

Designing ordinary public space, between revealed potential and public stance. The case of Viale Ottavio Mai in Turin

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# Book of Abstracts

the time <sup>of</sup> streets

INCISIONS  
OVERLAPS  
AND  
RHYTHMS

**TITLE**

City Street 5

The time of streets:

incisions, overlaps and rhythms

Book of Abstracts

**EDITION**

Alessia Allegri

Christine Mady

Francesca Dal Cin

João Silva Leite

Luis Miguel Ginja

Sérgio Barreiros Proença

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Elisabete Rolo

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# Book of Abstracts

the time <sup>of</sup> streets

INCISIONS  
OVERLAPS  
AND  
RHYTHMS





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## INTRODUCTION

### The Time of Streets

**THE STREET, AS A PUBLIC SPACE**, defines the common and exceptional elements of the city's urban layout. The various declinations of forms, names and meanings of streets reflect different geographies and cultures that nevertheless share common characteristics.

Street, in Portuguese, is translated with the word *rua*. According to the first dictionary of the Portuguese language (Bluteau, 1712-1728), *rua* derives from the Greek *ruo* with the same meaning as the Latin *flūo*: a stream of water “because through the streets runs the rainwater, that falls from the roofs (...) also the people run the streets, and each one of them is a stream of people (...).” Bluteau finally refers that some etymologists state that the word *rua* has the same Latin root as the word *ruga*, which means wrinkle: “a line, or a groove, caused by the time”. *Rua* therefore congregates the notions of motion and line, in a single word.

Recognising the street as a line produced by the effects of time on the skin of the city, as a wrinkle testify the passage of years, frames *City Street<sup>5</sup> – The Time of Streets: Incisions, overlaps and rhythms*. Streets are the physical repository of the *polis* memory, an urban object in transformation over time, resulting from social and political evolutions that shape the form of the city, the *urbs*. Reading the incisions and the overlaps of time in the urban fabric, allows us to decode the *polis eventum*, which have contributed to form the present *stratum urbanum*. Understanding the cycles and rhythms that sculpt the wrinkles of the city, remains essential to imagine and design the future of streets.

*City Street<sup>5</sup>* book of abstracts reunites the abstracts of the papers that were selected by the Scientific Committee. The call for abstracts challenged authors to write and also to include an image that reflected and synthesized the main idea. This is a sample of the wide scope of contexts, methodological approaches and disciplinary fields that relate to the timeless importance of streets on the construction of the city as a framework for human life.



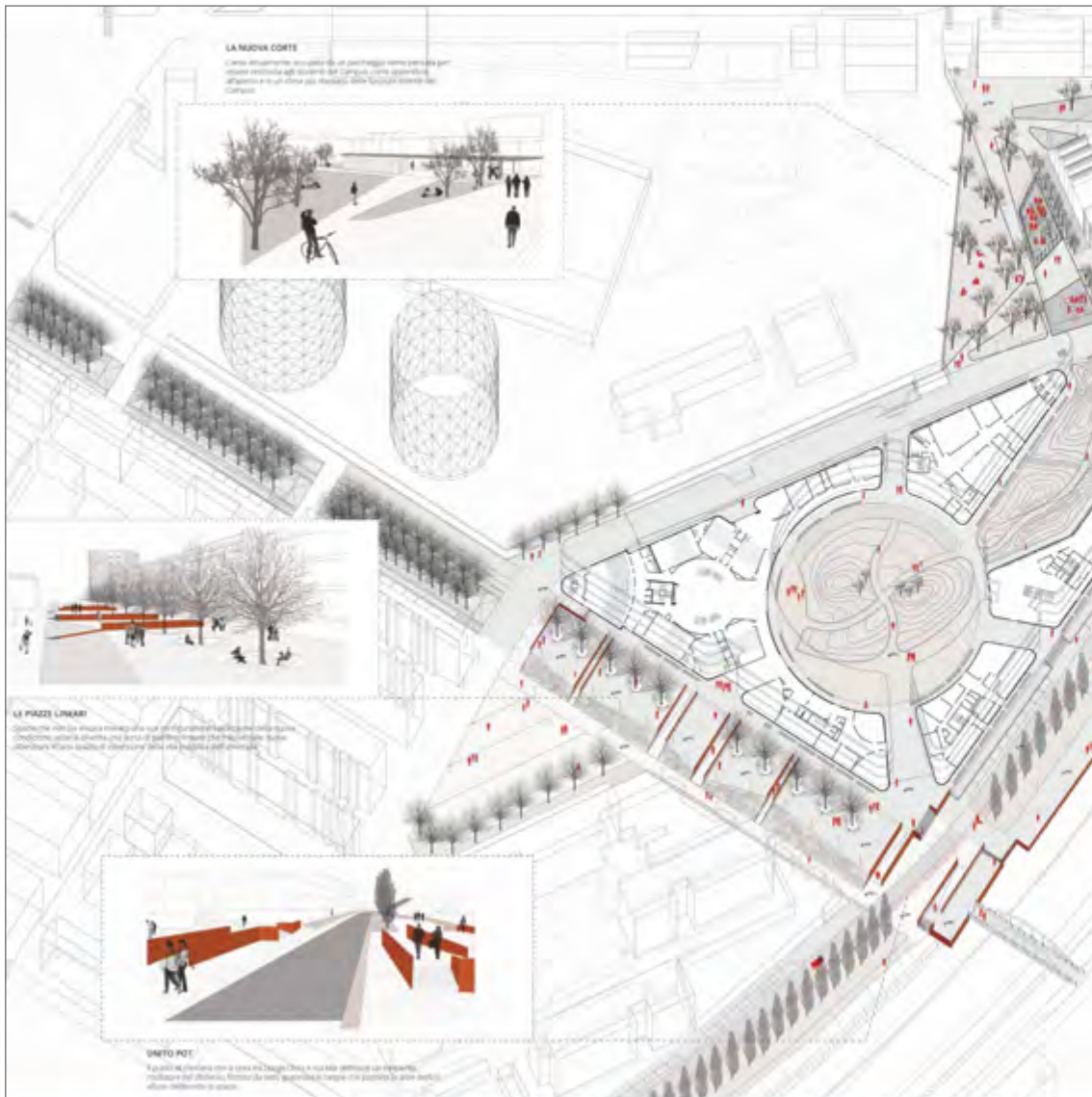




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**THE FORM OF STREETS:  
INTERPRETING AND DESIGNING**



—  
 Trame in Campus. Camilla Marè,  
 Silvia Meterc, Giulia Musso  
 (AY 2016-2017).



# Designing ordinary public space, between revealed potential and public stance.

## The case of Viale Ottavio Mai in Turin

Massimo Crotti  
Politecnico di Torino  
massimo.crotti@polito.it

Ilaria Tonti  
Politecnico di Torino  
ilaria.tonti@polito.it

Claudio Germak  
Politecnico di Torino  
claudio.germak@polito.it

Janet Hetman  
Politecnico di Torino  
janet.hetman@polito.it

### Abstract

As a space of collective interaction, the multi-dimensional streets allow investigating the adaptivity in terms of social, climate, and use. While architecture projects and placemaking processes have been realised, ordinary residual open spaces in the urban environment are still misused or poorly executed. Though, which European actions and architectural design strategies can be adopted to let flourish such public spaces?

From this perspective, viale Mai case study in Turin shows contradictions between its hidden potential and its actual transformation. Located in a vibrant city, where university hubs and adaptive urban renovations take place, the viale Mai is an underused and awaiting transformation street close to the new University Campus Einaudi. The site has been assumed by an academic reflection with students during three years of a Design Studio at the Polytechnic of Turin as the topic. Today, it is a new project of public space held by the municipality of Turin for the European program UIA - ToNITE.

The complexity of architectural projects, demonstrated by students' work based on the critical thinking of adaptive public space, climate change, and environmental comfort, seems in contrast with the results of public action. Indeed, in order to enhance the viale Mai potential, the contribution underlines the difference between two approaches: the academia's problem-setting and the problem-solving lead by public action.

### Keywords

Ordinary street, adaptive open space, problem setting, interdisciplinary design studio, research by design.

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