Prosuming Public Space: the UNPark project

The role of urban infrastructures in the regeneration of the in-between spaces

Paolo Carli

with contributions by Francesco Bruschi, Matteo Clementi, Davide Crippa, Luigi De Nardo, Barbara Di Prete, Carol Monticelli, Giulia Procaccini, Agnese Rebaglio and Patrizia Scrugli

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Prosuming Public Space: the UNPark project illustrates the experience of the Urban Nudging Park research project, funded by the social responsibility program of the Politecnico di Milano through the competitive call Polisocial Award 2019. The book returns the complexity that characterised UNPark: a research by design project, in the wake of tactical urbanism, on the theme of the role that urban infrastructures could have in the regenerative processes of the in-between spaces.
Indeed, UNPark has been a transdisciplinarity effort which took shape through a temporary urban tactical intervention and a study about the possibility of transforming the current parking under the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, in Milan, into a multifunctional space equipped for social activities, including street sports.
Prosuming Public Space: the UNPark project is a monographic book, with thematic chapters by the members of the work team, that proposes, in addition to recalling the research work phases, reflections on the city during the pandemic, on the co-design, on the multifunctional regeneration of the urban infrastructures, and about the needed transdisciplinarity in any urban design intervention.

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Paolo Carli

II.1 AN OVERVIEW

The Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, designed and built by Silvano Zorzi and Giorgio Macchi, between 1957 and 1965, was a pioneering work in the elevated street construction sector (Barazzetta, Neri, 2019).
However, over the years, it has represented an increasingly critical element for the urban quality of the areas it crosses, not only at the level of the superior street deck, but also at ground level. Since 2001, many areas crossed by the Overpass have been transformed and redeveloped, unfortunately without being able to positively affect the complexity of the relationship between the viaduct and the city. The size, the impact and also the peculiarity of this infrastructure have always aroused interest and curiosity in citizens. Such that some members of the UNPark Team were interested in studying the Overpass long before the research project proposal. This is because the Overpass is an exceptional case study from every point of view: at urban level - understood as a phenomenon that generates cause-effect correlations; at architectural level - since, as will be seen, it is an example of the golden moment of Italian engineering; environmental - from the point of view of the impacts it generates both at the height of

the road and the upper deck; social - since it has transformed and influences all the neighborhoods it crosses; economic - as it asks questions about its future and costs. Furthermore, the surroundings of the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass are full of associations and informal groups of citizens active in the area, interested in the redevelopment of their neighborhoods and the role of infrastructure in this process, and who were the first to promote to the UNPark Team the need to deepen, even in the field, the possibilities offered by their "neighborhood infrastructure".

As I wrote, The Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass represents the *synecdoche* of all the negative impacts that a linear monofunctional infrastructure for vehicular mobility can generate on an urban fabric: from its construction in the early 1960s to its lack of "metabolization" in the present city. However, with the hope - trigger of the UNPark research project and of this book itself - that the future can bring surprises, concerning its closer integration with the city and its inhabitants, through strategies for its multifunctional regeneration as an opportunity for a much wider urban redevelopment of the areas crossed by the Overpass, in a sort of positive domino effect (Carli, Scrugli, 2021). A strategy that must be articulated for very short, medium, and long-term scenarios, to guarantee shared design choices with residents and citizens. Especially because the shared decisions have always been lacking in the ideation, design, construction, and management of this particular infrastructure.

See also IX by Procaccini and Monticelli

The Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass is located in the north-western part of Milan, today amid its consolidated fabric, overlapping for almost 2 km the Circonvallazione esterna (an external ring road), along viale Renato Serra and viale Monte Ceneri, from which it takes its name, to a height between 5 and 7 meters, and with detachments from the building curtain about even

FIGURE II.1 - The Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass just completed, 1967 (Source: Fondo Zorzi – Archivi Storici – Servizi Bibliotecari e Archivi – ACL - Politecnico di Milano)

II.1

only 12 meters. Given its linear extension, the areas of the city it crosses are extremely heterogeneous: neighborhoods, isolated buildings, public spaces, and green areas which, in an ideal pictures sequence, give back an incredible variety of contexts, intertwined with a double thread to the almost 2 km of the viaduct. These almost 2 km of infrastructure constitute a fragmented environment, marked by a strong physical and social *polarization*, in which the unexpressed potential of the viaduct, today a separation barrier, hopefully tomorrow a tangible element of connection and social cohesion, is just waiting to be unlocked (to UNPark).

See also V by Scrugli and Procaccini

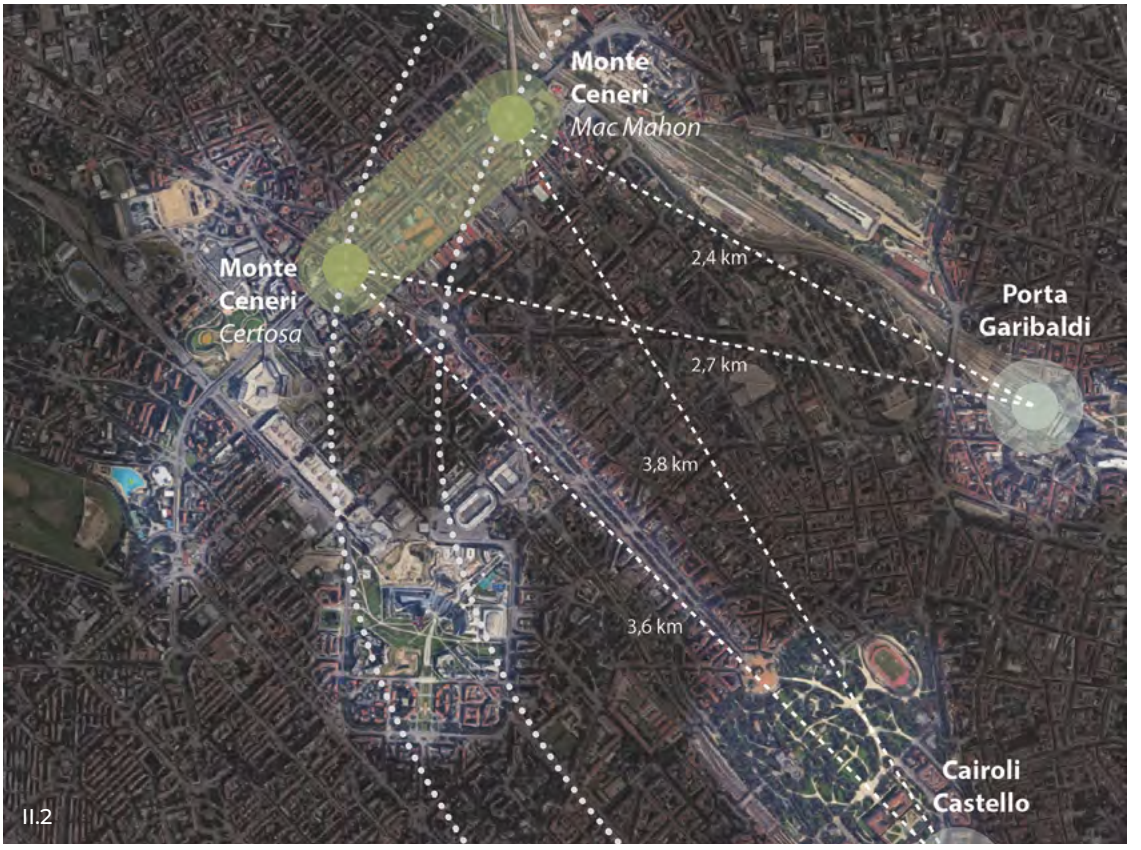
II.2 THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Over 1800 meters long, the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass is made up of two sections, the first, built between 1959 and 1961, is the one that goes from piazza Carlo Stuparich to viale Renato Serra, at piazza Gino Valle (2012) and the Alfa Romeo - Portello Industrial Park (2022), crossing the intersection of Viale Scarampo, the urban penetration axis of the Autostrada dei Laghi, for a length of 400 meters. The Overpass of viale Scarampo has a width of 14 meters and is made of ordinary reinforced concrete, cast on-site, with a continuous beam, resting on pillars, with direct foundations, with heights ranging from 2.5 m to 4.5 m, and spans between 18 and 21 meters. The second section, built between 1961 and 1965, begins at the level of the recent Gattamelata Tunnel (2017) and the Serra cycle/pedestrian sky-walkway (2012), and runs for a length of more than 1200 meters, at an altitude of 7 meters, passing numerous streets, including viale Certosa and via Mac Mahon, until it joins the pre-existing Bacula Overpass, and then it ends in piazzale Lugano, at the offshoots of the Bovisa district, already in the area of the Munici

[1] Popularly known as Ponte della Ghisolfa, the Bacula Overpass connects the Ghisolfa neighborhood with that of Derganino, towards piazzale Lugano, overcoming the Milan - Domodossola and the Milan - Saronno railway lines. "Ponte della Ghisolfa" is famous thanks to the novel of the same name by Giovanni Testori and and also to the famous film, inspired by the novel, "Rocco e i suoi fratelli", directed by Luchino Visconti in the 1960; as well as the local anarchist society of the same name, which was repeatedly featured in the news in the years of the Contestazione.

pality 9. The Bacula Overpass (1939), although previous and born from different needs, such as the crossing of two railway lines, is improperly considered the third section of the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, because of its total physical and ideal continuity from the point of view of criticality and impacts[1]. The second section, the Viaduct of viale Certosa - Monte Ceneri, has a width of 15 meters and spans between 20 and 22 meters, excluding the two on viale Certosa and via Mac Mahon which have spans of 42 meters. The structure is made of ordinary reinforced concrete, with a continuous beam, cast in situ, which, this time, rests not only on pillars with direct foundations, but also on piles, and, in correspondence with the spans of 42 meters on the crossings, the reinforced concrete is prestressed.

FIGURE II.2 - Distances between the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass and the urban spots of the area it crosses, 2020
(Source: UNPark/ Patrizia Scrugli)

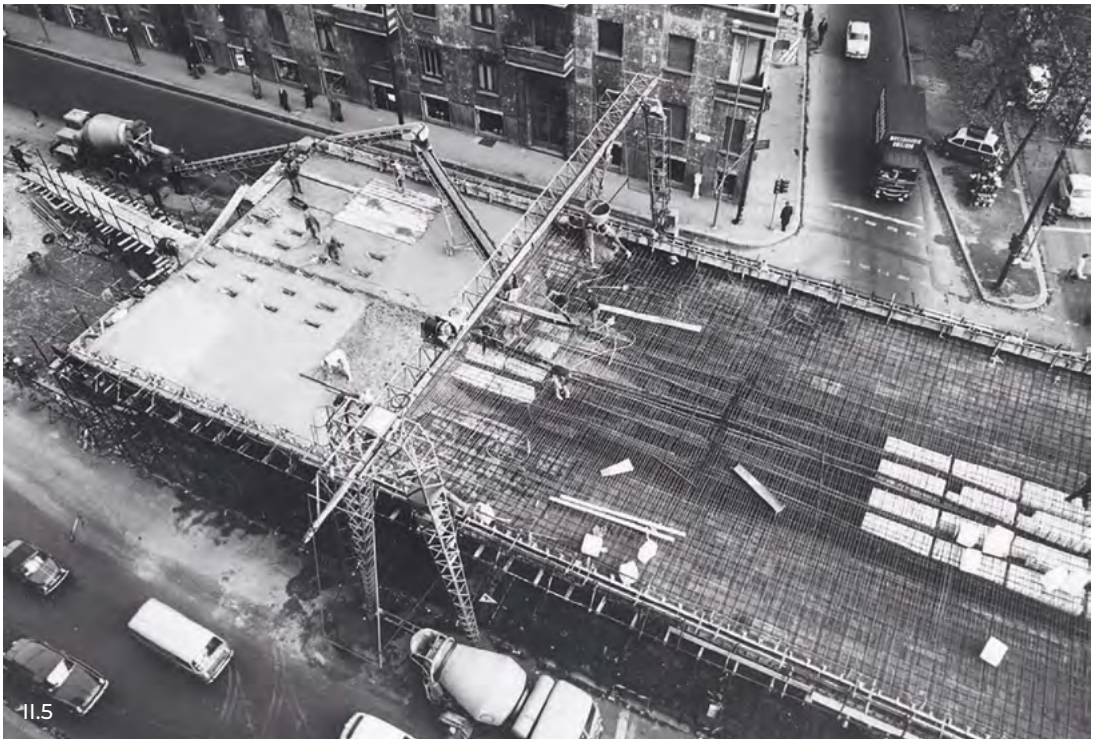


The Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass was designed by the engineers Silvano Zorzi (1921 - 1994) and Giorgio Macchi between 1957 and 1961, and built between 1959 and 1965. Silvano Zorzi is one of the great protagonists of contemporary engineering, who was able to transform the construction sector in a technical sense, giving innovative changes to the production system of those years (Daguerre, 2019).
Silvano Zorzi was certainly an emblematic personality of the Italian School of Engineering of the twentieth century, together with Pier Luigi Nervi, Riccardo Morandi, and Sergio Musmeci (Villa, 1995; Iori, Capurso, 2019), soon becoming one of the main interpreters of the theme of elevated streets, very requested in those years. The Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass is one of Zorzi's most successful constructions, in which he manages to express his idea of infrastructure as a "thin ribbon" that fits into the urban context. An architectural vision of the project also translates into an often-innovative construction technology.
There are therefore at least two elements of the Overpass that demonstrate Silvano Zorzi's stature as a designer. The first is certainly the attention to the soffit of its elevated streets, transfigured in the principle of the "thin ribbon" that unfolds harmoniously within the cities, which constitutes the main visual impact, and which Zorzi tries to lighten as much as possible by thinning the sections of the deck, making the continuous beam supporting structure coincide with the street deck itself, and importing technologies from abroad that he will be able to use profitably in Italy as well.
The intrados of the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass astonishes, in fact, for its subtlety, also accentuated by bright blue color, as the result of a relatively recent restyling, which highlights its lightness, especially at the intersections, where it stands out. The second element is the attention to detail, the result of Zorzi's interna

FIGURE II.3 - Silvano Zorzi (in the center with the trench coat) and Giorgio Macchi (on the left with glasses), together with other technicians, during an inspection of the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass worksite, 1957 – 65 (Source: Fondo Zorzi – Archivi Storici – Servizi Bibliotecari e Archivi – ACL - Politecnico di Milano)

II.3

11.4



11.5

tional training, received sitting at the tables, both as a student and as a fellow student, of great engineers and architects (Gustavo Colonnetti, Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Aldo Favini, Angelo Mangiarotti, Vico Magistretti), who makes him, more than a structural engineer, a *"designer of structures"* (Iori, Capurso, 2019).
In this case, as one example among many, the reference to the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass goes to the system of outflow of rainwater from the superior street deck, which takes place through drainpipes placed in the middle of the deck plate, connected to downspouts hidden in the pillars. A very elegant system, which contributes to the lightening of the Overpass soffit. The system, however, unfortunately quickly went out of order, due to poor maintenance of the viaduct in the following years.

FIGURE II.4 - The thickness of the bright blue intrados of the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, 2021 (Source: UNPark/Paolo Carli)

FIGURE II.5 - Viaduct of Viale Certosa-Monte Ceneri, casting of the superior street deck, 1957 – 65 (Source: Fondo Zorzi – Archivi Storici – Servizi Bibliotecari e Archivi – ACL - Politecnico di Milano)

II.3 THE PRE-EXISTING

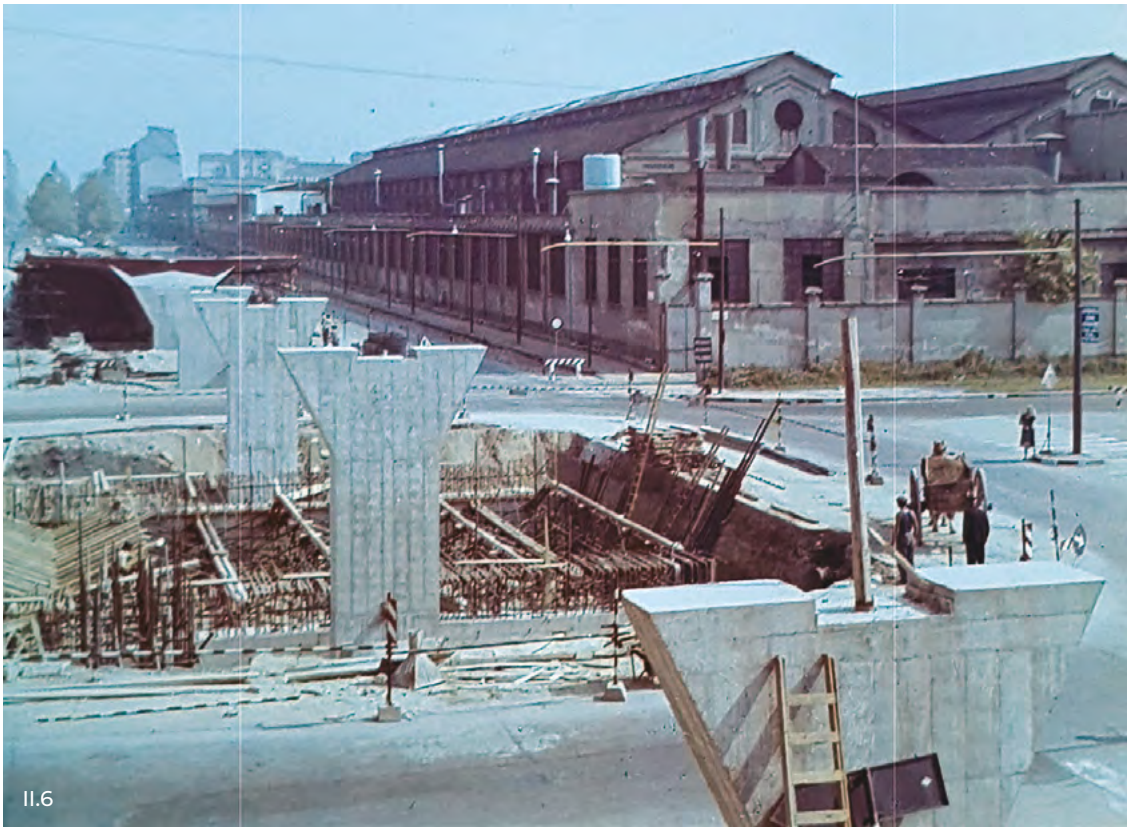
However, despite its lightness and Zorzi's commitment to the constructive innovation in the project, the viaduct remains an elevated street that runs at 7 meters above the city level, at a very short distance (even only 12 meters from the guard rails of its carriageways) from the building curtain, often residential and pre-existing.
In the years between 1959 and 1965, the Overpass was built, without any consultation with the resident population, and starting the construction works during the summer, in a context, in those years, still peripheral, but already highly residential, dense, and popular.
In fact, in the north-west sector of Milan, some important public residential building interventions arise, including the *Mac Mahon district*, designed in 1908 by Giannino Guerrini, made famous by the popular tales of Giovanni Testori, which was one of the first interventions built following the *"Luzzatti Law"* of 1903 (AA.VV.,

2018). Nearby is also the *Villapizzone Neighborhood* (1926-1928), designed by Giovanni Broglio, with its 1147 apartments, which make it the largest of the milanese IACP interventions of those years, and the one whose layout continues to present greater order, with large square courtyards and tree-lined crossings.
And, always not far from the future grounds of the Overpass, there are also the *Varesina Neighborhood* (1945-1950), by Irenio Diotallevi, Franco Marescotti, and Max Pedrini, the *Mangiagalli Neighborhood* (1946-1950), by Carlo Ceccucci, Franco Marescotti, Pasquale Carbonara and Vittorio Gandolfi, and the *Pompeo Castelli Neighborhood* (1946-1952), by Ezio Cerutti and Aldo Putelli, the *Mangiagalli II Neighborhood* (1950-1952), by Franco Albini and Ignazio Gardella (Infussi, 2011). Also stands out among the pre-existing buildings on the Overpass, the *Rinnovata Pizzigoni School*, today Istituto Comprensivo Pubblico, an experimental primary school conceived in the early twentieth century by the founder Giuseppina Pizzigoni, inaugurated in 1927. A place out of time, where an educational method based on direct experience is applied, and where, even today, the iconic red-brick buildings with their pitched roofs host vegetable gardens to cultivate and animals to look after, as test benches for the children. The Rinnovata Pizzigoni constitutes a pre-existence even to the Bacula Overpass, which it undergoes notably the impacts. The block along viale Monte Ceneri, between via Bartolini and via Monte Generoso, hosts the *Tennis Club Milano*, commissioned in 1923 by the Count Bonacossa to a young Giovanni Muzio, and which until 1960 hosted the *Davis Cup* international matches in its facilities (Lisini, 2019). Finally, one has to mention the *Portello plant* of *Alfa Romeo*, located where the public park of the same name now stands and, on the other side of viale Serra, stands piazza Gino Valle. The plant drastically affected the urban development of this city

FIGURE II.6 - The Overpass at the intersection with viale Scarampo. On the right are visible some buildings of the Alfa Romeo plant, 1961. (Source: Fondo Zorzi – Archivi Storici – Servizi Bibliotecari e Archivi – ACL - Politecnico di Milano)

sector until the 1980s. Historically established here, in the years after the *Second World War* and those of the Italian economic Boom, the increase in business soon forced the management of *Alfa Romeo* to open new factories in Arese and to move production to other poles outside the city. In 1986, the Portello area was thus given to the Municipality of Milan, and only in 2001 it started a season of reconversion and redevelopment of the sector. This huge area (clearly visible in Figure II.1 and Figure II.6), divided by viale Serra, had an extension of over 350,000 m2, covering the blocks between viale De Gasperi/via Scarampo, viale Teodorico, via Gattamelata, via Traiano, piazzale Accursio and via Achille Papa; and it has been the main reserve of space and land for the transformations that have taken place around the Overpass in the last 20 years.

See FIGURE II.1 and II.6



II.6

II.4 PAST URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

This concise list of places and built pre-existences, which is not exhaustive of the local urban and architectural history, however, has the purpose of underlining how the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass was built in an already strongly characterized context, to the complete detriment of the existing housing (Grandi, Pracchi, 1980). Viale Renato Serra and viale Monte Ceneri, before the construction of the Overpass, were boulevards of linden trees that made up the external ring road by segments, and in whose central area, not suitable for vehicles, where today are located the pillars of the Overpass and the parking lots, were being installed temporary or precarious functions, from time to time chosen by the contingent needs: from the air-raid shelters to the slums of the displaced people of the *Second World War*, to the itinerant amusement parks, to green spaces and, finally, the inevitable parking lots, in this process of continuous degradation protracted over the years: from flexible public space (also for emergencies use) to an infamous parking lot.
Coming back to the present years, or a more recent past, thanks to both the dismantling of the Alfa Romeo plant (1986), and the stabilization of the planning relating to the exhibition spaces of *Fieramilanocity*, due to the construction of the *Fieramilano* headquarters in Rho-Pero in 2005, the aforementioned season of transformations, started in 2001 by the Municipality of Milan, allowed a series of redevelopment interventions along the Overpass, without however being able to affect the areas crossed by the viaduct as a whole, and without triggering other regeneration processes (Pagetti, 2012). Among the areas of the former *Alfa Romeo*, there is the *Portello shopping center*, designed by *Studio Valle Associati*, which, since it opened in 2005, has become the real core of the neighborhood,

FIGURE II.7 - Piazza Gino Valle, 2021 (Source: UNPark/ Claudia Reati)

a point of reference not only for shopping but also for socializing. The Portello shopping mall is an example of a success of its kind, thanks to the pavilion structure, articulated on outdoor pedestrian paths, and the large suspended canopy that protects from bad weather and provides shade to the central area of the complex. However, it has unfortunately contributed to the polarization of commercial and social activities along the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass. In fact, to the south of viale Certosa we find the large organized distribution of Portello shopping mall and the big technology store *Mediaworld*; while to the north of the avenue we find, at the foot of densely residential blocks, small-scale, poor, or increasingly ethnic commercial activities (money transfer, international communications, foreign food products, laundries, 24/7 vending machines, etc.), or activities bordering on legality (massage centers, game rooms, betting rooms, etc). In 2012 were inaugurated the sloping, fan-shaped, pedestrian square Gino

Valle, which with its 20,000 m2 is the largest (and less used) square in Milan, and the directional center *Parco Vittoria*. The intervention, overlooking the former Fiera di Milano by Mario Bellini (1987-1997), again on part of the huge Alfa Romeo sector, is designed by the *Studio Valle Associati*, in collaboration with the German studio *Topotek 1* for landscape and soil design. At the foot of the colorful *Casa Milan* (upholstered in red and black stripes by the architect Fabio Novembre), there is the artwork *"Grande Erasing for Giovanni Testori"* (2014) by Emilio Isgrò. The square faces, on the other side of Viale Serra, the *Alfa Romeo - Portello Industrial Park* (2011 - today), a green space of 80,000 m^2, now under completion, built on various slopes. The distinctive feature of the park is *"The spiral of time"*, a hill with a spiral path, that is a tribute to the nearby Monte Stella. The design is by the english architect Charles Jencks, in collaboration with Andreas Kipar's *Studio Land*. The park is home to an amphitheater, games for children, a pond that in winter becomes an ice rink, one of the longest benches in the world on the perimeter of the pond, the *"Time garden"* grove, and an area for bowls games. *Piazza Gino Valle* and the *Alfa Romeo - Portello Industry Park* are connected, at an altitude of 6 m, by a cycle and pedestrian walkway, built-in 2012. The steel bridge, closed at night, is 120 meters long, 90 of which meters in a single span, and it is 4 meters wide. The elevated walkway, designed by the international studio Arup, is supported by hangers to a system of 2 arches, also in steel, connected near the ridge. In the idea by the german artist Torqist, the external casings are colored in a polychrome ranging from black to red *"Alfa Romeo"*. The walkway, despite its time limitations, has proved to be very effective as a link, allowing to cross viale Serra, without facing up the urban desert it represents. Again on the grounds of the former *Alfa Romeo*, both north and south of Viale Serra, new

FIGURE II.8 - A recent view of the pond of the Alfa Romeo - Portello Industrial Park, 2021 (Source: UNPark/ Claudia Reati)

FIGURE II.9 - Residenze Nuovo Portello by CZA - Cino Zucchi Architetti, 2021 (Source: UNPark/ Claudia Reati)

II.8

II.9

residential interventions were carried out. On the side of piazza Gino Valle, the *Canali Associati Studio* from Parma designed the *"Residenze Parco Vittoria"* (2007-2016), consisting of six eleven-floor towers and two five-floor buildings in line. While on the other side of viale Serra, behind the shopping mall, stands the *Nuovo Portello complex*, with residential buildings and offices, designed by the milanese studio CZA, Cino Zucchi Architetti (2002-2008).

II.5 FUTURE URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

In the decades following the construction of the viaduct, the *avant-garde* sign of the infrastructure failed to be accompanied by a real *metabolization* of the urban context which, on the contrary, was deeply negatively marked. The tangible impacts generated by the Serra - Monte Ceneri on the inhabited context (environmental and acoustic pollution, physical separation, mono-functionality, neglect) have, in fact, triggered over the time phenomena of physical and social degradation, anger and frustration, delinquency and impoverishment that monopolize much more attention than its quantifiable negative effects. The Overpass is perceived and experienced as a real barrier, visual and physical, an element of separation above all psychological, which makes the area a peripheral place, despite being relatively close to the city center: the Duomo Cathedral is just over 2 km away. Related to the mandatory issues that afflict the Serra - Monte Ceneri, it is increasingly necessary to link the future of the Overpass and its neighborhoods to the great urban transformations taking place in the adjacent areas of Farini and Bovisa, which will profoundly change the structure of this sector of the city in the coming years, thanks to the injection of large public and private capitals. The

huge areas of transformation of Bovisa and Farini or dormant spaces, such as the Caserma Montello and the Overpass itself, today represent an opportunity for redemption of these areas of the city. The strong potential of connection in terms of sustainable mobility of the Serra - Monte Ceneri axis through these new areas of transformation is more than evident, but unfortunately not enough to imagine a second new life of the entire viaduct. The *Scalo Farini* area was involved in an international competition in 2019 that crowned the *"Agenti Climatici"* (Climate Agents) masterplan of the dutch studio OMA, in collaboration with Laboratorio Permanente. A large linear forest developed along the axis of the tracks will be the heart of the new district.
The masterplan, however, does not foresee a new road system, above all no new crossing, at height or in a tunnel, of the railway tracks currently overtaken by the Bacula Overpass is envisaged, making it unlikely that the intervention will improve the situation, lightening the traffic on the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass.
The same is true also of the imminent transformation of the *Goccia* into the *Bovisa* district. The project, presented at the end of 2020, provides the redevelopment of the former industrial area of gasometers with a large park, the expansion of the Campus of the Politecnico di Milano, and the establishment of an innovation district and sports spaces. Also in this case, the information on accessibility is scarce about the repercussions that new viability of this urban portion could have on the Overpass areas, given their close connection.
Finally, the works for the conversion of the Caserma Montello in via Caracciolo into the State Police Headquarters have recently begun (April 2022), intending to build the "citadel of security", welcoming all the accommodations of the police in this single location.
It should also be emphasized that since the PUMS - Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan of 2015, the public ad

ministration has recognized the need to lighten the traffic on the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, in order to be able to foresee its transformation in a pedestrian sense. Since 2015 a new road connection is therefore planned between via Caracciolo and viale Lancetti, in the areas of the former Scalo Farini, an intention also confirmed by the PUMS of 2018: *"The forecast of overcoming the railway is preserved through the creation of continuity between via Caracciolo and via Lancetti. [...] This intervention may, in the long term, allow a verification of the possibility of redevelopment and/or reuse of the Monte Ceneri-Serra Overpass, identifying a new function according to its specific location in a particularly urbanized area, thus hypothesising a closure to private vehicular traffic, in favor of pedestrian and cycle use."* (Comune di Milano 2018, pag. 210). Starting from these intentions, the local media regularly propose solutions for the Overpass. These have included turning it into a public transport lane, or into an elevated linear park following the High Line model, and even knocking it down completely. Once again this shows the existence of the problem and the needs that spring from it, yet it is also proof of the need to reflect on the question that the infrastructure poses in such a way as to go beyond the issue of mobility and face questions regarding social justice/injustice (Carli, Scrugli, 2021).

See also XI.4

II.6 CRITICALITY

Despite the transformations that have occurred over time, and in anticipation of what may happen in the future, this urban sector continues to be a "suspended" and "polarized" part of the city. In particular, the blocks crossed by the Overpass from viale De Gasperi/ Scarampo to almost the intersection with viale Cer-

tosa, continue to be an “urban desert”, that the many interventions have not to refill up with activities and contents, introflexing inside the blocks and denying any relationship with the viaduct. The result is almost 600 linear meters of the city, within its consolidated fabric, in which there are no activities or shops, the arboreal presence is very scarce, and no shelter or pedestrian space for those who have chosen, imprudently, to walk viale Serra. On the other side, however, in the portion from viale Certosa to via Mac Mahon, there is an extremely different situation, made up of compact blocks, almost all residential, which constitute a continuous building curtain facing the Overpass, with buildings up to nine-floor. This is the portion of the areas crossed by the viaduct that has suffered the heaviest impacts since the very beginning. The first to third floors of these residential buildings live in close contact with the superior street deck, recording continuous traffic noise, an alienating view, and particularly low air quality in the homes. While the ground and first floors of the same buildings coexist with the parking (as previously written, today there are about 400 parking lots under the viaduct) which further increases the levels of traffic and smog of the Circonvallazione esterna, with its frequent night use at the limits of legality or illegal at all, and with the impacts on the urban landscape quality that a monolithic structure made by reinforced concrete, which occludes the view of the sky on a particularly busy road can produce. If on the one hand, we have therefore the desertification of activities and the city in general, on the other hand, we have its continuous disqualification. Further signs of economic and social uneasiness support these general considerations. From a simple reading of the real estate advertisements, the devaluation of the building stock, beyond the infrastructure, and the depreciation of the buildings built before the Overpass are sadly evident.

II.7 THE SOCIAL NETS OF THE OVERPASS

Despite this situation of urban unease along the areas crossed by the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, the territory of Municipality 8, which almost entirely includes the viaduct, instead, presents an amazing variety of associations, informal groups, and citizens who are very active in the field, that, over the years, they have contributed to improving its livability, founding meeting spot, places for the dissemination of culture and music, and regenerating disused activities to offer social and collective services to the neighborhood and citizens. Municipality 8 has been continuously guided, since 2011, by a council of the same political orientation, which has guaranteed, in these over 10 years, continuity of planning and choices, as well as support for associations and communities in the area. This is thanks to participating and enterprising Presidents, supported by passionate and motivated Councilors, such as the very young Paolo Romano, who was an enthusiastic partner of the UNPark project, both in the drafting phase of the project and, above all, in the management of the intervention. UNPark - FREESTYLE pilot (18 - 26 September 2021).

See also VIII by Monticelli and Scrugli

However, just as it managed to polarize the areas that it crosses, the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, from a social and commercial point of view, polarizes also the discussion about its future among those who support the hypothesis of its abatement, the supporters of its transformation into a milanese High Line, those who want to preserve the current *status quo* and, again, those who sponsor its integration into a plan for sustainable mobility (Public local transports and cycle paths). These are all concrete hypotheses, which have backgrounds and foundations according to the points of view of those who propose them, but which have a common denominator, namely the failure of the Over-

pass management in the last fifty years, both below the viaduct, related to the parking, and above the viaduct, related to the continuous traffic and its impact. The shop owners on the ground floor of the buildings facing the Overpass have a conflicting relationship with the parking stalls below, since, during the day, they consider them necessary for their customers despite being an evident element of chaos and constant traffic; while, at night, they consider them a source of degradation due to their lack of control and the illicit activities that are carried out there, which cause problems above all of a hygienic-sanitary nature (abandonment of cluttered waste, human and animal waste constantly present, etc.). Furthermore, the wild stop on the parking spaces reserved for the loading/unloading of commercial activities does not facilitate these shops, creating further discontent. Residents, on the other hand, while using the parking under the flyover as a reserve of stalls, also due to the endemic milanese lack of parking, suffer the greatest environmental impacts: poor air quality due to large volumes of traffic, both on the road and on the Overpass, increased by cars looking for free stalls under the viaduct; high levels of noise pollution and visual alienation, always due to constant traffic; perception of separation and exclusion from the rest of the city. Regarding the residents of the residential buildings that are directly confronted with the Overpass, the affected impacts change concerning the inhabited floor, as already anticipated. It is the lower floors, from the first to the third on average, that suffer the worst impacts. In the face of these critical issues and shortcomings of the territory, however, there is the presence of social structures such as the *Circolo ARCI L'Impegno*, which is located in the immediate vicinity, or the headquarters of the

II.10

FIGURE II.10 - "Non vediamo l'ora!" (We cannot wait), 2022 (Source: Tommaso Goisis)

Auser association in Piazza Prealpi, or the system of connected parishes to the boy scouts of the *Gruppo Milano 20 AGESCI*, together with the free initiative of the citizens, who are irreplaceable elements of the social fabric of the Municipality 8 and its neighborhoods, proposing activities, initiatives and supporting causes relating to the redevelopment of the area, such as the proposal for a cycle path on the Bacula Overpass, presented in the 2017/18 Participatory Budget and never implemented, that the group of active citizens *Non vediamo l'ora* (We can't wait!), promoted by many associations and people, including Silvia Di Stefano, who is the spokesperson for the social and informal group of citizens *Milano in alta quota - Cavalcavia Serra Monte Ceneri* (Milan at high altitude..., Partner of UNPark),

is clamoring through flash mobs and other initiatives, in the summer days of 2022. This last initiative, which is strongly participated by the citizens, once again underlines the need to rethink the viability of the area, starting from the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, including the Bacula Overpass, and the city as a whole, in a more sustainable and soft way, which allows the re-appropriation of a large portion of the urban endowment and surface that are subtracted from citizens, every day, by private mobility.

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