

# Senses & Sensibility'21

*Designing Next Genera(c)tions*

# **Senses & Sensibility'21**

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## Senses & Sensibility '21: Designing Next Genera(c)tions

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## Senses & Sensibility '21: Designing Next Genera(c)tions

The time between the 10th International Conference Senses&Sensibility'19 in November 2019 and this edition in December 2021, represents a period of important changes. The pandemic of Covid-19 started in November 2019 changed the lives of billions of citizens, with significant repercussions on the economies and radical changes in the social contexts.

The various responses to this event showed important capabilities in terms of resilience and reactions to the change. This occurred, in various forms, in all the main areas impacted by the emergency (from school to work, from the family to the most extended social communities), and in relation with the territories, the cultural contexts, the communities, and the organization of the productive systems (industrial and manufacturing).

Even if the post-pandemic scenario is still not defined, the need to move the action plans towards process adaptability appears quite evident. In this context, the design reflections are encouraged to move towards a new transitoriness and planned flexibility.

The post-pandemic transition is presented as a high complexity task. Firstly, because it is expected to last a long time, and secondly because it will be a pot for the most cogent questions coming from the past, about instances for many years in the European and Trans-European agendas, such as fair climate, digital transition, recovery and resilience in health, biodiversity protection e gender equality.

The political interest on these topics, together with new reflections regarding concepts as exaptation and dark ecology,

are signs of a new awareness in which the means and the forms of the knowledge are placed at the center of the investigation in a new context that is no more spatially static and temporally measurable, but in a continuous variation of solution and complication, according to a principle that we could define as “trans-action”.

The International Conference Senses & Sensibility'21: Designing next Genera(c)tions intended to collect from researchers, practitioners, students, and academics original cutting-edge contributions, with a focus on inter-generational relational dynamics and the role of the inter/trans-actions activable in design, that must be used for building long-time scenarios.

The aim was to activate a new perspective in which the internal problems of the different design fields are addressed with a new co-evolutive responsibility that, through the research, acquires new determinations.

The “Interactions” and “trans-actions” become two possible strategies to activate processes that might involve design practices and enable the capabilities of the multiverse design, requiring the interpretation of the following terms/principles.

Interactions	interception, interchange, interface, interference, interpret, intersection, intergeneration, interconnection, intercultural, interdisciplinary, interstice, international, interface, interval, intermission, internet, ....
Transaction	transcript, transdisciplinary, transferability, transference, translation, transform, transfusion, transhumanism, transience, transition, transubstantiation, transpose, transmigration, translate, transcode, ....

The Design course of DICAR (Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile e dell'Architettura) of Politecnico di Bari, and UNIDCOM/IADE, Unidade de Investigação em Design e Comunicação, questioned possible scenarios that the academic design community might generate in a context which unites both realities



## Keynote Speakers

### **Mathilde Bretillot**

*Interior Design/Design/Creative Director Celebrated Paris-based International designer, Mathilde Bretillot is known for her signature works, be they quirky twists on traditional luxury for Christofle, DAUM, la Manufacture de Sevres, and Boffi – or global projects in Europe and Asia for restaurants, movie theatres, apartments, houses and offices. Her iconic simplicity – often married with color and mirrored surface- belies a passionate interest in design as a joyful expression of life in its richness for all ages, in all places. From interior architecture to product development her work is seen widely in France, and across a range of brands worldwide. Early on Bretillot worked in Milan and London taking up the experimentation and social interests of Memphis to Solid.*





## Keynote Speakers

### Peter-Paul Verbeek

*Peter-Paul Verbeek (1970) is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy of Technology and codirector of the DesignLab of the University of Twente. He is also honorary professor of Techno-Anthropology at Aalborg University, Denmark. His research focuses on the philosophy of human-technology relations, and aims to contribute to philosophical theory, ethical reflection, and practices of design and innovation. He is also chairperson of the UNESCO World Commission for the Ethics of Science and Technology (COMEST). Currently, he is one of the 6 Principal Investigators of a 10-year research program on the Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technologies.*



## Keynote Speakers

### Lorenzo Imbesi

*Lorenzo Imbesi is an Architect, PhD, and Full Professor at Sapienza University of Rome, where he is also director of SDR Sapienza Design Research. Previously, he was an associate professor and the chair of the Master of Design at Carleton University (CA). At the moment, he is a member of the Cumulus Association Executive Board, where he is chairing the Cumulus PhD Network, a member of the Executive Committee of EAD European Academy of Design, and a member of the board of SID Italian Society of Design. Also, he is co-editor of the Design Principles and Practices Journal Collection and a member of the editorial board of The Design Journal and DIID Disegno Industriale.*



## Keynote Speakers

Lara Penin  
& Gui Bonsiepe

*Presentation of the Book – The Disobedience of Design – Gui Bonsiepe*

*This volume presents for the first time in English a curated selection of writings by the design thinker Gui Bonsiepe from the 1960s to the present day. Addressing as it does questions of non-Western design and a design practice that is both radical and democratic, Bonsiepe's work has assumed new importance for current debates inspired by global political and environmental crises. Structured into three sections, the anthology first addresses Bonsiepe's work on design theory and practice, particularly in relation to the history and contemporary relevance of the Ulm design school, where Bonsiepe was a professor in the 1960s. A second section then represents Bonsiepe's writings after his move to South America in the 1960s and '70s, where he worked as a design consultant for the Allende government in Chile before the military takeover. In writings from the period, Bonsiepe explores the concept of design 'at the periphery' and the relationship of national design traditions and practices in Latin American countries to those of 'the core' – Western European and American design. The final section comprises selections of Bonsiepe's writings on design in relation to literacy and language, visuality and cognition. This indispensable volume includes new interviews with Bonsiepe as well as his original, previously unpublished texts.*

# Track 1

## Design for Territories and Cultural Contexts



### Track 1

#### Design for Territories and Cultural Contexts

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**Serena Del Puglia**

# Design For Territorial Innovation.

## Participatory design process and good practices for socio-cultural sustainability

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This article studies at length the role of design within territorial socio-cultural transformation. It investigates and describes the industriousness of projects/processes which are particularly effective for social and territorial innovation and are applied above all, to fragile and problematic urban contexts. It focuses on communities and its inhabitants who are often excluded from traditional narrative through some particularly significant projects, with an emphasis on concrete experiences of recent projects in southern Italy. Thus, the article, traverses topics and critical points of a more extensive and profound disciplinary reflection, it explores innovative roles of design in the social transformation of places and resources and in the use of public spaces, through the description of participatory processes and of identity construction. Addressing some relevant issues which are inter-connected (such as sustainability, innovation in fragile contexts, cultural identities) the article weaves the necessary interdisciplinary approach of Design for Territories and Design for Social. By attributing specific attention to social impact and design applied to social policies, it is attainable to project and promote interactions which are capable of determining behaviour changing experiences, thus creating a positive and sustainable impact, accompanying people in the design and development of a new SOCIETY (Manzini, 2015).

Keywords *participatory design, territorial innovation, cultural processes, social sustainability, design as a process.*

## Introduction

### Disciplinary reflections, new challenges and new roles for design

“The design of the 21st century [is] an expert design which presents itself as a set of skills, sensitivities and cultural tools (the tools and culture of the project) applicable to any type of problem” (Manzini, 2015<sup>1</sup>).

Human beings interact with each other and with objects and places around them. In doing so, they continually and creatively re-adapt this system of relationships, to create something which is missing.

Since the 1970s, design has moulded to the needs of people and their behaviour more carefully, placing them in their context; the designer was the observer whilst the user was the object to be observed. This relationship, however, was highly disbalanced and this observation led to the definition of a new user figure: as an expert actor, as an active subject and bearer of knowledge, thanks to their direct experience with the context. On the contrary, this debate has had an impact on the evolution of the figure of the designer: from analyst to interpreter. The designer has thus become an observer who, on the one hand, must know how to interpret the active story of people and, that is, recognizing the meanings of their actions and their relationships with places (Manzini, 2009, p. 8); on the other hand, he must interpret and capitalize on these meanings, facilitating processes that are useful for stimulating and orientating the creativity and planning skills of the actors themselves, through the projection of future visions and actions. Therefore, by aiming at the active participation of people who can be considered as contributing multiple ideas and suggestions, design can structure ideas suitable for generating innovation and planning ad hoc activities to stimulate creativity (Rizzo, 2009).

By definition, planning in close contact with the user and with society, oriented towards the production of specific cultural innovation and the construction of experience and knowledge process, based on involvement and participation, design is able to promote connections within the complex dynamics of communities (Trapani, 2016, pp. 16, 17). As a discipline, therefore, it is capable of designing mediation strategies between knowledge, sectors, territories, actors (Lotti, 2016), design itself becomes a process, a service, an activity capable of establishing connections and creating synergies between different systems (Irace, 2013), in order to use these synergies to generate the conditions for a more favourable socio-material environment. The general objective of these processes is primarily to improve the quality of life for people and to make the inhabitants aware of the concrete possibilities of real change through the autono-

Manzini, E. (2015). *Design, When Everybody Designs, An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*. Cambridge: The MIT Press

Manzini, E. (2009). *Prefazione. Design, utenti e co-designer*. In Rizzo, F., *Strategie di co-design. Teorie, metodi e strumenti per progettare con gli utenti*. Milano: FrancoAngeli

Rizzo, F. (2009). *Strategie di co-design. Teorie, metodi e strumenti per progettare con gli utenti*. FrancoAngeli, Milano

Trapani, V. (2016). *Design e cultura. Riflessioni e connessioni per un nuovo paradigma culturale*. Siracusa: LetteraVentidue

Lotti, G. (2016). *Interdisciplinary design, Progetto e relazione tra saperi*. Firenze: DIDA PRESS Dipartimento di Architettura Università degli Studi di Firenze

Irace, F. (2013). *Design & Cultural Heritage*. In D'Averio P, Trapani V, *Il design dei beni culturali crisi territorio Identità cultural heritage design. Crisis territory identity*. Milano: Rizzoli

<sup>1</sup>Ezio Manzini: design per l'innovazione sociale. Interview by Daniela Selloni. Available on <https://www.che-fare.com/ezio-manzini-design-diffuso-per-linnovazione-sociale/>

Throsby, D. (2001). *Economics and culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Parente, M. & Sedini, C. (2018). *Valorizzare il capitale territoriale con un approccio design oriented: il caso di Biella, fabbrica culturale creativa*. Scienze del territorio n. 6. Le economie del territorio bene comune.

Stumpo, G. & Manchin, R. (2014). *The resilience of employment in the Culture and Creative Sectors (CCIs) during the crisis*. European Expert Network on Culture Report

UNESCO (2016). *Culture: Urban future. Global report on culture for sustainable urban development*. Parigi: Manual UNESCO

Unioncamere – Rapporto (2016). *Io sono cultura. L'Italia della qualità e della bellezza sfida la crisi*. Roma: Quaderni di Symbola, Fondazione Symbola

<sup>2</sup>Conference program and themes are available on the website <http://unidcom.iade.pt/cumulus/cumulus.html>

mous enhancement of cultural and environmental, social and economic resources which are present and available. In light of these new perspectives, the designer, who is able to analyse and interpret the complexity of phenomena, is thus recognized as holding privileged role in their ability to articulate, mediate, coordinate, with awareness and effectiveness, the great complexity implemented in a network of collaborations extended to experts of specialized disciplines and to create conscious social communities, capable of sharing, enjoying and benefiting from knowledge, intellectual and cultural experiences. In these processes, creativity and a new cultural paradigm become the subject of the design driver thanks to which territorial innovation strategies can be developed. David Throsby (2001) with the Concentric Circle Model expressed the driving force of development that, starting from the art sector, is also able to involve the other sectors of the Cultural and Creative and non-cultural industries, which make up the economy of a territory (Parente & Sedini, 2018, p. 214). In more recent years, the focus on creating a system suitable for the development of activities in the field of creativity and culture has been reaffirmed both internationally and nationally. Primarily, the ability to react to a status quo is one of the peculiarities recognized by the Cultural and Creative Industries, as noted by the studies of Stumpo and Manchin (2014) which highlight how in times of crisis the Cultural and Creative Industries have improved resilience skills, in comparison to other sectors. Furthermore, in the Culture: urban future report (UNESCO, 2016), culture is placed at the centre of urban renewal and innovation, becoming a veritable strategic asset for the creation of more inclusive, welcoming, sustainable and creative cities (Parente & Sedini, 2018, p. 214). In support of this vision, the Italian report I am culture provides a definition of culture, as a “driver of territorial development” (Symbola Foundation - Unioncamere, Report 2016, p. 250) which includes both the system consisting of cultural heritage such as museums and galleries, both include events such as festivals and performing arts, also related to literature, cinema and various productive activities utilizing creative lymph from culture. Internationally, the Cumulus 2005 conference, held in Lisbon, entitled Pride and pre-design. The Cultural Heritage and the Science of Design<sup>2</sup> has woven similar important links between cultural heritage and design culture; design allows for a continuous regeneration of heritage while safeguarding local diversity through acquisition, representation and appropriation of the tacit knowledge of places and typical productions by allowing tradition and memory to dialogue with contemporary identity. Hence, it is evident that thanks to design, the maturity attained

via the design field of cultural heritage is mainly expressed by enriching the traditional concept of enhancement with models capable of activating cultural heritage as a lever for development, to recontextualize, actualize and incorporate into meanings, products, processes which people are attuned with, redistributing the cultural value within the territory and in communities. "It is a question of combining the project for cultural heritage with the project together with cultural heritage" (Lupo, 2019, p. 122). Furthermore, to have an effective impact, it is necessary to re-imagine the value of cultural heritage, planning not only cultural offers for end users, but also enabling opportunities for the various actors and stakeholders of the system, such as institutions, policy makers, cultural and creative enterprises. The widespread diffusion of design driven participatory projects documents an ever deeper rooting of the project discipline, in interdisciplinary and inclusive multi-actor systemic processes capable of operating in complex multicultural contexts. Through the ability to recognize the most promising social dynamics and to work with them, design can promote and support social innovation, as a producer of a new system of meaning, which redistributes the value of places and relationships, from which originate new cultural processes promoting collaborative work aimed at a new idea of collective social well-being, addressing the definition of a new project culture capable of generating shared meanings, models and good practices<sup>3</sup> that can be exported and declined at different scales.

### Territory and *capitale sociale*

At this point, it is necessary to look primarily at two basic concepts: that of *capitale territoriale*<sup>4</sup>, namely the group of material and non-material elements, knowledge, endogenous resources, economic activities, infrastructure, networks, but also of physical and social interactions that convey the experiences of people present in a specific territory (not yet sufficiently capitalized in order to support the process of economic and institutional innovation mandatory for sustainable development), and that of the *circolo cognitivo* (Rullani, 2006) which represents knowledge settled in a territory together with its own *capitale sociale*, able to characterize its identity and social practices, through material artefacts, production processes, industrial districts and people who share that same knowledge (Parente et al., 2017, p. 4). Each project, due to its programme rooting in local dimension of the geographical and social context and the indispensable active role of the community, thus represents a unique and constantly changing reality as is defined in a dynamic way starting from resources, relationships and specific local processes.

Lupo, E. (2019). *Design e Cultural driven innovation*. I+Disegno Vol. 14-XI-4-2019

Farrel, G., Thirion, S., Soto, P. (1999). *La competitività territoriale. Costruire una strategia di sviluppo territoriale alla luce dell'esperienza LEADER*. Innovazione in ambiente rurale, Quad. 6 - Fasc. 1. Osservatorio Europeo LEADER

Rullani, E., (2006). *Capitale sociale e nuova modernità. Sociologia del lavoro* n.102, FrancoAngeli

Parente, M., Lupo, E., Sedini, C. (2017). *Tangibile e intangibile: concetti sfumati e coesistenti*. In Parente M., Lupo E., Sedini C., (a cura di), *Tangibile/Intangibile Dialoghi sul design per i territori*, D4T Design for territories. Milano: Dipartimento di design Politecnico di Milano

<sup>3</sup>Ezio Manzini, founder of DE-SIS, an international network on design for social innovation and sustainability, identifies some significant steps in the co-design processes that can be summarized as follows: recognize (the values of social innovation), amplify (making the hidden value of resources more visible and tangible), elaborate (building guidelines and scenarios), co-produce prosperity scenarios based on relational goods (Manzini, 2015).

<sup>4</sup>The concept of *capitale territoriale* was introduced in the nineties by the LEADER European programs for the development of rural areas (Farrel et al., 1999) and elaborated by the Organization

Parente, M. (2016). *Design for Territories as reflective practice*. PAD. Pages on Arts & Design n. 13

for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the 2001 Territorial Outlook; this concept was assumed to analyze the territories, to understand the articulated and complex set of material and intangible resources, outlining the framework of constraints and opportunities for a possible development or renewal.

<sup>5</sup>Me.design. *Strategie, strumenti e operatività del disegno industriale per valorizzare e potenziare le risorse dell'area mediterranea tra locale e globale* is a national research co-financed by MIUR for the years 2002-2004 and coordinated by prof. Giuliano Simonelli, Polytechnic of Milan

<sup>6</sup>Born in 2015, *Design for Territories* is a Research Network of the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano, dedicated to the study and application of design methodologies for the empowerment, regeneration and enhancement of territories. D4T uses specialized approaches, intra and interdisciplinary methods and tools for research, design and academic and professional training. The network gathers the different skills present in the Design Department and compares itself with national and international researchers, institutes and research centers.

In particular, in the field of cultural productions, design is called upon to develop new ways of enhancing, communicating and using territorial assets and resources by exploring their multiple aspects, also through highly experimental design methodologies. By carrying out multiple investigations of heritage (tangible and intangible), design can thus decipher and favour, the conditions for activating virtuous processes of requalification and re-meaning of environments, practices and knowledge, through forms of dialogical interaction with the community and with different territorial actors.

With the Me.design<sup>5</sup> research (Politecnico di Milano), for example, through some design experiments conducted in specific contexts, the methodological foundations have been laid for a design-oriented approach to enhance the territories, which is characterized by the centrality of the community as an active subject in the processes decision-making, and for the visionary and directorial capacity of design in prefiguring strategic multi-sectoral and multi-actor scenarios. In line with this project, the design for the territories has deepened in recent years the areas of interest, the methodological approach and tools, forming the D4T research network of the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano<sup>6</sup>. To transform territorial resources from potential to actual, it is necessary to redefine methods and sensitivity of observation and disclosure. Read the territory, interpret it, visualize it; build areas of shared meaning and visions; promote forms of participatory planning and community empowerment; transforming visions into actions and initiatives; design product systems and resulting service interfaces; promoting and implementing effective communication of the entire process are the main activities characterizing a design-oriented approach to the territory (Parente, 2016).

### Narrative tools in participatory processes

What can be noted, at this development stage during the debate on co-design and participatory processes, is that there is no systematic elaboration in progress defining themes and principles; moreover, it is possible to report the experiences in progress. These are experiences aimed at understanding the most useful tools required to support creative collaboration and to generate innovation processes.

These are processes that open up to communities and individual histories, pursuing the objective of a necessary cultural revolution, which favours the construction of a terrain of dialogue and cooperation between individuals, discussing its ethical dimensions and investigating how it can move towards the creation of a synergistic and interconnected global society. This highlights

the existence of a new trend in research on design methods which is not based on the response to the requirements necessary for the realization of a project, but focuses on the process of co-designing the requirements themselves and on the need to generate an empathic relationship between designers and citizens (Koskinen et al., 2003).

"The goal of this new design approach is to discover rather than respond; imagine new opportunities that become visible right in the process; mediate between the needs of spontaneous and local planning and their directing towards a systemic vision" (Rizzo, 2009, p. 129).

Firstly, to engage the user as a tester, as an information resource and as a designer, design research and professional practice drew on the tools of social sciences and ethnography, such as interviews and tales or participatory observations, but they have also been able to produce a series of original tools such as design probes<sup>7</sup> and workshops. Tools adopted and organized on collaborative activities to explore users' ideas (Mattelmaki, 2005), through the activation of listening practices capable of putting users at ease in telling visions, experiences and sensations related to the lived context and, at the same time, to propose and share future life scenarios with respect to the services deemed most significant by the people who live there.

Stories are composed of characters, objects, places, actions and, at least, of a conflict that moves the story along and triggers an arc of transformation (Vogler, 2010). The stories therefore reflect cultural and social change and, in the telling of these stories, they form a shared heritage. They build upon reference imagery, organizing a repertoire of knowledge, continually regenerating its meaning, providing interpretation keys and behaviour models to deal with relationships, overcome obstacles and grasp opportunities. They define a common ground for comparison from which it is possible to activate a process of understanding, knowledge and projection (Piredda, 2018, p. 155).

In the field of communication design, research applied to the territory has developed languages, tools, technologies for information design over the years, which make even very complex scientific content accessible. These are interactive and narrative artifacts and are devices which reveal the abilities of a territory, the memory of communities, the reading of the contexts by individuals, through a meaningful narrative construction that knows how to produce connections, sharing and awareness (Rossi, 2016, p. 65). Activating the planning potential of the local actors has a significant dimension, precisely through narration (audio-visual language and participatory video) and developing engagement strategies<sup>8</sup>, in the awareness of the fact

Koskinen, K.U., Pilhanto, P., Vanharanta, H. (2003). *Tacit knowledge acquisition in a project work context*. In *International Journal of Project Management* 21(4)

Rizzo, F., *op. cit.*

Mattelmaki, T. (2005). *Applying probes – from inspirational notes to collaborative insights*. *Co-design International Journal of CoCreations in Design and Arts*, vol. 1 n. 2. Londra: Taylor Francis

Vogler, C. (2010). *Il viaggio dell'eroe*. Roma: Dino Audino

Gaver, W., Dunne, T., Piacenti, E. (1999). *Cultural Probes. Interactions*, Vol. 6 - n. 1. New York: ACM

Piredda, F. (2018). *Il territorio come mondo (narrativo). il confine fra mondo reale e mondo finzionale come luogo del progetto*. In Parente M., Sedini C., (eds.), *D4T design e territori. Approcci metodi esperienze*. Milano: LIST Lab

Rossi, M. (2014). *Life Behaviour Design*. DiID 58 - 14D

<sup>7</sup>*Designed by the team of designers to allow the user to record data, facts and events necessary for the documentation of what happens every day in the context in which he is immersed, probes are tools to access the personal perspective of the participating user. They can contain information about people's daily lives, they can be designed to invite people to take actions and take note of past experiences, they are also a way for designers to put themselves in the user's shoes*

Piredda, F., *op. cit.*

Manzini, E., (2015), *op. cit.*

Simon, H. A. (1969). *The sciences of the artificial* (1st ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Manzini, E., (2015), *op. cit.*

Augé, M. (1992). *Un etnologo al metrò*. Milano: Eléuthera editrice

Parente, M. (2017), *op. cit.*

*to initiate the process of empathy between these two figures. The first type of probes developed by design research was that of cultural probes, developed during the 90s within the Presence Project (Gaver et.al, 1999) in which designers from all over Europe participated. The project, funded by the European Union and coordinated by the Royal College of Art, aimed to collect inputs for the design of new technologies to support the active participation of the elderly in local communities.*

<sup>8</sup>*Many ongoing processes develop collaborative tools typical of design thinking, but also introduce tools developed ad hoc for listening to the stories of users and communities; the collaborative construction of stories. These processes are based: on listening, through the documentation of both the transformations underway and the good practices already active; on envisioning, that is the visualization through communication devices to activate conversations between stakeholders; on the promotion of reference values with respect to the subject of the research, as an opportunity for socialization and reappropriation of urban space.*

that the lack of participation from people culturally has limiting and unequal effects also in cultural, social and economic terms. On the one hand, various envisioning processes, through various prototypes and communicative artifacts (paper mock-ups, textual micro-scenarios, story boards) allow users themselves to view their stories, providing the design with useful data to see, and thus to be able to interpret and translate them for project of community strategies; on the contrary they can be reworked to visualize and render the results of the research accessible to all. Many experiences have demonstrated the effectiveness of these methods and how they create a new generation of tools which are being produced from traditional ones such as workshops, laboratories and design toolkits to newer and more experimental ones, such as tools for remote collaboration, made available by web 2.0 technologies with open and peer-to-peer architectures (Piredda, 2018).

Design can thus make use of narrations, more generally, to support the different phases of the project and to trigger virtuous processes of dialogue and action within communities and stakeholder systems. Manzini (2015) identifies two dimensions of the role of design: on the one hand, design as a problem solver (Simon, 1969) is capable of offering solutions to the problems of users and communities; on the other hand, design is capable to "collaborate actively and proactively in the social construction of meaning" (Manzini, 2015, p. 35). The sense-making dimension is closely linked to the story, both in terms of creative processes and expression (individual or collective), and in terms of conflict management (real and/or narrative) that trigger a need for change and determine a transformation path. To do this, however, it is necessary to work by sharing objectives and actions with city institutions, local administrations, as well as associations and companies; activate opportunities to deal with other disciplines and skills, such as social sciences, philosophy, territorial marketing, finding the interest and support and collaboration of researchers and professionals.

## Projects

"The study of the territory through its material and intangible peculiarities leads to the relationship with complex situations, in which the designer has to make choices: a dualism, but also an overlap, between narratives, stories and collective memories compared to those of individuals or small groups (Augé, 1992). From the design point of view, the interpretation of this complexity translates into design actions that from time to time must mediate the universal and the particular, the objective and the subjective, or favour one of these aspects" (Parente, 2017, p. 14).



*PUSH. Borgo Vecchio Factory. Palermo, 2014.*

In the intent of providing a constructive and effective response to the economic and cultural crisis which has been suffering for years in Italy and especially in the South of Italy, several initiatives were born in fragile and problematic contexts. PUSH, for example, is a design laboratory for urban innovation based in Palermo that designs and develops services with the aim of making cities more sustainable (and citizens happier) through applied research projects, participation activities or social innovation initiatives, to address critical issues and solve problems, capable of improving the experience of citizens or facilitating the interaction between different actors in a given context. Borgo Vecchio Factory, to mention one project among all, is a social promotion project for the creation of artistic workshops for children (FIG. 1) in a particularly disadvantaged neighbourhood of the city; an ancient district of the centre of Palermo inhabited for the most part by families with serious economic difficulties; with an unemployment rate of 40%, widespread illiteracy and an insufficient level of education. The neighbourhood experiences a clear condition of social exclusion caused by the lack of services and a high crime rate. One of the biggest problems, on which the future of the neighbourhood depends, is undoubtedly

Figure 1. PUSH. Borgo Vecchio Factory. Palermo, 2014. Children at work with the mural artist Ema Jons during the workshop; urban scenes of the neighborhood of Borgo Vecchio in Palermo (Collage of images. Credits: Mauro Filippi /PUSH\_www.wepush.org/projects/borgo-vecchio-factory/)



the school non-attendance. The project was born as a continuation of Frequenza 200 project, an experience undertaken by the Arteca Onlus and Per Esempio Onlus associations, in collaboration with the muralist artist Ema Jons, who in 2014 involved twenty children and young people, between 5 and 15 years old, in workshops of street art after school. The drawings and paintings produced during the workshops were used as sketches for murals made by several hands on the buildings' facades in the neighborhood. Borgo Vecchio Factory project has experimented in the neighbourhood with a practice of involvement and animation that has produced, in a short time, a real open-air museum in the streets. About 30 large murals (FIG. 2) were created, involving about sixty children of various age groups, through workshops and creative working groups. Non-formal art education, combined with the involvement of the entire urban community starting from the younger generations, in fact, can be a very powerful tool capable of "redeveloping" small parts of the city and having a significant social impact, able to undermine and break the status quo, sometimes managing to influence systems on a larger scale, to shake institutions, innovating them, or at least to suggest a rethinking. The practices of social innovation - through art and culture, through new uses of space, through regeneration processes - can change the configuration of territories, through a process in which experimentation is carried out locally, producing new forms of use and sociality. The crowdfunding campaign and the related communication strategy adopted in this project are applicable to other contexts, not only strictly connected to the sphere of social promotion.

Figure 2. PUSH. Borgo Vecchio Factory. Palermo, 2014. Murals on the buildings' facades of Borgo Vecchio. (Credits: Mauro Filippi /PUSH\_www.wepush.org/projects/borgo-vecchio-factory/)



From technological innovation to artistic projects, there are many areas in which to develop a project with similar characteristics. Furthermore, street art, can also be declined in different places such as theatres, training centres or prisons, aiming to involve new subjects such as associations, administrations, schools.

Simultaneously, the Street Art Factory project is a digital map which allows to locate urban works of art in the city, obtain information on artists and buy prints and serigraphs signed by them to support artistic projects with social purposes in the urban area and in the territorial context.

*Ecomuseo Mare Memoria Viva. Ex deposito locomotive Sant'Erasmo. Palermo, 2014.*

The urban Eco museum<sup>9</sup> Mare Memoria Viva (MMV) is another example that was born in 2014 in Palermo. From the controversial relationship of the city with the sea, sanctioned by a succession of political choices that from the second post-war period to today have perpetrated a process of continuous removal of Palermo from the sea<sup>10</sup>, the MMV<sup>11</sup> Eco museum was born with the intention of conveying public attention precisely on those relationships which, since the foundation of the Phoenician city, constituted the identity reasons of the city, in its distinctive relationship with the sea.

The main objective of the Eco museum project, outlined by the needs, aspirations and community awareness of its local resources, therefore, is, first of all, to highlight (and thus contrast) the ruinous processes of de-territorialization caused by various regional, national and global factors, to become a sort of garrison in defense of the territory understood both as a universal value and heritage, and as a space of specific belongings that

Figure 3. Ecomuseo Mare Memoria Viva. Palermo, 2014. Meetings, interviews, workshops within communities and stakeholder systems (Collage of images from the MMV official website [www.marememoriaviva.it](http://www.marememoriaviva.it))



<sup>9</sup>*Conceived and imagined as a structure that should have a strong impact on society, the ecomuseum was defined by the archaeologist Hugues De Varine as "an institution that manages, studies, explores the global heritage for scientific, educational and cultural purposes of a certain community, including the totality of the natural and cultural environment of this community" (Pinna, G. (1997). Fondamenti teorici per un museo di storia naturale. Milano: Jaca Book, p. 111). The definition of ecomuseum introduces the extended notion of heritage related to the concepts of territory and landscape, as stratified entities, in continuous change, adaptation and transformation, characterized by a composite structure made up of environmental, cultural, social, architectural and community elements. The ecomuseum, as an open, participatory and collaborative entity, placing itself in a dialogical position with the community, becomes an active and integral territorial actor capable not only to preserve and exhibit widespread heritage, but also and above all to produce culture and the capitale sociale, promoting dialogue and social cohesion, offering citizenship tools for relating and understanding the other. The ecomuseum can also contribute to re-evaluate local knowledge, practices and values in a strategic key.*

<sup>10</sup>*The removal process, which began with the spillage of the rubble of the bombings along the Foro Italico and in other parts of the coast, had continued with the construction of the road artery along the Porto della Cala which constituted a barrier towards the coast where, in the meantime, warehouses, barracks and sheds of various kinds had ac-*

*cumulated. The extraordinary and unruly expansion known as the Sacco di Palermo, in thirty years (50s-80s) then completely changed the layout of the city.*

<sup>11</sup>*The ecomuseum is a project conceived by CLAC: a cultural organization active in Palermo since 2003- and was created: thanks to the contribution of CON IL SUD Foundation: through the historic-artistic 2011 call in partnership with the Municipality of Palermo - Department of Culture (with Assessorato alla Cultura - Francesco Giambone): the Soprintendenza per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali del mare, the Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali e dell'Identità Siciliana - Regione Sicilia: the Dipartimento di Architettura of Palermo University- Kur-saal srl: Le città del mondo - Centro Fiaba e Narrazioni Association, Ass: Gruppo SALI- UMIP - Unione Mediatori Interculturali Professionisti- Official website: [www.marememoriaviva.it](http://www.marememoriaviva.it)*

<sup>12</sup>*Located at the mouth of the Oreto river- in via Messina Marine- the former deposit constitutes one of the most important testimonies of the archeology of the early industrial age of Palermo: Anna Maria Fundarò wrote about it in a text dedicated to it: describing it as "a real object of industrial design- produced and conceived in other places (in this case in fact the production is Belgian)- where the industrialization processes were already widely tested. The large wooden and iron sheds were the great containers of the nineteenth century, the new cathedrals, which, due to their typology, were adapted to the different needs of a changing world" (Fundarò, A.M. (2000).*

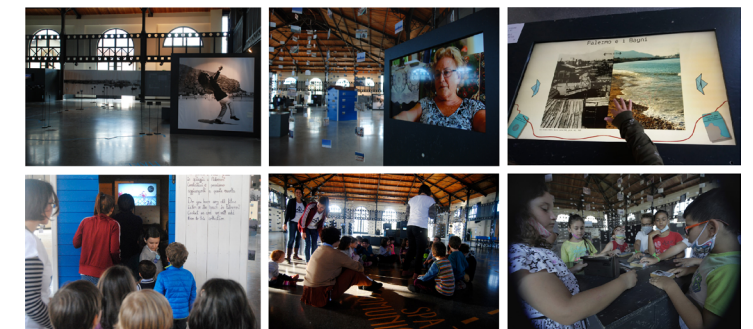
are rooted in the maritime landscape and its values, its history and its profile they express themselves.

Deputy to narrate and explain the stories of sea and land in Palermo, the ex-locomotive depot of Sant'Erasmo<sup>12</sup>, located right at the mouth of the Oreto river, houses the Eco museum (also involving a room in the Arsenale of the Regia Marina, monumental seat of the Soprintendenza del mare<sup>13</sup>). The MMV Eco museum has aimed, above all, at exploring the potential of the collaborative design dimension, through the construction of listening practices, aimed at promoting and fostering knowledge through an integrated and active reading of the various environmental, artistic, productive and social aspects.

The project began with a wide-ranging reconnaissance of materials collected in the neighbourhoods of the coastal strip of the city, meeting and interviewing the inhabitants of the seaside villages, mapping the significant places in the area, collecting stories, photographic and video material, even amateur ones, organizing activities and meetings, in public spaces and meeting places, organized together with the reference communities (FIG. 3). The landscape was read, interpreted, documented through an interdisciplinary, participatory and integrated methodology, based on horizontal cooperation between external and local experts, on the knowledge and direct experience of the place and the stories of its inhabitants, on the comparison and dialogue within the community and on the enhancement of opinions, perceptions, individual and collective knowledge on the territory, applying co-design tools and methods for social and cultural innovation, in territorial development processes.

From the exploration of the territorial context (especially recorded in photographs and videos) and from the analysis of the results that emerged from the meetings with the various

Figure 4. Ecomuseo Mare Memoria Viva. Palermo, 2014. Interiors of the exhibition space (Collage of images from the MMV official website [www.marememoriaviva.it](http://www.marememoriaviva.it) and photos by Serena Del Puglia)



territorial actors (administration, associations, artists, operators, entrepreneurs and citizens), with the support of community and several interdisciplinary experts (from the fields of anthropology, sociology, architecture, history of the territory and landscape), the Eco museum hosts a series of communicative audio-visual artifacts, designed by teams of designers and architects (FIG. 4), to communicate a composite vision of themes and related material and intangible elements, inviting the community to reappropriate from below the cognitive, analytical and representative tools of its territory.

The exhibition is based on the idea of building a large documentary-photographic archive<sup>14</sup>, also through digitally supported devices, including interactive ones, imagining that the purpose of this archive is not the archive itself, but the new meanings that can be traced from it, starting from a narration of Palermo, as a city intimately linked with the sea. Inside the Eco museum exhibition there are some user-generated installations, stations where visitors can leave their narrative contribution as well as small sets to host temporary exhibitions and installations for artists.

The possibility offered by the web to share open and implementable visualizations on the network with constantly updated data, has made it possible to design, within the MMV project, Geo Blog<sup>15</sup>, a platform that allows to place texts, images, videos and sounds, in a multimedia online map. The map, which can be updated daily from the web platform, with personal narratives of citizens, becomes a community map capable of recording the different experiences perceived on the sea and on sea places by the community.

“In re-evaluating and reconstructing the wounded memory of a place, the Eco museum can therefore contribute to re-attach the community to its history, helping it to recover the sense of a collective identity and individual one, through the sharing of information, knowledges, perspectives, experiences and multiple narratives. To do this, it is necessary to go beyond the conflict, and not cancel it, allowing to deconstruct and reconstruct the meaning of a sense of belonging, not only in antagonistic, oppositional and claiming terms, but also and above all through the rediscovery of material and symbolic value of local knowledge, practices and resources as potential tools of collective resistance” (Cancellotti, 2011).

Cancellotti, C. (2011). *L'ecomusée n'est pas musée. Gli ecomusei come laboratori produttori di cultura, territorio e relazione* in Saggi / Ensayos/Essais/Essays N. 5. Available on <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/AMonline/article/view/1044/1276>

*L'ex deposito locomotive S.Erasmo a Palermo. In Carcasio, M., Amoroso, S., Le stazioni ferroviarie di Palermo. Palermo: Regione Siciliana, Assessorato Beni Culturali Ambientali e Pubblica Istruzione, pp. 157-169.*

<sup>13</sup>The first Soprintendenza del mare of Italy was established in Sicily: a peripheral body of the Assessorato regionale dei Beni culturali e dell'identità siciliana, which protects, manages and enhances the culture of the sea in Sicily with tasks of research: census: protection: surveillance, enhancement and use of the underwater archaeological, historical, naturalistic and demioethno-anthropological heritage of the Sicilian seas and its smaller islands (art. 28 Lr 21/2003).

<sup>14</sup>The recovered archive consists of images in super 8 and 16 mm of the seaside leisure in the 50s and 60s: interviews with historical figures: experts, fishermen, sailors and citizens, ancient and contemporary photos that reconstruct the alterations of the coast from the first Twentieth century to today. To this initial corpus are added photos and videos from the archives of the CRICD – Centro Regionale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, of the Mare Negato project and of authors, photographers

Manzini, E., 2018, *op. cit.*

*and inhabitants of the city who shared their work (Melo Minnella· Sandro Scalia· Playmaker Produzioni are some of these)*

<sup>15</sup>Geo Blog was created thanks to the participation of many citizens of Palermo and seafront inhabitants: within the Mare Memoria Viva project, by a group of passionate and creative professionals: Carmela Dacchille, Antonia Giusino· Davide Leone· Giuseppe Lo Bocchiaro, Luisa Tuttolomondo, Valentina Bellelli and Cristina Alga di CLAC.

<sup>16</sup>ICSID, International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, THAT GATHERS DESIGN ASSOCIATIONS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, has appointed Turin as the First World Design Capital because it is a city that has been able to redesign itself a renewed international post-industrial role also and above all thanks to the processes and methods of design. The first meeting between researchers and scholars of design processes and methods was held in Turin on 12 July 2008 on the occasion of the Changing the Change international forum conference of design doctoral schools. The Carta di Torino, so called for these premises, is the proposal for a manifesto for the development of methods and processes design, developed in 8 points and brought to the attention of the members of the permanent forum, in order to propose it to the international design community. The manifesto is available on: <http://arsfluentes.es/ddiseno/ddiseno-6/doc/carta-torino-ita.pdf>

## Conclusions

“We believe that the task of contemporary design culture is to suggest and pay attention to certain research themes for design [...]: design for the suburbs, the design of sustainability, the centrality of man within one's own cultural system” (Carta di Torino, 2008<sup>16</sup>).

The projects contained in the text describe some models of interpretation of the territory and cultural identity, capable of producing design action schemes and good practices of social innovation design centred and malleable for the different territorial resources and dynamics. In these processes, design expands its capabilities, proposing an increasingly close and synchronic relationship between the analysis of reality, project of communication and of multidirectional fruition. The designer becomes an essential figure of mediation between project and context, able to activate virtuous strategies for the elaboration of experience and for the communication of the complex aspects of a territory, in connected, shared, multidisciplinary forms.

These original and hybrid design processes can allow people, communities, companies and social actors to activate, manage and experiment sustainable and collaborative ways of living and act and develop a design methodology capable of forming new skills and new values in the generations of professionals and citizens, aware and ready to respond to the ethical challenges centred on the territory in which they live.

These practices are based on the assumption that the crisis is an indication of a necessary change in styles and needs, capable of activating, starting from the knowledge, the skills acquired and shared, the hypotheses of collective life pacts, acting for the common good. Stories of re-appropriation, of generation and generativity, of care. Actions occurring daily and politically as they have the power to lead to other paths, accumulating listening skills and empathy, critical sense, adherence to reality but also an essential dose of imagination to give birth to new futuristic visions and feasible utopias in the present (Manzini, 2018).