

[JOURNAL HOME](#)
[MANIFESTO](#)
[INFO](#)
[NUMERO CORRENTE](#)
[ARCHIVIO](#)
[AVVISI](#)
[INVIO PROPOSTA](#)
[LOGIN](#)
[UTENTE](#)
[REGISTRATI](#)
[CERCA](#)
[INFORMAZIONI SULL'AUTORE](#)

Filippo Lambertucci

DIAP - Dipartimento di Architetture e Progetto, Sapienza Roma Italia

(Macerata, 1962), architetto, Dottore di Ricerca in Composizione architettonica presso Sapienza, Roma. Professore associato in Architettura degli Interni presso il Dipartimento di Architettura e Progetto e membro del collegio dei docenti del Dottorato Teorie e Progetto della Sapienza, Roma. Indaga le proprietà dello spazio con progetti prevalentemente orientati alla dimensione pubblica, tra cui chiese e infrastrutture, e con ricerche teorico-applicative sulle qualità sensibili e il rapporto con l'antico. Tra le pubblicazioni: *Esplorazioni spaziali* (Quodlibet, Macerata 2013); "La macchina del tempo. Viaggiare nell'archeologia" (in *Sottosuoli urbani*, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2015); "Archaeology for commuters. The San Giovanni archaeo-station on the new metro Line C in Rome" (in: *Tunneling and underground space technology*, Elsevier, 2018)

[KEYWORDS](#)

ABITARE ARCHITETTURA
CSAC
COMPOSIZIONE
ARCHITETTONICA
DISPOSITIO GARDELLA IUAV
IGNAZIO GARDELLA
INSEGNAMENTO LUIGI
VIETTI MADRID MUSEO
OSCAR NIEMEYER
OSPEDALI PSICHIATRICI
PROGETTAZIONE
ARCHITETTONICA
PROGETTO PROGETTO
URBANO RICERCA
RIQUALIFICAZIONE SMART
CITY WORKSHOP



Remembering by walking through. Infrastructure as dislocated museum

Filippo Lambertucci



Fig. 1 - Athens Metro, Acropolis Station. Photo by Author.



Around the underground public transport hubs does not gather only pure mobility needs, but also forms of public space more and more important in the contemporary city. More and more often it happens that these spaces get charged with meaning and features traditionally attributed to public places such as streets and squares, with the help in some cases of commercial activities but also, increasingly, of visual and cultural values brought by the interaction with art and heritage.

While the idea of public art can have the merit of pointing out the inadequacy of most of those transit spaces when intended as mere utilitarian expression, on the other hand it suffers the limit of a dimension that concerns still an ancillary role of decorative and comforting support used for the "mitigation" of inexpressive spaces.

It should instead be strengthening a policy approach that goes beyond the decorative dimension, as long pursued in the form of collection by many Transit Authorities, in favor of a more radical involvement in the definition of space and its value.

Somehow the road was systematically opened first in 1985 by the MTA Arts for Transit Program of the New York subway (Bloodsworth, 2014) and later introduced in Italy by the operation of the "Art Stations" in Naples which, even if developing a more incisive site-specific approach often extended also to the outside, it has nevertheless left many nodes still unsolved in terms of spatial organization and functional program, even if the extraordinary success of critics and the public has highlighted the effectiveness even of a minimum conceptual upgrade; the most important aspect is in fact precisely on this level, linked to a concept of museum experience that A. Bonito Oliva, curator of the entire operation, defined with great effectiveness "Mandatory Museum".

The "obligatory museum" takes the museum out of its enclosures to meet the city and can be an extraordinary instrument when referring to the highlighting of the historical and archaeological urban heritage; in this the infrastructural network can act as a capillary dislocated museum, with an enormous potential in terms of values, all referring to the possibility of bringing the visitor experience directly on site.

As M. Laudato (2019) points out, "the archaeological heritage, bringing its authority to the Metro, also confers its potential of cultural significance, in some way enhancing the Metro space as an integral part of the historical narrative emphasizing the local sense of place". If the involvement of works of art inevitably remains in a somewhat ambiguous domain of the confrontation between work and the space that houses it, the implications for interaction with heritage and its places become relevant in terms in which these activate more complex levels of meaning.

The active presence of heritage, in the place where it has been and must be, activates the registers of authenticity and the sense of place at a conceptual and experiential level



ISCRIVITI ALLA NEWSLETTER

CRUSCOTTO

Nome utente
Password
 Ricordami

[ENTRA](#)

LINGUA

Scegli la lingua

[Italiano](#) [INVIJA](#)

CONTENUTI DELLA RIVISTA

Cerca

Cerca in

[Tutti i campi](#)

[CERCA](#)

Esplora

- PER FASCICOLO
- PER AUTORE
- PER TITOLO

INFORMAZIONI

- PER I LETTORI
- PER GLI AUTORI
- PER I BIBLIOTECARI



INDEXED IN
DOAJ DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

ROAD DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS SCHOLARLY RESOURCES

THOMSON REUTERS
Emerging Sources Citation Index
WEB OF SCIENCE™



Scopus®



URBA DOC



such as to transfer to the infrastructure those attributes specific to the museum as a construction and constructor of socio-cultural meanings and urban identity (Merrill 2015, 76), but they load the infrastructure of responsibility for the development of updated and necessarily hybrid statutes with respect to the categories that have defined in their purity both the museum building and the subway.

In this direction many experiences have already offered variations that are not always fully convincing: that of the Athens Metro is the pioneer (1994-2004), but suffers all the limits of a still decorative and not always happily integrated arrangement, penalized by the naive combination of displays and fragments of an old-museographic flavor in architecturally modest spaces of transit. (Lambertucci, 2015) (Fig. 1)

In Sofia (2016 and prev.) The attempt is more aggressive but not for this more successful, while it is to signal the identity charge attributed to the program by the government (Fig. 2); in Thessaloniki, on the other hand, it was precisely the popular interest that forced a significant change of direction towards an adequate integration with the findings and the results of the redesign in this sense are expected shortly.

In Italy the disastrous experience of Line B in Rome (1955) (Fig. 3) has dispersed an unrepeatable occasion (Buzzetti and Pisani Sartorio, 2015) but also in Milan the complex of the ancient baptistery of San Giovanni alle Fonti, despite having been brought to light thanks to the works for the Metro, it was removed from public enjoyment to be included in the museum itinerary of the Duomo.

Once again the experience of the Naples Metro is instead able to trace a more convincing perspective with the project of the Municipio station, headed by A. Siza and E. Souto De Moura, which has become a complex laboratory, in terms of richness and consistency of the finds and above all for the desire to carry out a program that could incorporate all the opportunities coming from the systemization with the important structures that have come to light at the foot of the Maschio Angioino.

The project, patiently and onerously remodeled at each discovery, did not want to miss the opportunity to set up an urban arrangement that wedged from the waterfront to the Town Hall, finally finding a unified solution to an exceptional set of urban facts and historical problems. (De Risi, 2015)

In Rome, where the entire historic city centre is an immense archaeological park, the theme of conservation often arises in extreme terms, especially when it is faced with the development of underground transport networks.

Two approaches have faced each other for years: on the one hand the functional and technological upgrade with the arguments of technological advancement, of force majeure, of the inevitability of serving the citizens; on the other hand, instead, the reasons of preservation, deployed in exclusive terms of defence, aimed at preventing or minimizing damage.

Thanks to this cultural paralysis, for decades in Rome archaeology has been the enemy of innovation and vice versa, in a role game consumed on the ground of the bureaucracy and generating delays, cost increasing, opacity.

Conservation too often translates into this: securing and disappearance of the finds.

The Italian warehouses are full of works of art and archaeological finds: but can an almost inaccessible and forgotten heritage be defined as perfectly preserved?

Is that enough that it is preserved from a technical and physical point of view or, perhaps, a part of the value is also in its enjoyment by a wider audience than that of specialists?

The interior design for the San Giovanni station wants to answer these questions starting from the accessibility to information as the first principle for a correct and complete conservation.¹

The absence of the assets to be conserved certainly makes the operation more complex, but at the same time makes much clearer the importance and the role of the conceptual dimension, according to which the criteria for deciphering what they are seeing are made comprehensible to users.

The display is based on the construction of a narration that starting from the absence itself of what has yet been removed, recomposes at the same time the history and the stories of which the findings have become silent witnesses since the place, made *tabula rasa* by excavations, it is no longer able to return information. (Fig. 5)

Narrative is the tool through which 40,000 fragments and at least a dozen historical layers can find a place that is both physical and conceptual, and finally acquire a value precisely because they are placed in a context, even if just mental. (Fig. 6)

But this is precisely the level on which the design proceeded: making the stratification of the archaeological layers perceptible through physical immersion in the structure of a story that becomes tangible and even traversable. (Lambertucci, 2019)

The subway station does not have the same purposes and does not have the same ways of use as a museum, whose visitor has cultural expectations and is prepared for the experience he chooses to do. Those who pass through the station spaces have a higher speed than those who wander without hurrying through the rooms of a museum, and

have a concentration focused on optimizing the commuting time as well as on their own safety.

If the traveller's attention is geared to speed, the layout of the space must be synchronized so as not to generate malfunctions; the space cannot therefore be set up like a museum, because it would force a slowdown that is in contradiction with the intentions of the passenger and would lead to a malfunction both as a station and as an exhibition space. (Fig. 7)

But W. Feuer (1989, 151) raises a question of value: "what is the responsibility towards those who have not paid to see art but for a transport service?" to which it can be easily answered that it is to offer a museum experience at the cost of a ride.

Marc Augé (1992, 8) suggests something interesting about our behaviour in the subway: "Most of the singular itineraries in the subway are daily and obligatory. We do not choose to retain them or not in our memory: they get impregnated within us".

For this reason, the design aims at an enveloping atmosphere through which the crossing of History becomes a total experience that is organized on narrative registers involving all available space. (Fig. 8)

The walls have been imagined as actual sheets where to write on and draw the narration. The stratimeter is the graphic device through which the passenger can always know his position both in space and time, using a graduated bar reporting the physical depth and the correspondent chronological age. (Fig. 9)

The findings, do not have in themselves a particular artistic value but together they make up an inestimable documentary resource; that is the kind of items that normally exert no attraction and curiosity on display and ends up filling the storehouses. (Fig. 10)

On the contrary they become here testimonials of the stories that are built around specific themes, even of common daily life.

So the narrative wanted to give life to some of them by arranging the finds in a way that could clarify their role in the context of a life that thus could be imagined and somehow experienced.

The display of artefacts however cannot follow a typical museum-like criterion and must rather accommodate the flow of passengers without hindering them, so the windows are always placed in calm or in strategic places, according to a controlled discipline of visuals and flows. (Fig. 11)

The exhibition does not have the didactic character of the museum, even if it does not fail to be rigorous in scientific contents, but privileges the experiential dimension to reach an easy and accessible level of communication, which often a conventional museum cannot fully offer.

The dimension of context in this case is crucial for linking historical notions and artistic assessments, often abstract and distant, to the reality of places that are immediately perceptible, because they are lived in a here and now that proves extremely effective even when the place has been completely transformed.

Narration is therefore affirmed as an effective tool at the service of conservation when it manages to activate meaning or even emotional experiences around an otherwise invisible or incomprehensible heritage.

In a certain sense is stimulated that "continuous re-learning" that Ricoeur (2018) brings back to the act of inhabiting as an active and receptive experience of space that implies a careful re-reading of the urban environment.

The construction of a subway line offers in a historic city the unique opportunity to go through heritage and intercept it as it is and where it is.

It is precisely this dimension of the network that offers the opportunity for a different look on a reality that we normally only know on the surface, and can allow us to read the city in continuity with its heritage, breaking the traditional boundaries that segregate it from urban life

This implies a paradigm shift: the city is a museum and the museum becomes a city; the museum building as we know it in this case loses many of its conventional categories in terms of how it has fueled both architectural research, which in this case is all poured into the interior domain, and its role as repository and custodian of memories.

It does not occupy a space in the city, enriching it with its form, often deliberately iconic, but it is wedged into it, taking its shape by virtue of the extreme solicitations of the land and the pre-existing structures; therefore it no longer teaches through the canons of a voluntary and initiatory experience, but through those, instead, of a condition to which one is unprepared and defenseless and perhaps, for this very reason, more receptive. (Fig. 12)

On how many other occasions is it possible to physically cross the city's heritage and understand its complexity? In San Giovanni the experiment was to activate a diffuse and somehow involuntary process of knowledge, typical of those who normally cross the city, but making visible conditions otherwise impossible to appreciate, such as the stratification of 30 meters of history.

Starting from what would have been lost anyway, a narrative process brought to the attention and understanding of citizens a piece of the city that they did not know and would not have had the chance to know. (Fig. 13)

Augé (2002, 10) again says that "the subway gives the opportunity to brush against the history of others": by extension we can then say that it offers also the opportunity to brush against the history of the city itself, remembering as we walk through it.

Note

1 Museography and interior design: Sapienza, Università di Roma - Diap Department - Re-Lab, Regeneration Laboratory

Team leaders: prof. arch. Andrea Grimaldi, prof. arch. Filippo Lambertucci.

Design team: arch. Livio Carriero, arch. Amanzio Farris, arch. Valerio Ottavino, arch. Samuel Quagliotto, arch. Leo Viola.

Graphic design: prof. arch. Carlo Martino with Sara Palumbo, Delia Emmulo

General design: Metro C spa, coordinator eng. Eliano Romani

Scientific supervision:

Soprintendenza Speciale per il Colosseo e l'Area archeologica centrale di Roma:

Rossella Rea, with Irene Baroni, Anna De Santis, Francesca Montella, Simona Morretta;

Cooperativa Archeologia: Anna Giulia Fabiani

Bibliographic Reference

AUGÉ M. (1992) - *Un etnologo nel metrò*, Elèuthera, Milano.

BLOODWORTH S. e AYRES W. (2014) - *New York's Underground Art Museum: MTA Arts and Design*, The Monacelli Press, New York.

BUZZETTI C. e PISANI SARTORIO G. (a cura di) (2015) - *Le scoperte archeologiche sul tracciato della Metropolitana B di Roma (1939-1953) dall'Archivio Gatti*, «L'Erma» di Bretschneider, Roma.

DE RISI A. (2015) - *Napoli, stazione Municipio: un progetto che... insegue la storia*. In: Dell'Aira P.V., Grimaldi A., Guarini P., Lambertucci F. (a cura di) *Sottosuoli Urbani. La progettazione della "città che scende"*, Quodlibet, Macerata-Roma.

FEUER W. (1989) - "Public art from a public sector perspective". In: A. Raven (a cura di), *Art in the public interest*, UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, p. 139-153

LAMBERTUCCI F. (2015) - "La macchina del tempo: viaggiare nell'archeologia". In: Dell'Aira P.V., Grimaldi A., Guarini P., Lambertucci F. (a cura di) *Sottosuoli Urbani. La progettazione della "città che scende"*, Quodlibet, Macerata-Roma.

LAMBERTUCCI F. (2019) - "Travelling Through History : The San Giovanni Archaeo-station. Narrating the tangible to the preserve the intangible". In: C. Inglese e A. Ippolito (a cura di) *Conservation, Restoration, and Analysis of Architectural and Archaeological Heritage*. p. 1-27, IGI Global, Hershey PA.

LAUDATO M. (2019), "Mobilizing cultural resources: The functional role of heritage in metro projects". In: *Tunnels and Underground Cities. Engineering and Innovation Meet Archaeology, Architecture and Art: Proceedings of the WTC 2019 ITA-AITES World Tunnel Congress*, Napoli 3-9 Maggio 2019, CRC Press/Balkema, Leiden.

MERRILL S. (2015), "Identities in transit: the (re)connections and (re)brandings of Berlin's municipal railway infrastructure after 1989". *Journal of Historical Geography*, 50, Elsevier, 76-91.

RICOEUR P. (2018) - *Leggere la città*. Castelvevchi, Roma.

Refback

- Non ci sono refbacks, per ora.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).