

Designing ethically in a complex world

MULTIPLE CHALLENGES WITHIN DESIGN
FOR PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Edited by
Elena Caratti and Laura Galluzzo

Design International series

DIRECTION

Silvia Piardi

SCIENTIFIC BOARD

**Alessandro Biamonti, Alba Cappellieri, Mauro Ceconello,
Claudio Germak, Ezio Manzini, Carlo Martino, Promil Pande,
Mario Piazza, Angelica Ponzio, Francesco Scullica,
Francesca Tosi, Yingchun Zang**

EDITORIAL BOARD

**Alessia Brischetto, Alessio Caccamo, Barbara Camocini,
Giuseppe Carmosino, Eugenia Chiara, Andrea Di Salvo,
Elena Elgani, Silvia Gramegna, Shashwat M. Pande,
Gustavo Alfonso Rincon, Fabiano Scherer, Daniela Selloni,
Davide Spallazzo, Livia Tenuta**

The Design International series was launched in 2017 as a place for cultural exchange between the different design souls. Over the years, the series has consolidated its position as a point of reference for international research, outlining a continuously updated research map. The Scientific Committee, consisting of experts in fashion, interiors, graphics, communication, product, service, social interaction, innovation and emotional design guarantees the level of the accepted texts. The Editorial Board, consisting of young experts in the different branches of design, supports the work of the scientific committee. After an initial evaluation by the two committees, the texts undergo international double revision.

FrancoAngeli

SERIES - OPEN ACCESS CATALOG

This volume is published in open access format, i.e. the file of the entire work can be freely downloaded from the FrancoAngeli Open Access platform (<http://bit.ly/francoangeli-oa>).

On the FrancoAngeli Open Access platform, it is possible to publish articles and monographs, according to ethical and quality standards while ensuring open access to the content itself. It guarantees the preservation in the major international OA archives and repositories. Through the integration with its entire catalog of publications and series, FrancoAngeli also maximizes visibility, user accessibility and impact for the author.

Read more: [Publish with us \(francoangeli.it\)](#)

Readers who wish to find out about the books and periodicals published by us can visit our website www.francoangeli.it and subscribe to *Keep me informed* service to receive e-mail notifications.

Designing ethically in a complex world

MULTIPLE CHALLENGES WITHIN DESIGN
FOR PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Edited by
Elena Caratti and Laura Galluzzo

MANAGEMENT

Marzia Mortati, Alessandro Deserti, Paola Bertola

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

**Marzia Mortati, Alessandro Deserti, Paola Bertola,
Marco Quaggiotto, Giuseppe Andreoni, Antonella Penati,
Luisa Collina, Maurizio Bruglieri**

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Eleonora De Marchi

ART DIRECTION

Marco Quaggiotto

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Giada Zoncada, Arianna Priori, Francesca Cassanelli

ISBN e-book Open Access: 9788835167907

Copyright © 2024 by FrancoAngeli s.r.l., Milano, Italy

This work, and each part thereof, is protected by copyright law and is published in this digital version under the license Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

By downloading this work, the User accepts all the conditions of the license agreement for the work as stated and set out on the website <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

Contents

7	Preface Adam Nocek
13	Designing ethically in a complex and changing world Elena Caratti, Laura Galluzzo
	PART 1 THEORIES FOR AN ETHICS OF RESPONSIBILITY
25	1. Exercises in alterity: nurturing alterity for a design ethic Salvatore Zingale
37	2. Design as pluriversality: the translational territory where practice is plural Silvia Pizzocaro
55	3. Ethical translations for social design Elena Caratti
67	4. Ethical dimensions in interaction design James Postell
	PART 2 APPLIED ETHICS IN DESIGN FOR PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS
85	5. Design for public engagement: merging the role of academics and neighbourhood communities Davide Fassi, Francesco Vergani

101	6. Different voices of identity. The role of communication design for the 0-18 community Valeria Bucchetti
115	7. Framing designing practices from the margins. The case of Off Campus San Vittore Virginia Tassinari, Francesca Piredda, Elettra Panepinto
129	8. Design of plural public space Laura Galluzzo
141	9. The accessible landscape. Sustainable narratives for empowerment Daniela Anna Calabi
159	10. Care, community and reuse of places Anna Anzani, Ada Piselli
175	11. Designing digital media. Towards a user-centric approach for public communication strategies Umberto Tolino
191	12. When technology becomes harmful. The contribution of designers at a crossroads between fashion, digital and ethics Martina Motta, Rachele Didero
205	Authors

3. Ethical translations for social design

Elena Caratti

3.1 The being of translation

The being of translation is to be openness, dialogue, cross-fertilisation, decentralisation. It is to relate, or it is nothing (Antoine Berman, 1997).

Translation is everywhere, it is the foundation of every form of cultural and social interaction in the globalized world. We find it within the global sphere of culture and social exchanges, in that multiform and dynamic space that Lotman calls the semiosphere (1994). As Anna Maria Lorusso specifies, this space is an eventful universe, with internal frictions, external pressures, destabilizing inventions, and difficult contacts (Lorusso, 2010, p. 83).

Within this constantly changing context, translation (and its processes) is traceable inside our cultural production processes; in the transfer of content through language and its codes; but also when we question the meaning and finalities of things; when we wonder about cultural identities; when we correlate content to media and vice versa;

when we search the link between ideas and their material realizations; when we try to identify a link between different types of designed artefacts, or between different individuals, or between individuals and designed artefacts.

Translation can be interpreted beyond the common inter-linguistic translation. As Piotr Blumczynki points out, through the translation paradigm we consider the relationship between different communities, between artefacts and communities, between different times and places; between what is fixed and what is dynamic; between exercising force and experiencing influence and so on (Blumczynki, 2016, p. 9).

According to the author, translation is *ubiquitous* (Blumczynki, 2016, p. 13) and strongly intertwined with other disciplines. From this perspective, translation provides a basis for a genuine, exciting, serious, innovative, and meaningful exchange between various areas of the humanities (semiotics, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy), through both a concept (what) and a method (how) (Blumczynki, 2016, p. 4). This transdisciplinary dimension is also present in design. The contribution of the humanities has generated new visions and new design paradigms, which, in their turn, have produced new knowledge, new meanings, new methodologies, new ways of conceiving designers and users, new design projects, and new visions for the future.

In this chapter we state that translation and social design are both ascribable to transfer processes in which communication, interpretation, negotiation, collaboration, service, exchange with, and for the Other, all come into play through an ethical aptitude.

We affirm that translation studies share some issues and ideals with social design (some assumptions and principles we would like to highlight); the aim is to bring out the importance of an ethical dimension in design practice because its values can inspire and guide design itself.

Social design is defined by Elisabeth Resnick as

the practice of design where the primary motivation is to promote positive social change within society. [...] The term “social design” highlights the concepts and activities enacted within participatory

approaches to researching, generating and realizing new ways to make change happen towards collective and social ends, rather than predominantly commercial objectives. Social design can therefore be understood to encompass a broad set of motivations, approaches, audiences and impacts. For instance, these may be embedded within government policies or public services extremely critical of divergent from these (Resnick, 2019. pp. 3-5).

Looking at the relationship between translation and social design allows us to understand how they are not only empirical activities, but they can also be reflective practices with a deep ethical vocation.

3.2 Translation is a metaphor transferable to social design

As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson affirm, our common conceptual system, on the basis of which we think and act, is essentially metaphorical in nature (Lakoff and Johnson, 1998, p. 77).

Considering translation through different metaphorical associations allows us to explicate its internal and external relationships, its meaning, its processes, its values, and its connections with social design that can be reinforced.

Translation as a crossroads of disciplines

Translation studies are a transdisciplinary research area that is defined in terms of a reflective and praxeological discipline: it is a science of and for practice, which reflects on a form of practice and offers it elements of clarification and orientation (Jervolino, 2007, p. 12).

Translation is rooted within the humanities (semiotics, linguistics, anthropology, social sciences, psychology, history, philosophy etc.), but it's also connected with disciplines concerning new technologies (computer assisted translation, or systems for automated translation through AI), economy, and strategic competences. Similarly to social design and design for social innovation, translation is a combination of different factors: a strong cultural component connected to the humanities, operational knowledge supported by technology, and

creativity, within a broader context that reflects on its processes from a pragmatic point of view. As Manzini asserts,

in practical terms, design for social innovation is a blend of different components: original ideas and visions (from design culture), design tools, and creativity (which is a personal gift), within the frameworks of a design approach (deriving from previous reflexive design experience) (Manzini, 2015, p. 63).

Translation as transfer of texts

The concept of text constitutes for translators and semioticians a formal tool useful for describing all human, social and cultural phenomena found in the semiosphere. Design outputs can be considered as texts capable of conveying certain content, with its specific features, recognizable boundaries, internal processivity and so on (Marrone, 2010, p. 5).

They are created and negotiated within cultural dynamics fostering the relationships with other texts (other design projects), other discourses and other languages. From this perspective the process of transformation of texts into other textual configurations can be associated with translation processes, in other words they are the basis of the conformation of every type of text or design project. More specifically, they are achieved through the passage from a source text to a target text (Jakobson, 1959), or, according to Torop (1995), through the transfer which takes place from a prototext (text of the sender's culture) to a metatext (text of the recipient's culture) (Osimo, 2007-2014, p. 7). This transfer between prototext and metatext is analogous to the transformation of the design brief in the design output.

Salvatore Zingale has described the translation process in design through a model that essentially envisages two phases: the first, pre-translative, which, on the basis of problematic content and instances, preludes the generation of an instruction-text that determines the start of the project; the second, translative, which envisages the transition from instruction-text to artefact-text in which expression and content merge and are made usable to the final recipient (Zingale, 2016, pp. 85-88).

Translation as a creative process

The translation process, like the design process, is a creative procedure that has a concrete impact. It does not obey purely expressive research; texts, like designs, condition behaviour, enter people's lives and modify them. According to Torop's definition of Total Translation, (and successive reworkings), we can identify different translation processes which we can also find in design practices:

- *Mental translation*: corresponds to the process of conceptualization (that also includes the processes of reading and writing);
- *Meta-textual translation*: is the equivalent to the use of meta-texts to facilitate the decoding of the main text by highlighting relevant aspects of it (e.g., presentations or summaries of a project, teasers or deconstructions of a project to identify its structural and content components);
- *Intra-linguistic translation*: consists of reformulations, rewritings, redesignings within the same semiotic system (for example from visualizations to other forms of visualization);
- *Interlinguistic translation*: is the linguistic transfer between two different languages;
- *Intersemiotic translation* (which includes synesthetic translation and intermodal translation): implies the transfer between different semiotic systems (e.g., between verbal and visual, from verbal to film, from verbal to sound, from visual to sound, and vice versa);
- *Intextual translation*: is based on the transfer of text fragments, quotations, allusions, reminiscences, details;
- *Intertextual translation* (Intermedial translation): is an expansion of content, referencing of content and prior knowledge (text to text), extension of the project into neighbouring areas (intermediality, transmediality, crossmediality);
- *Cultural translation*: is a mediation of meanings between different cultural systems (cultural meanings are conditioned by the cultural code that generated them, the temporal, geographical, social and ideological location of issuers and recipients cannot be disregarded);

- *Automated translation*: consists of the AI-mediated translation processes in which intersemiotic (from verbal text to visual or filmic text) and intrasemiotic (rewritings) translations take place;
- *Ethical translation*: is an ethical-practical mediation that does not aspire to the *perfect translation* (to the perfect project), but acts in the name of a common good, of respect for the other than oneself, according to a concept of plural humanity.

Translation as directional decision

When we design and when we translate, we define an outcome (the metatext) that is different from the starting text (the prototext).

The final solution of a translation (or a design process) is the result of an interpretation, which is conditioned by the culture of the translator/designer, but also from the interpretation and culture of the final beneficiary of the translation/design project. It is therefore essential to study the relationship of texts/design projects with their addressee (or with other texts), and to reflect on the behaviours or the overall value system they generate within society.

From this perspective, it's important to be aware that translation, and at the same time social design, are the result of a series of active decisions that are not reversible and that can be imperfect.

Translating and designing are never neutral, they cannot disregard the temporal, geographical, social, and ideological locations of the people involved.

Translation as cultural bridge

Translation can create a cultural bridge between a starting cultural system and an arrival cultural system. At the same time, the design project is a sort of compromise between the culture of the designer and that of its target audience.

The translator and the designer have a double responsibility of decoding/interpreting reality for themselves and for their addressees. They face a creative process, rich in difficulties and complexities, that involves a continuous choice of meanings they want to actualize in the final metatext/design output. They make connections between different cultures with the significant risk of

producing prejudices or stereotyped visions that create divisions and exclusions of the most fragile people.

Translation as otherness and hospitality

Translation can be considered as one of the most significant intercultural phenomena. The real challenge of translating, in fact, is to welcome the Other by giving him hospitality in one's own language and culture. This happens without the translator's language and culture denying the Other, but by assimilating the foreign element into one's own culture (Cavagnoli, 2019, p. 8).

As Arduini asserts, translating brings into play the relationship with the Other and the question of diversity, and it makes us reflect on who we are (Arduini, 2020, p. 62). It means to act in welcoming the foreigner as such, and recognizing his creativity and expressiveness without giving in to an assimilating and ethnocentric translation.

This is a challenge that social design should embrace.

As Zingale argues, it means moving within a space of possibilities, to refocus into that missing part of experience that is neither normal nor neutral. He also states that within design, otherness nurtures inventive thinking and at the same time helps to advance the degree of human awareness, self-awareness and responsibility (Zingale, 2022, p. 40).

Social design is itself a social activity with a strong collaborative and participative dimension that is open to the Other; it presupposes a continuous exchange *with*, *on behalf of*, and *in the interest of* the Other (designing is inseparable from negotiations), (Zingale, 2022, p. 25). This exchange takes place not only pragmatically, but also through an ability to make ethical decisions, and to have insights into possible futures with an open gaze at the Other, beyond oneself.

3.3 For an ethics of otherness

The ethical act of translation and the ethical act of social design consist in recognizing and receiving the Other as Other. It means acting in the name of difference against cultural homogeneity, beyond economic and political needs, and in opposition to any hegemonic

pretension of cultural domestication. Based on this this assumption, translation and social design are interpretable as political acts aimed at encountering the Other through translation processes.

In social design, or in design for social innovation, the encountering with the Other happens through collaboration.

Ezio Manzini pointed out the importance of *collaborative encounter*: collaboration take place when people encounter each other and exchange something (time, care, experiences, expertise, etc.) in order to receive a benefit; as Manzini highlights, they create a *shared value* (Manzini, 2015, pp. 92-93). Starting from these premises, the encounter with the Other becomes real when there is a concrete *active and collaborative involvement* that starts from the *ethos* (the ethics) of otherness. All social intervention projects are inseparable from communication, discourses, and therefore, from translative practices, which should be based on the ethics of otherness.

According to Jaques Rhéaume, it is possible to distinguish four different forms of ethics, based on the relationship between ethics and otherness (Rhéaume, 2007, pp. 19-38).

- The first form is defined in term of *ethics of conviction*, and is represented by scientific reasoning, by the reference to be validated, by demonstrated knowledge which is universal in scope. The ethics of conviction can rely for example on professional knowledge, itself conferred by scientific knowledge. It is ideally suited to a kind of transferring or asserting of certain truths that need to be known or applied to others. The translation project can be finalized to convince the Other by a prescriptive or seductive language. From this perspective the Other is subject to the same basic principles, only based on strategic thinking.
- The second category is described as *ethics of responsibility*, which assumes that human behaviour is determined solely and exclusively by individual choices. As Maiello observes, it is an ethics that pays great attention to analyzing the consequences of behaviour and, therefore, of the

restorative actions that result (Maiello, 2015, p. 16). Rhéaume refers in even more detail to the principle in terms of *act as you would want others to act with you*, (this can be connected to the translation concept of hospitality that means to be open and accept the foreigner). This is the universal rule underlying the social contract the individual enters with his/her peers within society (Rhéaume, 2007, p. 23). Translated into its communicative dimension, this form of ethics is less focussed on the transmission of convictions or acquired truths than on the active response of the Other. It's less about convincing than about helping the Other to autonomously discover the direction for his/her action.

- The third form of ethics concerns the *ethics of discussion* (definable also as ethics of negotiation that is the core of translation processes). According to Rhéaume, to understand its traits, it's useful to recall Jürgen Habermas's affirmation that only through discussion, debate and negotiation will a community be able to establish rational norms of civil living and common action. This varies from restricted groups (micro-social entities), to the democratic functioning targeted in many organizations or associations, or even social movements. Shared information, debate and collective decision-making on important issues are all part of this general framework. Ethics is not disconnected from the political dimension of translation and social design. In this case, the Other is the citizen as an equal subject, able to participate in the social innovation process through collaboration and co-participation.
- The fourth and final category is defined as *ethics of the finitude* that is strictly connected to the living human being, for whom emotions, health and death are guiding dimensions of conduct at least as much as reason and will. It is the result of a search into the most advantageous actions for society, and of a social participation based on a shared awareness that reality is mutable; that human reason is limited; and that actions can be unpredictable and uncertain. The ethics of the finitude introduces more indefinite, more open, and at the same time, more limited actions

centered on the consciousness of the finitude of the human being but also of the presence of unequal human relationships. This is a kind of ethics where translation as design practice is conceived in term of praxis, a reflexive action with the Other.

In the real world these categories are flexible, they can intertwine, different forms of ethics can be predominant at the same time in some geographical areas or in some historical periods. As Rhéaume affirms, these categories express the various moments of a necessary dialectic between the universal and the singular, the individual and the collective, the subjective identity and the relationship with Others in search of meaning and direction in human life (Rhéaume, 2007, p. 25).

3.4 The ethics of the translator-designer

This contribution was finalized to create a relationship between translation (as act and process), and social design through an ethics of otherness. Being a social translator-designer means having a special ethical sensitivity, which enables him/her to face the challenges of our complex times. He/she needs to have multiple capabilities which are of support in his/her choices and actions:

1. from an endodisciplinary point of view, the attitude of self-criticism and the ability to search for the meaning of things with an aptitude for decoding their languages, even if the totality is elusive;
2. the ability to work beyond disciplinary fences, in order to address social issues from a transdisciplinary perspective facilitating the creation of interconnections amongst different research areas, cultures and design skills.
3. a sensibility which facilitates negotiation processes among humans, beyond prejudices or stereotypes, with an openness to multiple cultures, against all forms of ethnocentrism and in favour of a cosmopolitan ethic (Galimberti, 2023, p. 50) and cultural plurality;
4. a critical gaze toward any form of automatism generated by new technologies or AI, with the acceptance that responsibility doesn't only concern the pure production of results or

the proper execution of an algorithmic process beyond any horizon of meaning;

5. the capacity of making appropriate economical choices according to an ecosystem logic, remembering that there is an interdependence between the well-being of the individual and that of the planetary ecosystem. As Capra reminds us «the needs of the planet are the needs of the person... the rights of the person are the rights of the planet» (Capra, 2013, p. 327);
6. a consciousness that we must now move from an anthropocentric ethics to a planetary ethics according to a systemic paradigm, because, as Galimberti argues, the subsistence of the entire human species is at stake (Galimberti, 2023, p. 49);
7. the ability to operate and cooperate recognizing the power of language and translation, (and thus the linguistic hospitality), as the basis of human evolution and interaction. Only through discourse is collaboration realized, and only through collaboration is it possible to find unexpected solutions within an ever-changing context.

As Hannah Arendt suggests in her essays, we need to return to rethink the meaning and value of our actions, to rediscover a dimension of action that makes us truly human and open to interact with others for the good of humanity and the whole world; we think that translation (as an act and as a process) can work alongside social design in the pursuit of these objectives.

References

- Arduini S. (2020), *Con gli occhi dell'altro. Tradurre*, Jaca Book, Milan.
- Arendt H. (2012), *Vita activa. La condizione umana*, Bompiani, Milan, 1958.
- Baule G. and Caratti E., edited by, *Design è traduzione: il paradigma traduttivo per la cultura del progetto*, FrancoAngeli, Milan.
- Berman A. (1997), *La prova dell'estraneo. Cultura e traduzione nella Germania romantica*, Quodlibet, Macerata.
- Blumczynski P. (2016), *Ubiquitous Translation*, Routledge, New York and London.
- Capra F. (2013), *Il punto di svolta. Scienza, società e cultura emergente*, Feltrinelli, Milan.

- Cavagnoli F. (2019), *Tradurre come ospitalità*, Alfabet2. Available at <http://www.francacavagnoli.com/2019/10/11/traduzione-come-ospitalita/>. Accessed May 2024.
- Clarke A. J. (2019), *Émigré culture and the origins of Social Design*, in Resnick E., ed., *The Social Design Reader*, Bloomsbury, London, New York.
- Lalimberti U. (2023), *L'etica del viandante*, Feltrinelli, Milan.
- Jakobson R. (1959), On linguistic aspects of translation, in Brower R. A., ed., *On Translation*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Lakoff G. and Johnson M. (1998), *Metafora e vita quotidiana*, Bompiani, Milan.
- Lorusso A. M. (2010), *Semiotica della cultura*, Laterza, Rome-Bari.
- Lotman J. (1994), *Cercare la strada. Modelli di cultura*, Marsilio, Venice.
- Maiello G. (2015), *Etica e traduzione nel XXI secolo*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Naples.
- Manzini E. (2015), *Design, When Everybody Designs. An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*, The MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Marrone G. (2010), *L'invenzione del testo*, Laterza, Rome.
- Osimo B. (2014), *La traduzione totale: spunti per lo sviluppo della scienza della traduzione*, Kindle Direct Publishing: Osimo Bruno.
- Osimo B. (2021), *Traduzione come metafora, traduttore come antropologo. La semiotica ci fa capire*, Kindle Direct Publishing: Osimo Bruno.
- Resnick E. (2019), *Introduction*, in Resnick E., ed., *The Social Design Reader*, Bloomsbury, London, New York.
- Rhéaume J. (2007), *Étique et alterité, de quelle étique et de quelle alterité?*, in Cagnet M., Montgomery C., edited by, *Étique de alterité. La question de la culture dans le champ de la santé et des services sociaux*, Les Presses de L'université Laval, Laval.
- Ricoeur P. (2001), *La traduzione. Una sfida etica*, Morcelliana, Brescia.
- Tonkinwise C. (2019), *Is Social Design a Thing?*, in Resnick E., edited by, *The Social Design Reader*, Bloomsbury, London, New York.
- Torop P. (1995), *Toytal'nyj perevod*, Tartuskogo Universiteta, Tartu: IZD.
- Zingale S. (2016), "Come una traduzione. La traduzione del senso nel design", in Baule G. and Caratti E., edited by, *Design è traduzione: il paradigma traduttivo per la cultura del progetto*, FrancoAngeli, Milan.
- Zingale S. (2022), "Attraverso l'alterità. L'Altro nella cultura del progetto", in Zingale S., edited by, *Design e alterità. Conoscere l'altro, pensare il Possibile*, FrancoAngeli, Milan.

Authors

Anna Anzani: Associate Professor at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano. She works on the re-use of historical heritage, focusing on the conservation of beauty and its psychological and anthropological implications, the relationship between material and immaterial aspects of cultural heritage, and memory in creative and design terms, from an ecological and transdisciplinary perspective.

Valeria Bucchetti: Full Professor at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano; she is Chair BSc + MSc Communication Design. She teaches Communication Design and Gender Culture in the Design Master Degree. She is member of the PhD Design board and she is member of the Centro di Ricerca interuniversitario Culture di Genere board. She won the Compasso d'Oro Design Award (1998). Her research field concerns the theoretical aspects of identity systems and their communicative components and gender identities in the communication design domain, in which she has developed basic and applied research projects.

Daniela Anna Calabi: Architect and Researcher with a Master's in Multimedia Communication, is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Design at Politecnico di Milano. She is a member of the research group in Communication Design, focusing on the articulation of Communication Design for the Territory (DCxT). Her primary research interests include design theory and visual cultures, with particular attention to perception and communication, the atmosphere, and the identity of places. She extensively explores the fields of publishing and the communication of heritage, with educational and applied research perspectives. She participates in international conferences and develops experimental communication design projects within the scope of applied research contracts. Additionally, she is an expert in Basic Design and has made significant contributions to foundational design education.

Elena Caratti: PhD and Associate Professor at the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano. She teaches at the Bachelor's and Master's degree courses in Communication Design of the Design School and at the PhD School in Design, Politecnico di Milano. For years she has been researching in the field of design education and visual cultures, with a particular interest in editorial design reinterpreted through the translation paradigm. Author of the book *Rimediazioni gender sensitive* (FrancoAngeli, 2015), she was co-editor of the book *Design is translation* (FrancoAngeli, 2017), which received an honourable mention at the 25th edition of the Compasso d'Oro ADI.

Rachele Didero: She is a fashion designer specializing in tech textiles. During her studies in Milan, New York, and Tel Aviv, she developed and patented a textile that shields against facial recognition. Her ongoing research, as part of her PhD at Politecnico di Milano's Knit Lab and MIT Media Lab's Tangle Media Group, focuses on creating innovative products that are technologically advanced and ethically sound. Her work aims to address contemporary challenges that will influence the future. Central to her mission is the *Cap_able* project, which merges engineering, textile, and fashion to enhance public awareness and identity protection.

Davide Fassi: Full professor in design at Politecnico di Milano. He published *Temporary Urban Solutions* (2012) and *In the neighborhood* (2017). His research is about the relationship between space and service with a community centred approach. Awarded with XXV Compasso d'Oro in 2018 for the project *campUS – incubation and settings for social practices*, Ambrogino d'Oro (2022) and Seoul Design Award (2023) for Off Campus Nolo, a neighborhood living lab of the Politecnico di Milano. Coordinator of the Polimi Desis Lab a research lab on design for social innovation and sustainability and member of the DESIS network international coordination committee. Rector's delegate for cultural activities and public engagement.

Laura Galluzzo: PhD in Design, she is Associate Professor at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano. She is operational manager of POLIMI DESIS Lab within the international DESIS Network (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability). Her research focus is on participative projects of (public) Spaces and Services. She has a specific expertise in the co-design of spaces as activators of collaborative actions, community hub, incubators of social practices. She has been a researcher in various national and international research programmes on this topic. She works on the relationship between Spaces and Services (S+S) design with a focus on temporary interventions, domestic and urban transformations.

Martina Motta: PhD cum laude in Design, Assistant Professor at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano. Faculty member at the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano, and in the FIT in Milan program of the Fashion Institute of Technology (NY). Her teaching and research activity on contemporary fashion have a particular focus on knitwear and textile design: on the convergence of traditional manual techniques with advanced technologies, on the evolution of digital representation of textile products, on the enhancement of sustainable design, processes and products within this specific industrial sector.

Elettra Panepinto: Communication Designer, graduated at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano. She is especially interested in the social applications of design and the world of research.

Since June 2023, she has worked in Off-Campus San Vittore, participating in research activities with the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano. Within this context, she is particularly involved in Storylab, a permanent participatory storytelling workshop for detainees. This experience informed her research thesis, focusing on humanitarian communication in the context of incarceration, surrounding the representation of detainees as subjects of humanitarian attention and delving into the themes of biopolitics and agency.

Francesca Piredda: PhD, Associate Professor at the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano. Member of ImagisLab research group, collaborates with DESIS Network. Being committed to the transformative power of stories, she leads projects and educational activities on communication design, audiovisual language, digital media and the narratives. Being interested in action-research and participative design approaches, she experiments with participatory video and narrative-driven processes for co-design. In 2017 she received the XXV ADI Compasso D'Oro award. She's scientific director of the masters Brand Communication, Design the Digital Strategy, Art Direction & Copywriting at POLI.design, Politecnico di Milano.

Ada Piselli: Systemic therapist since 2008, she works as a private practitioner with individuals, couples and families. She is a trainer in psychotherapy at Centro Studi Eteropoiesi. During the last years, the willing systemic focus on context and the attitude toward transdisciplinarity materialize themselves in reflections about the complex relations between identities, memories and places. As a therapist, she is specifically interested in healing processes, and in how places can promote recovery from collective wounds. She published on these topics and she gave lectures about at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano.

Silvia Pizzocaro: Full Professor of Industrial design at Politecnico di Milano. She holds a Master of Science in Architecture and a PhD in Industrial design. Her research activity is embedded in the Department of Design, section Design and cultures. Over the years she has worked at the intersection of product design theory, design research

culture, and doctoral education in design. Her study interests include design theory and research methods for product design. She has written and edited a number of books, including *Introduzione agli studi sull'utente* (2015) and *Artefatti concreti. Temi di fondamento per il design di prodotto* (2016).

James Postell: Architect and Associate Professor of product design, School of Design, Politecnico di Milano and Professor Emeritus of the College of DAAP, University of Cincinnati. He has taught architecture, interior design and product design at: Texas Tech University, University of Cincinnati, DIS in Copenhagen, and Politecnico di Milano. His research focuses on the links between design, theory, and technology with emphasis placed on furniture, products, and interior design. He has designed many interior projects and furniture pieces and currently researches and writes on interiors, furniture, craftsmanship and materiality.

Virginia Tassinari: Her research focuses on how philosophy can contribute to the contemporary design research discourse. Previously a lecturer and researcher at Politecnico di Milano (IT) and LUCA School of Arts (BE), she is currently Assistant Professor at TU Delft (NL). She is a visiting scholar at Parsons, the New School of Design (USA), visiting lecturer at Université de Nîmes (FR) and design researcher at foresight and design studio Pantopicon (BE). Virginia is currently a member of the International Coordination Committee of DESIS Network, within which she is also co-initiator with Ezio Manzini of the DESIS Philosophy Talks, a series of discussions on design for social innovation & philosophy. She recently published *Designing in Dark Times. An Arendtian Lexicon* (Bloomsbury, 2020, with Eduardo Staszowski) (for which they won the Compasso d'Oro 2022 Design Prize) and *Re-framing the Politics of Design* (Public Space, 2022, with Liesbeth Huybrechts and Oswald Devisch).

Umberto Tolino: Associate professor and Designer, he conducts research and practice in the fields of Communication and Interaction Design. His works have been included in four ADI Compasso d'Oro Design Index and he was awarded a Compasso d'Oro honorable mention

(2018) and a Red Dot Design Award (2019). He has more than twenty years of teaching experience at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano, holding lectures on digital communication and advanced visual design studios. Currently, he is Vice-Rector for Communication and Cultural events of Politecnico di Milano.

Francesco Vergani: PhD, Post-Doc Research Fellow at the Department of Design of the Politecnico di Milano. He is member of Polimi DESIS Lab where he collaborates in research activities focused on the reactivation of local communities in urban contexts such as *Vocabolario di Quartiere* (2019-ongoing), a situated vocabulary in the Nolo neighborhood (Milan), developed within the living lab *Off Campus Nolo*. He is currently Adjunct Professor at Politecnico di Milano.

Salvatore Zingale: Associate Professor at the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano and teaches Design Semiotics at the School of Design. He is particularly interested in the cognitive and inventive processes of design activity and dialogicity in cultural interactions. On the relationship between design and alterity, he has edited *Design e alterità. Conoscere l'Altro, pensare il Possibile* (FrancoAngeli, 2022) and *Design meets Alterity. Case Studies, Project Experiences, Communication Criticism* (FrancoAngeli, 2024). He is author of the volume *Relazioni dialogiche. Un'indagine sulla comunicazione e la progettualità* (FrancoAngeli, 2023).

This volume focuses on the ethical challenges of design for public and social systems, attempting to clarify what it means to design *ethically* in a complex world and how it is possible to do so, within a multifaceted reality in which everything is interconnected and constantly changing. The first section of the book introduces some theoretical aspects, principles and values underlying ethical design. The second part is aimed at reflecting on the relationship between ethics and design from a phenomenological perspective. Ethics, in the philosophical sense of the term, pertains to the whole range of behaviors that individuals adopt to conduct their existence without causing damage to themselves or others, what challenges does design for public and social systems face in designing ethically? Can designers become real agents of social transformation? What kind of impact and effects do designers produce within the public and social system? How can we recognize those ethical design practices that bring about real structural change? What is the role of digital technologies? Our aim is to offer a series of critical reflections and concrete examples of the substantial effects of an ethical approach to design, with recognition of the value of otherness and the awareness of the interdependence between artifacts, individuals, societies, governments, institutions, and the planetary ecosystem.