La Triennale Di Milano 2016: the story of a “rebirth”

A long history connects the BIE and La Triennale, which occupies a special place in our organisation by its very nature.

Between 1933 and 1996, the BIE has recognised 20 editions of La Triennale. Today after a gap of almost 20 years, the BIE and La Triennale join efforts and work together on the preparation of a project on the theme “The 21st century: Design after Design”, which will take place in 2016 in Milan, global city of interaction between design and industry.

The relationship between the BIE and La Triennale has deep roots: the first Triennale Exhibition under the auspices of the BIE took place in 1933, only two years after the BIE started its mission of regulating and overseeing World Expos.

In this context, La Triennale has always represented a “niche” within the world of World Expos highlighting – on a smaller and more specialized scale - the most dynamic and innovative aspects of International Exhibitions.

La Triennale is unique. Symbol of the culture of projects for over a century, it has presented in its works the great challenges of modern social life: from urban planning to entertainment, from environment to cultural integration. La Triennale has given art the role of privileged interpreter of society.

Innovation has always been at the forefront of La Triennale. Its unique approach of synthesising the various trends, without opposing them reflects its innovative nature.

With its new edition, the XXIst Century Triennale will present a major innovation: cities, regions, universities, companies, design centres and young designer groups will be present. All these stakeholders will be invited to participate to this global dialogue and present their prospects, their challenges, proposals, thoughts, their objects and their possible applications in the daily life and in the society.

While being deeply anchored in aesthetics and design, the XXIst Century Triennale is changing the way in which it encapsulates and communicates innovation. The innovation will not just be dictated solely by materials and products but also by solutions and practices, at the service of humankind and society to improve the quality of life.

We look forward to working in close cooperation with the organisers of La Triennale and the BIE Member States to prepare this 21st edition of the Triennale di Milano 2016.

Vicente González Loscertales
Secretary General of the BIE

1. After a pause of 20 years, what has motivated the organisation of a new Triennale International Exhibition?

In the last decades, the Triennale’s combination of tradition in International Exhibitions and its permanent activity have ensured a broad success in terms of audience.

Acknowledging that International Exhibitions play a prominent role in sharing best practices on vital worldwide issues, the management of Triennale, with the support of the Italian Government, has decided to resume this core activity.

2. What about the theme “XXI Triennale: Design after Design”?

Supported by the Italian Government, that recognizes to Triennale a major role as a forerunner and a pioneer in the proposed themes and in its presentations, as well as for the capacity of combining arts and industry in multi-disciplinary events, we chose for the coming edition the theme “XXI Triennale: Design after Design”: a highly articulated concept, whose key elements can serve as founding principles for an exhibition flourishing with objects, at the same time enjoyable to the larger public and a source of reflection for experts, under economic, technological, cultural and educational aspects.
La Triennale di Milano : a short historical background

In 1930, the IVth International Triennale Exhibition of the Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts, called La Triennale, replaces the Biennial of the Decorative Arts that had been held in 1923, 1925 and 1927 in the Villa Reale di Monza.

In May 1933, the Vth edition of La Triennale is held in Milan. On this occasion, the new Palazzo dell’Arte, the current headquarters of La Triennale is inaugurated. This Italian cultural Institution holds international exhibitions, colloquiums, cultural and artistic events about design, fashion, architecture, cinema, communication and society.

The Bureau International des Expositions may grant recognition to the ‘Milan Triennial Exhibition of Decorative Arts and Modern Architecture’, on ground of historical precedence, provided that it retains its original features. BIE Protocol-Part II-Article 4 B) 1.

The Palazzo dell’Arte was constructed in very little time, between autumn 1931 and spring 1933, on architect Giovanni Muzio’s project. The building covers an area of 16,000 sqm. It was designed and built with the specific purpose of hosting exhibitions, so much so that Muzio himself liked to call it the “container”: as time goes by, the building has come to be identified with the Institution; for each edition, it has been ‘reinvented’ with hundreds of exhibition routes, each time set up and dismantled according to a logic based on temporary transformations.

Situated in the green of Parco Sempione, a short distance from Castello Sforzesco, from the Arco della Pace with its neoclassical architecture and from the Arena, the Palazzo dell’Arte displays historical and architectural continuity with the city’s noblest heritage. The site lies at the centre of important infrastructural hubs, such as the Ferrovie Nord, the Cadorna railway station, the Sempione road system and the exhibition complex “Fiera di Milano” (where the 1906 International Exhibition took place).

Right from its inauguration, the palace was characterized by the completeness and functional modernity of the project. It provides an entrance not only from the road but also from the park, a series of services among which a bar-restaurant, a space for open-air events, Customs and Post offices and a large hall accessible from both the theatre and the exhibition halls.

The Palazzo dell’Arte is developed according to three basic criteria: the grouping of the exhibition areas along the perimeter; the highlighting of an autonomous route unconnected to these areas; the gathering of the community and formal areas in the heart of the building and on the side towards the park. This clear distribution draws its origin from the rational and advanced building concept.

The building underwent its first important refurbishment at the beginning of the Eighties when it was stripped back to the essentials to evaluate the quality of the space fully. The second important refurbishment dates back to 2002 and was designed by architect Michele De Lucchi achieving a final revaluation of the building.

The recent restoration is part of a wider project to relaunch Triennale di Milano and its activities. The new exhibition and public areas have evolved coherently from the original ones, capable of adapting to the most varied functional needs keeping at the same time a unique and distinctive personality. In fact, right from its origins, the building was designed to be flexible and adaptable, in order to meet the needs of any performance or exhibition.

In this framework, the Biblioteca del Progetto (Project Library) was created, documenting the evolution of creative thought in Italy in the Twentieth century and keeping the memory of contemporaneity.

In 2007, the refurbishment of the building was completed specifically for the opening of the Triennale Design Museum: from the restoration and modernization of the systems in the first floor named Curva to laying the bridge at the main entrance, a highly symbolical threshold stating the museum’s autonomy from the building as well as its willingness to communicate with the surrounding space.

The reunification with the Teatro dell’Arte is the most recent renovation: another phase in the rediscovery of Muzio’s original project consists in the recovery of the connection between the exhibition building and the theatre, conceived as parts of one single unit but divided physically and administratively since the Seventies. In 2010, the theatre was reconnected to the building and now offers a real stage to discuss design, art and the culture of projects.
XXIst International Exhibition 2016 of Decorative Arts and Modern Architecture La Triennale di Milano

La Triennale de Milan presents its XXI International Exhibition, to be held in year 2016, from April 2nd to September 12th, entitled « XXIst century. Design after Design ».

La Triennale is proud to resume its historic tradition after a pause of 20 years, while contributing to this new Exhibition with a strong innovative character: Cities, Regions, Universities, Enterprises, Design Centres, as well as young designers’ groups will be invited to participate. The second and most important novelty consists in extending La Triennale traditionally held in the Palazzo dell’Arte to other sites, just as prestigious, involving the whole city of Milan. A considerable number of participants from all kinds of cultural backgrounds will be able to participate in the event.

La Triennale 2016 will be held in historical places like the Monza Royal Palace - whose restoration will be completed by year 2015 -, places linked to contemporary art museum, such as the Ansaldo Museum of Cultures, designed by David Chipperfield - which will be inaugurated by fall 2014 -, places directly connected to businesses such as HangarBicocca – the former Pirelli’s plant, where are shown huge installations by Anselm Kiefer -, places where research means a continuous practice, such as the Politecnico, 150 years old, and Bovisa Campus, where resides the biggest school of design in Europe.

Venues

Fabbrica del Vapore
Youth culture production centre
Reconversion of industrial warehouses

Fondazione FORMA per la Fotografia
Photography space
Reconversion of an historical tram depot in the Ticinese district

Politecnico di Milano
Training hub and science and technology research hub
Academic building

Ansaldo Museum of Cultures
New exhibition venue: opening Fall 2014 - Reconversion of industrial plant
Multi-cultural activity centre and museum
Project by David Chipperfield

Villa Reale di Monza
Exhibition Centre, venue for the 3 Decorative Arts Biennale Exhibitions from 1923 to 1927 and for the 1930 Triennale Exhibition
Eighteenth Century villa

Urban Plans

Milan and the so-called City-Region of Milan has about 9.3 million inhabitants. Situated in the heart of Lombardy, the most populated and developed region of Italy, Milan is the most important city of Northern Italy. Milan’s centrality within the European context is demonstrated by its position in the centre of the area bounded by the corridor 5 Lisbona-Kiev route and by the Genova-Rotterdam and Roma-Berlin north-south routes. Milan and Lombardy can thus count on a demographic basin and a totally central position.

Milan has an extremely rich and integrated infrastructure system: 4 metro lines and a surface transit system that connect the city areas and the city with the suburbs; 3 orbital roads all around the city; motorways, the A4 Torino-Milano-Venezia, the A8/A9 Milano-Como-Chiasso (Switzerland) and the Milano-Varese, the A7 Milano-Genova and the A1 Milano-Roma-Napoli, the motorway to the south; international airports, Milano Malpensa, Milano Linate and Bergamo Orio al Serio; international railway stations, Milano Centrale, Milano Porta Garibaldi and Milano Cadorna; high-speed rail connection to Torino and Bologna.

Finally, Milano is very close to lakes Maggiore, Como, Lugano and Varese, areas of outstanding natural beauty and cultural interest.
Organisational structure

The International Exhibition that Triennale is going to organise in 2016 aims to feature a new concept compared to its previous editions. While on the one hand the Institution intends to recover one of its original features by organising its Triennial International Exhibitions, on the other it is also willing to develop a brand new structure to keep up the pace with the current context of exchange networks and communication.

To do this, it is considered that:

1. Under this new vision, the size of the Exhibition will be so large as to require several different areas in addition to the Palazzo della Triennale. Therefore, it is planned to extend the exhibition to the entire city, involving other public and private places that lend themselves well to exhibitions;

2. The success of this Exhibition is linked to the construction of a system of unprecedented local and international alliances, not limited or bound to the traditional participation of official bodies and institutions, but open to the direct involvement of people who may be interested in the theme in various ways and who may help develop its different facets.

Considering these two objectives, and in relation to their similarity by theme and history, it is believed that creating a synergy between Triennale and Cosmit/Salone del Mobile – one of the leading trade fairs in the world – would be an ideal opportunity, the latter being able to attract maximum attention to design and design products.

The 2012 edition brought in approximately 1,000 Italian exhibitors and 300 foreign exhibitors, the influx of nearly 300,000 visitors and the presence of 5,700 journalists in Milan. The Exhibition is therefore planned to begin at the same time as the Salone del Mobile 2016, thereby extending the presence of participants at the exhibition for a period of 5 months.

Participation of entities and their nature

Besides the traditional invitation to Governments of the BIE member States, it is planned to extend invitations to a wider range of institutions, and also to directly involve various entities, related to La Triennale for their nature and mission. These entities may include both profit and not-for-profit organisations.

The aim is to obtain:

- An institutional participation: Countries and government bodies (ministries, government agencies, etc.) ; Regional authorities ; Municipalities
- A non-institutional participation: Not-for-profit entities-research : promotion, education, dissemination (Centres and Associations for the promotion of Arts, Architecture and Design, Universities and training schools specialising in the various disciplines of the project, Museums, etc.) – Profit entities : business research, production, advertising : Companies, Crafts, Professional associations, etc.)

For this reason, La Triennale is committed to strengthening all existing relationships and promoting new ones, with the intention of creating a real network between players and operators in the sectors concerned.

Scientific committee

Claudio De Albertis (Italy, 1950)

President of ANCE (Associazione Nazionale Costruttori Edili) from 2000 to 2006 ; President of Ance Milano (Associazione Imprese Edili e Complementari di Milano, Lodi, Monza e Brianza) from 2006 ; President of In-Arch, National Institute of Architecture, Section Lombardy ; President of the Foundation “La Triennale di Milano”, he sits on the board of directors of some of the most important companies for Italian territorial development.

He has been adjunct Professor of the course “Economics and Business Management” at the Faculty of Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano.

Silvana Annicchiarico (Italy, 1963)

Director of Triennale Design Museum

As an architect, she is involved in the fields of research, criticism and teaching.

Since 2007 she is the Director of Triennale Design Museum in Milan. From 1998 to 2007 she was Curator of the Permanent Italian Design Collection of La Triennale di Milano. From 1998 to 2004 she held a temporary post as a Professor within the Degree in industrial design of the Politecnico di Milano. From 1998 to 2001, she was assistant editor of the monthly design magazine “Modo”. She collaborated with several newspapers and radio stations. She is a member of the Triennale di Milano Scientific Committee for Design, Manufacturing and Handicraft.

Andrea Cancellato (Italy, 1955)

Director General of La Triennale di Milano

Company consultant. Mayor of Lodi from 1980 to 1990.

From 1994 to 2007, CEO of CLAC, Centro Legno Arredo Cantù, a public-private joint stock company whose mission is to transfer global design and technological innovation in SMEs in the wood and furniture sector.

From 2002 to 2007, CEO of Material ConneXion Milano, services company for the introduction of innovative materials in the field of design. Since 2002, Director General of Fondazione La Triennale di Milano, the Italian institute for architecture, town planning, design, the decorative arts, fashion, crafts, industry and new media.

Vicente González Loscertales (Spain, 1947)

Secretary General of the BIE

Before his nomination as Secretary General of the Bureau International des Expositions,

in 1994, he was Director of International Participation at Seville Expo 1992. Prior to this, he held various crucial positions in cooperation in Africa, Asia, and Central America for Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain. He taught Contemporary History at the University of Madrid (Ph.D. in History). He has published on history, social sciences and World Expos. He has received decorations from several countries.
Andrea Branzi (Italy, 1938)
His work and interests relate to industrial design, architecture, urban planning, and cultural promotion. Founder of Design and Architecture movements, he wrote many books and works as a Professor of Industrial Design at the Politecnico di Milano. In 1983 he was one of the founders of the ‘Domus Academy’, the first international post-graduate school of design.

Luisa Collina (Italy, 1968)
Professor of Design and Head of the Master of Science in Product Service System Design at the Politecnico di Milano. Her main interests concern strategic design and design driven innovation at system level. She collaborates with universities and research centres in national and international research programs and strategic innovation projects. She is Rector’s Delegate for Expo end Events at Politecnico di Milano and since 2013 she has been President of Cumulus, the International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media.

Elizabeth Diller (Poland 1954) et Ricardo Scofidio (USA, 1935)
Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio are founding partners of Diller Scofidio + Renfro, a 70-person interdisciplinary design studio that have integrated architecture, visual arts, and performing arts since 1979. Elizabeth Diller is a Professor of Architecture at Princeton University. Ricardo Scofidio is Professor Emeritus of Architecture at Cooper Vision.

Kenya Hara (Japan, 1958)
Hara Kenya is a Japanese graphic designer and curator. Since 2001, Hara has been the Art Director of Muji and designed the opening and closing ceremony programs of the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympic Games. He is the author of “Designing Design”.

Stefano Micelli (Italy, 1966)
Professor of International Management at the Ca’ Foscari University in Venice and a Member of the scientific committee at the Maker Faire Rome, Micelli is the author of the book Futuro Artigiano (Future Craftsman), which looks at the transformation of the Italian industrial system. One of his recent articles, “The third industrial revolution needs a new generation of craftsmen” (May 2013) provoked intense discussion on the Web.

Pierluigi Nicolin (Italy, 1941)
Professor at Politecnico di Milano, he carries out his design, researching and publishing (Lotus International magazine) activities along with the curatorialship of exhibitions (Sixth Triennale Design Museum edition “Design. The Syndrome of Influence”, 2013).

Richard Sennet (USA, 1943)
Richard Sennett writes about cities, labour, and culture. He teaches sociology at New York University and at the London School of Economics. He is currently working on a project called ‘Homo Faber,’ exploring material ways of making culture.

Cino Zucchi (Italy, 1955)
Senior Professor of Architectural and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano, he is a member of several boards and committees in the fields of architecture and urban design. His essays and writings have been published widely both in Italy and abroad, as have the projects of his Studio. He participated in the organization and exhibition design of the XV, XVI, XVIII and XIX Triennale, and his work has been shown at the 6th and 8th Venice Biennale.

All the countries in the world are invited
Reclaiming its history of Organizer of the International Exhibition “la Mostra”, Research Centre and window on design, architecture and the arts, La Triennale di Milano calls out for an exchange and active involvement of the Countries of the world, both as States and as structures of technological innovation, besides their role of business promoters.

The art of making things has been the driving force behind global increase and wealth (with a number of critical side-issues such as pollution, social imbalance, etc.).

Designing and making things was once, more often than not, part of the same activity and the work of the same person (or shop).
A drop in the costs of employment mobility, the presence of a shared language, the need to find a productive outlet to creative unrest, have brewed a competitive stress that on one hand has allowed us to find new designer solutions to things we need, while on the other stripping supplies to adapt to a “lazy” demand.

The boom of new communication technologies, the considerable cutting down of their cost (which seems set to continue), allow designers to experiment first-hand, free of market restrictions, the most daring and hi-tech solutions they carry, even when related to market lead-time (notoriously slow, considering too, the necessity of depreciating research costs).

The new rapid prototyping and 3D printing systems, moreover, make it possible to develop automated production processes that change the conventional paradigms of design, for architecture as well, allowing designers and manufacturers to bond designer innovation to production innovation.

Are universities and schools of design the same everywhere? Can we, do we want to, must we therefore, study the same things in every school?

Is being a designer a do-it-alone job, or rather a team of professionals bringing different cooperative and competitive skills to the table?

What new relations are thus fostered between design, architecture and new media?

Does a world that is over-filled with products still need design?

Our cities have grown hand in hand with economic development, with the manufacturing industry; they have witnessed its success, recession and transformation. Some of them have become large, they have engulfed know-how and expertise, while others have remained stuck in the past and have been impoverished, with less of a role and population. The relationship with the world of design is therefore also of essence to architecture and urban development.