

| **SENSITALIANI** |
| Curated by Anna Barbara |



Embassy of Italy
Al Kuwait

A Project in Collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Kuwait

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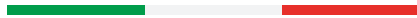
SENSITALIANI in Kuwait is a program born as consequence of the International Italian Day, the event that promotes the Italian design around the world as a country's excellence.

The mission of SENSITALIANI is to bridge and bring cultures closer together, to recognize each other and offer their respective countries moments of confrontation and friendship around the design.

The name SENSITALIANI comes from the fact that the best qualities of Italian design are about an aesthetic that affects all the senses, which puts the bodies, the experience of the places and the refinement of the technologies used, at the base of the quality of the much loved Made in Italy.

The SENSITALIANI program hosted 16 lectures, 10 conferences, 29 speakers, 43 students involved, was coordinated by Poli.design, sponsored by Politecnico di Milano, and the contents of this incredible experience are collected within this volume.

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**Embassy of Italy
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Reejy Atef Abdelatty Mikbail

The Influence of Teaching Italian Design Methodologies to Foreign Students and Designers from SENSITALIANI Perspective

Learning Italian Design Approaches Enhances Design Thinking

Italian design doesn't necessarily mean made in Italy, it is an art that can be studied and applied globally. From a foreign design student point of view, studying different Italian design approaches influence one's design methodology by identifying the relationship between aesthetics and function, societal, environmental, historical, and technological factors influencing the characteristics and potential of design ideas. Understanding that great design is much more than aesthetics, but also being able to communicate, intrigue, and represent something, as well as provide solutions.

It emphasizes the importance of the design which is centered on finding inspiration in unexpected areas, such as people, art, movies, food, fashion, beauty books, nature, etc. One that is more oriented towards personal experience, authenticity and storytelling; a concept that creates an everlasting memory. In addition, it is an activity of research and action that fosters innovation and creativity by using design and design thinking to generate new innovative solutions that address society's needs and the global community's challenges.

The Italian design approach sums up the attention to craftsmanship and detail, innovative individualistic quality in design and finding a balance between the classical elegance and modern creativity in design approach.

Carlo Scarpa, who focuses on material manipulation in relation to the human body, could be an inspiration. He emphasizes how to approach the right balance between materials, time-honored crafts with modern production methods. The use of light and shadow, undecorated use of materials, symbolic use of water that is how sound shapes what we see, what we touch and how we feel about it, all creating an impactful space which is depicted beautifully in his designs.

SENSITALIANI Students' Experience as a Case Study

Human senses in integration with design is one of the Italian approaches that give a deep understanding of design - not only sight, but also hearing, smell, touch, and taste. It shows the beauty of Italian culture, from art to design, theater, cinema, cuisine, sports, and much more. Along the period of 9 months, SENSITALIANI gave students the complete freedom to express their creativity and individuality. It also emphasized on how essential it is to engage the human senses to architectural space planning as it leads to a meaningful experience.

Nour Hashim, one of SENSITALIANI students, states that through the program she realized that design is not always about the visible aspects but rather what effect does the design do to our senses including touch, smell, sight and hearing. As a student and designer living in the middle east, she felt she is most encouraged to think of western designs when looking at innovation while not considering the beauty that comes from her culture in design, this way of thinking inspired her while working on her final project.

Furthermore, Joud Alhajeri underlines how SENSITALIANI expanded her knowledge on design and creative thinking, teaching her the methodology of implementing senses on her design projects. Additionally, Thuraya AlHamad explained how she gained an array of knowledge from each SENSITALIANI topics and from the discussions that arose. Not only did she learn more about the Italian culture, but she also got the opportunity to learn how to understand a certain culture on different levels and this led her to be inspired by it through different senses which she believes it allowed her to become more creative in her design process.

Last but not least, Khaled Jamal illustrates his involvement in various design disciplines and exploring different fields of design and architecture through SENSITALIANI. It gave him the opportunity to expand his perception regarding the path he aims to pursue as a future passion and professional career. Moreover, he had a wonderful chance to get introduced to some of the most inspiring Italian Architects, Artists, and designers and learn about the Italian culture of design and art, which appeared to be much

more human centric and experiential oriented. Consequently, his horizons of how he conceptualizes ideas and interpret them expanded a lot and was influenced dramatically by some of the professors we encountered during the program.

Intercultural Design: Italian and Kuwaiti Design Cultures Connection

Design and culture cannot be separated and flow together from ancient human civilizations to the present day. Culture describes shared values, including human behavior, material culture, and social conditions that encourage designers to create spaces that understand people's lived experiences. Both Kuwaiti and Italian cultures are fond of authenticity and staying true to origin. Their passion for culture is reflected through their designs. Both cultures often incorporate religion and history into their designs whether it's Islamic art or gothic cathedrals, which end up being major attractions in both countries. "Our cultures meet in the love for creativity and authentic designs" says Joud Alhajeri.

From a Kuwaiti culture point of view, Thuraya AlHamad outlines how the Italian and Kuwaiti design cultures meet through many different aspects of design such as art, fashion, music and so much more. The similarity in where inspiration is drawn from, she believes, is close. As a Kuwaiti, she thinks they value those things as much as Italians. On the other hand, Merrit Hassan, SENSITALIANI student, described how both countries have a deep history with design and have their own distinguished identity. For example, Kuwait is known for its Sadu rugs, which are made of hand woven, dyed sheep wool, which are known for its distinctive patterns. Similarly, Italy is known for its Rococo column, known for its elaborate design. Whether you look at the Sadu or the Rococo Column you would instantly know where they are from, knowing their culture and origin.

In her SENSITALIANI project "Strings of Harmony", Gunika K.Anand, emphasis the cultural amalgamation of both Kuwaiti and Italian brotherhood. Weaving the traditional stories by using the idea of thread or a yard or a string in design. A significant feature would be the use of the dome in both the countries indicating "A Vault to Heaven" which represents a higher power. Another feature demonstrated by Gunika is the intricate threadwork of both the countries. Emphasis on the street life as they are a social exhibition of multiple expressions, they unlock memories, they symbolize the various values and represent a blurred essence of the traditions of the place. Enhancing the essence of a space that is, to depict the historic significance of the perfume industry in both the countries.

From a personal point of view, as a foreign student who moved to Italy to obtain an MSc in Interior and Spatial Design at Politecnico di Milano and

currently a PhD candidate and researcher at the department of design. The experience and knowledge I gained while studying Italian design were the base that built my design thinking methodology as an international designer. Working on distinctive design projects with multicultural teams introduced me to new design techniques that helped me break beyond design thinking's limitations and become a better researcher with a message to express through design.

