

Porta Romana Village



THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

If we think about the crisis we are experiencing and the problems that a metropolis like Milan is facing, we need a global change: a new economic, health and education model.¹

How can we imagine the city of the future? Without wandering or thinking about suspended, floating, fluctuating cities, far from utopias, what can we actually do, given what we already have?

How can we re-activate the city in a more sustainable way, exploiting the existing urban fabric to create jobs, new activities and a healthier environment?

The answer I like is **"With the help of nature and people!"**

We have spent the last few decades logging, destroying green areas to build, covering lawns with concrete...

What if we try to go back, redesigning cities in a more sustainable way?

The need for change forces us to rethink the way we live and consume, in favor of a more sustainable life. As a designer, one of my main interest is the tension between the countryside and the city, hence the question, **what if we redesign cities with the help of agriculture?**

The integration of the production of primary goods in urban areas could favor the pedestrianization of some streets, reinvigorate the neighborhood economy, help the development of strong territorial communities, create new jobs and activities.

In addition to the practical aspects, there are also psychological ones: imagine walking in the midst of lush greenhouses and gardens, with the twittering of birds and the chirping of cicadas...



1. Kotler P. 2020, *Il capitalismo va ristrutturato*, è questa la lezione del Covid-19. Il Sole24Ore online

NEW SPACES

How can we integrate agriculture into the urban fabric?

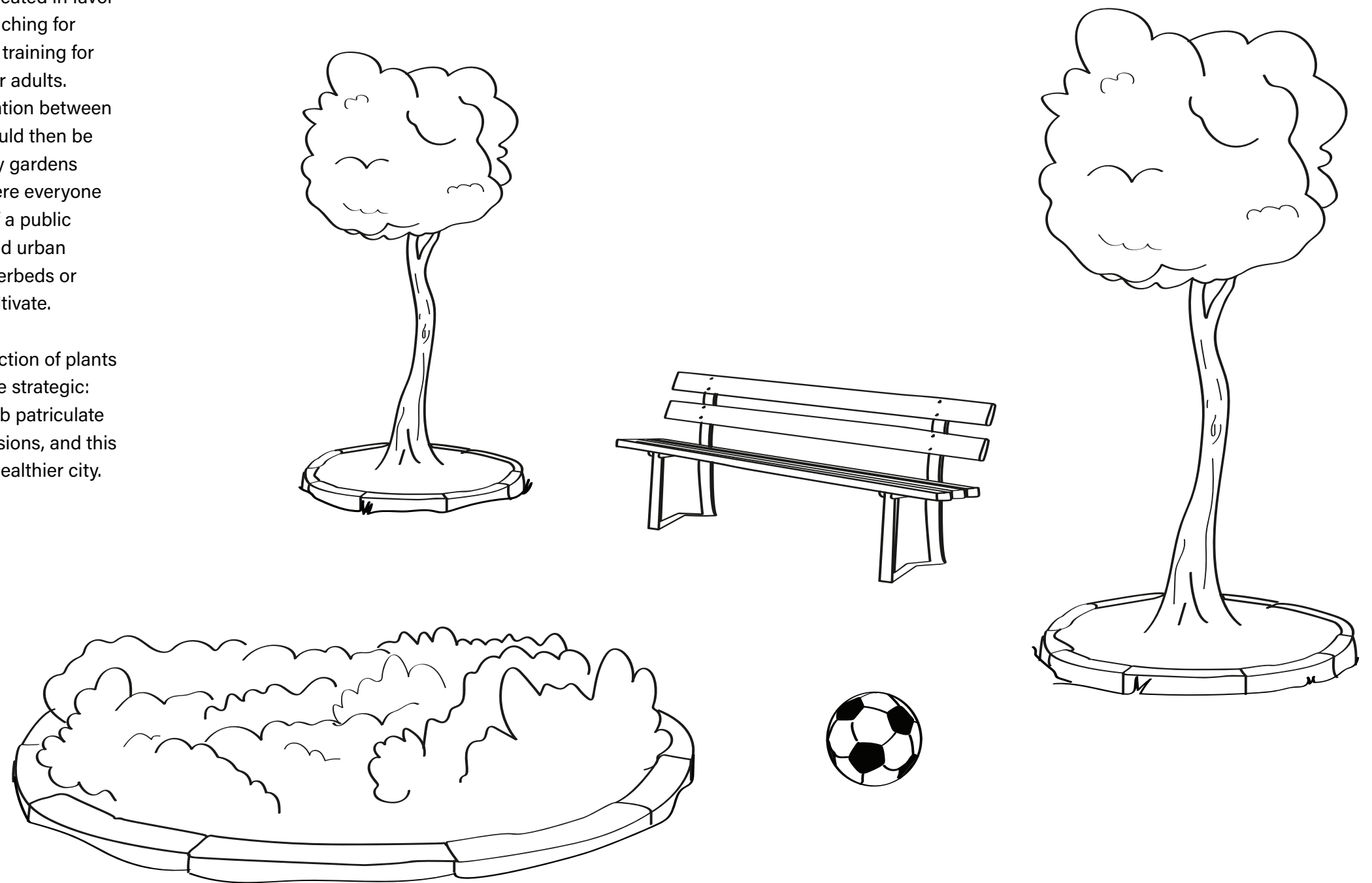
By keeping the idea of pragmatism, and therefore by excluding the demolition of buildings and the creation of real agricultural fields, we could turn our gaze to a typology of space that is often underrated, THE PUBLIC SPACE.

If we think about these areas from the point of view of their role, we can mention Marc Augé and his distinction between *places* and *non-places*²: in the public space alongside urban areas with a strong identity (places), we have a series of non-places, (car parks, gardens, traffic islands...) independent from the context and unable to bring any value.

These non-places could therefore become the perfect terrain for the integration of agriculture into the urban fabric: given its own identity, specific activities could be developed to strength the qualities of a particular area.

Thanks to this integration, various actions can also be created in favor of the community: teaching for children, courses and training for teenagers and jobs for adults. Sharing and collaboration between the neighborhood would then be facilitated: community gardens could be created, where everyone can own a small lot of a public space, or a widespread urban garden, in which flowerbeds or fences are used to cultivate.

Moreover, the introduction of plants and greenery could be strategic: many essences absorb particulate matter and CO2 emissions, and this would also lead to a healthier city.




CASE STUDY, Porta Romana


Considering the Porta Romana district, it is immediately possible to notice the amount of public space in the area: from the public park in Piazzale Libia to the open spaces of Viale Umbria, **the area has a total of 50000m² that can be used for agriculture.**


The district is also full of activities, especially a high density of restaurants (no franchising) and food sale points (supermarkets and retail trade).


Among these, there are Giannasi's urban poultry house, Cascina Cuccagna, Agricultural Market of Porta Romana and Viale Umbria street market - now abandoned - which are indeed points of reference in the neighborhood. Both for their role and their offer, these realities could become the main partners of the project, expanding their production in the neighbouring areas.


LEGENDA


 Food Retail


 Restaurants (no franchising)

 Project Partners

 Intervention areas

 Pta Romana District

 Neighbouring Areas

 Photographic survey (following pages)



OPPORTUNITIES

Characterized by parks, benches, parking lots and flowerbeds, contemporary public spaces are not actively experienced and therefore can be considered as "non-places": these are transit areas, possibly for walking the dog, jogging or reading.

We don't tend to take care of them and they often become a symbol of decay, especially in the suburbs of cities.

The choice of local and well-known partners and actors favors a revaluation of the territory: it is not an appropriation of public space, but a **reconversion to active public space**. It is exploited for a specific activity and at the same time brings benefits to the community and the area.

The characterization of these spaces through agriculture can create a connection with the local territory that can encourage greater sharing and the introduction of a new typology of space.

The term *public* will acquire a different value because a public space will be one that I can take care of and from which I can get work and food. It will be a healthy space, an oasis in the city.

1.



2.



1. Piazza Buozzi
2. Piazzale Libia - Viale Cirene

THE VILLAGE

The desire to reconvert public spaces arises from the need for change.

The city, its economic and social urban fabrics can't be modified by scratch. It is necessary to intervene with many small actions to be able to remodel the system over time. Such as planting of trees, moving parking lots to extra-urban structures, expanding the infrastructure network... These actions are part of **a way of thinking that aims to put the person at the center and make urban spaces more liveable.**

With Porta Romana Village project, not only the person is at the center, but also the city: the blocks will become real agricultural areas with semi-temporary structures. They will host courses and companies, shared gardens and small farms, each area will be characterized by its own commercial and social identity (ethnicity, typology of activities, typology of productions...).

Il progetto è una provocazione. The project is a provocation. We said that "let's not go back to normalcy..." until recently, but we are not doing anything to avoid it. In Milan many people have started to look for urban farmhouses and natural areas a few kilometers from the city. There is a research and rediscovery of nature, clean air and natural products.

Rather than building another skyscraper (A2A skyscraper, Lodi Station, Milano), why don't we reclaim public spaces? This provocation is also inspired by Orizzontale's thought about the function of these spaces: they must not be seen as places of contagion but as areas where we can find our balance, far from urban rhythms and the chaos of the city. These are spaces that should not be a symptom of decay, but a place for sharing, socializing and community.

3. Via Tiraboschi
4. Viale Umbria - Via Sigieri



1.



2.



3.

