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paesaggio urbano

URBAN DESIGN



Paesaggio Urbano – Urban Design is a bimonthly magazine on architecture and urban design, founded in 1989 and is published by the Maggioli Group. The magazine has a multidisciplinary approach, ranging from design and survey issues to urban morphology, architectural design and local and international cultural trends.

Paesaggio Urbano – Urban Design è una rivista semestrale di architettura e urbanistica fondata nel 1989 ed edita dal Gruppo Maggioli. La rivista ha un approccio multidisciplinare che spazia dalle tematiche del disegno e rilievo a quelle relative alla morfologia urbana, al progetto di architettura e trend culturali locali e internazionali.

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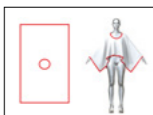


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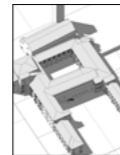
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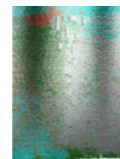


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Un'iniziativa interculturale per
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C. Ferreyra | R. Ferraris | V. Ferraris | S. Barba

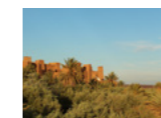


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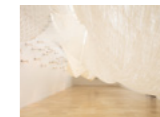
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A cross-cultural initiative for urban exploration and international education aimed at architects and engineers

Un'iniziativa interculturale per l'esplorazione urbana e la formazione internazionale di architetti e ingegneri

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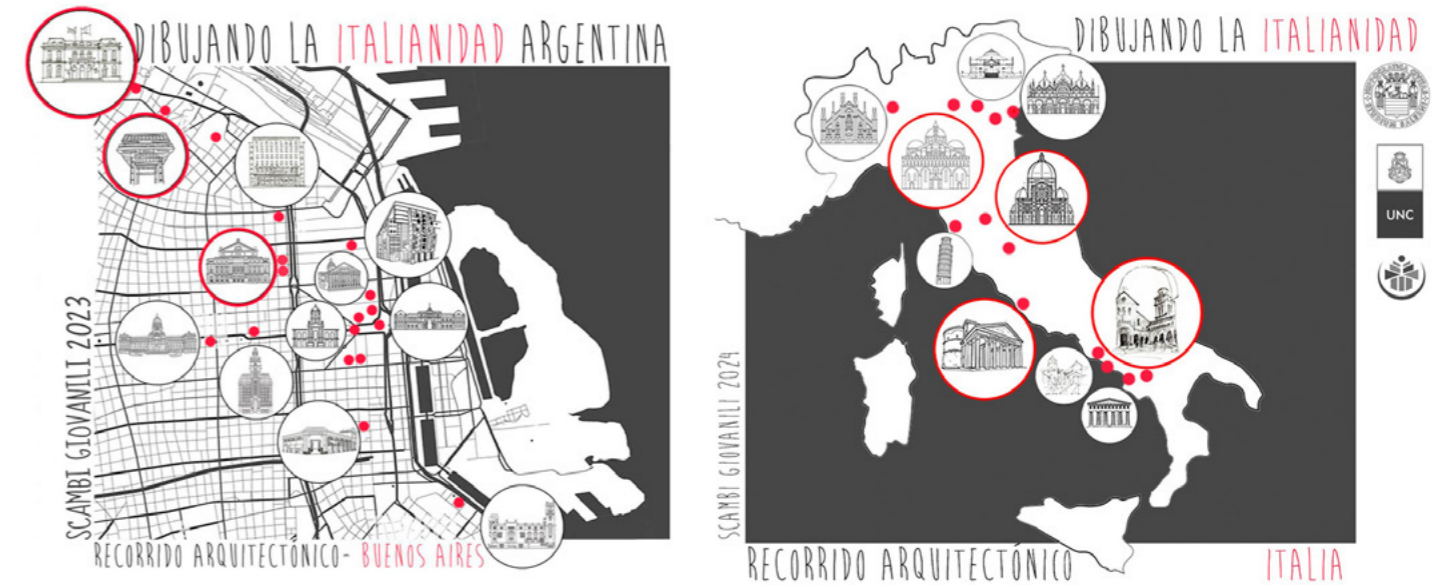
This contribution highlights a transnational educational initiative that fosters intercultural dialogue through the study of architecture and urban exploration. Promoted by the University of Salerno, in collaboration with the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba and recently supported by the Italian Embassy in Buenos Aires, the initiative was conceived to move beyond the traditional approach to training architects and engineers. It integrates experiential and immersive methodologies directly in the places and reaffirms the central role of study trips and drawing from life. These visits allow students to immerse themselves in urban contexts, draw on site, and develop critical reflections on the built environment. Drawing is thus redefined: no longer merely a technical skill, but a means of perceiving and interpreting space, capable of stimulating spatial awareness, personal expression, and intercultural understanding. Inspired by the figure of the traveling architect, the initiative encourages students to become

00.

Nearly two decades of collaborative research in architectural representation between the National University of Córdoba, Argentina and the University of Salerno, Italy.

intellectual nomads, recording their impressions and interpretations graphically as they traverse new urban landscapes. In this way, drawing becomes both a tool of discovery and a bridge between cultures, profoundly reshaping future architects' and engineers' perspectives on the dynamic complexity of contemporary cities within an increasingly international framework.

Questo contributo vuole valorizzare un'iniziativa educativa transazionale che promuove il dialogo interculturale attraverso lo studio dell'architettura e dell'esplorazione urbana. Promossa dall'Università di Salerno, in collaborazione con la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba e con il recente supporto dell'Ambasciata d'Italia a Buenos Aires, l'iniziativa nasce con l'obiettivo di superare i confini dell'approccio tradizionale per la formazione di architetti e ingegneri, integrando metodologie esperienziali e immersive nei luoghi oggetti di studio, riproponendo la centralità dei viaggi di studio e del disegno dal vero. Le visite offrono agli studenti l'opportunità di immergersi nei contesti urbani, disegnare in situ, comprendere e sviluppare una riflessione critica sugli spazi costruiti. Il disegno è così 'risignificato': non soltanto una competenza tecnica, ma uno strumento di percezione e interpretazione dello spazio, in grado di stimolare consapevolezza spaziale, espressione personale e comprensione interculturale. Ispirandosi alla figura degli architetti viaggiatori, l'iniziativa stimola gli studenti come nomadi intellettuali, che attraversando nuovi spazi urbani registrano graficamente impressioni e significati. Il disegno, quindi, assume la funzione di scoperta e ponte tra culture, trasformando profondamente lo sguardo dei futuri architetti e ingegneri circa la complessità dinamica delle città contemporanee, in una prospettiva sempre più internazionale.



01.

"Dibujando la Italianidad Argentina." International initiatives promoted by the Italian Embassy in Buenos Aires (held in Argentina in 2023 and in Italy in 2024).

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES FOR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Architectural education today faces a critical challenge: reconciling theoretical instruction with lived experience. At the National University of Córdoba (UNC) and the University of Salerno (UNISA), staff teaching recognized that conventional pedagogical models often overlook students' perceptual and interpretive development. In response, a series of extracurricular excursions were developed, combining travel and urban sketching to promote immersive learning. These excursions were not conceived merely as artistic exercises, but as spatial readings—drawing as a form of seeing, understanding, and engaging with the city. Initially focused on local contexts, the initiative expanded internationally through a collaboration between UNC and UNISA, fostering a dynamic and enriching intercultural dialogue. Students began to experience architecture as a lived phenomenon, immersing themselves directly in the exploration of space, culture, and community. The program also nurtured strong interpersonal connections among students, educators, and external drawing communities, fostering a collaborative and reflective learning environment. This academic partnership between Italy and Argentina was greatly supported and encouraged by Vito Cardone⁰¹, whose vision was instrumental in strengthening the initiative's international scope. Drawing on the figure of the "traveling architect" - who walks, sketches, and inhabits the city - this initiative repositions architectural learning as a process of observation, participation, and self-discovery [1]. It takes inspiration from past architects like Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn [2] who used sketchbooks as tools for understanding the urban world [3]. Since 2011, the project

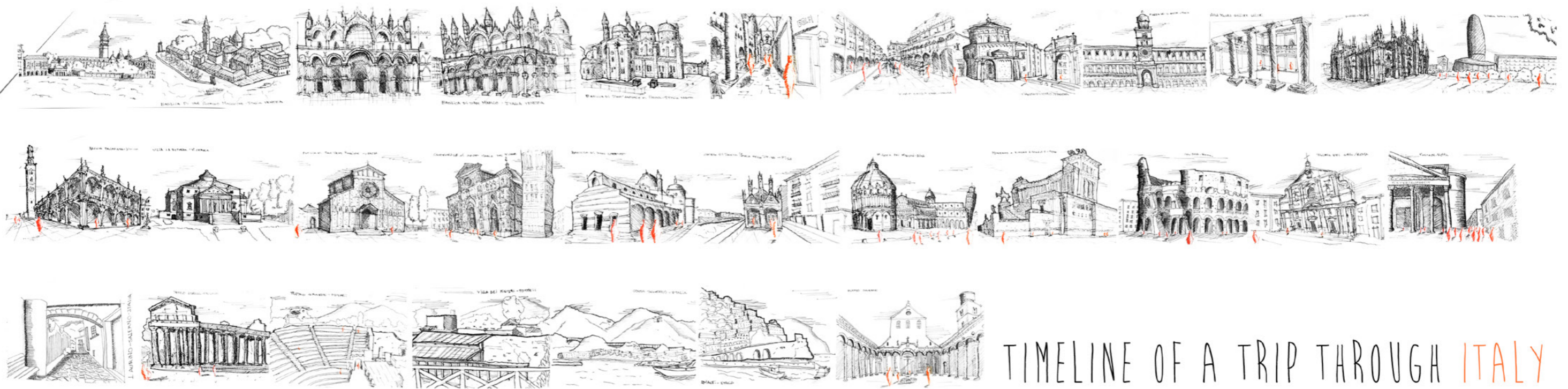
Uniting Two Continents has facilitated reciprocal exchanges: Argentine students sketching Italian cities like Rome, Naples, and Salerno, and Italian students engaging with Córdoba, Buenos Aires, and Rosario. Many of these experiences have been developed with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of mobilities initiatives known as Youth Exchange and in the field of Transnational Educational Initiatives supported by the Italian Ministry of University and Research⁰² [Fig. 01].

These shared experiences offer a comparative and multicultural lens through which students explore, interpret, and internalize architecture. Sketching thus becomes a gateway to critical and creative engagement with space, memory, and meaning.

METHODOLOGY: TRAVEL, DRAWING, AND OBSERVATION

Inspired by educational journeys of architects from the Grand Tour, this initiative reclaims the sketchbook as a pedagogical and mnemonic device. Drawing is understood as an act of cognition - a way to internalize and synthesize sensorial and spatial experiences. As Le Corbusier observed: "one uses one's eyes and draws, so as to fix deep down in one's experience what is seen".

From a theoretical perspective, the initiative draws on critical pedagogy, embodied cognition, and experiential learning. Knowledge, in this view, is constructed through context, interaction,



02. Drawing and spatial perception for urban exploration. Timeline of a trip through Italy by Argentine students in 2024.

and physical engagement with the world. Learning emerges as a dynamic process rooted in nomadism, where movement, perception, and reflection guide a journey shaped by experiences [Fig. 02].

Planning the trip itself is part of the learning process. Before traveling, students receive guidebooks with historical and architectural references, inviting them to annotate, reflect, and draw. These personalized sketch-journals serve as evolving narratives – visual records of discovery that blend observation with imagination.

By sketching cities rather than merely photographing them, students cultivate a deeper, more thoughtful relationship with space [5]. Italian students in Argentina engage similarly, experiencing unfamiliar urban environments through direct engagement, thereby fostering critical reflection on their own cultural and architectural contexts [Fig. 03].

DRAWING AS GESTURE AND THOUGHT: THE LINE AS KNOWLEDGE

Sketching is more than visual notation – it is a cognitive and emotional act. Philosopher Raz insightfully wrote: “To draw a line is to freeze a gesture of our arms on paper”. Drawing connects eye, hand, and mind, becoming simultaneously analytical and expressive. Alberto Bellucci [6] in *The Travel Sketches in the Formation of Architects and Designers*, emphasizes travel’s role in awakening perception: “Travel breaks the routine of daily life... It acts as a catalyst, awakening the eye from the inertia of habit”. Through travel, students learn to see with new eyes – to question, compare, reflect, and ultimately to draw as a means of knowing.

In a digital era saturated with curated imagery, the slowness and intentionality of drawing demand active attention and interpretation. It requires presence – of mind, body, and emotion – and fosters a more nuanced understanding of space and experience.

The Traveler’s Sketchbook serves as both physical object and conceptual strategy. It is at once a visual map, reflective journal, and narrative device. Unlike objective cartography, it embraces



03. Italian students sketching Argentine architecture designed by Clorindo Testa as part of the 2023 Youth Exchange project, an initiative promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.



THE IMPRESION OF THE PLACE...



THE SKETCHER...



THE VIEW OF VENICE...

04.

Argentine students exploring Venice through drawing and observation. Featured an excerpt from one student's Traveler's Sketchbook.

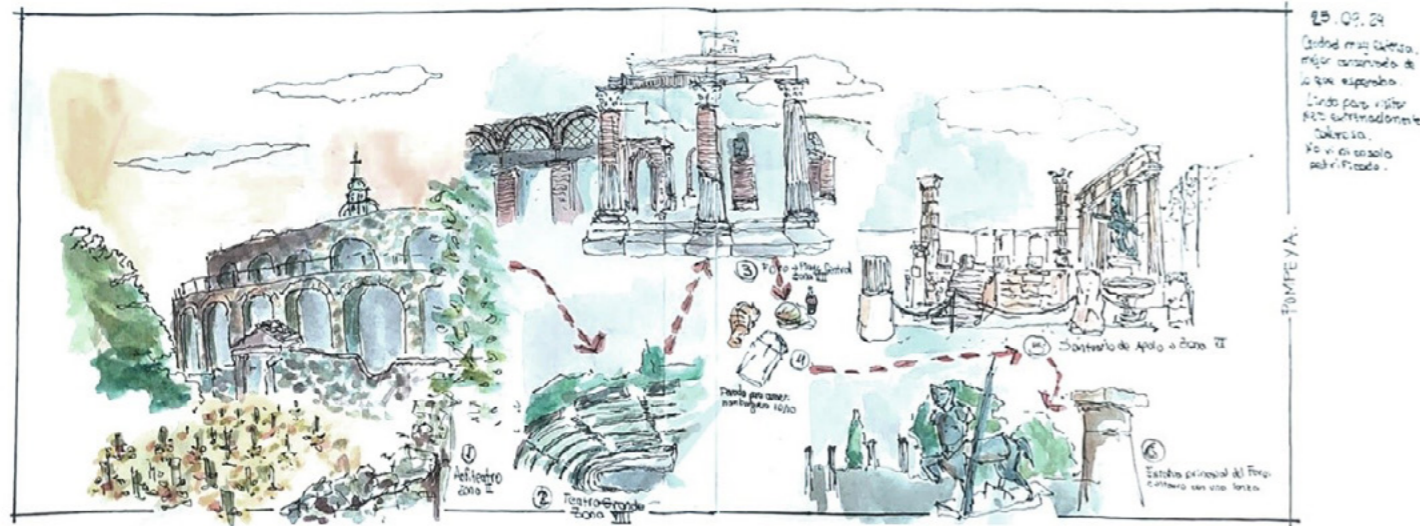
subjectivity, allowing students to become "cartographers of experience" [Fig. 04.]. As students observe, draw, and narrate their journeys, they are prompted to critically examine space and representation [Fig. 05.]. Whose stories are told in the built environment? What is visible, and what is hidden? The act of drawing becomes a means of inquiry [7], engaging with issues of memory, power, identity, and belonging. The approach integrates well across disciplines - architecture, history, geography, literature, sociology - inviting students to use the city as a text and drawing as a method of critical annotation. Urban parks, plazas, markets, and rural paths become classrooms; the learner's movement becomes an educational action.

ACADEMIC INSIGHTS: THE ROLE OF DRAWING

Travel and drawing are deeply interwoven in architectural education. Together, they activate perception, provoke reflection, and foster a more meaningful engagement with the built environment [Fig. 06.].

By exploring unfamiliar urban landscapes and sketching in response, students cultivate not only design skills but cultural awareness and empathy [8]. Drawing becomes more than a technical tool - it becomes a way of thinking, of being present, and of engaging with the world critically and creatively [9].

This initiative affirms the pedagogical power of the Traveler's Sketchbook as a model for situated, embodied, and transformative education. As educators seek to foster more inclusive, responsive, and experiential approaches, this initiative offers a compelling framework - grounded in movement, rooted in place, and open to the richness of international human experience [11].



05.

Traveler's Sketchbook of Argentine student in the trip through Italy in 2024.



06.

Reflections of the built environment: excerpts from a student's Travel Sketchbook.



07.
Group of Argentine students presenting the results of the international initiative in Italian universities.

CONCLUSIONS

The traveller-architect, pencil in hand, does not merely record what is seen, but seeks to understand what is felt. In educating future architects, we must teach them to see with care, to listen with curiosity, and to draw with purpose – for it is through these acts that architecture becomes truly meaningful.

Students participating in these sketching excursions consistently report improvements in spatial awareness, observational acuity, and visual communication skills. The shared experiences cultivate empathy, cooperation, and cross-disciplinary dialogue.

By stepping into unfamiliar cities and drawing in situ, students develop a more critical and embodied understanding of architectural space. Students move from passive consumers of knowledge to active producers of insight.

Furthermore, the cross-cultural aspect of the program enhances these outcomes. Students learn to recognize both universal design principles and cultural specificities, a key competency for contemporary architectural practice. The sketch becomes a bridge – between cultures, between observation and analysis, between emotion.

This international exchange enhances spatial understanding while developing cultural awareness and sense of belonging. Urban exploration becomes a learning journey through architecture, with the sketchbook capturing ideas, sensations, and perceptions [Fig 07].

NOTES

01| Vito Cardone has consistently cultivated strong international relations between Italy and Argentina. Recognized as a "visionary" in the introduction to the Proceedings of a Congress held in La Plata in 2012, he showcased dedication, conviction, and insight in strengthening these academic cooperations.

02| Activities conducted in the field of the project FraMMET "Fragility, Marginality, Mobility, Energy Transition (TNE23-00074)" funded by Italian Ministry of University and Research.

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