Scenographies of the End.

Between Disappearance and Regeneration of the Barycz Landscape

Land Degradation.

Barycz is a landscape of accumulation, where successive phases of exploitation have replaced the valley's natural structure with technogenic layers, erasing its original topography.

Today, this condition produces an overloaded environment deprived of self-regulation. Yet degradation is not an endpoint, but a transitional moment enabling further transformation.

Cycle of Transformations.

Barycz is a record of anthropogenic evolution, where successive phases: from Neolithic salt extraction to borehole mining - have shaped its layered structure, leaving distinct traces in the soil.

Today, former subsidence zones support renewable energy systems, closing material cycles. Industrial legacy shifts from burden to an active driver of ecological and technological transformation.

Salt Heritage.

Research at the Museum of Kraków Saltworks traces the evolution of Barycz, where phases from Neolithic saltworks to underground leaching (since 1924) reshaped its structure, creating subsidence.

In 1974, these voids were filled with waste, forming a hybrid ground. Today, Barycz is an Anthropocene palimpsest, where geology and technology merge into a basis for regeneration.

Social Resistance.

The operation of the Barycz landfill has produced a local archive of dissent, where residents have opposed its expansion since the 1990s, citing environmental risks and lack of transparency.

The protests of 2014 marked a turning point, embedding conflict into the identity of the site. Barycz reveals the tension between systematic logic and everyday life in its immediate proximity.

Experiencing the Site.

The perception of Barycz is fragmented and shaped by the logic of the landfill, where movement follows fixed trajectories between waste mounds and infrastructure reveals its scale and temporality.

The experience is controlled and limited. Human presence is conditional, and engagement with the landscape is mediated, positioning the user as an observer of ongoing processes.

Every intervention leaves a trace. Every trace becomes a layer.

Regeneration as a process that can occur.

Saltworks.

3500 BCE – 3rd century BCE

Long before waste heaps emerged, Barycz thrived through ancient saltworks and Celtic craftsmanship.

Salt leaching.

1924 – 1950s

In the 20th century, drilling through Miocene deposits extracted salt, leaving the land defined by subsidence.

Period of Silence.

1950s – 1974

From Barycz's contaminated landscape emerged Celtic millstones, revealing the continuity of the site's timeline.

Palimpsest.

1974 – present

In 1974, waste filled the scars of salt leaching, forming a hybrid and altered landscape of contemporary Barycz.

Regeneration.

future

Not an end, but a transfer of agency—when humans recede and the landscape follows its own rhythm.

Withdrawal.

First decade of reclamation (D-1)

Withdrawal erases infrastructure, returning materials to circulation and restoring the landscape's ability to transform.

Revival.

Second decade of reclamation (D-2)

Revival marks the landscape's first responses, as point-based structures initiate natural regeneration.

Gateway.

Third decade of reclamation (D-3)

The gateway introduces architecture as a tool of mediation, becoming a space for negotiating the site's past and future.

Community.

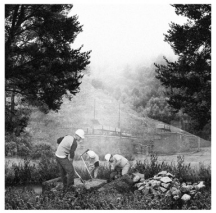
Fourth decade of reclamation (D-4)

The site becomes safe or accessible, as reclamation unfolds through shared use and collective responsibility.

Regeneration.

Fifth decade of reclamation (D-5)

Human intervention ceases, as nature reclaims what was taken. Over time, reclamation completes itself, revealing the lost genius loci.



Withdrawal.

The first decade initiates the dismantling of infrastructure and limits direct human intervention, while the site remains closed under controlled monitoring.

The landscape enters a state of managed decline, where material is not removed but transformed and reintegrated into new cycles, gradually redefining its structure and function.

Revival.

The second decade activates biological regeneration, with renaturalization of the Malinówka stream and pioneer vegetation stabilizing the substrate.

Reclamation evolves into a hybrid process, where natural dynamics interact with introduced interventions, enabling the first collective activities and cyclical reforestation.

Gateway.

The third decade introduces architecture as a transitional layer between landscape and use, creating a space of reflection, education, and mediation.

It establishes controlled access and frames human presence, regulating intensity and directing movement, while mediating the relationship between user and a recovering landscape.

Community.

The fourth decade introduces shared use and partial opening of the former landfill, transforming it into a space of everyday activity with controlled access.

Pavilions function as social infrastructure, supporting education and workshops, while the site becomes a field of collective experience and negotiation, enabling further transformation.

Regeneration.

Regeneration shifts the landscape from control to process, where design recedes and transformation unfolds as an open, continuously evolving system.

Architecture becomes one layer among others, while the site regains its own rhythm, enabling continuous adaptation and change without a fixed endpoint.

Between what was closed and what is not yet accessible.

The section reveals what the landscape remembers beyond humans.

Architecture as an temporary instrument of regeneration.

Malinówka Stream in a technical channel

Design intervention:

Removal of concrete surfaces and restoration of the degradated stream.

Biogas plant infrastructure

Design intervention:

Retention of essential biogas facilities for long-term monitoring.

Waste sorting plant buildings

Design intervention:

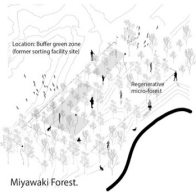
Phasing out functions and relocating the sorting facility to Igołomska Street.

Barycz Ecological Centre building

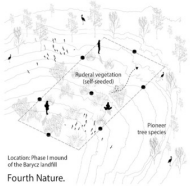
Design intervention:

Renovation and adaptation of the building for social,and cultural functions.

Riparian vegetation.



Miyawaki Forest.



Fourth Nature.

Path
Symbol of process and experience

Light
A tool for reading space

Gateway
A moment of awareness

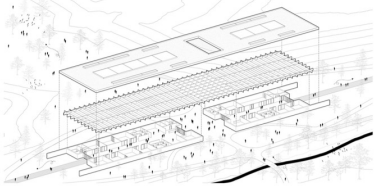
Garden
A space of regeneration

Rhythm
Repetition of time and structure

Layer
A record of time in matter

Time / Cycle
A factor of transformation

Trace
What remains after the process



BDA-SARP-AWARD 2026

Szymon Misiak, Politechnika Krakowska im. Tadeusza Kościuszki, dr hab. inż. arch. Kinga Racoń-Leja, prof. PK