

OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE – TRANSFORMATIONS, COLLECTIONS, CREATIVE PROCESSES

natural and cultural heritage initiative, authors and participants:

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ABSTRACT:

In "our natural and cultural heritage – transformations, collections, creative processes" a variety of approaches will be offered towards widening the view on complex heritage systems. In developing the human sensing of natural and cultural relations in context new perspectives may be gained towards protecting and developing "our individual and common natural and cultural (re)sources". Participating in these creative processes may help to sense "our natural and cultural heritage" as a "living memory" operating between historic (re)construction processes and future projections.

Further application of carefully selected documentation strategies in scientific research, education and arts may contribute to the establishment of adaptive and proactive monitoring systems. The gained awareness and partial insight into the physical and spiritual potential of "our natural and cultural grounds", opportunities and threats, would thus supports an active human involvement in environmental stewardship along the following guideline: taking over some responsibility in balancing ongoing local-global transformations and taking part in establishing collections that signify a part of our human identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the following parts of the paper short descriptions of "our natural and cultural heritage" will be sketched in integrative, interdisciplinary and international approaches from the wide field of science, education and arts. A variety of individual and common "bundles of perspectives" will be offered, focussing on different areas in the world. Thus they may contribute to a careful "sensing of our world's heritage". The complementary poster will serve as visual support, including all figures and selections of images to illustrate these perspectives.

1.1 Overview :

1. Introduction
2. Case Study
3. Documentary Projects
4. Study Project
5. Art Projects
6. Perspectives

2. CASE STUDY

2.1 Topochronological Documentation of Landcover Change in the Chamoli and Rudra Prayag Districts in Uttarakhand (India) as an Indicator of Impact on Natural Heritage

The central region of Uttarakhand covers most sensible areas of heterogeneous landscapes characterized by river valleys, steep slopes and high mountains ranging from about 900m up to 4800m altitude (Fig.1). Since historical times important pilgrimage and trade routes cross the region bound to the Tibetan and Nepali borders about 50 km to the north east and east respectively. The upper courses of the Alaknanda and Mandakini rivers developed small flood plains dotted all along the valleys. Settlements and temples had been established all along the routes and flourished during times of intensive cultural and economical interrelations between Tibet and the northern India. Nowadays the trails from old have partly vanished or are demolished, the settlements and temples having preserved an outstanding character of regional architecture. The landscapes are unspoiled and remarkably famous for their well-balanced equilibrium of man-made agricultural land use patterns like patches of fields in the small flood plains and fragile systems of terraces along the steep slopes and the magnificent natural landscape of the high mountain areas (Fig.2). Grazing is bound to seasonal movements slightly similar to transhumance, that is in the valley bottoms during winter and up at the mountains all around the meadows and sparsely forested areas up the mountain ridges during summer. The network of routes and trails, the locations of settlements and the land use and land cover patterns contribute to a

representation of a region of outstanding values in terms of natural (and cultural) heritage.

The tasks of preliminary studies concerning remote sensing are mainly focusing on the brief analysis of historical imagery of the region, here panchromatic spaceborne photographs of the Corona missions from Nov.1970 (Fig.3) and the perspectives of building time series of Land cover and land use change by applying recent high resolution imagery, here of IRS-1C multi-spectral satellite data from Nov.1998 and digital terrain models (Fig.4).

The dynamics of change of landscape structures and land cover patterns are closely connected to natural and man-made impact, that is annual floods, earth quakes (1998) and traffic or tourism measures. Changes occur in different levels, that is from local (buildings, landscape elements) to regional (structures of settlements and of landscapes) scales. Approaches to build spatial information systems on cultural and natural heritage in the region have to integrate a representative variety of experts knowledge.

Thus the case study brings together a task group of transdisciplinary experts, actually comprising geologists of IIT Roorkee (India), anthropologists of University of Srinagar (India), remote sensing and geoinformatics experts of University of Dresden (Germany) and experts in information systems on cultural heritage sites of the Institute of Comparative Research in Architecture Vienna (Austria).

2.2 Acknowledgements:

Figures 1,2 and 4 are part of a report on the research work which was carried out by Ashis K.Saha of IIT Roorkee during a scholarship at the University of Dresden, funded in the frame of the DAAD sandwich programme for Indian PhD students.

3. DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS

The Vienna based Institute for Comparative Research in Architecture (ICRA) is researching in the wide field of all disciplines, which are influencing architecture in any way. A cooperation of architects, anthropologists, historians, archaeologists, specialists in art but also in biodiversity, forestry, water, meteorology and so on are working together to show up the influences between the natural and the built environment.

Special interest is the genesis of architecture and its reciprocity with the environment all over the world. The aim is twofold: on one hand we want to protect the complete loss of traditional structures (in real and virtual ways) and on the other hand to find out in which way traditional building techniques may support modern architecture.

Two of our projects will be shown within this poster.

3.1 South Pacific Architecture – Building Traditions in Samoa and Fiji

Based on an excursion with experts and students in February 2002 this cinematic documentation shows the interdisciplinary work of architects, anthropologists and photogrammetrists on site and the results of the research.

Despite brisk research work in the anthropological field the architecture of the Pacific region is known very little. A unique part of the worlds' cultural heritage is abandoned and facing an increasing decline. Hot and humid climatic conditions and the growing commitment to progress and towards modern signs of prosperity accelerate the negative trend. Just a few remains of the traditional architecture are remaining.

Both in Samoa and in Fiji the manifestations of the buildings are closely connected with the social and cultural life. Purely technical photographs of the buildings alone therefore form no sufficient basis for researching an overall view of the architecture of the region - from the historical examples to today. Therefore it was particularly important to work with the methods of anthropology to find out about connections between architecture and the way of life and to analyse change processes on this basis.

The building method on the two islands differs fundamentally. While traditional architecture in Samoa gets along without walls, and thus no place for privacy is present, on Fiji closed structures are dominating. It is also unique that traditional building process in Samoa is downward as it were top to bottom. Complex hanging structures, elaborate bindings of coconut fibre and roofing made of sugarcane and palm leaves form a harmonious - however unfortunately short-living - total structure.

The tropical, damp-hot climate corrodes the wooden houses after approximately 20 years, if the so far usual, permanent maintenance work is no longer regularly accomplished. Introduction of modern technologies and the change of values that is taking place all over the Pacific area accelerate the loss of traditional houses. Prefabricated buildings following US-American samples and the use of corrugated sheets and tin let the conventional handicraft art sink fast into oblivion.

Outside influences by "Palagis" (translated white people), rising tourism and an arising of new media change also the housing customs and lead to a changed consumer and prestige thinking. The application of new technologies does not lead automatically to an improvement of the quality of life. Therefore it is not only necessary to record traditional built volumes but also to offer approaches for current problems and formulate increasing problems and questions. The unique combination of technical and cultural components in our research work addresses the topic from different sides and shows a possible way for future scientific interdisciplinary work.

3.2 Art in the sign of building traditions in the Vojvodina

1990, under the regime of the president Slobodan Milosevic the autonomy of the Serbian provinces Kosovo and Vojvodina nullified. The minorities, who were living in those regions, were forced to complete assimilation. Traditions of the different ethnic groups were suppressed and the education in the respective languages was forbidden. The import of books was prevented.

The north province bordering on Croatia, Hungary and Romania is the grain chamber of Serbia. About 40 per cent of the national tax revenue originates from the Vojvodina. All these funds had to be transferred directly to Belgrade and only very little flowed back again. In the relatively wealthy Vojvodina this had a particularly painful result. Due to the meanwhile bad economically situation and preceding political confusions the individual represented ethnic groups departed increasingly from their cultural roots. To work against the complete loss of cultural and artistic inheritance the "Hungarian association for young people in the Vojvodina" - DMISZ (Délvédéki Magyarok Ifjúsági Szervezete) created the "games of the youth of the Vojvodina" („Nyári Ifjúsági Játékok“).

In the year 2000 the games have been initiated to offer a possibility for the youth of the Hungarian minority to deal with their traditions in a playful way. Each year in May 80 teams of 8 persons start to work on different tasks, which are concerned with cultural and artistic topics of the ethnical minority. Thus for example traditional song property was collected or plays had to be prepared in co-operation with older ones, mirroring typical

historical everyday life situations. A four-day final event in the park of Senta forms the conclusion final celebration of the games, where the individual groups present the results of their efforts.

In our project students of architecture in Vienna, Budapest and in the Vojvodina co-operated in developing a booklet, which contains the 3x3 rules for photogrammetric recording of architecture and suggestions which additional information (besides the photogrammetric recording) about a building may be collected. This booklet was used as basis for one of the tasks at the games. The aim was to enhance the youth to find out about the building traditions, advantages and disadvantages, the history of the houses and their inhabitants and further more. In this way they will find out more about their cultural past and also about its relevance and influence on their everyday-life today.

For the final event the different groups prepare their own artistic access to the results of their work. In co-operation with artists they draw pictures, create sculptures make photo exhibitions or just show typical elements of "their" houses.

This part of the games may raise the awareness on the built cultural heritage value and can be a possible way to strengthen the knowledge and the pride about their roots of the Hungarian minority's youth in the Vojvodina. Even if it is only a small piece of the worlds cultural heritage it may enrich the diversity of the Hungarian culture in the Vojvodina and it is worth being kept alive.

4. STUDY PROJECT

4.1 study project scope

The study project "documenta: land + art?" will approach a cultural landscape from the perspective of a possible natural and cultural dialogue. Exemplary places of interaction between initiatives and processes of the "documenta" and the local environment and region of "Hessen-Kassel" shall be highlighted and investigated. A set of core question will be raised: e.g. In how far has the relation between the people and their environment been changed by creative processes? Are Land + Art key figures in this cultural landscape? How about places of significance, their relation, their influence, their sustainability?

4.2 study project process

In our study project "documenta : land + art ?" we (a group of interested, international, interdisciplinary people) focussed on the documenta, an international forum for contemporary art taking place in an intermediate rhythm of five years. The documenta has been initiated in 1955 by Arnold Bode and Werner Haftmann together with the horticultural exhibition ("Bundesgartenschau"). In the context of postwar heavily destroyed "Hessen Kassel" the documenta may be considered as a part of a re-creation process. After a time of isolation and heavy censorship also in the wide field of creative freedom (labelling some works as condemned art) this initiative has contributed a share in the movement of opening up to the world again and the process of revitalising the heavily devastated grounds.

Our study project excursion to Kassel at the beginning of May assisted us in getting a first idea and forming a set of impressions concerning the respective people and the place.

Our first walk took us to the "Künstlernekropole" in the "Habichtswald", an area within a landscape protection zone that has been dedicated to the creation of documenta artists' places of commemoration, initiated by Harry Kramer.

In visiting the documenta archive, we had the the opportunity to enter a part of the documenta's memory and with the kind help of the archive team managed to specify our own field of interest. In a practical exercise we followed along some of Joseph Beuys traces of the "7000 oaks" project, studying the scope of the physical evidence and spiritual vitality of his idea of a "social sculpture". Reflections contributed to an intense discussion in the creative atmosphere of "Villa Seeberg". An inspiring guided tour along the remains, the physical testimonies of the documenta that remain in public space helped furthermore to stimulate interest and research activities. The visit to the museum of sepulchral culture and the creative impulses gained at the current exhibition of the Fridericianum activated participation.

In the further study project process we decided to take further steps towards a creative reflection of the documenta as "living heritage". In individual and common activities we tried to activate this vital memory on the 4th of July...:

"4th of July"

We as participants of the study project documenta : land + art ? will present and perform actions related to our working topics in progress. The BTU Campus will become a platform, an experimental field for associations and reflections on the Beuys "7000 Oaks" project, the supportive idea of a "social sculpture", towards a "Free International University".

We would like to kindly invite you to join the "floating poem", pick some of "Beuys' fruits", enter a place of "commemoration", follow some "dialogues on landscapes, trees and public art", get to know "perceptions of a public/private space" and finally participate in our "tree planting project".

Our starting point will be the Cafeteria Terrace at 15:00. From here we will begin our flow along the "focal actions" taking us along the diagonal of trees and benches, towards the grove of trees and finally towards the University Garden, where our journey will come to a (preliminary) end around 16:00. A small brochure will be distributed illustrating our "focal actions" and ideas.

Feel free, take part...☺

4.3 documenta : land + art ?

The introductory formula of the study project remains our common riddle, leading us towards further reflections. We may consider it for example as describing the relation of an ongoing documenta collection (as documentation process) towards the combination of the existing natural and cultural potential of a place in continuous transformation by creative natural and cultural processes. The spatial context of these reflection and interaction processes between the local-regional environment of "Hessen-Kassel" in relation to the globally distributed environments of the respective curators, artists and visitors. In this sense the documenta may be considered an ongoing natural and cultural dialogue. Of course there are more ways of looking at it: "documenta: land + art ?" remains open for further reflections...

4.4 some acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks for valuable support to : the DAAD, the team of the "Villa Seeberg", the team from the "documenta archive", our guide along the traces of the documenta in public space, the exhibition team from the Fridericianum and the museum of sepulchral culture, the team from the Multimedia-Centre at BTU Cottbus, the BTU faculty's garden team and the team of K29...

5. ART PROJECTS

5.1 "cultural landscapes"

The long-term photographic project entitled "cultural landscapes" (working title) formulates approaches towards exemplary cultural landscapes. Sensing these areas comprises long strolls, careful observation and research on the formation processes of these characteristic landscapes on natural grounds. Taking a picture is an attempt to define the optimised position of the camera in the scene, between diving into it and barely watching from a distance. This "seen space" forms a "living world" and reflects a culturally perceived landscape.

In this sense images may be considered extracts and "glimpse-keepers" of life in motion. Colour and black and white get together side by side. It is in the act of comparing the single images to one another that characteristics and differences in nature reveal and get visible.

AnoYo Group works on "own initiative" as well as for commissioned projects. Among the main concerns is the documentation of cultural heritage and landscapes, also in combined spheres. After a thorough process of research, classification in social, historical and contemporary contexts photographs are taken in large format. Selected views are presented or to put it in a short formula: reflected documentary photography.

Some project examples: German Penal Architecture, Sacred Sites in Japan, Suburban Architecture of Tokyo, Main Station Leipzig, Contemporary Architecture in the Medieval City Centre of Halle, Wörlitz Gardens

5.2 "nat.-log."

The "nat.-log." project enters the experimental sphere of different approaches towards or rather exposure to natural spaces. A collection of texts, graphics and photographs are offered in a book. Similar to an artists' diary "nat.-log." reflects on human existence in general and in relation to "untouched" natural areas, offering extensive long strolls and short glimpses of sudden viewpoints. A connection towards our prehistoric memory is stimulated, archaic scripts and signs seem to reappear, touching upon inner archaic human nature.

The Workshop for Transmissions ("Werkstatt für Transmissionen") collects and edits graphic art, texts, sounds and all kinds of intermediate forms in experimental combinations. Generally independent from usual language, the results may be considered as art objects. According to the respective topics, mainly considerations on nature, human existence and related extensions are revealed. The objects have a wide range of appearance: artists books, folders, prints, silver-chrome-photographs, etchings, sound collages, also spacious book-image-plates mostly in larger formats.

6. PERSPECTIVES

After this overview of exemplary projects and brief journey into the wide field of science, education and arts we may recall some perspective-bundles and experimentally form new ones.

The case study reveals a wide and at the same time detailed approach towards the monitoring of a natural and cultural landscape bearing rich but vulnerable heritage (re)sources, including a comprehensive description of the historical transformations of this "living heritage".

The documentary projects offer comprehensive approaches towards scientific descriptions of cultural heritage in context with active involvement of the regions' inhabitants in this vital heritage conservation process.

In the study project an educative approach of active group involvement in the research process is illustrated, towards sensing (world) heritage in local-global context as part of "our living memory"

The art projects reveal individual approaches towards sensing our human natural and cultural basis in reflections of inner and outer worlds, as "reflected documentaries".

In the careful combination of different documentation methods and human communication approaches, common scientific research results may enhance individual artistic reflections or vice versa creative processes might lead to the development of new scientific perspectives, supporting a rich variety in the ongoing sensing of "our natural and cultural heritage - transformations, collections and creative processes". This rich fundus may provide a nourishing source for the development of sustainable strategies in balancing conservation and change as integral parts of our human existence.