Landscape aesthetics

«A science that gives up to save the appearances, can’t help but watch their destruction»
(Giorgio Agamben 2016)
1 Why to deal with aesthetics? – legal bases

2 From space to landscape – Definitions of aesthetics and landscape

3 Perception – more than a look

4 What means beautiful? – overview of the theories

1 Aesthetic preferences – how people value landscape beauty

1 Significance for practice
Importance of aesthetics

Biodiversity and aesthetics

Power of aesthetics

Inexistence of aesthetics
Beauty for whom?

Beauty as life quality?

Beauty as a common sense?

To pay for beauty?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>double lessons</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-02-19</td>
<td>1 Why to deal with aesthetics)</td>
<td>legal bases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-02-19</td>
<td>Short perception walk</td>
<td>Hönggerberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-03-19 14-03-19</td>
<td>2 From space to landscape – Definitions of aesthetics and landscape</td>
<td>terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-03-19 28-03-19 04-04-19 11-04-19</td>
<td>3 Perception – more than a look</td>
<td>the three levels of perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-04-19</td>
<td>reading week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-05-19</td>
<td>4 What means beautiful? – overview of the theories</td>
<td>theories of the aesthetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-05-19 16-05-19</td>
<td>5 Aesthetic preferences – how people value landscape beauty</td>
<td>results concerning valuation of landscape beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-05-19</td>
<td>6 Significance for practice</td>
<td>application for planning processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;campfire aesthetics&quot; (special guest: Michal Switalski), 14 may 2019, 4-6 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation

• Learning targets
The students receive an introduction into the main aesthetic theories, their significance for landscape planning and methods of evaluation. The main topic is to understand the important role of aesthetic aspects in the valuation of landscape and the specific question of landscape management. The students learn how to deal with the aesthetic experiences of landscape and the specific landscape approaches related to the aesthetics.
1 Why to deal with aesthetics? – legal bases

2 From space to landscape – Definitions of aesthetics and landscape

3 What means beautiful? – overview of the theories

4 Perception – more than a look

5 Aesthetic preferences – how people value landscape beauty

6 Significance for practice
1 Why to deal with aesthetics – legal bases
Spatial planning law (RPG)

Art. 3 Planning Principles

1 The authorities responsible for planning tasks pay attention to the following principles.

2 The landscape is to be taken care of. In particular:

...;

b. Settlements, buildings, and installations have to fit into the landscape;

...;

d. Near-natural landscapes and recreation areas should be conserved.

Art. 6 Cantonal structure Plans

When preparing their structure plans, the cantons shall devise guidelines by which they establish which areas:

...;

b. are of special beauty, valuable, or are important for recreation or as natural habitats

Art. 8a Structure plan content related to settlements

The structure plan shall define the following in relation to settlements:

...;

c. how high-quality inward settlement development will be achieved
1 Why to deal with aesthetics – legal bases
The comprehensive balancing of interests

Art. 3 ordinance of the RPG – Balancing of interests
1 If the authorities are given the opportunity to act when fulfilling and agreeing on space-based tasks, they shall weigh the interests against each other by:

...  
b. Evaluate these interests and, in particular, take account of the compatibility with the spatial development to be achieved and the possible effects;

Art. 3 RPV Interessenabwägung
1 Stehen den Behörden bei Erfüllung und Abstimmung raumwirksamer Aufgaben Handlungsspielräume zu, so wägen sie die Interessen gegeneinander ab, indem sie:

...  
b. diese Interessen beurteilen und dabei insbesondere die Vereinbarkeit mit der anzustrebenden räumlichen Entwicklung und die möglichen Auswirkungen berücksichtigen;
1 Why to deal with aesthetics – legal bases
Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage

Art. 3 Obligations

1 In the fulfilment of federal tasks, the Confederation, its institutions and enterprises, and the cantons shall ensure that heritage landscapes and sites of local character, historical sites, and natural and cultural monuments are carefully managed and, where there is an overriding public interest, preserved undiminished.

2 They shall fulfill this obligation by
a. suitably designing and maintaining their own buildings and installations, or by foregoing their construction altogether (...);

Art. 3 NHG Pflichten von Bund und Kantonen
1 Der Bund, seine Anstalten und Betriebe sowie die Kantone sorgen bei der Erfüllung der Bundesaufgaben dafür, dass das heimatliche Landschafts- und Ortsbild, geschichtliche Stätten sowie Natur- und Kulturdenkmäler geschont werden und, wo das allgemeine Interesse an ihnen überwiegt, ungeschaumlert erhalten bleiben.
2 Sie erfüllen diese Pflicht, indem sie:
a. eigene Bauten und Anlagen entsprechend gestalten und unterhalten oder gänzlich auf ihre Errichtung verzichten (...);
C. **Identification and assessment**

- With the active participation of the interested parties, as stipulated in Article 5.c, and with a view to improving knowledge of its landscapes, each Party undertakes:
  - a. i. to **identify** its own landscapes throughout its territory;
  - ii. to **analyse their characteristics** and the forces and pressures transforming them;
  - iii. to take note of changes;
  - b. **to assess the landscapes** thus identified, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned.

D. **Landscape quality objectives**

Each Party undertakes to **define landscape quality objectives** for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation in accordance with Article 5.c.

E. **Implementation**

To put landscape policies into effect, each Party undertakes to introduce instruments aimed at protecting, managing and/or planning the landscape.
Aesthetics in the federal court judgments

„In the present case, the Gonerli water in particular has outstanding landscape features worthy of protection. It is located in a small side valley that is still completely untouched today and is visible from far away. A balancing of all interests shows that the catchment of the Gonerli water would represent an unjustifiable encroachment on the landscape in view of the low benefit of the power plant for the Swiss energy supply.“

Hydropower plant project
Gere/Gonerli/Oberwald VS BGE 140 II 262

Wind energy Schwiberg BGE 2016: First impact, dimension, conspicuous foreign body in the landscape
Finally, in the context of a global balancing of interests, it should be stressed that there is an overriding need, all too often neglected, to safeguard sufficient free space for future generations.

“Finally, in the context of a global balancing of interests, it should be stressed that there is an overriding need, all too often neglected, to safeguard sufficient free space for future generations.”

“These works are therefore designed to disturb the wild and natural character of the river. They are then located near a pedestrian walkway, therefore visible.”

“Finally, in the context of a global balancing of interests, it should be stressed that there is an overriding need, all too often neglected, to safeguard sufficient free space for future generations.”

“Finally, in the context of a global balancing of interests, it should be stressed that there is an overriding need, all too often neglected, to safeguard sufficient free space for future generations.”

These works are therefore designed to disturb the wild and natural character of the river. They are then located near a pedestrian walkway, therefore visible.”
Objective landscape characters and...

Scary mountains

Peaceful scenery

Idyllic dry stone wall

Unprofitable fence

Tedious access for agriculture

Lovely pathway

subjective interpretation
Examples

a. Aesthetics and renewable energy

Français Diday 1841
a. Aesthetics and renewable energy
Visibility and site suitability

Intrinsic landscape aesthetic value
(Landschaftsästhetischer Eigenwert)

3-D-modeling, eye tracking

Landscape Aesthetics ETH Zurich

Raimund Rodewald • 16
b. Aesthetics and infrastructure
c. Authenticity and «look-like’s»

Twann BE: vineyard improvement
c. Authenticity and «look-like’s»
c. Authenticity and «look-like’s»

L. Hechenblaikner
d. Urbanisation and aesthetics
e. Rural architecture and modern standard of living
f. Livestock stables and suitable location
1 Why to deal with aesthetics – legal bases

Who cares about aesthetics?

Protected area of local, regional, national importance

➢ Expert reporting by commissions

national commission for nature and landscape protection and monument conservation (ENHK, EKD) or cantonal/local commissions (rare)

Non-protected area

➢ Inside of constructed zones: special plans, contests

➢ Outside of constructed zones: cantonal guidelines, landscape assessments, general sensibilisation, NGOs

In the implementation of planning laws, aesthetics are of great importance, but they are often neglected.
1 Why to deal with aesthetics? – legal bases

2 From space to landscape – Definitions of aesthetics and landscape

3 Perception – more than a look

4 What means beautiful? – overview of the theories

1 Aesthetic preferences – how people value landscape beauty

1 Significance for practice
2 From space to landscape

- Mathematical space (f.ex. Euclidean space, cartesian space)
- Mechanical space (absolute space, Newton)
- Space as forms of intuition, subjectivication, experienced space (Kant, Raum als Anschauungsform)
- Space as home (structured, ordered, apollonian) or as unlimited expansion (faustian) Oswald Spengler. 1920/21. Der Untergang des Abendlandes.
- Space as environmental space/environment (Lebensraum, Umwelt, Mitwelt)
- Landscape as a synaesthetical and emotional space (part of our awareness of life/Lbensgefühl) Ferdinand Fellmann 2018. Lebensgefühle)
2 From space to landscape
Definitions of landscape

- Locus amoenus/Idyll (Plato, Vergil)
- Arcadia (Theokrit, Vergil, Sannazaro)
- Regionis forma pulcherrima (Plinius the younger)
- The good land (Bible, genesis)
- Jean Molinet, 1493: Paysage (landschap: tableau représentant un pays), Dürer 1521 Landschaft (Historie), Marcantonio Michiel 1530 Paeseto in tela, John Milton, 17. Jhr.: Lantskip = view of a scenery
- Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors (Europ. Landscape Convention 2000)
- Landscape is a medium of cultural expression (value, meaning, communication between Human and the non-Human) (W.J.T. Mitchell 1994)

The comprehension of landscape existed before its notion
The charming place
Platon Phaedrus, ca. 400 BC

By Hera, it is a charming resting place. For this plane tree is very spreading and lofty, and the tall and shady willow is very beautiful, and it is in full bloom, so as to make the place most fragrant; then, too, the spring is very pretty as it flows under the plane tree, and its water is very cool, to judge by my foot. (...) Then again, if you please, how lovely and perfectly charming the breeziness of the place is! and it resounds with the shrill summer music of the chorus of cicadas. But the most delightful thing of all is the grass, as it grows on the gentle slope, thick enough to be just right when you lay your head on it.
7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a **good land**—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; **8** a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; **9** a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.

**10** When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

---

**Good land(scape):** rivers, distant mountains, fertile fields and fruit trees (but no pastures) -> sign of settledness and not migration
2 Definitions of aesthetics and landscape: Significance of landscape

- China: IVth cent. AD: Shanshui (mountains and rivers), Fengjing (wind and lights)
- Peru: IVth cent. BC: Nasca Lines
- Landscape at cinema (Easy rider, Yol, Barry Lyndon, Heidi, Los ojos del camino)
- Landscape in art and gardening

Seas/rivers and mountains: Geographical spaces creating elementary life awareness feelings

● Landscape Aesthetics ETH Zurich
Excursion I (perception walk, Anke Rees 2016)

- systematical exploration of a place and mapping of the subjective experiences of a place
- Aesthetical curiosity, to make attributions
- Explore what is image-forming
- to feel within the place, to feel in relation to the things in the place
- atmospheres and emotions
- the empathic look at the place (sinnlich-emotionales Einfühlungsvermögen, alles wirkliche Leben ist Begegnung)

«All real life is encounter» (Martin Buber 1926)
«People know, that the could not have a neutral relationship to buildings and music» (Peter Sloterdijk 2007)
Excursion I (perception walk, Anke Rees 2016)

Atmospheres (presence of things, expressions, throwing of meanings towards us, evoking images and emotions inside of us):
A. of the Boldness – what is provoking/innovating
A. of the Living – what is identifying, affecting (pleasure, sensual, exotic, familiar)
A. of the Emptiness – what is passing, reminding
A. of the Bleakness – what is abandoned, sad, disturbing, a non-place-like
A. of the Mystery – what is enigmatic, suggestive, interesting for further exploration

To grasp conceptually the qualities of atmospheres of a place.
Atmosphere of a place – example Matera /I

There are no scattered houses, everything is connected, intertwined, City blown from the inside, nature and architecture. Houses as small as bee cells. Crystals of tuff. A trembling stony spider web. Landscape of wrinkles and folds, parabolic and stretched cloths. Matera one and triune, slow city, hypnotic, city of the East, Anatolian, Byzantine. Matera water trap. The sun rains on the stones, it is noon until late evening. The saints in the churches are thirsty, they steal the water from the stoup. Matera of scirocco and chickens, bread and onions. (...) We go to Matera to disgrace the civilization of impatience, to read the first lines of a story in which the uncivilized modernity gives way to a rocky future, innovation and Podolica cows, the powerful past and the bitter one.

Franco Arminio
Landscape “appears“ due to our perception skills, constructs and symbols, activities, touch creating emotions and awareness of life

Raimund Rodewald © Rodewald 2008
Landscape character assessment – english model

C. Tudor 2014. An approach to landscape character assessment, Natural England
2 Definitions of aesthetics and landscape: Definitions of aesthetics

*aisthesis* and aesthetics

- *aisthesis*: Theory of the sensual perception
- *aesthetic*: Theory of the beautiful, theory of the beauty in arts, theory of perception, theory of philosophy of arts

### Dual nature of aisthesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pleasureful-emotional</td>
<td>Related to objectives and cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonistic (lust)</td>
<td>Objective statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplative (letting-go – letting-in)</td>
<td>Epistemiological (gain knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective valuation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- *Landscape* aesthetics: the sensual experience of landscapes
- *Neuroaesthetics* (Zeki 2001): *neural basis for contemplation and creation of art*
- *Mindscapes*: *We need many places within us for having some hopes to be ourselves* (Lingiardi 2017)
Taste (after Kant):
- a subjective private judgement, if sth. is beautiful or not
- a sensation of pleasure, that does not concern the object, but rather the subject, what satisfies our senses

Beauty and aesthetics:
- aesthetics ask for reflections, concepts, theories and rules, why sth. is perceived or considered as beautiful
- Beauty is a public judgement, that is based on a free play between intellect and communicable aesthetic experience
Neuroaesthetics
(Zeki: A vision of the brain, 1993)

- affordances (Gibson 1979, *Leistungserbringung*): characters of things suggesting immediately appropriate actions
- multimodal nature of perception (limbic, sensomotoric) (Gallese 2015): neuronal systems of motoric actions or sensations/emotions and much more
- embodied simulation by mirror neurons (*Spiegelneuronen*) -> a syntonic accord between the observer and the observed -> empathy, identification -> mirror neurons are the DNA of the psychology
- Landscape anthropology: embodied landscape, *forma mentis*, no division between nature and culture

Looking is more than a linear stimulus-retina-occipital lobe but instead an experience of the body (-> Merleau-Ponty)

Landscape-man-relation is neither neutral nor one-directional
Mindscapes

= Landscapes collected in our mind and mind immersed within the landscapes
= Landscape as deposit of traces

• „I am the river, the river is me“ (Maori, river with personal rights 2012)
• Matisse: all what we see is deformed by our habits and by piles of of pictures already given
• Semir Zeki: Beauty isn’t in the eye of the beholder – it’s in the brain (the medial orbito-frontal cortex lights up: near-universal response to beauty associated with pleasure, and also reward.
• D. Winnicott (Psychoanalyst): transitional objects of landscapes forming our ego/subjectivity
• C.K. Ogden: semiotic triangle: inner symbols/outer symbolization
Contents

1 Why to deal with aesthetics? – legal bases

2 From space to landscape – Definitions of aesthetics and landscape

3 Perception – more than a look

4 What means beautiful? – overview of the theories

1 Aesthetic preferences – how people value landscape beauty

2 Significance for practice
# 3 Perception – more than a look

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View Type</th>
<th>Authors and Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informative View</td>
<td>Lucius Burckhardt 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensual View</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoziative View</td>
<td>Girot und Wolf 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical View (immediacy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetical View (symbolism/composition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preiconographical description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iconographical analysis (conventional meaning)</td>
<td>Erwin Panofsky 1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iconological interpretation (symbolic, intrinsic meaning)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizable View</td>
<td>Max Imdahl 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing View</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Triple gaze**
3 Perception – more than a look

We care a significant share of responsibility for the present visual neglect of landscape, because we learned to accept our detachment from ambient reality.

Fragmented environment – commuters (dis-)interest – mirror of our inherent paucity of our gaze – oblivion.

A gaze which is merely informative and recognizable

Contemporary landscape is the end-product of a generalized visual numbness and neglection about our environment.

Perception walks help us to better depict and decipher particular atmospheres of contemporary landscapes. We need proper sensory acuity and awareness.
Brief excursion into art: glacier

L’amas de glace de Ghelten, Gottlieb Sigmund Gruner
1770©VIATICALPES
Matthäus Merian 1642: oldest representation of glacier
Glacier as embodiment of the overwhelming beauty and the Sublime

« Terrible joy », « delightful horror » (John Dennis)

Caspar Wolf (1735-1783): Der Rhonegletscher von der Talsohle bei Gletsch gesehen, 1778
Glacier as part of the ideal society

Caspar Wolf (1735-1783): Der Rhonegletscher von der Talsohle bei Gletsch gesehen, 1778

Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918): Die Jungfrau von der Isenfluh aus gesehen, 1902
Glacier as consumptive good

«The Alpine Coaster will quickly raise your adrenaline level and get your heart beating hard!»
(www.Glacier3000.ch)
Glacier as advertising object
Glacier as advertising and communication object

Hannibal-Lightshow-Glaciertheater in Sölden/A 2008 / Bikini-contest in Saas-Fee 2006

Aletschglacier august 2007 and Greenpeace-action on Gorner-glacier in august 2009

https://hannibal.soelden.com/bilder_videos
Unterschriftensammlung für Gletscher-Initiative lanciert

Die Schweiz soll die CO2-Emissionen bis 2050 auf Null senken. Eine neue Bürgerbewegung
Conclusion of part 1

Aesthetics are more than a individual taste judgement of the pleasant but rather public!

Aesthetics will be argued and serve for knowledge gaining and well-being

All is changing: world, time, perception, judgment of beauty. Aesthetics deliver us a moment of encounter for our life awareness

Landscape Aesthetics are a daily life matter

Landscape Aesthetics must be an important issue of spatial planning
Conclusion: how you imagine a landscape?

- Cultural influence
- Utopia (escapism)
- Nostalgia ...
- Internalized social norms
- Reality
- Individual aesth. experience (passive)
- Individual aesth. experience (aktive)

Imagination of landscape