

CAMPUS  
CONTRO  
CAMPUS  
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architetture  
per\_studiare  
e\_ricerca\_

Ultra / Beyond Città Studi.  
Projects for Politecnico di Milano  
Gennaro Postiglione  
Alessandro Rocca  
with Michela Bassanelli

21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Design After Design



XX1T



MAGGIOLI  
EDITORE

Ultra / Beyond Città Studi. Projects for Politecnico di Milano

XXI Triennale  
International Exhibition

Milano 2016  
2 April — 12 September

21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Design After Design

CAMPUS E CONTRO CAMPUS  
Architetture per studiare e ricercare  
4 April — 12 September 2016

—  
The theme of the university campus is central to the debate on the future of Milan. It represents a challenge for the new order of the city in its metropolitan dimension, an opportunity for architectural and urban regeneration that can give rise to new, updated, important systems of communal spaces.

ULTRA / BEYOND CITTÀ STUDI  
Projects for Politecnico di Milano  
4 April — 7 May 2016

—  
The exhibition ULTRA / BEYOND CITTÀ STUDI, the first of three shows in the Campus & Contro-campus cycle, presents projects and research that offer different perspectives on the future of the Milan campus of the Politecnico: from the Sustainable Campus - in collaboration with the Università degli Studi di Milano - to the recent proposal of Renzo Piano, all the way to the new project for a Research and Innovation center on the campus of Jiaotong University in China; from the results of the MIAW 2016 International Workshop to the projects of the Atmospheres 2016 competition for students. The exhibition thus becomes a large urban laboratory active in the city and for the city, a hotbed of new ideas, actions and strategies.

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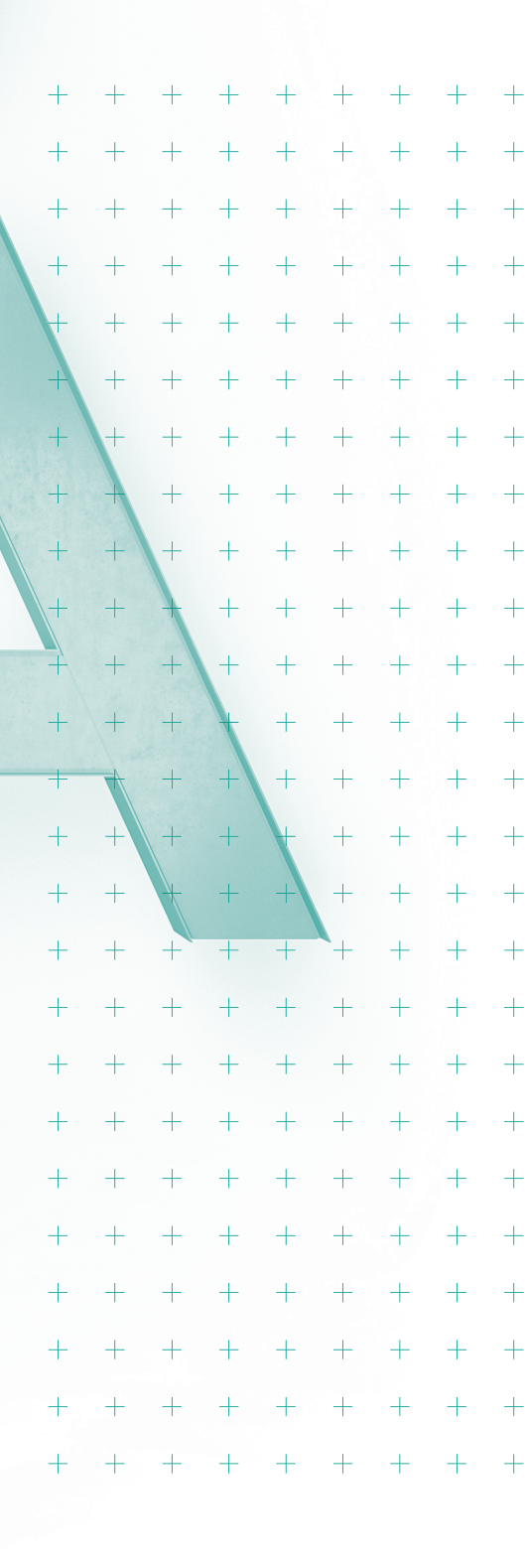
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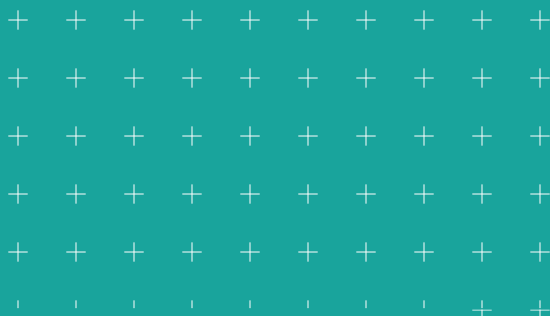
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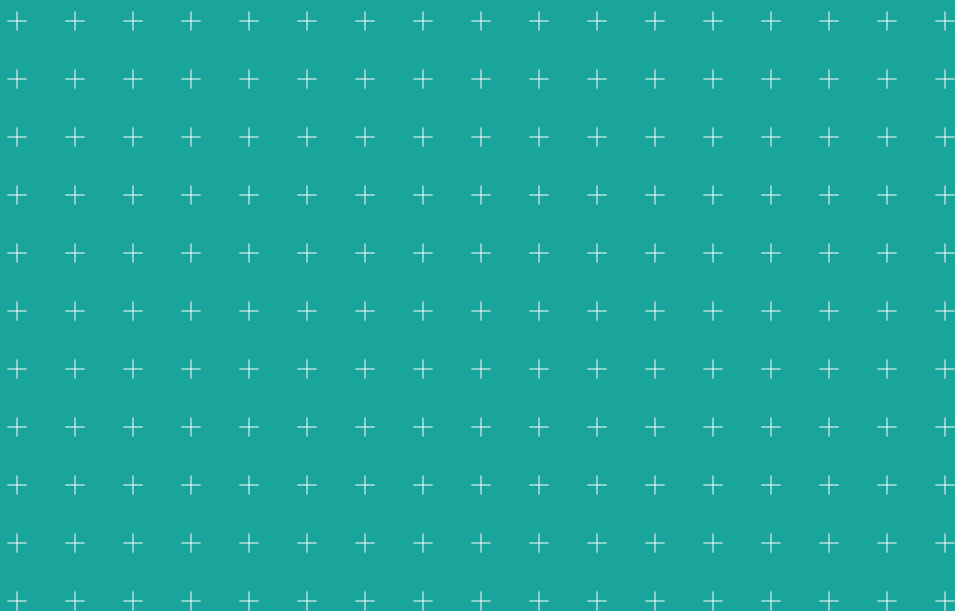
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## CAMPUS, FUTURE TENSE

→ ALESSANDRO ROCCA, GENNARO POSTIGLIONE

The future of the Leonardo Campus begins for us in 2016, when thanks to a series of parallel initiatives, a remarkable quantity of actions that produce ideas, proposals and true architectural projects regarding the Milan campus of the Polytechnic are activated in just a few months. The exhibition and this catalogue are entitled "Ultra / Beyond Città Studi" because these initiatives are not limited to intervention on the constructed context, but extend beyond its historical limits to spread out into the Città Studi district, other parts of the city of Milan and, as we will see, even other continents.

Most of the projects, however, concern the historic campus, intervening on the high density of the buildings that starting in 1915, when the first stone was officially laid for the new facility of the "Regio Politecnico di Milano" at Piazza Leonardo da Vinci, have spread eastward from the original nucleus, halting at the urban barrier of the railway to the north, infiltrating the compact fabric of the Lambrate district, while forming a long line

tangent to the facilities of the State University to the south. This year of 2016 is also a new beginning because it comes to terms with the results of intervention we can undoubtedly list among the recent design actions of greatest impact, the abandonment of the Bovisa facility - where the School of Architecture is concerned - and the institution, from January of this year, of the new School of Architecture Urbanism and Construction Engineering, which at least for the main headquarters in Milan, is entirely located on the Leonardo Campus. The first immediate consequence of this operation is the need for new spaces, not only for teaching, and the widespread sensation that apart from the perspectives of the individual schools, it will be necessary to work to improve the quality and the availability of all the facilities required by the life of an institution that in recent years has updated its characteristics to present itself as a credible university pole of international stature.

The initiatives of these last few months, presented in this catalogue, offer absolutely non-homogeneous modes, objects and responses; knowing that we run the risk of some confusion, we have combined projects by great architects with exercises conducted by students, often encountering attitudes and professional skills that are not precisely comparable. Yet we have decided to run this risk because we think this plurality of registers aptly represents the cultural vitality of our school of architecture, capable of asking questions about its own future in an open, shared way, using its own material consistency as a terrain of experimentation, an initial place – for many students – to begin independent reasoning about public and private spaces, about the time of study and free time, the transformation of a complex, living environment, a campus that is city and a neighborhood that is also, but not only, a university campus.

The wealth and multiplicity of a hybrid campus, with occasional and at times ambiguous borders, is also reflected in the vast variety

of the design experiences. The Anglo-Saxon system based on the more or less free arrangement of pavilions in a context that tends to shape itself around the idea of the garden city cannot be reproduced here. Nor can this context be compared to the Roman grandeur of the Città Universitaria designed by Marcello Piacentini, or the compact form of the Parisian pole by Jussieu; we do not have the vast lawns and riverfront of MIT, not to mention the inimitable aplomb of the age-old institutions of Great Britain. Instead we have this deep sense of belonging and interface with the urban fabric, the compact character and continuity of that fabric, the subway stations, the streetcar line, the proximity and mixing with presences and activities external to the university, which also correspond to a profound integration of the school in the cultural and affective tissue of the city, with a relationship that beyond contingencies represents a factor of strength and historical design identity for both parties. In recent years the processes of internationalization of the

city and of the school have gone hand in hand, and in spite of the difficult times both Milan and the school have revealed strong signs of vitality, energy for planning and implementation. The case of Expo, though controversial, has aptly represented the capacity of the school to establish a relationship with a program conceived elsewhere but in which we have acted as protagonists in the implementation phase, developing a program of collaboration that has led to the creation of nine theme clusters designed by professors and students of the Polytechnic. This continuity of relations with Milanese institutions takes concrete form this year in this active participation in the 21st Triennale, with three exhibitions that approach the theme of architecture for the university in relation to the future and the historical legacy of the Polytechnic, and contemporary international experiences.

**Competitions, studies, proposals, beyond the designated limits**

The characteristic shared by the projects we are presenting is their desire, or their necessity, to go beyond the designated limits. In different ways, all these projects never limit themselves to completing, reconstructing, inserting, but bring a new viewpoint, entering the dense existing context with courage, opening up new perspectives and modes, whether for a social micro-space at the edge of a parking lot or for a completely new building.

The project presented by Renzo Piano last October is perhaps the most realistic and concrete proposal, working on the difference between the level of the city and the recessed level of the architecture campus to create lecture halls and workshops in direct contact with the buildings that bear the inimitable mark of Gio Ponti, like the "Nave" and the "Trifoglio". What emerges is an idea of a campus of even greater density, a complex, green space thanks to the planting of one hundred new trees, which tends to resemble a megastructure formed by

buildings born separately and new constructions that connect them, unite them and transform them into a single active, technological and transparent scenario. The finest quality of this proposal seems to be its capacity to regenerate the outdoor spaces, now poorly organized and poorly utilized, and to construct a new system of relations between buildings, bringing out their very high architectural quality while increasing the level of technological and environmental quality of the campus with an updated conception of places of study and work. Piano's project assumes the responsibility of introducing two new buildings, two witnesses to the architecture of our time, which extending the series that connects the buildings by Ponti to the one by Viganò, represents and continues a meaningful temporal cross-section, also from the didactic viewpoint of Milanese and Italian Modernism.

The projects developed by the students, on the other hand, as is only fitting, have entirely different characteristics, and come from two educational

experiences with a clearly experimental spirit. The first is the competition Atmospheres, which from the end of 2015 to the early part of this year led to the production of hundreds of projects independently developed by the students, i.e. outside of the courses and workshops guided by faculty, to imagine small support structures inside and outside the campus. The results of the competition are summed up in the three winning projects and five honorable mentions, though they cannot suffice to provide a full overview of the participation and the results achieved. Looking at the hundreds of drawings in the exhibition, the multiplicity of the inventions and modes of expression becomes clear, the breadth of a ductile, at times ironic and irreverent shared imaginary, also with recurring design tics that are meaningful signs of the preferences, cultural orientations and technical preparation of our students. The exhibition, more spacious than the catalogue, presents this entire output, offered as precious material, an original overview and census of the architecture of the Polytechnic seen from the

vantage point of the students. Rooms, seats, tables, places for socializing and thinking, canopies, shelters, galleries, the projects of Atmospheres are a sort of catalogue of the architectural imagination of our students in this particular moment. The ability to develop many different original proposals inside a clearly circumscribed theme in terms of size stands out, as does the focus on the real situation, which in this case is clearly motivated by the fact that the prize consists in the actual implementation of the project at the Leonardo Campus. The three winning projects gained success by proposing objects that are easily built, which thanks to the companies supporting the initiative will be constructed and become a permanent part of the Leonardo Campus. They are two concepts for seating and one system of seats and worktops specially designed to be anchored to the internal parapets of the building by Vittoriano Viganò, the central headquarters of the School of Architecture. The five honorable mentions are also very interesting, demonstrating a higher level of complexity in the approach to themes less

connected with design, already on an architectural scale, as creative reflections on the form and use of small spaces at the service of the life of students: places for a quick meal, portable display structures, open capsules for a relaxing break or socializing, permeable walls based on the model of the famous Storefront Gallery in New York and – the lightest, most elegant proposal – a gramophone-armchair to spread the music contained in a smartphone or tablet.

The second important educational experience of the start of 2016, again focusing on the Leonardo Campus, is the MIAW, the Milan Intensive Architectural Workshop, which for the third consecutive year has brought nine international visiting professors to our school of architecture to conduct design workshops on pre-set themes and places. After having operated in the last two editions on areas indicated by the program Riformare Milano (in cooperation with the municipal government of Milan), these year all the themes were chosen in-house, at the edges

or in the immediate vicinity of the campus. The initial concept was to transform the campus into an archipelago, i.e. to accept and augment the fragmentary and hybrid nature of the Leonardo Campus, mixed and mingling with the continuum of dense, varied urbanization of Città Studi, thinking about growth driven by opportunities to be exploited in a pragmatic way, in isolated interventions, completions and interstitial actions, with the aim of revitalizing the image of the campus in an updated version, with experimental research on new morphologies and typologies on which to base the design of architecture and open spaces for activities of study, teaching and research. To outline this "Future Leonardo Archipelago" the eight architectural design workshops focused on eight different areas, imagining that the campus could renew itself from within, extend beyond its boundaries and find new forms of interaction with the facilities and spaces that exist around it. As happens in a successful workshop, interesting ideas, drawings and models were produced, envisioning imaginative

solutions and, in many cases, ones that were quite close to reality. This was the case, for example, of the university center designed by the students of the Japanese visiting professor Go Hasegawa on a corner lot inside the campus, producing something halfway between an edifice and a vertical garden, or of the typological studies conducted by the students of Luis Antonio Jorge to redevelop the lot facing Via Ampère, where the abandoned National Research Center building presently stands. The reasoning of Yichen Lu, designer of the Chinese pavilion at Expo 2015, is very clear, surrounding the Giuriati sports complex with a continuous inhabitable wall with a constant section, that was then subdivided and designed independently by each team of students. The flying model by the students of Jo Van Den Berghe depicts a series of spaces and imagers that between the buildings of the architecture campus and the Ponzio swimming pool invent and reveal hidden spatial dimensions, in which a memorial to Umberto Eco is nestled, and tall chimneys become new urban landmarks.

The patient work of the Sustainable Campus team takes a very different angle based on an action of cultural awareness raising and social sharing of the project, with a task force of professors and researchers that has worked for years to improve the functional quality of the outdoor spaces of the campus in a very concrete way. The work of Sustainable Campus that has achieved the best results has to do with the transformation of Piazza Leonardo da Vinci, which in a progression of design studies and proposals, analytical dossiers, laborious negotiations with administrative authorities, participatory public events, demonstrative actions and temporary installations has obtained first the closing of the area to automobiles, and then the restructuring of the paved surfaces and walkways in a project that will be implemented precisely in this period at the start of 2016. To complete this short guide to the projects in the exhibition, we can look at two experiences distant from the Leonardo Campus, which nevertheless originate, in terms of preparation and development, from the professors working

in our school of architecture. The first is an ambitious Call for Projects on the part of a team composed of experts from the City of Milan and the Polytechnic, to stimulate proposals for the new university campus to be built in the Bovisa district, in the context of an intervention that alongside the structures already operating for some time of the La Masa Campus, calls for the creation of new university departments, a science and technology park, services on an urban and neighborhood scape, and a large residential development. The Polytechnic faculty responded to this call by forming twelve design groups, which in mid-April will present twelve new visions for the Bovisa Campus, coming to terms with the problems of an area that over the last twenty years has been the focus of many studies and projects, from those developed by the faculty of the Polytechnic in 1990, the first coordinated action for the recovery of the "drop" of Bovisa, to the master plan presented by Euromilano, and signed by OMA / Rem Koolhaas, in 2008, for a futuristic Milanese Silicon Valley.



Bovisa, in the outlook of the organizers of the call, can become a campus of a new generation, where the university departments are joined by an abundance of spaces for the so-called science park, a settlement to contain companies and studios capable of collaborating directly with scientific research to construct, together, a new pole of national importance. An outlook that corresponds in some ways to the Human Technopole recently launched by the Italian government for the Expo areas, and which will probably have to come to terms with this competitor, in what promises to be a difficult face-off to find a precise position in the Milanese and national framework. In the meantime, the guidelines for Bovisa combine these rare functions with a long series of typically urban facilities, from large retail (Esselunga is part of the consortium of owners in the Area of Urban Transformation) to the park, all the way to a very large number of housing units for a maximum quantity of about 2000 inhabitants, a truly massive forecast with respect to a zone that now has a large quantity of new buildings

that have not been sold, as well as many underutilized and abandoned areas. The request to envision development in phases, advanced by the organizers, imposes the formulation of hypotheses regarding a future that seems uncertain, and therefore urges that flexible programs subject to modification be developed, that are sufficiently elastic to respond to the situation, clear and strong enough to orient the future of the area also over the medium and long term. At the time of the opening of this exhibition the projects for Bovisa are still being developed, and they will be presented here by their authors together with a selection of informative materials used for the competition, which will later be replaced by the new projects.

The second Off Campus project is much farther away. It has to do with a building for research and innovation for another campus, that of the Chinese University of Jiaotong, in Xi'an. This is a case of productive collaboration between two institutions that are particularly interesting in understanding

what are the most suitable typologies and spaces to house activities of research and creative interconnection, of the socialization of forms of knowledge. Based on an agreement between the two universities, a group of our teachers guided by Remo Dorigati has prepared the project for a futuristic, technological but also very friendly building, designed to encourage the circulation of ideas and people, to construct environments and images that reassure and stimulate, forming the best scenario in which to develop new methods of study and scientific research. The design of this building – and its implementation would underscore this even more – marks the opening of a new mode of interaction with foreign institutional partners, which would represent at the highest level the reality of the exchange of knowledge and research connected with the theory and practice of architectural design.

In 2013, at the time of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary, our school held a competition entitled “The Polytechnic in 150 years” which asked questions of this type: “what will the Polytechnic be like? How will it be inserted in the city? Who will be its students? What will be the relationships among its protagonists?” The program then imagined “a school, a city that will be the result of an aesthetic not yet dreamed of.” Producing very short texts, the competitors looked into a future that – to read the winning contributions – seems to be the prisoner of dehumanizing technologies, disrupted by aberrant social conditions, permeated by violence and solitude, saddened by visions directly borrowed from the science fiction of the last century. In the end, to represent the future it was necessary to look back on the classic stereotypes of science fiction in the second half of the 20th century, and the imaginary of Hollywood, underlining their most despairing features, their most apocalyptic nightmares. The next 150 years, evidently, are perceived as a time in

which everything we have will be lost, replaced by new, infinitely worse forms of social and individual life. In one of the stories an armed guard, alone in the night, who defends the Bovisa gasometers from the attacks of a desperate populace reacts to the void that surrounds him and his alienation by aiming his weapon at the moon, which has become an enclave set aside for only the luckiest earthlings.

The projects of "Ultra Città Studi" are the expression of a very different approach, based on the conviction that the future is now and that the key that allows us to enter is already in our hands. Architecture has always meant the capacity to achieve utopia; perhaps in a partial or rough way, but always in keeping with a positive, "edifying" attitude, that has to critically interpret the challenges posed by society and transfer them into creative and operative energy. As we have seen, these projects have involved a very wide range of subjects with very different characteristics, from great architects to foreign visiting professors to teachers at the Polytechnic, from the

technicians of the City of Milan to the citizen of Città Studi and the students of the various levels of the degree programs in architecture and urbanism. The results are multiple and reflect a broad and conscious cultural pluralism, and a capacity for comprehension and dialogue that is also reflected in the morphological destiny of the campus. The borders of Città Studi are and should continue to be permeable, not barriers but vectors of communication and places of encounter for the reinforcement and renewal of our architectural culture and our creative energy.

1. 1.

# 5 DRAWINGS FOR THE ARCHITECTURE CAMPUS AT POLITECNICO DI MILANO

→ RENZO PIANO

## Credits

Renzo Piano Building Workshop

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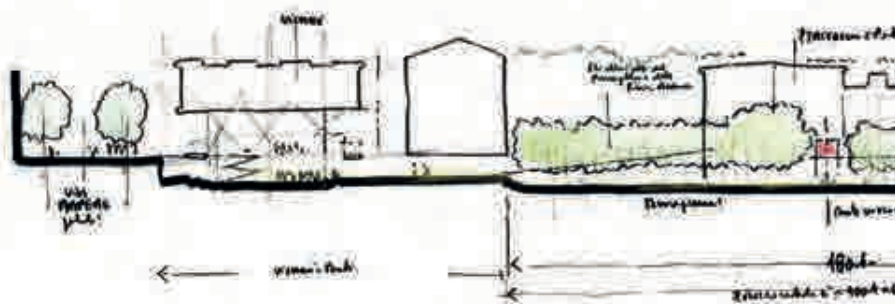
The proposal of Renzo Piano formulated at the request of the Rector for the creation of new workshops and study spaces for the training of architects reinterprets, on an urban scale, the present configuration of the Bonardi Campus, formed by the juxtaposition of buildings designed by Giò Ponti and Vittoriano Viganò, but without suitable quality of the outdoors spaces, presently set aside only for parking.

Piano's personal interpretation of the basement level (the true level zero of the system) comes from awareness of the way the students experience the reality of the Campus, starting with the Patio of the Architecture Building, faced by classrooms and the library, which represents a gathering place but also an area for study and events, often open to the city; the desire to live in the rare green spaces, like a hub of the paths that connect the campus to the historical part of the Polytechnic. The need to connect the open and "episodic" spaces has prompted Piano to develop a range of possible interventions, indicated as "mending," as he puts it: the elimination of the block known as the "submarine," presently the home of the modeling workshop, which forms a physical barrier between the original Architecture Building and the Trifoglio and Nave area, and the construction along the edges on Via Bonardi and the Ponzio swimming pool of new volumes, low enough to ensure perfect visibility from the street level of the buildings by Ponti.

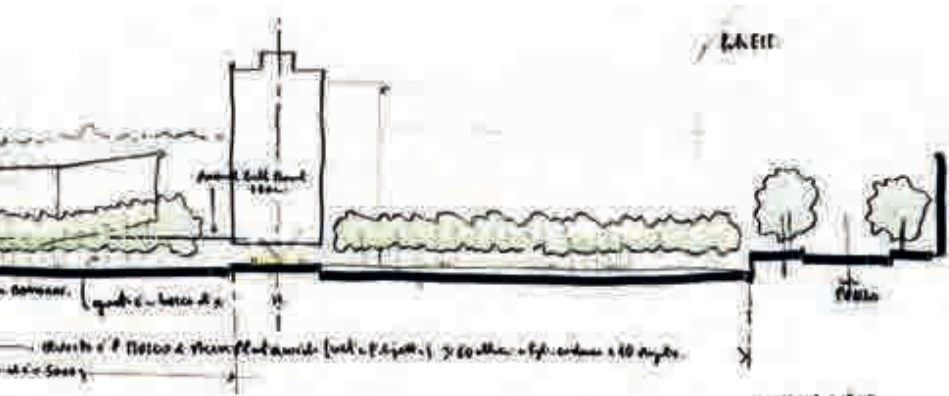
A grove of 100 trees, in place of the present parking area, creates the link between closed and open spaces, for total sharing and gathering among students, and for the activities that take place around the zone: the new modeling workshop, an avant-garde facility in line with the world's finest schools, study halls, outdoor spaces for installing architectural pieces. Because "learning by doing," as Piano believes, is an important and very effective part of education. The roofs of the new buildings will become open spaces, connected to the present urban system, shared with local residents and facing the new green space of the Polytechnic.

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→ [A grove of 100 trees, in place of the present parking area.](#)



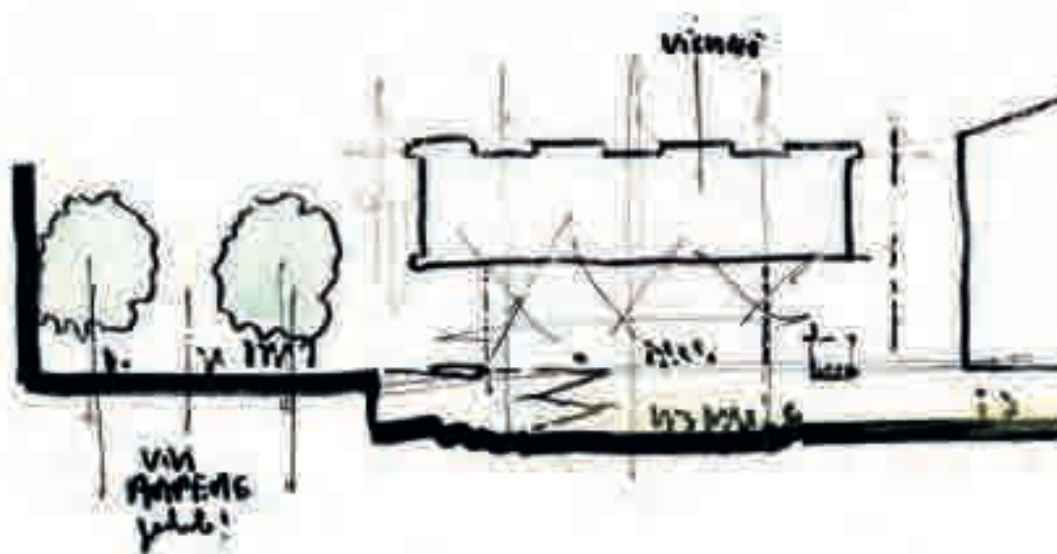
**MILANO 26/10/015 IL CAMPO + ARCHITETTURA**



AL POLITECNICO DI MILANO SEZIONE EST/OVEST

SCALE 1:300

M.L.

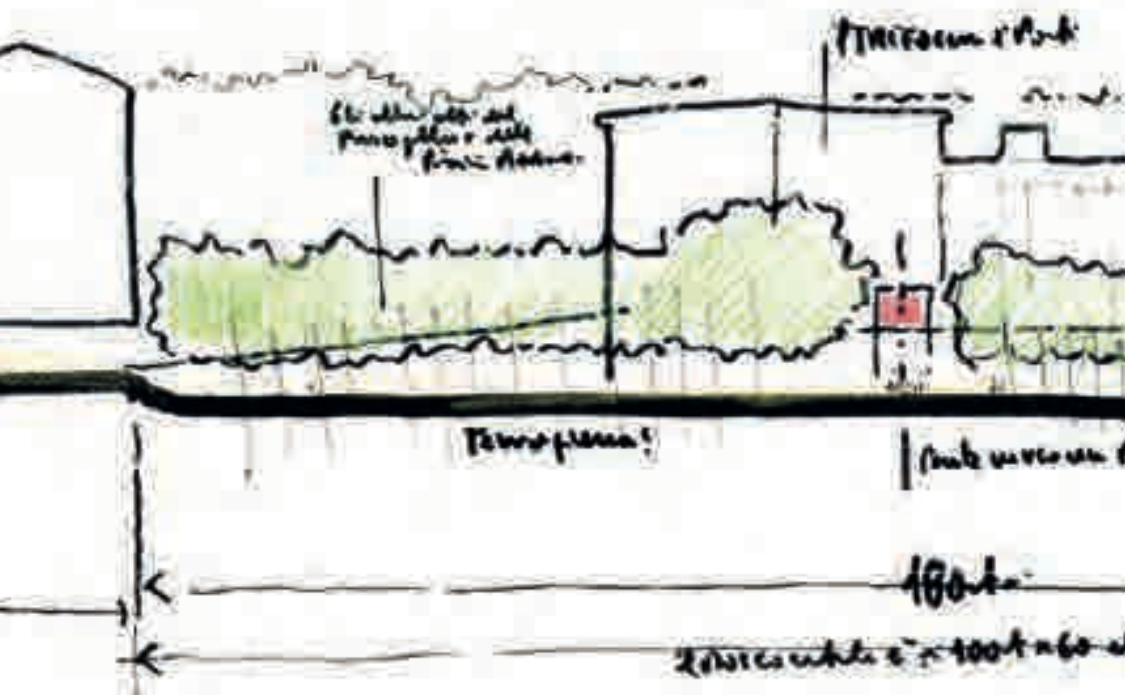


Wine & Food

MILANO 26/10/01

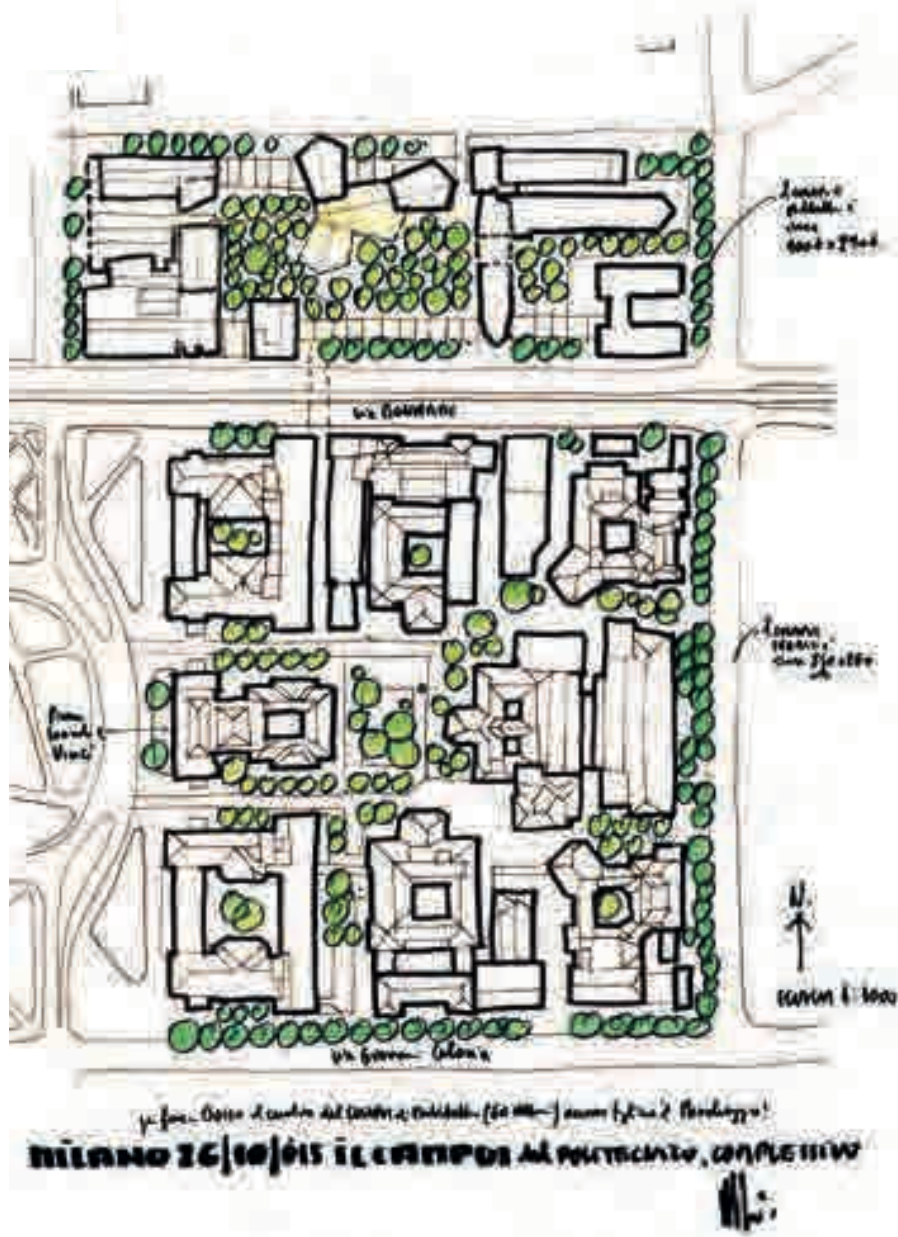
→ A modeling workshop, study halls, outdoor spaces.

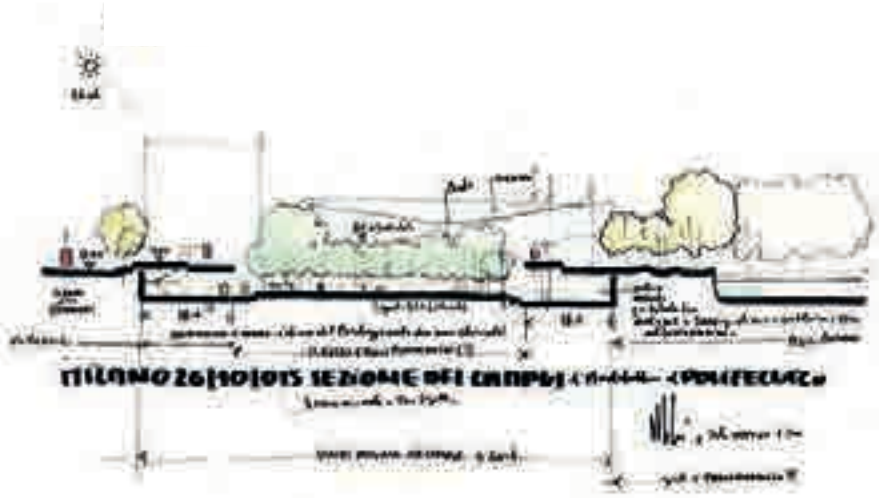




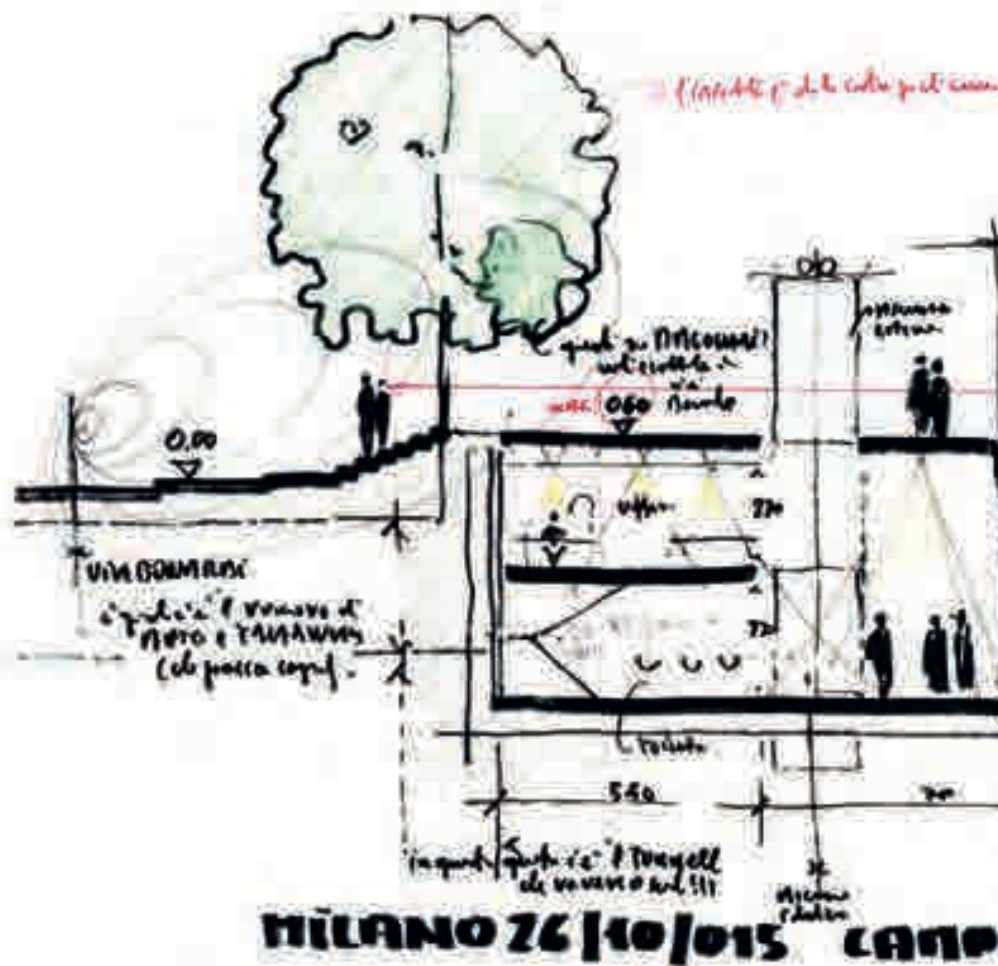
# IL CAMPUS + ARCHITETTURA

→ The roofs will become open spaces, connected to the present urban system.

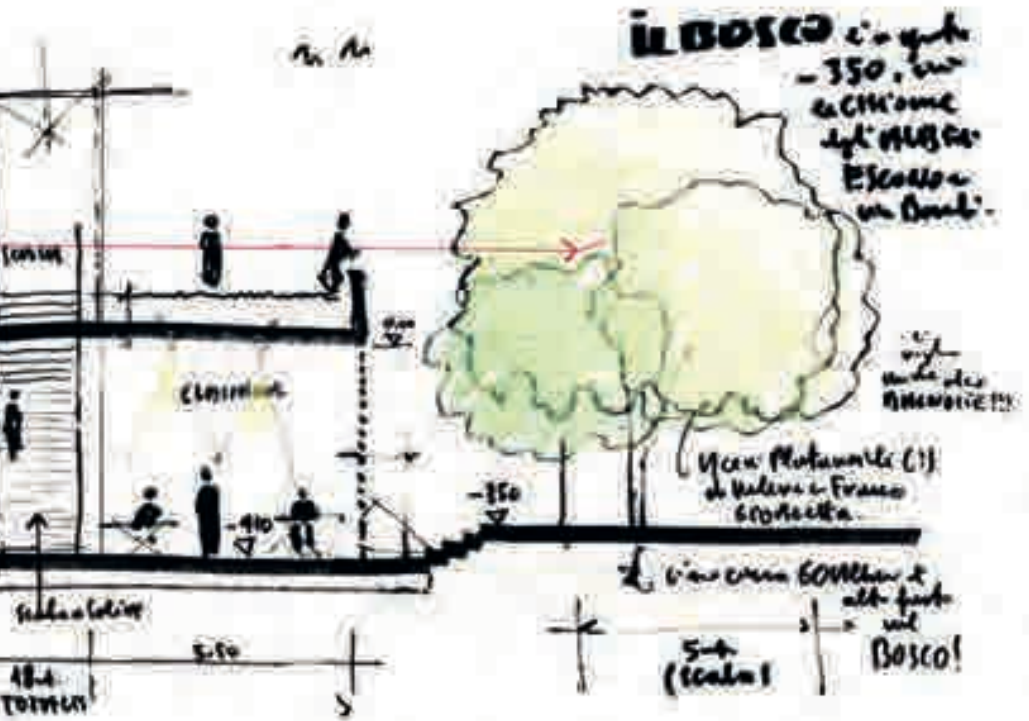




→ Masterplan and cross section.



di un'aula; 110 finestre sul bosco!!!



**UI + ARCHITETTURA AL POLITECNICO**  
 dell'idea di volume da recuperare sul lato sud  
 (lato ex Bonardi).

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Patio and Exhibition Space / School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering.

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