

REFLECTIONS

Environmental relevance

This design is based on the interrelationship between society and the canals. On the one hand, the Navigli, thanks to the new public spaces, is socially enriched and is configured on an urban scale as a linear park where different experiences with water can be experimented with in stages together with the community.

On the other hand, the waterway enriches urban space by imposing itself as a solution for climate change issues, not only in terms of cooling, water retention and soil drainage but also in terms of sustainability, such as waterpower generation and empowerment of water management through interactive waterworks

Although an extreme intervention, the reuse of the Navigli is coherent with the genius loci and the transformative character of Milan: verging on the flexibility and adaptability of more targeted designs, it seeks to enhance water as a valuable asset.

Methodology definition

As Navigli is a complex centuries-old territorial system, it has been challenging to define a hierarchical scale for the material sought. The social component has been crucial in orienting the research in a more focused way. Interviewing people with an informal approach gave me a clear overview of what is not working in Milan.

It was probably the genuine dialogue with the inhabitants that motivated me to create designs with very simple functions. A park with a pond, a water square, and the enclosed kitchen gardens are all functions within everyone's reach, seemingly banal, but, at the same time, enriched by the information and concepts of the theoretical framework. Somewhere between the simplicity of the first vision and the complexity of the learnt concepts we find creativity, translated into multifunctional spaces that dialogue with the interior and the water.

The analysis of the case studies proves that many issues could be addressed through water and landscape by further developing the traditional water system and customizing it to modern society.

Research Results

By taking the past technology as an example and reworking it in a modern key, water management in Milan can be investigated with a specific and resilient approach. An alternative symbiosis between nature and culture would be experienced in the city by developing the ecological aspect and introducing green elements by detaching from the conventional urban composition. This vision could coincide with a green city model capable of facing the climate crisis

and resulting complications in the urban environment.

Space is sought for people and their active contribution to experiencing and caring for the landscape. A different anthropological model could develop on the local scale together with a greater civic sense led by traditional and inclusive identities and values. With the daylighting of the Navigli, a historic trading route that connects Switzerland to the Adriatic might be restored in the future by enhancing and linking multiple cities in northern Italy. Thus, Milan would once again become an emerging port.

Ethical, social issues and dilemmas

Probably the most critical passage in my thesis project has concerned the theme of sociality and interaction. One always tends to see the potential of a place, hoping to receive positive feedback that will corroborate one's thesis. The truth is that several interviews showed a certain disenchantment and disinterest in the city, which is why I began to think that sociality and care, in general, are not a general condition but moments in history.

Theory related to the care and the design of spaces such as the Gardens of Care allowed me to understand that a landscape can be in harmony even if people are no longer involved. The sense of care had by the non-human can be an alternative to design space, and reappropriation by humans is part of the process. By combining these basic concepts with Gilles Clément's third landscape manifesto, I transformed a weakness into a design that never extinguishes because of its dynamism.