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DISRUPTED LANDSCAPES: The representation of Mediterranean Wildfires

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Abstract

This investigation explores representation in landscape architecture as a means of integrating wildfires as a disturbance in landscape planning and management. The case study of the Sierra de Collserola in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area in Spain is developed, as a Mediterranean metropolis referent where to test representation, planning and management methodology. Wildfires are the main natural disturbance that affects the Mediterranean area and it is expected to worsen in the global climate change scenario. The fire regime has changed, mainly due to climate and human activity. The international community specialized in wildfire management recognizes the inability to solve and treat the problem strictly from the field of emergencies. The classic prevention model is being questioned, since it is not an issue of extinction capacity or economic resources destined to extinction, but an issue of landscape's ability to integrate and modulate disturbances. The perception and interpretation we make of wildfires and disturbances is sociocultural, but in turn, disruptive, and this fact influences political and scientific positions that are not exempt from these assessments. The concept of loss of value, associated with disturbances, is analyzed, to resignify loss and disturbance through the characterization of the operation of the disturbance: intensity, frequency or regime, as well as the landscape's own capacities that are activated by the disturbance, such as resistance, resilience or transformability, proposing its integration into landscape planning and management through representation. The case study develops a methodology for the integration of disturbances in planning and management in a specific territory such as the Sierra de Collserola through representation, anticipating the scenario of great wildfire and proposing the inclusion of disruptive change through management as a designed disturbance, and of wildfires through fire regime management. The representation explores the operability of the disturbance from the instrumental and the affective perspective to resignify the concept of disturbance and join a necessarily transdisciplinary reflection on the socialization of value and risk.

Keywords: Landscape management; landscape planning; wildfires; landscape representation