



## On the side of fire

Rites, visions, cultivation practices in the landscape

International Landscape Study Days  
2023, *nineteenth edition*

### Abstract and lecturers' short biographies

#### > lecture **Cultivated by fire**

KATE CULLITY

landscape architect, founder of TCL-Taylor Cullity Lethlean, Adelaide  
**Cultivated by Fire**

Fire in the Australian landscape is both a destructive yet ordering force, one in which plants have become adapted to cope with, survive and in some cases flourish. The frequency and intensity of recent large scale bushfires are however unprecedented and many scientists and fire experts are turning to the traditional Aboriginal practice of “fire stick farming” as a way of managing the landscape to avoid these high intensity fires.

The talk will focus on a number of TCL’s projects that tell scientific and cultural stories in relation to fire and the environment. Projects presented will include the Forest Gallery at the Melbourne Museum, the exhibition gardens ‘Fire Stories’ (Chaumont-sur-Loire 2004) and ‘Cultivated by Fire’ (IGA Berlin 2017), and the National Arboretum in Canberra, an arboretum of 100 endangered tree species from around the world.

**Kate Cullity** is a founding director of TCL and is a nationally and internationally recognised and awarded landscape architect and environmental artist, with particular skills in the design of public and private gardens and the integration of public art with landscape and urban design. She has worked as both an artist and designer for a number of international art and garden festivals both in Australia and overseas and her work has been extensively published internationally. Her background in botany and her strong personal interest in horticulture have resulted in her involvement in the planting design of sites throughout Australia.

Kate has been a member of the core design team in many of TCL’s award winning projects, including the redevelopment of North Terrace and Victoria Square in Adelaide and the Australian Garden in Victoria, which won the 2013 WAF, ‘Landscape of the Year’ Award. Her own garden was the inaugural recipient of the AILA National Edna Walling Award for Residential Design in 2006 and her other residential projects have won the AILA National Award of Excellence in 2014, 2017 and 2019.

Kate has taught at both secondary and tertiary levels and is most familiar with the education sector. She has completed a PhD which reflected on 25 years of TCL’s practice, as well as her interest in beauty, aesthetics and care and how these qualities can be aligned with creating and appreciating resilient cultural, social and environmental landscapes.

Kate’s folio snapshot: Darwin Civic and State Square Masterplan, Darwin NT; National Museum of Australia Forecourt, Canberra ACT; Henley Square Redevelopment, Henley Beach SA; Australian Garden, Cranbourne VIC; Adelaide Botanic Gardens Mediterranean Garden, SA; 443 Queen Street Residential Apartments, QLD; Twig House Residence, VIC; Victoria Square / Tarntanyangga, Masterplan and Stage 1, SA; North Terrace Redevelopment, Stages 1-3, SA; Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park & Cultural Centre, NT; North Terrace Cultural Campus Masterplan, SA.

IGNAZIO E. BUTTITTA

professor of European Ethnology, University of Palermo-ISPC/CNR

**The flames of the saints. Rites and symbolisms of fire in Europe**



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Fire is an element whose symbolic meanings can be primarily ascribed to its role of powerful instrument of cultural transformation. The sacred value and ritual practices connected with it basically come from its functions of a practical nature: lighting and heating of living areas, cooking of food, transformation of materials, preparation of fields, etc. Fire was undoubtedly already a sacred symbol in the feast days of the first agro-pastoral civilizations, being regarded as the element that is linked to transcendence, divine instrument, manifestation of divinity. Sacred fires have maintained these roles throughout the Middle Ages, the Modern Age and relatively regularly in the contemporary world in various European regions, where they remain constituent elements of countless religious celebrations which take place during the year. In Sicily and Sardinia in particular, a diverse phenomenology allows fires, beacons, bonfires, torchlight processions to feature widely in the winter festivals and, to a lesser extent, in other calendar holidays and various patron saint festivities. The bonfires vary in number and size from place to place. First-class timber is burnt in some, in others straw, prunings or waste materials. They are devotional and entertainment places around which the family and the neighbourhood or the whole community gathers. Sometimes they are lit at other than the official celebration of a religious festival, at other times they are so much an integral part of the latter as to be blessed by the priest. In any case not only a multifaceted mythical-ritual universe revolves around the bonfires, but also behaviours and beliefs which seem to repeat forms and actions with which mankind has related to the divine for thousands of years, rendering homage to transcendent entities on whom people feel their wellbeing depends. Even though the bond with natural cycles today seems to have been lost and traditional festivities have been affected by capitalization, the rites of fire continue to offset the fundamental anxieties of existence with the perpetual questions about death, illness, production and reproduction. Lighting bonfires, dancing around the flames, jumping into flames, burning puppets or effigies, collecting up ashes, running through fields and village or town streets waving torches are behaviours aimed at communing with the divine, at fulfilling a vow made to the saint whose festival it is, at purifying the community space-time, at sustaining the fertility of men and cattle, at ensuring a good harvest, in other words at re-establishing the natural and social cosmos.

**Ignazio E. Buttitta** is professor of demo-ethno-anthropological subjects at the University of Palermo, where he teaches Anthropology of the Sacred and European Ethnology, and research associate of the Institute of Heritage Science of the National Research Council of Italy. He is president of Fondazione Buttitta, Secretary General of the Association for the Conservation of Popular Traditions, chairman of the Scientific Committee of the Festival of Migrant Literature, director of the Ethnomusical archive of the Mediterranean and of the Vittorietti Ethnohistory Library. He studies occurrences of Euro-Mediterranean popular religiosity, focussing in particular on the analysis of ceremonial calendars and ritual symbolism and their processes of transformation, as well as on material culture and ethnoanthropological museology. He has carried out research in Sicily, Sardinia, Calabria, Corsica and Crete. His monographs include: *Le fiamme dei santi. Usi rituali del fuoco in Sicilia*, Rome 1999; *Il fuoco. Simbolismo e pratiche rituali*, Palermo 2002; *I morti e il grano. Tempi del lavoro e ritmi della festa*, Rome 2006; *Verità e menzogna dei simboli*, Rome 2008; *Continuità delle forme e mutamento dei sensi. Ricerche e analisi sul simbolismo festivo*, Acireale-Rome 2013; *La danza di Ares. Forme e funzioni delle danze armate*, Acireale-Rome 2014; *I cibi della festa in Sicilia*, Padova 2019; *Una e la forma, molti sono i nomi. Scenari del sacro femminile tra la Sicilia e Creta*, Palermo 2022.

NADIA BREDA

Professor of Cultural Anthropology, University of Florence

**The art of hidden fire**

The use of fire is known worldwide and there is no shortage of examples also in the Veneto region, on the plains as in the forests.

The art of hidden fire is that of the charcoal burners in the Cansiglio forest; those ancient and skilled converters of wood into charcoal, able to get their livelihood and knowledge from fire in places that, although under increasing threat from forms of exploitation, negligence and abandonment, still remain an invaluable source of material and cultural resources.

Fire is an essential, vital element also in other landscapes such as wetland areas, where burning is an essential stage in the maintenance of marsh or bog resources. The reed harvesters of the wetlands are well aware that reeds reproduce through the rhizome chain, which must necessarily find free space to throw out new shoots. Furthermore, a marsh or bog produces an abundance of vegetation mass in a year, which, unless constantly reduced,

accumulates season after season with the risk of raising the bed and silting up the marsh or bog itself.

Local knowledge also makes it clear that the inflorescences of marsh plants appear before the leaves, when the marsh or bog is still covered with dry leaves and remains of vegetation from the last reed harvest. This is the time to burn the inflorescence, which is harmful to new shoots, so that only foliage is formed. The aim of this technique is to obtain a greater and better production of selected and pure foliage without any other species mixed up in it.

Modern cultures have become disconnected from fire practices to the point that their use is forbidden. Even burning marshes or bogs is currently forbidden and a conflict arises around fire, which is present in any case in these places; this conflict recommences every year between “unknown” arsonists on the one side and administrators, environmentalists and other players on the other side.



**Nadia Breda** (Conegliano, Treviso, 1965) graduated in Ethnology at the University Ca' Foscari of Venice with a dissertation supervised by Professor Glauco Sanga. She studied anthropology at EHESS in Paris and Toulouse and obtained her PhD in Ethnoanthropological Studies at La Sapienza University of Rome in 1999. She has been a Cultural Anthropology research fellow at the University of Florence (SCIFOPSI – Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology) since 2001, where she regularly teaches courses in Ethnography, Cultural Anthropology and Anthropology of the Environment. She has taught Master's and PhD courses, directed fellowships, organised conferences and coordinated two Agreements, the most recent being with the MSUAC University of Mongolia.

She has carried out fieldwork in national and regional parks and worked on international projects concerning climate change and the relationship between nature and culture in Great Britain, Spain, Switzerland, Slovenia, Colombia and France.

She was invited by the French anthropologist Philippe Descola to LAS (Social Anthropology Laboratory founded by Claude Lévi-Strauss in Paris) during the 2018/19 academic year, holding seminars at the Sorbonne, the Musée du Quai Branly, EHESS, INALCO and the University of Brest and working with CEMS (Centre for Siberian and Mongolian Studies).

She has over 70 publications to her name, including *I respiri della palude*, CISU, Rome 2000; *Palù. Inquieti paesaggi tra natura e cultura*, Cierre, Verona 2001 and *Bibo. dalla palude ai cementi*, CISU, 2010.

A number of her works on environmental conflicts were dramatised by an Italian music group in 2018 and 2019. Her most recent research focuses on the anthropology of Mongolia.

CARLOS CASAS

film director, program director Fabrica

### **Fieldworks: Fire**

Introduces a selection of films and excerpts related and featuring representations of fire in my fieldwork research around the world, from Patagonia to the Pamirs to the latest volcano eruption in Iceland. An audiovisual journey to fire in its different contexts uses and representations.

A selection of fire presence in my Fieldworks series.

*Fieldworks are a series of films, a part of an ongoing experiment with environmental video and radio frequencies, a sort of landscape video notes I have been developing since 2000, with these works I try to capture the atmospheric qualities of a landscape through visual and audio field recordings captured on location. Using image and sound as a sort of spatial instrument, I am interested in short waves signals and VLF, their atmospheric qualities and sound, capturing the radio waves in each of the landscape I portray, allows me to grasp another dimension of it. A sort of enhanced perception. I am interested also in the asynchronous randomness of the relation between soundtrack and film. I see this work as a sort of post structural film, where documentary and experimental film manners meet.*

At that time I was asking myself and I still do today how can you capture a place its essence with film, how can you film an experience of being in a precise moment in time in a precise location, which technology which data you need to gather, to fully comprehend a place. Fieldworks were always that for me a way to document place with all its possible dimensions, it was an architectural question, a pure space perception debate, but also in my way I was trying to capture myself in that space feeling and seeing as well as listening. Ultimately *Fieldworks* are this, perceptual moments captured through image and sound, what is like to be inside a lighthouse, or how it is to be in a barn in Patagonia, or what is an aurora borealis, or even what is a white night or a midnight sun. In a way a sort of personal encyclopedia of those moments that are essential to me, that have questioned my understanding of the world, that have created my own archive of the world, I still remember with wonder the day that I visited the Albert Kahn *Archives de la planète*, it was exactly that feeling, to watch those films and understand the value through time. A feeling of a world cataloguing itself, a document archive of a world continuously disappearing, a deep respect and passion for diversity for the amazement of being in the world, embedded in the riches of its cultures and its everyday pulse.

Film and even more digital video is a very fragile medium, how all this *fieldworks* will survive is still to be discovered, generation through generation,

I hope these instruments and documents will become a sort of testimony of these places or even better the ghosts that were inhabiting them.

Most of those fieldworks are devoid of human presence, Only the echo or the ghosts seem to live in those landscapes, populated by RF and other sonic phenomena captured in location and sometimes reworked as it would be an alchemical composition of the place, these landscapes were coming back to live in its surrogate version in its artistically/artificial version, hopefully with the ability of retelling its tale, of bringing back those memories of the place, those sensations, maybe an encapsulated version but also a reality in the works.



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**Carlos Casas** (b. 1974, Barcelona, Spain) is a filmmaker and artist whose practice encompasses film, sound and the visual arts. He was creative director of Colors Music and Films from 2005-2008 where he developed audiovisual projects and music research in various regions around the world. His works have been presented in International exhibitions like Venice Biennale, Shanghai Biennale, Bangkok Biennale, and Istanbul Biennial. His last films have been awarded in festivals around the world from Torino, Madrid, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City and his film works and installations have been presented in collective and personal exhibitions internationally. His films have been shown in festivals like Venice Film festival, Rotterdam Film Festival, FID Marseille, BAFICI Buenos Aires, Jeonju Festival, South Korea, Documenta Madrid, FICCO Mexico and others. His works have been presented in museum and spaces like Tate Modern, London, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, Hangar Bicocca, La Triennale Milano, NTU CCA Singapore, Bozar, Kunsten Festival des Arts Bruxelles, Oi Futuro Rio de Janeiro, MIS Sao Paulo, Center Pompidou, Fondation Cartier, Paris, Centre Cultura Contemporanea, Barcelona, Matadero Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Madrid, Malba Buenos Aires, GAM, Torino, etc.... He has concluded a trilogy of films, *END* dedicated to the most extreme environments on the planet, Patagonia, Aral Sea, and Siberia. *Avalanche* an a lifelong project and site-specific film project based on one of Pamir highest inhabited village has been presented in different museums, festivals and gallery spaces around Europe and the USA. *Cemetery* his latest project is a take on the myth of the elephant cemetery. And has been awarded in FID Marseille, and presented in festivals all over the world. He is co-founder of Map Productions and the visual sound label Von Archives. He is the current programme director at Fabrica. He is visiting professor at Dartmouth College USA, ECAM Madrid, Spain. He is currently researching and working on a new project based on the eruption of the Krakatoa volcano in Indonesia.

ROBIN WINOGROND

landscape architect and urban designer, Zurich

### **Like Moths Drawn to Light: The Fire Ring as Social Magnet**

Fire, as dangerous as it can be, has the ability to make public, urban space into a magical experience. This lecture is about the project Fire Ring built in two different settings: On the Beach and Zurich Airport Park. The medium of fire draws people like moths to light, creating a catalyst and magnet for social life – experiencing the power of fire with others. The archaic element of fire, the scenography of the fire as a sensual experience through the designed element and place Fire Ring, it's social uses and recreational infrastructure will be addressed.

The 10 meter diameter Fire Ring interprets the traditional camp fire anew. Based on the American “cowboy campfire”, the XL size Fire Ring is a space of social gathering for both friends and strangers, creating at once a sense of large-scale community and warm intimacy.

The project responds to an increasing need today for simultaneously experiencing one's own body, local culture and global lifestyles. The sensual wooden installation of Fire Ring: On the Beach functions as an enormous sofa for the naked bodies of bathers. In Swiss culture, grilling is a mist beloved national sport done only with friends and family. The intervention transfers this into an event of the public realm. At the same time it expresses the glacial history of the lakeside site, framing views to the surrounding landscapes, and provides a location for the global “urban event culture” of the city to unfold. The place is highly popular with young people, being among their friends while feeling part of a larger sense of community and gathering with strangers, something virtually foreign to Swiss culture.

The tree trunk, also an archaic natural element, is varied and composed to create multiple uses, scales and settings for the unfolding of social life around the fire. The large scale of the ring offers the feeling of community, combined and overlaid with intimate niches. The materials and surfaces allow differentiated textures and levels of thermal comfort, adding to the dynamic of the small place. By cool evening bonfires or grilling the stone ring serves as an archaic carpet on the ground, a seating space of warmth. The large, gracious wooden surface of the tree ring itself invites the visitor to spread out, take a nap, appropriate it, make oneself at home. The stools at the edge play with the theme of the hassocks, or footrests, creating an urban outdoor lounge.

With changing weather, seasons, social settings and personal mood the Fire Ring awaits to accommodate, be appropriated, or just lay in the landscape as a sculpture of shadow and light.

**Robin Winogron** is landscape architect and urban designer in Zurich, Switzerland. She currently teaches at Harvard University Graduate School of Design while practicing internationally on projects, juries, lecturing, teaching and publishing. Her interdisciplinary background, reflected in many prize-winning projects, ranges from built urban space and artistic installations to gardens and concepts for large and small-scale open and public space. She was Resident Artist at Stuttgart Academy of Art, holds a Master's in Landscape Architecture and Bachelor's in Urban Design.

Her projects express the site specific, poetic potential of residual suburban and urban sites, transforming their inherent identity and contradictions into potent narratives and experiences. Central themes running through all projects are her approaches and concepts of Geographical (Re)enchantment, atmosphere, imagination, the phenomenology of experience, environmental psychology and activating social space.

> session **Paradoxes**

PELIN BOLCA

research fellow, Polytechnic University of Turin

ROSA TAMBORRINO

professor of Architectural History, Polytechnic University of Turin

**Cities, great fires and new urban identity,**

The history of cities is intertwined with the history of disasters and in many cases the disasters leave permanent marks on the historic cities that can be chronologically – and sometimes visually – traced. These traces are not only strong elements to affect the urban identity and memory of the communities, but they are also impactful to enhance the community resilience. Among others, great fires have had a lasting impact on the urban identity and memory as they have been a part of urban life for centuries.

This article examines the Great Fire of Chicago in order to understand the event's place in a collective idea of the prime position of fire in the foundation of urban identity. It will aim principally at understanding the mechanisms through which a connection between the memory of fire and fire itself has transformed itself into an urban identity. The creation of a city museum, in line with similar initiatives in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth Century, will help to interpret these mechanisms. The Great Fire is, then, a fundamental aspect in the history of the American city, marking the transition from small communities to cities, from random growth to urban planning, from unregulated development to the construction of skyscraper, from the era of land grabs to the beginning of regulation and controlled urban growth.

**Pelin Bolca**, post-doctoral researcher affiliated in Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) of Politecnico di Torino (POLITO) in Italy. She is PhD in Architecture and Landscape Heritage program at POLITO and holds MSc Degree on Architecture for the Restoration and Enhancement of Heritage from the same university. She has collaborated with École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris as an invited researcher. Since 2018, she is teaching assistant of 'Digital History' course of the master program in POLITO, and yearly organized International Summer School entitled "Cultural Heritage, Cities, and Digital Humanities" organized by POLITO and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her research area focuses on the knowledge exchange between European and non-European contexts in the heritage-led decision processes that affects tangible and intangible cultural heritage of historic cities and the impacts on urban memory and urban identity of their inhabitants

**Rosa Tamborrino** is PhD, Full Professor in History of Architecture at the Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) of Politecnico di Torino (Italy), where she teaches Digital Urban History.

Rosa is leading the Infrastructuring Cultural Heritage/City History Architectural Network and Geodigital systems, a research group that she contributed to found on 2013 with Fulvio Rinaudo.

She is Vice-President of the Italian Association of Urban History and directs its official website <https://www.storiaurbana.com>. Her research focuses on urban history in a comparative perspective, on 19th 20th urban changes and cultural heritage, on museums and archives in their connections with the new media. Her publications include: 'Searching for a state-of-the-art public space: city museums among archives and networks' ("Planning Perspectives", 2012); *Guarini, Juvarra, Antonelli. Segni e simboli per Torino* (with G. Dardanella, 2008), *Parigi nell'Ottocento* (2005).

DAVIDE ASCOLI

professor of Forestry management and silviculture, University of Turin

**A history of fire: the role of fires in the evolution of life**

Fire disturbance in natural ecosystems originated at the same time as the earliest terrestrial plants and has played an important role for the whole evolutionary history of living organisms. The importance of fire in shaping ecosystems has varied in relation to climate changes and paleo-atmospheric conditions. Well before man appeared, fire played a key role in the selection of plant adaptations and in the distribution of ecosystems. Human beings initiated a new phase,



using fire to make the Earth more suited to their lifestyle. With the increase in the use of fire by the human population through various pyric transitions (prehistoric, agricultural, industrialised), fire regimes, however, have gone beyond the natural range and started to change ecological processes in ways that threaten the functionality of certain ecosystems and the services that they provide for society.

**Daide Ascoli**, professor of Prevention and mitigation of fire at the University of Turin, he studies wildfires from an ecological, economic and social viewpoint. He works together with fire control systems in various Italian and European regions with the intention of understanding and transferring sustainable impact mitigation models under conditions of climate change. He teaches forest science, and has published scientific articles on diverse aspects of wildfires. He is a member of the Italian Society of Silviculture and Forest Ecology (SISEF), for which he coordinates the working group "Gestione degli incendi boschivi" [Wildfire Management]. He is the author of *La tecnica del fuoco prescritto* [Prescribed burning techniques] (Aracne, 2013).



ENRICO PAU  
film director, Cagliari

### **The four seasons of fire (a diary of the fire of Montiferru)**

I could not tell the story of a fire as a simple account of what happened in the most dramatic July in the recent history of my island. Right from the start I realised that my journey into the fire of Montiferru would be a long one. I arrived when everything seemed lost, olive groves burnt, woods gone, animals, flower essences, insects, nature was just one colour and people were crying as if they had lost a part of themselves. In fact, in addition to the trees and the animals, in that fire the memory of the places was also burned, the memory that accompanied the life of so many of the inhabitants of Montiferru. It vanished in one night. I decided then that I would spend at least one year in those places, that I would enter into a human and emotional relationship with the people of Cuglieri and Santulussurgiu. I would follow the seasons of fire. And that is what I did; my love for nature in all its forms gave me empathy. I shared their pain, but I also spoke of their hope. I filmed the horror of a burnt wood, but also the generosity of nature which takes back its spaces. Rather than a miracle, what is slowly growing again represents the eternal dance of life in its various forms, capable of withstanding everything. What I will talk about in my article is the profound sense of this emotional journey; men and nature areas seem inseparable but what we do not fully realise is that nature can regenerate because nature always prevails. Man is fragile and his presence on the earth is precarious and is, unfortunately, not eternal, although we humans do not seem to understand that.

**Enrico Pau** lives and works in Cagliari, where he taught Italian in secondary school and History of Theatre at the University. The theatre has been an integral part of his artistic preparation. From a young age he performed and directed for various companies in his city. He experimented and continues to do so in the field of visual arts with design and performance. He has worked with the Italian national broadcasting company (Rai) as radio director and scriptwriter. For twenty years he was the theatre critic for the newspaper *La Nuova Sardegna*. As cinema director he has directed *La Volpe e l'Ape*, *Pesi Leggeri*, *Jimmy della Collina*, *L'Accabadora*, *L'Ultimo Miracolo*. His films have been screened, receiving awards and honourable mentions, at festivals including those of Locarno, Venice, Clermont Ferrand, Giffoni, Angers, Karlovy Vary, Palm Springs, Bobbio, Annecy, Ajaccio, Shanghai and Cape Town.

> sessione **Under the volcano**

DONATELLA DE RITA  
volcanologist and writer, Rome  
**Volcanoes and volcanic landscapes**

Contrary to what is commonly believed, a volcano is not the structure created by the build-up of its products, which in actual fact is only a small part of its complex geological formation and which, furthermore, develops within the earth's crust, including the magma reservoir or chamber and the conduit or conduits through which the magma tries to reach the surface. Volcanologists define as volcano any discontinuity in the earth's crust through which magma and its gaseous component rise up towards the upper parts of the crust and only occasionally reaches the surface; a volcano is the instrument through which the Earth transfers heat and matter from its interior to the surface.

Ever since man became a part of life on the planet, volcanoes have always influenced his life; without their activity, life on the planet would not even exist. It is because of volcanoes that there is the atmosphere and the oceans and even earth's crust on which man lives. From the very beginning volcanoes have been constantly moulding and changing the morphology of the planet, becoming protagonists of the landscape. Countless towns and cities have been built

close to volcanoes that have undergone continual changes thereby obliging man to adapt and change his economy quickly so as to be able to continue to use the innumerable resources of volcanic areas. Many volcanic eruptions have had serious repercussions on the history of man and on the evolution of our society, at times dramatically affecting the climate and therefore the quality of human life. This was the case of the eruption of Laki in Iceland in 1783-84, whose effects negatively impacted the European environment to the extent that they provoked popular insurrections that culminated in the French Revolution (1789). With their spectacular and often mysterious activity, volcanoes have always represented for man the mystery of nature to which his birth and death are linked. The destructive power of an explosive eruption or the fascination of a gentle emission of lava capable of destroying a lifetime's work in just a few hours could not and cannot even today but stimulate curiosity and respect in man. In fact artists worldwide have often chosen volcanoes as the subject matter of their pictures, initially deifying them then choosing them as symbols of the landscapes of famous cities in the world such as Tokyo with its Fujiyama or Naples with Vesuvius, Catania with Etna.



**Donatella De Rita** graduated in Geology with a first-class honours degree at the University La Sapienza, where she was also awarded a Professorship (1986). In 1993 she decided to go to Roma Tre University, where she has taught mostly volcanology subjects. Her research was on the geology and volcano-tectonic evolution of volcanic areas, their stratigraphy and cartography, eruptive mechanisms and the processes of emplacement of volcanic deposits, urban development in volcanic areas and relative risks, geosites and parks in volcanic areas, and geoarchaeology. She has studied most of the world's volcanoes. She has written hundreds of articles for Italian and international specialist magazines and journals as well as informative articles. In 2005 she wrote together with other authors for Princeton University Press and for Raffaello Cortina Editore, the book *The Seven Hills of Rome; A Geological Tour of the Eternal City* (winner of Rome's Premio Biblioteche 2006). In 2015 she published *I vulcani, giganti di fuoco* for the publishing house Il Mulino. Since 2000 alongside her academic activity she has been engaged in creative writing and has published two short-story collections: *Viaggi a testa in giù* for Firenze Libri (2002) and *Voci di strada* with Stango Editore (2003). In 2011 her first novel: *Volevo solo un figlio* for the publisher Progetto Cultura, in 2021 the novel *La nostra storia* for Albatros Il filo and in 2022 *Il grande caldo* together with F. Zarlenga for Titani Editori.

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LEONARDO CAFFO

environmental philosopher, Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (New Academy of Fine Arts), Milan  
**“La montagna di fuoco”**

Etna as a physical place, with its harsh and powerful nature, yet also a mental, spiritual place; area of the Earth and of the memory that encompasses the entire life of whoever is born and grows up in its shadow. That is how Leonardo Caffo describes it through an epistolary exchange between Man-philosopher and the Mountain of Fire, which is the first step in the construction of that 'psychophysiology of ecosystems' suggested by Sylvain Tesson. 'Cara Etna' can be defined as research that is also an acknowledgement to his volcanologist father, the family, childhood friends, encounters, walks, treks. The stories, of today and yesterday, written about the landscape, the lava and the houses. But more than anything, 'Cara Etna' is an idea of mountain that is all-inclusive: there is “the transformation of specialized life into bare life, from persons to simple life forms. There is life as play that we have left behind, life as mountain track where the objective and the route are just two ways of saying the same thing”. The Mountain of Fire tells of a passion for the volcano that unites a father and son. And while the father, the volcanologist Salvatore Caffo, gives a clear account of its history and essence, the son, a philosopher, outlines its spirit, which leaves its mark on the whole landscape and the people of Etna.

**Leonardo Caffo** is professor of Aesthetics of Fashion, Media and Design and Semiotics of Art at NABA in Milan; he also teaches Aesthetics at IULM, also in Milan. He previously taught Theoretical Philosophy at the Polytechnic University of Turin. He writes for the “Corriere della Sera”, holds regular columns in “Internazionale”, “Lampoon” and “Interni,” and has been among the presenters and authors of Radio 3 RAI; he has worked as Curator at Triennale di Milano, was Philosopher in Residence for the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea and is a Member of the Steering Committee of the MAXXI Museum in Rome. His latest books include *Costruire Futuri* (Bompiani 2020) and *Quattro capanne. O della semplicità* (nottetempo 2020). For Einaudi he has published *La vita di ogni giorno* (2016), *Fragile umanità* (2017), *Vegan* (2018) and *Velocità di fuga* (2022). He directs the magazine “Parola”, the publisher Politi Segnanfreddo Edizioni (of the international magazine Flash Art), and the Mater Matuta Master in Curatorial Studies for the Mediterranean at the Abadir Academy of Design in Sicily. He has curated dozens of exhibitions, worked directly on artist installations and design for museums and galleries including the research series on the concept of huts “Cabin-Out”. He has written novels and diaries on the border between literature and philosophy including *Il cane e il filosofo* (Mondadori 2020), *Essere giovani* (Ponte alle Grazie 2021), *La montagna di fuoco. Etna la madre* (Ponte alle Grazie 2022). Every year in May, he holds the experimental workshop “Rethinking Lampedusa” in collaboration between Northeastern University in Boston, the Made Program and the Moleskine Foundation on the Sicilian island. His

forthcoming novel, published by Fandango publishing house, is called *Due sogni*. His works are translated and commented on in numerous languages.

SALVATORE CAFFO

volcanologist, executive of Ente Parco dell'Etna, Catania

**Etna, World Heritage Site**



Diodorus Siculus, Pindar, Thucydides, Empedocles, Virgil, Lucretius, and Ovid have told us about Etna and its unceasing volcanic activity that has profoundly marked the history of the men who for many generations have lived in this part of eastern Sicily, where the interaction between primordial forces and the forms of vegetable and animal life that have lived in the area over time, has led to the evolution of an extraordinary variety of natural landscapes that are unique in the Mediterranean basin.

Called Aitnè in ancient times, with its 135 km perimeter, Etna, the mythical Forge of the Gods, is an extremely complex composite volcano formed by the overlaying and overlapping of eruptive material ejected at different times through different magma conduit systems to the surface.

Developed, changed, destroyed and rebuilt through many geological events that have occurred over many thousands of years, this special “asthenospheric window” represents a “response” to the complex process of lithospheric convergence between the African plate to the south and the Euro-Asiatic plate to the north as well as to many geodynamic events that have characterized the Mediterranean basin.

The slopes of Etna have seen countless generations of persons who, learning to live with the “Muntagna”, have shaped its environment to the extent that they have created new rural landscapes, often developed around agriculture and stock farming, leaving an indelible footprint through unmistakable and significant marks in the structuring of the landscape.

Very fine constructions; lava paved roads, dry-stone walls, terraces, lava stone shelters (*casudde*), towers..., all elements through which the Etna people inserted themselves appropriately into the environment, “exploiting it” and bringing out its enormous productive and economic potential, establishing the specific cultural identity of this region.

The evolution of the types of dwelling, the geometries of cultivations, their distribution in relation to old irrigation systems, the huge work of removing stones from the cultivated fields represent the pages of a geographical book that allows us to track certain fundamental stages in the long, complex rural history of Etna, whose traces and distinctive marks are stratified in the area and show us the multi-millennial Man-Nature relationship in terms of continual evolution and of mutual space-time tension.

After the first step in January 2011 with the Italian State’s proposal for the Mount Etna site to be included on the “Tentative List” and then the presentation in 2012 of the nomination file, on 21 June 2013 the “Mount Etna” site was put on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criterion VIII of the ten indicated in the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

According to Criterion VIII, the site of outstanding universal value must “be an outstanding example representing major stages of earth’s history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features”.

The official reason: “Etna is one of the world’s most active and iconic volcanoes and an outstanding example of on-going geological processes and volcanic landforms. The stratovolcano is characterized by almost continuous eruptive activity from its summit craters and fairly frequent eruptions and lava flows from the craters and fissures on its flanks. This exceptional volcanic activity has been recorded by humans for at least 2700 years, making it one of the longest records of volcanic history in the world.

The diverse and accessible assemblage of volcanic features such as summit craters, cinder cones, lava flows, lava caves and the Valle de Bove depression have made Mount Etna a prime destination for research and education. Etna is today one of the world’s best studied and monitored volcanoes and continues to influence volcanology, geophysics and other earth science subjects.

Mount Etna’s notoriety, scientific and cultural importance and educational value are of global significance”.

The area of public property (Municipalities, State Forestry Agency, Park Authority) inscribed on the W.H.L. covers Zone A, the integral reserve area of the park, which includes the most important natural and geological features of Etna. In this area, the natural environment is conserved in its entirety with all of its natural features and forms the core zone of the UNESCO site. The core zone is surrounded and protected by a larger area, known as the buffer zone.



Parco dell'Etna includes 9 SIC (Sites of Community Interest) and 4 SIC/ZPS (Sites of Community Interest/Special Protection Areas for Wild Birds), which represent 77% of the UNESCO site.

**Salvatore Caffo** is the leader of the Operational Unit "Ricerca Vulcanologica e Fruizione" of the Parco dell'Etna Authority. Born in Catania on 3 November 1960, he took his school-leaving exams in 1979 and did his national service in the navy from January 1980 to July 1981. From 1981 to 1985 he attended the Geology degree course at the Sciences Faculty of the University of Catania and was awarded a first-class degree in December 1985. In 1986 he won the national competition for a study grant to attend a three-year PhD course in "magmatic petrology" and did his research at the Department of Earth Sciences of the University of Catania and at other Italian and foreign universities until November 1989. In 1990 he was conferred the title of PhD in Rome at the Italian Ministry of University. From November 1989 until 1992 he taught geography and natural sciences. In 1992 he won the competitive examination to become full professor of natural sciences, chemistry and geography at state high schools and taught until 31 August 1994. Since 1 September 1994, after he won the relative public competition held by the Etna Park Authority in 1992, he has been executive volcanologist. Since 2004 he has been National Park director, having been successful in the relative national competition held by the Ministry of the Environment. He works with the Italian National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology and with the Civil Protection Department. He is ordinary member of the Italian Geological Society, the Italian Association of Volcanology, the Italian Association of Geology and Tourism and of the Italian Association of Park and Nature Reserve Directors.



**JUAN MANUEL PALERM**

professor of Architectural Design, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

**La Palma: eruptions and new landscapes,**

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**Juan Manuel Palerm** is full professor of Architecture at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Visiting professor in many European universities, in the United States and in South America, he was also a contract professor at the University of Venice and at the University of Trento, responsible for international seminars, workshops and Integrated Laboratories in Landscape Architecture.

In 1986, with Leopoldo Tabares de Nava he founded the firm 'Palerm & Tabares de Nava Arquitectos,' with headquarters in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. In his works he pays particular attention to the aspects of the place and the territory, to the relationship between architecture and landscape, between natural and urban elements, as part of the architectural language, in search of a balance in the face of differences in scale and intervention environments. Project-Landscape relations appear constantly within the reflections on architecture and the studio's works, which have received international prizes and awards and have been published in numerous national and international specialized journals.

Director of the II and III Biennial of Architecture, Art and Landscape in the Canary Islands and of the Canary Islands Landscape Observatory, since 2014 he has been president of UNISCAPE – European University Network for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention.

**XABIER ERKIZIA**

sound artist, Bera, Basque Country

**Hearing a volcano**

This conference illustrated with sounds relates to several days of listening to the volcano Cumbre Vieja on the island of La Palma during its eruption in September 2021. A listening exercise difficult to measure for a person with no scientific, volcanological knowledge but simply fascinated by the experience of listening to a sound whose amplitude goes far beyond the scale to which we humans are accustomed. A personal diary in the form of memory of the amazement, the force of nature and the atavistic fear aroused by the lack of understanding of natural events that deny reason.

**Xabier Erkizia** (Lesaka, 1975) is an independent researcher, sound-artist, musician and producer. He has spent the last thirty years in sound creation, paying attention mostly to music, the design and research of sounds and the culture of listening. The results of this work can be seen in his many sound installations, free improvisations, film sound tracks, works for radio and essays. In addition to his creative side, Erkizia is a museum and art gallery curator and teaches regularly in various schools and universities.

SERGE BRIFFAUD

professor at Bordeaux National School of Architecture and Landscape,  
researcher at the CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research) laboratory *Passages*

QUENTIN RIVIÈRE

PhD student, Université de La Réunion

**Burn to preserve. The case of the savannahs of Réunion Island**



The savannahs of Réunion Island lie between the coast and an elevation of 300-400 metres on the leeward side of the island. Today they are a landscape and environment at risk of extinction, in a coastal area undergoing maximum transformation marked by strong urban development. Since man arrived on the island mid-XVII century, the landscape of this lower slope has been shaped by pastoral activities. The desire to have permanent pasture led livestock farmers to use fire. The regular use of fire allowed a grassy or sparsely wooded savannah to be maintained, dominated by a tussock grass - *Heteropogon contortus* – whose nutritional value can only be renewed by fire. Contraction of the savannah areas and a considerable decline in livestock farming over the last few decades have deregulated this pyro-pastoral system, bringing about significant landscape and ecological changes, whose most visible manifestation is the rapid colonization of the grassy areas by invasive woody plants.

These changes occur at a time in which the value of savannah landscapes - long denigrated - is beginning to be recognised thereby raising the question of their conservation. In this regard, researchers suggested to the Conservatoire du littoral, owner of one of the better conserved savannah areas of the island, experimenting a method of landscape conservation based on the restoration and “reinvention” of ancient pyro-pastoral practices. This report presents the story of this experiment that not only allowed the necessary means for authorised burning practice on Réunion Island to be put in place, but also contributed to the recognition of the value of a marginal territory and of the heritage made up of the knowledge and know how of an invisible population, whose contribution to the environmental richness of the island had not been considered up to then. More generally speaking, by raising the issue of the use of fire, this research has helped highlight, on an island in which conservation of the environment mainly concerns the areas considered wild, the essential contribution to biodiversity and the quality of the landscape of highly anthropized areas and of practices at times suspected of contributing to the degradation of nature.

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**Serge Briffaud** is professor at Bordeaux National School of Architecture and Landscape and researcher at the PASSAGES laboratory (of the French National Centre for Scientific Research). Historian and geographer, his research is concentrated on the landscape and the environment and conducted where their ecological, social and cultural aspects meet. Over the last few years he has led various collective research-action projects that have united researchers of human and ecological sciences, calling on history to criticize and build public action on landscape and environment. His publications include: Serge BRIFFAUD, GERMANAZ (edited by) Christian 2020. *Les savanes de La Réunion. Paysage hérité, paysage en projet*, Saint-Denis, Presses universitaires Indianocéaniques, 282 pp.; Serge BRIFFAUD, Olivier DAMÉE, Emmanuelle HEAULMÉ. 2013. *Chantilly au temps de Le Nôtre. Un paysage en projet*. Florence: ed. Olchki, 250 pp.; Serge BRIFFAUD. 1994. *Naissance d'un paysage. La montagne pyrénéenne à la croisée des regards (XVIe-XIXe siècle)*. Toulouse: CIMA-CNRS, University of Toulouse II and Archives Départementales des Hautes-Pyrénées, 629 pp.

**Quentin Rivière** is a PhD student at the University of La Réunion and former project leader at the Conservatoire du littoral. His work is focussed on pastoral practices in relation to environmental and landscape conservation in tropical environments.

VERONIQUE MURE

Botanique - Jardins - Paysages, Nîmes

**Fire in the construction and care of gardens**

Forest fires, along with floods, constitute the major expression of a natural phenomenon on a large scale within the Mediterranean territory. They disrupt our experience of the “landscape”. The shock of the sudden disappearance of a familiar landscape moves us. But what about the resilience of the vegetation itself?

If the strategies of pyrophytes involved in these ecosystems have attracted the attention of foresters and Mediterranean ecologists for a long time, Gilles Clément was one of the first landscapers/gardeners to use it in his projects, introducing the ecological interest of “fire landscapes” to the general public. For him, the “singularity of the Mediterranean biome in planetary gardening comes from the use of fire as a natural repetitive mechanism, inducing a suitable pyro-flora over time and even using fire to ensure its regeneration”. He showcased this

unique feature in the 1990s in his “garden of fire”, also known as the Mediterranean Garden, in the Rayol area on the Var coast.

This singular and precursory look at the dynamics of these transitional landscapes has become a school of thought. Questioned about the increasing number and size of summer fires on the French Mediterranean coast, a new generation of landscapers has taken on this issue. They propose ceasing to consider fire as a risk but rather as a resource that can be used creatively for the territories, enabling us to overcome the demonization of the phenomenon by increasing our collective understanding of the ecology of fire; this approach also makes it possible to integrate other areas of intervention such as urban planning, agriculture, energy, tourism and health, all of which are closely linked to the goods and services provided by Mediterranean's forests. *Living in the territory of fire*, it is with regard to this challenge of spatial planning that the landscape project promotes reflection on a new “urbanism of flammability”, in which fire becomes the real engine of a new way of living risk.



**Véronique Mure**, a French botanist, has made an original niche for herself as consultant to leading contemporary landscape-designers, advising on plantings to enhance and preserve local ecosystem diversity. Based in the southern French city of Nîmes, she first trained as a botanist and engineer in tropical agronomy with Francis Hallé famous today for his pioneering research on plant intelligence and communication. Landscape-designers such as Coloco Agency in Montpellier, close to the landscape designer Gilles Clément, consult her to help create “living” spaces within the urban fabric. Active also in Marseille where she teaches at the National Landscape School, she contributed her knowledge of local ethnobotany for the Jardin des migrations for the Mediterranean Museum the MuCem created by the landscape designer APS. At times she herself designs, but always with a view to connecting sites to their ecosystem history and future potential. She conceived the landscape path, “Mémoires de garrigue” next to the famous Roman monument, the Pont du Gard. Her company Botanique-Jardins-Paysage, established in 2010, largely deals with public projects; but as she works closely both with Gilles Clément or renowned nurseryman Olivier Filippi, her approach to plant-rich ecological gardening easily connects home and community projects to the famous “planetary garden” envisioned by Clément. And because her work has always explored Mediterranean biodiversity evolving in extreme climate conditions of drought, flooding, wind and heat, it is particularly inspirational today for gardeners elsewhere now facing similar challenges.

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ANTONIO PERAZZI

landscape architect and writer, Studio Antonio Perazzi, Milan

### **Radicepura, fire and fertility**

In Sicily there is a magnificent though unstable mountain, which provides fertility: it's called Etna. *A montagna, mungibeddu*: it is a male and female entity at one and the same time, it is a wild, tense place that, like many natural forces, gives origin to a vital, generous land where stunning gardens can be conceived and Mediterranean plants cultivated, with the addition of a few tropical plants. At its foot, near Giarre, there is a special place where, in a lush botanical garden, a biennial landscape festival relating to the overall Mediterranean area is held. This festival is called Radicepura and every two years ten or so young landscapists - who have successfully passed the selection stage in which hundreds of candidates from all over the world are assessed - each test their ability to design a garden. While the volcano continues to spread its precious dust rich in fertile substances, the work has commenced to be ready for the imminent opening of the fourth festival.

**Antonio Perazzi** is a landscape architect and writer who has always been interested in the relationship between plants, man and the environment. His early years were spent between Milan and Chianti and after many trips to the East and long stays abroad, including Alaska, he trained at the Milan Polytechnic and at the Kew Gardens in London. In 1998 he opened his own design firm and developed numerous projects including plans for the parks of Via Brisa, Via Ovada and the Triennale Terrace in Milan, the landscaping of the Manifattura Tabacchi complex and the new Fendi factory in Florence, and the Snam headquarters in Milan – as well as providing consultancy services for leading international firms. He was invited to participate in: the Festival international des jardins de Chaumont-sur-Loire, the *Avant Gardeners* exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London, the Festival International des Jardins de Métis, Canada. He has taught at the Milan Polytechnic, the Brera Academy, the Universität der Künste in Berlin, the ISIA in Urbino, the Universität für angewandte Kunst in Vienna, the Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, and the École Nationale Supérieure de Paysage, Versailles.

His publications include *Contro il giardino. Dalla parte delle piante* (with Pia Pera; Ponte alle Grazie, 2007), *Foraverde* (Maestri di Giardino Editore, 2013), *Il paradiso è un giardino selvatico. Storia ed esperimenti di botanica per artisti* (Utet, 2019), *I giardini invisibili. Un manifesto botanico* (Utet, 2022).

He writes the *Verdissimo* column for *Sole 24ore* and *Bustine di Paesaggio* for *Gardenia*.