

Designing Hybrid Spaces

ENVISIONING PLURAL ECOSYSTEMS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL
PRACTICES FOR REGENERATIVE URBAN FUTURES

Edited by

Laura Galluzzo and Salvatore Di Dio

Design International series

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Hybrid Spaces: values, relations and participation

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According to the Eurispes Report Public Real Estate: An Asset to be Enhanced (2025), Italy's public real estate portfolio is valued at €296.9 billion, of which about €31 billion corresponds to institutional properties no longer directly used by public administrations. Nearly half of this stock is leased to private actors, while around €10 billion remains entirely unused, resulting in missed valorization and potential degradation. The Annual Report on Public Real Estate by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (cited by Eurispes) further estimates that 9.16% of institutional buildings and 6.46% of residential buildings are currently unutilized. A significant portion of this underutilised heritage consists of public interiors, defined as spatially contained environments inside civic buildings and public institutions, such as schools, hospitals, cultural centres, and administrative offices (Pimlott, 2018). In recent years, these interiors have been increasingly subject to de-functionalisation, a process driven by structural transformations in public service provision. One of the primary factors behind this shift is the digitalisation of public services. These transformations have reshaped citizens' relationships with public space, reducing

physical access and interaction. As a result, many public interiors are undergoing profound changes in terms of service functions, spatial organisation, and patterns of use (Legeby *et al.*, 2022). These developments highlight not only an issue of resource inefficiency, but also an opportunity: the reactivation of these underused spaces could support sustainable development goals by reducing waste and fostering social inclusion.

Urban regeneration through culture (Micelli *et al.*, 2024) represents a growing phenomenon in Italy, marked by increasing institutionalisation and diffusion across the country. This process is visible in both policy frameworks and on-the-ground practices. Recent mapping and infrastructural efforts reveal a structured movement that redefines the relationship between space, culture, and citizenship. As Ostanel (2025) observes, the intersection between cultural and social dimensions is generating hybrid practices that challenge traditional sectoral boundaries and contribute to urban revitalisation with a generative, community-driven approach.

Among the most promising forms of spatial reuse are the Socio-cultural Hybrid Spaces (SCHS), which function at the intersection of cultural production, social innovation, and urban regeneration in plural ecosystems. These spaces often emerge from grassroots initiatives and are hosted in a wide variety of underused settings: former industrial buildings, farmsteads, kindergartens, churches, cinemas, offices, gatehouses, and market halls. They respond to urban fragmentation and social exclusion by becoming incubators of creative practices and social experimentation (Manzini, 2021). Their adaptive, multifunctional nature enables them to blend cultural, social, and economic dimensions, creating fertile ground for both innovation and cohesion (Krasilnikova & Klimov, 2020). These SCHS promote collaboration and active involvement from diverse stakeholders. They are not merely locations for public interaction, but active parts of the urban fabric – hubs of civic participation and collective empowerment that contribute to a broader, more inclusive idea of plural cityscapes.

The increasing need for more flexible and queer urban environments resonates with the notion of open urbanism as described by Sennett (2017). Within this framework, SCHS are gaining centrality as experimental platforms for participation and inclusion through cultural

and creative processes. They represent concrete sites of social innovation, where cultural practices respond to unmet social needs while fostering new forms of collaboration and community building (Murray *et al*, 2010). Despite their growing significance, local public administrations often struggle to support the scalability and institutional recognition of SCHS. The absence of shared models and evaluation tools limits the potential for replicating these initiatives and systematically assessing their social, economic, and environmental impact. To unlock their transformative potential, it is essential to develop shared and collaborative frameworks and public policies that acknowledge and sustain these practices.

What social role can SCHS play in counteracting urban inequalities and in fostering new forms of active citizenship? How can participatory practices become not only tools for shared design, but real democratic governance devices capable of redefining the relationships between communities, institutions, and urban spaces?

Building on these questions, the action-research project *OS-MOSI*. Observation and Study of Design and Development Models of hybrid Spaces, places of urban experimentation and social Inclusion through creative and cultural activities explores the impact of SCHS in Italy, focusing specifically on the regions of Lombardy and Sicily. Funded by the Ministry of University and Research through the National Research Program and Projects of Relevant National Interest (PRIN) 2022, the project is coordinated by the Polimi DESIS Lab Research Group, operating within the Department of Design at the Politecnico di Milano, within the co-coordination by the University of Palermo through its Department of Architecture. Additional contributions come from the Department of Architecture, Built Environment and Construction Engineering and the Department of Management Engineering at the Politecnico di Milano, as well as the Department of Psychological, Pedagogical, Exercise and Educational Sciences at the University of Palermo.

OSMOSI aims to contribute to the emerging field of study on the impact of SCHS, proposing a framework to support their development and their potential adaptability and scalability across various urban and extra-urban contexts. The overarching objective of the research project is to develop a model capable of guiding Public Administra-

tions and relevant stakeholders in the experimentation and implementation of future SCHS that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. The research benefits from the collaboration of two nationally recognised reference points in the field of spatial hybridisation: BASE Milano, located in the former Ansaldo complex in Milan (Lombardy), is an experiment in the contamination between art, business, technology, and social innovation, and a prominent hub for public–private collaboration and social innovation; and Farm Cultural Park in Favara (Sicily), an independent initiative that has transformed the city's historic centre into a vibrant space for urban and cultural regeneration, promoting active participation and sustainable development. Building on the practices and knowledge developed by these SCHS, the project has initiated two local pilot actions: *Open Casello* in Milan and the *Museo delle Città del Mondo (World Cities' Museum)* in Palermo. Both serve as experimental contexts to test innovative models for the activation and management of SCHS, in close dialogue with local communities and public institutions.

Among its core objectives, *OSMOSI* project addresses the challenge of connecting geographically distant contexts by fostering the convergence of diverse experiences and promoting shared participatory processes. Digital collaborative environments – such as metaverse platforms – are emerging as alternative or complementary venues for public interaction. While often framed as substitutes for physical presence, these digital spaces require further investigation in terms of their potential to enhance participation, accessibility, and inclusion. Rather than replicating physical spaces, the metaverse is conceived as a hybrid ecosystem that can bridge spatial and social divides while supporting Participatory Design practices. The research critically investigates its affordances and limitations, particular attention is paid to user engagement, the role of digital tools in mediating co-design processes, and their broader implications for spatial perception, social interaction, and innovation in design methodologies. The productive dimension is not merely symbolic; the co-created materials function as decision-making tools, communication supports among stakeholders, and operational resources for implementing real-world solutions. Their value lies in this dual role: both as tangible outcomes of the design process and as reinforcements

of participants' commitment and ownership. Co-presence in virtual environments, combined with shared spatial and narrative experiences, fosters collaboration among heterogeneous actors. Furthermore, participants develop new competencies, including digital literacy, communication and collaboration skills, and creative capabilities (Romero, 2016).

Taking into consideration the premises and goals of the OSMOSI project, it is clear that there is an urgent need to foster interdisciplinarity and expand the scope of existing fields of experimentation, adapting them to diverse cultural and territorial contexts. This book aims to serve as an open interdisciplinary forum designed to cultivate a community of scholars and practitioners interested in envisioning plural ecosystems and socio-cultural practices for regenerative urban futures. The diversity of backgrounds and expertise among the contributors has naturally generated overlaps, variations in terminology, and at times divergent perspectives across the chapters. Far from being a limitation, we regard this heterogeneity as one of the book's main strengths: it mirrors the plurality, openness, and experimental nature of SCHS themselves, and offers readers a multifaceted lens through which to approach the topic. At the same time, it represents an essential part of the ongoing dialogue within the project – a point of departure for developing shared reflections and a more common ground for future research and practice. The volume is structured into four sections, each reflecting a specific perspective on SCHS, their functions, design approaches, and transformative potential within contemporary urban and territorial contexts, this volume brings together contributions from an open call and integrates the initial outcomes of the OSMOSI research, establishing a rich and diverse collection of reflections and case studies. The book is organized into four sections:

- Hybrid Spaces as a plural ecosystem;
- The public value of Hybrid Spaces;
- Cultural and participatory synergies in reclaiming public spaces;
- Digital tools for new models of participation.

The first section, *Hybrid Spaces as a Plural Ecosystem*, brings together a range of reflections and case studies that explore SCHS as

adaptive, multifunctional environments capable of responding to the complexities of contemporary urban and territorial contexts. Emphasis is placed on their evolving and processual nature and on their ability to reconfigure underutilised or abandoned places into meaningful and inclusive settings (Chapter 1). From self-managed community hubs to experimental design interventions, the texts highlight how SCHS operate at the intersection of social practices, cultural engagement and urban regeneration. They invite a rethinking of urban environments as plural ecosystems shaped through situated, participatory and iterative practices (Chapter 2). The contributions offer diverse perspectives on the potential of SCHS to foster sustainable regeneration through context-sensitive and adaptive strategies. One paper investigates how participation, procedural flexibility and non-intentionality function as generative forces for long-term social and economic sustainability, illustrated by the case of Il Giardino di Torricola in Rome (Chapter 4), a self-managed community ecosystem that fosters inclusion and resilience. Another contribution focuses on the city of Venice (Chapter 3), where interior design becomes a tool to reconfigure underused spaces in response to tourism monoculture and the decline of stable inhabitation. These interventions integrate cultural, productive and relational functions, offering sustainable and participatory design strategies. In Brazil, the symbolic reactivation of Casa Linhares (Chapter 5) demonstrates how collaborative cultural practices and place-making processes can strengthen social bonds and support territorial development through local engagement. Other works highlight often overlooked dimensions of design, such as environmental comfort – thermal, acoustic and visual – as critical components in the co-design of multifunctional public interiors (Chapter 6). Here, comfort is not only addressed as a technical standard but is redefined through the interaction between users, technologies and spatial configurations. Therefore, a study on Milan's hybrid economies (Chapter 7) explores how design can support inclusive innovation, weaving together manufacturing, education and cultural activity into multifunctional platforms that enhance civic engagement and regenerate peripheral urban areas through relational proximity and new urban imaginaries. Together, these contributions offer a multifaceted understanding of SCHS as dynamic and generative ecosystems that

negotiate complexity, promote social cohesion and support regenerative urban futures.

The second section, *The Public Value of Hybrid Spaces*, explores how these spaces generate civic impact, support new governance models, and contribute to more resilient and inclusive urban systems. Hybrid spaces produce multiple forms of value – social, cultural, environmental, and economic – beyond conventional market evaluations. Grounded in plural and intersectional practices, they challenge dominant governance structures and open up possibilities for more inclusive and participatory models that recognise historically marginalised voices. This section presents contributions that examine different ways in which SCHS act as civic infrastructures, starting from an overview of their social impact emerged from the *OSMOSI* mapping (Chapter 9). The case of Open Casello in Milan illustrates how youth participation and co-management can inform sustainable models of governance (Chapter 10). Other field-based experiences in Milan highlight how hybrid spaces can activate territories, foster reciprocity, and support informal networks through proximity services and relational welfare (Chapter 11). Further contributions analyse the outcomes of the SPACE programme by Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo (Chapter 12), which supported collaborative spaces across Northern Italy by strengthening their management models and competencies. The experience of Fondazione Housing Sociale (Chapter 13) focuses on local commerce as a tool for community building and neighbourhood-based innovation, showing how hybrid spaces can also serve as catalysts for economic and social inclusion. To sum up, these reflections emphasise the potential of SCHS to redefine public value by integrating civic engagement, institutional collaboration, and long-term sustainability.

The third section, *Cultural and Participatory Synergies in Reclaiming Public Spaces*, explores how cultural practices and participatory approaches contribute to the regeneration and reappropriation of public spaces as shared commons. These processes enable new forms of publicness, often driven by collaborations between institutions, local communities, cultural actors, and grassroots organisations. Through co-design, creative engagement, and inclusive cultural production, public spaces become platforms for civic activation and

social imagination. The contributions in this section reflect a diverse set of strategies and tools aimed at reinforcing the democratic role of public space. Several papers focus on how participatory and culture-based design can reframe urban transformation processes, as in the case of the *Museo delle Città del Mondo* in Palermo (Chapter 14) and the *Open Casello* in Milan (Chapter 15), developed within the *OSMOSI* project. Other contributions examine design-led innovation in peripheral areas, such as the Talents HUBs in Emilia-Romagna (Chapter 17), and the use of performative devices in bottom-up regeneration, as exemplified by *Terzo Paesaggio* in Milan (Chapter 18). Also, projects like the School of Neighbourhoods in Milan (Chapter 16), illustrate how distributed and adaptive design frameworks can support citizen-driven initiatives and the emergence of new hybrid spaces across urban territories. Taken as a whole, these experiences emphasise the importance of inclusive participation, cultural infrastructure, and relational dynamics in reclaiming and reimagining public space in ways that are locally rooted and socially transformative.

The fourth and final section, *Digital Tools for New Models of Participation*, investigates how digital technologies are reshaping participatory design in the context of public space, cultural heritage, and collective governance. From immersive environments to digital platforms, these tools expand possibilities for engagement and co-creation while introducing new challenges around access, embodiment, and inclusivity. The contributions explore a range of approaches, from the use of the metaverse for co-design in the *OSMOSI* project (Chapter 19), to the application of sensory design to support embodied and plural participation in hybrid spaces (Chapter 20). Comparative studies of platforms like *Decidim* and *Lisboa Participa* (Chapter 21) offer insights into digital democracy and participatory policymaking, while the ongoing development of a shared platform by Stecca3 and Mare Culturale Urbano (Chapter 22) reflects efforts to build community-driven networks that transcend consumption-based models. Viewed in combination, these projects illustrate how digital tools can facilitate collaborative design, reinforce civic engagement, and articulate inclusive modes of participation across physical and virtual environments. This volume has the ambition to move beyond mere academic reflection and provide a critical toolkit for public adminis-

trations and stakeholders. We challenge the often-ephemeral nature of past experiments in SCHS, which have too frequently resulted in elite, exclusionary models that fail to achieve lasting public value. Our research posits that for these spaces to truly fulfil their promise as engines of urban regeneration, they must become radically more public, open, and accessible. This requires a deliberate shift in strategy:

- From temporary projects to permanent infrastructure: we advocate for embedding these spaces within the long-term strategic framework of the city, moving them from the periphery next to the core of public service delivery.
- From cultural consumption to civic functions: we collected concrete examples and frameworks for integrating essential, strategic public services – from citizen labs and public library outposts to co-working hubs for the third sector – within these environments. This creates a vital public-private functional mix that guarantees daily relevance.
- From top-down to ecosystem activation: contributions in this volume demonstrate how to systematically engage and activate the rich ecosystems of local third-sector actors, positioning them not as beneficiaries but as co-designers and fundamental partners in governance.

By dissecting both successful and failed models, we aim to offer actionable insights into participatory decision-making. Our goal is to empower PAs with the design-led methodologies needed to catalyse this structural change, ultimately strengthening the role of these spaces as essential, democratic infrastructure for community-driven social innovation.

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Isabella Inti: Founding member of *Temporioso.net*, a network dedicated to the temporary reuse of vacant urban spaces and CEO of *Temporioso srl*, which leads initiatives on revitalizing abandoned sites. An architect and landscape technician, she holds a PhD in Territorial Planning and Public Policies from IUAV. Inti currently teaches Urban Planning at Politecnico and co-directs the M-US-T Master in Tem-

porary Uses program, focusing on innovative strategies for activating unused spaces. She is currently president of Stecca3, a hybrid socio-cultural space in Milan focused on community engagement and cultural events, continuing her commitment to fostering inclusive and dynamic urban environments. Her work centers on revitalizing abandoned spaces and large brownfield sites.

Paola La Scala: Lecturer and Research Fellow in Design at the University of Palermo. An architect with a Ph.D. in Exhibition Design, her work explores the role of cultural practices in the reactivation of public space, with a particular focus on sustainable tourism, participatory design, and museum experiences in both physical and digital contexts. She has taken part in national and international projects involving traditional and advanced technologies for the enhancement of cultural and architectural heritage. Her recent research investigates how temporary architecture can serve as a catalyst for urban and social reactivation, especially in smaller towns, and how the design of cultural practices can foster community engagement and drive social innovation by enabling new forms of collective use, care, and re-appropriation of the urban environment.

Tecla Livi: PhD, senior expert in planning, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies, as well as in the strategic design of territorial development and cohesion policies. She has extensive experience in university teaching and socio-economic research and serves as a senior consultant for Public Administrations and social partners. Her research focuses on social and urban innovation policies, and she designs and supports processes of social innovation, urban regeneration, and place-based local development. From 2016 to 2023, she was a member of the Evaluation and Analysis Unit for Programming (Department for Cohesion Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers). Prior to this, she spent over fifteen years working on the planning and management of urban regeneration programs for the City of Turin.

Andrea Manciaracina: PhD in Design and Researcher at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano. His research focuses

on the relationship between communication and graphic design, public spaces and services through the mediation of technologies to experiment with visual communication systems that promote spaces and services, visual tools to implement strategies oriented towards social innovation, and communication systems that promote human interaction in spaces. Attentive to these issues, he contributes to the field of design by participating in researches and conferences, writing articles and publishing books.

Roberta Mastropirro: Born in Milan in 1974. She graduated in Architecture from the Politecnico di Milano and obtained a PhD in Architecture, Urban Planning, and Conservation of Living Places. With twenty years of experience in conserving and enhancing cultural heritage, she has led and collaborated on various international projects with Architetti senza Frontiere Italy and the Lerici Foundation, gaining expertise in transferring knowledge to local communities. Since 2018, she has been a Contract Professor at the Politecnico di Milano, teaching Built Heritage and Sustainable Development. She is also a board member of the Stecca3 cultural center, overseeing space management and programming, and since 2023, she has served as vice president.

Andréia Mesacasa: Associate Professor at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Sul (IFRS/Brazil) – Design Department. Postdoctoral researcher at the Santa Catarina State University (UDESC/Brazil). PhD in Design from the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR/Brazil). Master in Regional Development from the Federal Technological University of Paraná (UTFPR/Brazil). Graduated in Fashion from the State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC/Brazil); Her areas of interest are focused on the following themes: Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Product Development, Drawing and Illustration, Design for Sustainability.

Elton Moura Nickel: PhD in Production Engineering from Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, specializing in Product and Process Engineering. With an undergraduate degree in Industrial Design, he bridges design and engineering to investigate organizational ergonomics and participatory design approaches that enhance the relationship

between environments and their users. Head of the Design Department and current Coordinator of the Graduate Program in Design at Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, he is also Editor-in-Chief of HFD – Human Factors in Design. His work focuses on transforming systems that improve human well-being and productivity.

Ingrid Paoletti: Full Professor in the Technology of Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano. She has a PhD in Building Technology from Milan's Polytechnic University and was an associated researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is the founder of the research group in theoretical and design experimentation Material Balance, where she is involved in innovative technologies and materials to develop a new and responsible material culture. Since 2023 she has been the Rector's Delegate for Exhibitions and Events. Her books include: *L'innovazione consapevole* (Maggioli 2012), *Advanced Customization in Architectural Design and Construction* (con R. Naboni, Springer 2015), *Material Balance: A Design Equation* (Springer 2020) and *Siate Materialisti!* (Einaudi 2021).

Irene Patria: PhD candidate in Service Design for Public Administration at Sapienza University of Rome, supported by ART-ER. With a background in Advanced Design, curriculum in services, and hands-on experience in participatory projects across Europe and Kenya, she explores how design can foster inclusive and sustainable territorial development. Her work combines research, fieldwork, and co-design practices to support innovation in public services.

Elena Vittoria Pedrina: Architect and Adjunct Professor in Interior design at Università Iuav di Venezia. She studied architecture at Iuav di Venezia and completed her academic training at the Escuela Técnica Superior del Vallès (ETSAV) through the Erasmus program. In 2000, she co-founded the architecture firm C&P Architetti with Luca Cuzzolin, developing projects at various scales, ranging from interior design to the creation of retail and showroom spaces, as well as architectural design in the residential and workplace sectors. Since 2019, she has been involved in academia as an adjunct professor within the Bachelor's Degree Program in Product, Visual Communication and Interior Design (Interior Design Curriculum).

Federica Pradella: PhD Candidate in Technological and Environmental Design of Architecture and she's part of Material Balance Research team at Milan's Polytechnic University. She holds a Master's degree in Architecture – Built Environment – Interiors and a II level Master in Material Balance Design. She focuses on bio-based materials, design for disassembly strategies, and innovative construction workflows. One of her works, showcased at the Lucca Biennale Cartasia 2024, merges research with real-world applications. She has collaborated with Architecture firms as ATI Project and Lombardini22, gaining experience in both concept design and execution phases.

Sandra Regina Rech: Associate Professor at the Santa Catarina State University (UDESC/Brazil) - Fashion Department; Tenured Professor of the Graduate Program in Fashion (PPGMODA/UDESC) - Professional Master's Degree in Apparel and Fashion Design and Leader of the Research Group on Fashion Design and Technology (UDESC/CNPq). She was a Visiting Professor at the Politecnico di Milano (Italy). She is the Coordinator of the laboratory FPLab - Futuro do Presente (UDESC) and Collaborating Researcher at the University of Lisbon (CIAUD/Portugal). Her areas of interest are focused on the following themes: Fashion Design, Trend Studies, Scenarios, Consumer Culture, Qualitative Research, Methodologies.

Mariana Rosa: Lisbon-based designer and master's student in Design for Sustainability at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon. Her work focuses on social design, emphasizing the role of designers as catalysts for change through community engagement. Mariana is involved in the INSPIRE project, contributing with her knowledge of design and art-based methods for Lisbon's pilot project as a research grant holder at Instituto de Ciências Sociais. Drawing on her background in participatory design, in April 2024, Mariana took part in the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Festival in Brussels, where she co-presented a workshop based on her Entre_Laços project.

Caroline Santos da Silva: Master's student in the Graduate Program in Fashion and Apparel Design at the Santa Catarina State University (UDESC/Brazil) and a professor in the undergraduate Fashion Design

course. She graduated in Fashion and holds a postgraduate degree in Photography from Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI/Brazil). Her areas of interest include Fashion Image, Creative Processes, Performance, Visual Arts, and Cultural Landscape.

Carla Sedini: Associate Professor at the Department of Humanities, IULM University. A sociologist with a PhD in Quality of Life in the Information Society, she integrates social research and design to explore themes such as social innovation, territorial development, and cultural industries. Formerly Assistant Professor at Politecnico di Milano, she has contributed to national and international research projects and authored numerous publications. Her work focuses on participatory processes, strategic design, and inclusive urban transformation.

Daniela Selloni: Associate Professor and researcher at Polimi DESIS Lab, Department of Design - Politecnico di Milano. She works on service design, social innovation, placemaking and more specifically on how co-design can be experimented in public and private organizations.

Mathew Spialtini: Research Fellow at Università degli Studi di Milano and a Research Collaborator at the Polimi DESIS Lab, Politecnico di Milano. He holds a Master's in Product Service System Design (2024), with a thesis on multispecies design in hybrid urban spaces. He is also a Teaching Assistant at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano.

Mara Soncin: Senior assistant professor at the Department of Management, Economics and Industrial Engineering at Politecnico di Milano. She obtained her PhD focusing on topics related to the evaluation of performance in digital learning within universities, and has since continued this line of research alongside themes related to the economics of education and public administration management. Additionally, she is involved in teaching activities both at the university level and in post-graduate courses.

Paulo Eduardo Tonin: PhD candidate in Design at Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, currently conducting research during a

visiting period at Politecnico di Milano. An architect and urban planner by training, his work integrates Cognitive Psychology, UX Design, Semiotics, Neuroscience and Anthropology to investigate Sensory Design and Human Experience within hybrid environments, with an emphasis on retail and exhibition spaces. Over the years, Paulo has engaged in studies at renowned institutions including University of Lisbon, Central Saint Martins, NYU, and Parsons. His research advances understanding of multisensory interactions to inform design strategies fostering meaningful and immersive environments.

Anna Turco: PhD student in Design at the Department of Planning, Design, Architecture Technology of Sapienza University of Rome. Her research focuses on Visual Communication Design, with particular attention to Environmental Graphic Design as a tool for the reactivation and regeneration of public space. Her work explores the intersection between graphics, environment and social dynamics, investigating the potential of the visual sign as a narrative, relational and transformative device in contemporary urban contexts.

Giulia Vaiani: PhD student at the Department of Management, Economics and Industrial Engineering at Politecnico di Milano. Her research interests focus on the use of digital technologies in school settings and on the quantitative analysis of educational processes.

Valentina Zaro: Urban planner and placemaker with more than 10 years of experience in community empowerment, community welfare, urban regeneration, service design, concept planning, communication, and facilitation of processes in the field of social housing. At Fondazione Housing Sociale, she is responsible for the Competence Center related to services and commerce in urban regeneration projects.

RESEARCH PROJECT

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RESEARCH GROUP



DIPARTIMENTO DI DESIGN



DIPARTIMENTO
DI ARCHITETTURA
INGEGNERIA
DELLE COSTRUZIONI
E AMBIENTE COSTRUITO



DIPARTIMENTO
DI INGEGNERIA
GESTIONALE



NETWORK AND SUPPORT

BASE

FARM CULTURAL PARK

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This volume investigates the potential of Socio-Cultural Hybrid Spaces as engines of urban regeneration, democratic participation, and cultural innovation. Emerging at the intersection of cultural production, social experimentation, and territorial transformation, these spaces challenge conventional boundaries between public and private, temporary and permanent, physical and digital. Through four main sections, the book develops a critical and impactful perspective on the functions, design and interdisciplinary approaches, and transformative potential of Socio-Cultural Hybrid Spaces. From their evolving role as plural ecosystems to their capacity to generate declinations of public value; from cultural and participatory practices that reclaim and reimagine the commons to the opportunities and challenges introduced by digital technologies; it offers a multifaceted lens on *hybrid practices* in contemporary urban and territorial contexts. By weaving together theoretical perspectives, empirical research, and case studies, this book provides critical reflections by and for scholars, practitioners, and institutions. How can cultural initiatives generate new alliances between institutions and communities? What forms of participation can strengthen the democratic role of public space? And what challenges arise in connecting physical and virtual dimensions for collective engagement?