MIAW 2022

Re-inventing schools

Politecnico Di Milano

School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering





MIAW

The MIAW-Milan International Architecture Workshop is the international intensive programme at the Politecnico di Milano, School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering, that provides an international design forum for schools, teachers and students, but it is also an informal platform to discuss issues and share ambitions that education implies. Its aim is to stimulate cross-over thinking between researches and practitioners in the design field, involving different scales and encouraging an interdisciplinary approach towards design problems. Each class has an international guest professor of high profile whose activity and interests are related to the different study courses and disciplinary areas characterising our School.

MIAW 2022 / Re-inventing schools

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MIAW 2022

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01. INTRODUCTION

Andrea Campioli

Dean of the School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering

The 2022 edition of the Milan International Architecture Workshop (MIAW) is focused on the topic "school", as integral part of a broader educational project called Inventing Schools, outcome of a fruitful collaboration between the School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering and the Municipality of Milan.

Likewise past editions, even the 2022 edition of the Milan International Architecture Workshop provided an opportunity for students of our School to discuss a challenging topic, through an intensive teaching method, within a broad and culturally multifaceted training context represented by the visiting professors in charge of the workshops. In this respect, I would like to offer some brief remarks on the following three aspects: the key topic, the teaching method and the training context.

The key topic brought to the attention of the students and teachers who animated the teaching was "the school". The central and strategic role that "the school" has in the development potential of a country is widely recognized. Yet, this awareness has rarely been matched by adequate design effort, neither concerning the updating of training and pedagogical models, constantly stressed by the continuous acceleration of the societal transformative dynamics, nor concerning the regeneration of the existing building stock (over 42,000 school facilities that host around 8 million students in our country), low resilient to processes of functional obsolescence and often with a lack of the most basic maintenance operations. In view of this, there is a gap to be filled both in terms of theoretical reflection and design experimentation. This is the framework in which the MIAW 2022 experience takes place.

The didactic activity of the workshops follows an intensive organization involving students, teachers and tutors for eleven consecutive working days, entirely devoted to deepening the topics investigated for the project. This method differs radically from the way, typical of our School, of developing

project teaching over the time frame of semester. Moreover, it presents relevant specificities that enrich the students training. First of all, it offers the opportunity to focus on the specific topic and to abolish the boundaries between theoretical study and design experimentation: during the workshops reading, studying, teaching, researching and designing occur all at the same time and in the same place. Secondly, it allows direct and continuous interactions between teacher and student and between student and student, building inside the workshop a community without barriers between teachers and students, triggering particularly virtuous learning mechanisms.

Finally, the MIAW training context is distinguished by different cultures, different experiences and different design approaches, put in place by the articulated team of visiting professors invited to lead the workshops: Giancarlo Mazzanti from Bogotà, Karin Hofert from Barcelona, Mladen Jadric from Vienna, Elsa Prochazka, from Vienna, Mia Roth-Čerina from Zagreb. Their intense teaching activity offered at an international level, their professional commitment in very different contexts and their different research traditions have enabled to investigate the theme of "the school" from several points of view, enriching the cultural and cognitive background of the participating students.

Special thanks to the colleagues who coordinated this MIAW edition, to the visiting professors and tutors who passionately animated the workshop and the students who welcomed with enthusiasm the challenge, achieving noticeable results documented in this publication.

Beyond the school perimeter involving the neighbourhood

Barbara Coppetti

DAStU Department, Politecnico di Milano

In a period of rapid change, the central role of school and educational training in civil society has led to the renewal of the complex school sphere.

The possibilities of regeneration of the considerable building heritage involved are explored through the close link between places, spaces and life experiences, the practices conducted and the teaching methods that characterise them.

Responding to needs beyond functionality, regulations and standards with a sensitive and open attitude towards the humanistic and social components is also a prerequisite for the NEB - New European Bauhaus, the European Commission initiative promoted by Ursula Von Der Leyen. NEB is an interdisciplinary project around the terms "beautiful" for our eyes, mind, and soul, "sustainable" to regain harmony with nature, the environment and the Planet, and "inclusive" to encourage a dialogue between cultures, disciplines, genders and ages.

The dialogue between actions of artificialisation of space and the natural environment, in full awareness of the alteration of ecological-environmental systems produced by wrong development models, tends decisively towards the search for new balances. In every order and degree, the school sphere needs to absorb this careful look to propose a relationship between human actions and their effects on the environment as accomplices and participants in transformative strategies.

Updating and accountability for environmental issues involve the existing heritage and the culture of the project. Some experiences made in the disciplinary tradition, such as that of Richard Neutra (Neutra 1954), respond to the need to trace the identity of forms and ways of learning consistent with the most urgent contemporary issues.

In giving shape to innovative educational landscapes, the new ways of living space cannot avoid including the sense of belonging to nature and the

environmental context in every transformation action. Nature and architecture, accomplices, can reveal mutual resonances and correspondences in their forms. In this perspective, the UN 2030 Agenda places quality education for all at the centre of Goal 4 and emphasises how adequate school facilities and suitable learning environments are the preconditions for any hypothesis of sustainable development.

Relating to the morphological aspects, «the approach treats the urban space as extended and complex architecture; in this sense, it is mandatory to choose a progressive look that can focus at the same time on small parts of the city and predicting the general effects on the entire shape of the city. Fragmentation, recognition and complexity are three phases of the same design process. This comes from the chaos of an exploded structure (fragmentation), proceeds to the recognition of the quality of different parts (recognition), and it is completed in the link between them, namely in the relationship between the parties that leads a structure, even complex, from chaos to order (complexity)» (Di Franco et al. 2015).

The work conducted in the context of Inventing Schools and some other Milan Metropolitan Areas (the three international experiences below in the text) moves within these assumptions and searches for correspondences and reciprocity between pedagogy and architecture. The search for specific relationships between the actions and reactions of actors capable of expressing different points of view stimulates innovative teaching methods. At the same time, developing projects or micro-projects to renew spaces allows for the physical shape of creative spaces. Within the Inventing Schools program, in some cases, it was possible to involve local communities and pupils from each school directly.

The relationships with the health emergency and its consequences on the school organisation and the need to explore scenarios of different ways of using and reusing spaces also made it necessary to identify the current weaknesses in the various school types. Therefore, although the restrictions affected 2020/2022, the schools wanted to place themselves as an open and dialoguing place with local realities and the territory. The scenarios designed and still developed through Master theses, workshops, scientific research and laboratories work on the idea of a school that interacts with the context and whose presence and vitality go beyond the school perimeter involving the neighbourhood and the city.

The idea of an open and widespread school aimed at integrating school activities with urban spaces and the regeneration project involved the context of formal and strictly school spaces, such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, canteens and non-formal areas. They were characterised by freer and more impromptu relationships, such as the atrium, the garden, the courtyard, the public park, the playing field, the street and the square.

IES - Integrated Educational Spaces: the School into the urban project in three international experiences

Complexity is a condition inherent within the urban phenomenon. This complex condition intersects temporality and spatiality without a unitary design or project. The possibility of controlling the complexity through points, fragments, and parts constitutes the challenge of the urban project, which aims to design partial possibilities of transformation through the understanding of the structures.

Nevertheless, it is possible to recognise some specificities in a city composed of many different sets and subsets. The character is not in the addition of its part but is composed of relationships, sometimes tricky or distorted, between the qualities of different areas. The composition and re-composition of spaces can update a character. Fragmentation, recognition and complexity are three phases of the same urban and architectural design process. As part of complex and multidisciplinary research, I present here three parallel experiences. The comparison with the strategies developed by visiting professors in MIAW 2022 is relevant and exciting.

1) The first scientific research agreement titled «Public space and new educational scenarios on an ecological corridor, hidden in Milan's 21st-century city»¹ experimented with alternative scenarios for transforming the built environment. The contemporary paradigms connected to the ecological and environmental components in the modern city are updated to understand the multiple configurations of the scholastic inhabited spaces. Architectural design, therefore, feeds on existing conditions, historical components on different scales, and morphological, typological and social characteristics. For those reasons, during the design experience, it was possible to cross different scales, times and fields, deal with new shapes in space, and design a cluster of educational buildings and open spaces. Through the provision of exchanges between different school classes and orders, the scenarios gave shape to some elemental correspondences: that of schools in their reciprocal relationships. Schools become recognisable places in the urban context, sites with identity and recognition, working together on campus. The campus, in this case, is the city. It is an updated centre for the community and all citizens.

The new educational architecture is part of the urban fabric. It is a complex, dynamic, open organism oriented towards circulating scientific and humanistic knowledge. The new Edu-Hub is, therefore, a vital organism focused on the relationship between architectural construction and external spaces, individual and collective places, and open, covered and internal spaces. The city's new Edu-Hub is connected with the environmental issue; it faces the polluted canal and the natural forest with its weeds. It truly becomes a space for didactic experimentation and research.

¹ Agreement - Convenzione Quadro- between Dastu- Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano and Artkademy Cultural Association for studies and research on the (Micro) Urban Regeneration Process of the internal margin of the Canale Scolmatore Lambro Inferiore, from Naviglio Grande along Via Malaga, with adaptive reuse of the public areas and of the arches under the railway embankment owned by RFI. Parallel experimentation of methodologies for the re-activation of residual spaces and creative intervention in collaboration with the artistic production of Artkademy. Scientific Responsible Prof. B. Coppetti, Prof. A. Oldani, with arch R.Cavallaro, arch. F. Santonicola, in progress from April 2021.

2) The second international design experience moves from the idea that university research and teaching constitute interconnected spheres of work that mutually feed and contaminate each other. The design experience titled "The renewal of learning space. The school as a common contemporary space, between architecture and landscape" with the stimulus to internationalisation and social integration through inclusion policies is undoubtedly a phenomenon in progress at all school levels. In major European cities, the teaching spaces are subject to programs for replacing obsolete school buildings and to redevelopment and regeneration projects of existing structures. Within these assumptions, it seemed appropriate to submit the theme of the regeneration of school areas to the Master's students² for its relevance, inter-scalability and concreteness.

The core is the architectural-pedagogical-antropological renewal project of the existing public schools and relative appraisal. The public school is a learning space that should become an updated centre for an Educational Community. The architectural design experience grafts the research programme «A Shared School. For a culture of Happiness» (Coppetti et al. 2022), which won the New Generation Competition in the fight against child educational poverty. It is an interdisciplinary research project of construction and experimentation of a teaching model for the Public School that provides for the renewal of learning spaces and community spaces.

We experimented with an Open and Spread School project by integrating with the city. The project activities were carried out within the school and through the application of a didactic model oriented toward the well-being of children as a self-realisation process. The project is carried out inside and outside the schools selected, in the contexts of both formal and non-formal education, favouring an idea of the school as a recognisable place with a specific identity, a democratic place of growth, theatre of encounters, exchange and enrichment to experiment exciting relationships. The spaces dedicated to young people are at the service of a new way of thinking about school.

² Master in Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design, Politecnico di Milano, Polo di Piacenza, «Architectural Design Studio - Sustainable Architecture» Prof. Barbara Coppetti with «Multi-criteria analysis and project appraisal» Prof. Angela Poletti, Tutors Arch. R. Cavallaro, Arch. F. Santonicola. a.y. 2019/2020

The new design for common areas is regulated with the sense of belonging of the children, teachers, parents, in and to the school. The aim is to define a solid relationship between the school and children. The goal was to give shape to an architectural project capable of giving recognition, to offer interdisciplinary perspectives where social criticality, marginalisation and sometimes violence seem to prevail. The re-design of the spaces such as the garden, trees, playground, canteens, places of welcome and paths, the analysis of solar geometries and the proposal of new shading systems for the open and internal spaces of the school are the objects of experimentation design.

The sample cases were the renovation project of the MAST community space + the regeneration of Federici Primary and Gold Medal Secondary School in Rho (Mi). With an architectural design process supplemented by moments of review and classroom lectures, the experience conducted with the students led to the sharing of three principal moments of exchange and comparison marked as follows. A) Students visit the city, MAST Space, Federici / Gold Medal School, and the reference context with the historical stratifications that have marked the urban fabric. The proposed design approach focuses on the experience of space and landscape to make concrete assessments of urban ideas and strategies capable of building an alternative narrative of places. A description corresponds to a slow pedestrian and cycle path along secondary paths. B) Meetings and Open Dialogues with the local community at the MAST space and with the Dean, the teachers and students of the school. On this occasion, we shared the space regeneration program with local communities. C) We fixed the goals: the MAST Community Space intends to propose itself as a new centre for young and intergenerational public life through the best definition of its own identity. We worked on the meaning of Co-learning, Co-studying, Audiovision, Theater, and Craft Room and on improving the Music Room and creating a Hub of ideas and a greenhouse or Eco-Garden Room with Fruit Forest. The nature trail to work on involves the Olona river starting from the Mast garden. The bank already has a stretch of cycle path, which should be engaged in an articulated and comprehensive vision of strategic regeneration on a broad scale, even if in poor condition and infested with weeds. The Primary and Secondary School students and teachers prepared a presentation on the workshop activities carried out in the school, and on the dreams, they would like to realise. The pupils' wishes

involve both the internal and external spaces of the garden and the adjacent public park. A new entrance with parental parking enriches the program, as well as the renewal of the school canteen; the redraw of the groundfloor spaces, an outdoor reading area to read books borrowed from the library; the playground with equipment in the park; a place with tables to have a snack; a science and nutrition laboratory connected to the greenhouse area; a larger music laboratory. D) In the middle of the process, we had a seminar on public school heritage between demolition and regeneration of existing structures hosted by the architect Simona Della Rocca, founder with Alberto Bottero of the BDR Bureau studio. They presented the experience conducted by TorinoFaScuola at the Enrico Fermi Secondary School. The presentation was followed by a common critic of the students' works: an opportunity for confrontation with the professional experience of carrying out the architectural and pedagogical updating project of a 1960s school structure in Turin's suburbs. E) Finally, the Mast Community Space hosted the exhibition. The participatory architectural design process made it possible to verify, with the secondary school community, the contents of the projects, the elements of the architecture, the materials and the design of the open spaces and interior spaces of the School and the Mast. It was possible to examine the forms that the students of the Master have given to the dreams of the little ones. Working with the children through the panels and the numerous physical models built for the exhibition was an exciting moment. "Around the world" snack accompanied the final moments of a laboratory full of contents, which saw a large and active participation of children, teachers and the head of the Institute. The students prepared a typical appetiser or finger food from their country of origin to share a convivial moment.

3) The third experience aims to give shape to the concept of space as a third educator (Malaguzzi 1995) explored on the occasion of the project developed for the International School Design Competition, New Pizzigoni School Complex in Milan (July-September 2019). The project developed by B. Coppetti, D. Ferrari, P. Ruggiero, P. Mei with R. Cavallaro, and F. Santonicola wanted to give physical form to an updated idea of a school that enhances existing resources. In the neighbourhood, there was a Kindergarten and a Primary and Secondary

school to integrate with Villapizzone Library, creating a new school campus. Among the design assumptions were clear the intention to bring out the new school in the neighbourhood through the clarity of its layout. The building and every part had to be recognisable and precisely named to make this objective intelligible. In this case, the new school's identity had to be connected to the ability to read its constituent parts accurately.

The «courtyard» proposes a consolidated figure in which the role of the central school spaces' open space and identity is that of a relational space par excellence. A square-shaped courtyard is a place of aggregation, an internal square for the community that uses the spaces on the ground floor at different times of the day. The yard is a balanced inner microcosm, silent and protected but lively because all the functions open to the neighbourhood overlook it. The elevations that delimit it are rhythmic and diversified, transparent towards the media library and with a covered space in front of the atelier of taste (Weyland B., Attia S., 2015) to eat outside. The side of the gym is permeable thanks to flexible opaque openings. The «public groundfloor» is accessible and usable by citizens; it is open to cultural, recreational, social and sporting occasions. The identity of the base and its ability to open up and welcome the whole community is expressed by a large entrance hall, with tapered openings to let natural light slide on the different floors, from the solid and durable material proposed that determines a strong, heavy and tectonic hoof. The intended uses are collective, biblio and media library, auditorium, school canteen and gym. The «educational space», as defined by Maria Montessori in the early twentieth century and taken up by Loris Malaguzzi as a «third educator» (Malaguzzi 1995), intends to stimulate behaviours and new uses by translating the most current pedagogical proposals into spatial quality, organisation of flows and control of the atmosphere in the different environments of the school. Updating teaching models aim to meet up-to-date personal development processes: innovative teaching and adequate spaces to implement it constitute actions in line with EU guidelines on skills, and inclusive development, contrasting early school leaving and educational poverty.

An inclusive school is a school that provides the following:

- Spaces for informal learning.
- Socialisation.
- Play as the glue of the group.
- Connective spaces can activate free relationships and foster relaxed moments of learning and sharing.

The classrooms and workshops allow different possibilities of aggregation of tables, each of a minimum of 62 square meters, and are equipped with individual cabinets to store materials. Classrooms and laboratories must be equipped to offer teaching tools that enhance the students and their potential. The «natural light» in the classrooms and laboratories controlled by adjustable external elements capable of blocking the solar ray from the outside, thus avoiding overheating the internal spaces. The artificial light provided in the classroom spaces must be diffused and adjustable to allow good darkening during screen use.

«Connective spaces» such as stairs, corridors and services are nodal areas as places of informal relations. They are areas for free activities, spaces for decompression, individual reading, and extra-curricular group activities, flexible and adaptable. Defined as connective spaces, they are characterised by warmer lighting that favours a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. The project's terrace is an outdoor space for students to prepare performances and make music or theatre.

These spaces aim to create a relational connection between traditional and innovative teaching activities, ensuring that students do not live their school life in watertight compartments or in a coercive way. The aesthetic quality of the spaces can be traced back to an attitude based on the recognition of the school as a nodal place in the new generation's life and training. It is the place of the educating community, a learning environment open to the variation of didactic models and capable of encountering personal development processes so that each student feels recognised, supported and valued in his uniqueness.



Fig. 1 Connective spaces can activate free relationships and foster relaxed moments of learning and sharing: spaces for informal learning, socialisation, play as the glue of the group. International School Design Competition, New Pizzigoni School in Milan, by B. Coppetti, D. Ferrari, P. Ruggiero, P. Mei with R. Cavallaro, and F. Santonicola.



Fig. 2 The public groundfloor is accessible and usable by citizens; it is open to cultural, recreational, social and sporting occasions. International School Design Competition, New Pizzigoni School in Milan, by B. Coppetti, D. Ferrari, P. Ruggiero, P. Mei with R. Cavallaro, and F. Santonicola.

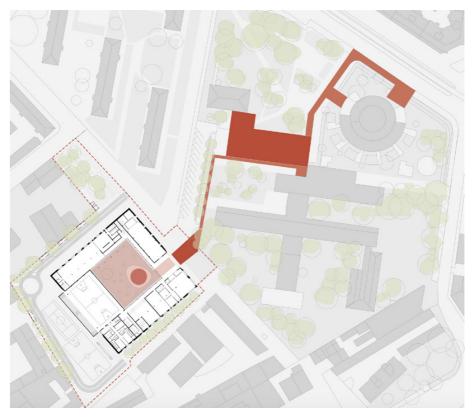


Fig. 3 Urban System: open spaces, connections and cycling paths in the new Campus in Villapizzone. International School Design Competition, New Pizzigoni School in Milan, by B. Coppetti, D. Ferrari, P. Ruggiero, P. Mei with R. Cavallaro, and F. Santonicola.



Fig. 4 The courtyard: the central school space, a place of aggregation, an internal square for the community. International School Design Competition, New Pizzigoni School in Milan, by B. Coppetti, D. Ferrari, P. Ruggiero, P. Mei with R. Cavallaro, and F. Santonicola.

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05. AUTHORS PROFILES

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Francesca Belloni is an architect with a PhD in Architectural Composition (2007). Currently, she is researcher in Architectural and Urban Design at the ABC Department, Politecnico di Milano. She is the author of several articles and essays and of some books. Beside her research activities, she is a designer of several architectural proposals and has taken part in numerous competitions.

Domenico Chizzoniti is an architect who holds a PhD from the Università IUAV of Venice. Since 2022 he is a full professor at ABC Department, Politecnico di Milano. He has taught in different universities across Italy, including the Faculty of Architecture of Parma, and Politecnico di Milano. He is the editor in charge of TECA Books Collections "Teorie della Composizione Architettonica". He has published more than 150 scientific papers in the field of Architectural Design and Theory. He took part as an author in several books and his work has been published in international journals and magazines.

Barbara Coppetti is Associate Professor in Architecture and Urban Design at the DAStU Department, Politecnico di Milano. She develops her research on the project of open spaces in public buildings with specific attention to educational areas and sustainable architecture. She participates in international conferences and design competitions; she's curator of exhibitions, author of books and articles published in specialized magazines.

Corinna Del Bianco holds a PhD cum laude, she is a post-doctoral researcher and adjunct professor of Urban Design, DAStU Department. She focuses on local development, also in the context of the global south, through the enhancement of cultural identities in changing urban environments, considering the tourism dynamics and the nature-culture relationships. As a consultant, since 2017, she has carried out research and photographic, curatorial, educational projects.

Massimo Ferrari is an architect, PhD Architectural Composition, Associate Professor in Architectural and Urban Design at the ABC Department, Politecnico di Milano. Since 2017 he has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Scientific Society Icar 14 PROARCH. He is curator of publications on architecture and art and directs his research mainly to urban design and the relationship between form and structure.

Andrea Foppiani is a PhD candidate in Architectural, Urban and Interior Design at Politecnico di Milano, where he graduated with honors in Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design. His research field is the porous city of Emilia-Romagna, starting from the issue of spatial and environmental quality within the architectural design of public open space. He is a tutor in Architectural and Landscape Design Studios and he is part of the organization team of the Landscape Of[f] Limits International Workshop. In the editorial field, he recently started a collaboration with Il Giornale dell'Architettura.

Riccardo Genta graduated from Politecnico di Milano in 1997, after a period of study abroad at Escuela Tecnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid. He is the founder of the architectural firm Studio Genta Architecture, based in Pavia. He has collaborated with public administrations and has been a member of the board of Ordine degli Architetti di Pavia. Since 2013, he collaborates in the teaching activities at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano, in Piacenza and Milan.

Francesca Gotti is an architect and researcher. Since 2015, she has been coordinating collective initiatives of reuse of urban commons in the city of Bergamo, while consulting for related projects in other Italian regions. Since 2016, she has been part of the editorial board of ARK magazine, curating the column "La Città Rimossa". Between 2019 and 2022, she has been research fellow at Politecnico di Milano for the European project En/counter/points, on the reactivation of neglected urban spaces; as part of this, she has been co-author of the book "The Design of Tactics" (DPR Barcelona, 2022). She is currently a PhD candidate at Politecnico di Milano and studies projects of anarchy and empowerment, in contexts of social urban poverty in South Europe. Since 2021, she is a teacher assistant in the studio Neotopia of Léopold Banchini, at the USI Academy in Mendrisio.

Karin Hofert graduated in Architecture at ETSAB-UPC in 1986. Since 1987 she teaches Architecture Design in this college. From 2008 to 2014 she was Vice-Dean for International Relations. From 2014 to 2021 she has been part of the regular visiting teachers' staff at Politecnico di Milano, Piacenza (AUIC – Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design). The main research and study areas are public space, urban landscape, and "specialized" neighbourhoods. She has been invited as visiting lecturer and academic jury member to universities in Europe, South America, North America, North Africa, Australia and Asia. From 1995 onwards she has been building up and directing international workshops and seminars. She got awards in several design competitions for public spaces and public buildings. Furthermore, she has worked and is working in cooperation and development, directing projects on public space in Morocco and Peru. Her current professional activity focuses on the refurbishment of private housing.

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