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When the Mountain Becomes a Work of Art: Arte Sella and the Transformation of an Alpine Space in Decline

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article would not have been possible without the kindness and helpfulness of the Arte Sella association, the Valsugana APT, the Public Library of Borgo, to which we give our thanks. Thanks to the two anonymous referees for their comments and suggestions made in the evaluation phase of this text. Special thanks also to Dr Renzo Usai for his valuable comments and interpretations. The responsibility of the text is entirely to be attributed to the author.

Introduction

In response to recent socio-economic changes around the world, local actors have mobilised art more and more in order to transform particular territories (Roy-Valex and Bellavance, 2015). Many spaces come alive and turn into sites for a diverse array of cultural initiatives that are justified and supported in the name of local development (Négrier and Teillet, 2014). We argue that the *mise en art* of mountain territories incorporates this current dynamic. *In situ* artistic approaches (for example, “Horizon Arts-Nature” in France’s Massif du Sancy, or the “VIAPAC – Route d’art contemporain” in the French-Italian Alps) offer ways of developing mountain territories.

This article proposes an analysis of the *mise en art* of an Alpine space, understood as a specific territorial resource that makes both its sustainable development and territorial integration possible. We will focus on the case of the *mise en art* of the Sella Valley (*Val di Sella*), located in the Alps in Trentino, Italy, where the Arte Sella association spearheads an artistic approach that forms part of the “*Art in Nature*” movement.

In concrete terms, the article considers the process of constructing a particular territorial resource. In our case, this involves the co-evolving relationship between Arte Sella’s artistic approach and its territory, as well as the coordination between the parties concerned and their intentionalities. Beyond the strictly artistic goals, the *mise en art* of the *Val di Sella* provides an opportunity for its economic (by creating jobs thanks to new influxes of visitors), social (by establishing formal and informal partnerships between local stakeholders) and sustainable (because the *mise en art* of a territory helps to protect and promote the environment) development. This contribution will thus present the approach of the territorial resource, subsequently applied to the case of the *mise en art* of the Sella Valley.

The article builds on a qualitative survey carried out between January and April 2016. We started with a media review of the local press and analysed more than 300 articles from different local and national magazines and newspapers in the archives of Spazi Livio Rossi, the headquarters of the Arte Sella association, and the Municipal Library of Borgo Valsugana. We also focused on documents that the local communities and actors produced in order to promote the territory, as well as a few other strategic documents. We conducted two interviews with territorial actors, namely members of Arte Sella and employees at the tourist office.

Analysis of the construction of the territorial resource and its contribution to territorial development

With regard to resources, the approaches can be used as tools to read the territory, its issues and its development. Gumuchian and Pecqueur (2007) define a territorial resource as “a constructed characteristic of a specific territory in terms of development”. They identify different types of resources: *generic* resources, which are easily replicable from one territory to another, and *specific* resources, which are not replicable but are linked to the intentionalities of the actors who identify, enable and renew them. Culture (Landel, Pecqueur, 2009), heritage (François, Hirczack and Senil, 2006), landscape (Peyrache-Gadeau and Perron, 2010) and, according to our study’s hypothesis, *in situ* contemporary art can help to distinguish between specific territorial resources and generic resources and thus play a central role in the territories’ development. This is how, in this case, the valley’s *mise en art* is understood as a proved territorial resource: It is the result of a link that the actors construct between art and nature, and whose whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Another core dimension of the notion of a territorial resource is linked to the actors’ intentionality: The process of construction depends heavily on the actions and intentionalities of the actors, the pooling of their different skills and their cooperation (Dissart, 2012). Indeed, it is not enough to identify a resource “in” a territory for it to have an effect: An institutional framework has to be established, and it has to allow for the territorialisation of the resource and make it possible to enact a process of governance and public policies that regulate the relationships between the various

actors involved in the approach. Thus, the construction of a resource is the result of a collective action that can be broken down into four moments (Janin *et al.*, 2016): the revelation of the resource; the justification of its links with the territory; its development; its linkage with other territorial resources.

The process of constructing a territorial resource

The revelation of specific resources is the first step in constructing a territorial resource. At the beginning, it is “virtual” or potential because it can only be revealed through the intervention of men (Gumuchian and Pecqueur, 2007) and for the purpose of contextual construction that reveals its potentialities in the interest of territorial innovation (Corrado, 2006). There is no resource *per se*: It is always the result of construction actions carried out by “revealers” – actors who take a fresh, long-range and objective look at the territory and can be considered as the “inventors” of the resource (Janin *et al.*, 2016). They help to reveal the qualities required outside the territory – ones that go hand in hand with the territories but are not perceived the same as those on the inside (Landel *et al.*, 2014). In the case of the *Val di Sella*, it is the Arte Sella association that forms the basis of the artistic approach and is involved in revealing the natural qualities that are simultaneously created and exposed through the *in situ* artistic interventions.

The revelation of the resource has to be followed by its anchoring in the territory in order for it to become “territorial”. Then there is a twofold process of collectively appropriating and justifying the links with the territory to the population (François *et al.*, 2006). To this end, the approach of the territorial resource is to assign a central spot to those who perform the “anchoring” and to link the resource’s “inventors” with the stakeholders responsible for developing it in the territory. Thus, the resource is exposed, and its links with the territory and its qualities are explained so that the territory’s stakeholders can make it meaningful and attractive. Accordingly, the stakeholders “develop the experiences in an interactive framework to produce new forms of collective organisation” (Janin *et al.*, 2016, pp. 154-155).

The *mise en art* of the *Val di Sella* demonstrates this twofold process by the local stakeholders of collectively appropriating and justifying the links with the territory. First, the support of a local association from the village of Borgo, the municipality and the province is secured, even though the population does not understand the links with or legitimacy with respect to the territory. Second, a series of initiatives helps to demonstrate the artistic commitment (info point, exhibition spaces etc.) and, by making the resource available to the largest number of stakeholders, plays a role in the process of understanding, recognising and legitimising. The resource’s development is connected to a phase in which the links between the stakeholders are strengthened and formalised, and the resource is specified and becomes as understandable inside the territory as it is on the outside. During this phase, the aim is to develop good coordination between (and shared know-how among) the stakeholders – a “cumulative learning” approach in which “the territorial resource comes from a cognitive process in which the actors learn together and cumulatively to tackle and resolve problems and change the way of doing things” (Lajarge and Pecqueur, 2011, p. 2). The result of this process is the gradual specification of the resource that is often accompanied by its certification, label approval and so forth. Regarding the *mise en art* of the *Val di Sella*, one moment in particular is emblematic of this phase in the development of the

resource: the creation of *Tree Cathedral* in 2002 (Fig. 4). The management of new influxes of visitors and the media coverage of this imposing work of art led the local stakeholders to organise themselves around a project that was no longer only artistic but also territorial. At the same time, *Arte Sella* was starting to become a professional association and to formalise the specificity of their artistic commitment through the brand “Artesella. The Contemporary Mountain” (<http://www.artesella.it>).

According to Pecqueur (2001, in Janin *et al.*, 2016), the culmination of this phase was the territory’s organisation around “a variety of products that the consumer is able to grasp in order to produce a truly territorial offer”. Following this approach, the qualities that are specific to the territory are associated with these products and thus make them unique and non-reproducible elsewhere. The *mise en art* of the *Val di Sella* is also moving in this direction because the *in situ* character of the art makes the products non-replicable. Furthermore, the recent entrepreneurial turn in the management of *Arte Sella*’s activities speaks to a desire to combine the artistic approach not only with other resources (such as sports activities, the countryside etc.) but also with the territorial tourism offer of the Valsugana Valley.

The *mise en art* of a marginal Alpine space as a specific territorial resource

The Valsugana Valley (*cf.* Fig. 1) is located in the eastern part of Trentino.¹ It is bordered on the north by the Lagorai mountain range and in the south by the Cima XII-Ortigara.

This region recently faced a crisis that struck its economic activities, which had steered the development of the territory since the Second World War. The crisis led to the closure of certain production facilities in the industry and craft sectors, as well as the resulting decline in employment (Cei Trentino, 2013). The tourism sector, for its part, has had to meet ever more strenuous demands in terms of services and organisation (Mazzola, De Ros, 2010).

The Valsugana is divided into two administrative entities: the Alta (high) and the Bassa (low) Valsugana, which have different features and have had different reactions to the economic situation mentioned above. The Alta Valsugana is characterised by its proximity to Trento² (Pergina is around 12 km far, or 30 minutes by train) and demonstrates a certain economic dynamism thanks to the tourist service sector, population growth and the suburbanisation of the valley floor.

Fig. 1. The Valsugana and Sella valleys and their locations in relation to Trento

Source: Compiled by the author, map data from *OpenDataTrentino* and Google Maps, processed by QGIS.

In the summer, tourism revolves around the lakes, which see a strong foreign presence (49.4% of the total of around 440,000 visitors during the summer season in 2010), while in the winter, the tourists, especially the Italians, prefer the ski slopes of Mount Panarotta (cf. P.A.T. 2015). The service sector plays a considerable role in the local economy: The town of Levico alone has some 45 hotels out of Valsugana's total of approximately 90.

The Bassa Valsugana's population has decreased in recent years, particularly in the less accessible and formerly industrial zones (Diamantini, 2003). The territory surrounding it is very sparsely populated and basically comprises vast mountainous zones and woodland areas. The Arte Sella event is organised in the *Val di Sella*, which lies on the territory of the municipality of Borgo Valsugana (6,800 inhabitants in 2010) in the heart of the Bassa Valsugana. It is a small enclosed Alpine valley that lies east-west and dead-ends,³ is 11 km long and between 3 and 5 km wide and has a surface area of approximately 6,000 ha. Grasslands bordered by woods stretch the length of the valley floor, at 850 and 990 m above sea level. These spaces were cultivated for Alpine pasture – whence the presence of cabins, sheepfolds and huts – and, given their preserved natural setting, tranquillity and optimal climate, were subsequently used as summer holiday spots. This is why the cabins were built by the wealthy inhabitants of Borgo and the Valsugana from the end of the 19th century until the 1950s. Since the 1970s, the *Val di Sella* has been visited less and less often because the pastoral and holiday activities gradually went downhill.

The revelation of the territorial resource: Arte Sella's *Art in Nature* approach

In the middle of the 1980s, three friends and contemporary art enthusiasts (Emanuele Montibeller, a trader in Borgo; Charlotte Strobele, a philosopher; and Enrico Ferrari, an

architect, painter and urban planner) were planning to organise an art exhibition in Borgo, but the city did not have adequate space. Thus, Strobele offered her villa and the surrounding park in *Val di Sella*. The first edition of the event took place in 1986, in private, in the park of this Alpine cabin, with support from the local Amici di Borgo association and under the aegis of Arge Alp, an international association for the development, promotion and protection of the Alpine arc.⁴ The unexpected success of the event – 2,500 visitors, according to the local press⁵ – persuaded the organisers to repeat the experience and turn it into a biennial happening. *Arte Sella* specialises in land art, and in particular the *Art in Nature* movement.

Critics Vittorio Fagone and Elmar Zorn (Fagone *et al.*, 1996) call *Art in Nature* a new artistic movement in the field of environmental art, which emphasises works made outdoors that are in dialogue with nature, have respect for the environment and use natural and degradable materials. Unlike some expressions of land art, this movement affirms the centrality of nature in the work. The guiding principles are (*idem*): an integration between man and nature and a respect for the special features of the landscape; an approach by the artist that does not damage the environment but uses materials, insofar as possible, that are natural and found onsite, so that the work, over time, returns to nature; the rediscovery of the landscape, links with history and the traditions of those who have lived them; and interdisciplinarity, by overcoming traditional barriers to art (e.g. Herman Prigann's Terra Nova, which is a participatory project to clean up a polluted area; see Kagan, 2014).

Arte Sella's specialisation in the movement that would subsequently receive the label *Art in Nature* was the upshot of a number of coincidences: The artists invited to Villa Strobele discovered the exceptional natural surroundings in its park, which gradually transformed from an exhibition "framework" into a place of artistic creation where nature takes on great importance – "in a relationship that matured over time, the art object created with natural elements had to deal with the natural object" (Pelloso, 1997).

In 1988, the villa hosted international artists who had been invited to "get in touch with" the surrounding Alpine landscape and to let it inspire their works. Arte Sella reinterpreted some of the conceptual artistic categories of land art and gradually developed the concept of landscape as a product of the interaction between art and nature. Indeed, land art is a "blend of sculpture as landscape and landscape as sculpture" (Beardsley, 1984), where the artist "turns the natural landscape into not only the context of the work but the work itself" (Sartoretti, 2014). In this way, thanks to its natural surroundings, as well as the hospitality and the freedom of expression granted by the organisers, the *Val di Sella* has attracted the attention of numerous international artists, including Jakob de Chirico, Georg Jappe, Nils Udo and Andy Goldsworthy. The idea, shared by the artists, is to create works of art with the natural materials found *in loco*, valorise certain elements of the landscape and leave it to nature,⁶ with the landscape serving as both the object and the product of the creative process.

The justification of the link between Arte Sella and its territory

The creation of the Arte Sella cultural association in Borgo in 1989 enabled the event to "move out" of the private sphere and be recognised by public institutions. Indeed,

according to L. Tomaselli, president of the association in the 2000s,⁷ “the financial and moral help and support from the Borgo municipality and the Autonomous Province of Trento (APT) turned out to be indispensable to launch and improve the activities of Arte Sella”.

The local actors emphasise how difficult it was, during this phase, for the event to gain a foothold among the local population, at a time when the inhabitants of Borgo were still distant towards and distrustful of the exhibition.⁸ However, the association grew throughout the 1990s: Around 20 local volunteers with a variety of (mostly artistic) skills began taking part in the organisation, thus proving the growing attachment of Borgo’s population to the exhibition, and their participation remains strong today. Since the edition of 1990, the artists have been chosen by artistic committees, which are also tasked with managing the exhibition and international relations.

The close links between the association and the local institutions, in particular the “Amici di Borgo” association, the APT and the Borgo municipality, led to Arte Sella’s “departure” from the Villa Strobele. Since 1996, the artists have been creating their works along a forest footpath around 4 km in length, on a road called “Arte Natura” (cf. Fig. 2) that grants visitors free access.

Fig. 2. The sites of Arte Sella in the Sella and Bassa Valsugana valleys

Source: Compiled by the author, map data from *OpenDataTrentino* and Google Maps, processed by QGIS.

Visitors⁹ take this forest route where the art installations that have been installed in the landscape seek to bring to light certain more or less visible natural features, namely the mountain, the height of a tree, the vegetation, the curve of a tree etc. Artist Sally Matthews’s work, *Lupi* (Wolves, 2002, Fig. 3), focuses on the relationship between man, the natural environment and animals. According to the artist: “The wolves are our evolutionary companions, but our power over their habitat and their existence is too great. Arte Sella’s forest seems to be the perfect place to meet wolves; unfortunately, there are none.”¹⁰

Fig.3. Arte Sella, Arte Natura route, *Lupi* (2002), work by Sally Matthews

Source: Sally Matthews, *Lupi*, Copyright Arte Sella. Photo: Giacomo Bianchi

Another initiative that was launched during this period to foster the activities of Arte Sella was to rent out a sheepfold, Malga Costa, located about 500 m before the end of the Arte Natura route (Fig. 2). Malga Costa thus became very important for the association in the valley: This space, which has replaced the Villa Strobele, is currently used for temporary exhibitions, to create artwork and welcome artists and the public.

The *Tree Cathedral* and the development of *mise en art* in the valley

On the basis of our investigation, we gather that the inhabitants started to understand Arte Sella's economic potential for the territory by the end of the 1990s:

"We want to save the environment and, at the same time, create services in the *Val di Sella*.¹¹" "It is necessary that rural tourism be developed, without forgetting what might become a powerful engine for tourism in the coming years: cultural events. With respect to the promotion of the eastern part of the Valsugana, there is a firm commitment to Arte Sella and its art event."¹²

Nonetheless, the communities and Arte Sella understand that it is necessary to have an artistic intervention that is robust. This is how a new phase started around this new site at the beginning of the 2000s. An Italian artist, Giuliano Mauri, was invited to Malga Costa in 2001 to create an artwork, *Tree Cathedral* (Fig. 4), after negotiating with the APT about its construction.¹³ Arte Sella suddenly became very successful: Thousands of people showed up in the high valley.¹⁴

Fig. 4. Giuliano Mauri's *Tree Cathedral* in the Sella Valley at its unveiling

Source: Giuliano Mauri, *Cattedrale Vegetale* (Tree Cathedral). Copyright: Arte Sella. Photo: Aldo Fedele.

The cathedral covers an area of 1,230 square metres and is 12 metres high. The work is made up of three naves formed by 80 columns of twisted branches, which creates an arcade effect. Each column contains and protects a young hornbeam specimen: These trees grow around 50 to 60 cm per year, and the columns will slowly disappear according to the natural cycle.

The period that followed was marked by a change in the way the association operated. Arte Sella was gradually restructured to deal with new visitors and the changing demands in terms of service and accessibility:

“It was a moment... we told ourselves: Here, we need to have an organisation. We were no longer just a group of amateurs; we were starting to manage large flows of visitors.¹⁵”

The public's sudden and growing interest was accompanied by a gradual change in direction and in the artistic language, which became more and more accessible to the wider public.¹⁶ Among the artistic installations at Malga Costa, for example, was Rainer Gross's *Il quadrato* (The Square, 2014, Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. Arte Sella, Malga Costa, *The Square* (2014), work by Rainer Gross.

Source: Rainer Gross, *Il quadrato*. Copyright: Arte Sella. Photo: Giacomo Bianchi.

This work was planned to be closely linked to the place and is greatly appreciated by the public:¹⁷

“It is the history of this place – a frontline in the First World War – that led to my project. The title contradicts what is visible to the naked eye; thus, by referencing the separation or the destruction of these points. The general impression is one of conflict and confrontation, but at the same time also of dialogue and interaction with nature.¹⁸”

Since 2002, Malga Costa has welcomed numerous works, and an entrance fee is now charged. The site has a ticket office, an info point and public sanitation facilities. In addition, numerous artistic, concert, theatre and literary events have been organised at Malga Costa, and collaborations, exchanges and partnerships have been introduced, along with other cultural institutions from Trentino, such as the Contemporary and Modern Art Museum of Trento and Rovereto (MART) and the Science Museum of Trento (MUSE). During this period, several national and international magazines have published articles about Arte Sella.¹⁹

From the *mise en art* of the Sella Valley to its integration into the tourism offer of the Valsugana

With respect to recent developments, two factors need to be taken into account: the merger of two tourist offices in the Valsugana in 2008 and the recent transformation of the association’s operational framework.

Regarding the first point, the valley had been managed, until 2008, by two tourist offices; the one dealt with the Alta and the other with the Bassa Valsugana:

“Two very different zones: The first was very touristy, connected to the lakes and the water component, and it was often visited by foreigners. The second, by contrast, had a strictly Italian audience. [...]. When the two zones were joined,

clearly, we had to change the communication strategy because it was necessary to communicate about two very different territories, and we could include Arte Sella in the promotion. It was interesting because it's very close to Borgo, and also to the lake zone, if you want to find something in the mountain (but not too much!), Arte Sella is perfect for everyone.²⁰"

The province wanted the two tourist offices to merge in order to create stronger tourist zones, and this merger was expected when they were privatised in 2004. Today, the promotion of tourism in the Valsugana is managed by a single office, the *Azienda per il Turismo Valsugana Lagorai*, a cooperative with nearly 50 associates, including the mayors of 25 communes in the valley and representatives from professional associations, among others. Arte Sella is also an active member of this cooperative:

"Arte Sella is very important to us [the tourist office]. Montibeller [the artistic director] is on our Board of Directors, and we work closely with him, given that for us this is a major tourist attraction.²¹"

The second important point is the reconfiguration of the association's operational framework. Arte Sella is dealing with administrative and management problems. The large number of visitors (between 50,000 and 70,000 over the past few years)²² has created a need for particular services in the valley on a permanent basis. Thus, the relationships with schools, communities and stakeholders in the territory have grown tighter: The tourist office offers an opportunity for dialogue with the professional associations and to convince them of the economic potential of the valley; the APT is leading studies through its Provincial Tourism Observatory,²³ promotes partnerships with provincial cultural institutions, recruits personnel to ensure the maintenance of exhibition spaces and for the stay of the artists in Malga Costa and participates in part in the financing of artistic activities.

The associative structure of Arte Sella is more complex today than it has ever been: It has around 30 associate members (some of whom receive a salary), who deal with the administrative and artistic aspects. This big transition received a boost in 2012, when a new president of the Arte Sella association was appointed.²⁴ This appointment is essential for the association's shift towards entrepreneurship. Arte Sella has undertaken actions aimed at reinforcing the previously weak link with the hotel and restaurant sectors and managing the associative result: Around 80% of its revenues are generated through the sale of tickets, gadgets and books, as well as sponsorships it receives from private businesses. Arte Sella also sells its expertise. The association has just signed an agreement with the F.A.I. (*Fondo Ambiente Italiano*²⁵) to create a project of *Art in Nature* in the garden of the Villa Panza di Biumo (in Varese, Italy), a 17th-century villa that houses an extensive collection of contemporary art. The sculptor Peter Randall-Page, the artist Stuart Ian Frost and Belgian sculptor Bob Verschuere have all worked in the villa's garden under the artistic guidance of E. Montibeller. This project has allowed Arte Sella to reach the national level with one of Italy's biggest and most prestigious cultural establishments.²⁶ Another major collaboration is currently underway in the city of Gothenburg in Sweden with the creation of projects for the Gothenburg Botanical Garden, as well as the Gunnebo House and Gardens.²⁷

At present, Arte Sella has three axes of complementary actions: the main biennial event and accompanying events; the cultural association and its activities; their offices in the area. These three kinds of activity relate to an ever stronger anchoring in the small Sella Valley, which is the result of a co-evolving logic between the artistic approach and

the particular space and proof of a cultural project's influence on the development and transformation of a territory.

Conclusion

Studying the *mise en art* in the Sella Valley by using an “evaluation grid” on the territorial resource's approach has made it possible to shine a light on various elements. First of all, the activities of the Arte Sella association have actively contributed to enhancing the value of the Sella Valley by inventing a new territorial resource – the *mise en art* of the natural space, which has emerged from the symbiosis between art and nature in which each helps to define the other. Second, this experience shows the centrality of the intentionality of the actors who “invented” the resource: Often, they are people who have a new and impartial perspective of the territory. The phase of defining and justifying the link between the resource and the territory sees an increase in the number of implicated stakeholders, who work in a logic of appropriating and legitimising the approach, notably with the residents. It is at this moment that conflict or a misunderstanding may arise between the parties. In this regard, the *mise en art* of the space is distinctive because, as it often falls into the field of land art or contemporary art, the artistic language can be far removed from the local population.

The case of Arte Sella reflects a certain initial distrust that the stakeholders only managed to overcome after a long period of time and thanks to good coordination between them. Analysing other instances of a *mise en art* of the space that reveal difficulties with adaptation, more proactive approaches and/or weak social capital would lead to a richer understanding of the issue of time and the modalities of appropriating the specific territorial resource. More generally, such an analysis would help to grasp the conditions that favour the socio-economic and sustainable development of the territories.

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NOTES

1. Trentino is a province that enjoys a special autonomy granting it major legislative powers, notably in the fields of land, environment and agriculture development, as well as broad financial autonomy.
2. With 117,303 inhabitants (January 2016, <http://demo.istat.it>), Trento is the capital and most populous city in the PAT (autonomous province of Trento), which is also known as Trentino.
3. A single forest pathway allows access to the Valsugana from the western side. Today, this course is used as a bridle path.
4. Arge Alp is an international association, a work community of the Alpine regions, established in Mösen in 1972. Cf. <http://it.argealp.org/>.
5. “A Borgo Valsugana torna la Land Art”, *Alto Adige*, 3 September 1987.
6. For this reason, numerous works created for the first editions of the biennale can no longer be seen. Thus, from the very beginning, photography has been an artistic activity on the same footing as that of the fine arts.
7. Interview with L. Tomaselli, in Morandi (2002).
8. The first press articles were quite explicit in the way they conveyed how uncertain and perplexed the public was vis-à-vis these conceptual artworks and exhibitions. Cf. “Singolare collettiva nei boschi in val di Sella. Perplexità e interesse per l'arte in aria aperta”, *Adige*, 19 September 1988.
9. A report compiled by the Provincial Tourism Observatory (Osservatorio Provinciale per il Turismo) provides a profile of visitors at the end of the 2000s: an educated public (39% have a university degree) with an average age of 48 years that comprises residents (26%), tourists (41%) and hikers (33%). Cf. Osservatorio Provinciale per il Turismo, 2010.
10. Cf. http://www.artesella.it/archivio_2002.html.
11. Mario Dandrea, mayor of Borgo Valsugana from the 1980s until 2005, in “Valle di Sella, noi ci siamo”, *L'Adige*, 6 March 1998.
12. Press release, APT Lagorai Valsugana Orientale, in *L'Aquilone*, March 1998, p. 24.
13. Interview with the president of Arte Sella, 13 April 2016.

14. Between August and September 2001, around 30,000 people visited G. Mauri's cathedral. Cf. "Trentamila fedeli in cattedrale. Boom di visitatori per l'opera di Mauri ad Arte Sella". *L'Adige*, 8 November 2001.
15. Interview with an official from the Valsugana Tourist Office, 12 April 2016.
16. According to the president of Arte Sella: "The works are currently able to converse with a generic public, a public that has become used to this type of artistic language, while the works of the 1980s were more about disruption, more conceptual." (Interview with the president of Arte Sella, Giacomo Bianchi, on 13 April 2016).
17. Interview with the president of Arte Sella, Giacomo Bianchi.
18. http://www.artesella.it/archivio_2014.html.
19. Besides specialist journals, we can point to articles published in the *New York Times* ("An Italian valley where nature meets art", 6 August 2010), *International Herald Tribune* ("Somewhere in the Dolomites: a magic forest", 30 August 2010) and *Le Figaro* ("Arte Sella, la cathédrale végétale qui pousse sous la neige", 8 January 2016).
20. Interview with the marketing officer, Valsugana Tourist Office, 13 April 2016.
21. *idem*.
22. Source: data provided by Arte Sella 2016. Interview with the president of the association. 13 April 2016.
23. Osservatorio Provinciale per il Turismo, 2010.
24. Giacomo Bianchi, formerly the official photographer of Arte Sella. Cf. "Giacomo Bianchi, nuovo presidente di Arte Sella: "Continuità e innovazione", *Franzmagazine*, 30 March 2012.
25. A non-profit foundation focused on conserving and promoting Italy's nature, art, history and traditions.
26. *Sky Arte*, "Arte e natura a Villa Panza", 25 May 2015. <http://arte.sky.it/2015/05/art-in-nature-villa-menafiglio-litta-panza-fai-scultura-open-air-giardino-peter-randall-page-varese/>.
27. Cf. <http://www.gothenburggreenworld.com/en/arte-sella/>.

ABSTRACTS

Can the *mise en art* of a mountain area be considered a territorial resource? Can it help to boost innovation and development? How does one define the process of an Alpine space's *mise en art* as a territorial resource? This article will suggest answers to these questions on the basis of a case study of Arte Sella, an evolving artistic approach that has a strong bond with the Sella Valley in the north of Italy. This project shows that the *mise en art* of the particular Alpine space has goals that are artistic and relate to territorial transformation and even sustainable development. This particular territorial resource evolves from a coordination between actors and the art-nature symbiosis, which makes it possible to confirm and promote the qualities of the territory. The *mise en art* of the Sella Valley as a specific resource is part of an innovative territorial project of which the local actors' intentionality and the involvement are a central component.

INDEX

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