

# Preface

In October 2023, on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Italy's first Bachelor's Degree Program in Industrial Design at Politecnico di Milano, the Department of Design, together with the School of Design and the POLI.design Consortium, inaugurated the *Design Philology* project. Dedicated to retracing the historical evolution of design as a discipline and its deep-rooted establishment at Politecnico di Milano as a field of study and research, *Design Philology* serves simultaneously as a digital archive, an editorial platform, and a medium for temporary exhibitions and hypertextual narratives. This multifaceted, open system aligns with the identity that has always characterized Italian design and its polytechnic component, making room for diverse perspectives and, at times, dialectical contributions across both theoretical-critical and practical domains. It is, in essence, a collective memory, created to honor the origins of Politecnico di Milano's Design System, the ideas that have fueled it, and the people, places, and projects that have shaped its identity.

*Design Philology* is firmly integrated within the strategic framework of the Department of Design's initiative, which in 2024, for the second

consecutive five-year term, was designated by the Ministry of University and Research as one of Italy's 180 Departments of Excellence.

This is a significant recognition – the only one awarded in this disciplinary area – granted in alignment with an ambitious development project titled *Design for Systemic Change*, aimed at enhancing its teaching and research capabilities by positioning design as a tool to address major challenges of our time.

Within this context, the *Design Philology* project plays a crucial role in strengthening the historical and cultural identity of the Department, while also serving as an essential resource to guide future decisions and actions.

The contributions of the present volume launch a new editorial plan, complementing the digital platform through the *Essays* section and introducing a critical and reflective dimension that regards history as a reservoir of identity and knowledge – a fundamental foundation for developing a mature and insightful strategic vision.

This volume marks the first in a new series, both in content and format: *Essays* represents an innovation in scientific publishing, providing theoretical-critical insights that deepen *Design Philology* platform's content, enhancing its flexible and layered nature through a system of hyperlinks for hypertextual readings that explore history and narratives in their most systemic and plural forms.

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