

Alberto Seassaro. The demiurge

DESIGN PHILOLOGY. THE MASTERS SERIES

Edited by

Antonella Penati, Agnese Rebaglio and Paola Bertola

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Antonella Penati, Agnese Rebaglio and Paola Bertola

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***Morfemi* by Alberto Seassaro**



Last day as Dean, saying goodbye to colleagues, 2010.
Photo by Fausto Brevi.

“ Il progetto, se non
ci salva, ci consola.

[Design, if it does not save us, at least consoles us.]

ALBERTO SEASSARO

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Polyhedric and Polytechnic

Alessandro Deserti

Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano

My first encounter with Alberto Seassaro coincided with one of those moments when a group's energy and capabilities exceed the sum of its parts. I remember a smoky room, the kind that still existed in the 1990s, in which a small cluster of people occupied the little space left free by cupboards and tables on which stacks of documents were heaped, sheets with notes and corrections, and diagrams crowded with boxes, arrows, and connections. Earlier still, I recall an equally cramped basement where, when I was still a student, I worked with him on mounting an exhibition that later led to my thesis, for which Alberto Seassaro was supervisor and which allowed me to begin to know him in a way decidedly more intimate and profound than is usual in the relationship between teacher and graduating students.

Perhaps Italian design could have a mythology of the basement just as Silicon Valley has that of the garage, because I later remember another basement, in a condominium in Via D'Ovidio that the Politecnico di Milano had rented to cope with the shortage of space, which represented the very first, tiny expansion of the project we subsequently called *Design System* of Politecnico di Milano: the POLI.design

Consortium, the Faculty (now School) of Design, and the Department of Design. Having been there from the beginning, I am certain that the overall scheme was not preordained and that we operated within an emergent model, seizing every opportunity and exploiting all available resources rather than formulating a strategic plan that foresaw the construction of all the system's components. Yet what was then Alberto Seassarò's vision, an intuition to be cultivated, has today become a solid presence, grown to the point of becoming one of the three souls of Politecnico di Milano and internationally recognized.

This growth was grounded in Alberto Seassarò's contagious direction, in his ability to hold together people with diverse and complementary competences and temperaments, but also in the grind of procedures, of equilibria and boundaries to be renegotiated continuously. When I think back to those early years, endless working days come to mind, in which up to a certain point I took part while simultaneously pursuing professional practice and leading a double working life that absorbed many of my weekends and holiday periods. I recall, for example, the many times we climbed over the gates to enter Politecnico di Milano on the weekend, or a summer spent with Flaviano Celaschi drafting a major development plan for laboratory teaching and the supporting infrastructures that had to be delivered at the beginning of September, which perhaps trained me for the deadlines of European research projects that would arrive years later, always scheduled at the beginning of September. It is an experience that has taken on a *heroic* dimension in the memories of almost all the members of the group, which perhaps today would deserve a critical rereading in the light of a necessary balance between professional and private life.

It was not a linear path, free of errors, second thoughts, setbacks, and recoveries. When Alberto Seassarò decided to take on the challenge of building the educational pathways in design at Politecnico di Milano, resources were extremely scarce. Alberto Seassarò was able to recognize and bring together differences and complementarities, gathering colleagues, engaging diverse competences and dispositions, opening internal and external dialogues, finding the resources needed to enlarge the group, and working tenaciously on the construction and then the consolidation, also in formal terms, of the system's various components. Along this path, inspiring and uneven as all

great challenges are, Alberto Seassaro managed to hold together visions and constraints, imagination and rules, the urgency of innovation and the patience of the institution.

His *polyhedral* nature has always struck me. His interests, which the contributions in this volume portray in their variety and complexity and which ranged from architecture to lighting design; from the exploration of form poised between art, architecture, and design, to the technology of building components; through to the relationship between the construction industry and the building supply chains, functioned as hinges capable of opening dialogues and creating connections. This disposition toward transversality made the *Design System* intrinsically open and relational, sustaining its vitality over time and welding the founder's multifacetedness to the polytechnic character of the project.

His distinguishing trait, what, in my view, made him most interesting, was his fertile contradictions. Alberto Seassaro was, at the same time, an anarchist, a visionary, and a man of institutions. The anarchist who refuses frames that are too tight and opens passages; the visionary who recognizes opportunities and trajectories for imagining the new and reimagining what already exists; the institutional man who accepts the responsibility to give stable form to novelties, so that they may endure beyond individuals and cycles, without, however, relinquishing the drive toward the new. In this sense, Alberto Seassaro was multifaceted but also profoundly *polytechnic*: not only a leading figure of an institution, but the engine of a project that, perhaps for the first time, truly integrated the different components of knowledge that characterize Politecnico di Milano. From this perspective, the *Design System* is the result of an orchestration capable of holding together diverse elements according to a principle of dynamic coherence: education, research, technology transfer, relations with the productive and cultural fabric, internationalization.

The wager, by no means a foregone one, was that design could be cultivated as an academic discipline without losing its project-oriented vocation and its capacity to engage the world. I do not know whether we have succeeded: design is a young discipline and the challenge demands sustained commitment. Yet I believe that the best answer, thirty years on, is the one we can read in the numbers,

in the reputation, in the projects, and in the people who have grown within this community and who today are part of it.

This publication, curated with sensitivity by Antonella Penati, Agnese Rebaglio, and Paola Bertola, conveys the figure of Alberto Seassaro in all his richness and complexity through a plurality of voices and formats. From critical profiles to the *quasi-biography*, from interviews to cameos, from documents to thematic reconstructions, it offers a framework consistent with the person and with the project to which he contributed in a decisive way. It is neither a hagiographic account nor a celebration of what was accomplished, but rather a critical reappraisal of a trajectory, in which to reflect on the choices made, on the goals achieved, and also on the challenges encountered and the ways in which they were addressed, so as to look to future prospects with renewed energy and capacity for innovation.

The opening sections, devoted to the *heteronomous intellectual* and to the fertile relationship between architecture and design, frame his cultural posture and capture the core of the formation and evolution of his thought. The pages on *where it all began* take the reader back to the Politecnico di Milano of experimentation, with that blend of vision and pragmatism that made it possible to reach unforeseen results. The interview with Ugo La Pietra and the cameos, including the recollections by Giancarlo Consonni, Bianca Bottero, and Luigi Bistagnino, add emotional depth and lateral perspectives.

The section devoted to Alberto Seassaro's artistic and design experiments after his graduation and before the full unfolding of his academic career, featuring contributions by Antonella Penati, who highlights the artistic practice that shaped his training, and by Giovanni Baule, who identifies in his *visual notations* Seassaro's most distinctive mode of expression, together with essays such as *Doing Everything, Doing It Artfully* (C.vo) by Beppe Finessi and *Imagining the Living Space Between Experimentation and System* (C.vo) by Giampiero Bosoni, sheds clear light on the hallmark of his presence on boundaries and at intersections. It is a thread we then find again, in the folds of technological culture, in the premises to the birth of the *Design System*: the social role of education and research, the capacity to catalyze energies and ideas, as recalled by Fabrizio Schiaffonati and Luciano Crespi, and the vivid images of Cristina Tonelli's *penguin* and *bats*, which

render the human dimension and the tenacity required to manage an institutional construction site in the making.

Building the institution to open up to emerging content is perhaps the core of Alberto Seassaro's legacy. Building institutions is, in fact, a cultural project: it means translating innovative contents into shared and durable forms, giving learning and research processes structures capable of supporting complexity and future developments. In the contributions in this section – from reflections on teaching for design to the documents and testimonies of transformation, through to the in-depth examinations of visual notations, cultural heritage, and lighting design (*Each Student is in their own Way a Master*) – one recognizes a way of thinking that sees *bricolage* as the path to creating resilient systems. It is a theme that I later, somewhat by chance, encountered again in research on social innovation, where *bricolage*, as an approach tied to structural resource scarcity, has been widely investigated.

Looking today at the *Design System* – at its international reach, at the quality of its research, at the breadth of its educational offering, at its strong relation to social, economic, and cultural developments – I recognize Alberto Seassaro's capacity to look to the future and the *cathedral thinking* that invites one to imagine undertakings larger than the time span of those who initiate them, and that enables the production of exceptions, ensuring that systems remain alive, attuned to the new, capable of learning and evolving.

On behalf of the community that constitutes the *Design System*, I would like to thank all those who contributed to this volume. The editors' merit has been to give a choral shape to memory, without smoothing its edges and by restoring its contradictions as well, so that it may become a legacy rather than a repertory. To those who will read, I therefore wish that these pages prove not only a tribute to a fundamental figure, but also a call to action: to design while holding together the vision needed to imagine the future and the tenacity required to achieve concrete results. It is, ultimately, what Alberto Seassaro asked us to continue to do.

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Authors / Autori

Paola Bertola

PhD in Industrial Design and Multimedia Communication and full professor of Design at Politecnico di Milano. She teaches in the MScs in *Design for the Fashion System*, *Product Service System Design* and *Management Engineering* at Politecnico and in several international programs. She is Deputy Director of the Department of Design and Scientific Director of the Gianfranco Ferré Research Centre. She coordinates the joint program with the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York. She is cofounder of *Fashion in Process Lab* within the Department of Design. Her research focuses on creative processes, and the role of design in guiding digital transformation in CCIs, as a key driver towards more sustainable and equitable paradigms. In 2011 she was awarded with the ADI *Compasso d'Oro* Prize for Research.

PhD in Disegno Industriale e Comunicazione Multimediale e professoressa ordinaria di Design presso il Politecnico di Milano. Insegna nei Corsi di Laurea Magistrale in *Design for the Fashion System*, *Product Service System Design* e Ingegneria Gestionale presso il Politecnico.

oltre che in diversi programmi internazionali. È Vicedirettrice del Dipartimento di Design e Direttrice Scientifica del Centro di Ricerca Gianfranco Ferré. Coordina il programma congiunto con il Fashion Institute of Technology di New York. È cofondatrice del *Fashion in Process Lab* all'interno del Dipartimento di Design. La sua ricerca si concentra sui processi creativi e sul ruolo del design nell'orientare la trasformazione digitale nelle industrie culturali e creative (CCIs), come elemento chiave per paradigmi più sostenibili ed equi. Nel 2011 ha ricevuto il Premio Compasso d'Oro ADI per la Ricerca.

Luigi Bistagnino

Architect and designer. He promotes the zero-waste transformation of agri-food and industrial systems. Former Full Professor of Design at Politecnico di Torino, he founded the Bachelor's Degree in Design (1996); the Systemic Design research group; the Master's Degree in Systemic Design (2002). Coordinator of the Doctoral Board in Design (1996–2015). He teaches courses at the University of Lyon, ECAM (France), UEMG (Brazil). Co-founder of the Systemic Design Research and Education Center, Politecnico di Torino. He sits on the scientific committee of Deloitte & Touche's Food & Agriculture research and on the committee of the UNISG Sustainability Laboratory, Pollenzo. Research coordinator, among his publications: *microMACRO*, the complex of systemic micro-relations generates the new economic-productive model (2016).

Architetto e designer. Promuove la trasformazione a zero rifiuti dei sistemi agroalimentari e industriali. Già Professore Ordinario di Design al Politecnico di Torino, fonda il Corso di Laurea in Design (1996); il gruppo di ricerca Design Sistemico; la Laurea Magistrale in Design Sistemico (2002). Coordinatore del Collegio di dottorato in Design (1996-2015). Tiene corsi presso l'Università di Lione, ECAM (Francia), UEMG (Brasile). Cofondatore del Systemic Design Research and Education Center, Politecnico di Torino. È nel comitato scientifico della ricerca Food&Agricoltura di Deloitte&Touche e nel comitato del Laboratorio Sostenibilità UNISG, Pollenzo. Coordinatore di ricerche, tra le sue pubblicazioni: *microMACRO, il complesso delle micro relazioni sistemiche genera il nuovo modello economico-produttivo* (2016).

Giampiero Bosoni

Full Professor of Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design. An architect, he collaborated with Figini and Pollini, Gregotti, and Mari, with whom he developed an interest in the theory and history of architecture and design. He has written and edited about 20 books and published more than 300 articles in international journals. In 1997 he founded the Permanent Collection of the Triennale Design Museum in Milan. In 2009 MoMA in New York commissioned him the book *Italian Design* dedicated to the Italian section of their collection. President (2018–21) of the Italian Association of Design Historians and co-editor of the AIS/design Journal (2022–2025). Member of the Scientific Committee of the Fondazione Albin (2008) and of the Centro Ricerche Ferré (2021), and board member of the Fondazione CASVA (2022).

Professore Ordinario di Architettura di interni e allestimento. Architetto, ha collaborato con Figini e Pollini, Gregotti e Mari, con i quali ha sviluppato l'interesse per la teoria e la storia dell'architettura e del design. Ha scritto e curato circa 20 libri e pubblicato più di 300 articoli in riviste internazionali. Nel 1997 ha dato vita alla Collezione Permanente del Museo del Design Triennale di Milano. Nel 2009 il MoMA di NY lo incarica del libro *Italian Design* dedicato alla sezione italiana della loro collezione. Presidente (2018–21) dell'Associazione Italiana Storici del Design e co-direttore della rivista AIS/design Journal (2022–2025). Membro del Comitato Scientifico della Fondazione Albin (2008) e del Centro Ricerche Ferré (2021) e consigliere d'amministrazione della Fondazione CASVA (2022).

Bianca Bottero

Former Full Professor of Architectural Technology, she taught Environmental Design at the Second Faculty of Architecture at Politecnico di Milano. She carried out research on urban design, sustainability, and social housing with the ABITA Laboratory, which she directed. In 1987, together with Spagnoli and others, she created the international yearbook *Housing*, which she directed until 2000. With the *Associazione Alfabeti*, she teaches Italian to non-EU women in the San Siro neighborhood. Among her writings and edited volumes: *Progetto e gestione dello spazio nelle società complesse* (1984); *Progetto o metodo. Var-*

iazioni sul tema della Salina di C. N. Ledoux (1988); *Decostruzione in architettura e in filosofia* [Deconstruction in Architecture and in Philosophy] (1991; 2002); *Progettare e costruire nella complessità. Lezioni di bioarchitettura* (1993); with Di Salvo and Faré, *Architetture del desiderio* (2011). Recent writings: *Città vs cittadini? No grazie* (2023); *Città femminili? Ahimè, non ancora* (2024); *L'urbanistica è quantistica* (2025).

Già Professore Ordinario di Tecnologia dell'architettura, ha insegnato Progettazione ambientale presso la II Facoltà di Architettura del Politecnico di Milano. Ha svolto ricerche sulla progettazione urbana, la sostenibilità e l'abitazione sociale col Laboratorio ABITA da lei diretto. Nel 1987 ha creato con Spagnoli e altri l'annuario internazionale *Housing* diretto fino al 2000. Con l'Associazione Alfabeti, insegna italiano alle donne extracomunitarie del quartiere San Siro. Tra i suoi scritti e curatele: *Progetto e gestione dello spazio nelle società complesse* (1984); *Progetto o metodo. Variazioni sul tema della Salina di C. N. Ledoux* (1988); *Decostruzione in architettura e in filosofia* (1991; 2002); *Progettare e costruire nella complessità. Lezioni di bioarchitettura* (1993); con Di Salvo e Faré, *Architetture del desiderio* (2011). Scritti recenti: *Città vs cittadini? No grazie* (2023); *Città femminili? Ahimè, non ancora* (2024); *L'urbanistica è quantistica* (2025).

Flaviano Celaschi

PhD, Full Professor of Design, University of Bologna. He works on advanced design and innovation driven by project cultures. He taught at Politecnico di Milano (1995–2004 and 2009–2012); at Politecnico di Torino (2004–2009); at the University of Bologna (since 2012). He co-founded with Alberto Seassaro the first Italian Department of Design at Politecnico di Milano and the university consortium POLI.Design. He founded and directed the *Centro di Ricerca per le Imprese Culturali e Creative* at the University of Bologna; the Design School of UNISINOS in Porto Alegre, RGS, Brazil; he has taught and taken part in conferences and workshops worldwide. Dean of Italian professors of Design; scientific lead of Spoke 1 of the national research PNRR PE11 – *Made in Italy Circolare e Sostenibile*.

PhD, Professore Ordinario di Design, Università di Bologna. Si occupa di advanced design e innovazione guidata dalle culture del progetto. Ha insegnato al Politecnico di Milano (1995-2004 e 2009-2012); al Politecnico di Torino (2004-2009); all'Università di Bologna (dal 2012). Ha co-fondato con Alberto Seassaro il primo Dipartimento di Design italiano presso il Politecnico di Milano e il Consorzio universitario POLI.Design. Ha fondato e diretto il *Centro di Ricerca per le imprese Culturali e Creative* presso l'Università di Bologna; la Scuola di Design di UNISINOS a Porto Alegre in RGS Brasile; ha insegnato e partecipato a convegni e workshop in tutto il mondo. Decano dei professori italiani di Design; responsabile scientifico dello spoke 1 della Ricerca Nazionale PNRR PE11 – *Made in Italy Circolare e Sostenibile*.

Luisa Collina

PhD, Full Professor of Design at Politecnico di Milano, she works on service design, interior design, and strategic design. Since 2000 she has held various roles within the Design System at Politecnico di Milano: Head of International Relations of the School of Design (2000–2015); Coordinator of the Master's in *Product-Service System Design* (2005–2015); Dean of the School of Design (2016–2021); and Coordinator of the *Landscape, Environments, and Mobility Design* Section of the Department of Design (2023–present). From 2013 to 2019 she served as President of the international association Cumulus, of which she is currently Honorary President. Since January 2024 she has been Vice President of Fondazione Politecnico di Milano.

Dottore di ricerca, Professore Ordinario di Design al Politecnico di Milano, si interessa di design dei servizi, interni e design strategico. A partire dal 2000 assume diversi ruoli all'interno del Sistema Design del Politecnico di Milano: è stata responsabile delle relazioni internazionali della Scuola di Design (dal 2000 al 2015); coordinatrice del Master in Product-Service System Design (dal 2005 al 2015); Preside della Scuola di Design (dal 2016 al 2021) e coordinatrice della Sezione *Design del paesaggio, degli ambienti e della mobilità* del Dipartimento di Design (dal 2023 ad oggi). Dal 2013 al 2019 è stata Presidente dell'associazione internazionale Cumulus, di cui è attualmente Presidente Onorario. Da gennaio 2024 è Vicepresidente della Fondazione Politecnico di Milano.

Giancarlo Consonni

Poet, painter, urban planner, and historian of architecture and the city. He is Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning at Politecnico di Milano. He directs the Archivio Piero Bottoni. His research ranges from the formation processes of the contemporary metropolis to architectural and urban culture, the historical–anthropological characteristics of spatiality, and urban design. His latest book is *Non si salva il pianeta se non si salvano le città* (Quodlibet, 2024). He has published seven poetry collections: with Scheiwiller, *Viridarium* (1987) and *In breve volo* (1994); with Einaudi, *Vûs* (1997), *Lui* (2003), *Filovia* (2016), *Pinoli* (2021), and *Il conforto dell'ombra* (2025). His pictorial work is partly gathered in fourteen small volumes published by La Vita Felice.

Poeta, pittore, urbanista e storico dell'architettura e della città. È Professore Emerito di Urbanistica del Politecnico di Milano. Dirige l'Archivio Piero Bottoni. Le sue ricerche spaziano dai processi di formazione della metropoli contemporanea alla cultura architettonica e urbanistica, ai caratteri storico-antropologici della spazialità, al disegno urbano. Il suo ultimo libro si intitola *Non si salva il pianeta se non si salvano le città* (Quodlibet, 2024). Ha pubblicato 7 raccolte di poesia: con l'editore Scheiwiller, *Viridarium* (1987) e *In breve volo* (1994); con l'editore Einaudi, *Vûs* (1997), *Lui* (2003), *Filovia* (2016), *Pinoli* (2021) e *Il conforto dell'ombra* (2025). La sua opera pittorica è in parte raccolta in 14 volumetti editi da La Vita Felice.

Luciano Crespi

Recognized by the international scholarly community as the leading figure of an *allestitivo* [exhibition-based] design approach he terms *design del non-finito* [design of the unfinished], aimed at the regeneration of *avanzi* [remnants]. Among his publications on the subject: *Stop City Now: progetti di architettura dal finito al non-finito* (2025); *Regeneration of Abandoned Spaces: A New Design Approach* (2024); *Design del non-finito. L'interior design nella rigenerazione degli 'avanzi'* (2023); *Manifesto del design del non-finito* (2018). He edited *La progettazione tecnologica* (1987) and, with L. Tedeschi and A. L. Viati, *Marco Zanuso. Architettura e design* (2020). He was Associate Professor of *Cultura tecnologica della progettazione* [technological culture of design] and

later Full Professor of Design at Politecnico di Milano, among the founders and Chair of the Bachelor's Degree Program in Interior Design.

Riconosciuto dalla comunità scientifica internazionale come caposcuola di un approccio progettuale *allestitivo* che definisce design del non-finito, finalizzato alla rigenerazione degli *'avanzi'* Tra le pubblicazioni sull'argomento: *Stop City Now: progetti di architettura dal finito al non-finito* (2025); *Regeneration of Abandoned Spaces: A New Design Approach* (2024); *Design del non-finito. L'interior design nella rigenerazione degli 'avanzi'* (2023); *Manifesto del design del non-finito* (2018). Ha curato *La progettazione tecnologica* (1987) e, con L. Tedeschi e A. L. Viati, *Marco Zanuso. Architettura e design*, (2020). È stato Associato di Cultura tecnologica della progettazione e poi Ordinario di Design al Politecnico di Milano, tra i fondatori e Presidente del corso di laurea in Design degli interni.

Alessandro Deserti

Full Professor at Politecnico di Milano, where he serves as Director of the Department of Design until 2025. His research focuses on design-enabled innovation processes, examining the methods and tools that support them. In recent years, he has explored how organizations can initiate or evolve these processes in emerging fields, integrating them with systemic and organizational transformations to address technological, environmental, and socio-economic challenges. He has extensive experience in international research collaborations, particularly within European research and innovation projects.

Professore Ordinario al Politecnico di Milano, dove ricopre il ruolo di Direttore del Dipartimento di Design fino al 2025. La sua attività di ricerca è focalizzata sui processi di innovazione abilitati dal design, con particolare attenzione ai metodi e agli strumenti che li supportano. Negli ultimi anni ha approfondito come le organizzazioni possano avviare o sviluppare tali processi in ambiti emergenti, integrandoli con trasformazioni sistemiche e organizzative per affrontare sfide tecnologiche, ambientali e socio-economiche. Vanta una lunga esperienza in collaborazioni di ricerca internazionali, con particolare riferimento ai progetti europei di ricerca e innovazione.

Emilio Faroldi

Architect, PhD, Full Professor at Politecnico di Milano, he is Deputy Rector and the Rector's Delegate for the Development and Valorization of Spaces. He publishes on architectural and technological design; takes part in design competitions, receiving prizes and honorable mentions; and has built works in Italy and abroad, some published in leading journals. Former Editor in Chief of *TECHNE_Journal of Technology for Architecture and Environment*, he is Director of the Master in Sport Design and Management and teaches the doctoral course *Italian Architecture and Construction from the Post-War period to nowadays. Dialogues between Inheritance and project*. Professor of the International Academy of Architecture, he is a member of the Scientific Committee of the *Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione* [Center for the Study and Archive of Communication] in Parma.

Architetto, PhD, Professore Ordinario al Politecnico di Milano, è Prorettore Vicario e Delegato del Rettore allo Sviluppo e alla valorizzazione degli spazi. Pubblica sui temi della progettazione architettonica e tecnologica; partecipa a concorsi di progettazione ricevendo premi e menzioni; realizza opere in Italia e all'estero, alcune pubblicate nelle principali riviste di settore. Già Editor in Chief della rivista *TECHNE_Journal of Technology for Architecture and Environment*, è Direttore del Master in Sport Design and Management e titolare del Corso di Dottorato *Italian Architecture and Construction from the Post-War period to nowadays. Dialogues between Inheritance and project*. Professore della International Academy of Architecture è Membro del Comitato Scientifico del *Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione* di Parma.

Beppe Finessi

Architect, PhD. A pupil of Corrado Levi, he carries out teaching (Associate Professor at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano), critical work (editor at the magazine *Abitare* during Italo Lupi's tenure), and research (he has curated exhibitions and publications on several great masters of Italian design, such as Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Vico Magistretti, Angelo Mangiarotti, Pio Manzù, Alessandro Mendini, Bruno Munari). In 2010 he founded and directs *Inventario*, with which

he won the ADI Compasso d'Oro (2014), while other publications of his received two Honorable Mentions (2016). He curated *Il Design Italiano oltre le crisi*, the seventh edition of the Triennale Design Museum (2014), and *Il cucchiaino e la città*, the inaugural and permanent exhibition of the ADI Design Museum (2021).

Architetto, PhD. Allievo di Corrado Levi, svolge attività didattica (Professore Associato alla Scuola del Design del Politecnico di Milano), critica (redattore della rivista *Abitare* durante la direzione di Italo Lupi) e di ricerca (ha curato mostre e pubblicazioni su alcuni grandi maestri del design italiano, come Achille e Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Vico Magistretti, Angelo Mangiarotti, Pio Manzù, Alessandro Mendini, Bruno Munari). Nel 2010 fonda e dirige *Inventario*, con cui vince il Compasso d'Oro ADI (2014), mentre per altre sue pubblicazioni ha ricevuto due Menzioni d'onore (2016). Ha curato *Il Design Italiano oltre le crisi*, settima edizione del Triennale Design Museum (2014), e *Il cucchiaino e la città*, esposizione inaugurale e permanente dell'ADI Design Museum (2021).

Ugo La Pietra

He lives and works in Milan. He has described himself as a *researcher* of visual arts and communication. He has presented his research through many exhibitions both in Italy and abroad. He has curated a number of exhibitions at the Triennale di Milano, the Venice Biennale, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lyon, the FRAC Museum in Orléans, the Ceramics Museum in Faenza, and the Ragghianti Foundation in Lucca. He was awarded the Compasso d'Oro for The Research in 1979 and Compasso d'Oro for his Carrer in 2016. His research experience in art, architecture and design led him to develop such themes as *La casa telematica* (MoMA, New York, 1972 - Fiera di Milano, 1983), *Rapporto tra Spazio reale e Spazio virtuale* (Triennale di Milano, 1979, 1992), *La casa neo-eclettica* (Abitare il Tempo, 1990), *Cultura Balneare* (Centro Culturale Cattolica, 1985/95).

Viive e lavora a Milano. Si è sempre dichiarato *ricercatore* nelle arti visive e nella comunicazione. Ha comunicato le sue ricerche attraverso mostre in Italia e all'estero. Ha curato diverse esposizioni alla Triennale

di Milano, Biennale di Venezia, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Lione, Museo FRAC di Orléans, Museo delle Ceramiche di Faenza, Fondazione Ragghianti di Lucca. Ha vinto il Compasso d'Oro per la Ricerca nel 1979 e il Compasso d'Oro per la Carriera nel 2016. Le sue esperienze di ricerca nell'arte, nell'architettura e nel design lo hanno portato a sviluppare temi come *La casa telematica* (MoMA di New York, 1972 – Fiera di Milano, 1983), *Rapporto tra Spazio reale e Spazio virtuale* (Triennale di Milano 1979, 1992), *La casa neoeclettica* (Abitare il Tempo, 1990), *Cultura Balneare* (Centro Culturale Cattolica, 1985/95).

Eleonora Lupo

Associate Professor at the Politecnico di Milano, with a PhD in Industrial Design and Multimedia Communication. Her main research interests concern product and process design cultures, Design for the Cultural Heritage system, and cultures of design research and scientific publishing, dealing with a pluriversal approach for decentring design knowledge and narratives. She is vice president of SID Società Italiana del design, a member of the Board of the PhD Program in Design at Politecnico di Milano, and of the Collegium of Reviewers of The Design Journal.

Professoressa associata al Politecnico di Milano, PhD in Disegno industriale e comunicazione multimediale. I suoi principali interessi di ricerca si rivolgono alle culture del design di prodotto e di processo, al design per il patrimonio culturale e alle culture della ricerca e pubblicazione scientifica, tramite un approccio pluriverso per decentrare la conoscenza e narrazione del design. È vicepresidente della SID Società Italiana del design, membro del collegio di Dottorato in Design del Politecnico di Milano e del Collegium of Reviewers di The Design Journal.

Antonella Penati

PhD, Full Professor of Design at Politecnico di Milano. She served as President of the Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Design (2004-2010) and as Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Design (2002-2010) under Dean Alberto Seassaro. From 2019 to 2025 she has been Coordinator of the Design and Cultures Section of the Department of Design. Main research areas: the nature of design knowledge and modes of

knowledge transmission in education; design culture as a driver of socio-technical innovation dynamics (*Mappe dell'innovazione. Il cambiamento tra tecnica economia e società*, 1999) [Maps of Innovation: Change among Technology, Economy, and Society]. On the nature of the socio-technical object she has recently focused on pharmaceuticals (*In-Home Medication. Integrating Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Design-Driven Pharma Practices*, 2024).

Dottore di Ricerca, è Professore Ordinario di Design al Politecnico di Milano. Ha rivestito il ruolo di Presidente del Corso di Laurea in Design industriale (2004-2010); di Preside Vicario della Facoltà del Design (2002-2010) con Preside Alberto Seassaro. Dal 2019 al 2025 è Coordinatrice della Sezione Design e Culture del Dipartimento di Design.

Principali ambiti di ricerca: la natura dei saperi progettuali e le modalità di trasmissione di conoscenza in ambito formativo; la cultura del design come motore di dinamiche di innovazione socio-tecnica (*Mappe dell'innovazione. Il cambiamento tra tecnica economia e società*, 1999). Sulla natura dell'oggetto socio-tecnico ha di recente focalizzato l'attenzione sui farmaci (*In-Home Medication. Integrating Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Design-Driven Pharma Practices*, 2024).

Agnese Rebaglio

Designer and PhD, Associate Professor at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano. Her research focuses on the role of design in innovation processes related to interiors, with an emphasis on their cultural significance and, in particular, urban spaces, from a perspective of sustainability and inclusion. She is scientific director of the Specializing Master *Design for Public Spaces* provided by POLI.design. She has developed research in the field of: design for urban social inclusion; processes of urban regeneration; energy sustainability promoted by design; circular economy for new production chains. Promoter, for the Interior Design Degree Course, of GIDE (Group for International Design Education), a network of European design schools that collaborates in educational programs.

Designer e PhD, professoressa associata di Design presso il Dipartimento di Design del Politecnico di Milano. La sua attività di ricerca si

concentra sul ruolo del design nei processi di innovazione degli interni, con riferimento alla loro portata culturale e in particolare degli spazi urbani, in una prospettiva di sostenibilità e inclusione. È direttrice scientifica del Master di Specializzazione in *Design for Public Spaces* offerto da POLI.design. Ha sviluppato ricerche nei seguenti ambiti: design per l'inclusione sociale urbana; processi di rigenerazione urbana; sostenibilità energetica promossa dal design; economia circolare per nuove filiere produttive. Promotrice, per il Corso di Laurea in Interior Design, di GIDE (*Group for International Design Education*), una rete di scuole di design europee che collaborano in programmi educativi.

Fabrizio Schiaffonati

Architect. Lecturer at Politecnico di Milano from 1967 to 2019. Full Professor in Architectural Technology from 1980 to 2012. Visiting professor at the Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio (2001-2005) and at Università Bocconi, Milan (2006). At Politecnico di Milano he directed the *Istituto di Tecnologia*; the *Dipartimento di Programmazione Progettazione e Produzione edilizia*; and the *Dipartimento di Scienza e tecnologie dell'ambiente costruito*. He promoted and coordinated the PhD programmes in *Innovazione tecnica e progetto nell'architettura* and *Design e tecnologie per la valorizzazione dei beni culturali*. In 2006 he was among the founders of the *Società italiana della Tecnologia dell'architettura*. His main projects are published in *Calamida, Lucchini, Schiaffonati Architetti* and in *Tecnologia Architettura Territorio*.

Achitetto. Docente al Politecnico di Milano dal 1967 al 2019. Professore Ordinario in Tecnologia dell'architettura dal 1980 al 2012. Visiting professor all'Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio dal 2001 al 2005 e all'Università Bocconi di Milano nel 2006. Al Politecnico di Milano ha diretto l'Istituto di Tecnologia; il Dipartimento di Programmazione Progettazione e Produzione edilizia e il Dipartimento di Scienza e tecnologie dell'ambiente costruito. Ha promosso e coordinato i Dottorati di ricerca in Innovazione tecnica e progetto nell'architettura e Design e tecnologie per la valorizzazione dei beni culturali. Nel 2006 è tra i fondatori della Società italiana della Tecnologia dell'architettura. I principali progetti sono pubblicati in *Calamida, Lucchini, Schiaffonati Architetti* e in *Tecnologia Architettura Territorio*.

Paolo Tinelli

Milanese, architect. He was trained at the *Artistico di Via Hayech* thanks to the teaching of Mauro Staccioli for sculpture, Carlo Cavallotti for architecture, and Anna Finocchi for Art History. He graduated in Architecture at Politecnico di Milano with Enrico Mantero in 1989. He learned the multimedia approach of Studio Azzurro from Paolo Rosa and Leonardo Sangiorgi, and approached museography thanks to the Museo Storico Etnografico della Bassa Val Sesia created by his father. He designs with Ettore Sottsass and collaborates with Patrice Martinet in theatre. Alberto Seassaro, founder and Dean of the Faculty of Industrial Design at Politecnico di Milano, involved him in a teaching collaboration that lasted more than twenty-seven years. In his professional practice, he contaminates architectural culture with constant research in the world of art and design.

Milanese, architetto. Si è formato all'Artistico di Via Hayech grazie agli insegnamenti di Mauro Staccioli per la scultura, Carlo Cavallotti per l'architettura e Anna Finocchi per la Storia dell'Arte. Si laurea in Architettura al Politecnico di Milano con Enrico Mantero nel 1989. Comprende, da Paolo Rosa e Leonardo Sangiorgi, il multimediale di Studio Azzurro e si avvicina alla Museografia grazie al Museo Storico Etnografico della Bassa Val Sesia creato dal padre. Disegna con Ettore Sottsass e collabora con Patrice Martinet nel teatro. Alberto Seassaro, fondatore e Preside della Facoltà di Disegno industriale del Politecnico, lo coinvolge in una collaborazione didattica durata oltre ventisette anni. Nella professione, contamina la cultura architettonica con la costante ricerca nel mondo dell'arte e del design.

Maria Cristina Tonelli

She graduated in Florence in Modern Letters with an art-historical focus and was a Postgraduate Fellow and University Researcher at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa; after moving to the Faculty of Architecture in Florence she became Associate Professor and subsequently Full Professor of Industrial Design at Politecnico di Milano. Her research focuses on the history of industrial design and fashion: specifically, on the historical-critical analysis of design and product in relation to their cultural, technological, economic, and production fabric. Among her

most recent publications are texts on innovation in eighteenth-century England, on Giovanni Klaus Koenig, on Alberto Rosselli and *Stile Industria*, on Gianfranco Gualtierotti, as well as several essays on Tuscan products.

Laureata a Firenze in Lettere moderne, con indirizzo storico-artistico, è stata Perfezionanda e Ricercatore universitario presso la SNS di Pisa; trasferendosi alla Facoltà di Architettura di Firenze è diventata Professore Associato e in seguito Professore Ordinario di Disegno industriale presso il Politecnico di Milano.

La sua attività di ricerca verte sulla storia dell'industrial design e della moda: in specifico, sull'analisi storico-critica del progetto e del prodotto in rapporto al loro tessuto culturale, tecnologico, economico e produttivo. Delle sue ultime pubblicazioni si segnalano i testi sull'innovazione nell'Inghilterra del Settecento, su Giovanni Klaus Koenig, su Alberto Rosselli e *Stile Industria*, su Gianfranco Gualtierotti, nonché diversi saggi sul prodotto toscano.

Raffaella Trocchianesi

Architect and Associate Professor at the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, she teaches Interior Design Studio and Exhibit Design Studio at the School of Design. Director of the Specializing Master's IDEA_Exhibition Design, and of the Specialization Course Design and Digital Technologies for the Intangible Heritage, she mainly deals with Design for Cultural Heritage in terms of museography and exhibition design, communication and enhancement of local areas, new models and narratives of cultural experiences, and the relationship between design, Humanities and arts. She is currently scientific lead on the project Sound Design & Cultural Heritage.

Architetto e Professore associato presso il dipartimento di Design del Politecnico di Milano. Insegna *Design degli Interni* e *Exhibition Design* presso la Scuola del Design. È direttore del Master *IDEA-Exhibition Design* e del corso di specializzazione *Design e Tecnologie Digitali per il Patrimonio Culturale Intangibile*. Svolge attività didattica, progettuale e di ricerca prevalentemente nell'ambito del design per la valorizzazione dei beni culturali in termini di allestimento, museografia, nuovi modelli

di fruizione, narrazione e linguaggi per la cultura, relazione tra design Humanities e arti. È responsabile scientifico del progetto di ricerca *Sound Design and Cultural Heritage*.

This volume is part of *Design Philology* editorial project aimed at enhancing the history of design at Politecnico di Milano and, in particular, inaugurates the series *The Masters*, dedicated to the figures whose thought has fueled the cultural pluralism that is the hallmark of the entire institutional project.

The remembrance of the Masters begins with Alberto Seassaro, the demiurge, a Dean capable of giving *Design* a home by conceiving and building the first Italian Faculty at Politecnico di Milano and guiding it to the scope we know today: that of a major international system for education and research. A designing intelligence, he is owed the construction of the cultural community of the *Italian Design System*. It was no simple challenge, because in the case of design we are dealing not only with a discipline worthy of teaching and autonomous research paths, but also with an emergent phenomenon of Italian culture whose outcomes are celebrated as the splendors of an imaginative synthesis that has become, beyond our country as well, a model of invention. In the background of this quasi-biographical account lie the intertwinings with the worlds of art, architecture, and design, and the cultural imprint toward experimentation that Alberto Seassaro received during his formative years at Politecnico di Milano.