

## The Greening intervention on the Opera House terrace (Teatro comunale di Bologna)

The so-called U-Garden project realised on the terrace of the Bologna Opera House was developed within a workshop "Le cinque piazze della zona universitaria" (The 5 squares of the University Area), involving a group of students of the Architecture Dept. of the University of Bologna, and was carried out by the Municipality of Bologna in collaboration with the University of Bologna, the Urban Innovation Foundation and Rusconi Foundation.

The comparison between the various workshop working groups showed that the University area is characterized by a series of "contrasts" through which it is possible to find a "harmony": the theme "Harmony of Contrasts" emerged.

The dominant theme identified for U-Garden was the contrast between *Formal/Informal*: the *formal* aspect was given by the Theatre Institution and it is in a quite strong contrast with the *informal* atmosphere of Piazza Verdi (the square below, characterised by movida). The project idea is to establish a harmony between the two contexts trying to create a the lively and relaxed condition, typical of Piazza Verdi, on the terrace of the theatre.

This contrast was then declined in the combination of *Green/Built*, binding the purpose of bringing the green within the architectural space of the terrace.

One of the main aims of the Rock project is to rediscover the "Hidden Treasures" of the University Area - places in the city of great importance to be rediscovered. The terrace allows a direct view of Piazza Verdi and opens the view towards the Guasto Garden, framed by historic buildings, and towards the Water Cistern, an "artificial tree", not visible from other parts of the city. These are key elements to be enhanced through the project.

The project has interpreted the different points of the terrace, which mark the path and offer unconventional views of the city, as spaces and environments typical of the theater building. The aim of the project was combined in accordance with the geometries and functions of the spaces of the theatre. The line, called *Galleria*, marks the corridor on the side of Via del Guasto and it is intended as a place of passage but at the same time of rest. The *Galleria* is accessed through a threshold called *Atrium*. The linear element is combined with a second square element, called *Platea*, the final space of the path.

## **The greening**

The greening project played a key role in the creation of the proposal. The stimulus to see the plant element as the basis on which to build the entire project, has allowed in the co-design phase to deepen the issues related to functional greenery.

The choice of species was based on two levels of analysis: the first was dictated by the basic needs of the plant (exposure, maintenance methods, etc..) and the second, more compositional, the directives provided by the concept of project "formal / informal".

To these is added a transversal stimulus, which sees in the Rock project a particular attention to environmental and ecological dynamics. The green is in favour of biodiversity, flora and fauna, and acts as urban ecological connector.

## **The furniture**

The furnishings have been designed in such a way that visitors, as they approach the "atrium", tend to enter into a more informal and relaxed atmosphere. If inside the Atrium, in fact, they are led to stand to capture the view of the city from above, moving in the Gallery meet some seats and finally, inside the Plateau, the chaise-longs invite you to take a more comfortable position, allowing you to discover the view of the water tower from the bottom to the top.

## **Light**

The lighting of the terrace has been studied with the support of the technical staff of Viabizzuno and has provided for the integration of the fireflies in the project, punctual elements inserted inside the vases that contain the vegetation.

The themes presented were translated into the project through a structure composed of modular elements, 60x60cm in size and 40cm in height, which follows the geometry of the spaces of the Atrium, Gallery and Plateau.

At the Atrium, the linear structure that crosses the Gallery, protrudes beyond the edge of the facade to be visible to visitors and defines a sort of "threshold" of entry.

The structure, made up of modular elements, integrates the vegetation, contained within fabric vases, the fixed and mobile seats and the lighting system. It works with few materials, respecting the protected context in which it fits.

We conclude with the image of the new view of the Water Tower framed by vegetation and a starry sky to thank the interdisciplinary working group that allowed the realization of the project.

Opening

