

CONNECTED

28 June - 1 July 2010 Sydney Australia
2nd International Conference on Design Education

PROGRAM

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Welcome to Sydney and to ConnectedED 2010 International Conference on Design Education. This is the 2nd ConnectedED conference, and follows on from the very successful and exciting 2007 ConnectedED, and is a collaboration of three University of New South Wales faculties - College of Fine Arts, Engineering and Built Environment. Like the 2007 conference ConnectedED 2010 will continue the groundbreaking work of bringing together a broad multidisciplinary spectrum in the context of design and design education.

This second ConnectedED conference has attracted delegates from over 25 countries and, with the combination of refereed conference papers, exhibitions, workshops and roundtables, will involve over 200 participants from around the globe. It will be an opportunity to renew existing collegial networks and to build new ones that reflect ConnectedED's multinational and multidisciplinary nature and, above all, to learn about and discuss developments at the cutting edge of design education. The University of New South Wales, one of Australia's leading research universities with over 40,000 students, is again the host for ConnectedED.

On behalf of the Organising Committee I am delighted to welcome you to ConnectedED 2010 - we hope you enjoy the Conference and your stay in Sydney.

Graham Forsyth,
Chair, ConnectedED2010 Organising Committee

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[369] Design, system, territory: a multidisciplinary didactic activity to enhance places

Marina Parente, Beatrice Villari

Multidisciplinary Design Education

Design, system, territory: a multidisciplinary didactic activity to enhance places

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ABSTRACT

The competition between territories, the goal to attract people and investments, the capacity to *prefigure* local sustainable development represent new opportunities to reflect about design theories and practices. Defining a "portrait" of an area, visualizing the specific features, enhancing the different levels of territorial resources are actions related to the refinement of design methods and practices.

These activities are developed through a *discussion* and a *synergy* with other disciplines and also through the ability to build relationships and coordinating actions between different local stakeholders.

The design for territories also represents an integrated approach into the design discipline: strategic design and services design to build scenarios, to propose *design visions* of local development using some themes of *sensemaking* such as the *brand* as collector of a coordinated system of the territorial offer.

In 2008, Poli.Design (consortium of Politecnico di Milano) has promoted an advanced training course "Brand for the Territorial Systems" on these themes. The multidisciplinary approach and the design practice in real contexts are the main characteristics of the didactic model.

In the first two editions, these methods have been applied in two Italian contexts: the territory of Ostuni and San Pellegrino Terme.

This is an original didactic approach that regards different aspects:

- the focus on design for the exploitation of the territorial resources (territorial capital) as the main theme of the projects;
- the application of the multidisciplinary theoretical tools in real contexts (field activities).

The results are related to different levels:

- a training of a *complex* professional profile able to interact with business and institutional environments and also with the main competencies acting in local contexts;
- the learning of conceptual and operational capabilities that integrate strategic vision and the

ability to manage projects in term of product-system design (services, communications, products).

I. DESIGN AND TERRITORIAL VALORIZATION: A SERVICES BASED APPROCH

The relationship between design and territory on different thematic areas (1) has been developed by the community of the Politecnico di Milano through different researches according to a design approach integrating design research and field experimentation.

Different design issues have been developed on the basis of the conceptual model of *territorial capital* (Villari 2005; Zurlo 2003) considered as the synthesis of all the values and resources that characterize a territory. The concept of *territorial capital* may actually refer to different kinds of resources - individuals, social context, local productive activities, cultural resources, infrastructure systems, know-how, development paths and external connections.

It is thanks to the integration of the different resources that territories can promote their own development, their socio-economic growth and people wellbeing.

From an economic point of view, the ability to create value (for example expanding the range of services, developing infrastructures, attracting investments, offering cultural activities) triggers a growing *competition* among territories; the *richness* of a territory represents the base to establish long-term goals, which enable the territory itself to gain a *positioning* in the global market (Caroli 2006), triggering mechanisms of investments, transformation and development of new activities that impact heavily on the local social structure. From a sustainable point of view, it is very important to prefigure the related phenomena and the implications of these changes.

Territorial valorization comprises the introduction of innovations at the local level, changes able to affect both artifacts (products and services) and processes (technical and organizational ones) in order to generate value for a territory in a long time perspective. This means also to consider the local values and the heritage (Magnaghi 2000) and thus favoring what, in Europe, is referred to as *integrated* local development (Osservatorio Leader 1999).

According to this approach the valorization of a territory can be achieved not only by means of the increase of its physical, infrastructural aspects, instead time it is important to enhance at the same those dimensions related to its human and social capital and its know-how. These are all elements that favor the development of the model of the *learning regions* (OECD 2001), emphasizing the importance of cooperation and interaction among people and different actors of the territory, in order to enable cooperative, non-hierarchical, supportive relations and create bottom up organization models.

This means, from a design view, to create potential development activities for the territory and to propose new design visions through a creative approach also entails creating the *design conditions* to enable these same mechanisms of transformation (Maffei, Villari 2006), enhancing the capacity of individuals to work together and share different know-how, thus promoting and supporting a form of social creativity (Fisher 2002).

As design issues refer to different levels and project scales, they are actually the object of different disciplines addressing local change according to their theoretical and operational tools (urban planning, urban geography, territorial marketing, sociology, etc ...). The assumption in this context is the one that design can be a tool to introduce innovation at the local level (Villari 2005) by means of strategic design (Zurlo 2004, Manzini 2003) and service design (Pacenti 2004, Sangiorgi et al 2009).

From a strategic point of view, there are different design levers able to affect the territory: *relations*, i.e. the ability to build networks and connections among people, companies, institutions in order to ensure the actual realization of a project; the building and communication of *potential development paths*, i.e. the directions of the project or meta-design decisions; *artifacts*, i.e. services, activities and physical elements that contribute to the valorization of a place (Villari 2004).

The perspective of service design involves an attention to the interaction of places, artifacts and people (Maffei, Sangiorgi 2003) as also to its relative aesthetic dimension.

According to this approach design for the territory can be described as a project action able to activate, promote, organize and process design artifacts that have a close relationship with the local environment, creating economic and social benefits for both individuals and communities. The outcome and impact of the project cannot therefore be related to a single product but to a design system that includes organizational and communicative aspects, scenario building as well as participation and interaction.

II. DESIGN, TERRITORY, ACTION-RESEARCH: AN EXPERIMENTAL EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Based on these premises and given the growing interest for the topic of design for territories, in 2008 the Politecnico di Milano has promoted an Advanced Training Course "BST Brand for Territorial Systems" aiming at supplying the participants - professionals, employees of public structures, designers - with a multidisciplinary know-how. In particular,

the course focused on the themes related to the touristic sector and on the capability of places to communicate themselves, both synergically within the local area and towards the outside.

A. Educational framework

Such educational and professional needs clearly emerge observing how the new competitive dynamics of territories involve a growing importance of the communication strategies of the territorial offer as well as their implementation.

The attraction of investments and resources, the definition of targets and the management of the expected flows (tourists, managers, industrial and commercial operators ...) strongly require communication policies (and before that analysis and strategic planning) able to:

- enhance the identity and the *genius loci* of the different territories;
- focusing on the territorial capital, considered as a set of tangible and intangible resources that characterize the local system, in order to highlight features and differences for an appropriate competitive positioning;
- storytelling of the distinctive resources by means of a coordinated *brand policy*.

Moreover the fragmentation of the territorial offer into different sectors and the involvement of very different actors (both public and private ones) raise a question of the management of the whole strategic, communicative and marketing process.

B. Educational goals

The educational aim is to develop professional ability to interpret complex systems (local areas) through context analysis and the identification and visualization of the region peculiarities (visual design), moreover, building strategic design scenarios and visions to enhance a local area (strategic design and services design). Basing on these premises, the main goal is to design a brand strategy and identity for a specific territory and consider it as a strategic lever to promote a local development.

The project of the *territorial brand* must be involved into a strategic plan considering the brand values and features. The process must engage the most important stakeholders of the territory and be based on dynamic approach and relationships to promote a constant renewal of the territorial identity.

To define a *portrait* of a place it is therefore necessary to involve new professional profiles able to combine managerial and organizational skills with design ones.

C. Approach

Given these considerations, the BST course was structured in such a way to give priority to multidisciplinary aspects, to an experimental approach and to the close collaboration with the institutions of specific regional contexts.

Structuring the project as an *action research*, it involves the creation of a strong relationship with the local stakeholders through participatory activities and the possibility to actually affect the local environment. The design process following the rules of *action research* is

structured as an activity of research, analysis, concept and project (Villari 2005, Zurlo 2003).

This project structure implies the dimension of *doing research*, structuring assumptions to support them by means of collected information, then validating them through the practice - therefore through the project itself.

The tools used for the analysis and verification phases are typical of participatory approaches (such as ethnographic analysis for the contexts, users and activities observation), they are also related to the scenario building, visualization and representation useful to make design proposals tangible and thus sharable by heterogeneous work groups.

D. Verification of results - evaluation methods

Being a professional course, the project evaluation is not focused only to the didactic activities but also through a comparison with local stakeholders and a public presentation about the project discussing the strategies and the design choices. The design results are a brief part of a wider process, it requires further steps to achieve a final design project shared among the different actors involved.

The didactic process does not coincide with the professional process, but the evaluation regards the capacity to structure a complex design process, define the process steps and tools, visualize the goals and the strategies and also build and concretize a brand strategies.

III. THE COURSE STRUCTURE: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The educational activity was carried out with a concentrated and intensive formula (200 hours in about 2 months) and was organized in modules and involved the development of a project work.

The didactic modules were related to four main areas:

- Territorial Marketing and strategies for the local development.
- Design for the local development
- Territorial brand design and Brand management
- Participatory approach (co-design) and planning tools.

All disciplinary areas involved a mix of different educational areas in order to combine theory and practice, supporting theoretical and methodological analysis with emblematic case studies, the definition of application tools and field-testing.

All the editions include the examination of a territorial case study area, which is also the object of the different contributions of the didactic modules: the project experience becomes directly or indirectly the focus of the entire course, the moment of the verification of the disciplinary contributions, the opportunity for a knowledge exchange with the various stakeholders of that specific territory.

The idea of focusing the Course on a real situation is certainly one of the most qualifying elements of the training.

Every year the theme of the project work is selected based on the available opportunities and on the interest of some territorial contexts, as well as on the availability of local partners, public or private, to actively participate to the project. The project includes a setting up in the local area,

activities of context investigation and, finally, a design workshop.

In 2008 the project focused on a broad territorial area near Ostuni (South Italy, Puglia) consisting of 15 different municipalities and surrounded by the sea, land and hills. This was made possible thanks to the approval of a new regional legal instrument that allowed the establishment of "Local Touristic Systems", as well as thanks to the interest of local authorities to support a project for that territory which, closed between two renowned tourist areas well-established in international circuits (Gargano and Salento), suffered from a lack of visibility and recognition, starting from the absence of a concise name to identify it. (Fig.1)

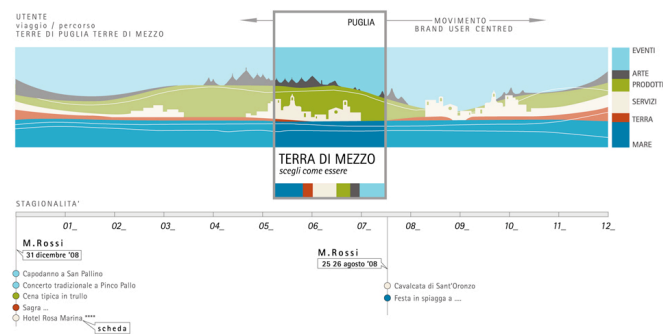


Fig. 1. BST 2008 - Terra di Mezzo: design of a *dynamic brand* considering the user preferences related to the different tourism offering (events, art, products, services, landscape, seacoast), designers Daniela D'Avanzo, Silvia Libera, Gisella Martinazzoli.

The following year, the project focused instead on the more circumscribed area of the town of San Pellegrino Terme in the North of Italy (Lombardy region), known for the eponymous mineral water, where a recent international competition for a new thermal and conference centre and a hotel - won by Dominique Perrault - had actually started a process of touristic re-valorization of this area supported by a private company in agreement with local authorities. A process that is still today "on paper" and addressed to a high-end target audience. In this case it was necessary to re-define the general strategies in order to not exclude the participation of citizens, opening up also to other forms of touristic offerings compatible with the choice of such a target. (Fig. 2)

The applied methodology was the same for the two different projects, it is divided into three phases:

1. Building identity – detect differences

This first activity involves a thorough knowledge of the territory through preliminary studies and direct field analysis (in order to detect even the most intangible and emotional aspects) together with a dialectical connection with some local stakeholders (residents, administrators, entrepreneurs, professionals, actual end-users, ...).

A survey aimed at *reading* the territorial capital (desk analysis), *feel* the area (field analysis), *listen* to the voices of the actors (interviews) with an approach that also involves a theoretical shift: from *an optic* to *an aptic* approach, from *sight-seeing* to *site-seeing*, from *motion* to *e-motion* (Bruno 2002).

The objective is to detect the current perceived identity. The tools used are those of analytical research and ethnographic analysis for the observation of the context.

2. Visualizing, storytelling and sharing design concepts

The second phase covers activities of interpretation, visualization and sharing design ideas. In order to activate participative activities with the local actors, it is fundamental the ability to represent and show in concise and efficient ways the features and 'values' emerged from the critical observation of the territory, using synthetic maps, mood-boards, storytelling techniques. These are skills typical of visual design.

This phase of selection of the emerging territorial values also includes a comparison with case studies (benchmarking) for an appropriate strategic positioning and an assessment of the most attractive and distinctive features.

The goal here is to achieve a shared understanding of the territorial values, to orient the strategic choices, to create design scenarios and strategic paths of territorial valorisation.

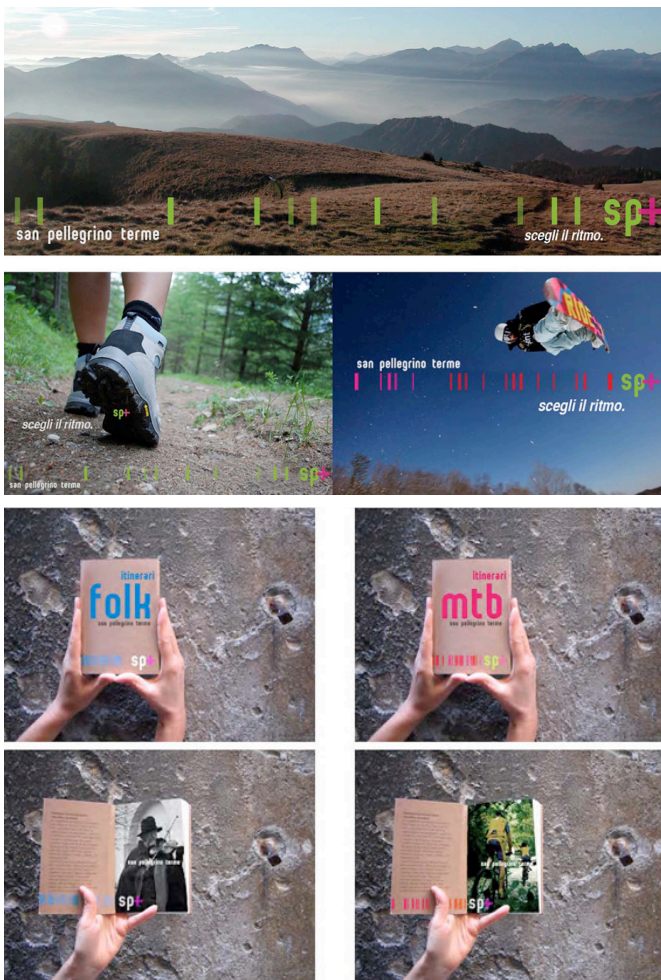


Fig. 2. BST 2009 - "Scegli il ritmo" ("Choose the rhythm" Communication strategy - San Pellegrino Terme), designers Ida Ceruti, Enrico Ripamonti, Carol Romano, Serena Scrosati.

3. Building territorial and strategic design scenarios

The third phase concerns the definition of the overall strategic vision, the *creation of meaning*, the integration of different levels of territorial offers, and scenario building.

These are skills typical of strategic design and scenarios oriented design towards the sustainable innovation for the local contexts (user-centred and context-based approach). The brand identity is a part of a wider framework of activities that contribute to build a complex territorial identity that includes local knowledge, services, production, infrastructure, so the design scenarios have to consider all of these territorial levels.

4. Communicate territorial values (territorial brand)

Finally, this phase concerns the development of the project of visual identity: identification of a territorial brand, definition of the naming, declination of its applications, creation of networks and systems of understanding/communication of the offer, realization of some communication evidences (Olins 2005, Kapferer 2008).

These are substantially activities concerning brand design (definition of concepts, messages, attributes, values and "personality" of the territorial brand and configuration of the various communication interfaces), brand management and brand policy (organization of communication process - Media Planning - and management of the *brand value* by the various local stakeholders).

IV. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The considerations on this didactic model concern different aspects:

Disciplinary integration: the experimental didactic thus structured has offered the opportunity to experiment a project form based on the relationship among different disciplines and integrating different professional profiles. If in the first two stages it is always important to consider - on both the theoretical and practical level - the differences among the different profiles of the students and create a common base of knowledge, in the following phases and during the design project the complementarities of the profiles becomes a main stimulus to the learning and is effective in terms of educational outcomes and project results.

Working in a team with different skills on a specific project has actually proved the importance of multidisciplinary design.

Strategic and service design approach: the approach adopted has allowed a sharing of design tools within the different work teams, thus creating a new common design language and focusing activities on the whole design process considering the brand identity as a tool integrated with a wider vision of local development, concerning also the creation of services, communication systems and products.

Incisiveness on the territory: the close connection with a specific area has triggered the interest of local institution for the issues addressed; moreover the visualization of the project results in a tangible way has facilitated for the different local stakeholders the understanding of the design dynamics, the approach used and the potentialities to involve design competencies in territorial valorization processes.

Professional profile (designer for the territorial brand): this professional profile is able to integrate skills of strategic vision, management of the project complexity and at the same time to translate original concepts into real artifacts, as also to develop design methods and strategies to communicate with the local actors - enterprises, agencies and institutions building a local brand identity starting from a design perspective and using design tools.

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* This paper is the result of a collective work, but for the purposes of this publication B. Villari has written the paragraphs I and II, M. Parente has written the paragraphs III and IV.

(1) The theme of design for territorial valorization is the subject of a national research co-funded by MIUR in 2002-2004 (Scientific Officer G. Simonelli). This was followed by D. Cult, research co-funded by MIUR (Ministry of University and Research) and focused on the theme of territory and cultural heritage (Scientific Officer A. Seassaro).

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- 323 Doerfler James, Kevin Dong - Teaching Integrated Practice in a Cross-Disciplinary Curriculum After Two Years
- 365 da Graça Guedes Maria, Ana Roncha - Communicating Creativity – A study on fashion design schools that address success through a combination of enhanced innovation and creativity

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- 126 Davis Dylan, Dr Gavin Melles - Intergenerational digital storytelling: a community initiative with inner city residents
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- 245 Dickson Michael - Concepts of play informing aspects of the design studio
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- 401 Domin Christopher, Manny Juarez, Larry Medlin - Ecologically Sound: Public/Private Partnerships
- 309 Edmonds Angelique - Designing, risk & resilience; perspectives from participants
- 58 Ekomadyo Agus - Opening the Black Boxes: Using Poetic Architecture Theory to Decode the Maestro Architects Creativity Channels
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- 333 Kuys Blair, Ian de Vere - Measuring differing approaches in design between engineering disciplines
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- 187 Ostwald Michael J, Anthony Williams - On Leadership and Management in a School of Architecture: Academic Perceptions

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416	Polin Ken C - A Hybrid Design System for Developing State-owned Buildings in Papua New Guinea: An overview
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- 80 Satherley Shannon - Finding the Remote: Immersive Learning in an Outback Community
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- 255 Sharpe Tim, Sally Stewart - Insider not Outsider; supporting sustainability in final design thesis
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- 113 Steinmetz Christine - Participatory Action-Research through Community Engagement
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- 248 Sutton Ken, Anthony Williams - A Rationale for Developing Spatial Skills: in a Design Environment
- 161 Sweetapple Kate - How del.icio.us: the impact of social bookmarking tools on the learning experiences of Visual Communication Design students
- 117 Taylor Mary-Jane - How can design educators grow students' global consciousness and conscience? A pilot study, Mary-Jane Taylor, University of Canberra

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- 299 Thomas Kerry - Keeping Up Appearances: The Sincere Fiction of Creative Autonomy in Art and Design Education
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- 186 Wahr Fiona, Jenny Underwood - Dealing with complexity in education for sustainability - a shared journey for students and teachers in design education
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- 149 Wechsler Andrea - Materials Development: An Alternative Career Pathway for Design Graduates
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- 189 Withell Andrew, Dr Stephen Reay Dr Olaf Diegel - Everyday Interventions': Engaging Students with Sustainability and Sustainable Design, a Case Study
- 188 Williams Anthony, Michael J. Ostwald - Investigating the role of Staff Development in Architecture Schools across Oceania
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- 207 Wood Carnie Bruce - Managing Creativity: a new course to address a shortfall identified in the visual arts employment sector
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- 348 Woolcock Geoffrey, Debra Langridge, Prue Walsh and Caryl Bosman - Child-Friendly by Design or by Accident?: Lessons from the Illawarra
- 317 Wright Emily J - Sustainable Futures for Communication Design: Integrating Sustainability into the Postgraduate Design Curriculum
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- 436 Zehner Robert, Graham Forsyth, Barbara de la Harpe, Fiona Peterson, Elizabeth Musgrave, Douglas Neale, Noel Frankham, Stephanie Wilson, Karin Watson - Optimising Studio Outcomes: Guidelines for Curriculum Development from the Australian Studio Teaching Project
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