

Welcome to research. Role, meanings and welcoming of the conference in the year of design in Turin.

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Changing^{the} **change proceedings**

Edited by

Carla Cipolla

Pier Paolo Peruccio

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Changing the Change
Design, Visions, Proposals and Tools
Proceedings

Edited by Carla Cipolla (Politecnico di Milano), Pier Paolo Peruccio (Politecnico di Torino)

International Conference
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Turin, Italy

In the framework of
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CPD - Conference of Italian Design Faculty Deans and Programme Heads

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ICOGRADA - The International Council of Graphic Design Associations
DRS - Design Research Society
CUMULUS - Cumulus International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media
BEDA - The Bureau of European Design Associations
IFI - The International Federation of Interior Architects/ Designers

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2. Background documents

2.1 Presentations
by the conference
organizers

Welcome to research

Role, meanings and welcoming of the Conference in the year of Design in Turin

Claudio Germak³ (12.7.08)

The fact that Turin was nominated World Design Capital is not a prize. Turin and its regional territory were chosen by ICSID, after hosting the 20th Winter Olympic Games, as a “pilot city”, with the task the investigate, implement, and promote Design.

Design as a “flexible” activity, able to generate resources, make different kinds of knowledge interact, interpret the humanistic and technological innovation, grasp the meaning of the change, anticipating it sometimes. Torino 2008 WDC, the institutions and their partners worked hard on the concept of Design “flexibility” (flexibility was the slogan for the year of design) by promoting several initiatives with different topics and audiences, involving a number of actors from the wide, by now, Design System, transferring local values to the international scenario and hosting international experiences and the debate resulting from them, in the meantime.

The scheduled activities for the third period of the year, dealing with TRAINING in Design field, focused on this objective. The Politecnico di Torino and its emerging Design area, according to its role as hosting university, but sharing this duty with other training centres, first of all, the Politecnico di Milano, took care of the organisation of some important events, accessible for the international community, whose purpose was to explore international scenarios regarding sustainability and which were developed in order to create positive results, this was the ambition..., locally and for the whole system, in terms of visions, proposals and tools.

The hint was taken by “Changing the change. Design visions, proposals and *tools*” (Turin, July 10,11,12), an International Conference on the role of Design towards sustainability that saw the lively participation of over 350 renewed researchers and speakers from 27 world countries. With its 150 scientific papers, it represented the test focus on approach attitudes and modes regarding the more and more cross-dimensional and pressing topic represented by sustainability in everyday life, production and design systems.

After this, “*Designing connected places*” (Pollenzo, July 13/29), scheduled as part of the eight main events for Torino 2008 WDC became an international summer school open to international Design students from the best Design schools in the world. Led by international experts and with the participation of Boards, Institutions and Research Centres as Local Commissioners, 250 youngsters worked for a week on extremely contemporary and internationally interesting projects, giving proper solutions (this was the brief) for the local contexts:

³ Politecnico di Torino (ITALY) – Organizational coordinator

health and well-being, food and new food networks, urban mobility, safety and liveability in cities, new production systems, forms to represent how complex the territory and communities are. Plus, a design study in Turin to project a parametric temporary structure suggested from the connections with the problems discussed in Pollenzo.

Two events that were developed in close synergy – where the first one, the Conference, was conceived as an ideal place for “*ideas for changing the change*” and the second, the Summer School, was considered the project application for “*designing the change*”.

Two highly successful events, mainly due to word-to-mouth advertising and to the Net and the many web sites and blogs that turned it into a real topic of discussion, rather than, we must reckon, for the national press.

Anyway, these events strengthened the image of Turin, the institution which had supported them and the team composed by Torino 2008 WDC and the Polytechnics of Turin and Milan, that outlined not just their scientific contents but their structures as well, from a macro-scale to a micro-scale point of view, according to an original and conscious eco-design approach: *from the elimination of green-house gases during the designing stage (AzzeroCO2 program) to the proposed sustainable mobility; from the places where the works took place, prestigious evidence of architectural and landscape local culture (Valentino Castle, Lingotto plant, The Faculty of Biotechnologies, Pollenzo mansion) to the use of environmental-friendly equipment and materials; and finally, the catering service – a chance to educate people to consume typical products coming from short food production chain.*

Then the positive results and the basis for the future of these activities:

The *Changing the Change* Conference started up a *Design research agenda for sustainability* on its own Web site as a reference point for trends on this topic, so offering the International Design System community a virtual discussion table and real chances to meet people in order to allow the presence of a number of different opinions: if nowadays the main actor of the Conference is the academic research, tomorrow this may be the production system (the companies), the project system (designers), service design system. Seoul, the next World Design Capital, is already being contacted for this reason.

The international Conference was organised according to sustainability, both in terms of eco-efficiency, for what we could do, and also talking about sharing spirit and quality of the accommodation and welfare provided.

Summing up the situation of research in terms of sustainability and acting as a structure model for discussion and international confrontation (but even for physical meetings, which is always important) about these topics: these were the two main goals of the Conference.

AzzeroCO2 – The preliminary phase of the Conference was designed taking into consideration the possibility to eliminate the green-house gases resulting from energy and materials consumption and due to transports and staff activities. This action was not solving the problem, but represented a sign to give a specific direction to our behaviours and those of the people who were organizing a conference or an event in Turin in those days. The initiative was led by AzzeroCO2, a society created in conjunction by Legambiente, Ambiente Italia and Kyoto Club. The selected “care” intervention regarded Piedmont local area: in specific, we invested on the reforestation of Po river park, thus restoring the indigenous flora and fauna that our river is gradually losing. Thanks to this intervention 35 tons of CO2 will be eliminated, as much as the CO2 consumed at the preliminary stage of the conference.

The locations – For humans, sustainability largely depends on the quality of the environment, the environmental - friendly one (zero impact) and the one related to the comfort and the cultural meaning of the space where people live. Therefore, we liked considering the Conference locations as a small stage where the city’s urban transformations are taking place. We selected 3 locations telling about next present/future, recent past and ancient past of Turin.

The Institute of Biotechnologies – In the next future Turin will gradually take the aspect of a post industrial city, with activities regarding advanced technological research (seven scientific/technological parks are located in Piedmont). It will also be a city hosting high level museums, a urban setting for cinema movies and a taste workshop for food. The Institute of Biotechnologies, the place where works took place, is a prestigious technological research centre, located in a new and architecturally refined building. A sustainable building, in its own way, with hard skin (armed concrete) and tender heart (internal gardens). A compact building, protected and open towards the city at the same time: just a huge glass is separating it from the chaotic streets of this multiethnic district. I was about to forget mentioning that Turin will not just be a post-industrial

city in the future, but also a multi-ethnic one.

Valentino Castle – Location of the Conference Dinner. The people from the Turin University Design scene are bound to this place as a kid is bound to his first bed. The Faculty of Architecture has been located here for one hundred years, and the Faculty of Design research for the last ten years, by now. Before giving it back to the city that deserves this place to turn it into a museum, we just wanted to let our friends get the touching chance to spend a night in a impressive and very “savoy” place. Around the big (self-made) table shaped as an arrow as the CtC symbol, there were the 350 participants and many other institutional (but not only) guests.

It was not a gala evening but an occasion to share the pleasure of being together, with “Piedmontese jazz” and typical foods selected from the Basket of products of Turin Province, a very successful initiative testing the sustainable way of short production chain and typical food product.

Lingotto – architectural complex, symbol of modernism, first industrial FIAT automotive plant and now combining a shopping mall and a leisure and multicultural centre. Many of our guests stayed at Lingotto, precisely at its Camplus, as the university residence is now called. A university residence where you can actually breath “a sustainable air”. This facility is respectful of its past and even if it was restored according to contemporary needs, this was done without upsetting the old order. Unlike the past, now it is a very bright place – the courtyards are rich in vegetation and there was a great deal of attention in preserving the old characteristics of the plant, whose main structural characteristics still recall its original function. The visible structures of armed concrete and the colours are just like they used to be: white walls and grey wainscots, including also doors and windows and rooms’ furnishing. The enamel painted wainscots, purely functional in the past, is now turned into a string running through a new tale, where beds, tables, sofas come to the surface as they were peninsulas. I may think that the sustainability community noticed these aspects, which are not just simple details, secondary things. On the contrary, these signs are peculiar characteristics of the place, with a touch of novelty in comparison with the past – for instance: the orange coloured lunge, the new presence of wood and floor materials. Architect Renzo Piano, responsible for the restoration, said, when the works began (1985), he wanted to re-create in Lingotto “an original piece of the town”.

Special occasions: free city transports, guided tours and 20 free bicycles for the participants to let them find out about the wonderful paths along the river Po.

A bicycle is the best means of transport to discover an unexpected Turin, a city on water, for example, with four rivers crossing it and natural parks.

As you may have understood, our will was to grant the participants a stay which was focused on sustainable design and international community: from the selected conference locations to the coordinate image of communication, mobility, sustainable food and locations themselves. Accommodation, services, and leisure time were set according to community spirit and values sharing.