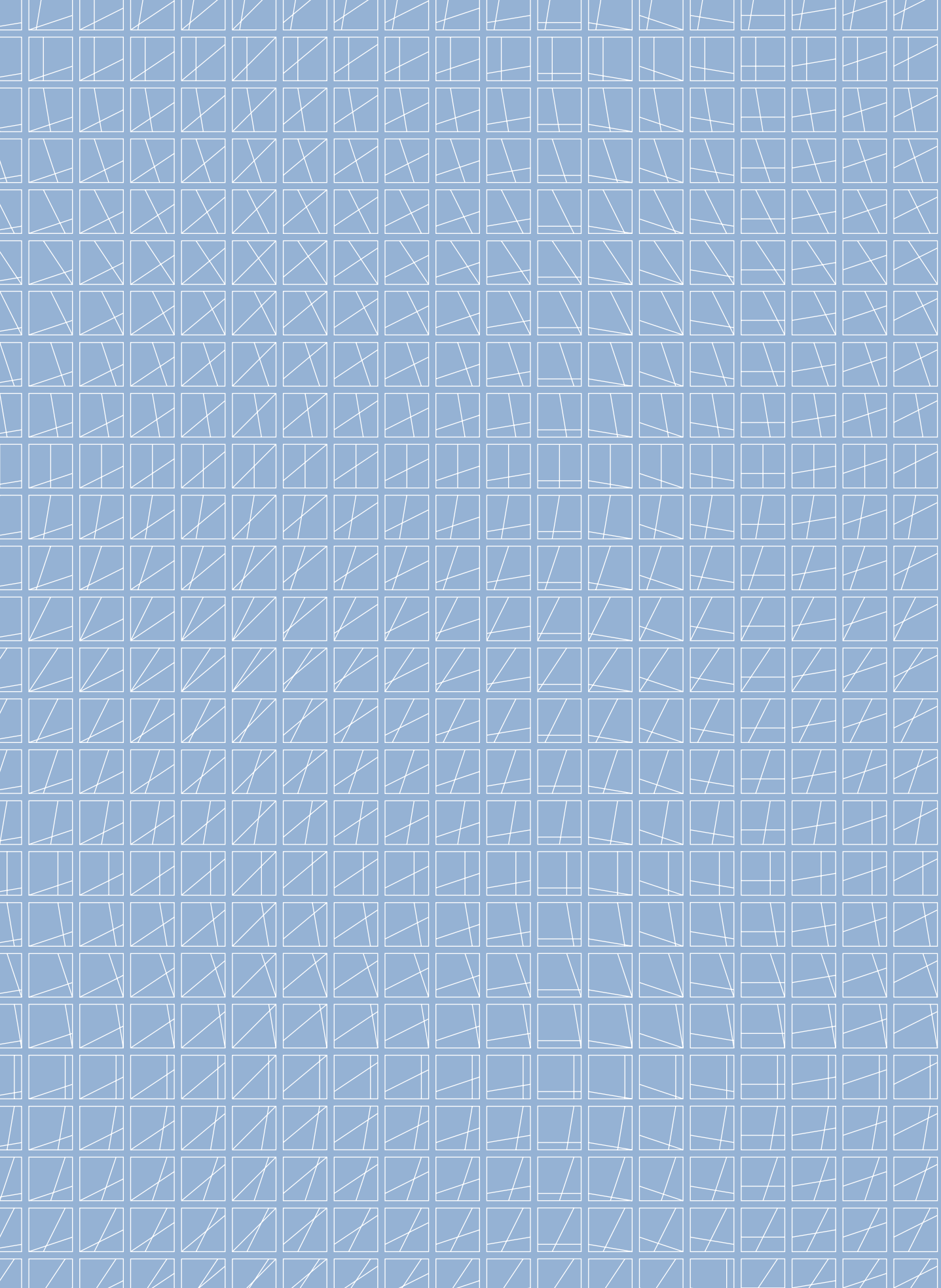


Cordusio 2.0





Cordusio 2.0

by Park Associati

Client
Hines Italy Re S.r.l.

Address
Piazza Cordusio 2, Milan

Year
Project: 2016
On Site: 2017-2019
Realization: 2019

Area
sqm 17000

Professional Service
Concept
Architectural Project
Artistic Site Supervisios

M&E, Specialistic Site Supervision
F&M Ingegneria, Milan

Structures
Tekser, Milan

Health & Safety
REAAS, Milan

LEED Certification
Greenwich, Medolago (BG)

A contemporary, discreet intervention

Characterised by its intended use for the service sector and its high bossage basement open to the public hosting Uniqlo, Cordusio 2.0 has become a contemporary landmark at the heart of the city.

Text: Mariva Vittoria Capitanucci



In 2016, Hines Italia entrusted Park Associati with the redevelopment of the historic former Palazzo Sorgente in Piazza Cordusio, a focal but unsuspected point with respect to the city's recent transformations. As reflected in the respectful but intense interaction between the overabundant monumentality of the early 1900s and the stylistic and structural choices required for a wholly contemporary and sustainable refurbishment of the building, this was not an easy challenge.

The intervention focused on covering the large internal courtyard with a complex steel and glass structure. The building's heart was turned into the generating element of the new building. Ready to accommodate the complex crossing and connection system, it became a place for stopping where light is captured and, above all, an element of energy efficiency improvement. Choosing to suspend a contemporary 'crown' on top of the historical structure can be interpreted as in keeping with this latter vision, as well as an opportunity to 'play' with the shifting and redefining of volumes.

Characterised by a strictly geometrical transparent spacing, this elevation represents a delicate but definitive addition to the city skyline, its development never affecting the integrity of the monumentality characteristic of both the building's Neo-Renaissance eclecticism and the sophisticated historical and social context in which activities and relationships develop.

Cordusio



As sophisticated as it was complex, this redevelopment intervention involved one of the areas that have characterised Milan's historic centre since the Lombard period.

The Cordusio 2.0 building tells a beautiful story of the nineteenth-century middle class, urban transformation and utter contemporaneity. It was in fact Alboin, king of the Lombards in the mid-sixth century, who instituted here the *Curia Ducis* – a place where all the political and administrative life of the city took place.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Cordusio had the appearance of a widening at the intersection of two roads: Bocchetto and Broletto, respectively Contrada delle Galline (the Chicken District), with the chicken market, and Contrada dei Fustagnari (the Fustian weavers District), where fabrics were woven and sold. And looking at historical photographs of the former Palazzo Sorgente, the sign for La Tessile, an outlet of fabrics can be seen on the ground floor of the building. Cordusio maintained its commercial and public function until the end of the last century, the square being overlooked, in addition to the former Palazzo Sorgente, by the Palazzo delle Assicurazioni Generali, the Borsa Valori (Stock Exchange), later turned into the Central Post Office, Palazzo Biandrà and the Palazzo of Credito Italiano.

Of these, only Cordusio 2.0's functions have remained unchanged – commercial spaces on the ground floor and the offices on the upper floors. Its complete redevelopment is changing the types of businesses that look onto the square – from major international brands such as Starbucks and Uniqlo, to hotels and the most refined restaurants. This mix does not alter the spirit of the place. If Piazza del Duomo with its cathedral is the symbol of Milan and the centre of the city onto which every direction converges, Cordusio is this centre's beating heart and the city's most welcoming and elegant core.

Bellorini and the new Milan at the dawn of the twentieth century

Text: Mariva Vittoria Capitanucci



Piazza Cordusio
1920

Francesco Bellorini was one of the protagonists of the urban transformation of the end of the nineteenth-century Milan, which took shape with the first city plan, drawn up between 1884 and 1886.

Francesco Bellorini, an engineer from Varese, belonged to the entourage of the great architect and senator Luca Beltrami, one of the leading figures of the Milanese architectural debate of the late nineteenth century and author, among other things, of two of the buildings overlooking Piazza Cordusio: the Palazzo delle Assicurazioni (1897-1901) and the Palazzo Biandrà (1900-1902).



Piazza Cordusio
1950

Working from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1920s in the area between Via Dante and Piazza Cordusio, Bellorini was involved in various interventions, including the one commissioned by La Fondiaria Assicurazioni on the Palazzo Sorgente in collaboration with the architect Ippolito De Strani. He also took part in the construction on lot 2 overlooking Via Dante, commissioned by Mr. Savonelli and on lot 3, with the architect Luigi Franchi, commissioned by Mr. Castini. In 1901, he collaborated with the architect Augusto Brusconi on the structural aspects of the renovation and expansion of the Hotel et de Milan in Via Manzoni.

The Bellorini's plan provided for the completion and reorganisation of the city's central areas, including Piazza della Scala, Piazza del Duomo and the Castello Sforzesco, with the opening of Via Dante.



Rediscovered spaces



Original building



Project

The redevelopment of Cordusio 2.0 involved painstaking work balanced between the redevelopment of its historical structure, its external appearance and its façade, and the provision of new spaces within the internal courtyard and on the top floor.

At the ground floor's existing layout included some variations related to the original project, such as the closing of the porticos overlooking the internal courtyard with the resulting elimination of this space's distributive role.

The top of the building housed the technical installations, which were 'hidden' by a dark bulky roof, also visible from the street. As if by chance, all the commercial activities envisaged for the building's ground floor were associated with the textile/clothing sector, almost as a continuation of La Tessile – the fabric retail space that used to overlook the square until a few decades ago. Indeed, the largest of these, the first store in Italy of the Japanese clothing giant Uniqlo, now stretches over three floors – the ground floor, basement and mezzanine.

The striking contemporary glass and metal roof of the mezzanine extends over the entire inner courtyard, the shop developing from one side of the building to the other, all the way to the street adjacent to the square, which is also overlooked by the two new reception areas of the upper floors offices.

With the moving of the technical plants from the building's top, a fully glazed space could be created to house new offices. The slightly opaque glass lets the light in and, seen from the outside, creates a lightweight and almost evanescent volume that reflects the colours and movements of the sky. While nothing was taken away from the building's monumentality, elegance and history, some details were added that put it in touch with the contemporary world.



Innovative technologies and sustainable materials



The monumental nature of the building and the context of the Cordusio 2.0 redevelopment project led to the implementation of a sensitive and sustainable restoration, which in terms of design within the workspaces was focused on creating flexibility, in keeping with the existing structure's legacy.

Much of the work involved dealing with the plant engineering system. The changes made in the decades prior to Park Associati's intervention were limited to well-timed changes in energy strategy that did not consider an overall view of the entire building. The complete replacement of the existing windows and technological plants with new-generation types, the introduction of renewable energy production devices and the improvement of the casing's energy performance were the driving forces that allowed the building to achieve very high space quality standards.

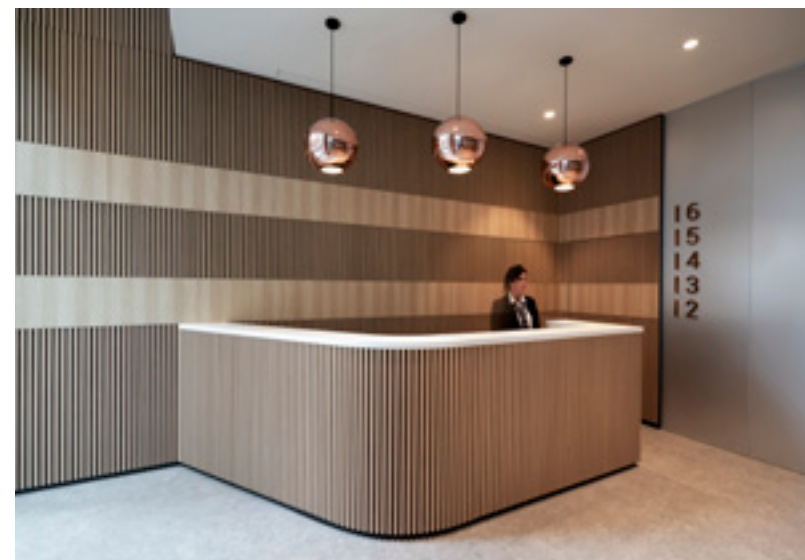


The attractive traditional restoration on the outside and a welcoming bright technological environment on the inside give the building a double 'personality'.



Previously housed on the building's roof in full view of the city, the engineering plant systems were moved to a more protected interior space. An additional liveable space could thus be created on the top floor, giving the building a more linear, cleaner shape.

Thanks to the sustainable materials used for the interiors, in particular the wood for the two reception areas, and the complete renewal of the building's technologies, Cordusio 2.0 obtained the LEED Gold certification, which rewards features related to energy, innovation, materials and resources, as well as a site's sustainability. The building's accessibility characteristics were already excellent, both in terms of its proximity to the public transport network and its strategic position within a predominantly pedestrian and cycling area. The excellent sustainability and efficiency results generated by the redevelopment have turned the building into one of the landmarks that will characterise the future layout of Piazza Cordusio.



Interview with Mario Abbadessa, CEO of Hines Italy



Q: Hines Italy is one of the leading players in real estate development in Milan. Does Milan still hold pulling power? How have the city and its real estate sector changed in recent years?

A: Thanks to both endogenous and exogenous factors – not least its infrastructural network which is nearing completion– international investors are still attracted by the city of Milan. In the last 10 years, Milan has much evolved – from real estate investing for its own sake to the search for development capable of enhancing the value of historic and modern buildings that have been redeveloped from a more international perspective and in line with the main standards of energy sustainability, efficiency and use of space. The players who are investing in Milan's market are characterised by long-term industrial visions and an international approach.

Q: What is your relationship with Milan? Do you have any favourite places, or a place that is close to your heart, regardless of where your business takes you?

A: My favourite places in Milan are essentially two. The first is the campus of the Bocconi University, where I studied; that is where my relationship with the city began, this place is linked to unforgettable memories of study and growth. The second is the historic centre, with which I developed a special relationship at an older age. This was our starting point with Hines, particularly Piazza Cordusio, which for me remains a symbolic place.

Q: Refurbishing the building in Piazza Cordusio, in the heart of Milan, must have been a truly fascinating experience for you. How does this renovation project compare with the square's new 'life'?

A: Our redevelopment was crucial to the square's relaunch. Thanks to the creation of the Italy's first Uniqlo flagship, the building helped revive the entire axis of Via Dante. Furthermore, our regeneration of Cordusio 2.0 triggered the pedestrianisation and redevelopment project of the whole square, which involves the restoration of the historic buildings overlooking it.

Q: In your opinion, which are the strengths and solutions you found to be most innovative and creative in the work of Park Associati? What do you think is the most significant element of the project?

A: The most innovative and distinctive element of the project was undoubtedly the roof over the courtyard, formerly a car park and now the heart of the Uniqlo store's flow distribution. This was the first courtyard in the historic centre that was covered that featured a real usable surface and this substantially rebalanced the building, making the rear part as attractive as the front overlooking the square. Thanks to extremely innovative ideas, Park Associati were able to intervene on a historic building respecting its architectural canons, regenerating it and making it usable again.

Q: Looking ahead, how do you imagine Milan in ten years? Will other areas change their intended use in the coming years?

A: Over the next few years Milan will be an increasingly inclusive, younger city oriented towards more sustainable development. Several areas will be the object of this relaunch and the historic centre will continue to be its driving force. I am mostly referring to the area of Piazza Missori and Torre Velasca, which is still in need of redevelopment, similarly to what the area of Piazza Cordusio used to be ten years ago. Then definitely the campuses of Bocconi and Politecnico alla Bovisa, two areas characterised by great energy, and, last but not least, San Siro, an area projected towards future transformations.



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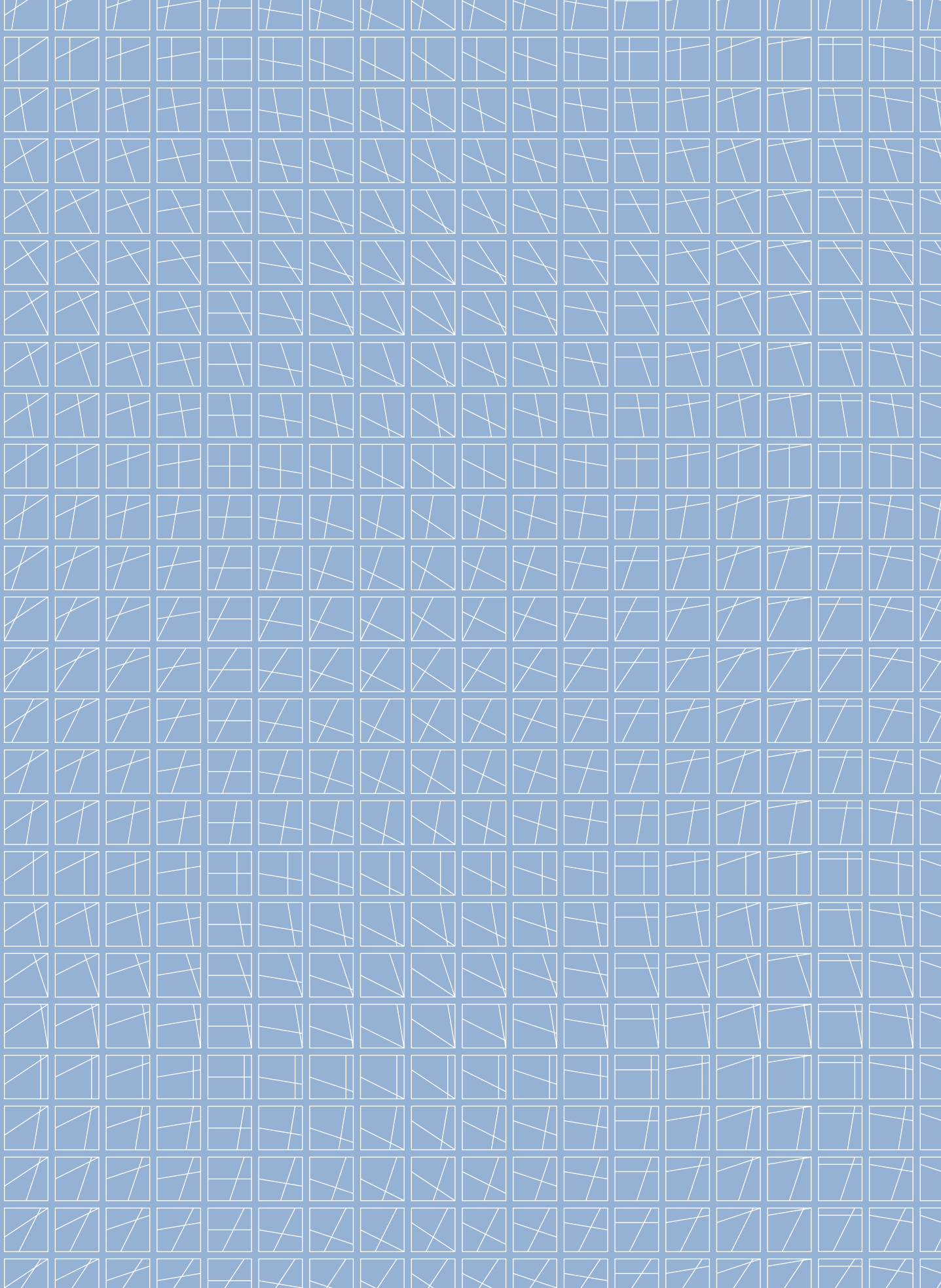
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