

RESEARCH BY DESIGN:
EXPLORING RESILIENT WAYS OF
'URBAN BY NATURE'

Test Site: Osumi Island in Berat, Albania
Phase II - CALL FOR IDEAS

MYSTIC ISLAND

DESIGN TEAM

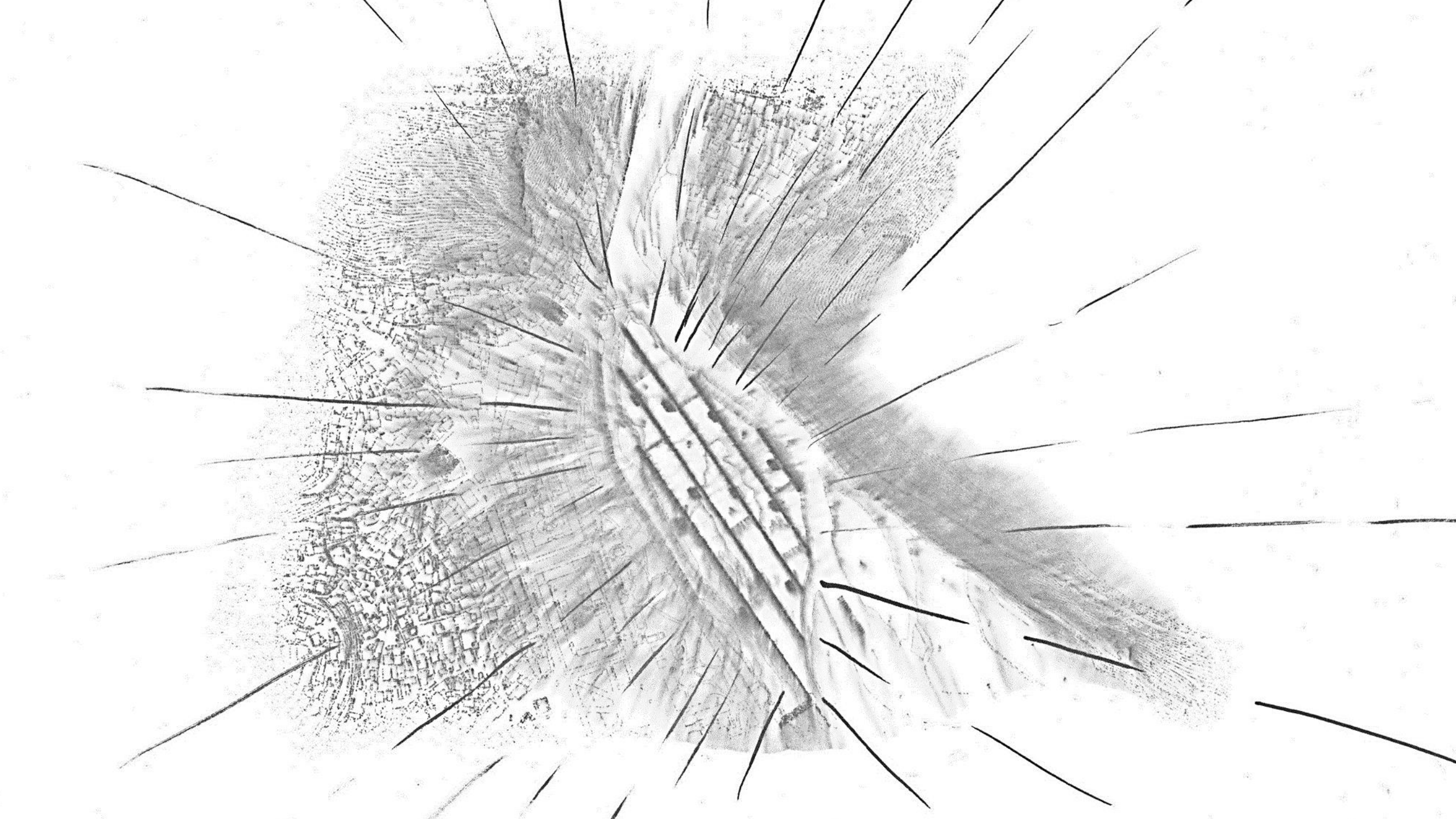
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Resilience to what?

Definition on the character of permanence

MYSTIC ISLAND: the character of the island relates to its ever-changing status, between emerged and submerged land. Its value is in the indefinite but recognizable being. A terrain vague.

In order to maintain this undefined shape, we propose actions on the general hydraulics of the river, which will affect exceptional floodings (to maintain safety levels) but will not be affecting permanently the shape of Osumi Island.

Appropriation of the island will happen through temporary paths and installations.

The concept tries to escape architectural and built solutions, to follow an attitude of landscaping and art installations, thus synchronizing with the concept of resilience.





Tolerance

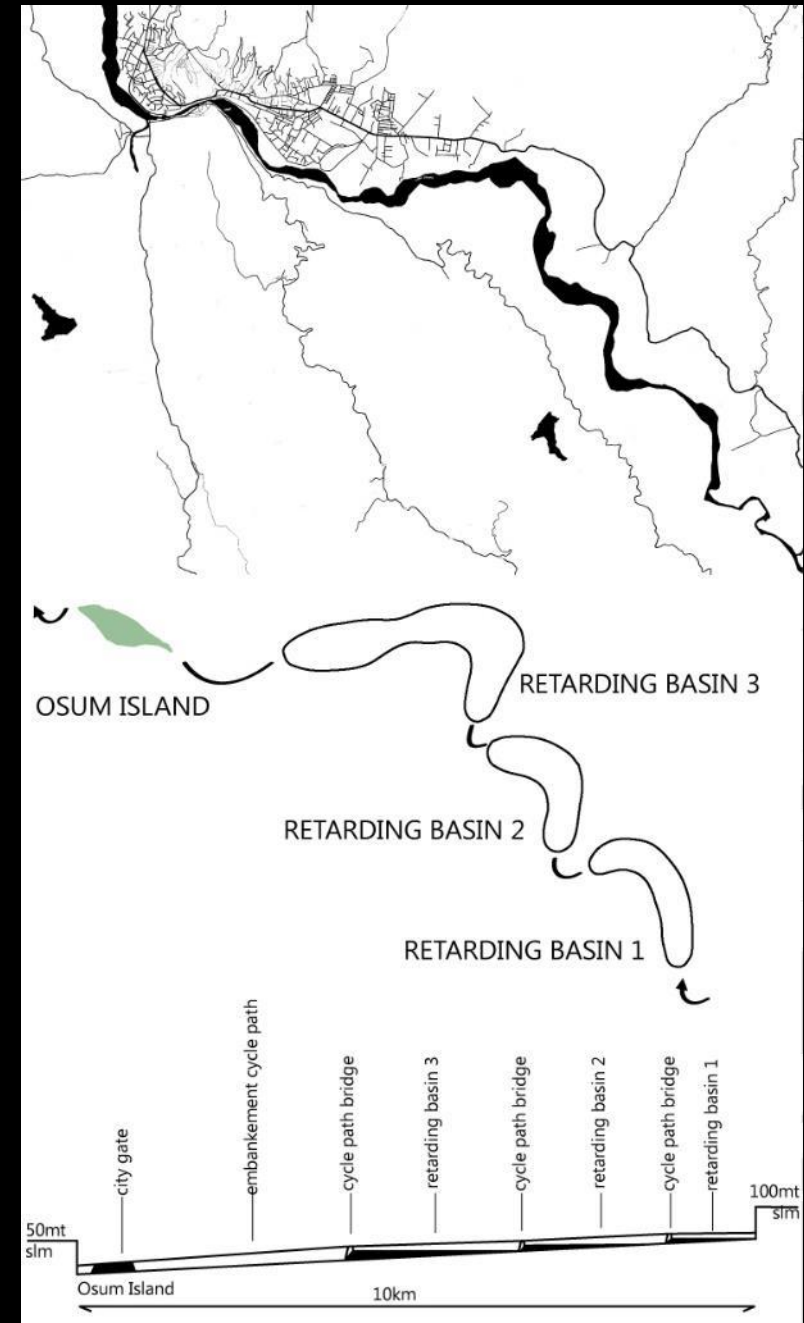
Berat bears outstanding testimony to the diversity of urban societies in the Balkans, and to longstanding ways of life which have today almost vanished. Berat was enriched by monument and vernacular urban housing during the Classical Ottoman period, in continuity with the previous Medieval cultures, and in a state of peaceful coexistence with a large Christian minority.



Hydrology as a tool of resilience

At a first analysis it appears that:

- The path of the river is critical exactly on the narrowing curve at the center of Berat; on this bottleneck water gains higher speed and it can flood over the right banks;
 - On downstream area of Berat, the reduced steepness of the riverbed and the resulting flood plain indicates that any overcharge in capacity of the river can result in territorial damages;
 - On the upstream side, the meandering river touches vast agricultural areas of potential use as floodplains that could intervene as regulators of the flux of Osum river at Berat.
- The design of the floodplains as controlled devices for river stream is a challenging landscape architecture theme.



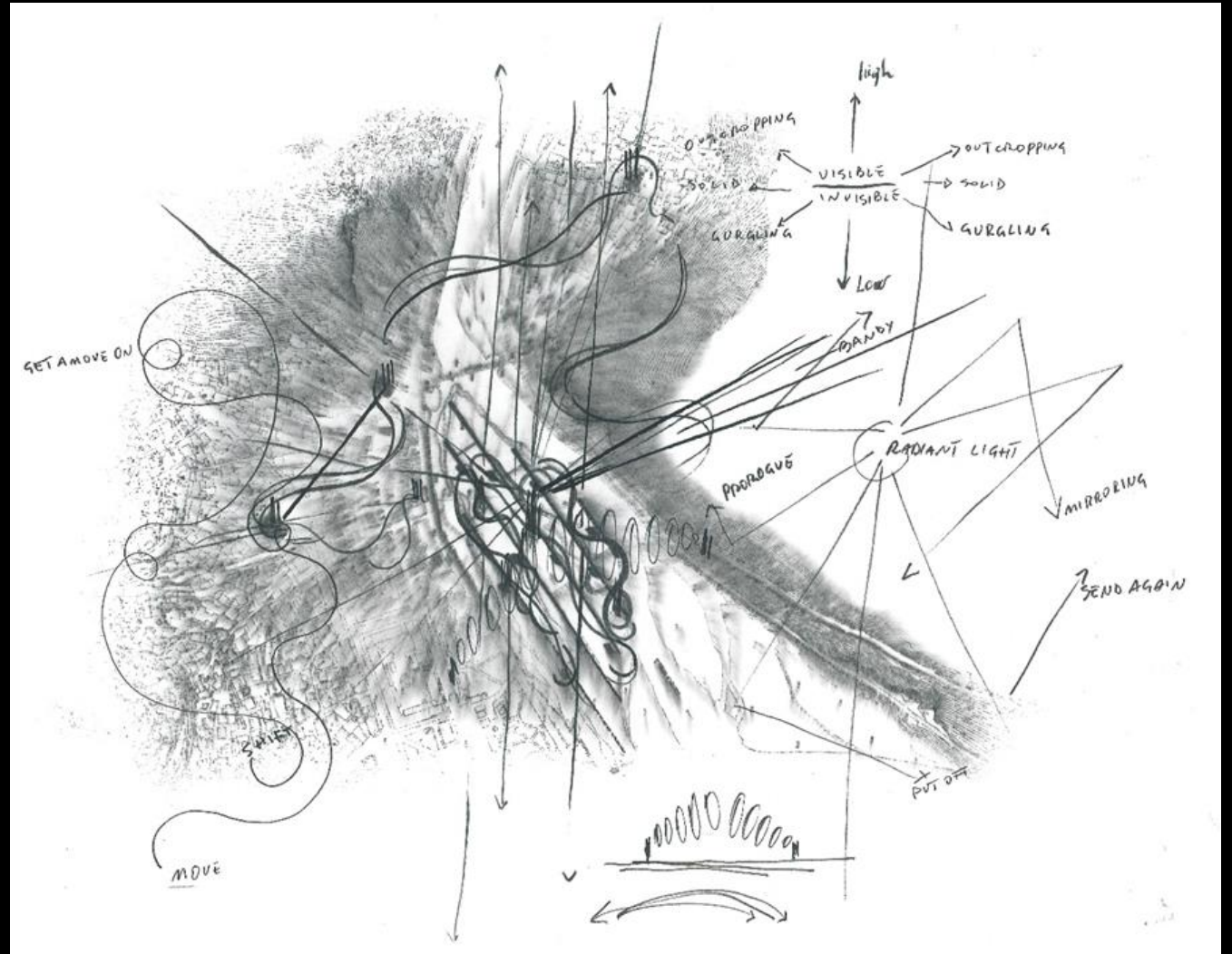


Art

The most intriguing way to make evident a landscape operation spread on a vast territory that integrates city and open land, is by the use of art.

Art will denounce, signal, measure, highlight and explain what the project is doing and the way it is performing.

Art is the perfect way to generate integration and participation with the people.



Landscape Ecology

In the ever-growing definitions of landscape, where everybody gives a contribution to the definition of the world we live in, a more scientific approach is driven by Landscape ecology. Unique to this realm, this branch of ecology tries to describe landscape complexity by numbers. This attitude is far away from arid statistics and figures, it returns interesting operating-tools that help understand the state of the art and the design outcomes.

