

# Master of Science in Urban Planning and Policy Design

## Urban Planning and Design Studio 2011-2012

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### • General program

The Urban Planning and Design Studio encompasses the subjects of **Urbanism** (G. Bertrando Bonfantini), **Urban Design** (Marco Mareggi), and **Vision and Rendering Tools** (Antonio Longo).

Considering the dynamics and the problems related to the “**new urban question**”, the goal is to experiment with a **re-composition design** of some parts of the urban region of Milan. These parts – i.e. the “territorial field” for the project – will be selected on account of their significance according to the idea that new urban formations in the making can be discerned within the settlements growing in the area.

A re-composition design presupposes the recognition of a **territorial field** in which social practices establish urban-like relations in the use of open and built-up spaces. A territorial field is a chain of spaces that is perceived by its inhabitants – whether permanent or transitory – as a significant set, which the project can enhance, through replacement, addition, and rehabilitation interventions. The territory of the new city to which the project is applied, is not given beforehand, it has no clear-cut boundaries: it is defined through its description and interpretation.

Course activities are carried out with the support of lectures, reviews, and evaluation seminars. They are organized in **two steps**, to result in as many products and presentations by each group of students:

- the identification of the territorial field and its profile, starting from the recognition of different – more or less mature – urban formations, and its description/interpretation from the standpoint of *habitability*, i.e., a special focus on the *populations*, and on the way those inhabitants relate to the places and the urban policies;
- the definition of schemes and guidelines for the urban re-composition of the same area, in the light of the profile outlined, geared towards a project of a new city.

### • Step one / The territorial field and its habitability profile

The first step of the Studio activity is the interpretation of one part of the Milan urban region (chosen among five parts suggested by tutors), aimed to outline a specific territorial field and its habitability profile, focusing on the characteristic relationships between space and society to recognize problems and opportunities for new forms of urbanity. By this operation each part of the Milan urban region will be redefined and specified too, towards the project to be developed in the second step of the Studio.

Each group of students is urged to this aim considering and composing **four operations** to look at the conditions of the area (facilities and performances; practices of use; perceptions and memories; construction sites and projects). In fact, a profile of the habitability conditions is an interpretation that combines salient aspects related to:

- *facilities* (i.e. the physical equipment, the set of *urban materials* – banal and exceptional – which characterize a settled territory) and their *performances* (the way in which territorial materials work, their usability, efficiency and effectiveness, their qualities): we will consider “complex” materials, recognizable like *patterns* at an intermediate scale;
- *practices of use*, i.e. the specific ways of populating, using the space, and living by different kinds of people;
- *perceptions and memories*, i.e. the ways in which the world of objects become part of the experience of the people, in comparison with the materiality of the things and their legacy: the rooted collective memory of a settled community, depositary of so called “identities” of the place;
- *construction sites and projects*, and disused and abandoned areas, i.e. opportunities for territorial transformation and their implications.

To develop a habitability profile requires to face to some fundamental questions, and to make an (open) series of related operations:

- How is the investigated territorial field done?
- How does it “work”?
- Who lives there and how?
- What are the rhythms of people’ practices?
- What are the perceptions of that settled and lived territory?
- How does it change and how does it resist to change?

The work starts from a survey applied to the physical form and composition of the settlements and territorial infrastructure.

Broad areas to be explored and short time suggest to use a survey device in a critical way: a “by samples” survey can support urban planning projects. We use a sampling strategy to explore an unknown territorial situation, catching and focusing its basic elements (materials), and also verifying and improving some starting hypothesis about its composition.

The sampling operation is generative, and it is open to original running and interpretations by the different groups. But the investigation of the territorial types and “families” – i.e. patterns – will be a common task for all the groups. The creation of a **catalogue of patterns**, is the first required “move” to draft an image of the considered territorial field.

The exercise will be done by a virtual exploration, using Google Earth and similar tools.

In the study of the *performances, practices of use, perceptions and memories, construction sites and projects*, each group can decide which and how many surveys to do organizing suitable geographies and choosing useful scales. Anyway, institutional and technical standards are references for evaluating performances; data and inspections are ordinary tools for practices of use; interviews together with historical documents can help for perceptions and memories; journals, magazines, books, web sites are references for construction sites and projects...

The product of the first step is an **A3 format Report**, that has to be carefully organized and composed. Short time suggests a selective strategy designed by each group. The effectiveness of the Report, that means to develop an impressive outline, is the core of the first step.

### • Step two / A re-composition scheme

The core of the second step is the development of a re-composition project for the territorial field focused in the first one. The key questions for this step are:

- what is the *general vision* for the territorial field?
- what are the *peculiar strategies* to modify its single and different parts and situations?

In the first part of this second phase of work, each group has to look for a *composition/re-composition project in another city* around the world considered interesting, and to prepare a **review** about the chosen case study to be exposed in a short presentation (on slides form: i.e., power point or pdf presentation).

In the project, the infrastructural space, considered in a broad sense (as the reframing element of the territorial composition), will be an essential device to redefine the relationships among the different parts identified in the first step and recognized in their qualifying themes: connecting them, re-linking, integrating, separating...

The spaces in between the different settlement patterns are the “infrastructure” to design: i.e. mobility spaces, the articulation and texture of the open spaces, the water system, the minor routes network (secondary roads, footpaths, rural tracks), the services system...

The product of the second step is an **A0 Poster table** with a short report (three A4 pages) to summarize the sense and the features of the proposal.

### • Essential calendar

- Intermediate seminar (Presentation of the first Report): Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011
- Case study review: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011
- Final seminar (Presentation of the Poster Table): Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012

### • Assessment

The final evaluation is based on the works produced by each group of students (reports and poster tables presented at seminars held during the course of Studio activities), with special regard to their relevance to the issues and operations specified.

The group evaluation will be completed by an individual discussion about the contents of the course.

### • Essential references

- Reyner Banham [1971], *Los Angeles. The Architecture of Four Ecologies* University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 2001 (*Los Angeles. L'architettura di quattro ecologie*, Einaudi, Torino, 2009)
- Andrea Di Giovanni, ed. (2008), *Progettazione urbanistica. Un laboratorio e un corso/Urban planning and design. A workshop and a course*, Maggioli, Rimini.
- Patrizia Gabellini (2010), *Fare urbanistica. Esperienze, comunicazione, memoria*, Carocci, Rome.
- Bernardo Secchi, Paola Viganò (2009), *Antwerp, Territory of a New Modernity*, Sun Publishers, Amsterdam.
- David Grahame Shane (2011), *Urban design since 1945. A global perspective*, Wiley, Chichester (UK).

www.laboratoriorapu.it: section of the website dedicated to the Urban Planning and Design Studio.