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**ART AND DESIGN
IN THE
WORKPLACE**



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Web Site

Pietro Forino, www.pietroforino.com

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PAD

via Francesco Soave 15 – 20135 Milano – Italy
via Roma 171 – 90133 Palermo – Italy
info@padjournal.net – editors@padjournal.net

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A DIALOG WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Curating

Creating a Space of Sharing

Gabi Scardi

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Keywords

Art, Care, Welfare, Law Firm, Nctm e l'Arte, ADVANT Nctm.

Abstract

As a person involved in curatorial research on contemporary art, I would like to present an experience centered on a law firm, ADVANT Nctm Studio Legale. Indeed, in 2010, the then Nctm Studio Legale launched *nctm e l'arte*, a project dedicated to contemporary art that is still alive today. Introducing art into an unconventional space with a strong professional connotation may seem to be a challenge, all the more so making the place a physical and conceptual platform that allows its visitors to interface with contemporary art, to live it as an experience, and to grasp its true meaning. Such intent required careful work on the relationship between the works and the space, understood as a context, not just a physical one. It was about understanding the people visiting the firm and their interactions. Great attention was paid to how art was integrated into the firm's interior and thus to the quality of the experience of those working there or visiting it. This was in addition to the idea that a professional community is necessarily defined within itself and in relation to its context. For such reason, further work was devoted to establishing a meaningful dialogue with the outside world. Efforts were therefore made to make the firm an open, porous, and stimulating place. A program was created that provides an opportunity for exchange with a broader public. In addition, artistic projects relating to the territory were launched, starting with the city where the firm is based, Milan. Several initiatives dedicated to the city's public cultural heritage were promoted. One of the most important initiatives concerned a fundamental artistic urban nucleus in the city's central park, Parco Sempione. Among other things, the initiative represented, within the firm, an opportunity for reflection and an essential experience of relations with the public space and public institutions, not only municipal ones. On the whole, the project aims to create a space of sharing and to convey the vision of a professional reality strongly connected to the phenomena of the present, capable of a narrative of meaning and endowed with a strong planning perspective, capable of stimulating a sense of individual and collective belonging.

1. The *Nctm e l'Arte* Project by ADVANT Nctm Studio Legale

Rooted in first-hand experience, this contribution is consciously placed in the field of professional practice rather than academic theory. At the same time, developing within the conceptual framework of the relationship between professional dimension and welfare, it discusses how culture, and more particularly contemporary art, can significantly enrich life within professional spaces, becoming a shared repository of common meanings, an opportunity for exchange, a common good, capable of affecting the quality of life and work, as well as serving as a strategic lever, as a vehicle for an image of momentum and openness.

The text thus intends to provide a cross-section of an exercise in grafting contemporary art into a purely professional environment, a long-term exercise whose meaning derives from critical reflection as well as from the relational work that accompanies it.

As a person engaged in research, writing and teaching, and in curatorial practice concretely experienced alongside artists, I wish to introduce the experience of the *nctm e l'arte* initiative: an artistic direction experience born within an associated firm, ADVANT NCTM Studio Legale.

The adventure, still ongoing, began in 2010. At that time, the then NCTM Studio Legale, established in 2000, already had several offices, the main ones in Milan, Rome, Genoa, Brussels and Shanghai.

The Milan and Rome offices were, and still are, located in buildings in the city centre. Both include offices, numerous meeting rooms and spaces for meetings and conferences; both have been renovated on the firm's initiative.

The 1940s building housing the Milan office, of considerable size, was previously used by the Italian Post Company. The renovation work involved the six existing floors above ground, plus two underground levels, the courtyard, the terraces and, among other things, a total revision of the internal layout. The building in Rome is a sumptuous historical palace, including a typical 17th century church, now deconsecrated but perfectly preserved and used for conferences. The renovation was entrusted to architect Antonio Zanuso for both offices, who opted for rational but welcoming solutions, strong in character and great stylistic sobriety.

The London office is likewise located in a central area of the city. Its interiors are linear and functional; its main features include glass windows that allow a broad view of the elegant cityscape.

Such renovations, accompanied by meticulous rearrangements and the inclusion of high-end design accessories, express a cultural inclination.

Moreover, at that time, the firm showed a project-oriented passion in various ways, starting with the periodic organization of book presentations, which were opportunities to open up to an external audience. The Milan office was particularly active in such respect.

The idea of involvement in contemporary art based on a specially conceived project emerged in 2010 and was defined over a year of meetings, encounters, and internal discussions.

From the very beginning, the project distinguished itself from other cases of professional firms' involvement in contemporary art thanks to the choice to entrust its artistic direction to an experienced professional figure; this was done not only to

legitimize but also to depersonalize the choices so that they could represent a diversified and plural reality as a whole. Furthermore, from the outset, in the generative conversations during the gestation period of the initiative, reference was made to art in its role of producing meaning, decidedly removing it from the interstitial function of filling space and beautification, and from being a status symbol. Its capacity for interpretation and active revival of reality was highlighted, along with its transformative power due to the deep connection with the main issues of contemporary debate: artists tend to feel part of a social fabric and an era, and are moved by a commitment that simultaneously concerns art and the world; they are inclined to immerse themselves in the heart of places and situations to bring out specific characteristics and elements, which will then be the subject of their varied operations. Their desire is not to maintain the present but to impact the future through the micro-changes that dialogue with art can induce in those who experience it. *nctm e l'arte* was born on said basis, emerging as a genuine journey of meaning made up of a complex of complementary activities, always linked to an overall vision and closely inter-related. Wanting to avoid episodic occurrences, the aim was for a comprehensive and systematic conception of the project's different parts from the beginning.

The main components include the creation of a collection, understood not as a simple sum of objects, but as an oriented and consistent set of works relevant to a chosen direction and support to many artists from the planning phase of their work, with support for production and the establishment, since 2012, of a semi-annual call for scholarships promoting international mobility.

Furthermore, a dialogue is always open with public artistic institutions such as museums, exhibition spaces, and national and international exhibitions. Collaborations have been undertaken with up-to-date cultural entities, among others, the MAXXI in Rome, the PAC and MUDEC in Milan, the Venice Biennale, and the Manifesta in Kassel.

There are numerous moments dedicated to the firm's professionals, from workshop proposals to visits to exhibitions and shows of particular interest.

Even more numerous are the activities that involve opening the space to persons gravitating around the firm and to an external audience through the organization of meetings with meaningful protagonists of the cultural *milieu* and exhibition and performance moments, even of a highly experimental nature. All the more so since acquisitions are always occasions for personal focus on artists, with meetings and temporary installations of large sets of their works. The main idea behind such initiatives is to contextualize the work and provide keys to access the author's poetics.

The numerous meetings with artists see motivation in the contribution that can come from direct knowledge of paradigmatic figures with respect to many qualities that are also fundamental for professional and social life: curiosity, vitality, proactivity, impulse, tenacity, and zeal, and the ability to always find new and original ways to achieve one's goal, whatever it may be.

There is also a strong desire to contribute to moments of ferment in the cities where the firm has offices, starting from Milan, where initiatives have been carried out during special events, primarily the Milan Art Week. In said situations, per-

performances and ad hoc interventions were produced by artists such as Elena Mazzi and Marinella Senatore, Emilio Fantin, Driant Zeneli, Jérôme Bell, Alexis Blake, Luigi Coppola and Christian Nyampeta, Marilisa Cosello. These were all ways, some radical, of giving new meaning to an otherwise highly regulated space, contributing over time to building the sense of the place that adds to the existing one (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Marinella Senatore, *Protest Forms Memory and Celebration*. *Public opinion descends upon the demonstrators*, performance, photo Francesca Brizi, © *nctm e l'arte*.

Finally, the strong connection with the country's substrate, to whose cultural life one wants to make an active contribution, emerges both in the organization of activities outside the space and in the realization of territorial and permanent public projects, with considerable energy devoted to such commitment. Standing out among these projects are the restoration of Alberto Burri's Teatro Continuo and the attention dedicated to Arman's Accumulazione e Seduta Musicale, two large works located in Milan's largest public park, Parco Sempione, and always concretely available to be enjoyed by any visitor (Fig. 7).

The recovery of Teatro Continuo took place in 2015 thanks to the synergy with the Municipality of Milan, Triennale, and Palazzo Albizzini Collezione Burri Foundation, while restoration and enhancement of Arman's work are currently underway. Situated between macro-design and micro-architecture, these two works represent elements of great value in the city's heritage and are symbolically emblematic of a way of conceiving art as deeply linked to the idea of democratic urban living (Fig. 8).

In its entirety, therefore, *nctm e l'arte* aims to be a sort of cultural infrastructure for the country.

While there is always a concern to avoid genericity in favor of specificity in methods and content, on the other hand, there is constant dialogue with the context, both internal and external; a dialogue that takes place conceptually, not just formally.

It is a matter of taking into account at all times where one is and creating beneficial relationships, whether it is the profes-

sional environment in the strict sense, and thus the quality of life and work within it, or the relationship between the professional environment and the city or national context that form its platform.

As concerns the internal environment, the project provides for an integration of contemporary art works and interventions in a space that is not designated for such purpose and is instead charged with its own specific purpose.

As concerns the choice of works, a guideline was decided early on: that of privileging a semantic area consistent with the professional mandate of the commissioners. The choice, which has strengthened over time, has thus been to focus on the theme of justice, rights, sustainability and social equity. Said themes are present in the works of numerous artists among the most interesting in the current scene. But above all, it seemed important to avoid genericity and anchor the works to the reality of the situation; all the more so since they are destined to be a common repository of meaning for those who animate it. Starting precisely from the importance attributed to real sharing, careful structuring of governance has been implemented since the project's first steps: in the firm, there is an Art Committee, composed of various partners of the firm, with a three-year rotation, which periodically meets in formal meetings to examine together with the curator every cultural proposal, evaluating its interest, feasibility, and significance concerning the Firm and its history of cultural production.

In some cases, decisions have been delegated to a collective choice involving the entire firm.

A delegation of young generations of professionals from the firm also participates in the Art Committee meetings, who

receives special attention in terms of initiatives and themes addressed.

The first concrete expressions of *nctm e l'arte* arrived at the end of 2011 when the Milan space was lit up by Carlos Garaicoa's installation *Nuevas Arquitecturas*, and then, in 2012, with the entry of a work by Kiki Smith and a four-handed work by Claudia Losi and Salvatore Arancio.

Garaicoa's installation consists of seventy-six suspended luminous elements, shaped in the form of stylized architectural structures. Multiform, delicate and airy, made of simple and ordinary materials, evocative of domestic objects - the paper lamps we all know - *Nuevas Arquitecturas* was then adapted to the spaces of the Milan Office, before being transferred, after several years, to the Rome office; its presence is pervasive, and its metaphorical and poetic charge profoundly modifies the atmosphere of the place. The central message is linked to planning, to the energy of building, and to the fact that the intensity with which one lives depends on the possibility of keeping desire, attention, and vision alive.

Kiki Smith's work, *Pyre Woman Kneeling*, also of museum relevance, is instead a sculpture: a tribute to the victims of witch hunts. The phenomenon, which lasted centuries and was the cruel and unjustifiable cause of an enormous number of deaths, is today understood as emblematic of the power asymmetries and repression of every form of right and autonomy that women were subjected to for centuries. The artist conceived the work as a public monument for the city of Nuremberg, the European epicenter of witch hunts (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Carlos Garaicoa, *Nuevas Arquitecturas*, 2002, photo Mario Tedeschi, © *nctm e l'arte*.

Idol Rock, by Salvatore Arancio and Claudia Losi, is a series of silkprints reproducing a mysterious monolith, ancient although apparently precarious. On these photographs, taken by Arancio, Losi has finely embroidered a constellation of lichens that, adhering to the rock, silently but tenaciously, inject into the whole a sense of natural growth, of future. The work combines fascination, ecological concerns and a consideration of the laws that underlie natural phenomena. And nature becomes a source and object of reflection, and a stimulus to initiate a process of awareness regarding our relationship with the context, starting from the environmental one (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Kiki Smith, *Pyre Woman Kneeling*, 2002, photo Andrea Rossetti, © nctm e l'arte.

While Arancio and Losi are at work on this installation, Adrian Paci, an Albanian artist by birth, Italian by adoption, is working, with the support of *nctm e l'arte*, on a challenging video, *The Column*. It shows a block of marble quarried in China and embarked on a long journey. On the way, a series of stonemasons work on it, transforming it into a finished product. The work thus refers to the theme of the voyage, understood in its existential dimension. Still, it also alludes to the phenomenon of factory ships and, thus to the theme of labor and production conditions that are all too often pushed to the point of extreme exploitation (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. Claudia Losi e Salvatore Arancio, *Idol Rock*, 2012, photo Mario Tedeschi, © *nctm e l'arte*.

At the same time as *The Column*, the artist's *Centro di Permanenza Temporaneo* also enters the firm: a photograph in which we see many people of different origins crammed onto a self-propelled ladder of the kind generally used as access to aircraft. All around an expanse of concrete, we are in the maneuvering area of an airport. The ladder, however, faces the void; the aircraft is not there. A sense of uncertainty dominates the image. The work thus combines a decisive comment, made explicit by the title, concerning current events, with the ability to move from the particular to the universal, coming to speak of a broader existential condition: that of all those who feel stuck, suspended in nothingness, waiting for a future without certainty (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Adrian Paci, *The Column*, 2012, © nctm e l'arte.

These early works have been followed over the years by many others, acquired from the artists' galleries of reference or as a result of the artists' collaboration in the conception and production phase; after Losi and Arancio and Adrian Paci, this was the case with Adelita Husni-Bey, R   Di Martino, Uriel Orlow, Micol Roubini, Francesca Marconi, Francesco Bertocco and others. Be that as it may, the works are identified beyond the criteria of age, notoriety, nationality of the artists or technique, and are instead revealed in their artistic quality, meaning, and their ability to grip reality.

Today, as the firm continues its activities - among other things, an alliance has been formed with other European law firms, and the name has evolved into ADVANT Nctm - *nctm e l'arte* continues to be a defining element, and indeed has gradually established roots.

The spaces, with their eminently professional aspect, have produced a strengthening of the already chosen direction, that of justice and rights.

Such themes not only acquire meaning and resonate within the firm, but also help to intercept the sensitivity of professionals and stimulate their participation in the project; all the more so since coexistence with the works, for those working there, is a daily occurrence.

Such coexistence is one of the central factors of the project and is at the heart of the curatorial work.

From the outset, the desire was to consider the firm's space as an ecosystem in which to organically insert the works, so as to create an integral environment in which the artists' visions could resonate with the architecture and design of the place, and with the activity carried out there.

The spaces proved to be ductile and permeable, ready to host the works. These, adapting to the layout of the common areas, meeting rooms, many of the offices, some of the corridors and even the courtyards, worked as a respectful counterpoint to the disciplined architectural regularity. Nor is this a purely formal matter: the presence of the works has brought with it the possibility of ranging, activating different, infinite visions. In addition, the distribution of the works varies, their configuration is continually renewed by means of a periodic rotation intended not only to make the space visually interesting and stimulating, but to communicate it as a dynamic system, constantly evolving; as a point of intersection of visions that are each time different.

The idea is that what counts above all is the quality of the experience of the place; an experience of use that is felt when actually experiencing the environment.

2. Curatorial Work as a Contribution to the Sense of Place

From a curatorial point of view, fostering the experience of place means designing as effectively as possible the arrangement of works in the space so that they are enabled to contaminate the environment and reach out to its visitors. This requires taking into account their characteristics and those of the space itself.

In the case of *nctm e l'arte*, this has involved continuous experimentation in relation to the specifics of the situation, the architectural characteristics of the different venues, and the activity taking place there.

From the outset, we have been oriented towards works that, on the one hand, can be a prism through which to look at the

most up-to-date contemporary world, and on the other, are endowed with a strongly symbolic character.

Suffice it to think of the works that first entered the firm, those already mentioned, by Carlos Garaicoa, Kiki Smith and Claudia Losi/Salvatore Arancio and Adrian Paci, or those immediately following, including Zineb Sedira's *The Lovers* trilogy, Pieter Hugo's monumental photography and Adelita Husni's *Bei Agency: Power-Play* series.

The series of large photographs *The Lovers*, of which there is a triptych in the collection, is linked to the project *Shipwreck: The Death of a Journey*. These are images of shipwrecks, still floating, in some cases leaning against each other as if to support each other. The images were taken in 2008 in Mauritania, a few kilometres from Nouadhibou. Shipwreck focuses on a portion of coastline that was once one of the most important shipyards in West Africa; today it is one of the few places in the world where old boats are abandoned without first being dismantled. Between the sand and the sea, large rusted wrecks lie like skeletons or continue to float, occasionally dumping wreckage on the shore.

Imbued with a poignant sense of elegy and a surreal epic, these images can be seen as metaphors for the idea of persistence. Their meaning resonates even more if we consider that large numbers of people converge to Nouadhibou from all parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, driven by the hope of being able to embark for the Canary Islands; while others land on said shores on their way back from Europe, after being rejected by society or the sea. Many of them make a living from the informal micro-commerce of materials derived from the dismantling of boats. The author, Zineb Sedira, was born in

France in 1963 to Algerian parents. She grew up in Paris, then moved to London, where she trained as an artist and began making videos and installations. In her work she manifests, from the very beginning, an interest in postcolonial discourse and issues related to the diasporic condition, and notions of origin and memory (Fig. 6).

The large photograph from the *Permanent Error* series taken by Pieter Hugo at the Agbogbloshie tech waste dump on the outskirts of Accra, Ghana, deals with similar themes.



Figure 6. Adrian Paci, *Centro di permanenza temporanea*, 2008, photo Mario Tedeschi., © nctm e l'arte.

Agbogbloshie is one of the most polluted places in the world. It is the destination of huge quantities of electronic waste, mainly European, which often arrive there illegally. In Agbogbloshie, Hugo proposed to the men who live in the slum and work in the dump to pose in front of the camera. The result is a series of monumental portraits. In these images there is a short-circuiting of the notions of progress, obsolescence and collapse, while a series of considerations about the relationship between the African continent and the West emerge. The images thus condense some of the most strident contradictions of the present. Adelita Husni-Bey's work is different. The themes dealt with are power and independence, an omnipresent system of pressure and influence that influences our behaviour, hierarchy, but also potential forms of alternative pedagogy that can stimulate critical and independent thinking and a feeling of cooperation and responsibility. Micro-utopias, systems of resistance, options for civil disobedience and self-determination: these are the themes that the Libyan-Italian artist Adelita Husni-Bey addresses in her works. Her work thus combines an ideal character with a link to an extremely topical global scenario. *Agency: Power-Play* was an exercise in social simulation. It took place at the MAXXI in Rome, in a hall overlooking the city, and involved a large group of high school students. The students divided into groups and created a real stage in the background, then acted out a series of situations and simulated different types of power relations typical of our society. The inspiration for this work came from the educational methods used in England as part of Citizenship Studies. Husni-Bey's idea was to trigger critical and collective feelings in the students.



Figure 7. Zineb Sedira, *The Lovers*, 2008, photo Mario Tedeschi, © *nctm e l'arte*.

To come to the present, today's addition to the collection of a series of drawings inspired by the disasters of war by the Lebanese artist Rabih Mroué seems most appropriate. While environmental and eco-climatic issues have come to the fore, for example, with the acquisition of a work by Jonas Staal, an artist who with extreme radicalism calls for attention to the future of the planet. Together with the jurist and activist Radha D'Souza, Jonas Staal has in fact conceived the performative activation of a court dedicated to judging climate crimes, the *Court for Intergenerational Climate Crimes*. In addition to prosecutors, witnesses and a large number of participants, the court features a series of seventy-four portraits of now-extinct animals, the *Comrades in Extinction*,

painted by Jonas Staal himself. It is they, these non-human ancestors, who bear witness to past climate crimes within the context of the court cases that the artist stages, and who contribute, through the exercise of legislation, to the collective effort needed to guarantee a future for the living, including humans, at a time of evident eco-climatic crisis.

Consistent with the guidelines chosen in relation to the firm's professional mandate, the work thus sees the environmental and legislative themes closely linked; not only that, but if Staal denounces climate injustice and its destructive effects, he at the same time attributes to the law the power to aim for a better world.

Again, with their broad presence, the series of paintings and the video permeate the firm's environment, offering an answer to a need for meaning.

3. Inhabiting Spaces, Questions, Relationships

Welcoming works of such a tenor means transferring their meaning, ideal tension, and metaphorical energy into space, creating spaces that think.

Their presence, firmly rooted in reality, is a decisive invitation not only to reflect on the questions that the present poses but to inhabit them, to confront particular and crucial questions, focusing in-depth, and at the same time, widening the visual angle, moving from the specific to the universal, just as artists do.

However, working towards such reinvention, first and foremost semantic, of a pre-existing space through the grafting of

ever-new visions requires great respect: the place is traversed by precise requirements, and the works, in turn, cannot be subjected to inappropriate conditions. The challenge of arriving at a proper exhibition dimension, enabling them to unleash their meaning, albeit within a space not designated for that, and active in everyday life as the nerve center of a professional activity, requires specific ideational trajectories. The work of curatorship – a term etymologically linked to that of care – thus consists of the challenge, which is continually renewed, to place the works in context without emptying them of their prerogatives and their autonomous meaning, and to redefine the space, to renew it from the inside by acting so that the meaning of the works pervades it; in a nutshell, working carefully on the display and on its potential in terms of content presentation and storytelling.

It is therefore a process of continuous experimentation. In the frequent rearrangements, the possibilities offered by the space and the different possible relationships with the architectural elements have been exploited to the full. For example, in the Milan office, the photographic works by Paola di Bello relating to Burri's Teatro Continuo and its restoration mark the junctions from one room to another, while the stairs that connect the floors create a very strong set-up conceived together with the artist herself. And it is again Di Bello's photographs that mark the transition to the conference room area, as well as the room itself, in which their partially asymmetrical arrangement deliberately interferes with the regular course of the interior design of the room, giving it a new rhythm.



Figure 8. Paola Di Bello, *Teatro Continuo di Alberto Burri*, Parco Sempione 2015, © *nctm e l'arte*.

But the direct interaction with the architecture is only one of the elements that contribute to success. The idea is that a professional community can be defined not only internally, but also in relation to its context.

For such reason, further work was dedicated to making the firm an open, porous, propulsive place, and to building a meaningful dialogue with the outside world so that the program of meetings and events would be an opportunity to share with a wider public. The culmination of this effort is the artistic projects activated throughout the territory.

It is clear that, understood in its overall design, unfolded over time, the project *nctm e l'arte* goes far beyond the idea of 'dressing' a place; intertwined with the daily life of the firm, it consists rather in a commitment to take care of it through an uninterrupted process that involves the most diverse components and aspects, from the most tangible, spatial to the psychological and relational ones.

The direction of this work of care is that of a co-evolution of the project itself and the firm, with the works of art as a sharable repository of contents and values, points of view, positions and postures, and the environmental dimension that encompasses them with a sense of organic integrity in which the space, intellectually stimulating, arouses a sense of relationship and belonging, with effects at an aesthetic, personal, relational and professional level.



Figure 9. Jerome Bel, performance *Compagnia Compagnia*, on Alberto Burri's *Teatro Continuo*, Parco Sempione, 2016, photo Paolo Sacchi, © *nctm e l'arte*.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Edoardo Amoroso

He is a PhD student in architecture developed by the Department of the University of Naples Federico II. His research focuses on design-related innovation processes through digital manufacturing, operated under his own brand and within the research team on design for all, nature-based solutions, and the use of new technologies for ecological transition and advanced processes in industrial design. He graduated with a master's degree in Architecture in 2023 from the Department Of Architecture (DiARC) of the University of Naples Federico II and, since 2024, has been a member of the Association for Industrial Design ADI Campania.

edoardo.amoroso@unina.it

Eleonora D'Ascenzi

She is a post-doc research fellow with a Ph.D. at the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence, with a design curriculum. She successfully pursued a Master's in Research at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, and she now belongs to the Design Sustainability Lab at the University of Florence, where she is currently investigating the role of transformative & immersive storytelling design. She is also Project Manager PE11 (Made in Italy Circolare e sostenibile), Spoke 2 (Eco-Design strategies: from materials to Product Service Systems – PSS) within the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan). Her fields of interest are mainly related to communication design, storytelling design, strategic design, user experience and neuro-design.

eleonora.dascenzi@unifi.it

Annalisa Dominoni

She is an architect, designer, PhD and Professor at the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano. Director of ESA_LAB@Polimi_Design at the Department of Design, where she has been responsible for confirming the strategic role of design for space through her research, projects and scientific publications. Principal Investigator of the VEST and GOAL experiments carried out with astronauts on board the International Space Station.

In 2017, she created and directs Space4Inspiration, the first and only MSc course in Space Design, recognised and supported by the European Space Agency (ESA). She is a visiting professor at many universities and has received several prestigious awards, including the Premio ADI Compasso d'Oro.

annalisa.dominoni@polimi.it

Silvana Donatiello

She is a PhD candidate in the international course Habitat in Transition, developed by the Department of Architecture at the University of Naples Federico II. Her research focuses on the ecological transition towards more sustainable settlement, production, and consumption patterns, specifically focusing on Nature Based Solutions, digital manufacturing, and community-based systems. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture and an international Master's Degree in Design for the Built Environment at the University of Naples Federico II. She has been a visiting student at the University of Applied Sciences Fachhochschule Potsdam, Germany.

silvana.donatiello@unina.it

Paolo Franzo

After receiving his PhD in Design Sciences at the Università Iuav di Venezia in 2019, where he collaborated in post-doc research activities and teaching in fashion degree courses, since 2023 he has been a researcher in fashion design at the Department of Architecture (DIDA) of the University of Florence. His research activity focuses on the futuring practices of fashion design in Italy, with a focus on innovative materials, production chains and the relationship between handmade and tech in a vision of human, social and environmental sustainability. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Lisbon and regularly collaborates with international research groups.

paolo.franzo@unifi.it

Mariarita Gagliardi

She is a PhD candidate in architecture, which the Department of the University of Naples Federico II developed. She graduated with honors in the international Master's Degree in Design for the Built Environment and a Bachelor's Degree

with honors in architecture, both at the University of Naples Federico II. Her research specialises in the domains of design for the ecological transition, design for the territory, social design and design for environmental sustainability and circular economy, with a particular focus on the field of Nature-Based-Solution, Internet of Things (IoT), Generative Artificial Intelligence (G AI), and Digital Manufacturing (DM), publishing articles in thematic scientific journals.

mariarita.gagliardi@unina.it

Sara Iebole

Designer, PhD student at the University of Genoa where she graduated as Master's Degree in Product Event Design at the Department of Architecture and Design. Her research interest is centred in understanding the cultural position and the role of designers in relation to gender studies and intersectionality. Specifically, her research focuses on the bond between gender stereotypes, societal evolution and design product/processes, seeking for a design method for inclusiveness.

s.iebole@gmail.com

Virginia Marano

She is a researcher, curator, and art historian. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Lise Meitner Group "Coded Objects". She holds a PhD in art history from the University of Zurich. Her thesis examined the diasporic dimension in the works of Jewish women sculptors in Post-war New York, previously assimilated to feminism but not yet connected to the question of exile. She was a recipient of several scholarship and research grants from the Swiss government and the University of Zurich. In 2022, she was a SNSF Doc.Mobility fellow in the Art History Department at Hunter College/CUNY. She is the co-founder and coordinator of the research project "Rethinking Art History through Disability" at the University of Zurich. In 2023, she was a fellow researcher at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice, working on the PNRR-PEBA project for the Removal of Physical, Cognitive, and Sensory Barriers in Cultural Sites, funded by the NextGenerationEU program. In addition to her academic activities, she serves as curatorial assistant at MASI, Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana, Lugano. Her work focuses on developing new approaches to curating exhibitions that emphasize decentralization and collaborative practices.

maranovirginia@gmail.com

Chiara Olivastri

Architect, PhD in Design, Associate Professor at the University of Genoa, Architecture and Design Department, since 2023. She focuses her studies in service design strategies applied to circular economy and social innovation, collaborating with local companies and public institutions. She is referent of the Desislub Unige team (<https://desislub.unige.it/>) working on research, teaching, and workshop projects focused on urban regeneration, Blueconomy and Design for all. Since 2021, she has been the scientific manager of the research contract with the Barilla company for the development of increasingly sustainable and consumer-friendly products and packaging. In 2018 she won an Italian national "Grant for a PhD research on urban regeneration" promoted by Directorate General of Contemporary Art and Architecture, publishing her doctoral research titled "Con-temporary, Design for the reuse of vacant spaces".

chiara.olivastri@unige.it

Pierluigi Panza

After having obtained two degrees and a research doctorate (all three theses have been published), he started teaching in various Italian universities (continuously at the Politecnico di Milano) and became an art critic of the *Corriere della Sera*. He is a member of the Academy of the Arts of Design in Florence, of the Veneto Institute of Sciences, Letters and Arts, of the Italian Society of Aesthetics and of the Italian Society of History of Art Critics. He obtained scientific qualifications in History of Architecture (full professor), History of Art (associate professor), Aesthetics (associate professor). He is the director of the restoration magazine *Ananke. Culture, history and conservation techniques* (Anvur class A magazine), published hundreds of scientific papers especially on Italian art, architecture and 18th century furniture. He is one of the world's leading scholars on Piranesi. In 2017 his volume Museo Piranesi won the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage, the highest European prize for Cultural Heritage Achievements. He is the curator of exhibitions and member of a ministerial commission. He has published five novels and in 2008 he won the Campiello selection prize.

pierluigi.panza@polimi.it

Luca Parodi

Designer, PhD, Research Fellow at the Department Architecture and Design, Università di Genova, UNIGE. He works and teaches in the areas of product, interior and furniture design. His research interest focuses on understanding the cultural position and role of designers in relation to local heritage and contemporary production. His research focuses on the link between product design as a function of cultural transformations and identity enhancement. Currently is a visiting professor at BUCT Beijing, member of the Design Observatory and is a part of ADI Handmade in Italy Commission. In publishing, he writes for the international magazine ElleDecor.it and is a member of the editorial board of the university journal Magazine.

luca.parodi@unige.it

Silvia Pericu

Architect, PhD, Associate Professor in Product Design at the Department Architecture and Design, Università di Genova UNIGE, since 2013. Her research interests focus on design's capabilities to contribute to territorial development and transformation in relationship to health, safety and sustainability. Main issues in the research are co-design processes for social innovation and circular design strategies for making change happen towards circular economy. On this topic she coordinated in the last two years the partnership activity of the University of Genoa, in the URBACT III Action Planning Network: "2nd Chance. Waking up sleeping giants, for a sustainable urban development" and the Creative EU "Creative Food Cycles" (2018-20) as scientific manager for University of Genoa research team.

silvia.pericu@unige.it

Gabi Scardi

Art critic, curator, and writer. She investigates art and the public sphere, and contemporary collaborative methodologies, questioning new tendencies and practices. She collaborated internationally with museums and institutions, curating solo shows, group shows and public projects. She is co-director of the review Animot; NAHR President; a member of EoC - Ecologie of Care and of CCW - Cultural Welfare Center. Since 2011 she has been the artistic director of *nctm e l'arte*, a project by ADVANT Nctm Studio Legale. She is director of the course in Socially Engaged Art, at Accademia Unidee, Biella, and teaches Phenomenology of Contemporary Arts at Accademia di Belle Arti di Verona, and modules on Contemporary Art and Public Art at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan.

gabscardi@gmail.com

Irene Sanesi

She is a chartered accountant and cultural economist. She is founder and Name Partner of BBS-pro. For 30 years she has been dealing with project and process management, third sector, advocacy, fundraising, taxation, higher education and strategic philanthropy. She has written many publications about cultural economics, sustainability and fundraising. Gestionalia is the title of her column on *Artribune*. She has held, and still holds, institutional volunteering positions in both national and international cultural institutions.

irene.sanesi@bbs-pro.it

Marzia Tomasin

She is a cultural manager specialized in the design and development of multidisciplinary projects for businesses and organizations. She bases her work on the belief that culture generates value and is a lever for innovation. Since 2016, she has been hosting Periscritto, a podcast dedicated to books and their authors. In 2021, she founded Atelier Cultura, a benefit corporation that integrates culture into the business landscape, guiding companies in creating ecosystems between cultural vision and business strategy. As a journalist and writer, she deals with business and culture: she co-authored *L'Alfabeto della sostenibilità* and in 2024 published *Successi a Nord-Est* (Egea Editore). In 2024, she founded and chairs Agorà, an ETS association that carries out multidisciplinary cultural and civic engagement projects.

marzia@ateliercultura.it



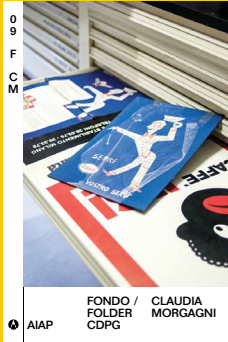
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