

Walking around, looking at, thinking about:
thoughts on a brief excursion to Parco di Cilento, UNESCO - World Heritage Site.

Initial impressions

This series of observations experienced over the duration of 10 days and described here, is not intended as a definitive report, but more an initial impression. We view this limited exposure as indicative of life within the park - a series of disconnected but continuous events - an existence of diverse and extraordinary circumstances of every day life played out within the arena of the Park.

Complex conditions politically and socially

We recognise the many complex issues existing within the Park: on the one hand lie the vested interests of the many players at a grass-roots level, on the other those interests represented by the chambers of power of local and national administrative bodies. However we feel it is important that individual ambitions do not interfere with the development of the park in its broadest sense. Any plan must admit and engage with the diversity of the park's population, and include both those who live there and those who come as visitors. Firstly we need to comprehend the existing situation more precisely through co-ordination with a range of individuals and organisations. The information we gather needs to be tabled in such a way as to promote open dialogue between these various interest groups. Only through this process can we move to a more precise understanding of the situation. We need to understand the park as a living and cultured environment, and to move beyond the simple delineation of the lines on the map. As architects we bring a distinct, spatial understanding to these situations and relationships. Using our particular skills, we intend to point up a number of possibilities for the role that architecture might play in the immediate future development of the Park.

Ideas for sites: A, B, C, & D

A

The organisation of the land understood by its markings: a system that indicates its workings and the activities that have formed it. Caccialupia to Sanza: A continuous surface of agricultural land, bounded on one side by a communications route. The Cava at Caccialupia is a site absorbed within a fold of land, part of, or separate from the linear system of organisation of the valley. It is a potential index or catalyst point. The site is remote, but does it have a close enough relation to Sanza to be useful? (There is a diminishing population - youth are emigrating to Salerno & Napoli. There is a potential site for a cinema. By the displacement of material - how could one make evident this procedure?)

B

Moio - Sustainability & food production: a reliance upon source of water and its distribution - what is the current system of public management and maintenance? Cultivated landscape as a sign of investment at a local scale. Raises questions about water distribution, wastewater management, and treatment of water from isolated settlements. Small-scale holdings that reap gastronomic production of fine quality with considered organisation of the land, despite a lack of management, (co-operative)? Potential intelligence for a collective identity with public recognition of this group in town / city - say Valo, helped by grouping of small settlements into an identity. Fish farm; small, isolated business venture potentially lucrative but seldom visited. Little adjacent settlement - what there is, is abandoned - a school. Incidents scattered in the landscape. (Shipment of products to a local market? Give a presence to this well considered infrastructure within a network of other strategically placed economies? Co-ordinate with location markers and signage?)

C

Extraction of material from the land: this act isolates this place from land and surroundings, despite close proximity to town and cultivated land.

Certosa: An attractive model of sophisticated, collective existence embodied in a specific architectural form. The management of this historical monument is not only testimony to how sites deemed of value can be signified as cultural monuments but also, and more importantly by analogy, how non-signified sites may be regarded as potential areas for public investment. In this way value might be offered to forsaken and residual areas land of which there are numerous. The adjacency of such discarded areas of land in close proximity to such significant ones illustrates the need to establish relationships of dissimilar things.

D

Initiating and supporting basic infra-structural needs: these are currently seen as something utilitarian and are not celebrated as they might be. Several examples seem half-finished. Connection to Europe physically

culturally brings an awareness of other places, other ways. Signage, a place to sit, to rest, to stand, drive in safety, these are all essential conditions for the enjoyment of public open space.

Intentions of Future Research

We envisage, through the observation of the similarity of dissimilar things, the potential to make connections across boundaries, to manifest relationships, which at present remain unrecognised. In this way we seek to establish a new ground for future development, without established goals, and to galvanise more stable conditions for the immediate future of the occupants and life of the park and its neighbouring regions. These may take the form of infrastructural measures as design propositions local to specific sites or more general, long term, slow growth strategies with the contribution of many different players all participating toward the benefit of the Park without personal goals. The precise scale and nature of any proposals will be established only from our period of future research, that is through an on going process of observation, meeting, and dialogue.

We have tried to outline in the four summary pages, (A, B, C, D) a series of grouped sites and related themes which we would like to form the basis of the development of our future work. Rather than categorise and isolate individual themes we have tried to sustain the sense of complex interconnections between places, people, and events, and this is a sense that we wish to retain.

The sudden decline in traditional forms of livelihood, seem to be resulting in a dramatic emigration of the population in some regions of the Park. With this scenario the long-term future does not appear encouraging and prompts urgency for inventive strategies addressing neighbourhoods on a local scale with particular research and involvement, together with more incisive infrastructural designs. Any proposals need to be based on where and how to act most efficiently, recognising specific individual desires longer-term goals, and funding and investment structures.

On a global scale the grouping of distant towns or incidents to reveal relations - at present - unseen but open and indeterminate, allows the imagination to strengthen unforeseen potentials, and above all to conceive of a believable, humane place enabling life's dramas to be played out. In this way by working with the many players within the Park's scenario we would like to engage in a dialogue about its physical conditions, to make more evident relationships both within and beyond the notational boundaries of the Park.