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The Path to Pitti

The Piazza de' Pitti is the large square of the Palazzo Pitti, where the large open space with a slight incline towards the Palazzo. Like many piazzas of Florence, this place is also transformed to accommodate the range of events that happen throughout the year. The Ponte Vecchio acts as a link between the city center and the Oltrarno region, but more importantly connects people and allows them to flow between one another. Using Dynamics of Delight as a guide, we will try to gain a sense of how people move through the area by observation, and utilize the space of the piazza based on visual cues and aesthetic principles.



Piazza de' Pitti is the large space at the entrance of the

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Palazzo Pitti. In terms of traffic flow, the Via De'Guicciardini is a one way street that stems from the Lungarno Torrigiani and heads SouthEast. The Ponte Vecchio itself is a pedestrian-only bridge, making the route easily accessible for people on foot or on bike. The main path connects the Piazza Duomo, Piazza del Repubblica, Piazza d. Signoria, and the Piazza de' Pitti together.

Piazza de Pitti has the characteristics of civic space, transforming for the various events and concerts that happen throughout the year. The piazza's large open space allows different venues to be hosted, such as the holiday of St. John the Baptist, where a concert was being played at the Piazza.

Lighting plays an important role for Piazza de' Pitti, with the majority of the square receiving no shade throughout most of the day. In contrast, Siena's Piazza del Campo provides the shade with it's large Torre del Mangia.

Throughout the different times of the day, the piazza's



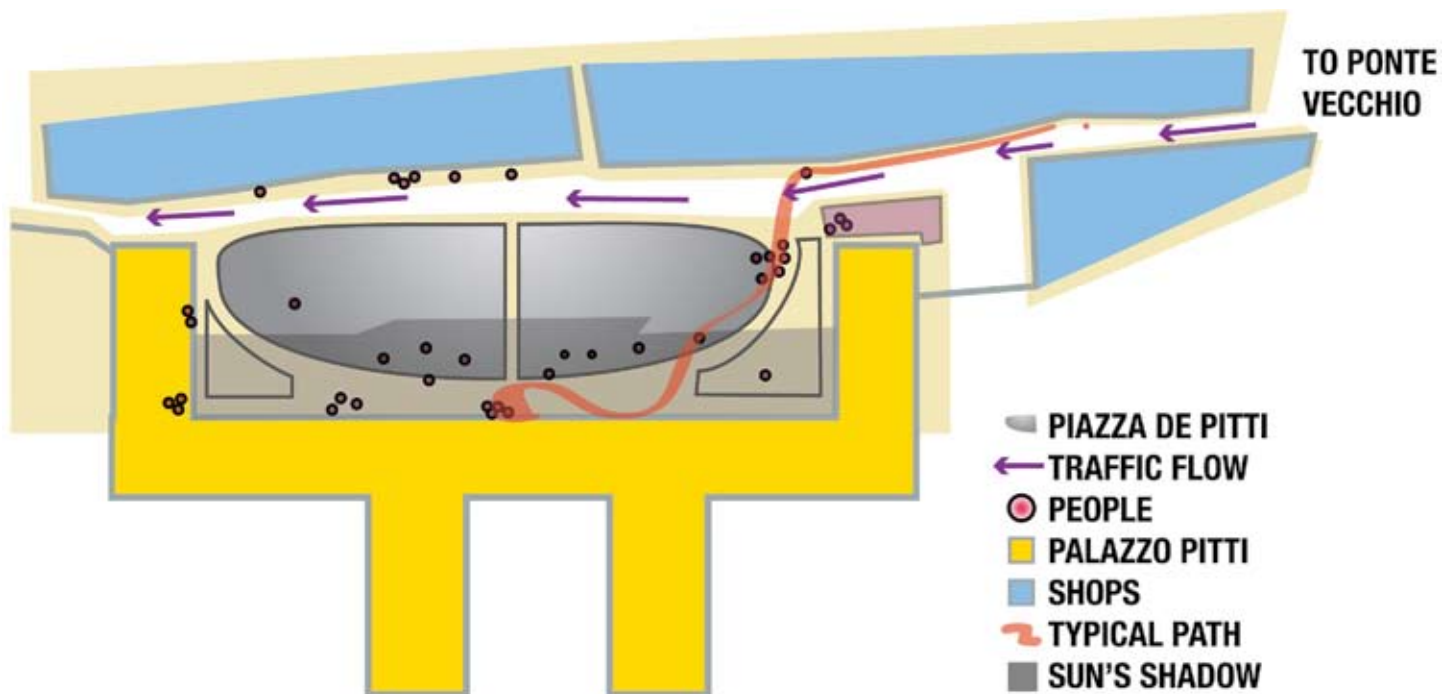
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occupancy is sparse and few, mainly because of the heat and lack of spatial definition: the surrounding area consists with shops and a small market place selling souvenirs and small gifts. Whereas other piazzas in Florence has other attractors such as monuments and sculptures, the Piazza de' Pitti is in an enclosed area where a large square that is fairly empty.

During the day, Palazzo Pitti attracts a large number of tourists, which make up the majority of the human traffic to the piazza. The diagram below shows the typical path and the groups of people that go through the space. People generally come from the East through the Ponte Vecchio, from the city centre. As mentioned earlier, the piazza has people sitting mainly where the Palazzo's shadow casts over the square. Most people during the day only stay in the area for a short period of time, as they are visiting for the most part. In terms of locals and night time, not many are in the area, unlike other piazzas which attract based on the dynamics of the street (markets, landmarks).

The network created through the main path allows people to travel between the piazzas. Piazza de Pitti happens to be the at one end of the network, with enough moments of surprise and complexity from one city block to the next.



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surprise and complexity from one city block to the next. Goal attractors are laid out through the whole path that draws people in towards the Duomo and vice versa. Starting from the Piazza de Pitti, there is the distant view of Palazzo Signoria's Tower (Fig. A).

Further down Via Guicciardini towards the Ponte Vecchio, the road curves slightly left to offer a different goal attractor and also an element of surprise. Firstly, the Vasari Corridor is evident throughout Via Guicciardini as it leads towards the Ponte Vecchio (Fig B). Once on the bridge, the Duomo's Cupola (Fig. C) in the distance, giving a sense of the sheer size of Brunelleschi's master work.

Once past the Ponte Vecchio and along the path to Duomo, another landmark catches the eye (Fig. D) and draws the person off to the right. This sort of navigation is just one of the many paths people can choose as the landmarks draw them from one point to the next.

The Piazza de' Pitti is just part of a large mesh of goal attractors, which leads from one piazza to another, mainly using goal attractors. This main path also directly links the Palazzo to the Duomo indirectly. Through these observations we can gain a better sense of how this network of piazzas work together to guide people throughout the spaces.

