

## **Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?**

- **Paper Title:**

Maintenance as Alternative to Growth: North Milan Brianza Recomposing Potentials for Spread Settlements and Open Lands Beyond the Economic Crisis.

- **Format:**

Written Paper

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- **Abstract:**

North Milan urbanized area is a dense built nebula at the base of which interact intricate and complex constitutive dynamics to be interpreted well beyond a mere exponential urban growth followed a long phase of economic prosperity. Therefore, its deterioration and increasing abandonment is not just the outcome of a deep economical and industrial crisis but, more crucially, the evidence of a spatial and social relationships model breaking point in which the economic recession highlighted the many contradictions and deep conflicts animating it. If indeed, this urban territory has always been composed of fragmented identities, singularities, autonomies, it is equally true that such elements have gradually shifted to compose an extreme individualized context. This pulverized the historical interdependence links that connoted the area for long.

The paper will propose the concept of “maintenance” as a strategy to address the deep metamorphosis to which Milan north metropolitan area is subjected, and where

this term defines a process of continuous, incremental and long-term transformations of the urbanized territory and open lands. Far from being a defensive approach, the maintenance has to be interpreted as an active disposition to contrast the persisting distortion between territory imaginary interpretation models and real current urban dynamics, which are no longer sustainable and functional to the new emergent territorial needs, rising identities, spatial demands. More specifically, it has to be assumed as a development method that sees in the deep and gradual reframe of the territory an alternative to growth, after the occurrence of the urban dispersion.

The paper will deep the Brianza potential system emerging from the linking of new and alternative built or unbuilt centralities as a tactic to manage the actual and future transformations of this territory, as a generalizable inspiration to trigger new relationships sets between society, economy and space, and as a contribute to the establishment of an even more needed urban shared culture.

#### • Authors Biography

**Marco Baccarelli**, PhD, is an architect and urban designer Milan based (Italy) and *Nimbu* team member, an independent research group working on several projects and international competitions obtaining awards and honorable mentions. Among others: *International Idea competition for the waterfront of the town of Gabicce mare. Urban themes for a city of the sea* (2014, third price); *Between Public and Private. New ways of living, working, inhabiting* organized by Polytechnic of Milan (2013, first price); *AAA Looking for Architects 2013: Requalification of the site in Rogoredo, Milan and project of social housing* organized by Milan Municipality and others (hon. mention); *Dietro Poggio. Requalification of an industrial area through its conversion into housing and office buildings* organized by the Municipality of Calenzano (2012, hon. mention); *AAA Looking for Architects 2011. Schematic Design for a residential project within the masterplan of Cascina Merlata* (2011, hon. mention). At the same time, he had collaborated, or still collaborates, as a designer and project leader with different architectural and engineering offices both at architectural and planning scale. Among others, Marcello De Carli Office, Barreca&LaVarra Office, Metrogramma Office, WT Partnership, Gianni Versace S.p.A. Since 2014, he is professor of *Architecture and Urban Planning* at the Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic of Milan.

**Martina Orsini**, PhD, is an urban and architectural designer Milan based (Italy), co-founder of *Ibidem*, an internationally based design and research group. She has been professor of *Urban and Territorial Design Lab* and *Urban Principles Course* at the Faculty of Civil Architecture, Polytechnic of Milan (2004 - 2015). She has been involved or coordinated researches workshops, exhibits on contemporary city themes deepening both design and theoretical aspects. Among others: six years research on a Milan metropolitan area transversal city conceptual and design hypothesis funded by the Ministry of University (published in the co-authored book *To Milan*, Hoepli, 2004); a

research on contemporary rurality potentialities in the definition of built urbanized territories (just published in *Architecture and Culture*, issue no 01/2017, Routledge); a research about the concept of the margin in the contemporary built and unbuilt environments (in *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* publication, forthcoming on June 2017); a research about the effect of global-design attitudes in term of urban de-contextualization deepening a Milan case (Routledge publication forthcoming on 2018). After a long and fertile professional collaboration with the urban planner and designer Cesare Macchi Cassia, she recently co-founded *Idibem*, a multidisciplinary team including professionals, researchers and academics, linked by thematic and ethical understandings of the contemporary city and landscape.