

CUBIST LANDSCAPES

Mediterranean landscape is a land of strong sunlight and shadow, of steep topography formed by terraced slopes and deep gullies which descent towards the sea. It is also a landscape with an extraordinary pressure of mankind. From urban settlements to agricultural fields the presence of man is ever present and it makes impossible to separate nature from artifice.

In Catalonian countryside we can find traces of this process all over. The Romans imported the Pine trees that are inseparable of Costa Brava landscape. Cypresses were planted as signs of hospitality or spirituality, or as a wind barrier against north wind. Palm trees tell the story of someone who gained his fortune in America and retired to his homeland. Olives and vineyards are so rooted in the landscape that ends up by losing its agricultural character.

Much of this landscape is conceptualize as the Cubist landscape. The sum up of different view points and geometries - as cultivated fields, facades and tiled roofs, dry stone retaining walls - are framed in a plane surface which is the painter's canvas. Cézanne showed partially this potential in the juxtapositions and color gradations of Gardanne landscapes. Picasso culminated Cubism manifesto in his exulting landscapes of Horta de Sant Joan painted in the summer of 1909.

A Cubist landscape, by means of formal abstraction, sums up the multiplicity of meaning and perceptions of the place and creates a new reality. In Cubism strategy of assigning similar values to man made and nature there is a strong potential to be applied in landscape, urban and architectural design. Some works of our practice were designed with the above as a tentative approach.