

# UC Berkeley

## Places

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An Italian Voyage

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*based on material*  
*by Pierluigi Nicolini*

The Triennale di Milano is a periodic cultural event staging temporary discursive settings on culture, social meaning, and form. It is a permanent catalyst for discussions and interventions; it is “a place about places.” The Triennale, housed in the Palazzo dell’Arte, focuses on architecture, design, decorative, and industrial art. This public organization was set up over 50 years ago with the aim of providing opportunities for cultural and aesthetic reflection and for research and new projects on the country, the city, the home, and the objects that surround us.

The coming exhibition is part of a larger cycle of events about the future of urban society. The cycle began in 1986 with two exhibitions on the home (*Il Progetto Domestico*) and the workplace (*Il Luogo del Lavoro*). It was followed in 1987 with an exhibition on the theme of imagined cities (*Le Città Immaginate*), where an imaginary journey through Italy provided the conceptual framework for sponsored urban design projects.

The last exhibition, the culminating event of the cycle, is organized for September 1988 on the theme *World Cities and the Future of the Metropolises*. With this international endeavor, the Triennale seeks to shed some light on current trends in urban environment

and, more specifically, on the future of the metropolis.

As the organizers observed: “Legends and utopias, dreams and philosophies for metropolises have, during the last decades, undergone radical rethinking or even collapsed totally, following changes in often contradictory growth patterns in society and science. Nevertheless, the conviction that there is a strict link between civilisation and the urban phenomenon has remained.”<sup>1</sup>

### Nine Projects for Nine Cities

In the 1987 exhibition *Le Città Immaginate*, the presentation of urban design proposals was a rehearsal for the exhibition to come. The Triennale saw the Italian city as a laboratory for solving current urban problems. Nine cities were chosen to be sites for architectural projects, within certain physical development frameworks.

In the section entitled “A Journey Through Italy,” the visitor was assisted in understanding the complex history of urban visions in each city and their main problems today. This section was “not an architectural treatise, not an encyclopedia of solutions, but journey as a metaphor for knowledge, for knowledge with its hazards and adventures.”<sup>2</sup>

“The projects of the 17th

Triennale were set in a new space: in the middle of that inner-outer city duality, and even physically they occupied the fabric of these two city areas. . . . The general aim is a rethinking of the city through a logic that accepts its fragmentation and the composite nature of its various parts.”<sup>3</sup> “If we were to accept as obvious the fact that architecture is by its very nature discontinuous and fragmentary, we would then no longer need fear either the presence of conventions or even read the models of the past.”<sup>4</sup>

The Triennale organizers have involved public administrations and rallied corporate and public support, to invite proposals by several international teams for each city. In each case, large-scale architectural interventions were sought to anchor general structuring principles based largely on transportation by road, rail, and water.

Six responses from the nine city contexts have been chosen here to summarily represent the main design concept in operation.

### Notes

- 1 *World Cities and the Future of the Metropolises*, Triennale di Milano (catalogue, 1987), p. viii.
- 2 Pierluigi Nicolini, “Nine projects for nine Italian cities” (unpublished manuscript, 1988), p. 4.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

## Rome

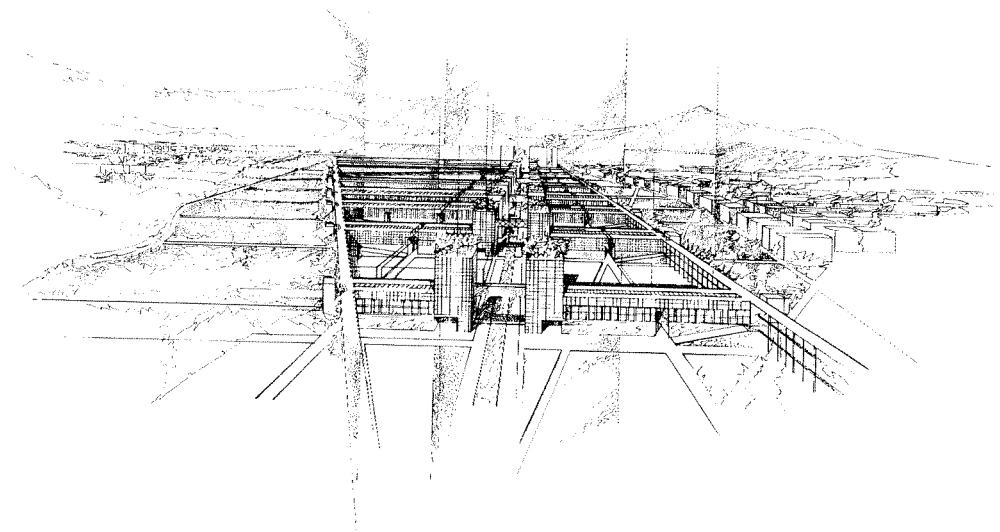
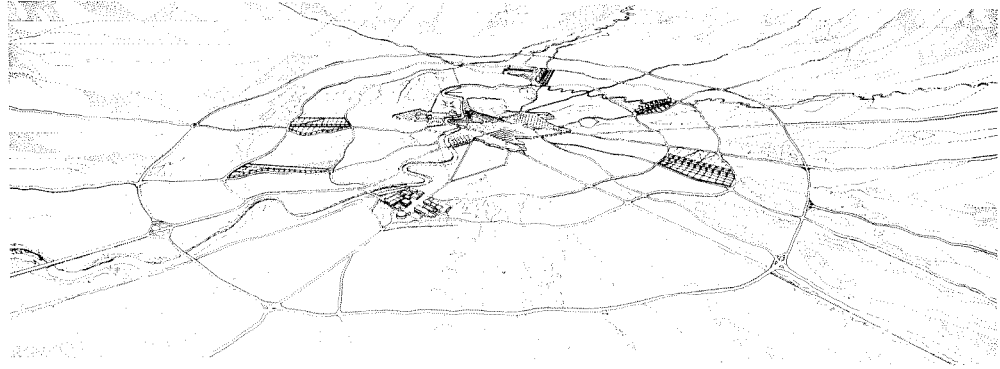
### Problem

The tension between tradition and innovation continues to weigh on the planning for today and for future city needs.

Rome's physical development plan is organized into a radial-concentric pattern. "It aims to complete the existing road grid with limited operations so as to produce three ring-roads and complete the radial-concentric scheme that already exists." At the meeting points of the main radial access roads with the first ring-roads, the sites of five new projects are planned. Together with the Mussolinian "new Rome" (EUR), and the city's historic center, these five projects compose another "Seven Romes," in reference to the seven hills of the Roman Republic.

### Project

The Administrative Center of Centocello, by Franco Purini and his team. The main axis of historic Rome, Via del Corso, is taken as a model and transposed into the area of the former airport of Centocello. This urban alliteration is meant to structure this administrative center as a restoring of the "normal" city, to contribute to the continuity of the Roman *genius loci*.



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1 "Seven Romes," by Franco Purini. Project drawing for the ring-road and the five new centers.

2 Administrative Center for Centocello, by Franco Purini. Bird's-eye view of the project for a new administrative center.

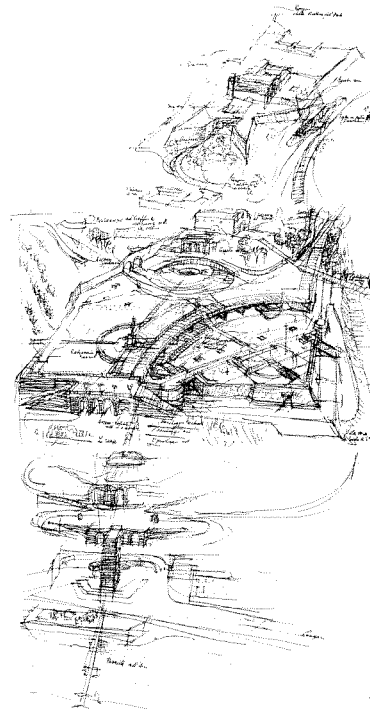
## Florence

### Problem

In 1870, the city of Florence was subjected to an incomplete expansion plan. "The avenues so created still form an emphatic marker for the boundary between the city centre and the beginnings of the outer city, and together they form the most important ring-road for the traffic." The design objective was to retrieve a sense of the city, and of its avenues now reduced to parking areas.

### Project

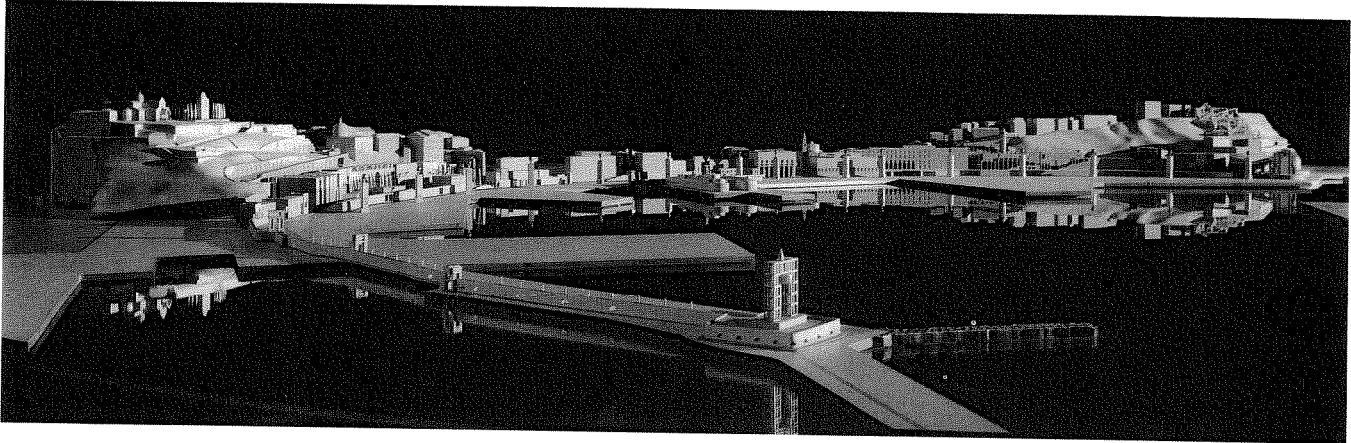
The Piazzale Michelangelo by Robert Maestro and Walter Di Salvo. This proposal transforms the Piazzale Michelangelo by means of a Michelangelesque matrix. This small piazza is the primary spatial icon of Florence and is a center for mass tourism. The idea was to redesign the place with practical and aesthetic considerations: to preserve and reorganize the piazza, to enhance its presence in, and communication with, the city.



**1 Project areas**, by Adolfo Natalini. Plan of the various sites located along the ring-road.

**2 Piazza Michelangelo**, by Roberto Maestro and Walter Di Salvo.

## Ancona

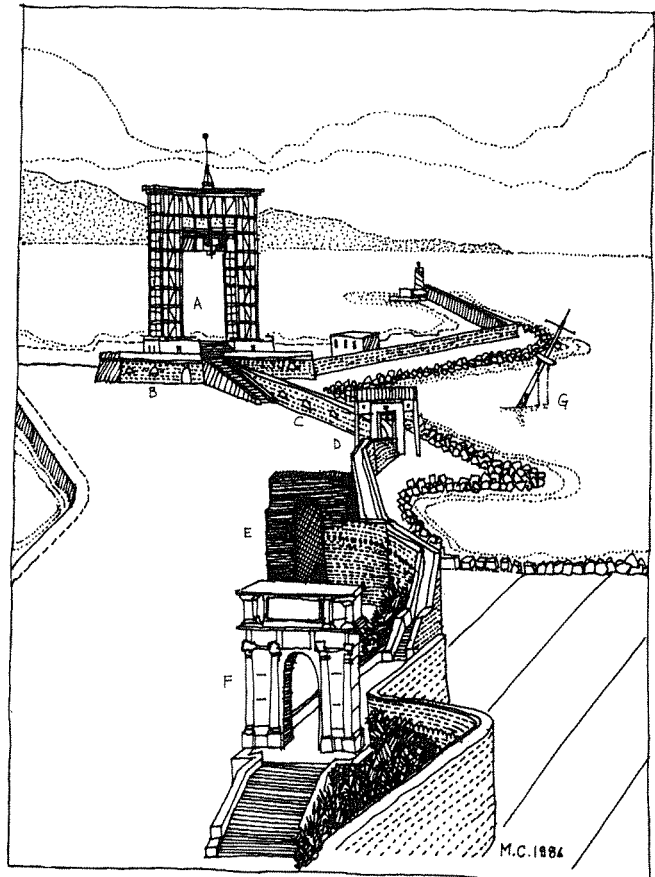


### Problem

The site is set along the boundary between the built-up area of the city and the extensive docks. The great arc of the waterfront is divided into eight project sites that form a sequence touching on various points to the city. The various projects originated from a series of considerations: the city as a collective construct and its ceaseless re-formation through works and projects; the dichotomy between the “unitary” and the “fragmentary” theory of form; the revision of the comprehensive plan as a “global concept.”

### Project

The monumental north pier, by Massimo Cartaginese, Emilio D’Alessio, and Fabio Pandolfi. The northern end of the site is shaped by the linear development of its fortification over the centuries. The corridor thus created is a clear metaphor of the passage of time. The proposal for the site responds to this temporal aspect with two monumental arches serving a dual role: they freeze time, and they prefigure its overcoming.



1 Ancona waterfront model, including the different design projects.

2 North pier project, by Massimo Cartaginese, Emilio D’Alessio, Fabio Pandolfi.

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## Palermo

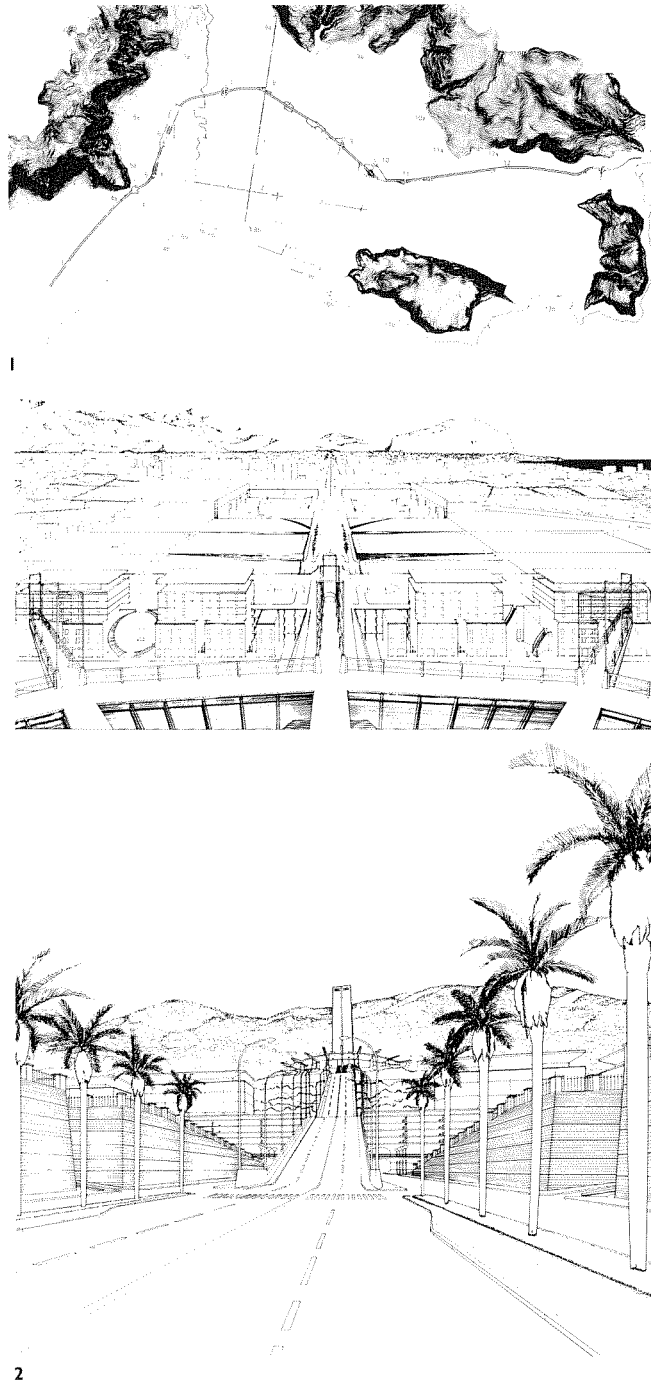
### Problem

Over the last 40 years, Palermo's population has tripled and its surface area multiplied by a factor of 10. The great axial road shuttling traffic to and from the two regional highways (Messina and Trapani) is a thoroughfare 20 kilometers long. It divides the city into two markedly different sections: a more compact and clearly defined urban fabric on one side, and a more chaotic development on the other. This project attempts to give this "express-road" the value of a great urban avenue, in keeping with the new role of the regional capital.

The design of new nodal points is intended to reinforce the ring-road's urban facilities and generate reference points for the parts of the urban fabric that still have to be completed. The elements constituting the new grammar of the ring-road—town gates, bridges, terraces, etc.—will appear as a sequence of links connecting the panoramic viewing places along the hillsides with the coast.

### Project

A belvedere, by Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti. It seeks to plant a "strong sign in the logic of the city's history, by appropriating technologically and functionally more advanced ingredients, devoid of whatever moralistic or messianic content."



1 The project area, by Pasquale Culotta.

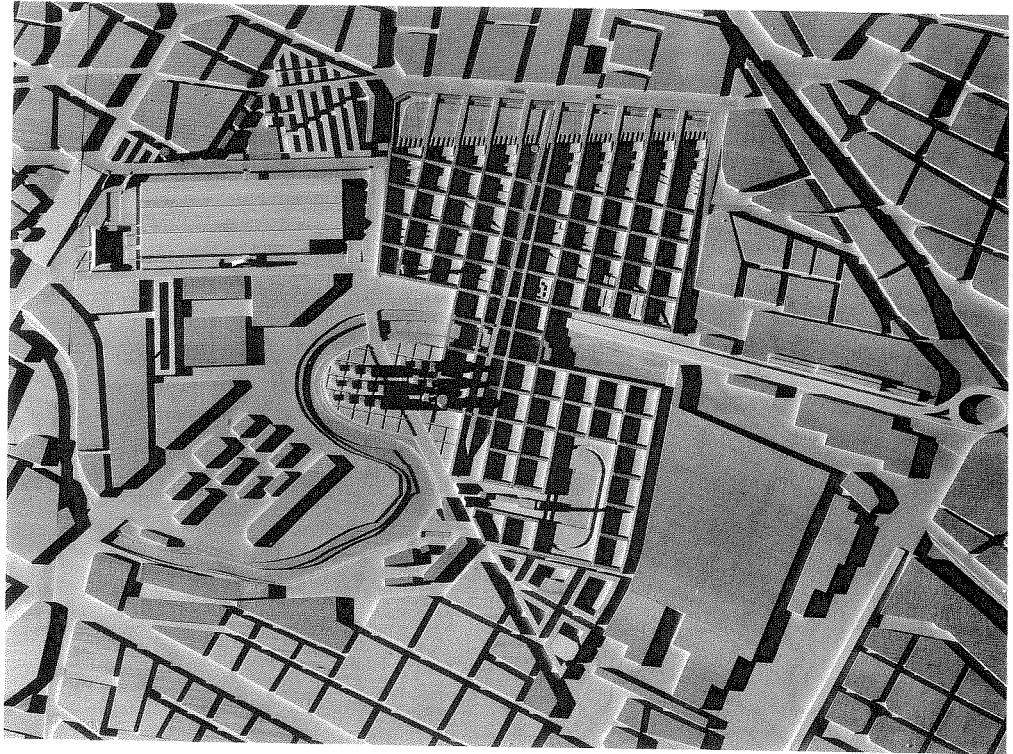
2 Belvedere of the Crown of Palermo, by Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti.

## Torino

### Problem

A large abandoned site of Turin is occupied by various large factories. The site, which is divided by the river Dora, will soon be traversed by a new transit rail system and is expected to be converted to serve new uses. It is the perfect example to carry on the debate over the future townscape of an industrial city like Turin.

“Without adhering to the hypotheses of the futurists which announce the end of the industrial age and the beginning of a new ‘immaterial’ epoch in which electronic communications will replace the old physical reality of the world, we cannot overlook the impacts of the new communication technologies on the facilities of social exchange and their location. The key word used to define this tendency is ‘decentralization,’ a word which can be interpreted in various ways.”



### Project

Upside-Down-City, by J. P. Kleihues.

Upside-Down-City	Privato minacciato	Città-Capovolta	Private threat
Magli	Ferro	Stitches	Iron
Mica	Olio	Mica	Oil
Verderame	Sale	Verdigris	Salt
Frese	Freddo, sudore e sangue	Frese	Cold, sweat and blood
10 secondi	Terra zuppa	10 seconds	Soaked ground
100 ore	No terra quotidiana	100 hours	No daily world
1000 giorni	No sensi affrettati	1000 days	No rushed feelings
Notti	No oblio	Nights	No oblivion
Luce di fuoco	Upside down: Vita è una volta e sempre	Lights of fire	Sottosopra: Life is once and for all
Lucente		Shining	

Upside-Down-City, by Joseph Paul Kleihues.

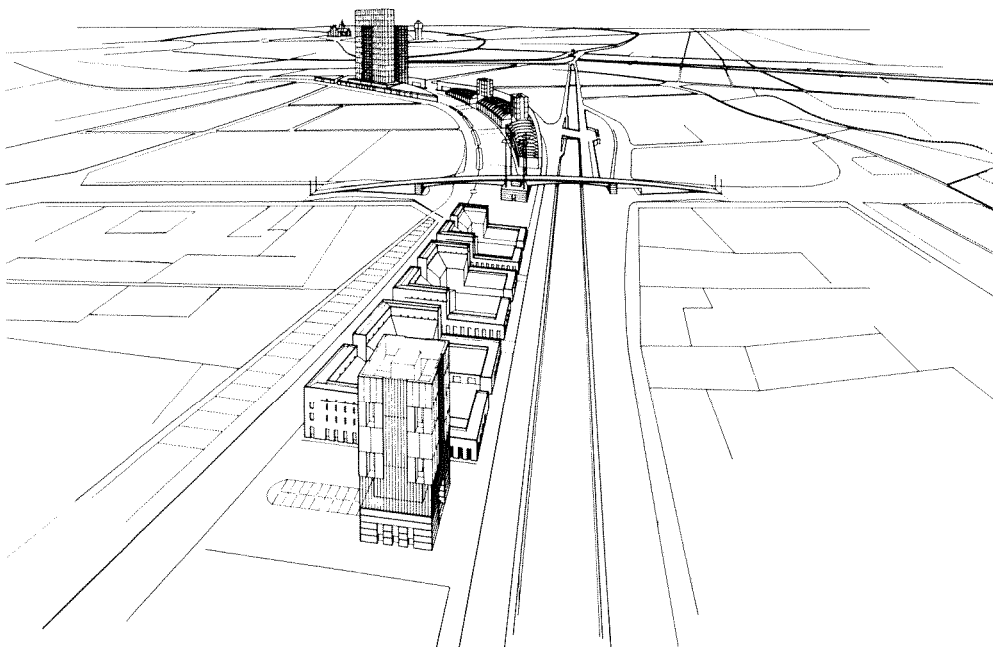
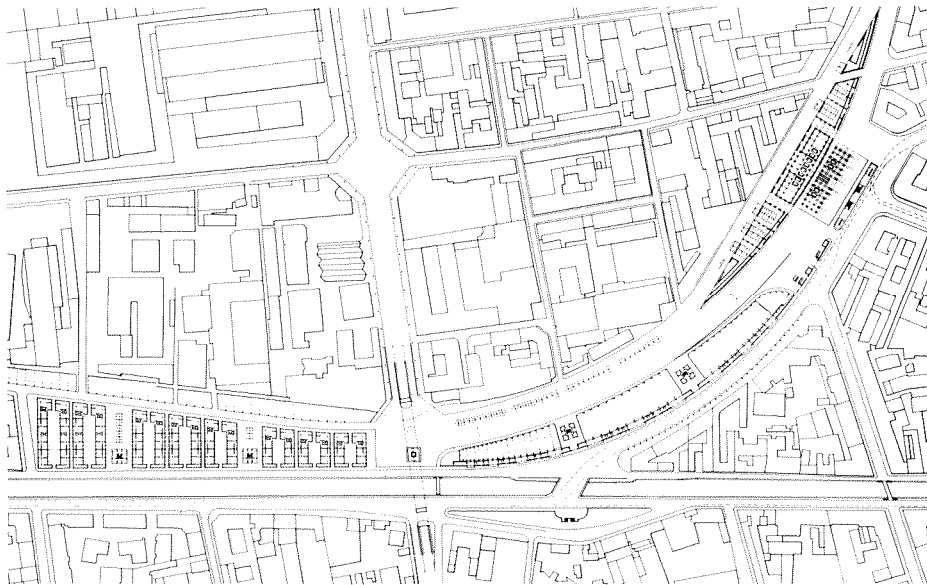
## Milano

### Problem

The string of projects focuses on “the largest obsolete structures of the industrial age, the belt of railways which encloses the inner part of the city, and which literally replaced the fortified town walls with their system of passenger and freight stations and correlated industrial areas.” The changes now taking place in this rail system have freed an impressive sequence of central sites which are part and parcel of the city’s morphology. The sites are linked in a ring pattern, onto which abut the derelict spaces of the freight and passenger stations located near the ancient city gates.

### Project

Porta Genova, by Pierluigi Nicolini. Avoiding an impossible and maybe unnecessary fusion between the railway space and the existing city fabric, the project maintains its proper character by keeping the traces of the canal and the railway.



2

1 Plan for Porta Genova, by Pierluigi Nicolini.

2 Bird's-eye view of the project area, by Pierluigi Nicolini.