FASHION, DEATH, AND RE-BIRTH: REGENERATING MILAN'S DECOMMISSIONED RAIL YARDS TOWARDS ECOLOGICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND CULTURAL ATTUNEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

As 'cities of the dead,' cemeteries are the utmost reflection of the culture, collective memory, and dominant societal values throughout history. The evolution of design for cemeteries in Italy especially, demonstrate these narratives, visualizing the true significance of dominant social, cultural, and political structures that shape the landscapes around us. As a result of a historic aspiration for the monumental, a tension has long existed between architecture and landscape, within the design of Italian cemeteries. Fashion, Death, and Re-Birth challenges the dominant

practices used in designing landscapes of grief and memory, within the context of Italian cemeteries, to reveal new approaches better suited to provide healing and celebration, at two of Milan's decommissioned rail yards - Porta Genova and San Cristoforo. All the while, establishing connections between the cultural significance of Italian architecture and Italian fashion.

This project connects ideas of grief, with landscape restoration, expanding perceptions of grief for people, to include the loss felt by a disconnection to landscape and culturally and / or ecologically significant systems - resulted from transformations in cities over time. By designing a place for spiritual rejuvenation, through acts of celebrating culture and immersing oneself amongst urban ecology around Milan's historic Naviglio Grande, this project positions landscape design as a tool through which we can rekindle our innate human connection to nature in birth, through life, and in death.

Fashion, Death, and Re-Birth Regenerating Milan's Decommissioned Rail Yards

Towards Ecological, Spiritual and Cultural Attunement

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land which I learn on, is the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əǧəm (Musqueam) First Nation.

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Ti amo tutti.



Fig. 2. Nonno tending to his garden, Sabrina Careri

## POSITIONALITY

The heart of my project traces back to the small towns of Locri and Castelpetroso Italy, through the lives of four incredible people – Candida, Felice, Melina, and Cosomo - who risked their lives in search of a better future for themselves and their children, migrating from Italy to Canada after World War II, with little to no education nor money. I am fortunate to call these four individuals my grandparents, who because of their sacrifice, have given me the ability to pursue a life full of opportunity. *This project is dedicated to them and is a love letter to our Italian heritage. I am grateful to have learned from them where I am from.* 

Like most Italian grandchildren, I too was raised by my grandparents who taught me the value of Italian culture and growing something from nothing. After countless hours with my Nonno (grandfather) in the garden, working the soil, recounting all the vegetables he's grown, I was saddened to learn that he had been laid to rest behind a marble wall, separated from the environment he loved the most - his garden.

To tend to our grief of their passing, my family and I have made it part of our Sunday routine to visit their place of rest, which is in a traditional grandeur Italian-style mausoleum, in Ontario.

Although beautiful, this space often leaves me feeling even more disconnected from my grandparents, as it is not reflective of the cultural value for natural systems that they ingrained in me. This sparked an interest and investigation on the origins of this cultural obsession with Italian grandeur mausoleum architecture in death, and a deeper meaning on landscapes of grief.

## INTRODUCTION

As the birthplace of landscape architecture, cemeteries function at the nexus between culture, religion, sustainability, politics, and art. The history, evolution, and design of Italian cemeteries above all, clearly demonstrate these narratives, visualizing the true significance of dominant social, cultural and political structures within the landscape. As 'cities of the dead,' cemeteries over time have gained importance in reflecting the mythologies and collective memories of the Italian culture. Notably, in the face of Italian diaspora, mass emigration of Italians to cities across world has heightened and reinforced the cultural values attributed to these landscapes of memory.

This project challenges the dominant practices used in designing landscapes of grief and memory, within the context of Italian cemeteries, to reveal new approaches better suited to provide healing and celebration, at two of Milan's decommissioned rail yards - Scalo Porta Genova and Scalo San Cristoforo. At the foundation, lies a connection between grief and landscape restoration, expanding perceptions of grief for people, to include the loss felt by a disconnection to landscape and culturally and / or ecologically significant systems. By designing a place for spiritual rejuvenation, through acts of celebrating culture and immersing oneself amongst urban ecology around Milan's historic Naviglio Grande, this project challenges ideas of 'the monumental' and positions landscape design as a tool through which we can rekindle our innate human connection to nature in birth, through life, and in death.

As the aspiration of a rising bourgeoise, the monumental Italian cemetery can be traced back to the Middle Ages. Remarkably, during the highly influential period of the picturesque garden movement during the nineteenth-century across Europe, this model was rejected in Italy, in favour of the 'monumental' (Malone, 2017). Over time, a social hierarchy of the dead was established where city-center churches and mausoleums became a sign

### 'attunement'

noun

the act of making aware and harmonious.

of wealth, power, and privilege for the elite, and suburban landscaped burial grounds were created for the poor (Malone, 2017; Worpole, 2003). As a result, there is often a rather unfortunate societal stigma and sometimes negative connotation associated with inground burial.

These ideas are grounded in the typical societal fixation of status symbols and expectations, which are paired with the rather common impulse in our daily lives to place emphasis on luxury and what is seen as desirable. These ideas then justify peculiar customs and the desire for opulence in death (Mitford, 2013). Traditionally, the garden cemetery was perceived to be inappropriate for the Italian context, with ideas that it denoted 'individualism' and 'private commemoration'. Monumental architectural-based burial on the other hand, was seen as lavish and expensive pertaining to 'collective memory' and 'political imperatives' (Malone, 2017).

These ideologies are still held, and are further fueled by generations-worth of heavy investment made in designing state-of-the-art Italian mausoleum architecture, in addition to Italy's social political history. Over time, this has created the mausoleum's often-neglected and rather lacklustre counterpart - the surrounding garden cemetery landscape - a marker of cemeteries across Italy, within the densely developed urban cities.

In a similar manner to this infatuation for the monumental, and the expression of elegance and craftsmanship in Italian cemeteries throughout history, Italian fashion is too linked with these ideas of beauty and opulence. As such, this project draws connections between these two markers of Italian culture - cemeteries and fashion.

Known as a cultural center of Italy, the City of Milan located in the Lombardy Region, is a world capital of fashion and design, heavily ingrained within the rich

## LITERATURE REVIEW

social and political history of the country.

The landscape of Milan is reflective of these dominant societal values, especially accentuated in the design of the most famous monumental Italian cemetery across Italy - the Cimitero Monumentale di Milano. This rich history in culture and landscape which centers around agriculture, industry, and water heritage - in addition to the prevalence of design across the city, situates Milan as the optimal study city for this research project.

This study began by developing a strong understanding on all seven the great rail yards of Milan - known as the 'Scali Ferroviari di Milano.' Two of the seven railyards - Scalo Porta Genova and Scalo San Cristoforo – were then selected to propose a design for, as the sites of also the last remaining Milanese Canals - known as the 'Navigli di Milano.' This study included a historic analysis on the overlap between ideas around burial, and the rise and eventual demise of industry and water navigation throughout the history of Milan. Furthermore, precedents and practices of Italian cemeteries in Italy, and of public parks around the world, were studied and compared, with the potential of being applied to the speculative future for the site. This included practices aimed at developing a new relationship to nature in cities, tending to grief, and the transformation of postindustrial sites for ecological restoration. In addition to this, the design of the site was pursed using both a conceptual link and study of Italian textiles, as well as the framework and vision for the railyards, as stipulated by the Comune di Milano.

In challenging the dominant views of cemetery gardens, ethno-botanic based principles were utilized, developing a language of healing through landscape design within this project. This was intended to strengthen Milanese-botanic identity, the connection to agricultural heritage, and tending to the loss of connection to nature across the densely developed industrial context of Milan.

Ultimately, this project proposes a new way in which landscape can be understood in its ability to tend to grief by expanding the ideas of what it means to grieve, putting feelings of loss, and emotions tied to landscapes of personal and cultural significance, at the forefront of the design.



this is the recipe of life said my mother as she held me in her arms as I wept think of those flowers you plant in the garden each year they will teach you that people too

must wilt fall root rise in order to bloom

- Rupi Kaur, the sun and her flowers

As landscape architects, our approach to design thinking cannot be untangled from the environmental, social, and economic problems which our profession aims to solve. This is because our profession is inherently subject to the wide array of political and social systems that sustain us. Despite our greatest efforts, landscapes "reflect the values and cultures of those who create them, and they have symbolic meaning to people who interact with them" (Shelly & Hollen, 2023, p. 220).

This ability to reflect power differentials within societies, is arguably greater in landscapes of remembrance, as these spaces testify to a timeline of dominant social, economic, religious, technical, and garden architectural developments (Fischer, 2021). The Italian fashion of death - the desire for the architectural monumental over the garden picturesque - is a strong example of this socio-cultural subjectivity in landscape, which is shaped by forces of (re) affirming dominant societal values. Consequently, this has resulted in a predetermined, culturally constructed approach to death in landscape that is arguably not an authentic act of remembering our loved ones.

This literature review first considers the dominant socio-cultural values that are (re)affirmed through an orchestrated farewell. Next, it synthesizes existing methodological approaches that challenge this participation in a culturally constructed approach to death. Finally, it synthesizes the existing scholarship, which assess the success of landscape architecture thus far, in attending to grief in design.

In examining these existing theoretical and methodological discourses, the intention is to develop a stronger foundation for this design project within the context of landscape architecture. Thereby, in the future, enhancing the ability of the profession to provide healing, through new ways of tending to grief and remembrance.

## (RE)AFFIRMING SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES THROUGH AN ORCHESTRATED **FAREWELL:**

There are two attributes in which all humans - or arguably all living things for that matter - share: birth and death. In the case of the former, birth is more often spoken of with excitement, eagerness, and joy. However, there is great difficulty in suggesting a unitary view of death, given that the conceptualization of death across cultures differs so widely. The construct of "culture" is most widely regarded as the characteristics and knowledge of any given group of people. This encompasses customary beliefs on all aspects of life including, but not limited to, language, social habits, religion, music, art, and even the perceptions surrounding death and dying. In attempting to explain the cultural values which are (re) affirmed through customary traditions surrounding death, various values were examined in the context of culture as both a social construct, as well as through genetic heritage.

First and foremost, the literature written by English author Jessica Mitford has attributed peculiar practices around death to four primary attributes - one of which, and the most applicable to this conversation, is a societal pressure to keep up with our neighbours (Mitford, 2014). This argument suggests that practices of remembering our loved ones, reaffirm societal status symbols and expectations, and fulfils the common desire in our daily lives to place emphasis on luxury. In this regard, the level of satisfaction of the bereaved towards feelings of remembrance, guilt, and remorse, is (re)affirmed based on the extent of sacrifice (in most cases, monetary) (Mitford, 2014).

In a similar manner, beliefs and approaches to death reinforce tradition related to practices of cultural heritage (Gire, 2014). There is an array of scholarship written on common death-related practices within varying cultural-heritages, and how each has peculiar

customs which suggests how death ought to occur. However, regardless of the specific ways in which death practices are manifested for a particular group, dominant social-psychological perspectives illustrate how rituals of remembrance fulfil a rite of passage for both the living and the deceased that is based on shared expectations (Gire, 2014; Minkjan, 2014; Prickett and Timmermans, 2022).

Ultimately, engaging in orchestrated rituals of remembrance, that are grounded in cultural customs, addresses existential questions surrounding a collective purpose and social bonding (Prickett and Timmermans, 2022). Multiple literary perspectives have concluded that doing so creates a process of transition and transformation, through which the bereaved learn to deal with grief and guilt (Gire, 2014; Minkjan, 2014; Prickett and Timmermans, 2022). As such, the literary discourse that exists, posits these acts of remembrance by a need for creating structure and meaning within the collective. This is through an integrative function that is intended to situate a new relationship that acknowledges the deceased through specific actions, within in the lives of the bereaved (Gire, 2014; Minkjan, 2014).

## CHALLENGING A CULTURALLY **CONSTRUCTED APPROACH TO DEATH:**

Understanding which cultural values are (re)affirmed through acts of remembering the deceased provides a theoretical framework for situating remembrance in landscape. The next step situates existing methodological approaches that begin to challenge this participation in a culturally constructed approach to death.

Previously, it was determined that the cultural affirmations, through acts of remembering the deceased, in dominant discourse is posited in the collective. However, through this examination of contemporary practices which challenge these

notions, it is revealed that these emerging acts of remembrance are instead situated more in the power of the individual, narrowing the gap between the social and the biological (Carson, 2011). These acts of remembrance transform cultural values into a proclamation of self-growth. This is evident through various actions that illustrate a newly exerted control over life and death, as well as modern shifting attitudes towards sustainability.

Contemporary discourse surrounding death, illustrate how our lives (through advancements in science and technology) have an increased level of control, becoming more calculable, predictable, and efficient, including our approach to death (Carson, 2011; Young 2007). This is most evident in research which supports an increasing interest in medically assisted death, for instance (Young, 2007). Whereas life and death have historically been perceived as uncontrollable, this growing body of literature supports how advancements in science, supported through acts of legislation, empower an individual to make decisions about their lives, in a seemingly uncontrollable situation (Young, 2007).

Other contemporary practices that exemplify this newly exerted control on the individual breaking free from the uniforms of death, are also seen in literature most notably through discourse on emerging practices such as the living funeral - to honor the dying person before death - the deathbed ceremonial farewell, the uptake in video recording an oral ethical will, and the revival of the "do-it-yourself" funeral (Carson, 2011). Ultimately, in contrast to traditional communal rituals of remembrance, "the power vested in these invented rituals is the authentic expression of the individual self and interpersonal relations that personalize a previously institutionalized occasion" (Carson, 2011, p. 3).

This newly profound level of control is further supported in literature that presents a shift toward sustainability in both life and death. There is an inarguable growing awareness of our environmental footprint in life, yet dominant scholarship rarely considers the ecological impact of death (Slominski, 2023). However, in recent years newer eco-oriented death practices have emerged, which are increasing in popularity. Most scholarship on these methods situate these newer practices within dialogue related to land scarcity, and portrays an increasing adoption of acts such as green burials, conservation burials, water cremation, and natural organic reduction (human composting) (Carson, 2011; Slominski, 2023).

As such, this uptake in earth-friendly practices further supports this argument of a newly profound level of control. These newer practices are also transforming conventional remembrance services for the collective in a way that better serves those in search of a more family-oriented approach to after-death care (Carson, 2011). Making controlled decisions about one's body, for example, choosing a burial method that reduces an individual's ecological footprint on earth after death, provides a level of autonomy and empowerment on the part of the individual. Once again, this illustrates the reclamation of ritual, away from commercial interests, towards the personalized.

## ATTENDING TO GRIEF AND **REMEMBRANCE IN CURRENT DESIGN THINKING:**

Through examining existing theoretical and methodological discourse around acts of remembrance in death, these ideologies can now be more effectively situated within the context of landscape architecture. Landscape provides an opportunity to embed cultural and traditional practices that do not often get conveyed in everyday contexts, including through acts of grief and remembrance. By bringing together "the relational, affective, emotional, and cognitive skills," landscapes "create and maintain social networks and promote

meaningful experiences, closely weaving together land, culture, and health" (Marques, 2019, p. 14). Scholarship on the design of landscapes of death, grief, and remembrance has consistently presented a lack of innovation, particularly regarding cemeteries where land is contracted in perpetuity - as is the case in North America (Bowring, 2017; Warpole, 2003). One of the prevailing explanations for this is the fact that contemporary society resists and suppresses the feeling of melancholy (Bowring, 2017). This is further driven through contemporary conditions, which are dominated by a rather single-minded pursuit of happiness, ultimately turning us away from contemplation and the celebration of death (Bowring, 2017; Curl 1980). These ideas are also evident in other dominate sociological and psychological theories which argue that death is still seen as taboo in some societies, and that humans retain an inherent denial of death, thus impacting the way landscapes of grief are designed (Tradii & Robert, 2019; Warpole, 2003). As a result, landscapes of remembrance often exhibit a lack of imagination and capacity for contemplation (Bowring, 2017; Warpole, 2003). Especially regarding remembrance in the landscape for sites of conscience (e.g., public memorials), scholarship continues to emphasize a greater potential in the future for imagination - more specifically empathic imagination (Herborn & Hutchinson, 2014). This recognition reaffirms that design thinking thus far in landscape architecture, in attending to grief and remembrance, has consistently failed.

## **CONCLUSION:**

This problem then begs the question of, how can landscape architecture be better suited to attend to grief and acts of remembrance in design? There exists an abundance of literature which speak more generally on the design of cemeteries, specifically. However, there is little which exists that situates the profession of landscape architecture in the evolving nature of grief, which proposes innovative

## PRECEDENT STUDY

approaches forward that better equip landscape architects for both design thinking, but also for the individual and the temporal nature of emotion.

Of the literature that does exist, aimed at addressing grief and remembrance more effectively in landscape, the research of Jacky Bowring is widely regarded. In Melancholy and the Landscape, Bowring (2017) recognizes that landscape holds within, the ability to address grief, and the natural habitat for melancholy, "as the locus of places of contemplation, memory, death and sadness" (Bowring, 2017, p.4). As such, the author proposes a new methodological approach to landscape design, that situates melancholy in the context of memory as a wound that is kept open. In doing so, the author suggests, the vital role of contemplation in the landscape is more fully realized. This allows melancholia to serve a social purpose by functioning instead as an agent of social building, and reintroducing an emotional, phenomenal engagement to an individual's relationship to a place in the world (Bowring, 2017).

Bowring's situation of melancholy, although useful and acts as precedent for locating emotion within landscape, arguably still exists within the binaries. Just as Bowring suggests new ways of situating melancholia, future design research could consider how landscape architecture could attend to more than a single emotion at once.

In attempting to understand a culturally constructed approach to death, this literature review has revealed that design thinking thus far in landscape architecture, in attending to grief and remembrance, has consistently failed. Moving forward, this project aims to build upon this idea of melancholy in the context of memory as a wound that is kept open to explore how we, as landscape architects, can then consider the evolving nature of social-cultural values, a more robust understanding of landscape grief, and acts of remembrance in design.

as small-scale precedent regarding cemetery design This precedent study first investigates three cemeterybased projects as well as one ecological restoration, within the function of an urban park. This project each offering their own useful insight for speculating demonstrated innovative approaches to new forms how to situate landscape architecture more effectively of burial, in a manner that is ecologically driven in places of grief, respite, and healing. Each of the and biodegradable. In reducing the scale to that three were selected based on the individual value they of a single path within a park, this project focuses could provide and their relevance to the project topic on ephemerality and looks towards the future, in proposing an eventual return to a forest at the end and site. Furthermore, each demonstrates insight related to large, medium and small scale interventions, of the life cycle for the design project. This project across different temporal scales of the past, present, exemplifies a rewilding approach to life and death and future, respectively. by enhancing environmental values and situating the materials used in the design, within larger ecological Beginning with the Monumental Cemetery of processes.

Staglieno in Italy, this project was selected as it acts as precedent for large-scale Italian cemetery design. More specifically, this project visualizes one of few instances where Italy has attempted to contend with the juxtaposition between the architectural monumental and the garden picturesque cemetery. Examining this project visualizes how landscape architecture can attend to culture, as the evolution of the cemetery exemplifies the power of both societal influences and heritage, as well as community-based programming.

The second project, the Garden Mausoleum in the American Lakewood Cemetery, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, acts as precedent for medium-scale cemetery design. This reduces the lens to the scale of a building and its immediate surrounding, which provided valuable insight on modern design typologies that support a more highly integrated approach between architecture and landscape. Examining this project demonstrated the importance of conscious design regarding materiality and textures for landscapes of grief, and the importance to support a range of opportunities for melancholy and contemplation, for both the individual, as well as the communal.

Next, the last cemetery project examined, the Forest Path in Roques Blanques Metropolitan Cemetery, acts

Finally, the last project examined is an ecological restoration project, located in Toronto, Ontario, known as the Evergreen Brick Works. This project in particular, was selected as it exemplifies a successful transformation of a post-industrial site into a place for environmental refuge for both people and urban ecology, within the context of a dense urban fabric. Now known as an environmental and artistic educational hub, through a nature-first approach, the design of Evergreen Brick Works is rooted in ecological and cultural heritage. As cemeteries grapple with the lack of interment space around the world, there must be more strategic planning and design of these under-utilized, and often highly contaminated, sites across urban cities to better serve the growing and aging global population. Through special considerations related to brown field adaptive re-use and ecological restoration, Evergreen Brick Works acts as useful precedent for going about the transformation of these types of landscapes, to better serve the community by deploying countless naturepositive planning strategies.

## MONUMENTAL CEMETERY OF STAGLIENO



Location: Genoa / Liguria / Italy Designer: Architect Carlo Barabino (until 1835) / Architect Giovanni Battista Resasco (after) Established: 1851 Aprox. Size: 100,0000m2 (250 acres) Key Themes: Cultural geography, Italian monumental, Communal tradition, Cemetery programming

### **OVERVIEW:**

Dating back to its founding, the Monumental Cemetery of Staglieno was planned and designed to be "the city of the dead," and over time has become well recognized as "the mirror of Genoa's history" (Guano, 2022). The design for Staglieno cemetery was in large, influenced by the dominant social, political, and cultural functions of the 19th century. This era positioned cemeteries as museums to showcase art and civic virtue (Malone, 2017). The competition that existed in society between local aristocracy and the city's rising bourgeoise resulted in a focused construction for the cemetery on marble statuaries and monumental tombs (Guano, 2022).

The most notable transformation of Staglieno occurred in the 1870's, when a picturesque extension was added to the neoclassical plan, through Resasco's design for the landscaped additions, adding to the Barabino's well-established neoclassical cores (Malone, 2017). This is where Staglieno Cemetery truly distinguishes itself from other Italian cemeteries

Fig. 3. Landscape area expansion from the 1870's. Source: (Georgia, 2023)

of its kind. Here, there exists a visible combination of the two contrasting approaches to 19th century European cemetery design: the architectural complex designed by Barabino which focuses on the built and monumental, in contrast to the naturalistic aspects and picturesque structures designed by Resasco (Comune di Genova, 2012).

Staglieno's reputation has grown for not only it's monumental architecture and sculptures, but also through its use as a space frequented by locals and tourists alike for storytelling, poetry readings, walking tours, and outdoor theatre performances (Guano, 2022). These informal uses of the cemetery have largely become one of its most crucial characteristics. Staglieno has essentially created a platform for selfemployment for Genoa's middle class, who facilitate the contemplation of mortality in the landscape through the evocative power of storytelling (Guano, 2022). By linking the remembrance and memorial of those who have passed, to the experiences of visitors to the city, these individuals have learned to contextualize their lives, the lives of those deceased, and their shared cultural heritage through the cemetery landscape.



## **EVALUATION:**

The Monumental Cemetery of Staglieno exemplifies an instance in Italy where the juxtaposition between the architectural monumental and the garden picturesque cemetery design are both visible. In evaluating the success of the design for the cemetery, it is difficult to disassociate the site apart from its historic and cultural significance. The beauty of Staglieno is inarguable, and despite the extensive history - where many other cemeteries around the world often become deserted after the ceasing of active interment - Stagelino has found success in maintaining visitors to the site.

I do question, however, how much of this success is more so attributed to experiential qualities of the This project demonstrates how residents have built and monumental, as opposed to the naturalistic, developed a local culture around the cemetery and or even the combination of the two. Stagelieno have used the landscape to re-inscribe the cemetery as Cemetery presents great success in the visible variety a mirror of the city. In this instance, the community of artistic forms of storytelling through both its engages with the landscape informally, in a way that is design and use. Here, individuals interrupt a sense of playful, surrounding the mystery and contemplation normalcy and tradition that is typical of cemeteries, of death. This project can help me to situate healing in my GP, within ideas around mortality and and instead encourages visitors to engage with Staglieno's history of the living and dead. This project contemplation of death, by turning the cemetery into also acts as useful precedent for studies on guerilla or a platform for understanding the complexities of informal urbanism in cities, within a cemetery setting. life for the grieving bereaved. Ultimately, Staglieno situates cultural symbolism and ceremony within Although this informality poses positive implications the landscape and acts as a reminder of the power for stimulating a local culture and economy, it is unclear whether this outcome was intentional or of design for the purpose of community, within the anticipated by the designers (assuming not), and context of attending to grief. I question what that means regarding the level of success of the cemetery's initial design concept.



Fig. 5. Local Genoese performance. Source: (Guano, 2022)

## **TAKEAWAYS:**

The evolution of Staglieno Cemetery acts as precedent for large scale Italian cemetery design, but more specifically visualizes one of the few instances where Italy has attempted to contend with this juxtaposition between the architectural monumental and the garden picturesque. The project also provides a greater contextual understanding for my GP on the influence of dominant cultural, social, and political functions, which have, and continue to, manipulate the way cemetery landscapes (especially Italian ones) are designed. Finally, Staglieno Cemetery exemplifies the power of community-based programming in a cemetery setting.

## THE GARDEN MAUSOLEUM (LAKEWOOD CEMETERY)



Location: Minneapolis / Minnesota / USA Designer: Halvorson Design Partnership / HGA Architects & Engineers Established: 2012 Aprox. Size: 10,000m2 (2.5 acres) Key Themes: Burial typology, Landform building, Memorialization in materials

## **OVERVIEW:**

Founded over 150 years ago, Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis has served for generations as the foremost resting place for Minnesota's citizens (HGA, n.d.). Constructed in 2012, the Garden Mausoleum was designed in response to meet a challenge faced by Lakewood – one that is familiar to cemeteries around the world. This was the need to create a 21st-century commemorative facility that addresses both the urgent need for more interment space, but also fits well with the distinguished, landmark landscape (Halvorson Design Partnership, n.d.). The most defining characteristic about this project is how the structure mends beautifully into the cemetery landscape, tucking about three-quarters of the building into a south-facing hillside (Czarnecki, 2013).

Aiming to commune directly with the cemetery's past, this project intends to heighten the close relationship between nature and spirituality, to provide visitors with a transformative experience through a close connection between architecture and nature (McMenamin, 2012; Czarnecki, 2013). On the

Fig. 6. Perspective aerial view of the Garden Mausoleum. Source: (Crosby, n.d.) exterior, this multi-award-winning design features an accessible green roof that provides a seamless extension of the adjacent landscape (Halvorson Design Partnership, n.d.). While on the interior, natural light, circulation corridors, and large windows orient views towards the four-acre garden to overlook the surrounding cemetery (Halvorson Design Partnership, n.d.).

Designed in collaboration with the Garden Mausoleum, the landscape design is also noteworthy. It features a quiet zero-edge reflecting pool (which doubles as an active plaza when drained in the winter), groves of native trees, as well as a series of outdoor commemorative spaces that can host both larger events, and more intimate gatherings (Landezine Editors, 2013). Finally, in response to the divergence between the architectural and the natural, particular attention for the design of the project was paid to the contrast of materials and textures. Material selection drew on both memorial architectural traditions, as well as Lakewood's history, placing emphasis on the use of natural stone and developing contrast between light and dark, rough and smooth, as well as rustic and refined (Frearson, 2014).



## **EVALUATION:**

The Garden Mausoleum exemplifies a solution to the The Garden Mausoleum in Lakewood Cemetery lack of land available for interment space, showcased acts as precedent for a medium-scale modern by the structure designed by HGA. This structure approach to landscape design, which boasts a more highly integrated approach between architecture also takes advantage of the growing funerary trends and landscape. Through research, I have identified a towards cremation and using density to serve other above-ground burial methods. However, what is most long history of tension in cemetery design between valuable is how the design of the structure maintains the built and the natural, especially regarding Italian the landscape by Halvorson Design Partnership as the cemeteries. The design of the project is a model dominant feature at the experiential scale. Likewise, that exists at the intersection between a support of the careful consideration of materiality and views, both below-and-above-ground burial methods. In fact, it was one of few projects that I found which showcases a blend of the historic landscape and a reinforcement of the relationship between spirituality uses landform as an approach to burial and cemetery design (other examples looked at the construction of and the earthbound. historic Neolithic-style Long Barrows).

The principal designers for this project have also acknowledged Maya Lin's Vietnam War Memorial in When it comes to the Italian monumental as the Washington, D.C. as inspiration for their concept. dominant approach to death, through my GP This is because their design at a larger scale, like I can consider how a similar approach to the Lin's, successfully metaphorizes death, evocative of Garden Mausoleum may be used to satisfy both the descent into the earth and a resurgence back up our atavistic human need for permanence - one (Czarnecki, 2013). This goes simultaneously with their of the defining characteristics supported through choice of materials at a more minute scale, where the mausolea - and more eco-friendly approaches to designers effectively position the use of materials and death. The project also serves as a reminder for more tactile qualities in respect to memory in landscape. minute considerations in design thinking. This is One critique I may offer is how this design maintains showcased through the consideration made towards the "Lawn Plan" cemetery. Although this approach the contrast of materials, all-weather design, and the may arguably speak better to the surrounding historic importance of cemetery design to support a range of landscape, the design for the structure maintains opportunities for melancholy and contemplation, for outdated practices of sterile, manicured, ecologically both the individual as well as the communal. insignificant turf grass as the dominate planting material.

**TAKEAWAYS:** 

## THE FOREST PATH (ROQUES BLANQUES METROPOLITAN CEMETERY)



Location: El Papiol / Barcelona / Spain **Designer: Batlleiroig** Year Completed: 2017 – in progress Aprox. Size: 2000m2 (0.5acres) Key Themes: Urban Park cemetery, Ephemerality, Eco-friendly burial practices, Nature-based solutions

## **OVERVIEW:**

Located within Collserola Natural Park - a protected space in the middle of one of the densest urban areas of Barcelona - the Forest Path or "Cami dels bosc" is part of the last extension of Roques Blanques Cemetery, founded in 1985 (Rubio, 2022; Landezine Editors, 2023). Roques Blanques Cemetery at the time, was in need of more accessible spaces for funerary practices, but required that the design preserve the environmental values of the site within the context of Collserola Natural Park and promote the revitalization of local biodiversity. As such, the project is based on respect and conservation for the environment. Batlleiroig's design consists of a large, very elongated green terrace with a main circulation path to enter the forest, and an innovative Krainer wall structure, which forms the two main design features: the Forest Path itself and the Butterfly Garden (Landezine Editors, 2023).

The Krainer wall is a bio-engineered natural retaining system, designed to be built efficiently with natural materials from the surrounding landscape. The

Fig. 9. Project Perspective Diagram. Source: (Batlleiroig Arquitectura, n.d.)

structure provides adequate space for the new graves, all the while incorporating existing and new vegetation (Batlleiroig Arquitectura, n.d.; Landezine Editors, 2023). In the future, as the wooden logs and organic urns disintegrate, a slope of overgrown plants will take over, which will sufficiently support the land, and further evolve through the changing of seasons (Landezine Editors, 2023). Not only does this consolidate the natural slope, but it also uses natural materials to control run-off water, and situates the materials to be part of the natural bio-dynamics of the ecosystem in which it is located (Landezine Editors, 2023).

The Krainer wall also boasts local flora and fauna in establishing the Butterfly Garden - a burial space that hosts specific plant species, intended to enhance biodiversity, and revitalize the site within the larger park (Batlleiroig Arquitectura, n.d.). Special consideration was made for the selected vegetation to favour the presence of pollinators using native plant species, which have adapted to local conditions.



Fig. 10. The Krainer Wall and Gravestones. Source: (Surroca, n.d.)

## **EVALUATION:**

The Forest Path in Roques Blanques Cemetery proposes an innovative approach to new forms of burial, in a manner that is ecologically driven and fully biodegradable. This is especially important as cemeteries must learn to contend with a shift in burial traditions but are challenged with issues related to a lack of interment space. This project is also situated within larger conversations in the practice of landscape architecture, around land scarcity and urban sprawl, resulting in a loss of landscape and healthy ecosystems in cities across the world. Furthermore, the designers successfully propose a duality in their choice of materials, where there was particular attention in the design to living and dead matter. Successfully relating the degradation of dead material (the logs) with the growth of living elements (plants), is evocative of both the cycle of life, and the idiosyncrasy of cemeteries as spaces for both the living and the dead. The project proposes a successful small-scale low-carbon footprint intervention, regenerating the existing forest and reactivating life in the natural park for human and non-human actors. This regeneration and small-scale does have me thinking more critically about the longevity of a project like this, and how it may be incorporated in my future GP. Nevertheless, Batlleiroig's design effectively showcases how to support ecological systems in design, especially in the context of cemeteries, and bring people closer together with nature in life and death, all within the dense urban fabric of Barcelona.





Fig. 11. The Butterfly Garden. Source: (Surroca, n.d.

## **TAKEAWAYS:**

The Forest Path in Roques Blanques Cemetery acts as a precedent for speculating how the future of cemeteries could attend to a shift in people's relation to burial traditions and grapple with issues related to interment space. This project exemplifies new methods that are focused on more naturefriendly approaches to burial. The temporal nature to the design proposition also showcases how I can incorporate ephemerality within my GP, which can act as the memorial itself, and how land and resources can be used more efficiently. This ephemerality is also illustrated in the eventual return to a forest at the end of the life cycle for the design project, which further aids in the larger function as the site as an urban park. This project exemplifies a rewilding approach to life and death by enhancing environmental values and situating the materials used in the design, within larger ecological processes. Not only does this restore biodiversity, but it also provides opportunity for human beings to develop empathy toward the natural world. The project assists individuals in recognizing the physical and mental value of being in nature in life and death, as well as the intrinsic value of all living beings (human and non-human) within the context of cemetery landscape. Through my GP, I hope to explore and further develop this rewilding approach to healing and care in the landscape through life and death, as I have already positioned cemeteries within the opportunity to be better equipped at healing grieving families.

## **EVERGREEN BRICK WORKS**



Location: Toronto / Ontario / Canada Designer: DTAH, Claude Cormier + Associes, and Dougan & Associates Year Completed: 2010 Aprox. Size: 165,000m2 (41 acres) Key Themes: Post-industrial, Ecological Reclamation, Site Remediation, Heritage Preservation

## **OVERVIEW:**

Nestled within the urban fabric of Canada's densest city, the Evergreen Brick Works has long-been adored as a cultural hub and natural oasis, which has played a pivotal role in Toronto's evolution.

The history of the site begins with the quarry, which is now filled with water, and contains geological evidence of plant and animal species that date back millions of years (Dean, 2012). This geological heritage has been studied by scholars from around the globe, making significant contributions to the understanding of historic patterns of climate change and the geological history of eastern Canada (Dean, 2012).

The site sits on a floodplain at the confluence of Mud Creek and the Don River, and these geological conditions - which has meant an abundance of clay on the site - resulted in a destined industrial success. This was further amplified by the Great Fire of Toronto in 1904 that outlawed wood as a primary

Fig. 12. Tiffany Commons Plaza Space. Source: (DTAH, n.d.)

building material, providing the means to construct many of Toronto's iconic masonry buildings (Dean, 2012).

From 1889 to 1984, the Don Valley Brick Works factory functioned as one of Canada's pre-eminent brickyards (DTAH, n.d.). This was until the quarry's natural resources began depleting in the mid 1980's, and what is now the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority purchasing the land in 1987, officially ending production two years later (Greenberg, 2019).

The Evergreen Organization, founded in 1991, led the re-naturalization, and the site was re-opened to the public in 2010 as the Evergreen Brick Works. Its design was finalized in partnership with the City of Toronto, and a large multi-disciplinary design team, who worked together to transform the abandoned site into an environmental education center, that boasts principles of nature, culture, and community development (DTAH, n.d.).



Fig. 13. Restored Quarry Garden., Sabrina Careri

## **EVALUATION:**

The Evergreen Brick Works site is used as a venue for artistic and educational opportunities, with a diverse landscape that draws from the ecology of the Don Valley. As a successful example of what reimagined green city space could be, the design of the site supports a diverse range of programming from captivating sculptures, and year-round exhibits and markets, weaving community, art, and sustainability.

The adaptive re-use of the buildings, which are interconnected by a series of public spaces and native of historic significance. landscapes, demonstrate a successful connection between the industrial past, and present-day This project demonstrates the value of cultural innovative ecological design principles of green infrastructure and explores an approach to adaptive cities. The design was in large, informed by the reuse, within the framework of sustainability. floodplain setting of the site (DTAH, n.d.). Through Although the site has become a center for interventions of flood protection, the site was raised environmental and artistic education, the industrial by one-half meter. This supported channels to direct legacy still remains intact. Through special water flow, and develop storm water ponds, all the considerations related to brown field adaptive re-use, while successfully incorporating an extensive native ecological restoration, energy features, and water planting program, permeable paving and harvesting conservation, as well as materials and resources, rainwater for reuse (DTAH, n.d). Evergreen Brick Works exemplifies countless naturepositive planning strategies that can help inform my GP. It is inarguable that accessible green spaces Through the successful ecological restoration, the site has become a cherished community asset and in highly dense urban regions are imperative to the wellbeing of the both future generations, as well as escape for individuals across the GTA. This is further supported through the "light touch and loose fit" the global climate. As such, the transformation of approach employed by the designers, intended to under-utilized landscapes in cities, especially those provide flexibility in programming needs over time, with post-industrial qualities, present a great potential to reconcile the needs of growing cities and aging based on community involvement, participation, advocacy and stewardship (Holmes, 2013). populations, with the needs of nature.



Fig. 14. Chimney Court area and historic brick, Sabrina Carer **TAKEAWAYS:** 

The Evergreen Brick Works acts as precedent for the transformation of post-industrial sites into vibrant community spaces, within a dense urban center. This project demonstrates the value of both ecological and cultural heritage in landscape, and establishes a nature-first approach to adaptive reuse. Heritage preservation and site remediation are the defining features of this project, showcasing opportunity to design in a way that accommodates frequent flooding, sub-grade soil contamination, as well as architecture

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## SCALI FERROVIARI DI MILANO





As a marker of prosperity and urban growth, the great rail yards of Milan – known as the 'Scali Ferroviari di Milano' – are an icon of the past Golden Ages, totalling over 1,300,000 square meters, located mainly along Milan's urban belt (EMBT, 2017; Mussinelli & Marchegiani, 2012). Throughout the last century, Milan has seen a mass relocation of large industrial plants, in place of tertiary economies, leaving the great rail yards in varying states of disuse (Mussinelli & Marchegiani, 2012; Wong, 2017). This has ultimately resulted in a substantially sized abandoned brownfield site surrounding the city, located at the intersection between the Milan historic center, and the corridors which radiate from the city, out to the wider Lombardy region (Miller et al., 2020).

Since the reclamation of the great rail yards back to the city (which began in the 1990's), countless conversations have taken place to speculate the future transformation of these seven connected abandoned railway yards – Farini, Porta Genova, San Cristofo, Greco-Breda, Porta Romana, Rogoredo, and Lambrate – into improved urban areas (Mussinelli & Marchegiani, 2012). Despite decades worth of public and professional consultation, the potential for these sites to include functions related to an urban park cemetery, has yet to be documented or explored. As such, the Milan Scali Ferroviari present a worthwhile opportunity for design intervention as the study site for this research project.

Fig. 15. Scali Ferroviari di Milano, municipal context map, Sabrina Careri

Fig. 16. Scalo Farini 2024, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 17. Scalo Greco-Breda 2024, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 18. Scalo Porta Romana 2024, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 19. Aerial view of Scalo Greco-Breda using Google Imagery, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 20. Aerial view of Scalo Farini using Google Imagery, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 21. Aerial view of Scalo San Cristoforo using Google Imagery Sabrina Car



Fig. 22. Aerial view of Scalo Rogoredo using Google Imagery,



Fig. 23. Aerial view of Scalo Porta Romana using Google Imagery, Sabrina Carer



Fig. 24. Aerial view of Scalo Porta Genova using Google Imagery, Sabrina Carer



Fig. 25. Aerial view of Scalo Lambrate using Google Imagery Sabrina Caret



## **HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

Milan's urban growth since the 19th century can be largely attributed to the interconnected great rail network, where a profound link exists between the success of the economy, the production of Milanese goods and services and rail transport (Pero, 2020). This striking link greatly impacted the city-layout, which is still visible in maps today. In the face of post-industrial realities, as well as the increased adoption of the automobile and road transport over the last 50 years, the consequential abandonment of these spaces commenced gradually, where today, the sites exist mostly disused (Prassoli, 2018).



Historic Photograph of Scalo Cristoforo. Source: (Dipartimento Architettura e Studi Urbani, 2014)

## **PAST POLITICS AND PLANS:**

Ideas for the abandoned railway redevelopment, and environmental regeneration of the mobility system, were long ignored in Milan arguably until 2005 with the launch of 'Project Scali Milano,' initiated by Ferrovie dello Stato (Italy's national state-owned railway holding company) and FS Sistemi Urbani (the Ferrovie dello Stato's property development company), in collaboration with the Municipality of Milan and the Lombardy Region (Mussinelli & Marchegiani, 2012). Conversation regarding the fate of the rail yards officially began with the signing of the 'Framework Agreement' that same year, which commenced an ongoing city-wide public consultation process to better define the future objectives and direction for the planning and design of the seven stations (Mussinelli & Marchegiani, 2012).

Plans for the railyards remained stagnant and piecemeal until December 2016 when the city launched a publicly open workshop titled 'To Create a New City from Rail Yards (Lusiardi, 2023). This workshop was intended to inform the preparation for the 'Scali Milano Programme Agreement' (the implementation plan), where five international architectural firms - EMBT (Benedetta Tagliabue), Mecanoo (Francine Houben), studio SBA (Stefano Boeri), MAD Architects (Ma Yansong), and Cino Zucchi Architetti (Cino Zucchi) - were asked to propose ideas for the disused railyards, revealing their proposals the following year at the 2017 Milan



Fig. 28. Scalo Rogoredo 2024, Sabrina Careri

Design Week (Wong, 2017). These five different visions of Milan for the coming decades, presented ideas surrounding public green space, social housing, and sustainable mobility. The document was signed that same year, representing one of the largest enhancement projects to-date in Italy and Europe, and the largest urban regeneration project for Milan, for the next 20 years (Italian Trade Agency, 2017).

### **FUTURE FERROVIARI:**

The five proposals by the international architectural firms set the foundation for the future of the sites, though none of them were officially adopted. Of the seven railway stations, currently five of them - Farini, San Cristoforo, Porta Romana, Greco-Breda, and Lambrate - have high-level proposals, which have been proclaimed by the Comune di Milano.

For Farini and San Cristoforo, designers at OMA and Laboratorio Permanente's have designed a masterplan, Agenti Climatici, which will turn the two abandoned yards into public parks intended to filter the city's air and water pollution (Crook, 2019).

For the Porta Romana site, the Architecture studios Diller Scofidio + Renfro, PLP Architecture and Carlo Ratti Associati have developed plans to convert the site into a park and the athletes' village for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, which will then be later transformed into a largely residential nature-oriented neighbourhood (Parkes, 2021). Porta Romana is the





Fig. 30. Scalo Lambrate 2024, Sabrina Careri

only rail yard where construction has commenced and is well underway.

For Greco-Breda and Lambrate, the proposals were selected through the international competition C40 Reinventing Cities - first and second edition respectively. L'innesto, the winning project for Greco Breda was designed by Architects at Barreca & LA Varra. Lambrate Streaming, the winning project for Lambrate, was lead by architects at Caputo Partnership International. Both proposals prioritize environmental sustainability, developing sustainable water management systems, and the development of affordable housing, public spaces, and support for local businesses (Reinventing Cities, n.d.).

## SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL INTENTIONS:

The regeneration of the great rail yards of Milan represents an important part of the urban discourse of Milan and the Lombardy Region, as well as the economic, cultural, and social histories of Italian metropolises. This has made implementation incredibly challenging as the site's significant heritage has been coupled with numerous logistical, relational, and functional limitations. These barriers are attributed to the considerable size of the estate as well as to degradation and pollution concerns, and the development of typical marginal uses that often follow the abandonment of European freight sites (Mussinelli & Marchegiani, 2012).

These elements have the potential to be redesigned in the future to better adapt to and meet the needs of contemporary and future social and ecological concerns, through Milanese context-specific design interventions. As dense urban cities, such as Milan, spaces across cities, such as inactive rail yards, will become even more critical.

Through introducing a new cemetery-related typology – which boosts a re-wilded approach to death – the social and ecological outcomes of the project will become co-beneficial. Through the remediation of continue to grapple with the loss of greenspace and a the brownfield site, to enhance urban biodiversity and lack of interment space, the regeneration of disused ecological systems, there presents an opportunity to also expand the perception of a cemetery use and landscape grief to also include opportunities for healing, gathering and recreation, more so within Milan's Scali Ferroviari offers a unique opportunity to conversations around the programming of an urban introduce a new type of urban park cemetery use in park. Likewise, the significant heritage value of the the context of Milan, especially given that the city is site and contextual circumstances can aid in attending already home to one of the most well regarded Italian to the loss of both Italian heritages and natural monumental cemeteries - Cimitero Monumentale systems, as well as the innate human connection to di Milano. This cemetery is the strongest example nature in birth, through life, and in death.



31. Scalo Porta Romana 2024, Sabrina Carer



Fig. 32. Cimitero Monumentale di Milano 2024, Sabrina Careri

of the recurring practice within Italian architecture to emphasize hardscape, and built form, neglecting nature, and natural systems in its design. Presenting an opportunity to address this historic contention between the architectural monumental and the garden picturesque within Italian cemeteries, as well as the dominant outdated social attitudes surrounding death and dying in the Italian culture.



Fig. 33. Triple timeline graphic, summarizing the historical contexts of burial in Italy, as well as rail transport and the Navigli water system of Milan, Sabrina Careri

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# PORTA GENOVA, SAN CRISTOFORO & NAVIGLIO GRANDE



This project proposes a design for the two rail yards that presented the greatest opportunity - Scalo Porta Genova and Scalo San Cristoforo - in respect to the narrative of landscape grief and transformation, as the sites of also the last remaining Milanese canals.

Historically, a system comparable to cities like Venice or Amsterdam, the canals - the 'Navigli' - were a navigable water system made of six canals converging around the historic center. Originally a medieval moat, the Navigli reached full functionality during Milan's industrial era. It was not shortly after that though, in the early 1900s, when rail transit began replacing water navigation, polluting the city's waterways. By 1930, all the urban canals were buried under concrete (Tyson, 2022). All except for Naviglio Grande, and Naviglio Pavese.

Despite being connected, their contexts are drastically different where Porta Genova is located on the cusp of the historic center, while San Cristoforo is located on the boundary of Milan, near the agricultural lands. Porta Genova is in one of Milan's most beloved and busiest neighborhoods, and represents a large opportunity for cultural revitalization, due to the historic Navigli district, and the Darsena - where the two remaining Navigli converge. Today, both rail yards are open spaces for parking and waste materials, but in a more naturalistic setting closer to San Cristoforo, where the Lambro River runs beneath it. Both sites hold a natural beauty, but also showcase the varying stages of decommissioning representative of all seven rail yards.

Fig. 34. Historic Navigli District, along the Naviglio Grande 2024, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 35. Scalo Porta Genova 2024, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 36. Scalo San Cristoforo 2024, Sabrina Careri



The site acts as a physical barrier in the surrounding landscape between the more densely developed urban city and the southern agricultural lands. Through site analysis, it became apparent that one of the greatest opportunities lay in decentralizing the Navigli and pursuing an integrated vision for the two yards, within the framework of the Agenti Climatici proposal by OMA, for San Cristoforo, and the Raggi Verdi Vision.

Raggi Verdi is a 2005 vision adopted by Milan which sets out the creation of eight ecological connections

Fig. 37. Raggi Verdi Map - Milan's Blue-Green Vision, Sabrina Careri

	from the center of Milan with its green belt. In
n	short, new development along these rays focuses
<u>)</u>	on developing opportunities for ecological and
	hydrological connection.

in The Porta Genova - San Cristoforo rail yards sit between RV 5 and RV 6, and is the southern-most
end to the future circle-line (represented above by the dashed line), which in the future will become a sustainable mobility corridor, connecting all the decommissioned rail yards.





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+ o railyard + rail net work

buildings

Standing on bridge of the chiesa at son Cristoforo - one of Many Well utilized bridges



Fig. 38. Site analysis sketches of Scalo Porta Genova, Sabrina Careri



 OUDDOW
 Next Horizon Hori



Fig. 39. Site analysis sketches of Scalo San Cristoforo, Sabrina Careri





Fig. 40. Porta Genova - San Cristoforo spatial organization plan, Sabrina Careri

To summarize the larger spatial organization approach, the objective of the design is to create ecological, spiritual, cultural attunement. This meant creating opportunities where these three pillars come together, harmoniously.

The larger programming intends to enhance the already existing site-conditions where possible, or extend contextual site conditions, rather than imposing new typologies. Ultimately, the site was designed as a path for spiritual wellbeing, through acts of engaging in culture with community, and / or engaging with nature, through restored urban ecology.

Nearer to the Porta Genova rail yard, the proposal places greater emphasis on spiritual attunement through community-oriented interventions, centered around culture.

Nearer to the San Cristoforo rail yard, the design is more individual-oriented, with a greater emphasis on biophilia and connection to natural systems.

In celebration of Milanese cultural heritage, the design of the site was pursued using a conceptual link to fashion. This aided in a stronger understanding of Italian design principles, as monumental architecture is too linked with ideas around Milan's monumental textile production and design.

To do so, traditional Italian fabric swatches were analyzed, to extract common design principles. Much of design in Italian textile making begins with a geometric grid, which gets overlaid with botanic motifs. These motifs then get abstracted to make more naturalistic forms.

These principles were applied to paving, circulation, and vegetation by extending the city grid onto the site, to prioritize creating various scales of connection, ultimately intended to decentralize the Navigli. These more defined geometries would then become softened over time as vegetation grows beyond the boundaries, eventually creating an ecological motif of the site.









Fig. 41. Finding form from fashion, design parti diagram, Sabrina Careri



#### PORTA GENOVA - SAN CRISTOFORO MASTER PLAN

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Fig. 42. Scali Porta Genova and San Cristoforo, a place for ecological, spiritual, and cultural harmony, rendered master plan, Sabrina Careri

SMALL STATION GARDEN PICCOLO GIARDINO DELLA STAZIONE

FLOWERS OF NAVIGLIO SQUARE PIAZZA DEI FIORI DEL NAVIGLIO

NAVIGLI AQUA-CULTURE CORNER AQUA-COLTURA DEL NAVIGLIO

CANAL RECREATION CENTER CENTRO RICREATIVO DEL CANALE

TRACKSIDE MEADOWS PRATI LUNGO LA FERROVIA

SAN CRISTOFORO ECO-INNOVATION DISTRICT ECO-DISTRETTO DELL-INNOVAZIONE SAN CRISTOFORO

WOODLAND OF SACRED TREES BOSCHIVO DEGLI ALBERI SACRI A small park and green corridor connecting the site with the northern park system.

A large gathering space, to host markets and exhibitions.

A community gardening and eating space along the historic canal.

A large sporting area with active fields and facilities.

A decompression space for meandering, focused on wildflower plant species.

An eco-oriented mixed-use district, centered around design and enhancing the active industrial context.

A phytoremediation wetland, within a smaller typical Lombardy region wooded area, centered around the Landform Mausoleum.





#### TREE CANOPY

#### Canopy Density Gradient:

A deliberate creation of a gradient in tree canopy coverage, radiating outward from the historic city center towards the surrounding agricultural lands. Intended to enhance the green infrastructure of Nilan while addressing the city's expanding urban footprint, softening the impact of built environment by fostering a more open urban landscape, and extending its reach from the site into the surrounding context, reducing the urban head island effect.

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## COLOGY

	ITAL PERENNI. E GARDENS ID		MOUNDED LAWN FLOWERED LAWN ACTIVE LAWN		HERBACEOUS WILDFLOWER I WETLAND	
Phytoreme	diation:					
Lambro	River into the	Naviglio Grande	e, to the southern ag	ricultural lands; a	and degrade site co	ntaminates through
soil stab	pilization and n	itrogen / phosp	horous fixation.			

Selected plant species intended to; re-enforce Milanese botanic identity; increase spiritual well-being through landscape tending; and establish environmental stewardship for traditional Lombardy ecological systems.

Populus spp.	Acer spp.	Pyrus spp.	Platanus spp.	Cornus spp.	Rosa spp.

#### Urban Habitat

Selected plant species intended to; effectively support pollination, and a diverse range of flora and fauna; and increase landscape connectivity and permeability, bridging the ecological gap within the larger Blue-Green Vision for Vilian.

Quercus spp.	Caprinus spp.	Prunus spp.	Fraxinus sop.	Lonicera son

#### CIRCULATION (MAIN ROUTES)

Grid Integration Mobility

Aimed at enhancing connectivity and accessibility to the site within the urban fabric. Inspired by conventional grid fabric patterns used in Italian textiles, this strategy extends and abstracts Milanis existing grid onto the site creating and enhancing new connections that prioritize pedestrians and active modes of transportation.

#### HYDROLOGY

#### NATURAL RIVERBED

CONSTRUCTED WATERWAY

Embracing Milan's Water Heritage

Celebrate and amplify the significance of water, particularly focusing on the iconic Naviglio Grande and the historic role of water within Milanese culture by placing the Naviglio Grande as the remained focal point, promoting the presence of water as a source of solace, cultural connection and ecological enhancement.



This space was envisioned as a traditional Italian piazza which can accommodate for large events, and the great number of tourists that frequent Porta Genova, due to the historic Navigli District. Porta Genova often hosts two culturally significant events - the monthly antique Navigli flea, as well as smaller design installations, bi-annually during design / fashion week. The Piazza Dei Fiori Del Naviglio was designed to intentionally host these milestone cultural events, supported by the open design and tree canopy coverage, surrounded by the systems of the Naviglio Grande.

Along the edge of the active rail system, is a series of curved gabion planters, at various heights, to provide seating, and are configured in a way that also creates more individual moments of respite. In celebration of the cultural heritage for rail transport in Milan, it was important to maintain views of the train system from the piazza, but then softening the edge using permeable infrastructure and vegetation.

The paving material is Porphyry stone, which is quarried in Lombardy and comes in a variety of grey-terracotta colors, used to delineate circulation hierarchy across the site. The pavers are also configured in a way that prioritizes permeability, especially around the trees in the piazza. The Naviglio Grande extends from a lower level, intended to bring people closer to the water. This lower level is treated with a variety of different edge conditions, providing an array of experiences from bleacher seats that create a water theatre atmosphere, to vegetated planter walls, recreational decks, and floating platforms, inviting people to take a step out into the beloved canal.



1:20 PAVING DETAIL 101.6mm x 101.6mm PORPHYRY STONE Fig. 44. Piazza dei Fiori del Naviglio paving detail , Sabrina Careri



Fig. 45. Piazza dei Fiori del Naviglio detail rendered plan, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 46. Piazza dei Fiori del Naviglio section through the widest area during the Antique Navigli Flea, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 47. Piazza dei Fiori del Naviglio section through the narrowest area, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 48. P1 - Piazza dei Fiori del Naviglio during design week, Sabrina Careri

At one of the medium, community scale levels of interventions, lies Aqua-Coltura Del Naviglio. This space is nestled between the railway network, the Naviglio Grande, and an overpass bridge. What makes this place truly unique is its location at the convergence of the historic covered canals. As such, re-opening and vegetating this canal, would then serve as the central focal point of the space, further strengthening the connection between agricultural heritage and the relationship to water within Milanese cultural identity.

Agricultural heritage is deeply intertwined in the character of Milan, reflecting its historical roots and traditions. It represents the city's rural heritage, and the contextual conditions of the site. The Aqua-Coltura Del Naviglio celebrates this agricultural heritage, in a way that is tangible at a community level. It would serve as a central cultural space to engage in landscape tending, where individuals can celebrate in their shared love for the land which sustains them.

This is essential for understanding the city's past, shaping its future, and the preservation of tradition. The space is supported by a variety of shared planter beds, gardening equipment, as well as infrastructure to do what Italians love most, which is to eat together.



Fig. 49. Aqua-Coltura Del Naviglio detail rendered plan, Sabrina Careri

## **CENTRO RICREATIVO DEL CANALE**



Fig. 50. P2 - Aqua-Coltura Del Naviglio, as a gathering space for community agriculture (Nonno in frame front), Sabrina Careri



Located west of the Aqua-Coltura Del Naviglio, the Centro Ricreativo Del Canale is the recreational area of the site. This space enhances the already existing site facilities and introduces new ways in which people can engage with the water recreationally.

This is the endpoint of the lower level, where it graciously expands back into the existing site condition, to accommodate for smaller scale recreation (e.g., badminton, boat launching, etc.,).

Fig. 51. Centro Ricreativo Del Canale section through recreation deck and building, Sabrina Careri

The lower-level recreational deck is supported by various infrastructural enhancements to buildings for indoor recreation, as well as dedicated fields for sports including soccer, basketball, and bocce, etc.,.



The Centro Ricreativo Del Canale is followed by the Prati Lungo La Ferrovia. The edge of the Naviglio Grande here, is more naturalized with islands of vegetation. The Prati Lungo La Ferrovia is a zone focused on decompression, which boasts a series of smaller pathways for exploration, surrounded by wildflower and meadow species.

Fig. 52. Site section through the Prati Lungo La Ferrovia to the Eco-Distretto Dell-Innovazione San Cristoforo, Sabrina Careri

Located at the north site of Scalo San Cristoforo, across the Prati Lungo La Ferrovia, and the active rail track, is the Eco-Distretto Dell-Innovazione San Cristoforo. This space is a mixed-use innovation district, which is intended to celebrate and enhance Milan's industrial heritage, further activating the site's active production context.

This intervention reflects Milan's commitment to sustainable infrastructure and vision across all seven rail yards.

The Eco-Distretto Dell-Innovazione includes facilities for makerspace workshops, textile production, and preparation studios for design week installations. Supporting these activities with adequate infrastructure is crucial for ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the site. This is especially important considering that funding is the biggest obstacle to creating high quality green spaces in Italy, particularly in Milan.

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Located at the end of Scalo San Cristoforo, at the point of the existing, but subterranean Lambro River, lies the Boschivo Degli Alberi Sacri. This space is a phytoremediation wetland within a typical Lombardy woodland habitat, centered around the Landform Mausoleum - Mousoleo in Terra.

This space was designed with a focus on particular tree species, which hold heavy cultural significance, representing Milanese landscape heritage. Key tree species here include various native Populus species and Salix species, as well as Quercus, Carpinus, and Fraxinus species. These are all milestone species, which would be extended onto the site, from the southern agricultural lands in its context.

The two points of the subterranean Lambro River on the site, would be day-lit, ultimately forming a wetland habitat in the process. This habitat would be supported by phytoremediation vegetation, surrounded by hardier woodland species. In daylighting the Lambro River, the intention would be that this wetland area would focus on creating habitat and connection for the plant and animal species in the southern agricultural lands, which follow the river, and play a crucial role in regulating the irrigation water. Many of the extended wetland species from the agricultural lands, in addition to the larger trees, are Persicaria species, Cynodon grasses, Nymphaea species, wild-berry shrubs, including Fragaria species, as well as various Carex grasses. This ecosystem is further supported by fauna which are all commonly found in the area, including but not limited to, common grass snakes, birds, pollinator species, frogs, weasels, and hedgehogs.

Demarcated by a contrast in typology in paving and vegetation, is the Landform Mausoleum. From the wetland area, a series of boardwalks invite individuals towards an intimate garden emblematic of labyrinth design - symbolic of the journey of life.

The Landform Mausoleum challenges traditional depictions of the Italian monumental, by taking the footprint of a never-completed station skeleton that exists on the site today, and inverting it into the ground to create crypt recesses and niches. This intervention uses existing infrastructure without sacrificing density or land for burial, and most importantly returns individuals to the land that sustained them, in death. The Landform Mausoleum still supports a want for permanence in death, and is symbolic of transition, and the journey into the afterlife. By descending and ascending into the Landform Mausoleum, the design represents hope and renewal, reflective of moving from one state of being into another, where the surrounding trees become the monumental.

Flowered lawns dedicated to planting biodegradable cremation urns beneath trees to act as communal headstones, surround the Landform Mausoleum. These flowered lawns are tended to by the community, providing grieving individuals a sense of purpose, memory, and solace in landscape care.



Fig. 53. Boschivo Degli Alberi Sacri detail rendered plan, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 54. Section through the Boschivo Degli Alberi Sacri to the Naviglio Grande, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 55. Section through the Boschivo Degli Alberi Sacri at the phytoremediation wetland, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 56. Section through the Boschivo Degli Alberi Sacri at the Landform Mausoleum – Mausoleo in Terra, Sabrina Careri



Fig. 57. P3 - Boschivo Degli Alberi Sacri a place for refection at the flowered lawns, towards the Landform Mausoleum - Mausoleo in Terra, Sabrina Careri

Surrounded by the Landform Mausoleum are a collection of Magnolia trees, which symbolize strength, the cycle of life, and the beauty of death. These are complimented with various Oak trees symbolic of strength, longevity, and re-birth in the design of Italian cemeteries.

# **CONCLUSION:**

This project proposes a new way in which landscape can be understood in its ability to tend to grief by expanding the ideas of what it means to grieve as an individual, but also as a community. It puts feelings of loss, and emotions tied to landscapes of personal and cultural significance - in this case agriculture, water, and industry - at the forefront of the design. In completing my project where it began, with the loss of my grandparents, tending to grief in landscape and challenging ideas of what is considered monumental in design in Italian culture, for Scalo Porta Genova and Scalo San Cristoforo, this means a design which re-ignites connections to natural systems and landscape heritage, and finding solace in placing biophilia at the center of all life.

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