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INDUSTRIA IN ITALIA
MARCO ZANUSO—BRIONVEGA
STUDIO VALLE—FANTONI
NORMAN FOSTER—NOMOS, TECNO

BIENNALE ARCHITETTURA 2018
VATICAN CHAPELS
ANDREW BERMAN, FRANCESCO CELLINI,
JAVIER CORVALÁN, FLORES E PRATS,
NORMAN FOSTER, TERUNOBU FUJIMORI,
SEAN GODSELL, CARLA JUAÇABA,
MAGNANI+PELZEL, SMILJAN RADIC,
EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA

MILANO
CITYLIFE: ZAHA HADID, TORRE GENERALI
FONDAZIONE PRADA, OMA

CASABELLA

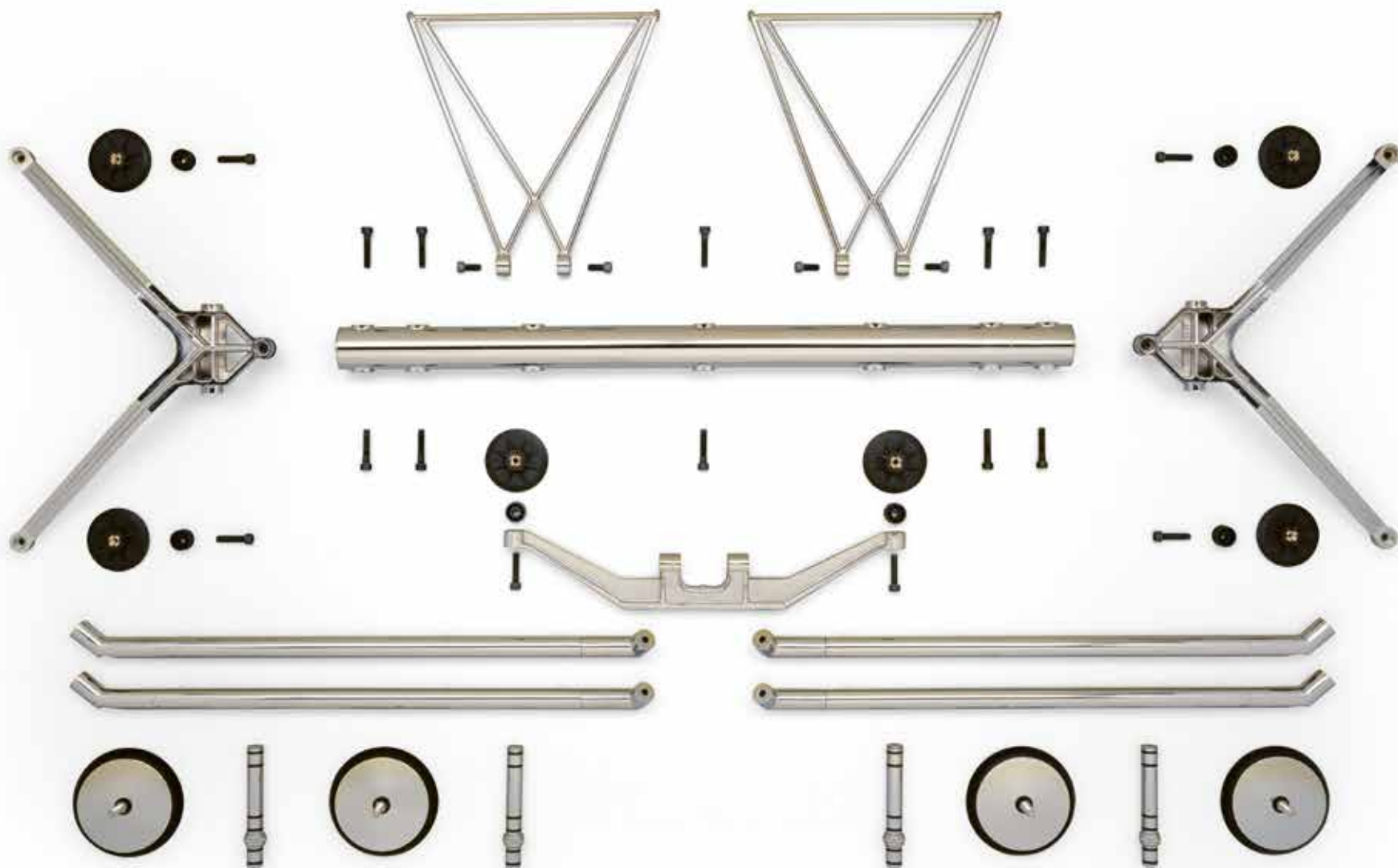
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Norman Foster, Sistema Nomos, Tecno

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Errata
Nel servizio dedicato al progetto di Tobia Scarpa per la Chiesa di San Teonisto a Treviso apparso su «Casabella» n. 881, gennaio 2018, pagg. 62-71, è stato omissso il nome del progettista tecnico delle tribune reclinabili, lo Studio Tecnico Mandetta.

Ci scusiamo con i progettisti e con i nostri lettori.

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Milano



Milano 2.0

Camillo Magni

A distanza di un anno «Casabella» torna a parlare di Milano. Dopo aver presentato la nuova sede della Fondazione Feltrinelli e il campus dell'Università Bocconi (cfr. «Casabella» n. 872), nelle pagine che seguono, si darà spazio a due nuovi progetti di recente realizzazione: Fondazione Prada e il grande intervento urbano di CityLife. Questa è anche l'occasione per condividere con i lettori alcune riflessioni più ampie sulla recente stagione milanese.

Il capoluogo lombardo sta vivendo un momento di grande fermento culturale che si rispecchia nella vivacità del mercato edilizio e nella capacità di attrarre capitale umano ed economico dando spinta a un rinnovamento urbano sempre più evidente e capillare. Questo ineludibile dato, tuttavia, nasconde una condizione più complessa che coinvolge operatori, architetti, costruttori e amministratori. Innanzitutto dal punto di vista architettonico è interessante evidenziare come gli autori delle più importanti trasformazioni urbane siano stranieri (OMA, Herzog & de Meuron, Sanaa, Zaha Hadid Architects, Arata Isozaki, David Chipperfield Architects tra gli altri). Gli operatori stessi sono, sempre più spesso, fondi d'investimento internazionali le cui forme attuative replicano modelli consolidati in contesti esteri. Questo dato, senza retoriche nazionaliste, evidenzia la coesistenza di due mondi distinti: da una parte i grandi interventi a mano straniera, dall'altra un professionismo locale che lavora con intensità e dedizione a una serie di progetti che potremmo definire di media, piccola dimensione. Cercando tra questi, tuttavia, si avverte la mancanza di un livello diffuso di qualità dell'architettura (se non in sporadici ed eroici esempi) e ci si incaglia in una mediocrità edilizia e in un provinciale sistema clientelare che non rispecchia le opportunità che la nuova stagione offre. Questo aspetto appare paradossale se consideriamo la storia di Milano e quel "professionismo colto" che ha caratterizzato l'architettura degli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta. Risulta ancora più paradossale se paragoniamo Milano a città europee come Barcellona, Zurigo, Lisbona o Porto in cui la rinascita urbana si è attuata attraverso la diffusione della qualità prodotta da processi e bravi architetti locali, piuttosto che nell'accentrarsi di poche e muscolose operazioni immobiliari.

Un secondo aspetto riguarda il protagonismo dell'operatore pubblico. Senza addentrarci in complicate valutazioni di merito è evidente la grande fatica nello sviluppare processi urbani complessi. Tempi e procedure sono le grandi incertezze che frenano più dei costi. L'Amministrazione Pubblica, a valle di un PGT licenziato tra amministrazioni di opposto colore, sembra navigare a vista, più a suo agio nelle piccole operazioni che in una visione ampia della città. Ciò ha portato Milano a trasformarsi in forma episodica, attraverso l'iniziativa quasi unicamente di privati condizionati, più che governati,

dall'Amministrazione locale. I limiti di tutto questo sono oggi evidenti soprattutto nella povertà dello spazio pubblico, simbolo evidente del "buon governo", in cui le figure del "parco" e del "verde" sono diventate le uniche retoriche attraverso cui guadagnare consenso.

Infine un'ultima considerazione di carattere economico: la rinascita di Milano rappresenta un'eccezione non solo a livello nazionale, ma anche regionale. La città cresce senza riuscire a trascinare con sé i territori limitrofi, relegando quella tanto ambita "regione metropolitana" a una condizione di subalternità. Ciò che avviene in città non avviene nelle sue periferie e la centralità economica e culturale del capoluogo rimane avulsa dalle economie dei territori vicini (cfr. R. Camagni, «Casabella» n. 872, pag. 26).

Questi tre aspetti alimentano con prospettive differenti la medesima preoccupazione: che la rinascita di Milano non sia l'inizio di un'onda lunga capace di scuotere nel profondo la cultura e l'economia meneghina, ma che sia un evento autonomo dal territorio in cui si manifesta uno spasmodico riflesso di un momento (Expo 2015?) indotto da elementi e protagonisti stranieri. Il timore è che questa stagione si concluda presto senza lasciare alcuna eredità e che Milano sia stata solo un'occasione per concentrare interessi speculativi.

Al tempo stesso le speranze sono altre e il giudizio rimane sospeso. Esempi come il terzo settore e il ruolo, mai così rilevante, delle grandi istituzioni culturali (tra le quali Fondazioni Prada e Feltrinelli), così come eventi quali "Design Week" alludono forse a un nuovo modo di coniugare cultura e urbanità, a una nuova forma di fare città. Alla luce delle future sfide che la città si presta ad affrontare, prima fra tutte la riconversione degli scali ferroviari, vogliamo rimanere ottimisti sperando che le gravi incertezze siano il retaggio di un passato troppo ingombrante e fiduciosi di poter ammirare presto nuove straordinarie architetture milanesi.



1 il monumento a Giuseppe Verdi in Piazza Buonarroti. Sullo sfondo, le torri progettate da Zaha Hadid e Arata Isozaki per CityLife
the monument to Giuseppe Verdi at Piazza Buonarroti. In the background, the towers designed by Zaha Hadid and Arata Isozaki for CityLife

2 vista aerea dello scalo ferroviario Farini nel 1998
aerial view of the Farini rail yard in 1998

3 vista aerea dello scalo ferroviario di San Cristoforo nel 2017 con, in primo piano, il rudere incompiuto dell'ampliamento della stazione del 1983 a opera di Aldo Rossi, G. Braghieri, M. Oks, M. Scheurer
aerial view of the San Cristoforo rail yard in 2017 with, in the foreground, the unfinished ruin of the addition to the station from 1983 by Aldo Rossi, G. Braghieri, M. Oks, M. Scheurer

4 vista aerea dello scalo ferroviario di Greco Bicocca nel 2017
aerial view of the Greco Bicocca rail yard in 2017

5 vista aerea dello scalo ferroviario di Porta Genova nel 2017
aerial view of the Porta Genova rail yard in 2017

stages the content, blurring the figure of the plant with that of the industrial machines that surround it. On the north side, vice versa, the absence of mechanical protuberances, due to the need to avoid interfering with nearby activities of wood transport, makes the building emerge in its territorial scale, transfigured like a gigantic dam in the landscape.

The project for Plaxil 8 raises a series of important questions, which we can summarize here as a conclusion. First, it expresses a complex approach to the problem of the relationship with the context, interpreted by Pietro Valle as the place of a stratification of practices and discourses with which to establish a critical relationship. In this sense, while the division of the fronts into horizontal bands of prefabricated parts reprises and confirms the method already applied by Gino Valle, the wavering between opacity and transparency of the top, like the breakdown of the southern facade in a sequence of planes of depth, enhance the existing language, introducing a series of original phenomes. Entering the “groove” traced by the father, in this sense, serves only to get beyond it, through a project that does not simply rework the characteristic themes of the Fantoni campus, but also adds new ones. Among them, we should mention the control of perception of the large scale, the configuration of spaces in which human activity is practically absent, the integration between the building and the machine, and the pursuit of architectural form through the assembly of standardized components. The choice of design as montage of *objets trouvés*, in particular, represents for Pietro Valle a response to the above-mentioned problem of the presence of the author, as an empirical procedure of interpretation that does not permit the a priori imposition of an “original” form, but forces its seeking in an intense dialogue with the individual context –whatever it may be– until it reaches the point of extending, as in this case, the iconic reservoir of architecture beyond its traditional confines, radicalizing the form and functioning of an industrial machine.

Innsbruck, 30 November 2017

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"Milan 2.0" Camillo Magni

One year later, «Casabella» returns to its coverage of Milan. After having presented the new headquarters of Fondazione Feltrinelli and the campus of Bocconi University («Casabella» no. 872), the following pages provide a look at two recently completed projects: Fondazi-one Prada and the large urban complex of CityLife. This is also an opportunity to share with readers certain wider ranging reflections on the recent period in Milan. The Lombard capital is going through a moment of great cultural ferment that is reflected in the upswing of the real estate market and the capacity to attract human and economic resources, giving rise to a situation of urban renewal that is increasingly clear and widespread. This undeniable trend, however, conceals a more complex

condition that involves the various players, the architects, builders and administrators. First of all, from an architectural standpoint, it is interesting to point out that the authors of the most important urban transformations are foreigners (OMA, Herzog & De Meuron, SANAA, Zaha Hadid Architects, Arata Isozaki, David Chipperfield Architects, among others). The develop-ers themselves, to an increasing extent, are often international investment funds, with forms of implementation that replicate established models from foreign contexts. This situation –with-out nationalist rhetoric– reveals the coexistence of two distinct worlds: on the one hand the major projects in foreign hands, and on the other a local professional sphere that works with dedication on a series of projects we might define as works on the small or medium scale. Looking through them, however, one senses the lack of a widespread level of architectural quality (if not in certain sporadic and heroic examples), and one runs aground on a level of mediocrity and a provincial system of patronage that do not live up to the opportunities offered by this new phase. This aspect seems paradoxical if we consider the history of Milan and that “cultured professionalism” that marked its architecture in the 1950s and 1960s. It seems even more paradoxical if we compare Milan to European cities like Barcelona, Zurich, Lisbon or Porto, where urban rebirth has been implemented through the spread of quality produced by good local archi-tects and processes, instead of the concentration of a few, powerful real estate operations.

A second aspect has to do with the role played by public entities. Without delving into complicated assessments, the enormous difficulty of developing complex urban processes is there for all to see. Timing and procedures are the great uncertainties that hamper growth, more than costs. The public administration, in the wake of a territorial develop-ment plan formulated across adminis-trations from different sides of the political spectrum, seems to be sailing without instruments, more at ease with small operations than with a broader vision of the city. This has led Milan to transform itself in episodes, almost solely through the initiatives of private interests, influenced but not governed by the local administration. The limits of all this are clear today, especially in the decline of public space, an obvious symbol of “good government,” in which the figures of the “park” and “greenery” have become the only rhetorical aspects through which to seek consensus. Finally, one last consideration of an economic character: the rebirth of Milan represents an exception not only on a national but also on a regional level. The city grows without managing to drag the neighboring territories along with it, relegating that much sought “metropolitan region” to a condition of subalternity. What hap-pens in the city does not happen on its outskirts, and the economic and cultural centrality of the capital remain separate from the economies of the neighboring territories (see R. Camagni, «Casabella» no. 872).

These three aspects, from different perspectives, feed the same concern: that the rebirth of Milan is not the start of a long wave capable of having a deep impact on the city’s culture and economy, but instead an autonomous event, separate from the territory in which it appears, a spasmodic reflection of a single moment (Expo 2015?) induced by foreign players and protagon-ists. The fear is that this period will come to an end without leaving any legacy, and that Milan has represented only an opportunity for the concentra-tion of speculative interests. At the same time, the hopes are different, and judgment remains suspended. Examples like the third sector and the role –never before so important– of large cultural institutions (including the Prada and Feltrinelli foundations), and of events like “Design Week,” allude perhaps to a new way of combining culture and urban life, a new form of city making. In the light of the future challenges the city prepares to face –first of all, the conversion of the rail yards– we want to stay optimistic, hoping that the serious uncertainties are leftovers of an overly cumbersome past, and hoping that we will soon be able to admire new, extraor-dinary works of Milanese architecture.

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CityLife 2004–2018 Francesca Serrazanetti

15 October 2017: for “FAI Day” in the fall, with special openings of dozens of cultural attractions in many Italian cities, the Torre Generali of CityLife opened its doors to the public. It was an exceptional opportunity to enter the skyscraper designed by Zaha Hadid, up to the 19th floor. The event’s success surpassed expectations: a line one kilometer long, five hours of wait time, many visitors turned away. At noon the organizers were forced to close the entrances. Ironically enough, this “futuristic” Milan that has raised more or less explicit outcry over the last fifteen years1 is suddenly a big attraction, more than historic palaces and archives.

The controversy surrounding the CityLife project dates back to 3 July 2004, immediately following a press release that announced the results of the competition held to redesign the area freed up by the move of the city’s trade fair to Rho Pero: “The verdicts are in: but in whose name?” writes Luca Bel-trami Gadola, in «La Repubblica», who on multiple occasions challenged the choices of “five gentlemen.”2 He was joined in the immediate media on-slaught by Jacopo Gardella, Antonio Monestiroli, Vittorio Gregotti, Pierluigi Panza reported on the favorable views of Gillo Dorfles and Stefano Zecchi, and the “veiled criticism” of Mario Botta and Aldo Colonnetti3.

The reasoning behind the choice announced by Fondazione Fiera asserted that “the proposal does an excellent job of interpreting the requirements of the guidelines in emblematic terms. Of particular importance in this regard are the three towers, which placed at the center of the project at the intersections of the main axes of this urban sector constitute a unique case, in Italy and on the interna-tional scene, putting Milan at the

avant-garde of contemporary architec-tural expression [...]»4 The concentra-tion of three tall buildings and the resulting freeing up of land area, because the formal variety of the skyscrapers, are the fundamental and unvaried characteristics of a project that was to undergo many modifications over the years to follow.

The unforeseen changes, which have altered our reference points, created wounds and required new adaptation. If we look back on certain episodes of the press coverage, we can recall the climate and the reasons of the debate that has accompanied this important process of transformation of the city from the outset.

Pierre-Alain Croset, in «Il Giornale dell’Architettura», uses the title “Parade of Monsters” and asserts that the winner was the worst of the projects still in the running5 and that in the period of sweeping transformations happening in large Italian cities, «the most worrying situation is that of Milan, where the lack of a strong design structure inside the municipal administration prevents correct coordination of the various projects of urban renewal.»6

Neither was the project immune to the satirical caricatures that have heaped scorn for decades on the “rising city.”7 From outside Italy, a cartoon arrived that was published in the English magazine «Architects’ Journal», poking fun at the three sculptural towers presented in the original renderings: with the title “Three Graces,” three senile figures lure the reader away from the imagery of progress and modernity, instead suggested “structural” malaise: the “straight” tower by Isozaki is an oldestr leaning on a walker, the “twist” by Hadid limps on a wooden leg, while Libeskind’s “curve” is an elderly hunchbacked woman8.

For many observers, the project of the CityLife alliance was far from the best option: the grumbling spread not only among architects, urban planners, critics and journalists, but also among the city’s inhabitants.

The main criticisms addressed the decontextualized character of the project, the insufficient quantity of green areas, the shadows generated by buildings of excessive height, and the characteristics disconnected from Milanese identity in terms of both settlement approach and architectural composition.

Many observers seemed to prefer the project submitted by Renzo Piano for Pirelli RE, which loomed less forcefully over the surrounding buildings and to a more consolidated approach to the green areas.

The residents of the zone already filed their first appeal with the regional administrative court in 2004, followed by a second appeal in 2006. Their complaint addressed first of all the urban planning variant of the master plan that had facilitated approval of the raising of the buildability index to 1.15 m3/m2 and the elimination of building height limits: as a result, the legitimacy of the CityLife project was called into question. Another appeal was presented by the association “Vivi e progetta un'altra Milano” in 2006, requesting annulment of the Integrated Intervention Plan approved by the municipality.

Sergio Brenna prepared and published detailed motivations supporting the appeals, relying on urban planning data and revealing the fact that the choices had been made in the context of “business committees” for economic interests (mostly private) and not with an eye on public benefits.

In the meantime the debate in the magazines continued, with the criti-cisms of Mario Botta and the responses of Stefano Boeri and Vittorio Gregotti,9 as well as contributions from David Chipperfield, Gae Aulenti, Philippe Daverio, Marco Romano and again, Beltrami Gadola and Gardella.

In December 2006 Libeskind, involved by the mayor Letizia Moratti in Milan’s bid to host the Expo, stated that the project could be modified based on the needs expressed by citizens.10

In the meantime demolition work began on the old fair facility, culminat-ing in May 2008 with the destruction of Pavilion 20: this was documented as the largest demolition ever completed in Europe at a single blow.11

In the same period, the variant of the Integrated Intervention Plan of 2005 was approved: the project was altered, the park widening to a new “hinge area” of 65,000 square meters, the green and public areas expanding from 128,000 to 190,000 square meters. The planned design museum was replaced by a contemporary art museum in the area of the public park next to the three towers, and it was decided to make a stop on the Linea 5 subway at the area, known as Tre Torri. Though the total constructed volume did not change, the expansion of the green areas spread out the buildability, shifting it from 1.15 to 0.90.12 The buildings were moved or “turned” to open the new district, and the residential buildings were lowered on the outer perimeter (to the south towards Piazza Giulio Cesare and on the east and west sides).

The modifications, nevertheless, were not deemed sufficient by the inhabitants, who continued their protest with new appeals, focusing on a very wide range of different reasons. These were joined by the appeal to the administrative court filed by the Architects’ Association, claiming the illegitimacy of the commission to Daniel Libeskind to design the muse-um. All the appeals were rejected or dismissed.

The first worksites began in 2009, those of the two residential areas designed respectively by Hadid and Libeskind. The profile of Libeskind’s curved skyscraper was “slightly straight-ened” in the context of the variability that is part of the definitive design phase, in an acceptable compromise with the consortium of investors, bent on defending its iconic character.

In 2010 Gustafson Porter, in a group with Imelk, One Works and Ove Arup, won the international competition for the new park (the projects and guide-lines of the competition can be seen in *CityLife. Un nuovo parco per Milano*, Electa, supplement to «Casabella» no. 808, December 2011). The project by the English studio brings out the value of the Lombardy geography “between mountains and plains” with a radial system of elements whose fulcrum is the central plaza of the Tre Torri. Pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths,

green areas and squares shape the land and create a public space that adapts to the level shifts of the area.

In 2013 the project underwent another transformation: the city government canceled the museum and granted seven more years for the work (no longer to be completed in 2016, but in 2023). The 45 million euros already deposited as development fees were reassigned for the restoration of two important existing structures that had escaped demolition (the Velodromo Vigorelli and Palazzo delle Scintille) and for new services.13

In 2015, after three years of work, the first tower was completed (the Allianz tower designed by Isozaki, published in «Casabella» no. 855), while the construction of Torre Hadid rose higher, and the foundations were poured for Torre Libeskind. In spite of the bureaucratic delays, the worksites proceeded at an unusually rapid pace.

Finally came the success witnessed not just at the opening of Torre Genera-li, but also in the subsequent activation of the Shopping District on 30 Novem-ber last year. The paths indicated by Gustafson Porter through the green areas lead to the shopping center at the base of Torre Hadid (the so-called mall) and towards Piazza Tre Torri (designed by One Works), and then continue in the open-air galleria designed by Mauro Galantino. The latter –resulting from yet another alteration of the program– forms a commercial axis that connects the outer perimeter of the area on Piazza VI Febbraio to the center of the pedestrian zone. Covered by a roof garden that forms a whole with the system of public spaces, it is connected at various levels: the 124 of the street, 122 meters of the underground plaza, the 129 of the upper plaza, at the level of the entrance to the towers. In contrast with the sinuous forms designed by Studio Hadid, the building by Galantino fits with its orthogonal lines into the heart of the area, starting from the “suspended” loggia overhanging Viale Boezio.

In what has to all effects become a new central area of the Milanese urban system, there is still the problem of a lack of cultural services: following the restoration of the facades of Palazzo delle Scintille, a decision has yet to be made regarding its public role, now being discussed by a technical commit-tee chaired by Severino Salvemini. For now the public functions are covered by the park, entrusted in the implementation phase to the studio P'arc Nouveau and completed in slightly more than one third of its overall area. Integrated with the system of green areas, sculptures are also being installed for the Art Line, a public art project that calls for 20 site-specific works.

In February 2018 it was announced that the Libeskind tower will take the name PwC, the third company to move its headquarters to the heart of the quad, completing the business district in 2020.

Again in this case, the timeline will be intense: the reinforced concrete should be completed by the end of 2018, while the last lot of the Libeskind residences on Via Spinola, now tempo-rarily occupied by a golf practice range, should also be finished.

Is this really a new Renaissance?

Many people have expressed doubts, in the discussions that have continued over the last 15 years, as we have rapidly summarized above.14 Yet this story, seen up close, reminds us of the better-known debates that have accompanied other transformations: like the one that arose in 1959 regarding the project of the Torre Velasca, with widespread coverage in Italian and foreign maga-zines. The perspective of the future will undoubtedly offer new judgments and views. Also with respect to those who last October, from the 19th floor of Torre Hadid, were able to observe from above the thousands of citizens waiting in line to discover the panorama of contempo-rary Milan.

Notes

1 Giulia Maria Crespi, honorary presi-dent of the FAI, had criticized the project herself: we can cite her public statements at the time of the commem-oration of Antonio Cederna on 10 May 2007 at Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte (documented by Antonio Stella: “Crespi: troppo cemento e pochi asili nido Milano ha perso l’anima,” «Corriere della Sera», 11 May 2007).

2 Luca Beltrami Gadola, “Il potere di cambiare il paesaggio,” «La Repubblica», 9 July 2004.

3 Jacopo Gardella, “I tre grattacieli della Fiera e la sobrietà di Milano,” «La Repubblica», 6 July 2004; Antonio Monestiroli, “I nuovi grattacieli nella città delle meraviglie,” «La Repubblica», 5 July 2004; Vittorio Gregotti, “Ma il futuro di Milano non sarà nei gratta-cieli,” «Corriere della Sera», 7 July 2004; Pierluigi Panza, “Le torri della Fiera simbolo della nuova Milano,” «Corriere della Sera», Cronaca Milano, 4 July 2004.

4 Fondazione Fiera, *Riqualificazione del quartiere storico di Fiera Milano. I progetti in shortlist. Le motivazioni della scelta*. Milano, 2 luglio 2004.

5 The other projects selected for the final phase were those of the Pirelli R.E. group (Arch. Renzo Piano et al.) and the Risanamento group (Arch. Norman Foster et al.).

6 Pierre-Alain Croset, “Sfilata di mostri,” «Il Giornale dell’Architettura», no. 21, September 2004; Croset further explained the choice of the final project in the next issue of «Il Giornale dell’Architettura» (no. 22, October 2004): “Non sempre vincono i migliori, la shortlist del Giornale dell’Architettura.”

7 See the reconstruction of the main satirical illustrations regarding the city of skyscrapers in Gabriele Neri, *Caricature architettoniche*, Quodlibet, Macerata, pp. 222-238.

8 Andrzej Bisztyga, “Three Graces?,” «Architects’ Journal», 22 July 2004.

9 Pierluigi Panza, “Botta: Brutta e perversa. L’architettura da bocciare,” «Corriere della Sera», 16 January 2005; Stefano Boeri, “Caro Botta, il grattacielo è nella tradizione europea,” «Corriere della Sera», 23 January 2005; Vittorio Gregotti, “Ma le idee alla moda non aiutano la città,” *ibidem*.

10 Reported by «La Repubblica», «Corriere della Sera» and «Il Giornale» on 14 December 2006, following a meeting between the architect and the mayor in New York.

11 Davide Carlucci, “Un boato e una spazia alle torri,” «La Repubblica», 12

May 2008.

12 Cf. among others: Marco Alfieri, “Il via libera a CityLife è in arrivo (con varianti),” «Il Sole 24 ore», 13 May 2008. 13 Cf. among others: Armando Stella, “CityLife, il Comune cancella il Museo. Sette anni in più di lavori all'ex Fiera,” «Corriere della Sera», Milano, 20 April 2013. 14 Fulvio Trace: «It seems debatable whether all this can automatically be considered a new ‘Renaissance,’ above all if we consider the fact that in the ‘historical’ Renaissance the Italy of the courts exported the culture of the new, while today it is forced to recycle in its cities what comes back from abroad» (Fulvio Trace, “Il grattacielo è ancora all'altezza?,” «Il Sole 24 Ore», 11 July 2004).

But also the already mentioned Luca Beltrami Gadola: «The Renaissance was absolutely Italian and influenced European culture in the 1400s and 1500s, the winning project of Arata Isozaki-Libeskind-Zaha Hadid could be in Milan, in London, or in any giant Asian metropolis. The global village of this architecture is not a Renaissance» (Luca Beltrami Gadola, “Rinascimento e villaggio globale,” «La Repubblica», 3 July 2004).

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Complexity: beyond the icon Marco Biagi

Lower by 37 meters and 8 floors than the nearby Torre Allianz by Arata Isozaki and Andrea Maffei, the new twisted skyscraper designed by Zaha Hadid for the headquarters of Assi-curazioni Generali, at the center of the Milanese quad of CityLife, compensates for this at the base, where a large shopping podium prepares the vertical thrust, deeply rooting it in the terrain and the city.

Together with the recessed plaza in front of it, designed by One Works, and the open-air galleria of shops and showrooms Mauro Galantino has designed between the plaza and Viale Boezio, the mall forms the largest urban shopping district in Italy, punctually opened in December, and meeting with public acclaim in terms of numbers and tastes. The tower is about to be handed over to its client in April, while a few weeks ago the deadline of 2020 was officially announced for completion of the last office building of the three called for in the initial master plan. Designed by Daniel Libeskind, the third tower will contain the Italian headquarters of the international accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoop-ers (PwC).

From the competition to the construc-tion, the project of the Torre Generali has undergone rather sweeping revisions, though the characteristic design of the twisted trunk has never been abandoned. The idea of the helical form arises in the plan from the detection of the staggered convergence on the focal point of the tower of the main road axes surrounding the block: Scarampo, Domenichino, Buonarroti, Rossetti, Poliziano. Competing but not meeting, the avenues placed along axes tangential to the profile of the building form a vortex of centripetal force that the designers decided to incorporate in

the streamlined styling of the skyscrap-er. With respect to the initial hypothesis in 2005, however, the direction of the rotation has been inverted, since with the arrival of Linea 5 of the subway system, in 2007, the rhomboid plan of the tower underwent a one-quarter rotation counterclockwise, and now points towards the southeast, towards the tribune of Bramante at Santa Maria delle Grazie. But the most important variation had to do with the engineering of the construction concealed behind the polished glass enclosure. The perimeter columns, which in the first version of the project were perfectly vertical, were later bent to accompany the inclined position of the external facade and to guarantee, floor by floor, the alignment between the partitions of the facade and the module of attach-ment of the internal dividers. The tower has a height of 170 m with 43 above-ground levels, divided into a two-story entrance lobby, a cafe on the second floor, offices from the 3rd to the 40th, and two levels of technical spaces at the roof. Technical systems and storage are also the purpose of the underground spaces. One enters the lobby from the level 122 (meters above sea level) of the subway and the shopping mall, and from level 129 of the upper plaza and the park, connected by a pair of escalators flanked by a dramatic staircase and lit by a large glass roof that offers a view of the entire tower.

This space also contains five large meeting rooms of variable size, from 55 to 370 seats, a reception desk and services. All in direct contact with the underground parking area by means of specific elevators. The structure of the tower, designed by the studio Redesco Structural Engineer-ing, has a classic configuration with a central nucleus and a crown of external pillars, without stiff outriggers and without the elimination of columns at the lobby level. The vertical support system is com-posed of the core and the columns. The horizontal system is composed of the core, with the partial contribution of the columns connected by a large number of reinforced concrete slabs. The overall functioning of the structure is cantilevered, discharging horizontal loads and moments directly to the foundation. The thicknesses of the core and the diameters of the columns are reduced as the building rises, in keeping with a stepped scheme of groups of homogene-ous floors. The columns, with angle variations from floor to floor, decreas-ing towards the top, transmit the torque to the core at the position of each slab, arriving at level 0, below which they become vertical, and the core is no longer subject to torsion. The slab at level 129, then, with a thickness of 50 cm and recessed zones up to 90 cm, plays a fundamental role for the structural balance of the tower. The core is shaped like a shield with the landings of the elevators facing a central corridor offering access to the private area of the offices by means of a glass wall aligned with the panoramic single-skin opening cut into the outer volume of the tower. Between the core and the perimeter pillars, placed flush with the slab, the work zones have a band of free usage with a constant



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