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Reasons
to Research
in the
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Editorial #14
Research and Reasoning in the Mediterranean Area

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After generating an interesting debate thanks to PAD 13 "Design for Territory" issue, edited by M. Parente & C. Sedini and awarded with the ADI index selection 2017, we are now glad to launch PAD 14 in partnership with AIAP, the Italian Association of Visual Communication Design, as our new publisher.

This new release focuses entirely on the strategic Design Research tracks across the complex Mediterranean scenario, investigating reasons and perspectives.

The choice of the topics to be tackled refers to our commitment to join the cause of activism due to the progressive decline of Western culture as well as the crisis of liberal democracy, in the framework of a continuous "metamorphosis of the world" destabilizing the certainties of modern society. We recall on this basis the considerations by German sociologist Ulrich Beck, author of *Risikogesellschaft* (Risk Society) and of the above mentioned "Metamorphosis of the world":

> "Risk reverses the relationship of past and present, present and future. The past loses its power to determine the present. Its places as a cause of the present-day experience is taken by the future, [...] the presumed risks are the spur used to ensure that everyday life goes on a gallop." (Beck 2000, p. 330)

Such a picture of the current situation shows how all the tools we have credited so far to cope with crucial times have been now used up. The response strategy prefigured in the book by the German sociologist goes beyond the now obsolete, though still operational "Zombie Institutions", which are no longer

suited to contemporary social needs and economic challenges and consequently stand as an obstacle to the understanding and making processes.

The condition which is essential for seizing the positive aspects of change is instead that of letting creativity think the unthinkable, envisioning a better future while containing the dystopias hindering as yet the awareness of the current condition and causing us to shape a world we don't want to live in. The vision we get as a reference to our context of choice is that the Mediterranean area is now induced to abandon a certain historicism already considered dangerous by Predrag Matvejevic (2009), renowned as the great scholar of the Mediterranean, in favour of a new perspective set on current times, consisting in a constructive realism capable of facing reality in a relevant way. Only by providing answers - even if yet partial and temporary - to the big problems of our time - while imagining how technology may support humans instead of drastically reducing their role, we can reset a future vision of the Mediterranean area. "The metamorphosis of the world includes the metamorphosis of the image of the world, the metamorphosis of general framing and the metamorphosis of practice and taking action."

The Mediterranean basin is indeed a geographic area consisting in a set of regions characterized by physical, social and cultural peculiarities that cannot be reduced to a single unity or a precise definition. Considered in its wholeness, it discloses as an active and dynamic mosaic of cultures and identities. It is not just a place of divisions and conflicts, but also a place of co-existence, hybridization, and multiplicity. Today, as in the past, it represents the "junction of the expanded geogra-

phy of flows" disclosing as an emblematic reality of the contemporary condition though in a sort of continuous modification (OMA, 2018).

Just like many other territories and geographical regions, the Mediterranean area is irreparably compromised. Environmental pollution, climate change, strong migratory flows, social and economic inequalities, local negligence, lack of dialogue and sharing attitude among sub-cultures are some of the degradation signs, that disclose at the same time as the stimulus to push further the design culture, especially in terms of scientific knowledge and digital skills to be effectively connected to Mediterranean cultures and traditions.

As a continuously transforming reality, the Mediterranean area needs to be reconsidered through a creativity-driven innovation approach, which could be pursued by a "restorative design" as a remedial practice, as suggested by Paola Antonelli (2018) for the activities related to *Broken Nature* XXII Triennale Milano 2019. Alternatively, also an explorative and multidisciplinary approach could also be implemented, just like the one applied by OMA at *Manifesta12*, currently developing in Palermo an incubator of global conditions and a cross-pollination lab for a new world's next paradigms.

While starting such a process of investigation of meaning and reimagining the future of the Mediterranean area, we launched a call for young researchers, though not only, expecting in return innovative solutions and methods to deal with old and new problems.

Taking up the concept of the inadequacy of the "zombie institutions" we open then this issue with the article "The Island of the Possible" by Barbara Predan. This text generates profound considerations on the need for the coexistence of different and alternative model of territory occupancy and experiences that can generate new organizing principles. It presents a case history of urban occupation, the *Rog Factory squat* in Ljubljana, Slovenia, existing in an autonomous form since 2006. Defined as a case of civil disobedience by politically active citizenship in the era of globalized capitalism, this "unregulated islands of activity "represents the most extensive community (as a space occupied) for alternative content in a heavily institutionalized Slovenia. The author highlights the issues related to the tension between renewal and resistance to the change of rigid systems and raises a deep critical reflection on the possibilities of transformation that can be opened in a world of experimentation and peaceful coexistence of different models.

In the *Contemporary Panorama* section, we issued three theoretical-methodological articles on research activities that started to identify the "problem areas" related to the management of the tangible and intangible resources of the Mediterranean, behaviours, ecologies and human needs, deserving consideration throughout the different Mediterranean contexts and identifying operational strategies for problem-solving design.

Within this section the article "The development of the Circular Economy materials in the Mediterranean: organic waste as

a valuable resource for the economic and social development of the area" by Chiara Catgiu is addressed to one of the most critical and complex contemporary problems, such as environmental pollution of the Mediterranean sea and lands. Acknowledging the unbalanced combination between natural and human-made living and production system, generating all the big problems we currently face, the author suggests a Circular Economy Model as a possible strategy to innovate the production of materials and consumer products, while restoring at the same time the economic-social system by contributing to the environmental problems. In particular, the author refers to the production of innovative materials from organic waste and shows some case studies of new entrepreneurship developing and applied this strategy in some Mediterranean contexts such as Egypt, Italy, and Spain, indicating possible models to follow.

The article "A Human Centred Design integrated approach for the inclusive valorisation of Mediterranean UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage" by Paola Barcarolo and Emilio Rossi, addresses to the valorisation of what can be defined as the most substantial resource of the Mediterranean: the UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage sites The image on page 49 is particularly impressive for the number of sites highlighted. So it easy imagines that their maintenance and relative services require many economic resources. For this reason, the strategies to maintain the attractiveness of the sites by increasing the number of tourist visits are of primary importance. The strategy proposed by the authors is the Human Centred Design Integrated approach for inclusive valorisation that can

autonomously enable and involve the use of historical heritage, widening the offer of cultural tourism including users with sense-perceptive deficits, thanks to projects of visual communication and haptic. Then this article opens to user experiences related themes to promote sites and cultural heritage.

The article "Design Approaches and Methodologies for the Valorization of Places Experiences from the Western Mediterranean Area" by Marina Parente, Eleonora Lupo and Carla Sedini deals with "Design as place maker" design culture. This design strategy can play a very important role in creating spaces, networks, and engagement for a collaborative understanding and a redefinition of the Mediterranean area. With the aim of systematizing the theory and developing a methodology for the design focused on places, they present four strategies resulting from already developed and chosen projects from Italy and Portugal. Those strategies metaphors are: Regeneration, Renovation, Replication, and Representation.

In the *Historical Panorama* section, we propose two articles based on two extremely different approaches. The first one "The Italian design history from a different perspective: the case of Ico Parisi", by Chiara Lecce presents indeed the multifaceted figure of Sicilian designer, architect, photographer and artist Ico Parisi, who lived his artistic life in Como, in the north of Italy. Between the Thirties and Forties of the Twentieth Century, he fully represented a part of the culture of Italian rationalism, that was openly inspired by Mediterranean design with its unique expressive languages and structure typologies. The article opens a new line of research, warmly

encouraged by PAD, aiming to drive attention on those authors with a relevant experience throughout the Mediterranean area, but somehow often neglected by official history due to their rowing against the mainstream, or only for their peripheral geographical position compared to the centres of major artistic and design production, such as Milan in Italy.

The article "E-1027: Shifting Paradigms and Aesthetic Outcomes in a House by the Mediterranean Sea" by Anna Cecilia Russo takes us to Côte d'Azur French Riviera, and exactly to Roquebrune Cap St. Martin, where the E-1027 villa designed by Eileen Gray is located. According to pragmatism and applied aesthetic approach, this article argues the Mediterranean experience generated by a total architecture and the original furnishings, contributing to create a warm and welcoming nest modelled on the needs of a modern, dynamic body, melting with the Mediterranean landscape and lifestyle, defining a sublime fusion of functionality and senses. Together, those two articles let us bring back some visions from the historical timeline, without however falling into the trap of the historicism. Showing a speculative tension that proceeds from the present and roots back to the past, they help us to open up new prospects for the re-imagination of the Mediterranean regions, observing how the Mediterranean area itself has been in the past a model of reference.

We do hope this issue and the following ones may promote a discourse about design research in the Mediterranean area, launching a new way of looking at the Mediterranean problems and next perspectives.

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A CRITICAL VIEW

The Island of the Possible

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Keywords
Possibilities, Active Citizenship, Civil Disobedience, The Act of Creation

Abstract
The text makes a case, through a discussion of active citizenship during the era of globalized capitalism, for the necessity of the existence of grassroots unregulated islands of activity such as the Autonomous Rog Factory. To some, the existence of this autonomous zone of activity represents nothing other than the usurpation of an abandoned space that, in the case of Rog, was slated for rapid demolition; for others, it represents a legitimate occupation through which active citizenship and political participation is manifested. What does an urban action such as the Autonomous Rog Factory create in the context of the freedom of grassroots action? And what perhaps does it prevent? Put another way: can we allow ourselves to neglect existing creative resistance merely in order to create an orderly framework of the known?

In the first chapter of his book *Means Without End*, Giorgio Agamben introduced the phrase *form-of-life*. As he explains it, it is "a life – human life – in which the single ways, acts, and processes of living are never simply *facts* but always and above all *possibilities* of life, always and above all power" (Agamben, 2000, p. 4). It is precisely the *possibilities* of life – and the power to choose between the possibilities – that offers the shortest description of what is being threatened by the potential demolition of the Autonomous Factory Rog, an alternative island in the middle of Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia.

The text makes a case, through a discussion of active citizenship during the era of globalized capitalism, for the necessity of the existence of grassroots unregulated islands of activity such as the Autonomous Rog Factory. Precisely the case of Rog clearly illustrates that in practice the concept of active citizenship is propagated by established political entities only to the point that the work and activities of these entities are managed and controlled. In this way, the government seeks to set boundaries on the ideas and initiatives of active citizenship. Deviation from regulations and civil disobedience are not recognized as building something, as creative rebellion, but are usually branded as unlawful acts. In the end phase, such a situation often metamorphoses into a battle between David and Goliath, and is converted – by the government authorities – into a one-sided set of demands, and, in the case of Rog, even the attempt to use violent force as a method of subordination.

1. From a Workshop to an Activist Project (a brief history of the situation at Rog before and during the occupation)

As reported on the website *Rog Factory* (2006), it all started in 1871 with the establishment of a leather workshop on the site. By 1922, the workshop had expanded to a leather factory and, despite a change in ownership, continued to operate until the end of World War Two. In 1945, with the change of the Yugoslav political system – the Rog Factory was nationalized. Its operations only continued for a short time before the government decided, during the period from 1951 to 1953, to reorganize the factory into a manufacturer of bicycles.

Thus the Rog Factory was born. The factory remained active until the collapse of Yugoslavia. In 1991, because of increasing logistical costs, the management of the factory relocated production from the center of the city to an industrial zone on the outskirts. For the next three years, all that remained in the original location of the factory was a bike store and service center. As early as 1992, the city authorities of Ljubljana took an interest in Rog's location, and, as the years passed, looked for ways, even seeking international consultation, to gentrify Rog and the property around it. In 1994, the seven-year period of denationalization of the Rog Factory began. During this time, the municipal government of Ljubljana took responsibility for the organization and condition of the Rog premises.

A local ordinance called for the protection of the main factory building, and stated that the wider premises were intended for both public and private programs. In 2002, the municipal government of Ljubljana bought the Rog Factory, but a year later plans for renovation once again stalled.

Despite these early intentions, the Rog Factory remained empty and in a state of collapse for fifteen years. The situation changed only when temporary users squatted on the property. Activists, students, and artists made the following announcement when they first occupied the Rog Factory:

> "On Saturday, March 25, 2006, a new social program and an initiative for the temporary use of the currently abandoned Rog Factory was launched with the purpose of conducting non-profit and under-represented activities" (Tovarna Rog, 2006).

During the subsequent ten years, the temporary users of Rog managed to conduct a lively program of social, political, sport, welfare, and cultural activities (this, despite the fact that there was no connection to the electric grid, because the city, despite its promises, never signed a contract for temporary use). A group of individuals built and created, among other things, a social center, artist studios, workshops, gallery spaces, a skate-park, concert hall, dance studio, circus space, and library. In the past, a space for the political activities of the so-called "erased" (citizens of the former Yugoslavia who were denied administrative and citizenship rights in independent Slovenia) was created. Today, in addition to numerous festivals, concerts, literary readings, and performances that take place in the Rog Factory, English lessons are provided for asylum seekers and other efforts related to refugees and migrants are conducted (for example, the collection of aid and integration work). In other words, an exceptionally wide range of activities has been housed in the once abandoned factory.

Cultural anthropologist Rajko Muršič noted that in these ten years

> "such a variety of activities did not develop because of ten dreamers who wanted to do these things, but because of the needs of the community for certain activities to be carried out, and the possibility for individuals to actually carry them out. To a great degree, we are talking about activities that are conducted autonomously, without social support, and without ancillary financial or commercial activities" (Pograjc, Vešligaj, 2016).

Municipal decision-makers did not recognize any of these activities as contributions to the city, but rather as a form of opposition to the planned gentrification of the area. After the unsuccessful search for a private investor for a public-private partnership in the renovation of the Rog Factory – the latter was to become a contemporary art center with stores, bars, hotel, apartments and garages – the municipal government of Ljubljana decided in 2014 to minimize the plan and carry out only the first phase of the project, mainly the renovation of the protected primary buildings. These would be transformed into the Rog Center, the goal of which would be the development of creative/cultural industries. A parking lot would be constructed in the basement, and the factory courtyard would become a multipurpose park (Projekti MOL, 2010–16). The problem with the recommended plan is that the first phase already anticipates the demolition of the factory's auxiliary buildings, the spaces in which most of the autonomous activities described above take place. This is what led both sides into a conflict that escalated on June 6, 2016 when,

following the orders of the City of Ljubljana, a group of private security guards entered the Autonomous Rog Factory in the middle of the night. Along with workers and equipment from a construction company, they attempted, in the words of the temporary users of the premises, to "demolish the living and functioning autonomous community with the exercise of authority, deceit, and violent force" (Uporabnice et al., 2016). The users of Rog resisted the demolition by erecting a living wall of people, and also seized the excavator with which the employees of the construction company had entered the premises. In the aftermath, both the yellow color and the purpose of the excavator were transformed: it was painted pink and became a symbol of resistance, of the creative freedom that replaces forceful destruction.

Figure 1. The excavator as a symbol of resistance, of the creative freedom that replaces forceful destruction, Autonomous Rog Factory, 2016. Photo: Voranc Vogel.

2. The Right to Occupy

The amount of media reporting increased with the conflict and this led to an intensified response from the public. It is interesting that a substantial segment of the public did not side with the weaker party, the temporary users of Rog, but rather on the side of the supposed owners of the area, the city of Ljubljana. The temporary users of the space were branded as irrational usurpers of private property. Of course this raises the question: is the property of the city of Ljubljana – as public authorities – actually private property?

We are offered a response to this question by the abovementioned Rajko Muršič and the constitutional lawyer Andraž Teršek. Rajko Muršič observes that

> "the occupation of these spaces is in truth not clearly illegal, as many people conceive of it when they use the phrase 'illegal occupation' [...]. The right to occupy abandoned spaces was written in old Roman law. It is based on the notion of responsibility for property, which in that time was less inviolable than it is today. If you do not responsibly care for your property, you do not deserve to own it!" (Muršič, 2012, p. 178).

Ergo: "since Roman times, the act of occupation was a legitimate expression of active citizenship and political participation" (Muršič, 2012, p. 178). An echo of this ancient Roman law found its way into the current Cultural Heritage Protection Act. Article 6 of the law states among other things:

> "Other monuments owned by the state, the region, or the municipality may only be seized in the exceptional cases where such

seizure improves their preservation or public access to them, and thus ensures use that is in agreement with the social significance of the monument" (Zakon, 2008).

The legal foundation and Muršič's observation regarding the replacement of a poor manager with public interest is supported by Andraž Teršek's statement that

> "the property rights of the municipality vis-à-vis Rog cannot be equated with private property rights, that is the property rights of individuals, and that the temporary users of Rog occupy the property above for the public good, which they fulfill with content and which the judicial authorities should protect" (Rožman, 2016).

Moreover, according to Teršak, the temporary users of the Rog Factory have

> "a genuine political stance and are exercising legitimate political self-realization. This is the way that citizens of a civil society exercise their freedom in the public space – as an active political subject. This is possible precisely with the seizure of public property, the custodianship of the public good, and the reinsertion of content and spirit into it" (Teršek, 2016).

It is only at this point that the public interest is actually being carried out; a task in which the public government – at least in the case of Rog – was unsuccessful in the past.

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Figure 2. Slovenian musician N'toko performing on the rooftop at the Autonomous Rog Factory, 2016. Photo: Voranc Vogel.

Figure 3. All temporary users participate directly and make decisions collectively at general assemblies, Autonomous Rog Factory, 2016. Photo: Voranc Vogel.

3. An Unregulated Island

Thus the occupation of public property, looked at from the legal perspective, is not even as controversial as it appears to many. But the case of the Autonomous Rog Factory extends beyond the legal, and poses additional challenges in terms of how to think of the situation: namely, that an island of autonomous grassroots activities exists in the center of a regulated city. This island is being created by active citizens from the pure need for such grassroots community action. At the same time, it is certainly also a form of rebellion against the interests of capital, as well as an expression of defiance against municipal policies that have criminalized everything that does not agree with the city's plans and vision: namely, the vision of a city cleansed of disorder. Everything that deviates from this vision is excluded, punished, and pushed to the margins. For example, it is expected that residents of the city will report when facades are covered with graffiti, because these walls "create an atmosphere of disorderliness in public spaces which reduces the sense of safety" (MOL, 2015).

This statement and the position it reflects raise many questions: "In what kind of city do we want to live?" "Who does the city serve?" and, above all, "Because of whom does the city exist?". Thus, the conflict described above – if we recognize the legitimacy of both communities, the city authorities and the temporary users of Rog – would seem relatively easy to solve with respectful dialog and the search for ways of co-existence.

But, as Vilém Flusser cautions us in the book *Post-History* (2013[1983]), when there are two different answers in the same situation, we must realize that the reason is most likely that

two different questions are being answered (p. 35). Let's first look at the two answers: "With the renovation of the Rog Factory, we will clean up the area, and will provide the cultural and creative industry with 5,526 m² of additional space," and, "The grassroots active citizenship action in Rog has filled the gaps in the field of social, political, sports, welfare, and cultural activities for the last ten years." From the two answers, we can see that the first responds to a quantitative question: "Why is it necessary to renovate the facilities?" and the second responds to a qualitative question: "What does the renovation destroy?".

In the first answer, we are presented with a vast amount of renovated space for the use of institutions and self-employed individuals with the city government selecting content and thus determining the general framework of cultural operations through tenders. Of course, this is important and necessary for the cultural development of the city. But, as noted above, this does not excuse the exclusion of others who do not play by the same rules. These other players are equally necessary for the development of city culture. With the independent and alternative cultural work carried out by individuals, collectives, and institutions, new mechanisms of social operations are researched and established that institutional bodies usually fail to address. These new mechanisms create non-profit content for the public good, as well as a space for socializing, further exploration, experimentation, and also *just doing nothing*.

The essence is in the search for and establishment of alternatives through resistance against that which exists. When the city co-exists with autonomous spaces and allows creativity

and the search for alternative social conditions to take place in them, it is also providing a precondition for the introduction and development of the possibilities alluded to above. The possibilities of life. And this is actually crucial.

It is crucial because we urgently need – especially now – to establish conditions in which we can begin to believe again that possibilities are even possible. We must forcefully oppose the convention that it doesn't make any sense to even look for possible alternatives to what exists. As Steven Duncombe put it: "The dominant system dominates not because people agree with it; it rules because we are convinced there is no alternative" (2014, p. 140). Thus when we reject a unique unregulated island community such as the Autonomous Rog Factory, we are actually rejecting the potential of other possibilities. We reject alternatives based on the assumption that they are simply not possible in the era in which we live. They are not possible because we doubt our own capability of even conceptualizing anything that deviates from the norm. Or worse yet: we reject alternatives because it is impossible, using standard measures of comparison, to compare them to that which exists. Consequently, we are not capable of comprehending them, and therefore we dismiss and thwart their work and creativity. We reject exactly that which is – according to Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben – necessary. Namely, in the act of creativity, there is always also an act of rebellion (Agamben, 2014). The action of the deed can only follow the preliminary idea: the idea of an alternative to what exists.

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4. The Necessity of Persistence

Given all the potential possibilities, it would be deplorable to ignore the answer to the question: "What does the renovation destroy?" What's more, the fact that autonomous islands, such as the Rog Factory, co-exist with cities opens up the possibility of new levels of culture, new levels of openness, and also a different kind of creativity in the area of looking for possibilities. Destroying or preventing the emergence of autonomous islands within cities leaves us left with the question of how to live if such independent unregulated islands are destroyed and not allowed to exist.

Put another way, we would be forced to confront a condition of lost possibilities: a condition when we had had the possibility of getting somewhere. However, unsure of where the road would lead us and because of the need for a feeling of security, we stopped the process with regulation. Rather than enabling the creative choice of various possibilities of life, we allowed the dominance of power that comes from the position of the apparatus and the power of function. It is precisely because of this that the persistence of individuals, such as the temporary users of the Rog Factory, is so essential. Their persistence prevents the loss of our possible futures.

Figure 4. English lessons for asylum seekers at Social Center Rog, Autonomous Rog Factory, 2016. Photo: Lin Gerkman.

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CONTEMPORARY PANORAMA

The development of Circular Economy materials in the Mediterranean: organic waste as a valuable resource for the economic and social development of the area

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Keywords

Mediterranean context, environment, circular economy, eco-design, sustainability, innovative materials, fashion design

Abstract

The article wants to be a contribution to the understanding of social and environmental issues that the area of the Mediterranean is facing after the global economic crisis and wants to propose the application of the circular economy model, with particular reference to the materials obtained from organic waste, to resolve the environmental and social problems of the region. The circular materials described in the article are produced starting from organic waste and transformed into a valuable resource, by promoting resource efficiency and jobs creation at the same time. The article presents three case studies focused on the reuse of waste materials in innovative applications, by applying the circular economy concept, within the framework of eco-design and resources reutilization.
The materials are analyzed according to the circular economy principles and to other relevant parameters.

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1. Introduction to the context and objectives

The Mediterranean Region boasts unique, rich biodiversity and it has been the birthplace of historically significant societies important for the European civilization (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2016). Nowadays, the Mediterranean area is facing several environmental and social problems, mainly due to climate change and to people unemployment. The economies of Mediterranean countries have been severely affected by the global economic crisis (Bartlett & Prica, 2011), together with the migration of talented people from the Southern European Countries towards more developed ones. To promote the sustainability and social development of the Mediterranean regions, companies need to be supported by high qualified people, with creative minds and technical skills, towards new eco-innovation patterns. However, insecure jobs and decreased salaries force young and talented people to seek more promising job opportunities in other places in Europe. The solution can be found in the circular economy model, as proposed by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2016).

The circular economy is defined as a regenerative and restorative industrial system where the end-of-life concept is replaced with restoration and with the use of renewable materials and energy. A better design of materials and products can lead to the elimination of waste (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013). There are many benefits in moving to a circular economy, from the preservation and valorization of natural resources to the elimination of the concept of waste, from the redesign of products and systems to the development of new materials, into a continuous positive development cycle (Moreno, Rios, Rowe, Charnley, & Rosen, 2016).

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Furthermore, a linear economy that extracts resources at increasing rates, according to the principles of take-make-dispose, without consideration of the environment in which it operates, cannot continue indefinitely (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013). The circular model promises a new solution by taking care of the environment that surrounds us and by supporting the creation of jobs (Circle Economy, 2017), thus creating new social opportunities and economic growth as well (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2009).

The paper aims at identifying new emerging circular materials that can potentially be the enablers of the social and economic change, starting from waste and transformed into new valuable resources. The materials will be analyzed according to a methodology that will be explained in the following paragraph.

2. Methodology

The circular economy changes completely the perspective of the designer, by addressing new challenges, by redefining the end-of-life concept and by shifting towards the use of more sustainable materials (World Economic Forum, 2018; Arcolab, 2018).

A circular or sustainable material is by definition "something whose production is supported indefinitely by nature, which means, a resource is used up at the same speed that it is renewed and no permanent damage to the environment should occur in the meanwhile" (Metroplan, 2012; Dahlstrom, 2016). The materials proposed in the article were selected according to the eco-design and circular economy principles. At the start of a product's life, both the design and the production process impact on resource use and waste generation (Euro-

pean Commission, 2017). Eco-design puts great emphasis on environmental awareness and, more generally, on the sustainable development (French Packaging Council, 2014). It helps closing material loops and contributes to a more efficient use of resources (Eikelenberg, Kok, & Tempelman, 2003). This can be achieved by designing for product longevity or durability, or by enabling the effective extension of product life through reuse, maintenance and repair, technical upgradability or disassembly so that their components and materials can be reused or recycled (European Commission, 2015).

The circular materials were analyzed according to aspects relevant for the application of the Circular Economy model in the Mediterranean area.

The first parameter evaluated was the opportunity to transform a common waste organic material, now a problem for the Mediterranean area, into a valuable opportunity. This can be done thanks to innovative and creative minds, together with technical capabilities.

The second parameter was the renewability of the material at the end-of-life into the same or into other applications. Renewable materials are those materials that can be produced or regenerated at the same speed at which they are used. They can be made from natural or from synthetic products and they often contain a percentage of recycled product (Garvin, 2017).

The third analyzed quality was the biodegradability. Biodegradability is the ability of materials to be degraded into simpler organic substances through the action of enzymes from microorganisms (Ecozema, 2015).

The case studies analyzed in the article represent the concretization of some of the innovative materials obtained through

the currently exploited design practices in the Mediterranean area.

In particular, the materials presented in the case studies are the starting points that the Mediterranean needs for the sustainable development of the rural areas, with the use of poor and waste materials and local resources, then transformed into new valuable products.

3. Case studies

The first case study that this article wants to analyze is Wineleather from Vegea, an Italian company specialized in the search of innovative textile solutions based on bio-based materials, born in 2016 from an idea of the architect Gianpiero Tessitore and of the chemist Francesco Merlino. The company became famous thanks to her award-winning project in the Global change award contest organized by the H&M foundation. Wineleather is a biomaterial obtained from the processing of skins, seeds and stalks of the grapes obtained from the production of wine, in particular from the lignocellulose and the oils (Fig. 1).

The Vegea research has been focused on the creation of innovative biomaterials, compatible with all the applications of the fashion sector, to respond to the more demanding request of green and animal free products. Vegea unites two Italian sectors, typical of all the Mediterranean traditions, fashion and wine. With about 18% of global production Italy is the largest producer of wine in the world, which makes the country the ideal territory for processing Wineleather (Vegea Company, 2017). The first tests of this vegetable leather have been obtained from wine production waste (Fig. 2).

Figure 1. Wineleather material, designed by Vegea company, Italy. Courtesy of Vegea.

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Figure 2. Wineleather material, designed by Vegea company, Italy. Courtesy of Vegea.

Wineleather by Vegea, is a material obtained by the marcs discarded from the agro-food industry and processed through a sustainable process that uses the machinery already present in the tanning plants.

After a brief period of fine-tuning of the leather, Vegea has finally launched a first test collection to test the material used to create products such as shoes, bags and clothes (Fig. 3). For the occasion, it relied on the creativity of Tiziano Guardini, one of the most prestigious designers in the world of sustainable fashion (Vegea Company, 2017).

Thanks to this biodegradable material, the wine production scraps are turned into a high added value product, by using a material, the wine production waste, of which the Mediterranean area is rich and the environment is safe.

The second case study this article wants to face is Bagasse, a particular kind of paper produced by the Egyptian company Mintra, specialized in the production of office and school supplies, that has promoted its new eco-friendly range of paper products where the paper is made for 80% from sugarcane waste and 20% certified virgin pulp (Mintra, 2010).

The material, called Bagasse (Fig. 4), comes primarily from sugarcane, one of Egypt's biggest cultivations and it will return to the biosphere after disposal. Bagasse, or sugarcane pulp, is the residual material after processing sugarcane. In particular, it comes from the waste fibers left over when sugar is refined for food. Most of the time this residual matter is reluctantly burnt, while it can be used for a much better purpose. By taking care of the residual material, Mintra reduces the emission of CO_2, since the pulp isn't burnt, while at the same time provides a natural alternative to harmful plastic objects (Mintra, 2010).

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Figure 3. Wineleather material, designed by Vegea company, Italy. Courtesy of Vegea.

Figure 4. Bagasse material, designed by Mintra, Egypt. Courtesy of Mintra.

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Bagasse looks and costs the same money of the commercially available on the market paper products, but thanks to its use, a lot of trees can be saved and less than 75% of energy and water are needed to produce it. The final product is compostable, recyclable and immediately renewable.

Mintra has understood that by using local resources, the environment and the social community can benefit from it, by giving work to people and by saving trees. This approach keeps the globe moving toward a better environment by slowing down the nasty effect of today`s industries and technologies (Mintra, 2010) (Mintra, 2010).

Figure 5. Hilaturas Arnau material, designed by Hilaturas Arnau, Spain. Courtesy of Hilaturas Arnau.

The third case study is Hilaturas Arnau (Fig. 5), a Spanish company involved in the environmental sustainability with a full range of yarns manufactured from 100% recycled materials derived mostly from fish nets, destined to cover the demand that exists for socially and environmentally respon-

sible products. The end-of-life yarns, of which the Mediterranean area is largely polluted, are used by the company for the production of clothes, decorative and technical textiles. The sustainable certification of Hilaturas Arnau is provided by Ecocert Textile, to certify that it has been manufactured in centers of production where the environment and the universal rights of the workers are respected. In the past, the recycling of natural fibers was associated only with the production of low quality fabrics but today things are very different.

Figure 6. Hilaturas Arnau material, designed by Hilaturas Arnau, Spain. Courtesy of Hilaturas Arnau.

It was in 1947, thanks to Francisco Arnau Comas, when Hilaturas Arnau opened its doors for the first time. Hilaturas Arnau was a consolidated business, but today the company is run by the grandson of the founder of the company, who has changed for sustainability, by opting for manufacturing with recycled fibers. Thus, Hilaturas Arnau has been able to adapt to the requirements of the market betting on special and technical yarns for fashion garments and technical yarns for industrial uses, due to its great capacity and resistance, although the recycled material (Fig. 6).

Hilaturas Arnau materials are renewable materials and they are a concrete proof that the use of recycled materials is essential also in the production of valuable products, thus leading to cost and energy savings on one hand, and increasing the textiles lifecycle on the other (Hilaturas Arnau, 2014).

4. Discussion

According to Jonathan Cullen, the materials science community has a key role to play in defining a future circular materials economy and in establishing sound metrics to measure progress toward circularity. This community will also be kept to balance the excitement that comes from developing new circular materials with a new caution to ensure these materials can be produced on series and be maintained into closed-loop cycles (Cullen, 2018). The case studies faced in the article are a demonstration of how closing material loops is becoming a concrete possibility. The large applications of organic waste materials into new high added value products is something becoming reality, everyday even more.

The first material, Wineleather, obtained from the wine production waste, is a biodegradable material and it is a concrete attempt of transforming something with no value, typical of the Mediterranean area, the wine production waste, into a valuable resource, the wine textile, and then apply it to the fashion industry.

The second case study, the paper Bagasse, is the witness of how the sugarcane waste, one of the biggest cultivations both in Egypt and in the Mediterranean region, can be transformed into a valuable resource, the paper products, and be at the same time a renewable and biodegradable material.

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Finally, the third case study presents the Hilaturas Arnau material, that helps to clean the Mediterranean basin, by taking the abandoned fish nets and transformed them into precious decorative and technical textiles, is a concrete proof of a renewable material.

The presented materials have still some missing points, such as the dependence of the primary material quantity from the organic waste materials. From a technical point of view, the quality and quantity of secondary raw materials on the market is still a barrier for the circular economy because of the insufficient quality and of the non-existent or too small quantity available after the collection and disposal steps (Blériot, 2017). For example, in the case studies presented, one of the main uncertain points is the variability of the secondary raw materials source at the beginning of the process. Other aspects are the missing renewability, as in the case of Wine-leather, or of the biodegradability, as in the case of Hilaturas Arnau. In fact, the transition to the circular materials is still not complete and it will require a coordinated effort and an active involvement of the designers, materials scientists communities and citizens (European Commission, 2017), by supporting the invention of biodegradable and renewable materials and by preventing the production of waste.

Another key aspect that can be considered is the lack of coordination and transparency throughout the value chain, from the design to the recycling process, and the missing implementation of the extended producer responsibility, since it is difficult that the interests of designers, producers, users and recyclers are aligned nowadays (OECD, 2018). Moreover, the current pricing system does not encourage efficient resource

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reuse and does not reflect the full environmental costs of production and consumption (European Commission, 2015). Choices made by consumers have in fact the potential to either support or hamper the process of developing a circular economy (SWITCHMED, 2015).

5. Conclusions and future perspectives

Making the transition to a circular economy involves the overcoming of both creative and technical barriers. Demographic factors, various socio-economic and geographical conditions have lead to disparities between North and South Europe. The disparities could provide an opportunity to cultivate faster Circular Economy practices to South Europe, as a comparative benefit against Northern Countries, as nations with more mature conventional waste treatments.

The transition to Circular Economy needs time, both to cultivate new culture and to develop innovations. A greater attention during the design phase can lead to greener products that consume less energy and resources during manufacture, generate less waste and pollution at their end-of-life stages, incorporate no toxic substances, create new markets for secondary raw materials, and open up to new business opportunities that in turn will create jobs (European Commission, 2017).

The future trends are an opportunity for designers to apply circular economy practices in their materials choices. The design for social and environmental sustainability is one of the main solutions to the problems the Mediterranean countries are facing. The discovery and implementation of circular materials can reach a high level of resource efficiency and of job creation, with the contemporary development of new

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local and social occasions for the Mediterranean communities. However, the local and old traditions combined with the new techniques and mindsets, coming from the young people, need to be better addressed, also with financing incentives for proposal linked to the development of the territories and communities in the Mediterranean ecosystem. Summarizing, a lack of governance and awareness on the topic is still present among the population and too many complexities and controversies are present among the Mediterranean regions. Information and good practices exchanges can be a proficient solution to the most relevant and urgent issues. Also, the use of financial incentives and a strong change in the definition of regulations, together by creating a network within the circular economy, for the promotion of social and environmental initiatives, will enable designers and communities to effectively make the transition.

The actual state of recycling, repair and reuse in Mediterranean countries gives a good opportunity for population to think that there is further potential to make the transition to a more circular economy, where materials never become waste, while creating social and economic opportunities (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013).

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A Human Centred Design integrated approach for the inclusive valorisation of Mediterranean UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage

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Keywords

Abstract

The valorisation of Mediterranean UNESCO Heritage can be intended as a complex set of design strategies, even communicative, which allows to understand those values universally recognised as the highest form of human *genius loci*, or the everlasting moulding action of nature. While communication design is still considered as a minor aspect in such domain, it is believed that it can help all visitors to catch the Heritage's essence beyond its aesthetics. The new holistic idea of human, which evolves from the notion of *customer* to *active person* in the global market scenario, suggests a radical change in the design paradigms, allowing to develop an integrated HCD-based (Human-Centred Design) approach that considers the communication factors between end-users and artefacts as a fundamental element to the inclusive valorisation of Mediterranean UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage.

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1. The value of UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage in the Mediterranean area

Within the design discipline, the valorisation of Mediterranean cultural and natural heritage has recently acquired a new strategic relevance and scientific interest (Barcarolo, 2017); both as regards the processes of conservation and sharing of artistic, historical, anthropological and cultural memories of sites and buildings, and, as regards the opportunities introduced to develop new technologies and advanced processes aimed to enable end-users to visit and the enjoy the heritage. Through the term *heritage,* we can include a large number of material and immaterial assets having a high collective value (Falser, 2015). Accordingly, it is possible include under this umbrella-term both cultural assets, namely those artefacts that mostly represent the magnificent expression of human legacy and its *genius loci,* and environmental assets, those extraordinary natural landscapes that are the result of the everlasting moulding action of natural phenomena. In terms of Heritage's intrinsic value, since 70's, the extension form the local dimension to the global one, characterizes a specific category so-called UNESCO Heritage. In 1972, the UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (UNESCO, 1972) defined its heritage as the whole of all material and immaterial, natural and cultural assets, whose immense value is universally recognized as belonging to everyone and, therefore, of property of the present and future world populations. The will to include future generations in the enjoyment of existing heritage alludes to two specific meanings: the first one concerns the will to preserve and increase the historic memory, the environmental condi-

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tion, and the social impacts of sites; the second one, which is close to the idea of Sustainable Development, concerns the protection policies and the future enjoyment of the assets, in their present-day conditions.

Figure 1. Mediterranean UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO WHC, 2017). Sites at risk or threatened are shown in red colour.

In the Mediterranean area, the existence of a large number of UNESCO sites (Figure 1) allows to understand the value that the organization assigns to this specific geographic area that, throughout centuries, shaped the economic and historical culture of the Western world. Moreover, there are new additional economic issues that the Heritage is able to generate, being able to stimulate the local economies in the development of a set of advanced services concerning the territorial branding, tourism, scientific visits like archaeological expeditions or eco-touristic champagnes. On this matter, some recent studies (Pedersen 2002; GHF, 2010; UNESCO WHC, 2013) demonstrated that in the Mediterranean area, to be more precise in

those areas economically disadvantages, a singe UNESCO site can produce a profound evolution on the local economic conditions, evolving, as a consequence, the quality of life in the surrounding areas through sustainability-based matrix of development (Table 1).

World Rank	Site	Country	Total Visitors	Domestic Visitors	Internat. Visitors	Annual Revenue ($)
3°	Memphis and its Necropolis	Egypt	5.000.000	400.000	4.600.000	936.000.000
5°	Historic Cairo	Egypt	4.000.000	1.400.000	2.600.000	576.000.000
6°	Ephesus	Turkey	3.500.000	800.000	2.700.000	572.000.000
7°	Dahshur	Egypt	3.000.000	400.000	2.600.000	536.000.000
15°	Abu Simbel	Egypt	2,000,000	500,000	1,500,000	320,000,000

Table 1. List of five most visited UNESCO Sites in the Mediterranean area, with data on annual visitors and revenue, 2010 (GHF, 2010).

2. Intrinsic problems of the strategies for the communicative valorisation of Heritage

Since 2000s, the constant increasing attention that the United Nations have shown toward the new idea of human has emphasized the central role of people. Using a new holistic point of view, this new idea has been intended as positive. Despite the efforts made by the various working groups, only few years ago the design interventions for the valorisation of Mediterranean Heritage has been taken into account by those International Agencies and Committees working in the field of tourism, culture, health, human rights and, finally, from the design community. On this matter, the literature (Federparchi & FISH, 2003; UNWTO & Fundación ACS, 2015;

UNWTO, 2016) proposed a number of different interventions mainly focused on the built environments, using three main trajectories:

- The *accessibility*: the possibility to access to sites and/or service spaces using fixed or flexible solutions placed in the gates and in the thresholds.
- The *visitability*: the opportunity to autonomously visit the sites using fixed or flexible solutions arranged along the crowded routes and/or in services spaces.
- The *adaptability*: the possibility to act in the environments to improve the level of visibility and/or accessibility.

While these notions have introduced an evolution of design paradigms toward a vision more adherent to the needs of real end-users, the design culture maintains a *classic* point of view that stereotypes the human psychophysical condition trivializing all design interventions, mainly those revolving around the spheres of disabilities, handicaps and, in general, the dimension of human diversity (Barcarolo, 2017).

However, it is interesting to note that the communicative elements of these projects are still marginally considered, or, they are still merely considered only for promotional, safety and marketing-related issues. All relevant communicative aspects directly linked with the branding strategies, the learning of information (cultural and/or natural), the experience of end-users and, finally, all solutions aimed to improve the quality of touristic offer, are not taken into account with attention.

Considering more in deep the issue of communicative valorisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage, there are two additional problems, which are relevant. The first one concerns the interpretation of conditions of end-users with sensorial-perceptive disabilities (i.e. blind), and their needs to access and pleasantly enjoy the Heritage; the second one concerns the traditional, erroneous, *visual-centric* meaning that a communicative solution demonstrates, in terms of design culture, compared to the visual disability issues. It follows that, in general, a large number of designers don't analyse needs, desires and psychophysical condition of people affected by sensorial-perceptive disabilities during the acquisition of information. Accordingly, the main problem introduced by these issues is the need to understand a complex human psychophysical condition, which affects the whole touristic visit experience. Moreover, an additional issue concerns the proper grade of analysis, in design phase, of end-users' needs. Many studies on this topic (Barcarolo & Rossi, 2013) and some authors (Bandini Buti, 2008) recommend to leave the classic *user-centred* approach toward a more holistic *inclusive-oriented* one, as a better way to understand latent end-users' needs and their real psychophysical characteristics. In communication, this implies an evolution of project's conventional elements to make flexible and resilient the design solutions for real stakeholders' needs and the environment where such solutions have to work. Finally, a last issue concerns the level and the quality of communication compared to the creation of a proper visit experience of sites (Ogleby & Kenderdine, 2001). This last element allows to point out two additional elements useful to understand all difficulties related to design enabling communica-

tive solutions aimed to make easier the use and the fruition of UNESCO Heritage, which are also valid for the Mediterranean area:

- *The active participation of end-users,* before, during and after the use of the communicative solution, developed for end-users with visual disabilities. The solution must be perceived as an element with intrinsic values, rather than a medical prosthesis imagined for disadvantageous people. Using simulation trials, interviews and co-design approaches with stakeholders, it is possible to add major qualitative results to the project, increasing the quality and the impact of all solutions.
- *The enabling autonomy,* which stimulates the active participation of end-users to learn information presented through the communicative solution. For people with disabilities, the existing gap between common solutions and ad-hoc ones, often, doesn't allow to get a pleasant visit experience, which empower the abilities of people; this because they are not designed considering the real needs of visitors.

The development of enabling communicative solutions for the inclusive valorisation of Mediterranean UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage needs a new analytical and design sensibility, which should not be addressed toward the mere consideration of standard end-users. A new holistic design approach is needed, which must be oriented toward the Social Inclusion, allowing researchers, designers and stakeholders to meet the real end-users' needs and desires, giving them a new deeper and rich visit experience.

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3. Toward a Human-Centred Design approach for the inclusive valorisation of Heritage

Some important authors (Papanek, 1983; Margolin & Buchanan, 1995) affirm that one of the most important elements characterising the Design Research is its ability to interpret the existing phenomena to develop proactive solutions able to be flexible at the various scenarios and, at the same time, to be resilient on the evolutions of context where they are placed. Moreover, these authors affirm that the efficiency of such solutions is higher when they work at macro-levels, rather than on the micro-ones.
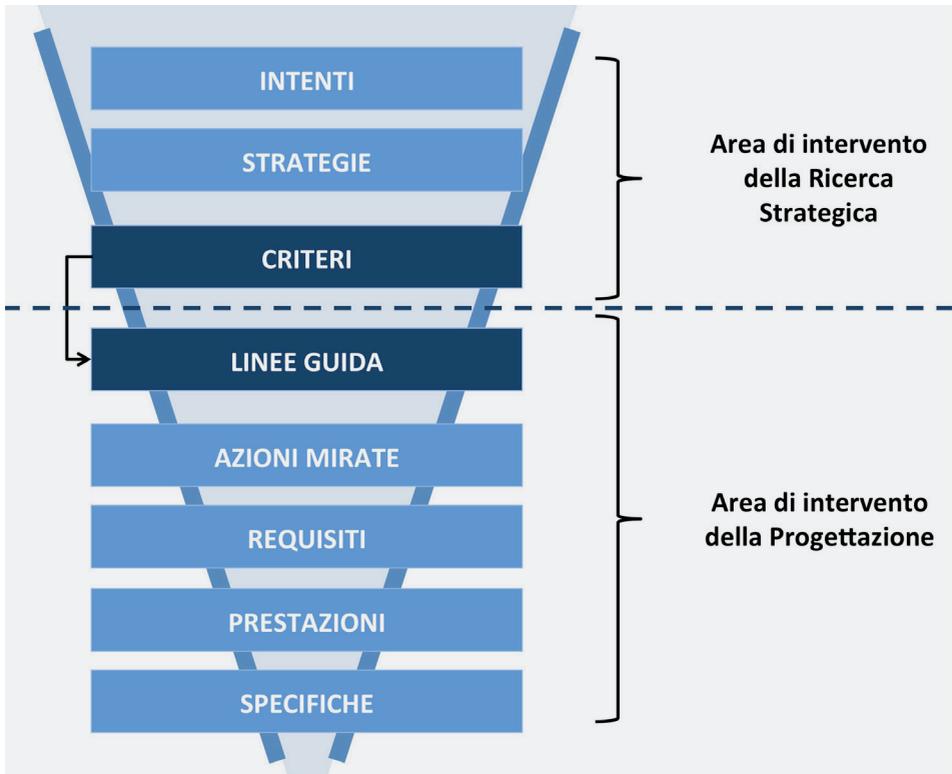

Figure 2. Design layers and level of intervention of the Research (Barcarolo, 2017).

To meet the evidences before described, this research has recognised the need to adopt an integrated Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach for the inclusive valorisation of UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage. In fact, for the specific purposes of this research, the HCD approach has been recognised as the one able to develop dialogic tools, usable by designers, to interact with stakeholders. Accordingly, the study here presented (Barcarolo, 2017) focused the attention on the development of Design Criteria and Design Guidelines intended as the best outcomes to meet and connect both strategic phases and design ones (Figure 2).

The study (Barcarolo, 2017) has identified four main Parameters that have been used to develop the HCD framework, listed as listed below:

- The haptic inclusive communication for the fruition of Heritage.
- The human diversity and the understanding of potential end-users.
- The digital survey of Heritage, including the analysis, the geometric optimization of shapes and the parametric digital modelling of mathematical surfaces.
- The production of communicative solutions through prototypes – even 1:1 – made with industrial production techniques (i.e. 3D printing).

A general workflow (Table 2) has been developed in the first research stage; it is composed by Phases and Design Criteria that show the various actions that must be take into account to

design and produce enabling communicative solutions usable for the valorisation of Heritage.

Workflow (Phases)		Design Criteria
Understand the existing condition.	1.	Analyse the current communicative solutions (if existing).
	2.	Understand the existing communicative-environmental conditions.
Design of the communicative solution.	3.	Understand the limit end-users using a holistic approach.
	4.	Surveying and modelling the elements to be communicated.
	5.	Develop the inclusive project in (systems of) enabling communicative solutions.
Produce the communicative solutions.	6.	Implement the system of enabling communicative solutions.

Table 2. Relation between Workflow's ideal phases and Design Criteria (Barcarolo, 2017).

Later, the Design Criteria have been developed into a detailed framework containing fifteen Design Guidelines. If compared with Criteria, Guidelines are more focused on the design aspects (Table 3, next page), giving more completeness to the enabling communicative solution for the valorisation of Heritage, and considering, with more responsibility, the HCD approach.

Design Criteria		Design Guidelines	
1.	Analyse the current communicative solutions (if existing).	1.1.	Analyse the quality and the characteristics of the existing communicative project (if existing), showing all critical elements and negative aspects compared to the themes of Social Inclusion.
		1.2.	Analyse the effectiveness, the perceived satisfaction and the efficiency of the existing communicative project (if existing) compared to the characteristics of end-users.
		1.3.	Analyse the layout and the environmental relations of the existing communicative project (if existing).
2.	Understand the existing communicative-environmental conditions.	2.1.	Understand the social, cultural, environmental and economic conditions within which the new inclusive communicative project will work.
		2.2.	Understand the dimensional, spatial, proxemic and anthropometric relations for the new inclusive communicative solution.
3.	Understand the limit end-users using a holistic approach.	3.1.	Understand real end-users' needs (i.e. primary, secondary, explicit, implicit).
		3.2.	Understand the real end-users' psychophysical and cognitive-behavioural characteristic.
		3.3.	Understand the end-users' residual abilities to design enabling solutions.
4.	Surveying and modelling the elements to be communicated.	4.1.	Surveying the items chosen to implement the new inclusive communicative solution.
		4.2.	Modelling the subject to implement the new inclusive communicative solution considering the real end-users' characteristics.
5.	Develop the inclusive project in (systems of) enabling communicative solutions.	5.1.	Conceive an integrated design strategy to develop a new integrated communication of subject(s) to be represented.
		5.2.	Develop detailed enabling communicative solutions considering the collected data concerning the end-users and the environment on which they will operate.
		5.3.	Verify the enabling communicative solutions using appropriate groups of stakeholders to test and add more value to the design decisions already taken into account.
6.	Implement the system of enabling communicative solutions.	6.1.	Produce the system of enabling communicative solutions using sustainable industrial production systems, which allow to accurately replicate data and shapes chosen in the design stages.
		6.2.	Situate the system of enabling communicative solutions in the environment considering relevant parameters, such as: visibility, accessibility, autonomy, usability and pleasantness of use.

Table 3. Implementation of six Design Criteria and development of fifteen Design Guidelines (Barcarolo, 2017).

4. Conclusions

The aims of this study were addressed to the valorisation of UNESCO Heritage, even Mediterranean one, though the development of communicative solutions for a small group of potential end-users affected by sensorial-perceptive deficits. These people, today, are not well considered and included in the design processes and in the systems of territorial valorisation of Heritage that, in the Mediterranean area, express a great potential in terms of local and economic development. The study here presented introduces new relevant advances for the scientific-design knowledge – i.e. literature – in the field of the valorisation of UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage; it also demonstrated that it is possible to connect the need of visual enjoyment and visual fruition of Heritage with the design of communicative solutions conceived for this scope. Finally, the paper demonstrates that it is possible to approach the issue of the valorisation of Mediterranean UNESCO Heritage through the study and the development of innovative communicative solutions able to exceed the visual-centric design culture adopted till now, which can empower the touristic and economic offer of Mediterranean countries, where the number of Cultural and Natural sites demonstrated the importance of this topic.

Credits

This paper is the result of the work of both authors; to be more precise, Abstract and the paragraph entitled *The value of UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage in the Mediterranean area* have been written by Emilio Rossi, the remaining paragraphs have been written by Paola Barcarolo.

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Design Approaches and Methodologies for the Valorization of Places. Experiences from the Western Mediterranean Area

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Keywords
Design for Territories, Mediterranean Places, Place Identity, Territorial Valorization

Abstract
Design approaches, competences, and methodologies have a significant impact and reputation on the process of analysis, construction and enhancement of places. Indeed, design is particularly able in driving interventions, focused on the valorization of tangible and intangible local peculiarities, which give shape to, highlight and connect specific territorial identities.
In this paper, we are going to propose a model we want to use in order to synthesize the possible approaches design can activate for the valorization of places and in particular of the Mediterranean area. We are going to use the biological and artificial metaphors and express them according to tangible and intangible dimensions. As we are going to explain, this approach is particularly useful for the Mediterranean scenarios but can be extended to other territories with similar characteristics.

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1. Introduction

The definition of what we intend for the Mediterranean is very challenging, especially nowadays. We definitely cannot define this area according to institutional borders or political boundaries. Instead, we can refer to the intangible elements which connect (and sometimes divide) the populations which enrich this "fluid" area (Matvejevic, 1987; Braudel, 1998). Fluxes of people have always characterized the so-called Mediterranean area and these fluxes have always carried with them culture, heritage, lifestyles, in one word: identity. The *ethnoscapes* theorized by Appadurai (1996) have always characterized the Mediterranean, however, nowadays these fluxes are wider in terms of frequency, distance and numbers than before.

The identity and the complexity of the Mediterranean area can be defined also by its peculiarities, such as its productive and economic structure which is strictly connected with lifestyles. This structure supports a new idea of quality, strongly characterized by local features, but able to compete in international scenarios. A territorial development of this kind is able to keep together socio-economic relationships with tradition and innovation; it starts, for example, from the specificities of certain handmade local productive systems, of the cultural heritage system and of the culinary and agricultural resources.

According to the call, we intended both tangible and intangible peculiarities and common features of the Mediterranean area as an opportunity to deepen and reframe some topics, which already are part of the Research Network D4T – Design for Territories agenda of the Politecnico di Milano,

Design Department[1]. In this paper, we are going to present an approach which considers the biological and the artificial metaphors applied to the valorization' goal of territories (or places). The concepts presented here have a strong relationship with co-creation processes, technologies, development of sense-making and the resolution of specific problems, as we are going to discuss hereunder. Before introducing these concepts, we are going to trace the theoretical and research path that led to the foundation of a line of research specifically focused on design for territories.

2. Design and territories: from object of study to context of action

It may be pretty unusual for the design discipline to talk about territorial projects: we are used to think about design as the project of "things" for "people"; actually, this concept was soon enlarged into a more holistic vision of "environments" and then of "experiences" for people. In the evolution of the discipline, design dealt at first with the topic of territories as local systems of physical and cultural resources that influenced the definition of products. These artifacts, objects, items incorporate material and semantic values linked to the contexts where they were designed or realized. The 1998 research headed *SDI Sistema Design Italia*[2] represents a first systemic scouting of

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1. D4T - Design for Territories is a Research Network financed by the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano in 2015, coordinator prof. Marina Parente (http://www.d4t. polimi.it).

2. The research SDI Sistema Design Italia (Italian Design System) was financed by MIUR (Italian Research Ministry) and coordinated by prof. Ezio Manzini from 1998 to 2000. It involved 17 Italian universities and in 2001 gained Compasso d'Oro price instituted by ADI (Italian Design Association).

the Italian design peculiarities in a relationship with the diverse geographical areas of origins, their cultures, traditions and specific productive specializations. From this scouting phase an opposite relationship emerged: beyond products "shaped" by the contextual situation, some of them started a dialogue with the places of origin, renovating and reinterpreting a different reading, vision and, indirectly, definition of the territory itself. This consideration opened the floor to subsequent research, highlighting the interest of the design discipline in considering the territory as an object of design actions through a series of wider activities ranging from product design to strategic services and experience design (Parente, 2010). The national research project, *Me.design. Strategies, tools and operation of industrial design to enhance and strengthen the resources of the Mediterranean between local and global* (2002-04)[3], paid a specific attention to the strategic use of resources in the Mediterranean area, according to a design approach, which in this specific case was defined as (Parente, 2016):

- *integrated*, because territorial resources were considered as a whole
- *ascending*, because it incorporated bottom-up and participatory processes
- *territorial*, because reiterated the concept of the local system and the value generated between natural resources, social structure, and culture of the place (Villari, 2012).

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3. Co-financed by the Ministry of University and coordinated by prof. Giuliano Simonelli of the Politecnico di Milano, it was conducted with the universities of Milan, Genoa, Naples Federico II, Naples SUN, Chieti, Reggio Calabria and Palermo.

The Me.design research considered the territory not only as a context but also as a specific object of intervention. Indeed, it took the concept of territorial capital as a crucial paradigm.

Summing up, as a design project object, a territory has to be intended as a set of resources, territorial and environmental capital, the identity of which has to be preserved, valorized and renovated; as design project context, the spatial (or scale) dimension where the project is located, its process and its results, have to be taken into account.

The spatial dimension of design practices was analyzed and identified in terms of *situatedness*. The standardization and the de-placement of products and processes were substituted with a profound interpretation of the territorial peculiarities of the product-systems and the way in which places "enter" inside objects. We went from an initial independence from territory to a vision of territory as a context where to localize the project or to use it as stimulus and element of value (design in the place) leading to a perspective of a territory as the object of the project (design of the place). In this last case, design is mainly focused on the valorization of the territorial capital, that is tangible and intangible resources of a place (Zurlo, 2003; Villari, 2005).
However, the concept of "design of the place", to simplify things, is usually associated with projects close to the traditional productions (in terms of memory and authenticity of the cultural tradition) or authorial top-down actions for designing the identity of a place (the image – similar to a brand – of a territory in terms of visibility and attractiveness); instead, design

is more focused on wider and strategic topics and is concerned with the valorization of the identity of places as an incentive for local development, the valorization of resources, and the promotion and empowerment of local communities.

The need for a wider definition was born. We need to use the concept of "design *for* the place" as a synthesis of the two aforementioned approaches and as an emphasis on the proactive and systemic capacities of design.

This evolution arose out of the confrontation with other disciplines, such as urban planning, that has deepened the concept of sustainability of places. Alberto Magnaghi (2000) efficiently synthesized this evolutionary approach in three phases:

- *functionalist*: territory is not generally seen as a cultural interlocutor but as a support for other goals;
- *environmentalist*: territory is intended as a natural system. Environmental sustainability becomes the structural condition for economic development.
- *anthropo(bio)centric:* territory is seen as a highly complex living organism. Sustainability takes into consideration both environmental and political, social, and economic dimensions.

When we talk about "design *for* the place", we are in line with this third vision, putting emphasis on the capabilities of design in facilitating interpretative actions, negotiation and qualification of behaviors able to connect places and people, to make needs evolve and to change models and social settlements in a specific context or shared space – even an intangible one.

Within this framework, the territorial dimension is not only a bond and a requisite of design, but also an opportunity of growth from a social point of view (Lupo, 2008).

3. Design and Valorization of Places

Design has always put people at the heart of its actions. Design process and strategies are focused on re-interpreting reality from the privileged point of view of people, looking at their needs, their culture, their habits, and lifestyles. In addition to that, the role of designers is increasingly not that of implementing top-down projects but to favor the spread of knowledge and the growth of diffused design capacities (Manzini, 2004; 2015).

This approach may be particularly useful when we are faced with strategic planning for the enhancement of Mediterranean places. Indeed, designers may be detectors of those similarities and common purposes which can be the foundation for the valorization processes of Mediterranean places. Designers can provide of stories, enable virtual, physical and conceptual platforms where it is possible to activate social processes to negotiate solutions, meanings, technologies, materials, and shapes. In a similar way, design put in place several kinds of "materialization" of a territory through the development of products and artefacts strictly connected with its tangible and intangible elements.

Ezio Manzini (2014; 2015) proposes a model to classify different and more recent design approaches, using a map where on the x-axis there are "motivations and expectations" explicated in two polarities "problem-solving" and "sense-making", and on the y-axis, which explains "actors and competences", there

are "diffuse design" and "design expert". Each quadrant generated by the crossing represents a specific design mode and its evolutions (Fig. 1).
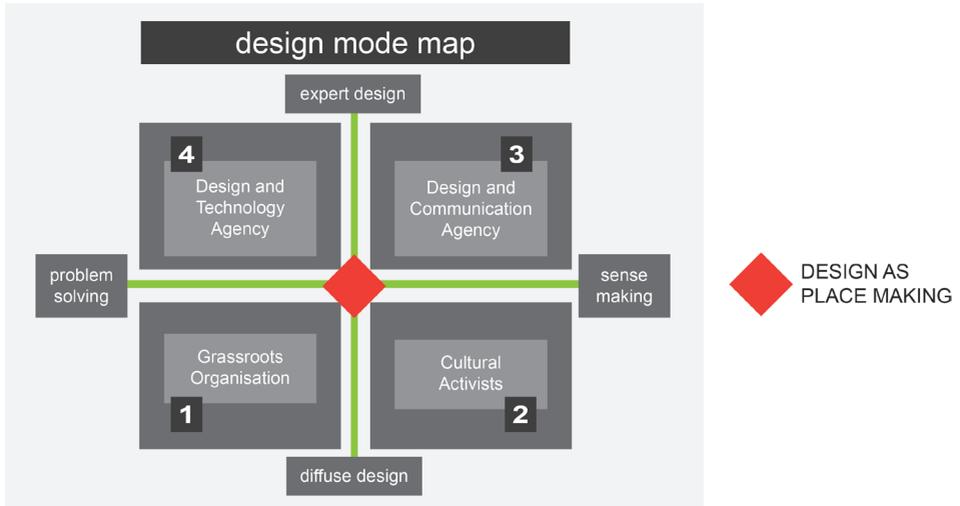

Figure 1. Design mode map, adapted from Manzini E. (2015), "Design when Everybody Designs", p.40.
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However, if we refer to design contents, it is clear that the borders between problem-solving and sense-making tend to be blurred. We are particularly interested in the *Design as place maker* design culture. This specific culture of design happens at the boundaries and is able to clarify their permeability. *Design as place maker* is characterized by the fact that "various design experts, from both the problem-solving and the sense-making perspectives, are converging into a central area of the map to develop projects at a local or regional scale" (Manzini, 2014: 98). Manzini makes reference to the relationship between a local and a global approach, which is able to create a new ecology of places. The typologies of projects having their origins in these collaborations are different and

have mainly to do with service design, social innovation, and experience design.

All of them (service design, social innovation, and experience design) can represent the possible design fields for the valorization of places since it has to do with the people's needs in connection with local resources capable of being activated and communicated both for their emotional, functional and cultural impacts (Ceppi, 2004).

For these reasons, the valorization of places can be both a physical intervention for improvement and a creation of sense and meanings.

4. Regeneration, Renovation, Replication and Representation: different strategies for the Valorization of Places

We decided to work with the two biological and artificial strategies on both tangible and intangible elements of the territory:

- a biological process typical of living beings, with an idea of regeneration of the territory that goes from its development to its growth and renovation and onwards until its multiplication;
- typical dynamics of the artificial and its fruition, which, starting from the reproduction (audio, video, etc.), arrive at its representation (*mise-en-scene* or narration).

In the following paragraphs we are going to present the four strategies concepts resulting from the intersection between tangible/intangible dimensions and the biological/artificial metaphor. It is important to stress the fact that these bound-

aries are blurred and therefore the different strategies are in some cases overlapping (Fig. 2).
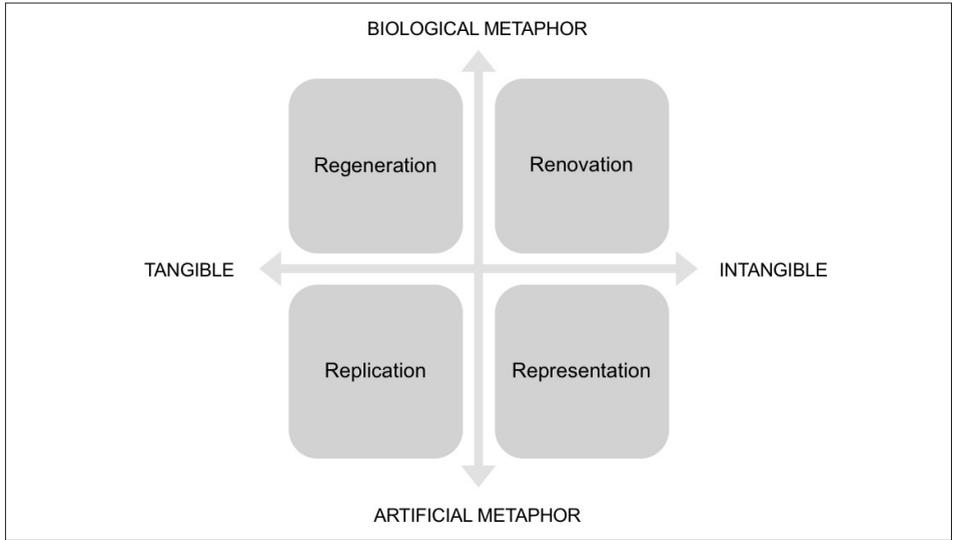

Figure 2. Strategies for the Valorization of Places.

More specifically, within the biological metaphor the biological concepts of growth, development, and diversification apply to the design of the territory through the *regeneration* of its tangible elements (resources, products, etc.) and the *renovation* of the intangible ones (traditions, identity etc.). The power of this metaphor lies in the careful attention to the intrinsic qualities of the territory as an organism capable of self-regeneration, repair, imitation, and virtuous specialization.

It is possible to talk about *regeneration* when territorial valorization actions are designed, both in terms of physical and material development (infrastructure expansion, redevelopment artifacts, production of new artifacts). These actions

can leverage the existing territorial capital and are inserted in continuity with desired virtuous evolutionary processes, which, however, are at a disadvantage from exogenous obstacles. Therefore, a rebalance or a facilitation (speed up) of these processes is needed.

In this field, the scale of design is that of service design, but also strategic design and policy design. This design approaches, starting from the enhancement and the diversification of local resources, regenerates places, tracing the whole supply chain, thanks to experience design or the involvement and empowerment of local communities.

It is primarily an expert design oriented towards problem solution; people's degrees of involvement, bottom-up participation and self-promoting, can be, depending on the scale of intervention and complexity, marked out as diffuse design. Taking into consideration *regeneration* case, we can mention projects for the valorization of traditional products of the wine and food tradition, which are able to generate new cooperative networks and cultural offers, as for example the design project developed for Nino Negri wine Sciúr (Fig. 3). Nino Negri company, based in Valtellina, asked the collaboration of the Strategic Design Master (POLI.design - Politecnico di Milano), to develop a strategy for a new wine able to recover the knowledge of traditional vineyards of Valtellina and of local know-how in a local contemporary product. Sciúr is intended to be a prototype that encourages a trend, a repeatable example, capable of having a positive effect on reality, showing how knowledge may actually translate into a product, bottle or production system.
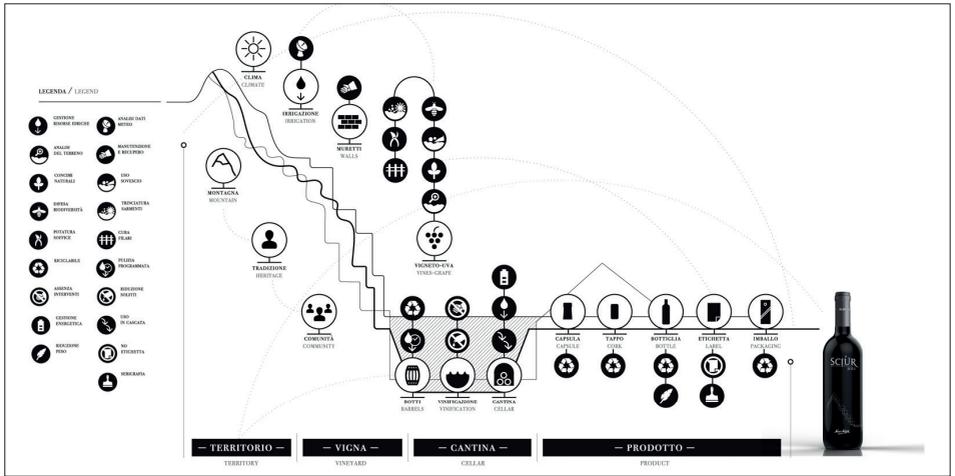
Figure 3. Nino Negri, Sciùr design system. Project by Strategic Design Master' students, POLI.design - Politecnico di Milano.

Figure 4. Moulding Tradition project by Studio Formafantasma, retrieved by http://www.formafantasma. com/moulding-tradition.

Another example of *regeneration* can be the Moulding Tradition project developed by Studio Formafantasma in 2009 (Fig. 4). The project takes inspiration from the Sicilian ceramic tradition (Teste di Moro), introduced by the invasion of Moorish people of Caltagirone in 17th-century. Recently fluxes of migrants are moving to Sicily from the same lands as immigrants. The project Moulding Tradition focuses on the relationship between past and present, fear and tolerance, innovating and evolving the local traditional ceramic in light of contemporary issues. The project results in a collection of ceramic vessels decorated with portraits of migrants and with information, as for example the percentage of refugees who immigrate per year.

We talk about *renovation* when the dynamics of continuity of the virtuous evolutionary processes of a territory activated and facilitated by design are placed in an immaterial dimension and therefore in the intangible elements of the territory, such as its values, its identity, its image, its reputation, its traditions, its capital of knowledge. In this case, too, design activates development processes that leverage existing but weak or even potential capitals, going to redefine, through the renewal of values, customs and traditions, or the diversification of processes and know-how, the overall identity of a territory and simultaneously its reputation and competitiveness. The scale of design is most often that of strategic and communication design (corporate image, brand design, design of events) that may be oriented to develop the attractiveness for both tourist and residential purposes as well as investment and entrepreneurship.

Examples that fall into *renovation* case are the strategic and visual projects of local identity, and the actions of territorial promotion and enhancement and re-contextualization of typical know-how or cultural traditions, customs and practices, that indirectly regenerate the identity and the cultural positioning of a place in the tourist or productive imaginary.

Here, expert and diffuse design co-exist: alongside institutional and top-down policies, bottom-up semi-structured or temporary proposals and actions (*activism*) are generated, and both are oriented toward sense-making.

As a case study, we can mention the new image branding for Porto, developed by White Studio in 2014 (Fig. 5). The Portuguese city needed a visual system, a visual identity that could organize and simplify communication with citizens, and the relationship with local authorities. The objective was to represent Porto as a global city and at the same time as a city for everyone.

In a similar way, Spring Agency worked from the Morocco place-branding campaign for the English-speaking tourists, called Much Morocco (Fig. 6). The visual image is based on the typical Moorish tale through which it is possible to see photos depicting various landscapes and touristic attractions.

Talking about the artificial metaphor (located in the lower section of our scheme), the dimension of the "production of the new", starting from exogenous factors and its understanding and experience, is the most valuable among dynamics of development and diversification of territories. The power of this metaphor should be read in the ability to switch from the exploitation of existing capital (enabled by design) to the explo-

Figure 5. Porto image branding by White Studio, retrieved by https://www.behance.net/gallery/20315389/New-identity-for-the-city-of-Porto.

Figure 6. Much Morocco branding project by Spring Agency, retrieved by http://www.springagency.co.uk/case-studies/morocco/.

ration of new possibilities (March, 1991) through a deliberate design action that introduces and negotiates disruptive "artificial" elements: artificial which, in this context, does not take the negative connotations of fake or unnatural, but the multi-faceted one of non-natural, then artifact (Manzini, 1990). Concerning the tangible dimensions of a territory, it is possible, for example, to extend the modalities of experience and enjoyment of its material assets through an enlarged dissemination and distribution of its products (being them simply local products or holders of specific identity values) but replicated in forms re-designed for other users and different markets (*replication*), in order to enable geographical relocation or thematic reframing (cross-fertilization of product sectors). The metaphor of the artificial applies to the processes of valorization of the territory through the *replication* of tangible elements (shapes and materials) and *representation* of the intangible ones (images and imaginary), able to create new ways of fruition of territories.

The design scales of action are various: from strategic to product and communication design, able to generate models of knowledge and fruition of a place even in an indirect and mediated manner. Examples in this area are the design of iconic products, or the diffuse practice of creolization of local products and the incorporation of new products and processes where the original references are even too blurred and frayed. The role of expert design is therefore relevant in this area since it uses a culturally advanced and sensitive approach opposed to (but also capable of leading and improving) the spontaneous and widespread phenomena of production.

The case study we propose for the *replication* process is Bye Bye Fly souvenir, designed by Giulio Iacchetti for Pandora Design (2007) (Fig. 7). The idea at the base of the fly swatter is realizing a non-conventional souvenir for Milan. The designer was inspired by the mosquitoes problem which affects the Milanese summer evenings. He thus thought of a fly swatter having the map of Milan instead of the classical net to catch flies (Parente, 2012).

Another interesting example of *replication* is the Ex-voto project by Studio Nucleo (2017), which was part of a larger project called PARA20SACRI (Fig. 8). The designers reinterpreted the *ex-voto* objects (immersed in resin) and, collaborating with Italian artisans and crafts workshops, they created 1.000 pieces in limited edition.

We talk of *representation* when, in activating new dynamics of production and re-use of a territory, design operates on its intangible and identity elements building up consciously (regardless of a deliberate design of new explicit identities), new values and images that return into new meanings. These representations can have a narrative vocation and a theatrical and performed characterization (*mise-en-scene* of the territory) or even a fictional one. In all the vocations, the experiential dimension is the main objective of the application of design skills (ranging from communication design to experience design and interaction design) which are put in place both by an expert and a diffuse design.

MappiNa platform, born by an idea of the urban planner Ilaria Vitellio, is the case study that in our opinion is able to explain the representation process (Fig. 9).

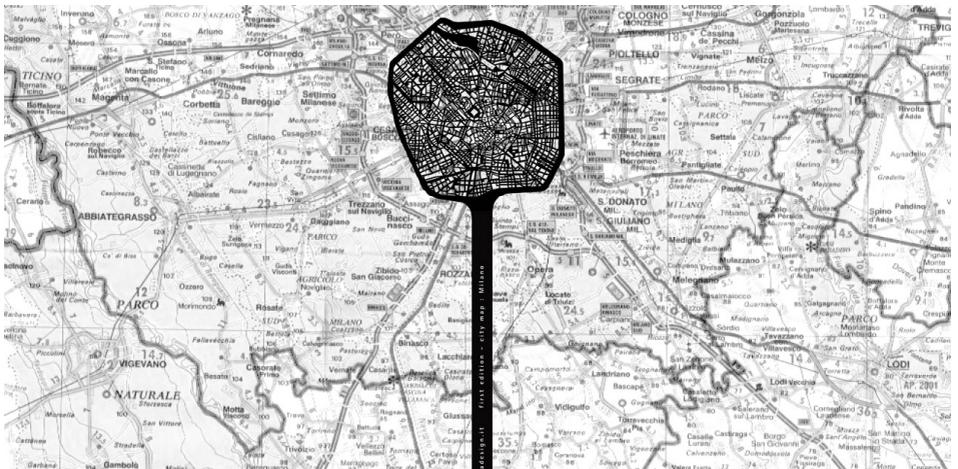**Figure 7.** Bye Bye Fly, Giulio Iacchetti for Pandora Design, retrieved by http://www.giulioiacchetti.com/?p=509&lang=it.

Figure 8. Ex-voto project by Studio Nucleo. Pictures by studio pepe fotografia, retrieved by http://nucleo.to/site/ex-voto/.

Figure 9. MappiNa platform, retrieved by http://www.mappi-na.it/.

On this platform, people can contribute to the creation of a contemporary map of Naples by sharing photos, audio files and videos about unusual aspects of the city (Parente, 2015). To conclude, we can mention the Digital Diaries developed by the agency Can't Forget It{aly} (Fig. 10). Videomakers (in most cases foreigners by choice) depict Italian cities and landscapes in a new way: showing people and their (real) life.

Figure 10. Screenshot from Digital Diary Basilicata (2013) by Can't Forget It{aly} agency, retrieved by http://cantforget.it/portfolio_type/basilicata-lonely-planet-italia-radio-capital/.

We can sum-up the four approaches here presented as follow.

Valorization	Tangible	Intangible
Biological metaphor (development)	Regeneration of products, resources, places Design: expert (mainly) Design mode: problem solving (mainly)	Renovation of values, identities, images, reputation, uses and traditions, know-how, knowledge capital (attractiveness and competitiveness) Design: expert and diffuse Design mode: sense-making (mainly)
Artificial metaphor (fruition and experience)	Replication (copy) of forms, materials Design: expert (mainly) Design mode: problem solving (mainly)	Representation (mise en scene or fiction) of values, imaginary, identities Design: expert and diffuse Design mode: sense-making (mainly)

Table 1. Strategies for the Valorization of Mediterranean Places.

5. Conclusions

Starting from the reasoning developed within the Research Network D4T - Design for Territories, such as the discussion about the change of the design role in projects dealing with places, which use an integrated approach in light of the specific visions of the "design in/of the place", we extended these concepts and strategies to the design of Mediterranean territories. We systematized the theoretical and methodological foundations for the valorization of territories, which we connected to the actors, the contents, the strategies, and the objectives of design projects focused on places. Therefore, we analyzed this topic looking at the artificial and the biological metaphors in connection with tangible and intangible dimensions. Thanks to this approach we are able, from one side to identify and show a framework of already developed experiences, from the other

side to give a referring tool for the development of new design projects focused on Mediterranean places. It is clear from this framework how the design enables all the strategic assets of a territory through activation processes that build the physical dimension and the identity of places in a non-pre-determined way, but flexible and open to multiple options and variations. This openness to multiplicity corresponds to the understanding of contemporary social dynamics of globalization, mobility and migration of information, objects and people that make a growing number of variables the needs of appropriation and representation of communities and places, and challenge the monolithic nature and completeness of certain representations in favor of solutions more differentiated, multi-layered and open-ended.

In this context, the scale of territory reproducibility and reproduction, too, changes, contemplating the vision and action of a single individual as equally significant and constitutive of that one of a group, in a general process of enablement of authorship. Design, therefore, is also concerned with achieving conversational, consultative and negotiation processes of such options. The systematization here proposed is obviously a simplification of the possible approaches, useful for visualizing some conceptual categories. However, design projects may not be identified by looking at them from strict conceptual borders, since they live out of coexisting realities and overlaps. Embracing the complexity of Mediterranean places and the need to reinterpret their identities and functionalities, design can play a very important role in creating spaces, networks, and engagement for a collaborative understanding and a redefinition of the territories where we live.

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HISTORICAL PANORAMA

The Italian design history from a different perspective: the case of Ico Parisi

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Keywords

Ico Parisi, Mediterranean Design History, Italian Design

Abstract

The history of Ico Parisi (1916-1996), multifaceted designer, architect, photographer and artist, originally from Palermo but then living in Como, is considered here as one of the many "satellites" in the history of Italian design. There are two ways of considering Mediterranean, here: on the one hand considering Italy as a geographical area of the Mediterranean sea but that, in relation to the history of design, is a separate chapter compared to the most debated and studied history of "Milanese" design, resulting in this sense relevant and interesting all those Italian cases isolated from it, including the Ico Parisi case. It is then added, at the origin of Parisi path, a first clear point of contact with that part of rationalist culture openly inspired by the Mediterranean, between the Thirties and Forties.

1. The "Milanocentric" perspective

The history of Italian design of the Twentieth century has seen a large predominance of authors belonging to Milan, creating Italian design stories that can often be described as "milanocentric". Of course, there is no doubt about the centrality that this city and its industrial surroundings (principally the Brianza area) has had in the maturation of Italian design. An area in which, between the two wars, intellectuals and entrepreneurs established "a sort of operative alliance, which chose to immediately start, from industrial products, the transformation of society and structures that Rome was slow to plan" (Branzi 1999, p.110).

It is also true, however, that the references to the world of the Milanese design were somehow influenced by a concentration of other factors such as, first of all, the presence of the newsrooms of the most important Italian architecture and design magazines of the Twentieth century: *Domus* (1928), *La Casa Bella* (1928, *Casabella* after '33), *Edilizia Moderna* (1929), *Interni* (1954), *Casa Novità* then *Abitare* (1961), *Zodiac* (1957), *Caleidoscopio* (1964), *Ottagono* (1966), *Stile Industria* (1955-63), *Artecasa* (1958-60), *Modo* (1977) and *Spazio e Società* (1978). Secondly, the role of the various *Trienniale* editions must certainly be considered as another fundamental, attractive (and proactive) core of the design world starting from the editions of Monza but even more, from 1933, with those of the Palazzo dell'Arte of Milan.

As a consequence of these (and many others) factors, the names of the protagonists of the Milan area such as Gio Ponti, Giuseppe Pagano, Franco Albini, BBPR, Ignazio Gardella, Marco Zanuso, Ettore Sottsass, Carlo De Carli, Achille and

Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Enzo Mari and Bruno Munari, frequently recur in the history of Italian design and have been, with good reason, worthily studied.

But equally numerous and worthy are those designers who sometimes only for a different geographical location were somehow put aside and for a long time forgotten, but whose work represented, on the other hand, an equally significant experience of Italian design.

If it is true, in this publication we want to give voice to that design stories which are transversal to the Mediterranean area and we can start by identifying all those cases that have been "neglected" by this "milanocentric" trend.

On September 23rd of the 2016 there has been the centenary of Ico Parisi's birth, a designer, a builder, a sculptor, a photographer. For this occasion, the exhibition *Ritrovare Ico Parisi* (January - May 2017) was set up in the Royal Villa of Monza by Roberta Lietti who also edited *Ico Parisi. Design. Reasoned catalog 1936-1960* (2017). Ico Parisi's story is one of those stories somehow marginalized in the debate of the history of Italian design and that in this article we would like to propose again, analyzing in particular two moments: the contact with that part of rationalist culture inspired by the Mediterranean in the Thirties and Forties, and the furniture design between the Forties and the Sixties together with his wife Luisa.

2. Ico Parisi (1916-1996): training years

Ico Parisi is born in Palermo on September 23rd of 1916, son of Eduardo Parisi and Olimpia Volpes, and he arrives in Como in 1920 following his father who was a professor of drawing. After graduating in construction industry (1935), the twenty-

year-old Parisi publishes in 1936, on the *Provincia di Como*, an article entitled "Arte, Arte" in support of abstractionism influenced by the reading of the book *KN* by Carlo Belli, a reference text for the artistic avant-garde operating in Como in those years around Giuseppe Terragni and Alberto Sartoris. And it is precisely in the Terragni studio that the young Parisi begins working between 1936 and 1937, a period of great artistic and cultural fervor in Como, an innovative fervor that was not provincial and that was determined by the presence of some enlightened personalities, autonomous and distinctly in contrast with the rhetoric of official culture, a disagreement that, as admitted by Parisi himself (1991, p. 34), is more tolerated in Como since it was considered a peripheral border town, with a little importance regarding the propaganda effects of the fascist regime. The innovative climate of those years was supported by continuous reports on international artistic movements and events, information for the most part provided by the architect Alberto Sartoris, a collaborator of Terragni resident in Lausanne who was constantly in contact with artists from all over the world (Parisi 1991, p.34).

The passion for photography soon becomes the first important work opportunity for Parisi. In 1936 Giuseppe Terragni entrusts his young assistant with the task of taking some photographs from particular angles "that interpret the architectural spirit" of his *Casa del Fascio* (1932-36) to be published in the monographic issue number 35/36 of the *Quadrante* magazine, entirely dedicated to the masterpiece of Italian rationalist architecture.

The story then continues following a historical period of exceptional vitality that for Parisi is the immersion in a reality

made of still progressive utopias and solid productive realities aimed to mediate the legacies and the contradictions of the enormous baggage of ideas and forms constituted by the experience of the masters of modernity. The names of those taking part in this univocal adventure are Giuseppe Terragni, Adalberto Libera, Luigi Figini, Gino Pollini, Alberto Sartoris, Gio Ponti, the group of abstract painters from Como Mario Radice and Manlio Rho, Mario Sironi and the most solitary Fausto Melotti who in those years teaches at the Cantù School of Art. A heterogeneous community that is able to produce and transmit knowledge, a theoretical and feverish knowledge with the ability to instill doubt rather than certainty, and to plan the future without escaping the responsibilities of the present (Guadagnini, 1990).

The integration of the arts is one of the variously declined issues of these years. It is also in this same period that Alberto Sartoris defines his idea of "Mediterranean functionalism", publishing a fundamental book for the history of Italian Rationalism: *Gli elementi dell'Architettura funzionale* (1935). In it Sartoris, while recognizing the great importance of technique and new materials in art, believes that functional architecture does not derive only from the "poetry of iron" but also from other economic, philosophical and artistic factors that have often preceded it, accelerating its evolution and accentuating its social scope. Sartoris, after having explained how the masters of Como during the centuries of work in Italy and abroad remained faithful to a rigid spirit of functionality, claims to them, and in general to the Mediterranean architects, the application of the first functional motifs in the history of architecture.

40 - GRONDE IN MURATURA, SCALE RAMPANTI, TERRAZZI SOVRAPPOSTI, TAVOLI DI PIETRA E CISTERNE PER L'ACQUA PIOVANA NELLE CASE RURALI DEL GOLFO DI NAPOLI
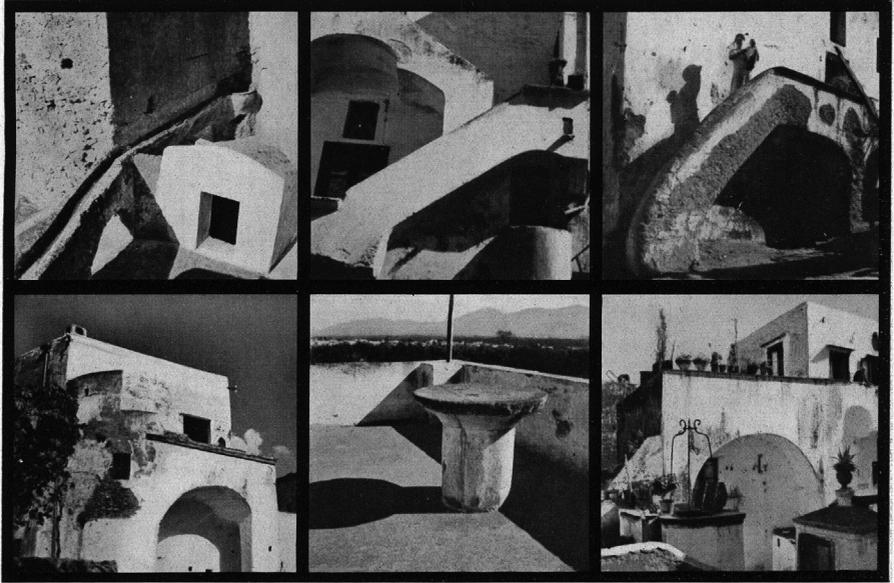
Figure 1. Giuseppe Pagano, pages of the catalogue of the exhibition *Architettura Rurale Italiana* at the *VI Triennale* of Milan, 1936.

The historical examples reported by Sartoris will contribute to influence the Italian rationalist design that will always maintain its identifiable dialogue between modernity and Mediterranean culture (see the works of Giuseppe Pagano, Figini and Pollini, but above all of Gio Ponti).

3. The Mediterranean villas

A second important commission for Parisi arrives with the great *Mostra dell'Impero* (Exhibition Of The Empire), organized in 1937 in Villa Olmo in Como. On this occasion, Fulvio Cappelletti, Giovanni Galfetti, Silvio Longhi and Parisi, form the group Alta Quota, a group who is entrusted with the realization of the ticket offices, of a signal tower, of the "war briefing" room and of the honor hall.

Between 1937 and 1939 the *Alta Quota* group, strong of a great youthful fervor, elaborate refined projects such as the villa of Alida Valle on the Appia Antica in Rome, the Casa del Fascio in Rebbio or a building in Capri, all project which were not realized. The villas are aligned with a series of works of the same year dedicated to the architecture of the Mediterranean area, especially with the extensive research of Giuseppe Pagano on the *Architettura Rurale Italiana* (Italian Rural Architecture*)* from which derives the homonymous exhibition at the *VI Triennale* of 1936 and a corresponding volume (Fig.1).

In the same years the Austrian architect Bernard Rudosfky travels through different Mediterranean countries; in 1925 he travels through the Balkans to Turkey, four years later he stays for two months on the Greek island of Santorini to complete his doctoral thesis and then returns again in Mediterra-

nean visiting Sicily and finally moving to the island of Capri[1] in 1932, visiting the nearby islands of Procida and Ischia in the same period. During these travels Rudofsky elaborates his interest in what he will define as "spontaneous architecture"[2]. In Capri, Rudofsky met Luigi Cosenza with whom he designed one of the symbols of Mediterranean rationalism: Villa Oro on the promontory of Posillipo in Naples (1934-37) (Rossi, 2012).

In 1937 Rudofsky was invited by Ponti to collaborate with *Domus* magazine, years in which several articles about the Mediterranean area emerge from the pages of the magazine, such as the article by Rudofsky dedicated to the Island of Procida (1938) (Fig. 2), or the *Domus* number 152 of August 1940, containing a series of projects of beach houses of Gio Ponti and Carlo Pagani, "The beach house in Sicily" by Lina Bo and Carlo Pagani (Fig.3), the beach house by Fabrizio Clerici, the beautiful graphic project by Banfi, Belgioioso and Peressutti for the Island of Elba and finally an article dedicated to "furniture and objects for a beach house".

The Second World War was almost upon us, and in 1941 Ico Parisi is enlisted as a lieutenant in the IX Pontieri Battalion on the Russian front. The ferocious experience at the front, represented by a vast series of photographs and paintings, requires a profound reflection on the existential values, which leads Parisi to "become aware of the fundamental role of the

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1. The island of Capri was already known since the late Nineteenth century as an exemplary case of vernacular architecture studied by Josef Hoffmann and Joseph Maria Olbrich (Rossi 2012, pp. 96-97).
2. Only many years later, in 1964 he will publish the book *Architecture Without Architecture* that accompanied the homonymous exhibition at the MoMA in New York.

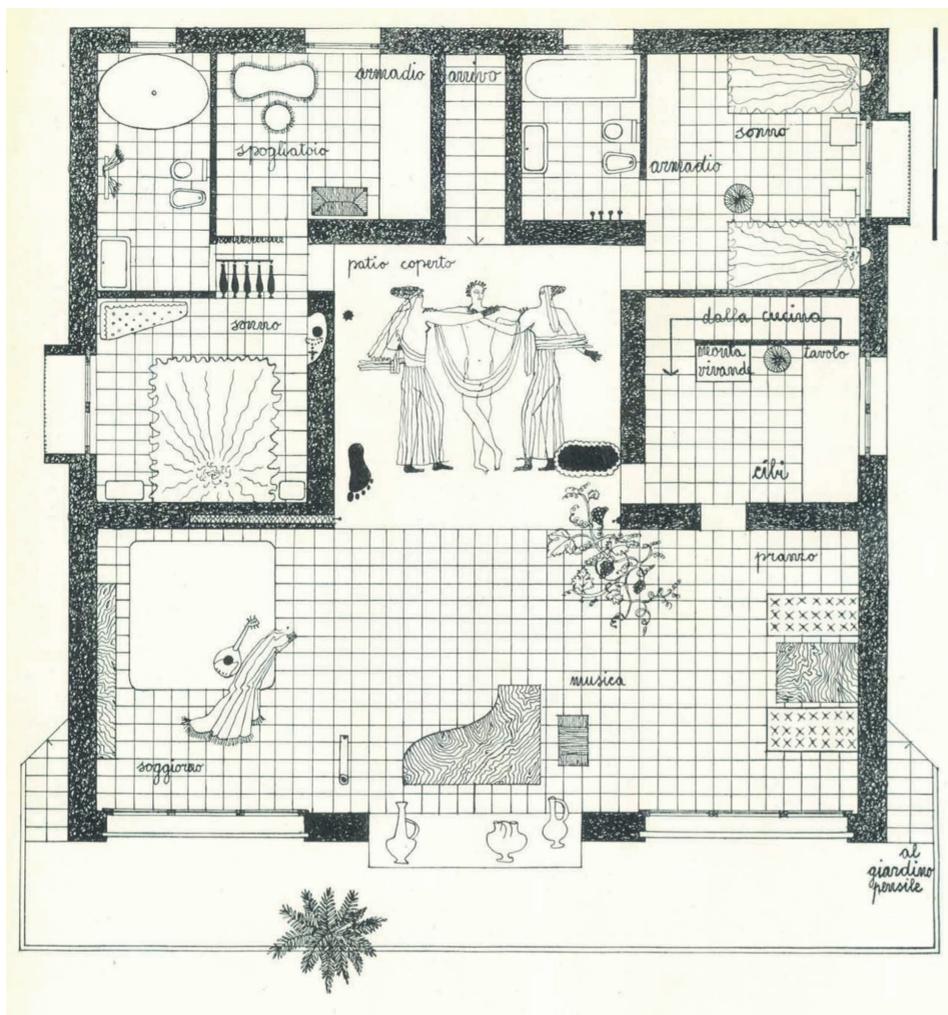**Figure 2.** Bernard Rudofsky, drawing for a house in Procida, published on *Domus* 123, March 1938.

Figure 3. Lina Bo and Carlo Pagani, "Casa sul mare in Sicilia", *Domus* 152, August 1940, p. 32.

house and of the constant and daily need for fantasy and creativity, comparable by their importance, to the primary needs of man" (Tenconi 2012, p.13).

4. The post-war period and the invention of the single piece of furniture

The period before the war will be a "training center" for Parisi, and it will be the post-war years to fully define his figure as an architect, designer and artist. In 1943 Parisi was discharged and returned to Como where he perceived, like everybody, the urgency of the reconstruction of society and of the country. According to a damage evaluation, the destroyed houses are more than three million. Looking to the future, everyone start to work hard.

The Italian industry rapidly uplifts itself from the disasters of the war, finding new sectors of activity, including the definition and implementation of new models of daily living. Aware of their role, the architects feel invested with the responsibilities that their job entails; they live it as a mission. In a climate of high hopes they design furniture and houses for a new democratic society, more composite and open to change (De Guttry & Maino, 1992).

In this sense, at the same time we find working together the masters of the pre-war and a new generation of young architects (among whom we find Parisi), who were trained by them and who in the war years did not have the opportunity to make themselves known.

Solidarity and optimism do not prevent the formation of two opposing orientations, in many cases deriving from political ideology; the one of those who, having in mind the collective

well-being, plan for the industrial sector and that of those who, to protect the creative autonomy, enhances individuality (De Guttry & Maino, 1992).

In 1945 the *Prima Mostra dell'Arredamento* (First Furnishings Exhibition), promoted by the Provincial Tourism Board in Como in the Broletto halls, was organized by Ico Parisi with Silvio Longo (also a pupil and collaborator of the deceased Terragni). The two organizers feel that the development of the local economy, based entirely on the production of furniture, is the primary problem of reconstruction. On the occasion of this exhibition, Parisi and Longo design with Paolo Buffa a dozen of rooms in detail, set up as if they were rooms in an apartment and enriched with paintings by contemporary artists.

The exhibit, enriched and entitled *Mostra Mercato per la Ricostruzione* (Market Exhibition for Reconstruction), is replicated and inaugurated on May 25th of 1946 in the Galleria del Sagrato in Piazza Duomo in Milan. The exhibition involves new names, such as Giulio Moscatelli, Antonio Cassi Ramelli, Guglielmo Ulrich, Patrizio Merighi, Mauro Cappelletti. Now, also the circle of small industrial furniture companies based in Brianza and Milan is bigger. The exhibition is a show of refined and precious furniture, examples indicative of the "Italian style" whose strength and consistency can be found in the architect's collaboration with an expert craftsman (De Guttry & Maino, 1992). The most experimental pieces of furniture are those of Ponti based on the principle of "aggregation": writing desk and bar table are integrated into the bookcase, the headboard extends itself in the bedside table.

Ico Parisi immediately imposes himself as a protagonist, since his pieces of furniture have very modern silhouettes, and he

sets up a terrace-like environment covered by a three spin-dle-shaped diagonal rods, a motif that starting from the 1940's *Veliero* bookcase by Franco Albini and continuing with some projects of Carlo Mollino and the BBPR, finds in the work of Parisi a further stylistic recognition typical of that time.

At the same time, in the spring of 1946, the great Furnishing Exhibition promoted by R.I.M.A. (*Riunione Italiana Mostre per l'Arredamento*) is inaugurated at the Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan and attracts a wide range of architects specialized in the realization of "single furniture" or "typical housings" with the intent to start a production of practical, inexpensive and taste-ful furniture to reply to the urgent needs of that moment.

The theme of "single furniture" assumes centrality a year lat-er on the occasion of the *Triennale Proletaria* of 1947 organ-ized by Piero Bottoni. For a series production, only furniture that does not come from a complete "coordinated" environ-ment is functional and interesting. Each piece is conceived as an independent unit with its own character and must be able to be freely united to other pieces, also them single according to the new logic of flexibility and practicality.

The list of designers and fitters includes the well-known exponents of historical rationalism (Pietro Bottoni, Gabriele Mucchi, the BBPR, Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella), but also a large group of young people including Vico Magistretti, Franca Helg, Giancarlo de Carlo , Luciano Canella, Ettore Sottsass, Marco Zanuso, Luigi Fratino.

From these experiences it emerges that the production of sim-ple and functional pieces of furniture meets two difficulties in Italy: the first is given by the general public who does not like the uniformity and standardization of the series but instead

wants showy and original artifacts; the second is given by the still semi-artisanal nature of small furniture industries that technically are not yet able to produce large numbers of furniture. The result of this peculiar reality is represented by furniture that however simple, will all be characterized by their own originality and will bring the signature of the architect who designed them (Fig.4).
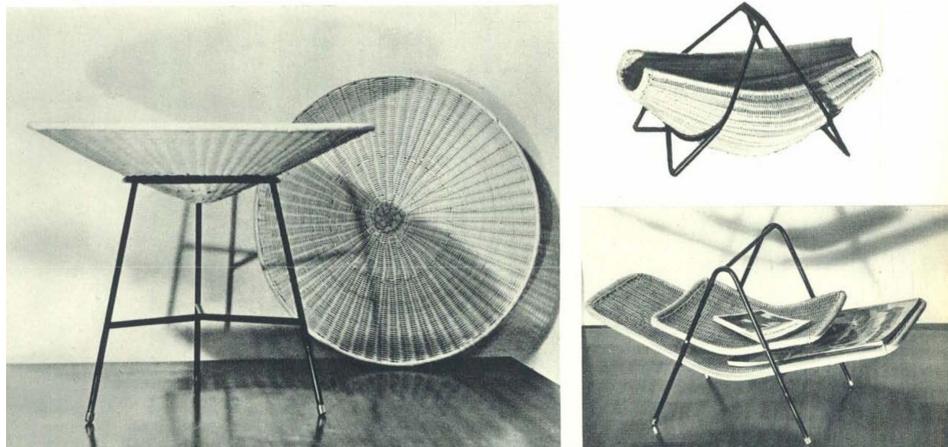

Figure 4. Luisa and Ico Parisi, little table and a nest realized with rattan and metal tube painted black, 1950.

As for the furniture from a formal point of view, it can be generally observed that pre-war rationalism has affirmed the taste of lightness and purity of the form that during the Forties was transformed from linear and geometric rigor in sinuous lines and enveloping shapes. The oblique and the elliptical have substituted the horizontal and the vertical, and from a theoretical point of view the "organic architecture" of Frank Loyd Wright and the aerodynamic style (it is no coincidence that both styles come from the United States, which have became a symbol of democracy and progress) affirm themselves as main stylistic references of the time.

The references do not come exclusively from overseas, in fact during the Forties an idea of Mediterranean nature lives again. Ettore Sottsass quickly grasps the change in taste during the post-war period as a reaction to those:

> shiny and plastic materials of the 20s (...) that comes from a certain taste for all that is Mediterranean, from Capri to Morocco, from Sicily to Tunisia, and for the colors of the South; a love that then includes not only the Mediterranean sea but also the rustic and rough things of all the seas of the South (...); a love for all things done with hands and corroded by centuries, sun and boiling sands; a love for violent and ancient colors, for sweet and grainy materials, for soft and fragile pastes (Sottsass 1954, pp. 47-48).

5. *La Ruota* studio and the lifetime duo with Luisa Aiani

In 1947 Ico Parisi furnishes the State Library of Milan in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele and the following year he participates with Bottoni, Sottsass, Minoletti, B.P.R., Buffa and Ulrich at the *Salon des artistes décorateurs* in Paris.

The same year he marries Luisa Aiani (widow of his friend Giovanni Galfetti) and in 1948 they found together *La Ruota* studio in Como, a studio that will embody that "sober and intelligent civility of life" that the couple shares with Gio Ponti and a few others.

They do not think of the house as a form, or as a functional machine. They think of it as a den of the intellect and of existential functions, and their furnishings are its life apparatuses (Gualdoni, 2008).

La Ruota is also a gallery/shop, a crossroads of a typically Italian world in which art, craftsmanship and culture in the

broadest sense coexist. Thus the splendid enamels of Paolo De Poli, the precious yarns of Gegia and Marisa Bronzini, the carpets of Renata Bonfanti, the splendid glasses of Fulvio Bianconi or even the daring ceramics of Alessio Tasca, meet the works of Boccioni, the engravings of Picasso and the sculptures of Bruno Munari to name just a few. Of course, items made by Parisi are also on display and on sale: ceramics, glasses, jewelry and home accessories that they will continue to draw and produce until the closure of the space in 1995. During the years immediately following the war, Parisi's design thinking is mainly influenced by the figure of Gio Ponti, as he himself admits: "Some important meetings can guide and even modify our life choices or change our behavior because they are enlightening and clarifying" (Parisi, 1991, p.81). Parisi is striked by the eternally enthusiastic and lively nature of Ponti in tackling and solving any professional problem with the same fervor and seriousness "from the skyscraper to the fork, from the cathedral to the chair, from the conference to the caption for an illustration" (Parisi, 1991, p.81). The enthusiasm of this period becomes an intensive activity of furnishings, interior design, proto-design and cultural organization, in "a sort of feverish vitality that is more than just the reconfiguration of a professional attitude, which proves itself in the daily invention, and together in the rigor of always critically penetrating the prime reasons of an idea, of a necessity" (Gualdoni, 1999, p. n.n.).

Now more than ever, the activity of Parisi is inseparable from that of his life partner, Luisa, much more than a simple presence of completion, "She is conscience and fierce culture, of a destined and pragmatic doing, under the utopian rind, of

a hazard that continually question itself. She is director and first critic" (Gualdoni, 1990, p. n.n).

Luisa possesses the intuition of beauty, the ability to select things and situations in which the form was a thought, a vision: "Was it a very thin essential splinter of Dieter Roth or the simple fruit of a hand of Grottaglie, the mental twist of Boccioni or of a Murano craftsman" (Gualdoni, 1990, p. n.n). However, her role was always "behind the scenes", and how much this depends on her precise choice and how it was dictated by the common destiny of other women who in those same years designed and worked in the shadow of men, is still to be discovered. However, it has been established that since the foundation of *La Ruota* studio each piece of furniture is signed by both (Fig.5).

Figure 5. Left: group portrait of Ico Parisi with Luisa Parisi and two friends; right: Ico Parisi, portrait of Luisa Parisi, 1950. Credits: Pinacoteca Civica di Palazzo Volpi, Fondo Ico Parisi.

In Como, the Parisi find themselves working in close contact with local artisans, in particular with some enlightened companies of Cantù maintaining a constant relationship with the artists.

Starting from 1946, at the Milan Fairs the Parisi exhibit furniture designed for those same houses, born in the artisan workshops with which, after the first post-war period, they establish real productive continuity, from *Ariberto Colombo* to *Arte Casa*, from *Fratelli Rizzi* and *Spartaco Brugnoli* of Cantù.

Figure 6. Left: group portrait of Ico Parisi with Fede Cheti and Gulielmo Urlich, France, 1949; right: Ico and Luisa Parisi, the "toilette-desk" presented at the exhibition, *Lo stile nell'arredamento moderno*, Milan 1948. Credits: Pinacoteca Civica di Palazzo Volpi, Fondo Ico Parisi.

Leafing through the photographic archive, for example, the first furnishings realized with the Colombo company of Cantù emerge. The images show beautiful armchairs and sofas (1946) with soft shapes but perfectly described in the design covered with black and white satin, whose executive perfection is surprising; two versions of chair (1946) in crossed iron, with stuffed seat and back and covered in white

satin; the series of modular sofas presented at the FMC in 1946, conceptually modern because they feature individual modules that can be freely assembled but still characterized by an extremely classic design.

Of this period the "toilette-desk" is also very famous, made by the Brugnoli company in rosewood: a double-function lady's furniture, on one side writing desk and on the other side toilette, divided by a central double-cabinet (Fig.6).

The "toilette-desk" is presented by Parisi in 1948 on the occasion of the first exhibition organized by Fede Cheti in his home in via Manzoni 23 in Milan, *Lo stile nell'arredamento moderno* and commented by Leonardo Borgese in this way: "it has the simple and lively beauty of a little horse" (Borghese, 1949, p. n.n.).

The exhibition presents furnishings designed by Franco Albini, Giulio Minoletti, Carlo Mollino, Gio Ponti, Carlo Enrico Rava and Ettore Sottsass. Parisi's comment on this event confirms the topics of discussion between industry and craftsmanship, uniqueness and seriality:

> Overall, it is a somewhat snobbish, somewhat frivolous event, which in the eyes of many seems to be in opposition to the *VIII Triennale* that, led by Piero Bottoni, has an extremely social and urban orientation. But it is surely a starting point for what will become the Italian style in furniture and industrial design (Parisi 1991, p.65).

After the exhibition of Fede Cheti, important orders arrive for the Parisi: the furnishings design of the State Library (Milan, 1947), the setting up of the Journalism Exhibition (Milan 1948) and the First Bergamo Fair (Bergamo, 1950).

Ico Parisi: due tavoli da pranzo per Altamira: piani in compensato di noce rivestito in noce naturale. Si noti la struttura, in tubo di ferro laccato nero, tagliato per la lunghezza.
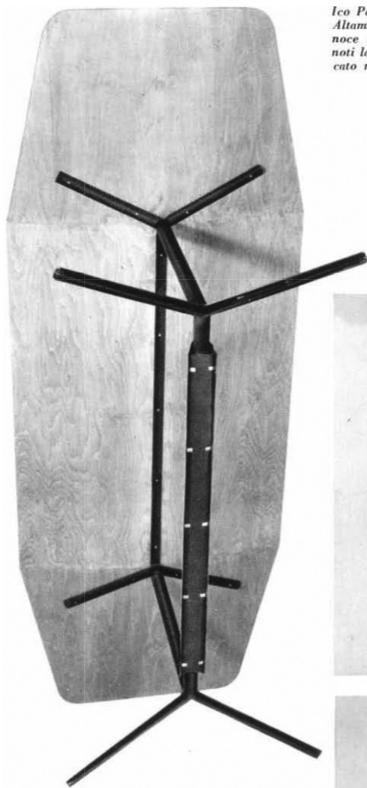
Figure 7. Ico and Luisa Parisi, rosewood and brass tables, "Mobili italiani per l'Altamira", *Domus* 292, March 1954, pp. 57-72.

At the beginning of the Fifties, Ico and Luisa Parisi are among the main authors of the Italian furniture style (De Guttry & Maino, 1992).

An example of renowned international fame (more international than national, probably) are the magnificent tables designed between 1947 and 1954 for the Altamira gallery-shop and the Singer & Son furniture factory in New York.

The celebrated "table-shelf", of which there are variants in polished walnut with feet and connections in silver metal, in walnut and brass, and in the then favorite rosewood with brass, originally designed between 1944 and 1946, will be the object of conspicuous production also by Altamira and Singer & Sons (Fig.7).

During the Fifties, the founding characteristics of the Parisi's invention stand out: the highest quality of the materials used, preference for curvilinear dominant used as organic echo ribs ("like the limbs of the human body", Radice writes in an article) and diagonal joints, skilful use of the roundings, oval sections and shining polishings with an executive level that must be perfect, search for a primarily tactile sinuosity and for an aesthetic quality that transcends the mere functional.

> Quando, di lì a un trentennio, si cercherà di fare un bilancio di quel tempo e di quel clima, che va dal barocco lussureggiante di un Mollino al genio essenziale di un Albini e che vede in Parisi un interprete primario e un propulsore, si immaginerà di definirlo non casualmente come neo-liberty (Guadagnini, 1990, p.34).

We can see the multiple artistic influences of Parisi in drawings of objects with an almost antithetical language. For the

Milan *IX Triennale* of 1951, Parisi presents a desk in walnut with a sculptural form, realized by Arte Casa, whose characteristic motif are the feet "gushing out like a static rib taken from the sides", in turn treated themselves in bas-relief with abstract biomorph motifs from Vittorio Tavernari.

In 1950, instead, Parisi presents for the Brugnoli company a chest of drawers in natural wenge and white lacquer treated with reliefs that looked like neoplastic, with perfect geometry. One of the most fruitful collaborations of Parisi during the Fifties is certainly that with the Cassina company. In 1953 the *armachair 813* marks, already at its debut, an apex in the long-standing collaboration with Cassina (also the model had been prototyped in 1952 by the Colombo company). The *813 model* has gone down in history as an "egg chair" (not to be confused with the equally iconic *Egg Armchair* by Arne Jacobsen produced by Fritz Hansen since 1957) for its construction on only curvilinear motifs generated by a circle that draw a wraparound shape, suspended by four slender metal feet that accentuate the visual dynamism typical of other pieces of the Fifties.

The design of the *sofa 812* (1953) is equally harmonious and welcoming, maintaining the same formal principle but revealing the curved multilayered wooden ring that holds the seat and rests on longilineal metal legs (Fig.8).

> È lo scatto decisivo di Parisi, il quale nella raggiunta nudità strutturale della forma tipica di tutti i progetti per Cassina – che si legge tipica anche nella coeva sedia 691 e in realizzazioni successive come, ad esempio, la poltrona e sgabello 856, con scheletro a balestra in acciaio e legno, e la poltrona e divano 865 – non fa che

distillare un uso sapiente delle tensioni curvilinee, delle diagonali, in nome di una presenza spaziale comunque fortemente estetizzante (Gualdoni, 2008, p.180).

Ponti is also a precious witness to the extraordinary nature of these intuitions, and in some letters to Parisi, figurative and of extraordinary ironic and poetic verve as always, letters that now are kept at the Galleria Civica di Modena, he redesigns the "egg chair" (Fig.9) writing: "My dears, your egg chair is a marvel. You are the masters, now I can only retire and live in oblivion in Civate. (...) Dear Parisi immediately sends the picture of your armchair to *Domus*".

Devoid of oriented superstructures, Parisi carries out a research aimed at enriching (not only aesthetically) the existing things, and he is willing to bet on a very high quality production, even if with less probability of incidence on a quantitative level. It should be also noted that during the Fifties Cantù also participates in the complex debate on the destinies of design in Italy through the establishment of the *Concorso Internazionale del Mobile* (International Furniture Competition) and the consequent *Mostra Selettiva del Mobile* (whose first jury of the 1955 is chaired by Gio Ponti and composed by Aalto, Barocchi, De Carli and Juhl; the brand is designed by Munari and the catalog is edited by Pica) and the birth of the magazine *Il mobile italiano* directed by De Carli, in 1957.

1954 marks a milestone in the history of Italian design with two main events: the X Triennale which sees the birth of the *industrial design* promoting the collaboration between the world of art and that of industrial production and reiterating once again the importance of unity and correlation between

the arts. The second event is the establishment of the *Compasso D'Oro* award of the *Rinascente* that reward the best design of the objects of Italian production.

Parisi gains an highlighting in the Compasso d'oro award in 1955 for the *chair 691* and the *hollow armchair 839,* designed together with the famous *egg armchair 813* and other original piece of furniture for the production of Cassina of the Fifties. Equally appreciated were the detachable pieces of furniture produced by MIM (Mobili Italiani Moderni) and dedicated to well-known Italian (and Mediterranean) locations, such as the *Lerici* bookcase, the *Ischia* bed, the *Sestri* small table. Smaller but equally rigorous and functional objects were designed for Lamperti and Stildomus Selezione in the Sixties (Fig.10). In 1957 Ico Parisi is in the executive committee of the exhibition *Colori e forme nella casa d'oggi* (Colors and forms in today's house), set up in Villa Olmo in Como, which should have continued the theme of the *Unità delle Arti* (Unity of the arts) introduced by the *IX Triennale* of 1951 (Dellapiana, 2014). Here the Parisi duo will make one of their most famous staging, together with Gian Paolo Allevi, that is the "Holiday Home" pavilion built inside the park of the villa.

Afterword

The case of Ico Parisi's design has been here reported as one of the many figures that compose a wider panorama composed by all the other stories collocated outside the boundaries of Milan. In this sense the article seeks to introduce in the future other similar cases in order to start a new map of the history of the Italian design following a trans-regional trace.

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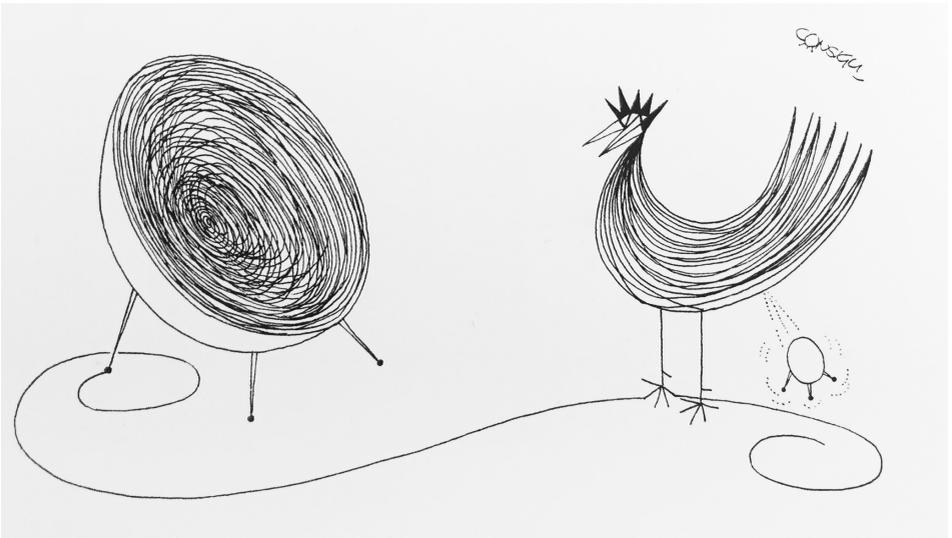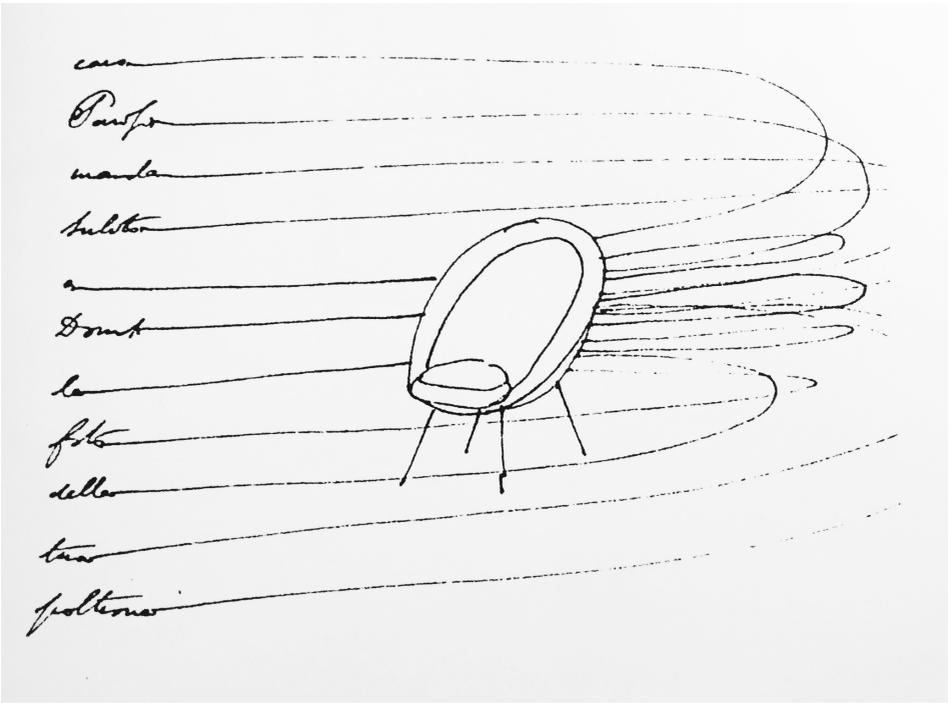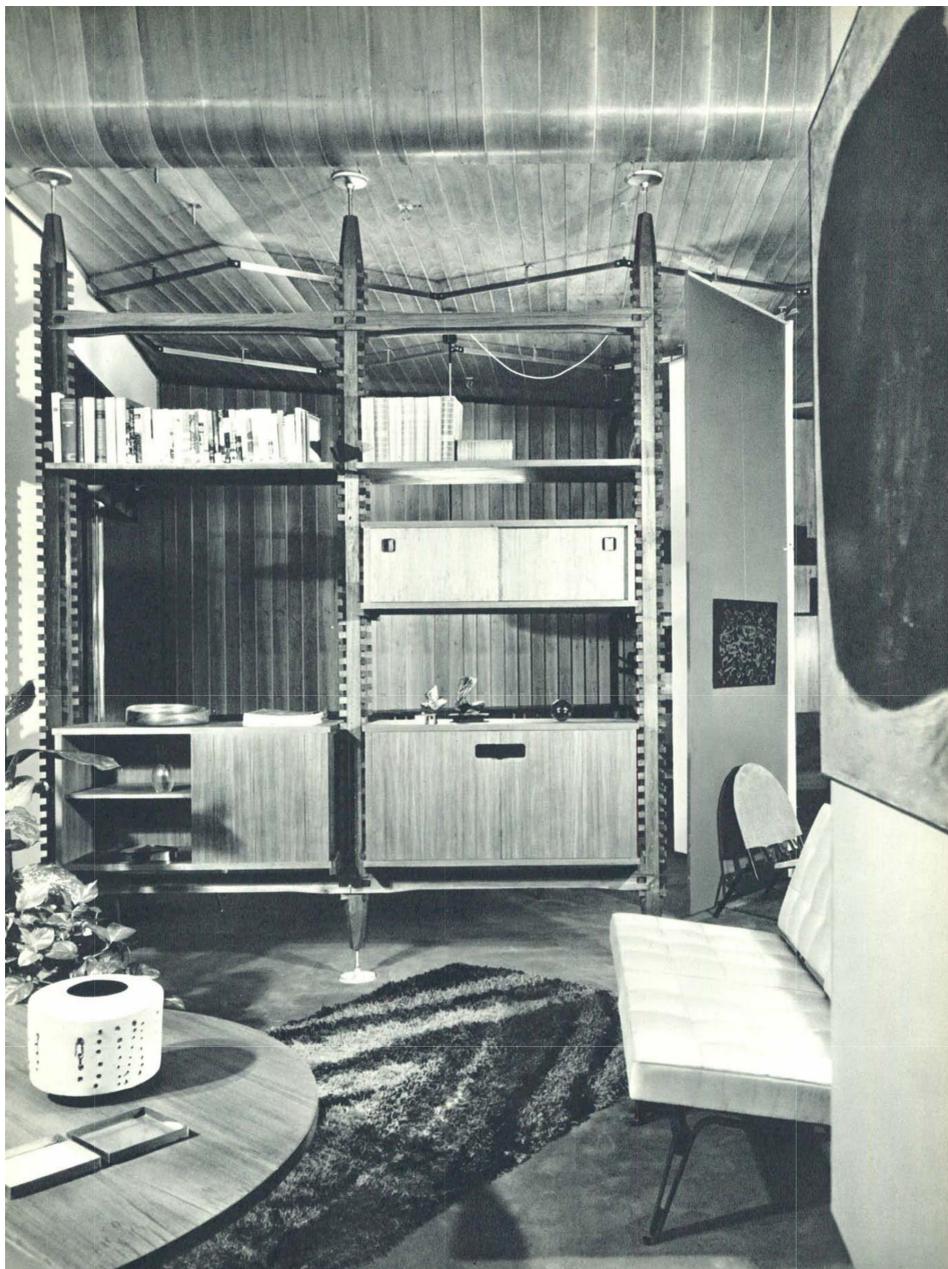**Figure 8.** Ico and Luisa Parisi, sofa n.812, Cassina, 1953.

Figure 9. Up: Gio Ponti's letter dedicated to the n.813 chair of Luisa and Ico Parisi, 1951; down: Luciano Consigli, vignette of the "egg chair" by Luisa and Ico Parisi, '50s.

Figure 10. Luisa and Ico Parisi, interior of the shop M.I.M. in Rome (with sculptures and paintings of Lucio Fontana). "Una nuova produzione italiana di serie", *Domus* 351, February 1959, pp. 45-50.

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E-1027: Shifting Paradigms and Aesthetic Outcomes in a House by the Mediterranean Sea

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Keywords

Abstract

This paper, far from structuring a historical discourse, aims to analyze how the heterogeneity of the pieces by designer Eileen Gray, furnishing the *E-1027* villa, perfectly fused with the spaces, generating interesting aesthetic outcomes. The *E-1027* was Gray's first architectural accomplishment, designed in a sort of life-long companionship with critic and journalist Jean Badovici, on the site of Roquebrune - Cap St. Martin, now *Cap Moderne*, in that strip of Mediterranean coast renowned as *Côte d'Azur*. The uniqueness of Gray's style mirrored the shifting paradigms of the late Twenties, between Paris and this Mediterranean bay of the French Riviera, also hosting other relevant heritages, such as Le Corbusier's *Cabanon*, his *Camping Units* and the beach kiosk l'*Étoile de mer*. According to Nelson Goodman's theories, as expressed in *Ways of Worldmaking*, expanding the qualities of the communicative functioning and symbolizing also to what is not-just-art, we will also briefly explore, along a pragmatist perspective, how design pieces can produce an aesthetic experience. Eileen Gray's approach to design, framed by the lights and the vibrant lifestyle of *Cap Moderne*, will add a historical aura to our questioning, showing how aesthetic judgments and social changes may widely impact on design insights and innovations.

1. Introduction

The *E-1027* villa by designer Eileen Gray, also known simply as *Maison en bord de mer,* built on that strip of Mediterranean coastline worldwide renowned as *côte d'Azur,* on the shores of Cap Martin-Roquebrune bay, now renamed *Cap Moderne,* was somehow intended to make history, and not just because on the same site as Le Corbusier's *Cabanon*, *Camping Units* and the beach kiosk *l'Étoile de mer.* The motivation driving us towards reconsidering such a paragraph of design, in the frame of Mediterranean cultural identity and heritage, is related to the desire of highlighting the footprint left by *Modernism* and its resonances in such a once wild and remote bay in the South of France, that turned to host the core of a true revolutionary attitude also in terms of women emancipation, design syntax, and new inspiring paradigms, reflected both on the architecture as well as on the furnishings of Gray's house. This paper, based on the few bibliographic references available, will be then an attempt to move along an analysis, according to a pragmatist thinking, of how the heterogeneity of materials and shapes of some of the once mainly one-off and site-specific design objects, as well as those of the non-custom ones, generated interesting aesthetic outcomes, including in their phenomenology several aspects of a time shifting perspective, while melting with the architectural volumes of the whole house. Completely forgotten, even squatted, and almost vanished into the wild nature, the *E-1027* villa went finally under major works of restorations and was brought back to its original splendor, reopening to public in May 2015, following to a plan started in year 2000 and supervised by Pierre-Antoine Gatier. Often defined as a *living*

organism (Mygairou, 2013), entirely conceived and inspired by the human body, the *E-1027* hosts today the redesigned versions of former furnishings, mirroring the original designs, some of which were, as said, created by Eileen Gray just on purpose for the place, in line with the tradition honored by other design and architecture masters. Though her fame was indeed tarnished and blurred for several years, and finally unveiled by historian Joseph Rykwert through the pages of Italian magazine *Domus,* only in 1968, Irish designer, naturalized French, Eileen Gray, had been part of that vibrant vague known as *colonie anglaise de Montparnasse* (Laurent, 2013), literally getting all the vibes of that Parisian atmosphere nourished by the artistic avant-gardes, the Deco scene, the new fashion and jewelry experimentations, as well as the finest taste of a unique generation of *Dècorateurs*. Besides such a strong French influence, it seems relevant to highlight also the impact that Victorian and post Victorian movements had released on her younger years of education at the *Slade School of Fine Arts* in London, capturing the resonances of Morris's *Arts and Crafts*, together with the literary redundancies of Wilde's aestheticism. Such a background could not help but blooming later on under the lights and the suggestions of the French Riviera, melting with the echoes of ancestral myth and historical recalls, already present in Gray's iconic poetry since her early years of activity, as disclosed also through the names of some of her pieces (i.e. *Syrenes; Destin; Macédoine; La Toilette de Salomé*), then revamped through modern insights and desires.

Figure 1. *E-1027* by Eileen Gray. Courtesy: *Cap Moderne*, France.

Figure 2. *Bibendum* armchair by Eileen Gray, 1930 ca.
Courtesy: *Centre Georges Pompidou*, Paris, France.

2. From Paris to Roquebrune: Resonances of the *Roaring Twenties*

As previously mentioned, all Gray's designs, both in terms of architectural spaces as well as design pieces, were human body inspired, but definitely detached from the classic modules and schemes, as first elaborated in ancient Greece or revisited across the centuries by that truly Mediterranean Vitruvian approach, or as even further elaborated by her contemporary colleague Le Corbusier. Her interest for designing accordingly to the human body was rather pervaded by an embracing sensuality, revealing a sort of *Desynchronized Measure* (Mygairou, 2013), fusing body and mind in a kind of hypnotic spiral, tending towards a full involvement. Basically, a sort of today's *Full Experience* approach, though delivered at that time in terms of synesthetic total artwork, such as a *Gesamkunstwerk* or *oeuvre d'art total,* engaging the body throughout the entire palette of senses. As Nelson Goodman claims in *Ways of Worldmaking*, works of art indeed are not the only things that can symbolize, insofar also architectural spaces, as well as *architectural objects*, as Umberto Eco used to semantically define design objects, can also take on a symbolic role and produce an aesthetic experience. Based on a pragmatist thinking, the process of how objects of common use can also function communicatively, can be analyzed developing a critical line of questioning up to disclose the intimate relationship that prevails between the user's body and an object, as well as the body's impulses and suggestions leading further to the conception of a specific object itself (Russo, 2016). Trying to zoom on what was the Parisian lifestyle in the early-middle Twenties, it is possible to seize at least some

of the insights and main trends that might have contributed to shape and define Gray's objectives, mindset and languages. It is not by chance that the second decade of XX century is often sided by the adjective "roaring", perfectly describing those winds of changes and some women emancipation attitudes, that so effectively and directly impacted also on fashion and design, as already started few years earlier. Women bodies were now finally freed from suffocating corsets and unwieldy dresses and, consequently, gestures and postures also started to follow such a process of liberation from old fashion styles and etiquettes. Such a new body/mind comfort status immediately reflected, especially for women, to new designs in terms of everyday life, including new furniture, new materials, news shapes, likely to outline the landscape of the new rising society in which dynamic and social roles were finally acknowledged also to female figures. Eileen Gray was able to translate all these new lifestyles and settings into her designs, creating not just new design pieces, quite in line with the main trends of *Modern Movement*, but also adapting Le Corbusier's philosophy of the house seen as a *machine à habiter* in terms of modern women's needs, aesthetics and comfort. It seems of relevance to mention that, apparently, Eileen Gray never entirely embraced the new architectural waves spreading all around Europe, she rather quoted some *De Stijl* or *Modernist* hints into her works, though sticking to a personal style, structured along several anthropological and ethnographic suggestions, such as the *Orientalism* of her lacquer furniture or the minimalism and archetypal designs of her rugs, coming out from a cult African art inspired movement, so popular among Parisian top bohemian chic upper classes, as promot-

ed, for instance, by heiress, socialite and collector Nancy Cunard in her *Negro Anthology* (Buot, 2008). While attempting an analysis of some of *E-1027's* pieces of furniture, we find all these echoes among some of the chairs, the stools, the coffee tables, the self-standing cabinets or the rugs furnishing this Mediterranean villa. *Modernist* chrome metal tubes stand together with different textiles, as well as wooden frames, supporting synthetic leather seating, just as several modular volumes find new ways of arranging their spaces in a functional *Coiffeuse* or *coiffeuse-paravent*, specifically conceived for a modern woman's needs. As also in those almost futuristic folding dining tables or adjustable coffee/tea tables, due to be turned into popular and renowned gallery pieces. As previously said, the majority of the design pieces, now furnishing the restored *E-1027* villa, were entirely redesigned, and their rights have been detained by British design company *Aram* since 1970. This explains why some of them are currently in production and therefore part of the company's catalogue.

3. Changing paradigms: lifestyle and design at *Cap Moderne*

One of the design objects, that mainly intrigues the visitors of the villa, is no doubt the well-known armchair *Bibendum,* a truly iconic piece, able to provide not just a synthesis of Gray's approach, but also to deliver a clear and loud message about the changing paradigms of the Modern times. This is actually one of the design pieces furnishing *E-1027,* that were not realized specifically for the site, but that incredibly fused with the fluidity of the interiors at a point that it seemed custom made for the place itself. Indeed, the *Bibendum* chair, supported by a polished chromium plated

tubular steel base, also characterized by a two overlapped rolls back, that owes its name to the popular *Michelen* man made of tires, as designed by O' Galop and that, according to a main stream of critics, it was to inspire even the renowned blow inflatable *MoMa* armchair created in 1967 by Lomazzi, D'Urbino, De Pas, was first conceived in 1926 to be part of the furnishing of some Parisian upper class apartments, and it was also included, though only in 1930-31, in the one belonging to Madame Mathieu Lévy, one of Gray's best friends and collectors, situated in Boulevard Suchet. The design of this armchair deserves to be further analyzed as iconically showing the impact of social changes on style and therefore on aesthetic paradigms. As previously mentioned, fashion revolution, as well as those rushes openly proclaiming women emancipation as core issues of the new modern era, inevitably and hopefully impacted also on product design. Women were finally moving freely into their practical *prêt-à-porter* clothes, that Coco Chanel, Elsa Schiapparelli or Madeleine Vionnet, were active advocates of, previously supported also by the sophisticated charm, but equally comfortably-shaped pleated dresses by Mariano Fortuny (Russo, 2017). All this generated a consequent expanded range of movements and postures that reshaped also chair and seats design in general, according to an indisputable equation that the way we dress inevitably influence the way we move and then the way we sit. A woman was finally allowed to cross her legs in public, to lay on a seat back, to use her full body to communicate her presence and to fully bloom in her personality. Of course, these new habits first impacted on socialite and main lifestyle icons, but were to spread around pretty soon mainly throughout the Western

or Westernized world. All these new Parisian born revolutionary habits were soon exported in Southern France whenever social life exploded throughout the year in Côte d'Azur, getting even revamped by the lights of Mediterranean Riviera. The *E-1027* house was indeed essentially conceived for an independent and emancipated woman, ready to open the door of her nest to people, sharing her visions and spare time in a cozy, though dynamic, balance of volumes and materials, enriched by the lights and shadows reflecting on the white of the façade and the proximity to the sea. According to *Aram*, still detaining, as said, the rights of the *Bibendum* chair, besides the shared memories of the designer herself, this piece was indeed a sort of feminist response to all the strictness of Le Corbusier's *Grand Comfort* armchair. But while this latter was officially released only in 1929, as still squared and anchored to rigid modules, *Bibendum* was instead centered on circular and therefore embracing, mellow shapes, allowing and inviting to a more informal and nevertheless audaciously sensual posture. We can also observe how these unconventional rushes found their way of expression through design also in another seat, and precisely in one of the pieces specifically designed for the site itself, and now also included into the *Aram* collection. The design piece we refer to is the one called *Non-Conformist*, a polished chromium plated tubular steel framed chair, partially leather upholstered, whose first prototype seemed to appear between 1925 and 1926. The name itself, of course, was not issued by chance. It was indeed a sort of provocative statement of the new role gradually allowed to women in society. The accurate description provided by the producer, quoting the designer's will, specifies that one arm-

rest is missing just for the purpose of granting an expanded range of movement and let the body more freedom in movement, allowing forward folds or unrestricted rotations to the opposite side.

3.1. *S.D.*: an easy move-around revolutionary coffee table

The same self-affirmation and manifesto of independence and emancipation is also traceable in the side/coffee table designed for the *E-1027* dining space. In all the versions of both the adjustable and the fix ones, this latter named *S.D. Table*, there is a sort of handle, symbiotically melting with the whole metallic tubular structure, allowing the user to easily move it around even just with one hand. Also the one named after the house itself, the *E-1027 Table*, adjustable at different heights and eventually turning also into a useful bedside table, was designed according to the same principle of being eventually easily moved around, in line with the needs of the user. After all, the idea itself linked to the "mobile" nature of these design pieces reflects the etymology still present in the Italian as well as in the French words *mobile* and *meuble*, from late Latin *res mobile*, in a time when, due to Barbarian incursions, only a chimney was the only fixed piece furnishing even old villas or castles. However, several centuries later, this same idea was to be reedited by French Napoleonic camp furniture, until capturing indeed the easy-to-move style of a woman and designer who was indeed a pioneer of the field in Modern times. According to Eileen Gray's lifestyle, a working and busy woman did not need anybody's help to displace no matter what piece of furniture around the house, especially if the interiors were specifically designed as a sort of forerun-

ner contemporary open space to live, work and spend spare time in. So, both the *S.D. Table* (now produced under the name of *Occasional Table* and also available with two rounded cornered square disks, instead of just with the two classic circular ones), as well as the *E-1027* adjustable table, were conceived to easily slide their base under the bedside or an armchair to enjoy breakfast or just keep working or sketching in a comfortable and informal position. And if the bases of the *E-1027* table, now internationally acclaimed and ranked among the most popular *Modernist* Design iconic pieces, are in glass or more often in transparent cellulose acetate, at least in the first versions, the table-tops of the *S.D./Occasional Table* were in MDF high gloss lacquer finish, recalling the very first production of one-off Art Deco inspired pieces for Parisian apartments, or for the *Jean Desert Gallery* collections, realized by Eileen Gray, after being accurately trained by Japanese master Seizo Sugawara, a former Tokyo Fine Arts, who had relocated in Paris at the beginning of XX century. These heterogeneous inspirations and such a rich background, also nourished by subliminal social activism and a pioneer spirit, found the right place to flourish and reach its climax in a corner of the beautiful French Mediterranean coast, a small bay that, also due to the several vicissitudes linked to Le Corbusier's biography, was to be known as a precious treasure of Modern Architecture and Design. (Le Corbusier died just in that bay, while swimming alone in open sea).

Figure 3. *Non-conformist* chair by Eileen Gray, *E-1027* villa. Courtesy: *Cap Moderne*, France.

Figure 4. *E-1027* interiors. *S.D.* table under Le Corbusier's painting. Courtesy: *Cap Moderne*, France.

3.2. The rugs chapter: from the *Ateliers de Tissage* to Artistic Avant-gardes

Mediterranean vibes discretely embrace and enhance all the spaces and volumes of the house also thanks to the nautical inspiration of some finishing and the big map hanging on the wall of the dining/living space: *Beau temps – Invitation au voyage* it says, while introducing the visitors to lean on the terrace or to enjoy the solarium in the garden downstairs. Also the rug, displayed on the black and white ceramic squared tiles of the first floor, recalls some marine suggestions, as disclosed also through the name: *Blue Marine Rug*, still part of the *Aram* catalogue, as well as several others. And as some of the other rugs designed by Eileen Gray, between the early Twenties and the Thirties, this one was not created on purpose for the *E-1027* house, as other versions had already been part of some Parisian interior furnishing projects supervised by the designer. Although not site specific designed, it characterizes at its best the navy inspired mood, enriching the *Modernist* style with that heritage of the *Ateliers de tissage*, that Eileen Gray used to run with Evelyne Wyld in Paris, even few years before the London *Omega Workshops* by the *Bloomsbury Group* (Filippini, 2013), crossing the rug design with some Cubist insight of the vibrant atmosphere of the artistic Avant-Gardes with the traditional geometrical style of the Berber ethnical crafts. A fusion of different and again heterogeneous suggestions, so wisely styled and assembled, as well as supported by the use of natural fibers, like cotton or wool – especially mutton wool, widely renown to better release the natural pigments and creating a gradient of shades.

4. Conclusion

The Eileen Gray chapter at *Cap Moderne* stands out as a true synthesis and not just of her whole life, as it could be also considered a sort of manifesto of women rights, translated in a new design syntax. In her attempt to balance applied arts with *Modernism*, artistic avant-gardes and ethnographical inspirations, she indeed succeeded in leaving the footprints of a time shifting figure, able to discretely define new life-styles and attitudes that would indisputably and discretely impact on future women design generations. The communicational resonances encompassing her works disclose all the power of symbolizing finally recognized even to objects of common use, in the frame of that *jouissance esthéthique* (A. Beyaert-Geslin, 2013), usually associated to the appreciation of design pieces. According to the vision she shared with Jean Badovici, interiors had to mirror the new arising society, while creating, at the same time, a warm and cozy nest for private life. All had to be shaped around the needs of human body, a new dynamic and modern body always on the run and in line with the requirements of the new speed of modern life, no matter if in a big city or on the shores of a breathtaking Mediterranean bay. After all, through the interiors and the design pieces furnishing the *E- 1027* house, she was able to create that right balance between *Modernist* functionality and *Mediterraneaness,* in terms of conviviality, open spaces and lifestyle. A perfect match of passion, sensuality and rational design thinking that is still encrypted in the name of this house by the sea itself: *E* as Eileen; 10 as for *J*, tenth letter of the English alphabet and first letter of Jean; *2* as B of Badovici, second letter of the English alphabet and *7* for G, first let-

ter of her family name: Gray. Though *E-1027* villa was not the true alcove she dreamt of, and for several reasons she rather preferred to retire in the other house she designed in Menton's neighborhood, called *Tempe à pailla*, (or *Tempe à païa*: literally *Yawn time* in local dialect) it remains as a sort of unique example of signature of the times.
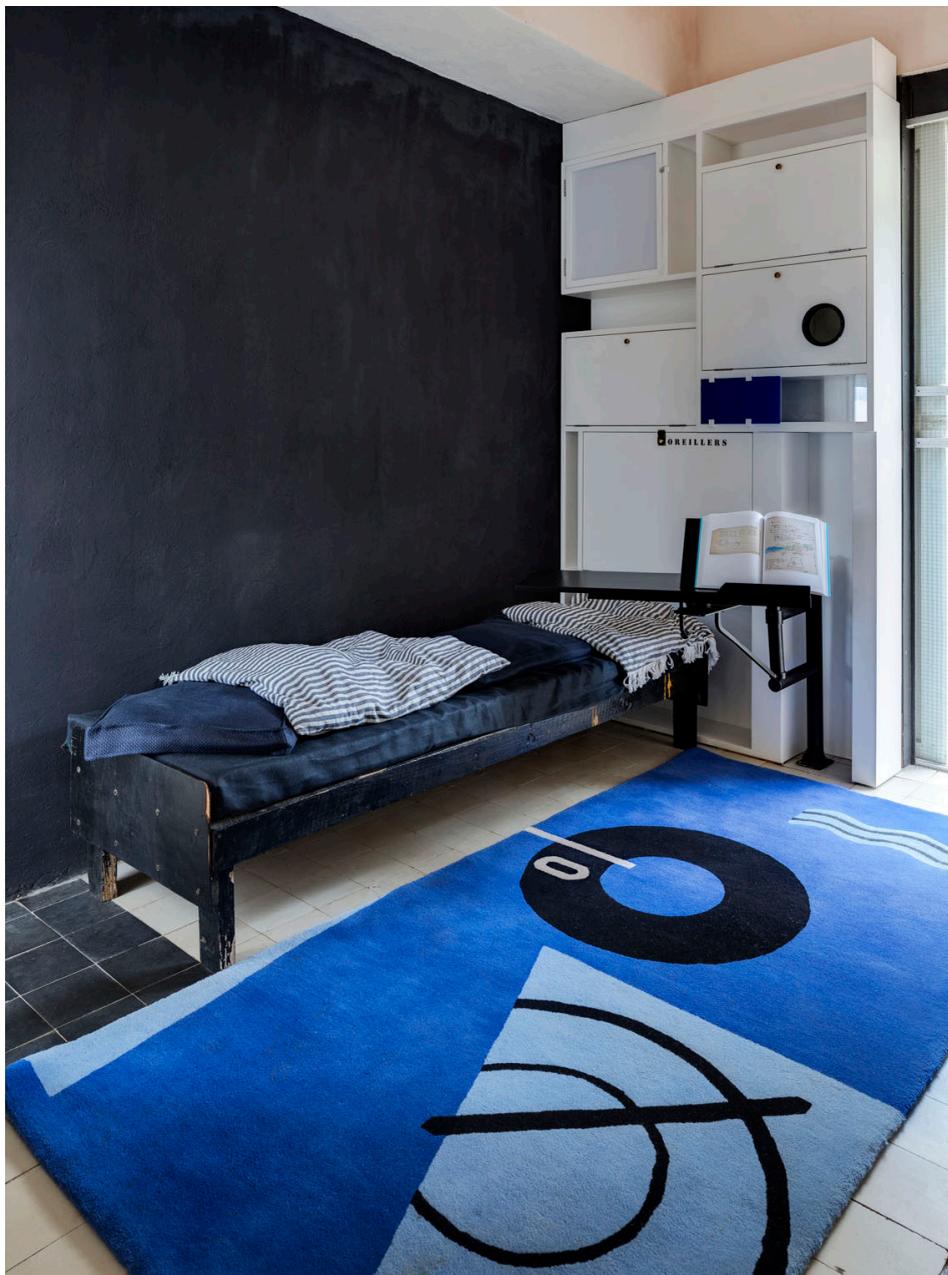
Figure 5. *Blue Marine Rug* by Eileen Gray, collection 1920-1930, *E-1027* villa interiors. Courtesy: *Cap Moderne*, France.

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Figure 6. *Cap Moderne* site, view from the bay. Courtesy: *Cap Moderne*, France.

SUGGESTIONS
FOR DESIGN

IV

Photos Collection

António da Cruz Rodrigues, Universidad Lusofona, Lisbon, Portugal

> "Homeostasis is the powerful innate imperative whose fulfillment
> implies, in every living organism, whether great or small, nothing
> more, nothing less than persisting and prevailing."
>
> António Damásio, *The Strange Order of Things*

Like homeostasis, Communication can be seen as a living
organism that tends to persist and move forward into the fu-
ture… even without humans!

The result of this apparent condition is the absence of bound-
aries between Real and Virtual, Photo 1,2,3, the multiplicity
of Generations, Photo 4,5,6, Non-Places, Photo 7,8,9, and
Symbiotic relationships between human beings and technolo-
gy, Photo 10,11,12.

The question posed for the future is, if this "living" organism,
which is communication, acquire consciousness, ability to
feel, generate learning, self-regulate, store and gain consid-
erable autonomy, what will be the consequence for Humanity
itself?

Photos from this collection have been shown in the exhibition "Communicando. Da Massificação à Convergência, para onde no futuro?" held from February 3 to March 20, 2018 at the Museu Nacional de História Natural and da Ciência.
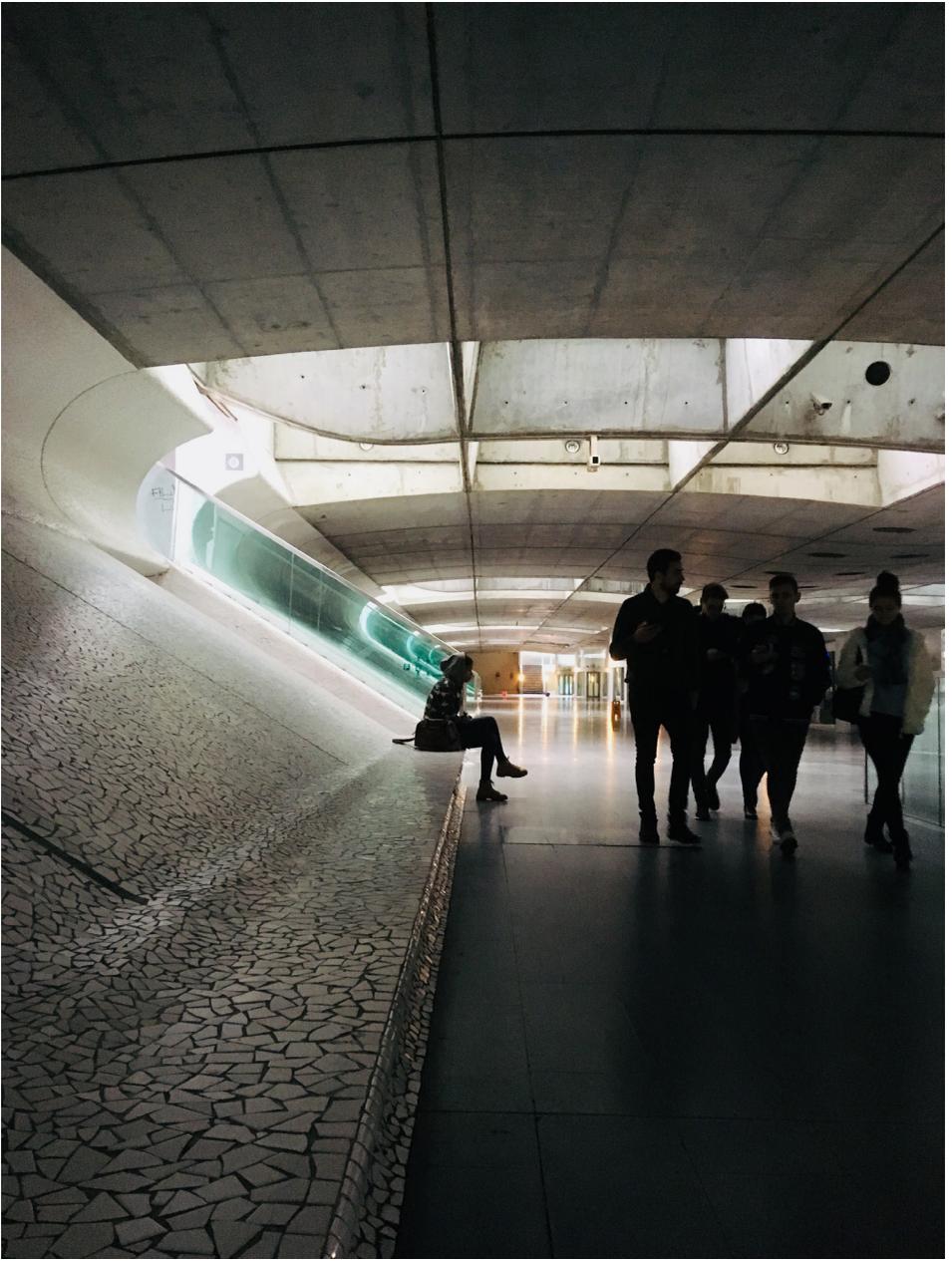
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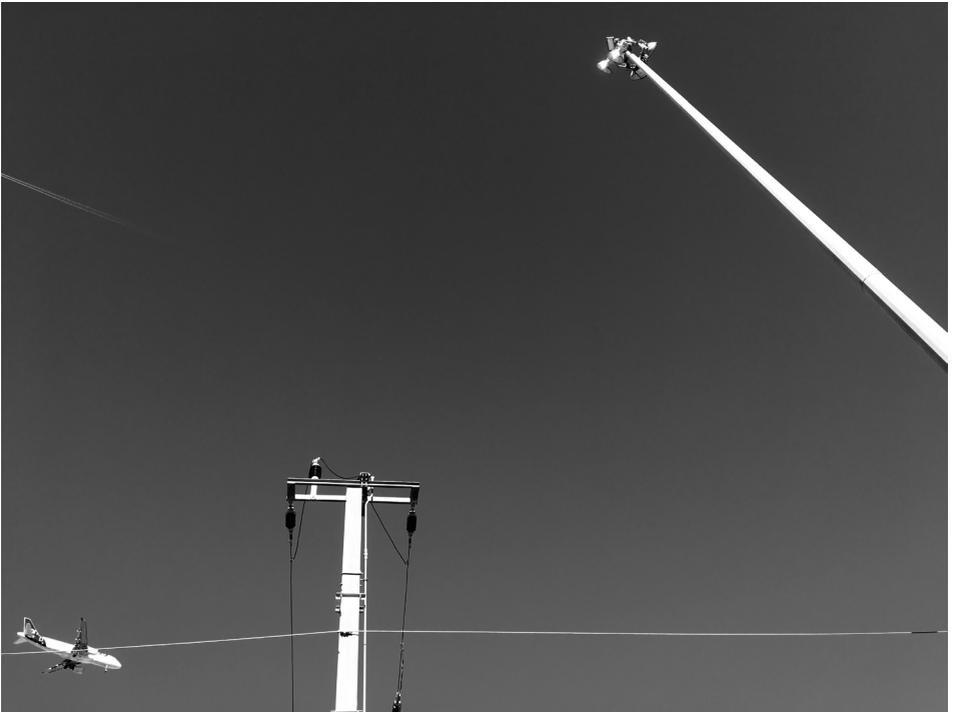
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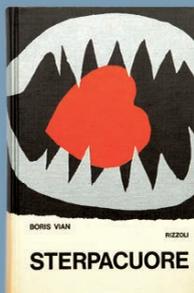
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