



Dino Gavina, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, and Michele Provinciali with the Sanluca chair in the arcades of San Luca in Bologna, 1960. © Mauro Masera. Università luav di Venezia, Archivio Progetti.

CITY MAKERS A NEW PARADIGM FOR URBANISM

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Looking at the emblematic photography by Mauro Masera of 1960 that sets the freshly produced *Sanluca* chair on stage in the arcades of San Luca in Bologna, we experience a flash-back to the inventiveness and energy of the Italian design in the 1960ies. Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni designed not only this chair for Dino Gavina's newly established company, but also its manufacturing and exhibition building situated in San Lazzaro di Savena some kilometres from Bologna on the Via Emilia: expression of modernist ideas enriched by inspirations of rural architecture, the building has been recently restored and re-opened as space for the arts by the Cirulli Foundation in 2018. The Gavina store in the centre of Bologna has been designed by Carlo Scarpa who himself engaged in the company of Gavina. *Sanluca*, the chair, takes its name from the church on the hillside above Bologna and from the arcades that are leading uphill towards it, they extend the peculiar pattern of Bologna's arcades into the countryside. As a blend of advanced design, strong iconography, promising comfort, newest technologies and materials at that time, smart marketing, and of industrial processes enriched with artisan knowledge and abilities of the skilled worker in San Lazzaro di Savena, Diego Gavina's enterprise and the *Sanluca* chair call for a rediscovery of specific strengths in *making* as well as in a strong relation to places and space.

The Power of Making

The approach of *City Makers* responds to a social, economic and cultural move towards re-establishing materiality in the age of digitalisation, articulated as "Power of Making" (V&A Museum 2011) and as basic human impulse (Richard Sennett: *The Craftsman*, 2008). Promoted by Chris

Anderson (2010) with the slogan "atoms are the new bits", the *maker movement* has addressed not only auto-production and mass-customisation, but entirely new modes, processes, and cultures of manufacturing (Cities of Making 2018). It is digging into sources of design, crafts and digital technologies, of a progressive notion of tradition, and of new ways to understand entrepreneurship, labour, and consumption. "Digital artisanship" relies on the approach of "doing is innovating" (Micelli 2016) and opens up interesting economic perspectives. Furthermore, the exploration of design and manufacturing processes can contribute highly to realise circular economy (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2012).

With the project *City Makers* we develop two—as will be shown—strongly interlinked lines of research: firsthand, the question of place and space as stage and source of the new creative and productive urban paradigm of *making*. And secondly, the question of the influence of a *maker* paradigm to the concepts and ways to work on the positive transformation of city and territory.

Evidently, *Sanluca* points at local networks of abilities, knowledge, and materials that have been specifically interlinked with extended fields of global culture and economy. Thus, it is interesting to explore constellations of spatial and social capital, of mind-sets and identities in Emilia-Romagna and Bologna towards a new economy and culture of *making*, in relation to the increased importance of experience and materiality, of clustering and of personal encounters that a *new artisanship* and the persons carrying it put forward.

Qualities of space, its relation to society, and the capacity of places are to be examined as basis for innovation—and on the other hand the influence

of this new form of material-digital culture and economy on space. The selection of Bologna with its well established background in manufacturing and culture is certainly of high interest for this exploration, but it is also understood as paradigmatic for a series of European places that show promise major future chances in this regard.

The second line of research—to explore a new meaning of *making* for city futures—is referred to another important background of Bologna: a strong tradition in social activism and intelligent urban planning. Different initiatives in urban policies and planning in the last years (Orioli 2016) are directed towards reconfiguring this tradition. The Urban Innovation Plan for Bologna (2017) fosters social innovation starting from Neighbourhood Labs in the city's quarter, new contract models for Commoning to support citizens' engagement and sharing initiatives, participatory budgets, and a diligent use of digital and analogue communication and interaction between citizens and city government. *City Makers* aims to explore concepts and models of co-designing urban futures in this context, highlighting new interactions between citizens as different cultures and groups of makers and experts in setting up urban projects and strategies and specifically looking at questions of contextualisation, of replication and of the pathways of upscaling of singular innovative projects (Brandsen 2016; Civic Systems Lab 2017).

A maker paradigm for urbanism

With *City Makers*, we focus on the influence of a *maker* paradigm towards newly defined roles of experts in urban planning and urban design and towards the extended expertise they need to develop, also in increased multidisciplinary linkag-

es. Hence, *City Makers* argues for a merging of creative design and planning approaches to answer to the challenges of urban transformation: in order to invent and sustain projects of change in the city that immediately create new and positive experience of urban space, and that at the same moment become part and contribute to set up longer-term strategies (as addressed e.g. by Metrolab Brussels). The combination of design, craftsmanship, and digital technologies observed in the maker movement is seen as inspiration for the renewal of urban disciplines that exceeds the paradigm of technocratic "smart city" (Campbell 2012) and leads to discuss about the "fab city" (IAAC 2016). With the *City Makers* approach, a new form of knowledge of action can be gained, to shape urban dynamics based on spatial, material, economic, and social forces and complexity. The *maker* paradigm can become a driver of innovation towards a refreshed understanding of design as research, of research-led design, and of co-design, answering to the call for adaptive and "responsive cities" (Goldsmith, Crawford 2014). This implies new connections between the scales, concepts and tools of architecture, urban design, and territorial planning.

Explorations in Bologna and along Via Emilia

In *City Makers*, two lines of projects are pursued in parallel: first, to ask for the spatial impact of the new Neighbourhood Labs in Bologna as experienced and lived space and in regard to initiate and foster development in the urban quarters—with the headline "Urban Space and Innovation"; secondly, to ask for alternative, more dense and more mixed concepts of the ongoing urban expansion along Via Emilia, specifically in reference to the stations of the new Metropolitan Rail-

way of Bologna, in form of urban clusters that enhance existing settlement patterns and urban networks—with the headline “Co-Living Clusters for the Regional Metropolis” that extends concepts of collective housing from a building scale (ID22 2017, Ring 2015) to the dimension of urban elements and their processual setup (A+T Research Group 2013). As a further connecting element between these two lines of the project, the excursion to Bologna provided insights into current urbanistic projects and the background of Bologna and its metropolitan area. The workshop with the University of Bologna addressed the design, character, communication and new urban networks and impulses for the neighbourhood labs. The labs are developing transformations for new cultural centres, new spaces of urban co-production, related to youth, culture, sport, social activities and community development.

Bologna: Urban Space and Innovation

The focus of this first line of the design studio is on conceiving models of urban co-design by active citizens and at fostering new expertise in urban design. Its focus is on the exploration of the influence of digitalisation, new technologies, and of the *maker movement* for urban transformation, working on the case study of Bologna in Northern Italy. With its vivid background as university city, cultural creativity, regional strengths in material industries and crafts, as well as engaged urban planning and social innovation activities. *City Makers* raises the question how dynamics and experience of an “urban atmosphere” can be discovered for contemporary urban innovation, refreshing theories of clusters towards an understanding of *making as industria* (lat.: purposeful, diligent activity). Starting from the observation

of new economic, social and cultural phenomena in between crafts, design, and digital culture, it becomes evident that spatial proximity and “communities of practices” (Micelli 2014) will play new roles for urban change. New artisanship—in bridging gaps between knowledge and action—is seen as inspiration towards innovative models of incremental urban bricolage, in understanding and articulating spatial-social developments. The design research Studio will work in parallel on urban design practice and theory with strong interdisciplinary linkages and on design projects in different scales and places in the city of Bologna.

The design studio will work on two different kinds of spaces in the city: three neighbourhood labs, currently installed by the municipality in a co-design process, re-using existing public buildings. The labs are developing transformations for new cultural centres, new spaces of urban co-production, related to youth, culture, sport, social activities and community development. In the design studio, the re-shaping of spatial character and configuration and of programme of the labs will be connected to the neighbourhood quarters and to the city level: exploring pathways for urban transformation and new urban networks, by developing a *City Makers* approach to foster technological, social, and economic innovation within urban development strategies. The other site to be examined is the Ravone former railway area, in a favoured position near the new high-speed railway station and the historic centre. For this large future development area, a *City Makers* approach is to be explored to configure the step-by-step growth process of a new neighbourhood, by creating immediate spatial qualities along with a long-term vision and the sets and mechanisms

of constructing an innovative quarter in programmatic, spatial, and figurative aspects. In the work and discussion of the design studio, the two different categories of sites will be continuously interlinked: in the exchange of tools and methods of analysis to discover chances and challenges, as well as of tools for urban design, diagramming, prototyping, and in setting frameworks of urban planning. Furthermore, this ongoing exchange between the sites will constantly address the whole city of Bologna and its larger networks, as background, as horizon for newly created relationality and transformation, and in terms of setting *City Makers* in the discussion for urban agendas in the future.

Via Emilia: Co-Living Clusters

Models of new forms of housing and working as important theme of current urban design research answer to the opportunities offered by digitisation and to changed forms of life; they are understood as an expression of urbanity and mixture and articulate themselves in new digital-material spatial and organisational forms. Their design as *Lived Spaces* of new communality and their role as *Urban Elements* and *Living Labs* for urban transformation is the focus of the urban design studio in the winter semester. For the city of Bologna in Northern Italy and its metropolitan cooperation along the Via Emilia axis, rising intensity and prices of spaces and buildings, the necessary valorisation of the peripheries, the new regional horizon of the metropolitan city, the re-discovery of territorial values and innovative mobility models are topical issues. With the Co-Living Clusters, a desire and need for urban spaces of opportunity is formulated that address new relationships between communities and space.

They interpret urban creativity not only as part of science economy, but in its connection with digital production and technologies, new artisanship, circular economy, urban resilience, new lifestyles, and social innovation. Bologna offers a rich and promising background for these approaches. In a further focus, the urban design studio aims to position the intensification, expansion, and multiple use of creative urban networks as a force of transformation in the current dynamics of growing regions.

Overall, the design and research approach of *City Makers* aims to explore and apply the diverse manifestations of *collaborative urbanism* in different scales including the emerging potential of digitalisation. *Making*, the revitalised process of crafting, that combines traditions and high tech innovations, is on the one hand the conceptual framework for inclusive forms of *city making*, on the other hand the actual topic of the projects. The local potential of the city and its places are the basis for urban transformation towards diverse and inclusive neighbourhoods, proposing integrated spaces of living and of productivity.



Fondazione Cirulli, originally exhibition and manufacturing building for Gavina, by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni
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