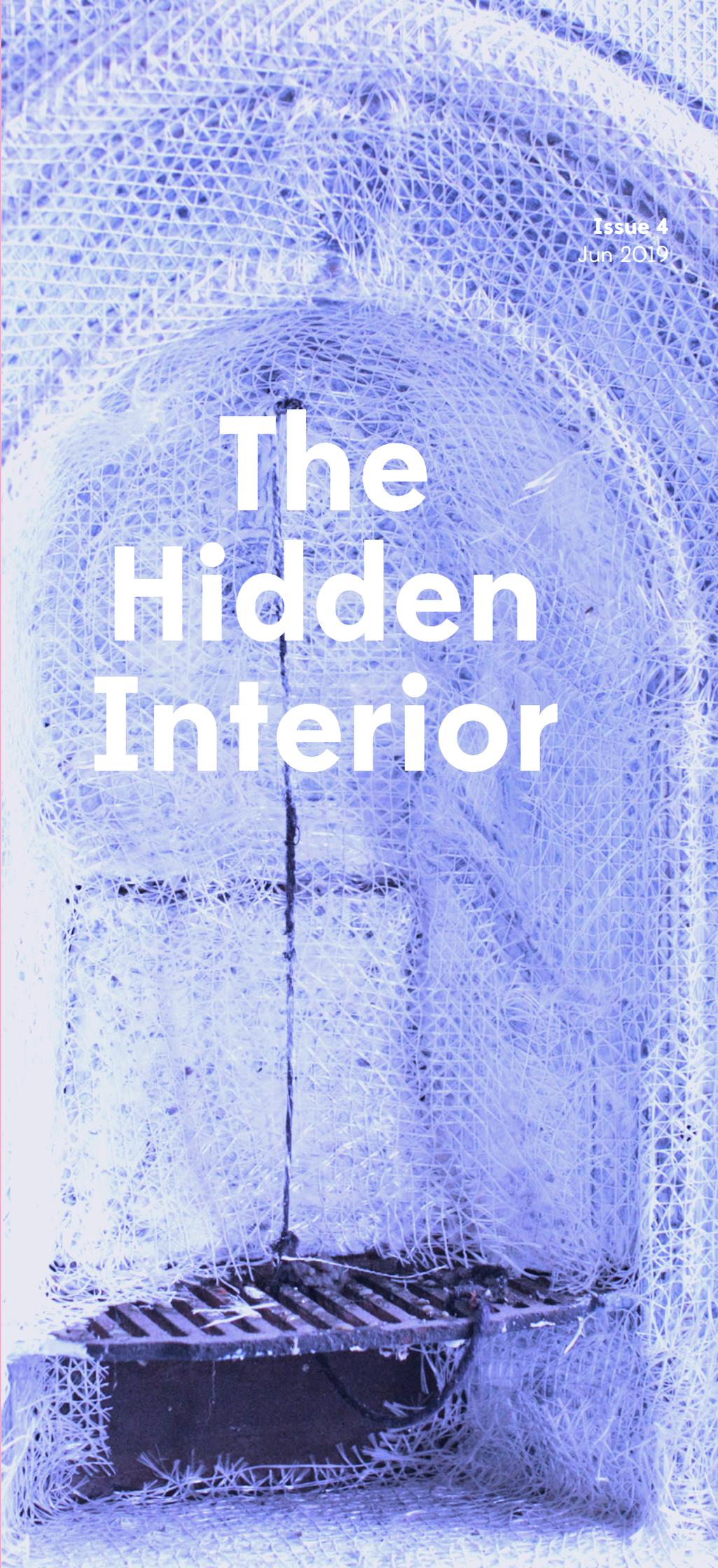


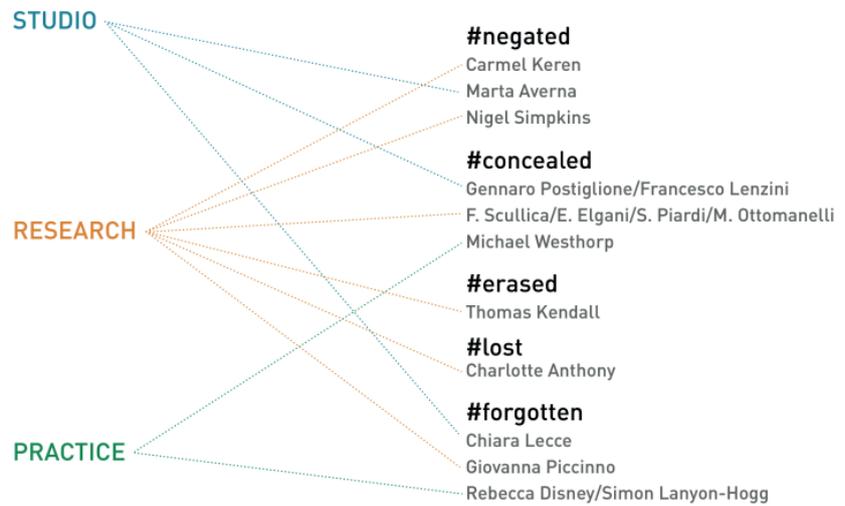
- **Introduction**
Francesca Murialdo and Naomi House
- 04 **The concealed and revealed interiors of Google Street view**
Carmel Keren
- 11 **Unveiling. Identity and interiors.**
Marta Averna
- 16 **In a Darkened Room: reflecting on the negated interior**
Nigel Simpkins
- 22 **Atlantic Wall bunkers possible Re-use. Strategies for the re-appropriation of a forgotten heritage.**
Gennaro Postiglione and Francesco Lenzini
- 28 **Concealed interiors for production in the Age of Industry 4.0**
Silvia Piardi, Francesco Scullica, Michele Ottomanelli and Elena Elgani
- 33 **Members Only - The private life of the gay and bi-sexual, male sauna**
Michael Westthorp
- 38 **The Juniper Tree**
Thomas Kendall
- 50 **Lost Interiors: An investigation of the Keskiee Centre**
Charlotte Anthony
- 56 **Open Neighbourhoods. Disclosing the hidden potentialities of urban interiors**
Chiara Lecce
- 64 **Between the digital and the physical: SENSITIVE_SCAPE**
Giovanna Piccinno
- 70 **Affective reasoning: hidden interiors**
Rebecca Disney and Simon Lanyon-Hogg
- **Back Cover**



The Hidden Interior

Introduction

Francesca Murialdo and Naomi House



Interiors – both public and private – can be invisible to the eye, hidden from view for many reasons, either by chance or as a deliberate act of concealment. There are interiors that are lost - invisible because they no longer exist in a physical form; erased, all traces of inhabitation removed; or forgotten, lacking a way of voicing their material and immaterial value. Others are shielded from public view because they are buried beneath the surface, sealed off, or locked in - too sensitive, important or fragile for inhabitation. Further there are also some typologies of building that negate the essence of the interior – that is, the capacity to allow exchange between people and space.

Issue #4 of IE:Studio explores the range of interpretations that emerge from the investigation of these hidden, invisible and erased spaces. Today digital technologies provide us with pseudo surgical tools through which to record, document, extract and reproduce interiors that are threatened, hidden or concealed, but what tactics and tools can we adopt to take apart, read and interpret the multiple layers of memory and matter that are embedded within the fabric of the interior? What happens when we encounter content and data that poses ethical and political questions? And in the uncovering of such interiors are we aestheticising trauma rather than simply unpicking the truth? Can the increased scrutiny of what lies beneath the surface of the interior give spaces their own agency beyond human inhabitation?

This issue offers a diverse collection of essays and studio briefs that question and expose a range of positions in relation to lost and hidden interiors, and what happens when these spaces are restored to the public gaze, literally and/or metaphorically. The eleven papers included here are organised into three sections: Studio, Research and Practice, and have been curated under five headings: #negated, #forgotten, #concealed, #erased and #lost that identify different typologies of the hidden interior as well as varying strategies of engagement. The three different sections - Studio, Research, Practice – provide a useful framework for how Research and Practice in Interiors informs Studio briefs. The wide range of contributors including academics, researchers, students and practitioners together underline the collaborative nature of interiors as a discipline.

Some of the papers document STUDIO briefs and student responses to them. For example Marta Averna's analysis of the Colonie in Northern Italy – a legacy of its Fascist heritage – and the student projects that re-conceive their interiors through a strategy of overwriting the traumatic history of these spaces with the identification of new narratives. Gennaro Postiglione and Francesco Lenzini's essay examines the Atlantic Wall – an example of a fortified coastal structure built to protect the Allies from invasion during the Second World War – questioning the potential for this abandoned set of structures to operate as a device for reconnecting our past, present and future by restoring its hidden spaces to the public gaze. Chiara Lecce's discussion of the Open Neighbourhood offers a strategic methodology for transforming the meanwhile spaces of Milan, in order to catalyse ongoing and sustained development. Here student work is intimately contextualised and catalogued.

Others papers describe academic RESEARCH that inform teaching such as Silvia Piardi, Francesco Scullica, Michele Ottomaneli and Elena Elgani's investigation of the smart factory, considering its relationship to context and to inhabitation, and Nigel Simpkins study of the camera obscura as a device that articulates a relationship to the city that is intimate and hidden. Charlotte Anthony offers her research into the Keskidee Centre in London – a building that no longer exists – establishing a methodology for investigating and documenting interiors that have been erased. And Giovanna Piccinno explores the locus of the 'contemporary nomadic citizen', contemplating the 'dematerialization of physical space' within a network of digital interactions.

Thomas Kendall's paper, 'The Juniper Tree' is experimental, testing the space of the page as the site of erasure and exploring the impact of gaps in the narrative, missing letters, words and paragraphs, as well proposing that text is itself spatial and thus inhabitable. Carmel Keren's essay is also propositional, speculating on the capacity of Google Street View to freeze time and capture lost narratives of inhabitation.

Michael Westhorp's paper offers an insight into PRACTICE by designing a hidden typology – the gay sauna. His project grapples with the question of visibility both in terms of the activity that the sauna accommodates and in the materiality of the interventions made. Rebecca Disney and Simon Lanyon-Hogg explore methods of detection that reveal the long-held secrets that the interior holds on to, and test these strategies to construct a new archive for a 'forgotten and overlooked space.'

The papers here all look to describe buildings and spaces that have disappeared or remain deliberately concealed - a complex interior landscape that is investigated, deciphered and re-presented using an array of methods and tactics. Such investigations are especially relevant to academics and practitioners of the interior as they address the physical and emotional complexity of the environments that frame our lives. Further the disentanglement of the multi-layered realm of the interior offers new visions for its future as an ongoing archive of human experience.

Between the digital and the physical: SENSITIVE_SCAPE

Giovanna Piccinno

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Abstract

This paper explores the reinvention of residual, intermediate, and hidden urban spaces to host the new online/offline behaviours of the contemporary nomadic citizen. The dematerialization of physical space, which supports the non-stop flow of digital information is filtered by a system of relationships. Within this context people assume the role of interface between spaces, generating an online/offline SENSITIVE_SCAPE.

1_ Digital city | networking city

The territory of the third millennium is transforming the ways in which users inhabit space. The formal deconstruction of the contemporary metropolis is a direct consequence of the processes of socio-economic transformations and the Age of Access. Post-industrial development has created indeterminate spaces, often hidden or forgotten, these spaces offer a refuge for diversity and are continually subjected to new programmes of use, often spontaneous. Here the boundary between virtual and physical space is gradually becoming thinner.

The landscapes that we inhabit, both physical and mental, are becoming deformed, as Marc Augé considers: 'Our everyday environment has changed in just a few decades', which has obliged us - inhabitants, citizens, researchers and designers – to deeply reconsider the logic for defining urban environments and social behaviours: *'feelings, perceptions and imagination are the categories that have been shaken by technological innovations and by the power of the industrial apparatus that makes said innovations widespread'*^[1]. Since the early 1990s the deep process for separating time and space has intervened in this new landscape as an activator of the mechanisms necessary to update behaviours, most of which have involved the uprooting of social institutions (the main categories being: kinship, politics, economy, religion) - a phenomenon that the English sociologist Anthony Giddens describes as *disembedding*^[2]. For Giddens disembedding describes behaviours that enable social relationships to be carried out free from specific places and contexts, recombining them in indefinite zones of space and time. Thomas Friedman^[3], defines this space-time compression process as the *death of distance* which entails the progressive reduction of distance - a restriction for social action.

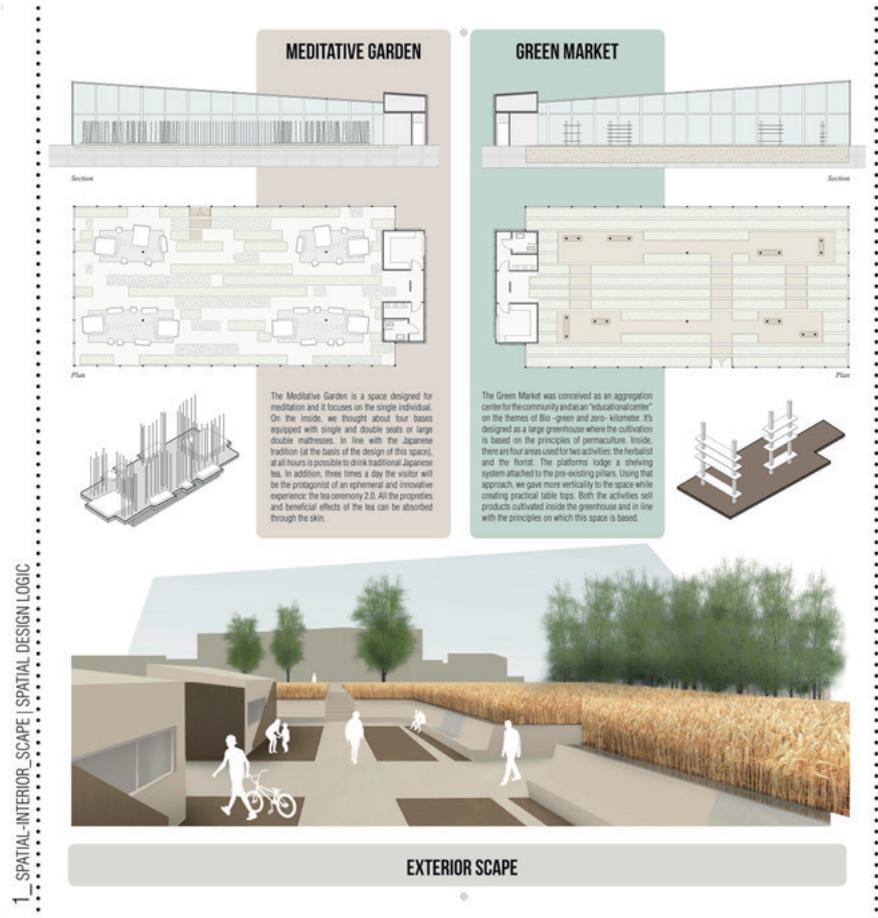
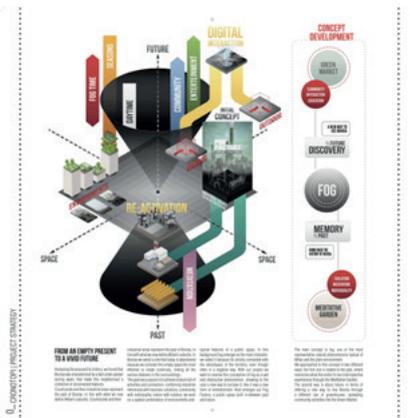


Figure 1: Fog factory. Team 6_students: Federico Quaini, Valentina Riolo, Daniel Volpi.
From an empty present to a vivid future. A spatial design strategy for new urban environment and new social behaviours.

2_ De-structured cities and intermediate zones

The continuous transformation of the landscape, where cities play a central role, creates a disruption which generates *in-between spaces*^[4] - indeterminate spaces, often hidden or forgotten, that operate as a refuge for diversity, continually subject to new programmes of use, often spontaneous. I believe these *in-between spaces* represent today privileged places, metaphors for the possible relationships *between humans and objects, and the physical and virtual realms*.

These *intermediate zones* are becoming crucial knots in the urban social system, offering the potential to introduce new strategies able to translate the boundary between virtual and physical space that is becoming everyday thinner. One example of the many changes in the urban condition includes the greater integration of the architecture of infrastructure - sometimes completely abandoned - which is gaining a renewed role through the integration of additional functions, implemented in response to the demands of the new citizen, cosmopolitan and consumer. The most representative, iconic and inspiring case study is the elevated linear park High Line, created on a disused spur of the New York Central Railroad on the west side of Manhattan in New York city (Project 2006-opening 2009). The project leader James Corner Field Operations (landscape architecture) collaborated with Diller Scofidio+Renfro (architecture) and Piet Oudolf (garden design) proposing a sort of "living system" made of nature and cultural attractions as part of a long-term plan for the park to host temporary installations and performances. This infrastructural landscape constitutes an interesting field of enquiry, open to new interpretations and responsive to design interventions that provide new meaningful narratives





Figure 2: Tutto tondo. Team 5_ Students: Aseel Dosh, Mahnaz Jahangiri, Maria Monna, Tessie van der Voort Maarschalk. Designing spatial and interior solutions around and inside existing building and places.

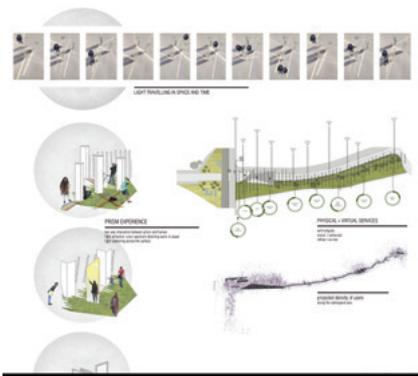


Figure 3: Urban sensory Lab. Team 5_ Students: Aseel Dosh, Mahnaz Jahangiri, Maria Monna, Tésse van der Voort Maarschalk. Sensitive_scape and digital aspect for a sensory environment in forgotten urban spaces. Connectivity + services + “the inbetweens” + natural-scape

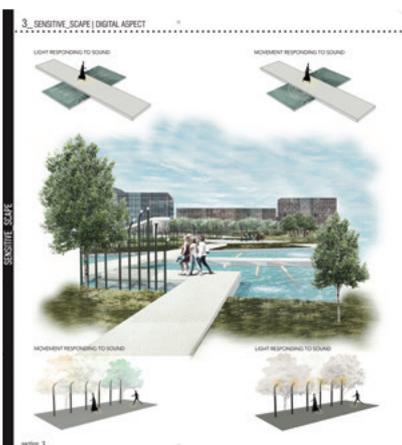


Figure 4: Soundscape. Team 8_ Students: Bahar Hami, Elnaz Torabzadeh, Siyka Georgieva, Huimin Chen. Movement and light responding to sound.

There is the need to develop projects for this new category of urban place capable of *mediating across the continuous online/offline condition that guides our daily behaviours*: places designed to connect the *analogical | real space* and the *digital | virtual one*. In the future, Ambient Intelligence, Ubiquitous Computing (UC) and the Internet of Things (IoT) will radically modify the use of urban spaces due to their pervasiveness, and it will be necessary to update the criteria for designing them. These infrastructures aim at “disseminating” network connectivity in the domestic and non-domestic environments, extending from devices to surfaces and objects of daily use. Therefore, UC and IoT *require the accurate design of the transition from the physical to the digital*, from materiality to immateriality, from visibility to invisibility - mixed realities that emerge as a continuum between digital space and real space.

The *relational aspect*, both virtual and real, is the decisive element for the new project and it may be capable of intervening in territories, environments and on users activating new experiences. What happens is a sort of dematerialization of the physical space, which supports a non-stop digital flow, filtered by the social system of relationships. People can assume the role of the interface between the digital and the physical, defining urban landscape and spatial relationships through digital systems. Users generate an *online/offline SENSITIVE_SCAPE* through physical-digital actions.

4_ Unresolved and performative spaces

Unresolved, hidden, neglected urban *interspaces* assume the role of connective tissue - *hot-spots* of a *network* continuously updated, and within which the most varied activities can be hosted. Spatial-interior design is an activity that intervenes in space according to configurative, light, progressive, regressive and even systemic modalities. One of its strengths is that it can create a strong connection between *analogical | real* and *digital | virtual* space.

The unstoppable flow of digital data across the analogic and digital can be supported by a physical component, the real space, completing an exchange of experiences and knowledge *face to face*, in a true *arena*. These designed places, with their countless and unusual typologies of environments, can host new sharing behaviours owing to their different “programmed“ qualities: relational, environmental, functional, aesthetic and perceptive, with reference to a logic of belonging to communities and a logic of *branding*. But they can also give back to citizens the sense and value of *the public good*. In this regard, design disciplines represent a unique opportunity to generate new creative spatial concepts by working as a continuous process, identifying and interpreting new scenarios.

The Interior and Spatial design approach is very agile, disseminated in several episodes. It is systematic, often aiming at a *possible* condition, even removable and/or transferable, and can be continuously updated. It also acts at environmental level, including *performance* and ephemeral aspects connected to temporariness or virtuality - responsive environments able to create the new *sensitive_scape*. This perfectly dialogues with different environments: from the historical and precious, to the former industrial, but also to the most forgotten, hidden, and neglected (*dirt space*)^[5], identifying each time appropriate strategies and languages. It is an approach characterized by its ability to synthetically and variably relate the most exquisitely configurative aspects of urban spaces with the functional, symbolic, conceptual, temporal, cinematic, interactive, artistic, poetic, artificial and natural, even of conflict and protest . . . ; basically, with all the mutable elements that constitute a large part of the contemporaneous urban scenario, in the emerging *wi-fi city*.

Design Studio activity

Landscape and interior-spatial design, 1st y MSc, A.y. 2017/18 [caption]

The Masters course dealt with the actions of Landscape and Spatial-Interior Design in urban areas, in the Milano-Bovisa district, in agreement with the Municipality of Milan - District *Municipio 9*, with particular attention to the evolving, intermediate, residual and often hidden, neglected spaces, by giving value to the aspects of hospitality of the city's public spaces, by using different landscape and spatial-interior design tactics and tools. These include the natural elements, the environmental, functional and aesthetic characteristics, the performative and interactive actions, the adaptability and variability of the spatial interventions. The Design Studio investigated this phenomenon through an actual, critical and experimental approach, testing in which way the natural, physical and ephemeral design hypotheses could become some of the city's interior_scapes and sensitive_scape for the new urban future scenario.

The various designed "city interior_scapes and sensitive_scape" offered the poetics of storytelling with the juxtaposition and layering of smaller designs into a whole; a composition made of memories, displaced contexts, future visions, recycled meanings, and metamorphosis, which allows the city to create itself, to read itself and to form its own meanings from unpublished or borrowed fragments, towards a continuous updating of the environment and of the landscape.



Figure 5: *Landscape and Spatial-Interior Design_DESIGN STUDIO*
Professors: Giovanna Piccinno, Carolina Fois, Marco Barsottini | Assistants: Daniele Mazzinghi, Jovana Vukoje _ Exhibition_ School of Design_Politecnico di Milano (It), January 2018

Notes & Citations

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Back cover

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Francesca Murialdo, is an architect and a PhD in Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design. In the past 10 years she's been running her own practice and working as Adjunct Professor at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano. From 2015 she is Programme Leader in Interior Architecture at Middlesex University in London. Her interests focus on the scale, and physical connections between spaces, people and objects, underlining emerging behaviours and strategies.

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Front Cover Image: Livia Wang

Vincent Van Gogh, 1853-1890, Painter, Lived Here 1873-1874

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