PROJECT *GOALS*

PALIMPSEST aims to imagine practices connecting human actions, landscape heritage and sustainability objectives and to bring architecture, design and art in dialogue with place-specific needs.
In particular, it seeks to

- Explore heritage landscapes' sustainability transition drivers, questioning the meaning and role of creative action and thinking.
- Leverage the social function of art, design and architecture for sustainable landscape generation, to connect human actions, landscape (as living heritage) and sustainability objectives.
- Develop and assess transdisciplinary co-creation processes involving artists, designers and architects in working collaboratively with technical partners, institutions and local communities in re(imagining) a new European way of life in line with the New European Bauhaus principles.

3 PRINCIPLES

- **Landscapes as text and papyrus**

  PALIMPSEST works on living heritage landscapes, considering them as living and dynamic manifestations of stratified nature-human interactions.

- **Art, Design and Architecture as re-writing practices**

  PALIMPSEST blends arts, design, and architecture to re-shape landscapes through the co-creation of responses that connect human actions, heritage and sustainability.

- **Sustainability transition as a direction**

  PALIMPSEST recognises the urgent need for action brought by the environmental and climate crisis and identifies sustainability transition as a desired horizon of change.

PROJECT FACTS

Duration: 36 Months (2023-2026)
EU Funding: 2.998.897,50 €
Coordinator: DAStU, Politecnico di Milano (CALL Research Lab)
Communication & Dissemination Leader:
Institute of Communication and Computer Systems

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New European Bauhaus

PALIMPSEST

Creative Drivers for Sustainable Living Heritage Landscapes

παλίμψηστος < palimpsestos, 'again' + 'scrape'

The PROJECT

The metaphor of the practice of writing over papyrus by scraping existing text, re-smoothing the surface and writing the new text is reminiscent of the vision of landscape as a living heritage shaped and re-shaped by the interactions of human beings with their territories. PALIMPSEST is a three-years project that adopts this re-writing perspective and focuses on regenerating the lost "sustainability wisdom" in living landscapes.

PALIMPSEST embraces the co-creation process as a methodology for setting up moments of creative collisions - i.e. Creative Dialogues, Residency Workshops and Prototyping - between PALIMPSEST consortium, creative actors, policymakers and local communities working in three Landscape Pilots - Milan, Łódź and Jerez de la Frontera - that currently face significant environmental challenges.

Throughout the Project, artists, designers and architects will dialogue with place-specific needs and broad systemic challenges to imagine new scenarios and experiment with innovative practices connecting human actions, landscape heritage and sustainability objectives.

3 LANDSCAPE PILOTS

MILAN / ŁÓDŹ / JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA

MILAN
ITALY

ŁÓDŹ
POLAND

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA
SPAIN

Milan's pilot focuses on the landscape of the Lambro River. One of the main water flows in the city, the Lambro, is, however, often ignored, disowned and avoided by the Milanese. Disregarded in the urban development plans, the area is affected by industrial, agricultural and social practices that severely affect the conditions of the natural landscape. Discharges from industrial activity, in combination with techno-centric water management approaches and unsustainable agricultural and irrigation practices, severely impacted the soil and water quality and, with that, the ecosystem functioning.

Disregarded by locals due to its poor conditions, the Lambro is invisible in the collective imaginary of Milan. As a consequence, the area hosts marginal and undesired communities and practices. The whole ecosystem calls for a reconsideration of the aesthetic, ecological, and productive values embedded in the area for restoring the relationship of the locals with the landscape.

The urban area of Ksiezy Mlyn, in the city of Łódź (Poland), is undergoing a severe transformation. Understood as a "laboratory of urban futures", the former industrial buildings are renovated to attract new residents, tourists and artists. The city plan aims to generate a modern and vibrant urban hub. However, these renovation plans seem to disregard the serious condition of the heritage landscape. As a consequence of the city's industrial past, Łódź still suffers serious air, soil and water pollution levels, being one of the most polluted European cities. Climate change also affects the city, causing critical complications such as drought, flooding, or urban heat island effects.

In contrast, citizens' proposals and movements evidence both the concern and compromise of the locals on pollution and environmental issues. PALIMPSEST aims to leverage Łódź's traditional creative value to contribute to a sustainable transformation of the area.

Due to its geographical conditions, some rural areas of Jerez de la Frontera, in the south of Spain, are receiving substantial investments in the renewable energy sector. In particular, large portions of land traditionally used for wine production and other agricultural activities are the target of external funds for the installation of windmills or photovoltaic panels. The effects of climate change and the difficult conditions for sustainable agricultural practices are contributing to this decision for those who relinquish part of their soil to this purpose.

However, what for some is an evolution of the landscape, for others, is the deterioration of a heritage promoted by external investments with a lack of local roots. This is generating conflicts and contrasting opinions on land uses, economic activities and traditional practices, both in the rural and urban landscape. Throughout its history, Jerez has reinvented itself time and again, overcoming conflict through creativity. PALIMPSEST looks for solutions that invite different practices, communities and mindsets to dialogue on the city's future landscape.