

WEST 8 PARTICIPATES IN INTERDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM ON LAND ART

27-06-2011

The exhibition "The final freedom – from the pioneers of Land Art in the 1960s to nature in cyberspace", developed in connection with the Federal Horticultural Show (BUGA) 2011 in Koblenz, serves this symposium as its point of departure. Twenty-three artistic positions, some of them thoroughly established, provide for a thematic range that particularly sheds light on the movement's beginnings and offers an overview of all of the important artists of the 1960s.

In the beginning, the origins in Minimalism and Conceptual Art exercised a decisive influence. Further key influences followed and led in new directions: Nancy Holt, James Turrell, and Charles Ross led the way with their spatial interventions oriented around light, the sun, and the planets. The definition of Land Art was also decisively altered through the walks of the artists Richard Long or Hamish Fulton as well as the actions of Agnes Denes, which focused on the (im)balance of nature. In contrast, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's large-scale wrappings appealed to the aesthetic quality of the landscape and added a new, temporary, and spectacular element.

These examples already reveal what the other artistic positions outlined in the exhibition demonstrate: the diversity of Land Art's articulation and thematic expansion in various decades. There is scarcely a unified definition that could be made to fit for all artists, but there are certainly shared aspects that render the most important lines of development clear. These will be investigated in the various contributions to the interdisciplinary symposium and then discussed in the forums.

Under the heading "Landscape, perception, and vision", three thematic complexes have been staked out, which art historians and artists as well as landscape architects will introduce and elucidate. An art historical review of the conception of landscape and nature will serve as an introduction and will make clear how significantly the perception of the landscape is also governed by painting. The 'manipulation' of our perception of the landscape began in the moment that the representation of nature established itself as an independent genre of painting.

This condition will be reflected not only in the concrete examples offered in the artists' lectures, but also within the history of Land Art's reception as a specific strategy between conception and perception. Here, the link back to the concept of the landscape and particularly to the Romantic landscape, which plays an important role in the Middle Rhine Valley (a World Heritage Site), helps us to understand more recent tendencies and developments. How essential the media of photography and video have become for Land Art is made clear by many of the exhibits, but no less so by our knowledge of the works in general, a knowledge that has been dominated and disseminated primarily through this perspective – sometimes further mediated through the filter of other artists. This plays a decisive role, for example, in Christo and Jeanne-Claude's large-scale projects, which most people are only able to experience through the filter of photographic media.

Reception and perception (and vice versa) each require the other – and to a much greater extent than in the case of a work of art viewed directly. An interdisciplinary exploration of these aspects follows in the second thematic block.

The third and final part of the symposium is concerned with the future – with projections and orientation. Particularly among the landscape architects and media artists, it develops a visionary perspective. To what extent are landscape architects occupying new ground at the interface of cultivated nature and urban environment, between the garden and their self-image as artists? What demands must be made upon nature and humanity if they wish to guarantee their long-term survival?

for more information: [Ludwig Museum Koblenz](#)