Preface

Space is a word that contains worlds: the world of philosophy, with its oscillation between the space of infinite emptiness where atoms move and Kantian space, understood as an a priori intuition that precedes all experience; the world of physics, where general relativity finds a space that is curved and inseparable from time; the world of geometry, where space can be Euclidean, topological, and vector; the world of space exploration and those who gaze at the stars; the world of computers, with *Cyberspace* its most unsettling aspect; the world of music scholars, involving both acoustic and cultural space; the world of artists, struggling to represent space and sometimes seeking the improbable fourth dimension; and then, there is the world of the many - of all of humanity – which is engaged in the daily adventure of *inhabiting* a space, be it interior, exterior, real, or virtual. Each of us also inhabits mental spaces, places that belong to a parallel reality, that reflect, mirror, and duplicate our way of perceiving things. This is why we can inhabit the same space as the painting *St. Jerome in his Study* by Antonello da Messina, or any number of the rooms in the building 11 Rue Simon-Crubellier, as described by Georges Perec (1978) in his book, *La Vie mode d'emploi*.

If we succeed in incorporating these images into our experience, it is because we are *recording* and processing with unconscious precision the spaces we actually "live" everyday. And this is not just our home, which for Gaston Bachelard (1958) is a "body of images that gives the illusion of stability" and becomes "a tool for the analysis of the human soul". It is also the countless places we pass through - sometimes temporarily - and often distractedly. When we move through the city, we may come across a space that, as Perec writes, stumbles across our view and arrests our gaze. As Bachelard reminds us, even a shadow can be lived. For Norberg-Schulz (1979), the term space has two meanings. The first is "three-dimensional geometry," and the second is the "field of perception". For the latter, the notion of *character* - understood as that quality that depends both on the "concrete shape" of a place, as well as the "substance of the elements" that define it - is critical.

The character of a space does not depend exclusively on its physical qualities, but rather on "the principal method of 'production' a priori existence" (Norberg-Schulz, 1979); and, it is something that can change over the course of time. Today, the use of both inside and outside space is increasingly invaded by the temporary and the provisional. Contemporary domestic routines are accompanied by the "slow de-consecration of space and the proliferation of multiple meanings" (Pasquinelli, 2004). Today, spaces that used to be easily recognisable and stable in character seem less and less oriented towards a specialised use. Instead, they are becoming increasingly flexible, featuring the aesthetics of temporary and hybrid uses.

Certain qualities of contemporary life have made interior design increasingly important. These qualities can be found in areas around the world that have left industrialisation behind and entered a new era,

an era some call the post-industrial and others, like Marc Auger, *surmodernité* (supermodernity). These qualities are radically changing the way we live and the way we see things, relate to others, build our future, envision time, and understand space.

The first important quality of contemporary life is its predominantly temporary way of using space. We live *en passant* asserts Jean-Luc Nancy (2002), like "a hurried passer-by or a *flâneur*, busy or idle, coasting (near yet distant) past other pedestrians, familiar strangers, with only temporary stops along the way: amidst traffic, purchases, transportation, and trips. Doors constantly open and close onto private dwellings that are invaded by the hustle and bustle of the street, the noise and dust of the world, all passing by" (p. 58). We are facing a way of inhabiting that privileges mobility and the temporary. And, according to Stefano Boeri (2011), in his book *L'anticittà* (The Anti-City), this is one of the characteristic traits of the contemporary European city, "Never so much as in recent years has the European city become a sort of huge camp; a hub of temporary stops and designs for a mobile life" (p. 43). On this front, there have been recent local projects for public events and performances that are well worth visiting as they foreshadow a new kind of intervention that today's design world has to contend with. It is something quite different from the 18th century urban installations for festivals or large events, where the existing city provided a natural backdrop. Instead, these days the event itself adds new pieces to the city—in some cases even temporarily replacing it entirely—making way for a new urban metabolism made up of short-lived organisms that quickly appear and disappear, leaving only an echo, organisms that seem to belong more to the world of design than architecture.

The second important quality of contemporary life is population growth in urban areas. Increasingly, city dwellers are the types of individuals who work in global financial, commercial, and cultural spheres who question previously held notions of identity and difference. At the same time, new phenomena are emerging that affirm the importance of physical places and specific symbolic sites to foster meaningful social relationships. In other words, the processes of globalisation are fixed in places (Sassen, 2006) in as much as globalisation is not able to erase local-ness. Instead, it is the very existence of the global economy that leads to richly diverse spaces, something akin to a labyrinth, where the inhabitant is a voyager engaged in the flow of experiences, passing from one room to another, drawing ephemeral itineraries on the ground (Rullani, 2004). At the moment places return to expressing their identity and difference, however temporary, the local area becomes a determining factor in the process of creative differentiation. This contributes to what Flavio Carmagnola and Vanni Pasca call the "symbolic economy" (Carmagnola & Pasca, 2002) meaning the underlying process of ascribing cultural and relational value to products and places.

After the temporary death of urban space, which Richard Sennet (1974) attributes to the incursion of intimacy into everyday life that forced people to turn towards the private sphere to replace what had been lost in the public one, it appears we are now facing a widespread renaissance of urban space. And, this is happening to such a degree that today, the quality of the city depends more on the welcoming character of its open spaces than the eloquence of its monuments. Urban open spaces are entrusted with the task of hosting cultural events and performances; most importantly though, they enable opportunities for the auto-consumption of space where each person can construct their own proximities, offering a kind of personal palimpsest for redefining new forms of identity founded on multiple ways of using a space. This phenomenon is something akin to the spaces of communication, circulation, and consumption that Marc Augé (2009) has discussed. What defines these spaces is they are reserved for "individual users" without implicating "the creation of special enduring social relationships"; instead, they provide "for the only temporary cohabitation of individuals, passengers, and passers-by" (p. 53). Nonetheless, these are

welcoming spaces, designed to make the city something more than just an efficient machine designed to maximise opportunities for exchange but also a friendly organism for inhabitation. In one of her important studies on the contemporary city, Saskia Sassen (2006) writes about *borderlands* as "bridges" between different realities that may represent a new generation of public space. Their differentiation can lead to a prospering economy in as much as they find a hospitable architectural environment in the form of "inhabited infrastructure" where these interstitial spaces or *terrains vagues* play an increasingly important role. They encourage the proliferation of new economic forms, especially informal and creative ones, which could eventually become determining factors and change the very nature of the city itself. The design community is faced with the new challenge of rethinking these interstitial spaces where "no one feels at home or at anyone else's" (Augé, 2007) by applying a method that, though currently outside the architectural design tradition, could become an integral part of it.

All this is combined with an increasing and relentless questioning of boundaries, of what belongs to "inside" space and what belongs to the realm of what could be called the "outside". It is a phenomenon that Walter Benjamin (2007) studied in Naples in the 1920s, when he described the city as being as "porous" as its stone, a place where "the domestic environment is recreated on the street", and "the street penetrates into the homes." It is a state also described in the famous 1911 painting by Umberto Boccioni, and one that now seems to have become generalised beyond the domestic realm. The museum itself opens onto the street. This is not just because a large part of contemporary art addresses urban space, but also because in order to reach out and engage the visitor, the space of the museum has to break free of its own borders and enter the city, smashing the wall that makes the museum a sacred and elite place. Undeterred by the advent of the Internet and virtual communication, libraries today have found a new lease on life. They have become a place of reformed diversity, a space for different generations to interact. This is in large part due to their having a friendly space inside designed to welcome users, as well as their function as a system of regional "antenna" for sharing information.

This last example is a real indication of how the use of environments—both indoor and outdoor—has changed in the contemporary city. In his book on this topic, Maurizio Carta rightly claims that, "having liberated itself from the excesses of a purely functionalist vision, today's urban planning finds itself experimenting once again with integrating aesthetics and culture, designing settlement shapes and standards able to go beyond mere functional efficiency and contribute to the creation of 'beautiful' cities and regions, not just in an aesthetic sense but also in terms of *social beauty* i.e., citizen rights, and *cultural beauty* i.e., promoting the cultural identity of the region" (Carta, 2004, p. 22). Today, most cities are carrying out major decommissioning projects of former industrial areas as well as other building types that have ceased to serve their original purpose. This is accompanied by an increasingly wide array of adaptive re-use projects for these same spaces. For interior design, this represents an unimaginable array of opportunities for experimentation, and not just limited to interiors. The discipline is at the forefront of a whole new terrain related to the phenomenology of contemporary space.

This also becomes plausible through the expanded application of skills formerly associated with "industrial design". And there are increasingly valuable segments both upstream and downstream of the production process i.e., in research and development, strategic marketing, logistics, customer service, product support, communications, and continuous innovation. In these areas, the Italian design tradition appears to hold a winning hand; this is not just because of its global renown, but also because of the reflective and critical work of its designers, who have managed to assign a value to mass-produced objects that goes beyond the purely the utilitarian. This is the certainly the case with Italian designers like Marco Zanuso, the Castiglioni brothers, and Franco Albini. For this reason, the scope of design has

increasingly been extended to include the idea of services, cultural resources, and most of all spaces and environments. These are the real reasons for developing new approaches to interior design; the discipline must open itself up to influences from the art and installation design worlds to embrace concepts such the temporary, the ephemeral, and reversibility.

The various contributions in this book address this topic from different angles depending on the various professional and geographic backgrounds of the authors.

The book is divided in three sections. The first section embraces the chapters focused on the changes of the cultural and social scenarios of the discipline and their effects on the discipline statute. Section two gathers the reflections on more strengthened disciplinary territories, on border territories and on ones still little explored at which the researches are pointing.

The last section is dedicated to illustrate the instruments necessary to transmit the idea of the project and describe some study cases related to specific research areas.

In particular the first two chapters aim to provide a theoretical overview for anyone interested in how spaces are designed independent of their specific function as interiors or urban spaces. It was deemed necessary to present an approach that recognises interior design as an autonomous discipline while also establishing a new hierarchy of activities to carry out during the design process. The very culture in which interior design operates has to be redefined; this new approach is demonstrated by examining the most relevant examples of authoritative interior design strategies.

Chapter 3 glances at the shifting landscape of disciplines and professions, with particular focus towards "Interior Design." In spite of trends and increasing examples of the erosion and overlapping of disciplinary and professional boundaries, ironically or not, there remains the need for some sort of definition; in other words, their needs to be a body of knowledge and skills defined and practiced.

Chapter 4 addresses the issue of changed domestic routines and their effects on interior design. It is a very important issue that concerns not only the residential sphere but also the way spaces are "inhabited" in the contemporary world, precisely in light of the disappearance of the clear distinction between the public and the private realm.

Chapter 5 presents a conceptual and pragmatic mind-set, framing a critical positioning concerning activities such as curating artistic projects in public space, programming cultural events and designing habitats. It develops a specific jargon, crucial for a truly Contemporary understanding of the city: a total rhetoric of the urban form.

Chapter 6 proposes a reflection about a kind of art that creates new spaces and places, expanding the discussion about the interdisciplinary approach of artists to creation. Considering the works of some artist that have made the intervention on spaces one of their prerogatives, the research would like to focus on the new connections that arise between the artist and the public through these creations

Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the issue of urban spaces i.e., the transformation of urban open spaces for a drastically different use than that of the industrial city. In these new urban spaces, priority is given to multi-sensory behaviours, events, and "new rituals and urban spatial patterns that can also perform symbolic-affective functions"; in addition, "a gap between the 'planned' and the 'lived' city" is identified.

We begin to find spaces that provide resistance to globalisation, like those illustrated in Chapter 9. Spaces that embody another approach, like the urban farming movement which, "with its production of food, its educational aims and the idea of creating sustainable situations, has been able to take root in many cities and metropolises as it is closely integrated with the urban ecosystem". It is an interesting movement, not just from a social and cultural perspective, but also in terms of the impacts it could have on landscape design.

Chapters 10 and 11 deal with retail design as an experimental segment of interior design where there is a collaboration of, "art, design, and science to create memorable brand experiences". From this point of view, retail design "both in research and practice, is particularly interesting as an expression of this disciplinary shift, with an approach characterized by the multidisciplinary, experimentation, and a strong relational dimension. Exhibition-making is an innate activity: everyone's home is an exhibit in some way, and people display objects to inform themselves, and others, about their lives and needs".

Chapter 12 articulates how the way of working has changed interiority of office buildings and how it has also influenced the space outside of the buildings, even cities.

Often, interior designers have to work within historical contexts where a change of use is required, or adapt spaces to new uses based on the behaviours and habits of its users. Increasingly, the work does not fall within the traditional discipline of restoration but instead raises the issue of a new approach to the notion of restoration itself. Chapter 13 addresses this topic in a completely original way, proposing the basis for a potential new relationship between restoration and design.

In Chapter 14 the study for a new Anthropocene style is to re-evaluate the domestic space today, to rethink its decorative style to meet the new thermal regulations and to invent the architectural language of the interior in the era of the Anthropocene.

The aim of Chapter 15 is to discuss the role of interior design in creating design solutions that can increase the flexibility of interiors according to the changing needs of different families with different cultural backgrounds. This issue is conducted taking as starting point a research developed in Istanbul.

Chapters 16 and 17 are left with the task of addressing methods of transmitting and communicating the design idea through the combined tools of the overall design discipline. Since these tools are the medium through which the interior designer can assign a specific meaning to their own work, they play a major role not only in the technical but also the cultural value of the design.

The issue of sustainability as it applies to interiors and urban spaces is illustrated in Chapter 18, which proposes potential new alliances between the natural and the urban, "An emerging urban interior design practice endeavours to embrace and integrate nature, in that nature and urban interior are not two opposed, extreme ends any more. More and more nature is introduced indoors, not only to meet our nostalgia for nature spiritually, but also physically helping us to create a regenerative environment beyond sustainability".

Chapter 19 presents exhibitions as a medium that work within two main disciplines, design and architecture, the former of which is the main focus of the essay.

The role of light—both natural and artificial—in an interior, urban space, museum, or exhibition space is a key factor in ensuring not only that space is used in the best possible way but also that is has a unique "character". Chapter 20 starts with a case study. Here, the special complexity of the topic makes it impossible to address just its cultural meaning, so the technical aspects are also investigated.

Luciano Crespi
Politecnico di Milano, Italy

REFERENCES

Augé, M. (2007). *Tra i confini*. Milan: Bruno Mondadori.

Augè, M. (2009). *Che fine ha fatto il futuro*. Milan: Elèuthera.

Bachelard, G. (1958). *La Poétique de l'espace*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Benjamin, W. (2007). Napoli. In *Immagini di città*. Turin: Einaudi.

Boeri, S. (2011). *L'anticittà*. Rome, Bari: Laterza.

Carmagnola, F., & Pasca, V. (2002). Il Sistema Design Milanese. In Milano distretto del design: Un sistema di luoghi, attori e relazioni al servizio dell'innovazione. Milan: Il Sole 24 Ore.

Carta, M. (2004). *Next City, culture city*. Rome: Meltemi.

Nancy, J.-L. (2002). *La città lontana*. Verona: Ombre Corte.

Norberg-Schulz, C. (1979). *Genius loci*. Milan: Electa.

Pasquinelli, C. (2004). *La vertigine dell'ordine*. Milan: Baldini Castoldi Dalai.

Perec, G. (1978). *La Vie mode d'emploi*. Paris: Hachette.

Rullani, E. (2004). La città infinita: spazio e trama della modernità riflessiva. In *La città infinita*. Milan: Bruno Mondadori.

Sassen, S. (2006). Perché le città sono importanti. In *Città, architettura, società, Biennale di Venezia*. Venice: Marsilio.

Sennet, R. (1974). *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: Knopf.