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Milan, statue [équestre] de Victor Emmanuel II [et galerie éponyme] : [photographie de presse] / [Agence Rol]



Il Derby della Madonnina. Inter 2 - Milan 2.




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<input type="checkbox"/>	 "Nuova piazza del Duomo ed adiacenze", assonometria del progetto definitivo dell'architetto Giuseppe Mengoni (Private) <a href="#">Details</a> · <a href="#">Edit</a> · <a href="#">Delete</a>		Still Image	May 3, 2016
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Progetto per "La nuova Piazza del Duomo e Via Vittorio Emanuele Approvato dal Consiglio Comunale di Milano" (Private) <a href="#">Details</a> · <a href="#">Edit</a> · <a href="#">Delete</a>	Giuseppe Mengoni	Still Image	May 3, 2016

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*Fondazione della Galleria Vittorio Emanuele*

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Gallery



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Geolocation Map



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## INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the XIX century, during years of political unrest as Italy fought for its Unification, the municipality of Milan started a urban renewal programme with the aim of redefining the face and role of the city in light of the new political changes. The *Piazza del Duomo* ("Cathedral Square") of Milan was in those years the theatre of many renovations that will last through the XX century and will bring it to become the square as we know it today.



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## THE SQUARE BETWEEN 1859 AND 1864



Figure 1



Figure 2

Between 1859 and 1863 a concrete push came from the municipality of Milan to renovate the main square of the city. The year before the square in front of the theatre *La Scala* was created between the theatre and the *Palazzo Marino*, demolishing the modest houses that stood in the way. In 1959 a project to connect the *Piazza del Duomo* with the newly build *Piazza della Scala* was approved by the city, but had to be postponed due to the war that started that same year.

In 1860, the will of renovating the square and make it majestic and monumental as to emphasise the importance of Milan was stronger than ever. A public contest was announced and citizens were invited to send in their projects for the square and the street that would connect it with *Piazza della Scala*.

*Piazza del Duomo* back then was characterized by an irregular structure. The space in front of the Cathedral was occupied by the medieval block called *Rebecchino* and by the XV century *Portico dei Figini*, a building that counted many spaces both for residential and commercial use (Figure 2). The area north of the square, towards the theatre *La Scala* was occupied by a dense neighbourhood with private and public buildings and curvy, narrow streets (Figure1).

Among the various projects that the municipality received, the one by the young architect Giuseppe Mengoni achieved resounding success. The project, called Dante, was approved by the city council on September 15th 1863.

It envisaged a rectangular square in front of the Cathedral, two triumphal arches, new buildings with arcades surrounding the square and a gallery that would connect the square with the *Piazza della Scala* (Figure 3).

After few minor modifications, the project was once again



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## 1868-1877



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Once the *Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II* was ready, the works for the renovation of the buildings surrounding the square could begin. These were funded both with private and public money, as the english society that was responsible for the renovations had to declare bankruptcy. Between 1867 and 1877 the block called *Rebecchino*, which was still standing in the middle of the square, was demolished and the surrounding buildings with arcades built.

In 1877, the two triumphal arches were the only elements that still remained to be built. One had to be the monumental entrance to the Gallery, while the second was supposed to match the first on the opposite side of the square.

However, public money was lacking so the architect Mengoni decided to pay with his own finances for the construction of the first of the two arches, the one that worked as monumental entrance to the gallery (Figure 3). The arch was completed that year, but the architect never saw it done, as he fell right before its completion from the scaffoldings and died.

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## 1896, 1929 AND 1936

After the death of the architect Mengoni, only minor changes were brought about in *Piazza del Duomo*.

One of these was the creation in 1896 of the *Monumento equestre a Vittorio Emanuele II*, the equestrian monument to Victor Emmanuel II by Ercole Rosa, which was located in the middle of the square right in front of the Cathedral.



In 1929 the so-called *Carosello*, the ring of tramlines that passed around the monument to Victor Emmanuel II was removed. In the same year the architect Portaluppi realized the new parvis and pavement of the square as we see them today.



The last major change to the square happened in 1936. The architects Portaluppi, Muzio, Magistretti and Griffini built the 'second triumphal arch', the *Palazzo dell'Arengario*. This is a modern building opposite of the Gallery that instead of adapting to the neo-renaissance style of the buildings constructed between 1867 and 1877, creates a modern counterpart to them.

With this last building, the renewal project that wanted a majestic and monumental square and was started by Mengoni, could be considered completed.

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