

# REGENERATION OF ABANDONED SPACES: A NEW DESIGN APPROACH



**Luciano Crespi**

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# **Regeneration of Abandoned Spaces: A New Design Approach**

Authored

**Luciano Crespi**  
*Design Department*  
*Politecnico di Milano*  
*Milan, Italy*

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Author: Luciano Crespi

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**Bahareh Jahan Bakhsh**

Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition Department,  
Università del Piemonte Orientale, Vercelli, Italy

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## FOREWORD

Regeneration of Abandoned Spaces: A New Design Approach is both an imaginative and theoretical book, and also an edifying and practical one. It presents many facets of the continuously transforming study of the built environment by suggesting a layered and multi-disciplinary approach to urban, architectural, and interior design thinking and praxis. Architect and retired full Professor Luciano Crespi who taught at the Polytechnic University of Milan in the Design Department, has published prolifically to test and tackle a variety of questions and situations that allow for representing and recontextualizing what is often overlooked or subjugated to disciplinary silos. His important and timely books and articles boldly integrate theories of phenomenology, performance, exhibition, materiality, atmosphere, ecology, aesthetics, and interiority to explore and express how the socio-spatial conditions of urbanism, interiors, and architecture may be integrated, and also reoriented. Though seemingly general, Crespi's lens is actually a specific point of view with a generative structure of belief that relies on these varied voices to produce keen observations, analyses, and critiques of places. He carefully brings attention to the many frameworks that surround a design culture of building new, yet with an eye towards recognizing the opportunities for regeneration of existing sites and a reclaiming of their attributes. Therefore, Professor Crespi's direction implores us to navigate these parameters to expose new methods for urban characterization.

As one of several now working to explore, articulate, and, thus, shift the edges and boundaries of how we study the surroundings and our role in it; we must acknowledge that defining the interior separately from the exterior has become blurred, or even unnecessary, depending on the conditions or issues. One of the main positions Professor Crespi takes in the Regeneration of Abandoned Spaces is to disallow the notion of the interior to be usurped or bundled only under architecture, as expressed by many scholars and practitioners. When reading his eight chapters, Crespi deftly immerses us in a fascinating variety of topics and a range of perspectives to expand the discourse. He provocatively terms potential design "paradigms" as "leftovers" or "abandoned" to develop what he calls "manifestos." These ideas provide context for the invited opening essay by Martí Guixé who reconsiders what she calls collective interiors, and the later chapter by Davide Fassi on tactical urbanism. All of the writings direct the reader to take hold of a particular design philosophy made up of a series of theoretical explanations set alongside short case studies composed of well-known and what he calls "unheard-of" projects of different scales, types, and landscapes, largely situated in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

By combining both personal and universal narratives to compel us "to reflect on how crucial it is to take care of what we have," Professor Luciano Crespi illustrates the wide breadth of his environmental thinking and realization. He leads us towards a "new wave" of innovative design and reuse attitudes that challenge us by optimistically declaring that the "unthinkable can be thought." Thus, Crespi unabashedly repositions how we might consider developing a conscious and fresh stance on what surrounds us.

**Alison B. Snyder**  
Department of Interior Design  
Pratt Institute, New York  
USA

## PREFACE

Throughout history, there has been a prevailing tendency to prioritize new and shiny structures, often neglecting the leftovers of the past. However, in recent years, a powerful movement has emerged, one that celebrates the unfinished, the imperfect, and the abandoned. This movement recognizes the inherent value and transformative possibilities that lie within these spaces, breathing new life into them and turning them into vibrant and meaningful places. Leftover spaces, often disregarded or inaccessible, offer an opportunity for temporary, cost-effective interventions that elevate local aesthetics and living standards. They serve as dynamic canvases for creative expression, innovation, and the celebration of community identity. Effectively repurposing these spaces is a crucial challenge with substantial implications for environmental sustainability and social well-being.

This book delves into the concept of 'leftovers' in architecture and design, unearthing the hidden potential within abandoned spaces often unnoticed in our fast-paced society. It uncovers various projects that embrace the philosophy of the unfinished, breathing new life into forgotten places while preserving their historical significance. From repurposed mills and forgotten buildings to reclaimed urban spaces, these projects demonstrate the power of preservation, adaptation, and innovation. Spanning different countries and cultures, these examples reveal the universal nature of the leftovers phenomenon, inspiring readers to see the beauty in imperfection and the possibilities in the overlooked. As you delve into the stories behind these remarkable projects, you will discover how designers and architects have reimagined abandoned spaces, drawing inspiration from their history, character, and unique qualities. Through sensitive interventions and thoughtful design, they have created spaces that not only honor the past but also embrace the present and future. These projects serve as a testament to the transformative potential of the unfinished and the remarkable ability to reimagine what once seemed forgotten.

This book goes beyond showcasing extraordinary projects; it also delves into the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of this movement. We explore concepts such as the beauty of imperfection, the significance of memory, and the essential role of community engagement in shaping these spaces. Only then, through compelling case studies and influential figures in design, we can explore the intricate language of unfinished design across various artistic disciplines. As we delve deeper, our focus shifts to the heart of urban innovation and its dynamic approach to sustainability and inclusivity. We examine tactical urbanism strategies, highlighting the vital role of collective action and interdisciplinary collaboration in shaping future cities.

This collection stands as a testament to the joint endeavors of people, organizations, and forward-thinkers, dedicated to not just redefining spaces but reshaping our collective existence. I hope this work inspires those dedicated to revitalizing our urban stories, bringing forth an era where every aspect reflects the potential of new beginnings and endless possibilities.

May this journey spark inspiration and dialogue, fostering a compassionate and sustainable future. As a former student of Prof. Crespi at the Polytechnic University of Milan, I take pride in my collaboration on the preparation of the English version, reflecting on the significance of repurposing abandoned buildings, a key theme within this book. Welcome to a world where untold stories emerge from leftovers, where the past meets the present, and the unfinished inspires possibility.

**Bahareh Jahan Bakhsh**  
Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition Department  
University of Piemonte Oriental  
Vercelli, Italy

# **INTRODUCTION**

## Interior Design: Toward a New Aesthetic

In the post face to the book *Design of the Unfinished: A New Way of Designing Leftovers Regeneration*, Cesare Stevan identifies mainly two themes that seem to require further investigation (Stevan, 2021). The first concerns the search for the reasons that led to the worldwide diffusion of the phenomenon of abandoning buildings, defined in the text as *leftovers*, which do not fall into the category of former industrial areas. They appear completely different from those that led to the closure/disposal of factories and are at the origin of an irreversible upheaval of the layouts of the contemporary city, often concerning places located deep within the heart of the city itself. The second theme is related to the need to evaluate the consequences of neo-nomadism, as a characteristic phenomenon of the present time, on contemporary ways of living and on the irreducibility of certain values that the notion of interiority still preserves, even in times of radical cultural and social changes.

In the comments following the publication of *Design of the Unfinished*, there was also an objection that the approach proposed to address the issue of regenerating “leftovers”, although considered interesting and suggestive, may clash with the rigidity of existing regulations, particularly in Italy. Indeed, the objection is not without merit. However, our aim is to demonstrate a multitude of global experiences, meticulously analyzed and documented in the latter part of this book, which strongly align with the proposed approach. These experiences convincingly embrace the regeneration of “leftovers”, acknowledging them not merely as social assets but also as entities deserving dedicated protection under the application of technical regulations and various rules.

The world of contemporary interiors is approached here from a completely eccentric perspective compared to what is commonly understood as interior design or interior architecture. This discipline continues to enjoy immense public consensus, which considers it a skill aimed at enhancing the places we inhabit, especially our homes, and consequently enriching our lives with happiness. This notion is reinforced by the media, fostering the idea that anyone practicing this profession enjoys immense prestige, lucrative incomes, and an enviable lifestyle. However, finding a clear understanding of what this field truly entails is not aided by the encyclopedic websites available online, including the widely visited Wikipedia. Under the entry for Interior Architecture, it states: “Interior architecture or interior design (sometimes designated by the hybrid: interior design, or the anglicism: interior design) is the design of spaces and common-use objects within an enclosed place, whether it be a private residence, a commercial establishment, a reception space, or a workspace.” It emphasizes the focus on “particular attention to practical and functional aspects of living in the space.” Analogous to Adolf Loos' memorable definition of an architect as “a bricklayer who has studied Latin” (Loos, 1972), one might infer from this description that an Interior Designer could be viewed as “a decorator who has studied construction management.” The accompanying bibliography, an amalgamation of technical manuals, texts on decoration, historical essays, and theoretical books, doesn't offer much clarity either. Amidst this compilation lies my own publication, *Da spazio nasce spazio* (Crespi, 2013), primarily directed at Interior Design students. Its purpose is to guide them through design projects that introduce innovative spatial devices capable of challenging common clichés and stereotypes while appropriately responding to new ways of inhabiting spaces and experimenting with

novel aesthetic codes. Andrea Branzi, in the preface, notes that the book is born with the intention of “demonstrating that the design of interior spaces constitutes an activity with autonomous cultural foundations” and that the discipline of Interior Design has assumed a crucial role in the process of transforming and repurposing the *contemporary city*. Two publications: *Progettare l'architettura d'interni* [Design the interior architecture] and *Lezioni di Interior Design* [Interior Design lessons], along with *The Contemporary Interior Landscape* [The Contemporary Interior Landscape], a manifest for the Interior Design degree program, stand as exceptions to this vague approach in addressing the subject matter.

*Designing Interior Architecture* (Brooker & Stone, 2010) is an authoritative book. Graeme Brooker, the director of the Interior Design course at the Royal College of London, and Sally Stone, the director of the MA Architecture and Adaptive Reuse program at the Manchester School of Architecture, have compiled a structured collection of exemplary works within various sections. These sections include Designing, Existing Buildings, Methods of Space Organization, Interactive Interiors, Autonomous Interiors, and Elements Organizing Space. The section dedicated to design contains the most relevant topics in an attempt to define the notion of interior design. Interior architecture, interior design, and interior decoration are defined as nuances of the different attitudes towards reusing existing spaces. They are described as follows: “Interior architecture deals exclusively with the adaptation of existing buildings,” bridging the gap between interior design and architecture. “Interior design is an interdisciplinary practice concerned with creating interior environments that articulate identity and atmosphere,” predominantly achieved through furnishings and surface treatment. “Interior decoration is the art of organizing interior spaces in a way that imparts a particular character that aligns with the existing architecture.” The original version of this book, written in English in 2007, explains why each of these three attitudes is still associated with historically established disciplines: architecture, design, and exhibition. Though subtle, signs of change are emerging within the interior design profession, evidenced in some parts of the world of interior projects, one of which was the establishment of the Design Faculty at the Politecnico di Milano in 2000<sup>1</sup>, with Alberto Seassaro as dean and, within it, the Interior Design degree program, led by its first president, Andrea Branzi. In 2010, Branzi authored the entry “Interni” [Interiors] for the Treccani Encyclopedia, where he argued for the necessity to combat “an old academic hierarchy, partly confirmed by the Modern Movement, which saw the city as the realm of fundamental decisions, architecture as the realization of formal qualities, and interior design as a minor activity lacking genuine cultural autonomy. This essay aims to demonstrate that the design of interior spaces constitutes an activity with autonomous cultural foundations, separate from the idea that there can still exist an objective unity between urban logic, architectural quality, and interior design. These theoretical foundations form the bedrock of the educational model of the degree program, which in 2012, took on the competition with other interior design schools worldwide through an ambitious publication that serves as a true manifesto of the Milan Bovisa interior design school's studies.

The book, curated by Giampiero Bosoni, Agnese Rebaglio, and Francesco Scullica, bears the title *The Contemporary Interior Landscape* (Bosoni, Rebaglio, & Scullica, 2012) and openly declares its detachment from an interpretation of Interior Design merely as a discipline responsible for selecting furnishings within an environment, urging instead for an expansion of its realm of expertise (Crespi & Dell'Acqua Bellavitis, 2012). Organized into thematic sections such as *The Hospitable City*, *Anthropology of Habitat*, *Urban Stage/Urban Spectacle*, *Interior Design and Branding*, *Mobile Domesticity*, and *Interiors and Art*, the book

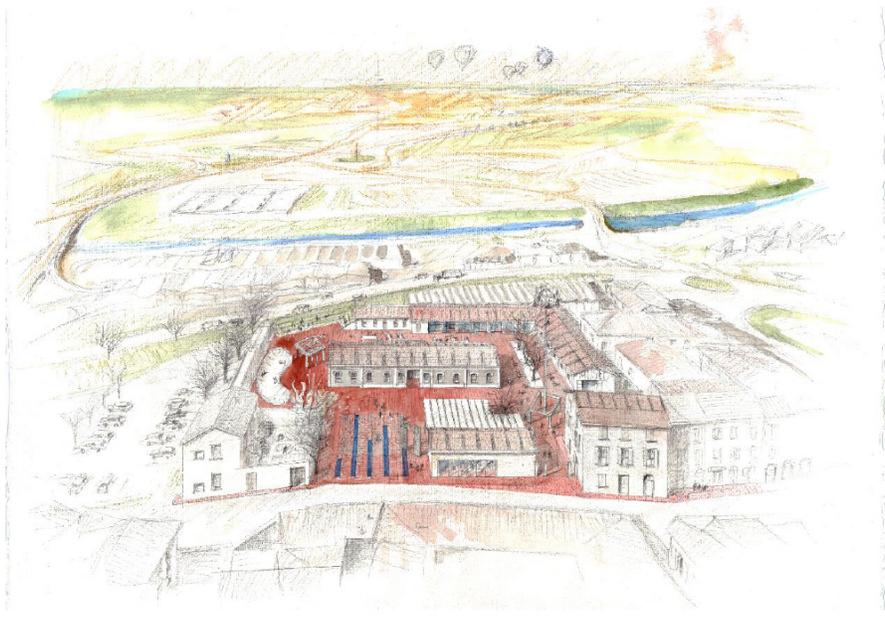
does not present a list of teachings or skills to market in the global educational landscape. Rather, it embodies a cultural manifesto centered on the notion that the degree program's task is to mold an original figure capable of riding the waves of change sweeping through the contemporary city, which is no longer “an assemblage of architectural boxes” but an orchestrated “territory of people, services, objects, information, immaterial relationships, scenes, and performances” (Branzi, 2012). To achieve this, the designer must engage in a dialogue with the vast world of disciplines situated on the fringes of the design sphere, especially in the realm of visual arts, sharing the same humanistic, rather than purely technical, vision of life's phenomena.

*Lezioni di Interior design* (Nicolin, 2020) collects the lectures held over a decade by Pierluigi Nicolin, professor and director of *Lotus*, at the Interior Design degree course of the Polytechnic University of Milan. The manner in which the subject is approached is captivating and unconventional. Firstly, the choice of themes deviates entirely from traditional classifications based on types of spaces (dwellings, workplaces, study areas, *etc.*) or subsystems belonging to the interior space. The chapters concern: *Threshold and boundary*, *Architectural spaces*, *Layers and surfaces*, *Camouflage*, *Microenvironment*, *Shelter*, *Ground*, and aim to represent the extensive realm that stretches between buildings and objects, individuals and their environment, and the confined and the open. The tone is that of one who employs language to construct mental shortcuts, effortlessly traversing the spheres of architecture, art, photography, and philosophy. The chapter “Threshold and boundary” is crucial for grasping the reference system within which the notion of interiority is situated: “Due to its spiritualism, the notion of interiority escapes mere spatial definition, it does not allow us to locate in a 'where' the place of consciousness, thought, *etc.*... In essence, we realize that interiority and exteriority can only be defined in their reciprocal relationship” (Nicolin, 2020, p. 7). Starting from this consideration, the text delves into a sort of conceptual labyrinth and the topics are strongly heterogeneous, jumping from categories of the universal nature of space - which dig into the configuration of soils, such as the theme of traces, or in the quality of the atmosphere, such as *blurring*, or around the notion of above and below - to very specific themes, such as that of *shelters*. However, the text always manages to maintain the same gaze capable of observing things from above, without falling into the specialisms of the discipline, thanks also to another peculiarity, represented by the role of images. They are used “not only for their expressive and artistic value but to suggest to those who are developing the project a given direction. Unlike a lesson in art history, it is not just a matter of explaining images, but of arriving at that metaphorical interpretation from which the transfer of meaning from the original image to that of a project still in formation phase begins.”

It is not a coincidence that this type of reflection has found the most suitable institutional environment to flourish within the Interior Design degree program. The same environment where the didactic experiments, by Cesare Stevan in his essay, have found asylum - experiments which I have conducted for over a decade within a third-year design workshop - represents the cultural background of this publication.<sup>2</sup> This work addresses the issues of contemporary neo-nomadism and the proliferation of “leftovers” across the entire planet as conditions that have given rise to an approach marking a significant paradigm shift in design practice. This approach can be described as the “Design of the Unfinished”<sup>3</sup>. In the concluding section of a text published in the journal *edA* in 2021, I describe the approach in the following terms: “By adopting a transdisciplinary approach, it entails embracing within the project, as a gift, the elements of decay present in the existing work, and translating them

into expressions governed by a syntax aimed at bestowing it with a renewed identity. 'Gift' here takes on the sense attributed by Marcel Mauss in his celebrated essay, as something given and to be reciprocated." In archaic societies, it represents not a free practice, but a social obligation. The project of leftovers assumes a broader value as an experimentation of "an interdisciplinary discipline", situated between design, interior design, arts, restoration, exhibition design, scenography, cinema, and anthropology, whose objective is to elaborate an aesthetics of leftovers. Furthermore, it would be even more fitting to speak of the 'design of the unfinished' as a perspective to imbue the spaces to be regenerated with a hospitable yet representative character of the conditions of temporariness, precariousness, and transculturality inherent to contemporaneity, regardless of their intended function" (Crespi, 2021) (Figs. 1 to 7).

This is by no means a trivial task. It entails designing these spaces while navigating along the border, assuming an uncomfortable position. Navigating along the border involves tacking, a challenge that appears paradoxical. Going against the current requires muscular effort. Resilience - a term now excessively used, once studied for a chemistry exam - is an act of will, founded on the ability to confront difficulties. Embracing drift, in the sense described by Guy Debord, is a "more general way of taking life," related to "flânerie". Tacking, in a sense, involves reclaiming "métis", being cleverer than the wind, finding the right angle to proceed even when the wind blows against you; Almost a violation of the laws of physics. Navigating along the edges is an extreme endeavor, which adds to the harshness of the task, the deliberate senselessness of traveling in a circumscribed territory, exploring a fringe, a margin, where navigation continually risks crashing against the shores that delimit it or seeming imprisoned by unheard-of forces. Similar to what occurs within the event horizon, that imaginary surface surrounding every black hole, escaping would require a speed greater than that of light. Thus, we can regard it as a zone beyond which it is no longer possible, not even for light, to return. Yet, it is precisely along those edges that the most unexpected events can occur, capable of subverting "the order of discourse," even regarding disciplinary statutes.



(Figs. 1 to 7) contd.....



**Figs. (1 to 7).** Luciano and Marino Crespi, with Paolo Saluzzi, consultant Michele Angioletti, collaborators Giorgia Mol, Cecilia Valsecchi, Competition Project for the redevelopment of the former Montichiari Slaughterhouse, 2019.

At this point, if we were to return to what was written at the beginning of the chapter and attempt to define an Interior Designer, one could say that it is “a scenographer who has studied anthropology.” All of this may seem trivial in the face of the huge challenges that the culture of design is called upon to address, such as the defense of the planet against climate change and environmental crises. However, one way, not the only one, to contribute to preventing the devastation of the territory is also to prevent occupying other unconstructed portions of it and to reuse its existing unused heritage. Even Lacaton and Vassal, winners of the 2021 Pritzker Prize, appeal to the need for designers to adopt a “frugal” perspective and avoid, as much as possible, interventions that involve the demolition of the existing: “Demolition is a waste of many things, a waste of energy, a waste of material, and a waste of

history.” The terrible images of Ukraine, shaken by modern rockets launched by the Russian invader, striking both humans and landscapes, leave us dismayed and prompt questioning even within the world of design, as Cesare Stevan also observes, on what will have to be done once the war is ended. Rebuilding a territory in many parts razed to the ground is an incredible endeavor, and past models do not seem adequate. It further compels us to reflect on how crucial it is to take care of what we have, despite the damage caused by years of senseless occupation of the planet that hosts us.

Nicolas Bourriaud stated that contemporary art aims to establish “more correct social relationships, denser ways of life, and multiple and fertile combinations of existence” and “no longer seeks to represent utopias, but to build concrete spaces.” This is not a surrender to the tasks that art can perform in the current world, but a different way of addressing them. Similarly, the project must know how to accept the great challenges that await it, but assuming them realistically, trying to redevelop the existing territory with widespread interventions, to obtain a new environmental system consisting of numerous micro-diversities, each characterized by a high aesthetic and symbolic quality. These endeavors could be referred to as “Netopia’s,” distinguishing them from the grand utopian scenarios that design culture has often pursued without significant results. Envisioned as transplanted fabrics within the urban organism, these neotopias hold the potential for virtuous consequences not only in the areas directly affected by the interventions but also in the surrounding portions of the territory. Hence, “neotopias” as “urban fertilizers,” destined to grant forgotten places a new role, a new identity, and consequently, a new life. They become pauses in the calligraphy of the city, capable of accommodating an “other” need for inhabiting, wherein the private and public dimensions can somehow coexist. Ememem, a French artist, named his technique of urban art “flacking” from the French term “flaque”, which refers to puddles. He calls it “the art of repairing potholes” and identifies himself as a “surgeon of road surfaces” and a “poet of the sidewalk.” These “medications,” executed using tiles or ceramics, make the “wounds of the urban fabric” stand out and, in a sense, revive the ancient Japanese art of Kintsugi. Is it a small thing? Perhaps, but it starts from here and from the “repair,” without distorting them, of abandoned spaces and architectures.

These topics are addressed in the first part of the book, accompanied by reflections on the potential implications for project culture arising from recent discoveries in our understanding of the world we inhabit. The second part investigates the concept of the unfinished in art, architecture, and design, examining selected contributions, both distant and recent, deemed indispensable to the exploration of the “philosophy of space” today. The intention is not to lose sight of the cornerstones of the thought and practice of the project that have determined its evolution. Davide Fassi discusses a very contemporary yet controversial subject, tactical urban planning, which in this context can be seen as a unique form of unfinished. In the third part, the most representative experiences of the “Design of the Unfinished” approach are documented and critically analyzed. These experiences span the last decade and are widespread across almost all geographical areas, testifying to the existence of a new approach that has not yet fully coalesced into a formal movement or legitimized thought. Nevertheless, it emerges as a reflection of the need to provide radically different responses to a latent demand for transforming the project culture<sup>4</sup>.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The first Faculty of Design in Italy and subsequently the most significant international Faculty in terms of the number of students and faculty, ranked fifth in the 2022 global ranking of Art and Design schools. The establishment of the Faculty in 2000 is the result of a long process. It commenced with discussions, primarily held within the P.P.P.E. Department at the Politecnico di Milano, regarding the role of Industrial Design education within Architecture Faculties. This journey continued with the launch of the Industrial Design degree program in 1993. It marked a decisive step towards establishing the third Faculty at the Politecnico, alongside Architecture and Engineering. This endeavor, advocated by the Dean of Architecture, Cesare Stevan, took place in an atmosphere not inherently predisposed to such a monumental change. It was preceded in 1999 by the establishment of the Polidesign Consortium and followed by the involvement of faculty members from the newly introduced Interior Design degree program in the Doctorate in Interior Architecture and Exhibition, coordinated by Cesare Stevan.

<sup>2</sup>In recent years, the Laboratory has had several esteemed faculty members, including Anna Anzani, Davide Crippa, Barbara Di Prete, and Giacomo Gatti, a film director involved to ensure the transdisciplinary spirit of the discipline's teaching. Alongside them, other prominent figures have collaborated over the years, such as artists Ugo La Pietra, Alberto Garutti, Emilio Isgrò, and composer Pier Francesco Forlenza. If I have one regret during my tenure as the course director, it is not having proposed the introduction of painting and choreography courses in the education of interior designers.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to:

- Crespi, L. (2017). *Aesthetics of the Leftovers*. In A. Anzani & E. Guglielmi (Eds.), *Memoria bellezza e transdisciplinarietà. Riflessioni sull'attualità di Roberto Pane*. Sant'Archangelo di Romagna: Maggioli.
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- Crespi, L. (2021). *Dissonances. A New Perspective for the Project of Regeneration of Leftovers*. In edA. Examples of Architecture, Special Issue.

<sup>4</sup> Aldo Vecchi, the deputy director of Utopia 21, an online magazine that defines itself as “a small initiative that aims to contribute to a great challenge, sustainability, embracing the visionary spirit of Agenda21,” rightfully believes that while this proposal is of great interest

to the world of architecture and design, “perhaps cultivating specific skills and sensitivities could be deployed for a broader horizon, seeking to bridge the vast complexity of needs with the considerable availability of abandoned properties (while also saving land and regenerating cities), utilizing the full range of techniques and poetics.” It is an invitation to step beyond the disciplinary realm and adopt a more political vision of the issues at hand, such as the right to housing and the concept of “minimum residential standards,” as discussed in one of his articles (Vecchi, A. (2022, November). Revitalizing public housing policies?. Utopia n.21.). I share this perspective, as we have done since the days of the “Experimentation” at the Faculty of Architecture in Milan, where we embraced the same notion of architecture as a discipline that must contribute to changing the “current state of affairs.” I concur, but without being able to fully embrace it, as it would have been too ambitious for the objectives of the book. I prefer to leave it to his magazine.

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## Special Contribution - Intuitive Hospitality

**Martí Guixé**

Designer, Barcelona (Spain) & Berlin (Germany)

In his speech on May 9, 2017, during the presentation of Luciano Crespi's book "Design Innovation for Contemporary Interiors and Civic Art" at the Triennale di Milano, Professor Graeme Broker presented Stonehenge (3100 BC) as the first interior design project in history. It was a magical ritual space designed to interact with and understand the cosmos in an attempt to domesticate it. Bruno Latour demonstrates how we interact in a tiny area of the Earth, a very thin layer, approximately 10 km, which he calls the "critical zone." This is where we, as industrialized human beings, live while promoting the idea of a transition to a new ecological class. If we compare Latour's vision with the planet and the cosmos, the critical zone could almost be considered an interior. As human beings, we share it with the rest of living beings and inanimate things, with artifacts, and, of great importance to Latour, small living beings such as viruses that continuously interact with us.

On the request of Paola Antonelli for the *Workspheres* exhibition at MoMA (2001), I designed a series of instructions for working while traveling called HiBYE. The key point of HiBYE is the idea of extending one's home to the outside world. This extension is psychological; it arises from the simple idea of traveling without luggage, not even a small carry-on bag. Starting from this assumption, we could consider that by traveling without luggage, everything around us becomes an interior, an extension of our home. In 2001, HiBYE may have been considered a theoretical suggestion, but currently, its spirit is gaining momentum. Global connectivity and new technologies have consolidated a new interrupted lifestyle, partially interrupted but continuously connected, first by terrorism and then by the Covid-19 virus. This urban interior space is like Archizoom's Non Stop City, but after the parenthesis of the modern era and contemporaneously amidst a serious ecological crisis.

Technological advancements are redefining spaces according to the needs of new generations. In Tokyo, as well as in major cities around the world, cars parked throughout the city can be rented through mobile applications. However, they are not driven or used for transportation. The Japanese use them either as temporary support for shopping bags or for short breaks and rest, while young people rent cars to host parties. The car becomes an element that clearly defines a space as external while encompassing a small interior. Since the advent of electric cars and their environmentally friendly nature, the boundary between interior and exterior has become blurred.

In the artwork of the artist Santiago Sierra titled "Two Black Cars with the Engine Running Inside an Art Gallery," exhibited as part of the show "Greenwashing: Environment - Dangers, Promises, and Perplexities," curated by Iliaria Bonacossa in 2008 at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, we see two black Alfa Romeo cars in a room with their engines running and an exhaust pipe connected to the exhaust. The sensation of hearing a combustion engine inside an interior intensifies the idea that there are distinct rules for an interior and an exterior. With electric cars, this idea has already been surpassed, as the exterior becomes our collective interior.

Agriculture has already started with this idea, but soon most of it will take place indoors, further challenging our notion of the outdoors.

Intuitive hospitality is the parameter that should guide the design of exteriors, which could also be defined as a collective interior. This allows the domestic code to make public space feel dynamic, communal, and personal. It should be capable of forming a diverse and ecological community of users. This hospitality must be built upon public objects, artifacts, and the design of interior spaces, and it must be intuitive.

## **SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION - TACTICAL URBANISM AS A FORM OF DESIGN OF THE UNFINISHED**

**Davide Fassi**

Design Department, Politecnico di Milano (Italy)

Contemporary cities are facing serious uncertainties and challenges today. Reflecting on public space and considering the experience gained from the pandemic require urgent action towards sustainable and inclusive urban development. Today, we are witnessing a substantial increase in spatial projects characterized by temporariness, low cost, and informality. These experiments aim to improve the quality of urban life by reconnecting people with their territories and finding project opportunities in existing public spaces - often interstitial or anonymous places hidden among the waste of the built environment and have significant transformation potential (Pericu, 2013). Temporary urban solutions are changing the appearance of cities: the recovery of residual spaces, the re-appropriation of degraded or abandoned spaces, and spontaneous events based on citizen initiatives become new design practices in which temporariness is a fundamental aspect. These interventions give “a strong sign to the city, but almost always temporary and reversible. They transform the urban image of the city, perhaps only for an hour, but they have the power to change the image in a lasting way” (Di Prete, 2011).

City planning therefore assumes a “bottom-up” approach that interacts with the “top-down” one, with some virtuous cases. This is due, on the one hand, to numerous initiatives related to social innovation that are slowly changing the way citizens use/transform/suggest cities, starting from the neighborhood level (tactical urbanism, slow mobility, guerrilla gardening, social streets). On the other hand, it is a result of various tools that administrations are employing to facilitate these efforts (participatory budgeting, collaboration pacts, civic crowdfunding, *etc.*).

The health emergency that has accompanied us in the last two years has led many cities - such as Milan, Barcelona, Paris, and Copenhagen - to adopt adaptation strategies. By applying these temporary transformative processes, they have been able to reconfigure their public spaces, thus promoting models of territorial proximity that focus their action radius on a daily scale. To do so, they were able to draw on the listening of the territory and give voice to those who live in it daily. Thanks also to intermediary figures, designers, and planners, who have initiated and facilitated the process. On the other hand, the fact that public space is fundamental in everyday life is indisputable to the point that it was declared a human right in

the emerging Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved at the Monterrey Forum in 2007<sup>1</sup>.

Active participation also allows people to reclaim the city's spaces, imagine new possibilities of use, and create new connections. Design tools can lead to the construction of sustainable life scenarios, and generate forms of social and systemic innovation concerning the human environment (Manzini & Jégou, 2003). In many urban projects that have involved extensive citizen participation, the role of the designer emerges as a design activist and practitioner: a figure with transdisciplinary skills who remains active in all phases of the process, not only in ideation but also in the implementation of interventions themselves (Collina, 2012). The designer is therefore the one who can create convergence, realizing the needs and ideas of people.

Preparing the inhabitants of the territories through a participatory process makes them aware of the benefits of the project and actively involves them (Fassi & Manzini, 2021). The application of participatory methods and the involvement of citizens in regenerative processes allow for the creation of a new emotional dimension towards rediscovered urban spaces. Designing a sense of belonging - to a place, a project, or a community associated with it - leads to a more vital willingness to take care of the place itself. It creates local communities that will continue to take care of the place over time, making the regeneration process effective and long-lasting.

Therefore, acting in public space is the first step in creating social cohesion and generating what we can call transformative social action (Manzini, 2018). A reinterpretation of space can create new social dynamics and give rise to new opportunities. New forms of community, belonging, and identity can be created; new social interactions constitute a concrete opportunity to regenerate urban areas often perceived as marginal and degraded. Involving users in the design process gives them the role of actors: citizens inhabit space in their daily lives. They can benefit from the improvements made and simultaneously be the architects of them.

There are increasingly more temporary spaces dedicated to socialization. Indeed, alongside places and buildings naturally designed for gathering, association, and meeting (from nightclubs to multipurpose structures to entertainment venues), there are spatial opportunities outdoors, in public places promoting the use of collective spaces. These places are linked to the sharing of activities and common interests ranging from gardening, playing, picnicking, cooking outdoors, and touching primary and secondary needs transversely. Today, they find expressions in even temporary and lightweight interventions like tactical urbanism.

## **MILAN IS ADAPTING**

Tactical urbanism arises from these premises: grassroots efforts to reclaim public spaces, strong design inclination of the promoters of these actions, and reaction to global phenomena such as climate change and pandemics. Specifically, it is a fast and cost-effective strategy to experiment with changes in public space, avoiding major structural investments but modifying certain places by removing them from traffic or parking and returning them to people for socializing. And it does so at a time of great reaction to an unexpected phenomenon that has changed and is changing our lives in recent years, a global pandemic

2020 has been the year of reaction, planning, and trying to imagine innovative forms of resilience. In October 2020, the “New European Bauhaus” was launched by Commissioner von der Lyen, with the ambitious goal of influencing society and the economy by improving the quality of life for millions of people through the beauty of art and the functionality of design, while also incorporating digital technologies. The areas of application inevitably concern public space, its quality and use, and innovation in adaptation to contemporary needs.

“If major transformations take decades to be realized, it is necessary to “invent” rapid methods that allow for visible and immediately usable results.” (Maran, 2022).

The places of tactical urbanism are real “leftovers” (Crespi, 2013), interstitial zones, in-between spaces (Piccinno & Lega, 2012), oversized or unresolved intersections that find redemption thanks to a simplification of existing regulations that make change possible by streamlining intervention procedures. It is a genuine regeneration of public spaces, a design of the “unfinished”, which gives a hospitable character while remaining “temporary, precarious, transcultural.” Milan is a pioneering city in this regard. The post-Covid adaptation strategy launched by the municipality in 2020 <sup>2</sup>combines new investments and care/protection of people with the aim of bringing socially and economically sustainable growth back to the territorial context (D’Antonio & Testa, 2021). This intersects and reinforces a direction that the administration has clearly stated since 2018, when a collaboration with the Bloomberg Foundation started, which for years has been supporting cities around the world in redesigning open-air social spaces, based on the New York experience of Times Square, which since 2009 has been transformed from a busy city traffic intersection into a “Piazza”, through a first temporary and then, since 2015, definitive path.

Milan had already embarked on this direction back in 2014 with the “nevicata14” project <sup>3</sup>in Piazza Castello, which for the first time closed a considerable portion of the roads facing the Sforzesco Castle, equipping the space with temporary and punctual installations that provided shelter from the weather, seating for socializing, and small services for citizens and tourists. Years after the dismantling of the original project, the square is now subject to permanent pedestrianization, emphasizing how the temporariness of the experimentation has given input to the long-term solution, transforming the unfinished into finished.

“Public spaces must be designed as pedestrian-friendly areas accessible to everyone, around which the city is built, where life is manifested between buildings, where individuals become groups and where being together forms citizenship, understood as a sense of belonging to a common good” (Scopelliti, 2021).

The opening of “Officina Urbane” within AMAT, the mobility, environment and territory agency of the Municipality of Milan, in 2019, allowed for dedicated personnel for these types of solutions, thanks to a team of “new generation” designers drawing from both the world of architecture and design. This is a clear sign of the city administration's urban concept, which embraces the principles established by C40, an international network of metropolitan cities that was founded a decade ago on the initiative of former London mayor Ken Livingstone, which committed to reducing gas emissions. It serves as an international forum to encourage collaboration between cities worldwide, shares knowledge and experiences, designs and launches concrete, measurable, and sustainable actions in managing climate change, including above all the design of public spaces. Since the launch of the “Open Streets” guidelines and

the “Open Squares” call in 2020, Milan has consolidated this path, acting in parallel to the creation of bike lanes and tracks, transforming parking lots into outdoor seating areas [dehor] for commercial activities, and increasing the number of tactical urbanism interventions. 40 interventions have been carried out by the Open Squares programme between 2018 and 2022 and more than 25,000 square metres were made pedestrian friendly and transformed into public spaces. A new call for proposals has been launched in November 2022. It concerns roads and public spaces near schools and received 87 projects involving 600 groups, associations and 250 schools, confirming the high interest of the citizens in these initiatives and reinforcing the tactical approach of the Milan municipality towards the transformation of public space.

### **The “Arcobalena Square” Case**

In the district now called Nolo, located between Piazzale Loreto, the Magazzini Raccordati of the Central Station, *Via Padova*, and Turro, there is Piazza Arcobalena, also known as Piazza Spoleto. It is one of the tactical urbanism squares built before the pandemic wave (2019), certainly the most well-known but also the most controversial. It is easily recognizable by a series of distinctive features: painted pavement, the presence of ping-pong tables, potted trees, tables and benches. Facing an elementary school, in close proximity to a kindergarten, and at the heart of an increasingly trendy neighborhood, the history of this unfinished space is quite unique.

Until 2019, there was an unauthorized parking area here, an unregulated and unsafe intersection for pedestrians. Thanks to various grassroots initiatives, the Municipality decided to transform this crossing into a square. It all started with proposals from schoolchildren, the interest of various associations and informal groups (FAS, Trentami in Verde, Progetto Moby). In September 2019, within the *Piazze Aperte* program of the Milan municipality, a participatory construction site began and lasted for a few days. It involved the participation of several citizens who painted the street and set up the space.

The construction site follows another intervention started in April 2019 and lasting 9 months, located in the nearby *Via Rovereto* and Trotter Park entrance. Thanks to an idea presented to the Participatory Budget 2018 by Progetto Moby (a group of neighborhood activists), the inhabitants of the neighborhood present a strategy for traffic calming and pedestrian- cyclist safety by suggesting the transformation of six critical points near schools and parks in the area. The support of “Genitori Anti Smog” association and the interaction with the Municipality and the district had allowed the experimentation of sidewalk widening (with horizontal signage and street art incursions), self-construction of urban furniture (flowerbeds for succulent plants) and the removal of unauthorized parking from the Trotter Park entrance. The success of the initiative, which involved hundreds of people active in the transformation over the months and was monitored by “Core-Lab” researchers, a local multidisciplinary research lab, created fertile ground for the realization of Piazza Arcobalena, which followed a different but somewhat similar process. Organized and promoted entirely by the Municipality of Milan, Piazza Arcobalena was internally designed by *Officina Urbana* and presented to the neighborhood, two months before its realization, in a public assembly held by then-councilor for urban planning, Pierfrancesco Maran. The involvement and enthusiasm in the construction were accompanied by strong protests from merchants who feared that the reduction in traffic would coincide with a decrease in turnover. Over the years, the effect has been the opposite,

but the excessive success in terms of public attendance has also brought some challenges.

Piazza Arcobalena has a completely positive daytime life: children safely coming out of school, young and old playing ping pong, benches offering a bit of rest and opportunity for conversation. Unfortunately, however, the night has become a nightmare for many of the people who live nearby: impromptu open-air nightclubs, loud noise due to alcohol abuse, graffiti on the building walls are revealing how the regeneration of the unfinished needs not only good intentions (and designers) but above all education, monitoring, control, and presence. To find solutions to contrast the degradation phenomena that are now no longer in the embryonic phase, coordination among various stakeholders actively involved in caring for this area is pressing the Municipality to keep the issue high on the agenda.

Since 2020, the Politecnico di Milano has opened Off Campus Nolo, a neighborhood laboratory that provides the neighborhood residents with the technical expertise of the university. Coordinated by Polimi DESIS lab<sup>4</sup>, it has a strong focus on space and service design and aims to accompany and integrate local actors to translate needs and desire in actions and projects with a systemic approach<sup>5</sup>. Thanks to this, a platform for discussion has been set together with various local actors (associations, informal groups of people, residents committees) interlinking with the municipality with a common voice. Even due to this system of stakeholders, in the summer of 2022, the Municipality of Milan published a call for proposals for “street education”, specific to Piazza Arcobalena aiming at involving educators, social psychologists, anthropologists in on-site activities to understand the phenomenon of night degradation but also guide it towards more appropriate behavior. Some meetings were conducted including the heterogeneous user categories of the square to try to face, discuss, and generate new ideas on the use of the Piazza. The report has instructed the technical office of the municipality who is now finalizing the redesign of the space for a long-term use. The output will have the difficult task of calming the phenomenon of misuse of the space that could be only assessed in the next month.

Today it is impossible to imagine that there are public places where the environment is not influenced by its content, encounters, human relationships, and interactions. Tactical urbanism interventions embrace places with unexpressed potential, subject to experimental transformations, which become used but also abused. Unfinished spaces attract the attention of project communities, which welcome forms of temporary, participatory, disruptive design and pose new cultural questions about their use, reinforcing the idea that the design of places (especially unfinished ones) is not only “a matter for designers and architects” but inevitably involves a multiplicity of disciplines that must collaborate to prevent its failure.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> IDHC. (2009). Universal declaration of emerging human rights. Barcellona: Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya. Retrieved from <http://www.idhc.org>

<sup>2</sup> More information on the subject can be found here: <https://www.comune.milano.it/aree-tematiche/partecipazione/milano-2020>

<sup>3</sup> A project by Guidarini & Salvadeo studio carried out in conjunction with EXPO 2015. [https://www.domusweb.it/it/notizie/2014/12/16/\\_nevicata14.html](https://www.domusweb.it/it/notizie/2014/12/16/_nevicata14.html)

<sup>4</sup> Research laboratory on design for social innovation and sustainability, currently coordinated by the author, includes 15 academic figures among professors, PhD students, and collaborators who adopt a community-centered approach to design and research. [desis.polimi.it](http://desis.polimi.it)

<sup>5</sup> Several active parties are involved: Genitori Ciresola Association, Nolo Residents Committee, Comin Cooperative, Signatories of the Piazzetta Transiti collaboration pact, Casa Nolo, Mobi Project, Core-Lab.

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# PART ONE

**Abstract:** Part One of this book examines the diverse facets of interior representation in contemporary design practices. The initial chapter delves into the emergence of new abandoned spaces resulting from cultural and industrial decommissioning. These spaces encompass churches, warehouses, 'cantoniere' houses in Italy, barracks, offices, and schools. Subsequently, the following chapter explores the evolving rituals of domestic living due to technological advancements and the global phenomenon of neonomadism. It navigates away from a technology-centric cultural reference system, emphasizing nuanced perspectives on space and time, and merging scientific and philosophical reflections to illuminate shifting paradigms in our understanding of the world.

The third chapter scrutinizes the evolution of interior space representation with changing dominant visions within societal systems. It showcases influential figures shaping design culture and emphasizes drawing as a pivotal research tool. Despite the digital prevalence, the chapter advocates for drawing's enduring relevance in capturing modern environments' immersive qualities, drawing inspiration from historical luminaries like Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Ferdinando Galli Bibbiena to showcase varied representational techniques.

Furthermore, it explores unconventional representation modes, featuring Pierre Restany's binary images and Archizoom's non-conventional design communication. It underscores personal expression amidst standardized landscapes, critiquing hyperrealistic depictions lacking depth. Finally, it analyzes modern designers like Ugo La Pietra, Marino Crespì, and Andrea Branzi, challenging traditional representations and offering novel approaches to encapsulate interior spaces' complexity.

In essence, this segment prompts a critical examination of interior representation, highlighting its potential to convey the multifaceted nature of contemporary built environments.

**Keywords:** Abandoned spaces, Contemporary design, Design culture evolution, Decommissioning, Interior design representation, Leftovers, Neo-Nomadism, Regeneration.

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**CHAPTER 1**

## **A Novel Species of Abandoned Spaces**

The literature on the phenomenon of the decommissioning of industrial spaces is vast, and the first studies date back to the 1980s<sup>1</sup>. The origin of the phenomenon is linked to the growth of deindustrialization processes across the Western world. The consequence is a shift from expansion to transformation. A novel phenomenon occurred in the early years of this century, which concerns the abandonment of a significant portion of built heritage across various sectors.

*Active Citizenship*, an association founded in 1978 to combat waste, states through its network *Disponibile* that within the realm of waste reduction, the abandonment of buildings and peri-urban infrastructural or agricultural spaces is one of the most prominent chapters of erroneous and harmful behaviors, leading to resource squandering. Across many nations with longer industrial histories, there is indeed an enormous amount of unused buildings, and in Italy, the phenomenon is worsened by the short-sightedness of most public interventions and the considerable number of buildings that were already useless or oversized at the time of construction. Today, we face a great variety of unused assets, including industrial warehouses, offices, roadkeeper's houses, farmhouses, railways, stations, hospitals, power plants, sports facilities, residences, and gyms (Scialanca, 2016). As for housing in Italy, it is estimated that the phenomenon affects 20 million vacant rooms, which equates to approximately 7 million dwellings, in contrast to 2.3 million “homeless” families. Moreover, this aligns with the trend observed in Europe, where the number of individuals without a home has surged by 70% over the last decade.

However, the ISTAT census of 2011 revealed that built land had doubled in two decades, and unused accommodations had increased by 350% in ten years. In the case of housing, especially in Italy, this phenomenon can be attributed to both the persistent reasons related to the longstanding reluctance of owners to enter the rental market and the inadequacy of the public housing stock in the face of evolving demand due to changes in family structures over the years<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, in this case, we cannot speak of decommissioning but rather the presence of an offer that would require radical changes to once again align with the demand. As for other unused assets, the reasons appear more difficult to trace. Certain hypotheses, as brisk as they may be, suggest that buildings, like living beings,

have a lifecycle that, once completed, leads to abandonment and demolition. Or, as advocated by “Active Citizenship,” it is attributed to the lack of foresight on the part of the public operator, which is certainly true but insufficient to grasp the true extent of the phenomenon.

In the *del design del non finito* (Crespi, 2018), I used the term “leftovers” to describe structures that are suspended in a state of abandonment, having ceased to fulfill their original purpose. I classified them based on morphological characteristics, using a classification system similar to that used in biology for living beings. This system provides an articulation on different levels, including type, class, order, family, genus, and species, for the animal kingdom. The operation has wide margins of arbitrariness but, above all, is based on a reading relative to the typological characteristics only. Now it is necessary to adopt a different interpretive filter, which starts from the originally performed function to try to trace the causes of the dismissal. According to *Riusiamo L'Italia* [Let's reuse Italy] (Campagnoli, 2019), today our country “is in the paradoxical situation of being 'full of empty spaces': it, in fact, has a heritage of over 6 million unused or underutilized assets (equivalent to more than twice the size of Rome, vacant...), encompassing residences and other public, para-public, and private properties.”

Excluding the case of residences, which is distinctly unique and whose potential causes have been discussed, as well as the instances of interrupted construction sites, which constitute instances of unfinished works and thus are not “leftovers”, a list of the most significant leftovers based on their functional identity could include: churches, warehouses, stations, roadkeeper's houses, barracks, offices, and schools. The pursuit of possible reasons for their abandonment is not an academic or statistical exercise, but rather an essential prerequisite to understanding whether we are dealing with a temporary and insignificant phenomenon or an irreversible process with long-term repercussions on current urban structures. In the latter case, the matter of their regeneration and the ways to enact it would hold considerable value both culturally and politically.

## CHURCHES

The case of decommissioning of places of worship is the most paradigmatic and has been thoroughly investigated during the international conference *Dio non abita più qui* [God No Longer Dwells Here], promoted in November 2018 by the Pontifical Council for Culture (Department for Cultural Heritage), the Italian Episcopal Conference - National Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage and Worship Building, and the Pontifical Gregorian University - Faculty of History and Cultural Heritage of the Church - Department of Cultural Heritage of the Church. The result of the collaboration between the scientific committee of the

conference and the aforementioned delegations is the document “Decommissioning and Ecclesial Reuse of Churches. Guidelines,” from the same year. It is a document of great cultural value and scientific interest on the subject. The causes are unequivocally highlighted: “The issue of decommissioning of places of worship is not new in history, but today it is brought to the attention of the Churches due to factors linked to a modern condition that we can broadly define as advanced secularization, but at the same time in a context of greater awareness of the historical-artistic and symbolic value of the sacred building and the artifacts preserved therein.” The objective of the document is to “examine the phenomenon as it presents itself today and to provide Christian communities (episcopal conferences, dioceses, parishes, religious institutes) with tools to address it, aware of the great variety of concrete situations and the different quality of the buildings. The phenomenon of decommissioning, more visible today in certain Western countries, is expected to emerge shortly in countries that currently do not yet experience it”. Therefore, there is an awareness that this reality was born in the West but is soon destined to spread to other parts of the world. It particularly affects large Western urban centers where, “in addition to the growth of fluidity in a sense of belonging and anonymity, the decline in religious practice, determined by various internal and external causes to the Church, has led to a decrease in the faithful and financial resources, and consequently has drastically reduced the need for churches. This is compounded by the situation of the clergy, with many priests of advanced age and very few ordinations. All of this leads to the decision of merging, integrating, or fusing parishes, resulting in the underuse and abandonment of churches.” However, one aspect not considered is the role that the different architectural quality of each place of worship may have had in causing their decommissioning. A census and documentation of each case would be necessary to have the possibility of evaluating it. It would be interesting, for example, to understand to what extent the abandonment has affected places of worship built in recent years, say from the post-war period to the present, a period in which architectural design culture has shown, with very rare exceptions, an inability to engage with the theme of sacred space <sup>3</sup> (Crespi, 2014). Another aspect that warrants investigation pertains to the extent of the phenomenon of monasteries and convents being abandoned, in relation to the crisis of vocations and the reduction in the number of individuals pursuing monastic life. The work carried out by Urbex, whose aims are to make these places visitable and appreciated in their current state, proves particularly valuable and represents one of the few sources to identify the extent of the phenomenon.

The document refers to the forum on “Conservation of Living Heritage,” which was promoted by ICCROM in 2003 (Stovel, Price, & Killick, 2005) . The scientific community emphasizes the shared responsibility of religious communities and heritage preservation professionals in the face of the risk of

**CHAPTER 2****Scene from an Interior: Neo-Nomadism and New Habitation Rituals****SCENE ONE**

Saint Jerome is depicted reading while seated in his study. His face reveals meticulous concentration and features that suggest he could be the portrait of a Venetian man of letters. In front of him is a wooden desk, on which, in addition to the book he is perusing, there are several volumes piled in a disorderly manner. On the shelves, placed in front and at the sides, there are more books, a precious painted vase, and a plate. Near his feet are two small plants and a cat. Hanging on the wooden wall is a cloth. The study is an elegant yet simple piece of furniture placed on a polychromatic floor and located within a high internal space, vaulted in a cross shape, from whose windows the light penetrates, contributing to multiplying the space infinitely, like a magical Chinese box. (Causa, 2004, p. 18). This is the painting by Antonello da Messina, around 1475, in which the represented environment appears in absolute harmony with the figure of the saint, portrayed as a true humanist, whose life is stubbornly dedicated to the study and translation of sacred texts, and whose world of objects that surround him faithfully reflects this disposition.

**SCENE TWO**

Still, Saint Jerome, but this time wearing cardinal robes, is seated on a sort of cathedra, and the book he is reading rests on a lectern placed on a cloth covering a piece of furniture with a closed compartment secured by a latch as if to suggest that something precious is kept inside. Apart from the lion depicted crouching at his feet, a purely symbolic figure, next to the numerous books disorderly piled up on the shelf, and an alembic, we find an hourglass and an astrolabe: instruments of measurement and precision for that time. It seems that this time, the painter Jan van Eyck wanted to give a more sophisticated image of St. Jerome's study, representative of a reality in transition from that "world of rough approximation" towards "the universe of precision", described by Alexandre Koiré (Koiré, 1967), of which the objects can constitute the allegorical representation. It seems that, in short, he intended to signal the inevitability of the intrusion of new devices into private spaces, necessary to accompany the activities of daily life.

### SCENE THREE

A woman has just received a letter from her maid while playing a lute inside her home. Johannes Vermeer's "*Love Letter*" of 1669 portrays an elegant bourgeois interior, made up of precious decorative elements such as the fireplace frame, golden tapestry, brocade curtains, and paintings on the walls. It also includes mundane objects taken from everyday life, such as a laundry basket, a broom, a pair of slippers, and an embroidery cushion. The musical instrument, which is often found in his other paintings and is replaced by a harpsichord and a viola in "*The Music Lesson*," shows how music seamlessly and naturally becomes part of domestic activities for the painter, turning these objects into friendly companions of everyday life. Through them, a new harmony can arise. This is at least what the Latin inscription on the harpsichord suggests: "Music is the companion of joy and a balm for sorrow."

### SCENE FOUR

In place of the harpsichord, there is now a modern piano. She touches the keys with one finger, but the impression is that she is completely lost in her own thoughts. He is focused on reading the newspaper. Between the two, there is a profound sense of detachment. Painted in 1926, Edward Hopper's painting, *Room in New York*, is the one that most resembles Vermeer, in particular the painting *The Love Letter*. But while in the Dutch painter's work, the presence of the musical instrument in the room becomes a medium for a condition of harmony between the man and the woman, here it appears as an opaque object, incapable of playing the role of a stimulator of relationships. The invisible wall separating the couple appears so irreducible that even the presence of an object potentially capable of claiming an intersubjective nature, and therefore of positively influencing the behaviors of those who inhabit that space, becomes insignificant. Through the representation of an interior, Hopper speaks to us about the contemporary human condition and the "lack of a sense to give to reality," (Pontiggia, 2004, p. 14) in which even the objects themselves are involved.

### SCENE FIVE

Inside a spacious room, a loft with exposed metal beams and a glossy resin floor, a series of projectors send swarms of images onto the walls and everything they encounter. "Its images flow over jutting portions of walls, sometimes overlapping by a few centimeters; they are rarely projected at the right angle, colors seem wrong, and different images appear as if they were superimposed. The nuances highlight the colors composing the image, the unpretentious presentation corresponds to the possibilities of a simple use of this medium, and the overlapping of images is the result of a sophisticated electronic dosage" (Blase &

Thater, 2002, p. 158). In Diana Thater's 1995 work, *China*, the artificially created image bursts into inhabited space without being confined to the small containers of monitors. It flows freely on every available surface, giving life to a second totalizing reality: a kind of diffuse and gelatinous fog that, even though it is not present in the work, seems destined to engulf its inhabitants.

## **THE INVASION OF OBJECTS**

Using the perspective of painting to observe how we inhabit spaces is an exercise that can yield surprising results. It introduces a viewpoint from someone who observes things with particular sensitivity, capable of capturing even seemingly negligible nuances. As Mario Praz taught us in his *Philosophy of Furniture* (Praz, 1993), each scene and example offers insights to reflect upon the theme of the transformation of our domestic rituals in relation to the intrusion of various telematic and computer devices, particularly those intended for transmitting and disseminating images. This theme appears crucial but needs to be viewed as a particular phase in the history of the relationship between objects and the domestic environment. Throughout this phase, we essentially witness an alternation of styles of objects, following a “series of Vichian recurrences” (Praz, 1993, p. 70), within a framework of relative stability and permanence of the components that make up the scene. This is still evident in the memorable London interiors of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by John Soane or the bourgeois interiors of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Adolf Loos. It can be said that the introduction of household devices (Frattelli & Cocito, 1991) (Banham, 1978) and later the advent of new computer technologies irreversibly transformed this relationship. With the “Modern” came the first experiments in equipped houses: from the famous “Frankfurt kitchen” of 1926 by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, to the house of the director of the Bauhaus in Dessau, by Walter Gropius, also of 1926 (Rizzi, 2003) (Holz, 2004), to the Fabio Filzi district designed by Franco Albini in Milan in 1936. The introduction of these devices aimed to transform the home into a “machine à abiter” [machine to inhabit] by equipping spaces with standardized “casiers”, a type of equipped partition walls, integrated with furnishings primarily made of tubular steel, as in Le Corbusier's project for the living cell at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1929. Born as attempts to address the problem of affordable housing demand, over the years these experiments ended up becoming expressions of elite culture, without being able to influence the major mass consumption trends in the field of furnishing products.

## **HYPER TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENTS**

The real change occurred with the introduction and diffusion of electronics, informatics, and communication tools in ways that are entirely different from the

**CHAPTER 3****The Representation of the Interior as a Vision of the World****RELEVANCE OF ERWIN PANOFSKY**

Discussing the representation of interiors helps to address the crucial yet intricate topic of the implications of the evolution of scientific thought on contemporary design practice<sup>1</sup> (Crespi & Ruffa, 2013). In particular, it is useful to start with the issue of coherence between the representation system and the value system, returning to the very current contribution of Erwin Panofsky. According to him, the genuine innovation of the Renaissance central perspective lies in its ability to represent a surpassing of the spatiality of Giotto and Duccio, “which corresponded to the transitional concepts of high scholasticism (Panofsky, 2007),” through the introduction of an “infinitely extended space organized around a chosen viewpoint.” This marked a break with the Aristotelian view of the world and paved the way for a new “de-theologized” conception of the world, founded on a notion of infinity “not only prefigured in God but actually realized in empirical reality.” This marks the conclusion of a long journey initiated by Giotto and Duccio, who had initiated the surpassing of the medieval spatial vision and introduced “an authentic revolution in the formal evaluation of pictorial surface: it is no longer the wall or the board on which the forms of individual things and figures are arranged, but has returned to being the transparent plane through which we can conceive of looking into an open space as circumscribed in all directions; a 'figurative plane' in the evocative sense of the term.” All of this aims to demonstrate how perspective had moved beyond being a technical-mathematical issue to primarily become an artistic concern closely related to the question of the conception of the world and the values it expresses.

Panofsky introduces the difference between the way Italians and Northern European painters interpret perspective. The example of Saint Jerome is given, painted both by Antonello da Messina and Dürer. While the former depicts the study as if seen from the outside, coinciding space with the surface of the painting and thereby establishing a distance from the observer, the latter almost brings the observer into the space of the painting itself, thanks to the eccentric position of the viewpoint, thus creating an effect of “intimacy.” However, “the perspective concept, whether evaluated and interpreted in the sense of rationality and objecti-

vism, or rather in the sense of randomness and subjectivism, is based on the intention to construct the figurative space (even abstracting from the psycho-physiological 'data') starting from the elements and according to the empirical visual space scheme. (Panofsky, 2007, p. 53)" What emerges clearly is the close relationship between perspective and Renaissance humanism, between the way space is represented and the very conception of the world. Simultaneously, as noted by Luigi Cocchiarella, it would be difficult to envision orthogonal projections outside of the Enlightenment or axonometric projections disjointed from the positivist culture of the 19th century. And this is because "the forms of representation are not exhausted in the mere executive drawing methods but are indissolubly linked to the cultural sensibilities within which they have developed and are employed." (Cocchiarella, 2009, p. 77).

Panofsky's studies focus on representation in painting, yet they do not lack a distinct interest in the subject of interior design representation. What appears today as a disciplinary problem, namely the gap between the potential constituted by digital technologies in the modes of project representation and their inability to convey the designer's stylistic thinking nuances, is actually the reflection of a much broader and deeper problem. It is rooted in the lack of a cultural reference system, following the exhaustion of the one based on the dominance of technology, defined as the "power of technical disposal" (Habermas, 1978), which has instigated the prevalence of calculative thought throughout the Western world, establishing a sort of "empire of the rational" (Latouche, 2000). Nonetheless, signals abound in various realms of thought and culture suggesting that we are facing a turning point in history, destined to introduce changes probably of the same magnitude as those that, for Panofsky, have unveiled an entirely new region for religious art. Just think of the reflections within the scientific world, leading to a shift from predictive and experimental science to qualitative and hermeneutic science, renouncing a program of integral domination over the realities to which it is applied in favor of weak rationality models, based on the reversibility of processes and the allowance for the intrusion of chance (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2007). Or the contributions in philosophy by Paul Virilio, on dromology and the dangers of contemporary technology connected to the accident as an unexpected phenomenon (Virilio, 2004), and by Jean-Luc Nancy on the city as a "place where something other than the place takes place" and where man lives "en passant" (Nancy, 2002). In anthropology, Marc Augé discusses the emergence of a new paradox characterized by a distinct perception of space-time meant to establish the perpetuity of the present (Augé, 2009). In economics, Serge Latouche addresses the concept of "décroissance" [degrowth], as a rediscovery of the frugal society by choice, aimed at "relearning to inhabit the world and thus liberating oneself from work dependency to rediscover slowness, reacquainting oneself with the flavors of life tied to territories, proximity, and one's neighbors" (Latouche & Harpagès,

2011), as well as Gilles Finchelstein's exploration of the “dictatorship of urgency” and the necessity to counter it through rediscovering slowness and embracing the practice of “losing time” (Finchelstein, 2011). The fragments of a novel conception of the world open up perspectives on the space we inhabit and its multifaceted connotations; an unspeakable, aleatory, reversible, “ineffable”, profound, and deformed space (Vidler, 2009), devoid of stable boundaries, where private and public coexist and the interior becomes like an exterior.

Guido Tonelli reminds us how two epochal discoveries have taken place in this decade: in 2012, the identification of the Higgs boson, and in 2016, the detection of gravitational waves, destined to contribute to a deep understanding of the world, its origin, its dark side and even its fragility, – attributed to the precarious equilibrium that defines the forms of life populating Earth. This increased understanding, further fortified by the initial images of a black hole captured in April 2019 and the most comprehensive image of the universe ever recorded in 2022 by the James Webb Space Telescope, presents us with a universe that coexists with countless other universes, far from immutable. “Now we must take a further leap: become aware that the entire cosmos seems to share with us and our planet a similar condition of precariousness” (Tonelli, 2017). Science, therefore, warns us that we live in a strange, diverse, and astonishing world where, as described by Carlo Rovelli, “space unfolds, time doesn't exist, and things might not be anywhere” (Rovelli, 2014), a world founded on relationships, rather than objects, and on “elementary processes where quantum of space and matter continuously interact with one another” (Rovelli, 2014). This world, previously thought to be a “wonderful perfectly synchronized mechanism,” where harmony and the balance of its components were believed to govern the universe, reveals itself to be a “highly chaotic system in which order and regularity become intrinsically local and temporary” (Tonelli, 2021). One might even call it a “New World,” like the one that Giandomenico Tiepolo must have imagined in his stunning work of 1791, a five-meter-wide fresco painted two years after the French Revolution for Villa Tiepolo in Zianigo (now in Ca' Rezzonico in Venice), manages to convey a profound sense of disquiet due to the presentiment of the end of an era.

### **Representing the Interior**

All of this should not make us forget that the issue of the representation of interiors, which we have embarked on, also has a significance that pertains to more specifically disciplinary aspects. In a syllabus from 1968 outlining the curriculum for that year's design course at the Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Milan, Franco Albini argued:

## PART TWO

**Abstract:** Part Two of this book delves into various aspects of design philosophy, particularly focusing on exhibition design across three chapters. It examines different uses of unfinished language prevalent in diverse creative domains, spanning from architecture, literature, art, and design, to cinema.

The initial chapter critically assesses the role of spatial design in manifesting emotional experiences, challenging assertions that relegate spatial formulas, and advocating for the emotional resonance of environments within the context of unfinished language in various creative fields.

Continuing further, the subsequent chapter seamlessly extends from the prior discussion and elaborates on figures considered exemplary and paradigmatic in historical research and interior design. It highlights notable figures like Mario Praz, Marco Zanuso, Ugo La Pietra, Andrea Branzi, and Martì Guixè, exploring their significant contributions within the context of unfinished language and design philosophies.

The next chapter explores the realm of exhibition design as a philosophical domain, charting its evolution and role in regenerating urban spaces post-industrialization. Notable exhibitions that seamlessly blend art, architecture, scenography, and design are referenced.

This part consolidates the core themes explored, highlighting the significance of embracing temporariness in design. It emphasizes exhibitions and events as transformative catalysts, offering profound meaning and depth in our lives. This comprehensive exploration of design philosophy, particularly within the domain of exhibition design, intertwines emotions, everyday objects, and the influential power of events, all while considering the usage of unfinished language in shaping our experiences and surroundings.

**Keywords:** Design philosophy, Exhibition design, Emotional resonance, Provisionality, Reversibility, Set-up, Temporary italian design.

**CHAPTER 4****In Search of the Unfinished****IN ARCHITECTURE**

“The tendency to preserve in architecture, rescuing from abandonment and degradation of ample traces of the past while maintaining rough finishes in the recovery intervention, sometimes seems to border on an approach close to that of archaeology. However, it certainly results in an extraordinary, albeit sometimes harsh, integration between history and design, whether one considers the subject matter in relation to architecture or with respect to the urban scale.” This is how Enrico Pietrogrande wrote in 2016, at the end of the almost pioneering text “Observations on the Unfinished in Architectural Restoration”<sup>1</sup> (Pietrogrande, 2016). This text takes inspiration from the project by Adam Caruso and Peter St John for Studio House in London, dating back to 1993-94, concerning the conversion of an old warehouse in Swan Yard into a studio and residence. As the designers narrate: “Modest materials are used in their raw state so that their image is concretely analogous to the rough bricks and worn layers of paint of the existing building. The existing building was from various epochs, and the idea for the new arrangement was to add further layers to compose a new whole” (Fernández Per, 2005). According to Philip Ursprung, the designers chose “to consider the building as a historical monument with a unique combination of traces, something like a medieval castle where every single stone and every single window deserve attention. As if it were a ruin (the favored space of the picturesque), telling the story of the destruction of the warehouse while it still exists. It shows the transformation in its raw state and allows us to perceive clearly the effects that the forces of the economy have on our environment, interiors, objects, movements, and daily routine” (Ursprung, 2008). This constitutes a highly convincing interpretation of a project that seems to set the stage for a generation of interventions during the past decade, which will be further explored later. Enrico Pietrogrande takes inspiration from this work in an attempt to trace the genealogy of the unfinished project. He discerns a common thread in the quest for authenticity through employing materials in their “raw” state, in the lesson of Alison and Peter Smithson, in the early brutalist works of Herzog and de Meuron, in the flower kiosk at the Malmö cemetery by Sigurd Lewerentz, of 1969, in the project of Sarah Wigglesworth Architects for the Siobhan Davies Dance Studios in Southwark, London, from 2002-05, and in other

works as well. It is a very interesting essay, worth reading, that already glimpses in authors from different eras than the present an inclination to work on existing architecture with a kind of design approach attentive to traces of the past, without adhering to the discipline of restoration. However, the idea that some brutalist works can be considered related to this family of non-finished projects is not very agreeable, as in most cases, they are new constructions rather than interventions on existing ones. Moreover, the adherence to the principle of the expressive value of natural materials in their “raw” state is never dissociated from a search for the plastic component of the architectural composition and its “tectonic” nature. Therefore, it is an interesting contribution but provides an interpretation of the subject that is not entirely coincident with that advocated in this text.

At the 15<sup>th</sup> Architecture Biennale in 2016, the book *Unfinished: Ideas, Images, and Projects from the Spanish Pavilion* was presented. Despite the use of the term “Unfinished” in the title, the book addresses an entirely distinct subject: that of unfinished architecture. This phenomenon also significantly concerns Italy, yet it inherently differs from the abandonment of existing architecture and its repurposing (Crespi, 2022).

At the border between art and architecture, Donald Judd's operation in Marfa, Texas, initiated in 1971 with the “adaptive” reuse of a former artillery shed, can be considered.

## IN DESIGN

Regarding design, it is necessary to conduct a survey on the history and evolution of objects, starting with Remo Bodei's book, *La vitta delle cose* (Bodei, 2011), and then moving on to some recent experiments. Among these, one can recall the project of a table system, *Hack*, by Konstantin Grcic for Vitra, which is presented as follows: “Grcic opposes traditional desks by proposing an innovative functional and aesthetic approach that satisfies the needs of today's high-tech societies... With its raw wood panels, Hack presents an unfinished aesthetic at first glance, like a snapshot of an ongoing experimental project. The system reflects the attitude of companies that similarly define themselves as constantly changing.” In this case, the unfinished is seen as a metaphor for an industrial world that is changing its approach to market challenges, adopting a working style capable of quickly responding to potential shocks. The motivation given for the use of the name is eloquent: “The term 'hack', related to the world of computing, was coined in the late 1950s at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It describes an intelligent and ingenious solution devised by a hacker. A typical 'hack' is executed quickly and often is not very elegant but highly efficient. It achieves the desired

result without transforming the integrated system architecture, often conflicting with it.”

In 2018, the Design Museum Gent hosted the “Poème Brut” exhibition, featuring designers who revolutionized the aesthetics of design through products crafted with mixtures of clay, organic forms, natural pigments, human hair, and extinct techniques. As Marianna Guarnieri wrote on Domus web on April 9, 2018, “Processes of manual craftsmanship and an interest in materials contrast with globalization and dematerialization. Some designers use forgotten materials, while others experiment with synthetic materials, creating original combinations of old and new.” While not strictly speaking “design of the unfinished,” this exhibition nonetheless indicates original research paths within the world of design, interested in experimenting with the materiality of things, presenting a counter-trend to the success of the idea of designers as facilitators of collaborative processes and the doctrine of design thinking.

## IN ART

The history of unfinished art is controversial. According to Giulio Carlo Argan, “modern criticism has seen Michelangelo's unfinished sculpture as the supreme moment of art that transcends its own technical limits... Since then, with the Mannerists and Romantics, all art has been constitutionally unfinished. By going beyond its disciplinary limits, it challenged the prejudice that the finished was the necessary connotation of value. In sculpture, the unfinished was tangible, from the polished form to the rough step work, which transformed the stone into trembling matter of light: not a physical light, beating or grazing, but an inner luminosity that dissolved and regenerated the matter” (Argan, 2005). In 2016, the exhibition *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible* was held at the new Metropolitan Museum in New York, which collected one hundred works of art from the Renaissance to the present day. The exhibition has aroused contrasting opinions, especially regarding the criteria for selecting works, including those that are paradigmatic of an artist's deliberate choice to leave the work unfinished and those that have remained incomplete due to incidental reasons (Ignazzi, 2016). The theme is insidious, as while some artists like Auguste Rodin are unanimously recognized for using the unfinished as a language, it's not equally straightforward for others. Not to mention that a large portion of non-figurative art could also be considered unfinished.

Paola Barocchi, one of the most prestigious figures in the study of Renaissance and Mannerist art, discusses the theme in a sophisticated essay titled *Finito e non-finito nella critica vasariana* [Finished and unfinished in Vasari's Critique]” (Barocchi, 1958). She investigates how Vasari interprets the theme of

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**CHAPTER 5****Paradigms**

There are both remote and recent studies that, although very different in content, cannot be excluded from a book dealing with interiors due to their historical or paradigmatic value. The same can be said for recent experiences in the design of interior spaces which, although representative of different approaches and concerning interventions not related to the reuse of abandoned spaces, still represent cornerstones of the discipline. In every adventure destined to explore new territories of knowledge and action, they help us better understand what we are doing, without necessarily having to be fully shared, but also without sacrificing their value as a teaching tool. They might be tied to sentimental reasons or life experiences and, therefore, have a special meaning for those who offer them new possibilities of interpretation, without detracting from their objective value.

**TWO BOOKS**

Few, I think, have read these two books. Also, because of the embarrassing story that circulated in academic circles, its author - whom I have not had the opportunity to meet - was universally known for his incredible power to cause bad luck (Di Benedetto, 2014). Maria Teresa Feraboli certainly read it, dedicating a chapter in her book *Dream Houses* (Feraboli, 2019) to Praz's writings, particularly *The House of Life*. Emanuele Coccia, however, did not read it. In his ambitious yet poorly informed book on the subject (Coccia, 2021)<sup>1</sup>, he accuses philosophy of having forgotten about the house and accuses architecture scholars of being guilty of "historical neglect" towards the house. So much so as to make it impossible "to have a clear idea of who inhabited that space, of how the houses have been furnished over the decades, or of what events the theater has been" (Coccia, 2021, p. 9). Nevertheless, *La Filosofia dell'arredamento* (Praz, 1993)<sup>2</sup> remains an essential text for understanding the world of interiors. Additionally, there are numerous recent and scholarly studies coming from the fields of social, historical, and anthropological studies<sup>3</sup>, as well as Carla Pasquinelli's aforementioned text and Edgar Allan Poe's small, delightful pamphlet from 1840 titled *The Philosophy of Furniture* (Poe, 1840). Thanks to his extensive

knowledge of comparative literature on Romanticism and Decadence of Huysmans and D'Annunzio, his contacts with the English literary world, and his.

passion for collecting and art history, Praz manages to create a unique text in its genre. The literary documentation is accompanied by the iconographic one, the result of a powerful collection of depictions coming from various sources and in many cases preserved in his own home. In the introduction, inspired by a *Collection of didactic poems*, which he happened to come across, in which the “Literate (men), but also educated women and young people” can encounter, “in the ingenuity of topics, a brilliant pastime,” he confesses to having an extraordinary interest in a poem, *I sing the Sofa*, intended to narrate, “under the mantle of poetic graces, the evolution of a piece of furniture, *The sofa*.” However, since the poet began to digress after the first few lines, leaving him unsatisfied, he is forced to wait for Edgar Allan Poe to “sit on it,” even though the description of the romantic settings contained in his *Philosophy of Furniture* is not able to fulfill his expectation. It is from here that his *journey* begins, made up of descriptions of environments illustrated mainly by watercolors, preserved in private homes, residences of princes and princesses, castles, and private collections. Guided by the conviction that an original distinction can be made between “men who care about the house and men who do not care at all.” Naturally, even here, there are the usual intermediate nuances: men who care a little, or so-so, or only in certain phases of their lives: men who show some interest in furniture only when they set up their home for marriage, and once that expense is made, they no longer care (and perhaps these people, we shudder to think, are the majority). There are some who are completely insensitive to what surrounds them, and others who adapt, and perhaps feel pleasure in living in environments that most would consider intolerable. I confess that it is extremely difficult for me to understand the soul of men who are indifferent to things and the home (...) The man who has no sense of home and who is not moved by the harmony of beautiful furnishings is, for me, as for Shakespeare, the one who is devoid of musical sense, born for betrayal, for deception, for robbery. The movements of his soul are as dark as night, his appetites as black as Erebus. Do not trust such a man!” (Praz, 1993, p. 17). This is the filter he uses to examine dozens and dozens of representations, without ever adopting the art historian's register but without renouncing dazzling annotations and judgments, as when it comes to the representation of interiors by seventeenth-century Dutch painting, capable of rendering “an interior like a sealed space outside the outside world, like a small universe carefully prepared for escape into the past and the exotic” (Praz, 1993, p. 121). This is because their intent was to make not only the furniture but also the life in the house, and the atmosphere. It is a book that cannot be read from beginning to end; it must be opened like a precious treasure chest with many drawers, each one capable of offering a

surprise, an emotion, thanks to surprising images and never pedantic texts, which mix erudition, knowledge of history and customs, anecdotes, and even, today we would say, “gossip”. The summary includes 94 entries, ranging from Carpaccio to Garnery, from French Trecento to Bourbon interiors, from parades and intense-colored curtains. Therefore, a very different discourse structure, for example, from a recent and exciting book, such as *Modern Interiors* (Sparke, 2011), which linearly traces the history of interiors in the last 160 years. Nothing found in Praz's text would seem useful to face Interior Design tests by adopting the approach described in the previous chapters. But ignoring it would be like trying to compose contemporary music without knowing Bach's *Goldberg Variations* played by Glenn Gould or *Gymnopédie No. 1* played by Reinbert de Leeuw.

First published in March 2022, in the prestigious Libri Scheiwiller series, *Interni o esterni* (Branzi, 2022) marks the provisional endpoint of a reflection that began in the 1960s with No-Stop city. The book has the unprecedented goal of rewriting the history of the transformation of everything that man has built to inhabit the world. This history has always been entrusted to architectural historians, but Branzi starts not from the evolution of architecture but interior environments. He goes backwards, starting from the interpretation of the characters of the twenty-first century, in which he describes the city no longer as the set of architectures that occupy it, but as a living organism. The city consists of “a flow of micro-projects, a buzz-design elaborated by many authors (even anonymous), following logics independent from architecture and as a whole respond to the need to update urban reality (starting from its interior) to new human activities”<sup>4</sup>. From this moment on, everything that preceded it is re-read by overturning the paradigms of classical architectural historiography. Branzi introduces sudden, startling, and surprising frames, flashes that illuminate a sky up to that grey point, in some passages that he considers crucial to that new history; for example, the chapter on non-architectural civilizations “which identifies their cultural and spiritual core in practices that cannot be brought back in any way to the world of architecture”. He also discusses Neolithic civilizations, for which the vaults of the caves had a sacred value of representation of their vision of the world; or the early Christian interiors dug deep into the earth, as if to seek a type of spirituality hidden and far from earthly values; or the Latin twilight, in which the Domus was immersed, to protect the rituals of everyday life from the harshness of the outside world; or the Renaissance as a civilization of interiors, consisting of spaces “perfect, mirrored, self-referential, closed in on themselves”. Branzi also analyzes the transformations that have characterized the post-industrial city, already presented in other publications that led him to receive the Rolf Schock Prize from the Royal Academy of Arts in Stockholm in 2019 and the Italian career architecture award established by the Maxxi in Rome and the Triennale in Milan in 2022.

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**CHAPTER 6**

## **Exhibition Design as a Design Philosophy**

Originally conceived as a discipline aimed at showcasing ideas, products, stories, and narratives, exhibition design is becoming the appropriate design approach to innovatively address the issue of regeneration of existing indoor and outdoor environments in the post-industrial city. In 1941, Giuseppe Pagano wrote that exhibition design has always fought “against the laws of statics and convention to achieve surreal effects, to reach new balances, to dissociate space into lyrical images, sometimes filled with exaggerated dynamism, sometimes immersed in the absolute serenity” (Pagano, 1941). He believed that temporariness represented “one of the most favorable conditions for an exhibition to be truly vibrant and interesting.” Pagano himself demonstrated the potential of exhibition design through some installations designed for the *Esposizione aeronautica italiana* [Italian Aeronautical Exhibition] at the *Palazzo dell'arte* in Milan in 1934 and the *Milan Triennials* of 1936 and 1940, inaugurating the extraordinary season of new exhibitions in Italy, which will have protagonists such as Albini, Baldessari, Gardella, BBPR, and Castiglioni.

Now those objectives and that condition no longer concern only the staging of the exhibition event: it is the design activity in general that, from now on, will have to adopt that approach, providing interventions of a set-up and of reversible nature, whose provisional character appears to be a characteristic entirely compatible with their ability to rediscover, as Gadamer would say, new forms of depth, to be a “manifestation of meaning” (Gadamer, 2002). In the book, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, Hans-Georg Gadamer, one of the masters of philosophical hermeneutics, invites us to rediscover “the metaphor of eternity, the value of the symbolic, of play as a communicative fact, of the festival, and to experience freedom even of 'not being,' as a condition of every artistic practice interested in representing life in its own time, subtracted, that is, from the empty time of never having time.” If for Gadamer “the festival arrests time and, in this sense, participates in the same temporal structure of the work of art,” then it could be said that even the event, as ephemeral as it may be, has the opportunity to resist the seductions of the market and trends to become one of the possible forms to represent the condition of temporariness and precariousness that characterizes our

Luciano Crespi

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time. Here, “event” is understood in its most common and popular sense, as a public manifestation, rather than its philosophical sense, as an interruption of the usual flow of things, to which the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, considered the guru of pop philosophy, dedicated a book in 2014 (Žižek, 2014).

Think about the *Fuorisalone* in Milan or the *Nuits Blanches* in Paris, as events that involve a mass audience, no longer just industry professionals, and can, therefore, be associated with the festive time Gadamer speaks of. The *Fuorisalone* in Milan has become a carnival where commercial and predominantly spectacular events, even when entrusted to prestigious design names, blend with others that aim to address social and anthropological themes.

The 2019 edition hosts installations inspired by the theme of *Human Space* in the extraordinary courtyards of Filarete della Ca' Granda, which have indisputable political and cultural value. The installation created by Studio Campana in the Pharmacy Courtyard, with the ambiguous title of *Sleeping Piles*, inspired by the courtyard's colonnade, consists of seven five-meter columns covered in grass that create an allegorical landscape, almost a frozen nature. Two other installations of significant social value are worth mentioning. In the first, Roberto Sironi, a young Milanese designer, stages *Human Code* in the underground spaces of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Crafts, a reflection on the history of man, including anthropology, design, art, and science, which is measured with sensitivity to the special nature of the location where the objects are exhibited. The second is by Carlos Amorales, a Mexican designer, who sets up *Black Cloud* in the spaces of the Adolfo Pini Foundation, a swarm of 15,000 black butterflies that invade every space - evoking the worst ghosts of our unconscious - and *Life in the folds*, which represents the theme of human's violence against man, a violence that can explode at any moment without justification. Of a different nature is the installation, sponsored by Philip Morris, by British artist Alex Chinneck, titled “IQOS World Revealed,” aimed at promoting the “I quit original smoking” technology and therefore the tobacco multinational's commitment to offering smokers “less harmful” solutions for health and the environment. It is a highly impactful scenographic installation, characterized by the illusionistic detachment of the external, rough and wrinkled skin of a traditional building, beneath which hides a new, pristine skin, a metaphor for a better future. The adopted pop language is located between art, architecture, scenography, and design, highlighting the blurring of boundaries between disciplines, in an attempt to explore, even in the ephemeral event, that depth and that ability to generate meaning as mentioned earlier.

Many cities in Europe and around the world have adopted the idea of the white night. The concept was first introduced by Paris on the night between October 5<sup>th</sup>

and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002. For the 2018 edition, under the direction of Gaël Charbau, on the night of October 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, the capital's audience was able to explore four “constellation” routes that took place in the heart and outskirts of Paris. The constellation of Île Saint-Louis hosted in the Collège des Bernardins *Echo of the Birth of Worlds*, a monumental installation by Abdelkader Benchamma. Going beyond the limits of drawing, Abdelkader Benchamma creates huge wall drawings that modify and interrupt our relationship with space and our perceptions. Inspired by the research of George Lemaître, a priest, astronomer, and physicist who was one of the first to propose the expansion of the universe, this work, even though it lasted only one night, left a profound impact on all those who had the opportunity to visit it.

On February 13, 2013, during the “Day of Anger,” a protest by construction workers was staged in Piazza Affari in Milan. Ten thousand yellow helmets were placed on the ground to create an unsettling yellow carpet, laid between the facades of the two historic buildings, Palazzo Mezzanotte and Palazzo Lancia, which delimit the square, challenging its once triumphant character now called into question by Cattelan's sculpture. The nine fields obtained by orderly aligning the rows of helmets have a certain drama, which aligns well with the project's intention to evoke the theme of workplace accidents on construction sites, not didactically, but by eliciting a strong emotional impact. It is an ephemeral installation, destined to last only a few hours, but destined, as it is capable of transmitting deep meanings, to leave behind a trail that does not disappear with the end of the event and that remains imprinted for a long time in that place, like the explosion of a supernova whose eco we continue to record years later.

## PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE EPHEMERAL

It was Renato Nicolini, the Culture Councillor of the Municipality of Rome during the tenure of the renowned art historian Giulio Carlo Argan as Mayor, who came up with the idea of dignifying the ephemeral event of summer in Rome, which began in 1976, and making it a fully legitimate cultural experiment that represents one of the distinctive features of contemporaneity. As Nicolini writes: “The sense of the ephemeral does not concern the transience of a fact because events are inevitably erased. The ephemeral event is the one that leaves traces in our memory, in our emotions, and in our passions. I believe that it is necessary to accept the fact that our life is ephemeral, that things change, in order to maintain meaning” (Nicolini, 2011). Despite its controversy, that experience managed to capture a demand for a change in how the role of design was understood, driven by the profound changes in the scenario in which design itself was called to operate. The boundary between exhibition design and *design d'espace* has become increasingly thin and reduced solely to the heterogeneity of the purposes,

## PART THREE

**Abstract:** The final part of this book delves into the concept of unfinished design, urban development challenges, and the adaptive reuse of abandoned spaces in contemporary architecture. Each chapter illustrates the significance of embracing imperfections, citizen engagement, and sustainability in shaping future urban landscapes.

Chapter 7 explores unfinished design origins, focusing on architect Ricardo Bofil's transformative La Fabrica project in Barcelona, among others like Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille and Teatríz in Madrid. It emphasizes adaptable spaces for diverse moods and the transformative potential of repurposed spaces for modern needs. The chapter concludes by stressing the importance of contemporary aesthetics representing present conditions and forward-looking design.

Chapter 8 highlights contemporary cities' challenges and the emergence of tactical urbanism for sustainable, inclusive development. Using Milan's Piazza Arcobalena project as an example, it showcases citizen-focused interventions but also notes challenges, such as nighttime public space management.

Chapter 9 delves into repurposing abandoned spaces worldwide, emphasizing Bulgaria, Vietnam, Italy, and Gurone projects. It emphasizes blending old and new, embracing imperfections, and prioritizing memory, community, and circular economy in regeneration. Overall, it advocates for an aesthetic code valuing the unfinished in architecture and design.

These chapters underscore the transformative potential of unfinished design and adaptive reuse in contemporary urban contexts. They advocate for citizen participation, sustainability, and a new aesthetic embracing imperfections and historical contexts, offering a vision for innovative and inclusive architectural practices in the future.

**Keywords:** Adaptive reuse, Aesthetic innovation, Citizen participation, Public spaces, Repurposing spaces, Sustainable development, Tactical urbanism, Urban regeneration, Unfinished design.

## Unfinished Design: The Origins

In the interview of October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1990, in *L'Unità*, Giulio Carlo Argan, brilliant as ever, states: “I wrote a book (Argan & Contari, 1990) about Michelangelo even though I detest him. I adore Leonardo and detest Michelangelo. However, unfortunately, Leonardo was wrong and Michelangelo was right. Unlike Leonardo, he did not experience art as knowledge, but as existence, and therefore as eternally unfinished until the moment of death. Because existence is the unfinished par excellence”.

To imitate him, I would say: I adore Barragan and detest Bofil, especially for his postmodern works, but he is right. *La Fabrica*, on which he started working in 1973, is located where the oldest cement factory in Barcelona used to be, and where he established both his studio and residence. It is the most eloquent testimony of how today's design should approach the remnants of a recent past while simultaneously dealing with the characteristics of contemporaneity. Bofil describes the reasons for the project in this way: “This space was being transformed into a green space that did not emit smoke, where instead of seeing the smoking chimney, you would see a cylinder, a sculpture. All this was done with a very minimalist approach, a simple approach with simple materials. I do not like the appearance of luxury, I think that luxury is in space, in a lifestyle, but not in having a golden object or painting the facade of the building in gold. I have never done it, I do not do it, and I do not like it. This bourgeois way of coexisting with the traditional house has never appealed to me very much. This is a place where the traditional is not conceived and each of us has our own space and we meet in some of the spaces when we want to see each other” (Bofill, 2015). Here we already find the idea that space is organized based on mental and psychological activities rather than functions. That it is a place where different aesthetics cross paths to give shape to “an appropriate environment for different moods.” That it is, like sound, something that not everyone perceives in the same way. Because there are “people who go to a place and look up and understand space, and people who simply look at the floor and walk on it but do not have spatial sensitivity. Finally, there is the idea that it is necessary to develop new aesthetics suitable for representing the conditions of the time we live in: “The two things that excite me and make me vibrate are the aesthetic sensation, beauty is what moves me and then intelligence. My life is constantly a project directed

towards the future rather than a story coming from the past”. It is no coincidence that he describes himself as a *nomad* in his statements. A nomad in a world of nomads. We can consider this story as the true beginning of an experimental phase towards the regeneration of disused buildings, which will quickly spread worldwide and consolidate from the 2010s onwards. In this interval of time, you can encounter, in episodic form, interventions with similar characteristics, in addition to the already mentioned Caruso St. John Architects project in London, which was demolished in 2011.

It is the case of the Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille, obtained through the regeneration of a former tobacco factory that, in the 19th century, was one of the most important French industries. In 1860, it was located on Rue Sainte near the Vieux-Port and later was moved to Belle de Mai, next to the Saint Charles sugar refinery. In the 1950s, it specialized in the production of Gauloises and Gitanes cigarettes. In 1990, Philippe Foulquié and Alain Fourneau, the director of the Théâtre Massalia and the Théâtre des Bernardines, respectively, founded the *Système Friche Théâtre*, which in 1992 took over the Friche la Belle de Mai. Since its inception, it can be considered a huge “playground”, and later a restaurant, skatepark, and studio were established, and in 2007, a cooperative was formed for the construction of housing. The true “soul” of this project is Patrick Bouchain, architect, set designer, and designer. “The city produces valueless wastelands, things that are wasted and have no value, things that are outside the economic and technocratic system. They are the waste of an economy, abandoned objects that no one wants. What Friche has shown with others is that another path was opening up, and people who were not involved in making the city, artists, intellectuals, and residents, were getting involved and proposing new ways of making the city, anticipating without planning, without freezing”. In 2017, a new phase of work was concluded, which involved the construction of a platform dedicated to activities for young people. The recovery interventions follow diverse trajectories in terms of the techniques adopted. Many spaces were left in the state of conservation in which they were found, *i.e.*, unfinished, such as the same toilet facilities that preserve the old writings on the walls. Others were made more suitable for new functions with renovation and technological adaptation interventions. It is interesting to note that the operation was conceived by Patrick Bouchain, a designer and set designer, a prominent and original figure in the international panorama of the design culture. It is worth mentioning his participation in the 10<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition of Venice in 2006, where he was responsible for the French pavilion, transformed into a lived-in space<sup>1</sup>. Named Metavilla (Mets ta vie là), the pavilion was designed to accommodate the public and passers-by and was equipped with a communal kitchen, a bar, a reading room, a sauna, a swimming pool, and a garden.

In 1990, Philippe Starck designed the restaurant, called *Teatriz*, in Madrid, inside the former *Infanta Beatriz* Theater designed by Eduardo Sanchez and Eduardo Lozaro in 1923. It cannot be defined as unfinished. Starck plays with all his favorite themes (Crespi & Ruffa, 2014), estrangement, disturbance, spectacularity, out of scale, abundantly integrating the space with new elements, even of an architectural nature. However, in certain spaces, the presence of the history of the place and the previous function is still strong. It is a brilliant intuition that ensures the work's tremendous success with the public and paves the way for interventions carried out twenty years later.

In late summer, from August 10<sup>th</sup> to September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, the *Between Time Showcase* was presented in one of the “time capsules” of 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture still remaining in Berlin (Fig. 1). It is an exhibition of refined furnishings, vintage design objects, and contemporary art pieces, within a forgotten space in Berlin at Wallstrasse 85. The event, curated by the Interior Designer Gisbert Pöppler and vintage furniture dealer Erik Hofstetter, was entirely independent and not influenced by any specific producer's agenda. It could be seen as a dress rehearsal for a trend that emerged during those years: the use of disused spaces, “leftovers”, as sets for design, art, fashion, and film shoots. Despite its overly nostalgic, Viscontian, and D'Annunzian atmosphere, the result is undeniably evocative.



**Fig. (1).** Gisbert Pöppler, *Between Time Showcase*, Berlin 2013.

## New Wave

### VADEMECUM

The selection of examples inevitably involves a high degree of arbitrariness. Something is needed, a guide, a handbook capable of including clues to understand how to recognize a case of unfinished design. I tried to search in other fields if there are useful references in this regard. There is a way to recognize a *human angel*, based on the presence of seven signs in the people you meet. One to recognize a narcissist, based on the presence of fourteen characteristics. One to recognize a good restaurant before starting to eat, taking into account some parameters that are learned in the theoretical and practical didactics of hotel schools and that explain how the first glance and the treatment one receives are decisive. One on how to recognize a *Leo*, a fire sign with great energy and good charismatic qualities, loves to be the protagonist, is expansive and extroverted, and acts in life with passion and enthusiasm. One to understand when a melon is ripe, based on four characteristics: they have a regular shape, meaning they do not have deformities on the outside, they have the stem scar marked and partly detached from the fruit, they retain greenish colorations and streaks, and the yellow parts never turn intensely yellow. One on how to recognize a poisonous mushroom, those without scales on the cap should be sought, those with a ring under the stem discarded, and especially those with a red stem or cap: nature is warning you, with the color red, that that mushroom can be dangerous. One on how to recognize a “Maranza [Poser]”, from the curly hair, the Nike or Lacoste tracksuit, the Tuned Air shoes and the strictly fake Louis Vuitton shoulder bag. One to understand if a person is spiritual, based on five characteristics: empathy, premonition, insomnia, awakening during the *spiritual* hour, and imaginative ability. One on how to recognize a true friend based on five secrets. One on how to recognize a true Panama hat, is by looking at the top of the hat and if you can see a rosette, it is an original Panama hat. The list could go on. Some ways are quite objective, while others are highly debatable, partly due to the discreetly esoteric nature of the people who are supposed to be recognized.

The one about the ripe melon seems to be the most relevant. It could therefore be argued that for a work to fall into the category of unfinished design, it should have previously been a leftover, that is, a disused architecture. Not an unfinished architecture, such as those found in abundance in Italy, mostly due to illegal

construction, and which *Incompiuto Siciliano* sought to dignify, albeit provocatively, as an expression of a new style. Or like deliberately unfinished architectures, such as Lianjie Wu's 2019 project for London called "Beyond the Shell," left unfinished and incomplete to allow each future inhabitant to independently complete their own dwelling. It should also not have lost its characteristics, the signs of time, and the wrinkles that distinguish it in the state of leftover. It should be destined for new functions compared to those previously had. It should have been adapted to new modes of use through set-up measures, temporary, reversible, and not through building renovations aimed at long-term durability. It should have been made available to the territory with the use of few, judicious resources, even economic, and of much, rigorous, cultured design thinking, not with tactical operations, independent of a project strategy, of reappropriation of the leftover by spontaneous groups of population<sup>1</sup>. It should be able to address the issue of energy performance by adopting unconventional solutions, challenging the regulations themselves<sup>2</sup>, due to the "special" character these places possess (no one would think of introducing a heat pump or a raised floor system into the Basilica Palladiana). It should be open to changing its function and newly acquired status again, even in a short time. It should introduce a new aesthetic code in the environments, both internal and external, representative of the character of the time we are living in. However, it should not be forgotten that, as in the choice of a melon, it also matters a lot to go "by smell."

## WHERE? HOUSE

For ten days, during the Melbourne Music Week in November 2012, Sashimi + design set up *Where? House*, a pop-up event space was set up in the abandoned Argus building at the corner of Elizabeth Street and La Trobe Street. The space was designed to host live and electronic music, seminars and workshops, film screenings, art installations, a dining room and bar, and a place to store vintage clothing. The building was in a state of total abandonment, and the most challenging task for the designers was to set up the existing space while preserving its identity and integrity as much as possible, ensuring safety for an expected audience of over a thousand people. A particularly complicated issue was represented by the internal circulation system, given the need to overcome different levels, maintain unfinished floor surfaces, and introduce new stairs into a place that lacked a roof. From a design point of view, the designers' choice was to evoke the culture of warehouse parties of the early 90s, using industrial elements both for the setup devices and for the furnishings. The main dance floor area was animated by constantly changing projections. On the first floor, there were the dining room, bar, and lounge area, as well as the sound garden, created in the form of a market, with plants, herbs, and meeting spaces. The workshop area was delimited by 3.6-meter-high natural plywood walls, providing a welcoming space

for music seminars, workshops, and small meetings. This intervention was intended for a temporary event and therefore does not fall into what is meant here by the reversible and provisional character of regenerated spaces, intended for new ways of living. The formal outcome, in terms of environmental design, may not be memorable, but it testifies to the beginning, all over the world, of a different way of approaching the theme of requalification and repurposing of disused spaces.

### **FACTORY LIFE**

In the same year, Julie D'Aubioul designed the transformation of an 800-square-meter industrial shed in Waarschoot, Belgium, into a shared home and architecture studio with her partner. The solution for the distribution system is interesting, dividing the space into two parts - one enclosed and air-conditioned, and one only covered, usable in the summer, under which freely relocatable units are placed, providing great flexibility. The character of the space is guaranteed by the metal and wood truss roof that keeps the old image of the industrial space alive. The poor condition of the building required interventions that ended up visually prevailing over what was preserved from the old image. It is not clear how much has been preserved, for example, of the numerous writings found on pillars, beams, and trusses, which seem to have been erased by sandblasting and painting works. However, it is interesting that the designers claim to have wanted to preserve the “patina [glaze]” deposited by time as much as possible, despite the need to adapt it to the comfort standards required by the current way of living and inhabiting.

### **A SANDEIRA, MUSA BREWERY**

The following year, in 2013, Paulo Moreira, a young Portuguese architect, designed the *A Sandeira* café in one of the oldest buildings on Rua dos Caldeireiros in Porto (Figs. 1 to 4). What remains “tells” of an ancient way of building, which the project intends to enhance. The intervention involves the introduction of old materials no longer in use, recovered from other buildings in the city, with the aim of establishing a dialogue between “old and new”. This becomes the guiding principle of every choice, such as preserving printed phrases still present on the facade as traces, such as “do not stand on the threshold”, which have become part of the building's identity. Or using granite slabs as a medium between the interior and exterior spaces, to break down the barrier between the street and the interior space. The bathroom becomes a place that plays with the ancient habit of users leaving messages, encouraging it, thanks to the predisposition of the cement walls on which visitors are invited to leave marks, contributing to the configuration of the room. In 2017, Paulo Moreira was

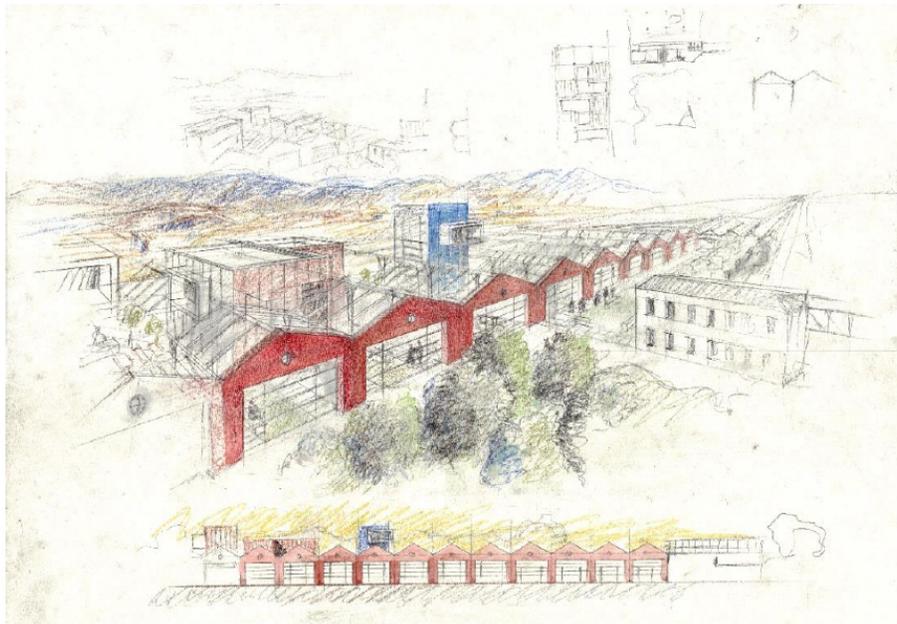
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**CHAPTER 9****CONCLUSION****IT COULD WORK!**

While the mind immediately goes to Mel Brooks' masterpiece, one of the monuments of world cinema, in this case, we should think of the less-known 2008 film by Giulio Manfredonia, released with this title (*Si può fare*). It revolves around the story set in Milan in 1983 of Nello, a former trade unionist transferred to Cooperative 180, which was established after the enactment of Law 180 in 1978, also known as the “Basaglia Law,” to accommodate patients discharged from psychiatric hospitals. The members, gathered in the assembly, approved the decision to abandon welfare work and try to enter the job market as parquet installers. After the first experience, failed due to inexperience, the Cooperative managed to win a new contract to carry out a task inside a haute couture atelier. When they run out of materials to finish the job on the delivery deadline, Luca and Gigio, who suffer from schizophrenia but possess remarkable innate artistic talents, decide to use the remaining scraps to create a marvellous and imaginative mosaic parquet. It becomes a great success.

It could work, the unthinkable can be thought. The examples collected in these chapters are just a small part of a rising wave that is coming from all over the planet, challenging common sense. We are only at the beginning of a process destined to develop a new vocabulary with which to face the challenges of a changing world. This is not an easy task. Preserving the memory of these places and assigning them a perhaps unheard-of role is a necessary challenge. Referring to Alessandro Papetti, an Italian artist whose work focuses on the theme of abandonment, Massimo Recalcati writes: “Remembering is not just reproducing what has been, but reinterpreting it, making it born again, making it alive again. Memory is not so much a replica of the past, reproduction, repetition, but creation, invention” (Recalcati, 2016). The *design of the unfinished* makes the leftovers come alive again, gives them a second birth without erasing the traces of their past, and surprises them without winking. It takes on the task of proposing a new aesthetic code. It is a style of thinking, a new design philosophy aimed at creating shelters for the neo-nomads of the third millennium, where they can live, work, enjoy art, and take care of themselves, all while being seduced by the skillful, rigorous, and magnificent contrast between the rough and dry, yet rich in symbolic value and memory content, of the 'leftover,' and the innovative and

surprising character of what it contains. It renounces the smooth image to give shape to the unfinished, the unheard-of, and the unthinkable examples in Figs. (1 to 8).



*(Figs. 1 to 4) contd....*



**Figs. (1 to 4).** Luciano and Marino Crespi, Giorgio Vassalli, Regeneration Project of the former Velamp, Venegono Superiore, Varese, 2019.



*(Figs. 5 to 8) contd.....*

## SUBJECT INDEX

### A

Abandoned 3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 45, 75, 79, 92, 102, 111, 115, 118, 121, 122  
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**Luciano Crespi**

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Luciano Crespi is a revered architect and an influential figure in design education. As an esteemed professor at Politecnico di Milano since 1992, he held the roles of full professor of design from 2000 to 2017 and president of the Interior Design Study Course from 2009 to 2015. His leadership extended to heading the postgraduate master's program in Design of Public Space. As a respected member of the Italian Society of Design, prof. Luciano Crespi curated significant exhibitions like "Marco Zanuso Architect" at Triennale di Milano and contributed ground-breaking projects at the Biennale di Venezia. Currently, his pioneering focus revolves around exploring the concept of "Design of the unfinished," challenging conventional design norms and pushing boundaries in the field.