

Panel 20

IVSA Conference 2009

Appreciating the views: How we're looking at the social and visual landscape

Panel Title:

This Land is our Land: Landscape and Nationalism

Description:

Notions of nationalism are always based in a passionate claim to particular land. Consequently the depiction of any such landscape is never neutral but always ideologically idealized to some degree, and particularly so in any setting where nationalistic or political claims are contested. This panel seeks to explore examples of such depictions, and to examine the influence that discourses of nationalism have on the ways in which audiences not actually living directly in such places receive their visual understandings of particular lands and landscapes.

Inevitably echoing some of the interests of post-colonial discourse, topics which could be of interest here could include:

- News or documentary coverage of conflict zones: Iraq, Palestine, Darfur, Afghanistan, Somalia etc.
- Comparisons of contested channels of communication for visual imagery of 'homelands': Al Jazeera / Reuters, BBC / Fox news, etc.
- Film and drama representations of national struggles ('Braveheart?') and 'settled will' ('Little House on the Prairie?')
- Messages of persuasion: posters and advertising for political parties with 'nationalistic' claims
- Expat and Diaspora networks: newsletters, websites and magazines
- Deliberate and conscious marking of nationalistic claims: graffiti and murals
- Tourism and 'visitor' selling: confirming visual definitions of unique 'national' experiences
- Social and domestic imagery; visual legacy transmission through home movies and photo albums

This of course is not an exhaustive list, and anyone who recognises an aspect of their own work or situation in this broad description is welcome. It is certainly hoped that this panel will allow objective consideration of the influence of discourses of nationalism in a wide range of international contexts.

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Final Selected Papers

Name:	Diana Papademas
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Paper Title	Reviewing, Revaluig, Revitalizing a National Historic Site
Description	<p>Through the views of the National Park Service and social organizations, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site in New York is the visual landscape of this research project. The turn-of the century home and summer white house of President Theodore Roosevelt is set in a terrain dominated by the coves and necks of Long Island Sound, once surrounded by gardens, pastures, agricultural fields. Since the 1962 Congressional public law established this national historic site to be managed by the National Park Service, there have been continuous efforts to review, revalue and revitalize the site. Sagamore Hill is described as the embodiment of TR's ideals of home, country, family, and love of nature, including his legacy of "conservationism".</p> <p>Scientific, cultural and natural resource management produces "long-range interpretive planning", which reviews, revalues, and revitalizes the landscape site through a public stewardship that relies upon the concerted efforts of many partners. Contemporary debates, challenges and contradictions are presented, given the multiple perspectives of the past, present and future actors who define historic preservation, policies, collective memory, and global, national and local identities. Multiple dynamic levels of the Sagamore site are studied through the visual archives, iconography, National Park Service images in a current "management plan", and the author's on site photodocuments, observations, and interviews over the last 25 years.</p>

Name:	Christopher R. Lawton
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Paper Title	A landscape 'inferior to few': William and T. Addison Richards's <i>Georgia Illustrated</i> (1842) and the idealization of place in a contested space
Description:	<p>William and T. Addison Richards's <i>Georgia Illustrated</i> (1842) was the first American travel text written by southerners and focused exclusively on the Deep South. Its celebration of the Southern landscape was, quite simply, an attempt to culturally elevate an increasingly maligned place. For if certain northern journals were willing to accept the Richardses' views and hail Georgia in 1841 as "a state rich in picturesque and romantic views," there were an even greater number of new texts by 1844 that lambasted it. Northerners during the 1840s and 1850s came to know the American South, and to expect to read about it, through a series of increasingly codified tropes: especially the plantation and the planter, the cotton field and the slave cabin, the slave and the poor white. Yet <i>Georgia Illustrated</i> specifically avoided any and all reference to these loaded subjects. William and Addison Richards captured a fleeting moment in which the battle lines had not yet been clearly drawn, in which it was still possible to imagine that a simple landscape book could redefine how one talked about and understood the American South.</p>

Name:	Fernando Magalhães, Polytechnical Institute of Leiria, Portugal
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Paper Title:	Landscape and place identity in Portugal – From the nation to the region
Description:	<p>The landscape has emerged as an inherent element to the thought about the national community during the romanticism of the eighteenth century. Acquired a special meaning in the beginning of the twentieth century. Tired of a fleeting modernity, cause of great anguish and insecurity, all countries saw, in their landscapes, a national representation. This phenomenon was particularly important in the context of German nationalism. The landscape, supposedly eternal, should be a response to the worst of change (Mosse, 1990). The landscape has become a metaphor for the nation's stability. Furthermore, the variety of the landscape began to be seen as a symbol of cultural diversity inside the national territory (Dorman, 1993). The stone rocks and monuments were interpreted as the strength of the nation, stressing the ideal of authenticity, stability and immortality (Mosse, 1990). The forests, plants and trees, as all living beings, demonstrate the ongoing renaissance of community. In 1914, Von Hindenburg refers the trees as a metaphor of the national community, in which the German tree, strong, with solid roots, is the symbol of the individual and community strength (Mosse, 1990: 102). Portuguese and foreign elites cultivated the landscape as a metaphor of the nation, like other European countries. With this proposal I wish to explain this process of landscape appropriation in the construction of the Portuguese national community. Nowadays besides the nation, its regional communities seek affirmation both in the national stage as the EU. They claim its landscape particularities in this process.</p>

Name:	Tiit Remm, University of Tartu, Estonia
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Paper Title:	Modelling sociocultural space and time in visualisations of conflicting identities. A semiotic view
Description	<p>National/ethnic identity construction is undoubtedly frequently using all kinds of visual media. In this paper I focus on the aspects of space and time in two documentaries about a conflict in 2006-2007 in Estonia on a Second World War monument called 'Bronze Soldier'. The monument and activities at it actualised local dissonances of national and ethnic identities. The imagined space, history, practices in daily surroundings and time are crucial aspects of identity formation and representation and are describable in terms of sociocultural space and time.</p> <p>The theoretical part of the paper searches for insights on the conception of sociocultural space and time – as a model on metalevel and its existence on the object level of society, in material and practical as well as in abstract and imagined world.</p> <p>Two documentaries from two opposing parties of the conflict illustrate the spatio-temporal basis of society and its practices of self descriptions and nationalistic narratives.</p>

Name:	Matt Sillars, University of the Highlands and Islands
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Paper Title	Caledonia, you're calling me? Motivated landscape imagery in the 2009 Scottish homecoming campaigns
Description:	<p>Though only leading a minority administration, the recent arrival in government of the Scottish National Party offered the both the home and diaspora 'Scottish' population an opportunity to reflect on and re-consider what contemporary discourses of national identity actually meant for them. In part as a response to difficult economic times, one of the key projects of the new administration became the 'homecoming' project, a worldwide invitation to ex-pat Scots to return and visit the country during the year of 2009 – preferably bringing their spending cash with them. As a key feature of this project was the emotional appeal of the 'hills of home', this paper considers and discusses the way that the Scottish landscape was depicted and articulated within the promotional imagery of the year of 'homecoming'.</p>