

ALONG WITH THE PROGRESSIVE BUILDING TECHNOLOGY AND MASSIVE URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY AGE, THE FUNCTIONAL AND FORMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR URBAN PUBLIC SPACE IS CHANGING AS WELL. AS A YOUNG BRANCH OF MODERN MATHEMATICS, TOPOLOGY HAS GRADUALLY PENETRATED INTO THE ARCHITECTURAL FIELD. IT BREEDS ALTERNATIVE THINKING METHODS WITH ITS BRAND-NEW SPATIAL DIMENSION, WHICH MAKES IT ONE OF THE HEATED TRENDS IN PRESENT URBAN PROJECTS.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC SPACES A TOPOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Historical European cities have a peculiar urban fabric which unify buildings and blocks in a whole and compact environment. At the opposite, in contemporary cities, this character gets completely lost, and public spaces are located among buildings of various scale and style. One of the problematic issues of historical cities today is the visual and physical split between old and new fabrics, urban spaces, and blocks. My research, which is based on a comparative analysis of case-studies and on exercises of architectural and urban design, states that public spaces can play a pivotal role as transitional spaces between urban fragments belonging to different historical ages. Nowadays, pushed from the changes of contemporary architecture, public spaces mutate their nature, such as squares grown in vertical direction and complex spaces ar-

ticulated in multiple layers, often more integrated with the facades and interior space of the surrounding buildings. For instance, the recently built Piazza Gae Aulenti, in Milan, appears being wrapped into the building. Cantilever structure is now widely applied to modern architectures, which leave the ground floor open public spaces while upper floors building. Moreover, each floor plan of a contemporary architecture could shares different shapes and even positions. In this case, urban morphology is no longer comprehensive to analysis of urban design and public space, because it is not able to demonstrate vertical information. Then, my research is addressed to a series of selected public squares in Milan, analyzing construction timelines and regarding how their impact is, in reference with connecting the low-density areas with high-density

ones, developing new relations among the surrounding buildings, exploiting new topological characters and potential qualities.