

# Towards Resili(g)ence

## Città intelligenti, paesaggi resilienti

PhD course in  
Architecture and Design  
University of Genova

curated by / a cura di  
**Manuel Gausa**

**Addoc Logos**  
Urban and territorial policies

A multiscalar PhD Laboratory

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# Adddoc Logos

Urban and  
territorial policies

## #1 | Towards Resili(g)ence

Città intelligenti, paesaggi resilienti

**Resili(g)ence aims to combine a new “intelligent city” (information, knowledge, projection and adaptation) with a “resilient city” (resistance and recycling, reaction and recovery, renovation and adaptation) in a new responsive and sensory condition, sensorized and sensitive at the same time.**

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## summary

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*Landscape potentials*

## DESIGNING THE LANDSCAPE TO PROTECT THE TOWNS

### • *Redundant borders* •

It is important to leave spaces for unpredictable events to be heard. Quoting Clément (2004), we need to think the project as a space “including reserves”, with questions to be posed, as a texture with a large weft, letting nature to interfere. Redundancy is becoming a need, to face the future.

At different scales, from the edges of a park to the borders of a town, the margins represent a transition from one element to another, where we can find the higher richness of species and bio-diversity and where the users' interest is strongly focused. Referring to the changes of the town, it is important to strengthen the connections and build new links with the surrounding landscape, using the transformation areas as possibilities to activate contacts with nature, occasions to underline the value of memory signs and elements. Particularly about urban spaces, the extension of metropolitan area are erasing the difference between town and country, by a continuous degraded undifferentiated sprawl. Contemporary landscape design re-interpretes the concept of borders as high quality spaces, to be tagged to a network of connections from which to orient and understand a hierarchy of places. The landscape design can show that residual spaces can be seen as new frontiers to meet nature and to put rural areas at the center of everyday urban



attention, as places that are able to stimulate our memory, our culture, our sensibility.

Many examples solve the borders as a frame with a specific redundant thickness, between dense urban areas and open remnant rural areas, that become new interesting urban scenery.

### • Changes as novelties and opportunities •

The design of a new urban landscape must be able to admit the necessary transformation, granting different uses, diverse social and cultural scenarios, abandoning completeness and formal configuration of auteur project, to take root in the motivations of contest and of people's needs. Time becomes more and more a strategic element to articulate the plan, that must be able to evolve and suit the different raising demands, involving in a process of continuous evolution the stakeholders that will use and actively participate the future spaces. If temporal dimension is becoming a fundamental component of the project, the definitive drawings, the forms and the objects loose their importance, when relations, actions and processes that can be activated by the design, also in different phases, achieve a strategic role. The possibility of projects to persist, despite adaptability, is tied to the rootedness in the contest, by the individuation of shared transmissible values.

### • Adaptive projects •

The manipulation of time finds elective terrain in the landscape projects that exploit the interstices, the transversal readings, the chances of meeting and overlapping, working on the gaps of the diverse speeds of urban transformation, priming, slackening or quickening processes and changes. The landscape project-process follows a critical route, starting from well-established methodologies of Landscape Architecture, to comprehend and interpret the contest, it allows an opening toward an innovative experimentation, affected by flexibility and reversibility. Some interesting examples draw different uses for the same urban place, by the over position of signs and signals, where traces on the floor can suggest sport-playgrounds, parking areas, market, place for concert, and other different activities (see the works by Gabriele Kiefer in Berlin, on a parking area, or by Kristine Jensen in Kolding on a school courtyard). Other experiences affect temporary designs for public spaces, involving communities and food production, offering examples of bottom-up processes or planned participative actions, experimenting new forms of transformation. Despite its capability to adapt, the original guidelines of a project is able to remain, focusing on the characters of a site, selecting the values, offering possible links and chances to compare and relate, or





*Image 1 | The urban public gardens Baltimore, known as "Plastic gardens", in the centre of the town of Genoa, directly close to the historical walls of the ancient city.*

showing a frame, an interpretation in which the stakeholders can bring their different contents.

We need a smart, adaptive, innovative and inter-disciplinary design, to suggest new uses, to satisfy diverse needs, opening to the multi-ethnic cultures, that are enriching urban reality (Kroll, 2001), with whom we must interact. The language we refer to is experimental, fragmented and polyphonic, but when in our society there is a lack of solid references, it can give a richer interpretation, instead of banalization or reduction. Observing daily habits tells a measure, a code to understand the multiple "fluid" cultures (Baumann, 2007) crossing a same place: it becomes a privilege to focus on resources, potentialities, signs, to point out values and degradation, trying to get the processes that are producing the transformation. The natural element in the urban space is a precious help for the design, because with its growing and seasonal changes, gives signal of the passing of time, offers a possible contact with the vegetal and animal worlds and can assume a role of protagonist, filling a cultural void, in many anonymous urban sites: it also provides a refuge for bio-diversity, absolving many eco-







systemic services (Santolini, 2011). The reference to natural elements, in the urban scenery, can focus on contents of hope and strength, that are tied to the capability of plants to regenerate. Inserting natural elements to start a transformation, in urban areas, can be an important “instrument of persuasion” (Cortesi, 2004, p. 12), in terms of bettering the quality of urban environment, grafting a new urban nature in the soils of abandoned areas. Good practice to manage abandoned areas are the French experiences of *pré-verdissement*. An important example is the inaccessible and mysterious nature of the “isle” in the Park Henri Matisse, in Lille, where Gilles Clément, in 1995, quotes the forest, suggesting a possible proximity with a non-urban space.

### • Agriculture •

Some experiences of rural parks in metropolitan areas (see for example the Rice Park in Milan) are working on the capacity of existing rural areas inside or around the cities to help to face environmental problems. They can generate resources (not only food, but also cultural services, with an important role in the maintenance of local identity and in the fostering of social cohesion) and provide provisioning/regulating/supporting services, improving urban resilience. Agriculture urban areas can help to preserve resources such as water and soil, providing drainage and habitats for different species, assuring the conservation of bio-diversity. These areas can represent a resource to reduce heat island and climate change effects, to improve life quality, with a role of “starter” of urban regeneration processes. For example the plan “Rome to cultivate” offers to young farmers the possibility to cultivate abandoned public areas. Urban farming and community gardens can also suggest strategies to improve urban attitude towards agriculture, where urban agriculture becomes an aggregation and sharing device. Terraced rural areas can represent a problem because of the need of a continuous maintenance of dry-stone wall. Abandonment is causing a progressive degrade that represent a risk of instability. Many times terraced systems surround the urban outskirts (in Liguria and other mountainous regions): their cultivation can represent a necessary protection of versants and of the territory, against slides and flood. To improve urban resilience we need to support agriculture. The recovery of non-cultivated areas, also with the help of new laws as the one about the bank of soil, is an important strategy to protect the city.

*Image 2 | Quadrio Road (Genoa): between the “sopraelevata” high-way and the historical walls of the city, there is a place used in 2017 for a temporary free market (born to regularize an abusive market, by an agreement between the Municipality and the Regional Federation of Solidarity and Work).*



*Image 3 | Genoa, residual rural areas in Coronata hills.*

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