscape (our living space) is crucially dependent upon what we perceive of it.

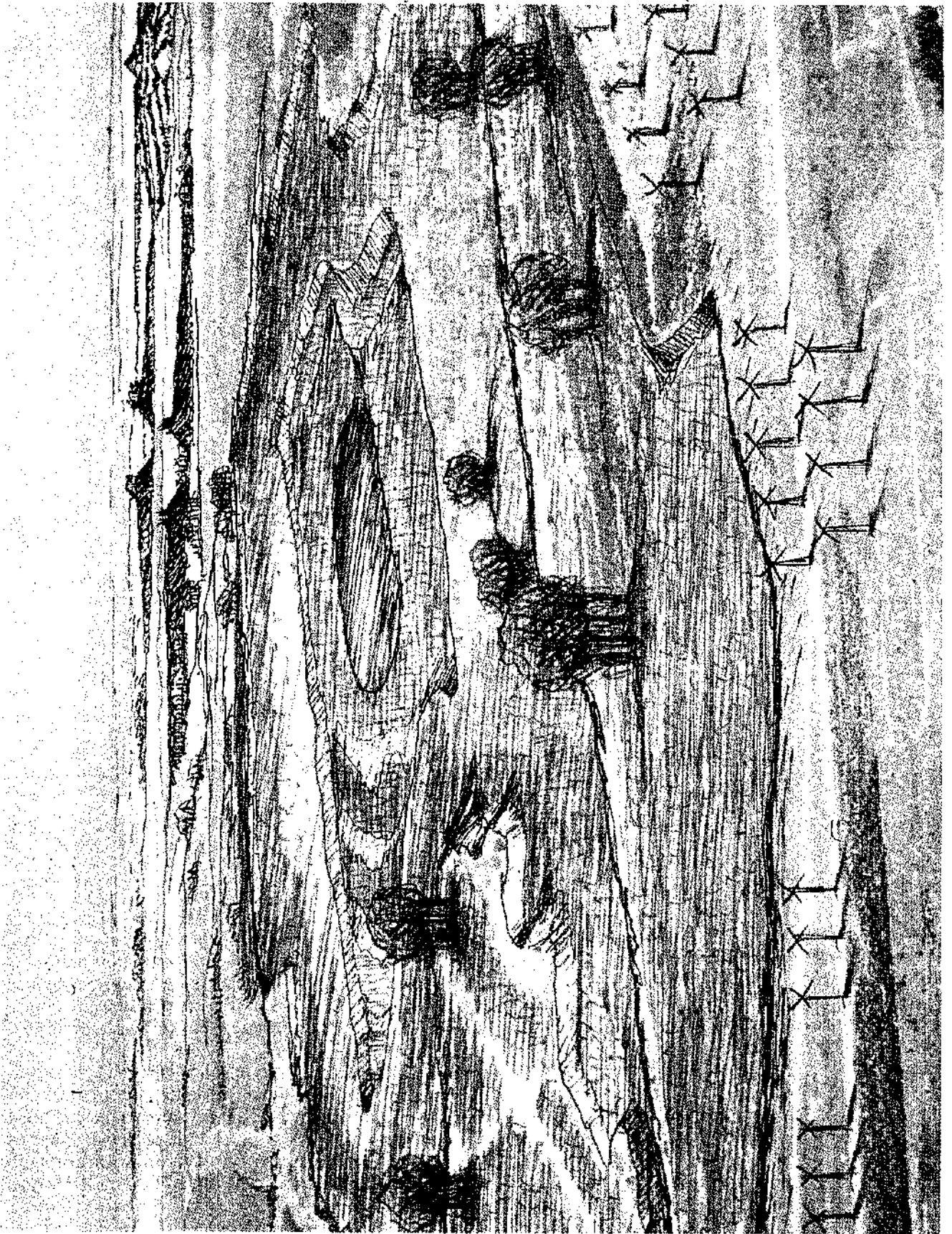
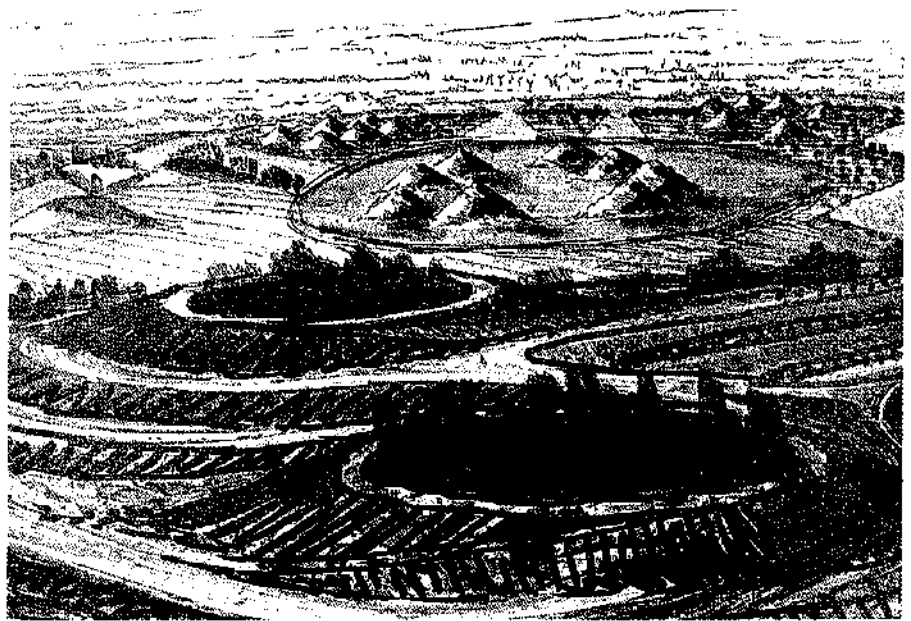


Figure 1. Artist's sketch of the reclamation and 're-cultivation' of derelict lands.

Figure 2. Artist's vision of 're-cultivation' of an heavily exploited landscape.



THE TERRA NOVA PROJECT: IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER COMPREHENSION OF NATURE AND ART

The starting point is the necessity of making old industrial sites, disused dumps, dying woodland, former open-cast mines, as parts of a developing landscape again. Forgotten and ignored lands in many town and country areas, such as derelict industrial land, heaps, dead forest areas, *etc.* constitute forms of large sites available for ecological and artistic moulding and change.

The conceptualization of an aesthetic and ecological program for re-cultivating landscapes that have been destroyed, leads to propositions and suggested solutions in the following areas:

- The integration of the unemployed, through the generation of new jobs in the environmental field,
- Co-operation with the universities in the ecological sphere,
- Setting up a 'campus' in areas currently receiving attention,
- Setting up areas for ecological experiment,
- Extraction of organic raw materials,
- Establishing middle-sized industries for processing these raw materials.

Thus at the center of the project is the interlinking content, structure and organization of the 'aesthetic and ecological recycling of derelict landscape areas' with the task of giving unemployed people a new perspective. In other words, further concepts and methods of implementation are required in order to provide initial work and training for the large numbers of unemployed people. Therefore, the 'disused areas' and 'disused resources' in both social and natural environments, that are no longer part of the 'working process' are reintegrated in the project.

This process produces areas that are redesigned aesthetically and ecologically, with their wastes disposed of, and leads also to an 'increased awareness' in the sense of a humane and ecological approach. In concrete terms, new jobs are generated in the course of work of this kind. The whole programme can thus be seen and interpreted as 'cultural ecology'.

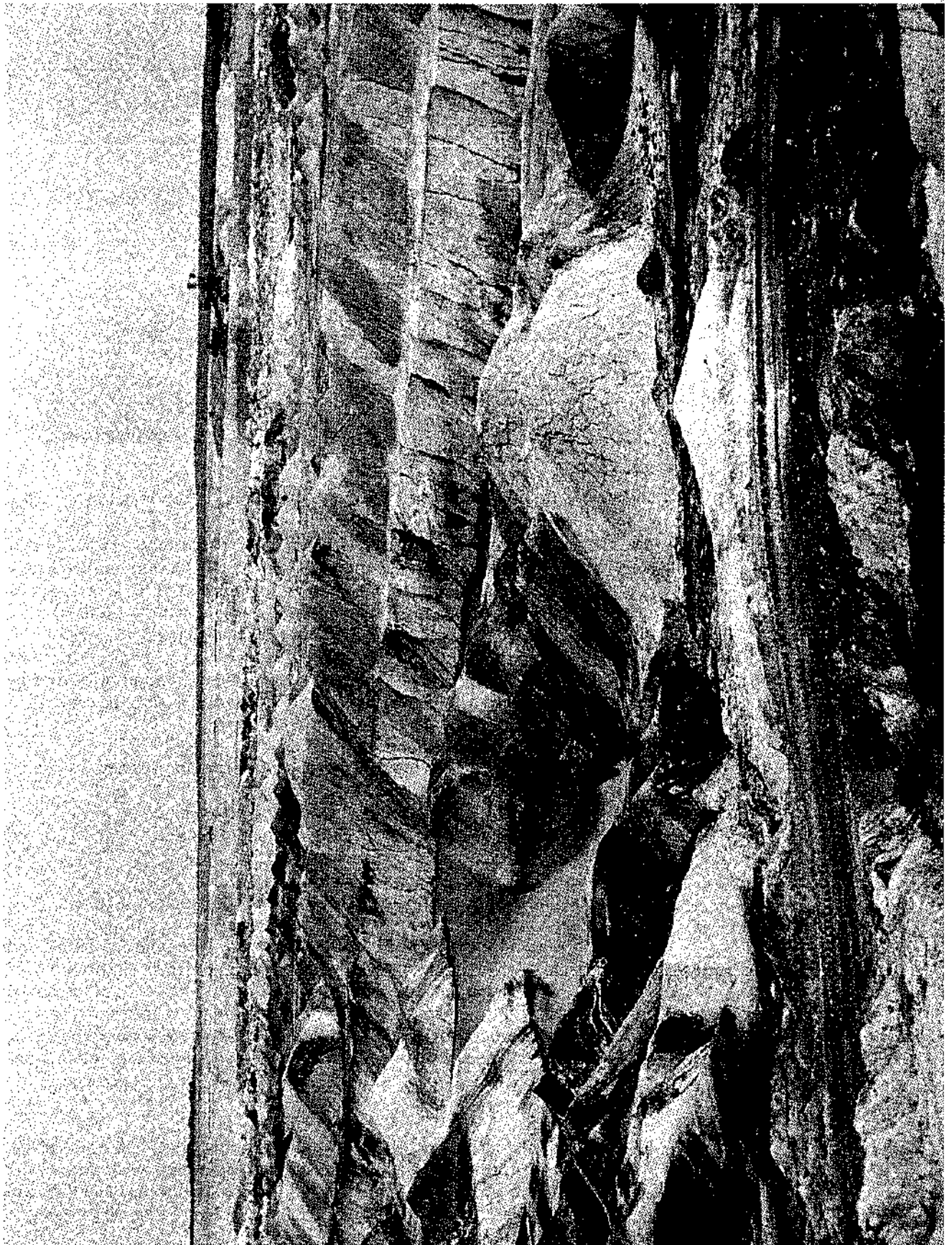
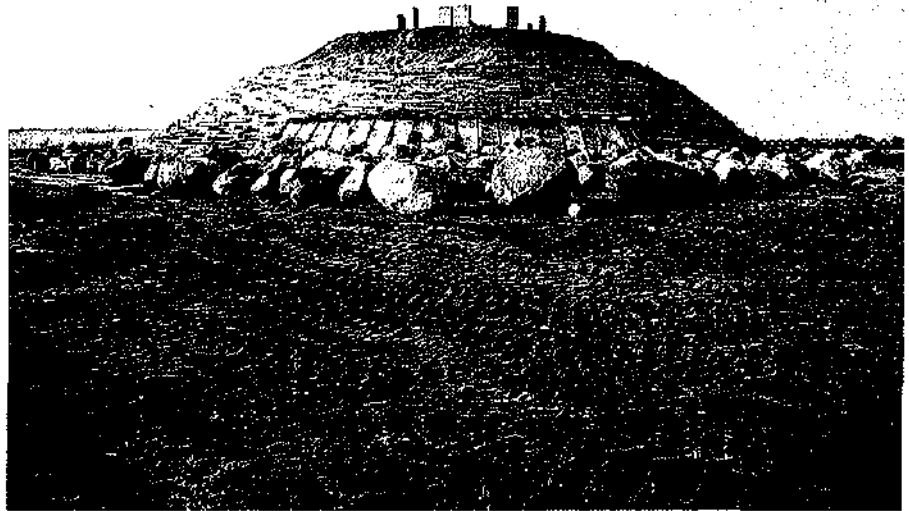


Figure 3. Browncoal mine area

Figure 4. The Yellow Ramp, Second and Third Bienalle for Land Art, lignite mining area, Cottbus, Germany.

This is an Earthwork (geoglyph), a sign and observation place. The observatory is constructed according to the rules of the neolithic observatories. The vertical set up of the concrete slabs are marking the four cardinal points. Between the concrete slabs on the east side, four small passages are left open, that according to the solstice, the sunshine can cross through and touch the two stones in the center of the place. The ramp will be grown over with broom and other yellow plants and flowers and they will blossom from May till September.



This work starts with the assumption that destroyed landscapes are activity fields available for creative remodeling. And it is necessary to create the preconditions for resource yielding landscapes, where raw materials for energy were extracted. What is beautiful in a landscape that shows traces of dereliction everywhere, is to be defined as something that transforms this dereliction into places of artistic and ecological transformation of natural phenomena. Thus, without an aesthetic and visionary starting point for the reshaping of the destroyed areas, there can be no positive identification with the landscape.

Nature's beauty, like all other notions of beauty, is a result of cultural and social conditions and conventions. It is necessary to view landscape as bearing the stamp of culture and not with that notion expressed with romantic projections that nature is only 'the other'. The beginning and the end of culture is nature, the one immanent in the other. Only the aesthetic experience of nature can go beyond the antagonism between nature and culture. The aesthetic experience of nature and landscape can be constitutive only if filled with imagination.

Figure 5. Yellow Ramp under construction, 1993-1995.

Length: 2.20 m., highest point on the ramp: 15 m., diameter of observatory: 12 m., breadth of the access ramp: 4-6 m.

Material used: Earth, granite stone pieces of approximately 2.5 x 3.0 m., concrete slabs previously used as temporary road at the surface mining.

Plantation: broom, two black conifers, and yellow flowering plants, St. John's worts, mulleins, lupines, sun flowers.



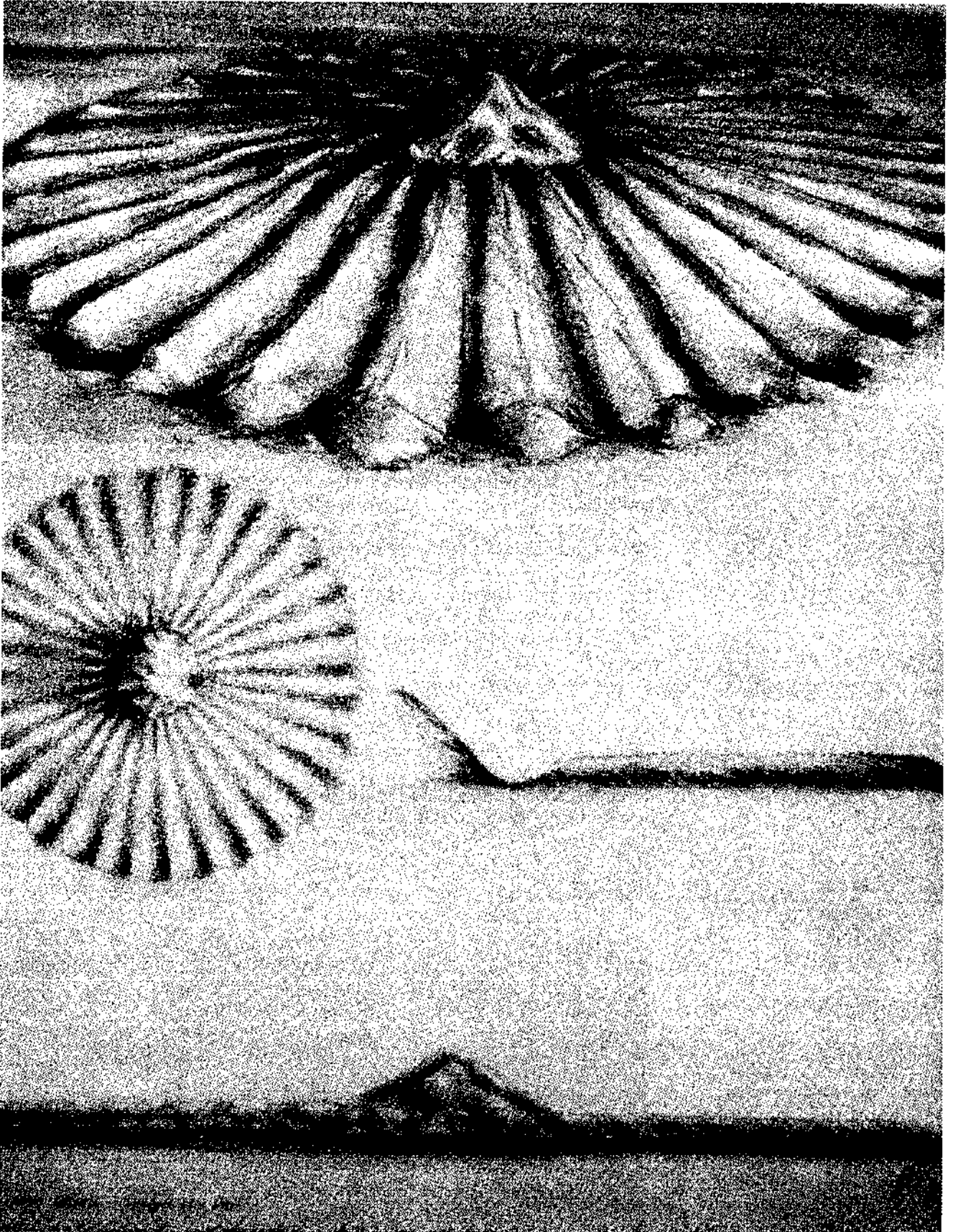


Figure 6. Sculptural places and geoglyphs as elements of new modeling.

Specialist personnel working on this project, on the basis of various levels of approach to the problem, include: ecologists, biologists, landscape planners, educators and sociologists, also specialists in organization, management and PR. According to the size of the various derelict sites, many people from various spheres are drawn into the working and learning processes. As a typical example, the middle-sized recycling industries can be established to plant, harvest and process raw materials like 'giant reeds'. Processing raw materials and manufacturing laminated fiber sheets may lead to an advanced furniture production industry. Another possible use can be fish-farming and processing, which yields on the spot in the ponds created at the premises. Other possibilities can be considered according to land availability. After these processes are completed, the site can be opened to public use for local recreation and can be used as an ecologically-planned leisure park.

One of the requirements of these 'working processes' is the act of 'living on the spot'. This leads to setting up a 'campus' structure near the derelict areas. The campus becomes a place of learning where seminars providing further education and training on cultural ecology are integrated into the work described above. The model for this type of further education process should be the case of adult education organizations. On the basis of these mutually complementary activities of various practices, new career structures can be developed which can then be used in the sphere of landscape care, recycling, restoration of derelict lands and development of the environmental technology. The design of the campus depends on the requirements of the site in question. It includes the existing surrounding area, its residents and learning and teaching structures that are available there. Beyond this, the 'campus' is intended as a place for international encounters between people concerned with the task of reassessing and redesigning derelict nature. Realizing the 'Terra Nova' project is overall not just a theoretical model, but also a demonstration of how solutions implemented anywhere, can be approached in their interdisciplinary interlinking of ecology, art and social design as a solution to many places in the world, beyond Germany and the rest of Europe.

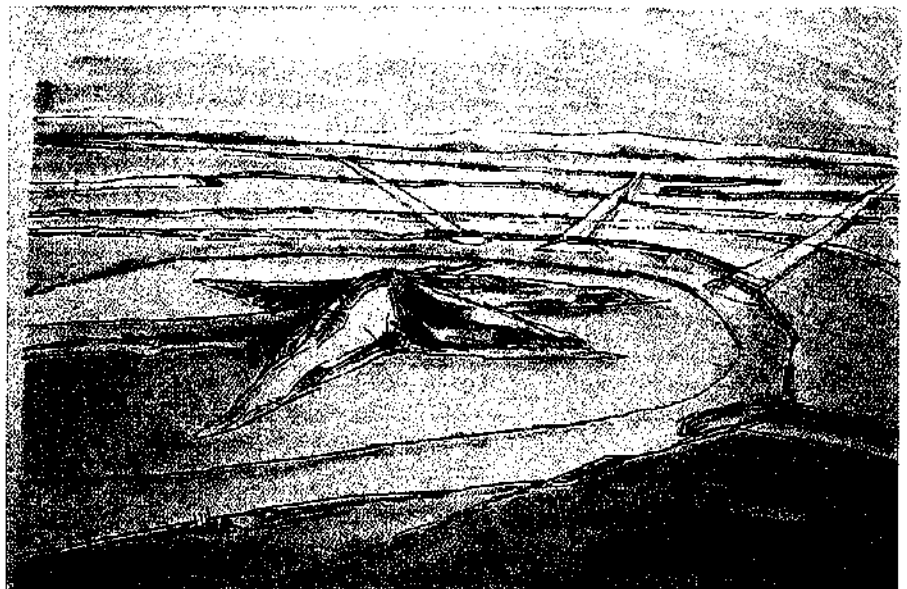
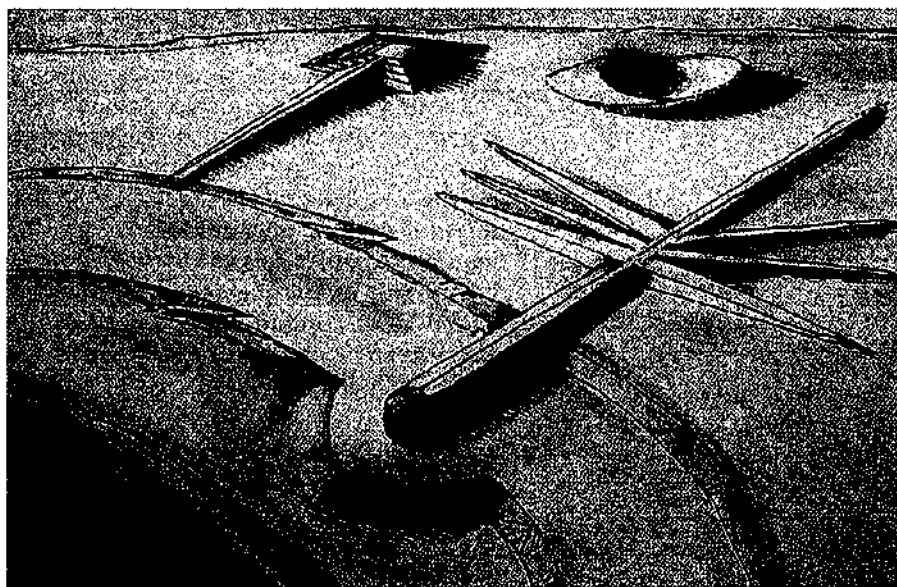


Figure 7. Sculptural places and geoglyphs as elements of new modeling.

Figure 8. Landscape becomes highly relevant, as we consider it from the perspective of flying.



This programme is art in and with nature, an artistic and ecologically based approach to change the landscape. It involves the staging of an artistic coordinate system of 'sculptural places' in the landscape that will form a network stretching over the frontiers of Europe -the 'ley lines' of our times. Landscape structures that shape or distort, enliven or restrict and allow to atrophy, the life of its inhabitants indicate that we are not only entangled in stories and history, but also in scenarios. Our identity always contains something of a 'place identity'. This is another aspect of a landscape art that does not produce a beautiful appearance but changes and re-inaugurates old structural experience. The *habitus* of landscape, its physiognomy receives fixed points through sculptural places around which the surrounding is formed. Thereby a possible position of 'center' in the landscape is developed, this effects an experience of 'being in the world' and initiates a communication with the surroundings.

Art was an is a seismographic recording and representation of our experience and knowledge of nature. Yet, the classical form of expression was one that represented nature as appearance, and now this dialogue takes place in nature. The historicity and materiality of landscape merge art into an new expression of the perception of nature. Namely that we are an integral part of a permanent metamorphic process. From this experience of being safe in nature, appears in the realization of this art -an aesthetic of free circumstance. That is, these actually experienced works, in their respective condition, are never finished. In them, the simultaneity of past, present and future can be experienced. Because these works contain as an aesthetic criterion, their change in time. Thus we can speak of an ecological aesthetic.

A different perception of nature from the one previously held is opening up for art, as nature can be grasped primarily as condition of movement of material in time.

Sub *specie aeternitatis* (with respect to eternity) looking upon the landscape, creates the consciousness of space-time. Here, past and future, in their present time appearance, join us in the dialogue. This process of experiencing landscape becomes highly relevant, as we consider it from the perspective of flying. Here,

from this glance we can read signs in it. The geoglyphs tell us something of intercourse and understanding of man with himself in the landscaped space of his history. This sign language bends the bow between Neolithic time and today and illustrates how we have given up the once known universal corporeal measure in relation to space, in favour of the pragmatic measure, with which now structures in landscape are drawn, whose cause and sense are clearly determined by a utilitarian and exploitative thinking.

An archaic world map would show a few paths that are spanning short distances, many astronomical rock formations, figurative mounts, earth pyramids, vast fissures, that bind themselves with others to form directive fields and figures, and apart from that gigantic space still free from human interaction with the terrain. Every manipulation of landscape had a spiritual, imaginary reference and starting point inside the consciousness of man. Today they can protect us from the loss of memory and are indicative of a future, in which the sign language of the devastation of the landscape can be transformed into its opposite. That we, in the present state of the landscape, can experience and compare the simultaneity of spiritually and industrially set geoglyphs which should cause us a moment's pause. Observed in time, the former remain silent, they are no longer to be read in the sense of those who once put them on the face of the earth. They can, and should be surrounded to a new formation that creates geoglyphs, signs, landmarks of our epoch. These signs can only find and state art through an intuitive understanding of that archaic sign language, that the powers of nature and the ideas of man about them have set in and on the earth. Signatures of the realization of our being, as integrated creatures of what we call nature. That means, in relation to the concrete object of industrially deformed landscape, an aesthetically and ideologically tuned work in and on it is possible, to give these landscapes back to man as space. The aesthetic, as well as the metaphoric aspect of decay, of metamorphosis, of dissolution has a long history in the history of art, it is the motif of the 'Modern'.

TERRA NOVA: BÜTÜNLEŞTİRİLMİŞ BİR PEYZAJ SANAT PROGRAMI

ÖZET

Bugün çevre ile olan ilişkilerimizdeki en büyük sorunlardan biri, onun içinde bulunduğu ve bizim yol açmış olduğumuz duruma karşı hissettiğimiz ortak sorumluluğu bastırılmışlığımızdır. Yapılması gereken, çevre ve doğaya yaklaşımımızı yeniden gözden geçirmektir. Doğa, burada peyzaj ile eşanlamdır. Peyzaj içinde ya da peyzaj için yaptığımız herşey, onu nasıl algıladığımızla belirlenmektedir.

Burada sunulan yaklaşım ve çalışmaların ana temasını bir temel varsayım oluşturmaktadır. Zarar görmüş, yıpratılmış peyzaj, yaratıcı bir yeniden modelleme için kullanılabilir eylem alanları olarak ele alınabilir. Bu yeniden modelleme sürecinde peyzajın zaman içindeki dönüşümünü belirleyen, kültür ve geleneklerdir. Kültür ve doğa arasındaki ilişkiyi düzenleyen ise, yine sanattır.

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Anahtar sözcükler: Çevre, Peyzaj Sanatı,
Doğa.

Bu kavramsal çerçeve içinde geliştirilen *Terra Nova* projesinin amacı, terkedilmiş endüstriyel alanların ekilebilir, yeniden verimli kılınabilir alanlara dönüştürülmesidir. Bu dönüşümü organize edecek olan, sanatsal ve ekolojik kararlardır. Terkedilmiş peyzaj alanlarının yeniden kullanıma açılmasının temelinde, estetik ve ekolojik kavramların, planlamaların ve düzenlemelerin örgütlemesi ve yeni meslek alanlarının yaratılması yatmaktadır.