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Proceedings

EURAU 2016

European Symposium on Research
in Architecture and Urban Design

Ion Mincu University of
Architecture and Urbanism
Bucharest, Romania



<http://eurau2016.uauim.ro>



Bucharest, September 28 - 30th, 2016

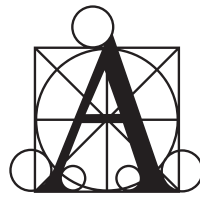
IN BETWEEN SCALES



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EURAU 2016 European Symposium on Research in Architecture and Urban Design: In Between Scales

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Introduction

The eighth edition of the European Symposium on Research in Architecture and Urban Design will be held from the 28th to the 30th of September 2016 in Bucharest.

The seminar will take place at the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning from Bucharest in collaboration with the institutions that organized the previous editions:

École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Marseille, on doctoral research (2004);

École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et Paysage de Lille, on large scale (2005);

Association des Instituts Supérieurs Brussels-Liège-Mons (IESA), on cultural heritage (2006);

Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, under the theme cultural landscape (2008);

Facoltà di Architettura dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, under the theme venustas (2010);

Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, on public space and contemporary city (2012);

Faculty of Architecture of the Istanbul Technical University, on composite cities (2014).

The project EURAU is constituted within a network of schools and researchers in Architecture and Urbanism, meeting every two years to share the status of their investigation. In the long-term, it is intended to lead to the creation of a physical meeting and deposit space with all the research undertaken and ongoing in Europe to facilitate the sharing of resources and deepening of knowledge in these scientific areas.

The main concern of the EURAU is to establish itself as a place of debate and discussion of thematic disciplines of Architecture, City and Town Planning.

The theme of EURAU 2016 is "In Between Scales."

Assoc.Prof. Beatrice-Gabriela JÖGER, Arch, PhD, UAUIM, Bucharest, Romania

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History

The EURAU project was initiated by the French Ministry of Culture, when, in 2004, it launched the proposal of an annual symposium for researchers dealing with Research in Architecture and Urbanism. The various editions were organized by different European schools of Architecture with a coordinated effort by a broad group of university professors and researchers.

The purpose of this initiative is to enable the confrontation between researchers concerned with the Architecture and the City on the European scene.

The acronym EURAU describes the congregation of the objectives which motivate these events: EU for "European Union", R for "Research", A for "Architecture" and U for "Urbanism".

Important Dates

December 2015	Call for papers
January 15th, 2016	Abstract and registration possible
April 15th, 2016	Abstract Submission Deadline
May 5th, 2016	Notification of acceptance
June 30th, 2016	Deadline for Final Paper submission for the publication of the proceedings
June 30th, 2016	Registration Deadline for Authors
September 28th-30th 2016	Conference dates
October 1st-2nd 2016	Post-Conference Tours

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I N B E T W E E N S C A L E S

How can one define in-betweenness in terms of built environments?

We want to explore the connections and cracks between the scales of public, communal and personal appropriation of the (un)built matter and space.

We want to inspect the intervals between built and unbuilt (virtual?) objects, between territory and settlements, between settlements and communal built environment, between public and private places and spaces, and between private and intimate spaces.

We want to investigate the links – and mutual misunderstandings - between culture of architecture and the culture of the vernacular; between the culture of the object based, top-to-bottom design procedures and the process based, bottom-up design strategies of contemporary parametricism.

Also, we want to further elaborate on the mostly unseen and unexplored conceptual territories between social awareness and activism with respect to preservation, housing, and migration.

And for this we address to Research, Education, Design, Implementation. All are processes, with different aims, at different scales, but all are processes of creation that are using research as a tool. The goal is to get out of the consecrated fields' routine in order to investigate the creativity that bridges those fields, the one that is making possible the passage between the scales, the one that is guiding us towards an inner inter-disciplinarity.

These are the theme and subjects proposed to be tackled by the EURAU2016 and everyone is welcomed to understand and develop them according to their background and affinities.

Keynote Speakers

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Danilo Vespier



Danilo Vespier was born in Milan in 1972. He finished his studies in Italy, alternating some periods of formation in France and Belgium. He graduated the Faculty of Architecture in 1998 and in the same year, he moved to Paris. Here he remained for 2 years, collaborating with Mario Cucinella in an evocative atmosphere of a picturesque office inside Corbusier's Maison Plainex building situated in the 13th Arrondissement.

During this period, he gave his contribution to various international competitions and research projects, especially oriented towards sustainability and energetic efficiency. He dedicates to the Stazione marittima Otranto, Italy, project, and participates at the requalification and the restyling of the metro station "Villejuif Léo Lagrange" designed together with other symbolic interventions dedicated to the centenary of Paris underground public transportation.

In 2000 he arrives to Genoa. Here he finds again the sea. There is a crowded and laced harbor by a sum of activities, behind which developed over the centuries such a rich and fascinating city, but also which allows it to be read and discovered. In this manner begins the adventure in Renzo Piano Building Workshop. There took place a personal and professional association for 16 years.

The first design commitments are in Genoa, for the completion of a series of interventions of requalification that began with the Colombiade in 1992, which received new finances in the occasion of the G8 meeting from 2001. The office initiated the requalification project for the antique harbor waterfront by a series of activities for the public and especially by constructing the Bolla, a new glass Biosphere intended to host a collection of plants, part of a small ecosystem that in now part of the exhibition path of the aquarium.

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This becomes shortly the new image of the city.

In this manner the RPBW entrust him to follow and design different interventions all over the world, as an important reference of the office, up to the proposal of becoming associate of Renzo Piano Building Workshop in 2007.

He manages, among other assignments, the final phase of the project and of the site of the Liturgical Auditorium of Father Pio from San Giovanni Rotondo and is responsible of "Jardim de Braço de Prata" in Lisbon, a new 140.000 m² neighborhood, part of a larger requalification project of the industrial site along river Tago.

Danilo Vespier directs a design and research activity more and more concentrated on the great confrontations of architecture and urbanism, typical for the current period. His works treats: the suburbs, the urban "voids", the transformation of the big abandoned industrial areas, the public and social value of the architecture, the sustainability and the energetically efficiency.

These are the main topics that come into discussion for the project of the Le Albere Quarter from Trento, where he is in charge and follows it entirely, from the first conceptual sketches to the complete construction, which ended in summer 2013. The realization represents an important event of urban requalification that transforms a large industrial abandoned area (former zone Michelin) in a new multifunctional neighborhood, connecting it to the existing urban texture. The project consists of: over 11 ha, 16 buildings of a total of 200.000 m², 25.000 m² of offices, residential area with a total of 350 apartments, commercial spaces, public constructions, streets, piazzas and an urban park of 5 ha.

Inside this urban intervention is born "MUSE", the new Trento Museum of Sciences.

Danilo Vespier follows personally the designing of "MUSE" from the elaboration of the first concept, through the long process of the executive design, but also by assuming the Artistic Direction in site and following the project management in museum organizing.

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The key concepts that he expresses from the first drawings: monitoring of the articulation of spaces through the insertion of big voids, the interaction with the natural light, the limited use of interior wall divisions which allows space perception from each point, integration of new exhibit modalities that connects the language of the "contents" with that of the building, are becoming the characteristic elements of the project, which determined the big success to the public. Inaugurated in July 2013, it attracted one million visitors in the first year after its opening.

In interventions of this magnitude, one of the major challenges is to focus on the themes of sustainability and energetically efficiency that should be pursued without overlapping, but integrated into the creation process, becoming an expressive opportunity, a part of the architectural language.

In 2009, Danilo Vespier obtains the LEED professional accreditation, issued by Green Building Certification Institute. Thus, the project "Quartiere Le Alberi" finds itself among the winners of "Awards Casa Clima 2013". MUSE obtains the LEED Gold certification.

Always next to Renzo Piano, he continues to handle projects in the USA, Asia and Australia, including "Soho Tower", one of the residential towers of New York, "Concept" for the National Palace Museum in Taipei or the project for three residential towers in Sydney.

In parallel with the large-scale design, he is dealing with various temporary performing, related to disclosing exhibitions or events. In 2004 during the "RPBW, Pezzo per Pezzo" exhibition held at the Palazzo della Regione di Padova, the project aims and regards the execution of the work entitled "Tavolo Dell'Architettura" (Table of Architecture), an urban temporary and itinerant performing design adapted to expose awarded projects from an international competition. Seven blocks of Vicenza stone, arranged in a succession of over 20 meters length, are cut and carved in order to highlight the heterogeneity of extraction signs alongside with the material's natural structural vibration.

Special adjustable steel supports sustain them, opportunely positioned, for a more discreet appearance.

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In addition of the design activity, Danilo Vespier is dedicated to disseminating and sharing his professional experiences toward academic and professional community. He sustained lecturers at the Faculty of Architecture from Reggio Calabria and at the Faculty of Engineering from Trento. In 2010 he participated as a speaker at the seminar entitled "Il future del mondo dell edilizia sostenibile e LEED Italia" (The future of sustainable building world and LEED Italy), in the Social Theatre of Trento. In 2014, he was invited to Marseille by the President of the National Order of Architects of France to lecture at the seminar "Cloture des Universites d'été de l'Architecture" (Closure of the Architecture Summer Universities). Also in 2014, during the general assembly of the Architects' Council of Europe, he was invited to present MUSE and Quartiere Le Albere. He is one of the lecturers in the international cycle about Ecological Neighborhoods held in the auditorium of „Seminario Maggiore of Padua.

By the end of 2015, he decided to establish together with Onur Teke, a new design company, named Teke Vespier Architects, with the intention of finding new spaces that combine the interests toward innovative expression forms with the substantial experience in the field of the two architects. Currently he is developing several projects, carrying out an activity in which the sensitivity for the context and its equilibrium, the study of materials and attention for construction details, as for sustainability issues, are the tools of a research method by design followed with passion and determination.

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Andrei Şerbescu



Andrei Şerbescu (1977) lives and works in Bucharest. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of UAUIM in 2002, year since he has also been teaching as a lecturer at the University's design studios. He was invited critic for final projects and presentations at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford (UK) and Universidad Politecnica de Catalunya, Barcelona (Spain). In 2011 he presented his PhD thesis about vernacular architecture in contemporary Romania. He is one of the two founders of the architectural office ADNBA, since 2003. (www.adnba.ro)

Awards, recognitions

Shortlisted among the 40 projects at the European Prize for Architecture Mies van der Rohe Awards, Barcelona, 2015

Milan Zlokovic Prize for the best architecture project in the Balkans area, Belgrade, 2015

Prize of the Architecture Section – Collective houses, at the Bucharest Architecture Biennale, 2014

Prize of the Architecture Section – Collective houses, at the Bucharest Architecture Annual, 2014

Shortlisted project at the World of Architecture Festival, Housing Section, Singapore, 2014

First Prize – Rehabilitation and remodeling of the Johannes Honterus courtyard, Biserica Neagră, Braşov (ADNBA + Exhibit Arhitectura), 2011

Mention – Remodeling of Piaţa Universităţii, Bucureşti (ADNBA + Exhibit Arhitectura), 2011

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Mention – Extension of the Central University Library, Cluj-Napoca, 2011

Prize of the Timișoara Architecture Annual, category > 1000sqm, 2010

Second Prize - Europan 10, Eisenstadt, Austria, 2010

Second Prize ex aequo – Arhetipuri / competition for public space, Bucharest

First Prize – Extending and functional remodeling of the National University of Arts premises, Bucharest, 2008

Mention – Europan 9, Bisceglie, Italia, 2008

Runner-up, RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) President's Medals for Architectural Education, London, 2002

Nominations at: Bucharest Architecture Biennale, Collective houses, 2014; Romanian Green Building Council Awards, Bucharest, 2014; Bucharest Architecture Biennale, category > 1000sqm, 2010; Arhitext Design Awards, rehabilitation section, 2011; Arhitext Design Awards, dwellings section, 2009; Bucharest Architecture Biennale, interior design section, 2004;

Publications, exhibitions

Dwelling together. 6 apartment buildings by ADN BA (Locuind împreună. 6 blocuri de ADN BA), Zeppelin Zoom, Zeppelin & "Ion Mincu" University Press, Bucharest, 2014 (with Ștefan Ghenciulescu, Adrian Untaru and Bogdan Brădățeanu)

Projects by ADNBA published in: Detail, A10, Deutsche Bauzeitung, Zeppelin, Igloo, Arhitext Design and others

Projects by ADNBA exhibited in: Bucharest, Barcelona, Bruxelles, London, Venice, Belgrade, Vienna, Rome

"Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning (UAUIM) / lecturer.

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Alejandro Aravena, introductory text for ADNBA's contribution to La Biennale di Venezia 2016 (15th International Architecture Exhibition Catalogue. Reporting from the front, p. 316).

“The Work of ADN in Romania: Fighting the weight of dullness in the mediocre real-estate world”

We tend to be worried about scarcity, emergency, crisis and all kinds of threats that jeopardize the quality of our actions as architects. But at least under these circumstances the enemy is clear. What is more dangerous is when the opponent is diffuse: the apparently inoffensive traditional middle-class housing and real-estate market, for example, which is responsible for the majority of the square meters built world wide. In that niche, nobody dares step out of the set of rules because of the fear of being replaced by the next architect in the queue. The vicious circle is as follows: the developer claims to know what the public wants. This is an euphemism to avoid saying that he (normally it is a he) has calculated the margins within which private gain and profit can still be assured. This set of rules shouldn't be too difficult, otherwise the whole commercial operation would become too difficult. This means that any average architect can do the job. So whoever wants to challenge the status quo (threatening financial return) is dismissed or treated as a commodity since average skills can easily be replaced.

In addition to this, it is a field where is hard to prove that there is a problem. Basic needs are satisfied, so no life is in danger, and there is no humanitarian crisis at stake. There is no sense of urgency to solve anything. In the best case the answer is “acceptable” architecture. In the worst case, it is mediocrity replicated hectare by hectare. Although marketing tries to convince us of a different story, providing quality of life to people is not what brings developers to work every morning; to the real-estate world, architecture is a mere means to make money. The merit of ADN is that of struggling for architecture's quality where apparently there is no conflict.

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ADNBA / Andrei Șerbescu, Adrian Untaru, Bogdan Brădățeanu (www.adnba.ro)

ADNBA was established in 2003 in Bucharest, by Andrei Șerbescu and Adrian Untaru, later joined by Bogdan Brădățeanu. The work of our practice is characterised by our attempt to search for the right balance between experiment and experience in the complex and delicate landscape of contemporary life. While we believe in architecture as a creative gesture, with cultural value and social responsibility, we also acknowledge the sometimes hazardous, and always subjective distinction between such attributes, in a rapidly changing environment as nowadays Romania and the whole of Eastern Europe. The challenges brought by the different scales, the diverse urban and cultural contexts, or the various building types we have worked with so far, have all enriched our experience and understanding of the many-sided nature of our profession.

Our practice has achieved critical recognition for both our built projects and our competitions entries, many of which have been awarded in national and international juries. We are currently involved in a diverse body of work, including mostly residential and public projects. In all of these, we strive for a wider and wiser understanding of the city and its evolution, this being also the essential background for our thoughts, hopes and doubts. But upon this background, the specific situation which each project and place bring to us, together with its fragile ties to the people, the neighbourhoods and their stories, is what interests us most.

RENEWAL PROCESSES ON EXISTING BUILDINGS AND OPEN SPACES: ACTIONS, PRACTICES AND DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR REGENERATION IN MILAN

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Abstract

The research that we are going to present involves abandoned areas and buildings. The abandonment places are the soils and the buildings discarded and underused. Many of those areas have been registered in Milan, in cooperation with the Department of Urban Planning of the Municipality of Milan.

The research - within the frame of the didactical project named “*Re-forming Milan, design experiments for neglected and decayed spaces and buildings*”, ongoing in its third edition this year - aims to the *urgent care* of the soil and of these anonymous buildings as a considerable *heritage*. They inspire a reflection that stimulates regeneration processes of the physical spaces. At the same time they help us to think about *new rules* to facilitate reorganization, reuse and renewal processes. The potentialities of abandoned spaces are investigated through interdisciplinary design explorations at the different scales.

The goal of Re-forming Milan is perfectly matching with the intention of encouraging a multi-scale and interdisciplinary approach to the architectural design. Firstly we have developed a list of abandoned areas divided into dimensional typologies. All the selected areas and buildings express a critical situation within the urban fabric, according to the physical degradation, social disadvantage, architectural obsolescence and technological decay. They are all places that have to be faced with considering the environmental, economical and social complexity that a design on the existing areas involves. For this reason we have defined some key words in order to flank the dimensional typologies with some topics related to the city topics.

The research is based on idea to *build on the existing*, helping in decreasing or at least bounding the soil consumption, assuming the existing building and areas as *resources* to be improved. At the same time the research wants to raise real problems, that are more and more going to define a future challenge of our work as architects to the attention of citizens and teachers working in different courses/workshops of the School. The value of this challenging initiative is underlined by the passage from the evidence of the critical aspects of the existing to the renewal of a design culture meant as shared social product. The project, as a social product, has to gain the ability to face the future and to explore new mental and imaginative paradigms. It is a research that aims to rediscover those areas of collective discussion, that can feed a comparison of merit and content and to power on the discussion toward a multidisciplinary approach.

Keywords: reuse, heritage, build on the built up

1 THESIS ARGUMENTS

The topic of the abandonment isn't new for our field of studies. The phenomenon about the neglected areas between 1980 and 1990 involves the whole Europe, although with great diversity of cases. The abandoned spaces define today a different problem: the research developed by Philip Oswalt about the *Shrinking cities* highlighted the transition from growth and expansion processes that characterized the modern age, to shrinkage phenomena. Today's tangible decrease is related to those studies that redefine a world map of the shrinking cities, trying to measure the most recent transformation that correspond to variations of principles, actions, practices and design strategies. The demographical, economical and building decreasing, in addition to the significant contraction of the investment on social services offered by the public sector to citizenship, reflects a census of abandoned areas in the municipality of Milan that shows the changing of the geography of the areas, the relationship between the abandoned sites and the historical memory, the physical state of the involved artefacts. The map of abandoned areas and building realized by Milan municipality has contributed in defining the specific *geography of the abandonment* within its own specific urban fabric. Re-forming Milan took as its starting this map, this geography, opening to the possibility of the definition, through urban and architectural design, of many different possible transformation scenarios.

2 RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Areas and buildings affected by degradation and abandonment phenomena within Milan have been selected according to their being emblematic and to their current condition. The choice of the sites to be submitted to the work of teachers and students made sure to involve different disciplines, though within the common thematic background. The inter-disciplinary approach of the project helped in focusing the attention at the same time on big scale areas as on numerous pieces of minor consistency and punctual areas scattered in the tissue with their heterogeneous problems. The initial subdivision has planned five categories according to scale and typologies of the areas and of the buildings:

1 *Urban reorganization areas*, made up by large marginal areas, both residential and artisanal, mixed with open spaces and built parcels, to be completed or replaced;

2 *Urban transformation areas*, as former barracks, railway yard and major disused public facilities within the city fabrics;

3 *Landscape redevelopment areas*: landscape upgrading areas, made up by fibres of unused open spaces, waterways paths; interrupted patterns of potentially continuous ecological systems and landscapes;

4 *Built up and open parcels*: punctual elements within the urban fabric, characterized by a different compactness (from the porous fabric to the social housing neighbourhoods), with residual spaces and uncultivated green areas, as well as single buildings in disuse;

5 *Farmhouse to be redeveloped*: rural typologies, with the constraint of maintaining the original features of the building.

Different thematic areas have been developed during the research and they become the *themes of the city*: keywords for the presentation of the results during exhibitions, workshops, public meetings¹. Those themes were defined starting from the understanding of the main characters of the current status of the places, and they are not conceived as closed categories, but on the contrary they are interacting. The relationship between the *thematic rooms* has defined the theoretical and critical apparatus. Twelve thematic rooms have been defined:

1- *"Large equipment in ruin"*: abandoned areas that used to belong to relevant representative functions, institutional and public, whose presence has left a mark during times in entire urban sectors. Some emblematic cases: the *former slaughterhouse*, that used to be a small citadel devoted

to supply activities, while around its boundaries the densification of residential fabric was increasing, until its progressive dismantlement started in the first years of 90ies; *San Cristoforo railway yard*, a paradoxical infrastructure that started to be a ruin before being completely built; *De Montel stable*, a group of building and open areas that, starting from the 20ies, belonged to an urban area devoted to Milan horseracing;

II- "Interdicted fences": of the disused or underused barracks: they occupy entire blocks that are inaccessible to citizens, subtracted and excluded from urban stratification, reuse and heritage enhancement dynamics. Among those areas: *Rubattino barrack*, *former Piazza d'Armi*, *Montello barrack*;

III- "Rarefied margins": peripheral and fragmented areas in between residential fabric and systems of open fields that could potentially be object of environmental and natural recovery. Among those areas we can point out *Porto di Mare* site, in the southern agricultural park, near the historical neighbourhood named *Corvetto-Mazzini*, characterized by the presence of both several farmhouses and informal settlements in a sensitive landscape dominated by the monumental presence of the *Chiaravalle abbey*;

IV- "Decay and mutation" involves areas where the industrial-craft dismantlement, and sometimes also the abandonment of buildings dedicated to the service industry, have induced punctual cases of functional reconversion or the definition of squatter settlements, with the appropriation of autonomous and socially critical nucleus. The studied cases are situated in the areas defined by *via Mecenate*, *via dei Pestagalli*, *via Medici del Vascello*.

V- "Peripheral areas in transition between industry and urban renewal" involves sites flanked by large scale infrastructural systems and sequences of residential and industrial settlements, as the result of disorganized additions and replacements. Common elements are the lack of service equipment and in particular of green areas, even of small scale, as well as the grate inhomogeneity between the buildings of different times, functions and property. This inhomogeneity makes more difficult a coordinated intervention that aim to the reorganization and integration of the physical and the existing socio-economic fabric, which is necessary for starting a gradual functional upgrading process and allocation of small-scale equipment;

VI- "Environmental under-standards": those areas are related to some social housing neighbourhoods that are marked by problems like the obsolescence of architectural and technical structures as well as the obsolescence that concerns both collective spaces and open public spaces. This is the case of the *IACP Case Bianche* neighbourhood and the *Corvetto-Mazzini* neighbourhood.

VII- "Punctual degradation": set of unused areas and buildings of different consistence, whose nuclear localisation isn't related to any settlement logic. Those areas are numerous and spread into the urban residential fabric: they are defined by construction sites blocked, small free areas, areas with former trade or commercial activities, office or residential buildings, former cinema, garages, local markets; those cases define specific spatial discontinuities related to the fabric, to their use and to the block's perimeter continuous facade;

VIII- "Obsolescence of the urban scene" focuses on areas where the stratified memory emerges through the architecture and reveals itself through the permanence of the major film collective halls or through traces and interstices within the block. The former *Borletti factory*, the *Maestoso Cinema*, *Adriano cinema*, that are situated in dense and consolidated city areas, are some examples.

IX- "Author's abandonment" identify the cases where the quality of the building is sustained by the disciplinary literature and distinguish itself according to the expressivity of the architecture. All the examined cases - *Torre Galfa* by *Melchiorre Bega* (1956-59), *Agip service station* by *Mario Bacciocchi* (1951-53), *Qt8 neighbourhood market* by *Piero Bottoni* - demonstrate how there still is a precise identity and a specific spatial idea lying in the different sites.

X- "New role for the lost rural identity" deals with that difficult heritage made by the numerous open or built up Milan's farmhouses. During the time those farmhouses have frequently been encircled, gradually occupied or besieged, evacuated and cordoned. The farmhouses selected as case study

have been deprived of their agricultural area, that was part of a indivisible physical and productive unit. These are elements of public interest, they give testimony of a lost rural identity and define both a resource and an opportunity for the neighbourhoods according to the possibility of introducing new social and supporting activities.

XI- "Systems of open spaces": it propose again, but in new terms, the topic of the "vital street" that inspired the building of experimental neighbourhoods (QT8 and Gallaratese) around the idea of the nature as connective and widespread element. The central spine could strengthen its presence linking areas that nowadays are not connected and rethinking a system of public relationships, redefining measures and landscape sequences.

XII- "Difficult dwelling" deals in the same time with social marginality, critical housing situation, environmental and building decay, variety in ethics and social composition of the population, within an emblematic area. In a marginal and compromise environment, illegal and criminal activities find fertile ground, as well as overcrowding, housing deterioration and disposal of industrial buildings that become zones without any control.

3 PRACTICES AND DESIGN STRATEGIES IN TWO CASE STUDIES: FORMER SLAUGHTERHOUSE AREA AND FORMER BORLETTI FACTORY

3.1 Architecture and landscape in the former slaughterhouse area

Within the thematic section "large equipment in ruin", the former slaughterhouse area defines itself as a proper enclosure mainly dismantled in the frame of the urban morphological layout. It has been conceived as a grate infrastructure for the city and it occupies a deep block in Milan eastern sector, south of the railway Porta Vittoria link. The settlement principle of this area belongs to a strategy that was continuing during the first decades of the XXth century a phenomenon that started in the post-unity period: the settlement, along the that time new avenues of the city, of a series of public buildings. Not only schools or hospitals were built, but also larger enclosures, that were representative of relevant public and institutional functions.

The former slaughterhouse and the 'Borsa delle Carni' building were realized between 1912 and 1924, looking to the contemporaneous structure built in the same period in Europe. Areas dedicated to each phase of the slaughter were built, and those were integrated with spaces for the workers and dining halls. The area, dedicated to those kind of activities, has strongly characterized among the time also the surrounding areas, and has inspired the setting of the bordering fish market, and of the activities concerning the breeding of poultry and rabbits as well as of the vegetable market. Those dynamic and lively presences have characterized a large area of the city for almost a century. The progressive process of dismantlement of the slaughterhouses started in 90ies, reaching the complete dismantlement in 2005.

The current scenario is defined by a urban façade open on viale Molise witch hosts, in the three liberty buildings, offices, public health clinics and some spaces related to the *Temporioso* association for promoting temporary reuse projects in abandoned spaces as well as the artistic collective named *Macao*, which organizes activities in the spaces of the former 'Borsa delle Carni'. Inside the area and in the spaces once dedicated to the slaughter, to the stables, to the cold storage you can see nowadays dilapidated buildings, sheds skeletons, old rusty tools, hooks, chain and distressing fences.

The future of this big urban enclosure compared itself with the economical and financial contemporary dynamics: we cannot limit the transformation to a mere residential and tertiary retraining oriented to consumption and to maximizing achievable volumes, because nowadays this kind of approach is no more producing benefits. At the same time we cannot neither imagine and area entirely consecrated to a public service and to a grate collective function: the services concentration in the contemporary city is a reality that we cannot ignore and that the project cannot forget.

How to give an orientation, than, to the design strategies? The answer to this questions goes through the interpretation of that critic awareness that aims to draw today a city as more welcoming,

aggregative, full of spaces for sharing, for urban farming, full of social relations of groups and people that are going through it and that live there. An opening of the enclosure to the most innovative social and cultural dynamics is foreseen, but at the same time also an opening sensitive to the specific realities of the neighbourhood and to the minute commercial network and retail, unavoidable in any reality of urban regeneration.

In parallel with the opening of the enclosure it is foreseen the maintenance of a specific unitary theme, presumably linked to 'vocations' which over time have been consolidated. The future of the former slaughterhouse has to take its steps from its previous identity, and it has to consider the reuse and recovery of the most beautiful buildings, but in the same time it has to deal with the courage to demolish and tear down buildings that aren't expression of that identity. The special morphological and typological conditions of the former slaughterhouse, together with the new uses of spaces and buildings, will have to aim, in an integrated way, to the definition of new configurations and to its regeneration.

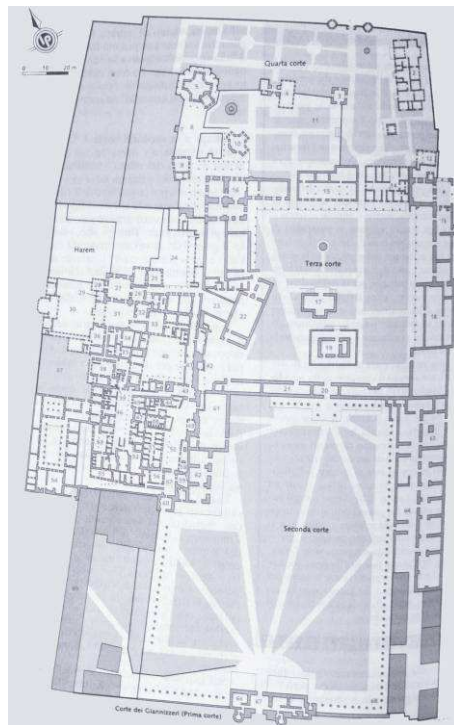


Figure 1. Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, where is held “The Abduction from the Seraglio” (original title “Die Entführung aus dem Serail”), the breach of the fence, narrated in opera and drama of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Figure 2. Diocletian's Palace in Split, great fortified enclosure subject to modifications, substitutions and stratifications in the time that has maintained its urban vision and its typology

3.2 Former Borletti factory building between memory and transformation

Originally founded in the last years of XIXth century, the Borletti was born as factory related to the clocks production. Later it was converted into a military factory during the First World War. After the war, it specialized in the production of precision mechanic instruments: in particular mechanical components, car's tachometers, sewing machines and measuring tools.

The liberty building facing piazza Carlo Innerio, which is nowadays abandoned, was part of a more extended industrial complex that was made up by a series of building situated in the southern area of piazzale Firenze, in the district between via Washington, viale Sardegna and the ring road. The industrial settlement helped, in the first half of the previous century, to give shape to this part of the city, today mainly residential. However, if for long time the via Washington factories were one of the Milan production sites, starting from 70ies a decline phase has started and it led in short time to the closure of the factory.

This building could be read, nowadays, as an element able to measure the time that has passed from that moment, thanks to its condition of suspension, of abandonment and at the same time of waiting, associated with evident degradation, frequently reported by the local community.

If today the former Borletti building appears as a fragment, as an unused element within the residential fabric of this part of the city, we don't have to forget that it was part of a wider plan. The building that were defining the via Washington industrial settlement have indeed being transformed during last decades, and those transformation have integrated in different ways the buildings into the urban fabric: a hotel, a supermarket and offices modified or took the place of the buildings that used to be part of the Borletti factory.

Today, the last fragment of the Borletti Factory is bordered on one side by piazza Carlo Innerio and on the other sides by via Costanza, via Gessi and via Cecchi. The factory is composed of several parts and shows the stratification of time: a Liberty style building with towers -probably from the early Twenties-, a building with a shed roof and a third building from the Thirties. The open space in between these buildings is saturated by a series of roofing, partially visible from via Cecchi.

Unlike the other buildings that were part of the Borletti factory, this nucleus has never been affected by the urban scene transformation processes. It appears today at the same time as *expression of obsolescence* linked to the abandonment, to the degradation, to the lack of taking care of existing buildings, but also as *resource*: as punctual occasion for a potential reactivation able to extend the results not only to the scale of the building but also to the surrounding urban fabric.

Defining an intervention of the former Borletti building doesn't mean just giving back life to a waiting artefact but it means at the same time having the possibility to transform this fragment of the industrial memory into an opportunity for the city, that will involves not only the building itself but also the surrounding public spaces and the relationships between those areas. This building doesn't have to be assumed as an isolated fragment, but as part of a wider set. Moreover, making an intervention on this building implies making a selection: choosing which parts have to be kept, which have to be demolished, and which transformed, according to different possible intensities. It means making interventions through actions of addition, of subtraction, of integration, of emptying, of covering, assuming the existing as proper *material* of the urban and architectural design. It also means, as far as the modification design of the existing asks for, to know deeply the object of the intervention, aiming to consciously operate these choices in respect of the starting conditions.

Within the projects developed for the reactivation of the former Borletti factory there is a common orientation toward the transformation of this building into a multifunctional equipmentⁱⁱ devoted to the cultural and artistic production, or to new forms of handcraft. In parallel it comes out how the new design has to deal with the relationship of the new intervention to the whole block and to the immediate context around. The liberty building is often detached, in the foreseen scenarios, from the block that it belong to nowadays, through the demolition of the shed building and of the Thirties one opened on via Cecchi. Their place was replaced by a proper public pedestrian space sometimes flanked by a car connection, opened between piazza Innerio and via Costanza. A new building defines,

in most of the cases, the end of the block toward east, solving the two blind facades that came as result of the demolitions. The relationship between the former Borletti building and the public ground is very important for this project and it has to deal with shifted levels. In this direction, the section is an indispensable tool for the design that explores the transformation of the internal space of this building, that has been too long waiting to be returned to the city life.



Figure 4. Former Borletti factory building (February 2014, photo taken by Cem Etik during MIAW Workshop, prof. Carlos Arroyo, tutors: E. Fontanella, G. Sempregon, A. Tognon).

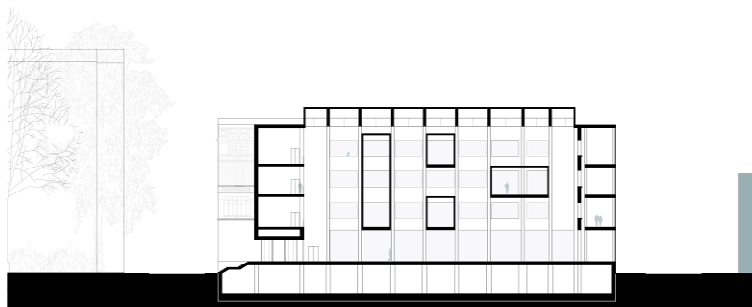


Figure 5. Section by Angelica Schina and Daniele Riva project "Inside-outside" (Architectural Design Studio 2, prof. Nikos Ktenàs, tutors: D. Ferrari, E. Fontanella, S. Marmori)

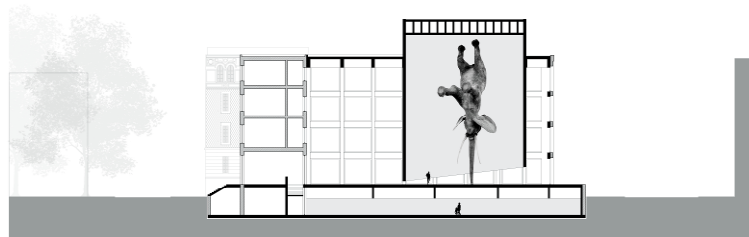


Figure 6. Section by Francesca Pasta and Sara Puleio project "Void Sublimation" (Architectural Design Studio 2, prof. Nikos Ktenàs, tutors: D. Ferrari, E. Fontanella, S. Marmori)

4 CONCLUSIONS

The current research is based on idea *to build on existing*, at different scales, helping in decreasing or at least bounding the soil consumption, assuming the existing building and areas as *resources* to be improved. At the same time the research wants to raise real problems, that are more and more going to define a future challenge of our work as architects to the attention of citizens and teachers working in different courses/workshops of Politecnico. The value of this challenging initiative is underlined by the passage from the evidence of the critical aspects of the existing, towards finding collective values, to the renewal of a design culture meant as shared social product. The project, as a social product, has to come back to gain the ability to face the future and to explore new mental and imaginative paradigms. It is a research that aims to rediscover those areas of collective discussion that can feed a comparison of merit and content and to power on the discussion toward a multidisciplinary approach.

On this common background, a group of professors, young researchers and their students has undertaken to deal with the questions expressed by the society and by the municipality. The results that the projects wants to reach are proposals for the urban spaces of the sociality, of the hospitality, for the contemporary dwelling, within new scenarios for different uses: temporary housing, social housing, spaces for the shared life but also spaces for cultural activities, open spaces for the urban agriculture and gardens. Those are just some of the functions that the design proposal gives shape to, confronting with the urban policies necessary for their implementation.

As both didactical and research experience, Re-forming Milan trains the students in the built up space enhancement, and in the soil consumption restraint, looking to the next decades trends of decreasing and shrinking phenomena. At the same time, starting from the Milan map of the abandoned areas and buildings, the work has reached a selection of significant places. Those critical places - that are nowadays acting as fractures in the urban fabric - become themselves opportunity and the matter of a possible transformation: they become real resource for the future of the city.

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ⁱ The three main moments for the dissemination of the work have been: the exhibition in *Triennale di Milano* (July-August 2014) edited by Barbara Coppetti with Pierluigi Salvadeo and the collaboration of Andrea Oldani, Giulia Setti, Martina Sogni. The events organized in Milan *Urban Centre* (July 2015) edited by Barbara Coppetti and Elena Fontanella; the exhibition organised in the Spazio Mostre Guido Nardi, (Scuola di Architettura e Società, Politecnico di Milano January 2016) edited by Barbara Coppetti, with Francesca Berni, Elena Fontanella, Matteo Puglisi, Giulia Setti, Francesca Zanutto.

ⁱⁱ This common orientation comes out from de projects defined in the following studios and master thesis that worked on the former Borletti area (they are published on the website www.riformaremilano.polimi.it): Architectural Design Studio 1, professors: Angelo Lorenzi, Francesca Bonfante, Cecilia Tedeschi; Architectural Design Studio 2, professors: Nikos Ktenàs, Cristiana Achille; Architectural Design Studio 2, professors: Cassandra Cozza, Matteo Ballarin; Architectural Design Studio 3, professors: Paolo Mestriner, Emanuela Morelli, Anna Pasini, Master thesis by Andrea Chiaf, Marco Medeghini, Michele Zamboni, supervisor: Andrea Oldani. The former Borletti building has been also the design site for the students of the Miaw workshop working with professor Carlos Arroyo.

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