

FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY

SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

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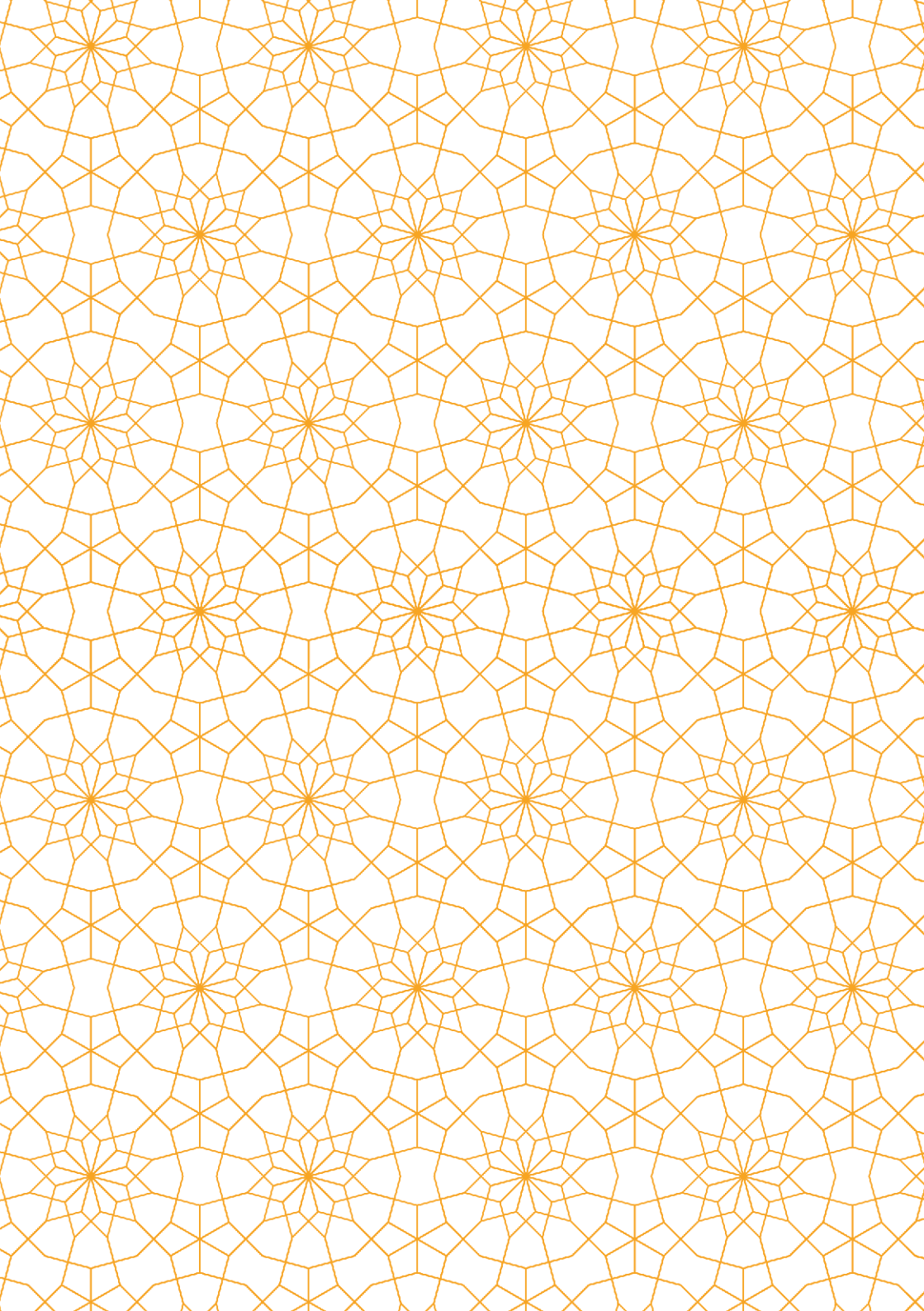
Patrizia Montini Zimolo

— ALEPPO / 36°11'52"N 37°09'37"E

# LEARNING FROM ALEPPO

WAVE.  
2017

  
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## **SYRIA – THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY**

W.A.Ve. 2017

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**Patrizia Montini Zimolo**

**Learning Form Aleppo**

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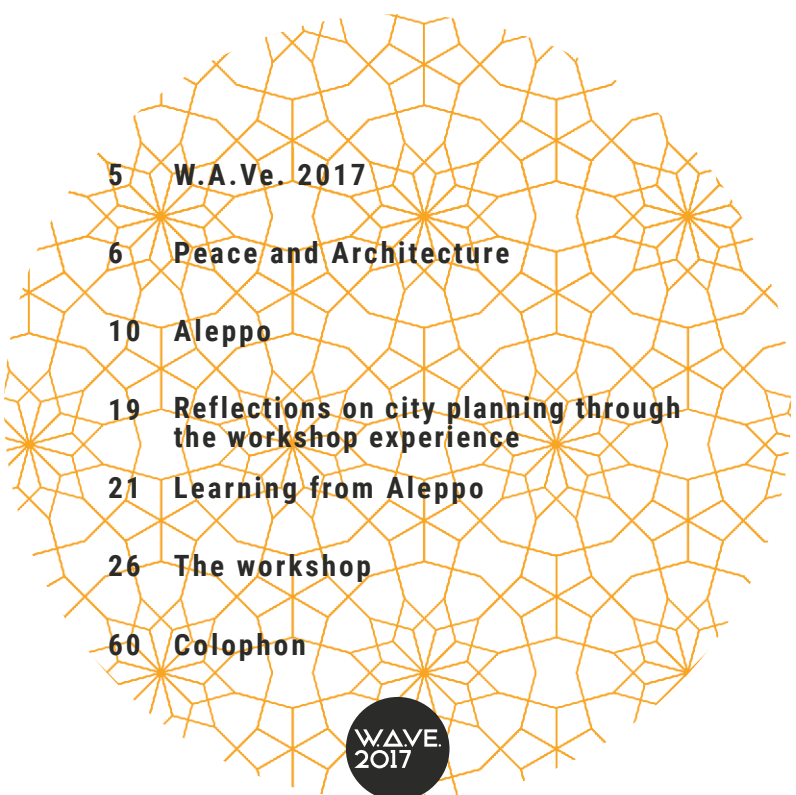


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**WAVE.**  
**2017**



## W.A.Ve. 2017

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Alberto Ferlenga

W.A.Ve. is now at its fifteenth edition but, despite this, its characterising formula still works. Since its beginning, when it did not have its current name yet, being a design workshop and an international architecture exhibition at the same time has made it a unique product. If we consider that each year more than 1,500 students and 30 teachers are involved, we cannot deny that even the numbers are sizable. In these 15 years, about 23,000 students (not counting students from abroad) and 450 architects (not counting assistants) have developed a project experience at Università Iuav di Venezia that takes place in a narrow span of three weeks, during which Iuav venues become training and meeting sites. Its open-air workshop feature has brought many prestigious architects and names of the international scene to the classroom venues of the Cotonificio Veneziano and Magazzini: Pritzker prizes such as Eduardo Souto de Moura or Alejandro Aravena, masters such as Yona Friedman and Pancho Guedes, and renowned professionals such as Sean Godsell or Carme Pinos. Under their guidance, Iuav undergraduates and foreign participants have developed (together and making no age distinction) a project experience that pertains to the city of Venice and many other places as well. The same summer days also see the spaces of the Santa Marta Auditorium and the Tolentini Cloister become the scene of large conferences, making it possible for hundreds of students to follow the latest international projects or reflections on the most pressing issues concerning cities and territories. Above all, however, W.A.Ve. is special for the atmosphere that it creates during its three weeks of work; discussions, projects, and meetings are often expanded and brought outside the classrooms, in bars and Venetian *campi*, and in the exhibitions that follow, transforming the campus of Santa Marta into a major international architecture showcase.

For all these reasons, W.A.Ve. is unique and renowned among architects and students of Architecture around the world, becoming one of the most representative expressions of a school, Iuav, that has built its peculiar quality on international exchange, laboratory experience, and on city studies.

## Peace and Architecture

Benno Albrecht

1 – Elio Vittorini in “Il Politecnico”, n. 1, September 29, 1945.

2 – Pierre Rosanvalon, “La democrazia dell'emergenza”, “La Repubblica”, April 16, 2012.

We invited many architects to Venice, to contribute to the discussion on the reconstruction of countries destroyed by the madness of men. Like a round table, Università Iuav di Venezia became the venue for the dialogue and discussion on the possibilities of architecture to preserve and reconstruct Peace. The will and desire for Peace was the guest of honour of our 2017 W.A.Ve. workshop.

A post-WWII Italian intellectual, Elio Vittorini, said that it was necessary to form “not a culture that consoles in times of suffering, but a culture that protects from it, fighting and eliminating it”<sup>1</sup>.

We see the University as an institution that serves society and the generations of the future, alertly vigilant and working to stay one step ahead. The relationship between Universities and Administrations can become operational and productive, precisely because the university is the exact place to test hypothetical future models – an “Academy of the Future”<sup>2</sup>, as described by Pierre Rosanvalon – to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and educate in global civic responsibility.

In Iuav’s W.A.Ve. workshop, a future of Peace, the reconstruction of Peace, has become an academic topic, a forecast technique, and an experience in practical planning of the future.

The immanence of the “environmental and human disaster” that we see today in Syria overcomes the

concept of architecture (understood as a need, consequence or manifestation of something else), leading the discipline to inevitably participate, as an integral part, in the resolution of a local/global “political and environmental” issue. In fact, one of the most pressing topics in the field of civil commitment (and in the operational field of architecture) is how to deal with the consequences of urbicides, with the deliberate violence against cities, with their destruction, and with the intentional elimination of collective memory made of stone.

Venice is where reflecting on these things is possible: a city that was described, by Richard Bonington and by Antoine-Claude Valéry, as “a Palmyra of the Sea”<sup>3</sup>.

However, we side these reflections with the words that John Adams wrote to his wife from Paris: “The science of government is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of law and administration and negotiation should take the place of, indeed, exclude, in a way, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that our children may have freedom to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons must study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain”<sup>4</sup>.

3 – Valéry Antoine Claude Pasquin, “Venise et ses environs”, Société belge de librairie, Bruxelles, 1842, p.2.

4 – Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, post 12 May 1780, in L.H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlaender, eds., “Adams Family Correspondence”, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1973.

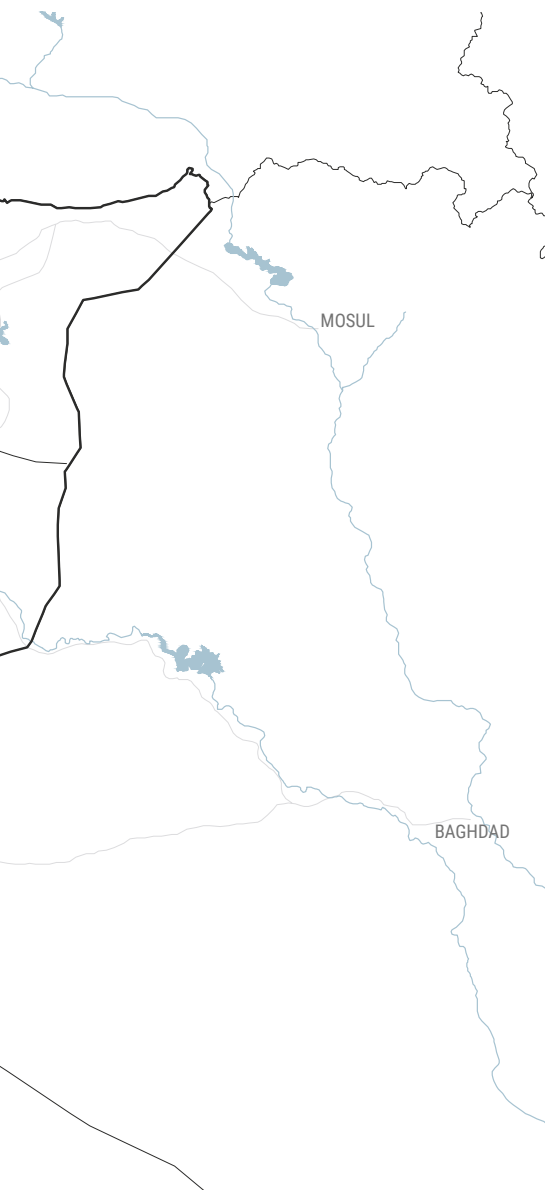
# SYRIA – THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

SYRIA – THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY



## W.A.Ve. 2017

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UNLAB  
Gaeta Springall  
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DAMASCUS

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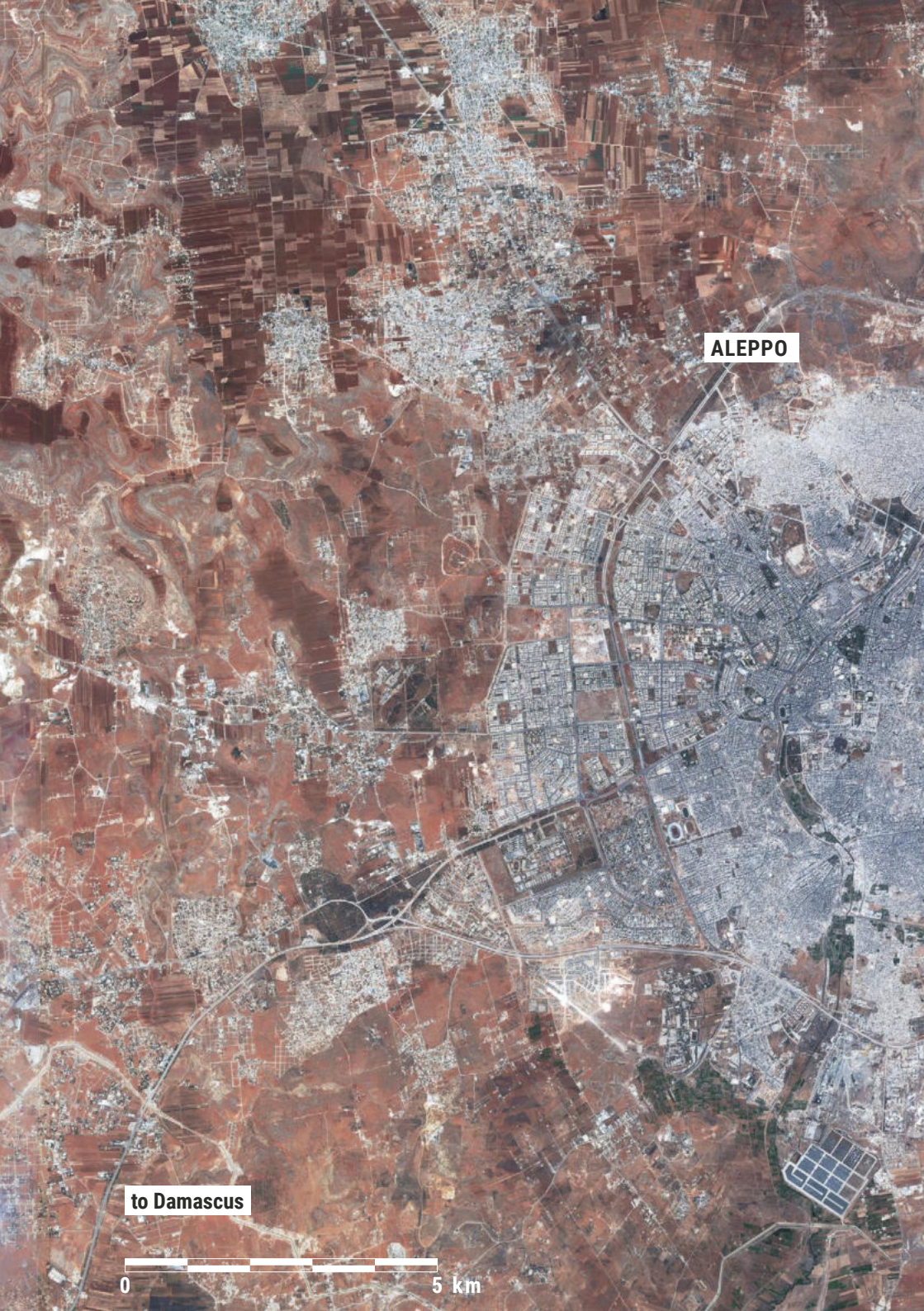
João Ventura Trindade











**ALEPPO**

**to Damascus**





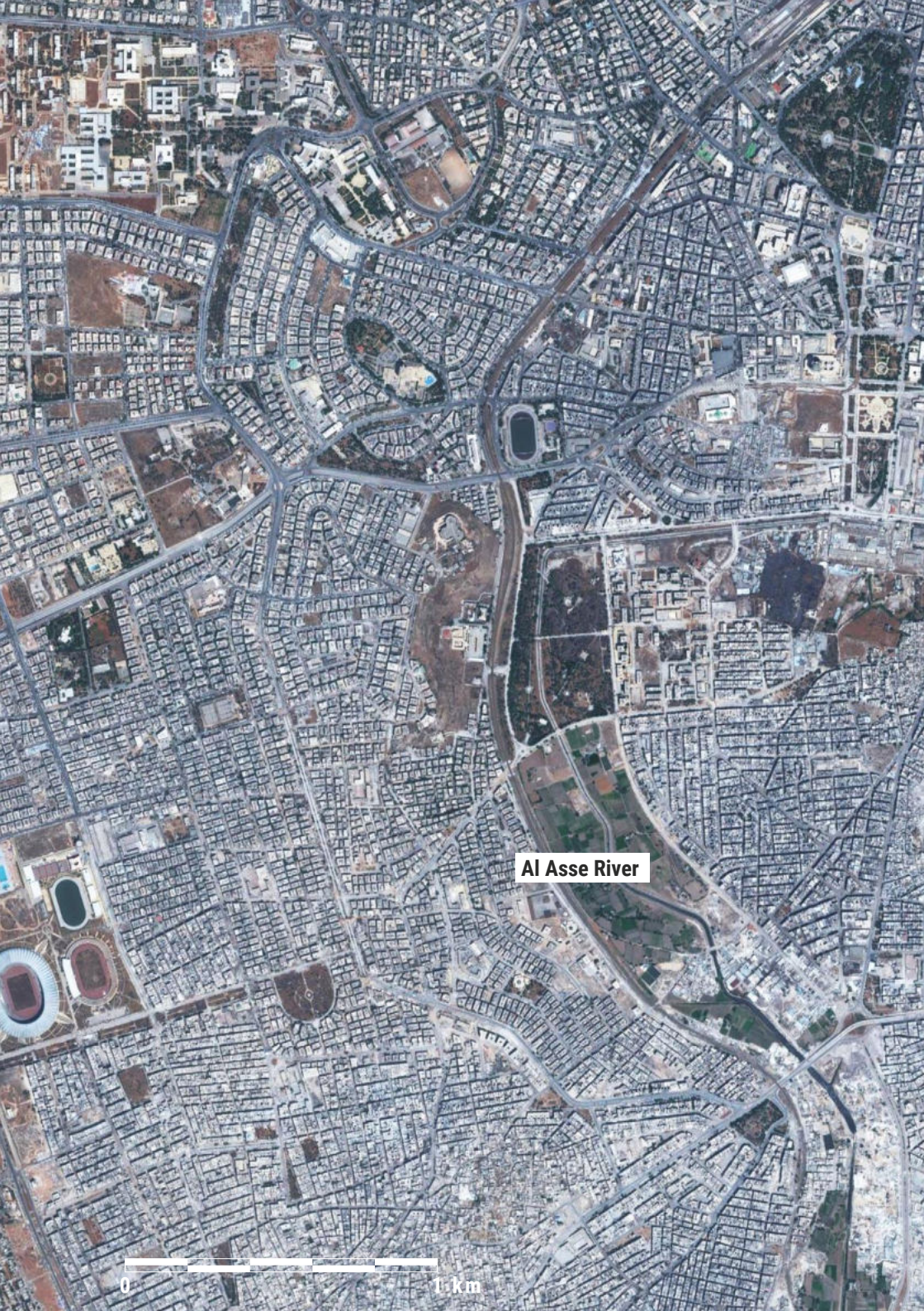


**citadel**

**airport**

**industrial city**





**Al Asse River**

0 1 km





**ALEPPO OLD CITY**

**Suk**

**citadel**

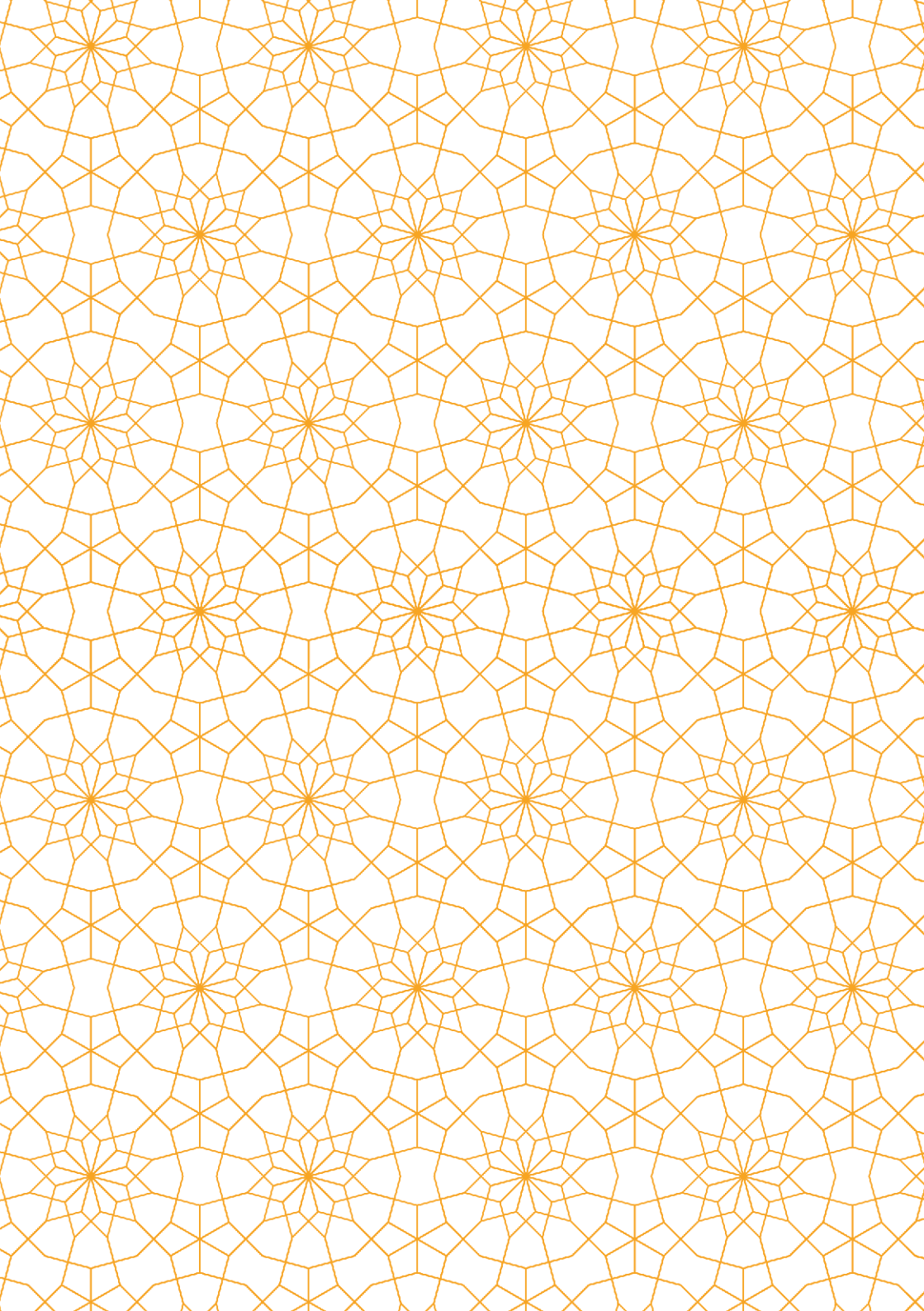








– The continuous armed Syrian conflict that reached Aleppo in 2012 caused severe damage and destruction to invaluable monuments and inhabited neighbourhoods. Therefore, the historic city has been added to the list of endangered cultural heritage. Since 2011, the conflicts in Syria have caused more than 400,000 dead and millions of refugees. The historic monuments and the cultural heritage continue to be damaged, as a strategic instrument to destroy the cultural identity of the Syrian population: 25% of historic buildings are damaged, 40% are partially destroyed, and the Souq (historic Arab market) has been burnt down completely.



## Reflections on city planning through the workshop experience

Stefano Ferro, Giulio Mangano

The W.A.Ve. 2017 topic, *The Making of the future*, has forced the entire work group to reflect deeply on the identification of a more sensitive approach, considering the current geopolitical situation of Syria. The city of Aleppo, with its geomorphological conformation and historical heritage, has provided us with an idea of urban design, one that keeps together the needs required and wanted by any contemporary city. It gave way to an intense collective work of teachers and students, confronting and exchanging opinions and gradually becoming familiar with the architectural and urban scale of Aleppo. You must learn from the city in order to design a part of it.

Starting from here, we chose a simple set-up to describe the city of Aleppo and its projects:

- A large model (4.5x2 m) in an archaeological site, joining together (with the same architectural language of the monumental ruins of the historic city, Citadel and Souq) the historical city to the large project area located in the west part of the Gate of Antioch.
- A central scene with 160 postcards, describing and narrating the project as a collage of building redesign, photography, emotions, and reflections on Syria and on the topics that were covered during the workshop.
- Seven projects for Aleppo, with a series of two drawings (1:500 scale plan and project view) suspended with a light steel structure around the central model.

The idea of a workshop, limited in time compared to a regular studio project, requires some choices in terms of design and exhibition layout. This has led to additional effort, but it has also led to awareness in seeking a synthesis of our thinking at the same time.

## Learning from Aleppo

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Patrizia Montini Zimolo

“There is something mysterious in the fact that landscapes, which ultimately are not responsible for our existence, have nothing to do with it; and certainly do not care, despite the fact that they express something of what you feel because if it did not, you would not feel anything for what you see”<sup>1</sup>.

1 – Cees Nooteboom, “Voorbije passages”, De Arbeiderspers, Amsterdam, 1989.

Syria has always been a crossroads, a stratification and contamination of cultures, stories and religions. Aleppo, specifically, is a city that has been able to overcome numerous catastrophes over time, and rebuild on the signs and fragments of old traces. Learning from Aleppo is an invitation to capture the design guidelines of the building texture and the natural vocation of the site in order to give voice to new building. The urban texture does not “forget” its past: it retains traces of its various stages of expansion, destruction, and transformation. *Learning from Aleppo*: relying on the ability of urban tissues to integrate and erase the pre-existing features, and to measure (with urban typologies and forms) what has remained and changed within the Hellenistic, Islamic, and modern city. Even measuring the transformation of the natural elements of the soil in anthropic structures, tells: a calcareous outcrop of strong symbolic character that has been remodelled over time. Through the “strip” designed by the Citadel’s tell (and by the souq and mosque system, *madrassa*, *khan*), it is possible to have the city grow along the east-west historical axis, the *Decumano*, in the voids left by the war. The new buildings are connected by an urban meaning:

from the point of view of the relationship they establish with the city, and their ability to transform the city itself. Buildings that highlight the timelessness and specificity of certain urban phenomena. The story of its history, its previous “stories”, is read on the planimetric relief as an archaeological trace, revealing a monumentality that seems to have disappeared in the aftermath of the destruction, but that is still legible and must be considered in its new relationships with the urban voids. A project for Aleppo that does not want to go beyond memories, but aims at measuring and re-inventing them in the present, to avoid the risk of having the new urban structure become a simple sum of experiences.

During the workshop, we experienced ways to integrate and recover Aleppo from Aleppo. We extended the “DNA” formed by the court buildings – found in *madrastas*, *funduqs*, *khans*, *hamman*, *souq*, colonnaded streets, bridges, and passages – in a series of memorable pieces: pieces with which we can build the “background” of a new life for a city rising from the ashes of a tragic war, triggering change and renewal. These are the fragments of a safe reality: the ancient city becomes the future of the new city, gradually building new areas from the sum, space, form, and elements of other contemporary architectures. This horrible war remains a fundamental and indispensable moment in the city’s history. It is not enough to overcome issues and problems that Aleppo has gradually developed and that will be faced in the post-war period.

Aleppo is a city in search of a new identity, and not only because of the conflicts that have devastated and divided it. In its urban fabric, there are places that constitute opportunities for its growth and that

can give rise to new aggregation spaces and new communications between cultures and peoples of different nationalities and religions. The selected area is an important example: a vast space that expands the twentieth-century city to the west that is characterised by the presence of unplanned holes that alternate with service spaces, such as the current bus terminal and the remains of a market. The “empty areas” are not just places that must be restructured, built or used as “green areas”: our goal cannot be their simple recovery and reuse. The “voids” are a sort of key that opens up new urban mechanisms. The area we chose for the project plays a strategic role: the end of the great Omar Bin Abdel Aziz axis, ending in the Antioch Gate, is the access point to the souq and citadel. The project incorporates a very dense programme aimed at building and strengthening this urban axis (free-way terminal, taxi, bus parking), organising a new entry to the historic city and a new opening to the market, with places for business as well as for exhibitions, concerts, and cultural events in the vast abandoned area in the south. The general idea is to build a network of public services and equipment along the historic perimeter for the population that will return to Aleppo, bringing different experiences and cultures along with it. The green bands that cross the entire area are also important, since they accentuate the connections with the large Jamal Abdunnaser Park, which is a major green lung for Aleppo. The strip of the park can be connected to the chosen area of study by redrawing the geography of this urban part with ground movements (terraces, ramps, spaces, slopes) that reflect the garden theme that is present in the city, determining the layout of new spaces and dwellings for displaced people.



We clearly outlined four areas within the space that we set out to design. Each area responds to the character of the adjacent context: sectors that, even if connected to each other, are imagined for different activities. They offer the opportunity to start a radical transformation of an urban landscape that does not yet have a common history, but that will incorporate different uses and cultures as it grows and develops. The projects we present (albeit the limitations of a workshop experience) display the vitality of a research that relies on the migratory nature of architecture. Shapes and figures travel in time and space, unceasingly repeated and transformed, and seek the ambition to build new and old buildings in the re-development of the city of Aleppo.

The design projects – *Mahkama Space Mobility and Opportunities*, and *Omar Bin Abdel Aziz Gate* – set a new arrival station in the centre of Aleppo for buses and taxis. Here, circulation stops and a welcome area is set up (information, refreshment, meeting points): a large entrance space that opens in front of the *Gate of Antioch*.

The projects for the new market – rural souq, arcade souq – seek a close relationship with the meeting point, gathering larger sales spaces, meeting venues, restaurants, and possible areas for cultural events. The design for the cultural centre of the citadel define a central path that winds through the open spaces of the sheltered houses. It is the main axis of the new settlement system of courthouses, ending in the culture citadel at a level of +12 m. On an artificial elevation made from the rubble of destroyed buildings, the volumes of the new auditorium and music centre come to revamp the skyline of this part of the city.

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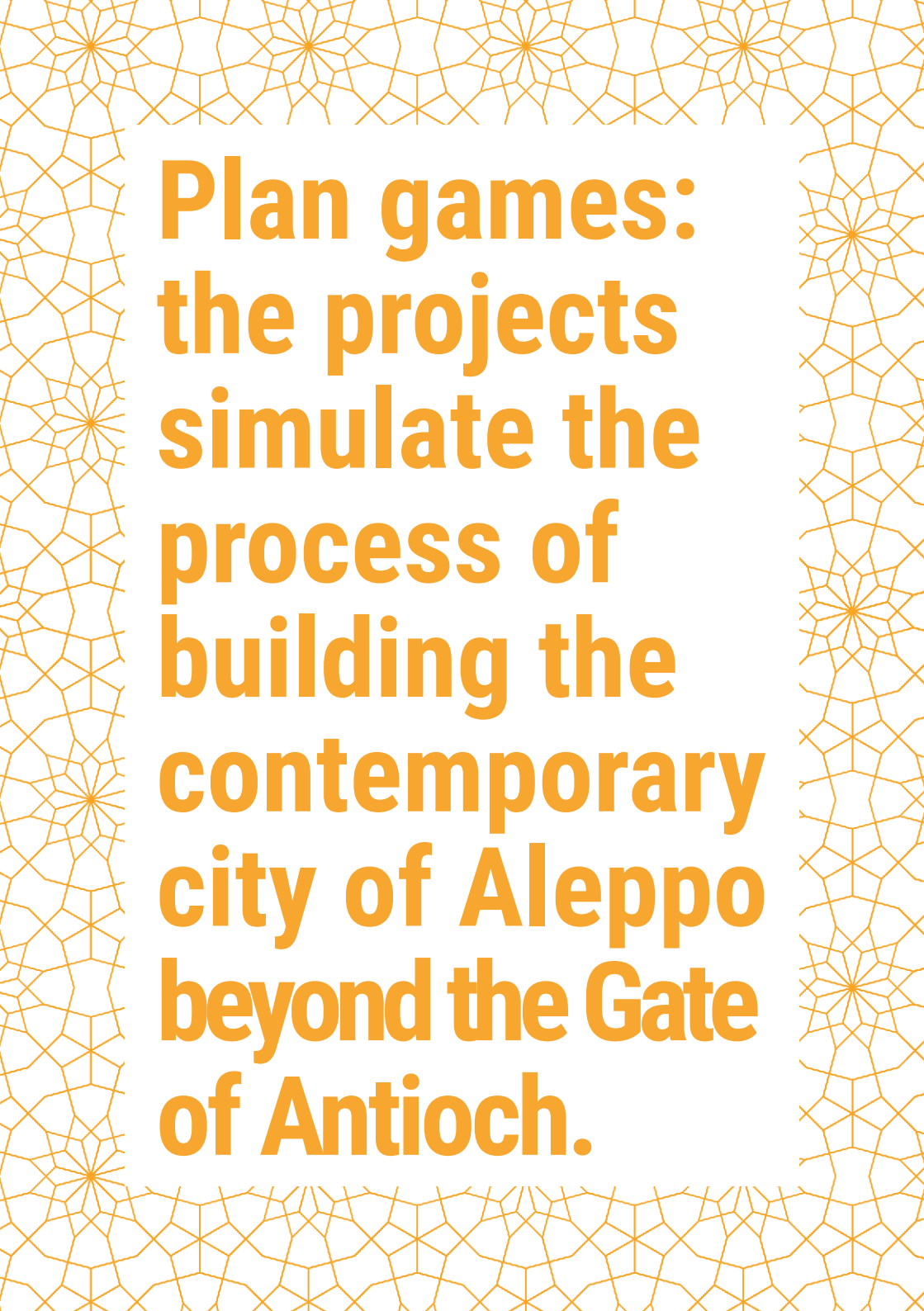
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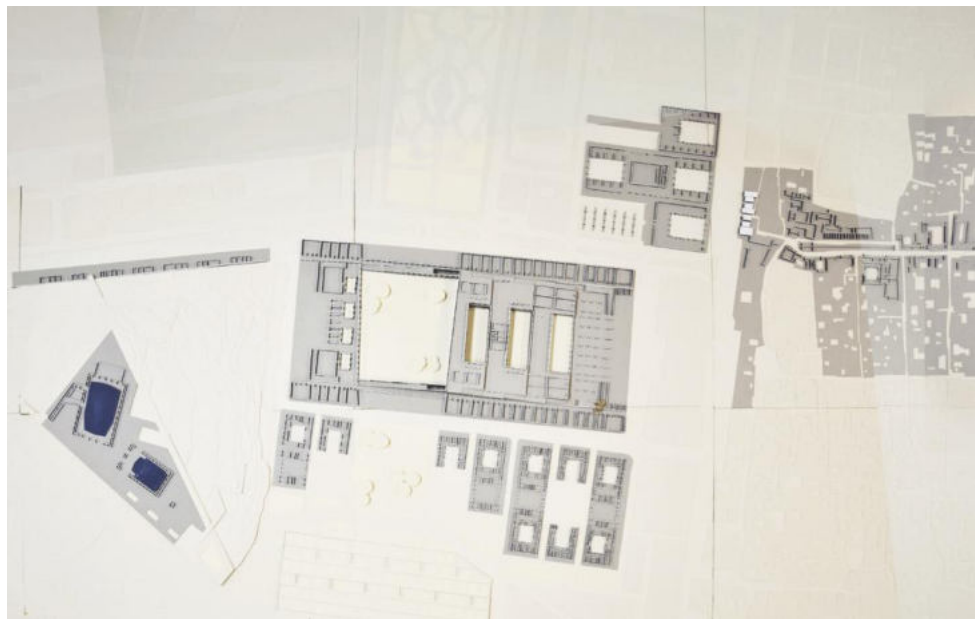
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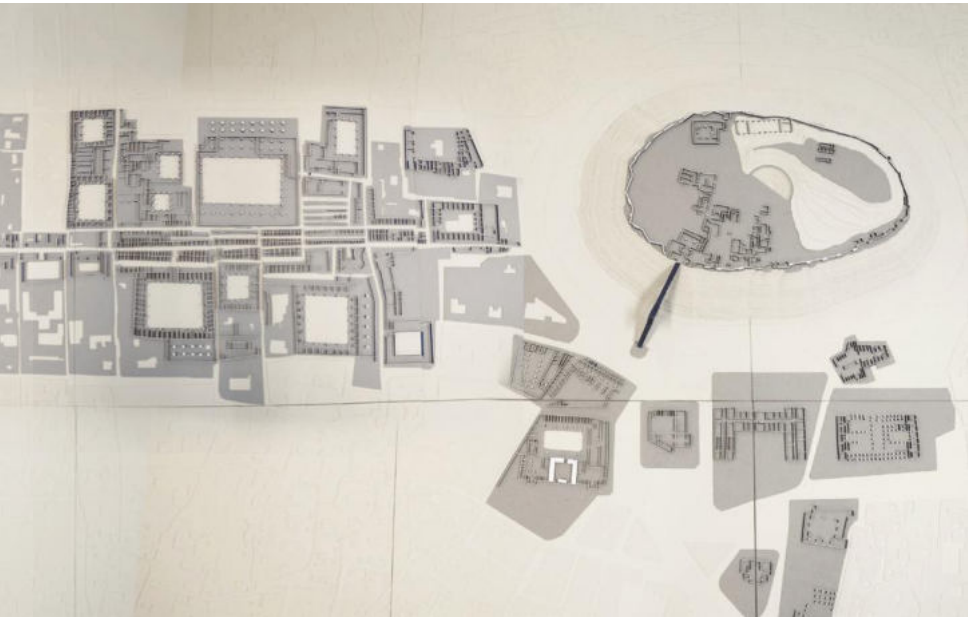
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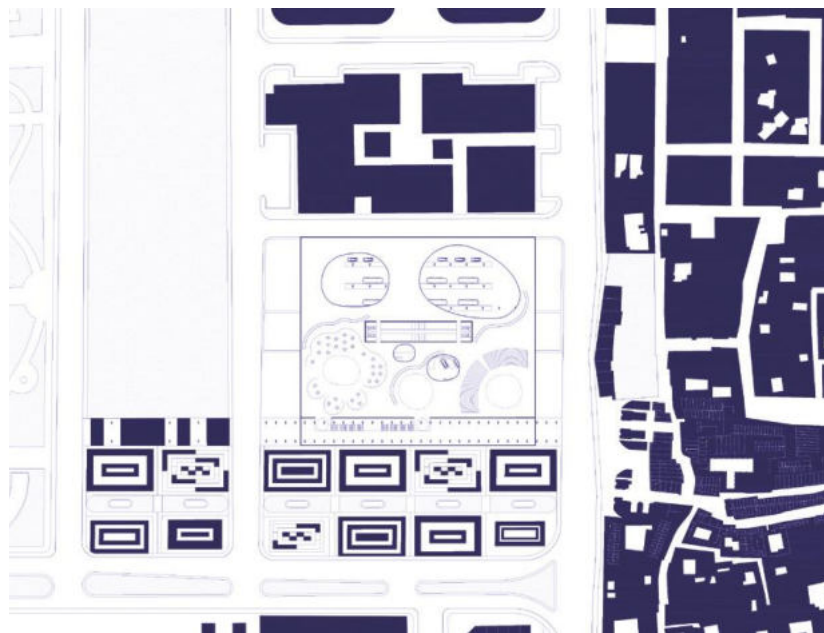
**Plan games:  
the projects  
simulate the  
process of  
building the  
contemporary  
city of Aleppo  
beyond the Gate  
of Antioch.**



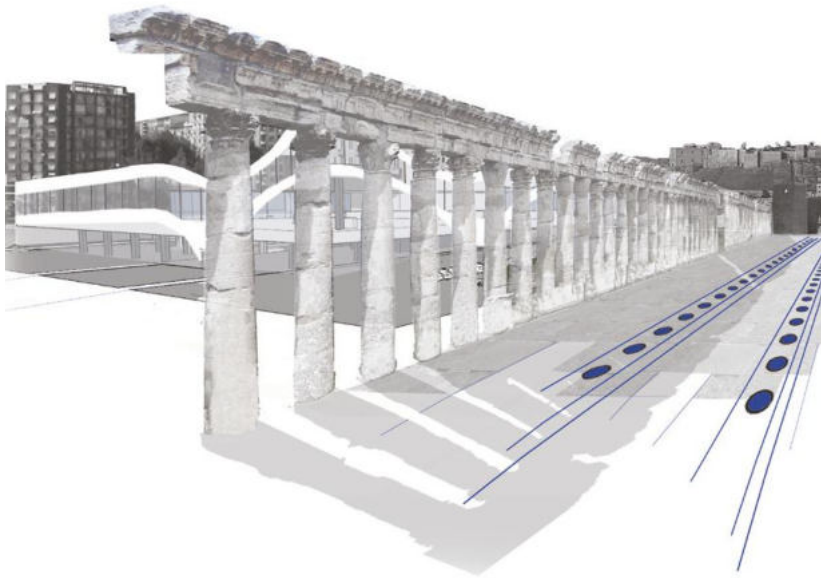




– Model. Top view.







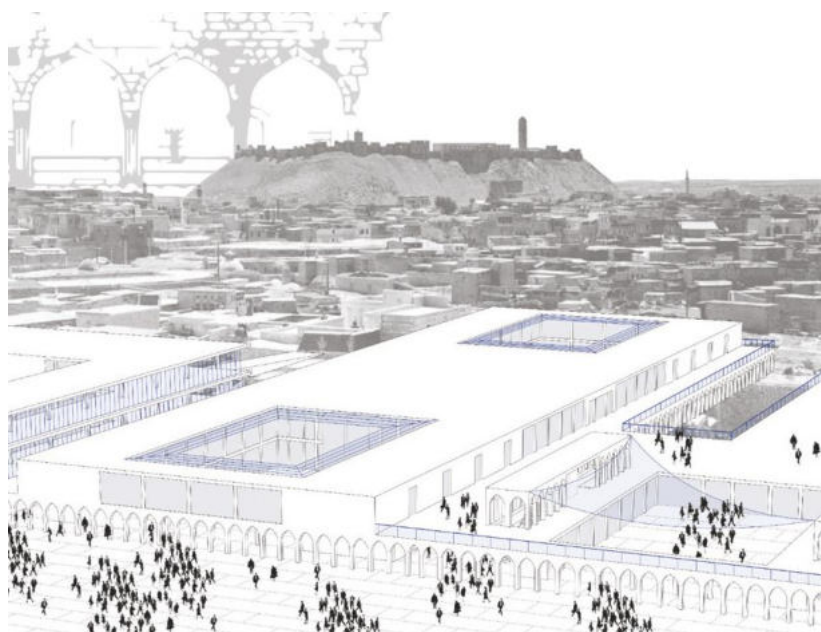
LEARNING FORM ALEPPO

– Omar Bin Abdel Aziz gate.

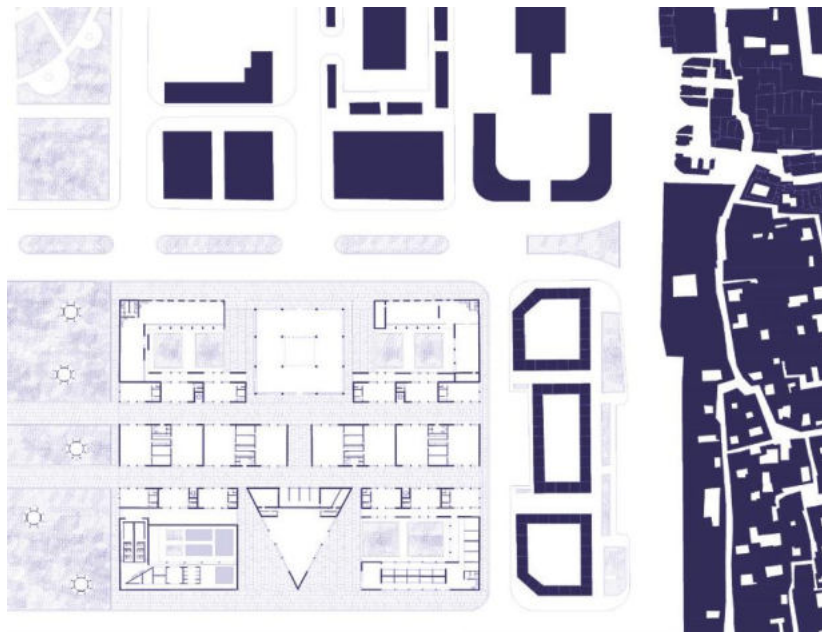








– Mahkama, Space Mobility and Opportunities.





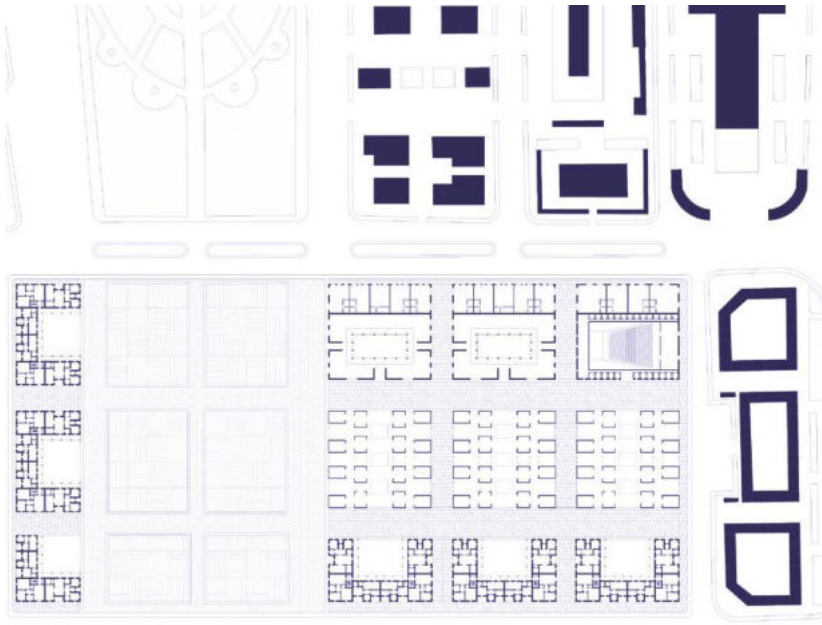


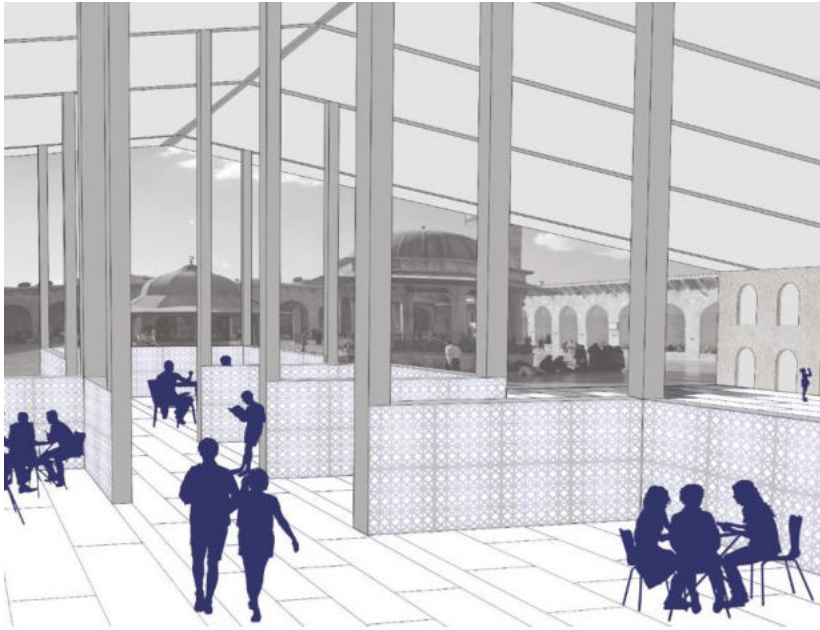
– Arcade souq.









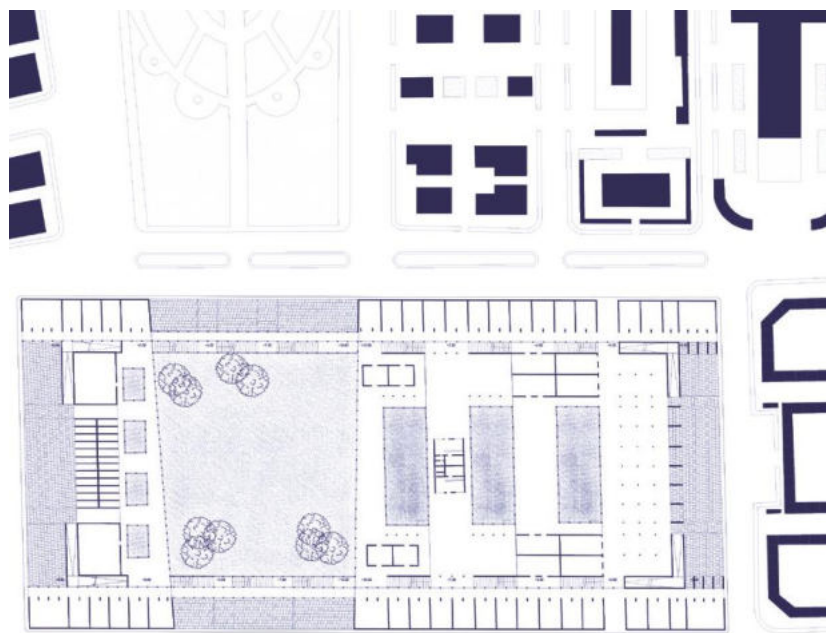


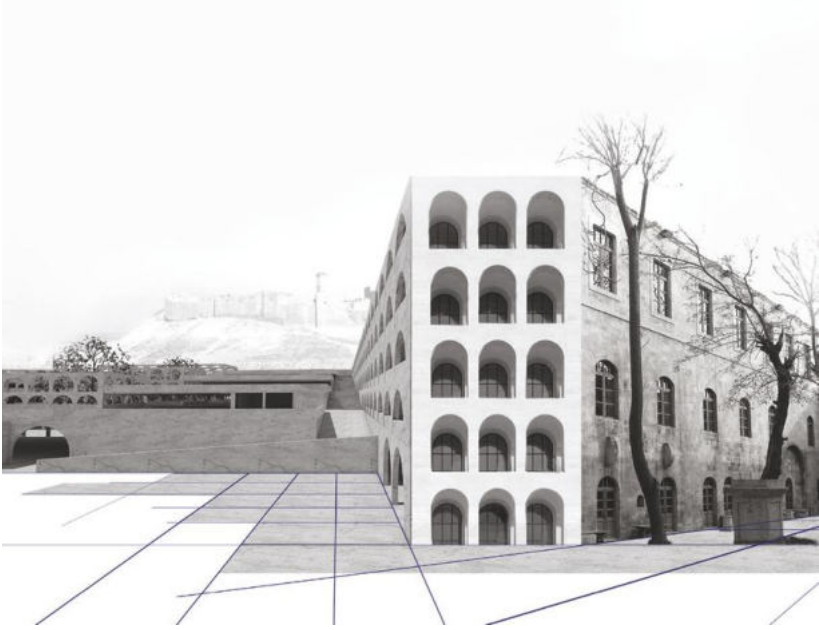
– Rural souq.



**Aleppo,  
new  
architectures  
for the  
ancient city,  
stage of  
prophecy  
and memory.**

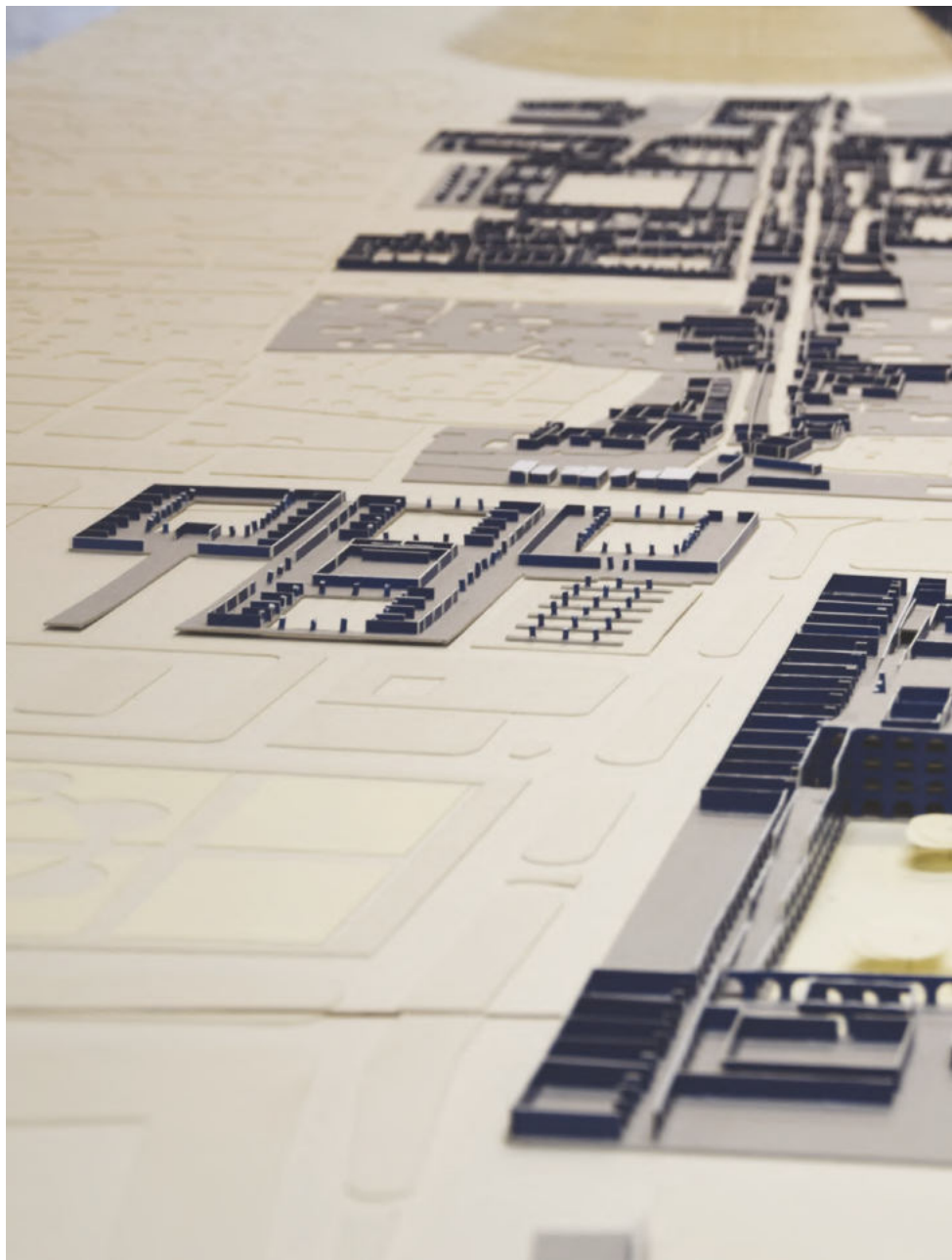




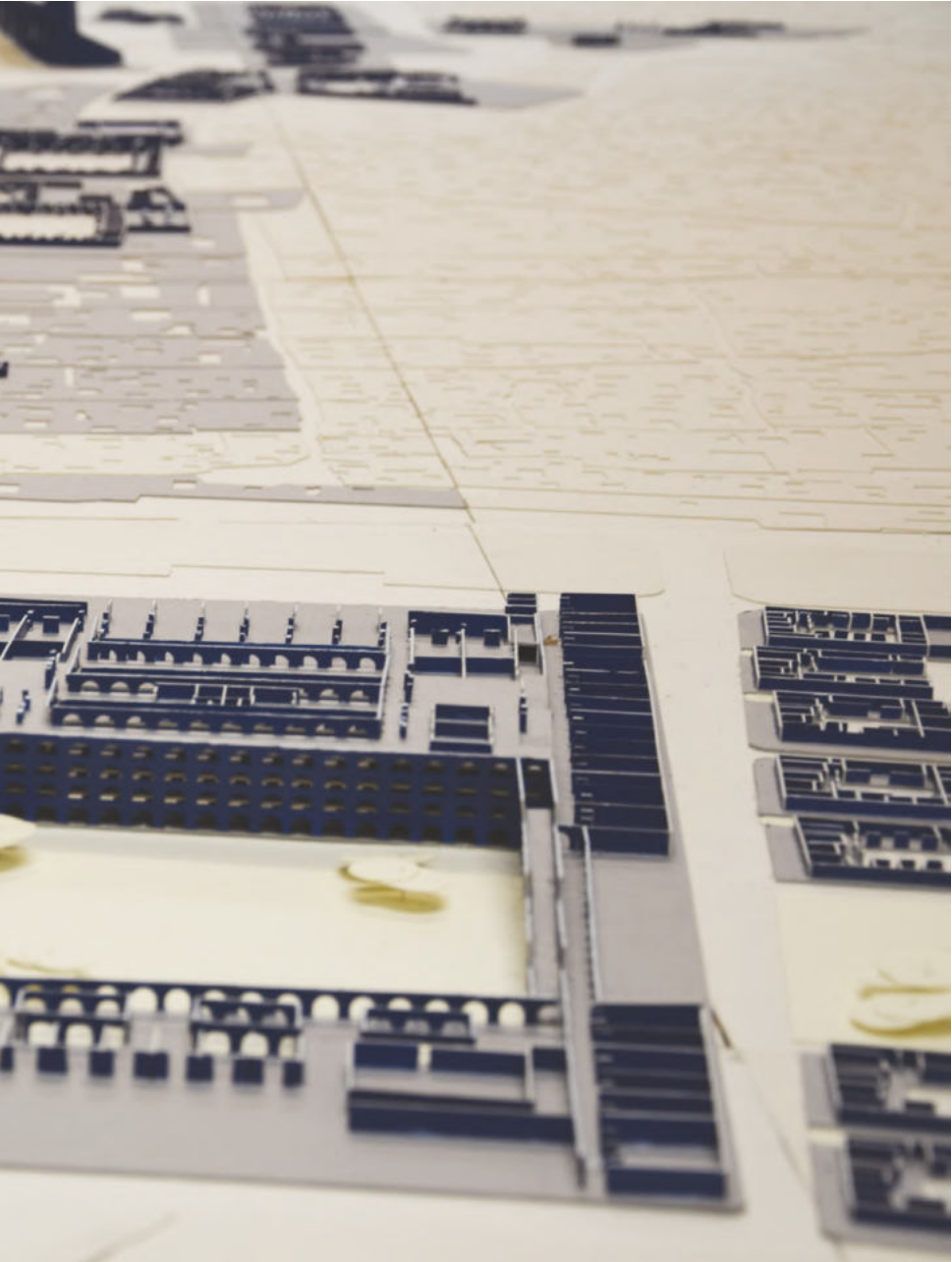


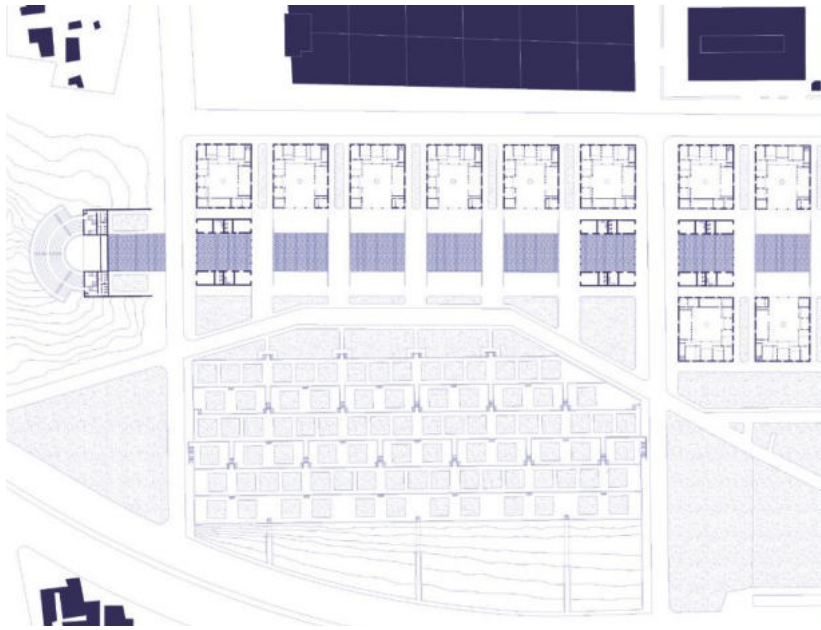
– Terrace market.







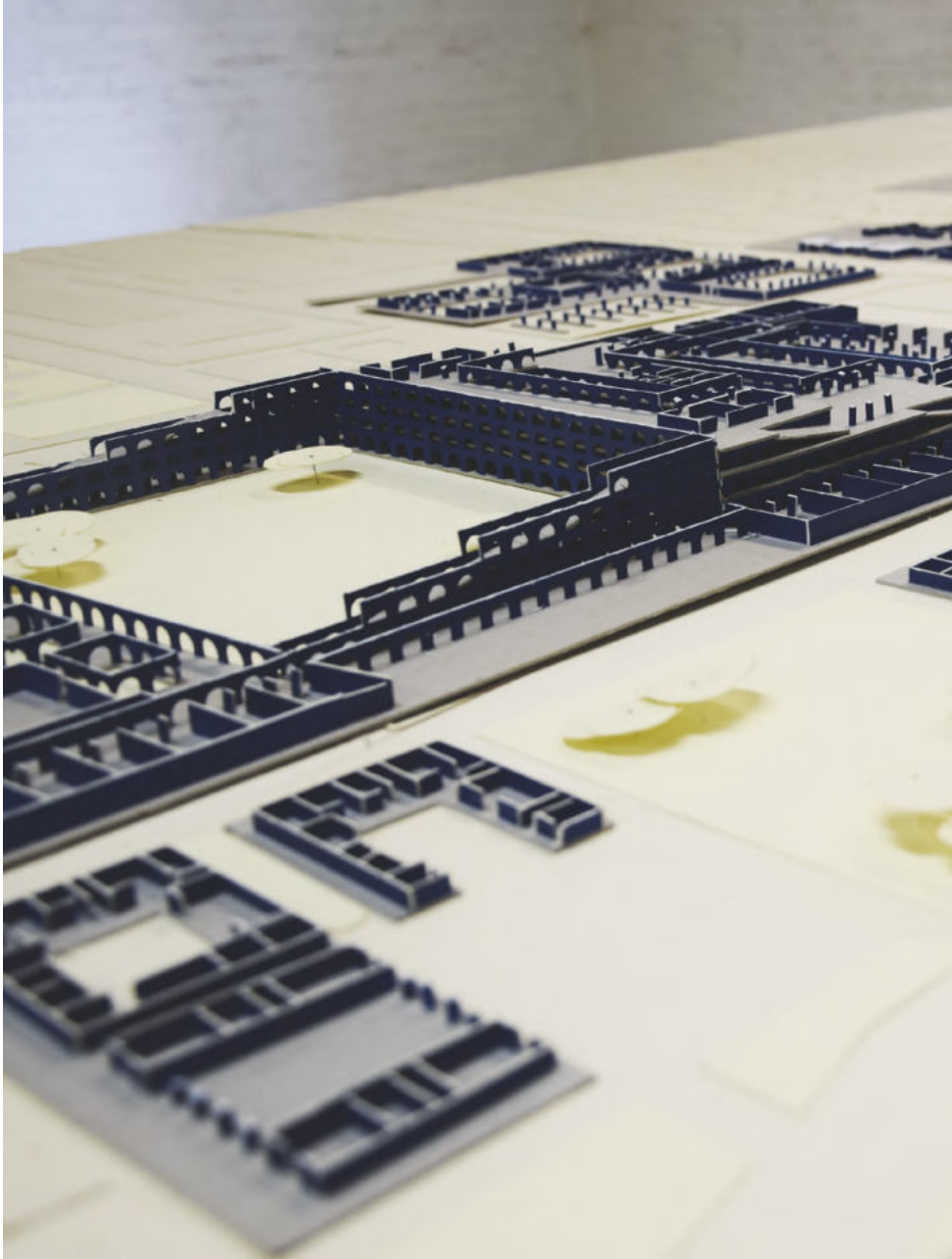


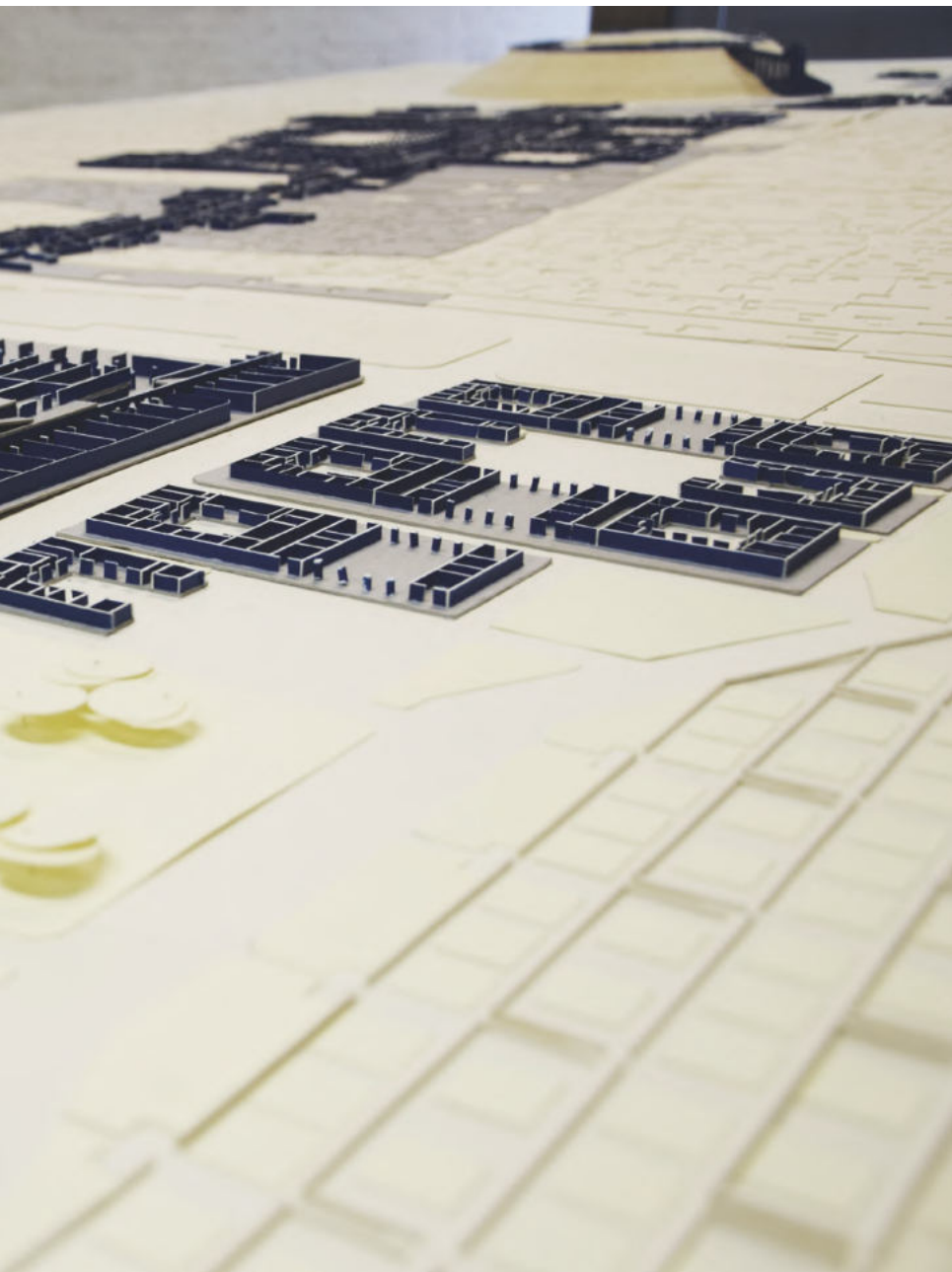


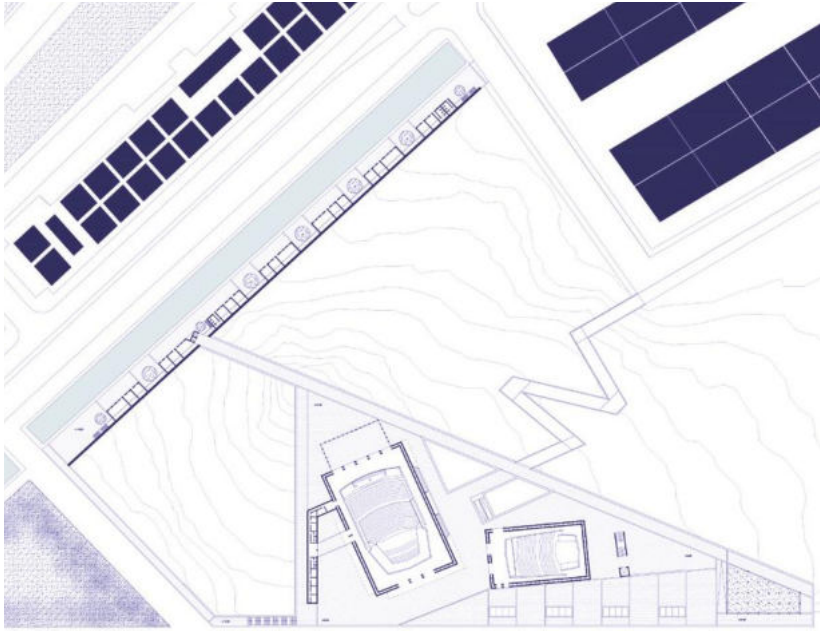


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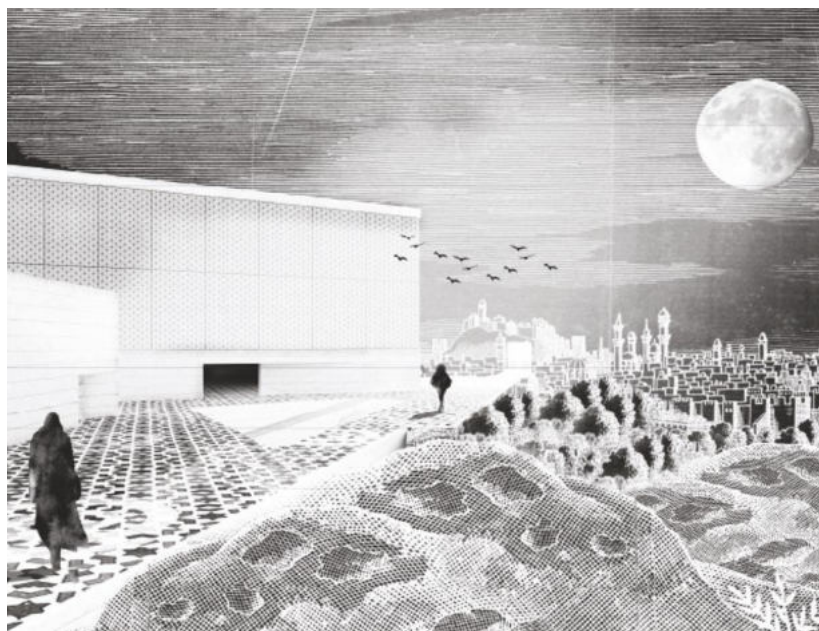
– Fondaci avenue.









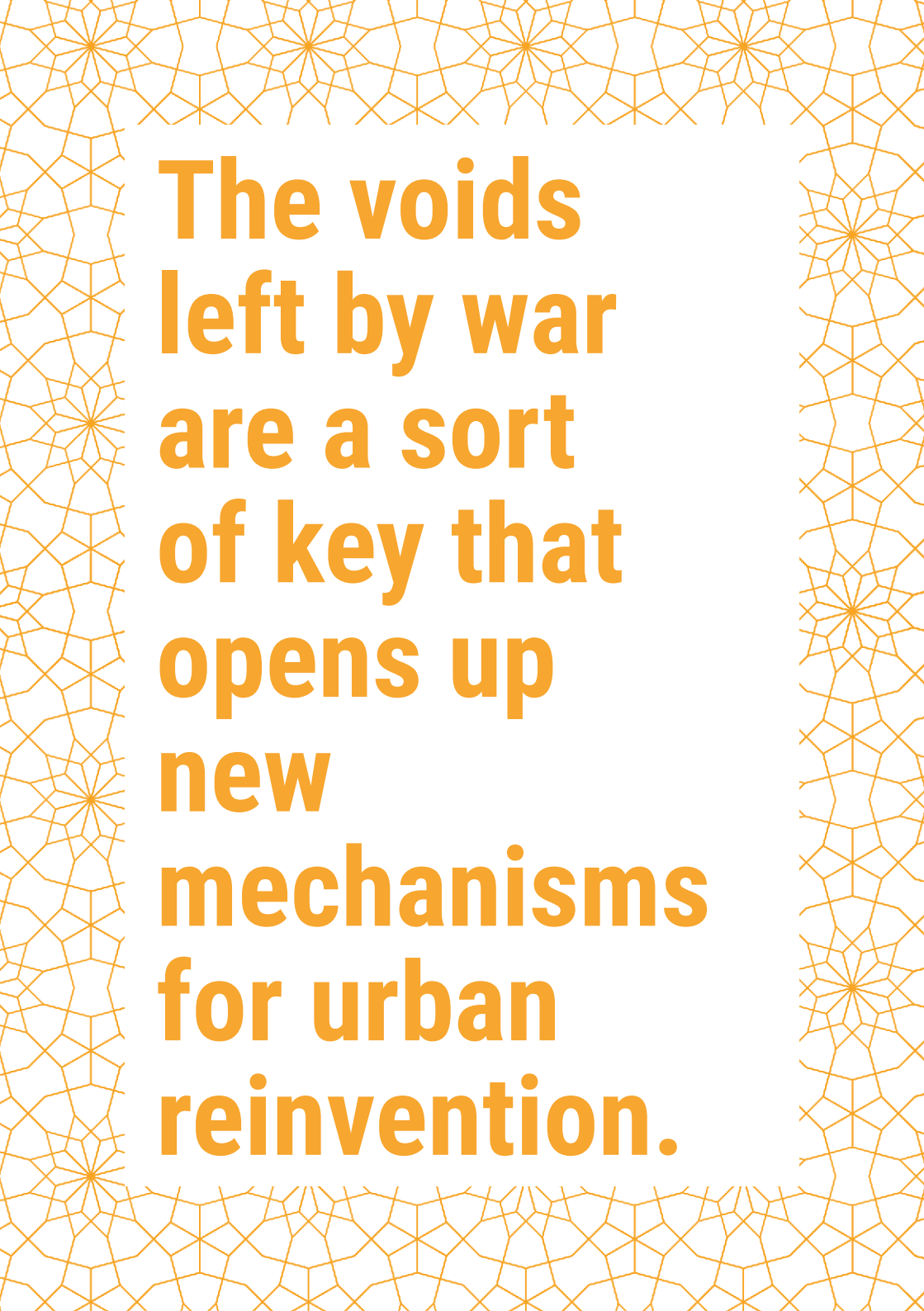


– Cittadella cultural center.

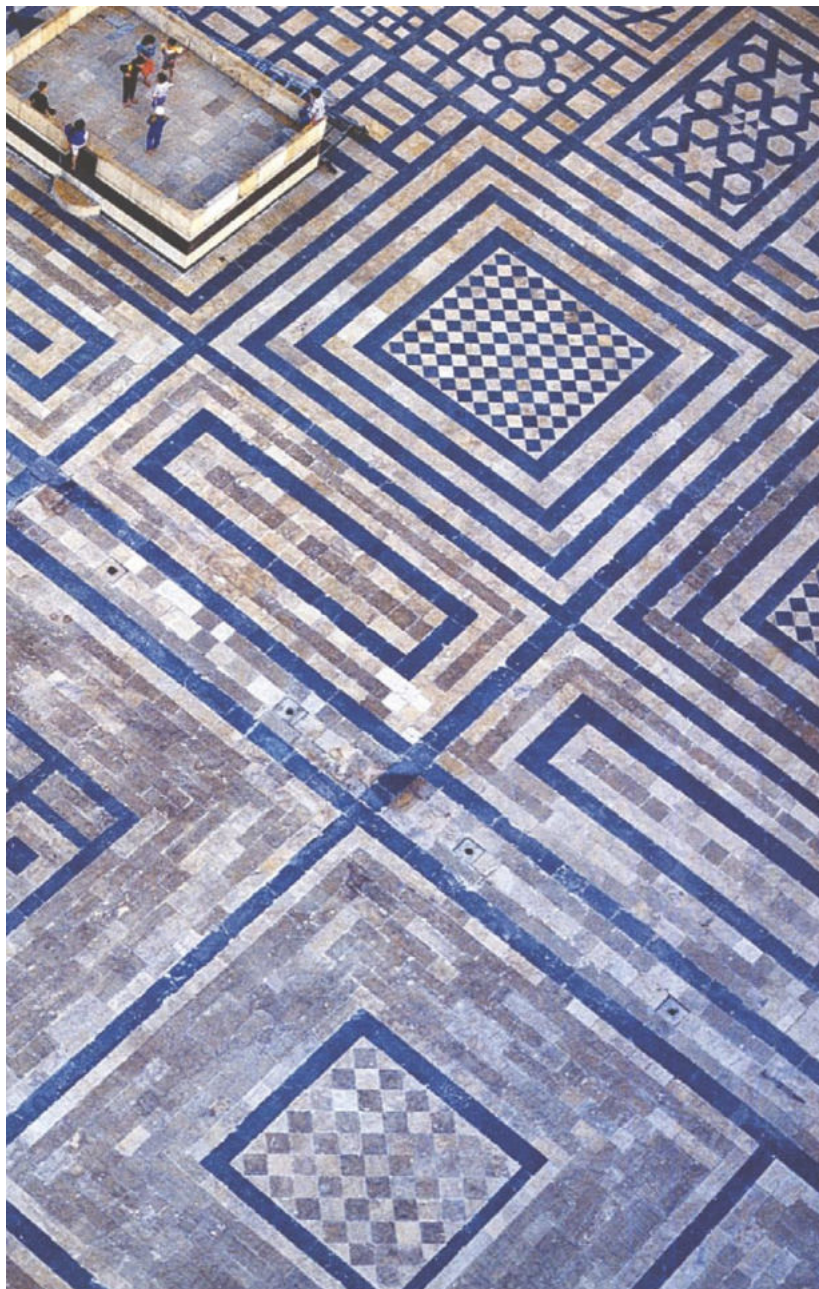




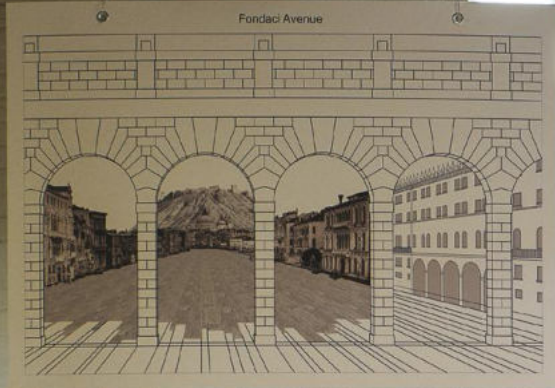


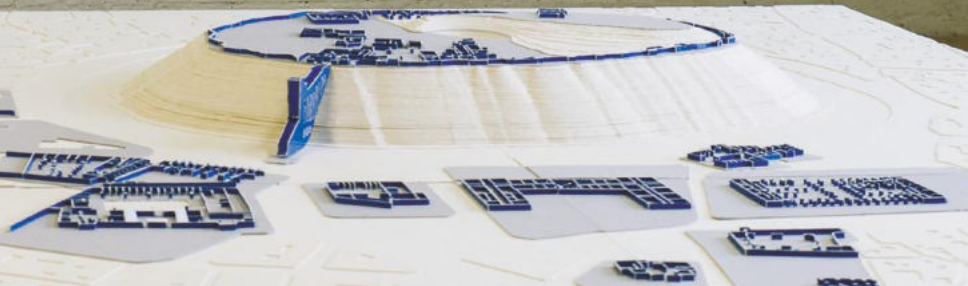
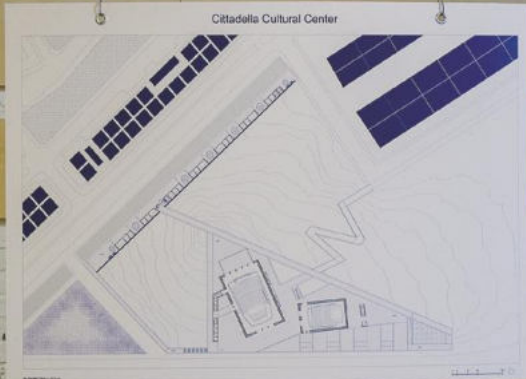


**The voids  
left by war  
are a sort  
of key that  
opens up  
new  
mechanisms  
for urban  
reinvention.**











## Patrizia Montini Zimolo

– Venice, Italy

Patrizia Montini Zimolo is architect and professor of Architectural Composition at Università Iuav di Venezia. Here, she was assistant to Aldo Rossi from 1987 to 1997, and is now member of the Academic Board of the Doctorate Programme in Architectural Composition. She has also been visiting professor at various Italian and international universities: International Bauausstellung in Berlin, Ecole d'Architecture de Nantes, Hochschule di Weimar, Leibnitz Universität Hannover, Ecole d'Architecture Paris Malaquais, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Vassivière, ETSAB - Fundacio UPC (Barcelona), FAAP San Paulo (Brasile), EA-MAU Lomé (Togo).

Many of her projects have been presented in exhibits, conferences, and international seminars around the world: Biennale di Venezia, 1985; Triennale di Milano, 1995; Biennale de l'Habitat Durable, "Habiter la Méditerranée", Grenoble, 2008; Premio Architettura città di Oderzo, 2012.

She has also published various articles, books, and essays: *"Berlino ovest, tra continuità e rifondazione"*, Officina 1987; *"Il luogo del progetto"*, CLUVA, Venezia 1990; *"L'architettura del museo"*, Città studi, Milano, 1995; *"Il progetto del monumento tra memoria e invenzione"*, Mazzotta, Milano 2000; *"Aldo Rossi e Venezia, il teatro e la città"*, Unicopli, Milano, 2002; *"Sotto sopra. Le forme del movimento nella città antica"* in *"Forme del movimento"*, Officina, Roma, 2008; *"Aldo Rossi, la storia di un libro. L'architettura della città dal 1966 ad oggi"*, Il Poligrafo, 2014; *"Il mosaico africano"*, in *"L'invenzione della tradizione"*, Il Poligrafo, 2017.



## Tutors and Guests

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### Stefano Ferro

Stefano Ferro graduated with Gino Malacarne from Università Iuav di Venezia in 2005, where he is a teaching assistant. He did research on urban planning and many competitions at UNIBO of Cesena. He is architect partner in NAOS Architecture Office in Chioggia, coordinator of Aalto Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, and president of "Architecture without borders of Veneto".

### Giulio Mangano

Giulio Mangano graduated in Business Administration at Bocconi University in Milan. He received his Graduate Degree in Architecture from Università Iuav di Venezia. After a period of training and work abroad, he came back to Venice where he co-founded Barman Architects while teacher assistant at Iuav.

### Federico Tenna

Federico is registered in the Graduate Degree Programme in Architectural Science at Università Iuav di Venezia. He studied at Leeds Beckett University where he followed "Fluctuating Archipelago". During his stay in England, he developed his thesis *The Archipelago* with Prof. Teresa Stoppani. His main areas of interest are interior design and retail.

### Marco Lucchiari

Marco Lucchiari began his architecture studies in 2012 at Università Iuav di Venezia, and in 2016 at the University of Oulu in Finland. He participated in the Roma 2020 Program. His fields of interest are urban planning and design, and real estate development.

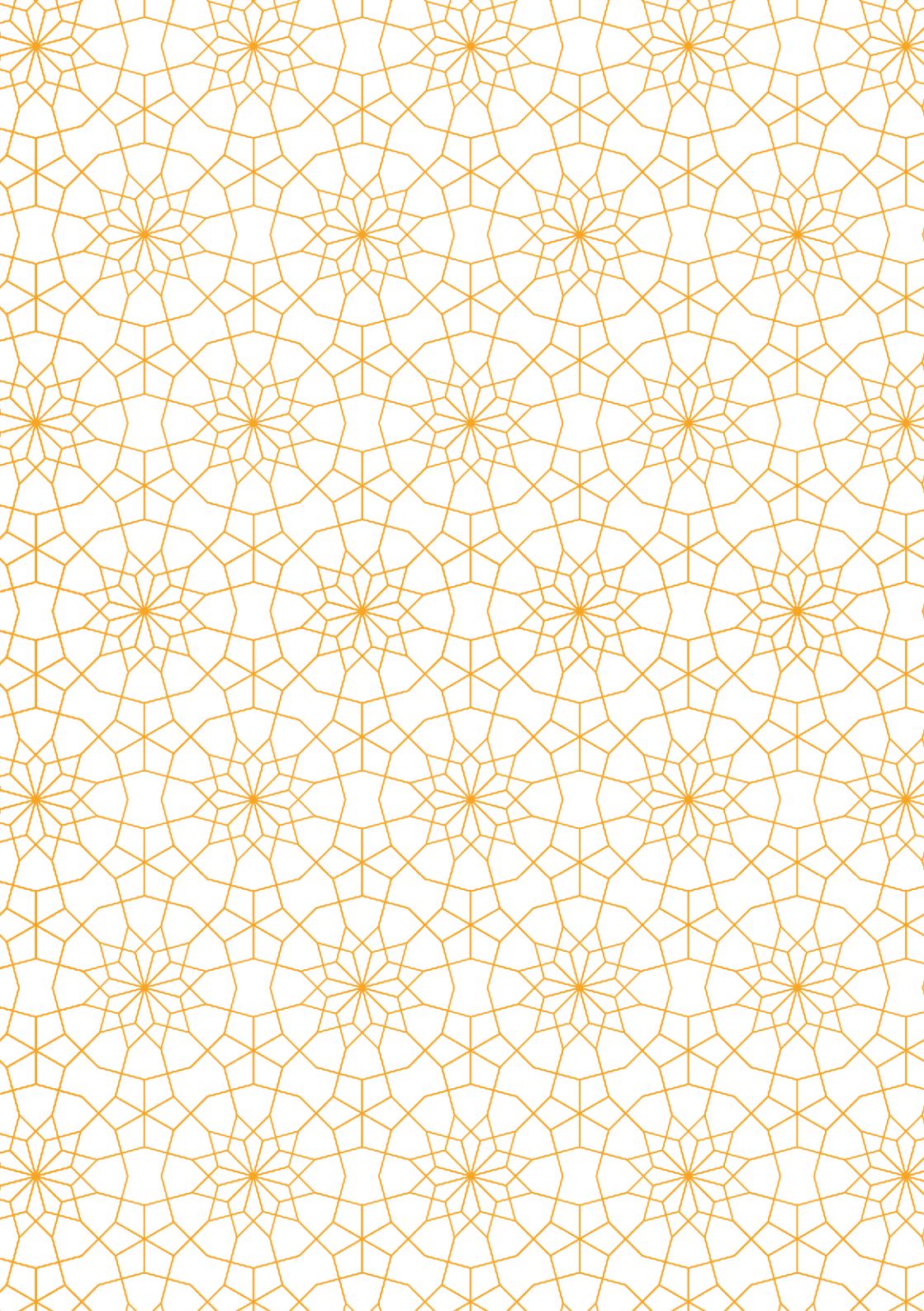
## Students

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Chiara Avesani  
Nicolò Bagagiolo  
Elisa Baldelli  
Erica Bolis  
Federica Bradariolo  
Giacomo Bregolato  
Francesca Bressanin  
Anna Calligaris  
Federico Cassaro  
Laura Cavestro  
Alessia Cavinato  
Gianmarco De Pieri  
Alessia Eustacchi  
Matteo Fasoli  
Filippo Girotto  
Alessio Grava  
Giulia Livan  
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# SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

## FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY



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### **Patrizia Montini Zimolo / Learning From Aleppo**

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