

PERSPECTIVES FOR A PUBLIC SPACE. VISUALIZATIONS VISIONS IMAGES

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Abstract

The research investigates the contemporary urban space structuring through the Drawing and the Survey methods, as places for experimentation and control of the city transformation dynamics. The 19th century foundation orthogonal grid of the Bari city is assumed as an example, which reveals the dynamism of changes taking place on the historical settlement. Starting from the city representation, the visual qualities of some main roads, that originally constituted the perceptive support of the city spatial unity, are analyzed. The graphic reconstruction, obtained from the street fronts two-dimensional representation and from the public spaces three-dimensional survey, with the use of photomodeling tools and laser scanner technologies, has allowed a deep reading of the visual described aspects. The knowledge process, implemented in the representation space, drives the environment projects towards conscious choices that protect the fragile historical city.

Keywords

Display, Imaging, City, Modelling

1. *Visions/Visualizations*

The Bari city central districts derive from the expansion of the historical nucleus beyond the ancient walls. The construction of the first so-called “Borgo murattiano” was implemented in the early 19th century, based on a project by the architect Giuseppe Gimma, starting from a proposal drawn up by the engineers Giovanni Palanzia and Francesco Viti, in 1790. The project is carried out on an orthogonal grid model used in many 19th century expansions in Europe, such as in Barcelona, and for the main American cities, as Washington, New York and Chicago. In Bari, the plan for the new city and the 19th century Murattian Statutes impose a certain formal rigour for the realization of new buildings and therefore a certain monotonous regularity in the neoclassical façades language¹. However, due to the succession of the different expansion plans

which the city endows of over the years and for maturing of ever new cultural, aesthetic and speculative needs, the urban aspect assumes a not originally planned visual variety, owing to the coexistence in the urban set of different period and different material and language buildings.

Over time, the redundancy of the orthogonal scheme, a grid that could extend infinitely without interruption and always equal to itself, pushes designers engaged in the realization of different expansion plans, to experiment the insertion of elements breaking the almost undifferentiated succession of rectangular blocks, for instance, the polygonal square proposed in the plan drawn up by Pietro Trotti in 1867 (Di Ciommo, 1984, p. 161 and 229) or the «oval one, limited by two semicircular arcades, with a fountain in the centre, imitating that in the Foria garden in Naples» (Di Ciommo, 1984, p. 171) by the engineer Carlo Marena, in 1884². Gimma himself, in 1812, in the

¹ Gimma «remains insensitive to those variety needs and picturesque aesthetic that induced» the 18th century treatiser Francesco Milizia «to warn against the risks deriving from regularity excesses» by carrying out a control on the individual projects presented to require construction licences. In the building projects of the new city there must not be «any pretentious decoration, no style grandeur, which indeed is to be censored, but a widespread and homogeneous decor» (Mangone, 2004, p. 99; Milizia, 1785, pp. 41-62). «Thus a substantially coherent city was outlined, made up of

homogeneous façades, regular blocks, straight roads and few but significant orientation elements, to break up the monotony; a city of “equals”» (Mangone, 2012, p. 76).

² Marena wrote, in the accompanying report to the plan, «the task of this office was limited really to modify the big blocks system... and not to draw up a new plan, otherwise the concepts developed in the new study would have been very different». To «break up the monotony of long roads and the symmetry not to say the equality of buildings» he intended to insert «squares, small squares, small gardens ... and small

first version of the plan for the construction of the new “Borgo”, devised a rectangular square in centre of which he placed a pyramid, eliminated in the immediately successive variant (Carlone, 1990, pp. 13-17; Mangone, 2004, p. 98). The above mentioned squares were also never built.

Several tricks, therefore, were designed to modify the public urban spatiality and to enliven the scene, expanding the spaces or inserting attraction elements along the roads. It cannot be affirmed with certainty that the city planners have posed the urban visibility problem also. It is clear that, in order to make some public buildings more representative, it was chosen to place them in a significant position in the city. In order to allow the façades obtain a privileged view, either a large space was left in front of them, to appreciate them entirely or, sometimes, buildings were placed in axis with some important roads, so as to be visible from different areas of the city. A certain attention may be recognized to urban visibility, similarly to the Baroque cities in which backdrop buildings are scenographic places of the street view convergence³.

To confirm this, in 1882, the Bari Chamber of Commerce required the Municipality to modify the deed of the land assignment in order to construct its head office (Figure 1), intending to move the location towards the North, allowing that «the centre of the façade appears in axis with Abate Gimma street and to move back towards the East of about 15 meters to extend its perspective» (Di Ciommo, 1984, p. 165). This act will define a new spatiality of the first three blocks of the Eastern front of Cavour avenue⁴ along which, later, the Petruzzelli theatre, by the engineer Angelo Cicciomessera (who later took the surname Messeni) built between 1898 and 1903 (Mangone, 2010, pp. 23-26), and the Bank of Italy, by the engineer Biagio Accolti Gil, built between 1926 and 1932, were placed. These palaces became backdrop buildings of the Abate Gimma street, the Putignani street and the Calefati street, respectively. The main façades are true perspective plans to which the escape line

horizontal elements of the urban fronts converge. The perspective thus obtained generates a spatial unity between road scenes and bottom planes.



Fig. 1: BDA Visual project: the Bari City plan. a) The Chamber of Commerce in Cavour avenue; b) the Petruzzelli theatre in Cavour avenue; c) the Bank of Italy in Cavour avenue; d) the Central railway station in Aldo Moro square; e) the Piccinni theatre in Vittorio Emanuele II avenue; f) the San Ferdinando church in Sparano street; g) the Mincuzzi palace in Sparano street and Putignani street; h) the old Bari building façades; i) the Giuseppe Garibaldi school; l) the Garibaldi square; m) the Margherita theatre

A similar perspective convergence is also found on the railway Station façade in relation with the current “Sparano da Bari” street. In this case the position choice, which was very debated, was probably not dictated as much by aesthetics as by economic and logistic motivations (Di Ciommo, 1984, pp. 120 and 210-211). It was therefore placed in line with one of the murattian grid streets perpendicular to the Vittorio Emanuele II avenue, the fundamental link between the ancient nucleus and the expansion city, which is overlooked by some of the main public buildings, such as the Piccinni theatre, the seat of the Town Hall and the Court (Mangone, 2010, pp. 22-26; Petruzzani & Porsia, 1982, pp. 127-133). On the chosen road, today called Sparano street, the San Ferdinando church already faced, which is the first church of the “Borgo”, designed by the architect Fausto Niccolini and built between 1844 and 1849.

buildings for coffee-restaurants ... widenings, obelisks, etc.» (Petruzzani & Porsia, 1982, pp. 137-139).

³ In reference to the plan drawn up by Marena at the end of the 19th century, in the book “Bari” the authors Marcello Petruzzani and Franco Porsia believe that «this intention to “embellish the city” with “squares, small squares, gardens ... and small buildings for coffee-restaurants ... widenings, obelisks, etc.”, takes place with pathetic delay», judging this «illusionistic distribution of 18th century memories»

anachronistic and considering the «distribution of visual fields» incapable «to modify the progression of the built quantity» (pp. 137-139).

⁴ The Cavour avenue is an important road axis that, since the city foundation, had also been its Eastern limit. Then, at the end of the 19th century, it became the transversal link between the first area of the “Borgo” and the subsequent Eastern neighborhood.

Over time the Sparano street has become fundamental for the 19th century city, due to its value as the main and direct link with the Station, as well as, starting from the thirties of the 20th century, a privileged access also for the ancient nucleus. Some of the most representative buildings of the city were built along it, including Mincuzzi palace, designed by the architect Forcinianò and the engineer Palmiotta in 1928. Since the 70s, the street were pedestrianized, becoming a central promenade for the city life.

The visual characteristics that Sparano street has assumed and that today are presented to an attentive observer, probably - but the statement could be denied - do not derive from the historical and urbanistic reasons that have defined their design and relevance. Today, those going through the long track find themselves inserted in an urban scene governed by a strong "perspectivism" determined by the natural convergences of the building horizontal lines to a centre on the plane of the Station or, in back-view, of the old Bari building façades (Fano, 1979, p. 57).

The perceptive experience is accentuated by the urban spatiality which invites obviously to walk down the street, but which is also able to direct the observer view. The perception of coherence in the visualization of architectural spaces is given by the perspective, in the meaning of "cultural category" (Gay, 2014, p. 551) that the observer possesses and applies unconsciously and empirically in the observation of the built space, especially in presence of places where one direction is prevalent over the others. Going along a rectilinear road he accepts in a natural way the effect - perspective and optical - of a progressive reduction of increasingly distant objects and he perceives as the perspective centre the element of the path closure, which, besides being the fulcrum of the vision, could be the element towards which his attention is drawn.

⁵ The illusion was demonstrated by comparing two segments of the same size, which, when superimposed in a transverse direction with respect to a bundle of convergent lines, appear to have different dimensions (Arnheim, 2000, p. 237; Fano, 1994, pp. 42-49). «Reasons of the error could be attributed to the influence of the so-called "dimensional constancy", which constitutes one of the characteristics of perceptive phenomena. Therefore the observer is induced to connect the image to the reducing action produced by the distance; in fact, the farthest segment is modified by the perspective flight caused by the convergence of the straight lines, so that its apparent length grows with respect to that of the nearest segment, despite their dimensional equality, with the increase of the mutual distance» (Fano, 1979, pp. 20-25).

The observer who is about to walk down Sparano street starting from Vittorio Emanuele II avenue is really attracted by the long perspective vision, but above all by the central station backdrop, because its façade appears particularly enlarged due to an optical illusion for which he interprets the road fronts as a telescope focused on it. This effect is not determined by the sight physiological process only, but by the cognitive elaboration of an information complex set, which activates a perceptive phenomenon caused by a set of psychological, cultural and experiential factors. The observer perceptively overcomes the real space physical characteristics and projects in front of himself an image that is a reality "reinvention", an illusory image that is explained through the same mechanisms that generate the so-called "Ponzo illusion"⁵, according to which the mind establishes the object size by comparing it with the context.

The observer "eyes of the mind" evaluate simultaneously the perspective effect of the fronts, which become smaller and smaller, and the length of the road, which seems even longer because the street level accelerates the perspective going up towards the Station.

The interpretative message shows the "oversized" façade, larger, because it is located near the point where the fronts are farther away and appear smaller. Overcoming the geometric value of the form, the observer accepts as valid the world so perceived, which could be said "imagined"⁶, and he captures a certain aesthetic quality that makes it convincing in the overall image⁷.

These considerations constitute some of the present research presuppositions, whose aim is not to determine if an illusory effect is the result of the urban structure manipulation in a perspective sense⁸, but to establish if the visual qualities relative to some parts of the city give a sensation

⁶ One of the meanings of the verb "to imagine" links the construction of the image acquired through the view to the cognitive elaboration to provide reality interpretation. See the verb "Immaginare" (to imagine) in *Vocabolario della lingua italiana* (1994).

⁷ To this regard, see the considerations formulated by Lynch on the city shape (2013).

⁸ «The built architecture history ... is studded densely with evident optical and tactical forms manipulations, which only partially fall in the projective transformations category, or do not enter at all, because they are intrinsically figurative manifestations refusing to be explained in terms of projectively geometrized shape» (Gay, 2014, p. 571).

of formal balance between the elements, between public space and built space, paths and opposite poles, architectures and roads.

Authors try to propose this aim value as a potentially useful quality to establish the transformation priorities interventions according to the enhancement and safeguarding of the historical city. «We have the opportunity of forming out new city world into an imageable landscape: visible, coherent, and clear. It will require a new attitude on the part of the city dweller, and a physical reshaping of his domain into forms which entrance the eye, which organize themselves from level to level in time and space, which can stand as symbols for urban life» wrote Lynch in 1960, «the form must be somewhat noncommittal, plastic to the purposes and perceptions of its citizens» (p. 91). They do not wish to offer a nostalgic view of the historical city, especially as the current central districts do not fully preserve characters and of the 19th century and the early 20th century city architectures, given large substitutions and more or less rapid transformations that have over time involved private buildings and public spaces. The importance of urban environment “recognisability” should be taken into account, according to Lynch (1960), for whom «the visual environment» is «an integral piece of its inhabitants lives.

The city is by no means perfect, even in the limited sense of imageability; nor does all of the city's visual success lie in this one quality. But there seems to be a simple and automatic pleasure, a feeling of satisfaction, presence, and Tightness, which arises from the mere sight of the city, or the chance to walk through its streets» (p. 93).

In Bari, although several road sections have an interesting visuality⁹, it is sometimes denied or hidden by the functional structures of the city itself. Just in Sparano street, due to the pedestrianization project of the 70s, the whole spatiality was hidden for the insertion of low and large palms (Figure 2). Only a recent restyling, which will be discussed later, eliminating the visual obstacles, has allowed to grasp the sense of unity between the architectures, either individual or as part of the road scenes, and the backdrop planes, both in view and in back-view. Currently, the road is perceived as an over-all pattern (Lynch,

1960, p. 2), which is characterized by a strong «imageability» capable of «evoking a strong image in any given observer», being «that shape, color, or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment» (Lynch, 1960, p. 9).



Fig. 2: Bari, the “Sparano da Bari” street, 2006 - 2020

In the central districts of the 19th and the 20th century Bari other relevant urban environments, permeated with a scenographic perspective structure as those just analysed, should generate an equally coherent “image”, when their aesthetic value is recognized and actions to strengthen it are undertaken. As an example, Putignani street (Mangialardi & Martinelli, 2018, p. 199) constitutes a long journey that from the Western Murat neighborhood leads to Cavour avenue in perfect axis with the Petruzzelli theatre. The road intersects Sparano street, in correspondence of a node (Figure 3) which is important because here the eclectic Mincuzzi palace, one of the most representative buildings of the historical city, is placed.

Observing from this “point of view” both roads, there is a perception of coherence and equilibrium because the view does not get lost towards the endless road perspectives of the orthogonal grid city. It culminates, in the Southern direction, on the 19th century Station façade and, in the East, on the french style Petruzzelli theatre (Mangone, 2010, p. 26), in the shorter stretches, while, in back-view, they have respectively as backdrops the façade of the old Bari buildings and the historic Garibaldi

⁹ Here visuality is intended in its broad sense of «quality of what is perceivable with sight», not limiting itself to evaluating only the sight ability to perceive an image, but

considering «the set of external characteristics which appear and impose themselves at view».

school¹⁰. Therefore, it is a node of fundamental evocative and symbolic value, a place where “visuality” assumes the role of “imageability” for the historical city. However, while the Sparano street visual qualities have been recovered, Putignani street is open to traffic, whose legibility is compromised by visual noise due to the presence of various obstacles such as cars, road signs, traffic-lights etc. (Castagnolo & Maiorano, 2018, p. 53).



Fig. 3: Cross between the Sparano street and the Putignani street

The analysis could be extended to other strongly identifying portions of the city such as, to give a final example, Vittorio Emanuele II avenue, one of the first two roads of the “Borgo” foundation, separating the ancient city from the 19th century expansion.

Perfectly in axis with the avenue, to the West the garden of Garibaldi square looks towards the sea, whose view, however, is “obstructed” by the Margherita theatre, built between 1912 and 1914. The perspective from this point of view is framed within the first three blocks of the avenue. They direct the vision towards the eclectic façade of the Margherita theatre, which, although it is rather large, shows only the right part. Immediately after

Filo-Diana palace, the Massari square and, then, the Prefettura square open up. Beyond this, the roadway is wider than in the previous section, until it reduces again at the first block to the East. Here the two buildings of the former Meat market and the Fish market, at the Eastern entrance to the old city, conclude the perspective¹¹.

The sequence of the fronts is not continuous, but in the initial and the final sections the Northern and the Southern fronts form an optical device that frames the portion of the theatre façade, which is formally more structured and interesting¹².

A systematic survey and drawing campaign of the Bari city had already highlighted the singular character of these roads (Valzano, Negro, & Foschi, 2017). The graphic reconstruction of the urban set, obtained from the street fronts two-dimensional representation and from the public spaces three-dimensional survey, with the use of photomodeling tools and laser scanner technologies, have allowed a complete and dynamic prefiguration of the city portions. The drawing makes it possible to put at the same level the city construction formal aspects and the transformations that occurred over time.

The knowledge process, implemented in the representation space, could guide environment projects towards conscious choices protecting the fragile historical city. It is fragile because such are its architectures, but also because it is the desire object of those who speculate on transformations and substitutions, and because it could easily lose its memory (Brusaporci, 2014).

2. Visualizations/Images

With the tools of drawing, three-dimensional modeling and descriptive geometry, authors analyze the visual areas that have been identified as emblematic and significant of the Bari city urban visuality. The aim is in fact to establish whether and in what way perceptive effects are founded in projective construction. In other words, assess the extent to which the attentive observer implements the process of reality “reinvention” through “the eyes of mind” or, instead, this suggestion is supported by recognizable factors that participate in the

¹⁰ The Giuseppe Garibaldi school was built by engineer Arrigo Veccia between 1905 and 1911 (Pastore, 2018, pp. 38-39).

¹¹ Opposite the two markets there is the first block of the “murattian Borgo”: at the corner of the Cavour avenue and the Vittorio Emanuele II avenue, in 1813, in the presence of King Gioacchino Murat, the new city first stone was laid.

¹² The part of the façade, hidden by the fish market, is showily less decorated, unlike the Southern body, divided in three bays. Two towers frame the central part, where there are the foyer dome, on the top, and the glass entrance to the building, at the bottom.

perception making it convincing (Gay, 2014, pp. 41-52).

To this aim it is necessary to construct an analogous model which, by replicating the orographic and metric conditions of the constructed reality, allows perceptual effects to be simulated geometrically. Starting from the material of the relevant campaigns that have been conducted in these years (Castagnolo & Maiorano, 2018), a synthetic model of the urban reality has been drawn up that exclusively restores the altimetric variation of public spaces and the articulation of urban fronts. This is marked by the rhythm of the properties and the building heights that have profoundly changed over the years due to the centrality and the consequent economic interest that concerned the land.

The transformation process in fact has strongly affected the development of the curtains with the consequent increasing of the useful surface and the multiplication of the floors number. Just the increase in the floors number with the vertical volumes development affects the perspective view. In fact, the comparison between the current situation and the ideal - perhaps never existed - situation of the “Borgo murattiano” expanded in a monotonous manner with equal vertical development, allows some reflections to be formulated (Figure 4). The architectures of the first and ideal murattiano Borgo have quite constant heights, with two or three floors only. They are marked by basements, string-course or window sills cornices and by projecting top cornices. A number of these buildings have been replaced by the contemporary ones, with overhanging balconies and shelters. The just mentioned “horizontalism” of the first buildings has been replaced by the marked projections of the last ones, with the consequent increase of the number of signs converging towards the vanishing point and the greater saturation of the image.

These signs identify a prevailing direction with a consequent acceleration of the perspective that uniquely addresses the observer’s view. The convergence of signs makes the perspective drawing monotonous and the variation in the height of the curtains, both the current ones and the murattiano ideal ones, does not affect it.

The change of contemporary volumes elevation is not sufficient, with the vertical bound alone and its intervals, to break this monotony. This is partly attenuated near the right and the left front, where all the elements are reduced to a

single line with a consequent partial attenuation of the prevailing direction.

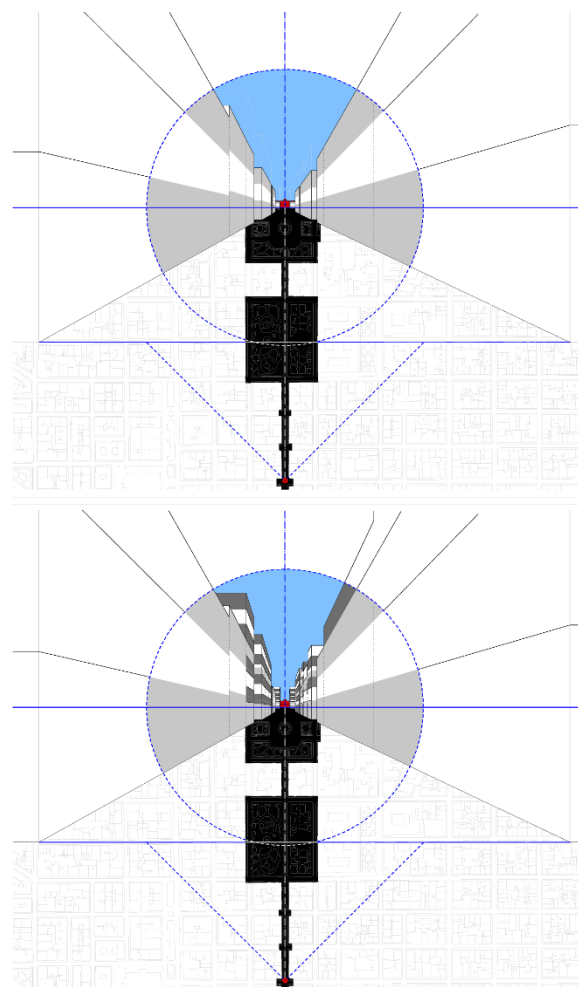


Fig. 4: Synthetic model of the Sparano street in which altitudes and horizontal lines both in the murattiano ideal city and in the current situation are compared

The road slope, which in the case of Sparano street tends to grow in the direction of the Central railway station, does not contribute in any way to accelerating the perspective, as for example it happens in the 18th and the 19th century gardens, which by this stratagem appeared greater and deeper (Rossi, 2017; Rossi & Leserri, 2012). Moreover, this acceleration is just perceived and, at the same time, is frustrated by the “horizontalism” which already strongly characterizes these views.

The oversizing in which the Station is perceived by the “eyes of mind” is absolutely not present in the geometric projection, where the façade is small despite the tympanum with the clock, soaring above the imposing volume of the station.

On the other way, the reality returns a different perception, that is only partially rendered by the photographic image. In the visualization of Sparano street starting from the Putignani street in the direction of the station (Figure 5), the front succession was marked. However, the "horizontalism" dominates the image and it is only partially attenuated by the masses, the colors, the lights and the shadows play. These components contribute in a significant manner to create rhythm and intervals and to emphasize the urban scene spaces.



Fig. 5: View of the Sparano street in which the image vertical component is highlighted

reported, the request of the Chamber of Commerce to move back the palace to be built in Cavour avenue, was useful to give this effect, of which perhaps designers were already aware (Di Ciommo, 1984, p. 165). The role of the light clearly perceived in the reality is instead difficult to represent. The sequence of images taken from the same point of view and then superimposed, tries to render the difference in brightness which is returned by the shade variations in the different visual fields (Figure 6).

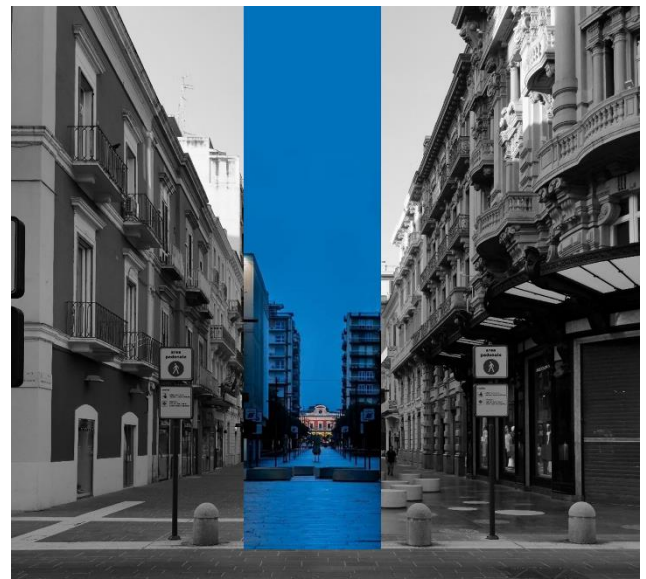


Fig. 6: Overlapping some images with different brightness of the Sparano street



Fig. 7: Views of the Putignani, the Calefati and the Abate Gimma streets, in which chromatic components are compared

The succession of squares in front of the station - Umberto I square and Aldo Moro square - increase the brightness of the side curtains that can be glimpsed and emerges taking on a different role in photography. For example, as above

The color seems to have a significant role in the perception, as shown by the views comparison of the Putignani street with the Petruzzelli theatre, the Calefati street with the Bank of Italy and of the Abate Gimma street with the Chamber of

Commerce (Figure 7). In particular, in the Petruzzelli theatre, the chromatic combination of the white base band, the red front and the dark dome are recognizable immediately in the “eyes of mind”. The brick red of the theater front detached from the ground and with the dome presence in the background is more recognizable although its dimensions are smaller than those of the Chamber of Commerce. Here, the white of the order and the beige surfaces merge into each other and are attenuated by the brightness of the surrounding space. The soaring tympanum, with the clock dial barely distinguishable as flooded by light, gives only a small contribution. The comparison between the perspectives of the Putignani street, the Calefati street and the Abate Gimma street, in the same lighting and distance conditions, gives back a greater recognizability of the Petruzzelli theatre, for its showy chromatic component and the dome presence.

3. Image/Visions

The theme of urban transformation has guided reflections on the research methodological aspects, developing the construction of a structured reality model which favours the changing process of fragile and exposed urban areas to achieve the established regenerative aims.

This model constituted by a data set referring to the city and to its current and future configuration. All these data have figurative attributes, i.e. images and alphanumeric attributes, such as normative prescriptions, ideological models, strategies and tactics. The data restitution concerning the city and their relative diffusion and communication is a delicate phase, of fundamental importance for the process of urban space transformation. Communicate as well as represent and then promote, obtain consent, signify, interpret fully design requirements and needs. By looking carefully at the current urban scenario, it is possible to realize how deeply the city has changed not in its external appearance only, nor in its form of diffusion and decentralization, but in its being “augmented” (Bianchini, 2014).

Does not only the city exist, but all its representations also, including those implemented taking into account every single captured fragment, in an image, research, words, compositional modalities flow that invest daily life.

Therefore, the role of those who deal with the environment representation turns out to be active, tense in a continuous state of (graphic) translation of theories, norms and facts. How much thorough and precise the translation is, so much more effective the image will be. In his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Wittgenstein (1918) identifies «the logical picture of facts»¹³ (p. 11) in the thought: according to the 20th century philosopher innovative theories, besides being one of the *Tractatus* nodal points, any image presents itself as a moment of mediation between the world (reality, facts) and the thought. It has a projection method and this, corresponding for Wittgenstein to think the proposition meaning, is a translation rule also. Therefore the image problem is a translation problem fundamentally. Through the language, which is the sensitive image of a state of affairs, be it verbal, gestural, textual or visual, a fact is translated into an image and this in turn is translated into another one¹⁴.

The complexity of the current phenomena concerning the city, the heritage preservation and the contemporary living protection, requires a deepening and perhaps a rethinking of those tools and languages used to favour the transformation process. These show an obvious wear, revealing a representation vocabulary and grammar instability. This imbalance affects the ability of seeing the space that surrounds us and we inhabit.

The representations used today are deeply different from those of the past, since the city development models are evolving quickly. The concepts acquired and consolidated over time, such as for instance those of public space, are undergoing an epochal transformation, influencing the change of the communicative conditions, invested by an enormous variety of topics treated and still to be treated and, above all, by an infinite range of possibilities to translate the objects of communication.

¹³ «Proposition n. 3: The logical picture of the facts is the thought» (Wittgenstein, 1918, p. 11).

¹⁴ In proposition n. 2 - 2.063, «The total reality is the world. 2.1 We make to ourselves pictures of facts. 2.11 The picture presents the facts in logical space, the existence and non-existence of atomic facts. 2.12 The picture is a model of reality. 2.13 To the objects correspond in the picture the elements of

the picture. 2.131 The elements of the picture stand, in the picture, for the objects. 2.14 The picture consists in the fact that its elements are combined with one another in a definite way. 2.141 The picture is a fact» (L. Wittgenstein 1918, p. 9), the author expresses the relationship between the world and its image, identifying the sensitive expression of the state of things in language and thought.

The visual project, which this research refers to, places as reflection basis the architectural and urban survey of the road profiles chosen for investigation on the Murattian neighborhood. The Murattian city is a complex urban scenario, measured by regular blocks and façades of inhomogeneous linguistic character. The visual data, acquired during the knowledge process, have been selected to respond to the need of revealing what Kevin Lynch (1960) defines the «imageability» (pp. 9-10) of the urban environment, or the distinctive quality of the visual experience in the city, in order to expand the contents of the knowledge system and to guide the analysis process of the urban image.

Through the image composition and construction of that city part, a recognizable and permanent urban identity is defined. The architectural drawing is not used as a tool to define forms and relations between those elements that make up the set of constructed objects, or as a graphic display of the complex phenomenon which is the city, but as a significant understanding process and progressive unveiling of material and immaterial data. Especially when operating in an urban or territorial environment, where a critical data mass becomes decidedly demanding, it is extremely important to construct certain interpretation and visualization devices capable of managing the data themselves in depth, their meaning, their representation and placement in the narration. During the 30 years following the first attempt to renew the Sparano street, it was possible to see a progressive, though slow, effort to adapt it to the ever-changing needs of the fast-growing city. In 2007, a “restyling” project of this public space was defined that was realized only ten years later and is still in progress.

Therefore, the Sparano street urban renewal deserved a design competition¹⁵ that brought out a lot of contradictions, imbalances and inequalities of the 19th-20th century urban fabric already consolidated. All the projects seem to confirm the pedestrian use requirement. The aim is to regain measures, distances and times appropriate to the collective dimension of the place, by re-

establishing the original visual contact between Vittorio Emanuele II avenue and the Central railway station, hampered large concrete basins located in the middle of the street and which served as both seats and containers for the palm trees (Figure 2). The city sees the transformation project as a powerful tool and an opportunity to regain possession of the place and of what Heidegger defines as living activities, such as walking through spaces, pausing, moving, crossing¹⁶.

The city, which seemed fixed and untouchable, comes to life, climbs, untangles itself in many projects presented, to keep up with other contemporary cities. The winning designer identifies in the Sparano street longitudinal development, attracting and significant spaces for the city and, around them, it builds the renewal project. «The most significant priorities in Sparano street are, starting from Umberto I square: the bookshop Laterza, recently renovated; the area around the Mincuzzi palace; the churchyard of St. Ferdinand and finally, the area in front of the Rinascente palace.

These take the form of thematic areas in virtue of their being a point of interaction between public and internal urban scale. Small “occasional squares”, seating areas where you can stop by their presence that punctuate the course of the street, as steps of a narrative path, made even more pleasant by its episodes, characterized by a change of flooring and a key change signal in the presence of exceptional moments along the path of the axis¹⁷. The aim shared by all the projects participating to the competition is the recovery of what is defined, by authors of the present research, the “telescope” between Vittorio Emanuele II avenue and the Central railway station.

The Sparano street is therefore transformed into a street-museum, with seats grouped into thematic lounges in correspondence with old commercial activities.

The trees, if any, are placed mainly at the intersections between the transversal streets, where the telescopes, such as that towards the Petruzzelli theatre in Putignani street, are

¹⁵ European design competition in two grades, announced by the Bari Municipality - Public building division - for the Renewal of Sparano street and the “Borgo Murattiano” public spaces, in 2006.

¹⁶ What is living? The answer to Heidegger’s question in his essay “Building Dwelling Thinking” is to be found in the relationship between man and space: «To say that mortals are is to say that in dwelling they persist through spaces by virtue

of their stay among things and locations. And only because mortals pervade, persist through, spaces by their very nature are they able to go through spaces. But in going through spaces we do not give up our standing in them» (Heidegger, 1954, p. 105).

¹⁷ Winner Project is “Bari Crossing” by the architect Guendalina Salimei, Roma, 2006.

evidently not equally worthy of protection (Figure 8).

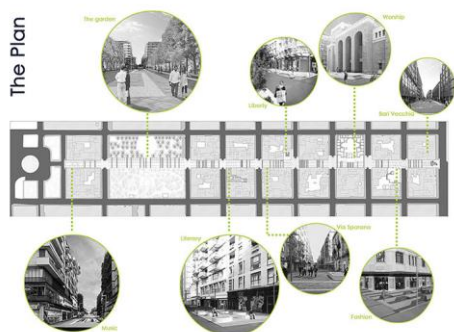


Fig. 8: Project winner of the ideas competition “Bari Crossing”, by arch. Guendalina Salimei, Rome (Salimei, 2007)

If visualization is a mental activity that uses the imaginative potential to trigger inner processes, predisposing to the achievement of chosen aims, the city project has, in its representation in images, the ideal technical and operational device. The images of places, described graphically, have an evocative and narrative capacity exceeding the prescriptive content of the urban project and they shift the attention to the emotional and perceptive state, that the transformed place has on its inhabitants.

Data, information and messages can be collected and communicated through an event story, which happens when the space transformation in question is in progress. In fact, in its development the unfolding of activities, actions, movements is witnessed, that therefore show the success of the transformation act.

The urban project images no longer speak about the city by plans, elevations and sections, but by constructing complex scenarios. They recreate interruptions, interrupt seriality, reconstruct missing parts, replace objects with others, fill gaps, free spaces, insert new objects, shape objects, light and colour where there is none, and suggest activities.

Some of these operations represent extreme acts, but all they are aimed to suggest possible

compositional and planning strategies and to encourage debates.

“Putting into image” (Maiorano, 2017 p. 948) of all data produced during the analysis phase, consists in transferring in an image the whole narrative/figurative set of the urban project and in translating it graphically. The visual data manipulation uses the drawing to alter the state of the urban space acting as a “contrast medium” in order to make visible the compromised regions and the otherwise hidden details. The methodological aspects of the urban drawing and representation discipline are intertwined with those of visual communication, multimedia graphics, photography.

Through drawing, the architect is able to materialize his space vision and to narrate the complex dichotomy between human life and the context (Zambeletti, 2014). Sam Jacob speaks about a “post-digital era of drawing” (2017). This new drawing cult exploits its artificiality, making us aware spectators who look at space as a fictitious form of representation, as opposed to the purpose of digital rendering to make fiction “real” (Jacob, 2017) (Figure 9).

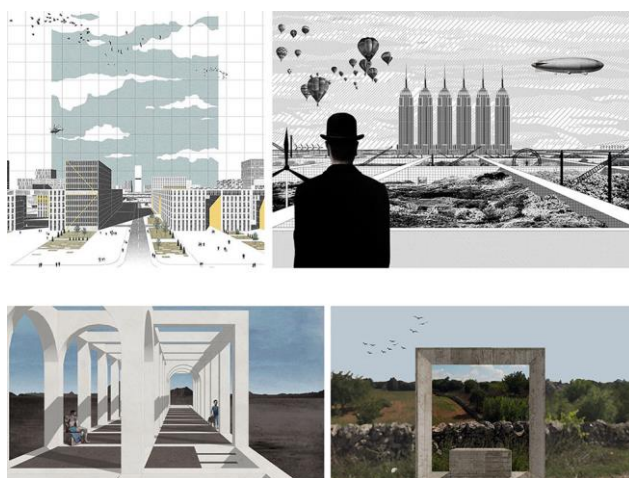


Fig. 9: Age of Post-Digital Drawing. Image composition by A.C. Maiorano (Jacob, 2017)

Authors research on the Bari city image moves in 2008 starting from the systematic road section surveys along the fronts of the architectures built between the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Then it was extended to all the buildings that define the regular blocks of the “Borgo” in their linear layout, with the aim of creating the visual archive called “BDA. Bari Drawing Architecture”. Currently the archive, in addition to data of

different nature¹⁸, has about 100 blocks and more than 500 buildings surveyed. The long research workflows into the book entitled “BDA. Bari Disegno Architecture” by Valentina Castagnolo and Anna Christiana Maiorano, published in 2018¹⁹.

In the study on the Murattian city image «the choice of the urban scenes frontal view responds to the research method of urban landscape analysis and reading. On the other hand, it meets the narrative needs of that part of cities whose urban development model, consolidated over time, prepares in a natural way the frontal building representations and generates overall homogeneous data by which it is possible to explore and to experiment the communication languages. The real correspondence between the morphology of the grid city with an orthogonal mesh, the strong character of its North neighbourhood and the vision model chosen favours the knowledge of the architecture and defines the image of the Bari city» (Castagnolo & Maiorano, 2018, p. 35).

In this way, a discontinuous, inhomogeneous, unstable character is pointed out in that part of the city where deeply different architectural languages coexist, even if a certain inconvenience. «Architectures, through the selective drawing act, lightened by the “background noise” deriving by the excesses of commercial life, by evident time attacks, dominate alone the urban scene, form it and inform it, without seasons, without sunrises and sunsets, without filters, without natural elements, as it is today» (Castagnolo & Maiorano, 2018 p. 39). Physical data, such as the plant systems present at the building façades, the signs of the structure deteriorations, the closing systems, shop signs, windows projecting on the road profile and superimposed on the façades, the street furniture, are omitted voluntarily in the visual project.

¹⁸ These data do not have only dimensional attributes constituting a physical environment representation, but they can be defined as multidimensional, with reference to different categories which determine measure, meaning, character, belonging, etc. They also include historical, technical and expressive contents and those data concerning the project for its construction. During the acquisition work, authors set themselves the aim of expanding the knowledge system on the Bari neighbourhoods, orienting the research towards the urban image definition, which is fed of physical morphological, historical data and of desires, of narrations emerged during the urban environment knowledge activities, of aspirations underlying the image elaboration operation too (Castagnolo & Maiorano, 2018 p. 21).

During the whole study of the urban image authors asked themselves if what they wished to represent and to construct graphically was a copy of reality or rather if image should express a peculiar and symbolic character (Figure 10).

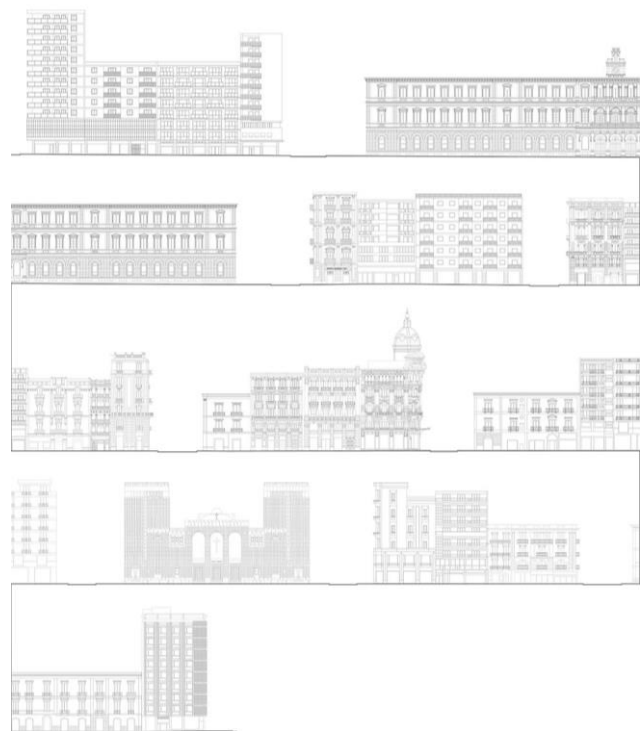


Fig. 10: BDA Visual project: frontal building sequence of the Sparano street West side

The visual sequence of all these “objects” composed together, constitutes the content of the “visual project” (Maiorano, 2015 p. 663) on a part of the city that however is implemented and redefined in the passage from a story to an another one, from a projection method²⁰ to an another one, from the frontal view to the perspective view, in a continuous cross-reference of figurative, spatial, symbolic attributes. The research, currently in progress, widens its boundaries by shifting its gaze

¹⁹ See Castagnolo 2015, pp. 483-488; Maiorano 2015, pp. 663-670; Castagnolo, Franchini, & Maiorano 2014, pp. 353-364; Castagnolo 2012, pp. 211-218.

²⁰ «3.11 We use the sensibly perceptible sign (sound or written sign, etc.) of the proposition as a projection of the possible state of affairs. The method of projection is the thinking of the sense of the proposition. 3.12 The sign through which we express the thought I call the proposition sign. And the proposition is the proposition sign in its projective relation to the world» (Wittgenstein, 1918, p. 12). Author identifies its projection method in the thought expressed with the proposition.

towards media and narrative forms, making the observer interacts with the urban context. The projection centre also moves, assuming a defined location within the urban space. The choice of the representation method to which entrust the urban transformation project intentions, besides being intimately linked to the place structure, to its form and development, is connected to the project aims.

If the expressive medium is the urban environment perspective, the observer becomes part of the space, he identifies himself with the users, he becomes himself interpreter of the

transformation, which makes possible what still has to happen, which highlights reasons and purposes by arranging them with the same logic as the urban facts (Figure 12). The visual project on some areas of the Bari city, of which some aspects are shown, arises from the awareness that every intervention on the city and on the landscape has to be fed by visual data, built on the basis of the city researches and on the analysis of formal, aesthetic and sociological aspects. This data then could be constituted in one or more images with significant content. The figurative content of these images is

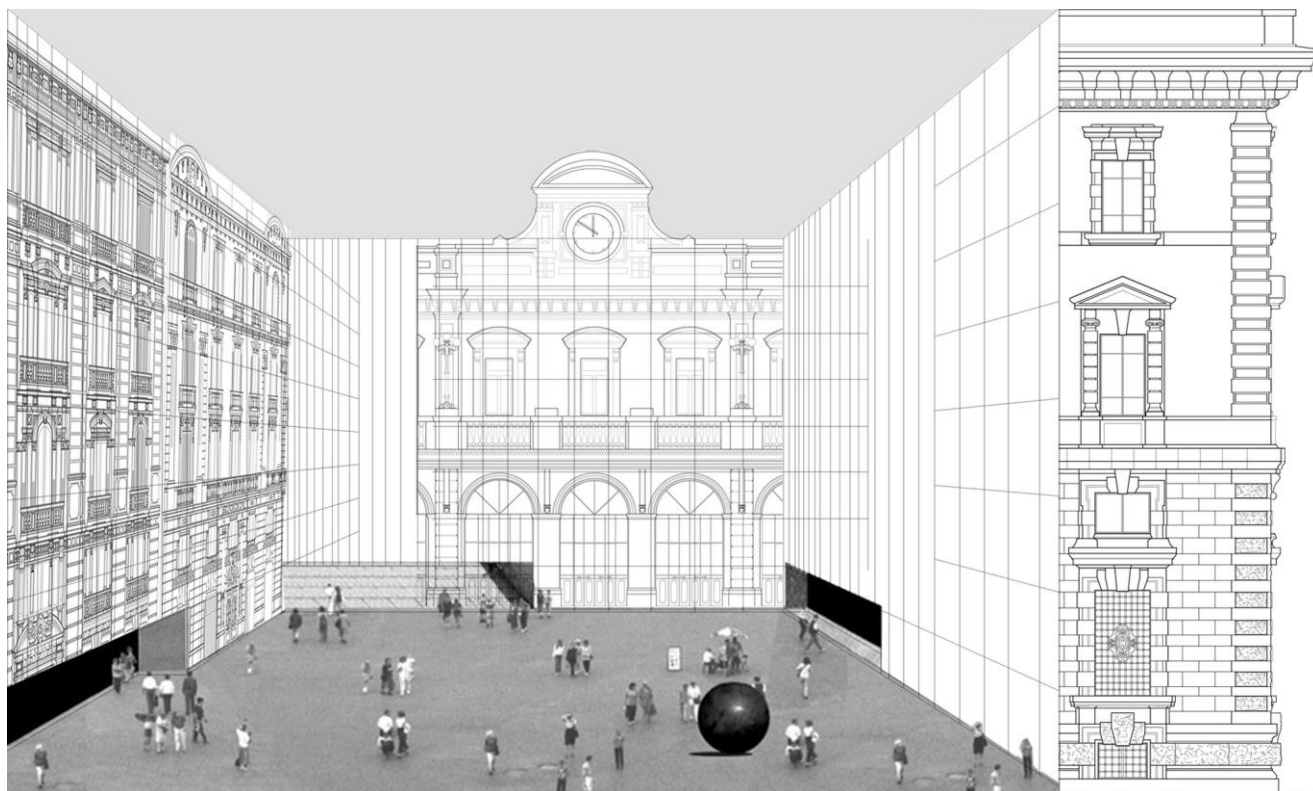


Fig. 11: BDA Visual project: perspective view of a significant space for the urban project. Image composition by A. C. Maiorano (Geers, Van Severen, 2007)

changes (Figure 11).

He could walk away, get closer, stop and move on. He could measure time, space and see beyond. He could be involved in the action that is taking place or he could imagine it himself. Perspective drawing generates a represented space dynamic image, capable of anticipating a future configuration, if it becomes receptive to all the data connected to the project aims.

Producing meaningful images does not only represent the outcome of the project process, but above all it is a methodological tool that favours

not necessarily the transposition, that is graphic translation, of the transformation intervention, made possible by its being similar to reality, but it can also allude, emphasize an aspect to make it important, manipulating the graphic model according to the view education and experimenting a language, that is the very expression of design instances (Figure 13)²¹.

²¹ Valentina Castagnolo: Paragraph 1; Gabriele Rossi: Paragraph 2; Anna Christiana Maiorano: Paragraph 3.



Fig. 12: BDA Visual project: frontal vision of the Central railway station from Vittorio Emanuele II avenue

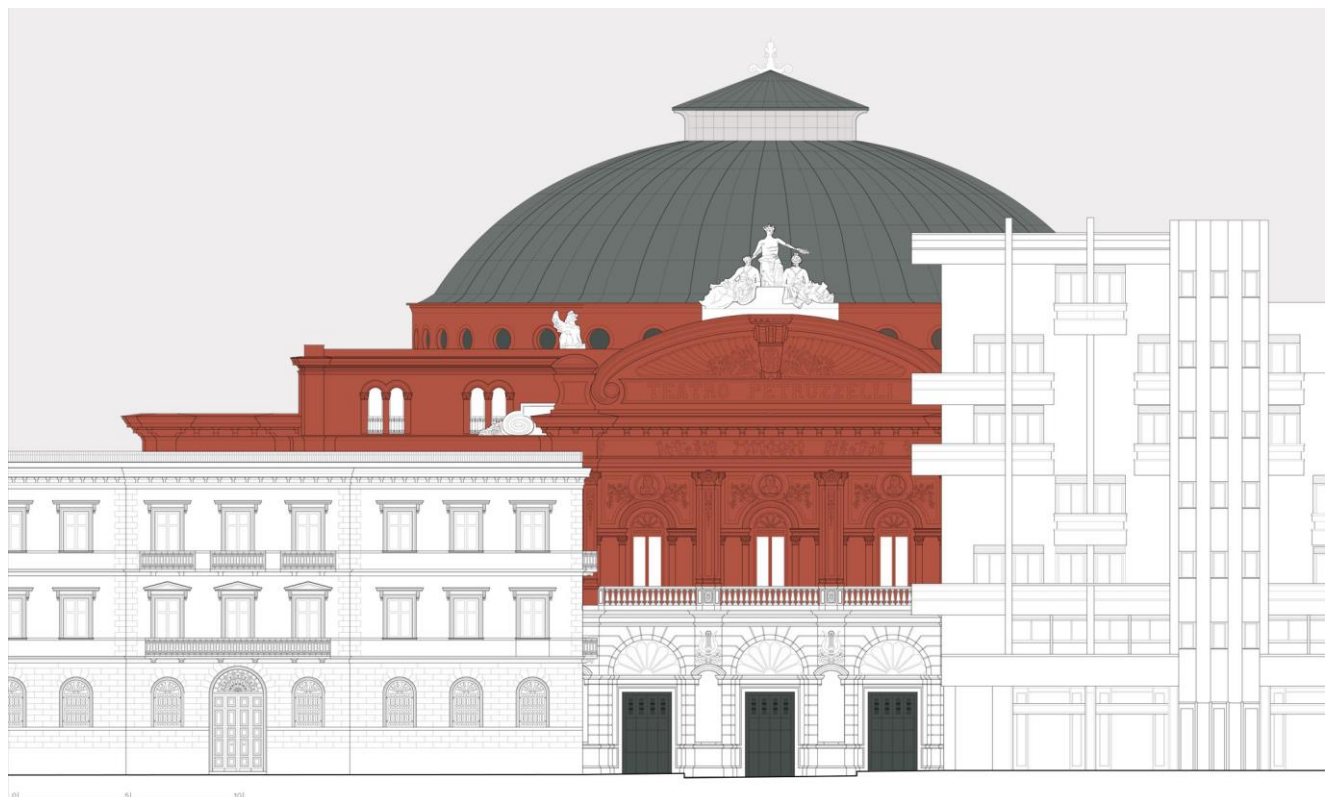


Fig. 13: Image BDA Visual project: frontal vision of the Petruzzelli theatre from Cairoli street caption

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