House and Studio Museums between Art and Design

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN STRATEGIES

Edited by
Anna Mazzanti

FrancoAngeli
DESIGN INTERNATIONAL

Design International series

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PART 3
PRACTICES

Polysemous Approach to the Spaces of *Faber*

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The D.E.SY research project (Designing Enhancement Strategies and Exhibit Systems for Italian House and Studio Museums) investigates the dwellings and workspaces of creative people, such as artists, architects and designers, here understood as *faber*, focusing on their spaces. These have already become museums or have the prospect of becoming so after the disappearance of their owners. We are going to questioning how they can be preserved, interpreted and communicated through contemporary design and curatorial strategies. In other words, in this volume we consider enhancement strategies that are currently in place or planned for this specific and highly sensitive area of cultural heritage, which has undergone extensive development in the Lombardy region from the late 19th century to the present day.

Rather than offering an exhaustive territorial survey, the research proceeds through a methodological selection of exemplary case studies, primarily in Lombardy and in particular in Milan, in order to construct tools and parameters of comparison capable of extending beyond the specific local context. Different historical, museographic and design-based approaches converge in classifying these spaces,

in exploring their narrative and experiential potential and in defining guidelines for their enhancement, both in situ and through exhibition and digital devices.

The innovation of the D.E.SY research project therefore lies not only in the proposed definition of specific typologies of dwellings and studios belonging to creative people – the *faber* – such as artists, architects and designers, analysed and ordered according to peculiar and recurring characteristics,[1] but also in the way these places, which need to be safeguarded – often already turned into museums or destined to become so – are studied and classified by the authors of this volume, all members of the D.E.SY research team, through the confluence of different competences, from art and architectural history to the multiple declinations of design.[2]

The acronym D.E.SY, which stands for *Designing Enhancement Strategies and Exhibit Systems for Italian House and Studio Museums*, already declares this specific focus on strategies of interpretation and display. Our composite and shared point of view represents an innovative factor within the rather substantial panorama of the international bibliography on the subject, since it combines historical awareness with an analysis of the expressive and narrative potential of these environments in relation to different design applications. In this sense the project situates itself within a wider debate,[3] while at the same time proposing an original analytical framework centred on typologies, vocations and the current state of the art.

The research and its outcomes focus primarily on Lombardy, the territory where the Politecnico di Milano is based and to which D.E.SY belongs, and this is not a coincidence. For historical reasons, the substantial industrial development of Milan and its surrounding context during the twentieth century increased the art market, attracted artists and activated circles and cultural networks, generating a concentration of presences and therefore of living and working spaces that contributed to making Milan's physiognomy one of the most identity-driven aspects of its modernity, which sometimes persist even as mere traces and memories, as is investigated in one of Bosoni's essays in this volume.

This book does not offer a comprehensive territorial mapping. Instead, it presents a methodological selection of exemplary case

studies used to develop guidelines and parameters for comparison that can be applied beyond local boundaries and beyond the specific practices tested by the authors. Different historical, museological and museographic approaches, together with exhibition design, digital design and design for cultural heritage, work together to identify new narrative paths and strategies for the enhancement of these spaces. This integrated perspective is still relatively rare in the international literature on the subject, which is often highly specialised and tends to address the topic through separate disciplinary lenses.

We then developed a taxonomic mapping supported by a shared data collection format that includes items of various kinds corresponding to the different disciplinary competences involved. This methodological framework, presented in detail in Alessandra Spagnoli's chapter, made it possible to highlight recurrent features linked to chronological, legal and content-related aspects of the spaces and their contents, always in relation to the creative agency of the *faber*, and to use them as a basis for subsequent historical, design and narrative investigations. The systematic investigation was aimed at highlighting the pre-eminent and recurring features connected to different chronological, legal, content-related and character factors of the spaces and their contents, naturally in relation to the creative engine of the author/user. This was a necessary preliminary process for in-depth historical investigations and was functional to the definition of guidelines for enhancement and narrative processes.

The conducted analysis showed certain prevalences that allowed us to define four typological macro-areas: House Museum, House Atelier, Atelier and Studios, and Atelier and Studios with a significant Archive component. Combined with a bibliographical review of the state of the art, this framework constituted the preliminary method for any subsequent analytical and experimental proposals concerning metaprojectual enhancement, teaching paths and design approaches.

The graphs reproduced in the volume offer a significant account of the results and of the research process. What immediately stands out is the impossibility of integrating the subject of this study into rigid categories and schematic workings, since the boundaries between categories are fluid and *wavelike*, making us aware that, beyond the need to find a systemic approach, the uniqueness of the places al-

ways prevails, as they are the fruit of the individuality of the *faber* and a testimony to his or her *magical* and individual creativity.

The challenges regarding these complex contexts range from musealisation processes to storytelling, reaching extreme cases of possible physical dismantling or the impossibility of visitor access. Alongside preservation protocols, there is therefore a need for strategies and configurations of valuation, some examples and possible modalities of which are presented in this volume. These are capable of interpreting history and activating underlying contents through updated languages, like a second skin that safeguards and communicates the density of meaning, which often does not concern a single, circumscribed memory but penetrates into the territorial fabric, demonstrating an expressive potential rooted in the context. This is also recognised as a prerequisite by various organisations, such as DEMHIST (the ICOM committee for historic house museums) and international platforms, as well as by Milanese networks and web platforms such as Storiemilanesi and MuseumCity.

We can thus distinguish two levels of *method* within the research: *history* and *practices*. In their mutual contamination, both levels gain new impetus, on the one hand for renewed art-historical reflections and, on the other, for innovative valorisation processes on several fronts, both inside and outside the *faber*'s spaces, and across different narrative registers of staging or reconstruction, from analogue to digital.

In the museographic and museological fields, attention has focused on emblematic reference models such as the concepts of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and *Wunderkammer*, understood as original archetypes for the *faber*'s intention to shape his or her living and working space. The essays address the transformations of this model during the twentieth century and the various techniques of transformation into a museum and display. Whether they are based on direct or indirect reconstruction, more or less philological, and more or less integrated into the philosophy of the project and into the identity of the *faber* and his or her ideal ecosystem.

An eloquent narrative tool for investigating artists' spaces is the photographic documentation and its expressive filter, analysed in this book in its multiple layers of meaning (see Capurro's chapter).

Photography is in fact an essential source for studying the artist's studio after the disappearance or transformation of the space; at the same time, the photographer's eye can mediate and *filter* the studio's authenticity through his or her interpretation, providing further tools and levels of meaning for the study of this subject.

Enhancement strategies can be strengthened by exploring to what extent the *faber*'s places act as identity elements within their surroundings, and how they survive as distinctive traces after their disappearance, within a dense network of urban intersections, particularly in Milan, between art and design, between workspaces and domestic spaces that also function as places of aggregation (see Bosoni's chapter). At the same time, taxonomic mapping (see Spagnoli's chapter) has made it possible to examine innovative practices of valorisation and exhibition narrative for these spaces, starting from the analysis of languages and from an understanding of the values underlying the processes activated by the *fabers* themselves when they set up their own environments (see Trocchianesi's chapter).

These contributions highlight creative and design characteristics analysed from various historical perspectives (see Bosoni's and Capurro's chapters), from museographic points of view (see Di Prete and Spagnoli's chapter) and through different design applications. As a starting point, these investigations provide a shared basis for analysis and for identifying and testing design-driven enhancement practices, such as the eloquence of archives in display (see Lecce's chapter) and the narrative potential of digital media (see Ceconello's, Sciannamè and Spallazzo's chapters).

The theme of reconstruction runs throughout the volume as a strategy of staging and self-definition carried out by the *fabers* themselves, or as a process of staging capable of restoring or amplifying memory by means of different techniques of display and storytelling. This includes the experiments undertaken by D.E.SY in 2019, also through teaching workshops, which led to metadesign outcomes (see Trocchianesi's chapter).

The volume, therefore, brings together examples of different storytelling strategies: integration into the composite and dense fabric of the *faber*'s spaces; processes of decoding and exhibition recon-

struction through integrated enhancement tools and *light* digital or analogue devices (see Ceconello's, Lecce's, Sciannamè and Spallazzo's chapters); and processes guided by the restitution of the *aura* of places within exhibition spaces (see Trocchianesi's and Bosoni's chapters). The intersection between theory, history and praxis, straddling museology and museography, finds a particularly effective field of application in the Milanese context, focusing on certain unique and complex spaces and situations – such as Franco Albini's studio or the Fornasetti and Duilio Forte house-ateliers (see Lecce's and Di Prete and Spagnoli's chapters) – which have given rise to exemplary enhancement processes on several fronts.

The archives preserved in Studio Albini offer, in a prototypical way, an example of the central role of documentation in a design studio, condensing in a single place drawings, photographs, documents, models, prototypes, books, periodicals and even some recently discovered 8mm films shot by Albini himself (see Lecce's chapter). This valuable and comprehensive body of material has encouraged the creation of a digital extension, accessible through The Virtual Museum of Franco Albini's Temporary Exhibitions (https://www.exposizioni.com/). Pietro and Barnaba Fornasetti and Duilio Forte share the construction of spatial projects that contain a dense and intricate palimpsest of motifs, interweaving times and spaces of living and working: total spaces, built in different periods and with different vocations, by *paradigmatic examples of artists/artisans* (see Di Prete and Spagnoli's chapter).

The overall aim is to outline the figure of the *faber* in his or her inseparable relationship with the environments: how closely the *faber* is connected to the spaces from which so many narratives arise, taking the form of physical, three-dimensional and, at best, immersive self-portraits. Reconstructions and processes of museification often generate shifts in identity, which are critically reflected upon in these pages and which the valuation practices discussed here seek to negotiate and overcome. Beyond postmodern processes of spectacular appropriation, the intent is to develop philological narrative restitutions using up-to-date and non-invasive attitudes and tools which do not imply appropriation or commodification of images.

If these special places (houses and ateliers) are *authors in potential*, a three-dimensional expansion of the creative figure who generated them and inscribed there his or her own thought and point of view on the world, they can be considered, as has often been said, vital microcosms. Their *forger* – hence the full significance of the term *faber* chosen by the D.E.SY group – is thus defined as an actor and self-designer. His or her attitude to combine ideas and concrete processes becomes a neuralgic, cross-cutting point of encounter among the competences of all the researchers involved and consequently a valid research device for attempting to grasp the nature and the *aura* of these places, that means its *genius loci*.

It is precisely the uniqueness of the *faber*'s space and its value as a resistant memory of its exceptional author that condense that auroral value which philosophers from Walter Benjamin to Theodor W. Adorno[4] have seen as being at least partly weakened in the work of art in the modern era. The distance of which Benjamin speaks remains a constant perception in the experience of these environments, which simultaneously awaken a sense of proximity with those who inhabited them and with the very things that compose them. We could, therefore, call them auroral spaces par excellence today. Physical presences contribute to this, but perhaps even more so do traces and absences – such as missing paintings on the walls or the tangible physical gap left by the *faber* – which photographers often know how to emphasize (see Capurro's chapter), or intermediate traces such as the pictorial or sculptural marks of the artists: the evidence of colour and form that covered the walls of Bacon's and Giacometti's studios and has been philologically transported into their reconstructions in museum settings.

Elsewhere, traces have vanished, lost through an inevitable museographic *cleaning*, so that only photographic series taken in real and still active places can preserve them. One realises, then, how much these traces were identity elements of the aura, in this case hic et nunc, that is, a singular and unrepeatable presence that the photographic reproducibility has preserved only as historical evidence.[5] For example, one may think of the distinctive and meaningful plaster dust of Brancusi's and Giacometti's ateliers, now absent from the musealised spaces in accordance with accessibility rules: in the

Brancusi studio reconstructed in its specific components and lighting but seemingly *bleached* and fixed within a museographic standard, and in the Giacometti studio staged as a lowered scene reminiscent of a Greek amphitheatre, which produces an almost anti-Giacometti effect.[6] As for what has not yet found its way to being re-staged, who knows if and how the acrid smell of Enzo Mari's smoke will be evoked as an integral part of his now disused and disappeared space of creation (see Bosoni's chapter).

Absences and presences of objects with remarkable narrative potential thus contribute to reactivating the unified story of the *faber* and his workshop, his special forging action. The places of the *faber* are therefore outlined as osmotic environments, privileged passages through which to enter into a relationship with the life and ideas that have passed there, through tangible traces of immersion together with allusive potentials that can be articulated through strategies of valorisation, preservation and exhibition.

A myriad of tangible documents – a puzzle of experiences, ideals, artistic values and everyday life – in short, a dense narrative weave, partly emerged and partly submerged, keeps alive the virtual presence, the memory, of the *faber*. For this reason, the chronological span considered by the research presented in this volume concerns almost exclusively places whose authors are no longer alive, with only a few exceptions in which the *fabers* themselves – for example, Piero and later Barnaba Fornasetti in their Casa-studio, or Duilio Forte – have shown that they wish to safeguard their narrative worlds.

Each element, as has been said, is a thought in potency, the "body of an intention" (Galimberti, 1987, as cited in Orsini, 2012, p. 55), a kind of singular and meaningful "synthesis between the outside and the inside, between the mental and the corporeal" (Orsini, 2012, p. 13), since a subtle link persists between everything that constitutes these places and their owner. The assumption on memory by Benjamin is thus at work here: "form and content, custody and custodian are the same thing" (Benjamin, 2006, p. 105, from Berlin Childhood, around 1900), fragments of history of a given duration that return a multifaceted and three-dimensional self-portrait to be crossed and understood by immersing oneself in it.

Such spaces bring with them the experiential tangibility of poetics and aesthetic ideals, of tastes and collecting practices; the relationships that exist between things, and between things and spaces, take on a moral identity, that of a complex and accomplished universe. It is therefore vital, in the second phase of the life of these places, after the disappearance of the *faber* and their possible inheritance by new creative figures who autonomously prolong the activity (as in the case of the Piero and later Barnaba Fornasetti house-studio), to study and implement, first of all, appropriate strategies of preservation, but also of valorisation and documentation. These aspects often intertwine to the point of envisaging virtual reconstructions of what has been lost – though not entirely – and of which documents, objects and places may still be repositories.

In order to identify the most suitable enhancement and storytelling practices that help to make this underlying process manifest, a dialogue between different skills is therefore indispensable: historical awareness and knowledge, design potential and technologies. Augmented reality and virtual regeneration processes, up to the most recent frontiers of AI, can support storytelling not only in the total reconstruction of vanished places – which was not the focus of this research, focusing on houses and ateliers that are still present, even if not necessarily evolved into a museum – but also in more targeted narrative actions. These can become tools for innovative and non-invasive narratives designed to communicate the *second life* of these spaces, accompanying their transition from places of making and production to places of reactivated memory. At the same time, this volume also presents strategies of staging based on non-intrusive analogue devices, tested both in the spaces under investigation and in other exhibition contexts to which their contents have been transposed.

Among these experiences are the Virtual Museum of Franco Albini's fittings (see Lecce's chapter); the SIRBeC digitalisation and cataloguing processes promoted by the Lombardy Region with the technical contribution of Politecnico di Milano, which have made it possible, for example, to document and communicate the working methods of Castiglioni and Sacchi, from the wooden models preserved in Giovanni Sacchi's workshop – now the Sacchi Archive – to the finished objects

integrated into the rich furnishings of the Castiglioni Studio (see Ceconello's chapter); and the Interior and Interaction Design project Genius Loci, developed for the Bagatti Valsecchi Museum in Milan to reactivate the spirit of the house, including the figure of its fabers and the concrete results of their work, through user-engagement strategies (see Sciannamè and Spallazzo's chapters). Genius Loci was the forerunner of the current immersive Wunderkammer project, based on augmented reality. Created with the support of Fondazione Cariplo, it allows visitors to explore the archives of the Bagatti Valsecchi Museum through a dedicated web app. In this way, certain elements of the House come to life and evoke the past through narrating voices and the visualisation of items not on display.[7]

It is also worth recalling the methodological experiments in staging carried out by D.E.SY, aimed at testing the potential of strongly connoted *faber* spaces in close dialogue with their archival materials and with the expanded value that these acquire in the environment as site-specific content that becomes a narrative of the surrounding space. This is the case in the exhibition Di Studio in Studio (MuseumCity, 2019), where a photographic series by Enrico Cattaneo dedicated to the studios of numerous artists in and around Milan found an inevitable *contamination* and intensification of meaning within Marieda Di Stefano's disused ceramic atelier. Even the project The Atelier as Living Nature, where archival images of three exemplary *faber* studios – Fondazione Albini, Fondazione Castiglioni, Studio Mario Negri – were presented and specifically and differentially installed inside the studios themselves, encouraging closer observation and revealing the original aura of the places, taking the visitor on a journey through time and as an eloquent narration of these spaces as a true *living nature*.[8] It was a fruitful exhibition experience of visual setting, seeking to interpret the characteristics of the three ateliers by retracing, through archival images, the historical stratification of the same spaces as traces of practices and life. In this way, the archive has been used as an activator of memories and a stimulus for visitors, without invading the rooms, but rather in a carefully calibrated balance designed to trigger their specific features and provoke questions.

The cooperation between the historian, who explores and understands the thought and processes of the *faber*, and the keen eye of

those who *must know how to show* thus becomes an indispensable operational condition. This book is grounded in that assumption, putting it into practice through shared micro-actions and laboratory experiences, as well as through prior and parallel methodological and theoretical research articulated in multiple registers.

For the most part, existing bibliography has focused on dialogues among peers, either within art historians and museological researchers (resulting in various conference proceedings for example at Possagno (Guderzo, 2010, 2014) and Vela ateliers, or at Volpedo by Huttinger (1992), as well in the research studies by Zuliani and her team at Salerno University); on the other hand, by architecture historians of spaces (De Poli, Piccinelli and their school), or on specific design applications. The ambition of this volume is therefore not to offer an exhaustive treatment of the topic, but rather to present a research path whose outcomes are the product of a sustained dialogue among different competences, stimulating towards new questions and further interdisciplinary developments.

Notes

Note 1.
Previous classifications of house and studio museums were developed in particular within DEMHIST, the ICOM committee devoted to historic house museums, and in numerous studies with predominantly historical and architectural-conservation perspectives. Among the Italian contributions are works by Pavoni and Zanni on house museums in Milan, as well as research on the transformation of house-ateliers into museums and on the conservation of artists' and collectors' spaces (for example De Poli & Piccinelli, 2006; Pavoni, 2008, 2009; Zuliani, 2013; De Marco, 2014; Gamboni, 2020; Hall, 2022). In contrast, the classification proposed in this volume combines historical awareness with an analysis of the expressive and narrative potential of these environments across multiple design applications and typologies, also in dialogue with French approaches to the "semantic flexibility" of the atelier (Lafont, 2014).

Note 2.
The D.E.SY research team was established thanks to a 2017 FARB basic research grant and is composed of scholars from different disciplines within the Interior Design and Interaction Design programmes of the Department of Design at Politecnico di Milano.

Note 3.
Much of the existing bibliography has focused on dialogues among specialists within art-historical and architectural-historical domains, including case studies on historic ateliers and house museums, conferences on artists' houses such as Volpedo, and research on the history and museography of artists' and collectors' spaces (for example De Poli & Piccinelli, 2006; Pavoni, 2008, 2009; Dessi & Testore, 2014, 2015,

2017; Zuliani, 2013). The ambition of this volume is not to provide an exhaustive survey of that tradition, but rather to expand it by integrating those perspectives with design-led approaches and experimental practices.

Note 4.
Giuseppe Di Giacomo, La questione dell'aura tra Benjamin e Adorno, *Rivista di estetica*, 52, 2013, pp. 235-256, proposes a reading of the notion of "aura" that highlights both convergences and divergences between Walter Benjamin's and Theodor W. Adorno's positions, showing how the concept is partially reconfigured rather than simply lost in the age of technical reproducibility.

Note 5.
This topic therefore becomes an exemplary case for understanding how, for philosophers from Benjamin (1966) onwards, the age of the technical reproducibility of the work of art represents a specific historical phase rather than the definitive disappearance of aura. Di Giacomo's analysis shows that aura is transformed and relocated rather than completely cancelled.

Note 6.
Brancusi's works now on display, clean and cleared of the layer of plaster that had made the forms appear more epidermal in the diffused light of the skylights, while in similar way Giacometti's studio painted walls have lost their aspect of traces of work to become artistic witnesses and absolute works of art in the presence of museum visitors.

Note 7.
See https://www.museobagattivalsecchi.org/it/visita.

Note 8.
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PART 1

Methods and Theories

1. The Architect and Designer's *Laboratory*. Methods and Tools for Exhibiting the Places of Design Culture

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1.1 Enhancing Time and Places

Turning a place, space, and interior originally inhabited as the home of an illustrious person (artist, a person of letters, collector, intellectual, scientist, politician, poet, etc.) into a museum requires special consideration when compared to creating a new museum space. Such planning must consider not only the presence of significant objects and works, but above all, it must be able to *exhibit*, communicate and stage the *life* of those who inhabited these places. The project should respect the essence and spirit imprinted by the inhabitants of that physical space through a continuous and slow permeation of a particular internal *skin*, a sort of patina, made up of valuable things related to the cultural spirit, to be *fused* together as parts of a whole.

The *house museum* is commonly defined as the collector's house, from which the founding principle of the modern museum concept originates. In this specific context, several solutions have already been studied and practised, which constitute an important reference repertoire for this particular and increasingly extended museographic field.

1.2 The Museographic Issue

The museographic issue we are dealing with here is more specific and delicate. This is due to the place of the so-called artistic and design *faber*, i.e. the ateliers, the professional studios of artists, architects and designers, where research, vision and production of creative *making* has been concentrated. The creative *production* has been expressed in very different forms, solidifying itself through a character of the place made up of things, shadows, gestures, and signs. Altogether, the character of the place is the surviving substance, the impalpable aura, of an inventive spirit that has created its works there.

In this regard, the question then arises: how should we use the tools of the exhibition design within this kind of place?

Traditionally, we have communitive elements and tools (graphics, videos, projections), display elements (showcases, tables, notice boards, support panels), service elements (movement inhibitors, signs, various types of partitions to define and structure the visitors' space) and environmental control systems (lighting, audio, climate-temperature/humidity). More recently, various mobile and remote devices have added and supported various immersive virtual reality and informative digital systems.

In light of all these elements, other more specific questions arise: which procedures, methods and protocols should be used to introduce visitors to these places? In which way does it actually mean to *bring alive* a place, as if it were still in use, allowing the visitor to feel immersed in the creative atmosphere of that place? In what way and how is it possible to allow the visitor to have an interactive connection with the place, being able to immerse him/herself in the direct experience of certain materials?

It is very difficult to give a one-size-fits-all answer to these questions. The peculiarities of the various and numerous places of intellectual, artistic and design activity are too heterogenous to recommend a single museographic approach type. Moreover, the personalities and the so-called *spiritualities*, of the various illustrious people, who were active inhabitants of these spaces, and infused, imbued and marked by their creative imprint, are usually quite diverse. Therefore, even considering the delicacy of this artistic and design spirit *floating*

in the air, it is very difficult to conceive even the physical invasion of a visitor in such distinctive places. Sometimes the *vis creativa*, i.e. the creative force, of these environments appears to be interrupted, as if fixed in a precise historical *still image*, in which it seems hard to intervene. Indeed, one is led to consider packing everything into a glass case to observe all content from the outside. The exhibits appear almost in a vacuum, or suspended in a particular micro-environmental solution, that is fragile and likely to dissolve into nothingness due to the spirit of the place.

However, it is possible to recognise some fundamental constants in these environments of making: they are places where the practice of the creative act is linked to tools, objects and spaces that are specific to that mastery and profession. Thus, it is important to verify the possibility of keeping alive, activating or reactivating this creative character. For example, there are legendary places of the *faber*, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's studios in Spring Green, Wisconsin (1911), and Scottsdale, Arizona (1937), which are still active as design schools today; or in Milan, Italy where there are some emblematic cases, such as the Fondazione Castiglioni, based in the studio of the brothers Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, where certain design and creative components are kept alive within the studio. There is also the Franco Albini Foundation, which is very active in several areas and where the *historical space* coincides with the activity of a design studio that is still fully operating by Albini's son and grandson. It is also true that these conditions are rare and difficult to apply to other situations that are not as structured and heterogeneous in terms of the equipment, accessibility, and intersections of personalities that cross them and continue to nurture their history. However, this option of effectively bringing the place to life as a continuous expression of the original creative spirit through the creation of didactic and seminar opportunities. This is certainly a very interesting museographic model of interaction to be considered. Here the immersion of the visitor-user is almost total, and the problem of the exhibition design is to *filter*, with very precise devices, informative aspects and permeability of certain areas or specific objects with calibrated distancing and dissuading elements.

1.3 Close-up on Relevant Case Studies

A few examples will help us to grasp the variety of these spatial and cultural situations. Also, in the Milanese and Lombardy area, it is worth considering the recent loss of some of the leading figures in the history of architecture and design at the world level, such as Vittorio Gregotti and Enzo Mari. Both of their workspaces became landmarks for the international design culture and crossroads of many important entrepreneurial and public interest initiatives.

Which destinies will these places have? With Gregotti we also have the concrete realisation of one of his works, namely the renovation of a beautiful historic furnace dating back to the end of the 19th century into a modern studio. This space was also considered futuristic at the time. A few hundred metres away there is Enzo Mari's studio, which for decades remained unchanged within the space on the third-floor apartment of an austere early twentieth-century building, overlooking one of Milan's most Parisian squares. At the height of its splendour, the Gregotti Associati studio employed around 80 architects and designers. It was perhaps the first major Italian design studio of international calibre (from architecture to furniture design, from urban planning to exhibit design, from graphics to the interiors of transatlantic cruises). Enzo Mari's studio had a decidedly more artisanal spirit with a maximum of 4-5 people working at the same time. But Mari had only one collaborator working with him on the projects, usually for long periods at a time. These two realities would already be a good test to verify the narrative of possibilities evoked by these places full of very important and fascinating stories.

How to evoke the atmosphere of rhythms, inspirations, rituals and environmental features typical of those activities? Gregotti's was frenetic, participatory, mundane and highly relational, while Enzo Mari's was introverted, meditative, calm and committed. Certainly, a concept for enhancing the value of these places should start from these environmental *climates*, dictated by the personalities around whom everything revolved. These environments, or *atmospheres*, should also be recounted with the sounds, voices and noises that accompanied and marked the rhythms of those creative vitalities. Every sign is important to be reported: the traces left on the wall or on the floor by

the continuous making of drawings and models, the smoke of Enzo Mari's Toscano cigar, the sound of the bunch of keys that Gregotti always wore hanging from a belt loop in his trousers. Other parts about the atmosphere could include the long discussions in studio, the reasoning out loud, the silent reflections, often at night, that filled those places of design, comparison, elaboration and transmission of ideas in the *faber*.

1.4 Atmosphere Concept Integrated into Design Practice

The concept of *atmosphere* becomes particularly sensitive and relevant in this narrative/exhibition context. In this regard, every tool and device proposed in this kind of environment to introduce and guide the visitor must be arranged for a potential *immersive virtual reality effect*. Thus, with the appropriate mix, this helps to revive the authentic and forgotten sensations of these places. What tools and devices are needed for such an *immersive virtual reality*?

Certainly, there are the technological/multimedia ones that can be used for some visual and sound involvements, and of course, they can also refer to other spaces and places, if necessary. However, it is important to remember that there are still valuable traditional approaches in which we can rediscover the effectiveness of the basic instruments of the art of display. This might include structures, frames, grids upon which diaphanous veils can be tied, light diffusers, impalpable membranes that allow us to see without disturbing the echo of *time that has stopped*, etc.

Always think of Franco Albini's brilliant lines when describing the qualities of a good display, meant as *porgere*, i.e. *giving to*, the object of the display:

> **It is sometimes fundamental for the success and interest of the exhibition to detach the visitor from external reality and introduce him into an environment with a special atmosphere, which helps him to concentrate his attention on the works on display and sharpens his sensitivity, without causing him fatigue. The exhibition installation**

> **must draw the visitor into its play: it must create the most suitable atmosphere around the works to enhance them without ever overshadowing them. The architecture [in this case, Franco Albini means the exhibition systems and its elements] must mediate between the public and the exhibits. It must enhance the environment as a powerful element of suggestion for the visitor. (Albini, 1954)**

Here, Albini stresses the importance of the *background*, the environmental context, which must be absorbed and controlled by the exhibition layout almost more than the *figure*, in this case intended as the *design elements* added by the designer. "In order to achieve this result", Albini continues, "it is necessary, in my opinion, to adopt spatial solutions rather than plastic ones: it is necessary to create architectural spaces and to emphasise the existing ones, linking them in an absolute unity with the displayed works". In this passage, Albini claims, no doubt, the most intense and essential concept of his research: "In my view, it is precisely the voids that need to be built, air and light being the construction materials. The atmosphere must not be still, stagnant, but vibrate, and the public must find itself immersed and stimulated, without noticing it" (Albini, 1954).

1.5 Narrative Immersion

This type of narrative immersion should be sought to bring the visitor closer to and resonate with the spirits that wander in the places of the cultural and artistic *faber* that still survive being crystallised in time. To reinforce this immersive and stimulating value, which helps us to perceive the *quid*, the essence and the understanding of the place, the great modern scholar Walter Benjamin's fine analytical sensitivity comes to mind, inviting one to reflect on the fact that perhaps the visitor is not expected to leave the exhibition feeling learned, but smarter (Korff in Dorrian, 2014). This means that we should practice *reviving* these places that have hosted and influenced the creation of art and design to restore, and perhaps continuously disseminate, the essential significance of *good research* and a perspective that goes beyond everyday boundaries and limits.

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2. Towards a Taxonomy of *Faber*'s Spaces: Milan and the Lombardy Region

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2.1 Research Boundaries and Trajectories

Since the 1950s, the Lombardy region, with Milan at its centre, has been an undisputed hub of production and cultural consumption. This region has nourished itself and been transformed through its proximity to a robust entrepreneurial tradition. From this interplay of creativity and pragmatism, an orientation towards innovation and experimentation has emerged, deeply anchored in present needs yet oriented towards future potential. This has fostered an economic, social, and cultural substratum that has enabled and sustained the presence of individuals predisposed to the act of creation. This act of creation – artistic, cultural, and design-driven – has served as a continuous thread, marking the private and professional trajectories of numerous figures associated with the creative sector. These individuals, collectively referred to as *faber*, embody a transformative capacity, utilising their ability to reshape reality and bring new dimensions of the world into existence (Bergson, 2012).

The *faber* encompass a wide array of artists and planners, such as painters, sculptors, designers, architects, and model makers. These creative figures have invested their languages and imaginative capacities not only in their artistic outputs, products, artefacts, and designs, but also in the spaces where they lived and worked. Their influence manifests both in their works and in their personal living environments, which serve as reflections of their creative processes and transformational abilities.

Within this framework, the D.E.SY research project (*Designing Enhancement Strategies and Exhibit Systems for the Italian House Museums and Studios*)[1] was conceived. This research initiative, as a foundational component of the broader programme, conducted an extensive mapping of faber spaces within Lombardy, covering the period from the late 19th century to contemporary times. The research was structured across three levels of action, employing a critical-analytical and meta-design approach:

- *Phase One: Exploratory Research*
  This phase involved the identification of faber spaces, the definition of analytical parameters, and the formulation of an initial typological taxonomy and clustering hypothesis.
- *Phase Two: Field Research and Case Study Analysis*
  Running concurrently with the first phase, this stage involved a combination of field research and case study analysis. It focused on testing and refining a multi-level, multi-perspective analytical model, ultimately enabling the identification of the unique identities, peculiarities, and cultural dimensions of the spaces.
- *Phase Three: Meta-Design and Scenario Development*
  This final phase concentrated on the elaboration of future scenarios and the experimental implementation of innovative engagement models for these spaces.

Before initiating the mapping activity, the scope of the research was carefully delineated in terms of temporal and geographic boundaries, as well as the subjects involved. The region under consideration was defined as Lombardy, with a specific emphasis on the city of Milan. The timeframe extended from the late 19th century to the 21st century, enabling the inclusion of contexts and phenomena that have been

only partially explored in related studies (cf. Pavoni & Zanni, 2005; De Poli & Piccinelli, 2006; Pavoni, 2009; Sammicheli & Mainoli, 2018). This approach was designed to integrate historical, museographical, and design perspectives within a multidisciplinary research framework aimed at cultural enhancement.

The concept of *faber* was refined to include creative personalities – artists and planners such as painters, sculptors, designers, architects, and illustrators – whose material transformations have left a tangible mark on their living or working spaces. These places, having been inhabited and shaped through processes of transformation, appropriation, and rootedness (Buttimer, 1980; Tuan, 1980; Casey, 1997), remain accessible today for interpretation and engagement.[2] However, spaces that no longer exist, have lost their original function, or lack substantial evidence of their former state (e.g., through documents or photographs) were excluded. Conversely, the research included public and private spaces, whether institutionalised or informal, musealised or not, that retain physical or experiential traces of the *faber*. This inclusive approach sought to open a broad horizon for cultural discovery and promotion.

This taxonomic phase employed two complementary research methods: desk-based research and field-based investigation. Desk research provided the foundational understanding of the *faber*'s activities, their works, and the cultural significance of their spaces. Field research involved visits to these spaces, enabling researchers to document and analyse their characteristics through direct experience. These visits were supplemented with photographic documentation and semi-structured interviews conducted with the *faber* themselves, their heirs, or curators responsible for preserving these spaces.

As a result, the research mapped over 30 sites across Lombardy, including house museums, ateliers, studios, and laboratories (Figure 1). While this mapping does not claim to be exhaustive, it reflects the richness, diversity, and complexity inherent in the subject. Geographically, it highlights a high density of interest within Milan, as anticipated in the study's premises. Moreover, the mapping revealed a wide spectrum of approaches and attitudes, both in how the *faber* engaged with their spaces and in how these spaces have been preserved, valued, and made accessible to the public.

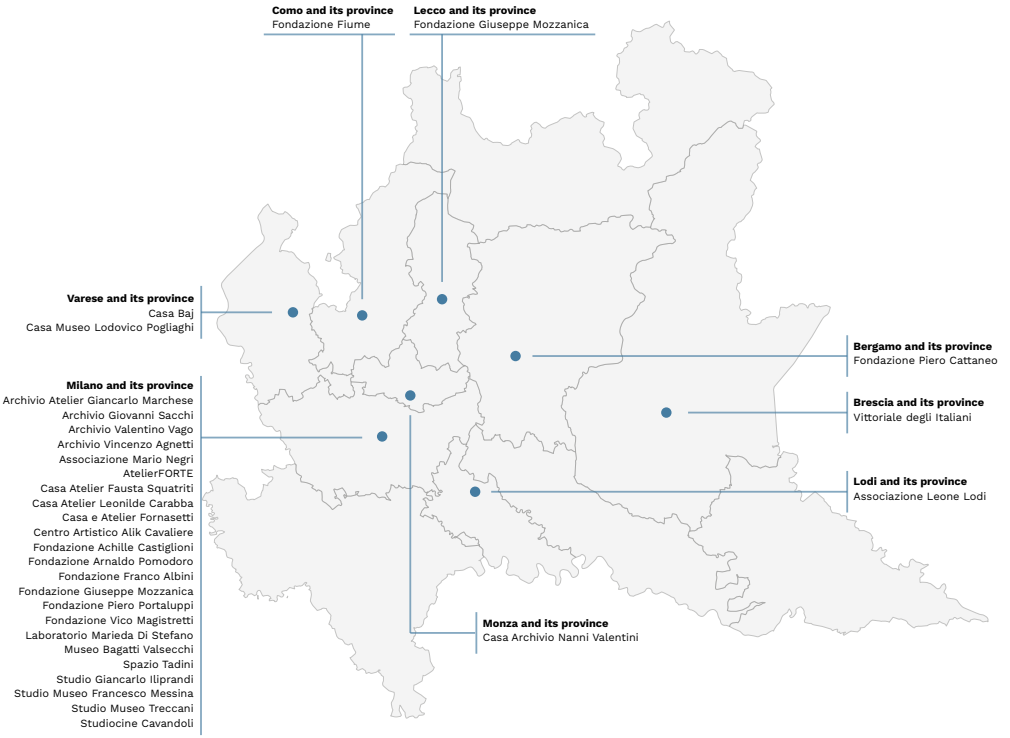

Figure 1.
Geography of mapped *faber*'s places in Lombardy region (author's elaboration).

To analyse the case studies, the research employed a descriptive-analytical framework, serving a dual purpose: as a tool for the pre- and meta-coding of the fundamental characteristics of each case, and as a means of disseminating the analysis within the research team.

The framework was structured as follows:

- General Information: A detailed "ID card" for the space, providing basic descriptive data.
- Profile of the Faber: A focused account of the faber's activities, artistic philosophy, and works.
- Relationship Between Faber and Space: An exploration of the dynamic interplay between past interventions, present functions, and future possibilities for valorisation.

This framework was further enriched by photographic surveys and targeted bibliographical references, creating a substantial corpus of semi-structured research material. These resources facilitated knowledge sharing within the research group and provided a robust foundation for networking with stakeholders and the wider scientific community.

2.2 The *Faber*'s Living Spaces: A Taxonomic Proposal

From the research, analysis, and mapping of the realities present in the Lombardy area – but with particular attention also to national and international experiences, even if not included in the census – emerged a proposal for a taxonomic classification. This classification is functional to the identification of macro-categories within the context of houses and ateliers/studios that are already musealised or that have shown potential for a museographic vocation. The proposed classification considered the original function or destination of the *faber*'s spaces, reinterpreting them through a lens that highlights the complex coexistence of museographic vocation, current activities, and strategies for present and future valorisation. Moreover, the proposed taxonomic mapping forms part of a consolidated scenario of interest and scientific investigation that has seen the proliferation of studies and research into the theme of places of creation (cf. Zuliani, 2013; Dessi & Testore, 2014, 2015, 2017). These approaches explore the systems of relationships and interferences between work and space, address issues related to processes of reconstruction and transfer, delve into the material and immaterial heritage of artistic and design-making, and examine the systems of relationships with the surrounding territorial context.

By way of example, within the Italian context, the typological issue has been addressed through various perspectives. On one hand, there is an explicitly architectural approach that focuses on different ways of inhabiting spaces of creation (De Poli & Piccinelli, 2006). On the other hand, and particularly within the studies and research proposed by DEMHIST,[3] there is a museographic approach aimed at defining a classification system for house-museums (Pavoni, 2008). Within this complex framework, the taxonomic classification proposed by the D.E.SY research project aims to reinterpret the original function or destination of these places, considering their intrinsic nature and/or their current museographic and exhibit vocation. It places less emphasis on rigid distinctions aimed at highlighting *faber* typologies in favour of a more fluid reflection on valorisation models.

Consequently, four broad and heterogeneous categories have emerged in terms of their internal composition: *House Museum*, *House Atelier*, *Atelier and Studios*, and, finally, *Atelier and Studios with a significant Archive component* (Figure 2). This proposal underlines the importance of including, within necessarily broad typological families, a dual focus: first, an essential attention to the housing models adopted, and second, a detailed interest in the strategies of valorisation either currently in act or in progress. These strategies aim to demonstrate specific orientations and practical implications, particularly from the perspective of models of public engagement, exhibition systems, narrative approaches, didactic activities, and related practices.

The proposed taxonomic classification outlines four overarching macro-types:

- The *House Museum* is a prominent type of living space that, through the language of its inhabitant, conveys "implications of a society, an era, an artistic period that would otherwise be irretrievably lost" (Pavoni, 2008, p. 2). These are spaces that represent a private individual, and through processes of protection and enhancement implemented in varying forms and models – now consolidated – become public and take on educational and didactic purposes. As Pavoni (2008) notes, "A house – in a more or less obvious, more or less veiled and formal way – is still the 'form', the shell of the history of those who wanted, built, furnished, [and] lived in that house. [...] A heritage made up of things, gestures, spaces, people, which could be shown off or hidden, but which remained a private and personal invention" (p. 2). The House Museum, in this sense, becomes a laboratory for experimenting with practices and strategies that convert domestic and personal spaces into environments capable of dialoguing with a large and diverse audience. By portraying the private, such spaces narrate dimensions that are simultaneously intimate and creative, individual and collective. Notable examples include Casa Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, which combines a collector's spirit with the propensity to transform and model spaces, and Casa Museo Ludovico Pogliaghi and Spazio Tadini, which exemplify differing attitudes to the transmission of artistic heritage.

	Space	Faber	Location	Website
House Museum	**Museo Bagatti Valsecchi**	Fausto e Giuseppe Bagatti Valsecchi	Via Gesù, 5 Milano	www.museobagattivalsecchi.org
	Casa Museo Lodovico Pogliaghi	Lodovico Pogliaghi	Via Beata Giuliana, 5 Santa Maria del Monte (Varese)	www.casamuseopogliaghi.it
	Spazio Tadini	Emilio Tadini	Via Niccolò Jommelli, 24 Milano	www.spaziotadini.it
	Vittoriale degli Italiani	Gabriele D'Annunzio	Via Vittoriale, 12 Gardone Riviera (Brescia)	www.vittoriale.it
House Atelier	**Casa Baj**	Enrico Baj	Varese	
	Casa Atelier Leonilde Carabba	Leonilde Carabba	Via Lodovico Il Moro, 133 Milano	www.leonildecarabba.it
	Fondazione Fiume	Salvatore Fiume	Via Alessandro Verza, 68 Canzo (Como)	www.fiume.org
	Casa e Atelier Fornasetti	Piero e Barnaba Fornasetti	Via Antonio Bazzini, 12 Milano	www.fornasetti.com
	AtelierFORTE	Duilio Forte	Via Arcangelo Corelli, 34 Milano	www.atelierforte.com
	Casa Atelier Fausta Squatriti	Fausta Squatriti	Milano	www.faustasquatriti.com
Atelier and Studio	**Laboratorio di ceramica Marieda Di Stefano**	Marieda Di Stefano	Via Giorgio Jan, 15 Milano	www.fondazioneboschidistefano.it
	Fondazione Piero Cattaneo	Piero Cattaneo	Via Silvio Pellico, 20 Bergamo	www.pierocattaneo.org
	Centro Artistico Alik Cavaliere	Alik Cavaliere	Via Edmondo de Amicis, 17 Milano	www.alikcavaliere.it
	Studiocine Cavandoli	Osvaldo Cavandoli	Via Giuseppe Prina, 10 Milano	www.studiocinecavandoli.com
	Studio Giancarlo Iliprandi	Giancarlo Iliprandi	Via Vallazze, 63 Milano	
	Associazione Leone Lodi	Leone Lodi	Soresina (Lodi)	www.leonelodi.it
	Archivio Atelier Giancarlo Marchese	Giancarlo Marchese	Via Lodovico Muratori, 34 Milano	www.giancarlomarchese.com
	Studio Museo Francesco Messina	Francesco Messina	Via San Sisto, 4 Milano	www.fondazionemessina.it
	Associazione Mario Negri per la scultura	Mario Negri	Via Antonio Stoppani, 7 Milano	www.marionegri.org
	Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro	Arnaldo Pomodoro	Via Vigevano, 3 Milano	www.fondazionearnaldopomodoro.it
Atelier and Studio / Archive	**Archivio Vincenzo Agnetti**	Vincenzo Agnetti	Via Niccolò Macchiavelli, 30 Milano	www.vincenzoagnetti.com
	Fondazione Franco Albini	Franco Albini	Via Bernardino Telesio, 13 Milano	www.fondazionefrancoalbini.com
	Archivio Osvaldo Borsani	Osvaldo Borsani	Via San Michele, 1 Varedo (Milano)	www.osvaldoborsani.com
	Fondazione Achille Castiglioni	Achille e Pier Giacomo Castiglioni	Piazza Castello, 27 Milano	www.fondazioneachillecastiglioni.it
	Fondazione studio museo Vico Magistretti	Vico Magistretti	Via Vincenzo Bellini, 1 Milano	www.vicomagistretti.it
	Fondazione Giuseppe Mozzanica	Giuseppe Mozzanica	Via Vicolo chiuso, 5 Merate (Lecco)	www.fondazionegiuseppemozzanica.it
	Fondazione Piero Portaluppi	Piero Portaluppu	Via Morozzo Della Rocca, 5 Milano	www.portaluppi.org
	Archivio Giovanni Sacchi (Spazio MIL)	Giovanni Sacchi	Via Luigi Granelli, 1 Sesto San Giovanni (Milano)	www.archiviosacchi.it
	Studio Museo Treccani (Fondazione Corrente)	Ernesto Treccani	Via Carlo Porta, 5 Milano	www.fondazionecorrente.org
	Archivio Valentino Vago	Valentino Vago	Via Ulisse Aldovrandi, 7 Milano	www.archiviovalentinovago.it
	Casa Archivio Nanni Valentini	Nanni Valentini	Via Tiziano, 44 Arcore (Monza e Brianza)	

Figure 2. Survey of House Museums, House Ateliers, Ateliers and Studios, and Studio Archives carried out within the D.E.SY research project (author's elaboration).

- The relationship between public and private is a pivotal element in the dynamics of *House Ateliers*. Here, the constitutive matrix – which necessarily also becomes a design matrix within contexts of potential enhancement and fruition – is the hybridisation between domestic and productive functions. *Productive*, in this context, refers to the complex set of actions and processes ranging from the ideational and/or creative dimension to the tangible, material dimension of artistic

or creative works. The House Atelier is therefore a distinctive type of living arrangement (Vitta, 2008), often revealing, in an explicit manner, the thoughts, poetics, and creative language of its inhabitant. These are spaces where the creative and domestic dimensions interpenetrate, merge, and overlap. They are environments where familial spaces carry traces, sediments, and testimonies of the artistic or projectual process. Examples include Casa e Atelier Fornasetti and Atelier-FORTE, where the creative element is deeply entwined with the domestic. Other spaces, such as Fausta Squatriti's House Atelier, exemplify a more balanced coexistence of artistic and domestic characters. In cases like Fondazione Fiume, however, the artistic and productive needs force transformations that alter the spatial dynamics.

- The third typology of faber spaces encompasses *Ateliers and Studios*, primarily professional spaces reflecting the daily activities of individuals within Lombardy's rich artistic and cultural panorama. These spaces bear witness to a prevalently professional daily life, often exhibiting diverse dispositions for public accessibility. Zuliani (2013) describes such spaces as "spaces of life and creation, dense archives of materials and thought, laboratories and exclusive showcases but also secret places of privileged intimacy and close negotiations" (p. 7). Ateliers and Studios maintain, as Zuliani (2013) further states, "a dual nature, private and public, in modern and contemporary times" (p. 8). It is this public dimension that enables their valorisation, offering a lens through which to examine the social status of their inhabitants, their methods of work, and their projection into the world as both individuals and creators: "This means thinking of these personal spaces, often even modest ones, not only as mere places of the private, a sort of sanctuary of memory but as buildings with a particular museum physiognomy and, consequently, inserted in the wider gear of the system of contemporary art and culture." (De Marco, 2014, p. 760). In recent years, the scientific community has increasingly explored these spaces as open fields of historical, critical, and museological investigation. Designers'

studios, especially in Milan, have begun to play a significant role in disseminating and enhancing the history and culture of design and architecture. Examples include the Achille Castiglioni and Vico Magistretti Foundations, which have transformed creative spaces into sites of valorisation. Alongside these are initiatives like Studio Mario Negri and Marieda Di Stefano's ceramics workshop, which are undergoing processes of reactivation.

- The final category comprises *Studio Archives*, which primarily refer to Ateliers and Studios that have, over time, accumulated diverse materials – artworks, tools, project documentation, models, photographic records, and personal objects. These archives have become indispensable sources for interpreting the lives and creative processes of their associated figures. Faroldi (2008) describes archives as "repositories for the preservation and transmission of knowledge" (p. 7). These archives have initiated significant actions for systematisation, preservation, and ordering, often preventing the dismemberment or dispersion of their materials. Simultaneously, they are developing dissemination activities, transforming these materials into sources of study and cultural transmission. Examples include the Franco Albini and Piero Portaluppi Foundations, the Giovanni Sacchi Archive housed in Spazio MIL in Sesto San Giovanni, and the Valentino Vago Archive, which is currently being established.

The mapping of these experiences within Lombardy has highlighted – and confirmed – the pivotal role of the domestic dimension in House Ateliers. These spaces serve as driving forces for advanced and meaningful preservation and enhancement strategies, building upon well-established national and international precedents. Conversely, Ateliers and Studios, which have experienced growing interest in recent years, are only beginning to experiment with diverse models of recognition, preservation, and promotion of their material and immaterial heritage tied to the faber and their spatial relationships (Figure 3).

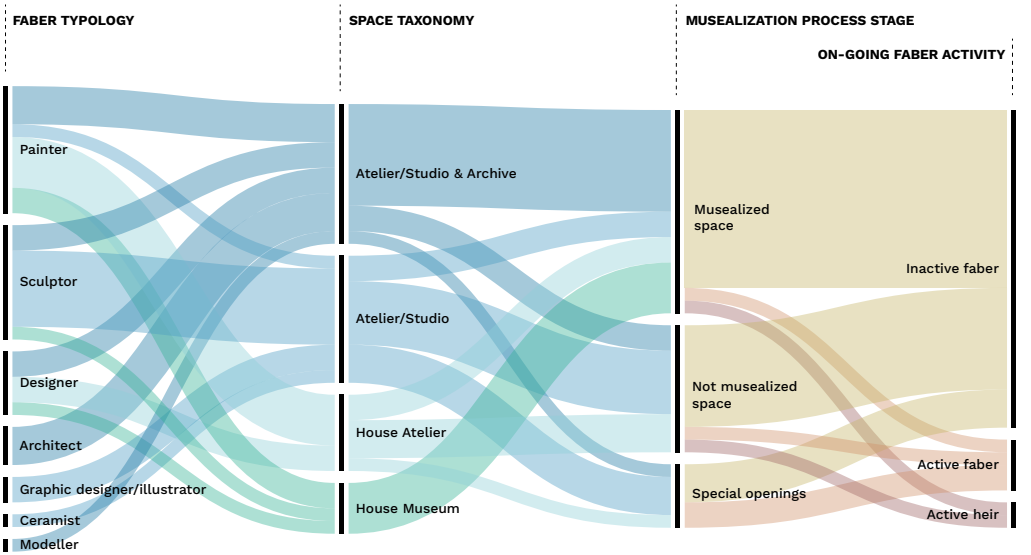

Figure 3.
Visualisation of the relationship between *faber*, space taxonomy, ongoing musealisation process and ongoing *faber* activities (author's elaboration).

2.3 Interpreting the Vocation of *Faber* Spaces Through Strategies and Actions of Valorisation

The strategies and objectives of preservation and valorization of the spaces under investigation appeared to be strongly diversified and related both to the spirit of the *faber* who inhabited, lived in, and transformed these spaces, and to the juridical framework that was chosen (or is in the process of being chosen), which determined their availability in terms of public access, space management, and economic investments. The nature of these spaces today is therefore, in part, the result of the modalities through which the faber themselves intervened and, in part, a reflection of the sensitivity, interpretation, and choices of heirs, curators, directors, and conservators. However, especially through the direct relationship with the latter, it was possible to define some recurring characteristics.

First and foremost, attention is drawn to instances of safeguarding and promotion centred primarily on the figure of the *faber*. The story of the artist, architect, or designer is conveyed predominantly through the exhibition of their creative output, with the space assuming the role of a backdrop, a narrative yet lateral scenario, functional

to the staging of this story. In this context, the notion of the *stationary place* described by Buren in his well-known essay *The Function of the Studio* (1979) becomes relevant. These are spaces within which the work of art (or more generally, the outcome of a creative process) originates – spaces that are "the first frame, the first limit, upon which all subsequent frames/limits will depend" (Buren & Repensek, 1979, p. 51). These spaces act as the boundaries from which the work departs to enter a public dimension. This approach, heavily focused on enhancing the artistic product and its connection to its place of origin, is especially prevalent in ateliers and *non-institutionalised* dwellings that are beginning a process of transformation into museums. In these cases, the urgencies surrounding inventory and archiving emerge as foundational components of the enhancement process. Furthermore, narration often takes on intimate and confidential tones, drawing from material evidence infused with the *domestic* dimension of the space. These might include specific collections or a highly personal arrangement of furnishings, which unveil unpublished interpretations and perspectives. Private spaces, often seen as a kind of ivory tower, are transformed into material representations of an otherwise invisible and mental space (Orsini, 2012).

Simultaneously, a transversal reading aimed at mapping the different inclinations expressed by these spaces in their availability – and therefore legibility – to a broad audience revealed multiple but non-exclusive *vocations*.

The first is that of a *stage space* (Jacob & Grabner, 2010), which becomes both the scene and the actor, the outcome and the instrument for narrating and valorizing the figure of the *faber*. Such spaces are often highly and consciously characterized, serving as an *environmental* and *habitable* reflection of a specific poetics or a distinctive artistic and/or design attitude. These spaces, in some cases, require minimal mediation to provide a clear and comprehensible narrative structure.

The second is that of a *resource space*: a space endowed with a particular richness in terms of material and immaterial traces. This richness enables specific actions of valorization that exploit the potential of the space. In this context, the space itself is understood as a holistic source of testimony, where tools, objects, clothing, and

furnishings become bearers of meaning (Salarelli & Tammaro, 2000). These items, viewed from a heritage perspective, reveal a cultural legacy concealed within seemingly mundane items that, when interrogated, offer new and intriguing insights.

Finally, some of these spaces function as *amplifier spaces*: spaces that are enhanced by overlapping heritage-based interpretations with contemporary activations. Rather than overwriting the original identity of the space, these actions allow for the stratification of multiple meanings, experiences, and activities. Such spaces exhibit an openness to cultural contamination, both in terms of content explored and the actions and languages experimented with, fostering a dynamic and inclusive environment.

The taxonomic analysis of the cases examined has thus highlighted and mapped a wide array of strategies and actions oriented towards safeguarding, promoting, and enhancing these spaces. These strategies range from the preservation and promotion of their creative and cultural heritage to its actualization (Lupo, 2011). The research underscores the heterogeneity of the proposed actions

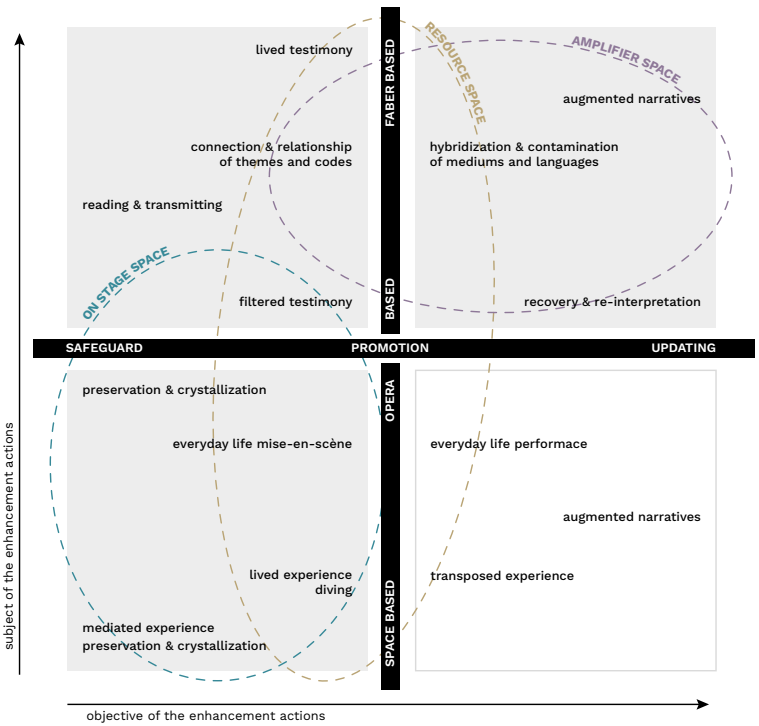

Figure 4. Interpretative framework for the valorisation initiatives implemented in the *faber*'s spaces: interplay between the *objectives of the actions* and the *valorised elements* (space, works, *faber*'s intimacy) (author's elaboration).

but also reveals a notable scarcity of initiatives specifically aimed at the valorization of the space itself, especially when compared to the vibrancy of activities centred on promoting the *faber* and their work. Within this overall scenario of growing interest in this unique typology of spaces – and with particular attention to studios and ateliers – new and promising opportunities arise for the development of innovative models and scenarios that can effectively highlight their inherent complexity (Figure 4).

Notes

Note 1.
FARB project (Basic Research Fund) of the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano. Project Coordinator: Prof. Anna Mazzanti.

Note 2.
With regard to the living and working spaces of creative figures who are still active – for whom the city of Milan represents an important and attractive hub – we have chosen to consider only those situations in which the faber has shown a clear commitment to conserving and enhancing the space, for example by initiating reflections on future conservation measures and/or the possible creation of a museum.

Note 3.
DEMHIST is the International Committee for Historic House Museums within ICOM (International Council of Museums). It brings together professionals and institutions working with house museums, provides an international forum for discussing conservation and management issues, develops classification tools and reference standards, and promotes the preservation, interpretation and public engagement of these museums worldwide.

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3. Metadesign Approach and Exhibit Models for Staging *Faber*'s Atelier: An Experimental Action

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3.1 From the Atelier as Private Space to a Cultural Asset

The space where the *faber* works – house, atelier, place of transformation – hosts the manifestation of a creative process that is embodied in the matter.

The topic of this essay is a critical and design reflection on the exhibit modalities of a place intended to have a private and intimate function which ends up opening itself to a public cultural experience: from a place able to generate cultural assets to a cultural asset itself.

> **The valorisation of the atelier allows for studying the social statute of those who lived in it, their work methods, and ways of projecting themselves into the world, as individuals and inventors. That means thinking of these personal spaces, often humble, not only as mere private places, like memory shrines, but as special museum buildings and, consequently, integrated into a wide apparatus of the contemporary art and cultural system. (De Marco, 2014, p. 760).**

This place is suitable for a process of metaphorical reconfiguration, not in terms of *atelier as a static memory* (as a reconstruction or preservation in the *how it was-where it was style*) but rather as a plurality of potential narratives aimed at staging the *genius loci*.

> **By definition, the creative person's workroom is independent and self-referential – sometimes austere and dry to breathe and concentrate, other times saturated with the objects needed for the layering process of thinking and elaborating. The artist's atelier is almost always solitary; the architect's and designer's atelier are usually collective, but above all their places are full of memories, whereas the archives represent the beating of a creative heart. These surroundings are permeated with a special atmosphere. When they are no longer used, but 'kept alive', they become mirrors in which we can still see the reflection of those who practiced their craft there. (Bosoni & Lecce, 2019, p. 8)**

Herein the atelier is intended as a space where tracing clues, recognizing marks, and unveiling secrets able to bring to light at the same time the human dimension – made of *infra-ordinary* anecdotes and daily manias – as well as the artistic one which is crucial for recognizing materials, tools and creative techniques.

3.2 Interdisciplinary Perspectives and the Design–Humanities Convergence

Among several expressions and activities of cultural enhancement, diverse models of the *faber*'s atelier representation and fruition are outlined. In this experimental action, the humanistic disciplines were represented by the competencies of art historians and critics, meanwhile, the design discipline brought its tools and methods aimed at making complex contents visible through concept generation processes and exhibition design practices.

Through this collaboration, some topics emerged:

- elaborating new paradigms of relationships fosters the synergy among these competences;

- translating collection and artistic contents into exhibit practices helps address the complexity of the relationships among artists' personalities, their atelier/house's core identity, and their works of art in new models of cultural experiences;
- extracting the design attitudes with which the involved designers interpret this topic in the developed exhibitions.

The conceptual allegiance between design and the humanities then seems conducive to experimenting with new forms of collaboration that lead to the re-codification of process and content.

Bourdieu (1993) affirms that the field of cultural production is linked to a larger social context that he calls the *field of power*. The value of this power then lies in the symbolic realm (including the aesthetic). The field of culture has relative autonomy, but its boundaries are permeable, and it is this permeability that creates its compelling role within contemporary society. The challenge of the design approach is to intervene in these boundaries to rethink existing structures and develop new forms of knowledge.

This approach is confirmed by humanistic studies in which aesthetics is defined as an intercultural category (of knowledge). In this sense, art, anthropology, and design are places of discussion, understanding, and evaluation of cultural activity (Caoci, 2008).

The model of this action verifies a mutual relationship between design and works of art, and this leads to a constructive disciplinary exchange: design is impacted by the humanities and the humanities are pushed towards more experimental approaches via the design practice. In particular, in this field, the design approach creates the narrative infrastructure (that influences the model of the cultural experience), and it deals with suggesting new forms of relationships between visitors and content, whereas the artistic approach creates the structure of content and the relationships amongst the said content.

Both disciplines offer important elements useful to understanding works of art and a multiplicity of meanings derived from them. In the design discipline, these elements are tools that facilitate knowledge and the exchange of content, whereas in the humanities, an interpretative key allows for the understanding of new knowledge, new experiences, and new exchanges. From this follows the idea of

translation by design: the translation action includes interpretation and use of new communication registers to shape new exhibit paths and new ways to show the core identity of the artist's atelier/house. At the same time, the humanities offer *interpretation*: the interpretation action allows a critical analysis to problematize topics and stimulate new curatorial paths.

3.3 A Design-Driven Reading of the Atelier

The art and its inhabitants: artistic imaginaries between houses and exhibitions is the title of an experimental action aimed at involving young designers and researchers in the exhibition design field.[1]

This research is based on the interpretation of the *portrait* of the artist's home and studio and aims to answer three research questions: how does the physical workspace influence the artist's creation process? How do the creation process and techniques work together to *shape* the creative space? How can this content be synthesized in an exhibition?

This action aims to collect several design-driven interpretations expressed through exhibit solutions within the same methodological framework and spatial context: from a field analysis to an interior design output.

The analysis and development of content and themes are the beginning of all considerations relating to conceptualization and design.

In this way we can have a collection of several interpretations developed according to a process that starts from the analysis on the field towards an interior design output embracing the following methodology divided into three stages:

Immersing & Reading

- Studying the artist's personality, their works of art and their productive process.
- Visiting the actual space (the artist's house and studio). *Method and tools*: desk research, on-field research, interviews, camera, sketch pads.
- *Output*: map of topics and suggestions, sketches, and notes.

Interpreting & Abstracting

- Synthesizing graphically the *essence* of the artists and their workplace (spatial and mental) through a critical approach.
- Focusing on a specific topic starting from the artist's production. *Method and tools*: metaphor, abacus of chromatic, material, and iconographical codes.
- *Output*: mood boards, diagrams, and collages.

Translating & Representing

- Translating the artist's studio identity into a design exhibition that hosts both the artist's works of art and a spatial (archetypal) interpretation of their own house and studio.
- *Method and tools*: exhibit score, narrative model, exhibit model, design attitude.
- *Output*: diagrams, sketches, technical drawings, render.

This approach allows us to extract some crucial elements that represent the pillars of the relationship between the artists and their workspace through metaphorical communication registers.

In this design process, we used a specific tool: the *exhibit score* (Trocchianesi, 2014). The concept of the *exhibit score* fosters the breakdown of the exhibit structure into different parts thanks to a graphic representation organized in parallel layers. This tool has been thought for the designer who has to manage the whole simultaneity of parts that contribute to the *mise-en-scène* of an exhibition. Graphically, the *exhibit plot* presents a horizontal structure made of different variables (each line corresponds to a specific variable):

- The contents organization is the logic and order of the collection management (the sections and the *file rouge* designed by curators).
- The spatial organization determines the paths and the design paradigm of the whole exhibit system.
- The exhibit artefacts and displays establish a specific relationship between visitors and the content shown.
- The actions and mechanics of interaction between visitors and the collection as well as among visitors themselves, determine the dynamics of the whole visit as far as the quality of the cultural experience is concerned.

- The communication register and the narrative style are expressed by the applied graphic communication system, materials, colours, and technologies, as well as the interface of displays.
- The length of the visit (total and partial) according to the articulation in rooms or *episodes*. This aspect is related to the rhythm, pauses, and accelerations that punctuate the visit.

All parts of these horizontal lines correspond to the part placed above and below to have a matrix reading.

No other creative disciplines possess such a multi-faceted range of instruments for the design of space as scenography and exhibition design. They instrumentalize the means of architecture, theatre, film, and the visual arts to design distinctive and effective spatial dramatizations.

Space is the central medium in which, with which, and for which designers think and create. Space – whether in the form of a scenically designed exhibition or a piece of architecture – is itself used as an instrument and can orchestrate all other instruments in the integrated sense of a total work of art. Four spatial parameters, on which all staged spaces are based, constitute the potential of space: the physical, atmosphere, narration, and dramaturgy (Atelier Brückner, 2011).

Each of these spatial parameters refers to a specific quality of the space and, in consonance with the other parameters, makes it possible to access content, get to the bottom of things, ferret out the soul of a theme, or get closer to a topic. The interplay of the spatial parameters in a dramaturgically ingenious and stimulating setting in exhibitions and architecture seduces the recipients into accepting the story and its message.

Indeed, we assume this approach stresses the relationship between the organization of contents (in this case, works of art and materials about the house-atelier) and the exhibit narrative.

This research action produced twenty-four design exhibitions, hypothetically placed in PAC – Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea in Milan, as indirect portraits of artists and their house studios. For each of them, *narrative models* and *exhibit models* have been defined. The *narrative model* is the way in which you arrange the narrative of the

exhibit path, while the *exhibit model* is the design attitude with which you treat the space to stage the contents of the exhibition.

The *metaphor* is also an important tool able to synthesize the core of the idea using evocative images belonging to other contexts. But the essence of this process is the spatial interpretation and translation of the house studio into an exhibit model: how do interior designers locate and interpret the studio's synthesis of the identity in a place out of the studio itself? What metaphors, spatial models, and design attitudes do they choose to express the relationship between the artists and their creative space?

If we read and compare all the design results of this research action, we can find some recurrences. Following are some design attitudes that interpret the identity of the studios:

Scenography: in the exhibition, the studio is represented by a scenography setting through different ways and systems, i.e. *layered wings* able to stratify multiple images and perspectives of the workplace, *stage setting* as a reproduction of a meaningful part of the workplace in a style which is not realistic but white and out of scale.

Synecdoche: in this case the identity of the studio is present in the form of a synecdoche (the part for the whole) using a specific piece of furniture present in the workplace: i.e. the *wardrobe of memories* (Leonilde Carabba) is reinterpreted in different ways within the exhibitions, as a big video wall where visitors can discover her stratified memories and art suggestions or multiplied as an actual furniture system with which visitor can physically interact (opening doors and drawers) and find objects and information; the *freestanding tripartite screen* (present in the Fornasetti's house/studio and collection) becomes the main display system here; in the exhibition the *red room* – which in the Fornasetti's house/studio is a secret and totally red one, where all pieces of furniture and textile, objects, and books are red (even in the titles of the books there is the word *red*) – becomes an immersive room where visitors can discover thoughts, private objects and special pieces of information; the *colours and materials* as architectonic references to the actual place (Mario Negri).

Domestic paradigm: the exhibition is interpreted as a cross-section of the house/studio. In this way visitors are immersed in the private space of the artist: i.e. the *wall as a linear unrolled space* in

which rooms and corridors are photographically reproduced in the same vertical surface, the bi-dimensionality is interrupted by niches with actual objects or interactive screens (Fornasetti); the diverse rooms of the house/studio are *spread* in the whole exhibition in a sort of multi-articulated and *diffused home*.

Abstract spaces: the exhibition *undresses* the space with all figurative references to the actual artist's house/studio, i.e., in a neutral context, parts of *walls and surfaces are malleable* in terms of materials and settings to make the place performative and dynamic (Pomodoro's creative process); some parts of the house/studio is re-

Figure 1.
The diagram shows the correspondences among six fabers engaged in the experimental action, the metaphors and the design attitudes applied in the temporary exhibitions aimed at valorising their ateliers (author's elaboration).

interpreted by *archetypal spaces* like tunnels and caves to underline some crucial meanings of artworks and their symbolic context; the *white box* as a neutral place where pictures of the actual workplace are shown as documentation.

This research project demonstrates the interdisciplinarity between design and art through an empirical approach and an experimental action able to extrapolate the interpretative logic of both the tangible and intangible values of the artists and their workplaces. The latter influence the creation process and, symmetrically, the creation process shapes the workplace: indeed, in Fornasetti's case – for instance – part of the space is a repository of sources of inspiration (see the room with the archive of iconographical units) and part of it is a show of countless objects. Pomodoro's studio includes an archive of works, documents, and – at the same time – a workshop *shaped* by materials. All of these artists and places tell something about the creation process, the inspiration path, and the physical and/or mental approach to the art. All of these spaces can be expressed by metaphors like the introspective journey, the retreat, the labyrinth, the wonderland, the Wunderkammer, the silent island, the grammar of signs, and so on, in a continuous dance of evocative images and physical installations (Figure 1).

The several narrative processes pinpointed in this essay highlight diverse exhibit models focused on *fabers*' figures as well as the space where their creation happens. These models are mediators in making explicit some aspects that – otherwise – could be hidden or not adequately readable. They embrace the aim to revive what Valery (2008) called the *faber's poetic state*.

Notes

Note 1.
Project curated by Raffaella Trocchianesi and Anna Mazzanti, 2018-2019.

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PART 2

Stories

4. The Artist's Studio Between Representation and Narration

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4.1 Introduction

The research on the artists' studios in the contemporaneity is often interwined with photography, and it is a fact that photography is frequently the fundamental instrument to study artist's studio, serving as a source with several levels of interpretation. Even from a museum point of view, it is relevant that the multiple connections between studios and photography reveal stories that always add meaningfulness to the narratives of artists and their art. It is also a fact that there is an increasing presence of references to studios in temporary exhibitions and permanent displays in museums.[1]

The essay aims to summarize the levels of dialogue between photographs and studios and how this interaction helps in the creation of a specific museum narrative, without excluding further fields of application. In particular, the essay combines a very brief history of the relations between art and photography with different paths of reading: the most common case is when photos are the main source documenting studios that are now lost or transformed; furthermore,

it considers instances where pictures capture the artist at work, offering an idea of the studio as a living space, transformed and involved in the action of artistic creation; finally, it examines cases where the photographer's eye interprets the subject, providing us with images in which levels of meanings can be read differently.

4.2 The Semiotic Density in Studios and Photographs

The exploration of artists' studios reveals multiple forms representing the artist's personality, lifestyle, and the environment generated by their creative actions. Sometimes, contemporary art renounces a physical place as a studio, and the creative process takes place through tools such as a computer or a temporary studio (Jones, 1996; Zuliani, 2013). Conscious of the risk of rhetoric when interpreting the multifaceted meanings of the artist's studio (Davidts & Paice, 2009) we research the studio as a place deeply connected with the artist in the action of creation, revealing techniques, light, and environmental characteristics – extraordinary instruments to deepen our knowledge of an artist and their work.

From the perspective of photography, we must consider the idea of a filter – something that is not authentic in itself but serves as proof of an exact moment that happened and passed (Barthes, 1980, p. 115). Thus, even if the image does not represent the studio in its full authenticity, it is often an essential record for the narrative of studios.

After this brief acknowledgment of the complexity of both ateliers and photographs, we can begin to provide some substance to the subject.

4.3 Love at First Sight

The studio is a subject beloved by painters and later by photographers. In the art of painting, there are many meaningful examples of representations of studios, such as in Flemish art from the 17th century, where the subjects include both real and fictional studios.[2] However,

we cannot limit this phenomenon to a specific time or place, as it is present in many periods throughout history.[3] The high point of the relationship between painters and the subject of the studio occurred in 19th century France, where the studio became one of the preferred setting for representing both past[4] and contemporary artists. The 19th century established a new status for artists, on one hand, esteemed academic intellectuals; on the other, individuals with a special aura, leading lives different from those of ordinary people. In this context, the studio became the perfect setting to showcase these qualities, and the emerging photographic medium is a suitable instrument for interpreting them. Particularly between the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, many artists staged themselves in their sumptuous house-studios, where photographers were called to capture an image that includes collections of exotic objects, work tools, and pieces of art, either completed or in progress. The artist, as the *king* of this place, became part of this aesthetic vision. The photographer presented to the spectator[5] a theatrical *mise en scène* designed to enhance the artist, who often posed pretending to work (Affri, 2012, p. 23).

The studio is a photogenic place that generates curiosity and reveals the secrets of the *cave* where demiurge creates art. Even in the 20th century, the photography of artistic spaces, in some cases, maintained its primary objective of celebrating aesthetic values and, above all, glorifying the artist. Photographs created for specific contexts, such as publication in magazines like *Vogue* or *Paris Match*, captured the studio's strong aesthetic appeal, sometimes paying homage to the artist's vanity. This aesthetic value is evident in the extraordinary beauty of studios, such as Picasso's residence in the south of France, called *La Californie*, and in the Aladdin's cave-like atmosphere of Alberto Giacometti's studio in Montparnasse.[6]

The perspective of the photographer is that of a hunter of beauty, capturing images that resonate with people seeking examples of remarkable interiors. Between the Fifties and the Sixties of 20th century, some magazines began to focus on aesthetically interesting objects and spaces, making art a recurring subject and in its forms as an object, the processes involved in its creation, and the context of its final setting. The studio appears as a significant space because the artist shapes it, transforming its configuration through their presence and their art.

4.4 The Photographer Witness and Creator of Sources

It is sufficient to create a list of the main artists of 20th century to point out that the majority of their studios no longer exist. For a several reasons, such as the use of spaces not owned by the artists or the need for heirs to repurpose the space, the loss of studios is something to be reckoned with. The dismantling of studios after the artist's death is, in some cases, unavoidable. Fortunately, there are situations where the memory of these places is preserved through the creation of archives, in which photographs are one of the most important form of documentation.

When there is photographic documentation that conveys the essence of these studios, it is possible to recreate them virtually or physically, totally or partially. Photographic documentation is, in this case, the main guide albeit not the only one: comparing different sources is always necessary.

Among the many examples, two are particularly meaningful in representing, on one side, the strong value of photography as a document serving museum philology, and on the other side, photography as a tool for interpretating art: Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo (Volpedo, 1868-1907) and Piet Mondrian (Amersfoort, 1872 – New York, 1944).

In the case of Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, photography is an essential tool for the museum narrative of the artist, both for his interest in photography and as documentation that allows to understand the original space of his studio in Volpedo (AI). This studio remained the property of his heirs after his death in 1907 until 1966, when it was donated to the municipality of Volpedo, which opened it to the public as a museum. The space was modified, first to create an independent entrance for museum visitors and later to strengthen the floor. The reconstruction of the studio was made possible thanks to a series of photographs (Figure 1) taken in the Thirties for the magazine *Alexandria* and for Arturo Mensi's publications, together with an accurate philological study.[7] Interstingly, in parts of the space without photographic documentation, some details were lost, as noted by the painter Pietro Morando (Scotti Tosini, 1998, p. 19).

Figure 1. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo's studio in an old picture used for the reconstruction. Courtesy Associazione Pellizza da Volpedo.

The same principle underpinned the recreation of Piet Mondrian's studio in Paris, thanks to the photo shoots by important photographers such as Paul Delbo and André Kertész.[8] In this case the interest of photographers in the studio was even more radical, since Mondrian considered it a manifestation of his concept of space, as theorized in his art. During his long career, Mondrian had different studios in Amsterdam, Paris, New York, and London, photographed by different photographers: Reinier Drektraan in Amsterdam, 1908, New York; Paul Delbo in Paris, rue Départ, 1926; André Kertész in Paris, 1926; Charles Karsten in New York, 1933; Arnold Newman in New York, 1942. In particular, Paul Delbo captures all the elements and angles of the artist's studio relating them to the overall work. The importance of the studio as an environment for artistic creation is highlighted by Delbo who conveys the concept of space which as a projection of Mondrian's vision of space, a fundamental aspect of his art. Thanks to the photographs of the studio taken over different years, it is possible to engage with the process of creating the Neo-Plastic studio (Wieczorek in Manacorda & White, 2014, pp. 47-67). In the case of Mondrian, studio photography represents the highest form of interpreting the creative process, while the completed painting finds its ideal setting in a gallery designed as a white cube.

4.5 From the Archive Fever to the Relevance

The importance of photography for artist's studios is deeply connected to the concept of an archive. In fact, the fundamental purpose of conservation, research, and knowledge inherent to archives can find in the photography a kind of microcosm. When deciding how to preserve the memory of a place, photography becomes the tool for selecting relevance, capable of capturing the essence – the minimum and fundamental aspects deemed necessary to retain in the memory of this place. From this perspective, we can consider the image as a minimal aspect of memory.

This contrasts with what Derrida calls the *archive fever*,[9] which characterizes many contemporary artists who build their own archives and seek to preserve every fragment that might be useful in reconstructing their identity within the world and the art world.

Hereinafter, three meaningful examples of studio interpretation through photographs, which we can consider archives of relevance, are discussed: the studio of Marco Melzi photographed by Giovanni Chiaramonte, the studio of Paul Cézanne as captured by Joel Meyerowitz, and the interpretation of studio objects in a work by Ugo Mulas.

Marco Melzi[10] was a sculptor and priest who taught sculpture in his studio at the Beato Angelico school in Milan. In 2018, due to a reorganization of spaces in the school, Marco Melzi's studio was completely dismantled. Before all the studio'objects were stored in a warehouse, photographer Giovanni Chiaramonte took several photographs (Figure 2). Unaware that the studio would soon been dismantled, Chiaramonte was able to interpret the space without the melancholy of farewell. The effectiveness of his photographs conveys the essence of space – a mix of light, objects, and dust – that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Joel Meyerowitz visited Paul Cézanne's studio in Aix-en-Provence in 2013 and was struck by the grey tones which characterized the studio environment. He reflected on the relevance of optical effect in Cézanne's paintings and highligthed the studio's objects, such as bottles, pitchers, and bowls, isolating them from the rest of the space and other items (Figure 3). Each object in this specific environ-

Figure 2.
Giovanni Chiaramonte, *Marco Melzi studio*, Milan, 2017. Courtesy Giovanni Chiaramonte.

ment seems to possess a personality, shaped by its essence as well as by the light and colors of the setting. Through his photographs,[11] Meyerowitz conveys Cézanne's perspective on the elements of his studio as an essential archive of optical perception, encopassing shapes and colours.

A particularly meaningful interpretation of the studio as a combination of space and objects imbued with meaning by the artist is provided by Ugo Mulas, who, writing about Rauschenberg's studio, remarked:

> **He had a very large studio, maybe the biggest one, with a lot of things, objects of all kinds, his and friends' paintings, hang on the walls or lean against the walls. But the most surprising thing was the quantity of everyday objects present everywhere, perpetually switched on televisions, domestic appliances, blenders, spray cans, stairs, pursers, colors, canned food of all kinds, really a bazar. All these objects are destined to disappear in a few years, they are**

eliminated or disappear, while the fact of being there in that studio hooked them to a figure destined to get out of time of objects, even those dear or necessary to daily life, objects that one day you will perhaps miss, a faded and tender memory. It is something like what happened to the objects of antiquity that have come down to us, in particular the things found in the tombs of the pharaohs, things that have come down to us thanks to the fact that the characters buried in those places slept their sleep in the midst of what had helped them to live, which had been close to them, necessary or useless. (Mulas, 1973, p. 118).

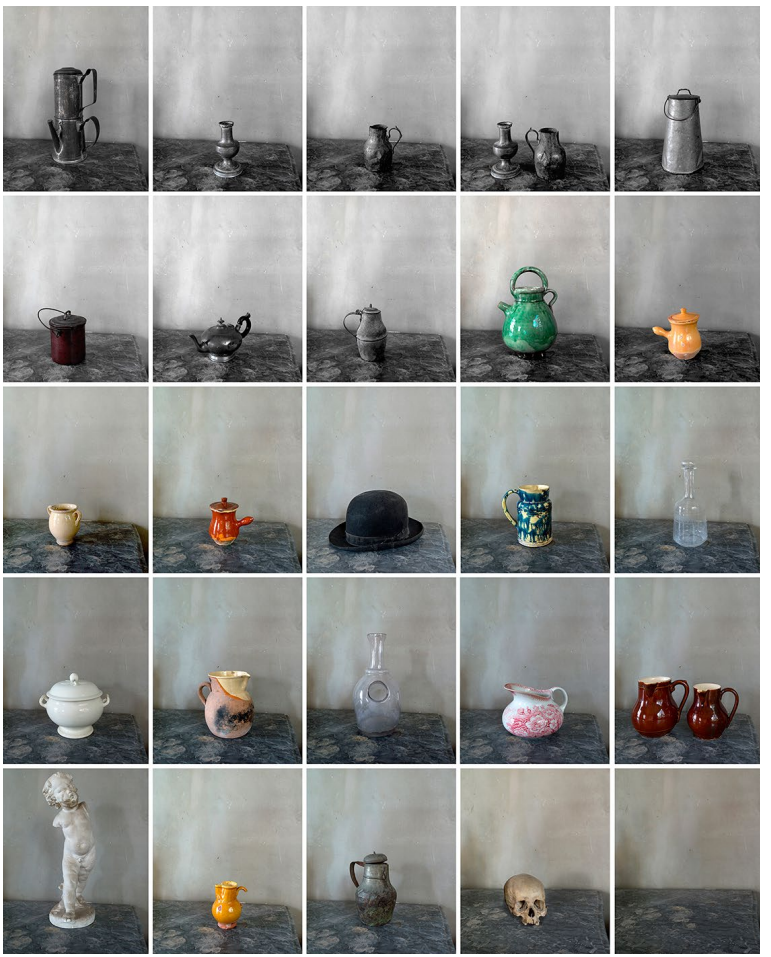

Figure 3.
Joel Meyerowitz, *Cézanne's objects*, Atelier Cézanne, Aix-en-Provence, 2013. Courtesy Joel Meyerowitz.

4.6 The Photography and the Reconnection with the Creative Process

Often, the subject of photographs is the artist working in the studio. While this can serve as documentation of a practice, it is sometimes more deeply connected to participation in the creative process. The focus of these photos taken in the atelier is not so much the artist, the environment in which they work, or even the artwork itself, but rather the creative process – a fleeting moment destined to end with the completion of the artwork. Photography's ability to capture a moment is radicalized here. Only through the image is time frozen, preserving the work in a stage that cannot be repeated in any other way.

A meaningful example is the experience of Costin Brancusi, who made self-portraits while working in his atelier around 1923-1924. The artist's deep interest in photography is demonstrated by his strong relationship with many of the greatest photographers of the 20th century, including Steichen, Stieglitz, Kertész, Outerbridge, and Man Ray, as well as by the considerable number of photographs he produced (Brancusi, 1979). In this case, he realized the idea of introducing a *third eye* into the scene – an eye belonging to the artist himself but detached from his body, capable of participating in the creative process and providing him with an image of himself in a creative action in the only way possible.

The participation of the artist studio in a creative process is evident in Bruce Nauman's installation *Mapping the Studio* (*Fat Chance John Cage*), which includes photographs taken with infrared camera that recorded his studio at night. The images show mice wandering through the room, occasionally disturbed by the artist's cat.[12] In this installation, we observe several levels of interpretation employed by the artist through the medium of photography: the studio as a place with its own secret life; the camera, which operates while the artist sleeps, as creative tool by the artist but functioning without him; and the photographs, which transport the space of the studio into a different context such as the gallery. In this case, the studio is not only an aesthetic space but also a place imbued with a sense of life.

In any case, the most meaningful example of a deep connection between creative action and photography is the relationship between

Pollock's action-painting and Namuth's pictures in the fifties. Namuth followed Pollock for a long period and immortalized moments of artistic creation both through both photography and video.

In particular, from 1945 Lee Krasner and her husband Jackson Pollock shared a farmhouse at 820 Springs-Fireplace Road in the quiet backwater of Springs north-east of Easthampton, Long Island. For two years, Hans Namuth followed their work, especially Pollock's, during the execution of the paintings. Between the two artists there was a sense of co-participation in creation. Pollock was aware that the work captured and recorded in its making was the work itself; in fact, the work was the action before its accomplished realization. The so-called *Namuth effect* identifies the two years of collaboration between the two artists, a period during which even Pollok's self-destructive tendencies seems to pause (Orton & Pollock, 1997).

The artist's studio was a barn where light and air crept through the cracks in the walls. In Namuth's images, this vital passage between exterior and interior seems to confer a breath of vitality that pervades the creative space.

In his shots, Namuth includes real studio portraits. In some of them, the artist appears in the distance, almost hidden among the various objects present in the space; the portrait becomes a study of the studio in its essence and life.

The aura of this remarkable studio experience is so strong that it continues to inspire photographers-artists. Even though everything ended with the artist's death, the atelier space remains. In the absence of the artist and his creative action, it stands as a suspended place where only the primary elements endure. This is significantly expressed in Thomas Demand's work entitled *Scheune* (*Barn*), created in 1997, where only the wooden beams of the wall and the sunlight passing through the cracks remain in Pollock's barn, evoking a kind of poetic relic of what still persists.

4.7 Weaving Stories. Photography as a Landscape

In Morandi's atelier, both in Bologna and Grizzana, Morandi worked with intense concentration, did not allow other people into the studio, and, therefore, therefore, there is no photographic documentation of the artist in the act of composition.

Luigi Ghirri took some photographs in Morandi's atelier as part of a project carried out with Giorgio Messori. The project combined photography and the written word to create a unified narrative dedicated to Giorgio Morandi and his atelier (Messori, 2001).[13] Ghirri depicted a studio that have been without its *faber* twenty-five years, yet he perceived the place as if "he was still there, just left home" [*T.d.A.*] (Ghirri, 2010, p. 46). He interpreted the space in relation to Morandi's work, considering it an optical camera where light was perfectly managed through a window, akin to a pinhole camera (Maiorino, 2013, pp. 142-143). Ghirri's photographs are landscapes, interpreted places, where the photographer himself becomes a *faber*.

Gianni Berengo Gardin also dedicated extraordinary shots to Giorgio Morandi's studio, taken between 1991 and 1993, commissioned after Maria Teresa Morandi's great donation to the Municipality of Bologna, which included 118 works, the library, the studio, objects, models, and more. The purpose of the photographic campaign was to create a final record before relocating the studio to the Morandi Museum.

Moreover, other important photographers have been captivated by the idea of this studio, which can be considered a landscape of a soul: Lamberto Vitali, one of the rare individuals allowed into Morandi's studio, photographed Morandi in 1956. Jean-Michel Folon dedicated a series of photographs to Morandi's studio in the winter of 1979, and both Ugo Mulas and Paolo Monti also captured images of Morandi's studio.

The same place, portrayed by different photographers reveals multiple interpretations, all united by respect for the artist and the awareness that this place may represent the most intimate portrait of Morandi himself.

4.8 The Study as an Iconography of the Artist

Between the sixties and seventies, the distinction between photographer-photographer and photographer-artist became increasingly blurred (Valtorta, 2008, p. 166) and the iconography of portraits became a matter regarding both paintings and photography.
Some remarkable cases of artists' portraits in their studios reveal an approach that seeks to capture the essence of the portrayed artists. In this context, it is necessary to first consider, Alfred Stieglitz, who, from the late 19th century, emphasized the idea of photography as a pictorial form (Stieglitz, 1899).

In 1953, Alfred Stieglitz created some remarkable portraits of his wife, the painter Georgia O'Keefe, at her Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. The artist, alongside her objects, takes on the characteristics of an iconographic representation. These objects of affection serve as attributes that define the artist's portrait.

There are cases where the studio itself becomes a representation of the artist, both in their presence and absence. This is exemplified by Brassaï, probably the photographer who portrayed the largest number of artist studios (from Matisse to Picasso). In 1933, he published a series of studio photograph in the surrealist journal *Minotaure*, featuring the studios of Constantin Brancusi, Charles Despiau, Alberto Giacometti, Henri Laurens, Jacques Lipchitz, and Aristide Maillol (Wood, 2001).

The work of Ugo Mulas with artists in their studios is certainly one of the most meaningful and relevant, thanks to the high value attributed to photography as a medium and to the process of image research, well described by Mulas himself (Mulas, 1967, 1971, 1973). Through his extensive interactions with artists,[14] Mulas observed, studied, and interpreted them, their art, and their environments, producing extraordinary portraits in his photographs. Mulas approaches the artist's portrait with a deep sense of responsibility, to the extent that he expressed regret when he felt his photographs did not achieve what he had envisioned. This was the case with the photos dedicated to his friend, the artist Alexander Calder (Mulas, 1971):

> From the photos there was no other intention than to declare my love for his work and the joy that his friendship gave me. […] In short, I wanted to do something that Calder liked as he had done things for me and for Nini, and now I have a great doubt: that he didn't like the book as I didn't like it. (Mulas, 1973, p. 94)

Calder's studio was an essential part of in his artistic experience (Davidson, 1972), a beloved place that profoundly inspired his creativity. He was so proud of it that he mailed postcards featuring images of himself in his studio – published by Edizioni del Cavallino (Figure 4) – to his friends (Schulmann *et al*., 2007, pp. 36-37). His figure, at the centre, wearing a red shirt, is depicted in a half-length-portrait, completely surrounded by space, light, and his work, as if he were an integral part of the studio itself.

This chapter could extend indefinitely due to the vast number of significant examples. However, to mention just one meaningful case, fundamental for the D.E.SY research project, we briefly consider the sculptor Mario Negri,[15] portrayed in his Milan studio by photographers

Figure 4. *Alexander Calder in his studio*, Edizioni del Cavallino, series "22 artisti contemporanei" ©Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Istituto di Storia dell'Arte, Fondo Cardazzo.

who were also his friends. Paolo Monti captured the studio as an intimate, personal place. His shots focus on details that have little to do with the artistic value of the sculptor's work but instead reveal aspects of profound human significance, such as children's drawings and postcards.

Another photographer who portrayed Negri in his studio was Arno Hammacher. Interested in sculpture, he visited many artists' studios and developed deep friendships with several of them. His portraits reflect this attention to the artist as the central subject of the composition, while the studio serves as projection of the artist's most introspective aspects.

In the photos of Mario Negri's studio, Hammacher often represented objects and small sculptures, immortalized as still life, or the artist at work, at ease, with a cigarette between his lips, fully absorbed in his task while the photographer-friend captured his gesture in the shot. Hammacher also documented the creative act in all its complexity as seen in the images showing the scaffolding of Hannoven sculpture or the nearly completed work.

As a provisional conclusion, it is meaningful to recall the image Hammacher took a few weeks after Mario Negri's death. In one shot, the photographer portrayed a corner with Mario Negri's empty chair: the protagonist is a space that has lost the presence of the one who gave it life. The photograph was affectionately named *The Lack* by Negri's daughters.

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Notes

Note 1.
The exhibition *Close Encounters: The Sculptor's Studio in the Age of the Camera* (Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2001-2002, catalogue edited by Jon Wood and Stephen Freeke) highlighted the crucial role of photographs in the narratives about

studios. The editor Jon Wood (2005, 161) tells: "The exhibition was thus about ways of looking and representing, rather than social or biographical histories of the studio. As an interrelated group, the photographs selected (and their subjects, scenarios, compositions and formats) shared secrets, told stories and subtly shed light on the studio's status and function as well as the ways in which relationships between sculptor, sculpture and studio were constructed in this period. […] On one hand such photographs provide a 'behind the scenes' view of the studio; on the other hand, they are highly staged and self-consciously artificial images, overlaying factual documentary with varying levels of fiction".

Note 2.
For example, Rembrandt van Rijn, *The artist in his studio*, 1628, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; J. Miense Molenaer, *Painter in his studio*, 1650, Bredius Museum, Hague; J. Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*, 1666 ca., Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Note 3.
The action of artistic creation is present in the Western art in the medieval art, in particular, in depictions related to St Luke painting the Virgin. An interesting historical overview of the theme is in G. Waterfield, *The Artist's Studio*, in G. Waterfield (Ed.), *The Artist's Studio*, Hogarth Arts and Compton Verney, Compton Verney, 2009.

Note 4.
One of the most represented artists in his studio was Raphael; among many examples: J.A.D. Ingres, *Raphael with Fornarina*, 1814, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge (Massachusetts); A.E. Fragonard, *Raphael Correcting the Pose of His Model for His Painting of the Virgin and Child*, Musée Fragonard, Grasse. In these paintings the studio is a fictional place which reveals the fictional personality of the artist.

Note 5.
Roland Barthes in his fundamental essay *La chambre Claire. Note sur la photographie* (1980) defines *Spectator* who can see the final pictures, the *Operator* the photographer and the *Spectrum* the caught image.

Note 6.
An interesting overview of these pictures are in J.-F. Chaigneau, *In the studio. Artists of the 20th Century in Private and at Work*, Editions Olms, Zürich, 2012.

Note 7.
An accurate description of the process of creation of the museum is in Scotti Tosini, 1998.

Note 8.
A very comprehensive reflection on Mondrian's idea of art readable through his spaces of creation is in F. Manacorda & M. White (Eds.), *Mondrian and his studios. Colour in space*, Tate Publishing, London, 2014.

Note 9.
J. Derrida, *Mal d'Archive: Une Impression Freudienne*, Paris, Éditions Galilée, 1995.

Note 10.
Marco Melzi, Milan, 1918-2013.

Note 11.
All the photographs of this series are published in J. Meyerowitz, *Cézanne's Objects*, Damiani, Bononia, 2017 and a selection of them have been published in G. Chiaramonte,

A. Dall'Asta (Eds.), *Joel Meyerowitz: Sightseeing. Un sentimento della vita*, Galleria San Fedele, Milan, 2013.

Note 12.
The exhibition was in 2001 at the Dia Center in New York. B. Nauman, *A.C. Mapping the Studio 1: Fat Chance* Walther Konig, Cologne, 2003.

Note 13.
A very interesting project which put together the narrative of photography with the written text is *Ritratti di Studio* made jointly by the photographer Enrico Cattaneo and the writer Stefano Soddu. In almost ten years, the two visited 77 artists in their studios in different parts of the city of Milan and Milanese area, and realized different artists' portraits, set by the lens photographic by Enrico Cattaneo and told, in short chronicles – as diary annotations –, by Stefano Soddu. The photos and stories of the visits were collected in three volumes (2004, 2010, 2015).

Note 14.
Among them: Lucio Fontana, Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Alexander Calder, Alberto Giacometti.

Note 15.
Tirano, 1916-1987.

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5. The City's Network of Crossroads Between Art and Design: the Milanese Case in the 20th century

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5.1 Enhancing Urban Relations System

Many public places in our cities, such as cafés, restaurants, dairies, theatre foyers, wine bars, brothels, bookshops, discos, art galleries, street corners and squares, have been historic and ritual points of reference for artists communities. Such environments whose particular *atmospheres* have created ideal places where these authors have met, known, admired, fought, and enjoyed themselves. Places in which they may also have shared fundamental moments as well as artistic and design intuitions.

For different eras, yesterday as today, we pinpoint historical maps of the various cities with all the design studios together with the residences of the artists and architects themselves. If we draw the lines connecting these points, folding them along the different streets and squares these personalities might encountered, we then have created an intricate network of paths full of exciting twists and turns. It is easy to discover that some of these intersections correspond to public places where these personalities, more or less consciously,

shared their lives, their passions and at the same time their projects and artistic research. Some of these places have become legendary for particular eras, especially in Milan, such as: Bar Craja, Biffi café in Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II and Biffi in Baracca Plaza, Bar Grillo, Savini restaurant, Gambrinus brewery, Tumbun in San Marco, Bar Blu, Bar Oreste, the brothel in Fiori Chiari Street, Bar Giamaica, the Moscatelli wine shop, Trattoria Moriggi, the Martini terrace, Camparino or Bar Zucca in Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, the dairy in via San Marco, Scofone brewery, Plastic discotheque and Bulloni wineshop. To name just a few of the first and most famous names that come to mind, not to mention art galleries and bookshops.

The story of the so-called literary cafés is often picked up on in the city and sometimes national cultural histories. However, we still need to fully understand what these public places' lives consist of. They are not austere, isolated libraries or even exclusive clubs, but rather commonplaces of entertainment, often for large groups, and sometimes even the most unlikely social and cultural entanglements: a true cross-section of city life.

5.2 The Cultural Scene Expressed in the Streets

An interesting commentary on the cultural and artistic life in these public places and on the streets of Milan between the 1920s and 1930s is the one left by the architectural historian Giulia Veronesi. The author recalls the authoritative figure of Edoardo Persico, who has been a refined intellectual, art critic, graphic designer and the *victorious provisional architecture*'s author as well as a fundamental theorist of Italian rationalist architecture between the two wars. Persico once stated:

> **However, he spoke no solely on the pages of magazines and newspapers, not solely in lecture halls; and he spoke not solely in his tiny editorial office in Via San Vittore, which had become a landing place for non-Milanese and even non-Italian friends passing through and a meeting place for some of the liveliest artists that Milan had to offer: poets and critics, architects and painters,**

> **sculptors and ceramists, typographers and decorators. He did not only talk in the smoke of the cafés, from Mokador to Craja, from Donini to Biffi in Piazzale Baracca, or in the rare homes of friends where he sometimes liked to stay in the evenings. He often spoke in the dark nocturnal silence of the Milanese asphalt, beaten only by his footsteps, cadenced with those of a listen-pal friend, whose soul he seemed to shake with his passion, with his violence, with the interrogative cry of doubts that continually surfaced in his spirit and in which he pondered, dialectically merging with enlightened reasons, his secret faith and strength. (Veronesi, 1953, p. 117)**

But this vision of Persico as an assiduous visitor of cafes where he exchanged opinions with other friends, artists and intellectuals, is also reported by Carlo Belli, musician, critic, painter and theorist of abstractionism: "And frequently, over a table in that Caffeuccio on the corner of Via Brera and Via Fiori Oscuri, almost opposite to the Milione, a meeting place always crowded with our artists, the two of us would exchange notes on pieces of paper with graphic projects we had been working on during the week" (Belli, 1988).

In the chapter *Tutti al Craja* (Everyone at Craja) in his memoir *Il volto del secolo* (The Face of the Century), Carlo Belli provides a rich and interesting insight into his visits to the famous Bar Craja, designed in 1929 by Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini together with Luciano Baldessari and with the collaboration of artists Lucio Fontana, Fausto Melotti and Marcello Nizzoli. The quote is long, but it is rare to find such an engaging description of the atmosphere created in a specific place, so it deserves to be read in its almost full length. The author wrote:

> **In the meantime, in Milan, architects Figini and Pollini, teamed up for the occasion with architect Luciano Baldessari, because they obtained their first important commission: no less than a bar in the centre of the city! The bar was located in Piazza P. Ferrari square, also accessed from vicolo Margherita.[1] The new bar was called Bar Craja and immediately became the evening meeting place for all modern artists. It can be said that it was the first truly rational building to be built in Milan, and the locals, after looking at it with scepticism for some time, finally accepted it as a fait accompli.**

> During the first few months, however, except for the rest of us, the place did not welcome anyone, so much so that we feared it would have to close. Instead, the owner, brave to the last, resisted and won. The Craja continued to be open for many years until it was demolished for dubious speculation! A true sacrilege. (Belli, 1988)

At this point, Belli begins with a very detailed description of all the materials used and all the parts that constituted the refined rational design. Then he resumed his immersion in the lived environment described as follow:

> The overall tone due to the diaphragms slant and the arrangement of the forms was a high one, but I repeat, sometimes, on entering, one was struck by a sense of hostility. We wanted it just like that, for our polemical reasons, but many of us became convinced that we should look for warmer solutions once the controversy was over. Anyway, we were the ones who warmed up the place. Around nine o'clock in the evening, we arrived one after the other (I came from Brescia) and settled down on the black leather sofas. Our place was over there in the third compartment, by the Melotti fountain. The first to arrive were usually the painters Oreste Bogliardi, Mauro Reggiani and Umberto Lilloni. [...] Later, those who had eaten at the Pesce d'Oro [restaurant] arrived: Peppino Ghiringhelli, pale, bewildered and sweet, always on the point of emerging from a fairy tale, followed by his brother Gino, who was the best among us in terms of culture, maturity of spirit and strength of character, together with Maria Cernuschi, a girl of dazzling intuition, lovely and a great entertainer, who later become his wife. The master printer Modiano also came from Verziere, sometimes accompanied by Leonardo Sinisgalli, mathematician and poet, while it is never known from which cardinal point the sculptors Lucio Fontana and Carlo Conte would have come; the former, light-hearted, angry, paradoxical, who rediscovered the world of knowledge on his own, immediately giving it wild and hilarious interpretations; the latter, shy, taciturn and always hungry, complained about the injustices of the world (he was a very good sculptor) that did not care about the things he was creating.

> Atanasio Soldati sat very pale and hieratic at a table next to me, almost aside. He waited for me, he always kept a seat for me, because we were very close friends; just as Melotti and Fontana, Persico and Del Bon, and, I think, Lilloni and De Amicis were very close friends at that time: [...] Sometimes, late in the day, the architects would then come: Pollini, distinguished and reserved, Figini *enfent ultraréchauffé* of the company, enthusiastic, translucent, with a spiritual charge that was always extremely powerful. Occasionally, on Saturday evenings, Terragni, the painter's Rho and Radice, the architect Lingeri and the very young Cattaneo, who died before reaching his peak, would come down from Como. The young master printers Dradi and Rossi, valiant militiamen of *// Milione*, joined this group of people from Como, who then published, at their own expense, i.e. in desperate and heroic conditions, their own frail publication to stimulate a new trend in the art of typography, which was called *Campo Grafico*. [...] Around half-past eleven, it was fully completed. Great discussions, of course. Sometimes Carrà would come, and we would welcome him as a master; other evenings Arturo Martini would break-in, and then we would listen to him because he was always talking big, [...] He was always shouting, yelling, and screaming in such a way as to give the impression that there were little space for him on this earth; [...] How many evenings we spent at Craja! [...] At Craja, we breathed the air we had asked for. There, we harboured the illusion of changing the country, infusing it with a spirit as lively and deep as the one we breathed in other European countries; there, we engaged in collective discussions on the state of things that could then be perceived as present and future. (Belli, 1988)

Compared to such a rich quotation as Belli's for Bar Craja, unfortunately, there is nothing similar to describe the cultural crossroads that probably enlivened Bottiglieria Bulloni in Piazzale Aquileia in Milan. In the same wine shop since 1933 (the year of the V Triennale and the first Milanese edition), a large tile panel painted by the futurist artist Enrico Prampolini,[2] dedicated to the festive lovers of white and red wine, stands out behind the counter. On the right side of this panel are two abstract-cubist compositions in the form of luminous devic-

es, also depicted and conceived by Prampolini himself. It is easy to imagine frequent evening gatherings, organised to enjoy a good glass of wine or a Campari (to whose history this restaurant is also linked). This place involved some of the emerging architects of the rationalist movement who worked and lived nearby in those years. In the 1930s, opposite the wine bar, there were the Villa and the Milanese residence of the Usuelli family (owners of the famous Borsalino hat factory in Alessandria), wherein 1938 Ignazio Gardella had designed the flat of *Nino* Teresio Usuelli,[3] who was the nephew of Teresio Borsalino and the author of the great relaunch of the brand from 1939 when he took over as Chairman until 1979. Also nearby, since 1931, Franco Albini and Giancarlo Palanti had shared a studio in Via Panizza 4 (at that time, Albini lived nearby in Via D'Alessandri). Close by was the studio of Gio Ponti and the editorial office of his magazine *Domus*, which in those years were located in the Borletti building, designed by Ponti and Lancia in 1927, at the end of Via San Vittore 42, just opposite to Corso di Porta Vercellina and few steps from Piazzale Aquileia. Lastly, we discover that not far from the Bulloni wineshop, nearby Via Verga 5, Marco Zanuso lived there with his family in pre-war years. In 1933 he was still in high school, but in the late 1930s he was a passionate student of architecture.[4]

Several years later, at the end of the 1970s the Bulloni wineshop experienced a new revival with the assiduous frequentation of Pierluigi Cerri in particular, together with numerous collaborators and friends, graphic designers, photographers, artists and art directors. This revival happened when Studio Gregotti Associati moved into the beautiful former brickworks of the historical Candiani company, which was a building magnificently renovated by the studio itself, located in via Bandello 20 next to the elegant Candiani family home. The architect Luigi Broggi designed the building at the end of the 19th century.

After the Second World War, the Brera district of Milan experienced a period of great artistic vitality, and among the various meeting places, the Bar Jamaica became the favourite place of many artists. Especially those artists of the younger generation, partly because *Mamma Lina* gave easy credit to many of these penniless artists of the time.

This story is now very well-known and celebrated, thanks also to some great photographers, such as Ugo Mulas, Alfa Castaldi and

Mario Dondero. These photographers frequented it in its golden years and immortalised that "atmosphere" and many regular visitors, who would later become famous, like the photographers themselves. The regular visitors included Roberto Crippa, Gianni Dova, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Nanda Vigo, Luciano Bianciardi, Salvatore Quasimodo, Enrico Baj, Allen Ginsberg, Dino Buzzati, Valerio Adami, Camilla Cederna, Bruno Cassinari, Ennio Morlotti and Nanni Balestrini.

> **The walls of Jamaica, then as now, immediately caught the eye. Covered in white tiles, they evoked home kitchens or even, if you wanted, sinful "houses" nearby, until 1958 located in Fiori Chiari and San Carpoforo streets. In the bar, voices chased each other and overlapped, mixing learned disputes about art, painting, literature and journalism [...] with the improper words of the broomstick players who handled the few tables available in the already small place. (Dicorato, 2012)**

The painter and intellectual of the highest rank, Emilio Tadini, has left us a precious testimony of what the world of the Bar Giamaica was like in the 1950s and 1960s, and he begins to talk about it starting with the exemplary case of the photographer Ugo Mulas. Emilio Tadini reported:

> **I met Ugo Mulas in the early 1950s at a poets' convention in an art gallery in Via Borgogna. Because Ugo wanted to be a poet, and naturally he never had any money, so one day Pietrino Bianchi said to him: "Why don't you take some photographs of me for my weekly magazine?" and Ugo said yes. Then he borrowed a camera and, incredibly, out of the blue, took a series of splendid photographs of Montale's Liguria and realised that he liked being a photographer. So he became the great master of contemporary photography that everyone knows still today. (Tadini, n.d.)**

Why have I told this story? To give an example of what Bar Jamaica was then and describe how coincidence and destiny were part of that small Olympus of minor gods. I think we were all sure that these personalities supervised that magical place and its inhabitants (I use the word *inhabitants* because many of us spent more time in the club than at home).

There were many photographers in Bar Jamaica, as much as painters, writers, filmmakers and journalists, or rather, they were a lot of young people who wanted to do one of these jobs – and who managed to do it, and in many cases very well. Of course, one mustn't forget the help that each of them received sooner or later, from that poor, highly efficient Olympian who moved in mid-air from the garden within Bar Jamaica – always overflowing with people and smoke in the very long evenings, until late at night.

> **Sometimes I remember when we were drinking white wine at the tables – from half past noon to two o'clock, or towards evening and after dinner – and someone would take out his camera and shoot a few photographs outdoors, if the weather was fine, or, if the weather was bad or too cold, in the background of the white tiles. And perhaps, in those moments, each one of us photographed, without even thinking about it and certainly without wanting to, was posing for some future story that didn't matter at all whether it came true or not. Because it must have already seemed to us to have been realised them in the dream world, lazily figured in our heads, and perhaps we already thought we could see them sketched out as best we could, on the table, near the glasses. Almost all of those photographers have become great, famous. But for anyone who is born and bred in Bar Jamaica, those are still the best photographs. The ones where four or five young people, very young, were sitting either outside on the garden's iron chairs or inside against a backdrop of white tiles – that invisible, these, and yet, to look closely, hazily mirrored in their pupils and perhaps even portrayed as cheap enigmas of the pauses of their inconsistent pride, all too vulnerable...**
>
> **Almost needless to say, the minor gods of Jamaica's Olympus were still keeping watch. And their representatives on earth quietly and inconspicuously continued to keep themselves busy – at the floor level, let's say. Mrs Lina, Elio... (Tadini, n.d.)**

Another important testimony of how many clubs and public places in Milan were marked at that time by a new image, which stimulated their creative and artistic frequentation, is that of the famous artist Lucio

Fontana. In an interview in 1962,[5] Fontana answered the provocative statement "People say that your art is difficult to understand" replying "On the contrary, it is very easy. It is the art of the man in the street. Don't you see the furnishings of the most modern cinemas, bars and public places? They are all my ideas: the cuts, the holes (do you know the ceiling of the Piccolo Teatro in Milan?), replace the ovals, the cherubs, the sirens, the rose windows of the past" (Pancera, 1999).

In this quick historical reconstruction of that invisible network of places representing the focal points where some particular creative *atmospheres* of the Milanese artistic and design world have been condensed over the decades, we conclude this synthetic journey with the most recent case. We then move from bars to discotheques: the famous Plastic discotheque in Viale Umbria 120.

Plastic was created in December 1980 from an idea of Lucio Nisi, the owner, and Nicola Guiducci, creative and DJ (who had previously worked as a salesman in Elio Fiorucci's showroom). The club has become internationally known thanks to the frequent visits of personalities and artists such as Madonna, Elton John, Andy Warhol, Freddie Mercury, Prince, Paul Young, Stefano Gabbana, Maurizio Cattelan, Francesco Vezzoli, Bruce Springsteen and Keith Haring, who used to fly from New York with Grace Jones to spend an evening there (Sada, 2017).

The American artist Keith Haring was undoubtedly one of the most famous and emblematic Plastic visitors in the mid-1980s, and Marco Belpoliti described that moment with these lines:

> **Milan, June 1984. After working until two o'clock in the morning in a continuous and unstoppable way, Keith Haring leaves the spaces of Salvatore Ala's gallery and runs to Plastic, a fashionable disco, where Nicola Guiducci, the friend who puts music on the plates and makes him feel as if he were in New York, is waiting for him. They all cuddle him, the artist who paints on the plastic covers of trucks or sheets of paper, covering clay pots and reproductions of classical sculptures with graffiti. As he will tell years later, Ala goes with him to the disco and then runs away: time, during the day, was dedicated to the market and at night was just for himself. An equal division, in which the night feeds the morning, and vice versa.**

Keith reappears the day after, in the afternoon, following massive doses of sex and drugs. (Belpoliti, 2014)

Years later, in an interview, Elio Fiorucci recalled: "DJs? They should no longer be called that, but *sound designers*. Today the variety of sounds is incredible, and they can switch from one reality to another. The Plastic disco? I have always been a fan of Nicola Guiducci and Lucio. It was the first community that anticipated the Internet. A magical place. I used to take Warhol and Haring there".[6]

5.3 Memories and Atmospheres to Be Narrated and Enhanced

In light of what has been said so far, it is essential to consider, within the framework of a historical places' reconstruction of the city's artistic and design *faber*, the memories of these places as inseparable parts of the urban context's creative and productive activity. Thus, these unique places and their associated memories and atmospheres deserve to be remembered with appropriate and contemporary narrative systems that can show and revive the network of physical and intellectual relations that have woven the spirit of the *faber* between art and design the time.

Notes

Note 1.
Today it is called Giovanni Malagodi passage.

Note 2.
Enrico Prampolini designed, in 1933, for the V Triennale di Milano in Parco Sempione, the Futurist Pavilion, a prototype example of architecture for a civil airport station.

Note 3.
Ignazio Gardella had married his sister Aura Usuelli in 1933 and moved in with her in Via Bellini.

Note 4.
An address that is mentioned several times in Gian Luigi and Julia Banfi's book, *Amore e speranza, Corrispondenza tra Julia e Giangio dal campo di Fossoli*, april-july 1944, Archinto editions, Milan, 2009. Because in 1944 Julia Banfi, after the bombing in Milan in

1943 that destroyed the house designed by Gian Luigi Banfi for his family, was a guest at Marco Zanuso's house and it was there that Banfi's letters from the concentration camp were addressed.

Note 5.
Lucio Fontana e l'infinito (Lucio Fontana and the Infinite), interview taken from Mario Pancera, *Vite scolpite, Almanacco del Novecento*, vol. III, Simonelli Editore, Milan, 1999, pp. 13-25. In the same volume, a note by the author explains that it is taken from *La Notte* (19 December 1962) and subsequent interviews, 1963.

Note 6.
Interview with Elio Fiorucci, 6 April 2012, extra content from the film *This is Plastic*, directed by Patrizia Saccò, produced by Plunger Media.

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6. The Creative and Artistic Legacy Between Identity and Project: Casa & Atelier Fornasetti and AtelierFORTE

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6.1 Casa & Atelier Fornasetti and AtelierFORTE: Between Home and Studio

Milanese cultural landscape started to consolidate itself since mid-20th century, among co-existence and hybridisation of industry and creativity, design and art within which productive, residential and expositive dimensions saw vanishing their boundaries in favour of a contamination of spaces and times. An example of this is the concentration of dwellings and atelier/laboratories by *faber* (Bergson, 1907) which, within such local context, experienced new modes of living; private living and workspaces come together, penetrate and contaminate each other going to build (micro)worlds by which the artist/designer/architect identifies and represents him/herself with. *Mise-en-scène* spaces, then, as in the case of Casa & Atelier Fornasetti and AtelierFORTE, two paradigmatic examples of artists/artisans who, even though very distant in terms of sensitivity, poetics and languages, assigned their own living environments to a full-fledged cultural design.

We are actually dealing with creative personalities who put into action a project of relocation to living and working environments, of their own poetic, thought and language *through the way in which this space is being lived*, through a specific living attitude. *Collecting* and *aesthetics*, meant as "cultural figures, outlining a specific behaviour with regard to things and their disposal within the sphere of living" (Vitta, 2008, p. 274) which leverage over sense of ownership and contemplation, intertwine with a latent or expressed vocation to dramatization. Dramatization as representation of their own identity, their own person, in a process of private to public extroversion. Even though the domestic environment represented "the place in which the […] public dimension has often been revised and filtered through a personal time and small actions which establish effective distance" (Molinari, 2016), such distance tends here to get thinner or, even to vanish.

Casa Fornasetti, villa dating from the late 19th century belonged to Piero Fornasetti's family and located in the heart of *Città-Studi* district in Milan, is currently home to the Atelier as well, of which Barnaba, the son, is the creative director. Here are located the graphic studio, the communications and marketing department as well as the historical archive in close connection and synergy with the private residence.

The space, as a whole, is conceived as an actual House Atelier in which environments, whilst keeping a clear separation in terms of functional plant, take over multiple vocations: public blends with private, domestic with expositive dimension, usage with exhibition in a continuous overlapping between the moment of creative and artistic creation and the moment of its own result contemplation. The House Ateliers also the place within the flow of time makes it a proper *Fornasetti's diving* experience: objects settling (Piero Fornasetti was a refined collector indeed), in production and custom pieces, unique items and prototypes, volumes, prints and fabrics, made it a liveable Wunderkammer. Fornasetti, artist and artisan/decorator capable of occupying and turning any area into visual storytelling, he pervaded the family dwelling by his own visual imagery and language, making it manifesto-space of his own poetic.

Duilio Forte, all-round artist, as he defines himself, has been the owner of AtelierFORTE for twenty years, even though the museum has

officially been inaugurated only in 2018, to provide institutional form to a situation that has been in place for years.

A postmodern metaphor takes its shape now: "in the age of access, [priority is to] build scenarios, tell stories" (Rifkin, 2000, p. 261), and actually in this museum-laboratory-house, Duilio Forte enjoys taking visitors to a dream world, through layered with years visions, which from time to time are *personified* in mythical animals and legendary depictions. Such representations availed themselves of Duilio Forte's utmost technical expertise, a truly modern artist/artisan; not surprisingly in the exhibition *Stanze. Altre filosofie dell'abitare* (*Rooms. Other philosophies of living*, Triennale di Milano, 2016) his room-installation – *Ursus* art work, meant to "give the opportunity to try a minimal living experience inside of a zoomorphic shape" (Duilio Forte in Finessi, 2016, p. 332) – has been introduced with reference to the famous essay by Richard Sennett, *The craftsman* (Sennett, 2009), precisely to emphasize, in Forte's approach, the "concreteness of making" value (Francesco M. Cataluccio in Finessi, 2016, p. 342) which joins his research deep narrative contribute.

6.2 The Two Atelier among Domestic, Creative and Expositive Dimension

Downstream from analytical reading carried out on the two Atelier, appeared interesting to bring out differences and similarities observable in both paradigmatic cases within the Milanese house-ateliers system. The following reflections, clustered in macro-topics of survey, highlight their divergences and convergences from a critical and projectual point of view, geared to investigate approaches taken, in terms of design, exhibition and meaning of spaces.

6.2.1 Towards a Total Space

AtelierFORTE and Atelier Fornasetti, in their diversity, share a living attitude deeply infused with their personal sensitivity and artistic and cultural vision. Both house-ateliers reflect a systematic impulse towards the search for a total space: a space, or better a place (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977), capable of including the artistic and cultural project

of their *forgers*, in all his dimensions. Spatial dimension – domestic and working environments, objectual dimension – in the dual nature of objects for daily use and works of art and design, as well as temporal dimension – which instils moments and occasions of private, public, intimate and shared life – create synergy, connection and merging. The notion of *total work of art*, by which individual types of art converge into a unique and superior holistic artistic design, is "materialised" by the two artists-artisans even before than in artistic production, in the manner by means of which their artistic and designing *doing* and *thinking*, looks at creating and reassemble a *put into shape* and experienced universe.

It is acknowledged *Fornasetti's space* powerful detectability, in terms of stylistic features and subjects, chromatic and compositional codes, a space that multiplies, with exquisite overbearance, in every aspect of via Bazzini's residence. Each and every room, wall, furniture, fabric or complement, over the years, has been subject of selection, intervention, decoration – in brief of design. Each vertical and horizontal surface, in some cases even floors, has undergone a chromatic or decorative operation such as, for instance, in the case of kitchen-veranda: table, seats, coverings, floors, furniture and accessories have been coated with the well-known composition – pages of newspapers and butterflies – which, in the subsequent years of domestic experimentation, went into production. Also and above all, daily use objects, furnishings or complements, contribute to environment signification, *they are devices that modify the space that contains them* (Fornasetti, 2013). Piero Fornasetti, voracious collector, has always been welcoming in his own environments, to collections of objects, prints, books, sources of nourishment for his imagination, nearby pieces designed or customised by himself. It consists of rigorous and various collections which, approaching and facing each other, create a constant play of semantic references maintaining a dual nature, "a simple, practical rigorous nature on the one hand, and a cultural, fantastic and poetic one on the other" (Fornasetti, 2013, p. 178). Interpenetration and overlapping themes, are also to be found in different environment's purpose nature. Currently, domestic space and the space devoted to the atelier, appear separated but communicating, lived by inhabitants having variable line-up – Barnaba Fornasetti and the whole

atelier's team –, share entrances, passageways, labyrinthine spaces connecting private and professional in nearly total merger.

Even the concept underlying AtelierFORTE design is pronounced interpenetration of spaces and activities: Duilio Forte works everywhere, with no preferences for a dedicated area (unless there is need for more complex and invasive processes, which must be carried out in the laboratory only); likewise all art works scattered throughout the entire space, equip it, decorate it, are dislocated in an unusual way – hung, camouflaged, highlighted – and only occasionally are placed on regular easels. Works of art intertwine with daily life, pander to it, escaping pure contemplation; the passage through various *places* in the house is set up as an *excursus* (non-linear) between the different artist's poetic phases, not only as crossing through functional environments. Each piece of art takes part in the definition of space and space comes to life in the relation between the works; all differences among them disappear, both being variants on different scales of the same thought.

6.2.2 Hybridisation as Design Category

Hybridisation concept constantly returns in both analysed cases, on the one hand because it is able to describe the complex, multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach of both authors (both led to escape from conventional design codes and to breach disciplinary fences), on the other hand because it is a semantic feature typical of contemporary, increasingly chasing fluid spaces, *transgender* categorisations and cross-media representations. When Bauman back in 2000 described fluidity as "main metaphor of current phase of modern age, [given that fluids] do not set space nor bind time" (Bauman, 2005, p. VI), has been able to capture features that firmly characterise contemporary society: indefiniteness, contingency, expandability and "rejection of any territorial confinement" (Bauman, 2005, p. XVIII). Piero Fornasetti, multifaceted and complex personality, artist, printer, bibliophile, artisan-decorator, gallerist, used to replicate, in an era of stylistic and disciplinary purity which misread his ability to cross every field of material culture, that "no aspect of cultural planning is barred to those who have the analytical and cultural tools to create worlds, and that from this point of view there is no difference between an

exhibition, an engine, the body of car, a chair, a picture or an ashtray…" (Fornasetti, 2013, p. 100). Such an approach to hybridisation and syncretism has been moved inside his studio-dwelling too. Private dimension of several lounges and sitting rooms that take certain portions of the house become real sets within which new pieces of the collection can be inserted and shaped. The presence of the private archive filled with valuable cuttings, images and volumes by Piero Fornasetti, engages in harmonic dialogue with drawings and slides archive, stored at the atelier. The atelier gives back a domestic impression and the private area is bathed in an aura of theatricality and scenic appeal, that brings it closer to public dimension.

Even more extreme is the design choice pursued by AtelierFORTE, that even after a meticulous visit, eludes a synthetic description: in the memory remain layering of activities and functions simultaneity, yet both archaic nomenclature of the single rooms, and complex spatial layout, does not help giving back a sharp mind map of space. Here indeed "order is considered a restriction, a form of imprisonment" (Rifkin, 2000, p. 259) not only studio, house and archive interpenetrate, but the productive, expositive, business and living world of the artist influence each other (contaminating us too).

6.2.3 Living Exhibition between Public and Private Vocation

The notion of hybridisation, applied to domestic and creative environments, crossed by a firm expositive vocation, necessarily implies a reflection on traditional design categories of exhibit and interior design as well. Seems to be crucial now, the overcoming of public-private dichotomy, which is challenged wherever, as in the case of Atelier Fornasetti, curatorial and expositive tension marks and materialises in every aspect of private dimension or wherever the extroversion of private to public becomes matrix for exhibit, as in AtelierFORTE. We're dealing with yet another upheaval of the rituals regarding domestic living, it's a sort of "secularisation of it, with the consequent effect of […] polysemous multiplication of the idea of house" (Crespi, 2016, p. 17). *Living exhibition*, which is differently redefined in the various house-ateliers and museum-houses, in both analysed cases is solved through a variety of ways.

On the one side Barnaba Fornasetti, who occasionally turns his dwelling into a set for private events or parties, maintains, by means of contiguity of domestic and atelier areas, a seamless flow between life and work times and spaces. On the other side Duilio Forte, chose instead to open his own museum-house by appointment, handling first-hand guided tours, though showing his visitors an ever-changing space, depending on previous hosted activities, that left traces over there.

Experimentations in such sense are multiple and sometimes rather provocative; think about Guggenheim museum in New York which already in 2008 opened to hospitality and thanks to Carsten Holler hosts in its spaces an installation-room (from museum-house to *museum-room*), *Revolving Hotel Room*, a one night rentable bed-room (Maritato, 2008); think of Edward Hopper's painting made three dimensional at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, which in 2019 realised in full-scale the painting's *Western Motel*, so that one can literally get in it and sleep, by purchasing *Hopper Hotel Experience* packets (Penna, august 2019); and lastly think of the museum-house of Zelda and Francis Scott Fitzgerald in Montgomery, that allows you to stay in two rooms purposely turned into suites (Penna, march 2019), just as the hazard tested in Concetto Pozzati's historic dwelling in Bologna, which adopts Airbnb platform possibly to develop a new economic prospect but, meanwhile, to bring into play new modes of use (Nastro, 2019). We're dealing with, even with profoundly different connotations, new types of *inhabited museums*, a paradigm whereon precisely house-ateliers should more closely wondering about.

6.2.4 Expositive Dimension between Contemplation and Use

In both Ateliers, although with independent inflexions, the display element of the space is of great importance, and both spaces are designed so that each element within them – be it functional, decorative or structural – works together to create a unified and engaging experience, blurring the boundaries between different forms of art, design and utility to contribute to the overall aesthetics and atmosphere. Piero and Barnaba Fornasetti's approach they apply to the definition of environments is, as has been mentioned, that of *total space*. Draft of representation space and *mise-en-scène* of a specific imagery and visual language implemented through a full-immersion involving

furnishing and surfaces: complements, appliances and even facilities, floors, tapestries and textiles, all converge to determine and materialising Fornasetti's poetic, with no distinction between objects of use, pieces of art or design, between collections of inspiration and semi-finished products.

Giò Ponti himself, who cooperated with Piero since the 1940s, recognizes in his colleague and friend such tension towards self-representation – by means of works of art, spaces and collections – and multiplication – not by accident, one of the most beaten stylistic features will be the one of the series. "Perhaps Fornasetti, setting up exhibition rooms in his house, full of 'fornasettis', must have been taken by this obsession to compose 'fornasettis' using 'fornasettis'. Printing is a dangerous game: much like a game of mirror, it never ends" (Ponti, 1950, pp. 37 *et seq*.). And it is precisely this game of mirrors, which is a play of references and relations, that perfectly represents the exhibit matrix permeating the entire via Bazzini's dwelling. Whether the *Red room* is furnished by the use of a single monochrome filter, strictly bound to the colour palette of the artist, the *Clouds room*, wrapped in a wallpaper realised in partnership with Cole & Son, exhibits on the walls a picture that has been direct and noticeable inspiration for the design of the pattern itself. Each environment, every detail contributes to the private exhibition design: items are selected and inhabit spaces as conveying "metaphors and symbolic relations, material and immaterial relations" (Branzi, 2007) creating a short circuit between objects in use and *on exhibit*.

In the case of Duilio Forte's dwelling, the distinction between exhibition and use is quite nuanced so that in the reading of space, there could be found an analogy with Kurt Schwitters' Merzbau: not just because AtelierFORTE is the result of a lifetime of *relics* or *assemblages* collections (Nigro, 2007, p. 99), but rather because it is physically the outcome of twenty years spent building the space, by adding parts in a still ongoing work-in-progress, which literally made it expression of the visionary art world of its owner. The result, as in the most popular work by Schwitters, literally is an *autobiographic environment*. In such ideally endless construction, just two pieces of furniture by Ikea, a chest and a coffee maker (gift by Mendini), are pieces not designed by the artist: every single detail custom made and based on his own

design. Precisely this coincidence of exhibition and usage posed a problem of readability: works of art's descriptions needed to be understandable without affecting the use of space. Within a context in which everything is becoming increasingly intangible, interactive and multimedia, even the museum-house has been converted to a technological reading: punctual explanation and captions are missing (except for concise introductory panels to single rooms), access to information is allowed by QR Codes and everything refers to the website, which enables a virtual tour of the spaces, offering insights on single pieces of art.

6.2.5 A Space as a Set: The Scenic Component in Narrative Environments

Both analysed case studies have strong scenic connotation, the first being a Fornasetti's language set-up, scenic and theatrical by definition, and the second, the AtelierFORTE, being explicitly born with a vocation for the set, a set suitable to host fashion photo shoots, advertising videos, short films and typically events.

With regard to Casa & Atelier Fornasetti, the constitutive consistency of languages and codes translates to an utmost recognisability of features, shapes, icons and chromatism, was immediately the dominant character for all interventions. Both, as we saw, in household environment and within the entire commercial and expositive dimension which revolves around the Atelier's universe itself. For instance, if on the one hand, the showroom in its set-up, retrieves certain private dwelling's stylistic cues, on the other hand the residence itself becomes in some cases photographic set for new pieces or re-editions. Spaces contribute to the tale of a story, turning into the scenery flat within which objects interact as actors on the stage: "His pieces of furniture are never just pieces of furniture: they are a backdrop, decoration or set design. Objects that evoke a story and provide the story with its setting" (Silvana Annichiarico in Fornasetti, 2013, p. 12). Theatricality of Fornasetti's work, which across decoration tells stories, worlds and entire imageries, blurs figure and background, reality and imagination in a tangle of infinite possible plots.

Similarly, AtelierFORTE stands out as a space in which everything is set design and in which – regardless of whether they are envi-

ronmental installations, small sculptures or land art works – steady prevails a story telling, dream and mythological dimension:

> **here is the laboratory, with the long sword suspended in the air, the cinema-bear *Ursus* having a mini screen under the belly (realised for the exposition "Le stanze" in Triennale) and the stage machinery of the 1700s for thunder rumbles and hiss of the rain, faithfully rebuilt by Forte himself. Two footsteps, a mighty roar and you will enter the Bear Room. […] Then a number of ravens "always by Odin" and the room "dedicated to Munch's Scream". (Ghezzi, 2018)**

All this contributes to a scenic, immersive and fairy-tale setting, in an atmosphere at times Gothic and at times science fiction. The artist thus shows an *archaic* sensitivity, yet in a highly contemporary perspective, proving himself to be capable of masterfully play among those *conceptual materials* that Augé already recognised as belonging to our society: "individual imagery (dream), collective imagery (myths, rituals, symbols) and narrative fiction" (Augé, 1998, back cover). Nowadays, almost to point out the initial vocation of the space, the artist believes it is time to shoot an actual movie in it, a film with Duilio Forte as director, noir genre.

6.2.6 A Look Back and a Look Forward: The Act of Creation, Production Horizon and Archival Contribution

The dimension of creative and artistic coexistence concerns AtelierFORTE only, where the artist keeps processing, developing and making his design, since conversely, for obvious needs, Atelier Fornasetti production department is no longer hosted at the headquarters, which remains the creative and communication centre. In both instances you can rather find the archival dimension, although the interpretation of the archive notion is utterly different.

Fornasetti, as meticulous collector, has always expressed great interest and sensitivity towards setting – understood in museographic sense – and cataloguing. His various collections, which included old-fashioned spectacles, decks of cards, Bohemian glasses… full-fledged belong to the residence's *private exhibition* and became, over time, genuine deposits for creative inspiration. Likewise, Piero applied

himself with archival accuracy, to tight cataloguing cut-outs of imagery taken from magazines, books and antique prints. Cataloguing that, in the '50s and '60s, enriched a library with perfectly organised folders divided by themes (leaves, fish, fruits and vegetables but even architectural prospectus and anatomical parts…) that made up an archive of remarkable size, to draw on ideas and motifs to reprocess. Archival dimension cannot be reduced to creative dimension *only*, yet it multiplies in the technical productive one too. The Atelier indeed hosts, a few rooms from the folders library, a slides and drawings archive which go over the entire Fornasetti's production and which nowadays are source for both entry in production of historical pieces and redrafting or design of new products and representations.

Portrayed as *domestic warehouse* or *inhabited museum*, AtelierFORTE keeps playing with binomials, apparently conflicting, so that it could also be defined as *archive in progress*. *Historization of the present* moreover, opens up to multiple ontological reflections, and in the case of Duilio Forte's production, we are faced with an ever-changing collection, subject to sales, loans, new projects, but also to daily use that makes any kind of static representation more complex. It in fact consists of a not yet *frozen* space (as other even distinguished museum-houses, from Salvador Dalí's museum-house in Portlligat, to Gaudí House Museum in Barcelona). Despite this, many pieces of art have already been listed in the inventory, and in the choice of a method of classifying and organising, emerges the creative side of the artist, who decided to use sequential numbers merely including prime numbers, "as evidence of works claiming their exclusiveness", adds ironically Duilio Forte.[1]

6.3 Conclusion

Atelier Fornasetti and AtelierFORTE represent meaningful case studies for the focus on new strategies of enhancement and exhibition models: precisely for peculiarities here illustrated, these could be interpreted as pilot-projects helpful for the definition of a new hybrid scenario: household and museum, aesthetic and fruitive, capable of attracting and producing culture.

Atelier Fornasetti, that in the sixties and seventies had to face the coldness of a climate influenced by rationalism of forms, functions and industrial requirements, knew a difficult period. Starting from the eighties, with the acknowledgement received on the opening of the *Themes & Variations* London gallery by Liliane Fawcett e Giuliana Medda and mainly after 2013, year of the major retrospective *Piero Fornasetti. Cento anni di follia pratica* (*Piero Fornasetti. One Hundred Years of Practical Madness*) hosted by Milan Triennale and curated by the son, Barnaba, Fornasetti's work has been newly discovered and recognised, as design of extremely high creative and cultural value. The Atelier expands, multiplying its departments, and is recreated such mixture between domestic and creative space that featured the early years of its establishment, the doors open to such *wonderland* that is Casa Fornasetti. The Atelier has developed a range of initiatives for enhancement and communication, designed to make Fornasetti's eclectic spirit, artisanal and creative work, archival documentation, and selected aspects of the domestic display accessible to the public.

Whether Barnaba Fornasetti, in his prospects and future targets for the valorisation, imagines developing a section devoted to teaching with local education institutions and to make room for a museum (Sarica, 2019), alongside AtelierFORTE is oriented to implementation of the museum dimension, to improvement of the communication impacts, to reinforcement of sales capacities and above all, to the creation of a local network. Duilio Forte is already founder of *inter-ars* start-up, a network of Milanese artists' studios pursuing the logic of *diffused museum*, by promoting to system, single studios to increase their visibility and access. Aware of the relevance of such collective dimension, he considers strategic the organisation/implementation of more effective urban networks of museum-houses even in the rich, yet in this regard little explored, Milanese environment; within this framework the Italian-Swedish artist wishes to build a common platform capable of promoting guided tours managed by external actors, as contemporary Virgilio, whom could take people on a tour among the network's diverse realities. Such stages would be an opportunity for a closer encounter with the artist's creative world, but also to live experiential times (create a portrait, take custom pictures) that would make users more and more like active players in the tour and no longer

mere spectators. Such as in the Airbnb model, it would be a way to get *into the intimacy* of studios as well as to discover the city following less travelled trajectories.

As shown Atelier Fornasetti and AtelierFORTE stand out as *unicum* in the Italian panorama, nonetheless research and experimentations initiated here, can undoubtedly trace a direction for codification of new models of house-ateliers and museum-houses, dislodged from styling cues of the past and able to interpret with flexibility and uniqueness demands of the contemporary.

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Notes

Note 1.
Interview with Duilio Forte conducted by Barbara di Prete within the D.E.SY research project – Designing Enhancement Strategies and Exhibit Systems – FARB Funding, Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano – Scientific coordinator Anna Mazzanti. Milan, 22 April 2018.

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PART 3

Practices

7. The Genius Loci of the *Faber* Place and its *Exhibition*: Experimentation at the Bagatti Valsecchi Museum

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7.1 The Fabers' Work, House and Museum

The Bagatti Valsecchi House Museum is a peculiar place with a vibrant soul, worthy of being exalted. To better understand the context, though, it is fundamental to know its origins and protagonists.

The house is the result of the creative minds of Fausto and Giuseppe Bagatti Valsecchi, two brothers of Milan XIX century upper class who dedicated their lives to it. Despite their legal studies, they never practiced as lawyers. Instead, they were passioned about art and architecture and, even without proper education, they stood out as amateur architects (Bagatti Valsecchi, 1994) and became well-renowned in the Milanese society thanks to their house project.

Actually, the re-design process of the Bagatti Valsecchi's House had been initiated by their parents, Pietro and Carolina, who bought it in different fractions (Della Torre, 1994), merged by successive renovations, and furished according to the principles of Eclecticism, the prevailing fashion of the time. It was a commixture of styles with a predominance of baroque and rococo. Though, after their mother's

death, in 1880, Fausto and Giuseppe took over the reins of the project and an original choice distinguished themselves: they took the Renaissance as a reference, to make their residence representative of their recently gained social status. They wanted to appear ennobled just like the lords of the sixteenth century, the flourishing period of the idea of mansion.

As singular as it may look in the panorama of nineteenth-century Milan, the dream of bringing the Renaissance back to life was probably influenced by the events of the late 1870s and early 1880s, when the Savoy Court, to which the brothers owed their recent nobility, returned in the Milanese context. By the way, it was a period in which getting inspiration from the past was a constant and reassuring practice, as well as being synonymous with good taste (Pavoni, 1992). In addition, the Renaissance has been one of the greatest ideal models of any time.

In particular, the nineteenth century residence embodied the Romantic principles. It was transformed into a place of memory, not only familiar, but of a wider memory, which evokes truths found in the human imaginary. It was a theatre of everyday life, where the metaphor underlined the artificial and fictitious behaviour in the family environment, whose members acted as the protagonists of a play (Perrot, 1999). Indeed, people believed that their domestic environment had repercussions on their entire lifestyle, setting their *modus vivendi*. In fact, they thought they could assimilate the character of their own houses, especially in the eyes of others. The Bagatti Valsecchi's case was no exception.

To create a real sixteenth century mansion, the brothers dedicated themselves to a detailed study of the most important palaces of the Italian Renaissance, especially from Urbino, Mantua and Venice, not to reproduce a particular model of the past, but rather to take advantage of multiple sources of inspiration that they could elaborate in a completely personal key (Rolando, 1999), creating what was called the *Bagatti Valsecchi Renaissance* (Pavoni, 1994). As a matter of fact, many of the rooms reveal the personal signature of the brothers, who felt the necessity to create custom solutions to exhalt their family and work, in complete harmony with the Renaissance style. Then, the house became a perfect mix of authentic and carefully selected piec-

es from the Renaissance period and details personally designed by Fausto and Giuseppe according to their modern yet sixteenth-century poetic. Indeed, they were men of their time and could not renounce to the comforts that their society recently achieved, like electricity and hot water, just because of the aesthetic language they chose. On the contrary, being among the first in Milan to have them was a source of pride and prestige.

The final result appears as a middle ground between the collection and the personal aspiration, but we must not forget that, primarily, it was a context of lived life. In fact, the house was inhabited by the Bagatti Valsecchi family until 1974. After that date, Fausto and Giuseppe's descendants decided to open the doors to the public, transforming it into a museum: they restored it to the original condition in which their creative ancestors left it, and today it remains unchanged by mandate.

7.2 How to Exhibit the Genius Loci: Approach and Method

This rich environment already provides detailed information about what is displayed. Instead, it is missing the exaltation of the most intangible heritage it can provide: Genius Loci, the spirit of the house, including the figure of the fabers and the actual results of their work. Consequently, Interior and Interaction Design were selected as suitable means to create an engaging and situated experience, oriented by a human-centred approach.

Moreover, the aim of the project was to take inspiration from the very specificity of the place, respecting and combining the will of all the parties involved: curators, visitors and designers, standing respectively for the place, the typology of experience and the means to meet all expectations. For this reason, for instance, nothing could be introduced or modified not to distort the frozen image of the time; while a temporary and replicable event format worked the best for a personal and engaging experience.

Necessarily, for a thorough knowledge of the location, preliminary on-field investigations had to be conducted to better understand the existing relationship between the place and its visitors, mixing tradition-

al and ad-hoc research tools, aimed at involving users unaware of being guiding the generative phase of the design process (Hanington, 2010).

Firstly, quantitative data about the visitors of the previous semester were collected through the statistic system of the museum. Secondly, to get a little closer to the users of the institution and to comprehend its dynamics, an ethnographical enquiry based on unobtrusive shadowing has been undertaken. That seemed to be the better solution to get impartial information about the visitors' experience inside the museum, as their direct involvement in this exploratory phase could have vitiated the results. A sample of one hundred people or groups have been followed through their entire permanence in the museum spaces to understand their behaviour and attitude towards the rooms and exhibited goods. In the meantime, a structured form was being filled in to take notes about the visitors and their experience in the museum. This system had the limit to be based just on the researcher's observation in a time span of about a month, that's why complementary qualitative research has been undertaken: taking advantage of their long experience at Bagatti Valsecchi's, the museum personnel has been directly involved in the research through semi-structured interviews. Fourteen volunteers answered questions about the visitors (in the first part of the interview) and their relation with the museum (in the second part), adding multiple and more expert points of view to the exploratory research.

In the end, this kind of collected information helped in getting familiar with the place and its users, assessing the great appeal of the house that amazed and engaged visitors with its sense of familiarity. Though, the observed behaviours and emotions prompted the modalities for a direct confrontation with the possible users – aimed at identifying the meaning for the intervention – and ultimately the design itself.

On-field research allowed plenty of unquantifiable factors to be acknowledged, enriching the quantitative research with impressions coming from a personal contact. Taking inspiration from co-design modalities and design exploratory games, simple physical games have been chosen as instruments of inquiry due to different reasons. First of all, they are participatory, they guarantee a common ground for conversation (Brandt, 2011) as game is instilled in human society since

its origins (Huizinga, 1938). Moreover, games respond to the necessity of acquiring spontaneous and unvitiated reactions since, when people entre the parallel dimension of a game, no matter how basic it is, they feel freed from social and cultural expectations (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Indeed, tangible items encourage users' engagement, especially in a museum context (Dudley, 2009), acting as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989; Spallazzo & Mariani, 2017).

The two games were proposed at the end of the visitors' tour of the museum, just before leaving. Visitors could choose whether to participate to the research by playing one or both games, or to decline. Ultimately one hundred samples per each activity were collected.

Play Your Cards, the first activity, was intended to investigate the visitors' reflections, preferences and emotional connections with the different rooms of the museum. It was composed by 18 cards, representing each room, and a dice with 6 different questions, initially undisclosed to the visitor (Figure 1). Firstly, players had to freely choose 3 cards, providing a reason for each choice, then they threw the dice and answered the corresponding question with one of the cards previously selected and a motivation. Though, some rules were a little flexible, as the real goal of the game was to originate a conversation to collect the greatest amount of information. Consequently, for instance, if the real answer to the dice question was not comprehended among the cards that the respondent had picked, (s)he was free to choose the actual room corresponding to her/his true opinion.

Figure 1.
Cards and dice of the *Play Your Cards* game – Italian version (Sciannamè, 2017).

For *The Secret Inventory of the Bagatti Valsecchi Brothers*, the second game, instead, visitors had to feel free to explore their purest desires. The activity was, in fact, designed to understand what visitors would like to discover, experience and perform inside the museum, but such a request would have overwhelmed them. That is why, according to a design embedded approach (Kaufman & Flanagan, 2015), the game real aim was concealed by an alternative narrative.

The players were presented a fictional ancient-looking secret inventory of the Bagatti Valsecchi brothers (Figure 2), where ten mysterious magical artefacts were catalogued. Each of them had a particular power and represented a different kind of experience that could be achieved with the support of digital technologies. After reading the inventory, the players had to choose their favourite object and state how and where in the museum they would have used it. Here the choice was deliberately wide-ranged to offer the most complete overview with different kind of stimuli.

Figure 2.
Secret Inventory in the three languages proposed – Italian, English, and French (they were selected based on visitors' data) (Sciannamè, 2017).

7.3 The Museum as a Living House

At the end of the research, all the parties involved highlighted the desire to have the homely dimension prevailing on the museum identity, so that the welcoming and familiar sensation could be emphasized.

In particular, the major outcomes of the research revealed that visitors actually enjoyed the house as a whole, in fact it was not easy for them to indicate a real preference among the rooms (Figure 3).

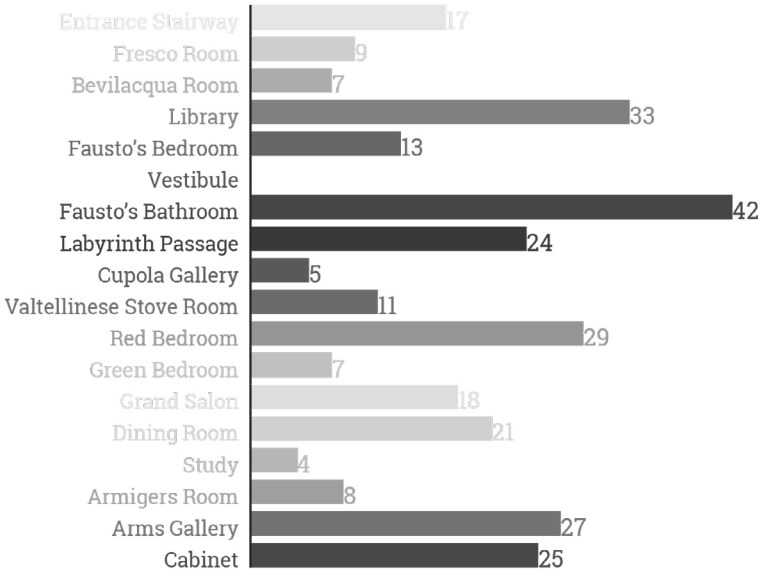

Figure 3. *Play Your Cards* results. Favorite rooms of the museum according to the three-cards free picking (Sciannamè, 2017).

Moreover, even if they were keen on participating in the playful activities, they would love being invisible observers in the middle of the action, in order to discover the most intimate secrets of the house and the familiar and social aspects of the domestic life, as it is patent from the results of the *Secret Inventory* game (Figure 4).

Then, the concealed thoughts of the visitors, which have mostly emerged from these indirect activities, helped to give orientation to the design generative phase and inspired the exaltation of the extraordinary everyday life of the people who dreamt, designed, realized and inhabited the Renaissance house of the XIX century. Indeed, the true essence of this place is represented by the simple pieces of ordinary life held in its history. In consequence to these findings, the aim

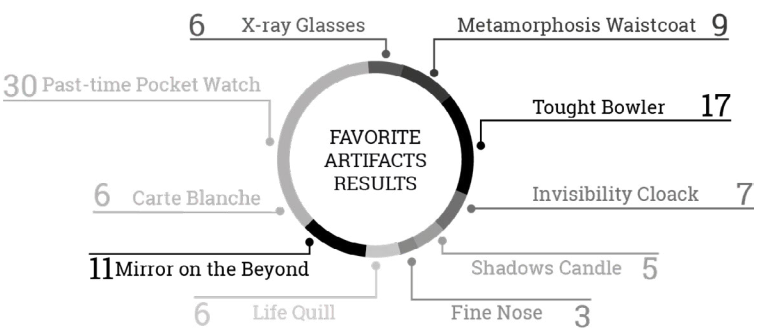

Figure 4. *Secret Inventory* results. Favourite artefacts selected (Sciannamè, 2017).

of the project is to bring these moments back to life by transporting the visitors in a distant dimension where they can actually and easily interact with the space.

In particular, in order to make the most intimate side of the house emerge, we returned to the original personification of the Genius Loci, whose symbols were painted on the walls. Even if this tradition acquired different meanings, it has never really disappeared, on the contrary, it has taken the form of noble families' coats of arms. That is why we translated the two main emblems of the Bagatti Valsecchi brothers in the materialization of Genius Familiaris (eagle) and Genius Rerum (lily). Each of them embodies a particular point of view of the Genius Loci and stands for a different visit path to discover the house's life on a symbolic reception day when the Bagatti Valsecchi brothers were still alive. The first one reflects the memories of the people who frequented the house, while the second gives voice to the objects' point of view.

Then, to make Genius Loci come alive, an integrated and flexible technological system has been designed so that the space could become responsive in a natural human-environment interaction with pervasive and concealed devices, not to alter the perception of space. In particular, audio and projection modules had to be deployed across the rooms to convey contents when triggered by the interaction module, a beacon-powered amulet worn by each visitor or group of visitors. The entire system also responds to the requirements of flexibility and scalability, as they can be easily moved and reprogrammed to be adapted to different settings and narratives.

Strolling around the house, a usual human behaviour in a museum, is at the core of the embodied interaction. In the different rooms, visitors may encounter three kinds of experience, according to the relevance of the place itself. Those where visitors just have to pass along are the *sound passage rooms*. Here, the immediate detection of the visitor wearing an amulet triggers environmental noises or distant voices. In the *vision rooms*, where evocative events could happen, the amulet activates a projection module, making shadows appear to visualize a significant scene. While, in the active *narration rooms*, visitors have to discover hidden details. This is why light events embedded in the audio

module draw the visitor's attention to a particular place where a special audio content will be disclosed only when the visitor gets close.

In short, the overall experience translates into an evening event, outside the museum opening hours, in which the visitor – alone or in group – can experience an intimate and magical relationship with the house, for a given time slot. The visit begins with the selection of the Genius that will guide the entire experience, and a brief tutorial for the interaction modalities. Then, across the rooms, different narrative strands are interwoven to show different aspects of everyday life and

Figure 5.
Grand Salon final recept (Sciannamè, 2017).

culminate in a banquet in the Grand Salon (Figure 5), the emblem of the social life of the period that mostly arouses contemporary curiosity. One of the strength points of the project is that visitors are encouraged to return so that they can discover ever new details depending on the Genius they choose at the beginning of the experience. Moreover, as the almost immaterial system can be easily and rapidly reprogrammed, a virtuous circle can be established, generating a sense of dependence and affection towards the museum.

In the end, designing to exhibit the Genius Loci is a delicate process. First, one needs to stay in the place, to live it, willing to understand and listen to it, in order to recognize its essence (Crespi, 2013). Then, when the spirit is revealed to the designer, the challenge is to make it patent without being intrusive, to let it pervade the environment as if it was the most natural outcome. In this way, the resulting experience of the visitors appear more authentic, they establish a deep bond with the free-of-barriers institution, they feel privileged of being part of an environment that is revealing its true and most hidden self in an almost human manner, and, finally, they develop an unparalleled sense of belonging in such a place.

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8. Design Practices and Enhancement Projects: from Collezione Giovanni Sacchi at the Triennale di Milano to Fondazione Castiglioni

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8.1 Castiglioni & Sacchi: *Faber* of Italian Design

Starting from the second post-war, Italian industrial design has been well-acknowledged worldwide. Thanks to some brave and visionary entrepreneurs who invested in the design of their productions, entrusting the work to talented minds, many everyday objects from that period are today guarded in museums as icons of a culture. Though the acquaintance of this world is usually limited to the final product, the entire process that led to a particular shape and the special expertise that distinguished our design masters are a cultural heritage to disclose. Design, understood as cultural heritage, communicates on a large scale the objective value of the product itself and the value system in which it was brought to life. The exhibition of industrial products is undoubtedly an excellent starting point for spreading the design culture, but it is just as valuable in providing an adequate contextualisation. Public institutions and private foundations have created a culture around Design by organising exhibitions

and debates on the subject and offering their spaces as a showcase for promoting *the Italian way of making*. Think of the Design Museum at the Milan Triennale, an exhibition, a visitor attraction and a training centre for future designers, or the ADI Design Museum Compasso d'Oro inaugurated in May 2022. At the same time, Milan provides plenty of professional studios, ateliers and workshops where many documents, models, prototypes, and drawings tell the story of Milanese Design. Through them, it is possible to follow the evolution of some masterpiece and their creation step by step through the work of artists and designers (*faber*).

Among them, two deserve a prominent place in the story of the golden years of Italian design: the Fondazione Achille Castiglioni, a repository of extraordinary creativity with countless drawings, models and inspiration objects, and the model collection of Giovanni Sacchi. Castiglioni and Sacchi embodied the personification of the *faber*: throughout their life, by drawing and modelling, they have given shape to an improved reality with clever designs, paying attention to fundamental matters such as functionality, industrial optimisation and communication. They significantly contributed to the golden period of Italian industrial design in different ways because they played different and interconnected roles.

Achille Castiglioni was an architect and a designer whose education has been influenced by rationalism. As he reported in an interview with Piero Polato, he was not interested in being associated with a particular style. Instead, he was trying to design with no preconceptions but continuously asking himself the reasons for his actions. As long as they responded to the easiness of production or handling or if the aim was to trigger a particular behaviour or meaning, these were acceptable explanations; on the contrary, subjective motivations had to be avoided (Polato, 1991). Accordingly, Polano (2000-2002) states that Castiglioni was fascinated by the anonymous design of common objects, and a significant part of his work was dedicated to projects in which the subjective design coincides with the objective processes that usually inform and define common things, a practice that the author calls undesign. The world was his inspiration; indeed, he used to say that design demands observation (Antonelli, 2000). From this starting point, his iterative design process developed on paper with

plasticine and plaster. Drawing and modelling were his way of reasoning. In particular, prototypes were important steps to confront and test the tridimensional shape of the objects he was designing. For this reason, collaboratively working with Sacchi was crucial in many cases.

Sacchi was not a designer and came to this world almost by chance. As a kid, he was trained and became a foundry model maker, and despite the difficulties caused by the Second World War, he managed to have his shop for mechanical models until he first met Nizzoli (Polato, 1991). That moment marked the transition to a different approach: no more models with precise measures for the mechanical industry, yet architects and designers needed prototypes to work with, to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their designs better, but also to present their ideas to the committers concretely. In this way, he realised models of study, verification and presentation (Maldonado, 1987; Salvarani, 1992; Consalez & Bertazzoni, 1998) and contributed greatly to Italian industrial design by cultivating and sharing his experience along the entire design process. It is no coincidence that many professionals of the time supported his candidacy for Compasso d'Oro, which he received in 1998 for his career. He was involved at all stages of the design process, and he was not a silent executor: he used to identify and correct the criticalities of a project, and he could understand and speak the same language of the designers even beyond what they were saying or drawing (Polato, 1991). Moreover, in the end, his models were so accurate that they fooled people and have been used even for commercial campaigns.

With such flourishing careers, they worked on several projects, producing an immense amount of materials able to uncover their authors' expertise and thoughts. Many remained in their former workplaces, composing a valuable heritage. In 2006, the heirs of Achille Castiglioni signed a five-year agreement with Triennale di Milano, and Studio Museo Achille Castiglioni opened to the public as an archive. Then, in 2011, Fondazione Achille Castiglioni was created so the family could continue sharing the place and the stories it contains with visitors. The foundation's main purpose is to catalogue, archive and diffuse drawings, photos, models, films, objects, books and magazines (Fondazione Achille Castiglioni, n.d.). Similarly, in 2009, Archivio Giovanni Sacchi was inaugurated as a result of a collaboration be-

tween Comune di Sesto San Giovanni and Fondazione ISEC (Institute for XX Century Studies) and the contribution of Fondazione Cariplo in order to collect models, products, drawings, photographs, documents, machinery and equipment coming from Sacchi's workshop (Archivio Sacchi, n.d.).

Nonetheless, the opening of these places is not sufficient to diffuse their contents, as not everything is easily accessible because of the format or the material of the support. In that light, a pilot project came to life to explore ways to communicate the mental processes that generated some of the most important products of Italian design and to promote design culture and knowledge, enhancing the attitude of their *faber*. The project, funded by Regione Lombardia, aims at identifying, digitising and cataloguing all documents, drawings, models and prototypes related to selected and renowned products.

8.2 Highlighting the Design Process Through Digitisation

As already pointed out, the process of design making is an enriching heritage to be shared with design researchers, scholars, students, and a wider public to fully understand the universe of the creative thought concealed in the even well-renowned objects of the Italian design production.

Currently, more than 300 wooden models by Giovanni Sacchi – property of Regione Lombardia – are preserved at Triennale di Milano. This collection, though, is stored in the museum but not exhibited to the public. Nonetheless, the great value of this heritage brought them to give Politecnico di Milano the assignment to digitise some of the works to make them accessible while preserving the original pieces. This commission fostered the idea to deepen the project, intending to reconstruct the entire process underneath the development of an industrial product, letting thoughts and making of well-known protagonists of the Italian panorama emerge. Therefore, after selecting some significant objects as samples of the programmatic initiative, the digitisation had to be extended to the related documents, preliminary sketches, drawings, photos, transparencies

and intermediate prototypes collected involving the design offices and the manufacturers of the industrial products. Specifically, for the choice of the objects, the Triennale di Milano staff assisted us and eventually, six out of 312 models by Giovanni Sacchi were selected according to their relevance in the history of Italian design, as well as to the ease of retrieving the concerning materials and documentation.

These are: 1. Gibigiana Lamp (1980, A. Castiglioni for Flos); 2. Tama Lamp (1970-1977, I. Hosoe for Valenti); 3. 4870 chair (1984, A.C. Ferrieri for Kartell); 4. 4822/44 Stool (1977-1979, A.C. Ferrieri for Kartell); 5. Trattopen marker (1975-1976, Design Group Italia for Fila); 6. Rialto phone (1975-1976, Design Group Italia for Siemens).

We aimed to identify a sample methodology of digitisation to be applied to heterogeneous items from different sources and correlated to different design procedures and outcomes. Nowadays, digitisation is a common practice that anyone can easily carry out with good quality and allows access to a broad audience, taking advantage of the great progress of information and communication technologies (ICTs) that modify how people create, deliver, accumulate, and use data. Digital libraries nowadays are enhancing the traditional ones, giving access to the information they preserve ubiquitously through the web and possibly mobile devices. A great example of the effort to make cultural heritage accessible online is Google's Arts & Culture project, which enables people to access several museums worldwide – exploiting its Street View Technology – and discover expert-created content. The real issues that institutions face is about how to catalogue data and make it accessible to expert users and a wider public, as well as on different platforms and systems. Some European projects deal with this topic, such as Minerva, Michael, Michael Plus, Athena (Angelaki *et al*., 2010) and Europeana (European Commission, 2009). In Italy, a set of rules and directions, defined by ICCD (Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione), establishes norms to digitise images properly (Auer *et al*., 1998) and records to catalogue the digitised data. More specifically, Regione Lombardia instituted SIRBeC (Sistema Informativo Regionale dei Beni Culturali), a regional cataloguing system (Degiarde, 2007). With those references in mind, our work developed according to three main steps.

1. *Retrieval*. We retrieved and organised the documentation from the designers' archives and the companies producing the items. Our main focus was collecting all the useful materials to reveal the mental process that led to the final design. Therefore, we excluded the commercial ones.
2. *Digitisation*. We digitised all the material in different ways according to the nature of the products. We mainly used digital photography for wide-size drawings (posters, technical, etc.), scanning for small-size sketches and documents, slides and transparencies up to the A3 format, 3D laser scanning for Sacchi's wooden models, and a 360° photography of one significant prototype. The entire process followed the Italian standards defined by ICCD (Auer *et al*., 1998), overtaking the top level A required for large prints and conservation as a high-quality digital copy of the original. Additionally, for correct colour calibration, every document has been digitised with Kodak grey scale and colour targets (Figure 1).

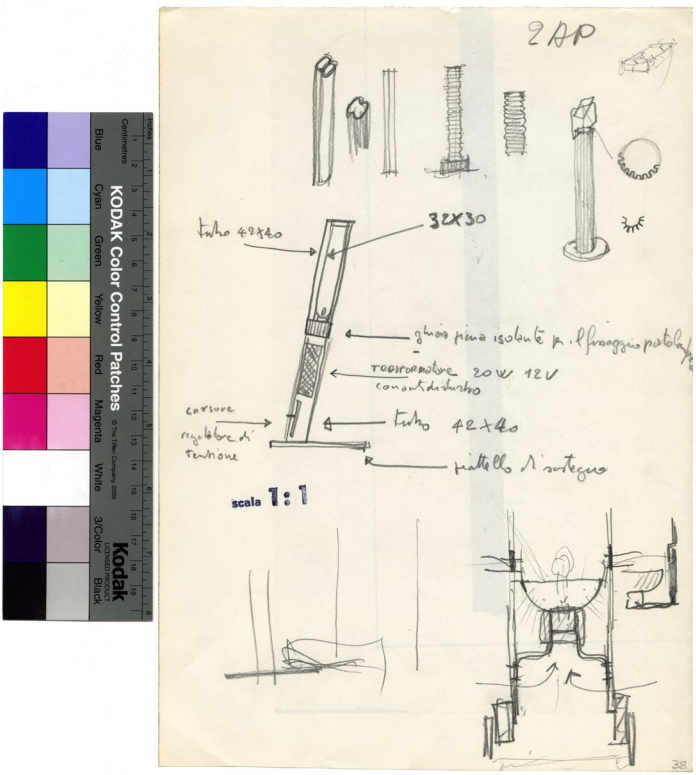

Figure 1.
Digitised sketches with colour targets. Image courtesy of Fondazione Achille Castiglioni – SIRBeC. https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/schede/w5010-00147/.

3. *Cataloguing*. We catalogued and stored the digitised material in the Regione Lombardia database, according to its cataloguing system for cultural heritage: SIRBeC. In particular, all the drawings, intermediate models, and final prototypes have been catalogued as works of art according to the record OA (Opera d'Arte), highlighting the artistic value of such production. In contrast, we catalogued photos, slides and transparencies with the record F (Photographs). Additionally, the system provides a record Design (DES R.L.), linking all the digitised materials that describe the overall project behind an industrial design product, the related documents, the subsequent restyled editions and the information about the author.

8.3 Gibigiana Lamp. The Narrative of a Design Project Through Archive Materials

With the specific purpose of exploring and reporting the evidence of Castiglioni and Sacchi's working modalities, the argumentation of the digitisation process is here limited to the case of the Gibigiana Lamp. It is a table lamp with an adjustable light swivelling in a particular spot with a movable mirror. The evident reference is the game of light sent back by a reflecting surface, called *gibigiana* in the Milanese dialect. In the Sacchi collection we analysed, this object is among those with the most materials (drawings, slides and intermediate models – stored at Fondazione Achille Castiglioni) (Table 1).

As foreseen, the A0/A1 technical drawings did not require a high resolution. As there were not so many to justify the purchase of a large scanner, digital photography has been considered the best method for their digitisation. The entire acquisition process took place at Photo Lab – Design Department of Politecnico di Milano – which provided a professional custom set to acquire them with a digital camera, Canon Eos 5D MarkII, with a minimum resolution of 240 dpi. A similar treatment was given to intermediate models, while final ones from Fondazione Achille Castiglioni were photographed from different angles to obtain a 360° degrees Quick Time VR image. Instead, the precious wooden prototypes by Sacchi are the only ones digitised

N°	Description	Size
22	Technical Drawings	A1-A0
25	Technical Drawings	A3-A4
64	Sketches	A3-A4
6	Slides	24x36 mm
7	Slides	6x6 cm
4	Colour Transparencies	10x12 cm
4	Colour Transparencies	13x18 cm
18	Models	Various
1	Wooden Model - Sacchi	Real size
2	Prototypes	Real size

Table 1.
Gibigiana Lamp digitised documents.

at the Virtual Prototyping and Reverse Modeling Lab at the Design Department, with the process of 3D scanning. We used a Minolta Vivid 910 laser scanner, and the clouds of points acquired have been processed to obtain a correct polygonal mesh, successively texturised properly.

Small-size drawings, sketches, slides and transparencies, instead, have been digitised with a flatbed scanner in not-compressed TIFF format with a resolution ranging from 300 dpi to 600 dpi for the first ones and 4800 dpi and 2400 dpi for the latter. Particular attention to the complexity of the drawing and the scanner calibration has ensured an accurate correspondence between the originals and the digital copies. The small-sized originals of Gibigiana have been mainly digitised at Fondazione Achille Castiglioni to minimise the risks of damage.

By reviewing and ordering all of these materials, the reconstruction of the process, from the early ideas to the final product, becomes patent. Like a growing creature, shape by shape, it narrates its story from the actual author's point of view. Intuitions, inspirations, rethinking and distractions: everything has been impressed, especially on paper. Thus, exploiting the SIRBeC, the 180 record realized for the Gibigiana lamp enables people to detect its development in the subsequent phases, a positive opportunity for scholars, researchers and design students who can profit from a mind-on and hands-on approach towards the design. Indeed, in some cases, Castiglioni's

bricoleur attitude (Levi-Strauss, 1962), bringing him to the ready-made or redesigned production (Antonelli, 2000), showed how he drew on existing objects to create new harmonious shapes; other examples demonstrate how some modifications derive from technical requirements to lower the cost; while sometimes suggestions and recalls to other objects that the designer would have developed later in his career can be highlighted (Figure 2), almost as a side note, on his drawings.

Finally, we can state that digitisation is a way to make the faber's spirit live again and to disseminate their knowledge in terms of crea-

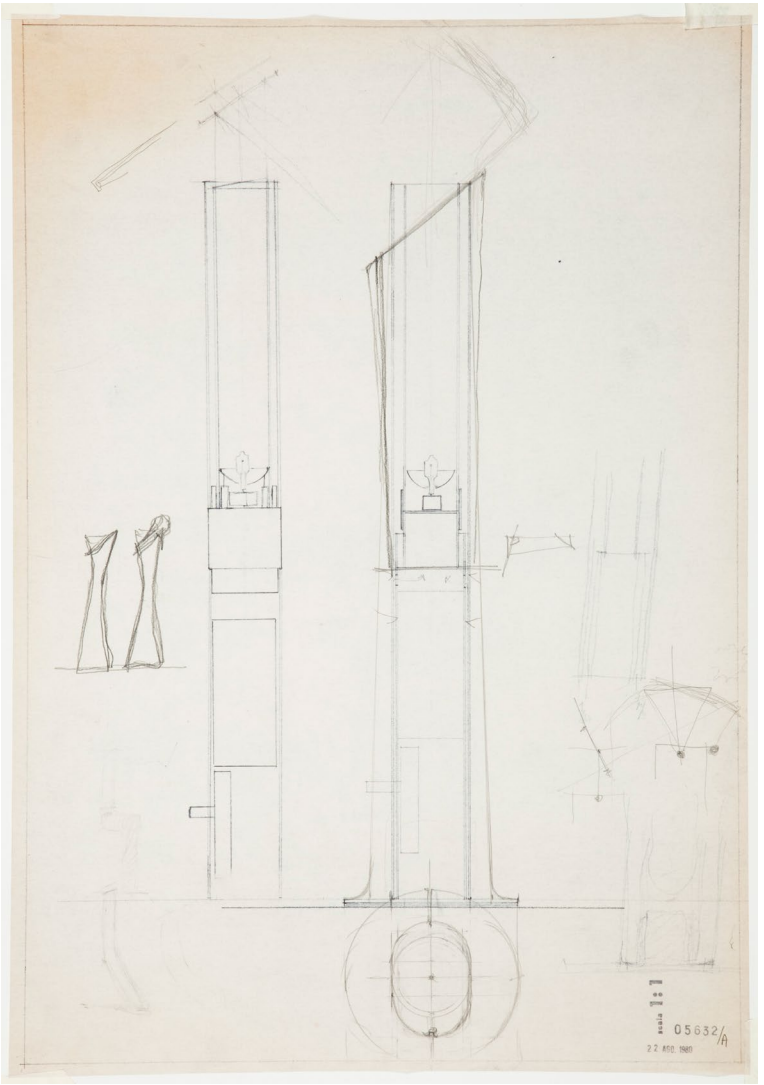

Figure 2. Sketches while designing Gibigiana. Image courtesy of Fondazione Achille Castiglioni – SIRBeC. https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/schede/w5010-00077/.

tivity, technical ability, process and communication: a heritage worth being discovered. Moreover, it is the only way to make some resources accessible while preserving the originals – sometimes characterised by big formats or fragile materials. Nonetheless, these kinds of documents are still not easy to access and interpret for common people, leaving the potential of this work mostly unexpressed. The project could be similarly extended to other products and archives in the Milan area to create a great repository for digital resources, on the condition that they could be disclosed and explained even to non-expert users, possibly in a captivating way.

The project shows how famous designers, like modern faber, can be brought back to life by the diffusion of their more private work materials; the aim is not just digitising and cataloguing but is the reconstruction of the process of development of the design product, bringing to light the cultural contents of the drawings, models and photos. They conserve great knowledge regarding creativity, technical ability, process and communication worth rediscovering and disseminating: a useful opportunity for researchers and scholars conducting studies and future designers who can profit from a mind-on and hands-on approach towards the culture of design projects.

As writers express their minds through their words, the protagonists of Italian industrial design – Castiglioni and Sacchi, among others – put their souls into drawings and models that usually remain stored out of sight. Even if the described approach is just one in the panorama of the valorisation actions concerning design archives, it demonstrates how digitising those precious materials can be suitable and powerful for the declared intents, especially if presented and spread narratively. Pointing at the core of the *faber*'s projects could add immense value to the mere exhibition of the design outcome, and, as the approach can be quite easy for public and private institutions to perpetrate, the design process could truly become a represented cultural heritage.

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9. Virtualisation and Digitalisation as Tools for Re-Reading the Ephemeral: The Case of the Franco Albini Foundation

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9.1 Digital Revolution and Cultural Heritage: Some Critical Observations

Macroscopically speaking, there are today two main currents that Knowledge preservation is facing: on one side, a world of widespread digital accessibility, and on the other, an extremely locally preserved cultural-place-heritage. A combination of material and immaterial factors.

After the complete geographical mapping of our planet, an internet colossus like Google is now undertaking the equally enormous challenge to realize an open-access Atlas made of *millions of artworks, historical sites, and stories*. It is a fact that the preservation of cultural heritage has been *shaken* by the digital media revolution, and in particular, there are two types of applications of these new technologies that will be introduced here: archives' digitalisation and virtualisation.

Despite this new discipline's *young* age, the literature is rich in observations and critics that raise crucial and complex topics like democracy and accessibility, fragility, and physical vs virtual.

Alexis E. Ramsey's words well reassume the dichotomy concerning archives' digitisation and physicality: "The necessity and value of digital archives stems from the possibility of access. […] the popularity of online research does suggest that non digitized collections may become invisible for the average researcher" (2009, p. 86). Conversely, the ability to touch and smell documents is a crucial aspect of archival work, allowing researchers to engage directly with collections rather than relying solely on digital renderings. Physical interaction fosters a deeper intimacy with archived objects.

As introduced within Chapter 1 of this book, there is a specific *atmosphere of a place* (p. 18). An awareness of the relationship between digital and traditional archives and understanding how collections are cataloged and processed in each setting should inspire researchers to ask questions, explore both formats, and reflect on how each shapes their research (Ramsey, 2009).

The observations of Melissa Terras confirm the different nature of these two levels: "Digitization is dependent on capturing a representation of existing analogue material. It is important to establish that digitisation is one of translation: the resulting digitised representation of an original analogue object is not a replacement for the object. Computational systems depend on exact numerical strings" (2015, p. 64).

Once this evidence is assumed, it is important to understand the reasons why archives' digitalisation is a priority hotspot for cultural heritage disciplines. Primarily, it is a matter of mass-culture revolution, as stated by Wolfgang Ernst:

> **Although the traditional archival format (spatial order, classification) will in many ways necessarily persist, the new archive is radically temporalised, "ephemeral", multi-sensual, corresponding with a dynamic user culture which is less concerned with records for eternity than with order by fluctuation. As a result, new challenges arise: what if the public will prefer to use Google rather than institutional Internet portals to get access and information on national, academic and cultural memory? (Ernst, 2016, pp. 15-16)**

And it is already going on. In the same publication, Jeffrey Schnapp goes deeper into the analysis, pointing out three main challenges in rethinking the notion of a *digital archive*: quantity, scale, and fragility.

When the challenge of quantity lies in managing an overwhelming flood of data, mere accumulation or digitisation of materials does not constitute conservation – let alone serve as an effective means of activating or preserving cultural memory. Storage is simple; meaningful engagement is far more complex. Cultural heritage that exists solely in storage, whether in physical archives or digital servers, is not truly alive in any meaningful sense. "So how to manage the inevitable and, indeed, welcome overflows?" (Schnapp, 2016, p. 19).

There is no single answer to this question, but for Schnapp, a crucial factor is a bottom-up approach that actively involves real communities from the outset in the creation and design of dynamic archives. The survival and relevance of archives depend on their connection to living communities – without this engagement, they risk being forgotten. Integrating these communities into the archival process can help preserve living knowledge, which is essential for ensuring these collections' future value and utility (Schnapp, 2016).

Schnapp's second point explores the relationship between macro and micro scales in experiencing cultural objects within online content's vast *ocean* and how they can be effectively managed. A new set of inventorial affordances – built on data, metadata, and capta – enables expanded modes of operation through computational techniques. These include tools that transform vast collections into aggregate visualisations, offering insights through multiple data perspectives. Such representations reveal new macro-scale narratives, shedding light on the history of collecting practices, institutional developments, or taxonomical shifts. However, they are not inherently intuitive human experiences but technical constructs – abstractions that must be critically shaped using various tools and methodologies to produce artefacts that inform, persuade, and create meaning (Schnapp, 2016).

Fragility is the third factor and one of the most critical because it arises from one of the weakest points brought by technology: obsolescence and impermanence. In this sense, Schnapp gives his own visionary suggestions:

> Digital materials may occupy little space and be readily resizable, sharable, and reproducible. […] But, for the very same reasons, digital assets are volatile, menaced by bit rot, and subject to misunderstanding and manipulation. Digital-specific techniques of conservation are still in their infancy. The oldest digital files currently preserved date back less than half a century: a mere drop in the bucket from the standpoint of cultural record. The challenges we face today are multiple: to layer a diversity of representations on top of the standard descriptors so as to better approach the full sensorium – the weight, the texture, the feeling – of cultural objects; to unjam data resources through open APIs (Application Programme Interface) and linked data environments so as to give rise to virtual realms of curation where researchers can work with open collections data and stories can be told through and with individual objects (excavated down to the nano scale) as well as with collection-sized aggregates. (Schnapp, 2016, p. 22)

9.2 Virtualisation

Going closer to the case study reported in this paper, as mentioned at the beginning, there is another strategic tool for cultural heritage preservation – narration and experience – brought by digital media: virtual reproductions. Researchers, companies, museums, universities, and government institutions grasped the modelling and visualisation capabilities allowed by computers to design reconstructions and databases of vulnerable or almost lost cultural heritage.

Beyond building models and other types of software that are capable of capturing astonishing immersive scenarios, the problematic core of virtualisation is all about contents and their impact:

> The question of the impact of media on contents is, of course, as old as cultural preservation itself. The introduction of papyrus and vellum as means of recording oral epics, […] the codex (book), which began to substitute the scroll in the second century AD, allowed easier transport and maintenance of literary collections, but because it was at first used to record everyday, low-level

> events, it was considered inferior to the scroll. Hence, many of the more "serious" literary works were not transcribed into the new format, and consequently were lost. The invention of the moveable type printing press by Johann Guttenberg in the fifteenth century directly contributed to the wide dissemination of information in Europe, ushering, or at least supporting, the emergence of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Age of the Enlightenment. Much of these older media have impacted the preservation of cultural heritage, the use of digital technology today raises questions that are situated at the convergence of the arts, technologies, and socio-cultural "memory-preserving" institutions (museum, libraries), challenging traditional notions of how cultural heritage can and should be represented, interpreted, and disseminated. (Kalay, 2007, p. 3)

The strengths and weaknesses of digital representation revolve around dissemination and authenticity. While digital media vastly expands access – allowing anyone with a computer, and soon a smartphone or cable TV, to view cultural data – it also introduces challenges of authenticity, interpretability, guidance, and contextualization, or their absence. One of the greatest strengths of physical heritage is its authenticity. Direct, unmediated engagement fosters a tangible connection to the past – an experience that digital viewing, filtered through a screen, cannot fully replicate. The monitor becomes a barrier, creating a sense of detachment that can lead to skepticism or a diminished sense of presence (Kalay, 2007).

It is equally relevant to culturally and historically contextualise digital reproduction, which avoids rendering the output a sterile, detached, and poorly engaging experience for the broad public. In this sense, a mutual correspondence between a well-structured digital archive and a correlated *virtual museum* could be a perfect combo.

Recalling a completely lost object or space is a complex matter, but one of the most challenging tasks comes when the subject of reproduction is ephemeral. The case study reported below, in fact, proposes a selection of virtual models of temporary exhibitions designed by one of the most important Italian architects of the 20th century. The ephemeral nature of these small architectures aligns

them with the challenges of preserving performance and media art. Traditionally, performance and archives have been seen as opposites – one embodying the transient and fleeting, the other representing stability and permanence. However, these distinctions have been increasingly questioned. The archive concept has expanded beyond a physical repository of objects and documents to include virtual archives accessible through screens, collective memory shaped by reinterpretations of history, and the political dimensions of archival access and authority. Similarly, performance has evolved beyond theatre and social rituals to become a broader framework for understanding action, embodiment, and cultural expression.

New perspectives on archives, history, and memory engage with theories of enactment and reinvention while evolving notions of performance provide a critical lens for examining archival traces. The idea of *performing archives* highlights how archives do more than store history – they actively shape it, influencing human thought, structuring narratives, and giving form to ideas (Borggreen & Gade, 2013).

9.3 The Franco Albini Foundation and its Archive

The Franco Albini Foundation[1] was instituted in 2007, about a year after the inauguration of the *Zero Gravity exhibition. Franco Albini – Building modernity*, curated by Fulvio Irace and designed by Renzo Piano on the 100th anniversary of Albini's birth. The work of the Foundation was born thanks to the coordination of Marco Albini and Paola Albini with the constitution of a scientific committee composed of Carlo Bertelli, Giampiero Bosoni, Federico Bucci, Francesco Dal Co, Francesco Moneta and Bob Noorda (now deceased).

From the beginning, the primary commitment of the Foundation is to recover and enhance the archival heritage preserved in the headquarters in via Telesio 13 in Milan. A heritage of considerable historical interest, as the Ministry for Cultural Heritage declared in 2002, and that today is formed by about 22.000 drawings, 6.000 photographs, 2.500 slides, as well as several hundred documents signed by Franco

Albini (1929-1955), by Studio Albini-Helg (1955-1970), by the Franco Albini Studio and Franca Helg, Antonio Piva, Marco Albini (1970-1977).

Thus, the research and study activities of the archive materials began almost at the same time as the actual cataloguing and systematization of the materials. All the cataloguing of the work by the Studio since the post-war period was fairly precise, but the material before the war was still not catalogued.

The in-depth study of the archive and its reorganization have been a key to understanding the work of Albini. Since the early 2000s, the discovery of little-known, if not entirely new, materials belonging to the first years of production of the Milanese architect have defined and completed the study and knowledge of the whole Albini design process.

Cristina Bianchetti (1988) states, "In this perspective, the analysis of small private archives is a precious way to understand the formation of theoretical positions and practical attitudes". The first result of these new studies was the publishing of two books by Electa, *I musei e gli allestimenti di Franco Albini* (Bucci & Rossari, 2005) and *Il design e gli interni di Franco Albini* (Bosoni & Bucci, 2009). The two publications have in fact brought to light a journey based mainly on interior design, temporary installations and objects: the refined planning apprenticeship in Gio Ponti's studio between 1929 and 1931, the first projects with the partner Giancarlo Palanti since 1932, the definitive adhesion to the group of rationalists and finally the long period of productive suspension during the war years (Bosoni & Bucci, 2009).

The lucky and almost unique of its kind (many important archives of architecture and design have been dismembered and dislocated in different places that sometimes are even geographically distant), the nature of this asset protected by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, has made the Albini archive a perfect field of research since all the materials are stored in just one place: drawings, photographs, documents, models, prototypes, books, old magazines and even some recently discovered 8mm videos shot by Albini himself. This favorable condition meant that the work on the Albini archive enhancement could have been developed through different types of research (Figures 1-2).

9.4 The Virtual Museum of Franco Albini's Temporary Exhibitions

One of the first initiatives of the Foundation was the development of *The Virtual Museum of Franco Albini's Temporary Exhibitions*, to restore a more vivid memory of those precious ephemeral projects so rich in concepts and values of the Albini method to represent a strategic design *training ground*.

Figure 1.
Detail of an interior of the Franco Albini studio in via Telesio 13, Milan. Photo credits: Matteo Girola. Courtesy Franco Albini Foundation.

The value of the temporary installations project reaches very high peaks in Italy during the 1930s. The fascist regime did indeed have a double attitude towards the rationalist *revolution*. If, in fact, at first, the reaction towards the artistic ferment of the futurists and the modernist visions of rationalist architects was of absolute enthusiasm and sharing of that strong avant-garde drive (as the *Casa del Fascio* by Giuseppe Terragni in Como, 1932-1936, shows in all its beauty), from the mid-1930s, so approaching the world conflict, the fascist regime closed itself in a gloomy and monumental imaginary rhetoric inspired by the great architecture of the Roman Empire, symbol of power and invincibility. The ethical principles of Italian rationalism, based on the values of democratic design and the equitable distribution of resources, aspired to an industrially-built standardised architecture, so very far from the majestic regime buildings such as the *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana* of La Paula in Rome (1939) or the *Central Station* of Milan (1931).

This led, in fact, the rationalist architects to the almost impossibility of concretely realising their architectures. At this point, the opportunity to express one's revolutionary ideas can be realised in temporary installations, in particular starting from 1933 with the inauguration of the Milanese Triennial Exhibitions inside the Giovanni

Figure 2. Detail of the archive inside the Franco Albini studio in via Telesio 13, Milan. Photo credits: Matteo Girola. Courtesy Franco Albini Foundation.

Muzio *Palazzo dell'Arte*. Here begins a series of ambitious and rigorous rationalist architecture projects in the form of 1:1 scale prototypes (today, we would call them *mockups*).

As evidence of the crucial role of temporary exhibitions as moments of free expression and experimentation, we find the following reflections by Giuseppe Pagano on the pages of *Domus* (1942), who specifically refers to the relationship between the arts:

> **The only place where some experimental freedom was sometimes permitted and modern architects were allowed to attempt a collaboration among the most active artists in a risky test of coherence was the field of exhibitions. Only in this field I have been able to work and attempt an effective collaboration between various arts. And from what has been done in this ephemeral but glorious test case, something has come out that still lasts, at least as a teaching of taste, at least as an investigation into a modern interpretation of the monumental, at least as a research to establish the limits of an artistically, functionally and morally bearable decoration. (Pagano, 1942, p. 230)**

Also, the young Franco Albini begins his journey in the field of temporary installation, giving proof from the beginning of knowing how to realise his ideas with extreme consistency. Ideas to which he will remain firmly stable in a perspective of obsessive improvement.

A path described in detail by Marcello Fagiolo in his text *Genesi di un linguaggio. L'astrazione magica di Albini e la 'via italiana' al design e alle esposizioni (1930-1945)* that already in the title contains a very precise and anticipatory vision of Albini's work concerning the link between his exhibition projects, the domestic interiors and the individual objects. In the essay by Fagiolo there are some identifying strands of the Albini approach to the installations: *Diaphragm, transparency, translucency*, *The spatial grid and the threadlike pillars*, *The scaffolding-caging*, *The idea of flight and sky*, *The aviary, the cage, the tree*, *The loom of wires*, *The tensile structures and the suspended space*, or *The sailing ship and the swing*. Regarding the theme *White Metals and Poor Materials*, Fagiolo writes: "[...] Obviously, Albini was interested neither in the rhetoric of the ephemeral at any cost nor in the

rhetoric of autarchy, but he was just interested in the principle of maximum economy and the didactic value of the design, considered as a variation also depending on the different materials" (Fagiolo, 1979).

The virtual museum project was born to bring to light all the most meticulous details of these ephemeral interiors, whose care in design and construction emerges only through the careful work of recovering all the possible sources useful for their three-dimensional (virtual) reproduction.

Since 2008 the Foundation has begun to collaborate with the designers Francesco Fusillo and Chiara Lecce and the Accenture group for the reconstruction of seven projects: the *Ina Pavilion* at the Trade Fair in Milan (1935), the *Ancient Italian Jewelery Exhibition* for the VI Triennale of Milan (1936), the *Hotel Room*, the *Standard Apartment For Four People* and the *Working-Class Housing* in the Home Exhibition of the VI Milan Triennale (1936), *The Room For A Man* still for the VI Milan Triennale (1936), the installation of the *Montecatini Room Of Lead and Zinc* for the Autarkic Exhibition of Italian Mineral in Rome (1938), the *Living Room for a Villa* at the VII Milan Triennale (1940) and finally the *Olivetti store* of Paris (1958-1960).

The archive work becomes the founding basis for facing the work of redesign and reproduction: photos, project reports, drawings, archival lists, letters and catalogs of exhibitions, magazines and books as supplementary completion material.

As stated by Yehuda Kalay:

> **Historical re-constructions are an inexact practice. Archaeologists rely on a variety of sources, which are often incomplete and contradictory: documents may be missing, buildings may have been modified in unexpected ways, and artifacts may have been displaced or intermingled with ones from a different period or culture. The data also comes in different levels of abstraction: from texts to maps to painting to artifacts to whole buildings. Reconciling all this information into a single, unified coherent narrative is often impossible. Digital media can help: its discrete nature lends it the ability to deal with chinks of data, which can be stored separately but linked to one another in meaningful ways. (Kalay, 2007, p. 5)**

In practical terms, the tracing of the original drawings (AutoCAD), the comparison with the real dimensions and the proportions of the drawings, and the study of the details from the iconographic material (many backs of the photographs contain valuable information on the project: from the colors to the materials, from the production companies to the involved collaborators), the redesign of the single objects present in the installations and finally the need to make resurface the material and chromatic aspects (difficult to perceive from the photographic materials of the time), represent very effective tools for studying and reworking the projects (Figures 3-7).

Beyond an in-depth description of each project, tracing a common discourse on the analysis of recovered materials is possible. One of the most interesting elements that emerged from all four projects is the homogeneity of the materials retrieved in the archive: the drawings are all of a technical nature, on glossy paper of various formats (from A4 to A0), and there are rarely present sketches, maybe just some quick pencil notes on the technical drawing; the photographic

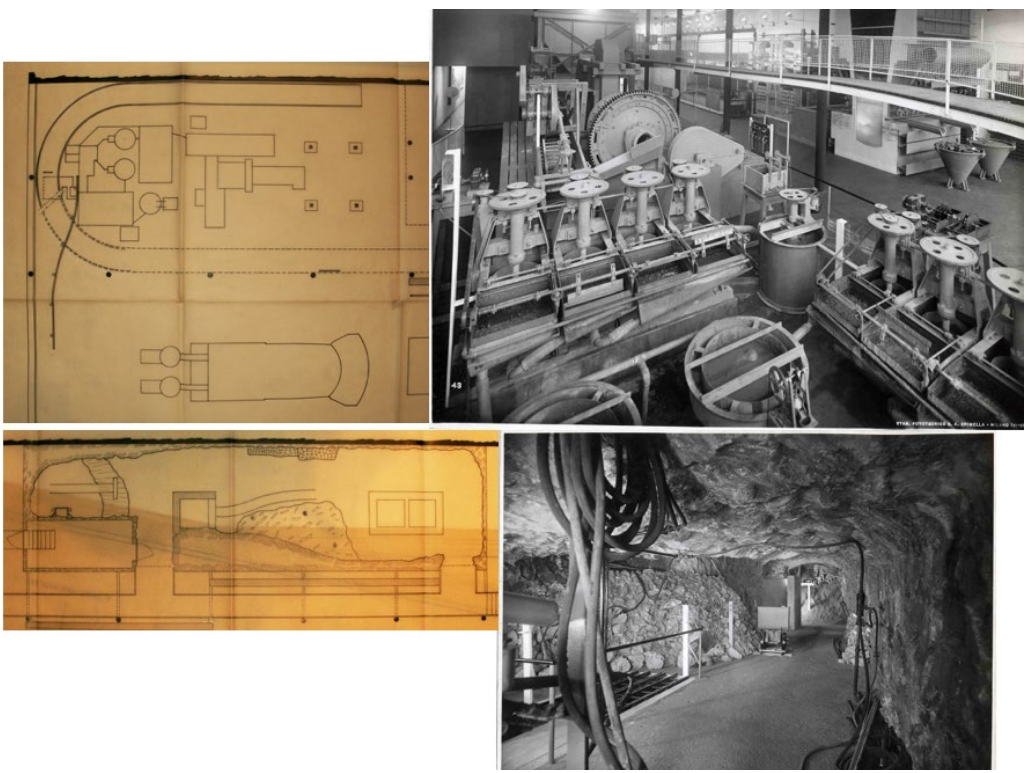

Figure 3.
Drawings and photos of the *Lead and Zinc Room*, designed by Albini for Montecatini, at the Mostra autarchica del minerale italiano, Rome, 1938. Franco Albini Foundation Archive.

material is a richly documented source, almost always of professional execution (for example, photo Crimella Milano for the Triennale) and completed on the back of each photograph by descriptive references of the project (materials, production companies, colors, etc.); the press review is ordered in special binders with magazines of the time. Instead, documents and letters are almost absent in the archive, except for the project reports, which generally consist of one or two synthetic pages of text. This last point is instead completed in the case of the Triennale installations, in the catalogs (preserved in the Foundation) and in the paper documents (mainly letters) that are instead kept only in the archives of the Milan Triennale (Figures 8-9).

The detailed observation of the archive sources gave the opportunity to analyse, study, and observe a project path on a time scale of about twenty years. Although these are sometimes very well-known and commented works, on this occasion, the study of primary sources represented an original resource that completes the understanding of the techniques and dynamics of the project, of the

Figure 4.
Detail of the sports equipment cabinet and a related photo, designed by Albini for the *Stanza per un uomo* (*Room for a man*) project, presented at the Furniture Gallery of the VI Triennale di Milano, 1936. Franco Albini Foundation Archive.

Figure 5.
Left: photo of the mirror with an integrated illustration for gym exercises designed by Albini for the Stanza per un uomo (Room for a man) project, presented at the Furniture Gallery of the VI Triennale di Milano, 1936. Right: redesign of the illustration used for the virtual redesign of the Stanza per un uomo exhibition. Franco Albini Foundation Archive.

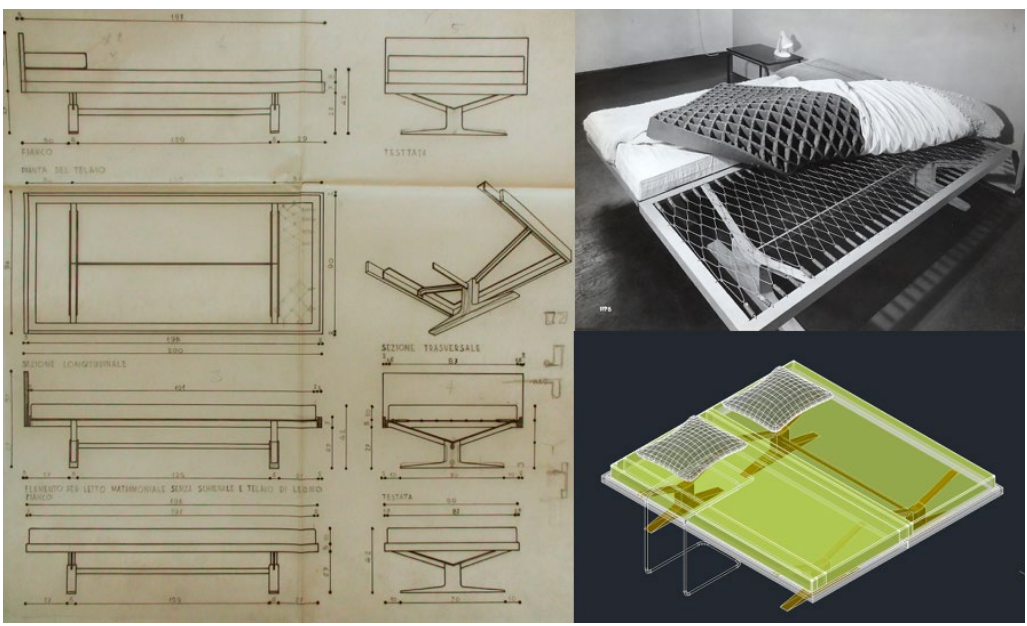

Figure 6.
Original technical drawings, a photographic detail end a 3D reproduction of the beds designed by Albini for the Standard Apartment for four people at the Home Exhibition of the VI Triennale di Milano, 1936. Franco Albini Foundation Archive.

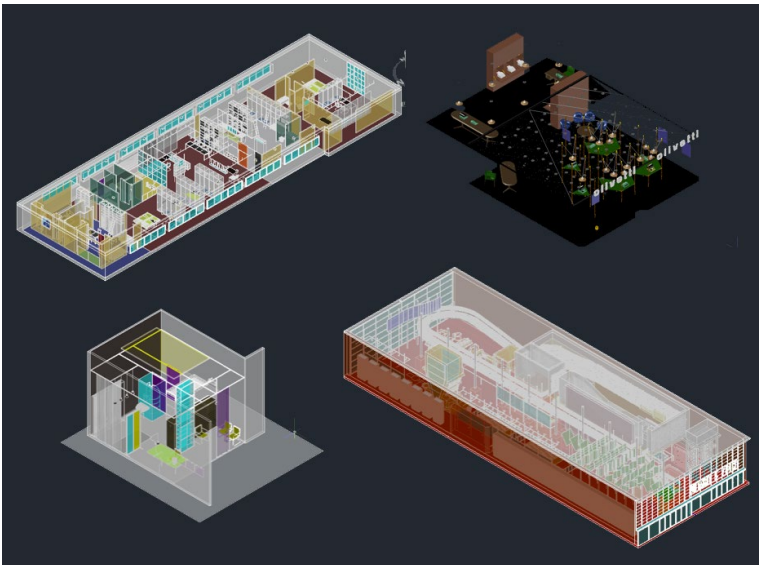

Figure 7. Chiara Lecce, 3D redesigned models of four Albini's temporary exhibitions. Top left, clockwise: the Home Exhibition of the VI Milan Triennale (1936); the Olivetti shop in Paris (1958); the Montecatini Room of Lead and Zinc, autarkic Exhibition of Italian Mineral, Rome (1938); The Room for a Man, VI Milan Triennale (1936).

operating subjects, and of the ideological guidelines, outlining their methodological continuity. A re-reading that aims at the protection of the memory and the enhancement of heritage is the one of the Franco Albini Foundation, rich in messages for the present and the future both in the didactic/educational field and historical/critical field.

The experiment of *The Virtual Museum of Franco Albini's Temporary Exhibitions*, which is already 10 years old, has been a precious source of study for all researchers and archivists. Still, it was also an anticipatory attempt at transposing disappeared spaces – but yet historically precious in terms of cultural heritage – into a digital, online setting.

In 2012, the concept of the *metaverse* was still in its infancy, and Albini's virtual museum existed only as a simple video output – now no longer accessible on YouTube – without further developments over the years, proving the concerns about technology's fragilities (obsolescence and impermanence) introduced by Schnapp (2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the emergence of a more immersive and interactive internet, driven by advancements in computer graphics and the metaverse. Now envisioned as a persistent, shared 3D virtual space within a broader digital ecosystem, the metaverse presents vast, uncharted potential. It offers innovative ways to re-experience cultural heritage architectures, such as temporary exhibitions, transforming perception, spatial cognition, and other

Figure 8.
Screenshot of the video dedicated to the *Lead and Zinc Room*, presented for *The Virtual Museum of Franco Albini's Temporary Exhibitions*, promoted by the Franco Albini Foundation and developed by Accenture (2013).

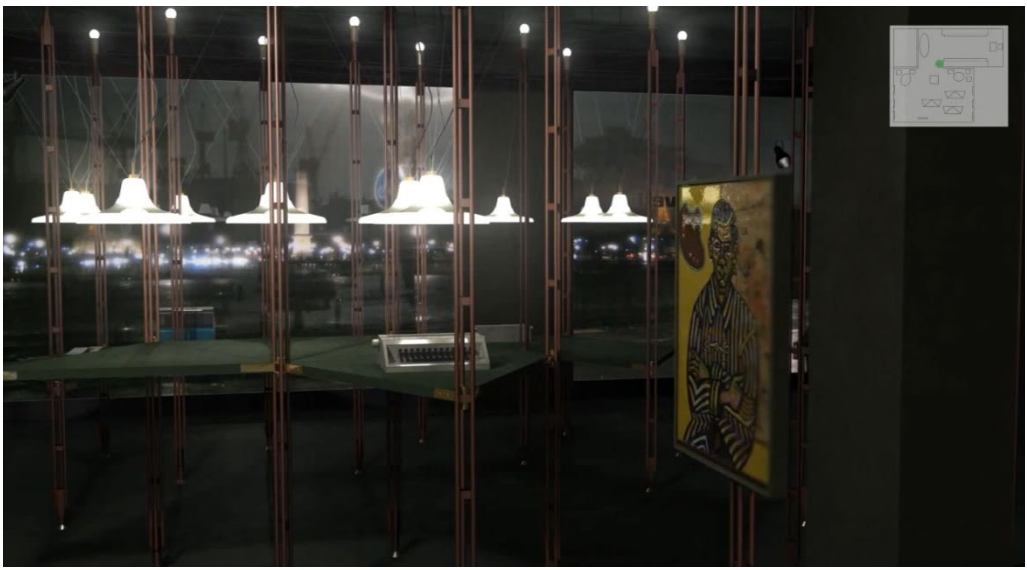

Figure 9.
Screenshot of the video dedicated to the *Olivetti shop* in Paris (1958), presented for *The Virtual Museum of Franco Albini's Temporary Exhibitions*, promoted by the Franco Albini Foundation and developed by Accenture (2013).

areas that require further exploration. As this paradigm shift unfolds over the next two decades, designers, historians, and archivists must rise to the challenge. Their expertise will be essential in shaping this post-digital spatial revolution (Moneta, 2020), ensuring that memory, history, and architectural heritage remain at its core

Notes

Note 1.
See also the reference to the Franco Albini Foundation within Chapter 1.

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House and studio museums of artists, architects, and designers – the spaces of the faber – constitute the core subject of this volume, which examines how these dwellings and workspaces, already configured as museums or envisaged as such after the disappearance of their owners, may be systematically studied, classified, and enhanced through the disciplinary lenses of art history, museology, and design. Originating in the D.E.SY research project (Designing Enhancement Strategies and Exhibit Systems for Italian House and Studio Museums), the book advances a typological framework for the spaces of the faber in Lombardy, with particular attention to Milan, and investigates their narrative, experiential, and curatorial potential in relation to contemporary design and curatorial strategies. The contributions address house museums, house ateliers, studios, and studio-archives, engaging with issues such as the aura and genius loci of these places, processes of musealisation and reconstruction, and analog and digital storytelling devices for their valorisation. By integrating historical, museological, and design-based approaches, the volume proposes a polysemous reading of the faber's spaces as vital microcosms and three-dimensional self-portraits, offering a shared methodological ground and operative tools for researchers, curators, designers, and cultural institutions.

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