

OPPONENT'S REVIEW

of

Olga Harea

on the Doctoral Thesis

in the field of art, the discipline of fine arts and art conservation

Doctoral School: The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław

of **J. Ivan Juarez Bolaños**

SENSORY LANDSCAPES

SENSES, EXPERIENCES & MIND-ECOLOGIES

Evaluation from formal and structural viewpoint

The Dissertation of J. Ivan Juarez Bolaños contains Introduction and 7 chapters, which is accompanied and complemented with a multitude of graphics elaborated by himself, series of relevant and compelling photographs of his Inspiration Sources, Influences, and of his Artworks, Site-Specific Interventions and Actions. The body of the thesis includes 313 pages, including acknowledgements and the bibliography. It is logically well arranged and structured, where the introduction and first chapter build the foundations for the latter ones. It has been worded well, it reads easy and fluently. The table of contents, accurately formatted, shapes the chapters and sub-chapter with their corresponding page numbers. The main point of each paragraph is always very clear, the concepts, ideas, and results presented in the text are nicely documented by the graphics and photographs, which are shown properly and are clear and demonstrative. The source of literature consulted have been referenced in the proper place within the text. The representative selection of references (relevant books, journals, proceedings and others categories), with a whole number of 154 were used. The bibliography includes the required data, all duly arranged in alphabetical order.

Evaluation from the content's viewpoint

The dissertation has a relevant, actual and challenging topic "*Sensory Landscapes | Senses, Experiences & Mind-Ecologies*," which is focused on the relationship between ecological mindset and sensitive cognition towards artistic practice, and how this connection can be a medium to establish sensitive dialogues towards the landscapes. Its importance was evaluated correctly based on many references explaining the importance and demonstrating unexplored yet novelty. The title is descriptive enough and ensures that it is clear and concise.

In the *Introduction* it is clear outlined the key premises of the research, provided an overview of contemporary social, environmental and artistic challenges, framed a series of reflections focused on rethinking, sensitizing and understanding the natural and human environment from the perspective of senses, experiences and mind ecologies. There are proposed 6 research

questions that resulted in addressing 6 main objectives, which the candidate dully achieved. The setup methods (collecting, mapping, interviewing, perceiving, experimenting, interpreting, creating, intervening, gathering) and phases for developing the research were implemented.

The Chapter 1, *Landscape as a Personal Journey*, traces sources and influences that have personally experienced, interpreted and reimagined in the course of his research practice (sources based on literature, visual arts, cinematography, spatial, public and environmental art, architecture and landscaping, events, spaces, artistic works). The Chapter 2, *Site Context | Natural & Cultural Landscapes*, is dedicated to the geographical epicenter for the development of the research. It is analyzed and described the specific natural, ecological, and cultural landscapes, the main landscape values and systems.

The candidate took a creative approach to his dissertation - a written work that forms the theoretical framework for his several artworks, site-specific interventions and actions developed within the art-based research across different landscapes, which are later expanded and illustrated in the Chapter 5, *On-Site Explorations, Artworks, Site-Specific Interventions & Actions*. The Chapter 3, *Thinking Landscapes | Thinking Senses*, embraces theoretical framework-based literature and case studies related to the research themes such as soundscapes, smellscapes, hapticscapes, visualsapes and tastescapes, and to the notion of landscape and human senses. In Chapter 4, *Site Approximations and Landscape Concerns Towards the Artistic Design Process*, are outlined the main approaches that have been explored within the research process.

The Chapter 6, entitled *Expanded Geographies | On-site Works*, covers a series of personal artworks related to the research themes, which are implemented outside of the geographical epicenter established for the development of the research. The last but not least, Chapter 7, *Seeding & Germination | Soil-Didactic Practices*, stresses how educational practices and the academic space become a relevant laboratory for exploring and disseminating new ways of thinking, imagining and creating. It reflects and brings into practice some of the key questions raised in the research, and cover some examples of the academic teamwork practice, developed within the educational space Laboratory for Designing Interactive Spaces and Objects at the Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, as a collaborative research environment.

The Candidate managed to successfully fulfil the tasks assigned at the beginning, namely examining and elaborating a series of reflections, processes and artistic-design explorations focused on sensitive approaches to the environment by interconnecting experience and landscape awareness. He concluded the evaluation and shaped eloquent answers to the raised questions.

Declaration

I was really impressed with Ivan's artistic, didactic and organizational achievements. There is no time even to mention all of them. Just a short description is taking 17 pages. So, I will briefly go through and I will remark only several most important achievements:

He participated in 9 international exhibitions and 17 online exhibitions, including one personal exhibition entitled "**Insect City**" in Linz, Austria. His artwork "**Sky mirrors, Coexistence, Inner rice field and Water path**" is present in Venice, at Art Laguna World gallery.

His didactic activity includes lectures for postgraduate and undergraduate levels of environmental design disciplines, such as **Landscaping, Interactive Design, Architecture and Urban Design** in Mexico, Hungary and Poland. He has been teaching at the Laboratory for Designing Interactive Spaces and Objects at ASP in Wroclaw.

Ivan Juarez is the founder of the multidisciplinary **research practice x-studio**, which focuses **on exploring artistic-design disciplines through the dialogue between ecological, biological and cultural systems**.

His activity was highly appreciated by the international community:

The most remarkable awards are **Environmental Award BigCi**, Australia; **The Architectural League Prize of New York**; **The International Architecture Award** by The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design and The European Center for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies; **Biennale del Giardino Mediterraneo**, Sicily; **The International Land Award**, Italy; **The Grand Prix International Landscape Architecture Belgrade**; The Venice Arte Laguna Special Prize; The Latin American Biennial of Landscape Architecture; **The Prize Design Vanguard-Architectural Record**, NY; **The Best International Architecture Research Practice** by Build Magazine, UK; **Young Architects Prize** by the Association of Architects in Barcelona; Honorable Mention in The Mexican Biennial of Landscape Architecture; **The International City. People. Light Award** by Lighting Urban Community International given in Finland Hall, Helsinki; **The World Architecture Community Award** and **Honorable Mentions in the AR Award for Emerging Architects** by Architectural Review, UK and **the Center for Contemporary Artist Prize**, Italy.

Overall, I judge the presented thesis as a work of high quality with an interesting subject and approach. In the field of art in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation, the Candidate disposes of the professional knowledge required to obtain the PhD degree. Respectively, the Candidate is deeply familiar with the professional information sources. At the same time, the

use of the described methods of research and analysis, as well as the depth of the evaluation could be considered sufficiently ample in the current version of the thesis.

Following my analysis of his dissertation and creative output as well as his professional practice in the field of art, I highly recommend that he be awarded an academic Ph.D. title in the field of art, in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation”

Chisinau, 20 January 2023



Olga Harea, PhD in Agricultural Engineering Sciences

Opponent

Technical University of Moldova, Department of Architecture