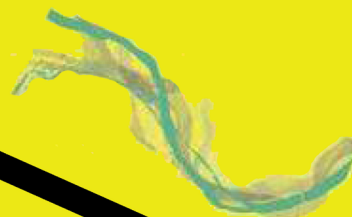




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Piacenza Campus Arata

Guya Bertelli  
Michele Roda



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Scuola di Architettura, Urbanistica e Ingegneria delle Costruzioni  
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WORKSHOP IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN

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## **New Next Nature**

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**Piacenza 2017**

*from ecological landscape  
to architectural design*

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# New scenarios for new developments: the OC Summer School experience

*Guya Bertelli*

## **An international summer school**

The creation of the International Summer School OC OPEN CITY is an important initiative promoted by the Master course in "Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design", with a strong international vocation, oriented to the design the "open spaces" in different

scales of intervention, from the landscape transformation to regeneration of public areas until the study of specific architectural components.

The school is open to students attending the 3rd year of Bachelor Degree Courses and to students attending a Master in Architecture, Design, Engineering and Planning, as

well as to PhD research students in disciplines of architecture and urban planning, which will work together in team with a big number of tutors.

The workshop aims at maintaining an open dialogue among the different design specialities needed to face the problems arising from architectural, urban



and environmental actual transformations, becoming a discussion forum and a brainstorming workshop, where issues on the general development perspectives of contemporary habitats can be discussed.

The wide consensus this initiative has received during the last 7 editions, both inside and outside the academic scene, is the result not only of the scientific reputation of Politecnico di Milano but also of the innovative format and the fascinating history of the host city.

Piacenza is the ideal venue for an initiative focused on complex design problems, both for the

quality of its landscape, artistic and monumental environment and for the wide range of case-studies, as well as for its solid traditions in the building sector.

Located in the fascinating buildings and pavilions of the campus Arata, an ancient recovered former slaughterhouse, the International Summer School OC OPEN CITY hosts each year tens of students, tutors and professors coming from different parts of the world, gathering to discuss issues of architectural, urban and environmental design.

The School high scientific value is confirmed by its intense schedule of lectures and public

conferences with speakers of international renown in the field of architectural and urban design.

### **The program**

The Summer School is composed by a lot of parallel initiatives, coordinated by the directors and coordinators, having congruent goals aimed to a closely coherence with the general issues proposed, according to an integrated, interactive and inter-scalar architectural-urban-environmental concept:

1 – A daily workshop oriented to develop innovative projects and proposals, in relationship to the spatial, cultural and





social requests of the host city;  
 2 - A series of conferences and panel discussions held by designers and scholars of international renown, with illustrations of projects and discussions on current architectural design issues, supporting basic lectures given by internal professors;  
 3 - One 'parallel event' dedicated to the relationship between architecture and other disciplines (cinema and television)

4 - Some scientific and educational contributions orientated towards the understanding of the city and the major transformations in urban context and in the territory;

5 - Three critical reviews (two mid-term and one final) with the participation of an International Jury.

The daily workshop is applied to specific issues typical of urban and environmental architectural design on different scales, aimed at the quality and sustainability of habitat transformation processes. This workshop will be conducted in workgroups, under continued supervision of tutors. The program includes three interconnected sections referred to three different scale of intervention:

- a- Landscape
- b- Urban Space
- c- Architectural Design



### **The city and the context**

The choice of Piacenza as seat of the International Summer School rises, among other things, from the analysis of its territory, an extraordinary case-study in terms of issues and topics related to architectural design and construction of public spaces in contemporary cities. Using as essential references the architectural and urban planning projects being developed and drafted, the International Summer School is discussing some of the most significant urban themes according to the important problems of the transformation of the city. The lowest common denominator is the architectural design of open spaces, which can be seen as a multidisciplinary practice, affecting several interconnected and closely related architectural scales: from landscape architecture to planning; from the architectural design of public spaces to architecture of connections; from the design of architectural components to the study of contemporary aesthetic scenarios.

The attention to environmental and open space issues is part of a theoretical-operational debate, focusing on the promotion of architectural, urban and territorial contexts in terms of sustainable resources and environmental impacts, in order to reach high levels



of consonance, congruence and integration among the architectural requirements and the distinctive traits of the locations. This is achieved through a trans-scalar procedure, simultaneously drawing attention both on the whole and its individual components, enhancing their environmental value. This value

also results from considerations on the concept of landscape as the product of a specific human attitude towards nature. The physical elements defining the environmental character necessarily interact with the history of the built-up areas, where we can see how man has manipulated spaces, shapes and environment in some specific

contexts, drawing this proposal of architectural design, starting from the relation between areas and material forces.

This consideration is even more actual referring it to areas experiencing radical changes over the next decades and where the potential of the development is huge as huge are the criticalities in



terms of densely populated areas de-structuring. In this sense Piacenza territory is an interesting research laboratory to study and to apply operational models related to sustainable development, both in terms of the housing sector (consisting of heterogeneous residential systems) and the design of the public and natural places, such as the territory along the Po river. Therefore the International Summer School aims at becoming, in the medium term, a privileged partner of stakeholders, administrators and technicians as well as of the common population. In fact, the workshop's weeks become, with the active cooperation of the largest possible number of operating institutes and associations on the territory, an extraordinary occasion for the whole city to debate and discuss about its future. A debate not merely internal, but enriched by the creativity and competence of young students and the experience of lecturers, critics and professional figures involved at different levels of competencies.

### **The Theme**

"New Next Nature" is proposed to the students both as a theme for an interdisciplinary discussion and a subject for a project experimentation, coming from a thematic matrix capable of reinterpreting the relationship between architecture-city-landscape in the contemporary era, with a look at future visions. Students are called to imagine "Scenarios for Piacenza 2050" through the use and integration of innovative forms of nature into the city. In particular, projects will give answers to questions that are at the center of the actual debate:

- How will cities be shaped in the future?

- How can we imagine a rebalancing between artifice and nature in urban and metropolitan habitats?

- Can the city-nature / city-future slogan become the emblem of the future of our lands and landscapes?

Part of the intensive design experience will be the activation of one or more areas with a view oriented to build a vision that could respond to the proposed scenario.

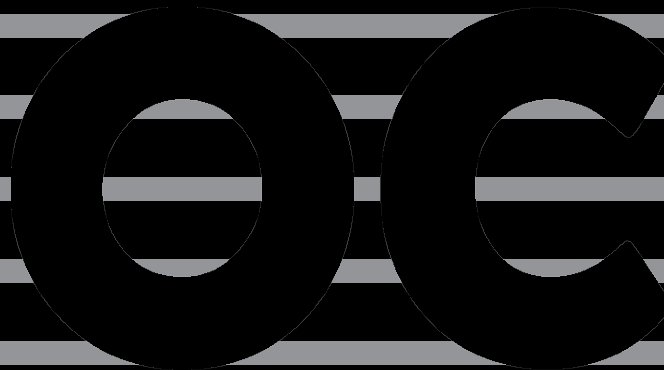


# International Summer School

Campus Arata

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