

The background of the entire page is a map of Rome, Italy. Overlaid on the map is a grid of thin, light-colored lines. Scattered across the map are numerous small dots in various colors, including blue, green, yellow, and orange. The dots are more densely clustered in certain areas, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the city, while other areas are sparser. The map shows the Tiber River and the city's layout.

LABORATORIO CLIMA

Experiencing performative
matrices in the city of Rome

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The shifting latitude scenario of European cities hypothesized by the European Environment Agency suggests the starting point of the research. The drift of Rome towards Tunis therefore stimulates questions about the future of the capital: moving away from the dramatic tones of catastrophic scenarios often assumed in the responses to climate change, the book investigates instead the changes already taking place and how public space can become a laboratory of experimentation for strategies in response to global warming, in which the tension between the extraordinary and the ordinary finds its maximum expression.

The first part builds a theoretical framework within which the research moves, investigating the academic debates around the climate issue and its implications in operational terms. Wondering about the meanings of change, the research analyses furthermore the spatial and non-spatial conditions that determined the most radical transformations in the city of Rome.

In an attempt to structure the main question of the research, the second part experiments ways through which it is possible to make visible the spatial implications of climate change and at the same time reveals the potential inscribed in the Roman territory.

Finally, going deeper into the design language, the research explains how a constantly evolving climate is able to redefine the approaches to architecture and urban planning, paving the way for new design scenarios. Through three episodes in the city, multiple prototypes are developed that, through urban and natural materials, structure a new language for Rome, re-establishing ecological synergies between the public space and the landscape of the city.

Notes for the reader:

Glossario

Archipelago: grouping of islands scattered in the sea but close enough to each other, sometimes with similar morphological characteristics, often in mutual interrelation with each other as well as with the elements that surround them. In architectural terms, it becomes a metaphor for a more modern interpretation of describing the urban fabric. **Climate change:** as subject of scientific studies, climate change denotes the average weather conditions of a particular location, a room as well as the whole planet, over an undefined period of time, from days to seasons, from human lifetime to eras. Specifically, climates is related to a statistical description of the sense and range of variation of temperatures, precipitation, winds, pressure, and many other factors in a defined spatial and temporal domain. An issue that draws attention to itself only when it occurs in particularly dramatic and disastrous situations, usually as bad weather. The formula "climate change" generates contradictions as a metonymic term that omits itself as being a consequence of global warming. Climate change in this research will be investigated not only in its scientific capacity but above all as a cultural factor. **Dramaturgy:** the art of composing or, in a practical sense, the complex of works by an author. In this research, it is understood as the set of infographics and speculative productions on Rome and global warming. Following Branzi's interpretation, the research detaches itself from the real dramatic dimension in order to deal with the tone of the narrative and the phenomenological relationship that design can establish regarding those anthropological themes that have always been left out of the narrow confines of the old modernity. **Exception:** practically, something that goes beyond the common ground, which differs from other similar elements. In this research, the exception lies in the particular morphological condition of the city of Rome, challenged by the singular role of the climate issue. **Ecology:** part of biology that studies the relationships between organisms or groups of organisms and their natural environment, understood both as the set of chemical-physical factors, and as the set of biological factors that affect or can affect the life of organisms themselves. In this case ecology will be considered as a driving force of new measures of urban interventions, interacting and defining new relationship scales. **Ephemeral:** what is or is considered short-lived, transitory, perishable. With reference to the tradition of Renaissance and Baroque celebrations, the term was taken up between the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s to indicate a set of cultural events, of a spectacular nature and of a short duration in Rome. In this sense, a further depth of meaning is identified in which the ephemeral defines new tools for urban intervention. **Eternal:** something that extends infinitely in time, which has no beginning and no end. Eternal is the identity of Rome, both in its monuments and in its landscape, which is defined as eternal for its attitude to survive by adapting to the changes of the city. **Figura retorica:** any artifice in speech aimed to create a particular effect. Especially in poetic language, it refers to an artifact since the figure represented shows a deviation from conventional expressions. In this case, relying on the ambiguity that characterizes the research, the rhetorical figures constitute intermediaries for new interpretations of the territory and new design languages. **Imaginary:** understood in its double meaning, it is defined on one hand as an act of diversion and escape from reality, on the other as a synthetic function of perception or as an integration of real data towards what is potential. In this research, the imaginary aims to overcome the oppositional combination with reality, placing itself rather as one of the possible interpretative lenses of the city. **Immaterial:** that goes beyond the limits of matter, appearing inconsistent. Here the juxtaposition with the perceptible but precisely invisible effects of climate change is of interest. Further meaning of the term is similar to both the evanescent elements and the three-dimensional space of the project of adaptation to climates. **Island:** portion of land entirely surrounded by the waters of ocean, sea, lake, swamp, originating from the accumulation of materials. This term can be understood through the dialectic established by its etymological roots: island simultaneously as land surrounded and isolated by water (from the Latin insula) and "the moment when land and water meet" (from the translation of the ancient languages of the north "Water land"). In its transposition into an urban figure, the research investigates both natures. **Mythology:** set of myths understood in a wider meaning of the word. A series of ideas which, in the conscience of a people or a society, take on the value of symbol or guide. Intended as a cultural expression, myths can tell the idea of climate change by re-proposing the different human attitudes and instincts of fear, arrogance, nostalgia and justice with which individuals relate to the surrounding environment. In this sense, to identify these myths means to recognize climate change not only as an environmental problem to be solved, but also developing a new awareness in the approach to this situation. **Ordinary:** something that does not come out of order. That is, from the norm or normality, and therefore usual, usual, common, regular. In the research the ordinary factor is recognized in climate change as a condition which the project must learn to live with. In this sense, climate change has been investigated as an ordinary dimension, stepping away from the destructive exceptionality of its effects and grasping its more subtle and perceptive implications. Similarly, the term refers to the monumental character of Rome, whose urban materials become ordinary by virtue of their permanent and pervasive nature. **Horizontal:** arranged as the horizon line, as to say parallel to the ground surface. Intended as an adjective associated to the project, it means a methodology that favors horizontal performative surfaces, shifting the focus away from solid vertical ones. **Landscape:** disciplinary field that deals with the study, design and guidance of all urban and non-urban spaces. In this sense, the term is defined as a structuring and compositional element of the city, aimed to overcome the traditional opposition between nature and artifice. The landscape is defined in this sense as the supporting structure of the city as much as of the project. **Perception:** the act of sensible acquisition of a reality that is considered external, digested through intuitive, psychic, intellectual processes. Perception is therefore not to be understood as an exclusively subjective experience relating to the effects of climate change, but as a cultural and social fact that determines the way a space is used. **Reality:** quality and condition of what actually and practically exists. In this investigation, reality was considered individually as an interpretative lens to scientifically describe the Roman condition mainly under the morphological aspect. Its admixture with the imagination and perception is able to produce new possible interpretations. **Resilience:** In its original meaning, it is intended as the breaking strength due to dynamic stress. This condition characterizes the Roman landscape especially in its historical and archaeological declinations, whose continuous adaptation determines its survival. **Rhizomatic:** adjective derived from the term rhizome, perennial stem typical of herbaceous plants whose appearance resembles to the root, yet different because it is divided into internodes. Deleuze and Guattari take up this concept as a metaphor to define a structure open to continuous new connections without predetermined directions. In this sense, the rhizomatic adjective describes a design methodology that rejects any kind of hierarchy, material, spatial and temporal. **Sense:** experience of internal and external sensations, of a physical or sometimes psychic nature. Going beyond the phenomenological conception of the term itself, sense is sensation but above all meaning: essence, character and perception of the place. Within the research, words as well as images aim to investigate the different depths of meaning, leaving any possibility open. **Space-time:** four-dimensional space used in the theory of relativity to represent the physical world on the basis of the three dimensions corresponding to ordinary space and a fourth dimension corresponding to time. Thinking about climate change necessarily implies a reflection on the two factors space and time at different scales, to make the project as responsive and adaptable as possible. **Temporality:** condition of what is momentaneous, as opposed to what is eternal or spiritual. Associated with the investigation of Rome, the project aims to be temporal in the sense of being moldable considering the times of the city. **Temporariness:** characteristic of what is provisional and temporary. Following this meaning, the project is built in different phases according to the changing needs of the city, in order to adapt to the dynamics of transformation. **Transcality:** peculiarity of what can be analyzed on the basis of elements built on scales that have different orders of magnitude. In a first layer of sense, transcality is characteristic of climate change, as a phenomenon that involves both the local and the global. Transcality is also comparable to the project approach, in which there is a dialogue between different quantities. The minimum intervention determines resonances on a larger scale and is part of design logic guided by territorial conditions. **Void:** that does not contain what it should or could contain. This definition emphasizes the potential of an element as a design subject.

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Parte II
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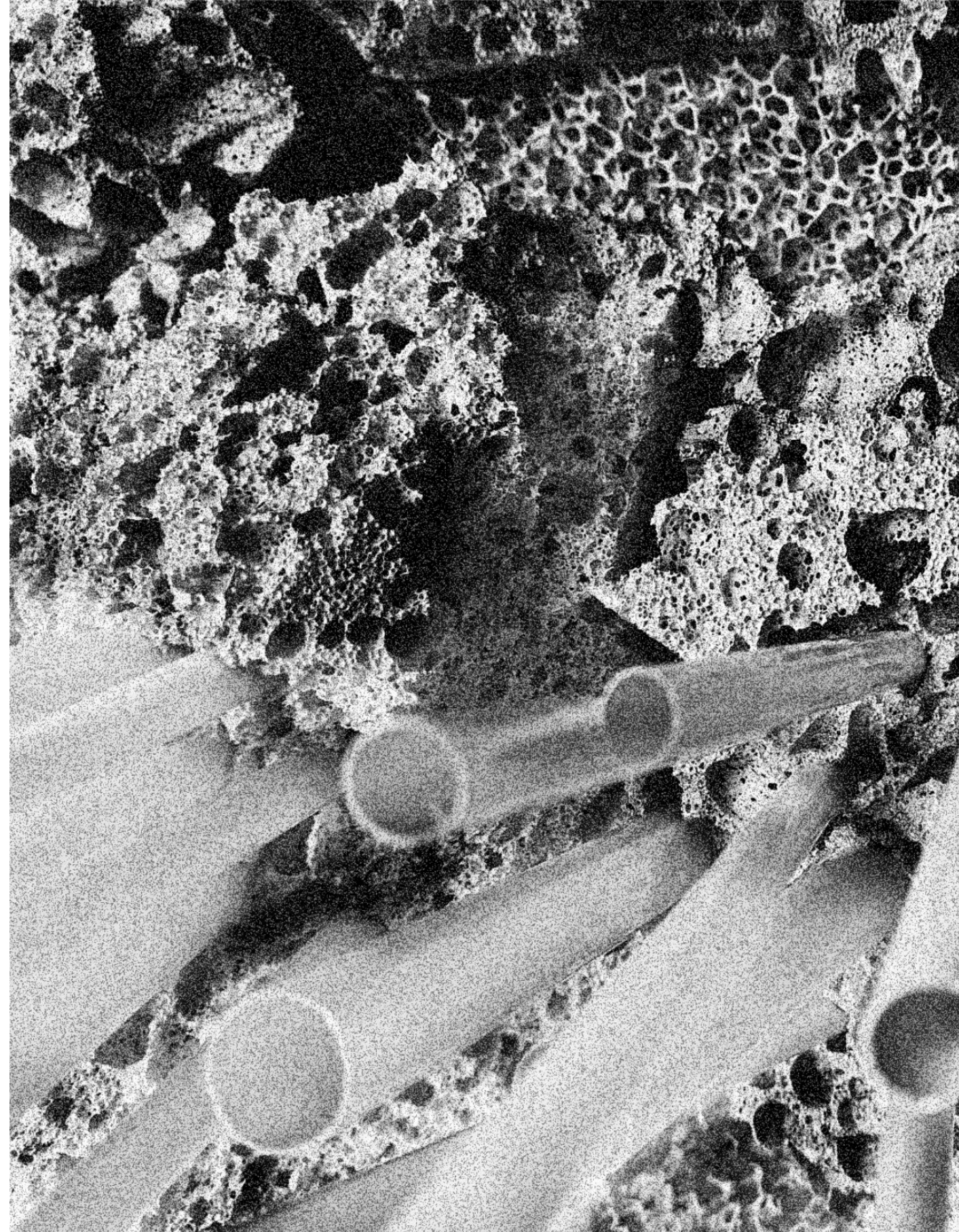
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Parte I
FIGURE RETORICHE



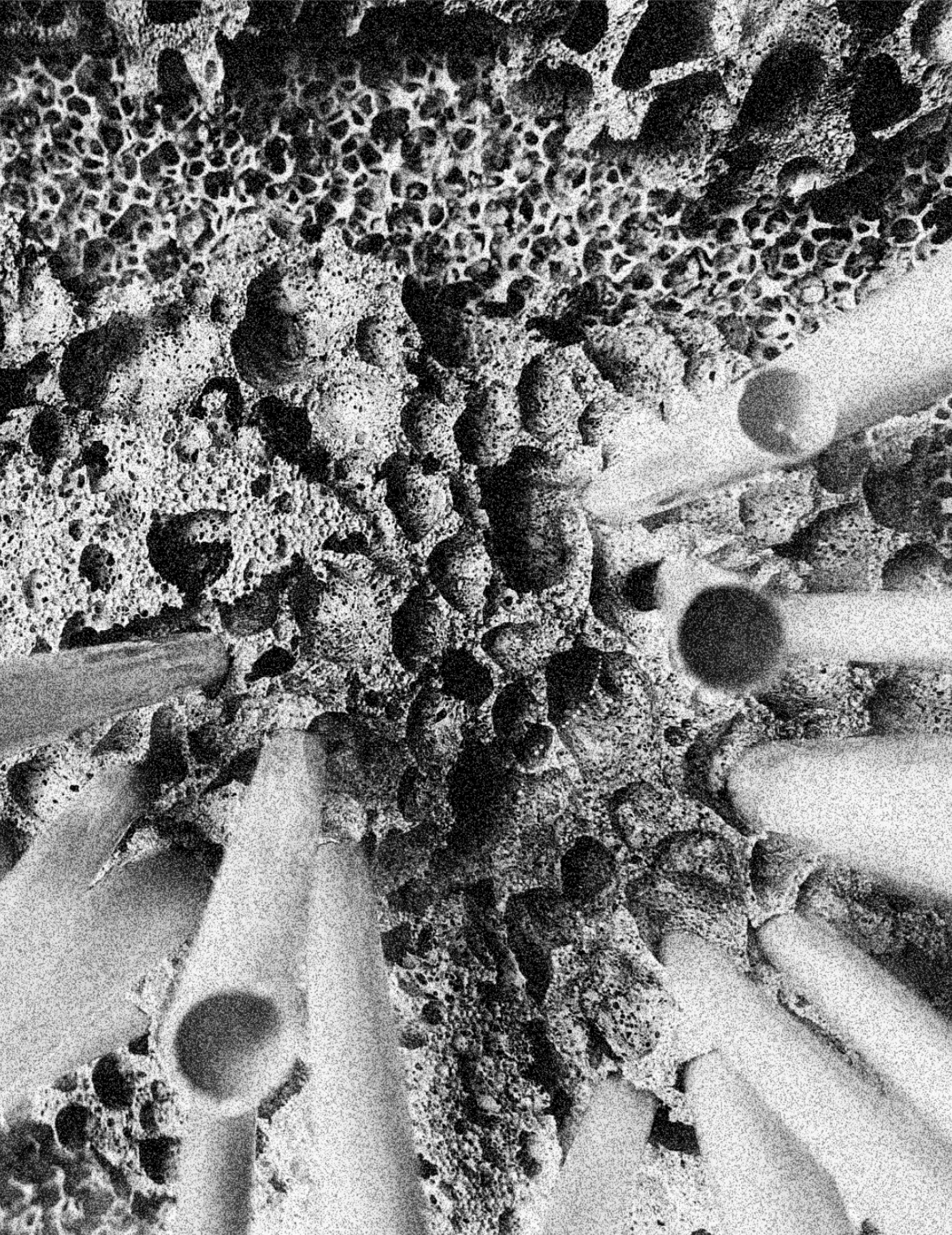


Figure retoriche or figures of speech, understood as forms of literary expression, enhance precise shades of meaning, constituting a deviation from the common meaning. In this sense, applied as a conceptual interpretation in the research, they become an alternative way of reading, aimed to experiment new architectural and landscape configurations. In this first chapter of the book, they structure a conceptual frame, in order to clarify the debates that identify the theoretical background of the research, attempting to bring into light contradictions and alterations of meanings. Penetrating deeply into the cracks of the discourses and deconstructing the canonical investigations of the city, the research offers a renewed possibility to discover new and potential languages that guide new approaches to urban design.

Challenging the common sense of things, rhetorical figures act as catalysts able to generate new questions starting from a new signification of forms, experiences, and languages. This process, questioning meanings, opens the way to new possibilities, introducing short circuits in multiple layers of sense that allow to rethink the conceptual and operational scope. Therefore, meaning and interpretation become central, as tools that suggest new approaches to issues of interest. In this sense, the debates on Rome and climate change have been observed with a particular lens using oxymoron, synecdoche, and metaphor.

Through the oxymoron are underlined the paradoxes that characterize some of the key issues the research was built around, with the idea of discovering unsolved issues and critical points it is still possible to fit in. The oxymoron, in fact, which works within the ambiguity, bringing into light new layers of meaning: working in the tension of different terms in antithesis, it suggests new openings of meaning and operation. Resuming therefore the logic of synecdoche, which works through the principle of substitution, the aim was to clarify how the *modus operandi* can be told in order to give back an abstract interpretation, also questioning the tools that allow to represent the issues taken into account.

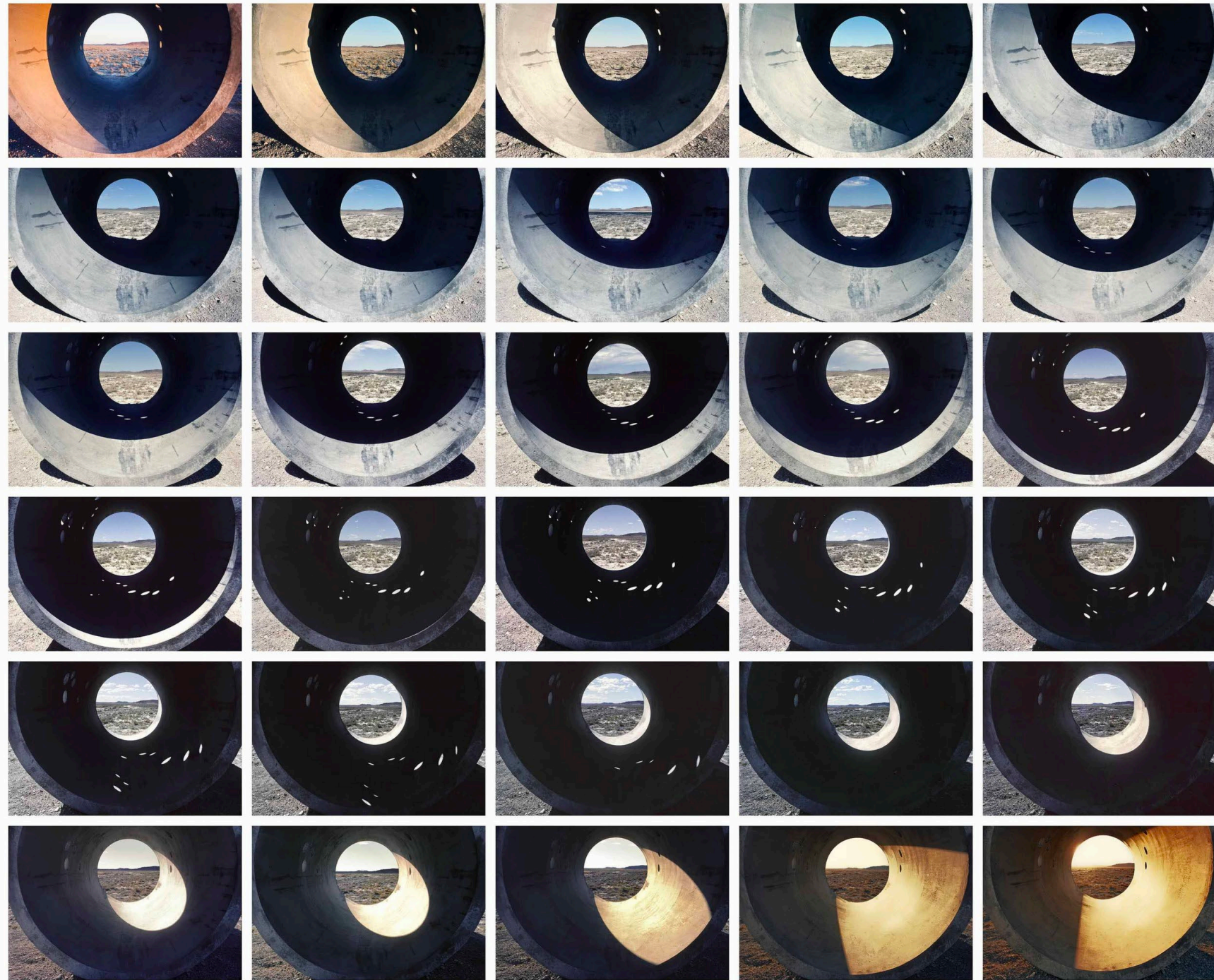
Finally, by asking how to look at things, the research explores past experiences and morphological characters of Rome, that have been observed as metaphorical terms of comparison to suggest new and current meanings that actualize the potentialities inscribed in the past and in the territory. In this sense, structuring itself as a "learning from", the metaphor suggests new figures of meaning, deduced from the observation of the city of Rome.

Thus, constructing a theoretical framework to operate with, the book investigates how a changing climate can restructure and redefine the field and the modalities of action of architecture and urbanism, redefining the issues and opening the way to new imaginaries.

OSSIMORO

Rhetorical figure consisting in the syntactic union of two contradictory terms, so that they refer to the same entity. The effect obtained is that of an apparent paradox;

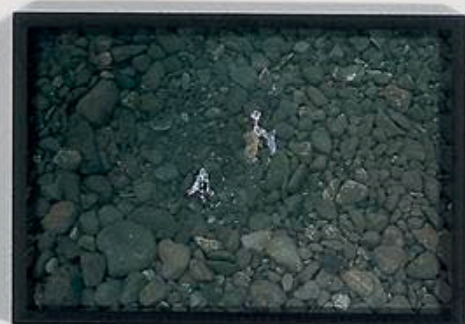
For example, Nancy Holt's sun tunnels. The oxymoron lies in the unusual use of a device traditionally used to shield: it is not used to protect but to allow the perception of light in a place perpetually characterized by the sun.





GLOBAL

WARMING



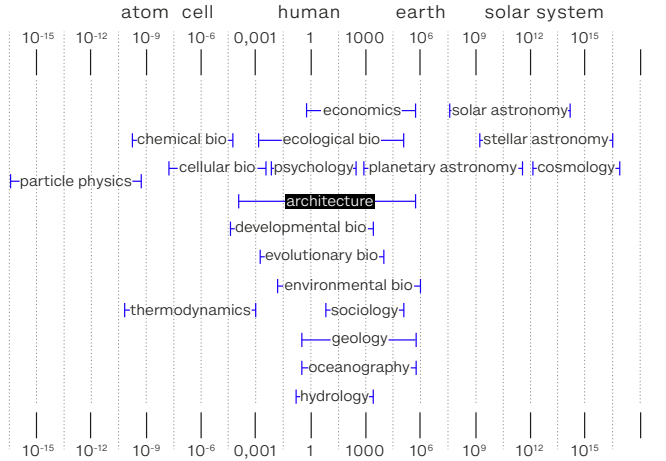
WHY DO WE
DISAGREE ABOUT
CLIMATE CHANGE?

The emblematic question of what is “climate change” has invested over the years the most varied disciplinary fields, whose formulations are so dependent on the matrices of cause and effect, to constitute inevitably partial answers. The only answer certainly shared, is that climate change is a “wicked problem” (Lazarus, 2009), i.e. an ambiguous problem, subjective and highly dependent on its formulation: there is often a relative dialogue on what actually the problem is and even less, consequently, on how to solve it (Rittel and Weber, 1973). “Global warming and the consequent, drastic changes in climate” are, in Morton’s words, “phenomena whose precise extent remains unclear, where their objectivity is established beyond reasonable doubt.”¹

This same formula “climate change” generates contradictions in all the debates that, seeking to raise a new ecological consciousness, put in the foreground the past, present, and future responsibilities of man towards nature. In this sense,

“climate change” becomes a metonymic term, omitting that it is a consequence of global warming.²

I discorsi sul cambiamento climatico si The considerations on climate change are mostly built upon the balance between dissonant terms and must constantly relate to each other and find a dimension of coexistence: they concern simultaneously the infinitely large and the infinitely small, exceptional and ordinary events, slow transitions and rapid changes, the global and the hyper-local, science and culture. They are mostly studies built on the continuous juxtaposition of terms, on paradox, and on relative and interconnected scales of analysis.



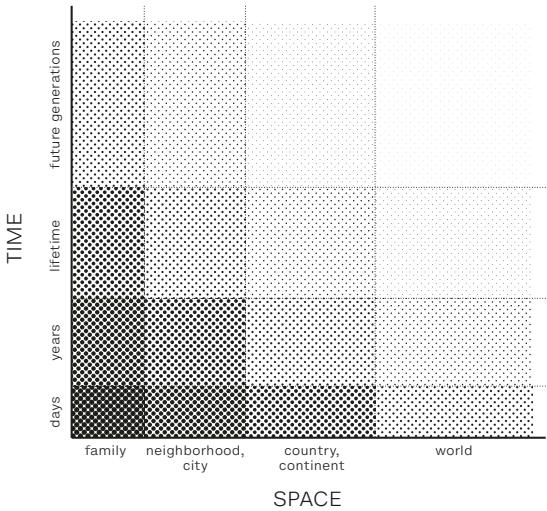
In this sense, Adrian Lahoud’s diagram, which graphically summarizes the scales of investigation of multiple fields, is particularly explicative: dwelling on the range of action of each discipline, it brings to light that, even at the same scale, the same issues can be investigated from completely different points of view, and at the same time it is possible to grasp the relativity beyond the narration of each study object of each respectively

field. These observations, at first glance trivial, become central when applied to the debate on climate change. In fact, to cover at least partially the complexity of the phenomenon, it occurs the need for a continuous interdisciplinarity, made of both spatial and cognitive jumps of scale.

The idea of “interscalarity” plays a central role in understanding the climate issue. In fact, as observed in “Limits to Growth”, it tendentially happen that the more a problem is enlarged in time and space, the fewer people are actively engaged in solving it. On the other hand, it can be counterproductive to limit one’s point of view to an area that is not sufficiently wide: it often happens that a person strives hard to solve an immediate, circumscribed problem, only to find himself defeated in the end because of circumstances that originate from a wider context”³

So, if on the one hand, describing the climate issue exclusively on a global level and in its scientific components is paradoxically reductive, at the same time what seems to be a local situation is actually closely related to continental, global and temporal scales. Therefore, the double relativity of climate change emerges: on the one hand, it is inevitably linked to contingency and it is perceived only in relation to the effects that occur in certain circumstances, on the other hand, each element, fact and situation is in dialogue with one another, that is, depends on and is in a reciprocal relationship of connection with the others, in spatial and temporal criteria.

There is, however, a third level of relativity, given by the reference system used for the description and that cannot be considered as exclusively dependent on



the entity or phenomenon observed: our reference system is dictated primarily by culture.

Thus, in facing new forces, destructive at the local dimension and interdependent at the global one, it is no longer only the destruction of the physical environment that is at stake. In fact, as Aldous Huxley pointed out, the material effects of climate change consequently lead to the loss of poetry and beauty, affecting cultural and perceptive aspects in unneglectable way.

Taking up what James Fleming and Vladimir Jankovic expressed in “Klima”, the climatic issue must be conceived as a phenomenon that acts primarily on the human body, revealing itself as “all those atmospheric changes that sensitively attack our organs” and that generate and influence “man’s sensations and mental conditions” in the words of Alexander von Humboldt.⁴

The climate issue in this research will be investigated in its meaning of “lived abstraction”: a constellation of meteorological concepts investigated not only in their scientific interpretation, but also in their meaning as cultural factors, intrinsically linked to human perception and spatial issues. From this point of view, climate change goes from being an object of study to an experiential phenomenon, capable, as Metta underlines, “of affecting the perception of the profound character of places, involving the complex and intangible aspects capable of producing sense and meaning.”⁵

In this sense, the greatest responsibilities are attributed to the cities in terms of climate change, which become the starting point to open new perspectives for the future and at chances to experiment an approach that is simultaneously multi-disciplinary, multi-scalar and multi-temporal, which responds to the global challenges of climate change but also to the local challenges of citizens’ wellbeing. Examined under these multiple lenses, climate change and the project of adaptation become, again in Metta’s words, “a far more complex issue than just ecology, economics, or even survival.”⁶

1. Morton T., *Hyperobjects : philosophy and ecology after the end of the world*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2013

2. Morton, T., Op. Cit.

3. Meadows D.H. (et al), *The limits to growth : a report for the club of Rome's project on the predicament of mankind*, New American Library, New York, 1975

4. Graham J., Blanchfield C., Anderson A., Carver, J.H., Moore J., *Climates: architecture and the planetary imaginary*, Lars Müller, Zurich, 2016

5. Metta A., *Verso Sud. Quando Roma sarà andata a Tunisi. Southward. When Rome will have gone to Tunisia*, Libria, Melfi, 2018

6. Metta A., Op. Cit.



“First is the **Edenic myth**, which talks about climate change using the language of lament and nostalgia, revealing our desire to return to some simpler, more innocent era. In this myth, climate is cast as part of a fragile natural world that needs to be protected. It shows that we are uneasy with the unsought powers we now have to change the global climate. Next, the **Apocalyptic myth** talks about climate in the language of fear and disaster. This myth reveals our endemic worry about the future, but also acts as a call to action. Then there is the **Promethean myth**, named after the Greek deity who stole fire from Zeus and gave it to the mortals. This talks about climate as something we must control, revealing our desire for dominance and mastery over nature but also that we lack the wisdom and humility to exercise it. Finally, the **Themisian myth**, named after the Greek goddess of natural law and order, talks about climate change using the language of justice and equity. Climate change becomes an idea around which calls for environmental justice are announced, revealing the human urge to right wrongs.”*

*Hulme M., *Exploring Climate Change through Science and in Society*, An anthology of Mike Hulme's essays, interviews and speeches, Routledge, New York, 2015

1. Hulme M., *Exploring Climate Change through Science and in Society*, An anthology of Mike Hulme's essays, interviews and speeches, Routledge, New York, 2013

2. Hulme M., *Op. Cit.*

In the essay “Climate Change: No Eden, No Apocalypse”¹, Mike Hulme shortly traces the nuances of the countless debates about climate change, outlining four fundamental mythologies that have succeeded one another and contrasted with each other. The reconstruction of these mythologies follows the perspective already expressed by Haraway: it is not a matter of reconstructing simple ideological discourses, “but a new biological, archaeological, ontological and epistemological concatenation” and it is therefore understood as “the study of myths in their relations with the cultural characteristics of an era or a civilization.” (Haraway, 2012)

In resuming and giving body to these narratives, on the one hand the research investigated the fundamental traits of different academic approaches to the climate issue, on the other hand, embracing the invitation of the author himself, it challenged their value as static and crystallized narratives on climate change. Rather than a phenomenon to be understood and controlled, climate change has been here interpreted as a situation the contemporary project must coexist with. The four mythologies, each in its own epistemological and cultural scope, have been reread and stitched together in a homogeneous anthology that allows the reader to “mobilize these stories in support of our projects”.²



What sort of story is
climate change?

1.1.1

Edenic myth

In this narrative, nature is understood as an entity other than man, something fragile to take care of. At first, the human body slowly used to transform itself in order to adapt to environmental changes, but, in the course of its adaptation, it conditioned the nature itself, eventually dominating it. Because of its apparent submission, man has come to perceive it as a foreign body rather than a factor belonging to the same process of transformation. As expressed in *Design Earth*, **“we create a false and irresponsible separation between people and nature, inducing a kind of pity for the living world”**.³

This condition in some ways recalls the words of Edward T. Hall, who described man as covered by a series of spheres representing the different levels of his intimacy. The scope of this statement completely overturns the subject/object relationship. In fact, we move from the emancipation from the Earth, in which man places himself in direct relation to the objects that he can transform and manipulate, to a relationship of attachment and interpenetration. That is, the concept of the sphere presupposes that man can no longer place himself above the world just because he is inside it. The same concepts resonate in the theories of Peter Sloterdijk, who projects the discourse to the spatial and relational dimension. In the long debate of the anthropologist, man and the world around him are precisely described as systems of spheres, internal or adjacent to each other: man has built his intimacy, his home, his space and, losing his trust in the goodness of nature, he has built the city, the place par excellence of the expression of human dominance, the work of which he does not imagine the disappearance, unlike what happens in the outside world, nature. Those who live in the city not only feel protected, but are also fully committed to its maintenance, protection and expansion, the latter aimed at transforming more and more the outer space into an inner space. The individual, in these words, is led by his nature to perceive space as an inside or an outside space: something that belongs to him and that he can domesticate as opposed to something foreign that follows the flows of genesis and destruction of nature. Man, therefore,

3. Ghosn R., Jazairy E.H., *Geostories: another architecture for the environment*, Actar, Barcelona, 2018



In the same direction, Coop Himmelb(l)au's “Restless Sphere” seems to repropose Fuller’s project in a scalar way:

4. Branzi A., *Modernità debole e diffusa: il mondo del progetto all'inizio del XXI secolo*, Skira, 2006



works by boundaries, mental and physical, to build hierarchies of belonging.

Far from the formulations of the German anthropologist, in architectural practice the sphere has become a material and metaphorical device to express the relationship that man weaves with reality, making evident the dualism underlying this approach. The giant geodesic dome that in the 1961 drawings of Buckminster Fuller lands on New York becomes, in this logic, the manifesto of this dualistic approach: the city inside, with the regulation of its microclimate, and everything else outside.

a minimal device that generates a new and more welcoming environment. As Branzi points out, these are “instruments that do not have a single function, but as many functions as the needs of the operator”.⁴ And in fact, these and other proposals – for instance, the provocative production of Archigram in the same years – indeed in their utopian momentum, make explicit through the use of irony and absurdity, the general attitude of adaptation to inhospitable environments through isolation from the environment itself, as a response to the attack of an invisible enemy. The current tendency to seek, through the use of increasingly sophisticated technologies in the name of “sustainability”, solutions based on energy saving, on the perfect control of the indoor climate, on insulating shells, has contributed, as also supported by Rahm, to further emphasize the



5. Rahm P, *Atmosphäre construite: Constructed Atmosphere*, Postmedia Books, 2014

6. Graham J, Blanchfield C, Anderson A, Carver, JH, Moore J, *Op. Cit.*

7. Urbonas G, Lui A, Freeman L, *Public Space? Lost and Found*, SA+P Press, MIT School of Architecture + Planning, Chicago, 2017

8. Heidegger M., *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1954

9. Barberis V, Cattaneo E.C, Prato, *Fabbrica Natura. Il nuovo piano operativo*, Skira, 2019

10. Morton T, *Op. Cit.*

clear division between inside and outside, between what is artificial and what is natural.⁵ But, by mitigating from the inside the effects of the external environment, these solutions, while raising our standards of living, help obscure “our awareness of whether these environmental effects come from within or without.”⁶

Nevertheless, as expressed by Kepes “new circumstances have forced us to see that we can no longer think of ourselves as separate and independent from our environment” ⁷

It is necessary to overcome the dialectical relationship in favour of a dialogical one between culture and nature and between nature and city, recovering a symbiotic relationship, understood as mutual modification.

This type of approach shows the need to shift attention from the body itself to relationships. But, as expressed by Martin Heidegger “To say: ‘the relation between man and space’ makes one think that man is on one side and space on the other. Instead, space is not something that stands in front of man. There are no men and additionally space.” ⁸ Reinterpreting the nature/city relation in dialectical terms means abolishing hierarchical and belonging categories and understanding that nature is capable of absorbing artificial substance as its component and vice versa. ⁹

New materials, such as plastiglomerates, are the practical evidence of the overcoming of modernist dualism, structuring themselves precisely as new products born from these reciprocal influences, made up of human waste that nature has incorporated to create its new materials. The same could be said of trinite, a material that no longer has anything natural about it, not even its genesis, having in fact been generated by the explosion of the first nuclear device. In Morton’s words, these objects would be pieces of “hyper-objects”, entities that we experience only partially and that force us to “realize that there is no longer any outside”. ¹⁰

Taking note of the conceptual gap between climate change as a phenomenon and its local manifestations, it is firstly necessary to start over from human space, not because it is the privileged space, but because climate change modifies foremost the experience and has come to mean much more than the physical ramifications of

human disturbance to the composition of the earth's atmosphere. Climate change has become as much a physical phenomenon as a cultural one, capable of deeply affecting perceptions of the identity of places. To do this, it is necessary to overcome the disciplinary boundaries between landscape architecture, urban design and ecology, seeking an approach that allows to catch both the spatial structure, fundamental for the interpretation of urban heritage, and the relational and intangible aspects, capable of producing meaning and significance. The key term therefore becomes "landscape", understood as a discipline and a dimension of action: the landscape allows a construction of meaning precisely because it is by stepping into the landscape that man can find the measure of his act. The landscape, in this new interpretation, becomes the conceptual and operational dimension to respond to global issues and urban transformations. In fact, taking up the position of Waldheim: "landscape has become both the lens through which the contemporary city is represented and the medium through which it is constructed".¹¹

Practically, the research moves from the urban green rhetoric, shallowly as opposed to the idea of built, to ecology understood as a device that works in performative terms and in close relation to the structure of the city, interfacing different scales. Ecology is therefore configured as nature that acts within the city, becoming the tool that allows to respond to the global challenge of climate change and to experiment a new aesthetic strategy to rethink the city.

11. Waldheim G.,
Landscape Urbanism
Reader, Princeton
Architectural Press,
New York, 2006

Apocalyptic myth

1.1.2

The sense of bewilderment and helplessness in front of destructive events fuels the construction of disaster scenarios, in which humans project themselves into alternative worlds or picture themselves into a future of destruction and desperate struggle for survival. Artists, filmmakers, authors, and writers rethink environmental disasters in narratives and imagery that aim to give back to a wider audience what scientists establish and demonstrate. "Jacobson's Fabulous Olfactometer" represents one of the varied declinations of the apocalyptic approach, proposing prosthetics that suggest man's transformation into an animalistic post-body, the outcome of a hyper-accelerated process of evolution dictated by the ongoing need to adapt to climatic conditions that are increasingly hostile to survival.

Similarly, the collection of short stories "A Year Without a Winter" reconstructs in literary terms contemporary scenarios regarding climate change. Realized by a varied group of authors belonging to different disciplines, from art to science, it works on the different hypotheses that men and, more generally, living beings must face in order to adapt to their environment, in a continuous modification and alteration of the landscape, which increasingly reserves inhospitable conditions.

In these and other countless imaginaries, a transformation of the environment marked by natural times, which therefore follows a process, is replaced by a traumatic transformative event, characterized by hyper-accelerated times, dictated by human laws and no longer natural. These are mostly perturbing events whose outcome are post-landscapes, in which the human body itself struggles to adapt, thus producing post-bodies.¹²

Nevertheless, the dystopian and apocalyptic visions, if on the one hand they warn the user about the uncertain and worrying future he is up to face, on the other hand they give back images so paradoxical and distant in time that they lose all contact with reality, arousing astonishment, at most dismay, rather than building a real awareness

12. De Poli M., Incerti
G., Trasformazioni.
Storie di paesaggi
contemporanei, Lettera
Ventidua, 2013

of the climate issue. The tendency of some architectural narratives of climate change is in line with the direction taken by other arts, for instance the illustrations that structure Geostories. In spite of that, as expressed by the authors themselves, the intent here is not so much to present alternative scenarios for humans, but to break out of the anthropocentric vision and re-centralize the discourse on the planet:

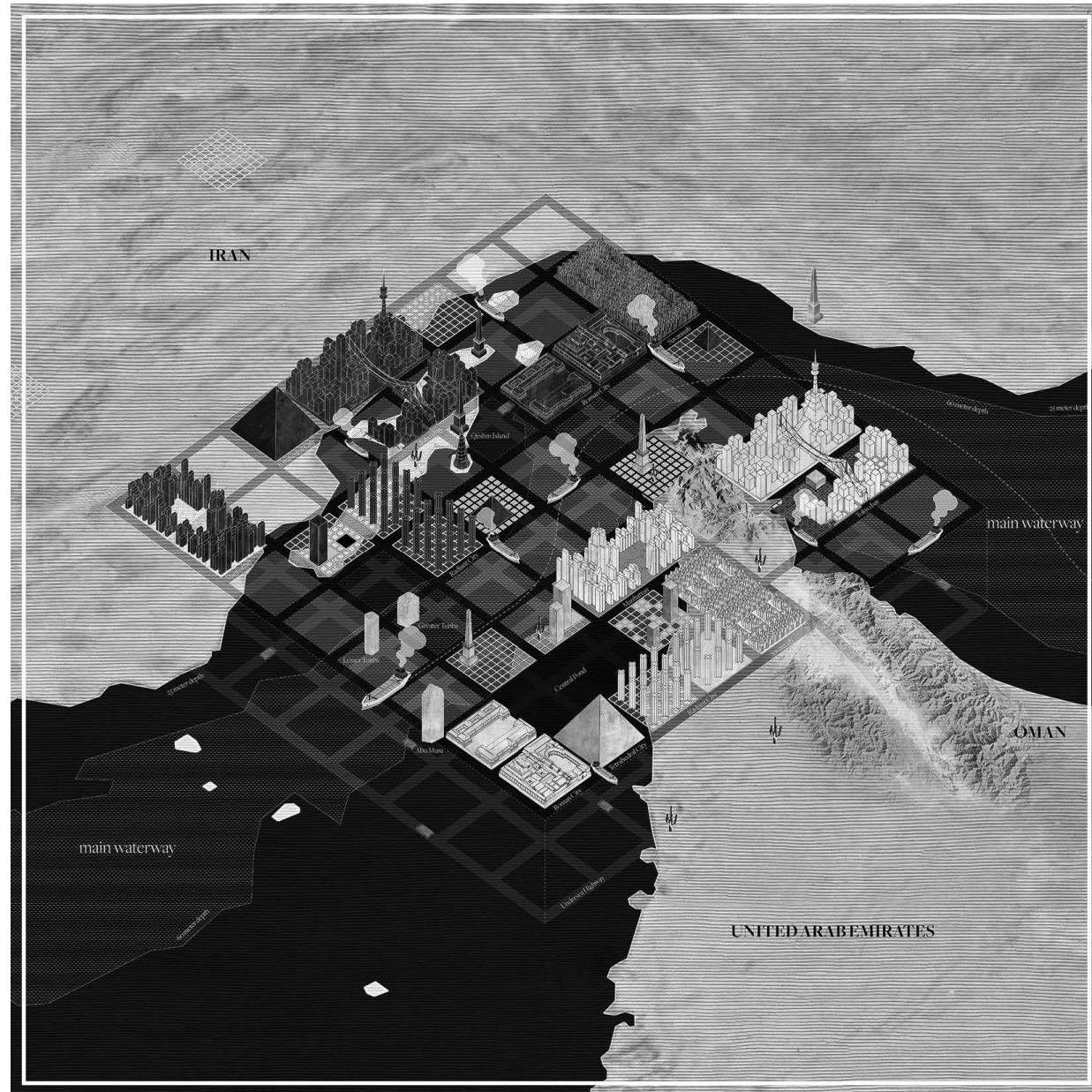
“for example, that the melting of Antarctica only matters in as far as rising sea levels pose a threat to coastal urban centres; otherwise, why care about continents and oceans?”¹³

The aim of these representations is mostly to turn the abstract issues of climate change visible, condensing into a drawing the scientific rationalization of environmental conditions that are otherwise unrepresentable at their multiple spatial and temporal scales. Rather than as dystopian, they should be understood as speculative drawings, capable of crystallizing global conditions into an image. Man does not appear in any of these illustrations and perhaps this is the moral of this debate through images: there is no man because there are no places for man. To think of nature, but more in general of the planet, as something external and above all independent, means denying our responsibility towards it; it means to let the flow of events and the blind faith in technology lead to a new world in which our habits, our faith in technology and our hopes are constantly questioned. In the words of Design Earth, “this book aspires to release accounts of the earth from the facticity of exchange value and eco-centric hubris of problem solving”¹⁴

13. Ghosh R, Jazairy
EH, Op. Cit.

14. Ghosh R, Jazairy
EH, Op. Cit.





15. Lefebvre H., *The Urban Revolution*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2003

16. Lefebvre, H., *Il diritto alla città*, Ombre Corte, Verona, 2014

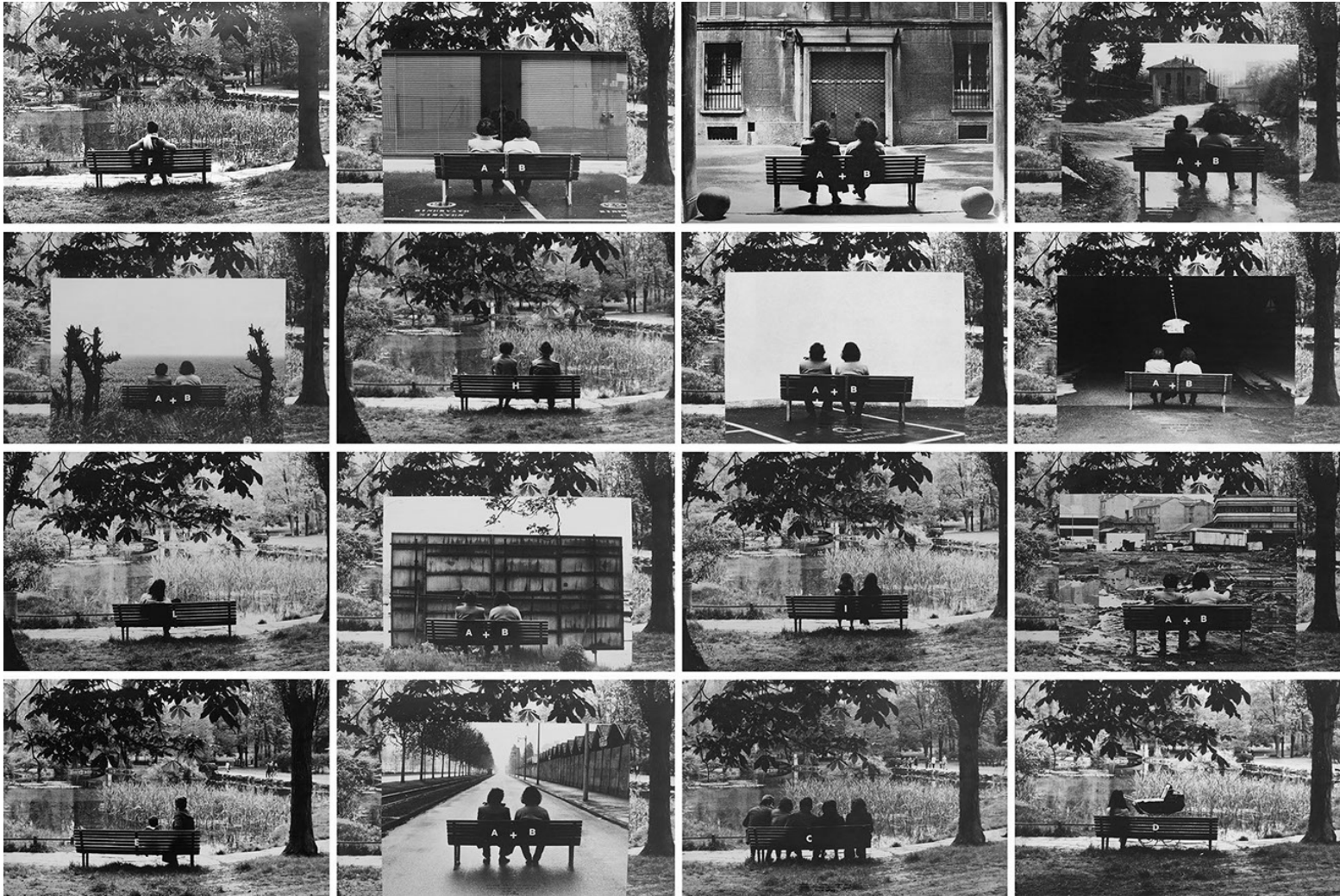
The interpretative logic of future space is perhaps not that of dystopia, but that of utopia, understood not so much as abstract imagery, as in the terms expressed by Henri Lefebvre instead. Utopia, in the meaning attributed to it by the author, can be understood in the intersection of two key concepts: that of myth and that of ideology. The first term is defined as “a non-institutional discourse whose elements are taken out of context”; the second one, instead, is explicated as “an institutional discourse that justifies and legitimizes, or criticizes, rejects and refutes, existing institutions but which unfolds through them”. Through the use of myth and its explication of the real, utopia reveals a new image of the city, without the institutional terms.¹⁵

This new expression of the city, when it arises from problems and solutions actually found in the city itself, embraces the meaning of “experimental utopia”, in which the term “experimental” is juxtaposed because, when looking at the horizon of the possible u-topos, the comparison with reality remains constant: “utopia can and must be considered experimentally because it is precisely in the terrain in which it comes to prospect that its possible practical implications and consequences exist”.¹⁶

Utopia therefore takes on the meaning of a space perceived in its paradoxical dimension, as a place that exists in its materiality, but lives in potentiality. In this sense, as previously expressed by Hannah Arendt, the public space becomes the place of paradox par excellence, “the place simultaneously physical and enduring and the events that find space in it”, which in this sense scalarly represents the city itself, “at the same time physical manifestation and accumulation of situations”¹⁷. The utopia here is not in the abstraction, but in the potentiality of space to respond as an infrastructure for unforeseen situations and that allows to relocate the exceptional scope of climate change within the ordinariness of experiencing the city.¹⁸

17. Arendt H., The human condition, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998

18. Urbonas G., Lui A., Freeman L., Op. Cit.



1.1.3

Promethean myth

“Western civilization has so far reacted to the natural pressures that the environment exerts on every process of growth by relying on technology; this response has always been crowned with success, so much so that a cultural tradition has formed that tends to exalt the battle to overcome natural limits rather than to seek the possibility of living within them. Any society that strives to overcome the limits set by nature by resorting to new techniques is at some point faced with a fundamental choice: is it preferable to adapt to live within those limits, accepting a self-imposed regulation of the growth process, or to continue along that path, until some natural obstacle occurs, hoping that in the meantime technical progress will allow it to be removed? In the last centuries humanity has followed this second path, with such insistence, always crowned by success, that we forget that there is also another way.”¹⁹

In the article “Love your monsters”, Bruno Latour uses Frankenstein as a metaphor to tell the relationship of man with technology. In 1818, Mary Shelley tells of Frankenstein, in the novel with the same name, a character that perfectly reflects the cultural attitude of those years and that will also influence future generations. The “creature”, as it is defined in the book, derives from the ingenuity of a scientist, metonymy of the attitude of the nineteenth-century creator, who, like a modern Prometheus, no longer limits himself to studying and knowing the world, but takes possession of the intrinsic laws of nature to the point of wanting to replace it. With Frankenstein, modern man comes to govern the evolutionary process, giving life to something that is an imitation of nature itself through the tools of technology. But the creature is so amazing to be condemned: Frankenstein is a form of liberation from constraints and dogmas that suddenly allows to put under a completely different light the scope of



20. Ghosn R, Jazairly EH, Op. Cit.

21. Urbonas G, Lui A, Feeman L, Op. Cit.

19. Meadows DH, (et al), Op. Cit.

22. Latour B, Love your monsters: Why we must care for our technologies as we do our children, in Breakthrough Journal, fall 2011, available at www.bruno-latour.fr. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

23. Dorus n. 1044, Protection and Identity, March 2020

the technological revolution. If on the one hand man has penetrated the secrets of nature, on the other hand in his sinful attempt he has let his invention gain the upper hand on him. According to Latour, “we confuse the monster with its creator and blame our sins against nature on the things we have created ourselves, but our sin is not that we have created technologies, but that we have failed to pay proper attention to them.”²⁰

While blind faith in technology on one hand has ensured progress, the great term that has nurtured modernity, favouring prosperity and economic growth, it has also cultivated a growing sense of emancipation from nature and responsibility. Once the veil of Maya was removed, Nature was revealed in its objectivity and assumed as an entity separate from man, to be looked at with distrust or, most of the time, with indifference. The sin is not to desire to dominate the Nature, but to confuse the desire for dominion with emancipation, without caring about its consequences and believing to have completed one’s task with artificial invention itself.

As Kepes wrote, “to achieve redemption for a crime committed, one must first be aware of the crime committed. Without an ecological consciousness, we have very little hope of change.”²¹ **To control the present and especially future effects, requires first of all becoming aware of the fact that every attempt to dominate nature corresponds, in an equal and opposite effect, to a power over man himself.**

The turning point, as Latour points out, is to mend the gap between the spirit of emancipation and its catastrophic outcomes, making it part of the normal and present situation and turning attention to the unexpected consequences.²²

This means building and asking new questions. Since “The Limits to Growth” has manifested them in their troubling consequences, they have rarely directly questioned the architectural discipline in its theoretical and practical components. However, new circumstances bring us to reckon with the narrative of unlimited growth, making it clear that a new disciplinary paradigm is needed.²³ It is necessary to reset our relationships not only with the natural world, but also with each other and with our beliefs, first of all by reflecting through the way we build, not only objects, but also and above all space.



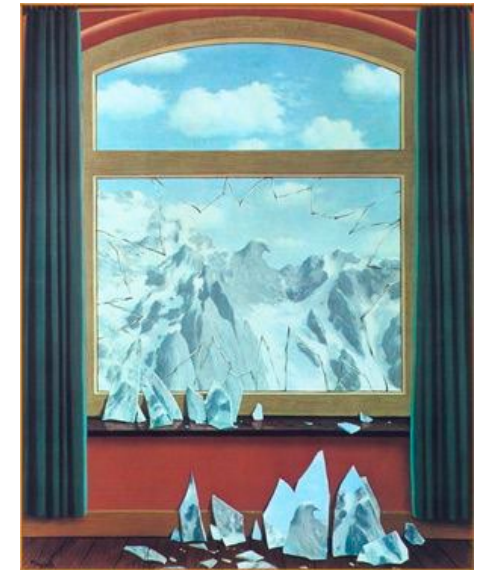
In disciplinary terms, the fusion and confusion of the terms architecture and technology has elected the building as a key material for modulating the discipline's response to the issue of environmental impact and, on a broader level, climate change, working primarily in terms of efficiency and performance.²⁴ This kind of approach limits the boundaries of the discipline, which can no longer be tied to the materiality of individual objects but must first and foremost be understood as a platform of knowledge, in which the sense of physical space and events merge. In a research aimed then "at defining systems of coherence, where problem, solution, context, methodology, expression, technology, use, etc. are composed through an equal confrontation", **the body must assume a new ontological status, being conceived within a system in space that produces a list of effects that influences and is influenced by the surrounding environment: that is, we pass to the conception of an ecology of bodies.**²⁵ "And, to do this, one must describe the spaces that lie between things already identified, spaces of interference [...] hence, millions of connections. Between has always seemed to me, continues to seem to me, a preposition of capital importance."²⁶ With Serres's words, we shift our attention to the open space that, in its declination in public space, becomes the place where these interactions

24. Graham J, Blanchfield C, Anderson A, Carver, JH, Moore J, Op. Cit.

25. Graham J, Blanchfield C, Anderson A, Carver, JH, Moore J, Op. Cit.

26. Serres M, Chiarimenti, 1992

between body and space are manifested and become new matter of the project. It is in this new condition of the project that the use of technology is reshaped: nature, explored in its maximum performative dimension, becomes a technological device that allows us to think precisely about the spatial and temporal effects of the project rather than its outcomes. Technology thus becomes a tool capable of reasoning causes and effects, able to respond while maintaining an approach of "transcendence" - a key term to rethink contemporary design in response to the challenges of climate change. It is no coincidence that one of the most influential books of the twentieth century is



"S,M,L,XL" by Rem Koolhaas, in which precisely the scalar discontinuity becomes one of the terms that structure the discourse. In this sense, the narrative shifts the attention from architecture itself, understood exclusively as a producer of material volumes, to the space of architecture, inviting to a remodulation of spatial relations rather than thinking about static compositions. Against ecological indifference, a relational logic arises, which, far from the exaltation of the object, makes the composition of space

its pivotal point, from which derives the juxtaposition of elements that remain as identifiable devices only through the relationships between the parts. Moving from the concept of object to that of system, a new approach is outlined, that of "architecture as infrastructure", which resumes and expands the discourse already proposed by Team X, reflecting on the admixture of urban and ecological systems. This approach has refocused the discourse on the search for a form of continuity between the urban and the natural, reflecting on new forms of interventions built with an infrastructural and ecological logic, in which causes and effects are intrinsically linked.²⁷

27. Graham J, Blanchfield C, Anderson A, Carver, JH, Moore J, Op. Cit.

1.1.4 Themisian myth

“From now on, we should stop scourging ourselves and take explicitly and seriously what we have always done on an ever-increasing scale, namely, intervene, act, will, care.”²⁸

Latour’s words suggest to abandon the path of commiseration for the committed crimes against nature and the environment in favour of a proactive approach, which builds a new ecological consciousness, welcoming unexpected consequences as part of human action. In this myth, “the belief that the world will end «if we don’t act now» is, paradoxically, one of the factors that most inhibits conscious commitment toward an ecological coexistence on Earth.”²⁹

One of the most disarming consequences of this kind of approach is that we focus on the fact rather than our response to it. Most of the approaches think of it as a problem to be solved, rather than an issue for architectural design to live with.³⁰ Taking up Bruno Latour’s theories, the challenge posed by climate change is also epistemological in nature: it lies in conceiving the current ecological crisis not so much as a “matter of fact”, but as a “matter of concern” instead.³¹

The anthropologist invites, through a “compositionalist” approach, not to reduce scientific facts to theories and models, but to investigate the relationships that these statements form with our daily experience. (Latour, 2004). The clearest exemplification comes when considering the production of Alexander von Humboldt, in particular his “Portrait of Nature”, which presents the earth in a variety of scales, from micro to macro, so that the object can be conceived in its completeness and in

28. Latour B, What is the style of matters of concern?, in “Spinoza Lectures”, Department of Philosophy of the University of Amsterdam, April and May 2005, available at bruno-latour.fr. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

29. Morton T, Op. Cit.

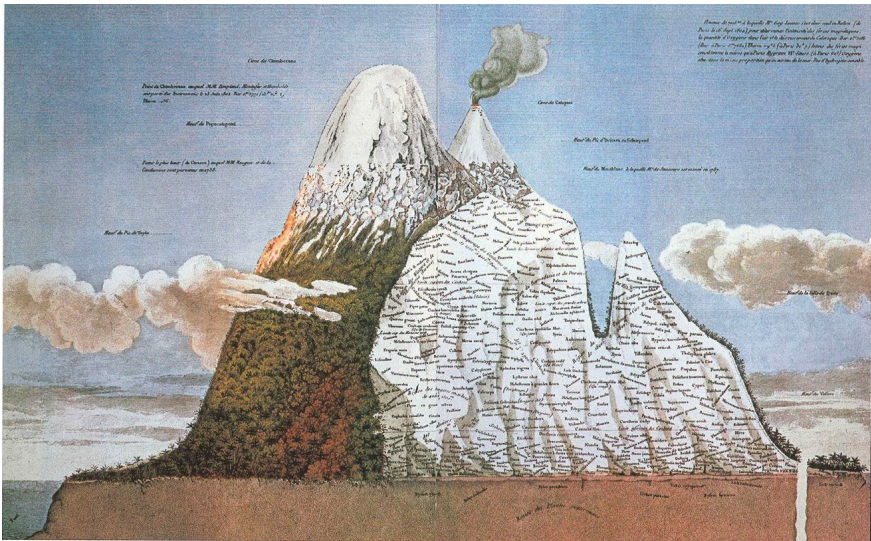
30. Ghosn R, Jazairy EH, Op. Cit.

31. Latour B, What is the style of matters of concern?, in “Spinoza Lectures”, Department of Philosophy of the University of Amsterdam, April and May 2005, available at bruno-latour.fr. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

its individual parts that constitute a unity. This representation goes far beyond the simple accumulation of information because it also brings into account the aesthetic experience of the observer. He uses the tools of representation to synthesize scientific knowledge into a holistic representation that traverses dimensional and preceptive scales.³²

One of the central issues of climate change is, in fact, precisely the difficulty of its perception, both cognitive and physical. According to Morton’s formulation, “you can feel raindrops on your head, but you cannot perceive the raindrop itself. What you perceive is always the anthropomorphic version of raindrops. Doesn’t this resemble the gap between climate conditions as I perceive them, and global climate understood not as a set of local patterns of climate conditions, but as a system? From this point of view I could think about climate and even measure it, but I could never see it or touch it directly.”³³

The greatest difficulty lies in the conceptual gap between the atmosphere as a concept and the set of phenomena and effects that make climates evident in a plurality of forms and times, in which human influences are increasingly inextricably linked to those of nature, in a continuous subversion of cause-and-effect relationship. In this sense, Moholy’s reflections³⁴ on the role of aesthetics in defining the relationships with the surrounding environment are fundamental; relations that fuel the climate issue with sense and meaning, contributing to restore depth to scientific facts, which are no longer interpreted as “facts” but as “concern”.



In fact, Moholy argues that a detachment between abstract ideas and the effectiveness of perceptions leads to a condition of bewilderment and it is therefore necessary to merge the abstractions of scientific knowledge with the perceptive component of aesthetic experience.³⁵ And again, Latour specifies that “seeing the earth as a matter of concern, requires a form of knowledge that synthesizes scientific epistemology and sensitive experience”.³⁶ Considering climate change as a matter of concern therefore means understanding it as a fact that touches us closely and from this point of view, only at the metropolitan scale can man perceive and touch the vast system of spatial relations that climate change produces. The attempt, according to Metta, is to avoid pure abstraction and turn it into real experience: “numbers, indicators and charts have an abstract rhetoric: what does it actually mean to stay under 2°C of warming? This numeric lacks visceral meaning. Similarly, the worst-case scenarios of flooding, drought or famine seem temporally and physically distant - far from the typical experience of place and producing, at best, deferred empathy. [...] Yet there are generally abstract narratives, presenting conceptual situations far from the common every-day experience of place. [...] However, climate change is an ongoing process, palpable every day through actual, tangible although subtle disturbances to the status quo.”³⁷

“Using the matter-of-concern can help to take a more complex and interconnected view. A matter of concern is what a matter of fact turns into when you put it in its full setting.”³⁸

The effects of climate change now call for a more sensitive approach to the invisible dimension, to the “subtle substances”³⁹, as Lina Bo Bardi would have called them, which play a large part in the construction of space. If a modernist reading has considered the climate as a physical condition in which to place human action, imagining emancipation from nature, in this new cultural paradigm the climate becomes instead the very first condition and matter of the project.⁴⁰

35. Urbonas G., Lui A., Feeman L., Op. Cit.

36. Ghosh R., Jazairi EH., Op. Cit.

37. Metta A., Op. Cit.

38. Latour B., What is the style of matters of concern?, in “Spinoza Lectures”, Department of Philosophy of the University of Amsterdam, April and May 2005, available at bruno-latour.fr. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

39. de Oliveira O., Subtle Substances: The Architecture of Lina Bo Bardi, Gill, Barcelona, 2006

40. Hulme M., Op. Cit.





41. Barberis V., Cattaneo EC, Op. Cit.

42. Corner J., Bick Hirsch A. (edited by), *Landscape Imagination: Collected Essays of James Corner 1990-2010*, Princeton Architectural Press, 2014

FIGURE RETORICHE

Since climate has a now dominant role and influence in future development, we return to question the design scope of these concepts. Architecture, by incorporating the invisible aspects of climate change into its language, shifts its attention from fullness to emptiness, which in this logic is no longer defined in a dichotomous way, in opposition to fullness, but in relation to it: emptiness becomes the place to modulate the relationship between artificial and natural matter. Acquiring its own depth, the void becomes an opportunity, a potential background for a multiplicity of possible interpretations. Understanding it first of all as a space of dynamic interaction, the ecological question can take on a new centrality, understood precisely as a conscious relationship between man and nature: “If man is responsible for the future of this planet, he must pay more attention to ecology, the scene of relation between organism and their environment”⁴¹. In fact, ecology becomes a strategic model because it allows to work within the limits that climate change imposes: first of all, accepting the contemporary urban complexity, it acts precisely with the apparently unmanageable or inconsistent complexities of data; it is able to address issues of spatial organization on a large scale and to establish relational structuring between the parts, that remains open and dynamic, not fixed; it introduces time as the figure of the project, working mainly in the setting of certain conditions rather than seeking a fixed design.⁴²

In the end, the overcome of the modern narrative involves bringing our relationship with nature and climate, at the different scales they go through, back into a dialogic discourse. Climate will continue to change, and these approaches can no longer impose themselves with certainty as solutions to global warming. However, this does not imply passivity in the face of change. In this sense, in an ever-flexible interpretation of what is happening, man must not give up his active role as an actor: he is called to interpret change in order to bring it back into precise cultural paradigms, which consciously guide his role in change, understood as a dynamic process of continuity rather than a worrying transition from one state to another.

*“We will continue to create and tell new stories about climate change and mobilise these stories in support of our projects”**

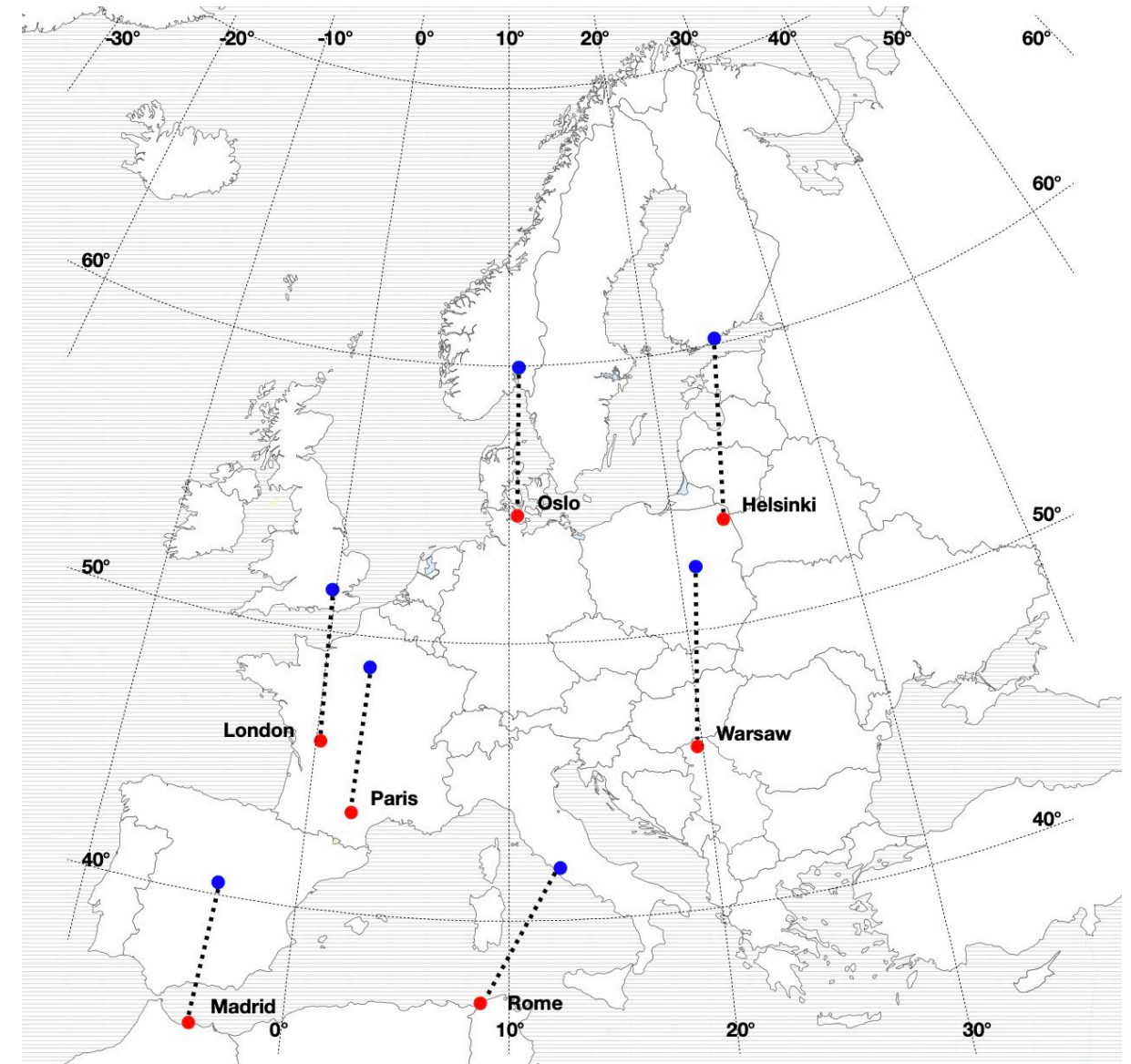
*Hulme M., *Exploring Climate Change through Science and in Society. An anthology of Mike Hulme’s essays, interviews and speeches*, Routledge, New York, 2013

1.1.5 Ordinary/extraordinary

In observing the shifting latitudes of European cities, a long-term effect of global warming, Annalisa Metta raises an unusual question, far from the traditional tone of the debates on climate change. Precisely, moving away from apocalyptic and extreme scenarios, she asks how “tiny transformations, almost minimal variations, with alternating slowness and intensity” can change Rome in its journey to Tunis.⁴³ Shifting the point of view, climate change ceases to be a matter of concern solely for the potentially devastating impact of its effects and it is instead investigated in its everyday, ordinary manifestations. Abandoning the dramatic tones of catastrophic scenarios, the research on Rome tries to swing in a constant balance between ordinary and extraordinary, through a process defined starting from a condition of oxymoron. In this logic, terms that express contrary concepts, normally kept apart as they are incomparable in meaning, are here merged to produce conditions that give them new depths of meaning. Thus, reinterpreted as an ordinary condition, the architectural and landscape extraordinariness of Rome and climate change become material and conceptual infrastructures whose spatial implications suggest new design directions.

This discussion therefore follows a twofold direction: on the one hand, working on climate change as a condition of ordinariness, avoiding reducing it to its destructive manifestations and instead grasping the more subtle implications that affect the living spaces of the city. On the other hand, all those exceptional elements of the architecture and even more of the Roman landscape that, especially in the most historical part of the city, are expressed through the language of monumentality, are questioned with an unprecedented key of reading; These magnificent presences that mark the structure of the urban fabric of Rome are in fact brought back to conditions that, by virtue of their repetition, become dominant in the metabolism of the city: ordinary because of their permanent character.

43. Metta A, Op. Cit.



Caught in its dimension of a city in transition, the need is to underline its critical issues, but even more its potentialities, suggesting new ways of representation and action. So, changing the taxonomy and the language in reading the city, the research introduces first of all the instability as a possibility, in an attempt to demonstrate how the reasons that have determined different urban morphologies can suggest new interpretations, proposing alternative operational directions. In this perspective, taking up some of the considerations produced by the initiative “100 Resilient Cities”, the investigation comes back to question the city with the attempt to redefine its public spaces and relink its territories, in order to respond to the new challenges raised by climate change.

In 2017, in fact, the initiative included Rome among the subjects involved in the drafting of an adaptation plan for the city to respond resiliently to environmental challenges.⁴⁴ Already in the preliminary analyses, it has brought into light the antithetical nature of the Roman fabric, whose potentials simultaneously constitute its critical points. Thus, the city’s rich cultural and natural heritage, of exceptional majesty, could prove to be a potential in terms of social and economic development and, especially in the case of natural components, climate adaptation. Therefore, its fragmentation and its reading in its almost exclusive historical and archaeological meaning, put the accent on its immobility more than on its possible effects in supporting and determining the future declinations of the city. In this sense, the research also reflects on a new idea of temporality, in which the eternal character of the city is reinterpreted in the light of a change: the landscape, even more than the monument, thus assumes central value in the discourse no longer as an element of identity, but for its ability to survive, in its oxymoronic meaning of built void, to the changes of the city. A renewed attention to the Roman landscape more than to its built forms, thus redefines the terms taken into account, directing the imaginary and materializing it in new forms.

Wondering how the changing climate rearranges and redefines architecture and urbanism⁴⁵, in a continuous interpenetration of scientific factuality, aesthetic and cultural agency, the research reflects on Rome as an experimental laboratory in which the tension between ordinary and extraordinary finds its maximum expression. Bringing to light its ordinary dimension over the extraordinary one that immobilizes it in eternal images, the research tries to investigate the city as an unstable system, reformulating the modalities to rethink the processes of transformation.

44. “Resilient Roma. Valutazione preliminare i resilienza” available for consultation on www.urbanistica.comune.roma.it

45. Graham J, Blanchfield C, Anderson A, Carver, JH, Moore J, Op. Cit.

“If you place a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will immediately try to scramble out. But if you place the frog in room temperature water, and don’t scare him, he’ll stay put. Now, if the pot sits on a heat source, and if you gradually turn up the temperature, something very interesting happens. As the temperature rises from 70 to 80 degrees F., the frog will do nothing. In fact, he will show every sign of enjoying himself. As the temperature gradually increases, the frog will become groggier and groggier, until he is unable to climb out of the pot. Though there is nothing restraining him, the frog will sit there and boil. Why? Because the frog’s internal apparatus for sensing threats to survival is geared to sudden changes in his environment, not to slow, gradual changes.

...Learning to see slow, gradual processes requires slowing down our frenetic pace and paying attention to the subtle as well as the dramatic.”*

*The Parable of the Boiled Frog, Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, available at www.peterkang.com. Complete site reference specified in the bibliography

ESTATE ROMANA



1970s - BACKGROUND

Several significant phenomena characterized Rome during the 1970s, generating actions and retroactions that can be seen as an enigmatic case study of an avant-garde attitude able to implement a transformation in the city. It is about a lively and restless decade, marked by protests and demonstrations of different natures, which often fell in occasions of urban guerrilla warfare. They were therefore particularly unstable years, characterized on the one hand by civil and social achievements that contributed to the growth of the country, and on the other by frontal clashes between opposing sides.

They were the same years of the first intellectual left-wing mayor of Rome, the art historian Giulio Carlo Argan, and the years of an important urban response to the housing crisis that the city was facing, the implementation of the first Plan for Affordable and Popular Housing, creating new neighborhoods on the outskirts of the capital. This singular alienation of the domestic dimension regarding the center of the city was further accentuated by the middle classes, driven by the need to move away from those places of social clashes that hosted the multiplicity underground fights of the time.¹ Hence

followed the raise of a multitude of articulated neighborhoods at the borders of the city, whose nature overcame the peripheral character because of conceived as self-sufficient, urban agglomerations independent from the city.

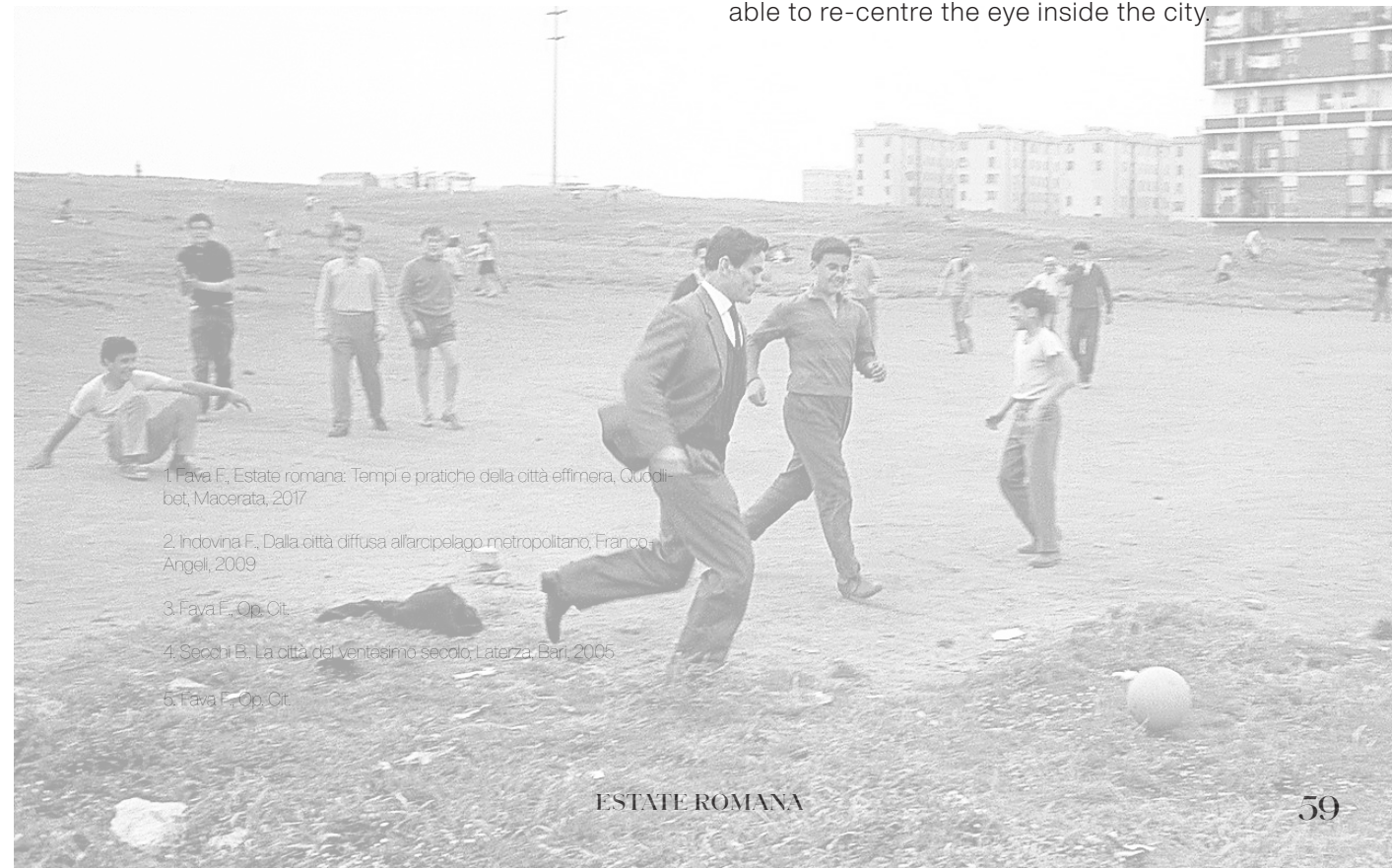
“What is happening, and we must be aware of this, is that as the compulsion to agglomerate has been loosened, different forms of cities have been created. The concentrated city does not disappear, but it is no longer the only form of the city: the urban “destiny” is articulated, individuals and organizations tend to choose the form that best responds to their needs, to the realization of their projects and to the conquest of those advantages expected from a location.”²

With these words, Francesco Indovina emphasizes that a particular awareness was raising in the individuals, an awareness of being able to find the same advantages of the city outside of its boundaries. An awareness that, at that time, brought consequently to an urban explosion, a journey away from the it. His words can be interpreted therefore to understand the reason, the necessity of that decade to rewrite the limits of the city. A series of cores and new agglomerations interconnected by a large highway network were thus articulated, redefining the new metropolitan boundaries, and constituting a combined pattern between city and countryside, thus overcoming their antagonistic dualism. Consequently, the limits between the two opposites became increasingly blurred, giving the city the character that still distinguishes it today: a spatial continuum between artificial and natural. The critical aspects of these marginal neighborhoods and their self-sufficient design witnesses the malfunctioning of urban episodes isolated

from the social and productive contexts of the area.³ Resuming the words of Bernardo Secchi: “the space of dispersal is not homogeneous and isotropic, as much as it is made up of constellations of fragmentary materials among which it becomes important to establish new relationships.”⁴

The same kind of estrangement happened as well in the public dimension beside the private one. If the city centre started to be deserted in order to find alternative ways of living outside the limits of the city, thus rewriting them, in a similar way the multiple public spaces of Rome began to suffer a particular detachment. The singular and violent turmoil due to the several protests of the late 1960s questioned the safety of public spaces, falling into a veil of terror conscious to the public.

Undermining the public dimension meant in some way to weaken the certainty of a space available for the inhabitants, causing phobias and consequently a sudden removal. It is therefore clear how the city, in those years, was experiencing a kind of isolation in multiple depths of dimensions. The impossibility to reduce urban being within homogeneous territorial portions directed then urban planning towards design methods capable of rehabilitating the dissipation of the city, establishing new relationships able to recompact the existing.⁵ It is in fact in this urban context that the phenomena of the Estate Romana took place, becoming a tool of reconnection between the inside and the outside, as well as the individuals and the public space. Estate Romana formulated an opportunity to claim back what used to be lost, the public dimension of the open spaces, and to restructure a catalyst able to re-centre the eye inside the city.



1. Fava F., Estate romana: Tempi e pratiche della città effimera, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2017

2. Indovina F., Dalla città diffusa all'arcipelago metropolitano, Franco Angeli, 2009

3. Fava F., Op. Cit.

4. Secchi B., La città del ventesimo secolo, Laterza, Bari, 2005

5. Fava F., Op. Cit.

1.2.1 Proprietà perduta

The impact on the public of such a turbulent period was to begin to perceive the spaces of the city as compromised; the centre of the capital was emptied not only in its residential sphere by several social classes, but also in the places of the public dimension, as they were covered by a veil of terror that threatened the autonomy of these spaces. The perception of them was not only defined by a feeling of unease, but also by the sense of alienation of man, and his awareness that these architectures were unreachable. Their hyper-monumentality raised an awareness in man of a certain inaccessibility, leading to a gap as much temporal as phenomenological.

“Gli uomini del posto, se così possiamo chiamarli, sono sempre gli stessi: Stendhal vi vedeva ‘un gran carattere’. Apparenza monumentale: per la sostanza intima sono schiavi anch’essi del genius loci, sono anch’essi condannati ad una vita di paradosso, ad una profondità superficiale e ad una fede scettica; per tutti un fallimento monumentale.”⁶



OSSIMORO

“esiste, innegabile, una cultura di Roma, come esiste una bellezza di Roma:



ma sono cose spesso disprezzate dai romani, che essi venderebbero a chiunque, e che del resto sono difficili ad apprezzare, a tener separate da certa romana incultura, quasi contadina, che ha accompagnato, passo passo, la poesia d'Orazio e le architetture di Apollodoro, le sculture di Bernini, il neorealismo e Fellini. Per capire ed apprezzare certe cose è necessario calarsi nella città e farsi prendere da essa, evitando tuttavia, cosa impossibile, di diventare romani, o meglio diventando romani ma rimanendo al di fuori, al di sopra.”⁷

ESTATE ROMANA



6. Quaroni L., *Immagine di Roma*, Laterza, Bari, 1976

7. Quaroni L., *Op. Cit.*

8. Quaroni L., *Op. Cit.*

9. Quaroni L., *Op. Cit.*

10. Quaroni L., *Op. Cit.*

11. Quaroni L., *Op. Cit.*

In “Immagine di Roma”, Ludovico Quaroni arguments this fracture, this feeling of estrangement, sustaining that it resides first of all in a “Roman scale”⁸, a dimension of the city inclusive of monumental attitude and at the same time, and in opposition, of a human nature. The great buildings that mark the urban fabric of the city, according to Quaroni, aspire to be representation; hence, they represent a symbol, an expression of power, intellect, and culture, to establish a detachment between those who are inside and those who are outside.

The detachment exists, but they show themselves to those outside through such vigour, that these interlocking architectures come to determine external spaces so familiar, intimate, and authentic to generate a sense of estrangement in man towards what happens inside them. “Monumentalissima, ma altrettanto romana, Roma riflette nelle sue strade, soprattutto, quella cultura di cui è simbolo, quella ricchezza che si esprime in una opulenta miseria per il solo fatto di essere romana.”⁹. Quaroni thus gives a reason why the domestic dimension of the Romans is resumed in the streets and squares, and why the interior of the monuments will always remain inaccessible: “sugli scalini di una chiesa barocca il sole prende altrettanto bene quanto sulla gradinata di piazza di Spagna, né le muraglie d’un palazzo patrizio mettono soggezione all’attacchino e al bambino che si diverte, mentre torna a casa, con un pezzo di gesso rubato a scuola.”¹⁰. The thought of the Roman architect reiterates how the open spaces that articulate the centre of Rome are those places dense of liveliness in which to rediscover the familiarity, a collective existence; the Romans reject closed places, and in particular the house itself, which is accepted only as a safe haven away from danger, as a place of isolation, in which “it is possible to see safe not to be seen”¹¹. The author expresses a concept so true that has occurred in its maximum expression in the urban struggles of the Seventies, whose terror moved the inhabitants from the public dimension of the places of conviviality towards the private dimension, furthermore far from the core of the city, at the borders of it. Therefore, the need of the inhabitants to seek elsewhere new spatial dimensions in order to claim again public use.



The pursuit for new places that could belong to public dimension was also and most of all driven by the lively experimental movements born in those years, born as a cultural response to the parallel political ferment, and which needed to find new fertile spaces in which to express themselves. This spatial investigation is realized in the identification of a new dimension of the city, the underground one; the cultural and artistic turmoil of the time finds particularly fertile the secret and hidden places of the city, a phenomenon that reflects not only the feeling of terror that inevitably leads to the need for isolation, a safe place, but also a tendency to conceal these actions. The fervour of the city is therefore characterized by a double and perverse dynamic in response to the social and political movements of the years; on the one hand, the expressive necessity of art forms and the need to relocate in a new spatial dimension, on the other hand, the need to hide such actions, for safety or for transgression, and thus to bring to life an alternative scale, the hypogeal one, of Rome.



12. Visone D., La nascita del nuovo teatro in Italia 1959-1967, Titivillus, Corazzano, 2010

13. Montini F., C'era una volta il cineclub, 22th October 2000, available at www.repubblica.it. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

14. Visitare la mostra assieme al gallerista - mito. Fabio Sargentini cicerone a L'Attico, 13th February 2020, available at www.vartribune.com. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

Particularly vibrant were the Roman basements, hosts of numerous theatrical experiments, which, moving away from the traditional Italian stages, gave life to a theatre of research of new artistic identities, determining, in the words of Giuseppe Bartolucci, the “imaginary death [...] of the architectural location of the theatre (Quindici, 1968)¹². In the same way happened the proliferation of cineclubs in the city's neighbourhoods, which favoured a small audience and innovative projections, inspired the future program of the following Estate Romana¹³.

Again, the reality of avant-garde art and its expressive needs of the time were translated into the “golden years” of Fabio Sargentini's Attico, and into the numerous art galleries that found opportunities for experimentation in the garages of Rome, a city where the only art institution of the time was the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna. The search for unusual spaces was also motivated by the intention to combine different arts; the cramped atmospheres of the garages and their large spaces were suitable for the versatility of different types of performances, dances, shows, and therefore not only for the staging of fixed objects. **Among the various happenings the research focuses the extravagant experience that took place in 1969 by Jannis Kounellis, who decided to exhibit in the Attic of Sargentini twelve horses for three entire days**, which caused astonishment even overseas¹⁴.





“One says: “Do you know that living horses have been exhibited in a gallery in Rome?” What satisfaction I felt! The American art galleries were all still located on various floors inside the skyscrapers, alongside legal offices, hairdressers, clothing stores. Rome has delivered New York checkmate, I thought while walking through the streets of Manhattan”.*

*Nicolas Martino, *La linea effimera*, 18th February 2014, available at www.alfabeta2.it. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

A cultural and artistic turmoil was taking place caused by the superficial depopulation of the city, animating Rome rather in its most recondite and underground places; the greatest and most recognized event of the years is attributed to “Contemporanea” (December 1973 – April 1974), an art exhibition that transformed the mysterious spaces of Luigi Moretti’s underground parking lot of Villa Borghese into an extraordinary art gallery.

Contemporanea is a provocation; it stands as a manifesto and celebration of the antithesis of public space, almost making fun of it behind its back, or rather, in the dungeons of the emblem of Roman public space, combining “the most typical and scandalous monument of official Western culture, the underground parking lot, and the most arrogant artistic manifestations of that culture in the form of its contemporary art”¹⁵.

The anthill that characterized Rome in those years recalls in a certain sense the concept of porosity linked to the transformation not only of the places of the public, but also of its practices. Hence a different idea of public space began to spread; it is projected to a closed dimension, which, turning back to Quaroni, redresses the lack of security of the open space. There is the need, therefore, to isolate oneself in an individual dimension, dark and nocturnal, nostalgic for the spontaneous and informal way of living the Roman public space. Hence the public dimension is experienced in cramped, subatomic spaces that, by necessity and size, enclose a restricted group of individuals, referring to a path of individualization.

The concept of porosity taken into consideration here is better explained by the words of Viganò, according to whom may exist two kinds: one uses the articulation of material, the other is a consequence of a shocking episode. In the case of the Roman situation, the subterranean porosity with the second genre defined by Viganò, which occurred **“as a result of a rupture in the modes of use of space and allows for a rethinking of the city, beginning with the extent and importance of the rupture that has occurred”**¹⁶. The traumatic event, the violent episodes of the time led to a sense of phobia, to estrangement, not only in Quaroni’s monumental terms, seeking comfort in a semi-private and hypogeal dimension of the city. The wartime atmosphere caused a crack in the relationship of the Roman with the public space, diverting its uses in another direction and altering functions and lifestyles, finding expression in the “idiorhythmic conglomerate”¹⁷ of the underground porosity, able to assimilate and

15. Domus n. 531, February 1974

16. Viganò P., I territori dell’urbanistica: il progetto come produttore di conoscenza, Officina, Roma, 2010

17. Viganò P., Op. Cit.

18. Ajroldi C., Cannone F., De Simone F., Lettere su Palermo di Giuseppe Samonà e Giancarlo De Carlo, Officina Edizioni, Roma, 1994

19. Secchi B. (curated by Fini G.), Il futuro si costruisce giorno per giorno, Donzelli, 2015

20. Viganò P., Op. Cit.

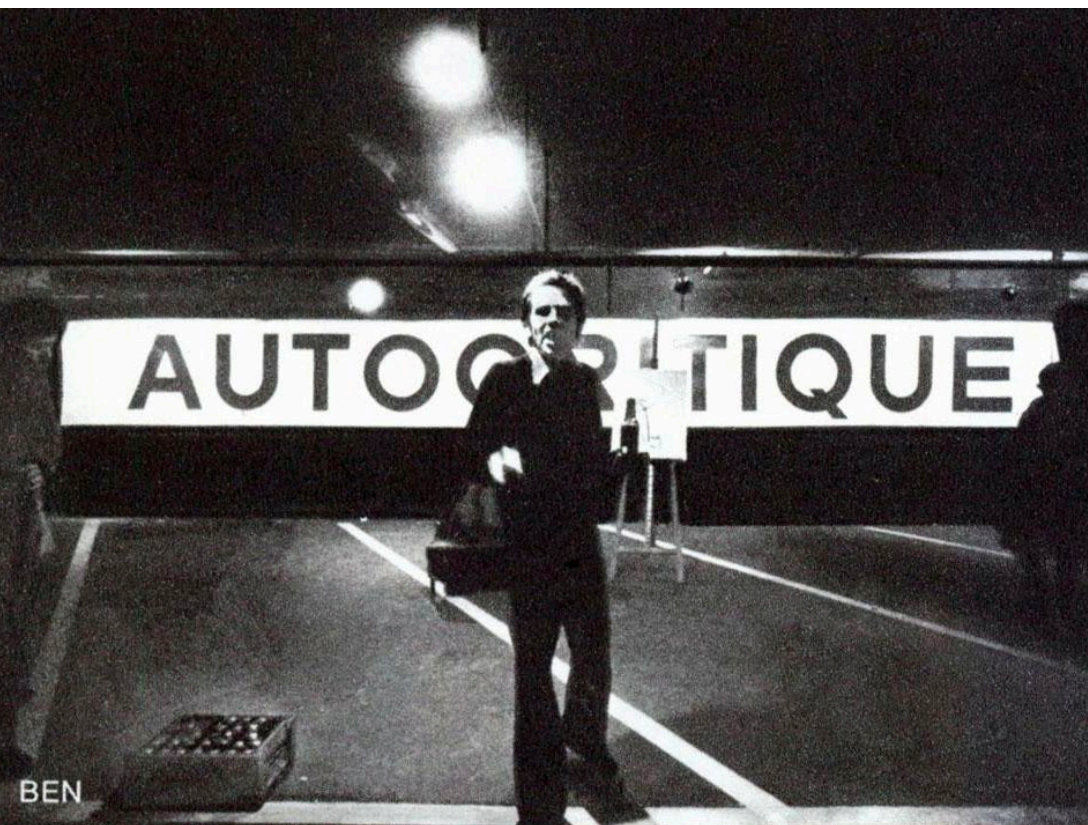
metabolize singular and plural dynamics and variations. Porosity further faced, in a more discreet and silent way, by Giancarlo de Carlo, whose projects determined both a spatial and a conceptual porosity in the uses and fruitions of the places; the practices are therefore not imposed or established but overlap and merge in the day and night-time.¹⁸

Going back to Viganò, “what is really under discussion is the rigid border between public and private space, between inside and outside, between family and community, between individual and society”¹⁹: in Rome it is precisely this plurality of binomials that shows cracks, questioning uses, functions and places, and overturning the condition as well as the physical dimension of public space. According to Viganò, “If society has to be a place of realization of the individual and not only a place that guarantees its safety, the forms of space that are porous to the individual and his practices allow a reflection on its role in the construction of a common good such as the city”²⁰; the concept of porosity is taken up by the interventions that characterized the experience of Estate Romana, not so much in its hidden places as in the practices and uses of hypogeal spaces. The project of this episode took up the customs of the hidden Rome and brings them to light, becoming aware of the society as an instrument of expression of the individual, a concept that was missing in the same years, as well as its role as a guarantor of protection. Estate Romana will assimilate and therefore repropose the same characteristics of the concept of porosity found in the Roman vibrant turmoil, such as the opportunity for improvisation and the praise of possibility.

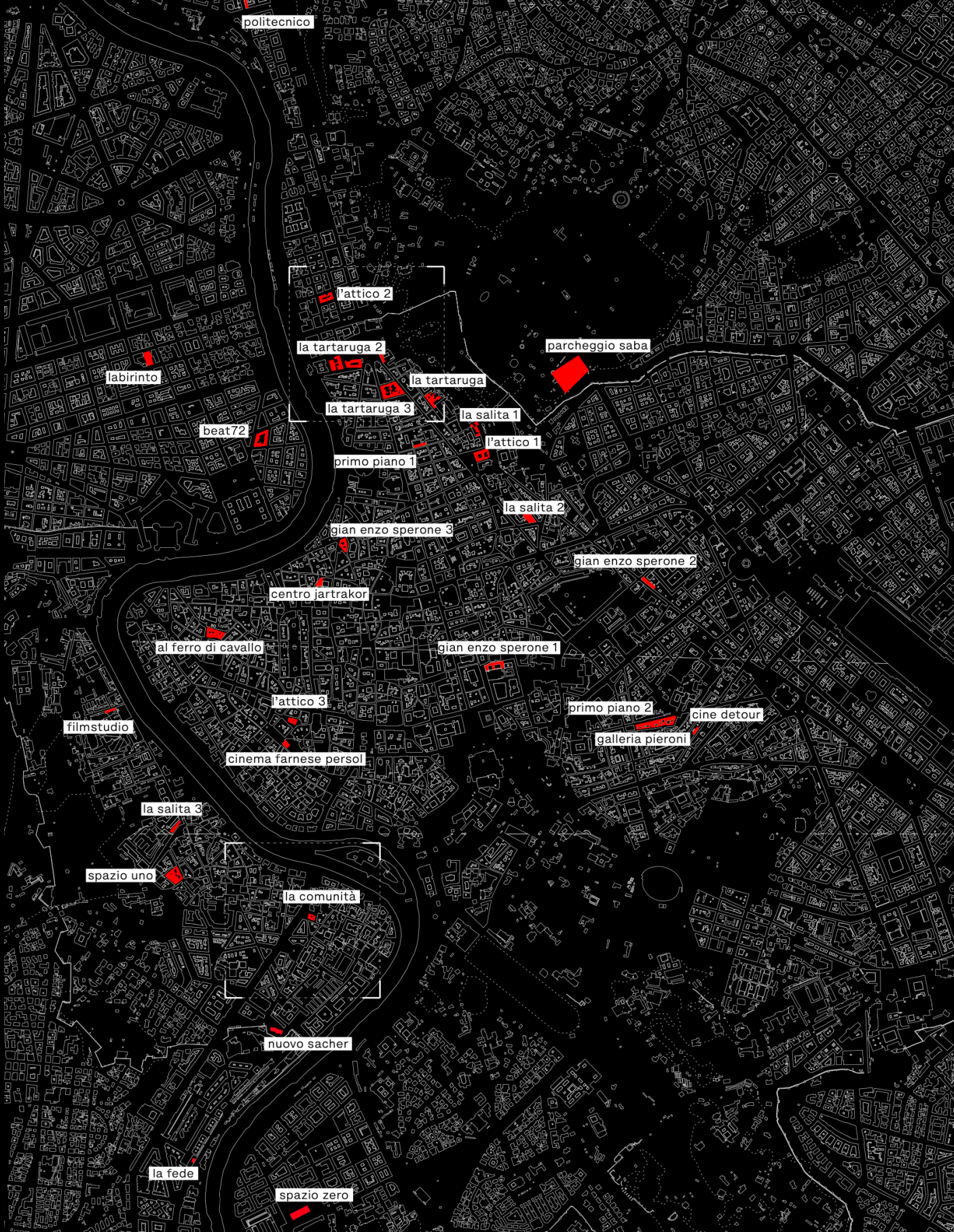
The subterranean landscapes of Rome therefore become theatrical backdrops to the cultural and artistic turmoil that would soon emerge, manifesting itself in bright light through the years of Estate Romana.

“Just think about how pleasant it would be to be to drive around the exhibition. The world’s first drive-in museum. Or, at least, experience it riding a bicycle”*

*Domus n. 551, February 1974



Underground porosity



KALEIDOSCOPIC EPHEMERAL

It is in this plurality of situations that a strong response to the historical period took shape; in 1977, Estate Romana took place, an initiative of the then young councillor for culture Renato Nicolini, who, through a series of festivals, events and shows gave life to the so-called season of the ephemeral in the following nine years. The aim to act against the estrangement towards the centre of Rome and to overcome the dualism city-periphery had in a sense the role of propeller; the Estate Romana stood as a strong action of taking a position towards its audience. There was a need to change direction, to oppose to the marginal expansion of the city and to re-propose connections and contacts with the much-troubled fragments of the existing. The re-appropriation of the places in the historic centre, abandoned by the inhabitants in order to avoid the terror of those years looking for a private dimension outside the city walls, became a fundamental need for

those who lived in Rome in those years, and the Estate Romana tried to respond to this. An initiative aimed at recentring the relationship centre-periphery and to encourage the public to a new imaginary of these spaces.

The summer project of this part of the city consists in an invasion and contamination through a varied program of theatrical-popular activities and cinema-graphic projections²¹ that relate and provoke temporally the same historical-temporal palimpsest of the architectures, favouring new spaces of tolerance and coexistence of diversity.

The main theme of this season is that of an urban policy oriented to inclusion²², to the use, even improper, of architectures and monumental spaces, aimed at overcoming the stereotypical vision of the eternal identity, which the centre of the Capital suffers, and that tends to that alienation previously expressed by the architect Ludovico Quaroni.

Episodes that aim to the reconstruction of relationships between bodies and space, putting in the foreground new uses of the existing; in the extraordinary appropriation of the city centre, the project becomes a pretext to simulate opportunities for life in the alienating architecture of the city, leading to new meanings and interpretations of the places hosted by Estate Romana.

Through the overlapping of episodes often distant in space and time, Nicolini describes the attitude of the city to disguise itself without the help of particular structures, using the architecture of the historical centre as a backdrop, transforming it into a stage for the city of the festival²³. Starting from the Basilica di Massenzio and in the following three years, the only architectural operation realized becomes the concealment of

architecture itself, carrying out minimal and essential elements fundamental to the development of the event, as an expression of reclaiming this fragment of the city. Rethinking the immaterial, Nicolini underlines the ability of the ephemeral project, in its multiple meanings, to be the spokesman of common feelings and temporal and spatial contradictions, and at the same time to accompany the evolution of urban life changing together with it.

Like Olafur Eliasson's Ice Watch melting in the Place du Panthéon in Paris, or Walter De Maria's Lightning Fields; what these episodes substantially have in common is the preliminary planning of their disintegration²⁴. Marking their end determines the equal and opposite response of generating resonances of memories and recollections, giving these products an indelible and eternal character. Through these examples it is understood the paradoxical character that defines the concept of ephemeral; etymologically an action "that lasts a day", which at the same time establishes a timeless relationship with its disappearance.

The interventions that characterized the seasons of Estate Romana (1977 - 1985) are as ephemeral sometimes in a derogatory sense. Although they were episodes with a beginning and an end, their essence lies primarily in establishing a re-appropriation of the places they saw as protagonists, and in a certain sense in the raise of awareness, memories, and feelings inextricable from them. It thus emerges that the ephemeral is subjected to a deeper sense that goes beyond the mere temporal connotation, covering a multiplicity of layers of meanings.

21. Fava F., Op. Cit.

22. Nicolini R., Estate Romana. 1976-85: un effimero lungo nove anni, Città del sole, Reggio Calabria, 2011

23. Fava F., Op. Cit.

24. Fava F., Op. Cit.





1.2.2 Time palimpsest

In a first layer of sense, the episodes that structure the experience of Estate Romana are strongly intertwined with the temporal dimension. These experiences, even though they live exclusively in a predetermined period, present more lasting and tangible resonant effects, thus allowing the flow of a daily and ordinary time as well as a seasonal one.

The result of Nicolini's initiative, in the words of Franco Purini, represents a project of urban infestation. Episodes interpreted as infections, "new stem cells scattered in the city-body" (Purini, 2014), in the hope that they would generate different urban responses: from rejection, to acceptance, to transformation. The retroaction phenomenon that eventually occurred was the inclusion and re-appropriation of fragments of the city,²⁵ often perceived as hyper-monumental, timeless but simultaneously spelled by the time itself, a contradictory condition described through the words of Venturi:

"the historical sense involves the perception of the past not only passed, but also present [...] This historical sense, a sense both of that which is timeless and that which is temporal, as well as that which is timeless and temporal together."²⁶

The products of the Estate Romana therefore open up to overcoming the dualism of the ancient city - modern city; they quickly become devices of urban contamination able to break the gap with the past, as well as to mitigate the weight of the cultural baggage that characterizes these spaces. The coexistence between Nicolini's episodes and the impressive existing architectures consequently determines a harmonious dialogue between the ancient and the contemporary, further underlined by the reversible and impalpable character of the ephemeral.

This temporal admixture implies a shift in several directions in the fourth dimension; it is precisely here that the paradox of the ephemeral lies. An episode with a fixed term determines the occupation of a

25. Fava F., Op. Cit.

26. Venturi R., Scott Brown D., Complexity and contradiction in architecture, 1966

"non ho mai pensato seriamente che esistessero progetti totali per salvare il mondo e l'umanità e ancora meno sono stato in grado di progettare un mio sistema personale... mi sento sempre più nel mezzo di un immenso deserto di ruderi e mi sembra che tutto quello che faccio, qualunque progetto mi venga in mente, diventi subito un rudere, diventi una presenza solitaria della quale io stesso capisco sempre meno la ragione, sempre meno capisco le connessioni con il resto... forse non mi resta

altro che camminare tra ruderi e forse, disegnando, non ho altro destino che quello di produrre ruderi, voglio dire produrre progetti che calino senza spiegazioni in mezzo a milioni di altri progetti di cui non conoscerò mai e mai più le logiche, né i collanti, né le connessioni."^{*}



^{*}Ettore Sottsass - Rovine, Design Gallery Milano, 1992

place that is inserted in time before being inserted in space, and that concerns the full involvement of several epochs, past and present, without predomination or hierarchies.

A cryptography understood as Leibniz's "art of inventing the key to an enveloped thing", capable of encoding its essence, or as Deleuze's code "capable of penetrating into the folds of matter and reading at the same time into the folds of the soul"²⁷.

Nicolini's intervention is therefore presented as an instrument of transformation of the imaginary of these places, and therefore, of stitching together the different temporal layers; overcoming the superficiality of the duration of the single episode, the sense of the ephemeral finds rather more substance if it is interpreted as a bridge between distant both spatial and temporal dimensions. In this way, Estate Romana is composed of a series of stories told in the historical centre of the Capital that, disturbing its monumental and eternal condition, allow to awaken and revive architectures and spaces inevitably stereotyped. The temporality of the ephemeral thus allows a new form of investigation of spaces, aimed at its actualization and, to recall the words of Agamben, "In the very gesture in which its present divides time according to a 'no longer' and a 'not yet', [...] it can, that is, relate what it has inexorably divided, recall, revoke and revitalize what it had also declared dead"²⁸. In this regard, Gilles Deleuze helps to understand this temporal shift through the concept of becoming; according to Deleuze, becoming evades the present but at the same time it does not admit separation of "before and after, past and future". The essence of becoming consists in the double attitude of "pushing in the two directions simultaneously. [...] the paradox is the affirmation of the two senses at the same time."²⁹.

The Estate Romana works with the same contradictory condition of time; it oscillates between action in the predetermined duration of the ephemeral, and at the same time evades the present to re-join distant layers of time. The stitching act behind these episodes gives the possibility to change the imaginary of these places and to give them a new meaning; time is therefore, in its multi-layered identity, an instrument for a Duchampian re-signification along the lines of his ready-made.³⁰

The preconception, the stereotype to which the place is subjected is thus cancelled as it is subject to a new interpretation. The ephemeral

27. Deleuze G., *La piega: Leibniz e il Barocco*, Einaudi, Torino, 2004

28. Agamben G., *Che cos'è il contemporaneo?*, Nottetempo, 2008

29. Deleuze G., *Logica del senso*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1975

30. Cattaneo E.C., *Weak City: Notes on Landscape Urbanism*, Babel, Trento, 2015

31. Smithson R., *Entropy made visible*, Interview with Alison Sky, in Robert Smithson: *Collected writings*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1996

is in this regard a reversible and non-permanent language that can be traced back to Robert Smithson's concept of entropy,³¹ understood by the latter as a transformative process that breaks the balance of order, goes out of the box, arouses tension and confusion. According to Smithson, entropy becomes synonymous with a change that leads to unpredictable results, it is the journey against the current, the abandonment of conventions and preconceptions, it is the suppression of stereotypes.

The significant character of the ephemeral lies therefore not so much in the extinction of the episode, as in the possibility of being able to overlap, even if only for an elusive moment, a plurality of meanings, uses and plots without any hierarchy, bringing out the palimpsestic attitude of the spaces of the city.

1.2.3 Designing absence

The mistake that eventually resulted in the crumbling of this Roman experience was the misunderstanding of the ephemeral; as explained, it has been understood as an artifact presently living, and no longer existing in the future. On the contrary, that of the ephemeral is a much more articulated concept, with deeper meanings and senses, and its key aspect does not concern the duration principle which etymologically describes the term, but rather the concept of metamorphosis, one that involves and realizes an animated process of relationships between form and substance. The ephemeral is therefore transformation, a fleeting event whose pervasion of a location establishes a change, and precisely because of its fugitive nature, it is able to adapt to the changing needs of the city.

This passage can be enriched and more intimately explained by the theoretical assumptions of Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo, according to which **the project has to be foresighted and far-sighted, able to recognize the possibilities of a certain place, and prepared to welcome any changes over time.**³² It is therefore defined as a tolerant, flexible, malleable, chameleonic project, therefore a protean device. Grasso Cannizzo thus outlines a design approach aimed at transformation. In this sense, the project must consist of materials and spatial installations that are repeatedly open to new needs and requests, departing from the static design dogmas of artifice. Rather, the changing design philosophy mimics the dynamism of natural processes, it simulates and reproduces the life cycles of nature, the changes of the seasons and the continuous, unpredictable biological change. In these terms, the idea of a constantly changing project is very close to the idea of a project composed of infiltrations, the previously mentioned Purini stem cells.

The Estate Romana is therefore a clear example of a project that takes into account in the first place the times of the city rather than spatial issues. In this regard, the words of Scogin Elam: "there are no more

33. Riley T., The un-private house, New York, 1999, available at www.moma.org. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

34. Nicolini, R., Purini F., L'effimero teatrale. Parco Centrale, meraviglioso urbano, La casa Usher, Firenze, 1981

32. Molinari L., Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo, Area 167, Italian stories III: beyond crisis, dicembre 2019

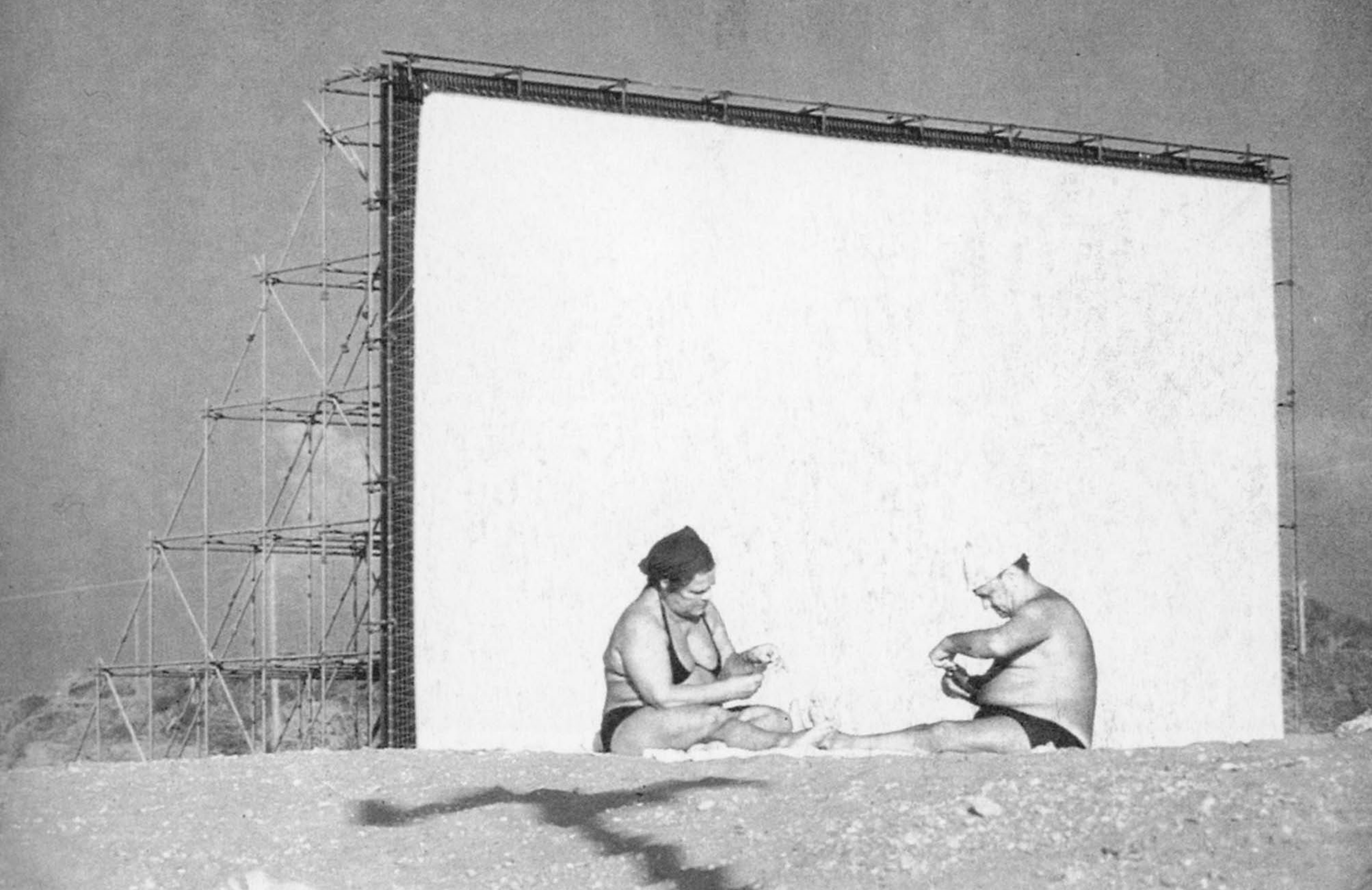
35. Nicolini R., Un effimero lungo nove anni, in Testa L. (a cura di), Lo spazio inquieto. L'effimero come rappresentazione e conoscenza, Il Cardo, Venezia, 1993

rooms, but only situations"³³ help to understand a further nuance of the ephemeral, which in this case is posed as a situation, climate or scenario, favoring the times at which the city is subjected.

The project becomes absence, telling of a fertile and experimental space that opens up to any possibility. Rather, it is configured as a suspended phenomenon, in which each relationship or use is prefigured as

potentiality; nothing is excluded, the project remains u-topian, that is, open to any occasion for variation. Nicolini himself describes his interventions as non-architectures³⁴; the Roman architect's reflection on the immaterial takes the form of minimal actions which, characterized by the possibility of reversibility precisely because they are ephemeral, allow to enhance the master context of these performances. These do not pursue mimesis, they do not go into the background, let alone cancel themselves with respect to the background, rather they enhance it, consolidate it, through a process of antithesis with respect to it. They are able to adapt, to manipulate these spaces, leaving their shape unchanged, but at the same time to persuade the visitor's eye by changing their imagination in a more or less permanent way in their mind. These essential interventions are described by Renato Nicolini himself as a "telo bianco", an indispensable object for the projections of Massenzio, and in particular: "lo spettacolo non era assolutamente quello che veniva proiettato sullo schermo, ma era soprattutto quello che accadeva sulle panche che erano state messe all'interno della Basilica di Massenzio. (...) la nostra operazione non è stata tanto diversa dagli artisti che celebravano la festa pariglia, abbiamo voluto che tutti festeggiassero: qui la tribù metropolitana può far festa"³⁵.

Perhaps is the ephemeral the key factor for the city of Rome, the only admissible approach for a palimpsest city, the only device that allows a dialogue between ancient and contemporary capable of restoring to the public the spaces of the eternal, even if just for a evanescent moment?



1.2.4 Meraviglioso urbano



36. Fagiolo dell'Arco
M, La festa barocca.
Corpus delle Feste
a Roma / 1, De Luca
Editori d'Arte, 1997

The term ephemeral is often associated with the artistic act and sometimes, with a certain negative connotation, with the expression of artifice. Precisely in its definition, reference is made to provisional phenomena of different scales, ranging from sets, installations, momentary events up to the artistic artefact. It is no coincidence that in relation to the ephemeral, we also refer to the great baroque festivals that characterized the 18th century, events described as a connective tissue between artificial and natural elements, and recalling the words of the art historian Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco: "[...] the purpose of the century is that of wonder, through an unfolding of music, performances, fires, "machines", in a global relationship with the public all based on the image. The "purpose of the wonder" is achieved with persuasion"³⁶.

The question of the ephemeral is also debated in the artistic sphere in all those contemporary investigative movements that materialize their works into products with a predetermined deadline: happenings and performances. But the peculiarity of art has always been the attitude to push man to confront the sublime, thus inducing a state of rapture through the subtle use of mystery and the inexpressible.

Nicolini's Estate Romana manages in a certain sense to assimilate the eighteenth-century purpose, the wonder of Baroque celebrations, reinterpreting and remodeling it according to the city and its spaces. Rome, in its palimpsest of identity, is strongly narrated through its sublime architecture, real works of art that place man in front of a condition of ecstasy, a state of wonder in itself. **The most significant issue of this Capitoline season precisely deals with these naturally magnificent places, looking for alternative expedients with the aim of finding a different interpretation of wonder.** Nicolini's intent was therefore to somehow have to counter the intrinsic identity of the sublime that distinguishes these architectures, with an antithetical response to them, through experimental and ephemeral episodes.

The ambiguous and contrasting extraordinary - ordinary binomial is the prevailing element the Roman architect plays with, recreating situations for the city of Rome that are extra-ordinary, such as film reviews, within spaces that are by nature extra-ordinary, but which at the same time make up the ordinarieness in the fabric of the historic city center. A plurality of meanings therefore lies behind the game of paradoxes of the interventions of the Estate Romana; from a certain perspective, territories are extraordinary, the events that reactivate them as well as

their reappropriation, and consequently the plurality of exceptions and of elements out of the ordinary relocate spaces and their nature to an ordinary scale, albeit in the temporal and fleeting dimension of the ephemeral.

If the search for amazement was the background of the ephemeral season of eighteenth-century Baroque, it also constitutes the backdrop in the Nicolini episodes, but more than the single momentary episode, the resonance of the regenerative effects that occur on an urban scale of these spaces is itself cause for wonder: “far la strada e incontrare meraviglie, ecco il grande motivo”³⁷, wrote Cesare Pavese; Nicolini’s project transforms Rome’s extraordinary / ordinary places into priceless, unquantifiable spaces, shifting the point of view from which they are observed inwards and away from crystallization trends. A project that manages to seduce senses and deceive eyes, and curiously it reflects the same peculiarities of the Baroque season: the same spaces suspended between inside and outside, real and fictitious described by Buci-Glucksmann, according to whom the Baroque assumes immaterial and invisible points of view.³⁸

These assumptions allow us to actually understand how the Estate Romana makes use of a series of spatial experiments useful for investigating the impact and response of the city. An urban survey whose premises intimately consider the ordinary, in the attempt to become aware of the extraordinary condition of the city with the ambition of bringing it back to an ordinary, daily dimension, unhinging the cognitive limits that determine the public-monument gap, and recalling the words of Fava: “per poter meravigliare è necessario entrare nella dinamicità della vita, toccare le invisibili corde del sensibile, navigando creativamente tra le oscurità dell’esistente”³⁹.

Therefore, the meraviglioso urbano, as defined by Nicolini, takes on the connotations of a search for the ordinary, giving the inhabitants a desire to be personally part of the narrative of these extraordinary episodes.

37. Pavese C., Il mestiere di vivere, Einaudi, Torino, 1952

38. Buci-Glucksmann C., La ragione barocca: da Baudelaire a Benjamin, Costa e Nolan, Genova, 1992

39. Nicolini R., Estate Romana. 1976-85: un effimero lungo nove anni, Città del sole, Reggio Calabria, 2011

“EPHEMERON:

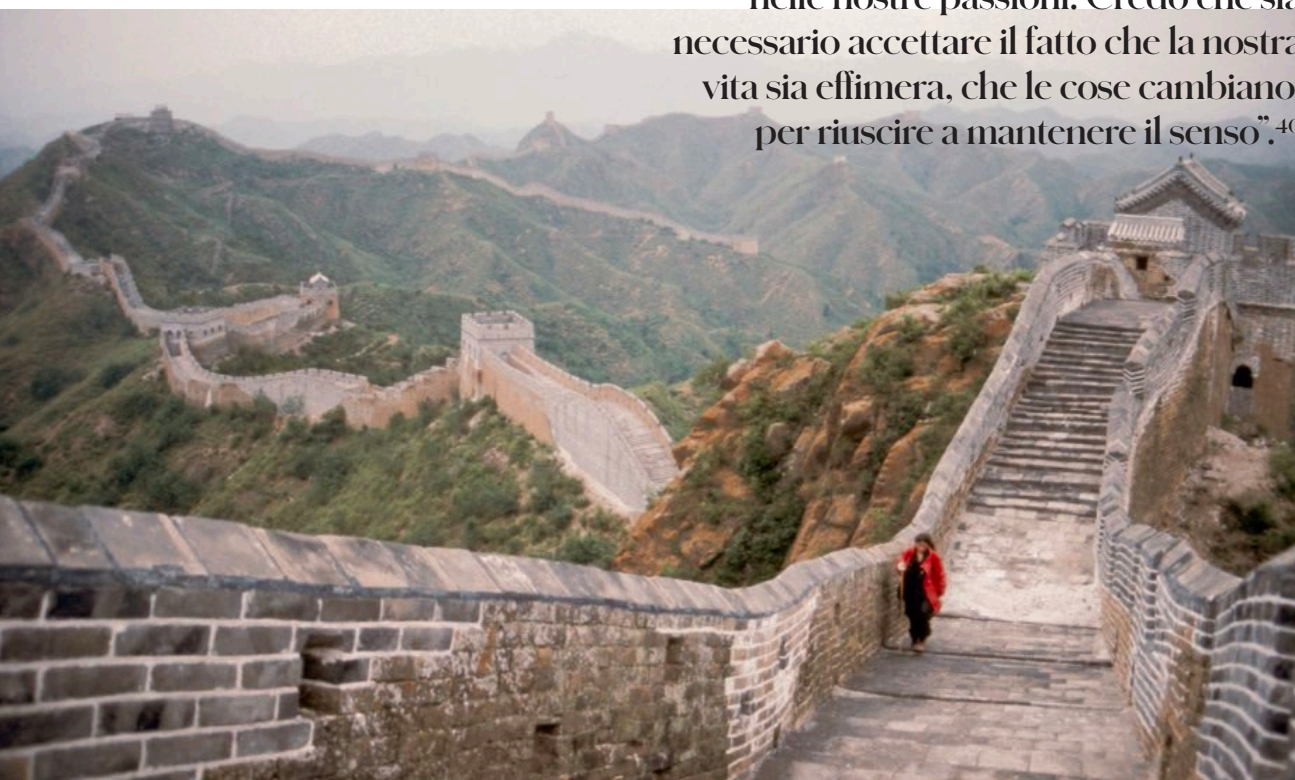
*This area struck me as a dream of a place in the city and I thought to myself that soon it wouldn’t be this way any longer.”**

**Koolhaas R., Mau B., Sigler J. (edited by), Werleemann H. (photography by), S, M, L, XL: Office for Metropolitan Architecture, The Monacelli press, 1998*

1.2.5

Emotional nature

“il senso dell’effimero non riguarda la provvisorietà di un fatto perché gli avvenimenti vengono inevitabilmente cancellati. L’avvenimento effimero è quello che lascia dei segni nella nostra memoria, nelle nostre emozioni, nelle nostre passioni. Credo che sia necessario accettare il fatto che la nostra vita sia effimera, che le cose cambiano, per riuscire a mantenere il senso”.⁴⁰



40. Fava F., Op. Cit.

41. Glissant E., Traité du tout-monde, Gallimard, 1997

Returning to the particular attention towards the ordinary, Nicolini further emphasizes the manifestations of the emotional nature in living the spaces of the city. On the one hand, the architectures of the Estate Romana are part of a temporal, more than spatial, dynamic, but on the other hand the ephemeral as a momentary condition produces an opposite effect in the memory of those who live these moments.

In Nicolini’s words, it is clear that the ephemeral means above all imprinting an eternal and timeless contamination on the individual’s mind rather than leaving residual traces in the stage space of the places that hosted these episodes.

Therefore, the Estate Romana is characterized above all by memories of those who lived this experience, testifying above all to a search for an emotional bond with the users of this season, questioning the temporary nature of these episodes. In this regard, the concept of tout-monde elaborated by Edouard Glissant, intercepting the masked meaning that shapes space, is a key passage: “When I say that location is unsurpassable, I mean that we cannot evade it, nor can we lock ourselves inside it, because place becomes meaningful only when it is associated with other places. The spirit of place, in fact, is to cause a contact, a relationship, and then to enter into relations with all parts of the world: in other words, with what I call the tout-monde”⁴¹.

Glissant expresses a perpetual pursuit of connections that cannot be interrupted, and by borrowing this reflection on a romantic dimension, space establishes intimate and emotional engagements with those who live it. The experience of the Estate Romana translates this thought, and its performances not only establish links with pre-existing places, but transfer the same search for contact on the emotional scale, maturing an emotional transport with the public.

‘Deve essere consacrata la felicità degli esseri umani, ci possono essere attimi di felicità che vengono dal fatto che ascoltiamo la musica che preferiamo nello scenario migliore... Ricordo la sera del concerto di Simon & Garfunkel, quando attaccarono bridge over troubled water, si vedeva la luna attraverso le volte del Colosseo...basta quello. “è effimero!” Sarà effimero, ma io lo ricordo ancora adesso’⁴².

Returning to the ordinary-extraordinary paradoxical pairing, the general attitude of the season is reflected in the attempt to divert the gaze from spectacular and exotic subjects, to bring everything back to an everyday and accessible dimension, recalibrating and refocusing the gaze in “everyday life”⁴³, as Georges Perec would say.

According to Perec himself, in fact, only by training the gaze to observe in a flat way, in a slow and naive way, will it be possible to see the places of the ordinary again. The need, according to the author, is to “question the habitual” precisely because “we are used to it. We do not question it, it does not question us, it does not seem to pose a problem, we live it without thinking, as if it did not carry questions or answers, as if it were not bearer of some information”⁴⁴.

Following Perec, therefore, the necessity is to rediscover atony, move away from any search for perfection or “marvellous” in the broadest sense, in order to reset the human gaze to observe differences, transitions and spatial metamorphoses.

42. Veltroni V., from the documentary Meraviglioso urbano: trent'anni di Estate Romana, Malabruzzi M., Petrone G., Rai Educational, La storia siamo noi, 2007

43. Perec G., L'infra-ordinario, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1994

44. Perec G., Op. Cit.

45. Fava F., Op. Cit.

46. Fava F., Op. Cit.

47. Pettarin F., Crisante S. (a cura di), Progettare gli eventi: introduzione all'operatore culturale, Costa & Nolan- Editori Associati, Ancona, 1999

48. Nicolini R., Purini F., L'effimero teatrale: Parco Centrale meraviglioso urbano, La casa Usher, Firenze, 1981

Consequently, there is a need for new methodological meanings free from any pre-established paradigm, to overcome the inability of architecture to give up itself and to pay more attention to temporal and perceptual factors. Issues already expressed and raised in the Estate Romana, through the dynamism of the ephemeral understood as a process for questioning city spaces.

Among the most important results of this season, there is the criticality of interpreting usable spaces as performative surfaces, theatrical scenes of fertile ground, relationships and transformations. As Fava explains, **Nicolini's intent was mainly to implement a “memories strategy”, which consists in an awareness of the needs and ambitions of the present, borrowing it from the urban dimension.**⁴⁵

To quote the same Roman architect: “what seemed to some a strategy of the ephemeral, is instead a strategy of the profound, because it focuses on these memories, and even more on the recognition and consolidation of desires, on the elevation of culture starting from the recognition of the material culture of the population, and of the even subversive refusal of homologation, up to the project, perhaps still the idea of a city in which a culture is neither ephemeral nor occasional, but the principle of needs, the one that expresses the degree of civilization”⁴⁶.

An urban and cultural policy aimed at the use of elements capable of reinterpreting habits and ways of enjoying space strongly rooted in the Roman tradition; **Nicolini, in his actions, was able to reread characteristics and methods in the use of the typically Roman space, such as the walk to the Fori and the habit of informal and spontaneous use of public space.**⁴⁷

In the rediscovery of the daily, the ephemeral conceals further depths of meaning, assuming the role of an instrument through which investigate more intimately the relationship between reality, imaginary and perception, a fundamental cognitive triptych in the palimpsest-city of Rome. It is therefore crucial to reflect on these three terms and how their relationship restores the city's identity. If the reality of public spaces corresponds to how they are expected to be used, actually, it is closely linked to the imaginary of Rome, to the stereotypes connected to it and often encouraged by the intellectuals themselves, “entangled in the theoretical meshes of purely ideal orders”⁴⁸.

Credits

p. 6 Gaia Global Circus, Une tragicomédie climatique, Bruno Latour ZKM
Copyright: Patrick Dumas / Look at Sciences

p. 7 Future perfect, Chapter I 2040
Copyright: Judy Natal

p. 19 Sun Tunnels, Nancy Holt
Copyright: Nancy Holt / DACS

p. 20-21 The ice melting series, Olafur Eliasson, 2002, neugerriemschneider, Berlin, 2004
Photo: Jens Ziehe

p. 25 Waorani people of Ecuador
Photo: Jeronimo Zuniga

p. 27 Repair, Mauro Bracco, Louise Wright and Linda Tegg, Australian Pavilion, Venice 2018
Photo: Rory Gardiner

p. 29 Coophimmelb(l)au, Wolf D. & Partner, A demonstration showing the possibilities of pneumatic construction.

p. 30 Plastiglomerate sample
Photo: Kelly Jazvac

p. 33 Jacobson's Fabulous Olfactometer, Susanna Hertrich

p. 35 First Earth Day April 22, 1970
Photo: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

p. 35 Spaceship Earth (2020), Documentary Movies Series
Copyright: 2020-Neon

p. 36 After Oil, Strait of Hormuz Grand Chessboard, Ghosn R., Jazairy E.H., Geostories: another architecture for the environment, Actar, Barcelona, 2018

p. 39 Decodificazione dell'ambiente (sulla panchina), con Vincenzo Ferrari, 1972, collage on wood, 16 pieces 35 x 50 each, Laura Bulian Gallery

p. 40 Frankenstein, James Whale, 1931Victor Frankenstein confronts the creature

p. 42 Kitchen Stories, Bent Hamer, 2003, NOR
Photo: Hans Mathisen

p. 43 The Domain of Arnheim, Rene Magritte, 1962

p. 45 Physical Geography, Edinburgh Black, Adam & Charles, Published by A. & C. Black. Engd. by Geo. Aikman, 1854

p. 47 Inhale-exhale, Terike Haapoja, 2008/2013, durational sculpures: plywood, glass, soil, CO2 sensors, sound.
Photo: Sandra Kantanen

p. 47 The Sound of Ice Melting, Paul Kos, 1970
Photo: Gallery Paule Anglim

p. 48 Riverbed, Olafur Eliasson, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, 2014
Photo: Anders Sune Berg

p. 56-57 La basilica di Massenzio, Estate romana, 1977

p. 59 Mamma Roma, Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1962, IT

p. 60 Roma, 1973, Gianni Berengo Gardin – Fondazione Forma per la Fotografia Milano

p. 61 Roma, 1973, Gianni Berengo Gardin – Fondazione Forma per la Fotografia Milano

p. 62 Women at their daily gathering beside an ancient Roman wall, Parco dei Gordiani, Rome October 1990 in the collection Campagna romana: the countryside of ancient Rome, Joel Sternfeld

p. 64 "Abitare è essere ovunque a casa propria", intervento ambientale, Ugo La Pietra, Giulianova, 1968

p. 65 Roma, Comizio di Lama 17 febbraio 1977

p. 65 Performance di Vettor Pisani con Giovanni Macchia, Roma, 1973
Photo: Fausto Giaccone

p. 66 Attico di Fabio Sargentini

p. 68 Dodici cavalli [Twelve Horses], Jannis Kounellis, L'Attico, Rome, 1969.

p. 72 Dettaglio pagine interne Domus 531 / febbraio 1974. Ben, mostra Contemporanea, Parcheggio Villa Borghese, Roma 1974

p. 73 Parcheggio sotterraneo a Villa borghese, Roma, Italy, Piero Portaluppi

p. 77 Collage di manifesti di Giuliano Vittori per Massenzio, Estate romana

p. 78 Ice Watch, 2014, Olafur Eliasson Bankside, outside Tate Modern, London, 2018
Photo: Justin Sutcliffe

p. 79 The Lightning Field, Walter De Maria, 1977
Photo:John Olett

p. 81 See Poussin Hear Lorrain, Ian Hamilton Finlay, garden sculpture, 1987

p. 86-87 Cinema sulle Dune a Castelporziano, a cura dell'Officina Film Club, 1984

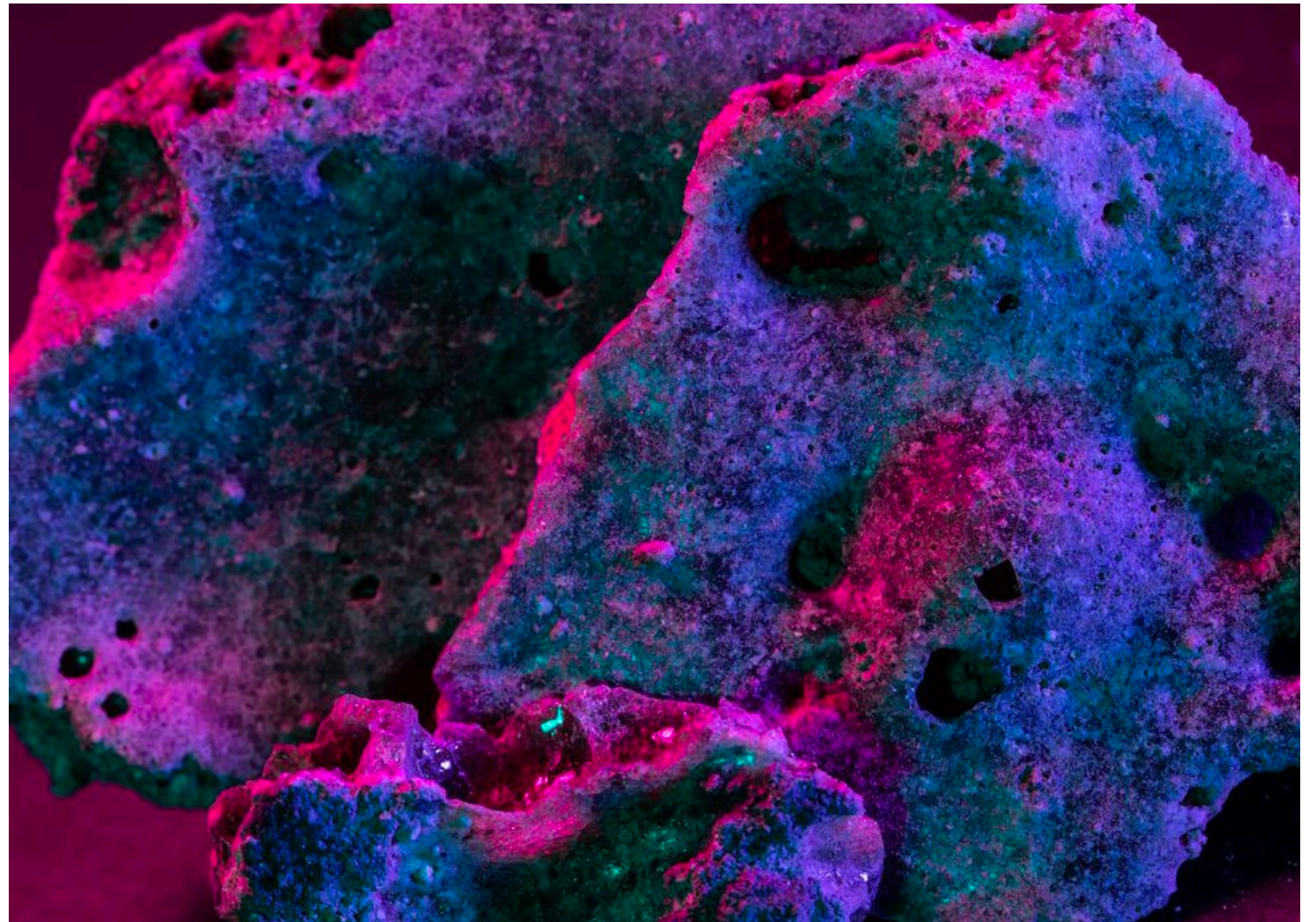
p. 88 Fountain, Marcel Duchamp,1917

p. 92 Walk Through Walls: A Memoir, Marina Abramovic, 2016

SINEDDOCHE

Rhetorical figure based on the principle of the substitution: a word with a more, or less, extensive meaning that is figuratively used to suggest another one. The relationship between the terms involves quantitative aspects. For instance, relationships such part-whole, singular-plural, material-object.

For example, the trinitite as a product designating Trinity, the first nuclear test in New Mexico, therefore: of the effect for the cause.



POINTS OF VIEW

The pervasive and exceptional extent of climate change is part of the topics that for decades have been questioning the tools and methods of traditional urban planning. If in the past urban planning and, more generally, the local government have taken a decisive approach, the new conditions affecting cities are forcing them to deal with uncertainty as a figure the project must cope with. The research wonders about places that can offer an opportunity to experiment new design practices for adaptation to environmental emergencies, assuming that cities become the new laboratories for experimenting with unprecedented project frames. The prevalence of artificial over natural, the strong waterproofing of soils and the low ecological value, highlight the need to put a strain on the traditional paradigms, questioning, through the theme of climate change, architecture and urban planning. From this point of view, it is necessary to look at the territory again, foreshadowing approaches to the project that open up to new temporal and spatial scales, in order to be able to deal with the implications of climate change.

Urban planning, in the words of Rem Koolhaas, becomes the “staging of uncertainty”, a field of rethinking the

project in performative rather than prescriptive terms; the project, in response to the changing needs of a society and a city in constant change, must enhance its capacity for reversibility, evolution, dynamism and provisionality, “oscillating between one unstable condition and another, adjusting some variables along the way”¹. The new dimension of the project necessarily involves the revision of traditional methods of analysis and implementation tools, building new methods of investigation and design approaches to the territory.

The attempt was therefore to investigate the city of Rome producing a rereading already oriented to the project, through a series of maps that in the description of the places simultaneously revealed their contradictions and potentialities, suggesting implicit design directions. Specifically, “Reality”, “Imaginary” and “Perception” were the terms the different interpretations were built around, with the hypothesis of combining these different points of view to re-establish multiple interpretations of territorial complexity. Losing the rigor of traditional analytical reading, these observational lenses have often overlapped and mixed, to enhance the projective potential of the survey.

As observed by Cavalieri, “if the process of unfolding the palimpsest, of deconstructing, excavating and investigating the context, across time and space, is a widely adopted operation today, the reconstruction process could instead be reconceptualized with the notion of hypertext: hypertext is a non-hierarchical rather than linear text, which is constructed as open and possibilistic rather than unitary and imperative”². The term, coined by T. Nelson in 1965, was re-signified by Corboz as a metaphor for

the reading of the territory which, probed in its elementary components, each endowed with autonomy of meaning, is then reorganized into a discourse that proceeds not sequentially, but through associations of ideas. In the wake of these definitions, the research suggests a further figure, that of the rhizome, which specifies these levels of transversal interpretation. The metaphor was elaborated by Guattari and Deleuze in the work “Mille Plateaux”, itself conceived in a rhizomatic way, conceived as a set of chapters that, although constituting a set, maintain their autonomy, guaranteeing both sequential and random reading. Replacing the line of thought defined as “arborescent” that proceeds hierarchically and linearly, defining rigid categories of meaning and defined once and for all, according to an approach still dominant in many disciplines, the concept of rhizome has an intrinsic dynamism: as a linear horizontal structure is prepared to host new connections and new nodes that develop without hierarchies³.

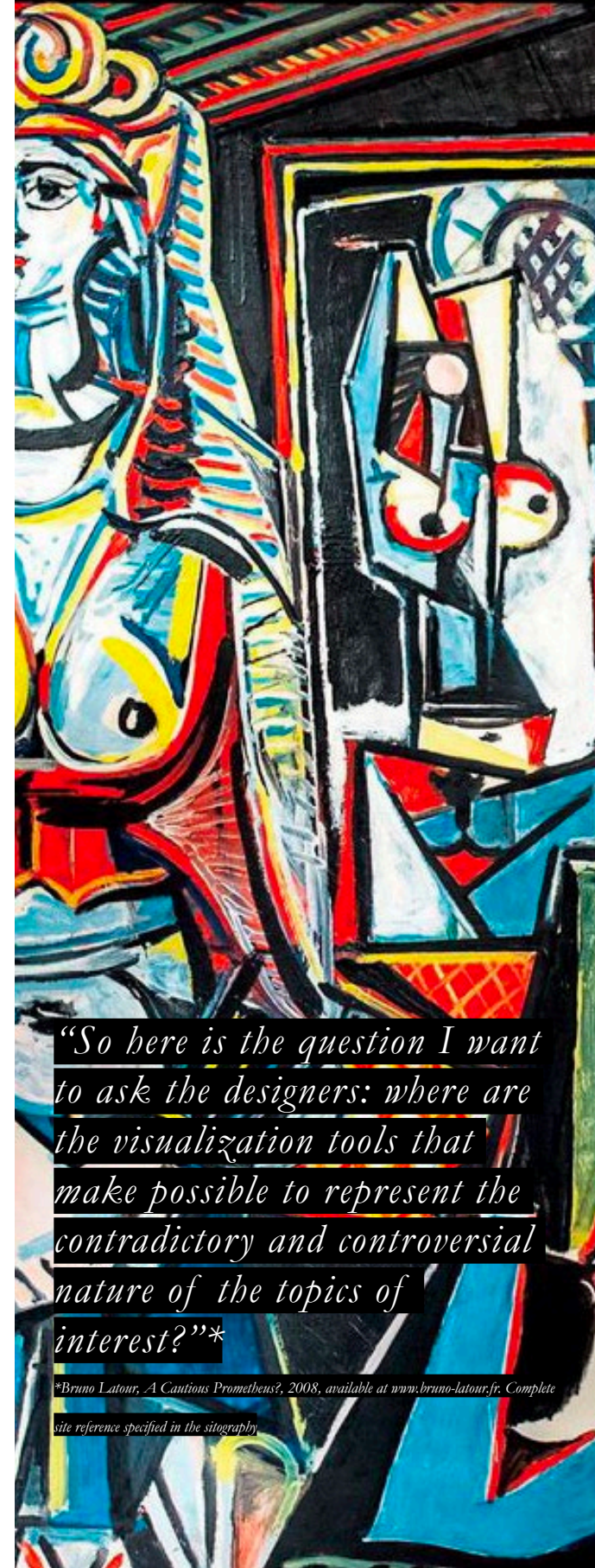
1. Monstafavi M., Why Ecological Urbanism? Why Now?, essay in Harvard Design Magazine no. 32 / Design practice now, vol.1, available at <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org>. Complete site reference specified in sitography

2. Cavalieri C., Viganò P., HM: the horizontal metropolis: a radical project, Park Books, Zurich, 2020

3. Deleuze G., Guattari F., Mille piani: capitalismo e schizofrenia, Cooper Castelvocchi, Roma, 2003)

*“So here is the question I want to ask the designers: where are the visualization tools that make possible to represent the contradictory and controversial nature of the topics of interest?”**

*Bruno Latour, *A Cautious Prometheus?*, 2008, available at www.bruno-latour.fr. Complete site reference specified in the sitography



2.1 Reality: the potential of mapping

“In other words, there are some phenomena that can only achieve visibility through representation rather than through direct experience. Furthermore, mapping engenders new and meaningful relationships amongst otherwise disparate parts. The resultant relational structure is not something already ‘out there’, but rather something constructed, bodied forth through the act of mapping.”⁴

The analysis of the territory at different scales, in its morphological components, in the composition of the soil, in the mixture of materials that determine its image, captures a snapshot of the urban palimpsest. Nevertheless, taking up the theoretical position of Jill Desimini and Charles Waldheim, describing the characteristics of a particular territory also means including the narration of change and transformation and this becomes of central importance when the climate question is added to the terms of the investigation. In this sense in the graphic rendering, the representation of mostly immaterial data is associated with the physical and material component of the soil. Far from the determinism of the map, an approach that tends to be pursued by traditional analytical logics, and from the abstraction of scientific data, which move the representation away from the real knowledge of the territory, the research attempt is to find a balance that creates “a representative project that blends spatial precision and cultural imagination”⁵.

The map can thus be understood in the meaning pursued by Mostafavi: a “catalyst for the actualization of the territory”⁶.

Climate change in the form of data, indicators and charts in this way informs the project, through representations which, without alienating themselves from the territory, synthesize the information translating it into spatial terms. Becoming a potential tool for the project, the map assumes a performative value and the interpretation of the territory becomes central: in this sense, the research does not aim to draw a status quo, but rather figures that suggest design directions so that the

4. Corner J., The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention, in Cosgrove D. (edited by), *Mappings, Reaktion*, London, 1999. Available at <http://peterahall.com>. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

5. Desimini J., Waldheim C., *Cartographic grounds. Projecting the landscape imaginary*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2013

6. Mostafavi M., Op. Cit.

7. Corner J., Op. Cit.

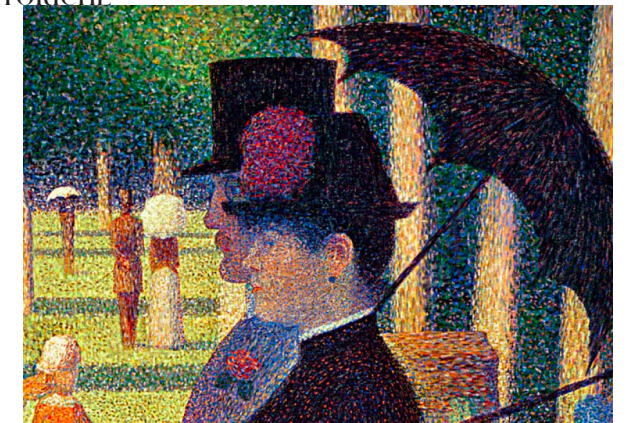
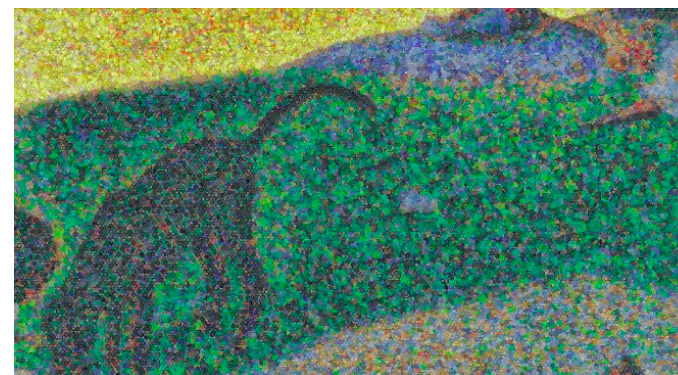
8. Cavalleri C., Viganò P., *HM: the horizontal metropolis: a radical project*, Park Books, Zurich, 2020

9. Pavia R., *Le paure dell'urbanistica. Disagio e incertezza nel progetto della città contemporanea*, Costa & Nolan-Editori Associati, Genova, 1996

map becomes the project itself. According to these intentions, Deleuze and Guattari's warning resounds, in order to let the map prevail rather than the layout, where the first term implies an experimentation in contact with the real rather than a mere representation of it.⁷ As underlined by Corner, the mapping so understood allows not only to highlight the possibilities in the complexity and contradiction of the city, but also to actualize that potential. Through selective and synthetic representations, the aim is to recognize the logics that structure the space and to bring to light potential and breaking points, proceeding with a continuous “partition and reconstruction mechanism, in which the very act of reconstruction, reorganization and reformulation is conceived as a search operation”⁸.

Having consolidated its role as a design tool, the map also recovers its representative value when it is able to act as a “retroactive manifesto”, revealing projects already underway in the urban fabric; in a certain sense spontaneous projects of those parts of the city that have been able to best support change, investigating whether there are already intrinsic logics in the city that can inform the new design approach.

Adopting this point of view, the territory loses its traditional hierarchical and oppositional classifications in favor of combinatorial logics that re-read urban materials through a plurality of interpretations rather than sterile taxonomies. In this way, the new principles for the interpretation of the complexity of the contemporary city are specified; in a rhizomatic interpretation, they “no longer have a prevalent interpretative scheme, but a plurality of interpretation paths.”⁹. In this contamination between the possible in the real, the map enables the continuous re-meaning of the urban palimpsest, revealing the potential inscribed in the territory.



2.2 Imaginary: data integration towards the possible



“L’immaginario è dunque radicato nell’immagine, formato da immagini, separato dal reale, ma a esso correlato e complementare.”¹⁰

10. E. Morin, *Le cinéma, ou l’homme imaginaire*, 1956

The term has been enriched with a plurality of meanings: in its negative interpretation, the imaginary is defined as a movement of diversion and escape from reality, a definition of something that does not exist if not in the imagination and has no basis in reality. In its positive meaning, however, the distances between reality and imaginary are shortened and the latter is intended as a synthetic function of perception or as an integration of real data towards the possible. The cancellation of the real / imaginary dichotomy was the approach this research on Rome adopted. In this shade of meaning, the imaginary draws precise aspects from reality to return a useful representation, highlighting peculiarities, contrasts, paradoxes.

In a city like Rome, it was an obligatory and fundamental step to reflect on the imaginary built and consolidated through myths, artistic and cinematographic productions. The collective imagination, of which cinema is especially considered one of the greatest expressions, in fact structures formulations that strongly affect the construction of precise ideas, both of what the city is and of what it could become. The imaginary, in this twofold perspective, tightens meaningful relationships with two other terms: “ordinary” and “perspective”.

In the first relationship, imaginary / ordinary, the rich imagery of and about Rome, freed from a superficial gaze, internalizes the complexity of different urban fragments and of the city itself, through synthetic reconstructions of social, spatial structures and lasting and unsolved tensions, which are configured as the ordinary conditions of the city, as stereotypes that guide the traditional reading and understanding of these places. Considered as a modality of physical description as much as social, economic and political, the imaginary thus understood represents a form of stabilization which, acting as an emulsifier, crystallizes the urban condition in a single uniform image, mitigating it and sometimes betraying its complexity.

11. Madsen P., Plunz R. (edited by), *The Urban Lifeworld: formation, perception, representation*, Routledge, London, 2002).

Consequently, taking into consideration the rich repertoire of imaginaries that Rome has collected does not mean searching among all the “truest image” or determining whether one or the other captures more precisely the experience and the perception. On the contrary, the intent is to move these stereotypes from their inertial condition, restoring their depth through a comparison with the new conditions of the city; this in order to underline the latent potentialities inscribed in these images and enable the second and more fertile relationship, that of imaginary / perspective.

The fundamental question with which to interrogate these imaginaries concerns in fact how these notions of the city can shape expectations about what it could become.¹¹ The revision of these imaginaries, necessarily passing through a new conception, thus reverses the relationships, starting from the imaginary to define a new condition of ordinariness. In this sense, the imaginary “precedes the action, in turn defining its spatial fallout”.

In this logic, **the implications of climate change are fitted at the exact intersection between ordinary and projection, which, as conditions of extra-ordinariness, allow for contact between the two terms, reshaping the imaginaries towards new declinations.**

The interaction between the real city, with its continuous transformations, and the preconceived images of it allows us to mobilize the imaginaries in support of the project, overcoming static and sentimental visions, bringing to the fore the importance that architectural practices and urban planning exercises not only on environmental and formal, but also cultural and ideological issues.

12. Cavalleri C., Viganò P., Op. Cit.

2.3 Perception: environmental relations

“You only understand information relative to what you already understand. You only understand the size of a building if there is a car or a person in front of it. You only understand facts and figures when they can be related to tangible, comprehensible elements.”¹⁵

With “The image of the city” the last term that guided the investigation into Rome is introduced. In fact, in the work, Lynch proposes to consider the “public image”, that is “the common mental picture that large sections of the population of a city carry with them”. Specifically, in retracing the formation of the urban image, he places emphasis on perception, which is not reduced to banal “subjectivity”, but rather conceived as something that involves cultural and social issues. **The hypothesis is to observe the city from the inside, with the eyes of those who experience its conflicts and paradoxes.**¹⁴

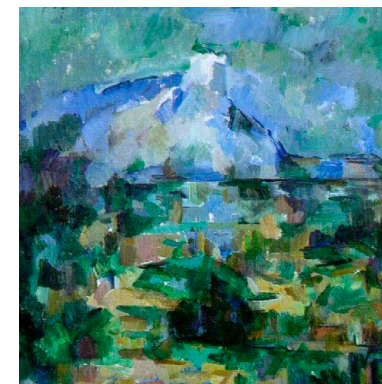
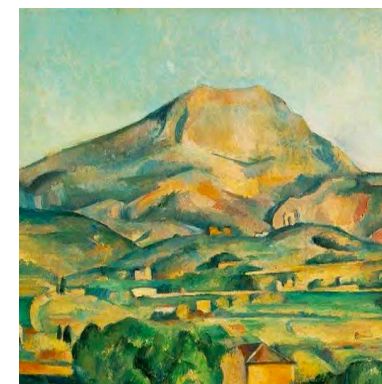
It is a reading that inevitably favors partial descriptions, but which, immersing itself in the experience of the city, allows for a subtly logics understanding of the use of space.

Logics that, reflecting on the climatic conditions, re-read the material aspects of the city, questioning what could be the new materials, the new surfaces, the new spaces for adaptation. Abandoning exclusively compositional logics of objects and surfaces, the interrelationships between objects within space, between space and its atmosphere, as well as the effects that are produced by such interactions, become the terms to be investigated in order to intervene in urban landscapes. The space of the city, in particular the public one, in fact lives in contingency and dynamism, being activated and modified over time by the events and situations that are generated and find space in it.

The city, understood as a dynamic field, is in fact activated by the daily practices of those who use its spaces, practices that are inevitably influenced by the perception of places. Even in its

13. Wurman R.S.,
Information anxiety,
Doubleday, New York,
1989

14. Cavalleri C., Viganò
P., Op. Cit.



immaterial aspect, climate change structures the space, influencing, as Metta underlined, above all on the collective behaviors that are adopted in public spaces.¹⁵

Questioning the sensitive dimension thus means bringing climate change back into the experience of the city, bringing intangible aspects closer to real knowledge and modeling of spaces. Through perception, in fact, we modulate our relationship with space, according to a double direction: modification of our behavior within the environment and adaptation of the environment, in order to prepare it for the use. Shifting attention from the static space-object to the space-time of relational systems, it is possible to give a new meaning to space, stimulating a reconfiguration through its dynamism and performativity.

In this sense, two episodes were particularly significant. In both cases, rather than pursuing descriptions developed for single points, relying on buildings and monumental spaces or vice versa on marginal spaces, the focus was on the perception of the relationships between man, environment and architecture. In the Seventies, through the rich program of events of the Estate Romana, Nicolini reactivated spaces in the city, in particular in the historic center, suggesting new perceptions of space through unprecedented experiences. Proposing new dynamics in the use of the city's monumental sites, it arouses a new perception of space: by questioning the archaeological and untouchable idea inherited from the traditional imagination, the spaces of the historic center take on a new meaning and value for the city.

The other episode takes place in the mid-nineties and concerns the renewed attention that the Stalker collective turns to the aesthetic dimension of Rome: through long walks they retrace the city, discovering hidden contradictions and harmonies. But what is most interesting is the new conception of emptiness as a place which, by virtue of its indeterminacy, allows for the establishment of new relationships between man and the environment. The pervasive system of voids that creeps into the core of the capital refutes the traditional readings of Rome, opening up new possibilities for interpretation and action.

15. Metta A., Verso Sud. Quando Roma sarà andata a Tunisi. Southward. When Rome will have gone to Tunisia, Libria, Melfi, 2018

METAFORA

Expressive linguistic process, and figure of traditional rhetoric, based on an implied similitude, an analogical relationship, whereby a word or a phrase is used to express a concept different from the one they normally express;

For example, Luigi Ghirri uses the relationship between the defined shapes of the railing and the writing with the indefinited landscape as a metaphor of the gap between word and object, sign and image, and of the subtle dialectic that is revealed in this gap between language and vision. It is therefore language that allows to see the world, as a threshold of visibility.



*“**Learning from** the existing landscape is a way of being revolutionary for an architect. Not the obvious way, which is to tear down Paris and begin again, as Le Corbusier suggested in 1920s, but another, more tolerant way; that is, to question how we look at things.”**

*Venturi R., Brown D.S., Izenour S., *Imparare da Las Vegas. Il simbolismo dimenticato della forma architettonica*, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2010

LEARNING FROM EFFIMERO



CONCEPTUAL ISSUE

Manfredo Tafuri: “Se dovessimo giudicare dai fatti appariscenti dovremmo dedurre che abbiamo una giunta che rinuncia ai progetti di lungo periodo, privilegiando lo ‘spettacolo’, ciò da cui ci si attende un risultato in tempi brevi.”¹

Italo Insolera: “Lo spettacolo è pericoloso. I progetti per ‘tappare i buchi’ non vanno considerati per ciò che appaiono – giochi estemporanei di architetti alla ricerca di incarichi – bensì per il pericolo che essi contengono. Che è superficialità di approccio ai temi, poca responsabilità nei confronti delle strutture storiche e funzionali, incredibile voglia di porre i propri segni accanto o – ciò che è più grave – sopra quelli antichi. [...] Anche perché tali ‘giochi’ iniziano ad assalire i monumenti, [...]. Lo pseudo-amore per l’antico fa chiaramente trapelare il bisogno di assalire l’antico stesso con gli strumenti più effimeri della ‘modernità’: il culto per il banale di massa. Un amore colorato di tinte sadiche, dunque, tanto più pericoloso quanto più dissimulato, magari sotto maschere proustiane.”²

L'Estate Romana, if on the one hand was accompanied by strong enthusiasm, equally strong were the criticisms against this season. The numerous misunderstandings referred to the concept of ephemeral in its most superficial meaning, highlighting only the momentary nature of this experience and not considering the depth of meaning that made the experience of the Estate Romana a great graft, spokesman of the fervor of the time.

Although the Estate Romana is characterized by a series of momentary episodes, it is therefore necessary to overcome the superficiality of the concept of temporary; the research starts from the critics of Tafuri and Insolera to investigate and understand how the ephemeral season has been an instrument of change for the city. The Estate Romana, as the research has already pointed out, is characterized by a series of crucial approaches in regards to the comparison and response to the urban fabric of Rome. Nicolini's choice to use minimal and essential interventions made up of simple and precise elements determines in reality conditions that resonate on the metropolitan scale. The temporal nature of this experience encouraged the public to perceive the importance of these spaces for the city, allowing them to overcome the monumental nature of these, opening up to other interpretations. The ephemeral season has in fact introduced the viewer's eye to new imaginaries, discovering new ways of using them.³ The key aspect is therefore the attitude of the ephemeral as a tool capable of restoring original scenarios, turning accessible to an ordinary dimension. The characteristic of these experiences of modifying the meanings of permanent spaces is therefore parti-

cularly significant; the temporal strategies used do not remain an end in themselves but evoke a longer-term thought about the city, in terms of cognitive and phenomenological transformations, suggesting new hypotheses on how the city could be. Nicolini's project therefore encourages experimentation with new uses and fruition of public space; it therefore translates into a catalyst tool of spatial and temporal dynamics, whose immateriality is the new key to interpreting the immutability of the ancient. Despite the criticisms of the time, L'Estate Romana was able to make flexible spaces that are in themselves indelible.

The unprecedented usability of these spaces does not determine a lack of responsibility towards the existing, even less a superficiality of approach, but a memorandum for the spectators, who have the opportunity to remember not only that they belong to the city but also to the extraordinary-ordinary nature of its monuments. These experiences have been able to intercept questions and to try to give answers; the safety of public spaces, the man - monument cultural gap as well as the center - periphery gap. The characteristic episodes of the Estate Romana are interpreted in this research as propelling devices for transformation; it is necessary to decipher the Estate Romana by isolating it and deriving the strategies that have allowed these changes.

The research therefore aims to try to understand the answers given by the Roman experience to these critical issues and try to extrapolate a possible repeatable code, a design scheme for a contemporary project methodology that can be re-proposed and translated with a current syntax.

Investigating the Estate Romana and the plurality of meanings of the ephemeral,

the research tries to understand how Nicolini's subtle strategies can be translated to today's circumstances. But compared to the social and cultural condition of the 1970s, a new variant must be considered in order to turn current the methodological principles of the experience of the Estate Romana, and therefore in addition to a transposition of the spatial, cultural and temporal aspects, it is necessary to add a new key of reading, such as the climate question.

The Estate Romana in its multiplicity of resonances on the city and approaches to change is interpreted here as a significant example of the project. The plurality of approaches of the Roman season are an interesting starting point to reflect on a new project on Rome, and therefore the Estate Romana allows to define the conceptual strategies of the project, the guidelines to follow in order to rethink the city of Rome taking into account the new cultural factor, such as climate change.

1. Tafuri M., in *Controspazio, Roma: I problemi di una metropoli. La nuova architettura*, n. 4, october-december 1984

2. Insolera I., *Roma, per esempio: le città e l'urbanista*, Donzelli, Roma, 2010

3. Fava F., *Estate romana: Tempi e pratiche della città effimera*, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2017

3.1.1 Unsolved stories

Many of the afflictions that Rome, as much as the inhabitants, suffered are still present, and in some way, there are similarities between the past situation background of the Estate Romana and the current condition. Consequently, the ephemeral season can be considered as a repeatable Roman “formula”; if Nicolini’s initiative was the first boost that led to a change in the city by exploiting the cultural fervor of the time, it is necessary to understand in which terms this response has mitigated such a troubled era, and therefore which approaches and responses can be borrowed today to allow for a new change.

So, in which terms do we speak of analogies between yesterday and today?

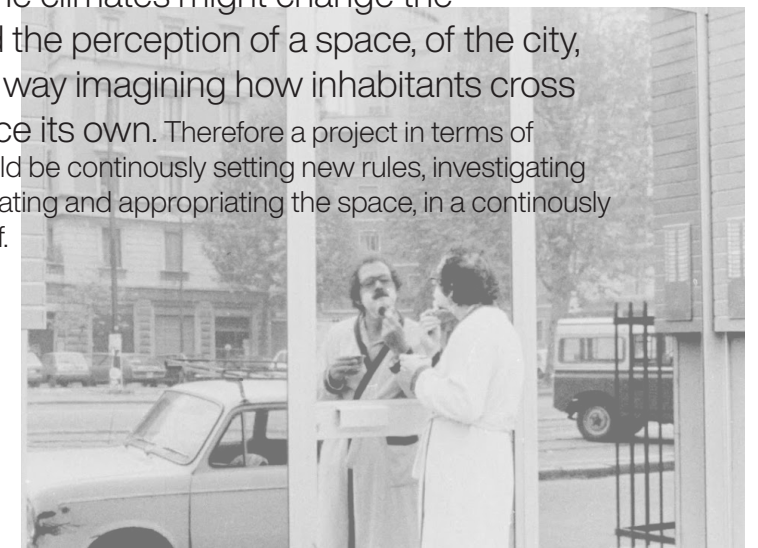
Today, albeit in a different form, the driving phenomenon of the past, equal to the feeling of terror, reappears. If in the decade of the Estate Romana the catalyst of new avant-garde expressive forms and therefore of a search for new spaces for the public was the veil of alarmism that compromised the spaces of the city, unleashed by the war episodes of the years, to date we refer to a new and more current fear. This, on the contrary, no longer resides in a social and political dimension as it previously happened, but rather concerns a sphere that may apparently seem imperceptible, but rather constantly involves the metropolitan scale. The research therefore speaks of a new restlessness felt unconsciously, more silent and discreet, but which threatens public space in the same way and which involves both the spatial and psychological dimensions of each individual. If those of the time were social and political struggles that questioned the free nature and safety of places, the threat of today is on a phenomenological level, compromising the knowledge of Rome and its spaces. The perception of the city today is undermined by the discriminating factor of climate change, which manifests itself in different forms and at different scales, from atmospheric particulate matter to high temperatures, involving a change in the light and therefore colors of the city’s architecture⁴. Talking about the transformation of the perception of public space

4. Metta A, Verso Sud. Quando Roma sarà andata a Tunisi. Southward. When Rome will have gone to Tunisia, Libria, Melfi, 2018

5. Quaroni L, Immagine di Roma, Laterza, Bari, 1976

also means talking about a change in the uses and ways of using the space. In this sense, the climate issue is hence compromising the spontaneous and informal way of experiencing the public spaces of the Capital, even though in a silent and barely perceptible manner. It is in fact mining at all those factors and aspects that involve the daily and ordinary dimension, for example, the lights reflected by the sky, the pureness of the air, the shades of the colors of the materials that compose the city. The past phenomenon of restlessness has generated new practices and their expressive need has determined a search for new manifestations of expression. It is therefore necessary to exploit in the same way the thrust that follows terror to investigate new spatial forms, intercepting the potential of public space, the latter compromised by the new perceptual restlessness. This condition of terror should be interpreted as an impulse for new spatial investigations, to define climate change rather than an invisible problem, a condition that the project should deal with. The goal is to establish new performativity of the public space starting from the same climatic conditions, rethinking it as the space of action of the inhabitants: the *vivre ensemble*, the authentic “*dimora*”⁵ of the Roman expressed by Ludovico Quaroni.

Rethinking the public space in climatic terms also implies rethinking its perception and therefore the experience made of it. It means imagining how the climates might change the atmosphere and the perception of a space, of the city, and in the same way imagining how inhabitants cross and make a space its own. Therefore a project in terms of climate change should be continuously setting new rules, investigating new ways of participating and appropriating the space, in a continuously changing space itself.



Etymology of ephemeral / today

Temporariness /
Temporality

3.1.2

“... the closed world, [...] is the distinctive character of ancient Rome: an environment in itself, a micro-universe, an Eden which man feels excluded from, the idyll of the street”⁶

6. Graves M., Roma interrotta, London, 1979

7. Fava F., Op. Cit.

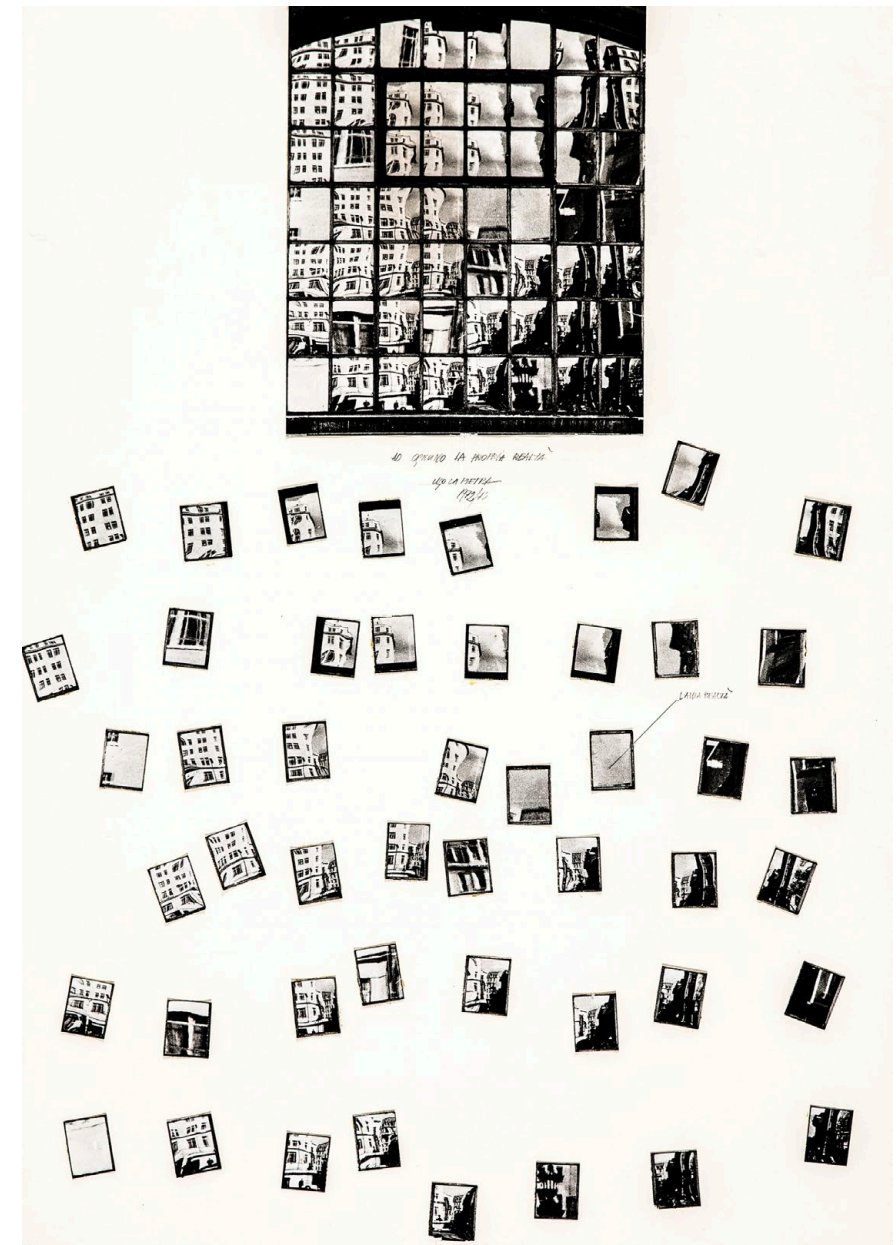
Among the multiplicity of the most significant approaches of the Estate Romana, the project intended as a temporal transition is at this point of particular interest, and therefore its aptitude for stitching between ancient and contemporary. The tendency of the project to structure itself into the existing as a cautious and sensitive intervention towards the ancient⁷, without imposing temporal hierarchies, but which rather enhances the multilayered character of the guest spaces puts the concept of ephemeral in a different light. In this sense, the project is a potential temporary path that allows, respectively due to its momentary nature, to relate to the existing in a completely prudent way, mitigating the monumental nature of these places and establishing a temporal dialogue. In this sense, the unprecedented characteristic of the Estate Romana is found in the use of temporariness, which allows to give new temporalities to places that are mostly static, permanent and

immutable, determining the re-appropriation of these spaces, and therefore suspending the cultural background to which the public suffers; this experience therefore finds particular interest in the interaction between man - space - architecture. The project is configured in this way as a key tool to return to the usability of these spaces, and therefore the project aims at a re-meaning; new scenarios are projected,⁸ bypassing the established dogmas and stereotypes and consequently the sensitive fracture between monument and individual described by Quaroni is healed, persuading the viewer's gaze to new possibilities for the city. The aim is to highlight the importance of reasoning in terms of **a project intended as a temporal convergence, adaptable to the existing and able to relate to the palimpsest identity of the city**; at the same time, it stands as a tool for the expression of new images as well as a buffer of conventional preconceptions.

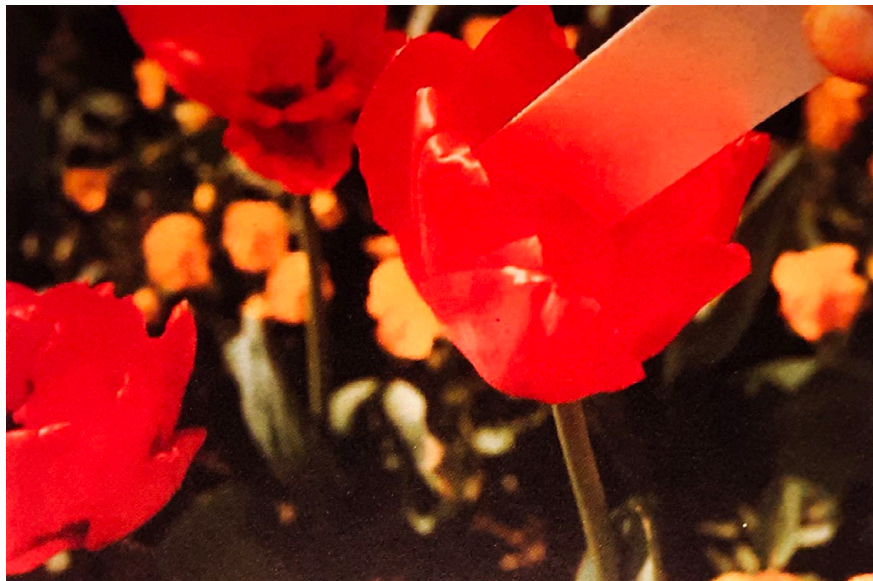
The attention is now turned to a further question, namely the paradoxical reasoning of a temporary project that has long-term resonances, a project that can be adapted to the different times of the city. Therefore, thinking about something momentary means in a certain sense avoiding any intention of permanent planning, leaving its destiny uncertain; versatility determines the continuous adaptation to the desires and changes of the urban context. The ephemeral project, in its temporariness, was therefore able to provoke effects even in a more lasting temporal dimension, making itself available and always fertile on the metropolitan scale.

In fact, during the nine years of the season, the Estate Romana was able to adapt and correct itself towards the changing aspects of the city, emerging as a chameleon-like experience. **It is therefore a project that develops following the times of the city, leaving itself open to any possibility of change together with the transformations of the city itself.** In these terms it is necessary to think above all of a more current interpretation of the city, and therefore in view of climate change. The aptitude for versatility would allow a continuous change in parallel to the environmental conditions to which the city is subject, with the intention therefore to trigger a new metabolism for the city through the use of artificial and natural materials. In this sense, the project envisages the phenomena to which the city will be subject and therefore the times and cycles which the materials of the project must respond to.

8. Fava F., Op. Cit.



3.1.3

Immaterial /
Absence

In “Ambiance 6”, Bernand Lassus gently inserted a white piece of paper in a red tulip and immediately the paper turned into the same color as the flower. In this way, the author demonstrated that the space inside the corolla is full, precisely of the color spreading from the petals.

The logic of the Estate Romana that favors temporal terms, placing itself as an extremely changing project, introduces a consideration on the immaterial and, particularly, how versatility can also be defined from a spatial perspective. From this point of view, the project is not intended with the characteristics of finite, indelible and immutable, rather it is intended to be reinterpreted as **a dynamic device, open to the future, which triggers an unpredictable process in space, and therefore in constant evolution.** The project-process is therefore deciphered in this sense as a method continuously changing that places the space of action as a transition in perpetual oscillation between interaction and interruption. In these terms, the project is a changing language, and it denies itself as a finished solution, defining rather the space as a blank page available to any possibility.

The aim is to turn the space of the project free and fertile, starting from the same reasoning about the emptiness of the Estate Romana for a new aesthetic of the city. Nicolini's intention to think about the dynamics of the immaterial evokes a concept of project that exploits the authentic performativity of the ephemeral episode, which does not reside in the artifice, or in the “telo bianco” of Massenzio, but in what happens among the public, and therefore the use of these places.

The episodes of the Estate Romana produce theatrical scenes for the typical use of the Roman public space, in which monumentality takes a back seat, playing rather as a background for the improvisations of the actors. If in a temporal vision the individual is a spectator, in this spatial perspective of the project that works on the absence the individual rather takes on the role of actor.

What allows these performances to be staged is the non-project, a suspended background in pre-existing places; it stands as a living object, a transformative process that needs to change in order to stay alive. In these terms, the project reflects a schedule, in assonance with the multilayered identity of Rome. The project as a process contains already written narratives, which need to be continually rewritten in order to develop. The project is a continuous mutation that does not exclude any possibility, but is made up of infinite facets, of the possible interferences that make the existing variable and unexpected. The project is thus the Calvinian “iperromanzo” (Calvino, 1985): there are infinite dimensions, in which all possibilities exist in infinite combinations.

The decision to establish space as a potential void, to think about the immaterial that composes it rather than the solidity of the architectures that delineate it, also means redefining it as a civic space. In this sense, the project allows a coexistence, in which the remnants of history are equally and evenly present, and together with each other and with the project they determine a “pantheon of ideologies and convictions”¹⁰.

10. 51N4E, Skanderberg Square, Tirana, Ruby Press, Brussels, 2017

The project is placed in this spatial perspective as a confluence of several meanings, which therefore allows a continuous alternation of interpretations of space. There is a strong awareness of the impossibility of enclosing the project and the multiplicity of senses within a single and finite form, and in the words of Emilio Gadda: “Forme ed eventi non possono essere chiusi in un singolo involucro, sono piuttosto aspettative rispetto cosa potrebbe accadere, su cosa c’era prima e cosa le ha determinate.”¹¹.

11. Gadda C. E., Un’opinione sul neorealismo, in The edinburgh journal of Gadda studies, 1950

The project is not expressed with the term vagueness, but constitutes a provisional element, structuring new spatial conditions in the times of the city. From plurality to the individual, from complexity to simplicity, the project oscillates between different interpretations, perpetually poised between accurate precision and differentiation, constituting a system of relations in the transitory temporal flow between the “expectations of what could be, and a reminder of what space was and is”¹².

12. Gadda C. E., Meditazione breve circa il dire e il fare, in Saggi giornali favole e altri scritti, Garzanti, 2008

3.1.4

Partial /
Global

Interpreting the project as a dynamic process rather than a finished and concluded solution raises questions towards the dimensional range the project belongs and manifests its effects. The case of the Estate Romana is particularly significant and further explanatory from this perspective; in fact, the episodes that characterized this season are part of a wider frame, that is an attempt to frame the historic center through a series of events that, articulated in different sites and moments, experimented new practices, in an attempt to hearten and encourage inhabitants to make unusual use of these places.¹³ The need to overcome the center-periphery binomial boosted the Estate Romana to act as a response for the city; the determination of new temporary temporalities in majestic and static places was in fact part of an urban logic that reflected on a wider scale.

The Estate Romana was therefore an episode that managed to overcome the single architectural dimension, and the re-appropriation of public space determined a re-centering of relationships, that followed a new approach to the monumental spaces of the city mending of the gap between the center and the periphery. This suggests a new design logic in which minimal intervention represents a broader strategy, resonating on a metropolitan level. **The project thus interpreted is broken down into a series of narratives / episodes, which constitute only small notes on the edge of a larger story, that of the city.**

From the perspective in which the small modifies the large, the project is therefore part of a series of considerations on the metropolitan dimension. The single intervention is an integral part of a more comprehensive vision and is the result of a reflection that examines larger sections of the city, thus relating to the urban scale, in which the molecular dimension is not a limitation, but rather it is understood as an opportunity. In this sense, working through the smallness means to expand the potential between emptiness and volumes, that is the background and architecture.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the project does not

13. Fava F., Op. Cit.

15. Barberis V., Cattaneo E.C., Prato. Fabbrica Natura. Il nuovo piano operativo, Skira, 2019

16. Barberis V., Cattaneo E.C., Op. Cit.

17. Barberis V., Cattaneo E.C., Op. Cit.

14. Atelier Bow-Wow, Behaviorology, Rizzoli, 2010

renounce to a global vision, but favors integral planning, a fragment of the city part of a wider pretext.

Unlike the spatial needs of the background context of the Estate Romana, and therefore the response of reunion between the rewritten margins of the city and its alienated historic center, the research wants to move away from the dichotomy center - periphery to bring attention to a design methodology that focuses to the interior of the city, questioning new ways of mending, using the minimal intervention of public space as a graft and a tool for transcalar reasoning.

In this plural vision between the minimum and the maximum, the ecological question constitutes the conceptual background of logics and reflections able to mend and redefine the urban landscape of Rome, placing itself as the inter-scalar element of the project. Thus, involving multiple scales of reflection as well as multiple intervention scales, from the territory to the detailed design of the public space, the project is interpreted as a synergy, intent on restoring the balance and connections of the fabric of the city¹⁵. The lack of a clear boundary between the rural landscape and the urban landscape, that as the mixture of this pervasive and heterogeneous fabric constitutes the potential to start to rethink the city.

The project is therefore an interdisciplinary and inter-scalar device, which considers nature as an element of a design language capable of composing a new landscape, constituting a mixture of nature and existing with the aim of building future scenarios¹⁶. In this sense, it is important to take into account multiple environmental sciences in order to build a new urban language starting also, and above all, from climate change. The project would thus find its expression through two tools: public space and nature, based on the mending of spaces, on ecological reconnection starting from the structure of the existing fabric and therefore from its re-signification¹⁷.

In this sense, the ecological field might be seen as a performative machine that could operate both at the molecular scale and at the territorial one. In this way, the project must arouse an awareness that the elements of nature need to be elected with accuracy both with the artificial elements of architecture, in order to cooperate at many levels of dimensions.

3.1.5

Horizontal /
Rhizomatic

The temporal and immaterial dimension of Nicolini's season diverted attention from the building itself, from the architecture that introduces itself monumentally and generates fractures; from this perspective, architecture is no longer the main character, but becomes the insubordinate decoration of a conceptual horizontal space, in which the city theater takes place into its public spaces. It is, above all, a question of horizontality in the relational topos: in fact, the experience of the Estate Romana favors the relationships that are established between the individual, space and architecture through the design attitude aimed to the immaterial. In the Estate Romana, the attention was shifted to the modalities the spaces can be used through, an approach possible due to the minimal intervention on the urban existing fabric Nicolini made use of. This logic reveals how this experience favored the performativity of horizontal surfaces over the solidity of architecture; as a natural result, the verticality is undermined, and the focus is shifted to a new field of action.

The absence as a strategy negates planning stasis affecting the city and, diverting attention from the mass assembly that characterizes the urban fabric, changes its viewpoints, focusing its emphasis on emptiness and its potential. **Thus, in a first layer of meaning, horizontality is to be understood as a design approach, an attitude in which public space comes to the forefront, diverting attention away from the buildings that draw it up.** In this sense, thinking in horizontal terms also means intercepting and investigating the intangible and smallest dimension of the open space, rather than acting permanently on what already exists.

Nevertheless, the concept of horizontality offers a second layer of meaning: the episodes of the Estate Romana were also able to generate new scenarios and interpretations of the static spaces of the city, and therefore a further lesson of this season is the ability to use the project as a spatial projector of multiple interpretations of reality¹⁸, able to undertake simultaneously different possible paths. Therefore, the

¹⁸ Fava F., Op. Cit.

“A strange prejudice that blindly valorizes depth instead of surface, claiming that the meaning of surface has ‘less depth’, and the meaning of depth is something with ‘great profundity’ and not something with less surface.”*

Deleuze G., Guattari F., Mille piani: capitalismo e schizofrenia, Cooper Castelvocchi, Roma, 2005

meaning of horizontality is here to be understood as a space available to every possibility, a conceptual space in which no design opportunity is excluded. The project is able to overturn roles perceptions of space, bringing it back to the ordinary dimension, in which the individual being is once more recognized as an actor of this experience.

At this point, the reader is introduced to the concept of rhizome, starting from the definition outlined by Deleuze and Guattari in “Millepiani”. The notion is described as a dislocated system in which each element is mutually linked to others without any prescribed formula, and therefore without any hierarchy.¹⁹ The rhizome is thus as a rejection of hierarchies and, in turn, a rhizomatic project does not favour any specific space, everything is placed “horizontally” on the same plane. If the Estate Romana project rejects the temporal / chronological pyramid, temporally speaking, in this rhizomatic reading the negation is also reiterated on the spatial level.

The project does not prevail, it is not imposed, but it disguised in the context in which it acts. The project is therefore proposed, also from this point of view, as a dialogue, to be understood as a communication between what exists and what could be, negating orders of priority between the elements that make it and the existing urban fabric up. Thus, there are no prevailing spaces, and consequently the monumentality of the built environment is also resized by virtue of this renewed point of view, unhinging the fractures that it generates. Once more, the project is rethought as a process, which, according to this interpretative lens becomes a strategy - camouflage, able to blend in with its surroundings, without imposing itself on the existing context and rejecting any spatial-temporal hierarchy.

The project, understood as absence, from a horizontal / rhizomatic perspective is revisited as a tool that, precisely because of its indefinite and open character, places each element it is composed of on the same level. The hierarchies reversal is therefore defined through the same components the project is made of: there are no subordination of materials, each element it is composed of has the same incidence, and the whole determines an organic system, so that each component equally contributes in the description of new spatial possibilities. The availability of space is subject to the same logic, and therefore no

19. Deleuze G., Guattari F., Mille piani: capitalismo e schizofrenia, Cooper Castelvocchi, Roma, 2003

use prevails over another. The space is left open to any hypothesis of use, without imposing predetermined conditions or uses. The explicit incompleteness of the project and its permanent changing condition allow the space to be available for any innovative fruition. Thus, the rhizomatic project, rejecting pre-established signs or designs, defines the chameleon-like identity of the space; it is therefore the project that adapts to the changing needs of the city, to the uses as well as to the unpredictable environmental conditions. A project intended as a hypertext, a continuous work in progress subordinated solely to the wishes the city expresses.

However, if in certain ways the Estate Romana is a valid example in its multiple approaches and strategies, in its current condition, the rhizomatic project moves away from the spatial pretexts that have determined the need for such a resonant intervention. If then the main purpose aimed to rehabilitate a relationship with the city center, and thus reestablishing connections, today the project no longer works within contrasting dichotomies. According to the definition of Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizomatic system favors connections in several directions, thus unhinging the conventional relational binomials the contemporary city is described through. The Research no longer speaks through opposite terms of center - periphery, city - countryside or artificial - natural, and the project crosses multiple paths, in a multilateral dimension. In this sense, the project overcomes conventionally contrasting binomials turning new gazes towards the city; through new interpretations and investigations, it redefines the elements that shape the city inside and on its edges, and uses materials of different natures to adapt the spaces of the city to its needs, in order to mitigate also the effects of climate change.



LEARNING FROM CIRCO MASSIMO

SPATIAL ISSUE

The conceptual example of the Roman Summer is implemented by the spatial question suggested by Circo Massimo, whose particular morphology constitutes a formula with still current potential in the design of the city. The 620 meters long and 140 feet wide, consecrate Circus Maximus as the largest man-made structure for shows, exploiting the morphology of the flat-bottomed valley of the Velabro, an ancient tributary of the Tiber. By virtue of this natural flat condition close to the river, since ancient times it has been elected as a privileged place for commercial exchanges and for carrying out market activities and meetings with other populations, as well as as a space for religious rites and socialization practices, like games and competitions. Its morphological conditions, therefore, since the time of its construction, determine its fortune as a flexible and adaptive space, supporting various expressions of the productive and public life of the city.

Even nowadays, Circo Massimo reveals a landscape scene which, beyond its subsequent uses and transformations, maintains a morphological continuity with the green crown that surrounds the city and in which not only the original topography persists, but its historical memory above all. It is in fact a system in which the historical, agricultural and the newest parts of Rome are mixed.

The research focuses on the fragmentary aggregation of this portion of the city, which reflects the spontaneous and multi-layered composition, as well as the palimpsest identity of Rome. From a formal point of view, Circo Massimo is a fundamental element within the urban fabric, as part of the green and indefinite silhouette that relates the city center to the Roman countryside. This urban cutout is translated as an emblematic example to explain the relationship that often exists between the plant fragments that repeatedly make up the city and the continuous urban fabric, but first of all to define the versatility of Circo Massimo and understand the replicable characters of this public space.

Observing the Nolli map, it is still possible to find characters that are still current and unchanged: the vast archaeological areas persist as active traces in the city palimpsest, imposing themselves as soils of nature and culture designed to survive the evolutions of the urban fabric. And it is precisely in these and among these historical islands or, as Purini would have defined them, "green memories", that the city finds respectively the structural reference and the material ground for its modern and contemporary expansion¹.



In the mutual hybridization of nature and anthropic environment, the fragment that finds its fulcrum in the Circus Maximus, experiences the construction of a city in which the thresholds between public and private become increasingly blurred, especially if observed in the composition of the plant material. Indeed, the urban dimension is greatly enhanced by the presence of a uniform green that works not only as urban design, but as a spatial continuum that gives an overall reading and functioning of the entire system.

In an agerarchic interpretation, the plant matter constitutes the permeable soil that invests the entire system, determining the prevailing nature of the soil. Observed in the different declinations of space, however, and therefore in the taxonomic radiographs, the pervasive network is read in its multiple identities that define the surfaces and their modalities of conformation; Circo Massimo is configured as a single chameleonic element capable of always taking on different characters.

Thus, investigated in its spatial dimension, it is interesting not only if fitted into this piece of the city in which different dimensions alternate and coexist, but also as a versatile space par excellence in the urban fabric. The criteria of flexibility that have always determined its varied uses, in fact, prepare it as an active and adaptive support for the changing practices of the city.

Originally born as the stage for chariot races, due to its exceptional size and neutrality, the space became the scene of political, social and religious events. In its subsequent uses, it was transformed into an agricultural field and into an Israeli-te cemetery, until the arrival of Fascism

which, for its high historical and symbolic value, elects it as the chosen space for its manifestations. With the post-war period, the contemporary characters of Circus Maximus began to take shape: a commitment to enhance its historical and archaeological dimension began to appear, but, at the same time, with a multi-temporal approach, it is recognized as a still active and potential space for city life. In other words, moving away from a conception that binds it exclusively to archaeological and identity values, Circo Massimo also finds its expression as a flexible and articulated public space, capable of being at the same time an urban park, an archaeological place that celebrates the past of the city without being a slave to it, a device environment capable of responding without permanent effects to climatic events, space for large events and ceremonies that animate the city. In this dual spatial interpretation, Circo Massimo therefore works as an unbuilt space that works in physical and functional synergy with the city, suggesting design strategies that, starting from its morphological components, suggest new declinations of public space.

1. Lotus International 157, City as Nature, Editoriale Lotus, Milano, 2015

Circo Massimo / Spatial readings

3.2.1

X-Rays

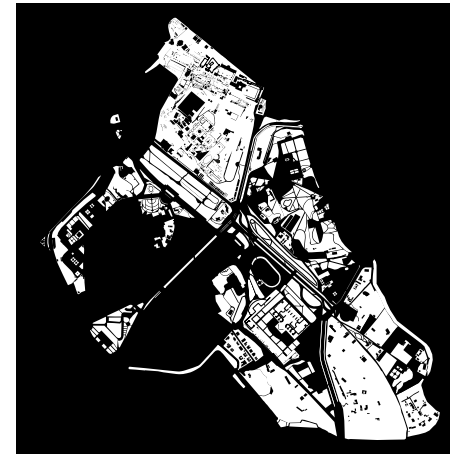
The peculiarity of this vegetable mosaic lies in its ambiguous character, in which the nature of the green spaces looks confused and often contradictory. The resilient identity that defines the character of these places lies in the versatility of the permeable soil, a single vegetal carpet, made up in its complexity of subatomic fragments of different natures, going beyond the simple etymological definition.

The soil is characterized, for the most part, of archaeological sites and historical areas, constituting the actual porous nature of vegetation, infiltrating the city's oldest architecture and monuments. On the contrary, public land is defined by minute and linear portions. Developing axially, each fragment converges in the vast area of the Circus Maximus, which assumes the role of catalyst. Quantitatively analogous to public portions, the private land is divided into a constellation of minute fragments, which, if compared to the historical areas, determine further alienation and distance from the latter. Particularly significant are the physical limits that delimit the portions of green: they appear to be marked in correspondence with the outermost edges of this plant system, determined in particular by the continuity of the Aurelian walls and especially present at the edges of the historical areas.

Inside, instead, there are a series of transitional spaces that help to mitigate the transition between old and new fabric. These elements replicate the nature of historic spaces, therefore also characterized by dense vegetation, but they are characterized as public spaces, and thus allow an original perception of the oldest portions.

In this multiplicity of elements that make up the system, Circo Massimo adapts continuously, assuming ever different roles in the succession of programmatic interpretations: from permeable soil, to historical, to catalyst of public spaces and at the same time a place of transition.

FIGURE RETORICHE



PERMEABLE



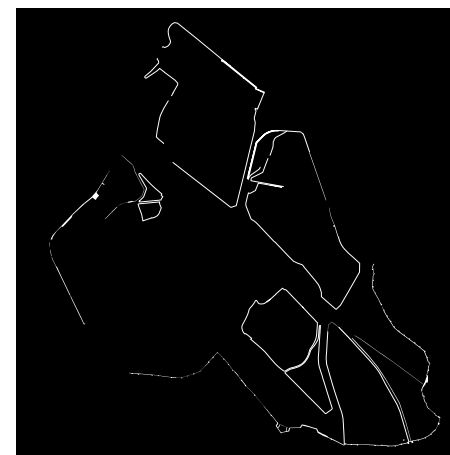
STORICO



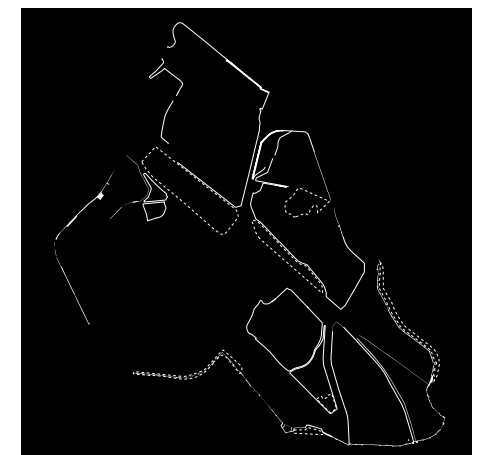
PUBBLICO



PRIVATO



CONFINI



TRANSIZIONI

**DID ANYBODY SAY
PUBLIC SPACE?**















3.2.3

Agenda

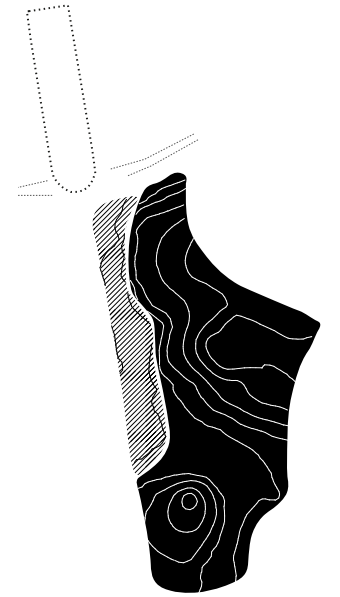
The flexible attitude of a space such as Circus Maximus to adapt to the changing needs of the city allows us to reflect on its role as a device. Having understood its main characteristics and the relationships that exist with the surrounding urban layout, it is possible to extrapolate design strategies, possible formulas that can be repeated in the city.

The first borrowed strategy identifies the catalyst element in the transitional space between the city and the historical fragment. This assimilates and imitates the nature of this fragment, from vegetation to strong orography, but differs from the inaccessibility that characterizes historical portions. Rather, it appears as an open area, with no physical or visual limitations, and is made available to the city by simulating the same Circus Maximus program as a public space.

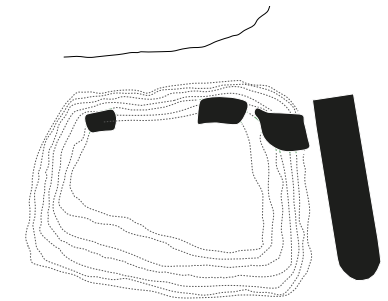
The second strategy identifies Circo Massimo as a design driving force. In this case, this large graft represents an occasion to initiate an infestation of further interventions on a smaller scale. This methodology appears to be a formula suitable in those fragments of cities characterized by steep slopes, which Rome is characterized by.

Finally, the third strategy follows the second, interpreting Circus Maximus again as a great graft, but favoring axuality rather than fragmentation. According to this spatial reading, it is possible to identify a series of connections that, expanding, offer the city a great variety of opportunities and episodes.

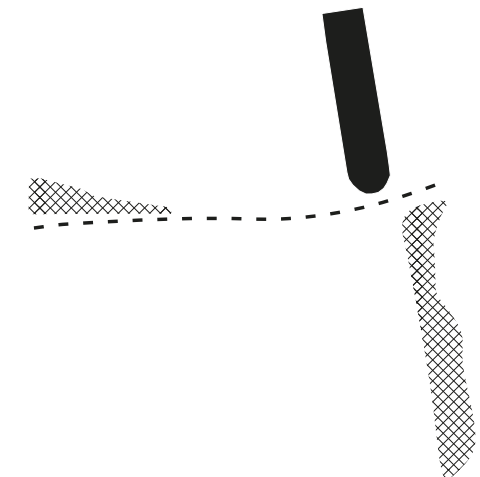
1. OROGRAPHY/TRANSITION



2. JUNCTION + INFESTATION



3. JUNCTION + CONNECTION





LEARNING FROM ARCHIPELAGO

INTERPRETATIVE ISSUE

The figure of the archipelago, as suggested by Stalker, has been for various studies, among which Labics and T-Spon, a fertile field to reflect on the contemporary condition of the city and establish the new directions of the urban project. While these researches, already deeply investigated and debated, have enhanced metaphor's validity and operability particularly to describe the condition of borders and periphery, a question mark has remained about its transposition into the consolidated city.

Following this logic, the figure of the archipelago as it was originally postulated in the eleven theses of "The city in the city, Berlin: A green archipelago"¹ was taken up and compared with the entire urban reality of Rome, defining the points of detachment in the light of the changed contemporary conditions and testing its actual potential in describing the entire

structure of the city.

In his work, through the description of Berlin, Ungers recognizes that the city can no longer be traced back to a unitary image, being made up of a series of heterogeneous fragments defined by its own formal structure. The proposal thus reinterprets the fragmentation of the city and instability not as situations to be solved, but as operational materials of the project. What it pursues, therefore, is a reconstruction in which diversity is assimilated to the logic that structures the entire territory, which can be described without reducing its complexity, through a synthetic figure, precisely the archipelago. In this metaphorical image, the idea of several cities within the city is made explicit: the urban islands, each one with a precise identity in relation to its history, social structure and its environmental characteristics, are surrounded by a green sea that represents the functional support of the city.²

The archipelago city, clarifying the dialectical nature of Berlin, thus presents itself as an organism made up by the juxtaposition of these urban fragments with different structures, often developed in an antithetical way.³

The provocative elaboration of Ungers and his collaborators lies above all in the proposal of a scenario in which the crisis dictated by depopulation is no longer conceived as a problem to be solved, but becomes the engine of the project itself, thus materializing a new Berlin that accepts criticalities as a premise to any operation. In the process of constructing a unitary image, no complexity, nor contradictions and differences are reduced, but indeed, as Koolhaas pointed out, the proposal immediately acknowledges the heterogeneity of the urban situation as

its strongest starting point. Precisely for this reason, the new model of the city is built on the logic of the fragment, which allows for the coexistence, within the archipelago, of differences and oxymorons. The outcome is a mosaic in which the interstitial void becomes the privileged material that allows the diversified catalog of urban tiles to be reunited in a single reading, restoring a Berlin as "a city of empty spaces, a set of absences from the past and the future"⁴.

The legacy of this writing to urban planning theories is the metaphor of a multiple city, a figure that reverses the traditional logic of planning theories that tend to highlight a single centrality in a generic way and that provides a lens to re-read the contemporary urban structure, in fact, in the "archipelago model" it is possible to include without contradictions discontinuity, transcalarity and multiple identities of the city⁵.

As Indovina pointed out, the metaphor played a great role in the drifts interpretation of the widespread urbanization process⁶; shifting the focus from the physical structure and broadening the gaze to the whole territory, the metropolitan archipelago allows also to emphasize features of functionality and sociality that create integration between heterogeneous and separate units. In this sense, the metaphorical sea takes on a new value: it is no longer just the material that allows the plurality of fragments to be grouped into a single entity, but its characters become central. The void between the islands, now increasingly defined by spaces excluded from the city project, is not only the negative of the fragment, but becomes a connective fluid filled with new meanings. By that logic, the sea becomes the necessary condition to ensure both

the maintenance of the character of each island and the relationships that allow each fragment to be brought back within the urban discourse.

In the wake of these considerations and in the light of Situationism, the archipelago takes on a further meaning in the specific description of the city of Rome: the famous map of the capital the Stalker collective drew up in 1995, after five days of "transurbance", for the first time returns a new image of the city, in which the negative reading of the built city produces an unprecedented representation through the pervasive continuity of its voids.

The spaces of contamination between organic and inorganic, between city and nature, represent for the collective territories "actual" in the Foucauldian sense: "the current is not what we are, but rather what we become, what we are becoming, that is the Other, our becoming-other"⁷. The condition of ambiguity and indeterminacy of these spaces therefore takes on a new value for the project of the city: they are no longer read as the unplanned wasted space of the city, but, on the contrary, they open up new possibilities of meaning in a project that makes their intrinsic nature "in the making" its cornerstone.

What is equally interesting is that the interconnected network of these spaces, concerning both urban and rural territories, returns a representation of the city core that contradicts its traditional compact image, highlighting instead its composition by fragments that build a fractal archipelago. A unitary description of the territory thus converges in the figure of the archipelago, which interrupts the rhetoric of the center / periphery, city / countryside, artificial / natural.

In this logic, even the full-empty binomial loses its oppositional logic to open up to a discourse in which elements of traditional antithetical nature become the terms for composing a dialogic discourse on the city. The archipelago, in fact, stands as a figure in which the heterogeneous conditions of spaces and objects in the city are structured and organized to build a unitary image, and they are also placed in mutual relationship. In this reading, as stated by Pruni “[...] what seems particularly interesting are not the architectures as such, nor their relationship if it remains on the architectural level, but the connective that binds them. In this way, the idea of emptiness comes very close to the idea of the environment, understood as a unifying fluid of relationships, rather than physical objects”⁸.

We can then overturn the discussion and transform the negative scenario of empty space understood as an unoccupied and uncharacterized place into that of an available, flexible, adaptable and transformable place.

1. Ungers O.M., Koolhaas R., with Riemann P., Kollhoff H., Ovaska A., *The city in the city: Berlin: a green archipelago: a manifesto*, 1977, Lars Müller, Zürich, 2013

2. Ungers O.M., Koolhaas R., with Riemann P., Kollhoff H., Ovaska A., *Op. Cit.*

3. Ungers O.M., Koolhaas R., with Riemann P., Kollhoff H., Ovaska A., *Op. Cit.*

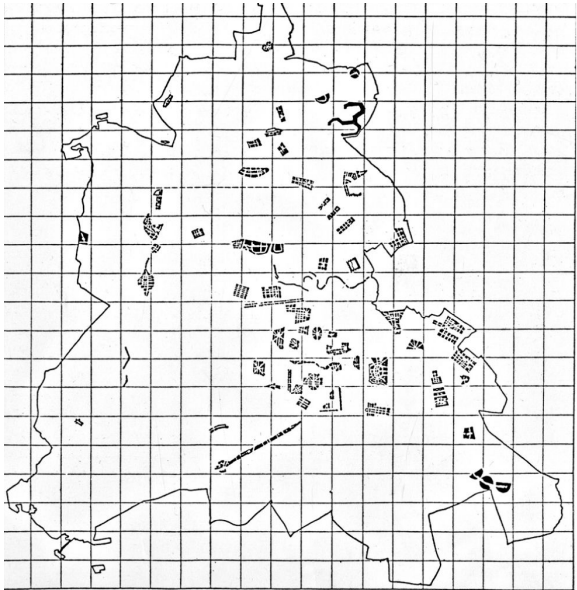
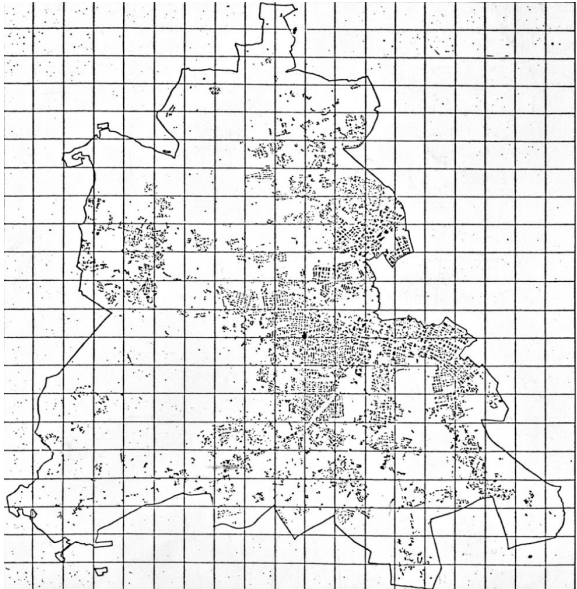
4. Ungers O.M., Koolhaas R., with Riemann P., Kollhoff H., Ovaska A., *Op. Cit.*

5. Clemente M.C., Isidori F., *Rome – A Borderline Metropolis*, on *Cartha*, issue 3, 2016. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

6. Indovina F., *Dalla città diffusa all'arcipelago metropolitano*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2009

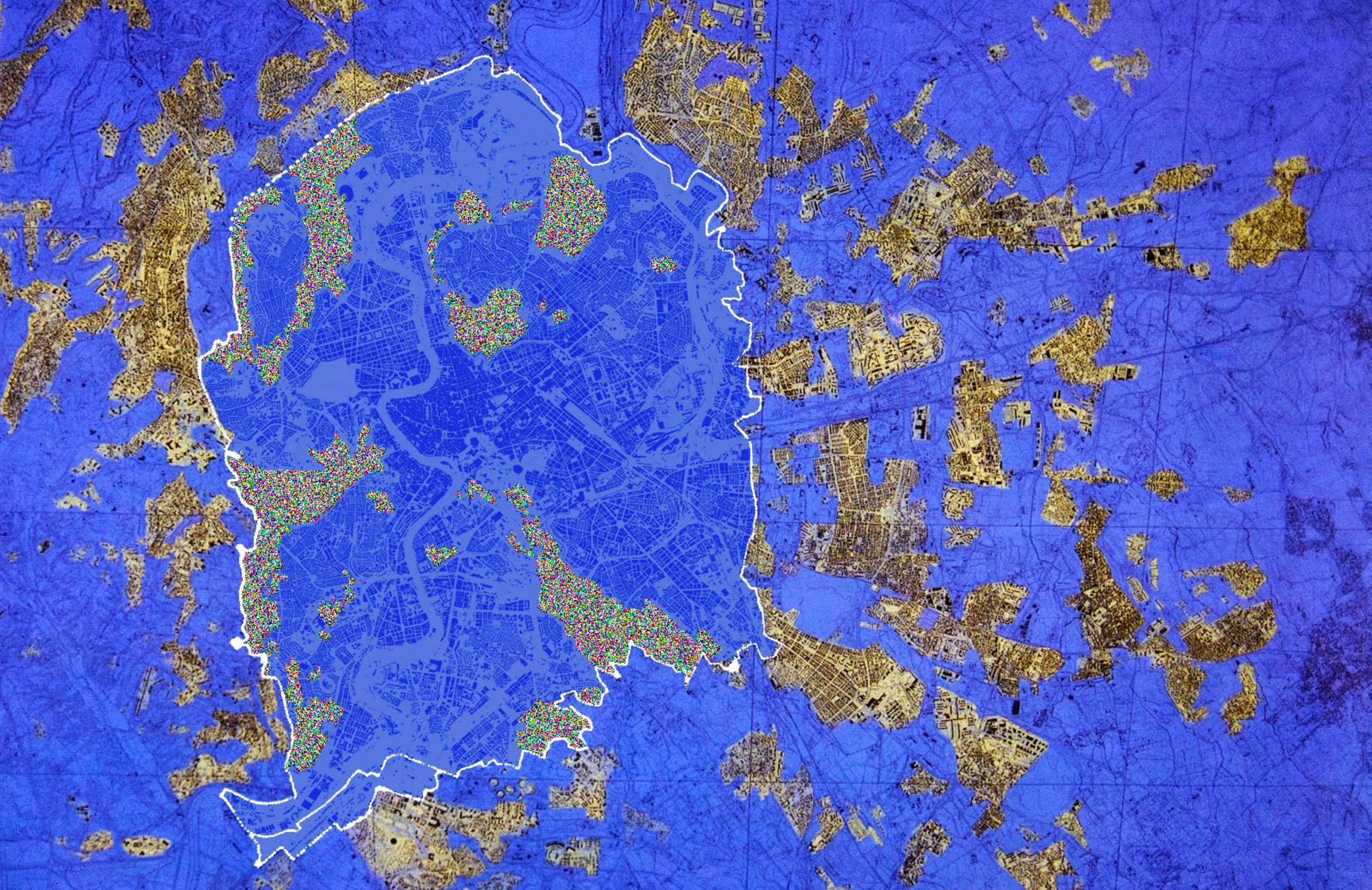
7. available at www.osservatorionomade.net. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

8. Purini F., *Il vuoto contro il pieno*, in **Topos e Progetto. Il vuoto**, Gangemi, Roma 2008





Archipelago / Reverse signs



Green archipelago 3.3.1



9. Lotus International
157, City as Nature,
Editoriale Lotus, Milano,
2015

According to this interpretation, the archipelago becomes the first term of the comparison with Rome, enriched with new meanings that mobilize its implications in support of a renewed design approach. In particular, the first attempt was to investigate the nature of these voids which, near the Grande Raccordo Anulare, meet a switching point where they reverse their relationship with the built environment. In this sense, the vast metropolitan area is characterized by the presence of extensive rural areas and open spaces, which, according to Purini, represent a structural as well as a landscape datum⁹. The parts expelled from the compact core of the city, in the words of Vieri Quilici, are described as a juxtaposition of “islands, promontories, isthmuses” which constitute a polycentric system immersed in the landscape, “amniotic fluid” that supports and connects all the different fragments. And it is precisely in these interstitial areas that the Stalker collective finds the potential of contemporary project: places with an ambiguous status, grown out of the project, available for continuous re-signification and adaptation to the needs of the city.

These fragments build that system of voids that Stalker highlights with his map, which nevertheless interrupts its intensity and continuity right in the core of the city. In fact, if the sea of emptiness is extremely pervasive in the less historicized area, articulating itself in an archipelago system that builds, among others, conditions of environmental continuity, in the compact core of the city this system found itself bound between the enclosures of the villas, historical parks and green areas subject to archaeological restrictions.¹⁰ The city was built around these voids, which, due to their dimensions, are configured as islands within the continuous urban fabric. In questioning the nature and the network of voids, the research underlined an inversion of signs: the archipelago, in its metaphorical declination able to describe the city-system, reads precisely these voids as a constellation of islands, surrounded by the dense urban sea.

This image appears already substantiated in the Piranesian representation, in which, for the first time, the idea of the archipelago system is configured: **“a city made up of autonomous parts that are not ordered by a unitary design but which, on the contrary, are expressed by contrast”¹¹**. This system, which develops within the Grande Raccordo Anulare, is therefore made up of antithetical but continuous urban clods, separated by green islands that structure the large voids of the city, resulting, as Purini stated, in “a discontinuous city in which the original soil surfaces and sinks together, among great ruins.”¹²

Exactly as it happened in the Berlin “Green archipelago”, also in Rome the different fragments of the city maintain a precise autonomy, drawing that system of “city within the city”¹³. However, their separation is no longer physical: everyone, as Ungers postulated, has “an identity coherent with their history, social structure, and environmental characteristics”¹⁴ but their isolation, rather than physical, in the roman case is reduced to relational terms. In their antithetical development, each clods thus builds a physical continuity with the others, building the negative image of that Berlin sea: a dense and compact sea, which surrounds the system of historical and archaeological green islands. Building a vegetable mosaic, as defined by Purini, **“the void becomes “an orderly and serial architectural material”¹⁵ that builds a green archipelago “bound to survive as an active trace in the future evolution of Rome”¹⁶**. A system that becomes in this sense the invariant of the city, and which integrates that of the monuments.

10. Graves M., Roma interrotta, London, 1979

17. Shell M., Islandology: Geography, rhetoric, politics, Stanford University Press, 2014

11. “Un racconto romano” di Franco Purini in “Learning from Rome” a cura di Paolo Carloti, Anna Irene Del Monaco, U+D edition Roma, Roma, 2018, available at www.urbanform.it. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

12. Purini F., Op. Cit.

13. Ungers O.M., Koolhaas R., with Riemann P., Kollhoff H., Ovaska A., Op. Cit.

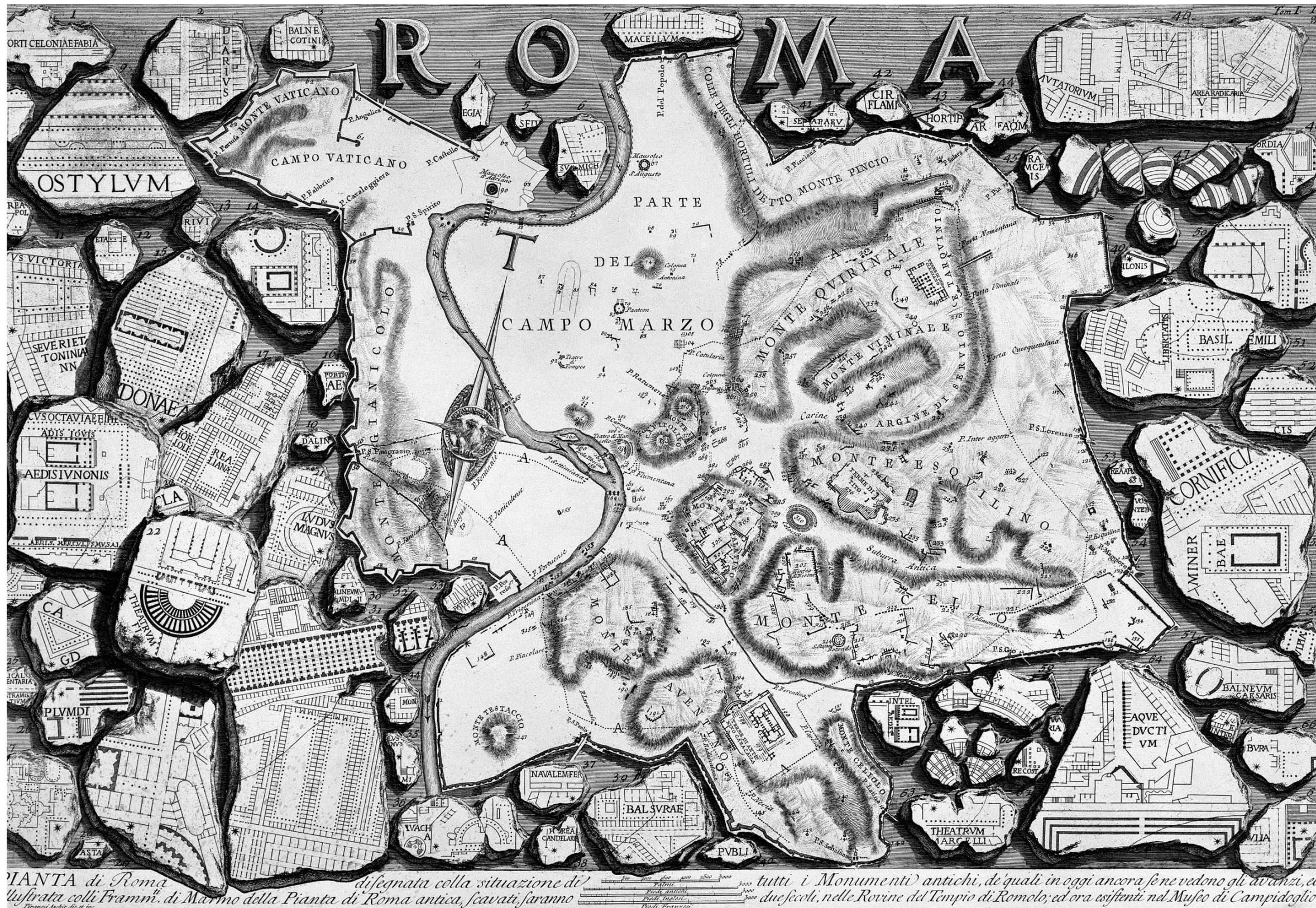
14. Ungers O.M., Koolhaas R., with Riemann P., Kollhoff H., Ovaska A., Op. Cit.

15. Lotus International, Op. Cit.

16. Lotus International, Op. Cit.

This system therefore configures the resilient pieces of the city: structuring voids, a skeleton that rests on the Tiber as its spinal column. Thus, these elements born from a natural and artificial material blend, crucial in the progressive developments of the city, fragment the urban fabric as three-dimensional voids, whose potential lies precisely in the contradictory nature of islands: “insule” from the Latin etymology, isolated from the rest by water, and “water land”, in the languages of the north, meeting places between land and water¹⁷.

Acting in this dialectical tension means reactivating their potential, accepting their particular and exclusive conditions, as a result of a natural process of entropic modification, and focusing instead on their connection with the urban environment, on the effects they could generate on parts of the city that work with different modalities. Understanding them as voids already designed, therefore, means reconnecting them to that vast system of public spaces inherited from the past, innervating the city with new public bridges that, working with different grains, reconnect islands and sea. Moved by their static condition, the islands act as catalysts, able to activate the entire system through the project of void, in terms that are no longer just relational, but above all ecological and climatic.



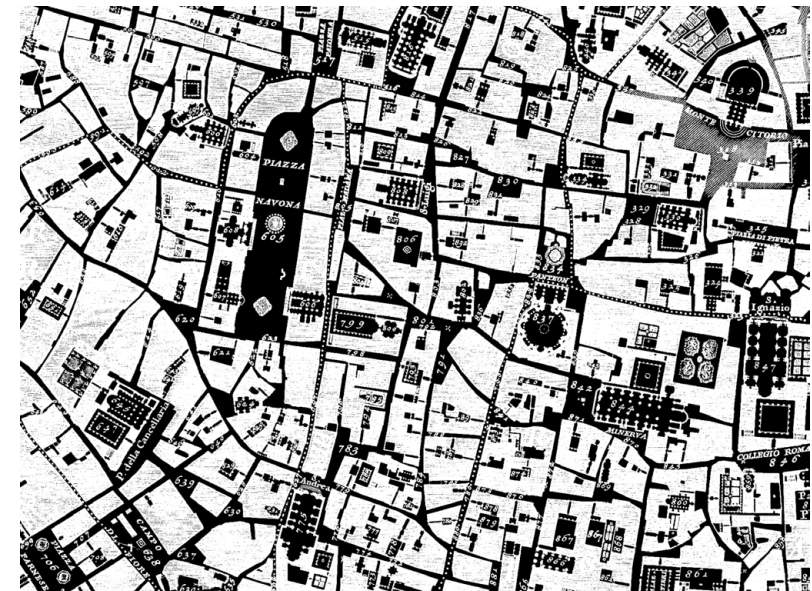
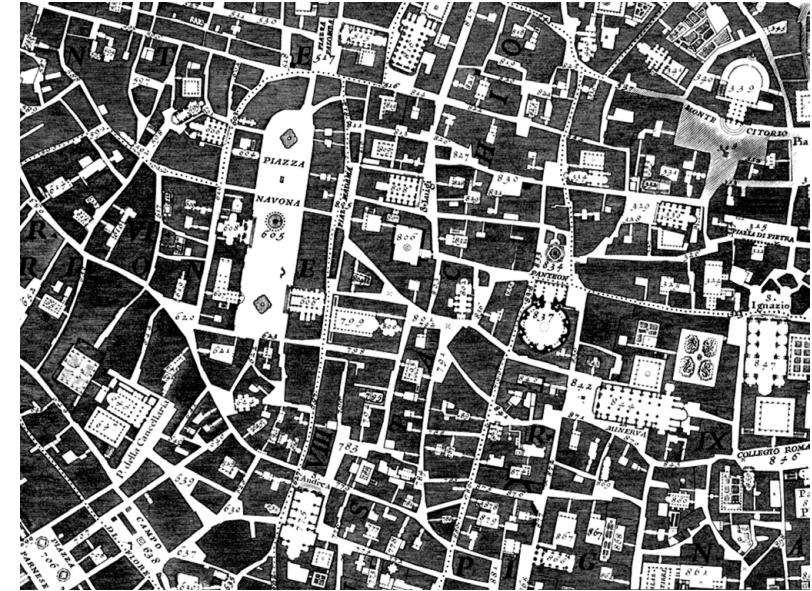
3.3.2 Rethinking background

In this interpretation, the void replaces physically and conceptually the built -le plein- overturning the formal and structural assumptions, “the project offers the future city incredible flexibility while the model of the archipelago ensures that each island’s maximum autonomy ultimately reinforces the coherence of the whole”¹⁸. The conceptual operation is the same that Koolhaas experiments with the inversion of black and white filling in the Nolli plan of Rome: the result is a map in which, provocatively overturning hierarchies, black searches and covers the voids, bringing attention back to the system of the city’s large open and public spaces. These concepts mature and find expression in a 1985 text, entitled “Imagining the Nothing,” in which the author himself, arguing that “Where there is nothing, everything is possible. Where there is architecture, nothing else is possible”¹⁹, promotes a project for the city that reflects precisely on what Ungers’ writing assumed as the green sea.

18. Koolhaas R, Mau B, “Surrender: Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart France Competition 1987,” in S.M.L.X.L., The Monacelli Press, New York, 1997

19. Koolhaas R, “Imagining nothingness,” in Koolhaas R, Mau B, S.M.L.X.L., The Monacelli Press, New York, 1997

FIGURE RETORICHE



Against the ideology of the crisis, the surrender of urban planning and architecture to contemporary instability and complexity finds the new expression of project possibilities precisely in the void. The inversion of the relationships between full and empty allows us to “take as a premise the position of weakness of urban planning” which, abandoning the defensive and resolving approach, introduces uncertainty into the project as a starting variable, as a potential and as a condition the project must constantly live with. Ultimately, in the words of Koolhaas “if there is to be a new new urbanism’ (...) it will no longer be about the arrangement of more or less permanent objects but about the irrigation of territories with potential.”²⁰

Having lost opposing logics, the goal thus becomes the composition of space, conceiving the void no longer as the negative of the city, but as the field of dynamic relationships.

In the abolition of sterile hierarchies, the void assumes a renewed value: it is no longer conceived as the opposite of the full, but is complementary to it. In this sense, the project of the void is also abandoned as a project of the fullness in the void, recognizing that “the city has a structure that is both relative, relational and transitory”²¹.

Inheriting from the contemporary debates these concepts, the project specifies its availability as a system open to the unexpected, suggesting a re-meaning of what already exists with a double movement, through and into the void. This approach looks particularly interesting when the issue of adaptation to environmental conditions that increasingly threaten cities comes into play, especially in urban compact stratifications. If the porous character of the widespread city is expressed, in this logic, as an intrinsic and potential characteristic, offering a land available for rethinking environmental and relational situations, it is necessary instead to renew the gaze on the historic city. The reformulation of the project theme therefore involves the revision of the enormous deposit of urban materials, in search of those gaps forgotten by the city, fragments mostly indifferent to evolution, to formulate answers that can simultaneously support current conditions of the city and future possibilities²².

Considering the new Rome Archipelago, in which the terms of the metaphor have been inverted, the research therefore wonders what

20. Koolhaas R, “Imaging nothingless”, in Koolhaas R, Mau B, SMLXL, The Monacelli Press, New York, 1997

21. Pasqualotto G, *Estetica del vuoto* Marsilio Editore, 2001

22. Monstafavi M, Why Ecological Urbanism? Why Now?, essay in Harvard Design Magazine no. 32 / Design practice now, vol.1, available at www.harvarddesignmagazine.org. Complete site reference specified in sitography

it means to accept Koolhaas’ invitation to focus on the sea without contradicting his implicit question about emptiness.

The field of the city was therefore investigated in an attempt to identify those fragments, with different grains, in which fragility and inconsistencies are explicated. Precisely the irresolution of these spaces translates into their operational potential, suggesting to shape them without denying their indeterminate character, and intending them in this sense as surfaces capable of simultaneously adapting to the city’s changing practices and responding to the unpredictability of climate change. **These voids thus become the active subject of the public space project, to be understood as a support for the city to respond to adaptation, in programmatic and environmental terms, and as a catalyst for new ecologies.**

Nevertheless, starting from the sea means first of all rediscovering the latent and mutual relationships between it and the islands, reconstructing a taxonomy of voids that highlights their associations with the different materials, languages, and dimensions of the city. A first interesting attempt, in this perspective, is reported in the pages of “Roma Interrotta”, collected reflections on the evolution of the capital which takes its title from the homonymous exhibition organized in Rome in the summer of 1978. In one of the fourteen critic re-readings, Antoine Grumbach highlights the character of continuity between the large parks of the historic villas and the private gardens, in which a “parasitic nature” is articulated. In the author’s terms, this “plant archeology that accompanies the lines of demarcation between the public and private spheres reveals the existence of a continuous plant form whose solutions are innumerable. In ancient Rome, in the eighteenth century or today, it constitutes the testimony, the ever-living trace of the relationship between city and nature (...) one of the threads that weave the warp of the city.”²³

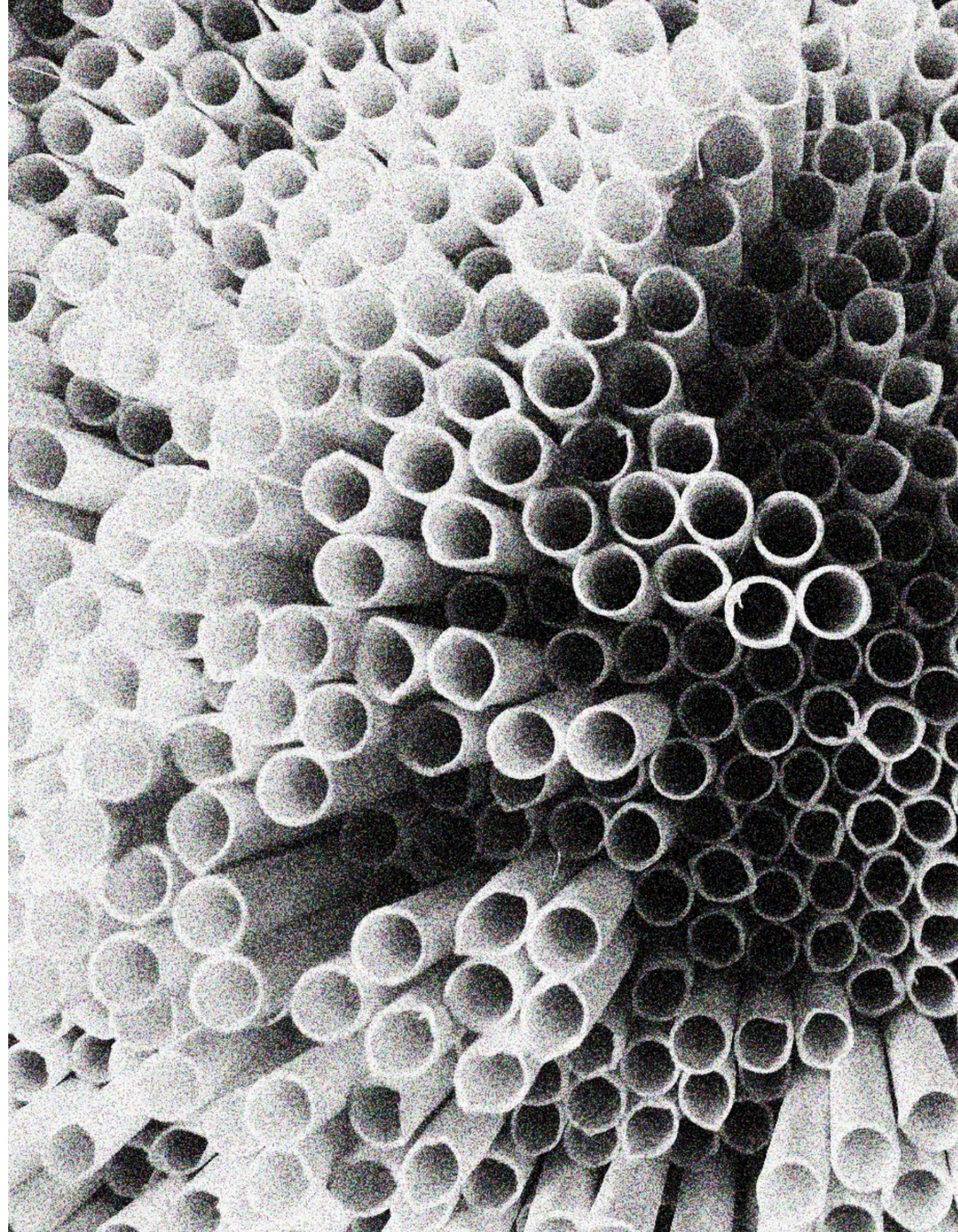
What appears interesting between the lines of these reflections is their relapse in operational terms. In this sense, the plant material is no longer configured only as a key to reading the continuity between past and present, but, above all, as an active compositional device, borrowed from the own language of the historic city. In fact, percolating the solid mass of the building, the natural elements crosses different dimensions of the city and, constantly changing their declinations, materialize situations in which their potential is expressed in reconstructing the relationship between the historic city and its future developments.

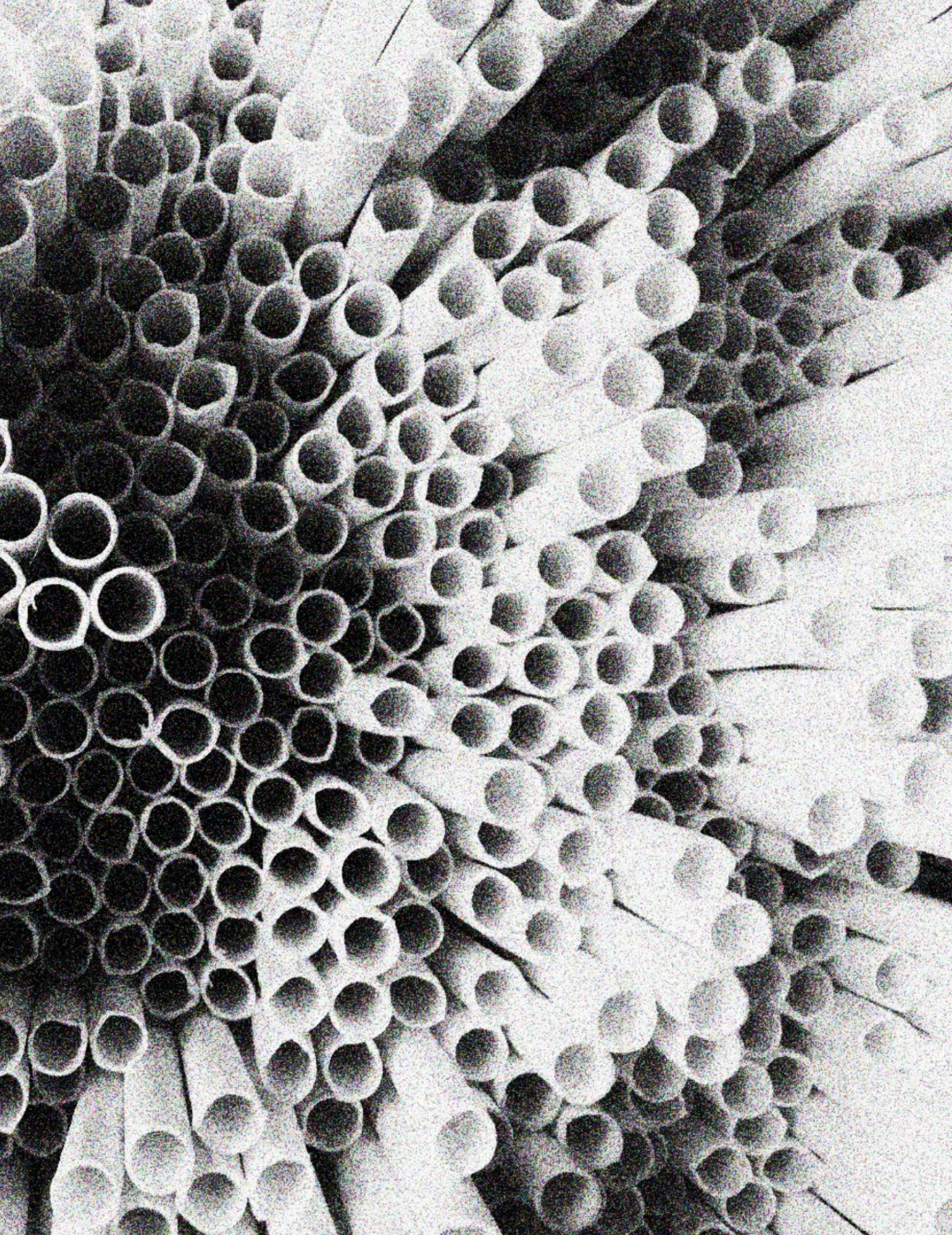
23. Graves M., opcit

Shifting the focus from private to public space, a clear break prevails between the mosaic of historic greenery and the city. The attempt is therefore to identify those voids which, relying on the generous system of public spaces that invade the city, can pervasively innervate the urban fabric and actualize the potential of the islands, reconstructing a symbiotic relationship between the elements of the archipelago system. In this logic, the project of the void searches for a double relation. In the first place with the islands, in an attempt to reactivate their ecological and environmental potential. In fact, testing the reverberation that these could have in the city, the voids are reshaped through an ecological project that is based on the continuous and reciprocal modification of natural and artificial material. In this way, the performative modulation of the surfaces allows to work with discrete points without giving up a vision of the effects at different temporal and spatial scales. On the other hand, immersed in the density of the sea-city, the void is necessarily investigated in its relationship with the full, offering the project a versatile support for the practices and future transformations of the city.

The void is thus configured as the term capable of countering the island-sea dualism, acting as a dialogic terrain in which to rehabilitate the functioning of the whole rather than of the individual parts.

Parte II
SINTASSI ROMANA





The elements of the speech, specified as rhetorical figures in the previous chapter, are at this point recomposed in their new meanings through different syntactic forms, that, proceeding according to their own formal characteristics, reconstruct a new Roman syntax. In this sense, through the connection of the minimum units of the speech, new formulations are structured, in the attempt to guide a more articulated reading of the field of investigation.

Projecting the syntactical discourse into the spatial sphere, the effort is therefore to clarify the expressive form of the contents, experiencing the different ways through which the codes of architectural language can graphically render the discourses about the construction of space, questioning in particular the forms of the statement, description and lyrics.

The statements, in their specific meaning of segments of the speech sufficient to provide the required information, are materialized through maps, which convey specific spatial conditions through a synthetic representation. This figurative translation process attempts to use the map as a potential tool that, highlighting spatial figures and patterns, translates scientific data, especially quantitative, to clarify climate-city relationships.

The descriptions, on the other hand, in contrast to the concise style of the statement, are constructed through more complex compositions, enriched with terms and adjectives that insert the mostly qualitative information they provide into a broader picture. Through the reconstruction of the imagination, a catalog of artistic representations is analyzed to highlight the relationships that bind man with his environment, specifically observing the scales to which address the design of open and public spaces.

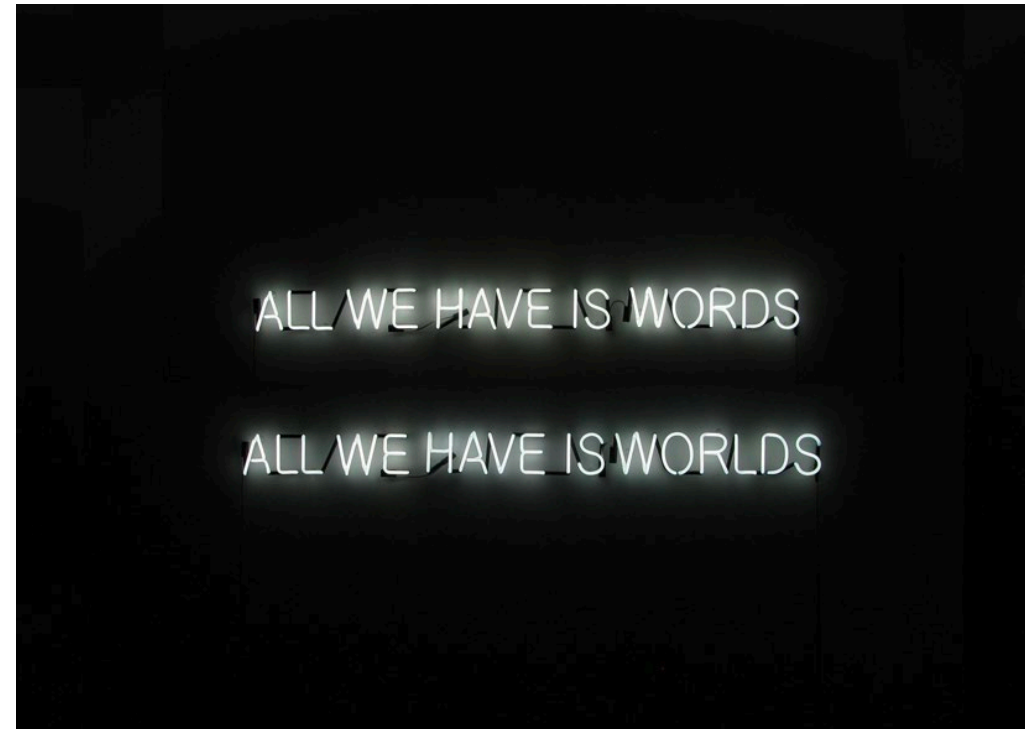
Finally, the lyric, daughter of poetry, explicits sensations and perceptions, involving intangible and immaterial aspects. Observing climate change with the ordinary gaze of those who daily live the city, in a hybridization between reality and imagination, the attention is again focused on the experience of the city. In this sense, the body becomes the instrument of knowledge, activation, and configuration of the future of the city. The indissoluble relationship between man and landscape is investigated and what are the interferences generated by the climatic component.

In the addition and composition of these different narrative tools, the attempt is to avoid separating the scientific factuality of climate change from its aesthetic and cultural agency, which would lead to a reduction of the field of action in which architecture can insert itself and operate actively. In this sense, the question that the research has built in this second part concerns a double aspect: the ways in which the material and conceptual infrastructures make the implications of climate change readable and potential and, at the same time, the spatial implications that the codes adopted bring to light.

ENUNCIATI

In linguistics, a sequence of words that forms a fragment of speech produced in a situation of communication and short enough to give the required information; it can be very long or even consisting of a single word, and sometimes syntactically incomplete.

Following logically the rhetorical figure of the oxymoron, Etchells's "All we have" makes explicit the ambiguity of representing reality. As the author stated, the work invites the viewer to reflect on the question of what makes up and comprises our lives; the concrete material of a world or the ephemeral material of language and ideas. The synthetic text reminds us of the fragile difference between tangible reality and the impalpable narration of it.



“We bend our shoulders beneath the official notion that the material world is explicable, just as we bend our shoulders beneath the notion that words are merely units of information. But something in us knows this to be a lie.”

Paul Kingsnorth



FORMA NATURAE

CITY LANDSCAPE

“Se è la città, infatti, che trasforma il territorio più vicino, è il territorio, un certo territorio, che della città giustifica l'esistenza, che alla città dà vita. Conoscere i problemi della città significa conoscere i problemi di questa area di influenza. Non sarà mai possibile parlare del destino di una città se non saranno stati presi in considerazione, prima, i destini, le risorse e le possibilità d'un certo spazio intorno per individuare, anche, quali sono i fattori limitanti lo sviluppo della città da parte del territorio.”¹

Several writings provide interesting descriptions of the context surrounding the city of Rome. In particular, the description of Christian Norberg-Schulz² explains Rome in its three distinct landscape dimensions. According to the same, there is an underground scale, consisting of the subtle infiltration of the so-called “forre”, a series of deep fractures and cracks. The-

se ribs constitute a natural infrastructure whose ramifications develop below the surface of the landscape, forming a hidden and buried universe. The singular orography that surrounds the city represents, in the words of Paolo Portoghesi, an interesting reading of Rome, according to which the physical environment from which the city arose constitutes the original matrix of the built environment that has slowly replaced it: “To get an idea of the landscape of Rome before the construction of the city, you have to look at the tuff cliffs of the Rupe Tarpea or those along the Via Flaminia [...]. Archaeological reconstructions show us not the mythical seven hills rising from the plain, but a series of inlets that from the Tiber valley insinuate on the sides of an elevated flat area forming a series of buttresses.”³ Following Portoghesi investigation, the forre constitute an internal landscape, in which the deep gorges refer not only to the original wilderness and the primordial sense of the underground context, but also to the roots of the development of the urban fabric. Portoghesi associates a dual sense of origin with the underground dimension surrounding Rome, whose primordiality can be found in the materials, colors and shapes of the city, the “Rome before Rome” is still found today.⁴

There is then a superficial dimension, harmoniously flat, which fits between the undulations of the gorges, hiding the cracks and fissures: the Roman countryside. According to the several descriptions of Norberg-Schulz, but also of Quaroni, the Roman countryside clearly has an arid, deserted character, and makes up a large part of the area surrounding the city; it is not by chance that the Roman countryside is compared to the Mojave desert by Robert Venturi himself in “Learning From

Las Vegas”. The Roman countryside, an anthropic, artificial place, almost deprived of naturality, constitutes the neutrality of the territory; it is precisely what hides the natural landscape of the forre, bringing the individual back to their origin, and what lies beneath the fully volcanic hills. The last dimension, following once more the descriptive line of Norberg-Schulz, is thus constituted by the classic landscape of the Colli Albani, in the south-east area of the capital. These are articulated in height, defining a majestic mass with a simple silhouette, and in the deep gorges, where they structure two large lakes. This eastern portion of the region, together with Monte Soratte, constitute the most natural and most classic landscape in the context of Rome, configuring immediate spatial relations.

The morphological description of the context of Rome in three different landscape contexts suggests a further synthesis; the city is situated between a more spontaneous, primeval and underground context to the west, and a predominantly classic and stereotypical context in its suggestive style to the east. The Roman countryside is therefore a form of mitigation between the two identities, widening to city boundaries. Interrupted by the marrane and the furrows of the forre, the Roman countryside is made up of a particular undulation, which consists of an alternation of more or less flat ground. In this sense, the Roman countryside constitutes the ordinary scale on which daily life takes place and is read as the switching point between the primordial underground universe and the classical dimension of the volcanic landscape. The synopsis of the two main dimensions, according to Norberg-Schulz, is reflected within the urban fabric: “the environment

of the ravines reappears in the streets and squares spectators of the daily life of the city, and gods descend from the hills to dwell in urban temples. From those temples they spread their influence to the whole environment: classical forms appear on facades and courtyards of houses and palaces, humanizing their natural structure. The chthonic-classical synthesis constitutes the essence of the Roman idyll.”⁵

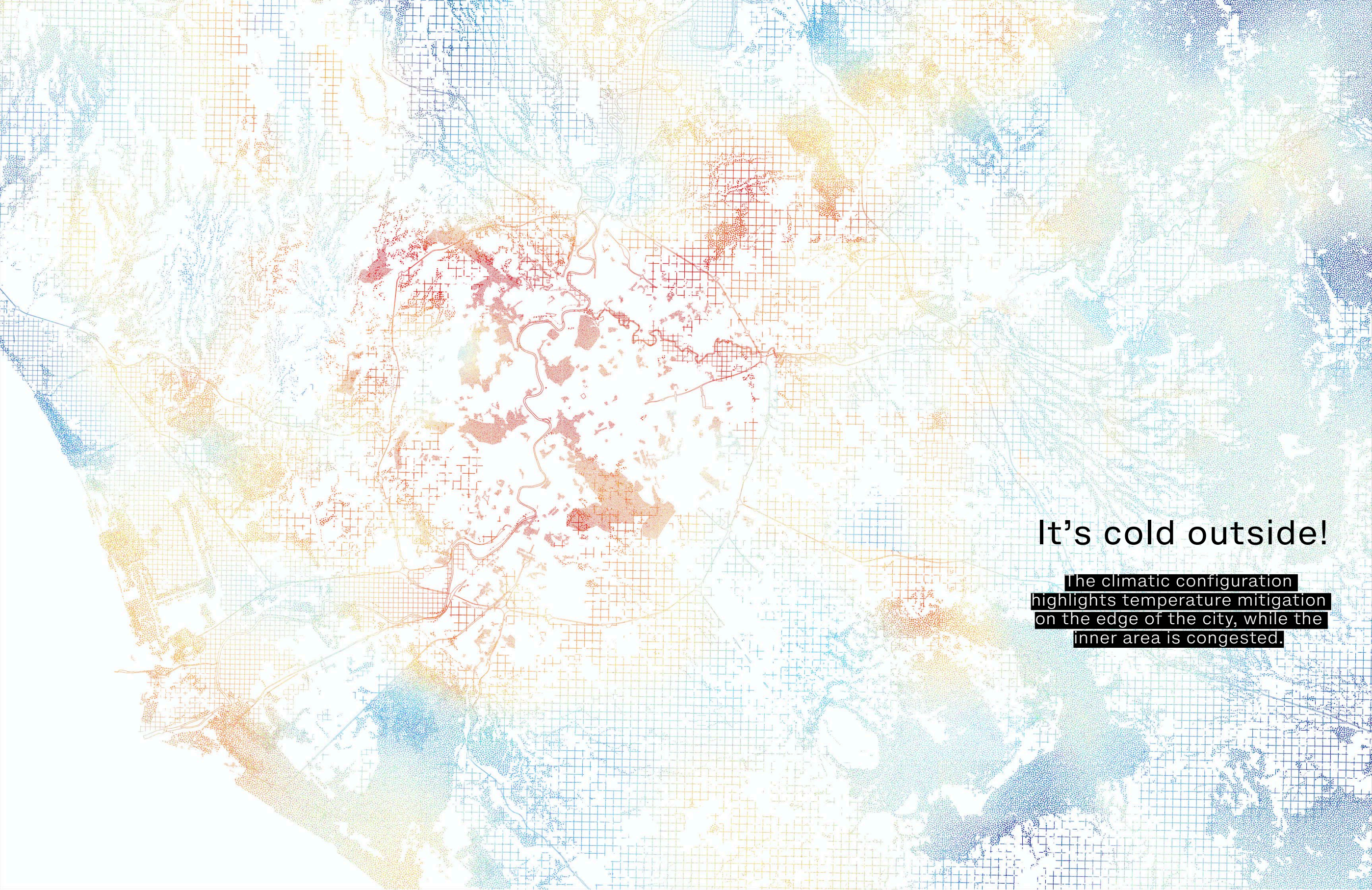
1. Quaroni L, *Immagine di Roma*, Laterza, Bari, 1976

2. Graves M, *Roma interrotta*, London, 1979

3. Graves M., *Op. Cit.*

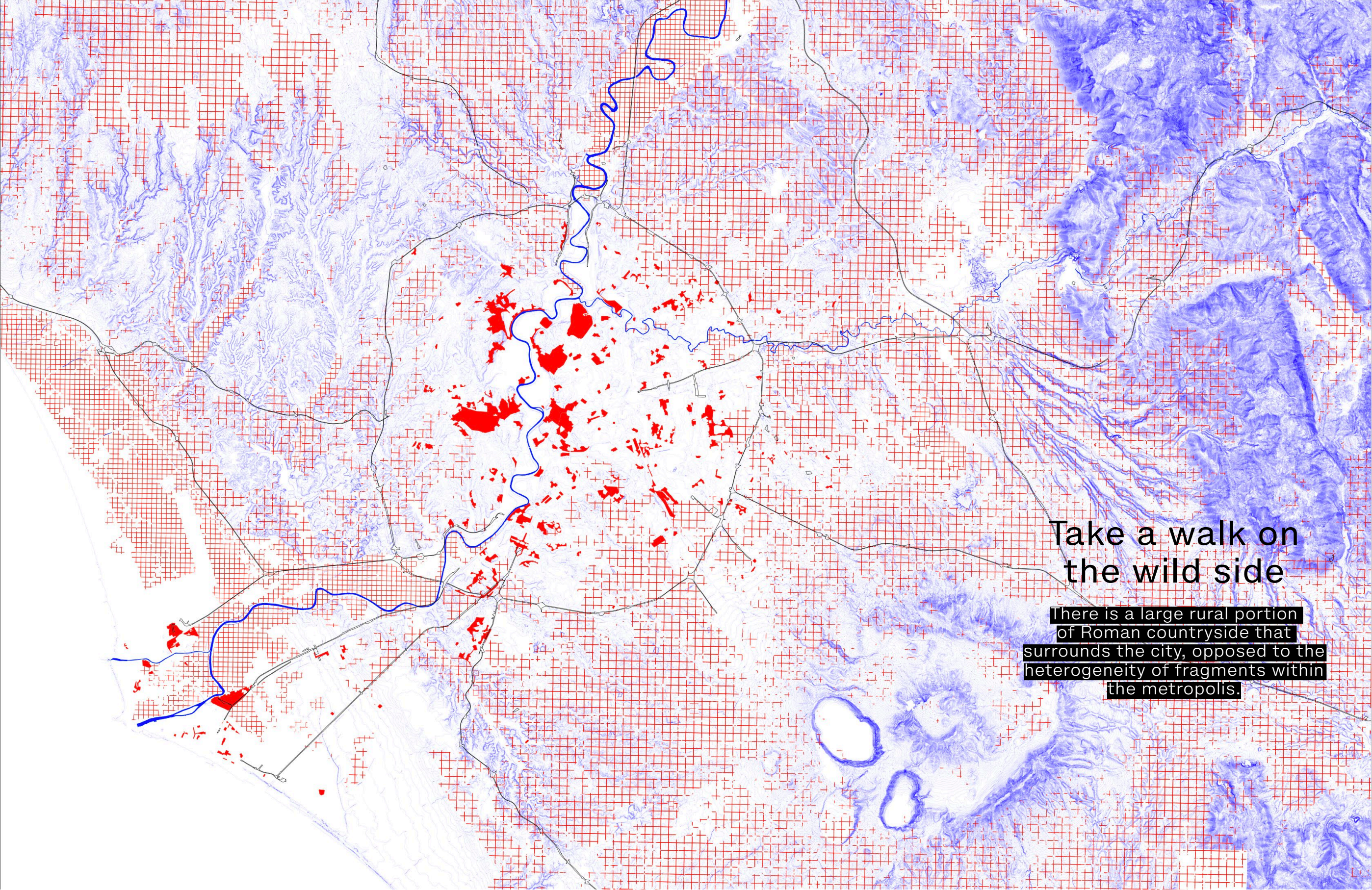
4. Graves M., *Op. Cit.*

5. Graves M., *Op. Cit.*



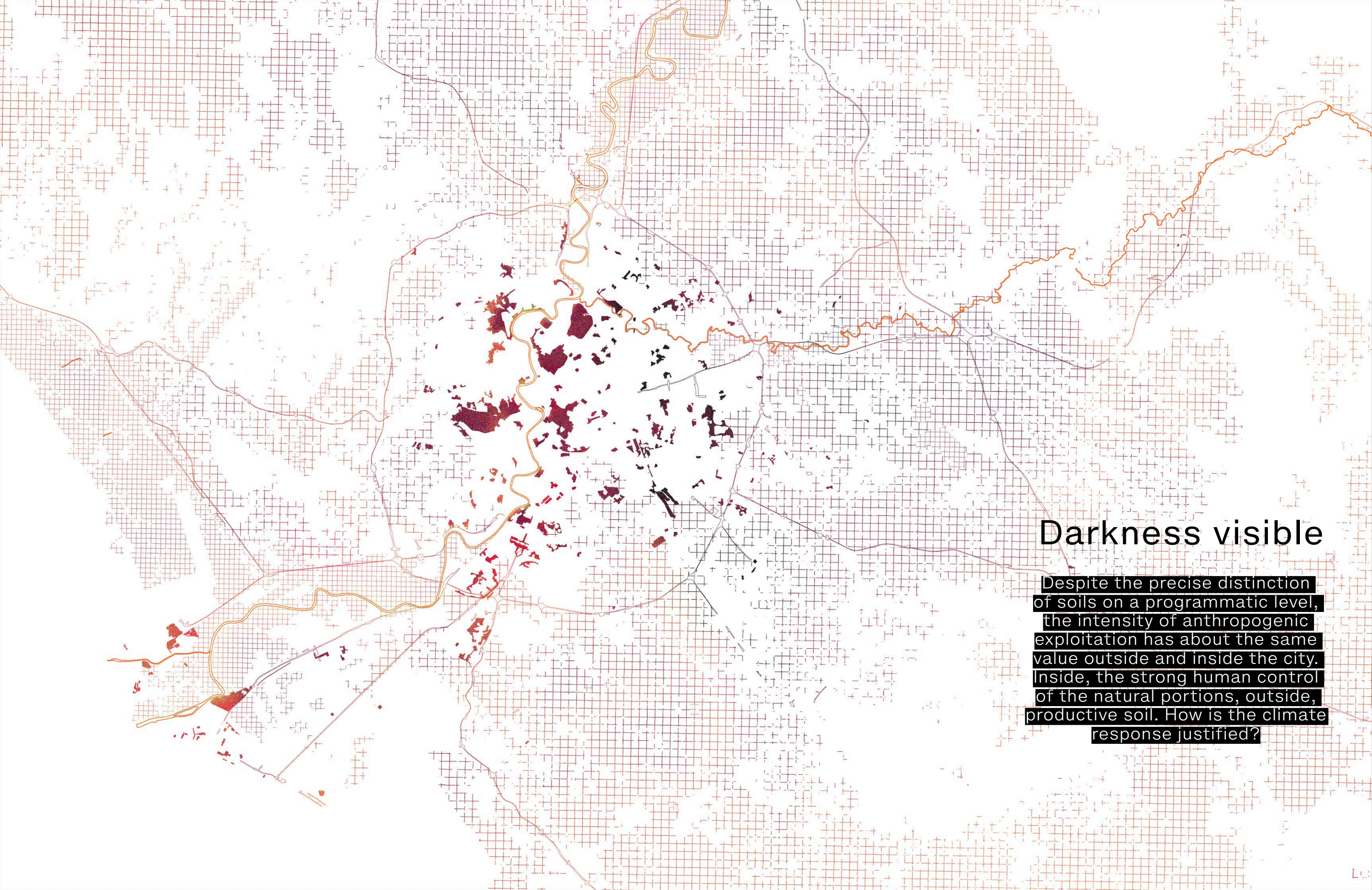
It's cold outside!

The climatic configuration highlights temperature mitigation on the edge of the city, while the inner area is congested.



Take a walk on the wild side

There is a large rural portion
of Roman countryside that
surrounds the city, opposed to the
heterogeneity of fragments within
the metropolis.



Darkness visible

Despite the precise distinction of soils on a programmatic level, the intensity of anthropogenic exploitation has about the same value outside and inside the city. Inside, the strong human control of the natural portions, outside, productive soil. How is the climate response justified?



Born to be wild

The Roman countryside, although exploited anthropically, gives a positive contribution to the climatic condition of the Roman context, as it is in continuous dialogue with the wooded portions of the territory, still naturally balanced in the components of flora and fauna they are composed of. The morphological synthesis between productive soil and woodland generates an ecological infrastructure, which determines an efficient climatic response outside the city.

ROMA

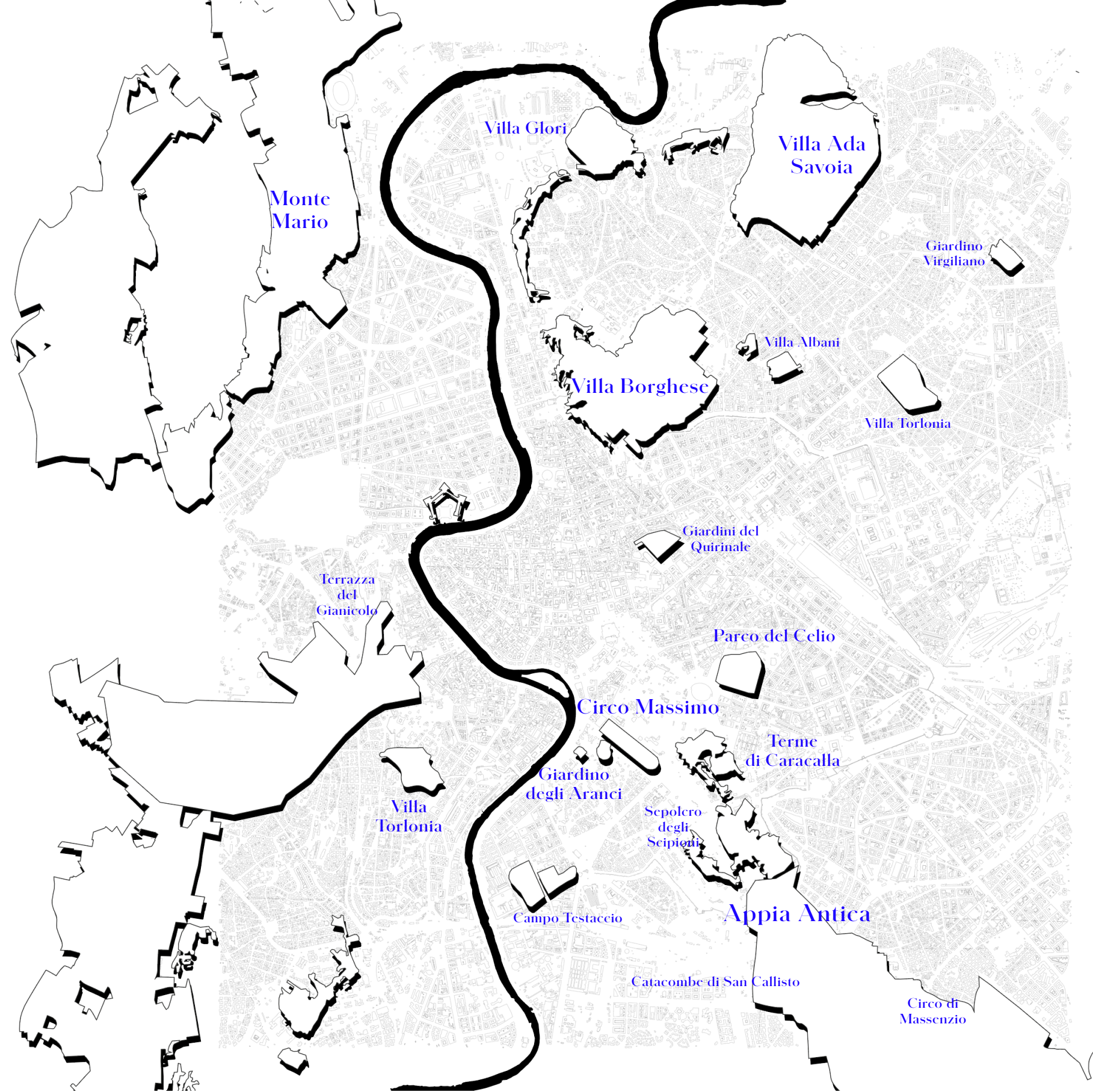
POTENZIALE

IS ROME MADE OF 70% OF EMPTINESS?

villa Mercedes 5 000 mq villa Lais 28 000 mq parco del
 Celio 19 000 mq parco Nemorense 30 000 mq villa Doria
 Pamphilj 1 800 000 mq villa Medici 70 000 mq Terme di
 Caracalla 130 000 mq parco Ardeatino 110 000 mq villa
 Chigi 50 000 mq villa Carpegna 70 000 mq villa Aldo-
 brandini 8 000 mq villa Alberoni Paganini 25 000 mq villa
 Bonelli 45 000 mq villa Flora 30 000 mq villa Lazzaroni
 60 000 mq terrazza del Pincio 5 000 mq villa Leopardi
 Dittajuti 20 000 mq campo Testaccio 3 000 mq monte
 dei Cocci 22 000 mq circo di Massenzio 54 000 mq villa
 Mazzanti 20 000 mq villa Mercedes 5 000 mq villa Osio 12
 000 mq Giardini del Quirinale 40 000 mq villa Borghese
 e giardini segreti 800 000 mq giardino di Sant'Alessio 3
 000 mq giardino di Sant'Andrea al Quirinale 6 000 mq
 parco degli Scipioni 17 000 mq parco di Colle Oppio 115
 000 mq giardino degli Aranci 7 800 mq parco della Mole
 Adriana 60 000 mq villa Celimontana 55 000 mq parco di
 San Sebastiano 75 000 mq villa Fiorelli 10 000 mq villa
 Grazioli 4 200 mq villa Veschi 2 300 mq parco regionale
 dell'Appia Antica 45 800 000 mq parco delle Mura Aure-
 liane 5 500 mq parco di porta Capena 3 000 mq cata-
 comba di Balbina 1 700 mq catacombe di San Callisto 150
 000 mq catacombe di Pretestato 1 500 mq catacombe di
 San Sebastiano 12 000 mq villa Sciarra 70 000 mq mau-
 soleo di Romolo 100 000 mq catacombe di Domitilla 18
 000 mq ninfeo di Egeria 1 000 mq terrazza del Gianicolo
 60 000 mq mausoleo di Cecilia Metella 600 mq comples-
 so di Capo di Bove 8 600 mq villa Torlonia 140 000 mq
 villa Quintili 23 000 mq tombe della via Latina 7 000 mq
 parco di torre Fiscale 46 400 mq Circo Massimo 85 000
 mq forte Bravetta 100 000 mq villa Abamelek 2 000 mq
 orto botanico di Roma 120 000 mq villa Farnesina 20
 000 mq villa Ada Savoia 1 750 000 mq giardini Vaticani
 230 000 mq parco di monte Ciocci 80 000 mq passeg-
 giata Massimo Cimino 1 000 mq villa Glori 280 000 mq
 villa Madama 7 000 mq torre Molinaro 10 000 mq villa
 Albani 70 000 mq domus Aurea 2 190 000 mq roseto di
 Roma 10 000 mq orti Farnesiani 20 000 mq parco degli
 Acquedotti 2 500 000 mq passeggiata dei fori imperiali
 120 000 mq villa de Sanctis 120 000 mq villa Balestra 15
 000 mq riserva naturale di Monte Mario 2 000 000 mq
 parco regionale urbano di Aguzzano 600 000 mq villa
 Gordiani 80 000 mq parco della Caffarella 1 900 000 mq
 parco regionale urbano del Pineto 2 500 000 mq pineta di
 Castelfusano 10 000 000 mq

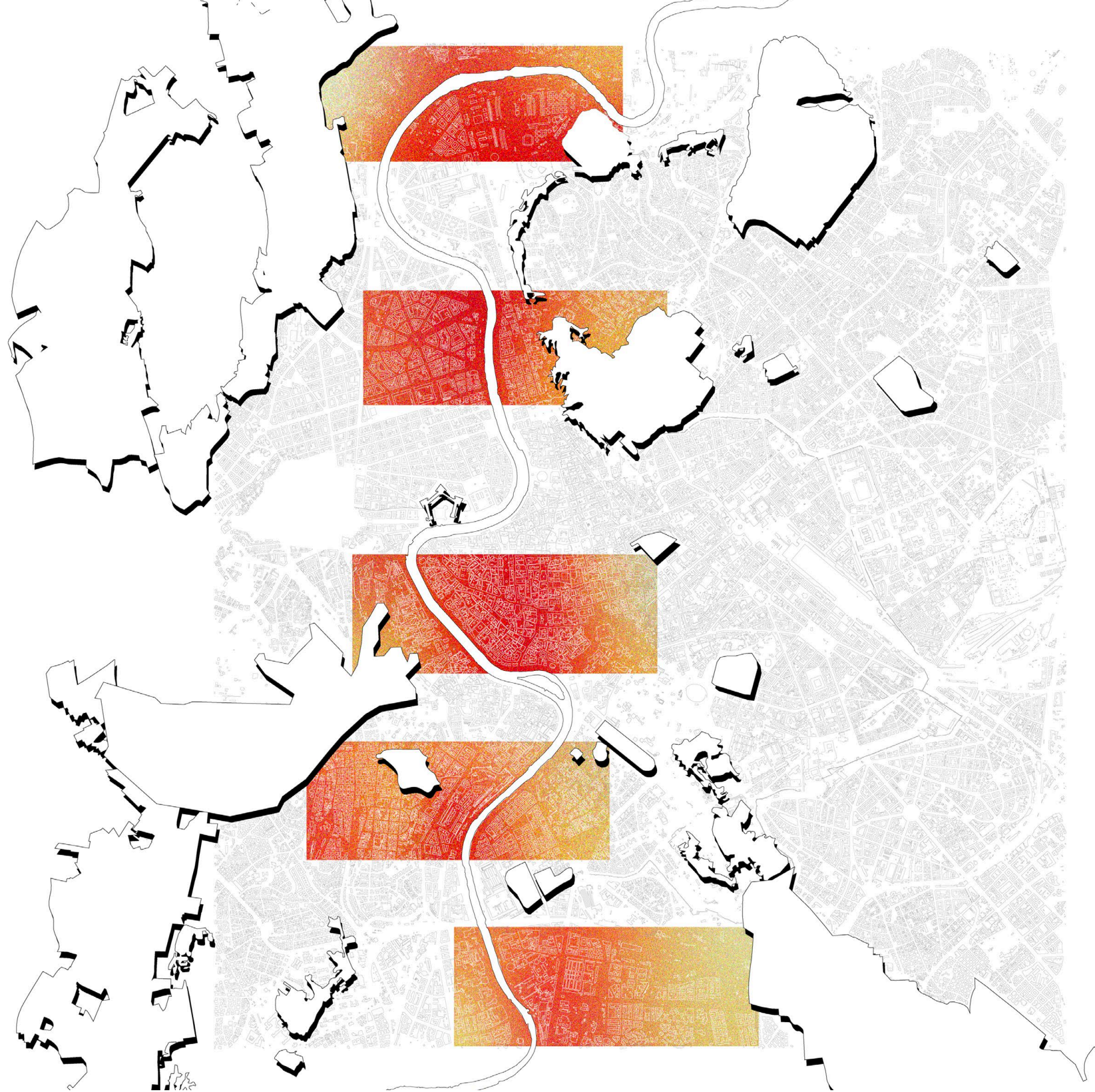
Green archipelago 2.0

The Green Archipelago is made up of all the green memories that characterize the urban fabric of Rome. The character of these islands is closely related to the singular architectures that characterize them and to the historical palimpsest that stratifies them, and they are strongly circumscribed by the physical and visual boundaries that define them as such. The islands are therefore born as vegetational support for monuments, archaeological relics and historical sites, and consequently their original identity is not recognized in that of public space. In this research, the meaning of these urban voids is overturned, recognizing them as masses, as they are far from being potential voids for the city.



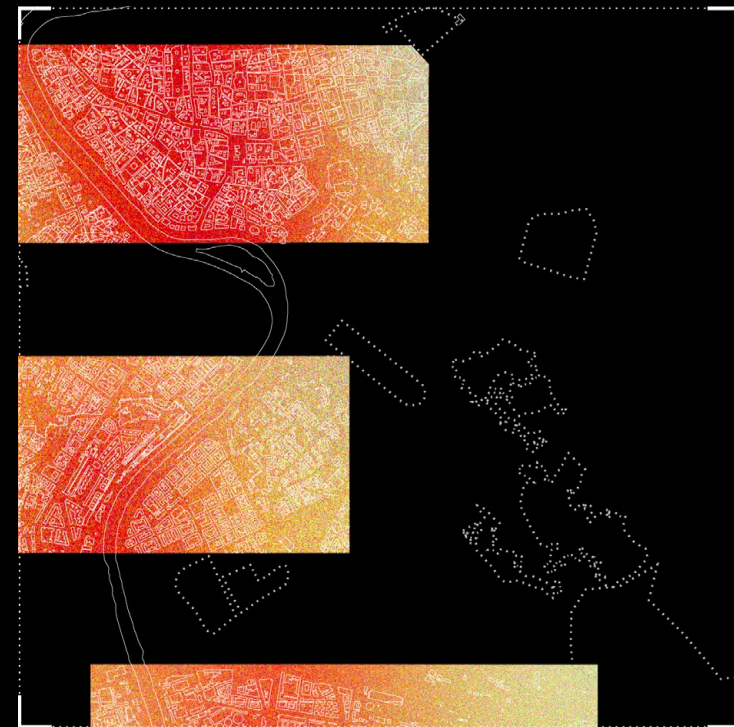
It's hot inside!

The isolated nature of green memories affects the climatic response of the city; the marked perimeters that circumscribe the vegetal masses deny nature to pervade the spaces of the city, thus limiting the climatic benefits of vegetation only to the immediate spatial proximity of the islands.



Exception

In the portion of the city between the east and west banks of the Tiber, in correspondence with the Isola Tiberina, the green fragments are organized in a homogeneous system, determining a state of exception in the urban fabric, in which nature rejoins the river. In the case of the east bank, there is a more unitary formal configuration, while in the case of Circo Massimo there is a further fragmentation of greenery portions.





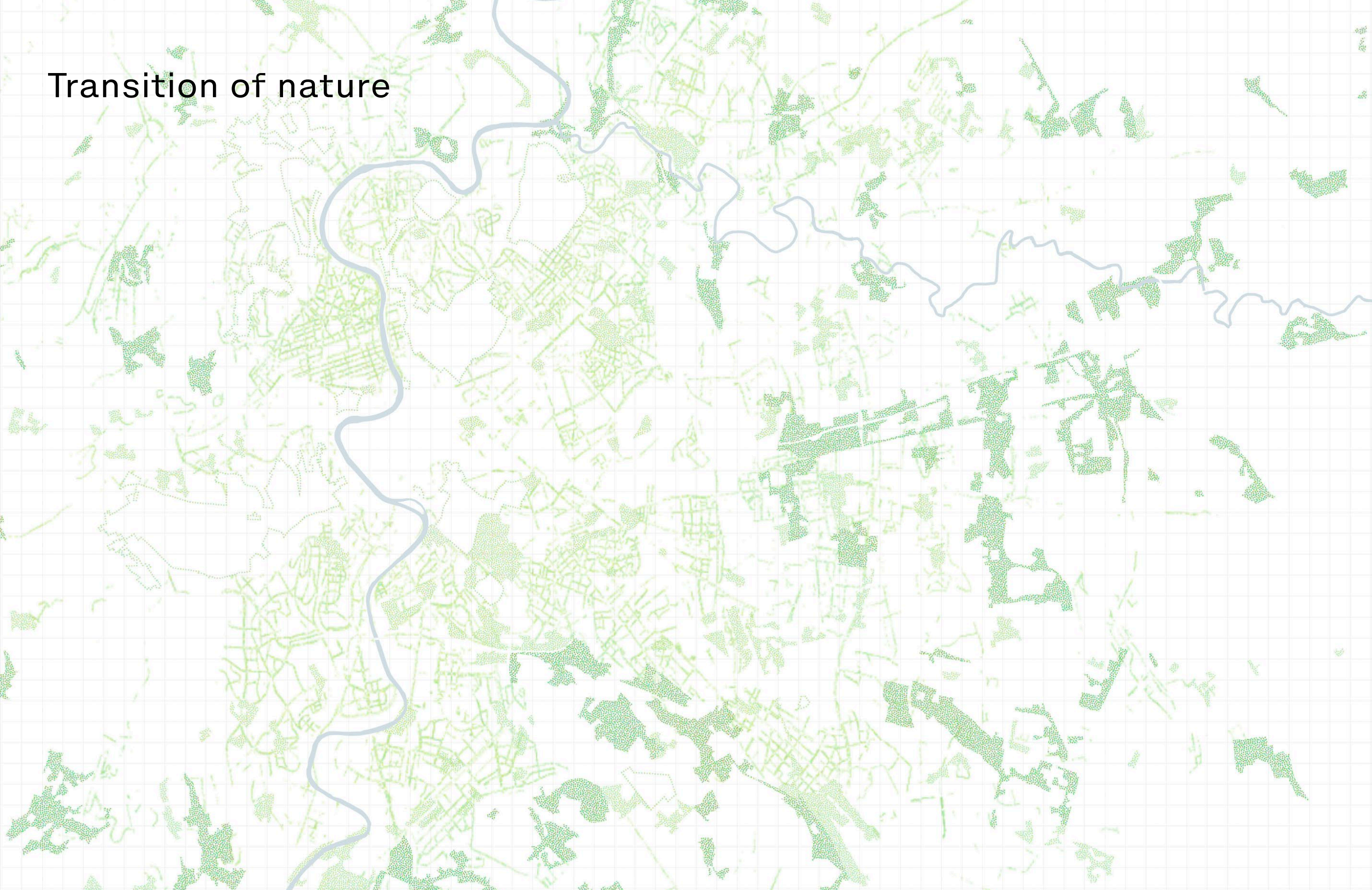
Circo Massimo is part of a system in which the city and the surrounding natural environment interact in a mixture of green areas, built fabric and public spaces, in a synergy in which roles and ecological value are mutually increased.

Circo Massimo is structured as the urban branch of a larger environmental system, articulating itself through a variety of patterns that reconstruct an environmental continuity with the Roman countryside, and connecting with the ancient river landscape to which Circo Massimo owes its genesis. Its nature as a green island is to be read as belonging to an archipelago system from which an active environmental functioning derives.

Unlike the other islands that determine the definition of the Rome Archipelago, Circo Massimo is part of a fragments-system of the same nature, in which a relationship of reciprocal link between islands and the sea is already in place.

In this part of the city, in fact, the green loses its antithetical opposition to the built city and becomes an element capable of working with it in a symbiotic relationship. Public space and environmental infrastructure determine responsive surfaces, both to uses and environmental conditions, capable of generating a mitigating contribution and versatile uses regarding climatic threats, confirming its role as an example not only from a spatial perspective.

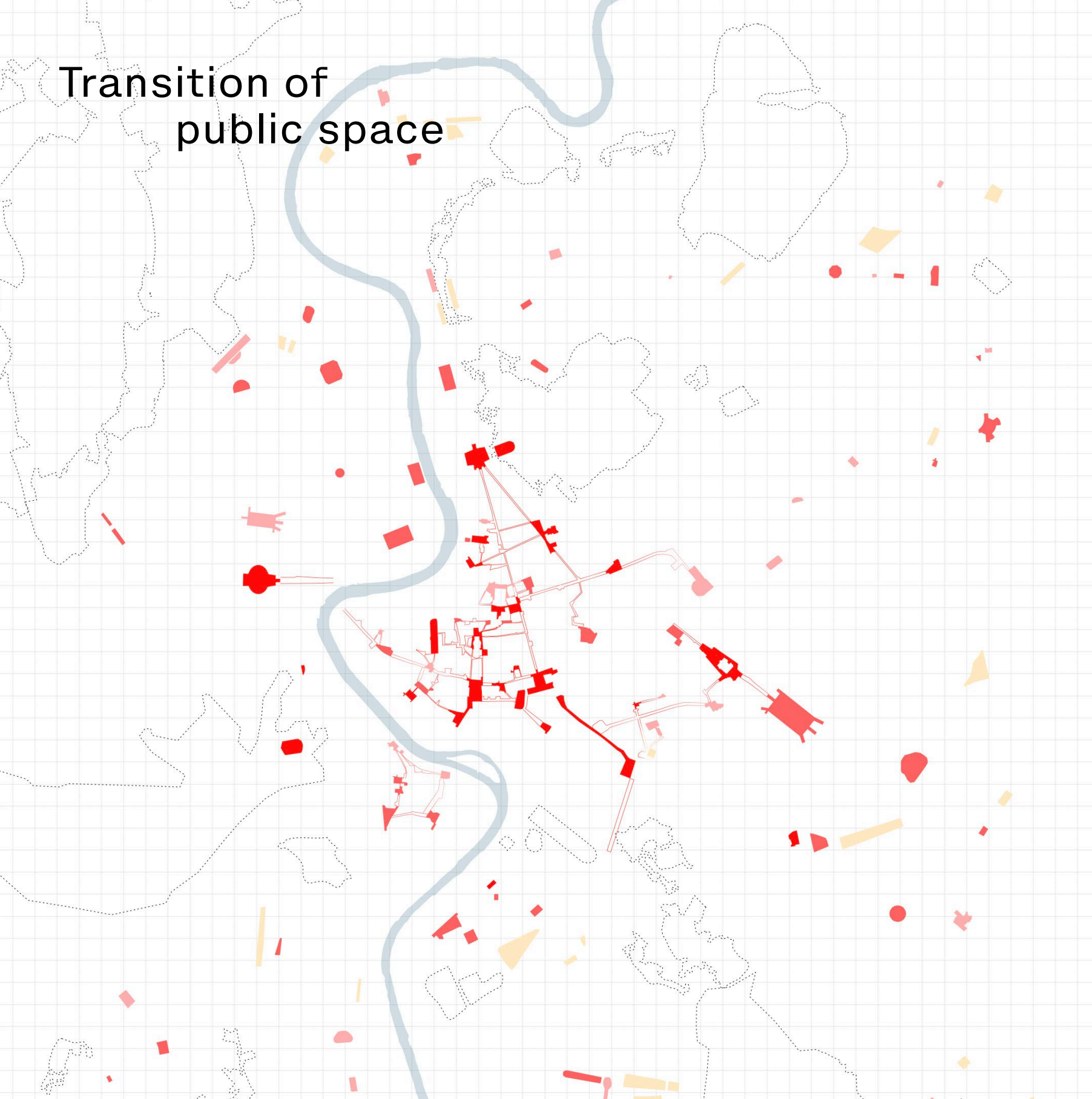
Transition of nature



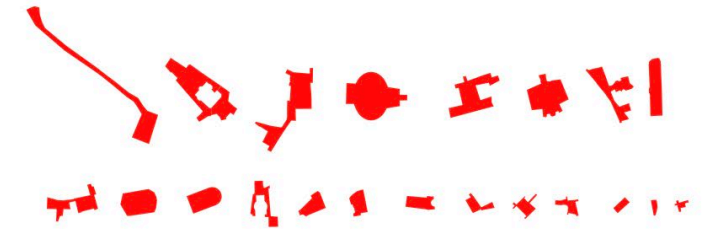
The Natural transition highlights a first area, more external, in which Roman borders are characterized by large portions of greenery that constitute a unitary vegetative system, considering them in admixture with the Roman countryside. Approaching the core of the city, there is a second sector, in which the large public green spaces available are lacking, becoming increasingly rare and exceptional. This area is rather characterized by a residual pervasiveness, in which the greenery consists of trees rows and flowerbeds that infest the large infrastructure of the city. Finally, in the innermost area of the city, corresponding to the historic center of Rome, also the linear green of the streets becomes narrow and limited.

VERSUS

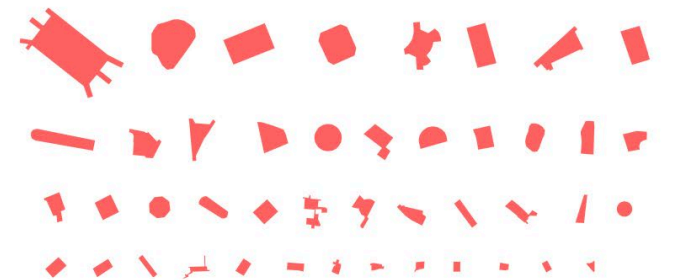
Transition of public space



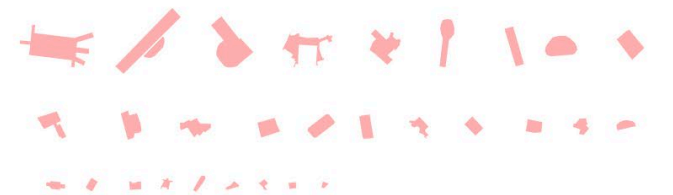
Monumental



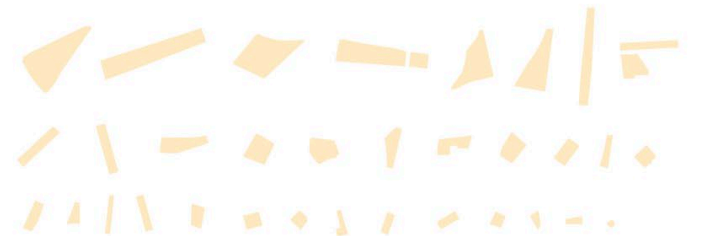
Squares



Intersections

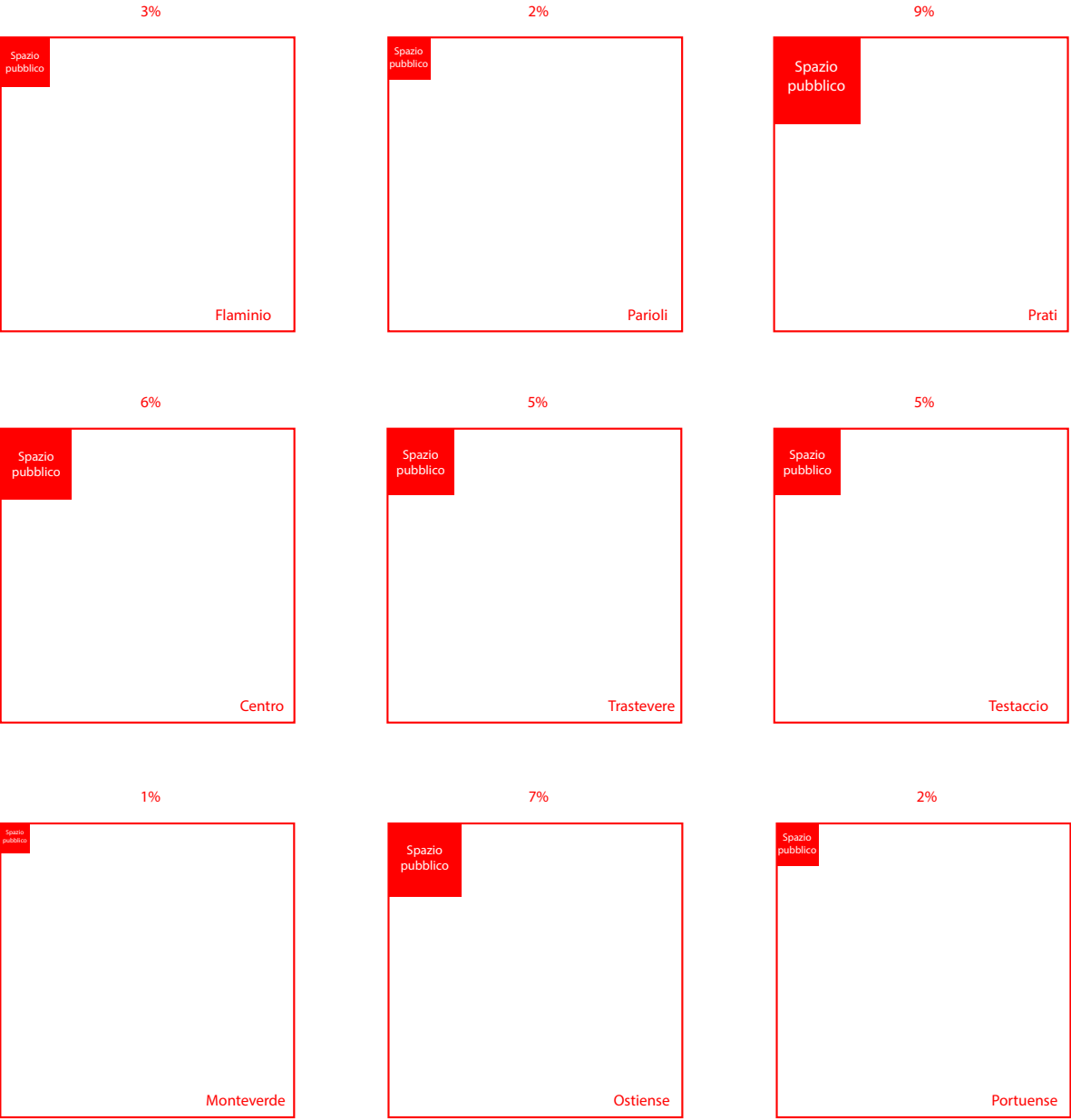


Gardens



In contrast with the Natural transition, the Public space transition manifests an equal and opposite attitude. In this case, the focus is on the city center, where the large monumental open spaces constitute a unitary system; the single square has no relevance as such, but takes on greater significance when considered within an urban apparatus. Moving further from the city center, unity is lost, defining a more heterogeneous situation, characterized by a constellation of indefinite spaces.

To this analysis is added a further investigation on a smaller scale. In fact, the distribution of public spaces within the city is also determined by its particular orography; fragments of cities such as Monteverde or Parioli, built on the strong slopes of Rome, do not allow the same availability of public space of the historic center.

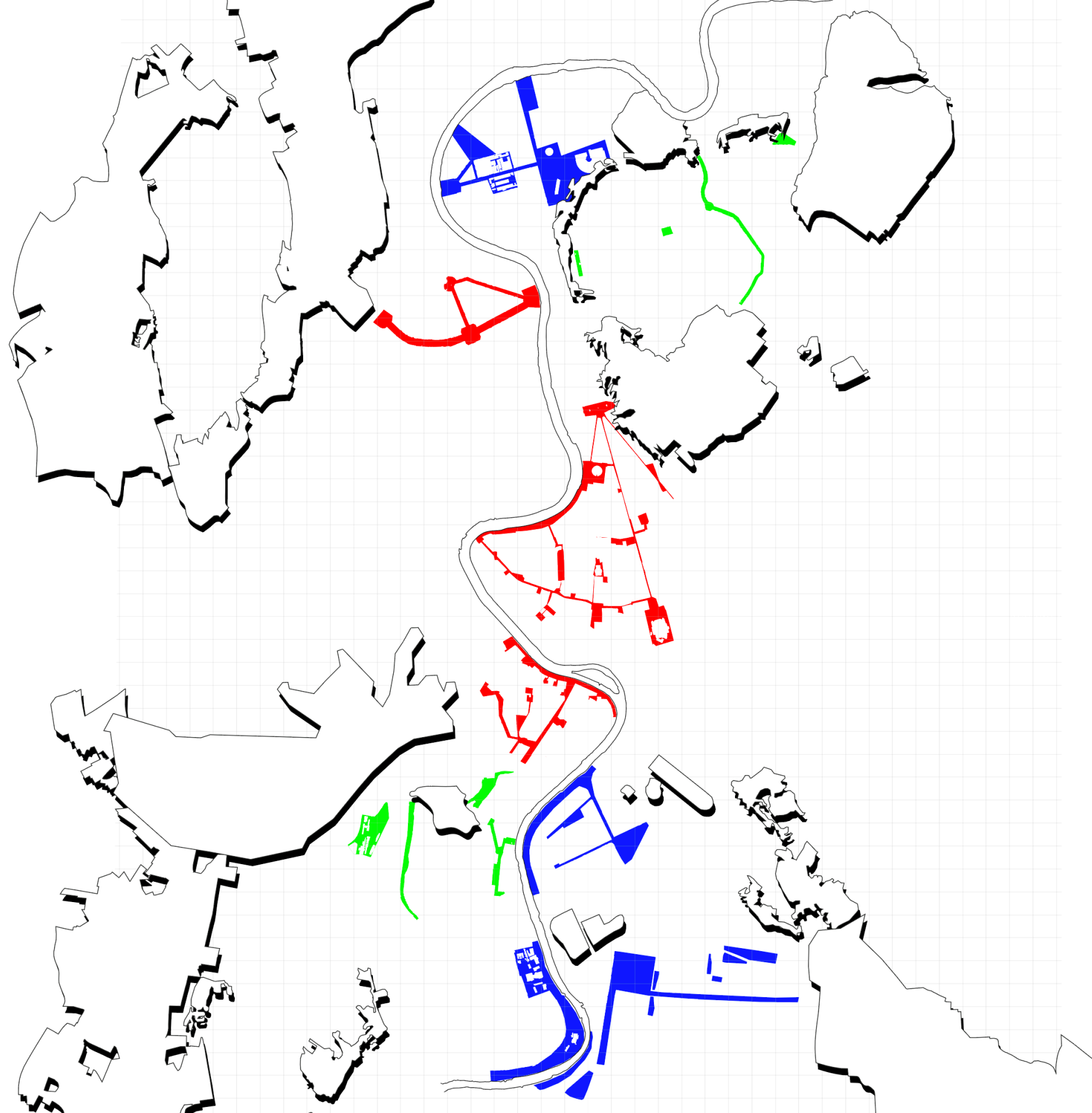


Islands, public space, water

Understanding the need for re-establishing connections within the urban fabric, the research explored whether and how the islands are related to public space and the naturality of the Tiber River.

Three different ways of articulating the public space in different Roman contexts arise from this investigation; the first favors junctions and connections between spaces, the second focuses on the episodes that make up the fabric, the third develops spaces in a disordered and confused way due to the particular orographic manifestation.

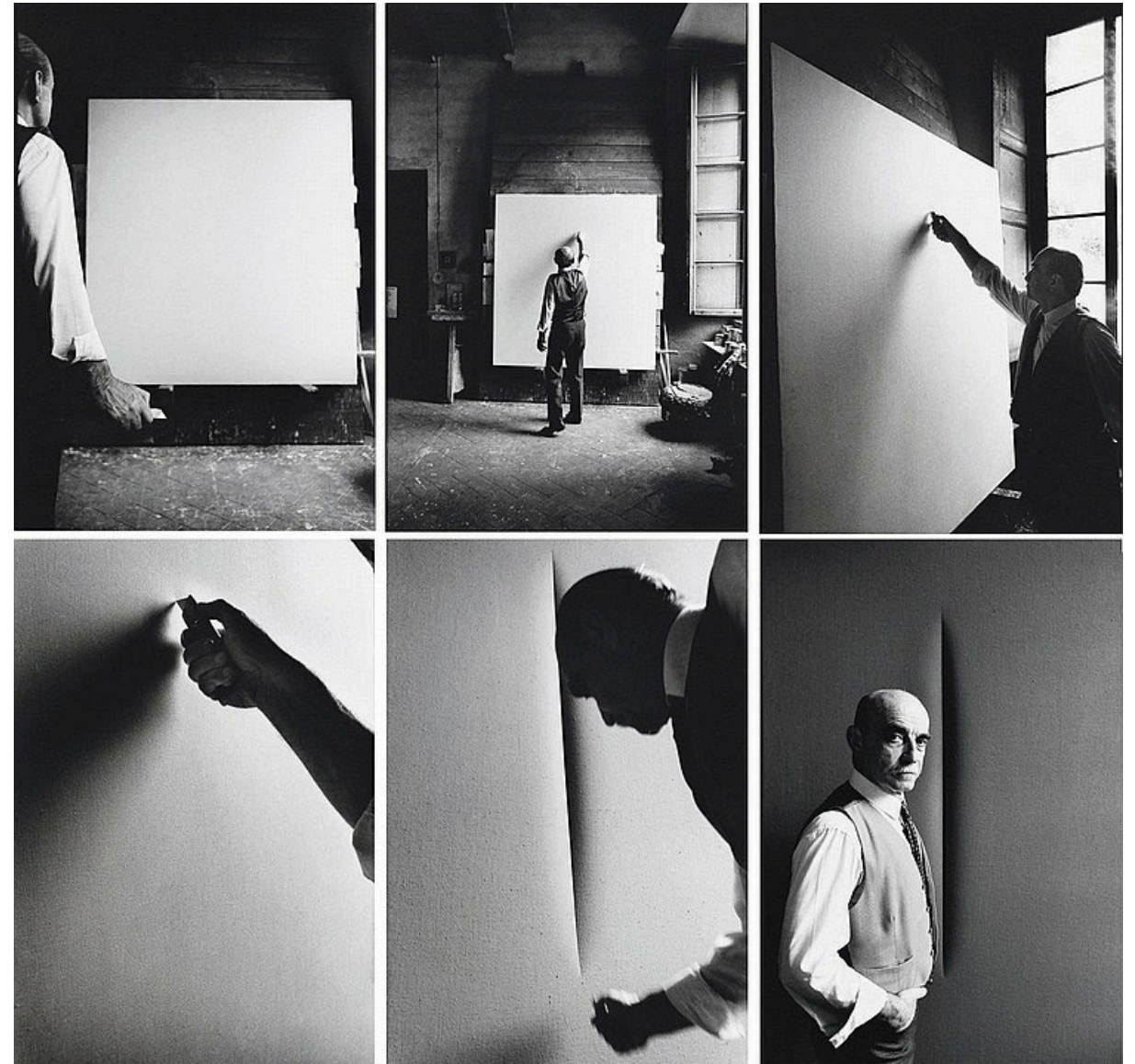
If in some contexts of Rome there are pre-existing manifestations of connections between the three elements, island - public space - water, as in the case of Prati, in other situations this dialogue is denied, and the three elements appear to be in antithesis, as in the case of Monteverde or Parioli.



DESCRIZIONI

Representation, more or less detailed or characterizing, for orientative, informative, illustrative purposes.

It is in this sense emblematic the photographic sequence by Ugo Mulas describing the act of Lucio Fontana. The accent does not lie in the finished object itself, but in the descriptive matrix of the actions that lead to completion. In this synecdotic story, the image of the finished work substitutes the gestures of the author, just as in Rome, the tangible aims to restore the abstract. Through the principle of substitution that characterizes the synecdoche, the vision, the concept expressed, is brought to the fore, in spite of the actual image.



IMAGINARIES OF ROME



ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

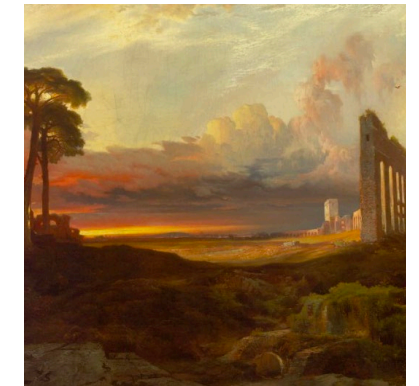
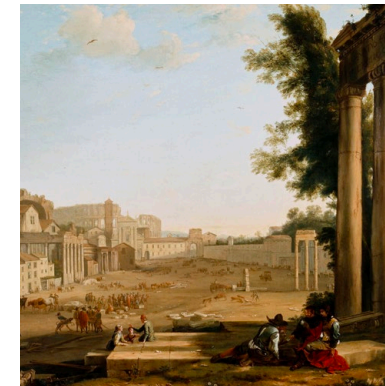
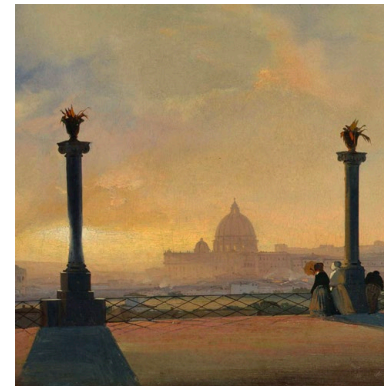
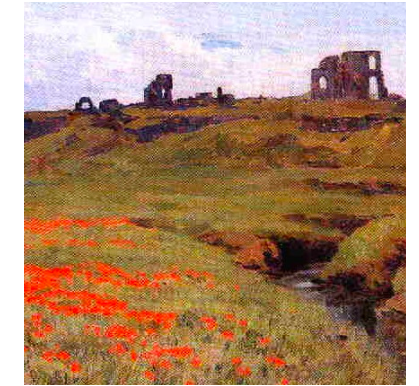
Ippolito Caffi, Gaetano Costa, Aristide Sartorio, Thomas Cole and many others reported multiple suggestions of Rome in its various aspects, often narrating the city in a complete contrast.

First of all, there is an artistic scenario which depicts the evanescent character of Rome, capturing particular shades of lights and reproducing the plurality of atmospheric suggestions on canvas. These representations focus on the multiple colors at different times of the day, during the seasons of the year, restoring a diaphanous synthesis of the perceptive character of Rome, and highlighting how the city was circumscribed by natural elements that define a clear, perceptible cityscape only from the panoramic views of the city, like Terrazza del Gianicolo or Belvedere del Pincio.

Overcoming the ethereal character of the city, there is a second, more common imaginary, which portrays the monumental Rome. The several caprices depict the conviviality of these eternal places, whose grandeur does not compromise their public nature but accentuates it. From these scenarios emerges the magnificence and majesty of the city's resilient architecture, but in the same way a strong landscape connotation emerges among the architectural features. Organic carpets and forms of green infestation that characterized the city in the past are still actual

modalities, albeit changed, of the natural re-appropriation of space. The latest imagery lies in the idyllic character of the city. There are many representations of the Roman countryside, in which the majestic and desolate environment of the surroundings of Rome is translated into a theme in which the image of the Grand Tour found one of its peaks. The crops of the Roman countryside are configured as the giant ruin that fits between the gardens of the ancient Roman villas. Although the ethereal and monumental imaginaries tell, albeit in a minimal way, the man-space comparison, in the rural imaginary of the countryside the individual is omitted, as if to communicate the idea of a Roman time in which man is not included. In this narrative, the spontaneity of nature prevails, as the main element characterizing the idyllic identity of the Roman surroundings.

Through photography, the representation of the city splits into perspectives limited to a single monument, communicating a sense of estrangement from the monumental character of Rome. Through photographic shots, a more sentimental than objective relationship between man and space is told, bringing out the complex and controversial dialectic between the two. On the one hand, the alienation of man, an unconscious prisoner of monumentality, on the other, the tendency to spontaneous appropriation of the eternal places of the city, in an attempt to bring back to the ordinary dimension what is perceived without awareness as extraordinary. Moving away from the extraordinary / ordinary contradictory dichotomy, photography instead witnesses a more intimate and domestic relationship between man and nature that circumscribes the city.



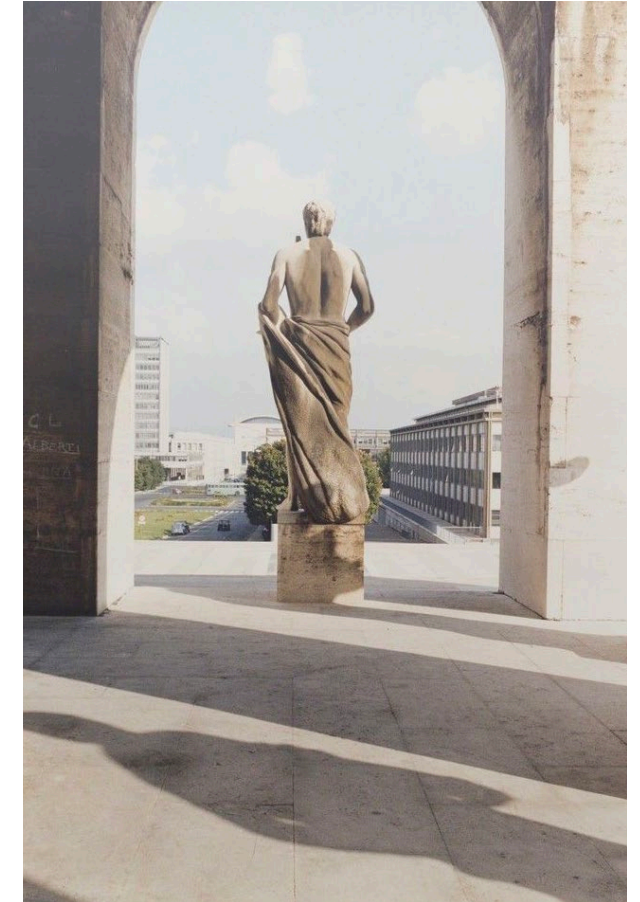
ethereal

monumental

idyllic

Man / Artifact





Man / Nature





CINEMATOGRAPHY

Oscillating between realism and poetry, monumentality and decadence, the scenes of great Italian and international masterpieces frame and photograph the changes and characters of a city in constant evolution. Thus, in a journey through images, Rome is described through its popular architecture of the 40s and 50s, the economic prosperity translated into building speculation of the 60s and 70s, up to the spread of spontaneous suburbs.¹ Following the hypothesis that cinema has been able to tell the overturning of the social fabric, but even more the urban one, with a description through the genres and the stages of the city, the stories that choose Rome as their main character are investigated. Through a selection of the most famous movies that celebrated the capital, the research explored how the city's neighborhoods were depicted in their spatial dimensions. Observing in a subtle way the spatial implications that derive from the different representations of social structures, the attention therefore turned to the space of actions, translating the content of the different films into landscape terms and investigating how they outline and narrate the lived space of the city. The plots of the narratives are thus interwoven between the stages

of Rome, outlining the main features of the urban fabric in its public and private declinations.

Both as a frame in theatrical narratives and as the protagonist of neorealist films, architecture and its spaces tell the ways of living and experiencing the city, highlighting the construction logics of the spaces of each fragment of the city. In a story that affects both the suburbs and the historic city, the spaces contract and expand, seeking more or less close relationships with history and alternating the magnificence of the past with the decadent landscapes, legacy of modernity.² Through multiple declinations, urban materials are divided into spatial theaters of different nature.

In the northernmost areas, narrations reveal the search for a strong intimacy in the construction of spaces. This attitude is as evident in the public spaces, in the squares circumscribed by vegetal material, as in the private ones, where the natural dimension is expressed in the forms of secret gardens, mostly hidden from the eyes of the city. In this regard, it is made explicit a sense of introversion, which tends to circumscribe the public space to the point of including it in the domestic dimension. It is curious in this sense to observe the inversion of the relationship between natural and artificial in the construction of spaces: while in the squares and public spaces the greenery is translated into a frame, in private gardens the organic material becomes the protagonist of the scene, closed by the internal facades of buildings.

The area of the historic center, in an antithetical way to the previous one, instead opens up to monumentality, in

a completely different scale of spaces. Celebrating a sublime landscape, in its architectural and naturalistic expressions, the city's resilience is solemnized, lifelong untouched and perpetuated through the iconic images of magnificence and history. The romantic charm of the gardens of the historic villas is associated with the ordinariness of living these spaces, which are confronted with the impressive dimensions of its monuments. The size of the public space is proportionally scaled to that of the monument it owes its birth, in a system in which objects and spaces dependent on them mark the path. The Trastevere narratives tell of an aptitude for appropriating spaces in the definition of a landscape that is, in a certain way, spontaneous, born from the implementation of the countless possibilities of use that its inhabitants read within it. The coexistence of historical artefacts enriches the spaces with meaning, in which an unprecedented form of conviviality is generated that, feeding on the relationship with history. Similarly, neighborhoods like Garbatella pour these attitudes into the thresholds between public and private, generating urban rooms that take on the characteristics of real meeting places. In this logic, public space is designed for a human scale, in which even the historical dimension bends in favor of new uses, becoming the scenic backdrop that accommodates the needs of the city.

Continuing south, finally, the space establishes a connection with the countryside and therefore with conditions of explicit contrasts. These are places where modernity has dictated the infrastructural and industrial development, imposing large dimensions in the development of roads and productive lots. In these places, whose scales are not designed for the

human beeing, but for large-scale production and circulation, the landscape thus opens up in fractures of space, with the generation of large abandoned areas and heirs of now forgotten projects of modernity. The sensation is that of immersing oneself in a contradictory landscape, in which the large natural areas that finally regain the dominion of space in this part of the city, in reality remain abandoned rears waiting for answers.

Analytically reconstructing the discourse, a first taxonomy attempts the classification through key terms that describe the urban landscape of the different movies taken into account. Through their spatial localization, the research therefore observes a categorization of landscapes by zone; these spatial stereotypes, associated with a selection of images taken from the various films, visually clarify the nature of these spaces, concretizing their features and defining the logics and construction scales of the spaces.

1. Prina V., *Il cinema e l'architettura moderna in Italia*: Roma, September 2013, available at www.magazine.larchitettoarchiworld.awn.it. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

2. Prina V., *Op. Cit.*

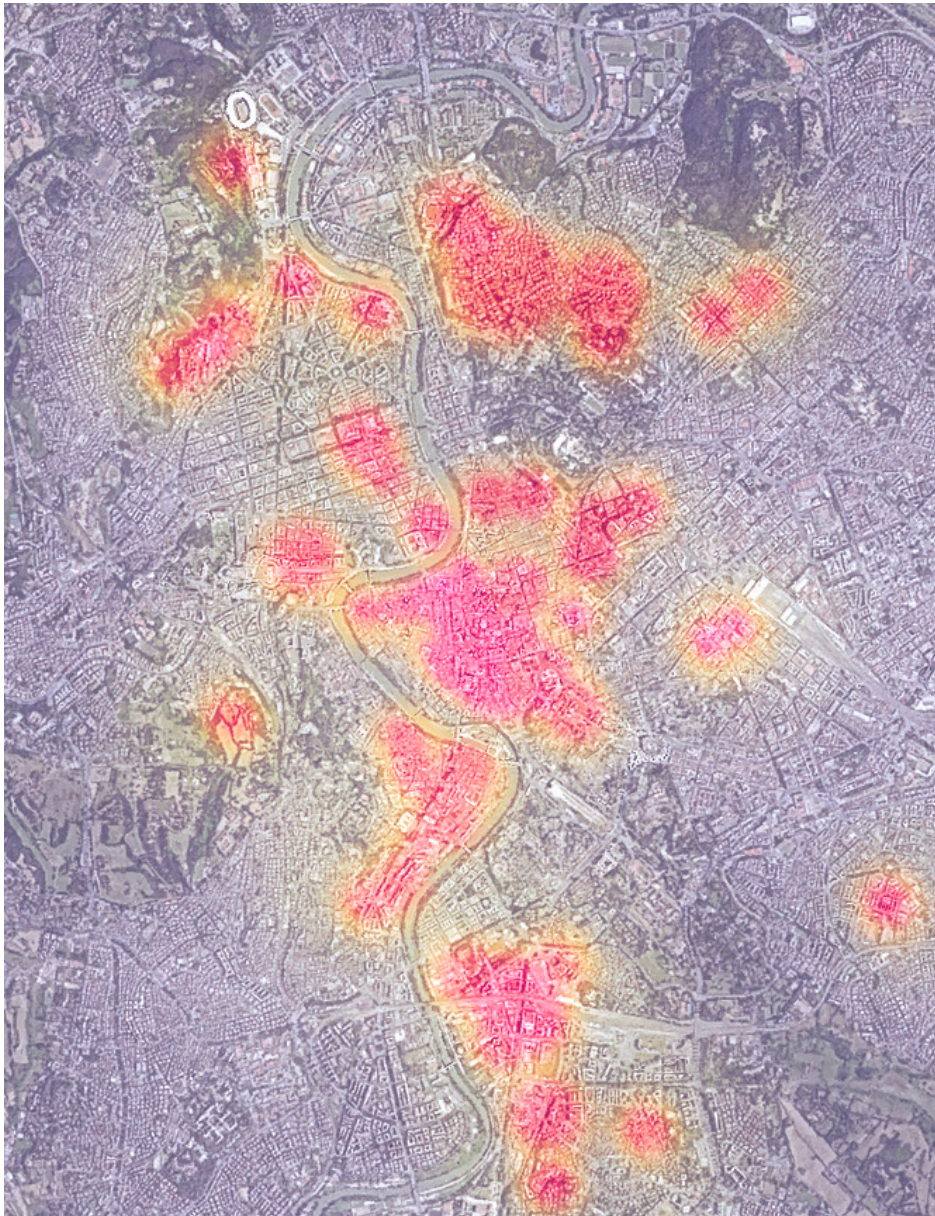
50+ Movies set in Rome

● Spontaneous ● Palimpsest ● Eternal ● Sublime ● Introverted ● Modern ● Domestic

1945	●	●				●	Roma, città aperta
1948	●			●		●	Ladri di biciclette
1951					●	●	Bellissima
1952	●			●			Umberto D.
1952		●	●		●		Lo sceicco bianco
1952			●		●		Le ragazze di piazza di Spagna
1953		●	●	●			Vacanze Romane
1954			●		●		Un americano a Roma
1955	●					●	Il Bidone
1957	●		●			●	Poveri ma belli
1957	●			●		●	Le notti di Cabiria
1958	●					●	I Soliti Ignoti
1958			●		●		L'amore nasce a Roma
1959		●	●		●		Arrangiatevi
1960			●	●			La Dolce Vita
1961	●			●		●	Accattone
1961			●			●	Totò, Peppino e...la dolce vita
1962	●	●				●	La commare secca
1962	●				●	●	Mamma Roma
1962	●	●		●		●	Il Sorpasso
1963	●				●	●	Il boom
1966	●	●		●		●	Uccellacci e uccellini
1968	●				●		Teorema
1971		●			●		Roma Bene
1972				●		●	Trastevere
1972		●		●		●	Roma
1974		●	●			●	Profumo di donna
1976	●		●			●	Brutti, sporchi e cattivi
1976		●	●		●	●	Il comune senso del pudore
1977		●			●	●	Una giornata particolare
1978	●	●			●		Ecce Bombo
1979		●			●		Caro papà
1980		●	●			●	Un sacco bello
1980				●		●	La terrazza
1983	●			●		●	Acqua e sapone
1983					●	●	Bianca
1983	●					●	Amore tossico
1987					●		La famiglia
1987			●	●	●	●	Il ventre dell'architetto
1993	●	●			●	●	Caro Diario
1999			●	●			Il talento di Mr Ripley
2000	●				●		Come te nessuno mai
2001		●			●	●	Le fate ignoranti
2003						●	Gente di Roma
2005						●	Romanzo criminale
2006				●			Angeli e demoni
2010		●	●	●		●	Mangia, prega, ama
2012			●	●		●	To Rome with love
2013	●	●				●	Sacro GRA
2013			●	●	●		La grande bellezza
2015	●					●	L'odore della notte
2018			●	●			Loro

Roberto Rossellini	IT
Vittorio de Sica	IT
Luchino Visconti	IT
Vittorio de Sica	IT
Federico Fellini	IT
Luciano Emmer	IT
William Wyler	US
Stefano Vanzina	IT
Federico Fellini	IT/FR
Dino Risi	IT
Federico Fellini	IT
Mario Monicelli	IT
Mario Amendola	IT
Mauro Bolognini	IT
Federico Fellini	IT/FR
Pier Paolo Pasolini	IT
Sergio Corbucci	IT
Bernardo Bertolucci	IT
Pier Paolo Pasolini	IT
Dino Risi	IT
Vittorio de Sica	IT
Pier Paolo Pasolini	IT
Pier Paolo Pasolini	IT
Carlo Lizzani	IT
Fausto Tozzi	IT
Federico Fellini	IT
Dino Risi	IT
Ettore Scola	IT
Alberto Sordi	IT
Ettore Scola	IT/CA
Nanni Moretti	IT
Dino Risi	IT
Carlo Verdone	IT
Ettore Scola	IT
Carlo Verdone	IT
Nanni Moretti	IT
Claudio Caligari	IT
Ettore Scola	IT
Peter Greenaway	IT/GB
Nanni Moretti	IT
Anthony Minghella	US
Gabriele Muccino	IT
Ferzan Ozpetek	IT
Ettore Scola	IT
Michele Placido	IT
Ron Howard	US
Ryan Murphy	US
Woody Allen	US
Gianfranco Rosi	IT/FR
Paolo Sorrentino	IT/US
Claudio Caligari	IT/FR
Paolo Sorrentino	IT/FR

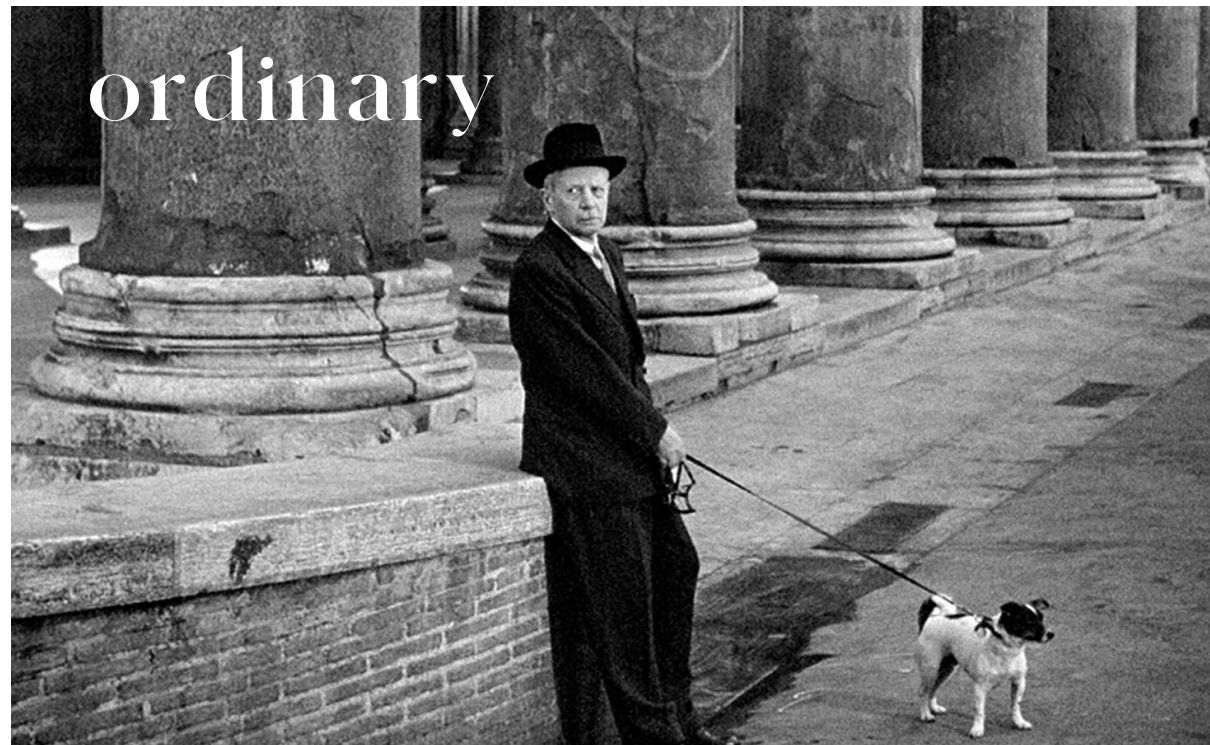
Spatial stereotypes



introversion

stage

secret garden



ordinary



sublime



iconic



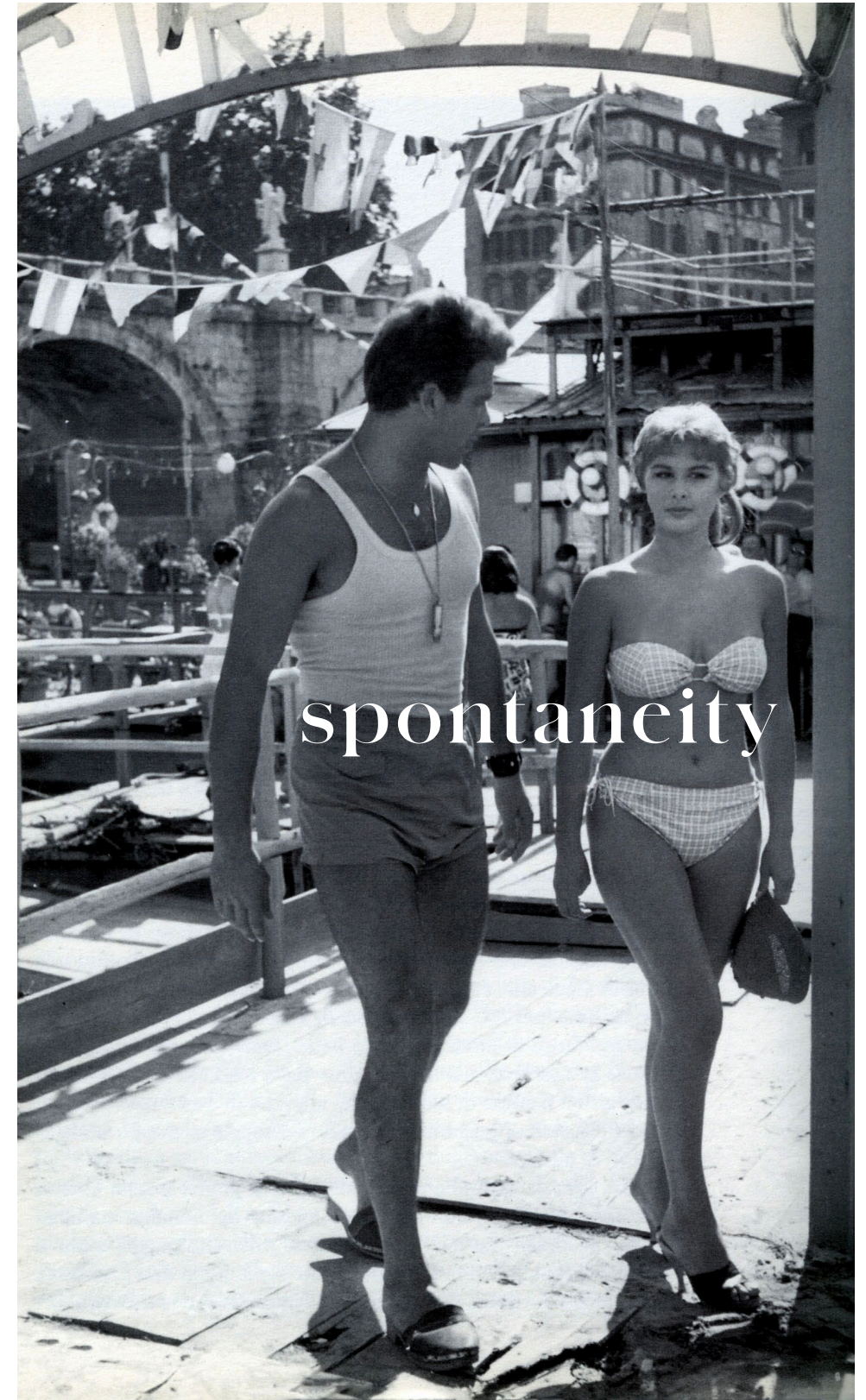
romantic



conviviality



rooms



spontaneity



contraddictory



B side



infrastructure



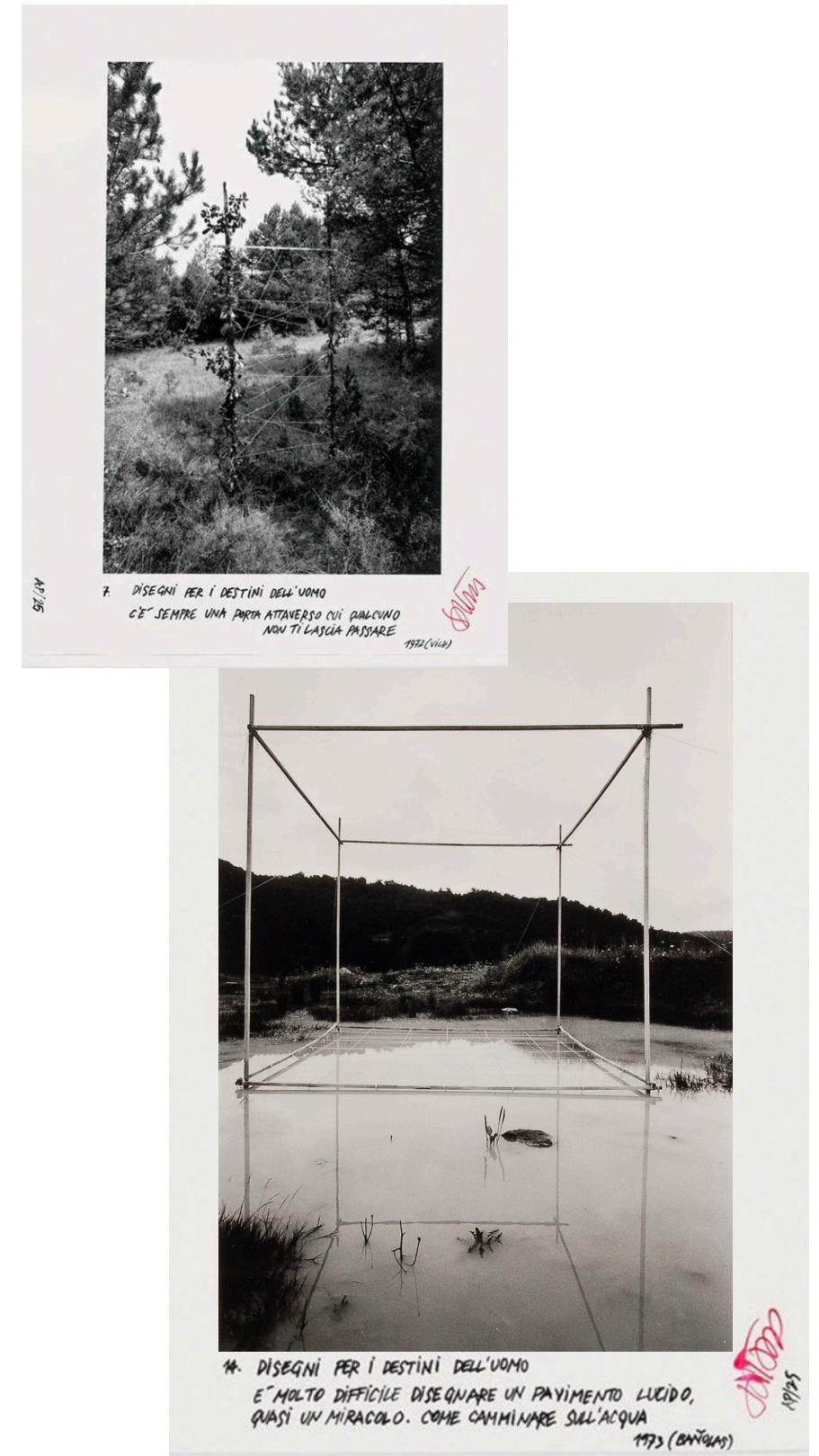
back

LIRICA

In its most modern meaning of affective poetry, in which the expression of the poet's subjectivity prevails. With collective value, the set of lyric compositions of a literature, of an age.

In Ettore Sottsass's postcards, playing with the observer's perception, natural and artificial elements are combined to metaphorically suggest domestic scenarios.

The lyric is used as an expressive device through meaningful images to propose the climatic metaphor of Rome as Tunis.



“Potremmo forse mutare,
con lavori immensi,
anche l’andamento (...)
del terreno; potremmo scegliere
(...) le piante che preferiamo;
ma non potremo mai cambiare
a nostro piacimento la luce, l’at-
mosfera di un luogo.
Roma è soprattutto
un’atmosfera, una luce,
un clima:
(...) è come una fatalità,
una delle tante espressioni
di quel carattere eterno
che è stato sempre attribuito alla
città.”*

*Quirioni L., Immagine di Roma, Laterza, Bari, 1976

DAILY

SHIFTING

January 12th, 2021, rainy day



April 20th, 2017, sunny day



ROME AS CLIMATE

place, stage of an extraordinary change. The city loses its traditional internal / external dualism in this artistic expression and the terms of comparison with the environment are provocatively inverted: it is inside the city that what happens in the external world finds space, it is in the accelerated times that slow transformations occur. Through multiple declinations, urban materials are thus divided into spatial theaters of different nature.

The emphasis is focused especially on the public dimension of living the city, in fact it is precisely on the colors, lights and atmosphere that new and informal ways of experiencing public space are built. While the monumentality and grandeur of Rome remain untouched, an antithetical discourse is built in the connective tissue between the monuments, a singularity of spaces characterized by a strong sense of intimacy that confers a sense of protection and belonging.

The city has therefore preserved a rustic simplicity, which makes it similar to nature. That same simplicity can be read between the lines when Quaroni affirms that the resting place of the Romans reside in an authentic way between streets and squares, rejecting any form of enclosed space.

Ludovico Quaroni's famous descriptions of Rome convey the ethereal character of the city, built on colors, materials, lights and sensations. It is precisely his words that open and accompany this chapter on a sensory journey to Tunis, highlighting the need to perceive these small fragments of ordinary life to become aware of a change already undergoing.

The images transport slow, distant and imperceptible events into an ordinary, dynamic and familiar context, re-proposing them in accelerated and immersive terms. Creating short circuits in time and space, they mend the distances between Rome and the African destination, visualizing the slow and imperceptible transformations in frames and snapshots, propelling the viewer in an alienating situation to think about phenomena and events that surround him. The logic is to bring "now and here" the elsewhere: the city gradually built and in which humans live every day becomes simultaneously the actress and the scene in which ordinary climatic events take

“About the garden that I have seen from year to year, today I will only say on the light that wanders there like a playing child. [...] Since it is found among things, it seems unalterable, even eternal. And it is thanks to this fragile vegetation, to this changing and precarious garden, that we can see it.”*

*Jacottet, 1984

Travelogue

3.1.1

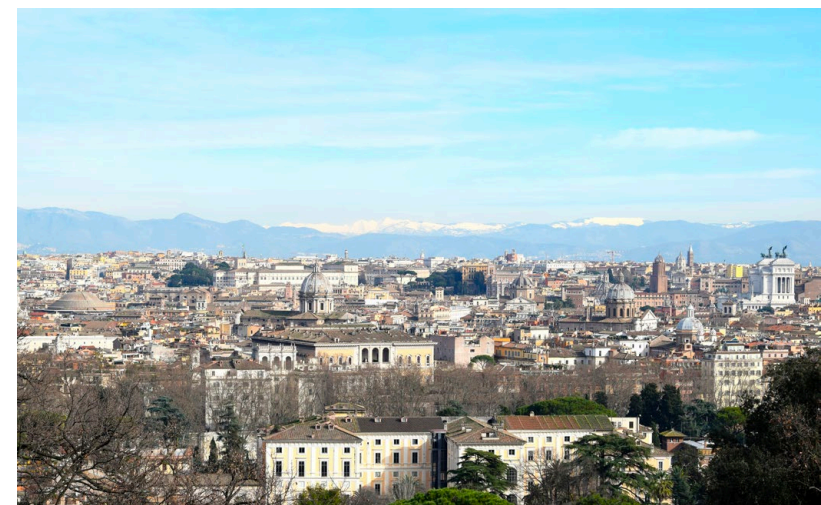
The seemingly imperceptible dimension of climate change is explored through tiny and apparently insignificant details taken from everyday life. Through a series of frames in an emblematic place in Rome, such as the Terrazza del Gianicolo, an attempt was made to make visible the evident chromatic variation given by the lights and the thickness of the air, showing that also in elusive fragments of a single day, different perceptions of the same space result.

The photographic story is alongside accompanied by fragments of descriptions of Rome¹ that immerse the observer in the dynamics and spontaneous approaches that guide the living of public space.

The result is precisely to recreate the experience of public space, determined in an unconscious and imperceptible way by atmospheres, more or less vivid colors of the materials and by the undetected but decisive landscape that circumscribes the city.

1. Quaroni L., Immagine di Roma, Laterza, Bari, 1976

Chè la vita in comune si fa con tutti,
ma fuori, per la strada [...].
Le vie, le piazze, sono la vera casa dei
romani.



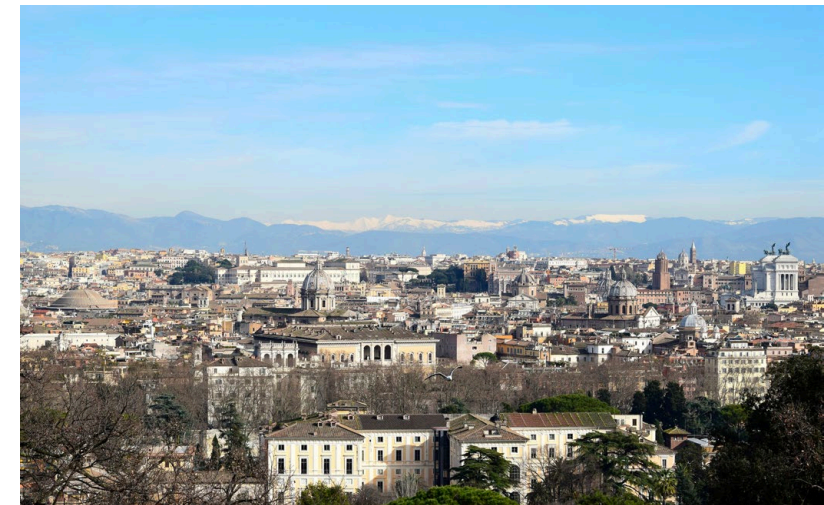
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 12:00 p.m.

Ma d'estate si sta fuori quanto
più è possibile, anche sotto il sole
soprattutto la sera fino a tardi,
a godersi il fresco in maniche di
camicia, intorno a una fontana, seduti
sugli scalini o affacciati alla finestra.



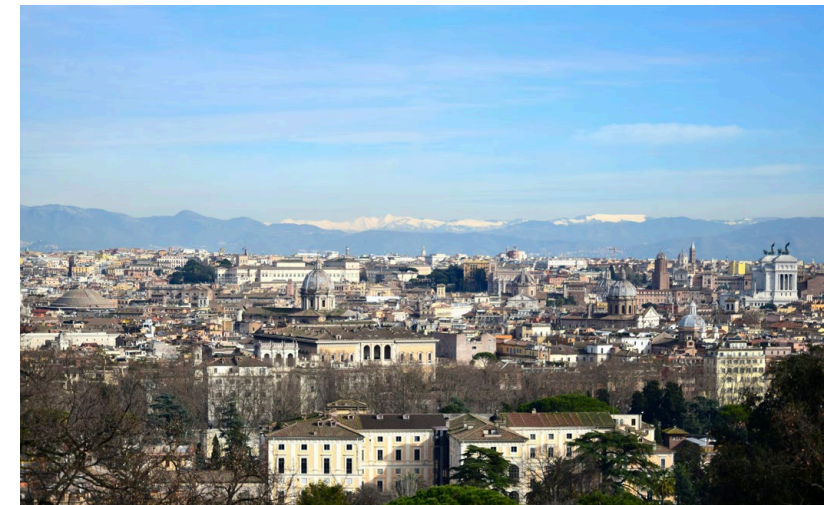
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 12:15 p.m.

Per la vita sociale ci sono le strade,
le panchine di villa Borghese ed i
muretti del lungo Tevere, dove le
giornate si consumano lunghe, in
una eterna voglia di isolamento e di
incontro.



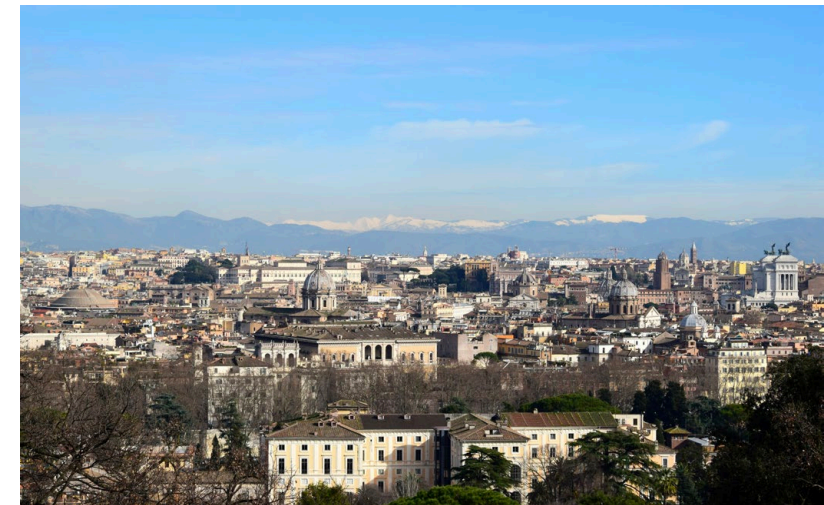
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 12:30 p.m.

Nelle piazze di Trastevere è ancora possibile correre a ritrovare la scala umana nella vita delle persone che sanno ridere bene insieme, e insieme vivere lo spazio urbano, seduti all'osteria o fuori della porta di casa.



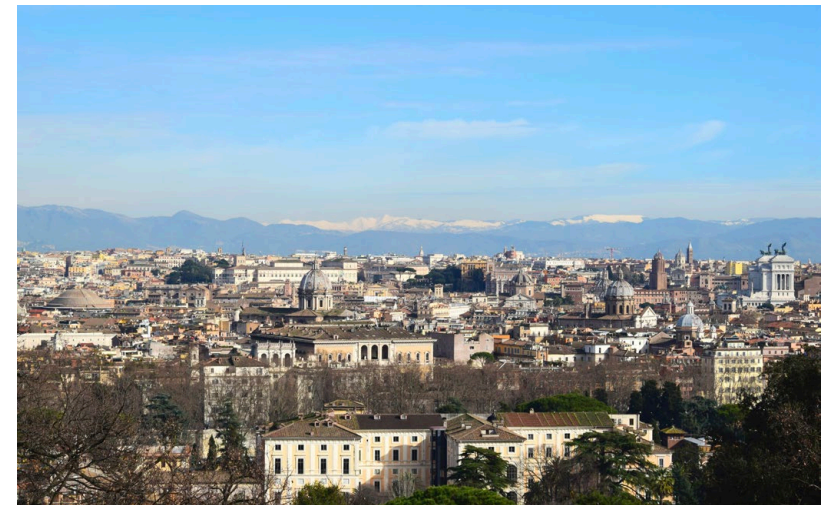
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 12:45 p.m.

Si tratti della biglietteria della stazione Termini o della “gabbia” esterno d’uno dei caffè di via Veneto, la gente che affola i luoghi pubblici è molto variegata:



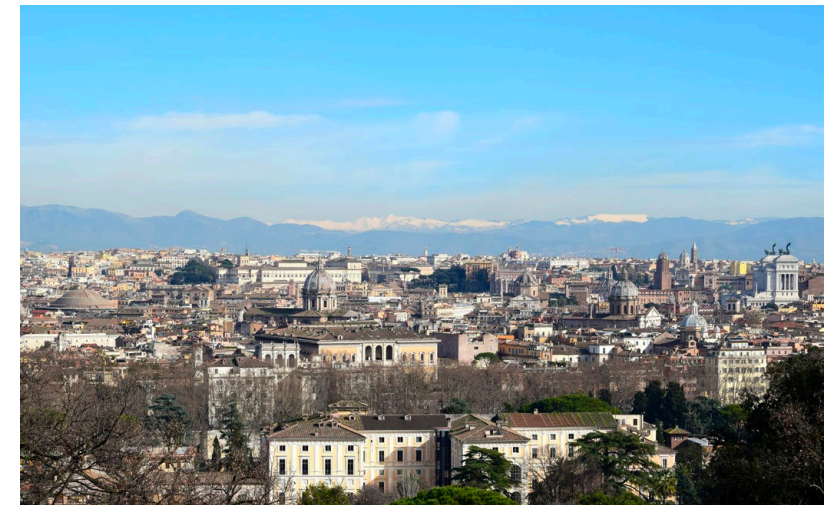
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 1:00 p.m.

[...] tendono a mescolarsi facilmente,
sommando le libertà degli sguardi,
intrecciando lingue e dialetti,
disprezzandosi e odiandosi,
cercandosi continuamente.



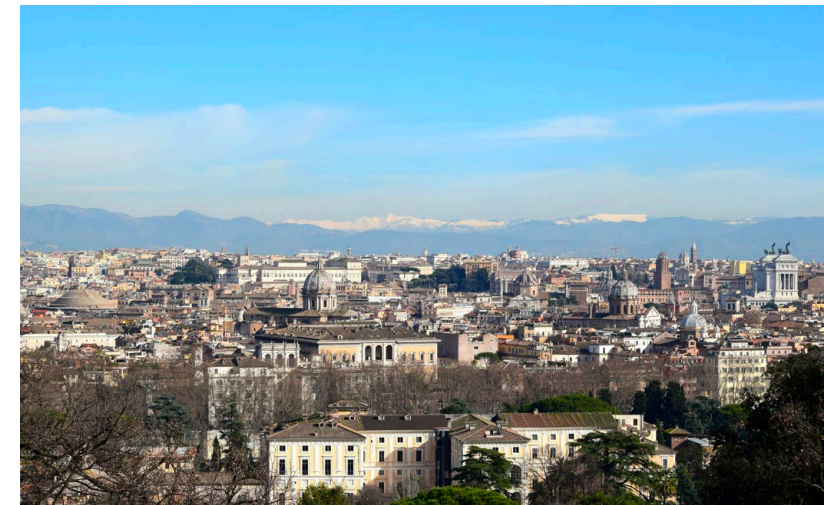
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 1:15 p.m.

[...] in un clima appena più freddo del Nord Africa la vita all'aperto è la vita naturale, la casa e i luoghi chiusi rappresentano solo un buio rifugio per il troppo freddo o per il troppo sole.



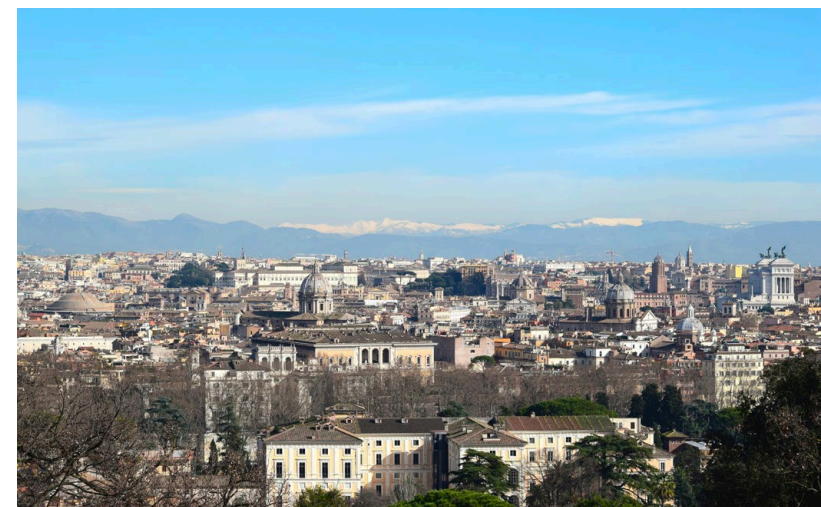
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 1:30 p.m.

[...] le piazza in Italia, erano lo spazio pubblico nel quale ri ripetevano, [...] quelle manifestazioni della vita collettiva che nella Roma antica avevano permesso il foro romano dapprima e i fori imperiali poi, le basiliche e le terme di Roma:



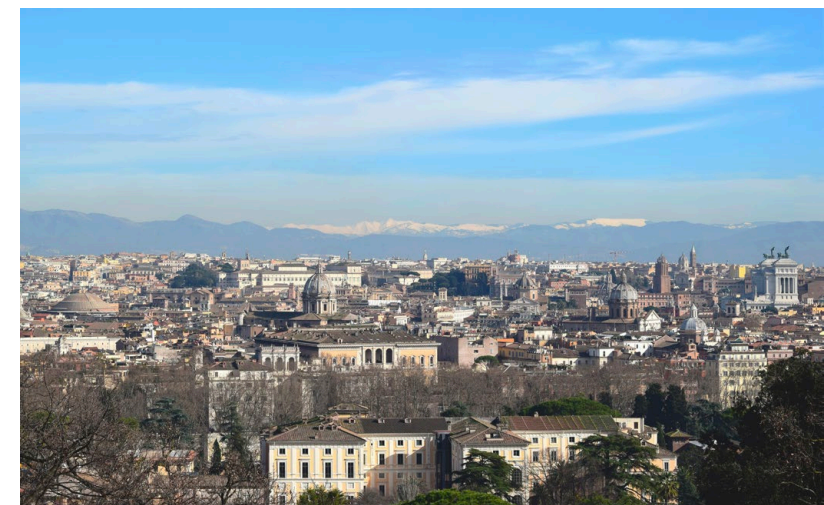
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 1:45 p.m.

incontri, discussioni, commercio,
politica e dolce far niente,
pettegolare.



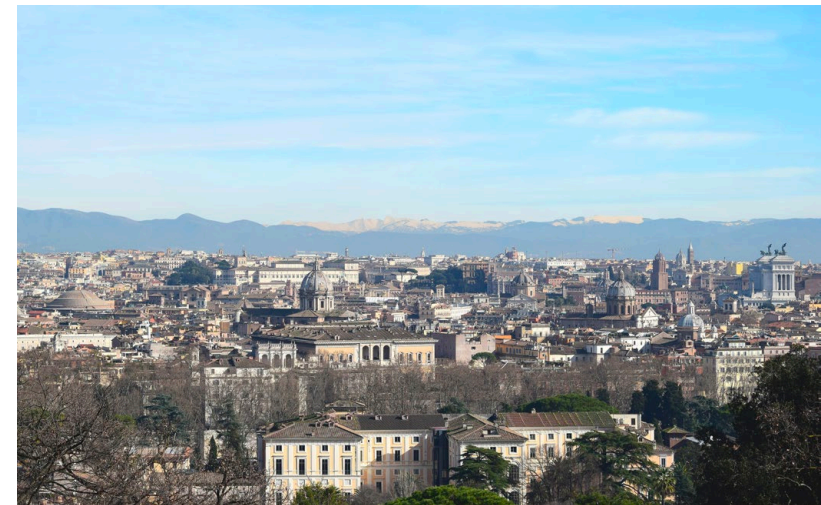
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 2:00 p.m.

La piazza Navona restituita ai pedoni
cerca di ritrovare un uso perduto da
molto, ma la gente non è più quella di
prima.



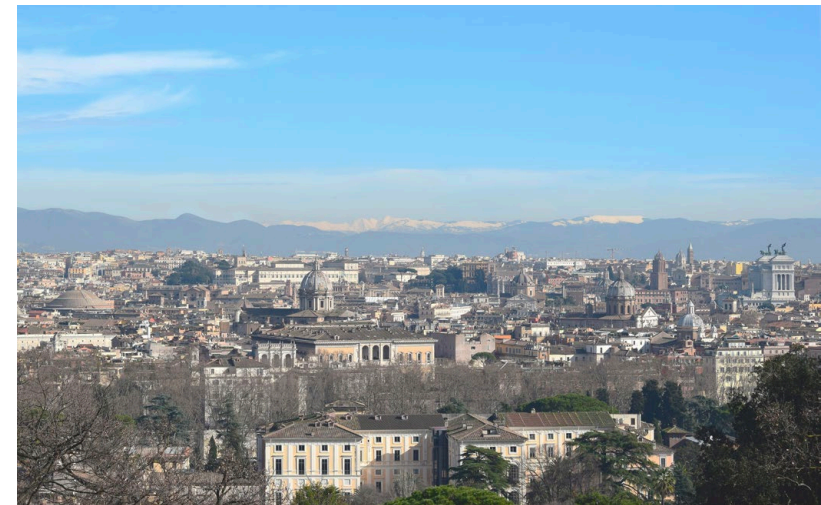
25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 2:15 p.m.

Sulle scale c'è sempre gente che cerca un luogo “disponibile” per sostare a riposarsi per chiacchierare, [...] per guardare qualcuno, per sceglierlo, quasi, per un amore che non si farà mai, o solo per distendersi al sole, per annullarsi, [...]



25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 2:30 p.m.

[...] qui a Roma, in questa anticamera d'Oriente, dove tuttavia ci si riferisce sempre, nei discorsi, all'Europa centrale.



25th January 2021, Terrazza del Gianicolo, 2:45 p.m.

Reading Hollywood in the smog
David Gissen

HOLLYWOOD	KDLLYWOGD	NOLLVWOPD
HOLLVWODD	KOLLYWCCD	HQLLYWDQD
KOLLYWCOD	BDLLYWOOP	HOLLVWGDP
KDLLYWDOD	HGLLYWOOO	HOLLVWPDD
HOLLYWOBD	NOLLVWDCD	HOLLVWRDD
NOLLYWOQD	HOLLYWCBD	KOLLYWBOP
HDLLVWOOP	NDLLVWOC	KOLLVWDQD
HDLLYWOQD	KCLLYWDDD	HDLLVWQOP
HCLLYWOOO	BOLLVWOC	KCLLVWCOD
NCLLYWDOD	HCLLVWOOO	RPLLYWOOD
NCLLVWOOD	KOLLYWOCB	HDLLYWQDP
HOLIYWOC	HDLLYWD	HQLLYWGOP
HOLLVWCCD	BDLLYWCOD	HQLLVWGOD
HBLLYWDOD	NOLLVWOBD	RQLLYWDOD
NDLLVWODD	KCLLYWDCD	HQLLYWDDP
HDLLVWOGD	HRLLYWOOB	ROLLVWOOO
ROLLYWDOP	HBLLYWOQD	ROLLYWCCD
NCLLYWCOD	HDLLVWOOR	KDLLVWQOD
HOLLVWOBD	HPLLYWODP	HDLLVWOQP
BQLLYWOOD	HQLLYWOPD	HDILVWOOP
KOLLVWOOB	NDLLYWDOO	FOLLYWDOP

David Gissen, "The Appearance of the Letters of the Hollywood Sign in Increasing Amounts of Smog and at a Distance", 2015.

Corporality 3.1.2

The provocative image of David Gissen highlights the threat of smog in the city of Los Angeles, where the iconic writing on the hill of the city is subject to the so-called phenomenon of "contrast reduction", disappearing into the haze of the air. This depiction makes clear the impact of pollutants in the perception of colors, shapes, depth. It is thus evident how perception, challenged by the tiny variations produced by climate change, results in an alteration of the profound meaning of places and in how they can be lived.

In the same vein, Tim Etchells' neon words recently installed at Circo Massimo invite to reflect on the experience of time. The author allows the viewer to stop and think about the circumstances he lives in and how these may appear later in time. His work, combining philosophical reflection with an opportunity for more intimate reflection, stimulates perception, projecting the public into a simultaneous process: looking at a distant future and at the same time imagining the present as the past. In this sense, "This precise moment in time as seen from the future" can be taken as an opportunity to reflect on the climate issue and pay attention to all those ordinary aspects that unconsciously place Rome on its landing in Tunis.



“There’s a lot of “Antropocene Art” that attempts similar things, and much of it is very creative and suggestive. But that does not refute my point about trying to access, or trying even to bring within a sensible grasp, something that is of a scale that is strictly incomprhensible. This is not to dispute the role that art can play in giving us some way of imagining things that defy ordinary human experience.”*

*Graham J., Blanchfield C., Anderson A., Carver, J.H., Moore J., *Climates: architecture and the planetary imaginary*, Lars Müller, Zurich, 2016

“La brise chaude,
la brise d’Afrique,
apportait à mon
coeur joyeux l’odeur
du désert, l’odeur
du grand continent
mystérieux [...]
J’étais ivre de
lumière, de fantaisie
et d’espace.”*

*De Maupassant G., Un soir, 1889

Exotic Rome

3.1.3

exotic

adj.

what characterizes
the places, the
environment and
the life of foreign,
oriental and tropical
populations

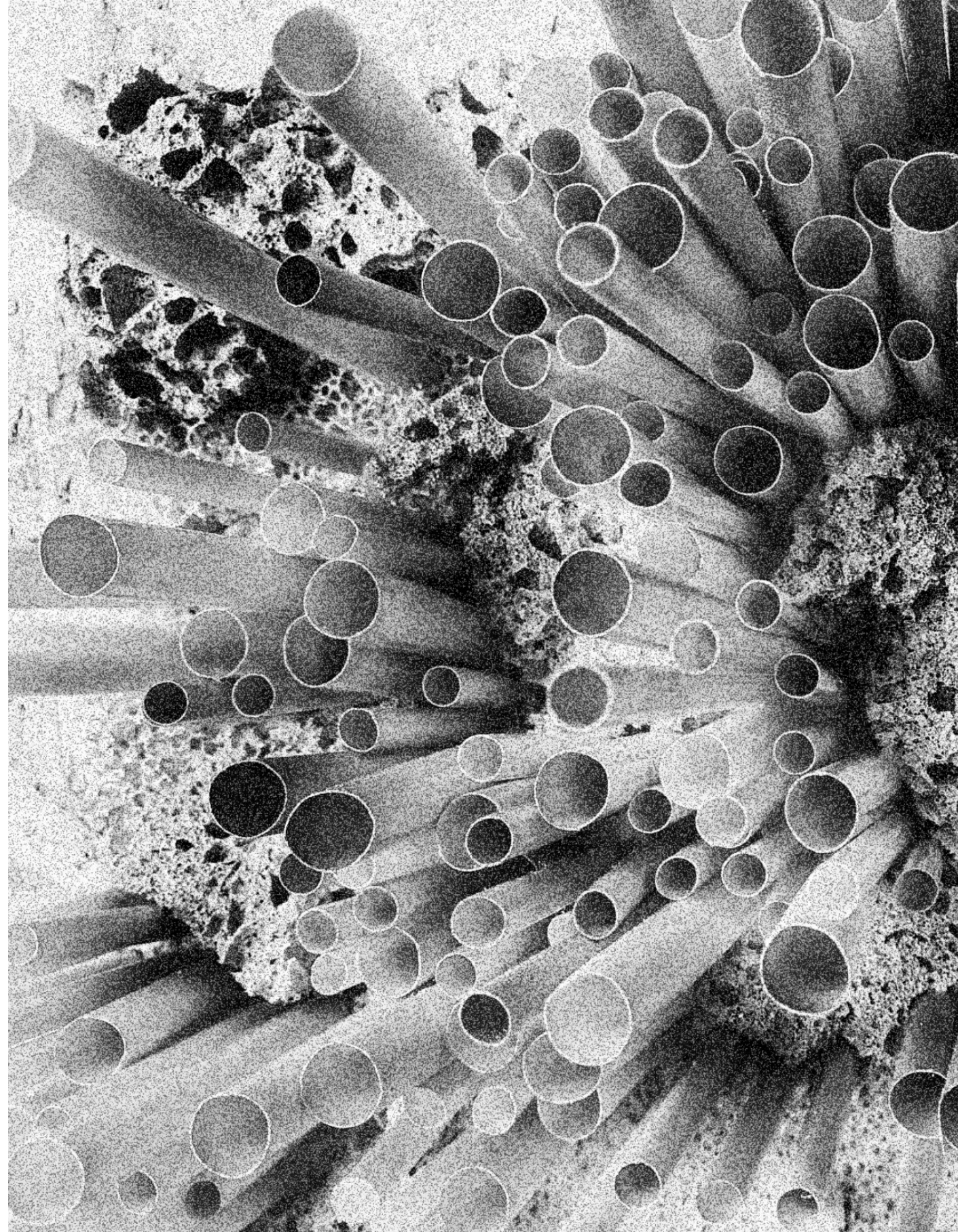
Imagining the scenario in which Rome moved to Tunis, the research attempts to bring out the actual consequences at the atmospheric, climatic and cultural level, through a catalog of African suggestions. This represents a collection of shots related to Roman and Tunisian contexts, suggesting a mixture and confusion of the two, to disorient the observer and imagine an exotic future. The details of Rome, merging with the Tunis' ones, give rise to a new imaginary for the city, reinterpreted in an ordinary and daily key. The spaces shown, public and private, are invaded by exotic plants, tropical storms, populated by new fauna.

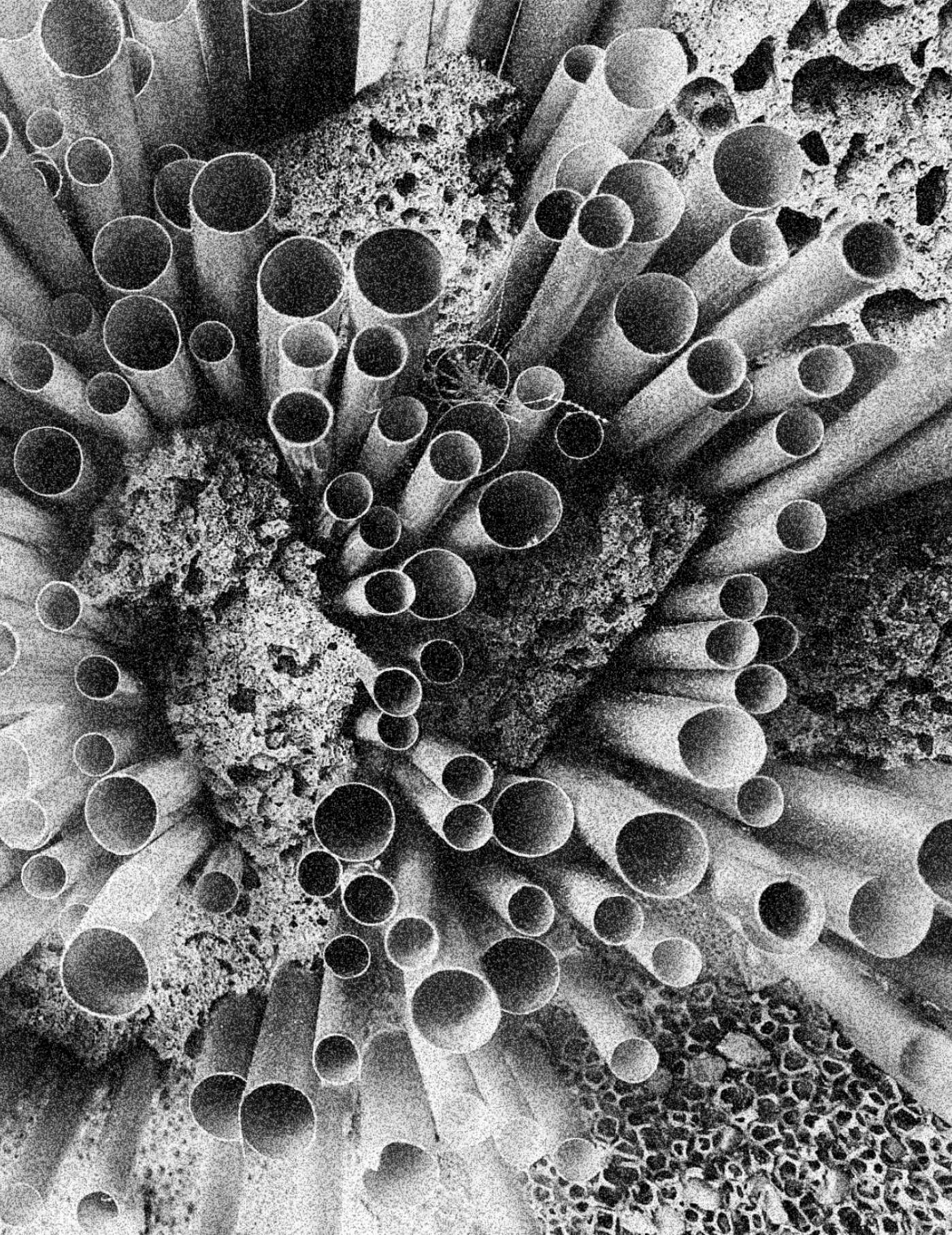
The acclimatization of unusual plants and the migration of new species of birds, attracted by a mild and increasingly sultry climate, suggest the change in the city's temperatures and microclimate. Like new infestations of space, these elements redesign the urban landscape, giving an exotic character to everyday life.

WHAT IF ROME GOES TO TUNISIS?



Parte III
NUOVA
DRAMMATURGIA





Drammaturgia, in its meaning as a work intended to be represented on the stage, projects the research towards its operational dimension, in an attempt to structure a new language that, starting from the reading of the Roman urban fabric, finds new expressive modalities. According to the classical etymology, from ancient Greek, the terms involved are in fact “act” and “work”: proceeding through a series of internal connections, the composition is not limited to the creation of a product, but, involving rhetorical figures as much as the elements of the syntax, searches for the internal connections that exist between the different elements that compose the work, favoring in this logic the definition of new ways of writing city spaces, especially in their public dimension.

Thus, far from a mere deterministic production, the research rather investigates the compositional tones and modalities through which to rewrite the city, starting from the concepts of trama and canovaccio.

Plots are here understood as a particular structure of a fabric, dependent on the way the threads were intertwined: in this sense, the analogy, at an urban level, is reflected in the sequence of events that have determined precise urban forms. Following the city warp, the research thus analyzes the threads of heterogeneous fabrics, different in grains and events that have determined their shapes, in an attempt to highlight potential structures in suggesting new developments.

Actually opening the way to the operative dimension, the plots therefore define the essential lines of the work, intended precisely as canovacci rather than a script. According to its definition, the canovaccio is assimilated to a non-deterministic or prescriptive attitude; on the contrary, it is configured as a support available to the unexpected, flexible to unpredictable situations. Precisely, the soil project becomes similar to the concept of canovaccio, investigated in this research in its possibilities of defining chameleonic and performative surfaces.

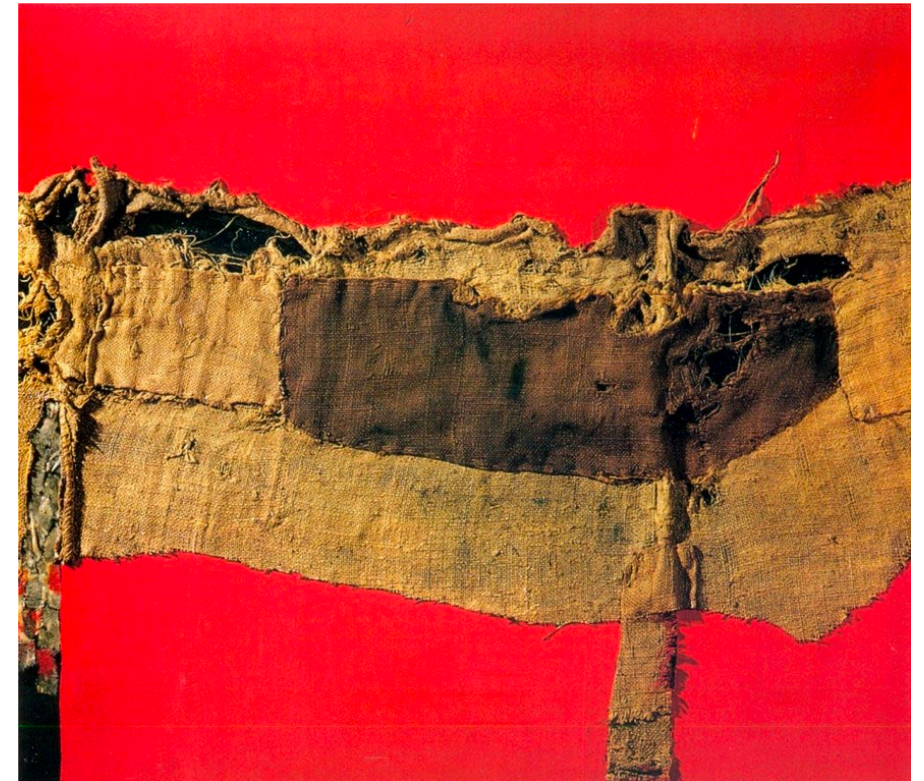
In this sense, the question here built concerns the operational methods in the project for the public space, starting from the assumption that climate change is able to continuously modify the perception and uses of space. The research therefore wonder what the new materials, the new surfaces, the new skin of the public city could be, imagining its spaces introduced within new sets. In this last chapter, in a continuous compenetrations of poetic and scientific dimensions, a possible approach is therefore investigated, in the attempt to open the way to new concrete suggestions for the city of Rome.

TRAME

URBANE

Trama: The plot, the essential line of development of the most important facts that constitute the subject of a narrative, or a theatrical performance. In urban language, the texture is assimilated to patterns of textiles and materials, recalling the morphological configuration of the city. This part of the research presents three different urban plots, interpreted as three heterogeneous prototypes that describe the recurring urban formulas of the city.

In this case, Burri's work "Sacco e Rosso" evokes the juxtaposition of materials with different and contrasting textures that brings back to the palimpsestal dimension of the city of Rome.



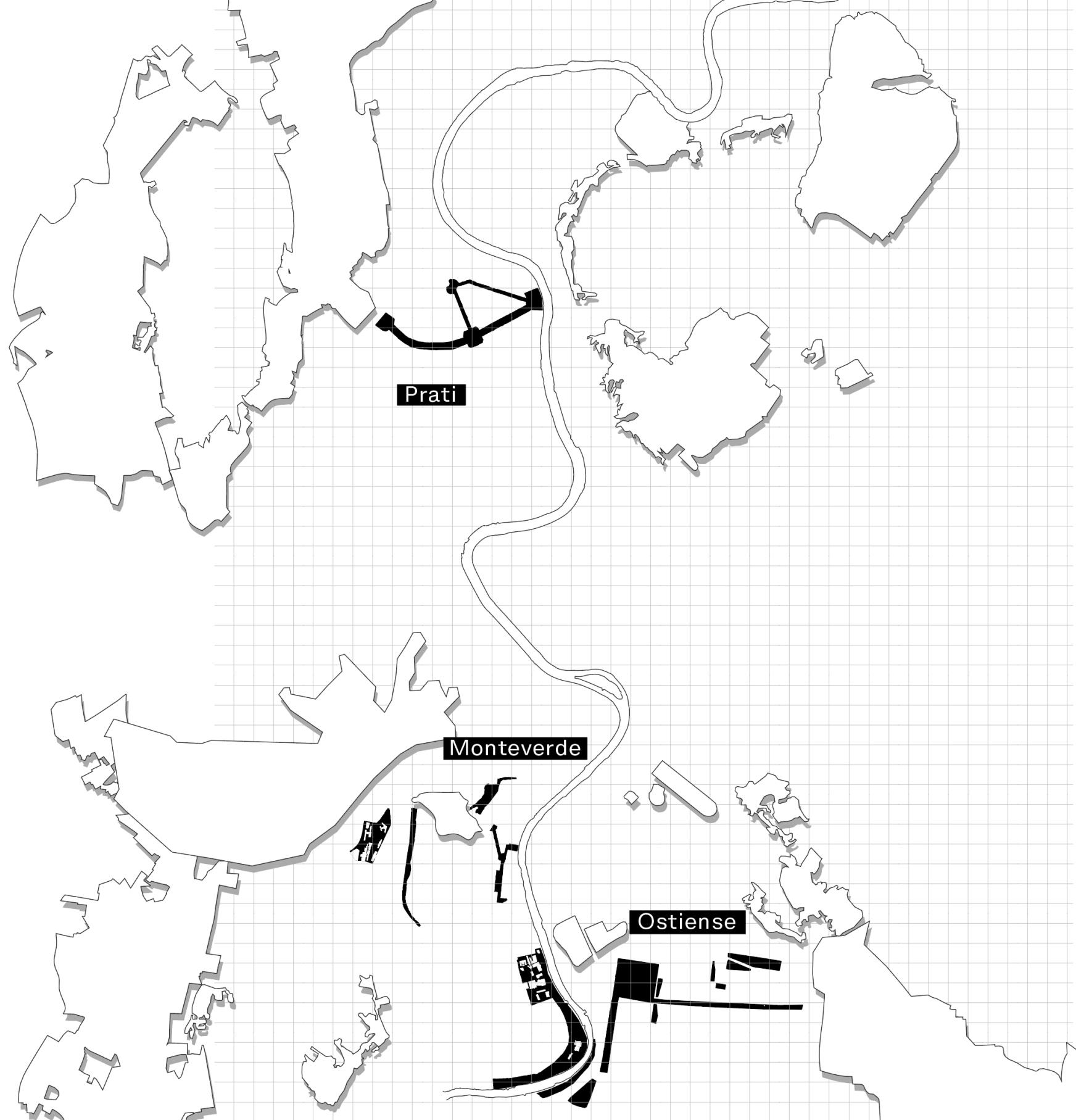
THREE SAMPLES

Shifting to a more precise scale of analysis, three sample areas of Rome have been identified, each with its own peculiarities, that can provide repeatable project prototypes in the city. From north to south the three areas are represented respectively by the Prati, Monteverde and Ostiense districts, which differ in urban fabric and spatial configurations.

Prati, the first district analyzed in the northern part, is configured as a constellation of public spaces interconnected by a green path, culminating in a large void on the slopes of Monte Mario.

The second is Monteverde, immediately close to the historic center, and for this reason it presents a mixture of extremely different architectural materials. The district, built on the slopes of Rome, contains intrinsic potential in its fragmentary character.

Finally Ostiense, the southernmost district among those analyzed, is characterized by a large urban void with an industrial past. Unlike Prati, the large potential space of Ostiense remains disconnected from any naturality structuring itself within the neighborhood, as a meeting point between various axes and fragments of urban greenery.



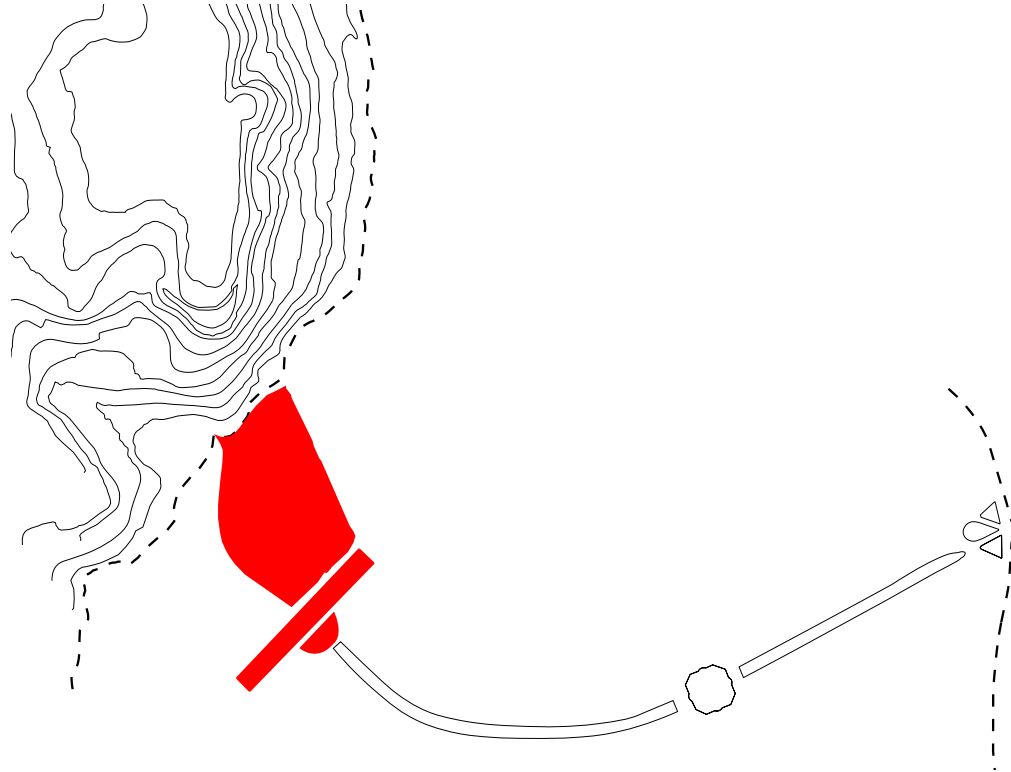
#1 PRATI

INTIMACY?

The urban fabric that characterizes Prati district already consists in a natural connection between Monte Mario and the Tiber. In fact, there is a substantial green infrastructure that splits the neighborhood, sometimes opening up on occasions of public space, which, isolated from the road network that surrounds them, are strongly denoted by introversion and intimacy, the same characteristics of the inner courtyards of the neighborhood. Prati is therefore characterized by a heterogeneity of theatrical scenes, secret gardens and intimate spaces. Although it is a neighborhood with a strong defined fabric, there is an exception; on the slopes of Monte Mario, a vast indefinite space in fact turns the natural connection unstable and fragile.

Piazza Monte Grappa

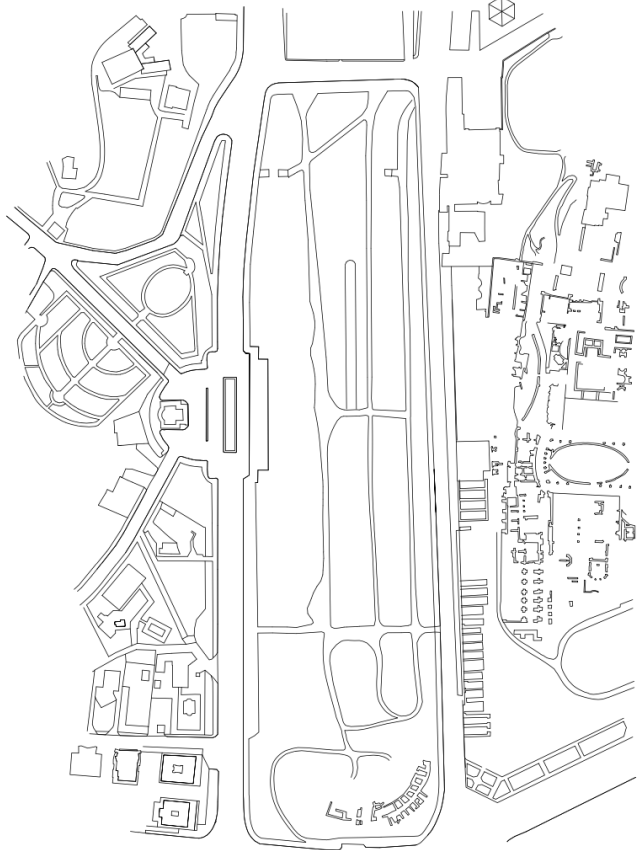
Piazza Mazzini



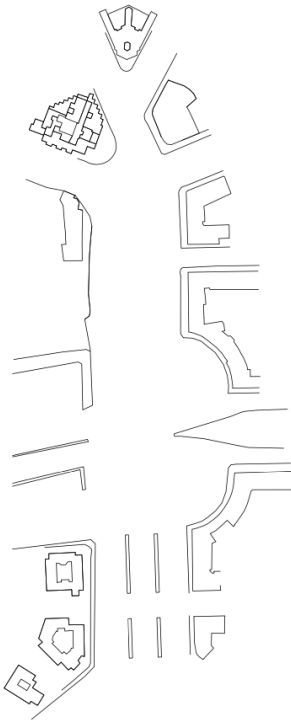
WHAT ABOUT THE SIZE?

The design intentions are therefore to intervene on the great urban void between the city and Monte Mario, in order to restore unity and completeness to the natural path.

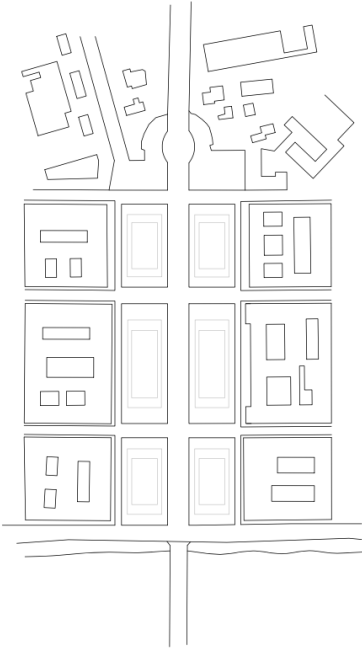
The aim, therefore, is to rethink this area as a graft that can be a threshold, a gate to the city, or to Monte Mario, a large public space available to the neighborhood.



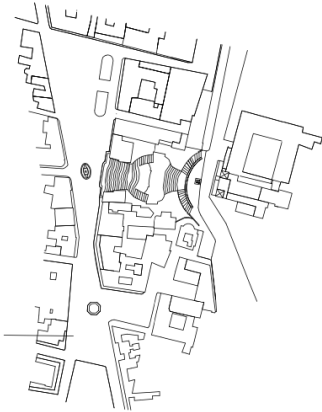
CIRCO MASSIMO



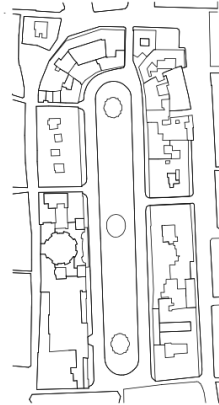
PIAZZALE CLUDIO



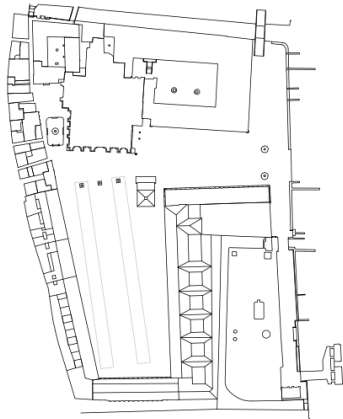
PIAZZA VITTORIO
VENETO



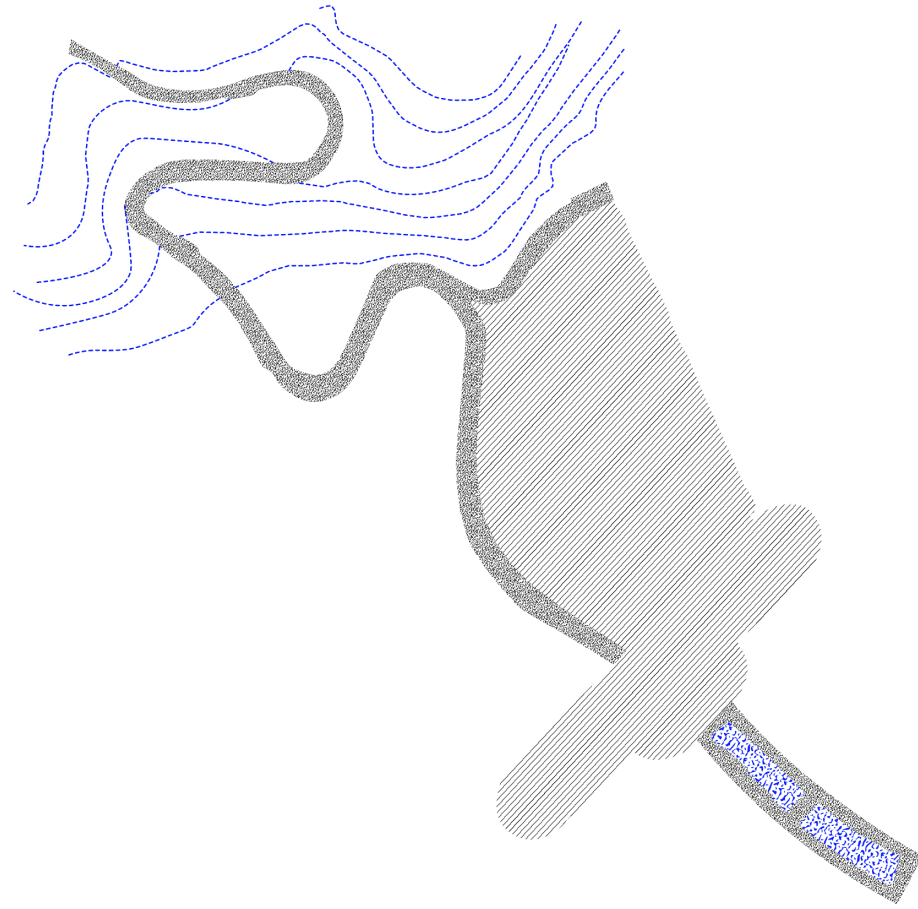
PIAZZA DI SPAGNA



PIAZZA NAVONA



PIAZZA SAN MARCO



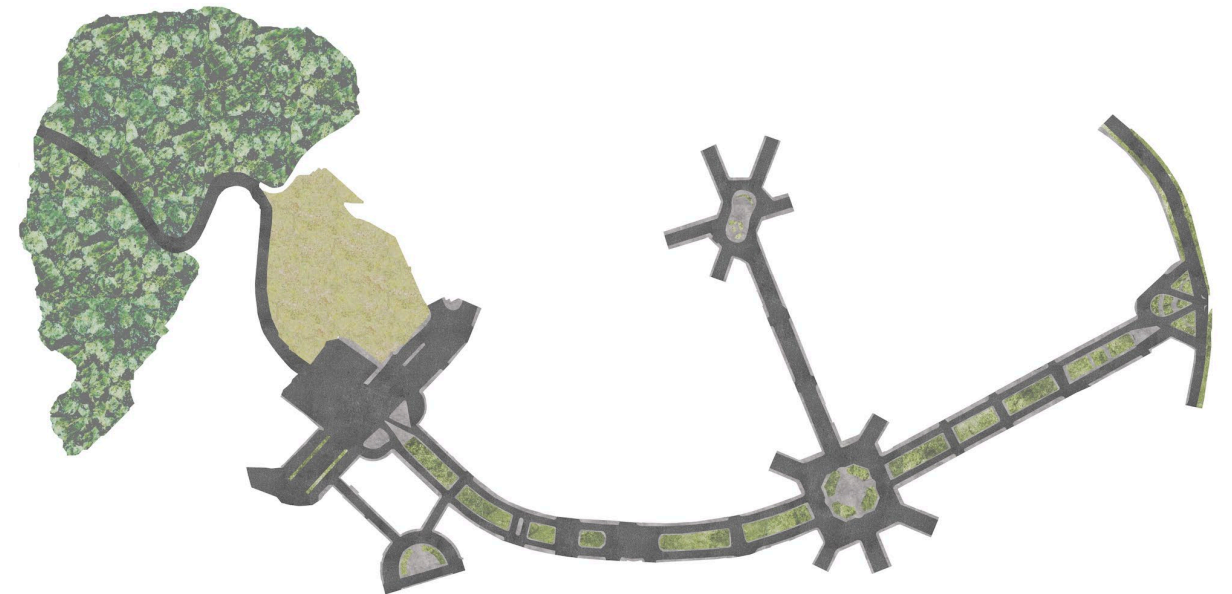
The threshold of piazzale Clodio constitutes an inversion of signs at a material level. Inside the city, a purely asphalted street contains a portion of greenery, while nearby Monte Mario the language is overturned and the asphalted road takes place surrounded by the nature.

Between these two opposing languages, the vast area of Piazzale Clodio constitutes a space without function nor identity; an uncertain and indefinite place of collision.

it is possible to understand the gradation of materials that characterizes the neighborhood, in which the permeable green of Monte Mario penetrates into the city.

Despite this, the impermeable surface that isolates and forces the episodes of public space to introversion is remarkably high.

The amount of impermeable surface of piazzale Clodio is significantly relevant, changing together with the indefinite greenery on the slopes of Monte Mario the natural connection fragile.

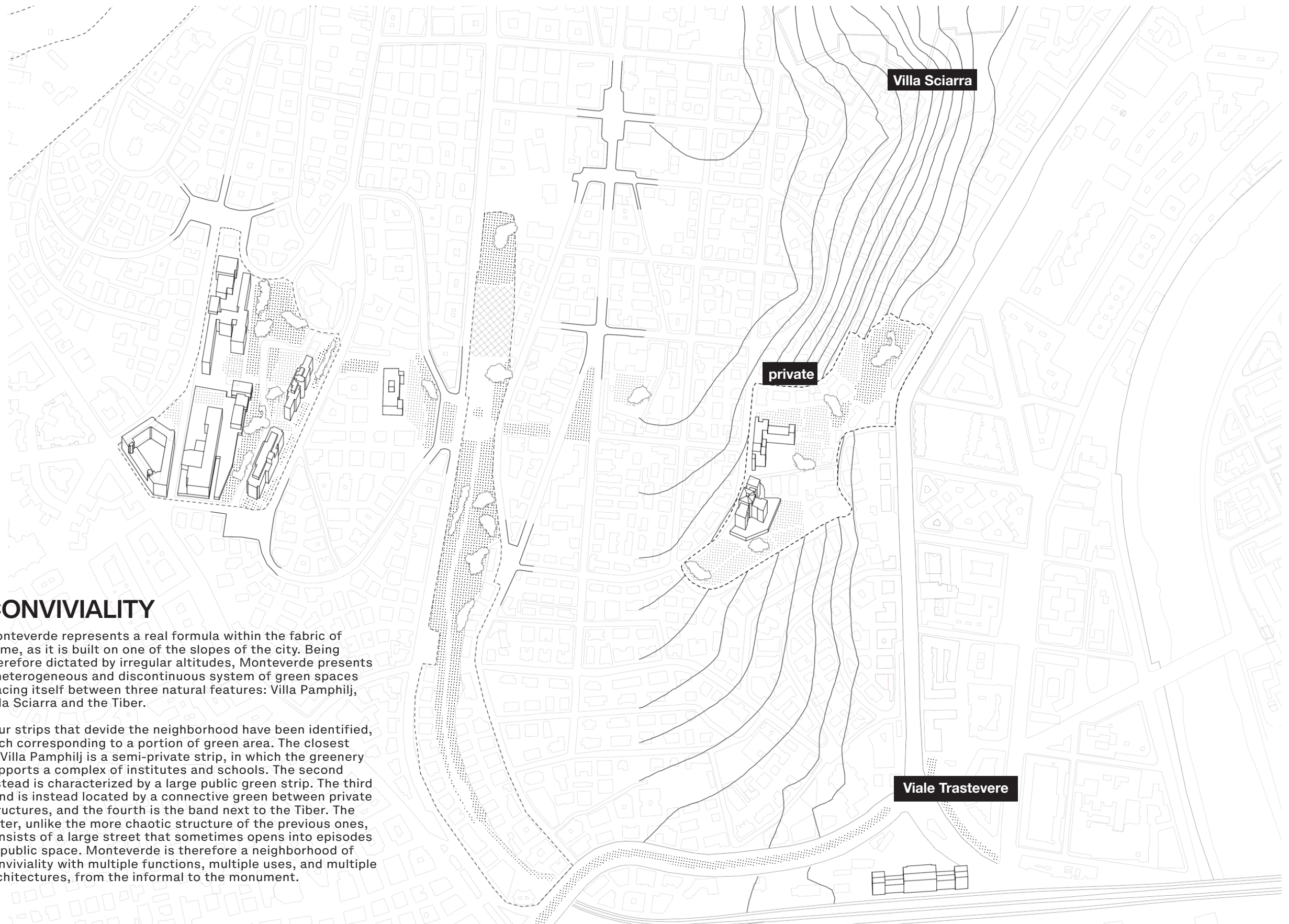


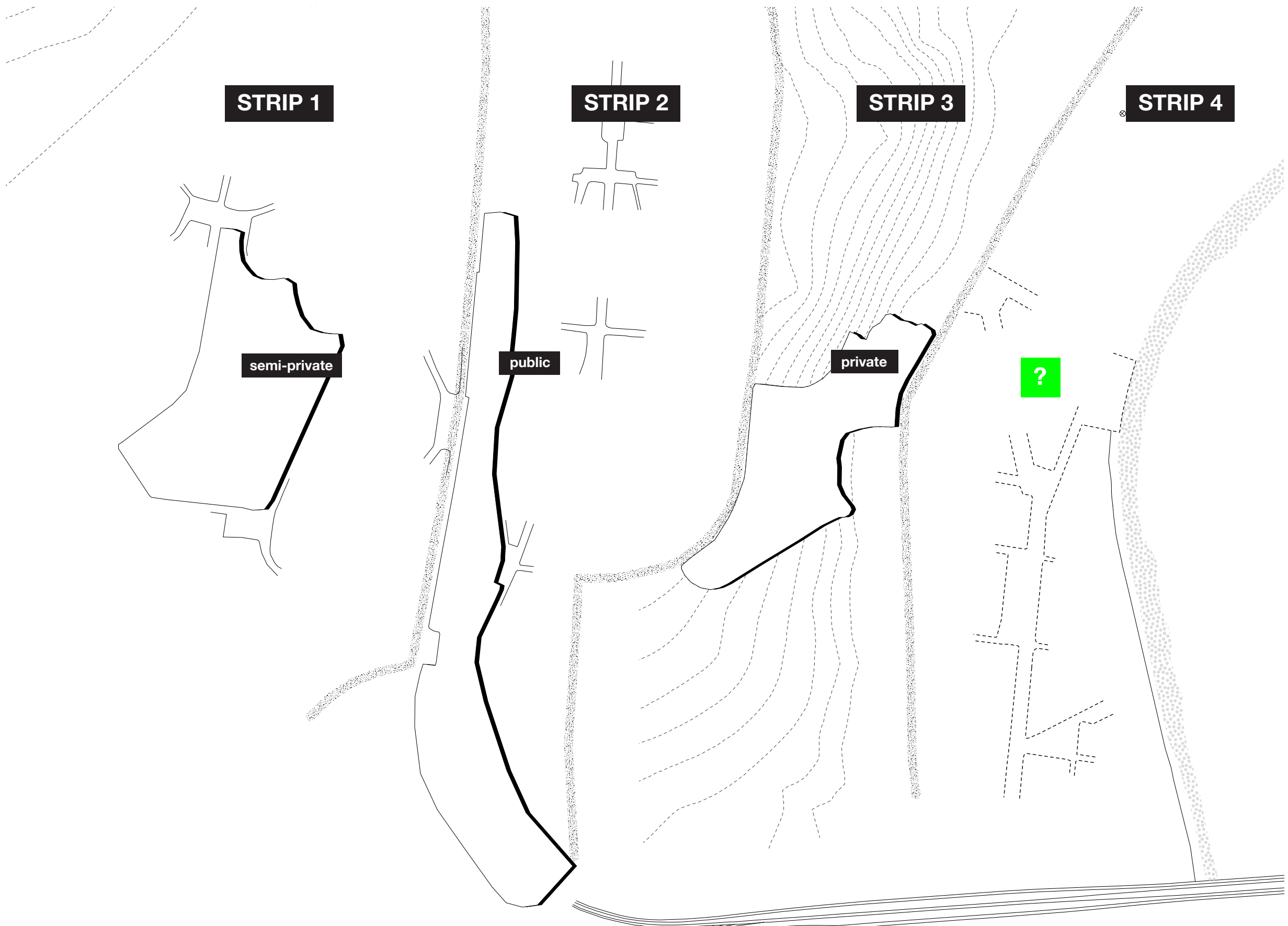
#2 MONTEVERDE

CONVIVIALITY

Monteverde represents a real formula within the fabric of Rome, as it is built on one of the slopes of the city. Being therefore dictated by irregular altitudes, Monteverde presents a heterogeneous and discontinuous system of green spaces placing itself between three natural features: Villa Pamphilj, Villa Sciarra and the Tiber.

Four strips that divide the neighborhood have been identified, each corresponding to a portion of green area. The closest to Villa Pamphilj is a semi-private strip, in which the greenery supports a complex of institutes and schools. The second instead is characterized by a large public green strip. The third band is instead located by a connective green between private structures, and the fourth is the band next to the Tiber. The latter, unlike the more chaotic structure of the previous ones, consists of a large street that sometimes opens into episodes of public space. Monteverde is therefore a neighborhood of conviviality with multiple functions, multiple uses, and multiple architectures, from the informal to the monument.





STRIP 1

STRIP 2

STRIP 3

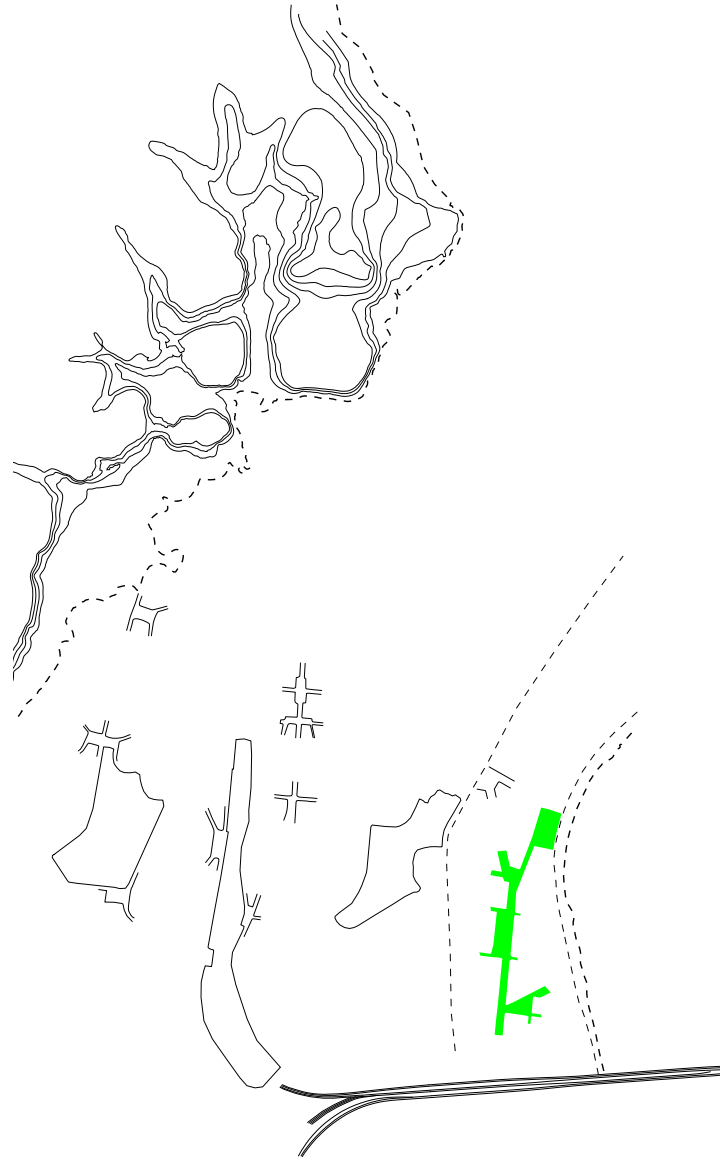
STRIP 4

semi-private

public

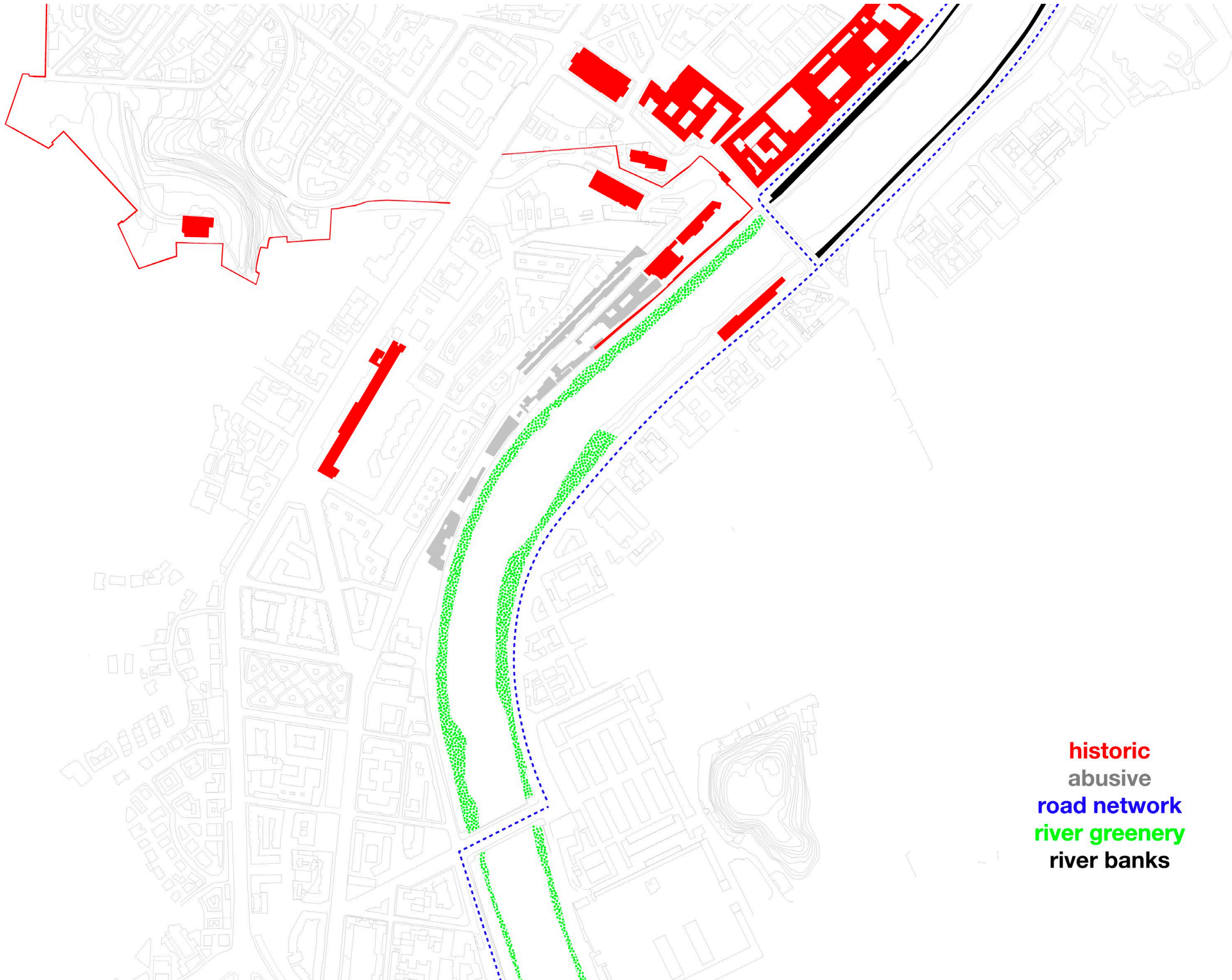
private

?

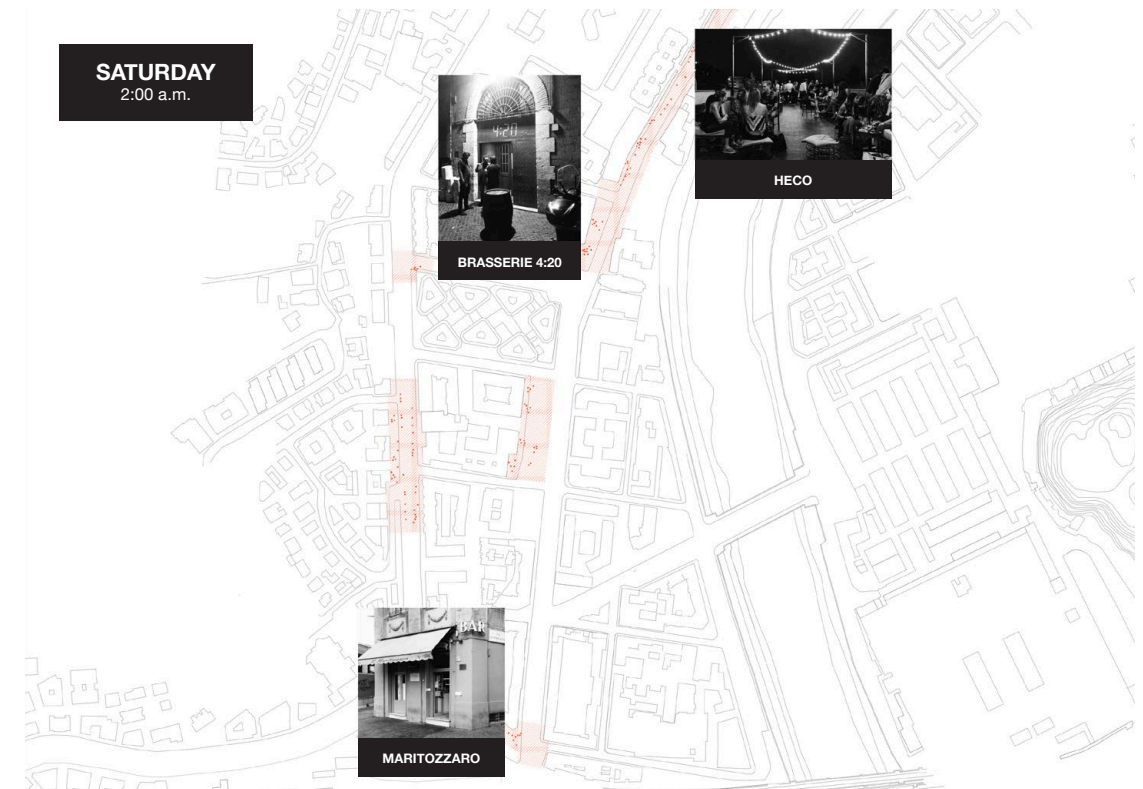
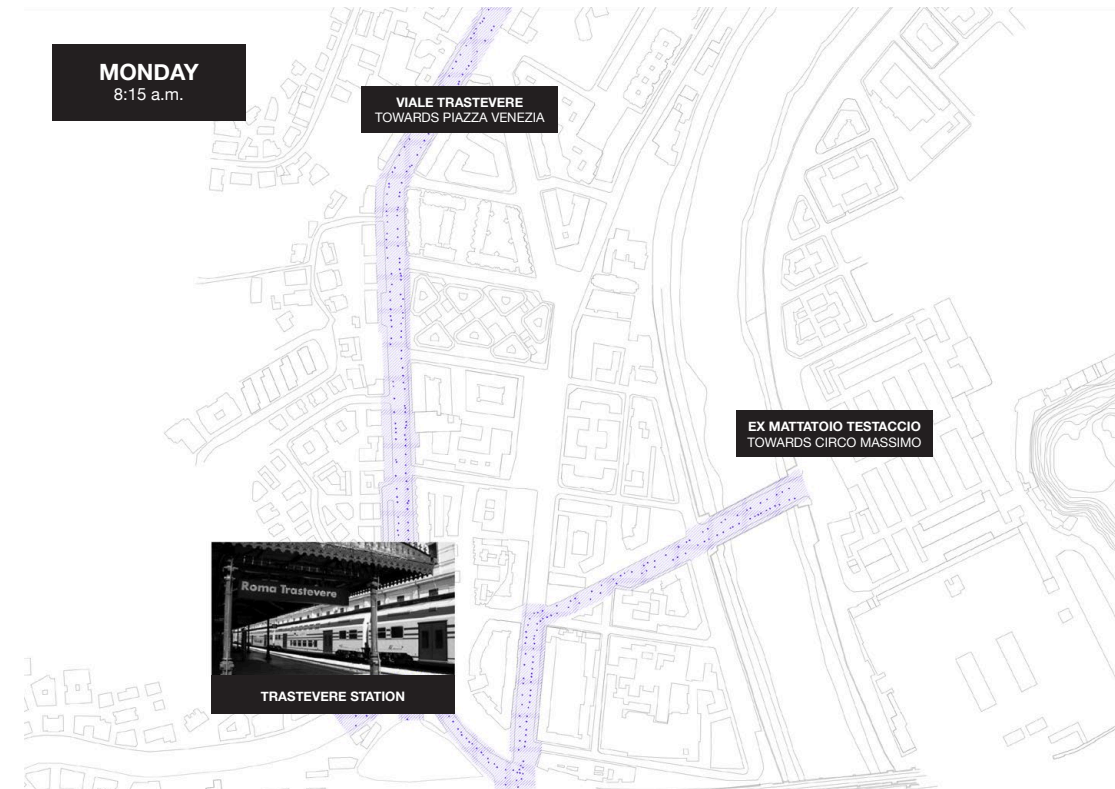


The investigations on Monteverde identify the last strip next to the river as a potential space, the articulation of which suggests a series of minute interventions that, in the same morphological way as Circo Massimo, can together rebalance and ecologically reconnect the three natural features. Although the first three bands present well-defined functions, the fourth band may be the most versatile portion, available and supportive for the others.

WHAT ABOUT THE TASK?

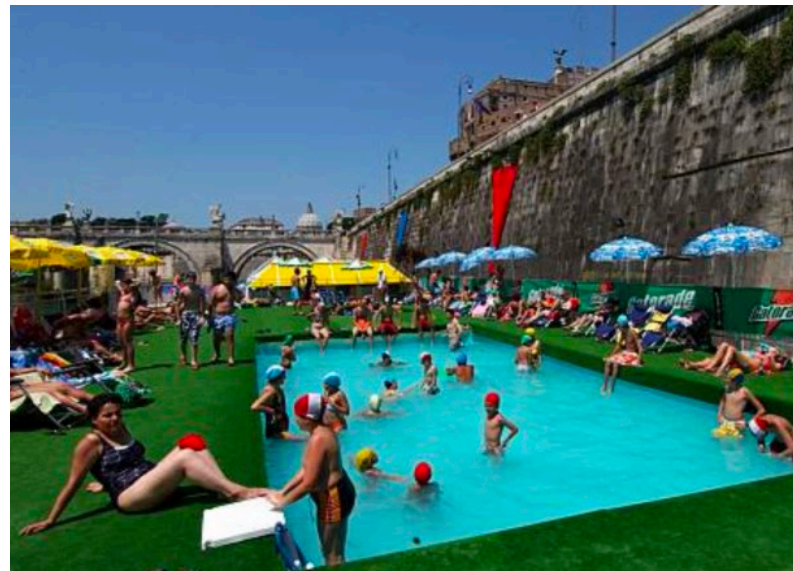


historic
abusive
road network
river greenery
river banks





1932



2010



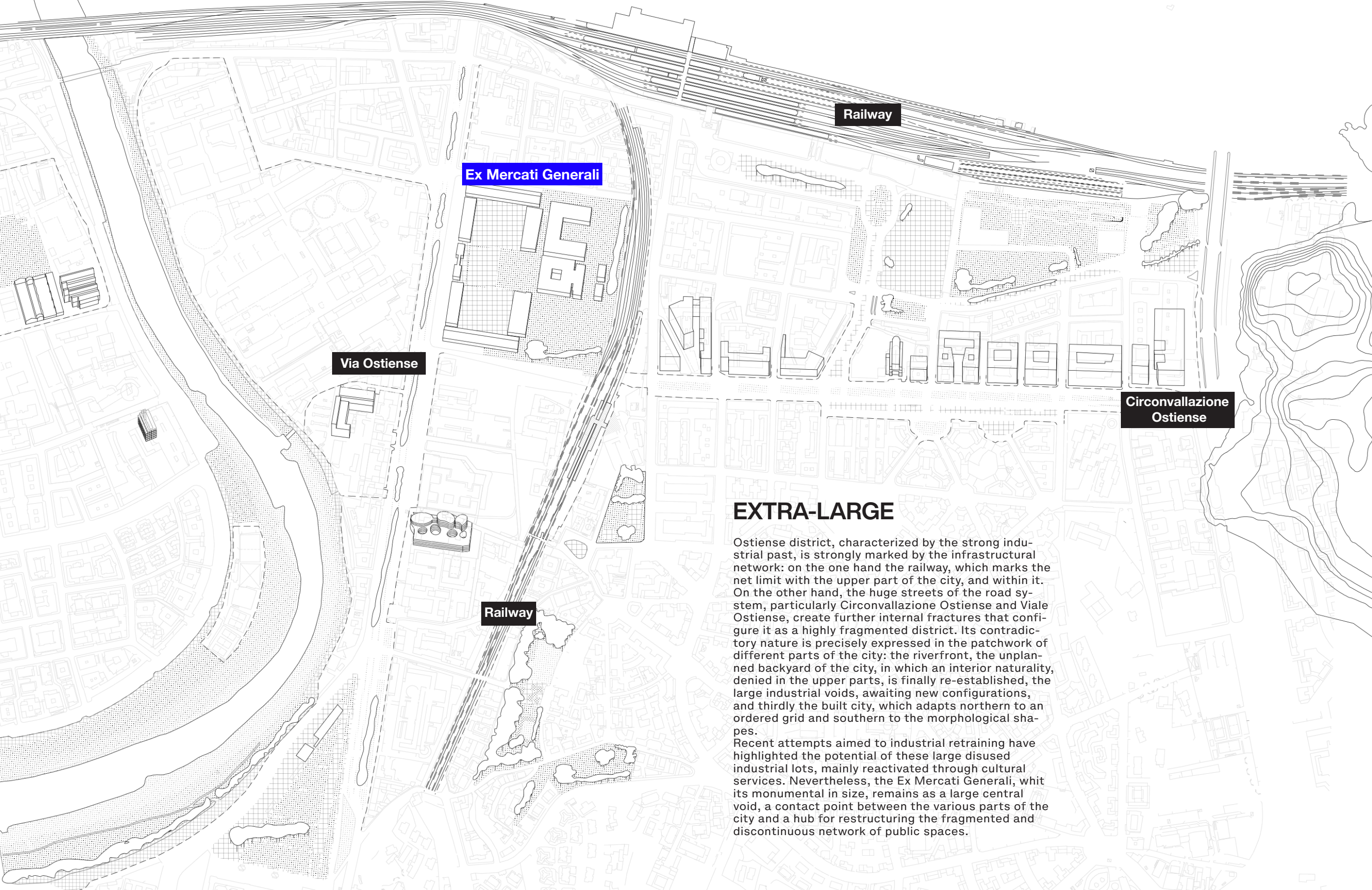
The first decades of the twentieth century the Tiber used to be integral part of the city, a space lived by its inhabitants, a public space that was in perpetual dialogue with its surroundings. This dialogue turned less and less important during the XXth century, and was mainly denied by the construction of the walls, which slowly led the city to turn its back to the Tiber.

In 2010 an attempt was proposed to replicate the same uses that characterized the Roman banks of the past, but the suggested solution did not find a synthesis, rather it turned its back on the city as much as it did on the River Tiber.

In 2018 a further attempt was made in the proximity of the project area located in Monteverde, but also in this case the outcome was unsuccessful and the “beach on the Tiber” for a second time did not establish any city-river dialogue.

The last strip identified in the Monteverde district would be the only space available in order to be able to carry out a design mending with the river, as it lacks the historical river banks, which determine such detachment and estrangement. In this sense, far from the function here suggested, the project plans to redefine the edges of the river as a public space available to the city.

#3 OSTIENSE



Railway

Ex Mercati Generali

Via Ostiense

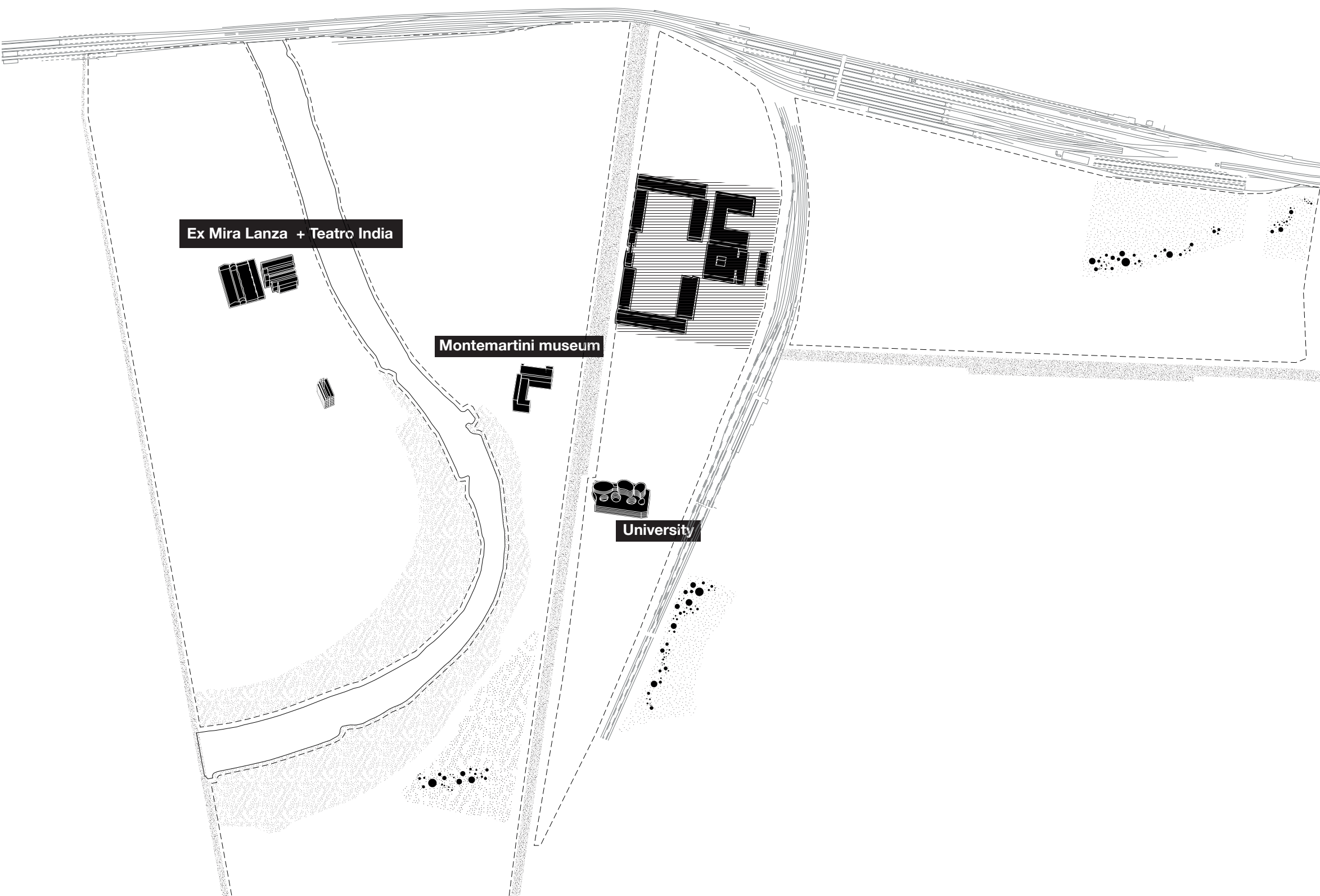
Circonvallazione
Ostiense

Railway

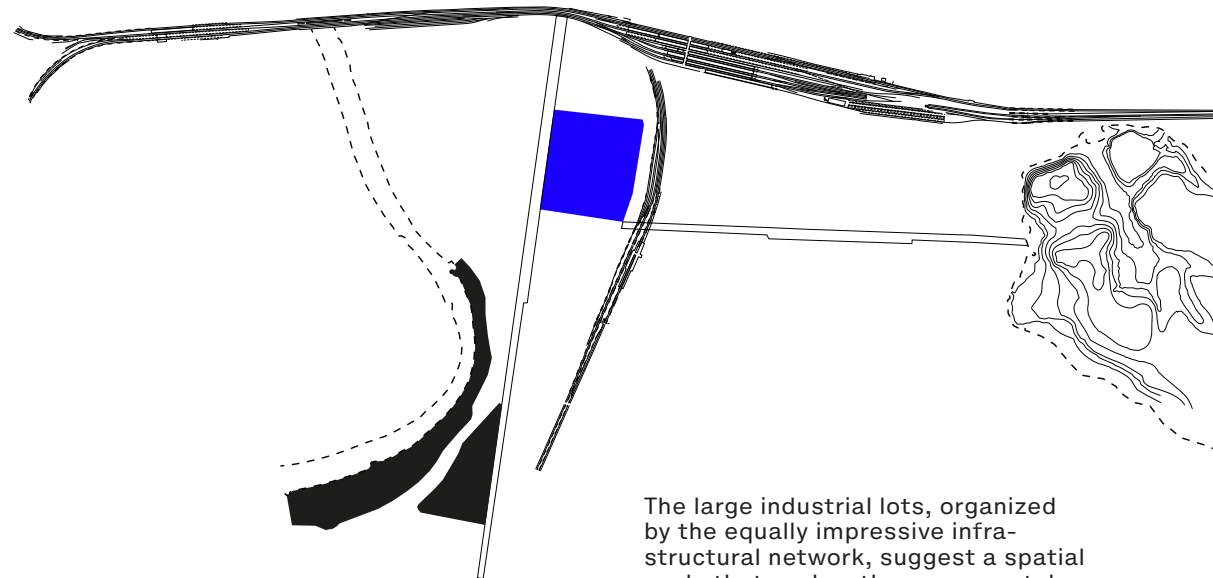
EXTRA-LARGE

Ostiense district, characterized by the strong industrial past, is strongly marked by the infrastructural network: on the one hand the railway, which marks the net limit with the upper part of the city, and within it. On the other hand, the huge streets of the road system, particularly Circonvallazione Ostiense and Viale Ostiense, create further internal fractures that configure it as a highly fragmented district. Its contradictory nature is precisely expressed in the patchwork of different parts of the city: the riverfront, the unplanned backyard of the city, in which an interior naturalness, denied in the upper parts, is finally re-established, the large industrial voids, awaiting new configurations, and thirdly the built city, which adapts northern to an ordered grid and southern to the morphological shapes.

Recent attempts aimed to industrial retraining have highlighted the potential of these large disused industrial lots, mainly reactivated through cultural services. Nevertheless, the Ex Mercati Generali, with its monumental in size, remains as a large central void, a contact point between the various parts of the city and a hub for restructuring the fragmented and discontinuous network of public spaces.



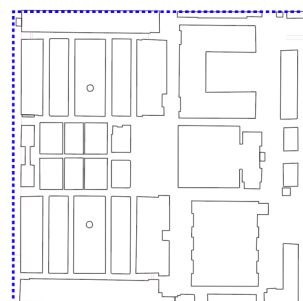
Appia Antica



The large industrial lots, organized by the equally impressive infrastructural network, suggest a spatial scale that evokes the monumental dimensions Rome has always built its image on, especially in the historic city. Precisely this great expansion of spaces and infrastructures results in the monumental feature the scenario for Ostiense is built on. The Ex Mercati Generali, recognized as a potential void capable of reactivating the public and ecological system, have in fact dimensions that make them comparable to the great monuments of the city.

WHAT ABOUT THE SCALE?

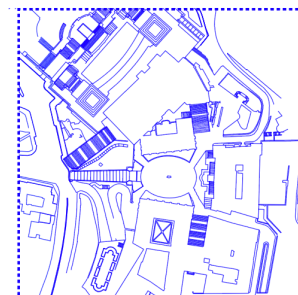
MONUMENTALITY



295 m

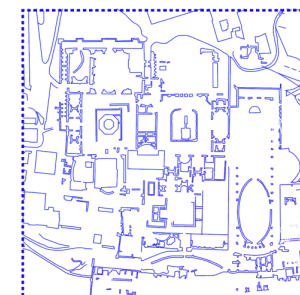
If in the past the redevelopment proposals have focused on the insertion of new volumes, the research has instead tested an alternative way, wondering how the monuments of the city could suggest new languages for the project. The vast urban repertoire was therefore investigated in its various expressions, highlighting nine emblematic monumental spaces, defined starting from their public, archaeological and natural dimensions, comparable in dimensional scales to the lot of the Ex Mercati Generali.

urban



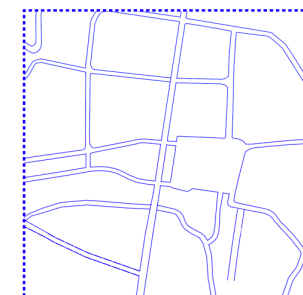
Campidoglio

archaeological

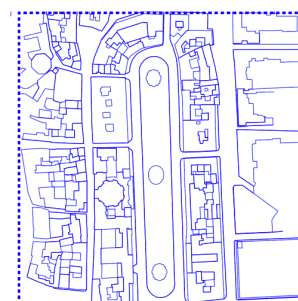


Fori Imperiali

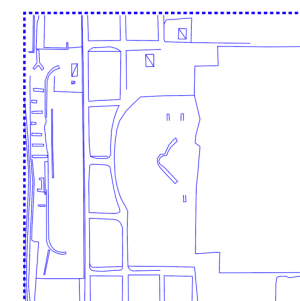
natural



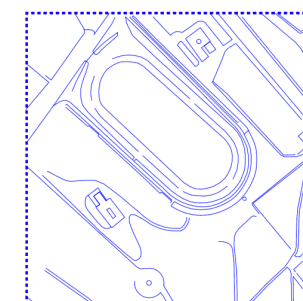
Villa Glori



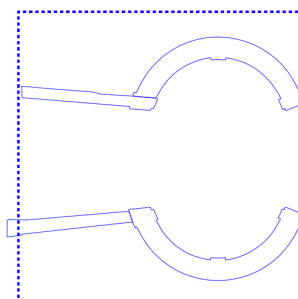
Piazza Navona



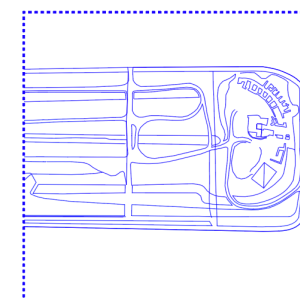
Terme di Caracalla



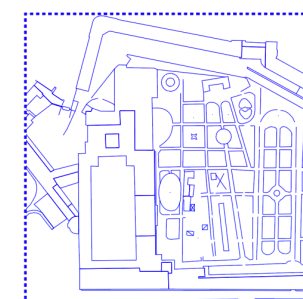
Villa Borghese



San Pietro



Circo Massimo



Giardini del Quirinale

PERFORMATIVITY?

Graphically depicting the ground temperature data, the maps highlight the so-called urban heat islands, areas where temperatures reach much higher values than the surrounding context. U.H.I tend to coincide with strongly waterproofed areas and almost totally devoid of vegetation. Through the maps, the critical areas for each area taken into account were therefore highlighted, in order to subsequently direct and calibrate the interventions.

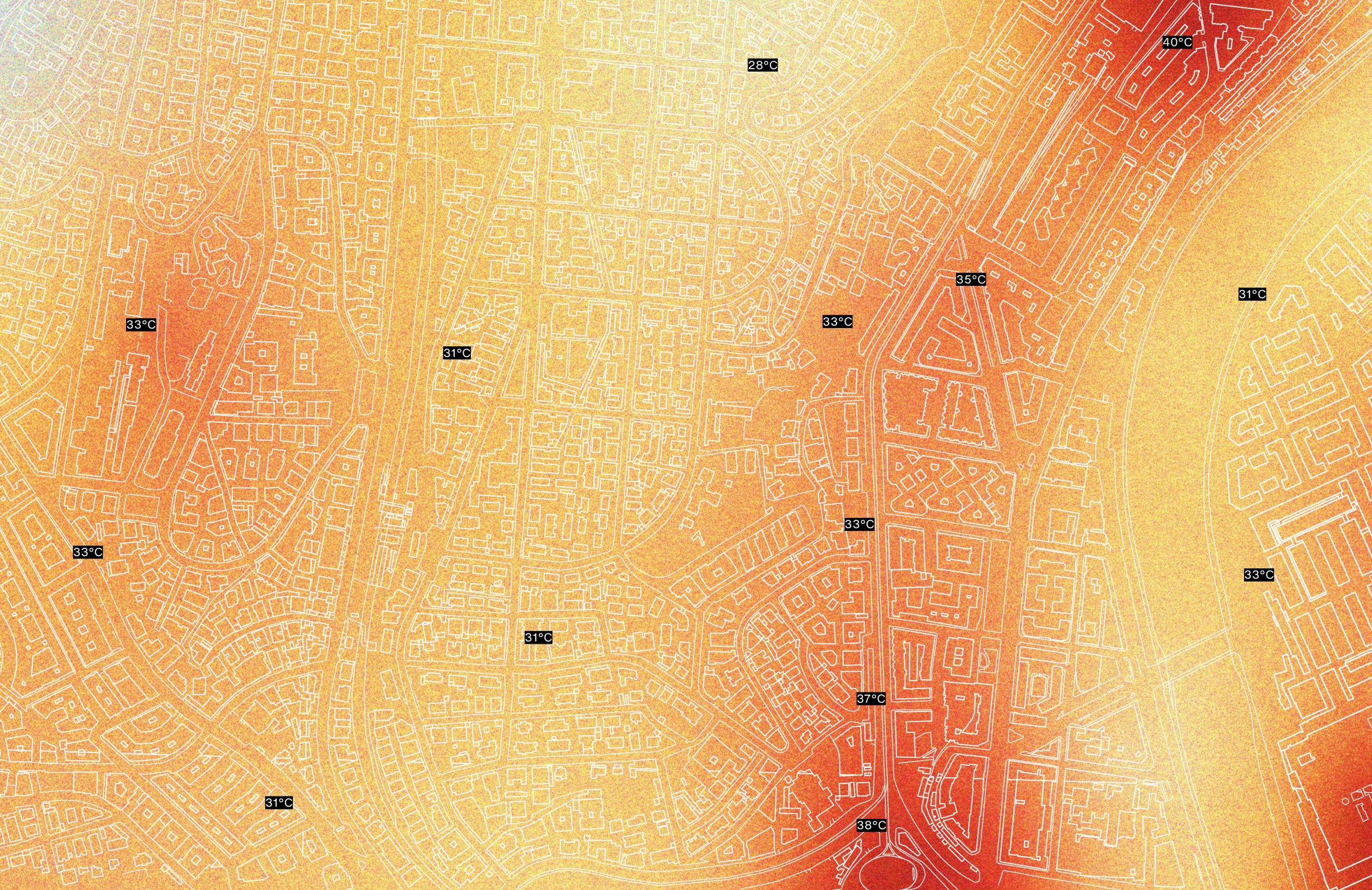
Specifically, in Prati district, the analyzes showed a peak in the area close to Piazzale Clodio, where the strong soil waterproofing and the almost total lack of vegetation cause excessive overheating, especially during summer months. Although the neighborhood collects a good amount of trees and vegetation, exist sensitive high-temperature spots around the area.

Monteverde, on the other hand, has high temperatures especially in the riverside area, where the Tiber is unable to mitigate the overheating caused by the strong building density, which leaves little space for vegetal masses. The map demonstrate how the three upper strips climatically work, while the last one next to the Tiber needs intervention.

Finally, in Ostiense the greatest criticalities are highlighted in correspondence with the railway, little or completely no shielded by vegetation and in the areas where waterproof soils dominate.

TEMPERATURES







AIR POLLUTANT: PM_{2.5}

Among the air pollutants, whose values are constantly increasing, the average annual concentrations of PM_{2.5} were taken into account. These small polluting particles are in fact strictly dependent on temperatures and highly harmful to health. In the three different districts, the highest concentrations were found in correspondence with the road axes, with a greater intensity in areas characterized by large traffic flows. It was also observed the role of current vegetation that, though present, is definitely not responsive enough to these pollutants, avoiding the city to give an effective response.

In particular, Prati district shows large concentrations particularly in the riverside zone, despite ground temperatures are significantly lower than in other areas. Similar values are also recorded at Piazzale Clodio, where climatic maps had already highlighted critical issues.

In Monteverde, the road system, which marks the 4 parallel strips, represents the peaks of concentration, higher as much closer to the railway in the south part.

Finally, Ostiense, with a behavior similar to Monteverde, records the greatest criticalities in correspondence with the railway and major road axes, with some localized peaks, specifically in the previously highlighted heat islands.



15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

13 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

18 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

13 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

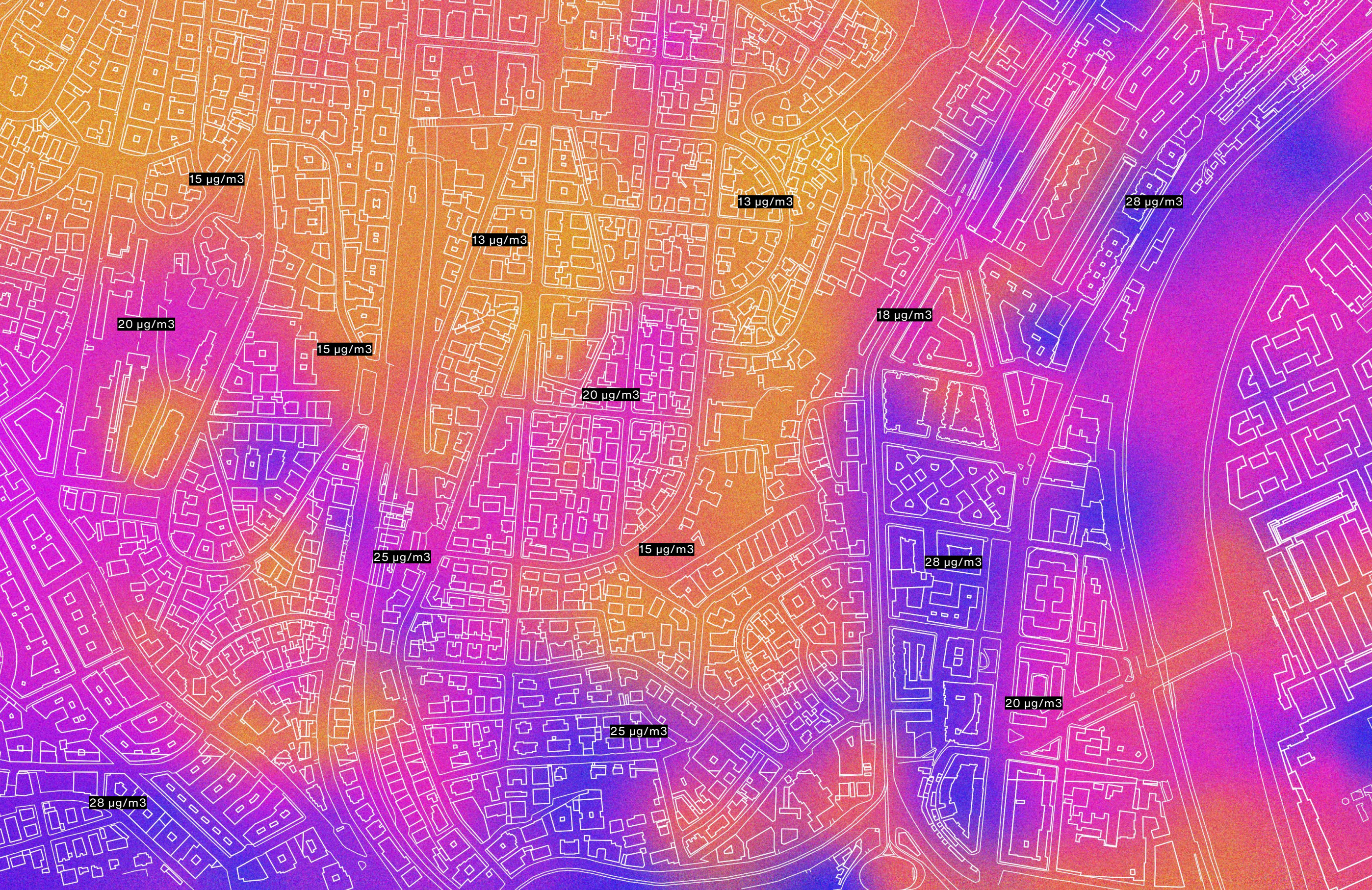
28 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

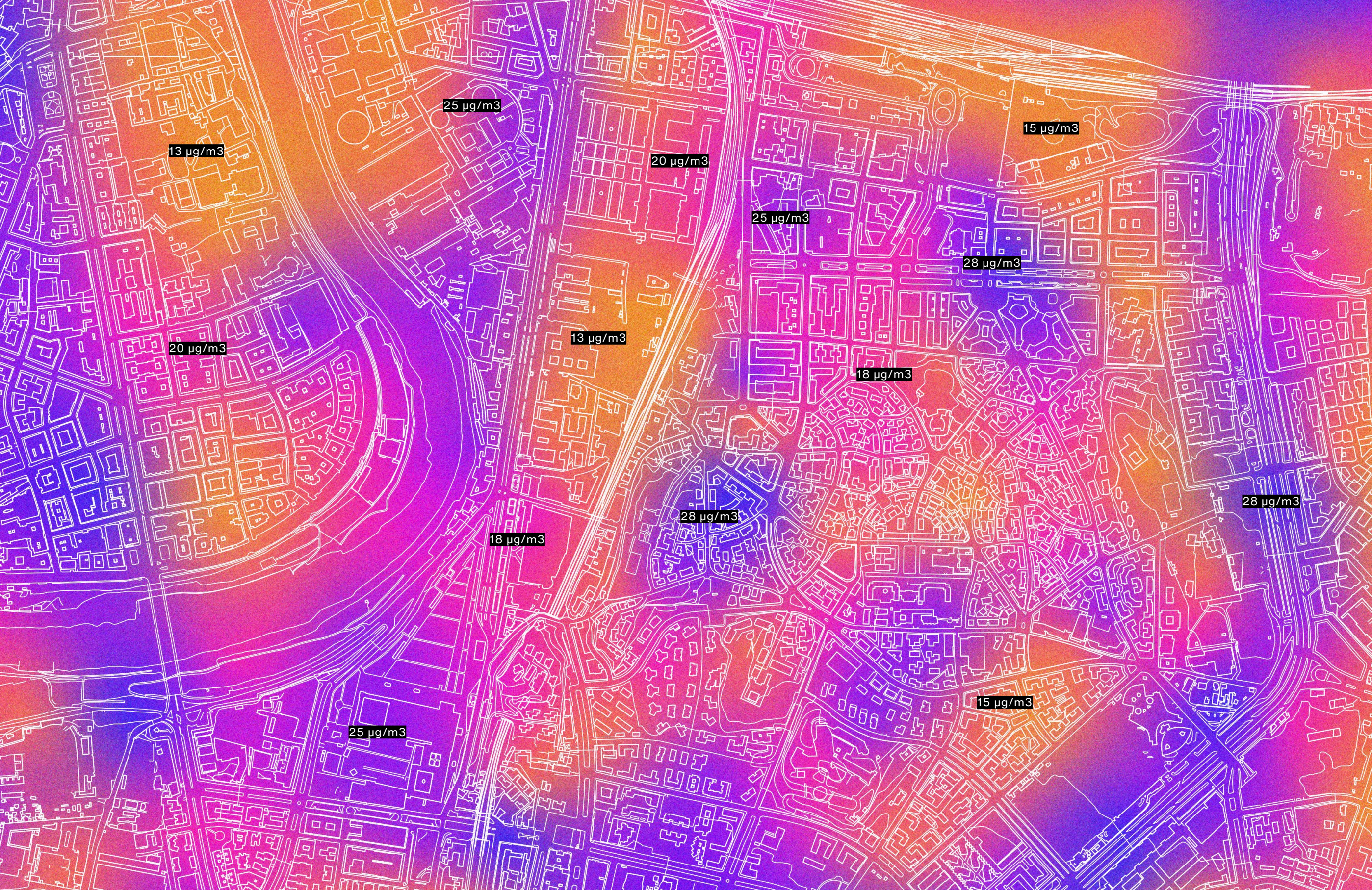
25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

28 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

28 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



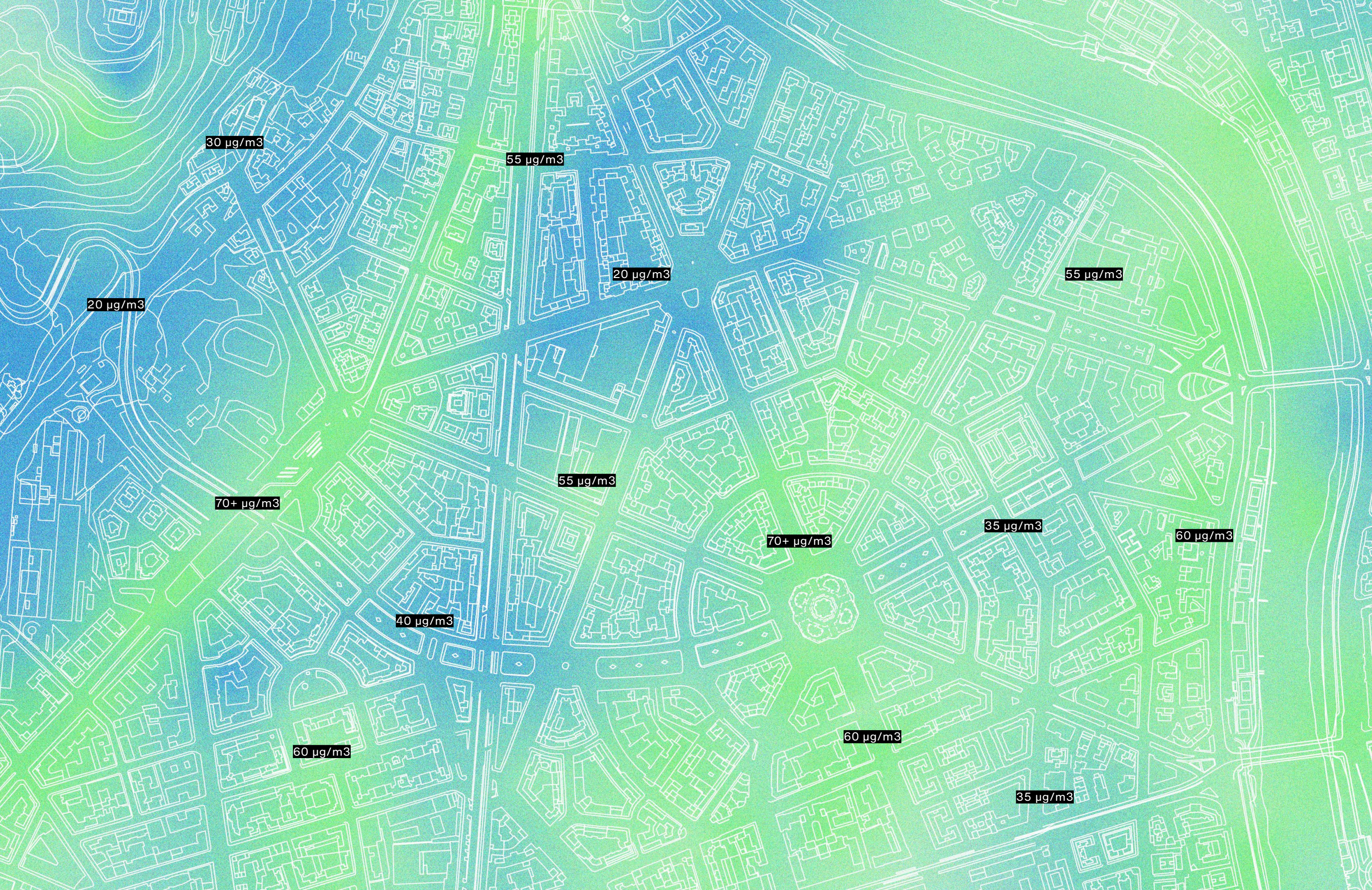


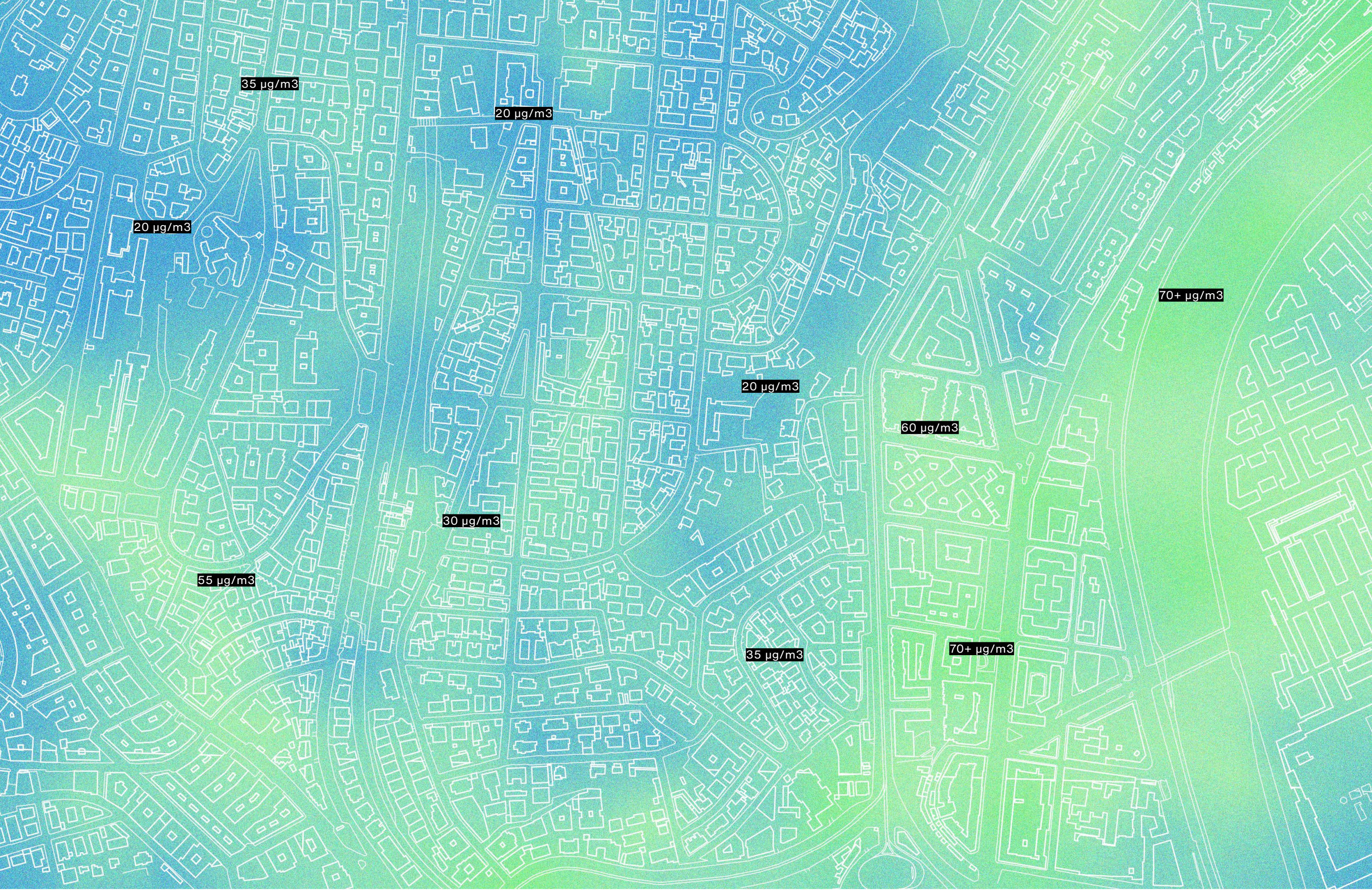
AIR POLLUTANT: NO_2

Nitrogen dioxide, NO_2 , is the other air pollutant considered in the preliminary analyses. The molecule is mainly present near the major streets and, like the previous one, its greatest presence coincides with high temperatures. Furthermore, through specific chemical reactions, it can cause water acidification.

In Prati, in fact, the highest concentrations are recorded in correspondence with roads characterized by the greatest amount of traffic. Furthermore, high values are also highlighted near the Tiber, probably to be read in relation to the river waters. Monteverde, in a similar way, confirms the high quantities near roads and along the Tiber, which appears to be the most critical area.

Finally, Ostiense shows, as in other maps, more localized concentrations. In particular, the peaks are reached near the railway and Viale Ostiense, especially at its conjunction with the river.





35 µg/m3

20 µg/m3

20 µg/m3

70+ µg/m3

20 µg/m3

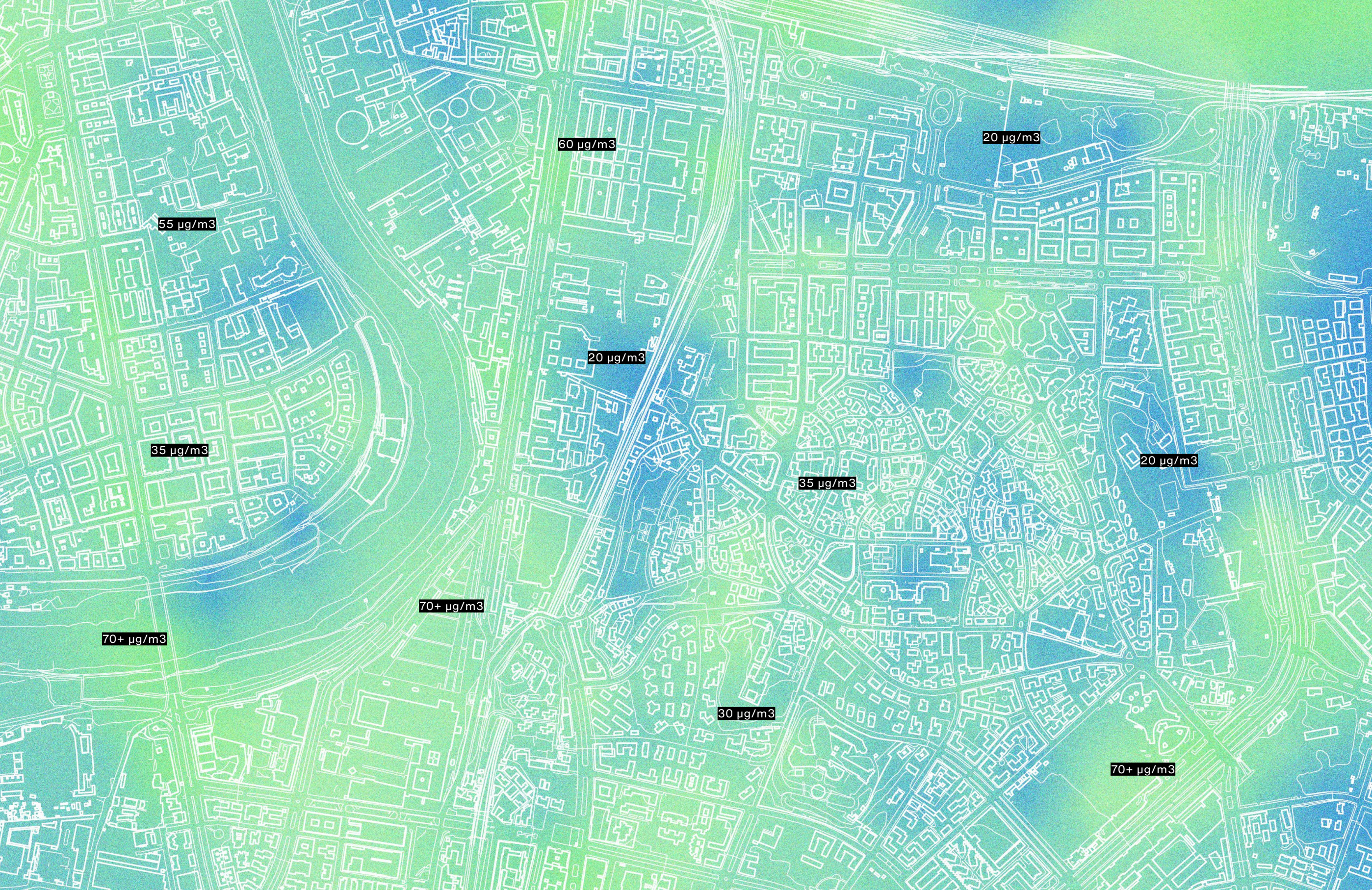
60 µg/m3

30 µg/m3

55 µg/m3

35 µg/m3

70+ µg/m3



CANOVACCI

Canovaccio: written plot of a dramatic work, divided into acts and scenes with the complete unfolding of the action but without dialogue, composed in a further processing phase or, as in the *commedia dell'arte*, improvised by the actors on the stage. Also intended as a sketch, drawing of any narrative work.

In this sense, “Here” by Richard McGuire tells of different situations in the same contexts, opening the imagination to the possible regarding a given context. The scenarios proposed for Rome are structure with the same logic: the compositional design is an urban canvas, a blank page to write and rewrite new possibilities alongside the times of the city.



ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

Surface Runoff

One of the most evident effects of climate change is manifested through high intensity precipitation, which increasingly, in Rome, take on the appearance of tropical storms.

The high number of impermeable surfaces does not allow adequate water runoff and drainage in such violent events, causing flooding and damage to the streets of the city. Moreover, stagnating water can collect air pollutants, transporting them to rivers and drains, increasing environmental vulnerability.

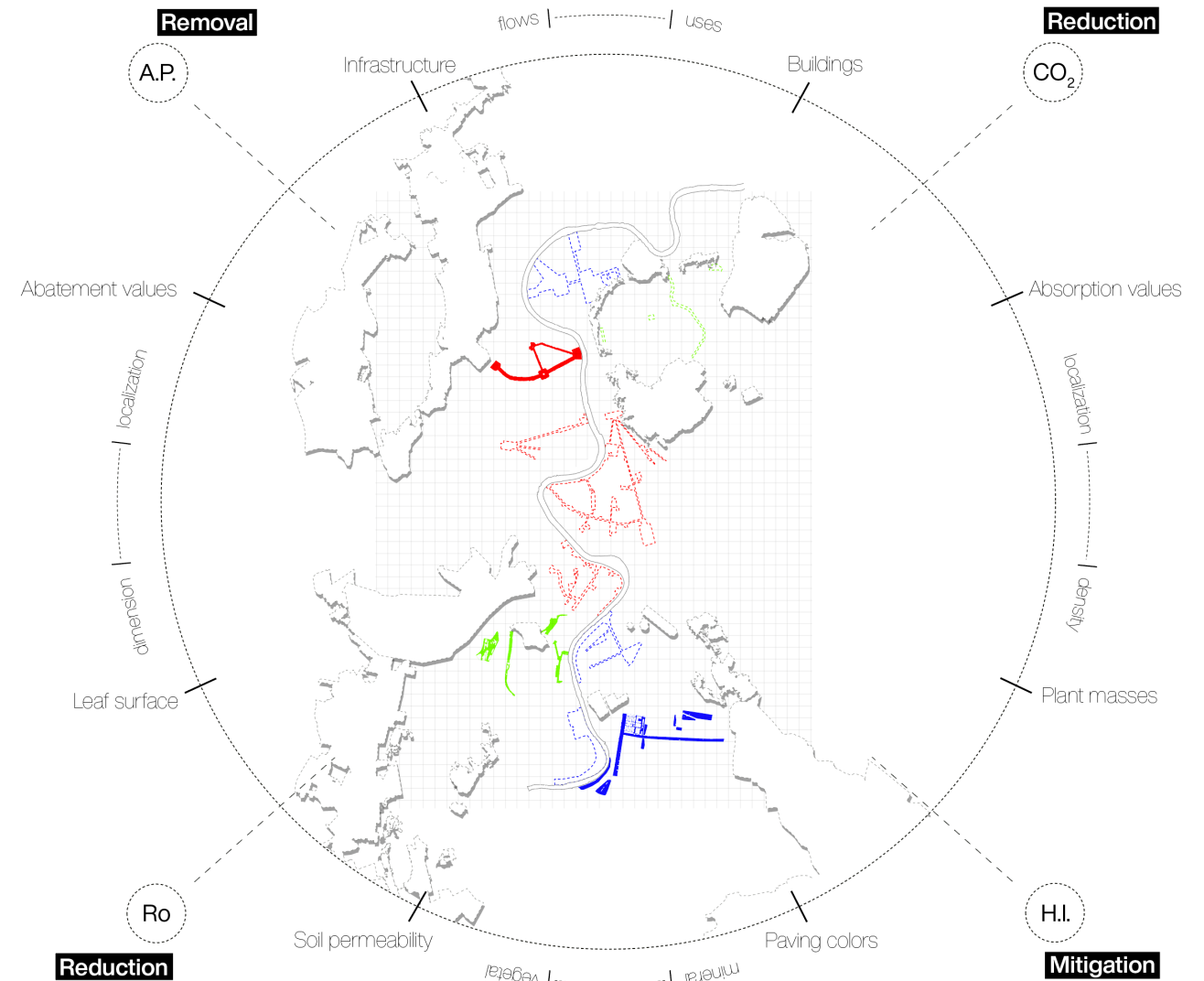
One of the possible actionable strategies is the use of trees that, through thick foliage, can reduce the impact of water on the ground and, at the same time, through the root system, allow the purification of the soil.¹

Specifically, the water collected from the crowns of trees partially evaporates into the atmosphere, while the remainder reaches the ground more slowly. To ensure the proper functioning of this process, it is therefore necessary to carefully choose the right tree species, including evergreens, which allow for the reduction of runoff all year round.

On the other hand, the roots, articulating in the soil, guarantee controlled drainage thanks to the less compactness of the soil.

This process, associated with a thoughtful choice of materials and artificial devices, allows the runoff to be slowed down and the water to flow out more quickly and in a controlled manner. Therefore, using permeable and non-permeable surfaces, it is possible to control and direct the rain flows, also thanks to slopes, leaks and pools of water, which are a valuable aid to trees action.

The preliminary analyzes were decisive in defining the objectives each area needs to be confronted with, through an approach that takes into account the natural components as well as the artificial ones. The diagram here shown graphically summarizes the four environmental goals the projects try to respond to, deploying a varied range of solutions.



Air Pollutants Removal

Preliminary analyzes have highlighted high values of air pollutants such as PM2.5 and NO2. The so-called PM are defined as portions of solids or liquids suspended in the air, of a complex group of pollutants that vary in size, shape, composition, and origin. Larger particles (PM10) are generally filtered through the nose and the throat and therefore do not cause worrying problems for the respiratory system, but smaller particles, such as PM2.5, can instead deposit in the airways.²

NO2, nitrogen dioxide, on the other hand, is a reactive molecule accounted in multiple chemical reactions that generate pollutants, including ozone. The high presence of this molecule is mostly related to major road arteries and in conjunction with high temperatures. Its bad effects on the urban environment are several: in the presence of strong solar radiation, it gives rise to pollutants known as “photo-chemical smog” and can also facilitate the acidification of the water.³

The presence of precise tree species allows for their partial removal, with an amount directly proportional to the leaf surface. In fact, trees act both directly, through the absorption action, and indirectly, reducing the surrounding temperature and therefore the ozone levels.

CO₂ Reduction

Among the various climate-altering gases, CO2 is one of the major protagonists, in fact the several climate agendas in European and world countries provide for its drastic abatements. Even in minimal quantities, the presence of vegetal masses is able to reduce its values through gas exchange and photosynthetic processes: carbon is absorbed by the leaf surfaces, then stored and preserved in the plant biomass for the entire life span of the plant.

The choice of vegetation, however, must not only concern the quantity of CO2 potentially absorbed, but it is necessary to take into account at least three other factors: the life span of the plant, after which the tree releases all that it has absorbed up to at that time, and the rate of growth and correct maintenance, which directly affect their absorption capacity.

Heat Island Mitigation

The high rate of urbanization is the main cause of urban heat islands, described as portions of cities where high ground surface temperatures are recorded. These temperature exceeding are mainly due to the reduction and random distribution of vegetation in the city, as well as to the use of highly absorbent surfaces such as asphalt.

In this sense, vegetation can be used to mitigate the overheating of these areas, restoring climate comfort. Also in this case, the vegetation responds through multiple strategies: on the one hand it guarantees the increase of shaded surfaces, on the other it allows to re-establish a favorable microclimate through evapotranspiration, a process through which water is absorbed by the root system and

released in the form of vapor through photosynthesis. The outcome of this natural process corresponds to subtraction of energy from the surrounding environment, resulting in a decrease in the surface temperature near to the vegetation and an increase in humidity.

If related to buildings, trees can also reduce energy consumption within buildings, functioning as natural air conditioners. To these strategies, it is possible to associate a reasoned selection of materials based on their chromatic gradations, allowing lower heat absorption by impermeable surfaces, thereby facilitating the mitigating action of the tree species.

1. Stefano Mancuso, in Barberis V., Cattaneo E.C., Prato. *Fabbrica Natura. Il nuovo piano operativo*, Skira, 2019

2. informations available at www.romariasalute.it. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

3. informations available at www.romariasalute.it. Complete site reference specified in the sitography

*“A paradigmatic nuance should be observed: what might seem the result of a hybridization between natural and its opposite, the artificial, is instead a captivated interpenetration that makes us read the transformative reality of nature.”**

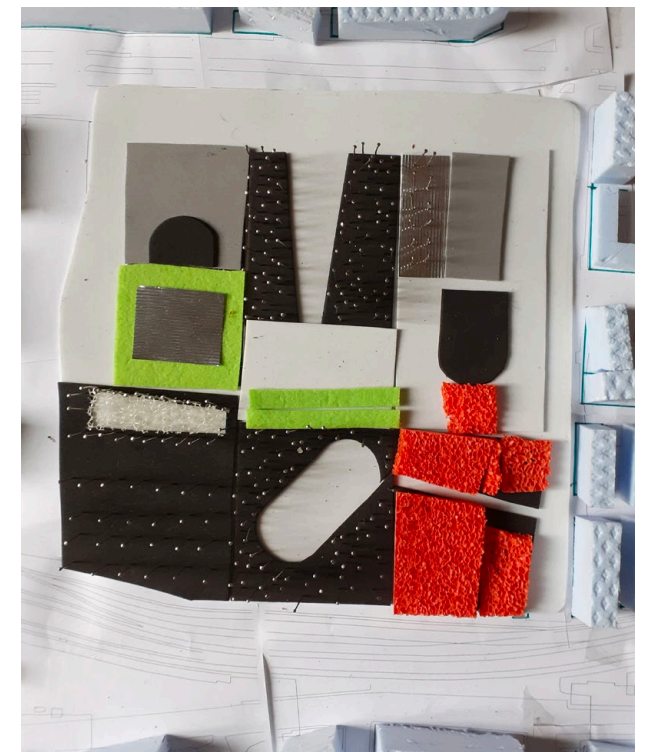
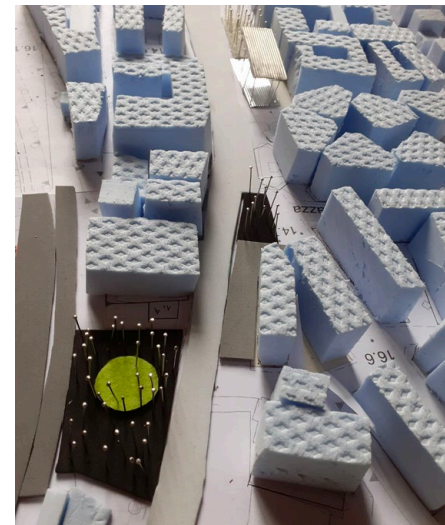
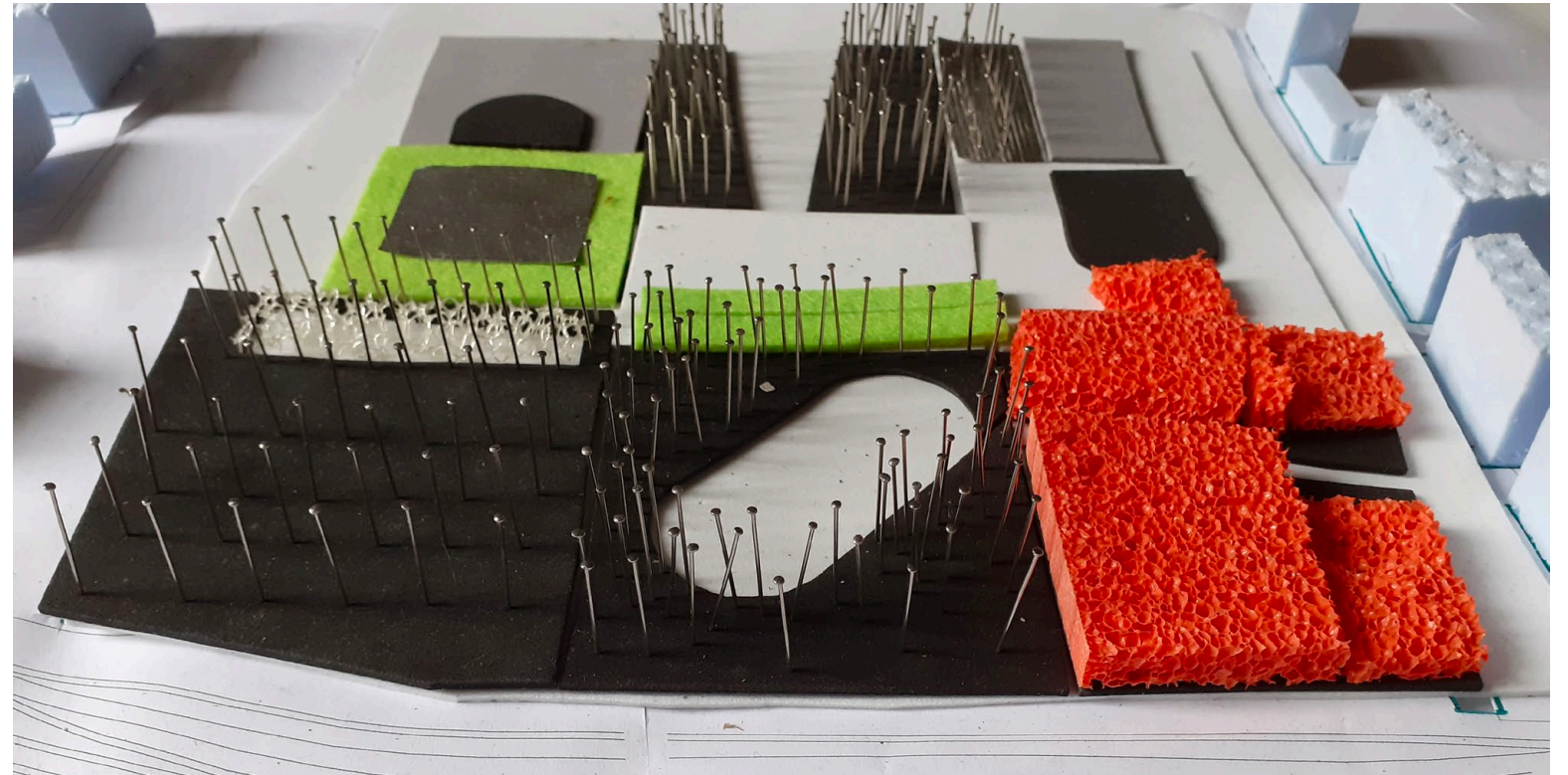
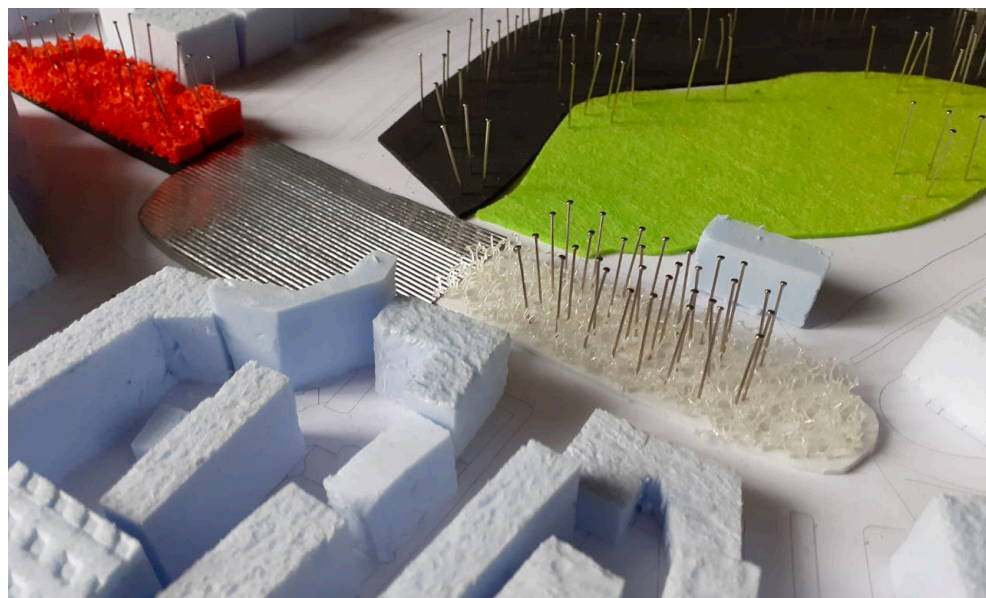
*Merleau-Ponty M., *La natura*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano, 1996

Ground investigations

2.1

The starting point for defining the project scenarios was soil modulation, in a first definition of the naturality and artificiality degrees of the soil. The spatial stereotypes highlighted through the film investigation translate into opportunities for public space, where intimacy, monumentality and conviviality are borrowed into new spatial figures that re-elaborate the traditional language of Rome.

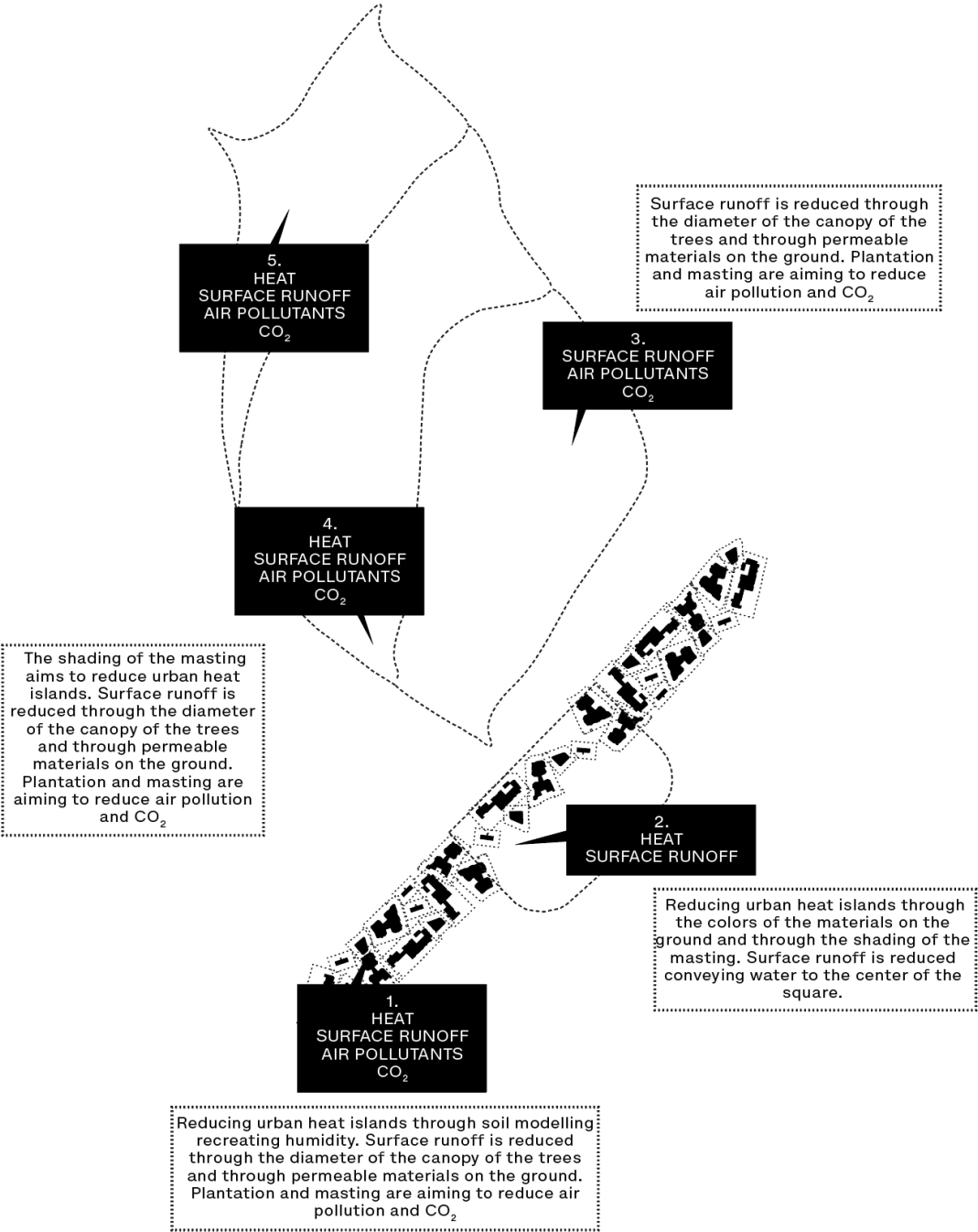
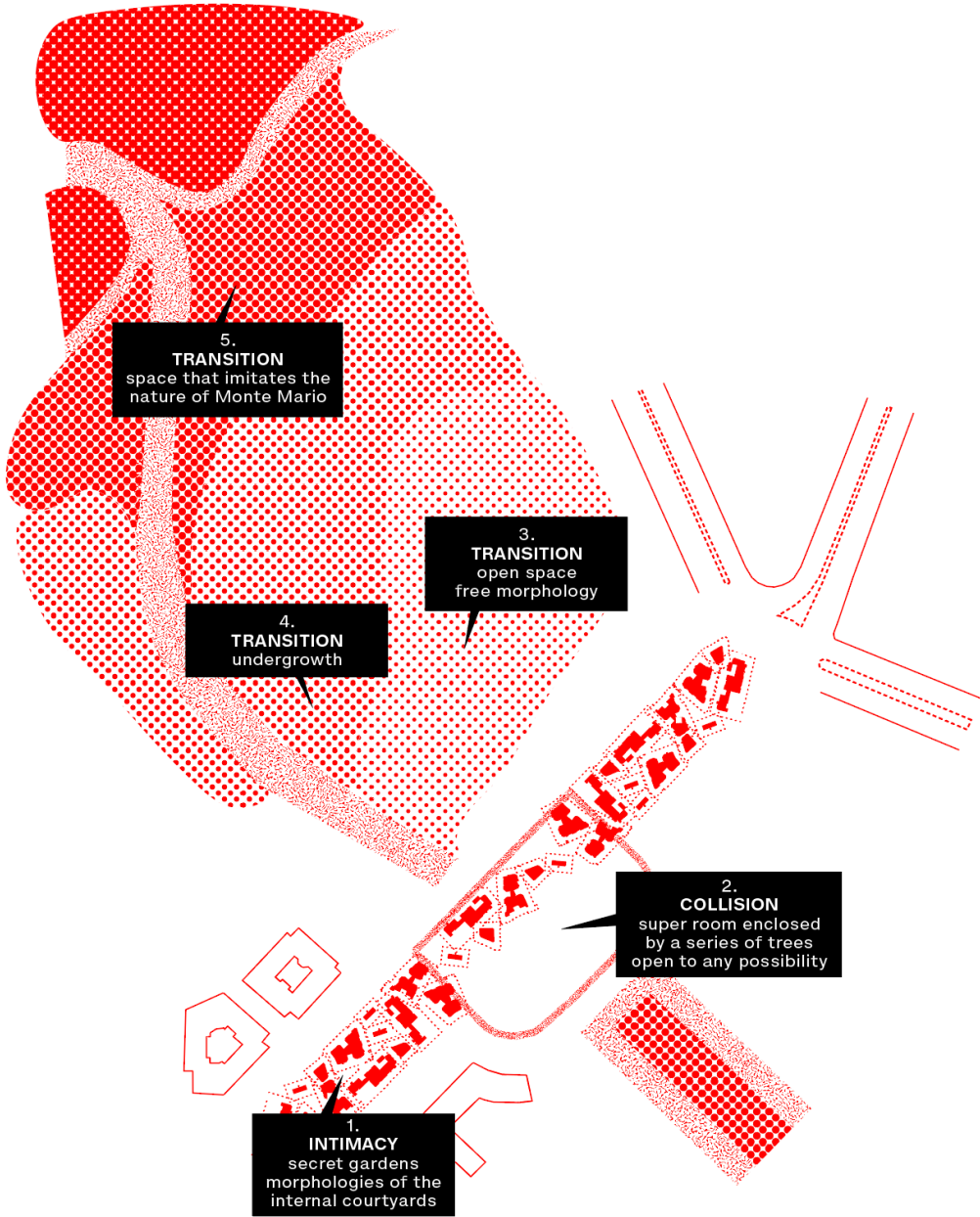
The three-dimensionality of the maquettes materializes the elements of the project by an immediate understanding of their spatiality, differentiating the various categories of soil and devices, subsequently translated into possible masterplan strategies. The modulation of the soil follows a double direction, which takes into account both the compositional and the scientific dimension. Thus, the design is accompanied by suggestions and prescriptions for each element drawn, defining an approach that looks at the pre-established climate objectives.



The intimate dimension of the Prati district is translated into the public space in its many facets. The project develops a sequence of spaces that work through the sign reversion of urban materials, assuming a vegetal language that replaces the artificiality of the built environment. The protagonist of the composition is the central square, a catalyst space for multiple intersections of meaning and matter, the point of convergence of two axialities. A first one, transversal translates artificiality into naturalness and vice versa, the second, longitudinal, instead develops from the build texture, investigating the public dimension of intimacy.

INTIMACY MADE PUBLIC







TALE OF NOISE #1



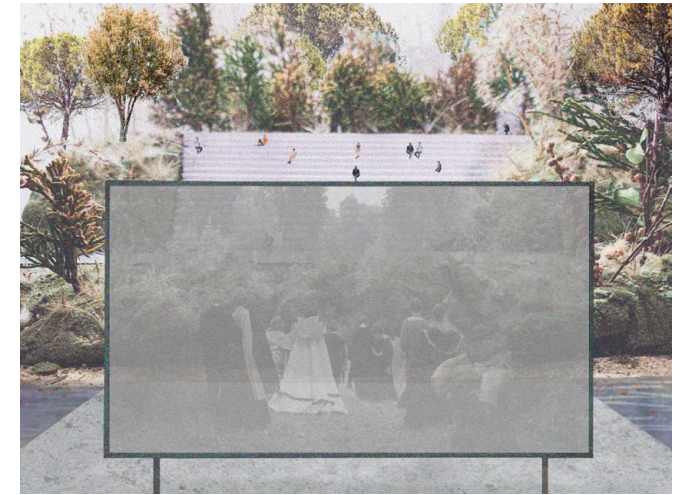
The design scenario of Monteverde takes up the fragmentation of Circo Massimo, developing as a series of episodes that, invading punctually the city, reconstruct an ecological path between Villa Sciarra and the Tiber river. Designed in a vibrant and contradictory fragment of the city, the project reinterprets the stereotype of conviviality in a multiplicity of senses.

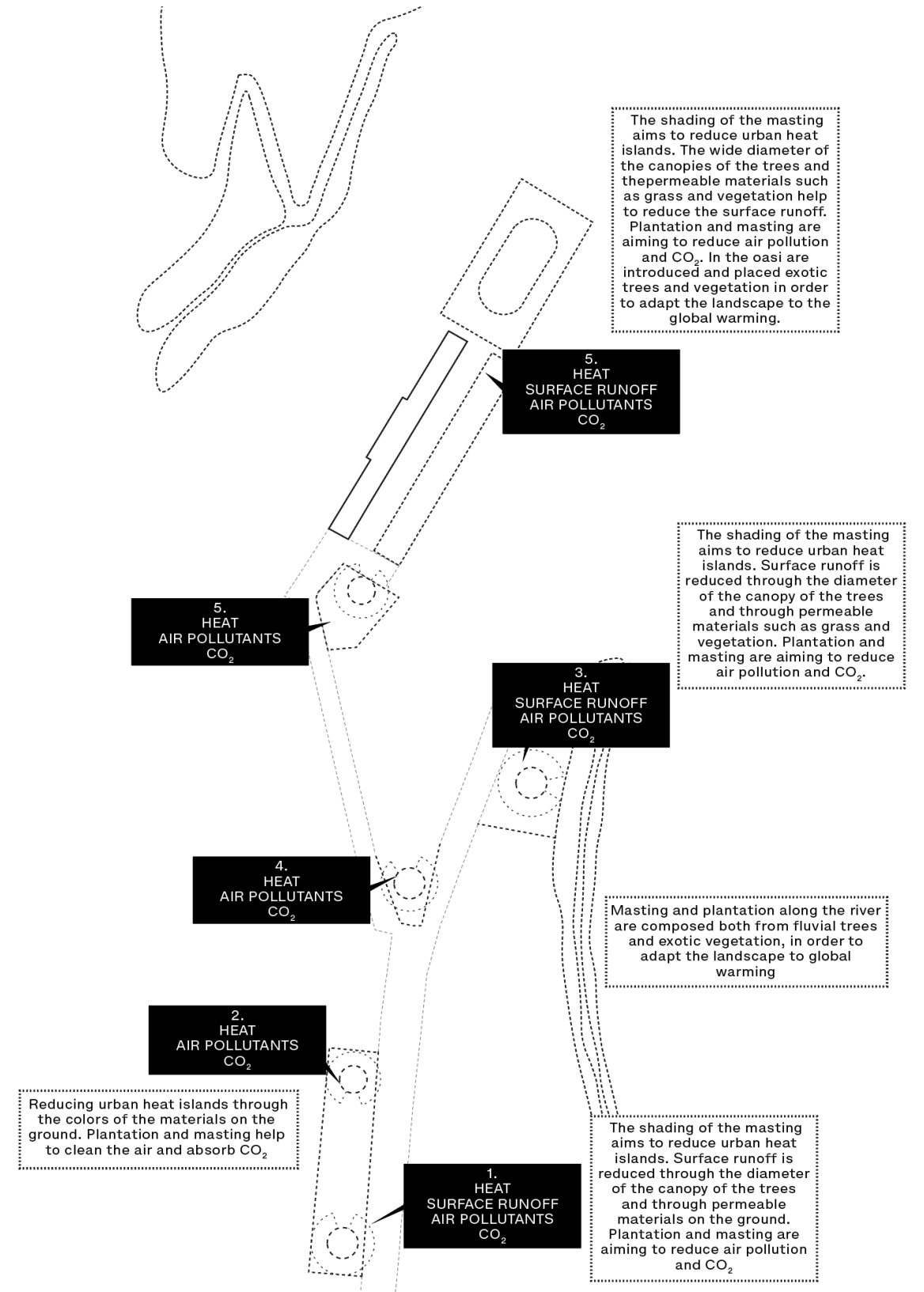
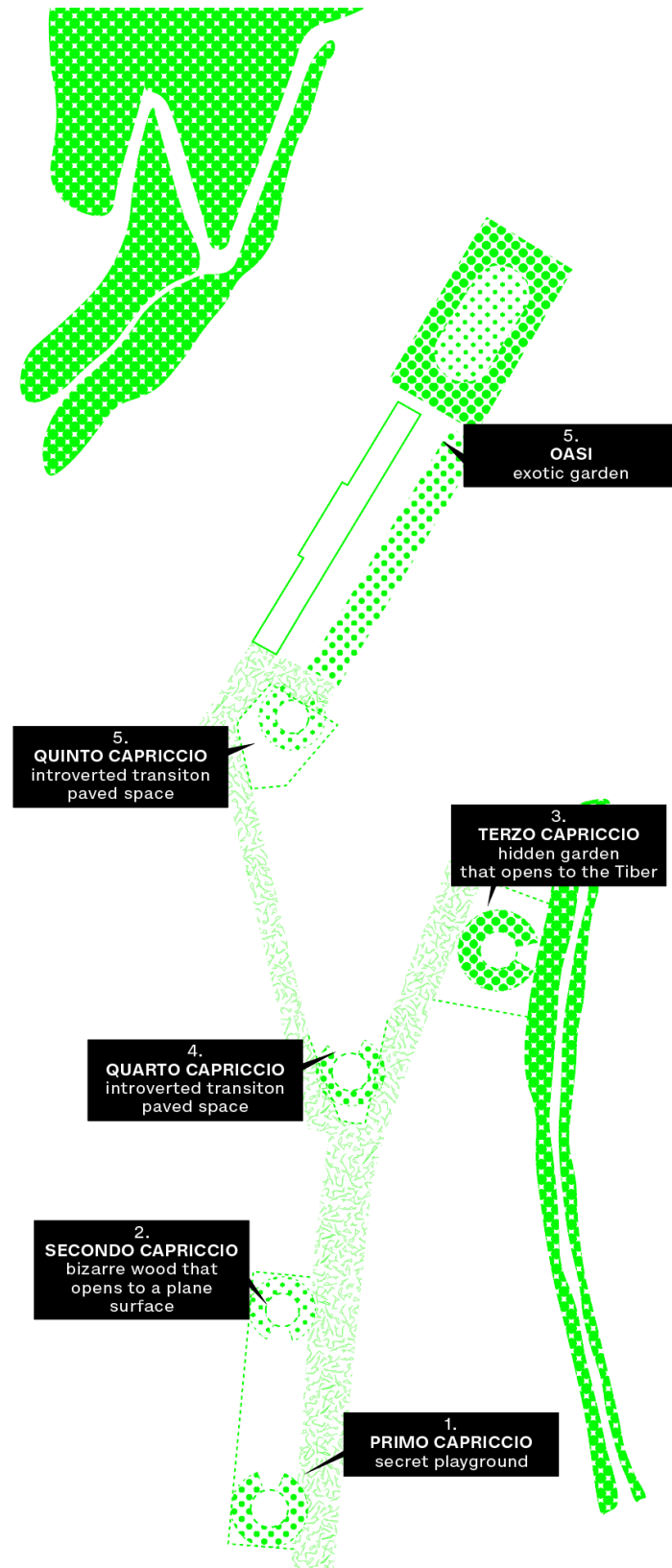
Tale of Noise # 1 represents the main graft, a contact point with historical naturality, defining itself as an oasis in the built fabric. Its conviviality arises from the encounter of exotic vegetation that recalls the Tunisian landscape, and native plants of the Roman context.

TALES OF NOISE #2

Tales of Noise # 2 is articulated into a sequence of narratives that reflect on the theme of disturbance and estrangement. In this sense, maximum expressions of naturality and artificiality, traditional materials and unprecedented colors, native and exotic vegetation co-exist.

Organized as caprice, each Tale constitutes a surprise for the public, associating contrasting objects in a bizarre composition that recalls the artistic concept of "capriccio".



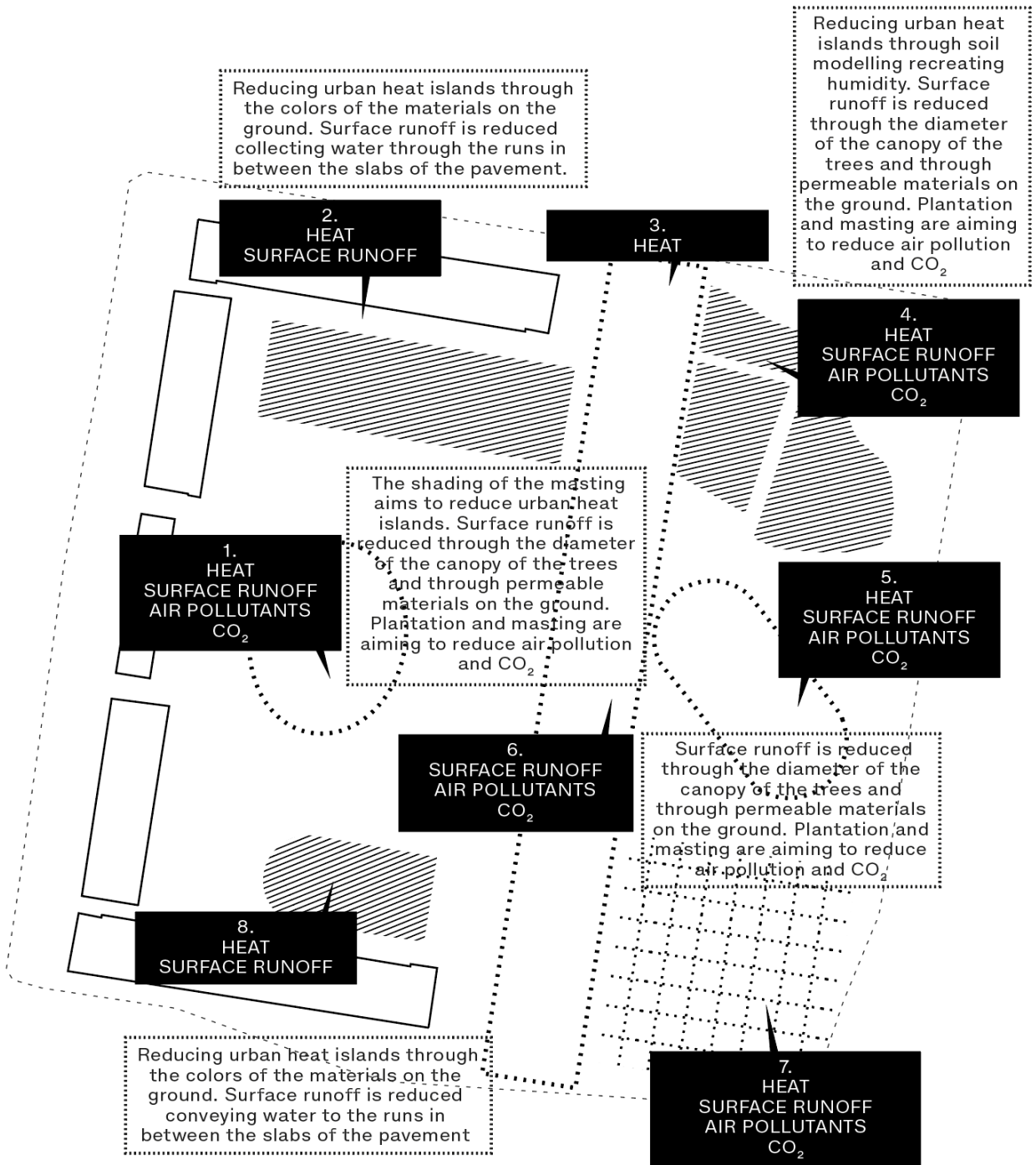
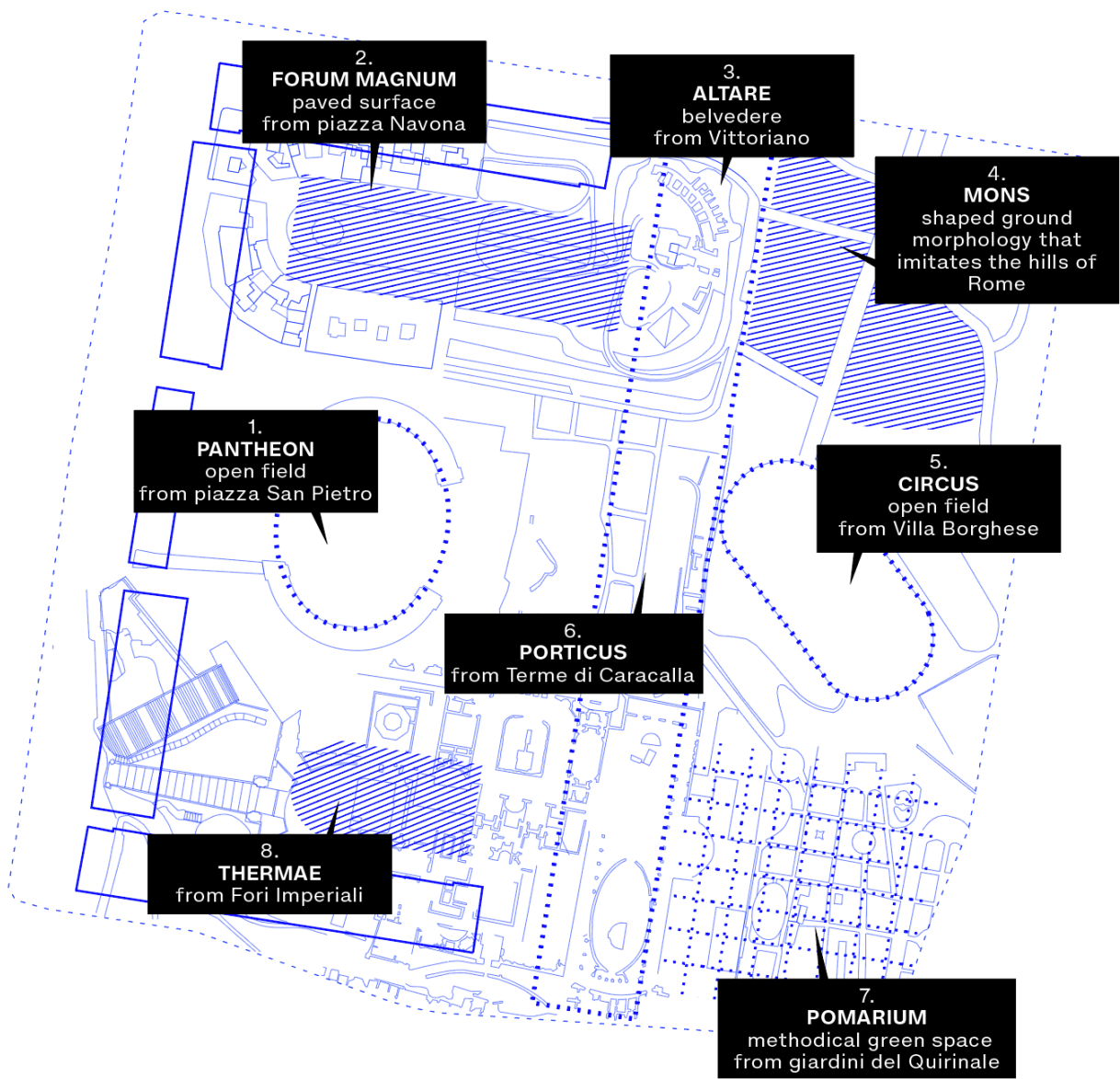




I AM A MONUMENT

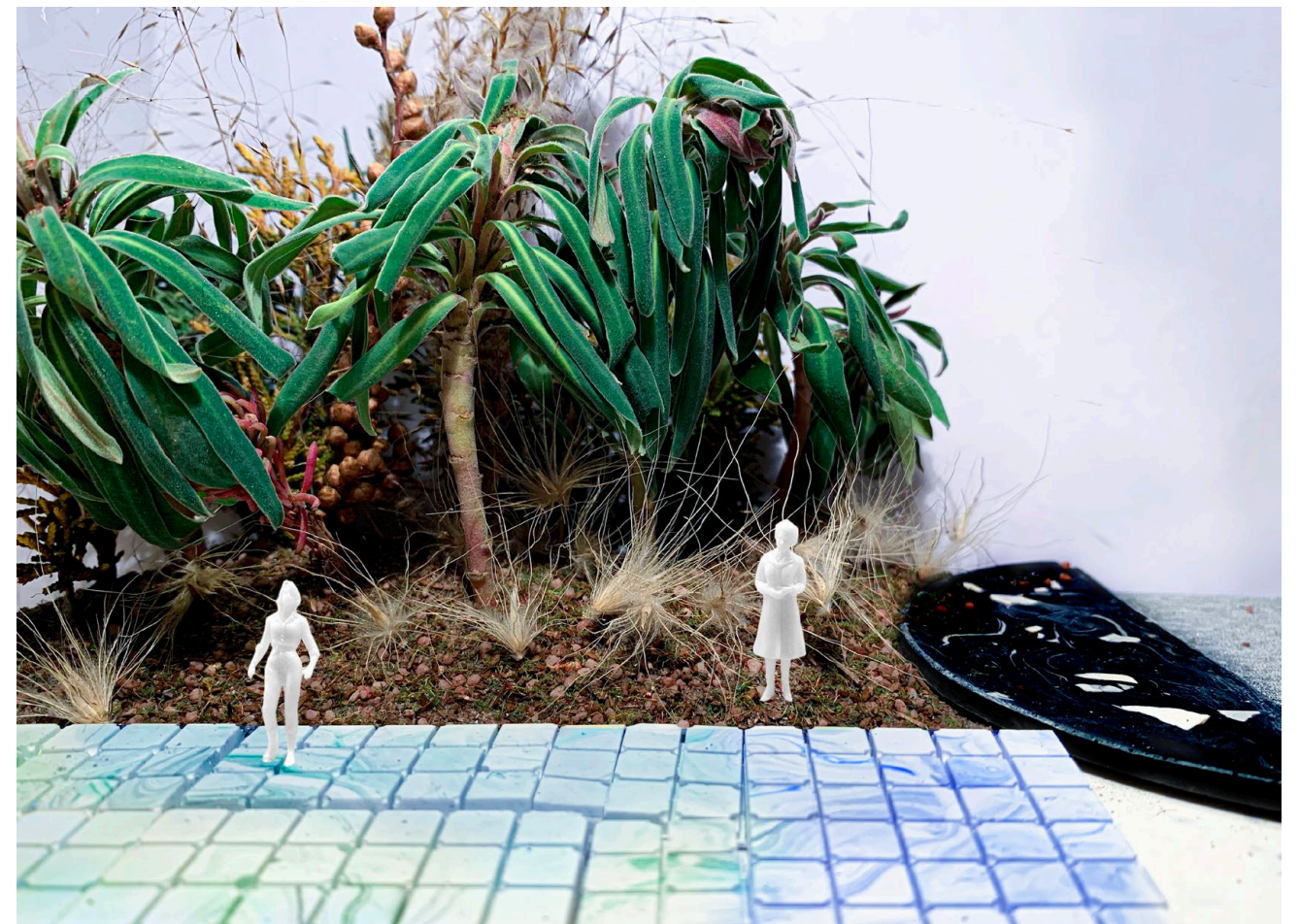
The huge dimensions of the limits that draw the urban void of Ostiense evoke the monumental feature of the city. In an exasperation of the stereotype of monumentality, I am a Monument is built through a resizing and reshaping of the most emblematic forms of Roman eternity. Investigating the nature of public spaces dictated by the great monuments of Rome, this suggestion takes back to a hedonistic dimension that uses the languages of the landscape to rewrite the relationship between man and nature. The dissolution of the form in a ground design is organized in a succession of natural spaces in which the echo of the majesty of the city resounds.







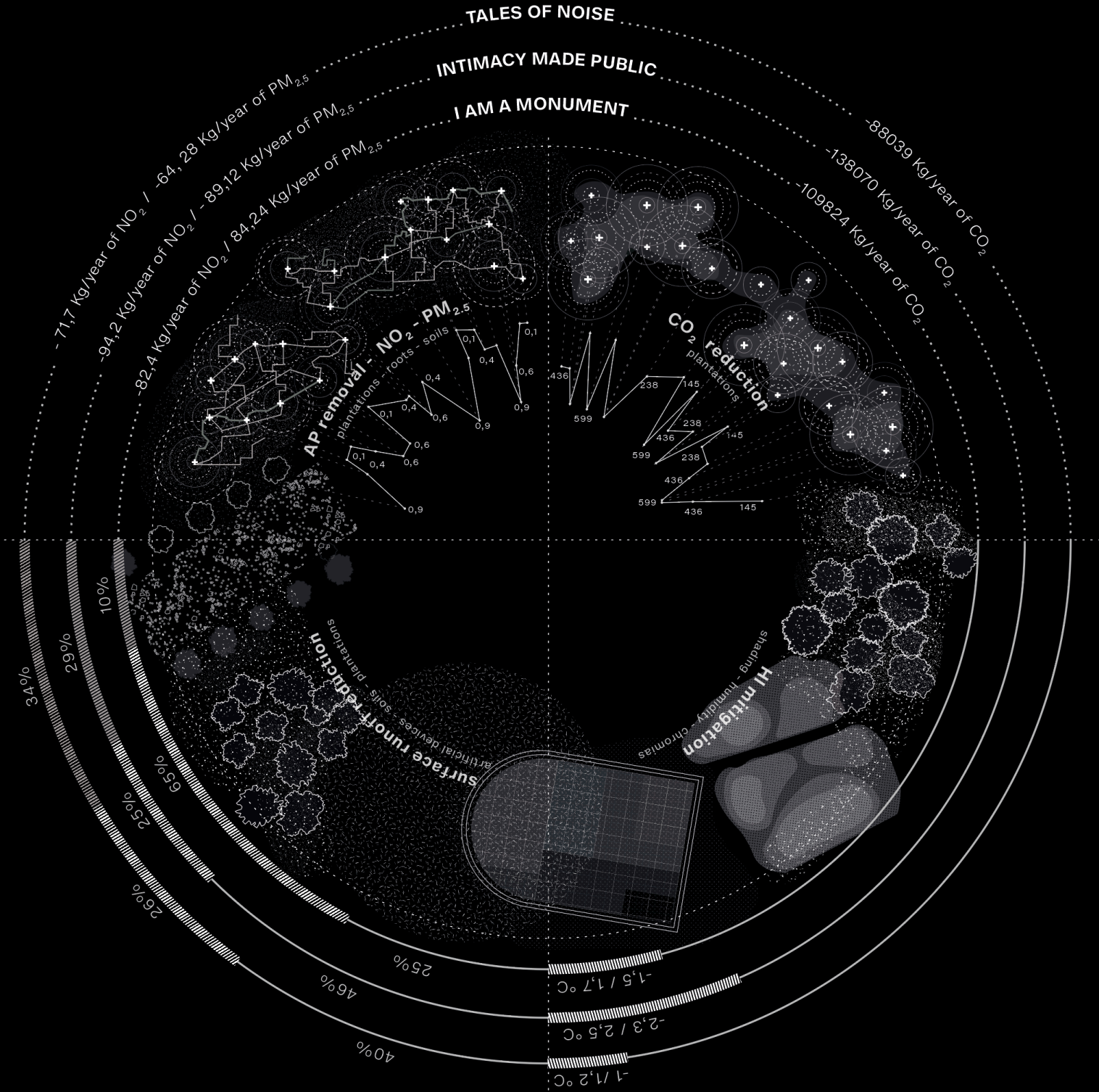






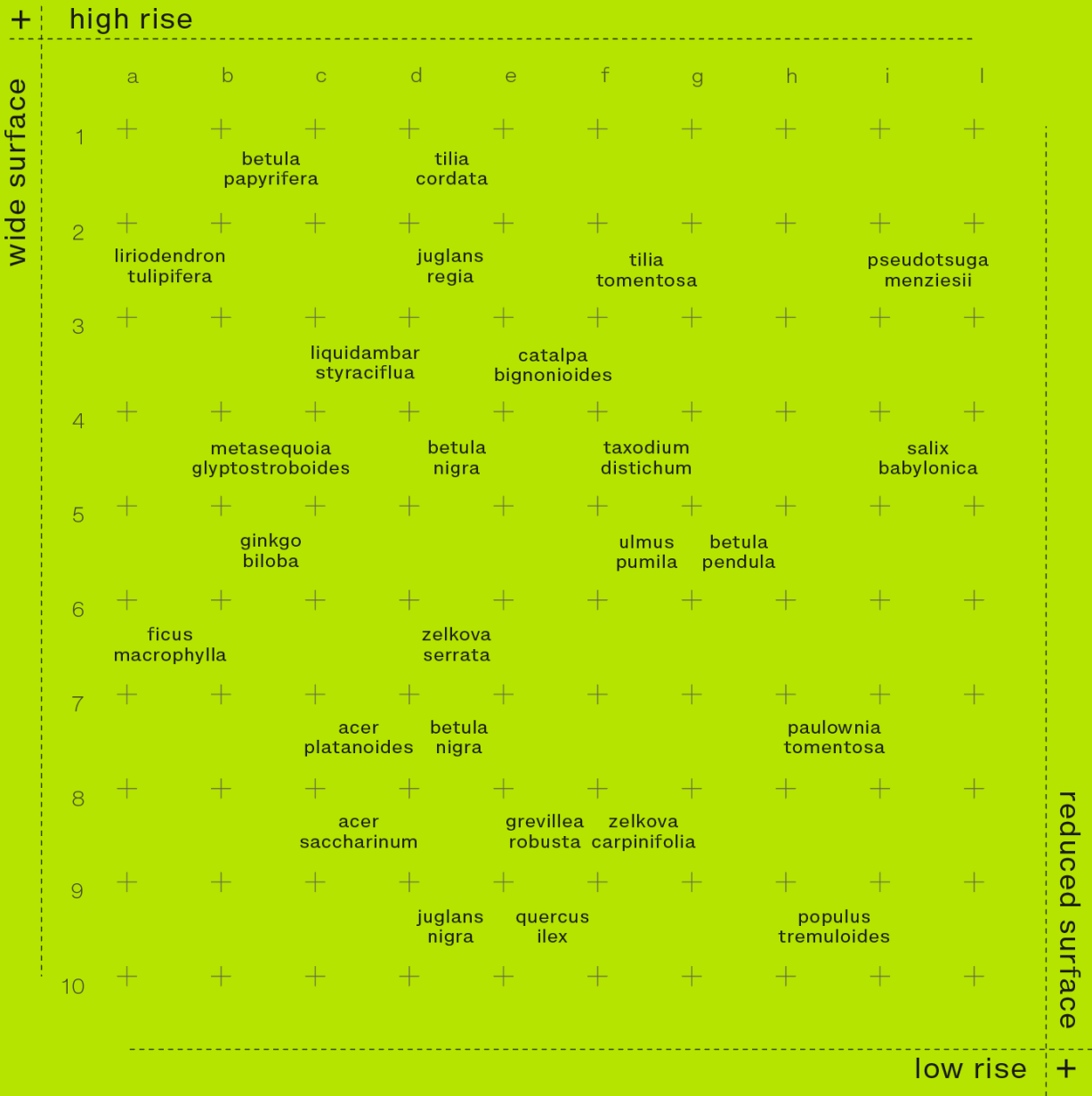
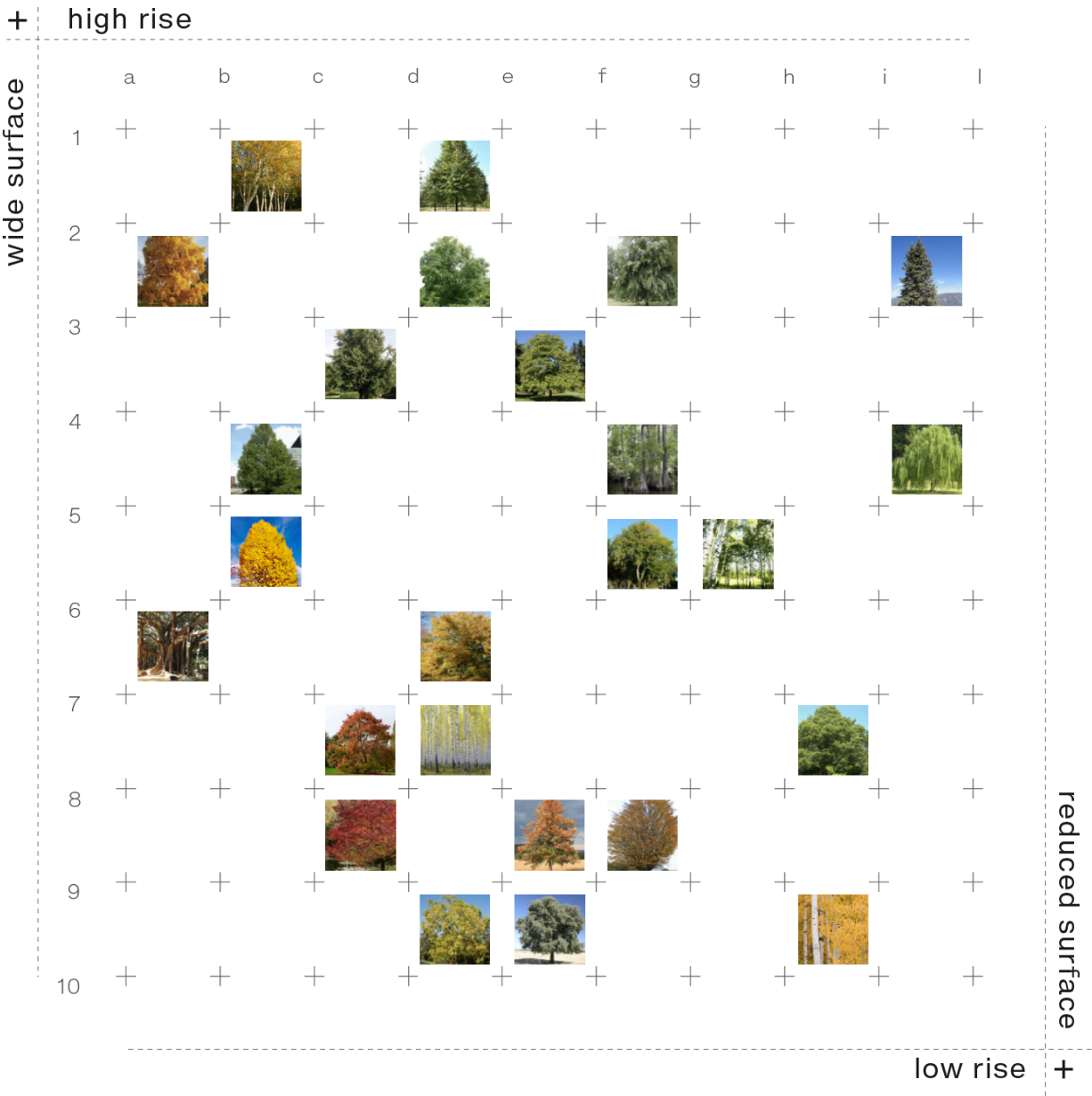
Performative matrices 2.2

The aim of objectifying the proposed scenarios, in order to make them climate prototypes, is expressed through the definition of performative matrices, which define a non-prescriptive project, made up of interchangeable materials, vegetation and devices. The research therefore organized several catalogs of elements that make up the masterplans, combining them to achieve certain degrees of performativity, which respond to the set objectives. The ecological machine operationally replaces the main goals diagram, specifying the approaches used and quantifying the reached outcome for each combination in the different projects. Each scenario was finally investigated in its technical and scientific specificities to show how the selected combinations give an answer to the climate question.

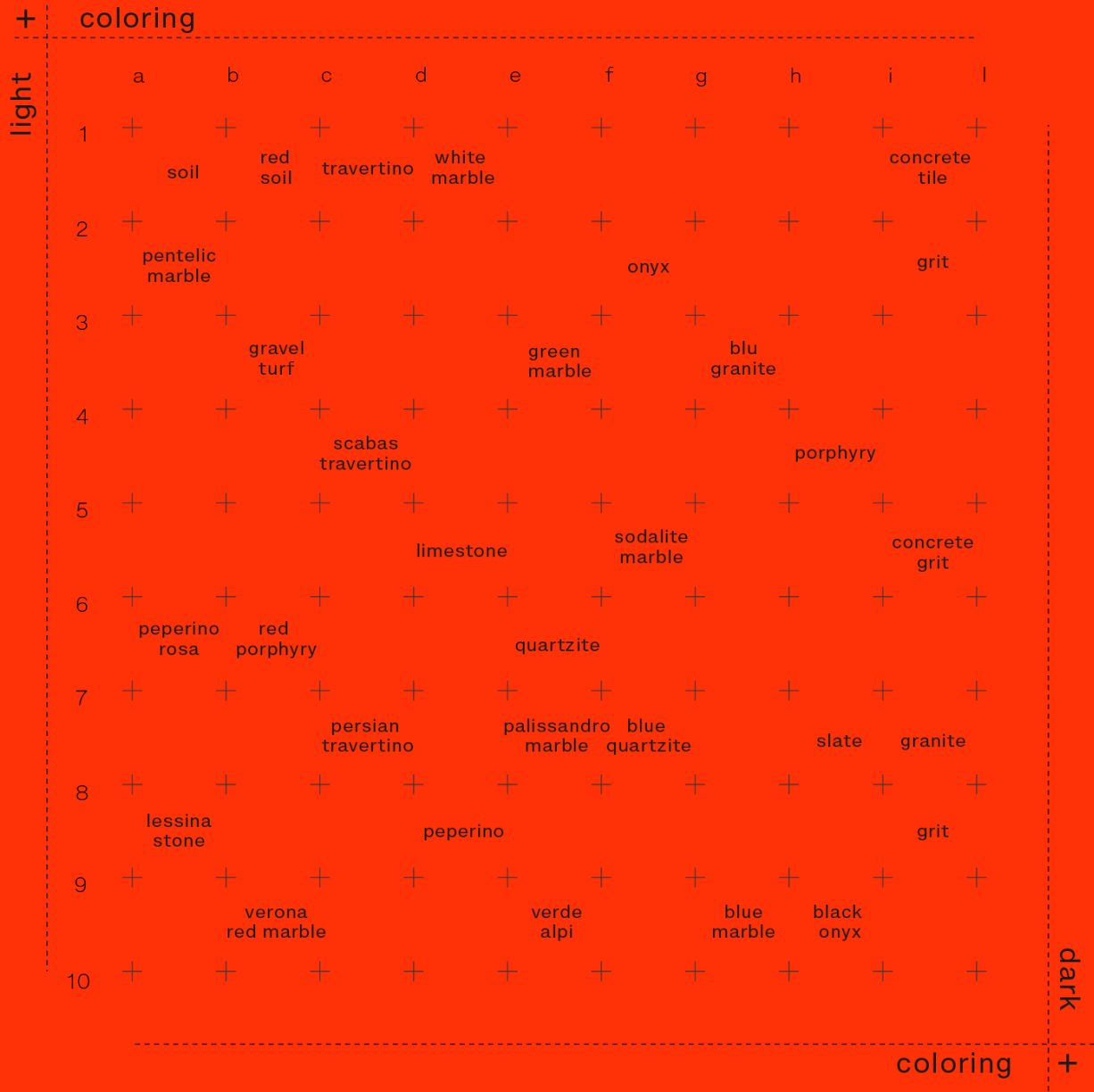
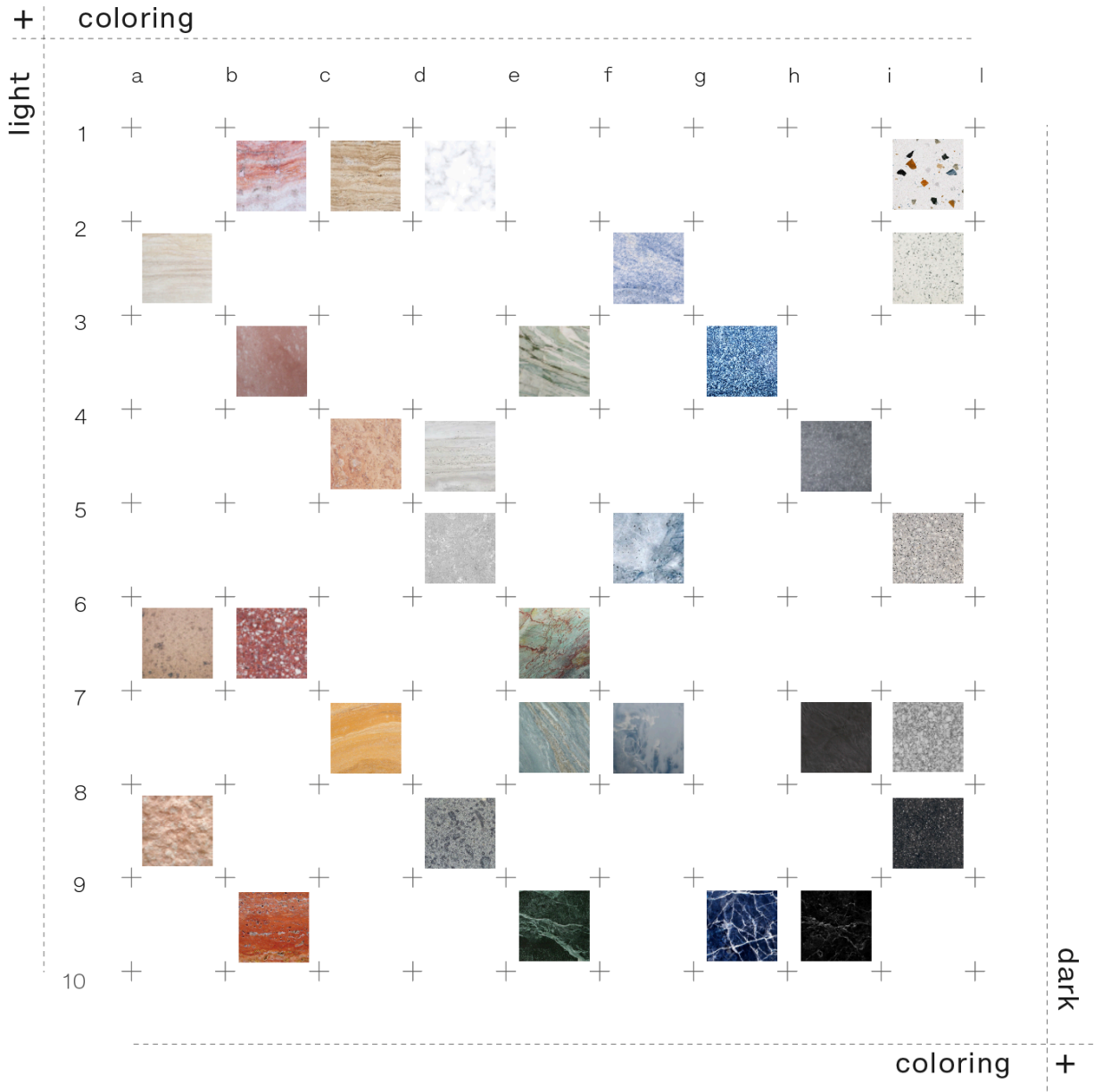


artificial

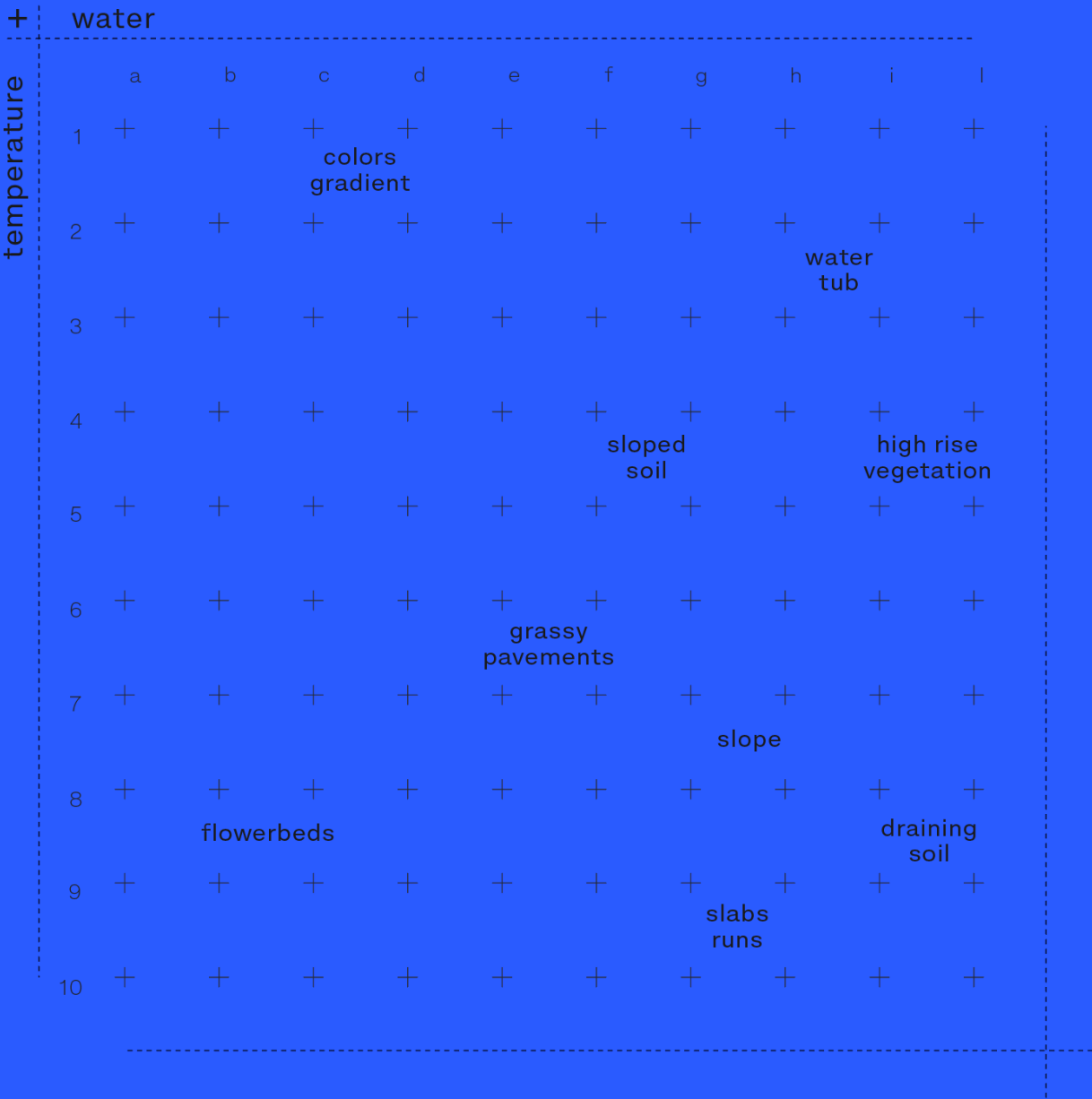
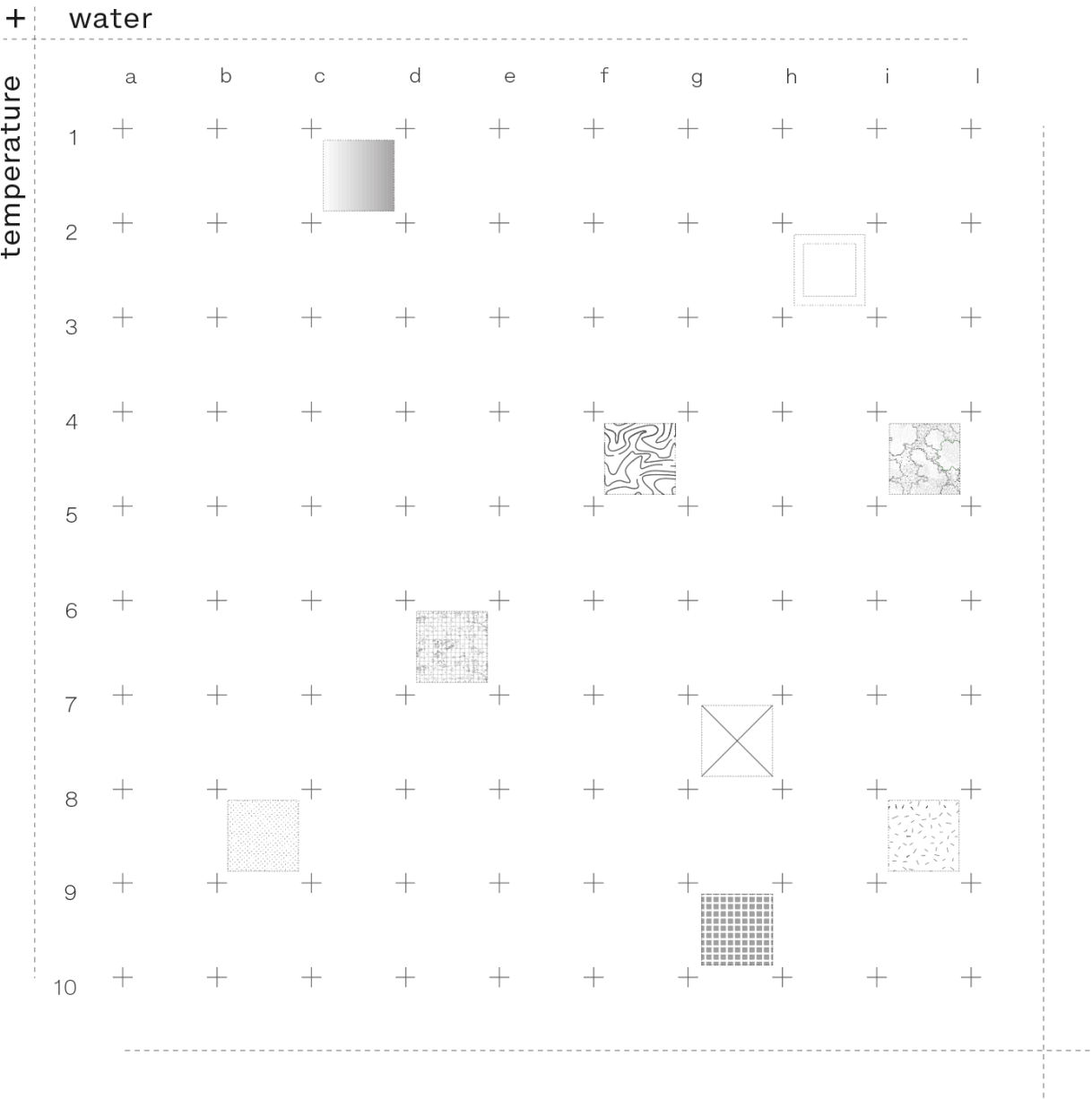
Trees

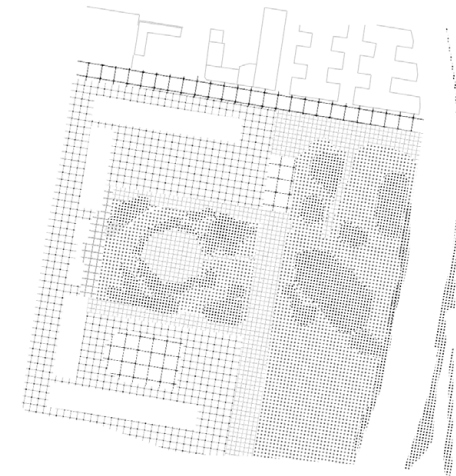
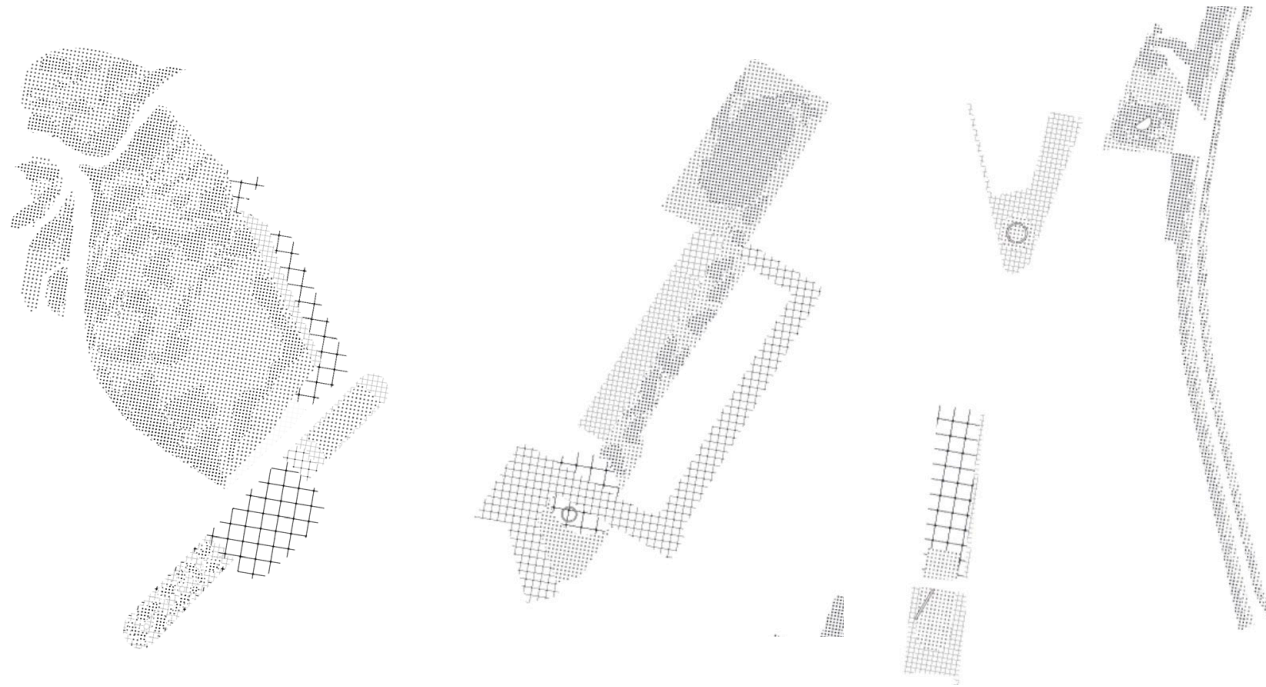


Stones



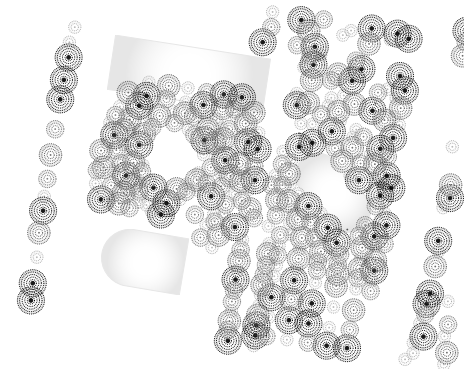
Devices





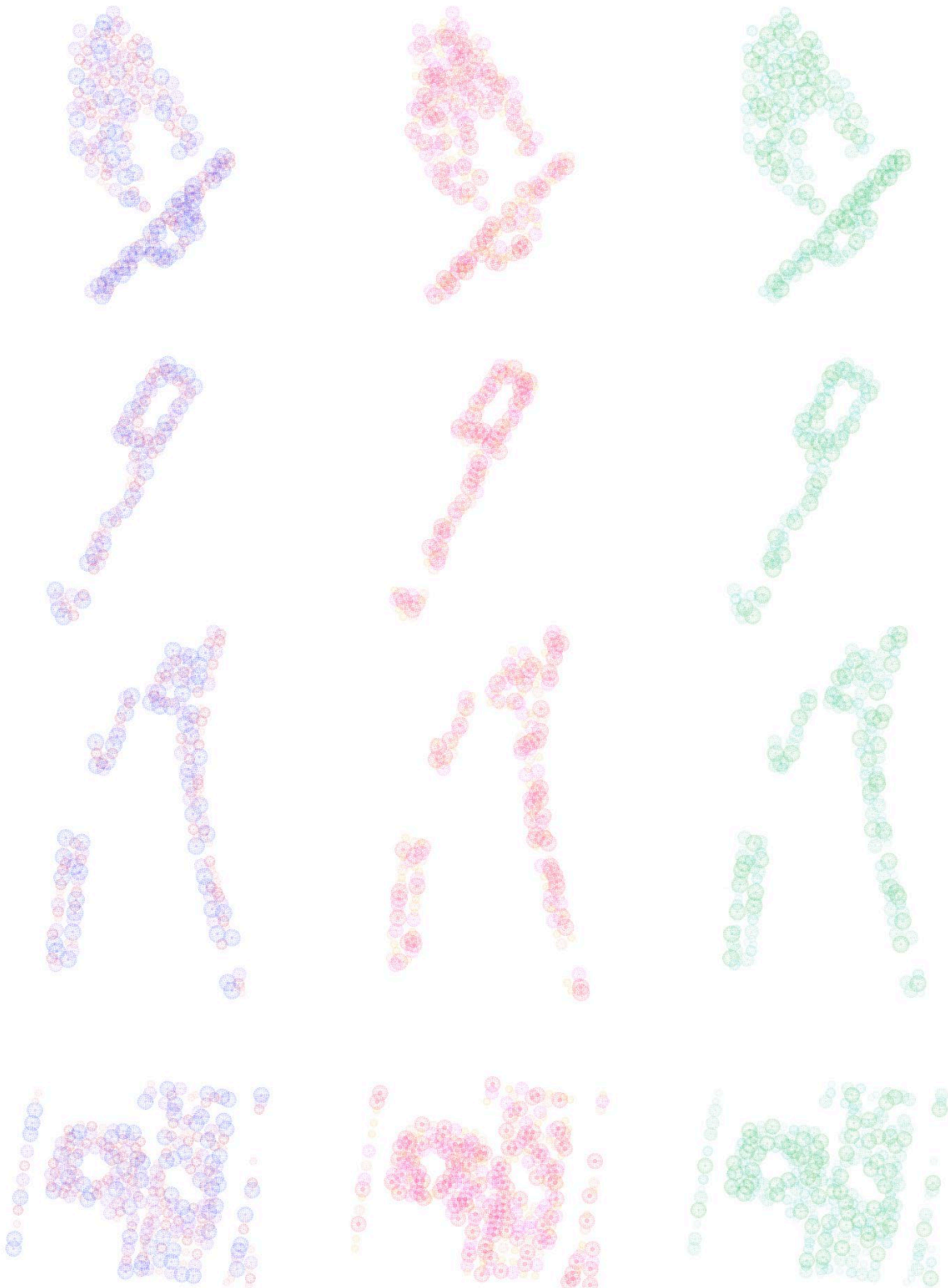
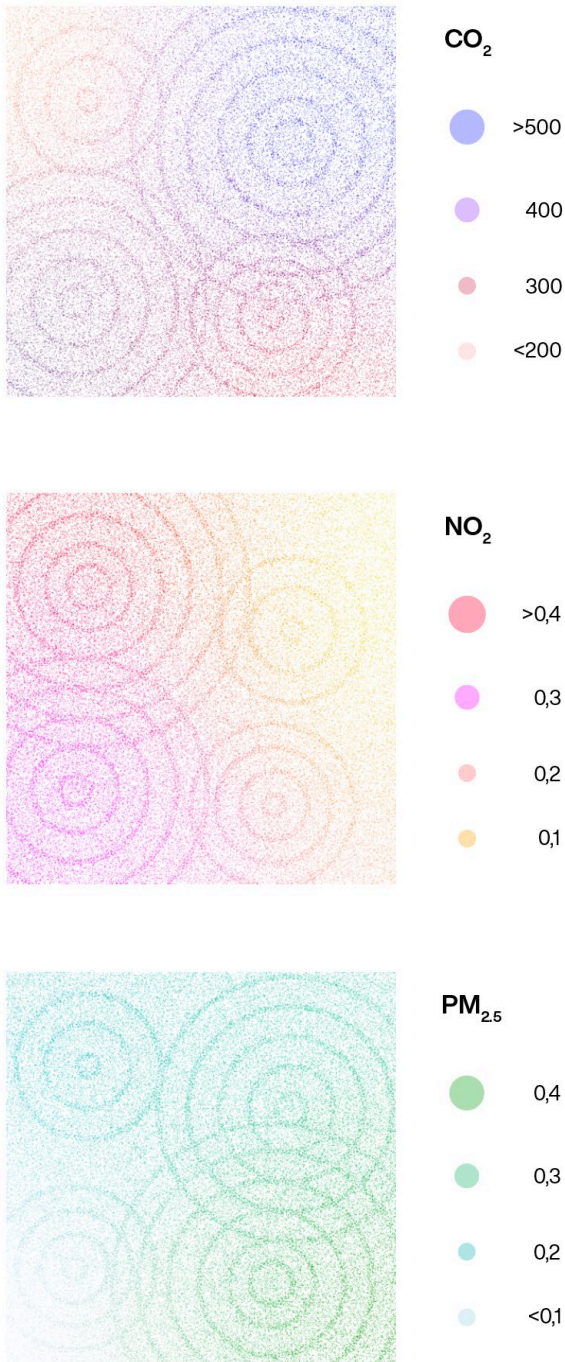
Surface Runoff

For what concern the runoff reduction, the first set of diagrams summarize the levels of soil permeability, while the others define the diameters of the tree crowns and the associated artificial devices to pursue the specific aim.

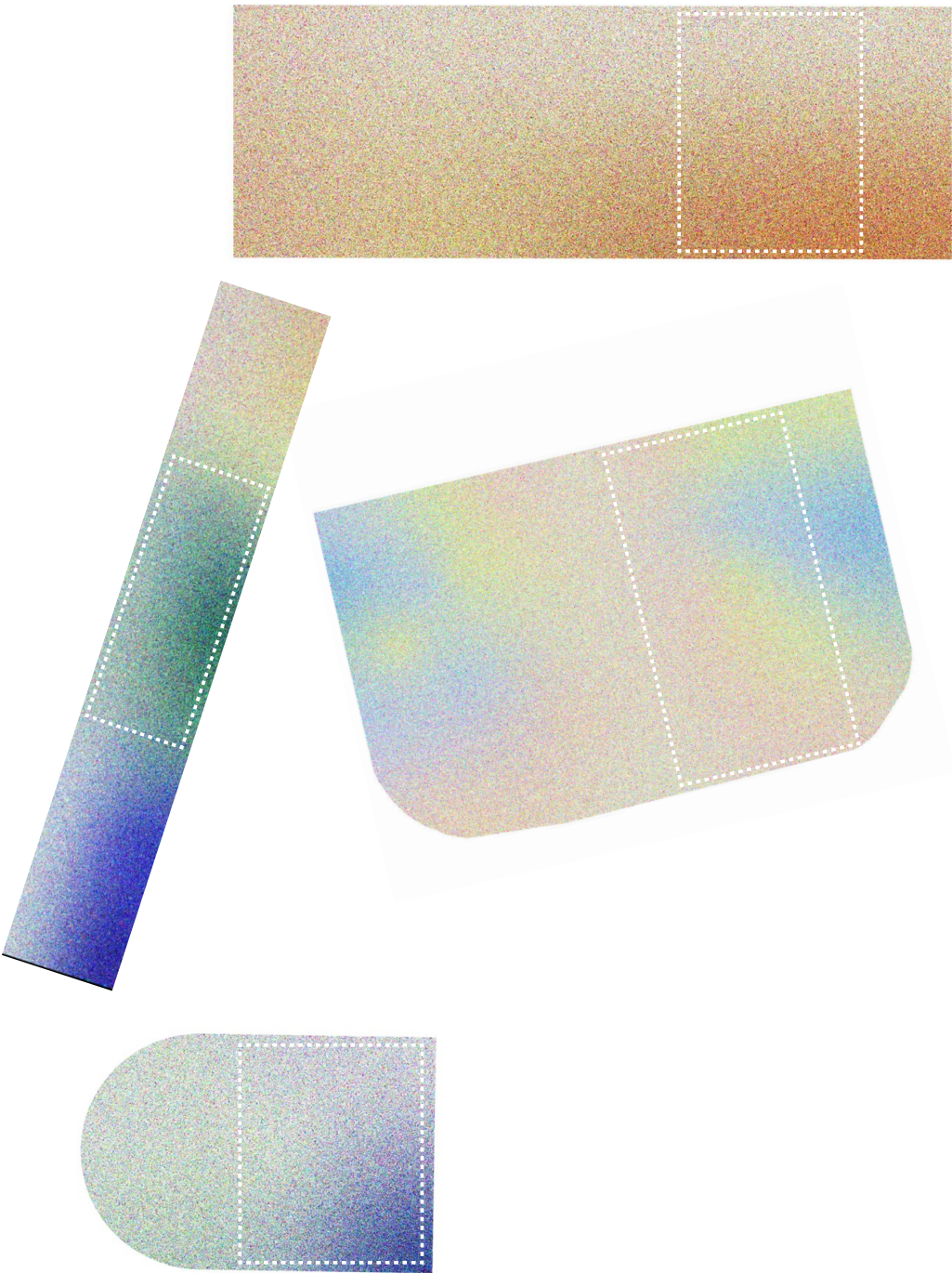


Air Quality

The selected tree species were classified based on their ability to absorb air pollutants, specifically NO₂ and PM_{2.5}, and CO₂. The comparative diagrams allow a quick reading of the different levels of performativity depending on the species and pollutant considered. It is possible to observe that each one shows different values from the absorption of pollutants and CO₂: for example, plants with good absorption values of PM_{2.5} are instead less performing if compared to the absorption of CO₂.



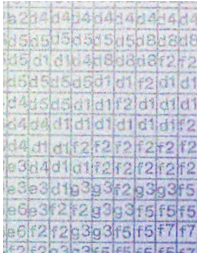
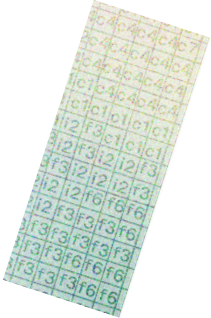


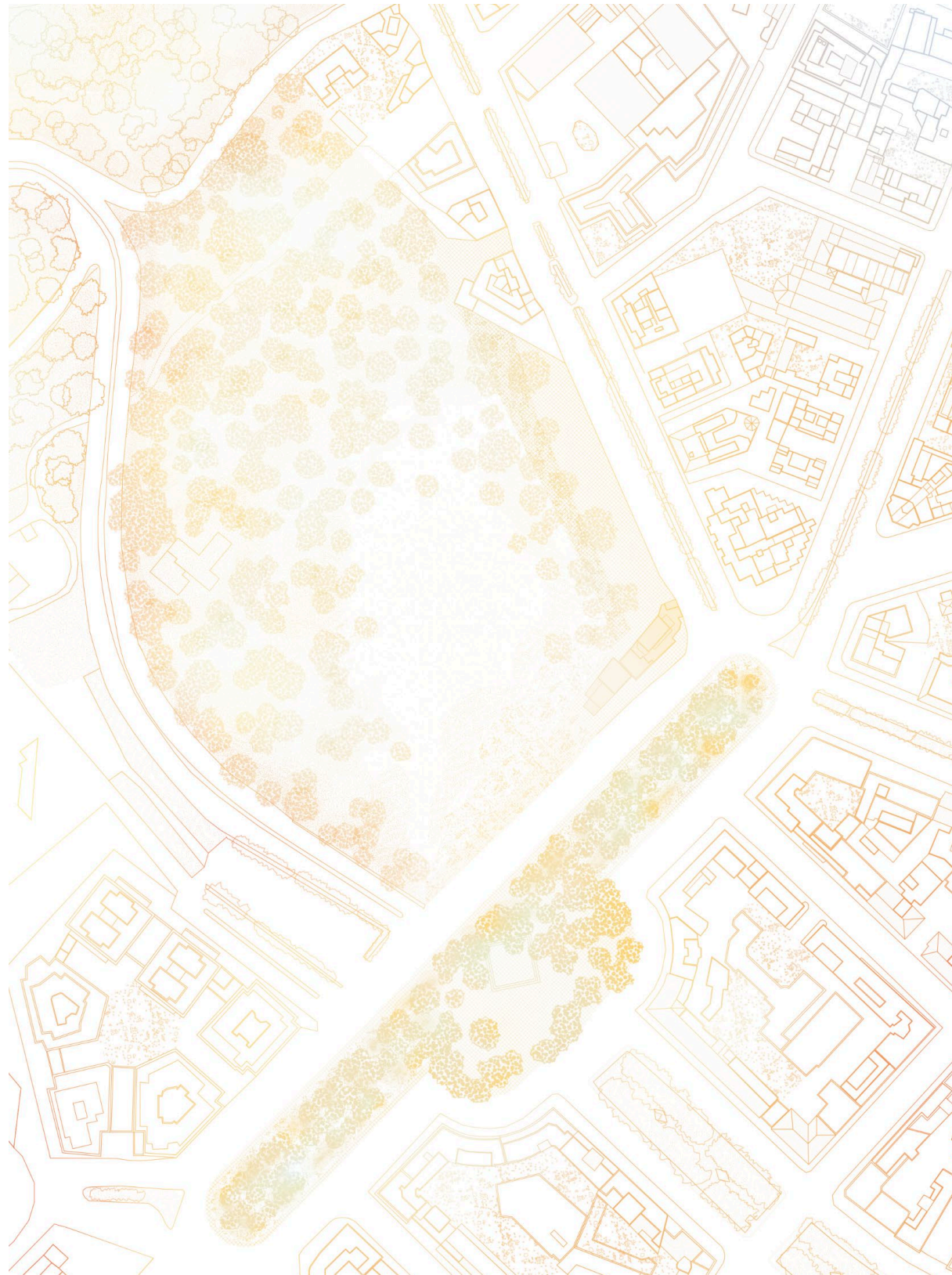


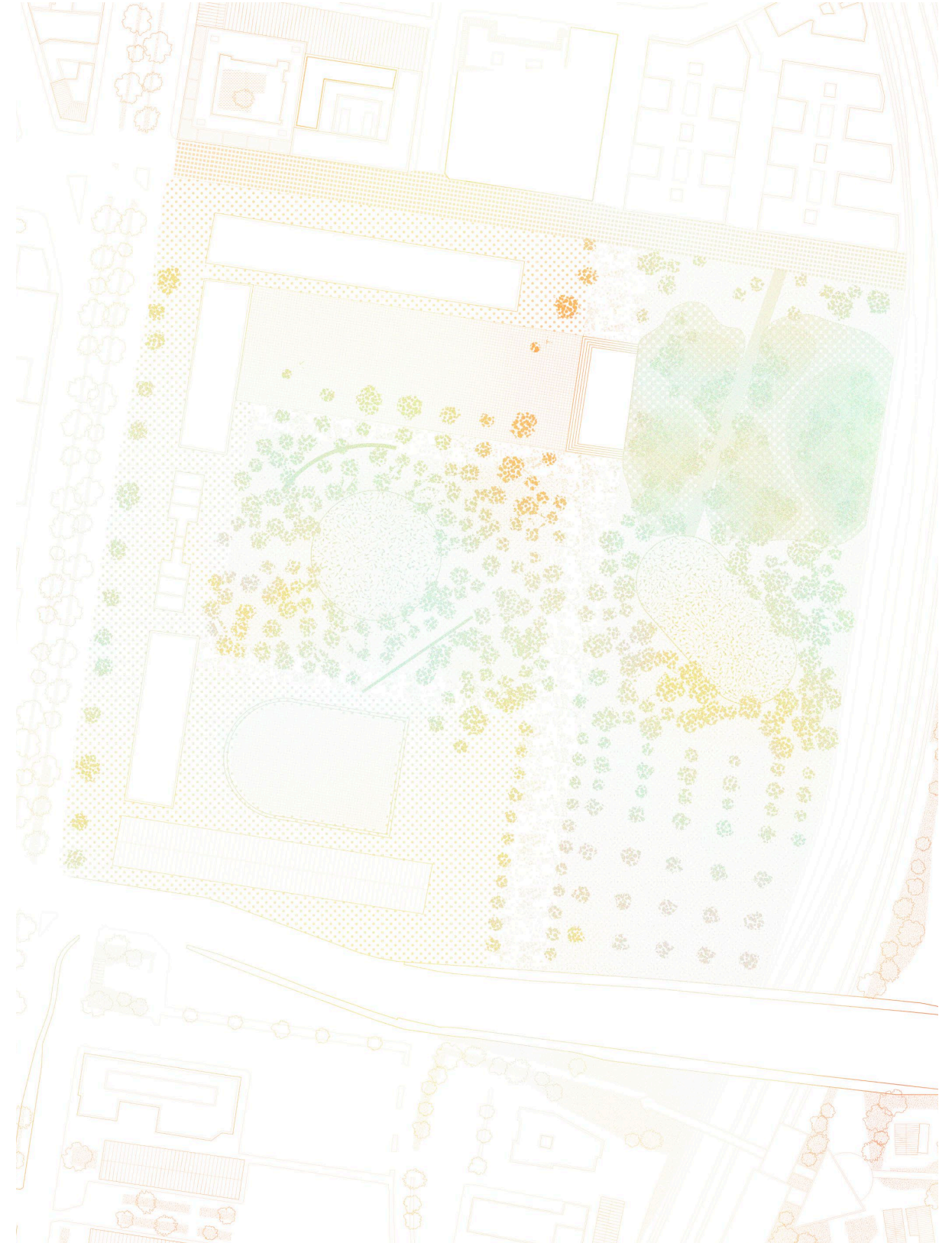
Urban heat islands

The localization of the trees in each master-plan, in addition to the answers to the objectives described above, also allowed a reduction in temperature through shading. This strategy was implemented by a specific investigation of the surfaces' colors: the stones with softest colors were positioned in correspondence with the sunniest areas, to counteract the radiation and therefore the level of absorption and release of heat, while more shaded areas, since they do not require excessive mitigation for what concerns the ground surfaces, have been treated with vivid colors.

The climatic masterplans consequently highlight a hypothesis of mitigation of heat islands highlighted in preliminary analyzes. These hypotheses were drawn from the comparison with these areas of Rome whose soils and pavements showed a good climate response. Taking the same reflectance values, the expected temperature reduction through design actions was approximately calculated.

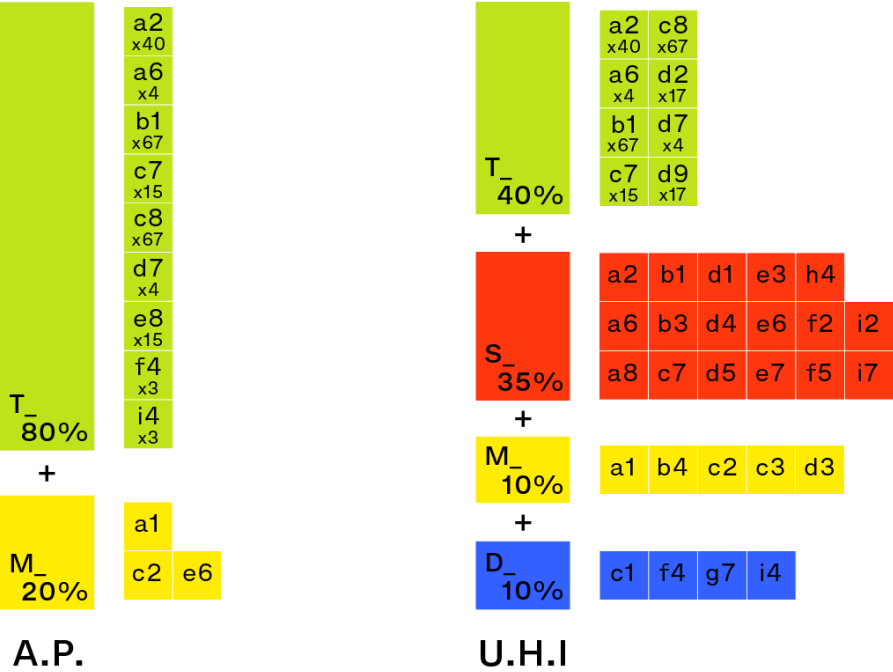
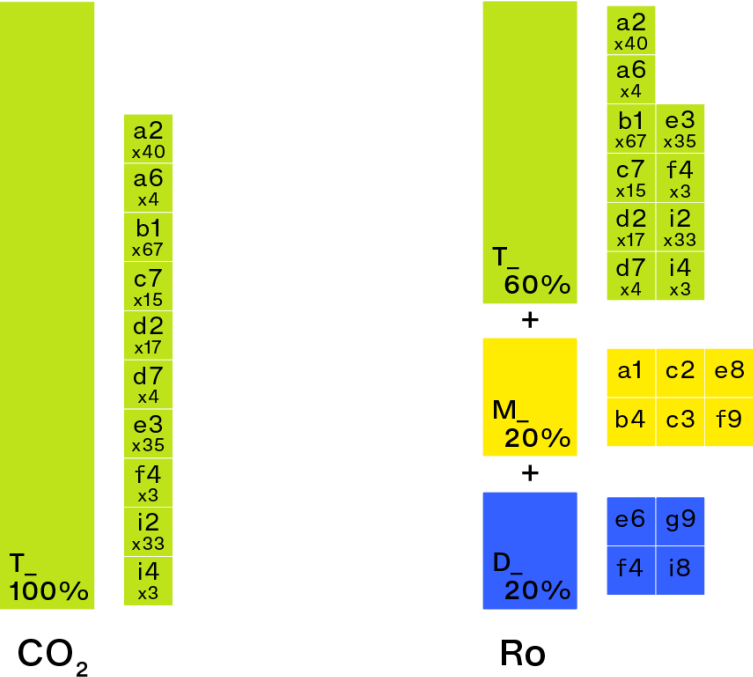


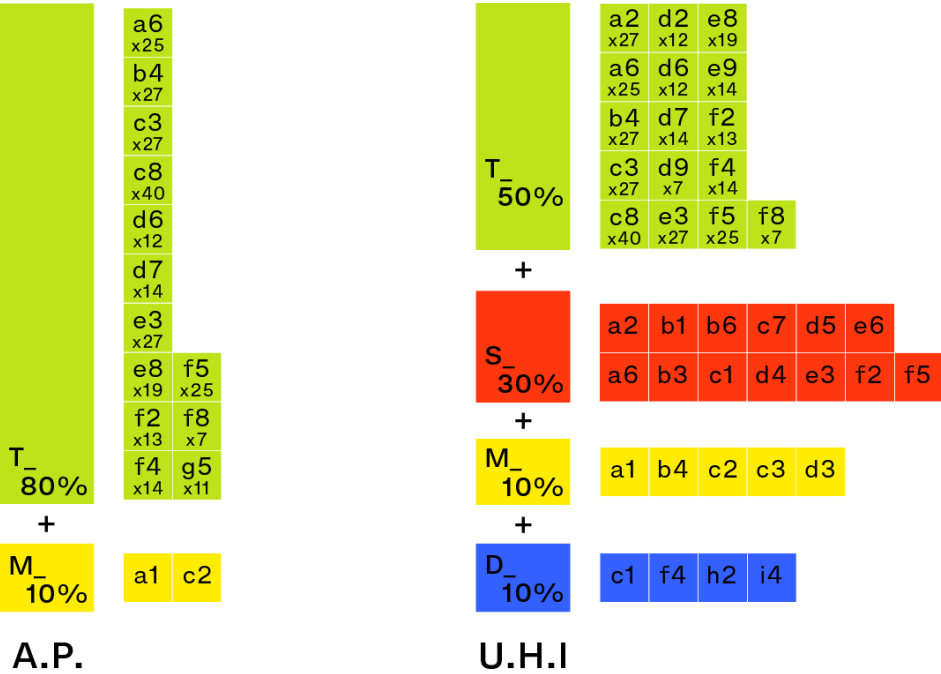
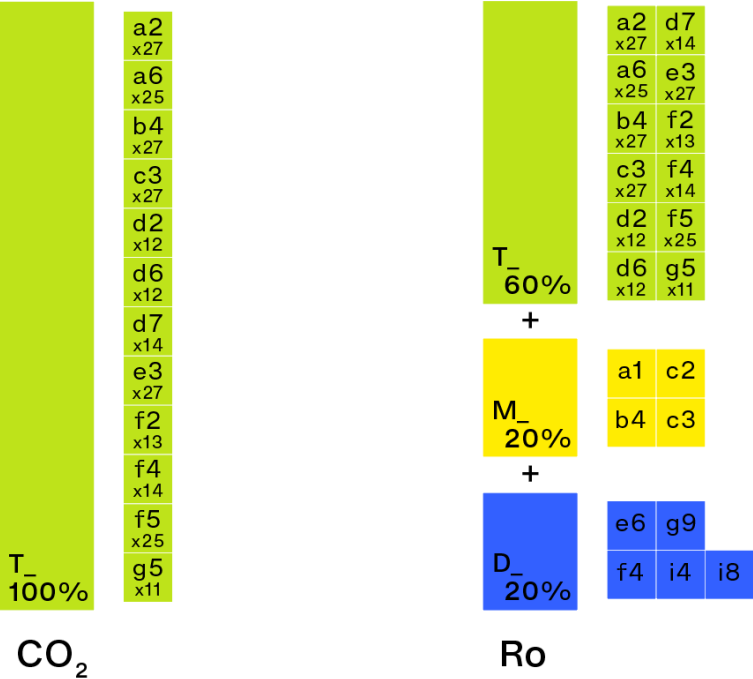
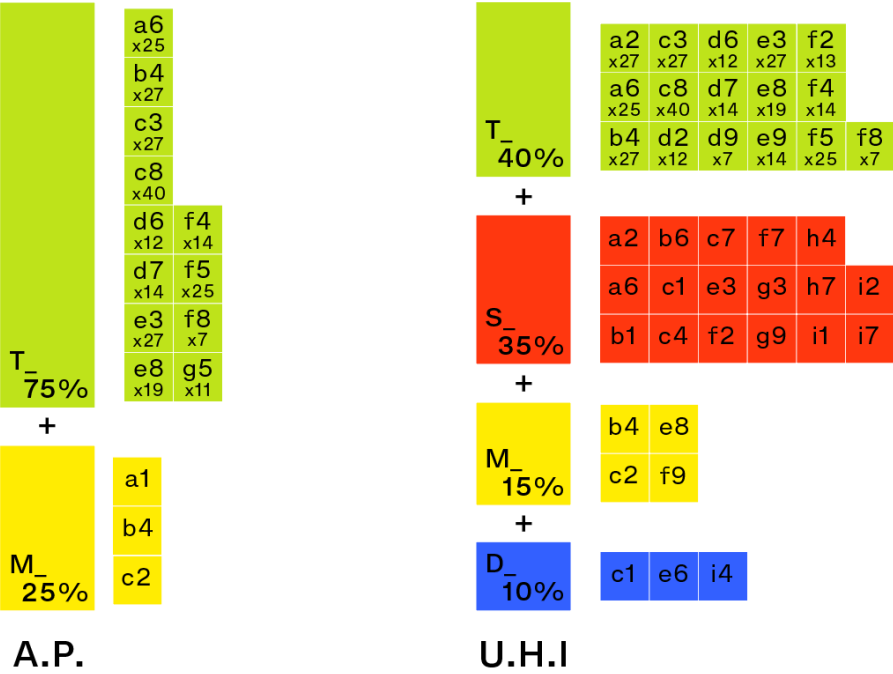
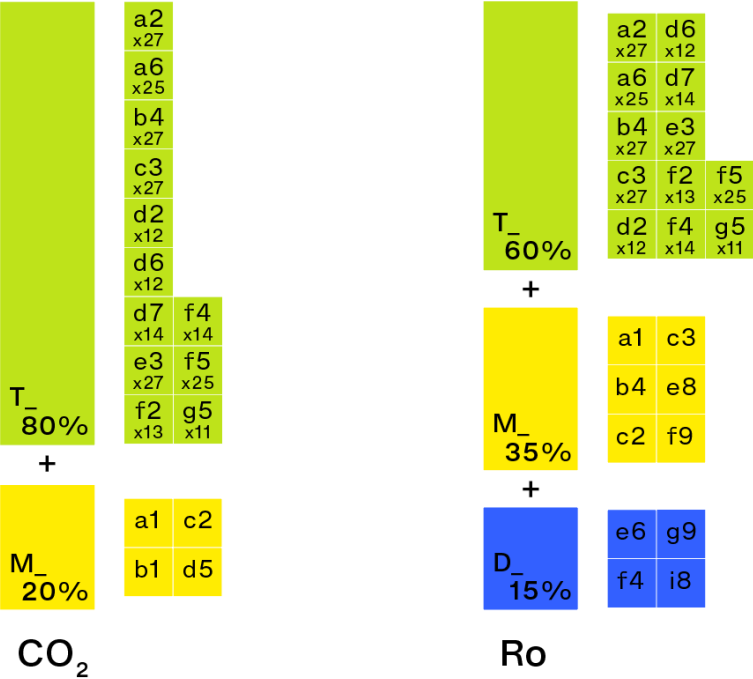




2.3 Synthesis

For each scenario, according to the elements used in the project, the level of performativity was qualitatively calculated in relation to the previously established objectives. The use percentages of trees, materials, stones and devices was therefore estimated and the alphanumeric code, that exactly identifies the chosen element for each category, was specified for each category. In this way, it was possible to clarify the design choices and verify how each component responds to a certain established environmental goal. Moreover, the synthesis matrices clarify the operational methods embraced by the project which, far from deterministic logic, is organized with extreme flexibility, configuring itself as one of the many possibilities that the different elements combinations allow.





“There is a way
that nature speaks,
that land speaks.
Most of the time,
we are simply not
patient enough,
quiet enough, to
pay attention to the
story.”

Linda Hogan

Southward

2.4

Southward suggests future scenarios for Rome in its landing to Tunis. Photos from the past have been reworked into future imaginaries, suggesting new configurations of space. The project intended here is fed by the scientific question as much as the poetic one, thus blending the two souls of the research.

In this sense, Southward reinterprets the effects of climate change in its potential declinations, showing how the places of Rome can, if properly rethought, give an answer and live with this new climatic regime.

Southward highlights how the project for climate change is mostly a process of new metabolisms for the city, in which public space above all remains chameleonic for what concerns uses and external changes. Moreover, Southward shows climate change also in its cultural meaning, as a phenomenon capable of defining new rules for the use of space and its new perceptions.



A Nicola Russi,
per averci guidate e accompagnate in questi
anni di magistrale, per il percorso svolto
insieme.

Per la passione nell'insegnamento, per averci
sempre spinte a disegnare cappelle Sistine
su fogli infiniti.

Per la fiducia in questa tesi.

Ad Elisa Cattaneo,
per la sua professionalità e disponibilità,
per averci lasciato spazio di sperimentare e
scoprire linguaggi inediti.

A Federico Coricelli,
per la compagnia, i consigli, i confronti.

A Giulia, alla spontaneità con cui siamo
diventate amiche, alla forza e la dolcezza,
a questi mesi assieme, perché tutto que-
sto sarebbe stato immensamente diverso
e triste senza di lei.

A Giulio, a questi anni di complicità,
incredibilmente pieni e bellissimi, ai suoi
sogni che sono anche un po' i miei, ai km
di distanza e al piacere di ritrovarci ogni
volta.

A Flaminia, alla sua risata nell'altra
stanza di Casa Marsili, perché senza di
lei non avrei riso così tanto in questi mesi
strani.

A Camilla, per il suo supporto silenzioso
e costante, per questi anni universitari
insieme.

A mamma e papà, per l'amore che mi
hanno insegnato e per la forza di ogni
giorno.

Alla mia famiglia, tutta, numerosa, terro-
na e divertente, che da sempre mi prende
in giro e mi insegna a vivere la vita come
viene, ma assieme.

A Giulia, Camilla, Ilaria, Elisa e France-
sca, per questi anni insieme, per tutte le
volte che non vi ho detto che vi voglio
bene e forse avrei dovuto, per i panora-
mi meravigliosi che abbiamo guardato
assieme e a quelli che ci stanno ancora
aspettando.

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ma che hanno fatto parte della mia vita in
questi anni.

grazie,
Francesca

Alla mia famiglia,
per resistere,
per farmi sentire accanto a
voi,
per essere il rifugio verso cui
fare sempre ritorno.

A Flaminia,
per tenermi stretta, per i mo-
menti vivi e indissolubili.

e a Francesca,
per essere complice, per
avermi mostrato la mia città
con i suoi occhi.

Ai miei amici di Roma,
agli amici di Amburgo,
agli amici di Torino.

A chi mi ha conosciuta, a chi
ha condiviso un frammento
di sé,
per essere il calore che mi ha
portata fin qua.

Giulia



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“Potremmo forse mutare,
con lavori immensi,
anche l’andamento (...)
del terreno; potremmo scegliere
(...) le piante che preferiamo;
ma non potremo mai cambiare
a nostro piacimento la luce, l’atmosfera di un luogo.
Roma è soprattutto
un’atmosfera, una luce,
un clima:
(...) è come una fatalità,
una delle tante espressioni
di quel carattere eterno
che è stato sempre attribuito alla città.”
L. Quaroni

How to rethink a city in a changing climate?