

PORTA NUOVA: BIBLIOTECA DEGLI ALBERI – THE TREE LIBRARY – IS INAUGURATED

**Milan's newest public park, the third largest in the city's center
opens its doors to the public**

Milan, 27 October 2018 – Today, Saturday, 27 October, in Porta Nuova, **Biblioteca degli Alberi – The Tree Library** – Milan's newest **public park**, the third largest in the city's center, opens its doors to the public. The Park, designed by the firm **Inside Outside|Petra Blaisse of Amsterdam**, was **realized by COIMA** which, in June 2015, took over for the Municipality of Milan in performing the works, through an intervention forming part of the overarching urban development project of Porta Nuova. In attendance are Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan; Pier Francesco Maran, Councillor for Urban Planning of the Municipality of Milan; Manfredi Catella, Founder and CEO of COIMA; Petra Blaisse, Inside Outside.

The ribbon-cutting by Mayor Sala is memorably celebrated with a **musical accompaniment by the brass section of the orchestra of Teatro alla Scala of Milan**, with pieces by Haendel (Royal Fireworks), Charpentier (Te deum), Mouret (Rondeau) and the Triumphal March from Verdi's Aida.

"With the completion of Biblioteca degli Alberi – remarks the Mayor of Milan, **Giuseppe Sala** - the old Varesine area definitively makes way for Porta Nuova which has become, thanks to an ambitious and winning project, an urban transformation model of world class quality. Here the city center has expanded to include futuristic skyscrapers that redesign the face and skyline of the city. This is the home to new residences, and this park, which we inaugurate today, is evidence of a Milan that is becoming increasingly green. At Porta Nuova, great care has been taken to prioritize the pursuit of beauty, through the involvement of world class Italian and foreign architects, landscape architects and designers. The Biblioteca degli Alberi, with its striking variety, is sure to astonish the Milanese and accompany them on a truly extraordinary experience immersed in nature, on a par with the most enchanting cities in the world. This is happening in Milan and we are very proud".

"A public park is opening today which has been long-awaited not only by Porta Nuova residents, who are now witnessing the completion of the urban development project in their own neighborhood, but by many Milanese who frequent and love this new part of the city - states the Councillor for Urban Planning **Pierfrancesco Maran**. It is an innovative park, with features reminiscent of green areas/parks planned in Northern Europe considering the great variety and richness of its vegetation. Biblioteca degli Alberi constitutes a novelty from a management standpoint as well, since the Municipality has called a public tender procedure with the goal of ensuring high levels of maintenance and safety, at no cost for taxpayers. This represents a new model of public-private collaboration which we count on replicating again over the coming years, which will see the creation of at least 20 new parks in the city".

Manfredi Catella remarked: "Biblioteca degli Alberi represents the completion of the regeneration of one of the largest transformed railway yards since the post-war period. It has taken many years of dedication since the project was launched – in 2005 – and hard work by tens of thousands of people and companies, in a show of dedicated public and private commitment toward a common goal. The Park encompasses values which are at the very heart of urban projects: developments that add value to the territory, reducing fragmentations, thanks to the long-standing Italian aptitude for optimizing city living, through high quality architecture and spaces that lend themselves to day-to-day social interaction and exchange".

Biblioteca degli Alberi presents features distinguishing it from the other parks in the city. **It is not enclosed by fences**, thus lending continuity in pedestrian spaces connecting the headquarters of the Region of Lombardy, Piazza della Repubblica and Piazza XXV Aprile and creating the **largest pedestrian area of Milan** with its 170,000 sqm. and 5 km of bike paths. The Park features a vast variety of **delicate essences planted in gardens/grounds designed in a contemporary style: an urban botanical library** with an extraordinary wealth of plant life comprising over **135,000 plants of 100 different species, 500 trees and 22 circular forests**; designs created not only by vegetation but also by paths enriched with botanical and poetic citations that traverse the park, creating a chessboard of *green rooms*. The result is a stretch of irregular fields, flower fields, meadows, intimate piazzas and circular forests, a labyrinth and equipped areas with custom-designed facilities and equipment. A one-of-a-kind park thanks to the complexity of its design, the innovation of its materials and the flexibility characterizing the use of its spaces, which are designed to encourage and accommodate a range of different activities.

The two elements, combined, render Biblioteca degli Alberi an experimental prototype, and an innovative model for a state-of-the-art park.

Fondazione Riccardo Catella – headed by Kelly Russell Catella – along with COIMA SGR, answered an invitation to tender that the Municipality of Milan opened to select a private entity that will handle the management, maintenance and safety of the park, which tender procedure will be open until 19 November: **an innovative proposal for public-private partnership** aimed at the creation of a **program entailing the inclusive involvement of residents**. In order to submit the proposal, examples of international best practices in the management of public spaces were analyzed, such as the High Line in New York – the linear park realized along a station no longer in use – and Bryant Park – Manhattan’s central park; in Dallas, the Klyde Warren Park, the public park realized above the Woodall Rodgers Freeway.

In March 2017, the first lot of the park was inaugurated: 7,500 sqm. on via de Castillia 26/28 close to the Fondazione Riccardo Catella and the Incubatore per l’Arte (Art Incubator), with 3 types of tree plantings, 44 trees, two *bocce* game fields, play water fountains for children and playgrounds that are also accessible by children with disabilities. The project also envisaged in this area educational vegetable gardens (approximately 260 sqm.), which will continuously host a **program of urban horticulture laboratories** open to the public, **managed by Fondazione Riccardo Catella**. During the building phases, the Fondazione, as part of its **Porta Nuova Smart Community** program, launched **MiColtivo nel Parco**, a program of initiatives sustained by BNP Paribas Italia Group, COIMA and Volvo Car Italia, as its Main Sponsors, with the goal of drawing attention to the crucial importance of prioritizing urban parks and greenery by directly involving the public in the realization of the park: the Fondazione organized special open building site days dedicated to the collective planting of seeds in the fields, the planting of flowerbeds and trees and a cultural program with concerts, laboratories in vegetable gardens and creative laboratories, involving over 2,700 people.

Kelly Russell Catella remarks “Alongside Fondazione Riccardo Catella, we have accompanied the park throughout all phases of its construction, directly involving the public in its unfolding and realization. From this day onward, Biblioteca degli Alberi will be open to the public with its open layout unfettered by fences and, moreover, we will all be invited to become involved in caring for it so that it may become a new model of collaboration and togetherness for the city.”

Biblioteca degli Alberi, **Porta Nuova’s green lung**, will from this day onward, serve as a new **public space for the City: a central element of the overall development of the area**, a connecting link between the project’s public spaces – such as Piazza Gae Aulenti, which has now become a full-fledged *agorà* for residents and tourists alike – and the infrastructures, vertical and horizontal architectures of the surrounding neighborhoods.

With the inauguration of the park, **Porta Nuova** is now essentially completed – one of the largest urban and architectural requalification projects in Europe, co-developed and managed by COIMA – which lays claim to the highest concentration in Italy of LEED GOLD certified buildings (22) and numerous international awards: MIPIM Award 2018 to Porta Nuova as Best urban regeneration project; Piazza Gae Aulenti winner of the Landscape Institute Award 2016; Bosco Verticale (Boeri Studio) winner of the International Highrise Award 2014 and of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat 2015 Award; Unicredit Tower (Cesar Pelli PCPA) named one of the 10 most beautiful skyscrapers in the world (Emporis Skyscraper Award, 2012).

COIMA is a leading platform in the investment, development and management of real estate assets on behalf of international and domestic institutional investors. COIMA SGR, an Investment & Asset management company, manages 22 real estate investment funds with over Euro 5 billion in investments and counts in its portfolio over 150 properties, including 30 LEED certified buildings. COIMA Srl, a development and property management company, in the past 40+ years, has developed and managed properties totaling over 5 million square meters. Among its most important projects, the platform co-invested in, co-developed and still manages today the Porta Nuova project in Milan, one of the most prestigious urban requalification plans in Europe.

FONDAZIONE RICCARDO CATELLA was founded in 2007 with the mission of disseminating a culture of sustainability in the development of the territory and contributing proactively toward improving the quality of urban life through a program of research and awareness-raising dedicated to sustainable and responsible property investment (SRPI) and principles of social responsibility in the management of the territory, with a particular focus on mitigating and managing risks associated with Climate Change and realizing civic- and cultural-minded projects on the territory, with a view to optimizing and animating public areas and urban parks and greenery.

INSIDE OUTSIDE | PETRA BLAISSE Founded in Amsterdam in 1991 by Petra Blaisse, is a firm specialized in interior and landscape architecture comprised of a group of professionals, architects, landscape architects and designers specialized in the realization of projects, with a special focus on public spaces. A few noteworthy examples of the firm's work include: the Roeters Eiland University Campus, the Walker Art Centre, the Dutch Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, the grounds of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, the grounds of CCTV headquarters and Media Park in Beijing, the botanical gardens of the headquarters of the Qatar Foundation in Doha. PETRA BLAISSE, landscape and interior designer, grew up in England, Portugal, Austria, Sweden and The Netherlands, and studied at art schools in London and Groningen. She is specialized in the use of textiles and particulars for interiors and, in parallel, in garden and landscape design. She teaches and holds conferences at numerous universities and collaborates with many of the world's most renowned architects and engineers.

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