



MUSEO
DIOCESANO
DI PADOVA

THE THIN CITY

...THE UTOPIA

of this installation aims to be a way to travel around the other city – one more temporary and unrehearsed, empty of its residents, where the gaze catches on peeling walls and drainpipes, digging under the wells, striding between the corners of the pavement and the ragged street shadows.

A child's drawing can hold this city like the lines on a hand; we can find it written in the sharp corners of the city streets, in the grilles of its windows, the handrails of its stairwells, in its lightning rods, its flag masts, its rusty shop signs, its dark corners.

The city appears to us as a structure of imaginary solutions where nothing is lost, and of which we are a part; **and it's strange to imagine that children really detected this subtle city in the nooks and crannies of the one outside, "all black and dirty".**

And yet, children observed, described and reproduced hidden worlds where the project of their experience gains a shape and a sense, and where relationships can be understood in light of an expressed need, a function or a fantastical projection.

The children managed to perceive the pattern of a design so fleeting that it escaped termites.

They took it back and gave it new life in the subtle city: they worked in the classroom with teachers and facilitators for five months, chasing thoughts, tales, paintings, images, and stories of artists that gave them the keys to open fantastical doors to the new city. They found themselves part of fascinating theatre experiences, at the risk of becoming lost in the beauty and intricacy of their thoughts, and along the way they found

**"... the wind creating a necklace of water
between the crooked legs of the suitcase city ...
which shines
as delicate as a pearl necklace ..."**

or more simply

**"houses made of bouncy rubber,
where sleeping
is very exciting".**

THE THIN CITY

has changed its name in these months, it has transformed, stretched, deformed; it has become an installation where we return to the places of this diffused metropolis with a new perspective – an itinerary through the streets and places of a fantastical map that shows us unexpected contents: a city that eludes us, where it is entirely possible, as a child wrote, that “the Pepsi billboard goes to shoot dreams at night” because it’s tired of its job as an advertisement.

Visitors are led by a zany guide that might speak in rhymes or read in different languages, following the everyday path with the detachment of someone who looks from afar, but through the lens of knowledge; and their gaze travels the streets as if they are written pages: every memory comes to the surface, every hidden sign, every way that fate and the wind have shaped things.

Does an ideal city exist in the imagination, to be philosophical? Or is it simpler to rebuild it through the irony and contradictions of children’s thinking? We look for similarities between its shapes and natural patterns: a star, a seashell, a ring, a mandala, a cross. Cities in history have always developed around a natural place that determined their shape: along the meanders of a river, or on the slopes of a hill, or among the dunes of a desert oasis.

As children remember the murky image of their city – the keep out signs, closed doors, barred windows; the loneliness, the rush, the money, the dangerous streets, bothersome noises, the discomfort, the strident colours, the division, the regulated natural environment – only they can revolutionise the way time is marked; they are able to redefine its boundaries and content, and have the great ability to follow the traces of a pattern so subtle that it eludes adults.

PLANNING A CITY

is part of dreaming: it’s a journey through thought
that many have undertaken
and it’s an attainable utopia for a city
that can reproduce the wishes and thoughts of children.

THE THIN CITY

is a performance of things, objects, figures,
one and multiple worlds that define each other,
that live together and complete each other.

The City Of Doors

Ramparts and walls made of doors.

One fat and one thin, one tall and one short, one narrow and one crooked, one straight and one old, one new and one peeling, one freshly painted and one knobby.

Doors everywhere; they block the view, fortresses within the fortress; concentric lines cover the perimeter of the space and force the traveller into the maze of the streets. It's difficult to find one's bearings; the sun barely filters through, everything seems still.

But the city reveals its secrets, its most intimate life to those who stop wandering mindlessly and approach the doors with curiosity.

In this way they will be able to see the details and discover the city's nooks and crannies, observing closely and discovering its stories – not the big ones from the history textbooks, but the small ones, those that concern us: whose bike is that, what are these stairs for, who let the pizza burn...

The Pig City

The pig city announces itself from afar with a massive silhouette.

It has eaten every settlement nearby: the city of objects, the jester city, the spaceship city, the bridge city, the train city, the thread city.

Under the weight of its own gluttony, it lay down and started to sink lifeless, motionless;

It's become an enormous fossil city;
they have rebuilt over its remains.

The only city that escaped the pull of the megalopolis
is the Suitcase City,
which keeps travelling...

The Upside-Down City

Changing perspective, lying on the ground to look at the city.

Seeing its greater design, recognising its modular structure;
small domes mark its turns and intersections.

A plot that incorporates and connects structures inspired by the memories
of children who have travelled; a story told by different languages.

The City Without A Name

Beyond an invisible barrier, dancing creatures are found;
silhouettes with strange shapes roam this city.

A visitor might not feel at ease,
but if they get used to it they will understand
that here every citizen
can be whatever they want,
except

the same as someone else;
they can become happy
in any way, shape or form.



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THE THIN CITY ARCHITECTURAL UTOPIA PLANNED BY CHILDREN INSTALLATION CONCEPT

The **THIN CITY** installation is conceived as a path, structured across multiple rooms, and it can be adapted to the exhibition spaces of the hosting Museum. It includes five or more rooms that contain the various cities.

- 1 A welcome room, with the first images and entry to the Thin City.
- 2 A room for the City of Doors.
- 3 A room for the Pig City.
- 4 A room for the Upside-Down City.
- 5 A room for the City Without a Name.

The path connects and ties together the various spaces with sculptures, drawings, objects and photographs, music and voices that accompany the visitor. The Thin City is a flow of thoughts, texts, and sound bites that mark the journey.

The THIN CITY is an installation that grows, breathes, expands.

In the months before the opening, through the proposed **LABORATORIES** and the **WORKSHOPS** conducted in schools, the Thin City can develop, and more rooms can be added containing the projects of the children from the hosting city.

Cities become richer, they mature and they transform.

THE THIN CITY is designed as a changing architecture, a workshop-lab, a maze of thoughts, dreams and wishes, of stories, residents and unknown protagonists.

The visit to the THIN CITY can be structured in two ways:

- **free**, where the audience can visit the rooms and exhibits independently
- **structured** (specifically for school groups), with a **GUIDE** that leads the audience through the city streets, telling and explaining its codes, details, and its more hidden, less visible contents. **Actors-guides** have a **Map** and a **travel journal** from where they select and retell notes and descriptions. They also have a **tablet** for operating and managing the sounds and images of the Thin City as they please: in this way the **guided visit** follows a **dramatised path** with a structured schedule. This type of visit lasts around one hour.

Every performance can host groups of up to 30 children and multiple performances can be held per day. The free visit has no predetermined schedule, like a normal museum visit.

