

To the Members of UNISCAPE

27th June 2021

Dear Members of UNISCAPE,

I am writing to submit my candidacy for the position of Vice-President of UNISCAPE.

As a teacher at the Ecole Supérieure Nationale d'Architecture de Paris-La Villette (ENSAPLV), a founding member of UNISCAPE, I have been involved in a variety of common projects, in particular the 2013 conference *Landscape & Imagination* held in Paris. As the representative of ENSAPLV, I participated in several General Assemblies and other organizational meetings, developing many exchanges over the course of the years.

I believe in the importance of the continuous building of a shared European identity, and the recognition of its diverse landscapes – as stated in the Preamble of the European Landscape Convention – is an important part of it. As a bridge between the European Landscape Convention and the universities, UNISCAPE could have an unique role to play.

Complementary to other organizations such as, for instance, ECLAS, UNISCAPE offers an interdisciplinary platform, which reflects the reality of teaching and researching landscape throughout Europe, where the training offered by landscape architecture schools providing full degree is complemented by various speciality curriculum or post-diploma degrees. Thus UNISCAPE invites landscape architects, architects, urbanists, geographers, archaeologists, anthropologists, agronomists and others to share reflections and engage into a cross-disciplinary dialogue, finding ways to combine not only knowledge but different frames of thought and engagement.

Within the variety of methodological approaches, I believe it would be important to reinforce the role of design or projectual approaches. What is called in French “attitude de projet” or in Italian “Culture del progetto” entails a creative synthesis of different modalities of knowledge, integrated at different scales and different temporalities. It gives shape to a dynamic understanding of landscapes and can lead to proposal for actions both at original design stages and at moments of ongoing management and maintenance, thought of not as mere “conservation” but as “creative management”. Reinforcing the project approach could help to develop, within UNISCAPE, a thinking process combining expert knowledge (based on the analysis of factual knowledge) and educated intuition.

This seems particularly important in the period of climate change we already entered, which will bring with it important and sometimes even drastic landscape changes. Research and teaching on these issues are gaining importance in universities throughout Europe, as landscape actors are becoming increasingly aware of this unprecedented challenge. Thanks to the specific landscape expertise of UNISCAPE members and the sharing developed within the network, I believe UNISCAPE could participate with shared innovative ideas in the ongoing discussions about the changing role and implementation of the European Landscape Convention.

The nature of UNISCAPE make it a place for freedom of experimentation in regard of the issues considered important by the network members, and it is in the spirit of this freedom of experimentation that I submit my candidacy to the position of vice-president of UNISCAPE.

Sincerely,



Catherine Szanto
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France