

Let's Talk About Change

Experiences from a video exhibition confronting the public with urban and landscape transition by revisiting the original sites of relocated historical museums buildings to view these sites in their current state

Abstract

Between 1985 and 2015, settlement areas in the densely populated parts of Switzerland increased by almost one third. Whereas Switzerland still perceives itself as “Heidiland” (referring to Johanna Spyri’s novel), expected to attract tourists with its beautiful landscapes and charming small towns, the country has been transformed into an urban landscape dominated by conurbations. In the 2010s, several ground-breaking (direct democratic) popular initiatives linked to landscape issues were launched and received the majority of the vote. The will to control further expansion of settlement areas exists and the transformation of built heritage and landscapes is present on the national political stage, but the perception of change is still difficult to express. However, dealing with landscape transition and developing local planning concepts accepted by the people requires talking about change more site-specific.

In 2016, the authors organised an exhibition at the Swiss open-air museum Ballenberg. It presents more than 100 historical farm buildings from all over Switzerland, which had been relocated from their original sites for various reasons, from construction of new residential or commercial buildings to infrastructure projects, and original sites today cover urban, suburban and peripheral locations. Videos of the original sites of 14 selected Ballenberg buildings were produced in order to present these sites of origin as they appear today. The videos, which were presented in the respective museum buildings, confronted the visitors with the historical buildings – still in existence, but relocated – and the current condition of their former sites. A special visitor’s centre provided an opportunity to find out more and to discuss the topic of change with volunteers.

Experience gathered from this exhibition will be presented, giving an insight into the quality of the visitors’ debate initiated by the videos and reflecting on the impact of these findings in dealing with landscape transition in the future.

Introduction

Switzerland is a country rich of mountains, woods, valleys, lakes and rivers. The natural beauty of the landscape and its preservation became a national concern in the late 19th century, which was in line with a wider European movement. In the wake of the industrial revolution, in several European countries the awareness for the protection of historical sites and the conservation of landscapes was risen and finally several national associations were founded, for example in the United Kingdom the *National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty* in 1895, in Germany *Bund Heimatschutz* in 1904, and in Switzerland *Schweizerische Vereinigung für Heimatschutz* in 1906. This international movement was linked to the new social class of intellectual bourgeoisie that distinguished itself through education in the humanities, literature and science, and was deeply rooted in the idea of the

Enlightenment. The awareness of the beauty and of the peculiarities of landscapes even became a means of identity formation on a regional and national level.

In 1881, Swiss author Johanna Spyri published her famous work of children's fiction *Heidi*, which not only became the fundament for a general Swiss Myth and was translated into many languages, but is strongly linked to this bourgeois movement of landscape conservation.

Switzerland is a comparatively small country within Europe with a comparatively high demographic dynamic, i.e. the total population has increased by 60% since 1960. Linked to the increase of the total population is an increase of settlement areas. In Switzerland, around 85 percent of the population lived in urban areas in 2015 and only 15 percent in rural areas (BfS 2014).

Land use in Switzerland is regularly surveyed by the national area statistics. The first survey took place between 1979 and 1985. Since then, two more surveys have been completed and a fourth survey is available in part. Between 1985 and 2009, settlement areas increased by 24%, increasing their share of the total area of Switzerland from 6.0% to 7.5% (Bundesamt für Statistik 2013). Between 1985 and 2015, settlement areas in the densely populated parts of Switzerland increased even by one third. The development of the settlement was closely linked to the expansion of the transport routes – and this was accompanied by the fragmentation of the landscape.

The separation of building zones and non-building zones (i.e. “landscape”) is one of the fundamental principles of spatial planning in Switzerland. One of the main aims of this separation is the protection of the landscape. The non-building zone is mainly the agricultural zone in which the production of food, but also biodiversity and recreation play an important role. Building permits in the agricultural zones (or more precise non-building zones) are subject to strict limitations, which are laid down in Article 28 of the Federal Planning Act. However, areas occupied by buildings in the non-building zones (i.e., agricultural zones or “landscape”) have increased by 21% throughout Switzerland over the past 25 years. The increase in area is due in particular to buildings linked to agricultural use (farm buildings) as well as detached and semi-detached houses. The number of dwellings in the non-building zones are highest in the rural communities. In the agricultural communities, every fourth dwelling is located in the non-building zones (Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung 2016). Today 590'000 buildings, i.e. 20% of all buildings in Switzerland, are located in the non-building zone. And, what farmers build, can look like an “industrial zone”: for example, large-scale glass houses, horse stables for horse pensions, silo installation. These figures demonstrate that landscape in Switzerland is under pressure. This situation is a result of, first, the fact that the federal planning act was not enacted until 1980, i.e. many buildings already existed when building in the non-building area was finally permitted on the federal level, and, second, the federal planning act has been amended and supplemented several times over the years, with the restrictive regulations being relaxed.

Traditional buildings in non-building zones, which are no longer used for agriculture today, are often very old. They bear witness to centuries of use and form an important part of the architectural heritage. They are of great importance not only for landscape aesthetics but also from a socio-economic point of view. There is currently discussion how heritage buildings could be converted to support the demographic and economic stability of eroding mountain regions (shrinking villages) without risking the loss of historical structures or negative impacts on the landscape (e.g., expansion of traffic infrastructure).

Moreover, urban densification, one of the main goals of Swiss spatial planning, is always linked to building new structures and, therefore, in urban environments affects built

heritage that carries specific information about the history of a location and thus strengthens the distinctiveness and the identity of a place.

Both aspects, i.e. transformation of built heritage in declining rural and built heritage under pressure in the context of urban densification are part of current debates.

Landscape, Landscape Protection and Swiss Identity

In his publication *Houses and Landscapes of Switzerland*, published in 1959, ethnologist Richard Weiss stated that the concept of landscape serves to "relate the village in its manifold ties to man and nature" (Weiss 2017: 316). Weiss regards man as a "cultural carrier and creator" and therefore distinguishes the natural landscape, which is untouched by man, from the cultural landscape, which was and is shaped by man. Already a decade earlier, Armin Meili, architect and pioneer of Swiss spatial planning, demanded in his 1945 publication *Zurich Today and Tomorrow*: "We don't want to let any crowding arise in our country. Switzerland should remain the home of personal freedom" (Meili 1945). Armin Meili's goal in spatial planning was the "decentralized metropolis". With this settlement strategy he wanted to counteract the unintended growth of few large cities. According to Armin Meili, the moderate further development of small and medium-sized towns and the construction of new settlement units separated by green corridors were intended to prevent the undesirable emergence of one huge urban area reaching from Lake Geneva in the west to Lake Constance in the east of the country. Journalist Rudolf Schilling (1975: 663) stated that the idea of landscape protection was of great importance for the development of Swiss federal spatial planning: "The impetus for federal spatial planning and with it landscape protection came from the affront to people's eyes".

In Switzerland, the protection of the landscape was a very early popular concern and in the beginning was mainly related to aesthetical and cultural reasons. In 1962, Swiss voters agreed on a federal constitutional amendment on the protection of natural and cultural heritage and only a few years later, in 1966, the respective act was brought into force. However, the constitutional amendment (1967) and the act (1980) on spatial planning followed comparatively late compared to other European countries because direct-democratic political processes delayed this very complex issue. During the decades of political struggles for a Swiss federal planning law, landscape protection was one of the main drivers in the political debate.

In 2007, a groundbreaking direct-democratic popular initiative was launched on the national level that was entitled *Landschaftsinitiative* (Popular initiative for the Landscape).

The initiative answered nationwide protest that came up when in 2004 the authorities of the Canton of Fribourg had reclassified 55 hectares of farmland as an industrial zone in order to attract an US-biotechnology company. This decision by the government of the Canton of Fribourg, which was in conflict with the federal spatial planning law, brought the weakness of execution of legal planning instruments to the public's attention and resulted in a major nation-wide protest.

The initiators of this popular initiative wanted to limit the continuing urban sprawl in Switzerland, the destruction of the landscape and the resulting loss of cultivated land. This initiative dedicated to the protection of the landscape received major support by voters and finally forced the government to revise the then existing federal spatial planning law. This revised law was accepted by Swiss voters in spring 2013. With this revision the limits for further settlement development were appreciably strengthened. After decades of rising public concern on landscape protection – fuelled, among others, by the *Heidi Myth* – finally

public opinion and with it voters' concern on the protection of the Swiss landscape, on the prevention of uncontrolled extension of settlement areas and with it further deterioration of the remaining landscape, became a decisive factor for the future of Swiss spatial planning. Only one year before, in March 2012, Swiss voters had already imposed restrictions on the construction of second homes in Switzerland by voting in favour of the popular initiative entitled "Stop the Endless Construction of Second Homes" that limits the proportion of second homes in municipality to a maximum of 20%. As a result, municipalities (especially in the mountain regions) with more than 20% in second homes are not permitted to build new second homes. On 1 January 2016, the law on Second Homes entered into force. The main goal of this initiative was to prevent further loss of landscape.

In the Canton of Zurich, which is the economically strongest region in Switzerland, in June 2012 another popular initiative called „Kulturlandinitiative“ (Popular initiative for the protection of arable land) on the cantonal (not federal) was accepted. This initiative demanded that the agricultural land should be effectively protected by the canton in terms of total area and soil quality. Though this initiative was accepted by the voters in 2012, in 2016 voters rejected the revision of the Planning and Building Act (PBG) that would have been necessary to ensure that according to the aims of the „Kulturlandinitiative“ an equal area replacement had to take place when arable land is zoned into a building zone.

Again, in 2019 in a nation-wide popular initiative voters rejected the so-called „Zersiedelungsinitiative“ („sprawl initiative“). This initiative had aimed that for each new building zone elsewhere a piece of existing building zone of the same size has to be reclassified to an agricultural zone. Both government and parliament had opposed this initiative, arguing that the 2013 revised Spatial Planning Act already effectively limits further urban sprawl.

Meanwhile, in 2019 a new (second) Landschaftsinitiative (Popular initiative for the Landscape) is launched which again aims to protect landscape from further sprawl. To this end, clear regulations are to be anchored in the constitution. Within the zone reserved for agriculture, the number of buildings and the area occupied by them should not be allowed to increase any further. Construction of new buildings within this zone would thus have to be compensated by the demolition of other buildings.

The background of this second „landscape initiative“ (following the first that was launched in 2007 and that resulted in the 2013 revision of the federal planning act) is that this 2013 revision of the planning law postponed the subject of construction in the non-building zone (e.g. farm houses or glass houses for vegetables, but also horse boarding) to a later, further revision of the federal planning act. However, this second revision of the law has not yet taken place, and, therefore, several environmental associations have launched this second „Landschaftsinitiative“.

In sum, we can state that during the last 15 years Swiss people (respectively Swiss politics and voters) have launched a series of popular initiatives related to landscape protection and the prevention of further uncontrolled urban sprawl. As a result, landscape and heritage issues were very present in political debates and the media.

Perception of landscape in Switzerland

The 2013 study "New Approaches to the Assessment of Landscape Quality" (Bundesamt für Umwelt 2013) is part of the Swiss landscape monitoring program LABES and was conducted by the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL). The landscape monitoring program LABES documents and assesses the state and development of the landscape in Switzerland using various quantitative indicators. These are based on a

comprehensive understanding of the landscape analog to the European Landscape Convention. The indicators therefore record landscape quality both in physical terms and in terms of public perception. The 2013 study is based on several indicators for the perception of the landscape by the population. We will refer here to three of this indicators: (1) "Peculiarity of the landscape" describes whether a landscape stands out from another in the perception of the population due to its specific character and whether a landscape is able to establish a reference to the past. (2) The indicator "fascination" describes the extent to which a person's attention is drawn to the countryside. Fascination contributes significantly to the attractiveness of a landscape, influences the length of stay of people in a landscape and is part of the recreational quality. (3) The indicator "authenticity" describes how landscape elements are judged to be appropriate to the site in terms of their authenticity, for example, regionally significant landscape elements (e.g. cultural monuments, waterfalls) or nationally important symbols (e.g. Matterhorn). For all three indicators, the assessment of the landscape by the population is more positive in the Alpine regions than it is both in the Italian-speaking southern part of Switzerland, which is dominated by narrow valleys with a high degree of urbanization and dense infrastructure networks, and the intensive urbanized Swiss Midland (*Mittelland*).



Magadinoebene, Ticino (Valley in the southern part of Switzerland), © ETH Bibliothek, Com_FC17-6512-001

In Switzerland, there are hardly any places that have not been altered in any way by people and in which no man-made buildings and structures can be seen. Most of these areas are located in the Alpine region. It is therefore not surprising that the perception of the landscape is most positive in the Alpine areas. More general and in line with this differentiation by regions, people who live in an agricultural area perceive the landscape of their own region most positively in comparison to residents of other types of communities. Due to the 2013 study by WSL rural communities are generally perceived as beautiful, and in terms of their complexity and authenticity they also perform well from the point of view of their inhabitants. The landscape is perceived most negatively in suburban areas, i.e. more negative in suburban than in urban areas (Bundesamt für Umwelt 2013). Moreover, regions that consist of a high percentage of valuable landscapes that are listed in the Federal Inventory of Landscapes and Natural Monuments (BLN) are perceived more positive by its inhabitants than others. The Federal Inventory of Landscapes and Natural Monuments (BLN) describes the most valuable landscapes in Switzerland. Its aim is to preserve the diversity of Switzerland's landscapes and to ensure that the characteristic features of these landscapes are preserved. In these BLN areas, differentiated protection objectives aim the better consideration of nature and landscape values in the decision-making procedures on both the federal and cantonal level (Bundesamt für Umwelt 2013).

This 2013 study shows that the perception of the landscape is closely linked to references to the past and that regions or “landscapes” with high urbanization dynamics in recent decades are perceived negative by the inhabitants. Instead, areas which are classified as “deserving protection” and which are part of the national inventory of valuable landscapes exhibit an above-average positive perception.

Swiss Open-Air Museum Ballenberg and Swiss Landscape

In 1968, a foundation was established with the purpose to bring into existence and to operate a Swiss open-air museum. In 1978, the Swiss Open-Air Museum *Ballenberg* opened its doors and today presents 110 traditional rural buildings from all regions of Switzerland on an area of 66 hectares near the town of Interlaken. Most of the buildings are farm houses, but also stables, barns, blacksmith's shops, a cheese dairy, a brickyard, a sawmill, among others. These buildings that are built heritage are surrounded by vegetable gardens, meadows, pasture, and 250 farm animals ranging from rabbits to horses and oxen. Today the museum is a very popular destination for families, school children and tourists (with an average of 210,000 visitors per year, 20% of them tourists). Together, the 110 buildings and their surrounding are representing traditional Swiss landscape and Swiss built heritage. This museum is deeply rooted in Switzerland's national identity and is strongly linked to the *Heidi* myth.

All the 110 buildings in the *Ballenberg* museum used to be located in very different parts of Switzerland and found a new home in the open-air museum. At their original location, the museum buildings had to give way because their original location was used for new purposes and they had to give way to construction activities. A few of them very pro-actively collected in order to preserve them in the museum. Even though the reasons for moving the building to the museum are quite individual for each house, the *Ballenberg* houses have one thing in common: settlement change, landscape change and new economic activities (for example, industrial or commercial instead of agriculture, or new economic systems, e.g. milk pipeline to a dairy in the valley instead of alp cheese dairy) have left a deep mark on their “biographies”. Their continued existence in the *Ballenberg* museum is closely linked to the fact that the “face” of Switzerland has changed deeply since the end of the Second World War – and will continue to do so in the future.

In 2016 the museum presented as a special exhibition fourteen short films revisiting the original sites of fourteen selected *Ballenberg* buildings to see how these original locations look like today and why these buildings had to be moved from their original locations, providing an excellent illustration of how Swiss settlements have changed over the last fifty years. Both the idea for this exhibition and the implementation of the project came from the authors of this paper who also evaluated the response of the visitors.

The exhibition in 2016 presented the 14 films in the respective house or with an outdoor screen in front of the house if a presentation of the film inside the house was not possible. In the individual films, short sequences were also presented showing the building in its present state in the museum in order to create a recognition effect. The films were conceived in such a way that only original sounds from the original location could be heard, but no commentary. In this way, the films could be understood independently of the language of the viewers, and, as a side effect, the change of noise regimes (compared to the museum that does not allow motorized traffic) as urban location appear louder due to traffic noise). During the presentation of the films as the museum's annual theme for 2016, there was an educational center in the museum where all 14 films were available. In addition, a member

of the museum's staff was present for questions and discussions. In this center there was also additional material available for the 14 houses, which provided maps and pictures and also information about the current situation at the locations or the houses' history. Here, special educational material was also available for children and young people. The films have been included in the museum's permanent exhibition since 2019.

Finding the *Ballenberg* houses' home locations

At the beginning of the project there was the search for the exact former location of the 14 houses. The authors of this article carried out the search for the location and attended the video shooting and consulted the video production, i.e. they visited themselves all the original locations and therefore were able to analyze them with regard to the current state of affairs.

The shooting for the videos at the former locations of the *Ballenberg* houses was preceded by a site visit. Here planning documents and historical photos were helpful to find the *Ballenberg* house's original location. Not in all cases it was possible to determine the former location with the necessary precision based only on the museum archive's documents. This made it necessary to consult further historic references in order to determine the exact original location of the houses. This necessity resulted in an exciting search, which provided interesting insights. Historical aerial photographs were an important aid in this search. As revealing as the historical and current aerial photographs may be for capturing the spatial context and as helpful as they may be for determining the original location, they cannot replace the experience of immersing oneself in the site's reality.

The changes on site since the move of the respective *Ballenberg* house to the museum are particularly radical when it comes to the impact of new built transport infrastructure buildings. In these cases, the visible traces are usually extremely limited. No less than four of the 14 buildings had to give way to traffic infrastructures. For example, the farmhouse from Lancy (next to Geneva), which dates back to 1762. If it would still be in its place of origin, it would now be in the middle of a huge tram depot hall not far from the *Stade de Genève* (sports stadium in Geneva). A maze of highways, railway lines and parking lots hardly give any idea of what it looked like in this place when the *Ballenberg* house was still at home here.




Even in the case of the old forge from Bodio (Ticino, southern, Italian-speaking part of Switzerland), the construction work for AlpTransit's Gotthard base tunnel, a railway tunnel opened in 2016 with a length of 57 km (35.5 mi), has changed this part of the valley so much that no traces of the old blacksmith's workshop can be found. A new "landscape" has been created here dominated by the new railway control center of the south portal of AlpTransit. The Chiasso freight station has taken possession of the old home of the Novazzano estate, which was located here before, but meantime has moved to the museum. Where the building itself once was located, there is now a communal recycling center. Only a small trace remains, as the lowering of the curb still reveals the location of the former entrance to the main building of the agricultural estate. The changes that were caused by the widening of Klausenstrasse (leading to the Klausen mountain pass) in Spiringen that was demanded by modern motor traffic and led to the relocation of a hay barn to *Ballenberg* are comparatively small.





The role played by *Ballenberg* and its houses for Swiss identity is shown by the fact that a copy of a house relocated to *Ballenberg* was erected at the original location in 2 out of the 14 cases. Due to the area needed by the new use, the copies are not located at exactly the same location as the original, but a few meters apart. In addition, in both cases it is not a 100 percent reproduction that was created, but rather slight modifications that took account of their new use in the restoration. The replica of the rope factory Unteraegeri (Canton of Zug) serves as a bicycle shed of a condominium complex. The Wellhausen granary, which once had to make way for a new residential building, was rebuilt by a neighbouring hotel as a honeymoon suite. And while the granary moved to *Ballenberg*, the related mill building in Wellhausen, 200 m away, remained. In Rafz (north of Zurich) no copy was made after the removal of the historical saw building to *Ballenberg*, but today a car repair shop with the same building dimensions can be found here.

With the increase in population and the increasing use of living space per capita, many new residential buildings have been built in recent decades. These can be the replacement of existing residential buildings, but also the new construction of entire housing estates. In Meggen (near Lucerne), the stable barn from the early 16th century gave way to a single-family house area. In Richterswil (near Zurich) a multi-storey apartment building has been erected on the site of the winegrowers' house that was moved to *Ballenberg*. In Unteraegeri (Canton of Zug) where in former times the rope factory used to be, there is now a large condominium estate located very close to the city center. A inner-city housing estate with a total of 100 apartments was built on the former communal maintenance depot in Aarau, which was moved to *Ballenberg*. Here the fire brigade that was closely related to the moved communal maintenance depot is left on the neighbouring area – analogous to the mill building that remained though the granary left Wellhausen. The two latter examples in particular are an example of the aim of the revision of the Spatial Planning Act 2013 for urban densification.

The 110 houses of the Open-Air Museum *Ballenberg* uniquely link Switzerland today with Switzerland's heritage and history. They also provide a glimpse of tomorrow's Switzerland and invite visitors to reflect on building culture and settlement development. With the 14 *Ballenberg* houses and the associated 14 short videos, which show the current situation at the former location of the houses, the *Ballenberg* presents fourteen windows from the rural cultural landscape of represented by the *Ballenberg* museum into today's urban and suburban landscape of Switzerland,. This enables the visitors to directly experience the changes in settlement of the past decades. These windows sharpen the visitor's awareness of the ongoing dynamics of the built environment and built heritage and invite them to reflect on Switzerland's natural landscape, cultural landscape and urban landscape. In this way, the experience of both the landscape and the built heritage during the visit in the open-air museum is not a stand-alone experience, and is not finished when visitors' leave the museum, but by relating the *Ballenberg* houses to the current situation at the former locations the experience gained in the museum also retains its significance in the urban landscape perceived in everyday life.

Building in the museum or historic site	Current situation at the original location
	
Bodio TI – blacksmith's shop	railway control center AlpTransit
	
Aarau AG – communal maintenance depot	
	
Unteraegeri ZG – rope factory	Bicycle shed in condominium
	
Brienz BE	
	
Champatsch GR – cheese dairy	Modern cheese dairy with milk pipeline
	
Malvaglia TI	

			
Meggen LU			
			
Novazzano TI		freight yard Chiasso	
			
Rafz ZH – sawmill		Car repair shop	
			
Richterswil ZH			
			
Therwil BL			
			
Wellhausen TG – granary		honeymoon suite	

	
Lancy GE – farm house	Tram depot and repair shop
	
Spirigen UR – barn	Enlarged road to the Klausen pass

Experiences with the museum visitors' perception of landscape and built heritage

In three steps, the response of the museum visitors to the presentation of the 14 films and the topic of landscape change and urban dynamics in the *Ballenberg* museum was evaluated. First, the experience of the museum guides who were in charge of the information center in the museum that presented all of the 14 videos, gave additional information and opportunity for discussion and, in addition, offered museum pedagogy related to the theme addressed by the videos was evaluated. Second, a questionnaire evaluation was used to learn more about visitors' assessment of the exhibition. Third, museum visitors were asked how they perceive Swiss landscape and how they assess the experience of the visit in the *Ballenberg* museum and the videos concerning landscape and built heritage.

When we asked Swiss visitors what landscape means to them, we received the following answers: "landscape means living space", "landscape is the basis for all living", "landscape means to recover from living in the city", "landscape means nature", "landscape means *Heimat*"¹, "landscape means recreation", "landscape means fresh air, recreation and time-out". Asked about the impact of their visit in the museum on their perception of landscape and built heritage, they answered: "a visit to the museum sharpens your perception"; "after visiting the museum one notices that in former times the houses were much more embedded in the landscape"; "after a day at the museum, one sees many things differently in the landscape"; "one becomes aware of how the landscape used to be"; "the visit to the museum makes clear that in former times the landscape determined the buildings and that today a building is built and the location is adapted to the building"; "Swiss landscape is controlled by man. There is almost no place left that has not been shaped by man".

¹ There exists no exact English equivalent of the German word *Heimat*. *Heimat* is often translated by „home“ or „homeland“, but both English words do not reflect the aspects of familiarity with a space, of security in a space. To speak with Johanna Spyri's novel *Heidi*: Heidi's *Heimat* are the Swiss mountains. That is where the girl feels well whereas the foreign city of Frankfurt, where her aunt sent her, makes the girl feel sick, homesick. *Heimat* includes an aspect that is related also to identity and mentality.

One fifth spontaneously declared Switzerland as a beautiful landscape, one fifth spontaneously complained about urban sprawl and a deteriorated landscape and one fifth did both, i.e. praise the beauty of Swiss landscape and at the same time complain about urban sprawl. These numbers exhibit the ambiguities people have about Switzerland and its landscapes and built heritage: though the Heidi myth of Swiss beautiful landscape is still deeply rooted, people are concerned about urban dynamics that result in urban sprawl and increasing built-up areas.

The questionnaire, in addition, revealed that the immediate reaction of the visitors to the real built environment found at the houses' original location that was presented by the videos was: "terrible", "depressing", "that's a shame", "how sad to see this change", "what a contrast". One of the guides who was present at different houses during 2016 museum season reported that the impact of the videos was especially high for houses where the change was very massive, i.e. location of the farmhouse in Lancy that now holds the huge tram depot in the middle of multiple infrastructures or the location of the farm house in Novazzano that now holds the freight yard in Chiasso and the communal recycling center next to it. Both are cases where the "banality" of the new urban situation is very striking. More positive was the reaction to examples where inner-city housing was the succeeding use.

Museum guides who had been in charge at the information center in 2016 when the videos were displayed next to or in the museum houses reported that they had many discussions with visitors. Though the main purpose of the information center was to give further information to the theme of urban development and its impact of Swiss landscape and built environment, these discussions with visitors often became very political discussions. Some people even wanted to share their anger about urban sprawl and landscape change, and anger that was not provoked by the exhibition, but an anger they brought with them to the museum. In this cases guides just listened and did not start disputes, but they soon recognized that it was very appreciated by the visitors to be just listened to. Many visitors were especially interested in houses originating from their home region. Visitors that came from one the towns holding one of the 14 houses displayed in the videos were particularly interested in discussing the theme of change and in having additional information.

Conclusion

The protection of the landscape has a long tradition in Switzerland and a series of (direct democratic) popular initiatives concerning landscape protection issues occurred during the last decades. Public awareness of landscape change, but also concern about the built heritage, is therefore relatively high in Switzerland as political debates and the media have extendedly touched these issues. The study on landscape perception carried out in 2013 showed that in particular the inhabitants of suburban regions and the southern valleys (Ticino) that both exhibit urban sprawl view landscape and landscape change in their region very critically.

Reactions from visitors demonstrate that Swiss people are very ambiguous concerning the perception of Swiss landscape. They still praise the landscape's beauty, but at the same time they complain about its deterioration. It seems that the landscape's beauty as an asset of the nation and a main element of Swiss identity is deeply rooted, although the long discourse about landscape deterioration and urban sprawl that was intensified during the last 15 years due to a series of popular initiatives has left its marks.

Without doubt the confrontation of museum visitors with built heritage and today's state of the built environment by using 14 examples that could be experienced by real-world built heritage and videos presenting the real situation at the respective original locations drove people to debate and talk about the transformation of built environments. Especially in case where one of the 14 houses originated from their home region or home town, this talk about landscape and urban transformation was very intense. This talking about urban change was not limited to facts and figures, but included also emotions and even anger. This exhibits, that emotions are essential elements of the perception of the built environment, built heritage and landscape. The visitors' perception of landscape was not only limited to aesthetics, but the evaluation of visitors' response to the *Ballenberg* exhibition made obvious that their perception of landscape is very wide and includes also aspects like livelihood, joy, and identity.

The preservation of built heritage and landscape is a very complex issue that is difficult to perceive and to debate. However, talking about these issues is very essential for a deep involvement that is prerequisite for the further political debate. The evaluation of visitors' response to the *Ballenberg* exhibition has exhibited that real and well-presented example that are drawn from people's home town or home region, i.e. the environment that is very close to their daily life, provoke the most intense debates about heritage preservation and landscape protection.

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Videos:

<https://www.ballenberg.ch/en/themes/house-styles/changing-settlements>