

Back to Fieldwork

Starting in the 1980s, a season of research developed that led to numerous readings of the Italian territory. These research projects experimented with a close and articulated coupling between text and imagery, between words, maps, drawings and photography as well as between essays, stories and interviews, in an attempt to grasp the various phenomena that were emerging across the country. In various ways, these projects also experimented with forms of dialogue between urban planning and photography, attempting to document the emergence of 'new urban phenomena' and to provide them with visual backup 'in real time'.

Over recent years, the territory of Central Emilia has come to the fore with the appellation of the 'new industrial triangle': a territorial definition of which the corners lie in the urban areas of Milan, Bologna and Central Veneto, and which ideally holds together some of the most dynamic production zones of Europe. This is an area that has experienced rapid development since the Second World War. While from an economic point of view, those elements of productive decentralisation and social integration that were later interpreted as characteristic of the Emilia development 'model' were manifested here, this development model has progressively produced a complex multipolar urban system, in which the concentration of activities along the historic axis of the Via Emilia has been accompanied by more articulated ramifications towards smaller centres.

Today, the territory of Central Emilia is a reality characterised by considerable dynamism in terms of investments in advanced production facilities, Industry 4.0 as well as technological innovation in production and logistics processes. It is one where globally recognised supply chains have been consolidated, from mechanics to agrifood, and where we are witnessing the transformation of the original industrial districts into clusters of advanced and internationalised medium-sized companies.

Hence the decision to 'look anew' at this territory in an interdisciplinary manner. However, this research does not concern all the transformations of the territory, but rather revolves around a precise issue: work and its modifications, how it is changing and how the places in which it takes place have changed. An investigation therefore that starts out from a specific theme, one which Linea di Confine has previously observed, and which we believe constitutes a field of fervent and intriguing relations between various fields of knowledge, between photography and urban planning just as between photography and sociology.

Michela Pace and Andrea Pertoldeo's research brings our attention to the moments of free time that work their way into the working spaces and hours in a company in Correggio (province of Reggio Emilia), while Cristiana Mattioli and Andrea Simi highlight the bond that has been established in certain realities between manufacturing production and education in the ceramic district of Fiorano and Sassuolo. The research by Marta De Marchi and Nicolò Panzeri analyses the packaging sector between production and research into materials, while Stefano Saloriani and Allegra Martin show us how a loading and unloading yard for goods at Bologna's Interporto (freight village) can also become a living space, where rest and work blur into one another.

We therefore returned to observe the Emilian territory with a number of working hypotheses, focusing our attention on a particular theme, but above all, trying to interweave different gazes and forms of knowledge. The hypothesis of a transdisciplinary project – which brings together the

observation of places and reflection on phenomena – leads to concrete, effective collaboration in the field, also calling on researchers, who bring their own baggage of knowledge and culture to be shared. An experience that we hope will help us reflect on the possible contours of a new season of investigation and understanding of the Italian territory.

Text drawing on the essay 'Back to Fieldwork' by Stefano Munarin and Federico Zanfi, published in the catalogue *JOBS. Forms and Spaces of Work. Un'indagine interdisciplinare in Emilia centrale*, Quodlibet / Linea di Confine Edizioni, 2022.

Curators

Antonello Frongia is associate professor of Contemporary Art History at Roma Tre University, where he teaches history of photography. His publications include *Fine della città. «Occhio quadrato» di Alberto Lattuada* (2022).

Stefano Munarin is associate professor of Urban Planning at the IUAV University of Venice. He deals with welfare policies in the construction of the city. His publications include *Tracce di Città* (2011), *Spazi del Welfare* (2011) and *Diritti in Città* (2021).

Federico Zanfi is an architect and associate professor of Urban Planning at Milan's Politecnico. His research and design activities focus on the transformations of cities and territories. His publications include *Città latenti. Un progetto per l'Italia abusiva* (2008).

Coordinator

William Guerrieri, photographer and curator, is the director of Linea di Confine, for which he has edited various publications. As a photographer, he recently published *Corpi e macchine al lavoro* (2022).

Photographers

Allegra Martin, an architecture graduate, is a photographer and lecturer. She has participated in several surveys including *Welfare Space Emilia* (2013), *Red Desert Now!* (2016) and *Mille case per Bologna* (2021).

Nicolò Panzieri is a freelance photographer. Winner of the 2019 JOBS call, he has exhibited in institutions such as the Milan Triennale, Fotografia Europea and Ph Museum.

Andrea Pertoldeo, a graduate in Urban Planning, is a photographer and lecturer in photography at the IUAV in Venice. His publications include *Blue Dust* (2017).

Andrea Simi is a photographer and curator. His research focuses on historical investigations, with particular attention to photographic archives. He published *Poimec* in 2019.

Researchers

Marta De Marchi is a researcher and lecturer at the IUAV in Venice and a member of the Italian-Belgian research and design collective Latitude.

Cristiana Mattioli is a researcher and lecturer in Urban Planning at the Politecnico in Milan. Her publications include *Mutamenti nei distretti: produzione, imprese e territorio* (2020).

Michela Pace, PhD in Urban Planning from the IUAV University of Venice, is a lecturer in Urban Planning. She has published *Production of Heritage: The Politicisation of Architectural Conservation* (2019).

Stefano Saloriani is an urban planner and PhD student in Urban Planning, Design and Policy at the Milan Politecnico. His research concerns e-commerce and the effects of home delivery on the territory.