
PASSAGES

ARCHITECTURE FOR FLOWING AND CONNECTING SPACES

Raffaella Cavallaro
Nicolò Chierichetti (eds.)

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

Conference Proceedings
Book of Abstracts

PASSAGES.

Architecture for Flowing and Connecting Spaces

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Collateral

LANDSCAPES

OF RE-

INVENTION

SESSION CHAIR:

Andrea Oldani

Assistant Professor, DASTU

LANDSCAPES OF RE-INVENTION

Andrea Oldani

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The etymology of the word “invention” derives from the Latin *inventio-onis*, meaning “to come upon, find; invent, discover”.

The most resonant implications of this term for the spatial disciplines lie in the foundations of polytechnic culture, where it represents a fundamental act within the fields of architecture, landscape, and urban design. For centuries, “inventing” was oriented towards the discovery of the new, directed at improving the relationship between nature and culture, and at enhancing humanity’s ability to adapt and survive.

Today, in the midst of the Anthropocene, this ancient orientation towards invention can no longer be directed at transforming what is pristine. Instead, it must inevitably engage with a landscape of ruins and waste. These remnants testify to an era in which the demands of nature were largely eclipsed by the imperatives of consumption, an age when technology fostered the illusion of surpassing the boundaries imposed by the natural order. Consequently, we are faced with a complex legacy that demands re-invention. This process requires a profound undertaking: to observe what

already exists with attentiveness, to critique it rigorously, to reflect upon its obsolescence, and to propose a new framework of re-evaluation. What is called for is the recovery of the ontological meaning of nature as an ethical and moral resource, one capable of guiding future trajectories.

Therefore, it is unsurprising that the notion of “reverse engineering” has recently become relevant, reflecting the growing necessity to critically reassess the artificial construction of our environment, much of which has been shaped by the mere exploitation of resources and an overreliance on technology. This notion clarifies one possible interpretation of the concept of re-invention. At the same time, it encourages us to consider areas that are usually outside the scope of architectural discourse. It shifts our focus towards diverse materials that are waiting to be discovered and reconnected within a broader range of possibilities for spatial disciplines.

However, the process of re-invention cannot be equated with a codified practice. Rather, the emphasis is on exploring what it entails and how it

might be applied. Re-invention emerges as the necessary pathway through which new territories for the discipline can be extended and alternative roles for architecture can be defined for the decades ahead.

The papers presented at this conference session contribute to the identification and critical interrogation of possible "landscapes of re-invention". In doing so, they highlight the importance and necessity of engaging with the existing environment and its contradictions from a conceptual and theoretical perspective, while also emphasising the urgency of rethinking our living spaces. They demonstrate how architecture, with its millennia-old knowledge base, can contribute in original and innovative ways to the urgent contemporary debates.

This in turn necessitates a consideration of the form of space, its formal characteristics, and the way in which it interacts with itself, with its environment, and with the materials of which it is made. The process of re-invention encompasses various categories and modes of

spatial interaction, providing a useful framework for describing the contemporary landscape.

In the following papers, we can deepen the intersections generated by interdependence, the dynamics of superimposition produced by anthropocentrism and the interruptions caused by a lack of clarity in programme structures. At the same time, we can address the hybridisations and coexistences that are necessary for interpreting contemporary conditions. This requires us to pay attention to the nature of transitional spaces and the fragments produced by the mechanisms of accumulation and rupture that are now integral to every context.

All of this highlights the urgent need to revise design methods and tools to manage the intensification of complexity during a period of major reconsideration of development models. In this context, we must take responsibility for nurturing our landscapes, safeguarding their legibility and ensuring they have the capacity to sustain forms of attachment and recognition.

Ivers, B. Cannon (2021). *250 Things a Landscape Architect Should Know*. Basel: Birkhauser.

Oldani, A. (2023). *Verso una emblematica della manutenzione per le infrastrutture idrauliche / Towards an emblematic for the maintenance of hydraulic infrastructure* - Atlas+Primer. Melfi: Libria.

Tsing, A., Swanson, H., Gan, E. & Bubandt, N. (eds). (2017). *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. Minneapolis, Mn: University of Minnesota Press.

Session Chairs

LEPRATTO, Fabio

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Fabio Lepratto, an architect born in Milan, earned a master's degree from the Polytechnic University of Milan in 2009, completing part of his studies at the Technical University of Delft thanks to the Erasmus program. At the same time, he earned a diploma in Management of Innovation from the Alta Scuola Politecnica and a double master's degree from the Polytechnic University of Turin.

He is currently a research fellow at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, where he focuses on social housing regeneration and affordable housing production, as part of the Departments of Excellence initiative – "Territorial Fragility 2018-2022" project.

NIFOSÌ, Chiara

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Chiara Nifosì is a PhD architect and researcher in Urban Planning and Design at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of the Politecnico di Milano, where she has been involved in teaching and research since 2002. Her profile is characterised by a continuous and intensive practice of research by design, pursued at both academic and professional levels (since 1998), through a multi-scalar and multidisciplinary approach. Her research focuses on infrastructure and public space as critical elements for the socio-ecological transition of cities and territories, exploring the forms and roles of urban planning and design in regenerating the most fragile contexts.

In recent years, academic research has focused on everyday life public spaces like streets, parking

space, space of mobility, with particular attention to marginalized areas, suburbs, and coastlines. This focus has also focused on the integration of integrated planning and design tools and forms of dialogue with the public and private stakeholders involved.

OLDANI, Andrea

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Andrea Oldani (MArch, PhD) is an assistant professor of landscape architecture in the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies at the Politecnico di Milano. He is a faculty member of the School of Architecture, Planning and Construction Engineering and is the vice-coordinator of the MSc in Landscape Architecture – Land Landscape Heritage programme. Since 2008, he has developed theoretical, didactic and design contributions by pursuing two main research lines that have many areas of intersection.

The first concerns the landscape of contemporary infrastructures, with a focus on riverscapes and waterscape architecture. Here, attention is focused on the relationship between description, critical interpretation, and the definition of modification strategies, investigating how the architectural discipline can contribute to complex, interdisciplinary projects. This research opens up the study of the effects and design consequences of climate change, as well as the improvement of environmental resilience, including the theme of 'plural' maintenance.

The second research theme focuses on the regeneration of underused, abandoned and degraded landscapes, including the architectural recovery of artefacts and the definition of reuse strategies.

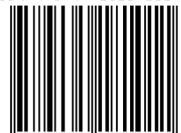
« *Ceci n'est pas une conférence sur la mobilité* »

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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