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POLITECNICO DI MILANO

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INTRODUCTION

As an international student at KEA, I experienced an amazing first year in Copenhagen, exploring the city and meeting new friends who became my second family. Considering my time abroad, both in Copenhagen and in Paris, where I spent my exchange during highschool, I was wondering why not using the opportunity to experience yet another city during my study period. Milan, why Milan? Well, who doesn't like Milan? The city of art, delicious food, fashion,... Besides all, a well known architecture University like Politecnico di Milano.



Politecnico di Milano – campus Leonardo

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

The semester I have spent at Politecnico di Milano has been extremely rewarding, both from the academic and social points of view. Milan is a wonderful city to live in, especially for students, and the University environment is extremely stimulating. Moreover, the University has a very rich program with different courses, and Exchange students have the ability to choose any course or subject to follow.

Before flying over to Milan, I received some general information from the administration of Politecnico di Milano; about the application process, Italian course, accomodation possibilities, academic calendar, however, I had to choose courses the first day of school after midnight. It was somehow difficult to decide which courses to take as the information provided by the University was not that comprehensive. We were allowed to choose as many subjects as we wanted and attend only the ones we preferred. A lot of courses overlap, you should be very careful with choosing it, as the attendance is required to enroll the exams.

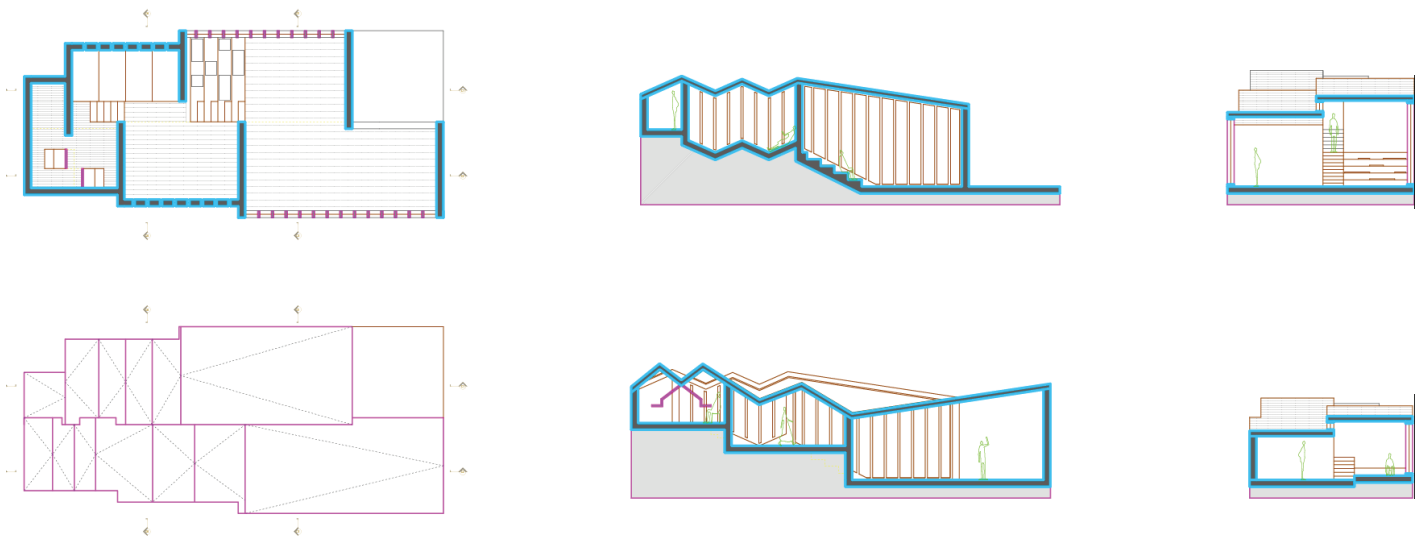
In general we exchange students did not get that much help from the University, but had to instead figure out things by ourselves or rely on other exchange students. Thus, managing things by myself highly increased my communication skills in a country where almost no-one speaks English.

I took following courses at Politecnico di Milano;

- Design Studio, Architecture Design, MA program
- Urban Planning Studio, Architecture Design, BA program

The first studio was a bit too advanced for our level. We were receiving new assignments every Monday and Tuesday, and usually had at least one deadline a week. Working hours were very tough, as the subject was a part of the last Master degree semester. The course was taught by three professors; an interior designer, an architect and a landscape architect. Each project was a group work but the help you receive from schoolmates is very little, anyway you can always rely on professors and their assistants.

I would recommend Design Studio only if you are very competent in architecture softwares like Photoshop, Illustrator, Rhino and other rendering softwares. The studio is absolutely challenging and worth it if you are on the same level with other students.



This was the assignment for one of the deadlines; designing a study space with different rooms: working, relaxing, quiet rooms, which was related to the ceiling height, materials and the natural light in the rooms. On each deadline we had to deliver plans and sections like showed on the picture, used materials and an atmospheric photo photoshopped with used materials and shadows, or a render.

The other studio aimed at exploring the complex field of urban planning, providing us with a basic introduction to its core ideas and practices regarding three issues; urban forms, planning tools and urban development processes.

The studio proposed an exercise aimed at studying and redesigning selected elements in the Milanese urban context and related to an urban development project, which was nearly completed in the district of Porta Nuova area. The exercise was focused on the transformative potentialities of the urban materials and centralities recognized in the area with reference to one specific problem and theme (e.g. parking lot system, open spaces systems, underused space systems, cultural place systems, the railway station, etc.). We students developed and discussed the urban problem and theme with teachers. We reported progress to the professors and teaching assistants on a weekly basis with a mid-term and final reports and presentations.

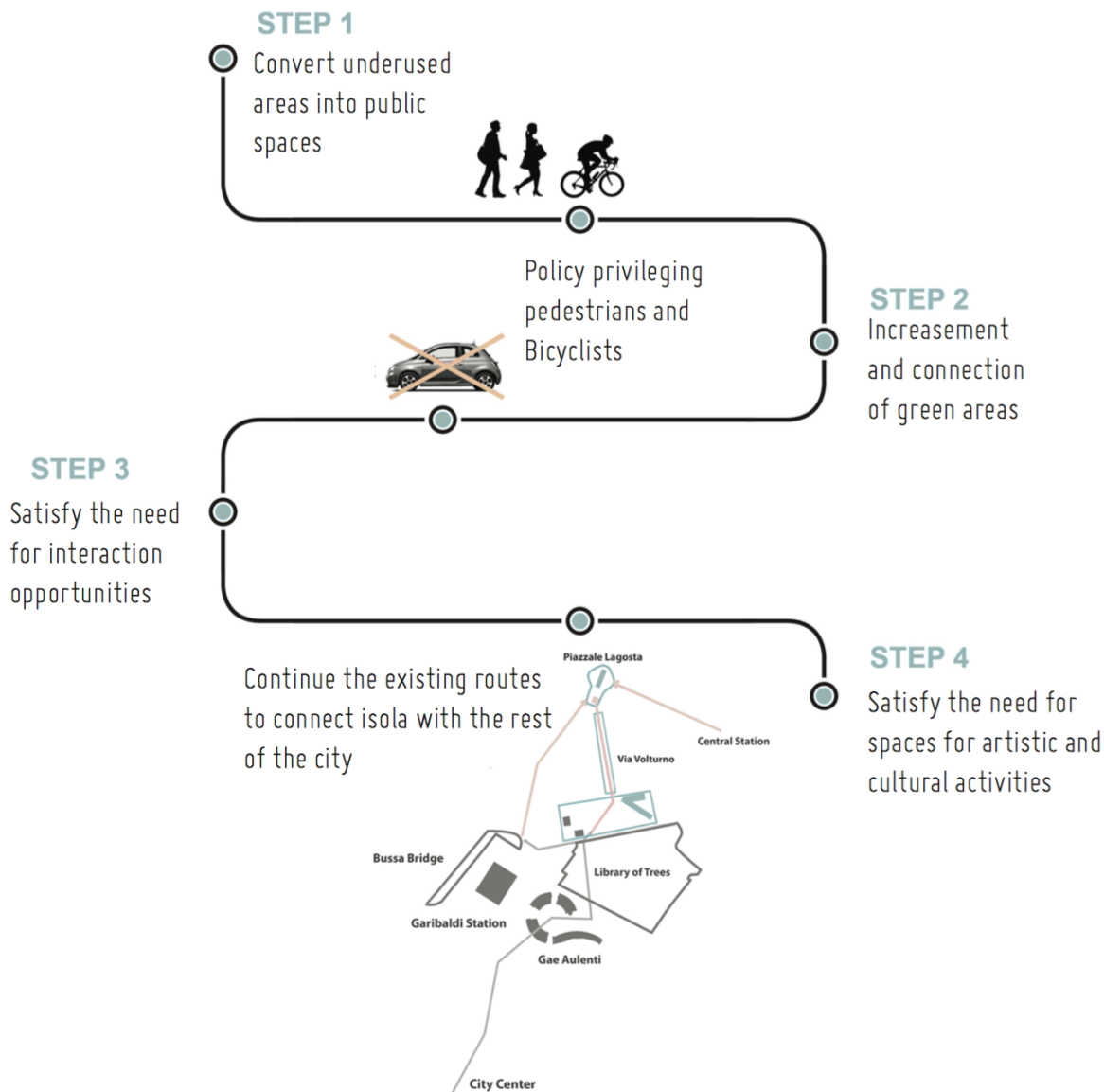
Below I am enclosing the intervened area we chose to develop.



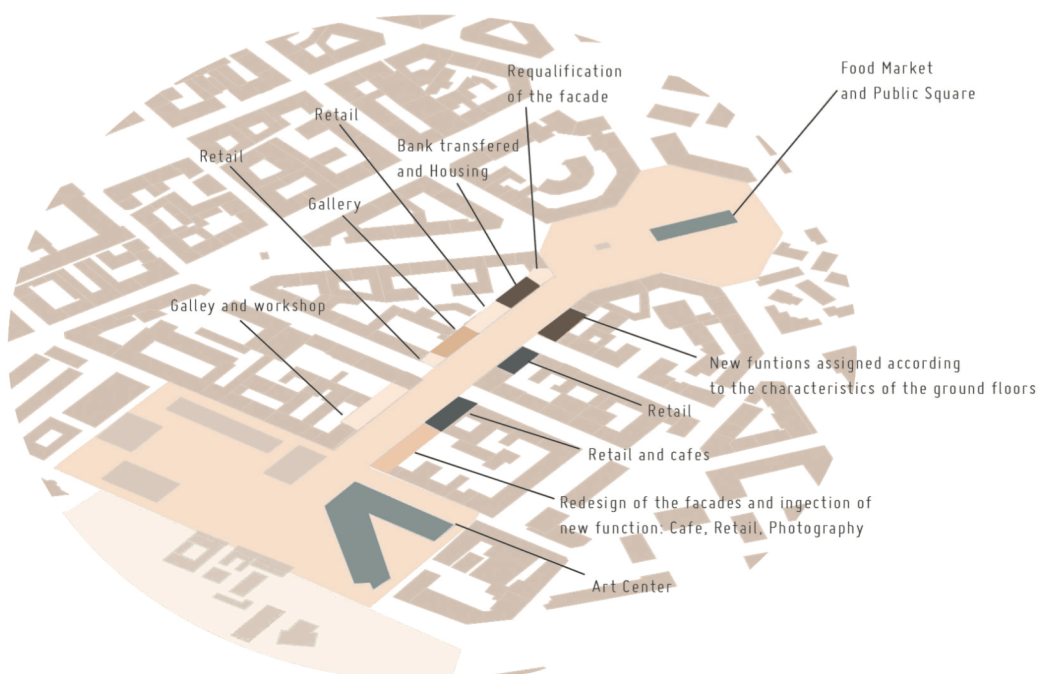
After choosing the area of intervention, we did some analysis fieldwork with maps, photographic survey, and relevant analysis like the ones shown below showing built forms of the context, functions, green areas, underused areas and similar.



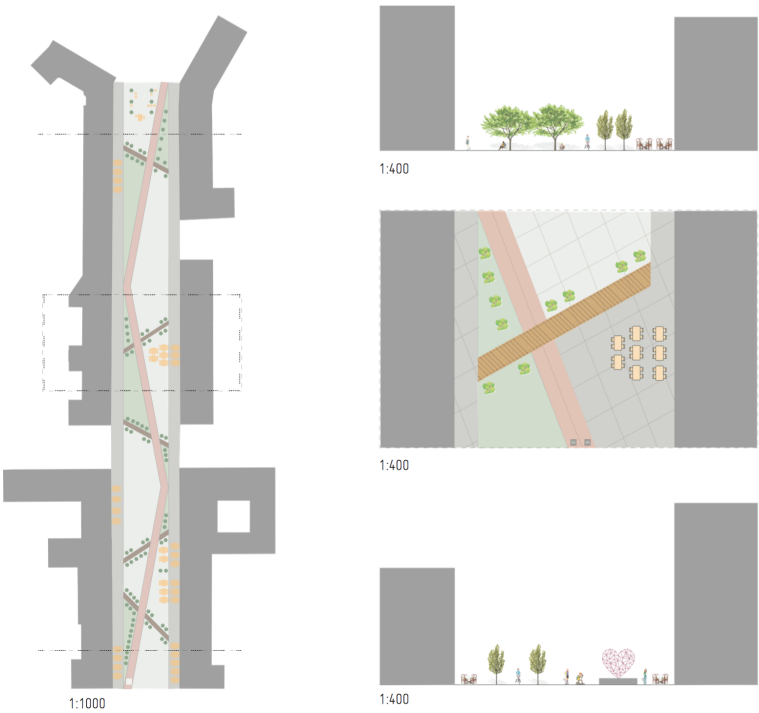
After we completed our analysis work, we started working on sketches and diagrams reflecting uses and characters.



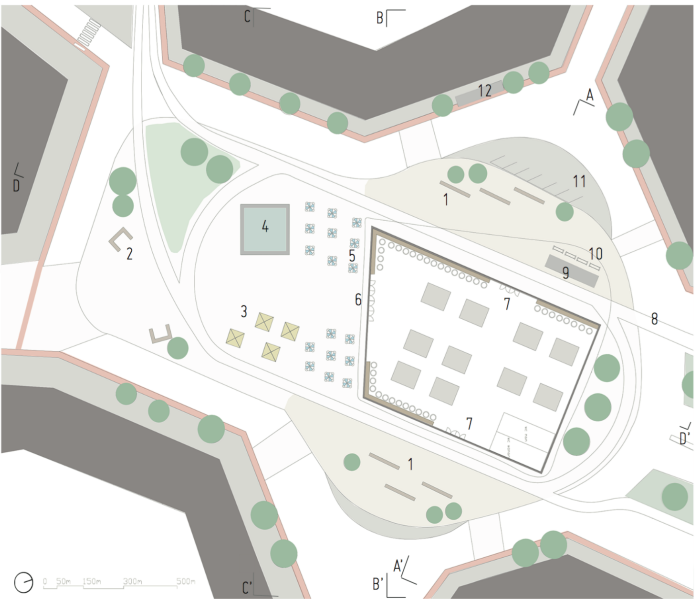
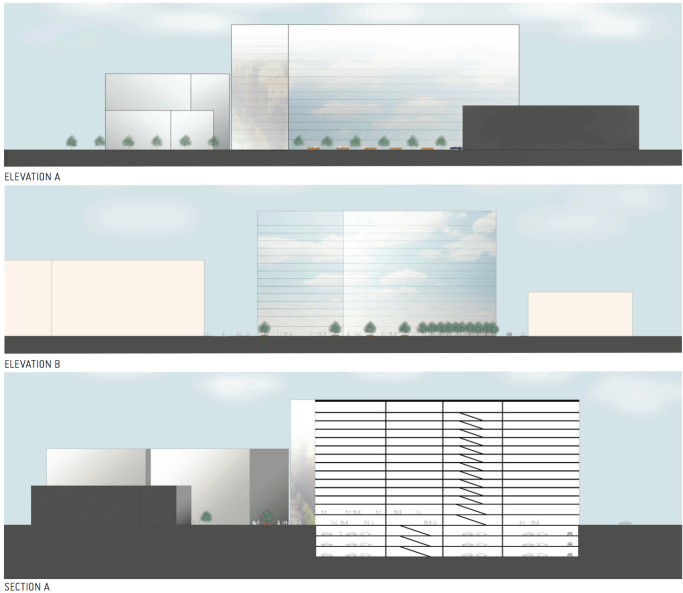
As shown on our concept diagram, we decided to prioritize people, and create a friendly district with nice public spaces, cultural activities and more green areas.



The concept of our project is based on the results of our analysis, surveys and interviews, as well as on the direct experience of the life in the area. The starting point was the will to integrate the neighbourhood of Isola with the new Porta Nuova development since it resulted as left out and not connected with the surrounding areas.



The selection of our area of intervention among the vacant places found during the analysis depended on their potential in terms of dimensions, continuity and visual connection between them, which allowed to develop our project including three different kind of spaces: one at the borders of the Porta Nuova development, one in the core of isola, and one at its edges.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Milan is a vibrant city with a long-standing tradition of culture, arts and science, full of opportunities for entertainment. During the year there are many events worth visiting;

Salone del Mobile held in April each year at the Milan Trade Fair Centre in Rho, is a world-renowned landmark for the home furnishing industry, a trade fair dedicated to the best in furnishing accessories of every type (accessories, objets d'art, ornaments, fabrics) and every style, from classic to Design to Modern. In the same week there is a lot of FREE EVENTS in various locations in the city, providing a new look at the city, re-interpreting Milan, the "design capital", and redesigning it for a week in a way that brings all its inhabitants an encounter with art and culture. A change of urban scenery: events, performances and installations all over the city. I highly recommend visiting the Brera district during this week.



Brera, Milano

Fashion Week, for approximately one week, fashion designers, brands or "houses" can show their latest collections in runway shows while buyers and media get to inspect the latest trends. Even more importantly, these events let the industry know what's "in" and what's "out" for the coming season. Fashion shows, events, performances and installations all over the city turn on the lights in a non-stop parade.

Besides all the city events, Milan has the oldest cultural institutions in Italy, such as La Scala for opera, the Piccolo theatre, Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, the Brera Pinacoteca, the Duomo (Cathedral) and Sforzesco Castle, all beautiful sites of great cultural importance, all well worth visiting.



La Scala, Milano

Milan is strategically sited in the middle of Europe as well as enjoying good communications with some of the loveliest places in Italy. Cities of historic importance such as Bergamo or Genoa can be reached in a few hours; or so can Lake Como, the “Cinque Terre”, the Alps, the Alpine Lakes, and the vineyard-clad hills of franciacorta and astigiano. The Swiss and French borders are less than two hours away; and now, thanks to budget airlines and a highly-developed network of infrastructure, it's easy to visit Venice, Rome or Florence.



Cinque Terre

The region around Milan is Lombardy, famous for lakes, mountains, history and art. A great variety of landscapes lie within a few kilometres of the city: rows of citrus and olives trees on the banks of the lakes whose waters reflect alpine landscapes (Maggiore lake, Garda lake, Como and Lecco lake, and Iseo lake).



Bellagio, Lake Como



Lake Maggiore

When it comes to the cost of living it was actually surprisingly expensive to rent a room. It was impossible to find rooms for less than EUR 400. So it was not as cheap as I had expected. I found my apartment/studio on Airbnb and I paid EUR 650 per month. The area was safe, but a bit far away from the city center. The same studio in the center would cost around EUR 1000. Otherwise Italy is an inexpensive country. At the university you can eat for EUR 3–5 and in an Italian restaurant for EUR 10–15. All transportation like buses, subways are cheap – student monthly ticket costs only EUR 22, and even trains within Italy are all very inexpensive so it is a good opportunity to travel to other cities; don't miss Venice, Florence and Rome! Luckily I come from a city which is only 4h drive away from Milan (Ljubljana), so my parents drove me there, but Milan has one of the greatest European airports with very good connections, so you will easily find a cheap flight to get there. And of course shopping! Everyone comes to Milan to do some shopping in the area of Duomo. Do not take too much clothes with you since you will be shopping a lot. :)



Shopping Gallery Vittorio Emanuele, Milan

TIPS:

- Have an aperitivo any day between 19 and 22 at Navigli canal for only EUR 10, you pay the drink and enjoy their free food/buffet :)
- Have an aperitivo at Corso Como; visit Corso Como 10, an amazing courtyard turned into a mixed use public space
- Try Italy's best coffee Illy at Piazza Gae Aulenti
- Don't leave Milan without trying the ice cream at Grom and Venchi
- Take a walk from Duomo to Navigli, on your way you will find a lot of cheap and nice cafes, restaurants, fast food places
- Taste a typical Italian breakfast; brioche (croissant), machiato and fresh orange juice
- Taste homemade Italian pastas at the restaurants at Corso Garibaldi
- Brazilian-Japanese sushis? Yes, they exist in Milan. Try it at Temakinho, they also have the best cocktails
- Have a sophisticated drink at Ceresio 7, the best rooftop of Milan
- Have a drink with the best city view on the top floor of the shopping building La Rinascente
- Pizzas? You have it on every corner, but taste the "pizza piece" at Spontini it only costs EUR 3,5, and you will want to go back the next day ;)
- Rossopomodoro - taste the traditional pizza from Napoli
- Enjoy Milan's rich nightlife; Just Cavalli club, Armani club, Old Fashion, Notox, Plastic, Divina, Fabrique and so many others. The entrance costs between EUR 10 - 25, drinks cost between EUR 10 -20 but don't worry, you can find a lot of cheap places at Porta Ticinese, where you can drink before heading to the club
- Sunday lunch at Brera district is always a good idea especially on a sunny day, when all the paths are filled with people and music
- Try different Italian food; panzerotto, piadina, panino, brioche, cannoli

Wish you a delicious stay in Milan! :)



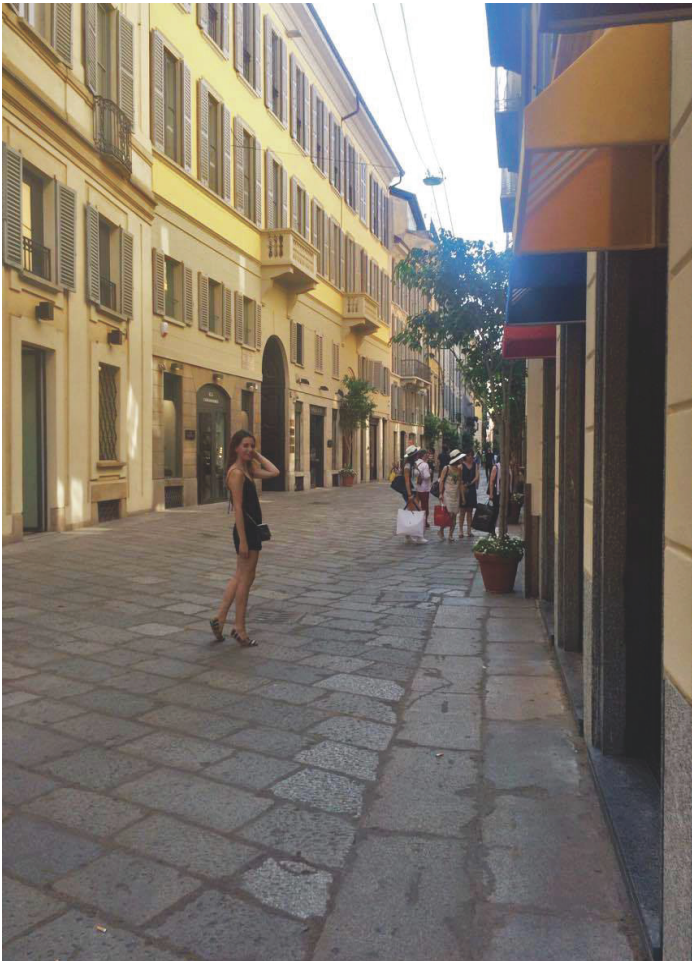
Corso Como 10



Ceresio 7

I will conclude by stating that this was undoubtedly an unique and life changing experience for me. Every moment was full of learning and fun. I am very thankful and happy that I had the opportunity to experience another university and at the same time be a part of what Milan's known about – fashion; meeting new and different cultures both at school and while modelling was an incredible and unforgettable life period!

If you need additional help regarding school or the city, please contact me via mail, I would be happy to help you. :)



Shopping street, Milano



Photoshoot, Milano

BEST REGARDS,
JONA