

# INTRODUCTION

The fourth biannual LUCAS Graduate Conference, which took place from 25 to 27 January, 2017, was titled *Landscape: Interpretations, Relations, and Representations*. Speakers were invited to explore the various ways in which people have interacted with, conceptualized, and artistically interpreted landscape throughout history. More than fifty early career researchers from various disciplines within the Humanities presented their work on landscape from different perspectives, time periods, and regions. Topics ranged from Biblical historiographers to urban parks in Republican Beijing, and from Surrealist paintings to computer games. Dr Anja Novak, who opens this issue of the *JLGC* with her foreword, also opened the conference with her lecture on Land Art in the Dutch *polder* landscape of Flevoland, which addressed topics of identity, modernism, and gender. Keynote speaker Prof. Dr David E. Nye (University of Southern Denmark) spoke about the history of the American electric grid, while Dr Elizabeth Losh closed the conference with her keynote lecture on place-making in digital activism.

Each of the six articles in this issue address issues related to the formation, expression, and questioning of identity through and in landscape. Landscapes figure as allegory, sites of memory, and art. The article by Karen Kriedemann, for example, discusses how a viscount in eighteenth-century Ireland represented his Old English identity in his landscape garden, while Kirsten Tatum

explores how different constructions of landscape identity influence notions of appropriate residential architecture in Dartmoor National Park, England.

A new element of the fourth edition of the conference was the opportunity for artist-researchers to present their own art projects related to landscape. This led to a fruitful exchange of ideas, and shifted the focus from artistic objects as final products to the practice of creating art. Two artist papers, by Sophie Ernst and Robert Lundberg, are included in this issue. Ernst examines art and landscape as processes, while Lundberg explores how his photographic practice changes his perception of landscapes. We believe that the contributions by these artists enrich the discussion of art, landscape, and identity.

For the cover of this issue we chose a detail of the painting *Meanwhile* (2014) by Dutch artist Nathalie Mannaerts. Her paintings refer to the outdoors, loggers, hunters, homemade cookies, and the reluctance to grow up. They are a reminder of a carefree childhood on the edge of a forest, where nature rules, a simple life is celebrated, and adventure is about to be undertaken. We hope that the reader can embark on a similarly adventurous journey through the landscape of articles in this issue.

Embarking on this journey through literature, in this issue's first article Amaranth Feuth discusses Gloria Naylor's novel *Linden Hills* (1985). Exploring the roles of landscape and symbolism, Feuth focuses on the adaptation in her novel of Dante's allegorical underworld to suburban Linden Hills. In addition to drawing parallels between Dante's *Inferno* and *Linden Hills*, Feuth scrutinizes the roles of Freemasonry and hermetism within the narrative. She describes Naylor's depiction of hell as a topification of the ethos of wealthy Black Americans, and further argues that the author makes use of landscape specific to the Masonic tradition in the Dantean underworld. This idea is interpreted in the article as a 'purgatorial way out of hell', for which the position of Black women is considered to be crucial. An example of Black Classicism, and especially the

motif of katabasis or the underworld descent, *Linden Hills* features landscapes and characters comparable to that of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Naylor, however, weaves a different fate for the suburb of Linden Hills, transforming Dante's *Inferno* into a modern purgatory of possibilities.

The following two papers explore how landscape is cultivated and designed, particularly in relation to architectural structures. Focusing in how family identity can be embedded in landscape, Karen Kriedemann analyses the concurrent shaping of landscape and identity in the gardens of Dowth Demesne (County Meath, Ireland) by Nicholas, the fifth Viscount Netterville, who owned the estate in the 1730s. In designing his gardens, the Viscount highlighted the prehistorical and medieval architecture of his lands, and also created a visual connection to important ancient and contemporary historical sites in the surrounding area. By using the complex visual relationships between these various monuments, he attempted to showcase the close connection between his family and the area they inhabited, thus firmly establishing their identity in a period of socio-political turmoil, in which that identity was under significant strain.

Making changes or intervening in protected landscapes and national parks often gives rise to heated debates and questions surrounding the importance of conserving environments that contribute to a sense of regional or national cultural identity. The history of the landscape and its unique properties will factor into policies concerning both its conservation and its development. This is true in the case of the work of British architect David Sheppard, who proposed to build a contemporary dwelling as intervention in the English Dartmoor National Park. Kirsten Lynn Tatum examines the different responses to such contemporary additions to landscapes that are deemed to be 'iconic'. Drawing on the architect's design proposal, policy documents, and interviews, Tatum addresses the different interests at stake for inhabitants of the park, policy makers, and artists, all of whom approach the conservation and function of

national parks in wholly different manners. As becomes clear in Tatum's article, interventions in landscape preservation almost inevitably become a highly contested battleground of what she calls "landscape identities".

In her article, Vera Kaps shows how a national exhibition, in this case the upcoming Swiss National Exhibition Expo2027, can challenge conventional ideas of national identity through landscape. Discussing the four winning entries for Expo2027, Kaps organizes her argument around four dominant landscape practices: moving, mapping, redefining borders, and creating landscape images. For instance, one of the competition entries, *Offshore*, challenges the national border as a defining concept of national identity through an installation on Lake Constance in the east of the country. This installation, consisting of floating platforms that can be reached from the shore through special vehicles provided by the exhibition, effectively proposes a 'global lake identity', defined through lakeshores rather than national borders. In sum, Kaps demonstrates that landscape not only serves as a screen onto which national identity can be projected, but that landscape can also be employed to actively deconstruct and reconstruct the collective identity of a people.

Lending an artist's voice to this volume, Sophie Ernst examines questions of memory and representation through the *HOME* project. Investigating the nature of landscape through her encounters with individuals who have moved away from their native countries, Ernst uses drawing and conversation as a means of accessing our relationship to places that have been left behind. Asking her participants to produce drawings during their interviews, she connects their recounted experiences to contemporary political events, and challenges the perception of landscape as passive or ornamental. Instead, she presents these sites as actively charged through sensorial and emotional experiences, and demonstrates the role graphic media can play in accessing an individual's encounters with different settings and locales. Her approach demonstrates that the topography of 'home' is more complex than simply space or place, and

is a product of layers that can be explored, manipulated, and shared through different processes of remembering.

Robert Lundberg discusses his photographic series *Bearings*, which reframes rural highways in the southwestern United States as Land Art objects. He explores how roads can produce feelings of comfort to the traveller in alien, wild landscapes. Lundberg himself experienced feelings of both comfort and curiosity during his non-urban travels. Photographing these roads and creating a fictional narrative around them is an act of connecting to these vast landscapes and finding a sense of place. In his article, he explains how he is influenced by the Land Art Movement. His project shows how man-made structures such as roads can affect our experience of landscapes.

Lastly we would like to extend our thanks to the people who have played a vital part in the process of publishing this issue. First of all, we are grateful to our publisher, the Leiden University Library. The conference participants who submitted their papers made this issue possible, in particular the six patient and cooperative authors who expanded their presentations for publication in this volume. We thank Anja Novak for contributing the foreword of this issue. Joy Burrough-Boenisch was of great help in guiding us in our editing work and building our enthusiasm for the editing process. The anonymous peer reviewers provided a gracious service to the editors and authors, for which we are grateful. We thank Jenneka Janzen for her help in the last stages of editing, and Andrea Reyes Elizondo for designing this issue's layout. Finally, we thank the LUCAS management team, Thony Visser, Jan Pronk, and Erik Kwakkel, for their continued support in producing this sixth issue, and previous issues, of the *Journal of the LUCAS Graduate Conference*.

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THE FORMATION, EXPRESSION, AND  
QUESTIONING OF IDENTITY

THROUGH AND IN  
LANDSCAPE

L A N D S C A P E

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LANDSCAPES FIGURE AS ALLEGORY,  
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