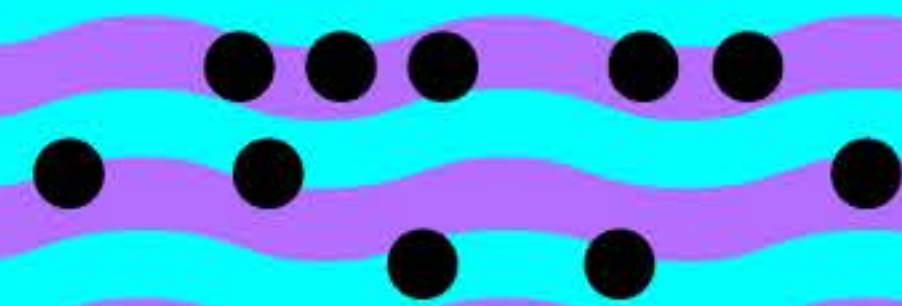


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PPAD

design
for
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Art direction**Francesco Trovato**

Officina22

Social Networking**Veronica Chisari**

MA in communication studies, Palermo, Italy

Ziad Zitoun

Visual Artist, Tunisia

PAD

via Festa del Perdono 1

20122 Milano - Italy

via Roma 171

90133 Palermo - Italy

info@padjournal.net

www.padjournal.net

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info@letteraventidue.com

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Editorial #13

Which Design for which Territories?

by Marina Parente and Carla Sedini



Photo © Carla Sedini

Design's interest in the territories is nothing new which has been made especially clear in recent years at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano. According to this complex and comprehensive body of work, we realized it was necessary to create a dedicated research network, called D4T- Design for Territories. The principal goal of this research network is to amass a collection of expert opinions to develop a collaborative dialogue through connection with other experts, disciplines and professionals both internally and externally from the Department.

One of the activities that D4T has launched was this call for paper for PAD Journal, which came after several internal meetings and the listening of several voices among professors, researchers and PhD students of the Design Department.

This preliminary networking' work allowed the comprehensive identification of principle lens of observation of the matter. This was the foundation for the three tracks we've proposed to use in requesting papers for inclusion in the PAD Journal. We want to stress the fact that these tracks were not meant to be mutually exclusive. The papers, received and selected, were able to give a general overview of the different roles that the designer could have in the process of working on a territory. The designer can focus on any of the following: the initial discovery and envisioning phase; the activation of empowerment processes; the identification of more efficient ways of communicating the identity of a place; or even can be the director to reinvent a specific place according to its needs. The designer could perform all those duties according to different breadth of knowledge and depth of expertise.

In addition to understand about the different roles of designers, defining “what is a territory” is important for our research and our understanding of the matter. We received a number of useful contributions focus on small neighborhoods, cities and even entire regions. The interested territories are both urban and rural, real and perceived.

The first track, *Theories and Practices*, is intended to consolidate the research into a (new) theoretical baseline, which resonates across varied research and teaching experiences. The selected papers dealt in different ways with the issues mentioned above.

The contribution of Marina Parente, “Design for Territories as reflective practice”, presents an overview of the state of the art of Design for Territories. The author highlights how the experimentation phases were fundamental for the validation and consolidation of the discipline’s theoretical assumptions.

The contribution of Carla Sadini and Luca Fois, about *Zona Tortona* case study (Milan), represents the post theoretical work. From practice to implementation, the authors use specific theoretical concepts borrowed by other disciplines for the analysis of place-branding activities.

The paper “Design Networking. Local systems of collaborative economies” by Maria Antonietta Sbordone focuses on the theoretical and methodological approach particularly of the Social Economy Network Model which is at the core of a specific research-action for the empowerment and regeneration of confiscated lands in Caserta province.

Then, we go deeper on the social role of design with the contribution of Marco Borsotti and Sonia Pistidda about the experimentation of a methodology (in particular participatory design) to approach design for built heritage, dealing

with the reuse of the Magazzini Raccordati (Milano Central Station).

The second track, *Tangible and Intangible*, addresses the existing resources of a territory, represented by its customs and artifacts. Resources and strategies can be both tangible and intangible.

The paper “Envision the nocturnal territory. Urban lighting as design strategy for the recovery of places” by Helena Gentili and Daria Casciani, perfectly represents the potentially ambivalent interpretation of the overarching topic. The authors identify both the physical and abstract aspects of public space light design and the various methodologies for implementation according to whichever diverse role that the designers can play.

The paper proposed by Anna Calvera, Debora Giorgi, Yasser Halloul, Insaf Khaled, and Rosa Povedano interprets the topic looking at the balance between tradition and innovation of typical local products in Tunisia. Through the experience of the Master 3D, they highlight the designers’ multidisciplinary approach to establish strategies for the reinterpretation of local products to propose them to new users and new markets.

“Territory and Aesthetic as tools for product design”, the contribution proposed by José Luis Gonzalez Cabrero and Ana Margarita Àvila Ochoa, does not approach the research through existing objects but the experience of the territory (in this case Real de Catorce - Mexico), which is analyzed according to an aesthetic-oriented perspective. The final goal is the materialization of the territorial resources, both tangible and intangible, in jewelry products.

In Letizia Bollini’ paper, “The social representation of the territory”, the discussion is developed at the cross-sections

of various disciplines of study. The author proposes the use of approaches and methodologies from environmental and cognitive psychology. The goal is that of applying these methodologies in the user-centered design approach in order to study the perception of citizens and users of Bicocca area in Milan.

With Reham Mohsen and Andreas Sicklinger contribution, we get an up-close look at a more specialized approach, oriented toward visual communication. In particular, the authors review some Egyptian case studies where a tangible need for the renovation of the wayfinding and street sign system forced them to consider several intangible elements directly connected with the local history and culture.

The third track, *Competition and Collaboration*, was meant to go beyond a marketing oriented approach addressed to the competitive positioning of territories. Additionally, this track highlights the most interesting ongoing phenomena, which are mainly looking for socially innovation goals. All the selected papers were incepted from collaboration strategies (such as co-design processes) in order to use them as levers both for the territorial enhancement and, as a consequence, for the success of these places in the territorial competition.

Raffaella Fagnoni and Silvia Pericu present the *Reagente* case study, a quality label which was co-designed by Genova citizens. This project is based on the political role of design as an enabler of sustainable behaviors. In this case, the label, commonly seen only as an element to competition, is intended as a promoter for specific values regarding recycling and abandoned spaces.

Rossana Gaddi focuses her paper on the territory of Como where the *Artificio* project was developed. The author presents the preliminary cultural mapping, completed in conjunction

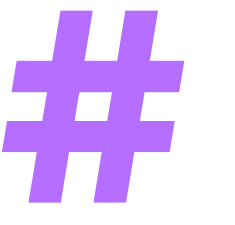
with the local citizens, who participated in the entire process. The project established an innovative cultural center where several activities and functions were co-designed.

The project presented by Davide Fassi, Laura Galluzzo and Annalinda De Rosa, called *camp-US*, was located in a Milan neighborhood, where the Design Department is also located (Bovisa). In their contribution they stress the important role of participatory design processes as generators or re-generators of social capital. They specifically work with a local nursery and some middle schools to co-design and co-manage urban gardens.

Miriam Bicocca paper, based on her PhD research, is focused on the Mexican region known as Guerrero. The author worked according to the Systemic Design Approach to empower local farmers. Thanks to the use of participatory design approaches a cooperative of farmers was started and an SDA for the rural development was tested.

The end result of all received contributions, displays a plethora of evidence and inspirations for the territories studies.

One goal of this issue is to initiate more chances for new reflections, questions and in-depth analysis. As we mentioned before, these three tracks are not meant to box our contributors into any single methodology; rather to change the readers' perception. These contributions can be re-organized, giving way to new connections and reflections. Together we are looking through a vibrant kaleidoscope of many moving pieces.



BIOGRAPHIES

Ana Margarita Ávila Ochoa

MHAU, researcher and professor of design at Facultad del Hábitat, Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, México. With prof. J.L. González Cabrero, she is developing design research approaches in the Industrial design program with the main objective to understand design processes and enable design education through meaningful methodologies and innovation.

amavilao@hotmail.com

Miriam Bicocca

PhD in Production Systems & Industrial Design, research fellow at Department of Architecture and Design (DAD) of Politecnico di Torino. Graduated in Eco-design, her research is aimed to promote sustainable growth and rural development through the application of systemic design approach in the marginal areas. From 2013 she is editor of the online magazine Graphicus.

miriam.bicocca@polito.it

Letizia Bollini

MS in Architecture, PhD in Industrial Design and Multimedia Communication, specialist in Digital Media Design at the San Francisco State University, certificated in Mobile App Visual Design from the Norman&Nielsen Group-London. Theorist, designer and educator her research interests are focused mainly on multimodal user interfaces and interaction, digital media, visual design, spatial representation and cultural heritage. She is currently assistant Professor at the Department of Psychology at the University of Milano-Bicocca.

letizia.bollini@unimib.it

Marco Borsotti

Architect, PhD in Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design. He is an assistant professor at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano, and member of AIMAC (Interior Architecture, Museums, Built Environment), a permanent research group. He takes part in several research activities and international conferences on the topic of exhibition, contemporary living and contemporary sacred architecture.

marco.borsotti@polimi.it

Anna Calvera

Graduated in graphic design, PhD in Aesthetic, she is full professor of History and Theories of design at UB, the University of Barcelona. She has been teaching in BA, MA and PhD level and currently she is also a teacher at 3d Tunis Master. She is member of ICDHS, EAD and GRACMON, the Research Group of UB which deals with the history of art and contemporary design.

annacalvera@ub.edu

Daria Casciani

PhD, lighting specialist, product designer, research fellow. She currently works at the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, by teaching at the Master in Lighting Design & LED Technology and conducting research activities at the Laboratorio Luce.

daria.casciani@polimi.it

Annalinda De Rosa

PhD candidate at the Politecnico di Milano, lecturer for the Department of Design. Her researches deal with mutual influences between design for services and public/urban spaces. She is involved in the European consortium GIDE (Group for International Design Education), and in the projects: Human Cities, Challenging the city scale and campUs - Incubation and settings for social practices.

annalinda.derosa@polimi.it

Raffaella Fagnoni

Associate professor of design at the Polytechnic School and DSA (Dipartimento di Scienze per l'Architettura) of the Università degli Studi di Genova. Her research deal with design capabilities for the re-development of territories in transformation, addressing health, safety and sustainability issues. She collaborates with the Municipality of Genoa and currently is participating at Urbact Network, 2nd Chance, action for a sustainable urban development.

fagnoni@arch.unige.it

Davide Fassi

Associate professor at the Politecnico di Milano and the Tongji University (China), member of the international committee of DESIS Network (Design for Social innovation and Sustainability). His research focuses on community centred design. He published "Temporary Urban Solutions" (2012) and developed "Coltivando. The Convivial Garden at the Politecnico di Milano" (2012).

davide.fassi@polimi.it

Luca Fois

Creative advisor and lecturer of Event Design at the Design School of Politecnico di Milano. Currently he is consultant for Cilab, Creative Industries Lab Network, at the Politecnico di Milano.

lucafois49@gmail.com

Rossana Gaddi

Graduate in Industrial Design, PhD in Design and Technology for the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage. She has been a visual communication designer since 2003. Currently she works at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano, where is involved in researches and teaching activities on the communication and the enhancement of the relationship between design, fashion and territory.

rossana.gaddi@polimi.it

Laura Galluzzo

PhD in Design, research fellow at Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano, lecturer at the Design School. In recent years she designed interiors and services for the Expo Village at Expo Milan 2015, and she was the project manager of the last Cumulus Conference in Milan (June 2015). Currently she is working for campUS, a Polisocial research project, and for Human Cities, a European research project.

laura.galluzzo@polimi.it

Helena Gentili

Architect, PhD in architecture and urbanism, lighting designer (professional member APIL). Currently she collaborates as a teacher and tutor at the Master in Lighting Design & Led Technology, Politecnico di Milano. Her independent experience in the field of lighting design involves the private and the public sector.

helena.gentili@polimi.it

Debora Giorgi

Architect, PhD in History of Afro-Asian Countries, and associate researcher of design at the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence. Since 1994, her research has been dealing with cultural heritage and durable development of Mediterranean countries. She has been coordinating a number of international projects. Currently she teaches Tangible and Intangible Heritage and Strategic Design Stratégique at Master 3D, Tunis.

deboragiorgi@gmail.com

José Luis González Cabrero

MDP, researcher and professor of design at Facultad del Hábitat, Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, México. He is developing design research approaches in the Industrial design program, with the main objective to understand design processes and enable design education through meaningful methodologies and innovation.

gonzalezcabrero@gmail.com

Yosser Halloul

PhD student of Sciences and Technics of Arts. She teaches Ceramic, Technics of Graphic Representation and History of Art at the Institut Supérieur de Beaux Arts de Sousse (ISBAS). She is a member of education at Master 3D Tempus, where she teaches Socio-Anthropology and Aesthetic.

yosserhalloul@yahoo.fr

Insaf Khaled

Semiotician and historian of art and design, she teaches these subjects as well as Interior Design at the Higher School of Science and Technology of Design (ESSTED) of the University of Manouba, in Tunis. Currently she teaches also at the Master 3D. She is specialized in Tunisian craft traditions with an approach related to the project of architecture, home and decorative motifs.

insaf.khaled@yahoo.fr

Reham Mohsen

PhD in Sign Design, graduate in Applied Art & Design at the Helwan University in Cairo. Since 2012 she has been an associate professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Helwan University in Cairo (Department of Decoration). She also taught Visual Communication at the German University in Cairo, and published several papers about art & design perception, visual communication, decorative arts and murals, calligraphy and typography.

dr.reham.mohsen@gmail.com

Marina Parente

Architect, PhD, associate professor at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano and Coordinator of D4T- Design for Territories Research Network. She is engaged in strategic design for the enhancement of territorial and cultural heritage, with research, teaching and planning activities. She is the director of the high education course "Brand of Territorial Systems" and the coordinator of the Master in Planning Culture in Milan.

marina.parente@polimi.it

Silvia Pericu

Assistant professor of design at the Polytechnic School and DSA (Dipartimento di Scienze per l'Architettura) of the Università degli Studi di Genova. Currently she is cooperating with the Municipality of Genoa and participating at Urbact Network, 2nd Chance, action for a sustainable urban development.

pericu@arch.unige.it

Sonia Pistidda

Architect, PhD in Architecture, Urban Design, Conservation of Housing and Landscape, and research fellow at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of the Politecnico di Milano. She is involved in teaching, professional and research activities in the field of preservation, protection and enhancement of cultural heritage, participating in important cultural activities and international projects.

sonia.pistidda@polimi.it

Rosa Povedano

Anthropologist, graduated at the University of Tarragona, Beaux Arts M.S. at the University of Barcelona (specialisation in design). She teaches design at UB where is in charge of the Experimental Atelier of design (tissue and product) and the coordinator of BA last years degree courses. She is a member of GRACMON UB. Currently she teaches Anthropology of every day life objects in the Experimental Fabric Atelier at Master 3D, Tunis.

21dits@gmail.com

Maria Antonietta Sbordone

Architect, M.S. at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), designer and researcher in Industrial and Fashion Design at DICDEA Department of the Second University of the Studies of Naples (SUN). She teaches Industrial Design in the Master Degree Course Design for Innovation at the SUN. She is a visiting Professor at the Nanjing University of Science and Technology (China).

mariaantonieta.sbordone@unina2.it

Carla Sadini

Sociologist, PhD, photographer. Since 2011 she has been working as a researcher and lecturer at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano, where she is currently research assistant for D4T - Design for Territories Research Network.

sadini.carla@gmail.com

Andreas Sicklinger

Graduate in architecture at the Technical University in Munich, for 20 years he has been working in different design schools in Italy, Politecnico di Torino, Università di Ferrara and IED in Milan), in the field of Product Design and Applied Ergonomics for Design. Since 2012, he has been head of the Product Design Department at the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Arts of the German University in Cairo, Egypt.

sicklingerandreas@gmail.com