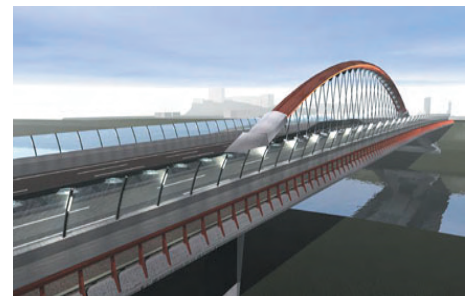
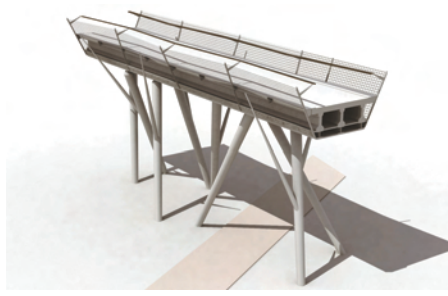


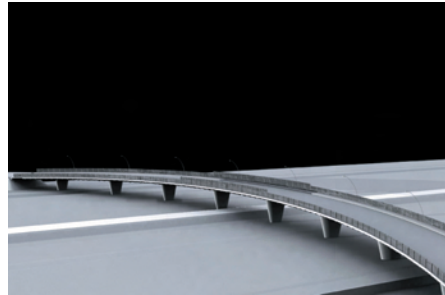
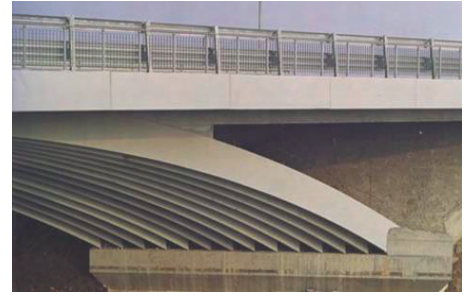
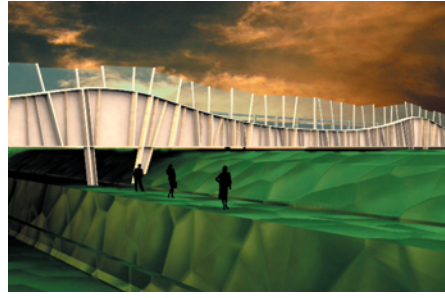
BRIDGE AND VIADUCT IN THE LANDSCAPE: REASONS OF THE SHAPE

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When designing and planning a bridge, its quality requires considerations that involve exploring the relationship between the work and its surroundings. For example, considering the dimension of this relationship by highlighting any aspects of the bridge's world intended as a product of engineering, and the perception and shape, where architecture and engineering meet and contribute all the cultural, historic and symbolic aspects.

Bridges, which somebody sensibly defined as “transit portals in space” are an excellent opportunity to reconsider the cultural codes of architecture and extend them to the territory. There are numerous ways to see a bridge and likewise planning approaches to design it. In all events however, the outcome refers to the “perceived” world. In fact, either a bridge or a viaduct can be perceived in different ways, or rather, by at least two types of users: generally speaking the first is the person who crosses over it; the second is the person who lives with the bridge and is affected by its presence. Consequently, the fact that man is able to absorb a visual (or environmental) impact and live with it does not mean that low quality panoramic elements should be offered which would just cause cultural decline. We



are very used now to seeing some beautiful stretches of countryside broken up by bridges, viaducts, flyovers and subways, “constellations” of poor quality designs that risk becoming degraded “doors” in modern town walls (ring-roads, bypasses, etc.). Involving the user does not only mean perceiving the shape, but also its function, or, rather, the ability of it “to work” in the territory. In fact, if two sides of a river need joining by a bridge, or a viaduct is needed to get over an obstacle, if the anthropological dimension of the contexts that the construction joins and what it offers when it is being crossed, or the consequences of its long-lasting presence in a physical space, are not considered, we risk creating structures that are not very representative of the people who live and move there.

Work into formal quality extended to the multiple “function” of a bridge, enables us to overcome a cultural impasse which has involved dominance in Italy over the last thirty years of the boring system of a simple girder placed on top of previously completed constructions. If is of fundamental importance, while maintaining the technical functions as reference criteria and paying attention to the budget, that we focus on the shape and its relationship with its context: this does not just mean creating a dialogue between customer and planner and between engineers and architects, but, what is more important, it means asking questions. The wider our points of view and their inclusion in the planning process, the greater chance the work of art has of giving a quality service intended in the broadest sense of the word, between the conceptual dimension of the impact and the “added value”, and therefore the development of a territory. To live with bridges means using them, crossing them and living together with their physical presence: to be sure that no conflict arises from the proximity between man and object, we must focus on the theme of the bridge, its relationship with its surroundings, so that a product that deserves being called quality is created. A quality product cannot just be a synthesis of technical and technological dimensions, nor can it just be a simple formal exercise, above all it must be relational expression able to summarise a technical, formal and cultural process on the basis of research that goes beyond the physical object. If we examine the aspects that are not purely “physical” and focus on the work-context relationships, we can automatically work on transforming those areas that are crossed by bridges, the majority of them totally anonymous, and help give a constructive identity to spaces that deserve being called Places.