

# Galata waterfront: models, types, and the morphology of meaning in architecture

*“Epic poetry and Tragedy, Comedy also and Dithyrambic poetry, and the music of the flute and of the lyre in most of their forms, are all in their general conception modes of imitation.”*

Aristotle, Poetics, I, i.

## *The workshop*

The International Urban Design Workshop 2019 “URBAN FAÇADE: ISTANBUL WATERFRONT”, was held from March 23th to March 30st 2019 at the Faculty of Architecture and Design, Özyeğin University, Istanbul Turkey. Organised by the writer together with University of Parma, it welcomed the cooperation of “Sapienza” University of Rome, University of Naples “Federico II”, the support of the DIDALABS System, Department of Architecture, University of Florence, the cooperation of the Università degli Studi “Mediterranea” di Reggio Calabria, the patronage of the International study centre for the History of Cities “Storia della Città”, the kind collaboration of Mimarlar Odası Istanbul Büyük-kent Subesi, and the precious contribution of nai010 uitgevers/publishers, Rotterdam. Students from these universities coordinated by international tutors attended lectures on selected topics related with the workshop design assignments, taking part in the digital survey campaign and designing different solutions for the Galata (Beyoglu) waterfront in Istanbul. Participation was free for selected architecture students.

## *Design Methodology*

The workshop focused on the architectural survey and re-design of the urban blocks of the Galata waterfront: we should not conceive these blocks as arbitrary objects, like in most contemporary architectural production, but rather as living organisms within the *formation process of urban tissues*. The single building designed by each student is therefore part of a *larger scale organism* and contributes with its physical consistence to the definition of a *part of the city*. The projects will therefore adhere to the principles of the construction of an environment suitable not only for private functions, but also for *social activities*. The workshop focuses on the theme of Galata-Beyoglu Waterfront considering its *ongoing* transformation. The area is indeed an important connection point between the sea and the historical Galata neighbourhood, acting as the city’s “urban facade” towards the sea. The workshop included also an advanced experimentation in Sustainable Urban Design; Digital survey technologies and procedures; Contextual Morphological Analysis; Contextual Environmental Analysis; Design of new Urban Tissues (*mixed use*);

re-design of public spaces. The workshop considered critically the recent problems of the contemporary metropolis in Istanbul, the substitution of *historical* urban tissues with *new* buildings. In the past ten years, the frenetic building activity has obliterated historical urban tissues, replacing them with new functions and *spatial layouts*, inserting different building types within a consolidated *historical* urban tissue. This activity has caused in some cases the *opposition* of part of the local population. The city growth has always requested a *processual* substitution of building types with *updated* ones. This *restructuring activity* is not a modern one: we can enumerate similar examples in ancient and mediaeval times. The workshop will focus on the *waterfront* of Galata-Beyoglu as a case study about the transformation of the contemporary *metropolis*, within an ongoing scientific research on that district. The workshop considers the transformation of urban tissues both inevitable and necessary, but distinguishes two different operative modes: an *evolution* in *continuity* with the diachronic transformations of the context, or a *substitution*, in complete opposition. Students will design, after discussing with the teaching team, selected blocks within the medieval Genoese waterfront, and therein will conduct advanced analysis in the field of urban morphology, determining the adequate way to design a contemporary transformation. A student team will be accomplishing a survey of the area using the most advanced digital survey technologies and procedures. During the workshop, we redeveloped selected urban blocks: these buildings though should not be designed as arbitrary objects like often happens in most contemporary production, but conceived within the formation process of urban tissues. The single building designed by each student was therefore part of a larger scale organism and contributed with its physical consistence to the definition of a *part of the city*. The teaching of the design skills therefore adhered with the principles of the construction of an environment suitable not only for private functions, but also for social activities. The design was guided through progressive exercises that lead the student to the definition of the project based on the choice of a model. The use of models in the architectural composition, not to be confused with the copy, belongs to an ancient school of thought, dating back to Aristotle, and feeding the history of architecture through centuries, all the way to the best tradition of modern architecture. Reference to the use of models in architectural composition may be found recently in the design activity of “gruppo architettura” in the ‘60 in Italy and in the theoretical work of Raffaele Panella. The school of thought that

stems from that root was taught directly through the design activity, rather than with theoretical teaching. The workshop provided also theoretical elements for its bases, but it was essentially based on the direct relationship student-teacher in the design activity, as in a professional studio. The urban morphology and typological theories, following the teachings of Saverio Muratori and Gianfranco Caniggia were explained in their basic principles and applications to the design process

#### Type and model

“Ars simia natura” (Boccaccio, 1360) is a concept that has cut in two the history of the arts. Hence the modern figurative revolution the misunderstanding of this notion it has depleted architecture to a mere branch of the *visual arts*: architecture instead possesses its own compositional techniques and we consider here the dialectics between *type* and *model* in architectural composition as a metaphor outlining the elements of a design theory focused on *meaning*. The proposed theory finds itself on the transposition of Raffaele Panella’s teachings to the domain of Urban Morphology and adapting them for the purpose to achieve *meaning* in architecture. The contemporary project should accept any restraint imposed by the context, and fit within the *processual* evolution of the surrounding urban tissue, but by considering the *collective memory* it should also use recognisable elements to communicate, the *design models* (Carpenzano 1993). Every designer uses a model in his design activity, but not all are aware control of this *creative process*. The use of models in composition, not to be confused with the copy, belongs to an ancient school of thought, dating back to Aristotle, and feeding the history of architecture, all the way to the best tradition of *modern architecture*. We can find reference to the use of models in architectural composition in the design activity of “Gruppo Architettura” in the ‘60 in Italy and in the project for East Rome, designed by Raffaele Panella, Costantino Dardi and Carlo Aymonino for the XV Milan Triennale in 1973 (Aymonino, Panella, Dardi, 1973). The other part of the *dyad* is the architectural type, or to better say the processual development of *urban tissues*, according to the Italian school of Urban Morphology (Maretto, 2013). This theoretical approach to architectural design enhances the strong continuity between the typological evolution of the built organism and the building to be designed (Strappa, Carlotti and Camiz, 2016). We can therefore infer from the context the deformations to apply on the selected models (Panella, 2008), so to include in the project not only the context and the models, but also their meaning.

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**Antonello Russo**, afferente al dArTe, Dipartimento di Architettura e Territorio dell'Università *Mediterranea* di Reggio Calabria, svolge attività didattica e di ricerca universitaria dal 2000. È autore dei volumi *Vuoto e Progetto* (LetteraVentidue, Siracusa 2018), *Dall'immagine all'etica. Riflessioni sull'abitare urbano* (2012), *Sequenze didattiche* (2012). Suoi disegni e progetti sono stati esposti presso il *Festival dell'Architettura di Parma*, la *Biennale di Venezia*, l'*Accademia di San Luca*, il *Museo M.A.C.R.O.* di Roma, l'*Expo Universale di Shanghai*.

**Antonello Russo**, Member of dArTe, Department Architecture and Territory of the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, he has been involved in teaching and university research since 2000. He is the author of the monographs *Vuoto and Progetto* (LetteraVentidue, Syracuse 2018), *Dall'immagine all'etica. Riflessioni sull'abitare urbano* (2012), *Sequenze didattiche* (2012). His drawings and projects were exhibited at the *Parma Architecture Festival*, the *Venice Biennale*, the *San Luca Academy*, the *M.A.C.R.O. Museum in Rome*, the *Shanghai Universal Expo*.

Un accordo bilaterale tra sedi universitarie ha, nel Marzo 2019, posto le premesse per l'invito ad una delegazione di docenti, dottorandi e studenti dell'ateneo di Reggio Calabria a partecipare, in qualità di progettisti, all'International Urban Design Workshop 2019 "Urban Façade: Istanbul Waterfront", organizzato nella sede turca. Partecipano alla stessa esperienza le scuole italiane del progetto provenienti dall'Università di Parma, da Roma La Sapienza, dalla Federico II di Napoli, le scuole di restauro e disegno dell'Università di Firenze, i dipartimenti di architettura dell'Università di Rotterdam e, ovviamente la sede ospitante. Per una settimana circa ottanta, tra studiosi, studenti, dottorandi, docenti, senza distinzioni di titolo e ruolo, lavorano all'elaborazione di un'idea per una porzione del waterfront di Istanbul. La delegazione del dArTe, composta da tre docenti strutturati (Giuseppe Arcidiacono, Alberto De Capua, Antonello Russo), due PhD del dottorato di ricerca dipartimentale in Architettura e Territorio e sette studenti iscritti al terzo anno del corso di laurea magistrale in Architettura, propone, di concerto con un gruppo di studenti turchi, un'idea insediativa per il nucleo storico di Beyoğlu, distretto di Istanbul situato nella parte nord del cosiddetto *Corno d'Oro*, braccio di mare che separa l'area di Galata dal Centro Urbano. Il volume riporta le riflessioni teoriche e gli esiti grafici relativi al solo progetto proposto dall'equipe coordinata dai docenti reggini. Testimonianza di un *agire italiano* esso è ordinato da un meditato *ascolto dei luoghi* nel quale *lettura, appropriazione, trascrizione* sanciscono le azioni propedeutiche alla *produzione di una differenza*.

*A bilateral agreement between universities in March 2019, laid the groundwork for the invitation to a delegation of professors, PhD students and students of the University of Reggio Calabria to participate, as designers, in the International Urban Design Workshop 2019 "Urban Façade: Istanbul Waterfront", organized in the Turkish headquarters. Participating in the same experience are the Italian schools of the project from the University of Parma, Rome La Sapienza, Federico II of Naples, the schools of restoration and design of the University of Florence, the departments of architecture of the University of Rotterdam and, of course, the host site. For a week, about eighty scholars, students, PhD students, teachers, without distinction of title and role, work on the development of an idea for a portion of the waterfront of Istanbul. The delegation of the dArTe, composed of three structured teachers (Giuseppe Arcidiacono, Alberto De Capua, Antonello Russo), two PhDs of the Departmental Research Doctorate in Architecture and Territory and seven students enrolled in the third year of the Master's degree course in Architecture, propose, in concert with a group of Turkish students, an idea for the settlement of the historic center of Beyoğlu, district of Istanbul located in the northern part of the so-called Golden Horn, arm of the sea that separates the area of Galata from the Urban Center. The volume contains theoretical reflections and graphic results relating only to the project proposed by the team coordinated by the professors from Reggio Calabria. Testimony of an Italian action, it is ordered by a meditated listening of the places in which reading, appropriation, transcription sanction the preparatory actions for the production of a difference.*

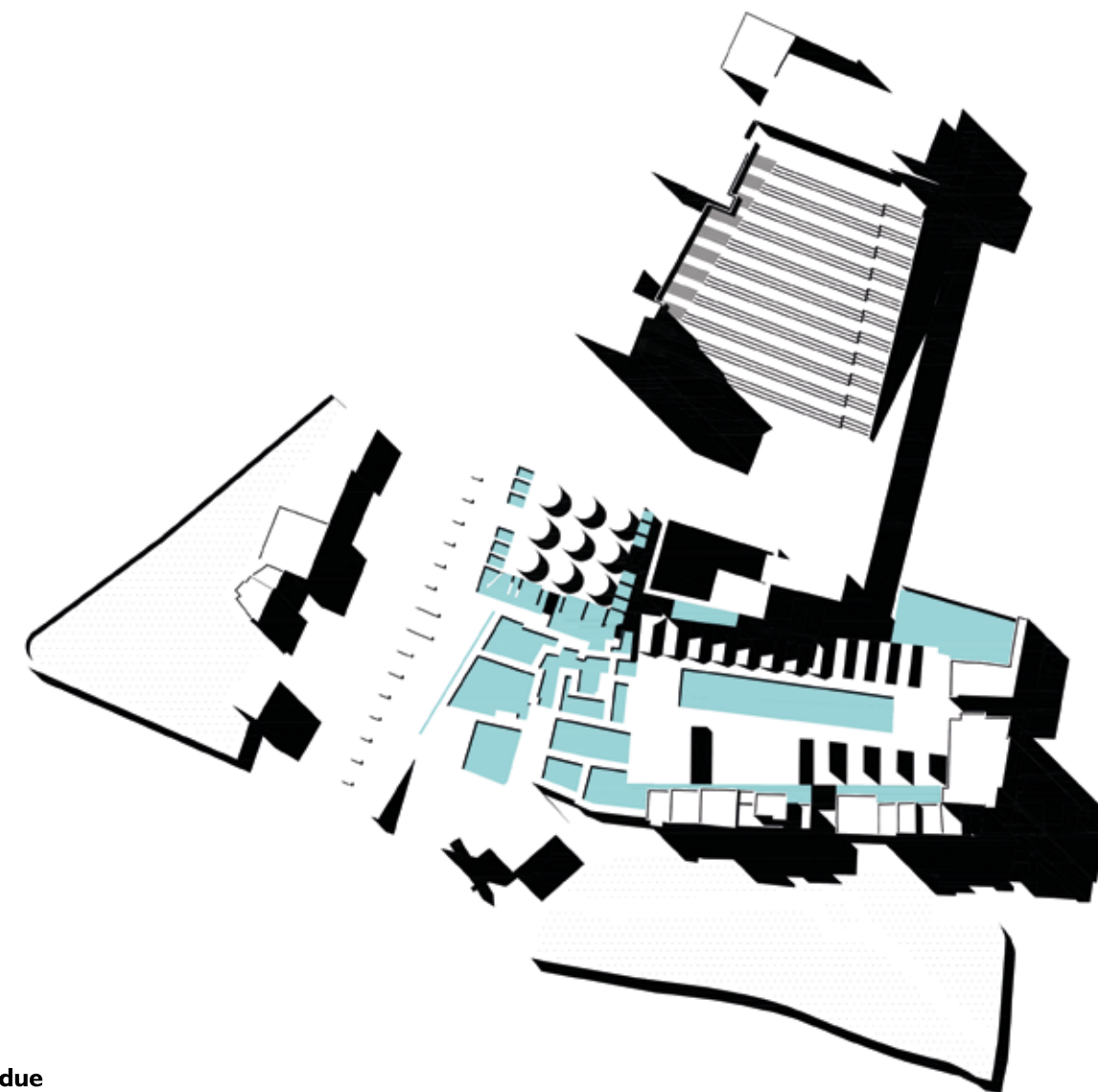
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### *A project for Galata*

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Reggio Calabria Istanbul Un progetto per Galata A project for Galata

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Waterfront di Galata, Istanbul.  
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The cover shows  
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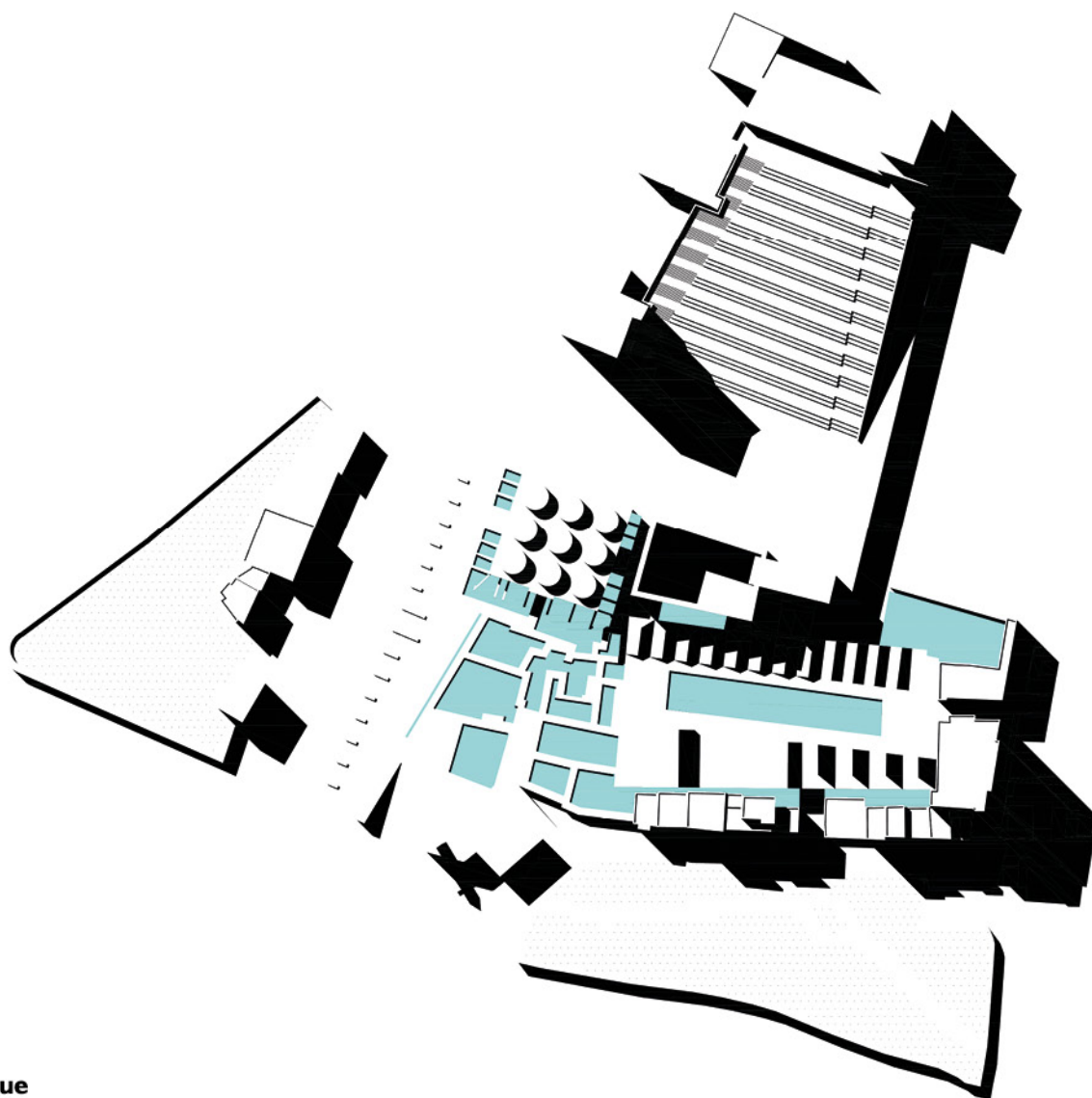
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*A project for Galata*

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*A project for Galata*

International Urban Design Workshop 2019  
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a cura di / *edited by* Antonello Russo

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