

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

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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.



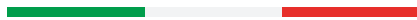
Embassy of Italy
Al Kuwait

A Project in Collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Kuwait

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**Embassy of Italy
Al Kuwait**

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“For me, gaining insight into a distinctive style of creating things and theorizing the built environment has encouraged me to turn my thoughts to the influential role of the design process. One that is more focused on personal experience, storytelling and authenticity.”

Student Khaled Jamal

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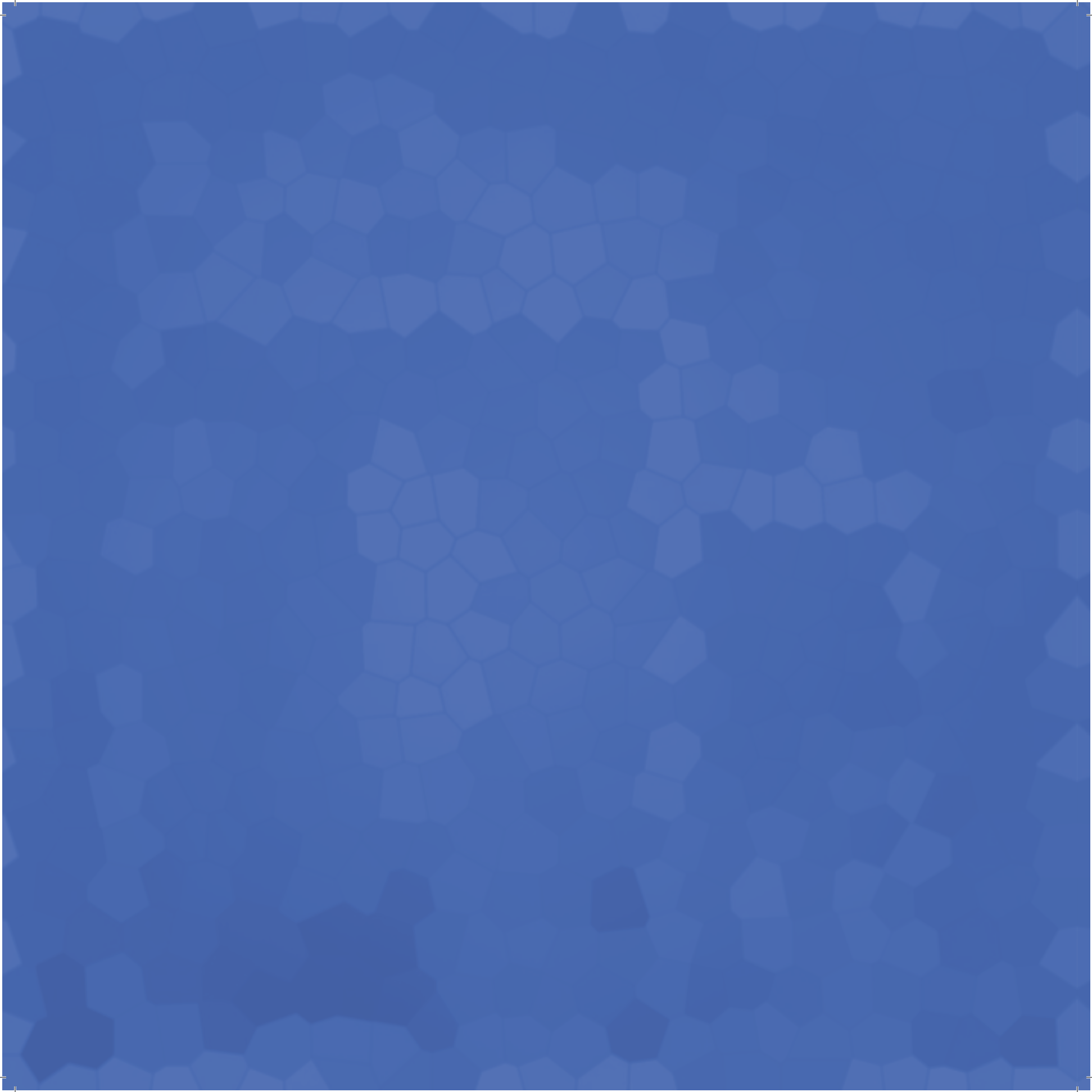
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Acknowledgement



| Part One | Introduction |

“My experience with the Sensitaliani program helped me learn how design practice combines and prioritizes different design elements and thought processes to initiate and develop ideas in response to a brief, and how design is a method used to solve problems in society.”

Student Aisha Thaher

*Carlo Baldocci
H.E. Ambassador of Italy in Kuwait*



H.E. Ambassador Carlo Baldocci

Foreward

When we started reasoning with Professor Anna Barbara - whom I would like to thank here, and all of Poli.design, for the passion and ability with which she conceived and guided this program about what would later become the "SensItaliani" Project, we had set ourselves a couple of important goals.

First of all, to focus on the promotion of Italian design in Kuwait, telling its history and peculiarities expressed in all its aspects, those of a multidisciplinary set of skills, creativity, research and entrepreneurship. I was convinced, as Anna Barbara - who professionally knows this Region well - that what we should have proposed would have been a set of diversified activities and therefore of great value for the public we intended to propose ourselves to: students and professionals of the sector interested in Italian culture. I would say more, students and professionals already in a highly receptive modality compared to Italy and open to deepen their knowledge in this path dedicated to the Italian senses, in the broadest meaning of the term.

Secondly, I do not want to neglect to highlight, how this path was also conceived (as evidenced by the many preparatory video calls ...) and then carried out in a particular moment of our lives. That of the joint effort to overcome the international pandemic. The commitment was

therefore also to know that we had to work remotely and then gradually move towards a regained (!) dynamic in the presence, already started with the beautiful ceremony for the delivery of certificates at the Embassy in December 2021. But when we proposed none of this was taken for granted, although it was already important in itself to even think about it.

"SENSITALIANI" was, is, and will continue to be - because this is not a farewell message, but rather the confirmation that our activities will continue - a travel companion that binds Italy and Kuwait in a field of narration and comparison of which the declinations and perspectives are truly innumerable.

I am therefore pleased to address this introductory greeting, expressing great appreciation for all those who have participated with commitment and interest in this first edition of our program.

Anna Barbara
Associate Professor, Design Department, Politecnico di Milano+ SENSITALIANI Scientific Director



Anna Barbara _SENSITALIANI_ Scientific Director
SENSITALIANI_Kuwait

Sensitaliani Program was born as part of a very important activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, through the Italian Embassy in Kuwait, and ADI (Italian Design Association) which for years, through International Italian Day, have been promoting Italian design around the world as a country's excellence.

The International Italian Day, so strategic, is fundamental bridge to connect and bring cultures closer together, to recognize each other and offer their respective countries moments of confrontation and friendship around the design.

On the occasion of the Italian Design Day 2019, I was invited by the Italian Embassy in Kuwait and from that occasion the Sensitaliani program was born.

We were during a pandemic, but a very courageous and hopeful action was taken by Ambassador Carlo Baldozzi, asking me to think of a way to continue to make design culture and Italy despite the obvious difficulties, indeed considering it an opportunity.

Sensitaliani Program had 16 lectures, 10 conferences, 29 speakers, 43 students involved, it was coordinated by Poli.design, sponsored by the Department and the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano, and its contents are narrated within this volume.

To Design with All the Senses

This cultural program, about the Italian design, was born in the midst of an ongoing digital revolution that has redesigned our lives, distances, the spaces we inhabit and our way of communicating and meeting each other, and during the greatest health crisis involving the entire planet, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has suddenly locked everyone in their own spaces, in their own countries, preventing for almost two years, the people of the entire planet to travel, move, work and study as we had done so far. Sensitaliani tells the story of an Italian cultural and productive system that values design as a total experience, places the body as the seat of emotions, contrasts the idea that we have all become consumers and that's it.

When people think of Italy, often they have a very stereotyped image of made in Italy... Grand Tour 's monuments... which are however the effect and not the cause of why Italy is considered one of the most important countries for design, art, fashion, food. Italian design is so important and strategic because it comes from a humanistic approach.

Italian design considers:

- knowledge as transversal to disciplines, therefore it emphasizes the encounter between expertise and sectors and people
- beauty as a quality that involves all the senses and not just sight, exploring aesthetics as a plural representation, an expression of all the senses
- diversity as a value (given by such a heterogeneous territory), but also open to the encounter with other cultures, with other religions, with other people
- history as stratification, to be preserved because it is a living memory that should not be eliminated, but neither should it be exalted, but lived in coexistence.

The theme of Italian sensitivity, from which the title of the program derives, has been central in Italy since the Renaissance and we find this attention in all forms of creativity, art, and design expressed in opera, theater, cinema, but also in food, furniture, and design, because the aesthetic and emotional dimensions are connected through the experience of perception. Sensitaliani pays attention to the qualities of sound, color, light, material, surface, smell...

Italy is very large with great regional differences, sometimes completely different, yet it is easy to recognize Italian products that come from the north or south or center of the country, as Italian. It is precisely the ability to design with all the senses that leads to a great aesthetic coherence, which is not only to be seen.



Top and bottom: Monochromatic Light, Palazzo Ducale Sassuolo, 2021.



Italian design was born as an act of creation that considers the sounds of places, natural and artificial light, the relationship between surfaces and lights, the qualities of air and its smell, the tactile experience of temperature, shadows, proprioceptive sensations.

Talking about senses in design is even more relevant in the era of digitization because it brings the experience back into the real world, into the materiality of places and experiences.

The body, even in the digital era, remains the protagonist in the spaces we design. The body is the seat of emotions even when the stimulus comes from a smart phone, even when we are sitting in front of the computer.

The Design of Creative Territories

The lectures and seminars of SENSITALIANI talked about this sensorial DNA, on which the best masters of design have worked, who have designed, taught, dared to manipulate all the senses of design - colors, shapes, meanings, memories, methodologies, etc. - to make Italian design exemplary all over the world (Camocini, p.30. Guerrini, p.74. Ingaramo, p.125).

Made in Italy, which is a phenomenon that moves very important economic sectors, is connected to the theme of Sensitaliani, because it was born at the crossroads between trend and research not only visual qualities of artifacts, products, and places (Dell'Acqua Bellavitis, p.38). It is in fact an integral part of a culture, and of its poetics, made of gestures, places and rituals of hospitality (Elgani, Scullica, p.70), but also of new visions of the world (Biamonti, p.111).

Italian design, however, is a complex story that also includes enlightened entrepreneurs, who invested their lives, and those of subsequent generations, in the territories of origin, in the expertise of local artisans, in the raw materials that those regions offered and in the local communities. This involvement, not only the company but also personal, has conferred absolute credibility, research, development, courage and risk-taking (Astori, p.42). A creative, but also productive, territorial, social, and cultural system that today is a shared heritage also through company museums (Molteni, p.115).

Design is also the creator of that territorial marketing, that transforms peripheral centers into international poles, capable of attracting tourism, investment, communication and involve local communities in a socially and economically innovative project (Trocchianesi, p.46).

Italian design, in fact, is not only a matter of designing spaces or products, but it is a cultural system that involves institutions through design awards, magazines, schools and universities, international competitions that attract designers from all over the world (Collina, p.118. Piccinno, p.78. Finessi,

p.122) and that assume an Italian design thinking as a project methodology (Cautela, p.82). Some of the meetings in the SENSITALIANI program tell the most extraordinary stories of design strategies that become places and projects in time (Zurlo, p.27. Auricchio, p.33).

The Sensitive and Sustainable Observer

Sensitaliani also deals with the other gaze, which makes design a way to build other possibilities of transformation of the world, that of the sensitive and sustainable observer, as are the women who think of places giving centrality to the relationship (Ferrara/Lecce, p.102), of fragile people (Gramegna, p.51), of dialogue, that which predisposes to the exchange between cultures and to the extraordinariness of some encounters (Cappellieri, p.87) and of the construction of international networks between institutions (Ponzini, p.107).

Through this sensitivity, new forms of interaction and new creative and design forms are born, which are sustainable, using advanced technologies, where sustainability is not a fallback, a lack, but a new form of awareness (Morello, p.35), if not an alternative luxury (Ratti, p.93. Conti, p.98).

Finally, the theme of sense_based design as a central quality of Italian design that concerns, beauty that goes beyond sight, but is declined in the poetics of light (Murano, p.67), in sounds, in the memories of smell (Barbara, p.56), in the emotions of colors (Bisson, p.60) and in the texture of materials (Paoletti, p.63).

Because if a place is beautiful to look at, but then has unbreathable air, or crowd acoustics, then I can only check it on instagram, but it will never become a place to live.

Italian Designers Do It Different!

In the last 25 years I have worked as an architect and interior designer in many countries around the world. And every time I have been called, I have asked myself: why are they calling an Italian designer? What contribution can I give as an Italian to the cultures of countries like China, England, Emirates, Japan, etc.?

What can make the difference? what is Italian design?

What is appreciated of Italian design in the world?

What can Italian design offer to the others?

What does Italian design mean today in a globalized world?

I've always studied a lot of the countries where I've designed, sometimes I've even tried to learn the language to better enter the extraordinary folds of another culture, the linguistic successes have been scarce, but the professional ones have been good. And I have always considered it

an honor to work in another country. An assignment that required great respect, study, listening and open an exchange.

Over the years, I've realized that one of the reasons why they called an Italian designer was because in our culture, designing is an exercise in creating a dialogue, not in colonizing some market.



Top: Monochromatic Light , Palazzo Ducale Sasuolo, 2021.

Matteo O. Ingaramo _ POLI.design CEO

POLI.design for International Challenges

In complex and closely interrelated worlds such as those we live in today, the design represents a resource that can guide societies and production systems towards new development models; it is also a resource that is nowadays crucial for standing up to the global competition in terms of identity and diversity. Design is considered a driving force behind the growth that can guide individual and collective choices through cultural trends, guiding tastes, behaviors, lifestyles, and consumption styles. It has numerous and highly varied applications: from research and applications connected with the introduction of new technologies to designing new products and services, from the study of communication interfaces to managing ergonomic and environmental qualities, from defining urban spaces and one's own body to governing processes connected with environmental and social sustainability policies.

POLI.design was founded by Politecnico di Milano in 1999 and today is one of the reference companies at an international level for post-graduate training. Together with the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano and the Department of Design, POLI.design forms the Design System of the Politecnico, an aggregate of resources, skills, structures, and laboratories, among the most important in the world. It plays a hinge role between universities, businesses, organizations and institutions, and professional worlds, operating in the perspective of internationalization and establishing



*Matteo O. Ingaramo
CEO of POLI.design, Associate Professor, Politecnico di Milano*

partnerships with universities, schools, organizations, institutions, companies, and companies from time to time.

POLI.design operates within an international network that is continuously growing thanks to the wide-ranging experiences and collaborations in an increasingly interconnected and global dimension. Our objective is to promote and spread the design culture through enhancing and intensifying our international relations. POLI.design has built strong relationships with companies and institutions worldwide by offering training programs for international students, professionals, and companies and organizing tailored training courses and site-specific projects.

The goal of POLI.design is to promote the exchange, access, and mobility in the world of Design, strengthening and intensifying relations in a perspective of spreading the culture of Design.

POLI.design involves each year international students coming from 88 countries all over the world, such as Colombia, Brasil, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, China, Costa Rica, Turkey, Russia, India, Uruguay, Greece, Lebanon, Switzerland, Denmark, Korea, Thailand, Morocco, Mauritius, Qatar, Uganda, etc.

Today we can add the experience promoted by the Embassy of Italy in Kuwait, which involved a contingent of local students in an activity of cultural exchange and knowledge. We welcomed this initiative because we believe a multiverse and pluricultural design vision to be of great interest. Anna Barbara, professor of the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano who oversaw the scientific direction of the initiative, proposed a broad vision, bordering on the pragmatically technical vision of the design of architectural and industrial artifacts. She suggested a vision in which the senses in their fleshly and intellectual meaning can be decisive for new-generation products and services' qualitative and performative identity.

It is an Italian challenge in the Arab land, bringing together the powerful cultural value of the two territories, ancestrally linked to a profound and heterogeneous human dimension. By involving students of the creative disciplines, there was an experiment to stimulate and enhance the design sensibilities that appear to us extremely promising in a vision of interpretation of an evolved and digital world in which the physical and material aspects of our planet remain and are stigmatized. Landscape, lights and scents, noises and silences of nature and men are perhaps a nuance and a value at the same time that we can find in the projects of the young participants in SENSITALIANI.

Our thanks go to the curator Professor Anna Barbara, to Ambassador Carlo Baldocci for allowing the fruition of this project, but above all, we thank Kuwait, with its men and women, has created an empathic, challenging prospect of a creative relationship with our country.

Acknowledgement

We, as SENSITALIANI team, would like to express our thanks and gratitude to the Embassy of Italy in Kuwait; H.E. Carlo Baldocci, the Italian Ambassador in Kuwait, Dr. Carlo Tidu (Deputy Head of Mission) and Mr. Alaa Zayed, Senior Commercial Officer in Embassy of Italy in Kuwait. In addition, POLI.design team; special thanks to Dr. Paola Galdi (POLI.design International Affairs Manager) and Thiago Ferreira (International Affairs at POLI.design), Politecnico di Milano, School of Design and Design Department. SENSITALIANI project jurors: Professor Jawad Altabtabai (Kuwait University, College of Architecture, Department of Architecture), Professor Giovanni Maria Conti (Department Design, Politecnico di Milano), and Professor Mario Bisson (Department Design, Politecnico di Milano). Furthermore, Professor Davide Ponzini, the delegate of the Middle East. Last but not least, all our colleagues and the students who participated in SENSITALIANI program.

