

Temporary Stay

New forms of hospitality between
architecture and landscape

edited by Paola Misino,
Matteo Almonti, Claudio Costantino



Nuova serie di architettura
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Paola Misino, Department of Architecture, Pescara - G. d'Annunzio
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Fig. 1 - River Pescara. Photo by Freegiampi.

Index

Foreword, by Paola Misino, Matteo Almonti, Claudio Costantino p. 9

Part I - Reflections

Intertwined identities: the traveller and the architectures of travel, by Paola Misino » 15

Postcards, landscape, monuments, by Federico Bilò » 25

Tourism and hospitality in the Apennine inner areas: forms of temporary dwelling and local development, by Massimo Angrilli » 35

From philoxenia to hyper-tourism: collective memory and the transformation of the commercial triangle in Athens, by Tina Mikrou » 45

Anatomy of the heritage city, an approach to its museum structure: the case of Seville, by Fernando Diaz Moreno » 55

Reclaiming rivers. Where urban life meets flowing water, by Stefania Gruosso » 67

Notes towards a spatial perspective of tourism, by Claudio Costantino » 77

Fluid boundaries. Water as design condition, by Matteo Almonti » 89

Designing for human well-being. An interdisciplinary reading on nature, form and color, by Andrea Di Cinzio p. 99

Part II - Visions

The riverfront and the city, by Paola Misino, Matteo Almonti, Claudio Costantino » 111

Back to the bank, by Carmen Cerrato Ramírez, Elena Fusco, Lavinia Denisa Hritcu, Manuel Torres Moraga, Marina Alexandra Boghita, Tsenkov Yavor » 119

On the (ri)verge, by Anastasia Sakellariou, Andreas Primikyrios, Despoina Tsaliki, Eirini Marina Prokidi, Eleonora de Santis, Giulia Giustini » 129

Living on water, by Dorina Borş, Iliyona Andreeva, Luca Ferretti, Natalia Fernandez Pérez, Paola Sambrotta, Paula Fernandez Pérez » 135

Walk.net, by Alexia Stoica, Ana Silveira Oria, Andrea Pietrantoni, Dimitrios Antoniou, Florina Oboroceanu, Maria Morales Marchal » 141

The riverline, by Antonio De Giuseppe, Christina Ioannidou, Eva Karapanou, Foteini Sotiropoulou, Lucrezia Di Domenico » 147

Well-being and urban riverfront environment, by Alena Kolev, Dermendjieva Shanaya, Kadurina Dobtyana, Kristyan Raychev, Umar Ali » 155



Fig. 1 - River Pescara. Photo by Claudio Costantino.

Foreword

Paola Misino, Matteo Almonti, Claudio Costantino

The essays and projects collected in this volume present the outcomes of the Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) Temporary Stay. New Forms of Hospitality between Architecture and Landscape, promoted by the Department of Architecture of the University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara and co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The initiative brought together five European universities – the University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, the Medical University of Sofia, the National Technical University of Athens, the Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași, and the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura of Seville – engaging professors, researchers, doctoral candidates and students in an intensive international learning experience. Activities were organised in a blended format between July and September 2025, combining online seminars with a one-week design workshop held in Pescara at the laboratories of the Department of Architecture.

The volume is structured into two complementary sections. The first, Reflections, gathers theoretical and critical contributions that investigate the transformations currently affecting hospitality and tourism. The second, Visions, presents the design proposals developed during the workshop, translating these reflections into spatial and architectural scenarios. Together, the two sections offer an interdisciplinary perspective on the relationship between hospitality, landscape and urban transformation, combining theoretical inquiry with experimental design research.

At the centre of the programme lies the exploration of “new forms of hospitality” and their potential role in addressing some of the most pressing challenges generated by contemporary tourism. Since the second half of the twentieth century, the progressive expansion of the hospitality industry has profoundly transformed the relationship between travellers and destinations.

The development of global transport networks, the standardisation of accommodation services and the widespread diffusion of digital platforms have increased accessibility, while simultaneously contributing to the homogenisation of travel experiences. Increasingly, destinations are selected not for their specific cultural, historical or environmental qualities, but for their capacity to satisfy expectations shaped by global tourism markets. This condition has generated significant spatial and social imbalances. While many historic centres and coastal destinations experience growing pressures associated with overtourism, large portions of rural territories, inland regions and secondary urban landscapes continue to face demographic decline, economic marginalisation and progressive abandonment. Such dynamics reveal the limits of tourism models primarily oriented towards consumption, where places risk becoming interchangeable settings rather than unique cultural and environmental contexts.

Against this backdrop, the programme investigates alternative approaches to hospitality capable of redefining the relationship between visitors, local communities and territorial resources. Rather than considering hospitality exclusively as an economic sector, the contributions collected in this volume explore its broader spatial, social and cultural implications. Hospitality is understood as a potential tool for territorial regeneration, capable of activating new relationships between temporary inhabitants and local communities, while fostering more balanced forms of development. Particular attention is devoted to forms of mobility that extend beyond conventional holiday tourism: professional activities, academic exchange programmes, research initiatives, cultural production and temporary work are increasingly generating new patterns of movement and residence. These practices suggest different ways of inhabiting places, often characterised by longer stays, stronger engagement with local contexts and a more meaningful interaction with everyday life, making hospitality capable of supporting local economies, enhancing territorial identities and promoting a more reciprocal exchange between guests and host communities.

Special attention is given to territories located outside consolidated tourist circuits, where ordinary landscapes, productive activities, historical settlements and ecological systems often coexist in fragile but highly valuable balances. These contexts provide an opportunity to rethink hospitality not as an isolated sector, but as part of broader territorial and landscape transformations. Within this framework, the Adriatic coast of Abruzzo served as a laboratory for experimentation. Its river landscapes, coastal settlements and relationship with the minor historical centres of the hinterland offered an exemplary context through which to investigate the opportunities and contra-

dictions associated with contemporary forms of hospitality. The studies and projects presented in the following pages emerge from this shared field of inquiry and demonstrate how architectural and urban design research can contribute to imagining more sustainable, inclusive and place-sensitive futures.

Far from representing definitive solutions, the Reflections and Visions collected in this book should be understood as contributions to an ongoing debate on the future of hospitality, mobility and territorial transformation. Together, they reaffirm the capacity of architecture, landscape and urban design to act as critical instruments for interpreting contemporary challenges and for imagining new relationships between people, places and forms of temporary dwelling.



Fig. 2 - Lungofiume dei Poeti. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli.

PART I - Reflections



Fig. 1 - Abandoned hotel in Sicily. Photo by Cristiano La Mantia.

*Intertwined identities: the traveller and the architectures of travel*¹

Paola Misino

The architectures of travel can be interpreted as material testimonies to the cultures of mobility of a given era. Analysing them means understanding not only how people travel, but also how travellers construct their relationship with the world, with local communities, and with the places they encounter. In this sense, the identities of travellers and the architectures of travel do not develop independently; rather, they emerge as deeply intertwined dimensions of the same cultural phenomenon.

Throughout history, each form of mobility has generated specific architectural typologies and, at the same time, these architectures have contributed to shaping the very experience of travel, influencing patterns of encounter, modes of stay, and relationships with the host environment. Alongside the more familiar figure of the tourist, new forms of mobility have emerged, linked to education, work, research, and nomadic lifestyles. These transformations require spaces capable of supporting more flexible and adaptable models of temporary accommodation. As a result, the architectures of travel have become hybrid places where residential, social, and productive functions overlap and interact.

1. All the images from this paper follow a parallel trajectory to the text and highlight the extreme vulnerability of the tourism phenomenon. The choice of destinations can generate demand that even exceeds the carrying capacity of the places themselves (overtourism), while at the same time it can lead to depopulation, a shift in the attractiveness conditions of a destination, and even to abandonment. The photographed structures document scattered evidence along the Italian coasts of this dual condition. The images were selected from the photographic competition “Fotogenia degli ecomostri” 2023/2024, promoted by Legambiente and Osservatorio Paesaggi Costieri Italiani, edited by Arch. Michele Manigrasso. Link: <https://www.paesaggicostieri.org/fotogenia-degli-ecomostri>.

Within this framework, the relationship between traveller and architecture acquires an identity-forming dimension. On the one hand, spaces influence the travel experience on an emotional as well as a practical level; on the other, the needs and behaviours of travellers contribute to redefining the meaning and configuration of the architectures that accommodate them. What emerges is a dynamic relationship in which subject and space mutually transform one another, giving rise to identities that do not develop autonomously but through a continuous process of interaction.

In the last few decades, tourism has grown a lot and had a big impact – not only on the environment and local areas, but also on the economy, on social life, culture, art, literature, and even on people’s physical and mental well-being. By now it’s clear that tourism touches so many different fields of study and, more generally, many aspects of today’s culture – even things we usually think of as just “leisure”.

Without delving into the debate surrounding the positive or negative effects of tourism, it is nonetheless relevant to investigate the processes through which travel destinations are selected, especially in the contemporary context, where such choices are largely mediated and guided by the Internet.

The features that make a place attractive are becoming more and more varied, and not always well-defined. Since the 2000s, studies in sociology and statistics suggest that people don’t necessarily pick a destination because of the uniqueness of the place itself, but rather because of what’s included in the “travel package”. So, besides the price, what really matters are things like: how easy it is to get there, what the hotel looks like in the photos, the extras included, maybe a Michelin-starred restaurant, or the online reviews. Whether it’s the sea, the mountains, an art city, or a big capital city doesn’t make a huge difference – what counts is that the place doesn’t disturb the tourist too much.

The anthropologist Kristina T’Felt, in her book *Le voyage à travers le temps et l’espace*, talks about two different approaches to travel: the tourist’s approach and the traveler’s approach:

«The tourist lives in a closed space-time, organized by the tourism industry: every moment is determined by a precise itinerary, without the possibility of experiencing the unexpected.

The voyager lives in an open space-time: they visit the public space of a country and sometimes step into private spaces when a connection forms with a community member. Open time is the ability to let the trip drift into the unexpected.»²

2. Kristina T. (2023), *Le voyage à travers le temps et l’espace*, Le Manuscrit, Paris.

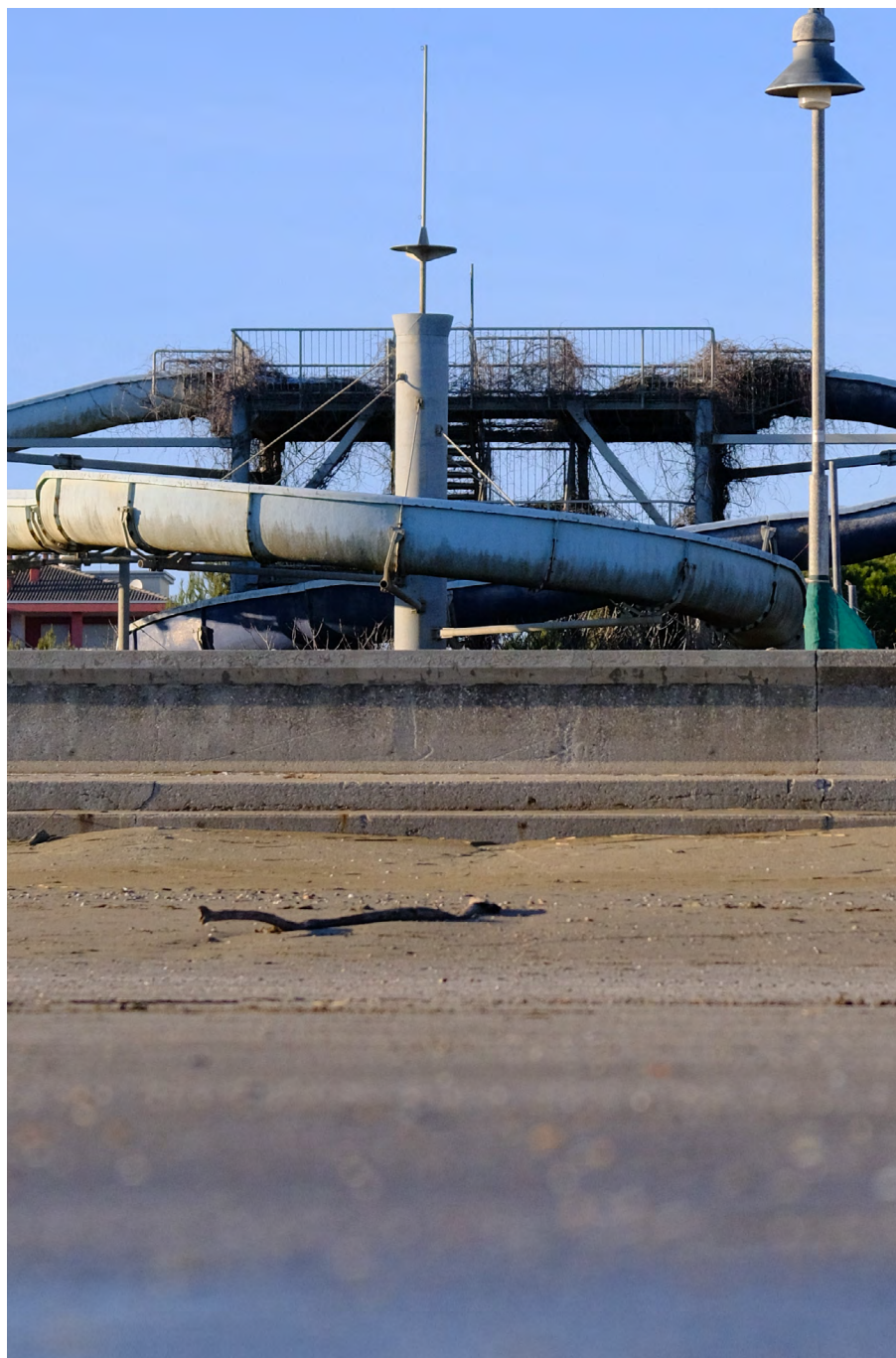


Fig. 2 - Porto santa Margherita – VE. Photo by Marco Francescato.

Within these processes that drive mass tourism, talking about hospitality means shifting our point of view – putting ourselves in the shoes of those who welcome rather than those who arrive. The way hospitality spaces and buildings have evolved can actually be read as a story of the cultural changes in the society that travels.

In the 1970s, anthropologist Dean MacCannell, while writing *The Tourist*³, built a large archive of data, newspapers, interviews, and more on «the things tourists go to see», with an initial aim of classifying types of tourist attractions and then tracing back to the motivations and desires of travelers: «I began collecting reports on every kind of imaginable attraction [...] These included entries from guidebooks, travel brochures, diary pages, fragments from travel essays, occasional comments from politicians, sociologists, journalists, and others [...] So I examined thousands of accounts of monuments, mountains, festivals, battlefields, churches, archaeological ruins, towers, items of clothing (Marilyn Monroe's 'Happy Birthday Mr. President' dress, Napoleon's hat), paintings (the *Mona Lisa*, *Guernica*), gardens, bridges, rich and poor neighborhoods, sites of tragedies and miracles, etc. [...] Eventually, my archive filled an entire room in our apartment. [...] What exactly distinguishes a tourist attraction from the thousands of similar things that don't attract tourists? [...] What made the objects and events in my archive different from their unloved twins and siblings was that they were socially marked as attractions.»⁴

The features that lead a place to become an attraction are increasingly variable and loosely defined; since the 2000s, statistical and sociological studies suggest that leisure travel destinations are chosen not for the unique qualities of the place itself, but based on conditions determined by the travel-package offer. Beyond the economic aspect, factors such as ease of access, visuals of the hotel, possible extras, starred cuisine, and web reviews have become the key parameters guiding destination choice. Whether it's sea, mountains, art cities or big capitals matters little; the priority is that these places, fundamentally, do not overly unsettle the tourist⁵. Within these processes that fuel large-scale tourism movements, to speak of hospitality means to change perspective and take the point of view of those who host. The evolution of hospitality architecture can be read as a narrative of the cultural transformations of

3. MacCannell D. (1976), *The tourist: a new theory of leisure class*, Schocken Books, New York.

4. MacCannell D. (2018), "The Making of The Tourist", *Via. Tourism Review. Revue internationale interdisciplinaire du tourisme*, 13, retrieved from: <https://journals.openedition.org/viatourism/2239>.

5. Cazalais N. (2004), "Hôtellerie et développement régional: Réflexions autour de paradoxes", *Téoros, Revue de recherche en tourisme*, 23, 3: 17-21.

the traveling society. The positioning of a hotel within a territory reveals the development strategies and policies of one area compared to another, while the layout and finish of interior spaces outline the profiles of its guests.

When Giò Ponti, in 1939, wrote in *Corriere della Sera*, «The hotel room must not be a bedroom in a hotel! The hotel room is a thing unto itself», he emphasized the need to keep distance from the rampant standardization of hotel structures at the time. Instead, he argued that designers should think about the guest who would temporarily live there, whether for a short or long stay, aiming to make them feel always connected to the place, in an environment that combines domestic comfort with the thrill of elsewhere, of travel, of discovery.

In his hotel projects of the 1930s, the standard repetition of the room module – «wasted space, poorly placed beds, reading lamps that don't work, nightstands with insufficient surfaces»⁶ – was reimagined using color and wall, ceiling, and furniture finishes that gave each room a unique character.

«We Italians must fully leverage our fabrics' imagination, daring in design and color, to make the environments in which we are hosts distinctive, attractive, and lively. [...] The first principle to be represented and preached is the widest, most selective and appropriate adoption of typical Italian productions in hotel furnishings; in this domain we must most prominently present to the foreign tourist the qualities and characteristics of our products; the hotel also has a representative or demonstrative role in this respect.»⁷

The collective spaces of hotel architecture should provide an opportunity to tell guests the culture of the place through the use of local materials and the context through light and visual connection with the outside: no hotel can ever be a repetition of itself but must be a specific narrative of its various destinations.

The choice of lodging tells a great deal about the meaning the guest attributes to the journey; as Asterio Savelli observes in *Sociology of Tourism*, although leisure travel has a dominant role in the tourism scene, there are many different forms of tourism that together provide important balance; according to Savelli's classification, they mainly include stays for care (e.g., spas...), pilgrimage, return to one's land of origin, study trips, congresses or conferences, business trips, labor tourism, official visits. These types of mobility are still growing today, driven by variable conditions that stem not from free time, but from personal life needs and circumstances.

6. Mautone F. (2006), *Gio Ponti. La committenza Fernandes*, Editrice Compositori, Milano.

7. Ponti G. (1939), «L'attrezzatura alberghiera e la produzione nazionale», *Corriere della Sera*, 27 maggio 1939.



Fig. 3 - Villaggio Pinetamare, Castelvoturno – CE. Photo by Elvio De Blasio.

In this regard, many testimonies come from art and literature; Saul Steinberg's drawings⁸ are emblematic: they depict ordinary spaces where architecture is not the protagonist, but rather the life that brings one to that place at that moment. Space welcomes, and its perception silently and unconsciously influences the well-being – or discomfort – of those temporarily inhabiting it.

Hermann Hesse expresses with clarity the strong bond that forms between the guest and their “temporary home” when he writes about the Hotel Heiligenhof in Baden:

«For normal people, taking a room is a trifling matter, an ordinary, unemotional act that takes just two minutes. For us, however – us neurotic, sleepless, and psychopathic people – this banal act, fantastically complicated by memories, anxieties, and phobias, becomes a torment. The kind hotelier, the pleasant clerk who, at our anxious and persistent request, shows us and recommends their ‘quiet room’, have no idea of the storm of associations, fears, ironies, and self-ironies that that fatal phrase unleashes in us. How well we know – deeply and horrifically know – those quiet rooms, those theaters

8. See 1940-43 journal. Saul Steinberg Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Link: <https://saulsteinbergfoundation.org/chronology/1940s/>.



Fig. 4 - Albergo abbandonato in Sicilia. Photo by Cristiano La Mantia.

of our worst sufferings, our most painful defeats, our most secret shames.»⁹

The hospitality structure thus has an anthropomorphic identity¹⁰, which changes its physiognomy according to the guests' differing perceptions. In this sense, an insightful interpretative key lies in perceiving the relationship among hospitality architecture, the destination, and the meaning the guest assigns to the journey.

Parallel to leisure tourism – and of equal weight – this alternative clientele has proven fundamental in the history of hospitality and has driven important architectural and territorial transformations. As is well known, monastic and religious buildings adapted in the Middle Ages to host students, researchers, and artisans anticipated the type of configuration that would later develop in inns and hotels: individual cells were devoted to rest and study, while the spaces surrounding the courtyards served as areas for social interaction and collective learning (libraries, archives, and so forth), as well as, over time, catalysts for the regeneration of the urban contexts in which they were located.

9. Hesse H. (1978), *La cura*, Adelphi, Milano.

10. Gerosa M. (2004), *Gli alberghi letterari e cinematografici come modelli di interpretazione delle architetture ospitali del Novecento*, in Berrino A., ed, *Storia del Turismo. Annale 2004*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

However, it was in the 1940s, with projects for apartment hotels designed for professionals, office workers, and artists, that attention shifted toward a temporary – yet often long-term – population working away from home for various reasons. The design experiments proposed during this period focused both on the autonomy of rooms and dwelling units, in order to recreate the comfort of one's own home, and on the provision of collective spaces dedicated to work, dining, and leisure.

Luigi Moretti's apartment-hotel projects in Milan were intended for «bachelors, single women, married couples without children and with one child [...] belonging to that social class of office workers, teachers, magistrates, professionals, students, technicians, and workers who today find refuge only in so-called furnished rooms»¹¹. Designed primarily to accommodate young communities, these buildings were conceived to ensure maximum functionality, abundant natural light, and a strong visual connection with the outdoors. The well-being of residents remained one of the principal objectives, and the necessarily limited size of the individual units was compensated for by the provision of laundries, generous communal spaces, reading and study rooms, as well as shared recreational and sports facilities.

The cultural and urban contexts for which these buildings were designed were profoundly shaped by the proximity of the Second World War and by the urgent need to address the issue of social housing for young people and workers. Today, they still represent some of the few architectural examples in Italy dedicated to accommodating forms of temporary residential mobility that extend beyond conventional leisure tourism, unlike student residences, which have been the subject of continuous design experimentation, often inspired by successful Northern European models.

According to data from ISTAT, work-related temporary mobility has increased in recent years (excluding the pandemic years) and is now widespread throughout Italy, including in inland and peripheral areas of the provinces that are generally overlooked by leisure tourism strategies. These are often fragile territories affected by depopulation and physical decline; nevertheless, they constitute part of an ordinary reality in which productive, agricultural, artisanal, and cultural activities coexist. As such, they offer an opportunity to «move beyond the aestheticization of a postcard-like Italy, trapped in a past that has become both commodity and cultural capital, and to reconnect with the actual reality of territories inhabited and lived by people»¹².

11. Moretti L. (1946), «Le case albergo. Questa iniziativa risolve un grave problema cittadino», *Un alloggio per ogni famiglia*, numero speciale del bollettino 1946 «Mostra Permanente della costruzione», Organizzazione cantieri, Milano.

12. Barbera F., Cersosimo D. and De Rossi A., eds. (2022), *Contro i borghi. Il Belpaese che dimentica i paesi*, Donzelli Editore, Roma.



Fig. 5 - Spiaggia di Fregene – RM. Photo by Tommaso Stefanori.

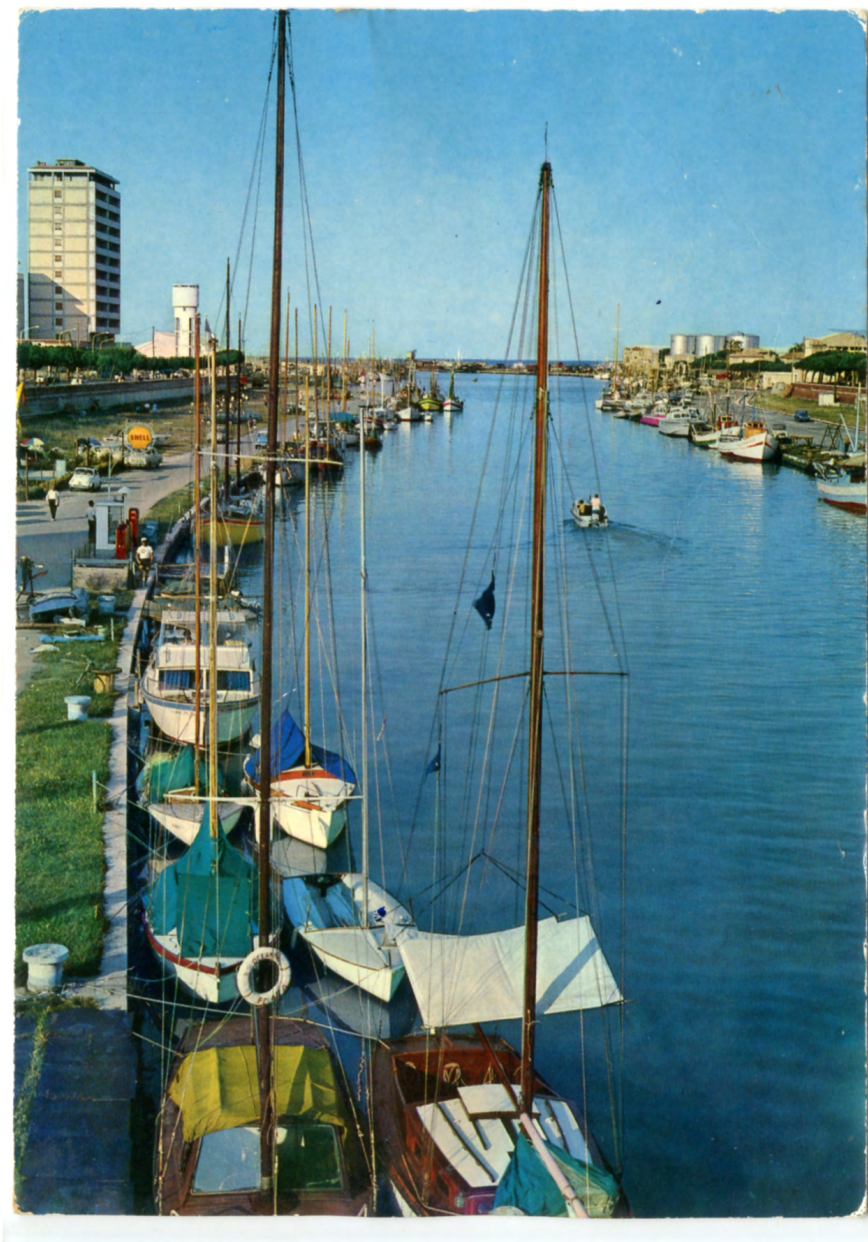


Fig. 1

Postcards, landscape, monuments¹

Federico Bilò

«Sono i messaggi istantanei del mio
telefono a farmi sembrare malinconiche le
cartoline e le lettere che Carlo e Doralice si
scrivevano a penna.»
Andrea De Carlo

01. Photography is the heir to eighteenth-century pictorial vedutismo², and landscape photography in particular boasts, in our country, a long and solid history, very well recounted in the exhibition *L'Italia è un desiderio*³. The image of what Francesco Petrarca had defined as the *Bel Paese*, a definition later taken up and relaunched by Abbot Antonio Stoppani in 1876, became fixed in the nineteenth century, beginning with the photographic views of the Fratelli Alinari. This image would change over time, rather slowly, passing through the ethnographic investigations of Giuseppe Pagano⁴, through various reportages (among many, those of Federico Patellani, Alberto Lattuada, and Henri Cartier-Bresson), depositing a vast repertoire of portraits of places and monuments, as well as of portrait modalities.

1. The images illustrating this essay are all postcards depicting the mouth of the Pescara River, collected from the 1950s through the 1980s. They therefore document three decades of transformations – both major and minor – affecting this urban area. One can observe the southern bank of the river mouth before and after the construction of the urban section of the *Asse Attrezzato*, as well as the northern bank before and after the development of parking areas on the floodplains. These are all essential points of reference for an accurate reconstruction of the history of this part of the city.

2. Galassi P. (1989), *Prima della fotografia. La pittura e l'invenzione della fotografia*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino.

3. *L'Italia è un desiderio. Fotografie, paesaggi e visioni 1842-2022. Le collezioni ALINARI e MUFOCO*, a cura di Matteo Balduzzi e Rita Scartoni, Roma, Scuderie del Quirinale, 1 giugno – 3 settembre 2023.

4. Bilò F. (2019), *Le indagini etnografiche di Pagano*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa.



Fig. 2

It is commonly believed that *Viaggio in Italia*⁵, conceived and coordinated by Luigi Ghirri, which took place in 1984 (42 years ago!!) with the involvement of 23 photographers, revolutionized the gaze upon our country, which had been radically transformed in the 1960s and 1970s⁶. Ghirri's initiative launched a wholly particular exploration of the Italian landscape⁷, far from

5. Twenty photographers took part in *Viaggio in Italia*: Olivo Barbieri, Gabriele Basilico, Gianantonio Battistella, Vincenzo Castella, Andrea Cavazzuti, Giovanni Chiamonte, Mario Cresci, Vittore Fossati, Carlo Garzia, Luigi Ghirri, Guido Guidi, Shelley Hill, Mimmo Jodice, Gianni Leone, Claude Nori, Umberto Sartorello, Mario Tinelli, Ernesto Tulliozi, Fulvio Ventura, Cuchi White.

6. Not by chance Eugenio Turri, citing Karl Polanyi, speak of a Great Transformation. See Turri E. (1979), *Semiologia del paesaggio italiano*, Longanesi and C., Milano. See also Polanyi K. (1944), *La grande Trasformazione*, Einaudi, Torino.

7. Corrado Benigni has written: «certainly, the Italian landscape is characterized by the particular feature of being composed of an alternation of historic centres, churches, monasteries, castles, roads, bridges, set within a natural context of seas, mountains, forests, and rivers, the result of a strong anthropization; of being a multiplicity and a stratification of traces that the many civilizations that have followed one another have left upon it. [...] However, Italy is also that of industrial plants, modernist constructions, gasometers, overpasses, abandoned houses: an Italy of the margins, which in the 1980s was narrated with a new gaze by the photographers of *Viaggio in Italia*». Benigni C. (2023), *Creatori di paesaggio*, in Balduzzi M. and Scartoni R., eds., *L'Italia è un desiderio. Fotografie, paesaggi e visioni 1948-2022*, Scuderie del Quirinale/Electa, Milano.



Fig. 3

the consolidated canons of genre vedutismo and from the most celebrated sites. And the *Viaggio* conceived by Ghirri anticipated by twelve years the statement by Stefano Boeri, according to whom the configuration of the landscape, more or less stabilized in those years, required «a drastic revision of ways of seeing»⁸. More precisely, it is said that *Viaggio in Italia* had the force to displace the «pigeon-greased Venice»⁹ and to emancipate the gaze «from the pictorial connotation rooted in the Italian tradition»; more succinctly, it is said that with *Viaggio in Italia* the idea of Italy as a postcard is done away with. But this is precisely the point: what did those postcards depict?

02. What, then, do illustrated postcards depict? The photographic tradition that flowed into postcards, expressed above all by the Fratelli Alinari, by the TCI, and by more or less amateur photographic circles, favoured celebrated monuments and panoramas and disdained «common and familiar places»¹⁰. For example: a famous monument such as the Duomo of Milan; or an equally famous landscape view, such as the Gulf of Naples, with Mount Vesuvius in

8. Boeri S. (1996), *Atlanti eclettici. Il pensiero laterale*, in Ricci M., ed., *Figure della trasformazione*, Ed'A, Avezzano.

9. The expression, by Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, is found in Benigni C. (2024), *Viaggiatori ai margini del paesaggio. Ghirri, Barbieri, Basilico, Chiaramonte, Cresci, Guidi, Jodice, La nave di Teseo*, Milano.

10. *Ivi*, p. 23.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

the background and the Posillipo pine in the foreground. It is the adjective “celebrated” that proves decisive: celebrated because it is recognized, in its indisputable quality, by everyone: that is, by “common sense”. Thus, “celebrated” in common and widespread opinion. I go to Rome, I send a postcard of the Colosseum, or the Pantheon, or the city seen from Trinità dei Monti, with the “Cuppolone” on the horizon; only the most unconventional (or the most distracted) will choose Termini station. I go to Pescara, I send a postcard of Corso Umberto, or of the seafront: in any case, the most qualified elements of the urban fabric. Even in a city certainly not beautiful and devoid of historical monuments, such as Pescara, there are places recognized, by “common sense”, as qualified and identity-defining.

All this leads us to an important consideration: postcards faithfully reflect the parochialism and the established aesthetic sensibility of “common sense”, that is, of the vast majority of citizens.

03. But let us take a step back. What is a postcard? A postcard is, broadly speaking, a piece of card suitable for postal dispatch (the old post: the “material one”), of variable format but on average around 10 x 15 cm. Its two sides are entirely different. The so-called reverse is usually white and divided into two almost equal parts: one bears lines that facilitate writing the address of the recipient of the postcard itself and the space where the stamp is to be affixed; the other part is blank, and available for writing greetings, a thought of affection, a comment, a testimony of presence-in-loco, or for sketching a drawing. It is important to note that, usually in the upper left-hand corner of this reverse side of the postcard, there is a brief caption of what is depicted on the other side of the postcard itself; unfortunately, the year of the photographic shot printed on the front is only rarely indicated.

The front, then, that is, the true *raison d'être* of the postcard itself, and what distinguishes it from an ordinary letter or a postal card: the image that is sent. But I have already said this; I now add that the edges of postcards are almost always straight, though there are also examples with serrated edges, more common in the past.

04. When and where did the postcard originate? I leave the floor to Cristian Sammarco, who has already written a concise and precise account of the facts. «The fascinating history of postcards as a means of communication and documentation begins in Germany around 1870. It was here that the famous *gruss aus* (greetings from) postcards first spread, featuring collages of holiday resorts, historical and tourist sites, landscapes, and scenes of everyday life, framed by decorative motifs. Initially the preserve of the wealthier classes and used to communicate with families, these ‘photographs in postcard format’ (Treccani) soon became accessible to all».



Fig. 6

05. It is to the credit of Antonio Clemente to have pointed out how, for Italo Calvino, «a formally complete reality in which every part is proportioned to the whole can “be enjoyed only [...] in old postcards”»¹¹. What reality, then, can be depicted today? A formally incomplete reality? «Deliberately omitting the monuments and “postcard” views [!!] that photographic tradition had, until then [until *Viaggio in Italia*], immortalized»¹², what is illustrated instead? To guide the argument, let us try to answer this question: if one day we were to find a photograph by Luigi Ghirri used for a postcard, should we rejoice or rather complain? I believe there are arguments for both reactions. Arguments for rejoicing: one might say that Ghirri’s images, owing to his particular visual sensitivity and his particular attention to even unfortunate places, have become part of the common heritage; they have entered the domain of “common sense”. Diffuse sensibility may have taken important steps forward. Arguments for complaining: his ability to confer aesthetic quality upon unfortunate places might conceal their misfortune. This could result in an unconscious yet widespread resignation, which would constitute an obstacle to their redress: aesthetic appreciation, in fact, does not redeem the spatial

11. Clemente A. (2025), *Le città inesauribili*, in Clemente A., ed., *Biografie di città. L’invisibile di Calvino*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa 2025. The original expression can be found in Calvino I. (1972), *Le città invisibili*, Einaudi, Torino.

12. *Ibid.*

and social inadequacy of those unfortunate places. A similar assessment had been made by Valerio Paolo Mosco regarding the exhibition organized by Stefano Boeri at the 1996 Venice Architecture Biennale: *Sezioni del paesaggio italiano*, produced together with Gabriele Basilico.

The exhibition illustrated six sample areas of the Italian territory, characterized by urban sprawl, each measuring 12 x 60 km, within which Basilico photographed, with perhaps excessive mastery, those situations of mixture and hybridization, between rural and urban, between residential and productive, between different types and degrees of artificiality, that characterize the contemporary landscape: thereby, in effect, sanctioning a kind of approval of it. Mosco commented: «In the aestheticization of the diffuse city carried out by Boeri and Basilico there hovers a certain legitimization of a phenomenon that was inexorably engulfing enormous portions of territory no longer capable of being redressed. Thus, whereas in the past Cederna, Sereni, Calvino, Benevolo and Insolera and many others had fought to preserve the national territory from devastation, the new generation now adopts an accommodating attitude toward what until shortly before had been considered execrable»¹³.

06. During a lecture illustrating the history of the project that Giancarlo De Carlo developed for Piazza della Pilotta in Parma, one of the major architectural problems in Europe, Dario Costi recalled how the architect had bought and collected a large number of postcards. Costi attributed great importance both to the act of collecting postcards and to the postcards themselves. Why? Because, in his view – and one can only agree – in them an imaginary is deposited and revealed: the urban imaginary recognized by “common sense”, by people who are not specialists. De Carlo, therefore, sought to acquire knowledge of the evaluations of common sense among the inhabitants of Parma regarding Piazza della Pilotta. Collecting postcards, in fact, means gaining awareness of the places and urban qualities recognized within diffuse perception: within “common sense”. And this is, undoubtedly, one of the values of postcards; which have indeed attracted the interest of many architects. It is well known that Le Corbusier bought and collected postcards (he had more than two thousand¹⁴), and that he sometimes sketched on the reverse a schematic plan of what was represented in the image, or wrote a meaningful comment. It is also known that Rem Koolhaas began constructing *Delirious New York*, and the reflections it contains, by collecting postcards¹⁵. And other examples could be cited.

13. Mosco V. P. (2017), *Architettura italiana dal postmoderno a oggi*, Skira, Milano.

14. See Bielza L. B. (2013), *Le Corbusier. La passion de cartes*, Mardaga, Bruxelles.

15. See “Interview with Madelon Vriesendorp and Zoe Zenghelis”, in *CLOG 2014*, a special issue entitled *Rem*: 21-22.



Fig. 7

With even minimal research, one discovers that much has been said and written about postcards. For example, Italo Calvino, in narrating Maurilia, one of *Le città invisibili* (*La città e la memoria*, 5), compares the city depicted in postcards with the real city. He arrives at a paradoxical conclusion: «the old postcards do not represent Maurilia as it was, but another city that happened to be called Maurilia, like this one»¹⁶. With regard to postcards, therefore, architects have much to reflect upon: both in relation to the “imaginary” and in relation to the relationship between “common sense and specialized knowledge”.

07. Postcards, by depicting places of quality, landscapes, notable viewpoints, monuments, and so on, are also indicators of a locality’s tourist vocation. I go to Rome to recognize the monuments depicted on postcards: the Colosseo, Piazza Navona, the Fontana di Trevi, and so on; or to recognize the urban ensemble: the domes of the churches seen all together from the Gianicolo, or the way the Tevere river winds through the urban fabric, as visible from the Giardino degli Aranci on the Aventino. What is depicted on postcards is certainly worthy of a visit. Therefore, the more postcards I can produce, the more the place in question has a tourist vocation. Postcards thus become a kind of list of unmissable things: the “must-sees” of a visit, even a brief one.

16. Calvino I. (1972), *Le città invisibili*, Einaudi, Torino.



Fig. 8

Let us now consider the case of Pescara, and in particular the urban area of the river, on which the BIP has focused (more precisely, on the northern bank). First question: is this area depicted in postcards? Second question: what, in particular, do the postcards depict? Which is tantamount to asking which places or elements common sense attributes value to. Answers: the depictions are many and they tell many things. Let us look more closely. The postcards found of this area of Pescara are numerous and describe different phases of urban development: it is possible to establish a significant visual diachrony. Since there are no monuments of particular distinction, the “desirability” of the area is necessarily entrusted, in the images, to the whole, composed of the river, its banks (variously configured), the fishing boats, the characteristic trabocchi (in the area of the river mouth, on the northern side), and, of course, the adjacent urban fabric. What is depicted, therefore, is the relationship between water and the built environment, a particular relationship, capable of qualifying the area and making it appreciable to the point of becoming a tourist destination. Not without a certain degree of optimism.



Fig. 1 - An art event at “Otium - Casa degli escursionisti” in Castrovalva. Photo by Massimo Angrilli.

Tourism and hospitality in the Apennine inner areas: forms of temporary dwelling and local development

Massimo Angrilli

In the contemporary debate on the recovery and repopulation of inner areas, the themes of hospitality and tourism occupy a central position, among the principal devices through which new forms of temporary dwelling are imagined, capable of triggering processes of local development centred on the relationship between landscape and quality of life. It is nevertheless evident that, with considerable insistence – and at times a degree of superficiality – tourism is invoked as a panacea for many inland territories of the Italian peninsula, favoured by the beauty of their landscapes, the richness of their historical and artistic heritage, and their distinctive agri-food characteristics.

The *National Strategy for Inner Areas* likewise places the valorisation of tourism among the five areas of intervention on which to concentrate local development actions aimed at counteracting depopulation². However, Fabrizio Barca³, speaking together with Flavia Terribile at the conference *Tourism in Inner Areas*⁴, emphasised that tourism can become a driver of develop-

1. This work is a revised version of a text that appeared in: Angrilli M., Ciuffreda V., Spera M. (2025), *Paesaggi in attesa. Territori marginali d'Abruzzo*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

2. The proposed strategic framework is articulated through the following pillars: a) Active territorial stewardship and environmental sustainability; b) Enhancement of natural and cultural capital and tourism development; c) Valorization of agri-food systems; d) Implementation of renewable energy supply chains; e) Promotion of local “savoir-faire” and traditional craftsmanship.

3. Fabrizio Barca served as the Minister for Territorial Cohesion (2011-2013) and is widely recognized as the primary architect and promoter of the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI), launched during his tenure. An economist and former senior official at the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Barca provided a decisive contribution to the theoretical and operational framework of the Strategy. This framework is fundamentally centered on the integration of essential services, place-based local development, and the active agency of local communities.

4. The conference was held at the Gran Sasso Science Institute in L'Aquila, from May 31 to June 1, 2016. Barca F. and Terribili F. (2016), *Elementi per la Strategia Turistica nelle*

ment only if integrated with an agri-food and/or cultural production chain and supported by high-quality essential services such as mobility, education, and healthcare. It was further highlighted that hospitality in inner areas may indeed benefit from territorial identity, the diversity and richness of natural and cultural resources, and the capacity of local communities for self-representation, provided, however, that a strong industrial component is also present, endowed with high technical and specialised competences and possibly accompanied by continuous professional training capable of adapting to changing tourism demand.

Concerns regarding the effective capacity of tourism to represent a driver of development in the Apennine territory had already emerged in the 1970s. Pierre Vitte⁵, in a study published in the *Revue de géographie alpine*, observed that the human environment of the L'Aquila mountains, although affected for about a decade by significant tourist dynamics, «reacts little or not at all and is not stimulated [...]». Consequently, tourism, while representing an economic success, may fail to have a significant social or human impact on the region⁶. According to the French geographer, mountain tourism may take the form either of colonisation or of infrastructural adaptation, with real prospects of success only in the latter case and only if local populations are involved and prepared. In Abruzzo, however, tourism appeared rather to assume the form of colonisation and, where modernisation interventions had taken place, these had occurred without genuine participation by local communities.

Even today, mountain tourism in Abruzzo, although it has experienced significant growth, remains excessively dependent on demand from large cities such as Rome and Naples, thus feeding a model of intermittent use weakly rooted in the socio-economic fabric. As Vitte warned, tourism in the Abruzzo mountains must avoid domination by external capital and instead increase the participation of local communities, which must move from spectators to protagonists of economic development. It is also necessary to prevent tourism expansion from producing merely spatial transformations without translating

Aree Interne, Esiti del Seminario *Il Turismo nelle Aree Interne*, Gran Sasso Science Institute, L'Aquila, 31 maggio-1 giugno.

5. Pierre Vitte (1912-1992) was a French geographer and a specialist in Alpine and mountain geography. His research focused on the interaction between the natural environment and human activities in mountainous regions, with a specific emphasis on the socio-economic impacts of tourism and local development. The cited 1975 article provides a critical analysis of tourism in Abruzzo, highlighting how its economic impact does not necessarily translate into social or cultural benefits for local communities.

6. Vitte P. (1975), “Tourisme riche et montagne pauvre: la province de L'Aquila (Abruzzes)”, *Revue de géographie alpine*, 63: 511-532.

into real economic and social regeneration. Indeed, the creation of new accommodation facilities has already altered the landscape in many contexts without producing a significant increase in local employment or a strengthening of the economy.

As early as 1938 – thus even before Pierre Vitte – Ugo Giusti⁷, in his geo-economic-agrarian investigation into mountain depopulation, observed: «Among the industries that seem best suited to the mountain environment, those related to tourism deserve particular mention, and all researchers in fact devote special attention to this form of activity, toward which many hopes are directed also with regard to the revival of Alpine valleys. Yet even in this respect, while from a general point of view a development of tourism both in intensity and in extent is greeted with unanimous approval, especially when, in order to avoid disappointment, it is accompanied by a prudent choice of locations, from the point of view of mountain depopulation reservations are almost universal. It is in fact admitted by most that tourism benefits mountain populations not so much through the creation of large hotels serving wealthy clientele, which make little use of local labour or products, but through the development of modest hotels and especially through the adaptation of dwellings into temporary accommodation for holidaymakers, from which local populations would thus derive a direct economic advantage and an indispensable supplement to their meagre incomes»⁸.

The final sentence appears to anticipate the later emergence of new forms of hospitality alternative to hotels, such as agritourism establishments, bed and breakfasts, and, more recently, house-sharing platforms. Initially conceived with the aim of valorising local resources, fostering encounters between residents and tourists, and promoting slow tourism respectful of territorial specificities, these formulas seemed to embody a virtuous model of hospitality linked to the authenticity of places and human relationships. Over time, however, large-scale expansion and the growing pressure of a form of tourism that has become mass tourism even in Apennine destinations, have profoundly altered their original spirit.

7. Ugo Giusti (1897-1966) was an Italian geographer and economist, renowned for his extensive research on mountain depopulation and rural economics. In his seminal works, including the 1938 survey of mountain territories, he critically assessed the potential of tourism development as an economic catalyst for Alpine communities. Giusti emphasized that tangible benefits arise primarily from small-scale tourism models deeply integrated into the local social fabric, rather than from large-scale hotel infrastructures.

8. Giusti U. and Toniolo A.R. (1938), *Lo spopolamento montano in Italia. Indagine geografico-economico-agraria*, Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria, Roma.

Diffuse hospitality has likewise transformed into an extractive economy, contributing to rising real-estate prices, residential desertification of historic centres, and the loss of control by local communities. This phenomenon is aggravated by the entry into the market of large operators and investment companies that purchase clusters of dwellings in the most valuable landscape areas to manage them through digital platforms, further emptying territories of their residential and decision-making dimension. This tendency toward the centralisation and financialisation of hospitality represents a new form of dispossession that risks distorting the relationship between tourism, dwelling, and territory.

The case of house sharing, in particular as it is configured today, signals the limits and contradictions of any territorial revival strategy founded exclusively on tourism if not accompanied by solid public regulatory policies and genuine protagonism of local communities. This shift highlights the risks implicit in any attempt at territorial regeneration based solely on tourism, when not supported by public policies capable of regulating the phenomenon and safeguarding collective interests.

Another recurring theme in narratives of repopulation identified in the pandemic crisis of 2020 a possible opportunity for a return to the mountains. According to this view, abandoned centres would have returned to new life thanks to the movement away from densely populated cities of people seeking safer places in the present and in the future in the face of the fear of new epidemics. The flight from cities and contagion effectively renewed interest in places where social isolation could be cultivated while at the same time rediscovering human values such as community and self-realisation.

The social isolation sought by those fleeing cities during the pandemic certainly had a hygienic-sanitary motivation linked to the need to protect oneself from contagion. Yet behind this choice one can also read a deeper spiritual dimension: the search for an “elsewhere” recalling, in certain respects, the experience of the hermit. Like the anchorite withdrawing from the world to rediscover the self through silence and contemplation, many saw in marginal places – such as depopulated mountain villages – spaces of purification, inner regeneration, and reconnection with nature.

In this perspective, flight was not merely a gesture of survival but also an act of symbolic detachment: an attempt to suspend the complexity of urban life in order to reclaim a slow temporality and a human measure of existence. Thus, mountain, village, and countryside once again assumed an almost sacred function, similar to that historically associated with the hermitage – place of solitude and listening, but also of spiritual rebirth. The ideal of secular retreat emerges, understood as an inner discipline autonomous from religious



Fig. 2 - Abandoned houses on a street in the historic center of Pacentro. Photo by Massimo Angrilli.

and ascetic withdrawal, useful for the formation of the individual aspiring to play a role in society and necessary for the creative act.

In more recent times, the search for isolation has also become, more prosaically, the search for a restorative pause from urban stress and the relentless rhythms of everyday life. The protagonists of this movement are often natives who return for short periods during holidays to the villages they left, but also urban residents who, attracted by high quality of life, purchase second homes in which to spend short or medium-long breaks from metropolitan routine. This represents one of the effects of the city's dominance over the mountain, whereby the city identifies the mountain as a place of pleasure, primarily enhancing its residential and recreational functions. This process does not always lead to the recovery or reuse of abandoned buildings in historic centres; more often, attention is directed toward isolated rural houses and scattered farmsteads. Indeed, the very condition of isolation of these properties makes them attractive to potential buyers – particularly foreigners – drawn by the quality of the Italian landscape and by the ideal of rural life, which in reality only rarely translates into a concrete commitment to the management of agricultural space.

During lockdown there were numerous cases of voluntary departure from cities toward countryside or mountains, a phenomenon also encouraged by small mountain municipalities that, claiming immunity from contagion thanks precisely to the geographical isolation previously considered a disadvantage, attempted to attract tourists or new residents. The slogan “Covid-free village” spread rapidly throughout the country, relaunched by newspapers and magazines. The message conveyed was simple: villages located on the margins of the main communication routes, from Sicily to the Alps, presented themselves as alternative destinations for the many citizens and tourists frightened by the possibility of contracting the virus in crowded cities or, during holidays, in the traditional destinations of mass tourism. The disseminated message was straightforward: villages situated on the periphery of major communication routes, from Sicily to the Alps, present themselves as alternative destinations for those (many) citizens and tourists apprehensive about the possibility of contracting the virus in crowded cities or, during holidays, at traditional mass tourism sites.

It is easy to perceive how the map of non-contagion overlapped with that of the internal areas, with the epidemic seemingly (at least at the onset of the pandemic) sparing precisely those communities at risk of depopulation – identified as models of slow tourism for the new millennium and as places in which to promote a new lifestyle grounded in slowness and environmental quality. In this way, topography became synonymous with well-being, and

existing problems were reframed from a new perspective, transforming them into opportunities to be seized.

The pandemic has, to a certain extent, affected the perception of territorial hierarchies. While it may be premature to speak of a definitive “revenge” of marginal areas over urban centers, the social model based on large urban concentrations – a paradigm established globally through globalization – has been called into question. Polycentrism has re-emerged as a plausible scenario, offering a potential opportunity for “marginal and marginalized” Italy, previously regarded as lacking future prospects. The significant impetus toward telecommuting necessitated by the lockdown has shed new light on Alpine and Apennine settlements. Furthermore, the inherently democratic nature of digital networks has acted as a social equalizer, placing professionals operating from large metropolitan areas on equal footing with those based in remote mountainous regions, provided adequate digital connectivity is available. Consequently, many individuals chose (or were compelled) to spend the period of domestic isolation in secondary residences in rural or mountain settings, where they experienced tangible improvements in their perceived quality of life.

The risk is that this represents merely a part-time repopulation, which would frame the phenomenon within the more conventional process of the aesthetic appropriation of the countryside by urban centers⁹. This process is typically characterized by individuals belonging to cultural and social elites who reside for limited periods – often during weekends and holidays – in secondary rural residences.

If, however, the objective is a permanent repopulation, further action is required. This necessitates the strengthening of essential services, including digital connectivity and telecommunications. Furthermore, as stated by Marco Bussone (National President of Uncem¹⁰), there is a need for strategic models, structured projects, and a long-term vision. This approach must involve active consultation with local authorities and mayors, the empowerment of local inhabitant communities, the revitalization of agricultural policies, and a comprehensive redesign of tourism models¹¹.

9. Merlo V. (2006), *Voglia di campagna. Neoruralismo e città*, Città Aperta Edizioni, Troina.

10. Uncem (National Union of Mountain Municipalities, Communities and Authorities) is the unitary national organization that, for over sixty years, has brought together and represented entirely and partially mountainous municipalities, mountain communities, and unions of mountain municipalities.

11. Bussone M. (2024), “*Strategia per le Montagne e le Aree interne*”, *Documenti di Visione Strategica UNCEM*, Unione Nazionale Comuni Comunità Enti Montani, Roma.



Fig. 3 - The former Cipolla Wool Mill in Fara San Martino. Photo by Massimo Angrilli.

Positive indicators are observed in Abruzzo¹², where an increasing number of foreign nationals have chosen mountain localities either to establish permanent residency or for extended stays facilitated by telecommuting.

According to Uncem, the foreign component is increasingly influencing migratory flows toward mountain municipalities. For this dynamic to yield positive structural effects, it is essential to attract young individuals willing to settle permanently, initiate entrepreneurial ventures (in agriculture, craftsmanship, or services), or develop family projects. In the absence of these conditions, such inflows risk resulting in “sterile” demographic growth – devoid of the capacity to foster new generations of permanent residents or trigger genuine social renewal.

12. This trend affects the entire country with varying intensities. According to the 2025 Italy Mountains Report, the demographic outlook for Italian mountain areas shows cautiously encouraging signs: between 2019 and 2023, approximately 99.574 individuals relocated to one of the 3.417 mountain municipalities, resulting in a positive net migration balance. This evidence may constitute the foundation for a “neo-population” process which, although still fragile, represents an opportunity to mitigate the historical demographic decline of highland areas.

Without long-term strategic planning, “neo-population” may remain a fragmented and localized phenomenon, limiting its impact on the territory. Furthermore, this trend remains vulnerable unless supported by active policies: infrastructure, essential services (education, healthcare, transport), incentives for youth entrepreneurship, and institutional hospitality must be decisively implemented to ensure that newcomers transition from seasonal visitors to integrated members of the community.

An interesting case study, recently highlighted by the press, is the village of Introdacqua, where a small multilingual and multicultural “expat-community” has emerged. According to the mayor, over 300 individuals from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, and Scotland have chosen to settle in this small center. At least 20-25 families have been residing permanently in the village for approximately five years, with some having purchased real estate for themselves and their children.

These phenomena involve the category of the “multi-localized” contemporary individual, characterized by high mobility and a more fluid conception of dwelling and territorial belonging, allowing them to choose where to establish their secondary (or primary) residence. However, it is essential to remain cognizant of the subtle distinction between “those who are here” and “those who are from here”¹³. Often, the idyllic vision of those arriving in a mountain community may clash with hostility from the native population, particularly if, as outsiders, they show no desire to assimilate – a dynamic effectively depicted in the film *As Bestas* by director Rodrigo Sorogoyen¹⁴.

Within this framework, tourism and new forms of hospitality in the internal Apennine areas can contribute to regeneration processes only if they are integrated into a long-term territorial vision. This vision must be capable of incorporating temporary dwelling, essential services, labor, and the active agency of local communities. In the absence of such conditions, there is a risk that temporary stays will translate into a new form of land consumption, reinforcing extractive and intermittent dynamics rather than initiating a genuine project of social and settlement rebalancing.

13. Sencébé Y. (2004), “Être ici, être d’ici”, *Ethnologie française*, 34, 1: 23-29.

14. *As Bestas* (R. Sorogoyen, 2022) explores social tensions in the marginal rural areas of Galicia through the conflict between a couple of newcomers and local residents. The film portrays, in the form of a thriller, the dynamics of mistrust, economic frustration, and identity-based insularity that can emerge in territories subject to depopulation and external transformations, offering an effective representation of the conflicts linked to neo-population processes in European inner areas.



Fig. 1 - Viewed across the landscape of Athens, the Acropolis stands as a symbol of philoxenia, the Greek tradition of hospitality, and of the city's historical continuity. Yet beneath this image of cultural openness lies a growing tension: as hyper-tourism reshapes Athens into a space increasingly oriented toward consumption and short-term visitation, living heritage risks being reduced to a thematic backdrop rather than preserved as part of the city's civic life. Photo by Tina Mikrou.

From philoxenia to hyper-tourism: collective memory and the transformation of the commercial triangle in Athens

Tina Mikrou

Introduction: hospitality and the contemporary tourist city

Philoxenia, the Greek term for hospitality, literally translates as the love (*philo*) of the stranger (*xenos*), framing the reception of the foreigner or guest as an act of care and spatial generosity. Athens has long attracted visitors: from early travelers, artists, and archaeologists arriving in the newly established nineteenth-century capital fascinated by its ancient past, to contemporary flows of global mobility, tourists, wanderers, and digital nomads. Throughout its modern history, the city has continuously adapted to the presence of the temporary guest, embodying *philoxenia* not only through private hospitality but also through the rhythms of streets, markets, and public squares.

Historically, the traveler arrived slowly, stayed attentively, and engaged with Athens as a lived urban landscape rather than a consumable image. In the contemporary era, however, the growth of global tourism has fundamentally altered this relationship. Cities increasingly compete within a global economy of travel and cultural consumption. As tourism expands, urban spaces are progressively reorganized to accommodate short-term visitors rather than long-term residents. A phenomenon often described as hyper-tourism, a condition characterized by the intensification of tourist flows, the commodification of urban heritage, and the transformation of local economies into service infrastructures oriented toward visitors¹.

Athens offers a particularly revealing case. Following the economic crisis of the 2010s and the rapid expansion of digital tourism platforms, the historic center of the city experienced a dramatic increase in tourist activity. According to the Greek Institute of Tourism Research and Forecasting (ITRF)

1. Milano C., Cheer J., and Novelli M. (2019), *Overtourism: Excesses, Discontents and Measures in Travel and Tourism*, CABI, Wallingford.

short-term rentals (STRs) surged by 475% between 2015 and 2022. Entire apartment buildings have been and are still being converted into boutique hotels or Airbnb complexes. Entire neighborhoods have gradually adapted to this new urban economy, while traditional residential and commercial uses have been displaced. The transformation is especially visible within the historic Commercial Triangle.

Collective memory and the Architecture of the City

In *The Architecture of the City*, Aldo Rossi argued that cities function as repositories of collective memory. Urban artifacts, buildings, monuments, streets, and districts, persist through time and acquire meaning through the historical events and social activities associated with them².

From this perspective, the identity of a city cannot be understood solely through its architectural forms. Instead, it emerges through the interaction between built structures and the everyday practices that animate them. When the social functions of urban artifacts change, the meaning of those spaces within the collective memory of the city is also transformed.

This insight resonates with the work of Henri Lefebvre, who described urban space as a social product. According to Lefebvre, space is continuously produced through the interaction of economic forces, political decisions, and everyday practices³. Changes in economic structures, such as the growth of tourism, inevitably reshape the spatial organization of the city.

Together, these perspectives allow us to interpret the transformation of the Athens Commercial Triangle not simply as an economic shift but as a reconfiguration of the social practices that once defined the district.

The commercial triangle: structure of the urban core

The Athens Commercial Triangle is defined as the central area of the Municipality of Athens bounded by the main thoroughfares of Stadiou Street, Mitropoleos Street, and Athinas Street, with the vertices of this imaginary triangle located at Syntagma Square, Monastiraki Square, and Omonia Square.

Situated at the heart of the metropolitan center, the Commercial Triangle concentrates many of the economic, administrative, and social activities of

2. Rossi A. (1982), *The Architecture of the City*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

3. Lefebvre H. (1991), *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, Oxford.

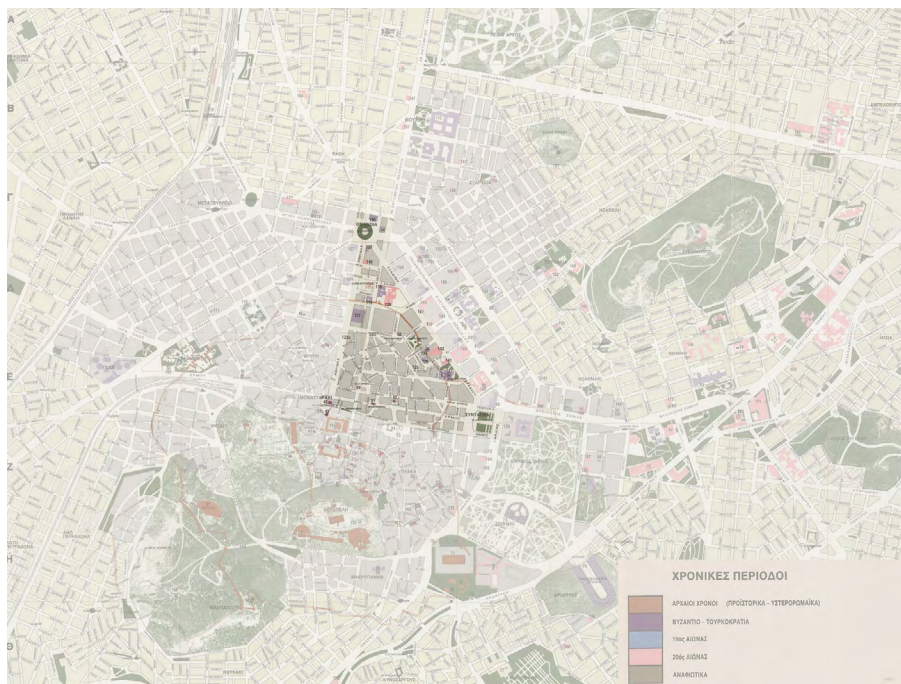


Fig. 2 - The Commercial Triangle bounded by the main thoroughfares of Stadiou Street, Mitropoleos Street, and Athinas Street, in close proximity the the Acropolis Hill. Author's drawing.

Athens. Within this relatively limited urban area coexist the offices of corporations and banks, public institutions and services, as well as an extensive range of commercial uses, from large retail stores and wholesale businesses to small shops and craft workshops. In many respects, Athens itself can be read through the transformations occurring in this commercial core, where multiple urban scales and social practices intersect within a dense spatial environment.

The built environment reflects this diversity. Historic buildings along the principal axes define the spatial character of the area through their scale, architectural presence, and relationship to public space. Alongside monuments and significant landmarks such as the Old Parliament (today the Historical Museum), the New Parliament, the Metropolitan Cathedral, City Hall stand large office buildings, known locally as *megara*, constructed mainly during the 1960s, as well as the headquarters of banks and major corporations concentrated along the main arteries of Stadiou and Athinas Streets.

Equally important, however, has been the dense network of small-scale commercial activity embedded within the urban fabric of the triangle. The sidewalks of Ermou Street, Aeolou Street, Agios Markos Street, and Evan-

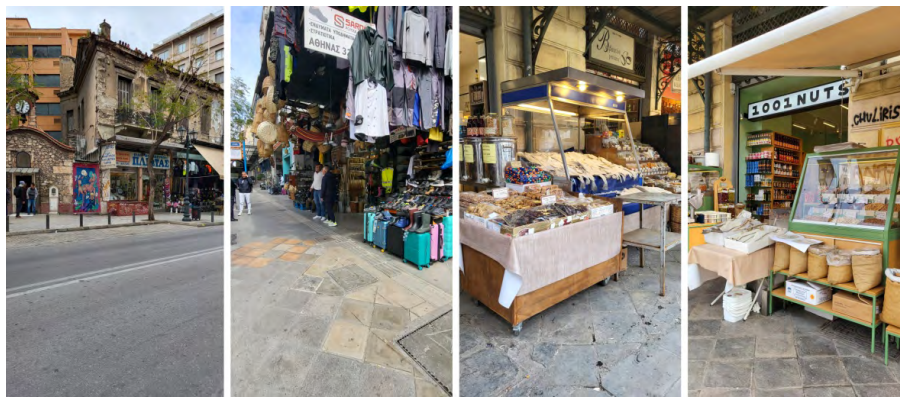


Fig. 3 - A sequence of street-level views along Athinas Street, the axis connecting Omonia and Monastiraki squares, where long-standing retail practices, selling food and specialty artifacts are occupying the ground floors. Photos by Tina Mikrou.

gelistria Street, together with their narrow side streets and the arcades located at the ground floors of larger office buildings, have historically hosted a rich ecosystem of small retail shops, workshops, and family businesses. One could find there almost anything: buttons, stationery, sewing supplies, clothing, hats, screws, doorknobs, light fixtures, kitchenware, and countless other everyday objects. This dense network of commerce creates a vibrant urban environment where economic exchange intertwined with social interaction.

For decades, this intricate commercial network formed the everyday social infrastructure of the city. The small shops, wholesalers, and craft workshops did not merely support economic exchange; they produced a particular urban atmosphere, one grounded in familiarity, and human interaction. In this sense, the Commercial Triangle historically embodied a spatial expression of philoxenia: the stranger was welcomed not through a specialized hospitality industry, but through the openness and accessibility of everyday urban life. Visitors, residents, merchants, and artisans shared the same streets, cafés, and marketplaces, generating a living urban environment where hospitality emerged organically through social proximity and everyday encounter.

During the decades of rapid urbanization and reconstruction in the mid-twentieth century, the city managed to integrate parallel developmental trends, large and small-scale, formal and informal, within the same urban space. The Commercial Triangle thus functioned as a field of opportunity, enabling economic mobility for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs and artisans while maintaining a dense and diverse social fabric.



Fig. 4 - Street-level views from Agiou Markou, Evripidou and Athinas streets illustrating the dense commercial fabric of the Athens Commercial Triangle that has historically supported specialized retail and small-scale economies: Shops selling religious icons and artisanal goods, garments and ceremonial items, plants and flowers, craft and household goods contribute to a vivid and materially rich urban atmosphere. Photos by Tina Mikrou.

Hyper-tourism and the transformation of urban identity

In recent years, however, this urban mechanism is increasingly under strain. The economic crisis and intensifying market competition have led to the closure of numerous small businesses, leaving behind empty storefronts and neglected buildings that stand as silent witnesses to a prosperity lost to the city and its inhabitants. At the same time, new development patterns have begun to reshape the district. Vacant commercial spaces are increasingly converted into hotels, bars, cafés, restaurants, gradually transforming the economic structure of the area. Along the axis of Athinas Street, abandoned neoclassical buildings have been converted into boutique hotels and short-term tourist accommodations.

Urban redevelopment initiatives have further encouraged this shift. Pedestrianization projects and public-space improvements have enhanced the accessibility and attractiveness of the district, making it an important hub for recreation and nightlife. While these interventions improve the physical environment, they also accelerate the transformation of the area into a leisure-oriented urban landscape.

The consequences are increasingly visible. Housing has become an “investment good,” causing rents to “reach the sky”. Large investment funds and real estate lobbies are buying up properties, often pressuring long-term tenants and small businesses to vacate to make room for new hotel units.

The district remains lively, yet its vitality is now largely structured by



Fig. 5 - Street-level views in the vicinity of Agia Irini Square illustrating the juxtaposition of traditional small-scale retail and the expanding presence of tourism-oriented leisure uses. Photos by Tina Mikrou.



Fig. 6 - Luxury and boutique hotels, tourist apartments and hostels increasingly occupy former residential and commercial buildings in central Athens. Neoclassical and mid-century apartment blocks are reprogrammed as short-term accommodation, producing a condition that operates less as adaptive reuse and more as a form of spatial and social displacement. Photos by Tina Mikrou.

tourism consumption. New luxury hotels and all-day cafés reshape the district's atmosphere, creating an environment where tourism activity dominates everyday urban life. The entry of multinational chains and mass-market outlets is leading to Cultural Homogenization. The “spirit of place” is replaced by generic tourist “scenography” and the traditional sense of community is eroding as residents are replaced by “people with suitcases”. Traditional trades, wholesale markets and specialized shops disappear one after another, replaced by standardized hospitality venues catering primarily to visitors.

This transformation also produces a series of urban tensions: overcrowded public spaces, noise pollution, illegal parking, and the accumulation of waste. In the Commercial Triangle alone, the city must manage 62 to 65 tons of waste daily. From the perspective of Rossi's theory, this shift represents a transformation of urban artifacts. The architectural structures remain intact, yet the social practices that once defined them have changed. Streets that once hosted productive commercial activity now function primarily as spaces of consumption.

Digital tourism platforms and the intensification of urban tourism

A crucial factor accelerating these transformations is the rise of digital tourism platforms that have fundamentally altered the structure of urban hospitality in Athens. By enabling the rapid conversion of residential properties into short-term tourist accommodations, these platforms have extended the tourism economy deep into the urban fabric of the historic center.

In neighborhoods surrounding the Commercial Triangle, including Plaka and Psyri, entire apartment buildings have gradually shifted from long-term residential use to temporary tourist lodging. What was once housing stock for permanent residents is increasingly integrated into a global network of digital hospitality infrastructure. The result is a subtle but significant restructuring of urban life: the population becomes more transient, local communities fragment, and everyday neighborhood economies are replaced by short-term consumption patterns.

From the perspective of urban theory, these developments illustrate what Henri Lefebvre described as the production of space through economic forces. Tourism, facilitated by digital platforms, does not simply occupy existing urban spaces – it actively reshapes them. Apartments become hotel rooms, streets become entertainment corridors, and historic districts gradually transform into spaces organized around the circulation of visitors rather than the everyday needs of residents.

Memory, experience, and the disappearing city

The consequences of these transformations are perhaps most perceptible at the level of everyday urban experience. Walking along the main or the smaller streets of the “commercial triangle” early in the morning, before the shops open, one can still glimpse the rhythms of the older city. For a moment the streets are quiet, and the layered history of the area becomes perceptible. The sound of deliveries, the gradual opening of small shops, and the slow awakening of the marketplace evoke an Athens that once unfolded at a human pace. Yet this experience is increasingly fragile. Within a short time, the streets are filled with visitors, tour groups, delivery trucks, and the noise of commercial activity oriented towards tourism. The delicate moment of urban calm disappears, replaced by the accelerated rhythms of a tourist economy.

Nearby Plaka offers an even more striking example of this transformation. Once a residential neighborhood, the district gradually lost much of its permanent population as houses are increasingly converted into tourist accommodations, while restaurants and cafés catering primarily to visitors dominate the local economy. As a result, the area has acquired an overwhelming and somewhat “kitsch” atmosphere oriented toward consumption and spectacle rather than everyday urban life. Although the physical fabric of the city remains largely intact, the social life that once animated the neighborhood has progressively diminished. In this sense, contemporary Athens often feels like a city remembered rather than a city lived. The architectural landscape evokes memories of a collective urban past, while the everyday practices that once sustained it are progressively disappearing.

Conclusion: the city as touristic stage set

The transformation of the Athens Commercial Triangle reveals a broader tension between tourism-driven development and the preservation of urban identity. Through the theoretical perspectives of Aldo Rossi and Henri Lefebvre, these changes can be interpreted as a profound restructuring of the relationship between urban form, social practice, and collective memory.

The architectural artifacts of the city remain largely intact. Neoclassical façades, historic arcades, and nineteenth-century streets continue to define the physical image of the district. Yet the activities that once gave meaning to these spaces, small commerce, workshops, neighborhood life, and everyday social interaction, are gradually being replaced by a tourism economy oriented toward short-term consumption.

This process produces a paradoxical urban condition. Athens today appears more welcoming, attractive, and accessible than ever to visitors. Cafés, restaurants, boutique hotels, and pedestrianized streets create an environment that is vibrant and visually appealing, reinforcing the city's global image as a cultural destination. However, the deeper cultural practice of *philoxenia* – historically grounded in reciprocity, coexistence, and the shared use of urban space – risks being replaced by a hospitality infrastructure designed primarily for transient consumption. In the long term, this transformation may ultimately undermine the very qualities that once made the city attractive to visitors.

At the same time, the historic center becomes progressively more difficult for its own inhabitants to inhabit. Overcrowded public spaces, traffic congestion, noise pollution, and the proliferation of tourist-oriented businesses contribute to an urban environment increasingly hostile to everyday life. The gradual disappearance of small shops and local services further erodes the practical and social infrastructures that once sustained the resident population.

Within this context, the historic center risks evolving into what might be described as a touristic urban stage set. The architecture remains carefully restored and aesthetically curated, yet its function increasingly resembles that of a backdrop for tourism. Streets become scenic routes, monuments become photographic landmarks, and the city itself becomes a consumable experience.

Perhaps the most significant loss is therefore intangible. Beyond the economic and spatial transformations lies the gradual erosion of the city's urban physiognomy, the subtle identity produced through the interaction of architecture, commerce, and everyday social life. When this delicate balance disappears, the city may remain visually recognizable, yet its deeper character becomes increasingly difficult to sustain, and the charm that once defined its urban experience slowly fades.



Fig. 1 - Metropol Parasol. Photo by Fernando Díaz Moreno.

Anatomy of the heritage city, an approach to its museum structure: the case of Seville

Fernando Díaz Moreno

Introduction

There is extensive scientific literature regarding the historic city understood as a tourist destination and the difficulties involved in reconciling this activity with the inherent purpose of public space, which is none other than to support civic activity. Due to its social implications, most studies tend to focus on the conditions of the resident population, addressing the analysis of problems caused by activities linked to temporary stays, both in terms of coexistence and economic factors. As a result of this approach, the studied sectors of the historic center are usually those with a high population density, relegating to the background those where the presence of a high number of public historic buildings significantly reduces the resident population.

The trajectory of scientific literature on these issues dates back to the end of the last century, but it is from the beginning of the current one that works on the problem of tourist pressure on historic centers became widespread. Specific cases of cities worldwide have been analyzed, from the important contribution of the New Orleans case study¹, to recent examples such as Lisbon², or Venice³. Looking at the Spanish context, Manuel de la Calle Vaquero's work on the relationship between tourism and historic centers⁴ is a benchmark. Referring to Seville, the subject of this study, we must consider the research on

1. Gotham K. F. (2005), "Tourism Gentrification: The Case of New Orleans' Vieux Carre", *Urban Studies*, 42: 1099-1121.

2. Sequera J. and Nofre J. (2020), "Touristification, transnational gentrification and urban change in Lisbon: The neighbourhood of Alfama", *Urban Studies*, 57: 1-21.

3. Bertocchi D. and Visentin F. (2019), "The overwhelmed city: Physical and social over-capacities of global tourism in Venice", *Sustainability*, 11: 1-19.

4. Notably: Vaquero M. (2022), *La ciudad histórica como destino turístico*, Ariel España, Barcelona.

historic center squares led by Auxiliadora Comendador-Sánchez⁵, the work on public policies and citizen action against tourist overcrowding by Alfonso Fernández-Tabales and Enrique Luis Santos-Pavón⁶, as well as the numerous works on tourist gentrification processes in the city⁷. Studies have not only focused on problems associated with residential use; emphasis has also been placed on the globalization of services, especially in the tertiary sector. In the case of Seville, the research led by Andrea Ruiz Romera⁸ stands out.

As previously indicated, in addition to these primarily residential sectors, in generously sized historic centers – for instance, those found in southern Spanish cities – it is possible to differentiate a sector of greater heritage value, which we can consider the monumental center. The relationship of this urban area with tourist pressure and its influence on citizens differs from that governing the rest of the historic center. It translates not so much into a co-existence conflict, but rather into a hijacking process of an urban sector of the city, and with it, the history it holds. The purpose of this study is to advance some considerations on the transformation process through which these monumental centers mutate into museum systems, presenting a functional and spatial organization similar to that of contemporary museums. To this end, a preliminary analysis of the tourist activity in Seville’s monumental center and its ramifications throughout the rest of the historic center is carried out, focusing on its spatial (urban) implications, as befits a study approached from an architectural discipline.

It is important to note when evaluating this work that it is proposed as a first approximation to a “typological” proposal, based mainly on data provided by official tourism services of both the Regional Government of Andalusia (Junta de Andalucía) and the Seville City Council. Therefore, these are annually updated data with an informative, rather than statistical, profile. Consequently, a comprehensive study would require significant fieldwork to

5. Comendador-Sanchez A., Hernández-Ramírez J. and Santos-Pavon E. (2024), “Plazas domenadas. Impactos de la turistificación sobre el espacio público urbano”, *Pasos. Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 22: 9-28.

6. Alfonso Fernández-Tabales A. and Luis Santos-Pavón E. (2025), “Dialécticas de acción/ reacción ante el overtourism. políticas públicas y movimientos ciudadanos en la ciudad de Sevilla”, *Estudios turísticos*, 229: 31-61.

7. 40, 1-11, Herruzo-Domínguez G., Aladro-Prieto J.-M., Rey-Pérez J. (2024), “Analysis of Touristification Processes in Historic Town Centers: The City of Seville”, *Architecture*, 4: 24-34.

8. Ruiz Romera A., Villar Lama A., Puche Ruiz M.C. and Fernández Tabales A. (2025), “Making the city uninhabitable. The impacts of the touristification on the commercial environment”, *Cities* 165: 1-12; Ruiz Romera A., García Martín M., Villar Lama A. and Fernández Tabales A. (2023), “De ferreteria a gastrobar: anàlisi de la turistificació comercial en centres històrics”, *Documents d’Anàlisi Geogràfica*, 69, 2: 385-409.

confirm the official information. In any case, I consider the data used to be sufficiently reliable to make the approximations presented throughout this brief study.

Monumental sectors contain the materialization of the great institutions present in the city throughout its history. In cities with a brilliant past, as in the case of Seville, this complex has been formed by institutions of great importance: the Crown, the House of Trade (*Contratación de Indias*), highly influential and economically powerful ecclesiastical and secular chapters, headquarters of religious congregations, etc. They thus transcend the local sphere, presenting themselves as the stage for highly significant actions in the European and American context. This circumstance endows them with international value, making them part of world heritage and monopolizing an enormous tourist attraction. But they remain, at the same time, the construction of a past that makes the city proud, even if only as a symbol of a family legacy.

The historic monumental center has belonged to the city; it has been shared by all citizens and not just its residents. For every Sevillian, it has functioned as an extension of the urban space of their neighborhood. This is because its streets and squares have hosted numerous celebratory expressions of the city and, traditionally, as mentioned, it has supported the institutions representing all citizens. Throughout this century, institutional presence has been reduced to its symbolic form, displacing most services outside the center, which have been drastically reduced in recent years thanks to the use of digital communication networks. However, celebratory activities have been maintained, and the monumental center has continued to be used to support the daily leisure activities of its citizens, including the tradition of strolling and outdoor tapas in public urban spaces.

These civic uses have been combined with tourist use as long as the pressure was not excessive, but the scenario has changed, especially in the last five years. The proliferation of temporary tourist accommodation services has brought about a radical leap in the reading of the historic monumental center. This sector of the city, which until recently was part of the citizens' domain, has collapsed due to the appearance of an erratic population that colonizes the space at all hours of the day, exhausting its capacity to serve as a space of transition and socialization. The alienation of local users makes them feel like tourists in their own city – not so much as part of a tourist service system, an image belonging to past eras, but as true tourists with the capacity to be so, belonging to an economically and culturally prepared society. For a Sevillian today, going to the monumental center of the city is not very different from going to Rome or London for a weekend. This feeling is more intense among

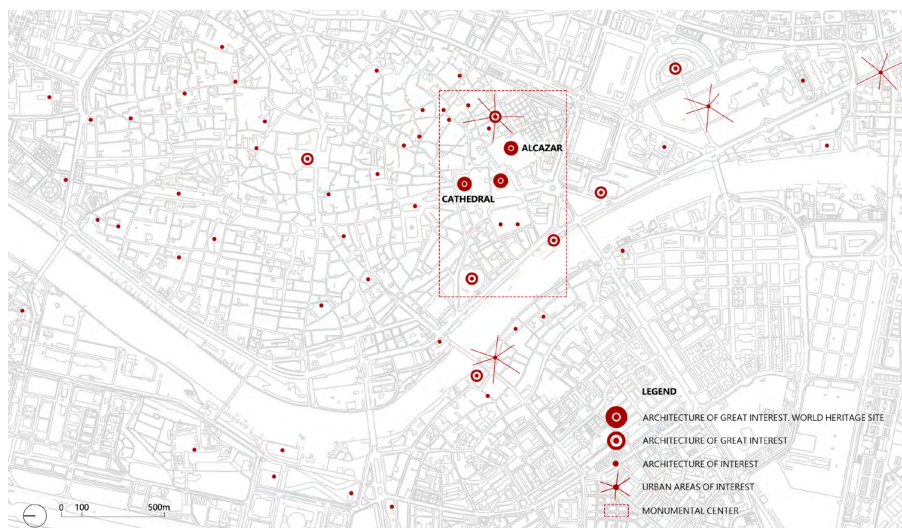


Fig. 2 - Distribution of architectural pieces of tourist interest in the historic center of Seville. Author's drawing.

the young population, as they are unaware of the loss of that city fragment and, nevertheless, welcome the easy access to heritage of international value and the economic development opportunity that tourist activity entails.

The hijacking of the monumental center, in addition to the loss of that space for the city, implies the globalization of services due to the appearance of a new clientele, which includes part of the citizenry transformed into proximity tourists, and promotes the reconstruction of local clichés over a superficial city fragment.

The museification process of the heritage center: the case of Seville

The process described in the introduction entails a museification of the monumental sector. It occurs at several coordinated levels until it meets the expectations of a modern museum and adopts its basic spatial organization.

Cities with a rich past are aware of the value of their heritage as an artistic work, adopting an almost archaeological view of their historic centers' architecture. This vision strips historic buildings of their contemporary character, disconnects them from the city structure, makes their function anecdotal, and transforms them into museum pieces. Squares and unique spaces suffer the same fate, acting as scenography, sometimes themed by the local traditions developed within them.

The process materializes in the organization of urban space following the

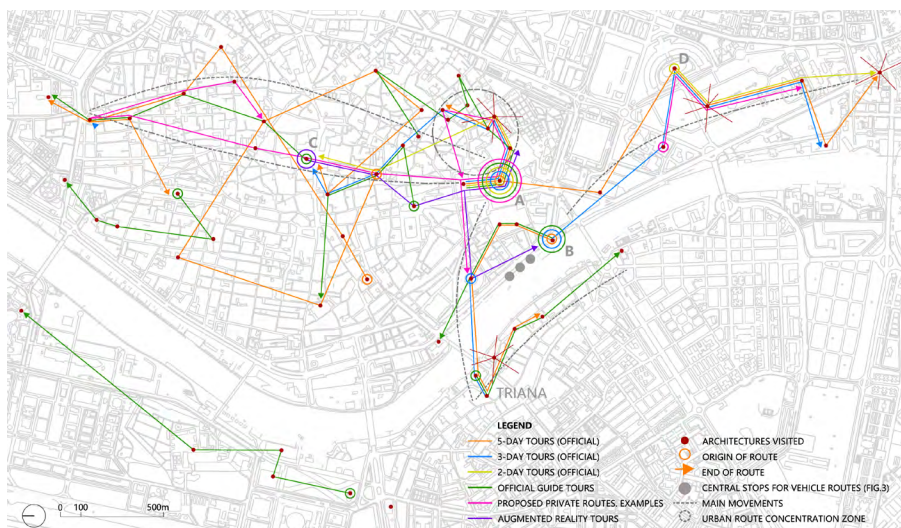


Fig. 3 - Distribution of pedestrian tourist routes in the historic center of Seville. Author's drawing.

guidelines of a museum system, mimetically repeating its functional structure. In the following lines, I review this transformation for the specific case of Seville. To draw general conclusions, it would be necessary to replicate the study in cities with similar historic centers, both within Spain (Granada, Córdoba...) and Europe (Florence, Budapest, Venice...).

As a starting point, it is necessary to clarify the distribution of architectural pieces of tourist interest within the historic center in order to detect and delimit the sector we call the monumental center and analyze the activities taking place on this valuable structure. It is easy to recognize the main sector around the two elements defining the city's history: the urban structure linked to religious and royal power (Cathedral and Royal Alcázar) and the river, an urban protagonist due to its landscape value and for being the image of its historic economic power (Fig. 2).

The combined analysis of data on various types of tourist services (shops, accommodations, rooftops...) and the routes of tourists visiting the city, including all those offered by official tourist information services and a sample of the enormous amount of private tours (in most cases repetitions of the official ones), allows us to detect behaviors associated with a museum system.

• Lobbies

Most routes start from the Plaza del Triunfo area, in the center of the southern sector, around the three Sevillian buildings considered World Heritage Sites (Fig. 3, A). This is the urban space that acts as the museum's main lobby, the

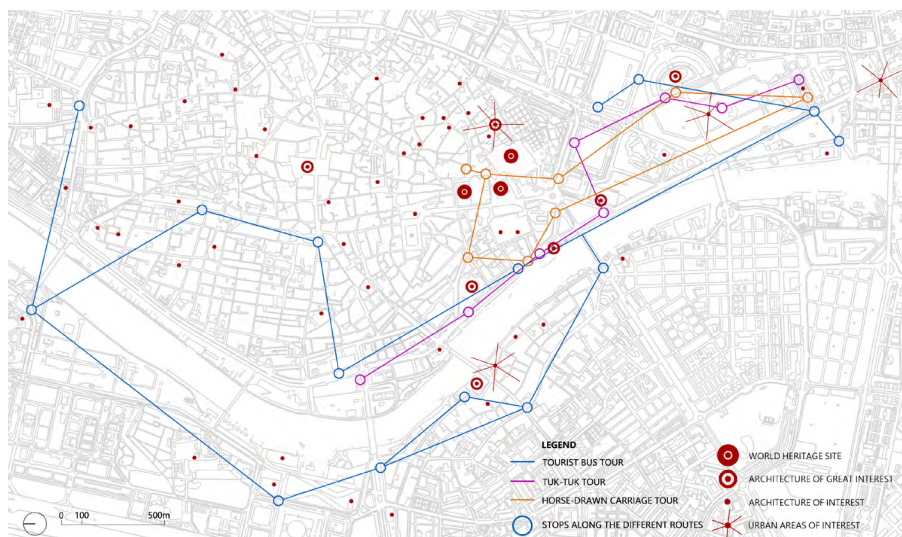


Fig. 4 - Distribution of motorized tourist routes in the historic center of Seville. Author's drawing.

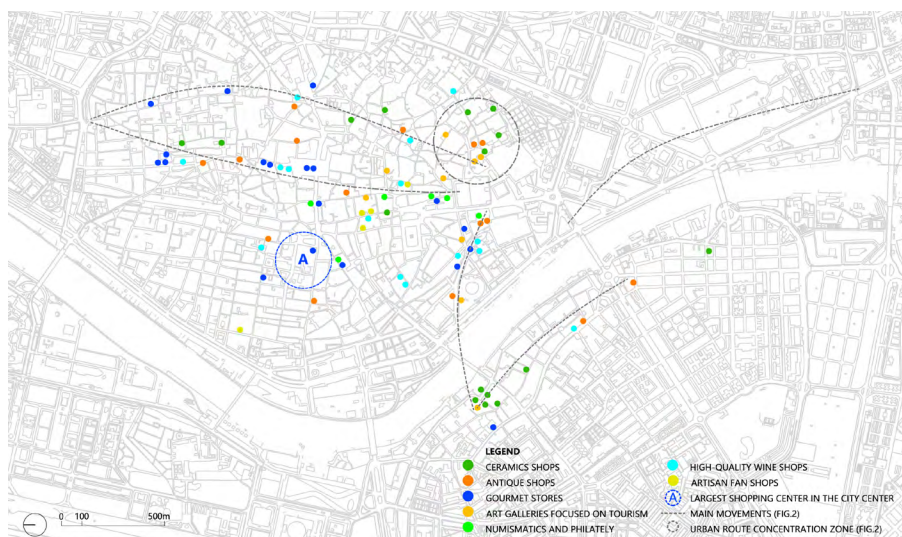


Fig. 5 - Distribution of high-quality shops aimed at tourism in the historic center of Seville. Author's drawing.

starting point of the visit. It is complemented by two minor lobbies; one located in the monumental river zone and another in the Plaza de la Encarnación (Fig. 3, B and C). The first is an extension of the main one, acting as the origin for visits to the Triana sector and serving as a starting point for motorized routes, taking advantage of the fact that it is the only vehicular access to the monumental area (Fig. 4). The second serves as a departure point for visits to the northern sector of the historic center and is created around the Metropol Parasol building (known as “las setas” / the mushrooms), one of the city’s most visited meeting places.

- Galleries

Translating the circuits to the city map, connecting the architectures in the order of the visit, also defines displacement vectors that link the described lobbies and act as the galleries of a museum, facilitating transit through the city and access to the works. Two parallel routes towards the northern sector of the historic center are detected, one towards the city’s southern expansion, and another towards the traditional neighborhood of Triana, along with an area of high route density, all originating in the main lobby (Fig. 3).

- The Shop

The souvenir markets that used to dot the historic center have been disappearing in favor of a much more elaborate merchandising service. Antique, traditional ceramic, fan, and gourmet food shops, art galleries, and philatelic and numismatic stores have transformed into high-quality souvenir shops, in line with modern museum shops (the lack of bookstores focused on tourist activity, a prominent aspect of museum shops, is noticeably missing). As observed when comparing Figures 3 and 5, this service develops along the displacement vectors deduced from the routes through the historic center (museum), located in the transit areas between works, mainly on the return legs once the visit is completed. The southward displacement vector falls outside this system, as it runs through landscaped areas lacking tertiary services. The map also shows an accumulation of these types of businesses that does not correspond to the displacement vectors, but rather to the location of the historic center’s main commercial hub (Fig. 5, A).

- Workshops

Figure 6 shows the proliferation of workshops related to activities typical of the city, which is, after all, the museum’s theme. Ceramic, fan-making, and espadrille workshops, gastronomy workshops, Spanish wine tasting sessions, and even express flamenco workshops spread throughout the historic center,

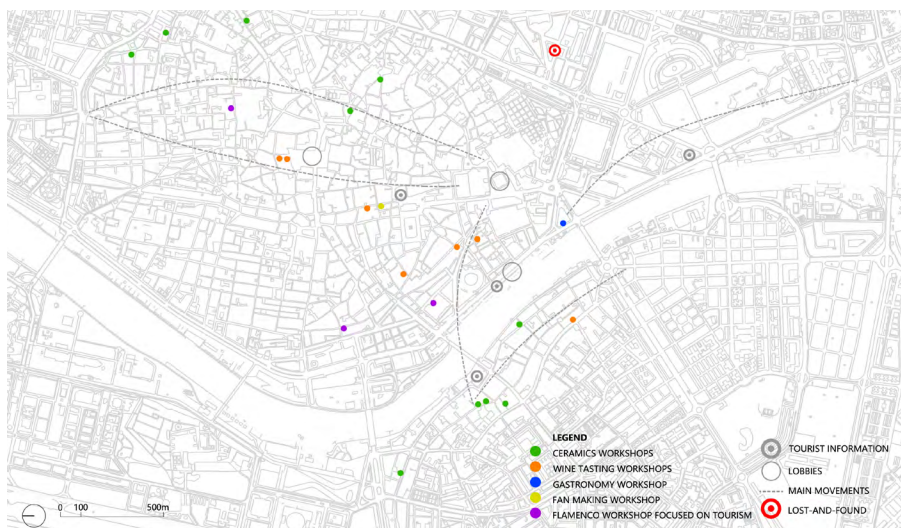


Fig. 6 - Distribution of tourism-focused workshops in the historic center of Seville. Author's drawing.

all aimed at tourism. In this case, no urban organization spatially relating the workshops to the rest of the described elements is detected, an issue attributable to the nature of the activity, which requires significant time development and, therefore, prior scheduling.

• Rest Areas

All contemporary museums have rest areas that facilitate visitor relaxation and the sequencing of both physical and intellectual activity involved in their enjoyment. Although these zones are sometimes integrated into catering sectors, the trend is toward separation, as occurs today in monumental centers. In Seville, independent of the wide gastronomic offer aimed at tourism that dots the entire historic center, a large number of rooftops (free-access terraces full of activities located on building roofs) have proliferated around the core of the monumental area, occupied by the main lobby, very successfully performing the role of rest areas for visitors (Fig. 7). The roofs of hotels located in the sector are often utilized, although the number of independent rooftops is increasingly larger, and, crucially, in all cases, they are for public use, not restricted to hotel guests.

• Information

An important service of a museum is providing the necessary information for its visitors' activities. In cities, this function has traditionally been carried out by tourist information points. In the case of Seville, their location responds

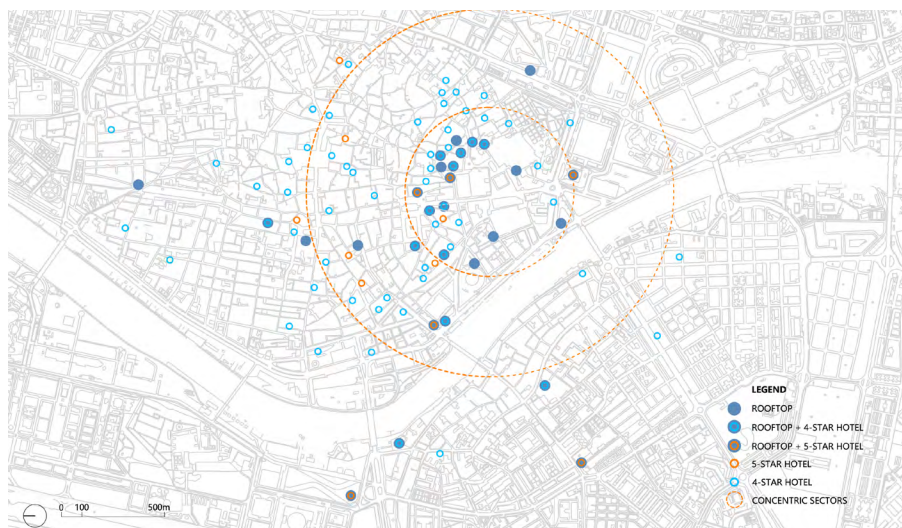


Fig. 7 - Distribution of high-quality hotels and rooftops in the historic center of Seville. Author's drawing.

to the tourist activity of decades ago, not properly adapting to current requirements. Only one of the information points is located in a lobby, with the remaining three situated on the displacement vectors (galleries), but not in the other lobbies (Fig. 6). An information point in the main lobby, from which most routes depart, is noticeably missing.

- Cloakroom-Luggage Storage

Another highly important museum service is the cloakroom. Although I have not developed specific cartography on this topic, it is easy to verify through a user search that luggage storage services dot the entire historic center, taking advantage of agreements with businesses of all kinds.

- Restrooms

The entire historic center, including the monumental one, has a large number of catering services whose sanitary facilities, together with those of the historic buildings, cover the visitors' need for restrooms. However, this circumstance does not occur in the southern sector; therefore, along the route, specifically in the Plaza de España area (Fig. 3, D), high-quality public restrooms (for a fee) have been installed, minimizing the problem. As in the case of information points, I believe it would be necessary to install similar services in the museum's lobbies, especially in the main one, where, due to its location in a sector with high heritage density, catering services are scarce.



Fig. 8 - Distribution of high-quality hotels and rooftops in the historic center of Seville. Author's drawing.



Fig. 9 - Guadalquivir Riverbank. Photo by Fernando Díaz Moreno.

- **Waiting Areas**

This service is the great absentee in the city's museum system. In this case, a distinction must be made between waiting to access the different works that make up the museum, especially the most visited monuments, and waiting to begin tourist routes, whether programmed or private. In the first case, a detailed study of building access points and the possibility of defining waiting areas not necessarily formalized through a continuous queue is pertinent. In the second, the solution would be to install conditioned and general waiting areas in the three detected lobbies.

- **Accommodation**

Accommodation is not a museum service, but it is interesting to consider it due to the relationship its location maintains with the main access. Moderately priced tourist stay services are distributed evenly throughout the city center, but the highest quality ones, corresponding to 4- and 5-star hotels, are located around the main lobby, concentrated to the north due to the eccentric position of said lobby with respect to the surface occupied by the historic center (Fig. 7).

Conclusions

As I present in this brief preliminary study, the transformation of Seville's monumental center into a museum system is a verifiable fact and, regardless of its positive or negative assessment, unstoppable. Given this situation, I believe that the architectural discipline's stance should be to make our knowledge of spatial strategy planning available to urban managers to improve, as much as possible, the monumental center's function as a museum. In this way, we can optimize the visitor experience while simultaneously preserving the artistic work, which is none other than the city's main historical material heritage, including its urban spaces.

Becoming aware of the city's monumental center's museum function and, from there, analyzing the various activities that define it, allows us to detect the system's shortcomings and propose solutions to avoid them. As final graphic documentation, useful for this discussion, I include a basic diagram of the layout of the different museum activities in Seville's monumental center (Fig. 8).



Fig. 1 - View from above of some of the temporary scaffolding pavilions. Photo courtesy of Openact Architecture + Sara Palomar Studio.

Reclaiming rivers. Where urban life meets flowing water

Stefania Gruosso

Rivers have historically functioned as primary territorial infrastructures in the genesis and development of cities, operating simultaneously as ecological systems, economic resources, and spatial structuring devices. Early urban civilizations emerged in close relationship with complex fluvial systems, where water played a strategic role in agricultural productivity, transportation, trade, and territorial defense. This long-standing interaction established a symbiotic relationship between natural systems and urban form, in which rivers acted as fundamental drivers of settlement patterns and spatial organization.

Throughout history, urban rivers have continued to operate as morphological matrices and organizing elements of the built environment, shaping urban growth and contributing to the legibility and identity of cities. Within this perspective, rivers have been interpreted as landscape infrastructures that integrate hydrological, ecological, and social functions within the urban system, as theorized in landscape urbanism and landscape-based planning approaches. With the advent of industrialization and modern urban planning, however, the relationship between cities and rivers underwent a significant transformation. Increasing urban density, the need for flood control, and the dominance of functionalist planning paradigms often led to the marginalization of rivers, which were perceived as constraints on urban expansion rather than as assets. As a result, many urban rivers were subjected to channelization, embankment, rectification, or even burial, leading to substantial loss of ecological continuity, spatial quality, and public accessibility. This shift reflects broader modernist tendencies toward the control and abstraction of natural systems within urban environments¹ (Mumford, 1961).

1. Mumford L. (1961), *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York.

Despite an early awareness of the vulnerability of urban canals, the implementation of systematic interventions occurred only between the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century through measures primarily driven by the need to address public health concerns, including the spread of diseases, the non-potability of water, and the emission of unpleasant odors. This initial phase of awareness was subsequently followed, during the 1970s and 1980s, by a renewed approach underpinned by the emergence of a new environmental consciousness, which foregrounded the necessity of regenerating waterways as structuring elements of urban space, thereby reintegrating them into the city and enhancing their accessibility and use by citizens.

The emergence of the vision of rivers as landscape infrastructure has provided a new conceptual framework, supported by figures such as Charles Waldheim and James Corner, two of the main influences in contemporary landscape architecture.

Waldheim's formulation of landscape urbanism emphasizes the primacy of ecological processes and landscape systems in structuring urban form² (Waldheim, 2006), while James Corner argues that rivers and fluvial landscapes are central to the production of urban space when integrated with open-space networks and ecological planning³ (Corner, 2006).

Parallel influences from landscape ecology⁴ (Forman, 1995) and ecological urbanism⁵ (Mostafavi and Doherty, 2016) support a vision of urban river corridors as conduits for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and connectivity. Such perspectives foreground the interdependence between natural processes and anthropogenic landscapes, marking a departure from purely technocratic management approaches.

Urban rivers have increasingly been conceptualized in the academic literature as urban devices that contribute to ecological functioning, climate adaptation, and socio-spatial quality. Traditionally relegated to engineered conduits for drainage and flood control in industrial and modernist planning paradigms, rivers are now understood as multifunctional corridors that integrate hydrological, ecological, and social processes⁶ (Ahern, 2007).

2. Waldheim C. (2006), *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York.

3. Corner J. (2006), *Terra fluxus*, in Waldheim C., ed., *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York.

4. Forman R. T. T. (1995), *Land mosaics: The ecology of landscapes and regions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

5. Mostafavi M., and Doherty G. (2016), *Ecological Urbanism* (revised ed.), Lars Müller Publishers, Zürich.

6. Ahern J. (2007), *Green infrastructure, a spatial solution for cities*, in Novotny V. and Brown P., eds., *Cities of the future*, IWA Publishing, London.

In recent decades, contemporary approaches emphasize the role of urban rivers as multifunctional and resilient infrastructures capable of addressing climate adaptation, ecological restoration, and social inclusion. Within this framework, river corridors are increasingly conceived as green-blue infrastructures and public spaces that reconnect fragmented urban fabrics, enhance ecosystem services, and contribute to more sustainable and adaptive models of urban development⁷ (Pauleit *et al.*, 2017).

Watercourses once again assume the role of defining elements of urban identity, simultaneously functioning as privileged spaces for the experimentation of innovative design strategies and new forms of collective urban identity.

Currently, urban narratives increasingly position rivers as strategic instruments and central elements in urban regeneration, transforming abandoned areas or obsolete infrastructure into vibrant waterfronts, resilient green spaces, and social environments that promote biodiversity, flood management, and the mitigation of urban heat islands. Such interventions enhance quality of life by developing riverine parks and pedestrian and cycling pathways, re-establishing a meaningful connection between the city and surrounding natural ecosystems.

A new, more sensitive design culture is emerging, one that restores the relationship between the city and the river, transforming it into a tool capable of generating public space, promoting ecological values, and enhancing urban resilience. In this framework, public space, ecology, and resilience constitute the foundation of a regenerative process capable of effectively guiding the urban transformation of watercourses.

Design experiments on rivers are numerous, each addressing specific challenges, with the shared objective of transforming rivers into “a place to live and to be experienced.”

River regeneration has become a primary objective in both large cities and small towns, supported by a range of initiatives that are helping to define new paradigms of river–city relationships. Among the various experiences, three have been selected as new paradigms for the regeneration of rivers: the riverfront as a threshold, the river as a porous space, and the river as an on-off space.

7. Pauleit S., Hansen R., Rall E. L., Zölch T., Andersson E., Luz A. C., Száraz L., Tosics I. and Vierikko K. (2017), *Urban landscapes and green infrastructure*, in H. H. Shugart, ed., *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Environmental Science*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

The riverfront as threshold space

Among the most significant examples of urban regeneration over the last forty years are the waterfronts of post-industrial cities such as Bilbao, Seoul, Madrid, Toronto, and numerous urban centres in Germany and England.

A case in point is the Alba River in Hamburg, Germany, where, in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, large international investment funds opened up new scenarios for the transformation of the city and its port, helping to shape one of the most significant European case studies in the relationship between cities and port infrastructure.

Among the priorities of Hamburg's urban transformation process, rebuilding the relationship between the city and its river plays a central role. In this context, the multi-decade project by the Miralles Tagliabue design studio fits, serving as a strategic device within the city's broader urban regeneration programme⁸ (Salizzoni, 2021). The new waterfront project is, in fact, a landscape infrastructure capable of redefining how the river space is used and reactivating social interaction along the banks of the Elbe.

The project creates a varied landscape through a sequence of large terraces that mediate between the urban and water levels, reinterpreting the river's natural dynamics as a structural component of the project. This spatial configuration interacts with the tidal regime, incorporating a floating platform that adapts to changes in water level. With a vertical range of approximately three metres, this device allows boats to dock. It provides access to various rest areas, creating a dynamic threshold between the river infrastructure and public space. From this perspective, the waterfront is not limited to a recreational function but becomes a key element in ecological, spatial, and social reconnection between the city and its river system⁹ (Caja, 2011).

The riverfront is a porous space

The relationship between rivers and cities is strengthened when the urban fabric is configured to accommodate and integrate water.

From this perspective, the concept of a threshold, or, more generally, a

8. Salizzoni E. P. G. (2021), "HafenCity Public Spaces", *Topscape Paysage*, 43: 86-93.

9. Caja M. (2011), "La ciudad portuaria contemporánea", *PORTUSplus*, n. 1, Primavera 2011, RETE – Associazione per la Collaborazione tra Porto e Città, retrieved from: http://retedigital.com/wp-content/themes/rete/pdfs/portus_plus/1_2011/Tem%C3%A1ticas/La_ciudad_portuaria_contempor%C3%A1nea/03_MicheleCaja.pdf.



Fig. 2 - Hafencity public spaces by Miralles/Tagliabue, Hamburg. Photo by Marco Polo Terrassen.

boundary, disappears, giving way to a porous, permeable transition zone.

“Cities must retain water, slow down water, embrace water”. This is one of the phrases that best summarises the concept of the “sponge city”,¹⁰ (Yu *et al.*, 2015) a basic concept theorised by Kongjian Yu, founder of the Chinese landscape architecture firm Turenscape, to address flooding and water resource problems in Chinese cities. The ‘sponge city’ is a sustainable urban planning model based on a drainage system that absorbs and retains excess water for reuse when needed.

Kongjian Yu’s river parks are, in fact, true “resilient landscape machines”, in which water becomes a precious and essential resource for counteracting the harmful effects of increasingly frequent extreme weather events. His approach to landscape is delicate, with minimal and essential intervention, as if to emphasise the innate perfection of nature¹¹ (Padoa Schioppa, 2019), as in the case of Minghu Wetland Park, situated in Liupanshui City, along the Shuicheng River, in China.

The city, historically surrounded by the Shuicheng River and nicknamed the “Water City” or “Lotus Leaf City,” once appeared like a lotus leaf during

10. Yu K., Li D. and Li N. (2015), “Sponge City: Theory and Practice”, *Landscape Architecture Frontiers*, 3, 1: 18-23.

11. Padoa Schioppa C. (2019), *Kongjian Yu. Turenscape 1998-2018*, Libria, Potenza.



Fig. 3 - Minghu Wetland Park, Liupanshui, China. Photo courtesy by Turenscape. Source: ArchDaily.

the rainy season. With industrialization and urbanization, the river was channelized with concrete embankments, losing its natural course. The project aims to revitalize a former concrete river and a degraded peri-urban area into a nationally recognized wetland park that provides ecological benefits, such as stormwater management, water purification, and habitat restoration, while also serving as a valued public space for recreation and enjoyment.

Sanlihe is transformed into a spectacular water infrastructure that turns dangerous natural forces into a pleasant amenity. The project takes full advantage of the natural elevation difference between the Luan River bed and the city, creating a changing landscape with terraced wetlands and retention ponds to reduce peak water flow and regulate seasonal rainfall.

The project features pedestrian paths and bike routes through green spaces and wetland terraces, with platforms, pavilions, and a viewing tower for universal access. Its most iconic element is a warm-colored rainbow bridge spanning three sides of the central lake, creating popular social and recreational spaces for locals and visitors alike.

Thanks to this and many other projects, Turenscape Landscape Architecture has moved from theory to prototyping a new approach to river landscape architecture¹².

12. Landezine (2014, August 25), *Minghu Wetland Park by Turenscape*, retrieved from: <https://landezine.com/minghu-wetland-park-by-turenscape>.



Fig. 4 - Minghu Wetland Park, Liupanshui, China. Photo courtesy by Turenscape. Source: ArchDaily.

The riverfront is an on-off space

While it is true that new regeneration strategies have always sought to create a dialogue between rivers and cities, it is equally true that water, as an unpredictable fluid, can make negotiation difficult and require sometimes radical approaches. In extremely critical situations, the relationship between the river and the city is sealed by a compromise in which one makes room for the other, a sort of transference. This is the case with Sava Installation, a project inaugurated in 2019 on the banks of the Sava River in Zagreb by a team composed of Openact Architecture + Sara Palomar Studio .

The Sava has had a major influence on the urban development of Zagreb, which, due to the devastating effect of frequent flooding, has historically developed away from the river. The project was conceived to finally make the Sava River, the city's main waterway, usable.

The variability of the river regime and safety regulations has prevented the construction of permanent buildings, which is why Sava Installation envisages temporary interventions scattered along approximately 7 km of riverbank. These will involve the use of modular steel structures that can be assembled, dismantled, or moved according to the river's seasonal conditions. The proposed interventions operate at different scales and include nine main



Fig. 5 - Aerial view of part of the masterplan for the Sava River, Zagreb. Photo courtesy of Openact Architecture + Sara Palomar Studio.



Fig. 6 - One of the pavilions during the summer season. Photo courtesy of Openact Architecture + Sara Palomar Studio.

structures, considered process activators, comprising pavilions with different programmes, clusters of structures capable of hosting events, and small landscape interventions. Despite their ephemeral nature, these installations offer a diverse range of programmes covering sport, culture, and entertainment¹³.

Sava Installation is an ambitious project that embodies the oxymoron of creating a public space that can persist over time, given its temporary nature. It is the project of an “on-off space”, a space that turns on and off, or rather, appears and disappears cyclically¹⁴ (Gruosso, 2021).

Riverfront reclaiming: what it means

Reclaiming rivers seems to be the newest trend in urban design, capable of manipulating the interspace between water and land as an adaptive space that can transform itself in order to act as a flexible threshold; accommodate water, as a sponge landscape; or turn into an on-off space.” Around the world, projects focused on river revitalization have demonstrated a unique capacity to drive urban renewal, fostering the creation of community spaces that combine utility with visual appeal, as demonstrated by the case studies presented above.

It is clear that the contemporary project opposes a static vision of space, partly because it struggles to define a “before” and an “after” and, where a boundary is identified, it remains dynamic and never static. This means that the river space must necessarily be rethought as a holistic infrastructure, an ecological corridor, and a variable space for interaction. This is a meticulous operation that goes beyond the simple act of revitalising the soil, water, and vegetation; it is a creative effort capable of skillfully weaving together the threads of life that were once interrupted by human intervention, thus presenting an alternative vision for the future¹⁵ (Cervera, 2023).

13. ArchDaily, (2020, November 4), *Sava Installation / Openact Architecture + Sara Palomar Studio*, retrieved from: <https://www.archdaily.com/929536/sava-installation-openact-architecture-plus-sara-palomar-studio>.

14. Gruosso S. (2021), “Towards est. Spazio pubblico e cambiamenti climatici nelle città balcaniche”, *EWT/EcoWebTown*, 24: 160-169, retrieved from: https://www.ecowebtown.it/n_24/22.html.

15. Angelillo C. (2024), “The Poetics of Remediation. Progetti e storie di rinascita alla dodicesima Biennale Internazionale di Paesaggio di Barcellona”, *Ri-Vista. Research for Landscape Architecture*, 21,2: 216-223.



Fig. 1 - “Sun & Sea,” a performance by the collective Neon Realism at the Lithuanian Pavilion, Venice Art Biennale 2019. Photo by Jean-Pierre Dalbéra.

Notes towards a spatial perspective of tourism

Claudio Costantino

Within the broad spectrum of contemporary mobility practices, tourism has occupied for decades a prominent position in both public and academic debate due to its controversial ambivalence. It is a social practice that exerts a significant influence on processes of territorial regeneration and, at the same time, takes the form of an invasive force, capable of compromising the form and meaning of the places it crosses¹.

Although the spatial variable is central to the construction of this mobile condition, scholarly attention has focused predominantly on the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of the phenomenon, too often relegating its spatial manifestations to the background. It is, in fact, striking how marginal the theoretical contribution of architects has been, especially considering that «tourism can alter the use and character of public spaces, produce effects of environmental transformation [...], and superimpose its own rules and new hierarchies upon cities and territories.»² Despite the significant programmatic, spatial, and environmental implications of the phenomenon – and the central role architects play in enabling them – architecture has remained at the margins of a debate that has been active for over fifty years.

In Italy, only a few prominent architects have engaged in the theoretical discourse on the subject. Among them, Gio Ponti stands out, having already in the 1950s grasped its cultural and social significance:

«TOURISM – architects say – is an action for all, a motive and a necessity for education [...] tourism policy should be implemented through a distribution of attractions for a total, national, free, and inclusive tourism: tourism should be connected to the action of a ‘popular culture’, coordinating holi-

1. Marzo M. (2020), *Un particolare punto di vista*, in Rocha J. And Bertini V., eds., *Architecture Tourism and Marginal Areas*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa.

2. Marzo M. (2016), “Turismo e Architettura: una relazione disattesa”, *Officina*, 11: 8-13.

days with museum displays, with specific cultural programmes of lectures, with musical, cultural, theatrical, and cinematic events, as well as exhibitions and shows.»³

In 2004, the anthropologist Davydd Greenwood, in the preface to the volume *Architecture and Tourism: Perception, Performance and Place*, reiterated how «the largest peacetime movement of human beings in human history» had, at the time of publication, received limited critical-analytical attention. Until then the scholarly literature on the subject had largely focused on how to benefit from tourism-related activities, overlooking the critical dimension of the phenomenon.

The sociologist Dean MacCannell was among the first researchers to shift attention toward the problematic nature of tourism, reflecting in particular on the ways in which authenticity is constructed and perceived within the tourist experience. Drawing on Erving Goffman's theory of front-stage and backstage behaviour⁴, MacCannell argues that tourist space is composed of a front region, where the social performance involving tourists takes place, and a back region, invisible to visitors, where the performance is prepared in the absence of the spectator – an ideal locus of authenticity to which tourists aspire, driven by the desire to encounter local reality. According to MacCannell, tourists are trapped in the front region, where authenticity is staged⁵ and displayed.

MacCannell thus laid the groundwork for what has since become a field of study largely shaped by anthropology, geography, economics, and sociology – disciplines that, in the final decades of the twentieth century, contributed to the formation of a critical awareness of tourism and the spaces it produces.

Beyond overtourism

In response to the growing scale of tourism and the consequent academic, institutional, and public attention to the transformations it produces, the lexicon through which the phenomenon is described in contemporary debate has gradually become populated with expressions that are, in some respects, ambiguous and often lacking a solid analytical foundation.

3. Ponti G. (1957), *Amate l'architettura. L'architettura è un cristallo*, Vitali e Ghianda, Genova.

4. Goffman E. (1959), *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Doubleday, New York.

5. MacCannell D. (1973), "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings", *American Journal of Sociology*, 79, 3: 589-603.

Among the most widespread and overused is the neologism overtourism, which first appeared on the tourism news platform Skift to describe the worrying growth of tourism in Iceland. A striking and immediate expression, through which Rafat Ali succeeded in capturing attention, conveying concern and alarm about an impending threat affecting the most popular tourist destinations and negatively impacting economies, environments, and cultures. The term has established itself in public debate due to its capacity to encapsulate a phenomenon shared by places that are profoundly different from one another, while at the same time flattening their specific spatial conditions.

Another term that has gained prominence in more recent debates on the distortions of tourism is touristification. This is a long-standing concept, originally developed within tourism geography to describe the complex processes through which multiple actors transform a territory through tourist activity. In recent years, however, the term has been widely adopted across different fields, often acquiring a more negative connotation, associated with the massification of destinations and at times used interchangeably with notions such as gentrification⁶. Another concept closely related to the issues emerging from the analysis of touristification is tourism-phobia. The term was coined in 2008 by the anthropologist Manuel Delgado to describe the widespread attitude of hostility among residents toward tourists, highlighting – specifically in the case of Barcelona – the social tensions generated by a level of tourism that had far exceeded its carrying capacity.

Faced with this proliferation of terms, often marked by generalization and semantic ambiguity, a shift in perspective becomes necessary. This entails returning to a lexicon drawn from geography, anthropology, and urban studies, which appears more capable of grasping the complexity of the spatial effects of contemporary tourism and of restoring to architectural design an active role in understanding and transforming the tourist city.

Tourism space as enclave

The first term toward which attention is to be redirected is enclave, a concept commonly used in tourism studies to refer to specific exotic destinations, but which appears instead capable of describing a broader and recurrent condition, extendable to the vast majority of tourist spaces. The term has been borrowed from tourism geography to describe those portions of territory designed or transformed specifically to accommodate tourist activities, separated

6. Ojeda A. B. and Kieffer, M. (2020), “Touristification. Empty concept or element of analysis in tourism geography?”, *Geoforum*, 115: 143-145.

and isolated from the surrounding socio-spatial environment. These spaces, defined by clearly delineated boundaries that isolate them both physically and symbolically from their context⁷, are conceived to avoid conflict with local society and its everyday life, maintaining a sharp separation from the urban or territorial setting to which they belong, thus institutionalizing a condition of controlled separation.

The Maldives⁸ represent a paradigmatic example of a tourist enclave, where the condition of natural insularity becomes the extreme expression of the concept, configuring «monofunctional enclaves, isolated both from the Maldivian population – who could access them only for work – and from their own guests, who could not leave except through organized excursions.»⁹

Access to and exit from these enclaves are strictly regulated by the presence of physical barriers, which reinforce their condition of spatial segregation, rendering them spaces apart from the surrounding territory. The existence of precisely defined boundaries responds to a dual need: to protect visitors from a context perceived as potentially unfamiliar and, at the same time, to shield the local environment from a possible invasion of tourists.

Another emblematic destination of enclave tourism is Bali, for which the geographer Claudio Minca coined the expression Bali Syndrome, referring to «the apparent tendency of numerous tourist destinations in the developing world to segregate the most affluent segments of tourist demand, creating a functional and sometimes even physical separation between the latest generation of gilded enclaves and the surrounding territory.»¹⁰

Here, in 2020, OMA designed a resort with the aim of questioning the conventional resort typology. The Potato Head Studios presents itself as an open and shared space, where: «‘exclusivity’ is abandoned to create a space shared with the community. [...] The Potato Head Studios is a place for open engagement rather than private consumption. The hotel guests and the community experience the contemporary Balinese culture here, while making it.» The building is conceived as a large ring elevated on pilotis, defining an open courtyard and acting as a symbolic gateway to the beach. This public space constitutes the core of the resort: a flexible square hosting festivals, cultural events, and recreational activities centred on Balinese culture. However, al-

7. Saarinen J. and Wall-Reinius S. (2019), “Enclaves in tourism: producing and governing exclusive spaces for tourism”, *Tourism Geographies*, 21, 5: 739-748.

8. For further information on the case of the Maldives, see Dell’Agnese E. (2018) “One island, one resort. Il turismo enclave alle Maldive come eterotopia pianificata”, *Bollettino Della Società Geografica Italiana*, 1, 1: 27-39.

9. *Ibidem*.

10. Minca C. (2000), “The Bali Syndrome: The explosion and implosion of ‘exotic’ tourist spaces”, *Tourism Geographies*, 2, 4: 389-403.



Fig. 2 - Desa Potato Head by OMA, Bali. Photo by Desapotatohead.

though the project is described as an innovative experiment in inclusion, the resort is part of Desa Potato Head, an enclave-village that includes a beach club and two hotels, access to which is limited to tourists and local workers. A continuous enclosure marks the boundaries of the complex, thus reaffirming the logic of spatial segregation typical of these settlements.

Heterotopias, des espaces autres

Michel Foucault, in a lecture delivered to the Cercle d'études architecturales in Tunis in 1967, entitled *Des espaces autres*, introduced the concept of heterotopia, outlining the six principles that govern it. A reading of these principles reveals analogies with the concept of the enclave, while at the same time allowing other significant qualities of tourist space to emerge. One of the most relevant aspects is contained in the third principle, according to which heterotopias are the result of the juxtaposition of spaces that are apparently incompatible with one another: «The heterotopia has the power to juxtapose, in a single real place, several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.»¹¹

Foucault exemplifies this concept by referring to theatrical space, where elements, objects, and people originating from entirely unrelated contexts are superimposed. Tourist space, as already discussed, can likewise be conceived as a form of staging. In large hotel chains, for example, one observes the coexistence of local elements – employed as distinctive signs to evoke authenticity – and global references, which ensure a recognizable and reassuring aesthetic for the tourist. This juxtaposition seeks to recreate a domestic atmosphere within spaces designed to offer experiences that are out of the ordinary.

Another principle of heterotopias, highlighted in the fifth point of Foucault's analysis, concerns the existence of a system of opening and closing «that, at the same time, isolates them and makes them penetrable. [...] One cannot enter without possessing a certain permission and without having performed a certain number of gestures.»¹² Some of these spaces appear accessible, yet reveal within them more or less evident mechanisms of exclusion, regulated by physical, and social barriers. Foucault cites the example of American motels, spaces that allow rapid and anonymous access: one enters, stays overnight, and departs, while remaining isolated from the surrounding context.

11. Foucault M. (1984), “Des Espace Autres”, in *Architecture Mouvement Continuité*, 5: 46-49.

12. *Ibidem*.



Fig. 3 - View of Lake Buena Vista and Newport Bay Club Hotel, Disneyland Paris. Photo by Victor R. Ruiz.

The final principle of heterotopias concerns their function in relation to the surrounding space, oscillating between two extreme poles. On the one hand, they may generate an illusory space that amplifies the illusory nature of real space; on the other, they may create a new space, so perfect and meticulously ordered that the external world appears disordered and chaotic by comparison. A paradigmatic example of this oscillation between reality and fiction is the typology of theme parks, of which Walt Disney World is a precursor. In a 1996 special issue of *Domus*, entitled *La Sindrome di Disney*, the phenomenon is described as a form of heterotopia of compensation, in which the boundary between true and false becomes blurred, generating an illusion that both stimulates and sustains the desire for escape. This model, developed in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, was replicated in Europe only in the early 1990s with the opening of Euro Disney. The initial phase involved numerous internationally renowned architects – including Rem Koolhaas, Aldo Rossi, Bernard Tschumi, Jean Nouvel, and Christian de Portzamparc. The projects by Michael Graves, Frank Gehry, Robert A. M. Stern, Antoine Predock, and Antoine Grumbach – particularly the hotels arranged around the artificial lake Buena Vista – fit perfectly within the Disney heterotopic philosophy: «in harmony with the philosophy of the park, offering vernacular flavours and playful-symbolic features. [...] a sort of cinematic sequence that places the guest – actor and spectator at the same time – within different worlds, separated from one another by only a few hundred metres.»¹³

13. Vercelloni M. (1996), “Eterotopie della Compensazione. I parchi a tema Disney e le

Non-places

If Foucault's heterotopias delineate spaces that are separate, strongly connoted, and governed by their own internal logic, another perspective on contemporary tourist space emerges from the work of the anthropologist Marc Augé, known for his theory of non-places¹⁴. These spaces are configured as anonymous and interchangeable environments, devoid of a specific identity and defined instead by their transitory function. Airports, highways, railway stations, and large shopping centres are clear examples, as are many spaces associated with tourism, such as airport lounges and the lobbies of large hotel chains. The latter, contrary to their present condition as described by Augé, have historically offered «venues for the social activities of the new urban upper and middle classes; the grand hotel was established as a building type containing huge spaces for festive events and more intimate interiors for exclusive socializing and private dining.»¹⁵

The collective spaces of grand hotels, while configuring themselves as elite enclaves, have historically been places of intense sociability. The description that Rem Koolhaas provides of the Waldorf-Astoria in *Delirious New York* encapsulates the ambiguous role of the common spaces within large hospitality structures: «a sequence of theatrical 'living rooms' – spaces intended for Waldorf guests, open to visitors, yet inaccessible to all others. These living rooms constitute one of those haughty private realms that, taken together, form Manhattan's Venetian system of solitudes.»¹⁶ In these words emerges the contradiction inherent in such spaces, which simultaneously function as spaces of sociability, exclusive enclaves, and non-places, where thousands of solitudes merely intersect without truly interacting, revealing the limits of an architecture that organizes proximity without producing relation.

This interpretation of the phenomenon does not remain confined to major infrastructures of mobility and hospitality, but also extends to territories historically characterized by a strong cultural and landscape identity¹⁷. These places, increasingly subject to processes of valorization, appear to undergo

loro strutture alberghiere", *Domus*, 787: 35-42.

14. Augé M. (1993), *Nonluoghi. Introduzione a una antropologia della surmodernità*, Elèuthera, Milano.

15. Avermaete T. and Massey A. (2013), *Introduction Hotel lobbies: anonymous domesticity and public discretion*, in Avermaete T. and Massey A., eds., *Hotel Lobbies and Lounges. The Architecture of Professional Hospitality*, Routledge, London.

16. Koolhaas R. (1978), *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, Monacelli Press, New York.

17. Misino P. (2023), *Oltre le vacanze. Nuove forme di ospitalità*, in Misino P., ed., *Hospes. Ospitalità, architettura, territorio*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa.

dynamics of museification and commodification of cultural and architectural heritage. Even in these contexts, human presence is regulated by standardized behavioural norms, and the relationship with the territory is reduced to a temporary and impersonal form of use. Tourism in non-places operates through predefined circuits – mediated by guidebooks, signage, and online reviews – which shape a standardized and mediated experience. The logic of consumption permeates the interaction between visitors and urban space, transforming places into transient settings, devoid of any real connection to their social and historical dimension, and reinforcing standardized patterns of use and perception.

Environmental bubble, tourism bubble

An initial definition of the concept of the environmental bubble can be attributed to the sociologist Daniel J. Boorstin, who as early as 1972 identified a protective attitude toward the tourist, for whom a «local atmosphere»¹⁸, is reproduced, conceived as «a kind of social film capable of immunizing tourists from the identity/cultural shocks that visiting a foreign country entails.»¹⁹

Dennis R. Judd later introduced the concept of the tourist bubble, which, in analogy with the environmental bubble, takes the form of a safe and protected space, often disconnected from the surrounding urban fabric by means of «a well-defined perimeter [that] separates the tourist space from the rest of the city.»²⁰ It consists of «pure tourist space carved out of urban decay»²¹, that is, tourist spaces extracted from deteriorating urban areas with the aim of isolating visitors from the social problems of the city. Judd includes within tourist bubbles large multifunctional leisure complexes such as convention centres, sports facilities, shopping malls, and casinos. What these spaces share is the central role played by consumption, revolving around the entertainment industry in its broadest sense. Seemingly more permeable than tourist enclaves, these places present themselves formally as public spaces, yet are in reality governed by strong private interests that regulate access and shape visitors' behaviour, in ways analogous to non-places, ultimately reproducing controlled environments under the guise of openness. Although residents are

18. Boorstin D. J. (1992), *The image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America*, Vintage Books Edition, New York.

19. Cortini M. and Converso D. (2018), "Defending Oneself From Tourists: The Counter-Environmental Bubble", *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9: 354.

20. Judd D. R. (1999), *Constructing the tourist bubble*, in Fainstein S. S. and Judd D. R., eds., *The Tourist City*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

21. *Ibidem*.



Fig. 4 - Axonometric sectional drawing of the Waldorf-Astoria, illustrating life within the hotel, from *Delirious New York*.

not formally excluded from these areas, they are instead encouraged to frequent them, finding in them an opportunity for escape from the ordinariness of everyday life. However, their participation takes place within a highly regulated environment, in which the tourist and commercial experience is designed to maximize consumption and limit unforeseen interactions, thereby reinforcing the separation between the world of visitors and that of the local population.

Conclusion

Separation, protection, isolation, accessibility, imitation, integration, and consumption: these are the key categories that emerge from the reading of the theoretical constructs discussed above. Their analysis reveals how spatial limits, often interpreted as constraints, may instead be reframed as potential resources for design – echoing the inherently ambivalent nature of tourism, understood simultaneously as a driver of development and a source of critical tensions.

A key element is the perimeter that defines these spaces and mediates the relationship between tourists and the host context. It simultaneously protects visitors and shields the local environment, with varying degrees of permeability – from the closure of enclaves to the relative openness of non-places. Public and collective spaces likewise shift in character: in non-places they function primarily as spaces of transit and consumption, while in other contexts they can enable interaction between tourists, residents, and the territory. The design of thresholds thus becomes crucial in negotiating between separation and integration. Finally, programmatic structure oscillates between monofunctional and multifunctional configurations: enclaves tend toward self-contained recreational systems, whereas tourist bubbles integrate a wider range of activities, reflecting a more complex spatial condition.

Tourism spaces, therefore, should not be interpreted as anomalies, but as spatial devices that reorganize relations between users, practices, and territories. The challenge for architecture lies not in rejecting these conditions, but in critically engaging with them – reworking their boundaries, redefining their degrees of openness, and reprogramming their internal structures – so as to transform spaces of separation into spaces of mediation, and spaces of consumption into spaces of coexistence.



Fig. 1 - Allegorical frontispiece by Andrea Zucchi, from Bernardo Trevisan's *Della Laguna di Venezia*, 1715.

Fluid boundaries. Water as design condition

Matteo Almonti

Water is an originary presence in human dwelling, a primary condition that runs through the construction of inhabited space well beyond its purely natural dimension. It is not merely a resource or a landscape element, but an active matter, capable of profoundly shaping the forms of architecture, settlement logics, and the very modes of design. Its ambivalent nature, at once necessary and threatening, stable in its presence yet unstable in its manifestations, places it in a critical position within the discipline, compelling a rethinking of the relationship between construction and environment.

This dual character has been recognised since the theoretical origins of architecture. Marco Vitruvio Pollione, in articulating the principles of construction, assigns water a fundamental role, highlighting its value as both functional and symbolic element in the definition of the built environment¹. Water is simultaneously a technical component, to be captured, regulated, distributed and a material capable of conferring meaning and spatial quality. This double nature runs through the entire history of architecture, manifesting itself in ever-changing forms.

Over time, architecture has constructed multiple modes of relation with water: building with water, on water, in water, facing water. These conditions are not mere contextual variants but genuine spatial regimes, in which water assumes in turn the role of material, limit, support or device². In each of these cases, water acts as an element capable of orienting the design process, influencing not only technical solutions but also the language and perception of space.

1. Vitruvio M. (I sec. a.C.), *De Architectura*, Libri X, libro VIII (Giacchini C.F.C., Trad.), Einaudi, Torino 1997.

2. Berselli S. (2019), "Il segreto di Mosè. Rapporti e forme tra architettura e acqua", *Espazium quaderni*, retrieved from: https://www.espazium.ch/it/archi3-19_segreto_di_mose.

In the contemporary moment, this relationship takes on a new urgency. Climate change, rising sea levels, the intensification of meteorological events, and the growing impermeabilisation of soils are redefining the role of water in territories, transforming it progressively from resource to risk. In this scenario, water can no longer be considered an element external to the project, but must be assumed as a genuine operative condition³. It calls into question the very principle of stability upon which architecture has historically founded itself: it introduces variable temporalities, constructs relational spaces between different elements, and acts as an infrastructure that traverses and organises territory. To assume water as a design condition means recognising its complexity and working within its ambivalence: this is not about solving a problem, but about constructing a field of relations, in which architecture and environment define each other reciprocally⁴.

Unstable ground

Architecture has historically rested on an implicit assumption: the stability of the ground. To build has meant, for centuries, anchoring oneself to a solid, continuous, and reliable condition capable of guaranteeing the permanence of the work over time. In this sense, the Vitruvian principle of *firmitas* concerns not only the resistance of the construction itself, but presupposes the existence of a stable support upon which it rests⁵. The ground has thus been the foundation of architecture not only in physical but in theoretical terms. Water introduces a radical fracture into this condition. Where the ground dissolves, fragments, or becomes unstable, the very premise upon which architecture has been built falls away. The action of water undermines the idea of a sharp separation between construction and environment, transforming the terrain from a certain support into a dynamic and negotiated condition. In this scenario, architecture can no longer confine itself to establishing an order above the ground but must confront a reality in continuous transformation.

The case of Venice represents in this sense the pre-eminent historical paradigm. The city does not merely rise above water: its palaces are founded upon forests of wooden piles driven into the marshy terrain until they reach

3. Bachelard G. (1992), *Psicanalisi delle acque. Purificazione, morte e rinascita*, Red Edizioni, Como (ed. orig. 1942).

4. Menichini D. (2019), "Acqua, oro blu anche per l'architettura", *Il Giornale dell'Architettura*, retrieved from: <https://partnership.ilgiornaledellarchitettura.com/2019/07/21/acqua-oro-blu-anche-per-larchitettura/>.

5. Mancuso F. (2011), *Costruire sull'acqua. Le sorprendenti soluzioni adottate per far nascere e crescere Venezia*, Corte del Fontego, Venezia.

the caranto, a hard and compact layer of clay. Here, the ground is not a pre-existing condition but a constructed element, the result of a secular negotiation between architecture and unstable soil. Bernardo Trevisan, describing the relationship between Venice and the lagoon, speaks of an “*opponesi elemento ad elemento*”⁶, a condition in which land and water do not merge but define each other reciprocally through a continuous tension. It is precisely in this tension that Venetian space is built: not as a stable equilibrium, but as a dynamic system of relations. Similarly, many contemporary architectures operating in contexts exposed to water risk develop systems capable of adapting to level variations, accepting mutability as an integral part of the project. The stilt house, among the oldest typologies in the encounter between construction and water, returns today as a resilient emergency model, capable of lifting itself from the ground in the event of flooding⁷.

Water, then, does not merely interfere with architecture but redefines its premises. By undermining the stability of the ground, it forces the project to shift from a logic of permanence to a logic of relation, in which construction does not impose itself upon the context but configures itself as a device capable of interacting with it. Instability does not represent a negative condition but a possibility: that of rethinking architecture not as a stable object but as an open system, capable of adapting, transforming, and coexisting with natural processes.

Terrae Aquae

If water undermines the stability of the ground, it is in the space of contact between land and water that this crisis translates into architectural form. This is not a line of separation, but an intermediate condition, a zone of relation in which different elements, solid and fluid, stable and mutable, meet and redefine each other. The threshold, in this sense, is not a limit but an active space, a device through which architecture constructs its relationship with water.

Carlo Scarpa, as is perhaps natural for a Venetian, considered water the element capable of bringing life to the inert matter of architecture. The Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice (1961-1963) constructs its relationship with the tidal cycle not through separation but through a device that welcomes and regulates the entry of water, transforming a condition of risk into a

6. Trevisan B. (XVII sec.), citato in Berselli S. (2019), *ibidem*.

7. Bauman Z. (2002), *Modernità liquida*, Laterza, Roma-Bari (ed. orig. *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2000).



Fig. 2 - Teatro del Mondo by Aldo Rossi, Venice, 1980. Photo by Peter Christian Riemann.

compositional principle⁸. The water enters, is slowed, filtered, made visible: the threshold is no longer a boundary, but an articulated space capable of putting interior and exterior in relation. In a different way, Aldo Rossi's Teatro del Mondo (Venice, 1979) occupies an ambiguous position between land and water, suspended between stability and mobility⁹. Its temporary and floating nature calls into question the idea of permanent foundation, configuring architecture as a transitory presence within a fluid system. Both projects render the threshold not resolved but explicit, transformed into a site of design. Silvia Berselli has identified in the tension between land and water not a stable equilibrium but a dynamic system of relations, in which the threshold becomes the privileged site of urban and architectural experience¹⁰. It is in

8. Giovanardi R. (2006), *Carlo Scarpa e l'acqua*, Cicero, Venezia.

9. Rossi A. (1981), *A Scientific Autobiography*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

10. Berselli S. (2019), "Il segreto di Mosè. Rapporti e forme tra architettura e acqua",

this intermediate dimension that the project finds one of its most fertile conditions. Not in stability, but in relation. Not in separation, but in the capacity to construct continuity through difference.

The blue infrastructure

If at the threshold between land and water architecture constructs local relations, it is at the urban and territorial scale that water reveals its fully infrastructural nature. Water acts as a genuine infrastructure, capable of connecting, distributing, and transforming complex territories.

Historically, cities developed in close relation with water: along river banks, in deltas, on coastlines. This proximity guaranteed access to resources, possibilities for exchange, and favourable conditions for settlement, while also exposing territories to constant risk, making the construction of regulatory and control systems necessary. Today, this relationship takes on a new centrality. Climate change and growing anthropogenic pressure are transforming water into one of the primary variables through which to read and design the contemporary city¹¹.

Water is no longer confined or hidden, but made visible, traversable, inhabitable, contributing to the construction of public spaces, ecological systems, and new forms of mobility. Daniele Menichini observes that water will no longer be able to serve in our architectures as an element of distinction or assertion of aesthetic or symbolic power, but will have to reckon with its presence as added value in terms of environment, energy, and resource.

Several contemporary projects make this transformation explicit. The Oslo Opera House by Snøhetta (2008) redefines the relationship between city and fjord by transforming the building's roof into a continuous, accessible, inclined surface that extends to the water's edge¹². Architecture no longer confines itself to placing itself at the border but constructs a continuity between urban ground and marine surface, configuring public space as a hybrid system in which infrastructure and landscape coincide. From this perspective, water infrastructure is no longer a technical system separate from architecture but a shared field of design.

Espazium quaderni, retrieved from: https://www.espazium.ch/it/archi3-19_segreto_di_mose.

11. De Francesco G. (2020), "Emergenza idrica e cambiamenti climatici: occasioni di architettura nella città contemporanea", *L'Industria delle Costruzioni*, 474: 16-27.

12. Testoni C. (2024), "10 progetti in dialogo con l'acqua: le architetture anfibie selezionate da Domus", *Domus*, retrieved from: <https://www.domusweb.it/it/architettura/gallery/2024/06/13/10-architetture-anfibie-raccontano-progetti-nati-dallacqua-.html>.

If at the territorial scale water configures itself as infrastructure, it is at the architectural scale that it reveals its nature as matter. No longer merely an element to be managed or a system to be organised, but a component capable of constructing space through sensory qualities: reflection, transparency, sound, movement. Water does not act as a simple complement to architecture, but as a design material in its own right, on a par with light, stone, or air. This specificity was grasped with rare precision by Gaston Bachelard, for whom water is never an inert background: a breath of evening wind will be enough for the water that had grown silent to speak to us again¹³. The liquid surface is never identical to itself, it registers atmospheric conditions, the shifting of light, the passage of bodies. Carlo Scarpa exploited this property systematically, placing water at the entrance to buildings, constructing a kind of initiatory ritual of purification. At the Querini Stampalia as at Castelveccchio or the Tomba Brion, access becomes a crossing, and water the medium of this transformation¹⁴.

Some projects push this condition to the point of making water the primary constructive material. The Blur Building by Diller Scofidio + Renfro for the 2002 Swiss Expo dissolves architecture into an artificial cloud generated by thousands of nebulising nozzles on Lake Neuchâtel. Here water is neither contained nor represented but constitutes the building itself: an environment devoid of stable form, in which space is defined exclusively by atmospheric conditions. Architecture becomes experience, loss of orientation, sensory immersion. In a different way, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's The Floating Piers (Lake Iseo, 2016) transform the surface of the water into a walkable plane, radically redefining the relationship between body and landscape. Walking on water, albeit through an artificial device, produces an unprecedented perceptual condition, in which the boundary between ground and liquid is suspended and renegotiated.

What does it mean, then, to design with water at this scale? It means accepting, as Adolf Loos might have said, that "before thinking about the roof, think about the rain"¹⁵, that is, that constructive choices will determine both the general form and its expression. The effect of weathering, the patina of

13. Bachelard G. (1992), *Psicanalisi delle acque. Purificazione, morte e rinascita*, Red Edizioni, Como (ed. orig. 1942).

14. Giovanardi R. (2006), *Carlo Scarpa e l'acqua*, Cicero, Venezia.

15. Collomb M.H., Molteni E. (2016), Elements. Water/Acqua. "Bath-house per i pellegrini di Santiago", *Dispensa Atelier Collomb-Molteni*, retrieved from: <https://enricomolteni.com/academic/14.pdf>.

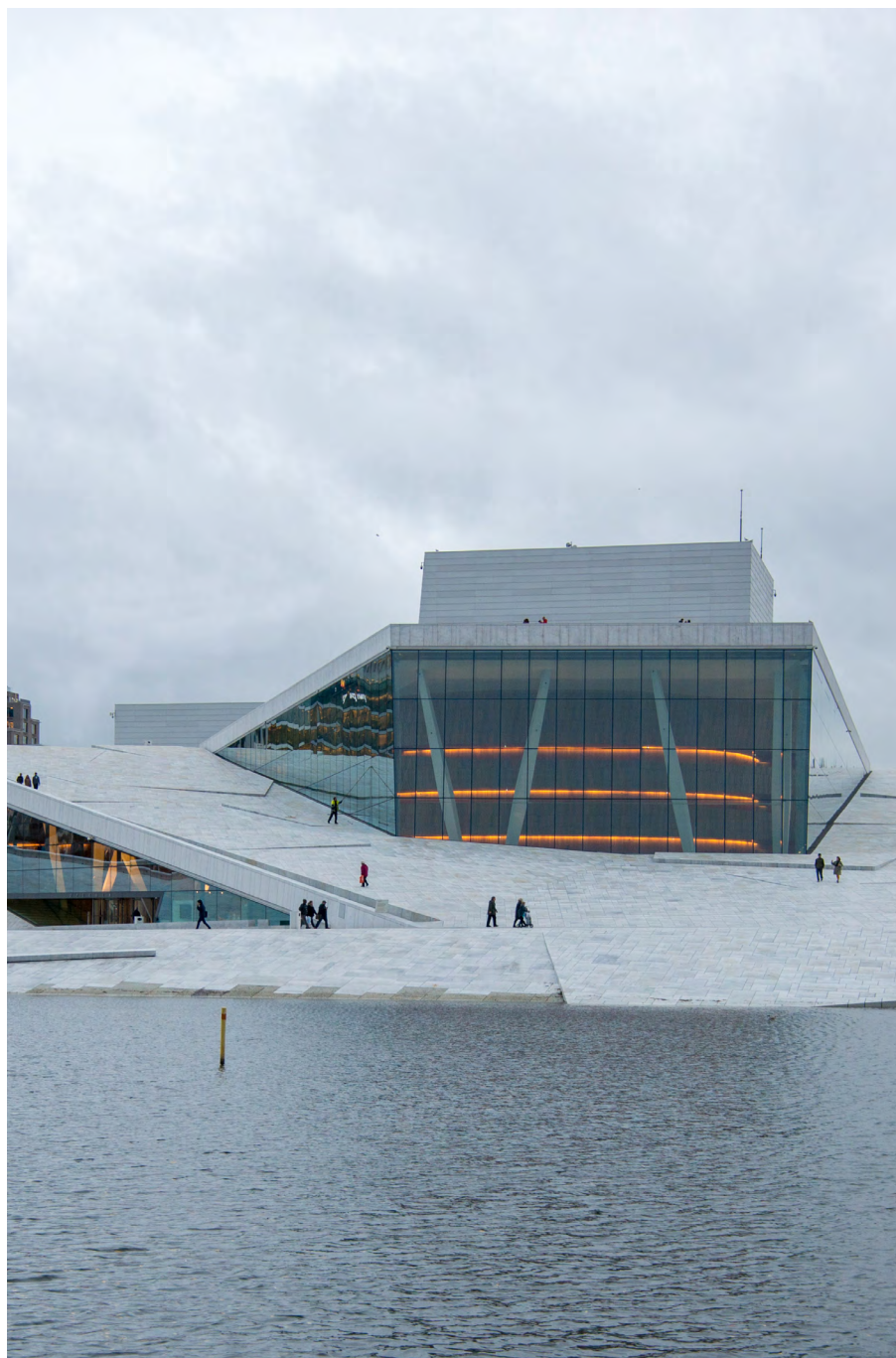


Fig. 3 - The Oslo Opera House by Snøhetta, Oslo, 2008. Photo by Jorge Lásar.



Fig. 4 - The Blur Building by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Yverdon-les-Bains, 2002. Photo by Norbert Aepli.

time, the sound of rain on metal or stone. Every material is modified by the action of water over time: granite darkens, wood silvers, concrete becomes covered in lichen¹⁶. In this sense the materiality of water, precisely in its impossibility of being completely controlled, introduces an open dimension to the project, in which space defines itself through processes rather than objects.

16. Zumthor P. (2006), *Atmosfera*, Electa, Milano.

Conclusions

To assume water as a design condition means calling into question some of architecture's most deeply rooted assumptions. The stability of the ground, the separation between construction and environment, the permanence of form: all these principles are redefined the moment water enters as an active element in the design process. It is not simply a matter of adapting to an external presence but of recognising in water a force capable of generating space, of orienting relations, and of transforming the very meaning of inhabiting.

In the passage from stable ground to unstable condition, from separation to threshold, from object to infrastructure, to sensory matter, water reveals itself as a complex device that traverses all scales of the project. It acts simultaneously as limit and possibility, as risk and resource, imposing a revision of the traditional categories through which architecture has been interpreted. It is in this capacity to work with instability, rather than against it, that a space of research opens for contemporary design. Water, then, does not represent merely an environmental or technical question, but a genuine theoretical occasion. It compels architecture to redefine its own status, shifting it from the condition of a stable object to that of an open system, capable of adapting, transforming, and responding to changing conditions. To design with water means rethinking the very role of architecture: no longer as definitive construction, but as process, as a dynamic field in which form, environment, and time interweave. It is perhaps precisely in this instability, not as a limit, but as an operative condition, that one of the most fertile possibilities for contemporary architecture is to be found.



Fig. 1 - Tactical urbanism at 34th Avenue, Queens, NY. Photo by Andrea Di Cinzio.

Designing for human well-being. An interdisciplinary reading on nature, form and color

Andrea Di Cinzio

Designing a space undoubtedly requires attention.

In the act of projecting an idea into space, it is necessary to take into account not only the practical functions to be included within it, but above all to reflect on the multitude of people who will inhabit that space. «Empathy is a talent that can be developed and refined, and it is more important than technical skills for the practice of the architect.»¹ (Mallgrave, 2018). What, therefore, proves necessary is that, in creating new urban fragments, new spaces for sociality, or in the act of regenerating the urban fabric, the architect must employ the talent of empathy as a competence aimed at citizens' well-being.

Within a design vision centred on well-being, in which people's needs and experiences are at the core of the design process, it is essential to understand and conceive buildings and urban spaces in ways that positively and healthily influence those who inhabit them. Designing with the aim of promoting beauty and well-being ultimately means striving for the user's happiness.

From its origins, architecture has recognised beauty as an essential component for the well-being of inhabitants and for the harmony of the built environment. In *The Ten Books on Architecture*, dedicated to Augustus and written between 29 BC and 23 BC, Vitruvius introduces his celebrated triad: *Firmitas*, *Utilitas*, *Venustas*² (solidity, utility, and beauty). Beauty, in the Vitruvian conception, was intimately linked to proportion, symmetry, and ornament, which were not mere aesthetic details but structural and symbolic elements that conferred balance and harmony upon classical architecture.

1. Mallgrave H.F. (2018), *From Object to Experience. The New Culture of Architectural*, Bloomsbury Visual Arts, London. Mandelbrot B. B. (1967), "How long is the coast of Britain? Statistical self-similarity and fractional dimension", *Science*, 156: 636-638 .

2. Vitruvio (1997), *De Architectura* (C. F. C. Giocchini, Trad.), Einaudi, Torino. (Original work published in the 1st century BC).

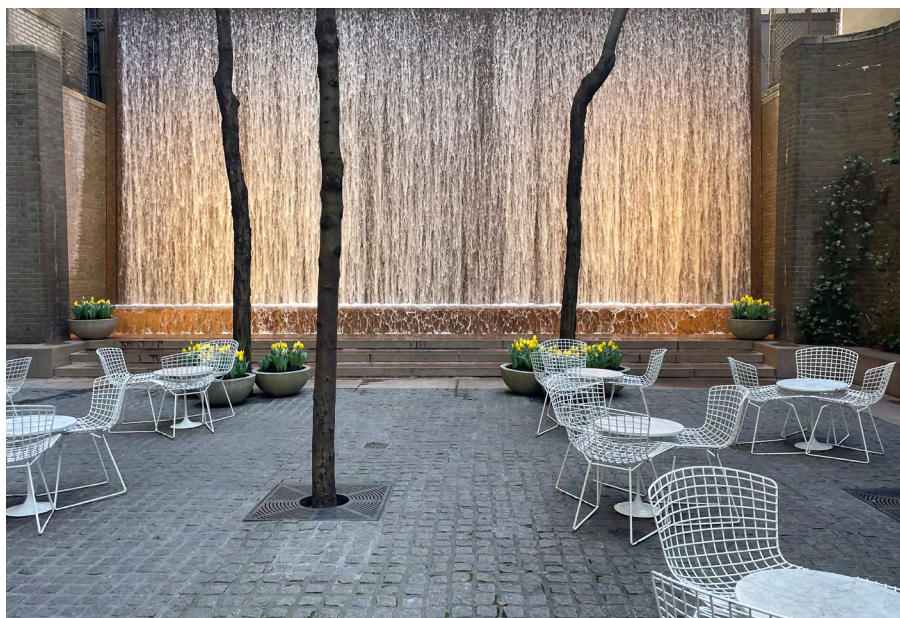


Fig. 2 - A New York pocket park where vegetation and water create harmony and well-being. Paley Park, New York. Photo by Andrea Di Cinzio.

With the advent of modern architecture in the twentieth century, the relationship between beauty and function underwent a radical change. The celebrated principle of Louis Sullivan³ (1896), «form ever follows function,» places utility at the centre of the project, reducing the role of beauty to a secondary element subordinate to functionality. However, this vision has been questioned by contemporary theories that emphasise the importance of aesthetics in the human experience of spaces.

Beauty, in our time, can no longer have a solely aesthetic function but a deeper, more elevated one, capable of impacting people. One might affirm, speaking of Architecture and Beauty, that «beauty is the capacity that spatial forms have to generate attraction and desire in people [...] an incremental concept that expands with the social ability to elaborate new meanings and new aspirations»⁴ (Ricci, 2019).

Today, this role can be crucial, also at a psychological level and in its effects on well-being. Some studies indicate that the aesthetic qualities of architecture have an impact on our mood, cognitive functioning, behaviour, and

3. Sullivan, L. (1896), «The tall office building artistically considered», *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, retrieved from: https://www2.gwu.edu/~art/Temporary_SL/177/pdfs/Sullivan_Tall.pdf.

4. Ricci, M. (2019), *Habitat 5.0: L'architettura nel lungo presente*, Skira, Milano.

even mental health; moreover, the level of complexity of the image to which we are exposed generates different preferences in us, leading us to favour images with a moderate level of architectural and artistic complexity, while images with excessive complexity can overwhelm the visual system.

If beauty, empathy, and well-being therefore constitute the theoretical framework that guides an authentically human-centred design, it remains to be asked which, in concrete terms, are the spatial elements capable of activating this profound relationship between architecture and the person. Contemporary literature, along with psychological and neuroscientific evidence, clearly shows that not all design factors affect our bodies and emotions with the same intensity.

Three, in particular, emerge as fundamental devices in the construction of spatial experience: natural elements, colour, and form. These are the three vectors through which the environment dialogues with the human perceptual system, modulating emotions, orientation, behaviour, and consequently our overall well-being.

Nature

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of contact with the natural environment in improving psychological well-being and cognitive abilities. In particular, the Attention Restoration Theory⁵ (ART) (Kaplan, 1995) provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding how different environments can influence directed attention abilities. Nature, rich in interesting stimuli, captures attention in a gentle and involuntary manner (bottom-up), allowing voluntary attention capacities (top-down) to regenerate. Conversely, urban environments are characterised by an excess of stimuli that capture attention intensely and require greater cognitive effort.

Two experiments conducted to validate ART demonstrated that walking in nature or even simply observing images of natural landscapes significantly improves directed attention abilities, thus confirming the effectiveness of nature in promoting the recovery of cognitive functions.

Another study demonstrated that mental well-being is closely associated with exposure to Natural Outdoor Environments⁶ (NOE) (Triguero-Mas et al.,

5. Kaplan, R. (1995), "The restorative benefits of nature: Toward an integrative framework", *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15,3: 169-182.

6. Triguero-Mas M, Donaire-Gonzalez D., Seto E, Valentín A., Smith G., Martínez D., Carrasco-Turigas G., Masterson D., van den Berg M., Ambrós A., Martínez-Íñiguez T., Dedele A., Hurst G., Ellis N., Grazulevicius T., Voorsmit M., Cirach M., Cirac-Claveras J., Swart W.,

2017). This study, conducted in four European cities (Barcelona, Stoke-on-Trent, Doetinchem, and Kaunas), explored the relationship between exposure to NOE and various indicators of psychological well-being, including sleep quality, vitality, and stress somatisation. Exposure to NOE was measured both by assessing the availability of green and blue spaces in the area of residence (through geographic information systems) and by monitoring actual contact with nature via smartphone data collected over a seven-day period.

The study found that direct contact with nature, particularly proximity to greenery, was significantly associated with improved mental health. A relevant aspect of the study concerns the role of perceived stress as the main mediator of this relationship: contact with natural spaces appears to act particularly effectively in reducing stress, thereby contributing to improved psychological well-being. Conversely, other variables such as physical activity and social interactions were not found to be significant mediators.

Furthermore, a systematic study analysed 35 quantitative studies on the potential benefit of outdoor blue spaces, such as lakes, rivers, and seas, on human health and well-being, highlighting a positive correlation between greater exposure to these environments and improved mental health and psychological well-being (12 studies), as well as increased levels of physical activity (13 studies). Despite these promising results, research on blue spaces still presents high heterogeneity in analysis methods, exposure criteria, and measurements of effects, making a definitive synthesis of the evidence complex⁷ (Gascon et al., 2017).

There is therefore a need for greater scientific production based on longitudinal studies and large-scale experiments to better understand the causal link between water, health, and well-being. However, current evidence suggests that the presence and accessibility of blue spaces may play a key role in psychophysical regeneration and in promoting a healthier lifestyle.

These results suggest that simple contact with natural environments can have positive effects on mental health. Moreover, they highlight the importance of designing cities that facilitate access to green spaces and integrate water in its various forms, not only in terms of quantity but also in the quality of the experience offered, thereby fostering psychological well-being and the cognitive restoration of individuals.

Clasquin E., Maas J., Wendel-Vos W., Jerrett M., Gražulevičienė R., Kruize H., Gidlow C.J. and Nieuwenhuijsen M. J. (2017), “Living Close to Natural Outdoor Environments in Four European Cities: Adults’ Contact with the Environments and Physical Activity”, *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 14,10: 1162.

7. Gascon M., Zijlema W., Vert C., White M. P. and Nieuwenhuijsen M. J. (2017), “Outdoor blue spaces, human health and well-being: A systematic review of quantitative studies”, *International journal of hygiene and environmental health*, 220, 8: 1207-1221.



Fig. 3 - Macrolotto zero by Arch. Michela Brachi, Arch. Massimo Fabbri, Ing. Alessandro Pazzagli, Comune di Prato, Servizio Urbanistica Tansione Ecologica e Protezione Civile. Photo by Simone Stefanelli.

Colour

Numerous studies have highlighted how colour in indoor environments can significantly impact perception, physiology, and individuals' emotional state. In particular, experimental research has shown that chromatic variation influences spatial perception as well as cognitive and emotional responses. Studies conducted in rooms with different tonalities found that colour modifies environmental perception and physiological reactions: strong hues, such as red, can increase cerebral arousal, sometimes producing a paradoxical slowing of heart rate, while cooler hues, such as blue, tend to promote a sensation of calm⁸ (Küller et al., 2009).

At the same time, studies in therapeutic contexts have explored the role of colours and landscape forms in promoting psychological well-being through perceptual and emotional processes. In an investigation conducted on patients in a psychiatric clinic, colour and spatial configuration were explored through psychotherapeutic painting and autobiographical narration, revealing how en-

8. Küller R., Mikellides B. and Janssens J. (2009), "Color, arousal, and performance: A comparison of three experiments", *Color Research & Application*, 34, 2: 141-152.

vironmental perception intertwines with symbolic and emotional dimensions. The experience of place is not limited to its physicality but also involves visual and chromatic elements that influence a sense of comfort and belonging⁹ (Lengen, 2015). Perceived colour brightness also influences psychological processes and behaviour. Human beings are constantly exposed to stimuli that modulate psychological functioning, potentially through emotional influence. Colour, particularly its brightness, is identified as a significant factor in this process¹⁰ (Bortolotti et al., 2022).

In this context, the role of art in public space «has a unique and revolutionary potential as an activator of movements of self-determination: being the heart of spatial contestation, urban space in particular welcomes the choruses and the different voices of minorities»¹¹ (Tartari, 2024). Art, in fact, not only aesthetically enriches public spaces but acts as a catalyst for social dynamics and as an instrument of collective expression.

A recent experimental study investigated the role of art in urban well-being, evaluating the impact of an artistic intervention in a public space through a video simulation. Participants observed three different versions of the same urban environment: one decorated with art, one enriched with natural elements (active control), and one without interventions (conventional control). The results showed that, while in the control condition mood tone tended to decrease, in the art condition it remained stable. Moreover, a positive correlation was observed between the subjective experience of the artwork and perceived well-being, suggesting that art may play a fundamental role in urban regeneration and in improving quality of life¹² (Dehove et al., 2024).

Alongside these variables, site-specific design must also be considered, which does not impose arbitrary forms but arises from an in-depth reading of the context, highlighting those qualities that emerge from the enhancement of the existing, «from the excavation and mise en valeur of the existing to generate new beauty and happiness for those who inhabit it»¹³ (Ricci et al., 2022).

9. Lengen C. (2015), “The effects of colours, shapes and boundaries of landscapes on perception, emotion and mentalising processes promoting health and well-being”, *Health & Place*, 35: 166-177.

10. Bortolotti A., Cannito L., Anzani S., Rossi M. and Palumbo R. (2022), “About the influence of color perceived lightness on psychological functions”, *Cultura e Scienza del Colore-Color Culture and Science*, 14,1: 112-122.

11. Tartari M. (2024), *Arte, città e impatti sociali: Percorsi di analisi e critica*, Polistampa, Firenze.

12. Dehove M., Mikuni J., Podolin N., Leder H. and Oberzaucher E. (2024), “The Impact of Urban art on Wellbeing: A Laboratory Study”, *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, 43, 2: 1240-1268.

13. Ricci M., Ferretti M., Lamanna R., Piccione E., Prunesti L. and Tiberi M. (2022), *Custom made: Senso e metodo nel progetto di architettura, città e paesaggio*, ListLab, Trento.

These results indicate that a conscious use of colour and art in the design of public spaces can improve mood, reduce psychological discomfort, and foster individuals' overall well-being. Integrating calibrated artistic and chromatic strategies not only enriches the aesthetic quality of environments but also represents a concrete opportunity to create spaces that respond to the emotional and cognitive needs of those who experience them, while at the same time promoting inclusion and social self-determination.

Forms

Form is one of the most powerful devices through which the environment constructs our perceptual experience. If nature and colour act primarily through immediate sensory stimuli, form instead operates as a cognitive structure: it organises visual information, guides movement, defines spatial rhythms, and gives order to complexity.

A large part of our response to forms originates from biological evolution. The geometries present in nature, branching, undulations, symmetries, and repeated patterns, have shaped our perceptual systems over millennia. It is therefore not surprising that some scholars have identified in natural patterns a “code” capable of generating a positive resonance in individuals. The pioneering work of Christopher Alexander¹⁴ (1977) and, subsequently, Nikos Salingaros¹⁵ (2006) highlighted how recurring forms in natural landscapes are characterised by a combination of order and complexity that our brains recognise as familiar and cognitively stable.

Among these characteristics, fractal structures play a central role. Introduced by Benoît Mandelbrot¹⁶ (1967), the concept of the fractal describes configurations that repeat similar patterns at different scales. Although mathematical fractals are abstractions, in the real world we constantly encounter forms that approximate this logic: the veins of leaves, the branching of trees, mountain profiles, and the network of blood vessels. Neuroscientific studies have shown that exposure to fractal patterns, both natural and artificial, can reduce the stress response and promote a state of calm alertness, with measurable physiological effects on the autonomic system.

14. Alexander C., Ishikawa S., Silverstein M., Jacobson M., Fiksdahl King I. and Angel S. (1977), *A Pattern Language*, Oxford University Press, New York.

15. Salingaros N.A. and Mehaffy M.W. (2006), *A theory of architecture*, Umbau-Verlag, Solingen.

16. Mandelbrot B. B. (1967), “How long is the coast of Britain? Statistical self-similarity and fractional dimension”, *Science*, 156: 636-638.



Fig. 4 - The complex geometries and sinuous paths of the “Little Island” project made by Heatherwick Studio. Photo by Andrea Di Cinzio.

What clearly emerges is that it is not complexity in itself that generates well-being, but organised complexity. Salingaros and Mehaffy¹⁷ (2006) describe this phenomenon as the balanced combination of variety and order: a readable hierarchy of scales, local contrasts that maintain attention, symmetries that orient, and varied repetitions that avoid monotony. Spaces that are too simple appear impoverished in stimuli, while excessively complex forms can saturate the perceptual system, leading to disorientation.

This concept receives important development in the work of Lorenzo Pellegrini¹⁸ (2024), who analyzes the relationship between form, visual complexity, and cognitive response using computational techniques. Pellegrini demonstrates how aesthetic experience is often associated with intermediate

17. Salingaros N.A. and Mehaffy M.W. (2006), *A theory of architecture*, Umbau-Verlag, Solingen.

18. Pellegrini L. (2024), *Complessità architettonica ed estetica computazionale: una nuova unità di misura – Architectural complexity and computational aesthetics: a new unit of measurement*, in Bergamo F., Calandriello A., Ciammaichella M., Friso I., Gay F., Liva G. and Monteleone C., eds., *Misura/Dismisura – Measure/Out of Measure. Atti del 45° Convegno Internazionale della Unione Italiana per il Disegno*, UID, Padova-Venezia.

levels of complexity: forms neither banal nor chaotic, capable of activating a pleasant and sustainable perceptual engagement. In other words, form is not a mere geometric fact, but a cognitive regulator that can orient emotional and behavioural states.

Form and the configuration of architectural objects also significantly influence human perception and psychophysical experiences. Albertazzi¹⁹ (1999) explores the concept of form from different perspectives, including Gestalt psychology, phenomenology, and mathematics, emphasising the importance of formal characteristics in spatial representation.

These results highlight the importance of a conscious use of geometric forms in architectural design in order to create environments that have a positive impact on the psycho-emotional state of city inhabitants.

In this sense, designing no longer means merely organising functions in space, but constructing perceptual conditions capable of supporting human life. Nature, colour, and form do not represent accessory qualities of architecture, but cognitive devices through which the environment dialogues with body and mind. Architecture thus returns to its original responsibility: not only to host human beings, but to actively contribute to their balance and their possibility to flourish.



Fig. 5 - From “Forms follow function” to “Architecture follow our senses”. Author’s drawing.

19. Albertazzi L. (1999), *Shapes of Forms: From Gestalt Psychology and Phenomenology to Ontology and Mathematics*, Springer-Scienze + Business Media, B.V.

PART II - Visions



Fig. 1 - Aerial view of Pescara. The numbered markers shown on the image correspond to the photographs presented on pages 112-118.

The riverfront and the city

Paola Misino, Matteo Almonti, Claudio Costantino

The projects presented in the *Visions* section are the result of the design workshop developed within the Blended Intensive Programme “Temporary Stay. New Forms of Hospitality between Architecture and Landscape”. Working in international and interdisciplinary teams, students were invited to explore the relationship between hospitality, public space and river landscapes through a specific case study located in the city of Pescara. The workshop focused on the Lungofiume dei Poeti, a strategic stretch of the Pescara River where the waterway crosses the consolidated urban fabric between the historic district of Corso Manthonè on the southern bank and the contemporary city centre on the northern side. Although this area occupies a central position within the urban structure, decades of infrastructural development and land reclamation have progressively weakened the relationship between the city and its river.

Today, the northern riverfront appears as a fragmented landscape composed of parking lots, residual open spaces, road infrastructures, disconnected green areas and pedestrian and cycling routes lacking a coherent spatial framework. Rather than functioning as a civic space capable of connecting different parts of the city, the riverfront has gradually become a marginal environment, largely excluded from everyday urban life despite its environmental, historical and symbolic significance.

Starting from these conditions, the workshop proposed a radical rethinking of the relationship between the river and the city. The primary objective was to imagine the transformation of the northern bank into a public river park capable of restoring ecological continuity, increasing soil permeability and reconnecting urban life with the dynamic character of the river landscape. Natural systems, recreational spaces, pedestrian and cycling networks were conceived as complementary components of a new public infrastructure extending across the waterfront.

Within this broader framework, students were asked to investigate the potential of innovative forms of temporary hospitality as catalysts for urban regeneration. Rather than reproducing conventional accommodation models, the proposals explored flexible solutions capable of responding to emerging forms of mobility associated with study, research, cultural exchange and professional activities. Particular attention was devoted to floating structures and water-based living environments, conceived as reversible and adaptive interventions able to engage directly with the changing conditions of the river ecosystem. The workshop brought together students and faculty members from:

- University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara with Prof. Paola Misino, Arch. Matteo Almonti and PhD Claudio Costantino as tutors; students: Antonio De Giuseppe, Eleonora De Santis, Lucrezia Di Domenico, Luca Ferretti, Elena Fusco, Giulia Giustini, Andrea Pietrantonì, Paola Sambrotta;
- Medical University of Sofia. Students: Alena Kolev, Dermendjieva Shanaya, Kadurina Dobtyana, Kristyan Raychev, Umar Ali;
- National Technical University of Athens with Prof. Tina Mikrou; students: Dimitrios Antoniou, Christina Ioannidou, Eva Karapanou, Andreas Primikyrios, Eirini Marina Prokidi, Anastasia Sakellariou, Foteini Sotiropoulou, Despoina Tsaliki;
- Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura of Seville with Prof. Fernando Diaz Moreno; students: Carmen Cerrato Ramírez, Natalia Fernandez Pérez, Paula Fernandez Pérez, Maria Morales Marchal, Ana Silveira Oria, Manuel Torres Moraga;
- Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași with Prof. Andrei Ionut Donutu; students: Iliyona Andreeva, Marina Alexandra Boghita, Dorina Borș, Lavinia Denisa Hritcu, Florina Oboroceanu, Alexia Stoica, Tsenkov Yavor.

Through lectures, seminars, site visits and collaborative design sessions, participants developed a series of visions that reinterpret the riverfront as a space of encounter between landscape and architecture, permanence and temporariness, local identity and international exchange. The projects collected in the following pages do not represent definitive solutions. Rather, they should be understood as design explorations that test alternative futures for the Pescara riverfront and, more broadly, for the role that hospitality can play in the regeneration of contemporary urban landscapes.



Fig. 2 - Lungofiume dei Poeti. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli. [1]



Fig. 3 - Via Spalti dei Re. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli. [2]



Fig. 4 - Ponte di Ferro crossing the river Pescara. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli. [3]



Fig. 5 - Circolo Canottieri under renovation. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli. [4]



Fig. 6 - Ponte Risorgimento and the parking lot. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli. [5]



Fig. 7 - Museo del Mare and the new public spaces. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli. [6]



Fig. 8 - WWF Kentish plover protected area. Photo by Lorenzo Morelli. [7]



Fig. 1 - A temporary floating residence along the riverpark.

Back to the bank

Carmen Cerrato Ramírez, Elena Fusco, Lavinia Denisa Hritcu, Manuel Torres Moraga, Marina Alexandra Boghita, Tsenkov Yavor

Back to the bank conveys both a physical and symbolic return to the riverbank of Pescara's historic core. The promenade we designed is not just a linear path, but a sequence of moments where the city meets the water. The floating platforms – the “Rafted Promenade” – continuously move across the river, turning the act of crossing into an everyday ritual that reconnects the old town with the contemporary city. The title captures this dual ambition: to bring people back to the riverbank and to give the river back to the people.

The project was born from the perception of an urban divide between the two banks of the river. This situation is a consequence of the parallel directionality of mobility flows – pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles – that run alongside the riverbed, both on the elevated motorway and on the *Lungofiume dei Poeti* promenade. This configuration reflects the contemporary urban structure, but has relegated the historical transversality that characterised the old city, still visible in the urban layout of the right bank.

The main objective of the project is to re-establish the connection between the two banks by creating new non-motorised urban routes that encourage walkability and new recreational uses. According to this end, the urban level of the old city – between 4 and 7 metres below the current level – is taken as a reference, thus homogenising the levels of the two banks.

The proposal takes the form of a continuous pedestrian walkway connecting the archaeological remains of the *Rampigna* field with the *Circolo Canottieri* building. The route, designed using wood as a unifying material, incorporates a series of elements linked to the public space: stands, lifts, viewpoints and up to ten floating housing units with their respective common services, accessible to both residents of the residential units and the citizens of Pescara.



Fig. 2 - Aerial view of the riverpark.

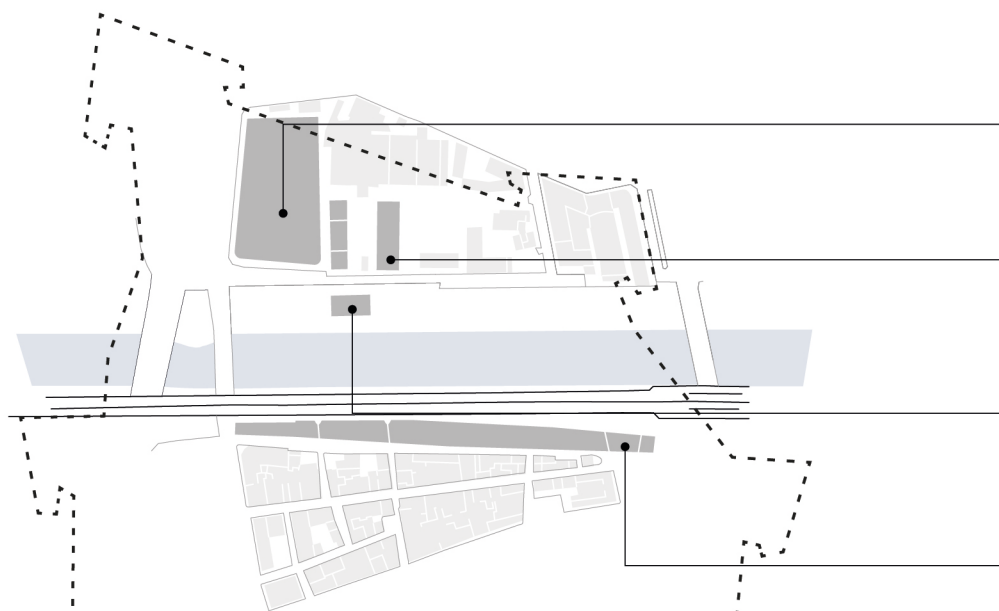


Fig. 3 - Historical heritage along Pescara river.



Fig. 4 - Floating platform system connecting the two banks of the Pescara River.

Rampigna archeological site



Pescara Police headquarters



Circolo Canottieri building



Bagno Borbonico
today Museo delle Genti d'Abruzzo



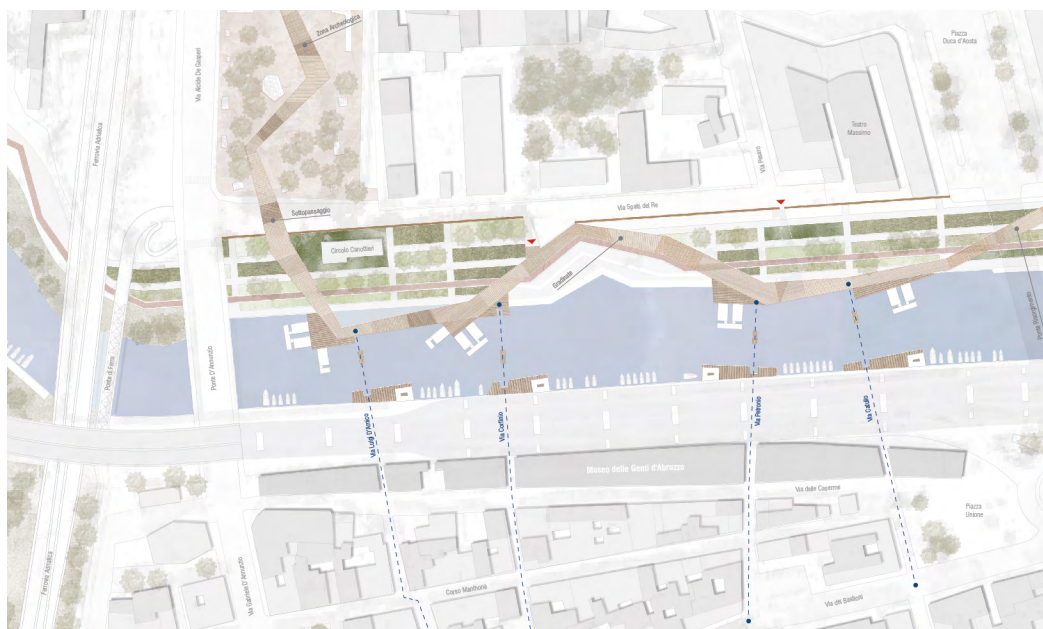


Fig. 5 - Riverpark masterplan.

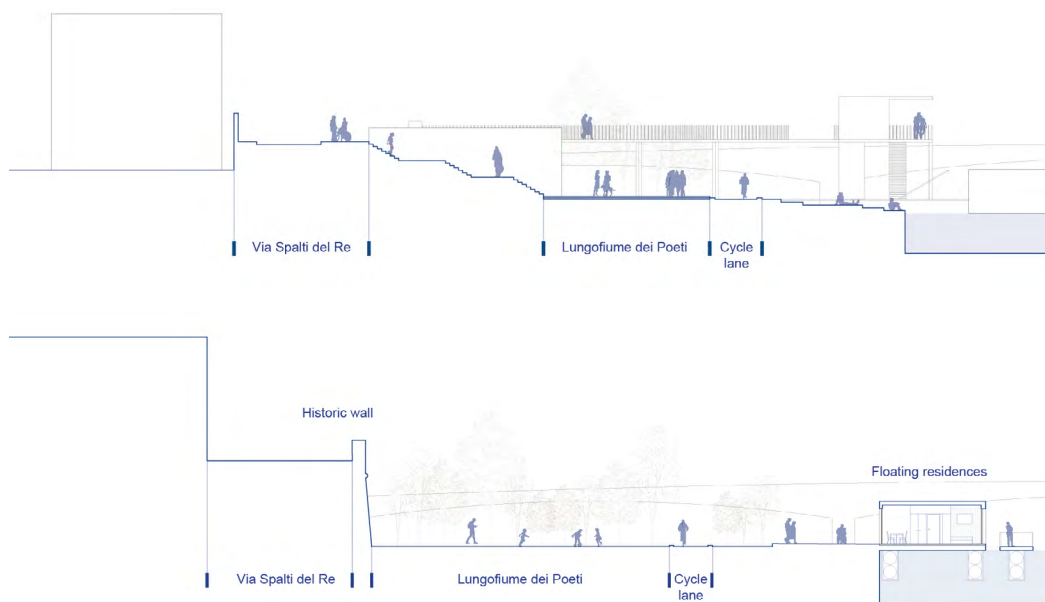
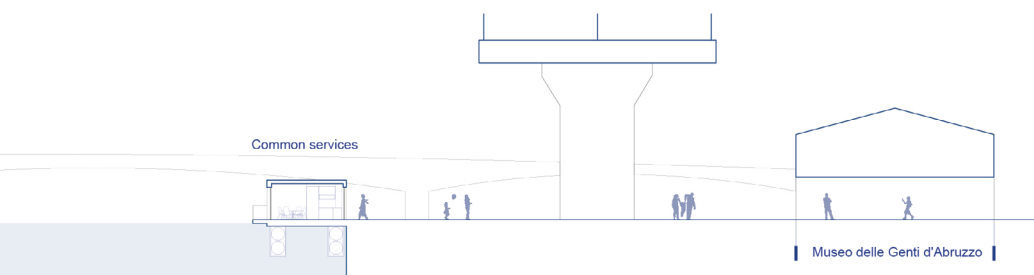
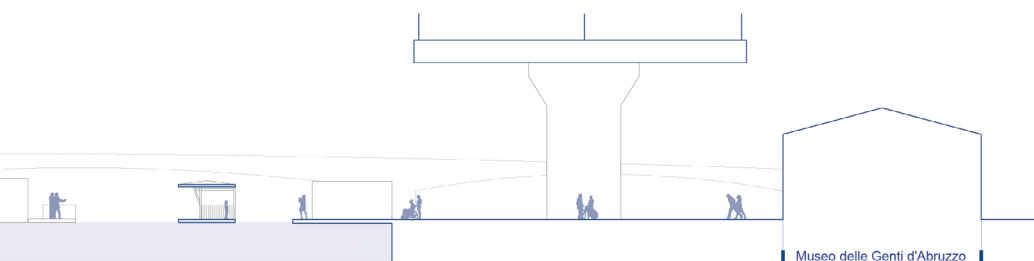


Fig. 6 - Cross sections along the riverpark.



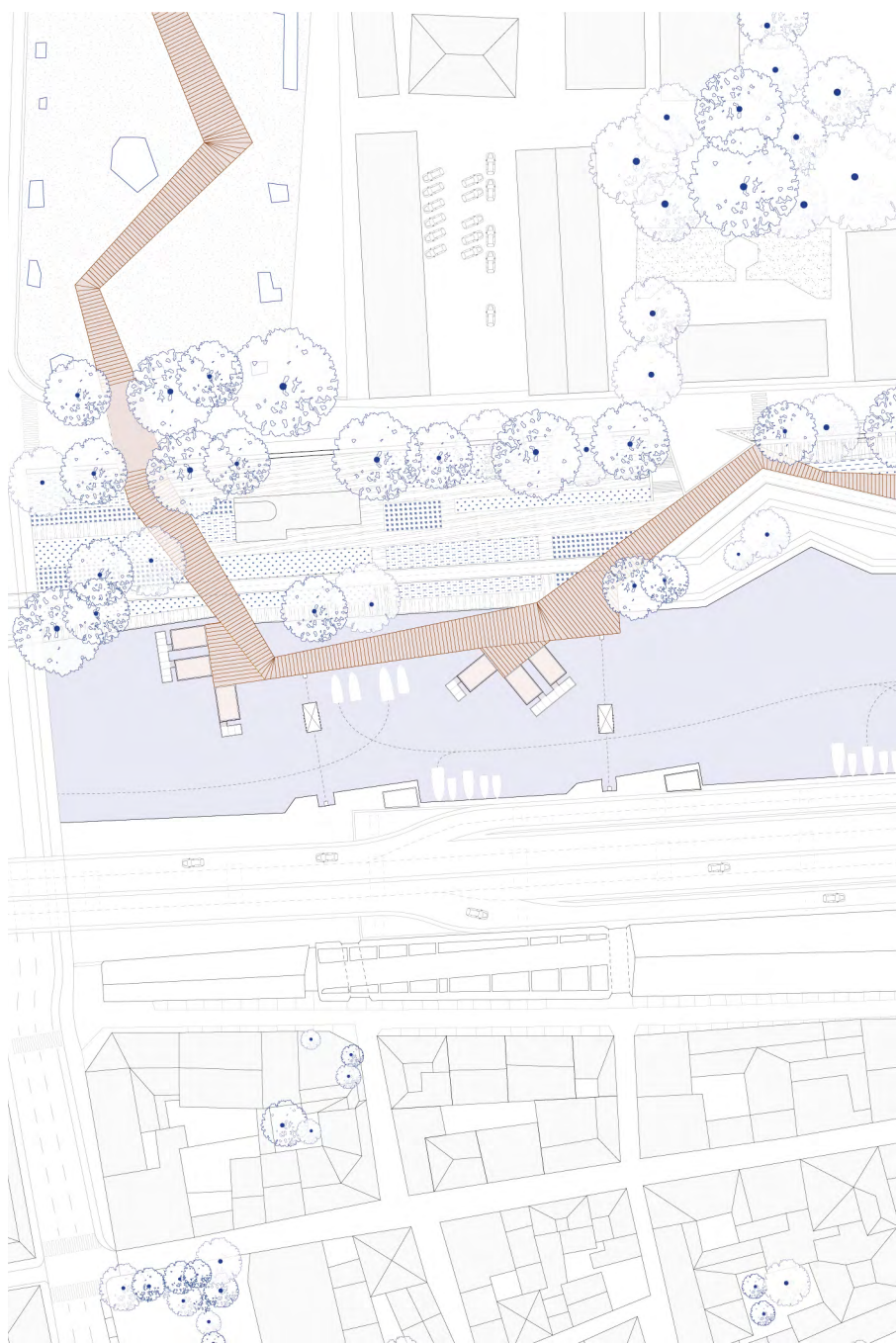


Fig. 7 - Prototype cluster of floating temporary residences.

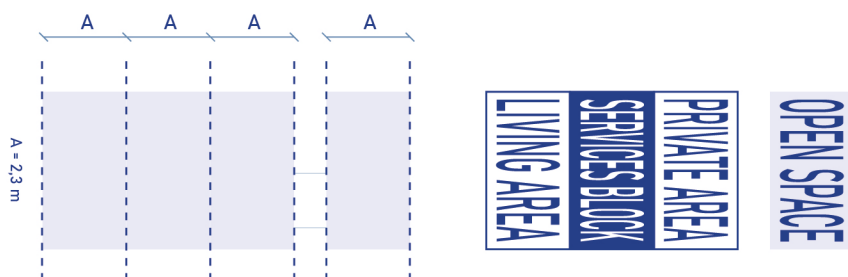


Fig. 8 - Floating temporary residences concept diagram.

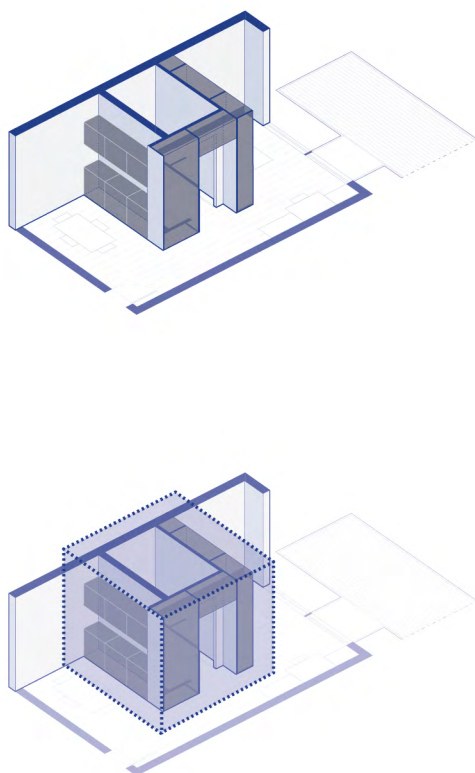


Fig. 9 - Floating temporary residences axonometry.

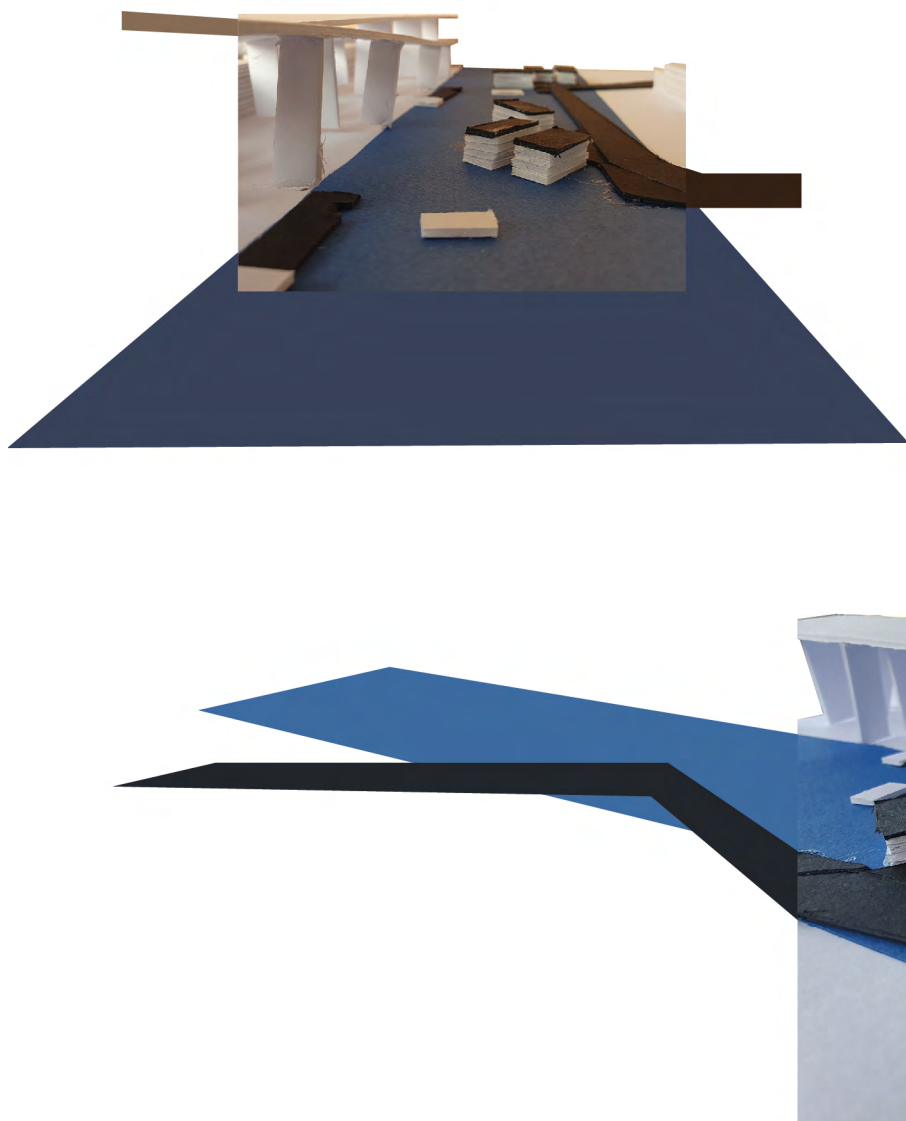


Fig. 10 - Physical model collage.

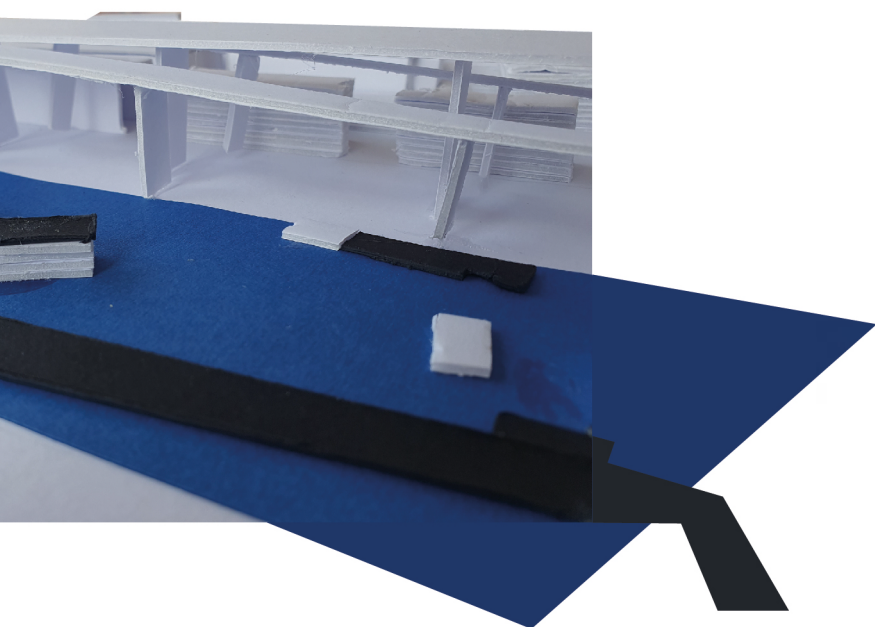
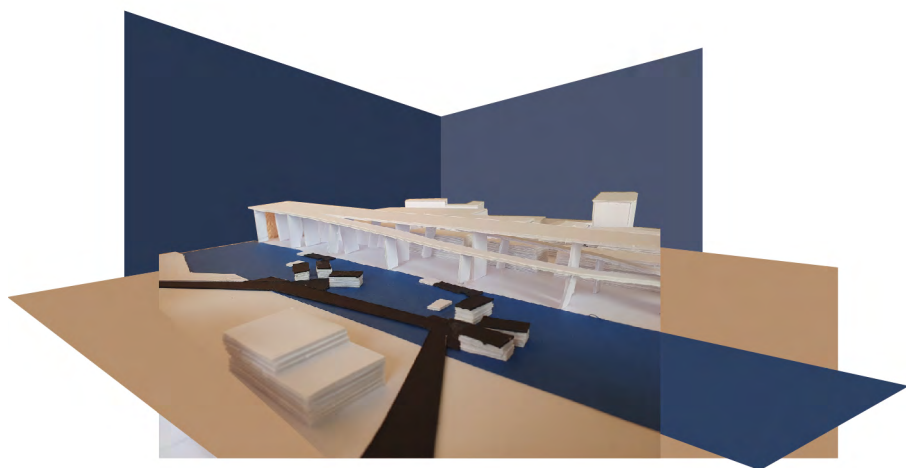




Fig. 1 - Symbolic landmarks shaping the identity of river Pescara.

On the (ri)verge

Anastasia Sakellariou, Andreas Primikyrios, Despoina Tsaliki, Eirini Marina Prokidi, Eleonora De Santis, Giulia Giustini

The proposal concerns the design of an urban park and ten floating residences along the river Pescara. The aim of this redevelopment is to reclaim and reintroduce the city's inactive riverbank to public life. To articulate the park's entrance, the existing curvilinear access road at the southwestern edge, next to the Coastal Rowing Pescara Club, was extended and emphasized. Following this curve, visitors are naturally guided to begin their walk along the riverbank. Out of respect for the historic wall, no alterations were made and all its existing openings have been preserved as secondary entrances to the park. The promenade culminates at the Naval Academy.

In terms of design criteria, we sought to incorporate a curvilinear element that echoes the river's flow. Both the pathways and the vegetation adopt sinuous forms, highlighted by different materialities, textures and elevations. These curves gradually fade toward the end of the park, allowing visitors to disperse into the city, just as the river flows into the sea. The park also offers opportunities for interaction with both the city and the river, as the path alternates between elevated and lower levels.

The residences are located at the entrance of the park, arranged around a communal area sheltered by a large canopy. Here, we have created a green atrium, making the most of the natural light available in this area. The atrium also features a ramp leading visitors to the upper level of the park. Vegetation has also been arranged to mitigate the noise pollution generated by nearby highways.

In this way, the riverbank is transformed into a spatial and experiential journey, weaving together the relationship between the river and the city.

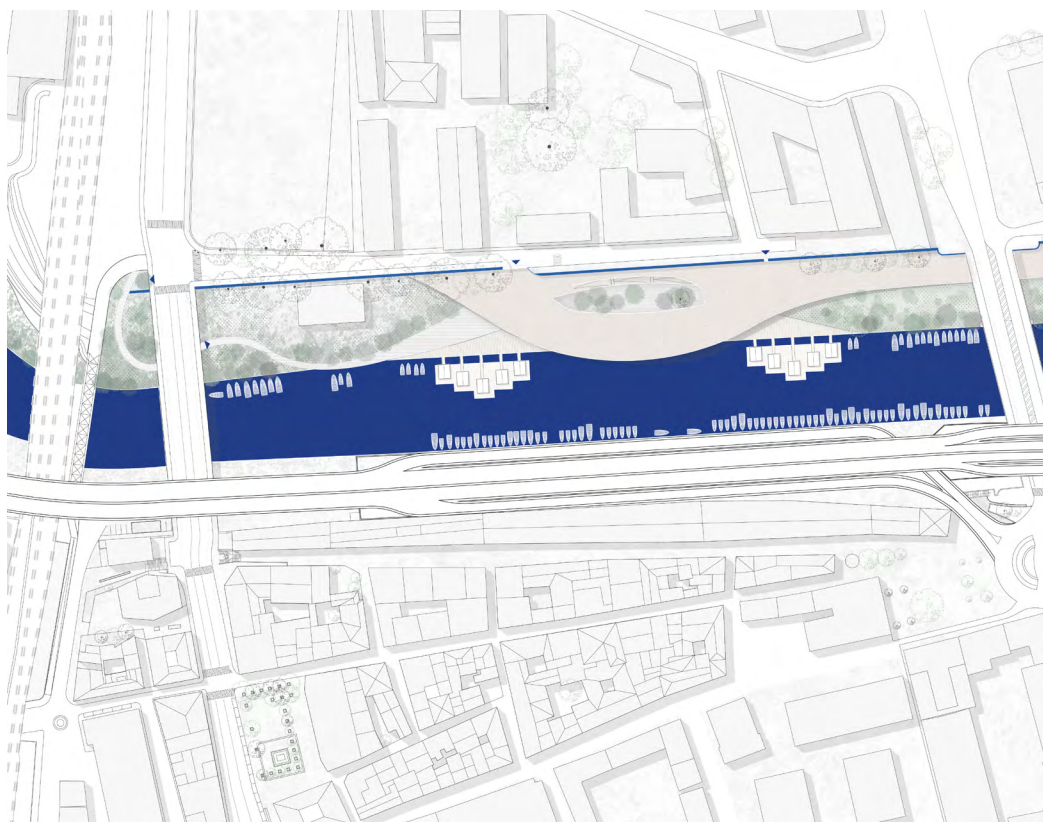


Fig. 2 - Riverpark masterplan.



Fig. 3 - Cross section along the riverpark.

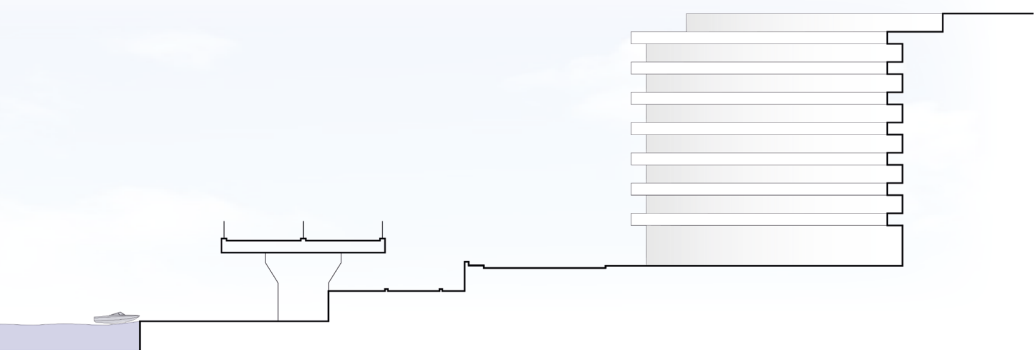
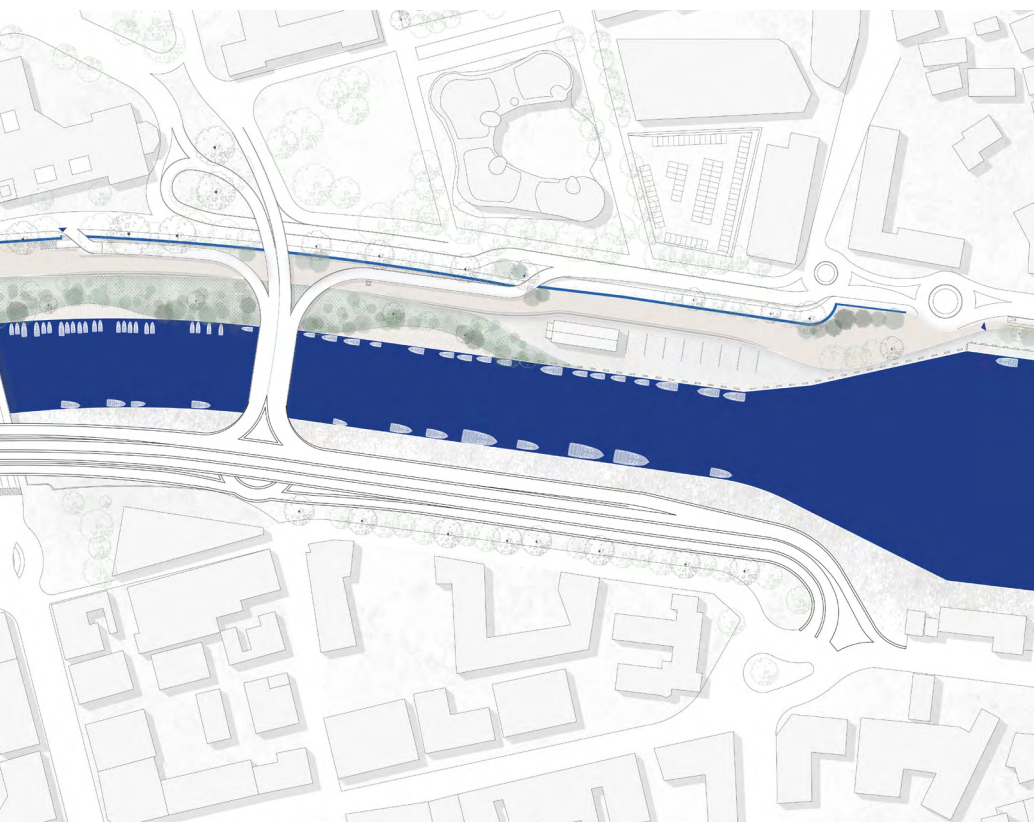




Fig. 4 - Floodable public square.



Fig. 5 - Riverfront promenade.



Fig. 6 - Temporary floating residences along the riverpark.



Fig. 7 - Covered riverfront public square.

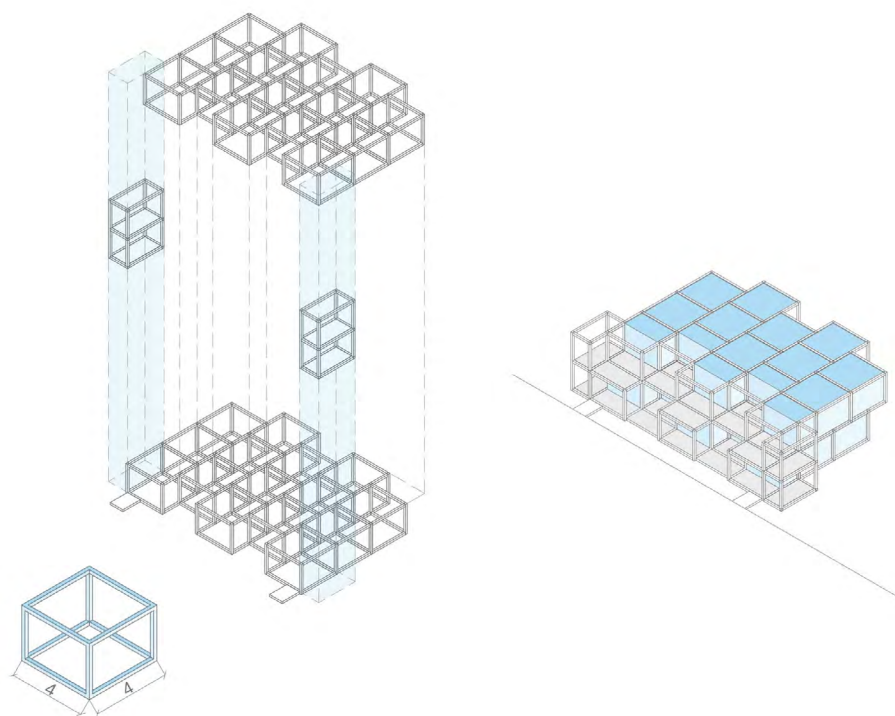


Fig. 1 - Temporary floating residences concept diagram.

Living on water

Dorina Borş, Iliyona Andreeva, Luca Ferretti, Natalia Fernandez Pérez,
Paola Sambrotta, Paula Fernandez Pérez

The project focuses on the regeneration of the Lungofiume dei Poeti in Pescara, located on the north bank of the river Pescara. The site lies approximately 5 meters below the urban level, offering great potential to reconnect the city with its riverfront. The main objective is to design a river park, conceived to become a public hub for social interaction and urban revitalization. The project is structured around three key elements:

- Multifunctional pavilions hosting services such as co-working spaces, a café, and exhibition halls.
- A central public space, acting as a transitional area between the pavilions and the floating houses, featuring pedestrian paths, urban furniture, greenery and a cycle path
- Floating houses on the river Pescara, connected to the existing quay and designed using the Cylindrical Pontoons floating system. Their modular design ensures flexible configurations that can be adapted to users' needs.

The design concept emphasizes vertical connectivity between the urban level and the riverfront. Pedestrian routes, staircases, and elevators enable easy access, while the pavilion roofs act as urban extensions, shaded by pergolas and integrated into the pedestrian network.

The intervention stretches over 500 meters along the river, arranging the sequence of pavilions, squares, and floating houses in three main nodes. Between these clusters, extensive green spaces host outdoor activities such as an open-air cinema, urban gardens, a skate park, and children's playgrounds, enriching the riverside park with a variety of recreational spaces.

Overall, the project acts as an urban and landscape connector, strengthening the relationship between the city and its river while fostering sustainability, community engagement, and innovative uses of public space.

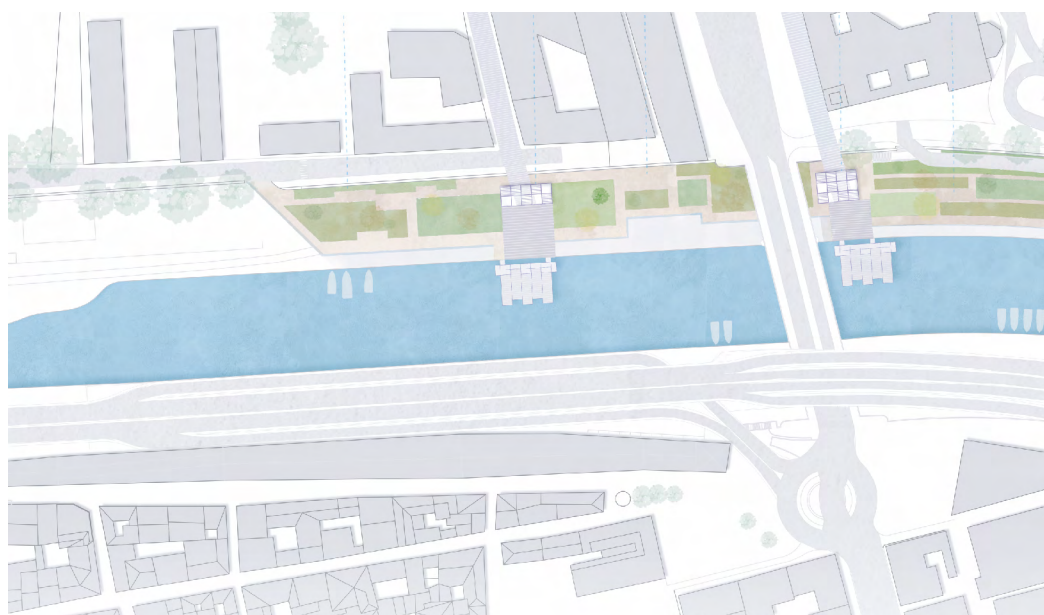
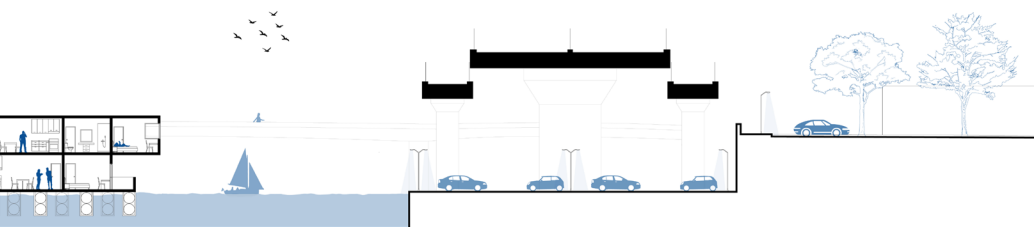
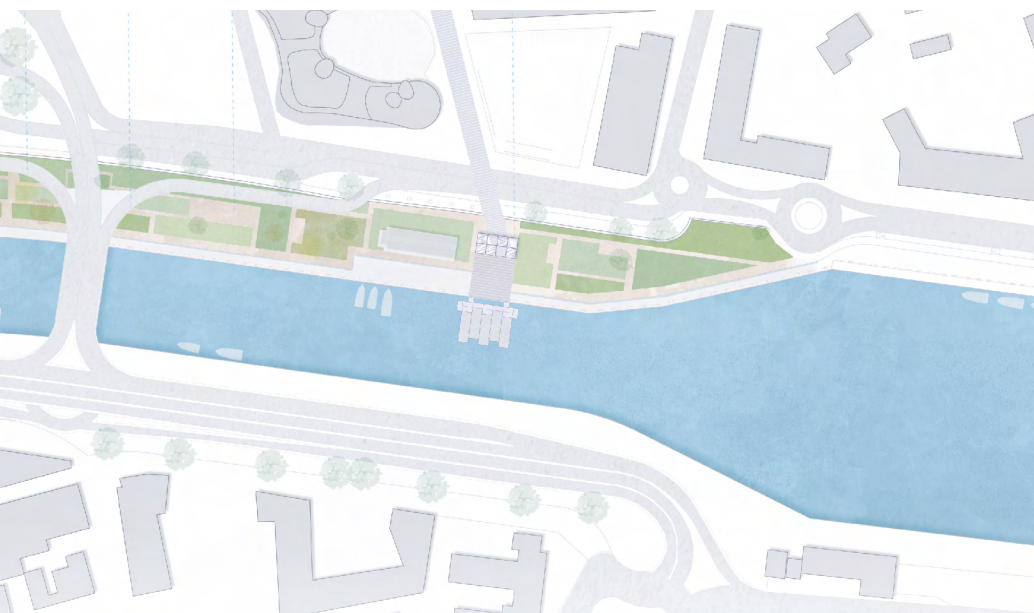


Fig. 2 - Riverpark masterplan.



Fig. 3 - Cross section along the riverpark.



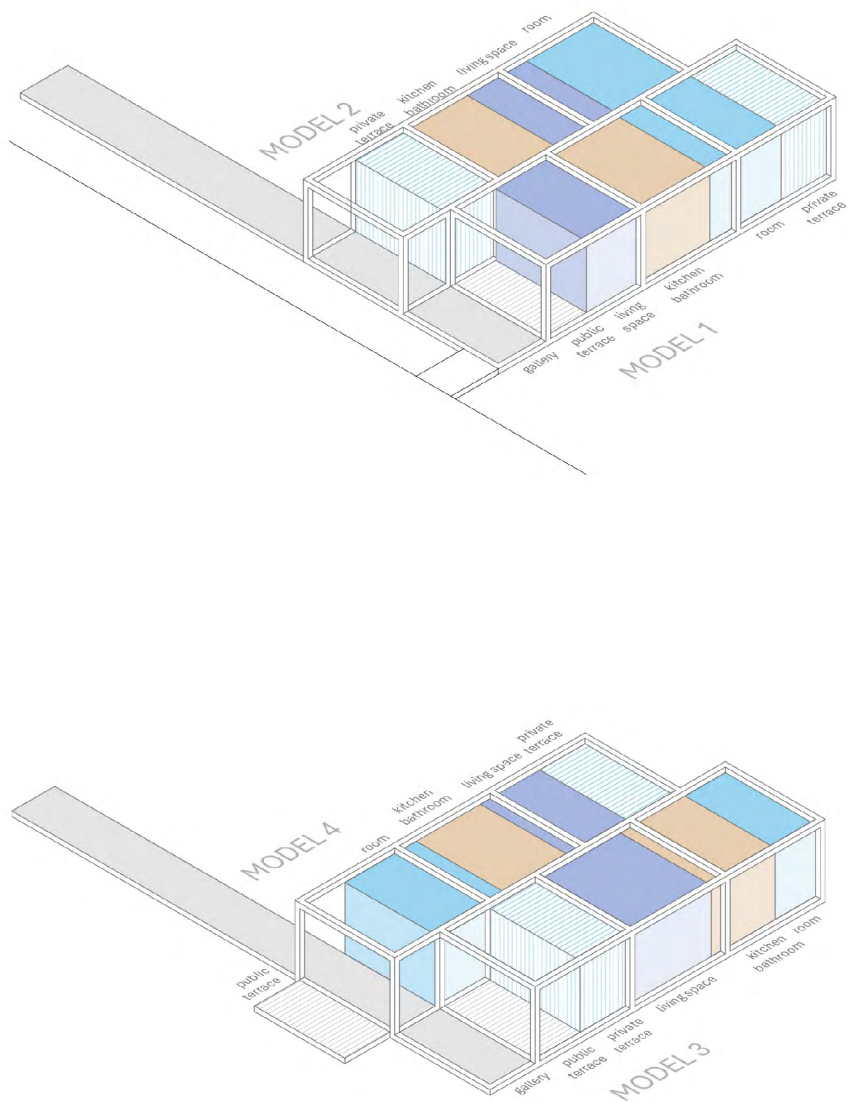


Fig. 4 - Aggregation schemes for the modular system of floating temporary residences.

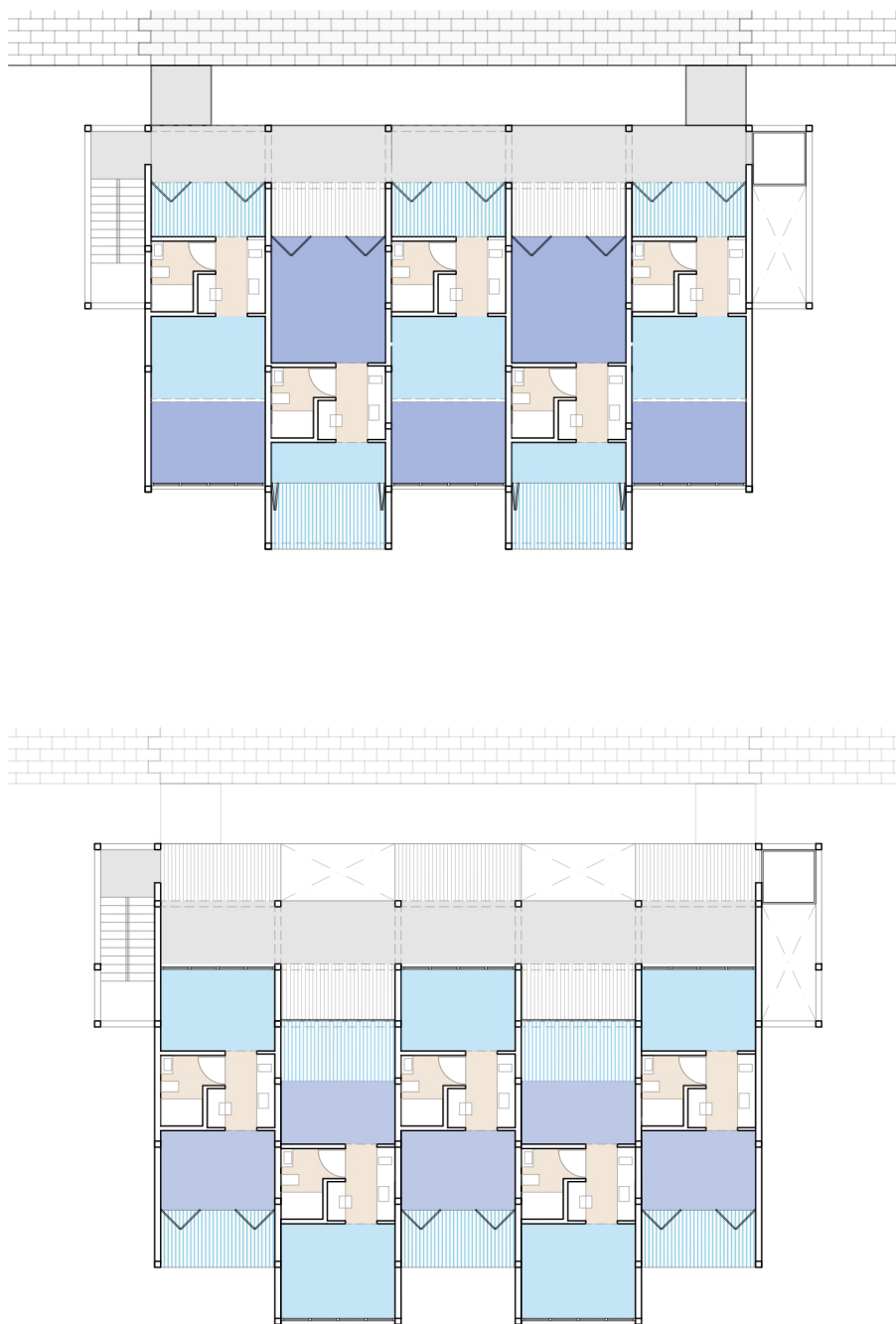


Fig. 5 - Plans of floating temporary residences.

Trabocco reinterpretation

An architectural fishing machine transformed into a relax and leissure space

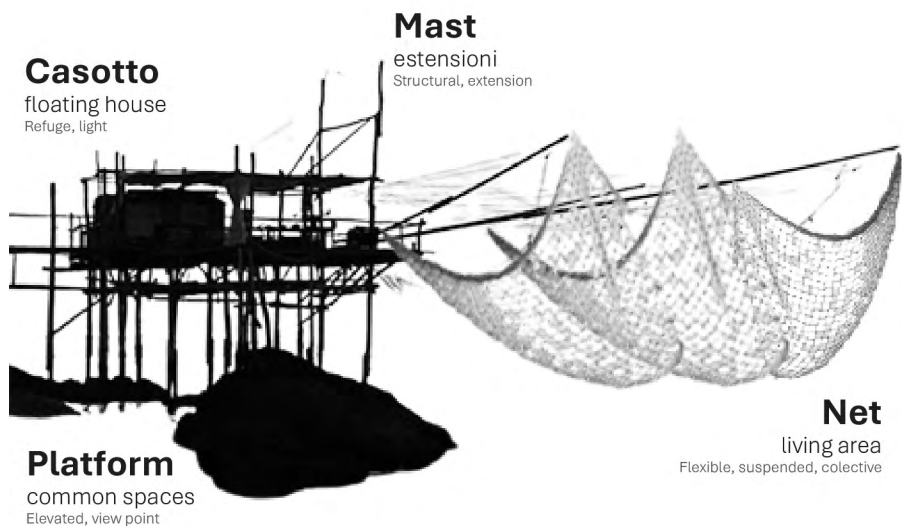


Fig. 1 - Trabocco as a symbolic reference for the temporary floating residences system.

Alexia Stoica, Ana Silveira Oria, Andrea Pietrantoni, Dimitrios Antoniou,
Florina Oboroceanu, Maria Morales Marchal

The project aims at the regenerate the *Lungofiume dei Poeti* area and reintegrate it into the existing urban fabric. The design proposes dividing the strip of land between the historic walls and the riverbank into three main sections.

The first sector, adjacent to the wall, is designed to house a range of community-oriented facilities, such as a restaurant, co-working spaces, a bookshop, a skatepark, a playground and public areas designed to enhance the relationship between the fragmented spaces beneath the motorway junction and the surrounding urban context.

The second sector is dedicated to green and public spaces, becoming the true “green heart” of the area.

The third and final sector is conceived as a mutable space, subject to tidal variations: ramps will extend into the river and the rising tide will continually alter the perception of the space, making each experience unique.

The sectors are designed at different elevations, ensuring a safety margin in case of flooding: the service areas, for example, are located at levels that should never be reached by the water.

Two long parallel paths cross the first and third sectors at the same level, while a system of transversal connections links them together. The path located in the third sector is conceived not only as a more introspective riverside promenade compared to the one running through the first sector, but also as a connecting walkway leading to a floating residential complex, dedicated to temporary accommodation.

These floating houses reinterpret the architectural image of the traditional *trabucco* from Abruzzo, giving new meaning to the structural elements of what were once these “fishing machines”. The walkways leading to the houses are not merely functional connections, but also communal spaces.

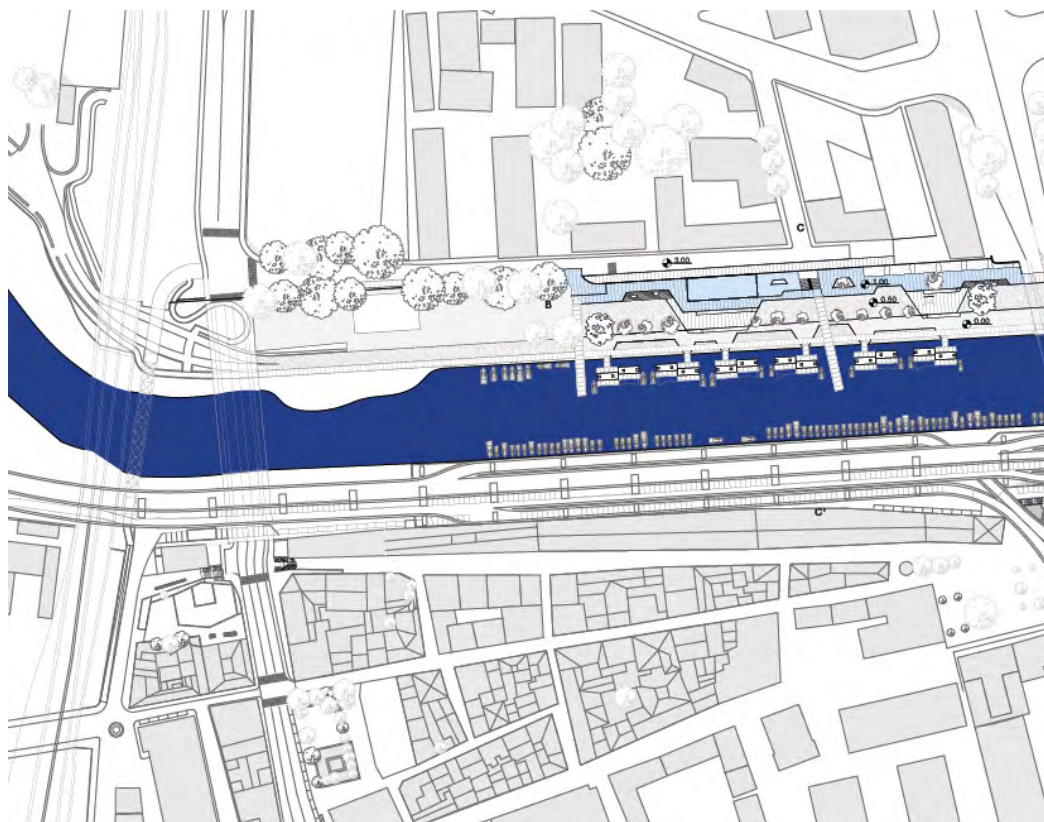


Fig. 2 - Riverpark masterplan.

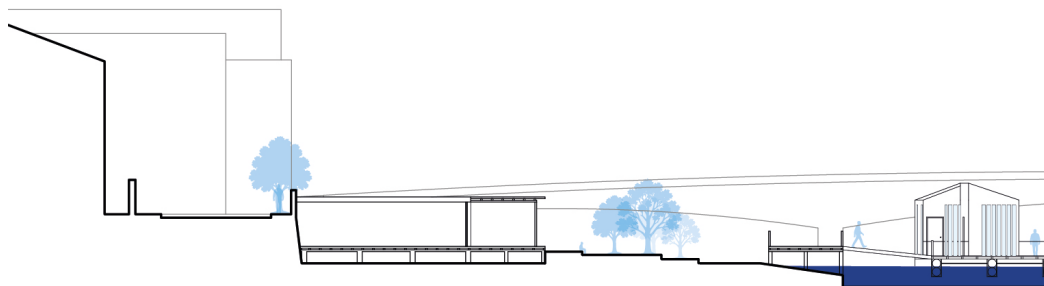
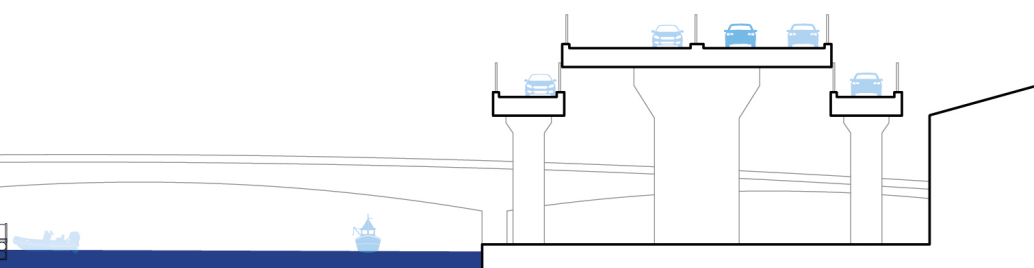
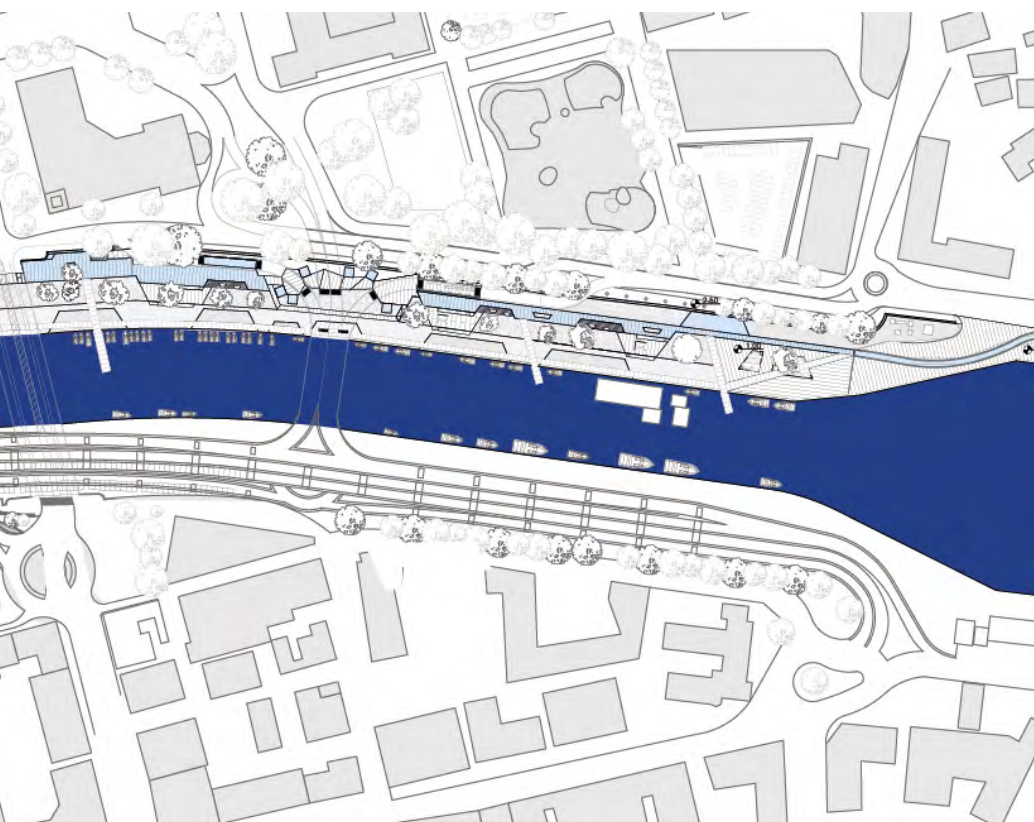


Fig. 3 - Cross section along the riverpark.



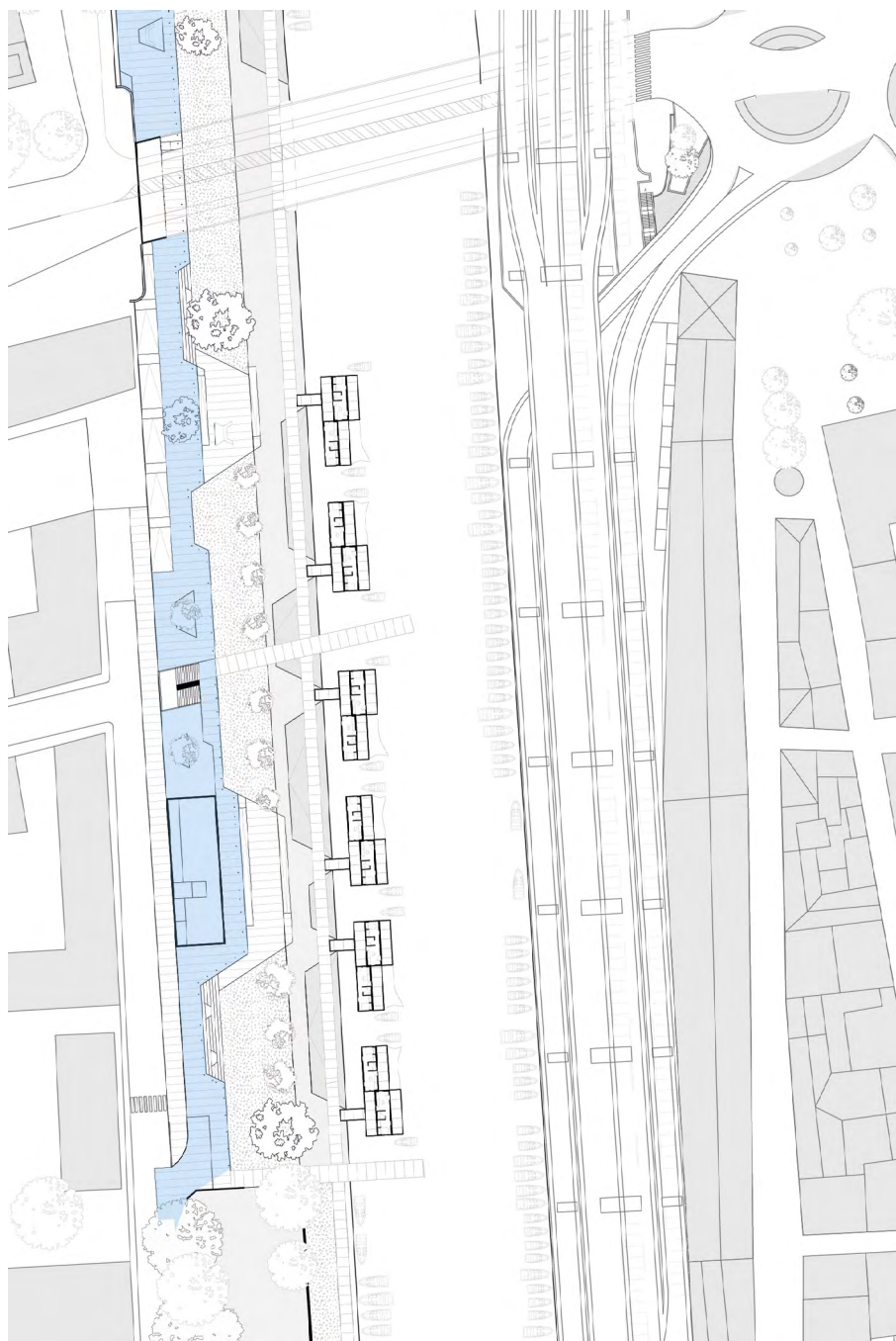


Fig. 4 - Prototype cluster of floating temporary residences.

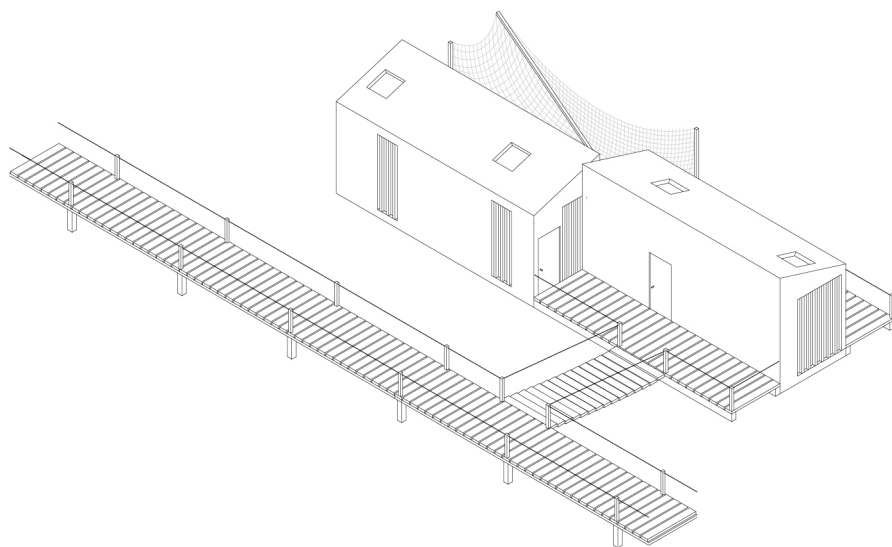


Fig. 5 - Temporary floating residence axonometry.

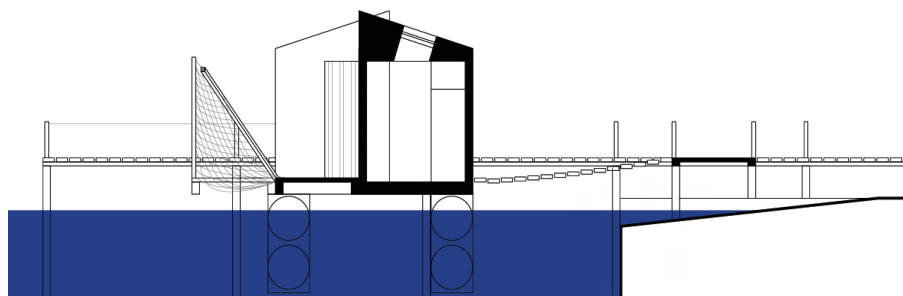


Fig. 6 - Temporary floating residence section.

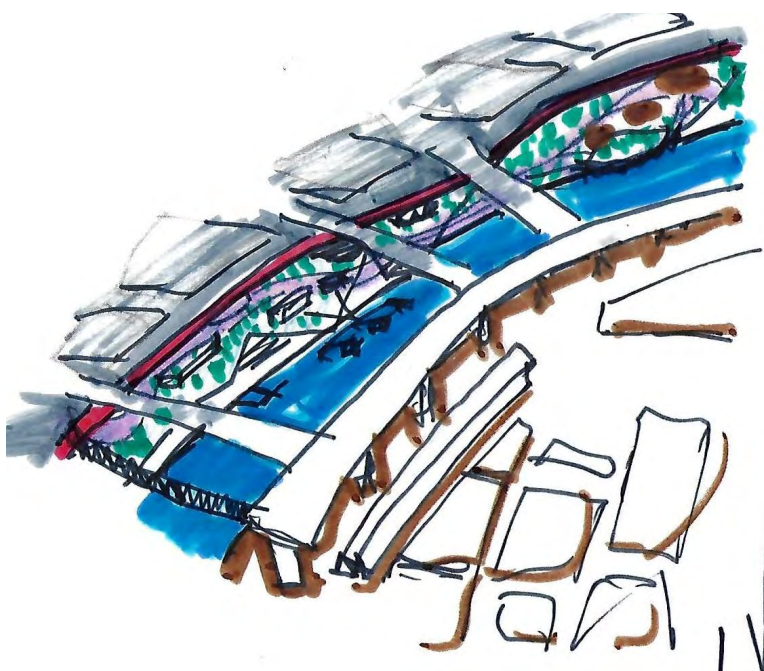


Fig. 1 - Riverpark concept sketch.

The riverline

Antonio De Giuseppe, Christina Ioannidou, Eva Karapanou, Foteini Sotiropoulou, Lucrezia Di Domenico

The proposal focuses on enhancing the livability of the area by increasing vegetation, encouraging social interaction, and redefining the riverfront. The central element of our proposal is an elevated platform that runs along the river's edge, creating a dynamic and multi-functional public space.

In some sections, this new platform extends the existing urban edge, while in others, it recedes. A central pathway runs through the length of the platform, guiding visitors through a series of distinct yet connected zones. The area have been articulated in three layers each with its own character and function. The first layer is the housing zone, composed of the floating residential units and their supporting infrastructure. This is followed by the public recreational zone and the park area. Together, these layers create a gradual transition from private to public, reflecting the project's broader concept of continuity and integration along the riverfront.

There are four entry points to the site. The first entrance marks the beginning of the route, providing access from the bridge and it's connected to the archeological site. The second one connects directly to a small floating residential complex. These units form a floating neighborhood, complete with small triangular plazas, fostering a sense of community. The buildings are designed to be semi-private, with two shared-use structures acting as buffers between the apartments and the public pathway. The third entrance is designed as a sloped staircase-ramp hybrid, integrating resting plateaus for seating and casual social interaction. At the final segment of the pathway, visitors arrive at a park composed of three smaller squares. This area includes seating spaces, gathering zones, a children's playground, and sports facilities.

Overall, the project aims to connect the city with the river, creating a smooth transition between urban life and nature. It offers new spaces for living, relaxing, and socializing, making the area more welcoming and enjoyable for everyone.



Fig. 2 - Site visit photos.

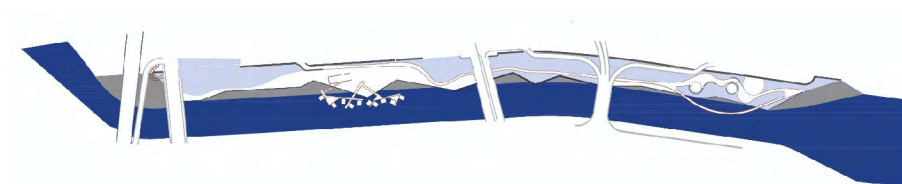


Fig. 3 - Riverpark Permeable surfaces.

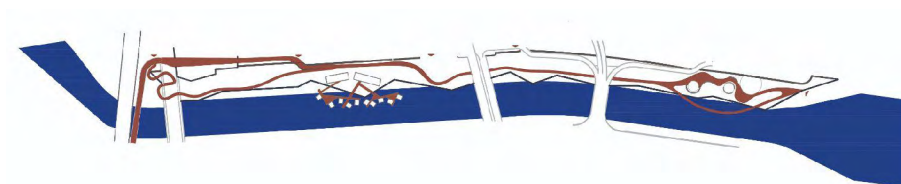
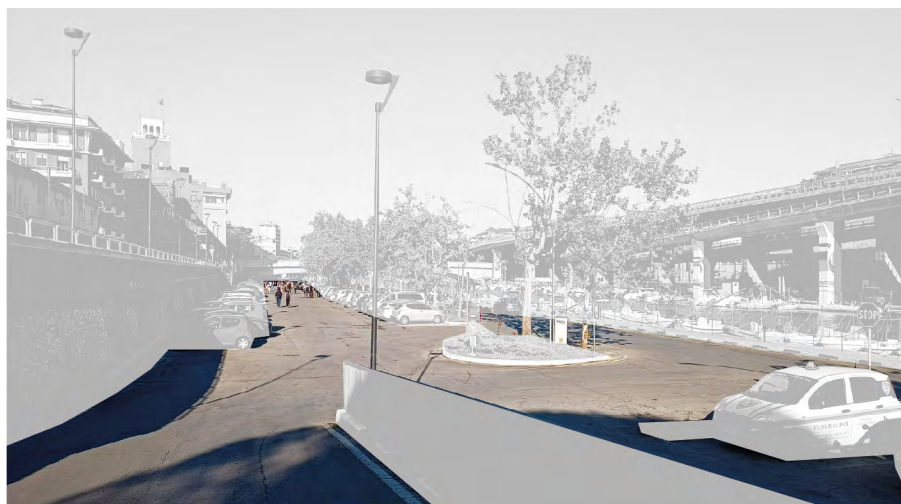


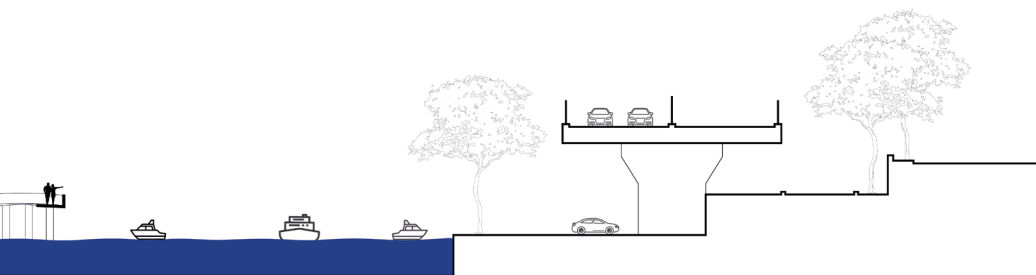
Fig. 4 - Riverpark pedestrian paths.



Fig. 5 - Riverpark masterplan.



Fig. 6 - Cross section along the riverpark.



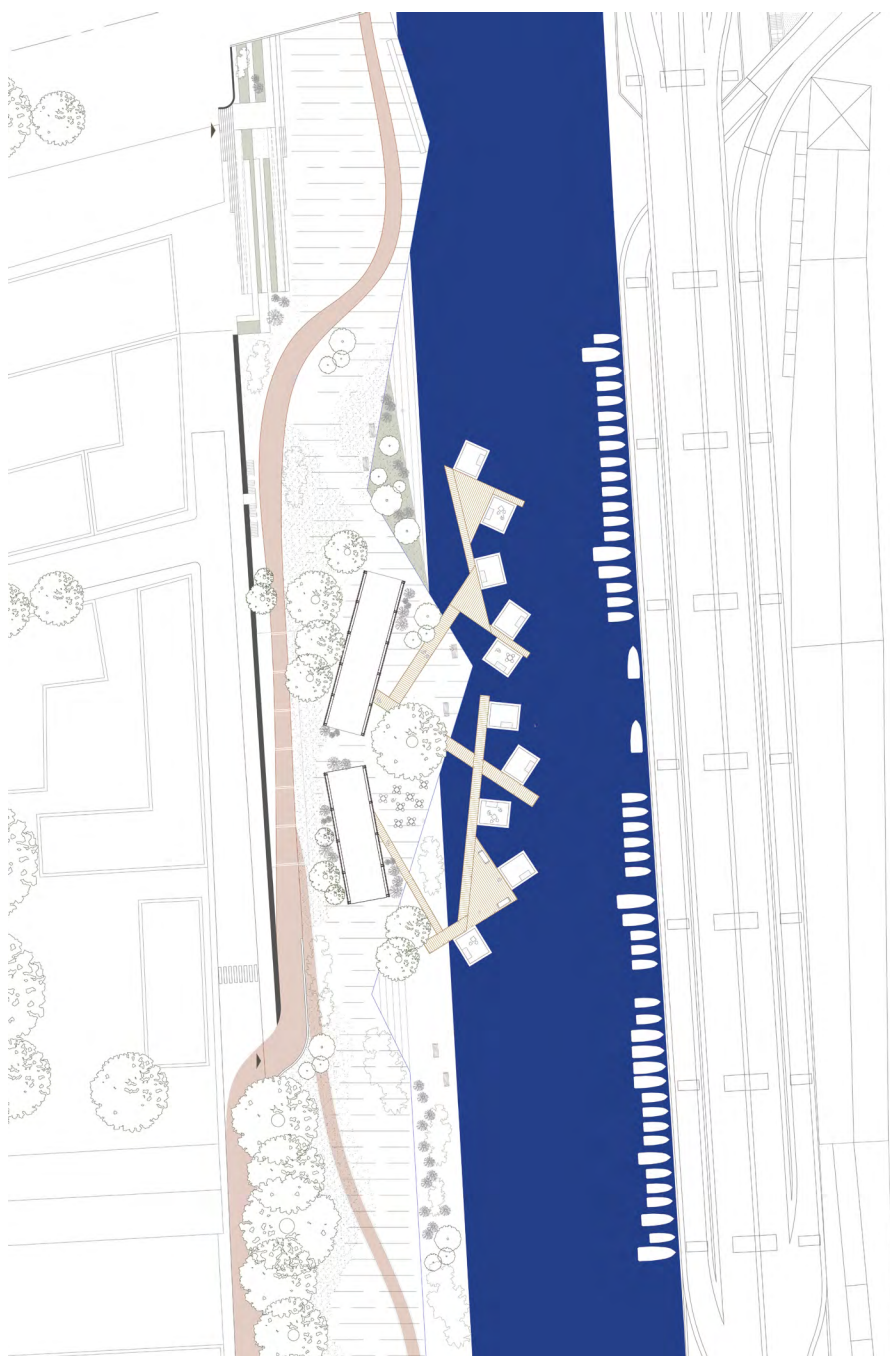


Fig. 7 - Prototype cluster of floating temporary residences.

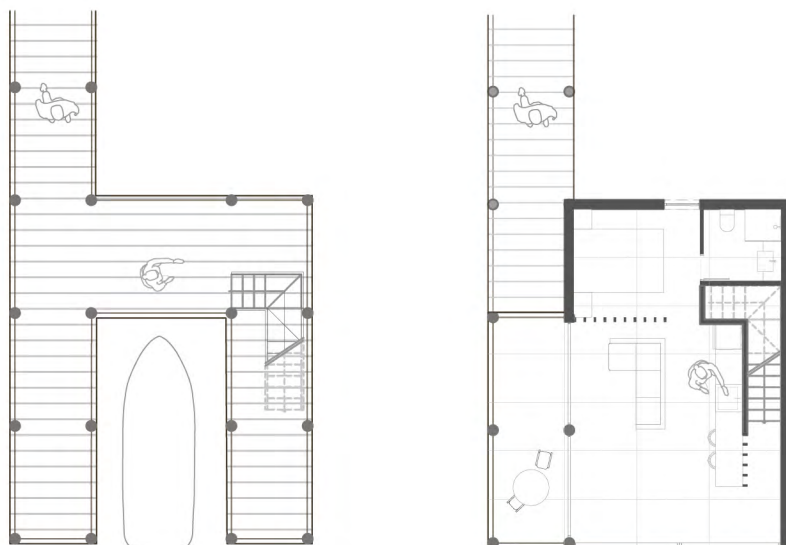


Fig. 8 - Plans of the floating temporary residence.

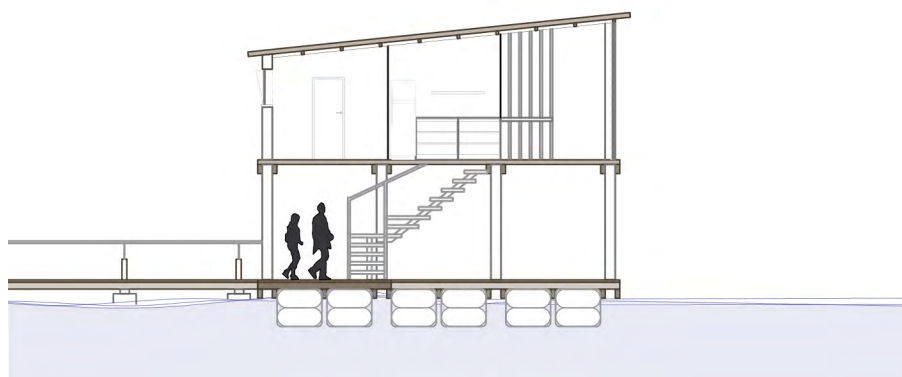


Fig. 9 - Cross section of the floating temporary residence.



Fig. 1 - River Pescara. Photo by Ra Boe.

Well-being and urban riverfront environment

Alena Kolev, Dermendjieva Shanaya, Kadurina Dobtyana, Kristyan Raychev, Umar Ali

The relationship between architecture and human health has become a central concern in contemporary urban design. The built environment can act as an active device for physiological, psychological, and social well-being – a hypothesis tested here through the specific condition of the Pescara riverfront. The riverfront offers a unique opportunity to address the four dimensions of well-being identified in this research: body, environment, mind, and soul.

The proximity to water, the availability of open space, and the interface between urban fabric and natural landscape make this site a privileged ground for design strategies that simultaneously operate across multiple scales – from the regulation of indoor air quality and thermal comfort to the configuration of collective spaces that reduce social isolation and support mental health through interaction. Each dimension of well-being corresponds to a precise set of spatial and material conditions.

The body dimension engages with environmental parameters such as natural light exposure, physical activity, and the prevention of pathogenic agents. The environment dimension addresses the building's metabolic relationship with its ecological context – energy efficiency, water cycle management, and biodiversity integration. The mind dimension focuses on perceptual comfort: acoustic control, spatial legibility, and the reduction of environmental stress factors. The soul dimension, finally, concerns the social infrastructure of the project – the quality of gathering spaces, the management of public-private transitions, and the promotion of interpersonal proximity behaviors.

The proposals engage with the Pescara riverfront as a multi-layered therapeutic infrastructure, approaching well-being not as an aesthetic concern but as a measurable and designable condition, grounded in the specific spatial, climatic, and social characteristics of the site.

ENVIRONMENT

sustainability

The building as a physiological regulation device

Lowering climate-altering emissions

Selection of non-toxic materials

Biodiversity integration

Water cycle management

BODY

wellbeing

The building as a physiological regulation device

Indoor air quality

Natural light exposure

Thermal and hygrometric control

Prevention of pathogenic agents

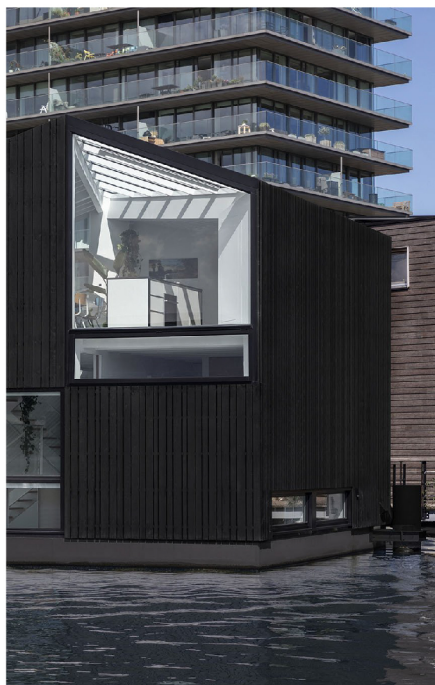


Fig. 2 - Diagrams.

MIND

comfort

The building as a regulator of perceptual experience

Acoustic control and noise reduction

Quality and intensity of artificial light

Sensory control by user

Lowering environmental stressors

SOUL

socialization

The building as infrastructure of collective life

Quality of gathering spaces

Accessibility and inclusion

Design of public-private transition

Prevention of loneliness

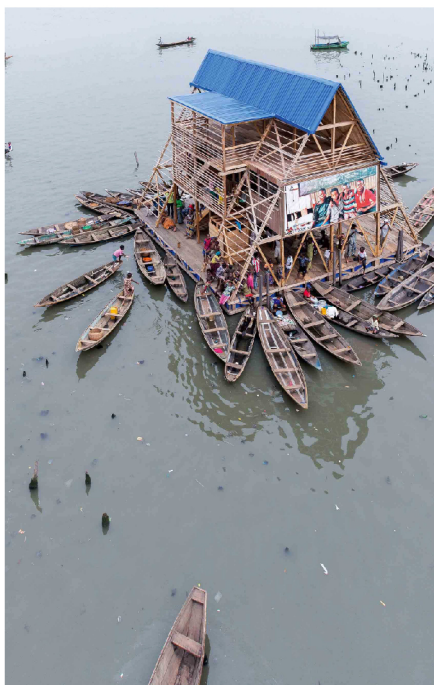


Fig. 3 - Diagrams.

The effects of living near nature on human well-being and psyche

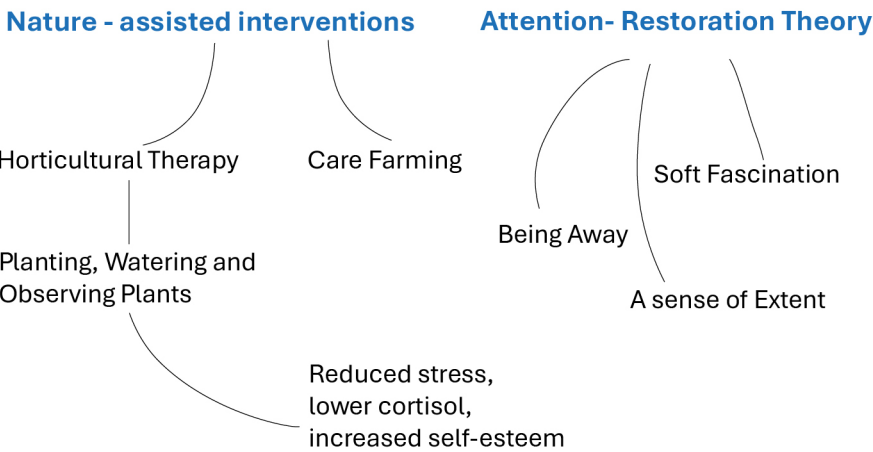


Fig. 4 - Lavino sulfur springs. Photo by Francesca Piersanti.

Environmental Psychology

Arousal Theory

Prospect-Refuge Theory

Psychological Restoration Theory

Information - Processing Theory

Stress - reduction Theory

Health Hazards of Floating Homes

Harmful Algae Bloom

Climate Variations

Microbial Pathogenic Production

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning



Fig. 5 - Pescara springs. Photo by Co Gianni.

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Psicologia, benessere,
autoaiuto

Efficacia personale

Politiche
e servizi sociali



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La passione per le conoscenze

Temporary Stay. New forms of hospitality between architecture and landscape explores the evolving relationship between tourism, hospitality, architecture, and landscape, examining how new forms of temporary dwelling can respond to the spatial, social, and environmental challenges generated by contemporary mobility and tourism.

Moving beyond the traditional understanding of hospitality as a sector exclusively linked to leisure travel, the book investigates its broader role as a catalyst for territorial regeneration, social interaction, and sustainable urban transformation. Bringing together theoretical essays and experimental design research developed within the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme *Temporary Stay*, the contributions address topics ranging from landscape and architectural heritage representation to riverfront and inner territories regeneration.

Through an interdisciplinary perspective that combines architectural theory, urban studies, landscape design, and tourism research the book demonstrates how architecture and landscape can become instruments for imagining more inclusive, place-sensitive, and resilient futures.

Paola Misino is an Associate Professor of Architectural Design at the Department of Architecture of the University "G. d'Annunzio" of Chieti-Pescara. Her recent research explores the evolving forms of hospitality architecture and the transformations of dwelling in relation to changing modes of work. Alongside her academic work, she is actively engaged in architectural design research and has received awards and recognitions in national and international design competitions.

Matteo Almonti is a PhD candidate in Architecture, Theory and Project at Sapienza University of Rome, researching the relationship between architecture, landscape and new forms of work. He has collaborated with international firms, including BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group, on major projects in Europe and the Middle East. Since 2024 he runs his own practice, working in Italy and abroad.

Claudio Costantino is a PhD in Design Cultures: Creativity, Heritage, Environment at the Scuola Superiore "G. d'Annunzio" of Chieti-Pescara, with a thesis entitled "Hospitality Geographies. Architectures on the Edge of the Tourist City". His research investigates the evolution of hospitality architecture and its impact on the contemporary built and social environment.



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La passione per le conoscenze