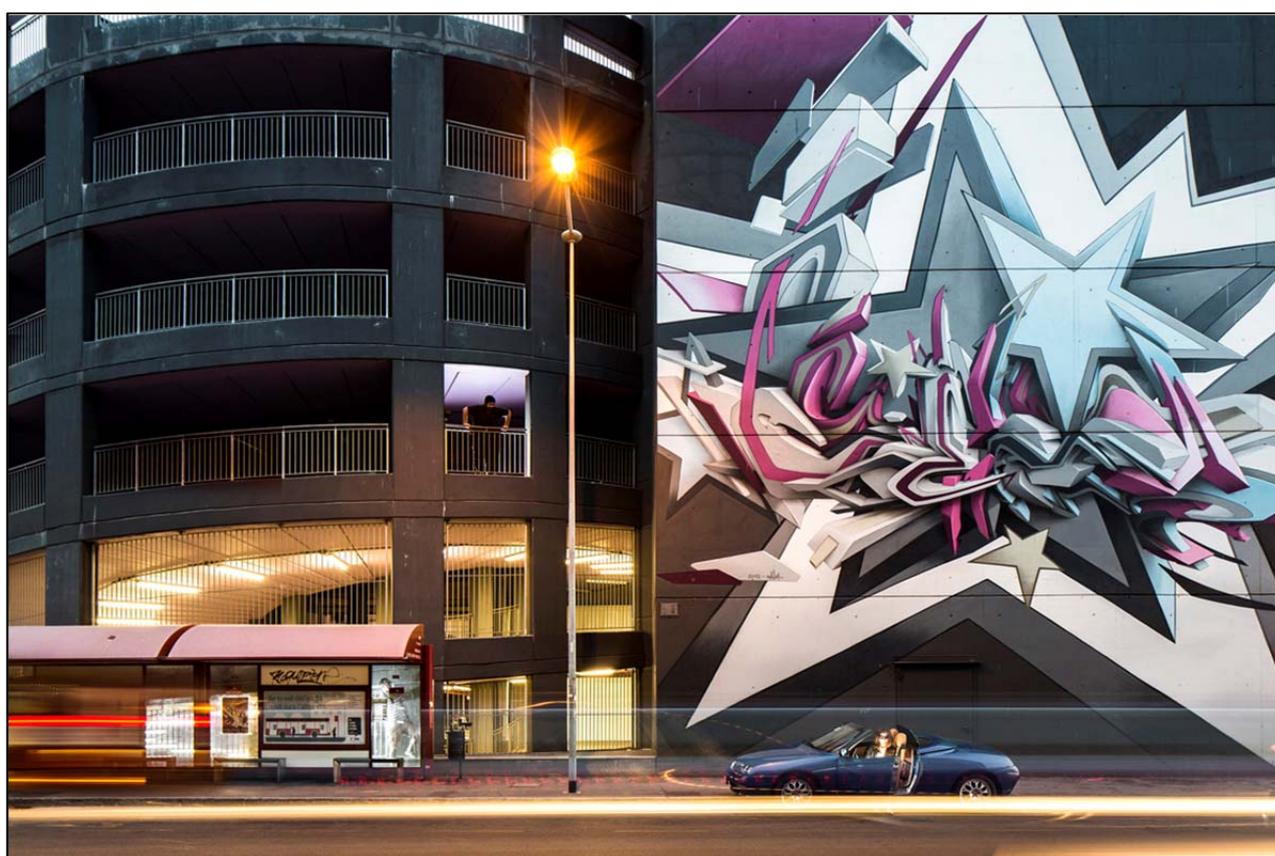


## VIEWPOINT

### Pop-up City. Searching for instant urbanity

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Multi-storey car park, via Fioravanti, Bologna. Photography: Fabio Mantovani.

Pop-up City is a photography research project initiated in 2013 in the city of Bologna, Italy. It works on perception and understanding of urban and architectural features of the existing city, trying to deliver new powerful images of the suburban world and to highlight existing places with a potential for public life. These places are generally disconnected from the mental representation of the urban narrative plot of public spaces: they are part of the everyday existence, but common people are accustomed to experience them as fragments, in a sort of jump-cut urbanism, affected by the use of cars.

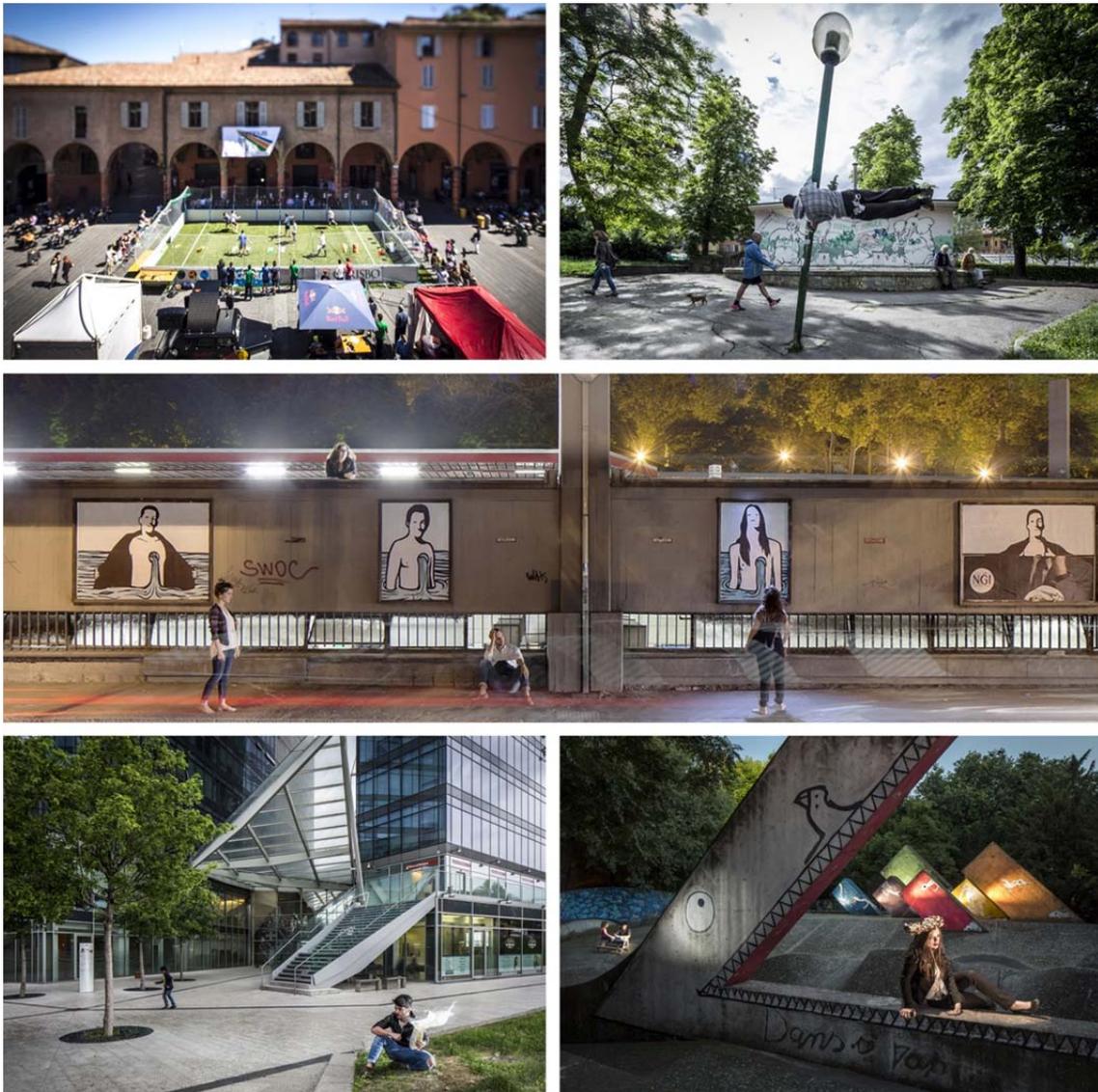
Pop-up City is an attempt to make people look at everyday streets, places and spaces around them with different, conscious eyes, in order to embed them in their physical and

*Pop-up City. Searching for instant urbanity*

emotional urban life. Pop-up City moves far away from the European mental attitude that immediately links the concept of “public space” to the idea of a traditional designed square, searching for that intangible dimension made of desires, dreams and passionate involvement, giving shape to imagination.

Pop-up City can influence the mental representation of different places and can foster a kind of *imageability* in the urban consciousness. This means to discover invisible dimensions of an “ordinary magic” in the public realm, looking for the unexpected and the unseen, through episodes of instant urbanity related to our everyday existence.

Pop-up City is trying to document what is now largely undocumented. It represents the city of Bologna, but actually the Pop-up City could be anywhere.



Top left: “Campus by night” event, Piazza Verdi, Bologna.

Top right: Lions’ cage, Giardini Margherita, Bologna. Center: Bus Station, Viale Masini, Bologna.

Bottom left: Piazza Liber Paradisus, Bologna. Bottom right: Giardino del Guasto, Bologna.

Photography: Fabio Mantovani.



Pop-up City exhibition at Tin Shui Wai, Hong Kong, 2014. Photography: Fabio Mantovani.

The Magic Carpet project team at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Tin Sau Bazaar hosted Pop-up City in Tin Shui Wai in 2014. Like suburban Italian neighborhoods, Tin Shui Wai is located at the margin of Hong Kong; its space has no identity; it lacks street spaces for communal encounters and micro-economic activities. All these result in the stigmatization of Tin Shui Wai with problems such as social isolation and a high unemployment rate.

Bologna and Hong Kong share the same suburban reality, in a way that is not difficult to perceive: even if they are related to different geographical contexts and cultures, the two cities are dealing with living communities in new, large urban landscapes far away from the historic downtown district. The suburban world can be banal, sometimes ugly, not interesting, but full of life and can transform itself into an enchanting environment. People simply have to understand a new kind of urbanity, made of small, temporary, spontaneous and creative episodes of emotional exchange.

Through staging Pop-up City in Tin Shui Wai, the Magic Carpet project team and Tin Sau Bazaar created an opportunity to re-envision, activate, and transform the public space of the district, and thereby make the community more vibrant. In addition, the project aimed to foster art and cultural exchange and creative activities in Tin Shui Wai.

### Credits

Curator: Luisa Bravo

Photographer: Fabio Mantovani

Pop-up City was exhibited for the first time at Palazzo Pepoli, Museum of the History of Bologna, Torre del Tempo, Bologna, June 27 - July 20, 2014, as part of the 'Past Present and Future of Public Space' International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Design, June 25-27, 2014.

<http://www.cityspacearchitecture.org/?c=pop-up-city>



Pop-up City exhibition at Tin Shui Wai, Hong Kong, 2014.

Photography (top left and bottom right): Fabio Mantovani. Photography (top right and bottom left): Loix Fung

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