

RESEARCH THEME

XL cycle – a.y. 2024/2025

Title of the doctoral research

The Political Role Of Places.
A Discourse On Public Spaces.

Proponent professor

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Abstract

Space, whether temporary or permanent, public or private, can effectively and directly convey messages and content. The concept of place, more specifically, embodies tensions: the nodes of relationships that have entangled in places, the history and social dynamics that have settled over time and made a space a place. Focusing on cities, the urban space has always been an active mediator between power and society, an arena capable of building synergies between political and social dynamics. If, in the 20th century, the city was solid, dense, and persistent, now they are platforms for social, political, and behavioural interferences. Here, politics experiments with new symbols and messages to get as close as possible to a collective articulation of a democratic discourse. Participatory design approaches and co-design practices are instruments for re-articulating interactions and spaces tied to the regeneration of commons. Such approaches attempt to avoid and oppose the impulse to provide immediate answers and hastily establish shared interests among diverse publics. Power systems are, on one side, increasingly directed towards creating ephemeral spaces to communicate rather than to be inhabited; on the other, they manifest through neighbourhood transformations, social frictions, and marginalisation. What are the communicative and spatial strategies employed in the narration of power? Is public space still a representative place of power, and how does spatial design play a role in reshaping public agency? The research program aims to reflect – through explorative and applied research – on design as an aesthetic and political language and the role of design in participatory public space regeneration practices.

Keywords

Spatial Design, Participatory Design, Political Design