

ricordi di spazio espaces de passage

Milan

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During my residency at Viafarini in Milan, I started a research project about the notion of home. This project is part of my broader research on geography, in which I work on our relationship with the space that surrounds us.

What do we call home? How can a space become *chez soi*? Can the space of a city that we inhabited for a long time also be considered our home? What memories of a place do we hold if we have lived there or if we are only passing by? How can the time and the experience of a place affect our memory?

To reflect on these questions, I asked fourteen Italian artists that I met in Milan to participate in my research. I approached them because I felt that they had a sensitivity for these questions and because they were all working on the notions of space, the city, or memory.

I asked them to choose a place in the city that has a particular significance for them, and to send me the address. It could be any kind of space, as long as I can have access to it.

Then, I asked them to describe that place by memory with a text and a sketch.

Without looking at their sketch or reading their text, I went to the place and wrote a description of my own.

I then combined their affective memory of each place with my more recent experience of them and created these *ricordi di spazio espaces de passage*.

This is the active part of my research, not the finality of my project. It is a starting point to deploy a reflection on the questions, the notions, and the subjects that emerged from our experiences of the same space. I annotated and underlined the texts to activate our dialogue, to continue my research, and pursue my relationship with the artists and Milan.

The artists speak Italian, I speak French, English is where we can meet. The strangeness of the second language has been preserved.

Catherine Barnabé
April 2022

A bench in front of the Museo di Storia Naturale

PAOLA GAGGIOTTI

the use of the space When chaos or the virus prevent me from thinking, I sit on this bench.
From there, beyond the gates, I see the cars go by.
Behind me the Natural History Museum and the Planetarium.
In front of me the gravel, the fence, the luxurious buildings of Milan.
Someone is running, the children are eating ice cream,
the mothers are smoking while talking on the phone.
Everything slows down.
This bench was my artist residency
when I didn't find an alternative space for myself.
Minutes are like hours, hours are like days.
going home Coming home from this place is like coming back from a trip.

*making a public space your home, your place of work
outside/inside
slowing down and observing*

Sunday, March 6, 2022 – 4:22 pm

This is the kind of place where you wait for someone. It is close to a metro station, in front of a museum and in a park. You wait for someone to meet you and you go for a walk or you visit the museum. The lineup is full of families. It is Sunday, people are walking around. There are a lot of pigeons. I see a dinosaur in front of me, a little to my right. The air is fresh and the light hits the top of the building. A dog is barking. The museum is made of orange-like stones, the windows are in arches made of alternating black and orange stones. On the roof, there are statues. On the facade, there are frills and inscriptions. I don't recognize the architectural style. There are three flags on the facade: European Union, Italy, and another white and red flag that I don't know (maybe the city of Milan?). In front of the museum there is a wide alley, with trees in the middle, there is an island of green in front of the door made from only one kind of plant—at least, this is what is alive at this time of the year. On the bench, at my right, two young girls are talking in English but I don't clearly distinguish their words. There is no particular smell. The park is encircled by a metal and stone fence. A child is crying. The lineup diminishes, the sounds of the cars and the motorcycles composes a continuous noise. Most of the trees are old, but a few seem to have been planted not so long ago. There are a lot of runners. A touristic red bus stops at the red light. A few dogs are on leashes, a few are not. The benches around me are dark green, but at a distance, there are concrete benches without backrests. On the ground, among twigs, small rocks and cigarette butts, there is confetti in the shape of stars and circles. Of all colours. I am hearing one of the girls: "I want to go home." She flips through a Vogue. A dog doesn't want to move. Another joins its owner who has left the park, and waits for him to put its leash on. This is a chic neighbourhood. Paper streamers are stuck in a tree, the party is over. It is 4:53 pm.

the use of the space

going home

Via Lanzo 7

LUDOVICO OROMBELLI

I remember having walks and always stopping in front of a toy shop. It was called Fate I Capricci, Italian for “play up!”

I can still visualize the place that I used to look through the display window. The first image that comes to mind is the huge number of toys that was definitely too much to be contained in such a little space. The most absurd shapes were filling every little bit of the area, pressing on walls and windows that seemed to verge upon the point of exploding.

Interlocking geometries and colours were defining the content of the framework, which was so chaotic as to be absurd. Boxes and postcards of different sizes were presenting every kind of image. Figurines of objects, animals, humans, aliens, cars, guns, and princess dresses were blending with cuboidal, pyramidal, and sometimes, spherical forms. Beside these, I remember other three-dimensional characters that were free in space and that appeared alive. A huge reproduction of a sailor was placed at the side of a little chick measuring no more than the size of a fingertip. The statuesque toys were made from shiny materials and colours that were captivating my attention.

Every time I used to pass by the shop I was seduced by all of this, and I still think of it with a sense of longing.

*interior/exterior
places that last in time*

Sunday, March 13, 2022 – 4:30 pm

The address leads me to a quiet street in a residential neighbourhood; it is a toy store for kids. The store is closed, it is Sunday, I didn’t think that it would be closed; in Canada everything is open on Sundays. The storefront is full of stuffed toys, there are also some figurines. The street is a one-way and the sidewalks are narrow. I hear some voices, as if people are reuniting in an interior courtyard in the building behind me, or maybe they are on the rooftop. I don’t hear the voices clearly, only a murmur. The building where the store is has four storeys, the fourth is in part a rooftop with trees. The facade of the store is completely glazed. The door is in the centre. There are red panels with green frames at the extremities. On those panels, there are only a few stickers—green, red, blue, yellow—from the store’s celebrations. 37 years in 2022. A yellow basket is left on the doorstep for people to leave books for the children. The lower storey is grey, the upper storeys are beige, the windows and the doors are in wood. Almost all the shutters are closed. Only one window has flowers, pink. They must be fake, it is still winter. A child passes by with his parents, he is on a little bike. He wants to go to the store. “It is closed. We will come back tomorrow.” When we look at the street, there is no horizon, in one direction or the other; buildings are blocking the view. Many people stop to look at the storefront. A woman walks with her son and a stroller. She shoves me, then apologizes. A couple stops by the window and they embrace each other. The girl seems sad. They are not aware that I am watching them. They look at the window for a long time and point at some toys. They left, talking. I cross the street. All that time, I was on the other side of the street. The book basket is empty, only a few flyers. Inside the store, it is dark. The store seems cluttered. I try to find a toy that reminds me of my childhood. A stuffed animal reminds me of my grandmother. Two padlocks are on the door. Will I come back when it will be open? It is 4:56 pm.

*childhood memories
the power of the objects
objects that we accumulate in our home*

Via Brisa – Palazzo Morigi, Ruins of Imperial Palace, Ancient Tower

SONIA ARIENTA

The space chosen for your project is a kind of square nearby Via Brisa, in Milan, delimited by the ruins of the Roman Imperial Palace in one side and by the ancient Palazzo Morigi on the other.

White. For me this space is a white-coloured place. I chose some other words characterizing it: brightness, peaceful, lightness, quietness, silence, sweetness. No particular smells, nor sounds. It is a space where I can feel the silence in the very heart of Milan, especially if I go when it is dark. This is a place recently involved in a requalification and restauration project, in the most ancient side of Milan, as you can infer by the presence of Roman ruin.

traces of the past

In effect, I like to be there because I can feel the old story of the city, the flow of the times while I think to, and I am in, the present. 17th and 18th century palaces, ancient Roman ruins, medieval tower and walls are cohabiting with modern buildings, in a relatively small space.

the feeling of a place

This creates a feeling of a serene and articulated domestic partnership between different historical signs, a sense of equilibrium, of geometric and architectonic peace, despite the historical differences of each element. In my opinion, this is a metaphysical space, suspended over time.

More, when I walk in this place, due to these different kinds of architectural elements, it is like walking on a theatre set. This space has a strong dramatic essence; it represents a theatre which is that of the city, with its layered history. An ideal city, of geometric serenity, equilibrium.

It is a place of reflection, meditation, concentration. I go there when I need to reflect or relax, in the presence of different signs.

When I arrive in this place, I feel like I am connected with the heart of the city, with the history, the past, the present, the future times, in other words, I rest in a timeless dimension. I think that the silence, the white colour of the building and the red of the bricks has an important role in keeping the place so special.

*transformation of the city
heritage
different times
cohabitation
narrative layers*

Sunday, March 13, 2022 – 5:26 pm

During one of my first walks in the city, I came across this square by chance. This time, I arrive by the other side. There is a *caffè* but no one is on the terrace. Maybe it is too cold. The place is quite incongruous. The architectural mix of old vestiges and refined contemporary designs. I have never seen such a thing. There is a tower. Pieces of walls are embedded in the new architecture. Many streets lead to the square. I see a family with a very old woman in a wheelchair. I saw them earlier on my way here. The layout of the square seems quite new. It is organized. There is a lot of concrete and there are a lot of plants. A bit like a repetition of a pattern. The flowers of the magnolia trees are blooming. The vestiges are made of red bricks. It is calm, but I know that not too far away there is a busy street. People are passing by the square but a few are stopping. I see a construction crane. The buildings are embedded, as if they are pieces of a puzzle. The buildings that circled the square are mostly white and grey; there is one yellow, one pink, one orange, and one light blue. Sometimes, but rarely, we hear cars. We hear better the noise of the wind in the few dead leaves left hanging on the bushes. A young boy plays with a ball by himself. He throws the ball against a wall. The street that is alongside of the square is not a busy street, only a few cars have passed. I change places to have a different view. A man is walking with his camera and tripod, he sometimes stops to take a picture. There are explanatory panels about the archeological excavations. A guide is giving a tour in Spanish. I see a flower stand. On a rooftop terrace the orange trees are wrapped for winter. Ro-man vestiges encircled by a metal fence occupy a third of the square. The brick and stone ruins seem to form a kind of agora. The boy from earlier is crying out loud. The vestiges are lower than the level of the street. About four metres lower. Many people stop to look. There are pieces of antique columns. There is a cat and a bird in the ruins. Someone dropped a piece of paper with notes. It is 5:54 pm.

organization of the space

traces of the past

Piazza della Scala / corner of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II

history
architecture

You are in the heart of Milan: in front of you, Palazzo Marino, the Town Hall, a 16th-century building restored at the end of the 19th century by Luca Beltrami (the same architect of the restoration of the Castle Sforzesco, of the Corriere della Sera headquarters, of the Central Synagogue of Milan). On the sides, the Municipal Accounting Office and Gallerie d'Italia, also by Beltrami. Behind you Teatro alla Scala, made by Giuseppe Piermarini in the '70s of the 18th century (he is the same architect of the Villa Reale di Monza). In the middle, the statue of Leonardo da Vinci, surrounded by benches and plants. At the corner you can enter the Galleria, Milan's "good living room."

At the back, via Manzoni, further down you will find the Grand Hotel et de Milan, where Giuseppe Verdi died. In the days of his agony, the Milanese scattered the streets around the hotel with straw, so as not to disturb the "Maestro" with the noise of the carriages and the horses' hooves.

touristic site

Piazza della Scala is pedestrianized and wide; a lot of people pass by, coming from all over the world. It tastes like a washed street. People go on foot, you can hear them speaking different languages, the school groups shouting, the tour groups following their guides, the noise of the wrappers of the snacks of children and tourists, the rubbing of clothes, shopping bags, the noise of trams and cars, the water from the fountain. Near the Galleria, the "ghisa," the police (men and women) in uniform, so called for their elongated hats.

significant
moment

This is the place where I made the first ten artistic interventions for the Green is Gold series, now at Malpensa Airport. Here I feel at home: Milan is a welcoming and listening city, where the relationship with the Institutions is open. Here, me and other women, now friends, often demonstrated peacefully on Fridays with our climate change signs. Inside the Town Hall, the Air and Climate Plan has been recently approved by the women and the men of the City Council: an important step for the health of millions of people, with the objective of cutting CO2 emissions by 45% by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

light

Here my son and I took many walks, stopping on the benches to read our books in the days of springtime and autumn, when the sky is blue and the sun is mild.

daily life / passage of tourists
real city / phantasmagorical city
important moment related to a place

I am sitting on a cold stone bench. I look at the corner of the Palazzo Marino and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. The sun is almost at the place where the two buildings meet. On the Palazzo, there is a banner where it is written "*Verità per Giulio Regeni*" and the drawing of a man, I guess it is him. I wonder why people want the truth for him. On the public square, the benches are disposed in a circle around a monument that I don't see very well because I have my back to it; behind me there is also La Scala. Many people are going to the Galleria, there's less people than the last time I came, a Saturday. A little to my right, there is a big street lamp with four globes, at my left a fountain that flows continually. The water is falling from a kind of *gargouille*, or maybe it is a duck? The light is veiled by the clouds. When I arrived, an old woman was sitting at the other end of the bench, she is gone now and three youngsters are sitting in her place. There are two security guards at a door of the Palazzo. There are three flags on the Palazzo, always the same: European Union, Italy, and Milan. On the building at my right, there are the same flags and another one: a rainbow flag with the word *PACE*. Two women sit by me but they are facing the opera. They are smoking and looking at their phones. There is a little souvenir shop at the entrance of the Galleria. From here, I only see the beginning of the passage but I know that at the end there is the Duomo. I have been here a few times. On the other side of the entrance, there is a hat shop—Borsalino. The street that borders it seems pedestrian. A dog on a leash is passing. A man is speaking on the phone. Another man is transporting a suitcase that seems very heavy. I hear a flute. It is a woman behind me. The woman beside me are gone and a couple have taken their place. By the metal door of the Palazzo I see what seems to be an inner courtyard. I see a lion head sculpted in the stone. A tour guide had deployed an umbrella for the people that follow him. There are almost 50 of them. They speak in English. They stop at the main gate of the Palazzo and all turn toward La Scala. The couple by me speaks French. There are more and more people. It is 12:10 pm.

light

light

touristic site

Via Guglielmo Pepe

SILVIA MANTELLINI FAIETA

I remember the places where I lived, walking by Via Guglielmo Pepe.

home

I remember, indeed, my houses, all the streets, all the lights of the day. I remember that I lived in a lot of places I called home.

seeing far

In every city I lived in, I looked up at the sky. I was looking for human traces.

Here, I see the sky, I see the horizon, I see the train lines. People flow in the train, here I have human traces. But, in this street, the city seems motionless.

I could be anywhere. I could be nowhere.

Nothing moves. Nobody is around.

I can smell the fresh air.

I see the sun like a big dot above me, and, while I feel the sun, fresh air becomes warm. And I feel at home again.

Silence is around me.

Emptiness is my home. Emptiness and silence come inside me, through my eyes, in my body.

I have walked by this street almost every day that I have lived in Milan. Just to see again, for the last minute before I go inside, the light.

And I feel grateful, feel free. And, that I am part of the world I am living in.

*walking in the city
the sky, the view: seeing far/close
path, following a path, a trace
seeing something different from one perspective to another
making a city a home
finding new landmarks*

Friday, March 18, 2022 – 4:58 pm

I arrive by Via Pietro Borsieri. There is no sidewalk, only a pedestrian passage. There is a parking lot at my right. At my left, there are parked cars and a street that is going up. On the low concrete wall of the parking lot there is graffiti. And on the wall of a building that overlooks the parking lot, a mural representing the decomposed face of a woman. I start walking. There is a communal garden in a big yard, with benches and tables, the walls are pink and yellow. The garden is enclosed by metal panels with things written and drawn on them. *Isola Pepe Verde*. In the distance, I see the Cimitero Monumentale. In the middle of the garden, on the other side of the street between the parked cars, there is a space that I guess is used like a terrace during the summer; there are also bushes. In the garden, there is a kid shed. I think I am at the end of the street but it turns. There is a mural of a fish, and one of a parrot. On the wall at the end of the garden there is a bas-relief of an ear. It is written, *Zona Audio Sorvegliata* (something seems erased). A man speaks to me but I don't understand. I tell him, "*Scusi, non parlo italiano.*" He leaves. At the top of the ear, there is a security camera. I arrive at the entrance of the Porta Garibaldi train station. The street takes on another look, there is a lot of graffiti. On the right side, there are apartment buildings with stores at the bottom. On the other side, there are still parked cars. The railway is behind the wall. The direction of the street has changed. I go faster. Near the entrance of the station it smells like urine. There are a lot of wall drawings of La Gioconda and Leonardo. There are four young boys who are sitting on the parked BikeMI bicycles. The street turns again. In this part of the street there are two sidewalks; the street has again changed direction. On the fence of the railway there are metal flower pots with pink and green succulents. I hear the calls from the station. I hear birds and a siren with warning messages coming from a building under construction. On a fence, there is a Ukrainian flag. The street is ending with a pedestrian passage towards Via Farini. I go back the other way. The view is different, many new buildings and the ones with the big trees on all the balconies. It is 5:29 pm.

seeing far

away from home

Piazza Cincinnato

VINCENZO ZANCANA

*organization of
the space*

*importance of
a place*

One of the most important places for me in Milan is certainly Piazza Cincinnato. A square with a triangular shape that is quite unknown but which has allowed me to rediscover lost sensations and emotions. I don't remember how many benches there were but it was the only time I sat alone thinking in a public space. In the middle of the traffic, the smog, and the noises of the busy city, in that triangle-shaped square I felt protected, balanced, and safe in a city that I was afraid would not accept me. I never went back to that square, I don't really know why. Maybe because I didn't even remember it existed, but as soon as you asked me to describe a place that was meaningful to me, it was like having a flashback.

*experience of a space, sensations linked to a place
perspective
memories
affective memory
reminiscence
how time and events affect our souvenirs*

Saturday, March 26, 2022 – 2:32 pm

The streets divide the Piazza into three triangular shapes. There are six streets that converge towards the Piazza. It is a place of passage and circulation. I don't think people stop here—there are no benches—or maybe they do to make a call on one of the three public phones, or to wait for the tram that is passing in the middle. There are a few mature trees and some bushes, almost no grass; it is mostly sandy soil. Scooters are parked. Two little girls are passing, singing a very enthusiastic song, the man who is with them stays neutral, quiet. The buildings surrounding the place are high, five to seven storeys. The sun only reaches the centre of the Piazza. The architectural styles are very different, mostly in stone, nothing really amazing. The buildings that are on the other side of the square, in front of me, are more beautiful. One reminds me of gothic-style church with pale stones, arches, and columns. The other next to it has a kind of trellis pattern that forms lozenges and has a lot of ornamentation. Many people are walking their small white dogs. The dogs are not allowed on the Piazza. Two women wearing summer dresses seem to have chosen clothes that are a little too optimistic for the season; it is hot today, but we are in March. There are other people in winter coats. I think I am hearing a little girl talking, I raise my head, it is a woman in her twenties. The streets that converge to the Piazza have deep perspective; we can see far. I walk around the square. At the end of the street that crosses the square there is a park. There are two hairdressers, two restaurants, one bar, one real estate agency, one cartridge store, one supermarket, one men's clothing store. Men are putting what seems to be entertainment equipment in a truck. I now see the beautiful buildings closely. There is a blue coat abandoned in a bush. A homeless woman drinking Fanta is looking at me. Now I want to drink a Fanta. The trees don't have leaves. The woman lights a cigarette. It is mostly a residential neighbourhood but since it is close to the central station, there are a lot of hotels. I cross the street to read the plaque: *Piazza Cincinnato – dittatore romano V. sec. A.C.* I wonder why they named a piazza after a Roman dictator. It is 2:58 pm.

*organization of
the space*

the use of the space

Via Cappuccini 7

RAFFAELE MORABITO

Pink feathers,
Are my memories,
Like bird wings
And colonialists' skin

*private space/
public space*

An exposed soft secret
Where private becomes public
A gate, obstructed vision,
Through dark fronds I see

Closed, concealed,
Cavernous opening,
And this city, surrounded by buildings,
A pool, mute screams

A hole in the chaos,
I stare, I feel
Detachment becomes a theft
Blue water, red shellfish

Privilege creates beauty
And I just feel so guilty,
But eyes watch for the real
Is this a movie or a dream?

The evil is hidden,
'Cs freedom is a concept,
Flamingos are survivors
Their presence has no reason

The hunter is bright white
His power is to buy
Right and wrong are just words
The beauty's by their side

The hunter is bright white
His power is to buy
Right and wrong are just words
The beauty's by their side

*wildlife in the city
traces of colonialism in the city
construction of a space
phantasmagorical space
the magic of a space
cohabitation of different social classes/privilege*

Saturday, March 26, 2022 – 4:16 pm

I arrive in front of a private yard surrounded by a high black metal fence. The vegetation is very dense and abundant for this time of the year: many big trees with dark leaves, they look like tropical trees. Many people are gathered further away. I look at them from a distance. I hear a fountain. We are in a residential neighbourhood, quite chic. On the other side of the street there is a building with a lot of ornamentation: heads of lions and women. At the corner of the street the building is a mix of Art Deco and '80s architecture. I don't know who is the owner of the courtyard, it is surrounded by buildings. I hear something, a sound that reminds me of a rooster but not quite. And then, I understand what people are looking at. I see them. I am coming closer. About ten flamingos in the centre of Milan. They are all in a pond. They are all standing on one leg, their heads hunched over. They are all a different tint of pink, from very pale to vivid pink. I always heard that they were pink because they eat shrimp. I don't know if that is true. Behind the flamingos, which are not too far from the fence, there is majestic stone building with columns. People are fascinated, almost everyone stops to look. In the garden, there are also pink flowers. I guess it is to match with the birds. Three of them are now on both legs and are walking. In the yard, there is grass and plants that cover the ground. There are sculptures. One of the flamingos is drinking from a littler pond. There are also a few little black birds on the ground. People are really amazed. I am too. I think that each of the people that stopped took a photo. I wonder if the people who are living in the neighbourhood are looking at the flamingos every day, and if the flamingos are staying outside all year long and day and night. Aren't they from the South? Why are they here? They are so graceful, they move forward and then backward, spreading their legs. Like they are dancing a ballet. There are feathers all over the ground. Their legs look like bamboo and they seem to be wearing knee pads. It is my turn to take pictures. It is 4:43 pm.

Ponte Alexander Langer

REBECCA AGNES

Starting from Piazza XXIV Maggio, it is possible to walk along the dock, the former river port of Milan, an area that was last restructured for Expo 2015. I have never seen the port in use; it had already ceased to be such when I started going to Milan in the '90s. The area between Porta Ticinese and the Ponte Alexander Langer, used to be a parking lot, home to the flea market Fiera di Sinigaglia. The market was a meeting place for young (and less young) people too—a must on Saturdays. When I walk along the canal, it is always a little bit like walking into the past. From the square to the bridge, renamed the Nutria Bridge by me, was my classic pandemic walk too—in the months in which it was not possible to leave the city of Milan, due to the restrictions on movement and lockdowns (2020–2021). I look at the other side of the water, and I see one of the last occupied houses in the area (Via Vigevano 2/A, via Gorizia), which hosts an organic and food cooperative shop—vestige of a reality of struggle, anarchy, and acts of solidarity engulfed by the gentrification of the Ticinese district. I see Edicola Radetzky, a place for exhibitions and contemporary art projects in a former newspaper kiosk. I see all the graffiti drawn on the riverbank walls and then covered, erased, and then cyclically redone. In spring I see many ducklings, some swans, but above all and in every season: nutrias.

art in the city

animal

*the city as a refuge
the place of the people in the city
the occupation of a place by the people
animal life in the city*

Wednesday, March 30, 2022 – 5:15 pm

All the other bridges that I saw are in stones, this one is in green metal. Two women are walking behind me: “I don’t like summer, I like the sun but not the heat.” There are a few boats: one little sailboat and motorboats. I came here before. A few months ago. It was my birthday, a Saturday, there were so (too) many people. Today it is quiet, it is raining a bit, there are a few people on the dock, most of them are without an umbrella. We are hearing the circulation of traffic in the street behind without seeing it. There are a few apartment buildings around, of six to eight storeys. The boats are all in front of the Marina Militare. A man is standing on a plastic raft paddling with one paddle, he clings to the fence to get closer to the dock and he ties up his raft. The Italian flag—but with some kind of ornament on it—is floating in the wind. I hear a duck. I raise my eyes, it is a male, the female joins him. Three women are traversing the bridge, they stop and look around. A dog barks. They continue on their way. There is a lot of graffiti on the brick walls. On the other side, there is the Mojito café. It is closed. On my side, there are also two other stands, also closed. Further from where I arrived, there are two bars. Close to me, there is a sculpture on the ground, like a concrete carpet that is floating. A young woman is talking to her mother on the phone with a big beer in one hand. The canal seems to end after the bridge, or at least it is no longer visible. It is where the water flows. I stand up to cross the bridge. There are eleven steps. From the bridge, we can see the street. The bridge vibrates under the footsteps of the walkers. The water is translucent, not too much trash. There are padlocks, like on the bridges of Paris. A young boy puts a paddle board in the water with the help of the man that was on the raft earlier. And another one. I am now on the other side of the canal. There is construction in the street, large blocks of stone are piled up. It is raining a bit. I see the two boys paddling in the cold water. It is 5:43 pm.

presence

animal

art in the city

Autostazione Milano Lampugnano

CARLO GALLI

I have a kind of image locked on one specific moment like it would be a photograph in my soul.
I connect this place with a lovely memory full of good tension and emotions. Even if I was there to see someone special, the area was busy and noisy. I went to the bus station to pick up a person who was visiting me.
I feel a kind of sense of pleasure because it's related to a pleasant moment in my life.
I believe that places like bus and train stations or airports have a unique and energetic atmosphere concerning the expectations of life. While you meet or leave somebody, your visual scenario changes as well.
Before a trip, I feel a kind of tension that I release once the vehicle is moving. To me, travel is a kind of yoga for my spirit.

*travel
movement
places of passage
connexion of a place with a good memory/a vague souvenir
affective space*

Friday, April 1, 2022 – 3:09 pm

I am arriving from the metro, the bus station is directly outside. I sit on a bench to get an overview. It is a small station, I see only ten stops, I don't see where the buses are going. Four young German guys are close to me. There are buses from French and from Italian companies. A few years ago, I took a bus from Milan to Lyon, maybe it left from here. I don't remember clearly. There are only a few people waiting. At my right, there are tents—“*Protezione civile*” (blue, where there are suitcases) and “Emergency” (white, where women are sited at a table)—and a trailer (clinica mobile gratuita). I think “Welcome” is written in Ukrainian, English, and Italian. The bus station is surrounded by an office building, a parking lot, and a wall on which there is a lot of graffiti. Behind me, there is a young woman with many bags, another woman joins her and they speak English with an accent from the UK. A BlaBlaCar arrives, a woman gets out and runs to catch another bus. The German guys are leaving to catch their bus. The station is made of pale red bricks. I see what seems to be the roof of a big stadium. There are also a few trees, and wild flowers on the ground. I am going inside. On my way, I see the arrivals and departures board: Napoli, Roma, Aosta, Clermont-Ferrand, Ginevra, Borino, Parigi, Torino, Venezia. The interior is very small and dirty. There is only the ticket office and a bar. I get out on the other side. There are benches and blooming trees. In front of me a tree is split in two. A young woman who seems to be travelling alone is sitting in the grass on a yoga mat, she puts on her beanie and lights a cigarette, she is barefoot. In front of the station there is a *caffè* in a trailer and a parking lot with caravans. There are a lot of pigeons. Two young French women sit in front of me, they each take their picture in front of the blooming trees, with the other girl in the background. They are looking for the Museo Nazionale Scienza on Google Maps and ask one another if they have time to go. At my left, an English couple. The sun breaks through the clouds. It is 3:34 pm.

Parcheggio ATM Lampugnano

ELEONORA ROARO

Parcheggio ATM Lampugnano was the closest one (and cheapest) to the motorway's exit for people coming from the Autostrada dei Laghi, like myself when I was a child and a teenager. It was the first place of the city I used to see coming to Milano from Lago Maggiore by car, a VW Passat. As the parking garage was the closest, it was the most comfortable for people not used to driving in the city. I remember going there with my mother and my grandmother, more rarely with my aunt, but always with a female companion. They used to park outdoors, as they considered it safer, and we did everything quite in a rush, just to avoid potential danger: I have these memories of my mother and my grandmother waiting in the car, while my mother was paying with the automatic machine, and then run back to us. I remember multi-level parking, with a low ceiling, hence quite claustrophobic, with light-green details. A rotten odor coming from the metro line 1 ("la rossa"), which I think was particular to the old metro cars as they are very different from today's: a strong memory that I have from the '90s. An outdoor newsstand where I always peaked looking for my favorite comics. A few homeless people lying on the floor. We bought the tickets for the metro there, and my mother always said to me, "Please remember to look for Molino Dorino when we'll come back." Molino Dorino was the final destination of line 1 at that time. The rest of the city, for me, was just names of the metro stops that I read on the metro: Lampugnano, QT8, Lotto Fiera, Amendola, Buonarroti, Pagano, Conciliazione, Cadorna, Cairoli, Cordusio, Duomo. Many years later, I moved to Milano and all these places became more familiar. But I like to think of Lampugnano as a non-place, an uncomfortable one, but somewhat familiar.

unpleasant space

place of a passage

*people we associate with a place
living in the city/passing by
remembering little details
childhood memories*

Friday, April 1, 2022 – 3:37 pm

I saw the parking lot from the bus station; it is really close to it and to the metro. A four storey parking lot. I am already on the street because I saw that the address is on this street, so I go around to find the pedestrian entrance. The parking lot is surrounded by a white metal fence with bushes. A lizard scurries out of it. The street is a busy one, there are two buses that are waiting. On the other side of the street there is a vacant lot and a basketball court. I arrive at the intersection of a really big street, almost a highway. There is a pizzeria. It is a pretty hostile environment when you are not in a car. I go left and find another entrance for cars. There is a part of the parking lot that is outside of the building; there are a few trees, some of them are dead. One of the exits is a tunnel that goes under the big road. On the other side of the street there is a park. Many cars are entering. A man is in the parking lot with his dog. There are four high poles, each with a kind of geodesic dome at the top. I guess they are lights. It makes me think of the geodesic domes of Buckminster Fuller. We have one in Montreal. There are also three other poles without any dome at the top. I guess they fell. I am going back toward the bus station to find the pedestrian entrance. Next to the pizzeria there is a soccer field. At the corner, an Armani Exchange billboard. I see the gate where you pay to exit, there is no employee, only blue machines and barriers, everything is automatic. The parking lot is in bricks with pale green metal. The pedestrian entrance is on this side. "Orario parcheggio Feriali 5:30/1:00, Festivi 6:00/1:00." There is also an entrance for the cars and a taxi stop. The parking lot is not full, but there's a lot of cars. I have not seen anyone going in or out by foot yet and as I am thinking that, a young man with a puffy yellow jacket exits. Then, two women and the man with the dog. There is a woman who is speaking to no one very loudly near the metro. An empty plastic bottle rolls with the wind. It is 4:03 pm.

unpleasant space

Via Saponaro 36, the square without a name

LUCIA CRISTIANI

A small square in the middle of the "Torri Bianche" in Gratosoglio.

Tall skyscrapers, in concrete and light grey plaster.

A square, a place outside the centre, on the border of Milan, where what should disappear, reappears.

A lived-in and abandoned place.

A square without a name.

They should have called it "Piazza Allegria," but for the moment this name has been rejected by the neighbourhood.

And so it remains there, the nameless square with its skyscrapers.

encounter

This square has often been my meeting place when leaving for Sarajevo.

From that perspective, with the vans parked under the skyscrapers, I felt as if I had already arrived under the great buildings of Yugoslavia's Brutalist architecture.

Geographical distance often shrinks in the suburbs, where more similarities than differences emerge, where life manifests the essential.

*the names of the places
empty space/abandoned space/appropriation of the space
parts of the city that look like other cities
suburbs
the city as a place of encounter
community*

Wednesday, April 6, 2022 – 11:11 am

I have never been that far to the south of the city. The square is surrounded by residential buildings of sixteen storeys (seventeen if you count the ground floor). In the square, there are benches, trees in big plastic bins, ping-pong tables and picnic tables. An old man and an old woman are sitting and looking at the construction workers on one of the buildings. One side of the building is covered with scaffolding and blue tarpaulins. There are construction materials on the ground surrounded by a metal fence. At my right, there is a one-storey building with closed gates on which an eagle is painted. On the ground floor of the building in front of me there is the Plaza cafe that seems open but where there is little activity. A mini-market is located next door, it is closed. At my left, there is a two-storey yellow building surrounded by big trees and a fence. A man and a woman are leaving. The woman has a cane. The man pulls a cart. A crow caws. Since I arrived, six or seven people have passed. There is an odour of meat that is cooking, but I cannot distinguish the subtleties. A man on the scaffolding screws into a post and it makes an unpleasant sound. I see a group of people, I walk towards them. There are six men and two women, three of whom are in wheelchairs. They are talking and they applaud themselves. There is a football field. Two people coming from the chapel are joining the group. The place really seems to be a meeting point. I can imagine the kids at night or on the weekends. It seems to create a community. On the ground floor of the same building there is another door: *Lo Sorigno*. I wonder what kind of place it is, it doesn't look like a shop. A child and a man come running. I walk around the building, the square continues but it is a lot more quiet. I see a bike rack and big bins for recycling under a roof. Surprisingly, the entrance of the building is on that side, hidden in a dark corner. There is a primary school in the back of the building: Scuola primaria Baroni. The same three flags, again: European Union, Italy and Milan. The buildings are all made of white/grey concrete. The group dispersed. It is 11:39 am.

daily life

encounter

daily life

Parco Forlanini

seeing far

The sky is always clear at Parco Forlanini. I never go to the park in bad weather or when it's raining after all. This aspect makes the atmosphere at the park somehow surreal, as it tends to be experienced in pleasant climatic moments. It is a bit like meeting people who are always well dressed in suits: you can't really say that you deeply know them. Parco Forlanini is close to Idroscalo and the Milan Linate Airport, in the immediate outskirts of Milan. Birds chirpings are mixed with sounds from aircraft landing or taking off. The trajectories of their shadows merge together in a suggestive contemporary sound landscape. After all, they are both flying entities caught in the act of exploring the sky. Who knows where those people are going. Who knows if those birds are migrating or if they are going to get food. Their flights take me to other places, to other environments. These hybrid entities poised between nature and artifice find their maximum expression in the lake, home to frogs and other animals. Tired young couples lie down on the edge of the lake to sunbathe. It is funny how humanity tries to deceive its own perceptual capacity by simulating situations that almost always end up being pleasant and comforting although the setting is obviously full of fiction. There is nothing true in that lake, it was designed from scratch. Yet it created a landscape, an ecosystem that works in its own way. The cars that can be seen on the Viale Forlanini help maintain a certain degree of connection with reality, preventing you from experiencing an act of true escape from the city and its problems. For me, the park is a moment of purification. I basically go there after stressful or tense situations. It is a place for calming my nerves. For this reason, I find it comforting and helpful to perceive it in its best condition. Sometimes I wonder about what happens at Parco Forlanini on an ordinary winter night.

construction of the space

*constructed and natural landscapes
how the human transforms their environment
adaptation to a place
nature in the city*

Sunday, April 10, 2022 – 4:26 pm

I walked around the park before setting down to write. I have never been so far in the east of the city before, I took two buses to get here. There are many people in the park, but I thought it would be more crowded because it is Sunday afternoon and it is Milan; there are always a lot of people everywhere, especially during the weekend. It is much quieter here than in the city's centre. There are many families that walk around, groups of friends are having a picnic. By the way I arrived there is a golf course. Then, football and baseball fields. There is a baseball game going on, spectators in the stands. There are also ping-pong tables and people playing ball; sometimes they have installed a volleyball net. There is a big pond with weeping willows all around. In the distance, we see the mountains. This is one of my favourite things in Milan, turning my head and seeing a mountain at the end of a street or in park. Many people are resting and sunbathing around the pond. I saw two parking lots at the ends of the park. I think that most of the people are coming here by car or by bike. I don't think this is a neighbourhood park. Depending on the direction of the wind, we can here the highway and sometimes we see the cars passing between the trees. We are close to the airport, but there aren't too many planes in the sky. Most of the trees are mature, but at two places hundreds of trees have just been planted; they are still surrounded by a plastic cylinder that ensures their proper growth. Very close to one of those spots, there is a site that seems private, with a house and some sheds. The site is surrounded by a fence, with a sign that says "Beware of the Dog." I think there are other animals; I hear the sound of a living creature, a kind of bird maybe. I can't tell. The sky is blue today, the view is clear. At my left, there are blooming trees, apple trees maybe. A bee is buzzing around me. At my right, a little girl is playing alone in the grass, she came on her pink bike, her family is not too far. A stream runs through the park. I hear the wind in the tree leaves and the steps of a dog. It is 4:54 pm.

*use of the space**seeing far**construction of the space**seeing far*

Cimitero Monumentale

Remembering the Cimitero Monumentale, the first image that materializes in my mind is the profile of its entrance, clean and majestic, which stands out against the sky. In a city so dense with tall buildings, this place manages to be surrounded by a large open space and creates a dialogue with the light that changes throughout the day.

light

I remember a singular contrast between the external and internal sounds of the cemetery: the constant traffic noise outside, before crossing the high gates, and the silence inside. In the garden area the sounds of the city are muffled and give way to the chirping of the birds that inhabit it and that change according to the season.

*the noise**the calm in the city*

Among these are the crows, which inhabit the city and the trees surrounding the cemetery, with their cawing binding the outside and the inside of the place.

Smells come to mind, that of damp and closed inside the building, the cooler but still humid scent in the garden. The light also changes, accompanying you in the different spaces of the cemetery. Twilight, sunlight, and artificial light alternate, until you reach the large room in the upper part, where the windows let the sun's rays filter through.

light

Unlike many other cemeteries, the colour of many of its trees changes according to the season. I have the memory of it in the hot and sunny summer season. Although it is a place that I particularly like in Milan, I haven't been going there for a long time.

It is as if I still had to observe it in its entirety, still grasp an infinity of details and glimpses. Yet this space had come into contact with me even before I saw it. Without my knowing it, it would have become one of the places I would most associate with a radical change in my life.

A historical place, unusual in the context in which it is located, a unique space of the city, as well as one of its infinite facets.

*effect of architecture
places of peace and calm in the city
how do we remember places with our senses
the presence of non-humans
remembering the sound, the light*

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 – 10:46 am

It is the second time that I cross the gate of the *cimitero*, although I pass in front of it almost every day. The entrance is in gravel, there is no access control. I am sitting on one of the twelve concrete benches that face the gigantic main building of the cemetery. At the centre of it, there is a chapel, the Famedio, with wings that lead to gravestones and columbariums. The building is made of white/grey stones with brown accents. There are several tourists. On each side of the main staircase, there is a fountain and a landscaping arrangement with flowers. Behind me, there is a large public square with flower stands and a bar. I enter the cemetery through the arches under the building, three of which are condemned and stabilized with wood structures. Inside the columbariums it is cold. There are little metal staircases to reach the compartments where the urns are kept. I look at the map of the cemetery and see that it was built in 1862 by the architect Carlo Maciachini. I cross under the arches. Rispetto e silenzio. I climb the stairs to go to the chapel and stop to look at the view. On that side, there are little enclaves with golden mosaics that are very pretty. The interior is splendid with its starry sky. In the centre, the gravestone of Alessandro Manzoni. The ornamentation of the ceiling reminds me of oriental patterns. On the walls are the names of important citizens. Cittadini illustri benemeriti e distinti nella storia patria. On one side there is the agitated street, on the other the silence of the dead. A broom and a dustpan are placed near the door. I wonder how many people are here. On many slabs of the columbariums there are orange stickers. "Urgente. Concessione scaduta contatarre l'ufficio del cimitero". On the compartment where the urns are kept, there is a photograph of the dead and often a vase that is integrated with the stone. The sun enters by the openings of the architecture. I read "Pax Ricotta" and it makes me smile. A woman installs fresh flowers in the showcase of that gravestone, which takes up all the wall. It looks like a display case of a store, you need a key to open it, there are pictures and vases. Teresina Megano 14/01/1935–03/03/2017. Her mother I guess. I leave her to her remembrance. It is 11:16 am.

*the calm in the city**the noise**light*

Cimitero Monumentale

daily life

One of the first places I visited here in Milan was the Cimitero Monumentale. A place that would later become a regular presence in my days. Since the cemetery is halfway between my home and my studio at Viafarini, I could define it as the epicentre of my entire residency. Every day I pass by, along the same route. At least two or three times a week I happen to see a car that is about to take the dead person to the place where they will spend the rest of their life. And I keep walking, I breathe a sigh of relief, I go on my way, I cry, and only at the end, I build an idea. Today, Saturday, April 9, 2022, I stayed in the cemetery for almost two hours, repeatedly listening to the same song. I would like an excerpt from this passage to appear on my tombstone. Those who know me well will know which phrase to choose. The song is "Winter" by Fabrizio De André, and I would like to finish this short confession with the words of this immense poet.

habit

Sale la nebbia sui prati bianchi
come un cipresso nei composanti.
Un campanile che non sembra vero
segna il confine fra la terra e il cielo.

Ma tu che vai ma tu rimani,
vedrai la neve se ne andrà domani,
rifiioriranno le gioie passate,
col vento caldo di un'altra estate.

Anche la luce sembra morire
nell'ombra incerta di un divenire,
dove anche l'alba diventa sera
e i volti sembrano teschi di cera.

Ma tu che vai ma tu rimani,
anche la neve morirà domani,
l'amore ancora ci passerà vicino
nella stagione del biancospino.

La terra stanca sotto la neve
dorme il silenzio di un sonno greve.
L'inverno raccoglie la sua fatica,
di mille secoli da un'alba antica

Ma tu che stai perché rimani?
Un altro inverno tornerà domani.
Cadrà altra neve a consolare i campi,
cadrà altra neve sui composanti

*The fog rises over the white meadows
like a cypress in the cemetery.
A bell tower that doesn't seem real
marks the boundary between the earth and
the sky.*

*But you who go but you stay,
you will see the snow will go away tomorrow,
past joys will blossom again,
with the hot wind of another summer.*

*The light also seems to die
in the uncertain shadow of a becoming,
where even the dawn becomes evening
and the faces look like wax skulls.*

*But you who go but you stay,
even the snow will die tomorrow,
love will still pass us by
in the hawthorn season.*

*The tired earth under the snow
sleeps the silence of a heavy sleep.
Winter gathers its fatigue,
of a thousand centuries from an ancient dawn*

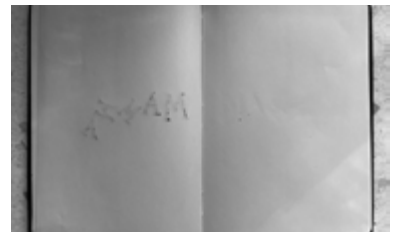
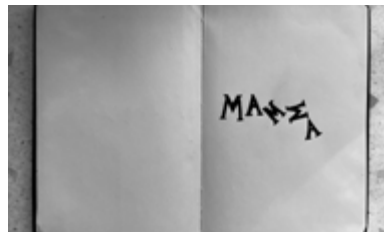
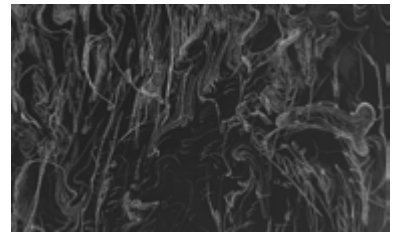
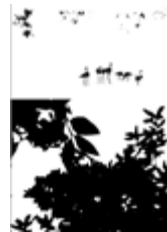
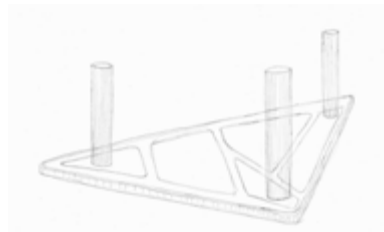
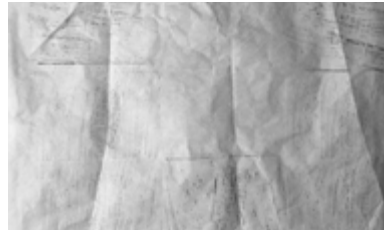
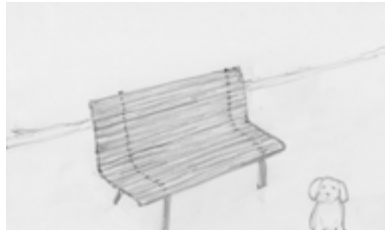
*But who are you why are you staying?
Another winter will return tomorrow.
More snow will fall to console the fields,
more snow will fall on the graveyards*

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 – 11:17 am

I start my visit of the cimitero by the east side. Last time, I entered by the west side. I remember: a pyramid, the Tower of Babel, a few contemporary gravestones, many statues of woman crying, a black cat, big trees, and a broken gravestone with the picture of its occupant that has fallen. I only hear the birds. At some places, people have planted trees or bushes directly on the graves. There are a few spots that are free, but not so many. The most ostentatious monuments are located in the middle, for the most part they are chapels and temples. A woman is driving by, too fast. A man is filling a watering can. The cleaning people are picking up the trash. A woman is cleaning a grave with fervour with a brush and many kinds of cleaning products. She is wearing headphones and has taken off her coat. There are a lot of statues of La Pietà. There is a monument that is bigger than all the others: Foglia, three big grey arches with Christ on the cross. I wonder if there is a height limit for the monument. All the names that I see are Italian, no traces of any immigration. At the back, there is the crematorium. I had a strange feeling the first time I went there. It is a really cold place and I don't want to enter again. I prefer to stay outside, where it is calming. A few doors of the mausoleum are slightly open, as if they don't want to let the dead suffocate or be alone. A grey cat is coming towards me. I see a grave with Japanese characters, a yin-yang symbol and a cat. Sometimes there are tombs that are broken and access to them is blocked by a white and red ribbon. There is a cement mixer charging by a generator. I guess it is being used to repair a tomb or to fix a headstone. At the end of an alley, I see a big sculpture of The Last Supper, it is the grave of Davide Campari. I wonder if it is the Campari liquor guy? And the inscription: SIBI ET SVIS A lizard runs on a tomb. Many groups of tourists converge at the exit. I hear one of the guides speaking in German. A woman enters with a big bouquet of light green hydrangeas. It is 11:55 am.

*daily life**feelings
sensations**ephemeral*

*the presence of a place
cycle of life
the aura of a place
events linked to a place
time and people that are passing
ephemeral aspect of a city*



ricordi di spazio espaces de passage - Milan

A project by Catherine Barnabé

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