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A Transdisciplinary Approach to Recover Natural and Cultural Landscape and Place Identification: The Case-Study of Can Moritz Spring (Rubí, Spain)

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Abstract: Perception of the quality of green and blue spaces can be key in the relationship between 26 a community and its local landscape (i.e. place identification). The lack of transdisciplinary training 27 and social-specific education of landscape architects towards the complexity of landscape as a par-28 ticipative cultural artefact limits reaching the general population. Bridging this gap of landscape 29 30 and place identification and evaluation by a local community was the main objective of the present case-study conducted at an abandoned spring and seasonal stream area in Rubí (Spain). The "Stei-31 nitz method" of landscape evaluation was used as a participatory method to activate community 32 members to learn about and express their visual preferences towards this neglected landscape. Bot-33 tom-up interventions applying an "urban acupuncture" approach in the area identified as least at-34 35 tractive by the residents were co-designed and combined with a top-down restoration of a nearby 36 existing but derelict and hidden spring. In addition, before and after planning and implementing the intervention, we conducted surveys about the community perception, sense of belonging and 37 use of the space. We observed that the lack of awareness of the inhabitants about this spring was an 38 obstacle preventing the community from embracing the potential for health and well-being pre-39 sented by the spring and adjacent landscape. Following the work, the landscape saw increasing use 40 41 and the historic spring was brought back to life as a resource for people to improve their health and well-being. 42

Keywords: natural environments; landscape architecture; heritage; social participation; community 43 engagement; health and well-being

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1. Introduction

Extensive literature from the last decade has provided increasing evidence of the 48 health benefits of being exposed to natural environments, including nature in urban areas. 49 Research results are remarkably consistent in demonstrating an association between green 50 spaces (trees, grass, forests, parks) and blue spaces (rivers, lakes, springs, the coast) and 51 better mental health and well-being [1–4]. Two recent systematic reviews showed a reduc-52 tion of mortality associated with increasing exposure to green spaces close to residential 53 areas [2,5]. Stress reduction, the promotion of physical activity and an increase in social 54 interactions are some of the suggested mechanisms behind such health and well-being 55 benefits. Such spaces also attenuate the adverse health effects of noise, air pollution and 56 increased temperatures [6,7], which are mainly an issue in urban areas that are developing 57 58 and densifying [8].

While existing studies show that quantity (e.g. proportion of residential green space, 59 distance from the coast or time spent in these spaces) are significant factors affecting 60 health impacts, a limited number of studies have also indicated that the actual and per-61 ceived quality of green and blue spaces is essential for obtaining a range of positive health 62 and well-being outcomes; this includes the perception of signs of pollution (e.g. foam on 63 water), signs of lack of stewardship (e.g. litter, vandalism), algal blooms, or low levels of 64 biodiversity and wildlife [9-13]. In this sense, the concept "therapeutic landscape" was 65 coined in 1992 to explore why specific environments seem to contribute to a healing sense 66 of place [14,15]. Besides, accessibility to nature is an even more critical factor [16–19]. Bear-67 ing this in mind and considering that a recent study observed that there is an exponential 68 relationship between residential distance to green and blue spaces and visits to these sites 69 [20], it is crucial to conduct interventions co-created with affected individuals and com-70 munities in order to ensure the availability of good quality nearby green and blue spaces. 71 Moreover, such interventions can reduce inequality of access to such environments and, 72 in turn, reduce health and environmental inequalities, as we have shown in recent inter-73 74vention studies [17,21].

Since the European Landscape Convention (ELC) [22] was adopted in 2000, a re-75 newed concept of landscape spread throughout the continent. The ELC defines landscape 76 as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and inter-77 action of natural and/or human factors". This notion has been widely accepted by scientific 78 79 literature [23] and has boosted the Convention as the most widely adopted (now ratified by 40 out of 47 CoE members). It is also a globally influential approach to the subject 80 (through its amendment opening the text to countries outside Europe [24]). Through its 81 Article 5, the ELC recognizes landscapes to be an essential component of people's sur-82 roundings, and a foundation of their identity because they are an expression of the diver-83 sity and shared cultural and natural heritage of a specific community [25]. All signatories 84 to the Convention commit in Article 5c "to establish procedures for the participation of 85 the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with interest in the 86 definition and implementation of the landscape policies mentioned in paragraph b 87 above". This section secures the basis for collaborative design and the community's em-88 powerment to reflect and intervene in their landscapes. The notion of the Right to Land-89 scape [26] evolved from the ELC principles and the shared social responsibilities to the 90 environment, emphasising the importance of governance beyond the definition of land-91 scape extending the specific awareness-raising measures integrated into Article 6 of the 92 ELC. 93

The importance of Landscape perception and public participation is thus only fostered in European level policy, whilst a broader range of objectives on health and wellbeing and the importance of life on land are recognized in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, specifically through sustainable development goals 3 and 15 [27]. Even if scientific literature has identified the strong links between landscape and health [8,14,19], the importance of landscape regarding community health and community building seems to have been disregarded in international recommendations and sustainability agendas, 100 which explains the focus on the ELC as the main reference for this research. Understanding that not all communities are cohesive and not all individuals have the same awareness
levels towards their landscapes, the ELC promotes a new culture of participatory and collaborative landscape analysis, management, and design, focusing on ordinary landscapes
as opposed to previous concerns over highly valued or protected landscapes.

The recognition of the importance of the ordinary urban landscape can be traced back 106 to the 1990s [28] and is still integrated into environmentalist mainstream thinking, limiting 107 the equity to the landscape as a right. The notion of preserving natural landscape as her-108 itage can be traced back to 1872, when Yellowstone was protected as the first U.S. national 109 park, becoming an area of exceptional natural landscape protection and a touchstone of 110 the emerging environmental culture. The time needed for the academic contribution on 111 ordinary or every day landscapes to reach public acceptance and integrate ordinary land-112 scape as a collective right is tackled in the ELC text through an emphasis on education 113 [29]. The ELC encourages interdisciplinary training programmes in politics, nature con-114 servation and landscape management aimed at professionals in the private and public 115 sectors, and specific training in schools and universities. However, the lack of awareness 116 towards landscape complexity as a cultural artefact among the general public is an obsta-117 cle. 118

While the landscape and the ELC are rightly considered important, discussing the 119 local landscape or environment with communities reveals that landscape as a concept is 120 better replaced with the notion of "place". Depending on the authors, places are a combi-121 nation of the physical environment, the activities people do there, and the perceptions 122 they hold [30]. When researchers - trained as landscape architects - try to interview resi-123 dents of a particular locality about their landscape they often find it frustrating that the 124 interviewees responses wander away from the specific physical environment to talk about 125 living there, jobs, services and other things (which are indivisible from the place, its iden-126 tity and the attachment people have for it). The limited social and participatory-specific 127 education of landscape architecture curricula [31-33] and lack of transdisciplinary train-128 ing is challenged by the collaborative and multidisciplinary case-study approach em-129 braced by authors from different backgrounds. Thus, while it is important to consider 130 landscape as a subject field, practically speaking it can be a closed book to local people 131 unless they can be given the means to understand it, such as through public participation 132 and co-design processes. The tripartite model of Scannel and Gifford is a well-known ap-133 proach for understanding place and has been widely used in local participation processes 134 [34,35]. 135

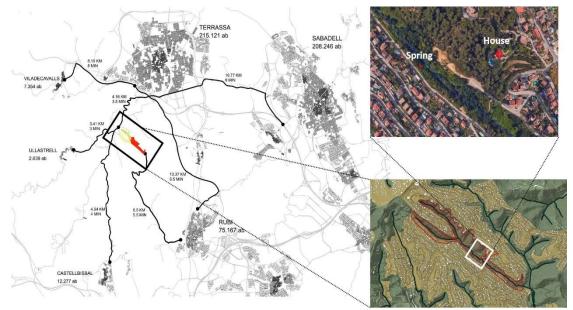
Bridging this gap of landscape and place identification and evaluation by local resi-136 dents was the main objective of the present case-study conducted in the municipality of 137 Rubí (Barcelona, Spain). The case-study is the result of interdisciplinary and trans-sectoral 138 work involving environmental epidemiologists and landscape architects within the E.U. 139 Horizon 2020-funded BlueHealth project, together with landscape architect practitioners 140and academics in the area of Barcelona, students of the Master in Landscape Intervention 141 and Heritage Management (LIHM, at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona - UAB), a 142 local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) (Rubí d'Arrel) with expertise on nature and 143 heritage protection and recovery, the local public administration (City Council of Rubí), 144 and, most importantly, local citizens. The specific objectives of the case-study, as a joint 145 research and practice project, were: i) to renovate the spring of Can Moritz (Rubí) and its 146 surroundings; ii) to co-design the renovation intervention by engaging the residents in a 147 comprehensive participatory process integrating the analysis, design and partial construc-148tion of the particular place; iii) to empower and inform citizens regarding their responsi-149 bilities and rights over their everyday landscapes; and iv) to evaluate the use and percep-150 tion of the place before and after the intervention. 151

2. Materials and Methods

The BlueHealth project (https://bluehealth2020.eu), which ran from January 2016 to 153 December 2020, aimed to understand the relationships between exposure to blue space 154 and health and well-being, to map and quantify the public health and well-being impacts 155 of changes to natural and artificial blue spaces and associated urban infrastructure in Eu-156 rope, and to provide evidence-based information to policymakers on how to maximise 157 health benefits associated with interventions in and around aquatic environments [36]. 158 Following the latter objective, eleven small-scale experimental interventions were con-159 ducted and evaluated in different European regions (https://bluehealth2020.eu/research/). 160 One of these interventions took place in the municipality of Rubí (Barcelona, Spain), an 161 industrial city of 77,500 inhabitants located 20 km from Barcelona, and with practically 162 50% of its land classified as non-developable (i.e. protected from being built). Rubí is char-163 acterised by a combination of a dense city centre, industrial parks, and a significant ex-164 panse of low-density residential areas (dispersed) mixed with non-developable land. The 165 BlueHealth intervention aimed to recover and renovate, in collaboration with residents, 166 an abandoned historical site, the spring of Can Moritz, together with some adjacent dere-167 lict public land along a small seasonal stream fed by the spring, in a valley next to one of 168 the communities in this low-density residential area (the valley of "Les Martines"), located 169

Figure 1. Location where the study site was conducted (Valley of "Les Martines" in Rubí172[Catalonia, Spain], source: LIHM students). Yellow indicates the initiation of the stream; red indicates the area of study.173

a 20-minute drive from the city centre (Figure 1).



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2.1. The study site: the history of the Can Moritz spring and its surroundings

According to local media and records from the City Council of Rubí, in the mid-19th 177 century, Louis Moritz, the founder of the well-known Moritz Brewery in Barcelona, 178 bought the property of "Can Matarí" ("Can" in Catalan means "the house of") in the "Les 179 Martines" valley, Rubí, as a summer house. The "Vallès" region, where the municipality 180 of Rubí is located, and specifically the lush and shady valley of "Les Martines", was tar-181 geted at that time as a "nature destination" offering better health conditions during the 182 hot summer periods for the upper-middle-class citizens of Barcelona. The urban living 183 conditions in Barcelona's dense medieval central city, walled until 1854, rendered basic 184 hygiene features (fresh water, clean air and contact with nature) a privilege to be sought 185 in the neighbouring countryside. The "Can Matarí" farmhouse was thus part of a cultural 186 landscape that featured bourgeois summer houses on the "Vallès" hillsides and connected 187 the main roads to the land around these houses, traditionally comprising the main house,188the surrounding gardens, its productive lands (linked to the original farmhouse) and private springs. These springs offered fresh water and an opportunity to sit within a humid189enclosure to feel the cooling effect.191

After the death of Louis Moritz, in 1922, the family built a modernist-style house next 192 to the existing farmhouse ("Can Matarí") and designed a similarly-styled enclosure 193 around the natural water spring initially used by the landowners for their water supply, 194 which is currently named after Moritz (Can Moritz). This spring comprised an oval or 195 "bathtub" shaped brick-lined tank set into the ground, at the base of which the spring 196 water was fed into channels. Around the edges were located several brick benches resem-197 bling sofas upon which people could recline, relax and feel cooler in the shady and moist 198 atmosphere. 199

Around the mid-1950s, the family sold the property, and the land was parcelled out, 200 which resulted in the house of Can Moritz remaining in private ownership, currently cat-201 alogued as the archaeological heritage of Rubí. In contrast, the surrounding plots were 202 sold and developed as a low-density garden city or suburban housing. The spring belong-203 ing to Can Moritz ended up in public land, as it was located next to a seasonal stream. The 204 stream basin was integrated into the state hydrological water protection area and thus 205 remained cut off from the summer house system. Scarcely noticed by local people, it was 206 soon abandoned and gradually infilled and overgrown so that it was utterly lost. In De-207 cember 2014, after a massive heavy storm, the spring and its modernist recreational struc-208 ture were rediscovered by residents. In 2016 a local NGO, Rubí d'Arrel, instigated the first 209 restoration intervention with volunteers by removing the vegetation, cleaning the spring 210 and the surroundings, unveiling the 1922 design for recreational uses around Can Moritz's 211 spring (Figure 2). Simultaneously, the area across the stream was identified as needing 212 some environmental improvements – in part so that a footbridge could be laid to improve 213 access to the spring (which was at the base of a steep slope) - and to revitalise and restore 214 the landscape. 215

Figure 2. The spring of Can Moritz when first cleared of vegetation in 2014, during reconstruction in 2016 and after the restoration was completed in 2019 (pictures from Jordi Simó and Jordi Muntan). 217



2.2. The approach

In 2016 a collaboration between the BlueHealth project, the local NGO Rubí d'Arrel, 220 professors and students of the Master programme in Landscape Intervention and Herit-221 age Management (LIHM), and the City Council was established to conduct an extensive 222 intervention to renovate the spring and its surroundings while involving the neighbours 223 of the Can Moritz spring. While the City Council assumed the costs of renovating the 224 spring itself as a heritage architectural structure (the most expensive part of the interven-225 tion, $\approx 80.000 \in$), the BlueHealth project used a modest amount (10.000 \in) to conduct what is 226 known as an "urban acupuncture" (i.e. a small-scale intervention to transform the broader 227 urban context around the spring and its nearby stream). An integrative project for the 228 whole study area would never be practical un budgetary terms. However, urban acupunc-229 ture builds on the progressive institutionalization of grassroots initiatives to shape the 230 city, as tactical urbanism means relational processes in-space testing [37,38]. 231

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The full project took place between 2016 and 2020 (Figure 3). In 2017 we engaged and 232 recruited neighbours for our pre-intervention evaluation to obtain information on the use 233 and perception of the study site, and conducted workshops that enabled the students of 234 the Master in LIHM to design the intervention, which was conducted between 2018 and 235 2019, together with the restoration of the spring. In 2020 we conducted the post-interven-236 tion evaluation (see Figure 3). We carried out a multi-method study comprising a ques-237 tionnaire survey and two public participation landscape/place evaluation workshop. The 238 survey was carried out pre-and post-intervention implementation. 239

February to July: renovation of the

Can Moritz spring by the City Council.

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Figure 3. Calendar of the project (intervention and its evaluation).

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2017 May: workshop with students of the Master in LIHM. July: information to locals, recruitment of participants, and preintervention survey (N=86). September: Visual Preference Mapping workshop with locals. October: results and intervention proposal delivered to the City Council.

2016

November: agreement between the BluHealth project and the City Council of Rubí.

2018

March: results and intervention proposal presented to locals. April and May: intervention in the Can Moritz surroundings by Rubi d'Arrel, with the participation of the locals. **2020** January to March: postintervention surveys (N=43).

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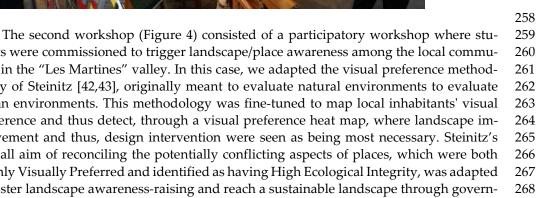
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2.3. Design of the intervention

The students of the Master in LIHM conducted two workshops. In the first, the focus 244 was on a landscape analysis of the site of Can Matarí ("Les Martines"), including the val-245 ley and hillsides along the Can Matarí stream where the house and the spring are situated. 246 The students were mentored to learn about the site's topographical, natural and historical 247 characteristics, interweaving the objectives and subjective framework of cultural land-248 scapes [39,40]. The analysis followed the classic method of the "layer cake model" for the 249 site developed and published by Ian McHarg during the 1980s [41] building upon foun-250 dations laid by Sauer, where the landscape is understood as being built up in layers from 251 the geology, soils, hydrology ecology and cultural processes. This method contributed to 252 building ecologically-based land use planning, which should be regarded as a fundamen-253 tal theory to guide future developments on a specific site. This workshop was held with 254 the collaboration of the City Council. 255



Figure 4. Participatory workshop with the neighbours (September 2017).



dents were commissioned to trigger landscape/place awareness among the local community in the "Les Martines" valley. In this case, we adapted the visual preference methodology of Steinitz [42,43], originally meant to evaluate natural environments to evaluate urban environments. This methodology was fine-tuned to map local inhabitants' visual preference and thus detect, through a visual preference heat map, where landscape improvement and thus, design intervention were seen as being most necessary. Steinitz's overall aim of reconciling the potentially conflicting aspects of places, which were both Highly Visually Preferred and identified as having High Ecological Integrity, was adapted to foster landscape awareness-raising and reach a sustainable landscape through governance rather than planning. The elaboration of Visual Preference Mapping (VPM) was the 269 main focus of the second workshop, which was challenging, given the characteristics of 270 the community and its local landscape. The character of the urban settlement structure 271 along the long street running parallel with the stream was the primary condition deter-272 mining the community's use and behaviour around the "Les Martines" valley. In addition, 273 the low-density urban sprawl carried low numbers of residents in direct relation to the 274 spring and the nearby green spaces, and determined its dispersion. The workshop was 275 thus targeted at a widely-spread community with little interaction with each other, mini-276 mal knowledge of the immediate local environment as a result of most people's commuter 277 lifestyle, and little identification with their local landscape.

We summarize the steps that were taken between 2017 and 2018:

1) The first contact with the neighbours was the joint analysis of their built environ-280 ment through the visual mapping workshop activities. After several weeks of research on 281 the social, environmental and landscape conditions, the master students prepared a face-282 to-face session. This focused on the evaluation of a large sample of pictures representative 283 of the nearby urban landscapes. This assessment was based on both the Steinitz method 284 (see above) and the methodological guidelines for landscape studies used previously in 285 the Valencia Orchard project to foster green infrastructure planning at different scale lev-286 els [44,45]. The degree of preference of the community in the "Les Martines" valley for 287 those images representing the ordinary landscapes was compared with the expert evalu-288 ation of the same scenes according to a hypothesis suggested by the team of teacher and 289 students formulated according to landscape perception principles developed since the 290 1970s by Kaplan and [46,47]. Recreational activities were offered along with the workshop 291 with semi-structured interviews with some neighbours, which was helpful for later par-292 ticipatory stages. 293

2) Once the first session results were compiled and analysed by applying a linear 294 regression model between the grading of each picture as evaluated by the community and 295 the expert team according to the Kaplan's hypothesis, the resulting visual preference was 296

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mapped. The heat map of visual preference (low to high) rated by the neighbours was 297 analysed and used for feedback and strategic work. Throughout the different sessions, a 298 draft global landscape management and intervention project were used, with the final aim 299 of producing and invigorating the public space identified as the most preferred location 300 next to the old rediscovered spring of Can Moritz. An overall masterplan was co-de-301 signed, following the City Council administration's inputs, academics serving as advisers, 302 local residents, Rubí d'Arrel (NGO), and other associations. Finally, a set of actions and 303 interventions applying the vocabulary of the urban acupuncture and tactical urbanism 304 [48] used by grassroots movements were articulated into an action plan that would en-305 hance the design vision while triggering direct participation of the community. The over-306 all aim was to design a landscape infrastructure that connected the existing fragmented 307 urban sites and heritage elements to the natural features (blue-green infrastructure), add-308 ing value to the low-density residential area, revealing previously hidden cultural land-309 scapes and improving landscape image. 310

3) All stakeholders organized the final and main participatory session to produce the 311 public space as agreed at the masterplan level. At this stage, the urban acupuncture and 312 tactical urbanism actions were put into place, by a various set of synchronous and parallel 313 activities to be realised (hands-on) by the residents with input from the volunteers of Rubí 314 d'Arrel and the overall guidance of the masterplan coordinators. The actions were inten-315 tionally designed to take place during the same weekend, which required a lot of coordi-316 nation and time and people management. This part of the project was funded by the Blue-317 Health project and included inputs by two landscape architects who coordinated the over-318 all urban acupuncture part of the research and held the research budget to pay for the 319 construction and planting. 320

2.4. The pre/post-intervention survey

We conducted a questionnaire survey in Catalan and Spanish, based on the Blue-Health Community Level Survey (BCLS) [36] and included questions on personal characteristics (gender, age, education level, work status, general health), frequency of visits to natural environments (in the last 12 months), whether they knew the Can Moritz spring and if they had visited it in the last six months and in the last four weeks, their opinion about the quality of the site, the activity conducted there, time spent, etc. The same questions were asked before and after the intervention. 328

We recruited participants (\geq 16 years of age) through different strategies: i) online: 329 using a Twitter account specifically created for the project (@FontCanMoritz); ii) advertising the study in local media; iii) leaflets handed during the local festival in Rubí (many people are in the street at that time); and iv) leaflets distributed to the mailbox of the closest residents to the Can Moritz spring. Participants could answer the survey online or fill in a paper version and send it back via regular mail. 331

3. Results

3.1. Visual Preference Mapping (VPM) and the intervention

In total, 17 local people participated in the workshop for VPM. The results can be seen in Figure 5. In summary, the VPM revealed potential hotspots of conflict and neglect (in red) while revealing the potential of the green-blue corridor's line along the stream (in green) as being the highest visually preferred feature. 341

In addition, some of the VPM revealed the influence of senses beyond the visual in 342 the mapping results uncovering the potential of the stream in which the spring is located. 343 For instance, the main road's reddish colour may be considered contradictory findings, as 344 this high-level, winding road offers the most scenic views over the valley, but was poorly 345 rated by the inhabitants. This might be related to its character as busy, noisy and dangerous to pedestrians since it features no walkway on the riverside, where the slope is abrupt. 347

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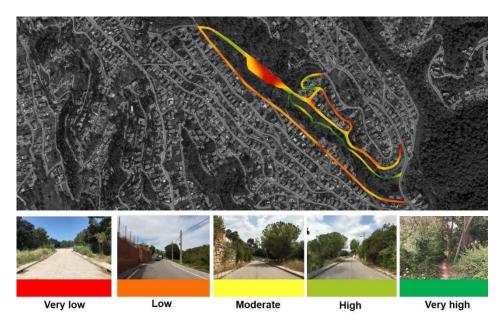
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These findings led the masterplan development to establish a continuous path along 348 the river, integrating the Can Moritz spring as the main recreation site in the valley. The 349 main challenge was to tackle the sizeable negative hotspot around a car parking area, 350 which the community perceived as the least preferred (most disliked). The pictures and 351 the semi-structured interviews identified illegal activities and night-time vandalism tak-352 ing place there, leading to the accumulation of litter and pollution of the stream. The lack 353 of care and stewardship in the flat area around and within the parking area was also per-354 ceived as an obstacle to the desired path route following the stream basin. 355

The masterplan formalized a series of hands-on actions to define the desired line for 356 the path along the stream as passing through the most fragile section across the parking 357 area and its immediate surroundings (Figure 6). The purpose of these small-scale tactical 358 interventions was to claim back the area perceived as the least attractive by mobilizing the 359 site potential and future care by the local community. The collaborative activity included 360 painting blue circles on the car park surface, arranging cut logs into a pattern, also painted 361 blue so as to give a visual connection across the site, planting trees and bushes and adding 362 furniture (Figure 7). 363

Figure 5. The Visual Preference Mapping generated during the workshop with the locals (colour gradia65 from least to most preferred areas: red indicates areas of improvement and green indicates areas with **p66** tial). 367



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Figure 6. Masterplan of the interventions in the spring's surroundings following the conclusion of the **37**/4PP analysis (P indicates parking lot area). The bubbles are blue circles painted onto the surface of the car part the other circles are the position of the painted logs. 373



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Figure 7. Intervention in the surroundings of the spring, with the participation of the locals (clearance3764) bish, painting of circles on the car park surface, and tree and shrub planting). 377



3.2. The survey

379 In total, 86 inhabitants of Rubí (not necessarily living near the study site) participated in the survey before the intervention. After the intervention we obtained answers from 43 380 of these participants. Their characteristics are shown in Table 1. In summary, before the 381 intervention participants were between 21 and 77 years of age (average 46.8), 45.4% fe-382 male, and 46.7% with high education (university degree). Ninety-four per cent reported 383 having access to a garden at home (either community or private garden). Sixty-four per 384 cent knew of the Can Moritz spring, but 34.6% had not visited it in the last six months; 385 and among those who had, only 14 (38.9%) had visited it in the last four weeks. 386

When comparing the total population (N=86) with the population who also answered 387 the post-intervention survey (N=43), we observed that the sample characteristics were 388 similar except for i) the percentage of people working at the time of the survey (66.3% vs 389 79.1%, respectively); ii) involvement in local NGOs, organizations, or entities (33.7% vs 390 51.2%, respectively); and dog ownership (48.8% vs 37.2%, respectively). Other major dif-391 ferences in the post-intervention group were regarding the place where people reported 392 they worked (in Rubí or not), and that more people knew of the Can Moritz spring (from 393 60.5% to 83.7%). The post-intervention participants who had visited the site in the last four 394 weeks reported spending more time there (from 15.8 minutes on average before the inter-395 vention to 32.5 minutes after the intervention) (Table 1). 396

Overall, the quality of the spring and its surroundings was mostly rated as 'bad' or 397 'very bad' before the intervention (\approx 40%), whereas after the intervention more than 50% 398 of the participants rated the site as of 'good' or 'excellent' quality (Table 1). When asking 399 for detailed information on how they felt about their visit (in the last four weeks) to the 400

Can Moritz spring, we observed that the levels of satisfaction (rated as 'totally agree') 401 substantially increased from less than 20% to more than 60% (Table 2). Also, after the intervention, participants more frequently felt part of nature, very few reported feeling unsafe, and the presence of rubbish and litter was less of an issue. Despite the improvements, 404 however, participants felt that facilities (parking, roads, toilets, drinking water points and barbecue sites) could still be improved (Table 2). 406

We also asked participants to provide their opinion (open answers) regarding the site407before and after the intervention. Before the intervention, many comments reflected and408complemented what was captured by the VPM. Some of the comments include:409

- "[...] I would very much like to see its restoration and its environment as well as its conservation, I have practically lived here all my life and, since I was a child, I have visited that spring, always flooded, and over time covered by vegetation and even, so it seems, a place of special charm. I usually walk around the area with my dog and pass by the spring. I have always been curious about what the spring would be like, I am a great lover of nature and these spaces [...]" (Male, 47 years).
- "It would be very interesting to take advantage of this space since it is part of our historical memory" (Male, 51 years).
- *"It needs to be opened to the public and to commemorate its past and history"* (Female, 55 years).
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- "*At the moment, access is a bit difficult, and the spring is in poor condition. I look forward to your rehabilitation*" (Female, 74 years).
- *"Everything is destroyed, there is a platform with a hole, and I do not dare to walk 422 on it because of the danger of it breaking" (Male, 74 years). 423*
- *"The location of the spring should be indicated, and young people should be monitored so that it is not destroyed"* (Male, 77 years).

After the intervention, comments were much more positive, such as:

- "We are really happy with the spring of Can Moritz to recover a piece of our past. 427 Thanks to people like you, we have a more beautiful and natural place [...]" (Male, 428 51 years). 429
- "I totally agree with the project and the initiative to promote this space, I am concerned about the dumping of garbage in the surroundings that influence this space, 431 because although there are containers for these purposes, people's awareness is low! 432 Plastics, cans, papers, which do not sit well with this environment" (Male, 47 433 years).
- "The spring of Can Moritz, now recovered, promotes encounters with other people, 435 in a natural space" (Male, 79 years). 436
- "*A pleasant space, a very well achieved heritage recovery*" (Female, 63 years).

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Between 3 and 6 times 12.7 11.5 8.3				
Seven or more times7.37.78.3				
	Seven or more times	7.3	7.7	8.3

In the last four weeks, how				
many times have you visited	N=36	N=18	N=25	
the spring? (%)				
Never	61.1	66.7	68.0	
Once or twice	33.3	22.2	24.0	
Once a week	5.6	11.1	4.0	
Several times a week	0.0	0.0	4.0	
	N=14	N=6	N=8	
Date of the last visit	Jan, Feb, Mar, June,	Feb, Mar, June,	Jan, Feb, Marª	
Date of the last visit	Sept, Dec	Sept	Jall, FeD, Mal	
Time spent [mean (min-max)]	20.4 minutes (5-90)	15.8 (5-30)	32.5 (10 - 60)	
Activities (%)	N=14	N=6	N=8	
Bike	7.1	0.0	0.0	
Running	28.6	33.3	0.0	
Nordic walking	7.1	0.0	12.5	
Observing fauna	7.1	16.7	12.5	
Walking with the dog	28.6	16.7	37.5	
Walking with a dog	21.4	33.3	25.0	
Eating or drinking	0.0	0.0	12.5	
Number of adults (>16	N=14	N=6	N=8	

NV: non-variable throughout time; <16: children under 16 years of age.¹We had to stop the postintervention evaluation due to full COVID lockdown; people were not allowed to be outdoors.

(35.7% with <16)

57.1

35.7

7.1

4. Discussion

years, %)

One

Two

More than two

The Can Moritz case-study showed a relationship between landscape perception, the 445 use of shared spaces and community well-being; the perceived low quality of the natural 446 environment along the stream in which the Can Moritz spring is located was limiting the 447 use of this common space. The Steinitz methodology helped identify the most and least 448 preferred areas on a visual map to inform the strategy to intervene on the site and improve 449 the neighbour's impression of their open spaces. We also demonstrated the importance of 450 collaborative work among different actors and the combination of top-down (the munici-451 pality taking responsibility for the spring) and bottom-up (the co-design and the applica-452 tion of "urban acupuncture" and tactical urbanism in the rest of the project area) strate-453 gies. 454

(50% with <16)

50.0

50.0

0.0

The present case-study was particularly challenging regarding the ELC definition of 455 landscape because we were targeting an ordinary, rather bland urban sprawl area on the 456 outskirts of Rubí old town, where a low-density community inhabited a range of isolated 457 housing in an under-valued hilly valley. The case-study demonstrates how "urbanaliza-458 tion" (a spatial and cultural process characterized by a territorial specialization that ac-459 companies trends in thematization and simplification of the urban landscape [49]), led to 460 degradation of the landscape in the valley, where natural landscapes praised highly in the 461 19th century leading to building a new summer community in the surroundings, declined 462 over time into an unnoticed and undervalued environment. 463

442 443

444

441

(50% with <16)

25.0

62.5

12.5



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Table 2. How survey respondents felt about their visit to the Can Moritz spring (it only includes respondents that reported to have visited the spring in the last four weeks).

(%)	Totally agree	Agree	Agree a little bit	Neutral	Disagree a little bit	Disagree	Totally disagree
INITIAL STUDY POPULATION	WITH PI	RE-INTE	RVENTIO	N INFORM	MATION)		
PRE INTERVENTION (N=14)							
I felt satisfied with the visit	4.1	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	21.4	14.3
I felt part of the nature	14.3	14.3	7.1	14.3	14.3	28.6	7.1
I felt safe (i.e. I felt protected)	21.4	14.3	7.1	35.7	0.0	7.1	14.3
The area was free of rubbish and vandalism	7.1	0.0	0.0	7.1	42.9	14.3	28.6
It had good facilities (e.g. parking, roads, bathrooms, fountains drinking water, barbecues)	0.0	0.0	7.1	7.1	7.1	42.9	35.7
STUDY POPULATION WITH PRE	E AND PO	OST-INT	ERVENTI	ON INFOR	RMATION		
PRE INTERVENTION (N=6)							
I felt satisfied with the visit	16.7	33.3	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7	16.7
I felt part of the nature	33.3	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0
I felt safe (i.e. I felt protected)	50.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	16.7
The area was free of rubbish and vandalism	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	16.7	33.3
It had good facilities (e.g. parking, roads, bathrooms, fountains drinking water, barbecues)	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	33.3	50.0
POST INTERVENTION (N=8)							
I felt satisfied with the visit	62.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
I felt part of the nature	50.0	37.5	125	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I felt safe (i.e. I felt protected)	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
The area was free of rubbish and vandalism	12.5	37.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0
It had good facilities (e.g. parking, roads, bathrooms, fountains drinking water, barbecues)	0.0	25.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	25.0	25.0





467

The Steinitz methodology had previously been applied for similar purposes in sev-468 eral workshops within Barcelona's city, within the Master in LIHM programme directed 469 by Francesc Muñoz (e.g., the Pere IV Workshop in 2014 and Playful Gràcia District in 470 2015). These previous studies had proven the effectiveness of using the methodology in 471 urban environments where the combined activities of university staff and students ener-472 gized interaction and co-creation with residents and other stakeholders. 473

In the present case-study, framed in a less urbanized area and with an strong pres-474 ence of natural environment, the location and identification of the least preferred land-475 scapes signalled the community's concerns, including signs of water pollution and algal 476 bloom, which proved to be minor problems compared to the signs of a lack of stewardship 477 and the presence of ongoing vandalism. The visual map helped to concentrate the project 478 efforts on the least preferred areas and to obtain visible changes that would at the same 479 time facilitate the accessibility to the green-blue area, which is a critical point according to 480 the literature [17,21,50]. 481

The landscape perception of the "Les Martines" community changed throughout the 482 process triggered by the BlueHealth project intervention. The twofold strategy of improv-483 ing the quality of the site through the combination of a top-down architectural interven-484 tion of the Moritz spring led by the City Council and a bottom-up process of awareness-485 raising and participatory decision making and hands-on actions was successful. The sur-486 veys carried out before and after the intervention among the general population of Rubí 487 demonstrated the project's positive impact on the community's perception, sense of be-488 longing, and increased use of the space. 489

4.1. Significance and impact of our results

Our study contributes to the discussion on the importance of green-blue infrastruc-491 ture and its impact on health and well-being in urban landscapes through the perspective 492 of the reinterpretation of cultural landscapes related to water. The overall aim of the Blue-493 Health project is demonstrated in the Can Mortiz case-study by the recovery of the historical memory of the site and its once significant relationship to water features. Improving 495 health and well-being was at the inception of the first urban settlements in the valleys of 496 the Vallès, Catalonia [51]. Both the purpose of those first cultural landscapes and their 497 settlement system located along streams and springs seem to have fallen into oblivion, 498 despite the local initiatives of mapping and research targeting the natural heritage around 499 water and urban settlements [52]. 500

The actions catalysed by the BlueHealth project with the local community and part-501 ners offered a new awareness of the site's history and the settlement morphology to un-502 cover the public health potential of the obsolescent, but still existing, cultural and natural 503 landscapes. Nowadays the once valued activity of socializing around the springs is in de-504 cline. The leisure opportunities offered by the springs is part of a cultural heritage which 505 related people to nature during the previous century; it gave a purpose to walking for 506 recreation and discovering the landscape through the act of visiting both public and pri-507 vate springs, as milestones in a the nature itinerary —the relationship to nature experi-508 enced as a frequent social activity, including basic cooking, eating and singing. The inhab-509 itants of many of the areas, like "Les Martines" valley, once famous for their lush vegeta-510 tion and abundant water features, seemed to be ignorant of their origins. With the loss of 511 collective memory, physical and cultural landscape heritage [53]. 512

The "urban acupuncture" and tactic urbanism actions contributed to the disparate 513 community's connection by caring for and constructing a new common place around the 514 stream and the spring. Beyond the importance of the action, as triggering a social process, 515 the Can Moritz spring masterplan aims to revive the spring as a central hub for the valley 516 community. Water and leisure, along with its green-blue infrastructure, are offered as the 517

494

community's new focus to help it reconnect past and future through the twin threads of 518 public health and landscape enjoyment. 519

Beyond the contributions to increasing the local landscape awareness arising from an 520 integrated landscape approach recommended for implementing the ELC [54], the case-521 study improved the qualitative perception of the intervention area -by its immediate in-522 habitants and other people living in Rubí. The literature can demonstrate the benefits of 523 direct contact with green and blue spaces. For instance, in a recent study including more 524 than 18,000 participants from 18 different countries, we observed that individuals with 525 common mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety, were more likely to use 526 nature for self-management [55]. In a randomized crossover study including office work-527 ers, we also observed evidence of the positive effects for well-being and mood of walking 528 for 20 minutes alongside a blue space, in this case, the beach [56]. In yet another recent 529 study we showed that facilitating access to a river and improving the area translated into 530 an overall increase in users of an urban riverside after renovation; that the proportion of 531 females, adults, children and ethnic minority users increased, and that locals perceived 532 the river to be beneficial for their health and well-being [17]. We even estimated the de-533 rived health benefits of improving the ecological quality of a river area, facilitating access 534 to it, and the amount of money saved by the public health system thanks to this interven-535 tion [21]. 536

Indeed, increasing research highlights the role of the quality of the natural environ-537 ments on mental health and well-being [9-13,16]. Thus, we expect that the intervention in 538 a local green-blue site, such as the Can Moritz spring area, will contribute to the well-539 being of the inhabitants of the "Les Martines" valley - and after more people find out 540 about it, the level of use overall may increase and with this the benefits. Moreover, such 541 interventions can be instrumental for a nature-based social prescription [57] and nature-542 based interventions in urban contexts to improve mental health and well-being [58]. Be-543 sides this, the increased recognition that urban and natural environments contribute to 544 our health and the results of the present case-study support and provide the critical po-545 tential for enhancing and prioritizing community-level interventions, which are more ef-546 fective than individual-level interventions [59-61]. The Can Moritz case-study contributes 547 to generating and transmitting tools and knowledge so that community interventions can 548 be implemented to improve public health by promoting and improving urban landscapes 549 (see additional tools in https://bluehealth2020.eu/resources/toolbox/). 550

4.2. Strengths and limitations

The Can Mortiz case-study revealed the potential of an integrated sequence of methodology and techniques to strategize a low cost, tactical and participatory "urban acupuncture" intervention. Combining procedures from the landscape architecture and environmental epidemiology disciplines resulted in a sequence of actions that could easily be replicated in different urban contexts. The replicability, low cost and effectiveness of the overall method is the main strength of the project. 557

The chosen Steinitz method had already been pilot tested in diverse contexts led by 558 two of the authors in previous editions of the same Masters' Workshop. This confidence 559 in the method made it suitable to be applied as part of the case-study methodology, relying on its strength to be adapted to smaller sites, whilst knowing that the nature of the 561 working hypothesis formulated by the experts would remain similar to previous case 562 studies tested in earlier versions applied in both larger and smaller areas. 563

According to both previous experiences in applying this method and the contradictory findings in the results of this case-study noted earlier, we believe that the main challenge for the future are to refine the results. This further distillation could be embraced with sectoral perceptual studies, to complement the visual perception. The interpretation of the results leads to the appreciation of all senses in perception, finally representing VPM perceptions, which are more than visual, such as pleasant or unpleasant smells and different noises and sounds.

Furthermore, the lack of public spaces and a low socialization culture in the commu-571 nity limited the scope of the results obtained by the Steinitz method. The recruitment of 572 volunteers in previous applications had been triggered mostly by casual contacts between 573 researchers and inhabitants, which enriched the number and diversity of profiles for re-574 search. In future contexts of limited access to inhabitants, this limitation could be allevi-575 ated by social media data harvesting to balance quantitative information following inter-576 national recommendations [62,63]. It would be equally interesting to mitigate limitation 577 of participant recruitment by fully integrating complementary perceptual studies focus-578 ing on the qualitative multisensorial experience of place proposed by Grout as teaching 579 methods, prioritizing the role of qualitative information with few triangulating subjects 580 [64]. 581

Beyond the VPM, a second survey would have been useful to complete the impact 582 evaluation cycle. However, due to limited resources, we could not conduct an observa-583 tional survey to evaluate the actual use of the studied site (e.g. using the SOPARC tool 584 [65] or others designed by the BlueHealth project [66,67]); this information would also 585 have been valuable to estimate the levels of physical activity and to understand the new 586 activities and social interactions occurring in the Can Moritz spring area. The post-inter-587 vention survey took place a few weeks before the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pan-588 demic in March 2020; this limited the number of people who could participate in the sur-589 vey, as most did not reply before the lockdown and therefore their visits to the site would 590 have been biased. Nevertheless, we are aware that the site's use dramatically increased 591 once people could start going out once more. 592

Another limitation of the project was the low level of community engagement. Even 593 though the efforts of dissemination and the protocols followed were correct, the low density of the area, the lack of cohesion within the community and the low degree of identification with their immediate landscape or place limited the number of participants in the surveys (in total 86 before the intervention). 593

5. Conclusions

The Can Mortiz spring case-study explored the limits of methodologies to address 599 visual preference as the basis of landscape identification and tested the relationship be-600 tween perception and landscape awareness-raising. We demonstrated that participatory 601 landscape architecture planning methods with residents and other stakeholders could 602 help prioritize and co-design interventions. In an integrative approach, the sequence of 603 those methods, also using tools and knowledge from health disciplines, is the main case-604 study contribution. Beyond these, the Can Moritz case-study promoted the recovery of an 605 ancient cultural landscape and its intangible values associated with water heritage. Pro-606 moting the health benefits to be obtained from leisure should aim for European and 607 worldwide landscape management as part of the promotion of better health and well-608 being as identified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 609

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Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the624Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Parc de625Salut MAR, Barcelona, Spain (protocol code 2017/7380/I, 12th of May 2017).626

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Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions, e.g., privacy or ethical. 630

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