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# Ardeth #13: Energy landscapes

Deadline: Oct 20, 2023

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ENERGY LANDSCAPES - Spatial Agencies of Energy Transition

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While in the recent decades, the field of architecture has primarily focused on the self-sufficiency of individual buildings, the current ARDETH issue wishes to bring back scholarly attention to an approach that prioritizes energy conservation and generation at the urban scale. Such an approach relies on the idea of the productive (and not only consumptive) urban environment, in which the built fabric, topography, soil, bodies of water, green spaces, as well as regional climatic conditions (determined by sun, wind, rain flows, and seasonal temperatures), serve as potential parameters for energy production.

Since the late 1960s, landscape architects such as Ian McHarg, Anne Whiston Spirn, and Michael Hough, and urban planners such as Ralph Knowles, Vladimir Matus, and Dean Hawkes were increasingly aware of the urban dimension of energy. Hough introduced the notion of "energy land-scape," pioneering "an ecological view that encompasses the total urban landscape" (Hough 1984). Today, Hough's notion is of fundamental significance for rethinking the relationship of practices of space-making to energy on several scales, integrating novel technological systems and built structures with natural processes responses (Roesler 2022; Roesler, Kobi, Stieger 2022).

The ARDETH issue promotes the conceptual framework of "energy landscapes" to question energy as cheap, abundant, and at the disposal of urban development. It critically examines concepts and methods for shaping future energy landscapes. Understanding energy transition as practice of spatial transformation, the issue looks for contributions that uncover the mutual dependency between energy and urbanization, analysing the possible influences of settlement structures on promoting renewable energy production. The contributions should thus conceive "energy futures" as intrinsically tied to a broader discussion on space-making futures and highlight "the spatial elements through which urban energy systems evolve [...] and the spatial consequences of [energy] transition" (Rutherford & Coutard 2014). For example, how do different built fabric densities contribute to and limit the emergence of post-carbon energy landscapes? What are the implications of a British suburb, an Italian medieval town, or Greek informal settlements densities on the production, distribution, and use of post-carbon energy in those areas?

The editors particularly welcome scholarly papers and visual essays that promote a transversal view of energy landscapes, integrating the urban and architectural scales and the transition from energy consumption to production. The editors seek contributions that offer a transdisciplinary view of energy landscapes, considering actors (companies, institutions, people), technologies (car-

bon-based and renewable), flows (of resources, energy, money), scales (from buildings to the globe), and patterns of urbanization.

The issue departs from a regional focus on Europe in light of the recent geopolitical situation relating to the war in Ukraine, which has exacerbated Europe's dependency on external energy sources, urging us to explore novel strategies of self-reliance that enhance and hasten the strategies discussed in the past. Nonetheless, contributions that present valuable insights from different regions will be taken into consideration in relation to the challenges that the European cases present. Scholars of history and theory of architecture and urban design, social anthropology, urban studies, and science and technology studies are invited to present recent findings and novel methods at the intersection of archival and ethnographic approaches for studying energy landscapes in transition. Contributing to a contemporary environmental theory of architecture, papers might be centered around the following four thematic threads: energy hinterlands, spaces of cohabitation, net zero cities, and spatio-temporal frameworks.

#### 1. Energy Hinterlands: Scales of Energy Transition:

The most important aspect of the 20th century's energy system has been the dependency of urban centers on global "energy hinterlands" (Dean Hawkes, 1996). The remoteness of energy sources such as oil and natural gas has led to a global distribution network and the idea of energy abundance regardless of location. Considering the spatial ramifications of "energy hinterlands" and the potential alterations resulting from the energy transition processes, we welcome scholarly articles exploring strategies related to decentralization and centralization. Where and at which scales will new energy production and storage sites be allocated? We welcome contributions that explore new forms of energy governance and spatial regimes, propose alternative approaches to zoning regulations and building codes, and highlight inevitable challenges related to issues such as liability and safety.

#### 2. Spaces of Cohabitation: Integrating Green Technologies and Ecosystems:

Following Ian McHarg's "Design with Nature" (1969), the exploration of energy production ecologies unveils the manifold intersections of political, infrastructural, social, and natural conditions. Papers are expected to examine novel renewable and low-carbon energy production strategies in the context of the existing urbanization patterns and to address the consequent trade-offs between green, growing, and equitable urban development (Campbell, 1996), highlighting also frictions between green technologies and ecosystems. Which criteria define a post-carbon energy landscape? Which criticalities do the most recent or past energy transition's grand plans present regarding environmental impact? How do natural and socio-technical aspects entangle as integrated systems in energy production sites? In which way do these artificial manipulations implicate friction with nature and among various groups of interests?

#### 3. Net Zero Cities: New Models of Energy Ownership:

Future energy landscapes entail a novel political ecology of energy production that foresees a shift in the social actors' perspective from energy consumers to producers. We are interested in contributions that explore the cultural and socio-anthropological impacts of more or less successful cases (private, public, or mixed initiatives) in the past, present, and future. Contributions might examine the role of urban dwellers as energy producers, owners of the infrastructure, and/or energy shareholders and the State and other actors' roles as energy service providers concerning off-

-grid rights. Contributions could, for example, explore the following aspects: What forms of productive energy communities exist and how sustainable can the small-scale production of energy at the community or district level (energy microgrids, autonomous systems) be? How is green energy generation supported by new monetary systems such as blockchain (smart contracts and tokenization of services)?

## 4. Spatio-temporal Frameworks: Energy Transition as Process:

The energy transition is inevitably processual and non-linear. It is a continuous process beyond the "net-zero goal." As sociologist Lucius Burckhardt noted, the practice of planning must be understood as a paradox, as it seeks to define a non-finite future state. "Who plans the planning?" Considering this provocation, the editors aim to raise questions such as: How to anticipate a planning culture of uncertainty and constant adaptiveness? How could the gradual and repeated process of introducing new energy systems that change the natural and urban landscape become the very subject of architecture and urban design? What challenges arise due to the dynamic nature of the energy transition, such as the scalability of systems and the potential for failures?

## Submission guidelines

Articles should be written in standard English or Italian. Only original work will be considered for publication, i.e. outcomes of research conducted by the author/s which have not yet been published anywhere else and are not currently under review by any other journal.

Ardeth accepts contributions in four submission types: Manuscripts; Visual Essays; Commentaries; Book reviews and other short contributions. Except for Visual Essays, the other four types of manuscripts are primarily text based. All essays should be grounded in relevant discourse, offer an original and critical contribution of a theoretical or a more empirical nature, and be supported by appropriate visual apparatus.

Contributions should be submitted electronically at following link: http://ojs.lexis.srl/index.php/ardeth/about/submissions

To start a new submission, please follow the OJS guide for authors: https://openjournalsystems.com/ojs-3-user-guide/submitting-an-article/

The Editorial board contact is: redazione@ardeth.eu

Detailed guidelines are available on the ournal website: www.ardeth.eu

Reference: CFP: Ardeth #13: Energy landscapes. In: ArtHist.net, Jul 25, 2023 (accessed May 7, 2025), <https://arthist.net/archive/39810>.