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# PASSAGES

ARCHITECTURE FOR FLOWING AND CONNECTING SPACES

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Raffaella Cavallaro  
Nicolò Chierichetti (eds.)

International Conference  
September 24–26<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Politecnico di Milano

**Book of Abstracts**



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Conference Proceedings  
**Book of Abstracts**

## PASSAGES.

### Architecture for Flowing and Connecting Spaces

Conference Proceedings: Book of Abstracts

International Conference  
24-25-26 September 2025  
Politecnico di Milano

#### Editors | Curators

Raffaella Cavallaro  
Nicolò Chierichetti

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Additional materials are available on the conference website

[www.passages.polimi.it](http://www.passages.polimi.it)

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ARENA

# Welcome to *Passages* International Conference at Politecnico di Milano, Department of Architecture and Urban Studies.

*Passages* aims to investigate notions of space for mobility in contemporary architectural discourses. How architectural design can contribute to reimagining spaces to overcome functionalist engineering limitations, also considering the ecological, climate and social impacts of mobility spaces as something more than mere built objects?

This conference aims to unveil the potential of architectural design and research tools to enrich unconventional discussions about mobility in urban and periurban contexts, its spatial configurations and experiential qualities. Although mobility is intended as a framework, the discourse will focus on the spaces above, below, in-between, and to the sides of the ordinary boundaries of architectures of flow, as well as on the spaces of new forms of movement.

Raffaella Cavallaro  
Nicolò Chierichetti

Politecnico di Milano  
September 2025



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# Intersection

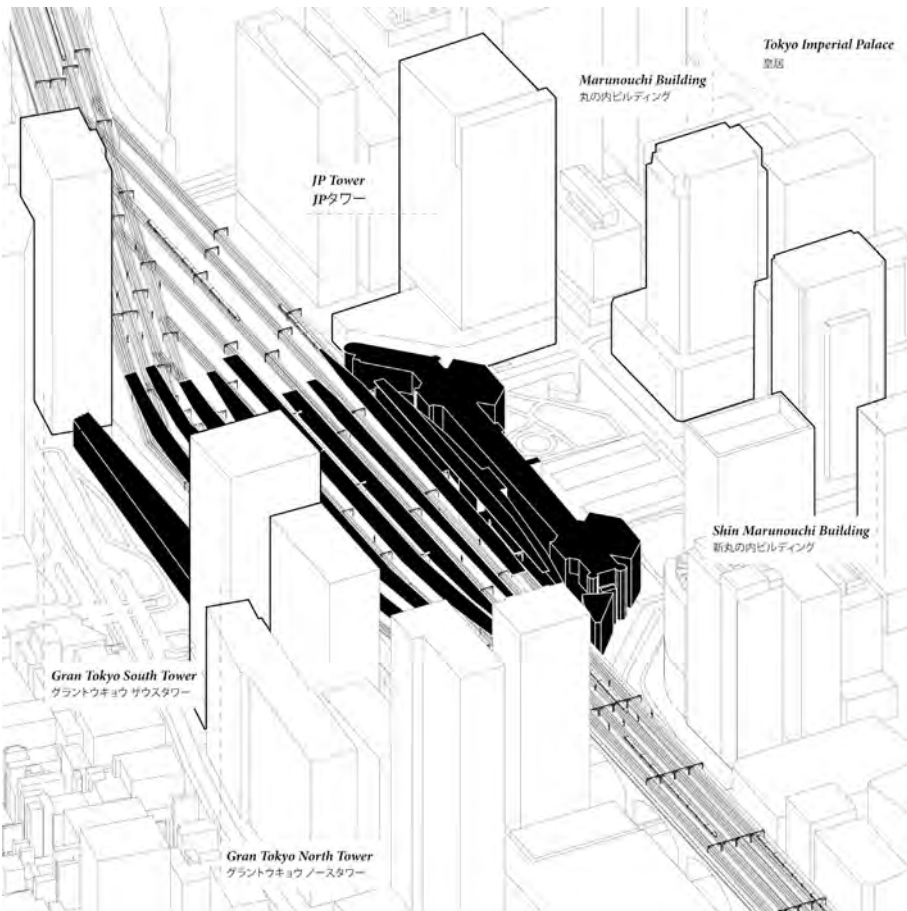
# SPACES OF TRANSITION

SESSION CHAIR:

Francesca Zanotto

Assistant Professor, DASTU

"Tokyo Station (JP), urban wound caused by passage of railroad, and possibilities of air rights". Drawing by the author (2025)



## URBAN MENDING ABOVE THE TRACKS

Air rights as an architectural tool for new urban opportunities

**Simone PAROLA**

PhD Candidate | Politecnico di Torino. Department of Architecture and Design. DASP Programme.

An analysis of satellite images of contemporary metropolises reveals an element that is as recurrent as it is impactful: the railway station as the source of the railway groove. If the railway station is an essential node for transport, its connecting infrastructure produces visible effects on the urban fabric: sharp separations between otherwise connected parts of the city, impermeable areas and unused surfaces. *How can architecture mend the urban fabric without precluding transport activity?*

A design possibility emerges as a key tool to achieve this goal: air rights - the possibility of building "above". Exploiting the area above the transport system can promote a functional and urban reactivation of these "missed" spaces (De Wilde, 2006).

The research analyses case studies in which architectural interventions on railway station infrastructure - understood as nodes and places (Bertolini, Spit, 1998) - have successfully restored the city's spatial continuity, identifying valuable design models: Tokyo Station, and homonymous city itself, as urban wound, train station's connective capacity, and allocation of air rights; William J. Wilgus's pioneering air rights project for Grand Central Terminal in New York; and Rive Gauche area (Paris) toward Gare d'Austerlitz, as a representation of the potential capacity of the above-ground railway within the built city.

Through a process of research on design, the contribution aims to study applied examples to identify scalable and re-applicable dimensional, connective and morphological models. Architectural solutions can be leveraged as tools and valuable expertise for identifying and designing cases that are still in potential.

The objective is to evaluate infrastructure no longer as physical barriers but as engines of urban regeneration through the air rights as a design lever to imagine new forms of urbanity "above" flows, and overcome a strictly functionalist view of infrastructure.

### *Railway-bundles, urban-regeneration, air-rights*

Bertolini, L., & Spit, T. (1998). *SampCities on Rails: The Redevelopment of Railway Stations and their Surroundings*le Book. PresE & FN Spons.

Crisman, P. (2009). *Inhabiting the In-between: Architecture and infrastructure intertwined*. University of Virginia School of Architecture.

de Wilde, S. (2006). *Rail Estate / Multiple use of space and railway infrastructure*. Movares.

« *Ceci n'est pas une conférence sur la mobilité* »

As infrastructures of movement often prioritize technical efficiency, they risk neglecting the qualitative and experiential dimensions of space, an oversight that architectural thinking is distinctively positioned to address. Architecture offers a special perspective to address this gap, particularly in light of SDG 09-Industry, Innovation and Infrastructures and SDG 11-Sustainable Cities and Communities, and in reference to the principles of the EAAE Charter.

By engaging with mobility through a transversal approach, the conference explores how architectural design can contribute to reimagining spaces to overcome functionalist engineering limitations, also considering the ecological, climate and social impacts of mobility spaces as something more than mere built objects.

Through the examination of design methodologies and prototype case studies, the conference attempts to unveil the potential of architectural design and research tools to enrich unconventional discussions about mobility in urban and peri-urban contexts, its spatial configurations and experiential qualities. Although mobility is intended as a framework, the discourse will focus on the spaces above, below, in-between, and to the sides of the ordinary boundaries of architectures of flow, as well as on the spaces of new forms of movement. The conference «Passages. Architecture for Flowing and Connecting Spaces» invited contributions which critically address the role of Architecture in the Shaping the spaces of mobility, and in their interference, around the sessions of “Intersection”, “Collateral” and “Evolution”.

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