

LUALDI PLACES

Milan, November 2023

Lualdi, which has always followed the evolution of design and architecture, and not strictly in terms of aesthetics and function, has witnessed a profound shift in the way spaces are being designed, with a greater emphasis on the interaction between people and the places where they live and work.

A physiological change dictated by several enabling factors. Accessible technology, a focus on personal well-being, environmental awareness, and dialogue with the context.

In this new scenario, the designer's work must examine several variables also tied in with social and relational changes.

Lualdi has researched these topics over the course of 2023 offering a broad overview of the relationships between people and places, by exploring the different aspects of designing spaces, thanks to a panel of experts from different fields.

Starting with a case study, the historic Milanese showroom at Foro Buonaparte 74 was the setting for debates and considerations, moderated by Marina Jonna, architect and journalist.

The last encounter of the year looked into **PLACES OF HOSPITALITY**.

Hospitality in the future: contamination and sharing of spaces. From a service aimed at tourists to a place open to the local area and the community.

Hospitality is a sector in continuous evolution that adapts to social and cultural changes. In the past, hotels were often havens for tourism only and closed to the local area and public. Nowadays, they are increasingly geared towards a social context, endeavouring to integrate and open up to collectivity.

This trend is guided by a variety of factors including the desire for greater integration and exchange within the local area, to promote a better-informed tourism and an increasing demand for new services.

An example of this new trend is the project for the new **MGallery Palazzo Tirso** in Cagliari which is designed by Studio Marco Piva.

The hotel, situated in a historical building in the city centre, was designed to be permeable and open up to the urban fabric, creating a venue for the city.

"The spaces in the MGallery Palazzo Tirso are dynamic and not tied to pre-established visions", explains the architect, Marco Piva. They, therefore, lend themselves to the interpretation of whoever manages and makes use of the structure with a view to a "mixed use": the buildings become new centres for urban sociality, combining public spaces, entertainment, quieter areas, and workplaces.

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Tourism is one of the driving forces in Italy. While foreign chains have long understood this, Italy must, however, learn to organise itself to better manage its territory, without losing the quality and creativity that have made Made in Italy a hallmark for our country around the world.

“The future scenario”, says Magda Antonioli, “tells us that investments are shifting from cities of art to small towns”. We need to invest in the eco-system to prepare for this change which will allow a slow utilisation of the local area, without foregoing services.

Today’s travellers are more attentive and better informed - they are looking for well-being and authentic, immersive experiences. They don’t just want a place to sleep - they want to feel part of that place.

To meet these demands, the hospitality facilities of the future will have to offer services and spaces that encourage sharing and interaction between tourists and the local community, making choices that have the ultimate goal of capitalising on heritage, with increasing attention for the environment.

PLACES TO LEARN. The relationship between physical space and learning.

Society has experienced and continues to experience critical events that have placed the spotlight on the field of education.

In addition to improving the educational offer to attract Italian and international students, can the design of their learning space, interaction and services also lead to a change of course?

Neuroscience tells us that **the brain only opens if we are moved**. In the last 50 years, the sphere of empathy has been somewhat pushed aside. Everything is information, education for the cognitive dimension, in the perhaps vain hope that we can move from notion to action.

The mentality of new generations is more fluid, porous, connected and empathic. So what is the right approach and which are the spaces most suited to educating youths?

Elena Granata answers this question with the **“3 Es”: Empathy, Emulation, Experience**.

“Attending university means not only acquiring information, but also experiencing the lifestyle and being part of an intellectual community. The places we have inherited from our past are no longer compatible with the intelligence we need to develop. I hold my urban planning lectures outdoors, because the city cannot be explained inside the four walls of a classroom.”

We need spaces that can be shaped by hybrid figures capable of reconciling needs with imagination, everyday creativity with the general well-being of the city; figures moved by free and creative curiosity, which, in adopting this attitude, identify the skills needed to find the solutions.

Elena Granata dubbed them **“placemakers”** because of their ability to translate a brilliant idea into a living project that transforms a place.

Artists that become impromptu scientists to tackle the mobility issues of a big city. Architects who discover novel solutions by studying plants and animals. Designers who specialise in human behaviour and psychology. Innovators think up new spaces in a new city. Each of them is capable of venturing outside their own field without ever losing sight of the main objective.

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Franklin University Switzerland was a placemaker, which, as Strategy and Marketing Director Davide Gai tells us, hired architect Flaviano Capriotti to interpret an educational approach through spaces, materials, forms and technology, that viewed university as a permeable, multicultural place of coexistence and exchange, also with the local territory.

PLACES TO LIVE

Has the way of designing residential spaces really changed?

The answer should be sought in the difference between the ideas of “inhabiting in a place” and “being in a place”. People inhabit spaces; objects are there and undoubtedly help in the interaction and create empathy with places.

The second meeting of the PLACES series investigates **PLACES OF LIVING** and the relationship between domestic spaces, people, time and technology

The case study for this event is Torre Milano, the project by Studio Beretta Associati, developed by Impresa Rusconi, which for over a century has been committed to building residential buildings designed to fit those who will live in them.

Central, liveable and hyper-connected, Torre Milano is located between Isola and Maggiolina, not far away from Porta Nuova, actively contributing to major urban transformations and defining an idea of "home" that goes beyond the spatial boundary of the threshold. Places of living are no longer limited to traditional domestic spaces, but extend to a series of interconnected areas. New modern homes are no longer simple dwellings, but social and cultural "hubs".

According to Architect Gianmaria Beretta, “the house represents those who live in it. There are many ways of designing living, but they all have to start from the plan and functions of the space and then reach a project and a story that integrate and enrich the urban context aesthetically”.

In fact, the needs and functions required have not changed so radically and we must try to accommodate them, with as little waste of space as possible.

This rigid approach to the project was only possible thanks to the flexibility of the developer who was able to build a sustainable business model.

However, it is necessary to dispel some false myths.

In fact, we speak of flexibility in reference to space, which by its very nature has defined boundaries.

This feature is entrusted to partners such as Lualdi who, through partitions and custom systems, will interpret the internal layout.

The topic of technology also deserves consideration. What may be state-of-the-art at the time of the design, may be outdated at the time of construction.

Engineer Stefano Rusconi concludes: “The changes and the regulatory and material cost variables, which have taken over since 2020, have launched a challenge to operators, designers and the supply chain, who will have to identify new innovative and sustainable models.”.

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Le Corbusier defined the house as a “machine for living in”, i.e. a space that was meant to protect against external dangers, becoming the hub for human actions; an environment in which the essence of each individual could be expressed.

Nowadays, this definition needs to be adapted to new concepts of contemporary social life which calls for places capable of creating connections, intensifying exchanges between human beings in total respect for the environment and with togetherness as the ultimate goal. If, as the anthropologist Francesco Remotti writes, “living is a difficult compromise between the need for intimacy and sharing and the need to open up to the world outside; a precarious balance between closure and openness, between the intimacy of an “us” or an “I” and opening up to social relations”, architecture as a social art has the task of guaranteeing an emotional experience, stripping itself being a self-reference.

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LUALDI company profile

Founded in 1859 as a carpentry shop, Lualdi is an illustrious Italian design company specialising in interior doors, custom furniture and contract furniture, now managed by the fourth generation of the founding family. Its industrial turning point came about in the 1960s thank to a collaboration with some of Milan's foremost architects at the time. With showrooms in Milan, New York and Miami, the company currently collaborates with some of the world's most renowned architects and enjoys international acclaim. The company's core values are product and processing quality, with skilled manufacture that combines artisan tradition with the most sophisticated aspects of industrial production. Social responsibility is one of the cornerstones of its philosophy and daily commitment to protecting the environment. Its socially and ecologically sustainable use of materials and resources has led to it becoming an FSC®-certified company.

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