

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

START_STAIN OF ART: art as a bridge towards the Bronx

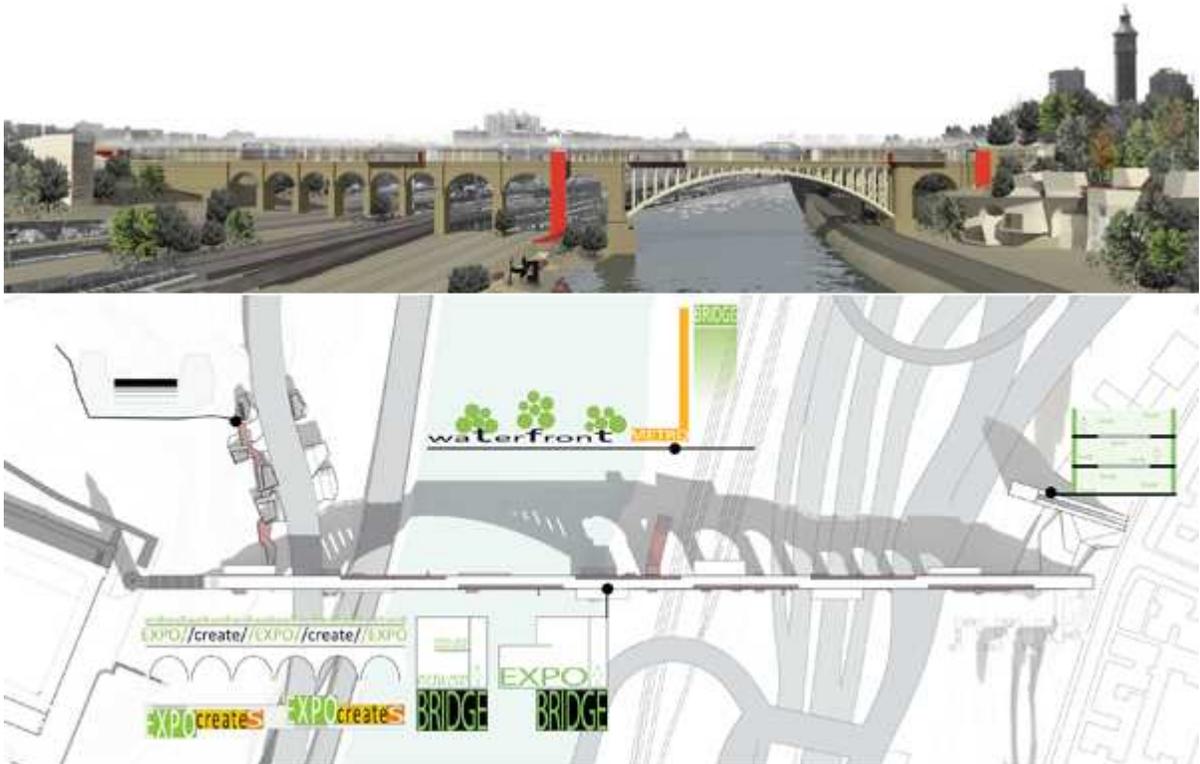
(Refunctionalization contest of the bridge between Washington Heights and Highbridge – NYC)

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To be involved in an international contest, in an area where we have no experience, increases the difficulties of a planning approach. The choice to confront us with The Metropolis that is New York adds several components to value and keep under control: the multiethnic ambient and the huge differences that are noticeable in the distance of a subway's station make sociological evaluations in context gain a relevant importance.

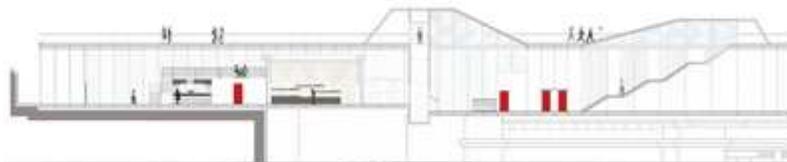


High Bridge, the bridge that's part of the first aqueduct of NYC (1842), that has always been pedestrian until the closure in the 80's of twentieth century, leans on the homonymous park near Harlem's Riverside, that divides in Washington Heights (Manhattan) and Highbridge (the Bronx) and, in the visions of the contest's planning, becomes connective element.

The general theme of the contest is an art centre bound to Bronx Museum of Modern Art and to *Artist Unite*, an artists organization of Washington Heights which is baseless, but the specific functions to insert, the necessary square metres, such as how to intervene, are choices left to designers with broad indications.



This condition is optimal to express our design ideas, but it make necessary to create some bounds to cling to: we decided to make use of the *junkspaces* of which the area is rich limiting our intervention, besides building on the bridge, the area's and project's hub element. At the beginning it's been analyzed the context by the urban and sociological point of view, and it' been edited a wide scale project that involves the whole area and accomplishes the requirements asked by the competition. The analysis has been afterwards thorough deepened with a view to the inspection on the area, while the last phase it's been a revision oh the precedents in the light of what has been observed *in situ* followed by a larger definition of the intervention on the bridge. The focus has been performed on the bridge, the waterfront with the subway stop, the structure under the arches of *Harlem Drive*, the library on the opposite side and the insinuation in urban empty spaces that arises from the project.



The first ideas have been based on the concept of occupation, connection and attraction:

- Occupation of the arches under Harlem Drive Expressway and the waterfront in Bronx.
- Connection of the two neighbourhoods with the building on the bridge of an edifice that crosses the river from one side to the other for the whole length with the same importance for both banks.

- Attraction of the public on the bank opposite of his own, with particular attention for the Bronx, for the awkwardness of the area: so the administration offices and artistic promotion with the lecture halls dedicated to research and didactics find place under the arches, whereas the library is placed on the opposite bank.

As far as the bridge is concerned, the only seven metres in a direction compared with the four hundred of the other one make difficult the use of the space. In our opinion the best solution is a union of functions that can be all placed in controlled size spaces, but all turned to the exhibition. Our idea is that the creation of the art has to be exhibit too, not only its final outcome. We tried to create a new subway station on Hudson Line, that passes near Harlem River and that has only a goods yard areas in this area. This one will be added to the requalification of the riverside and that will take part to the connection to the city. It will be possible come straight from the station or go down from the bridge using the lifts that create a only structure. For what concerns of the building that weaves under Harlem Drive's arches, we considered the possibility of confronting with Harlem Drive itself, rising from the bottom to the height announcing its presence. Near the point of beginning between High Bridge and the homonymous district of the Bronx, founds place the library, a vertical edifice that rise to the height difference between the upper and the lower road by the double access and the inner vertical structure. It's from here that the project expands itself to the rest of the city: taking cue from the floor pattern, involving the way of approaching that starts from the subway stop and takes to the overpass's one. The aim is to draw people with a visual intervention but not only: along the route we have analyzed the closest empty urban spaces, so that the works of art that wants to be exhibited in the open space found a concrete place and easily visitable by those walking to the bridge.

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