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Circular Water Stories

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Professional water managers, due to a rise in population, have taken over authority of the living water systems (circular water system) in which there is a self-evident exchange between the natural system and the (human) water chain. This led to an administrative approach to the water system in many - especially western - countries. Water systems were separated into categories like drinking water, drainage, irrigation, sewage systems, and water safety systems, with centralised management. The bond that traditionally existed between communities and 'their' water was literally and figuratively cut off and became not only controlled from the top down, but was also often invisible, amplified by technical innovations or even more disturbingly by a lack of water. This industrialisation caused a change from communities of water workers - aware and knowledgeable about the importance of water as the source of life and shaper of the cultivated landscape - to passive users.

Central to this Spool issue, Landscape Metropolis #7, are contributions that investigate traditional water systems as a source of inspiration for today's challenges. Due to the fact that there are so many interesting contributions there is room for a second issue on: Circular Water Stories Landscape Metropolis #8, which will be published in early 2021.

Few people still know the stories and the discoveries behind indigenous decentralised systems, such as the water mills in the rural area of the Sierra de Cadiz in Spain (page 39), and the Sprengen system in the suburban terrains of the Veluwe in the Netherlands (page 5). Both papers show that it requires research by drawing to discover the workings of these systems in their physical and social context and draw them in such a way that they become visible again in their interaction with the landscape. These systems and their water workers were once drivers and bearers of entire industries and have shaped and structured the landscape and the settlement patterns significantly. As these systems have lost their economic relevance these water systems are considered as relics of the past. This is less true for the traditional Asian gardens of historical cities in Japan (page 23) and absolutely not true for the case of Kampung Naga in Indonesia (page 59), where the community is still actively involved with the water in a circular way, understanding the value of it. Both cases have their own difficulties. In the case of Japan, the governance of the system supported the qualitative and quantitative management of the water. With this traditional organisation lost, the quality and quantity management for the future was hampered. In the village of Kampung Naga (page 59) the community cannot be extended and the way of life is threatened by the growth of the large nearby city and the pollution of the river feeding the water system of Kampung Naga. Knowledge and understanding of traditional organisational systems in this case is crucial for the future. This is why, in the paper on the qanats in Tehran (page 95), the authors focus on mapping the historical development of the participatory management of these waterworks. They highlight the former community-based coordination mechanisms and today's institutional gaps in the management of the qanats. In the case of the maritime

backyards of Povoia de Varzim, Portugal (page 77) people are still intensely connected to the water but, due to the upscaling of the fishing industry, the profound knowledge that is hidden in the underwater landscape gets lost. In the visual essay about the Oslo area (page 113), we see examples on how lost water stories can be activated through new design, which keep the memory vivid and at the same time demonstrates how designers can help to face today's climate challenges.

By reading these articles, hopefully everyone can find answers to the question that we asked the authors: What can we learn from traditional water systems in terms of the interaction and engagement between people, water, and the (urban)landscape when building resilient and valuable water landscapes for the future?

We hope you will enjoy the articles and the vast number of images and discover the hidden treasures in these water stories.

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