

Translator and cartographer of living systems  
The Catalan landscape architect and agronomist Teresa Galí-Izard

### **Laudation Kathrin Golda-Pongratz**

Under the leitmotif Deep Transformations - Earth, Landscape, Architecture, this year's Schelling Prize 2024 nominates three urban landscape creators who question the concept of built architecture by working with nature, soil, water and other living materials and elements as building materials.

Teresa Galí-Izard is one of the nominees. The Catalan landscape architect and agronomist, who lives between Barcelona, a farm in the province of Girona and Zurich, holds the Chair of Landscape Architecture at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and emphasizes that the opportunity to teach and research has radically changed and expanded her practice. Her Chair of Being Alive is a kind of statement through its substantial name alone and deals in the truest sense with life cycles, living beings and the landscape as a basis for life to be rethought. "Being alive means being able to translate the potential of places as milieus of their past, present and future living beings, including humans," says Galí-Izard.

She sees her role as a landscape architect as influencing how people connect with these living systems. She has been exploring the potential of places for almost 30 years in her practice as a landscape architect and since 2007 together with the architect Jordi Nebot in their interdisciplinary working group Arquitectura Agronomia. Aware of the importance of the biophysical world for the human environment, they develop landscape architecture projects all over the world. They have been involved in some of the most important contemporary landscape architecture projects, including the TMB Park and the new urbanization of Passeig de Sant Joan in Barcelona and the redevelopment of the Sant Joan landfill in Begues, which was awarded the European Prize for Urban Public Space in 2004. Galí-Izard was a finalist in major landscape competitions in Spain, such as the remodeling project of the Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes in Barcelona (2013), the Parque Valdebebas in Madrid (2009) and the Parc Central in Valencia (2011).

The systemic nature of the projects that transform the logic of nature has many layers and scales. Teresa Galí is familiar with the language and behavior of water, vegetation, soils, tree architecture and plant life cycles. At the same time, she knows how to identify parameters that intervene in rule-based systems, including infrastructures, management, urban metabolism, temporality and seasonality.

In Logroño, in the garden of the Centro de Desarrollo Tecnológico de La Rioja (architecture by Foreign Office Architects, 2007), Arquitectura Agronomía has placed a simple network of climbing plants over one of the buildings, thus fully integrating it into the surrounding landscape and creating a dialog between nature and technology. In the design of the roof and the open spaces around the Logroño train station and AVE junction (architecture by Ábalos and Sentkiewicz, 2014), the shape of the park was determined by the irrigation: Only one type of sprinkler with a radius of 9 metres was used, which was followed by a planting pattern of locally sited rural plants, traditionally arranged to serve as windbreaks and slope stabilizers.

In the Parque de los Primeros Pasos in Caracas (with ARUP, RSHP, Héctor Rangel and Carolina Acevedo, 2016), a former parking lot is transformed into a community space and canopy of tropical trees, where the former asphalt is broken up and sunken areas serve as catch basins for rainwater. There it is again, reading the unrecognized potential of places and translating this knowledge into proposals and projects.

Teresa Galí's recent projects and questions span a highly interesting arc between radical practice - touching soils that have lost their quality through extractive use, testing regenerative agriculture in the form of cyclical cultivation and living with animals as part of a coherent living system - and a major research project, Languages, which translates scientific knowledge about living beings into schematic drawings as a design tool in landscape architecture.

Could productive, extensive, diverse landscapes managed by animals be the garden of the 21st century? What Teresa Galí is testing as regenerative agriculture on a small scale on her farm in Planeses is translated to the urban regions of Arles or Bern in a leap in scale: Drawing and diagramming the system at Planeses allow agricultural techniques to be translated into design. The distribution of the various elements, the rotation system and the quantity and quality of the inputs are continuously tested and refined on the farm, and this data and experience is incorporated into the design proposals.

It is about food sovereignty, about a new ethical and physical aesthetic of urban nature that allows for a more resource-efficient coexistence, about the capacity for self-sufficiency and, again and again, about the regeneration of the soil, which is of fundamental importance for the survival of humanity. Teresa Galí-Lizard provides radical impulses that revolutionize our understanding of architecture and landscape.

June 2, 2024