

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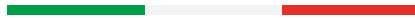
SENSITALIANI in Kuwait is a program born as consequence of the International Italian Day, the event that promotes the Italian design around the world as a country's excellence.

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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Acknowledgement

Anna Barbara

Sense-based Design

Anna Barbara, Architect and Designer is Associate Professor at the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano, member of the Polimi Design Think Tank and Lab.I.R.Int.

She has been visiting professor at Tsinghua University, Beijing (China); Kookmin University, Seoul (South Korea); Fellow at Hosei University, Tokyo (Japan) and many others.

She designed professional projects in China, Japan, USA, Europe, UK and UAE, as founder of Senselab, most of them awarded and selected by international juries. Some of her research and products have been selected by ADI-Index 2019. She has been Italian Design Ambassador 2020, 2021 in Kuwait and awarded as Eccellenze della Lombardia.

She exhibited her works at Biennale di Venezia 2010, 2012, 2021; Triennale di Milano 2003, 2018.

The relationships between senses, time, spaces, and design are developed in education, conferences, publications and professional works.

About the topic:

The theme of sense-based design aims to place, at the center of design culture, attention to the use of the senses, all the senses, and not just sight. This is nothing new in the design of spaces, but more and more the sight-centric of the gaze has marginalized other perceptions and sensibilities.



*Anna Barbara
Associate Professor, Design Department, Politecnico di Milano*

The theme is then explored using the senses as tools for a more complete and complex design, and not employing them as the end of the project. The idea is that design should be 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, and proprioceptive sensations.

Each of these questions must enter the issues the designer should face. The result is sensory typologies with which it is possible to associate places, that are geographically distant and culturally different, but with the same emotional sensitivity. In addition to the intention to build a greater sensitivity of designers to the sensory experience of places, the theme addresses the need for a shared system of representation and notation that allow for coordinated design.

The theme of sense-based design becomes even more relevant in the era of digitalization, where people often make the image of a place coincide with the place itself, losing depth, materiality, presence.

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 body is physically present in places. Having a sense-based approach is fundamental to avoid the alienation of bodies in spaces.

The Interview

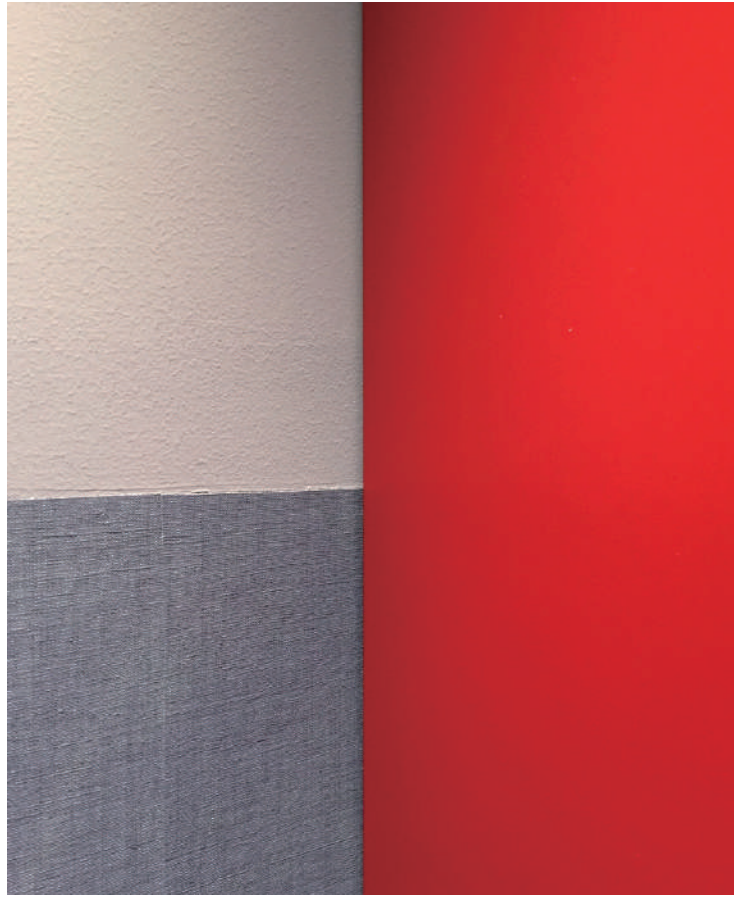
Q1: Why is the theme of the senses so important in Italian design?

A1: The theme of the senses is important to everyone, but in Italy it has been particularly central since the Renaissance. This theme runs through art of all time, but also through opera music, theater, food, and even design. Italian design is not just to be seen, but to be held, to be heard, it produces a humanistic experience that connects emotion and reason.

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 the south or the center of the country, as Italian. Precisely the ability to design with all the senses leads to a great aesthetic coherence, which is not only to be seen.

Q2: Can you say that there is an Italian style?

A2: No. I don't think there is an Italian style, but there are Italian cultures and methodologies. What is recognized as Italian, if you go to analyze it, can be very different from an aesthetic point of view, yet it is recognized because it has a particular coherence in holding together, colors, materials,



Top and bottom: Colorscape for alzheimer's patients village, Il Paese Ritrovato (B&B Colordesign).



finishes, creating a unique sound, smell, tactile stories. And this ability does not belong only to the so-called high culture, it is present in all levels of cuisine, design, art, tourism, fashion, etc.

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Q3: Can sense-based design have anything to deal with Made in Italy?

A3: What you must be careful of is sense-base design, that is the idea of building sets based on a theatricalization of certain archetypes about Italy. The commodification of Italian culture does not produce good results, because it is superficial and often based only on the image to be copied, which is far from the sensory experience of Made in Italy. In a globalized world, sense-base design can help to know and recognize a culture, decode its languages, design experience as well as places.



| Acknowledgement |

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.