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Publication date:
2015

Document Version:
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for pulished version (APA):
Majgaard Krarup, J. (2015). *Rural Land(scapes): Lessons to be learned(?)*. Abstract from ISU Talks, Braunschweig, Germany.

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ISU TALKS #3

RURALISM: THE FUTURE OF VILLAGES AND SMALL TOWNS IN AN URBANIZING WORLD

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ABSTRACT

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Rural land(scapes) - Lessons to be learned(?)

The term 'urban' and 'landscape' can be argued to be interdependent:

'(...)without the city there would be no landscape. In the same way one can claim that without landscape there would be no city.' (van der Velde 2012).

Landscape as architectural and aesthetic category has always reflected urban conditions and needs, and is currently the dominant perspective in the discussion. But, (...) *'The topographic and productive characteristics of land(scapes) have historically determined where cities arise – as well as having an effect on their form, size, shape and wealth.'* (van der Velde 2012), indicates a meta-land concept, suggesting other, material and structural, relationships between land and city than normally associated with the concept of landscape.

In both urban and land(scape) architectural history there is a resource of references on the interdependencies between city and rural land.

To this resource belongs the 17th century concept of Ferme Ornée: An agricultural estate combining aesthetic priorities of the landscape garden with the utility of a working farm.

Patrick Geddes argued in, *Cities in Evolution* (1915), that urban planning should take its point of departure in the landscape and the local natural conditions. Vittorio Gregotti (1981) has argued for a return to topography and ecology of a region to inform the urban fabric; Fritz Palmboom (1987) prompted a return to landscape context and underlying landscape characteristics such as topography, geomorphology, drainage patterns, vegetation types and historical settlements forms in the layout of new urban areas; Marcel Smets (2002/08) has described different design approaches, where, *'(the Casco) is based on local geological and hydrological conditions.'*

Peter Bredsdorff's, *Dry Feet Theory*, (1973) based on a cross reading of orohydrological maps and urban plans, focused on how man in historic times used his ability to read the land, and to settle, cultivate and transport him self accordingly.

With a point of departure in these examples on interdependencies and exchange between land(scape) and cities, this paper discuss if they hold a potential that they might add to our current understandings of the concept of the rural and to our approaches to a sustainable development of rural and urban land(scapes).

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