

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



Embassy of Italy
Al Kuwait

A Project in Collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Kuwait

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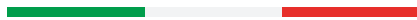
SENSITALIANI in Kuwait is a program born as consequence of the International Italian Day, the event that promotes the Italian design around the world as a country's excellence.

The mission of SENSITALIANI is to bridge and bring cultures closer together, to recognize each other and offer their respective countries moments of confrontation and friendship around the design.

The name SENSITALIANI comes from the fact that the best qualities of Italian design are about an aesthetic that affects all the senses, which puts the bodies, the experience of the places and the refinement of the technologies used, at the base of the quality of the much loved Made in Italy.

The SENSITALIANI program hosted 16 lectures, 10 conferences, 29 speakers, 43 students involved, was coordinated by Poli.design, sponsored by Politecnico di Milano, and the contents of this incredible experience are collected within this volume.

A project in collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Kuwait.



**Embassy of Italy
Al Kuwait**

Under the patronage of Politecnico di Milano.



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Acknowledgement

| Part One | Introduction |

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



H.E. Ambassador Carlo Baldocci

Foreward

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

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

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

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

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

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

| Part Two | Design From Italy |

Luca Guerrini

Italian Design Strategy in a Globalized World

Luca Guerrini is Associate Professor at Politecnico di Milano where he has worked since 1993. A trained urban designer, he has carried out applied research and projects in the field of architecture, interior and spatial design. His studies focus on the relationship between design and the arts.

He teaches Interior Design and Contemporary Arts at the School of Design. A faculty member of several PhD programs since 1998, he is a former Director of the PhD program in Design. He is in charge of the joint Politecnico di Milano and Tsinghua University, Beijing degree program in Design. He has lectured on M.A. Courses in Italy and abroad.

About the topic:

- I am genuinely committed to share knowledge about Italian design with foreign students.
- Sensitaliani is a wonderful opportunity to tackle this task involving young Kuwaiti designers.

Since its first appearing on the international scene, Italian design was largely acknowledged for its distinctive features. The exhibition "Italy: The New domestic landscape" (MoMA, New York 1972) displayed the vitality, complexity and variety of approaches experimented by Italian professionals: the smooth elegance of Alberto Rosselli and Marco Zanuso, the ironic



*Luca Guerrini
Associate Professor, Design Department, Politecnico di Milano*

aggressiveness of Ettore Sottsass, the harsh social criticism of Enzo Mari, Joe Colombo's visionary gaze, and finally the disruptive vision of the young "radical" designers. They were all ingredients of a highly energetic recipe in which Bruno Munari, who did not take part in the MoMA exhibition, injected his distinctive trait: playful thinking. Years later, Andrea Branzi identified Italian design as a research focused on asking the right questions, a speculative process in which products always play the part of temporary solutions.

Based on these solid foundations, Italian design has grown until today. The challenges to be faced have changed, especially those concerning environmental and social issues. Nevertheless, Italian products still display a renewed domestic landscape originated from the skillful work of professionals who combine critical thinking, reflective practice, aesthetic research and a playful attitude to produce a unique design method.

The interview

Q1: As an expert on Italian design, what do you think still makes the difference between Italian design and that of other countries?

A1: Analyzing design on a national basis is a tough and even questionable task. Critical thinking, reflective practice, and aesthetic research are common trait of design worldwide. Italian professionals and entrepreneurs, however, combine these features in a distinctive and multifaceted way, adding to the design process a playful attitude. Our criticism is ironic, not bitter. We reflect constructively. The shape of products is never sharp. Italian design is full of humor even addressing crucial issues of contemporary life. Michel Serres says we are entering the era of sweet technology. In this respect, many Italian design masterpieces interpret this new condition.

Q2: In your opinion, in which aspects of design, architecture and products could the encounter between Italy and Kuwait be successful?

A2: Design and architecture are both collaborative practices aiming to achieve tangible results. In this respect, they are privileged field for dialogic conversation. Sharing knowledge among people from different cultures is a fundamental means to understand each other, and to live in peace. I think there is an increasing demand of shared design knowledge to face the challenges of the years to come.

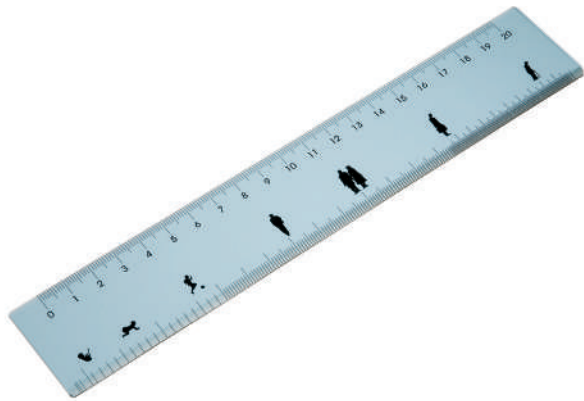
Q3: What does it mean to teach Italian design to globalized students?

A3: I don't even know whether globalized students exist. They come to Italy bringing their culture, education and beliefs. We do exactly the



Top: Massimiliano Adami, *Fossili Moderni*, 2006.

Bottom left: Gio Tiroto, *Rigbello*, Opos 2007. Bottom right: Giulio Iacchetti, *Odnom*, Palomar, 2009.



same when we visit their countries. I believe culture can only grow on variety and difference. On the one hand, Italian design is deeply rooted in our culture and therefore provides foreign students with an effective means of understanding their hosting country. On the other hand, Italian design method is as distinctive as it is adaptable. Students bring back home a formidable toolkit to face the challenges of their future professional practice.

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Q4: What is the real relationship between the sense of beauty and the Italian design culture?

A4: Defining the sense of beauty is a tough task itself. Even harder it is finding a relationship between this hypothetical sense of beauty and Italian design culture. Especially because - as Ezio Manzini says - the concept of design culture is typically Italian. We, Italian designers, entrepreneurs and scholars, have developed our own way to design reflecting on our culture, history and society. Italian landscape even played its role in this process because it is - according to Vittorio Sereni - a manifestation of an entirely artificial - that is entirely designed - beauty.

| Part Four | Learning from SENSITALIANI |





Left: Screenshot, Part of the SENSITALIANI Students in the class.

SENSITALIANI Edition I
Students:

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 Sbaima Al Sbatti
 Nour Hasbim
 Rawan Manby
 Nada Ibrahim
 Aisba Thaber
 Farab Al Mammaie
 Loulwa Al Ouda
 Abdulaziz Al Khonaini
 Aida Al Refae
 Alzain AlMasbaan
 Ghalia Husain
 Zain AlBarjas
 Badriyah AlSalem
 Jessica Anis
 Hajer almuBanna
 Khaled Jamal
 Thuraya AlHamad
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 Wilson Evan Menezes
 Alzain Al Haggan
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 Nawal Alsubaie
 Dana AlMuFarrej
 Joud Albajeri
 Taibab AlMasoud
 Sarab AlDulijan
 Haya Alnajar
 Yasmine alficker
 Wejdan albasawi
 Nourab AlEnezi
 Noor Ebrabim
 Gumika Anand
 Aisba Alrashidi
 Rosbni Pereira
 Merrit Hassan*

