
PASSAGES

ARCHITECTURE FOR FLOWING AND CONNECTING SPACES

Raffaella Cavallaro
Nicolò Chierichetti (eds.)

International Conference
September 24–26th, 2025
Politecnico di Milano

Book of Abstracts

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Editors | Curators

Raffaella Cavallaro
Nicolò Chierichetti

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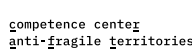


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Welcome to *Passages* International Conference at Politecnico di Milano, Department of Architecture and Urban Studies.

Passages aims to investigate notions of space for mobility in contemporary architectural discourses. How architectural design can contribute to reimagining spaces to overcome functionalist engineering limitations, also considering the ecological, climate and social impacts of mobility spaces as something more than mere built objects?

This conference aims to unveil the potential of architectural design and research tools to enrich unconventional discussions about mobility in urban and periurban contexts, its spatial configurations and experiential qualities. Although mobility is intended as a framework, the discourse will focus on the spaces above, below, in-between, and to the sides of the ordinary boundaries of architectures of flow, as well as on the spaces of new forms of movement.

Raffaella Cavallaro
Nicolò Chierichetti

Politecnico di Milano
September 2025

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Forms of mobility based on emerging technological developments, explored from an architectural point of view, offer innovative perspectives on the logistics and circulation of people and goods.

The twentieth century saw the emergence of visionary scenarios that explored alternative approaches to movement, mobility and time, anticipating future developments and transforming spaces. Under the pressure of a changing world and the emergence of contemporary challenges, they are becoming a tangible reality. Pioneering projects – from the utopian past to advanced scenarios for the future – aspire to conceptualize the integration of cutting-edge technologies into everyday space, more integrated with blue and green infrastructures.

«Transformation of mobility networks will redefine how people move through the city [...] to create urban corridors that allow seamless movement between work, living, and leisure, integrating high-speed transit, slow mobility, and pedestrian-friendly environments » (Cavallo et. al., 2018).

pioneering scenarios, futuristic visions, logistics, advanced air-mobility, alternative mobility

Evolution

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Evolution

UNFOLDING

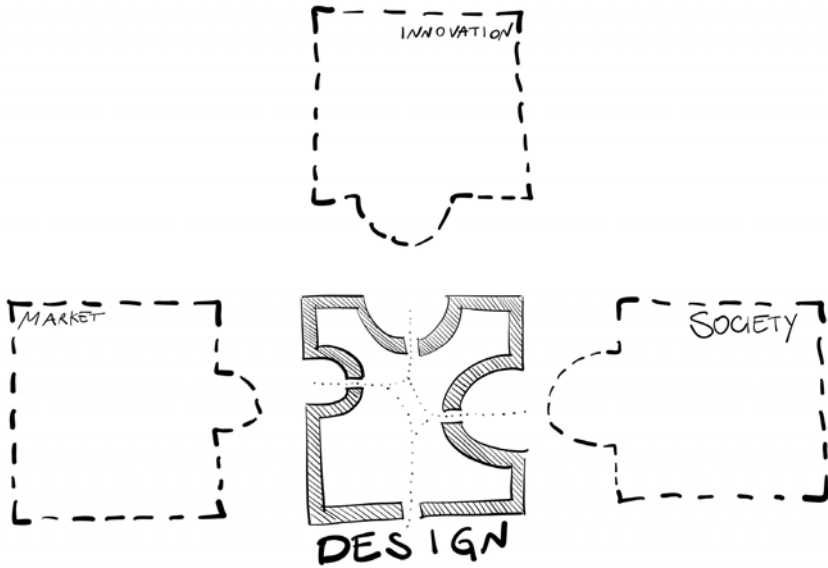
NEW MOBILITY

SESSION CHAIR:

Giulia Setti

Assistant Professor, DASTU

"The mobility puzzle. Within mobility innovations, design is the linking tile, translating innovations into spaces". Author (2025)



IN THE PUZZLE OF MOBILITY INNOVATION, THE DESIGN IS THE SWINGING FACTOR

Two failed stories, Bresso and Rotterdam-The Hague Airports, as track to proof architectural and urban design role in innovative mobility projects

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Mobility is not only the sum of technology and cost analysis, but also of spatial practices linked to land-use, accessibility, and mobility design (Eckart & Vockler, 2023). As a consequence, innovative mobility solutions (should) bring (direct/indirect) benefits to the entire community, to be accepted and succeed. This is the case of Urban Air Mobility (UAM), a new type of infrastructure under development, that uses electric aircraft to move quickly around the city. Even though social acceptance constitutes a source of concern for its implementation (EASA, 2021), developing scenarios proposed by companies feed a market-driven approach, where mobility design follows back. Design instead should be addressed from the initial stage of planning (Triggianese, 2023), to effectively integrate mobility in the urban and social environment.

This paper, therefore, highlights how mobility design (both architectural and urban) plays a crucial role in shaping mobility places, contributing to its success.

The investigation method through which these spatial relationships will be emphasized is through an analysis of failed case studies, Rotterdam-The Hague Airport (NL) and Bresso Airport (IT). Both represent air mobility cases embedded in an urban context. By learning from these two “failing stories”, it is possible to stress the role of the design in integrating mobility projects within the urban environment. This contribution sets a link with the narrative of UAM network and project design, which, even though they are linked to a market factor, can still address social and land-use practices.

In the form of mobility design, architecture and urban design has the power to act as a mediator of interests (Triggianese, 2023), between the market, technology and people, translating innovation into spaces. This position can feed future research on mobility design projects, re-centring architecture and urban design's role in the mobility implementation, to shape new common visions.

Failed-projects, inclusivity, innovation, integration, accessibility

(2021). *Study on the societal acceptance of Urban Air Mobility in Europe*. Press.

Eckart, P., & Vockler, K. (2023). *Mobility Design. Shaping Future Mobility*. JOVIS.

Triggianese, M. (2023). Design of Co-creation in Rotterdam Central Station (1996-2007): Architecture and urban design roles in the multi-stakeholder collaboration. *Spool*, 10 (1), 57-71.

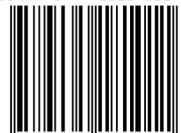
« *Ceci n'est pas une conférence sur la mobilité* »

As infrastructures of movement often prioritize technical efficiency, they risk neglecting the qualitative and experiential dimensions of space, an oversight that architectural thinking is distinctively positioned to address. Architecture offers a special perspective to address this gap, particularly in light of SDG 09-Industry, Innovation and Infrastructures and SDG 11-Sustainable Cities and Communities, and in reference to the principles of the EAAE Charter.

By engaging with mobility through a transversal approach, the conference explores how architectural design can contribute to reimagining spaces to overcome functionalist engineering limitations, also considering the ecological, climate and social impacts of mobility spaces as something more than mere built objects.

Through the examination of design methodologies and prototype case studies, the conference attempts to unveil the potential of architectural design and research tools to enrich unconventional discussions about mobility in urban and peri-urban contexts, its spatial configurations and experiential qualities. Although mobility is intended as a framework, the discourse will focus on the spaces above, below, in-between, and to the sides of the ordinary boundaries of architectures of flow, as well as on the spaces of new forms of movement. The conference «Passages. Architecture for Flowing and Connecting Spaces» invited contributions which critically address the role of Architecture in the Shaping the spaces of mobility, and in their interference, around the sessions of “Intersection”, “Collateral” and “Evolution”.

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